Chapter IV

REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY OF SIND

It should be a very worthwhile attempt to reconstruct a geographical picture of the medieval Sind by piecing together the scattered but related information in Alberuni's works regarding the country of Sind. This takes into consideration only two of Alberuni's works, have been taken into consideration here, namely, Kitab fi tahqiq ma li'l-Hind and al-Qanun al-Mas'udi. The information which these works contain, as would be seen later, is highly significant.

Before beginning the main discussion, it may be profitable to put the problem in the historical perspective, for such a perspective would lend clarity to the regional understanding. It may be particularly meaningful in the case of Sind, which in the eyes of the writers of those times had a unique and distinct identity as a separate country. It may be recalled that not only Alberuni but almost every Arab writer of the Middle Ages, from the eighth century down to the eleventh and even later, considered Sind as a political entity separate from the rest of the Indian sub-continent that was 'India Proper' (i.e., al-Hind). It would be

1 In this connection the writings of a number of Muslim historians may be cited who considered Sind a separate country. Salaiman Tajir, Abu Said, Ibn Khurdadbe, Ibn Maqal, al-Istakhri, al-Maqdisi and al-Mas'udi are only a few names. Still later works like Chaghpaia, Tarikh-i-Hamusi and Peh Larnasa, etc., continued to follow the same practice.
beyond the purview of this study to discuss the justification of this division and discussion. It should suffice to note that geopolitical circumstances in the medieval India were such that historians and others did look at Sind as a distinct unit.

**Historical Perspective**

Even a cursory glance at the history of Sind makes it clear that regional location has always been an important determinant in the development of historical events. Occupying the western and north-western part of the Indian sub-continent, Sind stood in the corridor joining the two sections of the Orient namely, India and Khorasan. It was thus placed in superbly favourable position for the assimilation and diffusion of cultures from both the sources. In the Puranic times, it was through this land that the ancient Sakas, the inhabitants of Sakadwipa (Saka-asthan, i.e., Seistan), penetrated into India and who even today constitute a

2 Inasmuch as the ancient history of Sind and adjoining parts of NWFP and Afghanistan is traceable from the archaeological or numistic evidences, it appears that Sind, i.e., the region west of the Indus, had much deeper cultural and ethnic affinities with Persia than India, but on the latter side its frontiers were more open for a deeper and faster synthesis of culture. The Semitic (Bani Israeli) traces developed during the Babylonian captivity, while the Achaemenian, Parthian and Sasanian influences which spread from Persia are still recognisable in its Khorasani culture. It does indicate that long before its conquest by Muslim and the consequent Islamization, had already attained a distinct entity from the rest of India. In the sixth century B.C., Cyrus the Great extended his domain to cover Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier Province and even as far as the Indus. After Darius, parts of the Panjab were also included within the confines of a huge Persian empire. The imprint remains to this day and lends a distinct entity to Sind. Note, for example, the observation made by Olaf Caroe: 'no one who enters Peshawar or Bannu from the Panjab, or mounts the hills west of them, can fail to remark that he has left one region of the world for another, and he is on the verge of the Iranian plateau'. (The Pathans 550 B.C.-A.D.1957, London, 1958, p. 26).
sizable portion of the population of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Again, it was through this passage that Hindu astronomy and other related sciences found this way to Persia and thence further west. A territory affording such cultural transactions cannot remain a backwater and the flow of men and ideas is bound to leave its imprint on the values, language, culture, lore and general mode of life in that area. Sind was no exception to this rule.

In ancient times, long before the emergence of Islam, it was through the seaboarding of Sind that India established its trade relations with the Arabs. The process was accelerated with the advent of Islam and more direct and deeper cultural as well as mercantile relations were established, particularly during the Abbasid Caliphate (A.D. 740-833). In fact the period of Abbasid rule in Baghdad ushered in a long era of cultural contact with Sind — an era which lasted several centuries. It was a two-way traffic covering all aspects of knowledge and culture.

The period of maximum cultural contact came with the establishment of Arab rule in Sind. The agents of change were different — the first was the ruling class while the second consisted of the commoners, the real harbingers of culture. The two, however, had a kind of symbiotic functioning. Soon, the Arabs held a large

territory of Sind under their sway, Multan and Mansurah being their main principalities.

As compared to the other parts of India, the Arabs, found a more sympathetic and receptive environment in Sind. Perhaps, this was the initial reason which made them distinguish Sind from the rest of India.

**Boundaries of Sind**

The graphic nature of Alberuni's accounts of the frontiers of Sind can be truly appreciated if it is placed in the context of the then available knowledge. It may be said that but for Alberuni's descriptions, our knowledge of the boundaries of Sind of that period would have remained imprecise. The information contained in *Kitab al-Hind* and *al-Qanun al-Mas'udi* supply useful data for the delineation of the boundaries of Sind in the east, north and west. As regards the western boundaries, there was little ambiguity, for the prominent ramparts and defiles of the Sulaiman and the Kirthir ranges which girdle the territory of Sind were regarded by the Arabs as the boundaries between Sind on the one hand and the Provinces of Khurasan, Sijistan and Makran on the other. In the east and south-east, however, the monotony of the relief of the plain presented real difficulties to the Arab geographers in fixing the line of demarcation between Sind and Hind and often made them differ in their demarcation.5 Similarly, difficulties are

5 cf. Ibn Khurdadbeh who counts Shindan in Sind which is supposed to have been situated north of Separa in Baroda district. See Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India*, Vol.I, pp.14 and 402-3.
encountered in the north and northwestern region as it is hilly and dissected by numerous streams which traverse the region and run in almost all directions presenting a haphazard drainage. Moreover, the northern and northwestern parts of Sind, as Alberuni notices, are inhabited by savage and rebellious Hindu (Indian) races. Their existence confuses the boundary between India and northern Sind.

The astronomical location of Sind as worked out from Alberuni's Table of Longitudes and Latitudes would reveal that the country of Sind stretches on either side of the river Sind and forms a narrow elongated strip of land. In its east-west extension it has a maximum width of 6 degrees 5 minutes while in its north-south stretch it covers 9 degrees 25 minutes. This is evident from the marking of the positions of Armayel (Armabel; modern Bela) and Jailam (Jhelum) for the longitudinal width and of Babbarahan

6 Al-Kandahar of the Arabs was the ancient Gandhara. According to Alberuni it was situated between Peshawar and Waihind, the latter being its capital. Gandhara was an ancient Buddhist satrapy which in the eleventh century, was inhabited by Hindu (Indian) warlike races who actually were Afghans (Alberuni, Kitab al-Hind, ed. and tr. Sadau, E. (New Delhi, 1964), Vol.I, pp.199 and 208). This statement extends the territorial limits of Hind (India Proper) northward and northwestward and introduces vagueness in the northern frontiers of Sind. Moreover, it brings an interesting fact to light, that is, the "Afghans" constituted a pre-Islamic race which even in the fifth century Hijra was not wholly brought within the folds of Islam. It is well known that these Hindu Afghans races were employed by the Shahi kingdom of Jaipal to fight against Mahmud of Ghasnah. Prithwi Raj in his famous battle against Muhammad Ghori (A.D. 1192) assembled Afghan horsemen so that the Afghans fought on both the sides. The "Afghan" of Alberuni corresponds with the Paurani race "Avagane". The Geographical Encyclopedia of Ancient and Medieval India, Part I, Varanasi, 1987, p.48.

(tentatively identified with Rawalpindi) and Daibal (near Karachi) for the latitudinal length (see Table I). Another interesting fact which emerges from the study of the aforementioned Table is that the country of Sind stretches in between two Climes, the second and the third, with the greater portion lying in the third Clime and that it extends from NNE to SSW, being wider in the north (3 degrees 15 minutes on about latitude 33 degrees N) than in the south (2 degrees approximately on latitude 24 degrees N).

It may therefore be concluded that according to Alberuni's reckonings Sind lay between the latitudes of 24 degrees 10 minutes N. and 33 degrees 35 minutes N. and between the longitudes of 92 degrees 15 minutes and 98 degrees 20 minutes.

Bounded as such, one can visualise the territory included in Sind. A clearer picture would emerge if the information regarding the boundaries is collated with the stages of Alberuni's itineraries of Sind given in Kitab al-Hind as well as with the supplementary and simultaneous information concerning the

8 A recent excavation has unearthed the ruins of an ancient town some 40 kilometers southwest of Karachi supposed to be those of Daibal.

9 In modern Greenwich parlance, taking the same extreme stations, the bounding latitudes and longitudes would come to 24 degrees 55 minutes and 33 degrees 30 minutes N. latitude and 66 degrees 15 minutes and 72 degrees 45 minutes E. longitude. The actual range comes to 9 degrees 35 minutes latitudinalwise and 6 degrees 30 minutes longitudewise.

