AL-HIND

THE MAKING OF THE INDO-ISLAMIC WORLD

Volume 1

Early Medieval India and the Expansion of Islam

Seventh to Eleventh Centuries

ANDRE WINK

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THE MAKING OF THE INDO-ISLAMIC WORLD

BY

ANDRÉ WINK

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VOLUME I

EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIA AND THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM

7th-11th CENTURIES

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PREFACE

I would probably not have written this book if I had not been a participant in the conference on 'surprise phenomena and long-term trends in future world-development' which was held in Friibergh Manor, Sweden, in January 1986. It was there that I decided to expand the scope of an originally more narrowly conceived work on the formative stage of Indian Islam. In Sweden it became clear to me that many of the problems which I had encountered during a preceding year of research could be solved if I gave priority to their long-term world-historical context. I should therefore first like to thank the organizers of the conference, the Swedish Committee for Future Oriented Research, for providing me with an opportunity to think about these issues. Two other participants in the conference, William H. McNeill and John F. Richards, I would like to mention especially for forcing me into the difficult question of world-historical periodization.

I incurred many other debts, both for material and intellectual support, over the past few years when I worked on the project at hand. Only with trepidation do I record my gratitude to the Netherlands Foundation for Scientific Research (N.W.O.) for awarding me a C. & C. Huygens fellowship from 1984 to the present. The unique privileges attached to this fellowship now preclude me from evoking adverse circumstances as a drawback in achieving the best of results. All shortcomings and mistakes of this book, I am afraid, can only be due to my own shortcomings.

My gratitude also goes to Chris Bayly and the Master of St. Catharine's College for accommodating me during a six-months stay in 1984-85 at the University of Cambridge, where I did much of the preliminary research. The Leiden Centre for the History of European Expansion provided me with a first occasion to test some of the ideas advanced here at the Third Cambridge-Delhi-Leiden-Yogyakarta Conference on the Comparative Study of India and Indonesia, held in Yogyakarta in September 1986. I benefited a great deal from discussions on medieval Indian history with Jan Heesterman, Ronald Inden, Dick Eaton, and Burton Stein. Marc Gaborieau, Dietmar Rothermund and Kirti Chaudhuri further stimulated discussion on earlier versions of the ideas presented in this volume by inviting me to give seminars in respectively

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Paris, Heidelberg and London, in May 1988. Similarly, I have had useful comments from participants in the conference at Groningen on 'The Sacred Centre as an Object of Political Interest', held in March 1989; from audiences which attended my lectures at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and at Harvard University in April 1989, and, finally, at the meeting of the Oosters Genootschap, Leiden, in June 1989. Others who read and commented on the manuscript include Hermann Kulke, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Ticia Rueb, Jos Gommans, Geert Horringa, Nicolette van Duyn, and Bert Keizer. Jacqueline Palsma of the Kern Institute, Leiden, was of invaluable help in typing various drafts of the book. My thanks are due to all.

Leiden, July 1989

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INTRODUCTION

It is a fact of immense significance that whereas in the making of Europe the conquests of Islam played the role of a powerfully effective but mostly external factor, in the East the expansion of Islam went on for more than a millennium and here, in South and large parts of Southeast Asia the association with Islam became so intimate that, as a result, we find an *Indo-Islamic* pattern of society and culture. We have an entire literature which deals with the 'birth of Europe' in the early medieval period, the Crusades, and the dynamic career of Christian Europe from the eleventh century onwards. We are all agreed that sometime between the late-Roman and the tenth-eleventh centuries the foundations of European civilization were laid. In the late seventh century the Christian calendar was introduced. The very word *Europa* first came to be used in the ninth century, to distinguish the European subcontinent from the Greek-speaking Christian empire of Byzantium and from Islam. We are also vividly aware – ever since the publication of Henri Pirenne's *Mahomet et Charlemagne* – that by the end of the eighth century a decisive realignment of forces had occurred in the Christian world under the impact of Islam. While perhaps no historical thesis has been disputed as much as Pirenne's, a consensus has evolved that Europe, Byzantium and the Islamic caliphate created their respective traditions in mutual interaction. Thus, for instance, Maurice Lombard denied the adverse effects of Islam on the Western development which Pirenne postulated, but firmly held to the latter's inspiration that we have to analyse early Europe within a threefold structure, starting with the eruption of Islam in the seventh century which irrevocably broke the political unity of the Mediterranean.[1] More recently, Judith Herrin has undertaken an analysis of the formation of Christendom within a similar tripartite context, embracing both the western and eastern halves of the Roman empire and their Islamic neighbour to the east and south.[2] Thereby, again, the extent to which the internal history of each part was influenced and shaped by its relationship with the others is revealed, and synchronisms are discovered. Clearly, if the rise

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[1] For references, see below.

[2] *The Formation of Christendom* (Oxford, 1987).

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of feudalism distinguished Christian Europe from Byzantium and the caliphate, it is in the interaction of the three that the initial particularity of Europe obtains profile.

The above, and other, authors writing about medieval Europe, Byzantium and Islam have repeatedly stressed that an adequate theory of historical explanation would have to articulate an even broader framework of analysis which includes China, Central Asia, and India with the Indian Ocean at large. For, obviously, the effects of Islamic expansion were most dramatically felt in the eastward direction. The secondary literature dealing with the eastern frontier of Islam, and more specifically with the interaction of India and Islam, however, is of no comparable volume and sophistication as that which deals with the West and the confrontation with Christendom. Another tripartite structure can be identified on the eastern frontier, one which is primarily determined by the interaction between the Islamic Middle East, Central Asia and India. It is the proximity of Central Asia as an open reservoir of mobile manpower and military force which goes a long way to explain the fact that Islam made headway in India during the centuries that the West was shielded by Byzantium. The most important Indo-Islamic ruling élites all had Turko-Mongol origins. But, with this structure in mind, even the broad stages in which the Indo-Islamic world developed and grew to its full complexity remain to be outlined. Among Indianist historians and Orientalists an awareness of Euro-Asiatic chains of causation and global interdependence is but gradually dawning.[3] Even here, Pirenne looms large, as it is beginning to be recognized that similar questions can be asked, while the answers which are to be given will depend on how much weight one is prepared to assign to external impulses relative to the autonomy of historical processes. Clearly however the idea that the medieval world was made up of isolated civilizations is giving way to a much more intricate and interesting model in which various forms of interaction are emphasized. If the essential interconnectedness of the world from early times can be demonstrated we will also, as a recent work on Central Asia by C.I. Beckwith has stressed, be able to reassess the question of periodization.[4] Such an undertaking should be

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[3] Cf. J.F. Richards, 'The Islamic Frontier in the East: Expansion into South Asia', *South Asia*, no. 4 (Oct. 1974), pp. 91-109; H. Kulke, 'Gibt es ein indisches Mittelalter? Versuch einer eurasiatischer Geschichtsbetrachtung', *Saeculum*, 33 (1982), pp. 221-39.

[4] C.I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1987).

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particularly important in the various fields of Oriental studies which now threaten to lose coherence on account of the excessive specialization which is caused by the great bulk and difficult nature of the sources.

The present volume is the first of a projected series of five which aims to analyse the process of momentous and long-term change which came with the Islamization of the Indian subcontinental and island realms. The series is set up in a chronological order, starting with the early expansion of the caliphate in the seventh and eighth centuries and ending with the beginnings of European colonization. In this millennium of Islamic expansion we have distinguished five successive stages, taking into account the world-historical context. Each stage is to be covered by a separate volume.

1. The period of the seventh to eleventh centuries -- the early medieval period and the subject of the present volume – , in which the Islamic Middle East acquires economic supremacy while establishing new links between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.
2. The eleventh to thirteenth centuries, in which the Middle East declines relatively in importance while Europe and China become ascendant, Central Asia is unified under the Mongols, and Islam expands far into the Indian subcontinent which then assumes its core position in the Indian Ocean.
3. The fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, the period in which an Indo-Muslim synthesis is achieved and Islamic power is consolidated in large parts of the subcontinent and along the coasts of the Indonesian Archipelago.
4. The sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, when new empires were built by Muslim dynasties all around the Indian Ocean and when the Portuguese and the European Companies begin to play an increasingly important role in the long-distance as well as the country trade of the Indian Ocean.
5. The eighteenth century, in which the Islamic empires disintegrate into a variety of regional successor polities, and resources are redistributed, until, finally, India's core position is subordinated to metropolitan British control and the integrative network of Indian Ocean relations is destroyed.[5]

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[5] This chronology has been further elaborated in A. Wink, 'Al-Hind: India and Indonesia in the Islamic World-Economy, c. 700-1800', in: *The Ancien Regime in India and*

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In an overview of the entire period of Islamic expansion and hegemony in the East one fact stands out: the growth and development of a world-economy in and around the Indian Ocean – with India at its centre and the Middle East and China as its two dynamic poles – was effected by continued economic, social and cultural integration into ever wider and more complex patterns under the aegis of Islam. In a word, Islamization here stands for integration. Already long before the arrival of the Portuguese, the region from East Africa and Ethiopia to Arabia, the Yemen, Persia, India and the Indonesian Archipelago, increasingly acquired a unitary Islamic identity, a distinctive historical personality, which made it the largest cultural continuum of the world.[6] In the sixteenth century we do not have a divergence of different sections of the Indian Ocean but a further convergence. European mercantile participation did not twist this process in another direction, but appears, in the final analysis, to have enhanced it by providing new impulses. It was not the Europeans – the Portuguese, Dutch or British – who made a world-economy of the Indian Ocean in any sense. From the very beginning the integrative processes which occurred here under the banner of Islam have set it apart from the Mediterranean world. The Mediterranean was the arena where East and West opposed each other from the early medieval period onwards, and if Fernand Braudel describes the sea as the focus of an *économie monde* in the sixteenth century we should at the same time not forget that it was in the sixteenth century that the Latin-Christian and the Turko-Muslim civilizations had diverged wider than ever before.[7] The Indian Ocean, by contrast, became more and more the preserve of Islam, an 'Arabic-speaking Mediterranean'.

To medieval Europeans, the Indian Ocean was equally an *anti-Mediterranean*, an unfamiliar world of fantastic exuberance, an oneiric horizon and a source of marvels, the *Mirabilia Indiae*, as well as a domain of great wealth which contrasted sharply with the impoverished West,

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Indonesia (Special Issue, Itinerario, 1988, 1, Proceedings of the Third Cambridge-Delhi-Leiden-Yogyakarta Conference on the Comparative Study of India and Indonesia, Yogyakarta, September 1986), pp. 33-72.

[6] Cf. H.N. Chittick, 'East Africa and the Orient: Ports and Trade Before the Arrival of the Portuguese', in: Unesco (ed.), *Historical Relations Across the Indian Ocean* (Paris, 1980), pp. 13-22.

[7] *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Epoque de Philippe II* (Paris, 1949); A.C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago, 1978).

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the *latinitas penuriosa*.[8] Such an image of India as a land of wonder and the Indian Ocean as a repository of dreams and legends had perpetuated itself from Megasthenes (300 B.C.) onwards. Medieval Christendom knew next to nothing of the real Indian Ocean but clung to the Ptolemaic conception of a circular river-ocean. As long as Christian traders were excluded from it, the dreams of Indian riches, of islands of solid gold and silver, reflected the structure of the medieval trade which was conducted by Muslims.

We will see that the Muslims first defined India as a civilization, set it apart conceptually, and drew its boundaries. The early Muslim view of India includes, to be sure, a close parallel to the Western *Mirabilia Indiae* in the accounts of the *ʿajāʾib al-Hind*. It also includes a number of stereotypes which were already familiar to the ancient Greeks: of India as a land of self-absorbed philosophers, high learning, 'wisdom', the belief in metempsychosis, of sacred cows, elephants, and, again, great wealth. The Arab geographers are perhaps uniquely obsessed with Indian idolatry and polytheism, 'in which they differ totally from the Muslims'. But the Arabs, in contrast to the medieval Christians, developed their conception of India in direct and prolonged contact with it. In a political-geographical sense, 'India' or *al-Hind*, throughout the medieval period, was an Arab or Muslim conception. The Arabs, like the Greeks, adopted a pre-existing Persian term, but they were the first to extend its application to the entire Indianized region from Sind and Makran to the Indonesian Archipelago and mainland Southeast Asia. It therefore appears to us as if the Indians or Hindus acquired a collective identity in interaction with Islam.

Beyond that, it is the aim of this volume to bring together research that has been compartmentalized into separate regional histories of neighbouring civilizations. It also attempts to show that India was of central importance in the first era of Islam and that it determined the direction of Islamic expansion, while at the same time socio-political and economic shifts within the realm of *al-Hind* itself were no less affected in the reverse.

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[8] J. Le Goff, 'The Medieval West and the Indian Ocean', in: *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago and London, 1980), pp. 189-200.

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CHAPTER 1

'FROM SPAIN TO INDIA': THE EARLY ISLAMIC CONQUESTS AND THE FORMATION OF THE CALIPHATE

The territory which, after the conquests of the seventh and early eighth centuries, came under effective domination of the caliphate extended from the Iberian peninsula and North Africa to Central Asia and into the Persian-Indian borderland of Sind which for three centuries remained its easternmost frontier. Scattered as they were, the conquered countries were characterized by climatological and ecological conditions similar to the Arabian homeland: deserts punctuated with large and small oases and more or less extensive pockets of irrigated and dry agriculture (Mesopotamia, Egypt, the North-African plains, Andalusia). Arab-Muslim civilization, the boundaries of which were drawn in the first half of the eighth century, clearly evolved in interaction with this ecotype. When, from the eleventh century onwards, Islam was extended to different climatical zones new forms of Islamic society and culture arose. Such new forms we also find in India and in parts of the Indianized world of Southeast Asia, the area beyond Sind which the Arabs left unconquered and which they called *al-Hind*. Up to the eleventh century, however, the Muslims penetrated in the countless kingdoms of *al-Hind* only as traders. In Abbasid times the India trade was to become the backbone of the intercontinental Muslim economy. But, by the time that Islamic power was established in North India, the political unity of the Abbasid caliphate was already lost. And neither India nor any part of its cultural hinterland were provinces of the classical Islamic state.

How can we explain the extraordinarily rapid and almost effortless Arab advances in the seventh and early eighth centuries? What were, in social and economic terms, the results of the Muslim conquests and why did they come to a stop – to the west in Spain and to the east in Sind – almost as abruptly as they had begun? Originating from Arabia, the startling symmetry of Islamic expansion reinforced the idea of an elemental outburst of energy, an explosion or vulcanic eruption. For the faithful themselves these successes were the product of divine will.

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Latter-day historians cannot prove them wrong but, taking an agnostic line, stress the revolution in the ideological basis and political structure of Arabian tribal society which was effected by the new integrative force of Islam and the new concept of law which transcended the limitations of tribal organization. While the rise of Islam itself is still largely unexplained, the new religion is thought to have unleashed the expansionist movement and, what is more important, to have allowed it to be sustained in co-ordinated and purposeful campaigning. Earlier explanations which pointed at the 'irresistible penchant for the raid' or the 'thirst for booty' of the Arab tribes are thereby rendered obsolete.

More generally, in the historiography of the Arab conquests, military factors are now played down. The Arab conquering armies were usually small and appear to have enjoyed no important technological advantages in armament. On the side of the opponents, the fortuitous weakness of Byzantium and Sasanid Persia due to their prolonged internecine wars, and the disaffection of the subject population of Syria and Iraq are stressed. Because of the struggle between Byzantium and Persia from Justinian and Khusro I to Heraclius and Khusro II the provinces became detached from Constantinople, facilitating or even inviting the advance of Islam. Moreover, in spite of an almost millennium-long exposure to Greco-Roman culture, the mass of the Syrian population had remained Semitic and followed the heretical Monophysite creed rather than Byzantine orthodoxy. Under its Hellenistic veneer, in those parts of Syria which were to come under Arab control, most of the population was nomadic and semi-nomadic, Arabic-speaking, while in its social structure it was more akin to the Arabian tribes than to the settled communities of the other parts of Syria where the Byzantine church was powerfully represented by a Greek-speaking urban élite and where the Arab advance was difficult and soon came to a halt. Similarly, in Egypt, the Byzantines had been unable to Hellenize the Copts. The latter remained Monophysite and had been persecuted by the Byzantine church, while from the fifth century onwards the fiscal demands from Greek landowners had begun to bear more heavily on them, to counter the religious upsurge which came in the wake of the expansion of Christianity. Further away, in the alluvial plains of Iraq (Ar. *arḍ al-ʿajam*) the egalitarian and cosmopolitan tendencies of Islam found response among movements of social and religious revolt. Here the mass of the population spoke some form of Aramaic, and when the Muslims appeared in 12 A.H./633 A.D. the Sasanids had not only completely lost northern Mesopotamia in the war with Byzantium but were also bur-

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dened with an annual indemnity which loosened their grip on the area. The agricultural districts were, furthermore, severely damaged and the alliance system with the frontier tribes was unhinged. The Nestorian Christians were just recovering from the indirect effects of a prolonged social crisis which had culminated in the religious egalitarianism of the heretic Mazdak in the fifth and sixth centuries. Here again the conquests were easy; one battle, a clash between two rather small armies, at Al-Qādisiyya, was enough to open the fertile lands of the Sawād of Iraq to the Arabs almost without further obstruction.

Under such circumstances, the relations with subject peoples were facilitated by the religious tolerance of the Arab invaders – the latter only imposed fiscal conditions in their treaties of capitulation and allowed economic life to go on unhindered. There were no forced conversions, but the Arabs were able to assimilate important elements of the defeated opponents in their armies. In fact, only the initial conquests were carried out by the Arab Bedouin under the Quraysh leadership of Mecca. Quite soon the impetus of conquest came to be maintained by the absorbed contingents of the subject population, as, in particular, by the Iranians in Central Asia and Sind and Afghanistan, the Syro-Egyptians in North Africa, and the Berbers of North Africa in Spain and Sicily. From the Iraqian plains the Arabs were drawn in an eastward direction, into central and eastern Persia, into Media, Khurāsān, Sīstān and Transoxania. Here the one decisive battle took place at Nihāvand, in 641, and this finalized the collapse of Sasanid power, even though the fleeing emperor and the frontier guardians and governors continued to offer obstruction to the Arabs. Within fifteen years after the battle of Nihāvand the Sasanid realm on the Iranian plateau, with the exception of Makrān and Afghanistan, had entirely fallen to the Muslims. Nearly all of Khurāsān was in Arab hands shortly after the death of Yazdigird III in 651. Sind was added to the conquests in 712-13, again not without a measure of military action but largely through capitulation. In Transoxania (comprising Khwārazm on the lower Oxus river and around the Aral Sea, Soghdiana with Samarqand and Bukhara as well as Farghana, Shash and Bactria), Arab authority was extended by Qutayba in the early eighth century. And thus, in the east, only the Hindu-Kush and southern Afghanistan were left to be conquered until the ninth century. In the same period, in the west, Sicily was the single important Muslim gain; it was conquered between 827 and 902. In the seventh and eighth centuries Eastern and Western Christendom survived due to the Arab failure to conquer Constantinople, not the defeat by

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Charles Martel – celebrated by the Western tradition – of a random Arab raiding party at Tours and Poitiers in 732. Muslim authors speak of Narbonne, a city held by the Arabs until 759, as 'the last Muslim conquest in the land of the Franks'.

'From Spain to India', the Muslims in the early eighth century thus acquired a core position from where they were able to link the two major economic units of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. These units had been linked before (in Hellenistic times) but they were split between the rival Roman-Byzantine and Parthico-Sasanid empires in the centuries preceding the Islamic conquests. The Muslims dominated all important maritime and caravan trade routes with the exception only of the northern trans-Eurasian silk route from China to India and Russia, and one major trade centre, Byzantium. What had been the provinces of the greatest importance – in terms of commercial organization and urban development – of the disparate empires of the ancient world, came under direct Muslim occupation. The Arab conquests were swift and, in sharp contrast to the barbarian conquests of Europe, left the monetary and urban history of antiquity unbroken. Establishing a thin Islamic superstructure on the rich, urbanite substratum of late antiquity, and by fusing the formerly rival Byzantine and Sasanid commercial circuits and forcing links between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, the Arab caliphate from the eighth to the eleventh century achieved an unquestioned economic supremacy in the world. At the junction of Christendom, Africa, Central Asia and China, and above all, *Hind*, the unity of the Islamic economy was founded on large-scale trading networks along overland and maritime routes connected by old and sometimes new urban centres. Throughout Islam, from the seventh to the eleventh century, the city was pre-eminent and the urban network allowed an unrivalled mobility of men and goods across great distance. If new cities were founded and old cities grew in size, in the countryside a real demographic revolution appears to have occurred in most parts of the Islamic world during the same centuries; this, again, was accompanied by a general transformation of agriculture, the diffusion of (new) crops and farming techniques (e.g. multiple cropping on the Indian model), the intensification of rural settlement, and the expansion of acreage. Early Islam was highly receptive to novelties and favoured the transmission not only of men and goods, but also of technology, information and ideas. Islam became the hegemonic religion but the Islamization of the subject population – the vast mass of Aramaeans, Egyptians, Persians, and so on – was a gradual process which took cen-

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turies. The tiny minorities of Arab conquerors and migrant followers soon merged with the older populations which by and large collaborated in the caliphal state.

While the Muslims, in our period, monopolized the trade between the Far East and the Indian Ocean and the West and Byzantium on the one hand and between Africa and the Mediterranean on the other, in monetary terms the result of the Muslim conquests was the transition to a unified currency based on the gold *dīnār* and the silver *dirham*, and simultaneously with it, a dramatic increase of the volume of precious metals in circulation. Possession was taken of all important gold-producing and gold-collecting areas, vast quantities of gold were seized from the Sasanid palaces, from the Byzantine churches and monasteries, and from the Pharaonic tombs. Dethesaurized gold, booty and newly-mined gold was minted and brought into circulation, thereby further strengthening the economic power of the Muslim world. The former Byzantine and Sasanid monetary circuits were fused and with the triumph of the gold dīnār in the ninth century the drain of gold towards the east came to a stop. The dīnār, together with the silver dirham and, in more localized transactions, copper coin, all entered new circuits of exchange and sustained the circulation of products of all kinds. For most of the Islamic Middle East the accounts of the Arab geographers of the ninth and tenth centuries testify to the great extent of money circulation and the ubiquity of gold and silver coin even in the tiniest communities. The revenues of all Abbasid provinces came to be expressed in gold coinage. Muslim gold played a worldwide role and in the Indian Ocean trade – where the dīnār took over the position of the Sasanid silver dirham and the Byzantine gold nomisma –, large amounts were lost, but the Muslims safeguarded a steady supply of precious metals, especially from the Sudan (West Africa), but also from the Caucasus and Armenia, the Ponto-Caspian steppes, Central Asia, Tibet, South-east Asia, the East-African coast, Nubia, and North Ethiopia. The silver areas exploited by the Muslims were the same as those of the ancient world: primarily Spain, the ancient Tartessor region, and the Moroccan Atlas, Armenia, northern Iran and Central Asia. Therefore, although we find the *dīnār* and *dirham* as the dominant currencies in all ports of Sind and western India, Malabar, Sri Lanka and, further east, in Bengal, on the Coromandel coast and in Indonesia and the Malayan peninsula, and westwards as far as Socotra and Madagascar, the supply of precious metals from multiple sources was guaranteed up to the eleventh century and the bi-metallic currency system of Islam was

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never jeopardized by a unilinear displacement in eastward direction.

In the early medieval period, then, when Europe was thinly populated, primarily rural and backward, we have to locate the driving force of economy and trade in the integrated Islamic civilization in the Middle East. This Islamic economic supremacy survived the political fragmentation which started in the ninth century, and it survived the establishment of the Fatimid counter-caliphate in Egypt, North Africa and parts of Syria in the second half of the tenth century. The unity and supremacy of Islamic civilization was lost however in the severe crisis of the eleventh century which followed the Seljuq-Turkish invasions and the beginning of the Crusading movement. From the eleventh century onwards the dynamic centres of world-economic development are found to be shifting to Europe, China and India.[1]

In the same period, the other typical features of the Muslim polity developed in the context, first of all, of the highly advanced monetary economy. The system of taxation and fiscal extraction quickly achieved a high measure of autonomy and standardized uniformity under a bureaucracy of salaried governors who rotated throughout the empire. A cash-nexus developed along the strings of innumerable towns and cities which were connected by interregional and intercontinental trade-routes. In the caliphate, from the eighth century, we find not only the widespread use of money but bills of exchange (Ar. *suftajah*) in general use, together with double-entry bookkeeping and advanced accountancy, large-scale and elaborate banking and credit – often mediated by Jews – linked to 'political capitalism' and massive fiscal operations. From the tenth century, but becoming universal only in the eleventh century, a method of prebendal assignment of revenue, known as *iqṭāʿ*, was introduced. This issued directly from the monetized economy –

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[1] M. Lombard, *L'Islam dans sa première grandeur, VIIIe-XIe siècle* (Paris, 1971); idem, 'Les bases monétaires d'une suprématie économique: L'or musulmane du VIIe au XIe siècle', *Annales*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1947), pp. 143-160; T. Walker, 'The Italian gold revolution of 1252: Shifting currents in the pan-Mediterranean flow of gold', in: J.F. Richards (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds* (Durham, 1983), pp. 29-52; A.M. Watson, *Agricultural innovation in the early Islamic world: The diffusion of crops and farming techniques* (Cambridge, 1983); F. McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981); P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity. From Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad* (London, 1970); C. Cahen, *Der Islam I: Vom Ursprung bis zu den Anfängen des Osmanenreiches* (Fischer Weltgeschichte Bd. 14) (Frankfurt am Main, 1968); R.N. Frye (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 4: The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Seljuqs* (Cambridge, 1975); B. Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (London, 1982), pp. 18-20.

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even though to some extent it was also a first response to the eroding political unity of the caliphal state. With the loss of provinces and the ascendancy of Turkish groups in Baghdad the bi-metallic currency went haywire. *Iqṭāʿ* made it possible to avoid having to anticipate fluctuations of monetized revenue and was first used to this effect, in the form in which all later Muslim governments in the Middle East and India used it, by the Buyids. The *iqṭāʿ* was basically a salary collected at source, with a value derived from a cadastral survey, and there was nothing permanent about it. The system always continued to function within a monetized economy and differed widely from the European fief system since the latter evolved out of a subsistence economy and a state without generalized taxation. Even when at times the tenure of *iqṭāʿ* became quite long and may have approached quasi-heredity it remained in essence a salary for service granted for a limited time. It is typical of the metropolitan Muslim states (and, from the thirteenth century onwards, of the Indo-Muslim states as well) that political relationships were of a very highly monetized order. *Iqṭāʿ* was never entirely cut loose from the monetized economy, not even when tax-farming was resorted to during liquidity crises or in times of disturbance. Conceptions of honour and loyalty were monetized in forms unknown in the West, and not uncommonly elaborate, quantified ranking systems developed which made intricate negotiation and calculated 'sedition' or *fitna* the pivot of Muslim politics.[2]

The second feature which developed from the ninth century and which became distinctive of Islamic domination afterwards – also during long periods in India, but never in Indonesia – were the well-known slave armies and slave aristocracies.[3] The systematic use of slaves in the

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[2] A. Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-century Maratha Svarājya* (Cambridge, 1986); R.P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton, 1980), p. 36; C. Cahen, 'L'évolution de l'Iqtaʿ du IXe au XIIIe siècle: Contribution à une histoire comparée des sociétés médiévales', *Annales*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1953), pp. 25-52; H.B. Abdallah, *De l'iqtaʿ étatique à l'iqtaʿ militaire: Transition économique et changements sociaux à Baghdad, 861-1055* (Stockholm, 1986); A.K.S. Lambton, 'Reflections on the Iqṭāʿ', in: G. Makdisi (ed.), *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A.R. Gibb* (Leiden, 1965); *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (Leiden and London, 1954-78), s.v. iḳṭāʿ; R.W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), pp. 23-4.

[3] D. Ayalon, *The Mamlūk Military Society* (London, 1979); P. Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980); ead., *Roman, provincial and Islamic law: the origins of the Islamic patronate* (Cambridge, 1987); D. Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven and London, 1981).

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army and the administration (commonly in the highest positions) was unique of Islam and alien to the pre-Islamic heritage. It is sometimes thought that élite slavery was the only or the predominant form of slavery in Islamic society, with next to it merely the commonplace forms of domestic slavery. Apart from élite slavery however it is also noteworthy that in Islamic history empire-formation and commercial expansion went together with an increase in the use of slaves as such.[4] But there was nothing typically Islamic about this. The increase of Roman power after the Punic wars, and the expansion of Iberian power in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were also concomitant with unprecedented increases in the number of slaves and with changes in the nature of slavery. For the Spanish and the Portuguese the most important change was to be the virtual restriction of slavery to Africans. In Islam the slave trade grew with the geographic expansion of Islamic power and the Arabs also introduced formal categories (like the pejorative *barbara*) to justify the enslavement of the sub-Saharan 'barbarians'. Rough estimates exist which show that the number of black slaves which was exported by Arabs across the trans-Saharan trade route reached a total of 1,740,000 in the period 900-1100 A.D. In the period 850-1000 A.D. the number of black slaves exported across the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean to Islamic Asia and to India was near to 10,000 per year.[5] Perhaps the conclusion is justified that the importation of black slaves to Islamic countries from Spain to India over a period of twelve centuries surpassed in numbers the African slave trade to the New World. But Islam by no means restricted enslavement to Africans. Restrictions merely applied (at least usually) to the enslavement of fellow believers. And only the Muslims systematically recruited large numbers of their military and governing class by enslavement. This was in addition to the employment of slave labour and in addition to domestic and sexual slavery. African slaves were present in the armies and governing élites as well (sometimes dominating these) but for Islam, during many centuries, the main source of military and élite slaves were the Turks of the Eurasian steppes. From the ninth century onwards, but with antecedents in the institution of the *mawālī* or 'clientele', such slave or *mamlūk* troops of Central-Asian origin were the core of the Abbasid armies; by the eleventh century most eastern Islamic states were formed around a nucleus of the same slaves. The mamlūks were a one-generation

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[4] D.B. Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (Oxford and New York, 1984).
[5] Estimates by R.A. Austen, quoted in Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-6.

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aristocracy of alien provenance and the life of the institution could be prolonged for as long as supplies continued to be available. The system, in effect, remained in use for a full millennium throughout the Islamic world – with varying degrees of prominence and under widely differing circumstances.

While the origin of the mamlūk institution is found in the Abbasid failure to structure a Muslim imperial aristocracy – in direct continuity with the Sasanid state or out of the Arab tribal material – it is thought that this necessitated the creation of an artificial aristocracy from deracinated elements. Once created the institution began to lead a life of its own and provided convenient solutions to the problems of man-power shortage, and of loyalty and exclusive obedience, at the same time allowing the establishment of 'legitimate' rule in the power vacuum recurrently created in urbanite Islamic life. The alien *mamlūks* were not associated with land as an agrarian nobility or gentry, but instead with *iqṭāʿ*. And although this dissociation from land was not always stable the mamlūks were in general easier to work with. The monetized economy, interregional trade, slavery and empire-formation tied in particularly well with *iqṭāʿ* and it is within this context of Islamic expansion that élite slavery was later commonly found. It became the predominant system in North India in the thirteenth century and retained considerable importance in the fourteenth century. It was still vigorous in fifteenth-century Bengal, while after that date it shifted to the Deccan where it persisted until the seventeenth century. It remained present to a minor extent in the Mughal provinces throughout the seventeenth century and had a notable revival under the Afghans in North India again in the eighteenth century. In Indonesia however, where throughout its precolonial history we find a much less developed monetary economy in the inland kingdoms and a relatively simple apanage structure of landholding, there appears to have been a virtual absence of élite and military slavery, even under Muslim domination. Slavery as such was ubiquitous in the archipelago in the labour and domestic context, as it was in the Persian Gulf, the Euphrates valley and in much of India and Sri Lanka. Slaves in Indonesia were not dominantly import but we know from Snouck Hurgronje that for instance the Achinese returning from the *ḥajj* to Mecca brought African slaves with them (called *abeuthi* or 'Abyssinians', whatever part of Africa they may have come from). This was still the case in the nineteenth century and probably it was a practice which dates much further back.[6] But no governing élites were

[6] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjehers*, vol. I (Batavia and Leiden, 1893), pp. 45-6.

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recruited in this way. Indonesia always had a real aristocracy. To be sure, when the aristocratic families of the coastal ports of northeastern Java rose to power and converted to Islam with the expansion of overseas trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they occasionally did recruit slave troops. These played a role in the struggle for hegemony with the agrarian interior, with Majapahit. The *adipati* of Demak thus for a while attempted to reinforce his authority with the support of an army of purchased Balinese, Buginese and Macassarese slaves.[7] Eminent Javanese Muslim merchants sometimes surrounded themselves with a number of armed slaves when they settled down elsewhere. Sometimes such slaves acted as factors of merchants who stayed at home. In Mataram there were at one time, similarly, bands of Macassarese, Madurese and Balinese slaves serving as auxiliaries. But such soldiers we hear of only incidentally and they were a very small minority while most armies were based on military service and soccage service of free peasants and agrarian gentry, and Mataram, for instance, did not even have a standing army.[8] An organized military slave force perhaps existed in Indonesia only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the Minangkabau region of Sumatra during the Islamic (Wahhabite) revival movement of the Padris. This was apparently fairly large, for it was reported in the 1860s that about one-third of the active population in some villages in the eastern Minangkabau were the descendants of slaves captured in the Padri wars against the Dutch.[9] Another case is that of the Achinese *roi-soleil* Iskandar Muda (1607-36) who maintained a palace guard composed of military slaves, similar to the Ottoman Janissaries, captured in war. The same king received Abyssinian slave officers (next to Turkish soldiers) from the Porte. Iskandar Muda's court was in many other ways reminiscent of a Middle-Eastern state rather than an average patriarchal Indonesian sultanate, due to close contact with the Islamic empires to the west. Such a *fulcrum imperii* as military slavery however looks oddly out of place in the Islamic states of Indonesia, even in Achin.

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[7] B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, 2 vols (The Hague and Bandung, 1955-57), I, p. 81.

[8] *Ibid.*, II, p. 128; H.J. De Graaf and Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, *De Eerste Moslimse Vorstendommen op Java* ('s-Gravenhage, 1974), p. 67.

[9] Ch. Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy: Central Sumatra, 1784-1847* (London and Malmö, 1983), p. 138.

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The third important feature which developed in the early formative centuries of Islam relates to the heritage of Persia or *'ajam* as the Arabs called it. Hindu or Buddhist India was not conquered until the thirteenth century and parts of it remained outside of Muslim control until as late as the sixteenth century. Similarly, the Byzantine state was not fully conquered (by the Turks) before the mid-fifteenth century. But Persia was conquered in its entirety in the seventh century and by the eleventh century had already largely converted to Islam. It is not surprising therefore that of the three metropolitan classical traditions of India, Greece and Persia it was Persia that resurfaced with an integral identity within the Islamic context.[10] The Persian imperial tradition could not persist anywhere outside Islam and as a result a vigorous Persian resurgence occurred within it. From its Arab roots the Islamic conquest state then shifted to a Persianized foundation.

Of course, Persian culture and the Sasanid tradition of monarchy and statecraft were at first loathed by the Muslim Arabs as a morally repugnant feature of the *jāhilīya*, the 'state of ignorance' of pre-Islamic times; or they spoke disdainfully of 'the usages and pomp of the Persian kings, given to futilities, eternal tyrants, oblivious of God'.[11] In Sasanid Persia, religion and polity had been twins. The Zoroastrian religion sanctified the ruler as the representative of Ohrmazd, the god of light, and as a state-cult it was supported by a hereditary priestly class, the Magi, guardians of the temples in which a sacred fire was kept burning, symbolizing Ohrmazd. Zoroastrianism not only sanctified the ruler but also the Aryan ethnicity of Iran and at the same time legitimated the aristocratic substructure of the Sasanid state which produced the heavy cavalry. Kingly authority was enacted to inspire 'awe' or 'dread' (Ar. *haiba*) and was surrounded by elaborate ritual and unparalleled luxury.

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[10] P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 41-2, 73-112; Brown, *World of Late Antiquity*, pp. 194-203; M.G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 29-32, 61-97; M.A. Shaban, *The ʿAbbāsid Revolution* (Cambridge, 1970); C. Cahen, 'The Body Politic', in: G.E. v. Grunebaum (ed.), *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization* (Chicago, 1955), pp. 132-63; idem, 'Points de vue sur la "Révolution abbaside"', *Revue historique* (1963), pp. 295-338; A.K.S. Lambton, 'Islamic Political Thought', in: J. Schacht and C.E. Bosworth (eds), *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 404-424; idem, 'Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship', *Studia Islamica*, vol. XVII (1962), pp. 91-119; idem, 'Islamic Mirrors for Princes', *La Persia nel medioevo: Atti del Convegno internazionale, Rome, 1970* (Rome, 1971), pp. 419-42; A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1942); Frye (ed.), *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4.

[11] A. Wafi (ed.), *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, 4 vols (Cairo, 1960-2), II, p. 710.

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While the monarchy was universal in intent, the person of the monarch was unassailable and he had an exalted professional bureaucracy and a secret police at his disposal. Access to court was carefully regulated, commensurate to status, and required outward personal submission and the kissing of the floor.

Early Islam unhesitatingly rejected the imperial civilization of Persia as illegitimate in religious terms and, in effect, the Arab conquests were initially greatly facilitated by counterideological movements such as that of Mazdak which had – without much success – challenged the Zoroastrian, aristocratic order of Sasanid Persia. But already in the seventh century we meet with the first application of Persian principles to Islamic government – not among the caliphs at Madina or Damascus but among the governors of Iraq. Here the Sasanid bureaucratic system was reconstituted, although in a less centralized and less hierarchic form, by Ziyād, under Muʿāwiya (661-80). Similarly, the building projects of Ziyād, which introduced the architectural forms of authoritarian rule, were inspired by Sasanid antecedents: urban citadels, walls and gates, audience halls. All of this was a far cry from the Arab tribal *majlis* but now imposed itself as indispensable. For, in the meantime, the Arab Bedouin supremacy was being undermined by the massive influx of non-Arab Muslims, mainly Persians, who sought access to the government of the new state which was beginning to consolidate itself, and these non-Arabs claimed equality with the old ruling élite in the name of the new religion. So, after the fruitless confrontation with Byzantium, Islam turned away from the Mediterranean and from Europe; Damascus was abandoned for the new capital of Baghdad, which was founded in 762 near the former Sasanid capital of Ctesiphon. The Umayyad dynasty was replaced by the Abbasids and their Islamized Persian supporters, predominantly Khurāsānis, creating a Persian empire in Islamic garb in the century following the foundation of Baghdad, most decisively in the reign of Hārūn ar-Rashīd (788-809). The Abbasid revolution began in eastern Persia and was heavily dependent on the *dihqān* aristocracy of the region, whose Persian identity was accommodated in a Shīʿa version of Islam – the basic tenet of which was that the leadership of the community was a divine office and which thus easily aligned with the belief (put forward in the Persian 'mirrors for princes') in the 'divine aura' (*farr-īzadī*) as an essential attribute of sovereignty. Throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, the Mediterranean coast continued to diminish in relative importance as the massive weight of Persia pulled the Abbasid empire eastward, to the Persian

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Gulf, down the Tigris and Euphrates and to the searoute linking Basra and Siraf with India and China. Persia, as it reflects itself in the tenth century in Al-Masʿūdī's mind, had been governed by 'the most noble . . . and the most opulent prince, most endowed with good qualities, and the one whose rule was the firmest and most vigilant . . . and who used to be distinguished by the title of *Shāhanshāh* or 'king of kings', and one whose place in the world was compared with that of the heart in the body of man, or that of the principal pearl in a collar'.[12] Here, scorn is replaced with admiration, but then, in the tenth century, it was the Muslim ruler who had become the 'king of kings' while in fact the old imperial civilization of Persia had superseded Bedouin army rule.

By comparison, the Sanskrit and Greek traditions were absorbed in a rather piecemeal fashion. In the one case there was a fragmentary rendering of Hindu literature and scientific works (channeled through Sind, until the Abbasids lost their grip on the province). Indian numerals, arithmetic, mathematics, philosophy and logic, mysticism, ethics, statecraft, military science, medicine, pharmacology, toxicology (works on snakes (*sarpavidyā*) and poison (*viṣavidyā*)), veterinary science, eroticism, astronomy, astrology and palmistry were transmitted. Chess and chausar games were brought from India. We have a reference by an Arabic author from Andalusia to an Indian book on tunes and melodies. Indian fables and literary works are reflected in the Thousand and One Nights. Al-Biruni, before he came to India, had some Indian works in his library which were translated into Arabic under the early Abbasid caliph Al-Mansūr (754-775) and the Barmakid vazirs of Hārūn ar-Rashīd; amongst these were the *Brahmasiddhānta* or *Sindhind* and the *Pāñcatantra*. When, in 1020, Al-Biruni began his study of Indian astronomy from the Sanskrit originals he was to find that the early works were still held in the same high esteem.[13] To an appreciable extent, Sanskrit philosophy had already come to the attention of the Sasanid Persians and its influence in the Islamic world was sometimes mediated by Sasanid schools. 'It was recognized among the

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[12] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, 2 vols (Cairo, 1948), I, pp. 159-60.

[13] E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India* (New Delhi, 1983), pp. xxx-xxxvii, and I, pp. 152-3; S.H. Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968); W. Cureton, 'Indian Physicians at the Court of Baghdad', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. VI (1841), p. 105-19; L. Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris, 1954); K.N. Chaudhuri, 'Asia before Europe: Comparative Civilizations of Historical Asia. Structural Integration and Differentiation', Conference paper, Yogyakarta, 21-26 Sept. 1986.

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Khusros (*Akāsira*) of Persia that wisdom (*ḥikma*) originally came from *al-Hind*'.[14] In Islam however Indian influences submerged under the tide of Greek and Hellenistic learning, *falsafa* and science, from the ninth century onwards.[15] We know for certain that the burning of the library in Alexandria is a myth of the Crusades period. The assimilation of the secular categories of Greek philosophy, however, was no aim in itself but part of an obstinate attempt to rid Islam of the germs of the ancient Perso-Aramaic or Manichaean free-thinking, *zandaqa*, and its manifestations of moral cynicism which the Arabs called *mujūn*.[16] This conflict between the Arab and Persian traditions really went much deeper. The anti-Arab polemics of the Persian literati which became designated as the *shuʿūbīya* movement introduced elements of a *Weltanschauung* which never ceased to be disruptive in the eyes of the orthodox. The heritage of Persia, while conflicting with the egalitarian sobriety of the pristine religion, was to become a decisive force in the formation of Islamic society; so much so that when in later centuries the Indians and the Greeks entered Islam it was no longer an Arab Islam but a Persian Islam that they entered.

Indo-Islamic civilization developed as an offshoot of eastern-Persian Islam, but only from the eleventh century onwards, and this second stage of Islamic expansion has to be carefully distinguished from the preceding one. The eastern Persian world began its advance in the ninth century, under the four generations of Ṭāhirid hereditary governors of the Abbasid caliphs, who were the de facto autonomous rulers of the region in 821-73 and contemporaries of the Aghlabid governors of Ifriqiya (Tunisia) and the Ṭūlūnids of Egypt and Syria. The resurgence of native Persian dynasties as practically independent local powers occurred simultaneously with the crumbling of effective Abbasid authority in Baghdad. The Sāmānids in Khurāsān and Transoxania (819-1005), the Ṣaffārids in Sīstān (867-1003), as well as the various Kurdish or Dailamite dynasties, e.g. the Būyids in Fars and Iraq (932-1062), con-

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[14] Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 160.

[15] Cf. R. Walzer, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1962); M. Steinschneider, *Die Arabischen Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen* (Graz, 1960); F. Rosenthal, *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam* (Zürich and Stuttgart, 1965); M. Plessner, *Der Oikonomos des Neupythagoräers Bryson und sein Einflusz auf die islamischen Wissenschaft* (Heidelberg, 1928).

[16] H.A.R. Gibb, 'The Social Significance of the Shuubiya', in: *Studies in the Civilization of Islam* (London, 1962), pp. 62-73.

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trived, like the Ṭāhirīds, to connect themselves genealogically with the Persian emperors, just as easily as they attached themselves to the Arab past or to the family of the Prophet. The title of *Shāhanshāh* was revived by the Būyids, with caliphal approval, and, more generally, the use of titles (*laqabs*) and pompous forms of address became a conspicuous feature of the Persianized East. The Ṣaffārid stimulus to the growth of New Persian literature was of great importance. But it was the Sāmānids who presided over a full-scale Persian-Islamic renaissance at a time when the indigenous aristocracy of the *dihqāns* was being subverted by military slavery. In Khurāsān and Transoxania the trade in Turkish slaves from Central Asia paradoxically provided the material foundation for the cultural revival. The epic poet Firdausi, who is commonly regarded as the founder of New Persian literature, began his *Shāhnāma* under the Sāmānids, and the main theme of the work was the conflict between Iran and Turan – the people of the latter being considered in Firdausi's time as the ancestors of the Turks who were now being Islamized as *mamlūks*. The Sāmānids – who had themselves sprung from the *dihqān* class – were also the first dynasty to 'Persianize' the bureaucracy, and Persian in due course became the lingua franca of the eastern caliphate. It is not precisely known when New Persian replaced Arabic as the official language. For a long time the Sāmānid bureaucracy was bilingual, with mixed Arab-Islamic, Central-Asian and Persian features. Firdausi, in any case, began his epic under the Sāmānids but had to finish it under their successors the Ghaznavids and by that time the use of New Persian had become dominant. The Ghaznavids were a dynasty of Turkish slave origin who first became governors of the Sāmānids in eastern and southern Afghanistan in the last quarter of the tenth century, and then established themselves as independent sultans. From 998 to 1030 Sultan Yamīn ad-Daula Maḥmūd b. Sabuktigin extended Ghaznavid power as far as western Persia and the Ganges valley. At his death he left the most extensive empire which the eastern Islamic world had seen since the fragmentation of the Abbasid caliphate. After 1040, Maḥmūd's western conquests fell to the Seljuqs and their fellow tribesmen of Oghuz. Maḥmūd's descendants retained Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Northwest India for a century and a quarter more and transplanted Perso-Islamic culture to Indian soil. Al-Biruni came to India with the Ghaznavid invaders and still wrote in Arabic. After that, Ghaznavid culture along the Ghazna-Lahore axis irreversibly moved away from an Arabic to a Persian base.[17]

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[17] C.E. Bosworth, 'Dailamīs in Central Iran: the Kākūyids of Jibāl and Yazd', *Iran*,

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With the occupation of the Panjab by the Ghaznavids (1001-1186) it was from Lahore that Indo-Islamic culture received the Persian content which it has always retained. The successors of the Ghaznavids who conquered North India in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries also made concerted efforts to connect their dynastic history not just with Islamic religious tradition but again as much with the Persian pre-Islamic past. Ever afterwards, for all eastern Islam and especially for Indian Islam, imperial Persia and its glittery apparel loomed very large – larger by far than it had in Mauryan and post-Mauryan times, when the architecture and the monolithic sandstone and other pillars of Ashoka, or the bas-reliefs at Sarnath, among a profuse array of additional elements, already betray a similar influence. Later Muslim architecture in North India is again indebted to Ctesiphon. The administrative institutions of the Delhi Sultanate evolved largely in Persian lands and in many ways the Delhi court became a replica of the Sasanid court; here it was the slave king Balban who restored the *dārāt-i-salāṭīn-i-ʿajam*, the 'lustre of the Persian kings'. Beyond the Indian subcontinent, in Indonesia, Persian statecraft was known by reputation but was of no comparable efficacy. In Islamic Indonesia, in a different way again, royal cults developed but continuity was sought in the connection with pre-Islamic Hindu empires, particularly with Majapahit. The Indonesian Islamic states never adopted the Persian-Sasanid tradition which in the eighth and ninth centuries completely transformed Islamic dominion in the Abbasid realm and which was taken over wholesale in the Delhi Sultanate. This tradition, in the Islamic context, brought with it not only the sanctification of the caliph as the external symbol of the empire and the usual royal paraphernalia and court ceremonial, next to an expanded and hierarchical bureaucracy, but also a tighter link between state and religion while the *ʿulamāʾ* and *fuqahāʾ* were sponsored by the state as a quasi-priesthood. All of these were elements which had been wholly absent in the more austere form of Arab Islam of the preceding centuries.

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vol. VIII (1970), pp. 73-95; idem, 'The heritage of rulership in early Islamic Iran and the search for dynastic connections with the past', *Iran*, vol. XI (1973), pp. 51-62; idem, 'The titulature of the early Ghaznavids', *Oriens*, vol. XV (1962), pp. 210-33; idem, 'The development of Persian culture under the early Ghaznavids', *Iran*, vol. VI (1968), pp. 33-44; idem, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran, 994-1040* (Edinburgh, 1963); idem, *The Later Ghaznavids. Splendour and Decay: The Dynasty in Afghanistan and Northern India, 1040-1186* (Edinburgh, 1977); M. Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultān Maḥmūd of Ghazna* (Cambridge, 1931).

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The establishment of the Ghaznavid Sultanate in eastern Persia and parts of *al-Hind* also represents the first real breakthrough of Turkish power against the indigenous dynasties. And, what is most striking, the Turkish conquest of North India from Maḥmūd of Ghazna up to the thirteenth-century 'slave kings' of Delhi and Balban's re-establishment of Sasanid-Islamic kingship repeats the three main features of the Arab conquest of the Middle East. Next to Persianization, a general process of dethesaurization occurred and a remonetization of the economy, while military slavery attained a new importance in early Islamic India as well. The fact that the Turkish invasions and conquests in North India were a *goldrush* stands out most glaringly. By all counts the amount of booty in the form of bullion, gold and silver, and coins was staggering. Most of the bullion was used for minting purposes, as was the other unminted gold and silver. Next to money, the Turkish slave element is conspicuously predominant in North India in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. It is true, on the one hand, that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries large numbers of Indian captives were taken to the west by Muslim raiders; under the Ghaznavids Indian *mamlūks* did become important for a while. On the other hand, it is hard to see how Islam could have been extended into North India without the formation of Turkish military élites through slave recruitment. The core of the Ghaznavid armies, indeed, remained Turkish-mamlūk. The thirteenth-century Indo-Muslim conquest state was entirely dominated by *mamlūks* and by kings of *mamlūk* origin who started their career under the Ghaznavid and Ghurid kings in eastern Persia.[18] As in the coeval Mamluk state of Egypt, Qipchaki Turks from the Golden Horde territories were in the majority, but there were numerous other groups of Turks, as well as some Abyssinians and Hindus. In India, slavery in general underwent a perceptible decline from the fourteenth century. After 1290, when Islam had spread through Chishti and Suhrawardi propaganda, Turkish mamluks were gradually eradicated from the government in favour of Indian Muslims and their Hindu allies, while most of the non-Indian part of the Delhi nobility was composed of foreign émigré Muslims of high status. In North India it is thus the fourteenth century which stands out as the period of the formation of a new Indo-Muslim synthesis which is characterized by a more reciprocal form of Hindu-Muslim alliance building instead of the exclusive and unconditional, rather asym-

[18] N. Lees et al (eds), *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī of Abu Umar al-Juzjani* (Calcutta, 1894).

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metric, loyalties and terms of dependence associated with slavery in a purely Muslim context. Such a compromise with the Hindu gentry or nobility remained characteristic of Muslim dominion in the subcontinent afterwards.

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CHAPTER II

THE INDIA TRADE

Under the caliphate, the Muslims remoulded the Middle East into a single monetary exchange system and a monetized imperial polity on the Persian model, supported by import élite slavery, and generally with important, often crucial, commercial connections to the wider world: to Africa, to Europe and Byzantium, Central Asia and China, and to the Indian Ocean countries of *al-Hind*. Throughout these regions the *dīnār* remained the dominant global currency up to the eleventh century. With India, the Indonesian Archipelago and with China the Arabs developed a trade in precious products. As we will see in this chapter, it was the India trade which became the main external source of wealth for Islam. But before turning to India and the Indian Ocean, let us briefly survey the main developments on the other frontiers of the Islamic world.

AFRICA

Africa became, first of all, a source of gold, and secondly a source of slaves. The extension of Muslim power across the southern Mediterranean provided access to West Africa, the *bilād as-sūdān* or 'country of the blacks', which, for the Arabs, apart from providing innumerable slaves, became the *bilād at-tibr*, the 'land of gold' par excellence.[1] West Africa, the *Sūdān*, did not use gold as bullion or currency in internal commerce. Instead, it was traded as a commodity ever since the introduction of the dromedary in classical times and the subsequent intrusion of Berber tribes to the south, across the Sahara, where oases were established and contact was made with the Sudanese tribes. The Arabs linked this commercial network of the Sahara with the Mediterranean, and Islam spread among the Arab, Berber and Sudanese traders alike. Sijilmasa, founded in 757-8, became the great city where the gold caravans

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[1] Lombard, 'Bases Monétaires', pp. 150-1; idem, *L'Islam*, p. 125; Walker, 'Italian gold revolution of 1252', pp. 32-35; J. Devisse, 'Routes de commerce et échanges en Afrique occidentale en relation avec la Méditerranée', *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale*, Vol. L (1972), pp. 42-73, 356-97.

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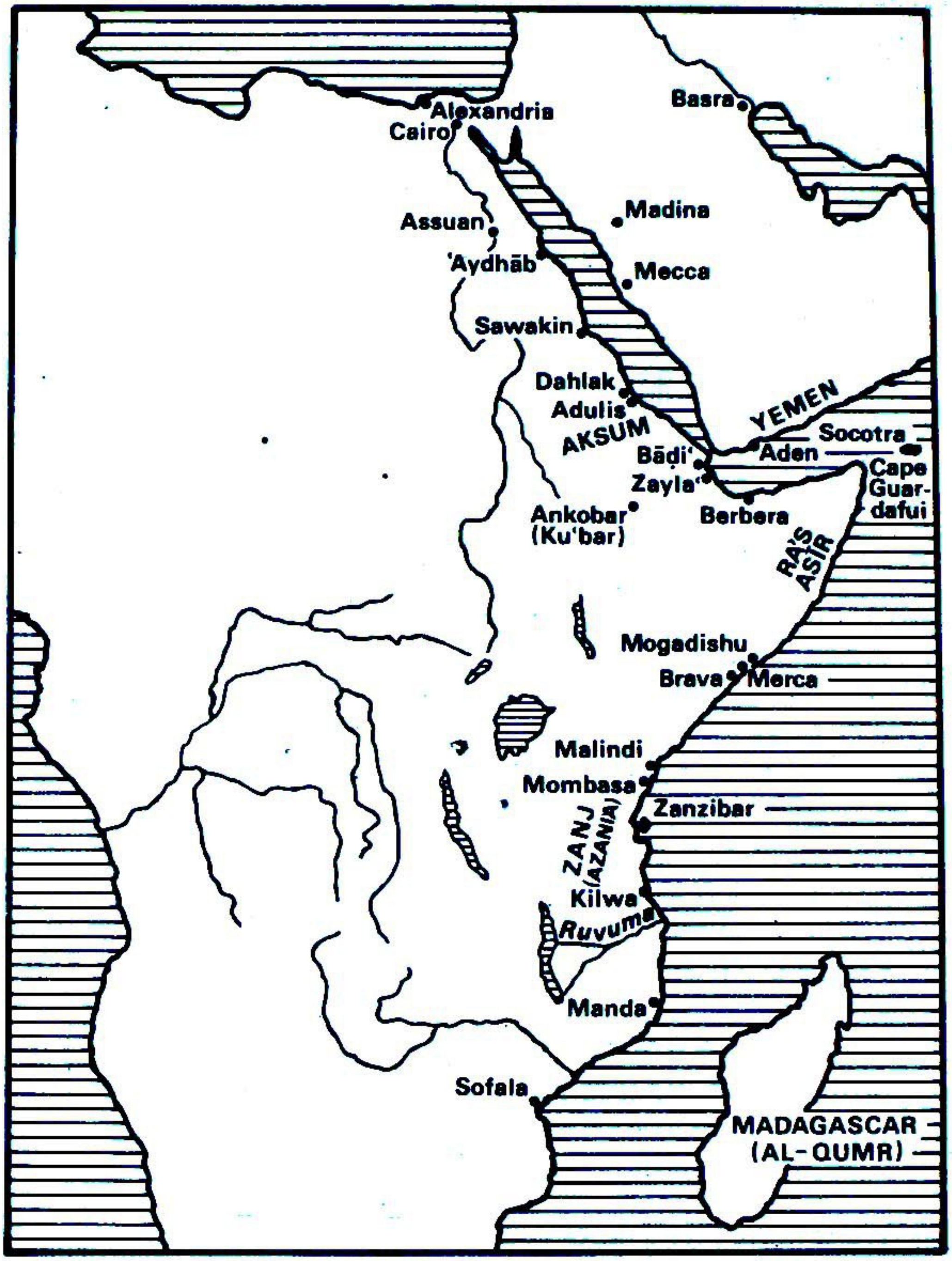

East Africa.

arrived. In the region of Ghana salt from the desert was first exchanged, in the eighth century, for gold from regions further to the south. By the tenth century there was a regular gold-salt exchange across the Sahara and gold flowed to the Muslim Mediterranean in massive amounts. The

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Fatimids of Ifriqiya were able to conquer Egypt, in 969, only briefly after they had seized Sijilmasa (951) and gained control of the gold trade. For centuries afterwards, the mastery of the trans-Saharan gold trade remained the prime political objective of North-African states. The Umayyads of Spain held Sijilmasa from the late tenth to the early eleventh century. But whether the Sudanese gold went to Egypt or to Spain, up to the eleventh century it went to Muslim rather than Christian rulers.

In East Africa, Arab geographers like Masʿūdī as early as the tenth century distinguished two peoples or 'races' (*ajnās*), the Abyssinians or Ethiopians who are called *ḥabshī* (pl. *aḥābish*) and the properly black-African 'negroes' or *zanj* (pl. *zunūj*).[2] A similar distinction between *ḥabshī* and *zanj* turns up in the literature of the Delhi Sultanate with reference to slaves from the Horn of Africa and those from Zanzibar and the adjacent coast respectively. Masʿūdī speaks of the 'sea of the Zanj and the Abyssinians' (*baḥr az-zanj wa-l-aḥābish*) which merges with the 'Indian Ocean' (*baḥr al-hind*). Among the Zanj, on the ancient coast of Azania, adjacent to Zanzibar, there were 'tribes with very sharp teeth which are cannibals'. The Zanj country abounded in elephants, which however were always wild and, unlike those of *Hind*, were not domesticated for warfare or any other purpose. The Zanj did have a king – known as the *waflīmī* by the Arabs – but apparently they had fewer towns and no specific capital. The king of Abyssinia is referred to by Masʿūdī as the *najashī* ('Negus'), and he resided in the capital of Kuʿbar (Ankobar?), 'a considerable city'. Abyssinia embraced 'a great number of towns and vast cultivated regions'. In some of these towns, in those which were on the littoral of the *baḥr al-ḥabshī*, facing the Yemen, e.g. Zaylaʿ, Dahlak, Bāḍiʿ, we find resident Muslims who were tributary to the Abyssinians. But there were other Abyssinian peoples who lived in the interior and who were known as the Zaghāwa, Gao, Qarāqir, Maranda, Marīs, et cetera, and these had their own kings and capitals. In addition, Arab sources of our period mention Madagascar, *al-Qumr*, the great island which was peopled by primitive blacks but also by more refined Indonesians – immigrants from Sumatra of the second and fourth centuries, to which was added a new wave in the tenth century – who gave rise to the civilization of the Merinas (Hovas) of the high plateaux of Malagache.

We do not know the background of the Indonesian migrations to the

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[2] Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, pp. 4-8, 16-21.

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African coast. But it is apparent that East Africa and Ethiopia were integrated in Indian Ocean trading networks from very early times, and the *ḥabshīs* in effect are found as sailors, merchants and men-at-arms before the rise of Islam. Adulis in the Red Sea, and Cape Guardafui (the 'Cape of Spices') became the foci of Indian, African and Arabian shipping, while the Ethiopians created the Aksumite kingdom which for centuries served as an intermediary in the trade between the Byzantine Empire and India. A monolith at Aksum is Buddhist in inspiration. Pliny recorded that Barygaza, on the north-west coast of India, was regarded as an 'Ethiopian' town. The Aksumites converted to Christianity in the fourth century, but the expansion of Islam cut off the empire's communication to the north and east, subsequently also to the west, rendering Ethiopia, the 'Black Byzantium', a Christian island in a Muslim sea. When the Arabs gained control of the ports, Ethiopian foreign trade shrank and became subordinate to Islamic trade. Yet, even in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries the Ethiopian 'Sidis' of *Jaṇjirā* (a Marathi corruption of Ar. *jazīra*, 'island') on the Konkan coast turn up as 'lords of the sea' – then usually as auxiliaries of the Deccani Muslim or Maratha powers.[3]

Contacts between the Middle East and the East-African coast had existed long before the Greeks, but they increased enormously with the rise of Islam. Arab migration and mercantile activity during the early caliphate gave rise to a series of trading colonies along the coast and gradually, by conversion, produced a veritable 'Swahili' (Ar. *sawāḥil*, 'coasts') civilization of Bantu Muslims.[4] This began in the tenth century when Arabs were well-established on the coast and offshore islands, from Malindi in the north to the Ruvuma river in the south. Arab-Muslim culture and trading activity were strictly confined to the coast and islands, concentrating at points which connected with the interior: Malindi, Kilwa, Manda, Sofala, Mogadishu, Sawakin, Mombasa, Zanzibar, ʿAydhab, Berbera, Zaylaʿ, Dahlak, Merca, Brava. Such towns were mainly composed of huts of grass, with few permanent buildings,

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[3] G.F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times* (Princeton, 1951), pp. 42-46; E.H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India* (London and New York, 1974), pp. 12-13, 320-21; D.R. Banaji, *Bombay and the Siddis* (Bombay, 1932), pp. X-XX; and see *infra*.

[4] J. Spencer Trimingham, 'The Arab geographers and the East African Coast', in: H.N. Chittick and R.I. Rotberg (eds), *East Africa and the Orient* (New York and London, 1975), pp. 115-46; G. Mathew, 'The East African Coast until the Coming of the Portuguese', in: R. Oliver and G. Mathew (eds), *History of East Africa*, vol. I (Oxford, 1963), pp. 94-127.

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easily rebuilt if destroyed in war. The first Arab immigrants were political dissidents from the Persian Gulf. Later, ships usually came from Siraf and Oman, with sailors and merchants belonging chiefly to the *Azdī* tribe. The Arabs of Oman became so influential on these coasts that the latter often were treated as political extensions of the kingdom of Oman. Zanzibar, for example, was for a long time under the suzerainty of the Sultans of Oman.[5] From the Persian Gulf and from Aden, the East-African towns were linked up with Debal or Cambay. Arab navigation and colonization on the coast does not seem to have passed beyond Sofala and Madagascar, and only the Islamized Swahilis went further in the exploration of the islands east of the African coast. Kilwa reached eminence early on; warehouses, customs-posts and a great mosque have been excavated here and porcelain and glass were found which indicate important trade in the ninth century, from the period of commercial expansion under the early Abbasids.[6] Chinese and Islamic pottery has been found in Manda from the ninth and tenth centuries. In the tenth century, Masʿūdī gives another illuminating testimony of the extensive seaborne commerce of the Zanj coast. The Arabs, as he writes, controlled a large trade in ivory, amber, iron, slaves and, above all, gold. Next to the mines of Nubia and the *Wādī ʿAllāqī* which produced gold that went to Assuan, we hear a lot about 'Sofala of the gold' (*sufālatadh-dhahab*), in present-day Mozambique. Kilwa was perhaps the most important colony up to the fourteenth century due to her role in the trade of the gold of Sofala, with connections to India and beyond. By the fifteenth century as many as 37 trading towns are counted from Mogadishu to Kilwa. Aden in the fourteenth century overshadowed all others in importance. Ibn Battuta describes Aden as the 'port of the Indians', with inhabitants who were sometimes 'immensely rich' merchants. In Aden however one could find as early as the ninth century 'all the merchandise of Sind, Hind, China, Zanzibar, Abyssinia, Fars, Basra, Jiddah and Kulzum'.[7]

As has already been noted (p. 14), the establishment of a string of Arab trading centres along the African coasts appears to have been accompanied by a great expansion of the slave trade in general. The Arabs carried large numbers of black slaves across the Red Sea and the Indian

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[5] S.S. Nadvi, 'Arab Navigation', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XVI (1942), p. 81.

[6] H.N. Chittick, 'Discoveries in the Lamu Archipelago', *Azania*, 2 (1967), pp. 1-31; idem, *Kilwa: an Islamic trading city on the East African Coast* (Nairobi, 1974).

[7] M.J. De Goeje (ed.), *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik of Ibn Khordādbhih* (Leiden, 1889), text, p. 61.

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Ocean to Islamic Asia and to India (to a lesser extent to China), as well as across the trans-Saharan routes. The East-African slave trade of the Muslim Arabs long predated the Atlantic slave trade but, in comparison, received little attention because the Arabs were small dealers and as a matter of course left no documentation. An additional difficulty is that many Africans in Asia are hard to trace because they adopted Islam and often merged with the existing population.[8] The slave trade from East Africa also started long before Islam. Black captives appear in Egyptian iconography in the third millennium B.C. and can be identified with some regularity from the fifteenth century through Hellenistic and Roman times. The first specific reference to an organized trade in slaves, by Arabs, from the East-African coast occurs in the Periplus of the second century A.D. From then to the tenth century the history of the East-African coast is obscure. The Sasanids are not known to have imported African labour. By the end of the seventh century however there were *Zanj*, black East-African slaves, in the vicinity of Basra.[9] The presence of a very large number of black slaves in the Euphrates valley by the ninth century also indicates that the trade of East-African slaves to the Persian Gulf was of long standing. The *Zanj* or 'Negro' revolt in the Fertile Crescent in the second half of the ninth century is well known. This revolt was backed by powerful groups of Persian Gulf merchants, and what seems to have been at stake was the control of the African trade along the shores of the Red Sea, the Gulf, and as far as North Africa, Egypt, Syria and the frontiers of Byzantium.[10] The Omani Arabs, i.e. the *Azdī*, emerged, after this struggle, as the most important slave dealers. In 985 slaves from Abyssinia are listed among the principal merchandise of Aden and the northern Somali coast came to be called *Ra's Asīr* or 'Cape of Captives'. There is evidence to show that large numbers of East-African slaves were present in the Persian Gulf in the mid-eleventh century. The princes of Bahrayn,

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[8] J.E. Harris, *The African Presence in Asia: Consequences of the East African Slave Trade* (Evanston, 1971); R.W. Beachey, *The Slave Trade of Eastern Africa* (London, 1976); H. Gerbeau, 'The slave trade in the Indian Ocean: problems facing the historian and research to be undertaken', in: Unesco (ed.), *The African slave trade from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century: Reports and papers of the meeting of experts organized by Unesco at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 31 January to 4 February 1978* (Paris, 1979; sec. ed. 1985), pp. 184-207; C. Cahen, 'Le Commerce Musulman dans l'Océan Indien au Moyen Age', *Colloque de Beyrouth, 1966* (Paris, 1970), pp. 179-93.

[9] Morony, *Iraq*, p. 272.

[10] M.A. Shaban, *Islamic History: A new interpretation*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1971-76), II, pp. 101-14.

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for instance, are recorded to have employed 30,000 Abyssinian slaves in agriculture and gardening. The Arab slave trade from East Africa was probably a fairly constant phenomenon, of increasing scale, between 100 and 1498 A.D. Throughout this period the Arabs also sold blacks in Asia. In the ninth century, slaves are mentioned as being sent from Sofala to ports in western India. By far the largest number of African slaves and freedmen which entered India appear to have come from Arabia and the Persian Gulf via Sind, Cutch and Kathiawar rather than directly by an overseas route.

In Asia, African slaves performed a great variety of tasks, in the harem, as domestic servants, as pearl-divers around Bahrayn, as plantation-workers on the Batina coast around Minab (inland from Bandar Abbas) and Basra. From the seventh century Abyssinian slaves were also employed as soldiers, but because horsemanship was alien to them, and perhaps due to a color bias, they were not as constant and important an element in the Muslim armies beyond North Africa, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula as the Turks were. In North Africa and Arabia they most commonly served as infantrymen with a correspondingly low status, and if blacks rose to high positions in these countries it was usually as eunuchs.[11] In India, 'Abyssinian male and female slaves' (*ghulāmān-o-kanīzakān-i-ḥabshī*) accompanied Muslim women in the early eighth century from Sri Lanka to Mecca.[12] In the same period, Abyssinian slaves do not appear to have been uncommon in the Muslim conquering army in Sind.[13] Thus a *Sujāᶜ-i-Ḥabshī*, 'of unbounded bravery'. And ᶜUbaidallah, the commander of an expedition in 698 against the Zunbil king in Afghanistan was of Abyssinian origin and became known as 'the dark one who is the leader of the people of the East'.[14] In Indian Islam, from the thirteenth century onwards, the use of black Africans as military slaves was associated with peripheral areas like the Deccan and Bengal, while in the northern heartland they were always overshadowed by military slaves from Central Asia. But in the peripheral Indo-Islamic kingdoms the *ḥabshī* or *zanjī* often rose high or became kings themselves.

It seems likely that the transfer of African slaves across the Indian

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[11] D. Ayalon, 'Aspects of the Mamlūk Phenomenon', *Der Islam*, vol. 53, 2 (1976), pp. 203-4.

[12] U.M. Daudpota (ed.), *Chachnāma* (Hyderabad, Deccan, 1939), p. 89.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 243.

[14] C.E. Bosworth, 'ᶜUbaidallah b. Abī Bakra and the "Army of Destruction" in Zābulistān (79/698)', *Der Islam*, vol. 50 (1973), p. 271.

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Ocean entailed a less violent uprooting than the slave traffic to the New World. The Indian Ocean in a fundamental sense represented one large cultural continuum, and a person, free or captive, travelling from Kilwa to, say, Sri Lanka in the ninth or tenth century would have suffered less of a culture shock than someone travelling from Africa across the Atlantic in the seventeenth century. Yet, if the Arabs were the first people who developed a specialized long-distance slave trade from sub-Sahara and East Africa, they were also the first to develop racial stereotypes.[15] The Arabs considered blacks to be suited by nature for the lowest forms of bondage. One tenth-century Arabic account describes them as 'malodorous, stinking, wooly-haired, with uneven limbs, deficient minds, and depraved passions'. Ibn Khaldun considered black Africans to be the only people who accepted slavery 'because of their low degree of humanity and their proximity to the animal stage'. The enslavement of blacks was as unproblematic as the domestication of beasts of burden. The Muslims enslaved Christians and Jews as well, but Africans were apparently treated much worse. On the other hand, these racist views were never systematized in discriminatory laws and institutions.

Next to gold, slaves were the most important raw material of East Africa which the Arabs exchanged for manufactured goods, the cloth and metalworks and beads of India, Persia and Arabia. The Arabs, from their coastal enclaves, largely monopolized the trade and transport of the slaves. From the coast, in collaboration with Indian bankers, raids were organized into the interior where slaves were obtained by capture or purchase, more often than not by building upon indigenous systems of labour recruitment and servitude. We know from the seventeenth-century account of Khoja Murād that the slaves sold from Abyssinia and other kingdoms thereabout were not real Abyssinians – even though the Arabs called them *ḥabshīs* – but vanquished negroes or kafirs and other people who rebelled against their emperor or kings.[16] They were natives of Narea, Asella, Sjankella and Kompella, or Gallas who were 'hunted down and immediately got rid of'. Such people were indeed pitchblack and had short frizzy or crisp hair. The true Abyssinians by contrast had long hair and were of yellow, reddish or brown colour and had 'no slavish appearance'. Since Abyssinia was

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[15] Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, pp. 8, 32-51.

[16] E. van Donzel, *Foreign Relations of Ethiopia, 1642-1700: Documents Relating to the Journeys of Khodja Murād* (Istanbul, 1979), pp. 17, 79-80, 148.

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a country with plenty of food, nobody was normally sold because of poverty by his parents, relatives or friends. Those who did abduct a freeborn Abyssinian into slavery were punished with the death penalty or the confiscation of all their property. Khoja Murâd also reported that the Abyssinians did not keep eunuchs and considered castration a sin. Ipso facto this must have been left to the Arabs. The insidious character of the trade is as obvious as the superior sophistication of the Arabs and their collaborators. Benjamin of Tudela, in the eleventh century, vividly describes one of those depraved subject peoples of the Sultan al-Habash who, 'like animals, eat of the herbs that grow on the banks of the Nile and in the fields. They go about naked and have not the intelligence of ordinary man. They cohabit with their sisters and any one they find. The climate is very hot. When the men of Assuan make a raid into their land, they take with them bread and wheat, dry grapes and figs, and throw the food to those people, who run after it. Thus they bring many of them back prisoners, and sell them in the land of Egypt and in the surrounding countries. And these are the black slaves, the sons of Ham'.[17] The season of the greatest slave trading activity in the Red Sea area was during the *hajj*, which usually coincided with the south-west monsoon (April to October) when dhows were enabled to sail northward from East Africa to Arabia. Slave brokers and their agents from all over the Muslim world then swooped down on the towns of Arabia to do business with pilgrims who, on their return from Mecca, often purchased one or two domestic slaves to take home with them. This pattern of combined slave-trading activity and pilgrimage perpetuated itself for more than a millennium. In Achin, as we have seen, such slaves brought back from Africa by pilgrims were called 'Abyssinians', but could be persons from any part of Africa.[18]

Europe and Byzantium

Prior to the seventh century, the movement of gold had been a linear one from west to east, from Western Europe to Byzantium, and hence to the Sasanid empire and the Indian Ocean countries. Europe was gradually drained of its gold due to its unfavourable balance of trade with the Levant and now relied on an indigenous silver currency of very

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[17] M.N. Adler (ed. and transl.), *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (New York, 1907), p. 68.

[18] Cf. p. 15.

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inferior quality. Without gold, its trade with the Byzantine Orient was suspended and Europe was reorganized along feudal lines. The Byzantines as yet maintained the single gold standard of their time, the *nomisma*, but also ran into monetary difficulties. One reason for this was, of course, the suspension of trade relations with Europe. But the monetary position of the Byzantines was also adversely affected by a massive drain of gold to Central Asia and the Indian Ocean in payment of the precious merchandise which the empire needed for its industries, and in payment of tribute to Sasanid Persia. Byzantine gold did not circulate in the Sasanid empire but was thesaurized in bars, jewels and precious objects – in which immobilized form the Muslims found it in the palaces – or, again, leaked away to India. The Byzantines' supply of new gold was, at the same time, cut off by nomads in the northern steppes as well as in Upper Egypt. And, finally, the Byzantine gold shortage was aggravated by ecclesiastical hoarding in the empire itself. While the volume of Byzantine gold in circulation was thus reduced, Byzantine commerce became more and more restricted to the eastern Mediterranean, the position of Byzantine gold in the Indian Ocean and southern Russia being taken over by the Sasanid silver *dirham*. The Sasanid monometallic silver domain was extended in the early seventh century throughout Central Asia and the western Indian Ocean. In sum, before the Muslim conquests, the volume of gold in circulation diminished while that of silver increased over a wider domain.[19]

It was this imbalance which the Muslim conquests redressed: by fusing Byzantine gold and Sasanid silver in a new bimetallic system; by dethesaurizing Byzantine and Persian gold stocks; by bringing in new gold from new sources (such as in Africa), and hence by transforming a linear movement of precious metals into a circular movement, sustaining commerce across three continents. For Europe the implications of the expansion of Islam were in many ways the reverse of what Pirenne thought them to be.[20] According to Pirenne, the economy, society and

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[19] Lombard, 'Bases Monétaires'; idem, *L'Islam*, pp. 119-36.

[20] A.F. Havighurst (ed.), *The Pirenne Thesis: Analysis, Criticism and Revision* (Boston, 1958); P.E. Hübinger (ed.), *Bedeutung und Rolle des Islam beim Übergang vom Altertum zur Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1968); P. Brown, 'Mohammed and Charlemagne by H. Pirenne', *Daedalus*, vol. 103 (1974), pp. 25-33; R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne Thesis* (London, 1983); R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The origins of towns and trade, A.D. 600-1000* (London, 1982); R.S. Lopez, *The Birth of Europe* (New York, 1966); idem, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350* (Englewood Cliffs, 1971); M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, 2 vols (London, 1965), I, pp. 3-71; F. Braudel, *Civiliza-*

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culture of Rome, Italy, Gaul and Spain were not destroyed by the invading Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Franks in the fourth to sixth centuries – these migrant tribes exerted themselves to preserve the classical heritage – , but by the Muslims. It was the expanding power of Islam which broke the unity of the Mediterranean and separated the remnants of the Western Empire from the Eastern Empire of Byzantium. The Muslim conquest of the western Mediterranean forced the Carolingians northward, in isolation from Greco-Roman civilization and trade, to be besieged by Muslim corsairs, Vikings and Magyars. Urban life collapsed in the West, while in Italy the Pope had to ally himself with the Carolingian dynasty. Europe emerged from these shocks, Pirenne thought, only after the mid-tenth century. New archaeological evidence however tends to show that the economy of the western Mediterranean was completely transformed before the Islamic conquests. Moreover, on the evidence of Arabic sources and numismatics it has been demonstrated that there was a close connection between the Frankish and Arab worlds, and that the Carolingian Renaissance, the successes of the Italian city-states, and the growth of the Hanseatic League were all enhanced rather than retarded by contacts with the Muslim East. The meteoric expansion of commerce under the Abbasids which followed the foundation of Baghdad in 762 and which so decisively affected India, Africa and the Far East, was registered in Russia, Scandinavia and the Carolingian *Reich* by a great inflow of Abbasid silver. Perhaps the trade of the Frisians at Dorestadt may be linked to the same monetary flow from the Abbasid empire and Khurāsān via Europe's 'back-door', the Russian river valley. It seems quite certain that trade revived at many places in the late eighth and ninth centuries. From the Abbasid caliphate trade passed up the river Volga through the lands of the Khazars to Staraja Ladoga or the eastern Baltic seaboard. The Baltic was connected at Kiev with the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and Turkestan. Another route ran from Bavaria to Prague and by the northern Carpathians to the Dnieper. Probably the most important trade connection of early medieval Europe went via Muslim Spain, as is indicated by the numerous Arab gold coins which penetrated across the Pyrenees. It was also in the late eighth and ninth centuries – long before the Crusades – that the Italian city-states began their career. Amalfi and Venice were among the first to benefit from extensive contact with Egypt and Syria,

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tion and Capitalism 15th-18th Century, vol. III: The Perspective of the World (London, 1984), pp. 57, 92-115.

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obtaining the Islamic gold dinars with which they could buy Byzantine luxury products, destined to be resold in Western Europe.

Contradicting Pirenne, therefore, historians now speak of the 'economic Islamization of early medieval Europe'. This process as such is no longer in doubt, even though the actual extent of the trade is disputed, as is the actual amount of Arab minted gold and silver that entered Europe. At no stage before the eleventh century should we imagine the trade between Europe on the one hand and Islam and Byzantium on the other to have been very extensive. The barbarian West obtained Muslim gold and silver in exchange for a minor set of items: furs, arms, tin, wood, and especially slaves. Slave-trading, in spite of its denunciation by the Church, was probably the single most important business in early medieval Europe conducted with the Arabs to the east and to the south-west. It was also an important motivating force behind the Viking raids. The Muslim gold which entered Europe, in its turn, paid for Byzantine luxury imports such as silk. In this way, from the ninth century, and increasingly in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the West remonetized, new centres of an exchange economy alighting at the points where Muslim gold and Byzantine commerce intersected. Gradually, by the second half of the tenth century the large-scale ravaging of Europe by Northmen, Arab corsairs from the Mediterranean, and Hungarian Magyars on the Dnieper route and the Danubian plain, subsided. In Italy, Pisa, Genoa, Amalfi and other cities had gathered considerable offensive strength by the early eleventh century. The roving bands of Magyars began to adopt a settled existence, while Magyar chiefs had themselves baptized in Constantinople. Greek monasteries in Hungary were eclipsed by their rivals of the western Church by the eleventh century as well.

Suddenly then, in less than forty years, between 1061 and 1099, there was the great change. A considerable part of the Muslim Mediterranean was invaded and subjected by the Franks and the political equilibrium across the sea changed abruptly. In 1061, Messina, the Islamic guardian of the Street, fell into the hands of a group of Norman knights. Eleven years later Palermo, the most important city of the 'Greek island' of Sicily (which Byzantium had failed to retake), was subjected. In Spain, where Arab Islam was more deeply acculturated and which held larger populations of Muslims, the Christian reconquest suffered many reversions but progressed steadily. A small Aragonese state was created in 1063. In 1085 the Tagus was reached, and Toledo fell into the hands of Alphonse VI of Castilla. In 1094, Huesca was taken. Five years after-

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wards, in 1099, a Christian principality was founded in Antiochia by the Normans of Sicily; and a Latin kingdom constituted itself in Jerusalem. Intimately linked to dynastic ambitions, the Crusades for more than a century stimulated the urge for violent dispossession and conquest, culminating in the sack of Constantinople and the partition of the Byzantine empire (1204). This was the bloody revenge of a Christian North which had until then been despised but now took over the leadership of the universal Church from the Orient. From the Crusades in the eleventh century onwards the Mediterranean was also subjected to a new economic order. The southern shores became, in course of time, the impoverished, depopulated and de-industrialized complement of the ascendant North. And a new ideological struggle against Islam was launched. In the Levant, in Antiochia, Alexandria and Jerusalem, Christian populations had survived the Islamic conquest but they had been undermined by conversion throughout the centuries, and lately by the violent persecution of Hakim, the Fatimid 'caliph of the year 1000' who was given to apocalyptic speculations and became the spiritual father of the Druze community. From the eleventh century a new Christian self-awareness took root everywhere and the stereotypes which until today pervert the dialogue acquired their emotive charge: Islam was a religion of sex and violence, it distorted the Biblical tradition, and the Prophet Muhammad was the Antichrist.

Emerging from the economic hegemony of Islam after gathering strength from it, Europe went through a series of profound and widespread changes which affected the parameters of all of her activity. Demographic expansion and technological and agricultural progress occurred in many regions of the heartlands, while a movement of repopulation and colonization from about 1050 to 1250 transformed the Iberian plateaux and the great plain beyond the Elbe. The artisan and merchant classes acquired a much higher profile in an expanded urban setting. There was the transition on a wide scale to indirect agricultural consumption. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, links with the East not only became more intimate but changed their character completely, the West now becoming a supplier of manufactured goods, grain, hardware, and especially textiles. This also caused the northward flow of West-African gold to expand substantially. Europe's monetary reserves increased, the rhythm of circulation accelerated. By 1252 Genoa and Florence were able to reintroduce gold coinage to Western Europe as a new stable medium of international commerce. We see the first European 'world-economy' taking shape from the eleventh to thirteenth cen-

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turies, with its two poles of attraction in the Low Countries and Italy, the North Sea-Baltic and the Mediterranean.

If the eleventh century sets off the emancipation of Europe from Islam and the beginning of its rise, Byzantine power rather abruptly declined in the period 1025 to 1095 and then gradually submerged under the invading Turks, first the Seljuqs, then the Ottomans, until in 1453 Contantinople itself was taken. There were two fatal Byzantine defeats before the First Crusade, both occurring in the same year, in 1071, when Bari, the Byzantine capital of Italy was taken, forever ending Byzantine control in Italy, while in the east the Byzantines were defeated by the Seljuq Turks at Manzikert (in Armenia). There were Latin invasions of Byzantine territory during the first three Crusades. During the Fourth Crusade, in 1204, Constantinople was overthrown and replaced by the so-called Latin Empire of Constantinople, a virtual colony of Venice.

Byzantine decline and the concomitant fragmentation of central power at one level were the result of successful expansion in the preceding period. After the seventh- and eighth-century Arab assault, Byzantium had recovered and the sudden collapse in the eleventh century in fact comes after a *renovatio imperii* under the aegis of the Macedonian dynasty (867-1056), when the offensive was carried to the Arabs, much territory was recovered in the east, almost as far as Jerusalem, and Armenia was annexed, while new advances were made in southern Italy. Not only the Hungarians but also the Slavs were brought into the Byzantine orbit. Prior to the Crusades, around 1015, Byzantium was the pre-eminent power in Christendom, claiming all territories, both in the east and in the west, which had been governed by Augustus and Trajanus, as her rightful heritage.[21]

In order to explain the survival and fall of the Byzantine Empire in its 'Middle Period', the seventh to eleventh centuries, historians have traditionally pointed at a military factor, the 'theme system', which supposedly originated under Heraclius in the seventh century and disintegrated in the late tenth and eleventh century.[22] The themes or *themata*

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[21] W.E. Kaegi, 'Some Perspectives on the Middle Byzantine Period', in: *Army, Society and Religion in Byzantium* (Variorum Reprint, London, 1982), pp. 289-310; H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, 'Recherches sur l'Administration de l'Empire Byzantin aux IXe-XIe Siècles', *Bulletin des Correspondances Helléniques* (1960), pp. 1-91; A.A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324-1453*, 2 vols (Madison, 1961).

[22] J. Karayannopulos, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung* (Zürich, 1959); W.E. Kaegi, 'Some Reconsiderations on the Themes (seventh-ninth centuries)', *op.*

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were provincial military districts with each its own army unit under a commander or *strategos* who exercised combined civil and military authority. In and after the seventh century the system of *themata* and *kleisourai* (fortified defiles) was substituted for the Diocletianic-Constantinian system that had been in force since 284 and in which civil governorships and military commands had not been combined in one person. Moreover, it was assumed that a modest but vigorous class of 'peasant-soldiers' who allegedly comprised the themes were the principal defenders of the eastern frontiers of Byzantium. By extension, the Turkish successes of the eleventh century have been ascribed to the betrayal by wily, self-seeking Byzantine generals of the sturdy peasant military force.

The evidence for this argument is unconvincing. Byzantine generals have, of course, always been 'treacherous' and if their treachery caused the decline of the empire in the eleventh century it was because it then linked up with overbearing external intruders, the Seljuqs and Normans. The documentation, moreover, does not suggest peasant soldiers beating off the Arabs but a wealthier and more professional army. It was not primarily the themes which saved Constantinople in its two most serious crises in 674-78 and 717-18, but the weather, and Greek fire. The Isaurian dynasty also owed much of its success against the caliphate to the Khazars. There is, again, more to Byzantine-Umayyad relations than the three sieges of Constantinople, the loss of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, or frontier warfare and the exchanging and ransoming of prisoners.[23] The Umayyads adopted Byzantine usages and architectural models and they emulated Greek emperors. Several decades after the Arab conquest of Syria, Roman-Byzantine influences turn up in the architecture of Central Asia and Kashmir. The state of war did not suspend commercial and diplomatic relations either. What ultimately saved Byzantium from further Arab assault, however, was the Arab shift to the East, to Persia and the Persian Gulf, and the Arab determination to tap the wealth of India.

In the eighth century this was by no means a foregone conclusion and the problem of how to adjust to the expansion of Islam remained acute,

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cit., pp. 39-53; A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World* (London, 1973), pp. 224-74.

[23] H.A.R. Gibb, 'Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate', in: *Studies in the Civilisation of Islam* (London, 1962), pp. 47-61; R.S. Lopez, 'The Rôle of Trade in the Economic Readjustment of Byzantium in the Seventh Century', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 13 (1959), pp. 67-85.

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for Byzantium no less than for other Christian states. Thus Byzantium, with the Frankish state in its wake, went through an 'iconoclast controversy' in the period 726-842, a religious face-lift which was also materially rewarding.[24] Contemporary Byzantine historians (e.g. Theophanes) say themselves that Emperor Leo III, who started the iconoclast conflict in 726, was 'very much influenced by the Arabs'. But iconoclasm can be regarded as endogenic, inasmuch as Christians anywhere were apt to draw historical and political conclusions from the Old Testament. The apostasy of Israel had always taken the form of a return to idols. In Byzantium, national apostasy was held responsible for the Arab invasions; the Iconoclasts wanted to remove the stain of the error of idolatry. The icons were also the symbols of an outdated style of political life. And the iconoclastic measures of the emperors – a centralization effort – to some extent redressed Byzantium's monetary situation by bringing back into circulation a significant portion of the ecclesiastical and monastic immobilia. At the same time the Muslims however began to re-export to Byzantium Asiatic products in exchange for gold. The re-opening of Byzantine luxury exports to the West, even when combined with the iconoclastic measures, was inadequate to balance the enormous drain of gold which the purchase of 'spices from India' entailed. Some emperors, like Leo V (813-20) attempted therefore to introduce further measures to stem this loss, but with little success apparently. No crisis of Indian spices is noted on the Byzantine market. Byzantium's gold resources continued to diminish by this trade, although it could not fatally weaken her.

Central Asia and China

On the north-eastern frontier, *Transoxania* – the area which the Arabs called *mā warā' an-nahr*, 'that which is beyond the river (Oxus)' – became the Muslim bridgehead to Central Asia and China, to the 'silk route' running along the oasis towns in the Takla Makan desert of the Tarim Basin or 'Sinkiang'. In Sasanid epic poetry and legend, the Oxus had always been regarded as the boundary between Īrān and Tūrān. But in actual fact there was considerable intercommunication between Per-

[24] H. Ahrweiler, 'L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes', *Revue historique*, vol. ccxxvi (1962), pp. 1-32; P. Brown, 'A Dark-Age crisis: aspects of the Iconoclastic controversy', *The English Historical Review*, vol. cccxlvi (January 1973), pp. 1-34; L. Breyer, *Bilderstreit und Arabersturm in Byzanz: Das 8. Jahrhundert (717-83) aus der Weltchronik des Theophanes* (Graz, 1957).

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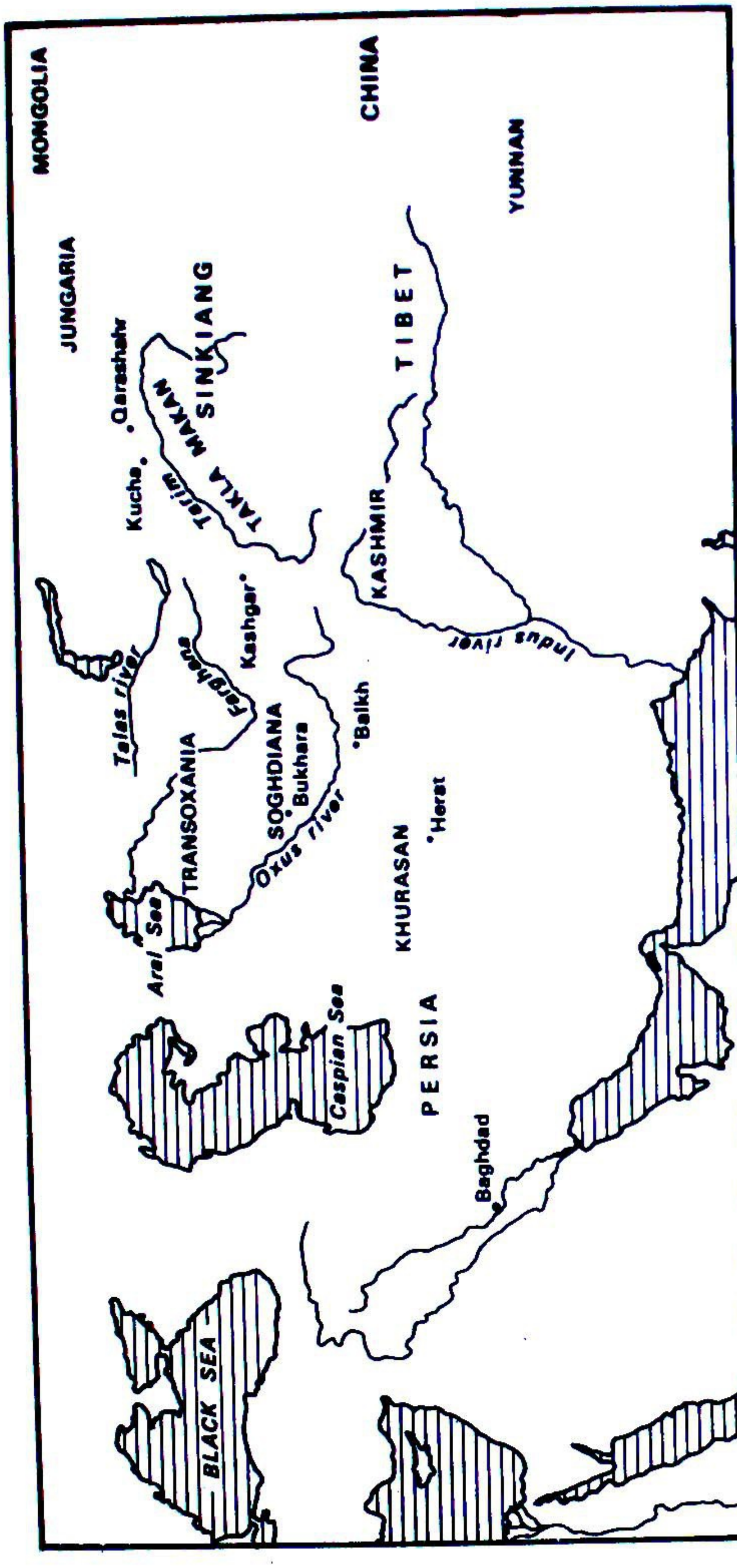

Persia and Central Asia.

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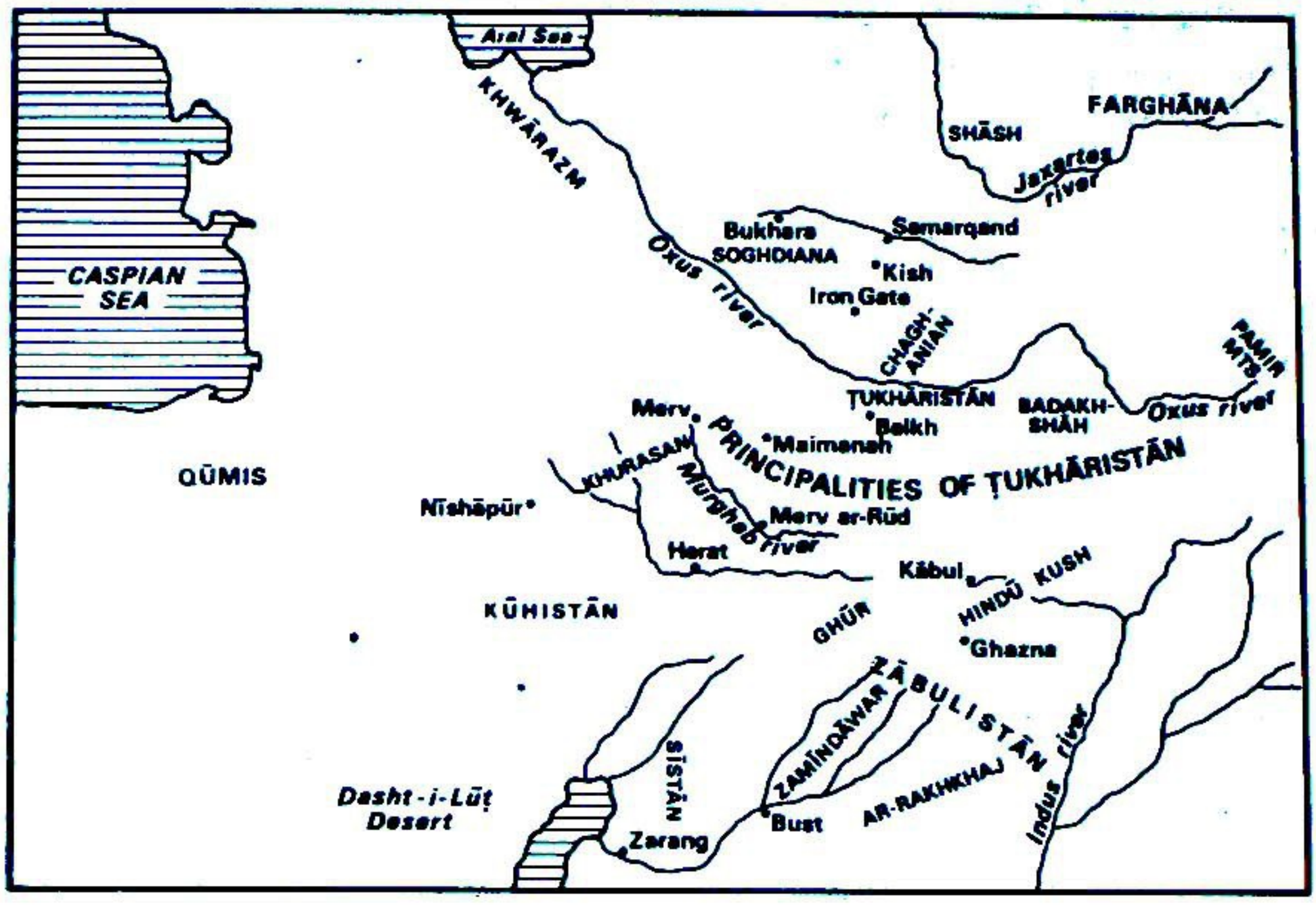

Central Asia.

sia and the peoples of Transoxania and Soghdiana. The latter were basically Iranian, although the Arabs described them as 'Turks' and regarded Balkh, the former religious capital of the Kushanas and the site of the Buddhist shrine of Nawbahār, as the 'capital of the Turks'. Transoxania was so closely integrated into Khurāsān that its conquest became possible only after *Cisoxania* or Lower Ṭukhāristān, the riverain districts to the south of the Iron Gate, including Balkh and the Hephthalite principalities in Jūzjān, Bādghīs and Herāt, had been completely subdued.

These regions thrived on trade and, obviously, they were among the most 'civilized' countries conquered by the Arabs, just as they were the most difficult to hold on to. Many conquerors and many religions had left their mark. Under the Kushanas, from the first century A.D., Buddhism had spread as far as eastern Iran and into the region between the Oxus and Jaxartes and the Tarim Basin. In post-Kushana times, Buddhism continued to flourish as the great trading religion on the western silk route. Like the China trade itself, it suffered a temporary set-back under the Hephthalites or 'White Huns'. But Buddhism persisted up to the Islamic period. In the seventh and eighth centuries we become aware of the presence of Indian Buddhist traders along the southern silk route,

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and Buddhist contacts were maintained between some valleys of the Upper Indus (e.g. Gilgit) and the Tarim Basin. While at this time Buddhism did retain considerable importance north of the Oxus, it was now gradually being superseded by Islam in most places along the silk route. Buddhism did not vanish without trace. The Islamic *madrasa*, for instance, probably had its origin in the Central-Asian Buddhist monastery. And it is interesting to note that as late as the thirteenth century there was a brief renaissance of Buddhism in Merv.[25]

Central Asia had been an important crossroads of trade since antiquity, but in the period preceding Islam, in the sixth and seventh centuries, a great economic upsurge occurred due to the conquest of the western parts by the Turks (*Tu-kueh*), when the entire region became more closely attached to the major peripheral civilizations of Eurasia. It was these Turks who, in alliance with the Persian emperor Nūshīrvān, overthrew the Hephthalites between 563 and 568.[26] In the seventh century we find Soghdiana divided among a number of small principalities which all acknowledged the overlordship of the Khan of the Western Turks and which all had one common interest: the Chinese silk trade. In the same century, the Tarim Basin was brought under the control of the Tang Chinese, who were expanding westward, despoiling the Buddhist sanctuaries of Kucha and conquering the last of the Indo-European kingdoms at Qarashahr. In 677 the meteorically rising Tibetans made their presence felt. Tibet captured the entire Tarim Basin and the neighbouring mountains to the southwest, but it had to hand it all back to the Chinese in 692.[27] By then, the Arabs had not yet reached beyond Ṭukhāristān and Sigistan. Khurāsān itself had only gradually been filled with garrisons and colonists from Basra and Kufa since the time of Muʿāwiya (683), when towns like Merv, Nishapur, Herat, and Balkh eclipsed Zarang, in Sistan, as the prime bulwarks of Arab power in the east.[28] The conquest of Transoxania was a difficult and slow operation. When the Arabs came up against the local Iranian rulers in the early eighth century the latter still had the backing of the Western Turks in

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[25] W. Barthold, 'Der Iranische Buddhismus und sein Verhältnis zum Islam', in: J.D.C. Pavry (ed.), *Oriental studies in honour of Cursetji Erachji* (London, 1933), pp. 29-31; H.G.Franz (ed.), *Seidenstrasse* (Graz, 1987); H.W. Haussig, *Die Geschichte Zentralasiens und der Seidenstrasse in Islamischer Zeit* (Darmstadt, 1988).

[26] É. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux* (Taipei, 1969).

[27] Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire*, pp. 36-54.

[28] C.E. Bosworth, *Sīstān under the Arabs. From the Islamic Conquest to the Rise of the Ṣaffārids (20-250/651-864)* (Rome, 1968), pp. 13, 36.

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the Central-Asian steppes. And up to the battle of the Talās in 751 there remained an acute Chinese threat to the Arab position in the area.[29] For some time, Tibet held the Chinese armies in check in the Tarim Basin. Al-Hajjaj and his general Qutayba then advanced, in the period 705 to 715, to conquer Bukhara and the Oxus valley with its extension to Soghd, and expeditions were undertaken into the Jaxartes provinces. The Arabs understood, from the very beginning, the commercial importance of Central Asia and China. Under Qutayba, as early as 713, the first trade embassy was sent to the Chinese court. Many more were to follow, and more often than not the princes of Soghdiana and Ṭukhāristān were involved in the missions, which were, after all, sent to safeguard and promote their interests as well. Qutayba's intention was to follow the trade-routes into Shāsh and Samarqand, and to round off his conquests over the central route between Farghāna and Kashgaria. But his death brought the Arab advance to a halt for about a quarter of a century, and a period of retrogression began. Embassies continued to be sent to the Chinese court, but much of the conquest was undone and only Lower Ṭukhāristān and Chaghanian, and Bukhara and Khwārazm, remained integral parts of the Arab empire.

In 715, the three great expansionist powers of early medieval Asia had converged: the Arabs from the west, the Chinese from the east, and the Tibetans from the south.[30] Numerous peoples from Arab-dominated areas opened negotiations with China. The threat of a Tibetan-Arab alliance came to be felt until deep in northern India and in Kashmir, where kings obtained substantial Chinese support to help ward off such a threat. The Chinese at this time succeeded in dispersing the Türgish confederation and, having lost this Western-Turkish ally, Tibetan power was brought to a lower pitch.[31] Therefore, in 750, when the military power of the Tibetans was reduced, the Chinese and Arabs were dominant in Central Asia. The Tang had established direct control over the Tarim Basin and Jungaria. The Arabs, under the Abbasids, recovered some major cities such as Samarqand and Kish. A protracted conflict with the Tibetans followed. In the early ninth century however the whole of Transoxania threw in their lot with the Arabs. A settlement was reached with the mercantile cities of Soghdiana and Ṭukhāristān, new embassies were despatched to the Tang court, and, on these foun-

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[29] H.A.R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia* (New York, 1923).
[30] Cf. Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire*, p. 83.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 89, 91, 111, 115, 124, 136.

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dations, a brilliant Islamic civilization evolved among the Iranian peoples of Central Asia. Khurāsān and Transoxania together became the hereditary dominion of the Ṭāhirid governors from 821-73, and then fell to another dynasty of eastern-Iranian origin, the Sāmānids, who ruled until 1005. The latter dynasty pushed the frontier of Muslim Transoxania further northward and Central-Asian trade then reached unprecedented heights. Next to the lucrative China trade, it was especially the traffic in Turkish slaves which became of great importance now as these were much in demand throughout the Muslim world. Beyond the pale of Islamic civilization, the Turks of the Eurasian steppes, for centuries to come, dominated the *mamlūk* armies and governments. Muslim raiding was often less important than peaceful trade even here. It was essential that the Turks were barbarians who could easily be Islamized and that they were familiar, unlike Black Africans, with the horse. These conditions changed but slowly when Central-Asian steppe life was reorganized and agrarian settlement expanded with the advance of Islamic and Christian culture and the establishment of durable states which effectively resisted raiding and the intervention of slave traders. Only by the fifteenth or sixteenth century, in effect, do we find the Islamic world turning away from Central Asia as the main reservoir of military slaves.

