

THE REHLA OF IBN BATTŪTA

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(INDIA, MALDIVE ISLANDS AND CEYLON)

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

By

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1976

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Arrival</i> |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Saturday | |
| 2 Shawwāl, 732 | He resumed his journey passing through Konia and Smyrna. |
| 27 June, 1332 | |
| Wednesday | He performed the 'Id-ul-Az̄hā prayer at Manisa. |
| 10 Dhilhijja, 732 | |
| 2 September, 1332 | |
| Tuesday | He resumed his journey and proceeded to Sinope and then to Crimea. |
| 11 Dhilhijja, 732 | |
| 3 September, 1332 | |
| Saturday | He came to Bulghār on the Volga. |
| 28 Ramaḍān, 733 | |
| 12 June, 1333 | |
| Tuesday | He performed the 'Id-ul-Fitr prayer in the royal camp shortly after leaving Bulghār. |
| 1 Shawwāl, 733 | |
| 15 June, 1333 | |
| Wednesday | He arrived at Astrakhan whence he proceeded to Constantinople. Then travelling on the Volga he came to Sarā and visited Khwārizm, Bukhārā and Nakshshab where he met Tar-mashīrin. Then passing through Samarqand and Tirmidh he entered the province of Khurāsān and visited Balkh, Herāt, Jām, Meshhed, Nishāpūr and Bistām, whence he turned in the direction of India journeying via Qundūz, Baghlān, Ghaznī and Kābul in modern Afghanistan. |
| 2 Shawwāl, 733 | |
| 16 June, 1333 | |
| Saturday | He arrived at the Indus |
| 30 Dhilhijja, 733 ¹ | |
| 11 September, 1333 | |
| Sunday | He crossed the Indus. See p. 1, <i>infra</i> . |
| 1 Muḥarram, 734 ² | |
| 12 September, 1333 | |
| Tuesday | He arrived at Janānī. See p. 6, <i>infra</i> . |
| 3 Muḥarram, 734 | |
| 14 September, 1333 | |
| Saturday | He reached Sivistān. See p. 6, <i>infra</i> . |
| 7 Muḥarram, 734 | |
| 18 September, 1333 | |
| Thursday | He voyaged with 'Alā-ul-mulk down the Indus till he arrived at the city of Lāhari. See p. 10, <i>infra</i> . |
| 19 Muḥarram, 734 | |
| 30 September, 1333 | |

¹ Def. et Sang., III, p. 93.