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<td>25; 0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Daibal</td>
<td>Karachi?</td>
<td>92; 30</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Laharani</td>
<td>Lari Bandar? or some site near Thatta</td>
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<td>Pishin</td>
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<td>28; 10</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Gandava?</td>
<td>96; 0</td>
<td>70°30' E</td>
<td>28; 0</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Bhatiya (Bhati)</td>
<td>Near Bhawalpur?</td>
<td>96; 0</td>
<td>70°30' E</td>
<td>29; 40</td>
<td>71°45' E</td>
<td>29°25' N</td>
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<th>No.</th>
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<td>Sauvira? or Sheh-abar, i.e., Trisab?</td>
<td>96°15' E 70°45' E</td>
<td>29°50'</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Multan</td>
<td>96°15' E 70°45' E</td>
<td>29°40'</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>96°40' E 70°10' E</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Karor</td>
<td>Kahrar</td>
<td>95°15' E 69°45' E</td>
<td>32°0'</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Lumi</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>95°10' E 69°40' E</td>
<td>33°5'</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>Parsawan</td>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>97°10' E 71°40' E</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Waihind</td>
<td>Ohind, near Atteck</td>
<td>97°50' E 72°20' E</td>
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<td>Dehrahm</td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>98°0' E 72°30' E</td>
<td>33°35'</td>
<td>73°0' E 33°30' N</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Jelum</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>98°20' E 72°50' E</td>
<td>33°15'</td>
<td>72°45' E 33°0' N</td>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
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latitudes and longitudes of some 23 towns of Sind in al-\-Qanun al-Mas'udi. It may then be deduced that the western territory of Sind covered an extensive area characterized by mountains and intermontane valleys, so that it included Makran, Baluchistan, Wasiristan, the southern part of the Vale of Peshawar south of the Kabul river, the northeastern edge of the Potwar Plateau and the adjoining Hasara District. The mountains beyond the Vale of Peshawar as well as those of Kashmir were thus outside the region. To be more precise this part of Sind which is hilly, dissected, arid and barren ran although the western borderland from the Makran coast in the south to the confluence of the Kabul river and the Indus in the north. The entire region is characterized by poor climate, difficult terrain and, on the whole, a gloomy and inhospitable environment. Understandably, therefore, Alberuni's towns are found located on better sites and usually in the river valleys or basins. The river basins in Makran included those of Hingol, Dasht, Purali and Hab rivers. The basin of the Purali known as Lasbela (the Arabii of the Greeks) was a picturesque site in the medieval times and was the location of Alberuni's Armayel or Armabela, modern Beila which is now an insignificant township. Further north the Kalat region of Baluchistan (Gandara) coincides with the valley of the Mela river transversing the Kirthir ranges.

11 The number of towns mentioned by Alberuni under the head "Sind" is twentythree, including Mastang. This town being reported as the metropolis of Wallistan in the country of Zabulistan is, however, mentioned in most of the MSS as a town of Sind. See Tegen, A.Z.V., Alberuni's Picture of the World. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No.53, pt. nt. 8, p. 29.
The position of Kandayel (or Kandabel) corresponds with this basin. In the extreme north the towns were Karur, Luni, Pursavar (Peshawar), Waihind (Chind or Mund near Attock), Babraham (also Babbarhan; Rawalpindi? or some site near the Margalla Pass) and Jailam (Jhelum) -- each situated in one or the other fertile valley or basin. The location of the first mentioned three towns, namely, Karur, Luni and Pursavar, would mean that the northern boundaries of Sind were beyond the Gomal river and covered the catchments of Mastura, Bara and Basar rivers which are the southern tributaries of the Middle Kabul river. Further east, the location of Waihind brings the boundary to the vicinity of the confluence of Kabul river and Indus river, which was the ancient region of Gandhara. Babraham and Jailam place the boundary to the northeast of the Potwar Plateau of Panjab, that is, up to the western bank of the Jhelum.

Thus, it will be seen that though the western and northwestern boundaries of medieval Sind roughly correspond with the general alignment of the highest ranges of the Sulaiman and the Kirthir, the northern and northwestern section of the boundary runs along the middle and the lower course of the Kabul river (the Landai) rather than the ramparts of the Hindu Kush which lie farther off. In the extreme north, the line of hills radiating from Rawalpindi, and aligned with the line joining Attock with Jhelum township is to be taken as marking the northern boundary of Alberuni's Sind.

The rest that follows is simple and clear. Alberuni's references
to the various inland towns close to the course of the river Sind lead us to believe that for all practical purposes the territory of Sind was more or less confined to the basin of river Sind. South of the Panchaard (the meeting place of the five rivers of the Panjab), all the towns which find reference in Alberuni's accounts are generally situated on the right bank and close to the river. A further scrutiny reveals that many of these towns (for example, Aror and Almansura) are situated on steep bluffs and higher banks (dhaya and bar) along the river course, seeking positions which may be safe from the vagaries of flood and the devastations wrought by the changes in the course of the river. This feature is found not only in the lower and middle courses of the river but also in the upper course. Siyawar (which may be read as Suh-yawar), Multan and Jahrawar are the typical examples. At the mouth of the river, Al-Daibal and Loharani have similar locations and occupy relatively higher embankments or sandbars on or near the river. Likewise, in the extreme north, towns such as Waihind, Karur, Purshawar and Luni, occupy sites which though lie close to the rivers, are nonetheless safe from periodic floods.

The point of substance is that in the interior, east of the western mountainous belt, Sind stretched, as it does today, over

12 Speaking of the enormity of flow of the Sind river, Alberuni points out that the river swells to such a degree that it often drowns the trees growing nearby. See Kitab al-Hind, Vol. I, p. 369.

the Indus Plains right from the Sibi Lowland or Sisistan to the mouths of the Indus, embracing Pat Desert, Kacchi, both the
Eastern and Western Valleys and Kohistan. In the northeast,
however, as is indicated by the site of the town of Jailam, the
territory of Sind impinged upon the Indus-Jhelum Doab, collectively
known as Sind Sagar Doab which is now in Panjab. This suggests
that the Jhelum may be taken as the fragments of old drainage and
the eastern-most boundary of Alberuni’s Upper Sind.

The task of fixing the boundaries of the Lower and the
Middle Sind becomes extremely difficult for Alberuni does not
provide sufficient data. Furthermore, the absence of any prominent
features in the monotonous level land east of the lower Sind
Valley may disappoint even the shrewdest observer. Alberuni does
not mention any settlement or town in this area and all the towns
reported by him in the Lower Indus Valley belong to the Kohistan
side. The absence of information should not be attributed to
his ignorance of the region. The simple fact is that the Eastern
Indus Valley was a relatively inhospitable region from the point
of view of human occupation. The chief factor which made the
environment difficult for habitation was aridity. This land must
have been gradually dessicated to its present state, an indication
of which is provided by the numerous elongated narrow depressions
(dhores) which are remnants of the old dried up drainage lines.
It was an area which was contiguous with the vast barren expenses
of the Thar Desert. In the absence of any direct statement from
Alberuni, one can rely only on his indirect statements about this
region. He tells us that the country of Sind lies to the west of Madhyadesa, the country around Kanoj which he observes as being synonymous with the Aryavarta. Madhyadesa, an ancient nomenclature adopted from the Indian epics, is a loose term and with regard to its territorial extent it has differently been interpreted by modern scholars. The present context therefore calls for caution. However, an enquiry into the history of the medieval India, does show that in the ninth century Madhyadesa under Bhoja (Arabs' Banura) was at the height of its power and glory and the frontiers of the empire established by the Guptas and Harsha had expanded so as to include eastern Panjab. It ran close to Sind.

That the country of Sind was not much distant from the Indus is confirmed by the itineraries and accounts of Sulaiman, Abu Zaid, Ibn Khurdadba, Al-Kas'udi and others. Alberuni was in line with his compatriots. In his itineraries, he counts Twalleshar, the nearest town inside the Al-Hind territory, only some fifty farzakh (about 400 kilometers) from Daibal. It is also to be noted that while discussing the coast of India he places the country of Sauri just after the Great Munha (Kori Mouth).

19 Ibid., p. 208.
In the Table of his Latitudes and Longitudes of Towns, Kalri, the first town of Bavarij, is only 3 degrees east of Daibal.20

The picture which emerges from these accounts is that in the southeast the boundary of Sind begins at the head of the Kori Creek and follows the course of the East Nara river till it approaches the Sind river approximately at the latitude of Aror (Rohri). Thence, the boundary of the Upper Sind Region follows an undefined course for about 25 to 40 kilometres. However, it keeps to the east of the Indus and runs almost parallel to it. Then it follows the course of the Chenab and Jhelum. In the north, north-northwest, northwest-west and southwest the boundary very roughly corresponds to the 600 metre contour line. In the south, however, the longitudinal shoreline which runs from Tiz, the capital of Makran, in an almost easterly direction, unmistakably marks the boundary of Sind up to the Kori Creek which was the farthest southeastern corner of Sind. It was a broken shoreline, however, for it negotiated through gulfs, inlets and dead creeks. Some of them which have been named by Alberuni are the Gulf of Turan, the Small Munha and the Great Munha.21

The above discussion gives a rather clear picture of the medieval Sind of the eleventh century. We owe it to Alberuni’s precise descriptions and accurate astronomical markings. Indeed, he stands out amongst Arab historians in boldly distinguishing the medieval Sind from the medieval Hind.

20 The location of Kalri is doubtful. Tugan’s *Biruni’s Picture of the World*, op.cit., refers it to Sind, see p. 16.
Alberuni's various references to the build of Sind point out the existence of two main physiographic divisions of the country. The first consists of a rather long mountainous belt characterised by ramparts and fosses. It girdles Sind on the north and the west. According to Alberuni, it is an off-shoot of the main mountain chain which traverses the entire longitudinal length of the 'inhabitable earth' in the middle latitudes, and in doing so it skirts the Great Plain of India, i.e., the Indo-Gangetic Plain, on the north as well as on the east and the west. The second physiographic division is the Sind Valley which is the western portion of the Plain of India.

The first physiographic division presents a very rugged and almost impassable terrain and functions as an effective barrier both in the north and the west. From the human point of view, Alberuni regards it as such and points out the routes from his country (Ghaznau) to India and Sind are difficult and hazardous and the only passages which afford communication lie through high passes or river gorges. He observes that though there are several entrances to India, there is only one to Sind. The route offered by this entrance lies through the country of Niros (Aijistan) and it reaches southern Sind from the southwest. In fact, it was the principal land route adopted by the Arabs and Mohammed bin Qasim himself had entered Sind through it.22

An interesting fact which comes to light from Alberuni's accounts of the towns of Sind and their location is that although the mountainous belt is generally inhospitable, it does contain a few pockets of habitation. They are the low lying plains and valleys and have been under human occupation for centuries. The towns supported by these plains and valleys include Waihind, Peshawar, Siwistan, Kandabel, Armayel and others.

