

Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

GEOGRAPHY

RESEARCH PAPER SERIES

No. 4

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V. A. JANAKI



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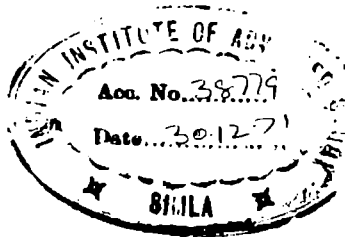


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Near Palace Gate, Baroda-1, India.**

Printed by Shri Ramanlal J. Patel, Manager, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda Press (Sadhana Press), near Palace Gate, Palace Road, Baroda, and published by Smt. V. A. Janaki, Head, Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, M. S. University of Baroda, Baroda August, 1969.

P R E F A C E

Arab contact with India and their references to the country as given in their texts have been critically analysed, interpreted and summarised by many eminent scholars. This paper only re-accounts what the Arabs knew about Gujarat, its people, its trade, its towns and ports correlating these with the known history of Gujarat during the four centuries when Arab contact was at its zenith. This paper is based on English translations and commentaries of Arab texts.

An attempt has been made to bring out the continuity of the commercial contacts between the West and the East, and the fact that Arab contact with India, and particularly with the West Coast, is a natural development in the commerce of the Indian Ocean. The two arms of the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, have from time immemorial been the connecting link between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. The control of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent was the key that opened the treasures of the East to the commercial nations. The struggle for power in this region dates back to the 3rd millenium B.C. and continues to the present day.

The Arabs were one of the many Powers that dominated this strategic region during the long history of the human race. For four centuries they were the dominating Power in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean controlling the gateways to the East. The Islamic State of the 7th century was a successor state to the Persian Empire which in the 6th century B.C. brought the then civilised world under one single administration and thereby gained monopoly of trade.

The rise of Islam was meteoric. When the Prophet Mohammad led his 300 Madinese (Medinah) followers against Al Sufyan of Makkah, the commercial metropolis of the time and routed him at Al Badr, 20 miles south-west of Medinah, the foundation of his temporal power was laid. Hitherto "Islam was a religion within a state in Al Madinah but after Badr Islam became the State". Within the short span of mortal life Mohammad had laid the foundation of an Empire "that was soon to embrace within its far flung boundaries the fairest provinces of the civilised world". Under the Ummayyads (661-744) and the Abbasids (750-847 to 1258) Science, Mathematics, Cartography, Geography, Astronomy, Medicine and Literature flourished. Commerce expanded with the unfolding of the map, and by the 15th century the Arabs had founded trade depots in the Far East.

It is, however, curious that the first references to India by Arab travellers and traders, are not during the hey day of Arab power. The glorious reign of Al Mansur (754-75), Harun

al Rashid (786-800) and Al Mamun (813-833) had ended nearly two decades before Suleiman, the Merchant of Basra, made the first reference to Gurjaratta (Jurz). F. J. Richards in his paper on Geographic Factors in Indian Archaeology points out that the great cultural developments in the Afrasian Dry Zone, covering the river valleys of Western Asia and North Africa, and the progressive desiccation in that area, resulted in a radial migration of people to the East. India being on the margin of the Eurasian continent, protected by the mountain barriers and away from the transcontinental communication lines of Eurasia, escaped the major impacts of, while receiving a sort of backwash from, the great migrations. Arab migration also seems to have followed the patterns set by the ancient people. Arabs continued to be carriers of trade long after the Turkish Mongols had established themselves in Arabia, so that when the first Europeans, the Portuguese, made their appearance in the Indian Ocean and the Far Eastern Seas in the 15th century, it was the Arabs they had to fight to gain monopoly of the trade.

It is hoped that this attempt will help the study of the Historical Geography of Gujarat. Historical Geography is a neglected subject in the Universities of India. Apart from the fact that Historical Geography studies the geography of an area at a given time in the past, the history of any region is indispensable to the study of the geography of that region in the present. For geographical patterns, be they physical, economic, commercial, social or political, are the result of what happened in the past. They are the result of the combined action of external and internal forces operating on area through the course of time. Time and space are the twin dimensions by which to comprehend our world. If we accept that geography is a method by which a greater understanding of our world is attempted then history cannot be dissociated from geography. The complicated and changing patterns, the real "blending of the dimensions of time and area", have not yet been fully comprehended and clarified by geographers. It is with this in view that a chapter in the history of Gujarat has been studied. Even if it contributes to the understanding of Gujarat's trade and cultural patterns in the distant past it would have served some purpose.

THE GREAT AWAKENING

In the fourth decade of the seventh century A.D. there arose in the hitherto little known land of Arabia a great power “ which hurled itself against the only two Powers of the Age, falling heir to one, the Persian, and robbing the other, the Byzantine, of its fairest provinces ”.¹ After the death of Mohammad the Prophet in 632 A.D., the spread of Islam was rapid. By 635 Damascus fell, 637 Jerusalem, 638 Mesopotamia, 640 Egypt, 643 Tripoli, 698 Carthage, and in 711 the conquest of Spain had begun. By the 11th century the Arabs had reached the shores of the Baltic and the Norwegian Peninsula in search of skin and fur. The early followers of Mohammad were a simple, nomadic desert people, with a natural intellectual curiosity, strongly patriarchal and held together by clan and tribal organisations. But the conquest of Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt and other areas brought the Arabs into contact with superior civilisations which had close cultural and trade relations with the rest of the then known world. The first few centuries of contact brought no new knowledge to the Arab except enable him to calculate more accurately the latitudes and longitudes for which an understanding of astronomy was necessary. This initial failure was partly due to his adherence to religious beliefs but more particularly due to his lack of knowledge of any of the languages of the then civilised world namely Persian, Aramaic, Sanskrit and Greek. Arab geographical knowledge may be said to have started after they established themselves in Baghdad in 766 A.D. and fell heir to the Persian Empire and the rich province of Khorasan which at one time included the Indus Valley, Sindh and parts of the Punjab. The shifting of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad in 766 A.D. brought the Arabs directly in contact with the merchants and scholars of the east, deeply affecting their intellectual outlook. Basra, at the head of the Persian Gulf, not far south of Baghdad, was at this time one of the main commercial centres where merchants from all parts of the world assembled and exchanged information.

The horizon of Arab geographical knowledge therefore, expanded with the military conquests of the Arabs and the very immensity of the Arab Empire. “ There was a time when the traveller could pass from the confines of China to the Pillars of Hercules, from the banks of the Indus to the Cilician Gates, from the Oxus to the shores of the Atlantic, without stepping

¹ G. H. T. Kimble, *Geography of the Middle Ages*, (Methuen), 1938, p. 44. Also Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, (Macmillan), 5th Edition, 1951, p. 142.

outside the boundaries of the territory ruled over by the Caliph in Damascus or Baghdad".¹ Merchants and travellers showed an enterprise in travelling enormous distances.

A second stimulus to knowledge was the pilgrimage to Mecca, which was obligatory to every Muslim unless he was incapacitated by illness or lack of finances. The Arabs had every opportunity for exchanging opinions on their "pilgrim way". Very few considered this journey as just a pilgrimage. To many it was "the equivalent of our journeys abroad for study".² Topographic descriptions, itineraries, travellers' accounts, maps and the characteristics of people as the Arabs found them, were recorded by the pilgrims to Mecca and these became a powerful factor in promoting knowledge, encouraging trade and in spreading Islam.

A particular stimulus was given to Mathematical and Astronomical Geography and Cartography, which was also an indirect outcome of a religious obligation in Muslim Society. The Muslim mosque, in any part of the world had to be built facing Mecca. There arose the necessity therefore to accurately determine positions and directions. Astrology was also held in high esteem by the Muslims and in order to cast horoscopes it was necessary to know the position of the stars at a particular time which in turn required a knowledge of latitudes and longitudes. Finding the geographical co-ordinates was therefore, a religious obligation to the Arabs and these were much more accurate than the co-ordinates of Ptolemy.³

A fourth stimulus to geographical knowledge was Muslim Brotherhood. Journeys for Arab traders and travellers were made easier and more attractive because they could be sure that their co-religionists in any part of the world would provide the facilities to those who braved the perils of such arduous journeys.⁴

A further stimulus was commerce. In the Mohammadan Society the merchant enjoyed a respect which was closely connected with the Islamic faith. Muhammad the Prophet was a merchant. Several sayings of Mohammad extol the merchant. "They are the couriers of the world and the trusty servants of God upon Earth" or "in the Day of Judgement the honest and the truthful Muslim merchant will take rank with the martyrs of the faith". The greatest

1 A. P. Newton, *Travel and Travellers of the Middle Ages*, (Kegan Paul), 1930, Second Edition, p. 89.

2 G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 35, as quoted in G.H.T. Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

3 G.H.T. Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

4 A. P. Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

of the early Caliphs, Umar, said that "there is no place where I would be more gladly overtaken by death than in the market place". The same ruler sets "honesty in commercial life above the punctual fulfilment of religious duties". Ghazali, one of the greatest thinkers of the Mohammadan world in the 11th century laid down the tenets for an ideal Muslim merchant.¹

The fact that the Arabs inherited the elaborate system of posts and roads from the Persian Empire added to the attractions of trade and travel. At intervals of every few miles there was a postal station and rest houses where travellers could change horses, rest and get more information about the roads and the people of the different provinces.

But no stimulus was as great as the encouragement given by the Caliphs themselves. The incentive to intellectual renaissance came not so much from the people as from a Prince. Al Mansur (754-775), the second Caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty encouraged the study of Greek, Persian and Sanskrit and ordered the translation of several ancient works. It was under the royal patronage of Al Mamun (813-833) that the colleges of Baghdad and Nishapur attracted students from all parts of the Muslim world which now stretched from the Indus in India to the Andalusian valley in Spain. In 830 Al Mamun founded the "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad, employed translators and encouraged scholars to follow the command of the Prophet and "seek knowledge even in China".² But Arab intellectual flowering was not limited to translations and slavish borrowing from other sources. It was supplemented by travels and journeys, undertaken, specifically to collect data, enhance trade and to spread the teaching of Mohammad. Knowledge gathered by eye witnesses forced the Arabs to break away from their traditional beliefs, revise existing theories and subject their conclusions to severe analysis and criticism. This contributed much to the knowledge of the world in the mediæval period when European intellectual advancement was stifled by barbarian invasions and religious beliefs.

Al Mamun himself was a great scholar and is said to have encouraged the improvement of Ptolemy's map. The radius of the earth as calculated for him was only shorter by 750 miles than the actual. He and his successors encouraged scholars from all parts of the Empire. They recorded the details of climate, of transport, of people and of merchandise in the different countries.

There were many scientists who distinguished themselves in the Court of Al Mansur, Al Rashid, Al Mamun and his successors. Al Khwarizmi translated into Arabic the Sanskrit treatise Siddhanta, at the behest of Al Mansur, which gave in detail the movements of the Stars

1 A. P. Newton, *Travel and Travellers of the Middle Ages*, op. cit., pp. 92-93 (Chapter V, Arab Travellers and Merchants, A.D. 1000-1500, by T. W. Arnold).

2 C. R. Beazley, as quoted in G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

according to Indian trigonometry.¹ This work was later translated into Latin by Adelard of Bath in the Middle Ages (1126 A.D.) where in he attributes the work to Al Battani. Khwarizmi also improved upon Ptolemy's Geography in his Face of the Earth.

Mohammad Ferghani's works were translated into Latin and Hebrew in the Middle Ages. Ferghani died in 830 A.D. Abul Fida writing in the 14th century frequently referred to Ferghani in his Book of Latitudes and Longitudes.

Another scientist was Nadar, born in Basra about 740 A.D. but settled in Khorasan. He wrote the Book of Characteristics, detailing the characteristic features and mode of life of different peoples. Amr also born in Basra, which in those days was an intermediary between India, Africa, Persia and Syria, took advantage of the knowledge brought by merchants from the different parts of the world who frequented the commercial capital of Basra. In his Book of Cities and Marvels of Countries, a detailed account of the different countries, their cities, products and trade, their people and their customs, were given. He believed that there was a connection between the Indus and the Nile. The close trade contact between Debal at the mouth of the Indus and the Nile must have led him to this conclusion.

Sulciman, the Merchant of Basra made many voyages to India and China in 851 A.D. and wrote his travel accounts in the "Relation of Voyages of the Arabs and the Persians in India and China". The communications between the Arab Empire and China had become very intensive by this time.

To Abu Yusuf Yakub is ascribed 200 works, translations of Sanskrit, Persian and Greek works including Ptolemy's Geography. Yahya, another scientist of Khorasan prepared several tables, astronomical treatises and charts indicating the day to day movements of the sun and moon, a knowledge of which was necessary to guide the Muslims to prayers. Abu Mashar (805-885) who was a great astrologer and scientist studied the mathematical doctrines of pre-Arab Persia and wrote the Astronomical Tables. He knew Indian doctrines equally well and is said to have visited "the banks of the Ganges to initiate himself into the science of the Brahmins". His work was later translated into Latin by Leon Hispalensi. Abu Mashar had a fairly good idea of the winds, tides and currents of the seas frequented by the Arabs. Al Masudi, who wrote in the 10th century, made use of the works of Mashar when describing the Monsoons of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean².

1 The Siddhanta was first brought to Baghdad in 771 and translated by Al Fazari (Hitti, op. cit., p. 373).

2 M. Ali, Arab Geography, Translation of Reinaud, Section II (Aligarh), 1959, p. 26. Also Philip K. Hitti, op. cit., Chapter XXVII., G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., Ch. III and A. P. Newton, op. cit., Ch. V.

Ibn Khurdadhbih, who was in the postal service was commissioned by Caliph Al Mo-Tamid to write the Book of Roads and Provinces, describing every station and the revenue of each of the Provinces of Islam. His descriptions were prefaced by a geographical account of the provinces.¹ Qudama who lived up to 948 but wrote mostly in 880, also gave the details of the postal routes of the Empire, their stages and distances. Al Yakubi (891) wrote the Book of Countries in which he emphasised the topographical and economic details of the cities and provinces of the Empire and gave an account of the two capitals of the Abbasids, Baghdad and Samarra, the major ports of the Islamic country, the distances between places and the most frequented routes of travellers and traders in his time. He also wrote a history of the Province of Africa and a description of Asia Minor.²

Sometime towards the end of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th century Al Battani wrote another Astronomical Tables based on Indian works. Al Battani, a native of Battan, close to Harran (situated on one of the banks of the Euphrates, ten miles north of modern Raqqe), mainly concentrated on Mathematical Geography. His works were translated into Latin in the Middle Ages.

Another book of geographical interest which appeared about the same time (921 A.D.) was Al Balkhi's Figures of Climates, describing the climates of the different regions of the earth. He included a map for each of his regions. Al Ishtakhri and Ibn Hawkal, in their writings, drew heavily on Al Balkhi.

Al Masudi, one of the best known Arab geographers, born at Baghdad (the date of his birth is not known but he died in 956) made successive journeys to India, Ceylon, Persia, Transoxiana, Armenia, the coasts of the Caspian Sea, Egypt and the Greek countries. He also navigated the seas of China and Malaysia. Al Masudi was interested in everything that concerned humanity. In every region he visited he scrutinised documents relating to its history, contacted well informed persons and recorded his experiences without fear or prejudice. He questioned many accepted traditions of Islam, discarded Ptolemaic concepts and maintained that Africa was surrounded by a sea. Although he was not acquainted with Sanskrit, Al Masudi paid special attention to Indian works. The Annals of Time which is one of his most important works, is lost. But in his Meadows of Gold he compared Greek, Indian and Sabian theories regarding the origin of the Earth and described the dimension and shape of the earth and the people who inhabited the different regions.³

1 G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., p. 50.

2 G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., p. 51. Also M. Ali, op. cit., pp. 34-36.

3 M. Ali, op. cit., Ch. 6.

The Relation of Voyages of the Arabs and the Persians in India and China by Abu Zayed Hasan of Siraf (a very busy port of Farsistan, Fars on the Persian Gulf) was a continuation of the Relation of Suleiman the Merchant and gave details of the routes and ports upto China.¹

A legendary treatise, supposed to have been the voyages of Sindbad the Sailor, who lived in the Court of Harun al Rashid, is attributed to the 10th century. But neither the source nor the date of the work is certain. The Persians of the pre-Arab era were great sailors and navigators in the Oriental Sea during the Sassanid and Arsacid periods. Under the latter Princes a book called Sindbad was written. It is possible that the Arabs changed the setting and re-wrote it in the 10th century. Al Masudi mentions a book of Indian origin called the "Story of the Seven Sages" which perhaps is the source of Sindbad's Seven Voyages. Sindbad's Voyages, alternatively was of Arabic origin relating stories current in the Muslim world of the Middle Ages.² Whatever the source of Sindbad's Voyages, it greatly added to the knowledge, the Arabs had, of the trade routes of the time.

Al Ishtakhri and Ibn Hawkal progressed along the lines of Al Masudi and Al Balkhi. Ishtakhri came from Ishtakhar, old Persepolis and travelled about the year 951 visiting countries from the Atlantic to India and from the Sea of Persia to the Oxus. The Book of Climes, he wrote is descriptive. One chapter is devoted to each region and it is accompanied by a coloured map. Ishtakhri also wrote another Book of the Routes of the Provinces, an elaboration of the earlier Routes of Khurdadhbih. Ishtakhri's works served as basis for many later works.

The Book of Routes was further elaborated by Ibn Hawkal in 977. He was a native of Baghdad and like Al Masudi he was interested in the customs, manners and mode of life of the different people he met. But by this time the Arab Caliphate had lost much of its glory and authority. The successors of Al Mansur, Harun al Rashid and Al Mamun fell a prey to Turkish generals. The capital itself was threatened by the Turks. Ibn Hawkal is known to have left Baghdad in 943 because of the unsettled conditions of the times. He made all his travels on foot or on the backs of animals as the later Abbasid Caliphs could not give the same facilities for travel and trade as the earlier ones. By 977 Ibn Hawkal published his Book of Routes and Realms in which he refers to the work of Khurdadhbih.³ Like Khurdadhbih and Al Balkhi, Ibn Hawkal also wrote only on the provinces and cities contained within the limits of the Arab Empire. Most of these, however, were accompanied by maps, accurate informaton of climate

1 M. Ali. op. cit., Ch. 7.

2 M. Ali, op. cit. Ch. 8.

3 In 1080 the Book of Roads and Realms was again brought up to date by Al Bakri. Also M. Ali op. cit., Ch. 9 and G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., p. 51.

products, trade, coinage, weights and measures and general characteristics of the people. Al Maqdisi (Muqaddasi), another writer of the period, made use of information he gathered from people but emphasised the need for research and inquiry for furthering knowledge. In his Best Classification for the Knowledge of Climates he gave the details of the climate of every region in the world.

While Al Masudi, Al Ishtakhri and Ibn Hawkal were making their voyages, a new School of Mathematics was emerging in Shiraz, Persia under the patronage of Bowayhid princes. Al Sufi and Ibn al Alam resided at the court of Adul Al Dawla. The main work of Al Sufi was the Book of Celestial Figures. Another work on Mathematical Geography was the Astronomical Tables of Al Farabi who died in 950, and the Book of Latitudes and Longitudes by Abul Fida. By the end of the 10th century Al Marrakushi had given a list of 135 co-ordinates which may be considered as one of the greatest contributions of the Arabs to Mathematical Geography.¹ Ibn Bajja and later Jabir Ibn Alfah (considered the best known astronomers of the 12th century) are known to have influenced later Latin and Hebrew Thought. Al Fragan altered Ptolemy's figure for the length of a degree. His figure was $56\frac{2}{3}$ miles where as Ptolemy's was $62\frac{1}{2}$. According to Al Fragan the circumference of the earth was 24,480 which was nearer to the truth than Ptolemy's 22,500. However, Al Fragan's mile was expressed in cubits which were of two kinds, great and small, corresponding to 18 inches and 15 inches respectively. The former was in vogue amongst the Dravidians of India. The first measurement gave the more correct figure of the circumference of the earth than the second (20,400).² Sircar³ is of the opinion that such a mistake of the length of a degree made by Ptolemy in the 2nd century A.D. resulted in the distortion of his map. The Dravidians who navigated the seas had charts covered with a close network of lines intersecting each other at right angles and they were in use in the very ancient period. " The horizontal lines were parallels depending on the altitude of the Pole Star, the Calves of the Little Bear and the Barrow of the Great Bear from the horizon. The altitude was expressed in Isbas or inches each equivalent to $1^{\circ} 42' 50''$. Each Isba was divided into Zams or eighths. The intervals between two parallels therefore amounted to only $12' 51''$.⁴ When Marco Polo visited the East as late as the 13th century these charts were still being used by the Indian Pilots. In the 15th century the Portuguese also mistook the intervals for degrees. There is evidence that in 1584 the Turkish admiral, Ali Ben Husein gave the details of the measurements used in these charts in his Encyclopaedia of the

1 G. H. T. Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

2 G. H. T. Kimble, *op. cit.*, p. 49 (including footnote 3).

3 D. C. Sircar *Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, (Varanasi), 1950, p. 250.

4 Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

Sea. The Arabs studied ancient works in Persian, Sanskrit and Hebrew which enabled them to navigate the seas and describe positions of places on the earth accurately.

In Al Idrisi and Al Biruni as in Al Masudi we find a fusion of old traditions with new geographical knowledge. Al Idrisi wrote a book "Amusement for him who desires to travel round the World". Born sometime during the end of the 11th century he travelled widely over Europe, Africa, Levant and the East and settled in the court of Roger V at Palermo in Sicily (1154). Sicily was the meeting place for many of the navigators from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. From the account of Lisbon Travellers it is clear that the Arabs of the period were acquainted with the Atlantic Sea. Idrisi describes the climates, seas and gulfs of every region of the Earth.—He takes seven main climates, divides each into ten longitudinal sections and describes each of these seventy regions vividly and with a wealth of detail. His scientific method, the use of accounts from various observers and the critical analysis of these, with the detachment of a modern writer, make Idrisi one of the outstanding geographers of his period.¹

Similar fusion of ancient traditions and modern knowledge is seen in Al Biruni also. He called the ocean the Western Sea or the Environing Sea which according to him continued to the south as well as the north. The northern part of the globe was inhabited while the southern side was unknown. The extreme part visited by navigators on the Southern Sea, on its western side was Sofala, which Al Biruni noted as being inhabited by Negroes. From their writings it is clear that the Arabs, by the 11th century had wide knowledge of the Empire, that they knew the east coast of Africa upto Sofala (20° South) that they had atleast a second-hand knowledge of the Mozambique Channel and that they knew Africa to be a Peninsula bounded by a sea which they called the Environing Sea.²

After Al Idrisi and Al Biruni however, Arab geography cannot claim much originality.³ Most of the later works were descriptive although some itineraries of travellers did show remarkable attention to details. Ibn Said's works (1214-74) Ibn Yakut's Dictionary (1225) and Abul Fida's Encyclopaedia (1300-1325) were mostly based on earlier sources and very often repetitive. Ibn Jubayr's (12th century) and Ibn Batutah's (14th century) travel accounts gave details but they were not based on original observations. The journey to Mecca of Ibn Jubayr (1183-1185) was written when Saladin was engaged in a war with the Crusaders. Although a good observer and scholar his works lack originality. Ibn Batutah did not write any of the works which passes under his name for it was dictated and taken down by one of the secretaries

1 G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., pp. 56-59, Also M. Ali, op. cit., Ch. 12.

2 G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., p. 54.

3 G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., p. 60.

of his Master the Sultan of Fez. Unlike Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Batutah is guilty of being a careless observer and not too accurate a writer. But his narratives are very lively, entertaining and amusing, exhibiting a curious and imaginative mind. These works also were incentives for travellers and traders.¹

That the Arabs inherited a knowledge of the world and the main communications used by traders of the period, is evident from their works. Routes across the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean and the land routes through Syria, Persia, Transoxiana and Tartary were already frequented by traders when the Arabs took over political power in the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean.

An account of the travels made by these traders is given by many of the Arab writers as early as the 9th century. Ibn Khurdadhbih, reveals the mode of trade and the routes frequented by the merchants during his time.

The merchants, says Khurdadhbih, travelled from west to east and east to west by land and by sea. They brought from the West fur, enuchs, slave girls and boys, skins and swords. The Jews who took part in this trade, embarked from the country of the Franks on the Occidental Sea to Farama (near the ruins of ancient Peluse, Egypt). From Farama, in five days, covering a distance of 20 Parasangs² they reached Qulzum, the northern end of the Red Sea. There they embarked on the Oriental Sea, as the Red Sea was called, and went to Hijaz and Jedda, proceeded to Sindh, India and then to China. On their return journey they brought musk, aloes, camphor, cinamon and other products. Sometimes on their return journey they went to Constantinople. An alternate route from the Occidental Sea was to Antioch, from where after a three day march, the traders came to the banks of the Euphrates and to Baghdad. Then they descended down the Tigris to Ubulla (situated on the Tigris a little north of Basra) from where they took boats to Sindh, India and China.

According to Khurdadhbih the Russians also took part in this trade. They traded in fox and beaver skins. They sailed down the Volga, then down one of its arms to the land of the Khazars (near present Astrakhan). From there they entered the sea of Jurjan (Caspian), sometimes their merchandise was carried on camel backs from the city of Jurjan (Gurgan, a small town about 15 miles east of Bandar Shah, an Iranian port in the south eastern corner of the Caspian Sea) to Baghdad.