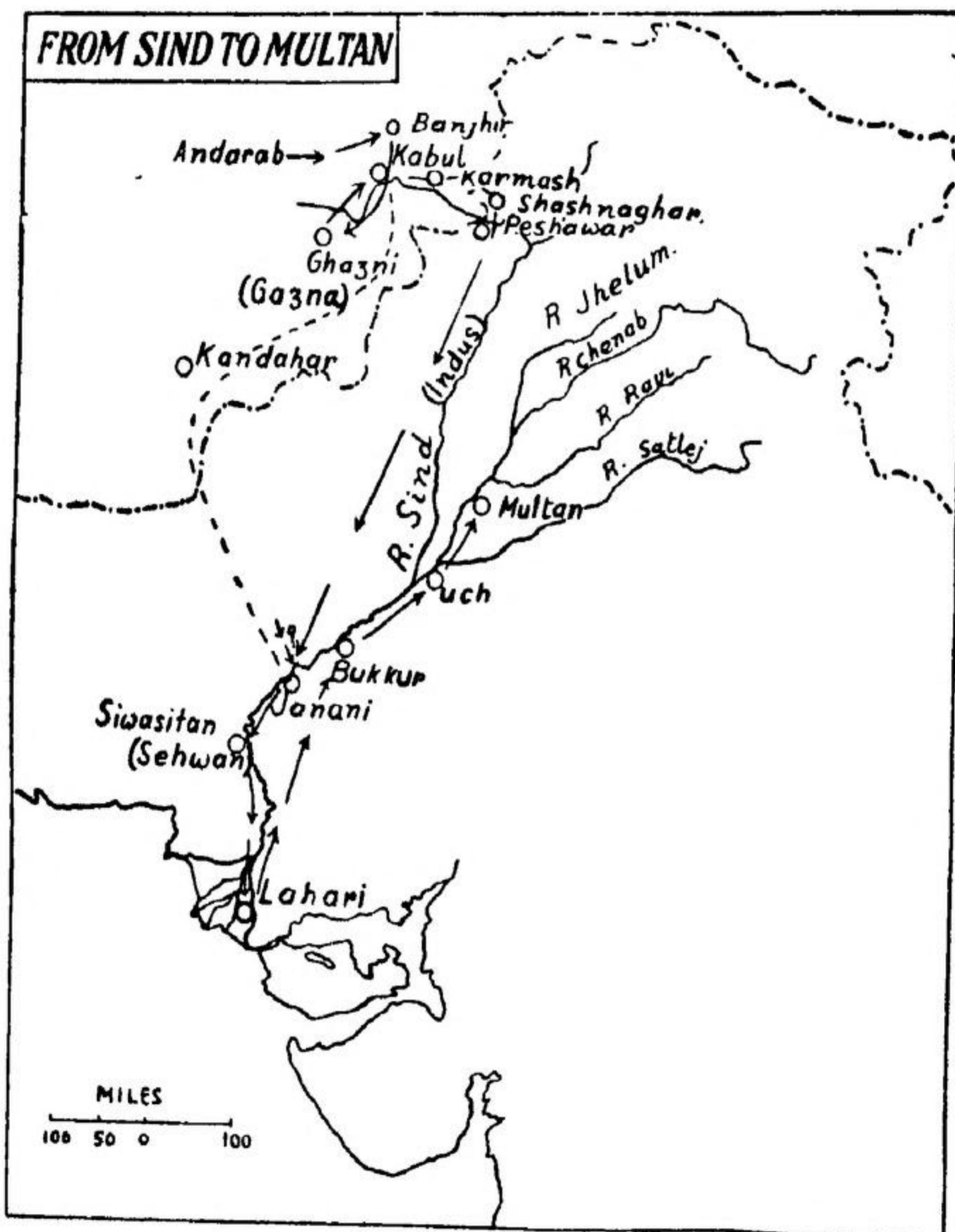
² Def. et Sang., III, p. 93.

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Arrival</i> |
|---|--|
| Sunday 6 Safar, 734 17 October, 1333 | He reached the city of Bukkur. See p. 11, <i>infra</i> . |
| Sunday 13 Safar, 734 24 October, 1333 | He arrived at the city of Uch. See p. 11, <i>infra</i> . |
| Friday 25 Safar, 734 5 November, 1333 | He came to the city of Multān. See p. 12, <i>infra</i> . |
| Thursday 20 Jumāda I, 734 27 January, 1334 | He set out from Multān and reached Pak-pattan. See p. 20, <i>infra</i> . |
| Friday 5 Jumāda II, 734 11 February, 1334 | He reached Abohar. See p. 16, <i>infra</i> . |
| Saturday 13 Jumāda II, 734 19 February, 1334 | He came to the fortress of Abū Bak-har. See p. 20, <i>infra</i> |
| Wednesday 17 Jumāda II, 734 23 February, 1334 | He reached the city of Sarsuti or Sirsa. See p. 23, <i>infra</i> . |
| Thursday 25 Jumāda II, 734 3 March, 1334 | He arrived at Hānsi. See p. 23, <i>infra</i> . |
| Friday 4 Rajab, 734 11 March, 1334 | He arrived at Mas'ūdābād. See p. 24, <i>infra</i> . |
| Sunday 13 Rajab, 734 20 March, 1334 | He reached Dehli <i>via</i> Palam. See p. 24, <i>infra</i> . |

Approximate distance travelled from the Indus to Dehli—1,303 miles

| | |
|------|---|
| 737 | He left Dehli for Amroha travelling <i>via</i> Bijnor. Then he proceeded from Amroha to Afghānpūr across the Sarjū and returned. See p. 144, <i>infra</i> . |
| 1336 | |
| 740 | He journeyed from Dehli to Sargadwāri whence he accompanied the emperor to Kanauj and Bahrāich and back to Dehli. See p. 104, <i>infra</i> . |
| 1339 | |
| 741 | |
| 1340 | |
| 742 | He went from Dehli to Sehwān to meet the emperor and returned. See p. 148, <i>infra</i> . |
| 1341 | |

Approximate distance travelled *en route* to Amroha, Sehwān and back—2,640 miles.