As one gathers from Alberuni's accounts, the mountainous belt runs from the Makran coast as the Central Makran Hills and then covering the hills of Baluchistan and Kirthir moves northwards to include the outer hills of the Sulaiman Range. The mountain belt is interrupted here by the Kabul valley but further onwards it reappears as a mass of mountains whose ranges run in different directions.

Alberuni's enumeration of mountains to the north of Sind begins from the region above the Peshawar valley. More correctly, this region may be taken to be that of Al-Kandhar (the Gandhara), i.e., the whole region from Peshawar to the Indus Confluence up to the vicinity of Waihind. In the northwestern part of this region are the mountains which border the kingdom of Kayabish 24 (Kiapishe or Kapisene of Yuan Tsang). Alberuni does not identify these mountains by particular names but from his descriptions of the rivers which rise in them it may be

inferred that they belong to the Hindu Kush Ranges. The ranges are certainly complex which makes the identification of the four or five names given by Alberuni difficult. The mountains, without any particular order, are, the Kaf mountains, the mountains of Bolor and Shamilan, the Unang mountains and the Haramakot and Kulderjak mountains. He also makes reference to another mountain which seems to be due southeast of those described above. This is the Nagarkot mountain, which is part of the mountains of Bhetul.

Here one may add a word of caution. The Arabs, and for that matter Alberuni also, were rather confused in identifying individually the mountains and ranges which border India on the north and the west. The probable explanation is that their knowledge of this part of the country was derived from secondary sources -- as either hearsay accounts or from the earlier Greek, Hindu, Persian or contemporary Arab sources. The region was indeed difficult to investigate and remains so even to this day; the greater part of the region to the northeast and north of Afghanistan and also in the north of India and Pakistan remains unsurveyed.

A common error made by the Arabs, including Alberuni, was that in applying a name they did not distinguish between the same name a peak, a mountain or a range and often used the same name. Haramakot may mean Kailash and/or at the same time it may denote the whole Hindu Kush-Ladakh-Kailash Ranges. The variations in the nomenclature is another source of confusion. As for example, in the case of Haramakot or Hemakot or Demakot, the first two stand for the same mountain, while the last name has been identified to denote the mountains which lie further northwards. Moreover, incorrect transcription of names is yet another factor which stands in the way of proper investigation and identification. Alberuni himself observes that names, with the passage of times specially when they are used by foreigners, lose their original form and orthographic changes are by no means infrequent (Alberuni's India, Vol.I, pp.296-99). As for example, 'Multan' was originally 'Mall' of the Greeks but it changed to 'Mulya-asthana' (meaning 'original place') and still latter, by the shortening of syllables became 'Multan'. In the same way the ancient 'Irava' became 'Ravi'; 'Shatalidhar' became Sutlej; 'Chandrabhaga' or 'Chandra' became 'Chenab'.

The Kaf mountain which the Hindus, according to Alberuni, call Lokaloka is by its proximity to Mt. Meru (Pamir Knot) may be none other than the Hindu Kush for which Cunningham has also used the appellation 'the Indian Caucasus'. There is great vagueness in Alberuni's accounts of Kaf but it seems logical to hint that probably the word 'Kaf' is an altered form of 'Kaoppu' which in ancient times meant to connote Afghanistan, the region bounded by these mountains. Bolor and Shamilan are the mountains which according to Alberuni's enumerations lie north of the 'Kashmir plateau'. The mountains of Bolar (more correctly, Billur) by their specifications identify themselves with the transepts of Gilgit, Ladakh and Baltistan region north of Kashmir. This fact equates them with the Karakoram-Ladakh Ranges. As far as the identification of the mountain of Shamilan is concerned Alberuni's own statement is fairly balanced. He observes that the two rivers of Kashmir, Kusanari (originally may have been Kishen-Hari after the name of Lord Krishna; presently identified with Kishan Ganga) and Mahwi (uncertain) descend from the mountains of Shamilan and later join the Jailan. This is a clear indication that by the 'mountains of Shamilan', Alberuni meant these mountains which are in the Sunkai (north) of Kashmir and would mean the ramparts of the Great Himalayas through which the Kishan Ganga makes its way.

29 Cunningham, A., The ANCIENT Geography of India. (Varanasi, 1975), p. 16.
30 cf. Elliot's "Billur-Tagh", Elliot and Dewson, op.cit., p. 46. See ft. at. 4.
The Unang mountains have been mentioned by Alberuni as the one in which the sources of the Sind lie. These mountains according to his description lie due east of Kashmir. He names these mountains as Kularjak (better reading Kularjal) and which seem to be the Pir Panjal Ranges. The Unang mountains seem to lie further northeast. The very topology of the word 'Unang' bears resemblance with the Tibetan 'Cya-nag' which means the 'Black Plains' and where the Indus actually has its sources. Another interpretation which seems equally valid is that by Unang Alberuni might have meant to denote the Nanga Parbat which literally mean the 'Nacked or Barren Mountain'. There is another possibility that the Unang mountains of Alberuni might have been the Pishang mountains which are located some 56 kilometers east of Kailasa near the source of the Indus.

Karmakot (also Hamakot) has been referred to as the mountains where the Jailam and the Ganga rise. This is a long range which lies above the line of perpetual snow and the Mahacan (Greater China) is situated, according to Alberuni, north of it. By implication this range identifies itself very effectively with the Trans-Himalayan-Kailash Range. It is interesting to point out that the name still survives in 'Harma Muka', a massif which lies immediately north of the Jhelum in Kashmir.

33 Cf. Kalarchal of Rashidu-D Din in Ja'mi'ut Tawarikh, see Elliot and Dowson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 46.
The mountains of Bhatul have been mentioned in connection with the Kaj, which is a minor tributary of Irava (Ravi) and which rises from Nagarkot in these mountains. However, on the basis of the inadequate information supplied by Alberuni the identification of the river of Panjab and the associated mountain is often very difficult and well nigh impossible, especially because the hydrography of the region has undergone great changes from time to time.

The second physiographic division to which reference has been made above constitutes the whole of the Indus basin right from the foot of the mountains of the north to Sindsgara, i.e., the Sind Gulf (the mouths of the Indus). This is, as has been said earlier, the western portion of the great Plain of Hindustan and is aggradational like the rest of the plain. The genesis of the whole plain has been graphically described by Alberuni. He points out that it was formerly a sea which through the ages was gradually filled by the material brought by the numerous rivers flowing through it. That the plain is almost a level land may be surmised from the fact that Alberuni does not report anything to the contrary. However, the towns which he mentions on the rivers of Sind must have been located on the higher banks in order to be secure from the periodic floods and shifting of river course both of which Alberuni mentions. This is also evident from the abandoned sites of the medieval towns which are found perched on high banks. The towns of Sind Sagar, 34

Chaj, Rechna, Bari and Bist doabs are examples.

Thus the whole of the country of Sind according to Alberuni's accounts falls into two distinct physical units:

(i) The Outer Rim of Highlands which has two sub-units, namely,
   (a) the Belt of High Moats, Fosses and Mountains, and
   (b) the zone of Inter-Perched River Valleys.

(ii) The Broad levelled Plain of the Sind.

HYDROGRAPHY

In the evaluation of the hydrography of Sind, Alberuni specifically names two river systems. The first, he opines, is the Ghorwand (Ghorband) which rises in the mountains north of the kingdom of Kabul and later joins the Sind near the fort of Bitur below Waihind, the capital of Kandhar. The other is the Sind itself which along with the five rivers of the Panjeb constitute the main river system of the country. 35

According to the descriptions given by Alberuni, the entire catchment area of the Ghorwand falls in the Kabul valley, comprising both the upper and the lower valleys and stretching over the ancient kingdoms of Kapisene, Kophene and Chandhara. This covers a vast area and the complexity of its terrain has helped in the development of a complex system of drainage with a large number of tributaries and sub-tributaries. This fact is perfectly registered in Alberuni's assertion that the Ghorwand derives its very name from the fact that it has many branches.

and affluents. It is to be noted here that the Ghorwand of Alberuni should not be confused with that river alone which drains the Kohistan region north of Koh Daman. The name actually applies to a system of rivers, including the Kabul, which ultimately falls in the Sind below Waihind. It is also possible that the Kabul river may have then known to him by this very name because nowhere in his lengthy accounts of India in Kitab al-Hind does he mention the Kabul river by its existing name. Instead wherever he wants to mention the Kabul, he uses the expression 'the Ghorwand... opposite the town of Purshawar'. This leaves no room for any doubt regarding the identification of the Ghorwand with the Kabul.

The main affluents of the Ghorwand enumerated by Alberuni are six. These are (i) the river traversing the Ghusak Pass, (ii) the river passing through the Panchir Gorge, (iii) the Sharvat river, (iv) the Sawa river, (v) the Nur river and (vi) the Kira river.

The first affluent of the Ghorwand derives its name from the pass through which it flows into the northeastern Kohistan before joining the main river. The present author has reasons to believe that this Ghusak (Sachau's reading) or Ghurak (Elliot's reading) is none other than the Khawak Pass which lies

37 loc. cit.
38 loc. cit.
enroute to Anderab through the Panjhir valley in the northeast. The variants in the reading are in itself a proof that none of these names can be taken for certain. In the first instance the variation in the second syllable seems to be due to negligent placing of the diacritical mark changing the "w" or "r" into "z". Moreover, the present name, Khawak, may have evolved due to the softening of both the syllables.

