

Khatun, Toslima (2022)

Spices and perfumes in early medieval globalism and their socio-political effects, 80-494 A.H. /700-1100 A.D.

PhD thesis. SOAS University of London

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25501/SOAS.00036816>

<https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/36816/>

Copyright © and Moral Rights for this thesis are retained by the author and/or other copyright owners.

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder/s.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

When referring to this thesis, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given e.g. AUTHOR (year of submission) "Full thesis title", name of the School or Department, PhD Thesis, pagination.

Title: Spices and perfumes in early medieval globalism and their socio-political effects,

80-494 A.H. /700-1100 A.D.

Course: PhD in Near and Middle Eastern History

Name: Toslima Khatun

First Supervisor: Professor Hugh Kennedy

Second Supervisor: Dr Roy Fischel

Word Count: 92,735

Acknowledgements

To my immigrant parents who survived a civil war to live across the world and live their whole lives for their children, and to my siblings Sufi, Sufan, Rahima and Lily (I know you will check).

A massive thank you to Prof. Hugh Kennedy, Dr Roy Fischel and Dr Philipp Wirtz as well for explaining the field of academia from my MA up until now when I had no guidance. I would have been lost without your constant support.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	6
A note on geographical names.....	7
Transliteration:.....	8
Preface.....	9
Introduction	12
The main contentions this research explores:.....	12
The context this research is working within:	14
What is meant by India and the geography of the borders this research is based within:	22
Raw materials and their definition:	24
Burning perfumes:.....	26
Unguents (liquid perfumes that are applied to skin and hair):.....	28
Spices used for consumption and medicine:	32
Literature and Source Review.....	38
The general historians and geographers from the Caliphate:	38
The Arab geographers and the Indian Ocean trade:.....	40
The specific primary sources on the Indian Ocean trade and the Muslim presence in India:.....	44
Primary sources on Christendom and its relationship with the Caliphate:.....	59
Archaeological sources:	66
The secondary sources; overarching and main source contentions:.....	68
Secondary literature of the Arab Indian Ocean trade and the current historical field:	71
The context of India, its politics and trade, in the current secondary literature:	84
The secondary sources specifically on the Arabs and the Carolingians:	89
Conclusion:	97
Early Medieval Indian Ocean Trade from 80-494 A.H./700-1100 A.D.	100
The context of the regions involved in the Indian Ocean Trade and the term South Asia before the Muslim conquests:	100
Introduction of Arab Muslim contacts and conquests in the Indian Ocean:	107
The explicit and symbolic value of perfumes:.....	117
The cultivation of perfumes and from whence their value came:	122
Spices from South and Southeast Asia:	129
Conclusion:	134
Trade with Caliphs, theologians, and philosophers	136
Introduction:.....	136
Trading in South Asia as a market and as a proxy:.....	147
Perfume; <i>The Accounts of India and China</i> by al-Sīrāfī alongside his contemporaries:	150
The Book of the Wonders of India in the Arab World; the new class of intellectuals and merchants:	163
The wider cross-cultural connections of merchant accounts:	178
The role of new foods and the dangers they potentially brought with them:.....	202
Metals and money in the Caliphate:	211
The formation of the merchant elite and the development of food consumption:	216
Conclusion:	220

Christendom and the Caliphate	225
Introduction:.....	225
The Mediterranean trade and its effects on society:	229
Spices:	236
Perfumes on the European side of the Mediterranean:	244
Conclusion:	252
Conclusion.....	254
Images	259
Coins:	259
Arabic Coins:	259
Manuscript:	261
Latin:.....	261
Maps:	262
English:	262
Raw Materials:.....	266
Bibliography.....	273
Primary Sources	273
Secondary Sources	281

Abstract

The aim of this research is to identify and examine the role of perfumes and spices that came from the Indian Ocean trade into the Caliphate, and through there into the Mediterranean trade. This study is a direct challenge to history writing that suggests that globalization happened as a sudden phenomenon after the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. instead of as a process that occurred gradually over several centuries. This research subscribes to the definition of globalisation as the continuous and ongoing linkages of distant societies in trade, knowledge, and the movement of ‘millions of people from Africa, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia’.¹ But with the caveat that this happened prior to the year 1000 A.D. and includes East and South Asia. It is due to the graduality of this process of interconnectivity that meant that there were genuine connections between the Arab traders and those they met. This was what made areas outside of the Caliphate adopt Islamic culture after a while. The movement of luxury products such as perfumes and spices provided enough incentive in value that communication links had to be made and maintained. The socio-political dynamics and adjustments that were needed to facilitate such links are also a part of this study into the effects of perfumes and spices in early medieval globalism.

¹ Hansen, Valerie. *The Year 1000, When Explorers Connected the World – and Globalization Began*, (New York: Scribner, 2020), 1-9.

A note on geographical names

The name ‘India’ is born out of several variations of the name, that in the colonial period included ‘Hindustan’ and in the Arabic speaking medieval world was called ‘al Hind’. Hence, one needs to be mindful that whilst this research will adhere to the *lingua franca* of the current academic field that uses the term ‘South Asian subcontinent’ and ‘India’ interchangeably, I am referring to the area that existed prior to British decolonisation in 1947 that broke these territories up into smaller nation states. Moreover, due to the same terms being translated in the primary sources that we have available, I should make clear that geographic regions and the naming of nation states will be as true to the original sense as possible but for the reason of continuity, we will also use terms that are familiar such as ‘India’ as it translates well into both the Arabic and English sources that are used.

In terms of the East Asian side of the Indian Ocean, it is important to note that the region that we now identify as ‘China’ is as large and as diverse as Europe, if not more. Its borders, rulership and socio-politics shifted dramatically according to the time and place being referring to. This was especially the case in the early medieval period when actual large, centralised government as we imagine it today was difficult, if not impossible, without smaller local administrations too.²

Indeed prior to the nineteenth century almost all the geographic terms for regions that will be used in this research are different than they are now – especially if the geographers in question had the information filtered down to them through travel accounts from Arab and non-Arab merchants. Even in Europe where nomadic rulership was much more uncommon than the Steppe lands of Asia and the Middle East, the Carolingian Empire spread across most of the area that is considered France and Belgium today as well as most of modern Germany. This is

² Clark, Hugh R. *Community, Trade and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century*, (MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1-4.

an issue with the historiography because the regional names differ with each time they are written in and given that the sources for the following research range from the early medieval period to later literature from the 1800s onwards, regional names can be inaccurate or vague at times. With all of this in mind the regional names (if changed) will be flagged and noted as to why the name changed and the reason why if needed.

Transliteration:

Given that the names as mentioned above shall be the contemporary equivalent, and thus at times in Arabic, or a South Asian vernacular, all the transliteration shall be in the vein of the most popular form that it takes in the current historiography. They may be spelt differently in some other works as there is no one way to spell them, given that the original language has a whole different system in terms of the characters they use for the alphabet. Thus, the reader may assume that ‘Sind’ and ‘Sindh’ when quoted are the same place.

Moreover, in terms of the Arabic original of Burzurg ibn Shahriyār’s work, his work is comprised of two manuscripts that are in one book which means that the page numbers do not always seem consistent with the English translation that I also use. This was the prerogative of the original Japanese study that I had access to, which is why both the Arabic and English versions are included in the footnotes as it helps with cohesion. Interestingly the English call him Burzurg ibn Shahriyār, and the title of the Japanese study calls him Buzurk, but the person is the same.

Preface

The purpose of this research is to look at the movement of perfumes, spices and the people involved in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean trade between 80-493 A.H./ 700-1100 A.D. This is to use these products as a measure of how much cultural transmission and trans-cultural contact occurred in this period. The reason for this is that luxury items like perfumes and spices helped shape cultural movements in a way that was altering the societies that they encountered; they brought and began new traditions and ceremonies to accommodate them. They were the subject of much speculation, myth, and exoticism, and therefore were studied particularly closely to understand them. This in turn meant that they only rose in value which was measured in gold with each new property that they were revealed to possess.

The reason this study focuses on specifically spices and perfumes, aside for their versatility, is that even though there is a little work done on spices so far, there is almost nothing on perfumes from the Indian Ocean trade coming across the Mediterranean. However, we have evidence of perfume being popularised in both the Arab³ world and Christendom. Yet it has yet to be fully explored at all in the current historiography. Moreover, they are important to note because their presence was always indicative of foreign contact. This is because for them to be present at court, stately functions, or even in the homes of the newly monied classes that were being born out of the increase of foreign trade, they had to be from the lands that had the climate to allow the ingredients to grow in this epoch of history. They are also proxies for other forms of trade and cultural contact which leave less evidence in the sources such as foodstuffs like aubergine which were considered a delicacy but cannot be traced in archaeological remains.

The changes that came out of this are unmistakable too. There was a new currency that was born in the Caliphate to stop using Byzantine coins to project the sovereignty of the

³ Arab here is just the lands in which people naturally speak Arabic – not used as a synonym for Muslim, as there was a significant Jewish and Christian population there too.

Umayyads (40 -422 A.H/661-1031 A.D.– they were exiled to Spain after 750 A.D./ 132 A.H.) at first and then later the ‘Abbasids (132-648 A.H./750-1250 A.D.). When this was combined with the diplomatic relations that were set up with governorships and kingdoms in South Asia, as the accounts of al-Sīrāfī record, this suggests that the political landscape was being shaped to facilitate long distance trade. We see such administrative aid from states on multiple occasions when traders are given concessions, to not upset the trading communities of port towns in Oman and South Asia. It was through these ports that most of the goods had to go through to get to the Caliphate itself to meet the demand in Baghdad, which was a major centre of learning and culture in the early medieval period,⁴ and other centres of learning and courts throughout the Caliphate. The Arab movement in the Indian Ocean and the adoption and cross-fertilisations of culture have yet to be fully considered in the context of early medieval globalisation pre-390 A.H./1000 A.D. This research is at its core a socio-political study into the economies involved and the cultural shifts that were brought with the increase in maritime trade.

The other contemporary effect of the use of perfumes and spices in the elite circles also brought with it complex ceremonies of gifting and etiquette to mark the social hierarchy in which foreign goods had a pivotal role. Their adoption into such symbolic displays of wealth and diplomacy made them a staple at every elite event. It also brought those who studied and traded them to the forefront of elite attention. This also meant that on occasion the attention of jurisprudence had to get involved when tax-evasion and law breaking became evident too. Perfumes and spices, however frivolous they may seem, permeated almost all aspects of elite life in the early medieval era. They aided globalisation in the early medieval sense of

⁴ Bakhsh, Alireza Omid. ‘The Virtuous City: The Iranian and Islamic Heritage of Utopianism’, *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (2013), 42.

connectivity and a movement of people across vast distances, and had the potential to be both medicinal and harmful, and were seen as one of the most prestigious items one could possess.

Introduction

The main contentions this research explores:

This research places itself as the bridge in the current historical writing between the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean links in the early medieval period. Globalisation is then meant as the movement of peoples across vast distances in this period of medieval history across Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.⁵ The Arab traders being discussed in this research came into a pre-existing system of trade that was present throughout antiquity and can be dated back to at least the Roman Empire in the fifth century B.C. With this in mind, the premise here is that the perfumes and spices that were gaining in visibility and prestige in the courts of the Caliphal and Carolingian elites had to arrive via a complex system of cabotage.

The reason why perfumes and spices are used as proxies is that they could not be replicated in another part of the world from which they naturally occurred at this point in time. They could not be present away from South Asia, Southeast Asia, or even East Asia, without being indicative of some form of contact with each of these areas, as this is where the spices and perfumes originated from. Southeast Asia especially was used as a proxy for trade between Arab merchants and East Asia, as well as having its own spices to offer to the Indian Ocean trade, such as cloves.⁶ So very presence of Indian Ocean perfumes and spices was an indication of foreign contact when they were present in the courts of the elite outside of their native land. Moreover, for spices and perfumes to be transported across vast distances was no small feat, and could be susceptible to spoilage, piracy and even shipwreck, which meant that they had to be charged for at a premium when they were present in the courts of the Middle East and Western Europe. This naturally meant that the consumers of such items were the elite. Until now the trading connections between the Caliphate and Carolingians entities is rarely if ever

⁵ Hansen, *The Year 1000*, 1-9.

⁶ Witton, Patrick. *Indonesia*, (Melbourne: Lonely Planet, 2003), 818.

included in history writing. In the words of Gary Nabhan ‘the history of the spice trade is an object lesson in how, step by step, globalization has developed’,⁷ and that globalization began long before the year 1000 A.D.⁸

The importance of this lies in the fact that due to the global hegemony of European colonialism up until the late twentieth century, this has naturally controlled the narrative of connectivity and applied it to a Eurocentric worldview that does not consider that the Europeans in the late medieval period came into a pre-existing system. Newer studies into the early medieval period such as Valerie Hansen’s on globalism from the year 1000 A.D. still applies such a worldview and fails to account for the Indian Ocean products that the elite were consuming on the western side of the Indian Ocean and the European side of the Mediterranean for almost three centuries before the year 1000 A.D. Hence this research challenges such an argument to highlight both the inconsistencies in the evidence of globalisation suddenly happening after the first millennium, and the narratives around it.

In actuality, the globalised trade was created through the actions of individual merchant actors in every part of the world that the Indian Ocean perfume and spice trade was involved in. Whilst the spices and perfumes themselves took on political roles for ceremonial purposes as will be discussed in this chapter, political actors, whether they be Caliphs or governors were not conducting the trade themselves anywhere. Instead they were patrons of those who could procure luxury items for them. This then led to the involvement of the intellectual elite studying those same substances, and even recording where they were from and how they were sourced.⁹

⁷ Nabhan, Gary. *Cumin, Camels, and Caravans: A Spice Odyssey*, (California: University of California Press, 2014), 1-2.

⁸ *Ibid*, 3.

⁹ See Al-Sīrāfī, Abu Zayd. *Accounts of China and India*, Tim Mackinosh-Smith, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

This indirectly meant that the spice and perfume trade gained more attention, but they were still not the elite political actors which is a pivotal distinction to be made.

With all this in mind, the purpose of this research then is to explore the movement of spices and perfumes and the ways in which there was evidence of early medieval globalism within and external to the Caliphate. This will be done through the analysis of the movement and trade of perfumes and spices and their socio-political meaning, as well as the delineation of knowledge that came with their extensive uses.

The context this research is working within:

This study uses perfumes and spices to highlight the relationship between the South Asian subcontinent and the Caliphate, as well as the soft trading networks that linked it to Andalucía and further up into Europe. The term 'soft' here means that whilst there were no direct voyages between Andalucía and South Asia, there were regular connections through goods that arrived to meet growing demand. This research is conducted to understand how the globalization that was occurring at the time, and the way that the societies involved were affected. Especially since it has been long established that on the western side of the Mediterranean, we are aware that the Arab Muslims were able to set up sustainable states on European shores.¹⁰

This will be done through the analysis of how the societies involved in the maritime trade intermingled through the demand for goods and the products that were coming out of the transcontinental trade. Such a radical form of contact across civilisations meant that people were put into prolonged contact with one another which allowed for the transmission of ideas and learning.¹¹ This in turn meant that the pre-existing networks that were being utilised by merchants from the Caliphate in South Asia had an effect far beyond the two regions as naval

¹⁰ Kennedy, Hugh. 'The Muslims in Europe', *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, R. McKitterick, (ed.), (1995), 249.

¹¹ Cahen, Claude. 'Le commerce musulman de l'océan Indien au Moyen Âge', *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l'océan Indien*, M. Mollat, (ed.), (1970), 180-193.

trade started to increase in popularity. This is because travel by sea meant that traders could reach further afield in a shorter amount of time, which inevitably led to the shift from an overland collection of routes for trade across Eurasia, to a maritime set to replace these. The research in this study focuses on the notion of specifically pre-existing networks of trade proliferating as there is evidence that there were links of trade between East Asia and the near and Middle East as early as the seventh century B.H./first century A.D.¹² But it is impossible to precisely date Persian involvement on a large scale in the early medieval period, except that we know that this is when it expanded.¹³ It was this relationship which eventually led to the involvement of Arab merchants (including Muslim, Jewish and Christian merchants that were all Arab) becoming interested in these trading routes too.

The elite of Carolingian Europe and the Caliphate, both became deeply involved in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean trade links by becoming enraptured by the rare and exotic perfumes and spices that were being procured. The fact that India was also the middle point of ports from East Asia to the Caliphate and beyond will also have to be considered. This is because almost every aromatic or spice-related luxury item that was procured by Arab merchants in Asia had to be taken through South Asia to reach the Caliphate and its European customers. South Asia was also en route to China so the Arabs were able to source goods that could be traded with the Chinese to procure Chinese goods to bring back to the Arab markets. We see that it was during expeditions to source goods such as Indian ivory to take to the Chinese merchants, that this was when the Arabs and South Asians interacted enough to exchange knowledge and ideas that then fed into philosophy, medicine, and the uses of luxury goods. This is especially integral in this research as the full impact of Indian traditions and

¹² Chaffee, John W. *The Muslim Merchants of premodern China: the history of a maritime Asian trade diaspora, 750-1400*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 13-15.

