JOS J.L. GOMMANS

THE RISE OF THE INDO-AFGHAN EMPIRE c. 1710-1780

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The battle of Panipat in 1761. On the right Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī rides a brown stallion surrounded by his Indian allies: on his left Najīb ud-Daulah and Shujāᶜ ud-Daulah, on his right Aḥmad Khān Bangash and Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān (Johnson Album, Faizabad, c. 1770). By courtesy of the British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, London.

THE RISE OF THE INDO-AFGHAN EMPIRE c. 1710-1780

BY

JOS J.L. GOMMANS

E.J. BRILL
LEIDEN · NEW YORK · KÖLN
1995

This book has been published with financial support from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO).

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gommans, Jos J. L.
The rise of the Indo-Afghan empire, c. 1710 – 1780 / by Jos J. L. Gommans.
p. cm. — (Brill's Indological library, ISSN 0925-2916 ; v. 8)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 9004101098
1. India—History—18th century. I. Title. II. Series.
DS461.8.G6 1994
954.02'92—dc20 94-33783
CIP

Die Deutsche Bibliothek - CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Gommans, Jos J. L.:
The rise of the Indo-Afghan empire : c. 1710 – 1780 / by Jos J. L. Gommans. – Leiden ; New York ; Köln : Brill, 1994
(Brill's indological library ; Vol. 8)
ISBN 90–04–10109-8
NE: GT

ISSN 0925-2916
ISBN 90 04 10109 8

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

To the memory of my father
To my mother

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PREFACE

Writing this book has been a most enjoyable and stimulating experience. Partly this is due to the fascinating experience of imagining pre-modern Indo-Afghan history, partly it is the result of the kind support given by sponsors, colleagues and friends. First of all, I am much obliged to the Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO) for giving me for four years the necessary financial backing. This enabled me to stay for more than a year in London and for almost half a year in India. I am also indebted to the Reael Fund of the Leiden Institute for the History of Overseas Expansion for subsidizing my early spadework in the London archives. Equally indispensable was the help given by the staff of many libraries and archives: the British Library, the India Office Library and Records, and the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London; the University Library, and the Trinity College Library in Cambridge; the library of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, the National Archives, and the Nehru Memorial Library in New Delhi; the UP State Archives in Lucknow, the Raza Library in Rampur, and the Maulana Azad Library in Aligarh; the Staatsbibliothek Preussischen Kulturbesitz in Berlin; the Rijksarchief and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek at The Hague, as also the University Libraries of Utrecht and Leiden.

Along the way, many individuals encouraged my research by offering useful comments and suggestions. In particular I would like to thank Professors Peter Rietbergen, George Winius and C.A. Bayly, who, more than five years ago, put me on this track. Venturing beyond the conventional boundaries of history into the insecure realms of various disciplines, languages, religions and area specializations, I could not dispense with the help of specialists who provided me with their expertise: Dr Lutz Ilisch on Durrani coins, Professor Van der Meij on horse-management, Professor J.M.S. Baljon on Shāh Walīullāh, Professor P.J. Marshall and Anand Yang on the EIC records and Hakim Muhammad Hasim Khan on the Rampur Nawabs. For their general encouragement Dr Leonard Blussé and Professors R.E. Frykenberg and M. Rossabi proved indispensable. I also appreciated the frank criticism of Professor Anatoly Khazanov. Stimulating were the animated discussions with

Professors Dirk Kolff, K.N. Chaudhuri and Muzaffar Alam. The latter also provided me with his kind hospitality and friendly care during my stay in India. I am especially indebted to one of his students, Amarjit Singh, who familiarized me with New Delhi and helped me to overcome my initial culture shock. I am grateful to other friends who generously opened their homes to me, in particular Frits van Kempen in London and Dr Zahir Ali Siddiqui in Rampur. I reserve special mention for my friends Hank Kune, Dr Nico den Tuinder and Ticia Rueb for their valuable criticism on earlier drafts. Of great help was the assistance in typewriting by Betty Mitchell.

This study is a slightly revised version of my PhD thesis written at the Kern Institute of Leiden University. If it may be a proof of a certain craftsmanship than most of the credit should be reserved for my patient gurus Professor Jan Heesterman at Leiden and Professor André Wink at Madison-Wisconsin. It was both a stimulating pleasure and a privilege to experience for more than five years their scholarly guidance and *baraka*. Needless to say that any shortcomings of the present work are entirely my own responsibility. Much remains to be done.

The final credit should go to my wife Marianne. On many research trips she travelled with me, helped me to take stock of the European sources, read and criticised draft versions, did some of the type-work and, on top of all this, always remained a loving companion.

Jos J.L. Gommans
Brussels
March, 1994

ABBREVIATIONS

Archives

ARA	*Algemeen Rijksarchief, Den Haag*
VOC	Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren)
HRB	Hoge Regering Batavia
DCA	Departement van Commercie Amsterdam
IOL&R	*India Office Library and Records, London*
BMC	Bengal Military Consultations
BPFC	Bengal Proceedings, Foreign Consultations
BPPC	Bengal Proceedings, Public Consultations
BPSC	Bengal Proceedings, Secret Consultations
BPSFC	Bengal Proceedings, Secret and Foreign Consultations
BPSMC	Bengal Proceedings, Secret and Military Consultations
BPSPC	Bengal Proceedings, Secret and Political Consultations
BRCCCP	Bengal Revenue Consultations, Ceded and Conquered Provinces
BomPPC	Bombay Proceedings, Public Consultations
BomPSSCC	Bombay Proceedings, Political Secret and Select Committee
BusRL	Bushire Residency Letters
FRBADC	Factory Records Bandar Abbas, Diaries and Consultations
FRBALE	Factory Records Bandar Abbas, Letters and Enclosures
HGPSDR	Home Government, Political and Secret Department Records
HM	Home Miscellaneous
LRB	Letters Received from Bombay
MMP	Madras Military Proceedings
MMPP	Madras Military and Political Proceedings
MMSP	Madras Military and Secret Proceedings

OPPP	Official Publications, Parlementary Papers
OPSR	Official Publications, Selections from the Records
PP	Parlementary Papers (Parlementary Branch Records)
NAI	*National Archives of India, New Delhi*
APD	Acquired Persian Documents
FMR	Foreign Miscellaneous Records
FPD	Foreign and Political Department
MDP	Military Department Proceedings
MSI	Memoirs of the Survey of India
PHD	Public and Home Department
BM	*British Museum (now Oriental and India Office Collections)*
CUL	*Cambridge University Library (Oriental Mss)*
SPK	*Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin*

Periodicals

AA	*Asian Affairs. Journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs*
AcAs	*Acta Asiatica*
AAS	*Asian and African Studies*
AR	*Asiatic(k) Researches*
BPP	*Bengal Past en Present*
CAJ	*Central Asiatic Journal*
CAS	*Central Asiatic Survey*
EI[1]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam 1913-36* (1nd ed.) (Leiden, 1987)
EI[2]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.) (Leiden, 1954-)
EIr	*Encyclopaedia Iranica* (ed. E. Yarshater), (London, New York, 1985-)
HJAS	*Harvard Journal of Asian Studies*
IA	*Indian Antiquary*
IC	*Islamic Culture*
IESHR	*Indian Economic and Social History Review*
IHQ	*Indian Historical Quarterly*
Iran	*Iran. Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*
IS	*Iranian Studies*

JAIH	*Journal of Ancient Indian History*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JAS	*The Journal of Asian Studies*
JAS(B)	*Journal of the Asiatic Society*
JASB	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
JASP	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JGO	*Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Osteuropas*
JIH	*Journal of Indian History*
JNSI	*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*
JRASGBI	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
MAS	*Modern Asian Studies*
MOOI	*Moyen Orient et Océan Indien*
NC	*Numismatic Chronicle*
PIHC	*Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*
REA	*Revue des Études Arméniennes*
SI	*Studies in Islam*
ZAS	*Zentral Asiatische Studien*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlndischen Gesellschaft*

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Foreign words not in common use in the English language have been italicized. Personal names have been transcribed but not italicized. In the case of proper names of tribes, dynasties and places standardized English spellings have been used. For place names I have generally adopted the spelling used by *The Times Atlas of the World.*

For the transliteration of Perso-Arabic, Turkish and Mongol words, I have followed the system adopted by F. Steingass, *Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary.* In Persian combination words I have preferred to put a hyphen (-) between the first word and the letter *i* (*iẓāfat*) indicating its combination with the following word. In Persian combinations, the Arabic definite article *al-* has been transcribed as *ul-* (not *u'l*) unless it precedes the consonant *t, s̤, d, ẕ, r, z, s, sh, ṣ, ẓ, t̤, z̤* or *n*, in which case the *l* is assimilated to the consonant. The conventional *al-* is used in the text where the works of authors who wrote in Arabic are quoted. All diacritical signs in quoted titles of translated or secondary works are omitted.

For the spelling of Hindustani (Urdu) and Hindi words I have followed J.T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English.* Transliteration of Pashto words have been based on H.G. Raverty, *A Dictionary of the Puk'hto, Pus'hto, or Language of the Afghans.* Unless mentioned in the glossary, plurals of foreign terms have been indicated by adding *s*.

INTRODUCTION

The Persistence of the Overland Trade

During the eighteenth century a new imperial system of Afghan states emerged at the interface of the old metropolitan centres of India, Iran and Central Asia. Traditionally this period has been presented as a saga of imperial decline and moral decadence. It was alleged that thanks to the European discovery of a sea route to Asia the bulk of the long-distance trade was redirected from the Eurasian overland routes to the high seas of the Indian Ocean. Thus the resulting reduction of overland traffic had a negative impact on the wealth of landlocked Asia and brought about the decline of the great Islamic empires of the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals. Following this almost classic view, many studies on Afghanistan and Central Asia have presented a picture of a humdrum backwater in which trade had virtually dried up and tribal or feudal chaos prevailed.[1] Especially eighteenth-century Afghanistan could attract the attention of only a few historians interested in great rulers, like Nādir Shāh or Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī, who for a short time were at best capable of changing their empires' isolation into a splendid one.[2]

Of course, interregional roads and the trade conducted through

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[1] See for example: V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* (Stanford, 1969), p.24; P. Jackson & L. Lockhart (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol.6: Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge, 1986), p.475; L. Krader, *Peoples of Central Asia* (Bloomington/The Hague, 1966), pp.90-7; M.G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, vol.3: The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times* (Chicago, 1974), pp.155-6; M. Rossabi, "The 'Decline' of the Central Asian Caravan Trade" in J.D. Tracy (ed.), *The Rise of Merchant Empires* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.351-70. Cf. N. Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago, 1974) and Steensgaard's more recent comments in Satish Chandra (ed.), *The Indian Ocean: Exploration in History, Commerce and Politics* (New Delhi, 1987), pp.125-50. Ashin Das Gupta also sees a close correspondence between imperial decline and the decline of trade in Surat (see his introduction to *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat c.700-1750* (Wiesbaden, 1979). At the same time, though, he is aware of the fact that numerous Banias migrated from Surat and continued their businesses from Bombay and Sind (A. Das Gupta, "India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century" in A. Das Gupta & M.N. Pearson (eds.), *India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800* (Delhi, 1987), p.140).

[2] L. Lockhart, *Nadir Shah* (London, 1938); G. Singh, *Ahmad Khan Abdali* (London, 1959).

them provided the basic framework of the pre-modern empire. Obviously, it was only through intermediaries along the trade routes that the cash nexus was established and the revenue could be remitted. Therefore, the declining effectiveness of the three large-scale Islamic empires in the eighteenth century should indeed be linked to a rerouting of the long-distance trade. But should we conclude from this that the overland routes were totally eclipsed by overseas traffic?

To find an answer to this question we must keep in mind that for most of the eighteenth century, at least until 1760, the encroachments of the European powers were still confined to the peripheries of the Islamic empires: the East India Companies mainly along the shores of the Indian Ocean, the Russians along the fringes of the Central Asian steppes. It is true that in between these areas under European control we witness the decline of existing empires. Simultaneously, however, we also see the vigorous rise of smaller but more effective successor states, like those of the Uzbeks in Bukhara and Kokand, of the Marathas in India and of the Zands in Iran. Often these new states were highly urbanized and commercialized entities which continued to develop and benefit from long-distance trade, overseas as well as overland.

Recent research on the Middle East confirms the ongoing importance of overland traffic. Well into the eighteenth century, the overland routes through northern Iran to the Ottoman Empire stayed undisturbed and served as a source of wealth which was eagerly tapped by new local dynasties in Baghdad, Aleppo, Mosul and Damascus.[3] In Iran the conventional picture of an eighteenth-century decline has also been modified. It appears from recent anthropological studies on regional tribes and states that the eighteenth-century "resurgence of tribes" was part of an ongoing process of commercial redirections and shifts. As a result of the weakening of imperial structures there was an intensified competition for economic resources among various new tribal groups. Their

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[3] For Baghdad, see T. Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and Society in Early Modern Iraq. Mamluk Pashas, Tribal Shaykhs and Local Rule between 1802 and 1831* (The Hague, 1982); for Aleppo, see: G. Masters, *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East: Mercantilism and the Islamic Economy in Aleppo, 1600-1750* (New York, 1988); A. Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1989) and K. Fukusama, *Toilerie et Commerce du Levant. D'Alep à Marseille* (Paris, 1987); for Mosul, see R.W. Olson, *The Siege of Mosul and Ottoman-Persian Relations 1718-1743* (Bloomington, 1975); for Damascus, see K.K. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus 1708-1758* (Princeton, 1980).

rise was closely related to the proximity of both markets and trade routes. Of course, many of the tribes emerged on the periphery of effective state control, but, they also had risen in response to increased state interference during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Actually, strong tribal confederations had not only mitigated but also facilitated imperial encapsulation. At any rate, it appears that during the eighteenth century many of the peripheral Iranian tribes had become wealthier, more powerful and more confident.[4]

Related to the tribal "problem" of Iran is a process which seems to have affected the whole of the Islamic world. This is what Chris Bayly calls the "tribal breakout" of unruly Afghan, Persian, Turkmen and Arab elements between 1720 and 1760. In the short term it was a crisis which saw the invasions of all the old hegemonies by powerful but unstable coalitions of tribal warriors which overthrew or dispersed the old prebendal nobilities. In the medium term it released into the old empires several hundred thousand free, tribal cavalrymen, many of whom succeeded in founding little kingdoms of their own.[5] Although these eighteenth-century revolts along the fringes of Islamic civilization threatened the existing political and economic networks, it should again be stressed that they grew naturally out of the imperial fortunes of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. At that time, the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals had been very successful in linking up the frontier areas with the imperial polity and its interregional trade routes. As indicated already above, in the eighteenth century the so-called tribals, who had done well as a result of their increased involvement in services and trade, were now able to turn the tables on the imperialists. Paradoxically, but to no surprise to the readers familiar with the famous Arab

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[4] The idea of the eighteenth-century "tribal resurgence" stems from Lambton (A.K.S. Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in Eighteenth-Century Persia" in T. Naff & R. Owen (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Islamic History* (Carbondale, 1977). For a more tribal perspective of what is happening in the eighteenth century, see G.R. Garthwaite, *Khans and Shahs: A Documentary Analysis of the Bakhtiyari in Iran* (Cambridge, 1983) and L. Beck, *The Qashqa'i of Iran* (New Haven, 1986). For a recent overview of the eighteenth-century history of Iranian tribes, see R. Tapper, "The Tribes in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Iran" in P. Avery & G. Hambly & C.Melville (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 7: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.506-41.

[5] For this idea, see C.A. Bayly's, "India and West Asia, c.1700-1830", *AA*, 19, 1 (1988), pp.3-19 and his *Imperial Meridien: The British Empire and the World* (London/New York, 1989), pp.35-6.

historian Ibn Khaldūn, the Mughal and Safavid empires collapsed under the weight of their very success.[6] As this study wants to show, the Afghan tribes, originally located in their mountain strongholds of Roh but increasingly spreading out towards India, were particularly well suited to outmanoeuvre the Mughals as they had easy access to the prime military instrument of the day: war-horses and cavalry.

As far as Central Asia is concerned, the discussion on the eighteenth century is dominated by Russian scholars mostly writing in Russian.[7] It appears that the current discussion regarding this century is less domininated by revisionists than that regarding the Middle East, India and, to a lesser extent, Iran. Partly this can be explained by the former marxist fascination with class and state formation.[8] In a breathtaking effort to bridge divergent historical and anthropological, Russian and western, traditions on Central Asia, Professor Anatoly Khazanov has tried to incorporate the sedentary "outside world" into the history of pastoral nomadism. For Khazanov, it is this outside world which is, in fact, the *sine qua non* of pastoral nomadism itself. In its own right, pastoral nomadism is "doomed to stagnation because its economy is extensive and allows no permanent solution to the problem of balance at the expense of intensification of production". Only this inbred instability of the pastoralist world made nomads interested in trade relations with the sedentary society; but at the same time, stability did not favour the production of surpluses which could have been sold regularly at the market. Hence, Khazanov is altogether sceptical about the role played by market forces. For him the eighteenth century appears to be just another stage in the ongoing process of pastoral nomadic decline in favour of the ever expanding sedentary world.[9] Elaborating on Central Asia's relations with the outside world, other scholars, like Bregel and Rossabi, are equally sceptical about Central

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[6] Cf. J.C. Heesterman, "Warriors and Merchants", *Itinerario*, 15, 1 (1991), p.39.

[7] For a glimpse of the Russian historiography on Afghanistan—mainly concerned with the so-called "disintegration of the primitive communal system and the development of feudal relations" or with the "liberation struggle of the Afghan people"—, see the translated contributions of Reisner, Arunova and Gankovsky in *Afghanistan, Past and Present* (Moscow, 1981). See also Y. Gankovsky (ed.), *The History of Afghanistan* (Moscow, 1985).

[8] For a short discussion on the marxist debate, see E. Gellner's introduction to A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Cambridge, 1984).

[9] E.g. Khazanov, *Nomads*, pp.69,71,168,202,205,212.

Asia's performance in the early-modern world. Interestingly, their analysis is mainly concerned with the relations between Central Asia, or rather Inner Asia, with China and the Middle East.[10] They focus their attention on the traditional east-west connections of the former Silk Route. Seen from this angle, the eighteenth-century picture seems to be indeed rather bleak. But if we take a closer look at the north-south relations and concentrate on Central Asia's relations with India and Russia, the evidence so far points in an entirely different direction. Seen from this angle the picture is more positive.[11] Long-distance trade between Central Asia and India in the eighteenth century is still brisk. Some Russian scholars have argued that the European conquests on the Indian coast only served to increase Indian trade with Central Asia. They even suggested that after 1750 this trade experienced a substantial growth, partly due to the growing involvement of Russia.[12] Moreover, from what follows below, it appears that market conditions in India also triggered off a burgeoning of already existing trade activities between India and Central Asia—activities which became increasingly dominated by Afghan nomads and traders. Nevertheless, the still prevailing contradictions in the literature on Central Asia show that much more research will be necessary in order to arrive at more definite conclusions or to detect more regional divergencies.[13]

Apart from the Middle East, much recent historiography on the eighteenth century has concentrated on India. There is now a strong tendency to reinterpret the period in a much more positive light than before. The Mughal empire is seen as having been superseded by

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[10] For Rossabi, see footnote 1; Y. Bregel, "The Role of Central Asia in the History of the Muslim East", *The Afghanistan Council of the Asian Society, Occasional Papers*, 20 (1980) and his "Turko-Mongol Influences in Central Asia" in R.L. Canfield (ed.), *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 1991) pp.53-78.

[11] S.F. Dale, "Indo-Russian Trade in the Eighteenth Century" in S. Bose (ed.), *South Asia and World Capitalism* (New Delhi, 1990), pp.140-60. As far as Central Asia's relations with China are concerned, Adshead has also stressed the point that the trade from east to west was redirected from north to south. At the same time, transit trade in luxury goods gave way to terminal trade in bulk goods (S.A.M. Adshead, *Central Asia in World History* (London, 1993), pp.199-201).

[12] Derived from P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State Formation in Medieval and Modern Eurasia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden, 1992), p.334.

[13] We should, of course, not equate Central Asia with a pastoral-nomadic economy since it comprised many fertile oases where urban settlements and sedentary agriculture prevailed.

various more effective regional states which exercised a much deeper control over commerce and production than any of the regimes they replaced. There is strong evidence of a continuing agricultural and commercial development in many parts of both southern and northern India.[14] By concentrating on the agricultural performance of the Afghan *riyāsat* in Rohilkhand the following pages will further corroborate these findings. But they will also highlight the fact that, certainly in comparison to the nineteenth century, the economy of north-western India was still very much a mixed one based on various forms of both sedentary agriculture and pastoral nomadism. This had several important implications. It promoted the exchange and communication with other parts of India, and with Central Asia and Iran. Along these lines local courts and village communities acquired some of their most vital and expensive capital goods, horses and cattle. A second implication is that cultivation tended to be concentrated on high quality lands of natural surplus, strongly supported by animal inputs, whether in the form of manure, traction or means of transport. In addition, the pastoralist economy made the rural society much more mobile. Like their pastoralist counterparts, large sections of the peasantry were armed and spent part of the year as mercenaries in distant places. Regularly, these armed peasants moved their families and agricultural homes to take maximum advantage of opportunities for military service. Although the peasants' mobility could destabilize the economy it also facilitated the maximum use of both human and capital resources.[15]

Taking together the evidence on the Middle East, Iran, Central Asia and India it is evident that the idea of an overall eighteenth-century crisis should be revised. At any rate, long-distance Eurasian trade still had a natural rhythm and resilience of its own and could still function on equal terms with overseas trade. An outstanding

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[14] The foremost regional studies in this respect are: M. Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India. Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-48* (Delhi, 1986); R.B. Barnett, *North India between Empires. Awadh, the Mughals and the British 1720-1801* (Berkeley, 1980); C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars. North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion 1770-1870)* (Cambridge, 1983); A. Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India. Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Svarajya* (Cambridge, 1986).

[15] D. Washbrook, "Progress and Problems: South Asian Economic and Social History c.1720-1860", *MAS*, 22, 1 (1988), pp.67.

example of an eighteenth-century success story is provided by the Afghans or—as they were generally known in India—the Rohillas. In Afghanistan proper, the Durrani-Afghans created a new empire and formulated a new imperial tradition on the basis of long-standing Perso-Islamic ideals of legitimate rule. In India, the Rohilla-Afghans succeeded in establishing thriving principalities along the routes of long-distance trade and in association with military service. The mobility of these Afghan free-booters and horse-traders often undermined the existing state structures of the Mughals. At the same time, however, the Afghans succeeded in building an extensive commercial and political network of their own, embracing both India and Central Asia. Although some of the Afghan free-booters gradually became tax-gathering administrators, they felt no need at all to give up their tribal or warrior outlook. In fact, their freebooting activities were unavoidably interwoven with their agrarian management and financial dealings. It also enabled them to maintain a dual base of both pastoral-nomadic and sedentary-agrarian production. In other words, by combining stock breeding, raiding, trading and agrarian expansion, the Afghan *riyāsat* was able to bridge the divide between the two. In creating and maintaining this "dual economy" the Afghans succeeded where earlier attempts of the Ghaznavids, Mongols, Delhi Sultans and Mughals had failed. Instead of choosing between either Central Asia—as did the Ghaznavids and Mongols —or India—as did the Delhi Sultans and Mughals—, the Afghans took the best of both worlds. The price they had to pay for this was the relative instability of their empire. They always had to balance the advantages of allowing their tribal supporters the benefits of pillage and ransom against the advantages of regular revenue collection. The best solution was to export the pillaging and ransoming and to exact taxes within their own realm.[16] Notwithstanding this built-in instability, the Afghan dual framework was held together by the continuing vigour of the Afghan trading network that connected India with Central Asia and which was based on the trade in war-horses and military services. Only when this commercial network was undermined by the ever tightening grip of, first, the British and,

[16] Cf. E. Gellner, "Tribalism and State in the Middle East" in Ph.S. Khoury & J. Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (London/New York, 1990), p.116.

later, the Russians in the nineteenth century, the empire lost its substance and fairly quickly faded away.[17]

In the following chapters I will describe and analyze the rise of the eighteenth-century Indo-Afghan political system of Afghan horse-traders, mercenaries and princes. Chapter one will first provide the overall political and geographical context of Afghan expansion. Here, I hope, Central Asia will become fully incorporated into the fabric of Indo-Afghan history. It will also highlight the Afghans' role as commercial intermediaries between Central Asia and India. In chapter two, attention will be paid to the emergence of the Durrani imperial mandate which encapsulated Iran, India and Central Asia. Chapter three will focus on one particularly important branch of the Afghan enterprise: the horse trade and horse breeding in India. Elaborating on all these themes, chapter four will discuss the process of Rohilla migration to northern India and their rise to prominence as co-sharers of Mughal and Durrani sovereignty. Chapter five will take a closer look at the formation of the eighteenth-century Rohilla *riyāsat* and its agrarian and mercantile economy. As a corollary of Afghan state formation, chapter six will deal with the construction of a new Indo-Afghan tradition of descent (*nasab*) which provided the Rohilla *riyāsat* with new theoretical foundations. Finally, the conclusion and epilogue will tentatively review Afghan imperialism and discuss Rohilla decline as an immediate result of the Pax Britannica. Let me begin, however, with a brief explanation of the ethnic and geographical terminology relevant to this study.

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[17] In the case of China, Thomas Barfield has recently claimed that only "frontier" conquerors from Manchuria succeeded in combining both sedentary Chinese and Inner-Asian tribal traditions. As he states: "the nomads from the central steppe were never able to establish powerful empires when their cousins from Manchuria ruled in China". In a way, the role Manchuria has played in Chines history may be compared with "Afghanistan" in Indian history (Th. J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge Mass., 1989). Cf. O. Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of Asia* (Boston, 1962), pp.247-9,541-4. In Iran, where pastoral-nomadism and the sedentary society were more integrated, attempts to manage a "dual economy" occurred more frequently and with more success. For example J.J. Reid has presented the Qizilbash *uymāq* as an organizational network which covered segments of the agricultural economy as well as the pastoral economy (J.J. Reid, *Tribalism and Society in Islamic Iran 1500-1629* (Malibu, 1983). For a fierce attack on Reid's analysis, see R.D. McChesney, "Comments on "The Qajar Uymaq in the Safavid Period 1500-1722", *IS*, 14 (1981).

Afghan, Pathan and Rohilla

Apart from the term *Afghān* or the older form *Aughān*, we come across the Indianized names of *Pathān* and *Rōhīla*, the latter in later tradition commonly spelled as *Rohilla*. *Pathān* was used as the Indianized form of the eastern Afghan *Pakhtūn*, the origin of which is, however, untraceable.[18] Sometimes, a distinction is made between the Afghans as the tribes settled in the open plains and possessing a clearly recognizable Afghan genealogy, and the Pathans as the uncivilized inhabitants of the mountains of Roh or Kohistan supposed to be the descendants of the Afghans' adopted son Karlān, hence Karlanis or Karranis. The Abdali or Durrani tribe even tried to restrict the denomination of Afghan to themselves, while all the other tribes were referred to as Pathans. Yet, despite all attempts at neat categorization, both terms were arbitrarily used, both by the tribesmen themselves and by outsiders. The name *Pathan*, however, mostly refers to an Indian context. For example, in eighteenth-century Hindustan, *Pathan* signified a stamp of authenticity; in other words, a Pathan was considered to be someone who was generally recognized as having a genuine Pathan or Afghan descent. As such it was used to distinguish between the superior Pathans and the multitude of Indo-Afghan immigrants of mixed origin which became commonly known as Rohillas.[19]

The designation *Rohilla* developed during the seventeenth century as a fairly broad notion of the people coming from *Roh* or *Rōh*, corresponding roughly with the mountainous terrain of the eastern Hindu Kush and the Sulaiman Range. Only in the seventeenth-century Indian and Indo-Afghan works do we find *Roh* frequently used as a more specific geographical term which corresponded with the territory stretching from Swat and Bajaur in the north to Sibi and Bhakkar in Sind, and from Hasan Abdal in the east to Kabul and Kandahar in the west.[20] From the eighteenth century onwards

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[18] According to Niʿmatullāh the name was given by the prophet to Qais alias ʿAbd ur-Rashīd because it was revealed to him through the angel Gabriel that his descendants' attachment to Islam would in strength be like the wood (of the keel of a ship) the sailors call "Pathan" (Niʿmatullāh, *Makhzan-i Afghānī*, trans. B. Dorn (London, 1829-36), 1, p.38).

[19] *IOL&R*, Orme Mss.ov.173, ff.171-2.

[20] See Niʿmatullāh, *Makhzan*, Dorn trans., 1, p.40., where Kandahar, Koh Sulaiman and Ashnagar (Hashtnagar) are included. Cf. Niẓām ud-Dīn Aḥmad Harawī, *The Tabaqat-i-Akbari of Khwaja Nizamuddin Ahmad*, trans. De Brajindranath

the term Rohilla was also used to denote all Indo-Afghans who had settled in Rohilkhand or all men who served under a Rohilla chief.

In the Indian context we frequently come across the term *wilāyat* or the combination of *wilāyat-i rōhīla* to denote the "land of the Rohillas". Like in the case of Roh, this does not indicate a well-defined territory but with a fairly broad designation. In a political sense *wilāyat* means "province" or "district", but it is also used as a colloquial appellation for Iran.[21] In all likelihood, however, in the seventeenth and eighteenth century the term *wilāyat* seems to correspond roughly with the north-western territories of South Asia; hence, in the Indian context, *wilāyatī* came to denote (western) foreign parts, later including Europe and more especially England. But in the eighteenth century it appears to have referred specifically to Afghans.

Central Asia, India and Afghanistan

At the basis of the present work lies the presupposition that the pre-modern histories of Central Asia and India should be studied in conjunction. These areas were part of a larger cultural ecumene which included Iran as well as the eastern parts of the Middle East.[22] Central Asia as presented in this study is as much a cultural as a geographical concept. Hence we should not attempt to establish its "borders" with accuracy. In geographical terms it broadly covers the southern desert zone of "greater" Inner Asia.[23] More precisely, Central Asia stretches from the Caspian Sea to the eastern edges of the Gobi and Ordos deserts, from the wide Inner Asian steppes to the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas. Its core is found in the many fertile oases and alluvial plains of the Amu Darya, the Zerafshan and the Syr Darya. Here lay its great urban centres like Bukhara, Tashkent and Samarkand. This area also corresponds roughly with Transoxania or the Arabo-Islamic term *Mā warāʾ an-nahr* (that which [lies] beyond the river [Amu Darya]) or the Persian terms *Tūrān* and

(Calcutta, 1927-39); Firishta, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India till the Year AD 1620 (Gulshan-i Ibrāhīmī)*, trans. J. Briggs (Calcutta, 1908), 1, p.4.

[21] F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (London, 1977), pp.1479-80; cf. H. Yule & A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson* (London, 1903), pp.93f.

[22] For a similar view, see Canfield, *Turko-Persia*.

[23] See D. Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.37-41.

Turkistān. Located to its south, Afghanistan and India are also broad overlapping concepts; the first being the ever-shifting area inhabited by the people called Afghans, the latter being the territory of present-day Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and the eastern part of Afghanistan, the Kabul valley. Speaking in geographical terms, the Kabul river forms indeed a part of the Indus river system, whereas, the dry western and south-western section of modern Afghanistan is an extension of the Iranian Plateau, and the area north of the Hindu Kush—often called Afghan Turkistan—is part of the Central Asian plains. Previous to the nineteenth century this tripartite division frequently matched the respective spheres of influence of Indian, Iranian and Central Asian civilizations. Thus, from the sixteenth century onwards, we find Kandahar contested between the Mughals and Safavids, Herat between the Safavids and Uzbeks, and Balkh between the Uzbeks and Mughals. Kabul was, however, generally considered to belong to India. The Mughal sources refer to the *ṣūba* of Kabul which comprises Kashmir, Pakli, Bimbar, Swat, Bajaur, Kandahar and Zabulistan.[24] In the west it bordered on the Iranian territory of Khorasan which, from the irredentist Iranian point of view, not only referred to eastern Iran, including Kandahar, but also to Transoxania, including Herat. Interestingly, even in the early nineteenth century, the western Afghans, speaking of their home country, were not using the modern name of Afghanistan but still generally preferred the older appellation of Khorasan.[25]

The name Afghanistan in its modern sense did not emerge before the eighteenth century, parallel with the rise of the Durrani state. The early Timurid references denote an area which is much more limited in extent and which is roughly situated outside the main settled areas, south of the Safed Koh Range, in between the provinces of Kandahar and Sind.[26] Bābar described the mountains

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[24] Abū'l Faẓl ʿAllāmī, *The A'in-i Akbari of Abul Fazl*, trans. H. Blochmann, H.S. Jarrett (Calcutta, 1927-49), 2, p.349.

[25] M. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (Oxford, 1972), 1, p.201.

[26] See e.g. ʿAbd ur-Razzāq Samarqandī, "Notice de l'ouvrage persan qui a pour titre Matla assaadein ou majma albahrein, et qui contient l'histoire des sultans Shahrokh et Abou-Said (Maṭla us-Saʿdain)", trans. E.M. Quatremère, *Notice et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi et autres bibliothèques*, 14, 1 (Paris, 1843), pp.162,296 and Bābar, Ẓahīr ud-Dīn Muḥammad, *The Babur-Nama*, trans. A.S. Beveridge (London, 1922), p.200.

of Afghanistan as rather loathsome: "all low, scant of vegetation, short of water, treeless, ugly and good for nothing. . . the world has few mountains so useless and disgusting".[27] This waste was the territory of the Afghans and it corresponds fairly well with the early definitions of Roh and with the legendary home of the Afghans near the Takht-i Sulaiman, the highest mountain of the Sulaiman Range.[28]

As far as terminology is concerned, it may thus appear to the reader that he is left without precise ethnic or geographical definitions. Designations like "Afghan" or "Afghanistan" have a meaning which depends on the time and place of the context in which they are used. Obviously, in 1500 the term Afghan denoted a more open category of peoples than it did in 1800. Similarly, in 1800, its meaning in Iran differed from that in India. Therefore, all such labels should be considered as fluid categories liable to the fluctuations of the historical process.

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[27] Bābar, *Babur-Nama,*, p.223; in this sense he linked the mountains of Afghanistan with those of Khwaja Isma'il, Dasht and Duki.

[28] H.G. Raverty, *Notes on Afghanistan and Part of Baluchistan* (London, 1888), p.669.

CHAPTER ONE

TRADE AND EMPIRE IN CENTRAL ASIA AND INDIA

> *"Half pushed, half towed, he arrived at the high gate of the Kashmir Serai: that huge open square over against the railway station surrounded with arched cloisters, where the camel and horse caravans put up on their return from Central Asia. Here were all manner of Northern folk, tending, tethering ponies and kneeling camels; loading and unloading bales and bundles; drawing water for the evening meal at the creaking well-windlasses; piling grass before the shrieking, wild-eyed stallions; cuffing the surly caravan dogs; paying off camel-drivers; taking on new grooms; swearing shouting, arguing, and chaffering in the patched square."*
>
> Rudyard Kipling, *Kim.*[1]

1.1. Nomads and Traders

Since the second millennium B.C., Central Asia has played a major role in the history of civilizations in the surrounding areas. Although from time to time mounted "hordes" of Sakas, Kushanas, Huns, Turks and Mongols penetrated the more settled society of South Asia, the damage these sometimes massive invasions, or, more usually, gradual migrations, caused is often exaggerated as cataclysmic. Central Asia's image as a seething womb of nomadic hooligans was promulgated by the authorities of the settled states, born out of their frustrated attempts to control these—to them erratic—movements. This horizontal mobility could not be allowed to jeopardize the vertical hierarchy of the state. Hence, the nomad, driven by insatiable greed and ignorant of the rules of *adab*, was presented as the antithesis of civilized man.

Although the nomad's mobility threatened the cultivated lands, the relationship between nomadic and sedentary society could equally be highly symbiotic. The latter was more difficult in areas like the Central Asian steppes, where nomads were less integrated into the sedentary world than, for example, in the Middle East or

[1] (London: Pam Books Ltd., 1978), p.24.

India. In this respect, Owen Lattimore has stressed the differences between so-called "excluded" and "enclosed" nomads.[2] While the first dominated in the steppes of Central Asia the latter prevailed in the Middle East. The typology of pastoral nomadism has recently acquired further sophistication in the already mentioned work of Anatoly Khazanov. According to the latter, the political integration of nomads is related above all to their relation with the sedentary outside world.[3] At the same time, though, it appears that the economic interdependence between sedentary agriculture and pastoral nomadism was much closer in the Middle East than in most of Central Asia. In the Middle East market forces seem to have had a greater impact on pastoral nomadism, although commercial exchange was always mixed with some kind of tribute or ransom.[4] But, certainly as far as Central Asia is concerned, Khazanov is not too impressed by the idea of symbiosis. Instead, he prefers the notion of "compulsory co-existence accompanied by conflict and the struggle to supplant competitors".[5] Khazanov goes on to say that more often than not the nomads derived no profit from this relationship with the sedentary world but merely the elementary means of subsistence.[6] Hence, from time to time the nomads were forced to conquer a sedentary society in order to acquire the products they were unable to produce themselves.[7]

Although I agree with Khazanov that the nomads' relations with the outside world are of overriding importance for their political integration, I feel that the relationship between the two was more balanced, at least as far as India and its relations with Central Asia are concerned. Actually, both political circumstances and market forces were often in favour of the pastoral nomads. I have already mentioned some ways in which pastoralism contributed to the efficiency and mobility of the Indian rural economy. In fact, the state authorities were very much aware of these advantages. Apart from war-horses, the nomads provided the settled areas with commercial communications with and transport opportunities to outside

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[2] O. Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History* (London/New York, 1962), p.487.

[3] Khazanov, *Nomads*, pp.148ff,169ff.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp.202-18; See also Th. J. Barfield, "Tribe and State Relations: The Inner Asian Perspective" in Khoury & Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation*, p.171.

[5] Khazanov, *Nomads*, pp.33-4.

[6] *Ibid.*, p.212.

[7] *Ibid.*, p.228 (for a similar view, see Krader, *Peoples*, p.83).

markets. The profits from this circulated again in rural and urban investments. In this way the trading, and even the raiding, activities of the mobile world could be naturally tied in and combined with agrarian expansion. As will be shown further below, the nomadic tribes wandering between Central Asia and India, in what we now call Afghanistan, were closely linked with the cosmopolitan cities and the rich producer and consumer lands of South and Central Asia.

As the evidence from both India and Iran suggests, pastoral nomads should not be viewed as mere vagabonds always lacking sufficient means of support. On the contrary, their economy is far from primitive and requires considerable capitalization.[8] As a result, pastoralists always have the potentiality of an economic take-off. Their products necessitate large, long-term investments. When marketing their products the returns are often net profits as they pay virtually no rents and no taxes. Compared with the ordinary peasant in sedentary society, the nomad with a herd of about a hundred animals had a high standard of living.[9] It follows that the nomad usually declines to sedentarize and to become a peasant. Nevertheless, the reverse picture is a direct result of these advantages since there exists always a tendency to produce overpopulation. This means that substantial numbers of impoverished nomads must be regularly denomadized and become sedentary. This, however, does not mean that the pastoral economy itself is in permanent crisis but, rather, that the side-effects of the pastoralist success are shifted on to the sedentary society. More than pastoralism itself, this persistent need for sedentarization often caused instability and turbulence in both the pastoral nomadic and the sedentary world.[10]

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[8] For Iran, see: J.M. Smith Jr., "Turanian Nomadism and Iranian Politics", *IS*, 11 (1978), pp.57-81; F. Barth, *Nomads of South Persia* (London, 1961); Tapper, "Tribes"; R. Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East" in Khoury & Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation*, pp.48-74.

[9] This was the average herd among the Basseri nomads in Iran at the time of Barth's study (Barth, *Nomads*, p.31) but it appears from other earlier material that this was the minimum size and that many herds were very much larger (see for example: J.M. Smith Jr, "Mongol and Nomadic Taxation", *HJAS*, 30 (1970), pp.46-85 and M. Khodarkovsky, "Kalmyk-Russian Relations, 1670-1697. Development of a Pattern of Relations between Nomadic and Sedentary Societies", *CAJ*, 2 (1983-4), pp.4-35).

[10] Smith, "Turanian Nomadism", pp.59-60. This also sheds some new light on the export of military slaves from Central Asia as this could relief the destabilizing effects of sedentarization.

In discussing the issue of symbiosis, we should keep in mind that the pastoral nomad in pre-modern times was not only a shepherd but also a trader and cavalryman. The capacity to produce both war-horses and cavalry was one of his major assets.[11] The most substantial demand for war-horses and cavalry was provided by the many political courts of India. India was self-sufficient in virtually all essential goods save precious metals and horses and the latter had always been by far the most significant export product of Central Asia.[12] Seen from the Indian perspective, the *Mahābhārata* already linked the people of the north-western territories to their main asset by calling them *aśvaka* (horsefolk). This name occurs again in *aśvapati* and *shāhsawār*, lord of the horses, 1500 years later.[13] The Afghan merchants purchased their horses in Balkh and Bukhara. In the horse markets of the latter much of the stock was imported by Bukharian merchants from the surrounding steppes, where the well-bred Turkoman horses were especially renowned for their strength and endurance.[14] The Kabul merchants often bought the horses cheap and in a bad condition in order to fatten them at their own pastures and after that sold them with huge profits in India.[15]

Not surprisingly, horse-traders were regularly tempted to enlarge their businesses by going into politics. Their expertise, experience with and access to war-horses made them extremely valuable to the

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[11] Patricia Crone has already noted the political significance of the ecological conditions in Central Asia where pastoralists can keep large herds of horses, which was not possible in Arabia (P.Crone, *Slaves on Horses. The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980), pp.18-26).

[12] The north-eastern steppes of Inner Asia had a similar relationship with China (see e.g. D. Sinor, "Horse and Pasture in Inner Asian History", *Oriens Extremus*, 19 (1972), pp.171-83).

[13] This refers to the Turks' main military asset during the Delhi Sultanate (see S. Digby, *War-Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate* (Karachi, 1971), p.12). Cf. J. Law de Lauriston, *Mémoires sur quelque affaires de l'empire Mogol, 1756-1761* (Paris, 1913), pp.191-5. Masʾūdī relates that the second or third greatest king of his age was "the lord of the horse", the greatest of all Turkic kings, the king of the Toghuzghuz (Emel Esin, "The Horse Lore in Turkic Art", *CAJ*, 10 (1965), p.170).

[14] J.P. Falk, *Beiträge zur topographischen Kenntniss des russischen Reichs* (St. Petersburgh, 1785), 3, p.524. For an early nineteenth-century description of Central-Asian horses, see Khanikoff, *Bokhara: Its Amir and its People* (London, 1845), pp.198-206.

[15] Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, pp.386-8. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Mir Izzat Ullah reckoned the difference between cost price in Bukhara and selling price in India to be between 400 and 500 per cent (Mir Izzat Ullah, "Travels beyond the Himalaya", *The Quarterly Oriental Magazine* (1825), p.289).

wealthy rulers of the Indian subcontinent. There was no strict dichotomy between the commercial and the political entrepreneur. Many of the well-known Indo-Afghan rulers started their careers as horse-traders. This probably applies to the Lodi and Sur sultans, and certainly to the eighteenth-century local chiefs of Rohilkhand and Kasur, who carved out their states along the trade routes to Central Asia. It was not before the nineteenth century that the volume of this trade diminished and that, while small armies of infantrymen replaced the large Indian armies of horsemen, its political impact diminished accordingly. This altered the character of the entire relationship between India and its north-western neighbours.[16] But as long as the horse was the mainstay of the Indian military it remained the mainstay of the Central-Asian economy as well.

Although it was possible to raise horses in India, these were of inferior quality and insufficient in number. In comparison with Iran and Central Asia, India had a general lack of good pastures. When invaders with large-scale cavalry forces or merchants with large strings of horses entered the subcontinent they were always immediately faced with huge logistical problems. Hence, for great conquerors from Central Asia and Iran the long-term occupation of India was far from attractive. Although they were able to invade, they were unable to maintain their hold permanently over the conquered territories without relinquishing their trump card, the mobility and strength of their cavalry. For example, Tīmūr and Nādir Shāh opted to leave India to save their empires in Central Asia and Iran while the Mughals chose to create an Indian empire, but, as a result, could but dream of restoring their lost paradise in Ferghana. Only the Afghan *riyāsat* succeeded in combining dominion in Central Asia and India in a way that preceding rulers could not. In this light, it is certainly no coincidence that most of the Indo-Afghan states of the eighteenth century were located along the fringes of the South-Asian extension of the Arid Zone. Although the soil and climate of these regions was less favourable to settled agriculture, they were blessed with a high quality of natural grasses.[17] Moreover, the Arid Zone reflects the natural radius of action of the camel—by far

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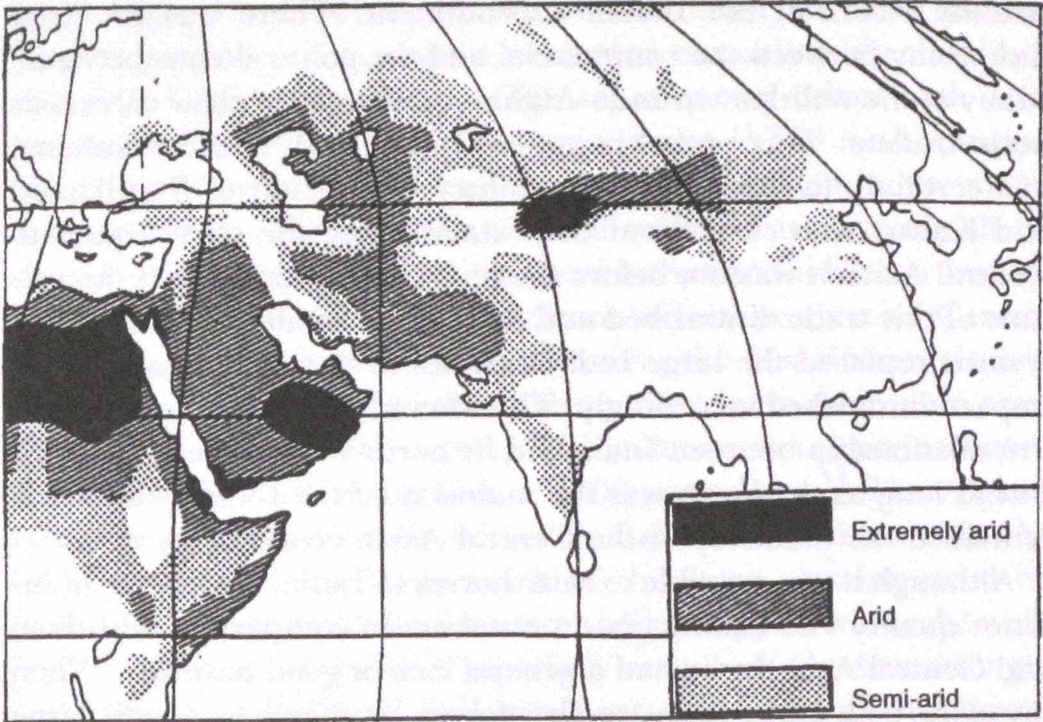
[16] See e.g. Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, p.388.

[17] See e.g. William Moorcroft, *Observations on the Breeding of Horses within the Provinces under the Bengal Establishment* (Simla, 1886), p.27: "It seems proved that the more sandy and dry the soil, every thing else alike, the more healthy are its horses."



Map 1.1. The Arid Zone

the most efficient beast of burden in Eurasia. As a consequence, strings of horses and camel caravans, coming from Iran and Central Asia, could directly reach the Indo-Afghan animal-depots and market-towns of Hindustan. For transport further inland, the animals either had to disperse or their loads had to be "transshipped" to other means of transport, like river-boats or bullocks.

Apart from horses, what other kind of trade items were exchanged between India and Central Asia? India received mainly fresh and dried fruits and nuts, several finished products from Russia and China and, sometimes, military slaves. Occasionally, raw silk from Bukhara and Kokand was brought to the commercial emporia of the Indus valley, especially Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur, where it was manufactured and then re-exported to eastern India.[18] In return, India's exports consisted chiefly of cotton textiles. Other important articles were indigo, sugar, pepper, and, recurrently, slaves.[19] Although it seems that in the eighteenth

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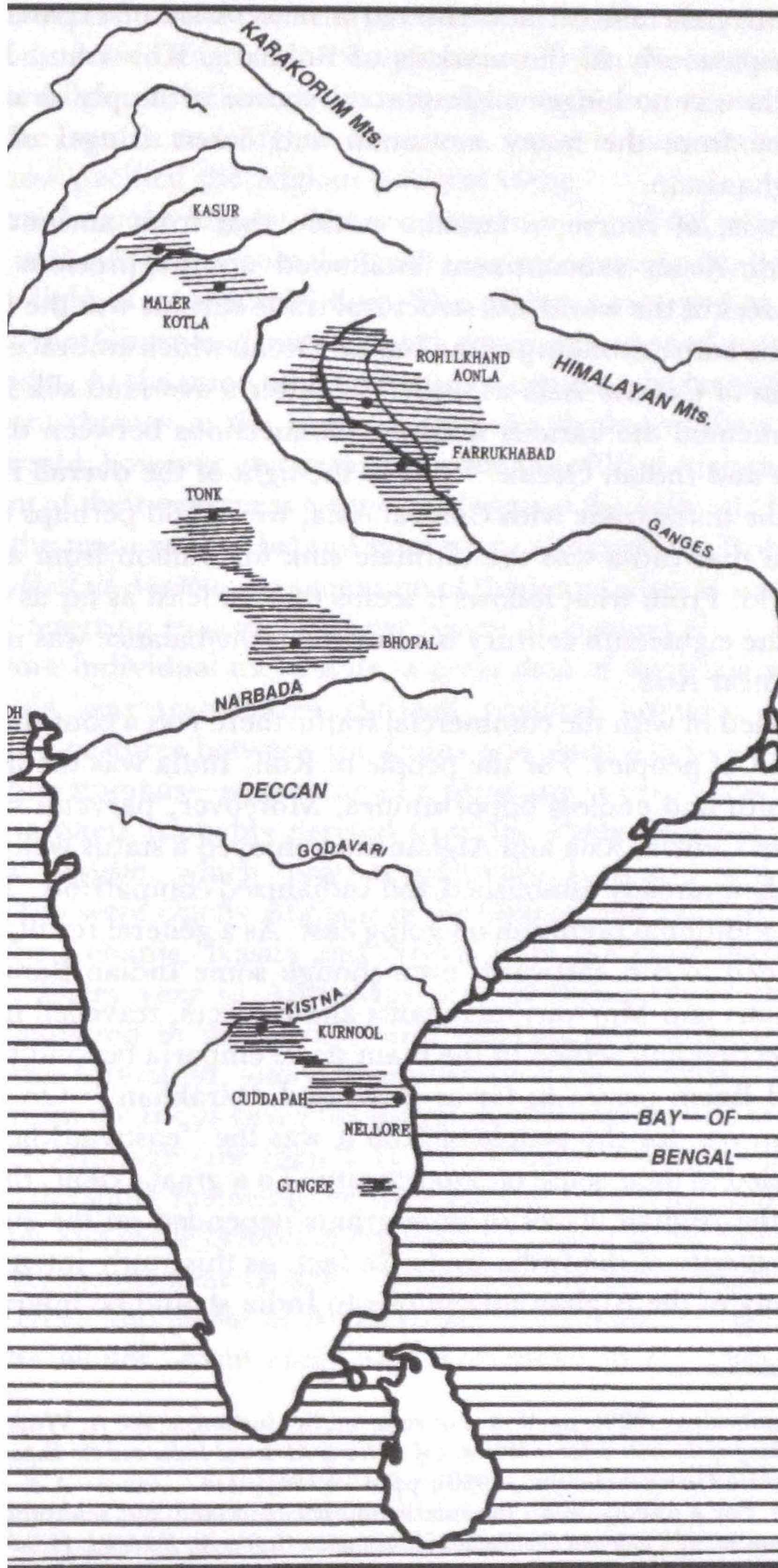
[18] A. Burnes, *Cabool: Being a Personal Narrative of a Journey to, and Residence in that City in the Years 1836, 7 and 8* (London, 1840), p.81; D. Kaushik, *India and Central Asia in Modern Times: A Study in Historical-Cultural Contacts from the Early Nineteenth Century* (New-Delhi, 1985), p.68.

[19] For the slave trade in the sixteenth century, see D.H.A. Kolff, Naukar, *Rajput and Sepoy, The Ethnography of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850*



Indo-Afghan *riyāsat* in India (1750–1850) (roughly indicated)

century the slave trade entered a new phase of expansion—most conspicuously in the markets of Bukhara, Khiva and Kashgar—India was no longer an important source of supply as most slaves came from the many mountain and desert fringes of Iran and Afghanistan.

It is, of course, a familiar notion that from ancient times the South-Asian subcontinent swallowed up the precious metal resources of the world. Its structural trade surplus was the foundation of the entire economy of the Indian Ocean which embraced the landmass of Central Asia as well. The latter's overland silk route complemented the various maritime connections between the Chinese Sea and Indian Ocean.[20] But in the light of the overall importance of the horse trade with Central Asia, we should perhaps modify the idea that India was the ultimate sink for bullion from all over the world. From what follows it seems that, at least as far as the middle of the eighteenth century is concerned, the balance was in favour of Central Asia.

Tied in with the commercial traffic there was a continuous movement of peoples. For the people of Roh, India was the land of vast wealth and endless opportunities. Moreover, parvenu immigrants from Central Asia and Afghanistan enjoyed a status well above that of their already established and Indianized compatriots. This meant an additional premium on going east. As a general result, migration tended to run eastward, even though some Indian Banias, mostly Khatri and Marwari merchants and bankers, travelled in the other direction and settled in the main trade emporia beyond the Khyber and Bolan passes as far as Baku and Astrakhan.[21] On the whole, however, for the people of Roh it was the "eastward ho" that appealed to their sense of opportunity. To a great extent, the intensity of the Afghan waves of immigrants depended on the stability and prosperity of the India trade. In fact, as this study intents to show, many of the Afghan migrations to India should be interpreted as a

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(Cambridge, 1990), pp.10-5. For some earlier instances, see A. Wink, *Al-Hind, the Making of the Indo-Islamic World, vol. 1: Early Medieval India and the Expansion of Islam, 7th-11th Centuries* (Leiden, 1990), pp.97-9,124,171-3.

[20] For a discussion on the interaction between land and sea routes, see: K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean. An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1985), pp.160-82.

[21] Very informative in this respect is Dale, "Indo-Russian Trade".

sign of commercial vitality and not, as convention often wants it, as a flight from chaos, stagnation or oppression.[22] On the contrary, the westward flow of bullion in the mid-eighteenth century, accentuated by the Iranian and Afghan invasions, seems to have enriched and somehow pacified the Afghan political scene.

