

Clockwise from top, an Ottoman-period handwritten manuscript map by al-Qazwini from Forschungsbibliothek, Gotha; the detail of the Indian Ocean according to al-Idrisi's regional maps in the reconstruction of Konrad Miller from the Bodleian Library; the Indian Ocean according to al-Idrisi's world map.

Southeast Asia in Classical Islamic Cartography¹

MAPS IN THEIR ESSENTIAL FORM are essentially simplified representations of a people's daily environment. One of the more well-known ancient maps is found on a Babylonian tablet dating to 600 BC (Millard: 111–2, fig. 6.10; Dilke: 12–13). It purportedly depicts Babylon within a rectangular box with several small circles indicating polities surrounding it. This is thought to be the first attempt to represent the world through its depictions of the territorial reach of the Babylonian empire. The oldest known map was found in Nuzi, next to Kirkuk, Iraq. It consisted of a clay tablet dated to 2300 BC (Millard: 113, fig. 6.11).

Thus, the most ancient of all preserved maps are related to the first well-known empires, such as Egypt and Sumer, Akkad, and Babylon that were clustered between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. These maps in common depict the capital surrounded by its corresponding territories that constitute the periphery of empire. They present graphic representations of experience and knowledge of territories that had been dominated and controlled by a sovereign.

Asia in ancient cartography

In a later epoch of history, the Mediterranean Sea came to be considered the center that divided the world in two halves, according to Greek civilization dating from the time of Homer (eighth century BC). The Mediterranean world was thought to represent the *οικουμένη*/*oikoumene* or “the inhabited world.” This concept prevailed many centuries later.

It was Hecataeus of Miletus (ca. 550–476 BC) who became the first Greek to prepare a *mappaemundi* or world map. The *Periodus* or *Description of the Earth* of Hecataeus is the first known global description of the Earth. The map is divided in two parts: Europe and Asia. Europe occupies a quarter of the Earth, Asia two quarters, and Africa (Lybia) the last quarter. The Mediterranean is considered the divider, with *Oceanus*, the “Surrounding

Sea, enclosing the three continents. The current Persian Gulf is depicted as a small sea contiguous to India, which is located opposite the Caspian Sea. Consequently, this map documents China and the wide Asian steppes, with the Indian Ocean and its archipelagos located in the periphery [Fig. 1] (Aujac 1987a, 134–5, fig. 8.5).

The conquests of Alexander III of Macedon (b. Lump, 356 BC–d. Babylon, 323 BC), popularly known as Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, extended the data about the known world, especially on Asia. From his epic life the Greek world acquired relevant knowledge of Persia and even India (Aujac 1987c, 149).

Eratosthenes of Cyrene (ca. 275–194 BC) included India and the Indian Ocean in a map in his *Geographica*—although not extant—that served as a basis for the works of Strabo and Ptolemy [Fig. 2]. In 240 BC, Eratosthenes became the librarian of the renowned Library of Alexandria. He was famed for his calculation of the circumference of the Earth (with a minimal error of 5 percent) and the first map with transversal parallel lines that indicated latitude. With these, he divided the Earth in meridians and parallels although only applying it to known places. The system was later applied in the second century BC by Hipparchus of Nicaea. In his map we can find India in the easternmost edge of the world and the Indian Ocean between Africa and south of the Arabian peninsula. Remarkably, a major island of the Indian Ocean—Taprobane (Ceylon, the current Sri Lanka) is depicted in it for the first time. This is the only island of the Indian Ocean represented in ancient Greek maps (Aujac 1987c, 153–7, fig. 10.9; Dilke 1985, 32–35).



Fig. 1. Reconstruction of Hecataeus of Miletus's world map. From Aujac 1987a: 135.

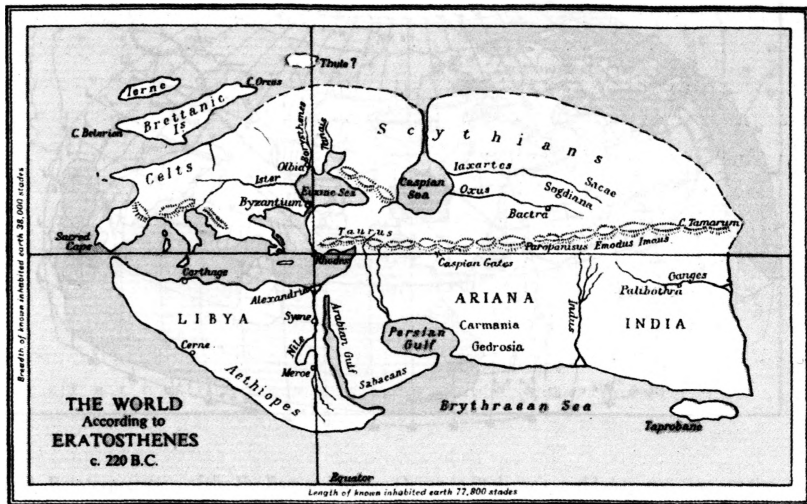


Fig. 2. Simplified reconstruction of Eratosthenes of Cyrene's map of the inhabited world, based on north-south and east-west lines intersecting at Rhodes in the Mediterranean Sea. From Dilke 1985: 33.