The second river, passing through the Panjhir Gorge, is the Panjshir river draining into the northeastern section of Afghanistan east of the Paghman Mountains. The Panjhir which originally seems to be Panchir (because the Arabs in Pronouncing "ch" wrote usually "j") later on under Afghan pronunciation became Pantsir and ultimately Panjshir. The Arabs frequently referred to the economic importance of the valley and Alberuni himself reports the existence of silver mines in this valley. He marks the longitude and latitude of the valley (or it may be the marking of the town of Panjhir which was situated in the valley) as 94 degrees 20 minutes (converted value 68 degrees 50 minutes longitude) and 35 degrees latitude. The marking of the town of Parwan which was situated in the lower Panjhir valley has been given as 94 degrees 10 minutes (converted value 68 degrees 40 minutes) and 34 degrees 35 minutes and which fixes the situation of the Panjhir valley accurately on the map.

The third and the fourth rivers are Shariwat and Sawa

39 Cunningham, op.cit., p. 27.
40 Alberuni, al-GIRNAH al-Mas'udi, pp. 873-74.
(Elliot's reading, Sharubat and Shala). The way they have been grouped together in Alberuni's accounts leads one to believe that one of these rivers must be a tributary of the other. Alberuni's estimation that the Sava, before finally joining the Ghorwand at the fortress of Druta (near Jalalabad) passes by the town of Lanbaga or Lamghan (modern Laghman) may lead one to identify it exactly with the Suat river. The Suat was formerly known as "Suastus" — a word which may have transposed into the Sanskrit Sueta, Suat or Swat by dropping the second consonant and the later part of the second syllable.

The fifth and sixth rivers, the Nur and the Kira, have not been adequately described by Alberuni. Yet a careful examination of the catchment area of the Ghorwand shows a close resemblance of these rivers with those of Kunar and Panjkora. The transformation of Kunar into Nur and Panjkora into Kira or vice versa is an interesting point for further investigation.

The second river system of the country of Sind is that of the Indus and from the point of view of human geography it is of great importance. Alberuni gives a comprehensive evaluation of the sources and confluences of these rivers of upper Sind and Panjab.

According to his enumeration the river Sind, after receiving the waters of the six tributaries of the Ghorwand, descends to the plain. Later the river Sind is joined by the five main tributaries of the Panjab which flow from the east. The first two

41 Elliot and Dowson, op. cit., p. 47.
rivers, Biyatta (Jhelum) and Chandratha or Chandrabhaga (Chenab),
join their waters some fifty miles above Jahravar and then flow
along the west of Multan. The third river -- the Biyah (the
Seas) -- flows to the east of Multan and joins the Jhelum and
the Chenab. The fourth river -- Irawa (Ravi) -- is joined by
the river Kaj (unidentified so far) which rises in Nagarkot in
the mountains of Bhatul. 42 The fifth river is Shatladar (Sutlej). 43

Alberuni points out that these five rivers unite below
Multan at a place called Pancanada (the meeting place of five
river of the Panjab) and then form a mighty watercourse. Speaking
about the magnitude which this river (the Sind) attains in times
of flood, he says that it rises to the height of the adjoining
trees and inundates an area about 10 farsakh, i.e., about 37 miles
along the bank. Even if it is an exaggeration, it at least offers
an explanation for the many changes that had taken place in the

42 The uncertainty which hangs around the identification of river
Kaj can be resolved if the passage in Sachau's translation is
slightly modified. The passage in Sachau's translation reads:
The river Irawa is joined by the river Kaj, which rises in
Nagarkot in the mountains of Bhatul. The writer proposes
that the statement may be modified as follows: "The river
Irawa, which rises in Nagarkot in the mountains of Bhatul,
join the river Kaj (Chaj -- the united stream formed by
the union of Chenab and Jhelum)". With this modification
the river could be identified. If Ravi be assumed to
rise from the mountains of Bhatul, then the location of
these mountains would take us in the vicinity of Dhaooladhar
in the Lesser Himalayas. It is also noteworthy that
Al-Nas'udi in enumerating the five rivers of the Panjab
makes mention of a river which he calls "Bahatil", which
comes from the mountains of Sind and flows through the
country of the Rahbut (Rajput, i.e., Kandhar). This fixes
the location of the mountains to the north as well as to the
east of Gandhara. (See also Elliot and Dewson, op.cit.,

course of the river in the past. Long abandoned channels of West Nara and East Nara and those of its other branches and anabranches and also those of its tributaries such as Beas, Ravi and Sutlej bear witness to the fact that the rise and fall of the floods and the differential deposition of debris associated with these inundations must have resulted in the frequent shifting of the channels of the rivers.

Alberuni's description of the courses of the main tributaries of the Sind, i.e., the rivers of the Panjab, provide useful data for marking their courses during the medieval period, which were different from the channels which they are occupying today. Alberuni's study is, therefore, of great significance as it unambiguously establishes that the rivers of the Panjab underwent major changes in their courses since medieval times, a fact that is universally accepted today.

In Alberuni's times, as his writings depict, the Jhelum and the Chenab joined together some fifty miles (about 100 kilometers) above Jahnavar and the combined stream then followed the rest of its course west of Multan. It was then joined by Ravi probably near or above Multan. Alberuni's statement that 'the river Irava is joined by the river Kaj' does not very explicitly describe the course of the Ravi, however, if Alberuni's 'Kaj' be taken for 'Chaj' (meaning the combined stream of Jhelum and Chenab) then the course of the Ravi after bypassing Lahore from the east may be extended, in spite of the vagueness of the statement, up to the

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Chenab. The Beas, which Alberuni in his description enumerated as the third river of the Panjāb, flowed west of Lahore46 and east of Multan before emptying its waters in the main river, the Chenab. The medieval course of the Beas has very accurately been given by him for we know that in ancient times the Beas did not meet the Sutlej but joined the Chenab independently. The Panchanada (the confluence of five rivers) of Alberuni can be explained only if the Beas is considered to have had a direct confluence with the Chenab. Otherwise, as the pattern of confluences stand out today, it would remain a point of confluence of only four rivers. The Beas-Sutlej confluences have shifted over the years and it was at a very later date that Sutlej deserted its old course and joined the Beas at Hariki-pattan.47

The changes and fluctuations that have taken place in the courses of the Panjāb rivers have been very great but the change in the course of the Beas is the most striking, as that river seems to have altogether lost its original course, and is now merely a tributary of the Sutlej. Alberuni's reporting has therefore a great significance in this respect.

**Climate**

Alberuni very accurately describes the general characteristics of the climate of Sind. His assertion that the climate of India as a whole is tropical rainy with summer as the rainy season is undoubtedly very significant. In his opinion, which he forms after

46 loc. cit.
47 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 187.
a careful study of meteorological phenomena and the variations of climate, the periods of rainfall and their duration and the amount of precipitation received depend largely on two factors; first, the northward distance of a place from the sea and, secondly, the position of intervening mountains. Thus the distance from the sea and the configuration of the region were the two dominating factors which, in his opinion, determined the distribution of rainfall in Sind. Multan, according to his observation, has no *varshakala* (rainy season) while regions of Sind adjoining the mountains in the north do have a *varshakala* of heavy rain with a longer duration. It is to be noted that in Sind, according to Alberuni, more northern the location, the greater is the rainfall. However, Kashmir, according to him, receives less rainfall but heavy snowfall on account of its situation which is north of the intervening mountains of Judari between Dunpur (Udyanpur) and Barshawar (Peshawar).

In the upper part of Sind the rains begin in *Ashadha* (beginning about last half of July) and last for four months while further northwards they begin in *Sravana* (c. July-August) and last for two and a half months. In Kashmir a few showers occur in the middle of *Caitra* (c. April) but snow falls incessantly for two and a half months beginning with *Marga* (c. December). 48

Language and People

It is rather odd that Alberuni, his keen observation notwithstanding, failed to give even a cursory account of the

people of Sind and their customs and institutions. We find very little or almost nothing in his observations, although he spent much of his time in northwestern part of India in the vicinity of Upper Sind and the Panjab. Probably he did not see any notable difference between the mode of life and institutions of the people of Sind and those of other parts of India.

The only note of significance is his description of the alphabets used in different parts of Sind. He observes that though in India people like the Greeks write from left to right, the people in Sind and adjoining regions generally write from right to left. He notes that in some parts of Sind and Bhabiya an alphabet, called Ardhanagari, i.e., pseudo-nagara, is current. It is so called because it is compounded of Siddhamatrika, used in Kashmir and Varanasi, and Nagara, employed, in Malwa. Beside Ardhanagari, an alphabet used in Southern Sind along the coast, is the Malwari. He further points out that another set of alphabet, the Saindhava, is used in the region of Bahmanwa and Almansura.

**Town, Hierarchy and Evolution**

Most of the towns of Sind which Alberuni chose to mention in Kitab al-Mind and al-Gamva al-Nas'udi were important ancient towns which had not lost their old glory and grandeur even in the medieval times.

These towns, which number about 22,\(^50\) can generally be classified on the basis of their functions as either strategic or religious or administrative or commercial. It may be noted that the towns in medieval period were largely mono-functional for the society was functionally simple. It was to be later that the towns of the medieval period had to face gradual decay on account of the growing needs of the society. However, the natural places of evolution of medieval towns were mostly the old sites. Alberuni probably was aware of this basic reality for in discussing the towns like Peshawar, Multan, Waihind and Bamhanva, he tries to correlate the correspondence of the existing sites with ancient ones. He makes comparative studies by citing identical names of old and new towns.