India and the Indian Ocean

Trading activity between the Middle East and India, as with Central Asia and Africa, developed in antiquity. Here too, the information at our disposal is fragmentary until we reach Islamic times. We learn from Herodotus that Darius 'subdued the Indians' and began to make regular use of the Persian Gulf. Ships are known to have sailed from India to the Strait of Hormuz in the Hellenistic period, and there were Indians in Socotra in the first century B.C.; the Arabic *Suquṭrā* is perhaps derived from the Sanskrit *Dvīpa Sukhatara*, 'blessed isle'. Similarly, the Periplus makes clear that Indian trade with the horn of Africa and Arab maritime enterprise in India can be dated to at least the first century A.D. And we know that in the same century, Mesopotamians, Greeks and Romans – using the monsoon – began sailing directly to India and Sri Lanka. Roman trade has been intensively studied as it has commonly been regarded by British writers as a forerunner of the European enterprise in India of modern times. It probably was at a peak in the first two centuries A.D. The majority of Roman coin hoards which are

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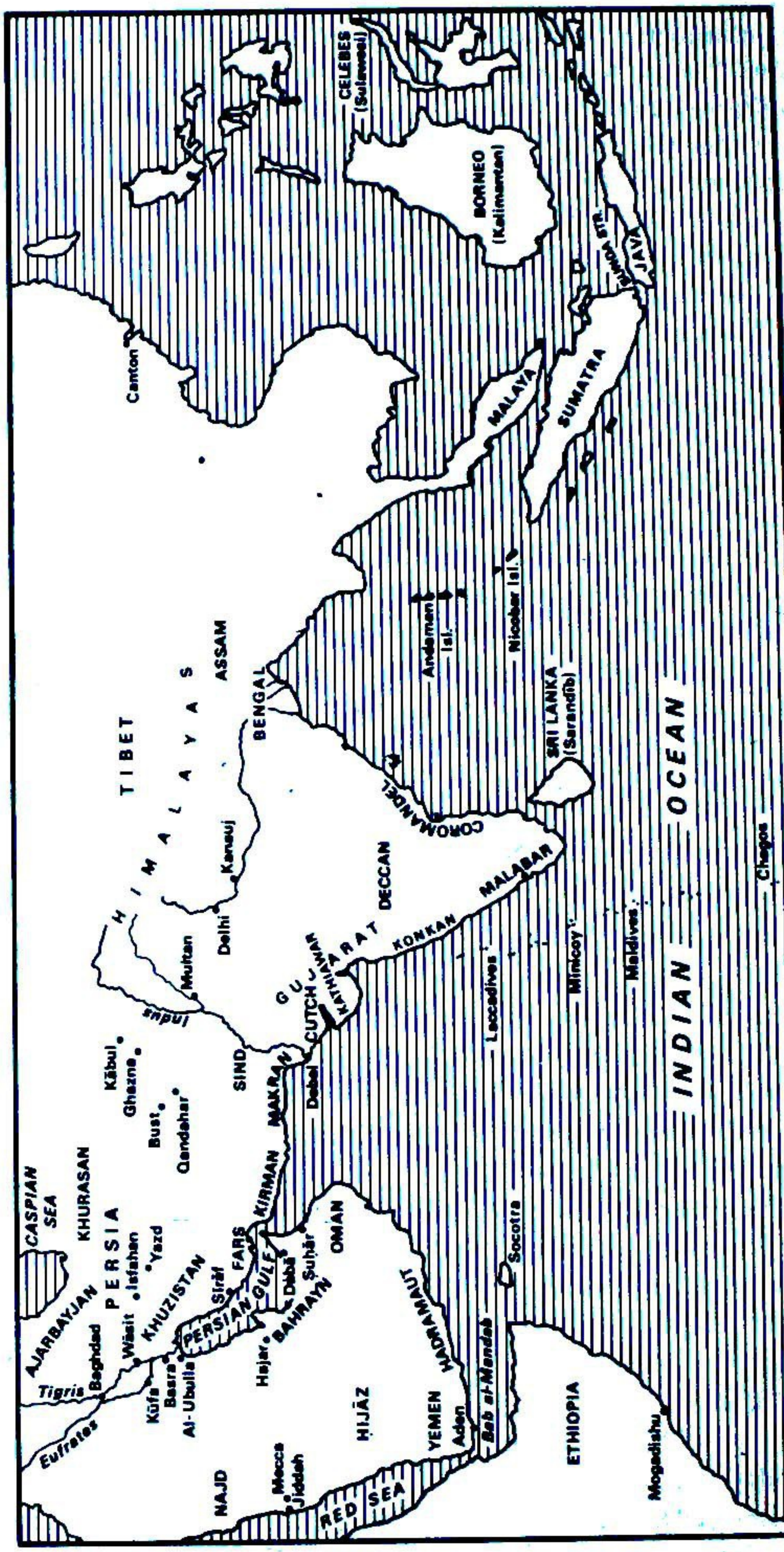

India and the Indian Ocean.

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found in India, however, date from no later than the first century, and we cannot be sure when exactly Roman trade declined.[32] It was definitely no longer important in the third century, but then, from the fourth to sixth centuries, Greek traders again became active in the India trade. Or rather the Byzantines, who, finding themselves excluded by the Sasanids from the overland trade with the East, entered into a trading partnership with the Ethiopians in the Indian Ocean. Greek, Ethiopian and Latin authors agree that the Ethiopians converted to Christianity in about 330 A.D., in the time of St. Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria. Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Greek merchant from Alexandria, in 523 A.D. described the Aksumite kingdom of Ethiopia as an integral part of the eastern Christian world, frequented by Greek-Byzantine traders and maintaining commercial contacts with the Yemen, Persia, India and Sri Lanka. Mecca was crowding with Ethiopians – traders, slaves and soldiers – and Muhammad declared that there should be no holy war against the *aḥābish*. But these 'Black Byzantines' were soon relegated to a subordinate position in the trading world of Islam. Not surprisingly, in the twelfth century rumours spread in European Christendom about a mysterious monarch, called Prester John, who allegedly ruled in 'India' and who was seen as a potential ally in the Crusade against Islam. 'India' and 'Ethiopia' became mixed up in the sources as early as the sixth century, when the Ethiopians conducted most of the India trade of Byzantium. In the centuries before Islam, then, the Arabs had lost the predominance in the trade between India and the Mediterranean which they had enjoyed in the Hellenistic period. The commercial decline of South Arabia, in particular, had begun long before 524, the year when the Ethiopians, incited by the Byzantine emperor Justinian, invaded the Yemen and established a Christian government there which could be prevailed upon to cross the Arabian desert and affront Persia, while the Ethiopians themselves were to challenge the Persian position in the markets of India and Sri Lanka.[33]

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[32] A.L.Basham, 'Notes on Seafaring in Ancient India', *Art and Letters, The Journal of the Royal India and Pakistan Society*, 23 (1949), pp. 60-70; P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 32, 35, 40; H.G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World* (Cambridge, 1916); Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*; M.P. Charlesworth, *Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1924); idem, 'Roman Trade with India; A Resurvey', in: P.R. Coleman-Norton (ed.), *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in honour of Allan Chester Johnson* (Princeton, 1951).

[33] R. Pankhurst, *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia from early times to 1800* (London, 1961), pp. 33, 36-37; Crone, *Meccan* Trade, pp. 40-42.

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It was the Sasanid Persians however who remained the most important trading power in the western Indian Ocean in the fifth and sixth centuries. The expansion of Persian commerce synchronized with Sasanid political ascendancy. From their rise to power in the third century, the Sasanid emperors were determined to extend their control on both sides of the Persian Gulf. Muslim authors mention the foundation or development of eighteen towns in the Gulf or along the rivers of Khūzistān and Mesopotamia by the first Sasanid emperor Ardashir (r. 226-41); these were all seaports and apparently designed to contain the competition or 'piracy' of independent Arab tribes. Oman and Bahrayn had become dependencies of Persia in the Achaemenid era and the ports of these countries had also belonged to the Persians well before the Sasanid rise to power. But Ardashir clearly showed much greater concern for the Arabian littoral and boosted maritime expansion to an unprecedented degree. Ardashir transplanted large numbers of the *Azdī* tribe of Oman to Fars and to the Kirman-Makran coast. These were Arab seafaring merchants, Zoroastrians (until the advent of Islam), and they dominated a Persian maritime trade diaspora which extended into western India. Shāhpūr I (241-72) further intensified Persian control in Oman and undertook extensive campaigns through Bahrayn, Hajar, the Yemen, and as far as the Syrian desert. A Greek author, Palladius, mentions Persian shipping around the Indian Ocean at the beginning of the fourth century. Under Shāhpūr II (310-79), independent Arab tribes from Bahrayn and Hajar again infested the Gulf and provoked another ferocious Sasanid response. The famous harbour-fortress town of Sīrāf was probably built around this time. Then, a succeeding emperor, Bahrām V (421-38) is recorded by Tabari to have married an Indian princess and to have received the port of Debal in Sind as a dowry, together with the adjacent territories. This seems to indicate that not only the Persian Gulf but also the Indus delta and the coast of Sind were of great commercial and strategic value by that time. Bahrām V also systematically pursued a policy of tribal resettlement in these coastal regions. For instance, a large group of pastoralist and predatory *Zuṭṭ* or 'Jats' from Sind were settled by this emperor in the marshes of southern Iraq.

Meanwhile, extensive Sasanid or Nestorian-Christian colonies had arisen, by the fifth century, on the Arabian coast, in India, Malabar and Sri Lanka, and even, to a lesser extent, beyond. The Chinese mention the Persians from the fifth century A.D. as *Po-se* or *Po-la-se* – the latter term still showing the 'r' of the word *Parsa* (Fārs) which was omit-

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ted when the name was derived from Central-Asian languages. Great confusion has resulted from the fact that the Chinese applied the same name *Po-se* to people of the Malayan peninsula. It is possible that Persian and Arab trade goods only arrived in China via these Malayan *Po-se* as middlemen and that Persian ships only began to arrive in China during the Muslim period – when they were still called *Po-se*. If that is so, the Persians arrived in China in the pre-Islamic period merely by land. On the other hand, the claim that the Persians preceded the Arabs in the maritime trade with Southeast Asia and China is not far-fetched, although historically unrecorded. A strong case can be made only for a more limited claim, that the so-called 'Nautical Instructions' of the Arab traders of the late Abbasid period (which were still in use in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and were then transmitted to the Portuguese) had Persian antecedents as their basis. In Middle Persian these treaties were known as *rāh-nāmaj* and they dealt mainly with the knowledge of the monsoons and other periodic local winds in the Indian Ocean. They were translated at an unknown date into Arabic, under the metathetic form of *rah-mānaj*. The Persians are supposed to have developed their science of the winds in particular under Nūshīrvān (r. 531-79), the same emperor who invaded the lower Indus valley and sent a fleet to Sri Lanka, while further extending Persian control in South Arabia.[34]

The conclusion is perhaps justified, then, that the Arabs borrowed some of their nautical science from the Persians, but whether they were introduced in the eastern seas by the Persians is much less certain. In the early sixth century we have to rely on Cosmas Indicopleustes who points at the presence of Persian merchants in Sri Lanka trading with the Chinese and other people 'from the remotest countries'. There was also in Sri Lanka a large colony of Persian Christians who were either traders or survivors of earlier persecutions in their homeland but who, in either case, by the time Cosmas wrote, were part of a Persian com-

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[34] D. Whitehouse and A. Williamson, 'Sasanian Maritime Trade', *Iran*, 11 (1973), pp. 29-49; B.E. Colless, 'Persian Merchants and Missionaries in Medieval Malaya', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, XLII, 2 (1969), pp. 10-47; G.R. Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders in South East Asia', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. XXX, pt.1 (1957), pp. 6-7, 9; G. Ferrand, 'L'Élément Persan dans les textes nautiques Arabes des XVe et XVIe siècles', *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 204 (April-June 1924), pp. 193-257; J.T. Reinaud, *Mémoire géographique, historique et scientifique sur l'Inde antérieurement au milieu du XIe siècle* (Paris, 1849), p. 180; M.J. De Goeje, *Mémoires d'histoire et de géographie orientales, no. 3: Mémoire sur les migrations des Tsiganes à travers l'Asie* (Leiden, 1903), p. 90.

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munity which was sufficiently important to induce Nushirvan to support their trading interests on the island by a military campaign. Sasanid activity in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian peninsula and the Indus valley, in effect, is best known from the last century before the Hijra, when the Byzantines made efforts to break the Sasanid hold on the India trade. We can be confident that the Sasanids, taking over commercially where the Romans and Greeks left off, in that period developed into the major Indian Ocean power. In Malabar and the North-Indian ports the Persians were most numerous and here they did not leave much room to their Byzantine-Ethiopian rivals, for, as Procopius writes, 'the Persian merchants always locate themselves at the very harbour where the Indian ships first put in (since they inhabit the adjoining country) and are accustomed to buy the whole cargoes'. This much is clear, that in the centuries preceding Islam there was persistent and intense commercial rivalry between the Sasanids and the Byzantines, and that such rivalry acquired outspoken political and ideological dimensions which were manifest from Syria to Sri Lanka. The Persian Gulf was to a large extent Nestorian-Christian and as a consequence a Nestorian influence, next to Zoroastrianism, spread throughout the Indian Ocean. The competitive struggle between the two imperial powers was especially vigorous in Arabia. Here, the imperial involvement from two sides may well have been, as it is now suggested, a decisive factor in the rise of the new religion of Islam.[35] Of course, Arabia, and especially South Arabia and the Yemen (*Arabia Felix* of the Romans) had been important in the India trade from much earlier times, but in the Sasanid-Byzantine period the stakes in this trade had become so high that Arabia became liable to imperial conquest. A Sasanid governor was imposed on the Yemen monarchy, and by 578 the Sasanids controlled the Bab al-Mandab from Aden. A Persian colony was settled in the Najd when silver was discovered. Silver routes came into being which were protected by client kings, and thus Persian influence reached into the Ḥijāz. And although the conquest of South Arabia was not very thorough, it prevented the Byzantines from redirecting the trade via the Red Sea by an overland route in alliance with the Ethiopians. Sasanid expansion to South Arabia as well as to the Caspian steppes eventually ensured Sasanid commercial dominance over the Byzantines at the beginning of the seventh century. Throughout Southern Russia and the Indian Ocean the Sasanid silver dirham, therefore, became the great currency of international

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[35] Crone, *Meccan Trade*, esp. pp. 45-50, 246-50.

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commerce. All shipping on both sides of the Persian Gulf came under the dominance of the Persians. The major ports of Oman, such as Ṣuḥār and Dabā, while frequented by the merchants who dealt with Sind, India and China, were ruled by a Persian governor in collaboration with an Azdī Arab client king. The Persians maintained diplomatic relations with the Calukyas of the Deccan, and a second fleet was sent to Sri Lanka in the reign of Khusro I. In the end, the Byzantine failure to sustain effectively their position in the Indian Ocean could only be partially remedied by the secret introduction of silkworms overland from China.

Knowing all this, there is no prima facie reason to conclude that the India trade had relatively declined in late Roman times. To the contrary, there are good grounds to suppose that the opposite was the case. With the coming of Islam, we will see now, commerce in the western Indian Ocean increased even more, as did the overland trade to China after the accession of the Tang in 618.[36] Because of the Muslim conquests the commercial and political rivalry of Byzantium and Persia came to an end, and a single political power now linked the Mediterranean with the Indian Ocean. Gravitating towards Mesopotamia, it became imperative for the Muslims to control the Persian Gulf and its feeder routes. The desire to expand traffic along the Persian Gulf route was also, as we will elaborate later (chapter IV), the main motivation for the conquest of Sind. The cities along the coast, in the Gulf, Makran, Sind, Kathiawar and Cutch had to be subjected to Arab authority in order to be able to safeguard the increasingly important India trade from piracy. Sind, at this time, was the wild frontier of Indian civilization, with Buddhist or Hindu rulers to be sure, but inhabited largely by (semi-)nomadic tribes, such as the Mīd, Jats or Kurk, whose predatory activities disturbed much of the western Indian Ocean, from the Makran coast to the mouth of the Tigris and the southern part of the Red Sea and as far as the coasts of Malabar and Sri Lanka. The ancient Persians had tried to protect their cities against such Indian piratical attacks by making the Tigris inaccessible for navigation. Muslim sources insist that it was the persistent insolence of the pirates of Debal and other lairs which forced the Arabs to subjugate 'the frontier of *al-Hind*'. And the effect of the Muslim conquest of Sind appears to have been what it was meant to be: the control of the seaports and maritime routes in western India, a very considerable reduction of pastoral-nomadic activity and the sedentari-

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[36] See also K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 36.

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zation of the Mīd and Jats. Throughout Sind there was also considerable urban expansion. Contrary to the current notion that the Arab conquest of Sind was an unimportant episode in the history of India and affected merely the fringe of the subcontinent, we should stress the great commercial importance of this province. Sind was the hinge of the Indian Ocean trade as well as the overland passway. It is no accident that, among the Arabs, the tribe of the *Azd ʿUmān* were instrumental in the conquest of Fars, Makran and Sind, and that for some time they became the dominant Árab tribe in the eastern caliphate. Since the reign of Ardashir, the coasts of Kirman and Makran had been studded with settlements of these strongly Persianized Arabs. They were the chief merchant group of Oman and Al-Ubulla and organized a trading diaspora which extended into Sind. Not only were they involved in the India trade with the west but they also carried the Arabian horses which were much in demand in India.[37] And with the expansion of Islam the *Azdī* could consolidate both their commercial power and their political authority on the Indian frontier. In the first years of the Hijra era the Muslims conducted their naval raids to Fars and Hind from Oman and Bahrayn, from ports which belonged to the *Azdī*. From about 637 A.D. the conquests in Fars and Makran were dominated by the *Azdī* and allied tribes from Oman and Bahrayn.[38] The *Azd ʿUmān* became especially prominent in Basra between 665 and 683 on account of the favours they received from Ziyad ibn Abihi, the governor of Muʿāwiya, and from his son Ubaidallah. Their fortune rose even higher when a member of the tribe, Al-Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufrah, gained control of Basra and became the leader of the conquests in Khurāsān, Kirman and on the Indian frontier. It was then that the conquest of Makran – where so many of the *Azdī* had been settled for ages – was consolidated, and incursions were extended into Sind. The *Azdī* grew enormously rich. After the death of Al-Muhallab in 702, however, they lost their grip on the eastern frontier. In large measure this was due to the opposition of the new governor of Iraq, the notorious Al-Hajjāj ibn Yusif, under whose command Muhammad al-Qasim accomplished the conquest of Sind. Al-Hajjāj pursued a systematic policy to break the Umayyads' power, and with them the *Azdī* suffered badly. Yet, after the conquest of Sind in 710-12, it was a son of Al-Muhallab again,

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[37] Cf. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, pp. 45-46; D. Hawley, *Oman* (London, 1977), pp. 17, 19.

[38] M. Hinds, 'The First Arab Conquests in Fārs', *Iran*, vol. XXII (1984), pp. 39-53.

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Yazīd, who put Muhammad al-Qasim in chains and engaged in a struggle for the caliphate with his namesake, the reigning caliph. His agents were ordered to take possession of all the eastern provinces, including Fārs, Kirmān and Makrān and Sind as far as the Indus. Qandabil, a town in Makran, was selected as a place of refuge in case of defeat. There, the sons of Al-Muhallab were eventually betrayed and murdered by their own *Azdī* lieutenants, in 720-21, in the reign of Yazīd bin Abd al-Mālik. From then onwards the *Azdī* link between metropolitan *fitna* and frontier politics was lost, but the *Azdī* remained a very important mercantile group until about 1055, when the Seljuq Turks interfered, the trade route shifted to the Red Sea, and the Baluchi overran Makran.

Commercial and political ties between the Persian Gulf and India had, thus, always been close but under the Muslims evolved into an integrated trading empire. In fact, the sources regard not the Indus but Makran and the head of the Persian Gulf, including a town like Al-Ubulla and even the island of Socotra, as the *farj al-Hind* or 'frontier of India'. Or they call it the *arḍ al-Hind*, the 'realm of India', which meant of course the 'realm of the India trade'. Particularly from Abbasid times onwards, the expansion of the Gulf maritime connection with India was given a great impulse. And throughout the eighth to eleventh centuries the Ḥijāz and the Red Sea ports were eclipsed. Jiddah and Aden did not fail to draw trade from all sides but in importance this route was left far behind, and it was not restored before the Fatimids (969-1171) and Ayyubids (1171-1250). With the expansion of the Gulf trade to India, Indonesia, the Malay Peninsula, to Canton, and China, the Muslim capital of Baghdad became the world's largest harbour, receiving the traffic of the two rivers of Mesopotamia which connected the city with the sea and the *arḍ al-Hind*, as well as with the trade of Syria, Egypt, North Africa in the west, and of Ajarbayjan, Armenia, Isfahan, and Khurasan in the north and east.[40]

Other ports in or around the Gulf which became of outstanding importance in these centuries were Basra, Kūfa, Wāsit, Al-Ubulla, Sīrāf, and, in Oman, Ṣuḥār, Julfār, Dabā and Masqat. Some of these ports were newly founded, while others were taken over from the Sasanids.

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[39] J.C. Wilkinson, 'Arab-Persian Land Relationships in Late Sasānid Oman', *Proceedings of the Sixth Seminar for Arabian Studies* (London, 1973), pp. 41-42; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, p. 47.

[40] Cf. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, pp. 61-4; Chaudhuri, *Indian Ocean*, p. 48.

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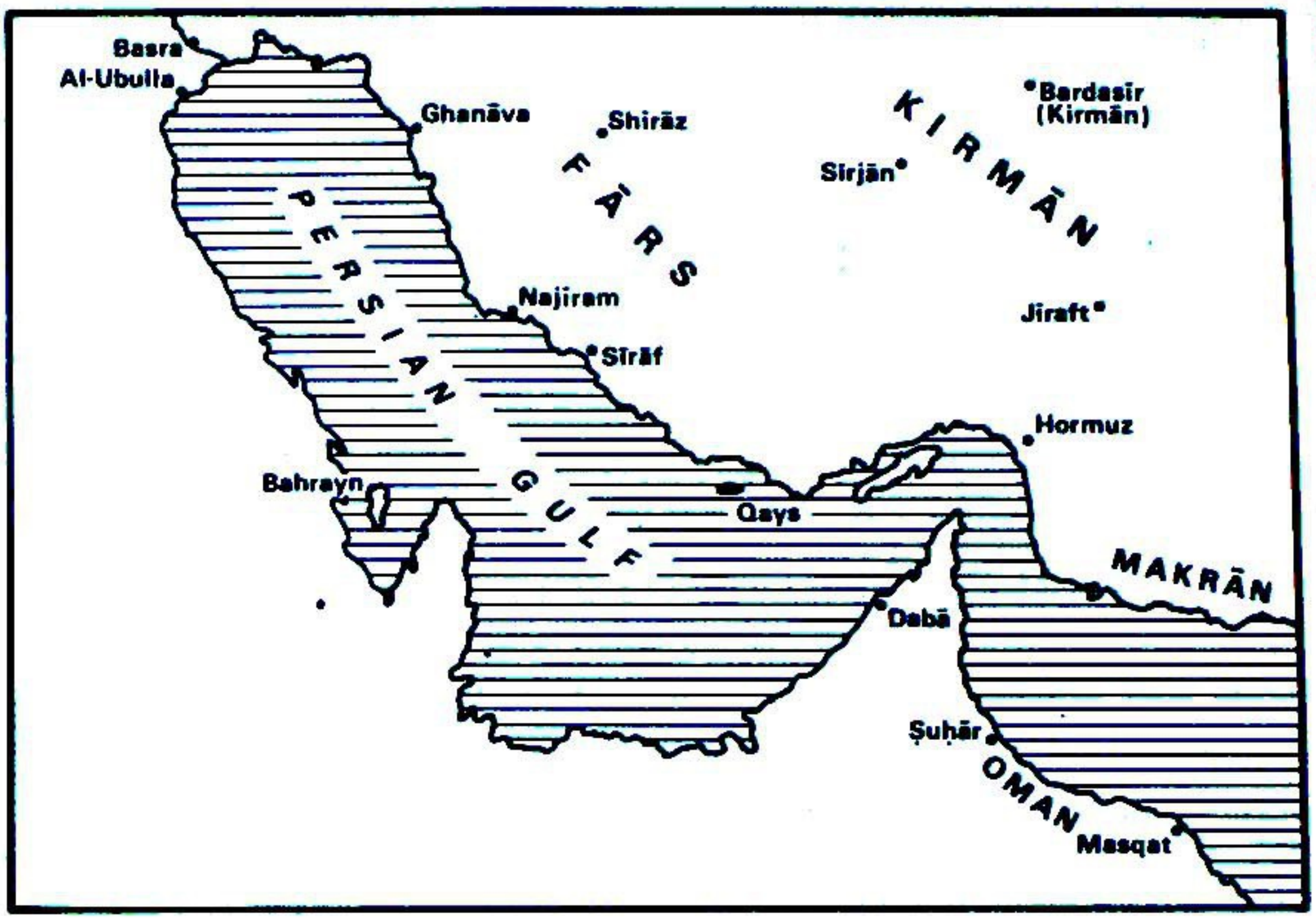

Persian Gulf.

Basra is an example of a city newly founded by the Arabs; this happened in about 638 A.D., with the explicit aim, as Tabari has recorded, to have a strategic place on the Tigris which could protect the Arab camps against naval attacks which were undertaken from Oman and India in support of the Persians. Subsequent to the Arab conquest of Sind we see Basra developing into a centre of the India trade, attaining a great prosperity which lasted up to the end of the tenth century. The city became the financial emporium of the caliphate; its total government income was estimated in 919 to have been 22,575 dinar. Near Basra, in the northern part of the Gulf, Al-Ubulla had, by contrast, been the largest port of the Sasanids and it was simply conquered and taken over by the Arabs in 635. Together with Basra, Kūfa and Wāsit, Al-Ubulla became an extremely important commercial centre again under the Arabs, after the foundation of Baghdad. And it attracted such a large share of the India trade that the Arabs spoke of the city as 'belonging to al-Hind'. It suffered a setback during the *Zanj* revolts of 868-83, when cities in the eastern Gulf became relatively more dominant. Among the latter was Sīrāf, a harbour town down the Persian coast, which before achieving eminence in the Gulf appears to have been well-established by the mid-ninth century. For some time it was second

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in importance to Basra only. The Arab geographers describe the splendour of its buildings 'in a continuous chain as far as the eye can reach', and they emphasize that its wealth was almost exclusively derived from the trade with India, China and Africa. The harbour of Sīrāf apparently offered advantages to large ships by enabling them to avoid the storms of the Gulf and the navigational hazards of the delta system near Basra. Due to these factors, Sīrāf, with a mixed Arab and Persian population, even eclipsed Basra in the period of Buyid rule (932-1044), especially under ʿAḍud ad-Daula (948-72), when trade along the entire littoral was boosted. The Buyids crushed the Baluchi tribes which had been threatening Hormuz, and they further consolidated control of the ports of Oman, subsequent to which numerous merchants of Sīrāf established themselves at Ṣuḥār, the principal Omani port. Sīrāf then reached its peak and its ships are frequently encountered from South China to Sofala. The inland towns of Fars also grew in size. Shīrāz, the capital of the province, and linked by road to Ghanāva, Najīram and Hormuz, the port of the province of Kirman, became a city full of palaces. Agricultural development was stimulated in the district of Kurbāl, neighbouring Shīrāz. Traffic, both maritime and by land, up to the eleventh century remained oriented along an east-west axis. While Kirman's capital in the tenth century was transferred from Sīrjān to Bardasīr, in a northeastern direction, the roads continued to run to Sīrjān and from there to Khurāsān and Sīstān in the east, and to Jīraft, Hormuz and Sīrāf in the south. In Oman, finally, from the eighth to the eleventh century, the ports of Ṣuḥār, Julfār, Dabā, and Masqat rose to eminence under the *Azdī* trading hegemony which extended throughout the Indian Ocean. Ṣuḥār, in particular, became one of the main maritime trading stations of the entire Islamic world.[41]

From the eleventh century the Arab geographers' knowledge of the sea route to China becomes less and less. In Southeast Asia the disturbed political order in the Persian Gulf is reflected on the one hand in the decreasing role of Arab traders and on the other in the entry of

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[41] J. Sauvaget (ed. and transl.), *Akhbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa-l-Hind* (Paris, 1948), pp. 7, para 13, 41 n.13, 2; M.H. Zotenberg (transl.), *Chronique de Tabari*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1958), p. 401; S. Nadvi, 'Commercial Relations of India with Arabia', *Islamic Culture*, vol. VII (1933), pp. 281-308; Whitehouse and Williamson, 'Sasanian Maritime Trade', p. 45; R. Rose Di Meglio, 'Arab Trade with Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula from the 8th to the 16th Century', in: D.S. Richards (ed.), *Islam and the Trade of Asia* (Oxford and Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 106-7; J. Aubin, 'La ruine de Sīrāf et les routes du Golfe Persique aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, X-XII (1959), pp. 295-301.

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Chinese traders. The Fatimids, moving into the India trade in the late tenth century, rarely ventured beyond South India and Sri Lanka.[42] The disruption of the overland caravan routes to China also appears to have begun in the eleventh century.[43] The Seljuq-Turkish occupation of Baghdad in 1055 and the decline of Abbasid power greatly reduced the intercontinental trade from the Mediterranean, Syria and Asia Minor, via Baghdad, to the Persian Gulf and onwards. By the beginning of the Crusades (1096) the major share of the spice trade was rerouted to Fatimid Egypt; via the Red Sea it now passed to Cairo (Fustat) and Alexandria and then into the hands of the Italian merchants, who, simultaneously becoming involved in the Crusading enterprise in the Levant, brought the spices and other oriental goods to central and western Europe. Within the Mediterranean the centre of gravity had shifted, in the tenth century, from Tunisia, the early nucleus of Fatimid power, to Egypt. The Fatimid transfer to Egypt was accompanied by a great population movement from Tunisia, Sicily, and from parts of Algeria and Lybia, areas which until then had been the distribution centres of Indian goods to the Muslim West and Christian Europe. The Fatimids thus brought about a complete translocation of the Mediterranean trade routes in the eleventh century and a reversal of the migration pattern of Muslims, which had earlier been from the east (Arabia, Iraq, Iran) to North Africa.[44] Tunisia and Sicily lost their central role in the intercontinental trade, and North Africa in the eleventh and twelfth centuries suffered badly from the invasions of the Hilāl and Sulaym – invasions which also cut off its supply of gold from the Sudan. Egypt and Syria then, under the Fatimids, became the distribution centres for Europe. But in the eleventh century the Mediterranean was no longer an Islamic possession. Europe was rising, and the northern Mediterranean gained ascendancy over the south, while, along the northern shores, naval supremacy passed from Byzantium to the Italian republics, the Normans, and later the kingdoms of France and Spain. After the fall of Constantinople (1204) and the Mongol destruction of the caliphate (1258), Egypt emerged as the new centre of practically all commercial

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[42] S.D. Goitein, 'Letters and Documents on the India Trade in Medieval Times', in: *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden, 1966), p. 325 ff; K.R. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, 1985), p. 196.

[43] Cf. Chaudhuri, *Indian Ocean*, p. 56.

[44] S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 4 vols (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1967-84), I.

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activity relating to the transit trade from India via the newly established trading centre of Calicut, to a revived Aden (later Mocha and Jiddah), to Europe. Under the Mamluks (1250-1390; 1390-1517), Egypt went through a period of great prosperity thanks to the extremely valuable India trade, its profits falling exclusively to the Arab *kārimī* merchants and the sultan. By the thirteenth century however the relatively open pattern and unity of the Mediterranean was lost.

In summary, we find an interrelated set of significant changes occurring in the eleventh and twelfth centuries on a global scale. With the rise of Europe, the expansion of Islam into North India, and the upsurge of China, the economic supremacy of the Middle-Eastern caliphate was gradually reduced. Beyond the confines of the Indian Ocean, but impinging upon it, the 'economic miracle' of the early Sung expanded the internal and external markets of China. Under the Sung, great industrial and economic progress was made, especially in the eleventh century, as a result of which Chinese influence in Southeast Asia increased and maritime commerce flourished – a situation which lasted until the early Ming (1430). The Islamic world was, beginning in the eleventh century, affected by a deep crisis from which only the Muslim Mediterranean was exempted, at least partially (not the Levant which had to stand off the Crusaders). From the Sahara to Central Asia, nomadic invasions occurred and in the second half of the eleventh century the urban organization and trade in many parts of Islam were severely damaged.[45]

To return to the Persian Gulf: here a clear picture of the commercial networks can be obtained up to the year 1000 A.D. but no longer in the eleventh century, when the rare texts which do refer to the situation in the Gulf reveal a profound decline. Several authors, in effect, attest that in the eleventh century the commercial traffic between the Persian Gulf and India was reduced to some occasional voyages.[46] This was not principally due to the commercial resurgence of the Red Sea and the competition of the Fatimid rulers of Egypt, even though there was abundant missionary activity of the Ismāʿīlīya at this time throughout the western

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[45] Cf. S.D. Goitein, 'The Rise of the Near-eastern Bourgeoisie in Early Islamic Times', *Journal of World History*, 3 (1957), pp. 583-604; C. Issawi, 'The Decline of Middle Eastern Trade, 1100-1850', in: Richards (ed.), *Islam and the Trade of Asia*, pp. 245-66; W.H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society* (Oxford, 1982), p. 61; Ph.D. Curtin, *Cross-cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 11; Lombard, *L'Islam*.

[46] J. Sauvaget, 'Sur d'anciennes instructions nautiques arabes pour les mers de l'Inde', *Journal Asiatique* (1948), pp. 18-19; Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders', p. 11; Rose di Meglio, 'Arab trade'; Aubin, 'Ruine de Sīrāf'.

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Indian Oçean (in Yemen, Sind, Gujarat and among the Baluchi in Fars). Rather we have to take into account the changing conditions in the Gulf itself and the negative effect on commerce of the Turkish pull towards Central Asia. We then find that at the time that the route of Aden becomes a rival in the trade with India, important changes occurred along the caravan routes linking the Persian Gulf with the cities of the Iranian plateau. When in the middle of the eleventh century the Buyid dynasty gave way to the Seljuq Turks, the local tribes in Fārs which were known as the Shabānkāra suffered from the redirection of trade towards eastern Iran, resulting in armed struggles with the Seljuq governors which subsided only after eighty years.[47] The Shabānkāra devastated the province while economic activity and urban life were paralysed all through the Seljuq period and even later. The former Buyid capital of Shiraz did not recover until the end of the twelfth century. Merchant ships stayed close to the mouth of the Tigris while avoiding Sīrāf and Najīram and other places where the roads were disturbed by the Shabānkāra. Basra was already half-ruined in 1052 and deteriorated further, down to the Mongol age. Sīrāf, surviving an earthquake in 977, declined abruptly after the Buyid disappearance unleashed piratical activity at the island of Qays, 200 kilometers east of the city. Sīrāf is first described as a port in decline at the end of the tenth century. A century later it was of no more than local importance, in spite of Seljuq attempts to revitalize the place. By the twelfth century Sīrāf was nothing but old ruins and rubbish heaps of devastation. An exodus of merchant people from Sīrāf accompanied the decline all along, to Ṣuḥār in Oman, especially at the end of the tenth century, or to the Red Sea or Qays. Most of Fārs was eclipsed in the eleventh-twelfth century; economic recovery followed in the first half of the thirteenth century, when Shīrāz remerged in full vigour as well. From the second half of the eleventh century to the thirteenth century, the island of Qays, with a predominantly Arab population, attracted what was left of the Persian Gulf trade, and its dynasty made itself felt in Oman and Bahrayn as well as 'among the Indian Rajas'. Of course, in Qays 'piracy' and 'commerce' were closely related activities, especially in the early days, but some form of regularized international market activity developed due to efforts of the Seljuq ruler Tūrān Shāh to turn Qays into the harbour of Kirmān, the province neighbouring Fārs which had passed through the Buyid-Seljuq transition unscathed.

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[47] Aubin, *op. cit.*

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To the east of Fārs, indeed, the picture is altogether different.[48] Here the roads remained open in the eleventh century and commercial exchange went on uninterruptedly. The Seljuqs resumed the Buyid policy and castigated the Baluchi tribes which had begun to penetrate the *garmsīr* ('hot zone') of the province. The coast of Oman, while threatened from the interior, remained in Seljuq hands until 1140. But especially important for Kirmān was its intensified contact with east Iran. The result was that in the eleventh century in Kirmān and Bardasīr there was no decline but an increase of urbanism. The province in fact reached the zenith of its prosperity under Tūrān Shāh's successor Arslān Shāh (1101-1142), when again the trade of India, China, Ethiopia and East Africa passed along its coast from Makran, benefiting especially Hormuz and to some extent Qays, and turning inland to Jīraft. Like Bardasīr, Jīraft doubled in size, and it became 'the residence of the foreigners of India and Byzantium (Rūm), the stopover of those who travelled by land and by sea, the treasury of the riches and *chambre forte* of the merchants of East and West'.[49] Arslān Shāh also occupied Yazd, 450 kilometers northwest of Bardasīr, on the caravan route to Ajarbayjan and Anatolia. While, therefore, in the Buyid period the traffic generally went from east to west, the itinerary of trade in the Seljuq period is north to south. By the middle of the twelfth century the Persian Gulf was linked to the interior of Iran via Kirmān, to Yazd, and to the rich territories of east Iran.

As the above shows, it is possible to deduce from the evidence related to the founding, efflorescence and decline of port cities in the Persian Gulf the corresponding movement of expansion and contraction of the India trade in the period up to the eleventh century and beyond. Such evidence has to be collated with what we know about the actual presence of traders from the Muslim Middle East in India, Southeast Asia and China or vice versa. In short, we will have to look at the trading diasporas in the Indian Ocean and along the overland caravan routes. But before doing so (cf. chapter III), something has to be said about the nature of the India trade itself, i.e. about the products which went into that trade, their quantities and relative importance, and to what extent a pattern evolved which was typical of the early medieval period as distinct from the classical or late-classical trade.

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[48] *Ibid.*
[49] Muh. b. Ibrāhim, quoted by Aubin, *ibid.*, p. 301.

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On this score, it has to be admitted, the lists of exports and imports furnished by travellers and chroniclers or geographers are grossly inadequate, especially in their quantitative aspects. It is clear however that the products of India which entered long-distance trade were of a great, seemingly infinite, variety and that they were quite commonly expensive or precious. The trade between India and the Greco-Roman world was especially a trade in pepper, of which Malabar was the source. This trade retained its importance, as we can see from the growth of expatriate trade communities of Muslims, Jews and Christians on the coast. Furthermore, there were 'spices', including many kinds of ointments, medicinal substances, poisons, antidotes, perfumes, incense, such as costum, ginger, aloe-wood, nard (spikenard), ambergris, willow, camphor, myrobalans,.cloves, nutmeg, sandalwood, musk, cinnamon, cardamom, mace, and rhinoceros horn (a panacea and aphrodisiac).[50] In Arabic, words of Indian origin are mostly for spices, perfumes and medicines. Spices came from regions of *al-Hind* as far apart as Assam and Sri Lanka, or Gujarat and Java, and they were 'exported to all parts of the earth'.[51] Then there is a miscellany of items like jewels of gold and silver, gold bullion from Southeast Asia (Sumatra especially), crystal, precious stones and diamonds, brass, bronze, elephant tusks or ivory, woods (including teak, ebony, bamboo, brazilwood), hemp, indigo, lead, leather, and foodstuffs like rice and grains. A major export from India, especially Gujarat and Bengal, were textiles, such as silk, brocade, cotton, and jute.[52] India's supremacy on the textile markets was based on her early mastery of the technique of fast dying from natural sources. Of great importance were also Indian steel and metallurgical products like swords. 'The Indians are very good at making various compounds of mixtures of substances with the help of which they melt the malleable iron; it then turns into Indian iron, and is called after *al-Hind*. There, in *al-Hind*, are workshops where swords are manufactured, and their craftsmen make excellent ones surpassing those made by other peoples. In the same way, the Sindī, Sarandībī and the Baynimānī iron vie with one another for superiority as regards the

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[50] J.I. Miller, *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1969); C.G.F. Simkin, *The Traditional Trade of Asia* (London, 1968); S. Maqbul Ahmad, *India and the Neighbouring Territories in the Kitāb Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fī 'Khtirāq al-'Āfāq of al-Sharīf al-Idrīsī* (Leiden, 1960), pp. 23, 26-7, 56, 63, 128-132; Nadvi, 'Commercial Relations'.

[51] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 63.

[52] L. Gopal, 'The Textile Industry in Early Medieval India (c. A.D. 700-1200)', *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1964-5), n.s. vol. 39-40, pp. 95-103.

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climate of the place, skill in industry, the method of melting and stamping and beauty in polishing and scouring. But no iron is comparable to the Indian one in sharpness'.[53] Indian iron products were for example exported to East Africa, while at the same time Sofāla had the best and largest iron mines which produced largely for the Indian metallurgical industry.[54] By contrast, unlike Africa, Central Asia and Europe, India's role as a source of slaves for the Islamic world appears to have been a minor one in early medieval times. There is some evidence that Indian female slaves were exported to the Islamic Middle East both from territories which were and others which were not occupied by the Arabs. As early as the turn of the seventh century, Syrian merchants who were sent by the caliph were active in the maritime slave traffic along India's westcoast.[55] The Arabs were the first invaders of India who are recorded to have forcibly removed fairly large numbers of its native inhabitants as enslaved captives. For a short time slaves were probably the main booty acquired on the Indian frontier. Sind and Makran supplied the Arabs with slaves, as did the Indianized regions of what is presently eastern and central Afghanistan, and Ghur, the almost inaccessible heartland of Afghanistan. These slaves were obtained by raiding or by trade, both overland and maritime. Of the eastern-Persian dynasties, the Saffarids are known to have employed Indian soldiers of slave origin, mostly from eastern Afghanistan, in increasing numbers in the tenth century.[56] Considerably earlier, in 767, as is mentioned in the Syrian chronicle of Dionysius Telmarensis, *Sindian* slaves, next to Khazars, Medes, Persians and others, were part of an army which invaded Byzantine territory.[57] However, Indian slave soldiers and slave commanders did not become prominent in Islam under the Arabs but only under the Ghaznavids, and they disappeared with them. In the Ghaznavid state it was still Turks who predominated in the highest posts, but Indian *mamlūks* served as an important counterweight, and they had their own commander (the *Sipahsālār-i-Hindūyān*) and inhabited a separate quarter in Ghazna.[58] Furthermore, the Ghaznavids

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[53] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 23.
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] U.M. Daudpota (ed.), *Ta'rīkh-i-Sind* (Poona, 1938), p. 60[b].
[56] Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, p. 98; idem, 'The armies of the Ṣaffārids', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. XXXI (1968), pp. 534-54.
[57] J.B. Chabot (ed. and transl.), *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Maḥré, Quatrième Partie* (Paris, 1895), pp. 72, 99.
[58] Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, pp. 101, 109-10, 114, 138.

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employed a permanent force of infantry which was dominated by Indians and Dailamīs. Here the Indian slaves retained their own religion; and this had probably been the case under the Arabs too, for, as we know, from the ninth century onwards, with the Christian Franks, Slavs and Galicians who were imported as slaves and then employed as soldiers, conversion and manumission had been formalities that could easily be dispensed with.[59] The Indian slaves who trickled into Syria and Iraq in the Arab period were not predominantly used as soldiers or in government service but more often seem to have been assimilated in the domestic context of wealthy Muslim households, where they served as menials, concubines, or agrestic labourers, and in random occupations. In course of time these 'Sindians and Indians' were probably absorbed in Islamic society without leaving much trace of their origin. Their number can only be guessed but was not large and definitely was dwarfed by the export of slaves from India during the Ghaznavid and Ghurid raids in northern India in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. From the Kanauj campaign of 1018 until the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate by Aybak in 1206 a vast stream of perhaps more than several hundred thousands of Indian slaves reached Ghazna, and hence were traded to other parts of the Islamic world.[60] In the thirteenth century Delhi developed into a considerable slave market and Multan became the entrepot for the westward trade of slaves which were then obtained from as far as the Deccan but also nearer at home in unsubdued parts of the Muslim realm. Timur's capture of Delhi in 1398-9 provided the last massive haul of Hindu slaves by an invader, and after the fourteenth century slavery in India generally declined in scale.[61] But eunuchs from *al-Hind* are found in some numbers in the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt in the fifteenth century.[62] The export of Indian slaves went on well into Mughal times, and even later. In the Mughal Empire there were no large slave markets but in the seventeenth century we hear of the enslavement and deportation by the Mughal nobility of thousands of 'refractory' Hindu peasants, and of pastoralists and vagrants, to Per-

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[59] *Ibid.*, p. 109; idem, 'The Imperial Policy of the Early Ghaznavids', *Islamic Studies: Journal of the Central Institute of Islamic Research, Karachi*, I/3 (1962), p. 54; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 78-9 and notes 622-3.

[60] Bosworth, 'Imperial Policy', pp. 50-1, 55-6; idem, *Ghaznavids*, pp. 79, 102; idem, *Later Ghaznavids*, p. 8.

[61] T. Raychaudhuri and I. Habib (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 84, 89-92.

[62] D. Ayalon, 'The Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate', in: M. Rosen-Ayalon (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 273.

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sia (now no longer via Multan but via Kabul), where they were sold or bartered for horses and dogs.[63]

If, from the eighth and ninth centuries, the India trade assumed central importance for Islam, it was because the subcontinent and its Indianized hinterland provided products of almost every type which was in demand in the world market, but not as a source of slaves – for that human commodity the Muslims looked first of all to Africa, Central Asia, Europe and the Slavic world. Throughout the early medieval period the India trade seems to have maintained the same character and there was continuity and steady development of the trading capacity and the volume of trade until the eleventh century, when the Persian Gulf commercial system collapsed.[64]

In answering the question of how the Muslim world made good its trade balance with India we probably have to give considerable room to payment in kind or barter, next to gold and silver coinage and bullion.[65] Indian rulers imported silk from Egypt and China, slaves from Ethiopia, and – very important – horses from Arabia and Persia. Goods like copper, lead, paper, carpets, glass, chemicals came to India from Aden or Iraq. The India trade of the seventh to eleventh centuries was certainly not yet a one-way traffic of goods against precious metals. India's propensity to attract precious metals had been notorious, however, from antiquity, and in our period the subcontinent drew vast amounts of gold and silver, exceeding previous periods and exceeding all other parts of the contemporary world by far. The explanation for this lies primarily in the very favourable export-import balance of India: self-sufficient as it was, and with an export market for all major commodities, there were relatively few imports needed. And, in conjunction with this inherent strength of the Indian economy we find a virtual

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[63] D.H.A. Kolff, *An Armed Peasantry and its Allies: Rajput Tradition and State Formation in Hindustan, 1450-1850*' (PhD thesis, Leiden, 1983), pp. 19-23.

[64] Cf. S.D. Goitein, 'From the Mediterranean to India: Documents on the Trade to India, South Arabia, and East Africa from the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Speculum*, vol. XXIX (April, 1954), no. 2, pt. 1, pp. 181-197; idem, 'Letters and Documents'. There is no evidence to conclude, as does E. Ashtor, that the trade underwent a great expansion in volume and an important change in character in the Fatimid period (cf. E. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 147, 196-7, and J.F. Richards, 'Precious Metals and India's Role in the Medieval World Economy', 16th International Congress of Historical Sciences, Stuttgart, August 26, 1985, mimeo, pp. 2-3).

[65] Goitein, 'Mediterranean to India', pp. 187-8; idem, 'Letters and Documents', p. 329 ff.

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absence of indigenous sources of gold and silver.[66] A considerable amount, though by no means all, of the incoming gold and silver was hoarded in temples, monasteries or palaces, and hence diverted from monetary use. The accumulated treasure of India is what ultimately set off the second wave of Islamic conquest, that of the Turks. Eleventh-century India resembled the late-classical Byzantine and Sasanid Middle East in this respect, while it wholly differs from feudal Europe. Similarly, the effect of the Islamic conquest of North India was the dethesaurization of the stocks of precious metals. We should not forget however that the treasures of gold and silver which the Turks obtained by plunder had originally entered India in payment of its trade items. For all we can deduce, this trade had reached its peak in the ninth and tenth centuries.

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[66] Richards, 'Precious Metals and India's Role in the Medieval World Economy', pp. 2, 34-40; idem, 'Outflows of precious metals from early Islamic India', in: idem (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, (Durham, 1983), pp. 183-205; F.R. Allchin, 'Upon the Antiquity and Methods of Gold Mining in Ancient India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. V (1962), pp. 195-211.

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CHAPTER III

TRADING DIASPORAS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Since the eighth to eleventh centuries were a period of expansion of Muslim commerce on all main routes of the Indian Ocean, we find that trading posts and colonies proliferated along the coasts and the river estuaries to sustain the newly evolving networks. Similarly, along the overland routes from India to the Middle East traffic increased. These were mostly nature-made paths, turnpike roads, with their directions often changing and difficult to use in the rainy season.[1] The overland routes to the west ran through Makran or Afghanistan. Kabul, Ghazna and Bust were among the important 'merchant resorts' (*matjar*, *furda*) for India, and the first two of these had permanent colonies of Indian merchants by the tenth century. The Hindu trading element was also not negligible in the Persian Gulf, in Oman, in Socotra, and it was large in Southeast Asia. Abu Zayd, for instance, reports in the ninth century that 'the Hindus come to Siraf and when some Arab merchant invites them to a feast, their number often approaches or exceeds a hundred. But a separate dish needs to be served before each, and none of them can eat off anybody else's dish'.[2] Just the same we find Hindus sailing to Aden in Arab ships. But, in comparison with the Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Arabs or Jews, there is little mention of Hindus in the long-distance trade of the Indian Ocean. In the eighth and ninth centuries the Indian Ocean became very much an 'Arab Mediterranean', and the Arab or Muslim trading diaspora along the coasts became predominant. There were, in addition, two other diasporas of trading communities which played an important role in the India trade of early medieval times: those of the Jews and the Parsis. These diasporas have much in common but we will describe them separately, in order of decreasing importance, to bring out the specific features of each. Before proceeding, let us first define our terms.

The concept of a 'trade diaspora' was introduced by Abner Cohen in

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[1] H.C. Verma, *Medieval Routes to India: Baghdad to Delhi. A Study of Trade and Military Routes* (Calcutta, 1978).

[2] Nadvi, 'Commercial Relations', pp. 301-2.

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1971 to describe the interrelated commercial network of 'a nation of socially interdependent, but spatially dispersed communities'.[3] Thus defined, the concept is of comparatively recent origin, even though trading communities fitting this diaspora description are recorded in most parts of the world from the beginnings of urban life. Historians such as Philip Curtin concede that the actual mode of organization of trading diasporas may vary widely, from the informal ties of merely a shared culture, religious solidarity, language, or kinship, to formal and relatively centralized arrangements (as of the *Estado da India* or the Dutch and English East India Companies) underpinned with monopoly rights and military force and empowered to govern as well as trade.[4] There is also thought to be a wide range of possible relationships between the scattered trading communities of a diaspora and the 'host society'; and these relationships again vary with or are dependent on the internal relations existing between the nodes of the diaspora itself.[5] It is essential to the concept as defined above, however, that the merchant communities in their spatial dispersion remain an alien element in the wider society in which they become settled, no matter how variable the patterns of integration may be in practice. Hence the current connotation of the concept is that there are two or more cultures which exist side by side, and that the diaspora merchants are always marginalized socially and politically. Such a concept fits in with the more general perception that in fact all mercantile communities were to a large degree a distinct category – in pre-modern India and the Islamic world as much as elsewhere – and that there was a virtually complete disjunction between trade and (élite) politics.[6] The underlying view of the role and nature of merchants in the Asian setting is basically unhistorical.

Some critics of this conception of the pre-modern trade diaspora and of the compartmentalized nature of trading enterprise (or peddlar activity) have, in effect, pointed out that it can by no means be applied

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[3] A. Cohen, 'Cultural Strategies in the Organization of Trading Diasporas', in: C. Meillassoux (ed.), *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa* (London, 1971).

[4] Curtin, *Cross-cultural trade*, pp. 2-12.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 7.

[6] Cf. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*, pp. 224-6; D. Lombard, 'Questions on the Contact between Europeans and Asian Societies', in: L. Blussé and F. Gaastra (eds), *Companies and Trade* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 179-207; M.N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976).

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universally.[7] More often than not typical diaspora communities like the Badija Naidus, the Sayyids of Golconda or the Mappillas of Malabar appear to be rooted in the broader framework of society and to have become involved in the revenue collection and even to have been able to obtain access to court politics.[8] There are perhaps few communities which upon scrutiny would still seem to fit into an essentially sterile and closed ambit of a diaspora. Perhaps the Armenians, and the private Portuguese and mestiços who were called *casados* conformed to the narrow description.[9] Even the Armenians however had a special relationship to Safawid Persia at the time they began to spread in large numbers in the Indian Ocean and towards Europe, and they could point at the township of Julfa in Isfahan as a 'national' home.[10] In the case of the Muslim, Jewish and Parsi diasporas in the seventh to eleventh centuries there is clearly an intimate connection with changing political and historical circumstances in Persia, the Middle East and India. It is the aim of this chapter to study these trading communities in their context, abandoning the 'closed' conception of the trade diaspora for a more 'open' and historical one.

Muslims

Muslims participating in the India trade were either Arabs or Persians. The India trade of the Arabs had in common with the trade of the Zoroastrian and Nestorian Persians that it long predated Islam. As early as the first century A.D., the anonymous author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* describes the town of *Muziris* (the later Cranganore) as the principal international port of Malabar and as a place which 'abounds in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia and by the Greeks'.[11] According to Pliny, writing in the same century, a large number of Arabs had settled along the Malabar coast – concentrating

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[7] Cf. S. Subrahmanyam, *Trade and the Regional Economy of South India, c. 1550 to 1650* (PhD thesis, Department of Economics, University of Delhi, 1986), pp. 31, 538.

[8] *Ibid.*, and *passim* for a particularly instructive case-study of the Persian trade diaspora in the Bay of Bengal, originating in Golconda (but with ties to Safawid Persia), in which there is no question of a separation of trade and agrarian management and the fiscal polity or court life, the Persian Sayyids as 'portfolio capitalists' being involved in all of this simultaneously.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 538.

[10] Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-5; M.H. Seth, *The Armenians in India* (Calcutta, 1937).

[11] W.H. Schoff (ed. and transl.), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (New York, 1912), p. 44.

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in the central and southern parts – and in Sri Lanka. In antiquity, the people of Yemen and Hadramaut appear to have been especially numerous here. From the coasts of Malabar and Sri Lanka the Arabs reached further, to the Gulf of Bengal, and settlements of Arab traders are mentioned in Canton in the fourth century and again in the first decades of the seventh century.[12]

Up to about the tenth century the largest settlements of Arab and Persian Muslim traders are not found in Malabar however but rather more to the north, in the coastal towns of the Konkan and Gujarat, where in pre-Islamic times the Persians dominated the trade with the west. Here the main impetus to Muslim settlement came from the merchants of the Persian Gulf and Oman, with a minority from Hadramaut. As in Sind, where Arab-Muslim settlement spread in the eighth and ninth centuries, in Gujarat and the Konkan the Arab element of the colonies gradually submerged under the conquests of the Turks and their successors from the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards. When Mahmud of Ghazna destroyed the temple of Somnath in 1026, the Arabs of Gujarat constituted a cluster of scattered Muslim enclaves, without political power, in a milieu which was dominated by Hindus, sometimes Parsis and still a number of Jains. Turkish mamlūks again entered Gujarat in 1197, and in 1298 the region was annexed to Delhi while its Arab-oriented Islam was largely superseded by the Persian-Turkish religious and political forms of the North-Indian sultanate. In the Deccani ports a similar assimilation took place somewhat later in the context of the expansion of the Bahmani sultanate. But in the tenth century the Muslim geographers describe a flourishing Arab mercantile culture on the Gujarat-Konkan coast, and these settlements dated back to the ninth, the eighth and in some cases perhaps even to the seventh century.[13] The Konkan, in particular, supplied a massive amount of teakwood which, during the early conquests, seems to have been indispensable to the Arabs for construction purposes, especially shipbuilding, in Iraq and Arabia. The entire region from Kambaya to Saymūr (south of present-day Bombay) belonged to the Rashtrakuta or *Ballaharā* kings – who dwelt in Mankir

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[12] G.E. Marrison, 'The Coming of Islam to the East Indies', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. XXIV, pt.1 (1955), p. 28; G.R. Tibbetts, 'Pre-Islamic Arabia and Southeast Asia', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. XXV, pt.3 (1956), pp. 182-208; N. Ahmad, 'The Arabs' knowledge of Ceylon', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XIX (1945), p. 225.

[13] Cf. A. Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen*, 2 vols (Vienna, 1875-77), II, p. ii.

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– and although they were 'infidels', as Mas'ūdī says, 'amongst the kings of Sind and Hind none treats the Muslims who are established in their domains with more distinction than the Ballaharā'.[14] In the cities of the *Ballaharā* kingdom the Muslims were 'honoured and protected' and they were allowed to erect their own mosques. Mas'ūdī writes that the largest settlement was that of about 10,000 Muslims in the district of Saymūr; these were a permanently established group by the tenth century, with ancestors who had come from Sīrāf, Oman, Basra, Baghdad and other cities in the Middle East, now 'wearing the same dresses and having their beards grow in the same manner as the infidels'. Mas'ūdī refers to them as *bayāsira* (sg. *baysarī*)[15], explaining that this means that they are 'Muslims born in *al-Hind* of Muslim parents'. Among them were merchants of great distinction, one of which was customarily appointed by the Ballaharā as the head (*hamza*) of the Muslim community. Consequently, even though the Muslims were excluded from political power, 'none but Muslims ruled over them on the part of the Ballaharā (*min qibali ballaharā*)'.[16] Except in Sind, no Muslim communities were founded at this stage beyond the coastal towns. Ibn Rustah presents the Gurjara-Pratiharas as having good relations with the Arab merchants, but no permanent Muslim settlements appear to have spread into the Gurjara territories.[17]

In Malabar and coastal South India and Sri Lanka, generally, the fate of the Arab-Muslim communities was very different from that of those in Sind, Gujarat and the Konkan. Since they were never exposed to northern conquest they could retain their Arab imprint through the ages. Religiously, this was most clearly expressed in the adherence of these Muslims to the *Shāfi'ī* madhhab of Islamic law, as opposed to the *Hanafī* madhhab which was upheld by the Turkish-Persianate states of northern India and the Deccan. This Shāfi'ite legal orientation points to an Arab origin and to continuing contacts with Baghdad and the towns of the Persian Gulf, as well as with Arabia, Yemen and Hadramaut. The same legal tradition was carried by Arab Muslims to Southeast Asia. The

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[14] Mas'ūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 170.

[15] On the complications of the term *bayāsira*, see J.C. Wilkinson, 'Bayāsirah and Bayādīr', *Arabian Studies*, vol. I (1974), pp. 75-85.

[16] Mas'ūdī, *op. cit.*, I, p. 210; M.J. De Goeje (ed.), *Kitāb ṣuwar al-aqālīm of Abū Isḥāq al-Iṣṭakhrī* (Leiden, 1870), p. 173; idem (ed.), *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l mamālik of Abū-l-Qāsim ibn Ḥauqal* (Leiden, 1873), p. 227.

[17] M.J. De Goeje (ed.), *Al-a'lāq an-nafīsa of Ibn Rustah* (Leiden, 1892), p. 135.

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Muslims of South India, in effect, have always been more closely connected with the latter area, especially the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia, and with the Persian Gulf and Arabia, than with most parts of the South-Asian subcontinent proper. And in various ways the Muslim societies which sprang up in South India have continued to show cultural affinities with those of Java and Sumatra in the early stages of Islamization. The geographical location and ecology of the two regions was also markedly similar; Kerala and Sri Lanka are set off from the rest of South Asia by either mountain ridges or sea and, while both regions have a tropical climate with evergreen rainforest and abundant rainfall, both produced typically high-value goods which entered international exchange circuits at coastal entrepots which were situated at river termini.[18]

Unlike the Romans, the Muslim traders who came to South India settled down permanently. The communities which developed here and which later became known as the Nāvayat of the Canara coast, the Mappillas of Malabar (and the Ilappai of the Coromandel, on which see *infra*) not only shared the same Arab/Shāfiʿite orientation but all had the same origin and social function.[19] Obscure as their earliest history may be, we know that by the fourteenth century, when Ibn Battuta visited these areas, the Muslims had come to dominate maritime commerce throughout South India. From Ibn Battuta's description it is evident that Muslims were present, at that time, in every major port of Malabar and that, like their ancestors, they kept arriving from the Persian Gulf and South Arabia. Since important trade links had existed between South India and South Arabia throughout antiquity, it is not unlikely that Muslims arrived here at the very beginning of Islam. Without doubt the first Muslims who came to Malabar departed from the Arabian peninsula.[20] Some of the *tangal*, the religious leaders among the Mappillas, still claim a Hadrami ancestor or claim descent from the Prophet's family. Arab merchants of South Arabia are known to have been particularly active in proselytization during the first two centuries

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[18] S. Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier: The Māppiḷas of Malabar, 1498-1922* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 11-12, 26.

[19] G. Bouchon, 'Quelques Aspects de l'Islamisation des Régions Maritimes de l'Inde à l'Époque Médiévale (XII-XVIe s.)', *Puruṣārtha*, 9 (1986), p. 30; idem, 'Les Musulmans du Kerala à l'Époque de la Découverte Portugaise', *Mare Luso-Indicum*, 2 (1973), pp. 18-19.

[20] A. Cherian, 'The Genesis of Islam in Malabar', *Indica*, vol. 6, no. 1 (March 1969), p. 8.

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of Islam, and the predominance of the Shāfi'ī school can also be related to Hadrami influence.

Colonies of Arab and Persian Muslims were definitely becoming established in Malabar, as in various other places between Sind and Canton, from the eighth century. Quilon (Ar. *Kūlam*) is first heard of as an important stopover in Malabar for Arab ships on their way to China. The earliest Muslim tomb discovered in Malabar is near Calicut and dates from 788 A.D. According to the sixteenth-century Malabar historian Zayn ad-Din the first mosques were founded in Malabar by missionaries from Arabia in the ninth century. And there is inscriptional evidence from Quilon to confirm the presence of Muslims at that time. Other inscriptions allow us to date the foundation of a mosque at Māṭāyi (where an important Islamic community developed) to 1124 A.D.[21] The first Arab account of the Siraf-Canton route, the ninth-century *Akhbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind*, does not yet mention Muslim settlements in Malabar. But its author descended only at Quilon – a place where Arab and Persian ships customarily stopped to take in local spices and to obtain Chinese merchandise. Other Muslim authors of the same period are badly informed about South India as well; they mention the Muslims of Sind and Gujarat, and they speak of Jains and Buddhists but are equally silent about Muslim communities in Malabar. None of this disproves that Muslims can be found in considerable numbers at this time within the fold of the Jewish and Christian guilds – which, as we will see in more detail, still controlled much of maritime commerce – , but are as yet invisible as separate communities. There were, in the era before the Muslims became dominant in the economic life of Malabar, the *anjuvaṇṇam* and the *maṇigrāmam* and two native *cheṭṭi* mercantile guilds, and Muslims, until the eleventh century, appear only as members of the two former. The Mappillas and other South-Indian Muslims, whatever their date of first settlement, emerged from obscurity several centuries after the rise of Islam. Probably they originally inserted themselves in local society by a special Islamic institution which was particularly vigorous among certain tribes of South Arabia and is still in vogue today among the Muslims of the Maldives and Calicut, and which was called *mut'a*, a 'temporary marriage'.[22] By this means they may have

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[21] *Ibid.*; Dale, *Islamic Society*, p. 24; G. Bouchon, *Mamale de Cananor: Un adversaire de l'Inde portugaise (1507-1528)* (Paris, 1975), p. 10.

[22] V. D'Souza, 'A unique custom regarding mahr observed by certain Indian Muslims of South India', *Islamic Culture*, vol. 28-29 (1954-55), p. 274.

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ensured themselves of a spouse in the harbours which they frequented, and this was of extra importance in Malabar on account of the strong taboos on commensality which developed here among the Hindus. The women with whom such marriages were contracted were often, if not always, of low fishermen and mariner castes. Their offspring multiplied in the harbour towns and belonged to the mother, in conformity to the matriarchal custom of Malabar, but was raised in Sunni Islam.

Thus the Mappillas (Malayalam *Māpilā*; Tamil *Māppiḷḷa*, a contraction of *mahā*, 'big' and *piḷḷa*, 'child', hence 'big children') grew as a foreign community mixed with the lowest castes of Malabari natives, emerging in about the thirteenth century as the privileged intermediaries of trade with the Islamic world. As Muslims they began to differentiate themselves from the Jewish and Christian business enterprises from the eleventh century, when the Colas sacked Quilon, disrupted the organization of the trade guilds, and redirected the trade to the smaller ports. In terms of their social function, therefore, the Mappilla Muslims were merely the latest group of outsiders who came to dominate the overseas commerce of Malabar, taking over the role of the Greeks and Romans and their successors, the Nestorian Christians and the Jews. Since antiquity, in fact, maritime activity had largely been in the hands of foreigners. On the other hand, the stereotype ritual isolation and the unusually rigid caste barriers and concepts of pollution of Malayali society were a relatively novel phenomenon, traces of which do not appear before the eighth century. Such 'brahmanization' of the social order as occurred in the early medieval period adversely affected the still relatively open maritime orientation of Malabar in the earlier centuries, when Buddhism and Jainism held strong positions. It was in the period of the Kulashekhara of Mahadayapuram, in the eighth to twelfth centuries, that the natives of Malabar became almost exclusively agrarian-oriented and brahmans rose to dominance who fostered an increasingly obsessive thalassophobia among the caste Hindus, while permitting the Jews and the Muslims to seize the overseas trade.[23] It is no coincidence that the implantation of Muslim communities becomes better visible the more caste prohibitions against trans-oceanic travel and trade seem to obtain a hold on the Hindu population and turns it to agrarian pursuits and production, away from trade and maritime transport. This, at least, is what the Tuscans and Venetians observe in the thirteenth century. Such prohibitions and taboos had been enshrined in legal texts of an-

[23] Bouchon, 'Musulmans du Kerala', pp. 7-14.

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cient date, but in the first eight to ten centuries A.D. the prevalence of Buddhism had minimized their influence. Legal digests like the *Baudhāyana Dharmashāstra* or *Mānava Dharmashāstra* imposed restrictions on maritime travel for high-caste Hindus and prescribed the avoidance of those who had undertaken such travel. Especially in Malabar these principles seem to have been rediscovered and applied with vigour. It was not so much the sea voyage itself which the brahmanical creed considered as a grave offence but the neglect of purification rites which it inevitably brought. Equally problematic was the need to accept food from impure hands and the pollution resulting from contact with *mlecchas*. A brahman who went to sea was to be excluded from the religious festivals and was declared *apaṅkteya*, i.e. he was no longer allowed to participate in the caste meals. From the eighth century these and other principles of purity and pollution are found at work. The philosopher Shankara, a Shaivite brahman who probably lived in Malabar in the last years of the same century played an essential role in the restoration of brahman influence and contributed to the effacement of Buddhism. In the late ninth century we find the Cera kings encouraging the immigration of brahmans from outside of Malabar. The same maritime taboos are in evidence in the sixteenth century, when they often created unique diplomatic difficulties for the Portuguese. At Calicut, for instance, in the year 1500, Pedralvares Cabral decided to retain some Hindu notables as hostages on board of his ships while attending the return of his Portuguese men from ashore. The Zamorin demanded their immediate return however 'because they were gentilhommes and could neither eat nor drink on board'. Negotiations could be resumed only when these notables – who were probably Nāyars – were replaced by Gujarati Muslims.[24]

It is striking to see that the ethos of South-Indian Muslims of the harbour towns was the exact opposite of the isolationism and rural orientation of Malayali Hindu society. Among the Muslims, the hierarchy of social ranks came to be determined by the tradition of physical mobility and participation in trade. Normally the widening of commercial networks would be accompanied by the foundation of new mosques and other Islamic institutions both at home and in the overseas centres with which the new trade links were established.[25] Given their great physical

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[24] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[25] S. Bayly, 'Islam in Southern India. 'Purist' or 'Syncretic'?', in: C.A. Bayly and D.H.A. Kolff (eds), *Two Colonial Empires: Comparative Essays on the History of India and Indonesia in the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden, 1986), pp. 40-41.

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mobility, it is not surprising that the position of Muslims among the Hindu majority in Malabar was extremely ambivalent. Ibn Battuta writes that 'the Muslims are the people who are most respected in this country, but the natives do not eat with them and don't allow them to enter their houses'.[26] On the one hand the Mappillas and their predecessors, thanks to their familiarity with maritime commerce and their knowledge of the Islamic languages, were indispensable in the trade with the Muslim Middle East. But, on the other hand, the ritualized barrier of caste segregated the Muslims from the social life of the Hindus. Restrictions on commensality were applied, and 'avoidance' was routinely practised on the open roads.[27] The situation which Ibn Battuta describes in the fourteenth century was probably not much different in the tenth century, or was beginning to take this form, perhaps hesitantly at first, then hardening gradually. In the roadstations along Malabar special resthouses were reserved for Muslims, the *dyār al-muslimīn*, without which the Muslim traders could hardly be expected to have travelled. Riotous conflict between Hindus and the Muslim inhabitants of the reserved suburbs outside or inside the towns is also in evidence. Especially the brahman *kuffār*, says Ibn Battuta, 'hate the Muslims'.[28] And of course the barrier of pollution separated not only Muslims from Hindus but also imposed itself upon the relations of upper and lower castes, including all agricultural labourers who worked the land of high-caste owners.[29] The military caste of the Nāyars became the special custodians of this separation, the sanctions of which were considerably more violent than was normally the case anywhere else in India. The ritual seclusion of women was quite strong among the Nāyar themselves, and even more so among the Nambūtiri brahmans. Women of these two castes could not enter the trading towns without becoming polluted. Such caste structures could not but reinforce the social isolation of the Hindus of Malabar. In this way, a strict complementarity of functions developed from about the eighth century, and since, unlike in Gujarat, no Muslim conquest occurred in the south, these functions and their social representatives were polarized further and further. The agrarian economy and society eventually were to become entirely dominated by the Nambūtiri brahmans and the Nāyars but neither of these

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[26] C. Defrémery and B.R. Sanguinetti (eds and transl.), *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, 4 vols (Paris, 1853-58), IV, p. 75.
[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 72-87.
[29] Dale, *Islamic Society*, p. 22.

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castes was directly involved in commerce. The only Malâyali trading caste of later times were the Vyâbâris, but these were concerned primarily with internal trade.[30] In the fifteenth century most commercial activity and all foreign trade were in the hands of four non-Malâyali communities which enjoyed considerable autonomy; two of these were Hindu, the Chettis of the Coromandel and the Banias of Gujarat, and two were Muslim, the 'Pardesis' from Arabia, Persia and elsewhere (a semi-autonomous group which was socially and culturally distinct from Malayali society), and the Mappillas, then a group of prosperous maritime merchants who had multiplied through intermarriage with local Hindus.[31]

The Mappillas, assimilating converted Hindus from early on, became ethnically quite diverse. They spoke Malayalam and dressed like the Nâyars, from whom they often took over the matrilineal kinship organization as well.[32] In some clans the *tangals* used both their Arab *sayyid* name and the matrilineal naming system. The style of the traditional wooden mosque architecture of Malabar equally shows strong influences of Hindu temple building rather than North-Indian Islamic architecture.[33] The Mappillas, 'who had no amir amongst themselves to govern them', were heavily patronized by the pagan rulers of Malabar, especially by, as Zayn ad-Din writes in the sixteenth century, 'that friend of the Muslims the Zamorin'.[34] Duarte Barbosa estimated the Mappillas to be twenty percent of the population and thought them so influential that Malabar would have had a 'Moorish king' if the Portuguese had not come to India.[35] The three Malayali royal dynasties which exercised power in the late fifteenth century, the Kolattiri Rajas, the Zamorins of Calicut, and the Tiruvadis of Venad were all descendants of semi-autonomous provincial governors of the Ceras, the so-called Nâṭu Utaiyavar, and inscriptions trace them back to the ninth and tenth centuries.[36] Tradition describes the last Cera emperor of Kerala, Ceruman Perumal, dividing his empire among such officials before he converted to Islam and went on pilgrimage to Mecca in 822 A.D. Ances-

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[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 23.

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

[32] V. D'Souza, 'Kinship Organization and Marriage Customs among the Moplahs on the South-West Coast of India', in: I. Ahmad (ed.), *Family, Kinship and Marriage among the Muslims in India* (Delhi, 1976), p. 141.

[33] Dale, *Islamic Society*, pp. 26-27.

[34] Zayn ad-Din, *Tuḥfat al-Mujâhidîn* (Hyderabad, Deccan, n.d.), pp. 12-17.

[35] Dale, *Islamic Society*, p. 24.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

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tors of the Zamorins in the tenth century controlled the neighbourhood of Eṛāḷanāṭu to the west of Calicut. They rose to prominence in perhaps the eleventh century and subsequently transformed Calicut into a great coastal emporium. It is not known how exactly the Zamorins extended their territorial influence but, clearly, the trade shift of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries and the Zamorin's patronage of Muslims from abroad were decisive. Trade had always been of the greatest importance to the Malabar kings while their authority in the countryside remained limited. Even the Zamorins extended merely a form of suzerainty over interior chieftains. There were also Muslim 'harbour authorities' (*shahbandars*) and there were 'chiefs of the Muslims' (*kabīr al-muslimīn*) but, like in Gujarat, the Muslims wielded no independent political power anywhere in Malabar. The main task of the 'chiefs' of the Muslims – as of those of other foreign merchant groups – was the regulation of succession and inheritance problems. We learn from Ibn Battuta that it was the general practice in *al-Hind* as well as in *as-Sūdān* that such internal affairs were settled without interference of the 'infidel kings'. In other ways however the Muslim traders and settlers were clearly subordinate to the Hindu rajas, who appear to have been effective guardians of their trading interests and the safety of the coastal roads.

The Mappillas, then, developed intimate ties with Hindu kings and with Hindu society, but in spite of such ties they made vigorous attempts to prove the pure Arab origin of their religion and thereby to enhance their status vis-à-vis other Muslim groups, particularly the descendants of the Afghan and Turkish invaders of North India. As Buchanan noted in the early nineteenth century: 'Being of Arabic extraction, they look upon themselves as of more honourable birth than the Tartar Mussulmans of North India who of course are of a contrary opinion'.[37] Some Mappillas say they have ancestors who escaped from the terror of Al-Hajjaj in Iraq at the end of the seventh century.[38] Others maintain that their first convert was a Malabar king who had an interview with the Prophet himself.[39] The Malayali Arabs discredit these claims and generally follow their Malabari historian Zayn ad-Din who speaks of a convert king of Malabar, known as Ceruman Perumal or Shakarwati, travelling to Arabia in 822 A.D.[40] According to Zayn ad-

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[37] Quoted by Y. Friedmann, 'Qiṣṣat Shakarwatī Farmāḍ: A tradition concerning the introduction of Islām into Malabar', *Israel Oriental Studies*, V (1975), p. 245.

[38] Marrison, 'Coming of Islam', p. 39.

[39] W. Logan, *Malabar*, 2 vols (Madras, 1951), I, p. 23.

[40] Zayn ad-Din, *op. cit.*

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Din, this king joined a band of Muslim pilgrims who came to Cranganore on their return to Arabia from a visit to Adam's peak in Sri Lanka and who had told him of the miracle of the division of the moon (Sura 54/1). The king then decided to go to Arabia himself and converted to Islam, but before he departed he selected officers to rule over his provinces during his absence. By the time he intended to return – in order to disseminate the faith – the king fell ill and died. Having died in Arabia he became known as 'the Zamorin', *as-Samuri* ('the mariner', from Skt. *samudra*, 'sea-'), and the tradition of his disappearance is quite common in Malabar. His returned companions are supposed to have erected mosques at various places: in Kūlam, Kalankallūr, Shaliyāt, Fandarīna, Darmafattan, Jurfattan, Hīlī, Kanjrakūt, Manjalūr, and Fākkanūr. By a curious confusion of fact and legend the Zamorin of later times disappeared from the list of officers among whom the departing king partitioned Malabar. Zayn ad-Din has it that at that time the Zamorin 'possessed himself of the harbour of Calicut . . . to which wealth and merchants of all nations flocked . . . '. From the vagueness of the accounts relating to the disappearance of the king the tradition also evolved that he lived on from generation to generation and later returned as the Zamorin. But all Malayali traditons – Hindu, Christian and Muslim – agree that Ceruman Perumal was the last all-Kerala emperor (hence his name *Shakarwatī*, i.e. *cakravartin*, 'universal emperor'), who reigned at Cranganore, and that after him it broke up in a number of smaller independent principalities.[41] While the Muslims claim he went to Arabia and became a Muslim, the Buddhists, Jains, Hindus, and Christians equally hold the last Perumal to have been an adherent of their faith. And whether Perumal's conversion took place in the ninth century or not, it is a tradition which is very popular among the Malabar Muslims and which probably developed in Malabar itself, even though similar stories of 'Shakarwati' can be found in Islamic literature outside of India.[42] According to the *Qiṣṣat Shakarwatī* the conversion of the Mappillas was effected by some of the Prophet's companions who established mosques with *waqf* endowments in the third decade of Islamic history.[43] Most likely the tradition was intended to support the ancient rights of the Muslim families who held juridical positions in Malabar and was then used to prove the antiquity

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[41] Logan, *Malabar*, I, p. 24; Cherian, 'Genesis of Islam', pp. 4-5.
[42] Friedmann, 'Qiṣṣat', pp. 241-2.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

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and respectable origin of the Mappilla community in contrast to the North-Indian immigrant and convert Muslims.[44] Historically the conversion of Ceruman Perumal is not attested, whether to Islam or any other faith. The story of the conversion of the king and the partition of Malabar probably evolved from his having given important privileges to the Muslim trading communities.[45]

The earliest historical evidence of Muslim settlement on the Coromandel coast and in the Tamil country dates from the ninth century; this is a Tamil copper plate edict of 875 A.D., in which the king of Madurai grants asylum to a group of Arab immigrants.[46] Famous missionaries of the faith, such as Sayyid Nathar Shah, are however not heard of before the early eleventh century, and it is from that time – the great age of Cola expansion – that Muslim settlement on the Coromandel coast and in Madurai appears to have gained momentum.[47] As in Malabar, the connection with North India was and remained thin. A northern Muslim ruler, Muhammad bin Tughluq, briefly asserted his sovereignty in Madurai in the fourteenth century. But this did not prevent the Muslim merchants who settled in coastal Tamilnadu from maintaining their distinctive Arab traditions throughout the later period. These Tamil-speaking Muslims became known as *Ilappai* or 'Labbai', a term said to be a corruption of *arabī*.[48] Like the Mappillas, the coastal Muslims of the Coromandel often became prosperous maritime traders and shipping magnates, and they were Shāfiʿite as well. In later times they assumed the appellations of *maraikkāyar* or *kayalar*, by which they distinguished themselves as a 'maritime' people from the rural Hanafī Muslims who sank roots in the Tamil hinterland and who were cultivators, weavers, petty traders and the like. With this distinction in mind, some sources use the term 'Labbai' only for the interior communities.

The assertion of a rigorously purist version of Arab Islam by the great trading families of the ports of Kayalpatanam, Kilakarai and Adirampatanam as it occurred especially in the British period in opposition to the syncretic, 'degenerate' Islam of the countryside produced greatly disfigured accounts of the foundation of these communities. The

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[44] *Ibid.*, p. 245.
[45] Cherian, 'Genesis of Islam', p. 11.
[46] M.Y. Kokan, *Arabic and Persian in Carnatic* (Madras, 1974), p. 53.
[47] T. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (London, 1913), p. 267; Marrison, 'Coming of Islam', p. 35.
[48] Bayly, 'Islam in Southern India', pp. 37-59.

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maraikkāyar shipping élites put ever more emphasis on their religious, linguistic and ethnic distinctiveness and thus became the custodians of a special Islamic port orthodoxy, banning the folk rites of image worship and concomitant animal sacrifice of the inland Tamil Muslims, whose knowledge of Arabic was limited and who were heavily influenced by Tamil Hinduism. The eradication or suppression of the more conspicuous elements of shared Hindu rites, and the cultivation of a self-conscious purity rather than religious enthusiasm and ecstasy, came with the Maraikkayar expansion of colonial times, when the economic and social balance was tilted decisively in their favour. The trading clans of the three ports now also revived the tradition that they were the descendants of the earliest Muslim settlers in India, who were Arabian traders in the tenth and eleventh centuries and who constructed the first mosques there. Like the other coastal Muslims of South India and Sri Lanka, the coastal Labbai, particularly those of Kayalpatanam – their most prominent centre – , thus stressed that their religious heritage of Quranic scholarship and mosque-oriented observance, next to their Shāfiʿite legal orientation, derived from their history of direct links with Arabia. The other Tamil Muslims, the rural Labbai of the Hanafī orientation of North India, came to be stigmatized as mere converts, tainted with religious impurity, and alleged to have received Islam at a much later date. Since long, therefore, the Maraikkayar have preferred marriage connections with the non-Tamil Shāfiʿites of Sri Lanka and Indonesia to those with the rural Labbai and North-Indian or Deccani Muslims. Participating in maritime trade, they have always cherished a tradition of physical mobility. Crossing the Palk Strait to the periodic pearl fisheries of Sri Lanka, many Labbai turned to gem and pearl dealing and then moved further afield to the international entrepots of Java, Sumatra and the Malay peninsula. The term 'Labbai' in its wider connotation came to mean 'merchant', 'jeweller', and it is a testimony to the important role of the Tamil Labbai in the spread of Islam in the Malay world that the Malay language adopted the same term *lebai*.[49] The expansion of Maraikkayar commerce was expressed everywhere in the proliferation of mosques and madrasas.

This new emphasis on a properly Islamic life-style does not mean, of course, that in practice the coastal Labbai ever maintained a tradition as exclusive and austere as their latter-day orthodoxy prescribes. At no

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[49] *Ibid.*; G.W.J. Drewes, 'New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 124 (1968), p. 459.

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time were any of the Labbai really isolated from the beliefs and practices of the wider Hindu society and from the popular Islam of the Tamil Muslim majority.[50] Quite early a sacred geography developed which linked Hindu and Muslim sacred sites in a single network, and a common religious vocabulary was shared by Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. The oldest mosques, even at Kayalpatanam, contain lotus columns and feature Hindu architectural designs. Instead of Arabic or Urdu the medium of worship and religious scholarship became the hybrid Arabic-Tamil. The Kayalpatanam Labbai refuse to credit Indian Muslim rulers with the endowment of their mosques and religious institutions but there is a long tradition of patronage, beginning with the earliest Hindu kings and running on to the Hindu *nāyaka* rulers of Madurai in the sixteenth century. The Tamil Hindu rulers supported their Muslim clients against the Portuguese onslaught in the same way that the Hindu Zamorin of Calicut supported the Mappillas. The dichotomy of 'purist' maritime Islam versus 'hybrid' hinterland forms as it developed in particular in the nineteenth century therefore breaks down and is too limited and too static to do justice to the historical development of Tamil Islam. But it is a fact that the Islamic orientation of the coastal towns of the Coromandel retained an Arab imprint to a significant degree and that this distinguishes their tradition from the continental forms of Indian Islam. And also, this Arab-Islamic element was introduced and consolidated itself in the eighth or ninth to eleventh centuries.

The island of Sri Lanka, which the Arabs called *Sarandīb*, accommodated settlers from the Yemen and Hadramaut as early as Malabar, i.e. in the first century A.D.[51] In the fifth and sixth centuries, Persian traders – Zoroastrians, Manichaeans and Nestorian Christians – predominated in Sri Lanka. The Muslim sources of the tenth to seventeenth centuries sometimes assign the first Muslim contacts with the island to the reign of the rightly-guided caliphs.[52] A restricted number of Western scholars also date the first Muslim settlements in Sri Lanka to the seventh century.[53] The first historical evidence, however, of a Muslim presence in Sri Lanka is found in the conquest literature of Sind and

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[50] Bayly, *op. cit.*, p. 43 ff.

[51] Tibbetts, 'Pre-Islamic Arabia and Southeast Asia'; Ahmad, 'The Arabs' knowledge of Ceylon', p. 225.

[52] Cherian, 'Genesis of Islam', p. 2.

[53] Cf. Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders', p. 37.

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does not go back earlier than the beginning of the eighth century. It is Baladhurī who at that time points at 'Muslim women who were born in Sarandīb, their fathers having been merchants . . .'.[54] The Muslims had a vested religious interest in Adam's Peak, the place where Adam is supposed to have done penance for 200 years after his banishment from Paradise. Hence the story of the group of Muslims who went there in the ninth century and were then joined by the Malabar king at Cranganore on their way back to Arabia. It is certain that the ports of western Sri Lanka, next to Quilon, were important Muslim entrepots before the eleventh century. And Muslims were engaged as mercenaries in Malabar as well as in Sri Lanka around the same time. Idrisi mentions four Muslim ministers next to four Jews, four Christians and four natives, at the court of the king of Sarandīb in the twelfth century.[55] Early links were established between the Muslims of Sarandīb and their co-religionists in the Middle East, Malabar, Tamilnadu, and Southeast Asia largely through trade.

Beyond South India and Sri Lanka proper, the Muslim diaspora extended to the remote island archipelagos in the central and eastern Indian Ocean, the Maldives, Laccadives, Andaman and Nicobar islands, and to the Bengal river delta. Needless to say that the Muslims included these in *al-Hind* without reservation. The Laccadives (Skt. *lakṣadvīpa*, 'the hundred thousand islands') are the northernmost and smallest of the archipelagos in the Central Indian Ocean, consisting of 27 islands (most of which have always been uninhabited). The Laccadive islands' population is ethnically and linguistically related to the Malayalam-speaking Dravidian peoples and the Mappillas of the Malabar coast. The Maldive islands, by contrast, and the Minicoy – together comprising about 1200 islands, of which less than 200 became permanently inhabited – have a population which is related to the Sinhalese-speaking Indo-Europeans of Sri Lanka. A third island archipelago, that of the Chagos, was possibly known to Arab and Malay navigators but was never settled by Muslims and, after being discovered by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and being colonized by the French in the late eighteenth century, it remained Roman-Catholic until its depopulation

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[54] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Cairo, 1932), p. 424. See also the *Chachnāma* (Daudpota ed.), p. 89.

[55] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 28.

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in 1966.[56] The Laccadives and Maldives turned almost entirely to Sunni Islam and the Shāfiʿī madhhab. Certain differences persisted. Before converting to Islam, the Laccadives had been Hinduized by settlers from the Malabar coast, and after becoming Muslim they maintained a caste hierarchy and the Malabari matrilineal kinship system. The Maldive and Minicoy islands were Theravada-Buddhist before they became Muslim, and remained without caste, while retaining a patrilineal system. The conversion of both island groups was probably completed by the thirteenth century. According to the Maldivian *Taʾrīkh*, the king of the Maldives converted in 1153 A.D., but the Islamization process must have started long before that date. The first Arab account, of the ninth century, refers to all islands of the Central Indian Ocean archipelago as the *Dībayāt*.[57] Its coconut products and cauris are given great attention, and it appears that its trading connections were already well-established. Even before the rise of Islam, the Arabs must have had knowledge of these islands, as the northern Laccadives lie across the route from Southern Arabia to South India, while the Maldives lie across the route to Sri Lanka and the Far East. Muslims, predominantly Arabs or Malabaris but also Persians, arrived as merchants and sailors in the eighth or ninth century. In the tenth and eleventh centuries we have indubitable evidence that the predominant trade from these islands was to Sīrāf and Oman rather than to the Yemen and Hadramaut.

Bengal's river delta and Arakan and Chittagong are identified by Masʿūdī and others as belonging to a kingdom of *al-Hind* which 'extends over land and sea'.[58] The Bay of Bengal was known to the Arabs as the 'sea of Harkand', in the southern part of which were 'numerous islands' (the present Andaman and Nicobar islands), whose wealth was constituted by cauris. These cauris were collected by the queen of the islands and exported to Bengal and Siam.[59] Arabs visited the islands but appear to have established permanent mercantile settlements in the Bay of Bengal only about Dacca and Arakan, i.e. in the south-east, which was the most vital zone for long-distance maritime trade. Arab settlement, with a measure of juridical autonomy, focused on Mainamati and Lalmai, thereby bringing to an end the commercial priority of ports of south-west Bengal. The Arab presence in this heavily urbanized and

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[56] A.D.W. Forbes, 'Southern Arabia and the Islamicisation of the Central Indian Ocean Archipelagos', *Archipel*, 21 (1981), pp. 55-92.

[57] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. 3, n. 4.

[58] Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 173; Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, pp. 3, 14, 35-36.

[59] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, pp. 3, 35-36.

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prosperous region is attested archaeologically and by the findings of early- and late-Abbasid dinars and dirhams.

Indonesia and the Malay archipelago appear to have been less important in the Arab trading world of this period than China. The China trade was a set affair before the middle of the ninth century but in the area around Malacca and the Sunda strait there were at that time merely transit trading stations, even though local commodities were obtained by barter and the Arabs did visit some of the ports of Shrivijaya regularly.[60] Settlements of Arab traders in Canton, by contrast, are already heard of in the fourth and early seventh centuries, and the Arab maritime accounts, especially the *Akhbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa-l-Hind* of 851 A.D., give detailed descriptions of the Arab establishments in China. The Arabic accounts also inform us that the first Arabs who came here, as well as the first Jews, originated from Oman or came via Oman from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea before sailing along the Malabar coast, Malaya's Kalāh (probably Kedah), down the Straits and then onwards via Cochin-China and Champa.[61] There is a huge amount of Chinese material on the colonies of the *Ta-shih* in China from the middle of the eighth century, i.e. about a century before the Arab descriptions become available. At that time the Arabs are found as far as Korea (Sīlā).

Since the Islamic trade with the Archipelago was based in South India and Sri Lanka and since ships bound for China sailed straight through, settlement on the 'islands of the eastern sea' spread relatively slowly. The first allusions to a Muslim presence in the Malay and Indonesian archipelago come from the Umayyad period. A group of Alid refugees is alleged to have arrived in the time of 'Uthman.[62] These may have set up a first colony in Ṣarf, a site which is perhaps in West Sumatra or the Malay Peninsula, in the second half of the seventh century. But elsewhere there were no more than trading posts and the first Arab tombstones are found in Champa in 1039 and 1082. The Chinese annals contain an odd story of a Prince of the *Ta-shih* who came to the throne in 674 A.D. in a place which some scholars have located on the westcoast of Sumatra as well as in Lāmurī, near the site of Achin. The Chinese however mention no other Muslim settlements in the archipelago as ear-

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[60] Rose Di Meglio, 'Arab Trade', pp. 108-9.
[61] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, XXXIII, n. 2; Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders', p. 37.
[62] G.R. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts containing Material on South-East Asia* (Leiden and London, 1979), p. 63, note 1.

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ly as that and it is more likely that this Prince of the *Ta-shih* should be located in Arabia itself, as some later Chinese authors are in fact apt to confuse the westcoast of Sumatra with Arabia. The story, moreover, is not confirmed anywhere else.[63] All we have from before the middle of the ninth century is another stray reference to an Arab merchant residing among the Khmer in Cambodia.[64] It was only after a rebellion had occurred in China in 878 A.D. under the leadership of Huang-Chao, when the foreign colonies – including the Arab or Muslim ones – in China were uprooted, that trade in Indonesia surged and an exodus of Arab settlers occurred towards Indonesia.[65] Within a century after this exodus the change in status of the Muslim trading posts becomes quite noticeable in the sources. Kalāh in particular appears to have gathered large numbers of Muslims from the west only after it was transformed into a colony by the Arabs hailing from China. In the late tenth century the Fatimid Al-ʿAzīz writes that 'the isle of Kalāh, which is in the sea of *al-Hind*, has a prosperous town which is inhabited by Muslims, Hindus and Persians'.[66] After being expelled from Chinese navigational waters the Arabs founded yet another settlement at Srībūza, near modern Palembang, the capital of 'the Maharaja, the Lord of Zābaj', i.e. Shrivijaya.[67] In Champa, as we know from inscriptions, settlement spread by the early eleventh century, and trading colonies founded at this period are probably at the origin of the present-day Muslim communities in Annam and of the P'u clan which found its way back to China after it was re-opened to foreign trade. In any case, there was a second line of penetration from China, via Champa or the eastcoast of the Malay Peninsula to east Java. Here the first tombstone – the stone of Leran (Gresik) – dates from 1082 or 1102. Lāmurī, on the northernmost end of Sumatra, may have become a substantial centre of Muslim trade in the tenth to eleventh centuries. This was the first stop in the archipelago for Indian Muslims, and it was in this region that the Islamic religion first spread among the coastal city states by the end of the thirteenth century. From about the turn of the tenth century Muslim traders also visited areas beyond the domination of Shrivijaya. As Islam had become the great religion of commerce throughout the Indian Ocean, the mixed trading communities of the harbours in Indonesia also grad-

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[63] Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders', pp. 37-38; Drewes, 'New Light', pp. 453-4.
[64] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, XXXIII, n. 2; Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders', p. 39.
[65] Tibbetts, *ibid.*, p. 38; Rose Di Meglio, 'Arab Trade', p. 109.
[66] Tibbetts, *ibid.*
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 39; Rose di Meglio, 'Arab Trade', pp. 109-10.

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ually became Muslim. These new centres continued to flourish after Chinese ports were re-opened to foreign traders under the Sung, from 979 A.D. onwards.[68] Until the thirteenth century the Arabic sources give no further clue to the coastal Islamization of the archipelago, but the twelfth-century Chinese author Chau Ju-Kua mentions *Ta-shih* in a number of places.[69]

It is thus clear that Arabs brought Islam to Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula. But the question where these Arabs themselves came from is less easy to answer and still the subject of debate. Since they adhered to the Shāfiʿite rite a link with Egypt was first presumed. Then, considering that the trade route went via Gujarat and Malabar, Snouck Hurgronje and others concluded a South-Indian origin of the Arabs in Indonesia, and for the first time the idea that Islam necessarily had to have been brought here by Arabs from Arabia or Egypt was abandoned. Snouck Hurgronje considered the year 1200 as the earliest date of the Islamization of parts of the Indonesian archipelago by Muslim merchants from South India; settling in the harbour towns and marrying local women. Gujarat is less likely to have been important as a place of origin since Cambay was still a predominantly Hindu city as late as 1293. Contacts with Malabar were established centuries before that date, and the idea of a South-Indian origin is in agreement with the Malay tradition which points at intimate ties with the Shāfiʿite Muslims of Sri Lanka, the Mappillas of Malabar and the Maraikkāyars of the Coromandel coast. Influence from Gujarat is not in evidence before the first half of the seventeenth century, when Nuruddin ar-Raniri came to Achin.[70] There had, on all accounts, been Muslim trade and Muslim settlement in Southeast Asia for centuries before substantial conversions occurred. The change took place in the thirteenth century and particularly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when Islam became important as a political force. Trade no longer played an independent role in this transformation. The Islamization of Indonesia, like its earlier 'Indianization', as Van Leur pointed out, was a process determined by political situations and political motives. Rulers of the newly-risen coastal states of northern Sumatra and Malacca adopted Islam in their struggle against Siam, China and especially the Hindu regime of

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[68] Rose Di Meglio, 'Arab Trade', p. 110.
[69] Marrison, 'Coming of Islam', p. 28.
[70] Drewes, 'New Light', pp. 439-45.

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Majapahit in interior Java. With the coming of the Portuguese, religion and political expansion became even more intermingled.[71]

Jews

In the case of the Jews it becomes even more evident that the diaspora concept, to be meaningful, has to be related to a context and to historical circumstances. The word 'diaspora' itself had first been used by the Greek-speaking Jews and in the New Testament as an equivalent of the Hebrew *galoeth*, i.e. 'exile' in an abstract sense. It hence came to refer to those Jews who after the Babylonian Exile were living outside Palestine. But only in the early Islamic caliphate the Jews began to develop an important 'trade diaspora', and it was only then that the ancient Jewish communities in India succeeded in re-establishing links with the Middle East and emerged from obscurity. We will also see that the fate of most Jewish communities in India remained intimately linked to that of the Middle-Eastern Jews and that their fortune followed the political vicissitudes of Islam. The eighth to twelfth centuries, in summary, were the palmy age of the Jews in India, but Jewish success in India was dependent on the presence of Jews in the Islamic Middle East and Egypt and hence did not survive the latter's migration to Europe.

In the early centuries of Islamic history Jewish communities could be found in almost every city of the caliphate, and Jews participated in trade ventures far beyond the frontiers of the Islamic state. Everywhere, from North Africa and Egypt to Persia and Khurasan and in India as far as Malabar, the Jewish communities had originated in antiquity. In many places the Jewish presence became that of a substantial minority as early as in Roman times. At the time of the Claudian census in 48 A.D. there were perhaps 6,944,000 Jews within the Roman Empire, some 10% of the total population; this however fell to about 1½ million in late-classical times due to assimilation and various economic and demographic factors. There were well-organized Jewish communities in many of the *civitates* of Western Europe in the early Middle Ages, and there were many in Southern Spain, Sicily and Southern Italy.[72] On the

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[71] J.C. Van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History* (The Hague and Bandung, 1955), p. 112.

[72] B.S. Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Minneapolis, 1977); P. Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (London, 1987), pp. 112, 171.

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eve of the Muslim conquests however the Jews of Iraq or *Babylonia* still appear to have been particularly numerous and here they were second in number only to the Nestorian Christians.[73] In effect, when Baghdad became the capital of Islam and trade surged in the eighth and ninth centuries, the Babylonian Jewry could extend and intensify a long-held cultural and religious-juridical hegemony over the entire Jewish diaspora. Up to the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century it was the peculiar *Gaonic* social and religious organization of the Jews which underpinned their solidarity and regulated their international economic activity.[74] Baghdad, capital of the caliphate, was also the seat of the two *Gaons* or 'heads' of the Babylonian Yeshivas, the academies which represented the highest authority of the Jewish community and which combined the functions of a centre of scholarship, high court (interpreting the law of God) and parliament. And because now the Jewish communities of Palestine, Syria, Egypt and North Africa found themselves under the same political rule as those of Iraq and Iran the influence of the Gaonate of Babylonia became even more pronounced. There were, in fact, three Yeshivas: two in Babylonia and one in Palestine – the latter with a seat in Cairo during the Crusades – but the three academies adhered to a single orthodoxy and differed only in ritual and legal usage. Unlike the Christian Church, the Jews had no religious schism but merely geographical divisions. The Jewish communities of the former Byzantine territories followed the Palestinian academy, while those of the former Sasanid empire were divided among the two Babylonian academies. With the establishment of the Fatimid anti-caliphate in Cairo in the tenth century a westward migration of Jews began and the distinction of 'easterners' and 'westerners' became blurred. From that time onwards there were two congregations in many towns, one Babylonian and one Palestinian. The judicial and administrative authority of the Babylonian Gaonate was thus extended to the 'eastern' Jews of Egypt, Syria and North Africa. Furthermore, the supremacy of Baghdad was ensured by the presence of the secular Jewish authority, the Exilarch or 'head of the diaspora'. The influence of the Exilarch however became limited to the eastern caliphate and its extensions, while even there at times it became rather a matter of form for the territorial leaders or *nagids* of the Jewish communities.

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[73] McGraw Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, p. 169.

[74] W.J. Fischel, *Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Mediaeval Islam* (London, 1968), pp. 30-32; Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, II, pp. 3, 5-6, 16-17.

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In some ways the advent of Islam and the formation of an Islamic state marked an entirely new beginning for the Jews. Although the centuries immediately preceding and following the Arab conquests are among the most obscure of Jewish history we can clearly see new forms of diaspora Judaism develop in interaction with the changing historical circumstances of the Islamic conquest society. First of all, it appears that the Jews had not always belonged to the city-dwelling population. In pre-Islamic times they had been active in a wide range of professions – including trade – but were predominantly peasants. Many of them were dispossessed of their land or, as especially in Babylonia, wrecked by progressively high taxation, and then moved to the cities after the Muslim conquests.[75] There was of course a fair number of Jews who converted to Islam and these, together with former Christians, Magians and pagans, entered the Muslim state and army as clientele (*mawālī*) of the Arab tribes. The unconverted Jewry – the majority of which now became concentrated in towns and cities across Islam – obtained the legal status of *dhimmīs*, 'protected people'. As such they were politically marginalized and socially downgraded but in the early caliphate these very disqualifications, in combination with unusually strong internal ties of solidarity, enabled the Jews to rise to prominence in finance, banking, trade and other new fields, of medicine and the like, which were unlikely to be monopolized by the Arabs themselves. In the benign climate of toleration of the early caliphate the formal subordination of the Jews was often obliterated, and a 'Judaeo-Islamic' symbiosis evolved across the diaspora which went far beyond peaceful co-existence of rulers and 'protected' subjects. The Jews produced an entire literature in Islamic languages, in Persian and Arabic, next to Hebrew.[76]

Other historical factors which affected the position of the Jews in Islam were the revival of Greek learning and especially the development of the India trade. The new Jewish prominence in medicine and pharmacy was probably due to their deep involvement in both the transmission of Greek science and the trade with India and the Far East simultaneously.[77] In the ninth-century Abbasid caliphate, as we have seen, the

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[75] Goitein, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-6; idem, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages* (New York, 1974), pp. 89-90, 105, 111.

[76] B. Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (London, Melbourne and Henley, 1981); A.H. Cutler and H.E. Cutler, *The Jew as Ally of the Muslim* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1986); Goitein, *Jews and Arabs.*

[77] Cf. Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, II, p. 265; idem, 'Letters and Documents', pp. 339-40.

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India trade became the foundation of the international economy, contributing also to a tremendous upsurge of internal commerce and, subsequently, the shift towards a unified bi-metallic currency system which encompassed the eastern and western caliphates. At this point, the central and hegemonic position of the Babylonian Jewry gave them a headstart not only in the long-distace trade with India but in the organization of finance and also state finance generally. In Baghdad and Isfahan great finance and banking institutions arose with important and even pivotal Jewish connections.[78] Indeed, as has been argued by Louis Massignon, corporate international finance as it is known today, with a clear Jewish preponderance, appears to date back to the Abbasid caliphate of the late ninth and the tenth centuries.[79] While most of the Jewish poor remained small artisans, we find that here, for the first time, significant numbers of Jews became associated with finance and long-distance commerce (rather than retail). Jewish bankers (*jahābidha*) loomed large in the entourage of the rulers, lending money to the government and consolidating the finances of the state, at the same time becoming involved in the fiscal system and in tax-farming.[80] Jewish bankers probably gained control of the Abbasid money market during the early tenth century and became instrumental in the development of sophisticated financial techniques such as the use of bills of exchange (*suftajah*) and cheques (*ṣakk*). The same bankers also operated as traders (*tujjār*) or as financiers of other Jewish as well as Muslim traders. We find them supplying funds for slave razzias in Africa, equipping caravans to Central Asia and China, and organizing maritime expeditions in both the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. The great Jewish banking houses of Baghdad also financed the Jewish *rādhānīya* trade which extended – both overland and by sea – from Western Europe to the Middle East and to Sind and Hind and China.[81]

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[78] Hilāl aṣ-Ṣābī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā'* (Leiden, 1904), pp. 81, 158-9; Al-Muqaddasī, *Iḥsān at-Taqāsim fī Marīfat al-Aqālim* (Beirut, 1906), p. 183; A. Von Kremer, *Ueber das Einnahmebudget des Abbasidenreiches* (Vienna, 1887), p. 6 ff; Fischel, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-7; L. Massignon, 'L'Influence de l'Islam au moyen âge sur la fondation et l'essor des banques juives', *Bulletin d'études orientales* (Institut Français de Damas, I, 1931), p. 3.

[79] Massignon, *op. cit.*

[80] Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, I, p. 73; II, p. 345; Fischel, *Jews*, pp. vii, 68; Ibn Taghribirdī, *An-Nujūm az-Ẓahīrah*, 4 vols (Leiden, 1851-57), II, p. 17.

[81] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, pp. 153-4; Fischel, *Jews*; L. Rabinowitz, *Jewish Merchant Adventurers: The Study of the Radanites* (London, 1948); M. Gil, 'The Rādhānite Merchants and the Land of Rādhān', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. XVII, pt.3 (1974), p. 299 ff; Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, p. 107; Massignon, *op. cit.*

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In Iraq and Persia the Jews appear to have dominated the Christian minority and in the institutions of finance and credit they probably surpassed the Muslims in importance. In Egypt both the Jewish and Christian minorities played roles in the economic and administrative spheres which were out of proportion to their sizes.[82] Fatimid Egypt (with North Africa) by the tenth century took over an important part of the India trade from their rivals in Iraq. The result was a vast migration of Jews to Cairo. When Baghdad declined and the Abbasids began to lose more and more power in the east and in the west, from the late tenth century and especially after the Seljuq invasion and the beginning of the Crusades (1096), an even larger portion of the India trade was redirected to Egypt. In Egypt the Jews again obtained a disproportionate share in this trade in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when it became one of their main pursuits. Jewish trading stations, linked to Egypt and the Red Sea termini, can be located in over twenty different places on the westcoast of India, to the south of Broach, and further in Indonesia. And in Egypt too the Jews sometimes attained high positions at court. But they were no longer as dominant as they had been in Baghdad, and the India trade of the tenth to twelfth centuries which is described in the Cairo Geniza documents was carried out and financed to a far greater degree by Muslims based in the Mediterranean area.[83] Still, Cairo became an increasingly important centre of Jewish mercantile and financial activity. Egypt – Egyptian Muslims and Egyptian Jewry – became the new intermediary between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, with the old Babylonian centre receding to the background. In the eleventh century, therefore, merchants from Iraq and Persia are found settling in the Mediterranean area but not vice versa. An additional large number of Jews began to emigrate from Baghdad to Spain from 1050 onwards. The Mediterranean in the eleventh century was still, in spite of Italian encroachments, largely in Islamic hands and Arabic-speaking Jews participated in the Mediterranean trade as well.