After Eratosthenes, other Greek maps represented India, the Indian Ocean, and the big island of Taprobane in a similar way, such as in the world maps of Hipparchus of Nicaea (190–120 BC), Dionysius Periegetes (125 BC) and the geographic description of Strabo of Amasia (63 BC–ca. 21 BC). Afterwards the definitive contribution of Ptolemy's scientific geography emerged (Aujac 1987b: 162–175, fig. 10.8, 10.9).

Claudius Ptolemy lived at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century AD. His work marked the peak of ancient cartography and the end of significant Alexandrian vigor in this field. Ptolemy was an Alexandria-based astronomer and author of an astronomical treatise (150 BC) and the most valuable *Γεωγραφικὴ ὑφήγησις*/*Geografiké yfégesis* or *Geography Guide* that contained maps of the world [Fig. 3]. Unfortunately, not a single map remains today. However, his famous *Geography Guide* provided fundamental information for reconstructing the places known during the epoch, as well as inspired countless maps that employed his rules.

Several characteristics of Ptolemy's cartography were a north orientation, the calculation of the grid coordinates of each town, and the reproduction of the terrestrial globe by means of a conical projection. These were the first maps to use a mathematical shape in methodologically determining precise locations on a conical projection, although it had led to several errors like the excessive extension of the Euro-Asiatic terrestrial plate. The

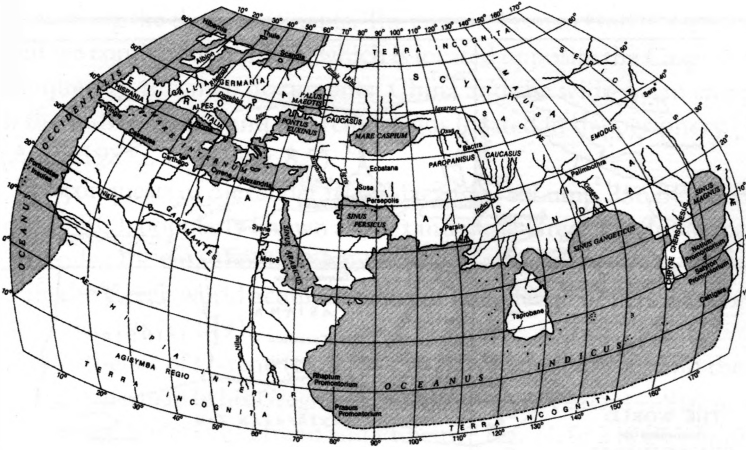


Fig. 3. Reconstruction of a Claudius Ptolemy's world map, in his second projection. From Dilke 1987: 184.

oikoumene was divided into seven climates subdivided into twenty-one sections to the north of the equator and four to the south (Dilke 1985, 154–166; 1987, fig. 11.3).

The Indian Ocean in Ptolemaic maps is presented as a lake enclosing the island of Taprobane (Ceylon), with greater dimensions than in actuality. Smaller islands emerged for the first time: Menuthias (Zanzibar), Lanquedivis (Maldives Islands), Maniolae (Nicobar), Barussae (Sumatra?), Sindae (Nias?) Agathodaemonis (?), Savadivae (Blitong?) and Java Diu (Java) [Fig. 4]. Ptolemy's work dramatically influenced European cartographers over hundreds of years until the Renaissance. In spite of this influence, no copy of his ancient maps survived. The most ancient copy of Ptolemaic maps in Europe dates only from the fifteenth century.

The first Islamic maps depicting Southeast Asia

Fifty years ago the Spanish scholar Juan Vernet (1953) demonstrated the Islamic origin of nautical cartography, which he based on several documents that mentioned the existence of maps depicting the coasts of the Indian Ocean as early as the ninth century AD. Chinese annals confirm in the middle of the ninth century the existence of regular communication between the Islamic centers in the Middle East and China.

This commerce was realized along India and Ceylon and was monopolized mainly by Iranian ports such as Siraf. Pilots transmitted their actual knowledge and experiences to their families, which considered them

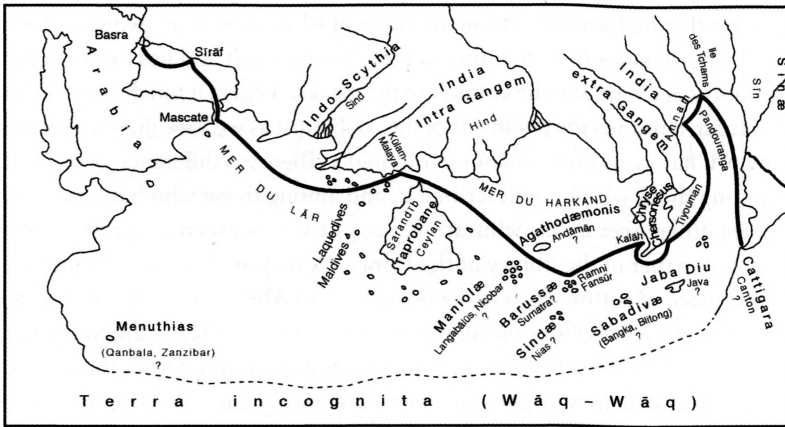


Fig. 4. Reinterpretation of the Far East and Indian Ocean in Ptolemy's world map, pointing out the route linking the port of Basra with China. Based on Miquel, 79, fig. 19.