In general I would suggest that the appearance and subsequent expansion of the Afghans from the tenth century onwards should be seen in the light of commercial flux. The Afghans emerged at the time when the Ghaznavid and Ghurid conquests opened up the world of India. At the same time, material or commercial incentives are recurrent themes in the Indian chronicles deploring their inroads. It should, however, not surprise us that the official Afghan accounts point at their eagerness for the *jihād* against the *kuffār* of Hind (India) as the main motive behind migration, although the Rohilla classic *Khulāṣat ul-Ansāb* makes mention of the temptation of Indian wealth, by referring to *qismat-abkhwur* (share of fortune).[23]

Apart from individual merchants, a great deal of the trade with Central Asia was transmitted through pastoral nomads, who traversed the pastures between the Indus and Amu Darya rivers. These trading nomads—something of a pleonasm—were known as Powindas, a name probably derived from the Pashtu *pawwal* and the Persian *pūyidan*, which mean respectively 'to graze' and 'to roam'.[24] They were chiefly Afghans of the Ghilzai and Lodi tribes, of which the Lohanis, Nasirs and Niyazi were the most marked subgroups. Every year in April-May tens of thousands of these Powindas gathered in the Derajat and subsequently migrated *en masse*, in tribal formation, joined by numerous other merchants and travellers, from the Indus valley to Ghazni, Kabul and beyond to the pastures of Qarabagh (see map 1.3). In October-November they returned to the south following the same itinerary. Leaving most of their families and cattle behind in the summer camps in the Derajat or the winter camps near Ghazni, the men of the tribes dispersed across the cities and *qaṣbas* of Afghanistan in the summer, and of India in the winter. Even cities like Hyderabad in the Deccan,

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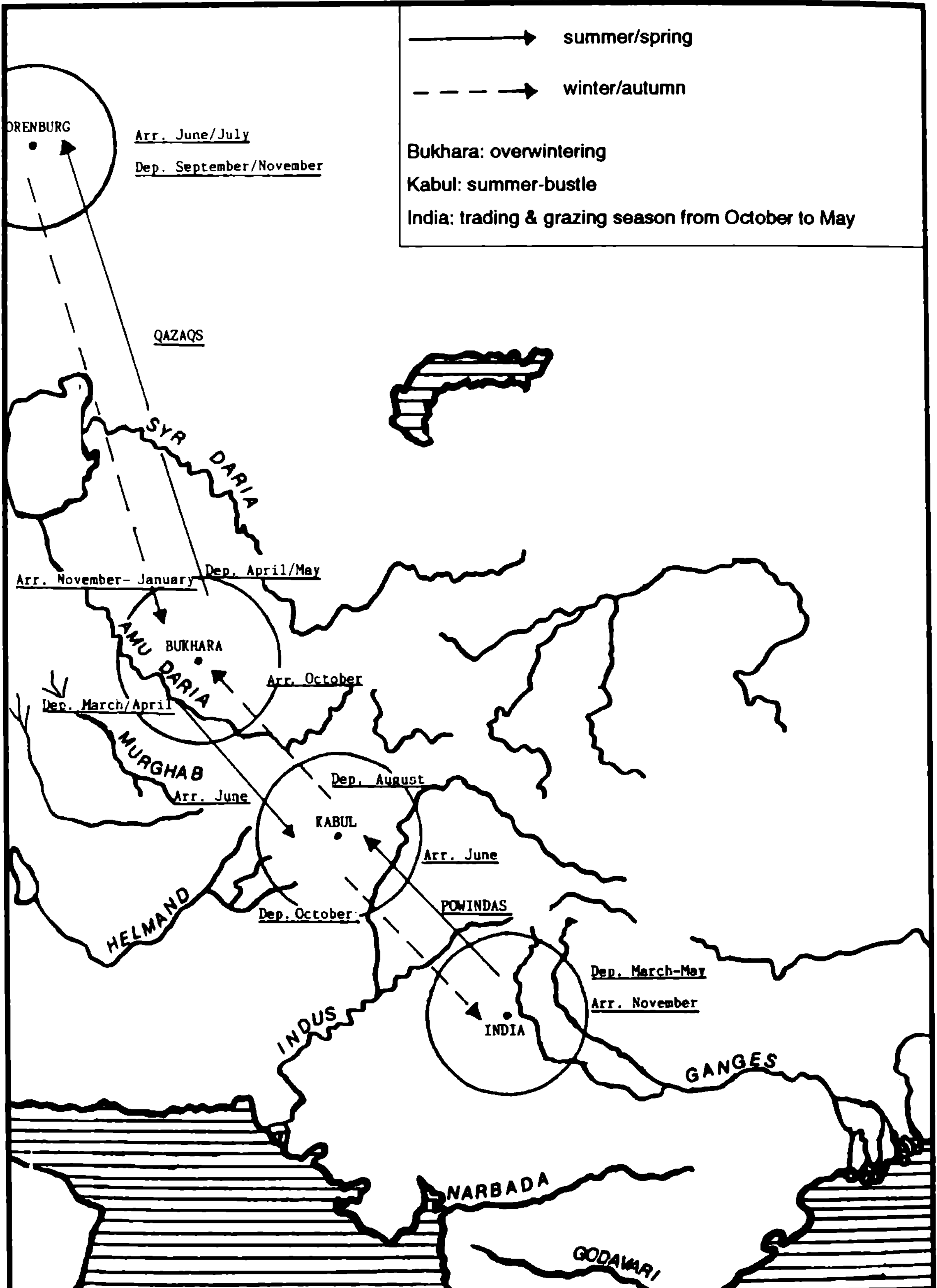
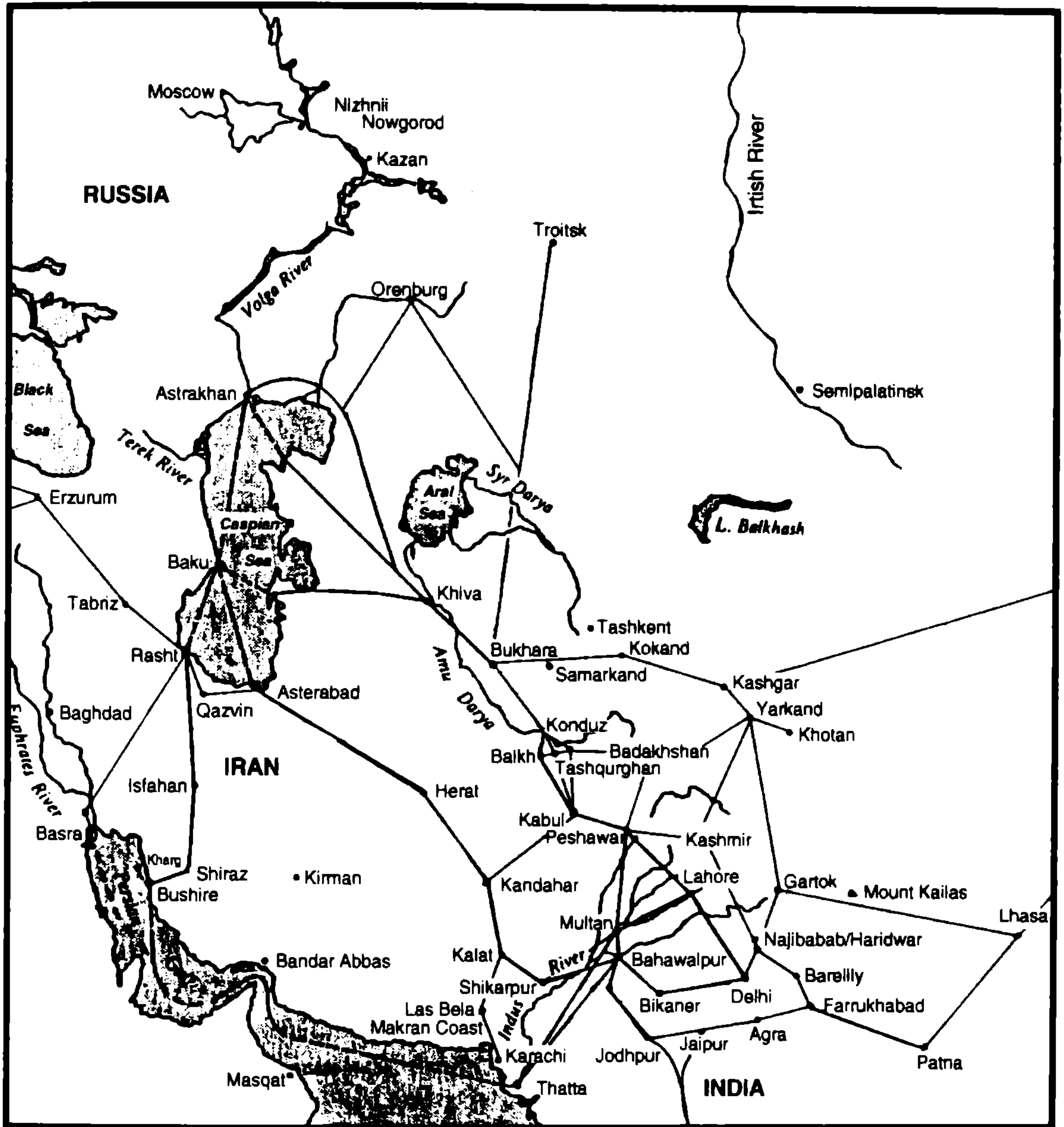
[22] See e.g. S. Chandra, *The Eighteenth Century in India: Its Economy and the Role of the Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs and the Afghans* (Calcutta, 1986), p.80.

[23] Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān, *Khulāṣat ul-Ansāb*, BM.Egerton.1104, f.13a.

[24] K. Ferdinand, "Nomad Expansion and Commerce in Central Afghanistan. A Sketch of some Modern Trends", *Folk*, 4 (1962), pp.157-8.



Map 1.3. Rhythm of trade: pastoral nomads in Central Asia and India



Map 1.4. Long-distance trade routes between Central Asia and India (1740–1800)

Patna, Benares and Calcutta in the east, and Orenburg in southern Russia, fell within their range of enterprise.

The Powinda caravans were led by a chosen *qāfila-bāshī*, mostly from the dominant tribe. Heavily armed they proceeded through the Sulaiman mountains to India. Because they travelled in such large groups they were relatively safe from attacks by various bandits and plunderers and it also gave them a strong position in their negotiations with the fiscal authorities or with wandering tribes. In the eighteenth century, however, they were expected to pay grazing duties to the local Durrani authorities of the Indus valley as compensation for the damage they caused during the winter.[25]

Similar to the sequence of the Powinda movements between northern India and Afghanistan, the Qazaq nomads wandering between Bukhara and southern Russia travelled southward to their summer pastures (T. *yaylaq*, Per. *tābistāngāh*) and northward to their winter pastures (T. *qīshlaq*, Per. *zimistāngāh*).[26] In both areas the pattern of the overland trade neatly followed the peripatetic rhythm of pastoral nomads.[27] In between these north-south extremes lay the bustling staple markets of Kabul and Bukhara. These cities were the central points in connecting the transhumance of the Powinda and Qazaq nomads. In Kabul both the caravans from India and those from Central Asia arrived simultaneously during the summer months of June and July. Without much loss of time merchants could again leave Kabul for the Indian markets in October or for Bukhara in August. Normally, the latter, travelling via Balkh, Tashqurghan or Konduz, would arrive there in October—at which time they had to await the arrival of the Orenburg caravan some time during November or December. Because during most of the winter season the Hindu Kush passes were blocked by snow, merchants were often forced to winter north of the Amu Darya. Meanwhile they could do business with other Central Asian merchants when caravans from Khiva and Kokand arrived at Bukhara during

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[25] G.W. Forrest (ed.), *Selections from the Travels and Journeys preserved in the Bombay Secretariat* (Bombay, 1906), p.148.

[26] Similar to South and Central Asia, the eighteenth-century Russian trade with Central Asia in livestock—mainly sheep and horses—went through a phase of vast expansion and of increased geographical specialization (I. Blanchard, *Russia's "Age of Silver": Precious Metal Production and Economic Growth in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1989), pp.215-87).

[27] This is also the case with the "vertical" migrations of hill tribes like the Bhotiyas of the western Himalayas and the Qirghiz around Kokand and Kashgar.

the autumn and winter months. Some of these settled down for study at one of the many *madrasas* of Bukhara.[28] At the following spring the merchants could choose between going northward to Orenburg or turning southward to Kabul. Arriving at Orenburg in June, the whole trip from India to southern Russia would have taken about one year.[29]

Finally, it is hard to quantify the merchandise these nomads carried with them. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Alexander Burnes believed that 24,000 camels were used annually. Around the same time the total value of the Powinda trade was estimated at 5 million Rs. According to Vigne there were five or six other caravans which annually passed through the Hindu Kush to Bukhara.[30] All the nineteenth-century travellers agree, however, that the Indus trade with Central Asia as a whole was very lively, although there had been some decrease compared to the previous century.[31] After the middle of the nineteenth century, the intensity of of South- and Central-Asian interaction was gradually reduced. The British Raj, China and Russia began to consolidate their influence and power. The political concerns of the players of the "Great Game" were incompatible with a thriving Afghan horse-trader and mercenary *riyāsat* spanning the divide.

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[28] Alexander Lehmann observed that many students at the *madrasas* were people who regularly accompanied trade caravans (A. Lehmann, *Alexander Lehmann's Reise nach Buchara und Samarkand in den Jahren 1841 und 1842*, ed. G. von Helmersen (St. Petersburgh, 1852), p.197).

[29] Of course it was possible to travel much quicker without any stops but this was far more dangerous and far less lucrative.

[30] Burnes, *Cabool*, p.78; E. Balfour, *The Cyclopaedia of India and Eastern and Southern Asia* (Graz, 1967), pp.274-5; G.T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan and of a Residence at the Court of Dost Muhamed with Notices of Runjit Singh, Khiva and the Russian Expedition* (London, 1840), p.70.

[31] Cf. H.G. Raverty, *Notes*, pp.659-60; Burnes, *Cabool*, pp.56,84; A. Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara* (London, 1839), 3, pp.315-65; L.F. Ferrières de Sauveboeuf, *Mémoires historiques, politiques et géographiques des voyages . . faits en Turquie, en Perse et en Arabie depuis 1782 jusqu'en 1789* (Paris, 1790), 2, pp.11-3; Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, pp.232,383; Forrest, *Selections*, p.107; J.B. Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan in the Years 1821 and 1822* (London, 1825), p.87; J. Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea* (London, 1753), 2, p.27; J.M. Kinneir, *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire* (London, 1813), pp.113-4, 181-2, 214; C. Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Belochistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab* (London, 1842), 1, pp.353ff, 2, p.107; Mohan Lal, *Journal of a Tour through the Panjab, Afghanistan, Turkistan, Khorasan and Part of Persia* (Calcutta, 1834), pp.102ff; H. Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sinde* (London, 1816), pp.8-78, 202-29, 281-421; Vigne, *Personal Narrative*, pp.425-41; J. Elton, *Tagebuch über seine Reise von Moskou nach den nordlichen Gegenden von Persien* (Hamburg, 1790), p.42.

1.2. Central Asia: Russian and Chinese Expansion

During the eighteenth century, Central Asia became the central stage and meeting point of Russian and Chinese imperialism. This engendered some important changes, which affected the political and commercial developments of South Asia through the existing commercial channels. Since the demise of the Mughal state and British expansion dominate the historiography of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India, one is inclined to underestimate the impact of political shifts occurring beyond the north-west frontier which, however, equally captured the imagination of the Indian contemporaries.

The Tsarist reign of Peter the Great marks the intensification of Russian relations with Iran and the beginning of active Russian involvement in Central Asia. By controlling the trade routes to Khiva, Bukhara and Kashgar, Peter hoped to get direct access to the high profits of the India trade. His immediate aim in Iran was to attract the bulk of the silk trade, which normally followed the Levant route along the market towns of Russia's main rival, the Ottoman Empire. To achieve their aspiration, the Russians conferred extensive trading rights on the Armenian merchant community of Julfa, a suburb of Isfahan where they had been settled by the Safavid emperor ʿAbbās the Great to attract their trade and commercial network. Armenian enterprises covered almost a hemisphere from Amsterdam to China and, under Russian protection, virtually monopolized the Russian silk imports. In the middle of the eighteenth century, it appears that as much as one third of the total Iranian silk production was directed towards Moscow and the market towns of Central Europe.[32] During the eighteenth century the share of Russian imports of raw silk in the turnover of trade increased relative to the transit trade because raw silk was used increasingly as a raw material input by Russian cottage industries and silk

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[32] For eighteenth-century Armenian trade, see: Hanway, *Historical Account*, 1, p.37, 2, pp.27-31; Kinneir, *Memoir*, pp.160-3; J. Fraser, *Travels and Adventures in the Persian Provinces on the Southern Banks of the Caspian Sea* (London, 1826), p.358; H. Kellenbenz, "Der russische Transithandel mit dem Orient in 17. und zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts", *JGO*, 12 (1964-1965), pp.481-98; A.A. Kurkdjian, "La politique économique de la Russie en Orient et la commerce arménien au début du XVIIIe siècle", *REA*, 11 (1875-6), pp.245-54; P.D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, 1985), pp.179-206; L. Khachikian, "The Ledger of the Merchant Hovhannes Joughayetsi", *JAS*, 8, 3 (1966), pp.153-86.

manufacturers. Generally speaking, the eighteenth century witnessed a further expansion of the Russo-Iranian trade, also partly as a result of the enormous growth of the Russo-Siberian silver output.[33] Moreover, after the eclipse of Safavid Iran the Julfa Armenians were increasingly replaced by their compatriots from northern Iran, Russia, and Central Europe.[34] This fits in remarkably well with Ricks' assessment of an accelerated migration of country merchants from southern Iran to the northern towns and ports of Iran and to Russia.[35]

Russia's ambitions in Central Asia were stimulated by fervent reports from Russian agents which extolled the vast gold supplies of Yarkand and the superb trade prospects of Khiva and Bukhara. Tsar Peter sent some exploratory and military expeditions to Khiva and Yarkand. Most of these failed, but Russian interest had been kindled.[36] The subsequent building programme, which resulted in a line of forts-cum-trading posts circumventing the Qazaq steppes but penetrated deeply into the inner-Asian heartland, is significant in this respect. This Orenburg-line was not meant as a fortified frontier, but rather as a welcoming gateway for newly created trade opportunities.[37] With the establishment of "*qaṣbahs*" like Orenburg, Troitsk and Semipalatinsk the Russians enticed many Qazaq, Bukharian and Afghan merchants to exchange their Asian merchandise for Russian goods in Russian towns. The Orenburg route constituted a viable alternative for the Caspian Sea traffic via Astrakhan, which since the seventeenth century had already housed an Indian merchant community. During the eighteenth century Indian

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[33] See Blanchard, *Age of Silver*, and the excellent economic survey of A. Kahan, *The Plow, the Hammer and the Knout* (Chicago, 1985), pp.215-28.

[34] See e.g. Anonymous, *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* (London, 1939), 1, pp.704-5; Ferrières de Sauveboeuf, *Mémoires*, 2, p.82; G.A. Olivier, *Voyages dans l'Empire Ottoman, l'Egypt et la Perse* (Paris, 1807), 3, pp.174-81. Probably, this process, which continued into the nineteenth century, should be related to the eighteenth-century expansion of Central-European transit trade centred at Leipzig (see e.g. I de Hagemeister, *Essai sur les resources territoriales et commerciales de l'Asie occidentale* (St Petersburgh, 1839), pp.230-2).

[35] T. Ricks, "Politics and Trade in Southern Iran, 1745-65" (PhD thesis, Indiana, 1975), p.334.

[36] Cf. two articles by C. Poujol: "Le géodesiste Russe et le chah de Perse. Khiva, 1740", *MOOI*, 1 (1984) and "Les voyageurs Russes et l'Asie Centrale. Naissance et declin de deux mythes, les réserves d'or et la voie vers l'Inde", *CAS*, 4 (1985).

[37] As in fact were the Roman *limes* and the "Great Wall" of China.

goods could reach Astrakhan either by sea via the Persian Gulf, mainly through Basra or Bushire and from there overland to Rasht, or by land via the southern route of Kandahar, Herat and Mashhad to Astarabad and the northern routes via Kabul, the Balkh area (including Konduz and Tashqurghan), Bukhara and Khiva.[38] For the merchants coming from Russia the trade via Astrakhan was certainly more convenient, but they nevertheless were willing to travel further to obtain the valuable goods brought by Qazaq, Kalmuk, Uzbek, Armenian, and Afghan merchants. Although Astrakhan remained the major Russian port for the Iranian trade, Orenburg took over as the starting-point for commerce with the Central Asian steppes, Bukhara, Afghanistan and to a lesser extent also with India. The opening of the India trade is exemplified by a contemporary Indian report which refers to the settlement of some 300 Gujarati families in the new city of Orenburg in the middle of the century.[39]

Data concerning the duties collected along the Orenburg line indicate a very rapid growth of trade after its establishment in 1738: annual imports rose from about 50,000 to 100,000 Rubles during the early 1740's to a maximum of about 350,000 Rubles in 1768 and 1769. Apart from the trade in Qazaqi horses and sheep, which counted for half of the total imports, the bulk of the imported caravan goods consisted of silks, cottons, rhubarb, some Indian goods and, around the middle of the century, also a considerable amount of specie. In return Russia exported mainly foreign goods like European textiles and metal goods.[40] The Russian authorities successfully tried to attract Asian merchants by permitting duty-free importation of gold, silver and jewels. According to the eighteenth-century Russian geographer Pjotr Rytschkow, writing from Orenburg in 1762, Bukharan merchants increasingly brought large amounts of Indian specie into circulation which triggered off new imports of fine textiles and other Indian piece-goods into Central Asia.[41] Not surprisingly, prices of Orenburg goods were quoted in

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[38] See Russian documents in S. Gopal (ed. and trans.), *Indians in Russia* (Delhi, 1988), pp.239-50.

[39] Comte de Modave, *Voyages en Inde du Comte de Modave 1773-1776*, ed. J. Deloche (Paris, 1971), p.405.

[40] Kahan, *Plow*, p.231.

[41] P. Rytschkow, *Orenburgische Topographie oder ausführliche Beschreibung des Gouvernements Orenburg aus dem Jahre 1762* (Leipzig/Weimar, 1983), p.138. Cf. Hanway, *Historical Account*, 1, p.345.

both Russian Rubles and Indian Rupees.[42] But not only Indian imports increased. The price differential for specie between Russia and Central Asia encouraged Russian, Armenian and Greek merchants to bring foreign goods, particularly Dutch broadcloth, British woollens and possibly imported metal manufactures, to Orenburg and to exchange them for Indian cash.[43]

It appears that some of the Orenburg bullion was part of the immense quantity of Indian loot, which was carried off from the Mughal cities to Khorasan and Afghanistan as a result of the campaigns of Nādir Shāh and Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī. Part of this wealth was transmitted to Russian Asia.[44] From 1748 to 1755 the Qirghiz (probably Qazaqs), Bukharians and Khivians are reported to have possessed a great quantity of money, which was part of the treasure of Nādir Shāh, and to have reached the Russian frontiers "with bags full of Indian Rupees and other oriental coins, or with ingots of precious metal".[45] Probably, this flow to the north was the result of both pillaging and trading, the latter following the increased demand for war-horses and mercenaries. Accordingly, Bukhara and Khiva found themselves in a position to pay for their initial trade deficit with Russia.[46] At the same time, however, the monetary resources of the Mughals, which were recycled across Central Asia, generated a renewed purchasing power vis-à-vis the Mughal empire. Only during the last quarter of the century the influx of specie greatly diminished both as a result of increased domestic silver production in Russia and, simultaneously, the drying up of—mainly Indian—bullion resources in Afghanistan and Central Asia.[47]

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[42] G. Bongard-Levin & A. Vigasin, *The Image of India. The Study of Ancient Indian Civilisation in the USSR* (Moscow, 1984), p.35.

[43] For Orenburg trade, see also C.M. Foust, *Muscovite and Mandarine: Russia's Trade with China and its Setting 1727-1805* (Chapel Hill, 1969), pp.234-5. Very informative is Marbault, *Essai sur le commerce de Russie avec l'histoire de ses découvertes* (Amsterdam, 1777), pp.82-4. Interestingly, Marbault speaks of a very brisk trade until the British penetrated into northern India.

[44] The plunder that Nādir Shāh and Aḥmad Shāh carried away from India was valued by contemporary reporters differently, but its value ranges somewhere between 500 to 1000 million Rs which would be between 3 to 6 times the total value of the East India Company's imports from Asia (thus including S.E. Asia and China) in the same period from about 1740 to 1761.

[45] Vigne, *Personal Narrative*, pp.434-5; Hanway, *Historical Account*, 1, p.349.

[46] Valikhanov, *Russians in Central Asia*, trans. R. Michell (London, 1865), pp.457-8.

[47] In the nineteenth century the situation was reversed as cash was exported

Nonetheless, at the end of the century the Orenburg trade still flourished although increasingly confined to a terminal trade with Central Asia, paid with Russian money and conditioned by the rapid Russian colonization of Siberia.[48]

Simultaneously, the eastern parts of Central Asia were undergoing similar processes of change. While the Manchus established their power in China proper, the western Mongol or Kalmuk tribe (Oyirad) of the Jungars unified the various countries on and beyond the Chinese Inner-Asian frontiers. At its height, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Jungar Empire included Tibet, Kashgar, Koko Nor and Tashkent. In addition the Jungars retained a close relationship with their kinsmen in the west, the Torgut Kalmuks of the Volga basin. Throughout this vast area a new mould of Lamaïst-Buddhism emerged which fitted in with the Kalmuk control of the long-distance trade routes from the Volga to the China Sea. As reported by the British agent Bogle, large numbers of Kalmuk pilgrims-cum-traders made regular visits to the holy shrines of Tibet accompanied by their camels loaded with furs and other Siberian goods.[49] According to the French historian Courant, the Kalmuk convoys protected trade from Bukhara to the Ural mountains in the west and as far as Beijing in the east. The range of this commerce is further exemplified by the fact that Torgut horses from the Volga were exported to and sold as far east as at Köke Qota (Qinghecheng) in north-eastern China. Although several clashes occurred, both among the various Mongol tribes themselves and with the Qazaq and Manchu neighbours, the Kalmuk polity stimulated trade, especially with Russia and China.[50] Because of this convergence of east-west relations the Kalmuks paved the way for the subsequent Russian and Chinese expansion. The Jungar hegemony was finally ended as a result of the Manchu annexation of Jungaria, Kashgar and Tibet in the mid-eighteenth century.[51]

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from Russia to Central Asia and Afghanistan, see Mir Izzat Ullah, "Travels beyond the Himalaya", p.138; Fraser, *Narrative*, Appendix, p.95.

[48] Kahan, *Plow*, pp.230-3; Rytschkow, *Topographie*, pp.133-141.

[49] *NAI*, FPD, S, 24-2-1775 (3-4) (d), no.4: "Memoir on Trade of Tibet", f.7; see also J. Cook, *Voyages and Travels through the Russian Empire, Tartary and Part of the Kingdom of Persia* (Edinburgh, 1780), 1, p.311.

[50] John Bell of Antermony, *Travels from St. Petersburgh in Russia to Various Parts of Asia* (Edinburgh, 1788), 1, p.236; Falk, *Beiträge*, 1, pp.185 ff.

[51] The best account available on the Kalmuk Empire is still M. Courant, *L'Asie Centrale aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: empire kalmouk ou empire mantchou?* (Lyon/Paris,

As had previously been the case under the Kalmuks, the Chinese left most of the local government of their newly annexed territories in the hands of the indigenous elites: the Naqshbandi Khojas in Kashgar and the Phola Dynasty in Tibet. But it was the Chinese conquest which integrated Central Asia further into the growth-economy of Manchu China.[52] As a general result, long-distance east-west trade between China and Central Asia partly shifted from Jungaria to Xinjiang.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, following Kalmuk and Chinese interventions in Tibet, the Jesuit padre Ippolito Desideri witnessed the swift dethesaurization of Tibet's famous *richesses steriles* and also the increased imports of Chinese silver which not only triggered off massive inflation but most of all assured the monetary inclusion of Tibet in the Chinese economy.[53] Although direct contacts between Kokand and India through Kashgar were forbidden, direct Chinese trade relations with the western khanates and with India remained undisturbed.[54] Through the building of new trading posts (*urtengs*) by the Chinese and the further harmonization and pacification of the commercial infrastructure, the existing intercourse was even intensified. Thanks to Kalmuk and Chinese expansion, the Sufi orders of Central Asia were able to integrate the various isolated Muslim communities of the seventeenth century into the solid network of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from which they were able to launch a new wave of islamization in Central Asia.[55] Indeed repercussions of Chinese expansion on India and Afghanistan were felt through the several new tributary relationships which China created with the surrounding states

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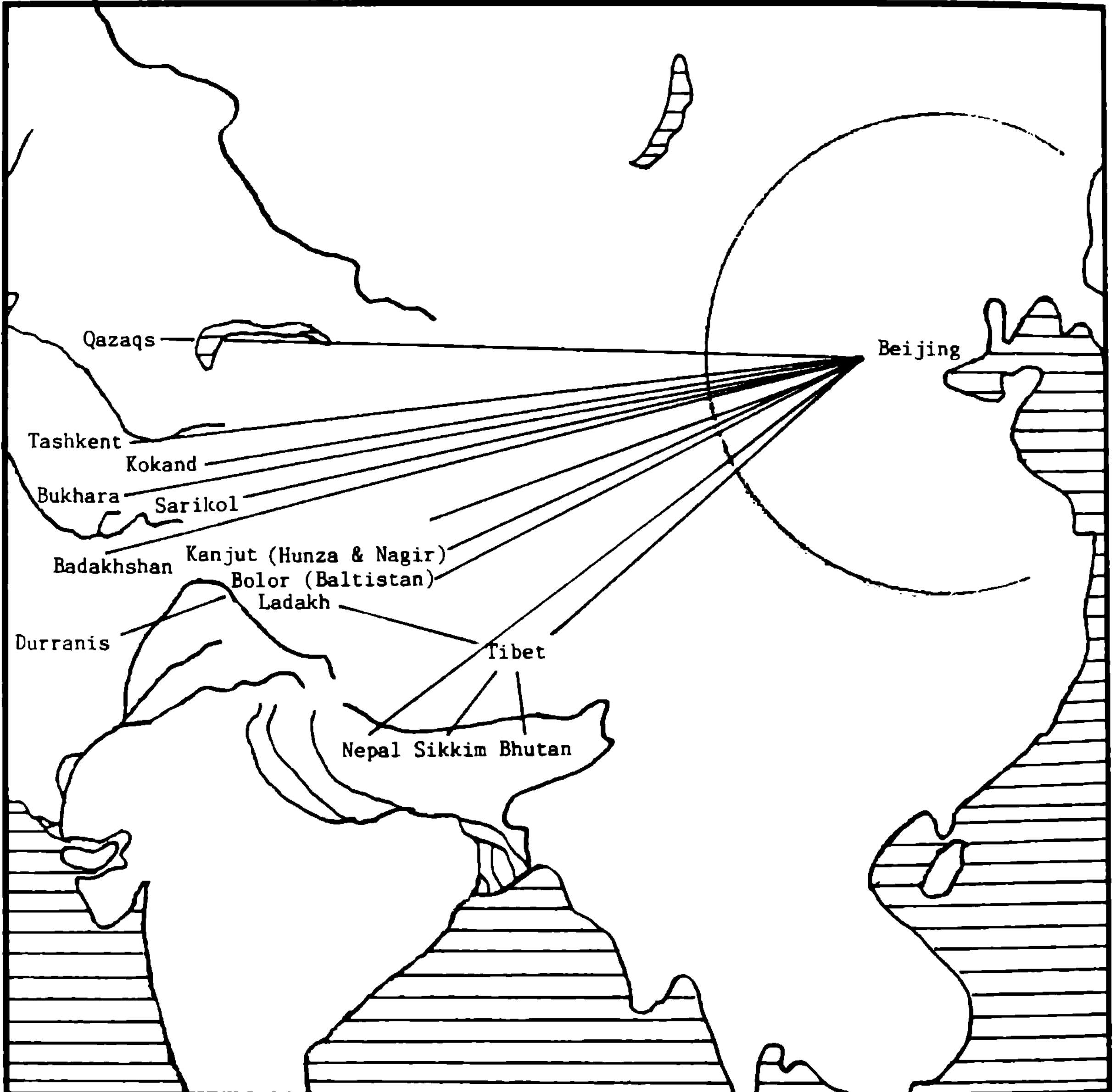
1912); see also C.R. Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* (London, 1989), especially pp.50-1,67-8.

[52] S. Naquin & E.S. Rawsky, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven/London, 1987), pp.194-5; cf. C. Markham, *Narrative of the Mission of G. Bogle to Tibet, and the Journey of J. Manning to Lhasa, with Notes and Lives* (London, 1879), pp.124-30; S. Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet; Containing a Narrative of a Journey through Bootan and Part of Tibet* (London, 1800), pp.372-3.

[53] J. Desideri, *An Account of Tibet. The Travels of Ippolito Desideri of Pistora s.j. 1712-1727*, ed. and trans. F. de Filippi (London, 1932), pp.157,164-5.

[54] W.M. Wathen, "Memoir of the U'sbeck State of Kokan", *JASB*, 32 (1834), p.376.

[55] J. Fletcher, "Les 'voies' (turuq) soufies en Chine" in A. Popovic & G. Veinstein (eds.), *Les ordres mystiques de l'Islam: chéminement et situation actuelle* (Paris, 1986), pp.14,21.



Map 1.5. Chinese perspective (c. 1780)

of its new province of Xinjiang. Kanjut (i.e. Hunza and Nagaur), Sarikol (i.e. Taxkorgan in the Pamir mountains), Kokand, Badakhshan, and the client states of Tibet: Ladakh, Sikkim and Bhutan, undertook regular tribute missions to Beijing and Lhasa. Even the far-off Qazaqs and states like Tashkent, Bukhara and Durrani Afghanistan were in the Manchu view tributary polities of the empire.[56] The value of the transferred tribute was always exceeded by the returning merchandise. Hence, tributary relations were highly lucrative for the participating states. Besides, the way in which the tribute caravans were organised shows how intense political and commercial interests were interwoven and how much room was left to the inventive merchant. The seventeenth-century Jesuit De Goes gives us the following quintessential description from Kashgar:

> "Most merchants coming to this town arrive from the west pretending to be ambassadors (. . .) the right of organizing and leading a caravan (to Cathay) was sold by the King of Kashghar to the highest bidder, whom he appointed his ambassador investing him with absolute authority over his fellow travellers. Then in consideration of large sums of money and presents the leader associated with himself four others with the title of ambassadors, after which he enrolled a suite of 72 travellers who likewise had to buy their admission."[57]

1.3. India: Afghan Ascendancy

Reviewing the previous sketch of eighteenth-century Central-Asian history, one can perceive a dual process of Chinese and Russian expansion, which opened up new outlets for the Central-Asian economy and linked it, in a string of numerous, small-scale commercial transactions, to the markets of Europe and China. Obviously, as in all pre-modern overland travel it was not necessary for traders to carry their merchandise from one end of the road, let say Orenburg, to the other, let say Delhi. Goods passed through a series of hands, from one depôt to the other, responding not only to long-distance demands but to the various needs of local exchange as well (see e.g. map 1.3). Albeit through many intermediaries, the implications of this Central-Asian political and commercial boost were felt to the

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[56] J. Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800" in D. Twitchett & J.K. Fairbank (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China, 10,1* (Cambridge, 1978), p.37.
[57] C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia* (The Hague, 1924), p.25.

south of the Caucasus, Hindu Kush and Himalaya mountains, well into the existing structures of the Mughal and Safavid empire. Placing the emphasis on trade, the following discussion will attempt to detect some of the major political shifts which appear to have been effected through Central Asian channels.

Analysing the accounts of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travellers, it appears that Bukhara, Kokand, Afghanistan and Baluchistan were relatively flourishing trading areas. The overall picture of Iran is less positive however.[58] Nearly all of its trade with Bukhara and an increasing share of its India trade went via the cities of Durrani Afghanistan, mainly Balkh, Herat, Kandahar and Kabul. For example, during the late eighteenth century, American and Bengal indigo transports, via the Cape and Aleppo, to northern Iran and southern Russia were partly replaced by the overland routes via Afghanistan; as Pallas reported:

> "Since the despots of Avganie are in undisturbed possession of Kyshmir, Multan and other Indian provinces, it [indigo] is brought in abundance from Lahor to Persia, and thence even to Astrakhan."[59]

As a result of all this, during the Durrani period the Afghan proportion of total Iranian foreign trade amounted to around 30 per cent.[60]

The Afghan lands, with their traditional links to India and Iran, found themselves in the best strategic position to benefit from the upsurge of Central-Asian trade with Russia and China. We have already suggested in which way the Afghan pastoral nomads were able to prosper in an atmosphere of increasing commercial prospects. The Abdali-Afghan and Ghilzai-Afghan pastoralists of Herat and Kandahar became part of a chain which united India, Iran and Central Asia. It is widely known that the Ghilzai leaders, who dealt the final blow to the Safavids, disposed of rich resources which they had collected from "the treasures of India, the Ottoman Empire, Turkestan, China and their own territories."[61] The decisive factor

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[58] For the relative position of Afghanistan and Persia, see Hanway, *Historical Account*, 2, p.27; Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, p.232; Elton, *Tagebuch*, p.42.

[59] P.S. Pallas, *Travels through the Southern Provinces of the Russian Empire in the Years 1793 and 1794* (London, 1802), p.288. Cf. Fukasawa, *Toilerie*, p.53.

[60] G. Hambly, "An Introduction to the Economic Organisation of Early Qajar Iran", *Iran*, 2 (1964), p.77.

[61] Muḥammad Hāshim Aṣaf, *Rustam al-Hukama. Persische Geschichten 1694-1835*

in their Iranian successes was not so much their fighting capacity as their ability to persuade and bribe the principal personalities of the Safavid court. Subsequent Ghilzai rule—although short-lived—integrated east Iran into the Afghan polity.

The Abdali tribe (*ulūs*) of Kandahar had close relations with Mughal India, and especially with the Multan area, where some of its members were known as camel-traders. Their rise to political leadership was partly the result of intense Mughal-Safavid rivalry for Kandahar. The Abdalis successfully played off both imperial parties against each other and, as a consequence, many newly gained imperial titles, privileges and much cash earned them a great rise in status and power. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Abdalis were ousted from Kandahar by the Ghilzais but with the help of their Multani tribesmen they succeeded in taking Herat from the Iranians in 1717. Hence, at that time, the Abdali tribes were spread out, along the traditional trade routes between Khorasan and Sind, towards Multan and Herat. They further integrated this area even before it was conquered by Nādir Shāh and Aḥmad Shāh a few decades later.

Their rise to prominence is also connected with their services as mercenaries in Nādir Shāh's numerous campaigns. In return for their military service, more than half of the settled Kandahar country was bestowed as a revenue grant (*tiyūl*) on the favoured Abdali chiefs. This triggered off a process of sedentarization accompanied by a substantial expansion of the cultivated acreage, financed by the new influx of wealth brought back by the Abdali horsemen in Nādir Shāh's service.[62] After Nādir Shāh's death (1747) his Indo-Iranian empire collapsed and new patterns of power were created out of its remaining fragments. From 1748, the Abdalis—now restyled Durranis—made Kandahar their new capital and expanded their territory mainly to the south and east, thrusting their way to India and the Persian Gulf. Southern Iran, already deserted by Nādir Shāh, decayed and, as noted already, became increasingly isolated

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elebt, erinnert und erfunden. Das Rustam at-Tawarih in deutscher Bearbeitung (Rustam ut-Tawārīkh), ed. and trans. B. Hoffman (Berlin, 1986), 1, p.254; see also the anonymous history: *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, 1, p.563, and L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge, 1958), p.85.

62 H. Rawlinson, "Report on the Dooranee Tribes" in L.W. Adamec (ed.), *Gazetteer of Afghanistan, vol.6: Kandahar* (Graz, 1985), pp.509-17. See also Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, p.302.

and exposed to what Lambton calls: "the resurgence of tribalism and the decline of bureaucracy".[63] After the middle of the century, the isolation was somewhat relieved by the Zand ruler Karīm Khān, who attracted some of the Persian Gulf trade to Bushire, captured Basra for some years (1776-79), and seems to have established peaceful relations with the Durranis.[64] This last achievement meant that India's overland trade relations with Iran via Multan were temporarily restored.[65]

The ships of the India trade which went across the Persian Gulf no longer called predominantly at the Iranian ports. Instead, trade was redirected via the Arabian coast to Ottoman Basra. This process of circumventing southern Iran was facilitated by the incorporation of Baluchistan, Makran and Sind into the new Durrani state. The Brahoi rulers of Baluchistan stimulated the southern trade through their ports of Karachi, Gwadar, Sonmiani and Chah Bahar. Their Durrani suzerains developed a direct line of communication, starting from Karachi and running through Makran, Las Bela and Kalat to Kandahar. From Chah Bahar in the west, merchants could go north to Khash and from there reach either Kandahar or Kirman. With the ports of the Malabar coast, Kutch and Kathiawar, the Makran and Sind harbours increasingly usurped the dominant role of Surat in this area.[66] The Durrani incorporation of Makran and Sind connected the Central Asian hinterland with the Persian Gulf and its main entrepôt, Masqat. Indeed, political and commercial relations between Afghanistan and Masqat were intensified. Commercial intercourse was primarily based on Indian cloth, but slaves from Africa and Baluchistan were important trade items as well.[67]

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[63] A.K.S. Lambton, "Tribal Resurgence", pp.108-29.

[64] Modave, *Voyage*, p.336; ʿAbd ul-Karīm Nadīm b. Ismāʿīl Bukhārī, *Histoire de l'Asie Centrale par Mir Abdoul Kerim Boukhary*, (*Aḥwal-l Kābūl wa Bukhārā*), trans. C. Schefer (Paris, 1876), p.17.

[65] For a similar observation for the year 1753 from a Middle Eastern perspective, see J.G. Nanninga (ed.), *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis van de Levantschen Handel, vol.3: 1727-1765* (RGP, Grote Serie, 95) (The Hague, 1952), p.261.

[66] Cf. Das Gupta, "India and the Indian Ocean", p.141. See also L.F. Rushbrook-Williams, *The Black Hills: Kutch in History and Legend* (London, 1958).

[67] E.g. R.M. Savory, "The History of the Persian Gulf A.D. 600-1800" in A.J. Cottrell (ed.), *The Persian Gulf States* (Baltimore/London, 1980), p.35 (see also footnote 68). For the African trade between Zanzibar and Mandvi, see A. Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar* (London, 1987), pp.40-1. For a description of the nineteenth-century Masqat slave trade in Baluchistan and Kandahar, see: H.B. Lumsden, *The Mission to Qandahar* (Calcutta, 1860), p.108 (some of the slaves were brought by pilgrims from Masqat); C. Masson, *Narrative of a Journey to Kalat* (London, 1843), p.50; Pottinger, *Travels*, p.63.

Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī enhanced this new north-south traffic by stimulating the *hajj* via Sind, Masqat, and Basra, and from there following the traditional caravan routes to Mecca, where he erected a separate mosque and caravanserai for the Afghan pilgrims.[68] Down the coast from Masqat to Basra, several political formations emerged among the new local ports and along desert routes as these became increasingly engaged in the carrying trade to the Middle East.[69]

Overland trade in Iran, especially from Bandar Abbas to Kirman and Khorasan and to Shiraz and Isfahan, was considered increasingly hazardous as a result of tribal and political chaos. During the first half of the century the commercial interests of the English and Dutch East India Companies located at Bandar Abbas and of the indigenous merchants predominantly from Khorasan and Multan were mainly focused on the valuable goat wool produced in and around Kirman. The success of the European Kirman trade largely hinged on the annual arrival of indigenous "northern" merchants who were willing to take the goods offered by the Company's agents, mainly European wool, spices and Indian textiles.[70] Already during the first half of the century, the north-south trading routes between Bandar Abbas and Khorasan were recurrently blocked by tribal raids or military campaigns. Finally, after 1750 and following the swift Durrani expansion towards India, overland trade between the Persian Gulf and Khorasan was almost entirely redirected, via Kandahar and Multan, to Sind. Moreover, booming Russian exports to Rasht and Qazvin also competed with the Companies' imports from the Persian Gulf.[71] As a result, both the

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[68] Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, pp.279-80.

[69] Very informative recent studies on the Persian Gulf and Oman are: P. Risso, *Oman and Muskat. An Early Modern History* (London/Sydney, 1986); M. al-Qasimi, *The Myth of Arab piracy in the Gulf* (London, 1986); Bhacker, M.R., *Trade and Empire in Muscat and Zanzibar. Roots of British Domination* (London/New York, 1992).

[70] *ARA*, VOC 2610, 1742, f.107; *IOL&R*, FRBADC, G/29/8, 1754-5, "Letters from Carmenia", ff.141-2; FRBADC, G/29/12, 1760, "Letters from Carmenia", f.93; FRBADC, G/29/14, 1762-3, "Douglas to Bombay Presidency (11-9-1762)", ff.171-2. According to Lorimer, Multani (= Indian) merchants used to buy goods in Kirman which they carried to Mashhad and Kandahar (J.G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia* (Calcutta, 1908-15), 1, p.121).

[71] *IOL&R*, FRBADC, G/27/7, 11-6-1748, f.124; Orme Mss.ov.211, "From Gombroon letters 1752", ff.38-9; *ARA*, VOC 2511, 1739-40, f.65; VOC 2748, 1748, f.97. Cf. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, 1, p.116.

English and Dutch were forced to close down their factories in Bandar Abbas.[72] To some extent, the Iranian involvement could be continued from their new establishments at Bushire and Kharg Island.[73] At the same time, however, attention shifted towards Sind which recently had come under Durrani suzerainty and was an area where newly-arrived Afghan soldiers and traders stimulated the demand for textiles and wool.[74] As stated in one of the British reports:

> "the Patan chuppars [*čaprāsī* i.e. those wearing a *čaprās* or badge, in other words, licensed traders], who came down [to Thatta] to receive the tribute [from the Kalhora ruler of Sind], finding they could procure woollens cheaper in Scindy than those they had probably been before supplied with, either through Persia or from the Caspian Sea by the way of Mesched, brought down large commissions from the king of Candahar and his principal officers, for Woollens and other articles, in which great part of the tribute [from the Sind ruler to the Durranis] was often invested."[75]

This positive picture is corroborated by the French adventurer René Madec, who reported around 1765 that Thatta experienced a large increase of its textile trade with Lahore, Multan and Kabul.[76] As a consequence, Durrani coins became the predominant currency in Sind.[77] In order to break into these new markets the English East India Company established a new factory in Thatta in 1758. Only a few years later, however, the commercial centre of Sind shifted to Karachi and the English factory at Thatta was closed again in 1775.

With regard to Afghanistan proper around the middle of the century, it can be concluded that not only its political but certainly also its commercial involvement with India escalated. The Durrani and Baluchi rulers successfully induced Hindu bankers and merchants

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[72] The English left Bandar Abbas in 1763, the Dutch in 1759.

[73] For a survey of the eighteenth-century history of the EIC in Iran, see A.A. Amin, *British Interests in the Persian Gulf* (Leiden, 1967); for the Dutch East India Company, see W. Floor, "The Decline of the Dutch East Indies Company in Bandar Abbas (1747-1759)", *MOOI*, 6 (1989), pp.45-81.

[74] *IOL&R*, BomPPC, P/341/23, 1760, "Report Mr. Erskine", ff.830-7; BomPPC, P/341/41, 1775, "Report Mr. Callander (24-10-1775)", ff.568-74.

[75] *IOL&R*, BomPPC, P/341/23, 1760, "Mr. Erskine's Report", f.830. During the 1750's wool sales to the Afghan market amounted to between 100,000 and 200,000 Rs each year.

[76] E. Barbé, *Le nabob Réné Madec: histoire diplomatique des projets de la France sur le Bengale et le Pendjeb 1772-1808* (Paris, 1894), pp.159-65. According to Madec this trade even affected the East India Company's sales in Bengal.

[77] *Ibid.*, p.195.

to settle in their cities, especially in Shikarpur, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Kandahar and Kabul.[78] It is not clear where they came from exactly, but the relative stagnation of the Punjab and the subsequent migration of its merchants suggests that many came from this area.[79] It is interesting to note that after 500 years of absence even Jewish bankers re-emerged in the region and settled as far south as Las Bela, from where they disappeared again in the nineteenth century.[80] Shikarpur became the most influential centre. Its financial agents and bills of exchange were to be found from Astrakhan to Calcutta and from Masqat to Samarkand. Its bankers were important in working the cash-nexus for the Durrani state: in return for cash advances they could levy the produce of the soil. According to Masson the Shikarpuri merchants were deeply involved in the treasury, and consequently financed all the military expeditions of Aḥmad Shāh. With the rise of the Sikhs at the end of the century, Shikarpur declined and its commercial classes withdrew to Multan and Amritsar.[81]

India's communications with Central Asia were not only maintained via the various routes of the north-west frontier but also, and more directly, through the more arduous passes of the Himalayas to Yarkand, Gartok and Lhasa.[82] Awe for the seeming impregnability

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[78] Pottinger, *Travels*, p. 281; Masson, *Journeys in Belochistan*, 1, p.353.

[79] For Punjab, see Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, p.184.

[80] Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Afghan-Jewish communities are found in Las Bela (Masson, *Journey to Kalat*, pp.408-11), Balkh (J. Harlan, *Central Asia. Personal Narrative of General Josiah Harlan, 1823-1841* (London, 1939), p.65), Peshawar (Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England through the Northern Parts of India, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Persia* (London, 1798), 2, p.50) Herat (Forster, *Journey*, 2, pp.134-5; Kinneir, *Memoir*, p.182) Kandahar (Elphinstone, *Account*, 2, pp.129-33) and Chardzhou (Mohan Lal, *Journal*, pp.131-2). Jewish communities already existed in Bukhara (Mohan Lal, *Journal*, p.109; Mir Izzat Ullah, "Travels beyond the Himalaya", p.135; Ahmad Shah Naqshbandi, "Narrative of the Travels of Kwajah Ahmad Shah Nukshbundee Syud", *JASB*, 25, 4 (1856), p.355), Kashgar (Valikhanov, *Russians*, pp.149-54) and Iran. For Iranian Jewry in the eighteenth century, see: Hambly, "Introduction", p.75; Bābāī b. Farhād, *Iranian Jewry during the Afghan Invasion (Kitāb-i Sar Guzasht-i Kāshān)*, trans. V.B. Moreen (Stuttgart, 1990); V.B. Moreen, "The problems of Conversion among Iranian Jews in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", *IS*, 29 (1986); W.J. Fishel, "The Jews in Medieval Iran from the 16th to the 18th Centuries: Political, Economic and Communal Aspects" in S. Shaked (ed.), *Irano-Judaica: Studies relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture throughout the Ages* (Jerusalem, 1982).

[81] Masson, *Journey in Belochistan*, 1, pp.353-6.

[82] See e.g. L. Boulnois, "Les passes himalayennes, religieux, marchants et voyageurs XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles" in M. Debout (ed.), *Routes d'Asie marchands et voyageurs XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Istanbul/Paris, 1988).

of this "abode of snow" has led to an underestimation of the extent of the traffic through this extremely high range. Nearly all the northern tracks were steep and rocky—not suitable for camels or horses—and only passable during summer. They led to the thinly populated regions of Tibet or to the far-off oasis cities of Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar. Nevertheless, the northern trade was very important for the Himalayan states since it was their foremost, and sometimes sole, source of income, not least for Kashmir, which obtained its goat wool (*pashm*)—the raw material for its famous and high-valued shawls—from Ladakh and western Tibet. Many Himalayan states enjoyed flourishing conditions during the eighteenth century. The western states of Badakhshan and Hunza benefitted from their tributary connections with China and were engaged in an extensive slave trade with Yarkand.[83] More to the east, the hill states of Garhwal, Kumaun and Nepal concentrated their activities on Tibet. In western Tibet the rocky mountain slopes were mastered by nomads who carried their merchandise, mostly rice, grain or textiles form the south and salt, borax and gold dust from the north, on the backs of their numerous sheep and goats. This they could accomplish three or four times annually.[84]

Secondly, there were thousands of Hindu pilgrims who travelled every year from as far as the extreme south of the subcontinent, via Haridwar, to the Himalayan shrines of Badrinath and Joshimath. Some of them even risked the perilous journey to the snowy pyramid of Mount Kailas, the throne of Shiva, and Lake Manasarowar, believed to be the birth place of the life-giving rivers of India. Local trading nomads linked these holy places to the various seasonal markets in the area, especially to Gartok, the foremost market town in western Tibet.[85] The hill rajas stimulated pilgrimage for their own

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[83] For Hunza, see J. Müller-Stellrecht, *Hunza und China (1761-1891)* (Wiesbaden, 1978), p.4; for Badakhshan, see J.F. Grevemeyer, *Herrschaft, Raub und Gegenseitigkeit. Die politische Geschichte Badakhshans 1500-1883* (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp.102-5; for Afghanistan (Herat, Balkh, Kabul), see Harlan, *Central Asia*, pp.38, 344-5,82-4,127.

[84] Informative recent studies on this transhumance in the Himalayas are: K. Chandola, *Across the Himalayas through the Ages. A Study of Relations between Central Himalayas and Western Tibet* (Delhi, 1987); J.F. Fisher, *Trans Himalayan Traders. Economy, Society and Culture in Northern Nepal* (Berkeley, 1986); M.P. Joshi & C.W. Brown, "Some Dynamics of Indo-Tibetan Trade through Uttarakhanda (Kumaon-Garhwal), India", *JESHO*, 30 (1987), pp.303-18.

[85] For early nineteenth-century accounts of its flourishing condition, see F.W.

and their toll-collectors' religious and financial salvation.[86] Apart from pilgrims, among whom were very many Gosains, Kashmiri pedlars were also engaged in the long-distance trade. They used several routes either travelling across the Tibetan plateau or following the more convenient hill slopes entering Tibet via Nepal. Many Kashmiris were to be found in the Kashgari cities as well, where they, like the Indians, Badakhshanis, Afghans, and Jews, had their own quarters and caravanserais.[87] The Kashmiri diaspora even reached China, but on the whole Chinese merchants prevailed over the eastern links, mainly via Xining.[88] During Kalmuk times, and increasingly after Chinese intervention, through all these channels, India received in return for its own goods some of the merchandise of Central Asia and China, from the latter mainly silver ingots, tea and porcelain.[89]

The flourishing condition of the hill trade naturally had some bearing on the border states of northern India. Was there any truth in the widespread bazaar rumours about huge Tibetan gold supplies?[90] I have already referred to the increase of bullion in Tibet following the Kalmuk and Chinese interventions. Some of this could have flowed into the Indian plains as a result of India's structural dearth of bullion. Cities like Patna and Benares had close commercial links with Nepal and Tibet. An outstanding example is provided by the Afghan Rohillas. They gratefully used the already existing pilgrim routes to Haridwar to connect their increasingly cultivated lands in the plains with the hill trade of Garhwal and Kumaun, and

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Raper, "Narrative of a Survey for the Purpose of Discovering the Sources of the Ganges", *AR*, 11 (1812), pp.536-40, and *IOL&R*, Moorcroft Mss.Eur.D.263, "Moorcroft to G. Swinton (18-4-1822)", ff.14-7.