¹³ *Ibid*, 15.

substances on Arabic medicine has yet to be studied comprehensively.¹⁴ Items such as spices, regionally specific vegetables (such as aubergines which will be discussed later), and aromatic substances including ambergris, camphor, and aloe wood, had to be shipped before they had a chance to spoil. This meant that Indian ports were important on journeys to and from East Asia to the Middle East to replenish stock or trade for more luxury items.

Although exact time measures for the journeys across the Indian Ocean currently elude us as it was dependent on weather, the consensus is that the journey from Baghdad to the western coast of China was somewhere between 41-48 days.¹⁵ The subsequent increase in maritime movement into South Asia by Arab merchants and the information they collected is also indicative of the type of interactions that they had and the socio-political effects that they were perceiving in India during their journeys. Abū Zayd al-Sīrāfi's (d. 289 A.H./902 A.D.)¹⁶ account where the scholar describes going to East Asia looking for different luxury goods, and focuses on mainly foodstuffs and perfumes, will be discussed in depth further on to understand the role merchants and travellers played in the transfer of an Islamicate culture beyond the borders of the Caliphate.

China is not the focus here, but it does need to be considered to fully appreciate the interconnectedness of the early globalisation that was occurring in this period. China is credited with the developments of maritime routes that led from there to India, West Asia,¹⁷ and the Mediterranean world which are all the focus of this study.¹⁸ This is because East Asian goods

¹⁴ Yoeli-Tlalim, Ronit. 'Islam and Tibet: Cultural Interactions – An Introduction', *Islam and Tibet: Cultural Interactions*, Ana Akasoy, (ed.), (2016), 4.

¹⁵ Ibn Shahriyār, Buzurg. *The Book of the Wonders of India, Mainland, Sea and Islands*, G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, (trans. and ed.), (London: East-West Publications, 1981), 76-77.

¹⁶ Gibb, Hamilton, 'Al Sīrāfi', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, (London: Brill, 2020), https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=&s.q=al+sirafi .

¹⁷ Also known as the Arabian lands that lead to North Africa.

¹⁸ Guy, John. 'Rare and Strange Goods: International Trade in Ninth-Century Asia', *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), (2010), 19.

were in demand in the Caliphate and beyond.¹⁹ Indeed, perfumes, spices and medicinal plants became such an integral part of court life in the known world that they became entire early industries in and of themselves.

Al-Sīrāfī notes for example, that musk pods can be found in Tibet and China, and whilst the Tibetan musk pods²⁰ are superior in their quality and value- the journey via ship eastwards in either case is necessary. Musk arrived in the Arab world as part of the movement of perfume and aromatic substances that were taking hold of the elite classes who coveted items that were rare as a status symbol during the Umayyads and ‘Abbasid Caliphate. Particularly because items such as musk were shipped at great expense, especially since musk had to be harvested from deer, which did not live within the bounds of the Islamic Empire at this period, making it even more valuable as a rarity.²¹ The importance of perfumery is doubly valuable since the same ingredients that made up perfumes, were also used as culinary spices, and additionally used for their medicinal properties. The pursuit of lasting health and cure for sickness has been a part of human life since time immemorial, and the early medieval period was no exception. The coming of the new medical knowledge into the Caliphate because of the incoming of vast amounts of spices and aromatic substances will also be explored to understand the societal effects of the long-distance trade that was occurring and why so many were so invested into it in the ensuing chapters.

The prolonged contact the Arabs had outside of the Middle East through trade pre-dated the coming of Islam and in fact ran alongside the rise of the Islamic Empire.²² Irfan Shahid also corroborates this in his 2018 article, arguing that a large body of prophetic hadith is specifically

¹⁹ Ibid, 19.

²⁰ Musk pods are a grainy substance that are harvested from deer in the sac from under the abdomen.

²¹ King, Anya H. ‘Scent from the Garden on Paradise: Musk and the Medieval World’, *Islamic History and Civilisation*, Vol. 140, Hinrich Biesterfeldt, (ed.), (2017), 2.

²² Ellenblum, Ronnie. *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7.

targeted towards ‘just’ trading relations instead of exploitation with the coming of Islam when it came to the pre-existing system.²³ The reason that this ties in to trade is because this is the main avenue in which there was a movement between groups of people in the early medieval period, which allowed for there to be cultural and religious transmissions to happen. Moreover, it was also because the prolonged Arab contact that there was outside of the Near and Middle East is indicative of how people found out about and converted to Islam, especially since we are aware of pre-Islamic connections between the Middle East and Asia which will also be explored in my research.

What we find is that large scale conversion happens over a course of one to one and a half centuries from the year 700 A.D. that spreads from the Middle East up to Europe and to the East into Asia and is a process.²⁴ Both Richard Bulliet and Andrew Peacock discuss this, and it is their work that will be discussed in the literature review. We have accounts that the Arabs that were in these areas to rule over them were given strict instructions to leave the locals to worship as they pleased whilst they paid their taxes.²⁵ In the meantime, they lived peacefully side by side (for the most part) and that was how Arab societies were gradually shaped to become more cosmopolitan in their acceptance of new ideas.

We know from compilations of work such as those of Captain Buzurg ibn Shahriyār al Ramhormuzī²⁶ (d. 338 A.H./950 A.D.), that there are even accounts of South Asian rulers who secretly converted to Islam but did not do so openly due to the fact that they were wary of

²³ Shahid, Irfan. ‘Exploring trade practice and market before and after the advent of Islam in Arabia’, *Journal of Emerging Economies & Islamic Research*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (2018), 5-14.

²⁴ Peacock, Andrew C. *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 1-3.

²⁵ Fredunbeg, Mirza Kalichbeg. (trans.), *The Chachnamah. An Ancient History of Sind*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985), v-vi.

²⁶ This is the only name we have recorded of him according to: Füek, J.W., “Buzurg b. Shahriyār”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, (2012), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1575

losing their position and authority.²⁷ He specifically writes about the King of Ra doing this, and whilst this may be a legend that was fed back to Iraq,²⁸ the narratives of the story are perfect when trying to understand how interconnected the early medieval world was. Ibn Shahriyār records that it was narrated to him that a poet that was originally from South Asia, who had lived as an adult in Iraq and learnt about Islam (it is unclear if the poet himself was Muslim) was asked by the King of Ra to translate the teaching of Islam into a South Asian language for him to understand and learn about it.²⁹ The notion that such levels of cosmopolitanism were considered viable, as well as there being a genuine interest in new spiritual and temporal ideas allows one to gain an insight on the types of societies and mindsets one is studying and the willingness to learn about ‘the other’ external to them.

Whilst popular history writing such as ‘The Silk Roads’ by Peter Frankopan explores some of this in terms of a movement of goods and the people involved, it is not an academic writing *per se* in that it is meant for the non-specialist reader.³⁰ There are also some writings about an equivalent ‘Maritime Silk Road’ to describe the main alternatives to the land routes (which were still very much present), but they do not necessarily connect the Indian Ocean trade with the East Asian components that were definitely present and connected to the Arab naval trade. Indeed, whilst this research does critique the arguments of scholars such as Valerie Hansen and Frankopan who write about globalisation that could be attributed to an Anglophone, as they have been completely disregarded by scholars in the field of writing more specialist studies as ‘generic’ and ‘ill-equipped’.³¹ But they do still seem to hold credence in the historical

²⁷ Ibn Shahriyār, Buzurg. *The Book of the Wonders of India, Mainland, Sea and Islands*, G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, (trans. and ed.), (London: East-West Publications, 1981), 2-3.

²⁸ Buzurk b. Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India, Its Mainland, Its Sea and Its Islands, (Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind)*, edited from MS. In *the Aya Sofia Mosque of Istanbul and MS. Included in the ‘Umari’s Encyclopaedic Book*, Hikoichi Yajima, (ed.), (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2018), 1-4.

²⁹ Ibid 1-4.

³⁰ Frankopan, Peter. *The Silk Roads, A New History of the World*, (London: Bloomsbury 2015).

³¹ Fleischer, Cornell. and Cemal Kafadar and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘How to Write Fake Global History’, *Cyber Review of Modern Historiography*, (2020),

field, and this is mostly due to the post-20th century colonial legacy that is still present in academia in that one either looks at the way the Caliphate interacted with Europe, or political changes that surrounded its rise and eventual fall.³² The purpose of this research is to decidedly work within the remit of a Muslim world and its peaceful interactions with Europe in light of the Indian Ocean trade which facilitated the increased contact between the two spheres of the early medieval world due to the mutually beneficial engagement in the spices and perfume market that was expanding.

This will include the question of whether there was indeed an invasion from the Caliphate to the East through the early expeditions during the Umayyad period to Sind by sea;³³ intermarriage; diplomatic missions, and finally the transmission of any literary cultures as well as art, architecture and physical archaeological remains. Spices and perfumes are especially important for this as their presence was usually a signifier of a special occasion or notable event. Hence, they are the primary avenue in which I shall be measuring the socio-political effects of the international trade of the Caliphate in this study – given that as is the case with all medieval history, the lives and culture of the elite are the most well recorded. Also, by the ninth century the ingredients that made up luxury perfumes as well as the spices found in the cuisine of notable events were all imported into the Caliphate and Europe through or from South Asia.

This is because the plants that the substances were made from were medicinal and this is how they became so important in the medieval world. Entire studies were done on the medicinal properties of items that became increasingly known for their aromatic qualities by the year 490 A.H./1100 A.D. But it is important to note, that it was medicine and the pursuit of life-saving drugs that began the gradual movement of plants for other reasons *en masse*

<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/cromohs/debate?fbclid=IwAR1IAA6An64NwBiq-fhTrC2dTZEiffaSKco8N4LSvp4oF61y4TG2vpM35w>

³² McCormick, Michael. *Origins of the European Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6-19 and Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, (London: Pearson, 1986), 57.

³³ Malik, Jamal. *Islam in South Asia*, (India: Orient Blackswan, 2012), 40.

westwards from South Asia into the Caliphate and further north into Europe. The perfumery that came with this is soon seen in the works of the philosopher and scholar Abū Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī³⁴ (d. 260 A.H./874 A.D.)³⁵ and his ilk. However, even so, these scholars are also interested in philosophy, society and expanding upon known Greek science which is also a by-product of prolonged contact between the European lands and the Caliphate due to continuous trade and diplomacy and the Carolingian Renaissance. An entire corpus was written about perfumes and how they were ranked in prestige in al-Kindī’s ‘Chemistry of Perfume’ which lists 107 different types of perfumes,³⁶ detailing just how far the substance had become an indicator for wealth, power, and favour in the ceremony of gifting that began to prevail on a scale that was almost universal by this point.

We are aware of pre-existing (pre-Islamic) contact between Europe and India because of the accounts of Alexander the Great as well as a great many other sources including archaeological finds such as coins on the Coromandel Coast which has been studied in depth by Robert Wheeler (d.1977) already.³⁷ While not all of the previous accounts are historically reliable – such as the Golden Letter that Alexander supposedly sent to Aristotle, in which he accounted in a romantic fashion what he observed in India, including accounts of various precious gems and prominent gold sculptures³⁸ – the fact that there was communication on the matter and previous knowledge is indicative of the longevity of awareness about the subcontinent.

³⁴ Shamsi, F.A. ‘al-Kindī’s Risala Fi Wahdaniya Allah Wa Tahani Jirm Al-‘Alam’, *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (1978), 185.

³⁵ Wright, O. ‘Al-Kindī’s Braid’, *Bulletin of SOAS, University of London*, Vol. 69, No. 1, (2006), 1.

³⁶ Amar, Zohar. and Afraim Lev. *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 135.

³⁷ Wheeler, Robert. ‘Arikamedu: An Indo-Roman Trading-Station on the East Coast of India’, *Ancient India*, Vol. 2, (1946), 17-30.

³⁸ Stern, Samuel. ‘The Arabic Translations of the Pseudo-Aristotelian Treatise *De Mundo*’, S.M Stern, (ed), *Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Thought*, (1983), 195-196.

The main points that the purpose of my research is to help to answer and fill the gaps in the current historical field is how globalization occurred way before European influence, and even earlier than has recently been asserted by Valerie Hansen in her book that came out in April 2020. In this book she says that globalization was something that occurred after the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. and later but does not dwell much on the processes that led up to this eruption of movement that she writes about.³⁹ However, this research challenges the argument that globalisation was a European effort that began with the progression of maritime technology on this side of the world and instead focuses on the three centuries before the fourth millennium A.H. /first millennium A.D. and how there was already a copious volume of globalization and contact between Christendom, the Caliphate and Asia from the year 80 A.H. /700 A.D. onwards.

What is meant by India and the geography of the borders this research is based within:

The area that this research considers is made up of present-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, as well as Sri Lanka.⁴⁰ When considering the geography of the regions that this research explores, one is aware of the borders of Europe and the Middle East for the most part as they have changed little as a whole even if new borders have been created within the areas. India, however, is a much bigger landmass that is still contentious and was being split and reformed and negotiated all the way up until the latter half of the twentieth century. For this reason, combined with the fact that there is little interdisciplinary work between the Middle East and India which has fostered a lack of awareness, this section will make clear the area within which this research concentrates.

When it comes to the maritime route that was taken by the Arab traders to India from the Middle East, we are aware that in the early medieval period they were going directly from

³⁹ Hansen, 27-63.

⁴⁰ Malik, Jamal. *Islam in South Asia*, (Brill: Leiden, 2008), 29.

the Gulf to India until the year 1000 A.D.⁴¹ The speed, duration, and accounts of the journeys are discussed in the main body of this research. The areas that are included are Sind in the northeast of India that came under the Islamic rule by second century A.H./eighth century A.D.⁴², Sri Lanka, and the Malay area in the South-West. As well as South India, which was a place to rest on the way to China,⁴³ all the way up to Daybul which is in present day Pakistan.⁴⁴ Whilst trade was mostly conducted by Arabs along the coast, India was very much externally connected and by the thirteenth century, and Gujarat⁴⁵ had become a major centre of both Muslim and Hindu merchants that surpassed any other centres Arab presence in the Indian Ocean. Even if this falls beyond the remit of this research it is indicative of the projection of growth of trade in the region within the early medieval period. Whilst Michael Pearson's study focuses on the medieval period post-1200 the mapping of India is still relevant to the period of history of this research,⁴⁶ although the major centres of commerce and the origins of most merchants shifts. During the peak of this epoch of early medieval history, he studied Indian merchants that were dominating the Indian Ocean trade.⁴⁷ Whilst this research focuses on the centuries before in which it was mostly Arabs being discussed it seems from the primary literature available. The reason for this being included here is that whilst it does not feed into the main body of the argument of this study, it does provide the framework within which to understand the Indian and Indian Ocean geography and how complex it is for those outside the South Asian sector of historical research.

Pearson does make a political framework within which he works for India, but he is only explicit when writing about kingdoms such a Vijayanagar. It was established in the

⁴¹ Pearson, Michael. 'Islamic trade, shipping, port-states and merchant communities in the Indian Ocean, seventh to sixteenth centuries', *The Maritime Oecumene, Part III*, (2011), 318.

⁴² Ibid, 318.

⁴³ Ibid, 322.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 323.

⁴⁵ On the western coast of India.

⁴⁶ Pearson, (2011), 322-324.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 322-324.

fourteenth century, which whilst significant and a great part of Indian history, is three centuries after the scope of this research. However, he does still make some relevant points, such as the fact that the rulers of the port cities of Malabar, Coromandel, and Sri Lanka were not Muslim throughout the medieval period but were welcoming of Arab merchants.⁴⁸ In Melaka (Malacca but this is the term used in his paper for the same area) and Calicut, there were separate rajas⁴⁹ but all of these areas allowed for their Muslim populations to govern themselves on the most part and it was rare for the ruler to have to intervene.⁵⁰ Calicut was a major port in the fifth century A.H/eleventh century A.D. and had its own independent raja that was the Zamorian ruler.⁵¹ Each port and city had its own ruler that reported back to the centre of a specific raja. However, due to the disparity of the timeframe of this research and Pearson's, and the complexity of the political geography of India, the situation as it stood in the period of this research is explored fully in the chapter specifically about Indian trade.

Raw materials and their definition:

The following is both an explanation and definition of what the substances that this research focuses on are, how they were procured, and where they came from. The purpose of this is to actively highlight how complex the process of preparing the perfumes and spices of the Indian Ocean were, and why they were so costly to cultivate and prepare. In so doing this also underlines the argument of this research, in that there was definite globalization as all these items were prepared and cultivated on one side of the Indian Ocean in India and China, to be sold in Oman, Baghdad, Cairo, and the rest of the Caliphate, and then further in Western Europe in the Carolingian Courts. Given that a lot of the words that are used in perfumes, medicines,

⁴⁸ Ibid, 325.

⁴⁹ Kings.

⁵⁰ Pearson, (2011), 325.

⁵¹ Ibid, 324.

and the different names of spices are often used in the sources, we rarely know what the names mean and what they look like which is another reason for the inclusion of this section here.