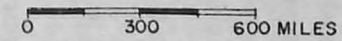
Land journeys were also undertaken. From Spain and the country of the Franks, the merchants went to Tangier from where they travelled to Egypt. Then they proceeded to Ramlah

1 M. Ali, op. cit., Ch. 19. Also G. H. T, Kimble, op. cit., p. 60.

2 Parasang = 1200 Cubits = 3 miles. G. H. T. Kimble, op. cit., p. 51, Footnote.

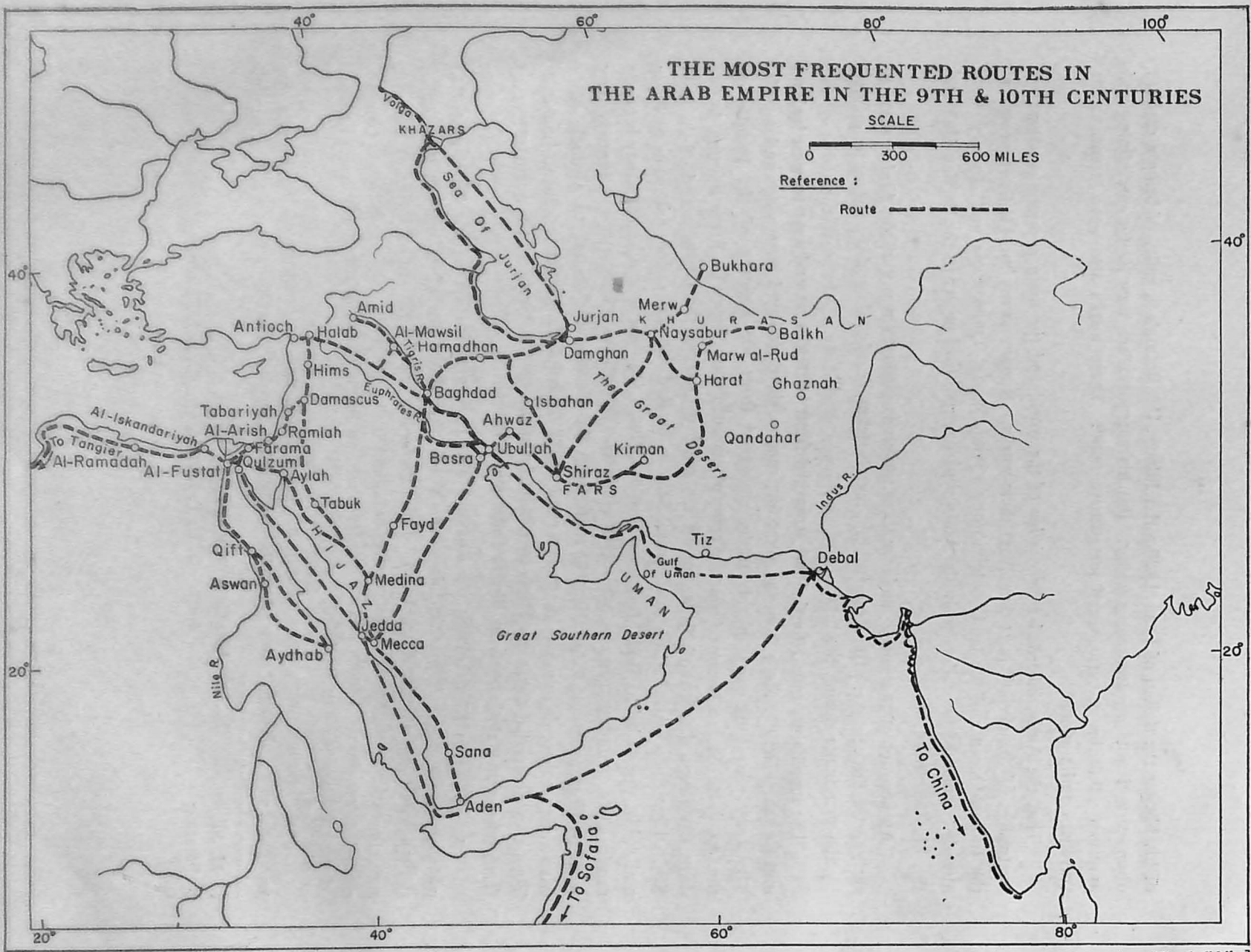
THE MOST FREQUENTED ROUTES IN THE ARAB EMPIRE IN THE 9TH & 10TH CENTURIES

SCALE



Reference :

Route - - - - -



[Based on Khurdahbih.]

(Ramla, three miles south of Lydda in present Israel), Damascus, Kufa, Baghdad, Basra, Ahwaz, Fariz and Kirman.¹

An alternate land route was from Germany or Armenia across the country of the Slavs to the city of the Khazars, then across the Sea of Jurjan to Balkh, Trans Oxiana and the land of Toghuzghuz. The land of Toghuzghuz lay on the route from Khorasan to China. The route bifurcated from here, one going to Sindh, Cutch, Gujarat and Western India and the other across Central Asia to China.²

Not only did the Arabs detail the most frequented routes of the traders of the period but also gave details of the various articles of trade in which the mediæval traders were interested. About the 9th century was also written the Manual of Traders with a list of articles which entered mediæval trade. Precious stones, diamonds, pearls, turquoise, cornelian, onyx, coral etc. ranked high. Then came the various scents, such as musk, amber, camphor and sandalwood. Cloves, pepper, ginger and cinamon were very important items of commerce. Paper is mentioned in the list with details of weight, texture and colour. Many kinds of woollen stuffs, furs and carpets are listed in the Manual. They are followed by a list of metals, iron, copper, lead and tin. This is followed by articles of food.³ This long list of commodities must have taken the Arabs from the Arctic regions of Russia and Europe to the African lands, India and the Far East. It is the capture of this East-West trade that made the Arabs the greatest power in the World in the early Mediæval period. There were no other rival empire either in Europe or in the east. The Roman Empire had lost its vigour by Barbarian invasions. In India, the Gupta Empire had not been replaced by any other great power. The western coasts were controlled either by the Rashtrakutas or the Chalukyas and the Vallabhis and the eastern coast by the Palas of Bengal and the Cholas and Pallavas of the South. In China the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) with its capital at Changan (modern Sian) was finally overthrown in 907 and was followed by the establishment of five dynasties during the years 907 to 960. China entered a period of disunity till the rise of the Sung dynasty in 960.⁴ Most of the early Arab period therefore was a period of disunity in China also. By the 15th century Arabs had reached Malacca and the Far Eastern Seas, captured the spice trade and established themselves in the Philippines and up to China. But by then their empire in the Middle East had passed into the hands of Turkish generals and the Mongols.

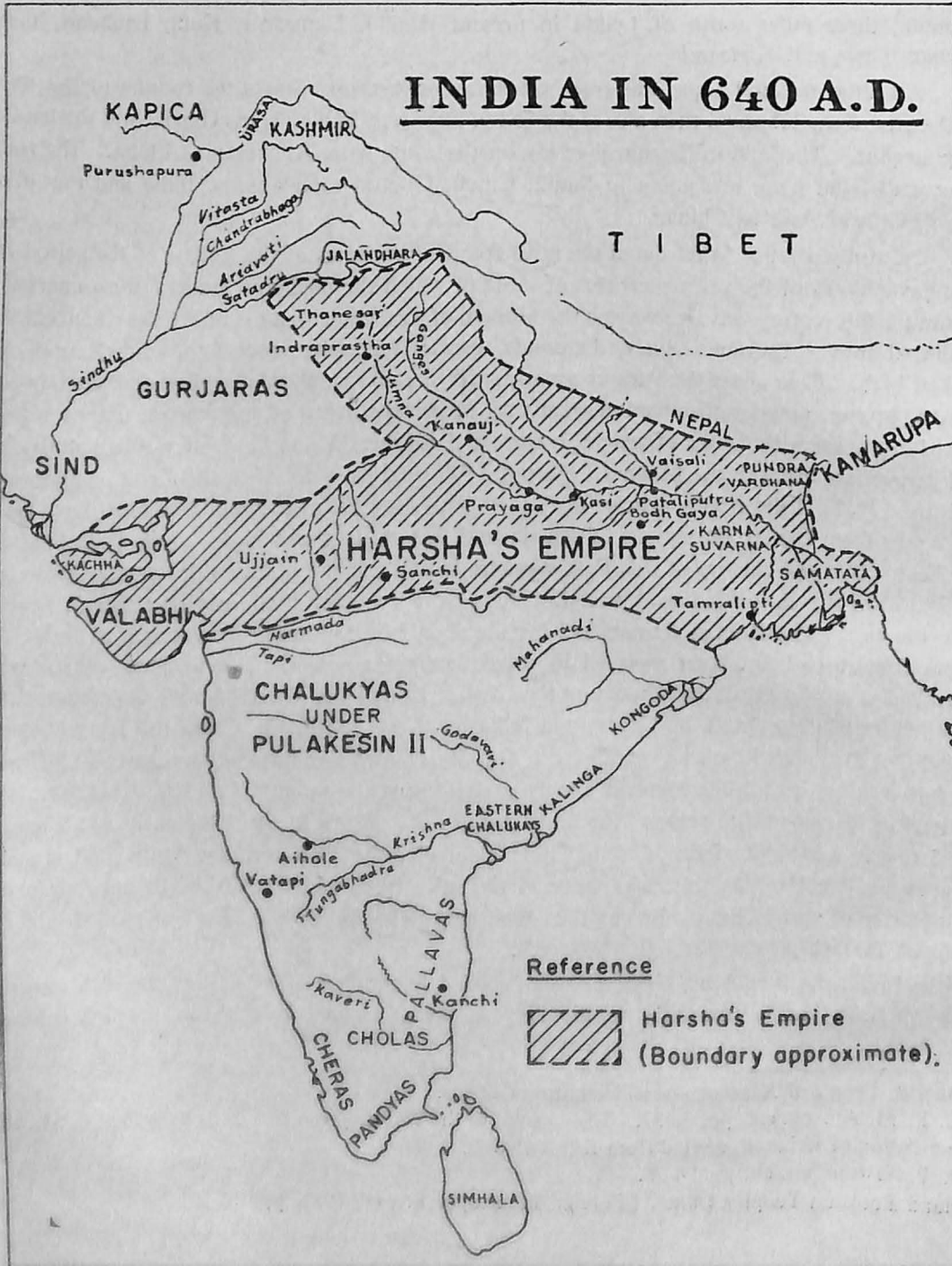
In India, the first Arab kingdom was founded in Sindh as far back as the 8th century (750-770 A.D.) while the raids on the Gujarat coasts started as early as the 7th century. (636 A.D.).

1 Ahwaz, Farz and Kirman are still important towns.

2 C. F. M. Ali, op. cit., pp. 30-33. The account of the Routes given here is as described in M. Ali's translation of Reinaud, quoted from Khurdadhbih.

3 A. P. Newton, op. cit. pp. 94-95.

4 Hand Book on Peoples China, (Foreign Languages Press), 1957, pp. 16-28.



Source: An historical atlas of the Indian Peninsula by C. Collin Davies (Oxford 1949).

[By Courtesy O. U. Press (India)]

GUJARAT BEFORE THE ARABS

When Suleiman, the Merchant, first referred to Gujarat in 851 A.D. the ports of Gujarat and the western coasts of India had already long standing cultural and commercial contacts with the countries of West Asia and East Africa. When exactly this trade between India and the West commenced we are not able to say. The earliest known cities of the Indus Valley, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, were known to have traded with Egypt and Mesopotamia. Articles of exclusively Indian origin were found in Ur, in the ruins of Babylon and in the Egyptian Pyramids. Dr. Sayce¹ the famous Assyriologist, is of the opinion that the trade between India and Babylon is as early as 3000 B.C. Long before the Aryans came to India (1500 B.C.) the Dravidians were known to have been great town builders and sea-farers. The word Sindhu for muslin in old Babylonian list of clothes is proof that such a trade existed. The Book of Kings mentions that in 1000 B.C. Ezion Geber (near modern Elath at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba) had a trade with the East. Direct evidence of such a trade, however, is available only from the 6th or 7th century B.C. Excavations carried out at the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar (604-502 B.C.) at Bir Nimrud and at the temple of the Moon God at Ur have brought to light a beam of Indian wood. The Baveru Jataka dating back to 400 B.C. states that Indian merchants took peacocks by sea to Babylon. Mr. Kennedy² remarks that the folk tales on which the Jataka stories are based must be of a much earlier date. The Jatakas mention that the Vanias of the west coast of India undertook trading voyages to the shores of the Persian Gulf or its rivers in the 5th and 6th centuries B.C. and that they maintained trade depots and colonies in the Persian Gulf area. They relate several other stories " describing voyages to distant lands and perilous adventures by sea in which the names of the very ancient ports of Souparaka (Sopara near Bassein) and Barukachcha (Broach) are mentioned.³ In the Suta-pitaka, whose date is fixed by Rhys Davids in the 5th century B.C.⁴ there is explicit reference to ocean going ships " out of sight of land." Indian navigators had by this time learnt to determine direction in the open seas and travel far and wide without clinging to the shores.

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- 1 Hibbert Lectures, 1887, " Origin and Growth of Religion among the Babylonians ", as quoted in R. K. Mukherjee, A History of Indian Shipping, (Orient Longmans), Second Edition, 1957, p. 60.
 - 2 J. R. A. S., 1898, Early Commerce between India and Babylon, as quoted in R. K. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 60-61.
 - 3 Buhler, Origin of the Indian Brahmi Alphabet, p. 84 as quoted in R. K. Mukherjee, History of Indian Shipping, (Orient Longmans), Second Edition, 1957, p. 61.
 - 4 J. R. A. S., April 1899, p. 482, as quoted in R. K. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 61.

Although no direct evidence to the use of the monsoon is available, it is certain that the Indian merchants knew the changing winds in the Arabian and Bengal seas, if they ventured out into the open sea, long before Hippaulus, the Greek, is said to have discovered it.

One of the main reasons for this recorded history of the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean during the 6th century B.C. is the rise of the Persian Empire. In 546 B.C. Emperor Cyrus of Persia, having defeated Croesus of Lydia (Asia Minor) established an Empire extending from the Hindu Kush to the Aegean Sea and from the Indus to the Transoxian region including also Egypt. The unification of the three centres of ancient civilisation, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Indus valley, effected by the Persians, intensified the east west trade. Roads were constructed to link the various parts of the Empire. The famous royal road from Sardis in Asia Minor through Babylon and Susa to Persepolis in southern Iran was equipped with inns and relays of horses for the use of merchants and messengers. A system of posts and rest houses was introduced on all roads making communication, travel and pooling of experience easy. Persian towns were eminently cosmopolitan. Under Darius and Xerxes, Indians, Egyptians, Greeks and Syrians fought side by side in the Imperial army.¹ A strong administration, coupled with the encouragement and facilities given to trade intensified east west contacts. Maritime activity was also at its highest during this period. For more than two centuries the Persian empire continued as the dominant power in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the connecting seas.

Between 336 and 325 B.C. the Persian Empire was invaded by Alexander of Macedon, who, defeating Emperor Darius, established his sway over the entire Persian Empire from the Indus to the Aegean. But before he could consolidate his conquests he died in 323 B.C. at Babylon. The campaign of Alexander to India lasted only nineteen months. The Persian Empire after Alexander's invasion broke up into two, Egypt along with the Levant being placed under the Ptolemies and Mesopotamia and the Indian territories, under the Seleucids. The struggle for power on the Mediterranean coast (Levant) for the capture of the east west trade brought up the Hellenistic trade depots in the Levant and Egypt. The loss of the monopoly of the east west trade affected the economy of Egypt and Mesopotamia and the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties gradually decayed. The Indian provinces of the Seleucids were ceded by Seleucus Nikator to Chandragupta Maurya of Magadha on the death of Alexander.

Chandragupta Maurya's empire extended beyond the north western frontiers to Archosia, Gerdosia and Paropanisadai (old Kapisa, Kambhoja and Gandhara). In the south, the

¹ Gordon Childe, *What happened in History*, (Pelican Books), 1948, p. 189.

Narbada formed the boundary of the Empire. The seat of the Empire was Pataliputra but Taxila was a secondary capital for the north western provinces. That he held Saurashtra is evidenced by the Sudarsana Lake which he built in Girinagara (Junagadh).

During the period of Asoka (272-232 B.C.) the Mauryan Empire extended from Paropanisadai, Archosia and Gerdosia in the north west to Meghna, Padma and Yamuna in the east including Magadha, Vengi and Tamralipti. In the north Asoka's empire extended to Nepal where he transferred the capital from Manju Patan to Lalit Patan (Lalitpur). The mouths of the River Pennar formed the boundary in the south. In his time Taxila was the capital of the North Western Provinces, Girinagara of the Western Provinces, Tosali (Dhauri) of the Eastern Provinces, Ujjain of the Central Provinces and Suvarnagiri of the Southern Provinces. Pataliputra continued as the seat of the Empire. It was the largest and the most powerful Empire the world had seen after the fall of the Persian Empire.

During the Mauryan period India is described as the commercial and cultural heart of the old world. The alliance of the mighty Mauryan emperors was sought by the Seleucids, the Ptolemies, the Greeks and the Persians. There was a constant stream of visitors from all parts of the world to the Mauryan capital. Commercial contacts with Asia Minor, Persian Gulf and the Aegean were intensified with the administrative efficiency and the very size of the Empire. Kautilya, Megasthenes (Greek Ambassador to the Mauryan Court) and Strabo give details of the working of the Board of Admiralty of Chandragupta Maurya. The Superintendent of Ships, posted at all the ports, was in charge of inland and ocean navigation and his main duty was to look after the welfare of the merchant ships and collect the dues. From the list of dues that were levied at the ports, it is evident that there was great commercial activity, both inland and maritime, in Chandragupta's period. Pliny mentions¹ that special boats were built in India to navigate the shallow seas between India and Ceylon. The tonnage of Indian ships at this time was 3000 amphorae.² So great was the trade of the Empire that the mere taxes on exports and imports formed a substantial part of the revenue. Asoka maintained commercial and diplomatic contacts with Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Macedon and Epirus. His merchants and missionaries travelled far and wide to spread the gospel of the Buddha. Indian mercantile activity was intensive in the eastern waters also. Kshemendra, writing in the 10th century A.D. relates how Asoka, was approached by Indian merchants trading with distant lands, with a complaint that the Nagas, "worshippers of Dragons", (probably Chinese) were harassing them on the sea, that if the Emperor did not take any action they would have to take to other means

1 Mc Crindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature*, (Westminster), 1901, p. 55.

2 amphora = 1/40 ton, R. K. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

of livelihood but that the "imperial exchequer in that case was liable to be emptied".¹ This bears testimony to the immense activity of Indian merchants in the eastern waters. Arrian, Pliny, Curtius and Diodorus, Greek writers, mention the highly developed shipping industry of India. It is said that Alexander used a flotilla of boats consisting of 4000 vessels to bridge the Jhelum, all of which were built by Indian craftsmen in record time.² This was a craft which could not have developed without longstanding and extensive river and ocean traffic.

The main centres of trade on the west coast in Mauryan India seems to have been Souparaka (Sopara near Bassein). But Somnath Patan (Veraval) and Bharukacha were also thriving trade centres.

After Asoka's death, the Mauryan Empire was divided into two, one, the northern ruled by Dasratha with its capital at Pataliputra and the other the western ruled by Samprathi, with its capital at Ujjain. Gujarat seems to have been included in the Western Mauryan Empire. After 197 B.C.,³ however, there is no trace of the Mauryans in Gujarat.

The decline of the Mauryans in Taxila (North Western Provinces) and in the Western Provinces (Gujarat) was probably due to the rise of the Bactrians in the region of Paropanisadai, Archosia and Gerdosia with their capital at Bactria (old Balkh) on the Central Asian trade route to China and India. Between 197 and 160 B.C. the Bactrians seem to have pushed southwards after having rebelled successfully against the Seleucids. As the Mauryan Empire lost control of the frontier provinces the Bactrians pushed to the Indian plains. Strabo writing in 50-55 A.D. mentions that the Bactrians had advanced far into the inland to Sorostos, (Saurashtra) Sigirdus (modern Haiderabad in Sindh) and Cutch. Between 197 and 70 B.C. Kabul, North Western Frontier Provinces, Rajputana, Sindh, Cutch and Saurashtra were perhaps under the Bactrians. In the Persian Gulf another power the Parthians, had gradually gained supremacy over the Seleucids by 83 B.C. The rise of the Parthians perhaps pushed the Bactrians southwards, till the short lived Bactrian supremacy in India was also supplanted by an offshoot of the Parthians, the Kushans in 70 B.C.

Almost at the same time as the Parthians established themselves in Mesopotamia (83 B.C.) and the Kushanas in north western India (70 B.C.) the Kshatrapas rose in Western India. There were two branches of the Kshatrapas, one in Kabul and the other ruling the territory

1 R. K. Mukherjee, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

2 K. Sridharan, A Maritime History of India, (Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting), 1965, p. 14.

3 Controversies about dates in Indian History have not been gone into for obvious reasons.

from Ajmer to Konkan and from Malwa to the Arabian Sea. The northern branch ended with the advance of the Kushanas. The southern branch came to be known as the Western Kshatrapas. It is possible that the Kshatrapas moved south as the Kushanas occupied the north west, either as generals of the Kushanas or on their own. Nahapana was the first great Kshatrapa king of Western India. Probably he entered Gujarat through Mandasor and Dohad. He also extended his sway over Nasik following the Bulsar-Billimora-Bansda-Dangs route. He is said to have subdued the Andhra kings of the Deccan. Whether he conquered the kingdom of Malwa or not is not known. From his charitable works, his kingdom seems to have extended from Mount Abu and Ajmer in the north to present Bombay in the south and from Malwa in the east to the Arabian sea in the West. Minnagara (Mandasor), according to the Periplus, was the capital of Nahapana but later he shifted the capital to Nasik. Nahapana's Kingdom drew its wealth mostly from the sea borne trade from the Persian Gulf to the East. There is reason to believe that the West Coast trade with the centres of civilisation in the Middle East continued despite the fact that political upheavals had once again brought disintegration in that area.

Rome had by now become a great power in Europe. By 189 B.C., a few years after Mauryan hold on Western India collapsed, (197 B.C.) Rome made her appearance in Lydia (Asia Minor). She then advanced southwards to the Levant (Syria, Lebanon and Palestine) where militant Judaism had captured the east-west trade. Rome conquered the Levant and established contact with Armenia, where in the difficult hilly country commanding the land routes, the Armenians had established an independent kingdom. By 31 B.C. Egypt succumbed to Rome and the last of the Ptolemies, Cleopatra, was defeated at Actium.

Beyond the Levant the Romans could not make any headway because the Parthian Empire, screened by the deserts and the mountains, was able to retain monopoly of the east and west trade by land and by the Persian Gulf. Between the Parthian and the Roman Empire in the Middle East, there came into existence a frontier region in the Fertile Crescent, where a Roman defence line extending from the highland masses from Nisibin through Jebel Sinjar, across the desert to the uplands of Hauran and Jebel Druse, was developed. The entire frontier was marked by Roman forts, fortified towns and signalling stations. These later fulfilled the dual role of military bases during times of disturbances and as trading depots in times of peace.¹

The land trade of Rome with the East had to pass through Parthia and the Kushana territories of Gandhara, Kapisa and Kambhoja. A northern route lay through the Central Asian oasis of Khokhand, Bokhara and Meru to Hamdan in Iran where it bifurcated to southern Iran

¹ W. B. Fisher, *The Middle East*, (Methuen), 1950, Chapter VII.

and India. From Hamdan the route continued to Babylon, on which converged all communications, and thence to the Persian Gulf. The land route continued northwards by way of the Euphrates to Palmyra, Aleppo, Antioch and Damascus on the Roman side.

The conquest of Egypt and the Levant brought under Roman control both the Nile and the Aqaba routes to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. From Petra transshipment took place and goods were brought to South Syria and the Gulf of Aqaba from whence they travelled down to the Red Sea ports of Berenice, Mocha, Eudaemon (Aden) and Oekelis. From Alexandria the goods went down the Nile to Myos Hormos and Coptos¹ and thence across by land to Berenice.

Parthia and Rome were, therefore, the two powers which controlled the Middle Eastern routes to the east from the late 1st century B.C. to the rise of the Arabs although from the 3rd century A.D. both the empires lost much of their vigour by unbalanced economies, internal squabbles and external threats. This long period of prosperity and organised trade in the West was shared by the Kshatrapas of Western India in the earlier part but mostly by the Andhras in the south and the Kushanas in the north in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D.

The glory of the Nahapana kingdom ended with his death sometime in the beginning of the 1st century A.D. The Chashtana dynasty took over power in Gujarat by 80 A.D. The Chashtanas were originally from Ujjain. The struggle between the rulers of the Indo-Gangetic plain, Malwa, Gujarat and the Deccan for possession of the Western coast ports is a recurring feature in the history of Gujarat and the Konkan, a feature found to a lesser degree on the east coast extending from Bengal to Tamilnad. The victory of the Chashtanas of Malwa over the Kshatrapas of Gujarat was followed by the struggle of the Chashtanas with the Andhras in the next two centuries.

When the Chashtanas succeeded Nahapana in Gujarat, the Andhras were still powerful in the Deccan. South Gujarat and parts of Saurashtra with their prosperous ports were included in the Andhra kingdom. Gautamiputra Sri Satakarni, the twenty-third Andhra king, in his Nasik inscription,² claims that he defeated the Chashtanas and annexed their dominions in about 119 A.D. and included Aparanta (Western seaboard from the River Mahi to Goa) in his kingdom. At the height of his power Satakarni was master of the whole country watered by the Godavari, Berar, Malwa, Kathiawar, Gujarat and Northern Konkan.³ However,

1 E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, (Cambridge), 1928, Ch. I and II.

2 Dated 119 A.D.

3 D. R. Bandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIVII, 1918, "Deccan of the Satavahana Period".

Rudradaman, the greatest of the Chashtana rulers of Gujarat (145-158 A.D.) seems to have defeated Sri Satakarni and sought his alliance by giving his daughter in marriage to Sri Pulamayi (128-156 A.D.), son of Sri Satakarni. The Chashtanas also styled themselves as Kshatrapas but while the earlier coins call them Kshatrapas the later ones distinguish them as Mahakshatrapas denoting that from a position of mere feudatories (perhaps of Nahapana) they rose to be the dominant power in Western India. Rudradaman's capital in Saurashtra was Girinagara, the old Mauryan capital but the seat of the kingdom was Ujjain. The fact that the Chashtanas hailed from Malwa, that they followed the route of the Mauryans to Saurashtra, that they were Buddhists and adopted Mauryan coins and further repaired the public works of the Mauryans, point to a Mauryan origin for the Chashtanas. Whatever their origin, Rudradaman is termed overlord of Akravanti (Akara, Bhilsa, capital of Vidisa—modern Bhilsnagar) Avanti (Malwa), Anupa (perhaps near Gujarat), Anarta (north Gujarat), Saurashtra and Svabhra (greater part of Northern Gujarat), Maru (Marwar), Kachcha (Cutch), Sindhu Sauvira (perhaps upper Sindh), Kukura (probably East Rajasthan), Aparanta (western seaboard from the River Mahi to Goa) and Nishadha (Bansda, Dharampur and Thana where the Bhils lived). This is roughly the territory from modern Bhilsnagar in the east to Sindh in the west, from Avanti in the north to Goa in the south, including Cutch and Saurashtra.

The power of the Mahakshatrapas declined after the death of Rudradaman in 158 A.D. Once again the Andhras seem to have asserted themselves. From the Roman records of their trade with the east it is evident that the Andhras were the dominant power in the south while the Kushanas held the north, and that between them they shared the east-west trade. The western seaboard and the Mauryan ports seem to have been inherited by the Andhras who held sway over them in the first and second centuries A.D. except for a short period of about thirteen years or more when Rudradaman (145-158 A.D.) of the Chashtana Dynasty defeated the Andhras.

The main carriers of this east-west trade to India were the merchants of Egypt, now under the Roman Empire. The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea mentions that it was the merchants of Egypt who brought Roman wine, brass, lead, glass and gold to India. It was Hippaulus, (47 A.D.) the Greek merchant of Egypt, who discovered that the Indians made use of the monsoon winds to navigate the Arabian Sea and that they had in their possession detailed sea charts which guided them across the open seas. It was this knowledge that enabled the Romans to strike across the sea and approach the Gujarat and Deccan ports directly. In the first stage of their commerce with India they had clung to the coasts of Arabia and reached only the mouths of the Indus (Barbaricon). But with the discovery of the monsoon and the sea charts used by the Persians and the Indians they were able to navigate in the open seas so that the centre of

maritime commercial activity steadily shifted to the Deccan ports of the Andhras, Tamils and Keraliyas. From India the merchants carried pepper, betel, ivory pearls, precious stones, cotton muslins, silks, perfumes and incense. The luxuries of the east were in such great demand in Rome that Pliny (77 A.D.) remarked that "There was no year in which India did not drain the Roman Empire of a hundred million sesterces, so dearly did we pay for our luxury and our women."¹ In view of the fact that the traffic was not balanced by a return flow of goods from Rome to India and the east, it is estimated that nearly one quarter to one half of the precious metals of the Roman Empire drained to Asia in payment of eastern luxuries. The Periplus mentions Barygaza (Broach) as the principal distributing centre in Western India where goods from Paithan and Tagara (Dharur) were brought. The merchants of Barygaza, says the Periplus, traded with the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea ports for guns and incense. They sailed to the African Coasts in search of gold and to Malabar and Ceylon for spices. The Indus ports and other western ports such as Sopara, Kalleina (Kalyan) Semulla (Chembur or Chaul) and Mandagora (Mandad) are also mentioned by the Periplus as having a thriving trade with the West. Ptolemy describes the entire sea coast from the mouths of the Indus to the mouths of the Ganges. The ports on the Gujarat Coast mentioned by Ptolemy are Syrastra, (either present Surat or Sorath on the Porbunder Coast) Monoglossan, (Mangrol) and Barygaza (Broach). Direct trade connection of the Romans with the Andhras was also a political weapon against the Parthians and the Kushanas. Rome wanted to balance forces in her favour against the other two Powers in the Asian trade. By allying with the Andhras and Tamils the Romans were able to divert much of the eastern trade by sea and avoid the land routes and the Persian Gulf routes across which lay the Parthian and Kushana kingdoms.