a hereditary treasure. Meanwhile, the fantastic stories about their travels were also transmitted to their fellow citizens. Accordingly, these traditions contributed to the birth of a specific kind of book, the *'Ajā'ib* (marvels, *mirabilia*), extraordinary stories related to the marine lore of the Indian Ocean.²

The knowledge of the monsoons—fundamental to the development of maritime routes—goes back to Eudoxus of Cyzicus (ca. 130 BC) who disseminated it around the Greek world, though the Persians became the first ones to profit from it. It is known that Greek merchants from Egypt traded as far as Ceylon and India during Strabo's times and that from the first century BC on, knowledge of the monsoons was used for commercial ends. Between the third and the sixth centuries, Ceylon became one of the major trading destinations in the Indian Ocean, particularly for merchants from Persia and the Ethiopian kingdom of Axum.³ Undoubtedly, the knowledge of the seasons allowed Arab and Persian sailors to develop regular commercial traffic for a silk maritime route. The very name of monsoon comes from the Arab *mawsim*, "date or station in which something is done" (Vernet 1978, 234; Hourani 1947; 1951).

Pilots and navigators of the Indian Ocean developed different navigational instruments such as the so-called nautical charts (Vernet 1953, 53–55; Ferrand 1924, 257). Al-Muqaddasī—Arab geographer of Persian origin—mentioned these charts in his geographical work, which was written around 378 AH./ 988 AD (Al-Muqaddasī Engl. transl, xiv):

Know that we have not seen in the realm of Islām more than two seas.⁴ One of the two issues from the direction of the southeast and lies between the country of China and the country of the blacks.⁵ Where it touches the realm of Islām it rounds the peninsula of the Arabs, just as we have drawn it on the map. It has many gulfs and numerous inlets. There is a difference of account among those who have described it, and among those who have mapped it are differences in his delineation. [...] I have also seen a representation of it on paper in the library of the Prince (Amīr) of Ḥurāsān and another on a piece of cotton cloth in the possession of Abū l-Qāsim Ibn al-Annāfi, en Nisapur (Naysābūr) also in the library of ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, and in that of al-Şāhib [Ibn ‘Abbād]. Well, each representation differed from the others, and some of them were gulfs and inlets unknown to me. [...] Thus I became acquainted with men of standing who were born and bred there—shipmasters, cargo masters, coastguards, commercial agents, and merchants—and I considered them among the most discerning of people about this sea, and its anchorages, its winds and its islands. I questioned them about it, about the conditions on it, and about its limits. I noticed, too, in their possession navigation instructions⁶ which they study carefully together and on which they rely completely, proceeding according to what is in them. From these sources I took copious notes of essential information, after I had studied them and evaluated them; and this I compared with the maps I have referred to.

Now one day, as I was sitting with Abū ‘Alī Ibn Ḥāzim and looking at the sea—we were on the shore at ‘Adan—said he to me: “What is it with which you seem to me to be so preoccupied?” Said I: “God support the Şaykh! My mind is perplexed concerning this sea, so great is the number of conflicting accounts of it. The Şaykh now is the most knowledgeable of men about it, because he is chief of the merchants, and his ships are continually travelling to the furthestmost parts of it. Should he be willing to give me a description of it I can rely on, and relieve me of doubt about it, perhaps he will do so.” Said he: “You have encountered an expert in the matter!” He smoothed the sand with the palm of his hand and drew a figure of the sea on it [Map. 5]. It was neither a *ṭaylasān*,⁷ nor a bird. But he showed it having gulfs, tongues, and numerous bays. Then said he: “This is a representation of this sea, it has no other form but this.” I shall draw a rather general map of it, however, and omit the gulfs and bays, except for the gulf of Wayla, because it is important, and because of the great need for intelligence of it, and the frequency of voyages over it. I omit anything on which there is disagreement, and include only that on which there is complete accord (Al-Muqaddasī, Ar, 10–11; Engl. transl, 10–11; Fr. transl, 29–32).”

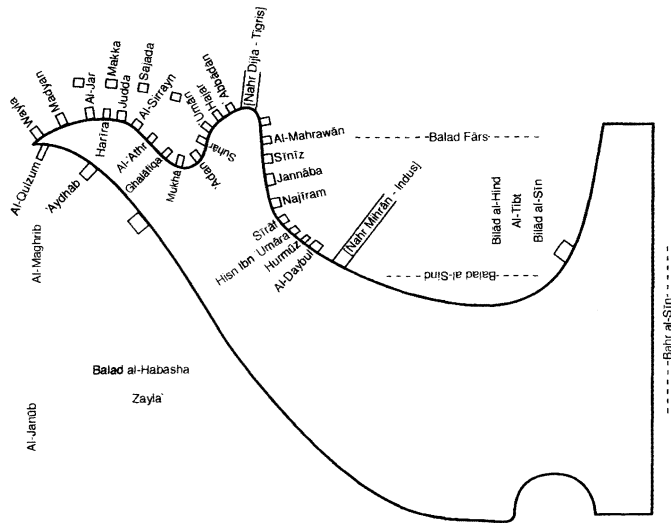


Fig. 5. Reinterpretation of the Indian Ocean in al-Muqaddasi's work. Based on a manuscript from *Oriental Teilung* in Berlin, Ahlwardt 6034, reproduced in Arabic 12, Engl. transl. 339.