These trade goods were also noteworthy for how much skill they took to make them useable as a luxury product. The cultivation, collection, and even concentration required specialist knowledge which in turn cost a fee from the provider and practice of said knowledge as will be discussed below. It was all these factors combined which meant that owning these items were an act of conspicuous consumption; they were a sign of power, success, and strength in their mere presence,⁵² as they could not be obtained without having a disposable income, and especially in the case of perfume – was not utilitarian and purely for pleasure. They were very much indicative of elite culture, and the aspirations of the elite and how they communicated with one another. The stories that were produced by the likes of ibn Shahriyāh to further exoticize the items will also be discussed in the ensuing chapters but suffice to say at this point of this research that there was a whole field of literature that was being produced for the Baghdadi market and beyond, to emphasise the perils and dangers one faced when pursuing the procurement of Indian Ocean herbs and spices. The process of making perfumes in this period is somewhat lost, although we are aware of some of the stages of production from antiquity which included heating the plants into a type of gum and using fragrant woods in earthenware and metals.⁵³ The specificities however are sadly lost, and the early accounts of any perfume preparation we have is the mixture of perfumes, or of burning fragrant woods, but not how they were actually harvested beyond the fantastical accounts of India that will be discussed in the Caliphate chapter. Some of the items that will be mentioned in this research are listed below.

⁵² Shiller, Robert J. *Narrative Economics: How stories go viral and drive major economic events*, (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 136-155.

⁵³ Brun, Jean-Pierre. 'The Production of Perfume in Antiquity: The Cases of Delos and Paestum', *The American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 104, No. 2, (2000), 277-278.

Burning perfumes:

Frankincense (*al bakhūr* in Arabic) – Looks like a golden-brown rock that is burnt to release its aroma in the form of an incense.⁵⁴ It is harvested from trees that have (as far as we are aware) always been native to Southern Arabia which means that they had to be transported a long way to reach Europe. However their presence has been known in the western hemisphere for as long as we have Christianity and earlier, (as incense was used in the Greco-Roman cults of the pre-Islamic period) and the written word combined, suggests that trade with Arabia was an ancient link which just spawned and proliferated with the expansion of the maritime trade across the Mediterranean.⁵⁵ It is still used in churches on Sunday services today and it is still used in perfumes as part of a tourist attraction in Mecca and Medina.⁵⁶

The Latin scientific name is *Boswellia Sacra*. The process of harvesting the substance is much like the process of harvesting rubber from trees, in that they have to be split open when ready, and then effectively bled in order to extract the substance.⁵⁷ It is then dried and made ready to ship, but one must note that in the pre-modern era, such a process of cultivation would require optimum growth conditions that could only be naturally provided, as well as a huge amount of effort. Hence, it is considered a luxury and must be bought as such.

Ghāliyah (already Arabic) – This perfume was the name of a concoction that was used by the ninth century and seems to be exclusively and sparingly utilised as the marker of the elite. It was made up of musk, ambergris, camphor, and oil of ben. It originally meant a scent that was especially strong and derives from the original meaning ‘expensive’ or ‘precious’ which feeds

⁵⁴ Lane. sv.

⁵⁵ Groom, Nigel. *Frankincense and Myrrh. A Study of Arabian Incense Trade*, (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1981), 5.

⁵⁶ Look in the image section further below for visual of the raw material.

⁵⁷ Al-Saidi, and Ahmed al-Harrasi. ‘Phytochemical Analysis of the Essential Oil from Botanically Certified Oleogum Resin of *Boswellia sacra* (Omani Luban)’, *Molecules*, (2008), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6245470/>

into the symbolism it held and the purpose of this research.⁵⁸ In order to create such a concoction one would need more than one substance that was procured from the Indian Ocean trade. The usage of *ghāliyah* particularly was a prime example of conspicuous consumption as it was only used to signify status and rank. How the ingredients are harvested are not verified as the term itself seems to be a marker of the calibre of the perfumes used – not a single substance.

Incense –From the Latin word *incensum*, which is any substance that is burnt for its aromatic qualities,⁵⁹ much like frankincense had to be in the ancient world to release its aroma. The English/Latin scientific name is most commonly *calocedrus decurrens*. This, again, would have been costly due to its usage being of no utilitarian need, but as it is more of an umbrella term for substances that were burned for their aroma, it cannot be pinpointed like the other substances for the exact harvesting technique as there are multiple depending on the substance. But it was harvested by ‘tapping’ a tree when it had enough of the liquid that made up the substance within it.⁶⁰ The process of ‘tapping’ is using cuts and sulphuric acid solutions to effectively bleed the tree,⁶¹ which in turn can kill it cutting of supply in the long term.

Incense is more of an umbrella term for anything that can be used to make a fragrant burning perfume which includes myrrh, cedars, sandalwoods and other naturally occurring plants and oils.⁶² In modern language incense has come to be a term interchangeable with the

⁵⁸ Lane, *The Arabic Lexicon*,

<http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87?cat=50> .

⁵⁹ Le Maguer, ‘The Incense Trade during the Islamic Period’, *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 45, (2015), 175.

⁶⁰ Daltry, Jennifer C. ‘Making business scents: how to harvest incense sustainable from the globally threatened lansen tree *Protium attenuatum*’, *Oryx*, Vol. 29, Issue 3, (2015), 431.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 431.

⁶² White, Adrian. ‘Is burning incense bad for your health?’, *Healthline*, (2018), <https://www.healthline.com/health/is-incense-bad-for-you>

frankincense that is used in religious ceremonies – mostly church now,⁶³ but that has not always been the case.

Unguents (liquid perfumes that are applied to skin and hair):

Ambergris ('*anbar* in Arabic)⁶⁴ – Ambergris is a bluish-white congealed mass that is made by sperm whales which is produced in their bile or in their faecal matter.⁶⁵ When they consume it again by accident this often proves fatal and kills the mammal. Given that it can only be found in a dead whale or if it washed up along the coast of the Indian Ocean, it is a rarity. The difficulty in sourcing it meant that it was even more valuable. This is still very much the case, as whenever there is a discovery of a sperm whale that has washed up to shore, it is still considered newsworthy which is indicative too of its continuing status as a luxury item.⁶⁶

In perfumes ambergris acts as a 'fixative' which is a scientific term to mean that it is a preserve or a natural stabiliser of biological material so that it does not disintegrate quickly, and matures instead. Also, it means that it brings one or more entity together in order to make them 'stick' or mix together, which allowed for fragrant substances to be mixed together into one scent. In the Lane dictionary 'ambergris' comes under the root which means 'embalm' and was used also in the scenting of corpses and was used with musk to do so.⁶⁷ The scientific name of ambergris remains the same whilst the whale that harvested from is *Physeter macrocephalus*. The very act of being able to locate a whale in the exact desiccation period where the oils and fat can be extracted from it are rare enough that such an occurrence would automatically connote a hefty fee for the substance. They are accounted by ibn Shahriyār, to have been near

⁶³ 'Incense', *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v., (2020).

⁶⁴ Spelt phonetically

⁶⁵ Le Maguer, (2015), 178.

⁶⁶ Pierce, Graham. And Cristina Brito and Vera L. Jordao, 'Ambergris as an overlooked historical marine resource: its biology and role as a global economic commodity', *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom*, (2015), 1-5.

⁶⁷ Lane, E.W. *The Arabic Lexicon*, s.v.

the Sea of Samarqand (or the Aral Sea as we know it) in his accounts of the Indian Ocean and his travels.⁶⁸

This is compounded by the fact that in a lot of cases some whales once dead were found floating at sea, and so had to be manually hooked and dragged to the shore via a ship, and then gauged for their aromatic qualities; the sheer manpower this would have required alone would then incite an even heftier fee. However, even once the substances are harvested, in their natural form they are quite revolting as the substances of a dead animal, and so they require much specialist knowledge and a whole process of filtration to make them useable, which is further reason for ambergris to be so expensive. In order to make ambergris usable in perfume, the components that make it up have to be isolated from one another, the main three are: *triterpene*, *alcohol ambrein*, *epicoprostanol and coprostanone*.⁶⁹ It is the first of these three items that make up a tincture that is used for ‘high class perfumery’ and can be soluble in alcohol, however how this was done in the early mediaeval period is not currently known, the earliest account we have is from a twelfth century Jain.⁷⁰

Camphor (*Kāfūr* in Arabic) – Camphor oil can be sourced from extracting it from camphor wood which also belonged to the South Asian trade in Fansur⁷¹ according to al-Sīrāfī that was coming with the rise of maritime trade. The process of getting the oil can only be done by using the leaves and twigs from the plant whilst it is still young through a process of hydrodistillation which means one packs the items tightly and then uses boiling water or direct steam into the

⁶⁸ Ibn Shahriyār, Buzruk. *The Book of the Wonders of India, Its Mainland, Its Sea and Its Islands, Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind, edited from MS. In the Aya Sofia Mosque of Istanbul and MS. Included in the ‘Umari’s Encyclopaedic Book*, Hikoichi Yajima, (ed.), (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2018), 55-58.

⁶⁹ Srinivasan, T.M. ‘Ambergris in Perfumery in the Past and Present Indian Context and the Western World’, *Indian Journal of History of Science*, (2015), 306.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 307.

⁷¹ Otherwise known as ‘Barus’ in North Sumatra.

plant sample until it can create the oil.⁷² Its role in the perfume trade, as well as in medicines due its abilities to reduce redness and itchiness, meant that it was doubly expensive. Lane also likens it to an Indian cane or sandalwood in his dictionary.⁷³ The English scientific name is *Cinnamomum camphora*.

Civet (*zabād* in Arabic) – This is a word that is commonly used in the sources but without understanding its provenance. However, when one looks at the definition of the word, as unlikely as it seems for something that is used in perfume it is found on the anal gland of the civet which is a small carnivorous animal found throughout Asia and Africa and has to be extracted through incision.⁷⁴ This also allowed the price to climb again like other perfume ingredients for buyers of the Arab markets. The original root of the word however derives from ‘butter’ according to Lane and then evolved from there.⁷⁵ The English scientific name for this is *Civettictis civetta*. However, even today, there is not any study about exactly how the substance is manufactured into a form that is usable for perfume, presumably since it still an active ingredient of many perfumes.

Oil of ben (*oilbanum* in Latin or *ālibān* in Arabic)– Found in a tree that is indigenous to ancient Greece and proliferate from there. The fact that it was used with *ghāliyah* which was a perfume that was made of a combination of musk and ambergris means that the mixing of foreign substances was also a sign of prestige. Being able to afford something that had arrived as such great expense was a marker of power. The English scientific name is *Boswellia serrata*. Extracting oil from a tree is a process that takes years for a tree to mature, making the substance

⁷² Frizzo, Caren D. ‘Essential oils of Camphor Tree (*Cinnamomum camphora* Nees & Eberm) Cultivated in Southern Brazil,’ *Brazilian Archives of Biology and Technology*, Vol. 43, No. 3, (2000), https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1516-89132000000300011&lang=en

⁷³ Lane, S.V.

⁷⁴ Uchechi, Amadi H. ‘Wildlife harvesting and bushmeat trade in Rivers State, Nigeria: The resilience of the African civet, *Civettictis civetta* (Carviora: Viverridae and records of rare species’, *Journal of Ecology and The Natural Environment*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (2020), 118.

⁷⁵ Lane,

<http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF?cat=50>.

both rare, and only acquirable by those who had the specialist knowledge too, especially as it could only be done properly in the warm months under the correct temperature.⁷⁶

Musk (*misk* in Arabic)⁷⁷ – Before it is refined the musk pod as a raw product looks like a brown oversized hair dropping (which is what it is mainly from deer or sometimes oxen) and the best ones originated from Tibet in the early medieval era. Whilst you could also find it further east of the Arab lands, they were considered less pure and with these we really see a coming to the fore of a differentiation of substances between regions even if they are technically at the very basic level the same thing.⁷⁸ Musk pods were mostly used in perfumes and that is how their usage started, but with their proliferation their harmful and medicinal qualities were also researched and discovered. The English scientific name for the musk itself seems to be the same, but the deer that it is harvested from are called ‘*Moschus*’. Moreover, it is important to note that this deer is not indigenous to the Near and Middle Eastern lands, as it is mountainous,⁷⁹ hence to retrieve the musk droppings and make them useable, merchants and perfumers needed to acquire the knowledge to use them and compensate the keepers of the knowledge.

Al-Sīrāfī mentioned two markets of musk in his travelogue as mentioned before: that of China and Tibet. What he fails to mention is that the possibility of why one was considered better than the other may have been since the musk deer of China and Tibet were different. For China the *Moschus moschiferous* is native to northern China, Mongolia, and Siberia.⁸⁰ Whilst the musk from the deer from the Himalayas – and thus the Tibetan market – is called *Moschus chrysogaster*. Indeed, Tibet became so well-known for the musk that came out of it that as late

⁷⁶ Siddiqui, M.Z. ‘*Boswellia Serrata*, A Potential Antiinflammatory [sic] Agent: An Overview’, *Indian J. Pharm Sci*, (2011), 255.

⁷⁷ Lane, *Arabic Lexicon*, sv.

⁷⁸ King, Anya. ‘Tibetan Musk and Medieval Arab Perfumery’, *Islam and Tibet – Interactions along the Musk Routes*, (2011), 145-148.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 145-148.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*. 145.

as the seventeenth century it was Tibetan musk that was being brought into the markets of South Asia through the markets of Patna; the longevity of the substance is testament to its value and quality.⁸¹ However, the evidence of there being a discernment in the musk being focused almost exclusively in Tibet comes with European colonialism centuries after the beginning of early medieval globalism it seems as none of the historical evidence – thus far – indicates otherwise. Whilst there is a lot of study into the substance, how it is prepared to become a perfume is not published for public domain, or indeed studied for the non-scientist, presumably for both its value in gold and skills it requires.

Spices used for consumption and medicine:

Spices that were used for consumption like the ones listed below were especially important because of their medicinal properties and the fact that their presence on a dinner table was yet another example of conspicuous consumption. In the ensuing chapters about the Caliphate specifically, it is discussed that not only were they present, but they were presented in excess to underline just how powerful and resourceful the power-players at least aspired for people to see them as. Additionally, the time it takes to harvest, dry, and transport them are also an aspect for the reason of their price, as well as the knowledge that must come with them and extensive study, as when not used correctly spices can quickly become poisonous, some such as anise seed affected body temperatures, and others becoming lethal which is also discussed in the chapter on the Caliphate.

Cinnamon (*al qirfa* in Arabic) – The cinnamon strand that this research focuses on is the type from Sri Lanka which is still considered to be the best quality and ‘true’ cinnamon in its

⁸¹ Boulnois, Luce. ‘Gold, Wool, and Musk: Trade in Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century’, *The Tibetan History Reader*, Gray Tuttle and Kurtis S. Schaeffer, (eds.), (2013), 465, and Wim van Spengen, ‘The Geo-History of Long-Distance Trade in Tibet 1850-1950’, *The Tibetan History Reader*, Gray Tuttle and Kurtis S. Schaeffer, (eds.), (2013), 508.

definition by the *US National Library of Medicine*.⁸² The scientific name is *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* the name clearly denoting where it is originally from (Ceylon) in the latter half of the name.

In order to create the cinnamon that can be consumed for its medicine and culinary merits one has to wait for the tree to be at least two years old and then cut it back into a stump, a process that is called ‘coppice’ and then cover the stump with soil so that it grows back as a type of bush.⁸³ The following year new shoots begin to grow from either side which are then harvested to create the cinnamon which are plucked, peeled, and left to dry in the sun. The drying process naturally turns the bark brown and into ‘quills’. The entire process then takes at least three years should all go well, including weather, natural disasters, and human error – especially in the early medieval era.

Cloves (*al qaranful* in Arabic) – Cloves are a small brown stick like spice and had a role in the dishes at the dinner table as a signifier of wealth and distinction because they came from so far away.⁸⁴ They also had medicinal properties, such as aiding digestion, which were well known and accounted for by the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. and were of especial note because they could not be grown in the lands of the Caliphate and so had to be imported. They mostly came from Southeast Asia (specifically the Moluccan Islands) and were transported to India and the Middle East in the early medieval period.⁸⁵ Their importance in medicinal properties is why their name in Arabic is also associated with literally meaning ‘head of garlic’ or a ‘clove’ as we know it in English.⁸⁶ The English scientific name is *Syzygium aromaticum*.

⁸² Ranasinghe, Priyanga. and Shehani Piger. ‘Medicinal properties of ‘true’ cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*): a systematic review’, *BMC Complement Altern Med*, (2013), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3854496/#>

⁸³ Bocco, Diana. ‘How Cinnamon Works’, *HowStuffWorks.com*, (2009), <https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/botany/cinnamon1.htm>

⁸⁴ Look in the image section further below for visual.

⁸⁵ Ptak, Roderich. *China, the Portuguese, and the Nayang: Oceans and Routes, Regions and Trades (c.1000-1600)*, (London: Ashgate, 2004), 164-168.

⁸⁶ Lane, *The Arabic Lexicon*, sv.

Nutmeg (*jawz al-ṭīb* in Arabic)⁸⁷ – This is a seed that comes from inside the Myristica tree and is brown and often ground to a powder to use in cuisine. Whilst it originates from Southeast Asia (specifically Indonesia) it is a common ingredient in South Indian curries and even European dishes. The English scientific name is *Myristica fragrans*. Interestingly, both cloves and nutmeg are still cultivated in the Maluku Islands that belong to eastern Indonesia.⁸⁸

Pepper (*fulful* in Arabic) – The now common household spice was once a luxury item that was specifically known for how rare and difficult to procure it was. This was to the point that early medieval writers turned it into a story that was fantastical in the manufacture process to hike up prices even further, with accounts of snakes that needed to be burned to get to the tree that was also burned down in order to procure the pepper which gave it its black colour. In Latin the word is *piperis* or *nigrum piper*,⁸⁹ and the scientific name is *capsicum*.⁹⁰ It was used to both adorn the early medieval dinner table for the elite and was also an important part of medicinal products in early medieval Arab society.⁹¹ It was so important in medieval society that it was one of the spices that was notable enough to be a gift. Whilst the catalogue *Book of Gifts and Rarities* which is discussed at length further on does not specifically name it, spices such as this are used in long retinues of gifts between rulers,⁹² for both diplomatic and tax purposes. As well as by the clergy in European society as evidenced by St Boniface's letters.⁹³

⁸⁷ Ibid, sv.