By the 3rd century A.D. Rome and Parthia were both on the decline. The Roman Empire broke up into two (395 A.D.), the Western, with its capital in Rome, comprising the European territories of the Empire² and the Eastern which came to be known as the Byzantine Empire with its capital at Byzantium (Constantinople or modern Istanbul). The latter took up the trade with the East. In the Persian Gulf, the Parthians were replaced by the Sassanids by 224 A.D. In India, the Andhras once again retreated to the plateau and the coastal areas of the Konkan and South Gujarat seem to have passed into the hands of a local tribe, the Traikutakas by 250 A.D. After the death of Gautamiputra Yagna Sri (166-196 A.D.) we do not

1 Natural History xii 18 as quoted in R. K. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 86.

2 Rome was sacked by the Goths in 410 A.D. and in 476 A. D. the last puppet Caesar was set aside by the German King Maker, Oliver Thompson, History of Ancient Geography, (Cambridge), 1948, p. 351.

hear of the Andhras in Gujarat. He seems to have carried on the long-standing clash with the Kshatrapas. The long series of Andhra kings came to an end in 225 A.D., but by that time they were no longer a Sea Power. The Traikutakas whose prosperity was short lived, made themselves powerful by capturing the trade of the one time Andhra ports.

While the Roman Empire and the Parthian and Sassanid Empires were resisting Barbarian invasions, another great power rose in the Indo-Gangetic plain, the Guptas, with their capital at Pataliputra. The first Gupta to have established his rule in Gujarat was Chandragupta Gupta (320-325). He is said to have defeated the Kshatrapa king Rudrasimha (308-320 A.D.) of Gujarat.

Chandragupta conquered Tirhut, South Bihar, Oudh, Bhilsa and Malwa. He took Ujjain and reached Bagh and Tanda in the Rath country (between Dhar and Broach). From Broach he crossed to Saurashtra by water and established himself at Girinagara. Chandragupta was followed by Samudragupta (335-375) the Indian Napoleon, who conquered more territories, Kosala, Chota Nagpur, the Mahanadi Valley, Pishtapura (Pithapuram) the ancient capital of Kalinga, Mahendragiri and Kottara in Ganjam. He defeated king Mantaraja, whose territories were on the banks of the Kolleru Lake (Colair), the king of Vengi (between Krishna and Godavari), the king of Kanchi (Conjeevaram) almost certainly ruled by a Pallava, and the king of Pallaka (probably Nellore). Returning from his conquests in east Deccan, he is said to have conquered the Maratha country and Eranpalla (Khandesh). Beyond the Empire directly ruled by him, he claimed several States as feudatories. His Empire in Gujarat reached up to the Narbada. However, Chandragupta II Vikramaditya (375-413) also claims as one of his greatest achievements his advance to the Arabian Coast through Malwa and Gujarat and the subjugation of the Peninsula of Saurashtra where the Kshatrapas were still a power. It was during Vikramaditya's time that Fa Hien (405-411) visited India. He records the splendour of the Gupta capital of Pataliputra, the free hospitals the Empire maintained in the towns, the prosperity of Malwa, the tolerance shown to all religions and the political and commercial contacts of the Guptas. Tradition generally associates the Nine Gems of Sanskrit literature, the most resplendent of whom was Kalidasa, to Raja Bikram of Ujjain (50 B.C.). According to Vincent Smith¹ Kalidasa and the Nine Gems most probably lived and wrote during the period of Chandragupta Vikramaditya. Whether this is true or not, one can safely conclude that Vikramaditya undisputedly ushered in a period of peace, prosperity and literary achievements which facilitated trade and commerce. His Empire was the largest India had seen after the

1 Vincent Smith, *Ancient India*, (Oxford), 1924, p. 324.

Mauryan Empire. While the Powers in the Middle East were crumbling, the Guptas took up the challenge, and like the Mauryans, dominated the Indian Ocean.

During the Gupta period there was great maritime activity in India, not only towards the west but also to the East, to Pegu, Java, China and the Malay Archipelago. In fact, the unsettled political condition in Western Asia and Europe, was itself one of the causes of a greater flow of trade to the East. In the ancient period this trade was mostly in the hands of the Bengalis, the Kalingas, Vengis, Cholas, Pandyas and Pallavas. For a time it came under an efficient and centralised Government when the Mauryas took over power in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. (320-232 B.C.). But the trade probably reached its height during the Gupta period when once again the major part of India was brought under one single organisation. The colonisation of Java according to different traditions is attributed to Gujarat, Bengal and Kalinga and it goes back to 75 A.D.¹ That Gujarat merchants reached Java in search of trade is borne out by the many legends of both countries. Aji Saka of Gujarat is believed to have landed in Java in 75 A.D. but was compelled to retreat because of some pestilence. Another and more successful colonisation from Gujarat was made in 603 A.D. when a ruler from Gujarat sent his son with 5000 followers in six large and hundred small ships. After some difficulty they reached Java and built the town of Mendang Kumulan. More people came from Gujarat and an extensive commerce grew between Gujarat and Java. The foundations of the temples which later came to be known as Prambanam and Borobudur were laid by them.² The legend is probably connected with some central event in a process of colonisation which continued for several centuries³ probably even as early as the Kshatrapa period, continuing through the Andhra and Gupta periods.

The Western trade on the other hand received a setback with the decline of the Roman and Parthian Empires following the onslaughts of the Huns and other tribes. Skandagupta, grandson of Vikramaditya, had repelled a Hunic invasion in 455 A.D. In 484 A.D. king Firoz of Persia was killed and the Huns advanced to the Kushana Kingdom of Kabul. About ten years later the Kushanas of Gandhara succumbed to the Huns. The collapse of the Persians and the Kushanas on the frontiers of India brought the Huns to the Gangetic Plains where the Gupta Empire was on its decline. Kumaragupta II (473-76) and Buddhagupta (476) had both to fight defensive wars against the Huns. After Buddhagupta, the Gupta resistance also

1 R. K. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

2 R. K. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, 105.

3 R. K. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 105, (Who attributes the colonisation to half a century before and after the 7th Century).

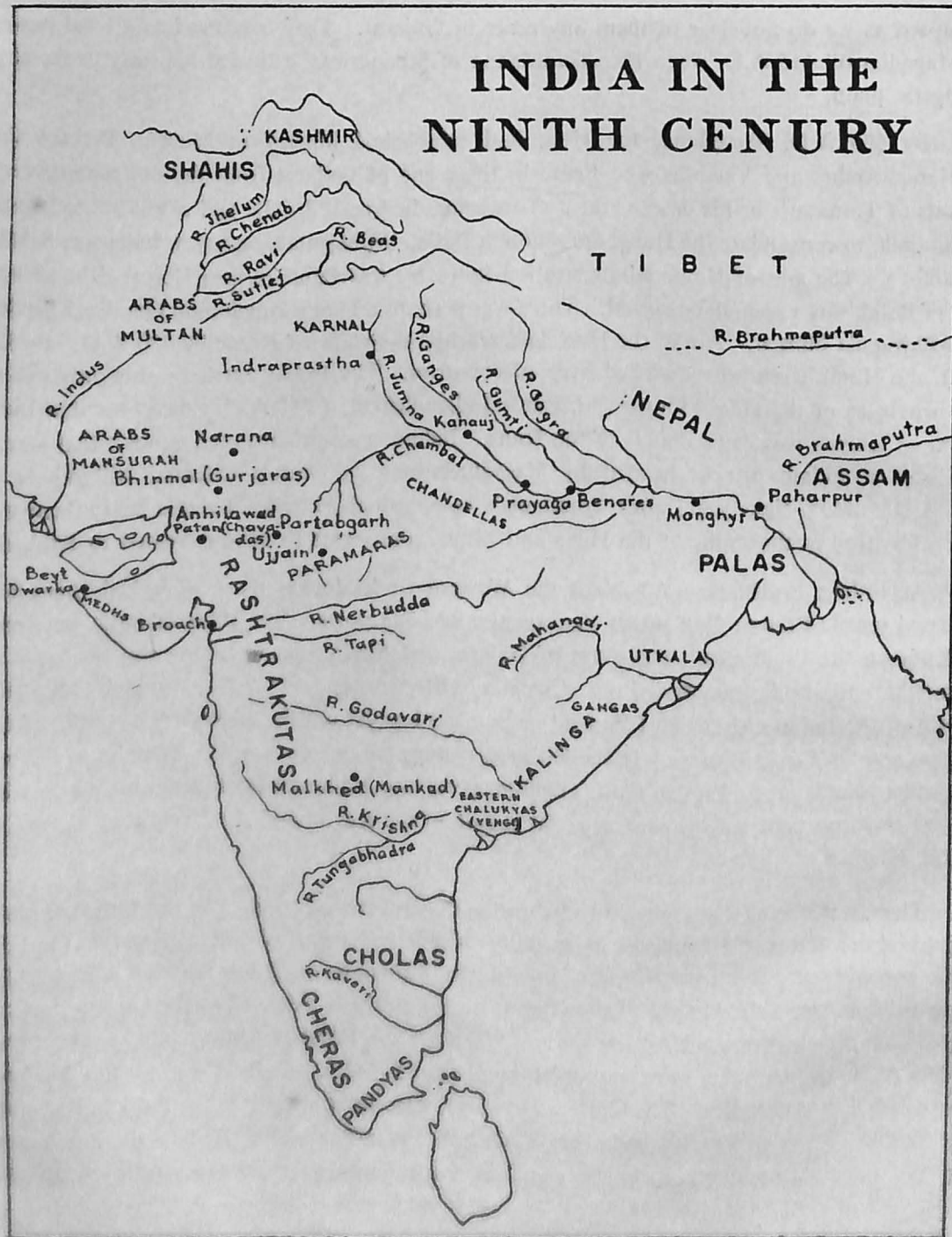
collapsed as we do not hear of them any more in Gujarat. They continued as a local power in Magadha till 615 A.D. when Harshavardhana of Sthaneswar, extended his sway to the east Gangetic plain.

By 500 A.D. Toramana, the Hun, had established himself at Malwa. Perhaps the Gurjaras, Mehars and Valabhis who figure in the scene of Gujarat from the 6th century were vassals of Toramana or his descendants. Toramana died in 502 A.D. and it was left to his son Mihiragula to consolidate the Hunic dominion in India. Mihirgula's capital in India was Sakala (Sialkot). The seat of Hunic administration however, was Bamiyin near Herut. The ancient city of Balkh was a secondary capital. There was perhaps a Hunic kingdom in Gandhara headed by Mihiragula himself. Attila, the Hun, had reached the walls of Rome by 450 A.D. By 519 A.D. the Hunic territories stretched over 40 countries. The Indian territory was only one of the provinces of the Hunic Empire. Cosmos Indicopleustus (547 A.D.) mentions that India as far as Kalyan was in the hands of the Huns. Indian records however maintain that a confederacy of Indian princes headed by Yasodhavarman of Malwa defeated Mihiragula in 528 A.D., twenty-eight years after Toramana's conquest of Malwa. By this time, there was also a division in the ranks of the Huns and Mihiragula seems to have retreated to Kashmir.

According to Hamsa of Isfahan the Western trade during these disturbed times was focussed on the Persian Gulf rather than on the Red Sea ports. The ships of India were seen in Kufa on the Euphrates. The ports of Gujarat and Sindh appear among the chief centres from where the trade was carried on. Cosmos Indicopleustus (547 A.D.) found Debal at the mouth of the Indus and Orthet (Veraval or Sorath) leading centres of trade where ships from Ceylon and the Far East came. In the 6th century there was a colony of the Cutchies in Bahrein and other islands in the Persian Gulf. Gujarat ports also maintained contacts with the thriving eastern coast ports of Kaveri-patnam at the mouth of the Kaveri and Amaravathi at the mouth of the Krishna.

There was one short empire in India during these disturbed times. In the Gangetic plain, Prabhakaravardhana of Sthaneswar successfully resisted the Huns of West Punjab and the Gurjaras (who probably came with the Huns) of the Punjab, Rajputana and Malwa in 604 A.D. Prabhakaravardhana was a descendant of the Guptas on his mother's side and as the Guptas declined he took up the challenge against the Huns. When his son Harshavardhana came to the throne in 606 A.D. he was the most powerful monarch in India. Gujarat up to the Narbada was included in his Empire. The Gurjaras however, were still powerful in the Punjab, Rajasthan and Sindh. South of the Narbada the Chalukyas under Pulakeshin II, like the Andhras of old, had extended authority up to the coast as lords paramount of the south, vying with

INDIA IN THE NINTH CENTURY



adapted from Collin Davies, *Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula* (Oxford 1949)

[By Courtesy O. U. Press India]

Harsha for the possession of the Southern Gujarat ports. Harsha's effort to subdue Pulakesin failed (620 A.D.) and the boundary of his empire was well north of the Narbada. The king of the Deccan guarded the passes on the Narbada effectively and the important port of Barygaza (Broach) remained in his hands or at intervals with an independent chief. In the west the Vallabhis of Saurashtra, even though they acknowledged the suzerainty of Harsha, were virtually independent. They had established the Vallabhi dynasty as early as 509 A.D. at Vala (20 miles inland from Bhavnagar) which was a flourishing port during the Valabhi period. We hear of the Mehars as being very powerful in Dwarka and north Saurashtra. There was an independent Gurjara kingdom in Broach by 580 A.D. which received material support from the Valabhis in their struggle against the Deccan powers. Hence during Harsha's period the western coast trade was rather disrupted and several of the tribes and clans who enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy developed ports of their own to attract as much of the western trade as possible to their own kingdoms.

When Huen Tsang visited India in 640 A.D. the people of Gujarat and Saurashtra are described as deriving their livelihood from commerce of the sea. He also notes that the merchants of Gujarat had settlements in most of the towns of Persia. Dwarka, Somnath Patan, Sorath and Barada (Porbunder or Valabhi) are mentioned as the chief centres of trade in Saurashtra. The tribes of Saurashtra, says Huen Tsang, showed notable energy at sea and they were mainly traders.

It was this unsettled political condition in the countries bordering the Arabian Sea and the continued trade with the Persian ports despite political upheavals, that brought the Arab to the shores of Gujarat and Konkan by the 7th century A.D. After the death of Harsha India was politically at its lowest ebb except for the Deccan kingdom of the Rashtrakutas, which, succeeding that of the Andhras, held a certain monopoly of the east-west trade. But their struggle with the Valabhis and Mehars of Saurashtra, with the kingdom of Broach and Khambhayat or the kingdom of Malwa, left them at intervals without control of the maritime coast. However, when the Arabs came to India for trade in the 8th and 9th centuries they found the Balharas (Rashtrakutas) the most powerful dynasty in Western India while the north was in the hands of the warring Gurjara Pratihara clans. South of the Tungabhadra were the Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras (Kerala). On the east coast, north of the Pennar river were the Eastern Chalukyas in the Vengi country (between the deltas of Krishna and Godavari) while further north were the Kalingas and the Palas.

GUJARAT AS THE ARABS KNEW IT

When the Arabs extended their sway from the banks of the Indus to the Andalusian Plains, it was only natural for them to have continued the long established cultural and trade contacts between the East and the West. Within a century of their rise to power in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf area, which commanded the routes to the East, the Arabs had established the kingdom of Sindh (712 A.D.) and founded the town of Mansurah on the banks of the Indus, not far from the old Hindu town of Brahmanabad.

Al Biladuri, writing in 892 A.D., mentions that Usman, Governor of Bahrein and Uman (Oman) was directed by the second Khalif of Damascus, Umar, (634-44) to send a military expedition to Thana on the west coast of India and to Debal at the mouth of the Indus in 636 A.D., four years after the death of Prophet Mohammad. Mohammad, son of Kasim, is mentioned as having invaded Sindh in 712 A.D. The Viceroy of Sindh, is said to have sent expeditions to Broach, and against the Valabhi Kingdom (589-766) soon after establishing the kingdom of Sindh. The Arabs claim that Vale, the capital of the Valabhi kingdom fell at this time and that Sindan in Cutch was taken. The Jama Mosque in Sindan was built in the reign of Al Mamun (813-833). Al Biladuri also mentions that the Arabs of Mansurah sent an expedition against the Mehars of Mali (Northern Saurashtra) who were great sea-farers and pirates and very powerful at Bet (Dwarka). Arab raids on the Gujarat coasts had, therefore, begun as early as the 7th century and become quite frequent after the conquest of Sindh in the early part of the 8th century.

I. About the Name of the Country

However, the first reference to the country of Jurz (Gujarat) is by Suleiman, the Merchant of Basra, who travelled to India and China in 851 A.D. Suleiman says that the country was rich in horses and camels, had gold and silver mines and a thriving trade with the Arabs in gold dust. The country bordered on the kingdom of the Balharas (Rashtrakutas) in the south and Tafik in the north.¹ From the description and position of the country, Suleiman's Jurz seems to be Rajasthan rather than Gujarat. According to Cunningham, Tofik and Tokin were old names of the Punjab. Silver mines were known to exist only in Rajasthan in India and it was also famous for its horses.² If Suleiman's Jurz is Rajasthan then the country of the Balharas, which is placed south of it, must be some part of present Gujarat.

1 H. Elliot's History of India, Vol. I, Edited by John Dowson (Kitab Mahal), p. 5.

2 Alexander Cunningham, Geography of Ancient India, (Varanasi), 1968, p. 263.

There is no doubt that the country of Jurz was the country of the Gurjaras. The controversy is regarding which part of India was called the Gurjara country in mid-ninth century. A reference to local history and observations made by other foreigners before or at about the same time will throw light on the problem.

In early days the territory now known as Gujarat comprised three distinct units, Anarta, the northern part of the Mainland, Lata, the southern part and Saurashtra, the Peninsula. Their boundaries kept fluctuating and were unknown during most part of history.

The name Anarta is derived from Anarta, the son of Yayati who ruled these parts in very ancient times. References to it are made in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Rudradaman in his Junagadh inscription mentions the country. However, the majority of the Puranas make no mention of Anarta. Probably in the Pauranic times it did not exist as a distinct unit and was either included in Saurashtra or Malwa.¹

The boundaries of Anarta, while it existed as a distinct unit, were roughly the Rann of Cutch in the west, Mount Abu in the north, Malwa in the east and hardly up to Ahmedabad in the south corresponding somewhat to present North Gujarat. There was no clear boundary between Malwa and Anarta in the east nor between Anarta and Lata in the south.²

Lata was the ancient name of atleast parts of present South Gujarat. It is not mentioned in the Vishnu, Markandeya, Matsya and Kurma Puranas nor amongst the provinces conquered by the Pandava Princes. Neither the Nasik inscription (119 A.D.) of Sri Satakarni nor the Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman (145-158 A.D.) refer to South Gujarat as Lata.³ Ptolemy⁴ and the Periplus⁵ include atleast parts of South Gujarat in Aparantaka or northern Konkan and refer to it as the land of Ariake or Ariaca bounded by the Gulf of Barygaza.⁶

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- 1 (a) A. S. Altekar, A. History of Important Ancient Towns in Gujarat and Kathiawad, Indian Antiquary (LIII and LIV), Reprinted Bombay, 1926, p. 2.
 (b) C. F. Brahmada Purana and Vayu Purana mention Anartascharbudyha Saha and Matsya Purana mentions Anarta Arbudyaha Saha. D. C. Sircar is of the opinion that Anarta is the district round about Dwarka. (Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, (Delhi), 1960, p. 33).
- 2 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 2.
 3 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 2.
 4 Ptolemy mentions Larike (identified by Lassen as Lata) as separate from the Gulf of Barygaza. Mc Crindle's Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy, edited by S. N. Mazumdar, (Calcutta), 1927, pp. 38-39.
 5 Edited by Schoff; The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, (Longmans Green), 1912, pp. 174-175.
 6 The Indian Antiquary, Vol. VIII, p. 142. The language spoken in Lata was called Masudi Lar (as given in A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 2).

In the Mahabharata, Aparantaka includes the entire west coast. Markandeya Purana refers to the land north of the Sahya mountains¹ as Aparantaka. At least that part of present South Gujarat, lying between the Tapti and the Narbada seems to have been included in Aparantaka. Lata was therefore somewhere north of the Narbada, corresponding somewhat to present Central Gujarat. How far Lata extended north is also difficult to prove. The Mahi is a probable boundary in the north. The Elura Dasavatara inscription (750 A.D.) of Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta king, mentions that he conquered Lata, "the country between the Mahi and the Narbada". But his mother seems to have made a grant of villages in the Matri division which is identified as the Matar Taluka of Kaira District.² In the 8th century, therefore Lata seems to have reached up to the Sabarmati.³

The name Lata is perhaps derived from Rattas (Rashtrakutas)⁴ or the Lattas⁵ who lived in the country between the Narbada (Broach) and Dhar in Malwa.

Most probably the term Lata was not in popular use locally because Aparantaka extended beyond Broach or atleast up to Broach and Anarta extended up to about Ahmedabad. The territory between the Narbada and the Mahi had an alternate name. The Matsya, Vayu and Markandeya Puranas call it Barukacha Samaheya and the people, Mahi Thirta Nivasin.⁶ Often parts of the territory were included either in Aparantaka, Malwa or Anarta and had no individuality of its own except as the basin of the river Mahi or as being near to the port of Barukacha. Foreigners found it difficult to use the name given in the Puranas and hence corrupted the Prakrit form Alata to Lata to denote that portion of land between Aparanta and Anarta and referred to it as Larike. This is the reason why Larike follows immediately after Syrastrene (Sourashtra) and before the Gulf of Barukacha both in the Periplus and in the accounts of Ptolemy. Lata, therefore, was bounded by the Gulf of Barukacha in the south,

1 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 2.

2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, Part I, History of Gujarat, (Bombay), 1896, p. 322.

3 See Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 7, footnote 5. The Mandasor inscription (437-38), refers to the people of Lata as being skillfull weavers, the country green-hilled and pleasing, abounding in temples and Assembly Halls of Gods.

4 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, Part I, History of Gujarat, (Bombay), 1896, p. 121. The Antroli Charoli (Sarat), grant of Kakka II, dated 147 A.D. is however the earliest known Grant of the Rashtrakutas in Gujarat. The connection of the Rashtrakutas with Gujarat began perhaps only in the 6th C. and the name Lata was prevalent in the 1st C.

5 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 7.

6 D. C. Sircar, Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India. op. cit., p. 33. Bhirukachcha = Broach, Maheya = People of the Mahi Valley.

Saurashtra in the west and Anarta in the north when Anarta, Aparantaka or Malwa did not encroach upon it to rob it of its individuality.¹

The boundaries of Saurashtra were more definite except where it abutted on the mainland. At present the name Sorath denotes only the south west part of Saurashtra but in ancient times the whole Peninsula was called Sorath or Saurashtra.² Ptolemy³ included the coasts of Gujarat up to Broach in his Syrastrene. The name Saurashtra appears in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, in the Markandeya, Kurma and Vishnu Puranas. It is referred to by Kautilya, Panini and Baudhayana. The name was therefore prevalent as early as the 6th century B.C. Ptolemy's Syrastrene, Strabo's Surastos and Surastrene of the Periplus are all corruptions of Saurashtra. The name was selected because of the richness of the province. The Periplus mentions that "the interior part of Syrastrene produce abundantly corn and rice, the oil of sesamum, clarified butter, muslins and the coarser fabrics manufactured by the Indians. It has also numerous herds of cattle."⁴ The name was in popular use right up to the 18th century when the Marathas called it Kathiawad after the Kathis who offered them the greatest resistance. At present the name has come back into popular use.

The three units remained distinct but with fluctuating boundaries up to the mediaeval period. During short periods, under the Mauryans and the Kshtrapas, parts of each were merged into a larger administrative unit. Even under these two dynasties only Saurashtra and Anarta were merged into one administrative unit while parts of South Gujarat remained outside.

- 1 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 2-4. See also the Skanda Purana which says Bharatavarsha consisted of nine divisions subdivided into 72 Vibhedas or subdivisions and quotes a list of 72 (actually 75) countries along with the number of Gramas contained in each. In this text Gujaratra, Kaccha, and Syrastra are separately listed. Gujaratra consists of 70,000 gramas, Kachcha, 1422 gramas Saurashtra 55,000 and Lata 21,000 (C.F. D.C. Sircar, op. cit., p. 201-203).
- 2 The Saktisangama Tantra, Bk III divides India into five divisions namely Indra Prastha, Yama Prastha, Varuna Prastha, Deva Prastha and Kurma Prastha. A section which is a supplement to the text (Chapter III) in verse 13 says "Hingulajanthako Devi Shatayojanamasrita Saurashthro Desho Deveshi namna thu Gujarabhira" (D.C. Sircar, op. cit., pp. 73-75). (The land from Konkana to Hingulaja (Hinglaj on the Arabian Sea) is called Saurashtya which is also called Gujarat.) The same book mentions also Lata as being West of Avanti and North-West of Vaidarbha. The Ancient Lata country was between Lower Mahi and Tapti. Broach and Navsarika were included in Lata (Sircar, op. cit., p. 106).
- 3 Mc Crindle's Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy, op. cit., p. 35. The Periplus also calls it Syrastrene. "Beyond the Gulf of Baraca is that of Barygaza and the coast of the country of Ariaca, which is the beginning of the kingdom of Nambanus and of all India. The part of it lying inland and adjoining Scythia is called Abiria but the coast is called Syrastrene" (The Periplus, op. cit., p. 29).
- 4 The Periplus, op. cit., p. 29.

The name Gujarat was also unknown in early times because the Gurjaras themselves came to India perhaps only in the 5th or 6th century. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas do not mention the Gurjaras. Ptolemy and the Periplus also do not refer to the Gurjaras. Bhagavanlal Indrajai is of the opinion that the Gurjaras came to India with Kanishka in the first century A.D., settled in the environs of Muthra, that about 300 A.D. they reached Malwa, Eastern Rajputana and parts of Gujarat and taking active part in the Gupta conquests in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., they received, in recognition of their valour, fiefs and territories in Rajasthan and other places.¹ Samudragupta (370-395 A.D.) in his inscriptions mentions them as tribes living on the frontiers of his Empire.