Finally, it was in these same centuries that Baghdad lost control of the overland trade route via Khurasan to India, Central Asia and China. In the wake of the break-up of the eastern caliphate other large groups of Jewish traders moved eastward from Babylonia, and Jewish settlements on the eastern frontier of Islam proliferated rapidly and expand-

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[82] Fischel, *Jews*, p. 29.

[83] Goitein, 'Letters and Documents'; idem, *Mediterranean Society*, I, pp. 229-30; idem, 'From the Mediterranean to India', pp. 184-7.

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ed in size. Here the Persian cultural renaissance and the rise of new, independent dynasties of Persian origin like the Samanids and the Persianized Ghaznavids re-aligned the trade routes. Vast wealth was obtained by these eastern Muslim rulers from commercial and political expansion to the east, especially from the slave trade and from slave raiding in Central Asia and India. And the Jews seized upon the new opportunities in the east, as they did in the west.

We have seen now that after the tenth century the most important centres of the Jewish diaspora were no longer in Babylonia or in the Islamic capital of Baghdad (which however remained the seat of the Gaonate and the Exilarch) but shifted westward to Egypt and Spain, and eastward to Khurasan, Central Asia and the frontier of *Hind*. Egypt in particular became important because of its intermediary position between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean trade networks. The rise of Europe enhanced the importance of the India trade and at first it also enhanced Jewish participation in this trade because the demand for spices and other oriental goods went up drastically and because European supremacy reduced Islamic opportunities in the Mediterranean itself. In the Mediterranean area Islamic influence was beginning to recede, and in the eleventh century in the Islamic parts of the Mediterranean the position of the Jews subsequently began to be adversely affected by their relations with the Christian states across the Islamic frontier. Such relations, in particular those with Byzantium and the Crusaders, had been a problem for the Christian minorities in Islam from the very beginning. By comparison, in the early centuries of Islam there had been only one Jewish state of some importance – that of the Khazars, a Turkic people of which the rulers had converted to Judaism in the eighth century and which lived between the Don and the Volga.[84] While the Khazars had trading relationships with Islam (like Byzantium had and the Crusading states and Western Europe) through the Jewish *rādhānīya* merchants and others, the direct effect of the presence of this state on the position of Jews in Islam was probably minor. The Khazar state can be considered Jewish only in a very restricted sense. The Khazar chiefs ruled over a very large majority of pagans, Christians and

[84] Cf. J.H. Kramers and G. Wiet (transl.), *Ibn Hauqal, Configuration de la Terre (Kitāb al-Arḍ), 2 vols (Paris, 1964), II, pp. 380-1, 385; Lewis, Jews of Islam*, p. 61; W.J. Fischel, 'The Jews of Central Asia (Khorasan) in Medieval and Islamic Literature', *Historia Judaica*, vol. VII, no. 1 (April 1945), p. 48.

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Muslims, and most of the Khazar customs were pagan and in contradiction with those of any of the monotheistic religions. By contrast, in the twelfth century very close connections had been developed between the Jews of southern France and the Jews of the Islamic East, and Jews by this time had begun to migrate en masse to Byzantium. Generally Jews became more and more active in Christian lands. Anti-Jewish propaganda grew under the Fatimids' successors, the Ayyubids and Almohids, reaching a climax in the thirteenth century, when Mediterranean unity had been lost entirely, and the Mamlūks of Egypt imposed discriminatory laws which caused a further deterioration of the position of the Jews.[85] Egypt, after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, virtually monopolized the Indian transit trade but the Jews were expelled from this trade and an association of Arab traders known as the *kārimī* took over. The thirteenth-century Geniza material is, as a consequence, entirely confined to local Egyptian trade.[86] In the same century, the reconquest of Spain brought the Sefardic ghettos within the orbit of Latin Christianity. Across the Mediterranean divide a transition occurred from a Judaeo-Islamic tradition to a Judaeo-Christian tradition.

On the eastern frontier of Islam, in Khurasan, Central Asia, Afghanistan and in Sind and Hind, Islamic power expanded in the tenth to twelfth centuries when the great Eurasian reservoir of Turks began to be tapped by newly arisen Persianate dynasties which, succeeding the Abbasid governors, brought the drain of revenue and tribute to Baghdad to a stop. All along the northern overland routes from India, in Sind and Afghanistan, the Babylonian-Persian Jewry spread and became an important commercial intermediary between the Islamic world on the one hand and India and Central Asia on the other. Jewish settlement in this period rapidly increased here, until in the thirteenth century the Mongols brought Jewish involvement in trade and finance to a low pitch. It is quite clear that the elimination of the Jewish intermediary from the overland India trade virtually coincided in time with the elimination of the Jews from the maritime trade between coastal western India and Malabar and Egypt. In Malabar, Muslim traders superseded the Jewish and, to a lesser extent, Christian guilds.

Jewish involvement in the trade between India and the Islamic lands

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[85] Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, I, pp. 29, 36, 39-41.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 149; Goitein, 'The Beginning of the Kārim merchants and the character of their organization', in: *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden, 1966), pp. 351-60.

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of the Middle East, then, after reaching a peak in the tenth to eleventh centuries, eclipsed in the twelfth or thirteenth century – at the same time that the Jewish transition to Latin Christianity occurred. The simultaneousness of these developments appears to be no accident. This was a time when Islamic power was severely threatened by the expansion of Christian Europe – the centre of gravity of commercial life shifting northward in the Mediterranean – and by the invading Mongols. The demise of the Abbasid caliphate jeopardized the position of the Jews in Islam, just as its rise had made that position a prominent one. Islam survived in Mamluk Egypt but, threatened by the Mongols and by European supremacy, could no longer accommodate Jewish trade and finance under the same conditions. During most of the Il-Khan regime in Iraq and Persia the position of the Babylonian-Persian Jews was depressed.[87] Many of the Jews of eastern Khurasan probably moved on along the caravan routes to Central Asia and Khwārazm, and to China. There are also traces of their moving further into India.[88] But in India and China the Jews became isolated from the main centres of the diaspora.[89] No Hindu-Judaeic or Chinese-Judaeic traditions developed. China even provides an example of a Jewish diaspora dissolving into the cultural mainstream.[90]

The successes of the Jews in the commercial life of early Islam and, subsequently, of medieval Christendom are facts which in themselves appear to have no relationship with the prohibition against interest or 'trade in money' which characterized Islam as well as Christianity. Judaism shared an attenuated form of this prohibition with the other monotheistic religions and the idea, moreover, that in the European Middle Ages moneylenders and usurers were essentially Jews is fallacious.[91] What seems to be crucial in the advance of Jewish trade and finance in India is their intermediary position during the expansion of Islam in a global constellation of circumstances which occurred once and never again. Jewish communities are found in pre-Islamic India but they had remained isolated and immobilized until the expansion of Islamic power re-established links with the mainstream of Jewish life in

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[87] Fischel, *Jews*, pp. 90-93.
[88] Fischel, 'Jews of Central Asia', p. 37.
[89] Lewis, *Jews of Islam*, p. ix.
[90] *Jodendom in China – Jews in China: Colloquium d.d. 28/29.11.1981* (Gent, 1984), pp. 11-12, 15-16, 19, 22-23, 25.
[91] Cf. J. Le Goff, *Marchands et banquiers au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1956); idem, *La Bourse et la Vie* (Paris, 1986).

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Babylonia, Persia and Egypt. When these links snapped again the communities of the Jewish diaspora in India lapsed back in obscurity.

Two clusters of settlements developed, one in the north, spreading out from Khurasan, and one on the westcoast, mainly Malabar, which was important in the maritime network. It seems certain that in both areas the Jews were relatively thin on the ground before the rise of Islam, although in Malabar a considerable community did exist. The earliest and most significant settlement of Jews in India was the one on the Malabar coast and these Jews had probably come by sea after the destruction of the second temple. According to legend the presence of Jews in Khurasan and on the north-western frontier of India also dates from pre-Islamic times.[92] Khurasan, the 'eastern region' of the Sasanid empire, was the country east of the Persian Desert. The Arab geographers include in it eastern Persia, Turkestān, Transoxania, Sīstān, and what they call the western parts of *al-Hind*, embracing Afghanistan.[93] Hebrew sources from the earliest times refer to the 'regions' (*mekhōsōth*) or the 'cities' (*medīnōth*) of Khurasan but do not yet indicate Jewish settlement here. When and how the first Jewish communities were founded in this frontier region between Persia and India is not precisely known. Stray individual families probably made the overland journey to India as early as the Babylonian Exile, but no mass migration took place, either to India or to Central Asia or to China.[94] During Greek times Jewish merchants maintained intimate trade relationships with India but these also were probably few. There is no very clear conception of how the Jewish diaspora spread to the East beyond the Euphrates and Tigris in the period following the Islamic conquest. Historical evidence pointing at the presence of Jewish communities in Khurasan, Afghanistan and north-western India comes from the eighth century and continues through the early Islamic period and then the Turkish period up to the Mongol invasions. It is Tabari who points at a Jewish community in Merv as early as the eighth century.[95] Of the same century is the first evidence of the penetration of Persian in

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[92] Fischel, 'Jews of Central Asia', p. 37.

[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31; idem, 'The Rediscovery of the Medieval Jewish Community at Fīrūzkūh in Central Afghanistan', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. LXXXV (1965), p. 148.

[94] Cf. G. Oppert, 'Ueber die jüdischen Colonien in Indien', in: G.A. Kohut (ed.), *Semitic Studies in Memory of A. Kohut* (Berlin, 1897), pp. 396-8.

[95] Fischel, 'Jews of Central Asia', p. 35.

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Hebrew letters among the eastern Jews.[96] Judaeo-Persian inscriptions or businessletters indicate established Jewish communities in Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan from the eighth to the twelfth centuries.[97] These Jewish groups were clearly extensions of the Persian-speaking Jewry of eastern Persia but were in contact with the Jews of South India. From the ninth century evidence becomes more abundant and other settlements in Khurasan find mention. In the tenth century we can locate the Jews in many of the main cities: Nishapur, Maimanah, Herat, Kabul, Qandahar, Merv, and the largest concentrations in Balkh and Ghazna.[98] Of Jews living in Bukhara and other cities no record is preserved but it is unlikely that they had been absent there. According to the Arab geographer Al-Muqaddasi, writing in 985 A.D., 'there are in Khurasan many Jews and only few Christians and various classes of Zoroastrians'.[99] This indicates a considerable increase of the number of Jews in Khurasan in the period from the eighth to the tenth century.

A further revealing episode in the eastern migration of the Jews is found in the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* of Juzjani, describing the origins of Jewish trade in Ghūr, the obscure interior of Afghanistan.[100] In Ghūr, according to this thirteenth-century Persian chronicle, there were at one time two rival dynasties which sought arbitrage about the rulership of the region with the then reigning caliph in Baghdad who is alleged to have been Harun ar-Rashid (786-809). The Amīr Banjī b. Naharān of the Shansabānī dynasty obtained the title to Ghur, but not without first having thoroughly familiarized himself with Islamic *adab* or 'court etiquette' through an acquaintance, a merchant, 'a Yahūdī, a follower of the religion of Mūsa'. It was in return for his *adab* teaching that the Jewish merchant stipulated permission from the Shansabānī to settle immigrant *Banī Isrā'īl* in the territory of Ghuristan and Herat. The events referred to in this story are substantiated by inscriptional evidence of Jewish settlement in Ghur and they may contain a clue to the remarkable theory of the Jewish origin of some of the Afghan tribes which is persistently advocated in the Persian-Afghan chronicles.[101] In any case, in the twelfth century, when Benjamin of Tudela visited them,

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[96] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 308 ff.
[97] Fischel, 'Rediscovery', pp. 150-3.
[98] Fischel, 'Jews of Central Asia', p. 33.
[99] M.J. De Goeje (ed.), *Al-Muqaddasī, Descriptio Imperii Moslemici* (Leiden, 1906), pp. 323-4.
[100] Lees ed., pp. 36-37.
[101] Fischel, 'Rediscovery', p. 42.

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these Jewish communities of Khurasan or Afghanistan – under the Exilarch of Baghdad – had become quite numerous.[102] Ghazna may well have had 80,000 Jews in 1170 A.D., perhaps double the number of the preceding century.[103] Balkh also had a very large community. Al-Idrisi (d. 1166) mentions Kabul as one of the towns of *Hind*, of magnificent size, and with a suburb 'where Jewish infidels live'.[104] The large-scale presence of Jews in the cities of Afghanistan makes it more than probable that there were Jews in Zarang and Bust, along the trade route from India to Persia through Sīstān and Ar-Rakhkhaj.[105] We can only conclude from the almost complete absence of later references that many of these communities disappeared or shrunk to quite minor proportions under the Mongols. In Ghur there are no traces of continued Jewish life after Ogedāi destroyed the capital Fīrūzkūh.[106] We hear of a 'Hebrew (*ʿibrānī*) banker, a khwajah of great opulence' assisting in the defence of Herat against Mongol attacks.[107] Large numbers of Jews probably moved on to Khwarazm and China. Some, perhaps many, went further into India. Juzjani mentions Jews who escorted him from Delhi to Multan in the year 1250.[108]

From the beginning, and throughout this period, the Khurasanian Jews make their appearance in connection with finance and trade. As early as the eighth and ninth centuries Khurasan was in contact with the Jewish *rādhānīya* merchants *(at-tujjār al-yahūd ar-rādhānīya)*.[109] Through them, Khurasanian Jewish settlements maintained trade relations with Europe, India, China, and with the Islamic Middle East and North Africa. This trade diaspora, at the time, was the largest existing in the world, constituting a single network with a shared cosmopolitan culture. Starting from the 'country of the Franks', one of the routes followed by the *rādhānīya* went through the 'country of the Slavs' and to Khamlif, the capital of the Khazars, then across the Jūrjan (Caspian) Sea and on to Balkh. From there they sometimes went on across the Oxus and to China. Another route went from Frankish territory overland or by sea to North Africa and Egypt, then to the Red Sea ports of

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[102] Adler, *Benjamin of Tudela*, p. 82.
[103] Fischel, 'Jews of Central Asia', pp. 37-39.
[104] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 67.
[105] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 11.
[106] Fischel, 'Rediscovery', p. 153.
[107] Lees, *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*, pp. 356-7.
[108] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[109] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, pp. 153-4.

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Madina and Jiddah to *as-Sind* and *al-Hind* and to *aṣ-Ṣīn* (China). Still another route went to Constantinople. And finally, there was a route which went to Antiochia, hence to the Euphrates and Baghdad, then down the Tigris, to al-Ubulla, and from there to Sind and beyond. In this way, Jewish trade embraced almost the entire world. As Ibn Khordadbhih points out, the *rādhānīya* Jews spoke 'Arabic, Persian, Greek, and the Frankish, Spanish and Slavic languages' (*al-ʿarabīya wa-l-fārsīya wa-r-rūmīya wa-l-afranjīya wa-l-andalasīya wa-l-ṣaqalabīya*). India was reached either by the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea or overland via Khurasan and Sind. The landroute from Persia to Khurasan became the main route of Jewish immigration to China. It was also from Khurasan and Afghanistan that the Jews penetrated deeply into India to trade.[110] In association with the itinerant Jewish merchants from the West, the Khurasanian Jews spread into Sind and Hind and to Central Asia and China. While in the Indian Ocean most Jews participating in maritime trade originated from the western caliphate and the Mediterranean area, in North India and Kashmir there were Persian Jews of the eastern caliphate who numerically predominated by the tenth and eleventh centuries. But the Ghaznavid invasions at some stage seem to have made them retreat to their retrenchments in Khurasan and Afghanistan.[111]

Along the overland Jewish trade nexus moved the countless oriental luxury items and spices, drugs and the like. The Jewish trade was not different from the general run of the India trade of Islam. Yet, an especially lively part of the Jewish overland trade seems to have been the traffic in eunuchs and male as well as female slaves. This is the more striking since the Geniza documentation of Cairo contains not a single reference to organized slave trading by Jews, and it was on this evidence that S.D. Goitein, confirming earlier impressions of David Ayalon, concluded that 'during the classical Geniza period, the Jews had no share in the slave trade'.[112] Acknowledging that in the ninth century Jews did deal in slaves (as later again in the Ottoman period), Goitein is particularly apt to depict the Geniza period of the tenth up to the twelfth century as an era of 'enlightenment and liberalism' in which Jews, as one of the hinges between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean,

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[110] Cf. Fischel, 'Jews of Central Asia', p. 49.
[111] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, II, p. 206.
[112] Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, I, p. 140.

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were only involved in the sale of slaves as private persons.[113] For Goitein 'it was the merchant who stood for individuality and adventure and kept the flag of freedom flying'.[114] This is an extremely biased and anachronistic judgement. Quite obviously the mercantile society of early Islam was embedded in, and grew with, the expansion of the state. And everywhere in Islam the increase of commerce and monetization went together with an enormous increase in the trade and use of slaves. There is abundant evidence that Jews were important in this trade. The fact that the Cairo Geniza documentation contains no references to Jewish slave trading is not surprising since the slave trade went largely overland, through the Slavic countries, through Frankish Europe, through Africa, and through Khurasan or Sind and Afghanistan. The Geniza documents hardly deal with these regions. But Jews are found all along the overland routes in Europe, Russia, Central Asia, Africa, and India. As already indicated, the Jewish bankers who rose to prominence in tenth-century Baghdad financially supported slave razzias in Africa which supplied the workshops and plantations in Iraq.[115] In the tenth century it was the practice that Jewish merchants castrated the Slavic eunuchs in or near Spain. The same merchants sold these eunuchs to all parts of Islam, together with slave boys and girls who had been taken or bought in France and Galicia.[116] The *rādhānīya* merchants were especially famed for their trade in eunuchs from Western Europe as also their trade in slaves generally.[117] The Khazars too, through their connections with the *rādhānīya* merchants, were important in the slave trade. Along the Russian rivers Jews were busy dealing in slaves. And without doubt the Jews of Khurasan were crucial in the slave trade with the Slavic countries, as these were entered not only from the side of France and Galicia and from Lombardy and Calabria but also from Khurasan. When in the tenth and eleventh centuries the trade in Turkish mamluks from Central Asia caught on, Jewish traders flooded the distribution centres of Khurasan and Transoxania. In these centuries the transit trade in slaves became the material foundation of the Samanid power in Khurasan and Transoxania, the rulers of which patronized the Persian renaissance at the court of Bukhara. The same was the case with

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[113] Goitein, 'Letters and Documents', p. 341; idem, 'Slaves and Slavegirls in the Cairo Geniza Records', *Arabica*, 9 (1962), pp. 1-20.

[114] Goitein, 'From the Mediterranean to India', p. 188.

[115] Massignon, 'Influence de l'Islam', p. 3; and cf. p. 89.

[116] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, I, p. 109.

[117] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 153.

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the Ghaznavids. When the Ghaznavids rose to power the trade in slaves from *al-Hind* became important, and in the eleventh century Jews collected in Ghazna and other cities along the supply routes to the west. Considerably earlier, Ghur became a notable slave reservoir for Islam, and here too, as we have seen, important Jewish colonies came to exist. Throughout the regions of eastern Islam, it may be concluded, the settlement of large numbers of Jews coincided with great increases in the importance of the slave trade. It may even be speculated that on the eastern frontier with *al-Hind* the traffic in slaves was one of the main if not the main reason for the Jewish presence.

The question which remains is: how did Jewish settlement link up with the expansion of Islam and Islamic trade in South India? Zayn ad-Din, in his *Tuḥfat al-Mujāhidīn* of 1583 A.D., says that 'prior to the introduction of Islam into this country, a group of Jews and Christians (*jamiʿan min al-yahūd wa-l-naẓārīya*) had found their way to a city of Malabar named Cranganore, having landed there on a large ship'.[118] The Jews of Cranganore were the oldest Jewish community in India. According to one tradition they came from Persia, after having been freed from captivity by Cyrus in 540 B.C. Another common tradition attributes the exodus of Jews to Malabar to the persecutions of Titus and Vespasian around the time of the destruction of the second temple of Jerusalem (68 A.D.). Some Hebrew manuscripts claim that at this time 10,000 Jews settled at Cranganore and other Malabar ports. There is no indication that these Jews arrived in the company of the Christians. The Christian Church which was noted in the sixth century by the Byzantine Cosmas Indicopleustes claims to date back to the apostle Thomas.[119] The Bani Israʾil of the Konkan have obscure origins – they probably arrived much later than the first centuries of Islam – but some of their traditions say they left Galilea because of the persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.), while others maintain that they too left Palestine by ship after the destruction of the second temple.[120] Other Jews arriving on the Malabar coast in the early centuries A.D. held the opinion or pretended that they had fled from persecutions

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[118] Hyderabad ed., p. 13.

[119] J. Henry Lord, 'Jews in Cochin', in: J. Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 7 (London, 1960), pp. 557-9; Logan, *Malabar*, I, p. 202; Adler, *Benjamin of Tudela*, p. 63.

[120] W.J. Fischel (ed.), *Unknown Jews in Unknown Lands: The Travels of Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel (1824-1832)* (New York, 1973), p. 33.

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in Persia, just as there came Persian Christians to Sri Lanka for the same alleged reasons.[121] The first definite proof of the existence of a Jewish colony near Cranganore is, in the meantime, the Tamil charter of Bhāskara Ravivarman (978-1036 A.D.), a grant of lands and privileges, written in the obsolete Vatteluttu script of ancient Tamil.[122] Jewish, Muslim and Christian travel accounts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries mention small Jewish settlements all along the Malabar coast, in towns such as Calicut, Quilon and Cranganore (Shingali), and at various places further north.[123] Jewish settlers continued to arrive in later centuries from the Persian Gulf area, Egypt, and later from other parts of the Jewish diaspora, from Spain, or Constantinople.[124] In the early period there were contacts with Khurasan, as Persian inscriptions in Malabar indicate. In later times there was an accretion of converts. The Jews of Malabar came to be divided in 'White' and 'Black' Jews and the latter were either the offspring of mixed marriages between Jews and Hindus or descendants of Hindus who had converted to Judaism.[125] White Jews say that the Black Jews are descendants of the numerous slaves who were purchased and who converted to Judaism to be manumitted. The Black Jews themselves claim to be the descendants of the Israelites of the first captivity.[126] However that may be, the main source of replenishment of the Malabar Jews still remained the Islamic Middle East. And this was also the situation in Sri Lanka, where historical evidence points at the presence of a large colony of Jews from the ninth century.[127] Benjamin of Tudela encountered 'about 3000 Jews' in a place south of Malabar which he called *Ibrig* and which is probably Sri Lanka.[128] Al-Idrisi described the Jews in twelfth-century *Sarandīb* as a community from which the king of the island recruited some of his ministers. Only one source, the *ʿAjāʾib al-Hind* (c. 1000), notes Jewish merchants in Sribuza (Indonesia) on their way to China.[129]

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[121] Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders', p. 6.

[122] W.J. Fischel, 'The exploration of the Jewish antiquities of Cochin on the Malabar coast', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. LXXXVII (1967), pp. 230-47; Bouchon, *Mamale de Cananor*, p. 10.

[123] Fischel, 'Jewish antiquities of Cochin', p. 231, note 7.

[124] *Ibid.*, p. 233; Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, I, pp. 246-7; idem, 'From the Mediterranean to India'.

[125] Oppert, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

[126] Fischel, *Unknown Jews*, p. 111.

[127] H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, 8 vols (London, 1867-77), I, p. 10.

[128] Adler, *Benjamin of Tudela*, p. 65.

[129] Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, p. 44.

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It is quite strtking now that, in parallel to north-western India, the Jewish colonies in the ports of Malabar emerged from obscurity in the first centuries of Islam. In Malabar the coming of Islam coincided with the consolidation of the strongly thalassophobic brahmanical orthodoxy which we have described.[130] While it is difficult to separate cause and effect here, there can be no doubt that this was a period which witnessed a general transformation of social and religious life. One of the reasons why the Jews became important in the maritime trade of Malabar with the Islamic world was the almost exclusively agrarian orientation which the newly developing Hinduism, underpinned by powerful groups of immigrant brahmans, gradually took. Malabar society and much of western India lost its maritime orientation, while Buddhism was replaced by Islam as the dominant religion of international trade and Muslim and Jewish traders further developed this trade. When in Malabar upper-caste aversion against the maritime vocation spread and the effects came to be felt of massive brahman immigration under royal sponsorship, it became mandatory to assign the role of the 'merchants of the sea' to foreign social groups which were settled locally but were beyond the pale of Hinduism. That role, until then played by Indians, seems to have been taken over by the *anjuvaṇṇam* and the *maṇigrāmam* guilds under the direction of Jews and Christians. Especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries the hostility against Buddhism and Jainism shows itself to have become marked and the role of the Jews appears to have become correspondingly more dominant.

In Malabar it was not before the thirteenth century that Muslim settlement had spread sufficiently to allow Muslims to develop their own institutions and to supersede the Jewish intermediary. The *Māppiḷla* Muslim communities of the coast grew and began to differentiate themselves from the Jewish- and Christian-dominated trade guilds after a long period of steady accretion through constant trade relations with the Persian Gulf and Arabia on the one hand and mixed marriages with low caste women of local provenance on the other. The earliest substantial Mappilla settlements are in evidence at the time when the first Toscans and Venetians visited these regions and Malabar became the crossroads between the Muslim world and the Far East. Supplanting the Jews, the Mappilla Muslims then became the privileged intermediaries of Malabar in the trade with the west as well as with the east. But until the twelfth or thirteenth century, until the end of the Geniza

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[130] Cf. pp. 72-73.

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trade of Cairo and the beginning of the *kārimī* trading hegemony of the Mamluk period, Jewish trade flourished and Jewish settlement in Malabar increased. Due to the growing importance of the India trade the Jewish representative in Aden became quite powerful for some time and 'Aden and India' came to be regarded by the Jewish authorities as one juridical diocese.[131] The Jewish 'Wakil of the Merchants' (Hebrew: *Pegid ha-Soharim*) of Aden and the head (*nagid*) of the Jewish communities of the Yemen became 'the trustee of all lords of the sea and the deserts', i.e. he concluded agreements in the interest of the Jewish merchants with all rulers and pirates in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.[132] In the twelfth century, a direct shipping line appears to have been established between Aden and Sri Lanka by the same Wakil, in partnership with the Muslim ruler of Aden, not merely to expand business but also to encourage Jewish goldsmiths to settle here and to get the island under their control, bringing to a close a period when Sri Lanka had still served as a place of refuge for insolvent debtors.[133] We also know that, in the twelfth century at least, Jewish courts in Malabar issued their documents in the name of the Exilarch of Baghdad and of the Palestinian Gaon, the latter of whom then had his seat in Cairo. This is explained by the origin of the Jewish merchant colonies on the Indian coast, which was either in Iraq and Persia or in the Mediterranean basin. The same held for the Jews of the Yemen who had always had close contact with the Babylonian academies but, in the wake of the redirection of the India trade, became more attached to Cairo.[134]

The history of Jewish persecution in Europe is well-known: England expelled the Jews in 1290, France in 1394, a Sefardic exodus started from Spain in 1492, from Portugal in 1497, and many of the cities of German-speaking territory also expelled Jews. Indeed, after 1497, Western Europe and large parts of Middle Europe were practically denuded of their Jewish population. The most important centres of Jewish settlement henceforward became Northern Italy, a few German towns, the Ottoman Empire, and in particular Poland and Lithuania. Under the impact of mercantilism and rationalism, then the Enlightenment, the Jews could re-enter England, France and Holland in the seventeenth

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[131] Goitein, 'From the Mediterranean to India', pp. 191 (note 16), 195; idem, *Mediterranean Society*, II, pp. 26, 95.
[132] Goitein, 'From the Mediterranean to India', pp. 189-90.
[133] *Ibid.*, p. 191; *Mediterranean Society*, II, p. 331.
[134] Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, II, p. 21.

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and eighteenth centuries. But soon the ghetto made place for modern anti-Semitism.

In India the history of Jewish migration and settlement and of the development of Judaism after the twelfth century was less chequered than in Europe, but also less fruitful. Persecutions on a systematic scale are not in evidence at any time. Yet the career of the Jews in India was abortive. A recent collection of essays on Indian Jews has once again revealed 'that there is remarkably little interaction with the Hindu religious tradition, classical and popular'.[135] Numerically, the Christians in India are now far superior to the Jews, numbering 14 million, while the Jews immediately prior to 1948 merely numbered 23,000, and in 1971 had decreased to 11,000 due to emigration. At present they count only 5000 people.[136] In comparison with these figures, the numbers we have for the 'golden age' of the Indian Jews – the eighth to twelfth century – seem high (80,000 in Ghazna alone in the late twelfth century), and it also seems clear that in the course of this period the Jews in India acquired and maintained an altogether much higher profile. The reason for this, we suggest, was the close connection which existed at that time with the mainstream of Jewish activity in the Middle East and Egypt. After the twelfth century the Jewish communities in India became isolated. But even then, whenever a partial revival occurred (such as e.g. in the first decades of the nineteenth century among the Cochin Jews and the *Banī Isrā'īl* of the Konkan coast), this was commonly due to an impetus received from the Middle East and the arrival of Arabic-speaking Jews from Iraq and elsewhere.[137] What happened in a big way during the Abbasid and Fatimid caliphates, when the Jews became preponderant in finance and long-distance commerce, thus finds some weak echos in later times. But there was nothing more than that, and the Middle East was then no longer the main focus of Jewish activity and of Jewish institutions, of the Gaonic organization and the Exilarch of the diaspora. Up to the twelfth century however the Jews played a powerful, multifaceted role here and although they often were socially marginalized, Jewish participation in the political life of Muslim states and in India and Sri Lanka appears to have been notable in a number of instances. Ultimately the success of Jewish trade and the

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[135] T.A. Timberg, 'On Indian Jews', in: *Jews in India* (New Delhi, 1986), p. 6.

[136] S. Weil, 'Symmetry between Christians and Jews in India: The Cananite Christians and the Cochin Jews of Kerala', *ibid.*, p. 179.

[137] Cf. J.G. Roland, 'A Decade of Vitality: Bene Israel Communal Development (1917-1927)', *ibid.*, p. 285.

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prosperity of the Jewish communities in India derived from the prominent position which the Jews occupied in Baghdad, Cairo and elsewhere in the Islamic Middle East in the period before they were absorbed by Europe.

PARSIS

In the centuries subsequent to the Arab conquest of Persia there was a considerable migration of Zoroastrian Persians or 'Parsis' towards India. From this migration the Parsi settlements in Gujarat and along India's westcoast arose. In Islamic Persia, Zoroastrianism, in contrast to Judaism and Christianity, suffered a virtual demise, and our sources – which are of much later times – insist that the exodus of unconverted Parsis to India was a flight from Arab oppression in the Zoroastrian homeland. India should be a plausible place of refuge, for it was not only nearby but had always been within the Persian orbit. Persia had been India's exemplary imperial neighbour for more than a millennium preceding the Islamic conquest, and from the beginning – in fact since the Aryan invasions – Persian cultural influence had been strong, especially in western India. It is not surprising that Persians should have been present in India since ancient times and that they are frequently mentioned in Sanskrit literature (e.g. the Vishnu Purana), as *pārasikas*. The Sasanid impact was also particularly felt in north-west India and various Sasanid campaigns were conducted into Khurasan, Sistan, the Kabul area, and as far as Sirhind beyond the Sutlej. The Persians remained predominant under the Buddhist emperor Harsha who is recorded by Taranatha to have entertained a community of 12,000 Zoroastrians for some time. Numismatic evidence further shows that the Sasanid monarchy or an offshoot of that monarchy obtained a foothold in Gujarat.[138] Finally, the Arab historian Tabari has recorded an exchange of embassies between the Sasanid king Khusro II and the Calukya king Pulakeshin II (608-48 A.D.) who ruled over the Deccan, 'the three Maharashtras', from Vatpipuram (modern Bādām) in the Bijapur district.[139] And, in the centuries preceding Islam, as we have described, Zoroastrian Persians and Christian Persians had dominated

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[138] Cf. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province*, 3 vols (Lahore, 1911-15), I, p. 32; J.J. Modi, *The Influence of Iran on other countries* (Bombay, 1954), pp. 125, 127-8, 131, 136.

[139] Th. Nöldeke (transl.), *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden aus der Chronik des Tabari* (Leiden, 1879), pp. 371-2.

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commerce in the western Indian Ocean, where they, while competing with their Byzantine-Abyssinian rivals, were backed by the military power of the Sasanids. Persianized merchant groups from among the Arab tribes such as the *Azd* '*Umān* controlled a trade diaspora which went as far as Sind and these were instrumental in the early expansion of Islam in Fars and the western portions of the Indian subcontinent.

It is thus apparent that when Persia was overrun by the Arabs and the alleged 'flight' of the Parsis to India occurred, the latter by no means arrived as newcomers. In fact, it seems more than likely that the migration of Parsis to the westcoast of India was not so much a flight as a readjustment of commercial patterns which had arisen long before Islam and, to an extent at least, a response to new opportunities in the transit trade between the Islamic world and *al-Hind*. Persian dominance in the trade with India pertained in the eighth century and even in the ninth and tenth centuries unconverted Parsis are seen participating in the India trade from areas within the Abbasid caliphate. A possible explanation of the rise of more permanent settlements of Parsis on India's westcoast is that Arab competition in the Persian Gulf forced them to shift the centre of their activities eastward. With the Arabs becoming predominant in the trade of Fars, the Parsis would then have concentrated in the territories of the Calukyas, the Hindu dynasty with which Persian diplomatic and trade relations were of old standing. In accordance with this explanation – that the Parsis were an element in the development of a new trading diaspora between the Arab-dominated Middle East and Hindu India – is the seventeenth-century account of Henry Lord, which says that the Parsis who undertook the voyage to India from the Persian Gulf, 'obtained a fleete of seauen Iuncks, to convey them and theirs, as Merchantsmen bound for the shoares of India, in course of Trade and Merchandize'.[140] From the time of their arrival, under the 'mildnesse of the *Banian Raiahs*', the Parsis prospered in trade, just as trade appears to have been the motivation of their migration. That religious persecution was not the main cause of the Parsi exodus seems also to be borne out by the fact that it took place at a relatively early stage, in the eighth century in all probability, which was well before the Zoroastrian religion had begun to disappear from Persia itself. The Arabs, to be sure, needed no more than fifteen years after the

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[140] H. Lord, *A Display of two foraigne sects in the East Indies, viz: The sect of the Persees, the ancient inhabitants of Persia, together with the Religion and Maners of each sect (1650)* (Amsterdam, 1972), p. 3.

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victory of Nihāvand in 641 to conquer almost the entire Zoroastrian-Sasanid polity. But the demise of Zoroastrianism, although dramatic and nearly total in the long run, was a gradual process of several centuries. At the first collision with the Arab forces some Zoroastrian communities were indeed scattered and fled to the mountains or to the frontier areas of Sistan and Khurasan. When the Arabs occupied the main towns of Sistan in 644-56 a number of the Zoroastrian inhabitants moved to Makran.[141] But in Sistan, as in all of Khurasan, various classes of Zoroastrians survived in large numbers up to the tenth century. In Fars itself, Zoroastrians still constituted the most important religious group as late as that. For this we have the testimony of Ibn Hauqal: 'In no region the Zoroastrians are better represented than in Fars, since this used to be the centre of their activity and of their religious institutions and of their libraries and altars; they have transmitted this heritage until our day'.[142] The Qur'ān does not yet mention the Zoroastrians as 'people of the book' (*ahl al-kitāb*), but like the Jews and Christians, the Zoroastrians became *dhimmīs* in the Islamic polity – a status which was reserved to the book religions. They were thus legally 'protected' rather than an object of persecution. Since in Persia however the Sasanid state and its aristocracy had been directly linked to the Zoroastrian religion, the fate of the religion, once dissociated from the power structure, was incomparably worse than that of Judaism or Christianity. From the Umayyad period onwards the number of Zoroastrians began to dwindle by conversion, especially among the mercantile and artisanal groups which in general assimilated easily within Islam. Under the impact of the Arab conquest, the Zoroastrian-Sasanid political tradition was isolated in the Dailam mountains (which explains why it was the Daylamites and the Būyids who in the tenth century claimed descent from the fallen dynasty of Yazdigird III and revived the title of 'King of Kings'). The Zoroastrian priesthood took little part in the Persian renaissance and political revival which occurred in ninth- and tenth-century Islam. In India the political reconstitution of Sasanid institutions occurred much later, after the Turkish conquests of the thirteenth century, and Zoroastrianism survived among the immigrant Parsis in Gujarat as a depoliticized religion, in an exclusively mercantile setting.

The actual story of the Parsi migration to India and the consecration of the first sacred fire of *Irān-shāh* at Sanjān is related in the *Qiṣṣa-yi-*

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[141] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, pp. 5, 13.
[142] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, I, p. 286.

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Sanjān, a Persian history written in verse in 1600 A.D. by a Zoroastrian poet Bahman Kaikobād on the basis of older materials which are lost.[143] This re-worked account is the principal source for the religious persecution interpretation of the Parsi exodus to India. It says that a number of the *Bihdīns* ('people of the good religion') fled before the Arabs to the mountainous district of Persia which was known as Kuhistan and remained there for a hundred years before moving on to Hormuz, where they remained for another fifteen years, and then crossed over to *Hind* by sea and landed at Div in Kathiāwār where they waited for nineteen years more before settling down at Sanjān in Gujarat. Here a virtuous Hindū rāja gave them permission to establish their permanent abode and to build a fire-temple and kindle the *Ātash-Behrām*, the highest grade of sacred fire known to Zoroastrians, for which the religious requisites (*ālāt*) had to be brought especially from Khurasan. From there a second group of Zoroastrian immigrants joined their co-religionists on this occasion. If the dates given in this text are taken at face-value, the landing in Gujarat occurred in 785 A.D.[144] What happened afterwards is not described in any detail. All we learn is that about three-hundred years after the establishment of the fire-temple the Parsis began to disperse in different directions and went to Vankaner, Broach, Vanav, Anklesar, Cambay and Naosāri, where they continued to live 'in great prosperity'. The Zoroastrian priests (mobads) divided the country of Gujarat into *panthaks* around the year 1290 A.D., five ecclesiastical spheres of influence or jurisdiction. A variant oral tradition gives dates for three distinct emigrations of 'Gabrs' or Zoroastrians from Persia to Gujarat: 631, 651 (the death of Yazdigird), and 749, while commemorating the landing of a son of Nushirvan near Surat with 18,000 followers.[145] No later immigrations of Zoroastrians from Persia are recorded. But there are some recorded instances in Pahlavi of immigration of Nestorian Persians to Malabar in the ninth-tenth centuries, and of a substantial presence of Manichaeans in Sri Lanka in the same period.[146] In Malabar, after this time, the Syrian Church superseded the Nestorian-Persian influence, and the latest inscriptions in Pahlavi found in Malabar or anywhere in India date from the eleventh and twelfth cen-

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[143] J.J. Modi, *A Few Events in the Early History of the Parsis and their dates* (Bombay, 1905).

[144] But for another date (916 A.D.), see S.H. Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History* (Bombay, 1970), pp. 67-84.

[145] J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 2 vols (New Delhi, 1983), I, p. 192.

[146] Logan, *Malabar*, I, pp. 204-5; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 10.

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turies. In short, the migration of unconverted Persians – Zoroastrian or otherwise – from Persia to India coincides with the period of Arab political and mercantile dominance, the seventh to eleventh centuries, in the Middle East. This migration, as far as can be made out, was not so much a flight from oppression as a result of the opening of new avenues of communication and commerce between Islam and *al-Hind*, a response to new opportunities, extending and deepening pre-existing contacts.

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CHAPTER IV

THE FRONTIER OF *AL-HIND*

a. The political geography of the East: Khurāsān, Zamīndāwar, Zābul and Kābul, Makrān, Sind, and Hind

Having analysed the formation of the early caliphate, the development of the India trade in the eighth to eleventh centuries, and the trading diasporas of Muslims, Jews and Parsis in the Indian Ocean which sustained it, we shall look more closely now at the political expansion of Islam on its eastern frontier, principally in southern and eastern Afghanistan, and in Makran and Sind. These were regions which in a cultural and political sense belonged to India; they were, as our sources say, on the 'frontier of *al-Hind*'. Before turning to the conquest of Sind and to the effects of that conquest on Islamic trading patterns, however, let us first try to come to grips with the politico-geographical complexities of the eastern frontier of the caliphate.

Khurāsān

Al-Hind was adjacent to the Persian province of *Khurāsān* which played a crucial role in the political history of the Abbasid caliphate. *Khurāsān* was the centre of the initial Abbasid revolution and the cradle of the Persian renaissance from the ninth century, as it was the home of the powerful *dihqān* (pl. *dahāqīn*) aristocracy which was instrumental in these developments. In Old- and Middle-Persian the name *Khurāsān* denoted 'the eastern land' and it was sometimes used to refer to all regions of eastern Iran, including Transoxania and Soghdiana.[1] Khurāsān, with Soghdiana, was not always entirely incorporated in the Sasanid empire but it was always within the Sasanid sphere of influence. There is however also a narrow definition of Khurāsān, current already in Sasanid times, which includes no more than the territory of the later Islamic-Persian province of the same name. Khurāsān in this sense ex-

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[1] G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem Conquest to the time of Timur* (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 8, 382-3; Shaban, *ʿAbbāsid Revolution*, pp. 1-15; Christensen, *Iran sous les Sassanids*.

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tended up to the Oxus and no further, but comprised the highlands beyond Herat in north-western Afghanistan and the Upper Oxus region towards the Pamīr mountains. At the time of the Arab conquest, the Murghāb river was the eastern boundary of the Sasanid empire and Khurāsān was considered to be constituted especially by the districts of Nīshāpūr and Kūhistān and the cities of Merv and Merv ar-Rūd with their surroundings, west of the Murghāb.

During the initial period of conquest, and up to Abbasid times, the Muslim Arabs also applied the name 'Khurāsān' to all the Muslim provinces to the east of the Great Desert and up to the *Hindū-Kush* ('Hindu-killer') mountains, the Chinese desert and the Pamīr mountains – thus including all of Transoxania in the north-east and Sīstān and Kūhistān in the south. The Arabs advanced beyond the Oxus, to the Jaxartes, and subjected the Hephthalite lands – which were formerly under Greco-Bactrian and Kushana rule – on the eastern periphery of the Sasanid empire. The Hephthalite (Ar. *Hayāṭila*) power was in fact an offshoot of the later Kushanas of the fourth century, and in the first half of the sixth century it had extended over Soghdiana, the Oxus basin and the area to the north and south of the Hindū-Kush. Like their predecessors the Kushanas, the Hephthalites controlled the extremely important trade routes which ran through the area and in which the Soghdians continued to hold a major position.[3] In the Hephthalite dominion Buddhism was predominant but there was also a religious sediment of Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity which had come with the increase of Sasanid influence. The Hephthalite power was defeated in 563-68 A.D. by the Sasanids in alliance with the new power of the Western Turks rising beyond the Jaxartes. The northern Hephthalite domains were then divided between the Persians and the Turks, with the Oxus as the boundary between them. But the Turks were able to encroach further southward and to incorporate the Hephthalite lands north of the Hindū-Kush. As a result the Hephthalites retained power only in the south of Tukhāristān, in north-west Afghanistan, and in Zamīndāwar, Zābulistān and Kābul. Now Zamīndāwar, Zābulistān and Kābul – which were not conquered by the Muslims before the ninth century – were traditionally regarded as part of *al-Hind*, but not so the other Hephthalite lands. In the time of the Arab invasion, Ṭukhāristān, the land immediately to the east of the Murghāb, was inhabited by an Iranian people, the *Ṭukhārā*, who had migrated to this region in earlier times. Among the rulers of Ṭukhāristān the Hephthalites took an important position but the people against whom the

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Arabs fought for almost a century were mostly Iranian in origin. The Arabs describe them as 'Turks' but the Turks do not appear on this scene before 716, when the Türgish came to the aid of the principalities of Tukhāristān, to be dispersed again in 737 A.D.

From Abbasid times onwards, the limits of Khurāsān essentially coincide with the modern province of Khurāsān and north-west Afghanistan, bordering in the east on Badakhshān and in the north on the Oxus and the desert of Khwārazm. The Arab geographers divide Khurasan into four quarters (*rubʿ*), which were named after the four capital cities: Nīshāpūr, Merv, Herat, and Balkh. In this period the population of Khurāsān came to consist of Iranians, including various classes of Zoroastrians and some Christians, and Turks and Arabs, as also numerous Jews. About 50,000 Arab families are recorded to have been transplanted to Khurāsān, shortly after the conquest, from Basra. The region, for this reason, came to be known as 'a second Arabia' and 'a colony of Basra'.[2] As we know from Tabari, at the time of the conquests the Iranian aristocracy of the *dahāqīn* which was entrenched in the different cities and districts of 'the East' (*al-Mashrīq*), i.e. in Khurāsān and Transoxania, negotiated treaties with the Arabs and by and large succeeded in retaining its powerful position in the local administration, paying fixed sums from the taxes which they collected independently. In Transoxania the power of the dihqans had been and continued to be greatest since here it had, in comparison with the rest of Khurāsān, been less circumscribed by the Sasanid monarchy and the Zoroastrian priesthood. Everywhere, until the reign of ʿUmar II (717-20), the dihqans generally maintained the positions which had been sanctioned by the conquest treaties, keeping direct control over the Iranian population, with the exception of a few thousand *mawālī* converts. But under the governorship of Al-Hajjāj the first problems arose with the Arab community of the province which resented the cession of what they considered excessive power to the dihqans. Under ʿUmar II attempts were made to integrate the Arabs of Khurāsān more closely into the imperial structure of the Muslim empire and simultaneously undermine the independent authority of the *dahāqīn*.[3] It was from Khurāsān that the early Abbasid armies were recruited, but the main support for the Abbasid takeover did not come from the Persian *mawālī* of the

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[2] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 10; Fischel, 'Jews of Central Asia', p. 30; Shaban, *ʿAbbāsid Revolution*, p. 35.

[3] Shaban, *ʿAbbāsid Revolution*, pp. 91-99, 155-7; Cahen, 'Révolution Abbaside'.

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province but more especially from the Arab settlers aiming to set aside important sections of the local non-Muslim aristocracy. The first Abbasid caliphs, dependent as they were on their Khurāsānian guards (*abnāʾ ad-daula*), succeeded to a considerable extent in politically and economically integrating Khurāsān and the East with the central Islamic lands. Through the political influence and the financial support of the dihqans the state was gradually Persianized. The succession manoeuvres of Harun ar-Rashid were intimately bound up with the political situation in Khurāsān and aimed, again, at drawing the province closer to the centre of power by judicious coalition management. One of the caliph's sons, Al-Maʾmūn, emerged from a fratricidal struggle with the aid of new Khurāsānian forces. But in the process Khurāsān became a virtually independent province under the dynasty of the Ṭāhirids (821-73), founded by a Persian *maulā* who rose to favour under Al-Maʾmūn. The Ṭāhirids were succeeded by another dynasty of eastern-Persian origin, the Sāmānids (819-1005), whose power still largely rested on a community of interests with the dihqans. By 900 the Sāmānids had taken over the governorship of Khurāsān and Transoxania, and they became the greatest power in the Persian East. They extended their suzerainty as far as Sīstān (where the Ṣaffārids also retained a hold) and Khwārazm, as well as over various local dynasties in Afghanistan and on the frontier of al-Hind.

Khurāsān and the East, rather than metropolitan Fārs, thus contributed most to the emergence of a Persian order of society in Islam. The local aristocracy of the dihqans was largely responsible for its transmission. But these centuries were, nevertheless, a twilight for the dihqan class as a whole. By the eleventh century their military role was superseded by that of the Turks who had begun to arrive as *mamlūks* from the ninth century onwards.

Zamīndāwar, Zābul and Kābul

In southern and eastern Afghanistan, the regions of *Zamīndāwar* (Zamīn-i-Dātbar or 'Land of the Justice-giver', the classical Arachosia) and *Zābulistān* or *Zābul* (Jabala, Kāpisha, Kia-pi-shi) and *Kābul*, the Arabs were effectively opposed for more than two centuries, from 643 to 870 A.D., by the indigenous rulers, the Zunbīls and the related Kābulshāhs of the dynasty which became known as the 'Turk-Shāhi'. With Makrān and Baluchistan and much of Sind this area can be reckoned to belong to the cultural and political frontier zone between India and Persia. It

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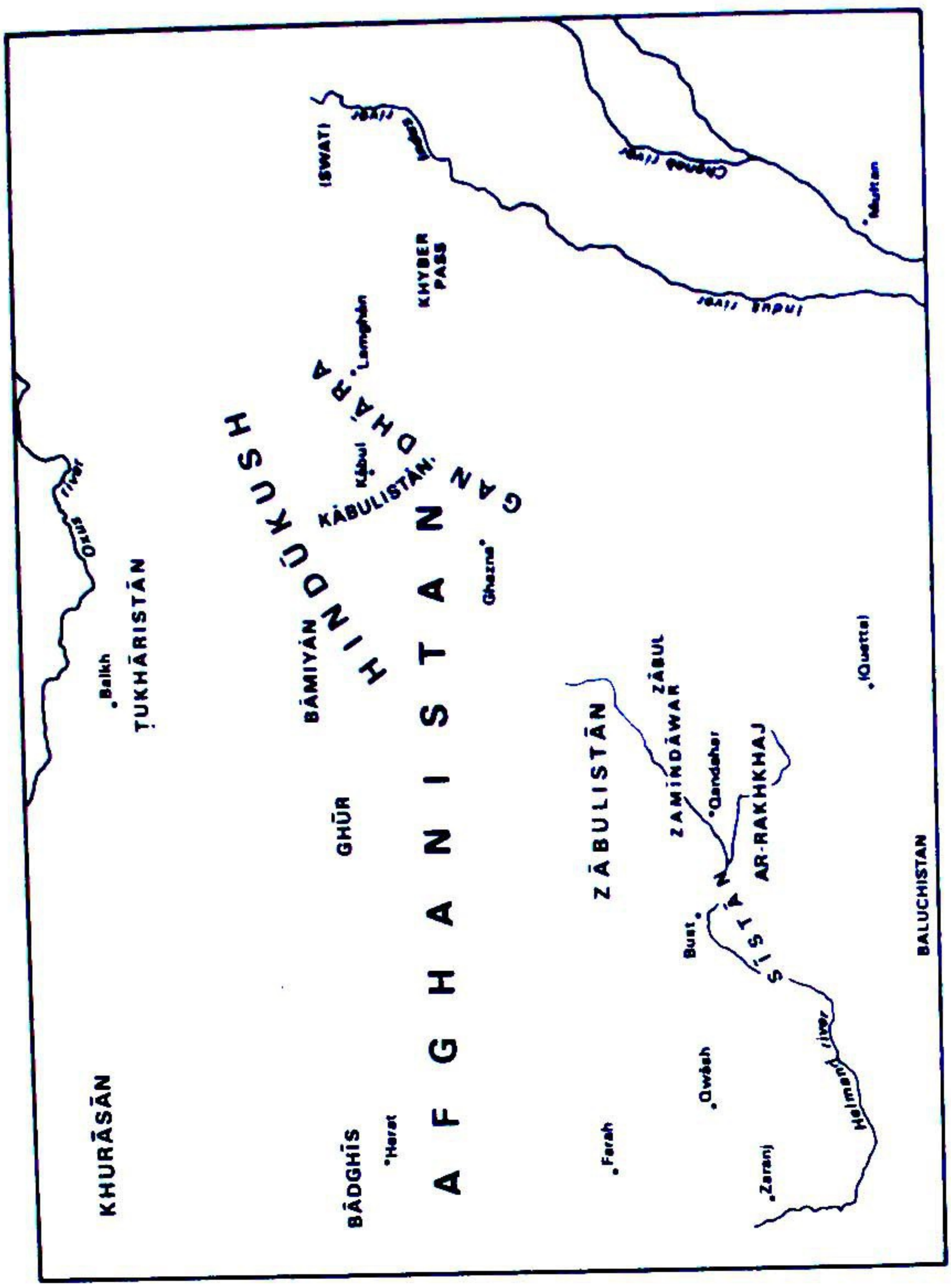

Zamindawar, Zabul and Kabul.

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is clear however that in the seventh to ninth centuries the *Zunbīls* and their kinsmen the Kābulshāhs ruled over a predominantly Indian rather than a Persianate realm. The Arab geographers, in effect, commonly speak of 'that king of *al-Hind* . . . (who) bore the title of Zunbīl'.[4]

Zamīndāwar was the lowland region around Qandahar, adjoining Sīstān, somewhat north of Ar-Rakhkhaj. Here the Zunbīls had their winter residence and it was the religious centre of the kingdom where the cult of the Shaivite god Zūn was performed on a hilltop. By *Zābul* or *Zābulistān* the Arabs denoted the cooler mountainous zone of the upper Helmand and Qandahar rivers where the Zunbīls had their summer residence. In Achaemenid times both regions, i.e. the whole of southern and eastern Afghanistan, are known to have been included in a Persian satrapy. In 302 B.C., a part of this satrapy was ceded to Candragupta Maurya by Seleucus and subsequently became adorned with several stūpas under Ashoka. Numismatic evidence assigns the formation of a kingdom with the new name of *Zābul* to the second half of the fourth century A.D.[5] No literary or historical texts are available which speak of the existence of this 'kingdom of Zābul' before the sixth century. Its rulers however are recorded to have belonged to a southern branch of the Chionite-Hephthalites, the *Sveta Hūṇas* or 'White Huns' as the Sanskrit sources misleadingly call them. In southern and eastern Afghanistan these were the successors of the Kushanas (*guṣān*) and they may have contained (ethnically) Turkish elements but their leadership was probably Indo-European.[6] In the late fourth century the Chionite-Hephthalites occupied the countries south of the Hindū-Kush, including Gandhāra and Zābulistān, as far as the Indus. A century later the Hephthalite rulers for a short while became a great power in northern India as well. The Huns proper (whom the Chinese called Yueh-chi), on the other hand, in the fourth and fifth centuries merely established a form of suzerainty over the southern Hephthalite rulers across the Hindū-Kush. After the downfall of the Huns, the Hephthalite kings did not survive as local rulers in India but only in southern and eastern Afghanistan. In the early sixth century the Sasanids then appear to have extended their political influence in these regions, until a new invasion of nomads from China occurred in Transoxania. These nomads were known

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[4] Cf. Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 211.
[5] R. Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites* (Cairo, 1948), pp. 104-14.
[6] C.E. Bosworth, 'Notes on the Pre-Ghaznavid History of Eastern Afghanistan', *The Islamic Quarterly*, vol. IX (1965), p. 15.

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as *Tu-kueh* or 'Turks' and it was they who destroyed the local power of the northern branch of Hephthalite rulers in the middle of the sixth century. Sasanid power began to decline at about the same time and the Turks could expand their dominion to the south of the Oxus and even beyond the Hindū-Kush. But the establishment of the Tang dynasty in 618 led to the destruction of the Northern Turks in 630 and that of the Western Turks in 658-9, after which Chinese suzerainty was extended across Turkestan and the Oxus valley to the south of the Hindu-Kush. And so, in relation to the southern-Hephthalite Shāhi rulers of Zābul and Kābul the Chinese and the Arabs in the mid-seventh century occupied the position which the Sasanids and the Turks had held in the middle of the sixth century.[7]

The *Zunbīls* of the early Islamic period and the *Kābulshāhs* were almost certainly epigoni of the southern-Hephthalite rulers of Zābul.[8] While in the upper Oxus valley and northern Afghanistan the remnants of Hephthalite power were erased by the Arabs as early as the eighth century, the southern Hephthalites survived the initial collision and blocked the advance of Islam. It is probable however that the Zunbīls and Kābulshāhs were only the most prominent leaders of a wide network of scattered Hephthalite chiefs whose combined authority extended from Bust and Zamīndāwar to the Kabul river valley. Chionite-Hephthalite power had also been strong in Herat and the surrounding region of Bādghīs; here too resistance against the Arabs was much stronger than in the Sasanid territories proper, but, slightly earlier even than in northern Afghanistan, Hephthalite power on these eastern fringes of the Sasanid realm succumbed to the Arabs in the seventh century.[9]

Since the Hephthalites had an Indo-European core but had been infiltrated by a variety of Turkish elements it is not surprising that Arabic sources such as Baladhuri's *Futūḥ al-Buldān* commonly describe the horsemen of the Zunbīl as 'Turks' (*fārisan min at-turk*).[10] Such 'Turks' were encountered as far as Sind and al-Qīqān. And in the same way, the Arabic authors refer to the northern Hephthalites of Bādghīs, Ṭukhāristān and Bactria as 'Turks'. The Islamic geographical literature of the

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[7] Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire*, p. 53; H.C. Ray, *The Dynastic History of Northern India*, 2 vols (New Delhi, 1973), I, pp. 55-64.

[8] Ghirshman, *Chionites-Hephthalites*, *loc.cit.*

[9] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 14.

[10] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 421.

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tenth century also points to the pastoral nomads of eastern Afghanistan who were roaming across the plateaux of Kābul and Bust as 'Khalaj Turks'. These nomads most probably were not Turks either but ethnic débris of the early Shaka, Kushana and Hephthalite invaders.[11] The appellation of 'Turk' therefore should not be taken in any literal sense here for, in effect, the Arabs appear to have applied this term to all their opponents on the eastern Iranian and Indian frontier. As T. Kowalski has shown, the term was used by pre-Islamic Arabic writers and by the *Mukhaḍramūn* (those contemporaries of Muhammad who lived through the interim period between the *Jāhiliyya* and Islam) even before the Arabs had come into contact with genuine Turks. The ancient poets of Arabia used the expression *at-Turk wa Kābul* in the sense of *Ultima Thule*.[12] In the originally Iranian lands of Central Asia, in Transoxania, Farghāna and Khwārazm and across the Dihistān steppe towards the Caspian coastlands, the penetration of the Turks had begun earlier than in the Indianized parts of Afghanistan. We find them here several centuries before the establishment of the Ghaznavid sultanate.[13] Thus the Iranian rulers of Soghdiana who opposed the Arabs in the seventh and early eighth centuries received assistance from the Western Turks and, anticipating the Abbasids' recruitment of Turkish slave soldiers, hired Turkish mercenaries and guards from the steppes. But the Zunbīls of Afghanistan were neither Turks themselves nor can they be shown to have employed Turkish soldiers.

If the Hephthalites were basically Indo-European, politically and culturally the realms of Zābul and Kābul were regarded as a part of *al-Hind* on the eve of the Muslim conquest. The *Chachnāma*, for one, contains numerous references to Zābul under the corrupt form of 'Ramal' or 'Ranmal', showing close contacts and marriage relationships between rulers and subordinate chiefs of Sind and Kashmir and the king of Zābul in the seventh century.[14] The relationships between these Indian rulers on the north-western frontier appear to have been in a constant flux but it seems a safe conclusion that the king of Kashmir had established a claim of suzerainty over Zābul – as he had over other Indian

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[11] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 33; idem, 'Notes on Pre-Ghaznavid History', p. 21.

[12] T. Kowalski, 'Die ältesten Erwähnungen der Turken in der arabischen Literatur', *Körösi-Csoma Archivum*, (Budapest 1926-32), vol. II, pp. 35-41.

[13] Frye (ed.), *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, p. 162.

[14] B.D. Mirchandani, 'Chach-Nāma: References to Persia, Zabul, Kashmir and Kanauj', *Journal of Indian History*, vol. XLIII (1965), pp. 376-81.

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kings. The Yadu Bhattī dynasty of Jaisalmer, the alleged descendants of the Yadus or Yādavas, claim Ghazna to have been their capital sometime before the seventh century and the country which they peopled as far as Samarqand before being exiled from Zābulistān.[15] The Chachnāma has also recorded an invasion of Sind by the 'king of Ramal' in the reign of Dahir, at about 707 A.D. 'Jealous of Dahir's power, he invaded the country with a large army but was defeated'. After Muhammad al-Qasim's victory in 712 at Rūr, in Sind, Dahir's son Jaisiya fled to the 'country of Ramal', then 'came back from that place, infested the roads, and distressed the Muslim army'.

However ambiguous the political situation of Zābul may have been – with overlordship fluctuating between Persian, Indian and even Central-Asian and Chinese rulers – , in a cultural and religious sense the regions embracing the whole of the Kabul river valley and the region from Ghazna to Qandahar were predominantly Indian as early as the period of the Buddhist Gandhara civilization. In Swat, it is true, many proto-historic necropolises point in another direction, as these show links with Iran[16]; and Marquart and others maintain that in the seventh century an Iranian dialect was spoken around Ghazna.[17] Apart from that, there were Zoroastrian elements in the religious cults of southern and eastern Afghanistan and Sasanid style elements in the art of these regions. But these were much less noticeable than Buddhist and, next to that, Hindu forms. The importance of Buddhism in Bāmiyān, Kābul, Zābulistān, and Ṭukhāristān, along the main trade routes, is attested until the seventh century A.D. by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims like Hiuen Tsang. The latter was especially impressed by the thousand Buddhist monks who lived in the caves of Bāmiyān, and the colossal stone Buddha, with a height of 53.5 m, then still decorated with gold. There is also evidence of *devi* cults in the same areas. In Ghazna and Zamīndāwar, Indian influence is again easily noticeable, but in Ghūr the absence of roads prevented its penetration. The Kabul valley and Ghazna and Bust continued to be situated along the main arteries of commercial intercourse between India and the Islamic world, and until the establishment of Ghaznavid power in Kabul in the tenth century it can be shown

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[15] Tod, *Annals and Antiquities*, I, p. 72.

[16] G. Tucci, 'Oriental Notes II: An Image of a Devi discovered in Swat and some connected problems', *East and West*, n.s. XIV (1963), p. 157.

[17] J. Marquart, *A Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Ērānshahr* (Rome, 1931), p. 89.

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that Indian religious and cultural forms continued to penetrate Kabul and Zābulistān.[18]

Predominantly Indian, but possessing Persian and Central-Asian features, was also the god *Zūn* from which the *Zunbīls* derived their name. The Arabic writers show little or no interest in the origins of the god, and they do not even establish a connection between the *Zunbīls* and *Zūn*. Masʿūdī merely says that *Zunbīl* is a *dynastic* title 'which has remained common till the present for all the kings of that part of *al-Hind*'.[19] Tabari uses the form *Rutbīl* or *Ratbīl* as synonymous with *Zunbīl*, saying that 'the kings were called *Ratbīl* in the language of Sind, just as the kings of Persia were called *Khusrau*, those of Rum *Kaisar*, and those of the Turks *Khaqan*'.[20] Marquart maintained that *Zunbīl* or *Zhunbīl* is the correct form, and *Ratbīl* a corruption, and it was he who connected the title with the god *Zūn* or *Zhūn* whose shrine lay in Zamīndāwar before the arrival of Islam, set on a sacred mountain, and still existing in the later ninth century when the Saffarids Yaʿqūb and ʿAmr b.Layth conquered the area as far as Kabul.[21] According to Marquart the title can be traced back to the Middle-Persian original *Zundātbar*, 'Zun the Justice-giver', or *Zun-dādh*, 'Given by Zūn'. Similarly the suffix *-dātbar* is found in the name of *Zamīndāwar*, 'Land of the Justice-giver'. With Kabul, Ghazna and Bust as key-points in the commerce between India and Persia, Zamīndāwar had become famous as a pilgrimage centre devoted to Zūn. In China the god's temple became known as the temple of *Su-na*. Marquart further suggested that the worship of Zūn might be related to that of the old shrine of the sun-god Āditya at Multan. In any case, the cult of Zūn was primarily Hindu, not Buddhist or Zoroastrian. Originally however it appears to have been brought southward by the Hephthalites, displacing an earlier god on the same sacred site. Parallels have been noted with the pre-Buddhist monarchy of Tibet, next to Zoroastrian influence in its ritual.[22] And a link has been posited between Zūn and the Iranian epic figures of Zal and Rustam, not without allowing however for a pre-Islamic connection with the proto-Shaivite god Sharva in Lamghān (the later Kāfiristān).

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[18] Bosworth, 'Notes on Pre-Ghaznavid History', p. 12.
[19] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 211.
[20] Zotenberg, *Tabari*, 3, pp. 518-19.
[21] J. Marquart, 'Das Reich Zābul und der Gott Žun vom 6-9 Jahrhundert', *Festschrift Eduard Sachau* (Berlin, 1915), pp. 248-92.
[22] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 35.

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Guiseppe Tucci concluded from Chinese sources that Zun(a)/Sun(a) was a northern mountain form of Shiva or 'an adaptation of Shiva to a local god, introduced from India'.[23] More generally, manifestations of Hinduism are in evidence in Gandhāra and adjacent areas of central and eastern Afghanistan and North Pakistan side by side with Buddhism. Even in the mountainous region of Swat, traces of Hindu worship are found together with rock-carvings representing the Buddha or some Mahāyānic Buddhist deity. As can be deduced from Hiuen Tsang, old pre-Buddhistic cults readily resurfaced everywhere when Buddhism declined in the seventh century. Buddhist influence was always more or less restricted to the main routes and to the trade centres, and it does not appear to have penetrated forcefully in the mountainous parts of Swat or Ghur. However, a connection of Gandhāra with the polymorphic male god Shiva and the Durgā Devī is now well-established. The pre-eminent character of Zun(a) or Sun(a) was that of a mountain god. And a connection with mountains also predominates in the composite religious configuration of Shiva, the lord of the mountain, the cosmic pivot and the ruler of time, and the god which the Greeks identified with their Dionysos. Whatever the origin of Zūn, it was certainly superimposed on a mountain and on a pre-existing mountain god while merging with Shaiva doctrines of worship. Gandhāra and the neighbouring countries in fact represent a prominent background to classical Shaivism.

For the Arabs the significance of the realm of Zūn and of its rulers the *Zunbīls* lay elsewhere, i.e. in the Zunbīls' tenacious presence which prevented the Muslim invaders from advancing through southern and eastern Afghanistan to the Indus valley. In Herat and Bādghīs, in northern Afghanistan and the Oxus valley, Hephthalite rulers held out under a Buddhist dynasty of Iranian origin until the first half of the eighth century. In Soghdiana, Farghāna and Khwārazm, local Iranian rulers and their Western-Turkish (Türgish) allies stopped the advance of the Arabs, but again no longer than until the eighth century. The first clashes between the invading Arabs and the Zunbīls and Kabulshahs occurred before the Umayyad rise to power, in 643 A.D., about three-quarters of a century before the conquest of Sind, and their struggle continued until 870 A.D. When the Arab general Ar-Rabīʿ reached the Helmand, the Zunbīls held power as far as Zarang. It seems probable,

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[23] Tucci, 'Oriental Notes', p. 172.

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at least from the account of Baladhuri, that the Indian officer who surrendered Zarang and the Helmand valley to the Arabs was, like the Kabulshah, a subordinate of the Zunbīl. We subsequently find the Zunbīl negotiating with the caliph's representatives 'for his own country and the land of Kābul'.[24] In 653-4 ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b.Samura and a force of 6000 Arabs penetrated, via Zarang, to the shrine of Zūn. The general broke off a hand from the idol and plucked out the rubies which were its eyes in order to persuade the Marzbān of Sīstān of the god's worthlessness.[25] The Arabs were now able to mount frequent plunder and slave expeditions as far as Ghazna, Kābul and Bāmiyān, but more than once the Zunbīl threatened the Arab position in Sistan. 'The *Zunbīl*', writes Al-Masʿūdī, 'was that king of *al-Hind* who marched to Sīstān with the design to invade the kingdom of the Syrians'.[26] And Tabari says that in the reign of ʿUmar 'the king of Sind who was called the *Ratbīl*' had mobilized the forces of all provinces of Sind against the Arabs but that these were routed and that the *Ratbīl* was killed by the Muslims.[27] A much later source confirms that this happened in 22/643, after the conquest of Sīstān and parts of Makrān: 'the ruler, who in the native language was styled *Zunbīl*, and was also king of Sind, was killed'.[28] Arab raiding continued and was aimed at exacting tribute, plunder and slaves. Since no permanent military establishments were as yet set up by the Arabs beyond Sīstān tribute stipulations were rarely complied with when no Arab army was in the vicinity. In the caliphate of Al-Walīd (705-15) an attempt was made to exact tribute from the Zunbīl in coined money. But the Arabs were soon compelled to accept payment in kind again. Slaves and beasts remained the principal booty of the raids, and these were sent to the caliphal court in a steady stream.

Within the confines of Sīstān the early Arab governors established a garrison in Zarang, and from here detachments were sent to towns like Farah and Qwāsh.[29] In southern Afghanistan, to the east of Zarang, Bust then became the most easterly permanent base of the Arabs, facing the *thughūr* or 'frontier zones' of Ar-Rakhkhaj and Zamīndāwar, from where the plunder raids were undertaken into the territories of the Zun-

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[24] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, II, pp. 65, 70.
[25] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 35.
[26] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 211.
[27] Zotenberg, *Tabari*, 3, p. 518.
[28] Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 417.
[29] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 36.

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bil as far as Ghazna and Kabul.[30] The town of Bust drew great numbers of volunteer ghāzīs – next to the regular troops – and this posed special problems since the deputy governors were often tempted to use these forces to assert their independence from the government in Zarang. Sīstān remained, in the final analysis, the frontier of consolidated Arab power and here large contingents of troops were kept in a state of preparedness, with regular stipends (*'aṭā'*) alloted to them, to be supplemented by the booty obtained in eastern Afghanistan.[31] Up to the end of the eighth century Sīstān brought a considerable surplus to the caliphs and their governors. The booty obtained in warfare with 'the infidels' at times considerably added to this. In 795, for instance, seven million dirhams' worth of plunder came in from Zamīndāwar, Zābul and Kābul.[32]

Thus, in Afghanistan the frontier of Islamic conquest had already become more or less stationary by the end of the first century. One reason for this was that the relative importance of Sīstān and Baluchistan had begun to diminish from the time of Muʿāwiya (661-680) onwards, when the conquest of Bactria and Transoxania was undertaken. Equally important was that in the easterly direction, towards the Indus valley, the conquests were now extended to Makrān and Sind. Here Muslim colonies became established in 711-12. We see that in the reign of Muʿāwiya campaigns against the Zunbil in Zamindawar and against the Kabulshah were still undertaken with enthusiasm by Abd ar-Rahman and by Al-Muhallab. Baladhuri writes that 'Al-Muhallab ibn abī Ṣufrah raided this frontier in the days of Muʿāwiya in the year 664. He reached Bannah and Al-Ahwār (Lahore), towns between al-Multān and Kābul. The enemy met and attacked him and his followers'.[33] From the late seventh century however factional strife (*ʿaṣabīya*) became a recurrent feature among the Arabs of Sīstān, and, while becoming linked up with political controversies over the control of the caliphate, the Arab striking force against the Zunbils diminished further.[34] The Zunbil was left unchecked and completely stopped paying tribute. This again provided a pretext for terminating the state of *muṣālaḥa* or 'peace' between the Arabs and the Zunbil, and Al-Hajjāj sent out his general Ubaidallah b.Abi Bakra in 79/698 with the order 'to lay waste

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30 Bosworth, 'Army of Destruction', p. 269.
31 Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 36.
32 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
33 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 421.
34 Bosworth, *Sīstān*, pp. 50, 54; idem, 'Army of Destruction'.

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the Zunbil's lands, destroy his forts, and kill and enslave his people'. Ubaidallah was the *maulā* (slave) of mixed Abyssinian and Iraqi-Persian origin who became known as 'the dark one who is the leader of the people of the East (*al-adgham saiyid ahl al-mashrīq*)'. His first assignment had been in Fārs, where he was ordered to take charge of the suppression of the sacred fires of the Zoroastrians and the confiscation of temple treasure, a task which he is alleged to have executed with such devotion that he collected forty million dirhams in less than a year. He was promoted for two years to the governorship of Sīstān in 671 under Ziyād, where again he took great efforts to suppress Zoroastrianism and also turned his attention to raiding the Zunbil and Kabulshah, succeeding in imposing tribute on them. A quarter of a century later, under Al-Hajjāj's government of Iraq (which included the entire eastern caliphate), in 697-8, Ubaidallah was once more appointed governor of Sīstān on account of the merit of his previous frontier experience. The campaign which ensued is described by Baladhuri as that of the 'army of destruction' (*jaish al-fanā'*). In effect, the Muslim army which on this occasion marched into Zamindawar and almost as far as Kabul was virtually destroyed. Ubaidallah was forced to offer money and hostages and had to promise never to raid the Zunbil's territory again. Al-Hajjāj however sent a new force under Ibn al-Ashʿath – which became known as the 'peacock army' (*jaish aṭ-ṭawāwīs*) – to restore the Muslim position.[35] The formation and despatch of this army quickly brought the Zunbil to terms and he offered to pay tribute again at the old rate. Around 700 A.D. the region of Zamindawar to the south of the mountain zone was penetrated by Ibn al-Ashʿath but he made peace with the Zunbil, much to the indignation of Al-Hajjāj and Al-Muhallab who denounced him for 'turning away from the *jihād* against the infidels and stirring up strife amongst Muslims'. A great *fitna* followed which sent shockwaves throughout the Umayyad caliphate and revealed the hostility of the Iraqi Arabs and their *mawālī* towards the Umayyads and the dominance of the Syrian troops. The Umayyad throne and the autocratic rule of Al-Hajjāj were jeopardized for a while when the Arabs of both Basra and Kufa joined Ibn al-Ashʿath.[36] But the episode ended with the restoration of Umayyad power in Sīstān. Ibn al-Ashʿath and his allies were crushed in 704 and much of the resistance against Al-Hajjāj's authority in the east was removed, inaugurating a period of North-Arab

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[35] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, pp. 57-86; Frye (ed.), *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, p. 41.
[36] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, pp. 60, 63.

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or Qays ascendancy. Ibn al-Ash'ath's defeat also fell heavily upon the *mawālī*. Al-Hajjāj had always shown a deep suspicion of them since they were in league with his opponents, and he had therefore compelled them to participate in the *jihād* on the eastern frontiers of Kabul, Sind and Transoxania.[37]

Subsequent to the *fitna* of the peacock army there was a rapid turn-over of governors in Sīstān, reflecting on the one hand factionalist politics of pro-Qaysī and pro-Yemenī parties in Khurasan and on the other hand objections of the Zunbil.[38] Internal Arab rivalry in Sistan and the sustained political intervention of the Zunbil combined to bring Islamic expansionism to a halt, and for about one-and-a-half century no lasting gains were made in these territories. In a series of unsuccessful campaigns the Arab governors and generals commonly seem to have underestimated the Zunbil's strength and the difficulties of terrain and climate in especially the regions of Ghazna and Zabulistan. One of the main reasons why in the late ninth century the Saffarid brothers Ya'qūb and 'Amr bin Layth were able to penetrate into eastern Afghanistan was that they were Sagzīs of local provenance and possessed detailed local knowledge of all these places.[39] Even then, the adjacent mountains of Ghūr in central Afghanistan remained pagan until the eleventh century.

In the early eighth century Sīstān and Bust still represented the limits of Arab expansion into Afghanistan south of the Hindū-Kush. The Zunbil had made Sīstān 'an ill-omened frontier'. In 711 he had to accept a 'peace treaty' from Qutayba bin Muslim but he at the same time renewed his homage to the Chinese emperor who claimed suzerain rights over the eastern-Persian borderlands. It was not until the final Muslim defeat of the Chinese in Transoxania in 751 that the Zunbil broke this tenuous link with the Tang emperors.[40] The 'āmils of Al-Mahdī (775-85) and Ar-Rashīd (786-809), as Baladhuri informs us, continued to rule 'over the regions to which Islam had reached', and Al-Ma'mūn, the son of Ar-Rashīd, during his stay in Khurasan (808-18), exacted 'double the tribute' and 'subdued Kābul, whose kings professed Islam and promised obedience'.[41] Such a profession, however, does not seem to have had lasting effect, if indeed it was ever made at all. But Islam must have come to eastern Afghanistan quite early, although at first it was not

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37 Frye (ed.), *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, p. 41.
38 Bosworth, *Sīstān*, pp. 67-68.
39 *Ibid.*, p. 74.
40 *Ibid.*, p. 36; Gibb, *Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, pp. 41-42.
41 Cf. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 70.

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disseminated widely or adopted by the ruling house.[42] Kabul, in any case, was frequented by Muslim merchants before the Saffarids conquered it.[43] According to Firishta, some 'Afghans' had already become converts to the true faith even before the conquest of Sind by Muhammad al-Qasim, in about 22 Hijrae.[44] As in Makran, Muslims were given refuge in the Zunbil's territories from a very early date. And in Hajjāj's time, the Zunbil, facing the peacock army, was advised by a renegade Khārijite Muslim. Numerous followers of Al-Qasim also chose to remain with him.[45] An inscription testifies to the presence of Islam in the Kabul area at least two decades before the appearance of the Saffarids in eastern Afghanistan.[46] It is quite possible that radical Khārijite propagandists passed from Kirman, through Baluchistan or southern Afghanistan, to Sind, in the time of Al-Hajjāj, when they were persecuted in Iraq, Ahwāz and Fārs and had to withdraw eastward.[47] It was however under the early Saffarids that the Islamization of the region gained momentum and that conquest succeeded the Arabs' slave- and plunder-raids or tribute levies.

The new dynasty of the Saffarids, having established itself in eastern Persia, achieved great fame by their conquests in the 'infidel country of *al-Hind*'. The Saffarid ruler Yaʿqūb took Zābul and Kābul in 870, three years after obtaining power in Sīstān and Herat, while his brother ʿAmr – who succeeded him -- claims to have defeated 'Kamalū, the Shāhi king'.[48] The activities of the Saffarid brothers on the Indian frontier attracted special attention in the caliphate thanks to the care they took to send exotic presents from the plunder to the Abbasid court.[49] Yaʿqūb, for instance, at one time sent fifty gold and silver idols from Kabul to the caliph Al-Muʿtamid – who despatched them to Mecca. Another set of idols, lavishly decorated with jewels and silver, sent by ʿAmr in 896 from Sakāwand (a place in the Logar valley between Ghazna and Kabul which the sources describe as a pilgrimage center of the Hindus), caused a sensation in Baghdad on account of their strangeness. Still, Muslim control of Zamīndāwar remained imperfect until the end of the ninth

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[42] Cf. Bosworth, 'Notes on Pre-Ghaznavid History', p. 22.
[43] Idem, *Sistān*, p. 86.
[44] J. Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India, Translated from the Original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta*, 4 vols (New Delhi, 1981), I, p. 4.
[45] *Ibid.*; Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 57.
[46] Bosworth, 'Notes on Pre-Ghaznavid History', p. 24.
[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
[48] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, pp. 74, 79.
[49] Frye (ed.), *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, p. 110.

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century, and in Ghazna the Saffarid governor was once again expelled by two Indian princes in 899-900. In the final decades of the ninth century the history of Zamindawar and Zabulistan becomes increasingly hard to follow. For one thing, the sources no longer speak of a *Zunbil* or *Ratbīl* king. At some time shortly before the Saffarid conquest of 870 the Buddhist 'Turk Shāhi' dynasty of Kabul which boasted descent from the Kushana king Kanishka was supplanted by a dynasty of Hindu kings. To these Al-Biruni refers as *Hindū Shāhīya* and they are called *Shāhi* in Kalhana's Rājataraṇgiṇī, and *sāhi* in inscriptions.[50] Al-Biruni says that Kabul was the earliest capital of the Hindū Shāhīya after they expelled the Turk Shāhīya dynasty.[51] In the beginning their authority extended from Kabul to the Chenab river. The last *Turk Shāhi* ruler, Lagatūrmān, is said to have been imprisoned by his brahman vazīr Kallār, and it was the latter who became the founder of the dynasty of the Hindu Shahis.[52] Kallār, according to Al-Biruni, was succeeded by 'the brahman kings' Samand, Kamalā, Bhim, Jayapāl and their descendants. But all other sources, including Kalhana, say that the Hindu Shahis were kshatriyas.[53]

However that may be, the Hindu Shahi dynasty succeeded, from about the third quarter of the ninth century to the first quarter of the eleventh century – when they were finally reduced by the Ghaznavids – , the Zunbils and Kabulshahs as the occupants of the frontier of al-Hind. The struggle between the Hindu Shahis of Kabul/Gandhara and the Yamīnī Turks of Ghazna or 'Ghaznavids' at first concerned supremacy over eastern Afghanistan but was then transferred eastward to the Panjab. The Hindu Shahis were expelled from Kabul in 870-1 and re-established their capital at *Udabhāṇḍapura* (modern *Und*; the town named *Waihind* by Al-Biruni) in the area which was called the North-West Frontier Province by the British. Here, while being hard-pressed by the advancing '*Turushkas*' (as Kalhana calls the Ghaznavids), they became '*the Rāīs of Hindustān*'. The Samanids of Khurāsān and Transoxania, succeeding the Saffarids, could not consolidate their power in the Kābul valley.[54] In 933 the virtually independent Samanid *wālī* of Za-

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[50] Y. Mishra, *The Hindu Sahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab, A.D. 865-1026* (Patna, 1972), p. 111.

[51] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, II, p. 10.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 13; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 72.

[53] M.A. Stein (ed.), *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṇgiṇī* (New Delhi, 1960), VIII, 3230; Mishra, *Hindu Sahis*, p. 3.

[54] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 79;

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bulistan was driven out of his headquarters at Ghazna by Alptigin, the slave general who became the founder of the dynasty of the Ghaznavids and gave a new impetus to Islamic expansionism. The *Shāhis* were now driven towards the Panjab, where they ruled for some time as far as the Rama-Ganga river. In the Kabul/Gandhara area only Lamghān remained in their hands.[55] Firishta writes that already during Alptigin's lifetime (c. 933-963) his general Sabuktigin had begun to raid the provinces of Lamghān and Multān. This then precipitated an alliance between the Shāhi ruler Jayapāl and the Muslim Amirs of Multān. Jayapāl's dominions at that time 'extended in length from Sirhind to Lamghān and in breadth from the kingdom of Kashmir to Multan'. The king himself, subsequent to a short stay in Lahore, took up residence in the fort of Bhatinda.

The Hindu Shahis, having thus been pushed eastward from Kabul to the Panjab by the Turks, could still reassert themselves as 'the greatest of the kings of Hind'. When Sabuktigin attacked Jayapāl the latter was assisted by the kings of Delhi, Ajmer, Kalinjar and Kanauj.[56] Jayapāl once again invaded Ghazna before he finally lost all his country to the west of the Indus, including Lamghān and Peshawar. As ʿUtbi says, 'from this time the Hindus drew in their tails and sought no more to invade the land'. Mahmud, the son of Sabuktigin who succeeded him in 997, first arrived at a tributary arrangement with the *Shāhi* ruler at Bhatinda in 1001.[57] When Jayapāl was succeeded by his son Ānandapāla in the same year the *Shāhi* dominion still extended southward as far as the Amirate of Multan. Mahmud undertook another invasion in 1004, allegedly 'because the tribute from Hindustan had not been paid', but in reality to gain access to the Panjab and, through that, to the wealth of the trans-Gangetic plain. In 1009, as says ʿUtbi again, 'the king of Hind . . . offered submission to Mahmud . . . paid tribute . . . and thus the road for caravans and merchants between the districts of Khurāsān and Hind became open'.[58] In 1013-14 Mahmud set out to destroy the last remnants of Shāhi power without bothering about an alibi. The Shāhi king appealed for help in Kashmir. But this could not prevent the 'royal glory of the Shahis' from declining rapidly. They were removed as a ruling power from the Panjab, then lingered for

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[55] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.
[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-101.

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some time in the hill districts south of Lohara, ultimately to take shelter at the court of Kashmir. Here they remained a factor of some importance, long after having been extinguished as a political power in their own right, until the twelfth century. And the *Shāhi* name retained its charisma. Many kshatriya lineages outside Kashmir continued to trace their descent to these kings. Idrisi testifies that as late as the twelfth century it was in Kābul that the contract of investiture of every *Shahi* king was completed and that here he was obliged to agree to certain ancient conditions which completed the contract.[59] Still in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries the prevalent coin of north-western India was a debased variety of the 'bull-and-horseman' issues of the Hindū Shāhi kings of Kabul and Waihind.[60] The same coin had become current in the Ghaznavid kingdom of Lahore and spread into Rajasthan and northern-central India. When Mahmud defeated Jayapāl, a quantity of seven crore of such 'royal rupees', in all likelihood of the same bull-and-horseman type, fell in his hands in the Hindu-Shahi fort in the Panjab.[61]

Southern and eastern Afghanistan were on the vital caravan route from Hind to Khurāsān. This is why the Muslims were attracted to it in the first place. Under the indigenous Zunbils the overland trade through Kabul and Zamindawar had probably never been suspended. It appears, to the contrary, that extensive trading contacts developed in these dominions with the Islamic West. Indeed, unlike Khurāsān, the importance of Zābul and Kābul was primarily commercial, not political, even though the 'army of destruction' and the 'peacock army' could turn frontier politics and warfare into pervasive *fitna*, jeopardizing the caliphal office. The bull-and-horseman coinage of the Shāhi kings of Kabul (which can be traced back to earlier Shaka and Greek coins) served as a prototype for Abbasid dirhams in the first half of the tenth century. Coins of this type appear to have reached Baghdad both through conquest or plunder and trade. Best-known are the coins of Al-Muqtadir's reign but imitation issues of the bull-and-horseman coin were not confined to his reign.[62] Before the Ghaznavids, bull-and-horse-

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[59] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 67.

[60] Raychaudhuri and Habib, *Cambridge Economic History of India*, I, p. 95.

[61] S.R. Sharma, 'A Contemporary Account of Sultan Mahmud's Indian Expeditions', *Journal of the Aligarh Research Institute*, I (1941), pp. 127-165; O.W. Macdowell, 'The Shahis of Kabul and Gandhara', *The Numismatic Chronicle*, VIII, 7th series (1968), pp. 189-224.

[62] A.S. Altekar, 'A Bull and Horseman Type of Coin of the Abbasid Caliph Al-Muqtadir Billah Ja'afar', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, VIII (1946), pp. 75-78.

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man coins also penetrated deeper into India, as is shown for instance by a large hoard of 178 billon pieces of this type, of Sāmantadeva of Waihind, of the tenth century, which were found in Ladusar, Jaipur.[63] Together with the great number of dirhams which in the ninth, tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century came to Eastern Europe (of which the majority was recoined) by way of trade caravans via the route through the state of the Volga Bulgarians and into the land by river arteries, there came Indian coins as well.[64] In the European parts of the USSR the silver coins of the kings of Waihind of the ninth and tenth centuries have thus been recovered, as separate pieces or in hoards along with Islamic dirhams, sometimes with a small quantity of Byzantine *miliaresia* and West-European *denarii* or even the rare *srebreniki* of the Princedom of Kiev: The Shahi coins came straight from Kabul, through Persia. And such coins circulated in Tashkent.

The Zunbil-Shahi dominions, on the frontier of *al-Hind*, it can therefore be concluded, clearly were integrated in a far-flung trading system. Ghazna, Bust, Kabul, and Al-Qandahār ('where people do not eat cows') were large and important cities, merchants resorts, with each its own satellite towns.[65] Al-Lahūm, in Bāmiyān, is described as 'the trade port of Khurāsān and the treasure-house of Sind'. Via Kabul and Bāmiyān and the other cities of the Zunbil, Sind and Hind maintained regular commercial intercourse with the Islamic world, and even beyond. Local produce too was 'carried to every region of the world', from at least the eighth century: mīrbalān (a kind of dried fruits and berries of styptic quality which was an extremely highly valued medicine), aloes-wood, indigo, coconut products, saffron, fine cotton cloth, iron. Our texts emphasize that these (and other) products were exported in large quantities, and that they were valuable, sometimes 'very profitable', sufficiently so to justify the presence of innumerable Indian, Muslim and Jewish traders in Kabul and the other main cities of these domains.

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[63] S. Prakash, 'Treasure Trove Coins from Ladoosar', *ibid.*, XXII (1960), pp. 276-7.

[64] A.A. Bykov, 'Finds of Indian Medieval Coins in East Europe', *ibid.*, XXVII (1965), pp. 146-56.

[65] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 422; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 21; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 66-68.

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Makrān

To the south of the Zunbīl's domain, it was the arid and inhospitable land of Makrān rather than the Indus river that the earliest sources describe as the *thaghr al-hind* or 'frontier of India'. The Arabs were in Makrān almost three-quarters of a century before Muhammad al-Qasim conquered Sind and established the first Muslim settlement on the Indus. Adjacent to the Persian province of Kirmān, a western extension of coastal Sind, Makrān was first invaded in 644 A.D., the 23rd year of the Hijra, towards the end of the caliphate of ʿUmar. The Arab army entered from Kirmān, routed a large assembly of Indian troops and elephants which had been collected from Sind and Kabul, pushed on to the Indus, then returned to Fārs or Iraq with booty and one captured elephant.[66] The Makrān passage to Sind appeared so difficult that for fifteen years the Arabs were deterred from further raids.[67] During ʿUthmān's caliphate (644-656) mere reconnoitring parties of horsemen seem to have roamed in the coastal parts of the region. Not before ʿAlī (656-661) a second army was sent to 'the frontier', to gain 'booty and many slaves', then penetrate into al-Qīqān in 658-9 and suffer a defeat in which the leader with most of his followers was killed.[68] Under Muʿāwiya (661-680) raids were carried out in Makrān and Sīstān. Al-Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufrah 'raided the frontier' and reached Bannah and *Al-Ahwār* (Lahore).[69] Qīqān was invaded once more at the same time, and again the army of Islam was put to flight back to Makrān.[70]

After these fleeting incursions, still in the caliphate of Muʿāwiya, Makrān was finally 'conquered by force' by Sinān bin Salamah bin al-Muḥabbiq al-Hudhalī, who 'established a garrison and settled the country after making it his headquarters (*maṣṣarahā wa ʾaqāma bi-hā wa ẓabaṭa al-bilād*)'.[71] From Makrān the Arabs engaged the warlike tribes of *al-Qīqān*, and the *Mīd* on the coast of Sind. 'Tribute, many spoils and slaves' were obtained even though the Arabs were by no means always victorious.[72] Quṣdār was conquered.[73] And, to the north, the Arabs penetrated to Sanārūdh from Sīstān, and hence to *ar-Rudhbhar*

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[66] Zotenberg, *Tabari*, 3, pp. 518-19; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 417.
[67] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 420-1; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 58-60.
[68] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*,p. 421; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 76.
[69] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, *ibid.*
[70] *Ibid.*; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 80-81.
[71] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 421.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 422; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 80-81.
[73] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 422.

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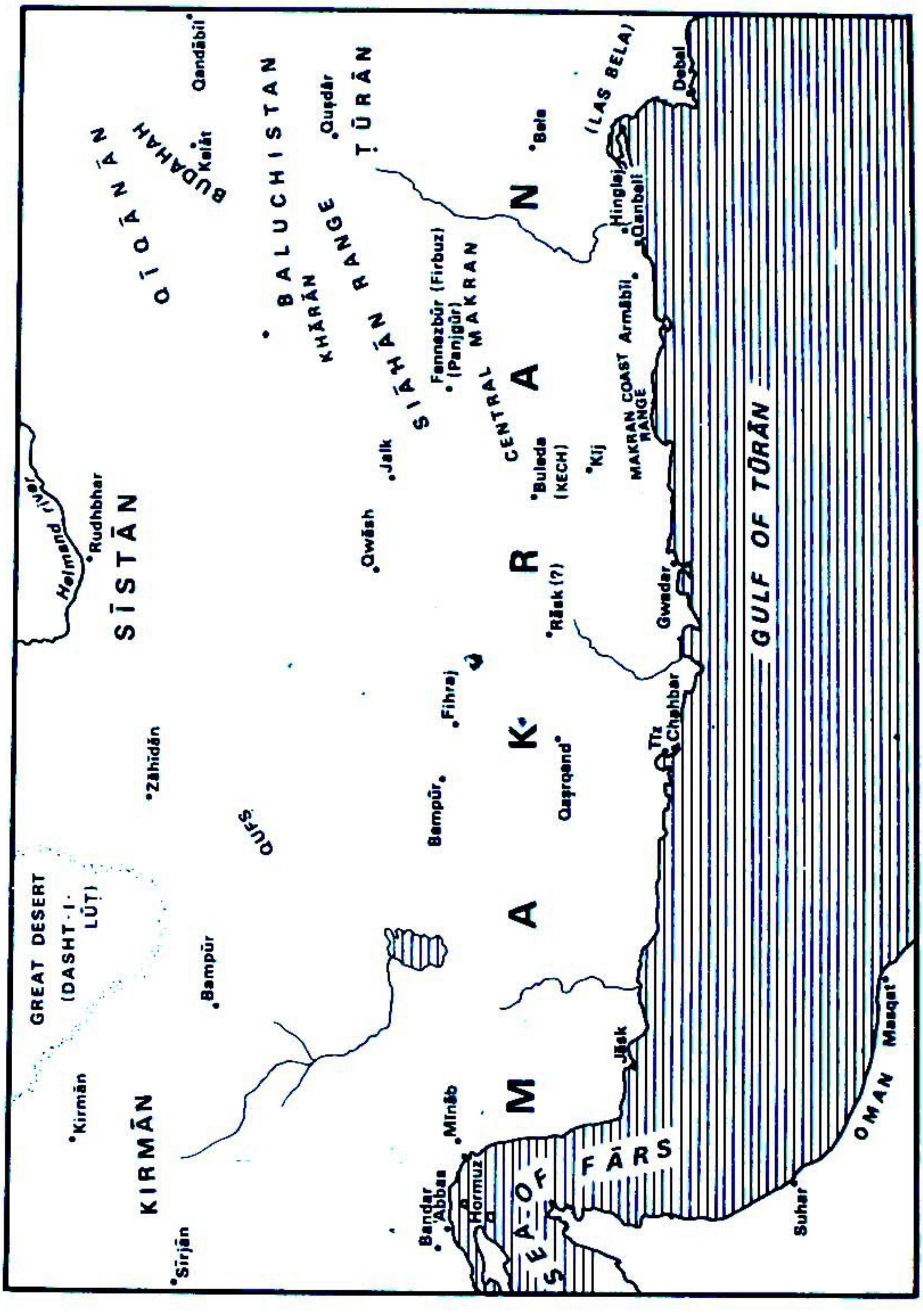

Makrān.

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and the river Helmand (Hindmand).[74] Factional fighting then broke out but in the first decade of the eighth century al-Hajjāj succeeded in re-establishing his governor in Makrān, and the conquests were extended to Qandābīl.[75] Tribute levies from Makrān appear to have become regularized during these years, but when al-Hajjāj put Muhammad al-Qāsim in charge of the frontier of al-Hind the latter faced renewed opposition in two of the main towns of Makrān, in Fannazbūr and Armābīl.[76] These towns had to be subdued when al-Qāsim went through Makrān to collect reinforcements for the 'holy war against Sind and Hind' which had by then been formally declared by the caliph Walīd and which resulted in the conquest of Sind by the Arab forces around 712 A.D.[77]

Practically nothing is known of the detail of the political history of Makrān during the subsequent 150 years. The political development broadly follows that of Sind, which, with Makrān, remained incorporated in the Arab empire (with short lapses) from 712 until about 870, when the caliphate lost its effective control over this – its easternmost – province. The power of the succeeding east-Persian Muslim dynasties of the Tahirids, Saffarids and Samanids was probably as ineffective in Makrān as it was in Sind. Makrān emerges in the mid-ninth century parcelled out among independent Arab chieftains who ruled from Kīj and a place called Mashki, on the Kirmān border. These chieftains are known to have used the caliph's name in the prayers. Most of Sind was at this time in a similar way divided amongst such chieftains, called *mutaghalliba*, having 'usurped' power instead of having been appointed from Baghdad. The last expedition sent by the Commander of the Faithful to Makrān or Sind seems to have been in 836 A.D. and was directed against the *mutaghallib* of Qandābīl, who was brought to terms and had to evacuate his chief men to Quṣdār. Two or three decades after this date caliphal sovereignty became nominal and no revenue or tribute was transferred from Makrān and Sind to Baghdad ever since.[78]

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[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 423; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 66, 69.

[76] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 85; M.T. Houtsma (ed.), *The Tārīkh of Aḥmad ibn abī Yaʿqūb al-Yaʿqūbī*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1883), II, p. 345.

[77] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 91; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 424.

[78] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 432; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 456.

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Makrān, 'the frontier of al-Hind' in the early Arab conquest (*futūḥ*) literature, is identified by the geographers of the ninth to twelfth centuries as the territory extending 'about fifteen days travelling from Tīz to Quṣdār in the district of Ṭūrān'.[79] The geographers commonly use the term *al-Hind* to denote the regions east of the Indus, while including Makrān in *as-Sind*.[80] The historian Tabari took Makrān to be a separate region between the Persian province of Kirmān on one side and *al-Hind* on the other: ' . . . the region of Makrān . . . is situated beyond Kirmān and Fārs, between the kingdoms of Sind and Hind . . . and ʿUmān . . . ; Makrān borders on Kirmān and Hind, (while) the sea separates it from ʿUmān'.[81] It is equally common, however, even in the geographical literature, to find *Sind* conflated with *al-Hind* in a single term. And since the Makrān coast was the westernmost portion of Sind, or a western dependency of Sind, it is then found that *al-Hind* ('India') is not just the country east of the Indus but includes Makrān, starting from Tīz. Al-Bīrūnī thus says that 'the coast (*sāḥil*) of *al-Hind* begins with Tīz, the capital (*qaṣba*) of Makrān, and from there extends in a south-eastern direction towards the region of Debal (*ad-daybal*) . . . '.[82]

These various statements from the Arabic sources show that Makrān was effectually regarded as a frontier zone, but yet as distinctly Indian territory. And this is conform to the view which has been current in antiquity – when Makrān was known as *Gedrosia* – and down to comparatively recent times. Pliny the Elder for instance writes in the first century A.D. that 'the river Indus . . . is the western boundary of India (*ad Indum amnem qui est ab occidente finis Indiae*)', but adds: 'in fact, most authorities do not put the western frontier at the river Indus but include four satrapies, (those of) the Gedrosi (Makran), Arachotae (Qandahar), Arii (Herat), and Parapanisidae (Kabul), with the river Kabul as the final boundary . . . (*etenim plerique ab occidente non Indo amne determinant sed adiciunt quattuor satrapias, Gedrosos, Arachotas, Arios, Parapanisidas, ultimo fine Cophete fluvio . . .*)'.[83] In the sixth century the Nestorian Patriarch Jesujabus considered India to

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[79] De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, p. 175; Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 331.

[80] Thus for instance Ibn Khordādbhih in his ninth-century *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik* (pp. 55-57) describes Makrān as one of 'the countries of *as-Sind*'. According to the *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik of Ibn Ḥauqal* (ed. De Goeje), of the mid-tenth century, Makrān and adjacent regions to the north-east are 'dependencies of *as-Sind*' (p. 231).

[81] Zotenberg, *Tabari*, 3, p. 518.

[82] Al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb fī Taḥqīqī mā li-l-Hind* (Hyderabad, India, 1958), p. 167.

[83] *Natural History*, vol. II (London, 1947), Book VI, XX.53-XXI.56, XXIII.78-79.

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begin from the coast of Persia, i.e. from *Fārs*, about the Persian Gulf. Medieval European literature introduced a tripartite division of India: 'India Major', which extended from Malabar to the east; 'India Minor', adjoining Persia and embracing Sind and Makrān; and 'India Tertia' which was Zanzibar. Nicolo de Conti, in the fifteenth century, similarly divided India in three parts: one, from Persia to the Indus (Makrān and Sind); a second, from the Indus to the Ganges; and a third, beyond the Ganges. And Marco Polo, in 1290, speaks of the eastern part of Makrān – which he calls *Kīj-Makrān* after its main inland town – as 'the last kingdom in India as you go towards the west and north-west', a kingdom which at that time claimed an independent status, probably under a Muslim ruler.[84]

Makrān, in the decades preceding the Muslim raids, was part of the dominion of a dynasty of Hindu *Rāīs* who had their capital at Alor, in Sind. This dynasty ruled 'on the east to the boundary of Kashmir, on the west to Makrān, on the south to the coast and sea and to Debal, on the north to the mountains of Kurdān and Qīqānān'.[85] Of the four provincial administrative centres of the kingdom of Sind there was one 'at Sīwistān, which had Būdhīya (Lūdhīya), Chingān, and the skirts of the hills of Rūjhān up to the limit of Makrān under its charge'.[86] When Muhammad al-Qasim arrived in Sind in the early eighth century, we learn, the King of Kashmīr 'held sway over the whole of Hind and Sind and even the country of Makrān and Tūrān'.[87] And there were other Indian kings, such as the Zunbīl, who shared power in these western regions with the Sindian dynasty. Makrān, in short, was, when the Arabs arrived, in the outer periphery of an Indian *rājmaṇḍala* or 'circle of kings', the pivot of which was constantly shifting.

It was however also characteristic of Makrān, from very early times, that sovereignty of the region – or of large parts of it – alternated between India and Persia, or rather between Indian and Persian kings. In the sixth century, Makrān was at first part of the dominion of the Hindu Rāīs of Sind, but was then annexed by Persia during the reign of Rāī Sīharas II. The brahman usurper Chach brought it back under Indian

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[84] H. Yule (ed. and transl.), *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, 2 vols (London, 1871), II, pp. 334-6, 359.

[85] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 15.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] *'wa jamala' hind-o-sind dar taḥt farmān . . . wa bilād-i-makrān-o-tūrān amr-i-o'* (Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 112).

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sovereignty in 631 A.D., 'as far as the border of Kirmān'. But when ten years later the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited Makrān (*Long-kie-lo*) he found the whole of it 'under the government of Persia'.[88] Then, three years later, the Arabs entered Makrān but they were opposed by Indian kings, and the Arabs accordingly spoke of the province again as the 'frontier of *al-Hind*'. The *Chachnāma* describes in some detail how in 631, after the death of Khusro Parviz – when a woman sat on the throne of Persia – Chach went to Kirmān with a large army in order to re-impose Hindu sovereignty in Makrān and to determine 'the boundary between Makrān and Kirmān': '. . . The King of Fārs, of Nimroz, invaded the country . . . After the death of Kasrā, son of Hormuz, the King of Fārs, the kingdom had come into the hands of a woman. When Chach heard about this situation, he went with a large army to the territory of Kirmān. . . . Chach then proceeded to the district of Makrān. Whoever he encountered submitted to him. After he had come across the steep ridge and the mountains of Makrān, he came to (still) another country (*bilād*). In that place there was an old fort (*ḥiṣār*) called Kinazpūr. He ordered it to be reconstructed. He also ordered that, in accordance with Hindu custom (*rasm-i-hindwī*), kettle-drums (*nauḳat*) should be beaten and musical instruments (*malāhī*) sounded in that fort at sunset and sunrise . . . He then left the place and came to Kirmān. He encamped at a small stream which ran between Kirmān and Makrān and there he marked out the eastern boundary (*ḥudd-i-sharqī*), declaring that some date-trees (*khurmā*) growing there were the boundary between Makrān and Kirmān. He also planted a grove of date-trees on the banks of the stream and onto them he branded the words: "This is the boundary as established in the days of Chach, son of Salaij, son of Bisas, King of Sind, when it came into his possession"'.[89] How far west this boundary was drawn can no longer be made out, but it was probably far beyond Tīz. The fort of Kinazpūr (in variant *MSS*, 'Kang' or 'Kinarpūr'), in any case, is to be seen as the extreme westward projection of Hindu power in Makrān during this period.

Further evidence in the Chachnāma makes perfectly clear that many areas of Makrān (as of Sind) had a largely Buddhist population. When Chach marched to Armābīl, this town is described as having been in the hands of a Buddhist Samani (*samannīʾ budda*), a descendant of the

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[88] B.D. Mirchandani, 'On Hiuen Tsiang's Travels in Baluchistan', *Journal of Indian History*, LXV (1967), pp. 330-1, 334.
[89] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 16, 48-49.

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agents of Rāī Sahiras who had been elevated for their loyalty and devotion but who later made themselves independent.[90] This Buddhist chief offered his allegiance to Chach when the latter was on his way to Kirmān in 631. The same chiefdom of Armābīl is referred to by Hiuen Tsang as *'O-tien-p'o-chi-lo'*, located at the high road running through Makran, and he also describes it as predominantly Buddhist; thinly populated though it was, it had no less than 80 Buddhist convents with about 5000 monks. In effect, at eighteen km north-west of Las Bela, at Gandakahar, near the ruins of an ancient town, are the caves of Gondrāni, and as their construction shows these caves were undoubtedly Buddhist.[91] Travelling through the Kīj valley further west (then under the government of Persia) Hiuen Tsang saw 'some hundred Buddhist monasteries and perhaps 6000 priests'. He also saw 'several hundred Deva temples' in this part of Makran, and in the town of *Su-nu-li-chi-shi-fa-lo* – which is probably Qasrqand – he saw a temple of Maheshvarà Deva, 'richly adorned and sculptured'.[92] There is thus evidence of a very wide extension of Indian cultural forms in Makrān in the seventh century, even in the period when it fell under Persian sovereignty. By comparison, in more recent times, the last place of Hindu pilgrimage in Makrān was Hinglaj, 256 km west of present-day Karachi, in Las Bela.