⁸⁸ Witton, Patrick. *Indonesia*, (Melbourne: Lonely Planet, 2003), 818.

⁸⁹ Apicius, Marcus Gavius. *Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome*, Joseph D. Vehling (trans.), (New York: Dover Publications Inc. 1977), 11 and 177.

⁹⁰ Lewis, Robert. (ed. and author), 'Pepper', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (2020), <https://www.britannica.com/plant/pepper-plant-Capsicum-genus>

⁹¹ Reyes, Raquel A.G. 'Glimpsing Southeast Asia Naturalia in Global Trade, c. 200 bce-1600 ce', *Environment, Trade and Society in Southeast Asia*, David Henley and Henk Schulte Nordholt (eds.), (2015), 110.

⁹² Ibn Duqmāq, Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī. *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, (*Kitab al-Haqāyā wa al-Tujaf*), Ghāda al-Hijāwī al-Qaddūmī, (trans.), (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, (1997), 129.

⁹³ Boniface, 'S. Bonifatii et lulli epistolae', *Monumenta Moguntina*, Philippus Jaffe (ed.), (1866), 155-156 and 199.

Whilst there are different strands of pepper and it can be confused the bell pepper, (even with the fact that sweet peppers were unknown at this time because they come from America)⁹⁴ we know that in this study the substance being referred to is black pepper because it is made clear that it is an Indian Ocean product, which was indigenous to India, making it black pepper.⁹⁵ It is also described as such in primary sources which will be discussed later on. Despite the stories that were pedalled about it, the production of pepper was much more mundane – but took time. The berries that made the pepper had to be collected before ripening from the tree *schinus molle* and then immersed in boiling water for a short period of time until they darkened enough to be left to dry in the sun for three to four days at a time.⁹⁶ Then they had to be kept in moist heaps for seven to fifteen days to make them soft enough to be edible and then washed and crushed to make them fit for consumption.⁹⁷ The role that pepper had in medicine was that it could also be used to raise the body's temperature when consumed in a concentrated, or excessive amount, and we have examples of it being administered at court but physicians which is also included in this research.⁹⁸

The tree itself belongs to present-day Muziris which is in South India and originates from there,⁹⁹ where it is still cultivated, but also now from Vietnam which is also a major exporter of the substance. It is still very much known for its medicinal properties and effectively known as a 'cash crop'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Kraft, Kraig H. 'Multiple lines of evidence for the origin of domesticated chili pepper, *Capiscum annum*, in Mexico', *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences of the United States of America*, (2014), 6165-6170.

⁹⁵ Petruzello, Melissa. (ed. and author), 'Black Pepper', *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (2020), <https://www.britannica.com/plant/black-pepper-plant>

⁹⁶ Ibid, <https://www.britannica.com/plant/black-pepper-plant>

⁹⁷ Ibid, <https://www.britannica.com/plant/black-pepper-plant>

⁹⁸ Ibn Ridwan, 'Part II: Ibn Ridwan's *On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt*', *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, Michael W. Dols. (trans.), S. Aldil Gamal, (ed. Of Arabic text), (1984), 126.

⁹⁹ Hajeski, Nancy J. *National Geographic Complete Guide to Herbs and Spices: Remedies, Seasonings, and Ingredients to Improve your Health and Enhance your Life*, (Washington: National Geographic Society, 2016), 236.

¹⁰⁰ Duke, James A, *CRC Handbook of Alternative Cash Crops*, (Florida: CRC, 1993), 395.

Ginger (*zanjabīl* in Arabic) – Also known as *zingiberi* in Greek, or *zingiber* in Latin. We are aware that the etymology of the word in the European languages belongs to Prakrit and that the Greeks and Romans has knowledge of the spice.¹⁰¹ Ginger was known for its medicinal uses too,¹⁰² and it came to the Arabs from China, which was also the most expensive variant of the spice, whilst there was a strain from Zanzibar that due to its proximity it seems, was deemed inferior.¹⁰³ The medicinal use for it was impotence according to previous studies,¹⁰⁴ which would have been very sought after once discovered in much of human history. However, the substance was still harmful, as consumption of it could cause ‘abdominal discomfort, heartburn, diarrhoea, and mouth and throat irritation, especially if taken in large doses’ according to the U.S department of Health and Human Services.¹⁰⁵ But done correctly, the ethanolic¹⁰⁶ substances that can be extracted from it, is highly anti-allergic.¹⁰⁷ Even without extraction, when ingested with food it can be used to treat a cold, constipation, sleeplessness and relieving flatulence.¹⁰⁸

Saffron (*za‘farān* in Arabic) – This was a spice that was derived from the flower *saffron crocus* in the Latin, and is still known as the ‘world’s most expensive spice’.¹⁰⁹ Mostly used for the purposes of flavouring foods and for their colour, it is so expensive partly because it only flowers in autumn from which the crocus can be harvested – the small orange like stems that make up the spice from the flower which are in the images at the end of this research.

¹⁰¹ Wright, Clifford A. ‘The Medieval Spice Trade and the Diffusion of Chile’, *Gastronomica*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (2007), 36.

¹⁰² Amar, *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern*, 68.

¹⁰³ Dalby, Andrew. *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices*, (California: University of California Press, 2000), 23.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 23.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Ginger’, U.S department of Health and Human Services, <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/ginger>

¹⁰⁶ Means organic chemical compound that can be extracted in an alcohol like manner from vegetables and fruits.

¹⁰⁷ Yamprasert, Rodsarin. Et al. ‘Ginger extract versus Loratadine in the treatment of allergic rhinitis: a randomized controlled trial’, *BMC Complement Medicine and Therapies*, (2020), [Ginger extract versus Loratadine in the treatment of allergic rhinitis: a randomized controlled trial \(nih.gov\)](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12907-020-00151-1)

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Hooker, Lucy. ‘The problem with the world’s most expensive spice’, *BBC News*, (2017), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-41110151>

Additionally, this is also because it takes 150 flowers to make just one gram of useable spice, they need to be tweezed and dried, which in the early medieval period would have required masses of man hours to be undertaken, and still have been scarce since it could only be found on season in the year.¹¹⁰ Especially since, the spice originates from what is now Iran, and spreads from there further into South Asia due to its popularity,¹¹¹ but even then would still have been costly to transport to the middle of the Caliphate. In terms of medicine saffron has long since been used as an anti-inflammatory herbal medicine from cardiovascular (heart) disease,¹¹² as well as ophthalmia (swelling of the eye).¹¹³ This is because the plant naturally contains several carotenoids¹¹⁴ that are fats found in the flower responsible for its taste and medicinal properties.¹¹⁵

With all this in mind, the ensuing chapters are an examination of the movement of Indian Ocean perfumes and spices in the early medieval period during the rise of the Islamic Empires. This will be analysed in terms of their socio-political roles at court, and in society at large. As well as the ceremonies and markets that cropped up to facilitate such change, which led to prolonged long-distance communication and co-existence.

¹¹⁰ Lak, Daniel. 'World: South Asia Kashmiris pin hopes on saffron', *BBC News*, (1998), http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/212491.stm

¹¹¹ Ghorbani, Reza. and Alireza Koocheki, 'Sustainable Cultivation of Saffron in Iran', *Sustainable Agriculture Reviews*, Eric Lichtfouse, Vol. 25, (2017), 170.

¹¹² Ghaffari, Sammad. And Neda Roshanravan. 'Saffron; An update review on biological properties with special focus on cardiovascular effects', *Biomedicine and Pharmacotherapy*, Vol. 109, (2019), 21-27.

¹¹³ Meyerhof, M. 'The History of Trachoma Treatment in Antiquity and During the Arabic Middle Ages', *Bulletin of Ophthalmological Society of Egypt*, Vol. 29, (1936), 48-49.

¹¹⁴ Yellow and yellow-like pigments with antioxidant properties according to: Lohr, Martin. *The Chlamydomonas Sourcebook*, (USA: Elsevier, 2009), 799.

¹¹⁵ Ghaffari, (2019), 21-27.

Literature and Source Review

The general historians and geographers from the Caliphate:

In order to understand how the globalised trade of Indian Ocean spices and perfumes was understood in each area that was involved, it is important to take into account the historians and chroniclers of the time, as well as the geographers in particular. This is because, whilst early forms of cartography are not precise, they are indicative of an interest in looking outwards and being able to pinpoint routes to other regions of the world. In turn this indicates a pursuit of knowledge, and a market for this information, at any point in history.

In regards to the materials used in this research, by the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century there was a revolution in the quantity and volume of classical Arabic texts that became available in English. This gave non-Arabic speakers access to this history without it being filtered in the historical works of others; the works of al-Ṭabarī (d.310 A.H./923 A.D.)¹¹⁶ were a notable example of this. They were originally in Arabic¹¹⁷ and have been translated into English by prominent scholars such as C.E. Bosworth (d. 2015) which are the editions that I had available in this study.

Al-Ṭabarī's work is especially important in being translated from Arabic to English because it supposedly encompasses all Islamic history up to and through the 'Abbasid period, starting with Adam and Eve.¹¹⁸ Whilst there are historiographical issues with this, as there is often a long gap between the time he was writing and the events he describes, it is a great insight into the beliefs of that society, and a comprehensive Islamic history unlike any other

¹¹⁶ Martensson, Ulrika. "It's the Economy, Stupid": Al-Ṭabarī's Analysis of the Free Rider Problem in the 'Abbasid Caliphate', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 54, No. 2, (2011), 204.

¹¹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, Annales quod scripsit Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), Vol. 1-Vol.3, (Leiden: Brill, 1901).

¹¹⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, Annales quod scripsit Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), Vol. 1, (Leiden: Brill, 1901), 1-50.

and spans over forty volumes,¹¹⁹ in the English version, with footnotes acknowledging both *isnād* and details of the people he writes of. He wrote about almost every major event in the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid Caliphates and is invaluable in setting a timeline, as well as understanding the popular viewpoint of the time if nothing else. Given that he does contextualise his history within his religion, as most medieval writers do, and starts with the time of the Garden of Eden, one does have to scrutinise some of his accounts from a secular viewpoint, but his later works on the period discussed in this study is steadfastly as factual as possible as he titles the leaders as *mulūk*¹²⁰ and seems to distinguish them from religion unlike the Rashidun (the four Caliphs that came right after the Prophet Muhammad who are referred to with this title as it means ‘Rightly Guided’) . His work, however, focuses within the border of the Caliphate that is based in the Middle East and whilst it does contain references to goods that must have come out of the Indian Ocean trade, the volumes do not deal with the actual trade itself. He does not seem to discuss trade or economic history in detail, but he does generally recount stories of tax-offending and how items of foreign trade were used to find who had been hiding wealth, bribing, and throwing lavish parties which are discussed further on in this study. Moreover, he does delve into the importance of the ceremonies around gifting in relation to perfumes and spices. Whilst gifting was not exactly like trade, the distinction of there being an inference of meaning and exchange in the giving of a gift, and how closely interconnected the two were is important to note, and why gifts are such a major component of this study, and what these gifts were. This is because to be considered an appropriate gift amongst elite circles, it had to be an item of luxury, which usually denoted rarity and some level of foreignness.

¹¹⁹ This includes the index, which is one volume, Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 1-40, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007).

¹²⁰ Traditionally translated as Kings.

It was this increase in fascination that made way for the careers of the likes of the geographer and historian Aḥmad ibn Abī Ya‘qūb ibn Ja‘far ibn Wahb ibn Waḍīḥ al-Ya‘qūbī (d. 284 A.H./897 A.D.). Scholars like him made a living in their pursuit of knowledge and compilations of work around the Indian Ocean trade; how to travel across the waters, and where the major markets in the Middle East were, as well as those in India and China. As well as the sheer amount of revenue it could produce for Arab cities involved in the perfume and spice trade in each specific year. The geographers that were responsible for these accounts will be explored in the next section.

The Arab geographers and the Indian Ocean trade:

Al-Ya‘qūbī was known and patronised by the Ṭāhirids to record his findings and journey to India. He was retained to record and account for the larger economic centres that could be found throughout the Middle East including, Iraq, Iran, Arabia, Syria, Egypt, India, and China and how they operated in terms of travel, taxation, and trade. His ninth-century work has been translated into English in a three-part series by the historian Matthew Gordon in 2017.¹²¹ Notably, this collection of works is among the earliest works that has survived from the early medieval Islamic period. Al-Ya‘qūbī was clear in his interest in Indian Ocean trade and the amount of wealth that could be brought into the Middle East and where the main centres of this trade was, and who benefitted in the administration most, by calculating tax in specific years due to the increase in monetisation.

He was a peer of the geographer, Abū al-Qāsim Ubaydallāh ibn Abdallāh ibn Khurradāḡbih (204-299 A.H./ 820-912 A.D.) who focused on the same thing with the exception that ibn Khurradāḡbih also includes more of Asia including the kings of Persia and the routes from Samarra. He was one of the earliest geographical writers in Arabic, and notably his works

¹²¹ Gordon, Matthew S. *The work of Ibn Wadīh al-Ya‘qūbī. An English translation*, Vol. 1-3, (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

have mostly survived in their original form.¹²² Being a contemporary of other geographers who wrote in the same field suggests that his interest in the subject was an entire genre that the elite were interested in and actively consumed for him to build a career out of it. Especially as he was also a member of the elite, given that he was at first appointed as Director of Posts and Intelligence (*ṣāhib al-barīd wa'l-khabar*) in the province of *Djibāl*, and eventually became a friend of Caliph al-Mu'tamid. All of this suggests that these writings were a part of elite culture, and integral to the administration given his official title.¹²³

Additionally, we have evidence of this rise in popularity from the anonymously written work *Ḥudūd al-Ālam*¹²⁴ that there was an interest in this work as the writer began his¹²⁵ work in 372 A.H./972 A.D. for Abu'l-Ḥārith Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, prince of Guzgan or Gizganan.¹²⁶ The text was primarily focused on how each region was connected to each other and what was of note in terms of luxury goods, such as the position of the mountains and the sea and the silver mines of *Jiruft*.¹²⁷ The tenth century geographer even structures the account of the different regions by the rivers that connect them¹²⁸ and even in his account of *Sind*, he writes that the soil is dry with 'many deserts'¹²⁹ and that it is connected to *Sistan* in the north through the river *Mihran*.¹³⁰ Hence we are aware that the way that water connected regions had become particularly of note on both sides of the Caliphate, as we can see from the geographical works on the Mediterranean side too. In this writing too, we see exactly how trade could be

¹²² Hadj-Sadok, M., "Ibn Khurradādhbih", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel (eds.), (1960), http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.soas.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3257

¹²³ Ibid, http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.soas.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3257

¹²⁴ Means 'the Regions of the World'.

¹²⁵ The assumption of the writer being male is that insofar I have found not written works of female geographers in this period from the Caliphate.

¹²⁶ Barthold, V.V., 'V.V. Barthold's Preface to the Memorial Series', *E.J.W. Memorial Series, New Series*, C.E. Boworth, (ed.), Vol. XI, (1970), 4.

¹²⁷ Minorsky, V. (trans.), 'Ḥudūd al-Ālam, The Regions of the World, A Persian Geography 372 A.H./ 982 A.D.', *E.J.W. Memorial Series, New Series*, C.E. Boworth, (ed.), Vol. XI, (1970), 65.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 69.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 80.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 80.

conducted and where because the routes are carefully noted down, albeit descriptively, but cartography was still in its early stages at this point. Whilst taxation is not as heavily present as in the works of al-Ya‘qūbī, the luxury goods that brought in wealth to the Middle East definitely are.

Similarly, the works of Muḥammad Abū’l-Qāsim ibn Hawqal (d.368 A.H./978 A.D.), whose work survives in the single text *Ṣūrat al-arḏ* (Configurations of the earth)¹³¹ are the most complete in the sense of detail or information and what was of note, and is effectively a descriptive account of Islamic countries.¹³² You can see this in the example of his work that is dated to 361 A.H./ 972 A.D. where he writes about his travels to Palermo. Whilst some of his Italian journey to Sicily is lost,¹³³ we do have enough of his existing work to get a nuanced picture of both what was of note, such as economies and societal viewpoints. Ibn Ḥawqal is careful to describe the defensive geography of the city, the level of wealth and its readiness in the face of illness, natural disasters, and civil toil, which are all important to a state in any time.¹³⁴ He even details where the markets are within the city, the gates to get into the city, and the geography around it, and how it was affected in the contemporary political climate and how safe it was considered to be.¹³⁵ His lack of sympathy with the Muslim Italians who spoke Arabic, whilst teleological is also indicative of how diverse each component of the global trade was, and how far from homogenous even the Arab trading circles were. Ibn Ḥawqal noted in the year 358 A.H. /969 A.D. that Basra alone had a total revenue of over six million dirhams per year from trade.¹³⁶ His work is again another indication that there was great stock put into

¹³¹ Khalidov, Anas B. ‘EBN ḤAWQAL, ABU’L-QĀSEM MOḤAMMAD’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (2011), <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/ebn-hawqal>

¹³² Miquel, A., “Ibn Ḥawqal”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, (edts.), (1960), http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.soas.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3193

¹³³ Granara, William. ‘Ibn Hawqal in Sicily’, *Journal of Comparative Poetics, The Self and the Other*, No. 3, (1983), 94.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 94-95.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 95-96.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 69.

being aware of where the centres of trade were, and the volumes of wealth that were going through them. This makes sense as he seemed to have been a merchant and missionary himself,¹³⁷ or at least engaged with those activities alongside his writing. This is integral to understanding that the globalism that was occurring was a far cry from the European hegemony that it is ascribed to in the later medieval period that Abu-Lughod and Hansen focus on, even if the former recognises the globalisation that was occurring prior to the turn of the first millennium.