CHAPTER I

FROM SIND TO MULTĀN

In the name of God, kind and merciful, may God bless our Prophet Muḥammad, his descendants and companions! And may He accord them peace!

Shaikh Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad bin 'Abdullāh bin Muḥammad bin Ibrāhim of the tribe of Lawāta,¹ and an inhabitant of Tangier (*Tanja*)² commonly known as Ibn Battūṭa—may God have mercy on him!—says:—

On the first of the month of Allāh³—*Muharram*—which marked the opening of the year⁴ 734 we reached the valley of Sind⁵ known as the

¹ 'Lawāta' was the name of a place in Andalus, and also a name given to some Berber tribes who inhabited the eastern part of North Africa.

² Tangier on the Strait of Gibraltar is a town in Morocco.

³ I.e. *al-ilāh* meaning 'the God'. For *Muharram* see page 143 *infra*.

⁴ 12th September, 1333 A.C.

⁵ It is difficult to determine the exact route which Ibn Battūṭa pursued in order to reach the Indus. But his journey from Kābul to Shashnaghār near Peshāwar via Karmāsh urges the conclusion that he entered India by the famous route of the Khyber Pass. That he visited Ghaznī prior to Kābul is not impossible; and in any case the mention of Ghaznī in the *Rehla* before that of Kābul is no powerful evidence that he pursued any other route; nor is the mention of a desert extending to fifteen days' journey from Shashnaghār strong enough reason to alter the conclusion.

In his notes on '*Afghanistan and Part of Baluchistan*' Raverty has described several routes leading from Kābul to Peshāwar via 'Ash-Naghar, which is, in fact, no other than the Shashnaghār of Ibn Battūṭa. Raverty (pp. 175, 177, 239) tells us that 'Ash-Naghar was the ancient name of the district near Peshāwar which in modern times became known as Hashtnagar. And Karmāsh or Koh-i-Karmāsh has been described by the same author (p. 91) on the authority of Bābar as the mountainous tract south-east of Gardaiz, not far from Kābul. This is exactly the position and character of Karmāsh related in the *Rehla* (Def. et Sang. III, p. 91).

Mžik describes Hashtnagar as a district 16 miles north-east of Peshāwar, and fixes Karmāsh between Hashtnagar and Kābul roughly. This tends to support the conclusion reached above. Mžik wonders why Ibn Battūṭa did not use the ordinary way which would have led him to Multān, and is impressed by his arrival at a place on the Indus which lay at a distance of two days' journey from Janāni. But the *Rehla* makes it quite clear that Ibn Battūṭa arrived in the vicinity of Peshāwar whence he travelled *en route* to Multān passing through Janāni, Sehwān, Lāhari, Bukkur and Uch successively. Why he did not go straight to Dehli which was his objective is a mystery. That Dehli, the capital of Hind, and not Multān, the capital of Sind, was his objective is evident from his start at Kābul. 'In marching from our country to Sind', says al-Bīrūnī, 'we start from the country of Nimroz, i.e. the country of Sijistān; whilst marching to Hind or India proper we start from the side of Kābul' (Sachau I, p. 198). Presumably Ibn Battūṭa changed his mind subsequently, and instead of journeying from the vicinity of Peshāwar ahead to Dehli he set his mind on Multān where he had been directed to meet the renowned saint Shaikh Rukn-ud-din Multāni, otherwise known as Rukn-i-'Ālam. And the fact that the latter is introduced in the *Rehla* in the course of Ibn Battūṭa's visit to Janāni tends to show why he travelled to

And, as the giving of presents has become an unfailing practice with the people (*an-nās*),¹ the merchants in Sind and Hind advance a loan of thousands of dinars to every new-comer intending to visit the sultān; and they provide him with all that he needs for the purpose of presents to the king or for his personal use in the form of riding animals, camels and goods. They even render monetary and personal services to such persons and wait on them like attendants. When these persons reach the sultān, he gives them magnificent gifts with which they pay off their debts and honour their pledges. So the trade of the merchants thrives and they make enormous profits. This has become an unfailing practice with them.