86 E.T. Atkinson, *Notes on the History of the Himalaya of the N.W.P. India* (Allahabad, 1884), pp.71-2.

87 For the organisation of these merchant colonies under Chinese rule, see: Valikhanov, *Russians*, pp.149-61; T.D. Forsyth, *Report of a Mission to Yarkund in 1873, with Historical and Geographical Information regarding the Possesions of the Ameer of Yarkund* (Calcutta, 1875), pp.95-7.

88 For Kashmiris in western Tibet, see e.g. W. Moorcroft, "Lake Manasaovara in Undes, A Province of Little Tibet", *AR*, 12 (1816), pp.449-50. Cf. Chevalier's account on Tibetan trade in G. Deleury, *Les Indes florissantes. Anthologie des voyageurs francais (1750-1820)* (Paris, 1991), pp.193-8.

89 A. Gerard, *Account of Kunnawar* (London, 1841); Raper, "Narrative", p.530.

90 For eighteenth-century Tibetan gold, see L. Boulnois, *Poudre d'or et monnaies d'argent au Tibet* (Paris, 1983).

beyond with the market of Gartok, which maintained further communications with Leh, Khotan, Yarkand, and Lhasa. In 1757 the Rohilla chief Najīb ud-Daulah extended his authority to, what later came to be known as, Dehra Dun and encouraged trade at a time when the Gurkhas had temporarily cut the more convenient routes between Tibet and the Katmandu Valley. It appears that the route from western Tibet through Garhwal to Najibabad in Rohilla territory was an alternative for some of the trade diverted from Nepal. After 1759 an increasing number of silver coins were struck in Srinagar (Garhwal), both in the Mughal design and in the hill currency of *Timashas*, in order to pay for local transport and for the purchase of Tibetan exports. The coinage was mainly organised by the bankers of Najibabad, who also converted some of their profits into Mughal Rupees at their own mint at Najibabad. Many questions about the Indian trade balance with Tibet remain unsolved, but the available material suggests that in general Indian and Nepalese silver coins were exchanged for bullion: gold from Tibet and silver from China.[91]

It is important to note that Rohilkhand as a whole became the crossroads of trade routes from the north, the north-west as well as the east. The axis of the Mughal Empire, the Grand Trunk Road, which had linked Bengal with the Mughal capitals of Agra and Delhi, and via Sirhind and Lahore eventually reached Kabul, was completely redirected. During the eighteenth century the eastern track shifted northwards, entering Rohilkhand via central Awadh and Farrukhabad.[92] From there traffic could bypass Delhi altogether and continue either south to Jaipur and other Rajput cities, or through Bareilly, along the hills, via Najibabad, Haridwar and Laldong, to Jammu and Kashmir. This route circumvented the Panjab and Delhi and from Durrani Kashmir the caravans could reach Peshawar and Kabul without touching Sikh territory.[93]

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[91] Raper, "Narrative", pp.497-8; N.G. Rhodes, "The Silver Coinage of Garhwal and Ladakh 1686-1871", *NC*, 141 (1981), pp.124-35. According to Moorcroft there was formerly (probably during the eighteenth century) a much more frequented trade route from Najibabad to Khotan and Yarkand via Gartok and Rudok (W. Moorcroft & G. Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir, in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara* (London, 1841), 1, pp.373-4.

[92] Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, p.262.

[93] Forster, *Journey*, 1, pp.190-1; F.X. Wendel, *Les mémoires de Wendel sur les Jat, les Pathan et les Sikh*, ed. J. Deloche (Paris, 1979), p.131.

Rohilkhand gained from its new position and so did the Rajput states in the south, which commanded not only the route from the north already mentioned, but also the commercial links between the Deccan on the one hand and Sind and Afghanistan on the other. The desert routes through the Thar to Bahawalpur, Multan and Shikarpur became more and more frequented. Here cloth, food grains, sheep, horses and camels were the main items of exchange. Reportedly there was even an eight-fold increase of the income from custom duties in the Bikaner state between the end of the seventeenth century and 1755. It appears that Maratha attacks did not cause the least harm to this acceleration of trade in Rajasthan.[94] On the contrary, they joined in, stimulating the trade through their campaigning.

In retrospect we may conclude that overall the process of shifts benefitted the Afghan trading network in India. Thus, it was not only the local forces of the successor states of the Marathas, Jats, Sikhs, and the East India Company, which threatened Mughal control of the agrarian produce. There was also a commercial circumvention of the Mughal heartlands of Lahore, Delhi and Agra,—as in the case of south Iran—due to the increased impact of Central-Asian trade which re-aligned financial resources, and in its wake helped to generate the new political configurations of the Durranis and the Rohillas. It appears that the loss of Kabul and Kashmir already decided the fate of the Mughals in their battles with Nādir Shāh and Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī. In this light it should not surprise us that even before the Durrani impact was fully felt in northern India, the Rohilla mint-towns were issuing Rupees in the name of the Mughal ruler but, more significantly, following a Durrani pattern and using a Durrani mint-mark.

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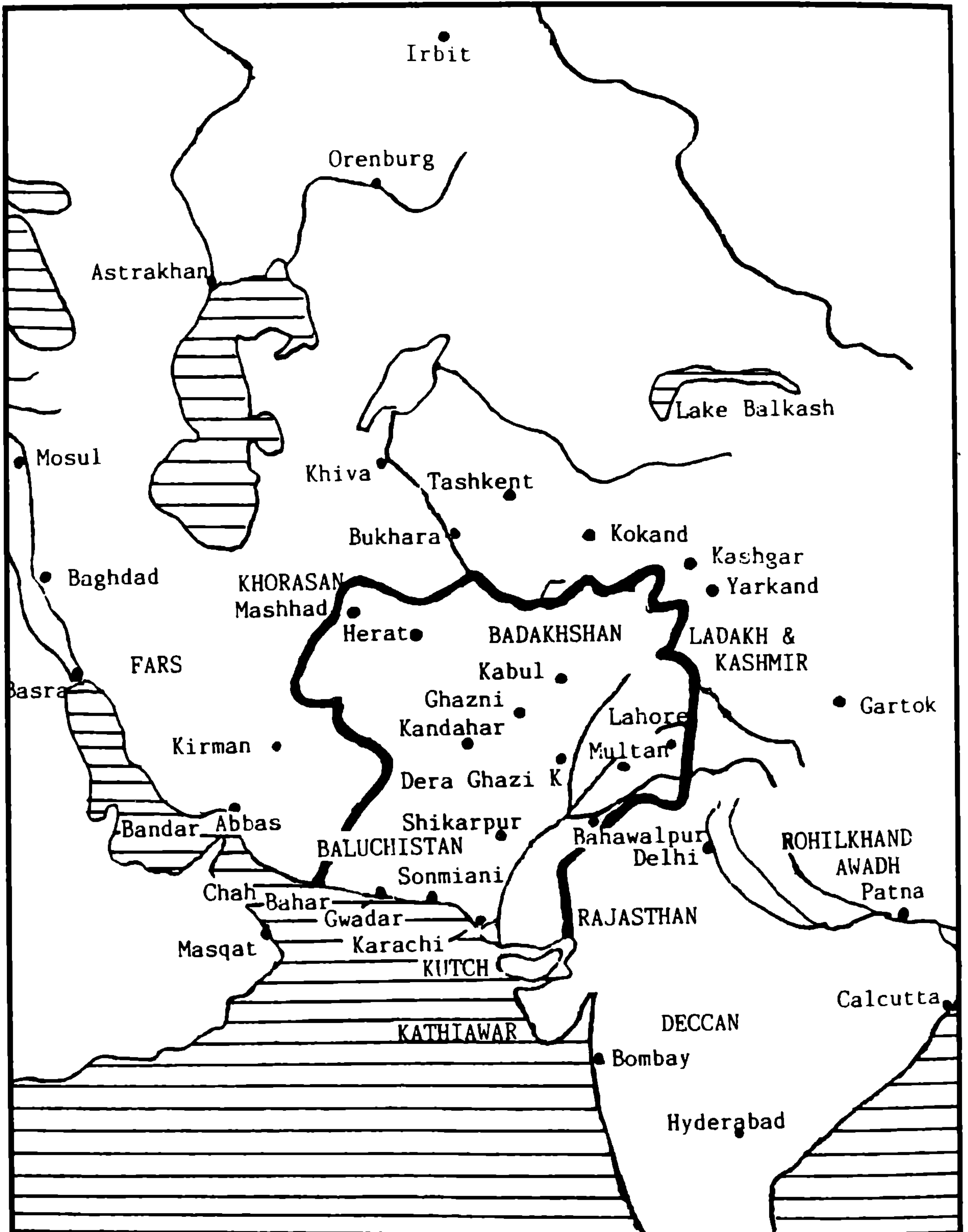
[94] G.S.L. Devra, "A Study of the Trade Relations between Rajasthan and Sindh/Multan (1650-1800 A.D.)", *PIHC* (1978), pp.585,587; see also: B.L. Gupta, *Trade and Commerce in Rajasthan during the 18th Century* (Jaipur, 1987) and his "The Migration of Traders to Rajasthan in the Eighteenth Century", *PIHC* (1988), p.316; H.K. Naqvi, *Mughal Hindustan: Cities and Industries (1556-1803)* (Karachi, 1974), p.246; J. Deloche, *La circulation en Inde avant la révolution des transport, vol.1: La voie de terre* (Paris, 1980), p.58.



Map 2.1. The Durrani Empire

CHAPTER TWO

DURRANI IMPERIALISM

"Tis the king of Rūm and Ind, king from Kanauj e'en to the river Sind, while in Tūrān and in Īrān men give as slaves obedience to his will and live thereby. With justice decked the earth and now, that done, hath set the crown upon his brow."

Praise of Maḥmūd of Ghazna in Firdausī's *Shāh-Nāma.*[1]

From the previous chapter we may conclude that in the eighteenth century Afghanistan found itself at the centre of a vigorous transit trade in nearly all directions. Commercial ventures based in the Indo-Afghan heartlands of Afghanistan and Hindustan encompassed a vast area across Central Asia, Iran and India.[2] Some individual traders even spread their wings out to far off places like Baku, Moscow, Beijing and, of course, in the guise of pilgrims, to Mecca. The highly decentralized Durrani state was not actively involved in directing this more or less "informal empire", but it was certainly stimulated by and it benefited from the increased opportunities for credit and taxation.

Apart from expanding their economic base, the Durrani rulers also attempted to furnish their empire with an idea of legitimacy which had a more widespread appeal than the indigenous Islamic folk traditions of their Afghan homeland. In doing so they were faced by the fact that the sacrosanct authority of both the Safavid and Mughal emperors was still functioning. The legitimacy of new regimes could only be sanctioned by reference to the sublime *pādshāh*. This "emperor of the age" and "shadow of God on earth" could be imprisoned, mutilated or even killed, but never fully dispensed with as a source of legitimacy.[3] Thus, at the beginning of the century,

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[1] Cited from Warner's translation by F.W. Buckler, "Firdausi's Shahnamah and the Genealogia Regni Dei", *JAOS*, suppl, 1 (1935), pp.17-8.

[2] For the very extensive radius of action of some long-distance overland traders, see Mohan Lal, *Journal*, p.122; Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp.114,118ff; also the Central-Asian travels of Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh, BM.Or.1119.

[3] For the lingering on of Safavid authority, see J.R. Perry, "The Last Safavids, 1722-1773", *Iran*, 9 (1971). For the Mughal emperors, see e.g. P.Hardy, "The

the Afghan Ghilzai chiefs had turned to the Mughals for imperial approval of their revolt against the Safavids. As sincere Sunnis they had first procured a *fatwā* from the establishment of *ᶜulamāʾ* in Mecca which authorized them to dissociate themselves from the Iranian Shiᶜite court. Subsequently, in 1722, they managed to defeat the Safavids at Gulnabad and to take their capital of Isfahan. After the Ghilzais had successfully thrown off the splendid aura of Safavid approval, they attempted to legitimatize their coup d'état by embracing just another tradition of universal rule in the area: the Sunni caliphate of the Ottomans.[4]

In contrast to these rebellious Ghilzais, Nādir Shāh had successfully seized the source of Safavid authorization by kidnapping the still remaining Safavid claimant, for whom he acted as *wakīl* and *nāʾib us-sulṭāna*, in other words, as deputy of the empire. Only much later, and in the face of great difficulties and moral indignation, he dared to assume the crown for himself.[5] Other arriviste rulers in Isfahan, ᶜAlī Mardān Khān Bakhtyārī (1750) and Karīm Khān Zand (1750-79), were equally unable to get away from the formal authorization of Safavid rule. They were known as *wakīl ud-daulah*, considering themselves nominally as representatives of the then almost powerless Safavid throne. Later Karīm Khān switched to a more "ascending" source of authority by calling himself *wakīl ur-raᶜāyā*, which means as much as "representative of the subjects", but still did not dare to challenge the divine right of the Safavid Shah. If anyone addressed him by the title of Shah he would immediately reprove him, saying in all humility that the Shah was in Abada (in north-western Fars) and he himself was merely his steward (*kadkhudā*). Again, his successor, ᶜAlī Murād Khān (1779-85) was called *wakīl ud-daulah-i jam-iqtidārī-yi ṣānī-yi dast-gāh-i mulūk-i*

Authority of Muslim Kings in Medieval India" in M. Gaborieau (ed.), *Islam et société en Asie du sud* (Paris, 1986); even in the nineteenth century Mughal authority was still in place (see F.W. Buckler, *Legitimacy and Symbols. The South Asian Writings of F. W. Buckler*, ed. M.N. Pearson (Ann Arbor, 1985), pp.43-75).

[4] In 1727 the Ghilzais acknowledged in fact the rightful succession of the Ottoman sultan to the caliphate, which means that already more than 40 years before the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) between the Ottomans and the Russians, the Ottomans found significant support for their claim to the universal caliphate (M.A. Hikmat, *Essai sur l'histoire des relations politique Irano-Ottomanes de 1722 à 1747* (Paris, 1937), pp.182-5). For earlier Ghilzai policies, see Riazul Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations. A Study of the Political and Diplomatic Relations between the Mughal Empire and Iran* (Lahore, 1957), pp.136-8 and Lockhart, *Fall*, p.86.

[5] Perry, "Last Safavids", p.67; Lambton, "Tribal Resurgence", pp.117-20.

ṣafaviyya, "the second representative of the king (lit. Yima)-like power of the establishment of the Safavid kings". Even the late eighteenth-and nineteenth-century Qajar kings found it necessary to claim that they descended from the Safavids. As reported, the last Safavid ruler Sulṭān Ḥusain had presented one of his Qajar wives to Fatḥ ᶜAlī K͟hān Qājār. Now it appeared that, just before, she had been made pregnant by the Safavid ruler and thus her son, Muḥammad Ḥasan K͟hān Qājār, should not only be considered a Qajar through his mother, but also a Safavid through his father.[6]

The situation in India was not much different. Here too an umbrella of imperial universalism was held over the emerging sub-polities, Hindu and Muslim alike. Even in the late eighteenth century, new regional rulers were acting in the name of the Mughal *pādshāh* and competing with each other for exalted Mughal titles, such as *amīr ul-umarā* or *wakīl-i muṭlaq*.[7] Even in Central Asia, where the large Turko-Mongol empires had long since faded away, a similar imperial legacy, that of Chingiz K͟hān and Amīr Tīmūr, was still very obdurate.[8] Not before the eighteenth century did the Uzbek *amīrs*—those of the Manghits in Bukhara, the Qungrats in Khiva and the Mings in Kokand—dare to remove the Chingizid puppet Khans and assumed the sovereign title of Khan for themselves. Nevertheless, they continued to boast genealogical and historical connections with the house of Chingiz K͟hān as their own claims to rule were still rather parochial, lacking the widespread appeal of their predecessors.[9]

With this background in mind, the ascendancy of Afghan-Durrani power in both Iran and India is all the more remarkable. The Afghans defied the Mughal and Safavid embrace and instead created a particular Durrani form of Irano-Islamic universalism which not only openly proclaimed independence, but, more importantly, overarched all the older empires of Iran, India (Hind) and Central Asia (Turan or Turkistan).

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[6] Muḥammad Hāshim Āṣaf, *Rustam*, 1, p.92; in addition, the author claims that the Qajars were directly related to the seventh Imām and even to the Chingizids.

[7] Consider e.g. the Maratha eagerness for Mughal titles: Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*, pp.147-8. For the Rajput attitude towards the Mughals, see Ziegler, N.P., "Some Notes on Rajput Loyalties during the Mughal Period" in J.F. Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (Madison, 1978).

[8] R.D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia, Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1889* (Princeton, 1991), p.219.

[9] Y. Bregel, "Tribal Tradition and Dynastic History: The Early Rulers of the Qungrats according to Munis", *AAS*, 16 (1982).

2.1. *Iran*

In Iran it was Nādir Shāh who for the first time attempted to break the Safavid legitimation by building a novel imperial tradition of his own. But despite his fervent propaganda and his numerous conquests, his reign was too short-lived to be successful. After his death in 1747, his successors felt they were constantly under threat of a Safavid restoration, for which reason some of them again sought Safavid recognition. For example, Nādir's grandson Shāhrukh Shāh, who, with short breaks, ruled from Mashhad from 1747 to 1796, could maintain his position because he possessed not only Nadirid, but Safavid blood as well, his mother having been a daughter of the last Safavid emperor Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain. Although the other Nadirid claimants quickly disappeared from the eighteenth-century scene, Iran became dominated by numerous break-away Nadirid commanders who acted under the guise of a de jure Safavid restoration.[10]

One of these former Nadirid commanders was the Afghan chief Aḥmad Khān Abdālī, later styled Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī.[11] Since he laid claim to the Afghan territories around Herat and Kandahar, both of which were considered to be part of Iran, and were strategically important areas too, there was an urgent need to get things settled with respect to both Safavid and Nadirid universal pretensions.[12] Immediately bordering on his newly acquired Afghan

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[10] For the best survey of eighteenth-century Iranian history, see the work of J.R. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand. A History of Iran 1747-1779* (Chicago, 1979).

[11] He entered the service of Nādir Shāh as a *yasāwal-i ṣuḥbat*. As such it was his task to enforce order at court and in the king's presence. According to the *Tazkirat al-Mulūk*, the *yasāwals* stood under the command of the great master of ceremonies (*eshīk-āqāsī-bāshī*) and at public assemblies they stood opposite the king, carrying painted and gilt staffs. They were generally recruited at a young age amongst the sons of the noblest amirs. They were entrusted to the care of specialized tutors who taught them all kinds of military exercises and courtly manners (Ghulām Ḥusain Khān Ṭabāṭanā'ī, *Seir Mutaqherin (Siyar ul-Mutā'khkhirīn)* trans. Ḥājī Muṣṭafa (M. Raymond), 3, p.250; Abū ul-Ḥasan, *Mujmal ut-Tārīkh-i Ba'd-Nādirīya*, ed. O. Mann (Leiden, 1891-6), 2, p.73; Mīr Ghulām 'Alī Khān Bilgrāmī Āzād, *Khizāna-yi 'Āmira*, BM.Or.232, f.83b; *Tadhkirat al-Muluk, A Manual of Safavid Administration*, ed. and trans. V. Minorsky (Cambridge, 1980), pp.47,64,75,77 and Minorsky's comment, p.133). Apart from this ceremonial position close to the person of the king, Aḥmad Khan was appointed as a commander of a large Abdali cavalry contingent which, like the Qizilbash corps, was personally attached to the king and was always encamped very near the royal tents (Imām ud-Dīn Ḥusainī Chishtī, *Ḥusain Shāhī*, BM.Or.1636, f.11a).

[12] Herat and Kandahar were separate Safavid provinces with each having their own *beglarbegī* (*Tadhkirat al-Muluk*, p.44).

territories was the former Nadirid capital of Mashhad.[13] This city had a great reputation among the Shiᶜites in both Iran and India since it gave shelter to the mausoleum of the eighth Imam and principal saint of Iran, ᶜAlī ur-Riẓā, which annually attracted thousands of pilgrims. It was natural that from this illustrious city, Aḥmad Shāh was faced, for the first time after the death of Nādir Shāh, with Safavid imperial pretensions.

In 1750, Mashhad's ruler Shāhrukh Shāh was temporarily deposed in favour of another Safavid pretender who was put on the throne by some of Shāhrukh's principal officers as Shāh Sulaimān II. He was just one of many Safavid princes in Iran who claimed all-Iranian sovereignty. Hence, Sulaimān sent to his "subject" Aḥmad *Khān* Sadōzai two agents who condescendingly demanded the handing over of Herat to its rightful Safavid sovereign ruling from Mashhad. Aḥmad Shāh, who had just occupied Herat, was outraged by the formal insult of Sulaimān's letter. He severely punished the Safavid agents and decided that in due course he would do the same to their preposterous masters in Mashhad.[14]

In contrast with most of the other Iranian rulers, Aḥmad Shāh was neither prepared to comply with the superior claims of the Safavids nor with those of the Nadirids. His own stance on this subject is most clearly expressed in a pompous letter addressed to his "brother" (*birādar*), the *sulṭān-i salāṭīn* Muṣṭafa III of the Ottoman empire (1757-74) in which he urged for joint action against the "rebels" of Iran.[15] Although it was written in the early 1760's, the letter reveals the Durrani mandate in Iran in its fullest splendour. As such it was the end product of a process that started with the above-mentioned diplomatic affront of 1750. In the letter Aḥmad Shāh clearly dissociates himself from Nādir Shāh, whom he calls a tyrant (*sitamgār*) and whose rule he qualifies accordingly as one of

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[13] After the Ghilzai sack of Isfahan, Safavid rule lingered on in Tabriz. Nādir Shāh transferred his capital, however, to Mashhad as it was situated in the middle of his Khorasanian homeland and in the centre of his extensive territories in Iran and India (Jackson & Lockhart, *Cambridge History of Iran*, 6, p.328).

[14] Abū ul-Ḥasan, *Mujmal*, 1, p.58 ff. Cf. Perry, "Last Safavids", p.65.

[15] The Persian letter is published and edited from a manuscript preserved in the national archives at Istanbul by G. Jīlānī Jilālī and styled: *Nāma-yi Aḥmad Shāh Bābā ba Nām-i Sulṭān Muṣṭafa Ṣālaṣ ᶜUṣmānī* (Kabul, 1967); referred to below as Aḥmad Shāh, *Nāma*.

tyranny (*ẓulm*), oppression and injustice (*taʿaddī wa jaur*). On the other hand, Nādir's tyranny was represented as the rightful, by God directed, punishment of the Iranian people, who after 300 years of security and tranquillity under the Safavid dynasty, were overwhelmed by the decadence and sensual pleasures which prevailed during the later Safavid years. At this time no-one took heed anymore of religious prescriptions (*nawāhī-yi āllahī wa iqtiẓāʾ-yi āṡār-u-sunun-i ḥaẓrat-i rasulat-i panāhī*) and everyone was diverted from the "middle path" (*jādā*; probably the Persian "mean"). These righteous principles were instead exchanged for principles of sedition and malice (*āsār-i fitna u sharārat*).[16]

Since Aḥmad Shāh represents Nādir Shāh's reign as the wrath of God, his letter is altogether silent about his service to Nādir Shāh's army and stresses instead his early reluctance to engage in the "futilities" of the temporal world. He suggests that he led the life of a mystic sufi, contemplating the truths of the "hidden world" and renouncing worldly pleasures.[17] After God bestowed on him the leadership of a sacred mission to restore the "hereditary sultanate", he decided to give in to the insistence of the chiefs of the Afghan tribes (*khawānīn ʿaẓām wa ruʾasāʾ-yi ān īlāt*), and ascended the throne.[18] The divine character of the Durrani mission also finds reflection in a visit by the "ever-flying" bird Humā. Following an ancient Persian kingship tradition, the shadow of this epic bird falling on Aḥmad Shāh's head predicted his elevation to royalty.[19] From this moment on he was turned into the "king of the seven climes" (*farmān-rawāʾī-yi haft iqlīm*) invested with a Godly mission to restore the sultanates of Iran, Hind and Turkistan. In this heavenly

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[16] Aḥmad Shāh, *Nāma*, pp.8-10.

[17] Two of Aḥmad Shāh's ancestors are reported to have acted similarly. Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī traced his descent from one Abdāl who derived his name from the famous Sufi saint Abū Aḥmad Abdāl (d.965-6). The latter's grandson, Khwāja Khiẓr (hence Khiẓr Khail) voluntarily declined the claim of worldly leadership and took on the life of a sufi. In the seventeenth century, the act of renunciation was repeated by another member of the Khiẓr Khail, Ḥayāt Khān of Multan (Ashiq Muhammad Khan Durrani, *Multan under the Afghans* (Multan, 1981), pp.11-30).

[18] Indicative of his claim to universal authority in his own right is that the letter lacks any reference to the saintly mediation and sanction by the Afghan darwish, Sābir Shāh (see e.g. Abū ul-Ḥasan, *Mujmal*, 2, p.74).

[19] Humā is mentioned several times in Firdausī's *Shāh-Nāma*. For similar traditions of mythical birds in the Persian tradition, see M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism, vol.1: The Early Period* (Leiden, 1989), pp.88-90.

task he situated himself in the tradition of the early associates of the Prophet and the first rightly-guided caliphs.[20] It was because of the lack of a strong *pādshāh*, he judged, that the conditions of the temporal government had fallen to such an utterly low level and chaos prevailed everywhere. Hence his religious and temporal scenario was aimed at the restoration of legitimate rule and the punishment of dissenters, not only in Iran but throughout all the sultanates of Iran, Hind and Turkistan.[21]

The Durrani letter is rather vague about the identity of Iranian dissenters. As far as religion is concerned, the Durrani mandate for Iran receives a much lower profile than it does in the case of India, where, as we will see, the holy war against idolaters figures prominently. By contrast, the Iranian mission is much more political and almost exclusively directed against numerous "rebels and vagabonds", who everywhere showed up from their hiding places in the deserts and mountains of Iran, roaming and plundering the once thriving Safavid empire.[22]

Apart from this political task, the Durrani mission lacks a clear commitment to fight Shiᶜism. At first glance this is somewhat surprising since the Afghans, like the Uzbeks, are usually presented as stern-orthodox Sunnis. In this respect, however, Aḥmad Shāh seems to have followed in the footsteps of his former master Nādir Shāh who had attempted to incorporate the more or less "national" Iranian strand of Shiᶜism into the more universalistic mainstream of the Sunni tradition. With this in mind he sought the Ottoman Sultan's recognition of Twelver Shiᶜism as the fifth Sunni school of law (*maẕhab*). His religious policy was determined not by any personal religious convictions but clearly by his goal to establish an eastern pan-Islamic empire.[23] It seems likely that in a similar spirit,

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20 Aḥmad Shāh, *Nāma*, pp.12-4.

21 *Ibid.*, p.16.

22 *Ibid.*, pp.22-35. Cf. the idiom of a letter Aḥmad Shāh sent to Karīm Kh̲ān Zand (Perry, *Karim Khan*, p.206). One of them, although not mentioned in his letter but certainly present in Aḥmad Shāh's mind, was the Ghilzai-Afghan chief Āzād Kh̲ān. He had once been his comrade-in-arms in Nādir Shāh's army but now, in the name of his Ghilzai co-tribals who had sacked Isfahan in 1722, he claimed the whole of Iran for himself. Obviously, being an Afghan himself, Āzād Kh̲ān, backed by a powerful Afghan-Ghilzai tradition, posed a most dangerous threat to the aspirations of the Durranis.

23 Cf. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam. Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shᶜite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago, 1984), pp.215-7

Aḥmad Shāh tried to encompass the creeds of all Muslims in his conquered territories, and, perhaps even more importantly, of all the Sunni and Shiᶜa-Qizilbash contingents in his army.

Further evidence of Aḥmad Shāh's pragmatic attitude towards Shiᶜism is found in the early nineteenth-century *Rustam ut-Tawārīkh*. Its Shiᶜa author eulogizes the Durrani as a most just and tolerant ruler who discouraged the radical anti-Shiᶜism of his Afghan and Uzbek following. Aḥmad Shāh was reported to have said that there should be no conflict whatever between Shiᶜism and Sunnism since all former hostilities were based on a sad misunderstanding. In fact, he claimed that although ᶜAlī was selected by the Prophet as his rightful successor, the former was forced by certain circumstances to consent to the Sunni succession of the caliphate. Afterwards, when he had finally succeeded to the caliphate, all important political and religious problems were solved by ᶜAlī in the spirit of the brotherly and friendly relationship he had always maintained with the early "rightly-guided" caliphs. The same author feels justified to include Aḥmad Shāh in a council of five leading officials who were in actual charge of Iranian sovereignty which was formally in the hands of the "hidden" Imām Abū'l Qāsim Muḥammad.[24] All this clearly indicates that the Durranis were seen as part of a common Shiᶜa-Iranian past and it was obviously not in Aḥmad Shāh's political interest openly to denounce such a legacy. It is equally clear, however, that the Durrani imperial claim of universal rule was not accepted by those Iranian rulers who succeeded in keeping the Durrani armies at a safe distance.[25] Yet, one ruler who was forced to submit to the Durrani claims was Shāhrukh Shāh of Mashhad, one of the remaining Safavid-Nadirid emperors mentioned above.

During the year 1750, Shāhrukh Shāh was restored to the throne. At the same time, Aḥmad Shāh laid siege to Mashhad. As a result, Shāhrukh Shāh and his *amīrs* were forced to surrender the city and to pay their respects to the Durrani ruler. They acknowledged Durrani sovereignty and coins were struck in the name of Aḥmad

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and Hikmat, *Essai*, pp.220-4. Previously, the radicalism of Ghilzai Sunnism had caused considerable embarrassment on the part of their Ottoman adversaries who, to allay popular unrest, had to circulate the lie that the Ghilzai king had embraced Shiᶜism (Olson, *Siege*, pp.50-5).

[24] Muḥammad Hāshim Āṣaf, *Rustam*, 1, pp.414-438; 2, p.662.

[25] See e.g. Perry, *Karim Khan*, p.206.

Shāh.[26] Four years later Aḥmad Shāh returned to Khorasan and for the second time succeeded in taking possession of Mashhad and also of some other cities and towns in the area, like Nishapur and Sabzevar.[27] Immediately after he had entered the city of Mashhad he paid tribute to the old Shiʿa tradition by making a pilgrimage to the Eighth Imam's sepulchre and gave order to make some restorations.[28] Shāhrukh Shāh, his nobles and the population at large were treated with exemplary generosity. A few days later, he re-invested Shāhrukh Shāh, with all possible pomp, with the sovereignty of Iran (*pādshāhī-yi wilāyat-i īrān*). From the Durrani point of view, Shāhrukh Shāh was considered his assistant-in-power (*dast-yār*) who was given the government of all the provinces of Iran (*mamālik-i īrān*). To help him in this demanding task Aḥmad Shāh re-installed Shāhrukh's principal court officials and governors and presented him with a personal Durrani force.[29]

From all this it became crystal clear that Aḥmad Shāh—who frequently styled himself *shāhānshāh* and *khāqān*—envisaged not only Khorasan, but the whole of Iran as a Durrani client state.[30] This titular Durrani encompassment of Iran was finally underscored by the marriage of the daughter of Shāhrukh to Aḥmad's son and successor, who was pretentiously styled Tīmūr Shāh.

Despite all the Durrani bravado it should of course be stressed

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[26] The sources are not entirely clear in this respect (see O. Mann, "Quellenstudien zur Geschichte des Ahmed Sah Durrani (1747-1773)", *ZDMG*, 52 (1898), p.168). Ganda Singh's chronology of the campaigns in Khurasan is, however, not correct as he situates both the first and the second campaign in the years 1749-51, (Singh, *Ahmed Khan*, pp.86-99). A sign of Mashhad's surrender is a Mashhad Durrani coin from the year 1163 A.H. in the interesting Tübingen collection of Durrani coins (personal communication by Dr. Lutz Ilisch, Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik, 28-11-1991).

[27] Nishapur, the old capital of Khurasan under the Ghaznavids and Seljuqs, was destroyed by the Durrani forces. In revenge for their former resistance the inhabitants' possessions were plundered and the women and children were carried off as slaves (Abū ul-Ḥasan, *Mujmal*, 2, pp. 92-4; Maḥmūd Ḥusainī, *Tārīkh-i Aḥmad Shāhī*, ed. D. Saidmuradov (Moscow, 1974), 1, ff.254b-257a).

[28] Maḥmūd Ḥusainī, *Tārīkh*, 1, f.247a.

[29] *Ibid.*, ff.250a-252a. This is the official Durrani version. Abū ul-Ḥasan only mentions Khorasan as Shāhrukh's new territory (Abū ul-Ḥasan, *Mujmal*, 2, pp.90-1). The whole handling of affairs by the Durranis is more or less similar to the later "subsidiary-alliance system" of the British in India.

[30] Both these titles are recurrently used in the Durrani chronicles, the Turkish royal title of *khāqān* was probably used in the Persianized meaning of "khan of khans". For the Turkish meaning of *khāqān*, see Golden, *Turkic Peoples*, pp.146-9.

that effective Durrani power did not stretch far beyond the borders of Khorasan, perhaps with the exception of Kirman, which was economically dependent on Khorasani merchants.[31] Even so, during the early 1750's, the political ambitions of the Durranis were still not very clear although rumours were spreading about their forthcoming conquest of the whole of Iran.[32] Not surprisingly, however, Durrani attention was recurrently drawn to the more lucrative affairs of Hind.

2.2. Hind

From the time of the Mughal emperor Bābar onwards the Afghans had clearly posed the most severe threats to the propaganda of the "divine effulgence" (*farr-i īzadī*) which sanctioned and universalized Mughal rule. Those who questioned their aspiration were automatically stigmatized as bandits or rebels. Hence the Mughals played down the achievements of their Afghan predecessors. In their eyes, the Lodis were not more than puffed up horse-dealers. This is also illustrated by Abū'l Faẓl's demotion of Shēr Shāh Sūr to mere Shēr *Khān* and his description of the latter's government in terms of strife and sedition, fraud and craft.[33] As a reaction to this Mughal propaganda, Indo-Afghan apologists began to glorify their own Afghan past: their genealogical ties (*nasab*) with the early

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[31] For Durrani influence and involvement in Kirman, see *IOL&R*, FRBADC, G/29/8, "Letters from Carmenia", ff.76,94,126,160; FRBADC, G/29/11, "Letters from Carmenia", ff.17-8; FRBADC, G/29/14, "Letter from Carmenia", ff.23-4. According to one of these Kirman reports the local governor paid some 1000 tomans to Aḥmad Shāh (FRBADC, G/29/8, f.126). For trade relation Khurasan-Kirman, see chapter 1.3 above.

[32] See e.g. Perry, *Karim Khan*, p.206 and *IOL&R*, FRBADC, G/29/8, ff.126,160; FRBADC, G/29/9, ff.45,150. In 1755, for example, the Durrani send a letter to Mullā ᶜAlī Khān, the governor in Bandar Abbas, to keep his fleet ready for his forthcoming attack on Fars.

[33] Abū'l Faẓl ᶜAllāmī, *The Akbarnama of Abu-l Fazl*, trans. H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1897-1921), 1, pp.328,336,399,401,615; for an overall Mughal picture of the Afghan sultanate, see pp.326-53,398-401,615-9; cf. Siddiqi, "Afghans and their Emergence in India as Ruling Elite during the Delhi Sultanate Period", *CAJ*, 26 (1982), p.252; Ghulām Ḥusain Khān, *Seir*, 1, pp.437-8. Other authors who tried to present a more neutral picture of Afghan rule were faced with strict Mughal censorship. This was the case, for example, with Niẓām ul-Mulk whose *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī* was largely based on the *Tārīkh-i Shēr Shāh* of the Afghan ᶜAbbās Sarwānī but who was forced to omit all references to that "suspicious" source. (ᶜAbbās Khān b. Shaikh ᶜAlī Sarwānī, *Tarikh-i-Ser Sahi*, trans. B.P. Ambashthya (Patna, 1974), pp.48-9).

Ghurid dynasty, their heroic part in the Islamization of India (*jihād*), and their excellent rule during the Delhi Sultanate of the Lodis and Surs.[34] The first two of these claims are of course extremely doubtful, but all of them served the obvious purpose of boosting Afghan confidence and resistance.

The eighteenth-century Durrani operations in India again confronted the Mughals with Afghan defiance of their authority. Apart from stressing the Indo-Afghan legacy, the Durrani ideologists also elaborated on the special relationship of Nādir Shāh with his allegedly most favoured officer Aḥmad Khān. In these stories, Nādir Shāh used to extol the special qualities of his Afghan servant to whom "he never found an equal in Iran, Turan and Hind". It is even said that Nādir himself prophesied that Aḥmad would be king after him and also begged him to be kind to his descendants after his death.[35] Although the Durranis kept silent about their Nadirid legacy vis-à-vis the Ottomans, their dealings with the Mughals made the image of Nadirid-Durrani continuity extremely helpful since they reclaimed all the Indian provinces which the Mughal emperors had previously handed over to Nādir Shāh.[36]

On the ideological plain, the Afghans aimed at the restoration of the ailing Mughal sultanate to its former greatness. Actually, this was nothing exceptional as this was the main issue for all the contenders on the Indian political scene.[37] What made the Durrani effort particularly threatening for the Mughals was the claim that their "assistance" was not duly offered by their inferior servants but, to the contrary, by their superior masters. From the Durrani point of view, the Indian descendants of Tīmūr (*Gūrgāniya*) had been both negligent and powerless in holding up the empire and the right religion. Therefore, they had begged for help at the heavenly throne of the Durrani emperor: the world-protecting *shāhānshāh*, the *dur-i durān* (pearl of pearls) or *dur-i daurān* (pearl of the age), who had,

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[34] For a full discussion of the early Indo-Afghan chronicles, see Ambashthya's introduction to ʿAbbās Khān.

[35] Imām ud-Dīn, *Ḥusain Shāhī*, ff.11b-12a. Cf. Abū ul-Ḥasan, *Mujmal*, 2, p.73.

[36] As we have mentioned already, the general attitude of Aḥmad Khān regarding his own Nadirid background was much more ambivalent than the Indian sources want us to believe. It appears that the Nadirid tradition was just one element of a variegated set of sometimes contradictory ideas and claims which started to take the form of a distinct Durrani imperial tradition.

[37] The only eighteenth-century exception being the sultans of Mysore.

without delay, rushed to Hindustan to destroy all rebels and unbelievers.[38] By underlining this "descending" character of the Durrani scheme to prop up the remaining vestiges of Mughal power, the Afghans undermined the universalist foundations of Mughal government.

These ideas are also expressed in the above-mentioned letter to the Ottoman Sultan in which Aḥmad Shāh again underlines the Afghan legacy in Hindustan. In this letter, which was written after his smashing victory over the Marathas at Panipat in 1761, the Durrani Shah points out that Hindustan had prospered since Amīr Tīmūr, whose conquest had been facilitated by numerous Afghan chiefs. Since then it had been excellently ruled by 29 Afghan sovereigns (*farmān-rawāyān*).[39] In the case of India, infidels (*kuffār*) threatened and beleaguered the lawful *pādshāh* and his ministers in Delhi. In order to re-establish lawful Mughal rule Aḥmad Shāh declared a holy war (*jihād*) against the *kuffār* of Hind, in casu the Marathas and Sikhs, who had dared to build their temples even in Delhi at the centre of the *dār ul-Islām*. Performing his religious duty, the Durrani had, immediately on his arrival in the Mughal capital, razed these symbols of idolatry to the ground.[40]

Although the Indian conquests of the Durranis are presented as a sequel of the holy wars of Ghaznavids and Ghurids, there is again an absence of anti-Shiᶜa radicalism. Iranis and Shiᶜites are missing in the enumeration of religious adversaries in the Indian *jihād*. Nevertheless, there are several reports of conflicts between the Shiᶜa and Sunni contingents both in the Durrani army itself and between the Sunni Afghan soldiers and their Shiᶜa allies in the service of the Irani nawab of Awadh, Shujāᶜ ud-Daulah.[41] What seems to have

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[38] Maḥmud ul-Ḥusainī, *Tārīkh*, 2, ff.332b-333b.

[39] Aḥmad Shāh, *Nāme*, pp.14-5. Interestingly, Aḥmad Shāh includes also the Khalji sultans. Apparently, in order to underline their own claims of primacy, the Durranis attempted to establish connections between the larger Afghan community in India and their own.

[40] *Ibid.*, pp.14-5,44. The idea of *jihād* is also the central argument in the political letters of the Naqshbandi theologian Shāh Walīullāh, who urged the Durrani emperor to intervene in Indian affairs for the sake of Islam. For an introduction, see K.A. Nizami, "Shah Wali-Ullah Dehlavi and Indian Politics in the eighteenth Century", *IC*, 25, 1 (1951), pp.143-5. Some scholars, however, doubt the authenticity of these letters,, see J.M.S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi 1703-1762* (Leiden, 1986), p.15. See also my remarks on his connections with the Rohillas pp.168-9.

[41] E.g. McChesney, *Waqf*, p.221; Barnett, *North India*, p.57.

been particularly embarrassing for the Afghans was the dominant presence of Hindu troops in the armies of their Indian allies. At Panipat, the spectacle of naked Gosain troops in the middle of the Muslim lines had an adverse impact on the Afghan soldiers whom the Shah could barely hold back from attacking them.[42] On the other hand, we should again keep in mind that, despite the rigidity of its formal expression, Aḥmad Shāh was far too pragmatic to fully implement all the exigencies of *jihād* in an environment which was predominantly Hindu.[43]

In 1757, during his fourth invasion of Hindustan, Aḥmad Shāh succeeded in capturing the Mughal emperor and his court. The *khuṭba* was read and coins (*sikka*) were struck in the name of the Durrani emperor. Following the example of Shāhrukh Shāh's installation a few years before, the Durrani Shah solemnly reinvested Shāh ᶜĀlamgīr II with the sultanate of Hindustan. Subsequently, ᶜĀlamgīr was made his guest at a dinner and was presented with a rich dress of honour (*khilᶜat*).[44] In return for paying a considerable amount of cash as a kind of tribute (*pīshkash*) to their Durrani overlord, most of the principal nobles at court and in the provinces were reinstalled to their previous offices. His Indo-Afghan Rohilla and Bangash allies were given new imperial offices and extensive territories in the Mian Doab.[45] Even the far-off British authorities of the East India Company in Bengal felt obliged to acknowledge Durrani sovereignty.[46] By marrying the daughter of the late Mughal emperor Muḥammad Shāh and by capturing the Mughal harem, Aḥmad Shāh once again demonstrated that he was truly what his name suggested, the pearl of pearls, who fully incorporated the glory of the Mughal emperor.

Only about twenty years before the Durranis, Nādir Shāh had likewise claimed Indian sovereignty. As Aḥmad Shāh claimed to be his successor, he also demanded that all the provinces which had

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[42] Barnett, *North India*, pp.56-7.

[43] Obviously, Aḥmad Shāh had several Hindus amongst his Indian allies and well-wishers, see e.g. S.H. Askari, "Durrani-Rajput Negotiations 1759-61", *PIHC* (1945), pp.257-269.

[44] Maḥmud ul-Ḥusainī, *Tārīkh*, 2, ff.326b-328a. Cf. Singh, *Ahmed Khan*, pp.162-3.

[45] See p.135.

[46] For the years 1760-1, see *IOL&R*, BPSMC, P/A/3, "Select Committee Consultations", ff.235-7,330.

been transferred to Nādir in 1739 be now handed over to him. In the end, the new Durrani territories were considerably extended and came to include Sirhind, Lahore, Multan, Kashmir, Thatta, Sind and the Derajat.[47]

How did the new aspiring Mughal successor states of India respond to Durrani universal rule? All of them continued to pride themselves in Mughal ranks and titles as they were all accommodated within the Mughal hierarchal system. For example, Shujā^c ud-Daulah, the nawab of Awadh, refused to be installed as *wazīr* of Hindustan by Aḥmad Shāh. A Maratha agent who witnessed the Durrani offer recorded the nawab's revealing response:

> "Who is the emperor? Whose wazir am I to be? You sit on the imperial throne and I will serve you as wazir. Why are you making me ridiculous by giving me the robe of an office, without function?"

After he had made his point, the nawab requested permission for his drum and bugle corps to play in the Durrani camp. When Aḥmad Shāh raised objections that this was not according to protocol, Shujā^c retorted:

> "It may be so for other music, but mine is the gift of the emperor of Hindustan, and not of your majesty's; nor am I your subject, but only your hearty well-wisher."

Rebuffed by this bold answer and very well aware that he needed the cooperation of Shujā^c's troops, Aḥmad Shāh saw no other way out than granting the request, and thus the nawab's music could be heard each day immediately following that of the Durrani himself.[48]

Shujā^c ud-Daulah descended from an Irani family of Islamic judges (*qāẓīs*) of Nishapur, a place which had been conquered and devastated by the Durranis during their second Khorasani campaign of 1753-1755. As *wazīr* of the Mughal emperor and governor of the Mughal province of Awadh he had established a separate

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[47] Maḥmud ul-Ḥusainī, *Tārīkh*, 2, ff.334a. Even before the Nadirid occupation, substantial amounts of the Punjabi revenue were earmarked as emoluments for the Mughal army in Kabul. During the early eighteenth century these monthly cash transfers (1,200,000 Rs.) became more and more interrupted, see Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, pp.46,83-4,91,293-4. In this light, the Nadirid and Durrani campaigns only forcefully restored a financial arrangement which previously had existed under the Mughals.

[48] Cited in Barnett, *North India*, pp.54-5.

Shi^ca court in Faizabad—later to be transferred to Lucknow—which began to rival the Mughal court as an example of Muslim "oriental refinement and culture in India".[49] Naturally, as a refined Shiʿa-Irani courtier with a power-base of his own, he was certainly not inclined to support the claims of the Durrani upstart, who had destroyed his paternal city in Khorasan and who made common cause with his Rohilla rivals. Only because he felt more and more threatened by the Maratha expansion, he was prepared to join the Islamic cause. An English source makes mention of a letter by Aḥmad Shāh urging Shujāʿ ud-Daulah to join his coalition. It is interesting to note that the Durrani argued not along religious or imperial lines but tried to persuade Shujāʿ by appealing to yet another common background:

> "When any one from the north came to visit another of the same lineage it was usual for him to consider the circumstances of a mutual origin from the same country, and without hesitating or any indignity to himself cooperate in all undertakings agreeable to the established customs of the north. It is now incontestably known that you were a native of these parts, but forsaking the conversation and turning aside from the manners of your own country, you have incorporated yourself with the inhabitants of Hindostan."[50]

Aḥmad Shāh deplored this Indianization and urged Shujāʿ to be loyal to the vaguely defined upbringing of his ancestors. But in view of the universalist claim of Aḥmad Shāh, the resort to "tribal" particularism was of course a revealingly weak bid.

These examples may again illustrate how, in actual practice, the Durranis had to cope with the usual process of constant accommodation and compromise. They had to be careful not to unsettle the still prevailing hierarchical system of the Mughals as this would unnecessarily upset the whole Indian alliance network. Hence the Durrani idea of empire did not obliterate Mughal sovereignty but merely tried to assimilate and integrate it under its own universal aegis. Obviously, in the end, it was not his insistence on universal rule and *jihād*, but his ability to constantly reconstruct these ideas, which determined the success of Aḥmad Shāh's efforts. Remarkably, the Durranis had swiftly imposed their superior rank on the Mughals

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[49] For a description of the high culture of Awadh, see A.H. Sharar, *Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture* (Delhi, 1989).
[50] *IOL&R*, Orme Mss.ov.21, f.109.

whereas the British required another century and a Mutiny before they publicly dared to attack Mughal sovereignty.

Let us now consider for a moment the attitude of the Indo-Afghan Rohillas. On several critical occasions the Durrani invasions saved the Rohilla states from early ruin. At the same time, however, the military and economic support of the Rohillas secured the success of these invasions. Apart from their common descent, Durranis and Rohillas shared huge common economic interests as both wanted to preserve an extensive Afghan trading network which linked Central Asia to India and underpinned their respective political configurations. Not surprisingly, Aḥmad Shāh mentioned repeatedly that he came to India for the support of the Afghans, whose territories were threatened by Jat and Maratha idolaters.[51]

Like the other Mughal successor states, the states of the Indo-Afghans had emerged within, and were a product of the political system of the Mughals. Therefore, they were at first very reluctant to recognize Durrani suzerainty. During the years of Aḥmad Shāh's first Indian campaign (1747-1748), they were not prepared to leave the Mughal ranks in favour of the Durranis. Notwithstanding the tempting invitations of the Durrani to become his *wazīr*, the Rohilla chief ʿAlī Muḥammad K͟hān still preferred to decline the Durrani offer and to keep within the Mughal imperial fold, most significantly, after he was assured that the Mughal emperor would recognize Rohilkhand as his personal territory (*waṭan*).[52] Not before the Durranis gained military momentum in the second half of the 1750's and many new Afghan immigrants arrived in northern India, were the Rohillas prepared to give their full support to Durrani imperial claims. According to the head of the French factory at Kasimbazar, Jean Law de Lauriston, all the Afghan settlers recognized the Durrani ruler as their lawful sovereign and, therefore, all felt a conflict of loyalties vis-à-vis the Mughal emperor.[53] Thus in contrast to most of the Indian regional successor states, the Rohilla and Bangash

[51] E.g. G͟hulām Ḥasan Ṣāmīn Bilgrāmī, "Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Indian Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk (1756-7) (Baʿẓi az Aḥwāl-i Aḥmad Shāh Bādshāh Abdālī)", trans. W. Irvine, *IA*, 36 (1907), p.15; Nūr ud-Dīn Ḥusain K͟hān Fak͟hrī, *Tawārīk͟h-i Najīb ud-Daulah*, BM.Add.24.410, ff.21b,27a.

[52] Muḥammad Mustajāb K͟hān, *The Life of Hafiz ool-Moolk, Hafiz Rehmut Khan (Gulistān-i Raḥmat)*, trans. C. Elliott (London, 1831), p.24.

[53] Law, *Mémoires*, pp.189-90.

nawabs generally acknowledged Durrani sovereignty and in their cities coins were struck in the name of Aḥmad Shāh Pādshāh.

Perhaps the best illustration of Rohilla attitudes towards the Durrani sovereign is provided by the above-mentioned *Khulāṣat ul-Ansāb*, attributed to the Rohilla chief Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān, which clearly corroborates Durrani legitimacy. Ḥāfiẓ idealizes Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī as a *pādshāh* who possesses "suzerainty" (*iqtidār-i qudrat*) over all the kingdoms of Hindustan, Iran and Turan. Referring to an illustrious Afghan history, it was Aḥmad Shāh who made the grace of justice (*fazli-rawā*) the prerogative of the Afghans.[54] The same history further subscribes to the Durrani motive of invasion: to wage *jihād* against the Marathas, Sikhs, Farangi (British) and Jat infidels. All this was done for the sake of Islam and the honour and reputation of the Afghans (*nang u nāmūs-i afghānān*).[55]

Finally, it should be noted that the Durrani and Rohilla courts fostered a renaissance of Indo-Afghan culture. In fact, it was a new Indo-Afghan variant of Perso-Islamic civilization which also radiated to many of the Rajput and Mughal successor states in northern India and influenced a wide range of cultural expressions, such as costume, manners and painting. In this respect, together with the Shiʿa centre at Lucknow, the Afghan courts set off a new era of late eighteenth-century Indo-Muslim revivalism.[56]

2.3. *Turan*

Turan is an Iranian term which was applied rather vaguely to the countries to the north-east of Iran. Following the example of Firdausī's famous *Shāh-Nāma* the term gained a widespread appeal as a literary expression. As far as geography was concerned, Firdausī

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[54] Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, f.52a.

[55] *Ibid.*, f.53a. Clearly, the *Khulāṣat* mainly served Rohilla needs to create a more unified Afghan-Rohilla identity. Obviously, its stress on Afghan *nasab* brings into question the very imperial pretensions of the Durranis it claims to support (see chapter 6.1).

[56] H. Goetz, "Der Zusammenbruch des Großmoghul Reiches im Lichte der Kostümgeschichte", *Zeitschrift für Historische Waffenkunde, Organ des Vereins für Historische Waffenkunde,* 1,4(1924), pp.88-92; H. Goetz, "Die Moghul-Malerei Nordwest-Indiens unter Persischen und Afghanischer Herrschaft", *ZDMG,* Suppl, 1,2(1969), pp.912-16.

identified Turan with the land of the Turks and Chinese, separated from Iran by the Amu Darya. As we have seen, its use retained much of its attraction in the Afghan imperial theory of the eighteenth century. In everyday usage, the term Turkistan was widely adopted as an equivalent. The area between the Amu Darya and the Hindu Kush, from the Murghab to Badakhshan, became generally known as Afghan Turkistan.[57] According to the eighteenth-century Durranis the latter was the southern part of Turkistan which extended towards the north as far as China (*khaṭā*) and Khotan. This wide realm was infested by numerous rebels who needed to be punished, after which a new and stable government was to be erected.[58]

From the thirteenth century onwards, the almost exclusive source of legitimate rule in Central Asia had been the Chingizid mandate. This meant that all political power, one way or another, needed to be sanctioned by an elected Khan who had a recognizable and generally accepted genealogical link with Chingiz Khān. In this spirit, most of Muslim Turkistan was ruled by *yāsā*-sanctioned Chingizid rulers, who always had to share their real power with their principal Uzbek nobles.

During the seventeenth century the Uzbek *amīrs* made more and more headway against the power and privileges of the Chingizid Khans. From about 1620, the Tuqay-Timurid khanate of Bukhara was divided up in the two great appanages of Balkh and Bukhara proper. The elected Chingizid Khan resided in Bukhara whereas his Chingizid co-ruler ruled Balkh under the inferior title of Sultan. By the early eighteenth century, even more than in India and Iran, the rule of these Chingizids had become entirely nominal. Everywhere independent Uzbek amirates had emerged, centred in cities like Kholm/Tashqurghan and Konduz or around large horse-breeding centres like Meymaneh and Andkhvoy, all immediately north of the Afghan heartlands. During the 1740's, the Central-Asian conquests of Nādir Shāh, gave the final blow to the already receding Chingizid mandate. After the death of Nādir Shāh, the new Uzbek principalities looked eagerly for alternative sources which could legitimize

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[57] See the articles on "Turan" and "Turkistan" in *EI*[1] and under the index of "Turkestan" in W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran* (Princeton, 1984).

[58] Aḥmad Shāh, *Nāma*, pp.9,27.

their governments. In this climate, the unabashed claims of the Durrani emperor could find a ready response in the area.[59]

In an attempt to bring the area south of the Amu Darya under his command, Aḥmad Shāh began to meddle with the internal affairs of the Uzbek amirates. To this purpose he supported the arriviste chief Ḥājī Bī Mīng of Balkh, who once had been his comrade-in-arms in the army of Nādir Shāh. Both tried to outmanoeuvre the Qataghan Uzbeks who were dominant in Konduz and large parts of Badakhshan. In due course, Aḥmad Shāh, recognized Ḥājī Bī Mīng as his governor in Balkh and later he made him his commander (*sardār*) in Turkistan.[60] More significant is the recorded event in which the Durrani Shah bestowed on him the loaded title of "Khan".[61] To say the least, this was against the still prevailing Chingizid rules of Turkistan. From this point of view, the Durrani act was unprecedented and preposterous, since only the descendants of Chingiz K͟hān were allowed to assume this royal title and only if elected in a tribal council. From the Afghan perspective, however, it had no meaning at all, since in their own environment "khan" was a common title without any particular political connotations. In this light, Aḥmad Shāh merely followed Iranian court usage. At the same time, if he was aware of its special meaning it was to be considered the rightful act of the sovereign of Turkistan. In view of similar Durrani propaganda in India and Iran, the latter seems the most likely.[62]

As he had done in India, Aḥmad Shāh tried to legitimize his activities in Turkistan by taking up the cause of endangered Muslims.[63] In a similar way Chingizid rulers had sought moral support from the religious establishment. In Central Asia, the most powerful representatives of Islam were the numerous Sufi orders, among which the Naqshbandiya was by far the most influential. They had

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59 For a historical survey of Central Asia, see the contributions of McChesney under the heading "Central Asia" in *EIr* and his *Waqf in Central Asia*; also Y. Bregel, "Tribal Tradition", pp.382-97 and "Role of Central Asia".