Others are of the opinion that the Gurjaras came to India only in the 5th and 6th centuries along with the Huns. The earliest known literary reference to the Gurjaras is in Bhanubhatta's Harshacharita where in it is mentioned that Prabhakaravardhana of Magadha conquered the Huns and the Gurjaras.² Huen Tsang (640 A.D.) places the kingdom of Kiu-che-lo (identified as the kingdom of the Gurjaras) 300 miles north of Valabhi and 467 miles west of Ujjain. The kingdom, he says, is 833 miles in circuit and had its capital at Pilomilo (identified as Bhinmal in Sirohi district).³ Another branch of the Gurjaras seem to have established themselves in Broach where a Gurjara kingdom existed with its capital at Nandapuri, sometimes independent and at other times acknowledging the suzerainty of more powerful rulers.⁴ From Dadda's grants it is evident that the earlier rulers of Broach called themselves Gurjaras while the later ones styled themselves as Kshtriyas and traced their descent from Pauranic kings. Bhagvanlal Indrajai says that the Valabhis were also Gujjaras, that Gujarat most probably got its name at this time because the three Gurjara dynasties, that of Bhinmal, Broach and Valabhi ruled the entire territory of Gujarat. However these three kingdoms did not cover the whole territory of present Gujarat. The Bhinmal kingdom was largely outside the present territory of Gujarat. The Chavotakas were rulers of Anarta even in the 8th century (720 A.D.). Pulakesin's grant of 770 A.D., listing the names of countries attacked by Arabs mentions the Chavotaka kingdom of Anhilawad Patan as being distinct from the Bhinmal kingdom. The

1 As quoted in A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 5.

2 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 5.

3 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 262.

4 Jayabhata's land grant dated 429 A.D. includes farms and villages in the Barukachcha Vishaya. Dadda II's Copper Plates dated 458-59, 495-6 and 495 make grants in the Ankleswar and Jambusar area. The capital of Dadda II was Nandipura, east of Broach. Perhaps the three Gurjara kings of Nandipura were vassals of the Chalukyas of Kalyan because the Chalukya prince Vijayaraja in his Copper Plate mention grants of land in Jambusar. (Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Volume II, (Government Press, Bombay), 1877, pp. 464-466.

Chavotakas (Chavadas) never claimed descent from the Gurjaras. The southern kingdom of Nandapuri was so small that it covered only a few square miles.¹ The Valabhis had control only over the south eastern part of Saurashtra. A large part of South Gujarat beyond the kingdom of Broach, and sometimes including it, was part of the Rashtrakuta kingdom. Further even if the Gurjaras were powerful enough at this time to confer their name on the land, there is evidence to show that they did not call themselves Gurjaras. The later Gurjaras of Broach called themselves Kshatriyas. The Valabhis never called themselves Gurjaras. Huen Tsang refers to them as Kshatriyas² and as being distinct from the Mihiras who held sway in the northern and western part of Saurashtra. Whether the Mihiras of the 8th and 9th centuries were also Gurjaras or the same as the Maitrakas who came to power in Saurashtra after the fall of the Guptas in the 6th century is not known. The close relationship between their name and that of Mihiragula, the Hun, who came to India in the 6th century, succeeding his father Toramana, has given rise to the belief that the Mihiras are of Hunic and perhaps of Gurjara origin.³ Although the Mihiras seem to have been a powerful people who attacked the Valabhi kingdom and later the Anhilwad Kingdom, they do not seem to have established a dynasty or kingdom of their own significant enough to have conferred the name of Gujarat to the country (assuming that they are of Gurjara origin).

Local evidences also prove that Jurz of the 9th century was no part of present Gujarat. The Daulatpura plate of king Bhoja mention the grant of the village of Sivagrama in Dandavanaka Vishya in Gurjara Bhumi. The village is identified as Seva, seven miles north east of Didwana (which is identified as old Dandavanaka Vishaya) in Jodhpur. The Kalanjara inscription of the 8th century mention that Mangalanaka is in the Gurjara Mandala. This is identified as Manglona 28 miles north east of Didwana. In the 8th and 9th centuries thereore, the land round about Jodhpur was Gurjara Mandala and the Arabs referred to this as Jurz.⁴

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- 1 All information about the Gurjaras come from nine Copper Plates of which three are forged. These plates limit the Gurjara territory to the Broach District between the Mahi and the Narbada. Sometimes their power extended north to Kheda and south to the Tapti (Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, p. 113), See also A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 6.
 - 2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 79.
Al Biladuri mentions (813) that the Mers were powerful in North-west Saurashtra and engaged themselves in piratic activities off Bet Dwarka, that the Governor of Sindh sent an expedition to curb their activities in the sea.
 - 3 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 136. The Mers like the Gurjaras seem to have moved through Rajasthan to Gujarat. Settlements like Jaisalmer, Barmer, Ajmer, Mehrwada etc. can be identified as Mehr settlements from their names.
 - 4 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 7.

The term Gurjara Mandala perhaps came to be applied to lands further south of the Bhinmal kingdom only after the 11th century. The Dohad inscription of 1140 mentions Sidharaj Solanki, ruler of Anhilwad Patan as Lord of Gurjara Mandala, which at this time was the land north of the Mahi. Kumarapala of Anhilwad Patan is referred to as the king of Gurjara Mandala in the Somnath inscription (1168). In the Girnar inscription of 1222 Anhilapura (Anhilwad Patan), Sthambhathirta (Cambay), Dharbhavati (Dabhoi) and Dhawalaka (Dholka) are all referred to as towns of Gurjara Mandala. The Solanki kings who succeeded the Chavadas in Anhilwad Patan were believed to be of Gurjara origin although several historians trace their origin to the Gujarat branch of the Chalukyas of Kalyan and therefore of Rashtrakuta origin. Probably the Gurjara king of Ajmer (Rajasthan) considered the Solanki dominions as part of the Gurjara country after Mulraj Solanki (10th century) was defeated and killed by him. A reference to this conquest is made in Hammira Mahakavya.¹ But the Solanki dynasty seems to have continued in Anhilwad Patan long after this defeat and the Solanki period is one of the most brilliant periods in the history of Gujarat before the Gujarat Sultanate was established at Ahmedabad.

The greater influence of the Gurjaras in Gujarat, perhaps, came about the 11th and 12th centuries. Probably the Gurjaras of Rajasthan were attacked by the Muslims by this time and moved south to the Solanki kingdom where they were absorbed. By the 12th century the Gurjara element in the population of north Gujarat was so great that the territory also came to be called after them. Hemachandra, the Jain writer mentions that Kumarapala's (Solanki) army consisted mainly of Gurjaras. The name Gurjara Mandala or Gurjara Ratta seems to have been applied to North Gujarat by the 12th century. But it still did not include either south Gujarat or Saurashtra. Hemachandra (12th century) and Someswara (13th century) continue to mention Lata and Saurashtra as separate from Gurjara Mandala.² It was only at the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th that the name came to be applied to these two areas as well. This was not because there was a greater influx of Gurjaras to these parts, for even as late as the 16th century, when Abul Fazl enumerates the peoples of the Surat Sircar of Akbar, he does not mention the Gurjaras. The name came to be applied in the 13th and 14th centuries to those territories administered by the Muslims from Anhilwad Patan.³ The kingdom of Anhilwad Patan fell to the Muslims in 1297 and the early Sultans of Delhi extended their sway over Western India from Anhilwad Patan. Ala-uddin Khilji conquered Patan and made it his headquarters. The Delhi Sultans grouped all the territories under the administration of the Viceroy of Patan

1 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 7.

2 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

3 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

into one unit. As their conquests extended to the south, the territories administered from Patan, came to be called Gurjara Mandala. Some Muslim writers include even Khandesh and Malwa in Gujarat as they were governed by the Viceroy of Patan.¹

The area in Rajasthan which was called Gurjara Mandala from the 8th to 11th century slowly lost its name as the Hindu rulers of the Indo-Gangetic plain were ousted by the Delhi Sultans and they took refuge in the hills of Rajasthan. In these hill fortresses they continued their resistance to the Muslims. The region therefore became not only one predominantly occupied by the Rajputras but also one whose people made history for the region by their prowess and valour. Legends grew round the many Rajput princes of the forests and fortresses and the area came to be called Rajputana or Rajasthan. In spite of this, had the territory been administered by the Muslim Viceroys of Anhilwad Patan, it might have continued to be called Gurjara Mandala.² But neither the early Delhi Sultans nor the later Mughal Emperors were able to annex the territory. At the height of Muslim power in India, large parts of Rajasthan remained in the hands of Rajput chieftains who only acknowledged the overlordship of the Muslim emperors.

Present Gujarat got its name therefore, only about the 14th century. Even North Gujarat (Anarta) was not called Gurjara Mandala till the 11th century. The Jurz of Suleiman the Merchant, therefore, could be no other than south-western Rajasthan. The description of the country also applies to Rajasthan. It was the kingdom of the Balharas which included atleast parts of present Gujarat upto the 10th century.

Ibn Khurdadhbih (912) mentions that the king of Jurz is very powerful and describes him as the fourth Indian Sovereign. To Ibn Khurdadhbih also Jurz meant Rajasthan where the Bhinmal kingdom of the Gurjaras was strong. The Chavadas (720-960) who ruled in Anarta in Khurdadhbih's time were not as powerful as the Gurjaras of Bhinmal.

Al Masudi mentions that the king of Jurz was continuously attacking the Balharas (Rashtrakutas) who ruled a large part of present Gujarat in the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries. The king of Jurz, he says, thinks he is equal to the king of Bebel. Al Masudi died in 955 A.D. and his writings refer to a period not far removed from that of Ibn Khurdadhbih. There is evidence to show that the Rashtrakutas continued to rule Gujarat or atleast parts of it till about 974 A.D. and that they were well disposed towards the Arab traders. During the declining days of the Rashtrakuta power in Gujarat and the rising strength of the Gurjaras in the north

1 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

2 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 8.

the Gurjara attack on the Rashtrakuta kingdom must have become a constant feature. Al Masudi, further mentions that the kingdom of the Balharas is also called Kumkar (Konkan) while Ibn Hawkal says that the land between Kambayah and Saimur was held by the Balharas. Al Biruni (1030) however mentions Lar Desh as being independent and that its capitals were Broach and Rahanjur (Rander). By the 11th century there was no trace of the Balharas even in South Gujarat. Al Idrisi writing in the 12th century mentions, on the other hand, that the land between Nahrwara (Anhilwad Patan) to Saimur is owned by the Balharas. This may be a mistake as he was perhaps quoting from 10th century records. It is known that the Solankis of Anhilwad Patan were very powerful kings in Al Idrisi's time. The origin of the Solankis is sometimes traced to the Rashtrakutas and Al Idrisi, alternatively, might be following this version of their origin if he is referring to his own period.

II. About the General Condition of the Land

Ibn Hawkal (943) mentions that the land between Saimur (30 miles south of Bombay, identified as Cheul) and Khambaya (Cambay) is very rich, thickly populated and covered with large villages where as the land between Mansurah (the Arab capital of Sindh) Bania and Anhilwad Patan is a desert.

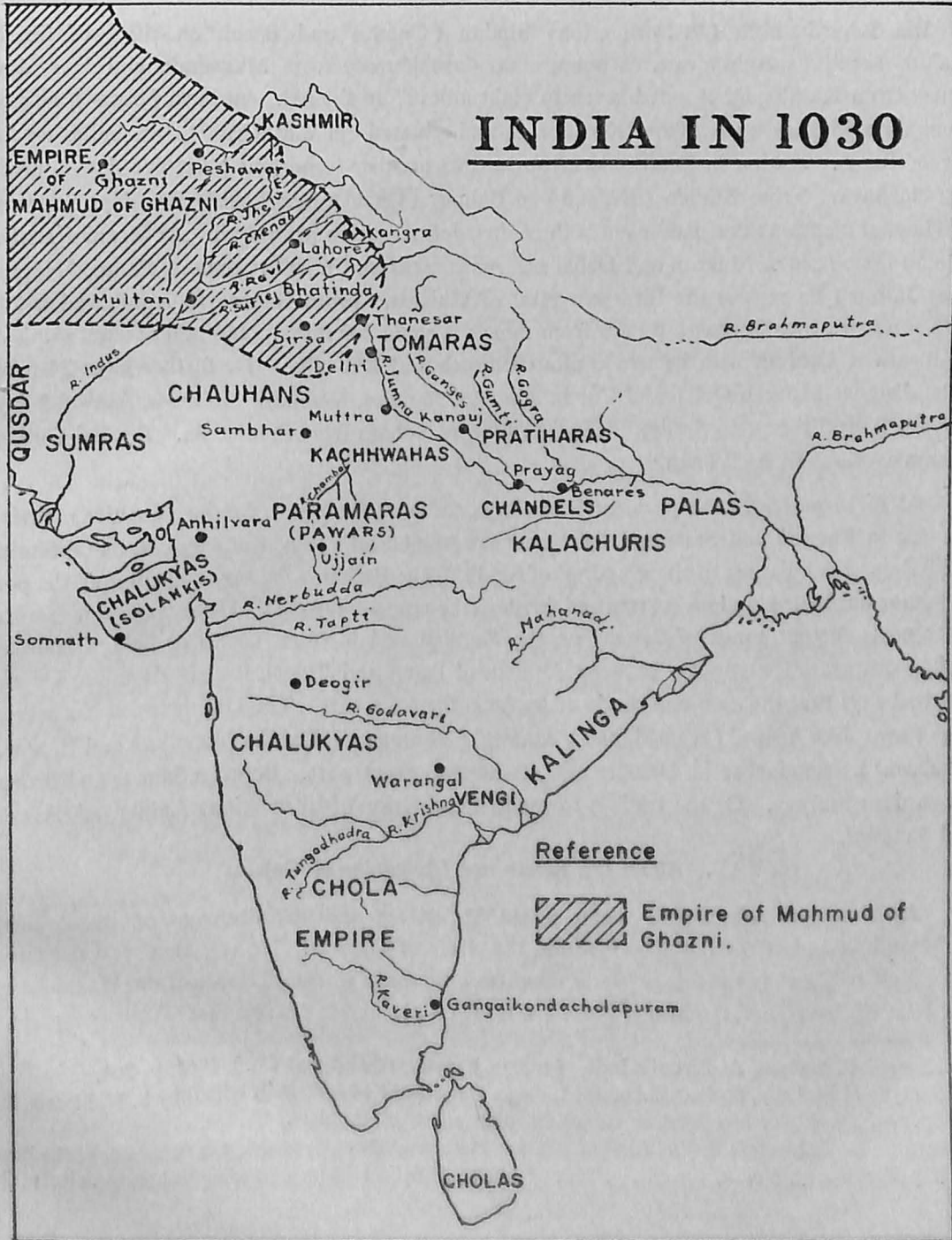
Another mention of the richness of the country even during this period of political turmoil is given by Abu Rihan Al Biruni. He says that the country between Debal¹ (at the mouth of the Indus) and Cutch and from Cutch to Somnath Patan is very rich, producing gum, myrrh and balm. The people, he says, are pirates and attack the Arab traders.

Al Idrisi writing in the 12th century but working mostly on earlier Arab itineraries is about the first Arab writer to mention the prosperity of the Anhilwad kingdom. By this time the Solankis had taken over power in Anhilwad and ushered in one of the most brilliant periods in pre-Musalman Gujarat. However, Idrisi mentions that the land between Debal and Khambaya is a desert where the Mers grazed their flocks. The Mers he says, are powerful in Saurashtra and they are seen at a short distance from Anhilwad Patan. The land between Anhilwad and Broach, he says, is particularly rich in cocoanuts and bamboo.

III. About the Coasts, Ports and Trading Centres of Gujarat

Arab writers, generally, give details of the coasts and ports, the promotion of commerce being one of their main aims. More rarely references are made to the rivers and mountains, the towns in the interior, the people and the produce etc. of the land.

¹ Barbaricon was the old port known to the Romans at the mouth of the Indus. By the time of the Arabs Debal had replaced Barbaricon.



Source : An historical atlas of the Indian Peninsula by C. Collin Davies (Oxford 1949).

[By Courtesy O. U. Press (India)]

Ibn Khurdadhbih (912) mentions Sindan (Cutch) and Baruh as cities of Sindh. Ishtakhri mentions Anhilawara as being eight days journey from Mansurah and four days journey from Kambayat, situated seven to eight miles from the sea. Surbaya (Surat), he says is four days journey by sea from Khambayat and situated one and a half to two miles up the river of Surat. Sindan in Daman is mentioned as another important port, five days journey from Surbaya. From Sindan (Daman) to Saimur (Cheul) is a further five days journey. Ibn Hawkal mentions that Kambaya is three days journey from Mansurah. Al Biruni describes in detail the coasts of Makran and Debal and the coast from Cutch to Somnath Patan. Narana (near Jaipur) he says is the former capital of Gujarat. From Narana to Anhilawad is 240 miles south-west, to Somnath by sea from thence is some 200 miles. 168 miles to the south of Anhilwara is Lardesh with its two capitals Bihruah and Rahanjur. He further gives 24 miles as the distance between Debal and Cutch, Somnath 56 miles, Kambaya 120 miles, Asawal 2 days journey, Bahruj thirty, to Sindan in Daman fifty, to Subara from Sindan six. Beyond Gujarat he says is Konkan and Than.¹

Al Idrisi mentions the ports of Khambaya, Subara (Surbaya), Jandur (Rander), Sindan (Sanjan in Thana) and Saimur.² He says that Anhilawad Patan, Kambaya, Surbara, Sindan and Saimur are adjacent to the kingdom of Sindh. The Balharas, he says control only the port of Saimur but their kingdom is large and fertile and commercially rich. He also mentions several other ports further south of Saimur on the Konkan and Malabar coasts as being important trading centres. The country between Anhilawad Patan and Broach is eight days journey and Al Idrisi says that the common mode of traffic is the oxen cart. The land between has several large towns, like Asawal (Ahmedabad), Janawal (Viramgam), Duluka (Dholka) and Hanawal (Jhalawar). Sandurbar in Goa he says, is an important port. Between Saimur and Broach is two days journey. Of the trading towns in the interior Idrisi mentions Anhilawad, Asawal and Janawal.

IV. About the Rivers and Mountains of Gujarat

Arab writers are usually silent about the rivers and the drainage of the country. Al Masudi is one of the few who mention the rivers of Gujarat. He says that "on the Larwi Sea (Gulf of Cambay) the great rivers flow from the south whilst all rivers of the World except the Nile of Egypt and Mehran (Indus) flow from the north".³ Another Arab geographer

1 Edward C. Sachau, *Al Biruni's India*, (Indian Reprint, Chand and Co.), 1964, p. 208.

2 Symylla of Ptolemy, *Ptolemy's Ancient India as Described by Mc Crindle* edited by S. N. Mazumdar, op. cit., pp. 42-43, identified as Chaul 23 miles south of Bombay.

3 Barbier De Meynard's text of Al Masudi's *Les Prairies d'Or* as quoted in the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 510. See also Elliot's *History of India*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 24.

who refers to the rivers is Al Biruni (1030). He mentions the Narbada as a river between the drainage of the Sarsuti (Saraswati) and the Ganges, flowing from the Eastern mountains south-west to the sea near Bahroj (Broach) which, he says, is 180 miles east of Somnath Patan. The Sarsut, says Al Biruni, falls into the sea at Somnath Patan.¹ There is a small river called Saraswati emptying itself into the sea at Somnath. The importance of Somnath Patan during Al Biruni's time must have made him refer to this river along with the Ganges. Locally the river is held sacred because Sri Krishna is believed to have died on its banks. It is also evident that when Arabs mention Broach as being east of Somnath Patan they consider the Gulf of Cambay as a connecting link between the Peninsula and mainland Gujarat rather than a sea that separated the two. Most of the ruling dynasties of south and central Gujarat and Malwa, also spread their sway over the Peninsula from the mainland across the Gulf. The Gulf of Cambay has brought south Gujarat and Konkan close to south Saurashtra just as the Rann of Cutch and the Wadhwan gateway brought north Gujarat and north Saurashtra together.

Al Biruni further mentions the river Tapti as flowing from Vindu (Vindhya).² The Tamraparni, (also Tapti) he says, flows from Malaya (Malwa).³ Besides these rivers he mentions the Mahindri (Mahi) and Sarusa (perhaps Sabarmati).

The only other Arab writer who mentions the rivers of Gujarat is Al Idrisi. " Dulaka " (Dholka), he says " stands on the banks of a river which forms a Gulf west (east ?) of which stands Baruh " (apparently the Gulf of Cambay).⁴ However, Dholka does not stand on any river. The nearest river is the Sabarmati. It is possible that Sabarmati has shifted its course since Al Idrisi's time.

V. About the Towns of Gujarat

The Arab writers mention in total about 19 towns being of great importance within the limits of present Gujarat.

1. Anhilwad Patan

Anhilwad Patan is mentioned by Al Ishtakhri (951), Ibn Hawkal (968-976), Al Biruni (1030) and Al Idrisi (11th and 12th centuries). It has been mentioned variously as Amhal, Famhal, Kamhal, Kamuhul, Mamhul, Anhilwara and Nahrwara. Arab writers of the 9th and early 10th centuries, namely Suleiman, the merchant of Basra, Al Biladuri, Ibn Khurdadhbih

1 Edward C. Sachau, Al Biruni's India, op. cit., p. 261.

2 E. C. Sachau, op. cit., p. 257.

3 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. IV, Ahmedabad, (Bombay), p. 338. Also Elliot's History of India, Vol. I, p. 87.

and Al Masudi do not mention Anhilawad Patan although it was established as the capital of the Chavada King, Vanaraja, in 746 A.D. (Vikram Samvat 802). By early 8th century, Arabs were in power in Sindh but the mention of Anhilawad as a frontier town is made only in the latter part of the 10th century. When Ishtakhri visited it, Anhilawad Patan had a continuous growth of more than 200 years as the capital of the Chavada Kingdom. Probably it was an insignificant capital during the early part of Chavada rule in North Gujarat.

Al Ishtakhri describes Amhal as being eight days journey from Mansurah and four days journey from Khambaya. All beyond it up to Makran, he says belongs to Sindh and therefore it is the first town, he says, on the road from Mansurah (70 miles north of present Haiderabad in Sindh) to Hind. He refers to it also as Kamhal and Famhal and as one of the chief cities of Hind.¹

Ibn Hawkal shows Anhilawad in his map and describes the country. He says a desert lies between Makran and Famhal (Kamhal) and the people here are Meds (Mers). It is 8 days journey from Mansurah and 4 days from Khambaya. Later he says it is 2 days journey from Mansurah. He says the city is great and strong and has Jama Mosques. He refers to Anhilawad Patan as a great town of many people.²

Al Biruni calls it only Anhilwara and places it 60 farrakh south west from Bazana.³

Al Idrisi refers to the town as Mamhal and as being " of moderate importance on the route from Sindh to India ". " It is a place of some trade producing small quantities of fruit and numerous flocks. It is six days journey from Bania (Buzana or Narayana near Jodhpur) and five days journey from Khambaya ". He says it is situated " at the extremity of a desert which stretches from Khambaya to Debal " where the Meds are numerous and they graze their flocks. They have numerous elephants and camels." Between the visits of Ibn Hawkal (968-976) and Al Idrisi (end of the 11th century) the town seems to have declined according to Arab references. Al Idrisi continues to say that the land between Baruh and Anhilawad is very flat and governed by the Balhara king.⁴ If Al Idrisi used 10th century material the Balharas were rulers of atleast the major part of Gujarat. After the conquests of the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva in Gujarat in 795 A.D. his son Govinda established an independent Rashtrakuta kingdom in Gujarat which lasted till about 888 A.D. when the southern and main branch of the Rashtrakutas assumed authority once again in Gujarat. Govinda's III (827-833) mentions.

1 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

2 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 38-40.

3 E. Sachau, op. cit., p. 205.

4 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 79 and 84.

in his Kavi grant (827 A.D.) and other grants that the Cambay, Gurjara and Malwa kings surrendered to him.¹ Actually by the time of Al Idrisi the Solankis had established authority in Anhilawad Patan and the Rashtrakuta power had declined. The Solankis are considered by some as an offshoot of the Chalukyas of Kalyan and therefore Rashtrakutas. This probably explains the reason why Idrisi mentions the country as being ruled by Balharas in case he is referring to his own period. Idrisi says that the Anhilawad Patan king is very powerful and has numerous troops, that Musalmans are frequent visitors to Anhilawad. This statement about Anhilawad probably refers to his own time.

Anhilawad was founded by the Chavada king Vanaraja in 746 A.D. The Chavada capital till then was Panchasar, south of Radhanpur on the Rann of Cutch. They seem to have shifted their capital to Anhilawad, an interior town, because of Arab threat from Sindh. Ibn Khurdhibih, Al Masudi and Al Ishtakhri saw the town when it was the capital of the not too powerful Chavada dynasty. By 961 A.D. Mulrajah had established the Solanki dynasty in Anhilawad Patan. He conquered Saurashtra after defeating the Chudasamas of Vamansthali (Vanthali, 9 miles from Junagadh). He also overran Cutch and wrested it from king Lakha. He is said to have crossed the Svabhavati (Sabarmati) and reached Lata (South Gujarat).² Ibn Hawkal mentions the place as a great city of many people.

By the 10th century therefore the power of the Anhilawad Patan rulers was felt as far south as Lata, Cutch and Saurashtra.

The next great king of the Solanki dynasty was Bhim Dev (1022-64). It was during his period that Al Biruni visited India. The Ghaznavids had established themselves in Lahore by 942 A.D. When Muhammad Ghanzi invaded Somnath Patan in 1025 he is said to have captured also Anhilawad Patan where Bhim Dev put up a strong resistance. Ghazni attacked it again in 1026. He was anxious to make Anhilawad his capital because it was believed to have gold mines and, as its dependency, Singaldip (Ceylon) which was famous for its rubies.³ Ghazni however was not able to make Anhilawad his capital but to show his fondness for the city he built two mosques. Despite the attacks from Lahore, Bhim Dev was able to re-establish

1 Indian Antiquary, Vol. VI, p. 65.

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. V, 350, as quoted in the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 123.

2 M. S. Commissariat, History of Gujarat, Vol. I, (Longman's), 1930, p. IXX

3 Stanley Lane Poole, Medieval India (Fisher Unwin), 14th Edition, 1925, pp. 14-33. Rouzat-us-Saja says that Ghazni wanted to make Somnath his capital. The above account is according to Ferishta.

himself at Anhilwad and even expand the town. The Kumbhara and Dilwara temples at Mount Abu, the Sun Temple at Modhera and the Ranivav at Anhilwad were all built during this period. Al Biruni, however only casually refers to it.

The successor of Bhimdev was Karna (1066-94) who built Karnavati after defeating the Koli chief of Asawal. Following Karna came Sidhraj Solanki (1094-1143), the most illustrious of the Solanki rulers. He extended his sway over Saurashtra by defeating the Prince of Girnar, over Malwa where the Parmars were routed, over Dharnagar where Raja Bhoj surrendered to him. Sidhraj called himself Avanti Nath (Lord of Malwa). The Sahasralinga tank in Anhilwad Patan was built by him. He is said to have ruled Gujarat proper which he inherited from Vanaraj. This was surrounded by a girdle of fortresses. Achalghadh and Chandravati (Mount Abu) were controlled by his Parmar feudatories and they formed the out-works of Anhilwad Patan in the north. Modhera and Jhinjhuwara were on the west. Champaner and Dabhoi were in the east and south.¹ A Chitor inscription refers to Sidhraj Solanki as one "whose frame was encased in the riches of Victory"² Anhilwad Patan was the capital of his kingdom and by the 12th century it seems to have recovered from the shocks of Ghaznavid invasions.

Sidhraj Solanki's kingdom of Anhilwad Patan must have been contemporaneous with the later rulers of the Ghaznavid dynasty of Lahore. After Mohammad Ghazni's death in 1030, however, there was not much threat from Lahore as Ghazni itself was threatened by the Ghoris. Anhilwad Patan was therefore able to expand under Sidhraj Solanki. Idrisi, if he is referring to his own time, mentions the king of Anhilwad Patan as being very powerful.