On the other hand, Persian political control did not fail to leave its mark on Makrān and, as a result, the archaeological débris of ancient or pre-Islamic Persia betrays a more fractured identity of the Makrān borderland. The memory of the Persian king Kai-khusro and of his grandfather Kai-kaus has been preserved in the names of the Khusravi and Kausi *kārez*, subterraneous canals which are found in Kīj.[93] Such *kārez* were the characteristic means used by the Achaemenids to extend agriculture; there is one in Makrān which is still named after Cyrus (who annexed Makrān and large parts of Sind and the Panjāb in 512 B.C.), and there are several others to the north of Las Bela.[94] Legendary stories tell of the expeditions of Cyrus and Semiramis through the Makrān desert. The Greek admiral Scylax descended the Indus and carved out a new satrapy along the coasts of Arabia and Makrān. There are also Sasanid remains. The nomadic tribes of present-day Baluchistan and the hill country of Sind call the ancient dams of hewn stone which are to

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[90] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[91] Mirchandani, 'Hiuen Tsiang's Travels', pp. 325, 327-8.
[92] *Ibid.*, pp. 330, 334.
[93] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. XVII (Oxford, 1908), p. 46.
[94] P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, 2 vols (London, 1951), I, pp. 150, 168-9.

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be seen here the '*gabrbands*', ascribing them to the *Gabr*, i.e. the Zoroastrians.[95] Although there is no evidence of their age it is quite possible that the Sasanid and perhaps even the Achaemenid rulers of these arid tracts would have executed these public works. Similar constructions which are known to be due to the ancient Persians are in evidence in western Persia. And the spatial distribution of the *gabrbands* often coincides with that of the *kārez*.

Until shortly before the Arab conquest, then, Makrān recurrently fell under Persian overlordship, not without receiving infusions of Persian elements but retaining an Indianized identity all along. Most durable was probably the situation in which Makrān was politically divided in a Persian portion to the west (part of the province of Kirmān, with a shifting borderline), and an Indian portion to the east which later was called *Kīj-Makrān*. The Indian and Persian portions of Makrān taken together would then constitute the plural *Makrānāt*, the 'Makrāns', a name which is found in later histories. When Marco Polo mentions Makrān as a kingdom which is formally independent of both Persia and India he is referring merely to *Kīj-Makrān*. In Mughal-Safawid times, *Kīj-Makrān* was regarded as a dependency of Sind but Mughal and Safawid authorities were alternately ascendant, the Safawids, interestingly, trying to 'conquer' the area in order to facilitate the journey of envoys between Golconda and Persia.[96] In the eighteenth century, the whole of Makrān reverted to Persia, after the expedition to India of Nadir Shah, and in 1739 a Persian provincial governor was appointed.[97] Equally, in Ahmad Shah Durrani's time, Makrān was reckoned to be part of the province of Kirmān. And the political boundary continued to shift until well into British times.

In addition to these political shifts, the coast of Kirmān and Makrān, from ancient times onwards, as we have already seen, was settled by the strongly Persianized tribe of the *Azdī* Arabs, merchants from Al-Ubulla and Oman, who were also an important bridgehead for the Arab conquest in the seventh century.[98] The presence of such a diaspora makes it even more difficult to draw boundary lines here. At the very least, the Azdī Arabs represented an influential Persian-Zoroastrian element in pre-conquest Makrān, with extensions into Sind and beyond. Mercan-

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[95] H.T. Lambrick, *Sind: A General Introduction* (Karachi, 1975), p. 52.
[96] Riazul Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations* (Teheran, 1970), pp. 177-9.
[97] Sykes, *Persia*, II, p. 361.
[98] Cf. pp. 48, 52-53.

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tile life in Makrān was carried on for long under the banner of Persia. Idrisi, in the twelfth century, writes that 'in Makrān the dress of the common people consists of tunics, while the merchants and people of eminence wear shirts with long sleeves, and cloaks, and use long pieces of cloth and kerchiefs of gold lame as their turbans, in the style of the merchants of Iraq and Fārs'.[99]

Similarly blurred are the languages of Makrān. Hiuen Tsang considered the script which was in use in Makrān to be 'much the same as that of India', but the spoken language 'differed a little from that of India'.[100] Under Arab domination the languages of Mansūra and Multān, in Sind, were Arabic and Sindian, but in Makrān 'Persian' and Makrāni were in use.[101] The very etymology of the name of the region is alternately derived from Persian and Indian roots. Classical writers referred to the coastline of Gedrosia (from Las Bela to Karmania (Kirman)) as the country of the *Ichthyophagi* or 'fish-eaters', and the name *Makrān* is therefore sometimes taken to be a corruption of the Persian translation of this: *Māki-khorān*. But it is also thought that the name derives from a Dravidian toponymic 'Makara'.[102]

If we look at Makrān from a purely physiographic point of view it appears above all to be an extension of the Great Desert of Persia.[103] This desert, which is now known as the *Dasht-i-Lūt* and which the Arab geographers simply called *al-Mafāza*, 'the desert', runs across the high plateau of Persia from the north-west to the south-east, in a line unbroken from the Alburz mountains on the Caspian Sea to Makrān and the Persian Gulf. *Al-Mafāza* was almost 1300 kilometers in length and 160 kilometers in breadth across the middle, while reaching 320 kilometers in the north and south, and was bounded by the province of Jibāl and the district of Yazd (in Fārs) and by Kirmān. To its east and north-east were Khurāsān with its dependencies of Qūmis and Kūhistān, and then Sīstān which was separated by the desert from Kirmān.

Thus defined as a single physiographic entity, Makrān, the ancient Gedrosia, is probably synonymous with *Long-kie-lo* of Hiuen Tsang. *Long-kie-lo* was definitely more than just *Kīj-Makrān* and very probably included a large portion or perhaps even the whole of Persian

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[99] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 48.
[100] Mirchandani, 'Hiuen Tsiang's Travels', p. 330.
[101] Cf. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 39; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 47.
[102] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. XVII, p. 46.
[103] Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 322, 329.

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Makrān.[104] The properly Persian part of the Makrānāt, however, has some special characteristics by which it can be distinguished from the Indianized part which later writers like Marco Polo or Ibn Battuta refer to as *Kīj-Makrān*. The land of Persian Makrān is comparatively poor and less inducive to human settlement, while the coast is impenetrable due to a grain of relief running parallel to it. The western zone of Makrān, lying east of a dividing line running from Bandar ʿAbbas and Mīnāb on the Gulf of Hormuz to Zāhīdān in the north, and up to Tīz on the Gulf of Tūrān, also shows marked geological, physiographic and climatological deviations from the Zagros mountains.[105] Mīnāb and Jāsk are the main settlements between the ports of Bandar ʿAbbas and Tīz. To the east of this wholly arid tract, the Indianized part of Makrān (now the south-western division of the Kalāt state, Baluchistan) is bounded on the east by the Jhalawān country and part of Las Bela; on the west by Persia; and on the north by the Siāhān range of mountains which mark it off from Khārān; on the south it was bounded by the sea, the Gulf of Tūrān. *Kīj-Makrān* has a coastline of about 320 kilometers length and its hinterland consists for a large part of mountains. These mountains form ranges running from east to west, gradually ascending in height when moving away from the sea, until they reach an elevation of about 2100 meters. The most important are the Makrān Coast, the Central Makrān, and the Siāhān Ranges; within these are situated the narrow valleys in which lie the cultivable tracts and numerous towns and villages. Here too was the capital town of Makrān, Fannazbūr, renamed *Panjgūr* or 'five tombs', after five martyred warriors of the Arab conquest. In the tenth century it contained a clay-built fortress with a ditch and a Friday mosque and was surrounded by palm groves.[106] Two other important towns, on the coast, were Armābīl and Qanbalī, half-way between Tīz and Debal, populated by rich traders who dealt mainly with the Indian regions to the east.[107] These towns were 'equal in size, beauty and wealth' to Fannazbūr. Armābīl lies slightly inland, on the Makrān highway; it was probably the city that Hiuen Tsang called *'O-tien-p'o-chi-lo'*, the centre of a Buddhist principality in the seventh century. A

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[104] Mirchandani, 'Hiuen Tsiang's Travels', pp. 330-1, 335.

[105] W.B. Fisher (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. I: The Land of Iran* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 81, 84-86.

[106] De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, p. 175; idem, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, p. 226.

[107] Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 330; De Goeje, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, p. 226; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, App. A., p. 364; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 46; Mirchandani, 'Hiuen Tsiang', p. 325.

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big town was also Qandābīl; it was surrounded by desert, 'without palms', but had a fruitful vicinity and was situated at about the outer limit of Makrān, where it was frequented by 'Budha' pastoralists for provisions.[108] The chief commercial centre of Makrān was Tiz, on the Persian Gulf, inhabited by a very cosmopolitan population and in the possession of a fine harbour and, as is never omitted from the Arab geographical accounts, 'a beautiful mosque'.[109] *Kij* or *Kiz* was the largest town in Makrān, 'as large as Multān, on the great highway and a centre of flourishing trade'. Of other towns we have hardly more than their names and locations: Dizak, Rāsk (Rasak), Bampūr, Qwāsh, Qaṣrqand, Bih and Kih, Nakiz, Aṣfiqa (Uṣqufa?), Fihraj, Dandarāj, Mashkī, and Band are enumerated as important towns of Makrān, trade centres, 'nearly similar in size'.[110]

The Kīj valley and Buleda concentrated most of the agricultural wealth of the country. This was the central part of Hiuen Tsang's 'long valley', traversing all 320 kilometers of the length of Makrān from east to west. The valley is at most twenty and at least ten kilometers wide, with the exception of the part around Buleda, where it broadens considerably. The middle parts of it have large irrigated areas which were well-cultivated and have probably always been more densely populated than any other area of Makrān.[111] They appear to have been picturesque and full of groves and date-palms, crops and orchards. And through the Kīj valley, from Bela to Qaṣrqand and beyond, ran the main highway connecting India with Persia.[112] In our period this was one of the main trading routes of the world. It was this route which lent importance to the otherwise barren Makrān. As a connecting link between *al-Hind* and Persia and the central caliphate, the Makran route was more vital even than the route running through the Kabul river valley. Along these two highways flowed virtually all of India's overland trade with the west. The trade through Makrān was the object of special concern to all rulers of this much-loathed frontier province; the brahman king Chach for instance, as soon as he came to power in Sind, 'had guards placed on the high road of Makrān'.[113]

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[108] De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, p. 175; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 99; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 385-6; Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 331-2.

[109] De Goeje, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, p. 226; Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 329.

[110] Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 330; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 45, 48, 87, 106, 160; Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 310-12, 318-19.

[111] Mirchandani, 'Hiuen Tsiang', pp. 331-2.

[112] *Ibid.*, pp. 332-3, 327; Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 332.

[113] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 40.

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From Qaṣrqand there were connecting roads across Persian Makrān which were a continuation of the roads of the Great Desert. Qaṣrqand itself was a town which had often been the seat of government of Persian Makrān and was situated on two ancient trade routes: one, the highway from India, and the other the road which connected the port of Tīz and the Persian Gulf with Sīstān and the regions beyond. Tīz added to Makrān's importance by giving it a role in the coastal trade from the Gulf and Oman to Debal and other parts of Sind.

Makrān was thus widely known because its people 'carried on much traffic by sea and land in all directions'. Its traffic comprised considerable local produce as well. It seems not unlikely that Makrān used to be more fertile and prosperous and populated than it is at present. An indication of this could be the numerous traces of irrigation works, *gabrbands* and *kārez*, dating from Achaemenid and probably Sasanid times, which are found scattered throughout the country in areas which later became dry-crop regions. In addition, we hear of an abundance of sugercane (Ar. *fānīdh*; P. *pānīd*), in particular in the districts of *Al-Kharūj*, at Rāsk, and Kīrkāyān and Māsakān, from which white sugar was prepared for export 'in large quantities'.[114] Silk was also produced in exportable quantities. And Hiuen Tsang recorded that in the Kīj-Makrān valley 'the soil is rich and fertile and yields abundant harvests . . . the population is dense . . . and contains an abundance of precious stones'.[115] If however it can be tentatively suggested that Makrān was wealthier in the past, its wealth and population were still confined to enclaves such as the valley of Kīj and the neighbourhoods of some other towns, mainly along the great trade route. The overall impression of Al-Istakhrī in the tenth century was that 'Makrān is a large territory, for the most part desert and barren'.[116] All other Arab geographers have echoed this judgement unambiguously. 'Makrān is a continuous country of broad and wide regions, but is dominated by desert, drought and poverty'.[117] 'Makrān contains chiefly pasturages and fields which cannot be irrigated on account of the deficiency of water'.[118] In fact, botanically and climatically Makrān has – and always had – stronger affinities with the hot parts of Persia, Iraq and Egypt than with most of India. The predominant vegetation, in southern Baluchistan generally,

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[114] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 47.
[115] Mirchandani, 'Hiuen Tsiang', p. 330.
[116] De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, pp. 175-6.
[117] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 45-46.
[118] De Goeje, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, pp. 319, 325.

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is a spiny scrub. Alexander, on his march from the Indus to Susa in 325 B.C., surely found Gedrosia as barren and its climate as severe as it was in later times.[119] Entering Gedrosia from the country of the Oreitai, about 160 kilometers from the Arabius the Ras Malan forced him to turn inland and, as Arrian describes it, 'the blazing heat and want of water destroyed a great part of the army . . . For they met with lofty ridges of sand not hard and compact, but so loose that those who stepped on it sank down as into mud . . . (and they were) tortured alike by raging heat and unquenchable thirst'. The Greeks, having become acquainted with the civilization of the barbarian kingdoms of north-west India, were startled by the primitive life of the Ichthyophagi. And Alexander's was not the only army which was nearly destroyed in Makrān. Semiramis and Cyrus barely escaped from it in the sixth century B.C. The Shah of Khwārazm, fleeing the Mongols in 1223 A.D., also lost the greater part of his army in the Makrān desert.[120] The first reports of the 'frontier of al-Hind' in Makrān which were received by the caliph ʿUthmān said that 'the water is scanty, the dates (*daqal*) are bad, and the robbers are bold; a small army would be lost there, and a large army would starve'.[121] Poorly informed as they were at that stage, the Arabs thought that the country beyond Makrān was 'even worse'. Makrān was far away, its reputation unsavory, and the Arabs were there 'either to fight or to trade'.[122] 'I always dislike to hear about it', says a poet of Hamdan, and 'most people there are hungry, while the rest of them are depraved (*maʿūr*)'.[123] All that Qazwīnī can think of imparting to his readers about Makrān is that there was a bridge there across a river, made of a single block of stone, and that 'he who crosses it vomits up the contents of his belly, so that nothing remains therein, and though thousands should pass over the bridge this always happens to each one'.[124]

Who, then, were the 'hungry or depraved' people of Makrān? In the seventh century, when the Muslims conquered the town of Kirmān, the mountainous borders of Makrān and Kirmān were inhabited by the

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[119] Sykes, *Persia*, I, pp. 276-7; Lambrick, *Sind*, p. 51.
[120] Sykes, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
[121] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 420-1; slightly variant messages in Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 74, and Zotenberg, *Tabari*, 3, pp. 519-20.
[122] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 422.
[123] Quoted, *ibid.*
[124] Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 330.

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tribes of *Qufṣ (or Kūj)* and the *Balūṣ*. These marauding nomads claimed to be descendants of the Arabs of Hijāz, and they were quick to join the invaders under Abdullah bin Rabiᶜ against the Persian government. The *Qufṣ* – whose Arabicized name etymologically derives from the Old-Persian form *kaufačiya*, 'mountain dweller' – never made it into the Indian Makrān and continued their predatory activity, though on a reduced scale, in the Great Desert up to the mid-eleventh century (when we last hear about them).[125] The *Balūṣ* or 'Balūchīs' in the seventh century had not yet come to Makrān but were there by the eleventh. At the time of (and before) the Arab conquest, Makrān or Kīj-Makrān held a substantial population of *Zuṭṭ* or 'Jat' dromedary-men.[126] These *Zuṭṭ* appear to have moved eastward into Sind in the following two or three centuries; by Ibn Hauqal's time the 'Indian races called *Zuṭṭ* were the inhabitants of the country between Manṣūra and Makrān'.[127] The other great pastoral tribe of Sind, the *Mīd* (*al-Mayd*, *al-Mand*), until about the eleventh-twelfth century wandered along the banks of the Indus and only sometimes marched further and reached the vicinity of the frontier of Makrān.[128] As pirates, the *Mīd* and other seafaring tribes also reached the Makrān coast from Sind, Cutch and Kathiawar.[129] The Arabs, from the beginning, set out to reduce Mīd piracy and began to wage war with the tribe in the time of Muᶜāwiya, around 664, after occupying some of the towns of Makrān. It was only much later, after the twelfth century, that the *Mīd* came to live in Las Bela and in Makrān itself. There, in the small harbours, they were still found as a seafaring people in the mid-nineteenth century.[130]

Other indigenous tribes roaming in Makrān in the first period of Arab domination, if not loosely categorized as *Zuṭṭ*, remain anonymous. The region that is now Baluchistan was not yet inhabited by the Balūṣ or Balūchī but was predominantly non-Persian. The Balūṣ probably migrated from northern or north-western Persia at some time before the tenth century, when they are first mentioned in Kirmān.[131] Then, under pressure from the Buyids, the Ghaznavids and especially the Seljuqs,

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[125] C.E. Bosworth, 'The Kūfichīs or Qufṣ in Persian History', *Iran*, vol. XIV (1976), pp. 9-17.

[126] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 1005, s.v. 'Baluchistan'.

[127] De Goeje, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, p. 231.

[128] *Ibid.*; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 44.

[129] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 119; Al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-Hind*, p. 167.

[130] Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 519-31.

[131] M. Longworth Dames, *The Baloch race* (London, 1904); *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 1005, s.v. 'Baluchistan'; Bosworth, 'Kūfichīs', pp. 10-11.

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they appear to have moved further eastward, into Baluchistan, where they superimposed themselves upon the Dravidian Brahuis and also drove out others. During the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates the Balūṣ raided Sīstān and Khurāsān from Kirmān. In the tenth century roving Balūṣ tribesmen infested the Great Desert of Persia from their fastnesses in the Qufṣ mountains. Muqaddasī describes them as 'a people with savage faces, evil hearts, and neither morals nor manners'.[132] These Balūṣ possessed some dromedaries but went mostly on foot and were famous for their endurance. Although nominally Muslims, Muqaddasī adds, they were more cruel to True Believers than either the Christian Greeks or the Pagan Turks, commonly stoning their prisoners to death 'as one would a snake, putting a man's head on a boulder, and beating upon it, till it be crushed in'. Still in Muqaddasī's time the Buyid ʿAḍud ad-Daula extirpated a large number of the Balūṣ and took a tribe hostage to Fārs. This made the caravan passage more safe – at least if the caravans were accompanied by a Buyid escort and letters patent of the sultan. But Maḥmūd of Ghazna again had to send a punitive army against them, under his son Masʿūd. Shortly after that, the Seljuqs moved up, making raiding unprofitable, and the Balūṣ began their great eastward movement (the memory of which is preserved in local legend) from Kirmān into Makrān.

This does not mean however that no Balūchī could be found in Makrān before their mass immigration. Muqaddasī again points out some advance elements in Panjgūr, the capital of Makrān, where, he says, there was a Friday mosque but 'the people were really Muslim in name only, being savage Balūṣīs whose language was a jargon'.[133] That was in 985 A.D., two centuries before the Balūchī are encountered in Sind, and before they established permanent kingdoms. What happened in Makrān after the eleventh century is obscure. Marco Polo speaks of *Kīj-Makrān* in the late thirteenth century as 'a land of idolators', but distinctly Indian. Local tradition maintains that, after the Arabs, indigenous (sub-)tribes of the Balūchī, first the Rinds and Ḥots or 'Maliks' and later the 'Buledais', held power in the country, until they were ousted by the Gichkis from India.[134] Several sixteenth-century Portuguese writers refer to the *Nautaques*, the 'Nodhaki' tribe of Balūchī, as then inhabiting a part of the Persian province of Kirmān, and

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[132] Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 323-4; *Enc. of Islam*, *ibid.*
[133] Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 329.
[134] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. XVII, pp. 46-47.

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Baluchistān with the Makrān coast. Tomé Pires left a description of them which shows that Makrān – outside its towns – was then as 'heathen' as ever. 'None of these (Nodhakis) ever recognized the name of Muhammad'.[135] It thus becomes more than probable that in Makrān the Arab Muslims continued to reside among largely unconverted native tribes. The Muslims remained confined to an urban setting, and were even there minorities, enclaves linking long-distance commerce and surrounded by 'depraved' frontiersmen on all sides. We do not know how large their numbers were and how rapidly the urban centres became more thoroughly Islamized. Nor do we know how and to what extent Buddhism was replaced or superseded. Being on the remotest frontier of the Arab empire for much of the seventh century, Makrān was a place of refuge for numberless dissidents and escapists, and a place where heterodoxies flourished in their more extreme manifestations. A first wave of refugees came from Kirmān after Arab troops killed the Sasanid Marzbān of the province and occupied the main towns, Sīrjān and Kirmān.[136] These refugees were Persian Mazdeans. But soon disenfranchised Muslims began to arrive. In fear of vengeance, many members of a large Arab faction which became known as the *Alāfis* chose to become permanent residents of Makrān; this was before the appointment of Al-Hajjāj and resulted in a temporary suspension of all caliphal control in the region.[137] Rāsk and several other towns near Quṣdār became bullwarks of *Khārijite* extremism early on.[138] Most important for the development of Makrān was, however, that the mercantile presence of the *Azdī* Arabs of ʿUmān continued to increase through the expansion of settlement in the wake of conquest. Even after losing much if not all of their direct political influence, the *Azdī* retained their mercantile position in Makrān until about 1055, when the Seljuqs interfered in the Gulf and the Balūchī overran Makrān.

Sind

From ancient times both Makrān and Sind had been regarded as belonging to India, even when these regions – as recurrently happened – were

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[135] A. Cortasaa (transl. and ed.), *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires* (Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1967), pp. 31-32.

[136] Bosworth, *Sīstān*, p. 13.

[137] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 85-86.

[138] De Goeje, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, pp. 226, 325-6; *idem*, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, pp. 177-8; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 47.

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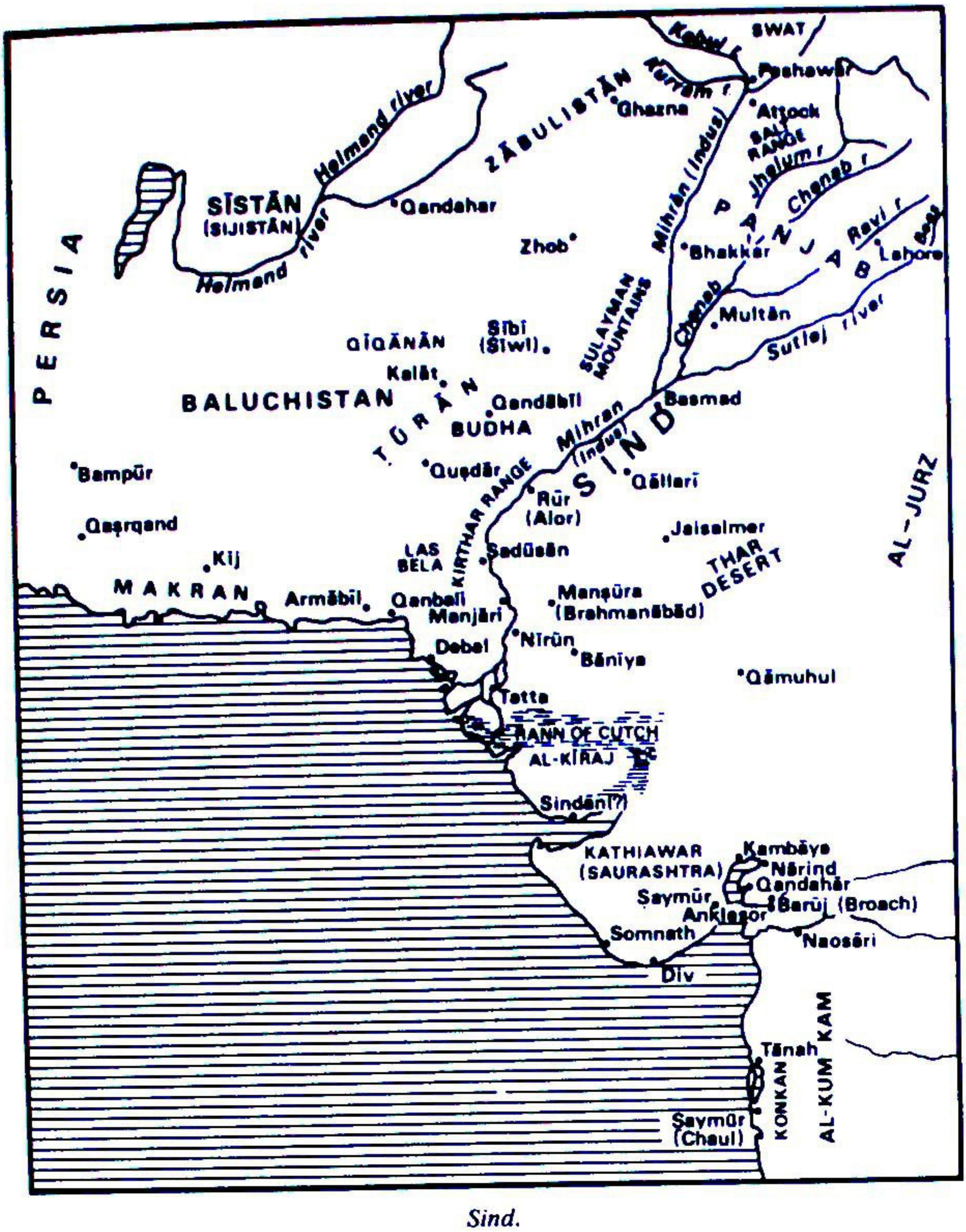

Sind.

under Persian political control. The Arabic literature often conflates 'Sind' with 'Hind' into a single term but also refers to 'Sind *and* Hind', to distinguish the two. Sind, in point of fact, while vaguely defined territorially, overlaps rather well with what is currently Pakistan. It definitely did extend beyond the present province of Sind and Makrān; the whole of Baluchistan was included, a part of the Panjāb, and the North-West Frontier Province.

Sind derived its name and identity from the river which in Sanskrit

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was called *Sindhu* (meaning literally 'river' or 'stream'), i.e. the 'Indus' of the Greeks and Romans, the *Mihrān* of the Arabs. 'The land of Sind' designated the alluvial plains created by the river on both sides in its middle and lower course, from Attock to the coast, with varying portions of the rocky uplands (Kūhistān) adjoining Baluchistan and of the sandhills of the Thar. Rainfall is scanty in most of these parts, and without the river system the economy of Sind would have been entirely pastoral, as is the case in the neighbouring areas. The Indus river system comprised the Indus and a number of major tributaries: the Kabul and Kurram rivers on the right bank, and the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej on the left, all with islands which served the function of strongholds. The Arab geographers do not fail to note the close resemblance of Sind and Egypt, long before the discovery of the remnants of a great civilization in the Indus valley. 'The most considerable of the rivers of Sind is the Mihrān. It has its source behind a mountain where certain rivers have their origin who unite in the Jayhun (Oxus). It receives (the water of) numerous tributaries . . . and acquires its greatest force in the region of Multan. From there it flows up to Basmad, passes by Rūr, then on to Mansūra, and finally flows into the sea at Debal. It is a very great river of sweet water. One finds crocodiles in it, like in the Nile. It also resembles the Nile by its size, and by the fact that its waterlevel is determined by summer rains. Its floods extend overland, then withdraw, after having fertilized the soil, as the river in Egypt'.[139] Some Arabic sources speak of a Mihrān river only after it has passed beyond the city of Rūr or Multān, and it is therefore a somewhat dubious point whether we should include the area to the north of Multan in Sind at all.[140] These same sources tend to regard Sind as the area to the south of the Panjab, 'the meeting place of the five rivers'. Hiuen Tsang, on the other hand, mentions rock-salt in the seventh-century Rāī kingdom of Sind, and this seems to indicate that it extended as far north as the salt-range. Qīqānān (Ki-kiang-na), 'abounding in sheep and horses', according to the Chinese pilgrim, also belonged to Sind. And the Chachnāma has it that the same kingdom in the late sixth to early seventh century extended from the sea to the mountains of Kurdistān and Qīqānān, and from the Makrān, Persia and Zābulistān to 'Kashmīr'.[141] Kashmir comprised a part of the Panjab at that time. Sind

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[139] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 320.
[140] Cf. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 260; Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 99.
[141] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 14-15.

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is also described as bordering on 'Kanauj', the kingdom of Harsha (607-47 A.D.), which comprised the kingdom of Thāneswar in the eastern Panjab. Biruni, in the eleventh century, writes: 'The country of Sind lies to the west of Kanauj. In marching from our country to Sind we start from the country of Nīmrūz, i.e. the country of Sijīstan (Sīstān), whilst marching to *Hind* or India proper we start from the side of Kābul'.[142] In the edition of the Chachnāma which forms the first part of the *Tuḥfat al-Kirām* the boundary of Sind is said to be Sīstān, the Sulaymān mountains and the Qīqānān hills. Similarly, Baladhuri considers *al-Qīqān* to be 'part of the *bilād as-Sind* where it borders on Khurāsān'.[143] But in his account of the Arab conquest of Sind, Baladhuri carries Muhammad al-Qāsim no further than Multān, in contrast to the Chachnāma which carries the conqueror to the feet of the Kashmir hills, where the Jhelum leaves the mountains, the site of Alexander's victory over Porus. In the Chachnāma the place referred to as the *Panj-māhiāt*, the 'five waters', is where the brahman king Chach fixed the boundary between Sind and Kashmir by planting fig-trees. Yet, from the same source it appears that in the early eighth century the dominion of Dahir, the king of Sind, was more or less confined to the Lower Indus, with even Multan excluded from it.

Like Makrān, Zamīndāwar, Zābulistān, and Kābul, Sind belonged to *al-Hind* in its widest sense but also to the frontier zone between Persia and India. It is perceptible in the sources that the early Arab invaders were prone to see Sind as an extension of eastern Persia in some respects. Hence, for instance, the use of the term *dihqānān* – normally applied to the landed gentry or nobility of Khurāsān – for 'headmen' of villages and rural districts of Sind.[144] Or the use of the denomination of *mubārizān* – Sasanid governors or frontier-guards – for local grandees of Sind.[145] The Arabs speak of *majūs*, 'Zoroastrians' or 'Fire-worshippers', in Sind.[146] This means either that there were Zoroastrians

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[142] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 198-9; H.A. Kazmi, 'The Frontiers of Medieval Sind: Delineated on the Basis of Accounts Furnished by Al-Bīrunī', *Islamic Culture*, vol. LX (1986), pp. 119-30.

[143] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 421.

[144] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 209. The appellation *dihqān* was not used in India. When Ibn Battuta points out a *dihqān* in Multan in the fourteenth century, he explains that the person in question is from Samarqand (Defrémery and Sanguinetti, *Ibn Baṭoutah*, III, p. 118).

[145] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 243.

[146] Cf. S.M. Stern, 'Ismāʿīli Propaganda and Fatimid Rule in Sind', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XXIII (1949), p. 299, note 3.

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in Sind or that there were Indians who were fire-worshippers. Most likely it means both. For, in fact, the culture of the nomads and semi-nomads of Sind, the Thar and Afghanistan has always been full of Persian elements, as is visible in the Sasanid Sūrya and Shiva images, the Gadhaiyā coins, the remnants of Persian dress style amongst the Jats and Gujars, and in motifs of Rajput folk art and various other anthropological peculiarities.[147] Multān (Old Persian *Mulastāna*) was an important centre of the cult of the sun, which, according to its own tradition, owed its origin and increasing popularity to the 'foreign influence' of Zoroastrian priests coming from Persia.[148] The Persian philosopher *Jāmāsp*, who is often confounded with Zoroaster, is mentioned as the founder of the Hindu system of astrology.[149] In Achaemenid times, in effect, the kingdoms of the Indus valley had been constituted into the four satrapies of Gandhara, Makae (Makran), Sattagudai (the Panjab), and *Hindush* (the Indus plains). It was the ancient Persians who, in their inscriptions, adapted the Vedic *Sindhu* to *Hind* or *Hid*, which then became *Ind* in classical Greek literature. The Maga sun-priests came to northwest India not later than the first century B.C. Sun-worship spread in the subsequent centuries. And on the eve of the Muslim conquest, the Persian element in Sind had been reinforced once again by an invasion of the 'King of Nimroz'.[150] Contaminated as it was, therefore, by Persian influences and repeated conquest, the cultural standard of the population of Sind from the Hindu or brahmanical point of view was far inferior to that of the agriculturally settled areas of the Indian heartland, especially Kanauj.

For all that, Sind was predominantly Indian rather than Persian, and in duration the periods that it had been politically attached to, or incorporated in, an Indian polity far outweigh Persian domination. The Maurya empire was extended to the Indus valley by Candragupta, laying the foundation of a great Buddhist urban-based civilization. Numerous Buddhist monasteries were founded in the area, and Takshashilā became an important centre of Buddhist learning, especially in Ashoka's time. Under the Kushanas, in the late first century A.D., after a

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[147] H. Goetz, 'The Conquest of Northern and Western India by Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa of Kashmīr', in: *Studies in the History and Art of Kashmir and the Indian Himalayas* (Wiesbaden, 1969), p. 20.

[148] H. Von Stietencron, *Indische Sonnenpriester: Sāmba und die Sākadvīpīya-Brāhmaṇa* (Wiesbaden, 1966).

[149] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 130.

[150] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

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period of Bactrian-Greek and Shaka rule, Buddhism also flourished, while international trade and urbanization reached unprecedented levels in the Indus valley and *Purushapūra* (Peshawar) became the capital of a far-flung empire and Gandhara the second home of Buddhism, producing the well-known Gandhara-Buddhist art. In *Purushapūra*, Kanishka is supposed to have convened the fourth Buddhist council and to have built the Kanishka Vihāra, which remained a Buddhist pilgrimage centre for centuries to come as well as a centre for the dissemination of the religion to Central Asia and China. While in the northwest Buddhist establishments in stone have been uncovered, in the plains of Sind and the Panjab – which were without stone quarries – fired or sun-dried bricks were used as building material and here relatively little remnant of monasteries has been found. But there is no doubt that in the plains Buddhism flourished as vigorously.

The period of Sasanid and Hephthalite invasions however renders the subsequent development obscure. The prima facie perceptible outcome was that in the sixth century new political constellations arose, with Buddhist influence still strong but steadily diminishing, while increasingly bearing the impact of brahman ascendancy. Under the Guptas, properly 'Hindu' elements had begun to infiltrate both in the Panjab and Sind. A Gupta temple has thus been found in the Salt Range. Hindu sculpture of the same age turned up in Banbhore (Debal), and an image of Brahma was found near Mirpur Khas. We can hardly avoid the conclusion that the Sasanids and Hephthalites caused or enhanced the erosion of Buddhism. Hiuen Tsang observed Sindian Buddhism in full decline, in 630 and again in 643, when even the monasteries of Takshashilā were mostly in ruins. But in conjunction with Hinduism, Buddhism survived in Sind until well into the tenth century. In some mountainous regions (like Swat) Buddhism penetrated for the first time in the sixth or seventh centuries. The last Buddhist votive tablets found in Sind date from the eleventh century.

Most of the officialdom appears to have been brahmans of sorts even before one of their number, Chach, took the throne of Sind in about 643 A.D. According to a story contained in the *Mujmaᶜ-t-Tawārikh*, a twelfth-century Persian translation from the Arabic version of a lost Sanskrit work, thirty-thousand brahmans with their families and retinue had in ancient times been collected from all over India and had been settled in Sind, under Duryodhana, the king of Hastinapur.[151] The story

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[151] M. Reinaud, *Fragments Arabes et Persans inédits Relatifs à l'Inde, antérieurement au XIe siècle de l'ère Chrétienne* (Paris, 1895), pp. 1-24.

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is of course apocryphal but may reflect a historical process of brahman immigration in Sind. The Arabic literature identifies numerous ministers, revenue officers, accountants, et cetera, in seventh- and eighth-century Sind as 'brahmans' and these were generally confirmed in their posts by the conquerors. Where these brahmans came from we do not know, but their presence was regarded as beneficial. Many cities had been founded by them and Sind had become 'prosperous and populous' under their guidance. 'The Hindus say that in this region the prosperity of towns depends on the brahmans who are their religious scholars, priests and (legal) guides and preceptors'.[152] During the Arab conquest they are mentioned frequently as important negotiators and intermediaries.[153] But *samanyān* (Ar. *as-samanīya*) or 'Samanīs' are also conspicuously present; these are the Sanskrit *shramaṇa* ascetics who are usually Buddhists. Thus, for instance, a *Samanī* governor of the city of Nerun opened the gates for the Arabs, asking for 'immunity' (*amān*) and offering tribute. In other cities the *samanīs* assisted likewise in concluding conquest treaties.[154] Brahman officials and Samanīs are in practice indistinguishable and certainly did not make doctrine a point of dispute. Similarly, the term *budd* is used to denote virtually anything which was religiously revered (men, idols, statues, shrines, temples), but its use is indefinite and although the word itself is perhaps a corruption of *buddha* (indirectly, through the Persian *but*, 'idol') there is no necessary connection with Buddhism. Baladhuri makes this explicit: 'Everything which they honoured in a religious way was called *budd* by them'.[155] The Arabs, in fact, did not bother about the *budd*, and not uncommonly despoiled them when they were valuable as a source of gold or owned large treasuries. Even less did they bother about the differing rites of brahmans and Buddhists. In Sind, the periphery of India, brahmanical culture was loosely Buddhistic anyway, deviating widely from the Gangetic standard. As in Bengal, such a peripheralized brahmanical culture, diluted and etiolated by a pervasive and ineradicable Buddhist substratum, facilitated Islamization. Sind's social make-up was also not rigid and little hierarchic. If necessary, one could appear to be a brahman and a Buddhist at the same time. Nor should we be surprised to see the brahman king Chach defying his *dharma* by publicly

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[152] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 213.
[153] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18, 109, 208, 210.
[154] *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 117, 119-20, 132, 219-20; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 425.
[155] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 427; and see *ibid.*, pp. 424, 431; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 240; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 504-7.

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marrying a widow; or see his successor Dahir commit an act of incest with a sister; or find out that Chach's brother was a 'Buddhist ascetic'. The pervasive character of Buddhist practices in Sind is further indicated by the use of a white state elephant by Dahir, and by the 'thousand brahmans' who, allegedly clinging to their ancestral faith, were given permission by Muhammad al-Qasim – with the sanction of the caliph – to carry a vessel and beg their daily food from door to door, in the way of Buddhist monks. In Sind we also note the absence of widow-burning, the sacred thread, cow-worship, ablutions, and penances. Of caste divisions very little mention is made. The stereotype social division is in professional classes rather than a ritualized caste-hierarchy: 'priests, warriors, agriculturists, artisans, merchants'. Once or twice we encounter the terms *Caṇḍāla* or *Sūdra* as a term of abuse for 'low people', or for Muslims who may be referred to by one or another princess of Sind, in a fit of rage, as 'Caṇḍālas and cow-eaters' (*chandālān-o-gāwkhwār*).[156]

It is in this blurred pattern that we must envisage Hinduism and Buddhism to have persisted in Sind, underneath or in conjunction with Islam, the expansionist religion which in these centuries was still often nominal among converts in Sind. In contrast to Persia, by the eleventh century, there is no indication that conversion had proceeded very far. Nor is there any indication that Buddhists converted more eagerly than brahmans. The theory that the Muslim Arabs were 'invited' to Sind by Buddhist 'traitors' who aimed to undercut the brahmans' power has nothing to recommend itself with. If Buddhists collaborated with the invaders, the brahmans did so no less. And the establishment of Arab power more often than not preserved and enhanced the status of the brahmans. There was, in short, no clear-cut religious antagonism that the Arabs could exploit.[157] Treaties, the scramble for immunities, alliances and declarations of loyalty were opportunistically motivated, without moral scruples, the product of rational reflection rather than religious faith.

Unlike elsewhere in *al-Hind*, in Sind, except for the remains of a few forts and Buddhist stupas, no monuments, inscriptions or copper-plate

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[156] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 195, 222; Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 101.

[157] See also Y. Friedmann, 'A Contribution to the Early History of Islam in India', in: M. Rosen-Ayalon (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 325-8. This should qualify my earlier statements in *Land and Sovereignty in India*, p. 382.

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grants have been discovered of its pre-Muslim rulers. For the history of the Rāī and Brahman dynasties we are, therefore, almost entirely dependent on the Muslim chronicles, especially the Chachnāma. Even these however do not present us with an account of the origins of the kings of Sind. We meet them, without further introduction, in the late fifth century, adrift in the fluid political order of the new monarchies which emerged after the Sasanid and (White) Hūṇa invasíons, issuing silver coins with the effigy of the ruler by the seventh century or somewhat earlier.[158] It is stated that the Rāīs of Sind ruled for a period of 144 years from their capital at Alor (Ar-Rūr) which was situated on the eastern bank of an old bed of the Indus, near modern Sukkur. Nothing in the sources suggests a foreign, non-Indian or Hūṇa origin for the dynasty.[159] The Rāī dominion in Ṣind dates from about the same time as the irruption of the White Huns in North India, but the synchronism is fortuitous; the Hūṇas, in fact, do not appear to have made their way into Lower Sind.

Rāī dynasty, c. 489-632 A.D.
- Rāī Dīwāji
- Rāī Sahiras
- Rāī Sāhasī
- Rāī Sahiras II
- Rāī Sāhasī II

The names of these kings are probably corrupted Sanskrit; thus, Dīwāji may be restored to Devaditya, Sahiras to Shrī Harsha, and Sāhasī to Sinhasena.[160] When Rāī Sāhasī II ascended the throne, Chach, a brahman who was 'well-acquainted with the four books of Hind (*chahār kutub-i-hind*)', i.e. the four Veda (*rig* (Rig-), *jaj* (Yajur-), *asām* (Sāma-), and *ashrīn* (Atharva)), entered the service of a brahman minister of the king.[161] After Sāhasī II's death, Chach married the widowed queen, seized the throne and proclaimed himself king. 'The entire kingdom came under the sway of Chach'.[162] They had two sons: Dāhir and Dahirsiya, and a daughter Bai.[163] Chach died after a reign of forty years

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158 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 72.

159 B.D. Mirchandani, 'Sind and the White Huns, and the identification of Hiuen Tsiang's Sin-tu kingdom', *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, n.s. vol. 39-40 (1964-65), pp. 61-93.

160 S.H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, vol. I (Bombay, 1939), p. 80.

161 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 17.

162 *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.

163 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

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and then his brother Chandar, 'a monk and devotee', ascended the throne at Alor.[164] Chandar's reign lasted for seven years.[165] He was succeeded at Alor by Dāhir, while Dahirsiya established himself as ruler at Brahmanabad. Thirty years later Dahirsiya died and Dāhir moved into Brahmanabad. 'Within eight years his rule was firmly fixed in the country of Hind and Sind'.[166] It was Dāhir who confronted the Arab invasion army under Muhammad al-Qasim in 712 A.D.

Brahman dynasty, c. 632-724 A.D.

Chach, c. 632-71 . . . . . .
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Dāhir, c. 679-712
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Hullishāh (Jaisiya?), c. 712-24 . . . . . .
.
Chandar c. 671-79
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.
.
Ṣiṣah (died c. 724)

The *Rāī* dynasty was obviously legitimated by its royal blood and by kinship, matrimonial and political connections with other Indian rulers beyond Sind, in Kashmir, Kābul, the Panjab, Gujarat, Kanauj, and Rajasthan. The ballads of Rajasthan and Gujarat tell of many Rajputs who had kinsmen in Sind. The brahman Chach, when he seized the throne, was initially denied legitimacy by Rāī Sāhasī II's brother, 'the king of Chitor, who himself claimed to be the rightful heir (*wāriṣ*)' to the throne of Sind. So the 'great warrior' king of Chitor organized an expedition to Sind, but was killed by the wily brahman through stratagem.[167] Yet, remarkably enough, the descendants of Chach in the eighth century show themselves to be on close and friendly terms again with the House of Chitor.[168] Similarly, the brahman rulers, apparently building on pre-existing networks, were quick to establish and consolidate political and matrimonial alliances, not only with a variety of chiefs in Sind itself, but also with the kings of Zābul and Kashmīr, the latter of whom, as the Chachnāma says, 'swayed the whole of Hind'

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164 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
165 *Ibid.*, p. 54.
166 *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 68-69.
167 *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.
168 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

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and maintained a form of suzerainty over the brahman kings of Sind as well.[169] In Sind, we read further, there was consanguinity between a great number of chiefs of 'noble' lineage and the ruling house of Dāhir, son of Chach: 'we are partners in the kingdom (*sharīk-i-mulkem*) . . . the country of Sind is our native country . . . it is an acquisition of our fathers and grandfathers and it is our heritage . . . we are blood-relations of Rāī Dāhir'.[170] Sind, clearly, was a polity of the normal Indian type, in the sense that it was 'open' to a 'circle of kings', and a polity in which sovereignty was 'shared'. 'All the great officers and nobles of Dāhir', reports Muhammad al-Qasim to the governor of Iraq, 'and most of the princes of Hind and Sind have a compact with him'.[171] To be sure, the Chachnāma is embellished at appropriate places with *Arthashāstric* maxims which exhort the king – any king – 'not to share territory, wealth and women with others', 'not to allow adherents or dependents to meddle with or share his sovereignty'.[172] But one does not even have to read between the lines to find out what went on behind such maxims of universal power. For the same 'royal code' demands – conform to the fluid and shifting nature of the real world – that 'whenever kings and great men gain a victory, and chiefs and nobles of the party of the enemy fall into their hands, they should be pardoned'.[173] As a result, legitimacy was quickly established and undone, while nothing stood firm. Unscrupulous sharers of the kingdom easily gave in to 'necessity', rendering 'treason' a routine affair. How different this was from the medieval-European political conduct and sense of honour, and how close it came to the politics of *fitna* in Islam, is easy to see.

Such sharers of the kingdom as we find in Sind are, as yet, unlikely to have been Jats or Jat chiefs or members of other tribes with an immediate pastoral or otherwise unsettled background. In a few instances we do find Jat chiefs rising to become governors of cities. In later centuries the demarcation line between 'Jats' and the more ennobled category of 'Rajputs' was almost impossible to draw. The Jats do not hesitate to accredit themselves with an origin of that of Rajputs from Rajasthan. The term 'Rajput' originally indicated a superior social status rather than an ethnic group, and in fact some of the Rajputs are

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169 *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37, 42, 50, 52, 112; Zotenberg, *Tabari*, 3, p. 518.
170 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 134.
171 *Ibid.*, p. 127.
172 *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 60.
173 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

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probably by origin Jats. The military nobility of Dāhir to which the Chachnāma and Baladhuri refer as 'Thakurs' (*thakkarān*, *takākirah*) – a term derived from Skt. *takkurā*, 'lord' – can be seen as Rajputs in the original sense of the word (even though that word is never used in the chronicle, or in the records of the eighth and ninth centuries). Their ethnic names are not given. In modern times the only numerous Rajput tribe living in Sind, the *Sodhas*, are usually referred to as Thakurs. These were especially prominent in Lower Sind between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in the armies of the Sumra and Samma rulers. The *Jhārejahs* who acted in concert with them are also often classified as Rajputs in Cutch. The Sodha tribe which for many centuries occupied the desert tracts of western India is an offshoot of the Paramāras, the most powerful clan of the Agnikula. According to Elphinstone the Sumras of the desert were also one of the subdivisions of the Paramāra Rajputs.[174] If not identifiable as Thakurs, the ruling élite of Sind in the seventh and eighth centuries are simply referred to as 'nobles' (*aʿyān*), the 'great' (*akābir*), 'lords' (*mulūk*), by using the usual Islamic or Persian nomenclature in short (in the Chachnāma often anachronistically at that) which does not take us any further.[175] But the picture emerges clearly of a native aristocracy, marrying into the 'royal' dynasty of Sind, making up the core of the cavalry and the higher echelon of government, often occupying multiple powercentres in autonomist fashion, of proto-Rajput-like identity but mixed or associated with native and probably immigrant brahmans. Some of the main elements of the Sindian élite, including the king Dāhir himself, were literally decapitated by the Arabs (their wives and daughters sent away as slaves). Other princes of Sind hesitatingly accepted to become Muslims and submitted to pay tribute to the caliph, adopting Arab names. The acceptance of Islam at this stage appears to have been a purely political act, as much as apostasy accompanied the refusal to pay tribute.[176]

The Arabs, apart from attempting – with partial success – the Islamization of the rulers of Sind, also made vigorous attempts to domesticate and sedentarize the various mobile, pastoral-nomadic and usually predatory groups of the Sindian wastes. In this too we find the

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[174] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, II, p. 837; Tod, *Annals and Antiquities*, I, pp. 75-76; Lambrick, *Sind*, p. 214-5; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 531-2.
[175] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 23-24, 26, 29, 30, 33, 36-37, 40, 47-48, 123, 127, 134, 155, 173-4, 177, 181, 188, 191, 195, 209, 217; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 426.
[176] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 428-9.

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Arabs attaining a measure of success. In the eighth to eleventh centuries piratical activity at sea was reduced, elements of wandering tribes adopted more settled modes of existence or assimilated to the Sindian-Arab frontier society as caravaneers and protection racketeers. In combination with these and other substantial shifts in population, urbanization accelerated.

When the Arabs first entered Sind, in the seventh century, the two chief tribal groupings of the country were the *Jats* (*Zuṭṭ*) and the *Mīds*, each with numerous, commonly intractable, subdivisions. As of the Rāī dynasty and the brahmans, the origins of both tribes is obscure. The Jats themselves claim to have come from Rajasthan and to have descended from the Rajputs of Jaisalmer.[177] The apocryphal *ḥadīth* found in the *Mujmaʿ-t-Tawārikh* which records the immigration of thirty thousand brahmans, also says that there were two *gurūh* or 'tribes' in the country of Sind, and a river called *Beher*. One of the tribes was called the *Mīd*, and the other *Zuṭṭ*. Theirs was a record of conflict, until they decided to send a deputation to Duryodhana, the king of Hastinapur, requesting him to assume kingship over Sind on their behalf. This was when the brahmans came, when cities arose, 'and one part of the country was given to the *Zuṭṭ*, the other to the *Mīd*'.[178]

Two facts concerning the pre-seventh century history of the Jats stand out nevertheless. One is that the Arabicized form *Zuṭṭ*, and the form *Jat-ān* with short vowel which is adopted by the Persian translator of the Chachnāma in the thirteenth century, derives from the Middle Indo-Aryan *Jatta*.[179] Secondly, as we know from Arabic chroniclers and from Byzantine historians such as Dionysius Telmarensis, considerable numbers of Jats had migrated from Sind to Iraq, Mesopotamia and Syria even before the Muslims began to deport groups of Jats of a perhaps comparable size as slaves and war captives. *Zuṭṭ* pastoralists and swamp-dwellers had been settled with water buffaloes by the Sasanid emperor Bahrām V (420-38) in the Persian Gulf area, where they became associated with the *Sayābija*, a group of Sumatran origin.[180] Some *Zuṭṭ* and *Sayābija* served as mercenaries, along with another Indian group, the *Indighār* of eastern Kirmān, or rather Makrān, in the Sasanid armies which opposed the Arabs. Many of these mercenaries,

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[177] Cf. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 507-8.
[178] Reinaud, *Fragments Arabes*, pp. 1-24.
[179] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. *Djāt, p. 488.*
[180] Morony, *Iraq*, pp. 271-2.

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following the Persian cavalry (*asāwira*), defected to the Arabs, converted to Islam, and were then quartered upon Basra, where their support was eagerly sought by several contending Arab clans. Around the year 670 a large number of *Zutt* was moved from Basra and Fars to the Syrian coastal towns by the caliph Muʿāwiya.[181] And in the early eighth century the governor of Iraq, al-Hajjāj, also settled numerous *Zutt* and *Sayābija* in Lower Mesopotamia and Syria, inducing them to turn to land reclamation and the extension of large-scale rice cultivation. Many of these people had been in Iraq, Mesopotamia or Syria long enough for their Indian or Sindian origins to have been obliterated, and contemporary historiography merely refers to them as *Zutt* or *Sayābija*, not as Indians or Sindians. In the marshes of Iraq, the area which covered about fifteen thousand square kilometers of the country around Qurna (comprising both permanent and temporary marsh), where the Tigris and the Euphrates come together above Basra and form the Shatt al-Arab, they merged with the famous 'Marsh Arabs' that have been described by Thesiger shortly before the marshes were drained.[182] The reedbeds of the marshes were also a stronghold of the *Zanj* in the ninth century. Many Africans had apparently been used in a similar way to drain marshland around Basra adjacent to places where the Jats from the Indian frontier had been settled from Sasanid times onwards.

The earliest description which we have of what may be the Jats in Sind proper is barely pre-Islamic and comes from Hiuen Tsang. He gave the following account of a pastoralist people in seventh-century *Sin-tū* (Sind): 'By the side of the river . . . (of Sind), along the flat marshy lowlands for some thousand *li*, there are several hundreds of thousands (a very great many) families settled . . . They give themselves exclusively to tending cattle and from this derive their livelihood. They have no masters, and whether men or women, have neither rich nor poor'.[183] This large pastoral group, which is left unnamed by the Chinese pilgrim, claimed to be Buddhists but were 'of an unfeeling temper and hasty disposition, given to bloodshed only' and can most probably be identified with the Jats. In any case, it is a very similar population on both sides of the Indus which the Chachnāma refers to as 'Jats' (*jat(t)ān*) or 'the tribe of Jats' (*tāʾifa-i-jatān*). The latter chronicle divides them in

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[181] Friedmann, 'Contribution', p. 317.

[182] W. Thesiger, *The Marsh Arabs* (Penguin, 1967).

[183] S. Beal (transl.), *Si-Yu-Ki, Buddhist Records of the Western World*, 2 vols (London, 1906), II, p. 273; T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, 629-645 A.D.*, 2 vols (London, 1904-5), II, p. 252.

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'the western Jats' (*jatān-i-gharbī*) and 'the eastern Jats' (*jatān-i-sharqī*), locating these respectively on the western and eastern side of the Indus river.[184] The same pastoral group is designated as 'Jats of the wastes' (*jatān-i-dashtī*) and is found as boatmen and watchmen on the river itself, with their armed forces stationed on the island of Bet.[185] The Muslim conquest chronicles further point at important concentrations of Jats in towns and fortresses throughout Lower and Central Sind: in Debal, Sadūsān, Ishbha, and Brahmanābād.[186] To the north, the Jats are pointed out as far as Ar-Rūr[187], in the regions of Kandail and Musthal (the latter in the vicinity of Sawandī) and the region of Budha[188]; and Baladhuri writes that 'the inhabitants of Qīqān are *Zuṭṭ*'.[189] Makrān, before and at the time of the Arab conquests, is also known to have held a substantial population of Jat dromedary-men which appear to have moved eastward into Sind in the following two or three centuries, to be replaced by the Balūṣ coming from the west, first gradually, then in massive waves under Seljuq pressure in the eleventh century.[190] There is no mention of Jats in the eighth century inhabiting places further northward which were occupied by Muhammad al-Qāsim, such as Bhatiyā and Multān.

Other tribes are mentioned – the Lohāna, Lākha, Samma, Sahtah, Chand (Channa), Machhi, Hālah, Kurejah (Jhārejah) and others – which appear, at least in the Muslim sources, to be subdivisions of the Jats or to be put on a par with the Jats.[191] Some of these tribes were dominating others, but they all, as a matter of course, suffered certain discriminatory measures (cf. infra) under both the Rāī and Brahman dynasties and the Arabs. The territories of the Lohāna, Lākha and Samma are also described as separate jurisdictions under the governor of Brahmanabad in the pre-Muslim era. Whatever may be the original distinction between Samma and Jat – the two tribes from which the majority of Sindis descend – , in later times it became completely blurred and the same people may be classed as Samma and Jat. The Samma residential area however was probably restricted to Brahmana-

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[184] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp: 155, 173.
[185] *Ibid.*, pp. 138-9, 155.
[186] *Ibid.*, 47-48, 132, 214-15; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 424-25.
[187] Al-Balādurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 187.
[188] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 142-3.
[189] '*al-qīqān wa hum zuṭṭ*' (*op. cit.*, p. 432).
[190] Cf. pp. 142-3.
[191] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 14-15, 39, 41-43, 52, 61, 72, 171, 220-1; *Tuḥfat al-Kirām*, *BM: Add. 21, 589*, fol.12;

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bad and its immediate neighbourhood. (The boundary between Samma and Ar-Rūr was at a village called Wahtāyat or Dihayat on the bank of the Indus.) The country of the 'tribe of the Samma' (*gabā'il-i-samma*) had its capital at Sammanagar, on the Indus, the later Schwān, but the rulers of the Samma resided mostly at Tatta or rather at Samui, below the Mahli hills, about five kilometers northwest of Tatta. A Samma was governor of the town of Debal on behalf of Chach. Very little is known of what happened to the Sammas under Arab rule, but some of their chiefs make their appearance as *mawālī*, converted freedmen of one Arab tribe or another in the Abbasid period. Thus, for instance, Abū-ṣ-Ṣamma, a *maulā* of Kindah, who was first associated with the Arab governor of Sind, and then usurped the office himself.[192] A *maulā banī sāma* of the name of Faḍl ibn Māhān is reported to have conquered and subdued Sindān.[193] He may have been the same general who afterwards made himself master of Multān. A person called *Jihm*, the son of *Sāma al-Shāmi* came to Kashmir in the retinue of some Arabs and succeeded to the governorship of the town of Shakalbar, on the outskirts of Kashmir, in the Panjab.[194] As is well known, *Jām* is a title of chiefs borne by Sammas only, and the *Jihm* which is found in the Chachnāma seems to be a corruption of it. The affix *Shāmi* means 'Syrian', but Samma tribes (as for example the Jhārejahs of Cutch (Kachh)) are known often to have claimed a connection, wholly spurious, with Syria in order to nobilitate themselves. To find a suitable eponym of *Samma* they also claimed descent from *Sām*, the son of the prophet of Nūh, while the titular designation of *Jām* was derived from *Jamshīd* or *Jam*, the Persian monarch. By the twelfth century the Sammas appear to have collided with the Baluchis, but by then they had spread far and wide, in many directions, in the south to Cutch and perhaps beyond.[195] In later times rulers with the title of *Jām* are found in Bela, Nawanagar, Saurashtra, and other places. The Sammas rose to great power in Sind at about 1351 A.D., displacing the Sūmras, who were not Jats and had achieved control of Lower Sind shortly after the death of Mahmud of Ghazna.

On the north-eastern frontier of Makrān, the Arabic and Persian sources locate the district of *Budha* (or *Budhīya* and numerous other variants, the modern province of Kachh Gandāva), with its capital Qan-

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[192] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 431-2.
[193] *Ibid.*, p. 432.
[194] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 203.
[195] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 33; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 494.

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dābīl (present Gandava), part of the wider region of Ṭūrān with its capital Qaṣdār, and with a population the chiefs of which were Jats at the time of the Arab invasion.[196] *Budha*, a district which was of some agricultural and commercial importance (yielding much rice), is thought to have been held by the Jats from very early times, and they are still the majority of the population, with the *Brāhūīs* infiltrating from the highlands in the eighteenth century. But while some Arabic authors equate the Budha people with Jats[197], others refer to them as people 'who resemble the Jats'.[198] In the same area where some authors speak of the Budha, Ibn Hauqal mentions *Zuṭṭ*: 'In the region which extends between Mansura and the Makran, the waters of the Mihraṇ form lagoons, in the midst of which live the people of Sind who are called the *Zuṭṭ*. Those of them who are near the river inhabit huts which are like those of the Berbers; their food normally consists of fish and waterbirds . . . By contrast those *Zuṭṭ* who live far from the banks of the river lead an existence like that of the Kurds, who live on dairy produce, cheese and millet-bread'.[199] Idrisi evidently derives his information from Ibn Hauqal but instead of speaking of Jats he speaks of *al-Budha*: 'Again, (the region extending) from it (Multan) up to the boundary of Mansura is (inhabited by) a wandering people called *al-Budha*. They are (many) tribes and a great number of people, scattered and wandering about between the boundaries of Ṭūrān, Makrān, and Multān and the towns of Mansura. They resemble the Bedouins of the Berber tribe. They have huts made of reeds, and thickets in which they take shelter, and swamps of water wherein they live. These are to the west of the river Mihran. They possess a fine and agile breed of camels, from which the two-humped camel is reproduced. The people of Khurāsān and others belonging to Fars and such-like are interested in these camels for cross-breeding with the Balkhī (Bactrian) camels and the she-camels of Samarqand, for these camels have a good temperament, and each one of them has two humps, unlike the camels that we have in our country'.[200] It thus does not seem far-fetched to consider the Budha as a tribe of Jats and to conclude that perhaps they derived their name from their adherence to the Buddhist religion, which, as we have seen, was also prev-

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[196] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 53; Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 331-2; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 386-9, 424.

[197] E.g. De Goeje, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, p. 231.

[198] E.g. Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 144.

[199] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 321.

[200] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 52.

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alent among the Jats of Lower Sind which Hiuen Tsang described, but may have been retained longer in the hill regions of Tūrān.

The Jats, Sammas and 'similar tribes', as they were encountered throughout Lower and Central Sind by the Arab conquerors, are generally designated as 'detestable people' (*makrūh khalqan*) and as 'highway robbers', 'thieves' or 'pirates'.[201] As a pastoral or semi-pastoral population they were barely integrated into Hindu society and of a very low status, although some of their chiefs were appointed to 'respectable positions' under Chach.[202] Normally they had little or no stratification amongst themselves, and even their chiefs and elders (*aʿyān-o-ruʾāsā* or *wujūh*) did not ride horses or rode without saddles; without distinction they were prohibited to wear soft clothes of silk and velvet and had to go about with bare head and feet, in the company of a dog.[203] 'They are all of the wild nature of brutes (*waḥshī mizāj*) and always refractory', observes the author of the Chachnāma.[204] On the other hand, they were by no means useless and they owed allegiance to the Rāī kings and to the brahmans and samanis associated with them, perhaps – but this is not clear – paying regular taxes or tribute to these rulers. They provided firewood. And, in a country which was intersected by rivers and canals and full of swamps, they often occupied strategic positions in the armies of the Sindian kings – providing bodyguards even – and served as boatmen and watchmen along the Indus.[205] We hear that under Chach and Dāhir the same tribes were guides of caravans (*qāfīla*), 'both by day and by night'.[206] Numerous armed conflicts are recorded between the Arabs and the Jats, and 'rebellions' occurred constantly under the Abbasid governors.[207] From the seventh century onwards, and with a peak during Muhammad al-Qāsim's campaigns in 712-13, a considerable number of Jats was captured as prisoners of war and deported to Iraq and elsewhere as slaves. Some Jat freemen became famous in the Islamic world, as for instance Abū Ḥanīfa (699-767?), the founder of the Hanafite school of law. The first conversions of Jats to Islam are recorded in 80 A.H. and at the time of Muhammad al-Qasim;

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201 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 61, 215; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 424.
202 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 47-48.
203 *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43, 215, 221; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 432.
204 *Op. cit.*, p. 215.
205 Cf. Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 115, 138-9, 155.
206 *Ibid.*, p. 215.
207 Cf. Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 425, 432, 436, 445-6; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 77, 80-81, 132, 155, 173-4, 218; Houtsma, *Al-Yaʿqūbī*, II, pp. 479-80; and chapter IV-b.

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how the conversion pattern evolved afterwards is not at all clear until the thirteenth century. It was quite common however for Jats to be given quarter (*amān*) and be enlisted in the Arab armies or to become liable to the payment of tribute or taxation. The enlistment of Jats in the Arab armies was especially important since the latter relied exclusively on cavalry. As such we find contingents of Jats in Arab service raiding the Mīds and other tribes still hostile to the conquerors in the third century Hijrae. Attempts were also made to bring groups of Jats under control by the introduction of Arab settlers. Certain groups of Jats were prohibited to carry swords. And generally the pre-existing discriminatory measures were perpetuated by the Arabs.[208] What seemed like low-caste, Shudra, or untouchable disabilities in Sind, in the Islamic context seemed like measures employed against the *ahl adh-dhimma*, the 'protected' non-Muslim subjects which we find everywhere, and the restrictions on riding or dress have in fact counterparts in the Sharīʿa. The dog too is an unclean animal in both Indian and Islamic tradition, easily associated with social inferiority. The imposition of the *jizīya* or 'poll-tax' and the 'sealing' (tattooing) of the hands were also measures normally imposed on the *ahl adh-dhimma*, and there is evidence that in the first half of the ninth century the Jats did not escape these either.

The Arabs, in effect, appear gradually to have intensified their grip on the Jat population. Not only were fiscal burdens imposed and were the Jats beginning to yield more revenue than before[209], but there is also a shift visible in these centuries away from the pastoral nomadism of Lower Sind to a more settled, agricultural existence in the north, in and beyond Multan or the Panjab. In the ninth century there is no trace yet of the Jats anywhere in the Panjab. But early in the eleventh century they appear to be present there in great numbers and we hear of 'the Jats of Multān and Bhatiyā' who with four or eight thousand boats fought Mahmud of Ghazna during his seventeenth and last expedition to India in 1026 A.D. in a naval engagement.[210] The Jats, at this time, can also be located in the hill-country of Jud, the part of the Salt Range nearest Multan, where they obtained considerable power.[211] Another Ghaz-

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[208] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 215; Friedmann, 'Contribution', pp. 331-2; idem, 'The Origins and Significance of the Chach Nāma', in: Y. Friedmann (ed.), *Islam in Asia, vol. I: South Asia* (Jerusalem, 1984), p. 32; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 432; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 449.

[209] See also Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 255.

[210] M. Nazim (ed.), *Zayn al-Akhbār of Gardīzī* (Berlin, 1928), pp. 87-89.

[211] Cf. also Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, II, p. 477.

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navid historian, Baihaqī, refers to the – by now mounted – Jats in the Panjab as 'seditious Hindus', who, however, supported Sultan Mas'ūd against a 'rebel' governor of Multan in 1034 A.D., until the latter perished on the Indus. 'The Jats and every kind of infidel joined in the pursuit of him . . . immense wealth fell into their hands'.[212] On this occasion the Jats received a reward of 100,000 dirhams. Biruni, describing the Jats as 'cattle owners and low Shūdra people'[213], is probably also referring to the Lahore area – which alone he knew from personal experience. Whatever further evidence we have points unambiguously to a Jat migration from the Indus valley in Lower Sind northward into the Panjab, where they seem firmly established by the early eleventh century.[214] There is in the Multan area considerable influence of a language akin to Sindī, as a probable result of the Jat migration into the area. Without doubt this migration process must have been accompanied by social and economic changes characteristic of the transformation of a largely pastoral people into one of mainly agriculturists. That transformation, concomitant as it was with an enormous expansion of the Jat population, had to be completed in the eleventh to sixteenth centuries and later. By the sixteenth century the Jats had become the vigorous peasant caste which we know of the Panjab and areas east of the Panjab, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, and along the Upper Ganges and Jamna. The Jats of the western plains of the five rivers have virtually all come from Sind. In Sind itself the name Jat is now practically an occupational term, meaning 'dromedary-man'. In the period up to the eleventh century the transformation of the Jats from predatory pastoralists into revenue-paying agriculturists was well on its way. In the Panjab, if they were not assimilated by the already settled peoples of the riverine areas, they at first continued to live in a symbiotic but also conflictuous relationship with the people of the area of intensive cultivation, in the thinly populated *barr* country between the five rivers. Here a type of pastoral nomadism came into existence, based primarily on the herding of goats and camels, where the nomads only moved between the river area and the *barr*, never leaving the Panjab plains and covering a small distance (of at most a hundred or hundred-fifty kilometers), unlike the nomads of Baluchistan and Afghanistan which moved between

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212 *Tārīkh-i-Baihaqī* (Teheran, 1966), pp. 533-4.

213 Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 401.

214 Rose, *Glossary*, II, pp. 362-9; I. Habib, 'Jatts of Panjāb and Sind', in: H. Singh and N.G. Barrier (eds), *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr Garda Singh* (Patiala, 1976), pp. 95-96.

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the plains in the wet winter season and the mountains in the dry season.[215] In the Panjab the conversion of the Jats seems to have gained momentum in the second half of the thirteenth century.[216]

The name of the second most important tribal grouping which the Arabs encountered in Sind is not certain. Only MD is given in the Arabic script, hence *Mīd*, *Mayd*, *Mand*, *Mund* are all possibilities. There has been some question whether there were two tribes with the names *Mīd* and *Mand* respectively. But the Muslim authors seem to indicate a single people with either name.

Similar incertainty surrounds the origin of these people – whom we shall call *Mīds* – and the locality with which they were first associated. The account of the *Mujmaᶜ-t-Tawārikh* merely confirms the antiquity of the *Mīd* presence on the banks of the Indus and records their rivalry with the Jats. Throughout recorded history the *Mīds* have been notorious for their predatory activities, down to 1821 when the British reduced them.[217] There were, in Sind, various other groups with such names as *Kurk* or *Karak*, *Tangāmara* or *Nakāmara* and variants which were equally predatory in their habits and are often equated or mixed up with the *Mīds* and which we may perhaps regard as subdivisions of the latter. The *Mīds* operated in their *bawārij* from Debal, Cutch (*Kachh*) and Kathiawar (the Saurashtrian peninsula), to as far as Ar-Rūr and the Makran coast and even up to the mouth of the Tigris and the southern part of the Red Sea and the coasts of Sri Lanka.[218] Like the Sasanids, but with much more durable success, the Arabs tried to bring these coasts and the Mīds under control, as the main motivation of the Arab conquest of Sind was the safeguarding of the trade in the Persian Gulf and the western Indian Ocean. They began to wage war on the Mīds in the time of Muᶜāwiya, around 664 A.D., after occupying some of the towns of Makrān.[219] During Hajjāj's governorship it was the 'Mīds of Debal' who kidnapped Muslim women who were travelling from Sri Lanka to Arabia, providing the occasion for the Arabs to

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[215] R.M. Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Srine of Bābā Farīd', in: B.D. Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1984), p. 342.

[216] *Ibid.*, p. 345.

[217] Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 524.

[218] Al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-Hind*, pp. 16, 72, 167; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 119; Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, p. 70.

[219] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 422.

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declare the holy war on Sind and Hind.[220] Then followed the conquest of Debal under Muhammad al-Qasim which put an end to Mid piratical activity here. In 714 we hear of the 'Mid of Surast (Saurāshtra) . . . who are pirates of the sea' (*vaqta'ūna fī'l-baḥr*), making peace with Muhammad al-Qasim as well.[221] An Abbasid governor, 'Imrān ibn Mūsa, in 836 A.D., raided the *Mīds*, killing three thousand of them, and built an embankment, known as the 'embankment of the *Mīd*' (*sakar al-mīd*), which was probably meant to deprive them of water.[222] During a second attack – this time with the assistance of the chiefs of the *Zutt* – he dug a canal from the sea, which he ran into their fresh water until it became salty.[223] This was without doubt in the southeastern part of Sind, where the *Mīds* were concentrated in greatest numbers. In the same period, the reign of al-Mu'taṣim, an Arab chieftain Muḥammad ibn al-Fadl ibn Māhān, whose father had conquered and subdued Sindān, in the Abrasa district of Cutch, made an expedition with a fleet of seventy warships against the 'Mīds of al-Hind', conquering Māli (Qāllarī), then returning to Sindān.[224] And again, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Arab geographers speak of 'the Mīds and other robbers' to the east of the Mihrān, towards Autkīn, frequently at war with the Muslim chiefdom of Mansura.[225] According to Ibn Hauqal, the Mīds wandered 'along the banks of the Mihran' (*shuṭūṭ al-mihrān*) from the boundary of the Muslim kingdom of Multan to the sea, and in the desert between Makrān and Qāmuhul (Famhal), 'the frontier town of Hind'.[226] They had many stations which they occupied as pasture grounds and formed a very large population, 'unconverted to the faith'. Idrisi locates the *Mīds* in the outer regions of the desert: 'The *Mīds* are a wandering people, who seek pastures in the outer regions of this desert. Their grazing grounds and wanderings extend up to Qāmuhul. They are a numerous people and have large crowds among them. They have camels and goats, and many a time in their (pursuit of) pastures they reach as far as Rūr on the banks of the river Mihrān. Sometimes they march further and reach the vicinity of the frontiers of Makrān'.[227] It was not before

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[220] *Ibid.*, p. 424; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, 1, pp. 376, 508-19.
[221] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 427.
[222] *Ibid.*, p. 432.
[223] *Ibid.*
[224] *Ibid.*, p. 433.
[225] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 62; Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 168.
[226] De Goeje, *Ibn* Ḥauqal, p. 231.
[227] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 44.

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much later, as we have seen, that the Mīds came to live in Las Bela and in Makrān itself. Large-scale piracy at sea by the *Mīds* is however no more mentioned in the Arab period from the reign of al-Muʿtaṣim onwards. For all we can deduce from the geographical literature, the Mīds in the ninth to eleventh centuries held on to a pastoral existence on the fringes of the settled Muslim kingdoms of Multan and Mansura, or in the interstitial pastures along the Indus and in the desert.

It is much more difficult to reconstruct the history of tribal settlement in Multan and northern Sind. From the first quarter of the eleventh century begins the Turkish encroachment upon Sind from the north. The conflict with the Shahis of Afghanistan and the western Panjab brought the Ghaznavids near to Multan. The history of Multan and northern Sind then becomes connected with the history of the Ghaznavids in northern India. The entire population in and around Multan remained in a constant flux and it is no longer possible to find out who the inhabitants were before the Ghaznavid period. Many people of this area are vaguely reputed to have converted to Islam in the thirteenth century. Another wave of tribal immigration followed in Akbar's time. In Lower Sind however we become dimly aware of the existence in the eighth and ninth centuries of a tribal people, the *Sūmras*, who shortly after the death of Mahmud of Ghazna became quasi-independent rulers throughout the Multan region, even when it remained nominally incorporated in the Ghaznavid and Ghurid dominion and subsequently in the Delhi Sultanate. The *Sūmras* were a dynasty of local origin, later claiming to be Rajputs as well as Arabs, and are clearly distinguishable from the pastoral-nomadic Jats or Mīds. In fact, it could very well be that next to the Baluchi immigration from the west, the rise of the Sūmras was a factor in pushing the Jats of Lower Sind northward. The *Taʾrīkh-i-Sind* (also known as the *Taʾrīkh-i-Maʿṣūmī*) of c. 1600 A.D. says that after the death of Mahmud, sovereignty passed to his son Masʿūd, but the people of distant regions rejected it. At that time 'the men of Sūmra assembled in the neighbourhood of Thari (the 'little desert' between Cutch and Sind) and raised a man named Sūmra to the *masnad* who had passed a long time as the head of the Sūmra tribe'.[228] In later histories it is found that the Sūmras claim descent from the Arabs of Sāmira who arrived in Sind in the second century Hijrae in the company of the Tamīm family who were governors of the Abbasids. Yet, 'even though

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[228] Daudpota, *Taʾrīkh-i-Sind*, p. 60.

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they ate the flesh of buffaloes, they belonged to the Hindu faith'.[229] Most remarkable is the information on this people which is given by Ibn Battuta. In his travel-account of the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta writes that he encountered a people called the *Sāmira* 'in a big and beautiful city, situated on the eastern bank of the river of Sind' which he calls Jināni.[230] He adds that it had been there since the time of the conquest under Al-Hajjāj and seems to have regarded the tribe as of Muslim origin. But Battuta proceeds to give further details on the customs of the *Sāmira* which seem to indicate that they were Hindus of a sort, as 'they do not eat with anybody and nobody may observe them while they are eating and do not intermarry with other tribes (*ṭa'ifa*, *ṭawā'if*)'. It is most likely that the majority of the Sāmira were Muslims, while others were Hindus.[231] Many of them are still Hindus today, roaming as shepherds through Jaisalmer and the country to the east of Sind. The Arab genealogy is definitely fictitious as the town of Sāmara was built only after the alleged emigration. From their rise in the eleventh century onwards the Sūmras ruled for more than five centuries (with a brief interruption), under nominal Muslim overlordships, from several capitals in succession, amongst which Tatta. From the eleventh century also the Baluchis, Sodhas, Kurejahs, and Sammas paid homage to the Sūmra overlord. In the thirteenth century their power declined and they were overshadowed by the Sammas. The ruling families of the Sūmras had already accepted Islam then. Firishta writes that Nasir-ad-Din Kabacha, the first Muslim sovereign of Sind after the death of Aybak, Sultan of Delhi, in 1210 weakened the Sūmra, 'of which some were Muslim and others infidel', and that they could retain only their capital of Tatta, the jungles and frontier places, while at the same time they resigned to agriculture and tending herds. But after Kabacha's death, in 1225, they again gradually resumed power and wrested Sind from the Delhi Sultans. Firishta summarily divides the 'zamindars of Sind' in two groups, the one called *Sūmra*, and the other *Satma* or *Samma*.[232]

One more tribal group that can be traced in Sind during these centuries are the *Afghans*. Biruni locates them in 'the western frontier

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[229] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 29; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 256, 266, 343, 483-94.

[230] Defrémery and Sanguinetti, *Ibn Batoutah*, III, pp. 101-2.

[231] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 137.

[232] *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, 2 vols (Bombay, 1832), II, pp. 609-10, 615.

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mountains of Hind', extending up to the valley of the Indus.[233] The name 'Afghan' is found in Arabic texts from the ninth century, as 'Abghān' (which became *Afghān* in Persian), and the geographers speak of the source of the *Abghān* river in their territory.[234] The cradle of the Afghans was the Zhob district, on a high road from India to the west, of considerable mercantile importance and noted as such by Hiuen Tsang. The mercantile involvement of the Afghans and Jewish penetration of these areas are probably responsible for the spurious claim of later Afghan chronicles that they descended from the *Banī Isrā'īl* (cf. p. 95). Firishta vaguely refers to these early times when 'the tribe of Afghans, forming themselves into a commercial community, carried on trade between Persia and Hindustan'. The same author also speaks of the Afghans as 'Copts . . . many of whom became converts to the Jewish faith . . . but others came to India and eventually settled in the Sulaymani mountains . . . '.[235] Ibn Battuta similarly speaks of the *koh sulaymān* as the 'principal mountain of the Afghans'.[236] Here they lived on the eve of the Muslim advance, and they held on to it, but, with the Muslims expanding to the east, the Afghans also began expanding further into the country bordering the Indus, and to the Khyber hills. This was no 'flight' however before the advancing Muslim armies. To the contrary, if we can believe Firishta, the Afghans could hardly wait to convert themselves to Islam in the seventh century. And many Arabs in fact chose to stay with them, especially during the invasion of Sind by Muhammad al-Qasim.[237] Already in 682 A.D. it was Muslim Afghans who, from their mountains, invaded the inhabited areas north of Multan as far as Peshawar, effecting an alliance with the Ghakkars, a wild tribe of the Salt Range of the Panjab (living in Rawalpindi and parts of Hazara and the Jhelum District). Such invasions were kept up, ultimately leading to the erection of a fort in the Khyber hills from where the province of Roh was subdued, from Swat and Bajaur in the north to Sibi and Bhakkar in Sind, and from Hasan Abdal in the east to Kabul and Qandahar in the west. Thus the Afghans maintained themselves as a considerable power through Samanid times. They even seem to have diverted Samanid incursions southward, to Lower Sind

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[233] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 208.

[234] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 101; S.M. Imamuddin, 'The Origin of Afghans', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XXIII (1949), pp. 1-12.

[235] Briggs, *Ferishta*, I, p. 4.

[236] Defrémery and Sanguinetti, *Ibn Batoutah*, II, p. 89.

[237] Briggs, *Ferishta*, I, pp. 4-6.

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and Tatta. The Ghaznavid general Sabuktigin, however, was not deterred by the Afghans and frequently invaded Multan and Lamghan. Jaipal, the Hindu Raja of Lahore, placed garrisons of Afghans in both these districts. But they soon united with Sabuktigin. They also submitted to the power of Mahmud. Similarly, the Ghakkars accompanied Mahmud of Ghazna on an invasion of India and obtained permission from him to settle beyond the Indus. But the Ghakkars did not convert to the faith until the thirteenth century. According to Firishta they were savages up to that time, without a religion, practicing infanticide and polyandry, after having come to the Panjab in 682 A.D.

The above are the most important mobile or migratory populations which we are able to identify by name in the seventh to eleventh centuries. The Jats, Mīds, Sūmras, and Afghans – these were the 'tribes' of the wastes and deserts, swamps and marshes, and of the mountains of the frontier province of Sind which the Arabs strove to integrate into the new political and economic order which was evolving under the aegis of Islam. Predatory activity, especially at sea, was put down by sustained military pressure, while pastoralists shifted to agriculture and various other groups of the *badw* were incorporated into the new protection rackets which were set up to safeguard the flow of Islamic trade.

Sedentary agriculture played a relatively minor role in the economy of Sind. Of course, in large parts of Sind there was no absolute dividing line between pastoralism and settled agriculture, the inhabitants being engaged in both on a limited scale, or alternating between the two activities according to weather conditions. This was the case especially in the western borderlands (including Makrān), in the north-western hills, and in the sub-montane region of the trans-Indus plains and parts of the Salt Range.[238] Settlement remained instable in Sind and population density was extremely low wherever the productivity of agriculture was constrained by scanty and highly unreliable rainfall; and in such areas the economy was dependent on animal breeding to a corresponding degree. The breeding and grazing of sheep and goats or cattle are still the regular occupations in the lower country of the south, while the breeding of camels is a dominant activity in the regions immediately to the east of the Kirthar Range. In the Kuhistan few permanent villages ever existed as agriculture had to be irrigated from springs or *kārez* subterranean

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[238] Cf. Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 46, 48, 53; Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 317, 319.

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canals; we find here, instead, the traders in wool and goats' hair.

An insurmountable limiting factor to agriculture were the deserts in Lower Sind, Rajasthan and parts of Gujarat and the Panjab. The geographers describe one vast desert from Qāmuhul, Debal, Bāniya to Kambāya, in the region to the south-west of the Thar desert, between present-day Karachi and Cambay, and including the Great and Little Rann of Cutch. There were deserts between Turan and Mansura and from Turan northward up to Sijistan, corresponding to the regions along the Kirthar Range (with the dwarf palm growing on its western flanks), and the Helmand Desert. The desert of Multan corresponds to the southern part of the great plateau which extends from a few miles east of the Indus to the high left bank of the Beas river and which is intersected by the rivers of the Panjab.[239] In the Indus valley as a whole – starting with an upper tract of hills, then followed by an alluvial plain and a lower tract of sand desert – soil conditions varied from extreme fertility to complete desolation. In the ninth century however the green area of Sind was much smaller than the waste or desert land. Both banks of the Indus and its offshoots were covered with dense jungles of mostly wild trees like the *bahan* and *babul* and thickets of Tamarisk and Kandi. In many places of Sind jungles existed which were later cleared, as can be deduced from descriptions of hunting expeditions and references to 'hunting lodges' (*shikargah*) of the Sūmra rulers.[240] There seems, for instance, to have been a vast jungle stretching between Siwistan and Qandahar and up to Bhakkar. In the Panjab there were, as late as the sixteenth century, large forests in Bajaur and Swat, and between the Indus and Bhera. The belt of Parhal and Peshawar had a forest, and the area from the Jud mountains to Sialkot, and between Kalanur, Manjhur and Samana. There were still other jungles.

But in the delta region of Sind people were actively engaged in agriculture. Hiuen Tsang and Ibn Khordādbhih recorded that wheat and millet were produced here, apart from salt.[241] Excellent farmland is noted patchwise in valleys of Sind, as in Makran. Most of the towns of Sind are also described as being surrounded by agricultural fields and palm groves, inhabited by farmers. The greatest concentrations of agricultural villages were to be found in and around the Muslim 'fron-

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[239] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 110.

[240] Cf. H.C. Verma, *Dynamics of Urban Life in Pre-Mughal India* (Delhi, 1986), p. 17.

[241] Watters, *Yuan Chwang's Travels*, II, p. 252; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, pp. 62-64.

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tier dominions' of Multān and Mansūra; these were situated in fertile country which was cultivated without discontinuity. Mas'ūdī speaks of a total of 420,000 'hamlets and villages' in these two regions but this is doubtless a great exaggeration.[242] In fact, even though the Arab conquerors exerted themselves to 'protect cultivators' and extend cultivation, the land-revenue of Sind encashed by governors and administrative officials was 'insufficient and of mediocre quantity', with many claimants who could barely meet their expenses.[243]

If Sind paid off handsomely it was because large revenues could be derived from trade, especially the transit trade from India to the Islamic world, both overland and by sea. At Multan the caravans of Khurasan used to assemble, commonly using the route via Kabul and Bāmiyan (Al-Lahūm) or via Ghazna and Qandahar. Mas'ūdī refers to another overland route through the mountains to the country of Soghdiana. The important southern route – which was used by the Arab conquest army – was via Sīstān and Makrān, the Kīj valley, to Debal, the main maritime terminus. Sind, in fact, could be reached by traders 'from all directions'. All cities and major towns were connected with each other by roads. And camel paths for transit trade existed even in such places as the Kirthar range, running along hilly river valleys.

Among the products of Sind itself sugarcane (white sugar or *fānīdh* (*pānīd*)) was exported in large quantities, bamboo, some teakwood (from Sindān), camels (which were sought after in Khurasan and elsewhere), while the salt mines in Khewra and its neighbourhood used to supply all of Central Asia.[244] The trade in slaves from Sind was not regularly pursued by the Arabs after the conquests of the early eighth century. In Sind and beyond, as in Iraq and Persia, Arab raiding only initially caused substantial shifts in population through the combined effects of captivity, death, defection and migration. The forced removal of enslaved captives from 'the frontier of *al-Hind*' to the markets of the central Islamic lands started in the caliphate of 'Alī, in the year 38-9/658-9.[245] The earliest Arab incursions into Makrān, Sīstān, Quṣdar, al-Ahwār, Bannah, and al-Qīqān, which preceded the first permanent occupation of the towns of Makrān in the reign of Mu'āwiya (661-80),

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[242] Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, pp. 168, 199.
[243] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 323.
[244] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 47, 131; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, pp. 62-64; Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 318, 325; De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, p. 231.
[245] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, pp. 421-3; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 76, 79, 82, 85, 88.

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provided 'many slaves' (*burda, bandagān, sabāyā*), next to 'much booty' and the 'big and beautiful horses' of Qīqān. But in Makrān raiding was soon superseded by more regularized tribute levies, and only those groups who broke the covenant remained liable to enslavement by the Arabs. When Sind was invaded by Muhammad al-Qasim considerable numbers of captives were taken in the conquered towns and these were often enslaved, especially if armed opposition had been offered.[246] In Sind, the general policy was to give 'quarter' (*amān*) on the stipulated condition of the payment of tribute (*kharāj*) to the non-combatant inhabitants and to those of the fighting men (*mard-i-jangī*) 'who asked for it'. Sustained armed opposition was however ruthlessly quelled, the combatants usually being put to death. Enslavement, however, could be a substitute for death, and invariably the numerous dependant followers and women and children of killed opponents were enslaved. The sources insist that now, in dutiful conformity to religious law, 'the one-fifth of the slaves and spoils' was set apart for the caliph's treasury and despatched to Iraq or Syria. The remainder was scattered among 'the army of Islam' and drawn along in the conquest and settlement movement together with parties of defecting Sindian tribal cohorts and a medley of stragglers. The total number of slaves thus acquired in the towns of Sind was high and embraced all social ranks, 'daughters of princes and ranas were made to stand in line with the menials'. At Rūr a random 60,000 captives, amongst which 'thirty ladies of royal blood', are said to have been reduced to slavery. At Brahmanabad 30,000 slaves were allegedly taken. At Multan 6000. Slave raids continued to be made throughout the late Umayyad period by the governors of Sind, amongst the inhabitants of 'rebellious' areas, but also much further into Hind, as far as Ujjayn and Malwa.[247] Equally, the Abbasid governors perpetuated raiding unsubdued areas of Sind and made forays far into the Panjab, where 'many prisoners and slaves' (*sabāyā wa raqīqan kathīran*) were taken.[248] Expeditions are reported to have been made against the Qiqanites, and against the *Zuṭṭ* and the *Mīd* until as late as 844 A.D., and throughout this remained a period of immense booty. How many of the captives were eventually transported westward is beyond computation. But it seems certain that the flow of slaves from Sind came to a stop

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[246] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 425, 427; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 105, 109-10, 120, 123, 132, 152-4, 166-84, 187, 192, 195-6, 198, 202, 204-5, 207,237-8, 243, 247, 297.

[247] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 429, 431.

[248] *Ibid.*, p. 431.

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when the caliphs lost effective control over the province in 870-1, and that slave raiding was not resumed before the appearance of the Ghaznavids in the early eleventh century.

Far more important for the Muslim Arabs was Sind's role as a passway of the India trade at large. This role it acquired in the seventh century – when Syrian merchants are first noted off Debal – but it is related to the Arab conquest and the rise to prominence of the Persian Gulf in the second half of the eighth and in the ninth century. When Debal was conquered, trade between Muslims and the merchants of Sind took off without delay.[249] Sindi, and more generally Arab merchants (on the coast the Azdīs of Oman) formed the commercial intermediary between Sind and the rest of India, Kabul, the Himālayas, Gujarat, Malabar, Sri Lanka and beyond, the Malay Peninsula, the Archipelago, and China. Through the same networks of trade, Sind also received its own import articles, such as fine cotton cloth (from Kabul for instance), horses from Arabia, the Yemen, Oman, Persia, gold from Tibet, emerald from Egypt. And the monetary situation of Sind reflects the development of the transit trade. Beyond doubt, Sind was a very rich kingdom when it was conquered by the Arabs. Huge amounts of gold and silver were found by the Arabs, in treasure or temple decoration or idols but also in money. From the time of the Indus valley civilization gold had been arriving in Sind from Tibet, as probably also from the south of the peninsula; silver came from Afghanistan and Persia.[250] While the South-Indian supply stopped relatively early, the import of gold from Central Asia and Tibet continued for a very long time. Gold coinage was even brought from Sind further to India. And through Byzantine and Sasanid trade, gold and silver kept arriving in Sind. Pre-Muslim Sind had a silver coinage with the effigy of the king on it.[251] Tribute and taxes appear often to have been monetized.[252] In addition, silver bullion was of widespread use.[253] The early conquerors collected 'immense wealth' in Sind through plunder, although not without generating a reverse flow of African gold (*zar-i-maghribī*) at the same time.[254] Muhammad al-Qasim 'collected gold and silver (*zar-o-naqra*) wherever he

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[249] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 213-14.
[250] M. Chandra, 'Presidential Address', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, vol. XVI (1954), pp. 8-9.
[251] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 72.
[252] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[253] *Ibid.*, p. 208.
[254] *Ibid.*, pp. 221, 190.

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could find them'.[255] At Multan the gold idol of the temple and the treasures of gold and jewels found in the fort were all carried away and jammed into 'a building, ten by eight cubits in dimension, into which whatever was deposited was cast through a window, opening in its roof, (and) from this al-Multān was called "the frontier of the house of gold" (*farj bayt adh-dhahab*)'.[256] Al-Qasim's campaign, in effect, yielded twice as much as had been spent on it ('he brought back 120,000,000 dirhams').[257] And immediately after the conquest, coins were ordered to be struck in the name of the caliph.[258] Of the eighth-century Arab governors of Sind about 6,585 silver coins have been found in parts of Marwar, adjoining Sind.[259] A few thousand coins have also been discovered at Banbhore, the site of Debal, most of which however are so badly corroded that they are completely undecipherable. A few can be identified, still, as Muslim coins predating the monetary reform of Abd al-Malik of 696 A.D.; these are the so-called Arab-Sasanid and Arab-Byzantine coins, i.e. Sasanid and Byzantine coins with some Kufic inscription of 'Allah' or 'Bismillah' on them to indicate the authority of the caliph.[260] The Arab-Sasanid coins were in silver or copper, but none in gold. The Arab-Byzantine coins had legends in Greek or Latin, sometimes Pahlavi, and followed the Byzantine model which set the standard for the Umayyad gold *dīnār* from Abd al-Malik onwards (which was presumably first struck at Damascus). The Banbhore collection includes one gold and a number of silver and copper coins of the ninth-century Abbasids, struck in Egypt and Samarqand, except the copper coins which were issued by local governors or chiefs of Sind. Large numbers of coins have also been found in the ruins of Brahmanabad, mostly Abbasid, some Hindu – without uniformity. At Banbhore again four silver coins were brought to light which are known as 'Indo-Sasanid', as usual with a Zoroastrian fire-altar on the reverse, and a distorted facial profile which earned them the name 'Gadhaiya', and struck in India.[261] The origin of these is attributed to the fifth-century

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[255] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

[256] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 427; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 240.

[257] Cf. Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 427; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 241.

[258] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, *ibid.*

[259] B.M. Reu, 'Coins struck by the early Arab governors of Sind', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, vol. IX (1947), pp. 124-7.

[260] P.T. Nasir, 'Coins of the early Muslim period from Banbhore', *Pakistan Archaeology*, 6 (1969), pp. 117-81.

[261] J.M. Unvala, 'Note on Indo-Sasanian Coins', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, vol. VIII (1946), pp. 157-8.

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Vikramaditya of Ujjayn; they were probably degenerate specimens of the Hephthalite coinage, which was once current in India as far as Malwa. The origin of the millions of '*ṭāṭarīya* dirhams' which, according to the literary evidence, filled the treasuries of the Abbasid governors of Sind is not known, although a Hephthalite link has been posited.[262] There were apparently numerous different currencies in Sind which were called dirhams in Muslim parlance but had differing values, convertible into standard dirhams and dinars according to fixed ratios (which however fluctuated in time). In the late tenth and eleventh century, with the rise of the Fatimid connection, it is interesting to note that the dirhams of Sind – at least of Multān – also began to be modelled upon the Fatimid-Egyptian coinage (*wa darāhim al-multān ʿilā ʿamal darāhim al-fāṭimīya*).[263]

The upsurge of trade in Sind under the Arabs is, finally, reflected in its urban history. As in the Middle East, in Sind the Arab invasion and occupation, instead of destroying the urban element, catalysed its growth. Most Muslims lived in the towns and through their presence were able to link the towns and cities of Sind with the urban islands of the Muslim economy further west. Of the urban history of Sind in the seventh to eleventh century we know much more than of that of any preceding period; this is significant in itself but should not distract from the fact that Sind was already densely urbanized long before the rise of Islam. The first stage of urbanization (following upon the pre-historic Indus valley civilization) was, as we have seen, associated with the spread of Buddhism under the Mauryas and subsequently the Kushanas. A number of these ancient towns in the Indus valley had decayed or fallen to ruins by the seventh century, as was recorded by Hiuen Tsang[264], but others had emerged in the newly evolved political and commercial context of the post-Kushana and post-Huna age. One of the most striking aspects of Arab rule in Sind is that it left a very meagre archaeological remnant. Thus, none of the Arab cities has survived and often their very sites are uncertain. It is even more difficult to determine the pre-Islamic substratum on which they were founded. In a very few cases, towns of Sind appear to have been ruined after the Arab conquest

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[262] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 430, 432; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 228; idem, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, p. 173.

[263] De Goeje, *Al-Muqaddasi*, p. 482.

[264] Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, I, pp. 166-7.

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and these were 'desolate' at the time Baladhuri wrote. But the main causes of the disappearance of some of the main cities of Sind – in this as in any period – were natural: the floods and changes in the course of the Indus, or, as in the case of Debal and Brahmanabad, earthquakes. In order to get an impression of the dense pattern of urban life in Sind, however, we may turn to the map drawn up in 967 A.D. by the geographer Ibn Hauqal.[265]

Accordingly we can locate twenty-four towns or cities in Sind proper, seventeen or eighteen in Makrān (cf. pp. 138-9), and four in 'territories of al-Hind adjacent to Sind' or 'between Sind and Hind'.

Nine figures do not denote towns:

(1) Sind
(2) The river Mihrān (Indus)
(9) The 'frontier of Sind'
(26) The tribe of Budha
(41) The region of Budha
(42) The region of Ṭūrān
(53) The river Jandrawar
(55) Al-Hind
(56) The river Sandarūr

Makrān comprises the following numbers:

(4) Qanbalī
(5) Nakiz
(6) Tīz
(7) Bih
(8) Kih
(10) and (43), which appear to be the same town Majāk, or two towns with the same name
(11) Fannazbūr
(13) Qaṣrqand
(14) Qwāsh
(15) Aṣfiqa
(16) Dizak

[265] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 310-2.

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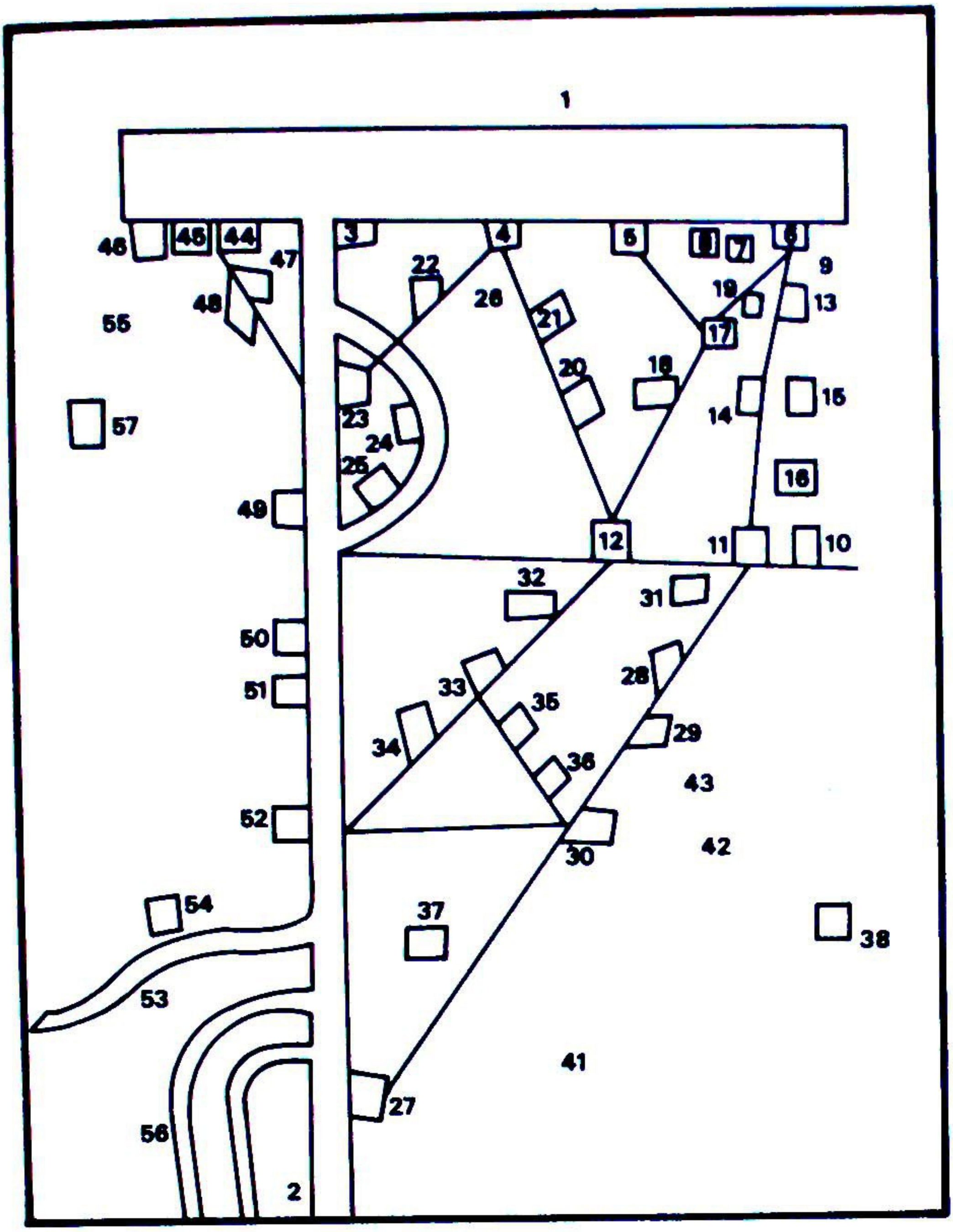

Ibn Hauqal's map of as-Sind.

(17) Kīz
(18) Bal-i-Fihraj
(19) Sar-i-shahr
(20) Armābīl
(21) Dandarāj

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(31) Mashkī
(33) Qandābīl

Between Sind and Hind, four 'cities with mosques' are found in the domains of Hindu kings:

(44) Kambāya
Perhaps three miles from present Cambay, an extended trading city situated on an estuary near the coast to which 'all kinds of commodities and merchandise are brought from everywhere, and from where they are exported in every direction'.[266]

(45) Sindān
On the seacoast, probably in Abrāsa, the southern district of Cutch, a populated and large town of 'wealthy merchants accustomed to travelling'; with an island to the east of it with the same name.[267]

(46) Ṣaymūr
A trading town, probably in Lār, the country around Broach, 'nearby which perfume-plants were found in abundance, which were exported to all parts of the world'. It was often confused with a second town of the same name, modern Chaul, in the Kolaba district of Bombay.[268]

(47) Qāmuhul (or Māmuhal, Fāmuhul)
Perhaps this is Anhalwāra, present Pātan on the Saraswati in northern Broach, on the road from Kambāya to the riverside opposite of Maṇsūra. 'It is a large and populated town, and is situated on the route of those travellers who enter India from Sind. It has commerce . . .'.[269]

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[266] *Ibid.*, p. 317; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 54-55, 57, 86.
[267] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 312, 317; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 56-57, 102; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 432; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, pp. 57, 63; De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, p. 173.
[268] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 312-13, 317; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 54, 56-58, 110-12; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 402-3.
[269] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, pp. 312, 316-17; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 44, 54, 92-93; De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, p. 176; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 363.

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As market-centres in Sind are mentioned:

(12) Quṣdār

The capital, clay-built, but with a fortress and underwater canals, of Ṭurān, a district which the Arab geographers situate on the north-eastern frontier of Makrān, in a very fertile plain intersected by roads going in all directions. It had a Muslim ruler, in the tenth century, who recited the Friday prayer in the name of the Abbasid caliph, and a market which was frequented by people from Khurāsān, especially for its white sugar. Quṣdār was raided by the Arabs for the first time in the caliphate of Muᶜāwiya and became one of their principal military colonies (*junūd*).[270]

(22) Manjārī

On the road from Qanbalī to Manṣūra, on the Indus.[271]

(24) Sadūsān

'A very large town', west of the Indus, frequented by traders, also known as Sehwān, Sīvastān, Sadūstān, etc. It appears to be one of the oldest urban centres of Sind. It was the seat of one of the four provincial governors of Sind under the Rāī dynasty, concluding a treaty of peace with Muhammad al-Qasim.[272]

(25) Maswāhī

An unidentified town to the west of the Indus.[273]

(28) Kīzkānān

In Ṭūrān, probably modern Kalat.[274]

(29) Sīwī

Also Sībī, in Ṭūrān.[275]

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[270] Kramers and Wiet, II, pp. , 311-2, 317-8; Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 331-2; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 47-48, 90, 101; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 422.

[271] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 311.

[272] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 425; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 119-20, 123-4; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 42-43, 45, 102, 159.

[273] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 312, 316; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 95.

[274] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 48; Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 332; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 382.

[275] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 237-8; Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 347.

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(30) Mastanj

A small town in the middle of the desert, the present town of the same name, in Sijistān.[276]

(32) Kūsha

On the road linking Quṣdār with the river, a market-place for the Budha.[277]

(34) Qadīrā

On the same road as the two preceding towns, and similarly a market-place for the Budha.[278]

(35) Ḥūr-Kijlīyā

An unidentified town, on the road from Qandābīl to Mastanj.[279]

(36) Qanāt-Khumar

On the road from Qandābīl to Mastanj.[280]

(37) Basmad

A prosperous town on the eastern side of the Indus.[281]

(38) Ṭūrān

Named after the valley of which it was one of the chief towns, in the neighbourhood of Fihraj, which belonged to Kirmān. It was on a desert which stretched unbroken to Manṣūra. The town was well-fortified and had a magistrate and commander who 'could not multiply three by ten, but knew the Qur'ān admirably well'.[282]

(48) Bānīya

A small but wealthy town, to the north of the Great Rann of Cutch, on the route from Kambāya to the riverside opposite of Manṣūra.[283]

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[276] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 48-49, 94; Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 332-3, 347-8.
[277] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 53.
[278] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 53.
[279] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 53.
[280] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312.
[281] *Ibid.*, pp. 315-16; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 81; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 426.
[282] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 312, 317; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 48, 52-54.
[283] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 312, 316, 318; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 43, 80-81.