The text is sufficiently informative. It continues then with the description of the sea, indicating famous places and seasons. After the Persian Gulf he describes Oman ('Umān), Sea of Harkand (Bay of Bengal), with the islands of Sarandīb (Ceylon), the place of Kalah,⁸ the island of al-Ramī (Sumatra),⁹ and the island of Usqūtra (Socotra) (Al-Muqaddasī, Ar. 13–14; Engl. trans., 14; Fr. trans., 29–32). Of the whole Indian Ocean he mentioned only these four islands, but in his map he did not represent any of those [see Fig. 5], possibly because—as he himself affirms in his earlier copied text—he encountered different opinions as to their map location.

The text of al-Muqaddasī makes clear that in the middle of the tenth century AD Indian Ocean sailors were already navigating using *portulanos* and nautical charts, which gave them a clear sea route, aided by their astronomical instruments. On the other hand, it is important to notice how al-Muqaddasī distinguishes clearly nautical cartography from that of the scholars and intellectuals, which were considered artistic maps for princes, kings, and magnates.

Ibn Ḥawqal is another Iraqi geographer who belongs to the same geographical and cartographic school as al-Muqaddasī, the so-called “School of al-Balkhī,” named after its first master (Tibbets 1992). The research of

Abū Zayd al-Balkhī was transmitted by al-Iṣṭakhri. Finally, the written work and cartography of al-Iṣṭakhri was completed by both Ibn Ḥawqal and independently by al-Muqaddasī (Franco-Sánchez 2005).

Ibn Ḥawqal's *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, "Book of the Description of the Earth," is complementary to the work of al-Muqaddasī, both being writing around the year 378 AH/ 988 AD. There is a chapter dedicated to the Indian Ocean (*Baḥr Fāris*), which extensively details local places and coasts. However, its main goal was to indicate immediate populations around the Nile, as well as in the well-known ports of the African coast. India, Tibet, and China are scarcely cited, and a few islands of the Persian Gulf and Ceylon are mentioned without further details (Ibn Ḥawqal, Ar. ed, 42–59; Fr. transl, 40–56). Perhaps this is the reason why al-Muqaddasī focused more on the Indian Ocean in a desire to complement the work of Ibn Ḥawqal.

Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ [Fig. 6] represents the Indian Ocean. Ibn Ḥawqal also includes four islands: Qanbalā (Madagascar); Sarandīb (Ceylon), Sribuza (Sumatra) and Sumbawa. Madagascar is located opposite the coast of the south of Africa and the three others are located in the same limits of the Indian Ocean before merging into the Surrounding Ocean (*Baḥr al-Muḥī*) (Ibn Ḥawqal, Ar. ed, 45; Fr. trans., 44–45, fig. 3).

Al-Muqaddasī's description is based on nautical documents on the Indian Ocean from the eleventh century onwards. However, this cartography

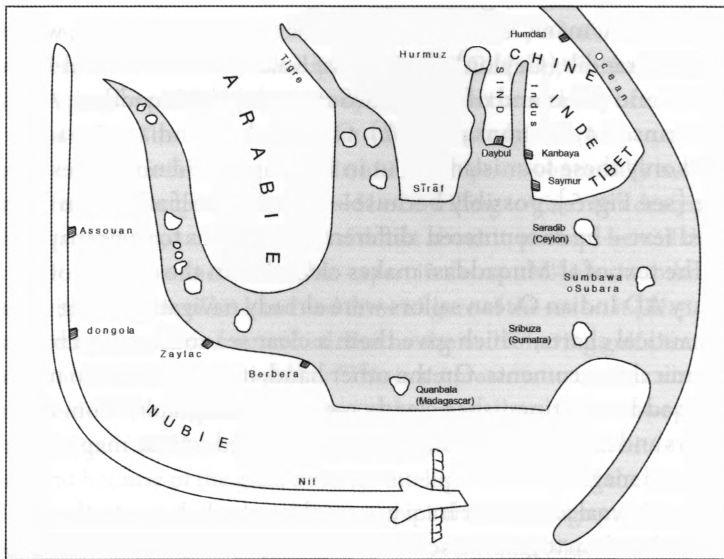


Fig. 6. Interpretation of the Indian Ocean and Far East after Ibn Ḥawqal. Based on Miquel, 81, fig. 18

that should have been a direct utility for the pilots and navigators has not survived. In contrast, the map of the Indian Ocean by Ibn Ḥawqal—datable to around the year 988—is one of the most ancient pictorial Arab-Islamic depiction of the Indian Ocean and its islands.