After Sidhraj, the Solanki kingdom passed into the hands of Kumarapal Solanki (1143-1174). Kumarapal Charita mentions that Anhilwad was eighteen miles in circumference and had at least a population of 500,000, that it was a great emporium of trade with 84 marts for different commodities. Its export and import duties amounted to 100,000 tankas every day.³ The muslim traders of the town received the protection of the king and they were allowed to trade in peace.

By the 11th century references to Anhilawara is profuse in Arab texts, Al Biruni, Al Idrisi and Ferishtah make mention of it. The Ghoris attacked Anhilwad Patan in 1178 and in

1 Merutunga relates that Sidharaj fought against the king of Kolhapur in the south.

2 M. S. Commissariat, op. cit., p. IXX.

3 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., pp. 12-15. The author of Kumarapala Charita says: "If you can measure the waters of the ocean then may you attempt to count the number of souls in Pattana." It ruins show that the city was at least six miles in length and two miles in width.

Lahore they displaced the Ghaznavids by 1192. In 1195 Kutbdin Aibek, the general of Ghori invaded Gujarat again when Bhim Dev II was ruler at Anhilawad.¹ Bhim Dev, however, succeeded in re-establishing himself at Patan. Kutbdin's work was continued by Iltamush (1211-1234) who conquered the Punjab, Rajputana and Malwa. By 1222 the Solankis of Anhilawad Patan were succeeded by the Vaghelas. Visaldev Vaghela (1243-1261) continued his capital at Anhilawad Patan but it had lost much of its glory with the continued attacks from the Turkish Governors of the Caliph. By 1236 Changiz Khan had become powerful beyond the borders of India and Mongol raids disturbed the frontiers of the Muslim kingdom in Delhi. By the 13th century Chengiz Khan's hordes had reached the Indus. Balban (1266-86) brought in some temporary stability but the frontiers of his kingdom fell into the hands of the Mongols. After Balban came the Khiljis who established the Khilji dynasty in Delhi (1290-1321). In 1297 Gujarat was again invaded by Alauddin Khilji and a Viceroy was sent to Anhilawad Patan to administer the Gujarat territories. The Khiljis were succeeded by the Tughlaks (1321-1388). Patan was once again invaded by Muhammad bin Tughlak in 1325.

Between the attacks of Muhammad Ghazni in 1025 and its invasion by Muhammad bin Tughlak in 1325, Anhilawad had reached the height of its power and also seen some of the worst attacks from the Turks and Mongols. After 1297 it continued as the capital of Gujarat under the Sultanate of Delhi. Even when an independent Sultanate was established in Gujarat, Anhilawad was its earlier capital. In 1411 it was abandoned by Ahmed Shah, the Gujarat Sultan, who shifted the capital to his new city, Ahmedabad, built on the site of the Koli town of Asawal and the later Hindu town of Karnavati.

2. Asawal

Asawal is mentioned by Abu Rihan Al Biruni, Al Idrisi and Ziauddin Barni. The name has not varied much with the different travellers as in the case of Anhilawad Patan. Abu Rihan Al Biruni is the first to mention Asawal (1030). He says that it is two days journey from Khambaya.² Al Idrisi mentions it along with Dulaka (Dholka) and Hanaval or Jhanaval (probably Chunaval near Viramgam) and refers to it as being near to the latter. He says Asawal like the other two towns has a good trade, that the town is comparable in size and population to Dholuka (Dholka) and Hanaval.³ Ziauddin Barni refers to Asawal as being a place where Mohammad bin Tughlak (1325-1351) spent one month while on his expedition against Gujarat because of the rains.⁴

1 Kutbdin later became the Sultan of Delhi and established the Slave Dynasty (1206-1299).

2 Edward C. Sachau, *op. cit.*, p. 208-209.

3 Elliot's History, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 87.

4 Elliot's History, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 260.

Asawal according to historians of the Solanki dynasty was a notable town on the important trade route from Anhilwad Patan to Cambay. It was known as Asapalli and was the capital of the Bhilla principality during Karna's rule (1064-1094). Karna led a successful expedition against the Koli chief, who had assumed independence in Asapalli because of the prosperous trade it commanded. That the Koli chief was a menace to the trade of Anhilwad Patan and its connection with its outlet, the port of Cambay, is obvious from the expedition of Karna. It is said that Karna, in pursuance of an omen he had from the local goddess Kocharba (probably a Koli deity), built a temple to her along with other temples to Mahadeva and Jayantidevi. In the vicinity of the temple he founded the new town of Karnavati. He built the Karnasagar (tank) and made the city his residence for sometime.¹ The new city became a centre of Jainism. The famous Jain Saint Devasuri resided and preached here and it is said that Kumudachandra visited the saint here. It was in Karnavati also that Devachandracharya went for the education of Hemachandra when he managed to persuade the latter's parents to allow him to become a Jain Bikshu.² According to M. Dey the Jains called the town Rajnagara and Srinagara. Karnavati, therefore, was also a great cultural centre. Arab writers of the 11th and 12th centuries, however, see the town only as a trading town on the road to Cambay, and even though Karna had founded the new town by this time, they still refer to it as Asawal and not Karnavati. In the 15th century also Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi refers to it as Asawal where Tatar Khan confined his father.³

It is not likely that the Solankis of Anhilwad Patan lost control of Asapalli in the reign of Karna's successor, the illustrious Sidhraj Solanki because Sidhraj is described as ruler of Gujarat who was in a position to excite the king of Kolhapur in the south, His kingdom extended up to Mount Abu and Jhalor in the north, Malwa in the east and Sorath in the west. It is possible that even after the establishment of Karna's town the Kolis were still powerful on the main trade route to Cambay and that the Arabs knew it as Asawal and not Karnavati.

Mirat-i-Sikandri (1403) speaks of Asawal as the place where Sultan Ahmed's (founder of Ahmedabad) grandfather retired to private life after making over his kingdom to his son Tatar Khan. By this time Gujarat had an independent Sultanate although the capital continued to be at Anhilwad Patan. Mirat-i-Sikandri continues to say that Ahmed founded the city of

1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. IV, (Bombay), 1879, p. 250.

2 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 12-13. Also Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. IV, (Bombay), 1879, p. 250. Footnote 1.

3 As quoted in the Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 513.

Ahmedabad in 1411 near Asawal and made it his capital. The village of Asarwara is perhaps all that remains of old Asapalli or Asawal.¹

3. Broach

Broach is mentioned by almost all the Arab travellers from Suleiman the Merchant of Basra to Ibn Batuta who visited the court of Mohammad bin Tughlak. It is variously mentioned as Baruz, Baruh, Barus and Bahru.

Broach is one of the first places attacked by the Arabs. As early as 636 A.D. the Khalif of Damascus sent Usman, Governor of Bahrein and Uman, with a fleet to Baruz. says Al Biladuri. He further mentions that the son of Abdul Rahman Al Murri when appointed Governor of Sindh by the Khalif Hisham bin Abdal Malik (724-743) sent an expedition to Broach. The march seems to have been from Sindh through Kutch, Anhilawad and Ujjain. Ibn Khurdadhbih places Broach in Sindh, obviously a mistake.

Al Masudi speaks of Barus as being famous for its lances and shafts called Barusi. Al Idrisi mentions Baruh as "a large town well built with bricks and plaster, two days journey from Saimur (Cheul) and eight days journey from Nahrwara" (Anhilawad Patan). He continues "that the inhabitants of Broach are rich engaged in trade and ready to enter upon speculations and distant expeditions, a port for vessels coming from China and Sindh."²

Al Biruni says that Baruh stands near the estuary of the Narbada, 120 miles from Debal and refers to it as the capital of Lar Desh (Lata) and a port of much importance. He mentions it along with Rihanjur (Rander, opposite Surat on the Tapti).³

In 1325, when Muhammad bin Tughlak invaded Gujarat Broach is referred to as being "in the flames of insurrection caused by foreign Amirs and nobles of the hot tempered Muhammad bin Tughlak."⁴

Broach or Bharuch is one of the most ancient ports of Western India. Its origin is ascribed to Saint Bhrgu who had his hermitage built on the banks of the Narbada. Bhrgupura, Bhrgukachcha or Bhrgukshetra was known as a holy place even as late as the 1st century A.D. Its

1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 513.

2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 513. (from his Meadows of Gold). Also Elliot Vol. I, op. cit., p. 87.

3 Edward Sachau, op. cit., p. 205 and 261.

"Marching from Anhilawara southward, you come to Lardesh to the two capitals of the country, Bihroj and Rihanjur, 42 farsakh from Anhilwara. Both are on the sea coast to the east of Tana".

"Between the mouth of the rivers Sarsati, and Ganges is the mouth of the river Narbada which descends from the eastern mountains, takes the course in a southwestern direction, and falls into the sea near the town of Bahroj nearly sixty yojana east of Somnath.

4 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 514.

sanctity is mentioned in the Puranas for king Bali is supposed to have performed his sacrifices in Bhrgukachcha. It is here that he handed over his entire kingdom to Vishnu (Vamana). In the 1st century A.D. Ushabhadata constructed several tanks, wells and rest houses in the town for pilgrims visiting it.

But the fame of Bhrgupura in ancient times was mainly due to its extensive maritime trade which dates back to the 3rd millennium B.C. There is ample evidence of this trade in the remains of old Babylon, in Baudhayana Smriti, assigned by Bühler to the 5th century B.C., in the Buddhist Jatakas and other ancient works.

During the Mauryan period (325 B.C. to 197 B.C.) it was a thriving port with an extensive trade with the Persian Gulf, Egypt, Cyrene, Syria, Macedon and Epirus in the west and Ceylon, Java and the Far East.

After the fall of the Mauryan Empire the Bactrians might have established their sway over Barugaza because the Periplus mentions that Bactrian coins were found in Broach even during the second century A.D. The discovery of coins however does not conclusively prove that the Bactrians held territorial authority over the port because a close commercial contact with the Bactrian Kingdom would also drain their coins to the port. Strabo (63 B.C., 23 A.D.) who drew mostly on Megasthenes (325 B.C.) says that a merchant of Barygaza had come to the court of the Roman Emperor, Augustus, as emissary of king Porus and that he had come via the Persian Gulf and Antioch route.

The Periplus also mentions the close connections of Broach with Myos Hormos and Koptos on the Nile.

Bhrgukachcha was not a convenient port and the dangers to navigation in the gulf and up to the port is mentioned in the Periplus. But by the first century A.D. it had monopoly of the entire maritime trade of Central and Western India and its hinterland extended even to the Gangetic plain. The Periplus mentions that goods came to Barugaza from Ozene (Ujjain) and the whole of northern India, that the importance of Sanchi, Bhilsa and Kapadwanj was mainly due to their being on the main trade route from Pataliputra to Barugaza. The port was an outlet for Banaras, Kanauj and other northern cities as well. Even Kabul was sending merchandise to Barugaza. In the Deccan, goods from Paithan and other places reached the port of Barygaza.¹

1 The Periplus as quoted in William Robertson, *An Historical Disquisition concerning Ancient India* (London), 5th Edition, p. 61-62. See also E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Romans and India* (Cambridge), 1928.

See also *The Periplus*, op. cit., p. 39-41 (dangers of the Port), p. 42 (trade with Ozene and the upper country), p. 41 (Bactrian coins in Barygaza).

In the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., during the Kshatrapa and Andhra-Kushana Periods, Broach became such an important outlet for the goods of India to Rome that it provoked Pliny to record "that there was no year in which India did not drain the Roman Empire of a hundred million sesterces". A considerable amount of this trade was concentrated at Broach.

During the Gupta Period (4th and 5th centuries A.D.), even though the trade with the west suffered a setback because of the invasions of the Roman Empire by barbarian hordes, the eastern trade to Java and China flourished and the merchants of Barygaza played an important role in this trade.

With the fall of the Guptas unsettled conditions existed all over India. But Bhrgupura being a flourishing port, it was not surprising that it became the capital of a Gurjara kingdom by the 6th century A.D. Probably the kingdom comprised the territories between the Narmada and the Mahi. Being a capital it was well fortified, for its ramparts are referred to in the grants of Dadda II. When it was not the capital of the Gurjara kingdom it was controlled by the Rashtrakutas who also made it one of their provincial capitals. With the fall of the Rashtrakutas and the rise of the Anhilwad kingdom in the north, Cambay slowly became the outlet of northern and central Gujarat. When the Solankis of Anhilwad extended their sway over South Gujarat by the 12th century, Barugaza passed into their hands but Cambay continued as the main outlet of the Anhilwad Patan Kingdom. However the Solankis built Jain Viharas at Broach. The Salunika Vihara was built by Bahade at the desire of his father Udayana, minister of Kumarapala Solanki.

The trade of Broach was at its height in the first and second centuries A.D. during the Andhra-Kushana period. It retained its glory till the 7th century as Huen Tsang observes that the riches of the town were entirely due to its extensive maritime trade. The fact that the first attack of the Arabs was on Broach is proof of its prosperous trade. The trade of Barugaza declined by the 9th century but even in the 11th century it is noted by Al Biruni as a port of some importance and as the capital of Lar Desh. By the time of Ibn Batuta (Muhammad bin Tughlak's period, 14th century) the town is spoken of as being on the verge of destruction.

4. Cambay

Al Masudi (915), Al Ishtakri (951), Ibn Hawkal (968-996), Al Biruni (970-1040), Al Idrisi (12th century) and Abdullah Wassaf (1300) mention Cambay. It is referred to as Kambaya, Kambayat, Kambayah and Khambait.

Al Masudi speaking of the ebb and flow of the tides in the Arabian Sea and its inlets mentions Khambaya. He says that Khambaya was famous in Baghdad for its sandals. These sandals, he says, were made in Khambaya, Sindan (near Than or Daman) and Sufarah (Sopara), Masudi notes that when he visited the city in 913-14 it was ruled by a Brahmin called

Bania, on behalf of the lords of Manker (Malkad in the Deccan) who were Balharas. The Brahmins of Khambaya, continues Masudi, were very friendly with the Arabs. "The port is on a deep bay larger than that of the Nile and the Tigris." The shores of Cambay is described as being "covered with towns, villages, farms, tilled fields, trees and cocoanut gardens, full of peacocks and paroquets and other Indian birds".¹ Between Khambaya and the sea, where the Gulf branches into two, is two days journey. "When the water ebbs, stretches of sand come into view which gives a desert look". The tide, he says, is very rapid here. Al Masudi further refers to an emerald known as Makkan which was sent from Khambaya to Aden and Makka (Mecca) where it had a good market.²

Al Ishtakhri mentions Khambayat as being four days journey from Anhilawad and Surabara (probably Surat), situated on the Tapti, 16 miles from the sea. According to him it was on the northern boundary of the Balhara kingdom.³ Cambay is now only four miles from the sea. Excavations further up bear proof that Nagara was the old port.

Ibn Hawkal mentions Kambaya amongst the cities of Hind and says that there is a desert between Kamahal (Anhilawad) and Khambaya. In his time there was a Jama (Assembly) mosque in the town. Amongst the products of Kambaya he mentions mangoes, cocoanuts, lemons, rice, honey but no date trees. He says that Kambaya is four miles from the sea and four days journey from Subara (Surabara or Surbaya, Surat). Kamhul (Anhilawad) he says, is four days journey⁴ from Kambaya.

Al Biruni places Kambaya within the large country of Gujarat, 120 miles from Debal. He says that the men of Kambaya receive tributes from Kish (probably Kich-Makran).

Al Idrisi places Kambaya in the second climate. He says that it is a "pretty well-known naval station and second amongst the towns of Gujarat". Merchandise from every country is found here and from here they go to other countries. He says that "it stands at the end of a bay, three miles from the sea where vessels can enter and cast anchor". Kambaya, he says, is well supplied with water and has a fine fortress built by the Government to prevent pirates from Kish entering. From Kambaya to Subara and Mamhal is five days journey and to Aubkin (Piram Island) is 2½ days journey. Al Idrisi continues that Kambaya is very rich in rice and wheat and that its mountains yield Indian Kana.⁵

1 & 2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VI (Bombay), 1880, p. 214. See Elliot's History, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 11, where Abu Zaid mentions emeralds imported from Egypt mounted as seals.

3 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 514. Also Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 27 and 30.

4 Elliot's History of India, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 39.

5 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 77, 84 and 85.

Abdullah Wassaf says that Gujarat which is commonly called Khambayat has 70,000 villages all of which "were populous and the people abounding in wealth and luxuries". He continues that "in the course of four seasons seventy different species of flowers bloom. The air is very pure and healthy and many plants and herbs grow wild. Even in winter the ground is full of tulips (poppies), the climate a perpetual spring. The moisture of the dew of itself suffices for cold season crops. Then comes the summer harvest which is dependent on the rain. The vineyards bring forth blue grapes twice a year".¹

Khambayat he says, has a trade in horses which come from the Persian isles, Bahrein and Hamruz. "This trade was so great that in the reign of Atabak Abu Bakr (1154-89) 10,000 horses worth 2,200,000 Dinars (Rs. 11 Million) were imported to Khambayat and the ports of Malabar". These sums, he says, were paid out of the funds of Hindu Temples and from the taxes on the citizens attached to the temples. The same author mentions the plunder of Khambayat by Malik Muizzudin (Ulughkhan). About fifty years later (1325-1351) Muhammad bin Tughlak came to Cambay for collecting the arrears of the revenues of Cambay.²

Khambayat mentioned by the Arabs is the port of Sthambhathirta³ of the Hindus. It is not very ancient because neither the Puranas nor the Greek writers refer to it. According to M. Dey its old name was Gambuta. It assumed the name of Sthambha during the Chavotaka period in Anhilwad Patan (720-961) although the reason for the change of name is not known.

The earliest reference to Sthambhathirta is perhaps in the Kavi grant of the Rashtrakuta king Govinda wherein it is mentioned that the king of Sthambha was one of those threatening Dhruva, son of Govinda. In consequence of this and other threats Dhruva was given extensive powers and made almost an independent king in Gujarat by his father. During the Rashtrakuta period in Gujarat, Sthambha often assumed independence. However Govinda III claims that the kings of Sthambha, Malwa and Gurjara surrendered to him. The local independent

1 & 2 As given in Abdullah Wassaf's *Tazjiyat-ul-Amsar* quoted in Elliot's *History*, Vol. III, pp. 31-33 and 256-57. (as given in Zia-ud-din Barni's. (*Tarikhi-i-Firoz Shahi*))

3 Sthambhathirta: The pillar Shrine (in Prakrit it was called Khambhaitha. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 211). The local legend is that (as given in Kumarika Khand) a copper pillar stood near the town gate which is believed to be erected by Kumar to mark his victory over Tarakasur. Dr. Bühler believes that Sthambheswar is one of the many names of Shiv (the pillar-shaped Shiv) and as he was worshipped in Cambay his name was given to the town. (See *Gazetteer*, Vol. VI, pp. 211-212). Under the Valabhi king mention is made of an important city and a port on the Mahi called Gajni, as the principal outlet of the kingdom. The Valabhi dynasty in Saurashtra came to an end in the 7th century A.D. (*Gazetteer*, Vol. VI, p. 213, footnote 2).

dynasties as well as the Rashtrakuta hold on Cambay were intermittent. When Al Masudi (915) mentions that Cambay was ruled by a Brahmin on behalf of the Lords of Manked (Rashtrakutas) he refers to a period when the struggle for power between the Rashtrakutas and the ruling powers of Malwa, Cambay and Gurjara-Mandala, was one of the main features of the history of Gujarat. It is the prosperity of Cambay and its extensive trade that made it the target of attack by powerful rulers. Al Masudi notes the wealth and prosperity of Cambay, its shoes which were famous in Baghdad, the emeralds for which it was famous. It is obvious that in Al Masudi's time Rajasthan (emerald mines are known to occur only in Rajasthan in India) formed part of the hinterland of Cambay.

Ibn Hawkal also mentions in detail the wealth of 10th century Cambay.

With the rise of the Solankis in Anhilwad Patan, Cambay became part of the Solanki kingdom. Even though Mulraj Solanki (961) is credited with the conquest of Lata (South Gujarat) it is Sidhraj Solanki (1094-1143) who really established the Solanki control over South Gujarat. Khambayat is included in South Gujarat by Al Biruni. Al Idrisi, who refers to the wealth and prosperity of Khambayat, says it is the second largest town in Gujarat. He refers to its trade with Debal and Kish. Abdullah Wassaf, although writing in 1300 refers to 12th century Cambay, when it had a prosperous trade in horses. He says Gujarat is called Cambay and that it had 70,000 villages under its jurisdiction. Abu Bakr (11-54-89) in whose time the trade of Khambayat in horses reached 2,200,000 Dinars was a contemporary of Kumarapala (1143-1174), who succeeded Sidhraj in Anhilwad.

Cambay, although it lost independence was at the height of its power during the later Solanki rule in Anhilwad and during the period of the Gujarat Sultanate. It was because of its importance as an outlet to the Patan kingdom that Karna found it necessary to send an expedition against the Kolis of Asawal who were a menace on the trade route from Anhilwad to Cambay. Sidhraj conquered the entire South Gujarat and Malwa for which also Cambay was an outlet after the decline of Broach. During the Solanki period Cambay is mentioned as having for its hinterland not only the Solanki kingdom of Gujarat (which for sometime included Malwa) but also Delhi and Agra in the Gangetic Plains. It was from here that Muhammadans went to Mecca from north India. There were several marts in the city and the merchants were very rich. It was also one of the chief money marts of Gujarat. There were many muslim merchants in Cambay and they were treated well. The town had gardens and orchards, temples, lakes and other amenities usually found in ancient Indian towns. Brahmins were held in high respect and Vastupala, minister of Kumarapala, is said to have laid out a new suburb for them. Someswara (13th century) informs that new temples were built in Cambay by Vastupala. In

1304 Ala-uddin Khilji plundered the city. Cambay remained in the hands of the Muslim rulers of Delhi or Ahmedabad for the next 430 years. Cambay was at the height of its power therefore when Al Biruni, Al Idrisi and Abdullah Wassaf referred to it. Ibn Batuta also describes it (1345) as "a fine city remarkable for the elegance and strength of its mosques and houses built by foreign merchants, the chief part of its population."¹ In 1347 and 1349 Mohammad bin Taghlak's army plundered Cambay. By 1443 it became part of Ahmed Shah's kingdom of Ahmedabad. Ahmed Shah I (1411-1443) took active care of the trade of Cambay and it was made a naval centre. This greatly enriched Cambay and at the end of his reign it is described as "a noble city, 12 miles round."²

5. Dholka

Al Idrisi mentions Dulaka and another town which he calls Hanaval (perhaps Chunaval or Jhanaval identified as Jhalawar) as being situated between Broach and Nahrwara (Anhilwad). Doluka, he says, "is on the banks of a river flowing into the sea which forms an estuary or a gulf west (east?) of which stands Baruh". It is one of the chief trading centres of Gujarat.³ Hanaval and Doluka, he notes stand at the foot of a chain of mountains called Undaran (probably Vindhya). He says bamboos and cocoanuts grow in the region.

Dhavalakam or Dhavalaka is believed to be the ancient Matsyapur or Viratanagar where the Pandavas lived incognito for a year. It was at that time ruled by Queen Sudishva of the Kaiyo or Bhil race, whose brother Kaiyo Kichaka was slain by Bhima because of his attempt on the chastity of Draupadi.⁴ Perhaps Matsyapur was only a village during the Epic Period although the seat of royalty. In the 2nd century A.D. (144 A.D.) Kanakasena, a prince of Suryavamsa (Sun race) is said to have settled in Dhavalakam and probably Aryanised it. The town however came into prominence when Anhilwad Patan became the capital of the Solankis in the 10th century A.D. and the commercial outlet of the kingdom of Anhilwad Patan became Somnath Patan (Veraval) and later Cambay. Dhavalakam was situated on the important Anhilwad-Somnath Patan and Anhilwad-Cambay trade route. As a frontier town commanding the route to Saurashtra and to South Gujarat it developed into a trading town of great importance by the 11th century. As a frontier town it was also used as a fortress from where the Solanki campaigns against the unruly Mehars of Saurashtra and the rulers in the south were directed. It became an administrative town and a district headquarters as the peaceful rule of the Solankis was firmly established in Gujarat. At the close of the 11th century the town

1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 216.

2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 216-217.

3 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 557 and Vol. IV, p. 338. Also Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 87.

4 Edited by H. G. Rawlinson, Forbes', Ras Mala, Vol. I, (Oxford), 1924, p. 102.

was adorned with a lake built by Minal Devi, mother of Sidhraj Solanki (1094-1143). When Idrisi saw it in the 12th century he mentions it as one of the chief trading towns of Gujarat.

It is the importance of Dhavalakam as a trading centre that attracted the Arabs to the town. The Arabs had reached the Saurashtra coasts as early as the 7th century. The Valabhi kingdom, with its capital at Vala, 20 miles north of Bhavnagar, had withstood Arab attacks on their ports for more than a hundred years before it finally collapsed in 766 A.D. It is said that the Valabhis moved to the interior because of Arab threats on the coast. Somnath Patan was frequently attacked by the Turkish Muslims by the 11th century (Muhammad Ghazni). It was the unsettled conditions on the Saurashtra coasts and the loss of trade of Broach that brought Cambay into prominence in the 11th century. With the capital of the most powerful kingdom of Gujarat in Anhilwad Patan and the rise of Cambay as an outlet the towns on the Anhilwad-Cambay route began to develop. The Arabs mention Asawal also as being situated on this important trade route.

Early in the 13th century Davalakam was called Dhavalgad perhaps because it became more important as a fortress town or because it was held by Veer Dhuwal, the founder of the Vaghela dynasty¹ which followed the Solanki dynasty in Anhilwad Patan. During the Musalman period Dholka is mentioned as a town, a fort and the headquarters of a local governor. The remains in the town show that at one time it was adorned by many beautiful Muslim buildings.² The *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* says that when Gujarat was conquered by Akbar in 1572 Dholka was the centre of 615 villages yielding a revenue of £ 16,000.³ The Supplement to *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* states that in the reign of Muhammad Shah Asaf Jha, Dholka was a Parganah with 233 villages under its control yielding a revenue of 21,799,097 dams. It had the following thanas under it namely Koth, Gondi, Sanand, Tandudara, Ratanpur, Sahra, Bhat, Taraj, Hariala, Chansar and Cherara.⁴

6. Gondal

Gondal is mentioned by Ziau-d-din-Barni as Kondal, a place where Muhammad bin Tughlak spent a rainy season in 1349-1350. He fell sick while in the town. It was from Gondal that Muhammad bin Tughlak marched to Cutch and Sindh.⁵

1 Forbes', *Ras Mala*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 250.

2 *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 338.

3 *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, (Bird's Translation), p. 117, as quoted in the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, p. 338. Footnote 5.

4 Syed Nawab Ali and C. N. Seddon, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, (Supplement), Gackwad's Oriental Series, (Baroda), 1928, p. 168.

5 *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. VIII (Bombay), 1884, p. 144. Also *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. I, p. 517. Also Elliot's History, Vol. III, op. cit., p. 264.

Gondal is not an ancient town as its name does not occur in the Puranas, the Epics or in any of the inscriptions or grants of the Hindu period. It is situated on the west banks of the Gondli, a tributary of the Bhadar. Its first mention occurs perhaps only in 1349. When Mohammad Ghori was ruling at Junagadh, Gondal was handed over to a Sultan. The Mirat-i-Ahmadi and Aini Akbari refer to it as a Parganah. The fort of Gondal was built only in the 17th century.