60 McChesney, *Waqf*, pp.220-1.

61 Maḥmūd ul-Ḥusainī, *Tārīk͟h*, 1, f.128b.

62 Cf. McChesney, *Waqf*, pp.220,230.

63 Turkistan might be considered the nursery of Hanafi Islam and many Afghans travelled for their religious education to the numerous *madrasas* of Bukhara. Also Peshawar was popular but India "had not a great reputation for learning, and the heresy of the Persians makes all Soonees avoid the infection of their colleges" (Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, p.250).

created a religious and commercial network which embraced all of Central Asia, including large parts of China as well as northern India. With the fading of Chingizid power, these Sufi orders had moved more and more into the political limelight. Their role as commercial mediators and as a source of political legitimation kept the fragile structure of Central Asia intact, even after Central Asia was divided up by the non-Muslim Chinese and Russian conquests.

Particularly influential were the descendants of the Makhdūm-i Aᶜẓam, a famous sixteenth-century Naqshbandi saint. These *Khojas* or *Makhdūmzādas*, as they were generally known, also claimed a direct genealogical link with the Prophet Muḥammad.[64] By the seventeenth century, they were politically in the ascendant. In the cities of Eastern Turkestan they had assumed administrative positions as governors under the nominal rule of the Buddhist Jungars. From these cities they stood in regular contact with related *khānaqās* and *madrasas* in Kokand, Badakhshan, Konduz and Balkh. Local Muslim rulers in this area employed them as political and religious advisors, married their daughters to them, bestowed land titles on them and, sometimes, could be initiated as their disciples.[65]

The political influence of the Khojas received a serious blow during the Chinese annexation of Eastern Turkestan. Some of them were incorporated into the Chinese nobility but, at the same time, by sending them to Beijing, they were deprived of all former attachments in the area. The leading figures, however, were forced to flee to Kokand and Badakhshan. They appealed to the local Muslim rulers to take action, to mount a holy war and to restore them in their former eminence. In order to counter these instigations, the Chinese authorities paid large amounts of cash and tea to enlist the help of the Muslim rulers to keep these refugee Khojas at bay.[66]

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[64] For an introduction to the Naqshbandi order, see H. Algar, "The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance", *SI*, 44 (1976), pp.123-52. For their role in Central Asia, see J. Fletcher, "voies", pp.14,21 and his "Ch'ing Inner Asia", pp.58-90. An important primary source on the Naqshbandi *Khojas* is: Muḥammad Ṣādiq Kāshgharī, "Ein Heiligenstaat in Islam. Das Ende der Chaghataiden und die Herrschaft der Chogas in Kasgarien (Taẕkira-yi ᶜAzīzān)", partial trans. M. Hartmann, *Der Islamische Orient, Berichte und Forschungen*, 1 (Berlin, 1905); "The History of the Khojas of Eastern Turkestan, summarised from the 'Tazkira-i-Khwajagan'", partial trans. R.B. Shaw, *JASB*, suppl, 46, 1 (1897).

[65] For an example of the latter, see McChesney, *Waqf*, p.128, and H.G. Schwarz, "The Khwajas of Eastern Turkestan", *CAJ*, 20 (1976), pp.266-95.

[66] Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia", pp.87-90; Schwarz, "Khwajas", pp.284-91;

The Chinese annexation of Eastern Turkistan and the perilous conditions of the Khojas posed an ideal challenge to the Durrani championship of Islam. In 1763 Aḥmad Shāh played the leading role in striving to marshal a united Islamic force to push the Manchus back into China. He planned to send an army to stand between Kokand and Tashkent while he tried to raise enough military support to expel the invaders and to arrange a Central Asian embargo on Chinese trade. The sublime Durrani Shah also sent an embassy to Beijing to enter a plea on behalf of the Khojas, but the Chinese emperor, true to his own inherited ideal of world supremacy, mistook the embassy for a tribute mission and a sign of surrender, so that the embassy did not achieve its purpose.[67]

Although in 1763 a united Muslim force failed to materialize, five years later Aḥmad Shāh sent a large army to Turkistan and Badakhshan. This time his aim was not the punishment of Chinese idolaters but to counter an Uzbek attempt to retake Balkh. The Durrani forces were successful and defeated the pro-Uzbek force. The confrontation ended with the Uzbek ruler Shāh Murād Bī of Bukhara accepting Aḥmad Shāh's sovereignty over Balkh. Some sources claim that Murād Bī also presented Aḥmad Shāh with the *k͟hirqa*, a piece of the Prophet Muḥammad's cloak which had since long been in the possession of the Bukharan ruler. This present was generally believed to be an Uzbek acknowledgement of the Durrani victory. Besides, the transfer of the *k͟hirqa* also reflected the transfer of the Prophet's blessings from the Uzbeks to the Durranis, and as such it also symbolized the shift of Muslim leadership from Bukhara to Kandahar. The *k͟hirqa* enjoyed a widespread popular appeal. As reported, it was carried with all possible pomp and ceremony from Turkistan to Kabul and Kandahar, at every stage attracting huge numbers of spectators who wanted to see and touch the relic.[68] It is, however, more plausible that the *k͟hirqa* was not handed over by Murād Bī at all, but was seized by Aḥmad Shāh's

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T. Sagushi, "The Revival of the White Mountain Khwajas 1760-1820 (From Saramsaq to Jihangir), *AcAs*, 14 (1968), pp.7-20; W. Eichhorn, "Kolonialkämpfe der Chinesen in Turkestan während der Periode Ch'ien-lung", *ZDMG*, 96 (1942), pp.261-325.

[67] Eichhorn, *Kolonialkämpfe*, p.315-6; J. Fletcher, "China and Central Asia 1368-1884" in J.K. Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order* (Harvard, 1970), pp.220,359.

[68] McChesney, *Waqf*, pp.222-7.

troops from Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan.[69] Here, for some decennia the cloak had been kept under the permanent guardianship of the Dahpidi Sufis: the same branch of Naqshbandi Khojas which some years before had fled from Eastern Turkestan. Thus, reviewing the Durrani claims in Turkistan, we may conclude that, although Aḥmad Shāh could not as openly and visibly claim Durrani suzerainty over Turkistan as he had done previously in India and to a lesser extent in Iran, he nevertheless propagated his championship of Islam, as he had done in India. He did so by taking up the Naqshbandi cause in Eastern Turkistan and, most emphatically, by securing the Prophet's *k̲h̲irqa*.

In the light of the foregoing, we should be aware that the official high-profile chronicles and letters reflect idealized claims and programmes. They are aimed at constructing an Afghan tradition of universal rule: an ingenious mixture of Persian, Sunni-Islamic and Sufi images which rarely approached but most often served day-to-day reality. Nonetheless, it is remarkable that the entire extent of the informal world of the Afghan transit-trader (chapter one) was reproduced in the formal claims of the Afghan empire (chapter two). The new Durrani system did not need to obliterate the Safavid, Mughal and Chingizid ones but merely absorbed and assimilated them under its own aegis. With this in mind, we will now focus our attention on Afghan horse breeding and trade. After all, it was the horse, as a commodity, military instrument and symbol of power, which linked together the world of the informal with the formal, of trade with empire, and Central Asia with India.

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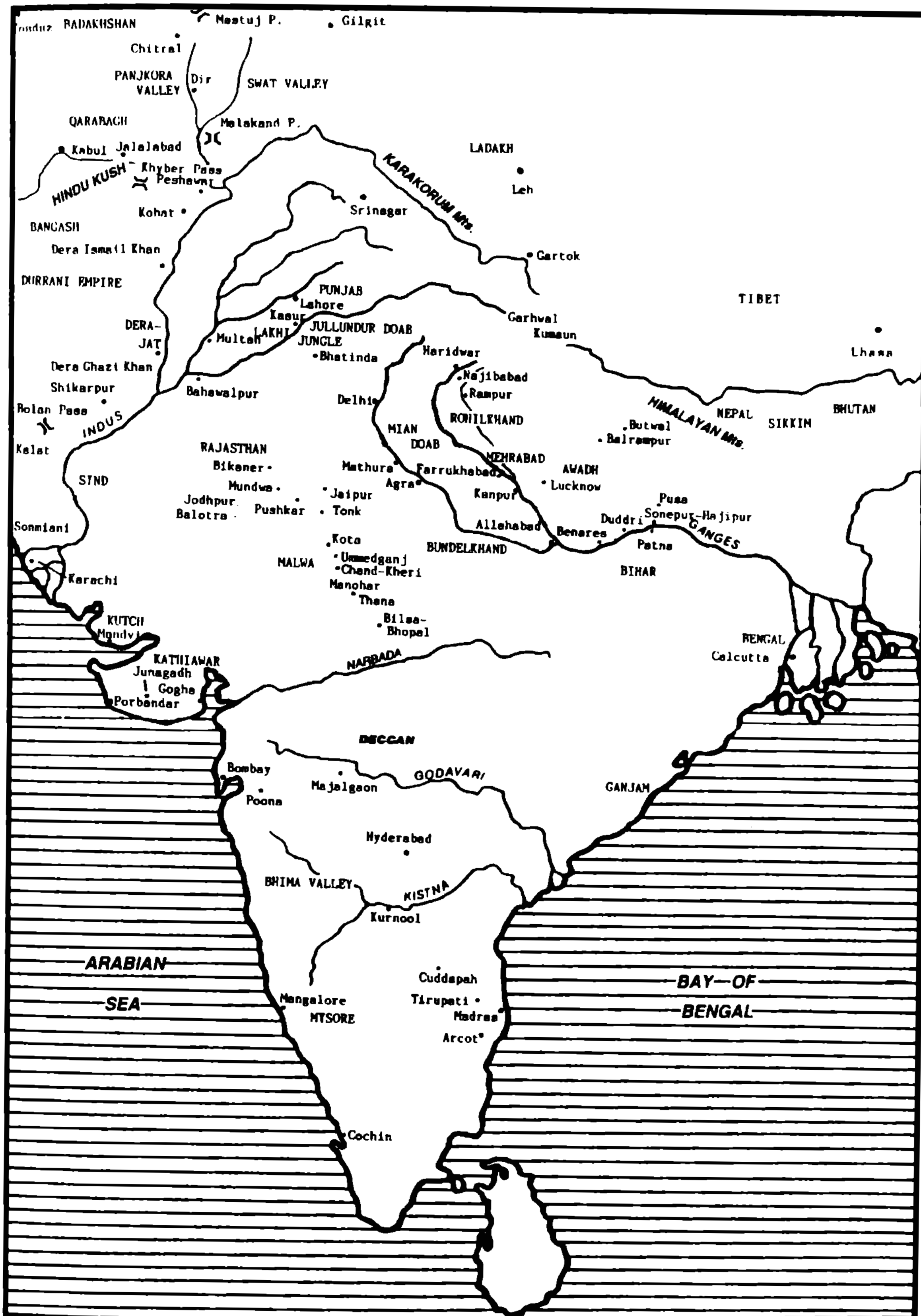
[69] See e.g. Maḥmūd ul-Ḥusainī, *Tārīk̲h̲*, 2, f.601a.



Map 3.1. India in the Eighteenth Century

CHAPTER THREE

HORSE-BREEDING AND TRADE IN INDIA

> *"'That North Country is full of horse-dealers as an old coat of lice. There is Sikandar Khan, Nur Ali Beg, and Farrukh Shah—all heads of kafilas—who deal there' said the Flower."*
>
> Rudyard Kipling, *Kim.*[1]

In this chapter I will set out to discuss two major economic problems: horse breeding and trade. In the first section I will attempt to present a general overview of the most important breeding complexes which surrounded the Indian subcontinent and which will highlight some specific Indian problems concerning breeding. This will be followed by a categorization of the most current foreign and indigenous breeds in India. Paragraph 3.2 will deal in more detail with breeding and trade during the eighteenth century.

Given the importance of the horse, it is surprising that Simon Digby's study of war-horses during the Sultanate period still stands out as the only monograph on the topic. Recently, though, scholarly interest seems to have been on the increase.[2] For the subsequent Mughal period nothing of the kind is yet available, a fact which may be attributed to a general lack of interest in overland trade relations with Central Asia, as alluded to before, and also to a want of accessible sources. For the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, the situation is much better thanks to the vivid reports of British "horse fanatics" like William Fraser and William Moorcroft. Therefore, these reports will lie at the basis of the following survey.[3]

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[1] *Op.cit.*, p.31.

[2] Digby, *War-Horse.* For some recent studies on overseas horse trade, see R. Chakravarti, "Horse Trade and Piracy at Tana (Thana, Maharashtra, India): Gleanings from Marco Polo", *JESHO*, 34, 2 (1991), pp.159-83 and also the relevant sections of S. Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500-1650* (Cambridge, 1990). For the early horse trade, see C. Gupta, "Horse Trade in North India: Some Reflections of Socio-Economic Life", *JAIH*, 14 (1983-4), pp.186-206. Very helpful on more technical problems are two studies of Jean Deloche: *Horses and Riding Equipment in Indian Art* (Pondicherry, 1990) and *Military Technology in Hoysala Sculpture* (New Delhi, 1989).

[3] Another important source regarding the eighteenth-century horse trade is provided by the local archives of Rajasthan as analysed by Gupta in his *Trade and Commerce.*

3.1. *Horse Breeding in South Asia*

International Breeding Complexes

The horse as a species, the *equus caballus* of zoologists, has evolved over a period of about sixty million years. As a result of natural selection, profound changes took place in the horse's stature, the shape of its molar teeth and the structure of its limbs. Most of the present-day horse breeds, however, are created by man in an attempt to perpetuate their most desirable characteristics. This artificial selection is based on continuous crossbreeding. Therefore, the horse should not be considered as an animal with fixed physical features. On the contrary, the horse could be manipulated to a high degree in response to specific functional demands from society. For example, in medieval Europe the art of warfare required the rearing of the strong *grant chival*, which could bear heavy medieval armour and could withstand the prevailing shock tactics of the time. Hence, between the eleventh and fourteenth century, the size of the warhorse increased almost beyond recognition. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this process was reversed in order to accommodate new military techniques and demands of more flexibility and agility.[4]

Most of today's horse breeds can be traced back to the earliest breeding grounds of Inner Asia. Probably, the domestication of the horse started in south-east Russia and from there the art of horse breeding was disseminated across the rest of Asia, Europe, Arabia and North Africa. The ecological environment of Inner Asia, with its temperate climate and its high proportion of rich feather grasses and fescue, provided optimal conditions for breeding. Breeding proceeded freely in herds in which the fittest stallion was accompanied by a following of mares, colts, fillies and geldings. This extensive "free-range" system required all other males to be castrated in order to prevent continuous strife and competition within the herds. Consequently, geldings were allowed to remain in the family group. Whereas the stallions and mares were primarily reserved for procreation purposes, geldings were free to be used as working and riding animals. Hence, the history-making mounts of the Turkish and Mongol invaders were chiefly geldings.[5]

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[4] R.H.C. Davis, *The Medieval Warhorse* (London, 1989), p.69.

[5] For the Central Asian breeding complex, see H.B. Barclay, *The Role of the Horse*

In Europe, Iran and India, to varying degrees, the breeding of horses became a more intensive, closed and controlled process. In general, there was a shortage of extensive pastures here, and nomadic pastoralism stood in a competitive relation with sedentary agriculture. For instance, the Indian grazing season from September to May paralleled the rotation of the winter (*rabīᶜ*) crop. As a result of this, there was a tendency to confine horses to stables or stud-farms. Since mares could be separated from stallions, castration could be dispensed with. In these circumstances, there could persist a general prejudice against mares and geldings, and a predilection for stallions—which represented manliness and aggressiveness. Consequently, the stallion looms large in all the depicted battle-scenes, hunting expeditions and court ceremonies in medieval Europe, Persia and India. In spite of this cultural bias, it should be pointed out that in practice geldings were slightly better suited for riding and warfare. In troops of cavalry, geldings were more tranquil and less prone to be distracted by other horses. In addition, they were more docile and more easily broken, while they required less food on long marches.[6]

Turning to Arabia, grass and other fodder was in short supply here, with the result that the number of horses that could be kept was strictly limited. Therefore, it was common sense to keep only the best mares while surplus stallions were immediately disposed of. It followed that the Arabian cavalry horse was almost always a mare. These conditions made it relatively easy to preserve the breed and ensure that it did not get lost. By these means the much acclaimed and high-valued Arabian breed was established and preserved.[7]

As stated earlier, the aim of any horse-breeder is not merely to maintain a certain race but also to improve or change it in response to the needs and fashions of the day. He will have to select mares with as many as possible of the qualities required, and have them

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in Man's Culture (London, 1980) and M.A. Levine, "Derewka and the Problem of Horse Domestication", *Antiquity*, 64, 245 (1990).

[6] W.J. Wilson, *A History of the Madras Army from 1746 to 1826*, 4, p. 402. Only after 1848, the Madras cavalry started to acquire geldings. With the benefit of hindsight, these capacities of the gelding must have given the armies from Central Asia some technical advantages vis-à-vis their defending counterparts in Europe, Persia and India. Thus, what started as an emergency measure in the free-range breeding complex of Central Asia turned out to be a strategic advantage on the military stage.

[7] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, p.37.

serviced by a stallion whose qualities might complement them. Sometimes the resultant foals may reproduce the less desirable features of both their parents, but with a little luck one or two may combine the best of both. It is on the latter that the breeder will concentrate, ensuring that they mate only with other horses possessing the required qualities. Subsequently, however, the great art will be to introduce the right quantity of new blood. Especially in areas less favourable for breeding, a regular injection of suitable horses is vital for the upkeep and improvement of the breed. In fact, this was part of the *raison d'être* of the long-distance horse trade, which not only provided horses for immediate use, but also made possible the occasional regeneration of indigenous breeds.

Obviously, rulers were very much concerned about the preservation of the right amount and quality of horses for their cavalry. To this purpose they often established a stud farm in the vicinity of their courts and made every effort to keep the channels of the horse trade open and to stimulate crossbreeding. For example, Amīr Tīmūr, Nādir Shāh and the Maratha rulers, as also the rulers of Vijayanagar and the Deccan Sultans before them, are known to have imported on a large scale Arabian horses in order to improve the breed of cavalry horses in their own districts.[8] Without adequate exchange between the various breeding areas, horses ran an increased risk of degeneration, most notably in those areas which were less favourable for horses in general. One such area was India.

The Indian Breeding Complex

In India the conditions for horse breeding were relatively poor. Since the best soil was mostly reserved for the cultivation of grains and vegetables to supply a dense population whose diet was often vegetarian, there was the problem of space. Similar to south-eastern China and south-east Asia, there was relatively little room for the horse, which could not be kept for too long in the same field since it was not willing to eat the grass which grew up around its own droppings. But apart from the relative lack of space, the greatest drawback was the want of appropriate fodder grasses. Only at places

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[8] *EIr*, "Asb", p.733; J.P. Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Belochistan* (London, 1856), pp. 94-5. For the Marathas, see H. Shakespear, *The Wild Sports of India* (London, 1962), pp. 298-300.

which were provided with regular watering during the dry season, either natural or artificial, and with proper care by grass cutters after the monsoons, nutritious grasses could survive. Normally, the extreme differences between the rainy and dry season made the soil at one time a swamp and at another hard, parched, and cracked. As a result, the grass-fields grew rapidly during the rains but the subsequent dryness rendered them unsuitable for pasture at the end of the year. Even though continuous moisture and high temperatures tended to increase luxuriant growth, the nutritive properties of the grasses were low by being expanded in the formation of their rankness.[9] However, in the climates of the north and north-west of India, i.e., the eastern extensions of the Arid Zone, more nutritious fodder grasses were to be found, like *dūb* in Rohilkhand or *dhāman* and *sewan* in Rajasthan.[10] In these areas the breeding of horses was a viable proposition. But even here, the tension between horse breeding and arable farming was maintained since haymaking always interfered with the busy activities of the autumn (*kharīf*) harvest.

Because of the lack of suitable grasses and hay, the animals were fed with all sorts of grain, mainly wheat and barley, and gram (until the nineteenth century oats did not grow in India). These could be prepared in various ways. Cut green wheat or barley was called *khavīd* and was sometimes mixed with *bhūsā*, or chaff. Wheat or rice mixed with cow's milk produced a widespread fodder called *khīr*. Grain and gram could also be boiled (mostly during winter) or mixed with clarified butter (*ghī*) or coarse brown sugar (*khānd*).[11] In south India horses were even fed on rice fields, or given boiled mutton mixed with *ghī* and grain.[12] Although grain was indispens-

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[9] J.F. Duthie, *The Fodder Grasses of India* (Roorkee, 1888); Balfour, *Cyclopaedia*, "Grass".

[10] *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, "Report W. Moorcroft", ff.278,289; for more detailed information on the capacities of the different fodder grasses, see MDP, 26-6-1795, "Report W. Frazer", ff.297-302.

[11] The raw or coarse sugar which is the produce of the first inspissation of the juice of the sugar-cane is called *gur*. *Khānd* is coarse sugar which is clarified and the syrup then gradually boiled down to a hard consistence.

[12] For horse fodder, see Abū'l Faẓl, *A'īn*, 1, pp.142-3; Saʿādat Yār Khān Rangīn, *Faras Nama e Rangin, or the Book of the Horse by Rangin*, tr. D.C. Phillott (London, 1911), pp.16-8; Shakespear, *Wild Sports*, p.309; R.O. Cambridge, *An Account of the War in India between the English and the French on the Coast of Coromandel* (London, 1761), p.VI; La Flotte in Deleury, *Les Indes florissantes*, p.514.

able for the horse as a supplementary ingredient to grass, as an almost exclusive basis for feeding it was considered deficient since it could not fully substitute the nutritional value of grass and hay and kept horses small.[13]

The Indian methods of feeding horses raised feelings of bewilderment on the part of Middle Eastern and European visitors.[14] According to some nineteenth-century British observers, the Indian diet was detrimental to the horse's liver and caused many diseases and high mortality rates.[15] On the other hand, Indian breeders and merchants knew that "Indian" fodder could be the ideal diet for fattening the horse and furnishing it with a bright outward appearance. To them it was customary to fatten the horse with wheat and g̲hī in anticipation of the spring fairs. In order to fetch a good price, their horses were subjected to a special treatment called *band-qaṣīl.*[16] According to Rangīn's *Faras-Nāma* this implied that since the horse eats more in the dark than in daylight, it should be kept for forty days in a very dark stable with only a small lamp burning night and day. During this time, no brushing and grooming was allowed and once a day one had to smear its daily urine and dung all over the horse's body. At the end of the forty days of passive fattening—not very much unlike our present-day agribusiness—the horse was taken out, ready to be marketed: it was covered with soft fat and its coat was sleek and shining.[17]

In other ways too the scarcity of grazing grounds had its damaging impact on Indian horse breeding. Since horses were often stabled directly after being weaned, they did not have much opportunity for exercise and so their strength and fitness suffered accordingly. Without much effect, one tried to reverse this handicap by massage. At the same time, the fertility of mares declined when kept too long in the stable.[18] All these impediments made the success of

[13] Shakespear, *Wild Sports*, p.309.

[14] K.N. Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe, Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1990), p.282.

[15] J.L. Kipling, *Beast and Man in India* (London, 1892), pp.167-8.

[16] I.e. "confined feeding"; *qaṣīl* is Punjabi for *k̲havīd.*

[17] Saʿādat Yār Rangīn, *Faras Nama*, p.17.

[18] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, p.43; Shakespear, *Wild Sports*, p.309; J.W., *Reflections on our Horse Breeding Operations in India* (n.p, 1899), p.11; De La Flotte, *Essais historique sur l'Inde* (Paris, 1769), p.350; Moorcroft, *Observations*, p.19. For a more recent veterinarian discussion, see W. Jöchle as cited by W. Doniger, "The Deconstruction of Vedic Horselore in Indian Folklore" in A.W. van den Hoek & D.H.A.

the breeding industry in most parts of the subcontinent highly dependent on outside supply, both for direct use and for improving the indigenous breed.

Breeds in India

Apart from the horse's symbolic role in the "pomp and circumstance" of the Persian courtly tradition, its importance in India was mainly due to its military function, both as a cavalry horse on the actual battlefield and as a means of personal transport. Partly as a consequence of its cultural and military value, the horse was not much used as a beast of burden. Besides, India was too hot and humid for the horse's effective use as a draught animal. For these reasons, it was the military role that determined the Indian demand for horses.[19]

From the perspective of the *longue durée*, the main breeding areas, both indigenous and foreign, which provided India with the bulk of its war-horses, remained more or less the same. Obviously, the amount of horses produced or exchanged at a certain time or place could vary, following the vicissitudes of political and economic history. Military tactics could change, trade routes could be blocked and local breeding conditions could be affected by political instability. But until the nineteenth century, long-term stability of supply was ensured by a high degree of complementarity between the main breeding centres and their supply lines. When one or another track was obstructed, horse-traders could use legion alternative routes to reach their destination on the Indian market. For example, whenever the safe delivery overland across Afghanistan was in danger, more horses could be ferried in from Iran by the Persian Gulf. Of course, this change of routes could just as well engender an alteration of imported breeds. During the Sultanate period, Persian and Arabian horses were called *Baḥrī*, or sea-borne horses, because they were imported by sea. They were considered by far the most valued breeds. This was not so much a reflection of their functional qualities as the result of their scarcity and the expense involved in their transport. Many horses died during the voyage or if not, arrived

Kolff & M.S. Oort (eds.), *Ritual, State and History in South Asia. Essays in Honour of J.C. Heesterman* (Leiden, 1992), p.77.

[19] For the functions of the horse in India, see Deloche, *Circulation*, 1, p.235.

in a poor condition on the Indian coast and might yet perish after they suffered an entirely different treatment and diet. Since overland transport was more convenient, *Turkī* or *Tatarī* horses from Afghanistan and Central Asia were cheaper and could find more outlets.[20] I will return to this in the next section.

Before we present a survey of the most current breeds, it should be pointed out that the overall typology is not very rigid or well defined. The exact race of a horse could not be certified by official stamps or stud books stating its origin. For the merchants and customers, only the horse's quality made or unmade its value. Obviously, horse-traders always tried to maximize their profits and often tried to pass indigenous horses for Arabian or Persian ones. In the end, it was not the biological breed or race but the quality of the horse which actually counted. The latter was to a great extent determined by the horse's geographical origin.

What were the countries which supplied India with horses? During Mauryan times the best quality horses were Arabian, Persian, and those of Kamboja, Sindhu, Aratta and Vanāyu. Kamboja corresponds roughly with present-day Afghanistan, Sindhu with Sind, and Aratta and Vanayu were situated in north-western India.[21] After the Muslim invasions, during the Delhi Sultanates, these centres recur under different names. Arabian and Persian horses are now both referred to as *Baḥrī* and *Tāzī* horses. Next in value were *Turkī* horses which, as the name suggests, came from wider Turkistan, including Afghanistan. A third category was the *Kohī* horse from Kohistan, i.e. from the Himalaya hills in northern India. The horses from the north-west of India recur under the name of *Buldastī*, referring to *mulk-i buldasta*, the area in the eastern Punjab, or *Alāghī*, denoting the horse from Sind. Apart from these high-quality breeds, there is also mention of the native, pony-like *Tātū* (H. *Ṭaṭṭū*) which was branded as the worst type of all.[22]

Some time later, in the *Āʾīn-i Akbarī*, cavalry horses were divided into seven classes: Arabian, Persian, *Mujannas*, *Turkī*, *Yābū*, *Tāzī* and *Jangla* horses. Most of the Arabian horses came not from Arabia

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[20] Marco Polo, *The Travels* (London, 1988) p.264; for prices of horses in the 14th century, see Digby, *War-Horse*, p.38, and Chakravarti, "Horse Trade", p.171.

[21] Gupta, "Horse Trade", pp.188-191.

[22] Based on 14th-century material; for Barani's categories, see Chakravarti, "Horse Trade" p.172; see also the anonymous source, *Qurrat ul-Mulk*, BM. Ms. Or.1697 II, ff. 335b-336a.

proper but from *ᶜIrāq-i ᶜArab*. Persian horses came mainly from *ᶜIrāq-i ᶜAjam*, i.e. Persian Iraq, and *Fars* (being more specifically: Dashtestan, Kazarun and Shiraz). Horses from Khorasan and Afghanistan were considered *Turkī* breeds. A *Mujanna* resembled a Persian horse but was in fact a mixed breed from a Persian or *Turkī* horse. The last three were native breeds; the *Yābū* was regarded as the mixed offspring of a *Turkī* and an inferior native horse; the *Tāzī*, during the Sultanate period still synonymous with a pure Arabian or Persian, had now devaluated to a general designation of a good but native breed, only slightly preferred to the Punjabi *Jangla*, which was bred in the Lakhi Jungle north of Bhatinda.[23] Indeed, *Tāzīs* were bred all over the sub-continent. The eighteenth-century British officer Pigott, who made a detailed typology of Indian horses, identified for example Jangla, Kutch, Kathiawar, Damaun, and Maratha *Tāzīs*. He further claimed that the name was applied to horses believed to have some mixture of Arab blood. Among the British *Tāzīs* acquired a rather bad reputation which caused horse-traders to sell them as *Irānīs*.[24] In general, this devaluation of the *Tāzī* again illustrates the fluidity of equine categories.

Obviously, the seven classes of cavalry horses in the *Āʾīn* designated the general quality, and not the genetic origin of the horse. For example, "Arabian" did not necessarily signify "from Arabian stock" or "from Arabia", but "like an Arabian". Of course, these qualities could overlap but the latter was the only really verifiable one. This is corroborated by the fact that, apart from this military classification, the *Āʾīn* also refers to several other indigenous breeds which compared very well with the better foreign races but are not listed under the cavalry headings. The horses from Kutch were particularly celebrated and could not be easily distinguished from Arabians. Other good breeds were *Sanūjī* horses from the western Punjab (north-west from the Lakhi Jungle) and *Pachwariya* horses from the districts of Agra, Mewat and Ajmir, that is, roughly, Rajasthan.[25] It should be noted that all these local breeds could again be ranked separately according to the above-mentioned typology of cavalry horses.

Not fit for military service but also mentioned in the *Āʾīn*, and also

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[23] Abū'l Faẓl, *Aʾin*, 1, pp.243-5.
[24] J.P. Pigott, *Treatise on the Horses of India* (London, 1794), p.15.
[25] Abū'l Faẓl, *Aʾin*, 1, p.140.

by later European observers, were the horses from the northern hills, earlier called *Kohī* horses. They occur under two separate categories, namely: the *Tānghan* (H. *Ṭāngan*) of the eastern, and the *Gūṭ* (H. *Gūnṭh*) of the western Himalayas.[26] These were strong horses widely used in northern India, but considered too small for cavalry purposes. A slightly better indigenous breed was the *Sirissa* horse in Bihar which was considered a crossbreed of the local *Tāṭū* with stronger foreign races.[27] Likewise, the *Āʾīn* states that the *Tāṭū* was inferior for service and was thrown out of the military stables. Nevertheless, among the numerous local *zamīndārī* armies throughout India, the *Tāṭū* was still reckoned to be good enough as it remained the common cavalry horse.[28]

When we take a closer look at the quality of the various horse breeds with regard to their fitness for military service, there seem to be two broad *ideal types* which corresponded to the characteristics of, on the one hand, the Arabo-Persian horse with all its mixed varieties of Indian breed commonly referred to as *Tāzī*, i.e. Arabian-like, and on the other hand, the *Turkī* or *Turkoman* horse in all its varieties of mixed breeds. Of course, this division was not a rigid one and many horses were not at all or only vaguely identifiable as such. According to Pigott, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, Indian breeders and merchants applied the name *Tāzī* to a horse which was relatively small, lively, active, vigorous, and had great speed and fire. As a result it needed intensive training and control. Besides, it was endowed with a nice appearance. All these features he found in complete contrast to the *Turkī* type of horse which was slower in its movements, but in height, docility, durability, and perseverance surpassed the *Tāzī*. The stamina and staying qualities of the *Turkī* horse rendered it particularly valuable on long marches and for heavy duty. Judged by outward appearances, however, it clearly deviated from the British taste of "delightful symmetry". But as Pigott admitted: "experience evinces how compatible deformity to the eye is with extraordinary powers".[29] Consequently, in the context of the indigenous armies and warfare, all these qualities made the *Turkī* horse the best horse for military service. This is attested by the early

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[26] *Ibid.*; Pigott, *Treatise*, pp.35-38; Deloche, *Circulation*, 1, p.233.
[27] Pigott, *Treatise*, p.43; *NAI*, MDP, 2-6-1803, f.4: local *zamīndārs* plundered the foreign horses after the battle of Buxar (1764).
[28] Modave, *Voyage*, p.327.
[29] Pigott, *Treatise*, pp.7-27.

nineteenth-century indigenous account *Ārāyish-i Maḥfil* of Mīr Shēr ᶜAlī Afsōs. He presents us with a more or less metaphorical anecdote in connection with the 1761 battle of Panipat in which Marathas mounted on Deccani, read *Tāzī*, horses, encountered and yielded to Durrāni-Afghans on *Kābūlī*, read *Turkī*, horses. The author states that:

> "...at the defeat of King Bhāo, a Maratha chief left the field alone, pursued by a Durrani. The Maratha, well mounted on a Dakhani mare, easily distanced his pursuer, and when he had galloped some five or six miles, drew rein to rest. Happening to look round after a time, he saw that the Durrani, his horse well-nigh blown, had almost overtaken him. Once more he set spurs to his horse and again stopped to rest, but again the Durrani appeared on the scene urging on his slow and exhausted horse. After a fifty or sixty miles' chase of this description the Dakhani mare succumbed. The Durrani, pounding along on his exhausted horse once more appeared on the scene, and the Hindu, recognizing his fate, allowed himself to be killed. Some golden equipment and a bag of money rewarded the perseverance of the "Mughal", but the mare he did not consider worth leading back to camp."[30]

Another factor which contributed to the success of the *Turkī* breed was the widespread availability of Central Asian blood stock. *Turkī* horses bred in Khorasan, Afghanistan or Turkestan could reach the sub-continent more easily overland than the Persian or Arabian thoroughbreds from the far off Middle East by sea. Consequently, the *Tāzī* type of horse was often of indigenous blood from Kathiawar, Kutch or other coastal areas. On the other hand, pure *Turkī* horses could not only enter India more easily by way of commercial exchange but also in the wake of invasions, military expeditions and migrations from Central Asia. In India there was a widespread belief that the quality of native breeds was considerably enhanced following the influx of *Turkī* horses during the invasions and battles of Tīmūr, Nādir Shāh and Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī.[31]

All in all, we may say that the best horses in India were either imported from Central Asia, Iran or Arabia, or were bred in those areas which possessed good ecological conditions or were favourably

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[30] As presented by D.C. Phillott in his translation of Saᶜādat Yār Khan Rangīn, *Faras Nama*, p.11.

[31] Pigott, *Treatise*, p.16; *NAI*, MDP, 2-6-1803, "Report J. Fortescue", ff.2b-8a; MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report W. Moorcroft", f.306.

situated for regular regeneration by foreign breeds. Hence, the main breeding centres were located within a broad frontier-zone which stretched from the Bhima river behind the Western Ghats, via Kutch, Kathiawar and Sind into Rajasthan, and extending northwards along the Luni and Indus rivers to the Punjab and eastward into the Himalayas. These Indian breeding grounds were linked to the Central Asian breeding centres directly north of the Hindu Kush and the foothills of the Elburz mountains in Khorasan. There existed no clear-cut distinction of breeds but, to a varying degree, the breeds of the coastal areas answered more to the description of Arabian-like *Tāzīs*, whereas the inland breeds were much more influenced by the characteristics of the strong *Turkī*.

3.2. Horse Breeding and Trade in the Eighteenth Century

The Overland Trade

During the eighteenth century India was still part of a thriving interregional livestock trading system which originated in the major breeding areas of Central Asia, and included eastern Europe and the Middle East. The bulk of the supply was produced by pastoral nomads in the Kalmuk and Qazaq steppes of southern Russia, the Turkoman wastes east of the Caspian Sea, and further to the southeast, Afghan Turkistan. During the eighteenth century, in the wake of Russian and Afghan expansion into the producing steppe areas, by far the most important markets for sale were those of Russia—mainly for cattle, goats, sheep, and horses—and South Asia, the latter mainly for war-horses.[32] The latter were the Turkoman or *Turkī* breeds from the area north of the Hindu Kush around Balkh and the area lower down the Amu Darya and along the Andkhui river. They were initially sold at the local markets of Balkh, Bukhara and Herat, which latter place was also an outlet for the minor Iranian market. During the summer, the horses were bought by Afghan merchants, either indirectly through middlemen at the fairs or directly from the breeding nomads themselves. In general, the horses were bought in a rather bad condition for only about one quarter of the ultimate Indian sale price. In order to prepare them for sale they were for

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[32] For the Russian livestock economy, see Blanchard, *Age of Silver*, pp.215-87; see also P. Longworth, *The Cossacks* (London, 1969), pp.25,172.

one or two months fattened in the more southern Afghan pastures or *maidāns* around Kabul and Kandahar.[33] During October and November, these merchants, joining the caravans of the Powinda trading nomads, moved *en masse* with their horses across the Sulaiman mountains, either taking the southern routes through the Bolan and other passes to Multan and the Derajat, continuing via Bahawalpur to Bikaner, mainly supplying Jaipur, the Deccan and southern India; or travelling northwards through the Khyber pass into Hindustan. After crossing the mountains but before being distributed to the local markets of the Punjab, Rohilkhand, Awadh, Benares and Bihar, the bulk of the horses was kept grazing at the extensive wastes of the Jullundur Doab and the Lakhi Jungle which were created by the recurrent floods of the Indus and its wild tributaries the Beas and the Sutlej. On these alluvial fields the merchants could rest and nourish their horses without much expenditure and free from too much state interference.[34]

At the turn of the eighteenth century the total amount of duties which had to be paid along both routes was around 40 Rs per horse, which would mean somewhat more than 10% of the sales price.[35] On their way, the horse merchants sold part of their stock at the local fairs and at the same time bought horses from the indigenous breeding centres in Rajasthan, the Punjab and Rohilkhand. Buying and selling *en route*, the merchants proceeded as far as Sonepur-Hajipur in the east and Tirupati and Arcot in the south. In this way, the regional breeding economies were integrated into the long-distance trade with Central Asia.

Many of the local *melās*, in Rajasthan also called *hāṭs*, became important outlets for indigenous horse-breeds. Some important examples in this respect were the fairs at Bhatinda which served as the entrepôt of the Lakhi Jungle, Majalgaon, the main Maratha market for the horses from the Bhima valley, and Balotra and Pushkar for the indigenous breeds of Sind and Gujarat. All the fairs were held

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[33] Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, pp.386-8; *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report W. Moorcroft", f.287; MDP, 9-5-1808, "Letter R. Frith to Secr.Brd. of Superintendence for the Improvement of the Breed of Cattle", ff.540-1; MDP, 13-2-1813, "Letter W. Moorcroft to Secr.Brd.", f.150.

[34] For a similar pattern in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, see J. Arlinghaus, "The Transformation of Afghan Tribal Society: Tribal Expansion, Mughal Imperialism and the Roshaniyya Insurrection, 1450-1600" (PhD thesis, Duke University, 1988), p.61.

[35] *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report W. Moorcroft", f.287.

during a few weeks either during autumn, at the arrival of the foreign horses, or spring, at the end of the grazing season. The timetable of the local fairs was adjusted to the convenience of the traders, enabling them to travel from one fair to the other without losing too much time. For example, the Ummedganj fair in Malwa, which serviced the Kota *darbār* with horses, followed neatly 18 days after that of the great Pushkar *melā*, some 200 km to the north-west. Besides, regular postal services kept merchant and customers up to date about the last developments at the other fairs.

During autumn, Pushkar was the major fair in Rajasthan. It was held in early November and some 5000 horses were brought to it each year. This was only a minor part of the total quantity on offer because the traders usually held back the bulk of the horses. Business on the spot was mainly a kind of window-dressing. Customers, mostly army officers or court agents called *chābuk-sawārs*, who wanted to buy horses on a large scale, had to purchase strings of horses on being shown only a few specimina.[36] After collecting the horses, the officers resold most of the very best and the very worst animals, whereas the medium quality was reserved for the military.[37] Obviously, the quality within a string of horses varied considerably and only the very best, and best fed and trained, were sent to the actual fair. In general, merchants preferred to dispose of their horses directly but in case there was no ready sale, they retained them, meanwhile fattening, breaking or training them, and at the right time fetching a higher price for them.[38] The prices of the horses were not only related to their quality and to the general market conditions but were also greatly influenced by the local price level of fodders like grain and hay, which affected overall costs of breeding and transport.[39]

Other autumn fairs in the area included Mundwa near Nagaur and Balotra near Jodhpur. The latter, however, had a more important spring fair during March-April, in which season regional breeds dominated the scene. More to the south, in Malwa, which was the gate to the Deccan market, there was a similar rhythm of alternating autumn and spring fairs. Here Ummedganj, and

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36 *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report Moorcroft", f.302-3; Pigott, *Treatise*, pp.56-7.

37 *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report Moorcroft", f.287.

38 *Ibid.*, f.303.

39 *NAI*, MDP, 27-9-1804, "Report Capt. Nuthull", ff.74r-84v.

particularly Bilsa, near Bhopal, serviced the autumnal imports of foreign horses, whereas Manohar Thana and particularly Chand-Kheri held their most important *melās* during spring.[40]

In the north, by far the most important centre was Haridwar, which had a fair both during the autumn and spring, during which time it also served the Himalayan traders from the hill states to its north. The biggest, however, was the spring fair which coincided with the famous religious festival which drew thousands of pilgrims to the banks of the Ganges each year.[41] The combination of trade and pilgrimage was a fairly common phenomenon; it also occurred at the Mundwa, Hajipur, Tirupati and numerous other fairs. Obviously, at the fairs, religious and political interests were two sides of the same coin. For example, the Maratha and Sikh generals and their troops, were in regular communication with the Haridwar and other fairs, not only to pay their devotion at the holy places but also to safeguard a secure supply of war-horses.[42] The control of the *melās* was always a cause of intense rivalry. Although at the spring fair there were not as many horses from Afghanistan or Turkistan as during the autumn, customers could buy foreign horses procured during the previous season by speculators who prepared and fattened the horses for the following spring sale or they could order them in advance for the November fair, since on their way back home many long-distance traders from Afghanistan called or re-called at the swarming Haridwar spring fair. Of course, one could buy indigenous breeds from the Punjab or Rohilkhand or *Gūṭ* ponies from the Kumaun and Garhwal hills at any time. More to the east, the autumnal fairs were held at Duddri answering the big demand from Benares, and Hajipur for the Bihar market. The spring fairs were held at Balrampur and Butwal along the Himalayan fringe, also the entrepots of local indigenous breeds like *Tātūs* and hill *Tānghans* from Nepal.[43]

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[40] *NAI*, MDP, 10-4-1795, "Cavalry agent R. Murray to Lieut. A. Green", ff.169-70.

[41] For Haridwar, see the accounts of Thomas Hardwicke: *NAI*, Field Books, 1, "Plot of Route from Najibabad to Srinagar and Upper Ganjes (1796)", ff.36-46 and "Narrative of a Journey to Sirinagur", *AR*, 6 (1799), p.309 ff. See also Raper, "Narrative", pp.450 ff, and *IOL&R*, HM.582, "Report H. Wellesley (1802)", ff.2233-306, and Wellesly Mss.Eur.E.178, ff.215-7.

[42] For Marathas at Tirupati, see *IOL&R*, MMSP, P/D/45, 26-1-1761, f.87.

[43] For information on the fairs, see *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report W. Moorcroft", ff.288-293 and Gupta, *Trade and Commerce*, pp.80-3. For Hajipur,

Thus, the long-distance overland horse trade connected and integrated several overlapping market areas. In each of these areas were held one or more major spring fairs, mostly outlets for local produce, and autumnal fairs which specialized in the direct sale of *Wilāyatī*, i.e. *Turkī*, horses brought in by foreign merchants. In addition, these fairs served as a market for each of the local states which tried to ensure a stable horse supply for their cavalry. The main fairs of the Rajasthan area were Pushkar in autumn and Balotra in spring; of Malwa, Bilsa in autumn and Chand-Kheri during spring; of Rohilkhand and the Punjab, Haridwar was the predominant market, especially in spring.

As far as the eighteenth-century overland horse trade is concerned, a clearly perceptible rhythm and pattern comes into sight. After the horses were bought, they were prepared for the market by letting them graze on the natural *maidāns* of Afghanistan and, after crossing the Sulaiman mountains, on the wastes of the Jullundur Doab and the Lakhi Jungle. In autumn the adjacent Indian markets tuned up for the arrival of this long-distance trade from Central Asia. At the regional level new horses were held for direct use, for fattening, for re-export or for reproduction in the breeding industry.

The Overseas Trade

The overland traffic stood in a complementary relation to the transportation of horses by sea. Whenever the landroute was interrupted by political unrest, importation by sea could provide a viable alternative and vice versa. Prior to the eighteenth century, the so called *Baḥrī* or "sea" horses had usually come from Fars, Iraq or Arabia in large numbers. In the eighteenth century, however, the horse trade with the Persian Gulf was limited and certainly secondary to the overland trade with Central Asia.[44] Besides, the bulk of the overseas horses did not originate from the Middle East but from ports in Kathiawar like Porbandar, Gogha, Mandvi or Sonmiani. It was not before the beginning of the nineteenth century that, in order to meet British army demands, sustained horse exports from Iran again reached India by sea. Some decades earlier the government at Madras had already decided to avoid the native overland

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see A.A. Yang, *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District 1793-1920* (Berkeley, 1989).

[44] S.R. Grumman, "The Rise and Fall of the Arab Shaykhdom of Bushire 1750-1850" (PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1962), p.196.

network and to buy horses in Kathiawar directly through their own channels in Bombay. In order to assure a safe arrival of the horses they were transported by sea to the west coast at Cochin or Mangalore from where they were brought overland to Madras. This was in direct response to a falling off of the overland supply.[45] The Madras territory, like its client the Walajah nawab of Arcot, was located at the other end of the supply lines from the north. At the end of the century the number of northern horses arriving at their regional fair of Tirupati in the south, dropped dramatically. The northern horse traders found a growing market in the hands of the agents from the several competing native states in the Deccan. Moreover, Mysorean and Maratha interlopers tried to siphon off the traditional supply lines controlled by the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Afghans of Bhopal, Kurnool and Cuddapah.[46] In fact, the same was true in northern India, where Sikh agents of Ranjit Singh intercepted the supply lines to Haridwar.[47] The situation was aggravated by the fact that whatever numbers were brought to Tirupati—around some 500 horses each year—the best of them were first claimed by the local *chābuk-sawārs* of the nawab of Arcot and, only through their mediation, the remainder was left to the Company.[48]

What can be said about the costs of transport of overseas horses in comparison with the overland horses? For the latter we only know the sales prices. At the time the overland horses arrived at Tirupati these had increased considerably. During the 1770's a good cavalry horse at Tirupati would cost from 150 to 200 Pagodas which was equal to 500 to 700 Rs.[49] The same horse at the northern fairs would be around 100 to 200 Rs less.[50] At the end of the century the prices had fallen to about 300 to 400 Rs in the north, most probably

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[45] *NAI*, MDP, 27-11-1813, nr.108, "Report E. Wyatt"; *IOL&R* MMSP, P/252/18, 3-8-1787, ff.407-9; MMSP, 14-8-1787, f.484; 17-8-1787, f.536; MMPP, P/253/10, January 1793, f.565; MMPP, P/253/75, 10-1-1797, f.156.

[46] *IOL&R*, MMPP, P/253/12, April 1993, f.608; MMPP, P/253/33, 4-10-1794, f.4109.

[47] *NAI*, MDP, 13-2-1813, "Moorcroft to Secr.Brd.", ff.137-8.

[48] *IOL&R*, MMSP, P/251/72, 2-11-1772, f.880; MMPP, P/253/33, 4-10-1794, f.4110.

[49] *IOL&R*, MMSP, P/251/71, 17-2-1772, ff.189,207: horses for officers would cost around 250 Pagodas; MMSP, P/251/72, 14-7-1772, f.623: frequently horses were also valued in Rupees; *NAI*, FPD, S, 8-10-1784, nr.12; FPD, S, 19-2-1785, nr.44.

[50] *NAI*, FPD, S, 6-1-1774, nr.1; FPD, S, 3-2-1777, nr.13; PHD, 9-7-1782, f.1457.

as a consequense of decreasing demands.[51] At the same time horses carried from Kutch to Calcutta by sea would cost around 760 Rs, from Basra to Calcutta 838 Rs. The latter sum consisted of the following subcharges:

Table 3.1. Specification of costs of a Basra horse for sale in Calcutta[52]

purchase at Basra	250
duties	30
fodder	100
freight Basra-Calcutta	300
insurance	80
landing charges	2
casualties on the voyage	76
cost price at Calcutta (Rs)	838

From this we may conclude that the costs of overseas transport of horses were considerably above the level of the overland passage, even at a stage when the latter had become very difficult indeed.

In another reaction to this supply crisis, the Madras government, increasingly aware of the importance of cavalry troops, had to resort to the hiring of native cavalry forces, which was extremely expensive but could not be dispensed with in the protection of British transports and communications.[53] Still another attempt to solve this problem was the launching of a breeding operation of their own, as was tried at Pusa in 1793 and at Ganjam in 1795.

The Volume of the Horse Trade

In order to arrive at a general estimate of the total volume of the horse trade it is necessary first to give an estimate of the total amount of cavalry horses employed in India. Let us start with the relatively small cavalry contingents of the EIC. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Company's officials and army officers became increasingly aware that, in the long run, they could not hold or expand their newly acquired territories without a substantial enlargement of their cavalry establishment. The Maratha and Mysore wars had

[51] *NAI*, MDP, 9-10-1795, nr.37-39; MDP, 10-4-1795, ff.169-70; MDP, 15-10-1811, "Report W. Moorcroft", f.305.

[52] *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, "Report W. Moorcroft", f.307; for Kutch-Calcutta, see MDP, 27-9-1804.

[53] *IOL&R*, MMSP, P/251/59, 19-10-1767, ff.1071-3; MMSP P/251/61, 29-2-1768, ff.252-3.

proven to them the persisting importance of the horse. In 1793 the peace-time Bengal cavalry consisted of only two regiments of native cavalry with an establishment of no more than 500 horses. Only six years later the total Bengal military horse establishment had risen sevenfold to 3500 animals. In 1809 it had grown twelvefold to 6000 horses. Similarly, in Madras the cavalry contingent was increased, mainly by incorporating the native regiments of the nawab of Arcot and the Nizam of Hyderabad. Until 1803, only the Bombay government had no cavalry of its own and had to rely completely on the mounted contingents of its native allies.[54]

Despite these increases, the total British cavalry force was still inferior to the massive cavalry contingents of the native states. In 1778, Ḥaider ʿAlī's army in the Deccan was reported to count 28,000 horse. At the same time, the cavalry of the Marathas, in the Deccan alone, numbered 67,000.[55] To Robert Orme we owe the following evaluation of the strength of the military powers in Hindustan around 1760:

Table 3.2. Orme's assessment of the military potential of Hindustan[56]

Rohillas:	
Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān	4,000 horse 20,000 foot
Dūndī Khān	10,000 horse & foot
Maulā Sardār	3,000 horse & foot
Najīb ud-Daulah	10,000 horse & foot 20,000 foot
Aḥmad Khān Bangash	10,000 horse & foot
Rāna of Udaipur	20,000 horse 10,000 foot
Jats	10,000 horse 30,000 foot
Sikhs under Charhat Singh	20,000 horse 30,000 foot
Rajputs under Rādhu Singh	20,000 horse ? foot
Chief of Marwar	25-30,000 chiefly horse

[54] For Bengal, see G.J. Alder, "The Origins of the "Pusa Experiment": the East India Company and Horse-Breeding in Bengal, 1793-1808", *BPP*, 98, 1 (1979), pp.10-2; for Madras, see Wilson, *History Madras Army*, 2, p.149; for Bombay, see B. Mollo, *The Indian Army* (Poole, 1981), p.16.

[55] *NAI*, FPD, S, 2-2-1778, nr.21, these figures only refer to the Deccan.

[56] *IOL&R*, Orme Mss.ov.108, f.89.

These figures, together with those of the Deccan give a total of something over 200,000 horses. They do not present a complete picture, however, because many native states are not included in the above list. Obviously, it is not possible to calculate the exact number of the total Indian cavalry but when we only take into account the Maratha army in Hindustan, the cavalry of the rulers of Awadh, Benares and Bengal, and the remaining Rajput chiefs, the figure would already be nearly doubled. Even the Mughal stables still counted some 200,000 horses around 1740. Although this figure is only half of the total of Akbar's cavalry units, given by Abū'l Faẓl, together with the armies of the Mughal successor states, the total sum for the mid-eighteenth century clearly exceeds the sixteenth- century numbers.[57]

Looking at the number of horses of the many local *zamīndārī* armies in India, even more doubts are raised. When we adopt Habib's figures for the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century, this would result in another 400,000 horse.[58] Considering the increased impact and buying power of the *zamīndārs* in eighteenth-century India, even this staggering figure would seem to be too low for the later period. All these figures, including those of Habib are, however, very difficult to check and often the contemporary accounts were influenced by the hyperboles of the over-enthusiastic observer. Besides, there was most probably a great deal of overlap in the numbers. For example, Rohilla mercenaries switched sides rather frequently and thus their contribution to the potential strength of native armies could easily be overrated. On the other hand, Kolff rightly observes that even the Mughal inventories of the military labour force did not exhaust the total reservoir of armed men, with or without horses.[59]

Keeping these restrictions in mind, we may still come to a general assessment of the importance of the horse in quantitative terms. As a result of the decentralization of the Mughal empire and the rise of the regional courts, the total horse population in the first three quarters of the eighteenth century was brought to a peak. Thus, the total sum of war-horses in India, excluding the Persian and later

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[57] For these figures, see W. Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls: its Organization and Administration* (London, 1903), p.61.

[58] I. Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556-1707)* (London, 1963), pp.166-8. Cf. S. Moosvi, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire c. 1595. A Statistical Study* (Delhi, 1987), pp.376-9.

[59] Kolff, Naukar, p.3.

Afghan provinces, can be ranged somewhere between 400,000 and 800,000.