Southeast Asia in the world map known as *Ṣūrat Al-Ma'mūniya*

Based in Iraq, the 'Abbāsīd dynasty governed the Islamic caliphate from the overthrow of the Umayyads in 132 AH/ 750 AD up to the capture of Baghdad by the Mongolian hordes in 656 AH/1258 AD. This long period is called *Mamlakat al-Islām* (Islamic empire) by many historians due to the ascension to power of non-Arabic elements, who were already fully Muslim but with cosmopolitan origins. In particular, the human and cultural element of Persian origin played a leading role.

The caliph Abū Ja'far Al-Manṣūr (135–58 AH/753–75 AD), founder of Baghdad in 762 BC, initiated the development of the mathematical and cosmographic sciences. This dabbling in experimental knowledge also fostered the development of geography as a major science. A significant external influence in at least as far as geographical and astronomical knowledge was concerned came from India.

The succeeding caliph, al-Ma'mūn (197–218 AH/813–33 AD) had a taste for the works of ancient Greece, encouraging translations into the Arabic language. He patronized a group of wise to develop this work of translation and study that became known as *Bayt al-ḥikma* (House of Wisdom). The contributions of this group of scientists extended in all the fields of Arabic science. Regarding geography, the result of this endeavor was the *Ṣūrat al-Ma'mūniya* or al-Ma'mūn's World Map (Kennedy 1997). Nevertheless, no copy has survived.

At present three hypotheses exist as to the final form of this map. The less probable and older one was described by Egyptian prince Youssouf Kamal (1926–52) in his monumental compilation of geographical texts and cartography. It recalls very much the restitution raised by Konrad Miller on the map of al-Idrisī, the origin of the *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq*. Its parallels and latitudes are depicted, and the regions are framed in. In this hypothetical reconstruction, either the Indian Ocean or its islands are scarcely included.

Chronologically, the second interpretive hypothesis is that of Fuat Sezgin (1987, 18–20, fig. 10, 11). He was of the opinion that the map that appeared at the beginning of the work of Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (700–49 AH/1301–49 AD) named *Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār* was the only preserved copy of the map prepared in al-Ma'mūn's court. Based on this, A. Jokhosha prepared a hypothesis on what would have been the original map

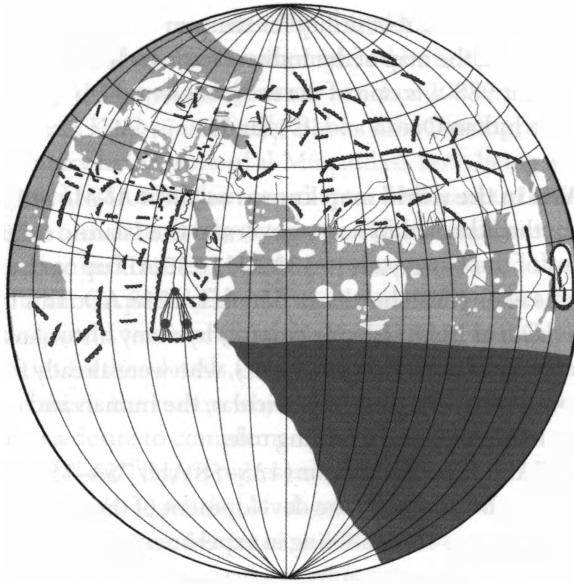


Fig. 7. Hypothesis of the *Sūrat al-Ma'mūniya* by A. Jokhosh. Based on Sezgin, fig. 10.

[Fig. 7]. This late reconstruction distantly resembles the map of al-Idrīsī that has been preserved in a copy of Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima* (Franco-Sánchez 2008), but in a very primitive form. The superposed grid of latitudes appears as well, but it denotes that it is actually an Islamic copy that should be classified as a precedent of the "Evolved Greek-Islamic cartography." Precisely the Indian Ocean already does not appear as a closed sea (like in the Ptolemaic cartography). We have to highlight that in this map a large number of islands are included in the Indian Ocean, but it does not mention the names of more than six of them: *Jazīrat al-Miyādh* (next to the Arabian peninsula), *Sarandīb* (Ceylon), *al-'Ād*, *al-Zanj*, *al-Fiḍā* (two different islands located along the westernmost edge), and inside the ocean proper *Jazīrat al-Yāqūt*. Only Ceylon is easily identifiable.

Finally, Francisco Castelló (1982) proposed that the seventeenth-century work of al-Sūlī had been derived from the *Kitāb al-Ja'rāfiya* by al-Zuhri (died between 1154 and 1161). Al-Zuhri stated that his work was at the same time a commentary of a map that had been done by Ibrāhīm Ibn abī al-Fazārī. The link to the *Šūrat al-Ma'mūniya* is that al-Fazārī based his map on Greek geographical knowledge, and this map—in turn—would have been the base of the *Šūrat al-Ma'mūniya*. The map discussed by al-Zuhri was reproduced by al-Sūlī in the seventeenth century (Bramon 1991, 15–16, Appendix 2).