7. Kachch

The only Arab writer who mentions Kachch is Al Biruni. He says that Kachch, along with Somnath Patan is the headquarters of the Medhs (Mehrs). Al Biruni continues that the Indus (Mihran) has several arms one of which reaches the province of Kachch at a place called Sindhu Sagara¹, Kachch, he says, is six miles from Debal (at the mouth of the Indus).

Even though Arab reference to Kachch is made only in the 11th century, the Arabs knew Kutch quite well as early as the 8th and 9th centuries. The Arab kingdom of Sindh was established in the 8th century and Al Biladuri mentions that the Jama Mosque in Sindan (Cutch) was built by the Arabs in the 9th century.

Al Biruni mentions that the Medhs were powerful in Kutch during his time (1030). The Valabhi records show that the Medhs were contemporaries of the Valabhis in Morvi in the 8th century. Later they seem to have shifted their capital to Bhumillika (Ghumli) north east of Porbunder. In Al Biladuri's time (9th century) the Medhs are referred to as being a menace off Dwarka, against whom the Arabs sent expeditions.

By the time Al Biruni refers to Kachch, the Solanki dynasty was established in Anhilawad Patan. Mulraj Solanki (942-996) is said to have conquered Saurashtra and Cutch by defeating the Chudasamas of Vamanasthali (Vanthali) and king Lakha of Cutch. Most probably the Medhs continued to trouble the Solankis of Anhilawad Patan because Sidhraj Solanki (1094-1143) is also credited with the conquest of Sorath. Al Biruni (1030) therefore must be referring to a period when the struggle for power in Saurashtra and Kachch between the Medhs and Solankis was going on.

Tarikh-i-Masumi (1069) mentions that when the Ghaznavides of Lahore were defeated by the Sumaras in Sindh the latter extended their sway from Kachch to Narsipur (near Haiderabad)². The Solanki rule in Kachch was perhaps only nominal and the local tribes continued to be powerful in Kutch even after its conquest by the Anhilawad Patan kings. Al Biruni however mentions the Medhs as being powerful in Kachch.³

¹ E. C. Sachau, Al Biruni's India, op. cit., p.260. Also Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 49 and 66.

² Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 484.

³ E. C. Sachau, Al Biruni's India, op. cit., p. 208.

8. Kaira

Kaira is mentioned by Ziauddin Barni in connection with Muhammad bin Tughlak's conquest of Gujarat (1325). The Gujarat noble Taghi had risen against the Delhi Sultan and Muhammad bin Tughlak is said to have remained at Asawal during the rains and defeated the forces of Taghi at Karra (Kaira). Taghi fled to Anhilawad and some of his supporters took refuge in Mandal (Viramgam) but the ruler refused to shelter them for fear that Muhammad bin Tughlak's wrath would be turned against him.¹ The Solanki rule in Anhilawad had already ended in 1222 and the Vaghelas who ruled from 1222 to 1297 had also succumbed to Muslim pressure by the time Ziauddin Barni referred to Kaira. The Kingdom of Lahore had seen the rule of the Ghaznavides and the Ghoris. Beyond the borders of India Chengiz Khan's hordes were powerful by 1236 and the Slave kings of Delhi were threatened by fresh Mongol raids from the north west. The Slave Dynasty (1206-1290) was replaced by the Khilji Dynasty in 1290 and the Tughlak Dynasty in 1321. Both Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad bin Tughlak lead campaigns against Gujarat. The king of Viramgam referred to by Ziauddin Barni was probably a local chief because the last of the Anhilawad kings was defeated in 1297 by Alauddin Khilji.

Kaira or Khetaka is a very ancient town mentioned in the Mahabharata as Chakravati Nagari and the king as Mordhuj who was defeated by the Pandavas. Copper Plates confirm the existence of a town called Khaidra in the 5th century A.D.² About 100 years later it is spoken of as the birth place of the Valabhi king Siladitya.³ M. Dey is of the opinion that the old name of Kaira was Kachcha as Huen Tsang spelt it as Kietcha or Kita. But in the 9th century, subsequent to the visit of the Chinese traveller, in the grants of Dharasena II, previous to the visit of Huen Tsang and in the grants of Dharsena IV, almost contemporary to Huen Tsang, it is still called Khetaka.⁴

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- 1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 518. See also Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi in Elliot's History, Vol. III, p. 260-61.
 - 2 Cunningham, Ancient Geography of India, op. cit., p. 415-416. Huen Tsang places his Kiecha or Kheda 300 lis or 50 miles north west of Malwa. Both Stanislas Julien and Vivien de Saint Martin identify it as Kachch. But according to Cunningham it is Kheda and he thinks that the reading should be 1300 lis (217 miles) from Malwa. See also Brigg's Cities of Gujashtra p. 195-196. The name Kaira is said to come from Ketaka the Sanskrit form of Kevda, the sweet-scented Pandanus. Sukhad, the confectioners' and Ratanpur, the Jewellers' quarters, each about 2 miles from Kaira are supposed to be suburbs of the old town. While digging drains near Kaira in 1832, several coins and marble images were found as quoted in Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. III, (Bombay), 1879, p. 169. Footnote 2.
 - 3 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. III, (Bombay), 1879, pp. 168-169. There were several Valabhi kings named Siladitya. See Forbes', Ras Mala, op. cit., pp. 20-24.
 - 4 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 15.



Source: An historical atlas of the Indian Peninsula by C. Collin Davies (Oxford 1949).

[By Courtesy O. U. Press (India)]

Khetaka is referred to as the head quarters of an Ahara (District) or sometimes as the headquarters of a Mandala or group of districts. Huen Tsang mentions it as being 500 miles in circumference.¹ Cunningham says that the district extended from the banks of the Sabarmati to the great bend of the Mahi and to Baroda in the South.² During the rule of the Valabhis of Vale, whose sway extended up to Godhra on the mainland, Khetaka was the headquarters of the Valabhi territories in mainland Gujarat. When the Rashtrakutas, conquered Lata, Kaira was included in Lata in the grants of Govinda III. Under the Rashtrakutas also it was the headquarters of a Mandal. The Solanki king Karna I (1064-1094) annexed the territories as far south as Ahmedabad to the kingdom of Anhilwad Patan. His successor Sidhraj (1094-1143) extended his sway much beyond Dabhoi which he made one of his frontier fortresses. Kaira, therefore, was part of the Solanki kingdom by the 12th century. By 1297 Gujarat had fallen to the Muslims although it took several centuries to finally conquer it and make it part of Akbar's Empire (1572).

9. Khabirun

Al Idrisi mentions Khabirun (Kavi) along with Khambaya, Subara, Sindan, Saimur and Mamhal as countries which touch upon Sindh. Kabirun, he says, is as populous as Asawal, commercially rich, industrious and productive of useful articles.³ In his time he says the Musalmans have made their way into all these countries. Being situated on the opposite side of Cambay it is not surprising if Arab travellers of the 11th and 12th centuries noticed Kabirun (Kavi).

Inscriptions mention that ancient Kapika is in the Barukachcha Vishaya and that the villages Kemajja, Sihugrama, Jambha, Ruhananda and Jadrana are near Kapika. These villages are in the vicinity of modern Kavi. In the grants of Govinda III (Raashtrakuta King) Kapika is referred to as the headquarters of a territorial subdivision, Pathaka, which is smaller than a Vishaya. Hence it must have been a fair sized town by the 9th century. At that time it was also famous as a Mahasthana or holy place because the Cambay plates of Govinda IV calls it a Mahasthana. It became a centre of Jainism probably during the reign of Kumarapala (1143-74), the Solanki king of Anhilwad Patan. The Navasari plates of Jayabhatta is issued from a Camp called Kavyavatara, which is also identified as Kavi.⁴

10. Kol

The only Arab writer who mentions Kol is Ibn Khurdadhbih. He places it eight miles (2 Parasangs) from Meds and 72 miles (18 parasangs) from Sanjan (Sindan), Kutch. Arabs.

1 & 2 Cunningham, Ancient Geography, op. cit., p. 416.

3 Elliot's History, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 84 and 86.

4 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 14.

had settlements in Cutch by the beginning of the 9th century and in the 10th century, Cutch was considered part of the Arab kingdom of Sindh.¹ There is also a settlement called Koth, on the route from Dholka to Saurashtra which might have been important enough to be noticed by the Arabs of the 9th century (Ibn Khurdadhbih) as it was on an important trade route. The fortress of Kol was taken by Kutbdin, Sultan of Delhi in 1194.

11. Mandal

Ibn Khurdadhbih mentions Mandal along with Rumla, (Kumla = a salt land) Kuli and Baruh as countries of Sindh. Al Biladuri says that when Hisham (724-743), son of Abdal Malik was the Caliph, Junniad was appointed to the frontier of Sindh and the latter sent his officers to Mandal, Dahnaj (perhaps Kamlej) and Bahrus (Broach).² Mandal is identified as a town near Viramgam and also as Okhamandal. The area in which Viramgam is now situated consists of a low, bare, flat ground, a few miles east of the Ran. This low ground commands the route to Kathiawad and as such several fortresses rose and fell in the area. According to Bird's History the town of Viramgam was only a suburb of Kangavati during the reign of Sidhraj. Kangavati in turn was built on the site of a still older town called Karaktal.³

At the close of the 11th century, Minal Devi mother of Sidhraj, built the Mansar Lake and Sidhraj added several shrines and temples in the suburb of Viramgam, despite which Kangavati continued to be the more important town. Kangavati was finally destroyed by the Muslims in the 13th century after which some Kadva Kanbis (represented later by the Desais of Patri), coming from Champaner, settled in the area and assumed Patelship and Chieftainship of Mandal. The Mandal chiefs of Viramgam became so strong that they were able to remain independent of Muslim rule till 1530. Under Aurangzeb the Mandal chiefs became Desais of Jhalawar. Viramgam was made the headquarters of the Mughal Viceroy.⁴ Even today Viramgam commands the route to Kathiawad and its trade is brisk. Alternatively Ibn Khurdadhbih may have been referring to Okha Mandal where, off Bet Dwarka the Mehrs were a threat to Arab trade.

1 Elliot's History of India, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 15.

2 Gazetteer Vol. I, p. 520. Also Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 126.

3 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 354, footnote 2.

4 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 354. There is also a place called Mandal 14 miles north-west of Viramgam which was of some importance in 1347 when Muhammad bin Tughlak invaded Gujarat and the Rana of Mandal and Patri is said to have helped him. The fort of Mandal must have been of some strength because in 1395 it was besieged by Muzaffar Khan, (Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 345).

12. Rander

Rander is referred to as Rahanjir, Rihanjur, Jandur and Sandur. Al Biruni says that Rihanjur and Bahruj (Broach) are capitals of Lar Desh (South Gujarat) and the former is situated opposite Surabaya (Surat).¹ Al Idrisi's Jandur or Sandur is identified as Rander.²

Rander is believed to be one of the older towns in Western India although it is not mentioned in the Puranas or the Epics or in the inscriptions of the Hindu rulers. Some give it an antiquity of about the 1st century A.D. when Broach was the chief seat of commerce in Western India.³ However, we do not hear much about Rander till Al Biruni mentions it as the centre of trade on the Tapti. The Arab merchants and sailors are believed to have settled in Rander shortly after the 13th century, at which time it is mentioned as being ruled by Jains. The Jains were ousted and the temples converted into mosques. Under the name of Nayatas the Muslim merchants of Rander traded with distant countries and became famous for their hospitality and wealth.⁴ Durate Barbosa the Portuguese writer, in 1514 refers to Ranel (Rander) as "a good town of the Moors, built of very pretty houses and squares. It is a rich and agreeable place because the Moors of the town trade with Malacca, Bengal, Tawaseri, (Tenasserim) Pegu, Martaban and Sumatra in all sorts of spices, drugs, silk, musk, benzoin and porcelain. They possess very large ships and those who wish to have Chinese articles will find them there very completely. The Moors of the place are white and well dressed and very rich. In the furniture of their houses they have China vases of many kinds kept in glass cupboards well arranged. Their women are not secluded as those of other moors."⁵

Rander seems to have grown with the expansion of the trade with the Far East under the Moors in the 13th and 14th centuries, although it is mentioned by Al Biruni and Al Idrisi in the 11th and 12th centuries.

13. Sanjan

There are three or four Sanjans (Sindan) mentioned by the Arabs, one in Cutch, one in Daman, one in Goa and the other in Thana (Bombay). Sindan in Cutch is one of the earliest acquisitions of the Arabs in that island. Al Biladuri, Ibn Khurdadhbih and Ibn Hawkal mention

1 E. C. Sachau-Al Biruni's India, op. cit., p. 205.

2 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 84. "The towns of India are very numerous. Among them may be mentioned Mamhal, Kambaya, Subara, Asawal, Janaval, Sindan, Saimur, Jandur, Sandur, Rumala."

3 Narmada Shankar's, History of Surat, as quoted in Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. II, (Bombay), 1877, p. 299.

4 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 299.

5 Stanley's Barbosa, p. 67 as quoted in Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 299-300.

Kutch Sindan while Al Ishtakri places his Sindan (Konkan) somewhere near Surabaya (Surat). Al Idrisi also refers to Konkan Sindan while Abul Fida (1324) confuses Sindan with Sindabur in Goa. Ibn Batuta (1340) describes Sindabur as an Island.

Al Biladuri mentions that Fazl, during the reign of the Khalifah, Al Mamun (813-833) took Sindan in Cutch and sent a present of an elephant to Al Mamun.¹ Fazl built mosques in Sindan. But the town was taken back by the Hindus. Ibn Khurdadhbih includes Kutch Sindan and Broach in Sindh. He says Sindan is 72 miles from Kol. Al Masudi notices that emeralds are available in Cambay and Kutch Sindan and that these were in great demand in Makkah (Mecca)².

Ibn Hawkal mentions that Kutch Sindan is one of the cities of Hind but that it had a large Muslim population in his time. "There are Jama Masjids in Famhal, Sindan, Saimur and Kambaya all of which are strong and great cities and Muhammadan precepts are openly observed.³ At the end of the 11th century Arab travellers mention Sindan as a rich commercial town with a large export import trade.

Al Ishtakri mentions Sindan as one of the cities of Hind and that it is five days journey from Surabaya (Surat) and Saimur (Cheul). Al Idrisi also gives the location of Konkan Sindan as being one and a half miles from the sea and five days journey from Saimur. He says that Sindan "is a populous town and the people are noted for their industry and intelligence. They are rich and warlike in temper. The town is large and has extensive commerce both in exports and imports."⁴ Al Biruni states that Konkan Sindan is 200 miles from Debal and places it between Broach and Supara.⁵

Kutch Sindan (Sandhan) is not a very old town. In 820 A.D. a certain Fazl son of Mahan, a slave of the Samma house took the town and built a Jama Mosque. Whether

1 Elliot's History of India, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 129. "Mansur Son of Hatim related to me that Fazal son of Mahan, formerly a slave of the sons of Sama got into Sindan and subdued it. He then sent an elephant to Khalif Mamun and wrote to him and offered to him prayers in the Jama Masjid which he built there". He was succeeded by Muhammad son of Fazl who proceeded with 60 vessels against the Meds of Hind. He killed a great many of them and captured Kallari and returned to Sindan. But his brother Mahan had made himself master of Sindan. But the Indians were under the control of his brother. So they slew Mahan. The Indians afterwards made themselves masters of Sindan."

2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 521.

3 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 521 and Elliot's History, Vol. I, pp. 34-38.

4 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 27 and 30 and p. 84-85.

5 E. C. Sachau, Al Biruni's India, op. cit., p. 208-209. Also Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 66 (Sindan is 50 parasangs from Debal.).

Fazl is the same mentioned by Al Biladuri is not known but Al Biladuri refers to the Jama Mosque in Sindan as being built by the Arabs between 813 and 833 A.D. in the reign of Caliph Al Mamun. Fazl was succeeded by his son Muhammad who was ousted by his brother Mahan, while the former was fighting the Medhs in Saurashtra. In order to win the favour of the Caliph, Mohammad is said to have sent one of the longest teak ever seen. But the people of Sindan preferred Mohammad and slew Mahan. Shortly after this they asserted their independence but spared the mosque where the Muslims were allowed to pray on Fridays. In 912 A.D. Sindan is mentioned by Ibn Khurdadhbih as a place where teak and bamboos grew. Probably the teak came from Malabar. A few years later Ibn Hawkal mentions it as a strong and great city with a Jama Mosque where Mohammadans were respected and where mangoes, cocoanuts, lemons and rice grew in abundance.¹

14. Somnath Patan

Al Biruni is the first Arab writer to refer to Somnath Patan. He says, Somnath and Kutch are capitals of the Bawarij pirates. Somnath, he says is 56 miles from Debal, 200 miles from Anhilawad Patan and 180 miles from Broach. "The river Sarsati" (Saraswati), he says, "falls into the sea at an arrow shoot from Somnath". He refers to it as a centre of pilgrimage and an important place of Hindu worship.² He notices that "many religious practices are prevalent in Somnath such as walking on the heads, crawling on the sides or ankles, never touching the sacred ground with the soles of one's feet". Al Biruni continues to narrate the legendary origin of the idol of Somnath Patan. The Moon God loved Rohini the daughter of Prajapati which kindled the jealousy of her sisters. The father of Rohini cursed the Moon which spread the pallor of leprosy over the Moon's face. The Moon asked for forgiveness but Saint Prajapati unable to withdraw his curses, asked the Moon to worship the Linga for salvation. He set up a stone on the sea shore, less than three miles to the west of the mouth of the Saraswati and to the east of the site of the golden castle of Barwi, (Veraval), the residence of Krishna's brother Vasudeva. It was here that the Yadavas were routed and Krishna met with his death. The waxing and waning of the Moon caused the flood and the ebb which covered and uncovered the Lingam proving that the Moon was the servant of the Lingam who bathed it regularly. Al Biruni says that in his time the walls and fortifications of the temple were not more than a hundred years old. He says that the upper part of the Lingam was of massive and bejewelled gold. The chains on which hung the Lingam were also of heavy gold. These were carried away by Muhammad Ghazini. Al Biruni says, that in his time, a jug of water from the

1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. V, op. cit., p. 250.

2 E. C. Sachau, op. cit., p. 261.

Ganges and a bunch of flowers from Kashmir used to be brought daily to Somnath. The stone was believed to possess curing powers and all sea farers and mariners worshipped the stone. Al Biruni also says that Somnath was a great centre for trade with Sofala (Zanzibar) and China.¹

Ibni Asir also mentions Somnath Patan. He gives a detailed account of the attack of Somnath by Mohammad Ghazni in 1023. He says that when Mohammad reached Somnath he found a strong fortress "whose base was washed by the waves of the Sea". The temple treasury, he says contained many gold and silver idols and jewels worth two million dinars. The temple had under its control 10,000 villages". Al Kazwini also refers to the shores of Somnath.²

Somnath Patan, known as Prabhasa is perhaps one of the most ancient cities in the whole of India. No information is available regarding its foundation.³ The earliest inscriptional

1 E. C. Sachau, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 102-105 and Vol. I, p. 405.

2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p.523 and Al Kazwini, in Elliot's History, op. cit., p. 97-98.

3 Somnath is believed to have been called Bhairaveswar in Satya Yug, Shrivarnikeswar in Treta Yug, Shrigaleswar in Dwapur Yug and Somnath in Kali Yug. The temple, it is said, was first built in gold by Rama, in silver by Ravana, then of wood by Krishna and finally in stone by Bhimdev of Anhilawad Patan. It was later repaired by Kumarapala of Anhilawad Patan. In the Skanda Purana it is called Prabhasa or "The Shining" and the Prabhasa Khanda of Skanda Purana describes Prabhasa and why the country and town were called Prabhasa:

"Oh Goddess, of all the splendid places on earth, this is the most brilliant.

It is the first of places of pilgrimage, hence it is called Prabhasa. Oh Goddess, the brilliancy which the moon lost from the curse of Daksha,

Here it recovered, and therefore is this place called Prabhasa.

Oh wife, the place where the sun is always present

Is on that account called Prabhasa in the three worlds.

(See Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VIII, p. 608). Daksha's curse is reported with a slight variation by Al Biruni who says that it was Prajapati who cursed the moon. Prajapati means Lord of the People and can be a title. The golden Temple is said to have been erected by the Moon in gratitude to Shiva who absolved him partially from the curse of Daksha by allowing him to have his brilliance back for 15 days in the month while for the other 15 days, his brilliance was to wane (Gazetteer, Vol. VIII, p. 609). But there was already a Ling in the place which is probably the stone described in Forbes' Rasmala. "The small port and bay of Veraval lie on the South-Western Coast of Saurashtra in the country exceedingly rich, thickly wooded and in high cultivation. Upon a projection of land, forming the southern extremity of this bay, which with its bold and graceful curvature, and its golden sands kept in perpetual agitation stands the city of Dev Patan or Prabhasa. Gazetteer, Vol. VIII, p. 607. (See also Forbes', Ras Mala, Vol. I, op. cit., pp 74-75). Prabhasa stands where three rivers, Saraswathi, Hiranya and Kapila unite (sacred Triveni) before they join the boundless ocean and it was the chief town of the very rich country called Nagher extending from Porbunder to Madhavpur (Gazetteer, Vol. VIII, op. cit., p. 607). Patan is called Shiv Patan and Sompur.

reference to it seems to be in the Nasik cave inscription (which is repeated in the Karli cave inscription) that in 90 A.D. Usabhadata, the son-in-law of Kshatrapa Nahapana had met the marriage expenses of eight Brahmins at Prabhasa. But legends and traditions prove that Prabhasa existed much earlier than the 1st century A.D. It is referred to in the Kurma Purana and the Agni Purana, in the Mahabharata and other ancient treatises.¹

Prabhasa is intricately woven with the life of Krishna. It was at Prabhasa that Krishna, coming from Dwarka, had met Arjuna who had come to Prabhasa for pilgrimage. It is also at Prabhasa that Krishna asked the Yadavas to assemble in order to settle disputes amongst themselves. It was on the banks of the Saraswati, close to where the temple stands, that Krishna was mortally wounded by the arrow of a Bhil hunter, who it is said, mistook his feet to be those of a deer.

But in Al Biruni's time it was a place of Saivite worship. Cunningham, in this connection, gives an explanation for the change of worship at Prabhasa. "About 720 A.D. the Pahlava ruler Krishna, built a fort at Elapura, in which the diety was Shiva adorned with the crescent". Cunningham identifies Elapura as Somnath and he is of the opinion that Somnath became a place of Saivite worship in the 8th century A.D.²

The fame of Prabhasa was perhaps at first only because of its being on the sea shore and a place of commerce. Veraval, a few miles away was an important port. The rock at Somnath must have been a hindrance to the sailors and merchants coming to Veraval and Somnath. In order to guide them to their port the temple must have been built as light houses are built in modern times. Amongst the people of a more primitive culture an object of fear is worshipped and propitiated.

With the establishment of the Siva temple its fame rose as a pilgrim centre. It was also associated with Krishna. Ibn Asir says that in his time thousands of pilgrims visited it and a pilgrim tax levied at Bahuloda (either a settlement 20 miles south west of Dholka or alternatively Bhaloda on the Narmada situated on the frontier of the Solanki kingdom) used to fetch a revenue of 72 lakhs a year. The statement that 10,000 villages were attached to the temple is not corroborated by any grant or copper plate of the Solankis. The Solankis were Saivites and also Sun worshippers. During the Solanki rule in Anhilwad Patan, the temple must have become more famous. The port was the outlet of the Solanki kingdom before the Muslim raids became too frequent on the coasts of Saurashtra. Mulrajah the first Solanki ruler used to visit Somnath every week. The Valabhis of Vale, close to Somnath were also Saivites although none of their grants mention the Siva temple.

1 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 29.

2 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 268.

The wealth of the temple referred to by Al Biruni and Ibni Asir was not entirely due to the sanctity of the place. The maritime commerce of the place must have contributed substantially to its wealth. Al Biruni says that Somnath was famous as a commercial place and ships plied between Somnath and Sofala (Zanzibar) and China.¹ Merutunga confirms the glory of Somnath as a port when he narrates how Yogaraj the grandson of Vanaraja siezed and plundered ships off Prabhasa. This is in the 8th century A.D. when Arab raids had become quite frequent in the east. Even as late as the 13th century Marco Polo refers to its immense trade. But the antiquity of the trade of Somnath goes back to 8th century B.C. when it had connections with Mesopotamia. Prabhasa must have been a shipping station when India was the commercial and cultural heart of the old world. During the Mauryan period Girinagara was the capital of the western provinces of the Mauryan Empire and it continued to be the capital till the 6th century A.D. under the succeeding dynasties. Girinagara (Junagadh) is not far from Somnath Patan. While Girinagara was the administrative capital Prabhasa is mentioned as one of the leading ports of Saurashtra. When Muhammad Ghazini invaded Somnath it is said to have been in the hands of a local chief² subject to the paramount power of Anhilawad. In 961 A.D. Mulraj Solanki had established himself at Anhilawad and conquered Saurashtra. Ghazni attacked Somnath during Bhim Dev's reign (1022-1064).

Muhammad Ghazini looted Somnath several times. The work of restoration was undertaken by Kumarapala Solanki after 30 years and the work was completed in 2 years. Within 150 years of its restoration it was invaded again by Alagh (Ulugh) Khan (1300 A.D.). Restoration work was then undertaken by the Chudasama king, Khergar IV (1279-1333) of Junagadh, which is mentioned in his Girnar inscription. The town suffered three more attacks from Muzaffar 1390, Muhammad Begada, 1490 and Muzaffar, II 1530, all Gujarat Sultans. Muzaffar converted the temple into a mosque. The temple was restored several times over but the architecture in general remains what it was during Kumarapala's time.³

15. Barada

Barada, identified as Porbunder, is mentioned as early as 758 A.D. However, Arab attacks

1 E. C. Sachau, *op. cit.*, p. 405.

2 Muhammad wanted to fix his capital here because its trade was very large and Ceylon was called a dependency of Patan. (*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p.523, footnote 1. (The same story appears in connection with Anhilawad Patan). According to Ferishta, Muhammad wanted to fix his capital at Anhilawad Patan. But Rauzat-us Safa speaks of Mahmud's desire to make Somnath his capital. After its conquest by Muhammad Ghazni in 1026, a Muhammadan Governor was appointed at Somnath. Subsequently it was acquired by the Vajas, a sub-branch of the Rathod tribe. But Kumarapala Solanki is credited with restoring the temple.

3 A. S. Altekar, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-36.

on the great sea port of Vale (Balaba) 20 miles north of present Bhavnagar and the capital of the Valabhi kingdom had begun in the 7th century itself. Whether Barada of the Arabs is Balaba (Vale) or Porbunder is not fully ascertained.

In 758 A.D., a reference to Barada is made. " In the 4th year of his reign Calipha Jafar al Mansur (754-775), the second ruler of the House of Abbas appointed Hisham, Governor of Sindh. Hisham despatched a fleet to the coast of Barada under the command of Amru bin Jamal".¹ Tabari (838-932) and Ibni Asir also (1160-1232) state that another expedition was sent in 776 A.D. from Sindh and the Arab took the town of Barada. They were however attacked by diseases and a thousand Arabs died and the remaining troops were shipwrecked, while returning, on the coast of Persia. Kalifa Al Mahdi (775-785) who succeeded Al Mansur was, therefore, reluctant to extend the eastern limits of his kingdom.²

Al Biruni mentions that a Bania called Ranka asked the help of the Lord of Mansurah and the Viceroy of Sindh sent an Arab fleet against Balaba in 766 A.D. Whether Al Biruni is referring to Vale (Valabhi-Balaba) or Porbunder is not known. He places Balaba 90 miles south of Anhilawad Patan.³

Many settlements in the neighbourhood or at the site of Porbunder are mentioned by ancient writers. Hence it can be concluded that the coast of Porbunder had important old flourishing ports and towns during the Arab period.