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(49) Bullarī

A prosperous and well-fortified town with profitable trade, on the left bank of the river, about sixty-five km south of Hyderabad.[284]

(50) Qāllarī

To the east of the Indus, on the road from Manṣūra to Multān.[285]

(51) Annarī

On the road from Manṣūra to Multān. The exact location is uncertain.[286]

(54) Al-Jandrawar

Probably Multān's port on the Indus.[287]

(57) Manhah

An unidentified town.[288]

Principal Muslim cities:

(3) Debal

Ibn Hauqal's map shows this city – the first to be captured by the Muslims – to the west of the Mihrān, but he writes it is to the east. 'It is on the seacoast, to the east of the Mihrān. It is an important trade centre, where numerous branches of commerce are represented, it is the harbour of all these regions and of neighbouring regions. The fields here are cultivated without irrigation and there are few plantations of trees and palms. It is a dry country, where people only live for commerce'.[289]

Among the shifting channels of the Indus delta the very site of Debal or 'Daybal' has long remained uncertain but is now usually identified with Banbhore, an excavated site among desolate salt flats on a former mouth of the Indus, 60 km from Karachi and 40 km from the present-day coast, which answers the descriptions of the sources. Archaeological research revealed that many of the ruins were built by the Arabs; it

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[284] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 316; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 44, 98-99.

[285] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 45, 99; Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 316; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 129.

[286] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 312, 316; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 43, 80.

[287] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 380-1.

[288] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312.

[289] *Ibid.*, p. 316.

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remains possible however that there were successive places which were called Debal. The town, in any case, which was known as Debal in the period of Sasanid and Rāī rule and under the Arabs, appears to have changed its name to 'Banbhore' in the early eighteenth century only and was not known as such except as an archaeological site. Excavations also show that it was an extensive entrepot in pre-Islamic times, and that the site was already occupied in the first century B.C. and the first few centuries A.D.[290] Debal was probably Hiuen Tsang's *Kie(ka)-chi-ssu-fa-lo*, which the latter describes as a capital in the Indus delta. In the early Islamic architecture of the place carved stone blocks from Hindu buildings were extensively used. Of the pre-Muslim period a Shiva temple has also been uncovered (which may well be the *budd* temple with a spiral shikara that the conquest literature points at), two Shiva lingams, and jars and silver coins of Sasanid origin. As a sea-port at the mouth of the Indus, Debal came into prominence in the fifth century, when it was in the possession of the Sasanids. Subsequently the Rāī dynasty took control of the town, together with the adjacent parts of Sind and Makrān, but Chach could not build up sufficient naval power to control the coastal areas, with the result that during the rule of his son Dahir 'pirates' were able to intercept the trade passing between India and the Persian Gulf from Debal. Trade and 'piracy' however were intertwined and co-existed together in ways which make them hard to distinguish. When the first Arab fleet reached Debal in 632 A.D. a city was found 'inhabited mostly by merchants and craftsmen'.[291] The state of defence and fortifications was apparently poor. It was taken by Muhammad al-Qasim, who 'marked out a quarter in the city where he built a mosque and settled 4000 Muslim colonists'.[292] Debal's trade flourished after the conquest, especially from the late eighth century onwards, and all Arab geographers mention it as the most important place on the coast of Sind. Under the Arabs it remained the leading emporium of the India and China trade of Islam, as well as the pre-eminent port of Sind, until the eleventh century. It was a port of call for ships sailing between India and the Persian Gulf and an outlet for products from up-country, 'a town with a large population, possessing abundant wealth'.

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[290] F.A. Khan, *Banbhore: A Preliminary Report on the Recent Archaeological Excavations at Banbhore* (Karachi, 1963); *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. 'Daybul'; *Pakistan Archaeology*, 1 (1964), pp. 49-55; *ibid.*, 3 (1966), pp. 65-90; *ibid.*, 5 (1968), pp. 176-85; *ibid.*, 6 (1969), pp. 117-209.

[291] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 89, 112; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 424.

[292] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 100, 102, 105; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 424.

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There was nothing else, no trees or date-palms; surrounded by arid mountains and sterile plains, its houses were mostly built of clay and wood. Excavations however revealed a well-fortified harbour with some detail of art and architecture and a great number of material objects of early Islamic date. A citadel and defence wall were erected in the Umayyad period with characteristic stone buildings of massive solidity and strength. In the ninth and tenth centuries major repairs were undertaken and mud-brick houses on stone foundations were built. The mosque at the centre of the citadel is the earliest of the subcontinent, as it dates from the early eighth century, a period in which the mihrab was not yet regarded as indispensable and was omitted, as in some mosques of Kufa and Wasit of the seventh and early eighth century. The remains of the temple at Debal appear to have been taken down completely in the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil, in the late eighth century. Kufic inscriptions which are found in the mosque area date from 727 and 907 A.D. and are *inter alia* concerned with the refutation of the Muʿtazilī doctrine of the 'created' Qurʾān. The mosque at Debal, drawing Muslims from all over the Islamic world, was eminently suited for a propaganda campaign. In fact, the mosque at Debal contained the largest number of inscriptions so far known of all Arab mosques of the early caliphate. The accounts of Debal's decline are confused by vague references to an earthquake and the failure of the river in the eleventh century. Debal did apparently experience an earthquake in 893 A.D., which caused great destruction – also to its mosque – , but the city recovered quickly to its former prosperity. The source material does not indicate the presence of any other port in the Indus delta until the eleventh century, when Biruni mentions a new port, *Lūharānī*, on the coast of Sind.[293] By the eleventh century Debal appears to have lost its pre-eminent function due to the silting of the river and it was probably superseded by Lūharānī already then. We still hear of Debal in the latter half of the thirteenth century, when the town was still visited by ships, but was again 'full of pirates'. Ibn Battuta does not mention Debal anymore.

(52) Ar-Rūr

This seems to have been an ancient town, situated on a mountain on the eastern bank of an old bed of the Indus, and is referred to in Muslim sources as *Ar-Rūr* or *Alor*, now a very small place near modern Sukkur, in Upper Sind. Before the Muslim conquest Rūr and Multān were the

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[293] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 205, 208, 260.

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two 'props (*sutūn*) of the kingdoms of Hind and Sind', 'royal capitals' (*dār al-mulk-i-shāhān*) with treasuries and with large mercantile, artisanal and agricultural populations.[294] There was a fortress at Rūr which Muhammad al-Qasim took by force, with considerable bloodshed, but the town itself was reduced, after a siege of some months, by capitulation.[295] Taxes were imposed and a mosque was built. But Ar-Rūr had again to be brought to submission in the caliphate of Sulaymān (715-17) and it was then that the town became the first seat of the Arab governors of Sind. As such it was replaced by Al-Manṣūra in the ninth century. This shift of residence however did not cause the deterioration of the town. Ibn Hauqal and Idrīsī both describe Rūr as 'a beautiful town with a large and prosperous population' which compares in size with Multān, surrounded by two walls, in a fertile country, and with 'intense commercial traffic'.[296] The town is still mentioned in the Rajput annals in the early thirteenth century but had been gradually declining before that time, due to alterations in the course of the Indus.

(23) Manṣūra

According to Idrisi, Manṣūra was a new town, named after the Abbasid caliph Al-Manṣūr (754-74), who built it early in his reign together with Baghdād in Iraq, Al-Maṣṣīṣa on the Syrian coast, and Ar-Rāfīqa in Al-Jazīra.[297] Baladhuri however writes that Manṣūra was founded in the second quarter of the eighth century as a Muslim capital (*miṣr*) on one side of 'a lake facing *al-Hind*', with a fortress on the opposite side which was called *al-maḥfūẓa*, 'place of refuge'; the town itself was called *al-manṣūra*, 'place of victory', after the victorious return of the son of Muhammad al-Qasim from an expedition against 'people of al-Hind who had apostatized'.[298] A third possibility – not suggested by contemporary writers – is that the city was named after Manṣūr bin Jumhūr, the last Umayyad governor of Sind.

What we know for certain is that Manṣūra and Multān became the capitals, by the ninth century, of the two provinces into which the realm of the brahman dynasty was divided under the Abbasids. Probably it received this status in the eighth century, as we read that very early in the Abbasid period the town of Manṣūra was 'restored' and its mosque

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294 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 14-15, 216, 221.
295 *Ibid.*, pp. 195, 224, 234; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 426-7.
296 Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 316; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 44.
297 Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 42-43.
298 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 430-1.

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enlarged.[299] The geographers who mention the town in the tenth to twelfth centuries invariably record that 'al-Manṣūra is called *Brahmanābād* (or *Bāmīramān* or *Bamhanwā*) in the *hindīya* language of Sind'.[300] The old Hindu provincial capital of Brahmanābād in fact appears to have been adjacent to the new township of Manṣūra. When Muhammad al-Qasim conquered 'old Brahmanabad' (*brahmanābād al-ʿaṭīqa*), al-Manṣūra did not yet exist, its site, 'at a distance of two parasangs', being nothing but jungle.[301] Just the same, old Brahmanābād was in ruins in Baladhuri's day. Its exact location, as that of Manṣūra, is unknown, but it was approximately 75 kilometers to the northeast of modern Hyderabad, on the western side of the main bed of the river, 'a city of about 1.5 kilometer in length and the same width, surrounded by an arm of the Mihrān, which makes it resemble an island'.[302] There are three main masses of ruins in this area, to none of which local tradition presently attaches the name Manṣūra. The abandonment and destruction of both Brahmanābād and Manṣūra is ascribed to an earthquake, but changes in the river course are also invoked. The period of destruction is even more uncertain. But clearly in the eighth to eleventh centuries al-Manṣūra was a large and important commercial city and regional Muslim capital, situated in the midst of a large stretch of fertile country. The geographical descriptions have it that the inhabitants of Manṣūra are Muslims 'wearing the Iraqi costume', often wealthy merchants, living under Arab governors who habitually read the khutba in the name of the Abbasid caliphs, with grains, gardens, orchards and many goods (e.g. indigo) which are always in demand, a 'pleasant abode' with houses built of kneaded clay, baked bricks and plaster.[303] In 985 or slightly later Manṣūra became, again like Multān, an Ismāʿīlī stronghold, with important commercial links to Fatimid Egypt. In 1025 the town was conquered by Mahmud of Ghazna, after the latter's return from Somnath.

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[299] *Ibid.*, p. 431.

[300] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 311-12; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 43; De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, p. 173.

[301] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 426.

[302] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 42, 43; M.A. Pathan, 'Present ruins of al-Manṣūra', *Islamic Culture*, vol. 42 (1968), pp. 25-33; Lambrick, *Sind*, pp. 159-62, 180-1; Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 311-12;

[303] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 313-14; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 43; De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, pp. 173-4; Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 99.

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(27) Multān

Very little is known of Multān before the arrival of the Arabs in the eighth century. The name of this city, which is located on the right bank of the Indus, derives from the Old-Persian *mulastāna* or *mūlastāna*, 'frontier land'. Hiuen Tsang, coming to Multan in 641, calls it *Mu-lo-san-pu-lu*, i.e. 'Mulastānapura' or 'city of the frontier land' – and this is the earliest known mention of the name. From the Chachnāma it appears that Multān was the seat of a provincial governor under the Rāī dynasty, 'a royal capital', and 'a prop of the kingdoms of Hind and Sind'.[304] Multān was considered to be 'on the extreme limit of Sind', the place where the Indus received the name of 'Mihrān' or 'Mihrān adh-dhahab', 'Mihrān of gold'; and it was known as 'the frontier of the house of gold' on account of the vast amount of gold and other wealth which Muhammad al-Qasim obtained in the city and which was collected in a building especially reserved for the purpose.[306] The gold was obtained from an idol, and 'treasures, exposed or buried'.[307] Muhammad al-Qasim also founded a mosque in Multān and stationed a governor in the town.

In the tenth to twelfth centuries, Multān is described as a large and populated town (although smaller than Manṣūra), with a strong fortress and four gates and a moat, 'of much wealth', and a place where much attention was given to Qur'ānic studies.[308] Remarkably, however, no Saiyid or Qurashīya family of modern Multān traces its origin to any date before the Ghaznavid invasions.[309] According to Idrisi the inhabitants of Multān were predominantly Muslims, but there is no tradition of large-scale conversion in the area during the first three centuries of Islam. As an outpost of Islam, an important frontier 'among the great Muslim frontiers' (*min thughūr al-muslimīn al-kubār*), Multān was practically independent of the caliphate by the end of the ninth century, but the khutba continued to be read in the Abbasid name. In the tenth century the ruler of Multān was a Qurashī, whose position – like that of the ruler of Manṣūra – was hereditary, belonging as it did to the

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[304] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 15, 216.

[305] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 43, 49; Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, pp. 99.

[306] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 427; De Goeje, *Ibn-Khordādbhih*, p. 56; Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, pp. 77, 229; De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, pp. 173-5; Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 314-15; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 49, 51.

[307] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 237-41.

[308] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, pp. 314-5; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 50.

[309] E.D. Maclagan (ed.), *Gazetteer of the Multan District* (Lahore, 1902), p. 30.

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descendants of Sam b. Lu'ayy b. Ghalib.[310] These chiefs, commanding a 'mighty army' (including many elephants), resided about 2.5 km outside of Multān proper, in a camp called Jandrawār. They entered Multān only once a week, riding on elephant back, to attend the Friday prayers.[311] Emissaries of the Ismā'īlī Fatimids came to Multān in the tenth century as well. Military aid was obtained from Cairo by rival rulers who captured Multān in 977 and established the Ismā'īlī doctrine as the official religion and had the khutba read in the name of the Egyptian counter-caliph. Trade with Egypt and the Red Sea now became overwhelmingly important. But from Multān caravans still continually departed to Khurāsān as well, and the overland trade remained a great source of wealth for the rulers of Multān.

An even greater part of the revenue of these rulers was derived from the gifts donated by pilgrims who came from all over Sind and Hind to the great idol (*ṣanam*) of the sun-temple at Multān. The great sums of money and often extremely valuable offerings brought to the idol, e.g. the perfumes and odiferous wood from Cambodia (*al-kāmrūnīya*), all became the property of the ruler, who collected them, used them, sold them or gave them away. It is not known, surprisingly, by whom and when the temple and its idol were constructed.[312] Hiuen Tsang gives a short description of the temple, which means that it predated Islam. The famous *Āditya* temple is said to have been made 'in the last kṛtayuga'. In fact, it had Zoroastrian antecedents of lesser antiquity, and retained Buddhist features. 'The idol has the shape of a human being, sitting cross-legged on a dais made of plaster and baked bricks, . . . stretching its forearms over its knees'. When Muhammad al-Qasim conquered Multān, he quickly discovered that it was this temple which was one of the main reasons for the great wealth of the town. He 'made captives of the custodians of the *budd*, numbering 6000' and confiscated its wealth, but not the idol itself – which was made of wood, covered with red leather and two red rubies for its eyes and wearing a crown of gold inlaid with gems –, 'thinking it best to leave the idol where it was, but hanging a piece of cow's flesh on its neck by way of mockery'.[313] Al-Qasim built his mosque in the same place, in the most crowded bazaar in the centre of the town. The possession of the sun-temple – rather

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310 Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, pp. 94, 167.
311 De Goeje, *Al-Iṣṭakhrī*, pp. 173-5.
312 Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 49-50.
313 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 427; Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 116.

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than the mosque – is what in later times the geographers see as the reason why the local governors or rulers could hold out against the neighbouring Hindu powers. Whenever an 'infidel king' marched against Multān and the Muslims found it difficult to offer adequate resistance, they threatened to break the idol or mutilate it, and this, allegedly, made the enemy withdraw.[314] In the late tenth century however the Ismāʿīlīs who occupied Multān broke the idol into pieces and killed its priests. A new mosque was then erected on its site, which was to replace the Umayyad mosque, the latter being ordered to be shut – until Mahmud of Ghazna restored the old mosque as the place of Friday-worship, leaving the Ismāʿīlī mosque to decay. Biruni recorded that the temple of Multān was in the eleventh century no longer visited by Hindu pilgrims since it was destroyed and never rebuilt.[315]

Ibn Hauqal mentions one other town in Sind which he does not indicate on his map: Nīrūn, situated on the west bank of the Mihrān, half-way between Debal and Manṣūra.[316] It may have been on the site of present-day Hyderabad, but its exact position is hard to establish.[317] The inhabitants negotiated a treaty with Muhammad al-Qasim, who replaced the idol-house with a mosque.[318] It appears to have been a fort and small town under the pre-Muslim rulers. It did not have a large population under the Muslims, but was wealthy and retained a strong fortress.[319]

There were a number of fortified towns in Sind which are not mentioned by Ibn Hauqal and of which we have hardly more than their names: Bannah, 'between Multān and Kābul'[320]; Iskandah (Uch of modern times)[321]; Babiah[322]; Ishbha and Jitor, not far from Ar-Rūr[323]; Musthal[324]; Sāwandaray, between Brahmanābād and Ar-Rūr[325]; Ghūl-

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[314] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 167; De Goeje, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, p. 228-9;
[315] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 116-7; II, p. 148.
[316] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, II, p. 316.
[317] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 98; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 396.
[318] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 92, 115, 117, 132; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 425.
[319] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 41-43.
[320] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 421.
[321] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 15, 33.
[322] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[323] *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 159, 224.
[324] *Ibid.*, p. 219.
[325] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 426; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 16-17, 40, 160.

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kandah[326]; Sikka' Multān, near Multān[327]; Al-Bailamāri, perhaps Nilmān, between Umarkot and Jaisalmer[328]; Al-Kīraj or Al-Kirāj, probably in Cutch[329]; Al-Baiḍā', a fortified 'white' town established by the Arabs in the third century Hijrae, in Qīqānān[330]; Al-Ḥaur, corresponding perhaps to modern Jhau, near Karachi[331]; Manjābrī, to the west of the Indus, opposite of Manṣūra[332]; Sindūr, perhaps the Sind-rūdh of Ibn Hauqal, along a river flowing into the Indus, on modern maps between Khairpur and Toba Gargaji, north of the dry bed of the Ghaggar and east of Bahawalpur[333]; Al-Qandahār, a more sizeable town, on 'the coast of Baroda', i.e. in the peninsula of Kathiawar.[334]

More conspicuous omissions from Ibn Hauqal's map are Tatta and Bhakkar, and Lahore. Of these, the first two however are not mentioned at all before the eleventh century, while Lahore (*Al-Ahwār*), although already a fortified seat of Hindu rulers before the seventh century, did not emerge from obscurity before it became a capital of the Ghaznavids in the eleventh century.[335] Hiuen Tsang appears to note the town of Lahore in 630, describing it as chiefly inhabited by brahmans. But it may have been abandoned prior to Mahmud of Ghazna's invasion, as it is not mentioned by Al-Masʿūdī.

Hind

In our sketch of the political geography of the East we have, so far, been able to distinguish a number of 'frontier regions' – Zamīndāwar, Zābul, Kābul, Makrān, and Sind – which were regarded as part of *al-Hind*, but yet were also regarded as separate, possessing many of those features which characteristically belong to the in-between or the marginal world. It was this marginal world however which was best known

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[326] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 236.
[327] *Ibid.*, p. 237; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 427.
[328] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 427, 429; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, p. 442.
[329] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 427, 429; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 391.
[330] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 432.
[331] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 45, 83-84, 156.
[332] *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 93; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 391-2.
[333] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 43, 51, 54, 103.
[334] Al-Balādhurī, p. 431; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 444-5.
[335] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 421; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 54, 65, 90; G.C. Walker, *Gazetteer of the Lahore District* (Lahore, 1895), pp. 23-26, 268; Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 22.

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to the Arabs. The numerous kingdoms of *al-Hind* beyond the frontier of Zābul and Kābul and Sind are not extensively covered in the geographical literature, although it goes too far to say that beyond Sind and the coastal zones, India remained *terra incognita* to the Arabs before Biruni.

In actual fact, when we talk about 'India' in the early medieval period we are essentially talking about an Arab conception. There is no Sanskrit term by which 'Indians' or 'Hindus' defined their collective identity or the country where they lived, except, in the latter case, the concepts of *Jambudvīpa* or *Bhāratavarṣa*, which are cosmographical rather than geographical. The Muslims, as we have seen, by referring to India as *al-Hind*, adopted a pre-existing Persian term, not a Sanskrit term. Darius I, the third of the Achaemenid emperors, in an inscription claimed *Hindush* as the twentieth satrapy of his empire. It is well known that Herodotus considered this Persian satrapy of 'India' as by far the wealthiest and most populous of all. But its actual content is incertain. Probably it embraced Sind and a part of the Panjab. The Persian usage of the term does not yet seem to have covered the entire Indian subcontinent, nor Southeast Asia and the Indonesian Archipelago. There is but incidental evidence which tends to show that in late-Sasanid times the Malayan Peninsula was beginning to be seen as part of India. The Arabic *Hind*, as it was used from Umayyad and Abbasid times onwards, refers to a geographical entity which includes all of South Asia, including the Central Indian Ocean archipelagos, and mainland as well as island Southeast Asia. The Arabs thus widened the application of the Persian term. And this makes perfect sense because in Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanid times most of Southeast Asia was only lightly, or not at all, affected by Indian culture. While Indian cultural forms were beginning to be disseminated here from the first century A.D., the major part of the Indianization process of Southeast Asia occurred after the seventh century. Indian ascendancy in Southeast Asia coincides with the seventh to eleventh centuries, as is especially visible in temple construction. Chinese influence – which was culturally less manifest – dominates the trade and politics of the region from the Sung onwards, but not before. One or two Arab authors speak of Southeast Asia as if it were an extension of *aṣ-Ṣīn*, China, even before the rise of the Sung in the tenth century, but these were clearly misguided by information derived from Chinese sources.[336] The cultural prestige which India

[336] Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, p. 18.

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gained in Southeast Asia was enhanced by the spread of Indian Buddhism in China – via the overland silkroad across Central Asia – from the Han to the Tang, when to some extent it even undermined Confucianism. *Aṣ-Sīn* was not sharply defined but rather a loose term for the Far East, everything between the Turkish lands in Central Asia and Japan. The so-called 'mission territories' of Mahayana Buddhism, Central Asia, China, Korea and Japan are never included in *al-Hind* by the Arabs. The reason appears to be that here Buddhism encountered dynasties which were and, in the final analysis, remained associated with non-Buddhist strata of literati or, as in Japan, a non-Buddhist state-cult. Buddhism was imported to China in the first century A.D. and took root in the fourth century. Official support for the religion was mobilized in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries. Some emperors entered into the monastic order. But Confucian suppression followed with a vengeance in the eighth and ninth centuries. The Confucian literati reduced Buddhism to a monastic fringe religion relating to the plebeian, aliterary strata. In Korea and Japan, Buddhism had even less influence as it was always mediated by China. Large parts of Turkestan and East Persia were also won for Mahayana Buddhism but there were at no stage Indian or Indianized kings ruling over these regions. This again appears to be the reason why the Arabs (and others) would not conceive of 'Buddhist' Central Asia as part of India. Aurel Stein calls it *Serindia*, after the *Seri*, a people connected with the silk trade, but this is a name which is not found in the medieval sources in a compound form.[337] Tibet presents other problems. Here Buddhist missionary activity began in the seventh century and Tantristic Mahayana religious forms evolved concomitant with the introduction of writing from India. But the resulting 'Lamaism' and hierarchic order of 'Lama' monks were too novel and deviant to make Tibet part of India. On the other hand, in the early medieval period, Tibet was a great, expansive power which was politically linked to various Indian kings and which subordinated various dominions of North India at different periods. Even though in the latter sense Tibet 'belonged' to the Indian political world, *al-Hind* in a political-geographical sense stops short at the Himalayas. The 'snow-peaked mountains' are, however, a northern frontier zone rather than an absolute boundary. To the south of it we find the Indian subcontinent proper, which the Arabs regarded entirely as *al-Hind*; this im-

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[337] M.A. Stein, *Serindia*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1921).

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plies that they also regarded South India's basic political and cultural patterns as Indian rather than Dravidian.

We are therefore left with an Arabic term *Hind* which covers both South Asia and Indianized Southeast Asia. And the term is a political one rather than geographical in its literal sense. *Al-Hind* is conceived of as a 'realm' (*arḍ*) which belongs to a great number of kings who are Hindu or Buddhist, 'the kings of *al-Hind*', whose territories have no hard-and-fast boundaries but interpenetrate each other and are 'open' to the world beyond. We shall return to these kings and kingdoms, in an attempt to ascertain their position in the wider context of Islam and the Indian Ocean economy at large, in chapter V. In the second part of the present chapter we will restrict ourselves to an historical analysis of the Muslim conquests in 'Sind and Hind'.

b. The Muslim conquests in Sind and Hind

Preliminary remarks on the source material

The early Islamic sources which deal with India or the Muslim conquest of India contain a variety of elements of an eschatological, legal, political or romantic nature which have led some historians to treat these sources as largely pseudo-history. Problems have also been pointed out which are due to translations from Arabic to Persian, anachronistic re-interpretation by later Muslim authors, or idiomatic adaptations. Since it is our contention that the sources which we have can legitimately be used to reconstruct the early conquests of the Muslims in India we will first have to deal with these objections and refute undue scepticism.

To begin with, what many texts attempt to make clear is that the conquest of India was one of the very early ambitions of the Muslims and that this conquest was envisaged as a particularly difficult one, so difficult in fact that it was set apart from the other conquests. Even before the rise of Islam the prophet Sulaymān (Salomon) is thus recorded by Ibn Battuta to have come to a mountain in Sind from where he could view India but was intimidated by its darkness and turned his back on it. 'It is said that the prophet Sulaymān ascended this mountain and from its summit looked down on *al-Hind* which was then in darkness (*fa naẓara ilā arḍ al-hind wa hīya maẓlima*). He went back without entering the country, and the mountain was named after him'.[338] Mus-

[338] Defrémery and Sanguinetti, *Ibn Batoutah*, II, pp. 89-90.

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lims throughout the Indian subcontinent tend to relate Indian Islam to the very beginnings of Islamic history, and in the *hadīth* collections the prophet Muhammad himself is credited with the aspiration of conquering India. Participants in the holy war against *al-Hind* are promised to be saved from hell-fire, like those Muslims who participate in the fight of the Messiah ʾIsā b.Maryam against the anti-Christ (*dajjāl*) in ash-Shām on the eve of the Day of Judgement. Thus also an eschatological work which is called the *Kitāb al-Fitan* ('Book of Trials') credits Muhammad with saying that God will forgive the sins of the members of the Muslim army which will attack *al-Hind* and give them victory.[339] The *ḥadīth* however – apocryphal or not – which refer to India lack any legal definition of the status of Hindus in the Muslim state. And this again sets India apart. Generally, Islamic literature, including the *ḥadīth* collections and the Qurʾān, abounds in pronouncements on the legal status of non-Muslims in the Muslim state but these are confined to Jews and Christians, who are 'people of the book', *ahl al-kitāb*, and have to be treated as 'protected subjects', *ahl adh-dhimma*. This meant that the jurists of later times were unable to derive their decisions regarding Hindus from a religiously authoritative text. The Qurʾān, however, next to Judaism and Christianity also recognized a vaguely defined third religion, that of the Sabians (*aṣ-Ṣābiʾa*), as imperfect earlier versions of Islam and equally defined them as 'people of the book'. The category of the Sabians made it possible to extend 'protection', beyond Jews and Christians, first to Zoroastrians in Persia, then also to the Hindus and other groups. Hence the Hindus could be treated as *ahl adh-dhimma* even though the Qurʾān and classical Qurʾānic interpretation did not regard them as *ahl al-kitāb*. But historically the decision to include the Indians among the *ahl adh-dhimma* is attributed to the eighth-century Arab conqueror of Sind, Muhammad al-Qasim, and testified not in the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*, but in the conquest literature of Sind. The testimony of the conquest literature points at a compromise with idolatry which during many centuries remained the subject of heated debate. In fact, only the Ḥanafī school of Islamic law – the school which became dominant in India itself – went so far as to include Hindus and all other non-Muslims who were not Arabs or apostates among the *ahl adh-dhimma*. As *dhimmīs* the Hindus were entitled to protection and

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[339] Friedmann, 'Contribution', pp. 318-9; A. Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden and Cologne, 1980), p. 4.

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limited religious freedom in the Muslim state in exchange for the payment of the *jizīya* or 'poll-tax' and while abiding by certain discriminatory measures which were prescribed by the Shar'īa. There was nothing uncommonly outrageous, however, about ulama in for instance the thirteenth century attempting to persuade the Sultan of Delhi that Hindus according to the law were either to accept Islam or be put to the sword. Obviously such debates did not change the fact that Hindus in practice always remained *dhimmīs*. Moreover, since in India the Muslims remained a minority the collection of the *jizīya* was often suspended altogether. Or the particular Muslim character of the *jizīya* as a poll-tax on *dhimmīs* was obliterated and it became a tax in general.[340] The point is, however, that due to such legal issues and the continual debates to which they gave rise, considerable doubt has been thrown on the historical authenticity of the Islâmic sources describing the conquest of Sind and justifying the incorporation of the Hindus among the *dhimmīs*.

This is especially so in the case of the *Chachnāma*, the Persian chronicle which is by far the lengthiest of our sources and which gives most attention to Indian matters (apart from being our only source on the *jāhilīya* history of Sind). The *Chachnāma* is a Persian version of a now lost Arabic original. The Persian translation or interpretation (the word *tarjama* can mean both) was done by one Muhammad Alī Kūfī of Uch in 1216 A.D. Kūfī writes in his introduction that he put the text from the *lugha'i-ḥijāzī*, 'the language of the Ḥijāz', i.e. Arabic, into the *lughat-i-ahl-i-'ajam*, 'the language of the people of 'Ajam', i.e. Persia.[341] The text however is replete with embellishments and anachronistic detail; even the transactions of the Hindu kings are entirely couched in a thirteenth-century Perso-Islamic idiom, with some Seljuq or Mongol terms.[342] Kūfī further explains that the Arabic manuscripts which he used were obtained by him from a *qāḍī* of Alor who claimed to be a de-

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[340] Y. Friedmann, 'Islamic Thought in Relation to the Indian Context', in: M. Gaborieau (ed.), *Islam et Société en Asie du Sud* (Collection *Puruṣārtha*, vol. 9) (Paris, 1986), p. 81; idem, 'The Temple of Multan. A note on early Muslim attitudes to idolatry', *Israel Oriental Studies*, 2 (1972), pp. 176-82.

[341] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 10.

[342] For instance, the titulature (*laqab*) which prevails in the text was unknown in the eighth century ('Imād ad-Dīn is a title of Muh. al-Qasim); terms like *iqṭā'*, *salṭanat* are applied anachronistically; Baghdad is taken to be the capital of the caliphate in the early eighth century (Daudpota ed., p. 243); an Arabic term, *shaḥna*, which did not become current before Seljuq times, is used for Qasim's representatives (ibid., p. 118); the Mongol punishment of sewing up in a cow-hide is also applied to Qasim.

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scendant of the Arab tribe of the Thaqīf to which Muhammad al-Qasim also belonged.[343] Kūfī meant to present his work to Nasir ad-Din Qabacha's *wazīr*, Al-Ashʿari, in the expectation that the latter would be proud 'both as a Muslim and a person of Arab descent' of the words and deeds of his ancestors in Sind. And, writes Kūfī, 'as the conquests of Khurāsān, and of ʿIrāq, Fārs, Rūm and Shām (Syria) have already been described in detail, . . . but as the conquest of Hindūstān by Muhammad-i-Qāsim and the chiefs of Arabia and Syria and the spread of Islam in that country, the building of mosques and pulpits (*masājid-o-manābir*) from the sea to the boundaries of Kashmir and Kanauj has not yet been made known to the world, this history had to be written'.[344] Later Persian chronicles, such as the *Taʾrīkh-i-Maʿṣūmī* of 1600 A.D. and the *Tuḥfat al-Kirām* of 1768 A.D., always base their accounts on the *Chachnāma*, differing only in some particulars and dates, while the Abbāsid historians Tabarī and Yaʿqūbī offer but fragments and Balādhurī compressed the entire narrative of the conquest of Sind in about ten pages. But the *Chachnāma*, on various source-critical grounds, has been treated as 'historical romance'[345] and 'every whit as unhistorical as similar lucubrations of Sanskrit poets and Rajput bards'[346]; or as 'political theory' aiming to give a blueprint for 'the accommodation between different elements in a body politic'.[347] Without wishing to go to the extreme opposite point of view, as for instance Elphinstone did (who called it 'a minute and consistent account of the transactions during Muhammad al-Qasim's invasion (of Sind) and some of the preceding Hindu reigns'), it seems indisputable to us that, once the dross of various accretions (moral, legal, linguistic, narrative) is cleared away, we arrive at a historical account which is derived from a tradition of Arabic 'chroniclers of the conquest of Sind' (*al-muwarrikhūn fī futūḥ as-sind*) of which later writers preserved the memory while the tradition itself was lost.[348] Ibn an-Nadīm mentions in his *Kitāb al-Fihrist* two works by Al-Madāʾinī which could conceivably have gone into the *Chachnāma*: the *Kitāb thaghr al-hind* or 'the book of the fron-

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[343] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 8.

[344] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[345] F. Gabrieli, 'Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ath-Thaqāfī and the Arab conquest of Sind', *East and West*, 15 (1964-5), pp. 281, 289.

[346] Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, I, p. 83.

[347] P. Hardy, 'Is the *Chach Nama* intelligible to the historian as political theory?', in: H. Khuhro (ed.), *Sind through the Centuries* (Karachi, 1981), pp. 113-5.

[348] Cf. Defrémery and Sanguinetti, *Ibn Batoutah*, III, p. 100.

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tier of al-Hind' and the *Kitāb ʿummāl al-hind* or 'the book of the governors of al-Hind'.[349] Baladhuri mentions al-Madāʾinī as his source for the history of the Indian conquests, and Baladhuri's *Futūḥ al-Buldān* broadly contains the same prosopography and sequence of events as the *Chachnāma*. It is therefore likely that the *Chachnāma* also drew on Al-Madāʾinī, or at least on an Arabic tradition of historiography. Of equal importance, probably, was the material which appears to be derived from a local Indo-Muslim tradition.[350] To the latter revert the passages which relate to the characteristic features of Indian society and the *dhimmī* status of the Hindus which were intended to justify the persistence of the Indian social structure under Muslim rule. A third layer can be identified: of Indian *arthashāstra* and the like, the maxims of which (especially the depreciation of violence as a political instrument) were taken over in the *Chachnāma*. The part of the chronicle which covers the *jāhilīya* history of the kings of Sind is probably also of local origin.

The rhetoric of the 'holy war' and the conceptual framework of Islamic conquest

In the sources the notion of an Islamic frontier is inseparable from that of *jihād* or 'holy war'. The Qurʾān in its latest texts makes the holy war a major obligation and a test of the sincerity of Muslims, to be waged against unbelievers 'wherever they are found' (IX, 5, 38-58, 87). Such a war is 'just', its aim being the spread of Islam and the establishment of peace under Islamic rule, under the universal dominion of Islam. When, by the mid-eighth century, it had become clear that Islamic expansion was coming to a stop, the notion of a permanent frontier became accepted and, while there was an occasional resurgence of *jihād* resulting in new conquests, the final victory in the *jihād* was postponed from historical to eschatological times.[351] Initially the caliph had been merely the 'leader of the faithful' and his political-geographical dominion was not referred to until the Muslim jurists developed the concept of *dār al-islām* or 'House of Islam' and its complementary opposite of *dār al-ḥarb* or 'House of War', the lands which are respectively within

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[349] Flügel, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, II, p. 100; Friedmann, 'Origins', pp. 25-28.
[350] Cf. Friedmann, 'Origins', pp. 29-33.
[351] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. *jihād, dār al-islām, dar al-ḥarb, dār aṣ-ṣulḥ.*

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and outside of Muslim control. The idea of a 'House of War' was the logical development of the idea of 'holy war' when the latter ceased to be a struggle for the survival of a small community. And a third category was introduced in the law books, that of the *dār al-ʿahd* or *dār aṣ-ṣulḥ*, dominions covered by treaties and tributary arrangements, the 'House of Truce'. These distinctions are classical, clearly reverting to Roman categories of conquest which distinguished between an *Ager Romanus* ('House of Islam'), *Ager Hostis* ('House of War') and the *Foederati* ('House of Truce').[352] The threefold division of the world and the later systematization, however, were projected back into the conquest literature, with the result that the latter often fails to accommodate the complex realities of the actual arrangements made during the conquest. Since the fiscal and legal status of a region was linked to the original mode of conquest ex post facto, later tradition in particular distinguished too sharply between conquest 'by force' (*ʿanwatan*) and conquest 'by treaty' (*ʿahd*, *ṣulḥ*). The second was allegedly the case with most big cities. In reality however there were no such two fundamentally different forms of capitulation, since the conquerors in all cases took over the existing administration as far as possible. But the systematization of later legal scholars at times blurs the picture of the settlement process and imposition of taxes during the actual conquests.

Islamic legal thought also introduced the artificial distinction between *jihād* or 'holy war', legitimate warfare against infidels conducted by the Islamic state, and *fitna*, illegitimate 'civil war' among Muslims or between Muslims and their protected non-Muslim subjects or allies. Reflecting this distinction, Muslim chroniclers, in spite of a more fundamental mistrust of monarchy as such, always depict Muslim rulers as indispensable to secure justice within an Islamic framework, denoting as *fitna* all conflict within the Muslim community as well as opposition against the powers that be. Since they depict such action as 'immoral' or as a manifestation of imperfect religiosity it appears that *fitna* is not simply the opposite of divinely sanctioned order but that such a conception of *fitna* is necessary to be able to define the existing order as 'just'. There is nothing specifically Islamic about this postulate of justice except the idiom which is used. In Europe too, without some conception of justice the state would have been unthinkable and here the opposition

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[352] Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic law*; McGraw Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 240, 253; Cahen, *Islam*, p. 25.

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between lawful violence and 'sedition' or 'robbery' had its origin in both the Germanic and the Christian-classical traditions. Thus the Germanic concept of the 'lawful feud' linked up with Augustine's idea of *bellum justum* or 'just war', which remained an important category of thought throughout the Middle Ages, and which reached back into classical times, when a clear distinction was made between the 'private' and the 'public' enemy (the *echthros* and the *polemios* of the Greeks, the *inimicus* and the *hostis* of the Romans). In the late-medieval period the dichotomy between the lawful war of the state or monarch and the unlawful private feud became an ever more important problem of scholastic theory, but in political praxis it could not yet be realized.[353] In early-medieval Europe the distinction between 'private' and 'public' enemy was certainly not yet essential. In Islam however the parallel distinction – classical as it was – determines the idiom of the conquest literature. Theoretically Islam extradites all conflict, and *fitna* or 'internal strife' among Muslims was radically set apart from *jihād* or 'holy war' against the infidels on the frontier. This does not make the conquest accounts useless. But we have to look through the rhetoric which serves to legitimate the conquests to see what forces are at work. For, in the first place, as will become clear from what follows, *fitna* always overtook *jihād*, which means that frontier warfare and frontier politics were linked to the recurring *fitnas* of the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. The disjunction between an outside 'enemy' and an internal 'rebel' cannot be maintained. *Fitna* shows itself to be a normal mechanism of state formation and, moreover, was not determined primarily by the application of military force. Characteristically, expansion and conquest were made possible by intervention in and making use of existing local conflict. As the following analysis is meant to show, the conquest of Sind, the 'holy war against Sind and Hind' which was declared by the caliph in the early eighth century, boils down to exactly such a compromise with locally established powers and the integration of a pre-existing order of society into the metropolitan *fitna* politics of the Arabs. Such a process belies not only the rhetoric of the holy war but also a profound bias of the Western historiography on Islam – the idea that Islam is in essence a warrior religion. Beyond that, it also belies the modern rhetoric of battle history, just as it upsets the modern disjunction of war and peace. In modern historiography, which (like modern

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[353] O. Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft: Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1973).

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warfare) began with the Renaissance, Roman models are as decisive as they are in Islamic law. It was the writings of the Romans, especially Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, which provided the paradigm for military history and the modern historical reconstruction of the 'battle piece'.[354] Roman military ideas, of intellectual leadership, automatic valour, unquestioning obedience, self-abnegation, and loyalty, and Roman military practices, of drill, discipline and uniformity, dominated the world of the European soldier. The paradigm of the battle piece was imbued with the 'realism' of the Romans. This meant that a battle always had to be described in win/lose terms, and that it is represented in simplistic oppositions; only two parties are mentioned by name – of which only one is assigned an important role – , and the army is an automaton reacting to centrally-directed leadership which inspires an unconditional will to fight against an 'enemy' which is easily identifiable and is all attacking.

Now, it is true that in so far as the Muslim rhetoric of the holy war inspires the idiom of the conquest accounts, the reader easily imagines himself in a Roman universe. The sources generally emphasize the excellent military qualities and union of the Arabs. 'No people knows the art of war (*shīwa' jang*) as well as the Arab nation', says the *Chachnāma*.[355] The Muslims who come to wage the 'holy war in al-Hind' are identified as 'Muhammad al-Qasim and the chiefs of Arabia and Syria', 'the army of Islam', or simply 'the Muslims'.[356] The conquests are guided by Allah.[357] On the other side, opposing the Muslims, we have the antithesis of Arab military valour and righteousness: 'the polytheists' (*mushrikūn*), 'the infidels' (*kāfirān*), 'the Hindus' (*hunud*, *hindwān*), who 'do not keep their promises' and are 'treacherous and deceitful'.[358] One feels as if the authors of these chronicles consider themselves morally obliged to describe events in a particular 'Islamic' way. The derogatory comments are thrown in in a routine, off-hand manner, almost as if the author takes it for granted that every Muslim reader of his work will know that it is part of the prescribed protocol of Muslim history-writing. No one will miss the point that the actual conquest was a *bargain*, involving not two but innumerable parties who only rarely belong

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354 J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London, 1976), esp. pp. 29, 36, 51, 62-68.
355 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 70.
356 *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 79-80.
357 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 422.
358 *Ibid.*, pp. 426-7, 432; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 75, 213.

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in one camp – that of 'the Hindus' or 'Muslims' – solely and more often than not obtain stakes in both. Behind the glorious 'holy war' we learn about Al-Hajjāj's orders to Muhammad al-Qasim: 'Give them money, rewards, promotions . . . give them immunity (*amān*) . . . try to grant every request made by the princes and please them by giving them bonds for the fulfilment of mutual promises (*ʿahd-i-waṣīq*)'.[359] Here we leave the Roman world of binary oppositions. And here Balādhurī's *Futūḥ al-Buldān* and the *Chachnāma* no longer resemble Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* but come close to the Indian *Arthashāstra*. The *Chachnāma*, for instance, literally reproduces the 'four ways of acquiring a kingdom': 'One: by courtesy, conciliation, gentleness, and alliance (*muṣāharat*); two: by liberality with money and gifts; three: by adopting the most expedient measures at times of disagreement or opposition; four: by the use of overawing force, power, strength and majesty in checking and expelling an enemy'.[360] Such Indian wisdom appears to offer a more 'realistic' model of the actual process of conquest in the early-medieval context of India and the Middle East than the one which was generated by the Roman-Islamic juristic passion for conceptual order and moral rectitude. Once this is accepted, the question is no longer whether we have to believe or disbelieve the conquest accounts – either wholly or on particular points – but whether we can find sufficient historical substance in them, while abstracting from their formal Islamic presentation, to make the conquest intelligible. If we can answer this question affirmatively, it is also clear that early Islam was much more a 'political' than a 'moral' or 'religious' affair, contrary to what the idiom of 'holy war' would want us to believe. As in the central Islamic lands or in Spain or Central Asia, wherever submission was offered, *amān*, 'immunity' or 'quarter', was given – and *amān* (from the Arabic root *amuna*, 'to be faithful') in the Umayyad period, as a category of conquest, seems to have been as good as conversion, while *islām* often denotes profane surrender, as in the statement for instance that 'certain people surrendered and accepted Islām' (*baʿaḍe pesh-amadand wa islām qabūl kardand*).[361] Others are given *amān* and 'accept Islām' simultaneously.[362] Apostasy (*ridda*) by a Hindu convert appears tantamount to a 'declaration of war'.[363] Not surprisingly, a more

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359 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 128.
360 *Ibid.*
361 *Ibid.*, p. 77.
362 *Ibid.*, p. 177.
363 *Ibid.*, p. 129.

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rigorous policy was repeatedly advocated by Al-Hajjāj, in blatant contradiction of his daily policy of granting *amān* to 'infidels': 'grant *amān* to no one, for the Qur'ān says, "strike off the heads of unbelievers"'.[364]

The conquests in the Umayyad period

We have already seen that the Arabs entered Makrān in the caliphate of 'Umar, as early as 644 A.D., the 23rd year of the Hijra, about seventy years before a full-scale campaign was launched to Sind under Muhammad al-Qasim. There is some controversy about the date of the first Arab naval expedition to al-Hind, which was also in 'Umar's reign, either in 23 or 15 Hijrae.[365] This first Arab army which was 'sent to Hind and Sind to carry on religious war (*ghazw*)' came via Bahrayn and 'Umān to Debal and then crossed over to Tānah (on the westcoast, near present-day Bombay).[366] The expedition or raid on Tānah is described as a 'victorious' one but appears to have been unauthorized by the caliph, who was nervous of naval expeditions at that time. Authorization was asked from the caliph to lead an army overland from Makrān to Sind, but 'Umar, from the discouraging reports which he had received, regarded Sind as inaccessible ('even worse' than Makrān) and prohibited the Muslims to go further.[367] Instead he ordered the Arabs to sell the elephants which they had captured on the Indian frontier: 'Send letters to Sind so that the princes of that country who wish to have elephants buy them from you and you will distribute the money among the soldiers'.[368] 'Uthmān (644-56) again prohibited the troops to invade Sind. In the caliphate of Mu'āwiya (661-80), after Makrān was conquered and occupied, the *Mīds* on the coast of Sind were engaged. Organized opposition on the Indian frontier, until the early eighth century, was largely offered under the banner of the Zunbīl kings of Kābul, who appear to have mobilized troops in Sind, next to 'Afghans' or what are wrongly identified as 'Turks' in some Muslim sources.

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[364] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[365] H.M. Ishaq, 'A peep into the first Arab expeditions to India under the companions of the Prophet', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XIX (1945), pp. 109-14; B.M.B.K. As-Sindi, 'The probable date of the first Arab expeditions to India', *Islamic Culture*, vol. XX (1946), pp. 250-66.

[366] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 420; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 73.

[367] Zotenberg, *Tabari*, 3, p. 519.

[368] *Ibid.*

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Sind was conquered under Al-Hajjāj, 'governor of ʿIrāq and Hind and Sind' from 694 to 714 A.D., under the caliphs ʿAbd al-Malik (692-705) and his son and successor Walīd I (705-715), in the same period that the conquests of Spain and Transoxania took place and a new offensive was launched against the king of Kabul. This was a period of great expansionist ambition, and Hajjāj was invested with more power than any of his predecessors in the government of ʿIraq, obtaining both the *ʿArabī* (Babylonian) and *ʿAjamī* (Persian) parts of the former Sasanid domain which had been governed separately before him. It was the beginning of the great Islamic shift to Persia and the East, as also the beginning of more intense rivalry between the Arab conquerors and the new converts and *mawālī* clientele who were non-Arabs. Until the end of Umayyad rule the Arabs did not fully accept the *mawālī* as equals and even in fiscal matters they tended to make no distinction between Muslim converts and dhimmīs. In the first century the Islamic theocracy was transformed into Arab government, and especially Hajjāj, 'the shield of *ʿAjam* and *Hind*', was known for his harsh treatment of the non-Arab Muslim affiliates.[369] During the governorship of Hajjāj, the *mawālī* were always allied with his political opponents, and to deflect conflict from ʿIraq, Hajjāj forced them as much as possible to participate in the *jihād* on the frontiers of Sind, Kābul and Transoxania. One expedition, as we have already seen, to Kābul under Ibn Ashʿath turned into a general rising against Syrian-Arab dominance (cf. p. 122). In the descriptions of the conquest the *mawālī* element – of Persian but also of Sindian origin – is easily visible and appears to be a pre-eminent one.[370] Conflict was endemic among the Muslims on the frontier and a considerable number, we read, 'took refuge with the king of Sind', to return to the Arab camp later, or not, with some crossing the floor repeatedly and coming to be regarded as intermediaries rather than defectors, while receiving 'honours' on both sides.[371]

When the caliph, after much hesitation, finally declared the 'holy war against Sind and Hind', an expedition was prepared with extreme care and put in the hands of Hajjāj's nephew and son-in-law, the seventeen-year-old Muhammad al-Qasim.[372] The aim of the expedition was not

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[369] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 125; J. Perier, *Vie d'al-Hadjdjaj ibn Yousof* (Paris, 1904); Frye (ed.), *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, pp. 33-34, 40-43.

[370] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 87, 89, 136, 177, 179, 191, 194, 218, 220; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 428, 431-3.

[371] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 423; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 68, 70, 85-86, 88, 160-1, 163, 173-4, 203.

[372] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 91-98; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 424.

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the propagation of Islam but to eradicate piracy and protect commerce, a motive which was ennobled as an attempt to release the Muslim women who had been captured off Debal.[373] As all Arab conquest armies, the army which departed from Shiraz in southern Persia in 710 A.D. was small, six thousand Syrian cavalry and detachments from Iraq with the *mawālī*.[374] These were military men, without families, for whom 'Syria was no more' and most of whom never returned but congregated in Sind with native women in military colonies known as *jundī* and *amṣār*, usually in or adjacent to the principal towns of the country. No mass migration of Arab tribes followed the invasion of Sind of 711 A.D., as it had in Iraq for instance between 638 and 656. Muhammad al-Qasim was joined by an advance guard on the borders of Sind, and by six thousand fully armed camel-riders with a baggage train of three thousand Bactrian camels. More reinforcements came from the governor of Makrān and were transferred to Debal by sea, together with five catapults. And soon the Jats and Mīds swelled the Arab army, while irregular troops and individuals began to arrive from Syria after the first rumours had begun to spread of Arab successes in Sind. How large, then, the army which conquered Sind really was is impossible to say. But it never became a sprawling horde, cut loose from its origins; throughout the campaign Muhammad al-Qasim kept in close contact by correspondence with Hajjāj, who superintended the conquest from Kufa, received 'reports of conquest' (*futūḥnāma*) and regularly issued orders.

Hajjāj's instructions were 'to give quarter (*amān*) to any of the inhabitants of Sind who ask for it, but not to the residents of Debal'.[375] Debal was the first city to be besieged and stormed. 'The city was conquered by force (*'anwatan*)', writes Baladhuri, 'and Muhammad kept up the slaughter of the inhabitants for three days'.[376] The custodians of the great *budd* temple or stupa of Debal were also killed, the temple destroyed, and Al-Qasim marked out a quarter for the Muslims where he settled four thousand colonists and built a mosque – the first mosque in the Indian subcontinent, which gave to the conquest of Debal an air of permanence which the earlier conquests and raids had lacked. The captive Muslim women were released, and many prisoners were

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373 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 89; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 424.
374 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 96; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 424.
375 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 105.
376 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 424; Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 100, 102.

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made, while 'one-fifth of the booty, cash and slaves' was sent to Al-Hajjāj, in dutiful conformity to the law. Conversions also occurred; 'the chief of the Hindus of Debal accepted Islam and was appointed supervisor of the revenue officials under an Arab superintendent'.[377]

After Debal, the Arab army marched up north, taking various other towns – amongst which Nīrūn and Sadūsān – by 'treaty' (*ṣulḥ*, *'ahd-i-waṣīq*) and 'capitulation' (*amān*) mediated by one party or another among the 'enemy' which thereby obtained special privileges and substantial material awards or exemption from taxation.[378] Again mosques were built to replace the idolhouses, and the one-fifth of the booty and slaves was dispatched to Hajjāj and the caliph. Hajjāj, in his instructions for the conquest, never forgot to add religious admonitions: 'When you come to Nīrūn, dig a ditch around your camp, in order that it may give you protection and security. Stay awake most of the night and let those of you who can read the Qur'ān engage in reading it while the others perform prayers, and be watchful at the same time'.

But if the conquest of cities was easy, Muhammad al-Qasim still had not confronted Dahir, the king of Sind, who was preparing for battle.[379] The battle with Dahir was going to be decisive, as appears from Hajjāj's order: 'Now give up other towns, go back to Nīrūn, cross the Mihrān and march against Dahir. Ask for help from the great and glorious God so that he may grant you victory and success. When you achieve this victory all other fortified towns, far and near, will fall into your hands without effort, and nothing will obstruct you in further conquest'. The army encamped on the western bank of the Mihrān, receiving reinforcements from Hajjāj. An embassy was sent across the river, accompanied by a *maulā* from Debal, demanding outstanding tribute from the king of Sind. Bargaining began for the support of the river Jats and the boatmen. Solemn promises were made for mutual support, and Al-Qasim succeeded in crossing over to the eastern side of the Mihrān by means of a bridge, in co-operation with Mokah Basayah, 'the king of the island (stronghold) of Bet', the Thakurs of Bhattā and the 'western Jats' who all paid homage (*bay'a*) to the Arabs, joined them, and were posted on the island. Dahir, at the decisive moment, was abandoned by the Arabs in his service. The king of Sind, joined by the chiefs and warriors of Sind and the 'eastern Jats', met the army of Islam near Ar-Rūr,

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377 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 109-10.
378 *Ibid.*, pp. 115-19, 120, 123-4, 132; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 425.
379 Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 136-195; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 425-6.

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seated on a white elephant and with two female servants with him in the litter, one of whom was handing him betel-leaf and the other arrows, one by one. 'A fierce battle ensued, the like of which had not been heard of'. Some of the Hindus asked quarter and 'came into the fold of Islam'. Many more were killed, 'until Dahir was left with a mere thousand horsemen, chiefly those of royal blood, when the sun set'. Dahir was hit by a volley of arrows and decapitated by a sword blow after his elephant's litter had caught fire from a *nafṭ* arrow and the elephant had thrown himself in the water. When Dahir was killed, Muhammad al-Qasim was 'in complete control of the country of as-Sind'. Of the prisoners of war the fighting men were put to death, but not the artisans, merchants and cultivators. Dahir's head and the heads of 'the chiefs of Hind' were sent to Al-Hajjāj, with the fifth of the booty and slaves, including 'those who were daughters of princes'. Al-Hajjāj, on this occasion, delivered a sermon in the great mosque of Kufa: 'Good news and good luck for the people of Syria and Arabia, whom I congratulate with the conquest of Hind and the acquisition of immense wealth'.

Following this battle, the capital cities of Brahmanābād, Alor and Multān were taken in succession, together with all in-between towns and fortresses. The killing became confined to the 'fighting men' (*ahl-i-ḥarb*), whose surviving dependants and women and children were enslaved, in considerable numbers (the sources speak of tens of thousands but are vague and unreliable here), while casualties on the Muslim side were small.[380] The one-fifth of the slaves and booty continued to be sent to Al-Hajjāj. Sometimes the custodians of *budd* temples were made captives; but 'the people who were useful', 'poor people', 'common people', 'artisans, traders and cultivators', received *amān* and were encouraged to continue in their occupations, while 'brahmans and samanis' continued to be administrators. It was usually through the intervention of the heads of mercantile houses that the Arabs gained access to the cities after a siege of some weeks or months, and through them treaties and agreements were concluded. 'Qasim gave permission to carry on commerce with the Arabs'.[381] The Jats received *amān*. Everywhere taxes (*māl*) and tribute (*kharāj*) were settled, and hostages

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[380] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 195, 198, 204-7, 237-8; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 426-7.

[381] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 202, 207-10, 214, 216-18, 220-1, 225-6, 237-8, 241; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 426-7.

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taken.[382] Those who converted to Islam – a small minority – were not only exempted from slavery but also paid lower taxes, and no *jizīya*, which was a tax imposed on non-Muslims, according to their wealth, the price they paid for retaining their ancestral religion.[383] Conform to Hajjāj's orders more mosques were founded, Friday prayers held and coins issued in the name of the caliph.[384] But the people of Sind were allowed to build new temples as well.[385] In general, Muhammad al-Qasim regulated the affairs of Sind 'in the same way and on the same lines as had been followed in the case of the Jews, Fire-worshippers, Nazarenes and Magians of Iraq and Syria'.[386] The management of local affairs was left in native hands under a Muslim *ʿāmil* who was stationed in each town with a force of cavalry. And Al-Qāsim wrote letters 'to the kings of Hind (*bi-mulūk-i-hind*) calling upon them all to surrender and accept the faith of Islam (*bi-muṭāwaʿat-o-islām*)'.[387] Ten-thousand cavalry were sent to Kanauj from Multān, with a decree of the caliph, inviting the people 'to share in the blessings of Islam, to submit and do homage and pay tribute'. Al-Qasim himself went with an army to the frontier of Kashmir, i.e. the Kashmir foothills, the *panj-māhīyāt* or 'five-river country', but this appears to have been an incidental foray.[388]

By January 715 Muhammad al-Qasim had been in Sind for about three years and a quarter when Al-Hajjāj died, with six months after him the caliph Walīd. Arab military expansion now lost its impetus. The end of Muhammad al-Qasim's career of conquest was due to the reaction of the new caliph Sulaymān (succeeding Walīd in February 715) against the relatives and protégés of Al-Hajjāj who had attempted, towards the end of Walīd's caliphate, to deprive Sulaymān of his right of succession. A great *fitna* ensued which involved the entire Umayyad ruling élite and which went on throughout the caliphates of Sulaymān and Yazīd II. With Sulaymān's accession the Muhallabites, who had been persecuted by Al-Hajjāj, gained ascendancy and the anti-Hajjājite

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[382] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 216-18, 220, 225; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 426-7.

[383] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, pp. 200, 204, 208.

[384] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[385] *Ibid.*, pp. 221, 225-6; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 426.

[386] 'juhūd-o-tarsā-o-magh-o-naṣrānī-o-majūs-i-ʿirāq-o-śām' (Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 214). Cf. Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 427: 'The *budd* are like the churches of the Christians, the synagogues of the Jews, and the fire-temples of the Magians' ('mā-l-budd illā ka kanā'is an-naṣārī wa-l-yahūd wa buyūt nīrān al-majūs wa maḍaʿ ʿilayhu').

[387] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 199.

[388] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

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reaction first turned against Qutayba bin Muslim, the conqueror of Central Asia, and then against Muhammad al-Qasim, the conqueror of Sind. The latter, Al-Hajjāj's cousin, apparently had followed an order of the late governor of Iraq to declare Sulaymān's right of succession void in all territories conquered by him. When Al-Qasim received the news of the death of Hajjāj he returned from Multān to Ar-Rūr, from where he seems to have organized some minor campaigns, but was 'put in chains' by his successor in the government of Sind, Yazīd ibn Kabsha as-Saksakī who worked under the new fiscal manager of ʿIrāq, Ṣalih ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān, and the governor Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab.[389] Al-Qasim was thus 'lost for frontier defence' but, remarkably, 'the people of al-Hind deplored the loss of Muhammad, and set up a portrait of him at al-Kīraj'.[390] Ṣaliḥ tortured him and some of his relatives to death, allegedly in revenge of Hajjāj's execution of Ṣaliḥ's brother.

The new governor Yazīd ibn Kabsha died eighteen days after arriving in Sind, and the caliph commissioned Ḥabīb ibn al-Muhallab 'to wage the Sind campaign' (*ʿilā ḥarb as-Sind*).[391] Baladhuri writes that after the departure of Muhammad al-Qasim 'the kings of al-Hind had come back to their kingdoms, and Dahir's son Hullishāh had come back to Brahmanābād'.[392] This does not appear to have prevented the Umayyad caliphs from continuing to appoint governors, who reinstated themselves in the same places. When Sulaymān was succeeded by ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, caliph from 717-20 A.D., the latter 'wrote to the kings, inviting them to become Muslims and be subject to him, agreeing to let them continue on their thrones, and have the same privileges and obligations as the Muslims. An account of his mode of life and how he protected his religion had already reached them. Hullishāh accepted Islam, and so did the other kings, and they adopted Arab names'.[393] Raiding into *al-Hind* was resumed under the new caliph's *ʿāmil* of the frontier. Of Yazīd II, caliph from 720-24 A.D., we only know that during his reign the contest with the Muhallabites was finally decided in Sind. But when Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, caliph from 724-43 A.D., appointed Al-Junayd ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Murrī over the Sindian frontier, Hullishāh prevented him from crossing the Mihrān and renounced his loyalty. Hullishāh sent a message: 'I have accepted Islam, and an honest

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389 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 427-8.
390 *Ibid.*, p. 428.
391 *Ibid.*
392 *Ibid.*
393 *Ibid.*, p. 429.

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man (ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz) appointed me to rule my country, but I have no faith in thee'. He 'apostatized and declared war' (*taradda-l-rahn wa kafara ḥullīshāh wa ḥaraba*).[394] Al-Junayd collected forces, seized boats, and a battle was eventually fought in a swamp, the *Baṭīḥat ash-Sharqī*, where Hullishāh was taken prisoner and put to death together with another son of Dahir, Ṣiṣah, who was attempting to get away to ʿIraq. Al-Junayd now again extended the raids: to al-Kīraj (Cutch), to Mīrmad (perhaps Maru Māra, in Jaisalmer), to al-Mandal (perhaps Okā-Mandal in Gujarat), to Dahnaj (unidentified), and to Barwaṣ (unidentified), Uzayn (Ujjayn) and the land of al-Mālibah (Malwa), to al-Baylamān (Nilman probably, between Umarkot and Jaisalmer) and al-Jurz (Gujarat or the 'Gurjara dominion').[395] It is probably one of these raids which is recorded in the Nausari grant of 738-9 A.D. of the Lāṭa Cālukya prince Pulakeshin Avani Janashraya.[396] In this grant we are informed that Pulakeshin defeated a *Tājika* (Arab) army which had attacked the kingdoms of Sindhu, Saurāshṭra, Cāvaṭaka, Maurya, and Gurjara, and had advanced as far as Navasāri, where the prince was ruling at the time. The Arabs penetrated through the Baroda gap and plain near the Rann of Cutch. And another Arab raid appears to be recorded in the Gwalior inscription of the Gurjara-Pratihara king Bhoja I, which says that Nāgabhaṭa, the founder of the dynasty who probably ruled in Avanti in about 725 A.D., defeated an army of a powerful Mleccha king who had invaded his dominions.[397] According to Biruni and some Jain writers the capital city of Valabhī in Gujarat was destroyed in a raid by 'the lord of Al-Manṣūra'.[398] These raids, both by land and by sea, are described as having been immensely lucrative. We learn about Junayd that 'there remained in his camp, over and above what he gave to his friends, 40,000,000 dirhams, and he sent in (to the caliph) an equal amount'.[399]

Yet, in spite of these expeditions the Muslim position in Sind and Hind appears to have deteriorated in the late Umayyad period. After Al-Junayd, Tamīm ibn Zayd al-ʿUtbi was governor of the frontier.

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394 *Ibid.*

395 *Ibid.*; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 9 note 2; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, p. 441.

396 *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XVIII (1925-26), pp. 99-114.

397 *Indian Antiquary*, vol. XL (1911), p. 240.

398 Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 192-3; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 9.

399 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 429.

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Tamīm, like his predecessor, was known as 'one of the most generous of the Arabs', handing out 18,000,000 *ṭabarīya dirhams* which he found in the treasury of as-Sind.[400] This means that under Al-Junayd and Tamīm, Arab power in Sind became more diffuse. In Tamīm's time, we also read, the Muslims withdrew from the 'land of al-Hind' (*bilād al-hind*), abandoned their headquarters (*marākizhum*) there and did not return 'as far as that since'.[401] Here, the 'land of al-Hind' probably refers to the regions to the east of the Indus. Afterwards, while Al-Ḥakam ibn ʿAwanah al-Kalbi was governor, 'the people of al-Hind apostatized' (*qad kafara ʾahl al-hind*), with the exception of the inhabitants of Qaṣṣah (probably Cutch).[402] On a lake, 'which borders on al-Hind', the Muslims built a city (*madīna*) which they named *Al-Maḥfūẓa*, a 'place of security' and a capital (*miṣr*) for Al-Ḥakam to settle in. Under Al-Ḥakam, we find the son of Muhammad al-Qasim as his 'most important and confidential servant'.[403] The latter was sent 'on an expedition' from *Al-Maḥfūẓa* and built the city called *Al-Manṣūra* on the other side of the same lake to celebrate his 'triumph'. *Al-Manṣūra* became the seat of the later governors (*ʿammāl*). Both cities were apparently near to each other, on the sides of the same unknown lake, which was probably the best site for an Arab stronghold in Sind. The foundation of *Al-Manṣūra* was a turning point. 'Al-Ḥakam won back from the enemy all that they had conquered from him'. Even then, subsequent governors were continually busy 'subduing the neighbourhoods whose inhabitants rebelled (*an-nāḥīya qad nakatha ʾahlhā*)'.[404]

Sind under the Abbasids

In the early Abbasid period, from the mid-eighth century, the province of Sind gradually becomes detached from the central Islamic polity. Under Abū Muslim two successive governors were despatched with armed forces in order to regain Sind from a 'rebellious governor', Manṣūr b. Jumhūr.[405] A third Abbasid governor re-established himself at *Al-Manṣūra*, 'enlarging its mosque', but in the beginning of the reign of Al-Manṣūr, caliph from 754 to 775, another 'rebellious governor'

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400 *Ibid.*, p. 430.
401 *Ibid.*
402 *Ibid.*
403 *Ibid.*, pp. 430-1.
404 *Ibid.*, p. 431.
405 *Ibid.*

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had to be crushed.[406] The Abbasid governor Hisham ibn ʿAmr at-Taghlibi, appointed in about 758 A.D., conquered regions which had hitherto not been under Muslim rule. 'He conquered what was left unsubdued, . . . sent a fleet to Nārind (i.e. Barada, Bārūd, on the coast of Gujarat), and at the same time went to the regions of al-Hind and conquered Kashmīr (i.e. the upper Panjab), obtaining many prisoners and slaves'.[407] The same governor also subdued the province of Multān and expelled a party of 'usurping' (*mutaghalliba*) Arabs, probably adherents of ʿAlī, from Qandābīl.[408] Hisham also visited Al-Qandahār, in the north-east angle of the Kathiawar peninsula, with the fleet, and conquered it, pulling down the *budd* and building a mosque in its place. Hisham 'maintained peace along the frontier, and kept its affairs in order'.[409] Another expedition was sent to Nārind in 777 A.D. to retake the town but on this occasion the larger part of the troops succumbed to an epidemic in some Indian port, while the remainder got stranded on the Persian coast, after which the caliph Al-Mahdī was deterred from further naval expeditions to al-Hind.

Al-Mahdī, caliph from 775 to 785, appointed several governors to Sind, of which some ruled only for a few weeks and one did not even reach the province.[410] In the reign of Harun ar-Rashīd (786-809) the dominant feature of Sind was the rivalry between the Qays and the Yaman.[411] In the caliphate of Al-Maʾmūn (813-33) we hear of a governor who refused to transfer taxes from Sind to Baghdad, which led to his forced removal.[412] The changes of governorships become confusing at this time, reflecting succession struggles for the caliphal office in Khurāsān. Al-Maʾmūn sent one of his generals to fight the Jats in 820-1, but it is not clear whether this was in Sind or elsewhere.[413] Sindān, in southern Cutch, was subdued, and from there an expedition with a fleet of seventy ships was launched against the Mīds. In Al-Muʿtaṣim's caliphate (833-42) the Hindus regained control of Sindān, but left its mosque for the Muslims to assemble in and prey for the caliph. The expulsion of the Arabs from Sindān was concomitant with a weakening

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406 Houtsma, *Al-Yaʿqūbī*, II, pp. 448-9.
407 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 431.
408 *Ibid.*
409 *Ibid.*
410 Houtsma, *Al-Yaʿqūbī*, II, pp. 479-80.
411 *Ibid.*, pp. 480, 493-4; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 446.
412 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 432.
413 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 445-6.

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of Abbasid control of the frontier provinces and a tendency for governorships to become hereditary dynastic dominions throughout the caliphate. In Sind, ʿImrān ibn Mūsa was appointed as governor by his father at the latter's death in 836 A.D. and the appointment was only subsequently confirmed by the caliph.[414] ʿImrān ibn Mūsa made an expedition against the Qīqānite Jats, 'fighting and defeating them, and building a city which he called *Al-Baiḍā'*, where he established his army'.[415] Other expeditions followed, against an Arab chief at Qandabil, and against the *Mīds* again, when three thousand of them were killed and the 'highway of the Mīd' (*sakr al-mīd*) was built.[416] ʿImrān also summoned the Jats at Ar-Rūr 'and he sealed their hands (by branding), collecting the *jizīya* from them and ordering that each of them should bring a dog with him when he presented himself'. He then again raided the *Mīds* with the assistance of the chiefs of the Jats. 'He dug a canal from the sea, which he led into their fresh water until it became salty, and he then started to attack them'.

ʿImrān and his successor Harūn bin Muḥammad (whom we know from inscriptions at Debal, commemorating his building activities in the city) both lost their lives in the conflicts which arose between the Nizārite (or Hijāzite) and Yamānite settlers of Sind. The Hijāzis emerged powerfully under the leadership of ʿUmar bin Abdūl Azīz Ḥabbarī, who compelled the caliph Al-Mutawakkil (847-61) to accept him as de facto governor of Sind.[417] Ḥabbarī was a Hijāzi Arab by blood but his family had been settled in Sind for more than a century, and it was he who succeeded in making the governorship of Sind hereditary in his family after Al-Mutawakkil was murdered in 861 A.D. This happened in the same period when the Tūlūnids in Egypt and the Ṣaffārīds in Sīstān gained practical autonomy and the *Zanj* revolt occurred in southern Iraq. The Saffārids, having established themselves on the ruins of the Ṭāhirid governors (821-73) of Khurāsān and Transoxania, do not seem to have exercised control (like the Ṭāhirids themselves) in the valley of the Indus, except perhaps Yaʿqūb ibn Layth. Caliphal renunciation of political control in Sind is usually dated from 871 A.D., the year when Al-Muʿtamid, in order to divert the newly rising eastern-Iranian dynasty of the Ṣaffārids from Iraq, conferred on Yaʿqūb ibn Layth the government

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[414] *Ibid.*, p. 432.
[415] *Ibid.*
[416] *Ibid.*
[417] M.A. Ghafur, 'Fourteen Kufic Inscriptions of Banbhore, the Site of Debal', *Pakistan Archaeology*, 3 (1966), pp. 81-83.

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of Sind, Balkh and Tukhāristān in addition to that of Sīstān and Kirmān with which he had already been invested. The Ṣaffārids were replaced in about 900-1 by the Sāmānids of Khurāsān and Transoxania who incorporated Sīstān but probably had no effective power in Sind, even though, as later authors sometimes tell us, the Sāmānids made incursions into Sind.

Sind in the Abbasid period was gradually parcelled out among a number of Arab chieftains who were not appointed by the caliph and who are therefore called *mutaghalliba*, 'having seized power' – a term not found with reference to Umayyad times. Much of the military effort of the governors of Sind was directed at keeping some form of control over these chiefs who transferred no revenue but acknowledged the nominal authority of the caliphs and sent occasional gifts of rare Indian objects such as 'a cartload of four-armed idols' to Baghdad. We first hear about these Arab chiefs of Sind from Balādhurī, and in the tenth century they are again referred to by the geographers Ibn Hauqal and Al-Masʿūdī. It is clear that by the tenth century the power of the Abbasids and of the independent governors of Sind was completely taken over by local Arab or Muslim rulers, of which the two most important were the hereditary dynasties of Multān and Manṣūra – both of which boasted Qurayshite descent. Multān and Manṣūra, as Muslim frontier kingdoms, were formally independent of one another and both mentioned the Abbasid caliph in the Friday prayer. When these kingdoms originated is not certain but it may be speculated that they rose to independence upon the death of the Ṣaffārid ruler Yaʿqūb ibn Layth in 879 A.D., the beginning of a line of relatively weak successors in Sīstān. Other Arab principalities, similarly mentioning the Abbasid caliphs in their prayers, can be located to the west of the Indus valley, in Ṭūrān, Quṣdār and Qīqānān, in Makrān and Tiz, at Mashkī on the border of Kirmān.

Sind and Fatimid Egypt

The political history of Sind from perhaps 879 to 1025 A.D., i.e. from the death of Yaʿqūb ibn Layth to the conquest of Sind by Maḥmūd of Ghazna, concerns primarily the history of these Arab principalities. Sind, during this time, did remain the vital commercial hinge of the India trade of Islam that it had become in the eighth century. The history of the Muslim principalities in Sind and the history of the India trade are intertwined. This is especially evident when the Fatimid rulers of

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Egypt in the late tenth and early eleventh century attempted to deflect the trade from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. The chiefs of Sind now became subordinate to the Fatimid anti-caliphs of Cairo (Fusṭāṭ) and turned to the Ismāʿīlīya heterodoxy which the anti-caliphs espoused.

Even before the rise of the Fatimids, Sind had become a refuge for 'dissidents', 'freethinkers', 'atheists' (khawārij, zanādiqa, malāhida, etc.), and the *Ismāʿīlīs* were an organized Shīʿite Muslim sect in India as early as the latter part of the ninth century. In Sind and western India they retained their hold after they were suppressed elsewhere. A high proportion of the many Saiyid families in Sind still trace their origin to these early Shīʿite refugees, and the Saiyids of eastern India trace their first settlement to the Indus valley. As a major branch of the Shīʿa, the Ismāʿīlīya itself has numerous subdivisions, but all of these revert to *Ismāʿīl*, the son of the sixth Shīʿa Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣiddīq (d. 765) who predeceased his father but was himself named the seventh Imām, while the other Shīʿites reject Ismāʿīl and claim that his brother, Musa Kāẓim, was the true seventh Imām. Nothing at all is known about the Ismāʿīlīya movement before the mid-ninth century, when it appeared as a secret missionary organization, active in many parts of the Muslim world. And nothing definite is known about the doctrine of the pre-Fatimid Ismāʿīlīya movement of the second half of the ninth century; everything has to be deduced from the later Ismāʿīlīya literature or from anti-Ismāʿīlīya writings.[418] It thus appears to have adumbrated the later body of ideas but to have been modified in some respects. Fundamental was the distinction between the *ẓāhir*, 'exterior' or 'exoteric', and the *bāṭin*, 'inward' or 'esoteric', aspects of religion. The latter led to speculations that Ismāʿīlīya doctrine was indebted to the mystical philosophies of India and their ideas of metaphysical divinity in man. There is certainly affinity between the two – the Ismāʿīlī Khojas appear as a transition between Islam and Hinduism – but direct influence is not proven. The *bāṭin* portion of the Ismāʿīlīya doctrine relied heavily on the mystical significance of letters and numbers, constituting these into a gnostic system of cosmology and a cyclical hierohistory which acquired a Neoplatonic stamp in the early tenth century. The Ismāʿīlīs are sometimes identified with the Qarmaṭīs, after Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ, an Ismāʿīlīya propagandist of Kufa in the final quarter of the ninth century. Their opponents sometimes simply refer to them as *malāḥīda*,

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[418] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. Ismāʿīliyya; W. Ivanow, *A Guide to Ismaili Literature* (London, 1933).

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'heretics'. Or they are called the *Sabʿīya*, 'Seveners', in allusion to the heptadic pattern which they detect everywhere. Other general designations are that of *bāṭinīya*, 'esoterics', or *ahl-i-ta'wīl*, 'people who practice (allegorical) interpretation'. The Fātimid caliphs claimed to be descendants of Muhammad through his daughter *Fātima* and, as Ismāʿīlīs, became exponents of the doctrine which ascribes supernatural faculties to religio-political leaders.[419] During the reign of Al-Ḥākim (996-1021), the Ismāʿīlīs in Cairo began to proclaim the divinity of this Fatimid caliph. And because of the Fatimid claim to the imāmate, the early doctrine concerning the role of Muḥammad bin Ismāʿīl as the final imām and the restriction of the number of imāms to seven had to be modified. From Al-Ḥākim the spiritual leadership of the Ismāʿīlīs passed to Ḥamza bin ʿAlī who became the founder of the Druze religious doctrine. The Druzes obtained a permanent holding in the mountains of Syria. But the Druze religion subsequently transformed the basic ideas of Ismāʿīlism to such a degree that it is usually considered to be outside its range.

Until the mid-ninth century the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿīs* or 'missionaries' went about very secretly. In 899 an Ismāʿīlī leader established a state, with its centre at Bahrayn, which remained strong until 977. In the Yemen two missionaries, ʿAlī bin al-Faḍl and Ibn Ḥaushab, established themselves in the area of the Jabal Maswar, where they succeeded in gaining strong tribal support. In 883 the Yemenite chief *dāʿī* Ibn Ḥaushab Manṣūr al-Yaman sent *dāʿīs*, led by his nephew Al-Haytham, from Yemen to 'Sind and Hind'.[420] Their mission was very successful in Sind, especially in Multān, and here Al-Haytham was succeeded by other *dāʿīs*. Al-Hallāj, the famous mystic who was suspected to belong to the secret societies of the Qarmatians, may have been received in some of the *dār al-ḥijra* of the Qarmatians, in Kūfa, in Al-Aḥsā (Bahrayn), as well as in Multān, during his journeys in the period of 885 to 901 A.D.[421] It was in these secret societies that the Fatimid Ismāʿīlian state was prepared. Ibn Ḥaushab Manṣūr al-Yaman also sent a *dāʿī*, named Abū Allāh ash-Shīʿī to the Maghrib in 893, where he won the support of the Kutāma Berber tribe in western Algeria, which became the foundation of Fatimid rule in 910.

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[419] W. Ivanow, *Ismaili Traditions Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids* (Oxford, 1942).

[420] B. Lewis, 'Ismāʿīlī Notes', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. XII (1948), p. 597.

[421] L. Massignon, *La passion d'al-Hosayn ibn Mansour al-Hallaj, martyr mystique de l'Islam*, 3 vols (Paris, 1922), I, pp. 178-9.

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The Fatimids enlarged their power on the one hand by direct territorial expansion – the fourth caliph of the dynasty, Al-Muʿizz (953-75), moved into Egypt – and on the other by the *daʿwa* or 'mission', a characteristic institution of Ismāʿīlism, which undertook to work among the public but also strove to gain the adherence to the Fatimid cause of local rulers anywhere.[422] In the latter respect it was generally not very successful, except in Sind, where the mission, dating back to the early days of the Ismāʿīlī movement, succeeded in establishing an Ismāʿīlī principality under Fatimid sovereignty, a singular political success for which doctrinal and ritual concessions were gladly made. In Al-Muʿizz's time the *dāʿī* in charge of Sind deviated from normal Ismāʿīlī practice in that he tolerated new converts to keep many of the un-Islamic practices of their former religion and relaxed the rules for Muslims who became Ismāʿīlīs concerning dietary laws, and laws concerning forbidden degrees of marriage. But the sovereignty of Al-Muʿizz was openly proclaimed, and the khuṭba was read in his name, in a fortress which the Ismāʿīlīs made their capital and *dār al-hijra* and which is most probably the city of Multān itself. This happened at a time when some of the towns of Sind, including Multān, had given their allegiance to Shahi rulers rather than Baghdad. Later, in 983-4 the Fatimid caliph Al-ʿAzīz (975-96) sent a military expedition under his commander Julam bin Shaybān to Sind. Julam seized Multān, broke the idol and killed its priests, building a mosque on its site, while closing down the old Umayyad mosque.[423] The Sindi *daʿwa* at the same time began to adhere strictly to the tenets prescribed by the Imām. It is not clear how we have to picture the exact relation between the *dāʿī* and the proselyte king whose help brought about the Fatimid victory. Perhaps we have to envisage a form of dual government. Al-Muqaddasī, visiting Sind in 985 A.D., writes: 'In Multān the Khuṭba is read in the name of the Fatimid (caliph) and all decisions are taken according to his commands. Envoys and presents go regularly from Multān to Egypt. Its ruler is powerful and just'.[424] The anonymous *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* notes in the same period: 'The governor is a Qurayshite . . . (who) lives at a camp half a parasang from Multān and recites the khuṭba in the name of the Western One (*bar Maghribī*)'.[425]

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[422] Stern, 'Ismāʿīlī Propaganda'.
[423] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 116.
[424] De Goeje, *Al-Muqaddasī*, p. 485.
[425] V. Minorsky (transl.), *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* (London, 1937), p. 89.

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The extraordinary success of the Fatimid daʿwa in Sind appears to be related to developments in trade. The Fatimid conquest of Egypt and the translocation of the Mediterranean trade routes caused a great upsurge of traffic through the Red Sea, and Egypt's role in the India trade, which until 969 had been limited, correspondingly became of much greater importance.[426] Obviously, on one level, the Shīʿa-Sunnī rivalry between the Fatimid caliphs at Cairo and the Abbasid caliphs at Baghdad was an ideological translation of the commercial rivalry between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf as both began to compete more intensely for the India trade. Egyptian control was extended down the African and Arabian shores, including the Yemen, which linked the Fatimids to a maritime trading population with ancient connections in the Indian Ocean.[427] In Sind, Ismāʿīlī propaganda and trade developed side by side. At the height of Fatimid power, in the reign of Al-Mustanṣir, in the mid-eleventh century, when Baghdad was temporarily held in the Fatimid's name, the daʿwa was also quite active on the Gujarati coast. Fatimid influence and the power of Qarmatian groups spread along the alternative routes which were used by the Iraqis, in Bahrayn and Aḥwāz, threatening Abbasid Gulf emporia, and among the tribes of Kirmān, Makrān and Baluchistān.[427] At the same time, as we have seen, the Persian Gulf trade deteriorated rapidly due to internal factors, set off by the Turkish invasions.[428] The Ismāʿīlī principality in Multān lasted until its destruction by Mahmud of Ghazna. Julam's rule reached from the Upper Indus valley down to Ar-Rūr, neighbouring the Hindu Shahi dominion which he supported in the attempt to stop the pro-Abbasid and staunchly Sunnite Ghaznavids. After Julam's death in 986 or 990, Shaykh Ḥamīd Lodī, his successor at Multān and perhaps his son, again united with the Shahi prince to oppose Sabuktigin at Lamghān.[429] This happened at a time when at Multān not only the khuṭba was read in the name of the Fatimid caliph but the coinage was also minted on the Fatimid pattern.[430] Such coinage became widely used in the port towns of western India, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf

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[426] B. Lewis, 'The Fatimids and the route to India', *Revue de la Faculté des Sciences Économiques de l'Université d'Istanbul*, 11ème Année (Oct. 1949-Juillet 1950), no. 1-4, pp. 50-54.

[427] W. Madelung, 'Das Imamat in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre', *Der Islam*, vol. 38 (1961); M.J. De Goeje, *Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahrain et les Fatimides* (Leiden, 1886); De Goeje, *Ibn Ḥauqal*, p. 221.

[428] Cf. pp. 57-58.

[429] Briggs, *Ferishta*, I, pp. 9, 40-41, 50.

[430] Cf. p. 175.

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region, and in the tenth century it was known as the *Tawila* currency, from which derived the pure silver *Lāri*, the standard coin of coastal trade in the sixteenth century.

When Mahmud of Ghazna conquered Multān in 1010 A.D. there was still a Fatimid-backed ruler of Shaykh Ḥamīd Lodī's dynasty who sat on the throne, 'of dubious fidelity and detestable inclinations' as the Ghaznavid historian ʿUtbi says, a *malāḥīda* or *Ismāʿīlī* who at one stage had agreed to pay a tribute to Mahmud and 'to follow the true religion' but then again abandoned it. This act was tantamount to rebellion and provided Mahmud with an excuse 'to put most of the schismatics and heretics who were there to the sword'.[431] Muhammad al-Qāsim's mosque was reopened for Sunnī congregational prayers and the mosque built by Julam was left to decay.[432] The mosque became a barn-floor, but the Ismāʿīlīs of Upper Sind recovered after Mahmud of Ghazna's attack, and they remained in contact with communities in Egypt and Syria. Under the Ghaznavid sultan Masʿūd (1031-41), Daud's son and other Ismāʿīlīs even seized power again, after being instigated by the Syrian Durūz leader Muqtanaʿ – the same who assigned a supernatural status to the Fatimid caliph Al-Ḥākim – in an epistle of 1033 called the *Risālat al-Hind* to make public and practice openly the 'unitarian' creed.[433] The epistle is addressed to the 'unitarians' of Hind in general, and to Shaykh ibn Sūmar Rāja Bāl in particular, which seems to indicate that the Sūmra tribe had by now affiliated itself to the Ismāʿīlīs. It is possible that many new converts were made at this time, when Fatimid power was reaching its peak and ʿAlī bin Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥi, a Fatimid *dāʿī* and founder of the Ṣulayḥid dynasty in Masār in the Ḥarāz region, extended Fatimid power to its furthest limits in the Yemen, Arabia, Oman and Bahrayn, while also furthering new efforts at spreading Ismāʿīlism in India. Yemenite *dāʿīs* now founded a new Ismāʿīlī community in the area of Cambay, in Gujarat. This new community retained close links to the Yemenite daʿwa and became the nucleus of the modern Bohorā community. In Multān the revived Ismāʿīlī power was again suppressed in 1175 by Muhammad Ghuri; but even here they continued to flourish as a secret organization, gradually merging into the Sūfī school of Shaykh Zakarīya (d. 1262), the founder of the Suhrawardīya *silsila* in Multān. Others became Twelver Shī-

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[431] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 27.
[432] Cf. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 117.
[433] *BM: Arabic MS*, Add. 11.561, fol.36.

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ʿites.[434] They did not lose their grip on the overland and local trade of Multān. Then, Ismāʿīlī leaders of Multān had left the city after Mahmud of Ghazna's conquest in 1010 to take refuge in Manṣūra, Ar-Rūr, Uch and Bhakkar, and founded a new state in these regions with the aid of local Ismāʿīlī chiefs. The kingdom of Manṣūra at one time acknowledged the suzerainty of the Buyid Amir ʿAḍud ad-Daula (949-83) and until 985-6 at least was ruled by the Habbarī clan of Arab Qurayshites, who were Sunnīs. By 1025 the region had come under Ismāʿīlī domination. Mahmud, on his return from Somnath (1025), followed a route through Lower Sind and proceeded 'against Manṣūra, the ruler of which was an apostate Muslim'. It seems that this ruler too was a *Sūmra*. For a time Manṣūra was ruled by Ghaznavid governors and the Ismāʿīlīs seem to have drifted back to Multān.

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[434] S.A.A. Rizvi, *A Socio-Intellectual History of the Isnā 'Asharī Shī'Ts in India*, 2 vols (New Delhi, 1986), I, p. 146.

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CHAPTER V

THE MAHĀRĀJAS OF INDIA

INTRODUCTION

We now turn to early medieval India proper, i.e. to those parts of *al-Hind* which were beyond Sind and the Islamic frontier of conquest. At first sight this is not a very promising subject. A.L. Basham's widely read *The Wonder that was India*, for instance, tells us that: 'The history of the succeeding [7th to 11th] centuries is a rather drab story of endemic warfare between rival dynasties. It can be followed in some detail, thanks to the numerous inscriptions and copper-plate charters of the period, but the detail is monotonous and uninteresting to all but the specialist'.[1] The early medieval period is really an age which has fallen out of favour with historians, leaving aside a very few exceptions. Basham, like V.A. Smith before him in *The Early History of India*[2], and after him R.S. Sharma in *Indian Feudalism*[3] with an entire school of thought in his train, all follow, either implicitly or explicitly, Europeanist models of historiography and periodization. And the most basic Europeanist model which has been uncritically applied by them to India is the division in 'ancient', 'medieval' and 'modern' periods. This division is by no means outmoded. In Indian universities the history departments are usually still organized along these chronological lines. 'Ancient history' then deals with the period from the Mauryas or perhaps earlier up to the Guptas and the end of the 'golden age' of classical Indo-Aryan civilization (Basham's 'wonder'), with Harsha's Buddhist empire of the early seventh century usually pulling the final curtain. Then the lights go out, as it were, and we have to sit through the 'dark period' of early-medieval India, a period which begins with invasions from Central-Asia, of Hūṇas and other non-Aryan people, and the rise of the Rajputs (with Central Asian ancestry, it is vaguely suggested), then the advent of Islam, leading to the 'foreign' domination of the Muslims and culminating in the establishment of 'despotic' empires

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[1] First published 1954. Reprint New Delhi, 1987, p. 71.
[2] Oxford, 1924.
[3] Calcutta, 1965.

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which ultimately collapse due to 'exhaustion' in the eighteenth century. It is only then that the curtain lifts again, and we see the 'modern' period beginning with the acquisition of territorial dominion by the British and the first orientalist scholars who set out to uncover 'classical' India under the spell of the assumption that India and Europe were at one time two different manifestations of a single Indo-European mind. Thus a search began for our Indian ancestors, which was in fact a search for our own 'essence'; and this search for an Indo-European mind still blurs our understanding of the medieval age.

The problem of Europeanist periodization is particularly acute when we look at the age of transition between 'ancient' and 'medieval', the so-called 'early medieval' period in India, or the seventh to eleventh centuries. Of course, it is one thing to use the terms 'ancient' and 'medieval', and quite another to assume that we are dealing with 'parallel' developments of what happened in Europe. We have used the same terms in this book as purely neutral denominators of particular clusters of centuries, in the manner we use the A.D. chronology with reference to Indian (or Chinese) history. But this 'innocent' use of the concept of the 'Middle Ages' is not that of the Indianist historians who assume a congruence of the substance of events occurring in Europe and India in this period. Such a view is reiterated up to the present day in standard source books, as for instance by S. Digby in *The Cambridge Economic History of India*: 'There are striking parallels in the changes which took place in India in this period to the phenomena of social reorganization in the face of dwindling resources and decaying communications in western Europe in the same centuries. The northern Indian recession, though possibly not so severe, was equally prolonged. Global historical factors which appear to have contributed to the decline in prosperity of both areas include invasion by fresh waves of barbarian central Asian tribes; the closure of the silk-route through the Tarim basin and north-west India to the Arabian Sea; and the rise of Islam'.[4] J.F. Richards has also recently written, to the same effect: 'The general impression conveyed by research carried out by historians of the period is that of a ruralized society in which urban places were relatively unimportant. Instead the rural peasantry was tied to estates run by Hindu and Buddhist temples and monasteries, by royal officials and by local aristocrats settled on the land'.[5] These authors echo R.S. Sharma, whose *Indian Feu-*

[4] Vol. I (ed. by Raychaudhuri and Habib), pp. 45-46.
[5] 'Outflows of precious metals', p. 185.

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dalism has misguided virtually all historians of the period, not only because it is entirely written from the a priori assumption of the 'dark age', doggedly searching for point by point parallels with Europe, but also, more accidentally, because there has never been anything to challenge it. Following Sharma, historians have looked for an Indian parallel to European 'feudalism', a type of social organization characterized by general economic and cultural decline which in Europe was once explained, similarly, with reference to barbarian invasions and the rise of Islam. Sharma has repeated his views innumerable times – almost verbatim often, and hardly developing them.[6] They can be summarized as follows.

The Indian economy in the seventh to tenth centuries, according to Sharma, became almost exclusively rural or agrarian-oriented, with trade and urbanism suffering a distinct decline, internally, but also externally as the India trade fell off because the Byzantines stopped importing silk from India (having introduced the silkworm from China themselves), and because of 'the expansion of the Arabs under the banner of Islam'. Sharma says that this can be deduced from the absence of finds of Indian gold coins in these centuries and the apparent paucity of coins in general, even though texts refer to the abundant use of coined money and land charters speak of taxes in gold and there remains evidence of commercial activity on the coasts. Trade and commerce were 'feudalized', and India acquired 'a closed economy'. The major positive evidence from which Sharma claims to derive his thesis (apart from the negative evidence relating to the absence or paucity of coins) are charters of grants of land or villages to brahmans, temples 'and others' which appear in significant numbers in many parts of the subcontinent towards the end of the rule of the imperial Guptas. These charters are evidence of the agrarian reorientation of the age, and of the 'decentralization' or 'fragmentation' of political power – the parallel of European 'infeudation'. The origin and development of the Indian form of 'political feudalism' Sharma thus finds in 'land grants made to brahmanas'. In the 'feudal' economy the Indian village became

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[6] See *Indian Feudalism, c. 300-1200*; 'Problem of Transition from Ancient to Medieval in Indian History', *The Indian Historical Review*, vol. I, no. 1 (March, 1974); *Social Change in Early Medieval India* (Delhi, 1969); 'Coins and Problems of Early Indian Economic History', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, vol. XXXI (1969); 'Usury in Early Mediaeval and Ancient India (AD 400-1200)', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. VIII, no. 1 (1965); 'How Feudal was Indian Feudalism?', in: T.J. Byres and H. Mukhia (eds), *Feudalism and Non-European Societies* (London, 1985).

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'nearly self-contained' (with 'local needs locally satisfied') while at the same time 'a class of landlords' arose, with hierarchic control over land being created 'by large-scale subinfeudation, especially from the eighth century onwards', and with vassals and sub-vassals who had to supply troops to and fight for their lord. 'A class of subject peasantry', i.e. 'serfdom', with peasants being forcefully attached to the soil, also arose in many parts of India. There was even 'a significant link between the breakdown of slavery and enterprise of serfdom'. And finally, the process of 'feudalization' is accompanied by the formation of 'regional cultural units', the proliferation of castes, the beginnings of the development of regional and local languages ('the local element in language was strengthened by the insulation of these areas'), regional scripts too, and 'regional styles'in sculpture and construction of temples'. It is clear that Sharma, loyal to a 'materialist' explanation, feels that these latter tendencies are the cultural superstructure of the 'feudal' economy, the increasing insularity of India's economy which was not reversed before the eleventh century, when 'India witnessed an expansion of commercial activities'.

This should be enough to show that Sharma's thesis essentially involves an obstinate attempt to find 'elements' which fit a preconceived picture of what should have happened in India because it happened in Europe (or is alleged to have happened in Europe by Sharma and his school of historians whose knowledge of European history is rudimentary and completely outdated) or because of the antiquated Marxist scheme of a 'necessary' development of 'feudalism' out of 'slavery'. The methodological underpinnings of Sharma's work are in fact so thin that one wonders why, for so long, Sharma's colleagues have called his work 'pioneering'. It generated a spate of 'feudalism studies', elaborating Sharma's thesis, differing perhaps on minor points, as the case may be, and critical here and there of 'the inadequacy of the data', but remaining variations on a theme.[7] A few quotations from this body of

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[7] Cf. K.K. Gopal, *Feudalism in Northern India* (London, 1966); R. Coulborn, 'Feudalism, Brahmanism and the Intrusion of Islam upon Indian History', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 10, 3 (1968); L. Gopal, *The Economic Life of Northern India, A.D. 700-1200* (Delhi, 1965); B.N.S. Yadav, 'Immobility and Subjection of Indian Peasantry in Early Medieval Complex', *The Indian Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1974); B.P. Mazumdar, *Socio-Economic History of Northern India (1030-1194 A.D.)* (Calcutta, 1960); R.N. Nandi, 'Client, Ritual and Conflict in Early Brahmanical Order', *The Indian Historical Review*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1979-80); U. Thakur, 'Economic Data from the Early Coins of India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. XIV (1971); D. Desai, 'Art under Feudalism in India (c. A.D. 500-1300)', *The Indian His-*

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feudalism literature will suffice to give an impression of the general drift of the argument. D. Desai, writing about 'art under feudalism', notes an 'ossification of form and spirit' and thinks that 'the siddhis (achievements) of tantric acaryas (preceptors) were considered useful by kings and feudal chiefs in serving their two dominant interests, war and sex'.[8] G.C. Choudhary sums up: 'The political characteristic of our period is somewhat monotonous and stagnant . . . we actually fail to find out any notable changes or developments. Everywhere one may meet with the same conditions of suzerainty and vassalage; everywhere one can see the same despotism . . .'.[9] There are Muslim authors like K.A. Nizami who glorify the Turkish conquest of northern India and look back at what preceded it in the same terms: 'From the 8th century onwards India had lost all contact with the outside world and the Hindu society was "set in rigidity like a concrete structure". One great achievement of the Turkish conquest of northern India was the ending of this isolation and the establishment of the International status of India in the then-known world'.[10]

There are, as indicated before, a very few authors whose work effectively addresses the feudalism thesis in a critical manner, and we will mention and discuss these at appropriate places in the subchapters which follow.[11] Sharma, for one, appears to have been in no mood to take heed of criticism levelled at his work. Under the impact of the feudalism thesis the historiography of the period is still in utter disarray. A 'feudal' pattern is supposed to have unfolded itself in consequence of barbarian invasions and the decline of Roman and Byzantine trade, and, on top of all that, the rise of Islam which further isolated the subcontinent. These are the reverberations of the now obsolete but at one time extremely influential theses of Edward Gibbon and Henri Pirenne. In Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, antiquity ended in the fifth century and the Dark Age began in consequence of the invasions of Attila's Huns. In reaction to Gibbon, Pirenne held that the classical world was alive and well up to the seventh century. The bar-

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torical Review, I (1974); G.C. Choudhary, *Political History of Northern India from Jain Sources, c. 650 A.D. to 1300 A.D.* (Amritsar, 1963).

[8] Desai, 'Art under Feudalism', pp. 11, 15.

[9] Choudhary, *Political History*, p. 329.

[10] K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi, 1974), p. 84.

[11] Special attention may be drawn to the names of B.D. Chattopadhyaya and D.C. Sircar. Cf. also H.Kulke, 'Fragmentation and Segmentation Versus Integration', *Studies in History*, vol. IV, 2 (1982), pp. 237-63.

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barian invaders perpetuated Roman civilization. But then Islam came, and when the Arabs established their power in the Western Mediterranean and Spain, the unity of the Mediterranean – the Roman lake – was lost. The Merovingians were isolated in West Europe, and subsequently the Carolingians had to retreat inland, losing contact with Mediterranean life and world commerce, setting off the feudal age.

We have already seen that for Europe the expansion of Islam had implications which were the reverse of what Pirenne had said.[12] We have referred to authors who pointed at the 'economic Islamization of early medieval Europe'; for instance Maurice Lombard, Sture Bolin and the so-called New Archaeology confirm that the early medieval West could rebuild its exchange economy by trading contacts with the more advanced Muslim world. But the Gibbon and Pirenne theses still hold India in a desperate double clutch: here the barbarian invasions and the rise of Islam *compounded* are responsible for the onset of the Middle Ages and for 'feudalism'. The usefulness of this periodization, of the entire analogy with Europe, has never been seriously questioned. Instead controversy focused on the precise date at which the medieval period should be supposed to begin. Is it with the Hunas in the fifth century? Or with the conquest of Sind by the Arabs in the early eighth century? Or is it the middle of the eighth century? – the time of the Kashmir king Lalitāditya's 'world conquest' – which marks the 'definitive end of the "classic" civilization of India' and the 'inception of the Mediaeval civilization represented by the Pratihāras, Pālas, Rāshṭrakūṭas and Choḷas', as Hermann Goetz thought?[13] The question is truly insoluble.

Even greater difficulties arise when, as an alternative, the Ancient/Medieval/Modern tripartition is replaced by that of Hindu/Muslim/Colonial. Again, when does the Muslim period begin: in the eighth, eleventh or thirteenth century? Can we speak of a Muslim period in India at all, as Muslims were never a majority in India and many parts of the country were never Islamized? This and other tripartite divisions have been invented by colonial historians and they are 'colonialist' in the sense that they are predicated upon the idea that a new civilization can spread only where an old one has decayed: Islam coming to India, or Indonesia, when 'Hinduism' had become 'degenerate', and imperial rule was 'fragmented', but also British or Dutch rule being established when the Islamic empires had become 'decrepit'. It is no coincidence

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[12] Cf. p. 33ff.
[13] H. Goetz, 'Conquest', p. 8.

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that both the eighteenth and the seventh to eleventh centuries are presented to us as 'dark centuries'. Such periodizations are blatantly colonialist and, without an alternative in sight, J.C. Van Leur has proposed to abolish periodization altogether in order to avoid the idea that the transformations of economy and society in India and Indonesia are always effected from outside by a 'superior' civilization and because the ideas of progress and evolution from which this emanates are European categories of thought, inapplicable to Asia.[14] But the kind of 'autonomous' history which Van Leur advocated does not really have a historical dimension at all and presents us with a basically static picture. It does not solve the problem of periodization; it rather evades it, and almost takes us back to the Hegelian-Marxist notion of Oriental Despotism, the state which 'existed in space but not in time', with an equally immutable Asiatic Mode of Production to go with it. There are other attempts to take the sense out of the history of Asia, or India, but instead of enumerating these we may well ask, at this stage, whether we are on the right track. Is it worth it, or is it possible, to devise a periodization for India, another for Islam, yet another again for Europe, and still others for Indonesia, China, Central Asia, Africa?

Perhaps for certain limited purposes it is. But what seems certain is that, to get an overall picture of Indian history, it is essential not to isolate the Indian subcontinent but to study it in interaction with its wider world. To begin with, we should therefore not assume beforehand that there is no such interaction, because of a purely imagined Islamic barrier to trade in the early medieval period similar to the one we once thought caused the transition from Roman antiquity to feudal Europe. As an alternative to the periodization of Indian history as such, we can look at the early-medieval world as an interconnected whole in which the Muslim economy is at the pivot. The seventh to eleventh centuries should be treated as the period of the economic supremacy of Islam. Neighbouring areas in general, and not just Europe, are *ipso facto* 'economically Islamized'. It is only in this sense that India offers a parallel to Europe. And subsequently again, in the eleventh century, there are world-wide economic shifts which put an end to the economic supremacy of the Muslim Middle East: the rise of Europe, the Muslim conquest of Northern India, and the so-called 'economic miracle of Sung China'. Europe, India and China then take over the position of the Muslim Middle East.

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[14] *Indonesian Trade and Society.*

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There is, apart from being encompassed by the Islamic commercial hegemony, little further similarity between India and Europe in the early medieval period. The Arab authors of the ninth and tenth centuries emphasize the backwardness of Europe, but describe India as a land of great wealth and the 'king of kings of *al-Hind*', the Rashtrakuta or *Ballaharā* king in the Western Deccan, as the third or fourth greatest and most powerful king of the world. The caliph, of course, is put at the top of the list; of all kings he is 'the greatest and the richest, the most magnificent, the sovereign of the great religion which nothing surpasses'.[15] Then, in varying order, follow the 'king of China (*aṣ-Ṣīn*)', 'the king of the Turks' (with the title of 'Uyghurkhān'), 'the king of al-*Hind*' who is known as 'the king of the elephants' (*malik al-fīla*) and 'the king of wisdom' (*malik al-ḥikma*), and 'the king of Rūm (Byzantium)'.[16] Moreover, not only the suzerain Rashtrakuta king but many of the lesser kings of *al-Hind*, including the kings of Java, Pagan Burma and the Khmer kings of Cambodia, and particularly also the Gurjara-Pratiharas in North India, are invariably depicted by the Arabs as very powerful and as being equipped with vast armies of men, horses and often tens of thousands of elephants. They are also described as being in the possession of vast treasures of gold and silver.

These kings are known to have played a role in what is known as 'the restoration of brahmanism' in India, a general religious transformation which involved the decline and virtual disappearance of Buddhism and in which the Western Indological tradition was quick to detect the 'corruptions of priesthood'. Here the feudalism thesis links up with the philosophical obsession – which derives from German Idealism – with ancient India's role in the spiritual evolution of mankind. And here too, the transition from 'classical' to 'medieval' was seen as a cultural degeneration, which went downhill all the way. While Hegel and Schlegel set the pattern for the philosophical quest for India, we find more than half a century later Max Müller still trying to highlight the original, ancient, and essential features of the Indian religious-philosophical tradition against the later 'accretions' of an ascendant priestcraft and 'foreign' – Muslim, then British – rule. Max Müller thus dismissed not merely modern India but over a thousand years of Indian history as uninteresting. Even Max Weber kept to an ideal type of the ancient Indian tradition in very much the same vein. Medieval Hinduism, it was felt, was

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[15] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, pp. 11-12.
[16] *Ibid.*; Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, pp. 158-60.

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a corruption of an élitist, heroic Aryan spiritualism effected by the brahmanic hierocracy in response to the need to accommodate folk religion and plebeian orgiasticism.[17]

Let us make a preliminary attempt here to situate these developments in a broad social and economic context and see whether we can reformulate the issues involved. First of all, it is an entirely accurate conclusion that Buddhism largely disappeared from India – though not from Indianized Southeast Asia – in the early medieval period. The early expansion of the Buddhist religion had had an intimate connection with long-distance trade and markets; and it had arisen in the periphery of the Indianized world. The Buddhist religious establishments spread along trade routes and provided the 'horizontally' integrated infrastructure of extensive empires, such as those of the Mauryas and the Kushanas, incorporating ethnically diverse military and mercantile élites.[18] By its in-built potential for expansion and horizontal linkage, Buddhism was eminently suited to these sprawling imperial formations which organized themselves primarily around strategic urban centres and trade routes. In Southeast Asia and Central Asia, the spread of Buddhism was normally the first stage in the Indianization process. Buddhism also provided the ideological and cultural setting of the world of the maritime merchant. But in the centuries preceding the rise of Islam, Buddhism had started to decline in India – as, for instance a comparison of the travel accounts of the Chinese-Buddhist monks Fa-hien (399-414) and Hiuen Tsang (627-45) makes clear. Mihirakula, the great *Sveta Hūṇa* leader who died in Kashmir in 542 A.D. is recorded by Hiuen Tsang and Kalhaṇa to have been a great persecutor of Buddhists and to have issued an edict to destroy all Buddhist priests in India and 'overthrow the law of Buddha'.[19] The White Hun invasions, however, were not the end of Buddhism, not even in Northwest India. Much of the Buddhist recession from the North did not take place before the death of Harsha in 647 A.D. From that date up to the Turkish conquest we witness the disappearance of the religion in most of India. It found refuge for a time in Kashmir and in the Pāla-Sena domains in Bengal; in the latter regions it was finally swept away by the Turks at the end of the twelfth century. Buddhism seems to have flourished under the Rashtrakutas of

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[17] Cf. D. Rothermund, *The German Intellectual Quest for India* (New Delhi, 1986).