Fig. 8. *Šūrat al-Ma'mūniya*. Detail of the Indian Ocean in al-Šūlī's map (dated 977 H/1570 AD) from the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Or. 317). Plate 10 in *The History of Cartography 2*, no. 1. Edited by J. B. Harley and D. Woodward. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Al-Sūlī's is not a good quality map. Nevertheless, it is possible to see the lines delineating the seven classical climes (*aqālim*), as well as numerous legends in Arab that indicate the location of the enclaves, regions, and peoples of the world. In this map the Indian Ocean is represented in a schematic way, with a multitude of unnamed islands that spread over the whole sea up to the edge of Asia. Only two indications in red appear: *al-Baḥr al-Hind* (Sea of India), and *al-Baḥr al-Šīn* (Sea of China) [Fig. 8]

Southeast Asia in the “evolved Greek-Islamic cartography”

Ptolemy was translated into Arabic several times during the ‘Abbāsīd period. The translation of Muḥammad Ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī (d. ca. 847) incorporated the contemporary data acquired by the Arabs in maps of which only two little diagrams have been preserved. The book of Tābit Ibn Qurra (d. 901) also contained maps, none of which are extant. Al-Mas'ūdī (915–56) used Ptolemaic information as well for his works and maps. Al-Hamdānī (893–950) included partial and abridged translations in the introduction to his *Šifa Jazīrat al-'Arab* (Description of the Arabian Peninsula). And the anonymous Turkish manuscript *Aya Sofya* (n° 2610) is a later copy (1465) of a more ancient work. This Turkish copy is actually a translation of Ptolemy's geography and tables, and preserves Ptolemy's maps translated into Arabic.

After being analyzed by Arab astronomers, Ptolemy's cartography led to a few new conclusions on the astronomical positions of the places of the world. Due to this hybrid method of using both Ptolemaic and Islamic traditions, we could call it as "evolved Greek-Islamic cartography."

The Islamic transmission of Ptolemy produced an evolved cartography that differs substantially from the original in two aspects. Firstly, it did not follow the Ptolemaic technique of conical projection. The cartographers drew the parallels and meridians as straight lines, without taking into account the sphericity of earth. Secondly, there were remarkable differences in the configuration of the continents: the Indian Ocean in the maps of the Islamic tradition communicates with the Pacific (the Surrounding Ocean), and Ceylon island is represented in reduced dimensions compared to that in the maps of Ptolemy. In other words, if the first represents a different technical approach, the second manifests new empirical data provided by Islamic navigation, which connected India with the Pacific Ocean.

These differences owe to the fact that Muslim geographers and cartographers were more acquainted with Asia and Africa. Also Islamic astronomers had scrutinized the astronomical tables of their Greek predecessors on the basis of their own observations and the new techniques of calculation using spherical trigonometry. Consequently, due to the Islamic navigation in the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia finally emerged in world cartography.

Conclusions

The Indian Ocean and the Chinese Sea had already become well-known from the ninth century AD. Arabs, Persians, and other Muslim seamen navigated these waters to bring to the Middle East the products of the Far East. Together with these goods, the knowledge of the routes of navigation along these seas became a major asset in carrying the commerce of this lucrative market.

In this brief summary we have documented how the first Arab-Islamic cartographic works charted these seas and lands that had been well-known by Muslim merchants. The pictorial representation did not go so far as to embody the deeper knowledge that the pilots of the Indian Ocean hoarded about its coasts and islands. Perhaps it is necessary to deduce that it was a question of privileged knowledge. These merchants were careful not to reveal too much in order to avoid competition from other navigators. Also, it is necessary to consider that the geography and cartography of this first age of splendor of the Islamic empire focused on describing the proper empire of Islam, and when they already managed to have precise knowledge of the same, its political fragmentation eventually prevented the expansion of this cartographic work beyond the limits of the empire.

Strangely, al-Idrīsī (493–560 AH/ 1099–1165 AD) became the preeminent Islamic geographer and cartographer by completing a universal work, which he accomplished by sending informers to the farthest reaches of the world. He was born in Ceuta and worked for the Norman king Roger II of Sicily. That is to say, the the highest achievement of the Islamic cartography took place under the patronage of a Christian king on the island of Sicily. It is not possible to find a more detailed Islamic geographical work until the seventeenth century.

Remarkably, the work that had greater circulation and impact during the Renaissance was the translation of a summary of al-Idrīsī's compendium of geographic information, *Nuzhat al-muštāq*. This brief and abridged summary of his work bears the honor of being the first secular Arab work printed in Europe. It was done in the Medici press of Rome in 1592. This edition was later translated by the Italian polymath Bernardino Baldi in an unpublished manuscript in the University of Montpellier. In 1619 Gabriel Sionita and Joannes Hesronita translated it into Latin. The 1592 edition has been a source of knowledge and authority for many centuries (Oman 1970, 1059). In this work the Indian Ocean is represented as an open sea merging into the surrounding ocean, which is full of islands, some of which are already relatively well placed in the map, but the denomination of many of them is difficult to identify. In sum, Islamic cartography incorporated the factual knowledge of Muslim navigators of the Indian Ocean, which was depicted as a link between the Middle East and the Far East. Through Islamic seafaring activity, new data was continually incorporated into the ancient traditions—mainly Ptolemaic—and the easternmost regions of the Earth emerged, thus revealing the existence of their inhabitants.