When I arrived in Sind I did the same. I bought horses, camels, slaves and other things from the merchants. From Muḥammad-ud-dūrī, a merchant of 'Irāq, an inhabitant of Takrit,² I purchased at Ghazna about thirty horses and a camel carrying a load of arrows—a gift usually presented to the sultān. Muḥammad-ud-dūrī went to Khurāsān whence he returned to India and exacted from me the money which I owed him. He made an enormous profit through me and in this way was classed among the great merchants. After many years I met him in the city of Aleppo (*Halab*) when the infidels had robbed me of all I possessed, but I got no help from him.

Account of the rhinoceros

When we crossed the river Indus, better known as the Panjāb, we entered a swamp of reeds which lay across our way. Suddenly a rhinoceros sprang on us. It was a huge black animal with a large head of inordinate bulk and stoutness. That is why it is said that the rhinoceros is all head and no body. It is smaller than an elephant but its head is several times bigger³ than that of the elephant. Between its eyes is a horn about three cubits long and a span wide. When it sprang upon us, a horseman encountered it on the way. The rhinoceros attacked his horse with its horn which pierced its thigh knocking it down. Then it returned to the swamp and we were unable to overpower him.

Again on this route I saw a rhinoceros after the '*asr*'⁴ prayer while it was grazing. When we intended to attack it, it fled. Still again I saw a rhinoceros,⁵ but then we were with the Indian emperor (*malik-ul-Hind*). While the sultān was riding on an elephant and we were riding

¹ *An-nās* here signifies 'foreign visitors', 'travellers' and 'officials'. Cf. pp. 34, 50, 54 *infra*.

² Takrit or Tikrit was a town of great importance on the Tigris. It is said to have been founded by the Sāsānian king Sābūr and to have been named after a Christian woman Takrit *bint* Wāl (E.I., IV, p. 632).

³ See, p. 111 *infra*.

⁴ 'Asr literally means time or a period of time. Here *asr* signifies the prayer of afternoon, so called because it is performed in *ṣawātir*, the last portion of the day (Lane, p. 2062).

⁵ 'The *ganda*', says al-Bīrūnī, 'exists in large numbers in India, more particularly about the Ganges' (Sachau I, p. 204). Al-Bīrūnī gives more details than Ibn Battūta and throws greater light on the conspicuous position of this animal.

on other elephants we entered a reed swamp along with him; and the infantry as well as the cavalry entered the swamp, started the beast and killed it. Its head was carried to the camp.

We journeyed from the river Indus for two days and arrived in the city of Janānī,¹ a big and handsome city on the bank of the Indus. It has splendid markets and the inhabitants are a people called Sāmira.² They have been residing there from ancient times. Their ancestors were living there when during the time of Hajjāj³ bin Yusuf it was conquered, as has been recorded by historians dealing with the Sind conquest.

The learned and sincere prelate and devout worshipper Shaikh Rukn-ud-din—the son of the pious jurist Shaikh Shams-ud-din, the son of the devout worshipper and prelate Shaikh Bahā-ud-dīn Zakariya al-Qurashi who was one⁴ of the three personages whom the holy and pious Shaikh Burhān-ud-dīn al-'Araj had foretold at Alexandria that I should meet in the course of my journeys and whom I met, praise be to God!—told me that his great-grandfather was Muhammad bin Qāsim al-Qurashi and that at the time of the conquest of Sind he was on the roll of the army which Hajjāj bin Yusuf had sent for the conquest during his governorship of 'Irāq. Muhammad bin Qāsim al-Qurashi lived there and his descendants increased. As for the people who go by the name of Sāmira, they do not eat with anybody nor can anyone look towards them when they are eating; nor do they marry among people other than their own and no one marries in their fold. At the time of my visit they had an amir called Wunār whose story we shall tell later.