What do these figures tell us about the total turnover of the horse trade? Obviously, we have to add another myriad of uncertainties which will leave the end result even more wide-ranging. For example, the price level of horses varied considerably during the eighteenth century. During the first three quarters of the century there was an upward trend in prices because demand continuously exceeded supply and because of an overall trend of inflation. Of course, prices were higher when horses had to be transported to far-off places like Mysore or Bengal. As a convenient alternative, horses could also be imported by sea but this markedly raised the costs of transport, fodder and casualties. As we have seen, the northern horses which arrived on the southern markets by land fetched a price which was only around 150% of the level on the Hindustani markets. For overseas horses the cost price would be around 200% or more.

The data of the mid-century trade hausse will serve as the basis for the following estimate of the total turnover. At that time, indigenous *Tātū* breeds, the horses that dominated in the local *zamīndārī* armies, could be procured for only 15 to 100 Rs each.[60] Larger, stronger and superior foreign and indigenous *Turkī* or *Tāzī*, i.e. Arabian-like, horses—mainly from Kathiawar, Kutch, Rajasthan, Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Turkistan—fetched a medium price of around 500 Rs but never under 400 Rs. Rare thoroughbred Arabian horses were even 3 to 4 times this price. The enormous price difference between indigenous and foreign horses was due to a persisting high demand for large and strong cavalry horses of the latter category and also indicates the difference in status of both races. The Mughal cavalry during the sixteenth and seventeenth century consisted almost entirely of relatively strong *Tāzī* and *Turkī* horses. The *Turkī* was particularly predominant among the Irani, Turani, Afghan and Rajput contingents, the *Tāzī* among the Maratha troops. During the eighteenth century these horses remained the mainstay of the now more decentralized Mughal cavalry.[61] However, in the Deccan at the end of the century, the Marathas started

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[60] Modave, *Voyage*, p.327; Pigott, *Treatise* p.43.

[61] Abū'l-Faẓl, *A'in*, 1, p.245; R.A. Alavi, "New Light on Mughal Cavalry", *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, 2 (New Delhi, 1972), pp.70-99.

to breed a *Tāzī* horse of their own along the Bhima valley which was a mixture of *Tāzī* and local indigenous blood.[62]

Returning to our estimate of the total turnover, it seems reasonable—on the basis of the Mughal figures mentioned above—to qualify half of the total amount of cavalry horses as inferior *Tātū* horses and the remainder as varieties of the more expensive *Turkī* or *Tāzī* breeds. Considering the fact that the annual wastage in peacetime was around 10% (which means that every ten years the existing stock of cavalry horses had to be renewed[63]), and assuming the total amount of cavalry horses in India to be 600,000 around the middle of the century, this produces the following results:

Table 3.3. Estimate of the annual turnover of the Indian horse trade

annual renewal	annual turnover in Rs
30,000 x 500 Rs (*Tāzīs*, *Turkīs*)	15,000,000
30,000 x 50 Rs (*Tātūs*)	1,500,000
total	16,500,000

Obviously, this is an extremely rough estimate because many of the quantitative data are uncertain. On the other hand the calculation appears to be a conservative one when compared with the contemporary assessment of the French traveller Comte de Modave, who during the 1770's reckoned the annual importation of horses from Turkistan and Iran to be around 45 to 50,000.[64] This would result in a total import trade of around 20 million Rs, which would be more than three times the total of Bengal exports to Europe by the English and Dutch EIC's together.[65] Although in terms of regu-

[62] Shakespear, *Wild Sports*, pp.298-9. Cf. Perrin's report in Deleury, *Les Indes florissantes*, p.506.

[63] This figure is given by Alder, "Origins", p.12; my own calculations are less optimistic: service of cavalry horse mostly started around 3,5 years, after which it could be active for less than 9 years. Other references speak of only 7 years (*NAI*, FPD, S, 6-1-1774, nr.1; C.F. Traver, *Hints on Irregular Cavalry, its Conformation, Management and Use in both a Military and Political Point of View* (Calcutta, 1845), pp.60,85,88).

[64] Modave, *Voyage*, p.327. Cf. Moosvi, *Economy*, p.378.

[65] The comparison is made in order to give a fairly rough estimate of the relative weight of the horse trade. For the early-eighteenth-century European trade figures in Bengal, see Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720* (Princeton, 1985), pp.70-1,82. For the later period, see K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760*

lar trade the Frenchman's account seems to be an overestimation, it is certainly possible that occasionally these figures could be realized as a result of a sudden increase of demand. During times of large-scale warfare or epidemics the losses of horses increased from one out of ten to one out of seven or more. Taking the incidental character of Modave's figures into account, they are not so far off from the calculations above.

All in all, we cannot trust these figures to be more than indicative of the overall volume of trade. But even if only 5000 horses were annually imported into India, this would result in a trade volume which compares still very well with the total export trade of, for example, the early eighteenth-century Dutch EIC in Bengal. Thus, the figures above do not claim any accuracy at all, but they should shed some new light on the overland connections of India and Central Asia. Also they have implications for the still current views of an isolated Central Asia. Until far into the eighteenth century, and not least thanks to the horse trade in general, overland commercial relations between India and its northern and western neighbours were still very close and were certainly in a flourishing condition.[66] In northern Afghanistan this resulted in further pastoralist penetration from the late seventeenth century onwards and a general shift from crop-cultivation to pasturage.[67] As we shall see in the following section, in India too the rising demand for war-horses stimulated regional breeding efforts.

The Breeding of Horses: Two Examples

The balance between horse breeding and arable farming could be an extremely delicate one. In areas where conditions of soil and climate were not ideal for crop cultivation and methods of horse breeding required extensive grazing lands, horse-breeding activities were often conducted at the expense of arable farming. However, in areas of secure and rich harvests the relationship between breeding and farming could be more symbiotic. In this section I will pay attention

(Cambridge, 1978), pp.508-11 and B.K. Gupta, *Sirajuddaullah and the East India Company, 1756-1757* (Leiden, 1966), p.15.

[66] For the growing horse trade after the decline of the imperial Mauryas and Guptas, see C. Gupta, "Horse Trade", p.195.

[67] McChesney, *Waqf*, p.234.

to two examples of local breeding areas. One is Kathiawar, where very good horses had always been bred but at the cost of a low intensity of settled crop cultivation. In contrast to this predominantly pastoral area, Rohilkhand was traditionally not associated with the breeding of strong horses since it possessed very good conditions for settled cultivation. Nevertheless, during the eighteenth century, the more sedentary area of Rohilkhand not only witnessed an expansion of the settled cultivation but also an increasingly flourishing horse-breeding industry.

Kathiawar

In 1814, the British agent Wyatt was commissioned to the Kathiawar and Kutch area in order to buy horses for the EIC's Bengal army.[68] He wrote to his superiors that this task had become very difficult since some years past there had been a marked decline in the local breed of horses. But during the eighteenth century the local chiefs had greatly encouraged the breeding of horses. Particularly the Kathi tribe had paid great attention to breeding. According to Wyatt, the natural conditions in Kathiawar were ideal for breeding purposes. The face of the country was almost everywhere hilly and mountainous while the soil was generally rich although mixed with stone and sand. According to Wyatt, "this made the area scantly cultivated and so bare of trees that excepting near the towns and villages there is scarcely a tree to be seen throughout the whole country". The country abounded, however, in nutritious "jinjirah" (*gānjā*) and "durru" (*dūrvā*: a variety of *dūb* or *Cynodon Dactylon*) grasses. Although the climate was relatively dry, there were innumerable small streams and rivulets which took their rise in the hills and ran into the creaks of the sea or lost themselves in subterraneous caverns. In contrast, to the north and east, in Gujarat, where the climate was very moist and the landscape flat, the breed of horses degenerated and became ill-formed. In the early nineteenth century, however, even in Kathiawar not much was left of this once famous breed.

Following an earlier report of Colonel Walker, Wyatt ascribed this sudden decline to the rude system of native government and the

[68] This section on Kathiawar is based on *NAI*, MDP, 14-6-1814, nr.76, "Report E. Wyatt", ff.75r-83r.

several incursions of the Marathas in the area. At the same time, however, he reluctantly had to admit that the predatory politics of the local chiefs which had produced the earlier political unrest was in fact the sine qua non of a blooming local breeding industry. Quoting his own words:

> "The decline of the breed however amongst the Kattee tribe who were the most famous for their horses and who to this day possess the best remains of the breed is owing in some degree to a cause which cannot be regretted, that is to a check having been given to their plundering excursions by which until very lately they almost entirely subsisted."

During the eighteenth century the Kathis were still semi-settled pastoralists who, 200 years before, had migrated from the north-west to Kathiawar. They claimed descent from the mythical Kāṭh who was a robber of cattle, and this, to the indignation of Wyatt, caused them to feel not the least remorse for their earlier predatory way of life. Only after the British had settled the country in 1807, did the Kathis leave their former occupations and did concentrate exclusively on settled agriculture, which offered more secure profits, given the rise of Bombay and the EIC trade along the coast. While the British had successfully pacified the area, the breeding industry had almost completely disappeared. The area changed from being by far the most important source for supplying the Deccani cavalry troops, to a relatively unimportant agricultural area deprived of its main item of export. Thus, since the breeding industry had been directly linked to a vigorous predatory economy, the imposition of the Pax Britannica took away the last incentive for breeding horses on a large scale.[69]

Rohilkhand

In Rohilkhand too the breeding industry declined following the end of native encouragement under the Indo-Afghan Rohilla government (1738-1774). In the words of the Company veterinary surgeon William Moorcroft:

> "The spirit of horse-breeding supported by the Rohillas during the period they possessed Rohilkhand has become almost extinguished

[69] Cf. Shakespear, *Wild Sports*, p.313; P. Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806* (Cambridge, 1970).

since their expulsion, and the animals now raised are seldom fit for other service than that of irregular troops."[70]

The Rohilla ruler Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān (1749-1774) stimulated breeding systematically by supervising the regular distribution of stallions to the local *zamīndārs*. They put them to their own mares and also to those of their circle of relatives and friends. The Rohillas, however, did not breed horses themselves. Most of the stallions were held by a Hindu cast called Bhat, of mixed origin, which normally served as panegyrists and bards who attended and added lustre to family parties and ceremonies. They are also frequently related to the Banjara caste of highly mobile grain carriers.[71] This caste of Bhats employed the best breeds of horses, which were however rejected for cavalry service because they were lame or for some other reason blemished and not fit for warfare. The Bhats regularly took these stallions to the stables of the local *zamīndār* who had to pay one Rupee in order to have his mare three times covered by the stallion, with the privilege of a fourth time whenever there would appear to be a necessity for it. Most of the breeding *zamīndārīs* were situated in the delta of Mihrabad in southern Rohilkhand, between the Ramganga and the Ganges rivers.[72]

Although to a lesser extent than in Kathiawar, the ecological conditions of Rohilkhand were suitable for breeding. The alluvial pastures along the many streams coming from the northern hills had a reputation for their fattening and nutritious qualities for horses. The area in general was extremely fertile and, in Chris Bayly's terms, might be called an area of natural surplus.[73] Although the Rohilla territory became increasingly cultivated the *zamīndārs* retained a certain quantity of land for growing the very nutritious *dūb* grass, which was cut at the end of the rainy season and made into hay and stacked, and given to the horses during the dry season. Most of the grazing fields were situated along the river shores in order to facilitate easy inundation. Besides, the water level was so near the surface that *dūb* grass could grow for over eight months

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[70] *NAI*, MDP, 13-2-1813, nr.156, ff.137-8.

[71] Deloche, *Circulation*, 1, pp.251,253.

[72] For breeding in Rohilkhand, see reports of Moorcroft, Fortescue and Nuthull in: *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, ff.275-281; MDP, 13-2-1813, nr.156, ff.137-8; MDP, 2-6-1803, ff.2r-8v; MDP, 27-9-1804, nr.56, ff.74r-84v.

[73] C.A. Bayly, *Rulers*, pp.80-3.

during the year, from the start of the monsoon until the time of the spring fairs. However, the cultivation of *dūb* was extremely labour intensive as it required the close scrutiny by grasscutters who had to keep the ground clear of more savage weeds that naturally suppressed and overpowered the more delicate *dūb*.[74] Next to grass and hay, the chaff of other winter crops available in Rohilkhand like gram (*ʿanā*), lentils (*masūr*) and particularly grains like wheat and barley, could serve as a suitable additional source of fodder.

In contrast to the more extensive pastoral production in western India and Afghanistan, the Rohilkhand breeding process represented a more intensive type of mixed farming which confined the animals to stables and small fields of pasture. Besides, Rohilkhand regularly imported horses from abroad, either through the long-distance trade or from the unsettled areas surrounding it to the north and the west. This was the territory of the semi-nomadic and predatory Banjaras, Gujars, Bhats and Bhattis. While these groups were frequently seen as enemies of settled agriculture and settled government, they played a crucial part in the regional economy of Rohilkhand, especially by providing fresh livestock for transport and breeding.[75]

Although during Rohilla rule (c.1720-1770) the cultivation area and the population in the region rapidly increased, horse breeding activities did not suffer at all. On the contrary, agricultural expansion facilitated breeding activities because it made fodder and labour readily available and relatively cheap. The high demand and prices for horses further stimulated the breeding economy. In Rohilkhand the demand was so high that advance reservations could be made even before foaling. The horses were sold directly to Rohilla mercenaries or to Afghan horse-traders who mostly purchased them when one and a half or two years old from the local *zamīndārs*, after which they fattened them well until they were three years of age and fit for military service and resold at the autumn or spring fairs. The quality of the Rohilkhand breed was not only a reflection of local breeding conditions, but also resulted from a regular injection of foreign stallions and mares from the Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan, brought by Afghan and Sikh traders or by roaming Gujar and Bhatti

[74] There also exists a tension between making hay and gathering in the *kharīf* crops, both of which take place around September.

[75] Cf. Bayly, *Rulers*, p.29.

herdsmen-marauders who exchanged these horses mainly for the Rohilkhand *kharīf* cash crops such as indigo and sugar, made ready for the autumn fairs, or the *rabīʿ* crops like wheat and barley, entering the market during spring.[76] The invasions of Nādir Shāh and Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī gave another impulse to the Indian breeding industry since many horses were bought or stolen from the invading armies by attentive Sikh, Rohilla, Gujar and other *qazaqi* interlopers. As a consequence, it was claimed that the breeds of the Lakhi Jungle and the Bikaner desert had markedly improved thanks to a sudden influx of *Wilāyatī* horses.[77]

After the annexation of Rohilkhand by Awadh in 1774, trade, agricultural production and breeding activity declined simultaneously. Most of the Rohillas and their clients concentrated on their remaining territory around Rampur or migrated to other more attractive areas. In order to control his new territory the ruler of Awadh discouraged external trade relations in Rohilkhand, and commercial traffic now began to avoid this increasingly depopulated area. The collapse of the Rohilla state and its Indo-Afghan trading network in northern India caused an overall dwindling of the demand for war-horses, exacerbated by increasing exchange problems caused by falling agricultural production and depopulation in the area. In addition, throughout the newly created fallow lands, parasitic grasses could spread, and reports of roaming cattle destroying the crops increased. For a decade the hub of the Hindustan horse trade shifted eastward to Benares and Awadh. Earlier during the century, the raja of Benares, Balwant Singh, had already stimulated Muslim horse-traders (*naʿl-bands*) from the west to settle in his territories in order to improve the local supply of war-horses.[78] He and his son and successor Chait Singh every year got hold of many colts and fillies from the Lakhi Jungle which they, like their counterpart *zamīndārs* in Rohilkhand, distributed amongst their numerous relatives and dependants. In the wake of the expulsion of Rājā Chait Singh in 1784, the trade with Benares diminished significantly.[79]

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[76] According to Moorcroft the Bhattis had become Muslims and horse-breeders after they had settled in the Lakhi Jungle during the reign of Maḥmud of Ghazna (Moorcroft, *Observations*, p.49).

[77] Pigott, *Treatise*, p.43. Similarly the breed of Bihar was known to have been improved through the spoils of the battle of Buxar in 1764 (*NAI*, MDP, 2-6-1803, "Report J. Fortescue", ff.2r-8v).

[78] Moorcroft, *Observations*, p.47; cf. Bayly, *Rulers*, pp.103-4.

[79] *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report W. Moorcroft", f.280.

Later, the nawab of Awadh, Āṣaf ud-Daulah (1775-1797), enticed Afghan and other horse-traders to move towards his territories, now circumventing Rohilkhand to the south via Mathura, Farrukhabad and Kanpur to Lucknow.[80] The demise of Āṣaf ud-Daulah (1797) and the increasing political influence of the East India Company dealt the deathblow to the remaining horse trade of north-eastern India. Simultaneously, the supply of Central-Asian horses was progressively deflected to the Deccan where there still was an intensive demand.[81]

At this point, we may draw some general conclusions. The success of the breeding economy was based, on the one hand, on a regular exchange of livestock with north-western India and Central Asia and, on the other hand, on a close relationship between nearby settled and unsettled areas and groups. The emergence of new political configurations within a flourishing predatory economy created extremely favourable conditions for both horse breeding and trade. In these circumstances, when high levels of demand and prices prevailed, an area like Kathiawar specialized in pastoral horse breeding, since ecological and political conditions did not allow an efficient combination with crop cultivation. On the other hand, in Rohilkhand, breeding was tied in with intensified cultivation and was also integrated with the more unsettled fringe areas to its north and west. As such, stability in one area was almost conditioned by instability in the neighbouring area.

The Decline of the Horse Trade

The Indian provinces under the control of the ascending English East India Company experienced a marked decline in the quality and quantity of the available cavalry horses. The quality requirements for a good British dragoon horse were very high indeed. The British cavalry trooper of the day, together with his saddle, weapons, ammunition and equipment, came to around 115 kilograms, which was much heavier than the lightly equipped native horseman.[82] Therefore, if he was to make an effective cavalry charge, the horse needed both height and weight, bone and muscle. Disreputable *Tātū*

[80] *Ibid.*, f.283.
[81] *Ibid.*, f.279; *NAI*, MDP, 13-2-1813, nr.156, f.138.
[82] Alder, "Origins", p.11.

horses were considered absolutely deficient for this purpose. Besides, British agents complained about an overall degeneration of the Indian horse following a marked decline in the trade relations with north-western India and Central Asia.[83] It appeared that every westbound step of British expansion was nearly automatically accompanied by a similar westward retreat of the interregional horse trade. Consequently, the bulk of the Company's horses could not be bought at the local fairs of Bihar and Bengal but had to be procured, through intermediary agents, from the *melās* of Rajasthan and the Punjab. The resultant import trade, however, caused an increasing drain of specie which the Company could not afford.

To secure an indigenous source of supply the EIC set up a breeding stud-farm of its own at Pusa in Bihar in 1793. Two years later, in reaction to increasing supply problems, a similar project was launched in the Ganjam district in the Madras presidency. Apart from producing horses at the stud-farm itself, the policy aimed at stimulating the breeding industry of the surrounding *zamīndārs* as well, especially in the traditional breeding districts of Ghazipur, Saran and Shahabad. Until then, the most prominent figure dominating the local breeding business had been the so called *naᶜl-band*. This term literally meant "farrier" or "blacksmith" but in fact he was the manager, a kind of horse-broker, who supervised all aspects of local breeding and selling.[84] As a trader he provided stallions to serve the mares of the *zamīndārs* after which he was entitled to buy the resultant offspring which he took to the local fairs, or he resold them directly to Afghan and Maratha long-distance merchants who carried the horses to the most lucrative markets of India. At the end of the century, these were certainly not located in the eastern territories under the sway of the EIC. The imposition of the Pax Britannica and the collapse of the northern Rohilla network engendered a dwindling regional demand for war-horses in Hindustan.[85]

British officers could not afford to pay as much cash for horses as traders in the Deccan or Rajasthan were used to receive. Because the demand from the south was on the increase, the price level was still

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[83] *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report W. Moorcroft", f.295; cf. E. Balfour, *Cyclopaedia*, "Horse".

[84] Cf. Alder, "Origins". In Rohilkhand the *naᶜl-band* signified a farrier only.

[85] For the negative effects of British expansion on the early nineteenth-century horse trade, see also A. Conolly, *Journey to the North of India, over Land from England through Russia, Persia and Afghanistan*, (London, 1838), 2, p.169.

under an upward pressure. Anticipating the lack of purchasing power from the east, the traders from the Punjab and Rampur separated their stock in two classes. One consisted of the best and most expensive horses which were earmarked for the Deccani market where they could be readily sold at high prices. The other group was made up of inferior horses and sold to local adventurers and mercenaries. Only a small part of the worst horses reached the eastern *melās* under British control. As a result, most of the cavalry of the native forces outside British controlled areas employed horses far superior to those available to the British. The situation was further aggravated by a European cultural predilection for Arabian horses, which were directly imported from Iraq to Bengal. This "Arabomania", as Moorcroft called it grudgingly, stemmed from Europe and the experience of breeding English thoroughbreds and race horses. Under British rule Indian horse breeding became, in effect, an entirely different operation which aimed at stronger, higher and better trained horses than the indigenous *Tātūs*, or even *Turkī* breeds. On the Bihar scene, however, Arabian crossbreeding with native stock was not very encouraging. In order to counter the general lack of qualified indigenous stock, the Pusa stud-farm tried to control the quality of the breeding stock by supplying stud stallions and mares to the local *zamīndārs* and to the *naᶜl-bands*. Although these new breeding investments caused some increase in production and in commercial interest in the eastern fairs, through the mediation of the *naᶜl-bands*, the majority of these horses were driven to the markets of the Deccan and Bundelkhand.[86]

In general, however, ecological circumstances in Bihar remained far from ideal for breeding large and strong horses. Because of the lack of a suitable climate and breeding stock the interest of the stud officials was redirected to the traditional breeding areas of the northwest: the Punjab, Rajasthan, Kutch and Kathiawar, and even beyond to Afghanistan and Turkistan. Here they hoped to procure a bigger and bonier parent stock both for crossbreeding and military service. The most enthusiastic example in this respect was William Moorcroft, veterinary surgeon and superintendent of the Pusa stud.

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[86] Moorcroft, *Observations*, pp.5-6. We witness a similar process in the nineteenth-century Dutch East Indies where the indigenous breed of *Batakkers* appear to have deteriorated as a result of changing European standards (W. Groeneveld, "Het paard in Nederlandsch-Indië; hoe het is ontstaan, hoe het is en hoe het kan worden", *Veeartsenijkundige Bladen voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 28 (1916), pp.195-240).

From 1810 until his death in 1825, spurred by an inner drive to find the source of the famous Turkistan blood stock, he made long journeys across the Himalayan and Sulaiman mountains which eventually would take him as far as Bukhara.

However, because of the ever progressing pacification of the subcontinent and the ever increasing success of the British "military" economy—based on concentrated fire power of infantry and, also, on a different use of restricted quantities of cavalry—the Central-Asian horse trade with India had shrunk to an utter minimum and Central Asia itself had changed into Kipling's imaginary nineteenth-century "Back of Beyond".[87]

Horse Trade and State-Formation

Not only for the EIC, but also for the other regional states it was difficult to check the fluid movements of the horse-trade. The highly mobile and experienced horse-trader was in a powerful position vis-à-vis the local consumers. As a result, horse-traders had a particularly bad reputation, to which their wandering life contributed as well. Their mere presence could constitute a serious threat to law and order, as is illustrated in the case of the Rohilla freebooter Dāʾūd K͟hān. Dāʾūd K͟hān was later considered to have been one of the founding fathers of the Indo-Afghan state in Rohilkhand. At the start of the eighteenth century and as an agent of his master Shāh ᶜĀlam K͟hān, he was sent to the *melā* of Haridwar to buy some horses. After he had bought these he declined to send them to his master and instead distributed them among some fellow Rohillas whom he had gathered around him and thus he began a career as highway robber. A few years later when he had collected a following of 80 horsemen and 300 footsoldiers, he was able to built his own mud fortress and to defy Mughal rule in the area.[88]

Apart from being a disruptive element, the itinerant horse trader represented a more or less cosmopolitan culture. They were accustomed to their own esoteric language, which was a mixture of various local dialects combined with a special jargon and an extensive code of manual signs, exchanged during the actual bargaining

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[87] For William Moorcroft, see G.J. Alder, *Beyond Bukhara. The Life of William Moorcoft, Asian Explorer and Pioneer Veterinary Surgeon 1767-1825* (London, 1985).
[88] G͟hulām ᶜAlī K͟hān Naqawī, *ᶜImad as-Saᶜādat* (Lucknow, 1864), pp.40-1.

at the fair, mostly concealed beneath a handkerchief.[89] Sometimes the local rulers tried to regulate and control the free movements of the horse-traders. At the Pushkar fair, for instance, the traders and their horses had to take up their camping ground in the direction of the countries they came from. Through such regulations the authorities hoped to make the trader and his horses more identifiable and to assure that there would always be somebody answerable for frauds or other malpractices.[90]

Partly as a consequence of the extreme mobility of the horse trade, it is very difficult to come very close to the horse-trader himself, who may appear alternately as a merchant, a mercenary, a highway-robber or a sufi. This multi-faceted role may also explain why the sources remain rather vague about him. Most of them were people from the north-west—Afghans, Sikhs and Punjabis—but at the Hindustani fairs Maratha traders were also active. Even in Kabul the Maratha chiefs had their agents who bought horses for them through bills of exchange.[91] Among the Afghans there were many Lohani Powinda traders and Rohillas. Many of them travelled long distances, as, for example, the Rampur merchant Aḥmad ʿAlī K͟hān who, even at the start of the nineteenth century, had a radius of action which extended from Bhatinda to Bundelkhand and far into the Deccan.[92] Some of these people answered the traditional picture of the itinerant pedlar but we should not forget that supplying merely a small number of horses required already huge capital investments for purchase, duties, fodder, and other expenses. Many of the smaller traders at the fairs were agents of the greater men behind the Sulaiman mountains to the west. An example of such an entrepreneur is one "Sunderji" who at the end of the eighteenth century had gained a complete monopoly of the horse supply from Kathiawar. His agency network extended far to the north from Kalat in Baluchistan to Kabul and Kandahar. During the years 1810-12 he supplied the Company agents at Bombay with 1800 horses although the quantity and quality of his deliveries had already greatly decreased during the last one or two decades.[93]

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[89] Saʿādat Yār K͟hān Rangīn, *Faras Nama*, pp. 42-4.

[90] *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report W. Moorcroft", f.289.

[91] H.R. Gupta, *Studies in Later Mughal History of the Punjab 1707-1793* (Lahore, 1944), p.259.

[92] *NAI*, MDP, 15-10-1811, nr.80, "Report W. Moorcroft", ff.302-3.

[93] Letters of E. Wyatt in *NAI*, MDP, 27-11-1813, nr.108; MDP, 9-4-1814, nr.89; MDP, 4-6-1814, nr.76.

As we have seen, the eighteenth century witnessed the rise and expansion of a contiguous series of Afghan states.[94] Like, for instance, Dāʾūd K͟hān Rohilla, many of the new Indo-Afghan rulers started their political careers as horse-traders-cum-mercenaries. As such they helped to promote and widen the Afghan trading network. Afghan mercenaries served in almost every army of the subcontinent and thus acted as valuable contacts, being both agents and customers for the native states of India. Therefore, it is no coincidence that nearly all Afghan states were carved out along the traditional horse-trade routes: the newly emerging Durrani empire controlled the main breeding areas in Afghanistan proper, while Rohilkhand and Kasur were situated along the northern supply lines, whereas Tonk, Bhopal, Kurnool and Cuddapah supervised the communications to the south, to the Deccan, Hyderabad and Mysore. Even in Kathiawar the Afghan Bābī merchants, coming from the Kandahar area, established their nawabi in Junagadh, where they also acquired a stake in the maritime connections at the port of Gogha. Most of the other native states were strongly indebted to Afghan mercenary chiefs and intermediaries for both man- and horsepower. In fact, Afghans rivalled the British in terms of military service and "subsidiary alliance". Instead of a disciplined infantry, they could offer horses and cavalry, and during the eighteenth century it was still not clear which of the two was the most important.[95]

In sum, the persisting vigour of the eighteenth-century Afghan trading network stretching from India far into Central Asia, should urge us to re-evaluate the overall Afghan impact on early modern Indian history. In the case of the Afghans, phenomena like long-distance trade, horse trade, migration and state-formation were all very closely linked together. After having discussed the overall imperial and economic context in the first three chapters, the following pages will more specifically tackle the question of Afghan-Rohilla migration and state-formation in northern India.

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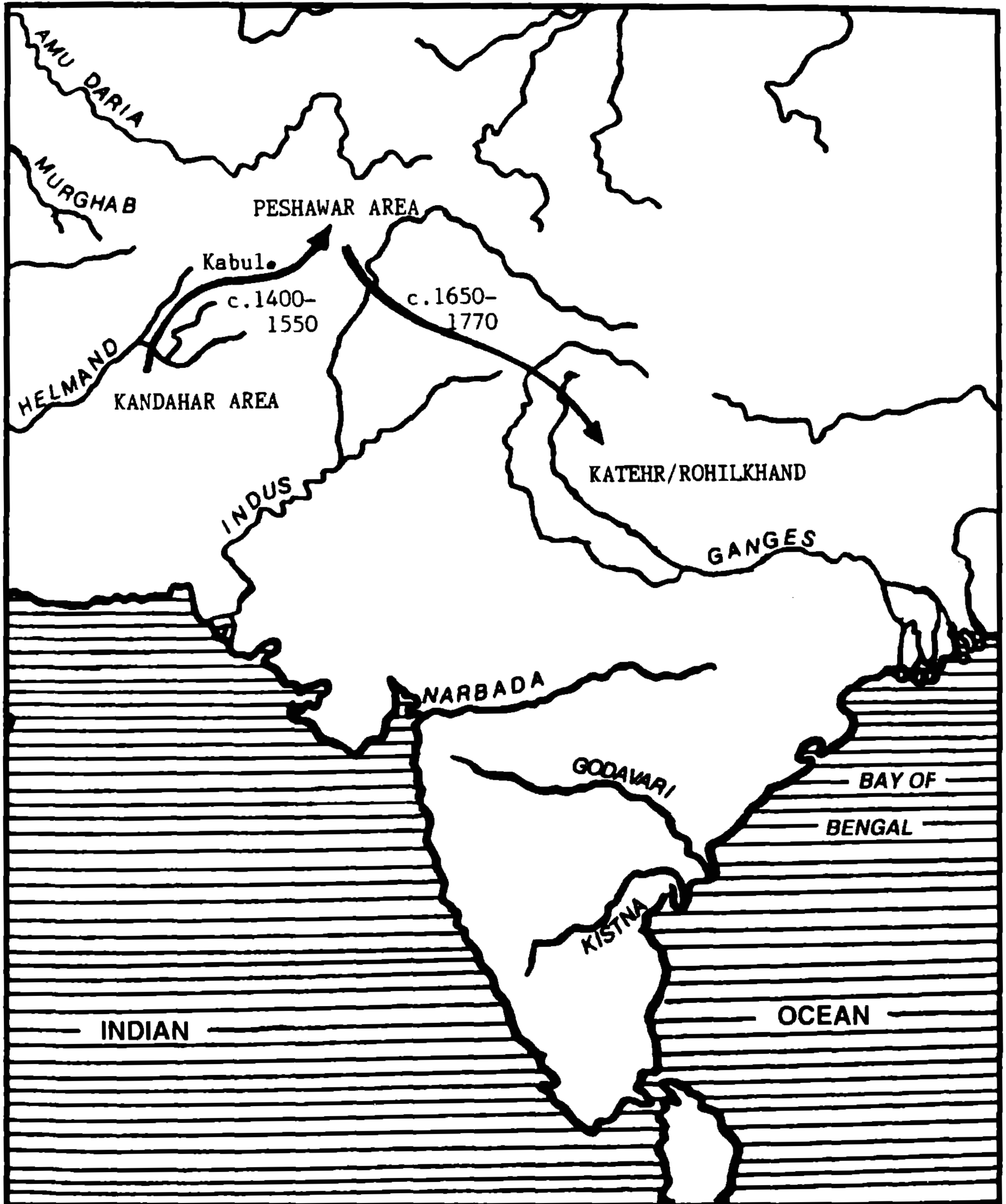
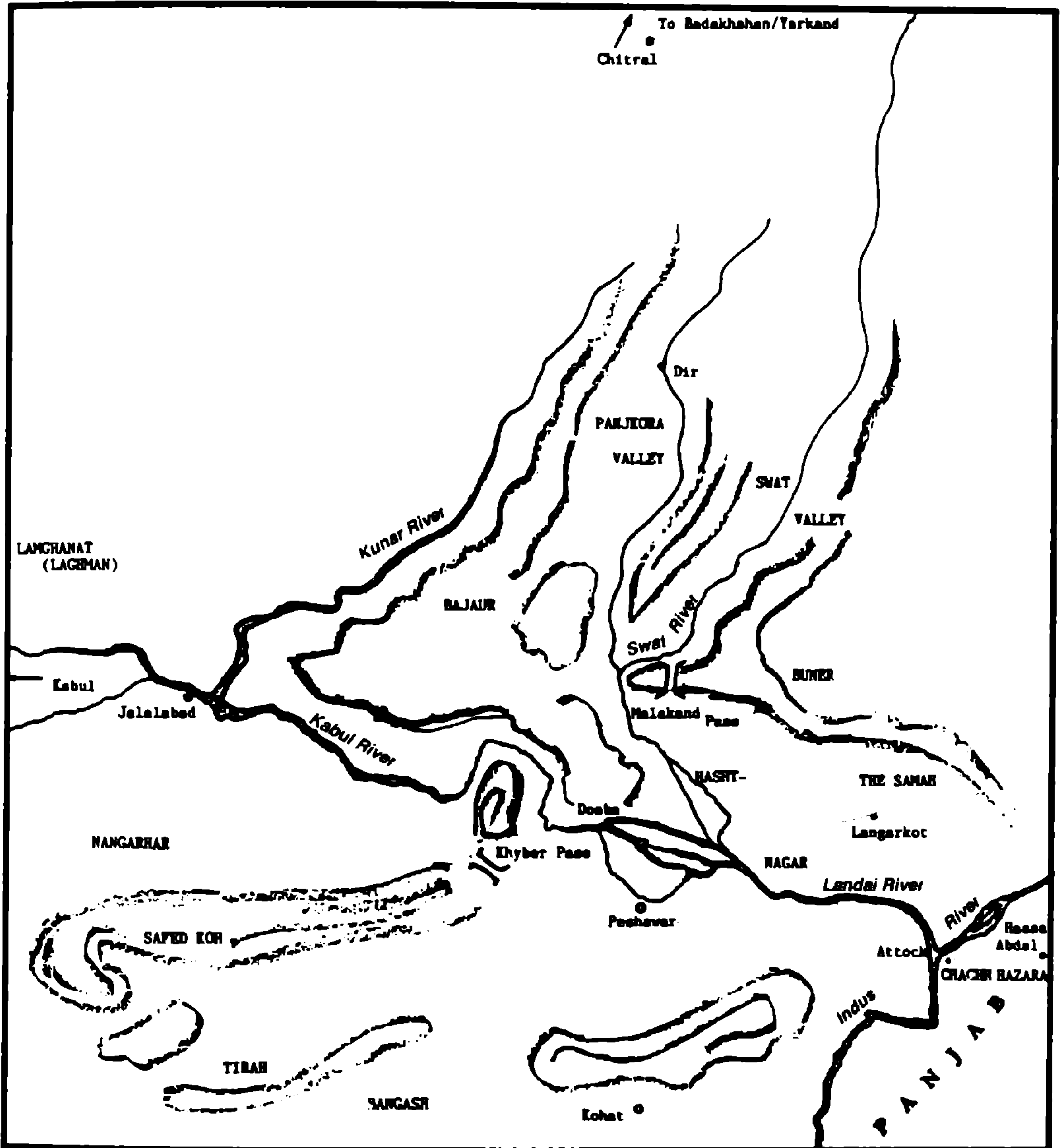
[94] See chapter 1.

[95] E.g. P.J. Marshall, *The New Cambridge History of India, vol.2.2: Bengal: The British Bridgehead* (Cambridge, 1987), pp.51,71; S Chander, "From a Pre-Colonial Order to a Princely State: Hyderabad in Transition c. 1748-1865" (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1987), pp. 136-7.



Map 4.1. Yusufzai-Rohilla Migrations (1400–1800)



Map 4.2. Peshawar Area

CHAPTER FOUR

AFGHAN MIGRATION AND STATE-FORMATION IN MUGHAL INDIA

"Kim dived into the happy Asiatic disorder which, if you only alow time, will bring you everything that a simple man needs."

Rudyard Kipling, *Kim.*[1]

4.1. Roh: The Rohilla Homeland

Before I proceed to the story of Rohilla state-formation in northern India I will first trace some of their tribal antecedents and outline the historical context in which they migrated eastward, first in Roh, from about 1400 to 1550, later towards northern India, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The great majority of Rohilla immigrants who during the seventeenth and eighteenth century settled in the area called Katehr, which later came to be known as Rohilkhand or "land of the Rohillas", originated from the Peshawar area and belonged to the Yusufzai tribe, mostly of the Mandanr sub-section. The Yusufzais were numerically the dominant tribe amongst a mixture of other Afghan tribes, which were called Khashi Khail after the name of their common eponymous ancestor. During the fifteenth century this composite of tribal groups moved from their extensive pastures around Kandahar in the south-west, to the more sedentary lands along the Kabul river valley, first to the vicinity of Kabul city and later to the Peshawar area, where they arrived somewhere during the early sixteenth century. Their migration had been part of a whole complex of resettlements and migratory movements following the advent of Turks and Mongols in the area. As the new Islamic sultanates on the subcontinent opened new prospects of employment and trading opportunities, more and more Afghans, most notably

[1] *Op.cit.*, pp.74-5.

in a capacity of merchants or mercenaries, left their homeland in Roh and tried their luck in the promised land of India.[2]

The Yusufzais were late arrivals on the Indian scene. Initially, they were driven to the Kabul region, probably due to increased competition with rival pastoralists for winter and summer grazing lands in the Kandahar area. This rivalry had interrupted the existing seasonal migration pattern and forced the Khashi tribes to look for new grazing lands. Towards the end of the fifteenth century they arrived near Kabul; but by the time Bābar entered Kabul in 1504 they had already been ousted again by the Timurid ruler of the time, Mīrzā Ulugh Beg (1460-1502) and had been forced to take refuge more to the east: in the Lamghanat and near Peshawar. The Mandanr sub-tribe settled in the Samah, the relatively flat plains north of the Landai river. Most of the other Yusufzais proceeded northwards to the more secluded hill valleys of Swat and Bajaur. The Yusufzais conquered the latter countries which were primarily inhabited by Dardic and Tajik peasants with only a few herding Gujars. In these places they were faced with ecological conditions which were different from those they were accustomed to in Kandahar and which were not very suitable for their pastoralist habitus.[3] Their new lands were part of what Bābar identified as Hindustan. When he approached the area for the first time from Ningnahar he exclaimed:

> "...another world came to view, -other grasses, other trees, other animals, other birds, and other manners and customs of clan and horde. We were amazed, and truly there was ground for amaze."[4]

It appears that, like Bābar, the once pastoral Yusufzais had to cope with a great adaptive economic challenge. Initially, as a result of the destruction caused by their large herds, much damage was done to the existing cultivation, but in due course a relatively sophisticated farming and herding society re-emerged.[5]

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[2] For an interesting recent study of early Afghan migrations, see J. Arlinghaus, "Transformation", pp.126-68.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp.168-226.

[4] Bābar, *Babur-Nama*, p.229.

[5] The Swat valley has been extensively described and analyzed by numerous anthropologists, amongst the foremost are: F. Barth, *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans* (London, 1959); A.S. Ahmad, *Millennium and Charisma among Pathans: A Critical Essay in Social Anthropology* (London, 1976) and by the same author, *Pukhtun Economy and Society* (London, 1980) (mainly on the Mohmand but with many com-

During their successive migrations the Yusufzais were frequently accompanied by other Afghan and non-Afghan groups and individuals. Most of them became attached to the Yusufzai *ulūs*, i.e. tribe, as clients or dependants (*hamsāyas*: lit. shade sharers). These were tribal groups like the Utman, Kakar, Gadun, Ravanri and Kansi. On more equal terms, other tribes, such as the Muhammadzai and Gagyanis, were able to combine with the Yusufzai and negotiate to have their own lands in respectively Hashtnagar, the Doaba and southern Bajaur. The *hamsāya* tribes received territories of their own and could act as buffers against outside encroachments.[6]

Along with the newly conquered lands, the indigenous peasants or *dihqāns* were assigned to the landholding Yusufzai clans. Hence, they were turned into dependent peasants (*faqīrs*, in the sense of poor, destitute, subdued), paying rent on the land they cultivated, or into retainers (Pa. *mʾlā-tarr*) who performed all kinds of services to their patron (*kh̲āwand*) as herders, artisans or commercial agents, mostly in return for a small payment in grain or rice. Usually we find these dependant bondsmen indiscriminately referred to as both *faqīrs* and *hamsāyas*.[7] Apart from these bondsmen there were dependants of a different category called *gh̲ulāms* or slaves. They were more closely attached to the person of their patron and were frequently entrusted with all kinds of functions within their master's household. Although they were not as free as the *faqīrs* and *hamsāyas*, they generally enjoyed a higher status in society because they were more closely associated with their master and his family.[8] Through this twofold client relationship of *faqīr/hamsāya* and *gh̲ulām*, the conquering elite of Yusufzais could incorporate both the indigenous and

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ments on Swat); C. Lindholm, *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan* (New York, 1982).

[6] Arlinghaus, "Transformation", pp.128,175,182,219,232,237.

[7] Before the eighteenth century there still appears to be a distinction between the two; *hamsāya* meaning a dependant tribe belonging to the Afghan *ulūs*; and *faqīr* an indigenous non-Afghan "landless" peasant but later the distinction became blurred, both meaning landless dependants or clients. Elphinstone, at the beginning of the nineteenth century is still describing them separately (Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, p.228; 2, p.27). For treating them as identical, see e.g. Muḥammad Ḥayāt, *Afghanistan*, pp.114-29, and H.W. Bellew, *An Inquiry into the Ethnography of Afghanistan* (Graz, 1973), pp.88-9. See also H.G. Raverty, "An Account of Upper Kash-kar and Chitral, or Lower Kash-kar, together with the Independent Afghan State of Panj-korah, including Tal-ash", *JASB*, 33 (1864), pp.148-9.

[8] Muḥammad Ḥayāt, *Afghanistan*, p.4; H.W. Bellew, *A General Report on the Yusufzais* (Lahore, 1864), pp.183-4.

the other populations into their own polity. This allowed them to integrate outsiders without having to assimilate them and, internally, the Yusufzai *ulūs* continued to signify the dominant stratum. For the outside world, however, ethnic distinctions were far less rigid. The outside world used the name Yusufzai only collectively, referring to both the Yusufzai elite and their non-Yusufzai clients.[9] In general we can say that the more they were in contact with the outside world, for example as a result of increased trade or migration, the more the internal ethnic boundaries also tended to become blurred and the more they became known as Rohillas.

Most of the Roh area where the Yusufzai tribes had settled during the sixteenth century was very difficult territory for establishing imperial control from outside. Hence, the area always retained the reputation of being a focus of turbulence and revolt. The southern plains of the Yusufzais in the northern Kabul valley were more easily accessible. But whenever the danger of violent incursions did arise, the inhabiting tribes could always move with their herds into the safe northern valleys and return whenever they wished. The whole area was of strategic importance since it immediately bordered on the Khyber Pass and on the northern highway which, from the sixteenth century onwards, served as a lifeline linking the imperial centres of Delhi and Agra with Kabul and its hinterlands in Iran and Central Asia. Apart from this main route, there was a secondary though not unimportant northern route splitting off to Chitral. This route entered Swat through the Malakand pass, and via the Panjkora Valley, Dir and the Lahore Pass it reached Chitral, a relatively busy commercial centre in the western Himalayas.[10] Chitral not only had this important southern access to Peshawar and Hindustan and another one going to Jalalabad and Kabul, it was also located on the east-west connection of Badakhshan with Gilgit and Kashmir, part of the tracks of the ancient Silk Road. Another route branched off to Sarikol and Yarkand in the north.[11] During

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[9] Cf. Barth, *Features*, 2, p.114.

[10] Also called Chitrar. Bābar refers to it as Katur and the Afghan sources use Qashqar (*Qāshqār*) which is different from Kashgar (*Kāshghar*) in Eastern Turkestan.

[11] Information on routes in this area is collected from: Raverty, "Account of Upper Kash-kar", pp.130-32; Barthold, *Geography*, pp.83-4; E.F. Timkowski, *Travels of the Russian Mission through Mongolia to China* (London, 1827), pp.426-7.

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the route through Badakhshan and Chitral became an alternative for merchants travelling from Bukhara to Yarkand and Kashgar in anticipation of disturbances in Kokand or Eastern Turkestan.[12] Besides, since the Chinese authorities regularly refused permission for caravans to pass through Eastern Turkistan and Ladakh to India, Kokand merchants were often forced to be content with buying Indian goods at Sarikol.

Obviously, many of these mountain routes presented difficulties for transport and during the winter most of them were considered almost impassable. On the other hand, the Mastuj pass, north of Chitral (see map 3.1), was relatively convenient and it put Badakhshan and further westwards Konduz and Balkh within reach of Chitral. Trade caravans mostly used this route because it was most practicable for beasts of burden, mainly asses and oxen. The Chitral route was by far the shortest way from Badakhshan to Hindustan. An additional advantage of these routes was that they were relatively peaceful and that protection costs were relatively low, whereas the passage through the Khyber and other southern passes could sometimes be extremely hazardous. Via the Mastuj route, products from Badakhshan, mainly horses and lapis lazuli, were exchanged for Indian goods like textiles and indigo. The Yusufzai territories of Swat and Bajaur exchanged their food products for all kinds of woollen products from the northern hills like shawls and blankets. From Yarkand they imported mainly Chinese tea, silk, horses and silver ingots.[13] In order to profit from these northern links several Afghan trading communities such as the Khalils and Gagyanis settled amongst the Yusufzais. Whenever the Khyber pass was blocked by one or another disturbance or excessive tolls they could turn to the north and travel, via Chitral and Badakhshan, further on to the oases cities of Central Asia. Besides, many non-Afghan and Hindu merchants were active in this area. Most notable were the Paranchas who, like the Powindas, had trade relations which covered an area which stretched from Calcutta in eastern India to Orenburg in southern Russia.[14]

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[12] I. Müller-Stellrecht, "Menschenhandel und Machtpolitik im westlichen Himalaja" *ZAS*, 15 (1981), p.459.

[13] Müller Stellrecht, "Menschenhandel", pp.395,409,417, 466,467; Raverty, *Notes*, pp.151-2; Raverty, "Account of Kash-kar", pp.139-40.

[14] Raverty, *Notes*, p.196.

Especially because of its strategic and commercial importance the Mughal authorities always tried to gain a firm foothold in the Swat and Bajaur area. The mountainous conditions made this however extremely difficult. The limits of the empire in this area were extremely narrow, and only a few yards left or right of the main road the *ḥukūmat* of the Mughals came to an end and shifted into the *yāghīstān*, the "land of sedition". The local population, however, had a keen interest in keeping the routes open to commercial traffic as these provided them with important sources of income. This was a principle in which Mughals and Afghans could find common ground. Hence, as a rule, there was always some measure of accommodation reached between the imperial authorities and the local Afghan leaders. For the Mughals it was crucial that no one single tribe or group could gain the upper hand and dominate the area as this could in the end threaten access to their interests in Central Asia. So they had to engage themselves in the local affairs and to make the best possible use of the internal conflicts between the different local factions by entering and shifting alliances in order to keep the balance.

Despite all the heroic stories of Afghan resistance against the Mughals, many Afghans were highly co-operative in establishing a stable imperial and commercial network. After 1530 the Yusufzais, together with most of the mercantile tribes in the Peshawar area, joined with the Mughals in order to oust the always obstreperous Dilazak Afghans along the Khyber route.[15] Many of the local Afghans decided to join the Mughal ranks and in return received some important lands in *jāgīr* across the Indus. An example is provided by the Muhammadzai-Khweshgi Afghans who in the wake of the Yusufzai migration had moved into Hashtnagar. The Khweshgis, generally known as horse-traders, had offered Bābar and Humāyūn excellent service as suppliers of horses and mercenaries in support against their Sur co-tribesmen. Not surprisingly they received a *jāgīr* in Kasur and held the post of *faujdār* of the nearby Lakhi Jungle; as we have noticed already, an area traditionally associated with horse breeding and an extensive grazing area where

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[15] Arlinghaus, "Transformation", pp.210-22.

horses from Central Asia could rest and recuperate before being distributed further throughout the peninsula.[16]

Other Afghans were delegated with the task of controlling the many passes through the dangerous mountain ranges of the northwest. The Afridi Afghans, for example, were entrusted with guarding the Khyber pass and the Khalils with the road between Attock and Khyber. As a result they changed from highway robbers to imperial custom officials levying transit duties. This change was just nominal but it assured their incorporation into the Mughal imperial structure.

Of course, there were always groups and individuals who were not able or not willing to take a share in the profits of trade and empire. One personage who has become famous for opposing Mughal rule was Bāyazīd Anṣārī, who tried to appeal to a supra-tribal following and thereby undermined the Afghan political establishment and its traditional balance of power.[17] Bāyazīd was a champion of religion and the founder of the millenarian Raushaniyya movement. He was not an Afghan himself but a Barki whose parents had moved from Waziristan to the Punjab. He and his father had been engaged in the horse trade between India and Central Asia and as a merchant he had become frustrated by what he considered to be the oppression and excessive tolls of the Mughal government. During his many trading missions he had frequently visited *k͟hānaqāhs* of darwishes and yogis in order to direct his attention to otherworldly matters.[18] In due course he launched a fiercely anti-Mughal and anti-orthodox campaign and he sent missionaries to far off places like Delhi, Badakhshan, Balkh and Bukhara—all of which had been within his former commercial range as a horse-trader. The Raushaniyya was in essence an emancipatory movement wrapped up in Pashto garb. It gained much support amongst the poorer classes but it failed to bridge the gap with the local Afghan leadership. Bāyazīd's successor Shayk͟h ʿUmar even dared to call himself the *bādshāh-i afg͟hānān*

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[16] Muhammad Shafi, "An Afghan Colony at Qasur", *IC*, 3 (1929), pp.425-73; Shāh Nawāẓ K͟hān, *Maathir-ul-Umara*, trans. H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1911-4), 1, pp.641-3.

[17] Another example is of course the well-known Afghan poet-warrior K͟hushḥāl K͟hān K͟haṭak (O. Caroe, *The Pathans 550 BC-AD 1957* (London, 1964), pp.221-47).

[18] In Afghan tradition darwishes are frequently associated with horses as they act as breeders and traders and their *k͟hānaqās* had sometimes fine stables, see Niʾmatullāh, *Mak͟hzan*, Dorn trans., 1, pp.16-7,20,27,30-1.

and began to demand the appropriate tributes from the Afghan tribal leaders.[19] Although Bāyazīd had a substantial Yusufzai following, the elite of Yusufzai landholders were not involved with him because his teachings undermined their traditional tribal leadership and their thriving business with the outside Mughal world. In general, Afghan tradition credits two Yusufzai orthodox *ᶜulamāᵓ*, Saiyid ᶜAlī Tirmīzī and his pupil Ākhūnd Darwēza, for opposing the Raushaniyya sect. The writings of Ākhūnd Darwēza became the canon of faith for the Yusufzais and were still influential in shaping the religious ideas of the later Rohilla leaders. Not the heterodoxy of Bāyazīd Anṣārī but the Sunni orthodoxy of Ākhūnd Darwēza developed into an indispensable ingredient of eighteenth-century Indo-Afghan identity.[20] In the end, the Raushaniyya movement was fully absorbed in the system which it had aimed to overthrow. In the first half of the seventeenth century its leaders were encouraged to take service with the Mughals and were turned into Mughal *manṣabdārs* endowed with several *jāgīrs* in northern India. Still on the basis of their charismatic leadership and spiritual guidance, they drew many recruits from their tribal Raushaniyya following in Roh. Many of these recruits were Bangash Pathans who some years later succeeded in establishing their own principality at Farrukhabad. It appears that, although during the late seventeenth century the Raushaniyya movement had lost much of its millenarian and mystical appeal, it had retained much of its vigour as a recruitment network for Afghan mercenaries.[21]

During the first half of the seventeenth century the Mughals were deepening their involvement in the affairs of their north-western frontier. They were drawn into hotly contested issues, with the Safavids for the possession of Kandahar and with the Tuqay-

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[19] For Raushaniyya movement, see: Caroe, *Pathans*, pp.198-230; Arlinghaus, "Transformation", pp.270-331; J. Leyden, "On the Raushanian Sect and its Founder, Bayazid Ansari", *AR*, 11 (1812), pp.363-428.

[20] See for example W. Irvine, "The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad: A Chronicle (1713-1857)", *JASB*, 48, 1 (1879) p.84; Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān based his *Khulāṣat ul-Ansāb* partly on the work of the *Taẕkirat* of the Ākhūnd Darwēza and in 1767 a transcription of the work was made in his capital of Philibhit (Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.18a,100b).

[21] Muḥammad Walīullāh, *Tārīkh-i Farrukhābād*, BM.Or.1718, f.10b; Elphinstone, *Account*, 2, p.51. For more details, see W. Irvine, "The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad: A Chronicle (1713-1857)", *JASB*, 47, 1 (1878), pp.357-64.

Timurids for Balkh and Badakhshan. As a consequence of intensified Mughal campaigning, Afghans, both in India and elsewhere, became even more involved in Mughal politics. Because of their regional know how, their co-operation became of considerable weight, both as mercenaries and as guardians of the long-drawn supply lines. In 1648 the Mughals finally lost Kandahar to the Safavids and by this time Balkh and Badakhshan also succeeded in becoming more and more independent from Delhi, as well as from Bukhara. As a result of these events the Mughals lost their hold on the Kabul province. Now, the Khyber pass and Peshawar area became of even greater importance as it was the only route to Kabul and Central Asia where the Mughals could still maintain some form of control. Meanwhile, however, Afghan confidence and power had increased considerably. In the 1670's there was a large-scale Yusufzai revolt directed against the Mughal strongholds in the area. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb concentrated all his attention on quelling it and although he managed to conquer the southern plains he was not able to wrest Swat and its adjacent valleys from the Yusufzais.

It is evident that during the latter part of the seventeenth century a process of Mughal decentralization had set in. As in their Indian satrapies, in the Kabul province the Mughals had lost much ground to more local forces. Afghan and Baluch tribes in the west and south were increasingly causing trouble, and along the Amu Darya small new Uzbek principalities emerged. During this process of decentralization it appears that trade relations were not disrupted. On the contrary, these new states launched a new phase of expansion, most notably in the slave and horse trade, which continued until the middle of the nineteenth century. In particular the new Qataghan *amīrs* in Konduz and Badakhshan were stimulating the slave trade by raiding their vast mountainous marchlands to the east.[22] Badakhshan merchants also exchanged horses for slaves from the hill principalities of Chitral and Hunza. During the second half of the eighteenth century the slave trade was even further enhanced thanks to new tribute relations with the Chinese authorities in Yarkand. Through Chitral and Panjkora this upsurge in trade also percolated to the Yusufzai territory where slaves and horses from the north were imported and transferred to the south.[23]

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[22] McChesney, *Waqf*, p.116.

