



HISTORY CHAPTER - 1

TRACING CHANGES THROUGH A THOUSAND YEARS

Map By Arab Geographer Al- Idrisi(1154)

TRADING CHANGES THROUGH A THOUSAND YEARS



Map 1
A historical map of the Indian subcontinent, showing the region of south India and Sri Lanka. The map is oriented with south at the top, which is a key feature of Al-Idrisi's map. The map shows the coastline and some internal features, but the details are less precise than modern maps.

Map 2
A modern map of the Indian subcontinent, showing the region of south India and Sri Lanka. The map is oriented with north at the top, which is the standard orientation for modern maps. The map shows the coastline and internal features in much more detail than Map 1.

Cartographer
Al-Idrisi

Cartographer
A modern cartographer

Trade routes
The map shows the trade routes between the Indian subcontinent and the rest of the world, highlighting the importance of the Indian Ocean trade routes.

Text:
Take a look at Maps 1 and 2. Map 1 was made in 1154 A.D. by the Arab geographer al-Idrisi. The version reproduced here is a detail of the Indian subcontinent from his larger map of the world. Map 2 was made in the 1700s by a French cartographer. The two maps are quite different even though they are of the same area. In al-Idrisi's map, south India is where we would expect to find north India and Sri Lanka is the island at the top. Place names are written in Arabic.

- In Al – Idrisi's map, south India is where we would expect to find north India and Sri Lanka is the island at the top.
- Place-names are marked in Arabic.
- Information of area was less.

Atlas Nouveau of Guillaume de l'Isle



The subcontinent, from the early eighteenth century Atlas Nouveau of Guillaume de l'Isle.

- This map was made by a French cartographer in 1720s.
- This map seems more familiar to us and the coastal areas in particular are detailed.
- This map was used by European sailors on their voyages.
- Equally important is the fact that the science of cartography differed in the two periods.

New and Old Terminologies

Historical records exist in a variety of languages.

The term Hindustan was coined by Minhaj-i-Siraj, a chronicler who wrote in Persian for areas around Punjab, Haryana and the lands between Ganga and Yamuna.

Babur used Hindustan to describe the subcontinent along with its flora and fauna.

Fourteenth-century poet Amir Khusrau used the word Hind.

In Hindi the term 'pardesi' was used to describe an alien. In Persian it was called 'ajnabi'.

Historians and their Sources

The information about medieval period is derived from two sources: Archaeological and Literary.



Archaeological sources available to us include monuments, temples, coins, tombs, ornaments and paintings.



Since paper became available in good quantum, a lot of written accounts in the form of chronicles, autobiographies, farmaans and accounts of foreign travellers is available from this period in Persian and Arabic.

Regions and Empires

Large states like those of the Cholas, Tughluqs, or Mughals encompassed many regions.



A Sanskrit prashasti that praises Delhi Sultan Balban tells that he was ruler of a vast empire that stretched from Bengal in the east to Ghazni in Afghanistan in the west and included all of the South India (Dravida).



There were considerable conflicts between various states.



When the Mughals empire declined in the 18th century, it led to the re-emergence of regional states.

New Social and Political Groups

The study of the thousand years between 700 and 1750 is a huge challenge to historians largely because of the scale and variety of developments that occurred over the period.

It was a period of great mobility. One such group of people was Rajputra. Other group of warriors were Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms and Kayasthas.

Throughout this period there was a gradual clearing of forests and the extension of agriculture. Changes in their habitat forced many forest – dwellers to migrate.

As society became more differentiated, people were grouped into jatis or sub-castes and ranked on the basis of their backgrounds and their occupations.

Ranks were not fixed permanently, and varied accordingly to the power, influence and resources controlled by the members of the jati.

Questions-

- ▶ Who is a cartographer?
- ▶ Who was Al – Idrisi?
- ▶ Who used the word 'Hind'?
- ▶ How do we know about the medieval history?
- ▶ How did the French cartographer depict India?
- ▶ In what ways has the meaning of the term 'Hindustan' changed over centuries?