[18] R. Inden, 'The Ceremony of the Great Gift (Mahādāna): Structure and Historical Context in Indian Ritual and Society', in: M. Gaborieau and A. Thorner (eds), *Asie du Sud: Traditions et Changements* (Colloques Internationaux du C.N.R.S.) (Paris, 1979).

[19] Mirchandani, 'Sind and the White Huns', p. 66.

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Gujarat until the end of the ninth century. Jainism, the other trading religion of the time, also became geographically confined to Western India and the South but lost its hold over the major part of North India from the eighth century. But perhaps it is simplistic to speak of the disappearance of Buddhism for, more often than not, Buddhism assimilated with brahmanical Hinduism, for example through the elaboration of *tantric* practices. Especially under the guidance of Shaṇkarācarya, Hinduism incorporated many doctrinal and organizational features of latterday Buddhism. The Buddha himself was incorporated among the avatars of Vishnu.

What, then, should we make of the notorious 'brahmanical restoration'?[20] The brahmans had never disappeared and had continued to serve as ritualistic temple priests in the 'Buddhist age', but in a subaltern position. From the time of Ashoka up to about 300 A.D. inscriptions are rarely favourable to brahmans. Under the Guptas their position appears to ameliorate but not before the demise of that dynasty do we find brahmanical influence becoming predominant, and this is particularly so from the eighth and the ninth centuries, when the brahmans assume the role of *gurus*. The first great polemicist against the Buddhist heterodoxy was the brahman Mimamsa teacher Bhattacharya in the seventh century A.D. Shaṅkara, in the eighth or ninth century, proposed a monastic reform with the explicit intention to undermine the Buddhist and Jainistic order. There was a great upsurge of scholastic literature, digests on *dharma*, and speculative philosophy amongst which, apart from the works of Shankara, were those of Rāmānuja and Madhva. A central feature of early-medieval Hinduism were also the monumental temples – the first of their kind – which were built in stone, in great number, throughout the Indian subcontinent and its Indianized Hinterland, and in which the images and sculptures of Vishnu and Shiva were enshrined for worship. The brahmanical cults and rituals performed in these new temple establishments were typical expressions of the 'vertical' linkages which came to characterize rising regional kingdoms in the aftermath of the dissolution of the 'horizontal' organization of the empires of the Buddhist period. Along with image-worship and monumental temple-building, the new royal cult centred around gift-giving as

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[20] Cf. M. Weber, *The Religion of India* (New York and London, 1967), pp. 291-328; V.B. Mishra, *Religious Beliefs and Practices of North India during the Early Mediaeval Period* (Leiden, 1973); Inden, 'Ceremony of the Great Gift'; Inden, 'Imperial Formations, Imperial Purāṇas', in: *Texts and Knowledge in South Asia* (forthcoming).

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a means of acquiring religious merit, ritually proclaimed in the ceremony of the *mahādāna* or 'great gift' and *tulāpurusha*, the weighing of the king in gold, which was enacted as a potlatch-like event to the material benefit of the brahmans and other servants of the king. These and other royal rites replaced to a large degree the Vedic sacrifices from the eighth century onwards. Gifts bestowed on brahmans and temples also included numerous large and small grants of land. The cult of *tīrthas* or sacred places became important at the same time, together with sacred bathing, fasting, religious penances et cetera. And on a general level we see the emergence of devotional *bhakti* cults, linked to the brahmanical theistic conceptions, to the personalized manifestations of Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti, and even of the Jina and Buddhas, who were also worshipped in temples, with sects and sub-sects proliferating. The new religion found its literary expression in the *Purāṇas*, and in other sectarian works, the *Vaishṇava Saṃhitās*, *Shaiva Āgamas* and *Shākta Tantras*. As indicated, the *Purāṇic* literature has been interpreted as symptomatic of India's 'decline' in the early medieval period, due to a prejudicial reconstruction of the way these texts evolved. It was put forward that the Purāṇas, like the Epics, had originally been the preserve of the 'heroic' kshatriyas but that their historical content had become distorted by the accretion of all kinds of religious and mythological material which originated from an obscurantist priesthood. In other words, Purāṇic Hinduism was presented as the result of the mingling of an élite-Aryan, pantheistic spiritualism and a crude, 'popular', non-Aryan polytheism. Brahmanical literature was regarded as being infiltrated with tantric folk ecstasy, while the religiosity of the two major sects of Shaivites and Vaishnavites were also seen as sublimated orgiasticism or popular emotionalism. Shiva was worshipped in human and especially in phallic form; Shiva's *lingam* was installed in the temples throughout India, large and small, its sexual-orgiastic worship being patronized by the kings and their brahman priests but enacted in the villages as well. Vishnuism, by contrast, turned orgiasticism into devotion, *bhakti*; Vishnu was the 'preserver', a vegetarian deity which demanded a non-bloody cult, without the blatant sexual and fertility symbolism, but no less emotional.

What the present chapter proposes to do is, briefly, to show in what way these new religious expressions were concomitant with the growth in power of local and regional dynasties, settlement and agrarian expansion, the intensification of regional economies, which followed the 'Buddhist' phase of extensive and far-flung trading networks and loose

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imperial integration. As the inscriptional sources throughout India make clear it was the power of the kings which was decisive in the restoration of the new brahmanical order. Brahmanism, culminating in the cults of Shiva and Vishnu under the patronage of regionally entrenched kings, with huge stone temples clustering in newly arising regional capitals which accommodated peripatetic courts, and sedentarization and settlement of nomadic or mobile groups, accompanied by agricultural intensification – this was the 'vertical' pattern which, with its more solid forms, descended upon the open-ended world of the itinerant trader and Buddhist monk.

This is not to say that trade disappeared. To the contrary, the increasing density of regional economies was a function of India's increased role in world trade. Not only did expansion back up trade, but the proceeds of trade were reinvested in local production. The one reinforced the other. Internal trade also linked up with these developments, as we can see in the proliferation of numerous towns with a new functional embeddedness in the region. The same can be seen in the diversification of the trade items. In short, the successful expansion of regional economies provided new kings with the material impetus to take up relatively autonomous positions towards an 'imperial' centre which receded into a symbolic background, to found dynasties which were ennobled by the association with brahmans who also provided the ritual underpinnings. But this entire development is unthinkable without the new cosmopolitan religion of Islam superseding Buddhism at the same time that the 'brahmanical restoration' takes place. The main thing is that the Muslims, representing the hegemonic commercial civilization of the time, by organizing their 'diasporas' all along the production outlets of *al-Hind* take care of the external linkages of a world which went on to expand its productive basis through the primordial ties of ethnicity, caste and kinship. We might even say that, at this time, the Muslims and their middlemen of Jews, Parsis or Christians specialize in functions which are the complementary opposite of those of the 'Hindus' under the developing aegis of a brahman-and-king condominium. As we have also seen, the 'early medieval' pattern was already prepared in the Byzantine-Sasanid-(post)Gupta age. Islam merely accelerated a process which had set in before its rise. This is especially evident, of course, in some areas of the westcoast of the subcontinent, where the imposition of the brahmanical order brought about a social transformation with a profoundly anti-maritime bias, with transoceanic trade being almost entirely monopolized by the diaspora merchants originating from the Middle

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East – who however brought their India trade to an unprecedented height. But we can follow through these historical developments in the entire subcontinent and in insular and mainland Southeast Asia.

We shall first look now at the new kingdoms which arose in the subcontinent and explore how these relate to the expansion of the Islamic caliphate and other great changes 'outside' India in the same period. To see what goes on we merely have to take our sources seriously. The sources – both Sanskrit and Arabic – also provide us with a chronological perspective. Different Indian dynasties, it appears, rise to supremacy and claim hegemonic and 'imperial' power over the other dynasties in India in the succeeding centuries of the early medieval period. Such supreme power is more than 'ritual sovereignty'[21]; it is much less than centralized imperial control but it is related to relative wealth, and to political and military power, which in each case is derived from strategic alliances or support from or economic-commercial links with the great powers outside the subcontinent. It is not difficult to identify these successive hegemonic powers: it was the Kārkota dynasty of Kashmīr in the first half of the eighth century; then the Pālas of Bengal, briefly, in the second half of the eighth century; then the Rāshtrakūtas, for over 200 years, from the late eighth to the late tenth century; finally, in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, the Colas. The pattern by itself is clear. And as we will see, it can be explained by linking these kings to an external factor.

a. KASHMĪR

In the valley of Kashmir inscriptions on metal or stone are practically absent but, amply compensating for this lack, Kashmir has a Sanskrit chronicle tradition which is unique in Hindu India and reminiscent of the chronicles of the Muslim world or medieval Europe. The earliest extant and most important of these chronicles is the *Rājataraṇgiṇī* or

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[21] The idea that the early medieval state, at least in South India, is based on 'ritual sovereignty' is found in the work of B. Stein, to which we will return below. R. Inden regards the early medieval Indian kings in the same way but insists upon a hierarchical element as well – for which he offers no evidence, although it is obvious that there are smaller and bigger kings (cf. 'Hierarchies of kings in early medieval India', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, n.s. vol. 15, nos. 1 & 2 (1981)). Inden's model of early medieval Indian kingship comes close to Geertz's 'theatre state' and has the same drawback: overemphasis on the symbolic quality of the king and his court as an *icon*, 'a figuration of the sacred in itself sacred', and ritual, while neglecting the political and economic context (cf. C. Geertz, *Negara, The Theatre State in 19th Century Bali* (Princeton, 1980)).

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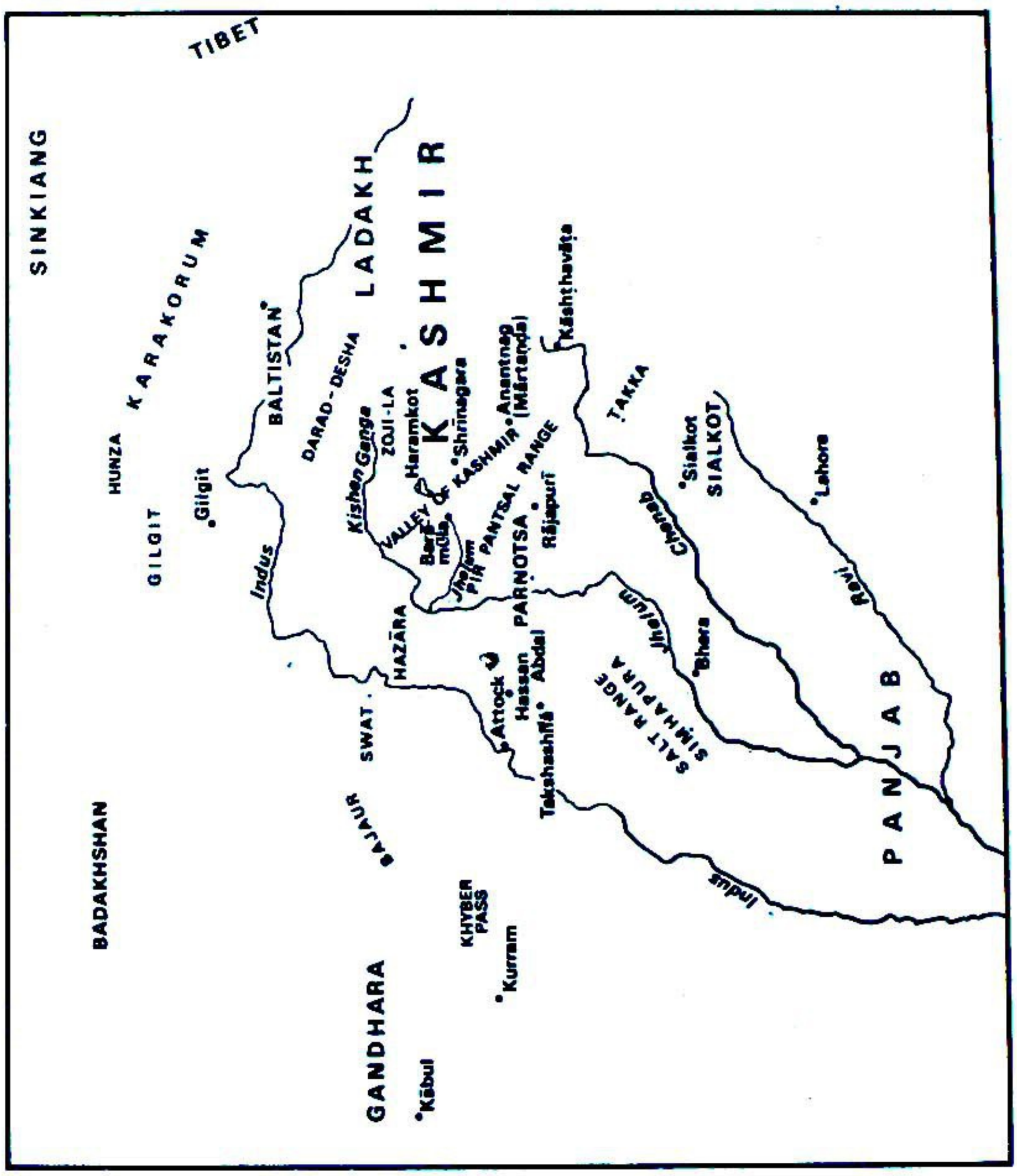

Kashmīr.

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'Stream of Kings', compiled by Kalhaṇa in about 1150 A.D.[22] A *kāvya* work in form and scope, the chronicle is not of the panegyrical court variety of the *caritas*, even though there is a consistent bias in favour of royal power as such. Kalhaṇa informs us that he consulted 'eleven works of earlier scholars containing the chronicles of the kings', besides the *Nīlamata Purāṇa* – the latter being the only work which survives.[23] What the *Rājataraṇgiṇī* offers is a narrative of the successive dynasties which ruled Kashmir from the earliest times; but up to the sixth-seventh century A.D. the chronicle does not give much more than a bare dynastic list of names and summaries of legendary traditions concerning individual kings. From the accession of the Kārkoṭa dynasty in the early seventh century Kalhaṇa's chronicle gradually becomes more historical and can be checked against the information given by Hiuen Tsang and a number of Chinese annals, while synchronisms can also be established with the Islamic historical literature. From this point in time the chronology of reigns seems to become reliable and the majority of royal names turns up on coins.

Similarly, it is from Kalhaṇa that we get a distinct idea of Kashmir's topography and of its physical and political boundaries. Kashmir proper, according to Kalhaṇa, was bounded by the Pīr Pantsāl Range in the south and south-west, a hilly and mountainous region inhabited by the Khashas (modern Khakkas) and parcelled out among semi-autonomous chiefdoms, of which the south-easternmost extension was at Kāshṭhavāṭa (modern Kishtwar).[24] Through the Pīr Pantsāl Range ran a number of passes linking the Panjab and the hill chiefdoms with the Kashmir valley. The thickly populated valley – according to tradition it contained 66,063 villages[25] – , surrounded by mountains on all sides, was divided in two parts, viz. the *Kramarājya* and the *Maḍararājya*, at the junction of which we find the capital *Shrīnagara* or *Adhishṭhāna*, 'the residence', Biruni's *Addisthān*,[26] the site of which did not change ever since the time of Hiuen Tsang. The division of the valley into an 'upper' and a 'lower' part (coinciding with the northern and southern regions), with the Kishen Ganga river in the middle, is reflected in the Arabic geographical literature. Idrisi, Dimashqi and Shariyar b. Buzurg how-

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[22] M.A. Stein (ed.), *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṇgiṇī* (Delhi, 1960); transl.: M.A. Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṇgiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmir*, 2 vols (Delhi, 1961).

[23] Ed. by K. De Vreese (Leiden, 1936).

[24] *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, VI. 202; VII. 590; VIII. 390, 468; transl., II, p. 431.

[25] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, transl., II, p. 438.

[26] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 207.

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ever also speak of 'inner' and 'outer' Kashmir to distinguish the valley (possibly with its southward extensions) from the mountainous parts of Kashmir to the north and east running into Tibet, China and Central Asia.[27] Biruni writes that 'Kashmir lies on a plateau surrounded by high inaccessible mountains. The south and east of the country belong to the Hindus, the west to various kings, the Bolar-Shāh and the Shugnān-Shāh, and the more remote parts up to the frontiers of Badakhshān, to the Wakhān-Shāh. The north and a part of the east belong to the Turks of the Khota and Tibet'.[28] 'Kashmīr', Biruni also writes, 'is the frontier of *al-Hind* from the north'.[29] In effect, there is evidence that in the seventh and eighth centuries the peoples, or at least the ruling groups, of the countries of Gilgit, Baltistan and Ladakh spoke Indo-Iranian dialects – the implication of which is that the zone of Indo-Iranian cultural and political dominion stretched from Kashmir into eastern Turkestan.[30] With the exception of parts of Gilgit, in these regions Tibetan is spoken today. In the eighth century the cultural influence of Tibet was not yet felt strongly in these countries to the north of Kashmir, although Tibet was politically very expansive at the time. The pass on the main commercial artery connecting the Kashmir valley with Tibet and China via Ladakh is generally known by its Ladākhī name of *Zojī-La*. Kalhaṇa refers to the Tibetans as *Bhauṭṭas* or *Bhuṭṭas* and it is probably the *Zojī La* pass which he calls the 'route of the *Bhuṭṭa* land' (*Bhuṭṭarāshṭrādhvan*).[31] Clearly, the Tibetans, or 'Turks' as Biruni calls them, had encroached further upon Kashmir by the eleventh century.[32] 'The river Sindh (Indus) rises in the mountains of Unang in the territory of the Turks. Their king is called Bhatta-Shah. Their towns are Gilgit, Aswira, and Shiltās, and their language is Turkish'.

Yet, the topographical situation of the Kashmir valley – the natural obstacles of the surrounding mountains – assured it some degree of immunity from foreign invasions. Kashmir – unlike Sind – always retained a distinctly local character and a certain cultural uniformity which ensured the effacement of many traces which early foreign occupation had left in the country. The Kashmiris moreover seem to have made the most of the natural strength of their country. 'They . . .

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[27] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 64, 99.
[28] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 206.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 208.
[30] L. Petech, *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh* (Calcutta, 1939), pp. 97-105.
[31] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, transl., II, p. 408.
[32] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 207.

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always take much care to keep a strong hold upon the entrances and roads leading into it'.[33] The best known of these entrances into Kashmir was the route starting from the town of Babrahān, half-way between the Indus and Jhelum rivers. From there the road went to a bridge at the point where the Kusnārī joined the Mahwī and both fell into the Jhelum. From this bridge it took five days to the beginning of the ravine out of which comes the Jhelum. At the other end of the ravine was the watchstation *Dvār* (Sanskrit for 'gate', 'entrance'), which was built on both sides of the Jhelum. Here the road left the ravine and entered the plain of the valley and two more days of travelling along the Jhelum were sufficient to reach the capital of Kashmir. The city of Shrinagara itself was still on the Jhelum, built along both banks which were connected by bridges and ferry-boats. The Jhelum rose in the mountains of Haramkot, where also the Ganges rises, 'cold, impenetrable regions where the snow never melts nor disappears' and behind which was *Mahāṣīn*, 'Great China'.[34] Commerce with Kashmir was always carefully regulated. Prior to the eleventh century foreigners, including Jews, appear to have been allowed into the country, but this was put to a stop. Biruni says that 'at present they do not allow any Hindu whom they do not know personally to enter, much less other people'.[35] Muslim merchants at that time did not venture beyond Rājapuri, a town which was not in the valley but in the foothills on the Panjab side.[36]

Geopolitically, then, the kingdom of Kashmir was not a likely candidate for all-India hegemony. But in the seventh and eighth centuries the political control of the Kashmir dynasty extended beyond the valley to the west and south. Hiuen Tsang attests that all adjacent territories to the west and south down to the plains were under the direct dominion of the king of Kashmir. Takshashilā, Urashā or Hazāra, Siṃhapura or the Salt Range, with the smaller hill-states of Rājapurī and Parṇotsa, were tributary to Kashmir. In the case of Takshashilā we know that this dependence was of recent date.[37] The power of Kashmir did not begin to expand before the accession of Durlabhavardana of the Kārkoṭa dynasty. In Hiuen Tsang's time a portion of modern West Panjab and of the North-West Frontier Province were under the dominion of Kashmir. The Sindian brahman king at about the same time fixed his bound-

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[33] *Ibid.*, I, p. 206.
[34] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 206-7.
[35] *Ibid.*, I, p. 206.
[36] *Ibid.*, I, p. 208.
[37] Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki*, I, pp. 136, 143, 147, 163.

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ary here. 'Chach . . . came to the borders of Kīh and Kashmīr . . . he reached the fort of Shakalhar, higher up the town of Kīh (or Kumba), which is said to be the boundary of Kashmīr, and where he stayed for a month . . . He imposed fixed compacts on the chiefs of those parts, and his dominion was securely established. He then ordered two young plants to be brought; one a *maysar* or white poplar, and the other a *devdār* or junipēr. He planted both of them on the boundary of Kashmir, upon the banks of a stream of the Panj Māhiyāt, which is close to the hills of Kashmīr, and has its origins in the springs of that mountainous region. He remained there until the branches of the two trees were intertwined with each other. Then he said farewell to the spot, declaring: "this is the boundary line between us and the Rāī of Kashmīr; let there be no passage beyond it"'.[38] When Muhammad al-Qasim is recorded to have marched 'through the confines of Kashmīr', it is this political extension of Kashmir in the Panjab which is meant.[39] Later in the first half of the eighth century the Kashmir king Lalitāditya directly controlled an even larger area: the whole of the Upper Indus or Northern Panjab and the Kabul valley and the Western Himalayas. In the Pratihara inscriptions Kashmir is at this time even equated with 'Sind'. But at about the mid-eighth century the Arab governor of Sind is reported 'to have entered *al-Hind* and conquered Kashmīr, obtaining many prisoners and slaves'.[40] This still refers to that part of the Panjab, to the north of Multan, which came into the possession of the Karkoṭas early in the eighth century and from which Lalitāditya undertook his campaign of 'world conquest' through India. After Lalitāditya's *digvijaya* – which did not lead to permanent annexations – the Karkoṭa dominion gradually shrunk, until it was again restricted to its original narrow limits, the Vitastā basin, east of Bārāmūla. Yet, in the ninth century it still extended into the submontane regions which adjoin Kashmir on the south.[41] The *Akhbār al-Hind wa-ṣ-Ṣīn* of 851 A.D. refers to the king of Kashmir as the *malik aṭ-Ṭāqā*, 'who has only a small domain'.[42] This was a king who lived in peace with his neighbours thanks to the small number of his troops, and who was on good terms especially with the Arabs and the Rashtrakuta king of the Deccan. The toponym *Tāqa* indicates, *hoc loco*, the entirety of Kashmir but it is actually the

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[38] Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 39.
[39] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 21.
[40] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 431.
[41] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, transl., I, p. 99.
[42] Sauvaget ed., p. 13.

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Ṭhakka-desha or *Ṭakka-viṣaya*, the country which extends between the upper course of the Chenab and the Ravi.

However far its political power extended into different directions from the capital of Shrīnagara, Kashmir, the northernmost extension of *al-Hind*, was Indian in its core. It was the classical land of the Veda, and of Mahayana Buddhism; and it almost looks as if the restoration of brahmanism began from the secluded valley of Kashmir.

Buddhist records and the copper coins of Kanishka and Huvishka which are found in great number in Kashmir testify that the country had been part of the dominion of the Kushanas. Kalhaṇa points at the popularity and power enjoyed by Buddhism in Kashmir under these 'Turushka' kings, and he records that the Buddhist teacher Nāgarjuna lived in Kashmir at that time.[43] The Buddhist pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited Kashmir in 631-3 A.D., says that the king himself was well-disposed towards Buddhists but that 'at the present time this kingdom is not much given to the faith, and the temples of the heretics are their sole thought'. Kalhaṇa still makes numerous references to images of the Buddha and displays thorough familiarity with Buddhist tradition and terminology. Royal families or private persons who founded Buddhist Stūpas and Vihāras appear to have endowed brahmanical establishments, shrines of Shiva and Vishnu, with equal zeal. Indeed, the Nīlamata Purāṇa, which is the earliest canonized authority for the brahmanical cult in Kashmir, prescribes the celebration of the Buddha's birthday in a great festival.[44] As Biruni noted, Kashmir became important as a place of Hindu pilgrimage after the destruction of the temple of Multān.[45]

By the eighth century however the brahmans of Kashmir were predominant in their role of religious specialists, scribes and administrative officials, so much so that Tibetan sources of that time refer to the land on their southern frontier as 'the country of the brahmans (*p'o-lo-men*)'.[46] Kalhaṇa describes the brahmans as 'resembling bulls without horns' and shows them to have had great power as kingmakers.[47] The same brahmans regularly staged fasts (*prāyopavesha*) to support their

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[43] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, transl., I, p. 76.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[45] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, II, p. 147.
[46] P. Pelliot, *Histoire Ancienne du Tibet* (Paris, 1961), p. 9; Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, V. 461.
[47] Stein, *Rājatanaṇgiṇī*, transl., I, pp. 16, 19.

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claims or to protest against the interference of the landholding class of *ḍāmaras*. The latter are, next to the brahmans, the most frequently mentioned category in the Rājataraṇgiṇī.[48] The term *ḍāmara*, as frequently as it occurs, has not been found in a similar sense of 'territorial magnates' outside of Kashmir, but neither Kalhaṇa nor any of his successors thought it necessary to define or explain its meaning. H. Kern, in a supplementary note of the St. Petersburg Dictionary, identified the *ḍāmara* as *Bojar*. It was used in the same generic way as the later Muslim term *zamīndār* (which became current from the fourteenth century onwards) to denote the land-based gentry, and in this sense the pandits of Kashmir still understood the word in the sixteenth century. Throughout the *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, their 'boorish habits' and boastful ostentatiousness when newly in power are an object of scorn. The *ḍāmaras* from the environs of the city 'are more like cultivators, though they carry arms'.[49] We are completely ignorant about the origin of these petty lords and about how, in interaction with royal power, they obtained titles to their lands. We do know however that the *ḍāmaras* as a collectively identifiable category of landholders date their rise to the early medieval period. Most of the *ḍāmaras* were probably originally recruited from the agriculturist population of Kashmir which bore the tribal name of *Lavanyas* (which continued to be used as a synonym for *ḍāmaras*).[50] In the chronicle the kings are enjoined not to leave with the cultivators more than is necessary for their subsistence and for the tillage of the land, for 'if they should keep more wealth, they would become in a single year very formidable *ḍāmaras*, and strong enough to neglect the commands of the king'. Nevertheless, the *ḍāmaras* obtained more and more power and soon began to give their daughters in marriage to members of the royal family.[51] In one passage Kalhaṇa is full of praise for the wife of a *ḍāmara* 'who followed him as a satī'.[52] This happened early in the twelfth century and Kalhaṇa makes a point of contrasting her conduct to 'the custom of *ḍāmara*-wives' generally, who 'yield up in widowhood their beautiful bodies from lust of money even to village officials, (common) householders, and the like'.[53] Such exceptional conduct is then attributed to the woman's noble descent. The fact

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[48] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 304-8 (Note G).
[49] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, VII. 709.
[50] Cf. *Ibid.*, VII. 1171.
[51] *Ibid.*, VIII. 459 ff; 2953.
[52] *Ibid.*, VIII. 2334 ff.
[53] *Ibid.*, VII. 2338.

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however that *ḍāmaras* married noble women is significant. For the eleventh to twelfth centuries were the time of the *ḍāmaras*' breakthrough in the political history of Kashmir. In the reign of king Harsha (1089-1101) a last attempt was made to curb the power of the *ḍāmaras* but it was counterproductive and henceforward we find the *ḍāmaras* completely overbearing. From the accession of the Lohara dynasty in 1003 A.D. the full development of the *ḍāmara* gentry power becomes visible. Royal troops are then regularly seen engaging in expeditions against various *ḍāmara* chiefs. The mainstay of these royal troops were evidently the 'Rājaputras' and other mercenaries from outside of Kashmir, whose 'bravery' Kalhaṇa contrasts with the conspicuous 'cowardice' of the *ḍāmaras* and the rest of the Kashmirian population.[54] The inhabitants of Kashmir were pedestrians who had no elephants or other riding animals. The noble among them rode in palanquins, called *katt*, which were carried on the shoulders of men.[55] Kalhaṇa emphasizes strongly the localized character of the power of the *ḍāmaras*. Their seats (*upaveshana*) were often strongholds, invariably in the fertile and cultivated parts of the valley. Ḍāmaras who accumulated wealth characteristically buried great quantities of money or precious metals in the soil. They 'harassed brahmans' and often interfered with their endowments. Kalhaṇa does not hesitate to call them 'robbers' (*dasyu*). Harsha's efforts to confiscate their excess wealth and suppress their power were ineffectual. Instead the struggle became more intense and the *ḍāmaras* took over all power except in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital. This happened in Kalhaṇa's lifetime, with the result that the entire chronicle reverberates with resentment against the overweening power and obtrusiveness of the *ḍāmaras*. For the same reason, far more than with foreign enemies, the chronicle is focused, in a Kauṭilyan matrix of thought, on the prevention or exploitation of internal rebellion, the 'rapacity' of the great and small in the kingdom who were ever ready to change their allegiance, shunning force, while their total lack of trustworthiness is taken for granted.

Obviously, it was not the *ḍāmaras* which made an imperial power of Kashmir in the eighth century, but soldiers of the Panjab, Afghanistan and Central Asia who were constituted into a heavily armed cavalry of the Sasanid-Chinese type. The accession of the first Kārkoṭa king, Durlabhavardhana, in the early seventh century, was the beginning of the

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[54] *Ibid*.., VIII. 1082 ff; 1047, 1148 ff.
[55] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 206.

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imperial stage in the history of Kashmir which first culminated in the formation of a Western empire, reaching into Central Asia, and then brought the Kārkoṭa dynasty to a brief all-India hegemony. The Kārkoṭa rulers superseded the Sveta Hūṇas and later Guptas in Kashmir. The 'White Huns' had subjected the Panjab by the end of the fifth century, together with wide areas of Afghanistan, Rajasthan and Kashmir. Mihirakula, one of their chiefs, possibly had his headquarters for some time at Sakala (Sialkot) in Madra or Ṭakka.[56] Kalhaṇa's chronicle reflects considerable dislocations and atrocities perpetrated by the White Huns, similar to those in Afghanistan and the Indian plains. In the sixth century Kashmir appears to have reverted for a short time to the overlordship of a later Gupta state, perhaps that of the Maukharis; Kalhaṇa's chronology is confused here.[57] The Kārkoṭa dynasty emerges from these obscure conditions in the way the Rāī and brahman kings arose in Sind: they were suddenly there and then expanded rapidly. Kashmir's growing power soon made it collide with the rulers along the Oxus, the Indus and the Ganges. The hill-states of Parṇotsa and Rājapurī were absorbed before 631. Further westward, a portion of Gandhara was wrested from the Shahis, and Kashmir's power was extended to Siṃhapura, the Salt Range, in the Panjab. The Shahis continued to be the major rivals in the west even though they acknowledged Kashmir's formal suzerainty. At this time the paramount king of North India was not yet the king of Kashmir but the Pushpabhūti king Harsha (606-47), who established Kanauj or Kanyakubja as the capital of Aryavarta, the part of India to the north of the Vindhyas, thereby challenging the Cālukyas who for about 150 years had been paramount kings of India while residing in the Western Deccan. Some of the Gurjara kings of the Panjab became tributary to Harsha but probably not the countries adjacent to Kashmir, Madra or Ṭakka, Vekaya or Siṃhapura. Certainly not the kingdom of Kashmir itself, which, to the contrary, was now beginning to evolve an imperial ambition of its own. Durlabhavardhana (c. 626/7-662/3), the founder of the Kārkoṭa dynasty, ritually declared his intention to establish an 'imperial' or 'universal' kingdom by having the *rājyabhisheka* ('royal consecration') ceremony performed with the waters of pilgrimage centres poured out of golden jars.[58] Durlabhavardhana however was compelled to cede a Buddhist relic to

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[56] U. Thakur, *The Hunas in India* (Varanasi, 1967).
[57] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, I. 287 ff; III. 102 ff.
[58] Inden, 'Imperial Formations, Imperial Purāṇas', p. 58.

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Harsha, in an act of political and religious humiliation which placed him in the position of a king who, although independent and striking his own coins, was confined in his activity and formal suzerainty to the periphery of Harsha's Buddhist empire.[59] Durlabhavardhana's son and successor Durlabhaka (662/3-712/3) was also formally independent and, like his father, struck his own coins. At the time of Harsha's death however, around 650, far-reaching political changes had occurred, not merely in India, but across Asia. The Tang emperors had expanded into Sinkiang, reducing the Shahi king of Kabul, as well as the ruler of Swat, to tributary status. Chinese power was felt in the kingdoms of Balkh and Tukharistan and Soghdiana, which sent presents to the Chinese court. Even Harsha is said to have been enfeoffed, before he died, by a Chinese ambassador. Around 650 also, the Arabs had conquered the Sasanid empire and were pushing on in Afghanistan, Makrān and Sind. The Tibetans, in the north, rose to imperial standing under Sron-brtsan-sgam-po (c. 608-50), the king who introduced Buddhism to Tibet and fashioned the Tibetan alphabet. Tibetan armies extended their control in the second half of the seventh century. By 670 they had cut off the Chinese from western Turkestan and Persia, after annexing the territories of Yang-t'ong, of the Tang-hiang and of various K'iang. In the east they reached the prefecturates of the Leang, Song, Mao, Souei and others; in the south they reached 'the country of the brahmans'; in the west they had conquered the 'four garrisons' of Kieoutseu (Kuchā), Chou-lö (Kashgar) and others; and in the north, they had reached the Tu-kueh (Turks). 'Since the Han and the Wei, never had the barbarians of the West enjoyed such prosperity'.[60] Southward, the Tibetan armies took command in 653 of the area around Mount Kailasa, called Zan-zun (Shangshung) or, in Sanskrit, *Suvarṇabhūmi*, 'the land of gold'.[61] In 678 the Tibetans penetrated to India. It may perhaps be inferred that the Tibetans descended into the Gangetic plain through the Kathmandu valley of Nepal (which was tributary to Tibet), and from Zan-zun, through Kumaon and Garhwal, along the Alaknanda and the Ganges, threatening Kanauj, the imperial capital of Aryavarta.[62] After 670, the rising power of a unified Tibet even threatened Chinese Szechuan and

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[59] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[60] Pelliot, *Tibet*, p. 9; R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (Stanford, 1972), pp. 56-64; T.V. Wylie, 'Some Political Factors in the Early History of Tibetan Buddhism', in: A.K. Narain, *Studies in the History of Buddhism* (Delhi, 1981).

[61] L. Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh, c. 950-1842 A.D.* (Rome, 1977), pp. 8-9.

[62] Inden, 'Imperial Formations, Imperial Purāṇas', pp. 62-63.

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the Thai. In a south-western direction the Tibetans did attempt to extend their conquests to the south of Kashgaria and to the north of Kashmir, but they did not occupy Kashmir itself. Instead Kashmir became an imperial power in its own right at the junction of Tibetan, Chinese and Arab power in the early eighth century.

When Durlabhaka was succeeded by his eldest son Candrāpīḍā in 712/13 the Chinese had again expelled the Tibetans from the oasis towns of the Tarim basin 'silk road' (this happened in 692) and were now facing the Arabs and the Turks. Qutayba bin Muslim had conquered Transoxania. Muhammad al-Qasim conquered Sind and Multān. It is about this time that Kashmir first appears to have been able to establish its formal supremacy over 'the kings of *Hind*'. This is, in effect, what the Ċhachnāma recorded. Dahir, the king of Sind, we read, threatened Muhammad al-Qasim to appeal for support against the Arab invaders from 'the king of Kashmīr who is the mighty possessor of a crown, kettle-drums and standards, on whose royal threshold the other kings of Hind have placed their heads, who sways the whole of Hind and even the country of Makrān and Tūrān, whose chains many grandees and lords have willingly placed on their knees . . .'[63] We know from the Annals of the Tang dynasty that in 713 A.D. *Chen-t'o-pi-li*, the king of Kashmir who is identified with Candrāpīḍā (711-20), applied to the Chinese emperor for aid against the Arabs who had now reached the Kashmir foothills. Generally in this phase of the Tang dynasty's rule (618-907), political, commercial and cultural contacts between China and India became much more frequent and intimate.[64] In 720 the emperor Hsüan Tsang (713-55) did not send aid but an envoy with an Imperial order to confirm Candrāpīḍā in his position of king of Kashmir. Three years later Candrāpīḍā's successor Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍā (*Mu-to-pi*) sent a monk in return to do homage at the Chinese court. The monk was accorded a dinner banquet in the inner palace, received 500 rolls of silk, and was then allowed to return to the 'vassal' state. In the same year the Imperial appointment of *Mu-to-pi* as tributary king of Kashmir followed suit. The letter of appointment recalls that the kings of Kashmir had shown allegiance 'for generations' and had sub-

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[63] 'malik-i-kashmīr wa ṣāḥib-i-chatr-o-naubat-o-ʿalam-o-rāyat, kah rāyān-i-hind sar bar āsitāna' daulat-i-o nihāda and, wa jamala' hind-o-sind dar taḥt farmān-i-o shuda, wa bilād-i-makrān-o-tūrān amr-i-o bar raqaba' khūd qilāda karda' (Daudpota, *Chachnāma*, p. 112).

[64] N.C. Sen, *Accounts of India and Kashmir in the Dynastic Histories of the T'ang Period* (Santiniketan, 1968).

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mitted to Chinese authority 'in spite of distance'. Another Kashmir embassy was sent to the Chinese court after the first Chinese expedition against Baltistān which was aimed at the expulsion of the Tibetans from that country, in or shortly after 736. The Tang annals report that this ambassador claimed for his master a number of victories over the Tibetans. In alliance with a king of Central India – *I-cha-fon-mo*, who is probably Yashovarman of Kanauj, a successor of Harsha – *Mu-to-pi* is said to have kept the Tibetans away from all great routes leading into the country. An auxiliary Chinese force of 200,000 men was requested by the king of Kashmir. This request was not acceded to, but Lalitāditya apparently did succeed in warding off another *Bhauṭṭa* invasion. The *Darad* tribes, who inhabited the mountain regions immediately north and north-west of Kashmir, also appear to have been subjected by Lalitāditya at this time.[65]

There is no doubt that Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍā did receive substantial material and military support from the Tang Chinese who, on their part, sought an ally against the Muslims on the western frontier of their empire and against the Tibetans who had encroached on Central Asia and in some decades overran Yunnan, Szechuan and Sinkiang. When Lalitāditya carved out his Western empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Panjab, between 720 and 730, Tibet was kept in check here by the Chinese while the Arab advance facilitated the absorption of the small neighbouring kingdoms of minor Gurjara and other semi-nomadic tribes in the Panjab (the Ṭakka kingdom around Lahore). This Western empire could only be conquered however after an organizational overhaul of the Kashmir army had been effected under Chinese guidance, which included the introduction of heavily armed cavalry of the Sasanid-Chinese type and new types of armour. Lalitāditya also recruited soldiers from the Western Central-Asian highlands, from Ṭukhāristān in the upper Oxus valley, from Darad-desha in the upper Kishen Ganga, and from the Panjab.[66] Only then the king of Kashmir set out on his *digvijaya*, the 'conquest of the world', by which he gave further substance to the position of 'king of kings of India' to which he first laid claim in about 713, and which took him to the imperial capital of Kanauj in 733, then around much of the subcontinent,to return to Kashmir in 747.[67] Paradoxically, Lalitāditya became the supreme lord

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[65] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, IV. 169.
[66] Goetz, 'Conquest', pp. 11-12.
[67] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, IV. 131-64.

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of India as a vassal of the Tang Chinese, and with the means provided by them.

Kalhaṇa then describes Lalitāditya's *digvijaya*, which took up most of the king's reign and which began with the campaign against Yashovarman, the ruler of Kanauj and his ally against the Tibetans, probably around 733 A.D. The campaign seems to have been brought off by an extension of Lalitāditya's dominion to the east, towards the Yamunā (Jamna), but Yashovarman joined the Kashmir king further around India. Jīvitagupta of Gauḍa (in eastern India) was subjected and also joined in the *digvijaya*. Lalitāditya advanced through Orissā to the Gulf of Bengal, then went to the Deccan and the Konkān – where his appearance seems to be related to the Rāshtrakūtas' rise against their overlords the Cālukyas – , then fought against the Pārasīkas in the South. After that, Lalitāditya returned to Kashmir through Gujarāt and Kāthiāwaḍ, Ujjain, Mewāṛ and Thānesar. This at least is how the Rājataraṇgiṇī describes the *digvijaya*. Aurel Stein, the editor of the chronicle, on account of the absence of historic details in the description, considered it 'manifestly legendary'.[68] According to Stein, only Lalitāditya's victory over Yashovarman and his conquests of Kanauj and Gauḍa are historical facts, as is the return to Kashmir. More recently however Hermann Goetz convincingly demonstrated that Kalhaṇa's entire account of the *digvijaya* is historically accurate as it refers to persons and circumstances which a later writer could not have invented, while new sources also prove the validity of Kalhaṇa's description of these exploits as they can be reconstructed in harmony with all known data.[69] Goetz, as we have mentioned (p. 224), concluded that Lalitāditya's conquest of Northern and Western India was the turning point in the transition from the 'classical' to the 'medieval' period.

It was a Tibetan invasion of Kashmir in 747 under the king Khri-Lde-gtsug-brtsan-'agtshoms (705-55) which forced Lalitāditya to return to the Himalayas. Lalitāditya successfully repelled the Tibetans, invaded the Tarim basin, crossed the Takla Makan desert and appears to have conquered the kingdoms of Kuchā and Turfān. Ṭukhāristān, comprising Badakhshan and the adjoining tracts on the Upper Oxus and inhabited by Turkish tribes, was also invaded. There are indications in the account of the Chinese pilgrim Ou-k'ong of close relations between Kashmir and the Turkish tribes. And, in Lalitāditya's reign, numerous

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[68] Trans., I, p. 90.
[69] Goetz, 'Conquest'.

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sacred places were founded in Kashmir by the royal family of the *Tu-kueh* (Turks).[70] Lalitāditya's army was annihilated however in Sinkiang in 756 or 757 and the king burned himself on a pyre with his ministers and generals – conform perhaps to Tibetan practice.[71] The imperial system of Kashmir fell apart in a few years after Lalitāditya's death. But up to 760 Kashmir's power in the Panjab appears to have remained strong enough to deflect Arab raiding to Kathiawar and beyond the Thar desert. In the second half of the eighth century Kashmir was ruled by the still powerful Jayāpīḍā. During the reign of his successor, Kashmir's power gradually declined, until it was restricted to its original limits. In India however the idea of an all-comprising empire survived and, as will be seen, the subsequent struggle for hegemony brought the Pālas of Bengal to the fore – again in intimate connection with the Tibetan power in and beyond the Himalayas.

The descriptions which we find in the Rājataraṇgiṇī of the various shrines, monuments and temples built by Lalitāditya and his court in a new complex at Parihāsapura, 20 kilometers north-west of Shrīnagara, and throughout the Kashmir valley, from Bāramula to Mārtaṇḍa, show that this king amassed great wealth, like no king in Kashmir after him.[72] As numismatic evidence demonstrates, the Kashmiri rulers of the eighth century vastly expanded the market for Kashmir's trade. Hoards of tens of thousands of alloy coins from Kashmir, of the mid-eighth century, were found in the Aunjhar fortress in the Banda district of Uttar Pradesh, and in Rajghat in Banaras.[73] Coinage was introduced in Kashmir before the Christian era. The earliest metallic currency in the valley, of which many specimens have been found, was probably that of the Indo-Greek and Scythian rulers.[74] When Kashmir was incorporated in the Kushana empire a bi-metallic currency of gold and copper was in

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[70] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, transl., I, p. 90.

[71] Cf. Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire*, p. 15, referring to Chinese reports according to which the 'sworn companions' of the ruler followed him in death. Abu Zayd however speaks of a similar custom among some of the kings of *al-Hind*, involving the suicide of more numerous 'companions' (*aṣḥāb*) (M. Reinaud, *Relation des Voyages faits par les Arabes et les Persans dans l'Inde et à la Chine dans la IXe siècle de l'ère chrétienne*, Tome I (Paris, 1895), Arabic text, p. 115).

[72] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, IV. 181-216.

[73] P. Dayal, 'Treasure Trove Find of 16.448 Electron Coins in Banda District', *Numismatic Supplement*, vol. XLI (1928); V.S. Agrawala, 'The Rajghat Hoards of Sri Pratapa Coins', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, X, pt. I (1908).

[74] S. Chandra Ray, 'Medium of Exchange in Ancient Kāśmira – A Reflection of Contemporary Economic Life', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, vol. XVIII, pt. 1 (1916).

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use. The former was made of Roman gold which at this time arrived by the overland trade-routes and which made Kashmir a chief emporium of long-distance trade. From the fifth century the *Kīdāra* or 'Little' Kushanas appear as the successors of the 'Great' Kushanas in Gandhara and the regions east of the Indus, including Kashmir. Trade had a smaller volume then; the coinage was of inferior quality and diminished in quantity. Yet, very large quantities of copper coin have been found in Kashmir of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., bearing the name of Toramāṇa, the Hephthalite king, the father of Mihirakula who ruled over the Panjab and probably over Kashmir as well.[75] These are the oldest representatives of the type of Kashmir coinage which was maintained throughout the Hindu period. Rare coins in gold and silver bearing the name of the early Kashmir king Pravarasena also show a close resemblance to the Toramāṇa coins as well as the *Kīdāra* Kushana coinage – a fact which may indicate a family relationship of these early Kashmir rulers with the ruling house of the 'Little' Kushanas. In any case, Kashmir is remarkable for having maintained the same coin-type throughout its pre-Islamic history. This type – with the standing king and the sitting goddess – was originally copied from the Indo-Scythian rulers and thus remained the same for more than twelve centuries. The Kashmir coins, as they have been found, are almost exclusively made of copper, or are alloy coins containing some percentage of gold (about 10%) and silver (about 13%). It is also remarkable that the addition of gold and silver to the copper coins was an innovation of the Kārkoṭa dynasty from the seventh century – reflecting as it does the growing trade in the early medieval period. From the time of Shankaravarman (883-902) up to the end of Hindu rule, with the exception of the reign of Harsha (1089-1101), Kashmir reverted to a pure copper coinage – and Kalhaṇa's list of kings is illustrated by an unbroken series of such coins, which apart from uniformity of type, have a great constancy in metal and weight. Hoards of these coins have been found as far afield as Takshashilā.[76]

Was the wide market for Kashmiri trade maintained, then, after the eighth century? The disappearance of gold and silver from the coinage does not seem to point in that direction. But this is merely negative evidence. There is no positive indication that trade came to a stop or

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[75] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, transl., I, pp. 82-83, 85.

[76] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 314-15; V.S. Agrawala, 'A Hoard of Kashmir Coins', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, XLII, pt.I (1949).

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that it diminished on account of the expansion of Islam or otherwise, either in the seventh or eighth centuries or later. To the contrary, metal art objects from Kashmir from the ninth century and later continue to be found as far away as in Scandinavia, where they arrived via the Islamic Middle East and the Caspian Sea.[77] Idrisi writes that in Kashmir there were places 'inhabited by people and merchants from all parts of the world'.[78] The Soghdians, many of whom were Nestorian Christians, also traded as far south as Kashmir and Ladakh in the eighth to tenth centuries.[79] The Jews and Muslims, as Biruni testified, were allowed into the country before the eleventh century.[80] The Rājataraṅgiṇī also illustrates that not only trade with the Islamic west but with the other Hindu kingdoms continued, as did other forms of intercourse such as pilgrimage.[81] King Ananta (1028-63) is mentioned to have been heavily indebted to an Indian merchant from outside of Kashmir who held 'the royal diadem and the throne in pawn' and who worked as an agent of the king of Malwa (Mālava).[82] Of the many traders of Kashmir who travelled to far-off regions in India we get to know a Jayyaka of Sālyapura who accumulated great wealth. 'After having the ground dug up for a krosha and a half, he filled it constantly with heaps of money (*dīnnāra*), and then had rice plentifully sown over it'. Later the king recovered these riches from the soil and they 'sufficed to relieve the king for his whole life from money troubles'.[83]

If such evidence of flourishing commerce appears to contradict the numismatic evidence which shows a reversion to copper coinage in the ninth century, we should not forget that trade and coinage are not necessarily related to each other. There were other means of payment. In Kashmir in particular, in spite of the absence of gold mines or alluvial gold in the country itself (there were sources of gold only in nearby Tibet, '*suvarṇabhūmi*'), there was an abundance of gold, especially in the eighth century, but in fact throughout our period. Whatever portion of that gold may have been used in ornamentation or (temporarily) put in the ground, there was much gold in circulation as bullion.[84] In the

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[77] Hodges and Whitehouse, *Muhammad*, p. 118.
[78] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 64.
[79] G. Uray, 'Tibet's Connections with Nestorianism and Manicheism in the 8th-10th Centuries', *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismus kunde*, 10 (1983).
[80] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 206.
[81] Stein, *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, VII. 485, 494-5, 897, 1007 ff; VIII. 1600, 1626, 2214.
[82] *Ibid.*, VII. 190-5.
[83] *Ibid.*, VII. 494-5, 499.
[84] Stein, *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, transl., II, pp. 317-18.

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trade with China and Tibet for instance gold bullion and cauries were used both. The extensive use of gold bullion in Kashmir is illustrated in the *Rājataraṇgiṇī*. 'The dying king (Yashaskara, 939-48) had left his palace with two and a half thousand gold pieces bound up in the hem of his dress. This his property was taken away from him by Parvagupta and other ministers, five (in all), while he was yet alive, and divided amongst themselves in his presence'.[85] King Ananta (1028-63) 'wisely abolished the royal privilege of marking the gold according to colour (quality), price, etc., which served to bring to light the savings of the people, knowing that succeeding kings would endeavour to seize through punishments and other means this accumulated wealth'.[86] King Nanata (d. 1081) and his consort 'both gave away their own weight in gold' in a *tulāpurusha* ceremony.[87] Seventy lacs of 'gold dīnārs' were obtained from the sale of a lingam made of a jewel by a Kashmiri queen after the cremation of Vijayeshvara in the second half of the eleventh century.[88] 'So much of gold and other valuables the (succeeding) king got out from the ground below the heaps of ashes, that its mere mention nowadays engages our curiosity'.[89] Another king, Sussala (1112-20) is reported to have sent to the castle of Lohara 'masses of gold, which resembled the *gold mountain* (Meru), after having made them into gold bricks (ingots)'.[90] Kalhaṇa invariably uses the term *dīnnāra* to describe the monetary value of commodities or salaries. In Sanskrit lexicography this word, more usually spelt as *dīnāra* (from Latin *denarius*), normally designates a gold coin. In Kalhaṇa's usage it is not clear whether it means 'coin' or 'money' as such, or refers to gold, silver or copper coin. The only gold coins which have come to light in Kashmir are those of Harsha, and all the earlier ones are copper or mixed metal. In the chronicle specific references to the use of gold and silver as minted currency are not entirely absent however.[91] Under Harsha, Kalhaṇa writes, 'the use of gold and silver money (*dīnnāra*) was plentiful in the country, but that of copper money rare'.[92] Yet, more copper (and brass) coins have been found of Harsha's reign than of any other Kashmir king, while the findings of gold and silver coinage of Harsha are almost unique.

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[85] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, VI. 102-3.
[86] *Ibid.*, VII. 211-12.
[87] *Ibid.*, VII. 407.
[88] *Ibid.*, VII. 414.
[89] *Ibid.*, VII. 416.
[90] *Ibid.*, VIII. 639.
[91] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, transl., II, pp. 315-17.
[92] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, VII. 950.

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Finally, Kashmir had a number of non-metal monetary means. Cauries were used, not merely in the China trade, but generally as an important medium of exchange, as they were in much of the rest of India. Paddy rice and other grains, *dhānya*, were also a regular means of exchange.[93] Bills of exchange (*huṇḍikā*) were in use in Kashmir from at least the tenth century.[94]

Apart from expanding Kashmir's market for trade goods, the eighth-century conquests brought in substantial treasure in the form of booty. The enormous wealth collected by Lalitāditya was often bestowed on temples and allowed him to become a great patron of art and architecture. 'The lord of the earth, who thus made the earth golden, surpassed Indra by his generosity, valour, and other great qualities'.[95] Golden, silver and copper idols and statues, treasure and jewelry were showered over the religious endowments. Some of the later rulers confiscated or imposed heavy taxes on these treasures, under various pretexts, to amplify their stocks of precious metals again. Especially Shankaravarman (883-902) and Harsha (1089-1101) were notorious iconoclasts.[96] Harsha, it is related by Kalhaṇa, came to the idea of replenishing his treasury by spoliation of sacred shrines through the accidental discovery of the treasures hoarded in a temple of king Bhīma Shāhi.[97] Few statues of gods in Kashmir escaped Harsha's iconoclasm. Divine images were confiscated after being systematically defiled by mendicants, then reconverted into treasure. Kalhaṇa, when giving an account of his confiscations, refers to the king with the epithet 'Turushka' – as if the latter had followed the Muslim example.[98]

Most of the great temples of Kashmir were built by Lalitāditya or his queens and ministers. As 'paramount' lord of India, Lalitāditya also had to erect the grandest temples of the subcontinent at that time. Such temples, which presupposed 'the conquest of the quarters', were those of Muktākeshava and Parihāsakeshava, built in the new capital around 740 A.D., and the *Mārtaṇḍa* temple, about ten kilometers from present-

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[93] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, transl., II, p. 313.

[94] The list of *huṇḍikās* in the Rājataraṇgiṇī opens with 'money-huṇḍikā' (*dīnnārahuṇḍikā*) and 'grain-huṇḍikā' (*dhānyahuṇḍikā*) (V. 266, 275, 302; transl., II, p. 313).

[95] Stein, *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, IV. 217.

[96] *Ibid.*, V. 165-81.

[97] *Ibid.*, VII. 1081 ff.

[98] *Ibid.*, VII. 1095, 1149.

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day Islamabad (Anantnag).[99] Most of these monuments, and all their precious statues and idols, were despoiled by later kings, especially by Shankaravarman and Harsha. The buildings that can still be identified by their extant ruins do seem to justify Lalitāditya's fame as a patron of architecture. It is also interesting that the number of Buddhist stūpas and vihāras by the side of the numerous Vishnu shrines built by him is not inconsiderable. Of the gifts of Lalitāditya, one colossal Buddha statue still existed at a vihāra in Parihāsapura in Kalhaṇa's time. But it is only the sun temple of *Mārtaṇḍa* – probably not the biggest of the temples built by Lalitāditya – which still stands intact, although it was damaged in the twelfth century and later again under the iconoclastic Sultan Sikandar.[100] From this temple the whole of the Kashmir valley can be viewed in the direction of the sun setting behind the Pīr Pantsāl. It is the first extant specimen of the Kashmir school of architecture which persisted for more than six centuries. But many of the temple's features are unique and have to be situated in the political and cultural context of north-western India in the eighth century. Blending Gandharan, Gupta, Chinese and even Syrian-Byzantine forms, the Mārtaṇḍa temple is the most expressive example of the cosmopolitan art of an empire which stretched from Central India to the borders of Persia and into Chinese Turkestan. While very little Kashmiri art of the preceding centuries survived it can be made out that the new style was not merely a revival of local forms or an adaptation of foreign influence but a genuinely synthetic achievement. A crude prototype of the same temple developed in the sixth and seventh centuries, and Lalitāditya's first monument – the stūpa of Cankuna at Parihāsapura – still shows the transition from this semi-barbarian towards a new and more polished style in which many variegated influences and techniques from neighbouring civilizations can be detected. Thus the stūpa of Cankuna is a further development of Gandhara models but already suggests the ideals of the Borobudur of Java, in the polygonal ground plan, the successive circumambulative terraces, the four flights of steps, the Nagas flanking them, the niches with Buddhas in yoga pose, and the drum of the stupa. The Mārtaṇḍa temple follows the late Gupta tradition of Northern India but the building types and architectural detail are taken from Gan-

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[99] Inden, 'Hierarchies of Kings', pp. 122-3.

[100] H. Goetz, 'The Sun Temple of Martand and the Art of Lalitaditya-Muktapida', and 'The Beginnings of Mediaeval Art in Kashmir', in: *Studies in the History and Art of Kashmir and the Indian Himalayas* (Wiesbaden, 1969).

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dhara art as well. An equally strong Byzantine influence was at work; the principal attraction of Byzantine architecture for Lalitāditya were the arches, vaults and domes of a size and strength which until then had been unknown in India. These elements penetrated together with the use of cement and dowels, Roman-Corinthian pilasters, engaged Roman-Doric pillars, Byzantine helical columns and imposts, Roman denticular cornices, big rectangular windows with heavy lintels of a Roman-Syrian type, Roman-Syrian and Coptic triangular gables filled with heads or flowers, the Roman system of superimposed figurial niches, box soffits, miniature arcades, et cetera. The use of cement and steel dowels with the above features of Greco-Roman architecture preceded Sasanid influences in Kashmiri art by a little over a century. The details of Roman-Byzantine character appear to be especially derived from the Syrian types of the fourth to sixth centuries (with a number of motives again reverting to Indian roots) and, although Gandhara art had become susceptible to Roman influence (next to Persian), the Kashmiri adoption of them cannot be purely a Gandharan influence. Lalitāditya, in his ambition to imitate the immense Roman-Byzantine vaulting system in his temples, possibly had recourse to Byzantine architects. These may have drifted to Kashmir after the Arab conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt in 634-8. The Arab conquest suspended Byzantine building activity and art, bringing unemployment to architects and artists until the later Umayyad period. In effect, the first Byzantine influences become visible in Kashmir some decades after the Arab conquest, in monuments which predate the Mārtaṇḍa temple. These early works were of quite modest dimensions. But then, with Lalitāditya's Indian expeditions, a grandiose building project along Byzantine lines became possible. The Mārtaṇḍa temple overwhelms us in the first place by its size. It is also striking that the *digvijaya* left its aesthetic imprint on the temple, apart from providing the means to have it executed. The Mārtaṇḍa temple has a façade of Roman-Corinthian half-pillars which however enclose trifoliated archways crowned by a set of high shikharas (points), an arrangement which is found in Buddhist manuscripts of the Pāla period and which was borrowed from Bengal when the king of Gauḍa became a subordinate ally of Lalitāditya. The temple of Mārtaṇḍa set a model for Hindu architecture in Kashmir for centuries to come but in the later temples the Roman element is completely absorbed.

North-western India (Sind, Afghanistan, Makran, Rajasthan) and also Kashmir showed many elements of a frontier zone between Indian civilization and Persia and Central Asia. When the Mārtaṇḍa temple

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was built, Kashmir had just emerged from a period of nomadic invasions. The Kashmir court, like other courts of early medieval North India, in consequence, preserved certain alien features from Persia. The most important of these was the cult of the sun. Four centres which became prominent in India for their sun temples and images of Surya were Multan, Modhera, Konarka and Mārtaṇḍa, of which only the first and the last existed in the eighth century, the other two being of later date. Mārtaṇḍa is therefore in one sense a temple of the frontier zone. But the sun was not the most important cult object in Lalitāditya's Kashmir. In fact the central cult which was to be performed in the great new temples was of equally recent origin as the architecture; and, appropriately, it was an 'imperial' cult, that of the *Pañcarātra Vaishṇavas*. The *Pāñcarātra* was to become the major order of Vaishnavas in India in the eighth to eleventh centuries, elaborating a peculiarly activist theology which enjoined an imperial 'king of kings' to perform a set of rites and practices in a temple which he had built after the 'conquest of the quarters', i.e. after having made himself the paramount king of India. The building of a *Pāñcarātra* temple itself was the first and most encompassing of the sequence of rites which was to lead the king to 'union with Vishnu'. In this way, the temple with its complex liturgy of image worship was designed to become, as Ronald Inden has shown, the capstone of the imperial formation of Lalitāditya.[101] *Pāñcarātra* ontology and ritual are enshrined in the *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, a text which is undated but on good grounds can be presumed to have been completed at the Kashmir court in the eighth century. Its composition was preceded by the *Nīlamata Purāṇa*, which is also of Kashmir (and one of Kalhaṇa's sources), completed probably at the court of Durlabhavardhana, the founder of the Kārkoṭa dynasty, and the first king to constitute, in accordance with the text of the Purāṇa, a state as a *Pāñcarātra* theophany and to build a temple at Shrinagara, dedicated to Vishnu, to give expression to his intention of establishing an imperial state. We have seen that Durlabhavardhana was still confined by the North-Indian king Harsha. The *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa* must have come near completion in the reign of Durlabhaka, who ruled from 662/63 to 712/13 and also completed a Vishnu temple. The dynasty then gathered strength, profiting from political shifts in neighbouring areas after the death of Harsha. During Candrapīḍā's reign, finally, from 712/13 to 720/21 circumstances were favourable for the disclosure of the *Pāñca-*

[101] Inden, 'Imperial Formations, Imperial Purāṇas'.

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atra text and for placing the king of Kashmir at the centre of the subcontinent. This king, as Inden suggests, is probably the historic recipient of the *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, the text inspiring him to 'world conquest', but since he ruled only for about nine years he could not complete his task. The same holds for his younger brother Tarapīḍā who reigned for about four years before being succeeded by Lalitāditya Muktapīḍā. It was therefore the latter who successfully completed the digvijaya and thereby became the first mahārāja of India to carry out the orders of Vishnu as issued in the *Vishṇudharmottara Purana*. This capital text contains the ideology of the first imperial formation of early medieva! India and represents a jump mutation in the evolution of royal ritual, as it requires a heavy and immovable infrastructure of temples characteristic of verticalized, sedentary dominions, which was completely alien to the Veda. The two Vedic communal sacrifices which were constitutive of kingship – the *rājasuya* or 'royal birth' and the *ashvamedha* or 'horse-sacrifice' – were now superseded. Earlier, the first of these Vedic rituals was meant to empower a king to conquer his neighbours and achieve the status of 'king of kings'. The second should enable such a king to rule successfully. The *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa* is the earliest and principal text to give replacements for these rites: the *rājyabhisheka* or 'royal consecration' (which could not do without elements of the Vedic *rājasuya*) and the *surāpratishthā*, 'the fixing of the divine abode' which replaced the *ashvamedha* (not without taking over some of the Vedic mantras) and represented a complex of rites by which the Vaishnava temple was established.

The imperial ambition did not die with Lalitāditya, not even in Kashmir. But none of his successors could successfully establish his hegemony over the other kings of India. A series of short-lived rulers followed Lalitāditya. His son Vajrāditya, who ruled from about 762, is reputed for having sold many men to the Arab *mlecchas* and to have introduced practices which 'befitted only them'. This was at the time that Hishām ibn ʾAmr at-Taghlibī, the governor of Sind, came to Kashmir to secure slaves. Vajrāditya's son Jayāpīḍa however had the same ambition as his grandfather and again set out 'for the conquest of the world', invading Bengal again.[102] Two later kings who set out for world conquest were Avantivarman (c. 855-83) and Shankaravarman (c. 883-902) but these soon collided with the Pratihāra king Bhoja. Shankaravarman's successor led a campaign against the Shāhi power at Udabhāṇḍa.

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[102] Stein, *Rājataraṇginī*, IV. 403 ff.

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But the downfall of the Shāhis, which occurred close to the southern borders of Kashmir, was due to the Turks. Princes of the Shāhi dynasty found refuge at the Kashmir court, where they were held in great esteem and enjoyed large subsidies until as late as the twelfth century.[103] Kalhaṇa does not fail to devote considerable attention to the vanished greatness of the Shāhi dynasty.[104]

After the completion of the *Rājataraṇgiṇī*, Hindu rule was maintained in Kashmir for nearly two centuries more. Islam entered by gradual conversion, not by conquest. A Muslim dynasty was founded in 1339. The greater part of the population adopted Islam during the latter half of the fourteenth century. Even then the revenue administration remained in the hands of brahmans, while the handbooks of administrative routine under the Sultans of Kashmir were drawn up in a Sanskrit jargon which was full of Persian and Arabic words and forms. The direct conquest of Kashmir by a Muslim invader did not occur before the sixteenth century. But that was a side-effect of the great movement which carried the last wave of conquerors under Babar into India. Akbar consolidated Mughal power in Kashmir in 1586. Conditions changed a great deal then. Between Kalhaṇa's time and Mughal annexation they were not all that different from what we find in the *Rājataraṇgiṇī*. Kashmir was not conquered by Mahmud of Ghazna in the eleventh century; the great wave of Turkish invasions stopped short at the mountain ramparts of Kashmir. According to Biruni, Mahmud's invasion was the reason 'why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Varanasi, and other places . . . Varanasi and Kashmir are the high schools of Hindu sciences'.[105]

b. The kingdom of Dharma (Pālas of Bengal)

The 'kingdom of Dharma' is the Arab appellation of the Pāla dominion in Eastern India, in reference to the name of the greatest king of the dynasty, Dharmapāla, who ruled over Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Nepal and Assam in the period c. 769-815 A.D. Dharmapāla also brought the imperial capital of Kanauj under his control and briefly established Pāla hegemony in all of Northern India after the death of Lalitāditya Muk-

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[103] *Ibid.*, VII. 144 ff.
[104] *Ibid.*, VII. 66-69.
[105] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 22, 173, and see pp. 135-6.

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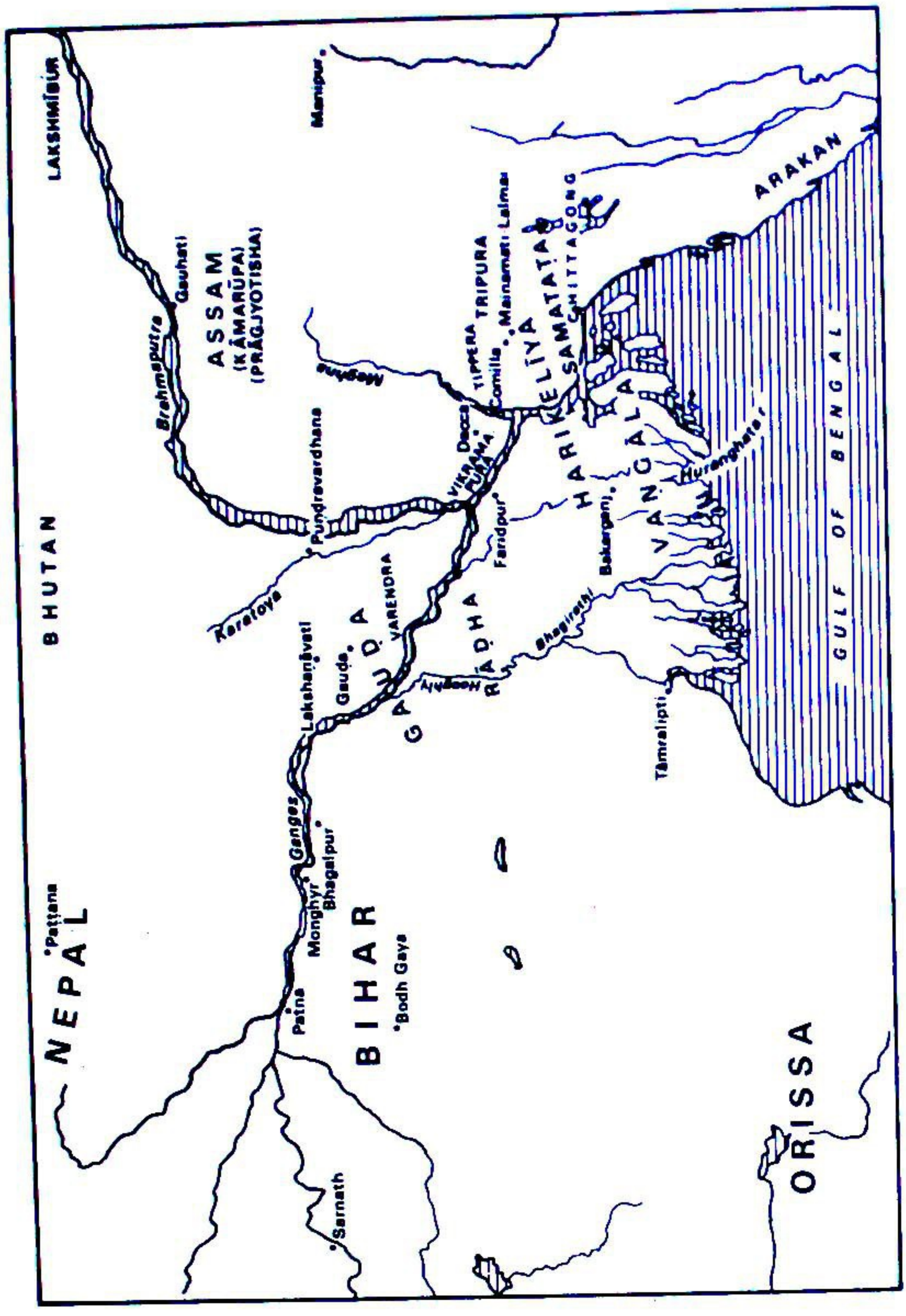

Bengal.

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tāpīḍā. There is no doubt that the rise of the Pālas in the eighth century is related to the same shifts of power – making themselves felt throughout Asia – which also brought the kings of Kashmir to the fore. The Arab advance into Sind and Transoxania, the Tang involvement on the Tarim plateau and in Central Asia and the concomitant rise of Tibet which propelled Kashmir on the Indian *digvijaya* thus also provided the political leverage for the ascendancy of Bengal. The Pālas appear to have been caught in a wedge between the Tibetans and the Arabs on the one hand and Kashmir allied with China against the Tibetans and the Arabs on the other. Up to the ninth century, events in sub-Himalayan and Eastern India and the broad pattern of political, economic and religious development remained intimately linked to the Tibetan power which was expanding southward, while from about the same time the Muslim maritime trading diaspora drew Eastern India and the Bay of Bengal into an important position in international commerce.

The Arab accounts unambiguously identify the 'kingdom of Dharma' as part of *al-Hind*.[106] But it is not possible to assign exact boundaries to the kingdom thus referred to by the Arabs; we are told that 'it extends over land and sea' and 'borders on *Kāmarūpa* (Assam) and *Lakshmībur* and its snowpeaked mountains'. The mention of cauris, rhinoceros and especially the superfine cotton fabrics which were produced in the country all point at a locality on the Bay of Bengal about Dacca and Arakan, places which held Arab mercantile settlements. The Arabs write about the 'kingdom of Dharma' but actually applied the name *dharma* to the dynasty, as a dynastic title of all kings who succeeded Dharmapāla. The Gulf of Bengal was known to the Arabs as the 'Sea of *Harkand*', which is perhaps a corruption of Sanskrit *Harikelīya*, a term which denotes East Bengal or, according to I-Tsing and Tan-Kang, the eastern limit of eastern India.[107] In the southern part of the Sea of Harkand the Arabs identify 'numerous islands' – the Andaman and Nicobar islands – , whose wealth was constituted by the cauris which their queen collected in her treasury and exported to the mainland to the north and east. If this further supports the conclusion that *Harkand* is East Bengal or *Harikelīya* it has to be located in one of the two main geographical divisions which the Sanskrit inscriptions refer to, *Vaṇga*, the region of which the rivers Hooghly and Brahmaputra were the western and eastern boundaries, with Varendra to the north of it, and the Bay of

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[106] Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 173; Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, pp. 3, 14, 35-36.
[107] P.L. Paul, *The Early History of Bengal*, 2 vols (Calcutta, 1939-40), II, p. IV.

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Bengal to the south. An etymological variation of *Vaṇga* was *Vaṇgāla*, which was then corrupted into *Baṇgāla* and later became the name of the much wider province of 'Bengal'.[108] As we will see in more depth, the south-east of Bengal on which the Arab nomenclature was largely fixed was, in the Pāla period, the vital zone for the maritime trade of the entire East-Indian economy. The alluvial plain of the Ganges-Brahmaputra which was properly called *Vaṇga* included not only Harikelīya but also the eastern hilly areas up to and beyond the Meghna river which was called *Samataṭa*, the 'low moist country on the seashore' in Hiuen Tsang's account of the seventh century. The name *Samataṭa* implies that it was a coastal country and probably should be identified as the Ganges Delta including the Sunderbans between the Huranghata river and Bakerganj. But the geographical description of the delta is hazardous due to the constant river changes. The Pālas were known to their contemporaries as *Vaṇga-patis*, 'lords of *Vaṇga*', but most of their earlier inscriptions were issued from *Gauḍa*. The latter is the second main geographical division of the Pāla-Sena dominion; it was a region which included two further subdivisions, *Rāḍha* and *Varendra*, the former of which roughly coincides with the modern Burdwan district and the latter with the modern Rājshahi division. The *Varendra* ('Barind') plateau on the north was a subdivision of the *Pauṇḍravardhana-Bhukti*, which stands for most of northern Bengal. It may also be taken as identical with Magadha, as in the early eighth century we hear of a 'king of Gauḍa' who is at the same time called *Magadhādhipa* and whose dominions extended from the limits of Vaṇga to the Vindhyas.[109] Kalhaṇa speaks of the 'dark-coloured' servants of the Gauḍa king whom Lalitāditya encountered, and of the city of Pauṇḍravardhana which was subject to the Gauḍa king, and of 'the chiefs of the five Gauḍas' (*pañca-gauḍ-ādhipān*) which were subjected by Lalitāditya's son Jayapīḍā.[110] Who these 'chiefs of the five Gauḍas' were we don't know. But archaeological excavations in the Mainamati-Lalmai hills near Comilla in *Samataṭa* show that this was one region which possessed its own independent or pseudo-independent dynasties from the seventh to at least the middle of the eleventh century.[111] These were the Buddhist *Khadgas*,

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[108] *Ibid.*, pp. III,V; R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *The History of Bengal*, vol. I (Dacca, 1963), pp. 12-46.

[109] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, pp. 276-7.

[110] Stein, *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, IV. 145-8, 323-30.

[111] F.A. Khan, *Mainamati: A Preliminary Report on the Recent Archaeological Excavations in East Pakistan* (Dacca, 1963), pp. 2-3, 7, 23.

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who ruled from the middle of the seventh century to the beginning of the eighth century, then the *Devas*, who in their turn were supplanted by the *Candras* in the beginning of the tenth century, also Buddhists. Then came the kshatriya dynasty of the *Varmans* in the middle of the eleventh century. There was also Orissa (*Oḍra*), with *Kaliṇga* (Northern Sarkars) and *Koshala* (Orissa Hill Tracts), which witnessed more than fifteen dynasties in this period, some of them ruling contemporaneously, and many of them issuing landgrants to a variety of officials, temples and brahmans.[112] Some of the Orissan kings, e.g. the Somavaṃshis from the mid-tenth century, or the Karas from the eighth to the eleventh century, were perhaps Buddhists, but, like the Pālas of Bengal and Bihar, they were also patrons of Vishnuism and Shaivism. At certain periods,perhaps throughout, the various kings of Orissa were at least nominally subordinate to the Pālas; it was never the other way around.

According to the *Svayambhū Purāṇa* the suzerainty of Dharmapāla extended as far north as the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal (Skt. *Nepāla*). Tibetan and Chinese sources however show that the Tibetans also exercised hegemony over Nepal, from the beginning of the seventh to almost the end of the ninth century.[113] The Nepali king Aṃshuvarman thus ceded a daughter to the Tibetan king Sron-brtsan sgam-po. Equally, the Nepali king Aramuḍi whom Jayapīḍā encountered in the second half of the eighth century, had a Tibetan name. Under Khri Lde sron brtsan (816-38), Tibetan power still embraced Nepal. The year 879 A.D. marks the beginning of the Nepali era and this appears to be the date of Nepal's emancipation from Tibetan overlordship. For about two centuries from the beginning of that era no epigraphic records exist of the kings who ruled the valley.[114] But from manuscripts which have been preserved from the eleventh century onwards it can be deduced that the period which coincided with the Tang dynasty in China, the rise of Tibet, and the Pāla dominion in Eastern India, was an important epoch in the economic transformation of Nepal. New cities were founded, such as Paṭṭana and Sanku, which superseded agrarian centres with small bazaars (*grāmas*), when regular commercial intercourse was established between the Indian plains and the Tibetan kingdom and China through Nepal. It seems possible that the Pālas in the lower Ganges

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[112] Cf. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, pp. 391-503; Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, pp. 274-86.

[113] S. Lévi, *Le Népal*, 3 vols (Paris, 1905), II, pp. 171-7.

[114] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, pp. 194-8.

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valley re-established some form of hegemony over Nepal in the early eleventh century; Sanskrit texts speak of *dvirājya* or 'dual rule' at this time, while Buddhism was moving north and consolidating itself in Nepal and Tibet from the Pāla domains (which included the sacred sites of Bodhgaya and Sarnath), and numerous manuscripts were transferred to Nepal by migrant scholars who had obtained copies under the Pāla kings.

Further to the east, in Assam (Skt. *Kāmarūpa* or *Prāgjyotisha*), the submontane kingdom which extended along the upper Brahmaputra, we meet with peoples with a Mongolian physiognomy, but the Arab geographers speak of the king of Assam ('*Qāmrūn*') as 'a king of *al-Hind*'.[115] The Indianization of the land beyond the Karatoya river had in fact advanced so far by the seventh century that a Chinese traveller could take its rulers for 'brahmans'.[116] Gupta influence may have penetrated into the valley of the Brahmaputra. Two dynasties which successively ruled Assam from c. 350-800 A.D. were of Mongoloid origin but adopted Indian culture and imported brahmans from the Pāla domains in Bengal. The invasion of Bengal and Bihar by the Kashmirian king Jayapīḍā appears to have been preceded by an invasion by the Kāmarūpa king Shrī Harsha, whom we find referred to in a Nepalese inscription as 'the ruler of Gauḍa, Oḍra, Kaliṇga, Kosala and other lands'.[117] Under Dharmapāla, apparently by a reversal of roles, the king of the Brahmaputra valley acknowledged Pāla hegemony. Whether a Pāla army actually crossed the Karatoya is not certain, but the Tibetan author Tārānātha says that Dharmapāla 'subdued Kāmarūpa'.[118] From c. 800-1100 A.D. two other dynasties ruled in Assam which traced their descent from a king of the *mleccha Cīnas* and *Kirātas*, Mongolian peoples to the north and east, but these also quickly and thoroughly assimilated Indian culture. These kings of Kāmarūpa became Shaivists, in whose capital 'the eating of flesh is only found in wild beasts'.[119] Throughout the period, Mongoloid penetration remained a recurrent feature of Assam, as it was of some of the districts of northern and eastern Bengal. Close contact was also maintained with the Pālas, but for most of the tenth century the latter had probably lost control of Gauḍa. New invasions of Mongoloid tribes then occurred in the Brah-

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[115] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 16.
[116] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 240.
[117] *Indian Antiquary*, vol. IX (1880), p. 179.
[118] E. Lyall, 'Tārānātha's Account of the Magadha Kings', *Indian Antiquary*, vol. IV (1875), p. 366.
[119] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, pp. 248-68.

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maputra valley from the north-east and some of these conquering tribes may have established their power to the west beyond the Karatoya.

The importance of Assam for the Pālas, as will be seen, was in the trade routes entering it from Burma and China as well as in the supply of precious metals which came from the region. 'The king of Assam (*Qāmrūn*)', Ibn Khurdadbhih writes, 'is a king of *al-Hind* . . . whose kingdom borders on China and abounds in gold'.[120] As early as the first century A.D., perhaps even earlier, there was a gold coin circulating in Bengal, the gold of which was brought through Tippera from the river-washings of Assam and Upper Burma.[121] The *Periplus* also refers to 'gold mines' in these regions. There is evidence of an abundance of gold coins in Kāmarūpa in the eleventh century.[122] Numerous idols of gold and silver, including one of exceptional size and weight, were found in Assam by the Turkish conquerors. There was silver production in eastern Burma and south-west China, and this silver passed westward to Bengal.[123] Kāmarūpa was the entry-point in the north-east, while Tripura/Sylhet in the east and Chittagong/Arakan in the south-east served as transfer-points. One route went from Yung Chang to Momien, crossing the Irrawaddy to Mogaung, then north through the Hukong valley, across passes in the Patkai Range, to the Upper Brahmaputra valley. A second route followed the Shweli river, crossed the Irrawaddy at Tagaung, then followed the Chindwin river to the north and crossed via the Imole pass to Manipur. Other passes led into Kāmarūpa through Bhutan and Nepal and through Tibet from the region of the Upper Yangtse-Mekong-Shalween rivers.

If Nepāl and Kāmarūpa had become incorporated in Sanskritic-brahmanical culture in a rather late stage (mostly in post-Gupta times), the same can be said about Bengal and Eastern India as a whole. Part of *al-Hind*, Bengal was, like Sind and to an extent Kashmir, at the margin of Indian civilization. The sources which describe the movement of the Vedic Aryans to the east of the Panjab scarcely refer to Bengal; and the people who came to inhabit the lower Ganges appear to have belonged to a different Aryan stock from those who composed the

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[120] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 16.

[121] S.K. Chakrabortty, 'The Gold Coins of Ancient Bengal', *Indian Culture*, vol. IV (1937-38), p. 222.

[122] Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, II, p. 15.

[123] J. Deyell, 'The China connection: Problems of silver supply in medieval Bengal', in: J.F. Richards (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, (Durham, 1983), pp. 216, 220.

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Vedic hymns, while in the east of Bengal, again, Mongolian features were common.[124] For a long time Bengal remained a land which was considered to be unfit for brahmanic settlement. Not before the Mauryas did Bengal acquire a clear political identity and did it begin to absorb the culture of Aryavarta under the impact of Buddhist and Jaina missionaries. Brahmanic immigration, as we know from inscriptions, followed much later, in the fifth to twelfth centuries, when brahmans were given landed endowments by royal mandate, first by the Guptas and their regional successors, then, with much greater frequency, by the Pāla dynasty. As a consequence, from Gupta times onwards, the *Asura* or 'demon' culture of Bengal began to give way to Vedic-Aryan forms of civilization but the predominently non-Aryan character of the population and the vigour of the social organization of these non-Aryan communities, in combination with the powerful presence of the two non-brahmanical religions of Buddhism and Jainism were factors which considerably weakened the brahmanical impact in Eastern India.[125] But even though the Sanskritization of aboriginal Bengal was not as thorough as in Aryavarta itself, Sanskrit and Indo-Aryan settlement did spread to the western part of the delta, bringing along iron and the long-term transformation of the social order of hunters, fishermen and shifting cultivators into a fiscalized and relatively hierarchic agrarian society based on plough and wet rice cultivation. West Bengal, to the end of our period and much later, remained far more intensively cultivated than East Bengal.[126] Under the Pālas the donations of uncultivated or jungle land became larger than those of previous rulers and began moving beyond the Varendra area where the earlier transfers tended to concentrate. The expansion of arable now clearly moved in an easterly direction, with large grants of jungle land and untilled waste being made in the eastern delta to Vaishnava and Shaiva establishments. As early as the seventh to ninth centuries brahmans played a pioneering role in the extension of agriculture in the forests of Bengal.[127] The Tippera copperplate of Lokanātha records a gift of land in the forest of *Suvvuṇga-vishaya*, a region which was outside the pale of human habitation, where there was

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[124] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 272; P. Niyogi, *Brahmanic Settlements in Different Subdivisions of Ancient Bengal* (Calcutta, 1967), pp. 3-4, 6, 43.

[125] N.K. Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, 2 vols (Calcutta, 1968-69), II, pp. 90-91; Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, II, pp. VII-VIII.

[126] R.M. Eaton, 'The Axe and the Plough: the Role of the *'Ulama* in Late Medieval Bengal' (Mimeo, May 1985).

[127] Niyogi, *Brahmanic Settlements*, pp. 13, 41.

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'no distinction between natural and artificial (*kṛt-akṛt-āviruddha*), infested by wild animals and poisonous reptiles, and covered with forest-outgrowths'.[128] Tribal groups like the Medas and Andhras continued to live as food-gatherers and hunters down to the time of the Pālas, who granted lands to them for the first time. Throughout this period however the concentration of people in the Bhagirathi-Hooghly region of West Bengal – then the main channel of the Ganges – was far higher than in the eastern delta. Fortified Pāla settlements are found in Monghyr, to the south of the Ganges, and adjoining parts of Bhagalpur, Gaya and Patna, as well as in various other places, with the easternmost being situated at Atichak near Colgang. Towns which we can identify include Gauḍa in North Bengal, the celebrated port of Tāmralipti (modern Tamlūk) in Middle Bengal, situated on a bay of the Rūpnārāyan, nineteen km above a junction with the Hooghly. Jain sources claim *Lakshaṇāvatī* (Lakhnauti) to have been the capital town of Dharmapāla (although the city is generally thought to have been founded by the Senas – but perhaps it was renamed). Two political capitals from which copper plates were issued for all subregions of the delta were Vikramapūra and Dhāryagrāma, in the Dacca-Faridpur area.[129]

It is in the inscriptions of the Pālas that we find the first references to brahmans 'coming from Madhyadesha' (*Madhyadesha vinirgātāḥ*).[130] Immigrant brahmans from Madhyadesha, i.e. the 'Middle Country', the brahmanical core land of Aryavarta in and around Kanauj, enjoyed the highest prestige in Bengal, and by inviting these brahmans to settle in their dominion the Pālas gave momentum to the Hinduization of native society. Clearly, the Pālas and Varmans succeeded in building a new ritual and economic infrastructure by systematically sponsoring the 'colonization' by brahmans. While many immigrant brahmans arrived from Madhyadesha, or Pañcaladesha (Uttar Pradesh), or Lāṭa (Southern Gujarat), often attaining high office in the polity but retaining connections with their places of origin, there were

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[128] *Epigraphia Indica*, XV (1922), p. 301 ff.

[129] Choudhary, *Jain Sources*, p. 54; Niyogi, *Brahmanic Settlements*, pp. 118, 135, 167.

[130] Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, II, pp. 31-39; S. Bhattacharya, *Landschenkungen und Staatliche Entwicklung im Frühmittelalterlichen Bengalen (5. bis 13. Jh. n. Chr.)* (Wiesbaden, 1985), esp. pp. 1, 46, 78, 82; P.L. Paul, 'Brāhmaṇa Immigration in Bengal', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, III (1939), pp. 575-6; Niyogi, *Brahmanic Settlements*, pp. 44-51; H. Von Stietencron, 'The Advent of Viṣṇuism in Orissa: An Outline of its History according to Archaeological and Epigraphical Sources from the Gupta Period up to 1135 A.D.', in: A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathi (eds), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa* (New Delhi, 1968), p. 7.

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also many brahman recipients of land from Bengal itself and there was considerable migration of brahmans within Bengal. And brahmans from Madhyadesha and Bengal are seen moving on to Assam, Orissa and South India. In Orissa, brahman colonization began slightly later than in Bengal, occurring especially under certain brahman rulers such as the Tuṇgas and the Gaṇgas, who also introduced brahmans to the Telugu-speaking areas of their dominions.

But it is hazardous to date with any great precision the process of brahman immigration to Bengal and other parts of eastern India. The *Kulashāstras* or 'genealogical books' of the Bengal *ghaṭakas* (match-makers) are invariably propagandist and based on much later traditions and caste codes which greatly distort the actual sequence of events.[131] Often this type of literature associated all immigrants with a king *Ādi-shūra*, in 1032 A.D., representing them as the ancestors of the Kulīna brahmans who are considered superior in rank to the indigenous castes by virtue of their good conduct. Just the same, it is also held that the major part of the brahmanization of Bengal took place not under the Pālas but under their successors the Senas.[132] In effect, the references to Madhyadesha brahmans in the Sena inscriptions are more frequent even than in those of the Pālas. The Senas also no longer patronized Buddhism; Buddhist institutions disappeared under their rule, and when towards the end of the twelfth century the Muslim conquerors appeared the only dynasty which still adhered to the Buddhist religion in north-eastern India was a minor one in Bodhgaya.[133] Moreover, brahmans at this time had begun to flee the 'Middle Country' due to the same Muslim invasions. Brahmanical orthodoxy thus finally shifted to Bengal at a time when it was being compromised in Madhyadesha itself.

The history of the Bengal delta in the pre-Muslim era has to be reconstructed from a corpus of inscriptions on seventy-one copper plates and one engraved stone slab, which are records of property transfers from the fifth century onwards.[134] In Bengal copper plates were issued until as late as the thirteenth century, while in an area like Nepāl, which was

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[131] Cf. R. Inden, *Marriage and Rank in Bengali Culture: A History of Caste and Clan in Middle Period Bengal* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), esp. pp. 50-82; Paul, 'Brāhmaṇa Immigration'.

[132] Dutt, *Caste in India*, II, pp. 24-26.

[133] Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, p. 3.

[134] B.M. Morrison, *Political Centers and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal* (Tucson, 1970), pp. 1-3.

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never conquered by the Muslims, copper plates are also found of the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries. We are further dependent on the accounts of the Arab geographers and the 'History of Buddhism' by the early seventeenth-century Tibetan scholar Tārānātha, which excels in historical description, and can be classified on this score with Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṇgiṇī* and the Muslim chronicles.[135] By comparison the specifically historical references in surviving Buddhist religious texts or in the Purāṇic or legal texts and in court poetry are few, and there is almost no archaeological record of the period before the Muslim conquest of Bengal. Under the Pālas, Candras and Senas a distinctive regional school of sculpture developed and a distinctive *gauḍīrīti* literary style.[136] Massive architectural works were undertaken but only a few of these structures, mostly of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, are left. The others have often perished without a trace but the magnificence and special features of many of the temples is alluded to in the inscriptions and literature. They include the temples of the Buddha of Puṇḍravardhana and Rāḍhā, of Tārā in Varendra, and of Lokanātha in Samataṭa, Varendra, Rāḍhā, Nālendra and Daṇḍabhukti.

The practice of recording religious gifts in copper dates from the fifth century and may be related to the supply of copper from the mines of Chota Nagpur.[137] We learn from them that the Guptas ruled over Bengal up to the sixth century, after the Hephthalite invasions. Throughout the fifth and sixth centuries, apparently, the delta was integrated with the middle and upper Gangetic plain and administered by Gupta rulers and officials. In the late sixth century a second phase in the history of Bengal began which lasted up to the mid-eighth century. In the Gangetic valley all power then passed to a succession of local rulers or former governors of the Guptas. We know that in the first half of the seventh century a Shaiva king Shashāṇka played an important role in north-eastern India. The Ganjām plate of 619 A.D. records the power of Shashāṇka over Gauḍa and Orissa – which makes the king a precursor of the Pālas. According to a Chinese source, Harsha of Kanauj assumed the title of 'king of Magadha' in 641 A.D. But Bengal and Bihar remained at this time under the rule of a number of independent or semi-

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[135] W.L. Heeley, 'Extracts from Tārānātha's History of Buddhism in India', *Indian Antiquary*, vol. IV (1875), pp. 101-4; Lyall, 'Tārānātha's Account of the Magadha Kings', pp. 361-7.

[136] Cf. Morrison, *Early Bengal*, pp. 15-16; D.H.H. Ingalls, *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 32-33.

[137] Morrison, *Early Bengal*, pp. 19, 85, 90-91, 146-7.

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independent kings. After Harsha's death the Tibetans expanded southward, but the Chinese and Tibetan sources never state to what extent Bengal and Bihar were actually ruled directly by Tibet.[138] The Tang annals merely establish that in the first decade of the eighth century northeastern India threw off Tibetan suzerainty. Bengal was subsequently invaded several times: by the Shailas; by Yashovarman, king of Kanauj, who is recorded to have defeated the *Magadhādhipa*; by the Kashmir king Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍā, shortly after 736 A.D.; then by the Kāmarūpa king Shrī-Harsha; and, finally, by the Kashmir king Jayapīḍā who conquered 'the chiefs of the five Gauḍas' in 762-3. The Pālas emerged around 750 A.D. with the 'election' of Gopāla, a kshatriya according to Tāranātha and a fervent Buddhist, who brought to an end a long period of what retrospectively was called *mātsyanyāya*, 'rule of the fish', i.e. the big fish eating the small fish.[139]

The chronology of the early Pālas is confused however. Gopāla, the founder of the dynasty, was 'elected' and definitely not of royal blood but probably of a line of brahmans which transformed itself into kshatriyas. No mythical pedigree of the dynasty is found in its records; but they were also known as shudras at an early stage.[140] An Arabic source affirms that the Pāla was 'not a king of noble origin'.[141] The Pālas patronized Buddhism from the start, and their copper plates usually begin with an invocation to the Lord Buddha; but Buddhism flourished in their realm in an easy coexistence with Hindu *dharma*. In the reign of Gopāla's successor Dharmapāla (769-815) – the apogee of the dynasty's power – the development of Buddhism in Bengal had a powerful impact in neighbouring regions, in Tibet first of all, but equally in Burma and even in Java and Sumatra. The links with Tibet were all-important at this time. Tibetan accounts in general extol the Buddhist virtues of especially the first three Pāla rulers, Gopāla, Dharmapāla and the latter's son Devapāla (816-50). It is from the Tibetan historian Tārānātha that we get confirmation of Gopāla's election, and of the consolidation of his power in Magadha and his temple-building activi-

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[138] Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, I, p. 17; Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 47-95; R. Mukherji and S.K. Maity, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions* (Calcutta, 1967), pp. 9-11.

[139] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, pp. 273-8.

[140] *Indian Antiquary*, vol. IV (1875), pp. 365-6; Mukherji and Maity, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 11; J.C. Ghosh, 'Caste and Chronology of the Pāla Kings of Bengal', *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, IX (1933), pp. 477-90; B. Chakravarti, 'The Caste of the Pālas', *Indian Culture*, VI (1939-40), pp. 113-4.

[141] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. 13.

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ties. Tibetan tradition again informs us that Dharmapāla built the great Buddhist monastery of Vikramashilā on a hill nearby the bank of the Ganges which developed into a centre of Buddhist learning that was second only to that of Nālandā. The Tibetans also put forward claims of conquest and supremacy in the Indian plains during the reigns of the first three Pāla kings.[142] These claims are not explicitly confirmed by Indian sources; the latter do not refer to any military campaigns issuing from *Bhauṭṭarāshṭra* or to the exercise of political authority by a Tibetan king. Yet the events occurring in Bengal in the period of about 750-850 A.D. could not fail to be strongly shaped by Tibet. In particular, the alleged 'victories' of the Tibetan king Khri-sron-lde-brtsan (755-97) appear to be related to the political situation in Bengal and may well have played a role in placing a Buddhist ruler on the throne. Dharmapāla is specifically mentioned to have submitted to this Tibetan ruler or to his son. Equally, Dharmapāla occupied the throne of Nepal which, as we have seen, was also under the authority of Tibet in the seventh and eighth centuries. Under Ral-Pa-Can (817-36) Tibetan power is alleged to have extended from Mongolia down to the Ganges, and the Tibetan conquests of this period are probably related to the Pāla loss of power in and around Kanauj. A subsequent advance of the Tibetans up to the mouth of the Ganges would then account for the sudden collapse of Pāla power under Nārāyaṇapāla (843-97) as well as for the successes of the Pāla's rivals, the Gurjara-Pratīhāras, in much of Northern India. In the early tenth century, at last, we find the *Kāmbojas*, which are probably Tibetans too or a people of Yunnanese origin, taking over power from the Pālas in Northern Bengal (*Gauḍa*). This happened in the wake of Mongoloid invasions from the north-eastern frontier to beyond the Karatoya and a temporary Assamese conquest of Gauḍa and the withdrawal southward of the Gurjāras.

Whatever may be the exact details of the extension of Tibetan power in Bengal, it is clear that the Pāla rise to power was related to a context which far transcended north-eastern India proper. A matter of certitude is also the Pāla's alliance with Kashmir and with the Chinese against the Tibetans – and hence indirectly the Arabs – in the eighth century. We have already seen that Lalitāditya, after subjecting Yashovarman of Kanauj, entered Gauḍa and appears to have taken its ruler along on his further campaigns through Orissa, the Deccan and beyond. Another invasion of Bengal occurred under the Kashmir king Jayapīḍā. But it must

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[142] Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 124-6.

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have been soon afterwards that the imperial hegemony of Northern India shifted to the Pāla king. It was Dharmapāla who brought Kanauj under his control.[143] As we read in the Khalimpur grant, Dharmapāla, after extending his power in Northern India, replaced the ruler of Kanauj by a nominee of his own. The precise date of Dharmapāla's campaigns are not known. But at Kanauj the Pāla king proclaimed himself suzerain over the rulers of *Bhoja*, *Matsya*, *Madra*, *Kuru*, *Yadda*, *Yavana*, *Avantī*, *Gandhāra* and *Kīra*. This effectively means that Dharmapāla became the 'paramount lord of Northern India' (*uttarāpathasvāmin*). Bhoja and Matsya were in north-eastern Rajasthan (the Jaipur region); Madra was in the central Panjab; Kuru is Thānesar; Yādda refers to settlements of the Yādus in Siṃhapura (Panjab), Mathura or Dvārakā (Kāthiāwār); Yāvana is the western Panjab or the Muslim power in Sind; Avantī is Malwa; Gandhāra is the North-West Frontier Province; and Kīra is Kangra. The transfer of Kanauj itself was the decisive symbolic indication of the Pāla's acquisition of supreme power in Northern India. But the North-Indian supremacy of Dharmapāla, the result of campaigns that are not recorded, did not last long and was soon back in the hands of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras, who recuperated power some time before 814 A.D. Dharmapāla then began to seek closer ties with the Rāshtrakūtas of the Western Deccan in order to check the expansion of Gurjara power. The advance of the Rāshtrakūtas up to the Vindhyas however on its own account did much to reduce Pāla hegemony in the north.

Devapāla maintained Pāla hegemony in Northern India for some time and successfully kept the Gurjara-Pratīhāras at bay. He also fought a Pāṇḍyan king and there is the claim in one of the Monghyr copper plates that Devapāla's empire extended from the Himalayas in the north to Rameshvara in the south. His direct dominion, in the meantime, does not appear to have reached beyond Bengal and Bihar. Around the mid-ninth century, Ibn Khurdadbhih points no longer at the Pāla but at the Rāshtrakūta king, the *Ballaharā*, as the 'greatest king of *al-Hind*' and the 'king of kings' (*malik al-mulūk*).[144] The Pāla king still possessed 'fifty thousand elephants' then.[145] This is repeated by Masʿūdī, who adds that the Pāla king, although not the supreme lord of India, has

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[143] R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Age of Imperial Kanauj* (Bombay, 1984), pp. 46-47; idem, *History of Bengal*, I, inscriptions 1 and 2; *Indian Antiquary*, vol. XXXV (1906), p. 17; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, pp. 285-90.

[144] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 16.

[145] *Ibid.*.

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more men, elephants and horses than the Ballaharā, the prince of Ṭakka and the Gurjara – with all of whom he competed for power.[146] But the Rāshtrakūta alliance soon became a cornerstone of the Pāla political network and matrimonial links between the two dynasties were established, even though on occasion the Rāshtrakūtas undertook campaigns against the Pāla kings to underscore their suzerainty. As a great patron of Buddhism, Devapāla also received an envoy from the powerful Buddhist king of the Shailendra dynasty of Shrīvijaya in Sumatra, requesting him to grant five villages as a permanent endowment to a Buddhist monastery at Nālandā.[147] This probably reflects regular pilgrimage between the islands of Java and Sumatra and the mouths of the Ganges.

Later in the ninth century the Gurjaras moved up and took a large part of Bihar, including the Buddhist centre of Gaya. By the end of the century they had annexed the whole of northern Bengal, while the Rāshtrakūtas encroached from the south. Under Gopāla II (c. 911-35) there was a revival of Pāla power which lasted through the tenth century and brought back Gaya under Pāla control. But Gauḍa was completely lost to the Kāmbojas. Under Mahīpāla (c. 992-1040) several local dynasties in Bengal considerably reduced the extent of the Pāla dominion; in his reign the Coḷas are first heard of, undertaking an expedition to Bengal in between 1021 and 1025 A.D. in order to deflect the trade of the Bay of Bengal with Shrīvijaya and Southeast Asia to the Coromandel coast. Muslim writers of the twelfth century thought the Pālas too insignificant to be mentioned. By then they had been supplanted by the Karṇāṭa-kshatriyas of Rāḍha, i.e. the Deccani dynasty of the Senas, which had been in the Pāla's 'circle of allies' (*sāmanta-cakra*) and had risen to power with the aid of the Calukyas of Kalyana and in association with the *Karṇāṭakas* of Tirhut and Nepal.[148]

In the Pāla period, then, Bengal's marginal status was evident in the persistence of Buddhism – a mixture of Mahayana and Tantrism – but at the same time the very marginality of the Bengal kings facilitated their political and commercial linkage with the 'outside' world, which in its turn brought Dharmapāla to supremacy in the subcontinent. Kanauj was then incorporated in the Pāla domain and the eastward

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[146] Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 84.
[147] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XVII (1924), p. 316 ff.
[148] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, 1, pp. 302-64; Mukherji and Maity, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 21.

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migration of the brahmans of *Madhyadesha* gained momentum. The large majority of images and inscriptions testify that the Pālas patronized the brahmans and the worship of Shiva and Vishnu. The brahmanization of Bengal undermined Buddhism, in a prolonged process which reached its completion under the Senas. Like the Buddhist Pālas, the Candra, Varman and Kāmboja dynasties granted lands to brahmans but also patronized the Buddhist university of Nālandā and numerous Buddhist monasteries. The Pāla period generated a great mass of Buddhist literature and the strength of Buddhism continued to lay in its cloistered population, the monkhood of dozens of *vihāras*, great and small, which were found in many parts of Bengal.[149] Such vihāras had existed before the Pālas but many were added during their rule. About the state of Jainism in Bengal after the seventh century we know next to nothing; its disappearance or absorption by another religion is wrapped in total obscurity.

Little would probably have marked off the lay Buddhists from Hindus, but Bengal's prolonged frontier character remained evident, as in the case of South India, in the absence of a clearly defined *kshatriya* caste. In Bengal, the 'twice-born' were synonymous with the brahmans since the kshatriya and vaishya varnas were both missing. In the thirteenth century the *Bṛhad-dharma Purāṇa* still ranks the *Rājaputra* ('king's sons') caste of Bengal as *uttamasaṃkara*, a high mixed caste of *shūdra* status.[150] The Pāla, Sena and Varman kings and their descendants – who did make claims to kshatriyahood – almost imperceptibly merged with the Bengal caste of the 'Kāyasthas', which also ranked as shudras. Abul Fazl, for instance, describes these kings as Kāyastha. Bengal, in effect, became the land of the Kāyasthas, having been ruled by Kāyasthas 'for about 2000 years'. Sanskrit sources such as the *Rājataraṇgiṇī* however do not yet regard the Kāyasthas as a caste in any sense but as a category of 'officials' or 'scribes'. Between the fifth or sixth centuries (when we first hear of them) and the eleventh-twelfth centuries, its component elements were putative kshatriyas and, for the larger majority, brahmans, who either retained their caste identity or became Buddhists while laying down the sacred thread. The Kāyasthas obtained the aspect of a caste perhaps under the Senas.

From the inscriptional evidence it appears that *Samataṭa* and the

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[149] N.N. Das-Gupta, 'The Buddhist Vihāras of Bengal', *Indian Culture*, I (1934-35), pp. 227-33.

[150] Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, p. 568 ff.

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lands of the Meghna were the sole region in the Delta where, in the Pāla period, Buddhism was deeply rooted.[151] Varendra, the Bhagirathi-Hooghly region and the area around Dacca received a stronger brahmanical imprint. *Samataṭa* developed into the main Buddhist centre under the Khadga rulers from the middle of the seventh century, and further under the Devas, Candras and Varmans. The remains of the Salban Vihāra represent a full-fledged example of Buddhist architecture of the seventh-eighth centuries which was maintained and elaborated up to the twelfth century. Here the majority of stone images were Buddhas and Boddhisattvas. Samataṭa had the highest known concentration of building sites anywhere in Bengal and its rulers were obviously wealthier. The evidence indicates that Mainamati under its successive dynasties remained the nerve-centre of Southeast Bengal. With large Buddhist institutions and endowments proliferating, Samataṭa had an important commodity market and continued minting of a high-quality silver coinage from the time of the Guptas up to the Muslim conquest in the thirteenth century. Two hoards of 224 silver coins have been unearthed here, and also three gold coins. One of the gold coins is of Candra Gupta (380-414 A.D.); the second is an imitation Gupta coin (seventh-eighth century); and the third gold coin seems to have been of the Deva kings. The silver hoards all appear to have been of the seventh-to-eighth-century Devas. Another hoard of two hundred coins was discovered at Mainamati which belongs to the Buddhist Candra rulers of East Bengal, c. 950-1050 A.D.; these coins are also of silver and are found piecemeal throughout the Delta.[152] Pure silver coinage was generally very rare in tenth-century North India and only current in this part of Bengal. Here the silver came from a more easterly source. The silver coins of the Candras are in fact found from East Bengal to Arakan. And the Candras reached further into Burma. Three hundred more silver coins were found in Mainamati of the twelfth century; these too suggest a prototype of the broad-struck silver and gold issues of the subsequent Delhi and Bengal sultanates. A considerable number of Arab traders – perhaps including settlers or colonists with some political or juridical autonomy – also came to Southeast Bengal, to the Chittagong region and the centres of Mainamati and Lalmai, while the ports of Southwest Bengal seem to

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[151] Morrison, *Early Bengal*, pp. 124, 149, 153-4; Khan, *Mainamati*, pp. 2-3, 7, 9, 11-12, 18, 22-23, 28.

