

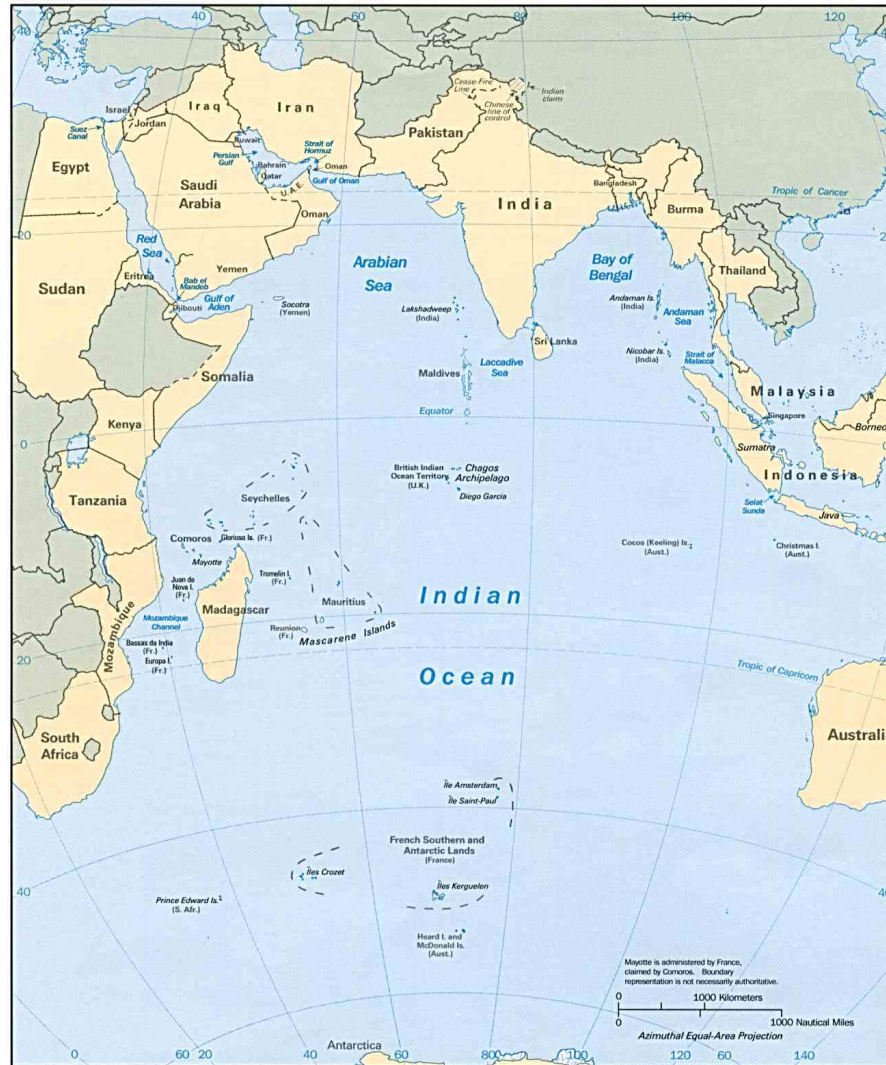
# The Indian Ocean Network or networks in the Indian Ocean: some reflections