We then journeyed from the city of Janānī till we reached Sīvistān (*Sīwasitān*)—a large city outside which is a treeless waste and sandy steppes. The only tree to be seen there is the acacia. And along the banks of its river nothing is cultivated, except the melon. The food of the inhabitants is millet and peas called 'mushunk'. With it they prepare bread. Fish and buffalo milk can be had there in abundance. The people eat the *sagānqūr*—a small animal resembling the chameleon—called by the westerners⁵ the paradise-snake (*hunaishat-ul-janna*). But it differs from the latter in having no tail. I saw them dig it out of the sand, cut it open, throw out its intestines and stuff it with curcuma which they call *zard shob*⁶ meaning 'yellow wood' and which they use instead of saffron.

¹ Janānī: a town, which then lay probably between Uch and Sukkar, has long been extinct.

² I.e. Sūmra or Sumera Opinions differ as regards the origin of the Sāmira. Some regard them as Rajpūt converts to Islām; others as Hindū Rajputs. It has also been contended that they were Jewish converts to Islām, and had originally come from 'Irāq. They embraced the Qarāmite heresy in Sind, where they established their rule. See—

(i) E.D., I, pp. 483-495.

(ii) R.F.M., pp. 79, 80 footnote.

(iii) Is C., Jan., 1935

(iv) J.R.A.S. Soc., 1887, pp. 404-407.

³ An Ommayyad statesman and conqueror (631/41-714/95).

⁴ See p. 20, footnote 5.

⁵ I.e. the inhabitants of north-west Africa.

⁶ *Shob* is the Arabic form of Persian *chob* (چوب) which means wood (Steingass).

(*Bahrāij*)—a handsome city lying on the bank of the river *Serv*,¹ which is a big and rapid river. The sultān crossed it with the object of paying his homage at the tomb of the virtuous hero, *Shaikh Sälär 'ūd*,² who had conquered most of those parts. Many marvellous stories are told about him and some notable battles are attributed to him. People rushed forward to cross the river and they overcrowded to such an extent that a big ship with three hundred passengers sank; not a soul was saved, except an Arab, a companion of *Amīr Ghaddā*. We had embarked on a small ship and Allāh the exalted saved us. The Arab who had escaped drowning was a man named *Sālim*; and this was a wonderful incident. He wanted to go on board the ship along with us, but when he came we had already left. So he went on board the ship which sank; but he escaped from drowning while people thought that he was with us. A clamour rose among our companions, as also among the rest of the people who thought we were drowned. Later, on seeing us they rejoiced at our safety.

We visited the tomb of the aforesaid pious personage,³ which lay under

¹ 'Serv' stands for the *Sarjū*.

² سالر in the Arabic text stands for *Mas'ūd* (مسعود).

³ I.e. *Sälär Mas'ūd Ghāzi*. In a book brought out in 1935 by Mr. Muhammad 'Abbās Sherwānī of Aligarh and named *Hayāt-i-Mas'ūdī* (Urdū) the mists which had shrouded this 'personage' heretofore have been removed. Still, the principal source of information about him is the *Mirāt-i-Mas'ūdī*, a book written during the reign of Jahāngīr by one 'Abdur Rahmān Chishtī. It was written, as the author alleges, under the inspiration of the spirit of the saint. But the information he has given has been confirmed in part from other sources and mention of *Shaikh Sälär Mas'ūd* has also been made by Abul Fażl, *Firishta* and Prince Dārā Shikoh.

According to the *Mirāt-i-Mas'ūdī*, *Shaikh Sälär Mas'ūd* was the son of *Sälär Sāhū* and a descendant of Muhammad Ḥanafīa, son of Hazrat 'Ali. He was born at Ajmer on 22nd January, 1015 A.C. *Sāhū* held a rank in the army of Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznī; and the latter sent him as commander (*sälär*) of an army marching to India to relieve one Muzaffar Khān and his followers harassed by the Hindū princes in the fortress of Ajmer (1010 A.C.). Since then, *Sāhū* was addressed by the sultān as *Sälär Sāhū* or *Pahlwān-i-lashkar*.

Sälär Sāhū journeyed with Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznī up to Kandahār where he parted and marched by way of Tattah to Ajmer. Before he reached Ajmer the spirits of some unknown persons appeared to him in a dream and gave him the good news of the victory awaiting his arms and announced the birth of a male issue, later to be known as *Sälär Mas'ūd* or *Sultān-ush-shahid*, i.e. the Prince of Martyrs.

