The Solanki Dynasty of Anhilawad Patan survived till 1240, despite all pressures from the Turkish Mongols on the North Western frontiers of India, since its foundation by Mulraj in the 10th century. The illustrious Siddhraj Solanki was succeeded by Kumarapal (1143-1174). Anhilawad Patan and Cambay grew in wealth and prosperity and Broach continued as one of the major suppliers of commodities for the export-import trade of Cambay. It also had an independent trade of its own. But with the rise of Cambay as the major sea outlet of the Solanki Kingdom of Gujarat and the continued uncertain political situation in the Mahi - Narbada - Tapti Basin, Broach began to depend on her own strength as a commercial city on the Narbada mouth and the old trade routes which connected her with the Gangetic Plain, Malwa, the Deccan and Central India and north western India. Her proximity to Cambay, the premier port of the Gujarat Kingdom, and Saimur, the leading port of the upper Deccan, and her traditional links with both the Deccan Plateau and the Gangetic Plain, stood her in good stead, to maintain whatever export-import trade it could muster to itself, in the face of competition from ports endowed with better locational advantages in the context of the changed course of the trade of the
Gujarat Kingdom and the Deccan, and the facilities offered to these major ports by organised and stable Governments.

Towards the middle of the 10th century, even before Mulraj Solanki took over the reins of Government and established himself at Anhilawad Patan, the Mongol Muslims who were being increasingly recruited to govern the frontier provinces of the Abbasid Empire, were defying the Caliphate, asserting their independence and embarking on a policy of conquest. In 942, some 20 years before Mulraj claimed Patan, the Ghaznavids had reached Lahore. Ghazni rose to power because of its location on the main Anhilawad Patan - Multan - Kandahar route to the Persian Gulf. In 1025, when Bhim Dev I was ruler of Patan, Muhammad Ghazni attacked Somnath Patan, the major sea outlet of the Solanki Kingdom at the time, making it imperative for the Solankis to find an alternate sea outlet on the Gulf of Cambay. It was mainly the destruction of Somnath Patan by Ghazni that contributed to the rise of Cambay as the major port of the Gujarat Kingdom. However Ghazni's raids did not result in permanent occupation.

Between 1160-1186 Ghazni was over powered by Ghori. Ghor was also strategically situated on the Multan-Kandhar route and became a commercial rival to Ghazni in the Gujarat-Persian Gulf land trade by the 12th century. In 1178 Ghori attacked Anhilawad Patan. Bhim Dev II barely succeeded in keeping control of his capital city. Ghori's attack on the
frontier kingdom of Gujarat was only a prelude to his attack on Delhi. By 1192 he had reached the gates of Delhi. In 1195 his general, Kutbdin Aibek, attacked Anhilawad Patan again and marched to Delhi. Kutbdin established the Slave Dynasty in Delhi in 1206. But it was left to his successor Iltutmish (1211-1234) to stabilise the Slave Dynasty in Delhi and embark on a policy of expansion of conquest. The land-locked nature of the Gangetic Plain once again drove its ruler to seek an outlet through Malwa to Gujarat. Iltutmish sought to re-establish the contacts of the Gangetic Plain with Western India by subduing Ujjain in Western Malwa and Bhilsa (Vidisa) in Eastern Malwa, both commanding two major trade routes from the Gangetic Plain to Western India.

Gujarat had now lost the use of all the routes linking Anhilawad Patan and Cambay with the resource-rich areas in their hinterland namely, the Anhilawad Patan - Multan - Kandahar route through Sind in the north West, Anhilawad Patan - Cambay - Jinjhuwada - Dholka route through Saurashtra to Somnath Patan to the south west, the Cambay-Broach-Ujjain and Cambay-Broach Vidisa routes through West and East Malwa to the Gangetic Plain in the north and north east, the Cambay-Broach-Burhanpur Khandesh route through the Deccan Plateau to the market town of Manyakhet, and the Cambay-Broach-Saimur route along the coast to the upper Konkan coast to the south. Hemmed in on all sides by enemies and
deprived of the major portion of its trade the Solanki Dynasty rapidly declined and came to an end sometime between 1240-43. The Vaghelas who succeeded them at Anhilawad Patan, were at their best, only a local power and never rose in power militarily or economically to challenge the might of the Delhi Sultans, who with a land locked territory in their possession, continuously kept thrusting to the Gujarat coast in their anxiety to find a sea outlet for the trade of upper India.