Lakshmi Subramanian

# Definitions

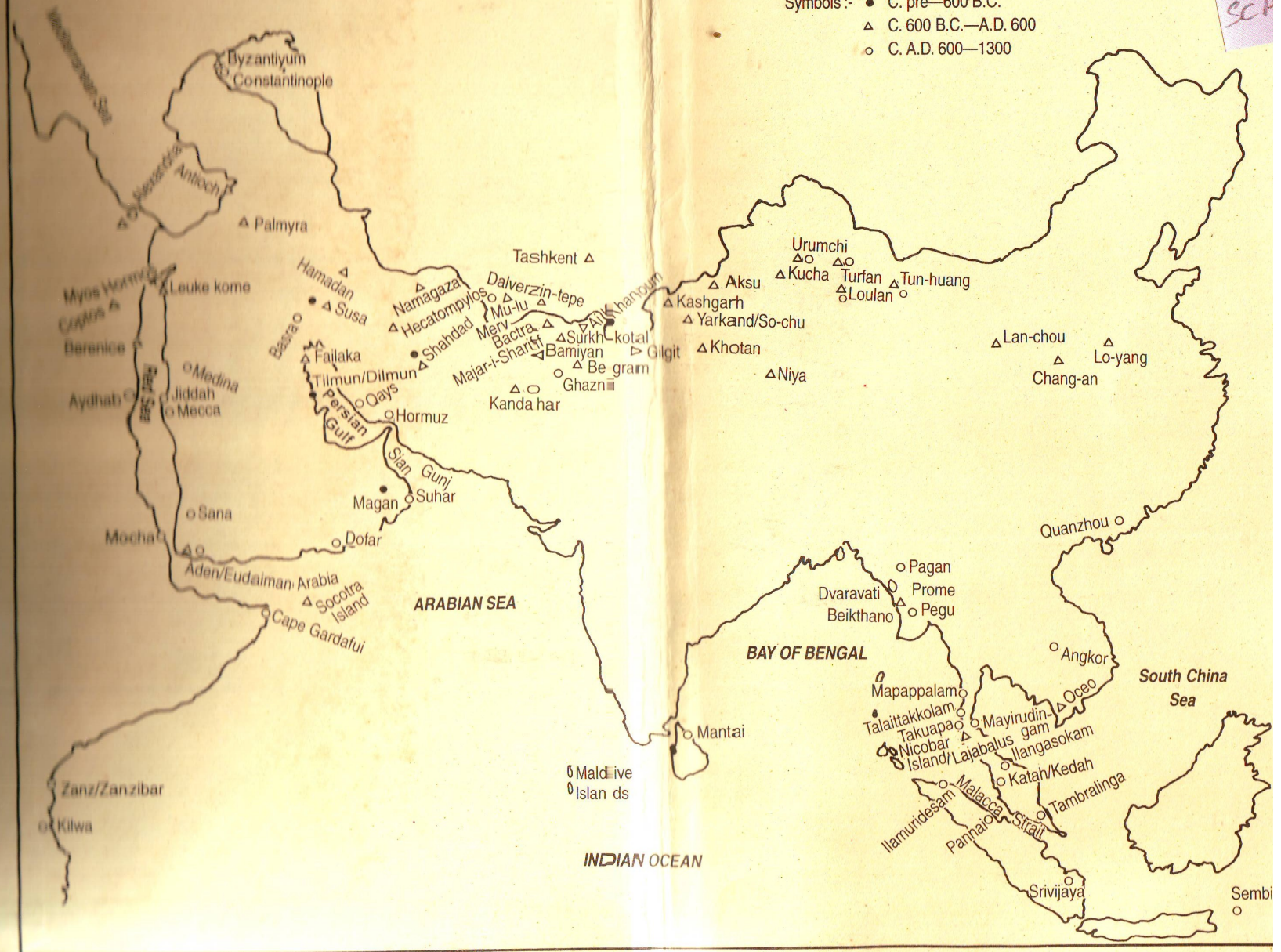
- How do we understand maritime spaces?
- Can we use terrestrial concepts?
- What would be the elements of structural unity?
- Can we understand the region as a network and if so what kind?
- Can we see the region as one where multiple networks could circulate?