As far as the determination of the location of towns is concerned, Alberuni notices that the prime factor is the availability of water. Towns and villages flourish where water is easily available and, as an example, he mentions the cluster of townships which were situated along the lower course of the Jayhun (Amu Darya) but which, as a result of the change in the course of the river, gradually decayed and ultimately disappeared.\(^51\) If this be regarded a general rule, the location and site of the medieval towns of Sind becomes automatically self-evident.

\(^50\) The number of towns to be counted under Sind is rather doubtful as all the extant MSS of al-Qanun al-Mas'udi are not consistent in their reportings.

A glance over the names of the towns as furnished by Alberuni (see Table 1) is enough to reveal that the list is in no sense comprehensive. There were certainly many other medieval towns, as can be seen in the accounts of other contemporary Arab geographers. Alberuni does not list them for he considered them to be insignificant in his own scheme of things.

For the purpose of this study, the towns have been serialized according to their respective location in a particular region of Sind. Sind itself has been divided into three regions, the Upper, the Middle and the Lower, although this division is quite arbitrary. These we may discuss below:

1. **Upper Sind**: This part covers the northern sub-montane Indus Region of Sind which runs between the side-hills of the Vale of Peshawar and the ramparts of the Salt Range. According to Alberuni's enumeration, this region would stretch between the latitudes of 33 degrees 35 minutes and 32 degrees N. The towns here are Babrahan, Pursavar, Waihind, Jailam, Luni, Mastank, Asyad Khak (sic) and Karur.

2. **Middle Sind**: This region is mostly a plain. Its northern boundary is marked off by the Salt Range but the southern boundary, which is rather vague, may be taken as the latitude of Kandayel (28 degrees N.) which according to Alberuni's enumeration lies on the southernmost extremity of the Third Clime. The towns which may be included in this section are Jhelum, Kish, Kundar, Siyavar (or Mehravar?), Mulinan, Bhatiya, Sidesan, Aror and Chandayal.
3. **Lower Sind**: This region may be deemed to consist of the southernmost part of the Indus Basin well below the Pancanada. It has a broad expanse of a level plain. The gradient is imperceptible so that the rivers are sluggish, except in the times of flood when the volume of water in the rivers causes them to gain momentum and velocity. The whole region falls within the Second Clime of Alberuni which ends at 27 degrees, 27 minutes, 40 seconds.\(^2\) In the case of Sind the marginal town on the border of the Third Clime is Bamhavana marked by the latitude of 26 degrees 40 minutes. The other towns are Armayel, Qanbali, Nirun, Loharani and Daibul.

We may now discuss the towns which have been mentioned by Alberuni.

1. **Babrahian or Babbarhan**

   Babrahian, which Alberuni mentions Babbarhan, was a town of great antiquity and his various references to it suggest that it held a commanding position on the high road to Kashmir.\(^3\) lying half way between Jhelum and Chenab. The position of the town is further confirmed by the markings of latitudes and longitudes which are 33 degrees 15 minutes N and 98 degrees 0 minute. The description and the latitudes and longitudes of adjoining towns as given by Alberuni, suggest a location at the head of the Margalla Pass in the Rawalpindi district. There is considerable weight in Cunningham's assertion that Babbarhan is actually

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Babbar-Khana which lay north of Taxila. The slight negligence of the diacritical point on the first consonant in the second part of the appellation has changed \(kh\) into \(h\). The name Babbarkhan, meaning "tiger's house", is connected with the legend that the Buddha offered his head to the starving tiger at this spot. Near the ancient site of Babbarhan there have been discovered many mounds and hamlets whose names, or the parts thereof, such as Sir-Kap-ka-Kot, Sir-Suk-ka-Kot and Siri-ki-pind substantiate the legend. Margalla Hills, which lie very close to the site, also seem to have derived their name from the same legend. It does not seem to be a far-fetched conclusion that Margalla is synonymous to Hindustani Gala-mar. Rawalpindi has a position very close at the head of the Pass. It may be surmised that Alberuni's Babbarhan was a nearby town due north of the location of Rawalpindi, in the ancient kingdom of Taxila which Alberuni pronounces as Takeshar, i.e., Taksha-sira, "Severed Head".

2. **Peshawar**

Alberuni is quite certain of the pronunciation of the name of this town and refers to it consistently in the same way. Peshawar, as it is called today, is but a transformation of the first syllable of Purshavarr. It was a town of ancient origin and finds a place of special reference in almost all Chinese and Greek itineraries though it has been pronounced in different ways in different places. Fa Mien calls it Po-lu-sha which is simply

54 Cunningham, op.cit., pp. 92-99.
55 loc. cit.
Parasha (Alberuni at one place only calls the town Purshur which very closely corresponds with the Chinese form (Vide Kitab al-Hind, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 338). The Greeks called it Paukalactis, i.e., the Pali Pukkalaoti and the Sanskrit Pushkalvati. Hwen Tsang's Pu-1u-sha-pu-lo is very near to Parshavara. The way Alberuni calls this town Purshavar suggests that the original name of the town must have been Purshara-pura or Pushkara-pura. The first part of the appellation under Turkish influence adopted the form 'Pursha' while the transformation of the last part of 'pura' into 'var' seems to conform to the common practice of the Arabs and very frequently met with in Alberuni's nomenclatures of the Indian towns. Examples are Mehravar, Jharavar, Ballavar, Lauhavar, Kakmavar and so on. All the names of Peshawar are the derivatives from the name of its founder Pushakara, the son of Bharata. The name Peshawar itself, meaning 'frontier town', came into circulation rather late that was under the reign of Akbar.

Alberuni gives a very exact location of the town of Purshavara. According to him, it lay some 14 farsakh (112 kilometers) northwest of Waihind, the capital of the kingdom of Kandahar (Gandhara). Dunpur, further northwest on the side of Kabul was only 15 farsakh (120 km) afar. As a further corroborative evidence/his marking of its latitude as 33 degrees 25 minutes N and of its longitude as 97 degrees 10 minutes. The town actually lay on the bank of the Ghorwand (identified as the Kabul river) where a Buddhist monastery or vihara, was built by Kanik (Kanishk) which was named

after him as Kanik-caitya. 59

3. Waihind

The synonymity which exists between Waihind/Waihind and Ohind/Hund suggests that the former must have been an earlier form of the latter. Though the town was one/antiquity, it is strange that the Arab historians prior to Alberuni had somehow failed to include it in their descriptions. Instead, what they usually mention is al-Kandahar whose exact position in their accounts is ambiguous and may correspond with either Peshawar or Waihind. There is a strong indication that Alberuni's Waihind or Waihind (both the readings in the absence of vowel signs are only approximate and there may be other variations such as Wehind or -hund or -hand) was the ancient Udakhanda or Utakhanda (the strong resemblance between the first syllable 'utakh' and the modern form Atak or Attock may be noted). By going through the process of softening and shortening Udakhand or Utakhanda changed into Uhand or Ohind -- the sequence of change being Utkhanda-Uthand-Uhand. 60

The location of Waihind is very definite in Alberuni's accounts and leaves no room for any confusion. The town is mentioned as the capital of Kandhar, the ancient Gandhara whose frontiers may roughly be described as lying between Jalalabad and Lamghan in the west, the hills of Swat and Bunir in the north, Indus in the east and hills of Kalibagh in the south. Its exact position with

59 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 11.
60 Cunningham, op.cit., pp. 44-48.
reference to Peshawar was 14 farsakh southeast on the west bank of the Indus. From Jailam (Jhelum) it was 20 farsakh (160 km) northwest. This is further confirmed by the markings of the latitudes and longitudes of Waihind and Jailam; the former being 33 degrees 20 minutes N and 97 degrees 50 minutes and the latter being 33 degrees 15 minutes N and 98 degrees 20 minutes. All these specifications from Alberuni suggest the location to Waihind near about the present city of Ohind, 14 miles above Attock on the right bank of the Indus.

4. Jailam

According to Alberuni the town of Jailam is situated on the west bank of the river of the same name. Its position has been given as 33 degrees 15 minutes N and 98 degrees 20 minutes E. The town is about 20 farsakh (160 kilometer) northwest of Mandahukur, the capital of Lauhawur (Lahore). Curiously enough, the present location of the town of modern Jhelum is almost at the same distance from Lahore on the map. This fact on the one hand, confirms that Alberuni was correct in his estimation of the distance between the two cities and, on the other hand, it conforms the exact position of the medieval town on the Jhelum which was not much different from its present location.

The ruins of this old city, which, according to Cunningham, must have existed as early as the first century before Christ, have been discovered west of the present city. 61

61 Ibid., pp. 135-36.
5. Luni

The identification of the town is uncertain. Alberuni provides very little information in this regard and it is only at two places, one in *al-Qanun al-Mas'udi* and the other in *Kitab fi tahqiq ma li'l-Hind*, that the town finds reference. In the latter book the reference is very brief and it has been mentioned as 'the castle of Loni', which lay further west of Karur, the latter being a place where Vikramaditya killed Saka, a king after whom *sakakala samvat* was named and which falls 135 years later than that of Vikramaditya. Al-*Qanun al-Mas'udi*, however, gives the exact location of the town, i.e., latitude 33 degrees 5 minutes N and 95 degrees 10 minutes E longitudes. From these markings the town, which was only a small defence town, lay somewhere southwest of Peshawar. In medieval times, valleys in this part of Sind, strategically situated as they were, witnessed the erection of a number of castles and forts to save them from attack from the west. Luni, as the propositions of Alberuni point out, must therefore have been a town on the river Luni (Lower Gomai) in the Waziristan section of the N.W.F.P. This river valley presents an open gate in the west for direct communication between southern Afghanistan and the Indus in the vicinity of Dera Ismail Khan. However, Alberuni's markings of the latitude and longitude of Luni compared with the present position of the river (32 degrees N and 70 degrees 30 minutes E) strongly suggest that the river then must have been flowing in a different channel which was placed

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slightly more northwest. This is quite possible, as the rivers of Sind generally have a tendency to erode their right banks.