[23] For the Himalayan slave trade, see the works of Müller-Stellrecht: *Hunza und China* and "Menschenhandel"; also Grevemeyer, *Herrschaft*.

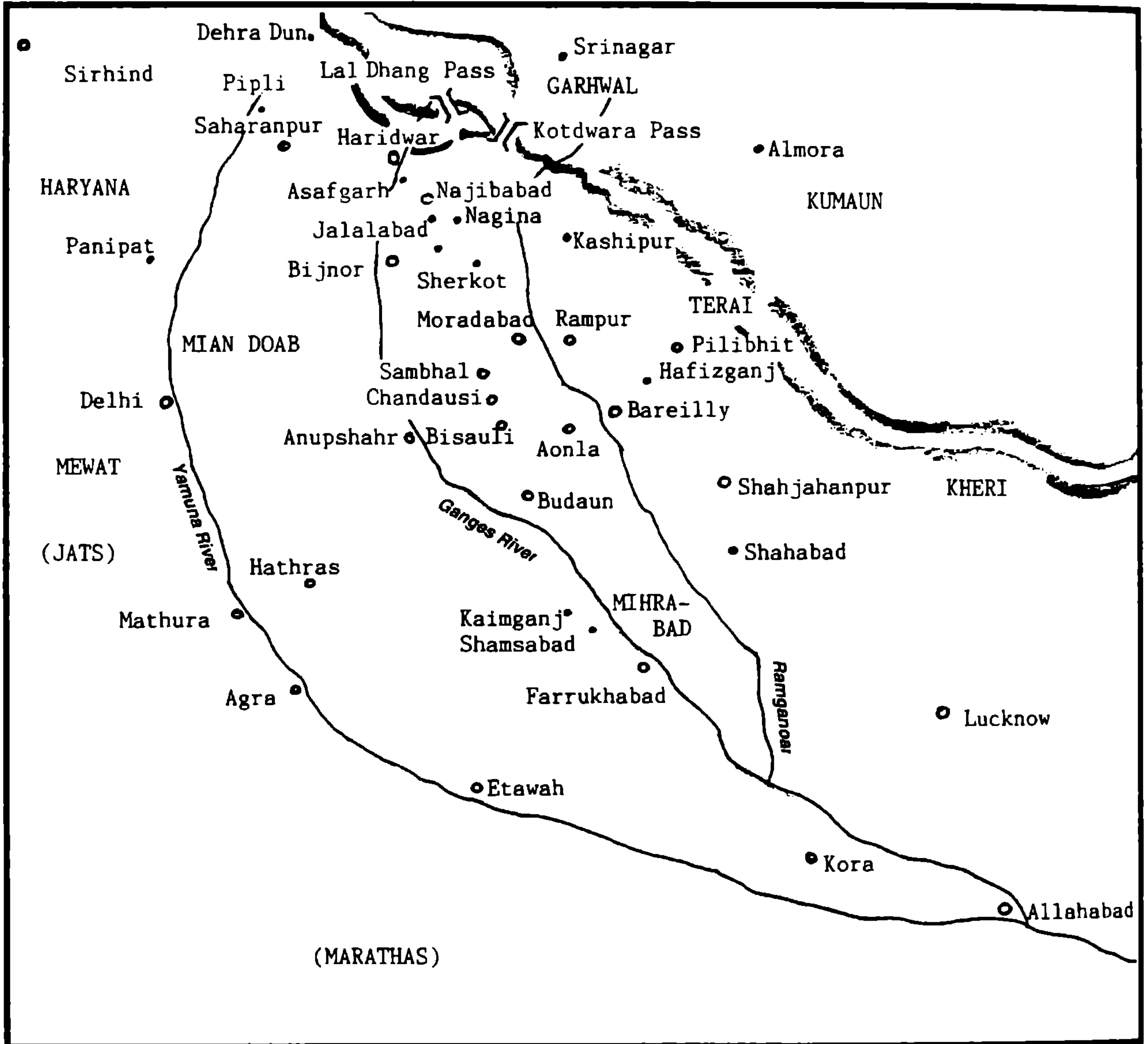
As one of the consequences of declining Mughal power the Yusufzai and other Afghan tribes enjoyed more and more latitude in their movements and patterns of migration. All too frequently, new waves of Yusufzai migration have been linked to increased impoverishment of the Peshawar area. Elphinstone, for instance, writes in 1808: "whosoever is without land must quit the country".[24] Obviously there were many individuals who opted to leave their homeland and searched for better opportunities in India. However, the available material does not suggest that the Peshawar area was going through an economic depression. On the contrary, during the late seventeenth century extended trade relations seem to have widened the opportunities for Afghan merchants and mercenaries for supplying a booming military horse and labour market in India. In particular enterprising and adventurous people were motivated to leave their dull Afghan homeland for the bustling world of India. Here their talents, especially their handling of horses and weaponry, were richly rewarded and their increased wealth could be more easily enjoyed without much restriction and without alarming their jealous neighbours. As a result, Afghan trade profits could find a safe outlet in their new colonies in India. Once migrated, only very few were prepared to return permanently. This persisting depletion of talent and wealth also partly explains the continued lack of state building activities in Swat and adjacent valleys during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Actually, as we will see in the following pages, Yusufzai state-formation came into its own in Katehr in northern India.

4.2. From Horse-Traders to Princes

Katehr (Rohilkhand)

Katehr was the area east of the Ramganga which was dominated by rivalling Rajput (Katehriya), Jat and Banjara *zamīndārs*. Most probably, the area derived its name from the kind of soil that dominated this area. *Katēhr* is a soft well-aerated loam which is extremely suitable for cultivation. Less ideal in this respect were the strips of swampy soil (*khādar*) and loose sand (*bhūr*) which stretched parallel to the numerous rivers in Katehr. This was also true of the long strip

[24] Elphinstone, *Account*, 2, p.34.



Map 4.3. Katehr/Rohilkhand

of marshy and moist jungles along the foothills of the Himalayas, generally referred to as "Terai". These lands could, however, be used as grazing land for cattle: horses along the rivers, bullocks along the hillskirts. In Kheri and Pilibhit, Banjara herders kept their bullocks for almost eight months of the dry season, returning to the plains after the monsoon when grass had become abundant again.[25] These seasonal north-south movements facilitated the rice and grain trade conducted through the Banjara herdsmen with the northern hillstates of Garhwal and Kumaun. Here it linked up well with the Himalayan trade of the Bhotiya nomads as they descended with their sheep and goats from the higher hills of western Tibet. The *zamīndārs* in the area set up weekly village fairs (*penṭh*) where goods from the plains could be exchanged with those of the hills. As a consequence of this natural rhythm the Katehr foothills (*Daman Kōh*) were closely linked to the northern Himalayas and only loosely integrated into the Mughal provincial structure which was centred at Moradabad (*sarkār* Sambhal) and Bareilly (*sarkār* Budaun). Besides, the impregnable jungles of the Terai made control from the plains hardly feasible as turbulent *zamīndārs* could always find a safe refuge out there, protected by forests and swamps, while being provisioned by their, mostly allied, northern hill rajas. No wonder, the Katehr *zamīndārs* had always been reputed for their turbulence and rebelliousness.[26] In this respect the Rohillas were only following in their footsteps.

West of Katehr were located the still extensive grazing areas and wastes of Haryana and the northern Punjab. Despite widespread agricultural expansion in this area during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was still a large pastoral-nomadic population of Gujars and Banjaras. Together with the Terai at its north and the grazing *daras* along the Indus river at its west, this whole territory should be regarded a semi-pastoral transit area which connected the more sedentary Afghan population of the Peshawar valleys with that of Katehr. In chapter one and three we have already seen how this facilitated the trade of Powindas and Afghan horse-traders. It also made Mughal power in these areas extremely precarious and the

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[25] E.W. Oliver, *Notes on the Indigenous Cattle of the United Provinces* (Allahabad, 1911), pp.4,15.

[26] E.g. the anonymous account *(Tārīkh-i Ra'īs-i Morādābād)*, BM.Or.1639, ff.53a-b and S.N. Moens, *Report on the Settlement of the Bareilly District, NWP* (Allahabad, 1874), p.29. See also Wink, *Al-Hind*, vol.2 (forthcoming).

best it could hope for was to exercise effective control along the major roads and its large metropolitan centres like Lahore and Sirhind. The sources of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century suggest that the symbiosis between pastoralism and sedentary cultivation was still intact although the relationship grew more and more complicated. New wealth from raiding and trading still looked for safe outlets in sedentary production. Widespread agrarian uprisings in the eighteenth century, however, were not necessarily a sign of overall crisis but could also be a consequence of reallocations of economic and political resources.[27] For example, the imperial highways increasingly lost their monopoly of long-distance trade. Alternative routes emerged along the fringes of the old empire to and fro the new centres in the Punjab, Katehr and the Himalayas. Indeed, the economic expansion of the former periphery was expressed in increased local resistance against imperial control. In the Punjab, Sikh rebels made common cause with the hill rajas. The *zamīndārs* in Katehr, Kumaun and Garhwal, already notorious for their turbulent leanings, also began to translate their increased wealth in ever more assertive behaviour. It is against this background of commercial expansion in the former peripheries, causing new political imbalances, that we should situate the large migration of Afghans into Katehr. One of these mobile Afghans was Dā'ūd K͟hān, a small horse-trader from Roh who became one of the founding fathers of the Rohilla *riyāsat* in Rohilkhand.

Dā'ūd K͟hān (c.1710-1725)

As we have noticed above, in the wake of Yusufzai migration to the Peshawar area numerous other Afghans moved from Kandahar to Peshawar. Most of them were rather small groups of nomads with an interest in extending their trading connections. This was a fairly gradual process and a follow up of the more massive movements of the sixteenth century. One of these mercantile groups was the Baraich sub-tribe who inhabited the area around Shorawak in eastern Kandahar. From the sixteenth century onwards the majority of them had settled in and around Peshawar, more specifically in Chachh Hazara and the Samah. Those Baraichs who stayed behind in Kandahar progressively merged with other more numerous and dominant tribes in the area. During the eighteenth century, of all

[27] Conclusions derived from Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, and Bayly, *Rulers*.

the 11 Baraich subdivisions who had once existed in Shorawak, only three had retained their former identity.[28]

One of the many Baraichs who had moved to the Peshawar area and settled amongst the Yusufzais was Shihāb ud-Dīn. Although as a Baraich he could not boast Yusufzai descent he gained acceptance within their society as a great saint and *pīr*. As an itinerant mendicant he was reported to have wandered through the wilds and mountains around Attock and Langarkot spending his time in prayer and meditation. In due course he became known as Shaikh Kōta Bābā (i.e., God's dog) and his descendants adopted the name of Kotakhail. As so many of the Afghan saints, he was buried on the main road from Peshawar to Kabul. His third son Shaikh Mūtī continued his father's profession and settled down as a *pīrzāda* (*sajjāda-nishīn*) in the village of Turu Shahamatpur.[29]

Thanks to their family connections with Shorawak and Pishin (famous for its excellent cavalry horses), the Baraichs were particularly well placed to deal in horses. From Peshawar they could extend their trading network to Badakhshan and India by sending their relatives to far-off horse fairs. One example of such practice is presented by the son of Shaikh Mūtī, Shāh ʿĀlam Khān. At the beginning of the eighteenth century he frequently used his contacts with his adopted son (*farzand-i lutfī*) Dāʾūd Khān who had left his adoptive father's village in Roh and settled near the north-Indian town of Haridwar, which, as we have mentioned already, was well known for its annual horse-fairs. We have also seen in chapter three how Dāʾūd Khān managed to embezzle the money from his adopted father which was remitted to him by bill of exchange, and now, equipped with the horses purchased at Haridwar, started a career as a highway-robber.[30]

The son of Shāh ʿĀlam Khān, Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān was also involved in the horse trade. The latter did not move definitely to Katehr before the late 1730's after he had travelled some time through Buner and Hashtnagar, visiting several *madrasas* and *khānaqāhs* for his religious and scholarly education. Some time after his father's death he decided to settle in Hindustan. The Indian

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28 Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.59b-61a.

29 Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, pp.5-8; Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.19b-29a; Aḥmad ʿAlī, *Nazāhat uẓ-Ẓamāʾir*, CUL, Oo.6.85, ff.4a-9a.

30 See p.99 above.

possessions he inherited from his father were remitted to him in Shahamatpur. With the proceeds of these he purchased horses in Badakhshan and disposed of them in Delhi *en route* to his new home in Aonla.[31] His example suggests another way in how the horse trade and migration could interrelate with each other. Whenever a particular individual or family decided to leave their home in Roh for Hindustan the safest and most efficient way of taking their wealth with them was to invest it in horses which could find an easy and profitable sale in India. It was cheaper than bills of exchange and both cheaper and more convenient than cash or precious stones. Thus, as long as the flourishing conditions of the horse trade prevailed, migration from Roh to Hindustan remained a relatively easy enterprise.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Mughal rule in Katehr was restricted to the immediate vicinity of the larger cities of Bareilly, Moradabad and Budaun. The imperial *faujdār* depended on the co-operation of the local *zamīndārs*—which could only maintain himself through constant negotiations and intrigues, intimately linked to the court politics at Delhi. The imperial nobility held large *jāgīrs* in the area, but for the revenue collection they had become entirely dependent on the local elites of landholders and revenue farmers. Revenue farming (*ijāra*) became widespread in Katehr because it facilitated the balancing of local power by employing the revenue farmer and his following in a certain *zamīndārī* without having to invest him with permanent powers and vested interests.[32] Dā'ūd K͟hān was one of the Afghans who knew how to profit from this fluid situation. By frequently switching his allegiance to one or another local magnate he managed to increase his power significantly from a following of only tens at the beginning of his career, to hundreds a few years later. In his band he recruited both Afghans and various Hindustanis, people generally referred to as *mardomān-i hamrāhī*, "fellow travellers", or *qaum* or *jamaʿīyat*, broadly meaning "people" or "*bans*", indicating the heterogeneous and open identity of this group, still different from the equally vague but more ethnic and

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31 Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.13; Cf. Shīv Parshād, *Relation*, p.33.

32 For a detailed survey of early Rohilla revenue rights in Katehr, see I. Husain, "Socio-Economic Background of the Rise of Rohilla Afghans in the First Half of the eighteenth Century in the Gangetic-Doab", *SI*, July (1979), pp.137-49.

tribal idiom of *ulūs* (kinsfolk) or *khail* (clan).[33] In return for his services as a *jamʿ-dār*, both to the Mughals and to the local Rajputs, he got hold of several villages, in a variety of capacities which made him responsible for the collection of the revenue. During his service to the Banjara *zamīndār* Tarpat Singh of Pipli he was entrusted with villages which were earmarked for the collection of horses, elephants and cattle.[34] Slave raids could also be part of his duties as he was to quell the revolts of disobedient and hostile villages. These activities occurred mainly along the skirts of the hills as there was a demand for young boys and girls who could serve as slaves (*ghulām, kanīzak, ashyāʿ*) at the local courts and households.[35] Because manpower was scarce in the hills, the rajas frequently required slaves, not only for domestic services but also for working the expanding domain of cultivation.

At one of these raids Dāʾūd Khān decided to select two boys from among the captive slaves (*bandagān*) and to adopt them as his own sons. Both were converted to Islam and received a proper religious education. In addition they were introduced to *adab* and learned both reading and writing. One of them was styled Fatḥ Khān and became the steward (*khānsāmān*) of Dāʾūd Khān's household. The other, named ʿAlī Muḥammad, was thoroughly trained in the art of horsemanship (*suwārī*) and was put at the head of a part of the veteran Afghan following of Dāʾūd Khān.[36] He was generally regarded as an adopted son (*pesar-i khwānda*) of Dāʾūd Khān but some sources also refer to him as a military slave or *ghulām*.[37] During the nineteenth century, circles around the still

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[33] Even at a much later stage, at Panipat (1761), the majority of the Rohilla army consisted of various non-Afghan recruits (*IOL&R*, Elphinstone Mss.Eur. F.88, Box 13, H, "Sketch of the Dooraunee History" f.566). Gupta mentions one "Qutb Khan Rohilla" who "was not a Rohilla by caste, but as he was in service of the Rohillas he came to be known as a Rohilla himself" (Gupta, *Studies*, p.81).

[34] Aḥmad ʿAlī, *Nazāhat*, ff.12a-b; other sources do not mention his service with the raja of Pipli but, instead, relate his early *naukarī* with one Madār Shāh of Madkar (Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.9; Ghulām ʿAlī Khān Naqawī, *ʿImad as-Saʿādat* (Lucknow, 1864), p.40).

[35] Aḥmad ʿAlī, *Nazāhat*, ff.12b-13a; R.E. Roberts, "Remarks on Countries", *Asiatick Miscellany*, 1 (1785), p.407.

[36] Aḥmad ʿAlī, *Nazāhat*, ff.13b-14a.

[37] According to an anonymous nineteenth-century manuscript his position as a *ghulām* hindered his claims to Rohilla leadership. (*Aḥwāl-i Raʾīs-i Rāmpūr-Rohīlkhand*), f.86a). See also Ghulām ʿAlī Khān, *ʿImad*, p.41 and Saʿādat Yār Khān, *Bunyād-i Afghānān*, CUL, Trinity College, Brown Suppl.1462, f.15a. In

ruling nawabi descendants of ʿAlī Muḥammad started their claim that he had originally been a Saiyid, i.e., a descendant of the Prophet.[38] Most of the contemporary sources, however, call him a Jat or an Ahir. Although his descent is thus strongly contested by both the contemporary and later sources, it appears that he was of local extraction and was made a slave (*gh̲ulām*) but, thanks to his adoption by Dāʾūd K̲h̲ān, was generally considered an Afghan Rohilla. Notwithstanding his lack of a proper pedigree, at the death of Dāʾūd K̲h̲ān in 1724/5 the leaders of his following unanimously elected ʿAlī Muḥammad as their new leader (*malik*, *sardār*) as he was regarded as by far the most able (*ṣalāḥ*) man amongst them. Even Maḥmūd K̲h̲ān, the only natural son of Dāʾūd K̲h̲ān, was passed over without further consideration.

ʿAlī Muḥammad K̲h̲ān (1725-1749)

Like his late master and adoptive father, ʿAlī Muḥammad K̲h̲ān continued his activities as a local war jobber and as such he became increasingly enmeshed in Mughal politics. By now his local star had risen to a level where it was clearly visible to the imperial nobles in Delhi who appealed to him for his cooperation in collecting the revenue from their local *jāgīrs* in the area. The acting imperial official (*faujdār*) at the time in Moradabad was ʿAẓmatullāh K̲h̲ān who governed as deputy (*nāʾib*) of the imperial *wazīr* Qamar ud-Dīn K̲h̲ān. ʿAẓmatullāh had managed to lure ʿAlī Muḥammad into the imperial service, pitting him against some of the rivalling factions at the Delhi court where many held one or another landed interest in the area. The main rival of Qamar ud-Dīn in the Delhi of the late 1730's was the *mīr-bak̲h̲shī* Amīr K̲h̲ān who had some *jāgīr* holdings in Manona and Aonla. With the tacit consent of ʿAẓmatullāh and the imperial *wazīr*, ʿAlī Muḥammad wrested these villages from Amīr K̲h̲ān's agents and made them the centre from which he started to organize his own Rohilla state.[39]

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these sources Dāʾūd K̲h̲ān is called a *gh̲ulām*. For the claims of various other sources, see B. Prasad, "Ali Muhammad Khan Rohelah", *Allahabad University Studies*, 5 (1929), pp.153-5.

[38] See the Urdu work by Najm-ul-G̲h̲anī K̲h̲ān, *Ak̲h̲bār-ul-Ṣanādīd* (Lucknow, 1919).

[39] For a survey of the entanglement with the Mughal court, see Harsukh Rāi, *Majmaʿ ul-Ak̲h̲bār*, BM.Or.1624, ff.696a-697b. Cf. Husain, "Socio-Economic Background".

In 1737, thanks to his special relationship with his patron Qamar ud-Dīn, he was invited to join in an imperial expedition against the Barha Saiyids. In the ensuing battle near Jansath the Rohilla was reported to have performed bravely and thus he was abundantly rewarded with a rank (*manṣab*) of 5000 and the privilege to play the *naubat* (kettledrum) in camp.[40] He also received some new assignments out of the imperial crown lands. After this first success in the service of the Mughal emperor, it was clear to everyone that he had become a power to be reckoned with, not only in the immediate vicinity of Katehr, but also on the imperial stage. From this time onward he started to style himself *nawāb*, a title which was later acknowledged by the emperor, and began to set up a truly princely court at his new capital of Aonla.

At this stage, ᶜAlī Muḥammad was able to absorb even more immigrants from Roh. In the wake of Nādir Shāh's invasion (1739) massive new waves of Afghans, most of them Yusufzais and other Afghans from the Peshawar area, began to swell the Rohilla ranks to about 100,000.[41] One of the immigrants was Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Kh̲ān, the one who, from a petty horse-dealer and *mullā*, was to become the foremost ideologist of Rohilladom and Durrani sovereignty in India. Among the Yusufzais he and his father had a high reputation as *pīrzādas* but were also reputed for their thorough knowledge of the *sharīᶜa*.[42] Being, at the same time, the natural son of Shāh ᶜĀlam Kh̲ān, the late master and adoptive father of Dāʾūd Kh̲ān, his arrival in Katehr was warmly welcomed by ᶜAlī Muḥammad who, obviously, was aware that Ḥāfiẓ's presence at the Aonla court could further strengthen his status vis-à-vis the other Rohillas.[43]

By 1740 ᶜAlī Muḥammad had succeeded in gathering a territory which was made up of a mixture of de jure rights ranging from *zamīndārī*, *jāgīr*, and *ijāra* to *inᶜām*. In practice, however, all these variable landholdings were more and more considered as his own homeland (*waṭan*), where he was the sole ruler and where he could appoint his own collectors and officials.[44] He also began to round

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[40] For this privilege, see p.52.
[41] Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīkh*, f.60a.
[42] Aḥmad ᶜAlī, *Nazāhat*, f.8b.
[43] Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, pp.14-5.
[44] *Ibid.*, p.18.

off his territory by ousting all the remaining imperial agents and the larger supra-local rajas along the northern foothills. At around this time, as a result of increased inside and outside Afghan penetration, the whole western area between the Himalayas and the Ganges, including Katehr and the Mughal districts of Sambhal and Budaun, became generally known as Rohilkhand.

For the Delhi court officials, ᶜAlī Muḥammad turned from a petty bandit into a regional warlord, became more and more of a threat. He not only siphoned off the imperial revenues from his territories around Aonla, but he also commanded the main road which led from Delhi, via Bareilly, to the eastern provinces of Awadh, Bihar and Bengal. In the 1730's, as a consequence of widespread Bundela and Jat unrest, the transport of the treasury of the latter provinces was diverted from the central trunk road passing through Benaras, Chunar and Jaunpur, to the northern territory of Awadh and from there through Bareilly to Delhi.[45] There was a general concern about possible Rohilla encroachments along this road. The ruler of Awadh, Ṣafdar Jang, for example, was very much dependent on this connection with the capital and it is no surprise that he saw the Rohillas as "serpents in his path to Delhi".[46] Thus, gradually, the conditions were created for a broad imperial coalition which intended to expel the Rohilla "brigand" from his newly acquired territories.

In 1741 Rājā Harnand Arorā was sent on a punitive expedition to Rohilkhand, but in the ensuing confrontation with the Rohillas he was killed in his *hauda* by an arrow-shot and the imperial army was easily defeated. Meanwhile, at the Delhi court, ᶜAlī Muḥammad's patron, Qamar ud-Dīn and his "Turani" faction, had tried to prevent the emperor from intervening in Rohilkhand, also because he wanted to frustrate the plans of his "Irani" rival at court, Ṣafdar Jang. Through his mediation the Rohillas could again come to favourable terms with the Mughals. As the imperial *wazīr*, Qamar ud-Dīn accepted ᶜAlī Muḥammad's promise of an annual tribute and, as a mark of his friendship, he arranged the marriage of his eldest son with the Rohilla leader's daughter. What was more important, the *wazīr* secured for him the imperial recognition of all the newly acquired territories.

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45 Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, pp.261-2.
46 Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire, vol.1: 1739-1754* (London, 1988), p.29.

Although the Rohilla conquests were now fully legitimized by Mughal sanction, it had been clear from the outset that real authority in Rohilkhand could not be properly established without bringing all the powerful landholders along the Himalayan hill skirts, in particular the raja of the flourishing hill state of Kumaun, to permanent subjection. With this in mind, the Rohillas started, in 1742, a large campaign into the Terai and the northern hills. Although the Rohillas had to leave their horses behind in the Terai, they succeeded in taking the Kumaun capital Almora on foot and, as a result, both Kumaun and Garhwal were reduced to tributary states. Reportedly, the plunder brought down from the Kumaun hills was vast. Rohilla plundering was facilitated by their iconoclastic zeal to melt down all the silver and golden idols they could grasp.[47] Nonetheless, until the end of Rohilla rule, relations with the Kumaun raja were very amicable since both powers needed each other in maintaining the flourishing conditions of Himalayan trade and pilgrimage.

In 1745 Safdar Jang, looking at these events with great envy, tried successfully to instigate the emperor to set out in person on a punitive expedition against the Rohillas. He accused ʿAlī Muḥammad of claiming an independent sultanate of his own as he was reported to camp in red coloured tents, which was regarded as a prerogative of the Mughal emperor. ʿAlī Muḥammad, hearing the news that Muḥammad Shāh, the Mughal *pādshāh*, in person accompanied by a huge train of followers, including his allies Qamar ud-Dīn and Qāʾim K͟hān Bangash, was slowly heading for Rohilkhand, decided not to flee into the Terai, but to entrench himself at Bangarh: a mud fortress in the heart of a thick forrest not far from Aonla. At the time the imperial train arrived everything was prepared for a long siege but, at the same time, Qamar ud-Dīn again entered into secret consultations with the Rohillas in order to come to a convenient settlement of the conflict. Meanwhile, every morning a cannonade was fired and assaults were staged but without much effect. The Rohillas were also bombarded with *fatwās* of the imperial *ʿulamāʾ* which condemned the Rohillas for fighting their lawful sovereign. While these ritual attacks were going on, negotiations brought new divisions within the imperial camp. Feeling that he lost out to the secret

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[47] Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.19.

"Turani-Afghan" coalition, Ṣafdar Jang brought in his own troops from Awadh and ordered them to begin with the siege in earnest. For the other parties involved, this meant that as soon as possible a peaceful settlement was to be concluded and it was resolved that in return for ᶜAlī Muḥammad's public surrender, he was to be pardoned and his life to be saved.[48] According to another version as told by an anonymous source, ᶜAlī Muḥammad K̲h̲ān, after a huge imperial cannonade which had forced him to come out of his fort, accused the emperor's forces of unchivalrous fighting and acting contrary to the law of Islam (*k̲h̲alf-i sharᶜ*).[49] In practice, however, it appears that the imperial artillery proved itself quite ineffective against the Rohilla mud fort since it was hard to hit the fort through the thick screen of bamboos surrounding it. More important in the long run, as with all long sieges, was the growing lack of supplies in the Rohilla camp. In the end, however, intrigue and negotiations played a major part in the final outcome of the conflict. Indeed, Mughal siege tactics were always characterized by such "a combination of coercion and incentives".[50] In this respect the siege of Bangarh was not a failure but should be considered as one of the last great successes of a Mughal army in the field. It was not so much the lack of coercion, but the increasing inability to offer lucrative incentives, which seems to have decided the declining fate of Mughal arms during the eighteenth century.

In the aftermath of the Bangarh siege, ᶜAlī Muḥammad had to leave Rohilkhand but, in due course, was appointed as *faujdār* in Sirhind while his two elder sons were detained as hostages in Delhi. In the absence of the Rohilla nawab, the newly established imperial officers in Rohilkhand, however, could not get hold of the area because the remaining Rohillas were already too much entrenched in the local management. Besides, in 1748, at the first news of the Durrani invasion, ᶜAlī Muḥammad K̲h̲ān left his post in Sirhind and returned to Rohilkhand, despite the fact that the Durrani emperor had offered him the post of *wazīr* in the event he would decide to join him. Not surprisingly, the Rohilla chose to remain within the

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[48] For siege at Bangarh, see K̲h̲ūshḥāl Chand, *Tārīk̲h̲-i Muḥammad Shāhī*, BM. Or.1844, ff.164a-181b; also: Irvine, *Army*, pp.291-5; Sarkar, *Fall*, 1, pp.29-31; Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, pp.20-1; Shīv Parshād, *Relation*, pp.62-5.

[49] Anonymous, (*Aḥwāl*), ff.87a-b.

[50] D.E. Streusand, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire* (Delhi, 1989), p.65.

Mughal fold because at this time the fortunes of Durrani sovereignty were as yet very uncertain. In Rohilkhand, he was simple welcomed back by his fellow Rohillas and he recovered his former territories without any show of force. At the time of his death in 1749, he had definitely succeeded in warding off all Mughal imperial influence in Rohilkhand.

Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān (1749-1774)

At the death of ᶜAlī Muḥammad Khān in 1749 there was the problem of his succession. He had six sons, four of them still minors. The two oldest sons had been taken captive, first in Delhi by the Mughals, and were then taken away by the Durranis to Kandahar. The most influential Rohilla *sardārs* were the close relatives of Shāh ᶜĀlam Khān: Ḥafiẓ Raḥmat Khān his son, Dūndī Khān his cousin and also ᶜAlī Muḥammad's fellow brothers in arms: Fatḥ Khān Khānsāmān and Sardār Khān Bakhshī. According to the later sources which are favourably inclined towards Ḥafiẓ, ᶜAlī Muḥammad had already, shortly before his death, appointed Ḥafiẓ as his successor. After some *sardārs* had put forward the claims of the old nawab's third son, Saᶜdullāh Khān, ᶜAlī Muḥammad was reported to have answered:

> "that neither Abdoolla nor Fyzoolla [his eldest sons, ᶜAbdullāh Khān and Faiẓullāh Khān] were calculated for the situation, and that such a boy as Saadoolla was quite out of the question; adding, that the only person whom he knew capable of governing the Afghans was Hafiz Rehmut Khan; and accordingly he laid his turban at the feet of Hafiz, and nominated him his successor. Hafiz took up the turban and placed it on the head of Saadoolla Khan [Saᶜdullāh Khān], saying that he was his surdar, to whom he would at all times afford such aid as his youth might render necessary"[51]

Other sources, however, claim he had preferred Saᶜdullāh Khān until the return of his eldest sons from the Durrani court. But because his sons were still considered too young for the task he proposed a settlement which could meanwhile balance the other parties involved.[52] Leaving aside the intricacies of later imagination, at the critical moment the leading *sardārs* resolved that Saᶜdullāh Khān

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[51] Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.28.
[52] E.g. Shīv Parshād, *Relation*, pp.89-93.

would be the nominal nawab and that Ḥafiẓ and Dūndī would serve as his regents.[53]

Meanwhile, Qā'im Khān, the Bangash nawab of the adjacent Afghan principality of Farrukhabad, being the senior member of the Afghan nobility at the Delhi court, had claimed the whole Rohilla territory. The claim was supported by an imperial order issued by the new *wazīr* Ṣafdar Jang. Qā'im Khān was, however, slain in a pitched battle with the Rohillas and as a follow up of his victory Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān annexed all the Farrukhabad territories north of the Ganges.

In 1752 the two elder sons of ʿAlī Muḥammad Khān returned from Kandahar with recommendations of the Durrani emperor and with his "orders" to faithfully enact the will of ʿAlī Muḥammad.[54] After a short while, however, Ḥafiẓ and Dūndī managed to play off the sons against each other and most of them were deprived of all real influence. Instead they were given only some small assignments in land or pensions in cash. The largest part of the territory was divided in estates (*ʿalāqa*). To Dūndī Khān went some 23 % of the total Rohilkhand revenue mainly in the district of Moradabad, to Ḥafiẓ Raḥmat Khān, some 37 % mainly in Bareilly, and the remainder to some of the other *sardārs*.[55] All of them retired to their new territories, building their own courts, each with an aray of palaces, stables, mosques, *khānaqāhs* and *madrasas*. Besides, by erecting new *qaṣbas* and *ganjes* all these local princes tried to encourage trade and to bring more lands under the plough. This decentralization in the aftermath of ʿAlī Muḥammad's death, made Rohilkhand in fact a kind of confederacy of small independent principalities based on a finely-woven network of flourishing urban centres.

Najīb ud-Daulah (1753-1770)

One of the most flourishing local Rohilla centres was Najibabad, located in the north-western part of Rohilkhand, founded by a breakaway Rohilla parvenu, once *jamʿ-dār*, Najīb Khān, later styled

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[53] E.g. the anonymous source *Tārīkh-i Ra'īs*, ff.59b-60a.

[54] Shīv Parshād, *Relation*, p.115.

[55] For a detailed survey of the land distribution, see *IOL&R*, OPSR, V/23/134, "Selections from the Revenue Records NWP, vol.1: 1818-20" (Allahabad, 1866), p.6.

Najīb ud-Daulah.[56] He was the main Indian ally of Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī. He was a member of the Umr Khail of the Yusufzai tribe. In the 1740's he had taken military service with one of his relatives who was an officer in ᶜAlī Muḥammad's army but, in due course, he was enlisted by Dūndī Khān. The latter assigned him some small estates (*jāy-dād*) (Duranghur, Chandpur) along the left bank of the upper Ganges and gave him his daughter in marriage.[57]

In 1753 Najīb made the decisive jump towards independence by deserting the Rohilla ranks under the command of Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān, in favour of the then acting *wazīr* in Delhi, Imād ul-Mulk, who had asked for his assistance in one of his many struggles against the "Irani" faction of Ṣafdar Jang. According to Najīb's biographer Nūr ud-Dīn, he had been greatly moved by the speech of an Islamic jurist (*maulawī*) who urged him to fight for the honour of his rightful emperor and, above all, for the Sunni faith against the heretic Shiᶜa Iranis of Ṣafdar Jang. After Najīb had assessed the *manṣab* and *jāgīrs* which would follow in the event he was prepared to support the *wazīr*'s cause, he made up his mind and, accompanied by 10,000 other eager Rohillas, joined the *wazīr*. He was rewarded with an imperial *manṣab* of 5000 and, in addition to his lands in Rohilkhand, he received Jalalabad and Saharanpur in *jāgīr* and became a principal noble of the Delhi court.[58]

Thus, in a few years, Najīb ud-Daulah had become master of the entire upper Mian Doab and held the key to the western gate of Delhi. His new capital Najibabad became an important commercial centre from which he could control the hill trade with Garhwal and Tibet, and the east-west trade routes along the hill fringes to Kashmir and Peshawar. He extended his territory deeply into the Terai and towards the Himalayan hillstates. The Durrani interventions further added to his prestige and power. After the battle of Panipat, he became the sole ruler of Delhi and integrated the Mughal capital with his territories and large trading network to the north-west. This meteoric but not unusual career had turned Najīb

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[56] This section on Najīb ud-Daulah is primarily based on: Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīkh* and Bihārī Lāl Munshī, "Najib-ud-daulah, Ruhela Chief (Aḥwāl-i Najīb ud-Daulah)", trans. J. Sarkar, *IC*, 10, 4 (1936), pp.648-58.

[57] Later Najīb was also linked to the Nawabi family as his sons married a daughter and a grand-daughter of ᶜAlī Muḥammad Khān.

[58] Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīkh*, ff.6b-9a.

ud-Daulah from a petty *jam*ᶜ*-dār* into one of the great nobles of both Mughal and Durrani empires.

The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad

Adjacent to the Rohilla chiefdoms, the Bangash Pathans established their own Afghan colony at Farrukhabad. During the second half of the seventeenth century, the Bangash had migrated to northern India under the guidance of their Raushaniyya leaders. The first Bangash nawab of Farrukhabad, Muḥammad Khān, was a son of Malik ᶜAin Khān, descendant of an Afghan peasant in the Kabul district (*tūmān*) of Bangash. Early during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) he had left his native country and settled in Mau-Rashidabad, 34 km west of present-day Farrukhabad. Here he enrolled as an officer (*sarkār-i anfār*) in the cavalry of a fellow Afghan named ᶜĀʾīn Khān Sarwānī.[59] Both were in the service of the local *jāgīrdār*, Nawāb Mīrzā Khān, who was a grandson of Khwāja Bāyazīd Anṣārī, the founder of the Raushaniyya sect.[60] Malik ᶜAin Khān married in Mau and when he died left two sons. The oldest, Himmat Khān, died while on a military expedition in the Deccan. His second son was Muḥammad Khān who at the age of twenty took service with Yāsīn Khān, an Ustarzai Bangash and one of the leading Afghans of Mau. As a small mercenary jobber-commander (*jam*ᶜ*-dār*) he and his gang were primarily engaged in local conflicts in the Deccan and Bundelkhand. After Yāsīn Khān was killed at a siege, Muḥammad Khān started a *jam*ᶜ*-dārī* business of his own. He started with seventeen followers but soon after his first successes, more and more Afghans were willing to join his standard. After some time he was able to put himself at the head of 500 to 1000 *suwars* and was enrolled by the local rajas of Bundelkhand and Malwa to deal with rebellious *zamīndārs* or *ra*ᶜ*īyats* in their territory. Frequently, a kind of contract was agreed to in which a part, usually one fourth, of the plunder, was reserved for the *jam*ᶜ*-dār* and his troops, half of which was to be forwarded in advance.[61] The usual routine of an expedition was to realize the contract and to maximize

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[59] Muḥammad Walīullāh, *Tārīkh*, f.10b; Elphinstone, *Account*, 2, p.51.
[60] For details see W. Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), pp.357-64.
[61] Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), p.270, note the similarity with the Maratha "protection rent" of *cauth* (cf. Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*, pp.44-7).

its gains by discrete mutual arrangement with the so-called rebels.[62]

During the struggle for the Mughal throne between Jahāndār Shāh and his nephew Farrukh Siyar, both claimants invited all major nobles and chiefs to join them. After he had sent one of his agents to find out which side was most likely to succeed, Muḥammad Khān joined Saiyid ᶜAbdullāh Khān, the main supporter of Farrukh Siyar. At the ensuing battle, the Bangash appears to have served bravely as commander of an elephant detachment (*jamᶜ-dār-i fīl-sawār*).[63] At the end of the day his political calculus had proven itself entirely reliable. After Farrukh Siyar had gained the throne, Muḥammad Khān was incorporated in the new Mughal body politic by being invested with a *khilᶜat*, presented with an elephant, a horse, a sword, and most importantly, eight *jāgīrs* in Bundelkhand. At the same time he was raised to the rank of a *manṣabdār* of 4000 and from that time he became styled *nawāb*.[64] Suddenly, Muḥammad Khān had changed from a petty *jamᶜ-dār* into an high-ranking *manṣabdār* and pillar of the imperial throne.

Some time later the emperor bestowed 52 Bamtela villages, not far from the original Bangash home in Mau, in *āl-tamgha* (i.e., on a permanent basis[65]) on him.[66] Here he established an extensive new city which he called Farrukhabad. From this new base the Bangash nawab started to carve out a territory of his own, free from either Afghan or Mughal interference. The adjacent territories were relatively easily annexed, partly by bribing the local *qānūngo* (accountant) or by new imperial grants as well as *ijāra* leases from absentee *jāgīrdārs* in Delhi to the nawab or one of his personal slaves (*čelas*). After some time most of these lands fell completely under nawabi control and were annexed to the nawabi *waṭan*.[67] In the end, he had come in a position to ward off any involvement of the

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[62] Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), p.271.

[63] Muḥammad Walīullāh, *Tārīkh*, f.19a.

[64] *Ibid.*; Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), p.274.

[65] For the meaning of *āl-tamghā* in the Mughal context, see Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp.260-1. For its original meaning, i.e. seal, toll or (sales)tax, see G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1965), 2, no.933, pp.554-65.

[66] Actually on his wife, the Bibi Sāhiba, as compensation for the murder of her father by one of the Bamtela Thakurs.

[67] *IOL&R*, BPSPC, P/Ben/Sec/2, 29-1-1787, "Willes to Gov.Gen.", ff.148-92.

old *jāgīrdārs* from the imperial centre who could only acquiesce or invite other keen outside powers to restore their lost incomes.

After he ejected the Bamtela proprietors from the existing villages, he established his personal *khānazāds* and *čelas* in Farrukhabad and enticed merchants and bankers to come and settle, literally, within their midst.[68] For the promotion of commercial activity the nawabs erected numerous bazaars, and *mahallas* (quarters), each devoted to a separate group of artisans or merchants.[69] Along the main trade routes and supply lines numerous *ganjes* and *qaṣbas* were erected to attract trade and credit to Farrukhabad, as also to integrate the countryside into the regional economy and the long-distance trade. In these small urban centres merchants could find protection and additional outlets for their commodities. Very important in this respect was the erection of the Farrukhabad mint which, apart from being an emblem of sovereignty, stimulated bullion imports and attracted numerous bankers. The superior quality of the Farrukhabad currency, both gold and silver, was very well known in the eighteenth century as it became the most trustworthy and hardest currency of northern India.[70] As the nawabi treasury also served as a local bank by regularly receiving deposits and making payments to individuals, Farrukhabad, as the central repository of the nawabi wealth, became an important financial centre. Importers of bullion in Farrukhabad began to invest on a large scale in the production of Rohilkhand and the Doab. In due course, Farrukhabad, not unlike the Rohilla townships, became an important regional entrepôt which linked the flourishing north-western trading network to the south and east. For example, horses, coarse cotton cloths, grain and indigo from Rohilkhand found their way to Awadh and Benaras via Farrukhabad, where they were exchanged for more luxurious textiles from the eastern provinces. Via its extensive credit network Farrukhabad was also able to attract new immigrants from Afghanistan. The nawab made over large sums by bills of exchange (*hundīs*), via Lahore to Kabul in order to invite his countrymen to

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[68] J. Tieffenthaler, "La géographie de l'Indostan" in J. Bernoulli, *Description historique et géographique de l'Inde*, (Berlin, 1786-91), 1, p.196.

[69] Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), p.280. Cf. M. Umar, "Indian Towns in the Eighteenth Century—Case Study of Six Towns in Uttar Pradesh", *PIHC* (1976), pp.212-3.

[70] Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī preferred Farrukhabad coins (Ghulām Ḥasan Ṣāmīn, "Ahmad Shah", p.50).

come to Farrukhabad.[71] Many *khānaqās* were built and large sums of cash were distributed in order to entice sufis, *ʿulamāʾ* and other intellectuals to settle in Farrukhabad.[72]

Although Muḥammad Khān had risen to become a top-rank *manṣabdār* and was selected as an imperial *ṣūbadār* over highly important provinces like Allahabad and Malwa, his status among his fellow Afghans remained highly controversial. For them, he was just one among equals and every sign of illicit pretensions, like riding an elephant or sitting on an elevated cushion amongst his brother Afghans, could only meet with their ridicule or open opposition. This strongly egalitarian atmosphere, reminiscent of similar conditions among the Durranis and Rohillas, made claims to legitimate leadership always extremely complicated. For this reason, he continued to make a rather plain and soldier-like impression. He always wore clothes of the coarsest material and in his audience hall and his house the only carpets were rows of common mats. On these mats the nawab sat together with his fellow Pathans and *ćelas* and all other persons and guests high or low, all enjoying the same simple meal of *pulao*. On these occasions the nawab always excused himself for being merely a soldier. Contemporaries were baffled to observe so much discrepancy between his great wealth and power and the simplicity of his personal habits. This display of roughness and general lack of *adab* sometimes could become rather embarrassing, in particular during imperial audiences at court, most notably in 1739 when he had to present himself before Nādir Shāh, and had to live up to what was expected of a principal noble at the imperial court. Muḥammad Khān's ascribed clumsiness in matters of courtly etiquette was further illustrated by the story that he did not understand a single word of Persian, for which reason he had to be accompanied by one of his sons.[73] Most probably, these most poignant appearances were meant to create the impression that Muḥammad Khān was still a sufi-like *pīr* and soldier-like *ghāzī* whose authority

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[71] Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), pp.323-4. For Farrukhabad coins found in Afghanistan, see J. Rodgers, "The Coins of Ahmad Shah Abdali", *JASB*, 54 (1885), p. 72.

[72] For some examples, see S.A.A. Rizvi, *Shah Wali-Allah and his Times* (Canberra, 1980), pp.182-83 and Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1879), pp.137,157. According to Wendel, the reputation of Farrukhabad as a home for holy men was such that it became commonly known as "Faquirabad" (Wendel, *Mémoires*, p.140).

[73] Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), pp.332,338.

was based on the unqualified and unconditional love of his personal disciples (*ćelas*).[74]

The second generation of the Bangash family seems to be more fully acclimatized to the nawabi lifestyle and the etiquette of an Indo-Persian court. Muḥammad K͟hān's successor Qāʾim K͟hān used on occasion to adorn his personal fort of Amethi sumptuously with canopies of precious broadcloth and gold curtains. No one's horse, *pālkī* or elephant was allowed to enter into the fort and all visitors had to dismount at the gate.[75] His brother and successor, Aḥmad K͟hān Bangash, even lived for much of his time in Delhi, where he enjoyed a luxurious life and started to pilfer precious books and pictures from the imperial stores.[76] His increased commitments at the Delhi court were also reflected in his appointments as *mīr-bak͟hshī* and first noble of the reign, *amīr-ul-umarā*. Aḥmad K͟hān considered himself explicitly as the leader of the Indo-Afghan nobility.[77] This was more or less confirmed by both the Rohillas and the Durranis.[78]

Unlike many of their Afghan brethren, the Bangash Pathans were not directly involved in the horse-trading or horse-breeding business. Partly this can be explained by the circumstance that they could not control a territory which was close enough to the pastoral transit zone with Central Asia and which was vast enough to keep large quantities of horses during the grazing season. Besides, Farrukhabad was one of the most fertile sites along the Ganges riverbank. It was an area of natural surplus where the subsoil was firm and water was close to the surface, ensuring the cultivation of both summer and winter crops. Only in the lowlands or *tarāī* the annual flooding of the Ganges made an autumn harvest almost impossible.[79] In most of the upstream country cultivation was easy. At

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[74] For a similar role of the *ćelas* as personal disciples around the imperial throne, see J.F. Richards, "The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir" in J.F. Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (Madison, 1978), pp.267-70. A similar role was played by the *murīds* at the Safavid court.

[75] Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), p.373.

[76] *IOL&R*, BPSPC, P/Ben/Sec/2, 29-1-1787, "Willes to Gov.Gen.", ff.148-92.

[77] Under Ahmad K͟hān even the Awadh nawab was considered to be of inferior rank (*IOL&R*, BPSPC, P/Ben/Sec/2, 14-3-1787, "Letter mother Muzaffar Jang", f.518; Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1879), pp.144-5).

[78] Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīk͟h*, f.18a; G͟hulām Ḥasan Ṣāmīn, "Ahmad Shah", p.15. For Rohilla aversion, see Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1878), p.376 and "Bangash Nawabs" (1879), p.128.

[79] E.T. Atkinson, *Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India, vol.7: Farrukhabad* (Allahabad, 1874-1884), p.261.

the beginning of the nineteenth century more than 50% of the Farrukhabad district was under cultivation, which was far more than in most of the surrounding districts.[80] In fact, the Bangash nawabs made Farrukhabad a densely populated area. Most of the wasteland was cleared by digging numerous stone pits and wells which irrigated the many fruit gardens at the upper plateau down to the river bank.[81] But as we have discussed already, all these conditions made Rohilkhand a far more convenient location for the trade and breeding of horses. In other words, the Bangash rulers became completely sedentarized as great landlords with an important stake in the empire.

The Durrani Invasions

During the years 1748 and 1752 the Rohillas were immersed in a series of conflicts, first with the Bangash nawabs of Farrukhabad, then with Ṣafdar Jang of Awadh, who with the help of the Marathas tried to oust the Afghans from both Rohilkhand and Farrukhabad. At the end of the latter conflict, the Rohillas were forced to retreat into the Terai jungles but were saved by spreading rumours of a Durrani invasion. Taking up their former territories again, the Rohillas north of the Ganges enjoyed a long phase of relative calm. One reason for this was the continued threat of Durrani invasions. Equally important, however, was their natural southern boundary of the Ganges river which during large part of the year offered them protection against Maratha and Jat inroads. Except for some bridges and ferries, the river was only fordable during the dry weather and even then it could cause serious problems. Whenever a large body of plunderers entered Rohilkhand they always took care to leave the territory again before the riverstream would make a sudden retreat impossible. This made most of the Maratha raids in Rohilkhand fairly short-lived affairs. In such an event, peasants, who were forced to flee from their fields and villages, were getting used to taking up their work again shortly after the marauders had left the place.[82] Further upstream, however, there were a great

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[80] *IOL&R*, OPSR, V/23/134: "Selection from the Revenue Records NWP, vol.1: 1818-1820" (Calcutta, 1866), p.17.
[81] Muḥammad Walīullāh, *Tārīkh*, f.3b.
[82] *NAI*, FPD, S, 23-6-1783, no.34B, "Col. Knudson to J. Bristow".

number of passable fords which during the dry months offered a relatively easy entrance into the north-western parts of Rohilkhand.[83] These were the territories of Najīb ud-Daulah and, not surprisingly, he was to suffer the most from the seasonal raids of Sikhs and Marathas, which he tried to withstand by building numerous forts along the western bank of the Ganges. For the other Rohilla chiefs his lands and forts served as a welcome buffer zone against the repeated inroads from the west.

Not only the hostile attacks by Maratha and Sikh plunderers, but also the "friendly" campaigns of the massive Durrani armies, could cast a dark shadow on the flourishing conditions in the Rohilla territories. For example, in 1763-4, the Durranis were again entering India and had to decide which road they would take on their way from the Punjab to Delhi. According to a contemporary account, they had two options: one was the road along the left bank of the Yamuna, via Saharanpur and thus through the territories of Najīb, the other the more usual route along the right bank, along the Grand Trunk Road, from Sirhind to Delhi. It was reckoned, however, that the latter territory:

> "was not rich and fertile and lacked in plentiful supply of provisions and fodder. The country on the left side was green and prosperous and was thickly populated. Consequently, they adopted the left hand route. They divided themselves into bands and marched leisurely, seldom travelling more than six miles in a day. They obtained plenty of wheat, barley, greens and pulses, and as a result both men and animals gained considerably in weight."[84]

Apart from revealing the shift of prosperity from the former Mughal heartlands to the Rohilla countries across the Yamuna, this instance also demonstrates how the Durrani army was directed very carefully through the cultivated fields of the Rohillas in order not to damage the crops and their own provisions.[85] The same had happened in 1760 when provisions and fodder for the Durrani army were mainly

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[83] *NAI*, FPD, S, 30-10-1780, no.1, "Brig-Gen. Stibbert to Gov.Gen.".

[84] From Nūr Muḥammad's *Jangnama* (Research Dep. Khalsa College, Amritsar) translated by H.R. Gupta in: "Ahmad Shah Abdali's Eighth Invasion 1764-65", *JIH*, 18 (1939), p.98.

[85] The Rohillas were extremely wary of this, see "Paper of Intelligence 12-4-1767", *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* (Calcutta, 1911-49), 2, pp.86-7.

supplied through the normal commercial channels and grain-markets in the Mian Doab.[86]

In spite of all the logistical problems, the intensified Durrani involvement with Indian affairs in the 1750's and 60's greatly added to the status and power of both the Rohilla and Bangash leaders. They were entrusted with high imperial titles and the entire Mian Doab, including the far-off districts of Kora and Allahabad, were handed over to them as *jāgīrs*, partly because these lands were earmarked for provisioning the huge Durrani army.[87] Thus achieving the position of a full scale Mughal successor state, the Indo-Afghan rulers had now risen to a princely status supported and acknowledged by their new Durrani overlord. It is true, however, that the Durrani involvement can only partly explain the meteoric rise of the Rohilla and Bangash free-booters. As could be gathered from the above-mentioned events, even more important was the fact that these horse-traders and mercenaries could take maximum advantage of a free and open military labour market combined with a similarly open market for revenue shares and concomitant landed rights. Therefore, the following section will broadly discuss some of the main characteristics of the mercenary trade of Hindustan.

4.3. The Mercenary Trade of Hindustan

As observed already, the Afghans who migrated to and settled in Katehr should not be considered as tribes with neat ethnical boundaries. In due course most of them became known as Rohillas but to be or not to be a Rohilla was not a question of birth but could be achieved through a mixture of performance, alliance and patronage, strongly related to the phenomenon of military service; in the Persian sources frequently referred to as *naukarī*, *chākarī* or *khidmat*.[88] It was the identity of a Rohilla warrior community which during the eighteenth century was increasingly transformed into the *riyāsat* of Rohilkhand. Since military recruitment and education were decisive for its membership, there was no insistence at all upon purity

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[86] Ghulām Ḥusain Khān, *Seir*, 3, p.379. Cf. Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīkh*, f.40b-41b.

[87] Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīkh*, f.33b; Shīv Parshād, *Relation*, pp.141,157.

[88] For a good analysis of the sixteenth-century military labour market and *naukarī* trade in Hindustan, see Kolff's, Naukar.

of blood. During the seventeenth century, the soldier-like habits of the Rohillas earned them a robust image of uncivilized barbarians and roaming plunderers who raided the civilized world of Hind from their rough mountain strongholds in Roh. As such, they were not unlike other mixed bands of freebooters such as *pindhārīs*, *qazāqī* and *luṭīs*. The state authorities desperately needed these vagabond mountain dwellers as soldiers for their armies and tried to incorporate them into their political system. From Mughal India there had always been a strong demand for them but the period from about 1650 to 1750, was the heyday for the military entrepreneur, as the new Mughal successor states brought about another increase in the demand for a well-trained military force. Just at the time when Europe moved to the elimination of the military entrepreneur or, from another point of view, towards the state-sponsored professionalization of armies, private-enterprise warfare in India was at its most flourishing.

Like the Italian *condottieri* or Swiss mercenaries, the common outlook of the military entrepreneurs was commercial and rational. War was indeed a well-oiled business which involved a great deal of market analysis. The recruitment and organization of troops and horses was the main pillar of this business, to which was added the extension of credit to the employer who was not always in a position to pay for these services directly in ready cash. Both quantity and scale of the trade increased dramatically during the eighteenth century. Small cavalry officers or *jamᶜ-dārs*, could rise rapidly on the social ladder, acquire landed rights and achieve a princely status. These mercenary princes did not much change their former commercial outlook and continued to supply their armies to the highest bidder of "subsidies".[89] On top of that they made money by looting or, more frequently, by levying "protection rents" under the mere threat of looting.