## Indian Ocean Area

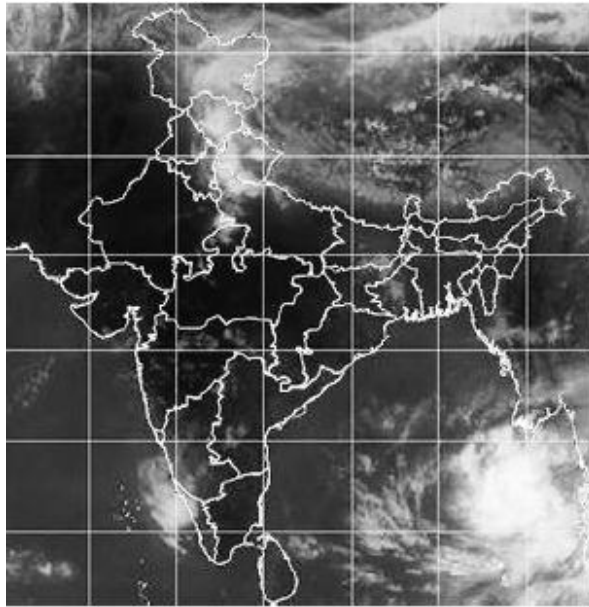


# India's Contacts with the Outside world

- Symbols :-
- C. pre-600 B.C.
  - △ C. 600 B.C.—A.D. 600
  - C. A.D. 600—1300



# The Monsoons and the Indian Ocean



# Winds, sails and connections: a time line

- Antiquity – Faith and empires and networks: Indian seafaring activity in the age of great civilisations. The Indus valley culture and its contacts with West Asia - Indo-Greek and Indo-Persian contacts. Indo-Roman trade (3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE and 3<sup>rd</sup> CE) Roman trade reaching its highest point in 250 CE.
- 250-550 CE Decline of Roman Trade and shift to the east – Links with suvranbhumi or southeast Asia. Consolidation of the southeast Asian link
- Islam and the Indian Ocean 7<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> CE Empires, Markets and Expanding Networks
- 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> CE India and the Indian Ocean – golden age of Indian trade, The textile boom
- 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century The Indian Ocean and Western Imperialism
- The post colonial and the contemporary.

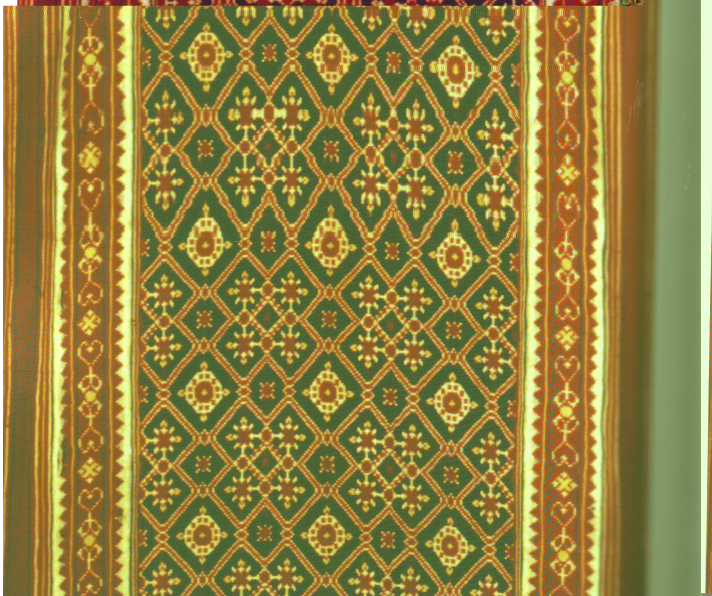
# Networks of Commerce and Religion

## the southeast Asian case

- **Buddhism, Hinduism, Kingship**
- **Merchants, Monks and Priests**
- **Ideas – Nucleus and transmission**

# Networks of design: textiles in southeast Asia





# Islam in the Indian Ocean

- A new political economy of distribution
- New networks of merchants
- The geniza merchant network: integrating Europe and Asia
- Articulation of the Indian Ocean world system?

# Indian textiles

- Design
- Mordant/Dyes
- Adaptability to local ritual meanings that were reflected in design
- This true of textiles for southeast Asia as well as Africa.
- Huge expansion especially after the fourteenth century

# The geniza

- Cairene Jews major players in the Levantine trade and the India trade.
- Shared commerce in the Indian Ocean with Arabs whose entry partly fostered by the Arab and persian inputs as well as by the growing requirements of the Delhi rulers.
- A major feature of the networks in this period was interdenominational transactions/partnerships and the relative absence of coercion.
- Arabic a common medium of expression used by Arabs and Jews.
- By this period, the bahr al Hind a clearly identifiable unit extending from the Red Sea to the Sumatran coast.