In the meanwhile rapid dynastic changes were taking place in West Asia and North Africa. The Mongol Muslims of Central Asia were attacking the north east frontiers of the Abbasid Empire. The Seljuk Turks occupied Turkey but the Ottoman Turks overpowered them and established themselves in Turkey and the outlying territories of the Abbasid Empire. The brunt of the Mongol invasion was borne by the Abbasid Empire which finally collapsed in 1258, leaving both India and Europe vulnerable to the Turkish-Mongol attacks. The Ottoman Turkish Empire stretched over the entire territory once held by the Abbasids in a very short time. The only area they did not subdue were the Spanish territories of the Abbasid Empire. On the other hand in South East Europe, the authority of the Ottoman Turks reached beyond the limits of the Abbasid Empire when they defeated the
the Byzantine Empire between 1451-53. With the fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks, the medieval City States of Europe which had emerged as trading cities on the major commercial routes, lost all contacts with the East. The Dardanelles-Bosporus - Black Sea and Caspian Sea route came within the limits of the Turkish Empire. The Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf once again became Muslim Seas but this time, not dominated by the Arab Muslims, but by the Mongol Muslims.

Dynastic changes in West Asia were followed by rapid changes in India. The Slave Dynasty of Delhi gave way to the Khilji Dynasty. Allauddin Khilji attacked Anhilawad Patan in 1297 and he appointed a Viceroy to administer the Gujarat province, But Alauddin had to face repeated Turkish Mongol invasions between 1296 - 1305. With his death in 1316 the Khiljis lost much of their vigour and the dynasty ended in 1321. The Turkish Mongols on the frontiers of India now poured into the Gangetic Valley across the Punjab. In 1321 they had reached Delhi and challenged the Khiljis. In 1325 Muhammad bin Tughlak established the Tughlak Dynasty in Delhi. The thrust to the Gujarat coast from the landlocked Gangetic Plains continued under the Tughlaks, the same year Muhammad seized Delhi. He is said to have plundered both Broach and Cambay, the major commercial cities of Gujarat. Broach during Muhammad bin Tughlak's campaigns is referred
to as being "in the flames of insurrection caused by the foreign Amirs and nobles of the hot tempered Tughlak". (1) "Cambay also seems to have been plundered in 1347 and 1349. Still, when Ibn Batuta saw it in 1345 he described it as "a fine city, remarkable for its elegance and strength of its mosques and houses built by foreign merchants, the chief part of its population". (2) Foreigners had already become the major part of the population of the trading cities of Gujarat including Broach. That Broach was the target of Muhammad bin Tughlak's attacks itself is proof that in the 14th century it was still a city of great wealth and trade, although very few references are made to it by the early European or late Arab travellers to India.

Under Muhammad bin Tughlak, the Sultanate of Delhi embraced almost the whole of India and much beyond its north western frontiers. It was the largest Empire India had seen since the days of Asoka Maurya. It extended beyond the limits of Asoka's Empire both in the north west and in the south. Broach was once again included in a large Empire, with every opportunity to be served by the old Mauryan trade routes. But the Tughlak administration was weak unlike the Mauryan administration. If they succeeded in establishing an Empire in India it was because there was no one to prevent it. Firoz Shah Tughlak (1351-1388) lost most of the territory which Muhammad bin Tughlak claimed to have conquered. In 1347 he
lost the Deccan. Khandesh, which controlled the Ujjain-Mahishmati-Burhanpur route to the Deccan, became independent in 1382. After Firoz Shah's death, province after province became independent, Malwa in 1392, Jaunpur in 1394, and Gujarat in 1396. In 1398 when Timur the Lame invaded India, Turkish nobles were struggling for power in Delhi, supporting rival claimants to the Tughlak throne but the Tughlak authority did not go much beyond Delhi and its environs. The so called Tughlak Empire was a collection of small provinces and territories, where each head tried to assert his independence and every chief was fighting his neighbour. Timur's invasion succeeded mainly because he did not meet with any resistance. When Timur left India in 1399, the Tughlaks were confined to Delhi. Timur claimed upper Sind and the Punjab and left a Viceroy to administer the territories.