NOTES

1. This study was developed within the framework of I+D Excellence Research Project. Ref. FFI2014-5863-P of the Spanish Ministry of Education.

2. The most ancient of them was *Ajbār al-Šin wa-l-Hind*, "Stories of China and India," which seems to have been written around 236 AH/851 AD for the merchant Sulaymān (Sauvaget 1948) in the port of Sirāf. In these stories are contained the adventures of Sinbād, datable towards the end of the third century AH/ninth century AD or beginning of the fourth century AH/tenth AD, indicating it was been written in the capital Baghdad or in the port city of Basra.

3. A number of Roman coins dating from the third century of our era were found on the island. An embassy from one of the rulers of Taprobane even visited Rome. Ceylon was already famous in Islamic times when it was better known as Sarandīb.

4. Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean.

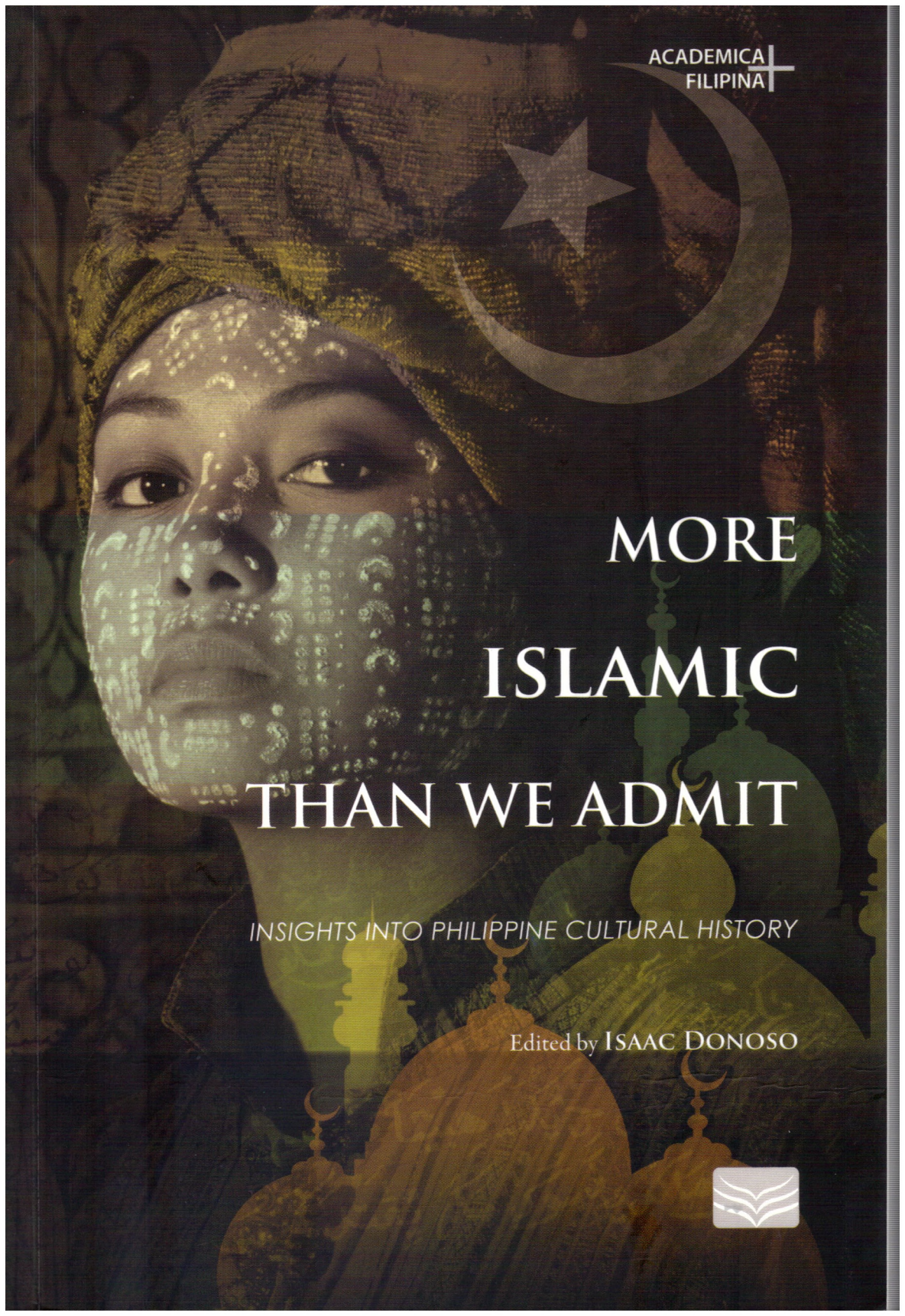
5. *Bilād al-Sudān*, "Nation of the Blacks."
6. *Dafātir*, "notebooks."
7. A typical costume in Iraq.
8. As André Miquel pointed out, al-Kalah was located in a "*parages du détroit de Malacca*" (al-Muqaddasī, Fr. trans., 38, n° 28).
9. It is still called in Arabic Ramnī, Lambri, or Lamuri (al-Muqaddasī, Fr. trans., 39, n° 29)