We also see less systematic early attempts of geographical works, muddled, and confused as they may be as the scholar and geographer Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Muqaddasī (333-381 A.H./945-991 A.D.) pointed out.¹³⁸ There was a rise in scholarly and commercial interest in this field, as he was able to create a career out of discussing the geography of the routes in and out of the Caliphate in the Middle East which was his focus. The fact that the geographers such as al-Muqaddasī were able to critique and build upon previous work illustrates how advanced the field had become by the early medieval period and the interest in the passages across the Caliphate and beyond.¹³⁹ Moreover the fact that they used the ancient scholars such as Ptolemy in some of their citations also suggests that there was a longevity to this interest that was being advanced in this period, alongside and because of the trade that was occurring. The works of geographers like him are indicative of what was considered of note in scholarly circles at the time, and what patrons would be interested in and were willing to commission.

The Arab geographers are especially indicative of the scholarly and elite interests in the field of cartography and trading routes which was actively symptomatic of the rise in maritime

¹³⁷ Miquel, ‘Ibn Hawkal’, (1960).

¹³⁸ Al-Muqaddasī, Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr. *The best divisions for knowledge of the regions*, Basil Anthony Collins, (trans.), (London: Garnet, 1994), 3-6.

¹³⁹ Ibn Khurradādhbih, Abū al-Qāsim Ubaydallāh ibn Abdallāh. *Kitāb al-masālik*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), (Leiden: Brill, 1889), 3.

trade and the expansion of the Caliphal economy. They were contemporaries of the travel writers who wrote specifically about having gone through the Indian Ocean, with tales that were sometimes fantastical, and really fed into a market for knowledge about these parts of the world that were very much connected.

The specific primary sources on the Indian Ocean trade and the Muslim presence in

India:

From sources such as al-Ṭabarī's accounts of history we are aware of just how connected the early medieval world was, except western Europe, about which he says virtually nothing. When his work is used alongside the works of the Arab and Persian geographers this elucidates further the amount of knowledge that was available on the Indian Ocean, how it was being gathered and compiled, and if it was being capitalised on. But other specific sources that deal directly with economic history and geography in specific primary sources about the Indian Ocean from the viewpoint of the Arab traders outwards also exist.

A major work is by Abu Zayd al-Sīrāfi (d.368 A.H./978 A.D.)¹⁴⁰ who wrote his travelogue in a form of extended prose of what he saw, and where, on his way to China from the Middle East. It was originally written in Arabic and has since been translated into English. Al-Sīrāfi unlike many of his counterparts who were merchants, or had official posts, seemed to have made his entire livelihood just on his writings and teaching them too. He was a member of the intellectual elite in that he could afford to do this, even in the heavily monetised society that the Caliphate had become by this point as al-Sīrāfi taught a wide range of subjects for fifty years.¹⁴¹ A part of the way he sustained himself is by copying out manuscripts for a fee as a

¹⁴⁰ Abderrahmane, Taha. 'Discussion entre Abū Sa'īd al-Sīrāfi, le grammairien et Mattā b. Yūnus, le philosophe', *Arabica*, T. 25, Fasc. 3, (1978), 310-311.

¹⁴¹ Humbert, Geneviève, "al-Sīrāfi", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, (eds.), (1960), http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.soas.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1090

type of wage,¹⁴² hence he had to work and produce texts in order to sustain himself. This does go some way into explaining why there is discourse on what he did write and what he did not. Including the following geographers work too, who is also the next major work this research focuses on.

The second major work is by Burzurg ibn Shahriyār al-Ramhurmuzī, (d.338 A.H./950 A.D.). His work is closer to the *1001 Arabian Nights* in structure, and is also more of a collection of stories, and observances that are related to him or sometimes that he saw, but there is no clear structure. However, as both of them came from a similar time as well as the fact that both al-Sīrāfi and ibn Shahriyār seem to be very similar as people there is some discussion about the manuscript tradition and whether they are indeed the same person.¹⁴³ This is because the only reason that *The Book of Wonders* is attributed to ibn Shahriyār is one manuscript in the Aya Sofia that names him as author.¹⁴⁴ Even then that was transcribed and edited much later.¹⁴⁵ Even so, assuming that the original dataset we have is true and ibn Shahriyār is the author, and even if he was not, they were all keen travellers and seems to have profited from the market of knowledge there was for Indian Ocean voyages and their accounts in Baghdad.

Another noteworthy example that illustrated early prolonged communication across the Indian Ocean is in the account of ibn Shahriyār, in which he related that traders such as Abū al Zahr al-Barkhatī who was a South Asian shipmaster, eventually converted to Islam in his *Book of Wonders*, which is fully examined in the context of the Arab market in the following

¹⁴² Ibid, http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.soas.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1090

¹⁴³ Ducène, Jean-Charles. 'Une nouvelle source arabe sur l'océan Indien au Xe siècle : le Ṣaḥīḥ min aḥbār al-biḥār wa-'aḡā'ibihā d'Abū 'Imrān Mūsā ibn Rabāḥ al-Awsī al-Sīrāfi', *L'Afrique orientale et l'océan Indien : connexions, réseaux d'échanges et globalisation*, Vol. 6, (2015), 3-5.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 3-5.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. 3-5.

chapters.¹⁴⁶ ¹⁴⁷ The *Book of Wonders*, at the basic level is just meant to be the culmination of his many travels and voyages across the Indian Ocean which he compiles into the book that is sold to the markets in Baghdad.

In the case study of the shipmaster that is accounted, we are aware that it is possible that this shipmaster was trying to escape the caste system and ibn Shahriyār does not expand upon this. Possibly because of convenience, or because of his own Muslim beliefs, but this does indicate the pitfalls of using sources that are accumulated for popular reading – even for the time. Also, we cannot be sure that the shipmaster was not Buddhist or even Zoroastrian, so the motives behind his putative conversion beyond spirituality cannot be examined further. What we know for sure, is that in this case we have evidence of a trader having converted due to prolonged contact, hence there are several layers of a process of interaction present in this account. Ibn Shahriyār is careful to say he ‘eventually’ converted,¹⁴⁸ and that this was over a period and a process. Whilst there are issues with credibility when it comes to ibn Shahriyār’s work in terms of hyperbole and at times pure fantasy, it is indicative of what people were willing to believe and thought was plausible. This is because his works include accounts of snakes as big as cows in India, as well as mermaids, which are unlikely to be true and fully discussed in terms of their allure to the Baghdad market for charging a premium for exoticism. This means that as a source, ibn Shahriyār’s work is more indicative of attitude, and lack of understanding, but willingness to learn in terms of the Arab buyers of the Indian Ocean goods. Also, it is entirely possible that chroniclers were willing to embellish their accounts to charge as much as possible for their wares.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Shahriyār does not provide any more context on the man’s age or where he came from so a death date cannot be provided.

¹⁴⁷ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India, Mainland, Sea and Islands*, G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, (trans. and ed.), (London: East-West Publications, 1981), 13.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 14-15.

Ibn Shahriyār is integral to understanding societal attitudes towards merchants and the fluidity of their movements and beliefs with prolonged contact that they had with the Middle East and the Caliphate from the outside in, or vice versa. His work still needs to be criticised as a historical source as he had something to gain as a shipmaster and writer in exoticizing the goods that came out of the Indian Ocean and South Asia as he was involved in that trade. This explains why he chose to include stories about mythical creatures, which he does not seem to include just for entertainment purposes. But in the same credence as he gives stories on conversions and findings of gems and diplomatic proceedings that are much more probable.¹⁴⁹ Hence, as a historical source one must keep in mind that traders could be Machiavellian in their accounts if they have scope for profit if needed.

Ibn Shahriyār did however confirm that al-Sīrāfi was a notable and respectable scholar and collector of knowledge about the same regions and his journeys to East Asia through the Indian Ocean. The two are connected by the fact that they seemed to have been travelling the Indian Ocean during a similar time, and had awareness of each other as Ibn Shahriyār confirms, indicating a sense of community or at least a consolidated field of work where one was aware of one's contemporaries much like academics today. Both scholars are used extensively in this research as contemporaries.

Albeit even with all the information that we have about the texts, there is still disagreement about the provenance of the sources now that they have started to be scrutinised. A prime example of this being that given all that we now know about Ibn Shahriyār, including the parallels he draws with contemporary writing and the stories of Sinbad. It is important too to consider the recent study on the text done by Jean-Charles Ducène, who is currently a major historian on the topic of Arabic geographical sources. In 2015, his work is the most significant

¹⁴⁹ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 25-29.

on the topic – and most comprehensive to date on *The Book of Wonders*, in which he hypothesises alternative provenances of the manuscript.¹⁵⁰ This is because he argues strongly that due to the fact that we attribute *The Book of Wonders* to ibn Shahriyār is because of a manuscript in the Aya Sofia 3306 which is gilded in gold at the top naming him as author.¹⁵¹ His argument being that since the majority of his work is so similar to al-Sīrāfī, the book of wonders is also by him. This is compounded according to Ducène by the fact that both he and ibn Shahriyār seem to very similar as people too; they both have connections to Basra, Baghdad the port of Sīrāf, a similar time frame to the anecdotes and a readership and connection to Baghdad.¹⁵² Whilst this is all true, due to the nature of the time, I contend that there was more than one sailor connected to Baghdad and Sīrāf and that for the purposes of this research the fact that the geographer ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī (d. 749 A.H./1349 A.D.) chose to transcribe the works displays that it was still considered relevant in the Mamluk period. This also explains why it was transcribed and that this work was consumed still serves its purpose of longevity. Ducène’s research is comparatively short, at less than two hundred pages on the *Book of Wonders* but is still the most significant work done on the text thus far and deserves addressing. However, as highlighted this study will be using the Ian Netton approach of looking at the writing itself in order glean what this meant overall, rather than if it really happened.

Used in conjunction with this, al-Sīrāfī’s accounts of his voyage to and through India were originally in Arabic and have also been translated into English. They are now a part of the Library of Arabic Literature at the New York University, which has created a hybrid Arabic-English collection to allow comparison which means that we are able to see how accurate the translation is for those who possess the ability to understand Arabic. Al-Sīrāfī’s

¹⁵⁰ Ducène, Jean-Charles. ‘Une nouvelle source arabe sur l’océan Indien au Xe siècle : le Ṣaḥīḥ min aḥbār al-biḥār wa-‘aḡā‘ibihā d’Abū ‘Imrān Mūsā ibn Rabāḥ al-Awsī al-Sīrāfī’, *L’Afrique orientale et l’océan Indien : connexions, réseaux d’échanges et globalisation*, Vol. 6, (2015), 3-5.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁵² Ibid, 4.

account allows us to learn much about naval travel at the time and his especial mention of items such as spices, perfumes, aromatic resins, woods and where they come from,¹⁵³ is indicative of just how valuable these items were by his time and that they were worth crossing over the Indian Ocean for. His work is specifically a compilation of reports in the early ‘Abbasid period that encompasses what can be found in a journey from the Middle East to China and how one would trade.

The history of perfumery and its societal effects as well as the plethora of other uses it had – such as in medicinal scholarship being expanded due to its proliferation - has yet to be examined fully. Even though we are aware that through extensive studies there were medicinal uses to a lot of the same raw materials. This is something that is highlighted by the writings of al-Sīrāfi and the focuses of this research topic. Unlike ibn Shahriyār, he has absolutely no accounts of mythical beasts, and only relates to strange animals that he had not accounted before, but we are very aware do exist – such as elephants and rhinoceros, and is much more believable as a historical account, and thus much more credible.

Whilst al-Sīrāfi is used extensively in this research, there is some uncertainty because some of what he relates seems to derive from the work of the chronicler ‘Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 345 A.H./956 A.D.) who also originally wrote in Arabic.¹⁵⁴ He is particularly important to note because he combined his historical works with scientific research and geography, and is dubbed ‘The Herodotus of the Arabs’.¹⁵⁵ In the medieval Arab world of documentation this is not seen as the act of a plagiarist, but rather just someone who is well informed of different accounts as well as their own. It does mean that one had to be careful when ascertaining if something happened or if it was a story that was related

¹⁵³ Ibid, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 12.

¹⁵⁵ Haywood, John A., "Al-Mas‘ūdī". *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Masudi>.

to him. Nevertheless, whether they happened to him or not (and in the research this is discussed to check the validity of each of his accounts) the fact that it happened to him or al-Mas‘ūdī is indicative of its occurrence and therefore its significance; the point being that it was witnessed by one of the two and thus is worth analysing.¹⁵⁶ The reason for this cross-over was because they had shared a common scholarly interest in India. Al-Mas‘ūdī described an Arab settlement in Chaul, which was granted a degree of autonomy by the local raja which corroborates with al-Sīrāfī in that there were mostly peaceful interactions in India between the Muslims and indigenous peoples. In the early 900s which he reports to have had thousands of Muslims whose ancestors had come from Arabia and Iraq.¹⁵⁷ These ancestors are specifically noted to have arrived to engage in the pepper trade along with other spices, which suggests the level of incentive that such trades held for people to resettle there to some extent.

Other Arabic geographers tell us about the increased interest of Muslim merchants in the Indian Ocean, which resulted in the grand scale of administration being brought to India. We are aware of this through the works of Arab scholars such as Madā‘īnī (d. 228 A.H./843 A.D.) who was a well-known historian,¹⁵⁸ and even later by ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 A.H./1406 A.D.) – who all wrote in Arabic- about the South Asian trade that the Arabs were interested in. They all agreed that South Asian trade was a major component in integrations and heightened awareness of India. Comparatively ibn Khaldūn corroborates with almost all the earlier geographers in his work (barring the parts that we can assume are myths such as the mermaids), but since his text is a fifteenth century source, also consolidates that the relationships that were

¹⁵⁶ Al-Sīrāfī, Abu Zayd. *Accounts of China and India*, Tim Mackinosh-Smith, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 12-13.

¹⁵⁷ Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Kitab al-Dhahab wa-Ma‘ādin al-Jawhar*, (“*Les Prairies d’or*”), Barbier de Meynard, (ed.), Vol, 2, (1877), 438-440.

¹⁵⁸ None of his works survive in the original but he was probably a major source for al-Balādhurī’s account of Sind and the *Chahnameh*.

built in the eighth century were robust trading relations that were proliferating steadily long after the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D.

The literature is also indicative of how these geographers and scholars on Indian Ocean goods and trade were received on the local level which is indicative of societal attitudes. There is usually a notion among those who are prominent in the field of Islamic history that the Arabs were an open-minded society in most revisionist histories and argue that unlike their European counterparts that the near and Middle East was open to progressive ideas in medicine and philosophy. This is in part corroborated by the works of ibn Juljul (d.383 A.H./ 994 A.D.) which were a collection of writings on the properties and uses of the plants and spices that came to the Caliphate as a result of the increase of maritime trade.¹⁵⁹ Such as his text *The history of physicians and scholars*, and *A book on theriac*^{160, 161} which admired the Greek works and also their integration of South Asian medicines and married that with the new knowledge that was coming out of extensive study in the early medieval period. We find through the works of the accounts of those who investigated the practice of medicines with Indian Ocean spices that there was a growing amount of suspicion against these substances and their uses as time went on. This will be expanded upon in the chapter about the Caliphate, but the sources do tend to ignore the reaction about what happened until we go and corroborate the fates of these scholars with their counterparts and the secondary works who investigated this. Involvement into the scholarship of foreign ideas could be lucrative as well as dangerous.

This was also the case outside of the Caliphate on the other side of the Indian Ocean. The Indian ocean was a gateway into finding Middle Eastern goods in China as we have

¹⁵⁹ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitab al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawhar*, 66 and M.S. Khan, A chapter on Roman (Byzantine) sciences in an eleventh century Hispano-Arabic work', *Islamic Studies*, M.S. Khan, (trans.), Vol. 22, No. 1, (1983), 51.

¹⁶⁰¹⁶⁰ Theriac being ointment or other medicinal compound.

¹⁶¹ Amar, Zohar. Efraim Lev and Yaron Serri. 'On ibn Juljul and the meaning and importance of the list of medicinal substances not mentioned by Dioscorides', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (2014), 530-531.