Settlements mentioned in and about Barada are Kalapaka, Chhaya, Srinagar, Gumti Bardaxema etc.

Kalapaka is referred to in the copper plate grant of Dhruvasena II as the headquarter of a Pathaka in the 7th century A.D. Bhagavanlal Indrajai says that Kalapaka must be the present village of Kawalwad sixty miles north east of Porbunder. Legend has it that the king of Vale married a Kathi girl at Kalapaka. Kalapaka is not mentioned as a port nor is it identified as Porbunder.⁴ But if the legend be true it is possible that an important town in the vicinity of Porbunder was part of, or in alliance with, the Valabhi kingdom. Arab attacks on the Valabhi kingdom had started as early as 636 A.D. and it is possible that they knew the Porbunder coast well.

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- 1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 524. Also Elliot, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 444.
 - 2 Elliot's History of India, Vol. I, p. 444 (Appendix). Al Biladuri mentions an expedition from the Arabs of Sindh in 776 A.D. when Vale fell and Kutch-Sindan was taken. Elliot is of the opinion that Barada may be Jetwar or Barua of Biruni or Al Barace of Ptolemy. Alternately it may also be Gumti on the Porbunder coast.
 - 3 E. C. Sachau, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 7 (30 Yojanas). Also Gazetteer, Vol. I, p. 525.
 - 4 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 15.

Chhaya is mentioned as a very famous port at the beginning of the 1st century A.D. and doubtfully identified as Porbunder.¹ Srinagar is another town of note cited by early writers on the coast of Porbunder.² Burgess observes that Bardaxema of the Greeks identified by Yule as Porbunder must be the village of Bardeya situated not far from the present Srinagar in the vicinity of Porbunder.³ But none of these old ports and settlements bear any resemblance to Barada of the Arabs except Bardaxema.

Valabhi, on the other hand, was a famous port and city during the 7th and 8th centuries. Col. Todd was the first person to identify modern Vala with ancient Vale or Valabhi. It lies twenty miles north of Bhavnagar. Even now the town is locally known as Valen. As late as the 18th century it was still referred to as Valeh or Valha which is the corruption of Vallaba of Jain literature and Valabhi of Sanskrit literature. It is not now a port but the statements of Al Biruni and Al Biladuri that the Governor of Sindh sent a naval expedition to Vale and destroyed it is proof that Vale was a leading port in the 7th century. The creek which once united Valabhi with the sea has been choked with silt now.

Valabhi was founded by Bhattarka, the Gupta general who overthrew the imperial Viceroy, Parnadatta, in Girinagara, after the death of Skanda Gupta (482 A.D.). Previous to the foundation of Valabhi, the official capital of the province was Vamanasthali.⁴

Bhagavanlal Indrajai observes that the ruins of Valabhi do not show any sign of greatness in the 7th or 8th century. This may be due to the fact that stone buildings were introduced into Vale only in the 9th century.⁵ Huen Tsang visiting Valabhi in 640 A.D. says that its circumference was 6 miles and its population wealthy and prosperous. "There are a hundred merchants" he says, "whose wealth is above a million. The rarest merchandise from distant countries is found here in abundance."⁶ This is proof that the wealth of the town was

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- 1 See Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VIII, p. 403 and p. 629. Porbunder is identified also as Sudamapura founded by Krishna for Sudama.
 - 2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VIII, pp. 620-21. Elliot mentions that the ruins of Gumti are attractive enough to bear testimony to the ancient prosperity of the Barada coast Porbunder, he says, was the great Emporium on this coast and he identifies it as Gumti (Elliot, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 444). It was taken by the Arabs as early as 777 A.D.
 - 3 Edited by S. Mazumdar Shastri, Mc Crindle's Ancient India as described by Ptolemy, op. cit., p. 37. See also Mc Crindle's Ancient India as described by Ptolemy, London, (1885), p. 37.
 - 4 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VIII, p. 671 (modern Vanthali).
 - 5 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 39.
 - 6 Cunningham, Ancient Geography of India, op. cit., pp. 266-273. Cunningham records that in an inscription of the 5th century a reference is made of the "beautiful kingdom of Valabhadra" but whose local name was Balabhi. He identifies Huen Tsang's Falapi with Balabhi. In Huen Tsang's time the Peninsula of Saurashtra seems to have been called Balabhi. The old name Surashtra

due to its trade with distant lands. He describes Valabhi as a capital, a port and a centre of Buddhist, Jain and Saivite scholarship, comparable to Nalanda. Bhatrhari is said to have flourished in this city in Dhara Sena IV's time.¹ The city is described as a fortified place with gates and ramparts. The army was encamped and fairs were held in the spacious grounds outside the gates. Some of these grounds were turned into gardens, orchards and places for recreation.² In 760 the Valabhi kingdom is said to have extended north as far as Vadnagar, east as far as Godhra and west as far as Junagadh.

The prosperity of Valabhi was woven with that of the Valabhi kingdom and it lasted for about three centuries (480-790). Some attribute its fall to the invasion of the Scythians. But the city was still flourishing long after the Scythian invasion because Huen Tsang (640) refers to it as a great city. The Valabhi copper plates bring the dynasty up to 766 A.D. The destruction of Valabhi, therefore, must have taken place sometime after 766 A.D. Local legends attribute the fall to an earthquake and to an invasion by the Arabs of Sindh who were invited by Ranka, a disgruntled merchant Prince. The latter story seems to be the historical fact behind the destruction of Valabhi as both Al Biladuri and Al Biruni confirm it. However the Muslims were not able to establish full control over Valabhi is proved by the fact that when Mulrajah Solanki conquered Saurashtra in the 10th century there was still a local Rajput dynasty ruling in Valabhi. It is obvious that the early Arabs were not interested in territorial conquests as they were mostly traders. As the trade of the ports of Gujarat and Konkan fell into their hands the prosperity of the various kingdoms, which depended on trade with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, also dwindled. Barada or Balaba of the Arabs could be therefore, identified as Valabhi and not Porbunder.

16. Surbaya

Surbaya (Surat? or Supara?) is mentioned by Al Masudi, Al Ishtakri, Al Idrisi, Ibn Hawkal and Al Biruni as Surbaya, Surbara and Sufara. Al Masudi says that the people of

mentioned in the Mahabharata and the Puranas, by Pliny, Ptolemy and in the Periplus, according to Cunningham, was lost sometime in 319 A.D. He supports this by the statement in Karka's grant of 812 whose remote ancestor Govinda was said to be "the ornament of the Saurashtra kingdom" "which lost its appellation of Saurajya from the ruin fallen on it". Karka's father was called Lateswara which he identified as Valabhi because Huen Tsang refers to him as the Lord of Lata, Pe-lo-lo or northern Lara (corruption of Lata). Karka (812) was fifth in descent from Govinda, and hence the change in name must be about the 4th century (p. 267) when the Valabhis supplanted the Guptas in Saurashtra and the capital was changed from Girnar to Valabhi. The Valabhi era starts in 319 A.D. and it marks the extinction of the Gupta race in Saurashtra. This date probably marks the foundation of the city of Valabhi also.

¹ A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 40.

² A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 40.

Saimur, Subara and Tana (Thana) "speak the Lariya language so called from the sea which washes these countries".¹ Al Ishtakhri places it 4 days journey from Khambayat and notes it as a city of Hind. Ibn Hawkal says, the same about Surbara except that it is four farsakhs instead of four days journey from Khambhaya. This must be a mistake as he places his Surbara at the mouth of the Tapti, two miles from the sea. From Surbara to Kutch-Sindan (Sanjan) he says is ten days journey. Al Biruni seems to be referring to the Thana Sopara as he places his Subara at six farsakh from Sindan.² Al Idrisi places it in the second climate, a mile and a half from the sea and five days journey from Sindan. Most probably he is also referring to Sopara (north of Bombay).

Surbaya of the Arabs is identified as modern Surat and as Sopara (near Bassein). Perhaps the earlier writers are referring to Sopara where as others who mention it as being on the mouth of the Tapti are referring to Surat. Forbes mentions that Suryapura was an outlet of the Anhilwad Patan kingdom in the 11th and 12th centuries and that it may be modern Surat.³ There is also the mention of an ancient city called Karmantapura (Suryapur) 12 miles from Surat and another Kantaragrama (Katargam) but they bear no resemblance to Suryapura. It is almost certain that the Solanki Kingdom, even at the height of its power in the 11th and 12th centuries did not possess territories as far south as Sopara.

Most accounts agree that Surat is not an old town, although Sir T. Herbert identifies Muziris of Ptolemy as Surat and Ogilby identifies it with Ptolemy's Syrastrène, and others as Sowrata of Huen Tsang, described by him as "a trading city on the western shore near Gujarat". However, Reinaud, believes that all these refer to the Sorath coast of Saurashtra and this view is now more or less accepted. Persian and Arab writers do not refer to Surat till the 11th and 12th centuries. Abbe Reynal mentions that Surat was "nothing more than a mean hamlet" in the beginning of the 13th century.⁴ Local traditions attribute the founding of Surat to one Gopi, a rich merchant who persuaded other merchants to settle in Surat in the 15th century. Gopi's date is believed to be 1496-1521. Gopipura in Surat was named after him and the Rani Talav and Rani Chakla after his wife Rani. It was Gopi who gave it the name of Surajpur or Suryapur, the city of the Sun, which was changed to Surat by the Sultan of Gujarat who, not liking the purely Hindu name, changed it slightly to "agree with the chapters of the Koran and called it Surat". However, Duarte Barbosa writing in 1514 mentions Surat

1 Elliot's History, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 24. Also Gazetteer, Vol. I, p. 523.

2 E. C. Sachau, op. cit., p. 209.

3 Forbes' Rasmala, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 235.

4 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 69. Footnote (1).

as "a city of very great trade in all classes of merchandise, a very important sea port yielding a very large revenue to the king and frequented by many ships from Malabar and other ports". Duarte Barbosa says that Surat is 20 leagues south of the river of Raval (Rander). Most probably he mistook Rander to be on the Narbada. If Surat was such a great city in Duarte Barbosa's time it could not have been founded by Gopi in 1520.¹

Al Ishtakhri's mention of Surbaya is in the 10th century (951) and hence the town must have been of some importance at that time. Gopi's town was perhaps built on the site of an older town which was of some importance atleast in the 10th century and later declined because Abbe Reynal mentions it as a mean hamlet in the 13th century. Surat was at the height of its power in the 16th and 17th centuries despite the fact that the first burning of Surat by the Portuguese took place in 1512 and it had fallen into the hands of rival Mirzas by 1572. The fort was rebuilt by the Sultan of Gujarat in 1540-46 and Ferishta praises the fort. Whether Surbaya of the Arabs is modern Surat cannot be conclusively established.

17. Janawal

Janawal is mentioned by Idrisi. He also mentions Hanawal. These are identified as Viramgam or Jhalawar. No detail of the town or its situation is given except that Duluka, Hanawal (Janawal, Jhalawar or Viramgam) and Asawal are the main trading centres between Broach and Anhilwad Patan and that the land is particularly rich in cocoanuts and bamboo.

Viramgam is not an old town although the low lands of Jhalawar command the route from Gujarat to Saurashtra and several old trading centres and fortresses have been in existence here right from the ancient times. There is evidence that Viramgam existed atleast as a suburb of an older town Kangavati at the close of the 11th century because Minal Devi, mother of Sidhraj Solanki (1094-1143) built the Mansar lake. Sidhraj added several shrines and temples to the suburb. Bird's history of Gujarat refers to Viramgam as a suburb of Kangavati and that Kangavati itself was built on the site of a still older town called Karaktal. Viramgam became more important as the Kadva Kanbis who under Aurangzeb became Desais of Jhalawar, rose in power and established themselves in Viramgam. The Desais were powerful enough to maintain their independence till 1530, when it was annexed by the Gujarat Sultans. Viramgam owes its importance to its being the main gateway to Saurashtra from mainland Gujarat.²

1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 70-71.

2 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol IV, op. cit., p. 354-356. Also Footnote 2 on p. 354.

18. Dwarka

Al Biladuri mentions an expedition sent against the Medhs of Mali (Saurashtra) by the Viceroy of Sindh as they were obstructing the Arab traders at Bet Dwarka.

Dvaravati or Dwarka is a very ancient town. It is said to have been founded by Sri Krishna who, pursued by Jarasandha of Magadha, fled from Mathura to Saurashtra and founded the town.¹ The exact date of its foundation can be ascertained only if the date of Mahabharata is undisputedly accepted. Dwarka is described in detail in the Mahabharata. The Baraka of Arrian is identified as Dwarka by Yule.

The Puranas and the Mahabharata mention the destruction of the original Dwarka by the encroaching sea. Some of the Jain authors also refer to this event. There is ample geological evidence to show that changes in the coast of Saurashtra have taken place in historical times. Vale, a port in the Valabhi period, is now 20 miles north of Bhavnagar. Dvip (Diu) was connected to the mainland in the 8th century B.C. but is now an island.²

Dwarka now stands on the right bank of the Gomti creek which is traditionally believed to be a river called Mul Gomti. The present Dwarka temple of Dwarkanath called Trilok Sunder is said to have been built by Krishna's grandson Vajranabh. Vajranabh was succeeded by his cousin Shatvir, during whose time the original people of the place, the Kalas, whom Krishna had conquered, rose in rebellion and re-established their authority. No written record of this reconquest is available but it is believed to be somewhere in the 2nd century A.D. Dwarka and Okhamandal were later subjected to another invasion from Sukkur Belim the Syrian, for the Kalas seem to have had to reconquer the territory. They were in possession of Okhamandal again in the 6th century. The Kalas by this time called themselves Vaghers. Akhiraji in the 6th century seems to have conquered them again. Kanak Sen of the same dynasty founded the city of Kanakpuri, modern Vasai, which became a famous trade centre of Okhamandal. His brother Anantdev established himself at Dwarka. At this time a branch of the Chavotakas attacked Dwarka and made themselves prosperous by levying taxes on pilgrims going to Dwarka. The next clan of Rajputs to come to Dwarka were the Rathods. Saurashtra was finally absorbed into the Anhilwad Patan Kingdom during the period of Sidhraj Solanki although local tribes remained powerful.³ The Arabs mention the Medhs as being powerful in Dwarka in the 9th Century. The fact that Dwarka escaped the notice of Mohammad Ghazni in the 11th century shows that it was not a very important centre of pilgrimage or trade at that time.

1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency Vol. VIII, op. cit., p. 587.

2 A. S. Altekar, op. cit., p. 27.

3 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VIII, op. cit., p. 589-90.

No reference to it is made by the later Arab travellers. It was the Gujarat Sultan Muhammad Begada (1472-1513) who sent an expedition to Dwarka and subjugated it.

19. Piram

Piram is mentioned by Al Idrisi as Aubkin. He says it is 2½ days journey from Khambaya and two more days journey from Aubkin to Debal in Sindh.

Piram became important when the trade of Cambay passed into the hands of the Arabs. It was a stopping place for ships plying between mainland Gujarat and Saurashtra.

VI. About the Products of Gujarat

In the middle of the 9th century Jurz is mentioned as having mines of gold and silver. Jurz as explained previously was in all probability Rajasthan. Abu Zaid mentions (916) that pearls were held in high esteem in Jurz. He says that the dinars of Sindh were the current coin in the Gujarat ports and emeralds were imported from Egypt and mounted on seals.¹

Ibn Khurdadhbih says teak wood and bamboo were the products of Konkan Sindan. Al Masudi also refers to the "aloe wood of the purest quality brought by the Hind traders to the fair at Multan".²

Ibn Hawkal mentions that mangoes, cocoanuts, lemons and rice were produced in abundance, that honey could be had in great quantities but there were no date palms in the country comprising Famhal, (Anhilawad) Sindan, Saimur and Kambaya.³

Abdullah Wassaf mentions the thriving trade of Cambay in horses which came from Makran and the islands of the Persian gulf.⁴ Al Biruni says. the country between Debal and Cutch and from Cutch to Somnath Patan is very rich producing gum, myrrh and balm. The people he says are pirates and attack Arab traders.

Al Idrisi says that the people of Mamhal (Anhilawad) had many horses and camels. "One of the peculiarities of Anhilawad", he says, "is that all journeys are made, all merchandise is carried, in bullock wagons". He continues that the land between Debal and Khambaya is a desert where the Medhs grazed their flocks. "Khambaya" he mentions is "rich in wheat, rice and the mountains yield bamboo". "At Sobara", he notices "the Indians fished for pearls and Bara a small island off Sobara produced cocoanuts" (Sobara probably is Sopara or

1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 528. Also Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 11.

2 Elliot's History, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 23.

3 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 38.

4 Elliot's History, Vol. III, p. 33.

Surbaya). Sindan according to Al Idrisi had cocoa palm, ratan and bamboo. "Saimur had many cocoanut palms, henna and a number of aromatic plants. The hills of Thana yielded bamboo pith". The inhabitants of Broach he says are rich.¹

Ibn Hawkal says that "villages lay close to one another from Khambaya to Saimur and much land was under cultivation". However he mentions the land between Mansurah, Bania and Anhilawad as a desert.² At the end of the 11th century, the trade of Gujarat is described as being "brisk". Merchandise from every country found its way to the ports of Gujarat whose local products were exported all over the East". The Rashtrakuta dominion, says the Arab travellers was well peopled, rich and very fertile. The people were generally vegetarians and their daily diet consisted of rice, peas, beans, lentils and vegetables. Al Idrisi, however, mentions that some Indians are meat eaters while Al Masudi says that the higher classes "who wore the baldric yellow thread" abstained from meat.

"The Balhara king", says Al Idrisi "wore a crown of gold and dress of rich silk and gold. The women attending on him also wore rich clothes. They had rings of gold and silver on their hands and feet and their hair in curls".³

Al Kazwini, (1236) mostly working on 10th and 11th century material, says that Saimur had aloes and that Somnath is a celebrated city.

Rashid-ud-din (1300) states that Gujarat is a large country within which are Khambaya, Somnath, Konkan and Thana. Vines yield twice a year, and the "strength of the soil is such that cotton grows like willow and produces for 10 years". He also refers to the betel leaf to which he and other Arab writers attribute strange medicinal qualities. The betel leaf, says Rashid-ud-din, is produced in the country up to Malabar. "The exports from Gujarat coasts", he says "are sugar which is the staple product of Malwa". He further describes Gujarat as a flourishing country "with no less than 80,000 cities, villages and hamlets, the people happy, the soil rich, growing in the four seasons of the year seventy varieties of roses. Two harvests repaid the husbandman, the earlier crop refreshed by the dew and the later enriched by the rain".⁴

1 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 79, 85, and 87. "From Debal to Mamhal and Kambaya, the country is nothing but a marine strand, without habitations and almost without water; consequently, it is impassable for travellers" (p. 79). Khambaya, however, he mentions later (pp. 84-85) as being very rich in wheat and rice, well supplied with water, where merchandise from every country find their way.

2 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 39.

3 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 87.

4 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 67.

Rashid-ud-din's account is largely a translation of the work of Al Biruni.

VII. Arab Impressions about Gujarat, its People, Customs and Traditions

Umar who first sent an expedition to Thana and Broach in 636 A.D. is said to have disliked India. According to Al Masudi, Umar's philosopher had made the Khalif believe that "India was a remote country peopled by rebellious infidels". When Umar sent his first Viceroy to Hind he is said to have told him "remember I am sending you to Al Hind, the field of the fields of enemy". Another report by the Viceroy of the third Khalif, Usman, (643-655) was also discouraging. He said that "its water is scarce, its fruits are poor and its robbers bold.¹ However, in their intercourse with India, they were struck by the toleration shown to Islam by the Indian rulers and people. This they say was specially so in the towns of the Balhara Kingdom where, besides free mosques and assemblies, Musalman magistrates were appointed to decide their own cases. "Not only the Balharas but also the Hindus of Cutch Sindan", according to Al Biruni, "allowed the Muslims to offer prayers on Fridays in the assembly mosques".

Suleiman the Merchant says that the chief religion of Gujarat is Buddhism which was introduced as far as China. He says that "the people believed in rebirth and suttee and self torture is common". "As a rule" he says "the dead are burnt". "The people of India" he continues, "abstains from wine and vinegar as they do not like it". "Among their chiefs, the desire for conquest is not usually the cause of war".²

Abu Zaid (916) describes the Brahmins "as being devoted to science and religion. Among them are great poets who live at the courts of kings, astronomers, philosophers, diviners and drivers of omens from the flight of crows". "These observations are especially applicable to Kanauj a large country forming the Empire of Jurz". The people believe in rebirth. "When they grow old they beg of their family to throw them into the fire or drown them in water". "The Hindu women", he says, "does not observe Purdah". "Even wives of kings mix freely with the men and attend courts and places of public resort unveiled".³ Ibn Khurdadhbih says that in his time there were atleast 42 religious sects in India "part of whom believe in the prophet Muhammad and part deny him". Ibn Khurdadhbih divides the Hindus into seven classes.

The first he says are the Thakarias or Thakurs from whom kings are chosen (Sabkufria).

1 Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 69. Footnote 6. Also Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 116.
 2 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
 3 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 9-11.

The second, the Brahmins who do not take liquor.

The third, the Kshatriyas (Kataria) "who drink not more than three cups of wine".

In the fourth class he places the Sudariyas or Shudras who are husbandmen by profession.

In the fifth class come the Baisurs or Vsyas who are artificers and domestic servants.

The sixth and seventh classes are the Sandalas or Chandalas and Lahuds who are menials.

The Lahud women "adorn themselves and their men are fond of amusements and games of skill".

"Wine", he says, "is lawful or unlawful both amongst the kings and the people, that is, it was used or not used though there is no religious rule forbidding it".¹

Al Masudi says, "that there was a general belief that India was the home of wisdom and order. "The Hindus chose as their king, Brahma who ruled for 366 years. "His descendants were Brahmins and they are honoured as the illustrious caste. They abstain from flesh of animals". He continues that "the Hindu kings succeed to the throne only after the age of 40. They do not appear in public except on certain distant intervals and then only for the inspection of state affairs". "Royalty is limited to one family. The same is the case with the families of wazirs, kazis and other high officers. They are all hereditary and never changed or altered".²

Al Idrisi mentions that "the Indians are naturally inclined to justice and in their actions never depart from it. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are well known and they are famous for these qualities that people flock to their country and add to its prosperity". Illustrating this point he says "that when a man has a right to demand anything of another he has only to draw a circle on the ground and ask his debtor to enter into it which the latter never fails to do and the debtor cannot leave this circle without satisfying his creditor or obtaining the remissions of the debt".³ Other Arab writers of the 12th century mention that there was no danger to life and property in Gujarat, though the country was at its lowest ebb by that time. Despite the fact that the people were divided into various sects and creeds they lived amicably. Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Islam existed side by side contributing to the valuable culture of Gujarat.

The only dynasty which seem to have impressed the early Arab writers is that of the Balharas of Malkhet. The Arabs knew the Rashtrakutas by their title of Valabha

1 Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

2 Elliot's History, Vol. I, pp. 19-20.

3 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 88.

(Beloved). Govinda III who established the independent branch of the Rashtrakutas in Gujarat was known by the title of Prithvi Valabha and his successor as Amoghavarsha Valabha Skanda. Suleiman the Merchant says that the title Balhara is taken by all kings of this dynasty.¹ The Arabs believed in the authority of the Rashtrakutas in Gujarat to be undisputed that Idrisi says that the Balhara is king of kings.² Ibn Hawkal says that the city in which the Balhara resides is Mankir and it has an extensive territory.³ Masudi refers to Mankir as "the great centre" in India.⁴ Dr. Bandarkar is of the opinion that the Balharas referred to by the Arabs may be the Valabhis but the Valabhi kingdom came to an end in 766 and it is not likely that the Arab travellers of the 9th and 10th centuries would refer to it as a great kingdom and its ruler as one of the most powerful in Hind and the greatest in Gujarat. Al Idrisi says "that Kambaya, Subara and Saimur were well known ports of the west coast. The last named belongs to the king called Balhara." His kingdom "is vast, well peopled, commercial and fertile. It pays heavy taxes so that the king is immensely rich. Many aromatics and perfumes are produced in this country".⁵ Ibn Khurdadhbih mentions the Balhara king as the greatest king of India whose name imports the king of kings. He wears a ring in which is inscribed the following sentence "what is begun with resolution ends with success". After the Balhara, he names the king of Tapan (Punjab) the king of Jaba and as fourth the king of Jurz.⁶

The Arabs found great favour with the Balharas. In the Balhara country their property was safe and secure, theft and robbery not known. Commerce was encouraged, foreigners were treated with consideration and respect and they chose Arab magistrates to settle disputes amongst the Muslims according to Muslim law. The Arabs have also preserved correctly the names of the three dynasties of Anhilwad Patan namely Chapa or Chaura (Chapotakas or Chavdas 720-956), Solankis or Chalukyas (961-1242) and the Vaghelas (1242-1297).

Fourth in importance to the Balharas, the Arabs place the king of Jurz (Rajasthan, probably the Gurjaras of Bhinmal).

The king of Jurz according to Suleiman the Merchant, "hated Muslims but acknowledged that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of kings".

Jurz, Suleiman says was a "tongue of land" but the king maintained "a large force and he had the best cavalry in the whole of India. His territories he says are rich and abounded in

1 Elliot's History, Vol. I, pp. 3-4.

2 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 75.

3 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 34.

4 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 19

5 Elliot's History, Vol. I, pp. 85-86.

6 Elliot's History, Vol. I, p. 13.

horses and camels. In his realm exchanges are carried on in gold and silver dust, of which metal, mines were said to be worked".¹

From the above account it is seen that Arab references to Gujarat do not give a complete picture of the Geography of Gujarat during the period of Arab contact with India. In spite of the prosperous trade which the Indian ports had with the Arab country, there is scarcely any record of the total value of trade of each port, the details of the products that entered this trade, nor the routes chosen by Arab traders. There is also not enough detail given of the country, its physical aspect, its people, the lay out of its towns, villages, the land, transport available at the time, the nature of industries, agriculture etc. Despite all these shortcomings the Arab account do give some idea of the continuity of the trade of the western ports of India with the ancient centres of civilisation namely the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea lands.