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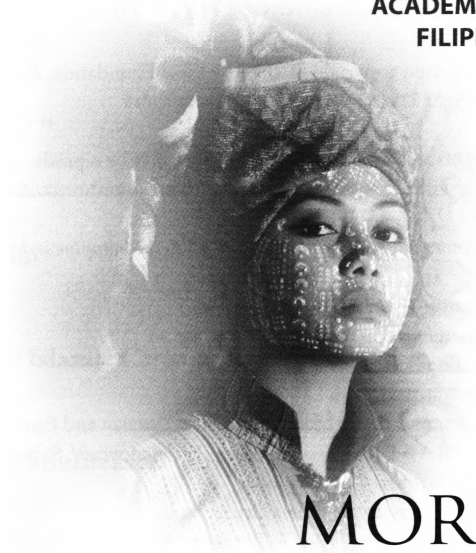
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Edited by ISAAC DONOSO

Foreword by SAMUEL K. TAN



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MORE ISLAMIC THAN WE ADMIT
PHILIPPINE ISLAMIC CULTURAL HISTORY

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In memory of Juan R. Francisco, the greatest Philippine Indologist.

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On the cover: Portrait of a Yakan bride. Used with permission of Per-André Hoffmann.

Published by Vibal Foundation, Inc.

1253 G. Araneta Avenue
Quezon City, 1104 Philippines
Tel. No. +632 712-2722
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The National Library of the Philippines CIP Data

Recommended entry:

More Islamic than We Admit : insights into Philippine cultural history / edited by Isaac Donoso. -- Quezon City : Vibal Foundation, Inc., [c2017].
360 pages ; 15.24 x 22.86 cm -- *Academica Filipina.*

ISBN: 978-971-97-0684-7 (softbound)
ISBN: 978-971-97-0685-4 (hardbound)

1. Islam -- Philippines -- History. 2. Philippines -- Civilization -- Islamic influence. 3. Muslims -- Philippines. 4. Philippines -- Social life and customs. 5. Islam -- Economic aspects -- Philippines -- Mindanao. 6. Economics -- Islam. I. Donoso, Isaac.

297.2709599 BP63.P5 2015 P520150280

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MORE ISLAMIC THAN WE ADMIT

Islam was the first cultural trend in the Philippine archipelago and Islamic culture had and has a dramatic role in the Philippine civilization. Despite being known as the only predominantly Christian country in Asia, the Philippines was also the easternmost edge of the classical Islamic world. Contact with the Spaniards and the legacy of al-Andalus will prove an essential element in defining Islamicity in the Philippines. Modernity has triggered a conundrum of identity for Muslims in the Philippines. Thus, from armed conflict to new conversion, Filipino Muslims have struggled to define a coherent history in the context of Asia. This book is the first attempt to analyze in a broad sense the capital elements of an Islamic identity in the Philippine islands, in order to have a synopsis that can reconcile Philippine Islam within the history of Islamic civilization.

More Islamic than We Admit is an astonishingly multifaceted and pioneering exploration into the forgotten history of Islam in the Philippines from a truly global perspective. As a whole, it provides a rich tapestry of linguistic, historical, art-historical, anthropological and theological threads and as such pays tribute to the wide variety of Islamic culture in the Philippines.

—JOS GOMMANS, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY, NETHERLANDS

The volume More Islamic than We Admit is really an excellent collection of articles written by fourteen Muslim and non-Muslim scholars documenting a whole range studies, from practically the earliest beginnings of the Islamization of Sulu and Mindanao (pre-contact period of the Sulu archipelago, Hindu-Buddhistic concepts), locating them in the context of Islamic traditions from Arabia (Abbasid Caliphate), Island Southeast Asia, and China, to Southern Philippines. Truly it can be said that the Philippines was “culturally fostered by both Islam and Christianity.”

—BERNARDITA REYES CHURCHILL,
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ABOUT THE EDITOR ISAAC DONOSO holds a doctorate in Islamic studies and master's degrees in humanities and in Hispanic philology from the University of Alicante in Spain. He also has master's degree in Islamic studies from the University of the Philippines and in music from the University of the La Rioja in Spain. In 2004 and 2008 he was awarded the research prize Ibn al-Abbar, the most important Spanish award for Islamic studies. His published works include *Islamic For East: Ethnogenesis of Philippine Islam* (2013), as well as a critical edition of José Rizal's *Noli me tangere* (2011) and prose works (2012), and of Jesús Balmori's novel *Los párajos de fuego* (2010). He also edited the volumes *More Hispanic than We Admit: Insights into Philippine Cultural History* (2008) and *Historia cultural de la lengua española en Filipinas: ayer y hoy* (2012). He currently teaches at the University of Alicante.



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