The Tughlak Dynasty in India, however, extended Muslim rule to Gujarat, Malwa, Khandesh and the Deccan. In the Deccan the Bahmani Kingdom of the Muslims soon divided itself into five kingdoms, Ahmednagar, Berar, Bidar, Bijapur and Golconda, all fighting against each other and against Gujarat, Malwa and Khandesh. Alliance between one and another succeeded for some time but on the whole India was subject to a series of independent dynasties rivalling each other to capture as much of the Indian Ocean trade as possible for
their own kingdoms, the target of their attacks being always the gateways to the sea coast, and the ports which commanded the trade.

During all these turbulent centuries, Gujarat on the whole thrived on trade and manufacture. In fact it was Gujarat's industrial and commercial wealth that drew Iltutmish, Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad bin Tughlak to it. Cambay, the major sea port, Anhilawad Patan, the capital, and Broach, also a port of note and an important market town on the Malwa-Cambay route, bore the brunt of these invasions to a great extent. Although very few notices are made of Cambay in the 13th and 14th centuries and almost none of Broach by the Arab and European travellers of the period all speak of the wealth and fertility of Gujarat.

Marco Polo who came to India between 1271-1290 says that Gujarat has its own king, (probably Sarangadeva Vaghela who ruled from 1274 to 1295 and was succeeded by Karna Deva 1295-1304, popularly known as Ghelo, the last of the line) and was tributary to none. Gujarat by this time had lost most of its glory. Still he notices the exquisite leather work and cotton manufacture of Gujarat, the abundance of Indigo, pepper and ginger. Gujarat he says is "well known for the curing of hides and the manufacture of leather, that ships went to Arabia laden with skins of goats, oxen, buffaloes wild oxen, unicorns and others". The leather he says is
"for making sandals, cleverly worked with red and blue, sleeping mats exquisitely laid with figures of birds and beasts and skillfully embroidered with gold and silver wire - They also work cushions embroidered with gold so fine that they are worth six marks of a silver piece while some of these sleeping mats are worth ten marks". He continues "there is a great trade in hides which are all well dressed and many other merchandise too tedious to mention". The textile industry of Gujarat was also noted by Marco Polo. Gujarat he says produces "much fine buckram (a strong coarse kind of linen cloth stiffened with gum) and a quantity of cloth which are exported to many quarters". It grows also "much pepper and ginger" and has an abundance of Indigo". "Merchants come here with many ships and cargoes but they chiefly bring is gold, silver, copper and tutia". (a kind of zinc or spelter much used in the East. The Portuguese used it for coins). The chief imports of Gujarat at this time were gold, silver, copper, oxide of zinc, used as an eye salve, and madder from the Red sea. According to Marino Sanuto (1300-1320) and Marco Polo, the chief exports of Gujarat in the 13th and 14th centuries were cotton cloth, hides and indigo. Broach had a well established textile industry since centuries and indigo was grown in Jambusar in Broach District and in many other places in Gujarat. Broach must have had a share in the cotton and indigo trade of Gujarat, although most probably, Cambay, despite the political
set back of the Anhilawad Patan Kingdom, continued as the major sea outlet of Gujarat. Marco Polo says that the Kingdom of Cambay was free of pirates although "the Arabian Sea was run over by Cutch and Somnath Cossairs, the most atrocious robbers". The coasts of Saurashtra were already infested with pirates by the time of Marco Polo. Deprived of the long Saurashtra coasts, "the Kingdom of Cambay" at this could not have controlled much beyond its immediate hinterland.

The Arab travellers of the period also speak of the extreme fertility of the Gujarat Kingdom. In 1300, a quarter of a century before Muhammad bin Tughlak's campaign against Gujarat, Abdullah Wassaf says "its air is healthy, the earth picturesque, the vineyards bring forth blue grapes twice a year and the strength of the soil is such that cotton plants spread like willow".