6. **Mastang**

Alberuni's Mastank and Mastanj, or Mastang of Istakhri and Muqaddasi, bear a very close resemblance with the modern town of Mastung in Pakistan. While enumerating the latitude and longitude of the town as 32 degrees 40 minutes N and 95 degrees 0 minutes respectively, Alberuni notes that the town lies in the district of Walishtan, also spelt as Balishtan or simply Balis or Balish. Walishtan is the district which lay around Sibi or Sivai, also spelt as Sivi or Siwah, north of the districts of Turan and Budahah. The remark helps to solve the problem of identification of the medieval site of Mastang. From a study of Alberuni's enumerations of the latitudes and longitudes of some adjacent towns the place of Mastang lies northeast of Sibi and also of Aspyad Khak (sic), Kisd and Kusdar. The precise location is doubtful, however. it is also to be noted that although Alberuni includes Mastang in Sind, he considers Sibi as lying in Zabulistan. In reality the latter town should also be included in the country of Sind, for the whole tract from Makran, Turan, Budahah and eastern Walishtan falls, according to his descriptions, within the frontiers of Sind.

7. **Aspyad Khak or Aspyad Khak**

This town does not find reference in the accounts of any of

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64 cf. Teghan's reading which is 32°20' and 95°30'.
65 According to modern enumeration Mastung lies northwest of Sibi.
the medieval historians. The uncertainty deepens in view of the variations in the name as found in the different extant MSS of al-kanun al-Mas'udi: Aspad Haal, Aspad Kak and Asyad Khak. In the absence of any positive statement from Alberuni the only way out is to look to his table for towns which were comparatively better known and which according to their markings lie near it. Such a deductive study may reveal that Aspyad Khak (sic) lay a few miles west of Sibi and probably was on the road to Panjaway, the town of Rukhhkhat, i.e., the country around Kandahar. It is, however, uncertain whether it lay to the southwest or to the northwest of Sibi, but Alberuni's markings assign it a position which is southwest. It may be noted that a town, Asfanjay or Safanjavi, finds reference in the Arab chronicles and it was supposed to be situated north of Sibi and very close to it and on the high road to Banjaway. The correspondence between 'Aspad' Khak and 'Asfanjay' is striking and further research may confirm the fact that both the town are the same.

The position of Asped Khak was reported by Alberuni as 32 degrees 0 minute N and 93 degrees 15 or 35 minutes which is only about one degree and a half north-northwest of Kusdar, the capital of Turan. This position and the second part of its appellation 'Khak' suggest its location was somewhere in the Pishin valley, which is now inhabited by Khakas tribe. Togan equates the town of Asped Khak with Asped Jayi or Aspan Jayi (Aspid Jah of Muqaddasi

67 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 73.
and Safanjayi of Hudu al-Alam) and arrives at the conclusion that the town is the modern Pishin. 68

8. Karur

This town which has been assigned by Alberuni a latitudinal position of 32 degrees N and a longitudinal location of 95 degrees 15 minutes lies very close to Luni in a south-southeastward direction. The location of Karur with respect to Luni and Multan is further confirmed by Alberuni's lone statement that it lay between the castle of Luni and Multan. 69 Beyond that he does not elaborate, except that the site was the scene of a battle between Vikramaditya and the Saka. 70 This latter statement is significant and, besides other evidences, led Cunningham to identify it with Kahror which lay 50 miles southeast of Multan on the southern bank of the old Beas. 71 Cunningham's identification of Karur with Kahror and of Luni with Ludhan near the old bed of the Sutlej does not fit in with the markings of the towns as shown in al-Qanun al-Mas'udi, which is definitely more reliable. There are strong indications that Kahror lay southeast of Multan in ancient times 72 and it may also have been the scene of the famous battle to which Alberuni make a reference, but Alberuni's Karur is definitely some other town situated more northwards, perhaps, a little southwest of Peshawar. It is possible that because of the similarity of name, Alberuni may have been misled in his assumption that the legendary battle of Kahror, took place at Karur, in which

68 Tegan, op.cit., p. 29.
70 loc.cit.
71 Cunningham, op.cit., p. 203.
72 Ali, S.M., The Geography of the Puranas, (New Delhi, 1966), See Fig. 17 opp. p. 177.
case he must have been unfamiliar with Kahror on the old bed of the Beas. That Karur lay west of Multan is evident from his narration of the movement of Vikramaditya, in which he unequivocally says that Vikramaditya came from the west first to Multan then to Karur and afterwards further east and was killed at Karur beyond Luni. In Chach-name the location of Karur is very much north of Multan, almost close to the vicinity of Kashmir, which agrees with Alberuni’s records.

The variations of the name -- Kadwad, Kadwar, Karwar or Karur -- have been a source of confusion but the last of these names seems to be nearest to what actually Alberuni must have meant.

9. Jharavar

This town, which has been assigned by Alberuni an astronomical position of 31 degrees 50 minutes N latitude and 96 degrees 40 minutes longitudes, is not mentioned in the accounts of any earlier Arab historian. According to Alberuni’s additional notes on the town as found in Kitab fi tahqiq ma’ lil-Hind it may be assumed that the town was of great antiquity with various references in the Vayu Purana and the samhita of Varahamihira. The Vayu Purana, as noted by Alberuni, counts it in the countries of the north or the Janapada (community) of Sauvira, bracketing it with other adjacent communities of Gandhara, Sindhu, Saka (i.e., Saka-sthan, Seistan) and Lampaka (modern Langhan) to name only a few. However, the samhita of Varahamihira includes Sauvira along with its two towns.

73 Elliot and Dawson, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 143.
namely, Multan and Jharavar (or Jharavar), amongst the countries in the south-west, are to mention a few, Sindhu, Parsava (Persia) and Surashtra. Howsoever the two aforementioned texts may differ in their estimation of the relative position of the Janapada of Sauvira, it is certain that it had a situation near the Janapada of Saindhava (Sindhu) and the town of Jharavar was very close to Multan with which it was always grouped in both these texts. This is confirmed by Alberuni's own specific estimation that Jharavar lay fifty miles (100 kilometers) below the confluence of Jhelum with the Chenab above the town of Multan on one of the banks of the Chenab and certainly only two or three miles north of the latter town. The present position of Multan is, on the map as the crow flies, only some 150 kilometers south of the confluence but this should not be taken as the medieval distance since sweeping hydrographic changes have taken place in the region, affecting the location of the towns which lay on their courses.

The orthography of Jharavar bears a close resemblance to Hadrawar (sic) or Chandrawar or Jandarun of Ibn Hauqal; Jandrud of Ashkaly-1 Bilad and Jandur of Idriisi. The resemblance helps us in equating them and considering them as the different variants of the same name. If this is true, which is most likely, Jharavar would not be, as Ibn Hauqal observes, more than half a farsang (4 km) away from Multan as it was the cantonment of the chief of Multan. On Ibn Hauqal's authority we can say that the town occupied the left bank of the river Mihran.

75 Elliot and Dunlop, op.cit., Vol.I, pp. 380-1.
76 Ibid., Vol.I, p. 36, also see pp. 34 and 37.
The town lay on the bank of the river Chenab, which had been known as Chandrabhaga or Chandraha, and it would not be far-fetched to conclude that the town was initially known as Chandrapur. The Arabs transformed the last syllable into 'var', and as the sound of ch in Arabic writings of the medieval period sometimes became that of j, 'Chand' became 'Jand'. The name 'Jandravar', was shortened to Jharavar or Jharavar. Examples of such transformations may be quoted, e.g., Sharvar for Saryupur or Sarjupur (modern Gorakhpur), Bauura for Bhoja Rai, Bamhanya for Bahmanabad or Brahmanabad. In this connection Elliot's contention is also very interesting, when he presumes that the first syllable of Jandrud stands for a cantonment or military colony and the second for a river -- implying 'a cantonment on the river'.

10. Kind

Alberuni places this town very close to and southwestward of Aspyad Khak, which has earlier been identified with modern Pishin. From the latitudinal and longitudinal markings of Kind it is evident that the town was at a distance of only few minutes from Aspyad Khak. The difference is 5 minutes eastward and 20 minutes northward; the position of Kind is given 93 degrees 40 minutes longitude and 31 degrees 40 minutes N latitude. This closeness guarantees to Kind a situation in the Pishin valley in between Khoja Amran Hills on the north and Mount Takatu on the south.

From its location in the Pishin valley, it is reasonable to

to equate this town with Kiskanan, Kaikanan, Kaikan or Kikan, Kabarkan and Kirkayan of other Arab records. Kaikanan, which is the most commonly mentioned, is, according to Chach-name, Ibn Hauqal, Biladuri and Hwen Tsang, on a tract comprising the Sulaimani Range south of the Gomal, in which case the town, as it was lying on the high road connecting Multan with Kabul, would occupy a location in the vicinity of Sakhi Sarwar Pass.78

It seems that Kaikan (Kaikanan) was famous for its horses and there is an interesting reference to these animals in the accounts given by Biladuri, who mentions that which as a precious gift they were sent to the Caliph Muawiya. The first syllable of Aspyad Khak seems to be the Persian asp (meaning horse). The region is still a celebrity for its horses.

Le Strange identifies Kiskanan or Kikan with modern Kelat.79 If Kiskanan is to be taken for Kind, this identification is not correct.