[152] A.H. Dani, 'Coins of the Chandra Kings of East Bengal', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, XXIV (1962), pp. 141-2.

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have lost their commercial pre-eminence at this time. Clearly the Arab knowledge of the Chittagong-Arakan region and the presence of early and late Abbasid dinars and dirhams at Mainamati set the region apart as a commercial zone. This is where the monetary economy perpetuated itself most vigorously, where commerce flourished, urbanization was wide-spread, and where long-distance maritime trade found its outlet. And this is the region which remained a stronghold of Buddhism and where the agrarian-brahmanical orientation was correspondingly less in evidence. In the Pāla-Sena-Candra-Varman period, Samataṭa and Vaṇga constituted an integrated economic unit in which voluminous trade converged on the political and economic capitals of Mainamati and Lalmai, sustained by its monetary system and trade routes following the river courses.[153] The rulers of Southeast Bengal issued coins from the sixth to about the eleventh century, to a large extent obviating the need for a standard currency (in addition to cauris and the indeterminate bullion or metal ingots) in the Pāla territories of the north and west.

Except in Samataṭa, coins of the Pāla and Sena period are very rare. In ancient times Bengal had had a gold currency; this is referred to in the *Periplus* of the first century and was denominated *calti*, i.e. 'current', but could not be identified.[154] Either it was merely a piece of gold of a definite weight or the local name of the Kushana gold coins known as *dīnāras* or *suvarṇas*. The gold was brought through Tippera from the river-washings of Assam and Upper Burma. Bengal, in these centuries, had a coinage system of gold and copper (the latter representing the earliest coins of Bengal), and there was some silver coinage as well. Gold coins of the Guptas are found in Bengal in greater number than those of the Kushanas, by the hundreds. Evidently, in the fifth-sixth centuries, land transactions were conducted in gold *dīnāras*, while the bimetallism of gold and silver was perpetuated; but the silver coins of the Guptas did not circulate in Bengal. In the post-Gupta period, Bengal issued an indigenous and barbarous imitation of the Gupta gold coin; of these there are some rare specimens in Samataṭa, and such imitation Gupta coins were in circulation under the Deva kings in the seventh cen-

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[153] Cf. also M.R. Tarafdar, 'Trade and Society in Early Medieval Bengal', *The Indian Historical Review*, vol. IV, nr.2 (1978), p. 279; idem, 'The Bengali Muslims in the Pre-Colonial Period: Problems of Conversion, Class Formation and Cultural Evolution', in: M. Gaborieau, *Islam et Société en Asie du Sud* (Collection Puruṣārtha, vol. 9) (Paris, 1986), p. 93; Khan, *Mainamati*, pp. 7, 18, 25, 27.

[154] Chakrabortty, 'Gold Coins', pp. 222-7; Morrison, *Early Bengal*, p. 85.

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tury. But these coins gradually deteriorated and ceased to be issued altogether in the period preceding the establishment of Pāla rule. Nowhere in the Pāla territories the economy was demonetized however. A silver coinage called *dramma* has been recovered in some numbers, and some barbarous specimens of silver coins of the eleventh century have been discovered which vaguely resemble the Sasanid head-and-fire-altar coinage.[155] The Arab geographers emphasize the importance of *cauris* (*wadaᶜ*) in Pāla Bengal.[156] These were sea-shells – known in Bengal as *kaparddaka purāṇas* – which came from the isles of the Sea of Harkand, where they were collected by the queen and exported to Bengal as well as Siam to be used 'as the money (*ʿain*) of the country'. As such they also found their way into international trade. For instance the Chinese bought the precious rhinoceros' horns which were abundant in Bengal with cauris. 'Gold and silver' is also pointed out by the Muslim geographers in Bengal and these probably payed for the extremely fine and 'unrivalled' cotton textiles which were a bulk export of the country. In the inscriptions of the Senas the donations of land-revenue are always stated in terms of current *kaparddaka purāṇas*.[157] It seems probable that cauris were also used as a unit for revenue accounting under the Pālas.[158] Sena inscriptions however equally often refer to 'taxes and tributes of gold enjoyed by the king' (*rājabhogakarahiraṇya-pratyāyasahitā*).[159] And there is mention of the 'golden tulāpurusha' and 'the ceremony of the great gift (*mahādāna*) in which a golden horse and chariot were given away'.[160]

The above tends to show that Bengal up to the end of the Gupta period maintained its most important trade relationships with the western regions, but after the expansion of Islam and the rise of world-wide Islamic trading diasporas, the main emphasis was on the south-east. Here contact was made with Arab trade and here also trade relations were extended to Southeast Asia, while new monetary foundations were created at the same time. Similarly, the northern routes to Tibet and China became more important. The evidence not only points to a

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[155] Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, II, pp. 130-2; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 330.

[156] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, pp. 3, 13-14, 36, note 9; Masᶜūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, pp. 171-2.

[157] Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, passim.

[158] Morrison, *Early Bengal*, p. 99.

[159] Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 63, 78.

[160] *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 104.

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continuous coinage tradition which facilitated commerce but also to a continuous supply of gold and silver from abroad. And since the Tippera-Chittagong-Bengal region had no gold and silver deposits we have to search for the sources of these precious metals in Southern China, Burma, Pegu and Southeast Asia. Such monetary linkages between Bengal and the regions to the east of it existed in the Sultanate period but it is obvious that in the Buddhist period this was not different, although the amount of precious metals which was transferred to Bengal may have been considerably less.[161] Transmission points were anywhere in the Bay of Bengal and, overland, in Tripura, Manipur, the kingdoms of the Brahmaputra valley, Assam (Kāmarūpa), and, further on, Tibet. The actual gold sources were concentrated in the Tibet-Szechuan-Yunnan borderlands and throughout Southeast Asia. Silver was confined to Yunnan and the northern Shan states (and, beyond practical reach, to Siberia, Manchuria, Hunan and Japan). As early as the seventh and eighth century the Pyu kingdom of Burma, with its capitals at Shrī Kshetra and Halingyi, was known for its abundance of gold, and from the start this was transferred to an Indian market; the site of Shrī Kshetra shows reciprokal influence from India as well. In fact, Chinese pilgrims mention Shrī Kshetra as one of the countries of India.[162] The Pyu kingdom, founded at Shrī Kshetra in 638 A.D., dominated the Irrawaddy and drew great benefit from the land- and sea-borne trade between the Indian subcontinent and China but was also a participant in the China-India trade in its own right. In the mid-eighth century the capital was transferred to Halingyi and by then a great number of products which were in demand in long-distance trade were extracted from mines in Upper Burma: salt, serpentine, amber, and gold (from the Nmai Hka mountains). Equally important to the Indians, but also to the Nanchao and Chinese, were the 'goldbearing sands' of the Irrawaddy. In 832, the Nanchao invaded the Pyu kingdom, destroyed its capital Halingyi and deported three thousand prisoners to wash the sands of the Upper Irrawaddy. The kingdom of Pagan, rising in the late ninth and early tenth centuries after the advent of the Burmans, inherited, nevertheless, a pre-existing network of relationships with India, Sri Lanka and China. A number of sources attest to the antiquity of trade connec-

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[161] Cf. J. Deyell, 'China Connection', pp. 207-27.

[162] J. Stargardt, 'Burma's Economic and Diplomatic Relations with India and China from Early Medieval Sources', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 14 (1971), pp. 40, 44-47.

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tions between China and India using the land route through Upper Burma. The northern parts of this route appear to have become unsafe in the fourth to sixth centuries but received new attention with the establishment of the Tang dynasty.[163] In any case, the Pyu and Pagan kingdoms of Burma as well as the Thai kingdom of Nan-Lhao (Yunnan) in the ninth century knew the metallurgy of precious metal extraction and refinement.[164] On silver mining and smelting we have no direct evidence but it is known that the Pyu and the Nanchao used silver bars 'shaped like a half moon' as a form of coinage.[165] In Northeast Burma silver-bearing sites exist in the Mong-Mao region, notably at Bawdwin, and these may have been discovered as early as the tenth century; the name 'Bawdingyi' means 'Great Silver Mines' and they were the main silver source of the Shan, producing perhaps 1000 kg annually (later much more).[166] This silver can on adequate grounds be presumed to have moved westward out of Burma, and it circulated among the Thai as ingots; unmarked bars were especially favoured in long-distance trade on account of its anonymity. Whether as coin or as ingots, Bengal received both gold and silver through the Yunnan/ Burma routes in our period.

In reverse, the production of marketable commodities of Bengal which were in local and far-off demand included aloe-wood, pottery, and especially fine and coarse textile fabrics. The potters and weavers of the Pāla period continued to be the major socio-economic groupings in Comilla throughout the Muslim period. Perhaps rice was also exported. Southeast Bengal was increasingly connected, between the seventh and eleventh centuries, with the numerous Arab trading settlements which sprang up in the Malay peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago, with Palembang, Lamuri (later Pedir) and Kalah. Trade on this route went via Pegu, along the coast or across the Bay of Bengal. The Arabs however monopolized but a share in the long-distance trade of the region. Most of it we must presume to have remained in the hands of non-Muslim Indian groups. The latter made their presence powerfully felt, and Arakan-Burma, apart from being a commercial intermediary, also played a role in cultural transmission. The type of cruciform building structure of the Salban Vihāra at Mainamati bears no resemblance to the tradition of stupa architecture of the Indian subcontinent,

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163 *Ibid.*, p. 40.
164 Deyell, 'China Connection', p. 216.
165 *Ibid.*, p. 217.
166 *Ibid.*, p. 222.

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but has close parallels with the Ananda temple of Pagan, as well as with Kalasan (eighth century) in Central Java, and probably represents a style which evolved in Bengal in the seventh-eighth centuries and then spread with the Buddhist religion to Southeast Asia. Similarly, a close resemblance exists between the Tantric forms of Buddhism in Southeast Bengal and Southeast Asia.[167] A strong Pāla-Sena influence is evident in the sculpture of Prome and Pagan, sometimes giving the impression of having been made by Bengali artists.[168] There is also very clear evidence of Pāla-Sena influence in the Buddhist art of the Thai in the northernmost part of the Menam Basin.[169] But Southeast Bengal gradually lost its pre-eminence in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, showing distinct signs of decay in its urban complex and a decline of trade.[170] This was due to two reasons. First, the urban centres and the mobilization of the region's resources were adversely affected by changes in the river courses and ecological consequences thereof. Secondly, Southeast Bengal by the eleventh century began to suffer serious competition from the expanding Coromandel and Javanese trade, and a related shift of Arab activity to the Cola domains, focusing on the Coromandel cotton fabrics.[171] Rajendra Cola's campaign to Vaṇga in between 1021-25 was probably aimed at weakening the political and commercial connection between the Buddhist rulers of Southeast Bengal and Shrīvijaya. This connection appears to have been largely severed by the mid-eleventh century, '*Ramu*' being reduced to a link in the local coastal trade of Chittagong-Arakan. Some urban centres of Mainamati survived until the thirteenth century however; the find of Abbasid coins of that time also shows that a connection with Arab trade at Chittagong continued to exist.

Meanwhile, in the eleventh century, the northern Bay of Bengal drew itself closer together, and ties between Northeastern India and Pagan Burma and the subordinate kingdom of Arakan were strengthened, in large part to counterbalance Cola-Shrīvijaya expansion in South India and the Indonesian Archipelago. The Burmans, after entering from the

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[167] G.E. Harvey, *History of Burma* (London, 1925), p. 40; G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, 1968), p. 155.

[168] G. Coedès, *The Making of South-East Asia* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1983), pp. 111, 117.

[169] Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 191.

[170] Tarafdar, 'Trade and Society', pp. 282-3.

[171] F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Taipei, 1964), pp. 96-97.

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north-west as a tributary unit of the Nanchao (a people at the north of the Burman and Khmer realms), succeeded in the tenth century to the northern territories of the Pyu kingdom, and, by the eleventh century, the Burman kingdom at Pagan had grown sufficiently strong to start new campaigns and annex the southern Mon kingdom of Pegu and Thaton.[172] The Burmans assumed control over the Mon commercial centres, amongst which Papphala, on the Pegu coast, one of the most important Mon ports which had been invaded by the Colas in 1024-25. The southward move of the Burmans and their extension of commercial control on the Malay peninsula may at the same time have been triggered off by a temporary blockage of the overland Chinese route to Nanchao. Commercial intercourse with the isthmus was restored under Aniruddha (1044-77) who, after the conquest of Thaton, moved south to Mergui. The same Burman king directed his diplomatic and military strength towards Arakan and Sri Lanka.[173] Arakan was vital in the intercourse with India, the India trade passing through it both by land and by sea. Coins of Arakanese origin but of Hindu type have been found in Arakan. The kingdom itself was also a partner in the trade. Aniruddha imposed tributary status on the Arakanese king and a form of indirect rule. Through Arakan, the Pagan kingdom could throw more weight on its relations with Bengal, the framework of commerce being underpinned by multifarious cultural and diplomatic contacts. Routes passed from Pagan to Manipur and Assam, through Arakan and Chittagong, or through the coastal waters of the Bay of Bengal. In Sri Lanka, Aniruddha supported the Indian princes of the Kaliṅga dynasty, who conceived of themselves as the defenders of Buddhism, against the Colas who were Hindus and allied with princes of Sri-Lankese birth. The Burman king Kyansittha (1077-1112) again appears to have felt a need to extend the communication network linking Burma with Bengal by restoring the Bodhgāyā shrine in Bengal.[174] According to a Bengal inscription (at Bodhgāyā), the Burman ruler sent ships laden with jewels to finance the restoration and endowment of *vihāras* by the rulers of Shrīvijaya at Nālandā in the tenth century and at Nāgapaṭṭinam on the Coromandel coast in the early eleventh century.[175] The expansion of

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[172] Stargardt, 'Burma's Economic and Diplomatic Relations', pp. 48, 50, 52; Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 198-9.

[173] Stargardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

[174] Ch. Duroiselle and C.O. Blagden (eds), *Epigraphia Birmanica* (Rangoon, 1919-36), I, p. 163 (Shewsandaw Pagoda Inscription).

[175] *Epigraphia Indica*, 11 (1911-12), p. 119.

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Mahayana Buddhism in Java, as we have seen, can be dated from the advent of the Pāla dynasty in Bengal around the middle of the eighth century. In the eleventh century, Theravada Buddhism came to Pagan as a result of the campaign in 1057 against Thaton in Pegu. Lower Burma, the country of the Mons, had had early links with Southern India (Kāñcī) and the Theravada Buddhism of Sri Lanka.[176] From 1057 Pagan converted to Theravada Buddhism and Tantric Mahayanism began to decline.[177]

c. Al-Jurz (Gurjara-Pratīhāras)

Al-Jurz is the Arabic appellation of the king of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras, the progenitors of one of the *agnikula* or 'fire-born' Rajput clans, who rose to prominence in the seventh century A.D. and established their hegemony in large parts of North India – including *Madhyadesha* and the imperial city of *Kanauj* – in the early ninth century. Although they became known as 'the enemy of Islam' par excellence, from the eighth to the tenth-eleventh centuries their struggle for supremacy in North India with the Pālas of Bengal and the Rāshtrakūtas of the Western Deccan was much more intense than their opposition to the Arabs and Islam. The Arabs at no time appear to have undertaken or even contemplated a co-ordinated effort to conquer North India or Rajasthan in the way that Sind was. Adjacent to Sind, the 'king of *al-Jurz*' indulged in perpetual frontier warfare with the Arabs but it was definitely not the military confrontation with Arab advance guards that provided the main impetus to the development of Gurjara-Pratīhāra power. The kings of the landlocked Middle Country were, at Kanauj, in the very heart of the Indian subcontinent and became the custodians of brahmanical orthodoxy. Paradoxically, however, their central position made it impossible for them to reach beyond India and establish the powerful linkages with outside powers which allowed, successively, the Kārkoṭas of Kashmir, the Pālas of Bengal, and the Rāshtrakūtas of the Deccan and Gujarat to achieve all-India supremacy. Meanwhile, the paramount overlordship of India as a whole remained in the hands of the Rāshtrakūtas throughout most of the ninth and tenth centuries because the Rāshtrakūtas were 'friends of the Arabs' and their dominion was closely integrated in the Islamic maritime trading system.

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[176] *Ibid.*, 22 (1922), pp. 213-66.
[177] Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 96, 148-50.

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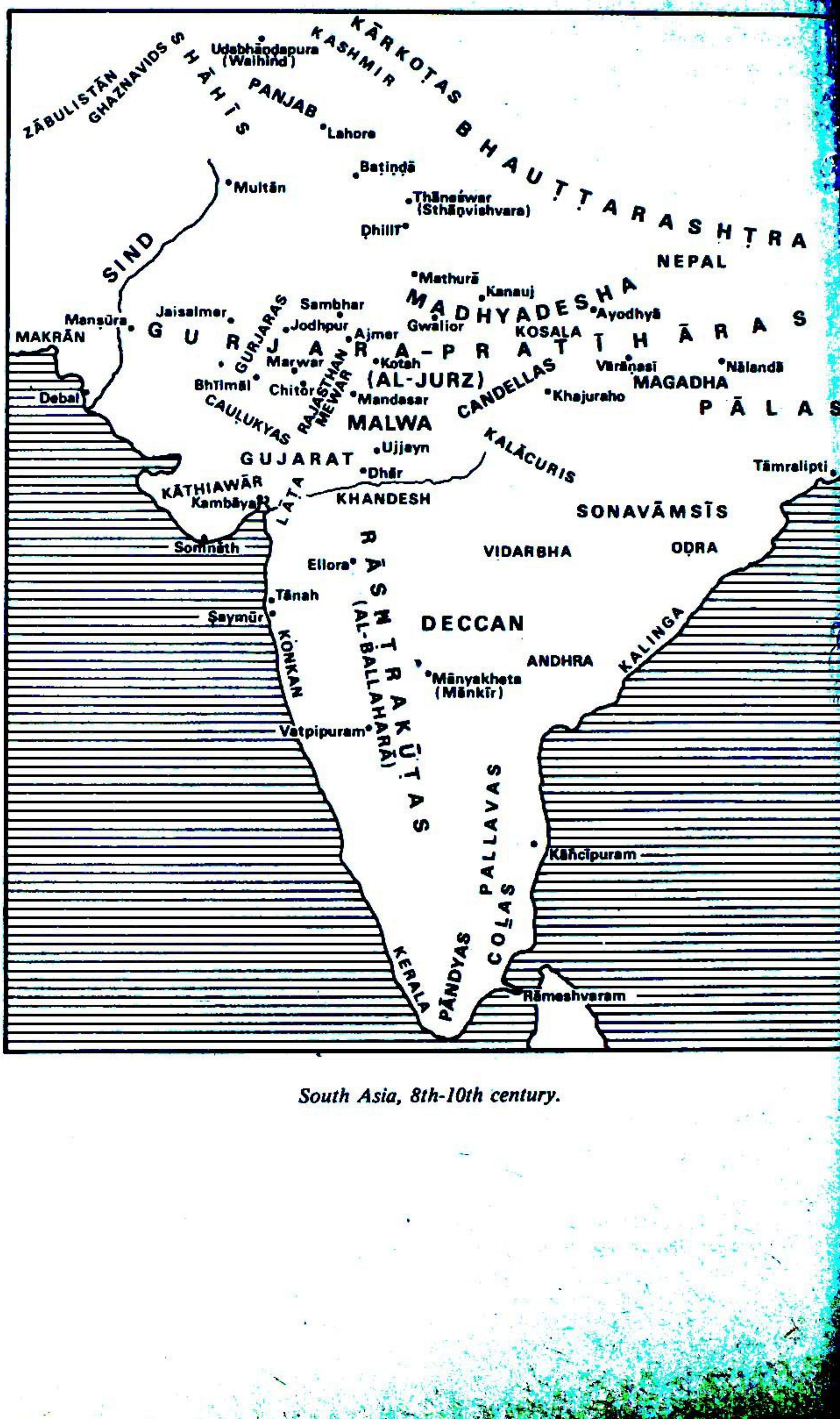

South Asia, 8th-10th century.

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The 'royal' clan of the Pratīhāras (*Pratīhāra*, *Pratihāra*, *Parihar*) has been shown to have originated as a subdivision of the pastoral Gurjaras. The later 'Gurjara-Pratīhāras' of Kanauj however, viewing themselves as noble *kshatriyas*, never mention their Gurjara pastoral origin.[178] We first hear of the Gurjaras after the White Hun invasions, and some of the earliest records – the *Harsha Carita* of Bāṇa and the Aihole inscription of Ravikīrti (634 A.D.) – bracket them with the 'Hūṇas'. In 641-42, Hiuen Tsang described the large kingdom of *Kü-che-lo* – a transliteration of 'Gūjara', the spoken form of 'Gurjara' – to the north of the Vallabhī territory which was governed by a *kshatriya* prince.[179] The capital of this kingdom was *Pi-lo-mo-lo*, modern Bhīlmāl (Bhīnmāl). In effect, this was Rajasthan, which, as we can deduce, was ruled for centuries by Gurjaras from their capital at Bhīlmāl, a town situated about eighty km to the north-west of Mount Ābū, before they transferred their seat of government to Kanauj in the early ninth century. Numismatic evidence indicates that the Gurjaras established themselves in Rajasthan later than the *Sveta Hūṇas*. Yet, the numismatic connection between these Hūṇas and the Gurjaras is extremely close, a fact which led to speculations that the Gurjaras were an element of the Hūṇa tribe or that the two tribes were in some way associated or that the Gurjaras immigrated into India along with them. The long series of 'Gadhiya'or 'Gadhaiya' coins and other coins of the Indo-Sasanid type in degraded form, in base silver and copper or bronze, have been assigned to the Gurjaras. These coins obviously were used in great abundance in the Gurjara territories in Western India and Rajasthan for centuries. It seems fairly certain that the Gurjaras were originally pastoral nomads but that only sections of these were probably immigrants who came along with or soon after the White Huns, the others being indigenous, largely pastoral, people or perhaps hill tribes. As in the case of the Jats of Sind and the Panjab of the seventh to eleventh centuries the rise of Gurjara power appears to represent a shift from pastoral nomadism and a predatory way of life to agriculture and a more settled state. The

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[178] V.B. Mishra, *The Gurjara-Pratīhāras and their Times* (Delhi, etc., 1966), p. vii; Choudhary, *Jain Sources*, pp. 35-39; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, 1, p. 842; V.A. Smith, 'The Gurjaras of Rajputana and Kanauj', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1909), pp. 53-77; D. Sharma, 'The Rājpūts: Their Origin and Advent into History', in: *Lectures on Rajput History and Culture* (Delhi, 1970), pp. 1-17; idem, *Early Chauhan Dynasties* (Delhi, 1959); idem, *Rajasthan through the Ages*, i (Bikaner, 1966); J.N. Asopa, *Origin of the Rajputs* (Delhi, 1976).

[179] Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, II, p. 249.

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modern Gūjar caste, which is closely allied to and resembles the Jats and the Āhīrs and Golas, is thought to represent the early Gurjaras (or *Kū-che-lo* of Hiuen Tsang); these are numerous in Rajasthan, parts of the Panjab, the northern districts of the United Provinces and Central India, and some of them are still a pastoral people today even though they are now largely converted to agriculture. The present distribution of the Gūjars shows that they spread further east and south than the Jats. They also settled down at an earlier date. Their earliest settlements appear in the Panjab and the territories from the Indus to Mathurā. From Mathurā the Gūjars seem to have moved into East Rajasthan and hence to Kotah and Mandasar and to Malwa and further to Khandesh. The *Pratīhāra* subclan of the Gurjaras also rose in Rajasthan, in Gurjaratrā, and became the ruling house at Bhīlmāl from about 725 A.D. and subsequently at Kanauj until 1018 A.D. Branches of the Pratīhāras established themselves in Broach, and in Avanti, towards Malwa (Mālava). While the Central-Asian or 'Hūṇa' derivation of the Gurjaras remains problematic – as this is probably a very limited component of the tribe – , the Gurjara origin of the Pratīhāras has been proven conclusively, and this raises a strong presumption that the other 'fire-born' Rajput clans (the Solanki or Cauḷukya, the Paramāra or Pawār, and the Cāhamāna or Chauhan, who in the eighth to ninth centuries were subordinate to the Gurjara-Pratīhāras), were of a similar pastoral origin. Perhaps this was also the case with other clans like the Tomaras.

Surveying the literature on the origin of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras and other predecessors of the Rajputs, it is easy to detect two dominant but diametrically opposed views. On the one hand we have the attempt – already referred to – of especially Western Indologists, as for instance Vincent Smith, to trace these groups or castes from foreign, Central-Asian, immigrants of the post-Gupta age.[180] This argument is meant to give substance to the broader idea that it was such 'barbarian' invasions which put an end to the classical Aryan civilization of India. The non-Aryan predecessors or progenitors of the Rajputs are, at the same time, put at the beginning of the 'feudal' Middle Ages, in synchrony with allegedly comparable developments in Western Europe. On the other hand we have the attempt to arrive at a purely indigenous *kshatriya* origin of the Rajputs. This view was especially defended by Indians in the heyday of nationalist historiography, as also in various genre

[180] Cf. Smith, *Early History of India.*

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writings which projected the chivalrous qualities of the Rajputs. Of course, the second view was also intimately linked to the assumption that the Rajputs rose to defend their ancestral homeland against the Arab-Muslim invaders, thereby performing the prescribed duty of the *kshatriyas* and becoming model heroes.

Inscriptional and literary evidence does relate the origin and rise of Gurjara-Pratīhāra power to the advent of the Arabs, but the link is tenuous. The well-known purification rite at Mount Ābū which was contrived by the later bardic tradition of the Rajputs was meant to regenerate the warrior caste of Hind and incite them against 'the infidel races who had spread over the land'; the account of the origin of the *agnikula* clans which it represents is evidently fabulous.[181] Similarly, the Chauhan lords of Ajmer and Sambhar emerge from obscurity in the year 685 A.D., presumably at the time when they were first visited by an Islamic army. This again refers merely to an incidental raid from Sind or Makrān which was undertaken in revenge for the ill-treatment of a Muslim missionary.[182] Arab generals or chiefs sometimes raided the Gurjara-Pratīhāra dominions, especially in the period 724 to 743, and Nagabhata I is described by the Gwalior inscription of the second quarter of the eighth century as 'having crushed the large armies of the powerful Mleccha king'.[183] In the ninth century the 'king of *al-Jurz*' is depicted by Muslim sources as 'the enemy of the Arabs' and as 'hostile to Islam'.[184] But, already by the second quarter of the eighth century, the Arabs had lost their expansionist impetus in 'Sind and Hind', as much as they had lost it in Spain and Central Asia. The skirmishes with the Gurjara-Pratīhāras were perhaps of as little importance as the Battle of Tours and Poitiers in the 'land of the Franks'.

The rise of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire in North India, then, instead of a military response to Islam, represents a broad process of settlement and the formation of a landed aristocracy, concomitant with the transformation of pastoral-nomadic groups formerly beyond the pale of Hindu civilization and their assimilation in a new state. Behind the military confrontation between Hindus and Muslims we perceive a general expansion of state and economy from the post-Gupta period and coinciding with the Arab-Muslim occupation of Sind. The picture disclosed is one of a landed aristocracy of mixed origin, a blending of

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[181] Tod, *Annals and Antiquities*, II, p. 356.
[182] *Ibid.*, p. 359.
[183] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XVIII (1925), p. 99.
[184] Cf. Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, pp. 12-13.

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a minority of Indianized immigrants and a majority of indigenous groups of pastoralists and hill-tribes, consolidating itself through political ties and alliances amongst clans and through marriage networks and fabricated genealogies. In short, a process of development occurred which after several centuries culminated in the formation of new groups with the identity of 'Rajputs'. The predecessors of the Rajputs, from about the eighth century, rose to politico-military prominence as an open status group or estate of largely illiterate warriors who wished to consider themselves as the reincarnates of the ancient Indian *kshatriyas*. The term 'Rajput' or *rājaputra* initially denoted nothing more than a chief holding a number of villages. The claim of being *kshatriyas* (a concept of doubtful etymological origins) was, of course, historically completely unfounded. The Rajputs, as well as other autochthonous Indian gentry groups who claimed kshatriya status by way of putative Rajput descent, differed widely from the classical *varṇa* of kshatriyas which, as depicted in the literature, was made up of the aristocratic, urbanite and educated clans who became known as the progenitors of the anti-brahmanic religions of Buddhism and Jainism and who, according to legend, were wiped off the earth by the brahmans in vengeance of their enmity towards them. With the expansion of state and economy in the seventh to eleventh centuries, and continuing in later times under Muslim domination, the name *Rajput* gradually became a generic title of the local magnate or gentry element in North India. These Rajputs remained tied up with landholding but also adopted the kshatriya identity and dharmic code as their honourable calling and associated themselves with the brahmans and with the brahmanical religion, which now superseded Buddhism and Jainism. In the same period the emerging clans forged genealogical links with the ancient kshatriyas and codified these claims in the numerous inscriptions which recorded their grants of land to brahmans and others. The same claims were reinforced by matrimonial links. A new category of status-legitimizing texts evolved: the *vamshāvalīs* and the *caritas*, which developed into the historical tradition (*itihāsapurāṇa*) of emerging monarchical forms in many parts of North India.[185] The *vamshāvalīs* were the histories of specific ruling families in localities that often coincided with the new kingdoms in areas which were previously unoccupied or settled under tribal modes of domina-

[185] Cf. R. Thapar, 'Society and Historical Consciousness: The Itihāsa-Purāṇa Tradition', in: S. Bhattacharya and R. Thapar (eds), *Situating Indian History* (Delhi, 1986), pp. 353-83.

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tion. The *caritas* were historical biographies, complementary to the *vamshavalis*, of particular kings. Both forms of writing flourished especially in the eighth to twelfth centuries. Throughout that period, this type of literature emphasized genealogy, adumbrating a similar procedure among the Mughal-allied royal families of Rajasthan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and hence in the works of certain British-Indian administrators (e.g. Tod) who wrote about Rajput history. From the beginning therefore, the 'genealogical view' of Rajput history has been predominant. But in actual fact, the early tradition was much more open and flexible. The claim to kshatriya status was a means to transcend the original ancestry in an expanding society which had to accommodate new groups of dubious background. The possible Gond and Bhil associations, for instance, of the Candella and Guhilot Rajputs were no barrier to kshatriya claims backed by landownership and genealogical links with the Candravaṃsha and Shūryavaṃsha clans, and they were soon acknowledged by matrimonial connections with more established kshatriya families. It was in the same way that the Gurjara-Pratīhāras became the kshatriya rulers of an empire centred in Kanauj and that they obliterated their Gurjara pastoral origin in Western India, Rajasthan and, probably, to a lesser extent beyond, in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The expansion and contraction of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra dominion as a political entity is related to the struggle for supremacy in North India with the Rāshtrakūtas and Pālas – a struggle which overshadowed the conflict with the Arabs, especially after the second quarter of the eighth century when Nagabhata I warded off Arab raids under Junayd and his successor Tamim. Nagabhata I probably ruled until 756 A.D. and left an already greatly expanded kingdom which comprised not only parts of Rajasthan but also Malwa and Gujarat. The Rāshtrakūtas gained prominence in the same period and conquered Lāṭa (Southern Gujarat) under Dantidurga (r. 733-58). And after 778 the Gurjara-Pratīhāra king Vatsarāja, having established his supremacy over a large part of North India, had to leave Kanauj to Dharmapāla. But Kanauj was finally occupied in 815 and henceforward became the Gurjara-Pratīhāra capital. A new burst of expansion occurred under Nagabhata II; the Saidhava chiefs of Western Kāthiāwār submitted, as did the rulers of Andhra, Kalinga and Vidarbha. Now the Rāshtrakūtas combined with the Pālas and achieved 'a great victory' over Nagabhata, but the latter retained Kanauj and the areas from Kathiawar to Rajasthan and Gwalior. Under

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Bhoja (r. 836-82), who is considered the greatest king produced by the dynasty, the dominion extended from the Panjab and Kathiawar to Kosala and Kanauj, while the Kalācuris of Gorakhpur and the Candellas in the area of present-day Bundelkhand acknowledged his suzerainty. Bhoja's successor Mahendrapala conquered Magadha and a part of Northern Bengal, thus extending the Gurjara-Pratīhāra dominion to an extent which rivalled or even exceeded that of the Guptas and Pushpabhūtis.[186] Idrisi's description, although of the twelfth century, clearly refers to this period of Gurjara-Pratīhāra power at its height (it appears to be based on an earlier account of Al-Jayhānī) and the towns mentioned by Idrisi as belonging to Kanauj suggest that the kingdom spread between the Western Panjab, Kashmir and the Bay of Bengal. This was only the case under Bhoja and his son Mahendrapāla, between the second half of the ninth and the early decades of the tenth century. Idrisi writes: 'This king of Kanauj has a large army and many elephants. His kingdom is vast and magnificent, and none of the continental kings of *al-Hind* possesses as many elephants as he does. He is an extremely zealous personality, and possesses military equipment, weapons and wealth. His might is dreaded by those who adjoin him'.[187] Earlier Arab accounts of the ninth century say that 'no king of *al-Hind* has a cavalry like his' and that 'there is more security here against robbers than anywhere in *al-Hind*'; the Gurjara-Pratīhāra king was hostile to Islam 'though he recognized that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of kings', and Ibn Rustah presents him as maintaining good relations with the Arab merchants.[188]

Needless to say that this was not a centralized state but a loose and always fluctuating hegemony which, if not symbolic, resulted in various forms of indirect rule and perhaps tributary arrangements with innumerable local lords and kings. The Gurjara-Pratīhāra king in the first part of the tenth century was entitled *Āryāvarta-Mahārājadhiraja*, 'the lord of great kings of the land of the Aryans', but was himself subordinate to the Rāshtrakūta or *Ballaharā* king, as the Arabs call him, who was 'on top of all kings of *al-Hind*'.[189] New hostilities ensued with the Rāshtrakūtas about 916, and the imperial city of Kanauj was threat-

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[186] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, pp. 569-70; Majumdar, *Imperial Kanauj*, pp. 19-43.

[187] Maqbul Ahmud, *Al-Idrisi*, p. 651.

[188] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, pp. 12-13; De Goeje, *Ibn Rustah*, p. 135.

[189] Sauvaget, *ibid.*; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 16; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 579.

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ened. But the Pratīhāras responded with a raid to the south which may have reached as far down as Malabar.[190] Masʿūdī, in the second decade of the tenth century, speaks of 'the master of the city of Kanauj' as one of the Rāshtrakūta's adversaries among the Indian kings. 'He has fortified garrisons in the North, South, West, and East, because all sides are threatened by a belligerent neighbour. The king of Kanauj has four armies in the four directions of the wind . . . . The army of the North is assigned to make war against the prince of Multān and the Muslims, and the latter's subjects who are established on this frontier; the army of the South operates against the Ballaharā, king of Mankir; the others against other enemies. His kingdom comprises 1,800,000 cities, villages or forts, situated in forests, and in well-watered and mountainous and rich territory . . . . The king of *al-Jurz* is rich in camels and horses and has a numerous army . . . . He shows himself full of conceit and violence with regard to other princes and promotes hate towards the Muslims'.[191] Literary and epigraphic evidence shows that in 931 A.D. the Gurjara-Pratīhāra kingdom extended up to Saurāshṭra (Kathiawar) in the west and Banaras in the east, and up to Chanderi (Narwar) in the south in 942-3. As late as 946 it incorporated Malwa.[192] But power gradually slipped away, apparently after another Rāshtrakūta invasion, and a number of local dynasties broke forth. By the end of the tenth century the Pratīhāra dominion had crumbled to the territory immediately surrounding Kanauj. In the north-west the Shāhis extended their power from Sirhind to Lamghan and from Kashmir to Multān, transferring their capital from Udabhāṇḍapura (Waihind) to Baṭiṇḍā in the Panjab. Mahmud of Ghazna invaded Hindustan seventeen times in the period 1000-1026, sacking Kanauj in 1018 and carrying away much wealth and many prisoners.

Like the Pratīhāras, three of their successor dynasties – the Cāhamānas (or Chauhans) of Rajasthan, the Cauḷukyas (or Solankis) of Gujarat, and the Paramāras (or Pawārs) of Malwa – are described as 'fire-born' Rajputs, originating from a sacrificial fire-pit (*agnikuṇḍa*) on Mount Ābū. Of these, the Cāhamānas originally belonged to the Sambhar region, then moved into the Ganges-Yamuna valley, where they became divided in many branches, the rulers of which were subordinate

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[190] Majumdar, *Imperial Kanauj*, p. 35; Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 577.

[191] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, pp. 85, 165-7, 170.

[192] Majumdar, *Imperial Kanauj*, p. 36.

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to the Gurjara-Pratīhāras.[193] Throughout the period 750-950 A.D., at least, most of the Cāhamāna domains were incorporated in the Pratīhāra polity. In the tenth century they succeeded in establishing themselves as overlords of Rajasthan and in parts of the Panjab and Gujarat. Similarly, the Cauḷukyas ruled in Gujarat and Kathiawar from about 950-1304 A.D., after disconnecting themselves from the Pratīhāra dynasty.[194] The Paramāras rose in areas which had been especially disputed between the Pratīhāras and the Rāshtrakūtas in the ninth and tenth centuries, in Malwa and parts of Gujarat and southern Rajasthan.[195] At about the middle of the tenth century they appear to belong to the sphere of influence of the Rāshtrakūtas. Other dynasties of Northern India which in the tenth century broke away from the Pratīhāras were the Candellas, the Gāhaḍavāḷas (a northern branch of Rāshtrakūtas), the Haihayas, the Kacchapaghāṭas, the Tomaras, and the Guhilots. The first of these, the Candellas or Candrātreyas of Jejā-bhukti (Bundelkhand) were as late as 959 A.D. still regarded as subordinate to the Pratīhāras.[196] After that date, which seems to have coincided with the capture of the fort of Gwalior and the extension of Candella power to the Yamuna, the name of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra monarchs no longer occurs in Candella inscriptions. Their earlier rise was evidently connected with the repeated Rāshtrakūta invasions. By 1019 the Candella king was the most powerful ruler of North India and did not even show nominal allegiance to the Kanauj dynasty. It was the Candella kings who built the temples of Khajuraho in the tenth and eleventh centuries and lavishly endowed brahmans with land, grain, money and cows. The Gāhaḍavālas (Gaharwars) of Vārāṇasī and Kanauj have an obscure history in the eleventh-century Ganges-Yamuna valley.[197] After the Muslim defeat of the last Gurjara-Pratīhāra king, Rājyapāla, his successors retired to the east of their domain and the Kanauj region probably passed to the Candella kings for a while. In 1090 A.D. the local rulers of Kanauj were the Northern Rāshtrakūtas, but the Gāhaḍavālas seem to have attained power in the city shortly afterwards. Of the Rāshtrakūtas of Northern India we also do not know much.[198] Some branches of this clan were connected with the dynasty of the same name in the Deccan, but others

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[193] Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, II, pp. 1052-1144.
[194] *Ibid.*, pp. 934-1051.
[195] *Ibid.*, pp. 837-932.
[196] *Ibid.*, pp. 665-737.
[197] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 504-49.
[198] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 550-68.

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probably were not. (The Gujarat branch of the Rāshtrakūtas, for instance, was connected with the Deccani dynasty.) The Rāthors of Jodhpur claim descent from the Rāshtrakūtas of Kanauj (where the latter retained power perhaps until 1111). The Haihayas of the United and Central Provinces, including the dynasty of the Kalāchuris, appear in the records from the sixth to the fifteenth century.[199] Their early history is however unknown. It is probable that the Pratīhāras drove them out of Malwa in the seventh and eighth centuries and that they then became confined to the upper waters of the Narmada and to Bundelkhand, before being driven to the northern districts of the Central Provinces where they were somehow incorporated in the Pratīhāra empire, evolving in various branches. The Kacchapaghāṭas of Rajasthan and Central India are the ancestors of the Kachwāha Rajputs.[200] At least three lineages existed in the tenth and eleventh centuries in and around Eastern Rajasthan and the region of Gwalior where they were incorporated in the Pratīhāra empire. The Tomaras (Tuars) are traditionally known as the founders of the city of Delhi (*Ḍhillī-pura*, *Ḍhillikā*) in 736 or perhaps 792, and here they established a dynasty which did not end before c. 1182-92 but was ousted from Delhi in 1164 by the Cāhamānas.[201] In the ninth and tenth centuries they were part of the Pratīhāra empire. Then, a final Rajput clan were the Guhilots (Guhilaputras) of the Panjab, Rajasthan and Kathiawar.[202] We know that these were very closely associated with the brahmans, perhaps were brahmans themselves. No branch of them had much power until the twelfth century. In the ninth century they were definitely within the orbit of the Pratīhāra empire and remained so up to the middle of the tenth century when their regions came within the domains of the Caulukyas, Paramāras and Cāhamānas. The Guhilots rose in Chitorgarh as early as the beginning of the seventh century; according to tradition an eighth-century Guhilot king left Mewar in his old age and died fighting in Persia and Turkestan. It may be speculated that this king accompanied Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍā of Kashmir to the north and followed him on his Central-Asian campaigns.[203] It is quite unknown in what ways the Kashmir king's conquests were connected with the rise of other clans of Rajasthan but it would not be far-fetched to assume that they were an important factor.

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199 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 738-820.
200 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 821-36.
201 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 1145-52.
202 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 1153-1210.
203 Goetz, 'Conquest', p. 19.

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We thus get glimpses of the clans – predecessors of the Rajputs – which underneath Gurjara-Pratīhāra supremacy, descended upon Northern India in these centuries as a new landed gentry and ruling élite. With many of these newly settling 'proto-Rajput' groups the Gurjara-Pratīhāras shared their monarchical sovereignty. And with many of them they had an obscure pastoral origin in common. It was this origin which had to be obliterated by shifting the capital to the 'imperial' city of Kanauj and by bringing forth a claim to *kshatriya* status, the fabrication of noble genealogies, and by referring their origin to a 'purification ceremony' at Mount Ābū in which the *kshatriya* caste of India was supposed to have been regenerated with the explicit aim of fighting off the *mleccha* Muslim invader. Let us look at this process of identity transformation in more detail.

The shift to Kanauj, to begin with, was of profound significance because this was a shift away from the Persianized regions of the north-western frontier of India, Rajasthan and the Panjab, to the very core of brahmanical culture in *Āryāvarta* and the religio-political centre of Hindu India. 'The middle of *al-Hind*', Biruni writes, 'is the country around Kanauj, which they call *Madhyadesha*, i.e. the middle of the realm. It is the middle or centre from a geographical point of view, in so far as it lies half-way between the sea and the mountains, in the midst between the hot and the cold provinces, and also between the eastern and western frontiers of *al-Hind*. But it is a political centre too, because in former times it was the residence of their most famous heroes and kings'.[204] Next to Kanauj, 'a very large town' to the west of the Ganges, Biruni enumerates a number of other important urban places (cf. *infra*), but among these North-Indian towns Kanauj had clearly achieved a cultural-religious and political pre-eminence in our period. Kanauj was also an important nodal point of trade; Biruni, in effect, goes on to describe the connections of the city with the different parts of India by roads running in all directions.[205] Of greatest importance were the trade routes from Bengal which joined the network at Banaras running westward, and those connecting Kanauj with Dhār, the capital of Malwa.

Kanauj or *Kānya-kubja* had not held the same focal position in *Āryāvarta* or *Madhyadesha* in ancient times, when it was second in importance to Ayodhyā; as such we find it mentioned in the Mahabharata.[206]

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[204] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 198.
[205] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 200-9; II, pp. 316-20.
[206] H. Bakker, *Ayodhyā* (Groningen, 1986).

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When Kaushāmbī was destroyed by the Hūṇas, Kanauj ceased to be a mere principality of the Gupta empire and became a political centre in its own right under Ishānavarman, the Maukhari ruler who drove back the Hūṇas. Under Ishānavarman's successors the political power of Kanauj was again overshadowed by the kings of neighbouring regions in Bengal and Malwa. But under Harsha (606-47) the city emerged as the foremost imperial capital of India and its most influential cultural centre. Biruni does not fail to note that in the country of Kanauj 'the era of Harsha was in use'.[207] Significantly, however, the cradle of Harsha's dynasty was not Kanauj, but Sthāṇvīshvara in the eastern Panjab, which was already a predominantly non-Buddhist city in Hiuen Tsang's time (with only three Buddhist monasteries against a hundred Hindu temples), but had remained under a powerful Persian influence as well. Having made himself master of Kanauj, Harsha appears to have been able to legitimate his expansionist ambitions; many North-Indian kings now began to acknowledge his paramountcy and we find Harsha figuring in the inscriptions as *sakal-ottarā-patha-nātha*, 'lord of the entire north'. The *Chachnāma* is full of references to Kanauj in the time of Harsha's rule and in that of his successors. Here Harsha is described as 'the king of Hindustān' or 'the king of Kanauj' to whom some of the rulers of Sind appealed for help against their rivals, resulting in an occasional invasion of the country on the western frontier. There is no evidence that Harsha made any attempts to incorporate Sind in his empire but Harsha's trading interests in the region appear to have been vital, both overland and maritime. The *Chachnāma* also describes the flourishing condition of Hindustān in this time, when Kanauj became its political centre. And although the history of Kanauj after Harsha's death remains obscure for a long time, in the *Chachnāma* the expression 'you want Kanauj' became tantamount to 'you want the impossible'.

Before the Gurjara-Pratīhāras made Kanauj their capital in 815 A.D., it was contested among all the 'great kings' of India. In the first half of the eighth century we found Yashovarman in possession of the city, joining Lalitāditya of Kashmir in his conquest and accompanying the latter as a subordinate king to Kashmir. Subsequently the Pālas of Bengal proclaimed their North-Indian paramountcy from the city. The Rāshtrakūtas also appear to have invaded Kanauj from the Deccan. Under the Gurjara-Pratīhāras however Kanauj reached the zenith of its prestige as the seat of government of the 'king of great kings' of Āryā-

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[207] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, II, p. 5.

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varta, a position which was effectively maintained up to 950 A.D. Kanauj remained the Pratīhāra capital until 1018 A.D. but the dynasty had lost its power almost completely by that date, even though its name lingered on and ʿUtbī, for instance, in 1018 could still describe the Kanauj ruler Rājyapāla as 'the chief of all kings of Hind'. At the beginning of 1019 the city was captured by Mahmud of Ghazna, who forced the reigning king to remove himself to Bārī. When Biruni wrote, most of Kanauj was 'in ruins and desolate since the capital has been transferred thence to the city of Bārī, east of the Ganges'.[208] Kanauj was perhaps the wealthiest capital which was sacked by the first Muslim invaders. But the real importance of Kanauj does not end before the defeat of the last Gahādavalā kings in 1193 A.D. For in the eleventh and twelfth centuries Kanauj revived under a northern branch of the Rāshtrakūtas and then the Gahādavalā kings, to become a great city again, 'the rival of Delhi both in extent and magnificence'.

In Kanauj – not in Gurjara-desha – the Pratīhāras presided over a great cultural and religious transformation of North-Indian society which involved primarily the brahmans. Abu Zayd of Sīrāf in the ninth century points at numerous brahman 'poets, astronomers, philosophers and diviners' who were concentrated above all 'in Kanauj, a large country forming the kingdom of *al-Jurz*'.[209] From this date the Kanauj or Kānya-kubja brahmans became the highest ranking subcaste of brahmans in the whole of India, migrating to Bengal, Gujarat and all over the north, where they are found until today.[210] These brahmans continued, even after emigration, to emphasize their *susthān* or original place of provenance, Kanauj, and related their ritual purity inversely to the distance which separated them from the city. This gave rise to subdivisions which were ranked according to their geographical position. Emigration from the *susthān* of Kanauj was always seen to have injurious effects on the original status and could also give rise to the suspicion that excessive wealth could have been acquired by wrongful means. As migrant Kanauji brahmans gradually deviated from the prescribed orthopraxis, exceedingly complex rank differentiations occurred which provided occasion for entangled marriage negotiations. Yet, outside of Madhyadesha and the Kanauj region, the number of brahmans de-

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[208] *Ibid.*, I, p. 199.

[209] Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 10.

[210] R.S. Khare, 'The Kānya-Kubja Brahmins and their Caste Organization', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 16 (1960), pp. 348-67.

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scribed as *madhyadesha vinirgatah* is quite numerous. The Kulina brahmans of Bengal, as also the Anāvil brahmans of South Gujarat, for instance, all claim descent from the brahmans of Kanauj in the early medieval period. It was in that time that Kanauj was turned into a bastion of brahmanical orthodoxy and the symbol of hegemony or imperial rule in India. Embassies between the Tang court and Kanauj are heard of as early as Harsha's reign. From Kanauj the Gurjara-Pratthāras maintained their political supremacy in North India for about 150 years. The paramount overlordship of India as a whole remained, however, during this time and up to the end of the tenth century, in the hands of the Rāshtrakūtas of the Deccan, and the latter dynasty *ipso facto* had to make repeated claims on Kanauj, even by physical occupation, to underscore this pre-eminence.

If Kanauj stood for brahmans and religious rectitude, the purification ceremony at Mount Ābū, the abode of hermits and sages, provided the occasion for the regeneration of the *kshatriya* caste from which descended the Gurjara-Pratīhāras and the 'fire-born' Rajputs.[211] The account we have of this ceremony is probably a mythologized version of a historical event, the exact date of which can no longer be determined but which for later generations served to cover up the obscure, (semi-) nomadic, aboriginal but also partly foreign, origin of these clans. H. Goetz has suggested, with some plausible grounds, that the ceremony at Mount Ābū may have taken place under the direction of the Kashmir king Lalitāditya, in an attempt to integrate the various Gurjara tribes into his political system and obtain levies for his campaigns against the Tibetans as well as for frontier defence against the Muslims.[212] Lalitāditya, as overlord of India, and already recruiting regiments from Afghanistan and Central Asia in the early eighth century, would have been instrumental in this way in drawing these intrepid tribes within the orbit of Hindu culture. In any case, the ceremony by which the fire-born clans were 'created' was doubtlessly meant to enhance the social respectability of such clans as had thus far remained beyond the pale of Hindu civilization. In the mythologized account of the event, the brahmans are credited with taking the initiative. They themselves, after having extirpated the ancient, impious kshatriyas, resolved to perform a ceremony on the summit of Mount Ābū to 'regenerate' the kshatriya warriors. For

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[211] Cf. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities*, II, pp. 356-7.
[212] Goetz, 'Conquest', p. 20.

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great disorder prevailed due to the absence of the strong arm. The kshatriyas of Hind were created through the expiatory rites of the sages and the gods. At the same convocation – from which day the beginning of the second age of the Hindus is dated – the new warriors were incited to defend the brahmanical religion against the *mleccha* Muslims.

We have already seen that in Afghanistan, Makrān, Sind and other parts of Western India a powerful, sometimes predominant, Persianizing influence had been at work for many centuries.[213] Such influence had at times reached considerably further, as the excavations at Pāṭaliputra show. Two important dynasties of India, the Kushanas in the North and the Andhra in the Deccan, disappear almost at the same time that the Parthian dynasty of Persia was superseded by the Sasanids, a fact which may point at an unrecorded Persian invasion of Northern India at this period. Amongst the ancestors of the Rajputs, Persian and Central-Asian elements are strongly in evidence.[214] One such element was the Indo-Sasanid Gadhaiyā coinage which was in use amongst the Gurjaras in Northwest India. Successive waves of nomadic invaders, amongst which the White Huns and subclans of the Gurjaras, brought these into the Panjab, the Ṭakka country around Lahore, Malwa, Gujarat and Southwest Rajasthan. The chief Rajput house of later times, that of Mewar, put forward especially insistent claims of Persian extraction. The sun, they alleged, was the deity of their ancestry, and numerous sun-temple remains are still found in the peninsula of Gujarat, whence its name *Saurāshṭra*, 'country of the sun-worshippers'. As both the Mewar kings and the ancient Persians had the sun as their principal object of veneration, there was a marked affinity between their religious rites. Both also bore the image of the orb in their banners. Zoroastrian migrations to Gujarat are thought to have occurred in the seventh and eighth centuries, and a son of the Persian emperor Nushirvan is said to have settled in Saurāshtra with many followers. The Ranas of Mewar in effect consider themselves to be the descendants of Nushirvan. But other allegations point at their descent from a daughter of Yazdigird, the last of the Sasanid emperors of Persia. Firishta recorded yet another tradition, which says that the Rathor king Ramdeo of Kanauj was made tributary to the Sasanids, and that subsequently an usurper of the throne of Kanauj neglected to pay the tribute and thus caused Nushir-

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[213] Cf. pp. 117 ff, 135-7, 147-8, and *passim*.

[214] Tod, *Annals and Antiquities*, I, pp. 21, 51, 173 ff, 179, 188-94; II, pp. 2, 169-70, 172, 357-61.

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van to invade India. Other royal Rajput dynasties, of Marwar and Jaisalmer, similarly constructed genealogies from ancestors in the region of Zābulistān or Central Asia. A number of ethnographic surveys, finally, of modern times bear out the survival of Persian or Sasanid motifs in the customs, dress, et cetera, of the Gūjars, Jats and Rajputs, in addition to other peculiarities in Rajput martial poetry and architectural decoration in Marwar and Kathiawar. Even today many tribes of the area are stigmatized as non-Indian by such features. Elsewhere, the *tumuli*, containing ashes and arms, which are found especially in the Cāhamāna areas, indicate the nomadic warriors of the north, as does the surname *pal* among the Ahirs of Central India. The most important Persian element in North India was, however, for many centuries, the cult of the sun or *Sūrya*. Next to the temples of Shiva which were constructed all over the north – most famous of which were those in Khājuraho, Un and Mālava – , the majority of sun temples and most of the images and idols of Sūrya (wearing Scythian boots and sometimes Sasanid costumes) go back to the period of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras, c. 800-1000 A.D. Sūrya appears here to be equated with the Mithras of the Persian Magi, but later with Vishnu; the Bhavishya Purāṇa mentions the 'Maga brahmans' as their priests. The Maga, we know, had come to India at an early stage, not later than the first century B.C., carrying the sun cult with them.[215]

The transfer of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra capital to 'imperial' Kanauj, the construction of *kshatriya* genealogies, and the 'regeneration' rite at Mount Ābū – these were devices to obliterate a pastoral-nomadic origin and move away from the Persianized culture of Northwest India into the very centre of brahmanical India. In spite of the strong identification with the Hindu heartland and with brahmanism, the outlandish or 'Persian' identity of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras and their successors the Rajputs was resilient and was never entirely superseded.

We should now further examine the origin of the Rajputs as a landed aristocracy in the socio-economic – rather than dynastic – context of settlement and expansion. By the twelfth century the term *Rājaputra* or 'king's son' had approximately acquired the connotations of the 'Rajput' caste and the process of landed settlement had proceeded far enough for the term to have become a widespread assimilative category,

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[215] Von Stietencron, *Indische Sonnenpriester*; Goetz, 'Sun Temple', p. 24; Mishra, *Religious Beliefs*, p. 41.

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frequently used in inscriptions and literature, by which newly acquired power was legitimated and the transition from a loose tribal organization to an agrarian-monarchical state was demarcated.[216] At one level, the records from about the seventh century provide evidence of the colonization of new land and the proliferation of new settlements.[217] Local tradition, e.g. in Awadh, confirms the important role of the Pratīhāras in agrarian expansion.[218] Epigraphic sources of Western and Central India similarly speak of the suppression of predatory Shabaras, Bhillas and Pulindas, suggesting the expansion of Rajput power in forest regions and other unsettled parts of the country. This is especially evident in the case of the Guhilots. 'Guhila' is the name of a forest, located between the Guhiḷa-bala and the Mahi river in Gujarat.[219] As early as the seventh century the first Guhilot settlements are found in Rajasthan and somewhat later traditions trace their movement from Gujarat. Bardic tradition further suggests that the Guhilot kingdoms in South Rajasthan succeeded the earlier tribal chiefdoms of the Bhils. Similar traditions exist which point at the colonizing movement of the Cāhamānas from Ahicchatrapura to Shākambharī or Jaṇgaldesha, i.e. the forest lands from the Sutlej to Haryana. One branch of the Cāhamānas clearly cracked down upon the Medas of the Godwar region.[220] But also, such groups as the Medas, next to descendants of the Hūṇas, at times merged into the proto-Rajput clan structure and equally assumed a *kshatriya* identity. And, in the early seventh century, we find the first Gurjara rulers in Nandīpurī, while documents of the same century point at nascent forms of Gurjara political power in wide areas of Western India as well as the beginnings of internal stratification. It was probably through the acquisition of political power that the Pratīhāras branched off from the Gurjaras. In all other cases, the achievement of political eminence led to the formulation of noble genealogical claims but usually this was in the context of the Pratīhāra hegemony. Within the existing political structure, new bids for ascendancy were made concomitant with attempts to create economic and social bases for newly developing

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[216] B.D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Origin of the Rajputs: The Political, Economic and Social Processes in Early Medieval Rajasthan', *The Indian Historical Review*, III (1976), pp. 59-82.

[217] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[218] *Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh*, vol. II (Allahabad, 1877), p. 291; vol. III (Allahabad, 1878), p. 326.

[219] Chattopadhyaya, 'Origin of the Rajputs', p. 63; Asopa, *Rajputs*, pp. 102 ff, 208 ff.

[220] Chattopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

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interests. The emergence of new clans is also associated with certain novel features of land distribution and territorial management in both the Gurjara-Pratīhāra kingdom and its successor polities.[221] In Rajasthan in particular we find the distribution of land among royal kinsmen – a feature which was most of all associated with the spread of the Cāhamānas. New land units appear. And there are the first references to the units of 'eighty-four' villages in the ninth century, the *caurāsia*, which provided the theoretical framework for the Rajput territorial system.[222] The period coincides with the construction of fortresses on a numerically large scale, a feature which was absent in the earlier polities of Rajasthan.[223] Close links developed between these forts and landholding families. Finally, there is much evidence of marriage networks evolving among these clans and emerging subclans who were beginning to constitute the Rajput caste or category.

Of course, if we are thus able to conclude that agricultural expansion and settlement proceeded apace in early-medieval North and West India, there were large tracts in the Gangetic plain, the Doab and elsewhere, which remained under forest. This much can be made of the relatively more numerous references of the Sultanate period.[224] Vast tracts of land in the environs of Delhi, Lahore and in the Doab were, in fact, not reclaimed before Balban, in the thirteenth century. Large jungle was still found in the fourteenth century in the Middle Doab of the Yamuna and the Ganges, and in many parts of Awadh. From the Sutlej to Haryana was *jangaldesha* in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[225] The country of southern Awadh which was conquered by the Bhars in the eleventh century was to a far greater extent covered with jungle than in Mughal times. Probably the jungle held its own as far south and west as the edge of the belt of high ground which runs through the region in a south-easterly direction. In that area only the plains of the Sarju and the Gogra were then cultivated.[226]

Together with the expansion of agricultural settlement, the early medieval period also saw a new burst of urbanism in North India: the proliferation of, especially, modest-sized urban centres in great number,

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[221] *Ibid.*, p. 71.
[222] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[223] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[224] Cf. Raychaudhuri and Habib, *Cambridge Economic History of India*, I, pp. 6, 48.
[225] Tod, *Annals and Antiquities*, II, p. 362.
[226] *Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh*, vol. I (Lucknow, 1877), pp. XXXV-XXXVI, 111, 114; vol. II (Allahabad, 1877), pp. 128-9.

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centres of regional commerce, but also a spreading of larger cities with a more extended functional embeddedness. In India, up to the Turkish conquests, urbanism went through three distinct stages. The first was that of the Harappa civilization, but this affected mainly the Indus area. The second coincided with the expansion of trade contacts with Central Asia and the Roman world, from the sixth century B.C. down to post-Kushana and Gupta times.[227] Early historical urban centers such as Takshashilā, Pāṭaliputra or Barygaza were characteristically the loci of supra-regional political power, with large agricultural hinterlands, and were located along well-developed trade routes. Many of these North-Indian urban centres, as archaeological data show, decayed in Gupta and post-Gupta times. The common explanation for this phenomenon is that India's exports declined with the Kushana empire and that, at that time, the gold supply from Central Asia and the Roman world came to a stop, bringing ruin to the towns.[228] The coup de grâce, according to this same argument, was then given by the Hūṇas in the fifth century. However, it has been noted that the majority of the hoards of Roman coins date from the first century A.D. and not later, and also that foreign trade does not appear to have been the sole or decisive factor in the rise and decline of the classical Indian cities.[229] For many of these cities internal trade was more important, and the volume of internal trade was not necessarily affected in significant measure by changes in the volume of external trade. The establishment of a power structure which syphoned off commercial and agricultural surplus appears to have been at the origin of the early historical cities; foreign trade – trade with the Roman empire – merely enhanced their growth, while the decline of that trade slowed it down at most. The picture of Indian urbanism in its second stage is thus that of a relatively small number of large cities (with little in the way of a hierarchy of smaller cities and towns), linked up with supra-regional power and commercial exchange on a subcontinental scale.

The third stage of urbanism, that of the early-medieval period, now, appears to occur after the second had become moribund. The evidence

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[227] B.D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Urban Centres in Early Medieval India: An Overview', in: S. Bhattacharya and R. Thapar (eds), *Situating Indian History* (Delhi, 1986), pp. 8-33; idem, 'Trade and Urban Centres in Early Medieval North India', *The Indian Historical Review*, I (1974), pp. 203-19.

[228] Cf. R.S. Sharma, 'Decay of Gangetic towns in Gupta and post-Gupta times', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 33rd session (Muzaffarpur, 1972), pp. 92-104.

[229] Chattopadhyaya, 'Trade and Urban Centres', pp. 213-14.

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suggests the crystallization of a process of urbanization in the ninth century, although we have merely an impressionistic idea of the intensity of this process and the distribution of urban centres has never been mapped in a systematic way, using all available inscriptional and archaeological evidence.[230] In the meantime, we may do well by looking at early medieval urbanization not as a development *ab ovo* but as the result of a redistribution of urban centres which spanned almost the entire millennium following the decline of the Kushana and Roman empires. The evidence relating to the Gurjara-Pratīhāra dominions points at a phenomenal growth of urban centres – centres, that is, which were distinct from rural settlements but were small in comparison with the 'classical' cities and were attuned primarily, although not exclusively, to more localized and intensive exchange networks, corresponding to different tiers of local, regional and supra-regional power, and hence representing a genuine functional hierarchy. The Malwa plateau, for instance, in the Paramāra period may well have had twenty towns. Over seventy towns are recorded in Andhra in the eleventh century and after. No less than 131 urban places can be counted in the Cāhamāna dominions.[231] Hiuen Tsang, in the seventh century, noted commercial centres all along the Ganges but also referred to a number of decayed towns in the Indus valley, and – far more numerous – in the Ganges basin, including for instance Kaushāmbī, Shrāvastī, Kapilavastu, Rāmagrāma, Kushīnagara and Vaisali. We have some information which indicates the survival of numerous old urban centres as well. Cities of magnitude which persisted, and even grew, throughout our period include Kanauj and Vārāṇasī. These surviving cities continued to be linked to important routes of long-distance trade and to manufacturing centres, as did the many cities in Sind and the Panjab, coastal Gujarat, Malabar, Coromandel, and south-eastern Bengal. In the Gurjara-Pratīhāra domains, the innumerable newly evolving towns received their main impetus from a realigning pattern of internal trade – a trade which to all appearances was becoming more and more vigorous. Numerous references are found to townships and market-places (*haṭṭas*) which were created by rulers and their officials with the apparent aim to promote a commercial exchange centre, often in combination with a ceremonial centre of some sort. It is also no accident that much of the *shilpashāstra* literature on town-planning relates to this period. And very common are references

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[230] Chattopadhyaya, 'Urban Centres'; idem, 'Trade and Urban Centres'.
[231] Figures in Chattopadhyaya, 'Urban Centres', pp. 31-32.

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to periodical markets as well. A hierarchical order of settlements is suggested by the articles traded and the levies imposed on them. For example, only one of the seven towns in the region of the Kalācuris in the tenth century appears to be incorporated in an extensive trading network which reached beyond the region, as we find there pepper, horses and elephants; in the other towns we merely hear of rice, ginger, turmeric, betel-leaves, arecanuts, cotton, coconuts, and perfumes as trading items.[232] But it is no exception to find that the surplus marketed in the towns covered a very wide range of agricultural and industrial products, including commercial crops such as indigo. The variety of trading items appears to have been on the increase.[233] Horses abound especially in the Cāhamāna inscriptions. In the eleventh century internal trade also covered daily necessities on a large scale: grain, wheat, pulses, resin, salt, sugar, oil, cotton, and so on. We hear a lot about bronze and cloth dealers and about distillers and weavers. The Cāhamāna inscriptions also reveal what we may call the beginnings of the activities of the Marwar merchants. The great *vāṇikas* of Gujarat prospered on foreign as well as internal trade and controlled far-flung networks of lower-order commercial centres in the hinterlands of coastal Gujarat. Trading communities are referred to in the Candella records, and in the Kalācuri records relating to Baghelkhand. Innumerable townships in the Gurjara-Pratīhāra kingdom are traceable to the ninth century, and these have all the assets of shrines and temples, traders of various denominations (including itinerant merchants), guilds (*shreṇī*), artisanry, courts of local lords or officials, mints and coins, roads, customs houses, and forts or fortified places.[234] Internal commerce crystallized around these centres, first locally, then on a wider scale, after conglomerations of markets had developed into towns. Merchants patronized temples and shrines. Donations were made in coins by resident and itinerant merchants. For instance, an inscription of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras of 882-83 which describes the township of Pṛthūdaka in Haryana refers to horsedealers who move all over the north and donate money to temples in Kanauj. The temples again often invested substantial amounts of cash in manufacture. Long-distance trading contacts are borne out by many records, along routes cutting across the boundaries of local commerce. I-tsing in the second half of the seventh century speaks of hun-

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[232] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
[233] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[234] Chattopadhyaya, 'Trade and Urban Centres', pp. 205-7.

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dreds of merchants coming to Central India from Tāmralipti. Other towns, scattered across North India, such as Pṛthūdaka, Tattānandapura (near Bulandshahr on the western bank of the Ganges), Siyaḍoni (Jhansi district) and Gopagiri (Gwalior) are evidence of the continuity of vigorous inland trade and of the urbanization associated with it; they are examples of towns which expanded with the rise of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras.[235]

To conclude, the early medieval inscriptions seem to suggest the importance of the region, far more so than the early historical records. On the other hand, the numerical strength of the early medieval urban centres is striking. There continued to be important cities in North India which were not different from the 'classical' type: Somnāth, Multān, Vārāṇasī, Mathura, and of course Kanauj come to mind. About Vārāṇasī, Hiuen Tsang writes: 'The inhabitants were very numerous and had boundless wealth, their houses being full of rare valuables'.[236] The same is said about Kanauj, the urban relics of which are scattered over many miles.[237] At Thāneswar, 'rare and valuable' merchandise arrived from everywhere.[238] In the eleventh century, Biruni mentions as important cities, next to Kanauj: Māhurā (Mathurā), 'east of the Jam (Yamunā)'; Tāneshar (Sthāneshvara); Ajodaha (Ayodhya); Banārasī (Vārāṇasī); Sharwār, Pāṭaliputra, Mungīrī, Janpa, Dūgumbūr, Gangāsāyara, in the westward direction; Kajūrāha, capital of Jajāhūtī, to the southeast of Kanauj on the western side of the Ganges; and between Kajūrāha and Kanauj, there were the two most famous fortress-towns of Hind, Gwāliyor (Gwalior) and Kālanjar.[239] Other cities are again mentioned by Idrisi: the 'very populated' town of Aṭrāsā, on the western frontier of the kingdom of Kanauj, which is perhaps Karnāl in the Panjab; a town called Nahrwāra, to the west of the Ganges; a 'town of Mālwā', which is probably Ujjain, the first capital of the Pāramāras, or Mandu, a town over which the Pāramāras ruled from the eighth to the thirteenth century; and Dada, which is Dhār, the capital of the Pāramāras from the ninth century.[240] It is thus clear that in the Gurjara-Pratīhāra period we find not only the realignment of trade routes and political networks in combination with agrarian and mercantile expansion leading to the pro-

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235 *Ibid.*, pp. 212-13.
236 Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, II, p. 248.
237 *Ibid.*, I, p. 206; II, p. 44.
238 *Ibid.*, I, p. 183.
239 Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 199-202.
240 Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 65-66, 91.

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liferation of small market towns, but also the persistence of a number of more sizeable cities from ancient times as well as the formation of new cities on the same pattern.

Such a dense and variegated urban pattern, it is obvious, leaves little room for a demonetization thesis. R.S. Sharma however, followed by others, propounded exactly that. According to Sharma, a general paucity of coins and an almost complete absence of gold coins from the post-Gupta period to the tenth-eleventh century in the North-Indian heartland or Madhyadesha as well as in Rajasthan and Gujarat reflected the poor state of internal and external commerce in these regions.[241] Sharma went on to postulate, in analogy to Europe, a revival of trade, and especially foreign trade, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries which put an end to 'the self-sufficient feudal economy' of the four preceding centuries.[242] The economic revival was also related to the cultivation of commercial crops. And there are, we are told by the same author, numerous references to money coinage in the epigraphic and literary records of the later period which, together with the discovery of coins from this time, similarly indicate an economic revival in North India, especially in Madhyadesha, but also in Malwa, Central India, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. The Kalācuris were the first to revive gold coinage in 1015-40, and they were followed by the Candella rulers in 1060-87, and by the Tomaras of Ajmer in 1019-49.

The question which we first have to address, therefore, relates to the monetary situation in Northern India in the seventh to tenth centuries. How desperate was it? We have to go by appearances. But appearances do not confirm the picture of a demonetization of the economy. For, in the first place, there are many types of coins referred to in the early medieval literary records; for example, the *rūpaka*, *suvarṇa*, *dīnāra*, *nishka*, *kārshāpaṇa*, and, the most common coin of the period, the *dramma* (Greek drachma). While *dramma* in all probability usually denotes a silver coin of a particular weight, *suvarṇa*, *dīnāra* and *nishka* refer to gold coins, and *paṇa* probably to a copper coin.[243] Another term which denoted a gold coin was *gadyāṇaka*, but in Northern India this is restricted to the Gāhaḍavālas of the eleventh century. A case can

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[241] Cf. *Indian Feudalism*.

[242] *Op. cit.*, pp. 248-59.

[243] L. Gopal, 'Coins in the Epigraphic and Literary Records of Northern India in the Early Medieval Period', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, XXV (1963), pp. 1-16.

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be made however that *dramma* was applied to both silver and gold coins, even though no such coins have been found. In the ninth century we hear of 'gold drammas' and 'iron drammas'. *Drammas* without any prefix appear frequently in the inscriptions of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras from the ninth century, and the earliest *drammas* are mentioned in the seventh century.[244] Actual finds of *drammas* include a hoard of base silver or billon coins (made of an alloy of silver with copper, tin and the like) from Ahichchatrā, which is attributed to the Gurjara-Pratīhāra king Bhoja (c. 836-82), and two gold coins of a king of probably the eighth century.[245] Numerous other hoards of similar base silver *drammas* have been found of some later Gurjara-Pratīhāra kings, amongst which Vināyakapāladeva (914-33), as also tens of thousands of cauri shells.[246] On the coins of Vināyakapāladeva light is thrown in a treatise called *Dravya-parīkshā* ('A treatise on movable wealth') which was written by Thakkura Pheru, the mintmaster at Delhi in the reign of Alaud-din Khalji, in 1327-28. This work deals with the names, weights, values and other specificities of the coins which were current at the time of its compilation. The author refers to 'Gurjara coins' (*Gurjarī-mudrāḥ*), which were coins issued by the kings of Gujarat as well as the Gurjara-Pratīhāras of Kanauj. Of the twenty-one coin names in the list there are two called *Varāha-mudrā* and *Vināyakā-mudrā*. The Varāha-mudrā are the Ādivarāha *drammas* issued by Bhoja, which are widely known. The others were issued by Vināyakāpāladeva, his grandson.

More importantly, Arabic sources repeatedly mention that 'the king of *al-Jurz* uses *ṭāṭarīya dirhams*' and 'ingots of silver' (*fiḍḍa-t-tibr*) as instruments of commercial exchange.[247] Masʿūdī says that 'the king of al-Jurz uses gold and silver'.[248] Muslim authors also mention *ṭāṭarīya dirhams* in the Kabul valley, Sind, the Panjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. These may have been the coin type known as 'Indo-Sasanid' or 'Gadhai-

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[244] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. IX (1916), p. 299 ff; *Indian Antiquary*, vol. XIII (1884), p. 140 ff.

[245] R.C. Kar, 'Some observations on the Ādivarāha coins of Bhoja', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, XV (1953), 2, pp. 214-19.

[246] V.S. Agrawala, 'Dramma-Coins of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra King Vināyakapaladeva (914-933 A.D.)', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, X, pt.I (1908), pp. 28-30.

[247] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. 13; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 67; De Goeje, *Ibn Rustah*, p. 135.

[248] Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 170. According to M. the king also had mines of gold and silver (*loc.cit.*); Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. 13 also states that 'it is said they have mines'. This is probably an error; in any case, we do not hear of these mines in any later source.

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ya', in base silver and copper or bronze.[249] The prevalence of huge amounts of these coins in Northern and Western India from the seventh to the fifteenth century must have played an important role in commercial activity and probably it was these that pushed the pure gold coin into the background until the eleventh century.[250]

A systematic history of the probably abundant Gurjara-Pratīhāra coinage is out of reach because of the absence of specimens of the various types which are mentioned in literary and inscriptional sources in the contexts of land grants or gifts to brahmans or for purposes of fiscal computation (land-revenue and commercial taxes). Many of these coins, and of those of the successor dynasties, remained in circulation under the early Muslim rulers. But in the Delhi mint most, if not all, of the coins of the Hindu rulers were eventually converted into coins with the name of the sultans on them. *Remonetization*, of Hindu coinages but also of immobilized wealth, as we know, greatly strengthened the Muslim urban economy. The Turkish conquest of Northern India was, in the final analysis, a goldrush; and the presence of vast wealth – in temples and palaces – contradicts demonetization, as virtually all of India's gold and silver entered the subcontinent through the medium of trade.[251] Even if minted money had been absent – which was not the case – it would be theoretically possible that all trade was carried on by using bullion, with additionally silk or spices or paddy rice and barter taking an important place. It is also not ruled out that older coins continued to circulate in the market.

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[249] Cf. pp. 174-5.

[250] C. Krishna, 'Gadhia Coins from Nimar East (M.P.)', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, XXV (1963), 2, pp. 36-38; G.S. Tiwari, 'Gadhia Coins from Harsud', *ibid.*, XXVIII (1966), 2, p. 213; S.K. Maity, 'The Gold Content of the Coins of the Tomara and Gahadavala Dynasties of Northern India', *ibid.*. XXII (1960), pp. 270-6; V.S. Agrawala, 'The Highest Purity of Gold in India', *ibid.*, XVI, 2 (1954), p. 271; D. Sharma, 'Chandella Coins described in Pheru's Dravya-Pariksha', *ibid.*, XXV (1963), 2, p. 248; V.V. Mirashi, 'A Gold Coin of Chandella Vīravarman', *ibid.*, XVI (1954), 2, pp. 236-8; D.C. Sircar, *Early Indian Numismatic and Epigraphical Studies* (Calcutta, 1977); D.C. Sircar, 'Feudalism and Coins', *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, vol. XIII (1980-82), p. 103 ff.

[251] Cf. pp. 63-64. See also J.S. Deyell, *Living without Silver: The Monetary History of Early Medieval North India* (PhD thesis, Madison, 1982), 2 vols, esp. I, pp. 13-15, 22 & 44: ' . . it can be stated with confidence that there was no shortage of currency in the Gurjara Pratihara empire of the late 8th-late 10th century A.D., relative to other historical epochs'.

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d. Al-Ballaharā (Rāshṭrakūṭas)

Al-Ballaharā is the Arabicized form of the Sanskrit title of *Vallabharāja* (Prakṛt *Ballaha-rāya*) which was applied to several of the kings of a dynasty ruling in the Deccan from about 743 to 974 A.D., with their capital at Mānkīr or Mānyakheṭa (present Malkhed, about hundred km south-east of Sholapur), a dynasty otherwise known as the *Rāshṭrakūṭas*. The name *Rāshṭrakūṭa* itself is an epithet, meaning 'of a great and excellent realm', while *Vallabha*, 'beloved lord and husband', appears to be a title which the dynasty took over from their predecessors the Cālukyas.

It is likely, although not certain, that Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍā's campaign to the Deccan was instrumental in the Rāshṭrakūṭas' supplanting their former masters, the Cālukyas of Badami (or Western Cālukyas) as overlords of the Deccan. At the time that the Gurjara-Pratīhāras exercised hegemony in North India, the *Ballaharā* king became the paramount overlord of India as a whole. Such paramountcy, it appears from Sanskrit and Arabic sources alike, the dynasty retained for about two hundred years, until the late tenth century, when they lost it to the Cola kings Rājarāja (985-1004) and Rājendra I (1012-1044), while in the Deccan they were supplanted by a later Cālukya dynasty and by the Paramāras of Malwa.

The first Rāshṭrakūṭa king who, having made himself master of Mahārāshṭra in the period 733-53, took over the title of the Cālukyas was Dantidurga.[252] Dantidurga's successor Kṛshṇarāja I (c. 758-73) was the builder of the Kailāsa temple at Ellora which was soon to become the symbol of the Rāshṭrakūṭa all-India paramountcy. Under Kṛshṇarāja I, the Rāshṭrakūṭa dominion was extended over what were the modern states of Hyderabad and Mysore. In later records however it is Dantidurga who is credited with having assumed the supreme sovereignty and the imperial title from the Cālukyas and 'humbled the circle of proud kings from the Himālayas down to the limit of Setu (i.e. Adam's Bridge)'.[253] In actual fact, Govinda III (793-814) expanded the dynasty's power in the south and north, from Malwa to Kāñcī, subjecting the

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[252] Majumdar, *Imperial Kanauj*, pp. ix, 1-18; A.S. Altekar, *Rāshtrakūṭas and their times* (Poona, 1934); R.G. Bhandarkar, *The Early History of the Deccan* (Calcutta, 1928); Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrisi*, pp. 135, 138; A. Goswami, *The Art of the Rashtrakutas* (Bombay, 1958).

[253] *Epigraphica Indica*, vol. XVIII (1925-26), p. 252.

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lesser kings of these areas and engaging in a triangular contest with the Gurjara-Pratīhāras and the Pālas. The Pāla hegemony in the north was soon broken by the Rāshṭrakūṭa advance to the Vindhyas. But matrimonial ties developed between the two dynasties, as they did with the Colas of South India. Kanauj appears to have been occupied by the Rāshṭrakūṭas in the early ninth century, and again in 916 A.D., allowing them to underscore their pre-eminence among Indian kings. In the south, Rāshṭrakūṭa power reached its zenith in about 965 A.D., when a large part of the Cola kingdom was occupied. The temples of Kṛshṇeshvara and Gaṇḍamārtaṇḍātya at Rāmeshvaram, in effect, proclaim the Rāshṭrakūṭa conquest of the extreme south of the peninsula. Remarkably, most of the Rāshṭrakūṭa monuments are found at Ellora (*Ilāpura*), with nothing corresponding at Malkhed, and it has been suggested that the early Rāshṭrakūṭa capital was located in the vicinity of the Ellora caves in the time of Dantidurga, while a new capital was established at Mānkīr in about 916. Perhaps the early capital was at Mayura Khindi or Markhind (in Nasik district). However that may be, the monuments at the cave shrines of Ellora and Elephanta represent the culmination of the schools of cave architecture and plastic art which began with the Gupta dynasty. From Gupta times we know the comparatively simple temple types with flat roof (e.g. at Sanchi or Deogarh). This style was further developed in the monuments with religious sculpture of the Cālukyas of Badami, and then in the cave temples, monolithic shrines, and structural temples of the Pallavas (such as at Mahabalipuram and Kāñcī). The Rāshṭrakūṭa kings, upholders of Shaiva, Vaishnava and Shakta cults – but still Jaina in one case – perfected all of these Hindu architectural and plastic forms.

The Arabic geographers from the mid-ninth to the second half of the tenth century without exception mention the *Ballaharā* king as the greatest of the kings of *al-Hind*. 'The kings of *al-Hind* are not subject to a single king: each of them alone possesses authority in his own country; but the *Ballaharā* is the king of kings (*malik al-mulūk*) of *al-Hind*'.[254] '. . . *Ballaharā* is the title of the kings of these people . . . their domain extends from the coast of the Kumkam (Konkan) up to *aṣ-Ṣīn*. Around him there are numerous kings which make war upon him,

[254] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. 23.

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but he is on top of them . . . This *Ballaharā* is the most noble (king) of *al-Hind*, and all acknowledge his nobility (*sharf*). If all (other) kings of *al-Hind* freely exercise their own authority (*mutafarrid*) they at least acknowledge this, and when the envoys of the *Ballaharā* arrive they make before them an act of adoration as a mark of consideration for their master'.[255] Similarly, Ibn Khordādbhih writes at about the same time, the mid-ninth century: 'The greatest . . . and mightiest king of *al-Hind* is the *Ballaharā*, who is the king of kings (*malik al-mulūk*)'.[256] And Masʿūdī says, about a century later: 'The most powerful king in *al-Hind* of our time is the *Ballaharā*, king of the city of Mānkīr . . . the greatest centre (of the country). . . . This was the name of the first sovereign (of this kingdom), but it has become the dynastic title of his successors on the throne of Mānkīr and so it remained until the present . . . Most of the kings of *al-Hind* turn their faces towards him while they are praying and prostrate (*ṣalla*) themselves before his ambassadors when they arrive at his court.'[257]

The same authors dwell upon the Rāshṭrakūṭa kings' exceptional wealth and the splendour of his court at Mānkīr. 'He owns horses, numerous elephants and great riches'.[258] 'The *Ballaharā* has innumerable (infantry) armies and he has elephants'.[259] 'He has a large kingdom, and his country has vast stretches of cultivated lands, abundant commerce and plentiful resources. He receives large amounts of revenues and his wealth is enormous'.[260] Special attention is given to the kings' large numbers of elephants and the idols decorated with gold and precious stones. 'The *Ballaharā* lives in the city of Mānkīr. This city is forty parasangs in length, is made of teak, bamboo, and other sorts of wood. It is said that there are a million elephants there to transport the goods of the people. In the king's own stable there are sixty thousand elephants, and one hundred and twenty thousand elephants belong to the cloth-bleachers there. In the idolhouse, there are about twenty thousand idols made of a variety of materials, such as gold, silver, iron, copper, brass, and ivory, as also of crushed stones adorned with precious jewels . . . In it there is also an idol made of gold, which is twelve cubits

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255 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
256 De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, pp. 16, 67.
257 Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, pp. 82, 84.
258 Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. 12.
259 Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 85.
260 Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 57. Idrisi appears to reflect an earlier description here, probably one of the ninth-century author Ibn Khordādbhih.

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in height. It is on a throne of gold, under the centre of a golden dome, adorned with jewels, pearls and precious stones'.[261]

But how do we explain the Ballaharā's great wealth and position of pre-eminence in *al-Hind*? There can be no doubt that this derived from the favourable position of the kingdom of Gujarat and the Western Deccan in the maritime trade with the Islamic world in the ninth and tenth centuries. This favourable position of Gujarat in long-distance trade first of all reflects itself in the long survival of the trading religions of Jainism and Buddhism. Buddhism in the Rāshṭrakūṭa territories flourished up to the end of the ninth century, while Jainism remained influential in this part of Western India even longer. Opportunities in trade also explain the presence of Parsis on the westcoast in the same period.[262] A Jewish trading diaspora developed in many parts to the south of Broach.[263] Even more important were the enclaves of Muslim traders which, after the conquest of Sind and the foundation of Baghdad, in the later eighth and in the ninth and tenth centuries linked Gujarat and the Konkan to the Persian Gulf and Oman.[264] 'No king had more friendship for the Arabs'. Most of the India trade passed along or through Gujarat and the Ballaharā's domains. From the Konkan itself came the vast amounts of teakwood which the Arabs needed for shipbuilding. Other locally produced items were aromatics, perfumes, bamboo, indigo, myrobalans, red kino, ginger, and, especially important, cotton cloth of every colour.[265]

Gujarat's future leading role in Indian Ocean trade thus seems to be adumbrated in the period of the Rāshṭrakūṭas – with the difference that the overseas trade was still largely in the hands of foreigners and not yet of Gujarati Muslims or Hindus. Given the overwhelming importance of maritime trade on the already heavily 'Persianized' Gujarati westcoast, the Hindu-brahmanical restoration was of relatively little impact and less abrupt in the Ballaharā's domain. Brahman immigration from Madhyadesha to Gujarat, especially Lāṭa, did occur, but was, to all appearance, not massive. And although the Arab geographers do not fail to make clear that from Kambāya to Ṣaymūr the villages were close to each other and much land was under cultivation, the expansion of

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[261] Flügel, *Kitāb al-Fihrisht*, II, p. 346.
[262] Cf. pp. 104-8.
[263] Cf. p. 90 ff.
[264] Cf. pp. 68-69.
[265] Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. 51, note 6; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 67; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrisi*, pp. 36, 57, 63; Flügel, *Kitāb al-Fihrisht*, II, p. 346.

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agriculture receives less emphasis in the epigraphical sources than for instance in Bengal, or North India. Altogether, the kingdom of the Ballaharā, in spite of its pre-eminence in *al-Hind*, is somewhat elusive, in the way that maritime empires (e.g. Shrīvijaya) always tend to be.[266] What we can follow in some detail in this part of early medieval India is the evolution of the urban pattern along the coast and inland, but not the growth of rural settlement and the sedentarization of mobile groups. Coastal towns, it becomes clear, provided an outlet for a vast rural hinterland however, to which they were connected by unpaved road systems along which merchants and travellers had no means to perform their journeys except by carts. 'They load their belongings on them, and the bullocks draw them and carry them wherever they wish to go. Every bullock cart has a driver and a guide'.[267] *Kambāya*, *Sindān*, *Saymūr* and *Qāmuhul* thus stand out as important trading cities of the Ballaharā (although they are sometimes reckoned to belong to Sind).[268] *Somnāth*, in close neighbourhood of *Veraval*, on a narrow peninsula in Saurāshṭra, was famous not only for its temples but also for its maritime commerce.[269] According to Biruni, 'the reason why in particular Somnāth has become so famous is that it was a harbour for seafaring people, and a station for those who went to and fro between Sofāla in the country of the Zanj and China'.[270] Then, *Asāwal* and *Khābīrūn* were very populated trading towns of great wealth.[271] *Asāwal* is the ancient Āshāpalli, on the site of which modern Ahmadabad was founded in the early fifteenth century by Ahmad Shah of Gujarat. *Barūj* or 'Broach' is described as a very large town, with brick buildings, where trade is carried on with the Muslim world and China.[272] It was connected with the inland town of *Nahrwāra* or *Aṇahilvāda* (also *Aṇahilpaṭṭan*), which became the capital of the later Calukyas, but already in the tenth century was frequented by Muslim traders.[273] *Dolqa* (Dholka, to the southwest of Ahmadabad), situated on a river, probably rose with Nahr-

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[266] For Shrīvijaya, see pp. 351-5.

[267] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 58-59.

[268] Cf. p. 178.

[269] H. Cousens, *Somanāth and Other Mediaeval Temples in Kathiawad* (Calcutta, 1931).

[270] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, II, p. 104.

[271] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, II, p. 209; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 357; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 54, 57, 59, 77.

[272] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 58.

[273] *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 84-85, 139.

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wāra.[274] *Janāwal* was another inland town which was important in trade, probably situated on the Narmada.[275] *Tānah*, 'a magnificent town on the bank of a large estuary, into which boats and vessels enter and where goods are unloaded', was the capital of the Konkan, on the seacoast, obviously of great importance in the teakwood trade, and connected overland with Dhār, in Malwa.[276] Sūbāra was another town in the region of Bassayn, about twenty-nine km from Tānah, near the coast, 'with all kinds of commerce'.[277]

We have shown in chapter II that a great expansion of the India trade followed in the wake of the Arab conquest of Sind and the foundation of Baghdad, in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. The Rāshṭrakūṭa's rise to supremacy in *al-Hind* coincides in time with and appears causally related to this upsurge of trade through the Persian Gulf and along India's westcoast. The Rāshṭrakūṭa decline, in the late tenth century, also synchronizes exactly with the collapse of the Persian Gulf trading system, first gradually, then rapidly in the eleventh century, when the India trade shifted to Fatimid Egypt and the Red Sea. From the Red Sea however the links with Malabar and the Coromandel coasts – which were to fall to the Colas – were given much greater emphasis than Gujarat. Gujarat diminished in importance, even though Western India, Gujarat and Sind did not fall out of the orbit of Fatimid trade altogether. The tenth-century *Tāwika* coinage, originating in Egypt, of pure silver and accepted everywhere, tells a different story.[278] Clearly also, the dynasty of the Later Cālukyas of Gujarat profited from the trade with Islam.

It is all the more striking that not a single Rāshṭrakūṭa coin has been discovered so far, nor a single coin of the Cālukyas, and only a few gold coins and six silver coins of the Later Cālukya king Siddharaja Jayasimha of the eleventh-twelfth century.[279] Clearly, in a prosperous commercial region like Gujarat, this means that in the seventh to

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[274] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[275] *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 58-59, 84-85; Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, p. 357.

[276] Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 203; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 62-63.

[277] Kramers and Wiet, *Ibn Hauqal*, II, p. 312; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 40, 54-55, 57, 104; Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 209; Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, I, pp. 402-3.

[278] Cf. p. 175.

[279] B.J. Sandesara, 'Weights, Measures and Coinage of Medieval Gujarat', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, VIII (1946), p. 138; U.P. Shah, 'Coinage of Early Chalukyas of Anahillavada Patan', *ibid.*, XVI (1954), pt.2, p. 239.

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eleventh century there was no indigenous coinage tradition. But, again, it does not mean that it was demonetized. In fact, all the evidence shows that there was in Gujarat a stupendous amount of unminted gold and silver. As everywhere in India, considerable amounts of these precious metals were immobilized in idols or temple decoration. The term *suvarṇa*, probably indicating 'gold' bullion, is however often used in the Rāshṭrakūṭa landcharters, for instance when it is said in the Cambay plates of Govinda IV that a certain number of villages yields 'an annual revenue of seven lacs of *suvarnas*'.[280] There is no reason to assume that 'this is just an estimate of the annual income in terms of money' and that 'probably assessment was made in terms of cash, but realisation in kind', as does Sharma.[281] In the trade of Islam, India and the Indian Ocean were fully integrated in the domain of the *dīnār* and *dirham*, the universal gold and silver coinage of the early medieval world. Next to these, silver pieces of a particular weight circulated in the kingdom of the Ballaharā in such volume that they drew the attention of the Arab geographers. 'In his kingdom the monetary means (*māl*) are constituted by the *ṭāṭarīya dirhams* which each weigh 1½ *dirham* and are minted as the coin of the king'.[282] Then again, the Muslim world made good its trade balance with India not only with gold and silver coinage and bullion but also with barter and payment in kind.[283] But the fact that Gujarat and coastal Western India were so closely tied into the Islamic economy by itself explains sufficiently that it did not evolve her own coinage tradition. The dominance of the Islamic *dīnār* and *dirham* resolves this paradox.

e. Maʿbar (Coḻa-maṇḍalam)

In the final quarter of the tenth and in the eleventh century, the paramount kingship of India shifted from the Rāshṭrakūṭas of the Deccan to the Coḻas on the *Coḻa-Maṇḍalam* or 'Coromandel' coast in South India, the area which the Arabs knew as *Maʿbar*. This shift, as we will attempt to show in the following, can again be related to global changes occurring in this time: the deterioration of the Persian Gulf trade and the Abbasid caliphate on the one hand, and the ascendancy of China

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280 *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. VII (1914), no. 6, 11.47-49.
281 *Indian Feudalism*, pp. 132-3.
282 Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. 12; and cf. Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 170.
283 See p. 63.

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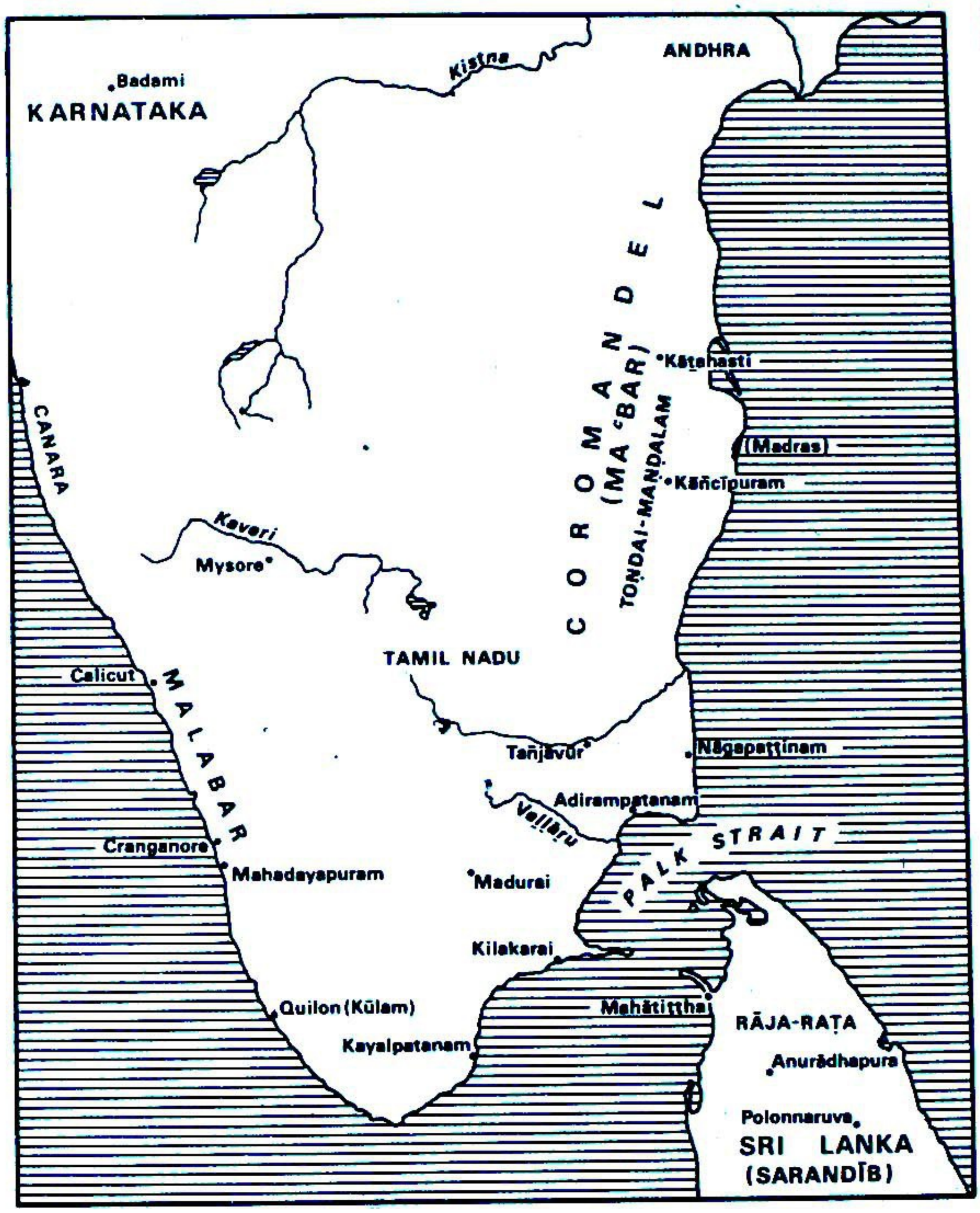

South India and Sri Lanka.

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under the Sung and the sudden, spectacular expansion of Chinese maritime commerce, giving greater weight to Southeast Asia and the Archipelago, on the other hand.

All Arabic sources of the ninth to eleventh century regard the Coromandel, with Malabar and the Maldives and Sri Lanka, as the southern part of *al-Hind*, while counting the kings of the area – the Pallavas and (from the tenth century) the Colas – among the 'Hindu' dynasties of the subcontinent. In South India, the blending of two originally distinct cultures, Dravidian and Aryan, had begun in the Sangam age. Vedic ritualism, next to Buddhism and Jainism, were in vogue in South India from the pre-Christian era onwards.[284] 'Sanskritization' was well-advanced several centuries before the Pallavas rose to power and we are presented with the first temples in the fourth century A.D.[285] But we know that the Pallavas gave a further great impetus to the process of assimilation of Sanskrit culture and institutions. Particularly striking is the development of secular brahman power in association with land control throughout rural South India, and the proliferation of brahman villages known as *brahmadeya* and *agrahāra*.[286] There was, beginning in the same time, an infiltration of brahman priests and preceptors from outside.[287] As in Malabar in the late ninth century we find kings encouraging the immigration of brahmans to further their dynastic interests by establishing and disseminating Sanskrit and Indo-Aryan forms of rule. Many South-Indian brahmans contrived to trace their origin to Āryāvarta, even though the vast majority was Dravidian throughout the Pallava and Coḷa periods, consisting of local priests and the like sponsored by the kings to adopt a *varṇa* identity.[288] Brahmanism and the Tamil devotional cult (*bhakti*) gradually took over from the sixth-seventh centuries. But for most of the first millennium, Jainism and Buddhism also retained prominence, with Kāñcī preserving links with the Theravada Buddhism of Lower Burma and Sri Lanka. Under the Coḷas, Buddhism largely disappeared, while Jainism lingered, but even then the Tamil devotional cult retained a strong imprint of the heterodox religions. In social terms the conflict between brahmanism and

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[284] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cōḷas* (Madras, 1955), pp. 63, 93.
[285] B. Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi, 1980), p. 66.
[286] *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 52-53.
[287] M. Liceria, 'Emergence of Brāhmaṇas as Landed Intermediaries in Karnataka: A.D. 1000-1300', *The Indian Historical Review*, I, 1 (March, 1974), p. 29.
[288] Cf. Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, p. 100.

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Jainism/Buddhism was not as clearly expressed as has sometimes been made out.Material support for Jainism came from rural areas as well as from the cosmopolitan population of the towns. And the *bhakti* movement arose in an urban milieu before it became associated with the brahmanical restoration in the rural areas.[289] Both Jainism and Buddhism continued to receive Coḻa patronage in a number of places. In the port of Nāgapaṭṭinam, for instance, a new and large Buddhist *vihāra* was established in the eleventh century, next to a Shiva temple of older standing, apparently to accommodate the large number of indigenous and foreign Buddhist traders of the port.[290] This Buddhist *vihāra* in Nāgapaṭṭinam was also endowed by the ruler of Shrīvijaya in the early eleventh century. Earlier, Nāgapaṭṭinam had become known as a *bhakti* centre of the Shaivas and Vaishnavas, but the Coḻa kings Rājarāja and Rājendra, then Kulottunga I, drew the port into a vast trading network, which in the eleventh century comprised Burma, Sri Lanka, Shrīvijaya, and China, and the persistence and revival of Theravada Buddhism may be attributed to this.[291] Donations to Buddhist *vihāras* or Jain shrines accompanied trading diplomacy.

The building of structural stone temples, while beginning in the seventh century, was also greatly fostered in the tenth century. The outstanding monument here is the Rājarājeshvara temple at Tañjāvūr, built by Rājarāja, the 'king of kings' in the eleventh century. This and other temples of great magnitude were dedicated to the royal Shiva cult. Rājarāja and Rājendra's reign were not only a period of rapid 'imperial' and commercial expansion but also a period of the consolidation of the *bhakti* movement and the standardization of the canonical works of South-Indian Shaivism.[292] It was a period in which the institutional framework of sectarian Hinduism was strengthened and a new doctrinal synthesis was achieved. The systematization of the Vaishnava canon of the 'Four Thousand Sacred Hymns' took place at about the same time.

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[289] R. Champakalakshmi, 'Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India: A Review Article', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XVIII (1981), nos. 3 & 4, p. 413; idem, 'Religious Conflict in the Tamil Country: A Reappraisal of Epigraphic Evidence', *Journal of the Epigraphic Society of India*, vol. V (1978).

[290] R. Champakalakshmi, 'Growth of urban centres in South India: Kuḍamūkku-Paḻaiyārai, the twin-city of the Cōḻas', *Studies in History*, vol. I, no. 1 (1979), p. 26.

[291] R. Champakalakshmi, 'Urbanization in Medieval Tamil Nadu', in: S. Bhattacharya and R. Thapar (eds), *Situating Indian History* (Delhi, 1986), p. 55.

[292] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Development of Religion in South India* (Bombay, 1963); S.R. Balasubrahmanyam, *Middle Chola Temples* (Faridabad, 1975).

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The principle of hereditary monarchy we find established in South India about seven hundred years before the imperial Colas. The earliest Cola kings of which we have evidence are those mentioned in the Sangam literature of the first few centuries A.D., where they figure next to two other dynasties of Tamil kings, the Ceras and the Pāṇḍyas.[293] According to tradition the Cola country comprised the land between two rivers of the same name, Vellāṟu, in the north and south, the sea on the east and Kōṭṭaikarai in the west.[294] Already then, South India is known to have played a role in the commerce between the West and the Far East and China. By Ptolemy's time Roman trade with India and China was highly developed and South India acted as intermediary in the trade with China. The transition from the Sangam age to the next period of three centuries, in which the Pāṇḍyas of the line of Kaḍungan and the Pallavas of the Simhavishṇu line divided the Tamil country between them, is hidden from our view.[295] The earliest records of the Pallavas, of the fourth century, are inscriptions in Prakrit, followed by inscriptions in Sanskrit and subsequently in both Sanskrit and Tamil. These register the rise of the Pallavas from the position of a local dynasty at Kāñcīpuram to the first important kingship of Tamilnadu. The Pāṇḍyas had established themselves at Madurai, further south, by the sixth century, and here they continued to hold power for many centuries. The *Cera* people of Malabar at the same time were ruled by the Perumal dynasty, maintaining close contact with the Pallavas. It was the Pāṇḍyas, not the Colas, who contended for power in the southern peninsula with the Pallavas. But the Pallavas, up to the end of the ninth century, provide the nascent forms of many of the institutions of the following Cola period.[296] Also, by the tenth century, the Coromandel plain between the two deltaic regions of the Kistna-Godavari and the Kaveri had become a region of settled agriculture.[297] Much of the Pallava heartland of the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam had been opened up in Pallava times, and large-scale tank irrigation projects had converted the central Tamil plain into a densely populated region of reliable cultivation, a condition which the older riverine tracts of the southern Tamil plain had attained even earlier.[298] In this period, the Pallavas derived their

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293 Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 45-46.
294 Nilakanta Sastri, *Cōḷas*, p. 18.
295 *Ibid.*, p. 100.
296 Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 63-65.
297 *Ibid.*, p. 69.
298 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

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revenue largely from rural sources, while mercantile and urban institutions were weakly developed, the navy was still inconsiderable, and metallic currency was restricted, as in Roman times, to foreign trade.

While in the Deccan the Cālukyas were superseded by the Rāshṭrakūṭas in the mid-eighth century, the Pallavas persisted up to the end of the ninth century, when their territory was conquered by the Coḻa kings of Tañjāvūr, Āditya I (c. 870-906) and Parantaka I (c. 906-953), who now emerged from obscurity after several centuries of Pallava dominance. The Coḻas in fact rose to power while playing off the Pallavas against the Pāṇḍyas. At the accession of Parantaka, the Coḻa kingdom embraced the entire country between Kāḻahasti and present-day Madras in the north and the Kaveri in the south, with the exception of the Mysore table-land and the coastal strip in the west.[299] The Coḻa residential stronghold was then Paḻaiyāṟai, the environs of which were developed by erecting temples richly endowed with land and gold. Under Rājarāja I (985-1014) and his son Rājendra (1012-44), the Coḻa dominion was expanded further, now reaching even beyond South India. Rājarāja first directed campaigns against the Pāṇḍyas and their allies the Ceras of Kerala.[300] Īḻamaṇḍaḻam (Sri Lanka) is included among the conquests of Rājarāja from 993 onwards.[301] Then came a part of Mysore and the Gaṇga country, while Veṇgī (Andhra Pradesh) was contended between the Coḻas and the Later Cālukyas.[302] The last of Rājarāja's conquests are said to have been the Maldives, 'the old islands of the sea numbering twelve thousand'.[303] These same conquests were consolidated by Rājendra I and they were extended to the Pāṇḍya and Kerala countries, the whole of Madras and Andhra, other parts of Mysore, and the island of Sri Lanka.[304] The Rāshṭrakūṭa-Cālukya capital of Mānkīr was invaded and its role transferred to Kalyāṇi.[305] Through the country of the Kalingas, Oḍḍas and Telungas, the Coḻa king marched to the Ganges and Bengal, performing what is called a *digvijaya*, from which he brought back the water of the Ganges to erect a 'liquid pillar of victory' in the form of the *Coḻaganga* tank in his capital.[306] There is no doubt that the

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299 Nilakanta Sastri, *Cōḷas*, p. 121.
300 *Ibid.*, pp. 169-71.
301 *Ibid.*, pp. 172-3.
302 *Ibid.*, pp. 174-82.
303 *Ibid.*, p. 183.
304 *Ibid.*, pp. 194, 199, 202.
305 *Ibid.*, p. 198.
306 *Ibid.*, p. 210.