But the prosperity and trade of Gujarat gradually declined with its continuous wars against the Delhi Sultans. Alauddin Khilji's army consisted of 475,000 horses and a large infantry. The army had to be fed. Alauddin had to enforce strict laws prohibiting the export of wheat, rice, sugar, salt, oil etc. The movement of armies also disrupted trade. During the Tughlak rule many villages and cities were faced with famines. Their army further had to be paid in coins and there was a great drain on the Treasury. Muhammad bin Tughlak found his Empire so depleted of silver and gold
that he was forced to strike debased coins of cheap metal. (6)
Trade suffered due to the circulation of forged coins in the vast unwieldy Empire of Muhammad bin Tughlak.

During Firoz Shah Tughlak's reign many provinces and commercial towns became restless. The Tarikh i - Firoz Shahi says that the Sultan marched against Gujarat to put down insurrections. It is said that Malik Makbul, who, after pursuing the rebels successfully, remained on the banks of the Narbada and seized the Amirs of Broach. Firoz Shah remained in Broach collecting the dues of Broach, Kambayat and Gujarat which were in arrears for several years. He appointed sharp Collectors and rigorously extracted large sums. Those people who defied Malik Makbul or had in anyway encouraged insurrections were seized and consigned to punishment. From Broach he sent a campaign to Deogir to pursue the rebels who had escaped. Firoz Shah, like Muhammad bin Tughlak, had a frightful temper. Revolts and troubles broke out on every side and general dissatisfaction arose from the excessive severity of the Sultan's punishments. It is said that, pursuing the rebel Taghi, he arrived at Broach and encamped on the banks of the Narbada. He sent an army of 2000 horses and some Amirs from Broach to Cambay. Taghi was routed and Firoz Shah returned to Broach. From here he pursued Taghi to Asawal. (7)

The above report bears proof that even during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlak Broach was an important enough city to
take part in political insurrections along with Cambay and that its Amirs were quite powerful. Its commercial wealth was such as to necessitate appointment of special officers to collect arrears of revenue. Further the route taken by Taghi and the army of Firoz Shah reveals close links between Cambay, Broach and Asawal (Karnavati).

But it was the lack of safety on the trade route that particularly hit the commerce of the major market towns and ports. The routes that connected Broach and Cambay with the interior were unmetalled and rough cart roads. Lack of maintenance and the neglect of the arteries of trade made them unserviceable during the rainy season. In summer the roads were heavy with dust. Besides, the merchant caravans were harassed by robbers who infested the forests along the routes. The Bhils, the Kolis, the Gohils, the Chavadas, the Jats etc. took to robbery and smuggling during the unsettled period and normal trade became risky. The chief of Godhra attacked the caravans en route to Malwa. The continuous wars between Malwa and Gujarat made the contact of Broach and Cambay with Malwa difficult. The Governor of Malwa in a bid to establish contacts with the sea, attacked the market towns of Gujarat, Broach, Baroda, Dabhoi etc. were plundered by Malwa.

The major trans-country routes now converged on Cambay but a large number of them served Broach as well. But all of them had deteriorated with the neglect of decades.
The Anilhawad - Cambay route was one of the busiest routes during the Solanki Period and continued to be of 14th significance in the 13th centuries, because Cambay still retained its place as a port of note. The Cambay-Malwa route went through Broach. If the forest products of the Panchmahals and the rice, wheat and cotton of Malwa sought this route for trade, it was only because they had no other outlet except the Gujarat ports. The clashes between Malwa and Gujarat and the rivalry of the Godhra Chief were mainly a trade rivalry between a Sea State and a Land Power.

The links of Broach with the Deccan also suffered at this time. Khandesh, the gateway to the Deccan had become independent after the Tughlaks withdrew. The Bahmani Kingdom, which rose on the ruins of the Tughlak Empire, was a loosely knit Kingdom which broke up into five small kingdoms before long. It was also at war with Gujarat for a share in its overseas trade.

The Broach-Sind road was through Cambay and Anhilawad Patan. Multan and the northwestern frontiers of India were either in a political turmoil or included in the Delhi Sultanate and the route was seldom at the disposal of Gujarat.