11. Kusdar

In the writings of Ibn Hauqal (especially in Ashkalu-l Biled) and in the works of Abu-l Fazal Baidaqi, Kusdar or Kasdar is invariably mentioned as the capital of the district of Turan. The town, as we learn from these and other sources, was the residence of the governor and lay at some 20 days march from Multan.80 Biladuri mentions that Kusdar was a town close to Kandabel, the

79 Le Strange, op.cit., p. 332.
80 Elliot and Dowson, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 39.
capital of Budhiya. These facts lead us to conclude that the
district of Turan was contiguous with the province of Khakh
Candava and undoubtedly corresponds with Kusdar of Alberuni. The
name given by Alberuni seems to be more correct as it is found
to have retained itself in the modern spelling of Khusdar.

Alberuni reports the coordinates of the town as 30 degrees
35 minutes N latitude (sic) and 94 degrees 5 minutes longitude
which, with reference to Kandabel (Candava), would be less than
2 degrees west, and definitely southwest, though the reported
latitudinal position of Kusdar is erroneous in Alberuni’s Table
(See Table 1). It is well known that Budha, of which the capital
was Kandabel, was positively situated northeast of Turan. On a
modern map the distance between Gandava and Khusdar is about
80 km southwest.

12. Siyavar (sic) or Mehravar (or Behravar?)

There is much confusion regarding the actual name of this
town. The confusion becomes acute due to paucity of details
regarding this town and the only clue to its identification may
be had from the markings of its coordinates of latitudes and
longitude. These have been given as 29 degrees 50 minutes N and
96 degrees 15 minutes. From this position and its repeated
reference in the Table alongside Multan and Bhatiya warrant it a
location almost identical with Multan and Bhatiya (note the
coordinates of each of these three towns in Table 1. Siyavar (sic)

81 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 28.
82 Tegan, reads Mehravar. See op. cit., p. 29.
having the same longitudinal position as that of Multan lay only 10 minutes north of the latter. The only comment of Alberuni on this town is very significant for he says that this town lay at one day’s march from Multan. There is a likelihood that this town was a cantonment of Multan on the river Chenab.

As has been noted above, the accuracy of the name is uncertain, but Siyavar seems to be the most approximate. This appellation may have stood for denoting the confluence of three rivers, in which case it would have been 'seh-sabah' which later may have been corrupted to Siyavar. The part of region where Siyavar would have actually been situated in the eleventh century still known as Trimab (three waters). Another equally valid interpretation is that the name is related to one of the Puranic Janapadas, namely, 'Sauvira' in which the town of Siyavar, lying between Multan and Jhara, must have situated. It is probable that the name of the town had had its genesis in the name of that Janapada.

13. **Bhatiya**

Bhatiya and Bhatit are the two variants under which this town occurs in Alberuni’s writings. In Istakhri and in *Ashkalu-l Bilad* of Ibn Hauqal, a town by the name of Bania is mentioned amongst the towns of Sind. As these historians do not provide further details it would be presumptuous to equate it with Alberuni’s

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84 Elliot and Dowson, *op.cit.* Vol. I, pp. 27 and 36.
Bhati or Bhatit or Bhatiya. However, in Chach-nama the town is mentioned as Batiya but its position is not identifiable. 85

The town is described by Alberuni as lying 15 farakhs each way between Multan and Alor and between the two arms of the river Sind. 86 Its exact direction with reference to Alor was northeast. This is discernible from the marking of the town which accordingly lay at 29 degrees 40 minutes N latitude and 96 degrees 0 minute longitude.

Cunningham, considering its location, identifies this town with the city which Alexander built near the meeting of the Panjab rivers. He finds close correspondence between this town and Talhati where Jam Janar crossed the Indus. 87 There is strong indication to correlate this town with Uch or Uja of Ibn Battuta, and it seems that Raverty is justified in identifying Uja with Bhatia. Uch, according to Mahdi Husain, is now reduced to a group of three villages in the Bhawalpur State in the Panjab. 88 The latitudinal and longitudinal position of Bhatiya, as given by Alberuni, almost justifies Husain’s assertion (Bhawalpur: 29 degrees 25 minutes N and 71 degrees 45 minutes E).

14. Mulestan or Multan

Multan is one of those prestigious towns of Sind which does not need any elaborate discussion. As the capital of a province

of Sind, it was well known to every Arab writer. However, its exact location has been changing as a result of the alterations in the hydrography of Panjab and, therefore, a cautious approach is necessary in identifying its ancient or medieval sites. It may also be remarked here that in the region of Panjab and Sind not only the sites of towns have changed with the courses of the rivers along whose banks they stood but there have also been significant changes in their names.

Thus, the original name of Multan, according to Alberuni on the authority of Utpala the commentator of the Samhita, was Kasyapapura which in later times changed to Hamsapura, then Bagapura, then Sambhapura and lastly to Mulasthana. The latter appellation of the town is the form which gave the present name of Multan. Mulasthana is a compound of two Sanskrit words mulya (meaning root or original) and asthan (meaning place). Thus, the name means "the original place." The other names of the town which Cunningham adds in the above list of Alberuni are Prahaladpura and Adyasthana. All these names, according to Cunningham, barring one or two, generally refer to the Sun God whose temple was built in the town, and so Multan means Mula-asthana, i.e., the Temple of Mula (Sun). Furthermore, he identifies Arrian's Malli with Multan.

The location of the town of Multan is very precise in Alberuni's accounts. He observes that Multan as a town of Savvira

91 Ibid., p. 197
lay on the right bank of the Chenab west of the river Biyah at a distance of 50 farsakh (400 kilometers) west of Basana (Narayen). From Bhatia it was only 15 farsakh (120 kilometers) eastwards. As a further corroborative one may cite his markings of the latitude and longitude as 29 degrees 40 minutes N and 96 degrees 15 minutes.

15. Sadusan(r) or Sivistan

The frequency with which this town occurs in the Arab chronicles lends support to the idea that the town must have occupied a very pleasant and prosperous site on the right bank of the Mihan. Ibn Battuta speaks of the town as the place of residence of the chief governor of Tughlaq and according to his estimates the town of Sivistan was at a distance of 10 days' journey from Multan. From Ain-e-Akbari the situation of Sahwan, i.e., Sivastan, comes very close to the northern flank of the Lakhi mountains. The accounts of early Arab historians also confirm this position. Alberuni, himself gives the position of the town as 28 degrees 10 minutes N and 94 degrees 50 minutes. With this marking Sivistan of Alberuni occupies the same latitudinal position as that of Aror (Mohri) but a little less than half a degree (25 minutes to be precise) westward. Kasdar, was to the northwest of this town.

According to Ibn Battuta's accounts of Sivistan, the town

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93 For further discussion see Cunningham, op.cit., pp. 185-195-7 and 201. Also see La Strange, op.cit., pp. 331-33.
94 Hasan, op.cit., pp. 3 and 6-7.
was situated in a semi-arid region which was a 'treeless waste and sandy steppes'. This statement is endorsed when one examines the food habits of the residents of the town as described by him. His account of the scorching heat of the summer, which he himself had endured, is given in his description of the town, which reminds one similar conditions prevalent in the nearby town of Jacobabad. Ibn Batuta says, "My companions used to sit naked, wearing one piece of cloth round the waist and another soaked in water round the shoulders. Very soon after it was put on this cloth became dry; then they wetted it again, and so continued'. The town in question can be no other than Sivistan in the Larkana district of Sind. It appears that in the medieval times it was situated on the bank of one of the old channels of the Sind, namely, the Western Nara, and on the shore of Manchur lake.

As regards to the name of the town, one comes across a number of variants. Alberuni himself gives two, Sadusar or Sadusan and Sivistan. The names Sadustan and Sharusan are also found in other accounts. Cunningham connects these names with ancient Saindhavasthana or Sindhu-sthan, which, by the deletion of the nasal sound, became Sadustan. The name Sivistan was adopted, it seems, after the name of the tribe, the Sewis or Sabis who were the early settlers.

16. Alleged

Alberuni fixes the position of the town as 15 farsakh (120

95 Ibid., p. 7.
96 Cunningham, op.cit., p. 224.
kilometer) southwest of Bhatiya and 20 farsakh (160 kilometer) northeast of Bamhanva Almansura. Bhatiya and Bamhanva Almansura as well as Loharani, which is the last town mentioned in this series of towns, were situated along the course followed by the Sind in those days. It may be mentioned that the site of the town of Aror attracted special attention of Alberuni, for beyond this town the Sind turned into a united stream which was known to the Arabs as Mihran. This fact and a further similar reference that the township was situated in between two arms of the Sind River help us to identify the town with the present site of Rori. The town of Rori stands on limestone hills through which the river Sind negotiates its course. The ruins of this medieval town lie to the south of this gap between the abandoned western bed of Nara and another bed on the northeast. The latitudinal and longitudinal position of the town is 28 degrees 10 minutes N and 95 degrees 18 minutes respectively. This position conforms well with Cunningham's identification.

The town has been mentioned by almost all the Arab writers in their accounts, which is a proof of the importance which it had had in the medieval period. There are several variants of the name, but the commonest is the one which Alberuni has recorded, i.e., Al-Ror, which according to Arabic grammar is pronounced as Ar-Ror.

Aror may originally have been Rawar which later became Ror, in the same way as Lakhavar became Lahore. The Arabs prefixed their article al to Ror. Cunningham's view is of interest in that he considers Rora to be a Hindi word, meaning 'famous', and he believes that the old name was Rora-nagar or Rora-pura, or the 'Famous City'.

The only snag in accepting this point of view is the fact that at that early period Hindi had yet to grow. Moreover, as Alberuni himself points out elsewhere, the language in the southern Sind was Saindhava and in the Upper Sind it was Ardhnagari, which leaves Hindi out of picture.

17. Kandayel

Kandayel or Kandabel was well known to the Arabs as the capital of Budhah. Alberuni, however, mentions the town as being situated in Turar or Turan. He gives the position of the town as 28 degrees 0 minutes N and 96 degrees 0 minute E.