# The Indian Ocean World System 1500-1700

- What is meant by a world system /trade network?
- Core/Periphery/Semi-periphery?
- How did it respond to change and how did it maintain its autonomous rhythm?
- What networks in it made this possible?
- Political security, textiles, silver, human networks

# How India clothed the world









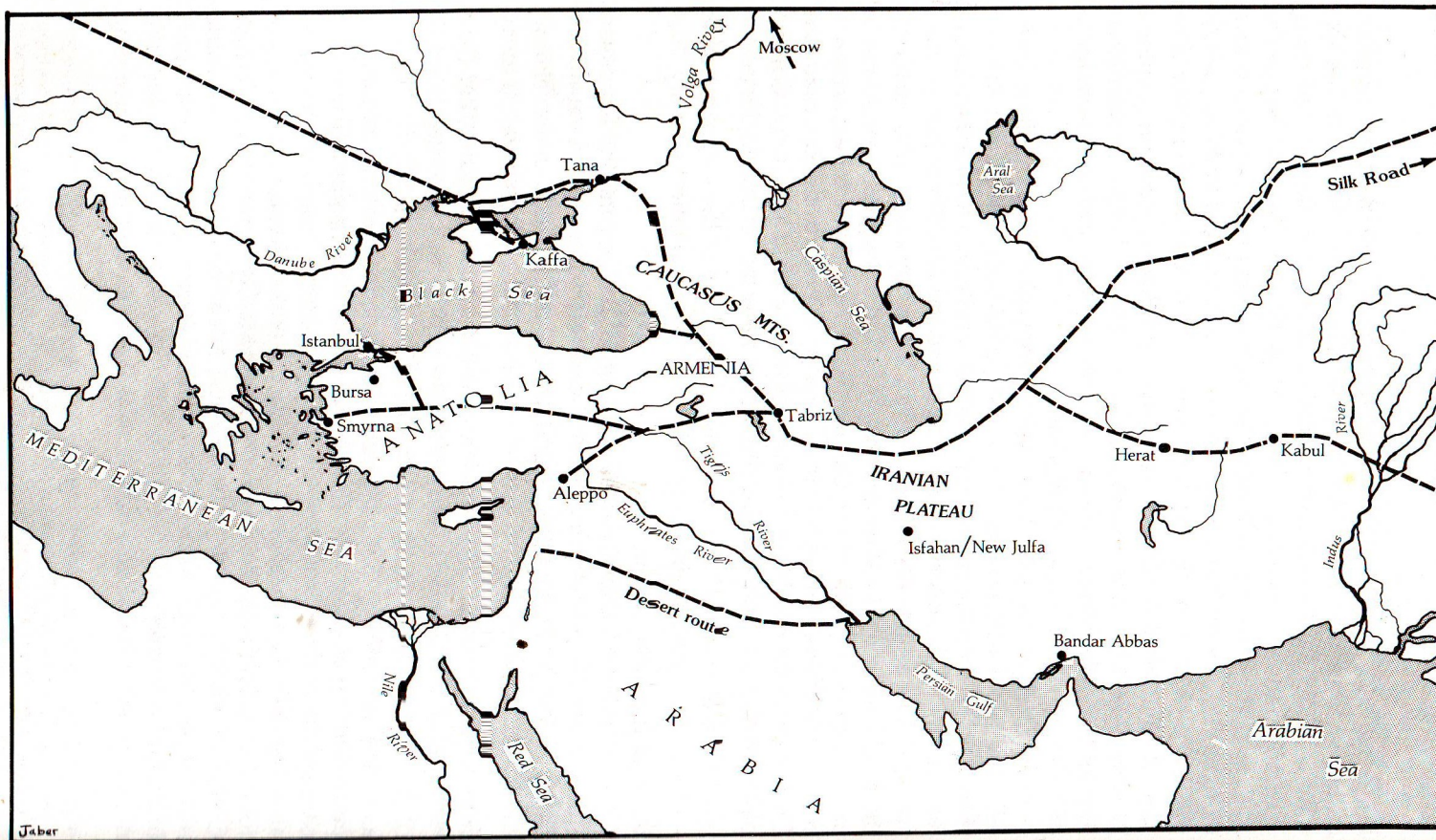
STEVEN COHEN

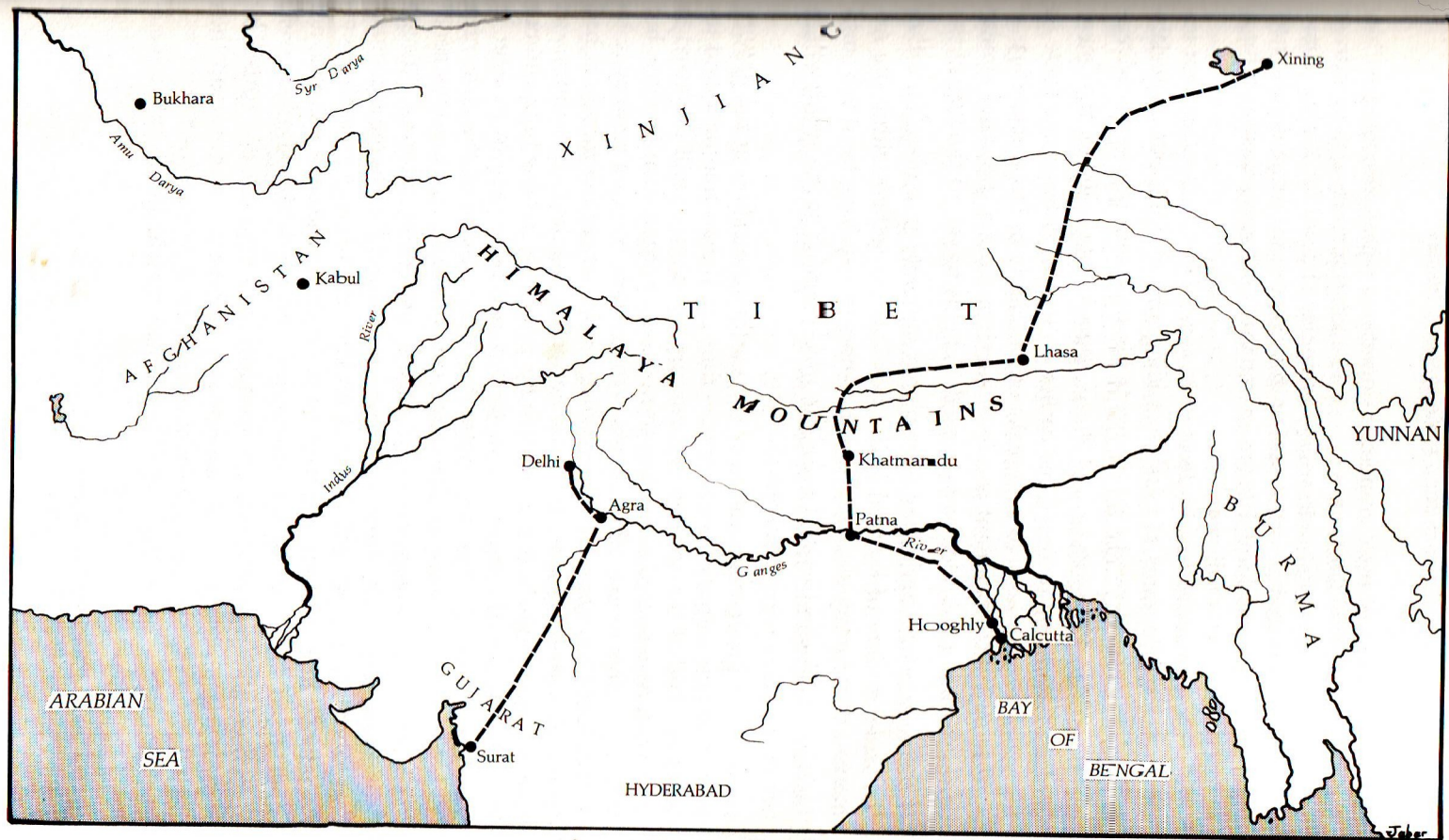
TEXTILES FROM INDIA



# Two networks

- Hadrami – Influential writing by Enseng Ho
- Armenians – a massive network that stretched from Armenia to Iran, to Ethiopia to India