The coastal route to the Konkan ports (Saimur) was rendered unsafe and risky for the trade of Cambay and Broach, with the expansion of the Ahmednagar Kingdom.
The land trade of Gujarat in the latter part of the 13th century and in the 14th century was at a very low ebb because its connections with Malwa, the Deccan and Sind suffered a setback due to political tensions.

The overseas trade of the West coast ports also became diffused with the continuous wars. When Alauddin attacked Anhilawad Patan it was reported that Dwaraka, Mangrol, Veraval, Div, Gogha, Gandhar, Cambay, Broach, Rander, Surat and Gandevi, all had a good trade with the Red Sea ports. Alexandria, at the head of the Nile, is mentioned as the great Mart for Indian goods. The Mamaluks (Viceroys of the Ottoman Turks) of Egypt opened the port to every trader irrespective of nationality or religion. With the continuous onslaughts of the Turkish Mongols on Baghdad, the Abbasid capital, trade with the Persian Gulf ports of Basra, Baghdad and Hormuz became risky. Trade once again shifted to the Red Sea ports. The Mamaluks made huge profits on the Eastern trade. They levied a tax of 30% on goods from India and the East at each of their ports, namely Alexandria, Jedda and Suez. The taxes made Indian goods 200% more costly in the European markets. Yet the demand for eastern luxuries in the European markets did not abate. The Venetians took a large share of the eastern goods that passed through Alexandria. It was the Muslim monopoly of the Eastern trade that prompted Marco Polo to undertake a journey to India and the east in the 13th
century. It was through the reports of Marco Polo, Marino Sanuto (1300-1306), Friar Ordoñico (1316), Friar Jordanus (1321), John Marignolli (1347), John Mandeville (1327-1372) etc., that Europe heard of the great wealth of the East.

The Age of Discovery, generally attributed to the 15th and 16th centuries was already ushered into Europe when the Majorcans, the Venetians and the Genoans revolutionised European cartography through their close contacts with Arab traders, who continued as carriers of trade even after the Abbasid Empire was routed by the Turks. The advances made in cartography in Europe during this period were mainly to discover the various commodities available at the different ports, their distances from each other and the routes leading to them. Blocked by the Islamic Empire at the Red Sea, Dardanelles-Bosporus and the Persian Gulf, Europe was anxious to find an alternate route bypassing the Red Sea route to avoid paying taxes on the eastern goods. Gold and silver from Europe flowed to Alexandria in payment of eastern luxuries just as during the period of the Roman ascendency. That Broach had a share in this trade is proved by the report of Abdul Abbas Nuwayri, the Egyptian geographer who died in 1332, on the textiles which came from Broach. He says these were called Baroj or Baroji and were distinct from those which came from Cambay which were called Kambayati. Marco Polo and Marino Sanuto also confirm that the major exports of Gujarat at this
time were cotton cloth, indigo and hides, while the imports were gold, silver, copper, zinc oxide etc. Of the local products exported from Broach, mention is made of cloves, spices and precious stones, besides cloth and indigo. These were probably re-exports from Broach. Most of the spices, precious stones, pearls, sandalwood etc. came from the Far East, Burma, Ceylon, Malabar or the Coromandal Coast. There was a good market for these at Alexandria and Jedda. In return Broach received besides gold, silver, and copper, goods such as mercury, vermilion, rose water, brocades, wool and horses.

The trade of Gujarat with Baghdad and Basra received a set back with the waning strength of the Abbasids. The Arabs however continued the centuries-old trade and they remained a strong commercial element all along the Persian Gulf, the Arabian coast and East Africa. A clearer picture of the trade of Gujarat, and of Broach in particular, emerges only in the 15th and 16th centuries, when Gujarat once again benefited by the strong administration of the Ahmedshahi Dynasty (the Sultanate of Gujarat) and European travellers began to come in large numbers to establish trade contacts with the East, defying the Muslim monopoly of the sea routes.
References:

THE BREAK UP OF THE SOLANKI KINGDOM OF GUJARAT


b. Translated by Mahdi Hussain, The Rehla of Ibn Batuta, India Maldives Islands and Ceylon, (Oriental Institute, Baroda) 1976, wherein he gives an account of the trade of Cambay (Introduction pp. x liv to x lvii).


(5) Elliot and Dowson, Vol.III, op.cit., pp.31-32.