All maps accompanying this paper are drawn by G. Y. Kanitkar, draughtsman, Department of Geography

¹ Elliot's History, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

APPENDIX I

THE GENEALOGY OF SOME OF THE DYNASTIES OF GUJARAT

The Western Kshatrapas

I

Nahapana A.D. 100-120 ? Kshatrapa

II

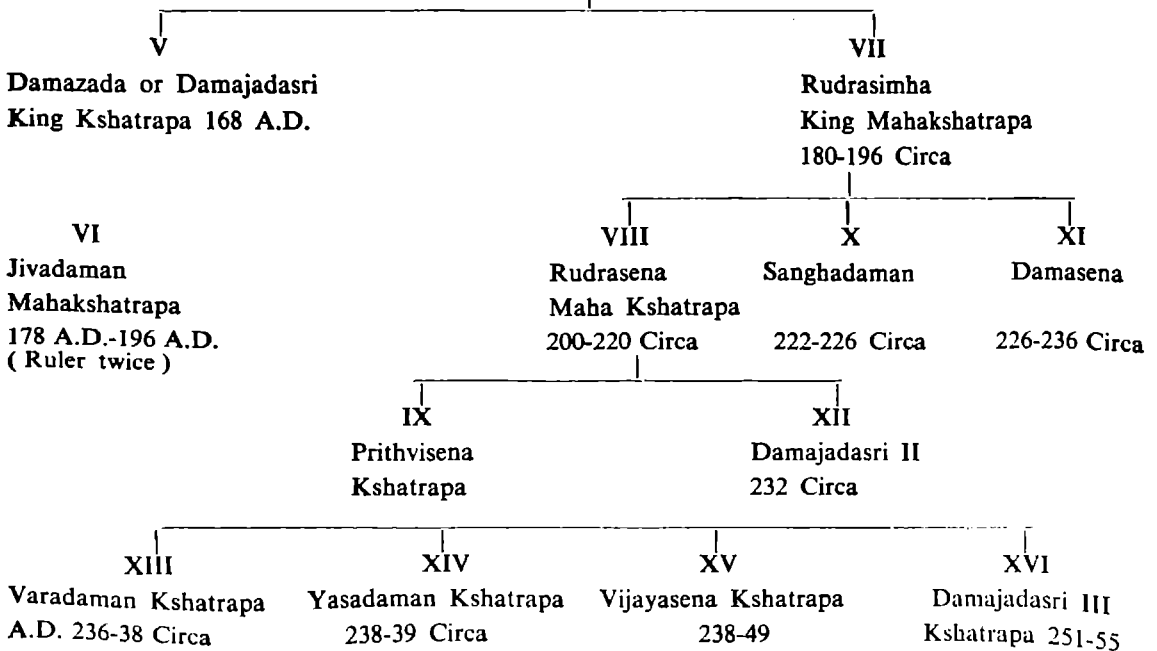
Chashtana, son of Zambotka King Mahakshatrapa
100-130 A.D.

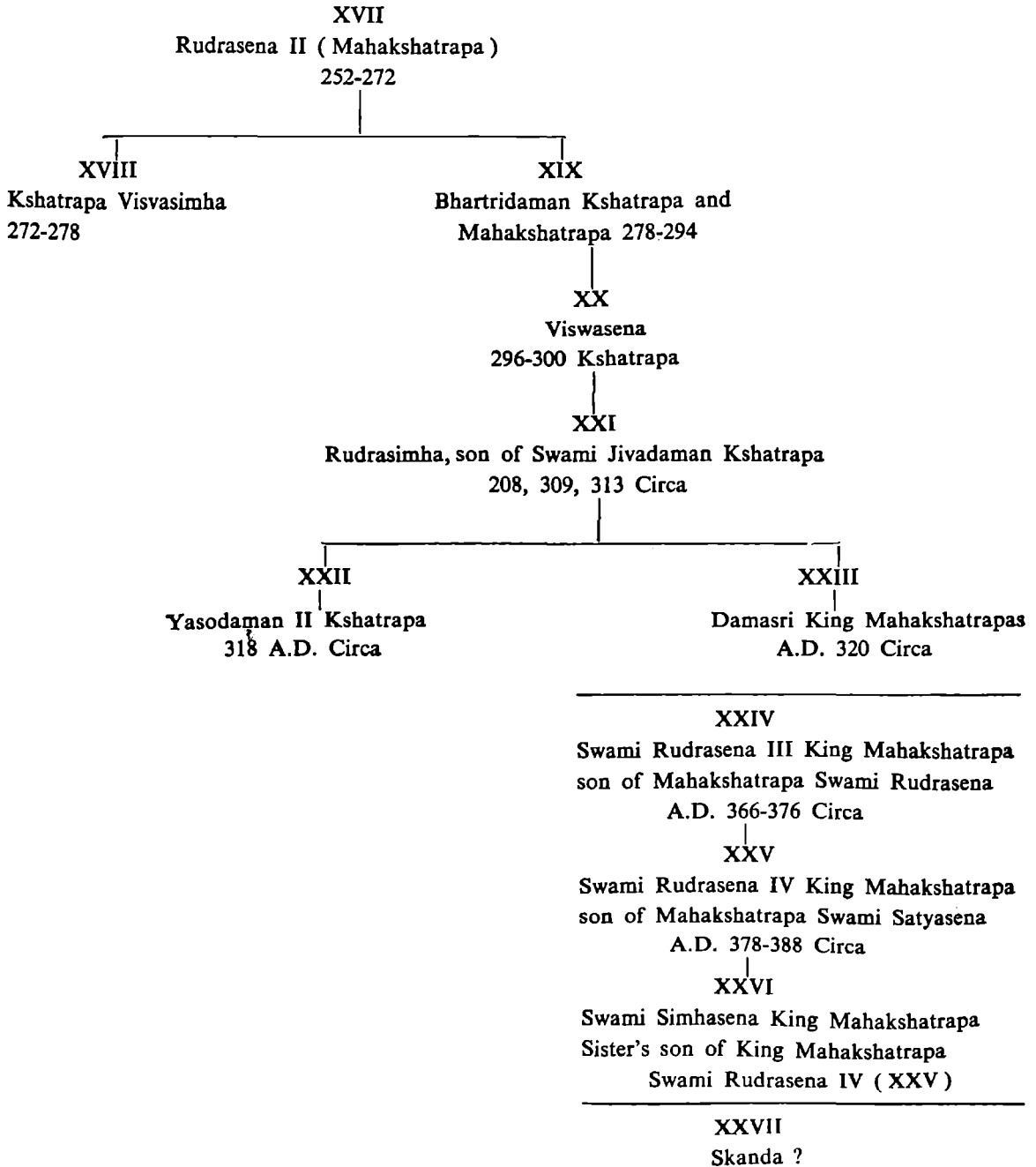
III

Jayadaman King Kshatrapa
130-140 A.D.

IV

Rudradadam Mahakshatrapa
143-158





The Traikutakas

250-450 A.D.

The Guptas

Gupta era begins A.D. 319 320 A.D. is 1st Gupta

Gupta A.D. 319-322

Petty N. W. P. Chief

Ghatotkacha Petty N. W. P. Chief.

332-40

Chandragupta I 349-369

Powerful N. W. P. Chief

Samudragupta 370-395

Great N. W. P. Sovereign

Chandragupta II 396-415

Conqueror of Malwa, Gujarat.

Kumaragupta 416-453

Rules Gujarat and Kathiawad

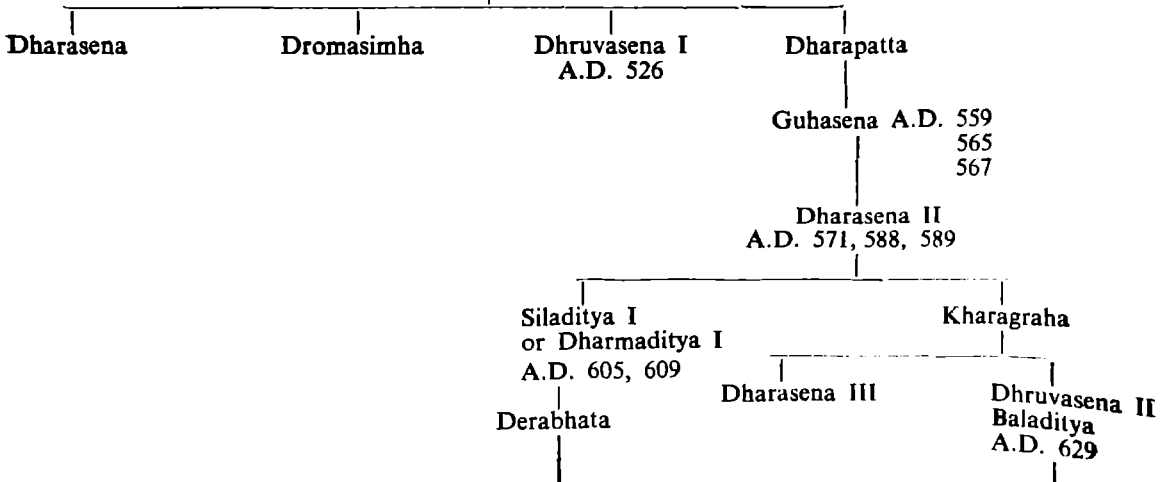
Skandagupta 454-470

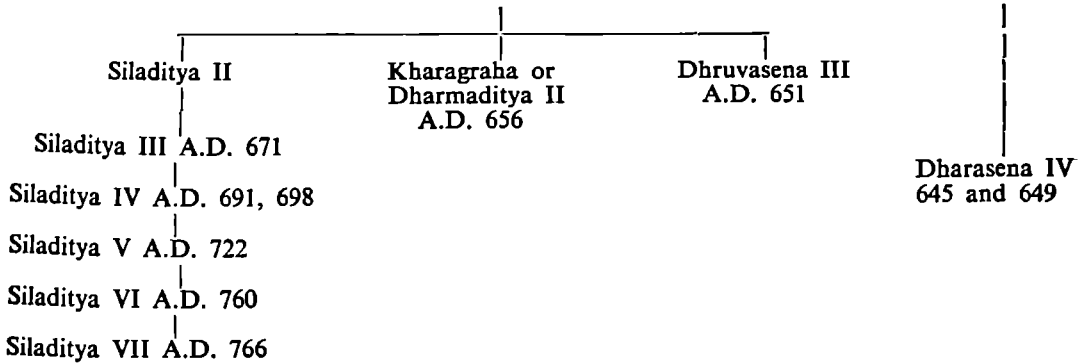
Rules Gujarat, Kathiawad and Kutch.

The Valabhis

Bhatarka

A.D. 500



**The Mihiras**

470-900 A.D.

The Chalukyas

634-740

Jayasimha Varman 666-693

Sryasraya (brother)

669-691 (Heir apparent)

Mangalarajah son of Jayasimhavarman

698-731

The Gurjaras

Dadda A.D. 580

Jayabhata I A.D. 605

Dadda II 633 A.D.

Jayabhata II 655 A.D.

Dadda III 680 A.D.

Jayabhata III 704-734 A.D.

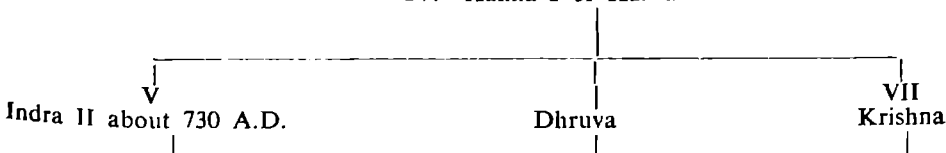
The Rashtrakutas

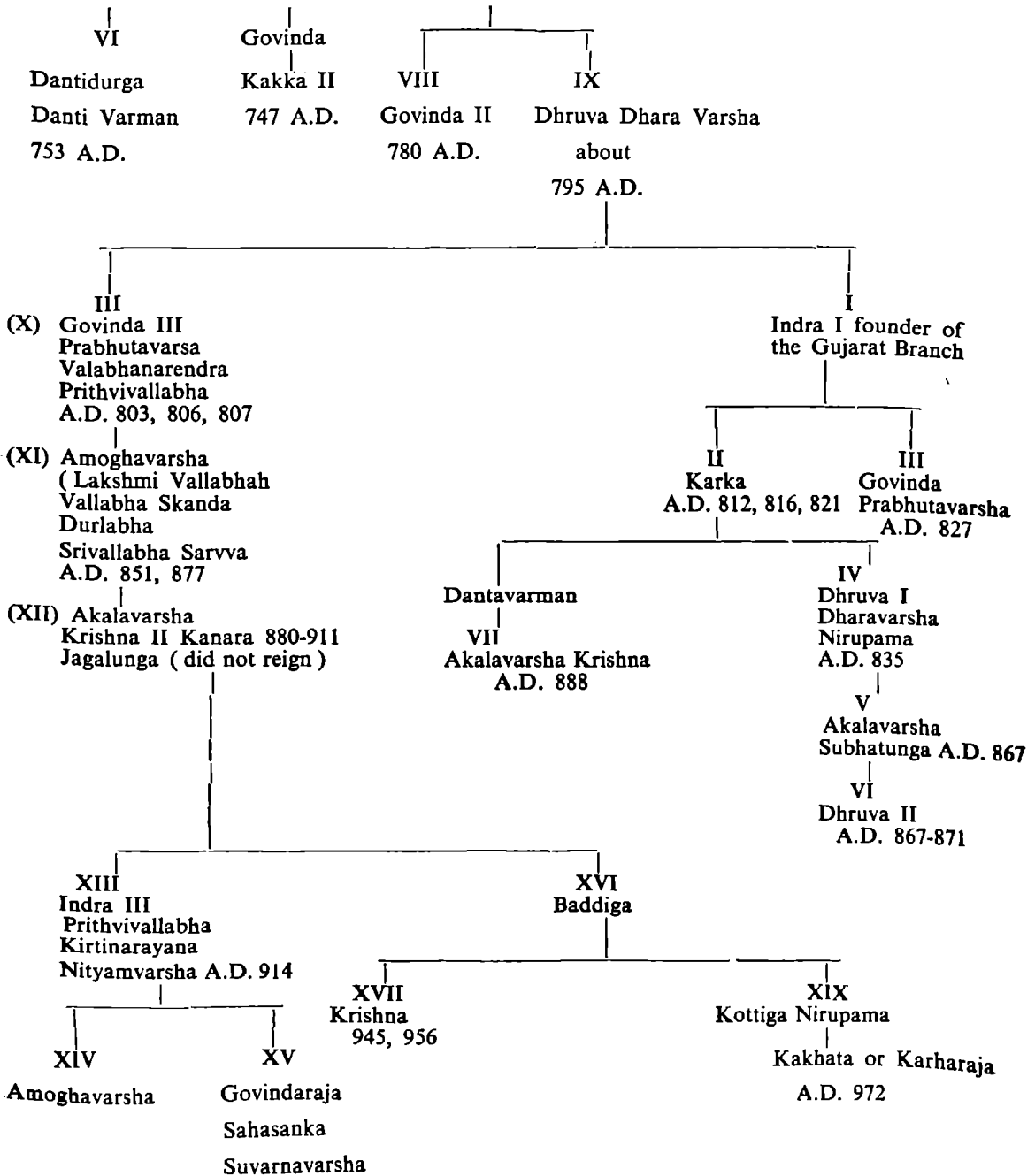
I. Dantivarman about 630 A.D.

II. Indra I about 655 A.D.

III. Govinda I about 680 A.D.

IV. Kakka I or Karka I about 705 A.D.



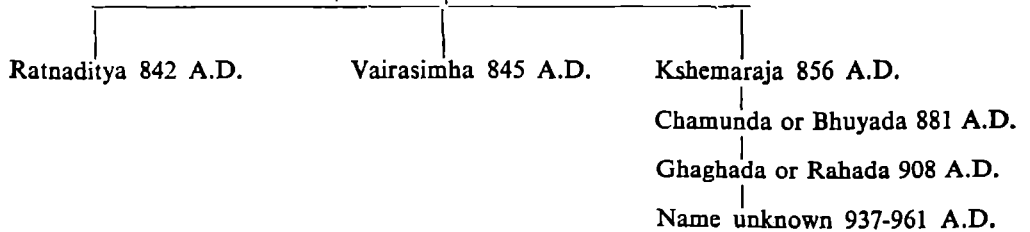


The Chavadas of Anhilawad Patan

Vanaraja born 720, succeeded 765, died 780

Interval of 26 years

Yogaraja A.D. 806-841

**The Chalukyas or the Solankis**

961-1243

The Vaghelas

1219-1304

Dhavala married

Kumarapala Solanki's aunt (A.D. 1160)

Arnoraja 1170

founder of Vaghela

Lavanaprasada 1200 A.D.

Chief of Dholka

Viradhavala 1233-1238

Chief of Dholka

Visaladeva 1243-1261

King of Anhilawada

Arjundeve 1262-1274

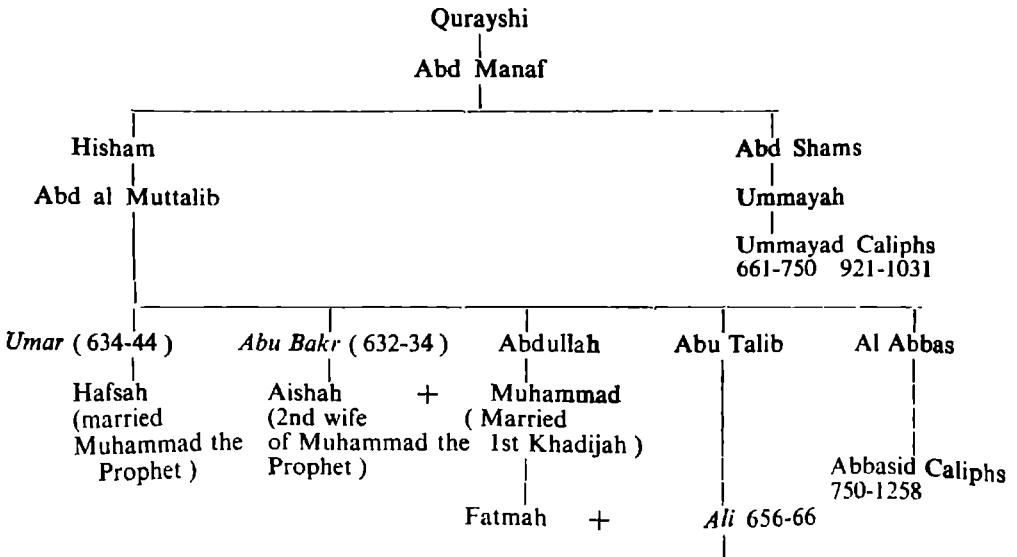
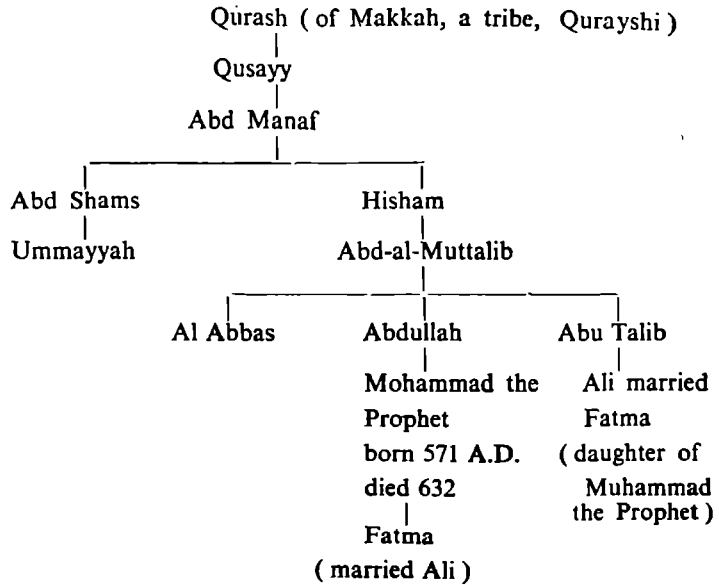
Sarangadeva 1274-1295

Karnadeva or Ghelo 1296-1304

Source : Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. I.

APPENDIX II

The Rise of Islam



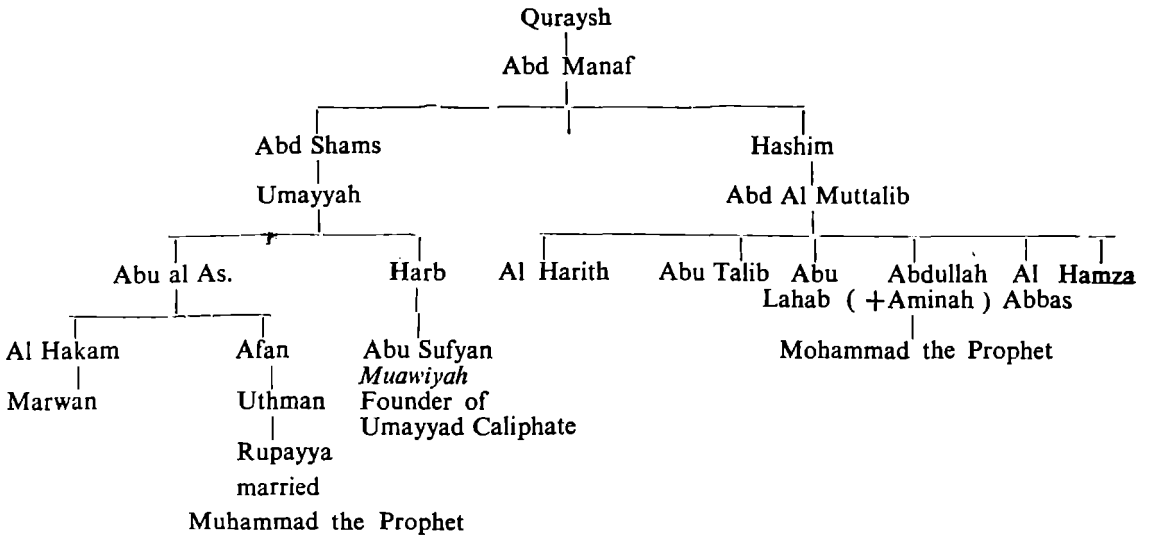
Uthman (644-56)
 |
 Rupayyah
 (married Mohammad
 the prophet)

Al Hasan
 Al Husayn
 |
 The Imams
 |
 Fatmid Caliphs.

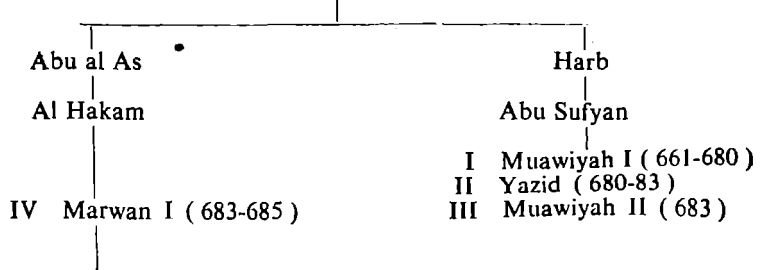
Note:— The First 4 Caliphs were:—

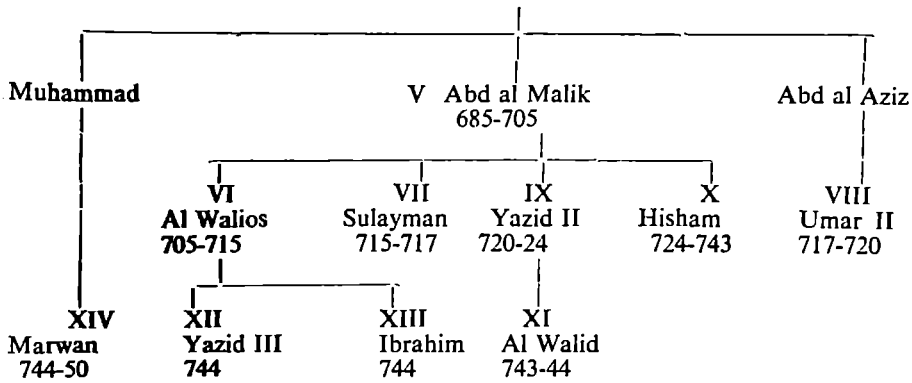
Abu Bakr 632-634
 Umar 634-644
 Uthman 644-656
 Ali 656-661.

The Umayyad Dynasty

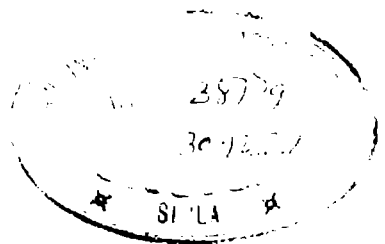
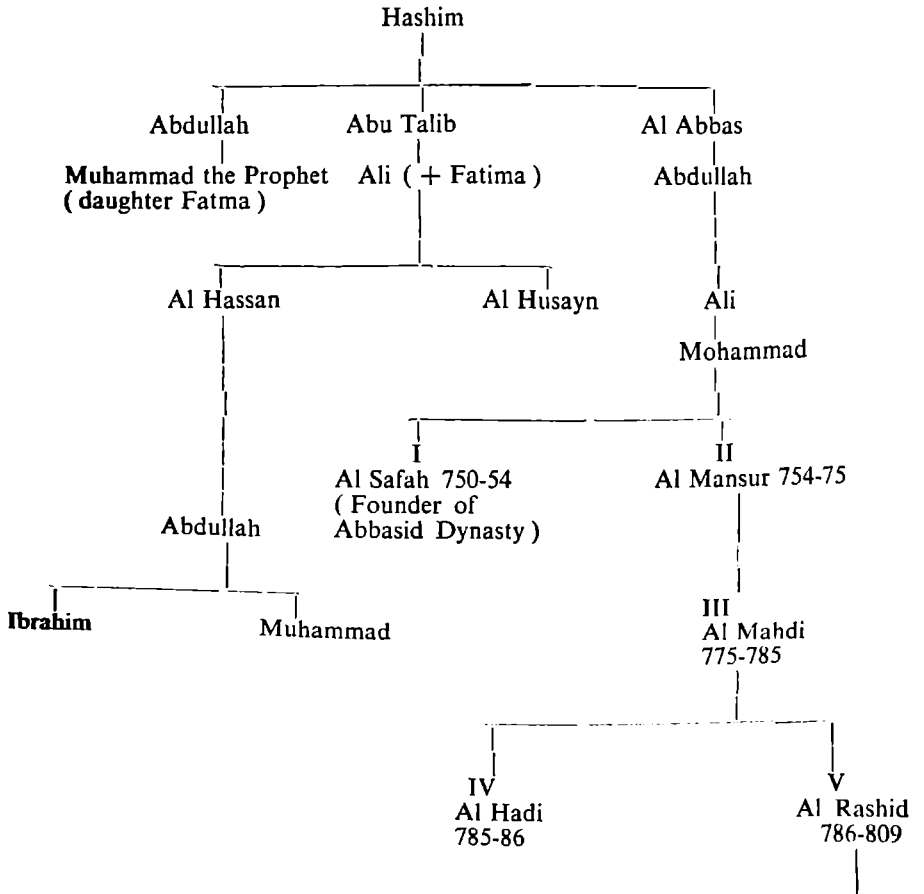


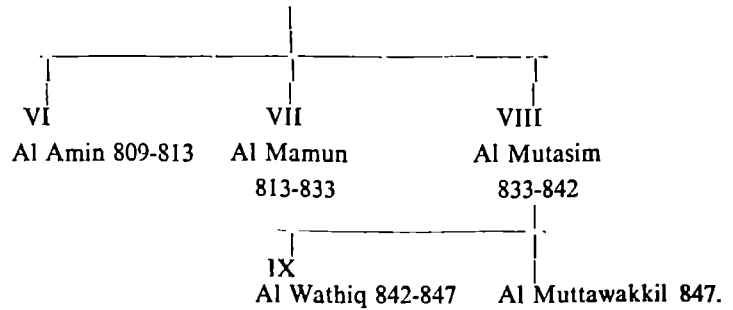
Umayyah (The Umayyads)





Abbasid Dynasty





The 37th Caliph of the Abbasid dynasty was Al Mutasim (1258) after which the Turkish **Mongols** finally took over. From the period of Al Wathiq (842-847) the Abbasid dynasty was on the decline.

Source Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs (Macmillan), 5th edition, 1951.



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