Chinese sources from the ninth century which list herbs and spices from West Asia such as dates and frankincense which are not indigenous to that area at all and were in fact considered luxuries in Tang China.¹⁶² The Chinese sources used here are the accounts of Du You (a relative of Du Huan) which are translated by Angela Schottenhammer, as well as what seems to have been relayed to Arab writers on their travels such as al-Sīrāfī. We are especially aware of the prestige attached to foreign goods as the date tree which is commonly associated with the Middle East was embroidered into the imperial textile in Shoisin that dates to the mid-eighth century.¹⁶³ Hence the elite that were involved in these trades, however niche they may have been compared to the volumes that existed during antiquity on the Mediterranean, did not decline in importance as time wore on into the early medieval period. Indeed, they were the power players regardless of which side of the known world you looked at and East Asia is a prime example of this, even if it falls outside of the remit of this research, judging from the textiles and evidence that was sourced on the spices that have survived there.

Hence there was an attempt of Muslim merchants to incorporate Indian Ocean goods into court culture, despite small proxy wars that occurred, and we see this highlighted in recipe books. We know from the cookery books such as the *Annals of the Caliph's Kitchens*,¹⁶⁴ that it was normal to list the foreign ingredients used in order to prepare a table and a dish as well as their effects on the body and how much of each to consider when using the spices and aromatic substances.¹⁶⁵ The collection of recipes is noticeably attributed to Iraq and due to the focus being on the table of the Caliph we can locate it specifically to Baghdad, which actively highlights the consumer society Baghdad was when it came to Indian Ocean spices. Ibn al-

¹⁶² Schaffer, Edward. *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand. A Study of T'ang Exotics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 121-122, 170-171, 212-226.

¹⁶³ Image in: Alain, George. 'Direct Sea Trade Between Islamic Iraq and Tang China: from the Exchange of Goods to the Transmission of Ideas', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 25, (2015), 608.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Warrāq, Ibn Sayyār. *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, Nawal Nasrallah, (trans.), (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 90-100.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 91-93.

Warrāq's work on this is extensive and will be considered at length in this research. His work was originally written in Arabic and the translation that is over one thousand pages is minutely detailed with each aspect of the dinner table. From this we can learn just how pervasive the knowledge was that if one was going to serve such delicacies to wealthy patrons, one needed to be aware of how they worked, and their poisonous and medicinal aspects alike.

Having different perspectives is important in an area as diverse as the Middle East. This is made apparent by him in the differences in elite cuisine based on geography is indicative of the trading patterns of the area. Usually, items shipped at great cost were worth viewing as a coveted product. However, the issue with cookery books is that they came to the fore as the written culture of the administration started to expand alongside the cultural adjustments that were taking place.¹⁶⁶ However, aside from ibn al-Warrāq's text, the cookery books that have survived are from the 1200s onwards, and so fall out of the remit of this study. Although they do attest to the *longue durée* of the spice trade.

The main historical works we have on the Muslim presence in South Asia before the Ghaznavid period are notable in their uniqueness despite being on the same topic. The *Futuh* by 'Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī (d. 278/9 A.H./ 892/3 A.D.) and the *Chahnamah*,¹⁶⁷ are both about interactions of Muslims in South Asia before the rise of Islamic dynasties that came later in the subcontinent and are much better recorded than this period was. However, they focus on different parts of this slow fertilisation of Islamicate and Muslim culture that was the result of prolonged interaction through trade. Al-Balādhurī focuses on the Arab settlers, their offspring and how they were treated by the local people, whilst the

¹⁶⁶ Ahsan. Muhammed Manazir. *Social Life Under the 'Abbasids, (170-289/786-902)*, (US: ProQuest, 2017), 44-45.

¹⁶⁷ Persian meaning 'Book of Conquests'.

Chahnamah is a history about Sind specifically, and in that vein some of the accounts seem to be fantastical.

A major early medieval text to consider in the beginning of the Muslim large-scale involvement in India is when al-Balādhurī¹⁶⁸ wrote about the conquest of Sind he is clear that there is some aspect of taking those who are captured as fugitives. Although he does go on to say that later families come to take refuge under the Arabs and bring with them their children and even livestock, specifying that they came with buffaloes.¹⁶⁹ He is pivotal in highlighting how the Arabs were assimilating to the area and the fact that little colonies were being set up. With communities that could follow Islamic practices as best they could – even under South Asian rulers further afield which will be discussed further on. When compared to the *Chachnamah* there is a similarity between the balance of a bloody takeover of the area, and the willingness of the Arabs to assimilate is something that is corroborated in both sources, and both sources write about almost the same exact period. The careful noting of the geography of the area, and why the Arabs wanted to be there is present in both sources and clearly indicates the language and motives for conquest by this period that seems to be understood on both sides of the Indian Ocean.

Whilst Sind was kept as a foothold into South Asia and Indian Ocean trading by the Caliphate, al-Balādhurī is careful to specify that the seemingly lack of tradable goods in the immediate area stopped the Caliph Uthman ibn Affan (d.13 A.H./ 635 A.D.)¹⁷⁰ from sending the army into India before the Arab domination that came in the 700s.¹⁷¹ Indeed, it is recorded that in the report back to the Caliph the description was ‘the water supplies are scanty; the dates

¹⁶⁸ Afsaruddin, Asma. ‘In Praise of the Caliphs: Re-Creating History from the Manaqib Literature’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, (1999), 337.

¹⁶⁹ Al-Baladhuri, Ahmad Ibn Yahya. And Philip Khuri Hitti, Francis Clark Murgotten. *The Origins of the Islamic State, Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, (New York: Columbia University, 1924), 209.

¹⁷⁰ Keaney, Heather. ‘Confronting the Caliph: ‘Uthman n. Affan in Three ‘Abbasid Chronicles’, *Studia Islamica*, Vol. 106, No. 1, (2011), 26.

¹⁷¹ Of the Gregorian calendar and the 1st century of the hijri.

are inferior; and the robbers are bold. A small army would be lost there, and a large army would starve.’¹⁷² The fact that this is what made ‘Uthmān decide against pursuing a bigger Arab foothold in the region is indicative of definite commercial interest, even though we are aware that the actual merchants involved were individual actors, the elite and diplomacy had a vested interest in them. Al-Balādhurī points out that it was only in the beginning of the 100s A.H./700s A.D. when the Arab were able to extract ‘booty and captives’ that the interest of the borders of India was once again sparked in the Caliphate.¹⁷³ Whilst al-Balādhurī goes on to say that there were many treasures found as the Arab armies swept into Sind and took over the towns and cities there, he does not specify what they were.¹⁷⁴

The *Chachnamah*, which was written in Persian and is the oldest written history of region of Sind specifically, is important for this study as it corroborates clearly that the Muslims were involved in the area prior to the year 390 A.H/1000 A.D. We are unaware of the original author but the transcription and translation as it survives is from the 1200s. It clearly agrees that the Caliphate, or at least actors from the Caliphate, were present and felt in the area and asserted that there were no disruptions to local beliefs in terms of what they could and could not worship.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, the order from the Caliph’s administration is quoted to have been that the local religions should be left alone ‘even if they worshipped sticks and stones.’¹⁷⁶ This seems to have been true to most of Indian history as the ancient Smritis¹⁷⁷ which are originally written in Sanskrit, state that even in times of war for the most part those that tilled and toiled on the soil were left alone under Hindu rulers too, so there was a set precedent for this, and it was what the peasantry expected.¹⁷⁸ This is in stark contrast to their earliest European

¹⁷² Al-Baladhuri, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, 210.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 210-211.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 212-213.

¹⁷⁵ Fredunbeg, Mirza Kalichbeg. (trans.), *The Chachnamah. An Ancient History of Sind*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985), v-vi.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. v-vi.

¹⁷⁷ Means ancient Hindu religious text.

¹⁷⁸ Fredunbeg, *The Chahnamah*, v-vii.

interactions just before the year 1500 when the Portuguese arrived in Goa and conducted what has since been called a ‘Portuguese Inquisition’.¹⁷⁹

We are also aware that Sind was predominantly Buddhist when the Arabs arrived in force, so it is logical that the locals were willing to accept the Arabs (even if we are not aware if they were content or not) and carry on with their day to day lives. The lack of written evidence apart from the writings of al-Balādhurī and the *Chachnamah* is then explained to a certain extent that aside from just the climate, shift in power to the Arabs that occurred may have just been carried out like any other previous invasion – without a great deal of harm to those at the grass roots. Al-Balādhurī does however, agree that there was a level of coexistence in India amongst the Muslims traders that came and went, as well as the settlers who decided to stay alongside the ingenious peoples. Both sources are imperative in proving a strong sense of connectivity.

The combination of traders leaving behind local families to tend to their houses, and the climate not being helpful to the preservation of written sources means that much of this history is still needs to be pieced together. We have folklore such as the *Chachnama*, which is about a Hindu king who discovered Islam from diplomatic emissaries from the Caliphate and subsequently decided to perform *hajj*.¹⁸⁰ In the story, on his return journey he lay on his death bed and sent his entourage to return to India and spread the word of Islam.¹⁸¹ However, we do not have substantial evidence for this. The Arab merchants must have had families in the ports that they docked into when they were in South Asia, as most frequent traders did throughout history, the women are largely ignored and have henceforth not been recorded in any histories

¹⁷⁹ Priolkar, Anant Kakbar. ‘The Goa Inquisition; being a quatercentenary commemoration study of the Inquisition in India’, *Bulletin of SOAS*, Vol. 27, (2009), 233-234.

¹⁸⁰ *Hajj* is one of the five pillars of Islam and is a holy pilgrimage to Mecca that all Muslims must perform once in their lives if they are able to do so.

¹⁸¹ Prange, Sebastian. *Monsoon Islam. Trade and Faith on the Medieval Malabar Coast*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1-2.

to be traced, despite their pivotal role as local traders and translators to Arab merchants, as foreign traders' wives usually were.

Given that the capital city of Sind, which was one of the first Arab conquests, was Alor and it was 'situated on the bank of a river called the Mehran.'¹⁸² ¹⁸³ The area was known for its 'innumerable riches'¹⁸⁴ and so it is logical that eventually the Arabs would look to expand there after the Persian conquests. Especially as maritime trade grew because according to the *Chachnamah* it is faithfully recorded that the borders of the kingdom reached 'to the boundary of Kashmir, on the west to Makran, on the south to the coast of the sea and Daybul, and on the north to the mountains,' which means that it was well connected in trade routes.¹⁸⁵ Hence, it came as no surprise when the Arab armies arrived to invade and take advantage of such trade routes by the year 711 A.D. Whilst conquest itself was quick, bloody and without a doubt violent. There is no strong evidence for long term persecution of those who resided in the area and continued to do so.

However, al-Balādhurī does concede that not all was peaceful all the time and wrote that during the conquest of Sind he is clear that there is some aspect of taking those who were captured as fugitives, but this was a part of war in this period and has been so ever since. The importance of this as a source is that it seems very realistic and thus much more credible. Although he does go on to say that later families come to take refuge under the Arabs and bring with them their children and even livestock, specifying that they came with buffaloes.¹⁸⁶

The widespread movement of people, free and bound alike, suggests a knowledge and intimacy with trade routes that must have come with increasing traffic along the Indian Ocean.

¹⁸²The ancient name for the Indus.

¹⁸³ Fredunbeg, *The Chahnamah*, 11.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 11-13.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 11-12.

¹⁸⁶ Al-Baladhuri, Ahmad Ibn Yahya. And Philip Khuri Hitti, Francis Clark Murgotten. *The Origins of the Islamic State, Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, (New York: Columbia University, 1924), 209.

The Arabs intermarried with the local Indian population and indeed there are accounts of individual and genuine levels of conversion that came with increasing Arab influence – especially when the Arabs turned Sind into what was effectively a colony for the Islamic Empire,¹⁸⁷ which soon after spread into Southeast Asia. All of this was done in part to secure and gain access to routes into, and from, Southeast, Central and East Asia to obtain ceramics and silks, as well as indigenous spices from the local area. As mentioned before what we lack are South Asian sources about the Arab traders.

We are also aware of the fact that there were cross-fertilisations of ideas and parts of Indo-Arabic cultures on both sides of the Indian Ocean as the numerals we identify as Arab actually originate from what is now India and is attributed to a celebrated mission to the court of the Caliph al-Manṣūr in 154 A.H./771 A.D. which included in the gifting procession as set of astronomical tables.¹⁸⁸ They became such a part of Arab culture that they were later revised and translated by Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al Khwārizmī (d. 235 A.H./850 A.D.)¹⁸⁹ in 825 A.D. a text on Indian numerals and how to compute them into Arabic called *Kitāb al-Fuṣūl fī al-Ḥisāb al Hindī* which does not survive in its original form but does in the later works that derive from it in quotations.¹⁹⁰ We see this in the works of Abū'l Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al Ulūkdsī¹⁹¹ who wrote about and quoted the book in Damascus which is dated to 340-341 A.H./952-953 A.D.¹⁹² The significance of this cultural import and the fact that they survived so long and effectively that they became 'Arab' is suggestive of how far globalisation had occurred on this side of the world by the tenth century. The practical use of having a common

¹⁸⁷ Devra, G.S.L. 'Arab Invasion and the Decline of Western Maurya Confederacy', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 76, (2015), 195.

¹⁸⁸ Burnett, Charles. 'The semantics of Indian numerals in Arabic, Greek and Latin', *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 34, No. ½, (2006), 15-16.

¹⁸⁹ Reichert, Bruce. 'Not all of those giants were European: Arabic scientists in the Middle Ages', *Science Scope*, Vol. 13, No. 5, (1990), 48.

¹⁹⁰ Burnett, (2006), 15-16.

¹⁹¹ Death date unknown.

¹⁹² Burnett, (2006), 15-16.

numerical system in trading was also not overlooked and is possibly a large reason why the system proliferated.

Globalisation is also very present in the *Book of Gifts and Rarities* exchanges of gifts are continuously mentioned in diplomatic relations and gifting with the ‘Abbasid Caliphate.¹⁹³ Whilst we are unaware of who wrote the original document, we are sure that it was copied out in the fifteenth century¹⁹⁴ by Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī ibn Duqmāq (d.808 A.H./1406 A.D.), which is the work from which this research gets its information from.¹⁹⁵ The work is supposed to be what had survived of the eleventh century manuscript, and given the Arabic tradition of *isnad*¹⁹⁶ this is not out of the ordinary.¹⁹⁷ Whilst there is a plethora of information about the gifting itself, the research of the wider impact of this on society and politics is still formative in the way that it affected the greater trading networks up to Europe and more expansively within the elite spheres of society. This source allows us to see into the meaning behind the diplomatic gifts and some of the reasonings (at least officially) that was used to justify such extravagant gifts. The reason that it is in this literature review is that, whilst the fact that it is an Arab source, specifically about the splendour, wealth, and power, of the Caliphs to the rest of the world, it gives at least an insight of the magnitude of goods that were involved in this vein of diplomacy. Whilst there may have been some exaggeration on behalf of the Arabs, it is still important to see the type of luxury items that were considered prestigious enough for rulers.

Primary sources on Christendom and its relationship with the Caliphate:

The early medieval period in the Near and Middle East was one where science and medicine were celebrated and actively pursued. The corpus of written materials is a rich source that are

¹⁹³ Ibn Duqmāq, Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī. *Book of Gifts and Rarities, (Kitab al-Haqāyā wa al-Tujaf)*, Ghāda al-Hijāwī al-Qaddūmī, (trans.), (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, (1997), 77, 98, 110—111.

¹⁹⁴ In the Gregorian calendar.

¹⁹⁵ Ibn Duqmāq, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 6.

¹⁹⁶ *Isnad* is the transmission of knowledge through secondary writers on the authority of those that came before them.

¹⁹⁷ Ibn Duqmāq, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 5-7.

used in this research. Many of the works that were translated into Latin from the Greek originals had been lost earlier and were translated from Arabic, and although this is dated to have occurred after the period we are discussing, the process of their popularisation was a direct effect of the globalisation. It was these global connections from trading contacts that led to the Arab integration of Greek works in the Caliphate, such as Aristotle, in intellectual circles. Moreover, it had been the Arabs that had been insistent in their pursuit of ancient and new knowledge alike, whilst Europe had regressed into shying away from it.¹⁹⁸ However, as contact between both sides of the Mediterranean grew, there was a regeneration in the reclaiming of the European past and trying to make it as correct and precise as possible – giving birth to a whole new script in this pursuit called Caroline minuscule.¹⁹⁹ The manuscript I use in order to display this is the original in Paris and was published online in 2007.²⁰⁰

Aside from the visual materials of manuscripts which can be fictitious or simply symbolic, most of this research is based on letters and written descriptions and accounts of events. The clergy and aristocracy in Western Europe in some cases have had their correspondences catalogued and they have survived the test of time, including what they gave with the letters which were usually accompanied by gifts. It was also in this time that some of the Islamicate culture of spices and perfumes were permeating into Western Europe as staples of elite culture and power. This eventually meant that the Carolingians in Europe were fostering a market that was actively looking for items that would help advance the pursuit of knowledge once more, as well as increase a sense of refinement. With this came the demand for spices such as pepper, and perfumes such as frankincense, which can be seen as early as the later 700s to the beginning of the ninth century when St Boniface is sent a letter which includes cinnamon,

¹⁹⁸ Frankopan, Peter. *The Silk Roads, A New History of the World*, (London: Bloomsbury 2015), 97-99.