We should not forget that there was no clear-cut distinction between war and peace or between plundering and revenue collection, protection and highway robbery. The dividing line between the two could sometimes be blurred and depended to a large extent on the power of the robbers or their clients. In fact, looting was considered

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[89] Perhaps the most efficient warlords in this open market were the officers of the English East India Company. In this respect they were the main business rivals of the Afghans.

as an irregular form of tax collection by the enemy and warfare was often just a continuation of trade by other means. Afghans could change overnight from highway robbers of imperial caravans to officials collecting the imperial tolls. According to the nineteenth-century *Ḥayāt-i Afg͟hānī* (referring to the Waziri Afghans) a group of men were known as thieves (Pa. *g͟hʾlah*) when they were fewer than ten. When they were between 10 and 200 they became plunderers (Pa. *turak*); and when more than 200 they were suddenly called a (regular) army (*lashkar*).[90]

At the time the Rohilla horse-trader Dāʾūd K͟hān began his career as a military entrepreneur and *jamᶜ-dār* in the service of one of the local *zamīndārs*, there had already been many other Rohillas from the Peshawar area who had staffed the local armies of the Katehr rajas. This was nothing exceptional as there were many roving bands in northern India, permanently on the lookout for military employment.[91] The crucial advantage of Dāʾūd K͟hān, as for many of his Rohilla fellows, was his involvement in the extensive horse and manpower traffic of Roh. What was actually needed all over the Indian sub-continent were military entrepreneurs and brokers whose supply lines of horses and mercenaries extended deep into Central Asia. Indeed, Rohillas were known as skilled cavalry troops (*risāla-yi taᶜlīm*) and often had functions connected with the cavalry such as *jamᶜ-dārs*, *dafᶜadārs* and *risāladārs*.[92] In return for these services, some of them held large tracts of land as *ijāradārs* or *zamīndārs*. Others had settled more to the south as they were invited by the Mughal authorities to counterbalance local Rajput disaffections. Sometimes they were even encouraged to replace the local peasants with their own tribesmen from Roh.[93] Like the Rohilla chiefs and

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[90] Muḥammad Ḥayāt, *Afghanistan*, p.257.

[91] Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīk͟h*, f.94a. Some of them were Jat and Rajput peasants, who had temporary left their fields in order to find additional sources of wealth and status during the campaign season, roughly from December to June. Some of them were from amongst the poorest classes. Nūr ud-Dīn, for example, mentions a group of sweepers, all of them carrying matchlocks, who were summoned by the local *zamīndārs* in case of emergency. They were not rewarded in cash but with a *sīr* of flour and a little dal and tobacco. These recruits from the poorer classes were mostly footsoldiers and had only a local radius of action.

[92] Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *K͟hulāṣat*, f.91a; Aḥmad ᶜAlī, *Nazāhat*, f.10b.

[93] For an example of this, see *NAI*, Oriental Records Division, no.3: "Mughal farman concerning a grant of *waṭan-jāgīr* to Afridi Afghans in the village Lohari in the district of Saharanpur".

the Khweshgis of Kasur, the Daudzai Afghans also began as horse-traders and made impressive careers as Mughal *manṣabdārs*.[94] In the mid-seventeenth century they founded the Rohilla colonies of Shahjahanpur and Shahabad, also situated in Katehr and bordering on the Terai. Shahjahanpur appears to be a neat copy of the common Yusufzai city pattern, with 52 separate quarters being built in order to accommodate all the various clans and sub-tribes.[95]

Those who took service under a mercenary *jamᶜ-dār* and mounted his horses were called *bārgīrs* (litt. burdentakers). Other individuals could join his band possessing a horse of their own, called *khūdaspas* or *silāḥdārs*. The latter received a higher pay as they fully provided their own equipment. The cavalryman's market value—he was earning at least four times as much as a footman—was for a great deal dependent upon the life of their horse. This was one of the reasons why violence was often as long as possible averted.[96] Some of the business risk of loosing the horse was anticipated by the formation of an insurance fund (*chandā*) which consisted of individual payments by all the members of the band and which enabled quick replacement of horses.[97] This practice had already been the rule among the Yusufzai tribes in Peshawar and continued in operation in the irregular cavalry corps of the East India Company.[98]

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, economic growth and increased monetization also facilitated the recruitment of mercenaries. Of course, mercenaries could always be paid in kind but the most powerful incentive was specie. Even when the employer paid in kind or plunder, it could be easily converted into cash at a local bazaar or with bankers who always accompanied the campaigning army.[99] One of the advantages of building up hoards of

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[94] The Daudzai were a section of the Ghoriya tribe which in the sixteenth century had moved from Ghazni to Nangrahar and from there to the Peshawar area where they arrived at around the same time as the Yusufzai.

[95] E.T. Atkinson (ed.), *Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of the N-W Provinces of India, vol. 9.1: Shahjahanpur* (Allahabad, 1883), pp.143-5; Maḥabbat Khān, *Akhbār-i Maḥabbat*, BM.Or.1714, ff.264-70. In the villages of Swat also each clan had its own quarter (*kandī*, or *maḥalla*), mostly enclosed by a mud wall with its own mosque, guesthouse and tower, all of which symbolized and expressed the independent status of the clan and its elders (*maliks*, i.e., "kings") (Muḥammad Ḥayāt, *Afghanistan*, pp.115-18).

[96] Traver, *Hints*, pp.36-42; C.M. Carmichael, *A Rough Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Irregular Horse of the Bengal Army* (Calcutta, n.d), p.2.

[97] Traver, *Hints*, p.86.

[98] Elphinstone, *Account*, 1, p.219.

[99] Ghulām Ḥasan Ṣāmīn, "Ahmad Shah", p.60.

plunder was the ease with which they could be used as pawns to attract new adventurers or converted into ready cash by sale. Thus, as hoards became booty, a process of dishoarding must have taken place concomitantly.

At the middle of the eighteenth century, both in Hindustan and the Deccan, the monthly pay of a private horseman who owned his own horse was somewhere between 20 and 50 Rs.[100] Most of them were recruited for only 7 or 8 months during the war season. Most probably, this represented a small rise of payment compared to the previous century when the pay was about 25 Rs.[101] It was certainly more attractive than it was in Iran or in Afghanistan, although the seventeenth-century Safavid salaries were nominally not much under the contemporary Mughal level. Practically, however, it seems that the lack of available cash in Iran, especially during the eighteenth century, made payments uncertain and lower than the Indian ones.[102] According to the Afghan scholar Muhammad Ghubar, under Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī a cavalryman earned approximately 12 Rs and an infantry soldier 6 Rs per month.[103] The latter would correspond roughly with the Indian level which was also around 5 or 6 Rs, but at the same time, the horsemen were considerably underpaid.[104] When we accept, however, the more plausible figures of Rawlinson, who claims that the Durrani horsemen were paid about 280 Rs a year, this would result in a level which is comparable to the Indian standard.[105]

According to Wendel, the horseman of the Rohilla army was badly paid as he earned only 20 Rs and actually received no more than 15 Rs.[106] The Rohilla mercenaries could find much higher rates when entering into the service of foreign employers in the area. The

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[100] Wendel, *Mémoires*, pp.103,131-2; Modave, *Voyage*, p.309; *NAI*, PHD, 9-7-1782, "Gen. Stibbert to Gov.Gen.", ff.1447-1481; FPD, S, 24-9-1764, no.2A, ff.565-7; *IOL&R*, BMC, P/18/47, 14-7-1779, "Minute Sir Eyre Coote on the general establishment and regulations of the army under the Presidency of Fort William" f.13; BMC, P/18/47, 14-7-1779, "Major Eyres to Brig.Gen. Stibbert", f.24; for Deccan, see: MMSP, P/251/59, 19-10-1767, ff.1071-3; R. Orme, *Historical Fragments of Mughal India* (London, 1805), p.418; Irvine, *Army*, pp.172-3.

[101] Irvine, *Army*, p.10.

[102] For Persian salaries, see *Tadhkirat al-Muluk*, p.155 and E. Kaempfer, *Am Hofe des persischen Großkönigs 1684-1685* (Tübingen/Basel, 1977), pp.96-7.

[103] Singh, *Ahmed Khan*, p.304.

[104] Irvine, *Army*, p.172-3.

[105] Rawlinson, "Report", p.314.

[106] Wendel, *Mémoires*, pp.127,131.

current rate doubled the Rohilla one, and ranged between 30 to 40 Rs. At times of battles and campaigns this could easily be increased to 50 Rs or more. Salaries of officers were much higher, somewhere around 300 Rs per month.[107] A bandleader himself could earn an amount far above this sum because as a broker his cooperation was crucial. An independent *jam*ᶜ*-dār* with a following of only 500 cavalrymen could earn as much as 2000 Rs a month as he had to bear all the financial risks.[108] René Madec, who in 1765 was hired by the Rohillas to collect the revenue from the territories just conquered from the Marathas, received a staggering amount of 10,000 Rs per month for his small but well-trained band of 800 sepoys. Because the Rohilla nawab declined to pay him during the winter months Madec was free to leave his service and join the Jats.[109]

As mentioned already, probably more important than regular pay was the prospect of plunder. Sharetaking in plunder could be an attractive and cheap way of paying new recruits. Even after a battle was over many men could flock to the winning side in order to take a share in the spoils. Commanding a horse was of utmost importance in this respect since cavalry was quicker to loot the enemy's camp than the infantry, which always arrived too late and could not so easily and quickly make off with the proceeds.[110] Therefore, it was sometimes found more attractive to ward off freebooting plunderers. They not only reduced the potential rewards of plunder but could also hinder military campaigns. During the Kumaun expedition of the Rohilla chief ᶜAlī Muḥammad K͟hān in 1742, the hilly and jungly terrain was not considered suitable for quick manoeuvring of large cavalry units. Besides, food and fodder provisioning made a large army much too cumbersome and expensive. ᶜAlī Muḥammad determined to throw off the burden of useless banditti and accordingly published a proclamation declaring that:

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107 *NAI*, PHD, 9-7-1782, "Proposition by the commander in chief for raising and maintaining a body of Mogul or Candahar cavalry", ff.1457ff.

108 *IOL&R*, MMSP, P/251/61, 29-2-1768, "Pay of Ibrahim Beg for 400 horse and 100 sepoys", f.252.

109 Barbé, *Madec*, pp.39-44.

110 E.g. British officers during the Rohilla War complained much about the indigenous cavalry forces which snatched away all the Rohilla plunder before the eyes of the British infantry troops (J. Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War* (Oxford, 1892), p.158).

> "'any stranger or other person not enrolled, who should be found inside the camp after a certain day should be punished with death.' The rigorous execution of this menace in a few instances soon drove away all superfluous mouth, and eventually contributed not a little to the success of the expedition".[111]

The pay of a cavalryman was frequently related to the quality and price of his horse and the costs of its maintenance.[112] The price of a horse determined the sum of its annual depreciation. Whenever the horse was of a relatively cheap country-bred race the annual write-off could be around 5 Rs whereas thoroughbred foreign horses could fetch a sum which was tenfold.[113] In addition, there was the cost of foraging and maintenance. During active campaigning this could increase considerably as a result of increased demand and longer supply lines. Broadly speaking, the general cost level for maintaining a horse was correlated to the local availability and price level of fodder crops. The latter were widely and, most probably, cheaply procurable in the Mian Doab and Rohilkhand, which might partly explain the relatively low pay-level of its soldiers. Of course, horses could also be fed by free grazing on the cultivated lands but, obviously, only in the short run was this a cheap way of feeding horses because it destroyed the crops and increased the overall cost of living.

Obviously, the loyalty of these hired soldiers could never be trusted because they always had an eye on counter offers of cash and position.[114] During periods of relative calm, substantial arrears in payment were a common means of attaching the soldier's fortune to that of his employer. On the other hand, army leaders always made sure that payments were sufficient to avert desertion to the enemy or to stimulate *jam*ᶜ*-dārs* of the other side to retreat or stay passive at the moment of battle. There were also other methods which were designed to counter the inbuilt fluidity of the military market economy. For example, the Durranis were able to avert defection with

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[111] Shīv Parshād Munshī, *An Historical Relation of the Origin, Progress and Final Dissolution of the Government of the Rohilla Afghans in the Northern Provinces of Hindostan (Tārīkh-i Faiẓ-Bakhsh)*, trans. C. Hamilton (London, 1787), pp.54-5. For the enormous costs of warfare in the Himalayas, see G.J. Younghusband, *Indian Frontier Warfare* (Delhi, 1985).

[112] Cf. S. Haleem, "The Army of the Rulers of Amber. Sources of Recruitment and Mode of Remuneration (1676-1750)" *PIHC* (1988), pp.209-10.

[113] On the basis of an average ten years service, see chapter 3.2.

[114] See e.g. Law, *Mémoires*, p.194.

the help of their elite corps of *ghulāms* and *nasaqchīs* which were stationed behind the vanguard.[115] Sometimes, attempts were made to establish a certain *esprit de corps* which would at best make it embarrassing for someone to leave the ranks of a his contingent.[116] The EIC armies consisted of contingents of the same clan (*qaum*)—a principle called *bhāʾī-bandi*. This could stimulate the clannish zeal, impose a certain level of social control within the contingents, and allowed problems to be solved internally.[117]

By formulating a common cause, such as the honour of the tribe or the glory of religion, attempts were made to enhance the corporate feeling of the army. At the same time, however, it offered a welcome ideological pretext for joining the other, mostly winning, side. In the case of the Rohillas we find them fighting with the Marathas for the legitimate sultanate of the Mughal emperor, against Awadh for Sunni orthodoxy, against the Marathas in the spirit of *jihād*, and with the Durranis for the name and honour of the Afghans. Although the Rohillas became noted for their Sunni orthodoxy, this never prevented them from developing close ties of military brotherhood with local Rajputs or from making alliances with Hindu Marathas or Shiʿa Iranis. Defection belonged to the conditions and rules of a vigorous and open military market economy equipped with a plentiful and mobile military labour force. Obviously, the best way of keeping an army or band together was success and in particular, the prospect of rich rewards and plunder.[118] Thus, it was under the conditions of a free and open military market-economy that Rohilla horse-traders and mercenaries became increasingly involved in the local rivalries and conflicts of Hindustan. In due course many of them became wealthy local magnates with high-sounding Mughal and Durrani titles and with each of them having his own local court. Obviously, even at this stage, the employment of mercenary armies, as well as the importation and breeding of war-horses, remained strategically important. This entailed a critical dependence upon the revenue of both interregional trading and local production. All this determined their overall

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[115] Abū al-Ḥasan, *Mujmal*, 2, pp.130-1; Ghulām Ḥasan Ṣāmīn, "Ahmad Shah", pp.16-7. Also Law de Lauriston considered the Durrani army much more efficient and disciplined than the Indian counterparts (Law, *Mémoires*, pp.191-2).

[116] Anand Rām Mukhliṣ, cited by Sarkar, *Fall*, 1, p.26.

[117] Traver, *Hints*, p.48.

[118] Cf. *NAI*, FPD, S, 26-11-1764, no.19, ff.620-1.

creditworthiness and was decisive in attracting affluent bankers and merchants. Indeed, at the middle of the eighteenth century the Rohilla chiefs had been extremely successful in surviving all kinds of risks, reaching the top of the imperial hierarchy, and in amassing huge financial fortunes. But at this point they were faced with the necessity of using the latter to their long-term advantage. Their foremost option for investment was of course the improvement of their newly established homeland in Rohilkhand.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROHILLA *RIYĀSAT*

> *"Aonla est une ville remarquable par sa grandeur, sa population, la beauté de ses maisons et un palace magnifique où réside le principal chef des Rohillas. La place du marché s'étend vers les quatre plages du monde."*
>
> Joseph Tieffenthaler, "La géographie de l'Hindoustan"[1]

The official sources of both the Mughal and British authorities speak with much regret about the rude Afghan penetration into the Upper Ganges area. The Afghan *riyāsat* is represented as, respectively, a *zamīndārī* revolt or just another variety of petty Islamic despotism. For both the Mughal and the British the new state posed a serious threat. For the Mughals the nascent Rohilla state was extremely dangerous, not only because, just a few miles from their capital, it siphoned off the revenues of agriculture and trade, but also because it became part of the alternative Durrani *shāhānshāhī*. The British were not very happy with the situation either and were afraid that Rohilkhand would become a springboard for further Afghan or Maratha inroads into the newly created buffer state of Awadh. Apart from these rather negative perspectives, we have some equally prejudiced positive statements from a somewhat unexpected corner. In the aftermath of the famous Hastings trial, in which the Rohilla War was one of the issues, the Rohillas found a range of Utilitarian admirers who sung praises of the achievements of Rohilla rule. Amongst them were James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay, who wrote about the Rohillas:

> "While anarchy raged from Lahore to Cape Comorin, their little territory enjoyed the blessings of repose under the guardianship of valour. Agriculture flourished among them; nor were they negligent of rhetoric and poetry. Many persons now living have heard aged men talk with regret of the golden days when the Afghan princes ruled in the vale of Rohilkhand."[2]

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[1] *Op.cit.*, p.140.

[2] T.B. Macaulay, "Essay on Warren Hastings" in Lady Trevelyan (ed.), *The Works of Lord Macaulay* (London, 1866), pp.562-3.

Obviously, we should be on our guard against such partisan assertions, but the Utilitarian assessment is more or less corroborated by more neutral observers like Wendel, Tieffenthaler, Francklin, Forster and Hardwicke, all of whom speak of the flourishing conditions of the Rohilla cities and their improvement of the surrounding countryside.[3]

5.1. The "Dual Economy" of the Rohillas

When we take a closer look at the achievements of the Rohilla *riyāsat*, the dual capacity of the Indo-Afghan economy comes fully into its own. In chapter three we already highlighted the significance of the Rohilla horse-breeding industry which was concentrated along the river valleys and was closely linked to the more extensive pastoralist areas to its north-west. At the same time, the Rohilla rulers continued to reclaim wasteland for cultivation. Already previous to Rohilla rule, large areas along the Terai or foothills of the Himalayas had been taken under the plough.[4] Under the Rohillas this policy was vigorously continued. Thus, the rise of Rohilla power in Katehr coincided with both increased horse-breeding activities and continued land reclamation. The latter was done with the help of the indigenous population, who, often in their capacity as bonded dependents of the Rohilla landlords, became fully integrated in the expanding agrarian economy. Although the Rohilla chiefs were generally looked upon as *ashrāf* Muslims who cherished an urban and literate lifestyle, many of their humbler compatriots were not at all averse to tilling the soil themselves. According to Forster:

> "the Afghan conquerors of Rohilcund, were a rapacious, bold, and lawless race of men; and it should seem, that after they had established a government in India, they adopted the more effeminate vices of the south, and became intriguing, deceitful and treacherous. The Rohillas, especially the lower clases, were, with but few exceptions, the only sect of Mahometans in India who exercised the profession of husbandry; and their improvement of the various branches of

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[3] W. Francklin, *History of the Reign of Shah Aulum* (London, 1798), pp.56-60; Wendel, *Mémoires*, pp.130-1; Tieffenthaler, "Géographie", pp.136-42; Forster, *Journey*, p.120; T. Hardwicke, "Memoir relating to the Routes in the Doab", in: *NAI*, Memoirs of the Survey of India, Memoirs, no.2, ff.21-36.

[4] T. Raychaudhuri & I. Habib (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India, vol 1: c.1200-1750* (Cambridge, 1982), p.225.

agriculture, were amply recompensed by the abundance, and superior quality of the productions of Rohilcund."[5]

All the existing evidence suggests that the Rohilla *riyāsat* grew in tandem with deforestation and agrarian expansion. With the gradual thrust of agriculture to the north-east, the administrative centres of the area also shifted accordingly: from the old imperial centres of Budaun and Sambhal to Moradabad, Bareilly, Aonla, Shahjahanpur, Pilibhit and Najibabad.[6]

Despite the continued agrarian expansion, there are no signs that horse breeding suffered from this. The reclaimed land along the Terai did not infringe on the grazing lands for horses which were concentrated in the south of Rohilkhand and in the still very extensive wastes of neighbouring areas.[7] On the contrary, from what follows it appears that both sections of the economy mutually supported each other.[8] Moreover, the Rohillas were able to maintain this dual base thanks to their control over, and the growth of, the interregional trade within India and with Central Asia. With this in mind, let us now pay attention to the sedentary-agrarian side of the Rohilla *riyāsat* and the latter's impact on the management of the land revenue in the area.

After the British annexation of the area in 1801, their revenue officials were perplexed with the *jama*ᶜ figures under Rohilla rule, as well as with the great decline of the area during the last three decennia of "misrule" under the Awadh regime.[9] Obviously, we should

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[5] Forster, *Journey*, p.120.

[6] Islamic invasions have often been equated with large-scale devastations of the countryside. But, as we will see, the Afghan penetration into Katehr was conducive to the agricultural development of the area. For the agricultural revolution of early Islamic expansion, see A.M. Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World. The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques, 700-1100* (Cambridge, 1983). For the intimate association of Islamization and agricultural expansion in Bengal, see R.M Eaton's contribution to: G. Michell (ed.), *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal* (Paris, 1984), pp.23-37.

[7] Although the lands along the hill fringes were important for cattle, it appears that in in the middle of the eighteenth century there was still sufficient wasteland available. Only in the late nineteenth century the balance between sedentary and pastoralist production became more critical. Cf. E.J. Bruen, *Cattle Breeding in the Bombay Presidency: Principles and Progress* (Poona, 1977), p.3.

[8] See also pp.13-4.

[9] See e.g. ᶜAzīzullāh Bukhārī's report made in 1783 (SPK, Ms.Orient,4,253, ff.132a ff).

not take the Rohilla *jamaᶜ* figures as unproblematic. Their accounts represented the nominal revenue, probably around 1752, and as such served as a basis for the land distribution among the Rohilla chiefs.[10] These figures, however, seem to match the mid-eighteenth-century Mughal statistics of the Sambhal and Budaun districts presented fairly recently by Muzaffar Alam.[11] It appears safe to support Alam's conclusion that the area of Rohilkhand experienced a marked agricultural development during the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century. The rise in *jamaᶜ*, from the time of Akbar to about 1750, was more than 250 per cent. In comparison with the surrounding areas, ranging from 85 per cent in Awadh to 134 per cent in Kora, this rise might be considered absolutely sensational.[12]

In table 5.1 and 5.2 we find these figures displayed in a survey from about 1600 to 1800. Added are the figures of the eighteenth-century geographical work of Rāi Chaturman Saksena, the *Chahār Gulshan*. Although these cannot be fully trusted they give us an idea of the revenue at the beginning of the eighteenth century, thus preceding the advent of Rohilla rule.[13]

Table 5.1. *Jamaᶜ* figures of Katehr/Rohilkhand 1595-1808

Year/Source/ Government	*Jamaᶜ* in Rs. Sambhal/ Moradabad[14]	*Jamaᶜ* in Rs. Budaun/ Bareilly	Total *Jamaᶜ* in Rs. Katehr/ Rohilkhand
1595/*Ain*/ Mughals	1,673,536	870,427	2,543,963
1710/*Chahār Gulshan*/ Mughals	3,541,843	2,922,244	6,464,087
1750/Alam/ Rohillas	5,292,052	3,545,625	8,837,677
1752/Lloyd/ Rohillas	5,046,000	4,310,000	9,356,000

10 *IOL&R*, OPSR, V/23/134, "Selections from the Revenue Records NWP, vol.1: 1818-1820" (Calcutta, 1866), p.6; *IOL&R*, BRCCCP 1803-22, P/91/20, 6-5-1808, "Collector Moradabad (Charles Lloyd) to Board".

11 Alam, *Crisis of Empire*, p.253.

12 *Ibid.*, p.252.

13 From J. Sarkar, *India of Aurangzeb: Topography, Statistics and Roads, compared with the India of Akbar* (Calcutta, 1911), p.125.

14 From 1774 onwards, exclusive of Rampur.

Table 5.1. Cont.

Year/Source/ Government	*Jama*ᶜ in Rs. Sambhal/ Moradabad	*Jama*ᶜ in Rs. Budaun/ Bareilly	Total *Jama*ᶜ in Rs. Katehr/ Rohilkhand
1774/Lloyd/ Awadh	2,704,678	-	-
1801/Lloyd/ East India Company	1,975,236	-	-
1808/Lloyd/ East India Company	2,446,530	2,369,999	4,816,529

Table 5.2. Index of the Katehr/Rohilkhand *Jama*ᶜ 1600-1800

Year	Rounded Index *Jama*ᶜ Katehr/Rohilkhand
c.1600	100
c.1710	254
c.1750	357[15]
c.1800	190

The contemporary accounts and these revenue figures all underline the thriving state of Rohilkhand during the eighteenth century. It appears that the agricultural development of the area during the seventeenth century was continued during the Rohilla years in the following century. Somewhere during the late 1760's or early 1770's, as external pressure on Rohilkhand grew, a dramatic decline in revenue set in which in 1808 ended up at half the former Rohilla level. In the following pages I will try to find some explanations for these exceptional figures. The result will not be fully conclusive since I gathered the bulk of the information from late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British sources. The early British revenue officials who tried to come to terms with the complexity of the local revenue collection were faced with a lack of official Rohilla statistics. Indeed, there appears to be not much left of the indigenous revenue material and whatever remains is scattered in numerous private collections. Part of this may be explained by the fact that under the Awadh government (1774-1801) the task of revenue collection was fully delegated to large, more or less independent revenue farmers.

It is evident that during the initial years of Rohilla rule the existing

[15] Average of 1750 and 1752 figures.

power structure in the area was altered. According to Brodkin, the Rohillas did not merely superimpose themselves on the indigenous organizational structure but fully destroyed that structure. Almost every landholder, no matter how petty, who was considered to be a potential source of difficulty and who could be a focal point of anti-Rohilla activity was uprooted and either killed or forced to flee across the Ganges. As every public office was filled with ᶜAlī Muḥammad's own men, he accomplished a complete obliteration of existing vested rights in the soil.[16] It seems, however, that Brodkin overstates his argument as he follows neatly the purport of the nineteenth-century British sources. It seems more correct to claim that only the powerful, supra-local *zamīndārs* and rajas were actually ousted from their territories. They, in particular the larger rajas along the skirts of the Himalayas, had always resisted central rule from the plains, whether Mughal or Rohilla. Effective control of Katehr, however, required the cooperation of these local magnates. Failing this, some of the largest landholders were, in effect, thrown out or demoted to minor positions. Similarly, the *jāgīrs* of the absentee Delhi nobility, the former revenue-free lands (*inᶜām*, *madad-i maᶜāsh*) and the crown lands (*k̲h̲āliṣā*) in the area were fully usurped by the Rohilla chiefs.[17] In spite of these wide-scale annexations, most of the smaller *zamīndārs* and other local power holders (i.e., *muqaddams*) were not displaced at all.[18] The local Afghan chronicles do not present a picture of excessive or violent dislocations but, on the contrary, they suggest a great deal of local cooperation and accommodation.[19]

Apart from this, the revenue management was not an exclusive Rohilla affair. Most of the financial management and bureaucracy was in the hands of Hindu *dīwāns* and *munshīs*, who were rewarded with large assignments of land. What actually happened in Rohilkhand was a change in the legal nomenclature of landed rights. At the supra-local level a new land revenue system was superimposed on

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[16] E.I. Brodkin, "Proprietary Mutations and the Mutiny in Rohilkhand", *JAS*, 28, 4 (1969), p.676 and E.I. Brodkin, "Rohilkhand from Conquest to Revolt 1774-1858: A Study in the Origins of the Indian Mutiny Uprising" (PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1968), pp.20-3.

[17] Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.117.

[18] In nineteenth-century Bareilly Rajput landholders reclaimed more than one third of the local proprietary rights, Muslims only about 22 per cent (Moens, *Report*, pp.7,129).

[19] See for example Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.33.

the old structure, which brought new people and new credit to the lands. These people were not only Rohillas but also local revenue farmers or others who possessed sufficient credit to engage in the collection. The ruling elite of Rohillas controlled large tracts of territory but without necessarily becoming a part of the village community. In general, they preferred to monitor the economy from the more luxurious and, anyway, more central urban *qaṣbas*.[20] Thanks to the high level of agricultural production they could share in the produce of Rohilkhand without having to thrust themselves into village society or to disrupt the existing conditions of the local peasantry. Thus, some of the former powerful rajas were ousted and substituted by commercial revenue farmers and absentee proprietors. At any rate, at the level of the actual village society not much changed. In case land was freely offered for sale the village headmen enjoyed a preferential treatment and usually were allowed to continue on the basis of their old rights.[21]

As we have stressed already, Rohilkhand was largely an extremely fertile area which facilitated both large *rabīᶜ* and *kharīf* crops. In the northern fringe areas the soil was naturally moist as it could profit from the many spring torrents from the hills. As a consequence, the dry weather could not do much harm to the crops. On the contrary, during droughts even a better harvest could be produced since ploughing and sowing the lands could be done more easily. Hence, the supply of grain in this area was at its maximum during times when there was scarcity in other areas and at a time when prices elsewhere were at their highest. These conditions triggered off export trade of Rohilkhand wheat, mainly to the south and west, even at times when there was scarcity in Rohilkhand itself. Wheat production mostly exceeded local demand as the poorer classes in Rohilkhand contented themselves with cheaper millets like *juwār* and *bājra*.[22]

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[20] Remark of Collector of Bareilly S.M. Boulderson in 1824-5 (A. Siddiqi, *Agrarian Change in a Northern Indian State* (Oxford, 1973), p.25). These conditions persisted deep into the nineteenth century (E. Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj, Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 1980), pp.55-6). Cf. Basawān Laᶜl Shādān, *Memoirs of the Puthan Soldier of Fortune the Nawab Ameer ood-Doulah Mohummud Ameer Khan (Amīr-Nāma)*, trans. H. Princep (Calcutta, 1832), p.9 (the father of the later Afghan Nawab of Tonk, Amīr Khān, served as a revenue-farmer of *jāgīrs* of some absentee Rohilla nobles).

[21] Moens, *Report*, p.112.

[22] *IOL&R*, BRCCCP, P/91/19, 30-3-1808, "Collector of Moradabad Charles Lloyd to Board", *NAI*, FPD, S, 23-6-1783, no.34C, "Knudson to Bristow".

Important other crops earmarked for export were rice, sugarcane, indigo, tobacco and cotton. The bulk of these was carried off by the bullocks of Banjara and Gujar trading tribes, mainly inhabiting the larger wastes along the riverbanks and the northern hills. Their bullocks not only served as hired beasts of burden but many of them were also bred for sale and export. Under Rohilla rule, Banjaras and Gujars in Saharanpur exported some 12 to 15,000 bullocks each year, mainly to the west.[23]

During Rohilla rule the cultivation domain north of the Ganges was substantially enlarged, more in particular towards the Terai and hill fringes to the north around Najibabad, Dehra Dun and around Pilibhit. Dera Dun had been under the control of Banjara merchants who had already increased the acreage of land under cultivation. Under supervision of Najīb ud-Daulah, the claiming and irrigation of land was further intensified. Canals were dug, new wells were built and many new mango groves were laid out in an area which had once been wild jungle. In a few years time the revenue increased from 94,344 Rs from 400 villages, to 126,000 Rs from 500 villages.[24]

From their former homeland of Roh, the Rohillas introduced the *kārez* system to northern Rohilkhand, an underground irrigation system which is otherwise found only in the dryer areas of Iran, where it is called *qanāt*, and Central Asia, where it is called *ariq*. The Rohillas excavated underground channels which, through a declining hill slope, quickly brought the water to the surface. From there the water was further distributed to the fields by small earthen embankments. The system stimulated rice production but required large investments and the annual costs of maintaining it were also not inconsiderable. The channels were farmed to *ʿāmils* who levied a cess for irrigating the fields of the landholders.[25]

Keeping pace with the reclamation of new land, the commercial ties with the Terai were also strengthened. The thick forests of the Terai had been of considerable economic weight for supplying timber (*sāl*), used for building and furniture, and also bamboo. The

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[23] *IOL&R*, OPSR, V/23/136, "Selections from the Revenue Records NWP, vol.3" (Allahabad, 1873), p.287.

[24] *IOL&R*, Elliot Mss.Eur.D.314, ff.403-28.

[25] E. Colvin, *Report on the Settlement of Pillipheet NWP* (Allahabad, 1873), p.7; *Documents relating to the Rohilcund Canals 1824-43* (Allahabad, n.d), pp.1-3. For use in Afghanistan, see L. Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton, 1980), p.40.

wood was worked by paid labourers of the local Dom caste who worked on advances from merchants from the Rohilla towns in the plains. Small markets (*mandī*) were erected in order to collect the timber from the jungle for further distribution to the south.[26] These markets served a double purpose as they were not only entrepôts of local trade but also centres from where cultivation could be stimulated. As a consequence, the Rohilla chiefs erected some of their new grain markets (*ganjes*) in desolated areas in order to attract capital and demand from outside and to raise production in the immediate vicinity of the *ganj*.[27]

Apart from the measures which improved the infrastructure of the area, the system of revenue collection was geared to the extension of cultivation. In areas where production levels were uncertain, especially where lands were newly claimed, there was no fixed assessment and a greater share of the eventual crop was reserved for the engaging manager. The labourers and cultivators paid to their manager fixed rates, either in cash or in kind. The government left the land manager relatively undisturbed and was content with only a fourth of the produce, but whenever the increase passed the estimated production level, the extra was divided between the government and the revenue farmers. The risk of reclaiming new land was thus delegated to the revenue farmer who was willing to engage in it because of the high shares in revenue. Whenever a farmer was exceedingly successful the government could again claim a share in the profits but in general all the farmed out lands were moderately rated, based on low estimates.[28]

For reclaiming and conquering new lands, the Rohilla landholders recruited bonded labourers or ploughmen (*hālīs*). These *hālīs* were not so different from the *hamsāyas* and *faqīrs* we encountered in Roh among the Yusufzai. Of course, the phenomenon of bonded labour is fairly common in other areas in India and has been most thoroughly analysed in Gujarat and Bihar.[29] In adjacent Kumaun

[26] Wendel, *Mémoires*, p.130; Francklin, *History*, p.59; J.H. Batten, *Official Reports on the Province of Kumaon* (Agra, 1851), pp.44-7.

[27] Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīkh*, ff.97b-98a.

[28] For the Rohilla revenue system, see *IOL&R*, BRCCCP, P/91/19, 30-3-1808, "Collector Moradabad (Charles Lloyd) to Board".

[29] For a discussion on bonded labour in Gujarat, see J. Breman, *Patronage and Exploitation, Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat, India* (Berkeley, 1974); for Bihar, see Gyan Prakash, *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial*

bonded dependants of outcasts or the poorer Dom caste were widely employed for working the fields.[30] This kind of patronage of agricultural labour is frequently related to conditions of an expanding agricultural domain either by conquest or by the reclamation of wastes. In fact, both latter circumstances were present in Rohilkhand. Through the bonded labour of the *hālīs*, Rohilla and other new landholders were able to bring new land under the plough and expand agriculture. At the same time, they had a permanent mobile workforce at their disposal for the labour-intensive paddy- and sugar-crops. On his part, the *hālī* bondsman was not particularly bad off. Most of them received a monthly wage, food and clothing. More important, however, they enjoyed continued employment, also when the seasonable labour demand slackened. In Rohilkhand, the *hālīs* were linked to the person of their patron but not attached to the soil (the latter seems to have been the rule in Kumaun). Hence, after the annexation of Rohilkhand many of the local *hālīs* followed their Afghan patrons and went to Rampur.[31]

Undoubtedly, the expansion of cultivation brought about new tensions with the herding tribes. As we have mentioned already, both in Dehra Dun and in Pilibhit, the large Banjara landlords were replaced by Rohilla chiefs. On the other hand, we have noticed several instances in which these tribes continued to play an important role as transporters and suppliers of animals. Especially the new territories of Najīb ud-Daulah along the riverbanks of the Ganges and the Yamuna and the hillskirts in the Terai were vulnerable to this tension between sedentary cultivation and pastoralism. In fact he found himself at the crossroads of long-distance trade in horses and other animals and, at the same time, his country was at the centre of expanding cultivation. On the surface, the tense relationship is reflected in the many forts—within which sometimes were located large cultivated spots—and other strongholds which we find throughout this area. Most probably, these were not only built in anticipation of hostile inroads of Sikhs or Marathas but also to protect the cultivated spots against the large herds of itinerant Gujars and Banjaras.

India (Cambridge, 1990); for northern India, see A.M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India* (Bombay, 1943).

[30] *IOL&R*, PP (House of Commons), Session 15-11-1837, 16, 51, "Slavery", pp.360ff.

[31] For *hālīs* in Rohilkhand, see *IOL&R*, BRCCCP, P/91/19, 30-3-1808, "Collector Moradabad (Charles Lloyd) to Board". Cf. Bayly, *Rulers*, p.42.

In order to strengthen his control in the area, Najīb completely re-organised the districts by breaking them up into new small units of administration and by distributing them to his own *ᶜāmils*. He also tried to come to terms with the unruly Gujar community to which he assigned some 500 villages and it seems that Gujars and Banjaras became also actively engaged in the cultivation of land.[32] Along the main roads, Najīb laid out large walled fruit gardens and new *ganjes*, but other parts along the river remained dominated by waste. For example, the lowland near Asafgarh was earmarked for pasture and inhabitants of distant places sent their cattle to graze there as it served as a kind of large "parking space" for merchants and caravans visiting the Haridwar fair.[33] In general, however, we can conclude that the northern Mian Doab was increasingly brought under the plough. At the same time, it appears that large tracts were allocated for grazing in the Mewat region of Haryana across the Yamuna where conditions for agriculture were less convenient.[34] Towards the northern hills, cultivation was extended but here again large areas of wild Terai remained undisturbed and continued to be used for grazing and wood cutting. All these developments still cannot fully explain the relative increase of the Rohilkhand revenue nor its steap decline after 1774. For a better understanding we should again focus our attention on the shifting trade relations of northern India.

5.2. The Trade of Rohilkhand[35]

Hand in hand with agricultural development, Rohilkhand experienced an upswing of trade with the hill states of Nepal, Kumaun

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[32] *IOL&R*, OPSR, V/23/136, "Selections from the Revenue Records NWP, vol.3" (Allahabad, 1873), p.287; H.M. Elliot, *Memoirs on the History, Folk-lore and Distribution of the Races of the North Western Provinces of India* (London, 1869), 1, p.100; Budh Prakash's contribution to H.R. Gupta (ed.), *Marathas and Panipat* (Chandigarh, 1961), pp.310-12.

[33] *NAI*, MSI, Memoirs, 2, "Memoir relating to the Routes in the Doab by T. Hardwicke (1796)", ff.27-30.

[34] In the 1750's, after they suffered from a grievous famine in their own territories, numerous Mewatis were invited by Hāfiẓ to settle in Pilibhit, where they were employed as construction workers of its new mud fortifications. Many of them converted to Islam and settled in Rohilkhand (Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.78). Cf. Rizvi, *ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz. Puritanism, Sectarian, Polemics and Jihad* (Canberra, 1982), p.51.

[35] Most of this paragraph is based on *IOL&R*, HM.582, "Report of Henry Wellesley and others on the Commercial Resources of the Ceded Provinces, 1802-3", ff.2233-306.

and Garhwal. In chapter one, we have paid some attention to the long-distance connections of Rohilkhand, through the Himalayan states, to Tibet and Kashgar. In this respect, the hill states were crucial as a transit area where goods could be transshipped from the bullocks and ponies of the plains to the goats and sheep of the hill nomads. Hence, the rajas of Kumaun and Garhwal took every pain to keep the hill passes open and in good repair. During the eighteenth century the road from Najibabad to Garhwal through the Kotdwara pass could be travelled by bullocks and ponies alike. The same seems to have been true of the Kumaun road. According to Captain Hearsay, writing in 1814, the road from Rohilkhand to the Kumaun capital of Almora, had previously been a thoroughfare for horses, elephants, and even camels. But, apart from these various animals, thousands of hill carriers, who, in the lower hills up to 3500 metre could carry weights of more than 100 kg, were available for transport in places like Saharanpur, Najibabad, Nagina, Sherkot and Kashipur.[36] Many of them had come down during the winter months with their hill commodities, apart from Tibetan wares, mainly drugs such as *bhang*, *gānjhā* and *caras*.[37] These were exchanged for the goods of the plains, particularly foodstuffs and textiles. In order to keep pace with this trade, merchants from Najibabad opened their agencies and a separate mint was founded in Srinagar (Garhwal) which struck small silver *Timashas*.[38] It is not surprising therefore that, during the eighteenth century, the Rohillas were constantly involved in the internal politics of the hill states. The political organisation of the two areas became much more integrated. Both Garhwal and Kumaun were tributary to the Rohilla nawabs. Members of the Joshi family staffed both the government of the Kumaun raja and enjoyed places of great trust in the immediate household of Najīb ud-Daulah.[39]

The Himalayan trade centred mainly on Haridwar and Najibabad. The latter town had been founded by Najīb ud-Daulah in the 1750's and its location also commanded the important long-distance connection through the Laldong pass along the northern hills with Kashmir and Peshawar. The town had been erected in the middle

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[36] *IOL&R*, HM.644, "Capt. Hearsay to Secr.Pol.Dep."; HM.644, 24-8-1814" ff.347,350,356; "Memorandum Hearsay, 9-9-1814", ff.383-4.

[37] Wendel, *Mémoires*, pp.130,143.

[38] Rhodes, "Silver Coinage", pp.124-5. See p. 42 above.

[39] Batten, *Reports*, pp.171-5.

of swampy waste lands but, shortly afterwards, it was turned into the entrepôt of the trade with Srinagar, the northern Punjab, Kashmir and Peshawar.[40] It was at the hub of these western and northern routes that the waste lands of Dehra Dun were brought under the plough.

Traditional trade links with the adjacent eastern and southern areas continued to thrive.[41] The new Rohilla nuclei of urban culture created a new demand for both luxury and bulk products. These new *ganjes* and *qaṣbas* could lure foreign trade and credit towards the Rohilla territories. Some of these were erected to smooth the traffic between the major cities. For example, Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat K͟hān founded Hafizganj in order to offer merchants a resting place on the road from Bareilly to Pilibhit.[42] *Ganjes* were also the focal points for the local revenue collection; here, revenue in kind could be exchanged for money and, possibly, made available for long-distance trade. In 1755, Chandausi was founded by the Pathan chief Ibrāhīm K͟hān who enticed Banias from the nearby cities to settle there in order to meet merchants from the western territories. Subsequently, it became an important town for rice and sugar exports to the west.[43]

From Bengal, Bihar and Awadh, mainly textiles and manufactured articles were imported or transferred to Delhi and the Punjab. Rohilkhand had some manufacturing industries of its own. In particular Bareilly and Najibabad are recorded to have been flourishing cotton centres. According to a British report from 1802, Bareilly had about 20,000 looms with a production equal to 3,000,000 Rs a year.

Sugar and indigo were the main trade items exchanged for the large horse imports from the Punjab and Central Asia and as such financed a great deal of the Rohilla horse trade. Sugar was also exported to the Deccan, mainly through Hatras in the Mian Doab. Probably, the most important export connection with the south was

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[40] Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīk͟h*, ff.25a-b; Forster, *Journey*, pp.190-5.

[41] Eastern connections were facilitated by the Ramganga river which was navigable by small boats for 7 months during the rainy season and which could reach Bareilly thanks to the south-eastern winds during this time of year, Francklin, *History*, p.56; Deloche, *Circulation*, 2, pp.56ff.

[42] Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.51.

[43] *IOL&R*, OPSR, V/23/119, "Report upon a Project for a Railway in Rohilkund by Capt.H. Yule (n.p., 1855), p.3.

the grain and rice trade with the Mughal capital of Delhi. Here, Anupshahr and Chandausi were the key Rohilla market towns.[44]

Transit duties in Rohilkhand seem to have been fairly moderate, and in particular the larger merchants obtained many exemptions. In 1766, Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat K͟hān even abolished all the custom duties throughout his territories.[45] This was a double cutting knife as this further enticed trade to his territories but could also counter inflation and reduce the costs of his army.[46] In 1752 the income from customs (*sāʾir*) in Rohilkhand had been around 500,000 Rs but it fell sharply after the annexation in 1774 as is shown in figure 5.3.

Table 5.3. *Sāʾir* of Rohilkhand[47]

Government	Rohilkhand *Sāʾir* or Customs and Townduties in Rs.	Index
Rohillas	500,000	100
Awadh	337,450	67.5
East India Company	170,000	34

Finally we should note that the overall expansion of cultivation and trade was also reflected in the sharp increase in the number of mint-towns during the eighteenth century. This might be illustrated with the table in figure 5.4.

Table 5.4. Mints of Farrukhabad and Rohilla territory in % of total Mughal mints, according to metal[48]

Reign	Gold	Silver	Copper	Total
Akbar 1556-1605	0	2.2	4.7	4.7
Aurangzeb 1658-1707	2.2	4.8	0	5.7
ShāhᶜĀlam II 1759-1806	13.6	11.1	12.8	17.6

[44] For grain trade with the market town of Shahdara near Delhi, see Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīk͟h*, ff.80a-b; for Rohilla rice trade with Delhi, see Bayly, *Rulers*, p.42.

[45] Muḥammad Mustajāb, *Gulistān*, p.87.

[46] E.g. Nūr ud-Dīn, *Tawārīk͟h*, f.83b: "Grain became exceedingly cheap in the camp on account of the remission of the transit duty which Suraj Mal had imposed in his dominions, so that the soldiers had to spend only 4 annas in the place of one ruppee."

[47] *IOL&R*, BRCCCP, P/91/19, 10-3-1808, "Collector Moradabad (Charles Lloyd) to Board".

[48] Based on list of C.R. Singhal, *Mint-Towns of the Mughal Emperors of India* (Bombay, 1953).

The Rohilla and Bangash mint towns were Farrukhabad, Rampur,[49] Najibabad, Aonla, Bareilly, Bisauli, Haridwar, Shamshabad and Saharanpur. Some of these also struck Durrani coins which signifies not only a political but also a commercial re-orientation.[50] In fact, in Rohilkhand the Durrani and Mughal monetary systems overlapped with each other, but, since there was no marked difference between the two, this did not require great efforts on the part of the Rohilla mint-masters. As Afghan commercial ventures were strongly oriented towards India the Durrani Rupee had the same standard and weight as the Mughal Rupee.[51] Interestingly, even before the Durrani invasions, the Rohillas, while issuing Rupees in the name of the Mughal emperor, followed a Durrani pattern and a Durrani mint mark.[52]

In addition to these precious coins which were clearly used for the long-distance trade with Central Asia, there were much smaller and poorer issues of copper and silver coins which were minted for local use only. In Rohilkhand these coins were called *jins-wār* coins, especially meant for the assessment and collection of the land revenue. These coins circulated within small regions, for the most part close to the towns where they were produced. The local government tried to restrict the exportation of these coins because this could endanger a swift collection of the revenue. Therefore, their exchange rate was not related to the intrinsic value but to their place of issue. Here the exchange rate was fixed somewhat above the level of the other towns.[53]

In sum, we can conclude that under Rohilla rule, Rohilkhand as well as large parts of the Mian Doab, experienced continued agricultural development, which was combined with increased horse-breeding activities and a general upsurge of local and long-distance trade. Afghan migrations into Katehr further integrated the area

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[49] Identification of Rampur with Mustafabad is, however, doubtful (Singhal, *Mint-Towns*, p.28).

[50] In Bareilly, Aonla, Farrukhabad, Moradabad and Najibabad.

[51] R.B. Whitehead, *Catalogue of Coins in the Panjab Museum Lahore, vol.3: Coins of Nadir Shah and Durrani Dynasty* (Oxford, 1934); M. Longworth-Dames, "The Coins of the Durranis", *NC*, 3rd series, 8 (19..), pp.332.

[52] C.H. Biddulph, "Countermarked Durrani and Sikh Coins", *JNSI*, 25, 2 (1963), pp.202-3.

[53] *NAI*, FPD, S, 29-7-1776, No.1, "Bristow to Gov.Gen."; Siddiqi, *Agrarian Change*, p.172.

with the western Durrani territories where new markets were created for Rohilkhand's valuable cash crops like sugar and indigo. The profits from trade and military *naukarī* found a safe outlet in new investments in agriculture, urban development and the improvement of the infrastructure. Since the Rohilla state absorbed from far and near both men, capital and skills, either through trade, plunder or propaganda, other adjoining areas were sometimes faced with severe setbacks. Obviously, this fits in well with the overall eighteenth-century picture of shifting routes and balances of power. In other words, the success of the Rohilla *riyāsat* rested on the fortunate interlocking of widely stretched trade relations, especially based on horse trade and mercenary services, and combined with an agricultural expansion which was fed by the proceeds of trade and in turn gave trade its feedback. After all, as far as Rohilkhand is concerned, the nineteenth-century Utilitarian praise of Rohilla rule was not so wide off the mark at all:

> "It is completely proved that their territory was by far the best governed part of India;. . . the people were protected;. . . their industry was encouraged;. . . and the country flourished beyond parallel."[54]

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[54] James Mill, *History of British India* (London, 1840), 3, p.550.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROHILLA TRADITION

"Creighton heard Kim say bitterly: 'Trust a Brahmin before a snake, and a snake before a harlot, and an harlot before a Pathan, Mahbub Ali'."

Rudyard Kipling, *Kim.*[1]

The eighteenth-century rise of Indo-Afghan successor states engendered a renewed interest in the history and identity of the Afghans. Hand in hand with the process of Indo-Afghan state-formation, local chiefs tried to reanimate latent feelings of common identity or group feelings amongst their often heterogeneous following. With this in mind, these chiefs could gratefully fall back on earlier panegyrics of Afghan history and genealogy. Thus, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, under the patronage of a new urban elite of Afghan colonists, northern India experienced a genuine renaissance of Indo-Afghan literature in both Persian and Pashto. The foremost example of this revival was the *Khulāṣat ul-Ansāb*, a general work on Afghan history and genealogy composed by the Rohilla nawab Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān. It largely elaborated on the earlier classics of Afghan literature, mainly the *Makhzan-i Afghānī* and, to a lesser extent, the *Tazkirat ul-Abrār* of the Ākhūnd Darwēza of Swat.

The *Makhzan-i Afghānī* or "the Storehouse of the Afghans", was produced at the beginning of the seventeenth century under the patronage of Khān Jahān Lōdī, who had become one of the most powerful and influential Afghan nobles at the Mughal court. At the beginning of Shāhjahān's reign, Khān Jahān Lōdī—incited by his Afghan followers to reclaim Afghan sovereignty and supported by the Niẓām Shāhī sultan of Ahmadnagar—rose in rebellion against his former Mughal master. Although crushed in the end, the Lodi uprising posed a very serious challenge to Mughal rule as it appealed to widespread Afghan resentment, not only in the interior of the empire but also among the tribal leaders on the north-west frontier.[2]

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[1] *Op.cit.*, p.123

[2] R. Joshi, *The Afghan Nobility and the Mughals (1526-1707)* (New Delhi, 1985), pp.115-27.

Even before his defection, Khān Jahān Lōdī had started a kind of research project into the genealogy of the Afghan tribe. As reported by Muḥammad Ḥayāt Khān, he had been instigated by an Irani ambassador who had amused the Mughal emperor with the story of Afghan descent:

> "Books of authority, he [the Irani ambassador] said, recounted that once king Zuhhak, hearing of a race of beautiful women that lived in some far-off western countries, sent an army thither; which army was defeated by the beautiful women, but afterwards, a stronger expedition being sent under Nariman, they were reduced to sue for peace and gave tribute of a thousand virgins when, on its return march, the army was one night encamped close to a wild mountainous country, there suddenly came down upon it a phantom of terrific aspect, smote and scattered the troops in all directions, and then, in one night, ravished all the thousand virgins. In due time all became pregnant, and when Zuhhak learned this, he gave orders that the women should be kept in the remote deserts and plains, lest the unnatural offspring should breed strife and tumult in the cities. This offspring was the race of the Afghans"[3]

Determined to rectify this rather embarrassing picture, Khān Jahān Lōdī sent four of his servants to Roh in order to investigate the Afghans' origins.[4]

Although the authorship of the *Makhzan* is still under debate, it apparently is the outcome of a compilation and a selection, and certainly not the product of a single imagination. After its initial composition, Khān Jahān commissioned a re-issue of the *Makhzan* under one Niᶜmatullāh, who added a biography of his master and renamed it: *Tārīkh-i Khān Jahānī wa Makhzan-i Afghānī*.[5] It provided the Afghans with a prototype and major work of reference for later, similar attempts to make sense of their complicated past. It contains a full record of Afghan history from the ancient times of Yaᶜqūb Isrāʾīl to the reign of the Lodi and Sur sultans in Hindustan.

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[3] Muḥammad Ḥayāt, *Afghanistan*, p.53. According to the author he had cited this from Khān Jahān's own introduction to the *Mākhzan*.

[4] It appears that the spurious claim of Afghan descent from the Bani Israel was already current in Roh as it is also recorded by the Ākhūnd Darwēza—who lived in the Peshawar area at the end of the sixteenth century (*Tazkirat ul-Abrār*, BM. Or.222, ff.68a-73b).

[5] Niᶜmatullāh ul-Harawī had first been a court historian of the emperors Akbar and Jahāngīr but in 1608-9 he entered the service of the Khān Jahān Lōdī whose name he gave to the book which appeared in 1613.

In addition, it presents a full and systematic ordering of all Afghan tribes and sub-tribes.[6]

Not unlike the *Makhzan* in the seventeenth century, the *Khulāṣat ul-Ansab* demonstrates an eighteenth-century effort to record and fix earlier Afghan oral traditions, to adjust them to new conditions and to sanction the new Rohilla *riyāsat* in Rohilkhand. Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān was motivated to write such a general history as he felt that his fellow Rohilla Afghans were too indifferent to their *nasab* or "descent". Since they had left their homeland (*waṭan*) in Roh they had mingled with each other and with foreign people in Hindustan. Hence they had lost all knowledge of their *nasab* and *turr* (origin) and could not distinguish any more between relatives and foreigners. It was important for them that they knew at least four generations of ancestors. For Ḥāfiẓ, consciousness of *nasab* was not only a requisite from the religious-moralistic point of view,[7] but it was of major importance for political government as well. As he saw it, the loss of *nasab* would automatically result in the decline of government. *Nasab* had been the cornerstone of Persian rule (*walāyat lubb fī'l ᶜajam*) but, unfortunately, at the present the majority of the Persian people had forgotten their *nasab*. From all this it becomes clear that Ḥāfiẓ was deeply concerned about the melting-pot that was India and the resulting lack of moral commitment on the part of his Rohilla following. Therefore, he wanted to preserve and stimulate Rohilla-Afghan consciousness of their *nasab*, as he thought this would contribute to the stability of the Rohilla *riyāsat* in northern India.[8]

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[6] According to Roy and Ambashthiya the *Makhzan* itself, as translated by Dorn, was a later compilation of Ibrāhīm Batanī who also revised Sarwānī's *Tārīkh-i Shēr Shāh*. Following in the footsteps of Elliot, this is disputed by Imamuddin who believes the work was compiled by an anonymous author. All agree, however, that the genealogical information of the *Makhzan* is identical to Niᶜmatullāh's edition of the *Tārīkh-i Khān Jahānī wa Makhzan-i Afghānī*. It appears, however, that the latter work was again revised some time between 1612 and 1670. This time the part on Khān Jahān Lōdī was skipped and replaced by Batanī's revision of Sarwanī's *Tārīkh-i Shēr Shāhī*. This version of the *Makhzan* was translated by Dorn (Ambashthiya's introduction to ᶜAbbās Khān Sarwānī; N. Roy, *Niamatullah's History of the Afghans* (Santiniketan, 1958); H.M. Elliot & J. Dowson (eds.) *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, 5, p.68; Imamuddin edition of Niᶜmatullāh, *Tārīkh-i Khān Jahānī wa Makhzan-i Afghānī* (Dacca, 1960), pp.1-17).