As soon as *Sälär Sāhū* reached Ajmer, the enemies took to their heels, and Muzaffar Khān proceeded to give him a hearty reception. On the morrow the enemies re-assembled and gave battle. But the stars were against them; they were defeated and fled to Kanauj.

Sultān Mahmūd was highly pleased to hear of this victory, and he granted *Sāhū* the victor estates in Ajmer. Then, he allowed *Sāhū*'s wife *Satr-i-mu'allā* to leave for India. She reached Ajmer and met her husband on 13th March, 1013 A.C. On 22nd January, 1015 A.C., the son who had been long predicted saw the light of day; he was named *Mas'ūd*. Before long Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznī came to Ajmer and was pleased to see *Mas'ūd* in his swaddling clothes (1016 A.C.); he saw him subsequently everytime he came to India.

a dome¹ and we could not enter on account of the crowds. In this journey we passed through a forest of reeds where a rhinoceros sprang upon us. But it was killed, and the camp-followers (*an-nds*)² brought its head to us. The rhinoceros is smaller than an elephant but its head is several times larger than that of the elephant.³ We have already mentioned this.⁴

Sultān's return to his capital and the revolt of 'Alī Shāh the deaf

When the sultān had triumphed over 'Ain-ul-mulk, as we have related, he returned to his capital after an absence of two and a half years. He pardoned 'Ain-ul-mulk as well as Nusrat Khān, who had revolted at Telingāna (*Tiling*) and employed both of them in one and the same job, namely to look after the royal gardens. He gave them clothes and horses and granted them a daily allowance of flour and meat.

After this came the news that one of the companions of Qutlugh Khān, named 'Alī Shāh the deaf (*kar*), had revolted against the sultān; the word *kar* means deaf. He was brave, handsome and good-mannered. He seized Badrkot (*Badrakot*) and made it the capital of his kingdom. The troops were sent against him, and the sultān ordered his tutor⁵ to march to fight him. The latter marched at the head of large troops and besieged 'Alī Shāh the deaf in the fortress of Badrkot. He made breaches in the towers of the fortress. 'Alī Shāh being hard pressed sued for peace. Qutlugh Khān granted him peace, and sent him in chains to the sultān who pardoned him and exiled him to Ghazna on the boundary of Khurāsān,

At the age of four years the *Bismillah* ceremony (initiation of the child to learning) was performed for Mas'ūd, and in the course of next five years he acquired all the knowledge and learning then available. When ten years old he began to regulate his habits and drew up a daily routine which he followed consistently. He became a great devotee of Allāh and was at his prayer-mat for several hours. He used to spend some of his time in the company of the learned and well-informed spiritualists and the evenings he spent in shooting, lancing and in playing polo. When he was 16 years old, his father died (1031 A.C.). Mas'ūd then became the 'Sālār' and settled at Bahrāich and he rendered Sultān Mahmūd active service until his death. The zamindars of Bahrāich looked upon him as a foreigner and joined together to turn him out. With them he fought a defensive battle, and without much difficulty he got the upper hand and dispersed them. But they re-assembled before long; and on 17th June, 1033 A.C. they made a night attack at the house of Sālār Mas'ūd. He fought bravely, but an arrow pierced his neck, and got into his throat. He bled profusely, fell from his horse and died instantly (Sunday, 18 June, 1033 A.C.).

Thus he died young at the age of 18, leaving behind great many admirers and devotees. He was buried at Bahrāich, and his tomb became a shrine which continued to be visited by all sorts of people. Sultān Firoz Shāh visited it in 1374 A.C. 'He stayed there some time', says Shāms Sirāj 'Aflī; 'and one night Sālār Mas'ūd appeared to him in a dream and stroked his beard with his own hand, thereby intimating to the sultān that age was prevailing over him and that he must prepare for death.'

¹ See the photograph on p. 111.

² *An-nds* here signifies 'camp-followers'.

³ This is an exaggeration; although it is a fact that the head of the rhinoceros is disproportionately huge as compared to his body.

⁴ See p. 5 *supra*.

⁵ Qutlugh Khān.