¹⁹⁹ Becher. *Charlemagne*, (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 116-120 and Paris, MSS Latin 9388, 198 ff. from: <http://www.europeanaregia.eu/en/manuscripts/paris-biblioth-que-nationale-france-mss-latin-9388/en>

²⁰⁰ Ibid. <http://www.europeanaregia.eu/en/manuscripts/paris-biblioth-que-nationale-france-mss-latin-9388/en>

pepper, frankincense, and an unnamed spice as a gesture and blessing of friendship.²⁰¹ The body of work I found this in is a compilation of these primary works that was published in the late 1800's and focuses on the letters of the elite in both Latin and English. What is important to note here is that whilst in the letter the items that are included are modestly called 'a little gift' spices are a very valuable gift and were known for their medicinal qualities as well as being a symbol of indulgence in the cuisine of high society which the sources reflect.

For Indian Ocean trade a lot of the evidence we have for this in the Carolingian Empire and Western Europe is scarce and limited to decorative manuscripts and book covers in which foreign substances or symbols are illustrated such as the ivory plaques in the British Museum.²⁰² On top of this we have the medical and culinary books that include spices, just as we have for the Caliphate, that are carefully documented in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* and the *Capitulare de Villis* mainly in the works of Theodulf in *Theodulfi Carmina* and *Rodulfi Gesta abb. Trudonensium, Lib IX*, but the instances are far and few between. Both are collections of recipes and accounts of Carolingian works that include how to prepare food and medicine in Latin. Neither mention that the items are foreign specifically, but one is aware because of the provenance of the ingredients such as black pepper, which could not be sourced within Europe. The accounts of the Frankish historian who worked for Charlemagne Einhard (d.840 A.D.) also wrote the *Vita Karoli Magni*, which does show evidence that there were worries about the decadence that was a result of the global trade that was rising in popularity but there was only one concrete example of this which was when Charlemagne was crowned

²⁰¹ Boniface, 'S. Bonifatii et lulli epistolae', *Monumenta Moguntina*, Philippus Jaffe (ed.), (1866), 155-156 and 199.

²⁰² British Museum, *Book Cover*, (1914), 1856,0623.20,
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1856-0623-20

in Rome.²⁰³ Hence, the major works are the cache of letters that have survived that this work relies on from St Boniface and other members of the elite including the Abbess of Cuniberg.

We are aware from the primary literature of medieval letters however that foreign goods were often exchanged along with the letters as acts of gift giving between the clergy and the nobility and across both spheres of influence regularly. Indeed, in the eighth century alone we have an example of the Abbess of Cuniburg being given a gift of frankincense and pepper, along with a letter to request for prayers of aid and help.²⁰⁴ As well as this, we have several letters that are addressed to and from Boniface that included the gift of frankincense, or gold and silver.²⁰⁵ Whilst this does not technically fall under the remit of the Carolingian Empire, circles of the clergy corresponding with one another across borders irrespective of politics (but certainly not always) and the elite is standard behaviour for medieval Europe, and suggests a *lingua franca* of accepted behaviour that included gift giving.

For contacts with Europe the source material from letters is especially important and this comes to the fore in the *geniza* material from Cairo. A *geniza* is usually a Jewish store of writings that have the name of God. They are stored and sealed without being damaged in reverence with the name of God being written but are no longer needed. The frequent exchange and gifting of foreign products explains why then, in Goitein's study of the *geniza* letters in *A Mediterranean Society*, there are entire families who gain their name through very specific trading patterns such as being merchants in ambergris, acorns, fennel or gallnuts as well as a plethora of other items.²⁰⁶ The indication here is that there is enough of a demand of the products that the merchants could afford to be so niche, as is often the case with sellers of

²⁰³ Einhardi, British Museum, *Book Cover*, (1914), 1856,0623.20, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1856-0623-2054.

²⁰⁴ Dennehard, Lullus. 'XXXIX [49], Dennehard, Lullus, and Burchard to Abbess Cuniburg asking for her prayers for help (739-741)', *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, WTH Jackson, (ed.), (1976), 78.

²⁰⁵ Cardinal-Bishop Benedict, 'LVXXIV [90], Cardinal-Bishop Benedict to Boniface (Nov 751)', *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, WTH Jackson, (ed.), (1976), 167.

²⁰⁶ Goitein, S.D. *A Mediterranean Society: Economic Foundations*, Vol. 1, (1999), 155.

luxury items even today. Whilst there are prominent merchants that Goitein lists with exhaustive items of trade in their letters (some so long that it could not be entirely listed in his book), Goitein cannot be faulted in his attention to detail in the long-distance trade of Arab merchants.

However, where this study fits in with his work is that whilst he states what the letters were and the context that they were in, in the Arab world, this research intends to look at the socio-political effects that occur across the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean trade. By that nature this research will also look at the soft-power networks that were being created and reinforced through continuous and prolonged contact. Hence, his work shall have to come into my own when looking at the role of Arab traders. Especially given that Goitein makes note of Jewish traders from the letters in the *geniza* which reinforces my earlier argument that Arab is not always synonymous with Muslim, and the fact that a lot of the Indian Ocean goods were taken to Cairo to be sent further north. This is Goitein's source base and gives invaluable insights into the lives of merchants that were involved in the trade across the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean in a system of cabotage. It also allowed for Jewish voices to be preserved in their involvement in the trade as well as early medieval globalism and highlights the complexities of the groups involved and the sheer volume of goods that were being transported. His work explores the existence of entire business clans and families in Cairo that were thriving leading up to and just after 390 A.H./1000A.D. In their original form the writings are in Arabic and Hebrew or even a mixture of the two, but Goitein's research and catalogue is all translated into English. Indeed, Jewish buyers seemed to have been their own market to an extent, as ceramics were produced with the Star of David imprinted on them by the eighth-ninth centuries on a large scale as excavations from South Ramla highlight.²⁰⁷ We are also aware of Chinese

²⁰⁷ Gorzalczany, Amir. 'Ramla (South)', *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel/ חדשות ארכיאולוגיות*, בישראל וסקרים חפירות: ארכיאולוגיות, Vol. 121, (2009), 1025.

ceramics that were found in an archaeological dig in Spain that date to, at the earliest, ninth century Spain which must have also arrived because of these same trading networks.²⁰⁸

Goitein's work is pivotal in this as he proves that there was extensive trade between Cairo and the rest of the Arab lands and through Sicily further north into the rest of Europe. Given that his work is so integral to understand the nature of Cairo being at the forefront of long-distance trade Goitein's work has already been analysed by some other secondary works too. This includes Zohar Amar and Efraim Lev, who investigate the items that are being discussed in the *geniza*. They contextualise the items in terms of economic value, and their utility in different fields, such as in perfumery, cuisine, and medicine, which were the major industries of the era. Both scholars shall be used in my study as they elucidate the differences between spices and how they could be used beyond eating, although the implications that this had in terms of social standing, access, and how they were brought over to Europe is not discussed and shall be where this work comes to the fore.

However, the frankincense in these letters itself was almost a universal indicator of ritual functions at this point - as it had been since antiquity²⁰⁹ - of the early medieval era as it came from what is now known to be southern Arabia and was transported to be traded into European markets. On top of that, we are aware from the accounts of al-Sīrāfī²¹⁰ that it was also bought by the Chinese markets that the Arabs had access to in exchange for ivory and copper ingots.²¹¹ The ivory of which from his accounts seemed to have been harvested in India as that is where he describes the different types of ivory and where they are available.²¹² This

²⁰⁸ Whitehouse, David. 'Chinese Porcelain in Medieval Europe', *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 16, (1972), 63-78.

²⁰⁹ Le Maguer, 'The Incense Trade during the Islamic Period', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 45, (2015), 176.

²¹⁰ Pingree, David. 'Abu Sa'id Hasan Sirafi', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (2002), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sirafi>

²¹¹ Al-Sīrāfī, Abu Zayd. *Accounts of China and India*, Tim Mackinosh-Smith, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 45-46.

²¹² *Ibid*, 45-63.

is why South Asia is pivotal in understanding this movement of trade as it was the gateway to goods on both sides of the Indian Ocean and even for the Mediterranean when it came to spice and aromatic goods. We know this because we have evidence of the residue of aromatic substances in incense burners on the European side of the Mediterranean that date back to the third century A.H./ninth century A.D.²¹³ that came from areas such as Amman, Jordan and were traded to end up in Europe.²¹⁴

In this period Europe was introducing itself into the existing trade networks that Arab merchants had set up and cultivated over the centuries leading up to 1000 A.D/390 A.H. The increase in maritime trade, the progression in naval technology,²¹⁵ and the increase in long distance trade were all instrumental in allowing the external trade of the Caliphate to penetrate Europe. Hence whilst we are aware of the presence of Moorish peas²¹⁶ in the *Capitulare de Villis* and by extension Arab interaction,²¹⁷ the current historiography is still busy trying to decode the indigenous culinary landscape. Having said this, primary sources still have several items of foreign origin that were covetable. However, we are aware that foreign spices were available and present as well, alongside aromatics that came out of the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean trade that was already booming by the 800s.

We are aware from Einhard (d.225 A.H./840 A.D.)²¹⁸, who was a nobleman and biographer of Charlemagne, that foreign substances were already present and even becoming a point of discourse because of its prevalence and symbolism of outside influences.²¹⁹ This is

²¹³ In the Gregorian calendar.

²¹⁴ Le Maguer, (2014), 177.

²¹⁵ Gilfillan, S.C. *Inventing the Ship*, (New York: Columbia University, 1935), 40-45.

²¹⁶ Moorish in this context seems to be pointing at something that is considered to be foreign and a result of the occupation of Spain most probably, but there is no real explanation of the term.

²¹⁷ MGH Capit 1:87, *Capitulare de Villis*, Chapter 70, p. 90.

²¹⁸ Smith Julia M.H., 'Einhard: The Sinner and the Saints', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 13, (2003), 70.

²¹⁹ Einhardi, *Vita Karoli Magni*, (Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1911), 27-28, and Einhard, *Vie de Charlemagne*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014), 54.

corroborated by works such as Marcus Gavius Apicius²²⁰ (who died sometime in the first century A.D.) of the long-standing prestige of foreign elements in foods. In his writing his dishes are named after notable peoples which made them celebratory items – their ingredients are also indicative of this as *piper nigrum* and *piperitis* meaning black pepper and Indian pepper (respectively).²²¹ Both ingredients were indigenous to the area that is now called India not Europe, indicating the high status of those who consumed the dishes. Whilst it is true that the works must have been collected after the first Apicius passed²²² (there were two) as the people that were honoured were alive well after his lifetime, the fact that these dishes were significant enough to be noted is indicative of European attitude towards foodstuffs historically. Which will be discussed fully in the chapter about Europe entering in long-distant trade on larger scales.

Archaeological sources:

Whilst archaeological evidence of perishables such as spices and perfumes that were made from natural substances are rare and far between, there are other indicators of trade that had to be present that have survived. The most notable survivor being coinage, which came to the fore in the newly monetised society of the Near and Middle East in the early medieval period. The Standing Caliph coin²²³ that Abd al Malik became renowned for, and indeed is still a point of conjecture today, was most likely the attempt at the marrying of Sasanian culture with its new Arab rulers. He did this by creating a coin that included a Zoroastrian fire temple guard or attendant whilst also inscribing on the coinage with the Islamic profession of faith on it,²²⁴ to reinforce the Caliphates claim to be protector and leader of the final Abrahamic religion on

²²⁰ A member of the Roman elite who was noted for his education and wealth.

²²¹ Apicius, Marcus Gavius. *Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome*, Joseph D. Vehling (trans.), (New York: Dover Publications Inc. 1977), 11 and 177.

²²² This was some time in the first century A.D. but the exact date remains unknown.

²²³ This is now on display in the British Museum, see in 'Images' section.

²²⁴ This is called the *Shahadah* and is the basis of faith for all Muslims.

it.²²⁵ The inscription that says ‘There is no God but Allah,²²⁶ and Muhammed is his Messenger’ is a powerful and undeniable assertion of this. The controversial image on the front of the coin with a living man about to unsheathe what seems to be a sword is clearly meant to be threatening or at least symbol of strength that is only religiously controversial however, because it is a depiction of a man in early Islam that is used to represent the Caliphate. We are aware that depictions happened in this period of time from examples such as Qusayr ‘Amra.²²⁷ However, this coin seemed to have been considered particularly problematic; whether it be the Caliph himself (which is a possibility) or a Zoroastrian religious figure is equally condemnable in terms of the theological criticism it faced. Moreover, this coinage had double meaning, as it was also used to project a message beyond the Caliphate.

Aside from coinage, bigger excavational discoveries are also used in this research such as the Belitung Shipwreck that have evidence of items that would have stored spices or accompanied perfumes, such as ceramics and vases.²²⁸ The shipwreck is believed to have been a part of the ongoing trade of the early medieval era that is dated to the early ninth century as a bowl discovered was dated to 826 A.D. and has been studied to find that there were traces of star anise on board.²²⁹ Further excavations in the Indian Ocean area, like that in 1998 in the area of Sīrāf are also telling of the amount of trade that was occurring in the port in terms of Indian Ocea traffic. Seth Priestman reports the findings to mean that the area was a ‘major trading emporium’ in the period this research is covering.²³⁰ Millions of objects, thousands of

²²⁵ See figures 1 and 2.

²²⁶ *Allah* means ‘God’ in Arabic but unlike common misconceptions is not affiliated solely with Islam and is just the name of the one monotheistic God for all three Abrahamic religions in the Arabic language.

²²⁷ Qusayr ‘Amra is a famous Umayyad palace that has within it several frescos depicting people, including women.

²²⁸ Flecker, Michael and J. Keith Wilson, ‘Dating the Belitung Shipwreck’, *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Wind*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), (2010), 35-44.

²²⁹ Flecker, Michael. ‘A Ninth-Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia’, *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, (2010), 111-112.

²³⁰ Priestman, Seth. ‘The British Museum Siraf Project’, *British Institute of Persian Studies Newsletter*, No. 32, (2007), 5.

them being ceramics, were found in the area, 32,000 of which are at the British Museum now.²³¹ Whilst the items are still being studied and Priestman has a very recent publication becoming open access on the findings,²³² the basic findings do agree that globalization and the Indian Ocean trade were well underway by this point, especially with the Western Indian Ocean to which a lot of the ceramics are attributed.²³³

The secondary sources; overarching and main source contentions:

Given the wide geographical scope of this research and the numerous sources that are consulted, this literature review will only discuss the major influences in the current field to remain within the constraints of one thesis. The current historical field on the globalisation of the early medieval period in relation to the Middle East, Europe and their involvement in the Indian Ocean are dominated by three critical works. That of Henri Pirenne (d.1935), Michael McCormick in his 2002 book of *The Origins of the European Economy* and Valerie Hanson on her work released in 2020 titled *The Year 1000, When Explorers Connected the World – and Globalization Began*. Whilst I do go into detail about them in terms of each region to maintain the clarity of the literature review, it is important to note that they are also applicable across all three regions and need to be contextualised more broadly too. This is because the questions that this research is trying to answer is about the connectivity across and through the Middle East on both sides in relation to the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

My contention with the Pirenne argument of a stonewalling between the Middle East and Christendom with the rise of the Islamic Empires is the lack of nuance that this presents when looking at the Mediterranean connections in the early medieval period. This is because whilst Pirenne is correct that there was a reduction in trade in this period in comparison with

²³¹ Ibid, 5-6.

²³² Priestman, Seth. *Ceramic Exchange and the Indian Ocean Economy (AD 400 – 1275), Volume 1: Analysis*, (London: The British Museum, 2021), 1-17.

²³³ Ibid, 209-211.

the volumes of trade that were involved in the Roman Empire during antiquity, globalisation did not halt because trade continued - just in smaller volumes. This is something Pirenne fails to include in his very Eurocentric study of the trading relations of this period. Without being contextualised this is misleading as the Indian Ocean was starting to thrive under the attentions of the ever-expanding Arab markets, which he was correct on.

On the other hand, more recent works, such as Hansen's study with its global perspective only starts to look at Asia and the Indian Ocean from the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. onwards.²³⁴ We are aware that the movement of grain from Egypt to Europe was the earliest movement of Middle Eastern trade we have record of before the rise of Islam, and Hansen only seems to look at the rise of trade after the first millennium, even though even if you consider the Pirenne Thesis then the Indian Ocean trade would come to the fore before this. Hansen's work falls short of this train of thought and overlooks it, which is where this thesis intends to fill in the current gap in the historical field.

Moreover, whilst a lot of research does support what Pirenne claims about Europe, we are aware of regular – if fewer - trading patterns still existing due to the slave trade through Venice further south and other trades that the elites were interested in to project their power and status, specifically perfumes and spices. Despite the slowing down of trade, the value of what remained was still significant as all the sources mention them being paid for in gold coinage exclusively when payment is mentioned. McCormick also heavily features the slave economy of Europe across the Mediterranean, and attributes it to the ongoing external trade of Western European Christendom in a way that Pirenne does not recognise to have happened.