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Cola 'empire', thus created, became the most powerful Indian state in the eleventh century. Under Rājendra, the Colas extended their expeditions into Southeast Asia, to Burma and Sumatra. Here no permanent conquests resulted however. Direct Cola overlordship remained, even in the eleventh century, restricted to the Coromandel plain, while the centre of Cola power remained the Kaveri basin.[307] Telingana, the Bombay Karnataka (Bidar, Gulbarga, Bijapur, Belgaum, etc.) and the Vengi or Kistna-Godavari delta were dominated by warring chieftains and in a cultural sense belonged to the Deccan rather than South India; here it was not before the middle of the twelfth century that agricultural settlement had proceeded far enough for a settled state to emerge for the first time.

In order to be able to understand the nature of Cola expansion we will have to look at its eleventh-century context. Why did the Colas rise to imperial status at that particular time? How did global changes affect South India at the time, and how can we situate the Colas in the development of the early medieval world which we have already outlined? Before addressing this problem directly, let us first briefly survey the *status quaestionis*.

Ever since a South-Indian historian, K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, put forward the idea that the Colas developed a centralized, bureaucratic state – superior to other Indian polities of the age – , a number of other historians of South-India, foremost Burton Stein, exercised themselves to salvage allegedly unique or distinguishing features of the South-Indian 'macro region'. Thus, Stein proposed that the South-Indian state was a peasant state – localized, weakly integrated and relatively isolated – , in some essential ways similar to the pattern of Sharma's 'feudalism' of North India, but with the important difference that Stein accredits this peasant state with a positive moral dimension and that in the South the pattern does not change in the eleventh century but only in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, and then still slowly and hesitatingly.[308] In Stein's unhistorical view, South India remained a cushy backwater which did not conform to Northern 'military fiscalist' standards until the eighteenth century. The medieval South-Indian states,

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[307] Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 39-41, 57-60.

[308] For Nilakanta Sastri's view, cf. *Cōḷas*; and *A History of South India* (Madras, 1966); for Stein's view, cf. *Peasant State and Society*, esp. pp. 4, 8, 13-14, 23-24, 46-55, 70, 90, 172, 214-15, 257, 265.

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those of the Cola and Vijayanagara dynasties, he claims, were 'segmentary states' (with a term borrowed from the Africanist A. Southall), in which 'political authority and control were local in several crucial ways'. In South India there was an absence of effective, bureaucratic government and revenue transfers were largely quite localized. The 'segments' or *nadus*, the structurally and morally coherent units which make up the 'segmentary state', are prior to the 'formal state'. Sovereignty, the sacred kingship of the Colas, is essentially moral, and expresses itself in the ritual idiom of a 'dharmic universe', with only in 'core territories' a modicum of coercive power. This is the case even under the 'imperial' Colas. In fact, according to Stein, the segmentary state 'is perhaps best exemplified by the Chola state of Rajaraja the Great and his son, Rajendra'.[309] Even in the eleventh century, at the height of Cola power, the state was 'integrated primarily by the symbolic or ritual sovereignty which attached to the king, not by the effective power possessed by him'.[310] Such ritual sovereignty is expressed in inscriptions, especially in those which recorded gifts to brahmans and temples. The alliance of sections of brahmans with 'localized peasant folk' and the dominant land-controlling population of Shudra rank was the primary cultural and political nexus of the South-Indian macro region which was under Cola sovereignty. Another distinctive feature of this macro region was 'the primacy of assemblies of all kinds in the governance of the numerous localized societies'.[311] The uniquely South-Indian situation of powerful brahman secular authority, associated with land control (especially the brahman villages or brahmadeyas), together with the narrow territorial segmentation of peasant society which inhibited widespread marriage networks, precluded, in the absence of a conquering élite, the formation of a high status warrior or 'kshatriya' caste with a kin-linked organization of warrior groups as in North India. It is not that South India was entirely unaware of the *varṇas* and the place of the kshatriyas in the Indo-Aryan order; the royal lineages of the Pallavas, Colas and Vijayanagara *cakra-vartins* claimed this status and thereby testify to the contrary. In Malabar warrior lineages did emerge and ruled over larger territorial units; these were the Nayars, who, if not as shudras, were regarded as kshatriyas. But this was not replicated in the Cola dominions. There the alliance of brahmans and

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309 Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, p. 46.
310 *Ibid.*
311 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

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dominant peasants remained the keystone. Of course, under the Cola, warfare and violence also occurred, in the defence against hill and forest people, for instance, and in the form of pillaging expeditions far beyond the Coromandel. Excluding Malabar, it is not before the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries however that the political structure of the macro region is altered by new forms of 'warrior control' spreading from beyond the northern fringes of the region, and subsequently establishing itself as far as the southern parts. Even then, these incoming warriors were not recognized as kshatriyas and the segmentary social substratum of South India imposed itself on their political networks. The same warrior élite was still 'shallow-rooted' in the eighteenth century. It came to constitute the *pāḷaiyakkārar* or 'poligar' class, the 'men of military encampments', which was liquidated by the British Company – a class wholly different from the Awadh talukdars or Bengal zamindars in so far as it had not developed viable client relationships and had failed to alter the earlier structure of society. Under the Cola this structure, with its hundreds of *nadus* and chiefs, thousands of gods and local cults, hundreds of local taxes and dues, went completely unchallenged. Transcending the prevalent particularism was merely, according to Stein, the ritual sovereignty of the Cola dynasty. Eleventh-century Cola expansion did in no way compromise the segmentary nature of the Cola state, nor did the rise of monumental temple construction contradict its terms.

These two latter points are further elaborated by G.W. Spencer, an author who otherwise follows Stein's model of a peasant state and society.[312] According to Spencer, such a central shrine as the Rājarājeshvara temple at Tañjāvūr, completed under the direction and patronage of Rājarāja I, does not presuppose the prior development of a great kingdom. Patronage to temples like the one at Tañjāvūr, 'far from representing the self-glorification of a despotic ruler, was in fact a method adopted by an arbitrary ruler to enhance his very uncertain power'. The second point elaborated by Spencer is that Cola expansion beyond the Coromandel took the form of mere plundering raids. This is already suggested by Stein in the following words: 'Different from this extension of Coromandel authority over territories close to the Kaveri were

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[312] G.W. Spencer, 'Religious Networks and Regional Influence in Eleventh Century South India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. XII (1969), pp. 42-56; idem, 'The Politics of Plunder: The Cholas in Eleventh-Century Ceylon', *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. XXXV, no. 3 (May, 1976), pp. 405-19; idem, *The Politics of Expansion: The Chola Conquest of Sri Lanka and Sri Vijaya* (Delhi, 1983).

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the Chola actions as far afield as the Raichur Doab to the north-west, the Mahanadi basin in the north-east, Malaya, and Sri Lanka. These were pillaging raids meant to yield rich booty and nothing more permanent. Such far-ranging raids were a part of the pattern of Indian overlordship and a central aspect of Indian kingship. . . . the wealth won in such daring raids was utilized to widen the Chola power base in the central Coromandel region'.[313] In other words, because of the weak, segmentary power base of the Cola kings at home, raiding had to be resorted to as a supplementary means of income acquisition. These two elements of the model – a highly unlikely combination as they may be – are logically dependent on one another. Stein presents it as a structural feature of the segmentary state.[314] That such 'raids' occurred in the eleventh century and not later or earlier is not considered to be a relevant fact. Spencer sets out to highlight the 'more abrasive' side of the Cola ventures in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, attempting to show 'that organized plundering activity was a more important politico-economic instrument in the traditional Indian state than most historians have hitherto acknowledged'.[315] Cola predatory expansion 'gave priority to the quick-return profits of plunder over the long-term but problematic profits of territorial conquest and consolidation'.[316] All Cola expeditions and military campaigns in southern and eastern India, Sri Lanka and in Shrivijaya, during the late tenth and early eleventh century were basically plundering raids issuing from a 'loosely integrated political system' seeking new sources of portable wealth and attempting to extradite its internal conflict to or beyond its frontier. Spencer equally does not explain why these expeditions occurred in the eleventh century, but assumes merely that Rājarāja and Rājendra provided 'vigorous royal leadership' to sustain the momentum of military expansion. The Cola expedition to Shrivijaya in 1025 is seen by Spencer as 'the ultimate expression of its predatory aspect'.[317] Such plunder raids however could not prevent that 'the problems inherent in South-Indian dynastic politics remained the same'. Strictly speaking there is a taxation-plunder

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[313] *Peasant State and Society*, pp. 40-41.

[314] Similarly, K.R. Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Cōḷas* (New Delhi, 1980) echoes: 'Like the emphasis upon ritual and symbolism, so too the emphasis upon long-distance plundering expeditions must have been largely compensatory, offsetting a weakly-integrated political system' (p. 12).

[315] 'Politics of Plunder', p. 405.

[316] *Ibid.*

[317] *Ibid.*, p. 414.

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continuum, but, while the conventional view is that taxation is the most important of the two, Spencer finds that 'we can understand the dynamics of the Chola politico-military system – and, by extension, that of many other Indian and non-Indian dynastic states – only if we reverse these priorities'.[318] At the same time, the plundering of neighbours made it possible for the Colas to protect their 'vaguely defined realm' more effectively from being plundered itself. Fundamentally, Spencer, like Stein, sees long-range plundering as a logical corollary of a weakly integrated polity in which resources were systematically drained off by the locally autonomous power of chiefs and villages.

Contrary to the above authors we would like to add a historical dimension to the Cola state by suggesting that in the eleventh century it was going through a rapid transformation which did affect its basic constitution. To be sure, Stein, while normally treating the Cola period as an undifferentiated whole, does give some intimation of change in the eleventh century. There were, he says, 'two factors (which) tended to offset the isolation of the *nadus*' but these could not diminish its integrity.[319] One was the consolidation in the tenth to twelfth centuries of the network of *brahmadeyas* from which emanated a more general and highly organized culture throughout the Cola region. The other factor was the emergence, in the eleventh century, of 'dual social divisions rooted in the numerous *nadu* societies but capable of transcending the isolation of those localities'.[320] Stein refers here to the well-known phenomenon of right (*valangai*)- and left-hand (*idangai*) castes, characteristic of this part of South India. But is it true that this division left the *nadus* unaffected? Most probably it was the left-hand division which acquired a definite identity of its own in the eleventh century, while the long-existing peasant-dominated order then became associated with a right-hand division. The rise of the left-hand division was slow to be registered because the mobile artisan and trader groups which it represented were probably (notwithstanding their ancient background) held in suspicion even after they abandoned the heterodox religions for Shaivism. The artisan and (itinerant) trader groups appear to have broken out of the shackles of a basically agrarian context, improving their collective status, by seizing new opportunities in the eleventh cen-

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318 *Ibid.*, p. 406.
319 *Peasant State and Society*, p. 172.
320 *Ibid.*, p. 173 ff.

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tury offered by the expansion of trade, temple building and a burgeoning economy in general. Hence the crystallization of the dual division, whereby the right-hand castes (mostly Vaishnavas and lower Telugu castes) were primarily associated with agricultural production and local trade in agricultural commodities, while the left-hand castes were associated with mobile artisan production and extensive trade in non-agricultural commodities.[321] It should be noted that these divisions relate to lower castes, linking them in supra-local alliances, while excluding the brahman and high non-brahman castes of South India. The first known reference to a ritually determined dual division of 'left' and 'right' in South-Indian society is found in inscriptions of the first half of the eleventh century.[322] If, however, in the initial period the economic determinants of 'left' and 'right' stand out relatively sharply – as the roots of the division were probably economic – , the initial distinctions became blurred in later times and a highly competitive and conflictuous aspect was added in (post-)Vijayanagara times. By the seventeenth century ritual prerogatives were all-important. But in the eleventh century the rise of this division was associated with urbanization and burgeoning trade on the supra-local level. The two divisions both produced military contingents which were active beyond the Coromandel. Conspicuous in the literature are references to the 'great army' of *valangai* and *idangai* sent by the Colas to Sri Lanka in the eleventh century.[323] We know, furthermore, that after the Colas themselves had departed from Sri Lanka, but still in the eleventh century, there were bodies of Tamil mercenaries employed by the kings of Sri Lanka who called themselves *Velaikkārar* and who were servants of the Aiññurruvar, Valanjīyar or Nānādeshi merchants; these troops were drawn, according to their own statements, from both the 'right' and 'left' blocs of South-Indian non-brahman castes.[324] Clearly, then, by the eleventh century the *nadu* was no longer the basic building bloc of the Cola state but was already structurally undermined.

A second, related, point of criticism relates to Stein's claim that South-Indian society (outside Malabar, and leaving aside the claims of the Pāṇḍya or Cola dynasties of being of Sūryavaṃshī or Candravaṃ-

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[321] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 54.

[322] M. Arokiaswami, *The Kongu Country* (Madras, 1956), p. 272; B.E.F. Beck, 'The Right-Left Division of South Indian Society', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 29 (1970), 391-2; Champakalakshmi, 'Urbanization in Medieval Tamilnadu', p. 51.

[323] Stein, *Peasant State and Society*, p. 188.

[324] Spencer, 'Politics of Plunder', p. 415.

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shī, and of certain *Vel* chieftains of being of Yadava descent) was basically constituted by a brahman-peasant alliance and that no conquering élite or indigenous group arose to take the position of the kshatriyas of Northern India. Here Stein's dichotomy of warrior and peasant is highly misleading, the more so since Stein introduces an element of sharp stratification in the agrarian structure by distinguishing between a 'dominant peasantry' and a 'dependent peasantry'. Now, in Tamilnadu the 'dominant peasantry' were the Veḷḷāḷas – a caste to whom belonged the *nāṭṭar* or leading men of the *nadu* who owned land and performed functions in the state. Not only were the Veḷḷāḷas (or Reḍḍys and Kammas) the landowning communities of South India, but they also formed, in alliance with the brahmans, a ruling stratum which was quite comparable to the Rajputs of the North, even if such high-status communities continued to be regarded as shudras rather than as kshatriyas.[325] In fact, Stein himself suggests that a large portion of Rājarāja's army was raised and commanded by the 'dominant peasantry', in other words by Veḷḷāḷas.[326]

It further appears that from the eleventh century onwards the *nadu*, which originally was largely represented by the dominant Veḷḷāḷa landholding groups, saw increasing participation of other groups like merchants and weavers, who also acquired land, even though the *nadu* did not really shed its character and position of a micro-regional assembly before the arrival of Telugu warriors in the Vijayanagara period.[327] Champakalakshmi is also able to identify officers of a Coḷa 'bureaucracy'.[328] And she points out the important role of the *Valanadu* revenue units, the formation of which is assigned to Rājarāja I and which were reorganized by Kulottunga I, but which Stein omitted from his description of the Coḷa state's *modus operandi*. The *Valanadu* formation and reorganization, it turns out, coincided with two major revenue surveys which were carried out by the two rulers in 1002 and 1086, evidence, according to Champakalakshmi, 'which would support an argument in

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[325] M. Arokiaswami, 'The Origin of the Veḷḷālas', *Journal of Indian History*, XXXIII (1955), pp. 25-29; XXXIV (1956), p. 191 ff; S.Jaiswal, 'Studies in the Social Structure of the Early Tamils', in: R.S. Sharma and V. Jha (eds), *Indian Society: Historical Probings in Memory of D.D. Kosambi* (Delhi, 1974), pp. 130-40; idem, 'Studies in Early Indian Social History: Trends and Possibilities', in: R.S. Sharma (ed.), *Survey of Research in Economic and Social History of India* (Delhi, 1986), p. 65 ff.

[326] *Peasant State and Society*, p. 188.

[327] Champakalakshmi, 'Peasant State and Society', pp. 414-15, 420.

[328] *Ibid.*, pp. 415-16.

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favour of Chola attempts at centralizing revenue arrangements, whatever the agencies of collection'.[329]

Such a conclusion is supported by Kenneth Hall's recent work on the role of merchant assemblies or *nagarams* in Coḻa times.[330] Hall notes specifically that during the reigns of Rājarāja I (985-1014) and Kulottunga I (1070-1118), Coḻa royal authority increased relatively to that of the local governing institutions of the *nadu*, and that in this time 'there were blatant attempts to circumvent the political authority of the *nadu* and its agrarian elite'. Hall shows that each *nadu* had a *nagaram*, interacting with on the one hand the local institutions, with *brahmadeya*, *ur* and *nadu* assemblies, and on the other hand with supra-local institutions, itinerant traders, and the Coḻa state.[331] Like Nilakanta Sastri[332] and Champakalakshmi[333] before him, Hall finds evidence of 'a major royal concern for efficient revenue collection beginning in Rājarāja's reign'.[334] From Rājarāja's reign revenue terms proliferate in the Coḻa inscriptions, suggesting an increased measure of intervention in *nadu* government.

These new patterns of mercantile activity were accompanied by urban growth. If in South India a first period of urbanization coincides with the Sangam age, the early centuries A.D., there is a second period of urbanization coinciding with the Coḻa period, from the ninth to the thirteenth century.[335] These two periods produced two different kinds of urban experience. In the Sangam age the predominant factor was maritime trade, which was then followed by urban decay when maritime trade slackened. By contrast, the urban growth of the Coḻa period was related to the expansion of rural settlement, with temples acquiring the status of landed magnates and giving impetus to urban development. During a slow, century-long process, urban growth under the Coḻas was also accompanied by the growth of the monetary economy, the rise of

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[329] *Ibid.*, p. 417; cf. also Y. Subbarayalu, 'The Cōḷa State', *Studies in History*, vol. IV, 2 (1982), pp. 265-306.

[330] *Trade and Statecraft*; 'Peasant State and Society in Chola Times: A View from the Tirvidaimarudur Urban Complex', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XVIII, nos. 3 & 4 (1981), pp. 393-410.

[331] See also, for similar conclusions, N. Karashima, *South Indian History and Society: Studies from Inscriptions, A.D. 850-1800* (Delhi, 1984), esp. the chapter on 'Integration of Society in Chola Times'.

[332] *Cōḷas*, p. 185.

[333] *Loc.cit.*

[334] 'Peasant State and Society', pp. 407-8.

[335] Champakalakshmi, 'Urbanization in Medieval Tamil Nadu'; idem, 'Growth of urban centers in South India'.

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itinerant merchant guilds and commercial activity which transcended the region into both mainland and insular Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka from the ninth century onwards, leading to the ascendancy of trading groups in a predominantly agrarian society and, again, the rise of coastal towns serving new hinterlands. Trade was promoted by royal policy and conquest, the development of ports and the stimulation of production centres and guild activity. But, again, the Cola period should not be seen as an undifferentiated unit. Itinerant merchant guilds trading with Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka are visible as early as the ninth century but only from the eleventh century are they drawn into a clearly articulated marketing system. From the eleventh century also, the *nagarams* were integrated into a wider network of interregional and overseas trade. Eṛivīrapaṭṭaṇas or 'chartered mercantile towns' began to appear from the eleventh century only. The eleventh and early twelfth centuries were marked by a conspicuous increase in *nagarams* and by specialization in marketing and trade. Due in particular to contact with Sri Lanka a regular gold currency emerged by the middle of the tenth century.[336] Gold and other high-value (religious) gifts by rulers, merchants or other members of élite groups increase in the eleventh century but dwindle considerably after the mid-twelfth. The Coḷas issued coins of gold, silver and copper. Temple records show that next to lumps of gold, weighed by the *kalañju* standard, gold coin was in use for the purchase of land or as gifts for feeding brahmans and ascetics. Gold coin appears to be gradually replacing the use of the metal by weight in the eleventh century, without ever leading to the complete suspension of the latter however.

Most importantly, South India's increased involvement, from the late tenth century, in long-distance trade was concomitant with a change in Coḷa policy. Expansion and conquest in the Southern Karnataka, first, aimed at the establishment of trade links between the Karnataka and Tamilnadu and control of the routes along which moved the Ayyāvaḷe and Nānādeshis.[337] The conquest and occupation for about eight decades in the late tenth and eleventh century of Sri Lanka also served to enhance trade relations with the island, intensifying and extending pre-existing contacts and Tamil mercantile enterprise.[338] As we have al-

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[336] B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Coins and Currency Systems in South India* (New Delhi, 1977), pp. 52 ff, 122 ff, 136 ff.

[337] Champakalakshmi, 'Urbanization in Medieval Tamil Nadu', p. 55.

[338] *Ibid.*

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ready seen (p. 80), Sri Lanka's role in international commerce had increased sufficiently by the first half of the sixth century to have Persian trading establishments. Idrisi writes about *Sarandīb* as 'a large and well-known island', where rubies, crystal pieces, pearls and many types of precious stones and diamonds are found, a variety of scents and perfumes, aromatics, aloes-wood, the 'musk-producing animal' (deer) and the civet cat, and where rice, coconuts and sugercane are grown.[339] The island had become studded with towns and trading centres where the Chinese, Jewish, Christians, and Muslims lived next to the Sinhalese and Tamils, the latter three groups even providing 'ministers' to the Sinhalese king. According to Idrisi, 'none of the kings of *al-Hind* possesses as much wealth as the ruler of Sarandīb in the form of precious pearls, magnificent rubies, and different kinds of stones'.[340] From Sarandīb, all these articles were exported; as Idrisi writes, 'this island is visited by the boats of the Chinese and of all neighbouring kingdoms'.[341] From India, Sri Lanka had at a very early stage received the Buddhist religion, and there had been, next to commercial contact through the ages, reciprocal political involvement in the centuries preceding the rise of the Colas. In the first half of the ninth century, the Sinhalese kings had been loosely allied with the Pallavas against the neighbouring Pāṇḍyas. There had been, well before the eleventh century, political and military engagement of Sinhalese kings in Southern India as well as vice versa, and some Indian colonization in northern Sri Lanka had occurred. The Colas entered the island in 993 and held it until after 1070, when they were expelled by the Sinhalese king Vijayabāhu I, which also led to a recuperation of strength by the Pāṇḍyas. The Sinhalese king then invaded South India and momentarily occupied Madurai, in the reign of Parākramabāhu I (1153-1186) by exploiting Pāṇḍyan opposition against Cola rule. But what was the purpose of Cola intervention in Sri Lanka in the eleventh century? Was this, as we are asked to believe, a mere predatory excursion?

The Cola military expeditions to Sri Lanka under Rājarāja and Rājendra did, it is true, as Spencer shows, lead to the destruction of major political and religious centres in the northern part of the island, followed by plundering and the establishment of fortified encampments

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339 Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 27-30, 108-9, 122-5.
340 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
341 *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

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from where the outer parts of the island could be reached.[342] Rājarāja's first intervention in Sri Lanka was occasioned by the presence of South-Indian mercenary troops (Damiḷas, Kēraḷas or Karnāṭas) on which the Sinhalese kings – who effectively controlled only the northern heartland (*Rājaraṭa* or 'king's domain', a lowland dry-zone with a system of tank-irrigation) – heavily relied to turn their factional struggles in their own favour. From the Buddhist *Cūlavamsa* we learn that the concentrated wealth of the *vihāras* at Anurādhapura was plundered, their sacred relics spoiled, the *thūpas* torn apart, the city devastated. The result was that Anurādhapura ceded its pre-eminence to Polonnaruva after the Coḷa departure from the island in 1070. On the other hand, the evidence does not show that the Coḷas disrupted the irrigation system of Rājaraṭa.[343] The Coḷa court also did not attempt to gain tight control over maritime trade for itself, this remaining in the hands of organized groups of foreign and indigenous merchants and artisans. As Spencer himself admits: 'Indian merchant alliances did vastly expand their commercial activities in northern Ceylon in the wake of the Chola incursions, and . . . they brought their troops with them – certainly to protect their commerce, but possibly also to serve with the Chola imperial forces on an ad hoc basis'.[344] Even Sri Lanka's internal commerce – until the Coḷa invasion under Rājarāja largely in the hands of Sinhalese merchants – appears to have been taken over by South-Indian merchant associations of the Aiññuṟṟuvar, Vaḷanjīyar and Nagarattār, along the principal trading routes of northern Sri Lanka in the period of Coḷa dominance.[345] The Aiññuṟṟuvar were at the same time extending their commerce as far as Sumatra. It is thus hard to see why Spencer should continue to insist on the predatory nature of Coḷa expansion in Sri Lanka. As if this were not enough, Spencer proceeds to show that the Coḷas consolidated their power in Rājaraṭa, constructing Shaivite temples in Polonnaruva and in the emporium of Mahātiṭṭha, instituted taxation, especially on merchants and artisans but also on the rural population; and that control was in some measure extended as far as southern Sri Lanka.[346] In short, in Sri Lanka we have come a long way from 'the politics of plunder'.

The two maritime expeditions to Shrīvijaya of Rājendra I and Kulot-

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342 Spencer, 'Politics of Plunder', p. 409.
343 *Ibid.*, pp. 412-3.
344 *Ibid.*, p. 416; and cf. p. 414.
345 *Ibid.*, p. 415.
346 *Ibid.*, p. 416.

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tunga I were no random plunder raids either, but appear to have been undertaken to extend or establish trading rights in the Sumatran maritime empire and over the Isthmus of Kra in order to reach the Chinese market.[347] Rājendra's expedition is first mentioned in the inscriptions of his fourteenth regnal year, 1026 A.D., a time when the Colas were already in constant communication with the Archipelago and with the Chinese. Tangible evidence of this growing intercourse between the 'islands of the eastern sea' and South India was the establishment of the Cūḍamaṇi Vihāra at Nāgapaṭṭiṇam by the ruler of Shrīvijaya, Māravijayōttungavarman of the Shailendra dynasty. Presumably this vihāra was used by Southeast-Asian traders in the way that South-Indian traders used a temple which they had established at Takuapa, on the Malay peninsula, more than a century earlier. There is also a Tamil inscription in Sumatra, dated 1088, which is however fragmentary. And there are the Karandai plates at Tañjāvūr which indicate that the Khmer king of Kāmboja (Cambodia) solicited Rājendra's friendship and protection against his own enemies. Kulottunga may have been physically present in Cambodia. Donations of money and lands or villages to the Buddhist vihāra at Nāgapaṭṭiṇam on the part of the Cola kings, and the abolition of tolls, were clearly part of a systematically pursued trading policy or diplomacy with regard to the Shrīvijaya rulers.[348] In the wake of the first naval expedition, the South-Indian trade guilds began to appear in Sumatra, and in Burma, Malaysia and Java as well.[349] An inscription at Tañjāvūr of 1030-31 describes Rājendracoladeva I as the king of *Īḷamuridesha*, the 'country of Lāmurī', in North Sumatra. The persistence of Buddhist influence at Nāgapaṭṭiṇam is a particularly clear indication of the participation of the town in a huge network of overseas commerce, extending into Sri Lanka and the Southeast-Asian Buddhist kingdom of Shrīvijaya, and Burma and Cambodia. Tribute missions from these kingdoms to the Cola court were frequent.

The Burman dynasty's interests extended beyond South India, to Sri Lanka, where king Aniruddha supported the Indian Kaliṅga kings – defenders of Buddhism – against princes of Sri-Lankese birth, at the same time that the Colas were on the island.[350] Kyansittha, the third

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[347] Cf. Nilakanta Sastri, *Cōḷas*, pp. 211-20, 271, 316-8.

[348] Chattopadhyaya, *Coins and Currency Systems*, pp. 58-61.

[349] Champakalakshmi, 'Urbanization in Medieval Tamil Nadu', p. 56; K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'A Tamil merchant guild in Sumatra', *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, LXXII (1932), pp. 314-28.

[350] Stargardt, 'Burma's Economic and Diplomatic Relations', pp. 55-56.

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ruler of Pagan, and his appointed heir, Alaungsittha, are recorded to have undertaken sea-voyages to Sri Lanka and the Malay peninsula, resulting in negotiations with the Colas. Within three reigns of the Pagan dynasty, from 1044 to 1112, a Burman network of economic and diplomatic interests extended into eastern and southern India, Sri Lanka, the Malay peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago. Southeast Bengal, as we have seen (p. 275), by this time began to be adversely affected by the competition of the expanding Coromandel and Sumatran-Javanese trade and the concomitant shift of the Arabs to the Cola domains and the Coromandel cotton products. Rājendra Cola's campaign to Bengal between 1021-25 appears to have severed the commercial connection between the Buddhist rulers of Southeast Bengal and Shrīvijaya. But the Burmans also took control over the Mon commercial centres on the Pegu coast which were invaded by the Colas in 1024-25. Due to their contact with the Mons – who themselves had long been linked to Kāñcī, on the Coromandel coast, and to Sri Lanka – Pagan, from 1057, converted to Theravada Buddhism. In Sri Lanka, Burman interests at times conflicted with those of the Colas. But a Chinese text of 1178 notes that one way to the Cola kingdom was to go there from the Pagan (*P'u-kan*) kingdom.[351]

From the evidence discussed above we conclude that the eleventh century is a watershed for the Colas, an age of rapid political and diplomatic expansion occurring in the wake of an upsurge of trade and economic growth throughout South India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Rather than being random plunder raids, the Cola expeditions appear to have served the consolidation of a new network of commercial and political relationships converging on the Coromandel. The same expeditions gave further substance to the Colas' new role of paramount kings of India which they took over from the Rāshṭrakūṭas.

The most important impulse behind the economic transformation occurring at this time in eastern waters was not endogenous but seems to have come from the increased market created by Sung China. The eclipse of the Tang dynasty and the decline of the Abbasids' power were almost simultaneous events, but for China – in contrast to most of the Islamic Middle East – the eleventh century was a period of spectacular

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[351] K.R. Hall, 'International Trade and Foreign Diplomacy in Early Medieval South India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. XXI, pt. 1 (1978), p. 95.

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economic growth. Chinese economic expansion greatly raised the stakes in Southeast-Asian trade and, while the Rāshṭrakūṭa maritime outlets in Gujarat were reduced in importance, South India and the Colas rose in this context of new opportunities. In Malabar also the Colas benefited from the newly developing links with Fatimid Egypt. Of course, these world-wide changes were relative and variegated. But historians speak of the 'economic miracle' of early Sung China, an indication that, although the decline of the Abbasid caliphate may have been a gradual process, the eastern transformation was strikingly abrupt. Chinese influence in Southeast Asia increased and maritime commerce flourished, especially in the eleventh century (but in some ways lasting until the early Ming (1430)), as a result of great industrial and economic progress which was made under the Sung, the dynasty which succeeded the Tang in 960 A.D. These events, to be sure, have baffled both specialists of China and general historians, and explanations are still far from satisfactory. William H. McNeill, for one, speaks of a 'massive commercialization of Chinese society' under the early Sung, which, affecting a hundred million people directly, 'tipped a critical balance in world history'.[352] The transformation of the Chinese economy and society in Sung times, McNeill emphasizes, can be 'conceived of as an extension to China of mercantile principles that had been long familiar in the Middle East'. It gave a decisive impetus to trading practices throughout the world and, from the point of view of industry and armament technology, the eleventh to fifteenth centuries became an era of Chinese predominance. Changes in those fields occurring in China in the eleventh century anticipated European achievements by several hundred years. The development of steel production, the creation of a new transportation network which included the Grand Canal between the Huang Ho and Chang Jiang (Yangtze) in Central China, new transportation techniques, a shift from taxes in kind to money, and specialization of production – all of this came together with a rising level of population and production, leading to proliferating market exchanges and the creation of an urban hierarchy, starting from the great metropolitan centres along the Grand Canal. The new patterns of production however broke up as remarkably as they had arisen, due, in McNeill's vision, to changing official policies which smothered further technological and economic development. Already in the twelfth century the Jürchen established

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[352] *Pursuit of Power*, pp. 24-62; and see Curtin, *Cross-cultural trade*, pp. 109-10 which agrees with McNeill's summary of the process.

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a new regime in North China, forcing the Sung to retreat southward. In the thirteenth century Genghis Khan's grandson Kublai Khan, the founder of the Yüan dynasty, reimposed direct imperial administration on the iron-production centres of Hopei and Honan, reducing their output. Canal transportation was also disrupted. As the argument runs, a liberal *laissez faire* policy was abandoned by the Chinese officialdom which as a matter of course attempted to break up independent concentrations of power and wealth. But, while this put restraints on 'capitalism' at home, overseas trade had become sufficiently well-established and continued under the Yüan, and even under the Ming, in the fifteenth century, when the Chinese navy allegedly sailed into the Indian Ocean. Withdrawal, again, was ultimately the result of official abandonment of overseas ventures. In summary, the autocatalytic development of commerce and industry in China was aborted after the eleventh century, but China could preserve political unity from the Sung to modern times with only brief periods of disruption on account of dynastic succession problems. In Europe, political unity was not preserved but there was an unbridled development of capitalism.

Important for our argument is not the question of 'empire or capitalism' but China's overseas commerce in the eleventh century. For, as McNeill concludes, as a result of China's pre-eminence in the eleventh century, 'a new and powerful wind of change began to blow across the southern seas that connected the Far East with India and the Middle East'.[353] It is certain that from about the year 1000 A.D. Chinese trade in the southern seas grew systematically – although not without temporary setbacks – and that hundreds of commodities entered the long-distance networks. Silk and other textiles, porcelain, lacquerware, iron and steel, but also precious metals were exported in return for tropical products. China's maritime commerce flourished largely in private hands but by the early twelfth century government income from taxes on foreign trade amounted to 20% of the total. And the revenue of the Sung in the eleventh century was already two to three times as large as that of the Tang in the eighth century. The development of Chinese maritime trade now led to the first Chinese commercial settlements in Southeast Asia. Prior to the Sung, the conditions for China's maritime expansion were not well-developed, the navy being insignificant and seaborne commerce being largely monopolized by Muslim merchants. In fact, if before the year 1000 we are dependent on Arabic sources for

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[353] *Pursuit of Power*, p. 24.

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information on trade in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, after that date Chinese works dealing with maritime trade become more numerous.[354] The Sung, from its inception, paid much attention to the development of seaborne commerce, encouraging the import of foreign goods by Chinese merchants and welcoming foreign merchants to China too. According to Wang Gungwu, Chinese trade in the South China Sea at the foundation of the Sung in 960 A.D. 'was on the threshold of new developments'.[355] Evidence on the existence of this trade dates back to the first century B.C. and up to the Sung we can distinguish three stages in its development. In the first stage it was a trade in precious goods for courtly consumption, lasting for five centuries, until the end of the Chin Dynasty; it was then dominated by Yüeh and Indian merchants and shipping and led to the rise of Funan as the first maritime empire of the Nanhai. In the second stage the demand went beyond jewels and perfumes to include 'holy things'; this stage lasted through the Southern Dynasties, for almost two centuries, and saw the participation in Nanhai trade of the *Po-se* (Persian) and *K'un-lun* (Malay) traders, concomitant with the development of more intimate contacts with Java, Sumatra and Sri Lanka. In the third stage a trade in drugs and spices developed; this was during the rise to commercial power of Shrīvijaya and the domination of Persian and Arab Muslim middlemen and sailors in the Far-Eastern trade. The volume of seaborne commerce however multiplied under the Sung, in the eleventh century, as is shown for instance in Chau Ju-kua's comprehensive work on trade of 1225 A.D., but also in earlier works.[356] As Paul Wheatley demonstrates, 'never before had foreign trade played such an important role in the economy of China'.[357] The Sung empire, founded on the sea, not only derived revenue from trade but also from the sale of tribute articles, the quantity of aromatics and drugs entering China in this way being hardly less than the quantities imported through trade. But all through the trading

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[354] Cf. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*, p. 248.

[355] 'The Nanhai Trade; A Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. XXXI, pt.2 (June, 1958), pp. 1-135.

[356] Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 248; Jung-Pang Lo, 'Maritime Commerce and its Relation to the Sung Navy', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. XII (1969), pp. 57-101; idem, 'The emergence of China as a sea power during the late Sung and early Yüan periods', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, vol. XIV, 4 (May, 1955), pp. 489-503.

[357] P. Wheatley, 'Geographical Notes on some Commodities involved in Sung maritime Trade', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 32, pt. 2 (1961), pp. 5-140.

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boom of the Sung, from the late tenth to the late thirteenth century, China suffered a trade deficit which generated a vast cash flow along the long-distance routes, as far as the eastcoast of Africa.[358] Just as in the ninth and tenth century Western India or Gujarat had ceased to produce indigenous coinage when it was incorporated in the *dīnār* domain of Islam, so the Southeast-Asian mainland ceased to use indigenous coins by the late tenth century when Chinese gold began to dominate its markets. Only in the area of Vietnam, during the early decades of the Lý dynasty (1010-1224), the minting of cash is known to have taken place. Under the Sung (960-1126) and Southern Sung (1127-1279), the trade balance with Japan was principally settled in gold, but Chinese silver was also imported by Japan from the late eleventh century, and Chinese copper coins.[359]

In the overseas trade of the Sung, Arabs, Jews, Indians, and the people of the Malay Pensinsula and Archipelago acted as intermediaries. The Coḻas became involved with the Chinese and with Burma through Shrīvijaya, and it was through the agents of the Shrīvijayan kings that Chinese gold entered the port of Nāgapaṭṭiṇam in the eleventh century.[360] The Burmans consolidated their state at Pagan in 1044, the Lý in northern Vietnam in 1010, the Khmers at Angkor after 944 – as part of a process of state formation which accompanied the change in international trade. Shrīvijaya however, the Malay maritime empire centred at Southeast Sumatra, whose king the Arabs referred to as 'the Mahārāja' or 'the king of the ocean lands', had owed its origin and its rise to prosperity entirely to the extension of Indian Ocean trade to China. The Chinese called this kingdom *San-fo-ch'i* and inform us that it controlled the Strait (of Malacca) through an iron curtain across the passage which was used by foreign ships in both directions. The Malay first began to participate in trans-Asian trade during the fifth and sixth centuries. Maritime trade increased in that period, not because of a diversion of the overland route but due to the increased needs of southern China. But before the seventh century the Chinese connection with the Archi-

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[358] J.K. Whitmore, 'Vietnam and the monetary flow of eastern Asia, thirteenth to eighteenth centuries', in: Richards, J.F. (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Worlds* (Durham, 1983), pp. 363-5.

[359] K. Yamamura and T. Kamiki, 'Silver mines and Sung coins – A monetary history of medieval and modern Japan in international perspective', in: *ibid.*, pp. 331, 333, 336-7.

[360] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 32 (1957-58), pp. 161, 166.

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pelago was as yet not very intimate.[361] The maritime trade which developed in the fifth and sixth centuries was still mainly a trade between China and Western Asia and not between China and Indonesia.[362] When the Persian Gulf trade lapsed, however – between the fall of Ctesiphon and the foundation of Baghdad by the Abbasids in 762 – goods of local Indonesian provenance (as well as for instance Indian pepper), penetrated the China trade, and this may provide the background to a number of missions from Shrīvijaya to China in the seventh century.[363] The Sino-Malay relationship now became an important fact in Asian commerce.[364] By the tenth century, Persian-Gulf merchants referred to Palembang as the port which 'faced China'.[365] The same port appears to have received its greatest impetus from the China trade in the early Sung period, while the last years of the Tang would have reduced the Mahārāja's sources of wealth.[366] At the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, with the great expansion of Sung maritime trade, we suddenly see the struggle to increase their share in the profits of trade becoming more intense among a larger number of participants. Trading missions from Shrīvijaya to China became frequent at this time, and conflict erupted with the Javanese and the Tamils, who both claim to have raided its capital in respectively 992 and about 1025.[367] A new system of fluctuating alliances evolved among the Cola Tamils, the Malay, the Javanese, Burmans, and Sri Lankese.[368] With the Chinese emperor the Mahārājas of Shrīvijaya worked under the mutually advantageous relationship of the tributary trading system, and in the early eleventh century a temple was built in the Mahārāja's capital to pray for the long life of the Chinese emperor.[369] Imperial favours, and military titles, were at regular intervals bestowed on the Mahārāja.[370] When in the eleventh century the rival trading interests between the Colas and Shrīvijaya erupted in armed conflict, both parties multiplied their missions to China. As far as is known, the Cola attack

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[361] O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce: A study of the origin of Śrīvijaya* (Ithaca, 1969), pp. 24, 76.
[362] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[363] *Ibid.*, pp. 232-4.
[364] See also O.W. Wolters, *The fall of Śrīvijaya in Malay history* (Ithaca, 1970), p. 40.
[365] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[366] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[367] Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, pp. 20, 107-8.
[368] Cf. Wolters, *Fall*, p. 2.
[369] *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 20, 40.
[370] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

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on Shrīvijaya in 1025 (leading to the capture of the king) was the first open challenge to the Shrīvijayan hegemony in the straits over the China trade since the first half of the seventh century. Shrīvijaya had been invaded by the Javanese in 992, and Javanese envoys had also reached China at that time, stating that Java and Sumatra were often at war. Surely, the entrepot facilities provided at Palembang did not completely exclude other Indonesian harbours even then.[372] Already in the early tenth century Javanese traders must have resented the Shrīvijayan trade hegemony.[373] But the Javanese threat was averted with the destruction by Shrīvijaya (probably) of the eastern-Javanese *kraton* in 1016. Only the later Sung accounts indicate that Java had become an important trading partner for China. By 1178, according to Chou Ch'ü-fei, it had surpassed Shrīvijaya in wealth. The Shrīvijayan hegemony in the Archipelago did not last long after the eleventh century, and other harbours, amongst which those of Java, then began to participate more and more in the China trade, increasingly attracting merchants from Malabar and the Coromandel, and Muslims or Jews from Cairo as well. Thus, the expansion of Chinese trade which at an earlier stage had provided the foundation for Shrīvijaya's prosperity now became a major threat to the empire, setting in motion tendencies which threw into disarray the commercial system centred on the entrepot of Southeast Sumatra by favouring Javanese and other ports, for instance at the northwest coast of Sumatra.[374]

At the date of Rājendra's expedition to Shrīvijaya, in about 1025, a quarter of a century of active trade had been maintained by the Coḷas with the east.[375] The expedition appears to have been undertaken to increase the Coḷa share of this trade. A contemporary inscription at Tañjāvūr mentions thirteen Southeast-Asian ports which were conquered by Rājendra, all of them subordinate to Shrīvijaya.[376] There is no evidence that it had lasting political effects, but after this Coḷa intervention Shrīvijayan hegemony was never again fully re-established. The Sung annals record that the first mission from *Chu-lien* (the Coḷa) reached China in 1015 and that the then reigning Coḷa king was *Lo-ts'a-lo-ts'a* (Rājarāja). A second and third embassy from the Coḷas reached

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371 Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, p. 251.
372 Wolters, *Fall*, p. 19.
373 Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, p. 251.
374 *Ibid.*, p. 252; *Fall*, p. 42.
375 Cf. Nilakanta Sastri, *Cōḷas*, pp. 219-20.
376 Hall, *Maritime Trade*, p. 85.

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the Sung court in 1033 and 1077.[377] In 1067, the Colas again invaded the Malay Peninsula, ostensibly reacting to an invitation to suppress a rebellion – which caused Chinese historians to suppose that in this period *Chu-lien* was an ally of *San-fo-ch'i*. An inscription at a Taoist monastery temple at Canton of 1079 however refers to the Cola king as the 'Lord of *San-fo-ch'i*', i.e. Shrīvijaya, and the temple's benefactor for a gift of 600,000 gold cash.[378] Evidently, Shrīvijaya held a strategic position in the Cola trade with China.[379] Chinese sources also explicitly mention that regular commercial contact was maintained with South-Indian ports throughout the Sung period. The Cola ports were the source of many valuable commodities, including cotton and other manufactured textiles, spices and drugs, but also ivory, rhinoceros horn, ebony, amber, coral, aromatics and perfumes. The Cola kingdom was assigned 'first class' status, along with Shrīvijaya, Java, and the Fatimid domain of Egypt.[380] Muslim merchants from the Red Sea and Egypt were now beginning to use the South-Indian ports as their advance posts for the China trade; as in Malabar, Muslim settlement on the Coromandel coast and in Madurai gained momentum in the eleventh century.[381] Arabic and Hebrew records emphasize spices, aromatics, dyeing and varnishing plants, drugs, silk, and especially, again, cotton products, and pearls, iron and steel, brass and bronze vessels, cauri shells, porcelain, and foodstuffs like coconuts, as South-Indian commodities or Chinese products which reached Fusṭāṭ through South-Indian ports.[382] Jewish traders were also present at *al-Maʿbar*, and like the Muslims, sometimes embarked from Coromandel ports to sail on to Southeast Asia. Southern India was therefore not merely an importing or exporting region but a full participant in Asian trade in its own right, with a regular relationship with its hinterland which allowed local products to reach the arteries of long-distance trade.

f. The 'land of gold'

The 'islands of the eastern sea', the Malay Peninsula and the Sunda Islands, lay athwart the avenue of commercial contact between India

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377 Nilakanta Sastri, *Cōḷas*, p. 219.
378 Hall, *Maritime Trade*, p. 201.
379 *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 95-96.
380 Hall, 'International Trade and Foreign Diplomacy', p. 76.
381 Cf. p. 78.
382 Goitein, 'Letters and Documents'.

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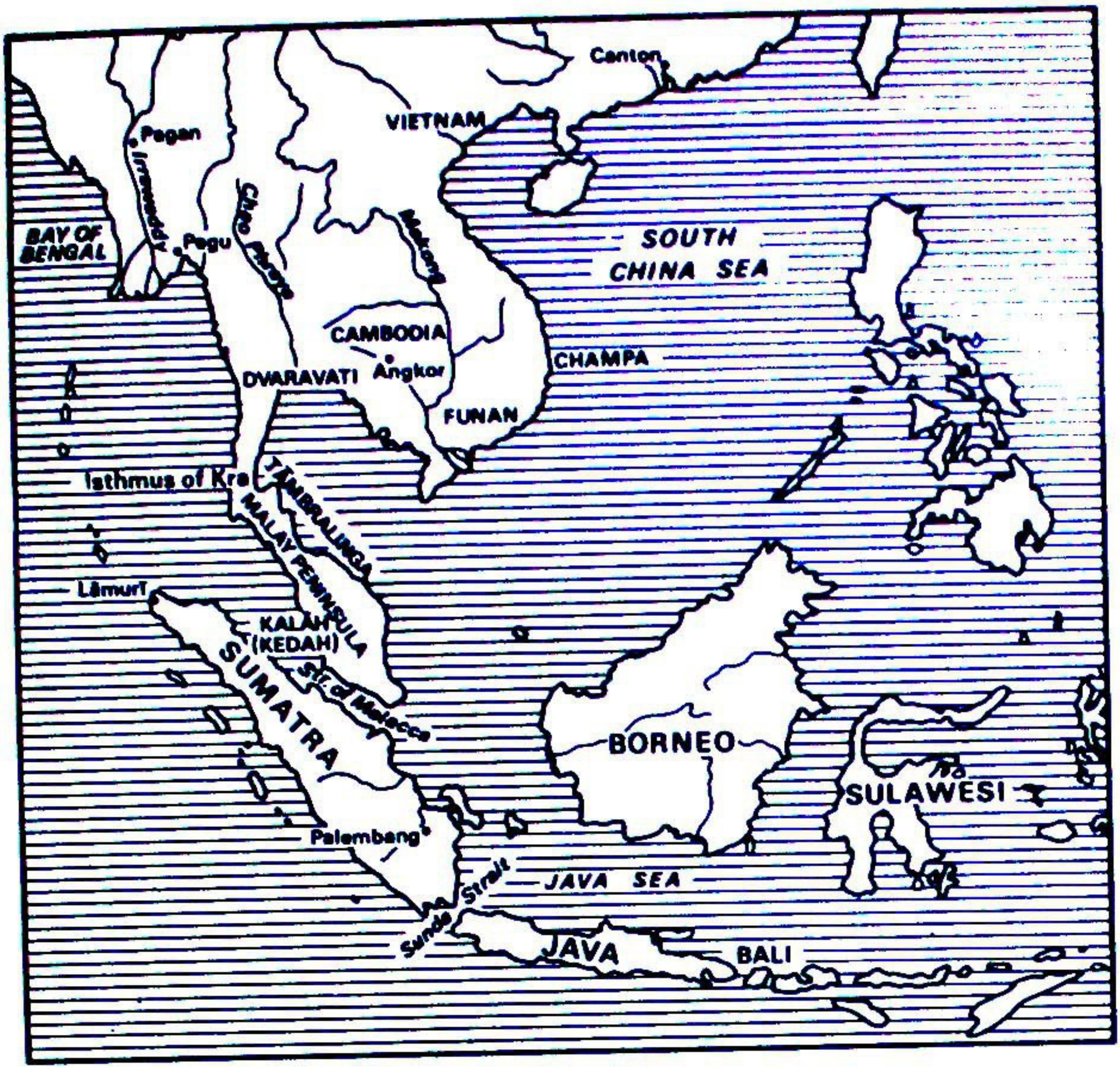

Southeast Asia and Indonesia.

and China and represent a transitional area between the two civilizations. Historically, Indian cultural patterns were widely disseminated from the early centuries A.D. up to the late tenth-eleventh centuries, when the Sung Chinese began to dominate the trade and politics of the eastern sea.

Until the second century A.D. the commercial impact on Southeast Asia of neither India nor China had been significant. China's connection with India and the Middle East went overland, across Central Asia; this was the 'silk route' by which Buddhism reached the country in the first century A.D. The Chinese displayed little or no interest in southern ocean navigation until Tang and especially Sung times. On the other hand, the spread of Indian Buddhism in China from the Han to the Tang dynasty, discrediting Confucianism, did enhance the prestige and

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impact of Indian traders in Southeast Asia. When the Guptas conquered the Ganges valley and parts of South India in the fourth and fifth centuries, there was also a resurgence of Indian influence abroad, emanating especially from the Pallavas of Kāñcī.[383]

Again, from the centuries B.C. to the end of the first century A.D., trading contacts had been restricted to Indian ports in the Bay of Bengal and peoples like the Mons on the opposite shores, while the movement of Indian trade goods was primarily westward, following the pattern set in Hellenistic times by the Seleucids in joint ventures with traders of the lower Red Sea area. Roman trade with India became important around 90 B.C., then declined during the civil wars, but was revived by Augustus around 30 B.C. and then expanded steadily until Vespasian (69-79 A.D.) issued prohibitions against its continuation in order to prevent the export of gold. Before Vespasian, Nero (54-68) had responded to the same problem by debasing the gold content of Roman coins. By this time, South-Indian ports had emerged as independent trading centres and Roman ships were using the direct monsoon passage from Aden to India. Pliny, probably with exaggeration, claimed that India absorbed 55 million gold *sesterces* annually, while 100 million sesterces were absorbed by India, China and Arabia together. After the decline of Roman trade, the Greeks and Sasanids took over, sustaining and elaborating the westward trade in mutual rivalry. There are indications, as was first pointed out by Sylvain Lévi, that now, in the first centuries A.D., the Indians were driven to Southeast Asia by the ambition to find gold. In effect, Southeast Asia, before it became known as the land of spices, camphor and aromatic woods, was known to the Indians for many centuries as the 'land of gold' or *suvarṇabhūmi*.[384] The Ramayana, for instance, records seven kingdoms in the 'gold and silver islands' beyond Sri Lanka. Ptolemy also speaks of the 'fabulous metal' in the sands of Indonesia. Shortly before the beginning of the Christian era, according to Lévi, India had lost its principal source of gold in Siberia due to nomadic movements in Central Asia. When subsequently Vespasian prohibited the export of *sesterces* the shortage of gold in India became acute. The quest for gold and the concomitant expansion of Indian commerce and culture in Southeast Asia which was enhanced by this, furthermore, coincided with improvements in boat construction

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[383] Cf. Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. xv, 246; J.F. Cady, *Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development* (New Delhi, 1976), pp. vi, 21-25.

[384] Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. XV, 19-20; Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 28-29, 33-38.

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and navigation techniques. The new Mahayana Buddhism spread in response to the dynamics of expanding commerce. It was the beginning of the 'Indianization' of Southeast Asia.

This process, highly complex as it is and spanning about a millennium in time, was subjected to a chronological and systematic description by Georges Coedès.[385] According to Coedès, 'the expansion of Indian civilization to those countries and islands of the Orient where Chinese civilization, with strikingly similar aspirations, seemed to arrive ahead of it, is one of the outstanding events in the history of the world'.[386] In the modern states of Southeast Asia the sediment of the Indianization process is still easily identifiable, in the Sanskrit vocabulary of the languages, in the Indian origin of the alphabets, the influence of Indian law and administrative organization, the survival of brahmanic traditions in the countries which later turned to Islam or Sinhalese Buddhism, and most of all in the presence of ancient architecture and sculpture of Indian inspiration and with Sanskrit inscriptions. Indianization began, around the beginning of the Christian era, at a time when the great prehistoric migrations of the Melanesians, Indonesians and Austro-Asiatics had already come to an end, and the 'substratum' over which Indian civilization spread was already a highly organized one – with irrigated rice cultivation, domesticated cattle, the use of metals, and with navigational skills – , sharing various traits with the Indian subcontinent.[387] There was, in other words, a pre-Aryan community of culture between India and the Southeast-Asian mainland and Archipelago. In addition, the Indonesians had carried their civilization across the Indian Ocean, to Madagascar, perhaps before the beginning of the Indianization process. One of the main problems of Indonesian or Southeast-Asian history which is still unresolved concerns the exact importance of the pre-Indian or sub-Indian 'substratum'.

In one way, the Indianization of Southeast Asia can be seen as the continuation abroad of a process which started in North India and from there gradually transformed the outer regions. But it can also be seen that the Indian cultural system did not strike equally deep roots outside the subcontinent proper, and was often no more than a veneer, or a

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[385] *Op. cit.* The work was first published as *Les États Hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie* (Paris, 1948).

[386] *Indianized States*, p. xvi.

[387] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.

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strictly royal cult and aristocratic religion confined to a courtly context, the influence of which worked itself out in writing, vocabulary, calendar, coinage, cosmogony, myths, epic themes, art and architecture, as well as in administrative and legal institutions, but not in a full-fledged brahmanic social framework and a caste system or in philosophy.[388] The problem of Indianization – a term which is preferred to 'Hinduization' since it may take account of Buddhism or 'Shiva-Buddhism' – spawned a considerable literature, and debate about the essential characteristics of the process continues. Following Coedès, however, at present all explanations agree that it was effected largely by peaceful and non-imperialistic means. It thus often contrasted sharply with the Sinicization of parts of the Southeast-Asian mainland. The Indians, unlike the Chinese, did not proceed by conquest and annexation; neither was tribute demanded in acknowledgement of suzerainty of a mother country. Indianized states evolved, in Cambodia, Champa, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Bali, and among the Burmans and Thai who received Indian culture from the Mons and Khmers, but these states were ruled by independent kings, of local provenance or mixed blood, who were associated with Indian or Indianized councillors, but not by Indian governors resembling the Chinese commanders of Vietnam. Rather than by conquest and the imposition of political rule, Indian culture was assimilated peacefully and adapted by local aristocracies who made it their privileged preserve. In Southeast Asia, Indian cults, particularly the worship of Shiva, became exclusively royal cults, giving a high profile to sacral or divine kingship (ultimately the 'theatricality') in these states. The lingam, placed on a pyramid in the centre of the royal city, the axis mundi, represented the concentrated essence of royalty and was obtained from Shiva through a brahman by the founder of the dynasty. Through the brahman priest a communion of god and king was effected on the sacred mountain of Meru, which was either natural or artificial. In the universal significance of the mountain in the mainland wet-rice states the blending of indigenous and Indian traditions is particularly striking.[389] For the mountain was already the abode of ancestor spirits, and by associating it with Shiva, the 'lord of the mountain', the king's position was powerfully reinforced. Confucian ideology may have been much less accommodating to such folk tradi-

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[388] *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 33-34; R.S. Wicks, 'The Ancient Coinage of Mainland Southeast Asia', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. XVI, no. 2 (1985).
[389] Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 5-6.

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tions, and this could be one reason why the Chinese failed to form durable polities in the area of the Red River Delta at this early stage.[390]

Who, after all, were the agents of Indianization? Since there is no evidence of direct Indian control or Indian political 'colonization', could it have been traders who effected the transformation? This is quite unlikely. As Van Leur maintained, most of Southeast Asia was characterized by a clear-cut dichotomy between the aristocratic-agrarian social formations and the trading world which was made up of 'peddlars', a multitude of itinerant, small merchants who were excluded from court life and élite politics.[391] With regard to 'Hindu-Indonesian history' Van Leur rejected the theory of N.J. Krom[392] that Indian traders transformed Indonesia through gradual, peaceful penetration and subsequent intermarriage, leading to a half-breed Hindu-Indonesian class. The mere fact that Hindu influence was from the outset stronger in the interior of Java (just as some of the most important centres of Indian culture developed in Mon Dvaravati, Angkor, Pagan Burma) than in the coastal states militates against this hypothesis. Krom was right in rejecting the idea of an Indian *political* imperialism but it could not have been traders – separated as they were from the courts – who were the prime disseminators of Hinduism. Indian peddlars were unlikely transmitters of anything that Hinduism in the Indonesian context stood for, i.e. the ritual consecration of royal dynasties, bureaucratic organization, and so forth. Hindu influence in Indonesia was restricted to courts, temples and monasteries and could only have been effected by the brahman hierocracy which was at two removes from the traders, since the latter were commonly Dravidian on top of being peddlars. The brahmans however did not come of their own initiative but were summoned to the Indonesian courts by the indigenous princes whose aim was to enhance the ritualistic and bureaucratic subjugation of their subjects and ascendancy over their peers. Van Leur's explanation is thus deduced from the primacy of agrarian, patrimonial state-structures of indigenous society. Similarly, his hypothesis regarding the Islamization of the Archipelago is also derived from the postulate of a historically constant dichotomy of agrarian society and peddling trade. The Islamization of the Archipelago was determined by

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390 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
391 *Indonesian Trade and Society.*
392 Cf. *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis* (The Hague, 1931).

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political oppositions, between coast and interior, in the Indonesian world itself.[393]

It is a point of fairly general agreement that Islam was more deeply assimilated than Indian influence. Coedès makes less of the process of Indianization as an exclusive affair of the Indonesian aristocracy than Van Leur and many of the latter's followers, but also adduces textual proof to Van Leur's thesis that the Indian brahmans were called to the courts by native Indonesian chiefs to underpin their power and prestige.[394] Disagreement remains on the occurrence of mixed marriages and royal dynasties of Indian origin. The theory of colonization by traders and other Indians migrating to the Archipelago is not without some truth, but it is certainly inadequate for most regions. The question of Indian or Indonesian initiative – the relative importance of which are hard to assess factually – and other aspects of Indianization will be discussed for a long time to come.[395] A major point is that, if 'Hinduization' affected mainly the aristocracy, Buddhism was not necessarily transmitted by high-caste immigrants – brahmans or otherwise – , but could relate to a more popular level, involving Indian missionary devotees and Southeast-Asian converts as well as traders. Buddhism was a trading religion, with little to contribute to political authority and administration. Often therefore, in Southeast Asia, Buddhist influence was superseded by the theocratic ramifications of brahmanism only where agrarian states developed. This happened in a manner analogous to what happened to the formal rule of Buddhism in the Indian subcontinent itself. But we are struck by the fact that in one way or another Buddhism retained its hold in large parts of Southeast Asia even after it had completely disappeared from its place of origin. Of course, from the time when its international expansion began, Buddhism transformed itself by adopting brahmanic elements in Southeast Asia too. Nevertheless, there is a difference here, and it should probably be related to the peripheral status of Southeast Asia as an Indian *Hinterland* and its transitional position between the Indian subcontinent and China.

The Arabic topography of Southeast Asia and the Indonesian Archipelago is unsatisfactory, and still mixed up with Ptolemaic concep-

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[393] Cf. pp. 85-86.

[394] Cf. *Indianized States*, pp. XVII, 9, 15-16, 21, 23-24, 33; 'Le substrat autochthone et la superstructure indienne au Cambodge et à Java', *Cahiers de l'Histoire Mondiale*, 1, 2 (1953).

[395] See also: I.W. Mabbett, 'The "Indianization" of Southeast Asia: Reflections on the Historical Sources', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. VIII, no. 2 (1977).

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tions and translated Greek place names.[396] The information at the disposal of the Arab geographers was limited to merchants' and sailors' accounts which were embellished with materials from Indian literary works and legendary lore – especially the 'Indian marvels' (*ʿajāʾib al-Hind*) which held such appeal in the Middle East and Western Europe alike. Historical and biographical material rarely enters the picture, although 'kings' (e.g. the Shailendras of Java, the Mahārājas of Shrivijaya, the Pagan kings of Burma, and the Khmer kings of Cambodia) are identified by their dynastic titles or names and political dependencies are not overlooked. Passages are often repeated almost verbatim over the centuries. Much attention is given to spices and drugs, even though the texts dealing with the spice islands as such are again of legendary nature. Idrisi's world map is useless here, showing the *jazāʾir* of the early texts as shapeless islands. The Arabic sources fall off after the end of the tenth century, reflecting the decrease of trade with the Middle East; from the eleventh century it becomes impossible to locate the place names at all. It is agreed by most Arab geographers however that these areas belong to *al-Hind* rather than *aṣ-Ṣīn*.[397] Masʿūdī is perhaps the most circumspect here, explaining that 'the *arḍ al-Hind* is a vast country which extends itself on the sea, the continent and the mountains; this kingdom (*mulk*) neighbours (*mutaṣṣil*) that of *al-Zābaj*, comprising the region between *al-Hind* and *aṣ-Ṣīn*, where the capital of the Mahārāja is found, king of the isles (*malik al-jazāʾir*), whose dominion separates *al-Hind* from *aṣ-Ṣīn* but is attached to the former (*wa taḍāfa ilā-l-hind*)'.[398] Only Yāqūt speaks of *Maʿbar* as the last part of *al-Hind* and *Jāwa* as the beginning of *aṣ-Ṣīn*. And Abū Dulaf, c. 940 A.D., perhaps obtaining his information from Chinese sources, thinks that 'Kalāh (in Malaysia) is the beginning of *al-Hind* . . . but its people have customs identical with those of China and its king is a subordinate of the king of *aṣ-Ṣīn*'. The term *Zābaj* before 860 refers to Java and the Shailendra dynasty, but after that date *Zābaj* is equated with Shrīvijaya, the *San-fo-ch'i* of the Chinese, or with the entire Archipelago.[399] Like Ptolemy again, some Arab writers extend the African coast towards China, thus confusing *al-Zābaj* (the 'East Indies') with *al-Zanj* ('East Africa'). Biruni, in the eleventh century, however, has it all tidied up: 'The eastern

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396 Cf. Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, pp. IX, 3, 10, 17.
397 *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 39-40, 55.
398 Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 82.
399 Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, pp. IX, 19, 21, 107.

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islands in the ocean, which are nearer to *aṣ-Ṣīn* than to *al-Hind*, are the islands of the Zābaj, called by the Hindus *Suvarṇa-dvīpa*, i.e. the gold islands. The western islands in this ocean are those of the Zanj (Negroes), and those in the middle are the islands of *Ramni* and the *Dīva* islands (Maldives, Laccadives), to which belong also the Qumayr islands'.[400]

The chronology of Indianization and the commercial developments of the eleventh century

The first Indianized states arose, from the first century up to around 550 A.D., in the Irrawaddy Basin, around the shores of the Gulf of Siam, among the Mons in Burma, in the Malacca Strait, in Western Java, in Kedah (Malayan Peninsula), Palembang, in the valley of the Lower Mekong, and in the plains of Central Vietnam.[401] From the earliest date the Mons of Lower Burma had maintained seaborne contacts with the northern Coromandel coast and inland Telingana, and it was they who transmitted the Indian heritage to the Khmers, Burmans and Thai. By contrast, Indian influence in Sumatra, Borneo and Central and Eastern Java before 500 was very limited.

Especially South Indians contributed to the Indianization overseas, but the founding of the first Indianized states intensified commercial exchange and soon Southeast-Asian traders began to appear in South India as well. By the second century A.D. Southeast Asia was an important passage for international seaborne commerce, shipping following the route between the southeast coast of China to the Bay of Bengal via the land portage across the Isthmus of Kra. Another commercial zone emerged in the region of the Java Sea during the second and third centuries. Around 120 A.D. a well-defined overland route to India via the Mekong, Salween and Irrawaddy river gorges was also in use.[402] Remarkably, the most important and best-known of the early Indianized kingdoms were Funan in the Lower Mekong Delta, and Lin-yi or Champa in the Hué region, both of which originated in the first century in the eastern part of the mainland which was furthest removed from the Indian subcontinent. Lin-yi made sustained attempts to expand to the north but collided with the Vietnamese and the Chinese who were ex-

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400 Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 210.
401 Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 36 ff, 63-64.
402 *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 32; Cady, *Southeast Asia*, p. 19; Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 20-21.

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panding southward; here, for centuries, the Indianized 'Chams' were set against the Sinicized Vietnamese until, finally, from the eleventh century onward, Chinese civilization became ascendant. In the ninth and tenth centuries the Arabs referred to the Hindu state of Champa, occupying the area of Annam, as *Sanf*.[403] Funan was the dominant power in the peninsula for about five centuries. Its name derived from Chinese records but indicates the title of the dynasty which meant 'king of the mountain' and probably refers to the Mount Meru of Indian cosmology. Funan was founded in the first century, but as a state (or rather a federation of Indianized states) it emerged in the late second century with its centre in the Mekong River Delta and the basin of the Tonle Sap or 'Great Lake'. In its early development both Hindu and Buddhist elements played a role but these were borrowed from the Malay portage states and the Mon state of Tun-sun. The first traces of Sanskrit date from the third century – a time when there were books in Funan and depositories of archives and a script of Indian origin, while taxes were paid in gold, silver, pearls, and perfumes and trade comprised the same items, as also silk. There is some inconclusive evidence, e.g. in the pre-Angkorian iconography of the image of Sūrya, showing a connection between Funan and Cambodia with Persia in the fourth century.[404] Due to its strategic location opposite the Isthmus of Kra, maritime trade and trade routes were crucial for Funan from the outset.[405] In the middle of the third century the commercial prosperity of Funan reached a peak, but then eroded in the fourth and fifth centuries because of a shift of the Chinese trade route to entrepots south and east of the Malay Peninsula. Funan was gradually bypassed, direct voyages being made from the Malacca Strait to China across the South China Sea, a development which in due course brought Shrīvijaya to the fore as the dominant power in the West Java Sea. Meanwhile the Chinese market for Southeast-Asian goods expanded. Numerous tribute missions to China from various coastal centres indicate intense competition for favoured trading status in the fifth century. Losing out in maritime trade, Funan now began to emphasize the development of its agrarian base as a source of revenue. It is from this period that significant Indianization occurred. The Funan rulers, failing to maintain a privileged role in in-

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[403] Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, p. 159; Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 122, 225, 247.

[404] Coedès, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 46; Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 67; C. Jacques, "Funan', 'Zhenla': The Reality Concealed by these Chinese Views of Indochina', in: R.B. Smith & W. Watson (eds), *Early South East Asia* (London, 1979), pp. 371-9.

[405] Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 39-43, 56, 68-76.

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ternational trade, withdrew inland, concentrating on the rice-lands of the upper Mekong Delta and undertaking hydraulic projects. Yet, this reorientation of Funan could not prevent the demise of the state under pressure of the Khmers from Chenla in the mid-sixth century. Epigraphy, however, shows that the Funan ricelands continued to flourish all through the seventh century, and the political shift to Angkor, in Cambodia, did not occur until the eighth-ninth century.[406]

Cambodia

Funan thus prepared the way for the civilization of the Khmer, who occupied the whole area of Cambodia by the end of the ninth century, and subsequently also incorporated the Mon country along the Gulf of Siam.[407] Like the Chams, the Khmer traced their lineage to Funan and derived their Indianized state pattern from the Funan rulers. Cambodia, on the other hand, was principally an agrarian, inland state, even in its origin in the seventh century, when it began to dominate the south and centre of the Peninsula. In the first half of the ninth century, Jayavarman II founded the kingdom of Angkor, breaking away from Javanese suzerainty, while setting up (with the aid of a brahman) the new cult of the *devarāja*.[408] Jayavarman's descendants founded the city of Yashodharapura, which remained the Khmer capital for six hundred years, with the temple-mountain that represented Meru at its centre. In the ninth-eleventh centuries all civilizational and institutional forms developed which were characteristic of Angkor. Especially important became the role of brahmans, including *paradesha* or 'foreign' brahmans newly arriving from the Indian subcontinent, some of whom married into the royal family. The economic base of the Khmer state, as of Pagan Burma, was rice agriculture, with surplus being concentrated in temples. In the case of the Khmers, this was at no stage superseded by a secular bureaucracy. A system of finance and tax-collection was set up parallel to the temple network, which allowed a high degree of centralized economic control. At the height of Khmer power, in Cambodia the local temples with their cults were integrated into a hierarchy which culminated in the king's central temple at the capital.

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[406] M. Vickery, 'Review of K.R. Hall, Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia', *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 46, 1 (1987), p. 212.
[407] Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 63, 67, 72 ff, 97-121, 161-2, 249.
[408] Cf. H. Kulke, *The Devarāja Cult* (Ithaca, 1978).

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The development and extension of agriculture, then, were clearly central to the Khmer state – even though the status of Angkor's hydraulic works may be in doubt.[409] But in the late tenth and eleventh century state power in Cambodia, as in Java, was enhanced by participation in the commercial upsurge of the period.[410] The reign of Sūryavarman I (1002-1049) appears to have been a period of royally sponsored commercial expansion, resulting in more general economic prosperity and further urbanization. Reinvestment of commercial profits in the eleventh century in the agricultural base allowed a dramatic expansion of the Khmer polity. Political control was extended to the west, into the Chao Phraya Valley of present-day Thailand, and toward the Isthmus of Kra. Sūryavarman established Khmer authority in the Lopburi region, providing, through the Lower Chao Phraya, access to long-distance maritime trade at Tāmbraliṅga, the Chaiya-Suratthani area of southern Thailand.[411] Marketing activity and commercial communication were extended along the river system, and administrative mechanisms for revenue extraction were developed.[412] Still in Sūryavarman's reign, the western trade routes received more emphasis. Takuapa, on the Malay Peninsula, was the terminus of Muslim trade until the mid-eleventh century, when it was shifted to the Kedah coast.[413] Khmer control of the Suratthani region would thus have linked the mainland commercial network to the maritime trade of China as well as the Islamic world, and, of course, India. Sūryavarman made attempts to establish regular trading contacts with the Coḷas and the Lý state in the Red River Delta of Vietnam. The Upper Malay Peninsula was drawn into the power of the mainland, away from the island world, and into the network across the Bay of Bengal to South India and Sri Lanka. But by the end of the eleventh century we find the Khmer rulers shifting their attention back to their eastern land frontier, while the Burmans challenged the Khmer relationship with the Isthmus of Kra.[414] Khmer commercial development then slackened and receded again behind their agrarian commitment. The great temple complex of Angkor Wat which was built in the early twelfth century by Sūryavarman II is an expression

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409 Vickery, *op. cit.*
410 Cf. Hall, *Maritime Trade*, p. 168 ff.
411 *Ibid.*, p. 170.
412 *Ibid.*, pp. 172-3.
413 *Ibid.*, p. 176.
414 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

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of this return inland of the Khmer rulers. Angkor Thom was built by Jayavarman VII at the end of the same century.

The Cham state in South Vietnam, without an extensive agrarian hinterland, also remerged in international commerce in the eleventh century.[415] This development had already been adumbrated in the eighth century, when the foreign merchant community at Canton was forced to shift its operations to the Vietnam coast. But the period between the eighth and eleventh century is obscure. A sizeable Muslim presence is in evidence on the tenth- and early eleventh-century Cham coast. And the Cham ports profited from the new opportunities created by the Sung, resulting in more intense commercial and political rivalry with the more northernly Lý ports which ultimately adversely affected the Cham. It is clear however that, like the Khmer, the Cham in the late tenth and eleventh century made frantic attempts to penetrate into the booming commerce of the Sung. Official embassies, with gifts, were sent by both states to China, as also to the Colas and the Vietnamese rulers.

Burma

In the region which is comprised in the present state of Burma, both land- and sea-borne trade with India, Sri Lanka and China in various ways affected the development of kingdoms in the early medieval period, in the north as well as in the south.[416] When Funan was overtaken by the Khmers, two new powers appeared in approximately the same time in the western Indochinese Peninsula, the Mons in the Menam basin – the cradle of Dvāravatī – , and the Pyus in the Irrawaddy basin. Of these, the Mons had had early contacts with South India and became disseminators of Indian culture throughout the Peninsula. In the interval between the disintegration of Funan and, about three centuries later, the consolidation of the Khmer state, the Mon dominions of Dvāravatī and Thaton continued to be the receptacles of Indian art and literature. The Burmans, founding the state of Pagan in the late ninth century, drew heavily on the Mons' civilization as late as the eleventh century. The Pyu created the first political entity in the central

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[415] *Ibid.*, pp. 181-3, 186-93; K. Taylor, 'Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam', in: D.G.Marr and A.C. Milner (eds), *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries* (Singapore, 1986), pp. 139-76.

[416] Stargardt, 'Burma's Economic and Diplomatic Relations'.

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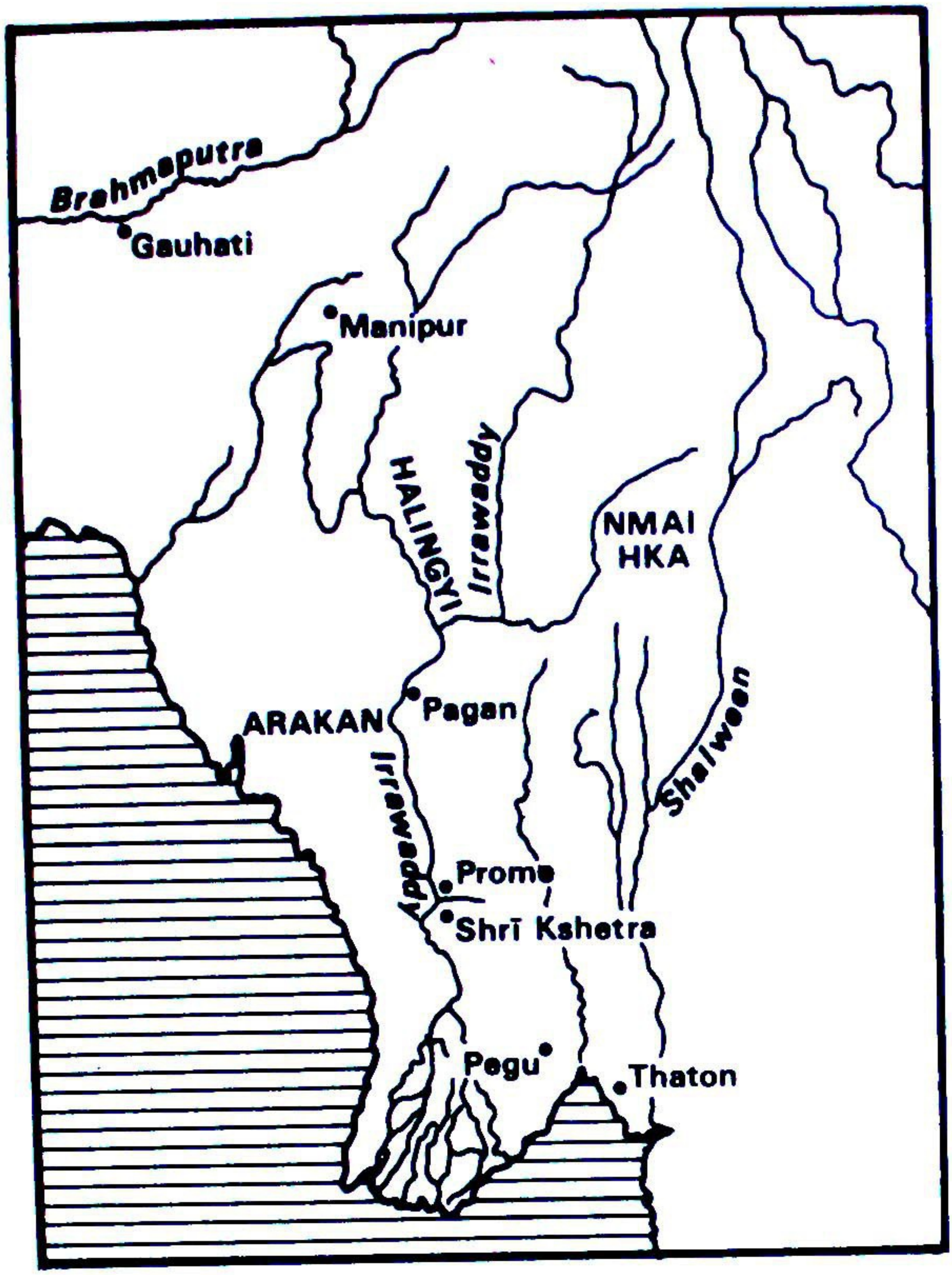

Burma.

Irrawaddy valley of Burma, with its capital at Shrī Kshetra – a site with extensive Indian ruins – in 638 A.D. A second capital of their kingdom became Halingyi. The Chinese pilgrims Hiuen Tsang and I-Ching mention Shrī Kshetra among 'the countries of India'.[417] The Pyu kingdom,

[417] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

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as we have already seen, participated in land-borne and sea-borne trade with India and China, the region around Shrī Kshetra being especially known for its abundance of gold produced for the Indian market.[418] But Pyu political influence in Lower Burma waned during the eighth century, giving way to Mon control. Export products from Upper Burma now increased in quantity: gold, next to salt, serpentine and amber from the mines.

Burma, and especially Thaton, the land of the Mons, had been known to the Indians as a 'land of gold' (Pali: *suvaṇṇabhūmi*) from the centuries B.C.[419] The Sanskrit texts also speak of a 'wall of gold' (*suvarṇakuḍya*) with reference to Lower Burma or perhaps the Malay Peninsula, while the Chinese *Çhin-lin*, 'frontier of gold', appears to refer to the same area.[420] Clearly, the alluvial gold of the Irrawaddy was of interest to the Indians as well as to the Chinese and Nanchao. In Burma, by the ninth century, gold ore was mined in the Nmai Hka mountains.[421] The Pyu are also known to have had a silver crescent-shaped coinage.[422] These were actually bars, without inscription, passing for metal value. Curiously enough, there was a paucity of real coins in Burma, although references in inscriptions to *ticals* (uncoined silver) and cash payments to craftsmen are numerous.[423]

A Mongoloid people, the Nanchao expanded southward from China and may have imposed tributary status on the Pyu early in the ninth century, destroying Halingyi in 836. The Nanchao conquest of Burma however was of no lasting effect. It was the Burmans (who may have come with them) who emerged as the new political overlords and who, in the ninth-tenth centuries, inherited the northern territories and river traffic network with their garrison towns from the Pyu kingdom. Pagan may have been one of the nine fortified towns of the Pyu kingdom.[424] By the eleventh century, under Aniruddha (1044-77), the Burman kingdom at Pagan was powerful enough to embark on a career of conquest and alliance-building missions. The Burmans established contact with India much earlier, assimilating elements of Tantric Mahayana via

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[418] *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47; and cf. p. 273.
[419] Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 17.
[420] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[421] Deyell, 'China Connection', pp. 216-17; G.H.Luce and P. Maung Tin, 'Burma Down to the Fall of Pagan', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, vol. XXIX, no. 111 (1939), p. 270.
[422] Deyell, *ibid.*, p. 217; Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 105.
[423] Stargardt, 'Burma's Economic and Diplomatic Relations', p. 54, note 2.
[424] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

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Manipur, but in things Indian the Mons became their teachers. The Burman ruler's divine authority as a *cakravartin* was founded on a Vaishnavite *devarāja* ceremony, while the Buddhist religion was also supported.

The transition from Mon to Burman cultural dominance did not occur at Pagan before the twelfth century. But Aniruddha's conquest of the southern Mon kingdoms of Pegu and Thaton were of decisive importance in the formation of the Pagan kingdom.[425] Due to the Burman southward expansion the Khmers were probably stopped from adding Lower Burma to their conquest of Dvāravatī. Campaigns were now also conducted against the Nanchao – some of their frontier posts may have been conquered, but it is not clear whether Aniruddha could effect the reopening of overland trade with China. These campaigns were always accounted for in religious terms by the Burmans themselves, as 'quests for relics'. In fact, they were political and military in character, and often economic in purpose. Aniruddha turned to the south a second time, imposing tributary status on the Arakan kingdom – which had vital links with Bengal – and intervening diplomatically in Sri Lanka.[426] From Aniruddha's reign onwards, Pagan gave special attention to its relations with India; these relations were fundamentally commercial in nature but were again accompanied by intensive religious, diplomatic and cultural exchange. As outlined before, there were principally three avenues of contact: from Pagan to Manipur and Assam; through Arakan and Chittagong; and along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. In Sri Lanka, after Vijāyabāhū I came to power in 1070, many treasures were received from Pagan. In 1075 Buddhist priests were invited from Burma to Sri Lanka. Kyansittha, the third ruler of the Pagan kingdom, was especially sensitive to the interests of the Mons and their involvement in trade and politics as far down as the Malay Peninsula, which they linked to the trade of Java and Sumatra as well as the long-distance trade passing through the Strait of Malacca. Kyansittha's heir, Alaungsittha, perpetuated the same policy of maritime expansion. Both rulers are credited with sea-voyages to Bengal, Sri Lanka and Malaya. Elaborate negotiations were entered into with the Colas. Kyansittha is also known for a mission to Bodhgaya, ostensibly undertaken to carry out a restoration project, but again not without an economic policy

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[425] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-62; idem, 'Social and Religious Aspects of Royal Power in Medieval Burma; from Inscriptions in Kyansittha's reign, 1084-1112', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. XIII (1970), pp. 289-308.

[426] Cf. p. 276.

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dimension. Burman expansion, thus, from 1044 to 1112, created a network of economic and diplomatic-political interests extending as far as eastern and central India, Sri Lanka, the Malay Peninsula, and the Indonesian Archipelago.[427]

It is evident that the Burmans expanded southward, into the delta of the Irrawaddy and the Isthmus of Kra, at the same time (around 1050) that the Khmers were penetrating the westward trade.[428] Perhaps a further motive was added by a disturbance of the trade network connecting the Irrawaddy plain with China in the tenth-century Nanchao region. Due to the Burman presence, the port of Kedah rose to new importance in the second half of the eleventh century.[429] The formerly dominant port of the peninsula, Takuapa, sunk to insignificance after the Cola visit. Another port, that of Tāmbraliṅga on the eastern Isthmus of Kra appears to have maintained its position unchanged. For Pagan, however, closer ties to South India and Sri Lanka provided a very important new economic potential which lasted through the twelfth century. This shift further reduced the dominance in international trade of Shrīvijaya. Java and the northern ports of Sumatra drew this trade to the south and west while the Burmans drew the route of the Bay of Bengal northward and while the Isthmus of Kra became a transition area to the mainland states.[430]

Another result of the campaign against Thaton in 1057 was the conversion of Pagan to Theravada Buddhism and the decline of Tantric Mahayana.[431] The Mon country, in effect, in spite of numerous vestiges of Hinduism, had been one of the earliest to adopt Buddhism; and when Buddhism began to decline in most parts of the Indian subcontinent, the Mons maintained contact with Kāñcī and with the Theravāda Buddhism of Sri Lanka. Under the Buddhist king Kyansittha the great temple of Ananda was built at Pagan, possibly after an Orissan or Bengali model.[432] Kyansittha completed the famous pagoda of Shweziga. In the late eleventh century the Chinese assigned the king of *P'u-kan* (Pagan), 'sovereign of the Fan (brahmans)', a higher place in their hierarchy than the *Chou-lien* (Cola).[433] Like the Khmer state, Pagan at its height, from

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427 Cf.Stargardt, 'Burma's Economic and Diplomatic Relations', p. 62.
428 Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 197-8.
429 *Ibid.*, p. 200.
430 *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 224 (map).
431 Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 149-50.
432 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
433 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

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the eleventh century, drew its economic support primarily from irrigated rice agriculture, linked to a temple network.[434] But in Pagan the rights to the agricultural surplus shifted to the Theravada Buddhist Samgha, the hierarchical monastic order around which the Pagan monarchy reorganized itself in an entirely novel way.

Sumatra and Shrīvijaya

The Arab geographers speak of Sumatra as one of the islands of *al-Hind*, 'adjoining Sarandīb (Sri Lanka)', and they call it *ar-Rāmī*, after the port of Lāmurī, probably, in North Sumatra.[435] 'A variety of corn is produced there, and there are mines and perfumes . . . . The island of *ar-Rāmī* has excellent soil and a temperate climate. Its waters are sweet. In it are a number of towns and villages . . . (but) the thickets of this island are inhabited by naked people whose language is incomprehensible . . . . They hang on the trees by their hands without any support from the legs, and because of their speed cannot be overtaken. The coastal parts of this island are inhabited by a people who meet the boats by swimming . . . They sell amber in exchange for iron from the captains of the boats, and carry it in their mouths'.[436] Sumatra also drew attention as 'the island where the rhinoceros (*al-karkaddan*) lives'.[437] And along Sumatra's westcoast there were other islands which, like Sumatra's own interior, were full of incestuous, naked cannibals: Nias (*al-Niyān*, *al-Baynimān*), with one large town; and Bālūs (*Jālūs*).[438] 'The inhabitants . . . of Jālūs . . . are black and naked and cannibals. That is because if a foreigner falls into their hands, they hang him upside down and cut him up into pieces and eat him piece by piece . . . . These people have no king. They have places where they take

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[434] Hall, *Maritime Trade*, p. 165.

[435] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 65; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 30.

[436] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 31-32.

[437] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 65. This is the 'Sumatran rhinoceros', which, built in the form of a battering-ram, trots through the thickest jungle with great ease, leaving tunnels behind it. It is also the smallest rhinoceros on earth, but the largest animal which lives exclusively in the tropical rainforest. It is unique among rhinoceros in that it is somewhat hairy; and of all Asiatic rhino's it is the only one with two horns. Its general appearance is more like that of a hippopotamus. There are 500 to 1000 of these animals left in Sumatra and Southeast Asia itself, but they are threatened, for, as every Sumatran peasant knows, its horn is worth its weight in gold. (Cf. N. Van Strien, *The Sumatran Rhinoceros in the Gunung Leuser National Park, Sumatra, Indonesia* (Wageningen, 1985)).

[438] Tibbetts, *Arabic Texts*, p. 25; Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 33, 115.

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shelter. These look like swamps, covered with trees and thicket. These people are black, and have repulsive faces, curly hair, long necks and shanks, and are absolutely ugly'.[439]

As the original home of Malay civilization, from at least the seventh century A.D., the eastcoast of Sumatra also held the capital of the Shrivijayan maritime empire. The characteristics of much of the eastcoast lowland were equally unfavourable, but in importance the eastcoast outstripped the westcoast and the Minangkabau highlands of Central Sumatra by far. This remained, basically, the situation until about the fourteenth century, when gradually the highlands overtook the cultural and political predominance of the eastern lowlands.[440] Even then, Shrīvijaya was dependent on its ability to integrate its hinterland into the international trading system and to maintain itself at the centre of a political alliance system on the island, which had in fact, as Idrisi says, 'a number of kings'.[441] Although primarily maritime in orientation, the Mahārāja of Shrīvijaya was also responsible for the agricultural prosperity of his domain. And the adoption of Buddhism did not merely underpin relations with overseas trading partners but equally enhanced the Mahārāja's legitimacy at home and among the inland population.[442] A not inconsiderable part of his revenue came from the land. Next to 'fine camphor', spices, aromatics, pearls, sugarcane, cocoanuts, and rice, especially gold, silver and tin appear to have been important in the economy of Shrīvijaya and are regularly mentioned by the Arab geographers.[443] Mines of gold and silver were found in the environs of Palembang (Srībūza) and Kedah (Kalāh) and were exported by the Shrīvijayan state. 'The Mahārāja . . . perceives every day a revenue of two hundred mann of gold which he melts into a single brick and throws in the water, saying "this is my treasure" . . . (and) apart from this revenue, fifty mann per day comes from cock fights'.[444] The largest tin

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[439] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 33-34.

[440] Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism*, p. 7.

[441] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, p. 30; Hall, *Maritime Trade*, p. 79.

[442] Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 90-91.

[443] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 32-33, 116; Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 112; De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 66. See also: P.Th. Couperus, 'Eenige Aantekeningen Betreffende de Goudproduktie in de Padangsche Bovenlanden', *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, V (1856); W.J. Van der Meulen, 'Suvarṇadvīpa and the Chrysê Chersonêsos', *Indonesia*, XVIII (1974); N.J. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis* (The Hague, 1931), pp. 83, 303; idem, *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst*, 2 vols (The Hague, 1923), II, pp. 422-3.

[444] De Goeje, *Ibn Khordādbhih*, p. 68.

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mines were apparently not on Sumatra but on the Malayan Peninsula, as the Arabic *Kalāh* is probably Kedah (Kra) and the name for tin in Arabic, *ar-riṣaṣ al-qal'ī* or *qal'ī*, is derived from Kalāh.[445]

Commercial leadership at sea, as we have seen (p. 343), had shifted to lower Sumatra in the sixth century, concomitant with the break-up of Funan. Indian influence in Sumatra, as in Borneo and Java, prior to 500 A.D., was meagre, but now increased. Commercial centres arose on the southeast coast of Sumatra and the northwest coast of Java. Seaborne trade was stimulated by the Sasanid empire, and by China after 628 A.D. If Sumatran groups established themselves along the Persian Gulf in Sasanid times, by the 670s the capital of Shrīvijaya had become an important Buddhist centre. Sanskritization, the assignment of Sanskritic titles to state officials, and the introduction of Indian ritual were part of the consolidation of Shrīvijayan rule.[446] This was many centuries before South Indians established their commercial presence on a more permanent basis on the westcoast, near Pariangan. Tang recognition of Shrīvijaya's hegemony in the region was also important. Supported by the Chinese, Shrīvijaya, with its centre on the southeast coast of Sumatra, dominated all maritime trade passing through Southeast Asia between 670 and 1025. While the economic and political background of Shrīvijaya's rise is vague – largely because it is not known in what way trade was conducted in the preceding centuries – it is commonly regarded, since its discovery, as the earliest Indonesian 'empire'.[447] It can be surmised that originally Sumatra played a more important role in foreign trade than Java and the spice islands. It is striking however that as a source of royal power the Javanese interior retained precedence; Sumatra and Shrīvijaya, in effect, were at different times ruled by the Javanese Shailendra dynasty. According to Wolters, Western Indonesia was not yet trading with China as late as the third century, but only with India and Sri Lanka.[448] In the early fifth century Sino-Indonesian trade was under way, Indian Ocean produce coming to South China via Indonesia.[449] Persian activity does not show itself beyond the Western Indian Ocean, and maritime trade in the fifth and sixth centuries was still primarily a trade between China and Western Asia and not between China and Indonesia. In other words, in the

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[445] Maqbul Ahmad, *Al-Idrīsī*, pp. 116-17.
[446] Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 92, 95.
[447] Cf. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, pp. 20-21.
[448] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[449] *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 78, 83, 94, 127.

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early Sino-Indonesian trade, Indonesian produce was probably much less important than West-Asian produce, to which *Po-se* ('Persia') gave its name in general. We do not know how the 'Persian trade' reached South China but there remains the possibility that here the intervention of the Indonesians was important.[450] One thing is clear: Western Indonesian commerce made a leap in the fifth century, profiting from developments outside Indonesia. Shrīvijaya then inherited Southeast Sumatra's key position on the route to China.[451] Local Indonesian goods became important in the China trade in the period of Umayyad rule in the Middle East, after the fall of the Sasanid capital of Ctesiphon and before the Persian Gulf trade gained impetus (with the foundation of Baghdad). The decisively important event in the rise of Shrīvijaya was thus the Malays capturing the China trade and mobilizing products from the region of the Java Sea and their own hinterland on the island of Sumatra.[452]

Shrīvijaya, then, centred in Southeastern Sumatra – the cradle of the coastal Malays, in whose language the first inscriptions of Shrīvijaya were written – expanded northwest toward the Strait of Malacca and southeast toward the Sunda Strait, enabling itself to gain control of the two great passages between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea and thereby assuring its hegemony in Indonesia until the eleventh century. By the early tenth century the wealth of the ruler of Shrīvijaya had become proverbial among the Arabs. 'One finds here the kingdom of the Mahārāja, the king of the islands, who commands an empire without limits and with innumerable troops. The fastest vehicle could not in two years make the tour of the islands which are under his domination. The lands of this king produce all kinds of spices and aromatics, and no other sovereign in the world extracts as much wealth from his country'.[453] The Arabic accounts emphasize that the Mahārāja ruled over Kalāh, the Malay Peninsula, as well as Sribūza (Palembang, Sumatra), and that it was the control of both sides of the Strait which was the foundation of his power. An inscription of Rājendracoḷa I of the early eleventh century confirms the Arabic evidence that the king of Shrīvijaya was also the king of 'Kaṭāka', i.e. Kedah or Kalāh.[454] Since all Indian and Chinese trade flowed through the Shrīvijaya-controlled passages,

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[450] *Ibid.*, pp. 150-7.
[451] *Ibid.*, p. 228.
[452] *Ibid.*, pp. 232, 242-3; Hall, *Maritime Trade*, p. 100; Sauvaget, *Akhbār*, p. XXXVII.
[453] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 153.
[454] Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 142.

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diplomatic intercourse was intense in both directions. Numerous embassies were sent to the Chinese court; and the 'Mahārāja of Suvarṇadvīpa' built Buddhist monasteries and temples in the Pāla and Coḷa domains of the subcontinent. Indian traders, in addition to Arabs and Persians, frequented the Shrīvijayan ports and Java. Remarkably, no great monuments appear to have been built in Sumatra itself, and what is left of the centuries of Shrīvijayan rule are only some insignificant brick towers and a very small number of inscriptions.[455]

'The Mahārāja, king of the islands, has relations with the other kings of *al-Hind* (*sā'ir mulūk al-Hind*) such as *al-Fījabat* (i.e. Vijayapati, "the king of Java")', Masʿūdī writes.[456] But Shrīvijaya's relationship with Java was complex. In the eighth century Central Java was in the hands of the Buddhist Shailendra dynasty which extended its hegemony into Cambodia and Northern Malaya. After being expelled from Java in the mid-ninth century, the Shailendras appear to have been given control over the Shrīvijaya kingdom, effecting a change of dynasty which is dimly reflected in the Arab geographers. At the turn of the tenth century conflict broke out between Shrīvijaya and the Eastern-Javanese state. This briefly preceded the Coḷa intervention which marked the beginnings of Shrīvijaya's decline as an independent power. In 1079-82 the capital was moved from Palembang to the Central-Sumatran port of Jambi, while rival ports rose in Java, Northern Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. The eventual demise of Shrīvijaya which was to lead to its break-up perhaps started as early as the final quarter of the twelfth century. With the lowlands becoming increasingly malaria-infested, the Minangkabau then built up their power in the central highlands on the surplus of its fertile soil and mineral wealth.

Java

In early times, Java had been known as an island 'rich in grain and gold', a 'gold island' or *suvarṇadvīpa* like Sumatra. The first cultural efflorescence of coastal Java has been related to the presence of gold, but, to all appearance, in our period gold was no longer of great importance.[457] Power shifted to the Diëng plateau – originally a place for

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[455] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[456] *Murūj adh-dhahab*, I, p. 174.

[457] Th. Pigeaud, 'Javanese gold', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (1958), pp. 192-6; F.D.K. Bosch, 'Gouden vingerringen uit het Hindoe-Javaansche tijd-

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worship of local deities – which by the sixth century had become the site of a Javanese Shaivite cult, and where in 732 we find a king named Sañjaya claiming to be the representative of the ancestral rulers of *Yāvadvīpa* and the patron of the 'field of Shiva', the temple complex of the plateau.[458] These rulers introduced the Indian title of 'Mahārāja' and were the precursors of a new concept of kingship. During the second half of the eighth century, the Shaivite kings were succeeded by the Buddhist dynasty which bore the title of *Shailendra* or 'kings of the mountain'. Java, however, up to the tenth century, remained under the control of numerous regional powers.

The advent of the Shailendras coincides with the expansion of Mahayana Buddhism in Java and Southeast Asia generally, just as it coincides with the accession of the Pāla dynasty in Bengal, with whom the Shailendras appear to have had direct contact. The Kedu plain (to the south of the Merapi-Perahu mountain range) became covered with great Buddhist monuments – among which the Borobudur – , reflecting the symmetry and cosmological standards of Indian architecture but incorporating Javanese elements and forms no less. The Shailendra kings of Mataram seem to have exercised a form of hegemony over the Indochinese Peninsula and raided its coasts from north to south. It cannot be shown however that in the eighth century the Shailendras were already kings of Shrīvijaya, as they were in the ninth, in the tenth and again in the eleventh century. Undoubtedly, the Shailendras governed Shrīvijaya in the middle and the second half of the ninth century as a dependency.[459] But elsewhere, in the ninth century, the power of the Buddhist Shailendras gradually declined; the Khmer kingdom threw off their suzerainty in 802, founding the House of Angkor. And Buddhist influence receded in Java under the impact of a revival of Shaivism which started from the east, the area where the former Shaivite princes had retired. The earliest ninth-century Arab mention of the 'Mahārāja of Zābaj' refers to the Shailendra reigning in Java, and not yet to Sumatra, as was the case later. The Hinduist resurgence on Java however and the Shailendras losing power at its centre was concomitant with an increase of their power in Sumatra. This change is what the Muslim sources reflect; with the result that by the tenth century 'Zābaj' cor-

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perk', *Djawa*, VII (1927), pp. 305-20; T. Harrison and S.J. O'Connor, *Gold and megalithic activity in prehistoric and recent West Borneo* (Ithaca, 1970), p. 331.

[458] Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 119-20.

[459] Coedès, *Indianized States*, pp. 89-92; Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 108-9.

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responds to the Sumatran kingdom of Shrīvijaya. Yet, it is correct to say that the Sunda Strait region and Western Java coast were subordinate to Shrīvijayan authority most of the period from the late-seventh to the mid-eleventh century.

In the eleventh century the important relocation occurred to Eastern Java, while Javanese kings became more actively involved in maritime trade.[460] Up to the tenth century the Javanese state was primarily focused on the Kedu plain of Central Java, but then the Javanese political center shifted to the lower Brantas basin of Eastern Java – a shift for which a variety of now largely outmoded catastrophic and idealistic explanations have been adduced, as also the assumption that the extravagant expenses of temple building in Central Java would have exhausted the area. A more important causal factor appears to be the increase of sea-borne trade. This was not only the period of Shrīvijaya's beginning decline but also that of the beginning of Sung overseas trade. The Java Sea became a flourishing commercial zone in the eleventh century, with the Chinese penetrating to the Spice Islands from the north through the Sulu Sea. The Sung records mention an era of warfare between Shrīvijaya and the new Eastern-Javanese state. This came to an end with the Coḷa expedition of 1024-25 and with the consolidation of Airlangga's authority in both Eastern and Central Java.[461] Thus, before the eleventh century, the Central-Javanese Mahārāja was merely an important regional chief (*rakrayān*), propping up his authority by temple construction and the patronage of brahmans.[462] In the early tenth century there appears to have been considerable conflict among the *rakrayān* before the kraton moved to the east.[463] In the eleventh century, however, thanks to the wider economic base in the Upper Brantas region, Airlangga's accession upgraded the status of the *Mahārāja*. More power was now concentrated at the centre, with royal authority extending over all of Java and Bali, and effecting a closer synthesis with local Javanese culture than was achieved in the wet-rice economy of Central Java in the preceding period.[464] In the eleventh century also, the Javanese monarch was no longer abiding by Shrīvijaya's supremacy in

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460 Hall, *Maritime Trade*, pp. 23-24.
461 *Ibid.*, p. 112.
462 *Ibid.*, pp. 115-8.
463 *Ibid.*, p. 127.
464 *Ibid.*, pp. 129-35.

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international commerce. Shrīvijaya did maintain political supremacy in the west of the Archipelago, but, as contemporary documents show, direct commercial relations of Java extended also to the west, to India and the Cola kingdom.[465]

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[465] Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 146.

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CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis should leave us with a clear perception of what went on in the first phase of the making of the Indo-Islamic world. In this first phase we have located the driving force of economy and trade in the Middle East. Here we found the centre of gravity of a world-embracing exchange circuit with a unified monetary constituent and a fusion of formerly rival dominions in a new universalistic polity which bridged the divide between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. When Sind – an important passway of the India trade of Islam – was conquered, the subcontinent as well as 'the islands of the eastern sea' were integrated in the Islamic trading system. Within the subcontinent, the overland and maritime expansion of Islam deeply influenced the formation of regional states in both direct and indirect ways. Geopolitical shifts which determined the development of early medieval India also included the Tang-Chinese expansion and Tibetan imperialism in Central Asia. Clearly, the effects of Islamic expansion worked themselves out first of all in the western Indian Ocean as far as Malabar and Sri Lanka, as also along the overland routes from Transoxania to Kashmir and Sind and Gujarat. The Gulf of Bengal and the Coromandel coast accommodated Muslim trading diasporas but here Islamic trade was not as hegemonic. By contrast, the rise to prominence of South India had to await the eleventh century, when Sung-Chinese maritime expansion raised the stakes in Southeast Asia and the Cola domains.

The Central-Asian or Turkish factor comes powerfully into play in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (and later), when the Ghaznavids and Ghurids and their slave generals extended the holy war to the plains of *al-Hind*. Islam was gradually established in North India by the Turks, not by the Arabs. In this second phase of Islamic expansion in the East, the accumulated wealth of the Indian subcontinent – which for so long had enjoyed an almost legendary reputation – was finally thrown open. The Muslim idol-breakers went about in the North-Indian temple cities with results which were not dissimilar to those which the Arabs achieved in the first phase of expansion in the Middle East. Indian wealth, like earlier Byzantine and Sasanid wealth, now became available for monetary circulation, and new foundations were laid for the creation of an eastern-Persian/Turkish state embracing the north of

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India. From this time onwards – when in the Mediterranean the expansion of Europe turns the table and the Islamic Middle East declines in relative importance – India became more and more central to the Muslim world at large. In the thirteenth century, the Indian Ocean trading world began to revolve around the subcontinent itself. India, with China and Europe, became one of the dynamic core zones of the world. Islam, we should note, had by then been present in *al-Hind* for more than six centuries.

We will return to the second phase, the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, in the subsequent volume. Our task will then be to show how the Indo-Islamic world began to develop two distinct orientations, an Arabic variant in the South emanating from maritime trading contacts and merging into the Indonesian Archipelago, and a Persianate-Turkish variant in the North (and subsequently the Deccan) resulting from overland conquest by Mamluks and associated with agrarian-fiscal state-formation on the Middle-Eastern model. In both cases Islamization was concomitant with the extension of trade, with urbanization and a further monetization of the economy, superseding or penetrating relatively more circumscribed, brahman-dominated social networks. It will thus become evident why, even though Islam derived from outside, the integration of South Asia in the wider maritime and overland trading systems of Islam established the subcontinent as the dominant economy in the entire Islamic world. This was primarily a question of population density and agricultural potential which allowed for a very favourable import-export balance. To understand how the subcontinent achieved this central position we will first have to look at the interplay between Islam, Central Asia and India in these centuries.

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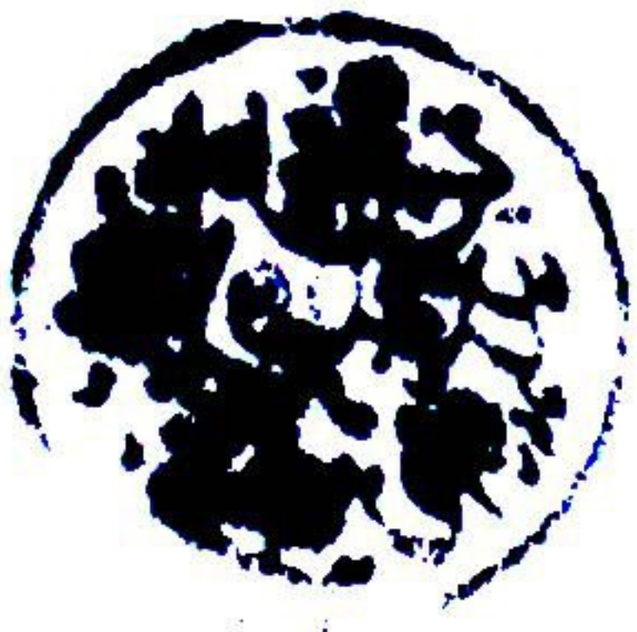

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