Kandabel was described by Ibn Hauqal as a large city, standing solitary on a plain. From his accounts as well as of other Arab writers, the position of the town may be deemed to be south of Sibi and east of Kelat. This situation is further confirmed by Alberuni's estimates of the latitudes and longitudes of the town of Siwai, i.e., Sibi (32 degrees 20 minutes N and 94 degrees 30 minutes E) and Kind, i.e., Kelat (31 degrees 40 minutes N and 93 degrees 40 minutes E).

From the above discussion it is possible to identify Kandayel

100 Cunningham, op.cit., p. 218.
or Kandabel with the modern town of Gandawa.

18. Bamhanva

In Ashkalu-l Biled and in Ibn Hauqal's other writings as also and other Arab accounts, the name of this old town of Lower Sind is not properly written. A large number of variants are met with in the accounts of Idrisi, the Chach-name, the 'arikh-i-Tahiri and the Tuhfatu-l Kiram. It is only Alberuni who spells the name properly, which leads to its appropriate identification. Alberuni writes it as Bamhanva and it is only at one place that he refers to it as Brahmanavata. He gives its location as 20 farsakh (160 kilometer) southwest of Aror and about 30 farsakh (240 kilometer) northeast of Loharani, which was situated on the mouth of the Indus. The exact location of the town was amongst the several anabranches of the Mihran. It may also be inferred from this statement that the town must have stood on a bluff to avoid the devastations from recurring floods of the Sind.

Alberuni's accounts of the town of Bamhanva are very graphic and precise. He gives the marking of the town as 26 degrees 40 minutes N latitude and 95 degrees 0 minute longitude. He also speaks of the alphabets of the Saindhava script, which was current in Bamhanva. This information brings the town nearer the

104 cf. 34 degrees 1 minute reported in Kitab al-Hind, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 316.
locality which was known to the Greeks as Sindomana, i.e., Sadusan. Alberuni's Table of Latitudes also corroborates this fact. Another point of interest is his repeated emphasis on the fact that Bamhanva was no other than Almansura. This assertion once for all settles the controversy that they were two separate towns. Cunningham identifies Bamhanva with Dilura and the latter with Bambhra ka Thul, both having neighbouring sites near an old bed of the Indus at a distance of 47 miles northeast of Haidarahad. 106

It has been stated by Alberuni that when Mohammed bin Qasim conquered Bamhanva he renamed the town Almansura, for his victory was due to the help (nusrat) from the Almighty. In a similar fashion he had renamed Mulistan as Al-ma'mura — implying that the conqueror was now well settled on the soil of India. 107 It is noteworthy that there were divergent views amongst the early Arab historians regarding the genesis of the name Al-Mansura, for instance, Al-Mas'udi says that Mansura 'has its name from Mansur bin Jamhura, governor of the 'Ummayides'. 108

19. **Armavel or Armabel**

From Alberuni's Table of Latitudes and Longitudes the position of Armavel or Armabel may be worked out as lying between Tis, the town of Makran, and Gumbali and Daibul on the Indus.

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It may be inferred from a comparative location of these towns that Armayel (more correctly Armabel as Armayel is simply a clerical omission) was situated very near to the coast of Makran. According to Istakhari Armabel was at a distance of 6 days' journey from Daibul towards the west.¹⁰⁹

In the absence of any elaborate description of the town in Alberuni's writings it is not possible to arrive at a definite conclusion regarding its identification. The only clue to identification lies in either the marking of the town (25 degrees 45 minutes N and 92 degrees 15 minutes) or in the accounts of the Arab historians of Sind. From all available information one may recognise the modern town of Bela on the northern bank of the Purali as the medieval township of Armabel. It is interesting to note that (Bel) in the old name survives in the modern name (Bela).

20. Qanbali

All the extant MSS of Al-Qanun al-Mas'udi mention the name of this town without any a'jam (diacritical points). The fact that it is mentioned as lying in the district of Budhah¹¹⁰ makes it certain that the town is none other than Qanbali of earlier authors. Its position is given as 25 degrees 0 minute N and 92 degrees 20 minutes E which places it southeast of Armabel. Daibul is only a little further southeast.

The exact identification of the town is not possible on

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 29.
account of paucity of information. However, Holdich's identification of the town with Khayrakot may get confirmation from future record. 111

21. **Nirun**

Nirun is of special interest for this town has been erroneously referred by some of early biographers of Alberuni as his birth-place. The confusion arose due to misplacing of the diacritical point. Nirun was the town which, according to Alberuni, lay at 24 degrees 45 minutes N latitude and 94 degrees 30 minutes longitude. This position places the town exactly 35 minutes north and 2 degree east of Daibul, on the mouth of the Indus.

Elliot identified Nirun with Jarak and Almansura with Haidarabad. Since then the position of Almansura has been fixed at the ruins of Bambhra-ka-Thul. The position of Nirun may thus be identified with the modern town of Haidarabad. This position is more concordant with the Greenwich marking of Haidarabad (25 degrees 25 minutes N and 68 degrees 15 minutes E).

In this connection Cunningham's finding that Haidarabad is still known to people as Mirankot 112 is significant. Mirankot may have been Nirunkot which in Arab writings assumed the short form of Nirun.

22. **Leharani**

Alberuni gives the latitude and longitude of Leharani as 24

111 Le Strange, op.cit., p. 339. See ft. n. 3.
112 Cunningham, op.cit., p. 235.
degrees 40 minutes N and 94 degrees 25 minutes E respectively, and also describes the town as lying on a small munha (a small anabranch) of the Indus near the coast.\textsuperscript{113} The anabranch may have been the Ghara river which name seems to have been unknown to Alberuni. Alberuni's statement, however, confirms the fact that Loharani was situated at the head of the Ghara Creek, which equates it with Barbarike-Emporium or Bambura of the ancients.

The exact location of Loharani may also be determined from Alberuni's accounts in Kitab fi tahqiq ma li'il-Hind, in which he gives the distance between Almansura and Loharani as 30 farsakh (240 kilometers), which makes the total distance between Multan and Loharani as 80 farsakh\textsuperscript{114} (640 kilometers), this being just a little short of the direct distance on the map. A comparative examination of the markings of Daibul and Loharani collaborates his statement that the rectilinear distance between the two was 12 farsakh (96 kilometers) eastward; the longitudinal difference between the two is 1 degree 55 minutes. That Loharani was situated on one of the two important anabranches of the Mihran, and nearer the western one, through which the river entered the sea is evident from his accounts in Kitab fi tahqiq ma li'il-Hind.\textsuperscript{115}

From the above discussion one may conclude that Loharani enjoyed an insular position but far away from the sea-board on the

\textsuperscript{115} ibid., Vol.I, p. 260.
westernmost branch of the Indus which was navigable in that
time at least up to the town. This afforded to Loharani a very
convenient and safe position as a river-port rather than a sea-
port. At one stage it was of a far greater importance than
Daibul itself. This fact may also be verified from Ibn Battuta
who found Lahari (Loharani) a very flourishing port and town on
the Indus and which he reached from Sivistan (Sehwan) by sailing
down the river. 116

The exact identification of the town with any modern site
has become difficult, on the one hand, by conflicting views
and disagreement amongst modern authorities and, on the other,
by the drastic changes that have taken place not only in the
course of the Lower Indus but also in the delta which is
certainly advancing, though slowly, towards the sea in the south.
On these considerations we may safely place Loharani near Thatta.
Although, Lari Bandar, very closely resembles with Loharani or
Lohaniyya, it does not guarantee to the former the corresponding
position of the latter. It is a curious phenomenon that when
a town becomes senile, a town or a cluster of towns in the
neighbourhood of the ruined locality retains the old name,
partially or fully, signifying the ancient glory of the decayed
town. An example is that of Daibul which still inspires people
to name their localities as Debal Thatta, Debal Kangra and
Debal Sindhi.

23. Daibul

Alberuni's accounts of Loharani and Daibul, as has been seen earlier, conclusively show that these were two separate towns both prospering at the same time as commercial ports. This state of affair, however, could not continue for long and Loharani soon outpaced the commerce at Daibul. In fact Ibn Battuta does not mention Daibul in his accounts while he describes the grandeur of Lohari. As Alberuni mentions, Daibul was situated between Tis and Loharani on the coast at the other end of the Gulf of Turan, 117 (the Sommian Bay) and as compared to Lohari enjoyed a commanding site so far as the Arab trade was concerned. Gradually, however, it lost its importance to Loharani as an international trade center. There may have been several factors causing this decline but perhaps the most important was the poverty of the hinterland.

It is interesting to comment that though the Arab histories of Sind often describe Daibul or Debai, these are generally not helpful in the problem of identification, Alberuni, however, is one authority whose description of Daibul corresponds with Karachi. First of all, like Biladuri, 118 Alberuni mentions the gulf of Turan on whose coast the port of Daibul was situated. Secondly, the marking of Daibul as 24 degrees 10 minutes N and 92 degrees 30 minutes E brings it very close to Karachi, indeed only three-quarter of a degree south of Karachi. Le Strange identifies the town with the ruins that have recently been found

32 kilometers southwest of Thatta and 72 kilometers east-southeast of Karachi.¹¹⁹

Cunningham fixes the old town of Daibul on the western bank of the Baghar river, below the junction of the southern branch of the Ghar or Sagara. This would mean, according to him, a position 8 kilometers north of Lari-bandar and about 25 kilometers southwest of Shambura and 48 kilometers from the Piti and Pintiani mouths of the river.¹²⁰ This identification, however, does not tally with Alberuni's enumeration of the town.

¹¹⁹ Le Strange, op.cit., p. 331.
¹²⁰ Cunningham, op.cit., pp. 251-52.