[7] Cf. Rizvi, *Shah Abd al-Azīz*, pp.176-7: "The Prophet prohibited attacks on the real or imaginary defects of people's ancestors and also forbade boasting concerning *nasab*. The Prophet, however, urged believers to study genealogies to the extent that they were essential for knowledge of their collective worth (*ahsāb*) and for the fulfilment of family obligation".

[8] Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.13b-15b.

The Rohilla's political arguments are reminiscent of the writings of Ibn K͟haldūn. In Ibn K͟haldūn's words, the exceptionally strong group feeling (*ʿaṣabīya*) among the Arab tribes was the result of the intensity of their feelings of *ansāb* (plural of *nasab*) and the freshness of their religion (*dīn*). These *ʿaṣabīya* ingredients gave the tribe its firmness and vigour and united all its members in their goal towards might and glory. Unfortunately, all this would come to a bitter end when the tribe became a dynasty and was immersed in the luxury and decadence of sedentary culture. Only through the importation of Turkish military slaves (*mamlūks*) from Central Asia, who had retained their tribal qualities and were undefiled by the softening habits of civilization, the Islamic states could continue to flourish.[9]

Although Ḥāfiẓ was probably not familiar with Ibn K͟haldūn's writings, it is nonetheless clear that they address the same phenomenon of tribal conquest of the civilized and urbanized world. It is equally clear that the Rohilla nawab tried to enhance the stability of the Rohilla state, not by the option of military slaves, but by stimulating the *ʿaṣabīya* of his "tribal" Rohilla following and by creating an awareness of their illustrious *nasab*. Let us, then, take a brief look at the contents of this Afghan *nasab* as laid down by the *Mak͟hzan-i Afg͟hānī* and the *K͟hulāṣat ul-Ansāb*.[10]

6.1. *Rohilla* Nasab[11]

According to their own tradition, the Afghans are descended from the Israelites (*banī isrāʾīl*) whose history goes back to the early Jewish past.[12] Hence, we are confronted with the legend of an Egyptian

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[9] Based on a passage from Ibn K͟haldūn's *Kitāb al-ʿIbar* and translated by D. Ayalon in "Mamlukiyyat", *JSAI*, 2 (1980), pp.340-9. Cf. Ibn K͟haldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. F. Rosenthal, ed. N.J. Dawood (London, 1987).

[10] During Rohilla rule, and continuing into the nineteenth century a myriad of other Indo-Afghan works such as genealogies and dictionaries were produced which further elaborated on these two works and purported to record and fix a common Afghan past, ancestry, and language. Especially the sons and grandsons of Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat K͟hān were active in this respect, e.g. the Hindustani-Pashto dictionary by Ilahyār (*ʿAjāʾib ul-Lug͟hat*), a Pashto grammar with a Persian dictionary by Maḥabbat K͟hān (*Riyāẓ ul-Maḥabbat*), a treatise on the alleged Jewish origin of the Afghans by Saʿādat Yār K͟hān (*Bunyād-i Afg͟hānān*), and a Persian translation of a Pashto history on the early Yusufzai by Allāh Yār K͟hān (*K͟hulāṣat ul-Aʿjāb*).

[11] The following is mainly based on Dorn's version and translation of the *Mak͟hzan* and the British Museum Manuscript of the *K͟hulāṣat*. For an early nineteenth-century continuation of this genre, see the Cambridge manuscript of Saʿādat Yār K͟hān, *Bunyād*.

[12] The obscure origin of this claim seems to be subject to an endless discussion

exile in which the Israelites resisted the forceful attempts of the Farao to lead them astray of the right religion. Angry about their stubbornness, the Farao captured some of their infants to raise them at his own court. Thus they lost all contact with their co-tribals and became intermixed with the local Coptic community. All this suggests that even before the advent of Islam, the Afghans had been monotheists and *ahl-i kitāb* who had successfully defied the idolatry of the Egyptian despot. At the same time the story tried to respond to the widespread legend that the Afghans were related to the "apostate" Copts and had left their homeland for the Sulaiman mountains because they had declined to convert to Judaism.[13] The Afghan sources, however, are silent about this tradition and the mass migration to the Sulaiman is fitted in much later.

To evade Egyptian oppression the Israelites were led by Mūsā (Mozes) to their promised land and in due course one of them, Ṭālūt (Saul), was bestowed by God with the kingship of all Israelites. Thus by tracing their ancestry to the first Israelite king, the Afghans could not only claim to be early monotheists but they could also boast a divinely instituted royal lineage. As such it played a role in later Afghan claims to government. As late as the nineteenth century, an arriviste Indo-Afghan nawab of Tonk—an off-shoot Rohilla principality in central India—found it useful to compare his position with Ṭālūt as he stated in his *Amīr-Nāma*:

(for a survey, see Caroe, *Pathans*, pp.5ff.) but it appears that between 1000 and 1200 A.D. the Jewish Bani Israel (in Ghur) and the Afghans (in Ghaznin) were separate groups who both resided in the area of present-day Afghanistan. The Bani Israel are portrayed as a cosmopolitan and polyglot trading community, oriented towards the high culture of Baghdad, whereas the Afghans are still enveloped in local obscurity and at best act in a military capacity (Jūzjānī, *Tabakat-i Nasiri*, trans. H.G. Raverty (Calcutta, 1873-6) pp.314-6,852). Studies of Fishel and recently André Wink have shown that during the thirteenth century the Jewish community completely disappeared from the area and mainly left for Central Asia and India (see W.J. Fishel, "The Rediscovery of the Medieval Jewish Community at Firuzkuh in Central Afghanistan", *JAOS*, 85 (1965), pp.148-53; Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1, pp.86-104). In my opinion, this and the overall tribal restructuring following Mongol invasions makes it plausible that the Afghans adopted the literary tradition of the Israelites and adjusted it to their own local folklore.

[13] Reported by Firishta, *History*, 1, p.6. The information on the Afghans in Briggs' translation should be handled with great care as he equates the Lawis with Lodis, calls Ghurids and Delhi sultans Afghans, and the Bani Israel are mixed up with Afghans; see the introduction of Raverty in his translation of Jūzjānī, p.xiii. Abū'l Faẓl also mentions the alleged story of Coptic descent but as might be expected, he finds both this and the Afghan version of no great interest (*A'in*, 2, pp.406-7).

> "And their prophet said unto them, 'God has sent Taloot [Ṭālūt] to be king over you'. And they said, 'Verily the dominion over us cannot be to him, for we are more worthy to reign than he, and he hath not the substance wherewith to reign over us.' and their prophet said, 'Hath not the Lord chosen him to rule over you, and augmented his capacity in knowledge and in all kingly qualities, and know ye not that the Lord givith dominion to whomso he willeth, and is all powerful and omniscient.'"[14]

In the continuation of the legendary account, we read that after his death Ṭālūt left two wives and two sons, Barakhīa and Iramīa, to his successor Dā'ūd (David) who took care of them. After they had grown up, Dā'ūd delegated the responsibility for the civil government (*wazīrat*) to Barakhīa and for the military (*bakhshī*) to Iramīa. In due course Iramīa had a son whom he called Afghāna and henceforth all his descendants were styled Afghans. Like his father, Afghāna served the Israelite king, in casu Sulaimān (Salomo), as *bakhshī* by whom he was also commissioned with the building of the great temple of Jerusalem. Only much later, at the time of the Babylonian exile, it is reported that the descendants of Afghāna were deported to Ghur, Ghaznin, Kabul, Kandahar and Koh Firuzkuh.[15] The latter place was the capital of the later Ghurid dynasty and its mention here is a prelude to the connection which was fitted in at a later stage. After fierce fighting with the local idolaters the Afghans decided to make these places their permanent abode.

Meanwhile, another group of the Israelites-Afghans had found refuge in Arabia and it is claimed that one amongst their off-spring was Khālid bin Walīd, the famous early companion of Muḥammad. He invited all his brother Afghans to Medina where all of them turned Muslims and took service in the army of the Prophet. The chief of the Afghans was called Qais but was restyled ʿAbd al-Rashīd by Muḥammad. All Afghan tribes, one way or another, trace their *nasab* to this Qais, whom they consider as one of the earliest Muslims. After he had performed some heroic services, Muḥammad sent him and his compatriots back to Ghur where they set out to proclaim the message of Islam to the local population. A few centuries later, at the orders of the Ghurid sultan Shihāb ud-Dīn (1203-1206), the

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[14] Basawān Laʿl Shādān, *Memoirs*, p.2.

[15] This is the view in Niʿmatullāh, *Makhzan*, Dorn trans., 1, p.25. According to the *Khulāṣat* the Afghans settled first in Kuh-i Sulaiman in Syria and later moved to Ghaznin and Kandahar (Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.46a-b).

Afghans moved *en masse* from the mountains of Ghur to the mountains of Ghaznin: in Koh Sulaiman, Hashtnagar and Bajaur.[16] According to the *Khulāṣat* the Afghans must have settled there some time before as we find the Afghans of Ghaznin and Kandahar making up the van of the Ghaznavid army of sultan Maḥmūd (998-1030), invading India, plundering the idol temples and slaughtering the *kuffār*.[17] Whatever may be the truth of both claims, it is clear that they served to explain the historical connection of the Afghans with the Koh Sulaiman and Roh, the territory which was widely known to be their original homeland and where they are for the first time noticed by the early Muslim geographers and historians.

Not surprisingly the latter references fail to justify the idealized picture of the Afghan tradition. Whenever they mention the Afghans, it is only as a common denominator for either rustic highway robbers from the Sulaiman mountains or, at best, a contingent of mercenary troops incorporated in the huge armies of Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Chingizids or even of one of their Hindu counterparts in India.[18] It seems plausible that in the turbulent climate of large-scale thirteenth-century Mongol invasions the Afghans succeeded in extending their territories from the Koh Sulaiman towards the east to India and, to a lesser extent, also to the north towards the Khyber and Peshawar and to the south-west towards Kandahar. Speaking of Kashmir, Yazdī relates how it was in all directions confined by

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[16] Niᶜmatullāh, *Makhzan*, Dorn trans., 1, p.40. According to the Ākhūnd Darwēza it was Kandahar which was the traditional homeland of the Afghans (*Tazkirat*, ff.75a-76a).

[17] Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.46b-47b.

[18] Anonymous, *Ḥudūd al-Ālam*, trans. V. Minorski (Cambridge, 1982), p.91; Al-ᶜUtbī, *The Kitab-i-Yamini. Historical Memoirs of the Amir Sabaktagin and the Sultan Mahmud of Gazn, Early Conquerors of Hindustan and Founders of the Ghaznavid Dynasty*, trans. J. Reynolds (London, 1958), pp.467-71; Al-Bīrūnī, *Alberuni's India (Taʾrīkh al-Hind)*, trans. E.C. Sachau (New Delhi, 1983), 1, p.208; Jūzjānī, *Tabakat*, p.852; Juwainī, *The History of the World Conqueror (Tārīkh-i Jahān-Gushā)*, trans. J.A. Boyle (Manchester, 1958), 1, p.168; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta AD 1325-1354*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (Cambridge, 1958-71), 3, pp.590,727. For the Timurid sources, see Sharaf ud-Dīn ᶜAlī Yazdī, *Ẓafar-Nāma*, ed. A. Urunbayev (Tashkent, 1972), pp.173a-174a,302b-304a,343a-b and Niẓām ud-Dīn Shāmī, *Ẓafar-Nāma*, ed. F. Tauer (Prague, 1937-56), 1, pp.175, 207-8. Cf. Wink, *Al-Hind*, 1, p.168; S.M. Imamuddin, "The Origin of the Afghans", *IC*, 23 (1949), pp.1-12; *EI²*, "Afghān"; Siddiqi, "The Afghans and their Emergence", pp.242-3; I.H. Siddiqi, "Politics and Conditions in the Territories under the Occupation of Central Asian Rulers in North-Western India—13th and 14th Centuries", *CAJ*, 27 (1983), pp.289-306.

mountains, in the south by those of India, in the north by those of Badakhshan and Khorasan, in the east by those of Tibet, and in the west by those inhabited by the Afghan people (*yurt-i aqwām-i aughānī*).[19] As a follow up of these Afghan migrations there emerged a distinct Afghan territory and "homeland" which only in the fifteenth century became known as Afghanistan.[20]

From the earliest Islamic sources it appears that there did exist a more or less recognizable ethnic category called "Afghans".[21] The term only slowly emerged as a rather fluid freebooter identity, relatively open to outsiders. Thanks to the inexact character of their identity, Afghans could constantly assimilate with other groups they encountered. As stressed by Schurmann and Kolff, the Afghans did not represent a fixed or ascribed ethnic or genealogical category but merely a "soldiers' identity" in which many diverse ethnic elements took part.[22] Except for this ethnic vagueness, all sources seem to agree on the observation that the Afghans were "barbarous" pastoralists, mountain dwellers and highway robbers who only gradually converted to Islam.

Obviously, the legendary stories of Afghan history were meant to rectify this negative image and to add prestige to the Afghan *nasab*. Therefore the Afghan past had to be coupled with the glorious traditions of Ghaznavid and Ghurid dynasties and their holy wars against the infidels of India. The *Makhzan* even fabricated a direct genealogical link between the Lodis and the Ghurid sultans and thence to Ẓaḥḥāk, the ancient tyrant of Persian mythology as recorded by Firdausī. In this legend Lōdī was considered the son of Baṭan's daughter Matō, i.e. an Afghan granddaughter of Qais, and one Shāh Ḥusain Ghūrī. It seems clear that this Ghurid *nasab* served

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[19] Sharaf ud-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, *Ẓafar-Nāma*, p.342a; Ibn Baṭṭūta, *Travels*, 3, p.590 (read "Zabul" for the mistranslation of "Kabul"). Arlinghaus mentions another thirteenth-century reference to Afghans in Mastung in northern Baluchistan ("Transformation", pp.132-3). According to Arlinghaus only the Dilazak Afghans settled north of the Safed Koh during the fourteenth century.

[20] At this time it denotes an area which is still limited in extent and which is roughly situated outside the main settled areas, south of the Safed Koh Range, in between the provinces of Kandahar and Sind (ʿAbd-al Razzāq Samarqandī, "Notice", pp.162,296; Bābar, *Babur-Nama*, p.200).

[21] For a clarifying definition of "ethnie", see Golden, *Turkic Peoples*, pp.1-2.

[22] H.F. Schurmann, *The Mongols of Afghanistan* (The Hague, 1962), p.45; Kolff, Naukar, pp.57-8.

to give the Lodis an aura of royalty distinct from the Chagatai-Timurid ancestry of the Mughals. The *Khulāṣat* is also keen on stressing the distinction between Turks and Afghans as it insists that all Muslim sultans in Delhi preceding Bahlūl Lōdī (1451-1489) should be considered as Turks. Ḥāfiẓ wanted to rectify the general tendency amongst Indian "idolaters" to equate all Muslims with Turks as they had served under Turkish sultans. He made it clear that various other Muslims had entered India during the preceding centuries, amongst which were Saiyids, Mughals, Afghans, Shaykhs and others.[23]

Ḥāfiẓ repeatedly mentions the *jihād* as the prime motive which brought the Afghans to India. Being Muslims from the very beginning, he boasts of the Afghans' traditional role as *mujāhidīn* of the Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Delhi Sultans, Timurids and, finally in his own age, the Durranis.[24] It is evident that this picture is also an idealized projection of an eighteenth-century image. It is true that at a time when, in the direct vicinity of the Mughal capital Shiᶜism (in Awadh), Sikhism (in the Punjab) and Hinduism (in the Jat and Maratha territories) had clearly gained momentum, the Rohillas were generally regarded as the champions of Sunni revivalism. Najīb ud-Daulah became known as a patron of the famous orthodox theologian Shāh Walīullāh (1703-62) and founded and sponsored a religious school in this tradition (*madrasa Raḥīmiyya*) in Daranagar near Amroha and in Najibabad.[25] In Shahjahanpur, Ḥafiẓ Raḥmat Khān established a small intellectual centre for Sunni theologians from Farangi Mahal, the prominent Muslim school in Lucknow, who had left the place under increased pressure by Shiᶜa "communalists" backed by the local nawab.[26] Like Najīb, he also invited disciples of Shāh Walīullāh to settle at his court.[27] In general, we can say that Rohilkhand was turned into a nursery of Indian

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[23] Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.47b-49b.
[24] *Ibid.*, ff.49b-52b.
[25] Rizvi, *Shah Abdul al-Aziz*, p.71.
[26] Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān wrote a short treatise on Sunni doctrine, especially directed against Shiᶜism (*Khulāṣat*, ff.91b-129a); for increasing Sunni-Shiᶜi disputes and Rohilla relations with Farangi Mahall, see J.R.I. Cole, *Roots of North Indian Shīᶜism in Iran and Iraq. Religion and State in Awadh 1722-1859* (Berkeley, 1988), pp.45-50.
[27] M.A. Ghazi, "The Role of Shah Waliy Allah in Muslim Revivalism in the Subcontinent of India and Pakistan" (PhD thesis, University of the Punjab,

Sunni Islam and as such it was the ideological counterpart of Shiʿa Awadh.[28]

Not surprisingly for someone who is concerned with the problem of *nasab*, Ḥāfiẓ also addressed the question of Rohilla identity: who is a Rohilla?[29] As we have mentioned already in the introduction, the appellation Rohilla developed during the seventeenth century as a fairly broad notion of the people coming from Roh. Only in the seventeenth-century Indian and Indo-Afghan works, Roh is frequently used as a more specific geographical term which corresponded with the territory stretching from Swat and Bajaur in the north to Sibi and Bhakkar in Sind, and from Hasan Abdal in the east to Kabul and Kandahar in the west.[30] In the *Khulāṣat*, we are faced with a definition which exceeds these limits as it comes close to the demarcation of present-day Afghanistan. It situates Roh simply in between Iran, Turan, Hind and Sind or more specifically: between Kashmir in the east, the Ilman river (Hilmand) bordering on Herat in the west, Kashqar (Chitral) in the north and Bakar (Bhakkar) and Baluchistan in the south. Similarly, while it prefers to speak of Afghans (*qaum-i afghānān*), it makes no clearcut distinction between Afghans and the people from Roh or Rohillas, the latter merely signifying the name given in India to the Afghan people in general (*mardom-i afghānān*).[31] The equation of Rohilla with Afghan served

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Lahore, n.d), pp.297-8,308-9. One of them was Hājī Muḥammad Saʿīd Afghānī who was appointed teacher of Ḥāfiẓ's son ʿInāyat Khān. Previously ʿAlī Muḥammad Khān had invited theologicans from Central Asia, e.g. Maulānā Jalāl ud-Dīn Khān from Kabul and Saiyid ʿAlī Shāh from Tirmiz (Rizvi, *Shah Wali Allah*, p.184).

[28] K.A. Nizami has edited a collection of the political letters of Shāh Walī Allāh in *Shāh Walī Allāh Ke Siyāsī Maktūbāt* (Aligarh, 1950), addressed, among others, to Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī and Najīb ud-Daulah. In these letters he appears as the principal propagandist of the Durrani invasions and the *jihād* against Marathas, Jats and Sikhs. Some scholars, however, doubt the authenticity of the entire collection (Muhammad Ikram and J.M.S. Baljon, cf. Baljon, *Religion and Thought*, p.15). Although I do not want to take part in the discussion of authenticity, the intimate relationship between the Rohilla courts and the Shāh Walī Allāh movement is beyond doubt. The letters (found in Rampur) appear to be a clear reflection of Indo-Afghan ideas which were current at the court of Najīb ud-Daulah.

[29] Cf. W.H. McLeod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity* (Oxford, 1989). As a comparative case the studies of McLeod on Sikh identity are illuminating.

[30] In the *Makhzan* Kandahar, Koh Sulaiman and Ashnagar (Hashtnagar) are included (Niʿmatullāh, *Makhzan*, Dorn trans., 1, p.40). Cf. Niẓām ud-Dīn, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and Firishta, *History*, 1, p.4.

[31] Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.90b-91a.

to counter the view that Rohillas were merely Indo-Afghan renegades and slaves of mixed origin.[32] Besides, the extension of the term Roh opened up the Rohilla ranks for various new immigrants who claimed their origin from Roh. As such it created the idea of a new Afghan enclave which was entirely detached from the once adjacent bordering territories of Hind, Sind, Iran, and Turan. It shows again that terms like Rohilla or Afghan are not rigid ethnic categories but denote a fluid Indo-Afghan category open to repeated accommodation.[33]

One example of this are the Bangash Pathans. Although they are not included in the enumeration of tribes in the *Makhzan*, the *Khulāṣat* depicts Bangash as the generic name of various Karrani-Afghan tribes who inhabit the area called Bangash.[34] Similar procedures were applied to other tribal groups which are not mentioned by the *Makhzan* but are introduced as Afghans in the *Khulāṣat*. It appears that the key point was not to demonstrate authentic descent but merely to adopt Afghan customs, language or patronage.[35] But in spite of the lack of early references, the Bangash Pathans of Farrukhabad considered themselves superior in *nasab* to the Rohillas. For example, the latter were not allowed to marry Bangash daughters, they were offered Bangash *khilᶜats* and had to accept Bangash precedence in protocol. The Rohillas were generally looked down upon as parvenu slaves and horse-dealers, whereas, the Bangash, seated on their elephants, regarded themselves as real Pathans entrusted with high *manṣabs* earned through their gallant service to the

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32 *IOL&R*, Orme Mss.ov.173, ff.171-2; Wendel, *Mémoires*, p.119.

33 In the early nineteenth century, we are again confronted with a more restrictive delineation as the Indian use of the term Rohilla is linked to the eastern Bardurrani tribes. The Bardurranis, or upper/mountain Durranis, were an artificial creation of Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī, which comprised most of the eastern tribes. These tribes, in particular the Yusufzai, Khattak, Bunerwal, Muhammadzai and Afridi, comprised indeed the bulk of the Afghan population of Rohilkhand. The Afghan sub-tribes in the *Aḥwāl* are not ordered according to their ethnic qualities but are mostly grouped according to their geographical location. Most probably, the widespread Indian application of "Rohilla" was now re-imposed on the tribes who inhabited the territories from where most of the Indian Rohillas claimed their origin (Maḥmūd ul-Mūsawī, *Aḥwāl-i Firqa-yi Afghānī*, BM. Or.1861, ff.32b-33a; 43a-b; Elphinstone, *Account*, 2, p.1).

34 Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, f.84b. The nineteenth-century *Aḥwāl-i Firqa-yi Afghānī* categorize them as fully Afghan as one of the Bardurrani-Rohilla khails (Maḥmūd ul-Mūsawī, *Aḥwal*, f.38a).

35 See e.g. Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, ff.85a-b and Niᶜmatullāh, *Makhzan*, Dorn transl., 2, p.34.

imperial throne.[36] Therefore, the following will take a short look at the way the Bangash Pathans expressed their *nasab* in the wake of their migration and settlement in Farrukhabad.

6.2. Bangash Nasab

The Bangash tribe derived its name from the hilly area, north of the Sulaiman mountains, from Bannu to the Safed Koh, in between the Indus and the Kurram river. Its main centre, situated along the lower river valleys was the town of Kohat, also the name of the area called Lower Bangash or Paʾin Bangash. Under Mughal rule this area had been a nominal district (*tūmān*) of the Kabul province.[37] The area was of some importance as it provided an alternative route to the Khyber pass from Kabul to Peshawar and India. Bābar, however, describes it as rather peripheral and being infested with Afghan highwaymen and thieves, such as Khugianis, Khirilchis, Turis and Landars, all of whom, obviously, declined to pay taxes. Nevertheless, in 1505 Bābar decided to raid and plunder the district, following some intelligence about its great riches.[38] Indeed, in Kohat the Mughals found cattle and corn in great abundance but they were not able to settle the area on a permanent basis since most of the tribes would temporarily retreat into the impregnable upper hills called Bala Bangash or Kurram. For any central government, whether in Delhi, Kandahar or Kabul, these hilly tracks of the Bangash *tūmān* always remained a refractory area. As a result, Shiʿa Islam and heterodox movements, such as the Raushaniyya, mostly combined with anti-Mughal resentment, found a free haven in this area.[39]

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[36] This became particularly and visibly clear at general meetings and visits. In 1752, for example, Aḥmad K͟hān sent his son Maḥmūd K͟hān together with Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat K͟hān for peace negotiations to the *wazīr* Shujāʿ ud-Daulah. Everything had to be neatly arranged in order to meet the requirements and sensitivities of everybody's rank and status. At this occasion in front of the *wazīr*'s tent an enclosure was erected which consisted of three courts. On his way to meet the *wazīr*, the Nawab's son was allowed to pass the first two courts on his elephant but at the third court he had to change for a *pālkī*. Nevertheless, the other chiefs had to dismount their elephants already at the first, and to leave their *pālkī* at the second court. After they had entered the third court on foot the young nawab followed and was helped by them out of his *pālkī* (Irvine, "Bangash Nawabs" (1879), p.115).

[37] I. Habib, *An Atlas of Mughal India* (Delhi, 1982), p.3.

[38] Bābar, *Bābur-Nāma*, pp.230-3.

[39] Caroe, *Pathans*, pp.202-3.

Before the sixteenth century, there did not exist a separate tribe or sub-tribe which was actually called Bangash. As mentioned already, the *Makhzan-i Afghāni* does not mention them at all. Most of the inhabitants of Bangash saw themselves as the descendants of one Karlānī, and were known under various sub-headings such as Orakzais, Turis, Malik-Miris, Baʾizis and Kaghzais (*kāghzais*). The latter three had entered the lower valleys of Kohat somewhere between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth century from the surrounding hills of Upper Bangash and, probably, subsequently came to be called "Bangash" to distinguish them from the other Karlanis residing in the Kohat area, mainly Orakzais and Khataks.[40] According to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Indo-Afghan sources, all the tribal groups in Bangash could be commonly referred to as *qaum-i bangash*, in accordance with their place of origin or residence.[41] This was not unlike the development of the Indian designation Rohilla, although the name Bangash referred to a more restricted territory and as such appealed to a smaller audience of potential immigrants. While the category Bangash was more restrictively used in the Afghan context of Bangash proper, in India it could include all sorts of Afghan tribes who one way or another claimed their origin from this area, and this in its most imprecise and wide-ranging dimensions. Thus, we may conclude that the tribal designation of Bangash came only into existence in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Kohat and Bangash, but found its widest extension in eighteenth-century Hindustan. Unlike the Indo-Afghan label Rohilla, Bangash referred to an actual local community in Afghanistan, although its definition became wider and more diffused in India.

Muḥammad Khān Bangash himself belonged to the Kaghzai line of the Karlani tribe of Bangash. He could trace his descent more than four generations back to one Daulat Khān, alias Hājī Bahādur, of the Shamilzai of the Harya *khail*.[42] Our most significant source in this respect, the mid-nineteenth-century *Tārīkh-i Farrukhābād* by Muḥammad Walīullāh, presents us with a fairly careful description of the *nasab* of these Kaghzai Karlanis. According to

[40] Raverty, *Notes*, pp.389-90.
[41] Hāfiz Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, f.84b; Muḥammad Walīullāh, *Tārīkh*, ff.6a-b.
[42] Muḥammad Walīullāh, *Tārīkh*, f.10b; Ḥāfiẓ stresses the requirements for a proper *nasab* to be at least four generations (Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat, *Khulāṣat*, f.15a).

most of the earlier Afghan traditions the Karlanis could not claim Afghan descent since they were regarded, and regarded themselves as direct descendants from the prophet Muḥammad or his clan, as Saiyids or Quraishis, who only through adoption and gradual accommodation were turned into Afghans.[43] Muḥammad Walīullāh, however, mentioning the Saiyid claim of some Karlanis in passing, stresses their undisputed Afghan identity. He points out that although Karlānī was originally a Saiyid, he had been adopted by one Amīr ud-Dīn, the youngest son of Sarban, the eldest son of the great Afghan ancestor Qais. Therefore, he claims, the Karlanis should be recognized as full Sarbani Afghans.[44] Muḥammad Walīullāh is equally keen on delineating the origin of the name Kaghzai. The name must have given cause for confusion because there were also other Kaghzais who had no relationship whatever to the Karlanis but claimed to be the descendants of Sarwānī. It was made clear that the two should not be confused because the Karlanis acquired the name only because they had settled near the Sarwani Kaghzai in Upper Bangash. Thus, in fact, there were two unrelated variants of Kaghzais: Karlani Kaghzais and Sarwani Kaghzais.[45]

Muḥammad Walīullāh's rationalizations again underline the importance of open and achieved identities. The nawabs were Afghans by adoption; they were Bangash because they had moved to India from the Bangash area; and they were Kaghzai because they had lived near the Sarwani Kaghzai. Only their Karlani identity was taken for granted and not explained properly. All of this made perfect sense to contemporaries since it alluded to existing customs and traditions and to a recognizable frame of reference. Within the wider category of Bangash Pathans, the nawabs could claim a clear and recognizable *nasab* for themselves. The Bangash label served as an external marking vis-à-vis other Hindustani or Afghan groups like Rajputs, Rohillas or Afridis, and, at the same time, could appeal to all sorts of ethnic sub-groups from within the Bangash area. Within this fairly open category, the nawabs could lay claim to a more exclusive and distinguished Karlani Kaghzai descent that underpinned their authority and status amongst the other local groups of Bangash Pathans, such as the Sarwani and Ustarzai Bangash.

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[43] Raverty, *Notes*, pp.380-8.
[44] Muḥammad Walīullāh, *Tārīkh*, ff.9a-b.
[45] *Ibid.*, ff.10a-b.

The nawab's attitude towards the other Bangash was always somewhat ambivalent. In order to raise their solidarity and group feeling he had to associate them with his government and with the inner circle of his sons and personal slaves or *ćelas*. This, however, gave them leverage and made them potentially dangerous. Consequently, he also needed to dissociate himself from them and keep them at a safe distance. Against this background we may also understand the importance for the first nawab, Muḥammad Khān, to present himself as a religious teacher and his slave retainers as "pupils" (*ćelas*).[46] Although the difference does not seem to be decisive, it did provide the nawab with a legitimation all his own. More generally, however, it was the ethnic nomenclature that accommodated the continuous need for association and dissociation: the Bangash label could serve the tendency of inclusion while, at the same time, the Kaghzai identity could stress the exclusiveness of the nawab's *nasab*. In day-to-day reality, of course, the *ᶜaṣabīya* of both the Bangash and Kaghzai sub-group always tended to dissolve into the conditional *naukarī* alliance of the free *jamᶜ-dār*. In the end, even the nawab's *khānazāds* and *ćelas* could not be trusted to withstand the immense gravitational force of Indian riches and *fitna*.

[46] Cf. also the religious-scholarly bent of Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān.

CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE

"Take away justice and what are kingdoms but great robber bands, and what are robber bands but small kingdoms."

Augustine, *De civitate Dei* IV:4[1]

Afghan Imperialism

Four years ago I read for the first time the novel *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling. By rushing through the pages I was struck by the fact that nearly all the themes of my freshly conceived research plan re-emerged in this imaginative masterpiece. Although the whole work breathed the mysterious atmosphere so typical of fine orientalist fiction, almost everyone and everything was somehow familiar to me: from the Pathan horse-dealer to the chela-disciple, from Himalayan "sheep of burden" to Turanian camel caravans. It appeared that Kipling and I were fascinated by the same thing: the magnificent world of the Pathan horse-dealer criss-crossing the qasbas and bazaars of Hindustan and Turkistan. For Kipling the golden age of the Pathan horse-dealer was already a thing of the past. Nonetheless, his novel is proof that he could still sense the aftereffects of the bustling horse traffic of the eighteenth century lingering on in the lively bazaar rumours about Russian agents spying under the guise of Pathan horse-dealers.

On the basis of the present study it should be plain that Kipling's allegedly romanticized picture comes very close to the reality of pre-colonial eighteenth-century India. In fact, the early-modern history of the whole subcontinent cannot be taken out of a context which includes Central Asia. This context is indeed the world of Kipling as described in *Kim*: a cultural continuum in which the origins of many historical developments in India, as well as in Central Asia, must be sought. Apart from common commercial networks, direct links were maintained through various political, military and religious organisations. The breakdown of this framework during the nineteenth

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[1] Cited in O. Brunner, Land *and Lordship. Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria* (Philadelphia, 1992), p.6.

century critically determined the separate destinies of colonial India and Central Asia.

The Durranis succeeded in establishing their empire precisely in the area which during the "Great Game" was reduced to the frontier zone between British and Russian spheres of influence. Thanks to their Rohilla outposts in India, the Afghans had controlled long-distance trade with Central Asia. From their urban market centres they had maintained their stakes in both the pastoralist and agrarian economies. Thus what had happened was not so much a shift from urban to tribal forms—as is suggested by the term "tribal break-out"—but merely a change from Mughal to Afghan hegemony. This had been paralleled by a shift of the imperial centre from the Mughal capitals of Delhi and Agra to the Afghan heartlands around Kandahar and Kabul. This, of course, was also turned to profit by the other rising powers in India like the Marathas, Sikhs and British.

Only about two centuries ago the Mughals had played the same trick with the Lodi and Sur Afghans. The Mughals under Bābar had started out as a particularly effective warrior band coming down from their stronghold of Kabul in regular raids to collect their dues from the areas they held in ransom. Both the Mughals and the Afghans very well knew that the key to Indian sovereignty lay in the control of the north-western territories around Kabul, Balkh and Kandahar. This area did not only give access to the markets of Central Asia and Iran but it also supplied the empire with the most important instrument of pre-modern war: the horse and its most valuable finished article, cavalry. After the Mughals, by force of arms, had established their dominion in India, the Afghans became once again increasingly involved in the military and fiscal apparatus of the empire. We have seen how the Rohillas gradually could rise from horse-traders and mercenaries to regional princes. In a similar way, the Durranis had traded off Safavid and Mughal patronage, after which their imperial career definitely took off through their military services to Nādir Shāh. For the imperial rulers of the time the crux of the tribal problem was not to get rid of these free-wheeling "tribals", but instead to make maximum use of them. In other words, to coopt their warlike services and to channel them in a proper direction. This policy of incorporation, to which there was no viable alternative, could easily get out of hand and, in fact, it got out of hand during the early eighteenth century. Therefore, the whole phenomenon of eighteenth-century Afghan expansion should

not be interpreted as a sudden tribal break*out*, but rather as the result of a long-term Afghan venture to "break" *into* the existing imperial structure. More often than not, the Mughals themselves had kindly invited them to do so.

Thus, in many ways, Durrani imperialism was a repetition of the earlier Mughal experience. Like the Mughals, the Durranis formulated an imperial mandate of their own, this time embracing both Hind, Iran and Turan, being a reflection of the north-western shift of the Indo-Islamic epicentre. But there were also some major differences between the two. The Mughal success story was one of agrarian expansion in a sedentary empire. Instead, the Afghans attempted to combine the latter with various forms of pastoral nomadism. Theirs was a "dual economy" based both on irregular ransoming and routinized tax collection. Hence, their political organization stood somewhere midway between a nomadic and a sedentary empire. Only through their constant campaigning and trading could they combine the management of both their lands and herds. Obviously, the balance between all these elements was always an extremely precarious one, which explains the empire's instability as well as the Afghans' unpopularity in the historical traditions of the more orderly, sedentary world.

Another major difference with the Mughals was the circumstance that Afghan imperialism ran short of time and was nipped in the bud by the rapid build-up of the Pax Britannica. Although a full description of this would certainly require another volume, in the following we will take a short look at the way the British expansion caused the decline and fall of the Rohilla outposts of the empire after 1770.

Rohilla Decline

During the second half of the eighteenth century British interests were rapidly expanding westward. In the 1770's Awadh and Benares became virtually British satellites. Simultaneously, Durrani power slowly faded away and Maratha incursions into Rohilkhand became more frequent. In 1770 and 1771 both Najīb Khān and Dūndī Khān died. Under these circumstances Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān sought a new alliance with Awadh and the East India Company in order to keep the Marathas out of Rohilkhand. As his own share in the price of defence against the Marathas, he signed an agreement with Shujāʿ ud-Daulah of Awadh in which he bound himself to pay

on behalf of the Rohillas 4,000,000 Rs. In fact Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān did not share the soldatesque *ghāzī* outlook of his fellow Rohillas such as ᶜAlī Muḥammad Khān or Najīb Khān. Instead, he prided himself on his religious knowledge and his role as a political mediator. He was a master of political intrigue and abhorred unnecessary violence.[2] Not surprisingly, with a large monetary incentive, he hoped Shujāᶜ ud-Daulah and the EIC would be prepared to defend his territory against the Marathas. Shujāᶜ and the British were, however, primarily interested in the large revenues of the Rohilla countries and in protecting the western borders of Awadh against possible Maratha, Sikh or Afghan incursions. From the British point of view, this required a shift of the borders to the Ganges.

In 1774 Ḥāfiẓ declined to pay the previously agreed sum because he felt that his allies had defaulted in repelling the Maratha inroads. Shūjaᶜ ud-Daulah and British Governor-General Warren Hastings interpreted this as a violation of the signed agreement. In the same year their troops entered Rohilkhand and after a short campaign and a battle in which Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān was killed, the Rohilla country was annexed to Awadh. In the wake of the Rohilla War large quantities of plunder were brought into the Awadh treasury. According to one British officer, Awadh's later wealth was entirely the result of the loot taken from the Rohillas in 1774:

> "such were the sources from which Shooja od Dowlah derived that enormous wealth for which Oude has been so long celebrated, and which is not yet quite exhausted—no portion of it was ever derived from the successful government of the country."[3]

Thus, in 1774 the Rohilla state came to an abrupt end. The single remaining son of ᶜAli Muḥammad Khān, Faiẓullāh Khān, was allowed to preserve his personal *jāgīr* in and around Rampur which continued as a Native State until 1947. Under his rule Rampur remained a relatively thriving area as it became the new centre of Afghan trade relations with the Deccan. Within a few years, he also managed to double Rampur's revenue and population. Meanwhile, political interference and cultural influence from Awadh increased, most notably in 1794-5 when it supported its own Shiᶜa candidate

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[2] Wendel, *Mémoires*, p.127. Cf. Strachey, *Rohilla War*, pp.288-90.

[3] *IOL&R*, Elliot Mss., Eur.D.314, "Report Mr. Hollings (1844)", ff.188-9. Cf. Strachey, *Rohilla War*, p.158.

to succeed to the throne. Rampur remained a Sunni centre, however, until the end of the nineteenth century when the government fell to the Shiʿa nawab Ḥāmid Khān (1894-1930).

Apart from Rampur, the remainder of Rohilkhand experienced a marked decline in revenue and trade. Afghan migrations to Rampur and other Rohilla outposts left large parts underpopulated. Adding to the general misery was also the policy of the Awadh ruler who tried as much as possible to ward off the penetration of British commercial and political interests in Rohilkhand. Hence, with this restrictive policy of the Awadh government and the withering away of the Afghan trading network, Rohilkhand was cut off from the long-distance trade with both Central Asia and the eastern Mughal provinces. Even the trade connections with the northern hill states were severed as a result of Gurkha expansion towards Kumaun and Garhwal. In Saharanpur, west of the Ganges, the son and grandson of Najīb ud-Daulah, Ẓābiṭa Khān and Ghulām Qādir Khān could still continue their independence and remained forces to be reckoned with in Hindustan. In 1789 their territory was finally annexed by the Marathas.[4] Twelve years later, Awadh handed over Rohilkhand to the EIC who kept struggling with the situation of low productivity and underpopulation.[5]

What can finally be said about the underlying circumstances that produced the decline of Rohilla power? Some observations can be made. As we have analyzed above, the creation of the Rohilla *riyāsat* in north India had been the result of regular migrations of Afghan horse-traders and mercenaries into the late Mughal realm. After 1770, however, the expansion of the British East India Company gradually reduced the north-Indian market for Afghan man- and horsepower. Although Rohillas continued to have considerable leverage as British sepoys and irregular cavalry, the overall volume

[4] Their continuing role is clearly shown at the time of the Mutiny, when the old Rohilla order of mercenary sepoys, local landlords and urban elites, simply reasserted itself in Rohilkhand, like they had done in 1748. Once again the descendants of Najīb ud-Daulah and Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān provided the leadership, the organization and the momentum of the Rohilla uprising (E.I. Brodkin, "Proprietary Mutations", pp.667-83).

[5] For nineteenth-century revenue policies, see the studies of Brodkin: "Proprietary Mutations"; "Rohilkhand from Conquest to Revolt"; "The Struggle for Succession. Rebels and Loyalists in the Indian Rebellion of 1857", *MAS*, 6, 3 (1972); "British Rule and the Abuses of Power: Rohilkhand and Early Company Rule", *IESHR*, 10, 2 (1973). See also L. Brennan, *Land Policy and Social Change in Northern India: Rohilkhand 1800-1911* (Nedlands, 1978).

of the mercenary and horse trade between Central Asia and Hindustan declined. Within a few decades, the open military market economy of Hindustan was replaced with the British monopoly of military resources. This brought about widespread unemployment and dissatisfaction among the Rohilla Afghans.[6] At the same time, new British commanders tended to exchange irregular cavalry for disciplined infantry, the latter being cheaper and easier to control. Of course, the slump in the military trade with Awadh, Bihar and Bengal also affected the cash transports to the Rohilla territories. During the 1770's and 1780's there was a general lack of money in the area and the coinage was strongly debased.[7] As a result, monetary exchange between northern India and the British provinces broke down.[8] Thus it appears that the imposition of the Pax Britannica in eastern Hindustan slowly but surely cut off the existing lifelines of the Rohilla *riyāsat* and contributed to its downfall even before its armies were finally defeated at the battlefield. Indeed, with the further expansion of the "modern" Indo-British state towards the north-west and of the Russian state towards the south, the Durrani empire became increasing isolated between the rigid borders of the new imperial rivals enmeshed in their "Great Game" for Asia.

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[6] *IOL&R*, HM.219, 22-5-1780, "Minute Gov.Gen.", f.565. Similar pleas were raised by the Nawab of Rampur. For general unemployment among Afghans at the start of the nineteenth century, see R. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, From Calcutta to Bombay* (London, 1828), p.138.

[7] *BM*.Add.60337, Shee Papers, n.d, "Shee to Wheler", n.f.; *NAI*, FPD, S, 29-7-1776, nr.1, "Bristow to Gov.Gen.".

[8] Cf. Bayly, *Rulers*, pp.64-8; A.M. Khan, *The Transition in Bengal 1756-1775. A Study of Sayyid Muhammad Reza Khan* (Cambridge, 1969), pp.169-215.

APPENDIX ONE

ISLAMIC DYNASTIES IN IRAN, INDIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

1. Safavid Emperors of Iran (Eighteenth Century)
   1694 Ḥusain I
   1722 Ṭahmāsp II
   1732 ᶜAbbās III
   1749 Sulaimān II
   1750 Ismāᶜīl III
   1753 Ḥusain II
   1786 Muḥammad

2. Afghan-Ghilzai Chiefs\Emperors of Iran
   1709 Mīr Ways
   1722 Maḥmūd
   1725 Ashraf

3. Nadirid Emperors
   1736 Nādir Shāh
   1747 ᶜĀdil Shāh
   1748 Ibrāhīm
   1748 Shāhrukh Shāh

4. Afghan-Durrani Emperors (Eighteenth Century)
   1747 Aḥmad Shāh
   1773 Tīmūr Shāh
   1793 Zamān Shāh

5. Mughal Emperors (Eighteenth Century)
   1658 Aurangzeb
   1707 Bahādur Shāh
   1712 Jahāndār Shāh
   1713 Farrukh Siyar
   1719 Muḥammad Shāh
   1748 Aḥmad Shāh

1754 ʿĀlamgīr II
1760 Shāh ʿĀlam II

6. Rohilla Chiefs of Rohilkhand
1710 Dāʾūd Khān
1725 ʿAlī Muḥammad Khān
1749 Saʿdullāh Khān
1752 ʿAbdullāh Khān
1752 Faiẓullāh Khān

1749-1774 *de facto* rule by Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān

7. Rohilla Chiefs of Najibabad/Saharanpur
1753 Najīb ud-Daulah
1770 Ẓābiṭa Khān
1785 Ghulām Qādir Khān

8. Bangash Chiefs of Farrukhabad
1713 Muḥammad Khān
1743 Qāʾim Khān
1748 Imām Khān
1750 Aḥmad Khān
1771 Muẓaffar Jang

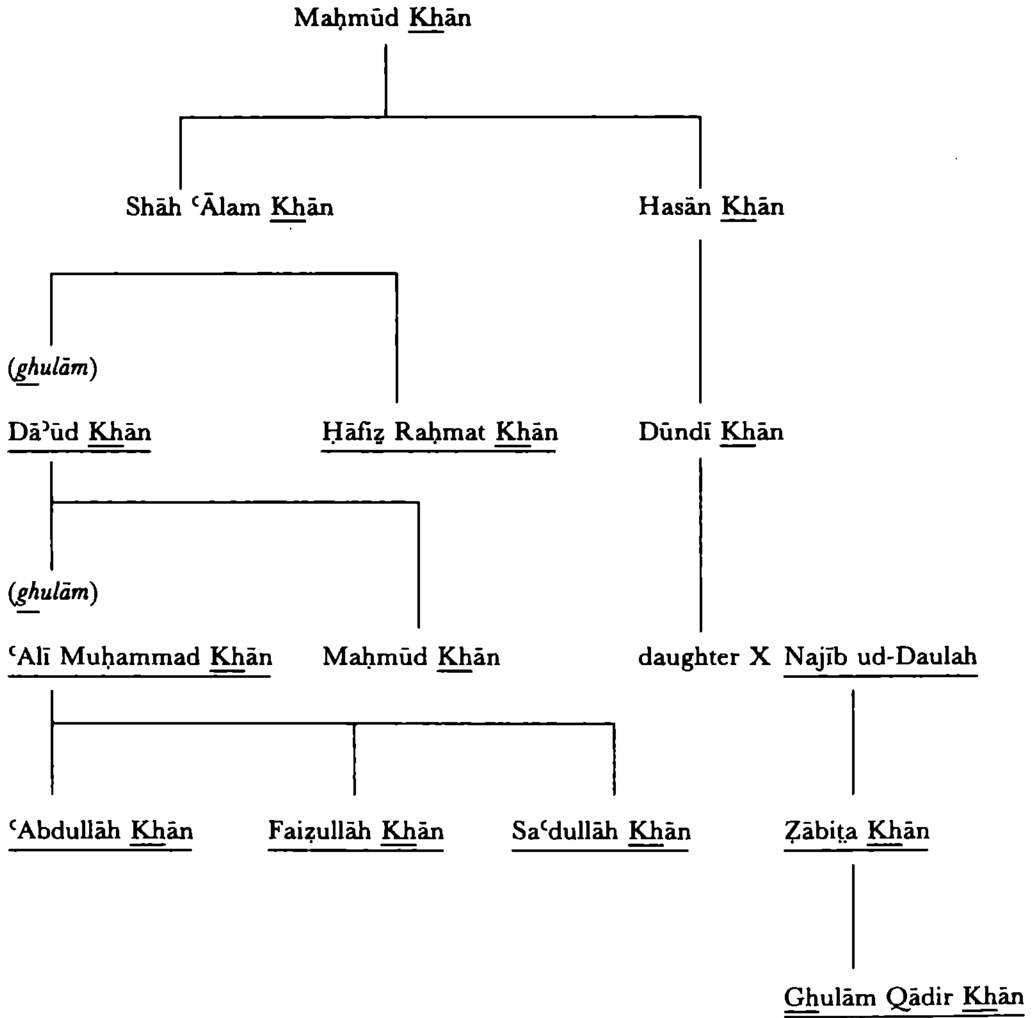
9. Chiefs of Awadh
1722 Saʿadat Khān
1739 Ṣafdar Jang
1754 Shujāʿ ud-Daulah
1775 Āṣaf ud-Daulah

10. Rulers of Bukhara (Eighteenth Century)
Tuqay-Timurid Khanate
1645 ʿAbd ul-ʿAzīz Khān
1681 Subḥān Qulī Khān
1702 ʿUbaidullāh Khān
1711 Abu'l-Faiẓ Khān
1743 ʿAbd ul-Muʾmin Khān
1758 Abu'l Ghāzī

Manghīt Khanate
1753 Muḥammad Raḥīm Khān
1758 Dānīāl Bī
1785 Shāh Murād Bī

APPENDIX TWO

THE ROHILLA DYNASTY



GLOSSARY

Note

Terms refer to Persian usage and transliteration unless otherwise indicated:

Ar. = Arabic
Ch. = Chinese
H. = Hindustani, Hindi
Ma. = Marathi
Mo. = Mongol
Pa. = Pashto
Skt. = Sanskrit
T. = Turkish

adab: etiquette, proper behaviour
ahl-i kitāb: people of the book
āl-tamgha: permanent assignment of revenue
ʿāmil: agent
amīr: prince, noble
amīr al-umarā: Mughal honourary title
ʿaṣabīya (Ar.): group-feeling, tribal or political cohesion
ariq (T.): irrigation canal
ashyāʿ (pl. of *shīʿat*): companions; followers, dependants

bājrā (H.): variety of millet
band-qaṣīl (H.): stabled feeding
banda(gān): slave(s)
bārgīr: hired trooper
bhāʾī-bandī (H.): kin
bhūr (H.): sandy soil
bhūsā (H.): chaff
birādar: brother

ćandā (H.): insurance fund for remounts
ćanā (H.): gram
ćelā (H.): disciple; slave
chābuk-sawār: horse procurement officer
chākarī: service

dafʿadār: cavalry officer
dār ul-Islām: territory in which Muslim law prevails
dara: valley

darbār: court
dast-yār: assistant; minister
dhāman (H.): grass of good quality like *dūb*
dihqān: (in India) cultivator
dīwān: chief financial officer of a state or of an *amīr*
dūb (H.): nutritious creeping grass (Cynodon Dactylon)
dūrvā (Skt.): *dūb*

faqīr: client; bonded labourer
farmān: royal order
farmān-rawā: ruler
farzand-i lutfī: adopted son
fatwā: a legal ruling given by a Muslim jurisconsult or *muftī*
faujdār: Mughal military governor
fīl-suwār: elephant trooper
fitna: sedition

ganj: grain-market
ghāzī: gallant soldier (of *jihād*)
ghī (H.): boiled butter
gh'lae (Pa./pl. of *ghal*): thieves, plunderers
ghulām: (military) slave

hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca
hālī (H.): client; bonded labourer
hamsāya: dependant; client; bonded labourer
hāṭ (H.): local fair
hauda (Ar.): framed seat carried by an elephant or camel
ḥukūmat: government; settled area
hundī (H.): bill of exchange

ijāra(dār): (holder of) farm of revenue
inʿām(dār): (holder of) hereditary tax-exempt/privileged tenure

jāgīr(dār): (holder of) assignment of land/land-revenue
jamaʿ: revenue valuation
jamiʿat: troop; kinsfolk
jamʿ-dār: cavalry officer, military entrepreneur
jāy-dād: land assignment
jihād: Muslim holy war against infidels
jins-wār: local revenue currency
juwār (H.): variety of millet

kad-khudā: head of a family
kanīzak: girl; slave-girl
kārez: underground water-canal
khādar (H.): low alluvial land
khail: clan

khāliṣā: crown domain
khānaqā: Sufi hospice
khānazād: member of imperial official's family
khānd (H.): coarse sugar
khānsāmān: household official, steward
khāqān (T. *qaghan*): Turkish imperial title, Great Khan
kharīf: autumn harvest (e.g. sugar-cane, cotton, indigo, rice)
khavīd: green wheat or barley cut for fodder
khāwand: master, patron
khidmat: service
khilāfat: vicegerency; caliphate
khilʿat: robe of honour bestowed by a superior in rank
khirqa: mantle of the Prophet
khīr (H.): rice-milk
khuṭba: formula read at the friday afternoon congregational prayers, into which the name of the ruler was often inserted.
khūdaspa: hired soldier in possession of his own horse
kuffār (pl. of *kāfir*): infidels

lashkar: army
luṭī (H.): free-booter, plunderer

madad-i maʿāsh: grant for charitable or religious purposes
madrasa: Muslim college
mahalla: quarter
maidān: open plain (for grazing)
malik: chief; king
mamālik (pl. of *mamlakat*): provinces; realms
manṣab(dār): (holder of) noble rank
mandī (H.): local market
mardomān-i hamrāhī: followers
masūr (H.): variety of pulse or lentil
maulawī: Muslim jurist or theologian
maẕhab: school of Muslim law
melā (H.): (horse-)fair
mīr-bakhshī: leading military official, ± Adjudant-General
mʾlā-tarr (Pa.): retainer
mujāhid: someone who participates in *jihād*
mulk-gīrī: expedition of conquest or ransom/tribute collection
mullā: Muslim jurist or theologian
munshī: secretary
muqaddam: village headman

nāʾib: deputy
naʿl-band: horse-trader; horse-farrier
nāmūs: name, honour
nang (Pa.): tribal honour
nasab: descent

nasaqchī: army police
naubat: kettle-drum
naukarī: service
nawāb: Mughal regional governor; honorary title

pādshāh: emperor
pālkī (H.): palanquin
pashm: goat-wool used for Kashmir shawls
penṭh (H.): local market
pesar-i khwānda: adopted son
pīshkash: tributary or honourary payment
pindhārī (Ma.): free-booter, plunderer, highway-robber
pīr: mystical guide, sufi master
pīrzāda: descendant of a *pīr*

qaṣba: country-town, often acting as a seat for small Muslim landholders
qāfila-bāshī: chief of a caravan
qanāt: underground water-canal
qānūngo: accountant
qāẓī: Muslim judge
qaum: people
qazāq (T.): free-booter, plunderer, highway-robber
qīshlaq (T.): winter pasture

rabīʿ: winter crop harvested in spring (wheat, barley, gram, pulse)
raʾīyat: cultivator, peasant; subject
risāladār: cavalry commander
riyāsat: government

sajjāda-nishīn: (successor of a) *pīr*
sāl (H.): saul-wood
sardār: chief
sarkār: district
sarkār-i anfār: army officer, ± Adjudant, recruitment officer
sāʾir: land-customs
sewan (H.): variety of grass
shāhānshāh: Persian imperial title
sharīʿa: Muslim law
sikka: coin
silāḥdār: gentleman-trooper
ṣūba(dār): (governor of) province
suwār(ī): horseman(ship)

tābistāngāh: summer pasture; mountain meadow
tarāī (H.): moist land, at foot of the Himalaya range
Timasha: Himalayan currency
tiyūl: assignment of land/land-revenue
tūmān: Mughal adminitrative term for district or subdivision of a province

turak (Pa.): plunderers
turr: origin

ʿulamāʾ (pl. of *ʿālim*): Muslim jurists or theologicans
ulūs: distinct group of people, tribal organization
urteng (Ch.): military post

waṭan: homeland
wakīl: ambassador, representative
wakīl-i muṭlaq: plenipotentiary
wazīr: high imperial official

yāghīstān: unsettled land, wilderness
yāsā (Mo.): Mongol law
yaylaq (T.): summer pasture, mountain meadow
yūrt (T.): encampment; territory

zamīndār: land-holder
zamistāngāh: winter pasture

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