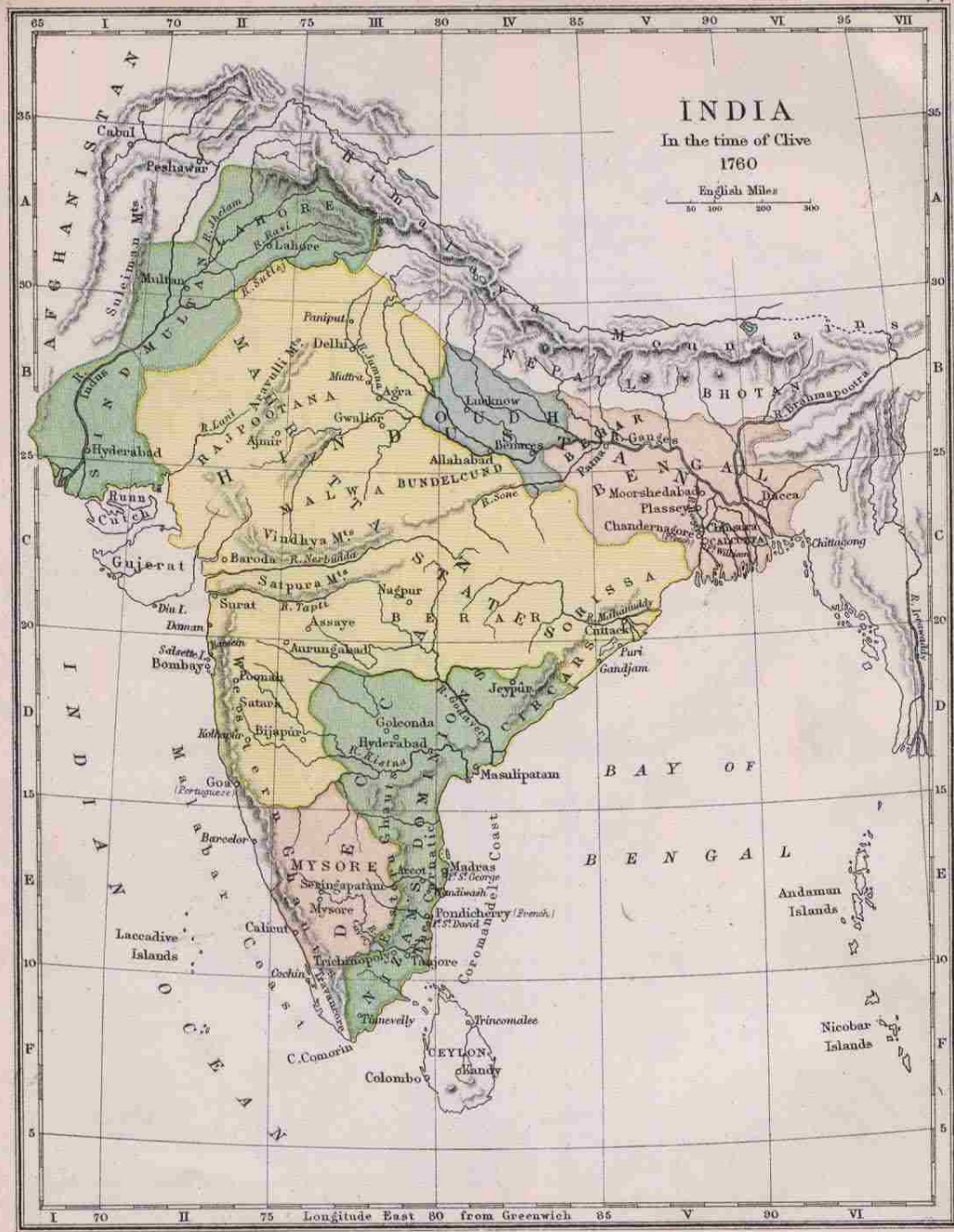




Map 9.4. The travels of Hovvannes

# Bullion and the Banias

- Hundi and credit networks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
- Mughal India a great absorber of silver
- Hundi networks extending in India and overseas
- Later networks like shikarpuris financing even khanates in central Asia



# Imperial Connections

- Circulation of Indian capital and labour
- New networks of empire
- Sociological explanations for success of Chettiar, Gujarati enterprise in the Indian Ocean.
- Creation of a greater India category? A jingoist impulse or a new narrative of the global Indian?

# Circulation of culture in the Indian Ocean

- Can we look at new networks now?
- Can we speak of Indian Ocean cities or even experiences?
- Can we look at the space of the Ocean as an useful heuristic category of analysis?