Ergo this actively reiterates that the Pirenne Thesis was true in relation to the reduction of trade between Europe and the Middle East in comparison with the Roman Empire and the

²³⁴ Hansen, Valerie. *The Year 1000, When Explorers Connected the World – and Globalization Began*, (New York: Scribner, 2020), 143-144.

fact that Pirenne focussed on the Eurocentric worldview and was highly acclaimed for it as a scholar.²³⁵ However, even with this, there was a parallel movement in the Indian Ocean of the opposite happening and there being an increase in trade where the presence of Arab traders slowly penetrating further into South Asia was something that dated to before the coming of Islam and has to be contextualised as a process – not a phenomenon of a sudden trading relations. However, Richard Hodges argues in his August 2021 article *The Adriatic Sea 500–1100* that the Mediterranean and Adriatic Sea connections thrived throughout late antiquity.²³⁶ Moreover he argues there were indeed indirect connections that also led into Asia which was a part of this naval trading system even as early as antiquity which he marks to have begun to end at the year 500 A.D. Fernand Braudel agrees with this in his own research arguing that a part of the eventual creation and rise in capitalism was in the relationship between culture and hierarchy, and that trading economies were born out a perceived sense of class in different objects.²³⁷ His work focuses on the 15th century, but nevertheless points towards a longevity in this process through the analysis of culture and the movement of people using goods as proxy.

McCormick weighs in on this discussion with his work on the Mediterranean slave trade which he talks about expansively and comprehensively,²³⁸ and will be discussed in detail further on. This research is meant to work alongside his, by looking at the other trades of spices and perfumes that were happening alongside the slave trade and growing dramatically in volume towards the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. McCormick argues that there was a change in the European economy with the rise of Islam, much like Pirenne, and in this space finds slavery to be key in this shift of attention from grain and other goods that were at the forefront of the

²³⁵ Boyce, Gray Cowen. 'The Legacy of Henri Pirenne', *Byzantium*, Vol. 15, (1940-1941), 449-450.

²³⁶ Hodges, Richard. 'The Adriatic Sea 500–1100: A Corrupted Alterity?', *Byzantium, Venice and the Medieval Adriatic: Spheres of Maritime Power and Influence, c. 700–1453*, Magdalena Skoblar (ed.), (2021), 15-44.

²³⁷ Braudel, F. *Civilisation and Capitalism, 15th-18th century, The perspective of the World*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 60-66.

²³⁸ McCormick, Michael. *Origins of the European Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6-19.

trade in antiquity.²³⁹ McCormick takes up the Pirenian torch of finding out what happened in the Mediterranean, and his focus on the years leading up to 900 A.D. indicate that there was still much to be discussed a full century before the turn of the first millennium.²⁴⁰ The year 1000 in the Gregorian calendar has in recent times been made into a significant year of change in historical works and Hansen's research is no exception to this.²⁴¹ But we see from revisions and in-depth analysis of both the evidence and the Pirenian argument that this does not align with the current historical field, including McCormick's work.

Beyond Pirenne, Hansen, and McCormick, the literature that is available beyond the Caliphate for the trade networks of Eurasia to be considered properly in relation to Islamic influence, however, is too large a topic to do at once. Hence, I shall review my material geographically and focus especially on Europe, South Asia, and the Middle East. What we do have definitive records of are taxes, geographical accounts, and even diplomatic missions which the Caliphate specifically ordered to be carried out as scoping missions, or for diplomatic alliances and even just for the economic incentive of new trading markets.²⁴² We have evidence of all these sources in relation to Byzantium, and later the Carolingians; Central Asia and the nomadic tribes there; the South Asian subcontinent; and East Asia, all indicating some level of globalisation in the early medieval period.

Secondary literature of the Arab Indian Ocean trade and the current historical field:

Geoffrey F. Gresh in his book published in 2020 *To Rule Eurasia's Waves* presents the access to Eurasia's water – notably the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean – being coveted by the great

²³⁹ Hodges, Richard. 'Reviewed Work(s): Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, AD 300-900 by Michael McCormick', *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2, (2002), 286.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 286.

²⁴¹ Hansen, *The Year 1000*, 9-27.

²⁴² Ibn Shahriyār, Buzruk. *The Book of the Wonders of India, Its Mainland, Its Sea and Its Islands, Kitab 'Aja'ib al-Hind, edited from MS. In the Aya Sofia Mosque of Istanbul and MS. Included in the 'Umari's Encyclopaedic Book*, Hikoichi Yajima, (ed.), (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2018), 104.

powers such as China as a new phenomenon. He does start by saying that maritime trade has been essential since the time of the ancient Greeks, but that mass competition between administrations that are now involved are new.²⁴³ Whilst albeit, the added climate crisis he includes as a factor, and the United States are new to the stage of the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean trade, the vying for knowledge and access for these naval passages are very much long-standing and at least a thousand years old. This falls out of the scope of my research but does underline a renewed interest in the study of this field and why it is in turn so imperative to then understand the origins of the legacies of early medieval maritime trade.

My research attempts to begin the process of acknowledging and attempting to remedy (in a small part) the history writing that has culminated from 500 years of colonial domination. This has led to studies focusing on areas that now belong to the Commonwealth or previously other Western colonies in terms of their relationship with Europe or their conflicts with one another – for the simple reason that, that was what Europe was interested in. This in turn meant that those themes are what most of the historiography that is available is now on. This is due to Europe’s politics and economic motives up until the latter half of the 20th century and beyond being geared towards diverting the wealth of Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and pumping it all back to the imperial powers in the West.²⁴⁴ The Middle East is mostly ignored in terms of its early history in globalization, and indeed, ‘the Silk Roads’ are actually defined as connecting China and Europe, without acknowledging the Arab middlemen in between.²⁴⁵ This lack of acknowledgement also includes the Turkic populations involved in the caravans of trade on overland routes that were very much still in use in the early medieval period.

²⁴³ Gresh, Geoffrey F. *To Rule Eurasia’s Waves, The new great power competition at sea*, (U.S.: Yale University Press, 2020), 1-128.

²⁴⁴ Jackson, Peter. ‘The Neoliberal University and Global Immobilities of Theory’, *Area Studies at the Crossroads*, (2017), 27-30.

²⁴⁵ Steger, Manfred B. *Globalization, A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 26-27.

The secondary literature about the early medieval Arab world more generally has even up to the late 20th century been contested over, in how ex-colonies should be examined in a post-colonial world. Revisionist scholars such as Edward Said have said about western history writing that it is important to note the wider variances of arguments at play.²⁴⁶ Given that, the era in which Said wrote was post-decolonisation and also from the viewpoint of a Palestinian descendant in America, his views on, in his words ‘orientalism’ were so vehement in his approach to addressing western historiography because of his feeling of disenfranchisement.²⁴⁷ It is the nature of history writing that at some point the writer’s motive informs the content within which they write. The relevance of Said’s theory being that heretofore, since the production of the postcolonial field in terms of eurocentrism, the lack of study into globalisation before European involvement is because it has not been seen as pivotal enough in our understanding of globalisation. Instead, it has been almost exclusively attached to the European colonialism of the fifteenth century, or the beginnings of long-distance maritime travel in the year 1000 A.D. most recently due to Hansen. Tansen Sen agrees that the emergence of intra-Asian connectivity and the outwards effected trading networks and aided the proliferation of trading relations. His work focuses on China, but its relationship with India and the fact that pre-thirteenth century linkages existed, but this is still a very early stage of the field.²⁴⁸

Indeed, a current example of this is that the fear of climate change has become increasingly pressing, which has meant that as a result a new field of climate history has been conceived about the medieval Middle East and the areas that were concerned and in contact with it. Due to the evolving nature of the field at present, most of the work is theoretical thus

²⁴⁶ See Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin, 2003).

²⁴⁷ Lopate, Philipp. And Edward Said. ‘Edward Said’, *Bomb*, *New Art Publications*, No. 69, (1999), 70-71.

²⁴⁸ Sen, Tansen. ‘The Intricacies of Premodern Asian Connections’, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 4, (2010), 991-993.

far, and so the evidence for substantial research is lacking. McCormick's work is at the forefront of this as he explored the possibilities of the changes of climate in what is now Syria just before the coming of Islam in his article in 2003.²⁴⁹ But he himself admits that a lot of the evidence is anecdotal for this period without hard evidence.²⁵⁰ However, in order to fully ascertain a more nuanced picture of trading patterns and how they worked ecological factors would have been of importance given that in order to survive crops had to flourish whether a merchant was at home, and most definitely if they were abroad.

Ronnie Ellenblum's book acknowledges that in the pre-modern, and in most cases pre-literate world, it is difficult to pinpoint when exactly climactic disasters and changes occurred because they often coincided with waves of migration. Those same waves of human movement in and of themselves changed the environments they were in— especially in economies that were based mainly in agriculture; the pressure on a good harvest were higher as there were more people to be fed, which in a lot of cases led to famine and starvation due to inflation.²⁵¹ Such an occurrence would then naturally affect the environment once more, and so the cycle continued. Moreover, much like with the Vikings Ellenblum argues that due to colder periods between 286-441 A.H/900-1050 A.D. in Central Asia this caused a series of nomadic invasions that are directly linked to change in temperatures and severe colds which effectively drove nomads south and into the near and Middle East.²⁵² Although, due to the lack of evidence we have of this and Ellenblum's own admission that his work is based upon Richard Bulliet's pioneering work involving the cotton crops of Iran in his book *Cotton, Climate, and Camels in Early Islamic Iran, A Moment in World History*. His methodology was based upon textual records as well as archaeological remains means that a lot of his hypothesis is conjecture

²⁴⁹ McCormick, Michael. 'Rats, Communications, and Plague: Toward and Ecological History', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (2003), 20-21.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 20-21.

²⁵¹ Ellenblum, Ronnie. *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 24-33.

²⁵² Ibid. 23-24.

because he extrapolates the data to fit his theory on Central Asian migration.²⁵³ Hence, the field is still evolving and shaping itself.

Added to this, Bulliet's work was published a decade ago and focuses more on economic flux in Iran and how that affected the Islamic world – this is a topic that directly crosses paths with this research. However, due to the fact that the work is still formative, and the data extrapolated is mostly hypothesis it is too soon to have a general idea of what happening ecologically and I will not be including it here, as that is a whole other topic unto itself.²⁵⁴ However, Bulliet's other work *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, which was originally published in 1979 as one of his major early works, in which he set out an essay on the number of converts to Islam according to regions and their dates from the early 700's onwards.²⁵⁵ He does this by compiling and studying the names of peoples in the region that come under the umbrella of the Caliphate and pinpoints the conversion to the last non-Muslim or non-Arab name in a lineage.²⁵⁶ Whilst the details of his work have either gaps in information and are much too vague for a piece of work that sums up to less than 140 pages that spans over the conversion rates of Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia and Spain. There is no doubt that the premise of his work is still usable and the compilation of the 6132 biographical works that he uses are compressed into the tables and graphs of his books that are useful in gaining a general idea in the amount of conversions and their dates that occurred within the Caliphate over the centuries.²⁵⁷ The work does not focus on trade, but conversion is linked to constant communication, which was at this point in history was a by-product of trade as this was the main motivator for travelling, especially in times of peace.

²⁵³ Ibid. 24-36.

²⁵⁴ Bulliet, Richard. *Cotton, Climate, and Camels in Early Islamic Iran, A Moment in World History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 1-7.

²⁵⁵ Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period, An Essay in Quantitative History*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1979), 10-19.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 18-19.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 114-120.

Other recent literature further agrees that Islamic influence did not necessarily include religion and fell under the description 'Islamicate'. We are aware that there was already a very real sense of diplomatic concern, as well as economic incentive in the globalisation that was taking place in the early medieval period, as we see from the formative attempts at cartography which are included as illustrations, and are primary sources in Hyunhee Park's work.²⁵⁸ Whilst her work is a secondary piece of literature and will be explored further later on, the fact that these attempts were being made as early as the first century A.H./eighth century A.D. suggests the administrations would also eventually use these. The inference being that maps are what armies would use to move if needed, and hence where patronage would be found for scholars.

In Park's book which was published in 2012 in English and was just over three hundred pages, she explores the links between the Chinese and Arab empires primarily through the maps of the era and the diplomatic missions that took place from the eighth to the eleventh century.²⁵⁹ She makes a particular case study of a noble called Du Huan who was captured in the Battle of Talas in 133 A.H./751 A.D.²⁶⁰ and was then taken to Kufa where he resided within the Caliphate for a decade before returning to China by ship.²⁶¹ Within this period Du Huan learnt the distinction between Arabs and Persians whilst maritime traffic and the consumer market for Chinese goods grew in West Asia and the Arab lands.²⁶² Indeed, he even managed to travel throughout the Caliphate even as a 'prisoner'.^{263, 264} Whilst Park is invaluable given that she translated the Chinese sources and their relationship and view of the Arabs, he does not consider the influence of Indian ports and the role the subcontinent had to play in trade

²⁵⁸ See Park, Hyunhee. *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds, Cross-Cultural Exchange in Pre-Modern Asia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

²⁵⁹ Park, *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds*, 4-23.

²⁶⁰ She used the Gregorian calendar.

²⁶¹ Park, *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds*, 21.

²⁶² *Ibid*, 21.

²⁶³ Political hostages were usually treated as guests.

²⁶⁴ Schottenhammer, Angela. 'Yang Liangyao's Mission of 785 to the Caliph of Baghdad: Evidence of an Early Sino-Arabic Power Alliance?' *Bulletin d'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient*, Vol. 101, (2015), 180.

networks beyond mention of the Indian Ocean specifically. The people and the sources are mostly ignored even though they were directly between the Arabs and East Asia.

Additionally, the works of the South Asian historian Kirti Chaudhuri in his study of the economy and civilisation around the Indian Ocean up to 1750 A.D. in relation to the rise of Arab influence that came to South Asia through trade need to be considered. In his research he does seem to conflate Arab to be a default for Muslim, which is problematic. Also, whilst I agree with his research in terms of his methodology of using archaeological finds to reinforce and understand the levels of interaction, his work tends to focus on the later medieval period of the thirteenth century²⁶⁵ onwards with slight nods to the earlier history to understand where the precedent for how diplomacy began, such as using hadiths²⁶⁶ for instance.²⁶⁷ In his comparatively smaller focused sections of the early medieval history that coincides with the period I am studying, Chaudhuri exaggerates the antipathy between the Hindus and Muslims going so far as the state that by the time of al-Bīrūnī (156-440 A.H./973-1048 A.D.) Islam was already a militant onslaught that was attacking Hindu civilisations. His recounting is very much informed by teleology as he fails to point out that apart from the conquest of Sind, trade with the Arab Muslims had mostly been peaceful and whilst the Ghaznavids who were much later in this period were violent, they were a different Central Asian Muslim force.²⁶⁸

He carries on, discussing the conception of mass production that was evolving for East Asian goods such as silk in the Near and Middle East that was being traded for the higher echelons of society across Eurasia by the year 1000 A.D.²⁶⁹ Here too he does not acknowledge the peaceful Indian interactions as middlemen – even at ports to stop at along the way to and

²⁶⁵ In the Gregorian calendar.

²⁶⁶ Hadith – means sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammed which have been recorded and passed down by scholars for the sake of posterity.

²⁶⁷ Chaudhuri, Kirti N. *Asia before Europe, Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 72-83.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 54.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 85.

from the Middle East. However, he does acknowledge that with this rise of trade Islam started to permeate through South Asia and a primary motive for this was its unifying aspect in the face of how divisive Hindu society can be between different social classes. Even if such divisions have never fully been eradicated, he acknowledges at least that there was a socio-economic dynamic beyond military conquest between Indo-Arab relations.²⁷⁰

Just as dense in material as Chaudhuri's work, Andrew Watson's work on the diffusion of early agricultural products specifically during the rise and establishment of the Caliphate is invaluable to the dataset of this research too.²⁷¹ His work is much more specific in that he has several chapters in the beginning on each product that he is studying in order of what seems to be in the highest to lowest level of diffusion and therefore its level of impact upon the Islamic world.²⁷² His time period coincides exactly with my own research, however he admits that some of his conclusions are constricted by the fact that there is a microscopic amount of archaeological evidence for a lot of agricultural products, presumably because they are biodegradable or they were consumed one way or another.²⁷³ Moreover, a lot of the origins are hard to place for the products because they are also embalmed in myth, or have been in cultivation for so long in vast swathes of areas, such as rice, which has been grown for centuries in India, Burma and Thailand and then further up into China, that it is impossible to pinpoint the exact origin. In turn then it is difficult to measure the levels of cross-fertilisation that took place with merchant relations with the rise of the early Islamic Empires.²⁷⁴ This in turn means one cannot measure exactly the socio-political effects of the Arab trading networks because one is unaware if the Arabs introduced new crops or just helped transport and monopolise an already thriving trade. Whilst his work is now around four decades old it is still imperative

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 85.

²⁷¹ See Watson, Andrew. *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World, The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques, 700-1100*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

²⁷² Ibid, 9-72.

²⁷³ Ibid, 12-70.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 15-17.

when attempting to understand the movement of goods and cultures that this resulted in and how, because the historian Andrew Watson marks clearly in the first part of the book that most of the agricultural products came to the Arab world through India wherever it may have originated from, including China. He expands this to then consider the socio-political effects of such a prolonged and extensive line of transmission of goods across Eurasia by people moving in and out of the Caliphate. So much so that the technology involved changed and evolved to meet growing demands and different climates where the crops are introduced in the early and mid-medieval period. Precisely because of the age of his work and the resurgence of interest in the period currently, I believe this research will be an updated addition to this gap in historiography.

In contrast to Watson, the much more recent work of Zohar Amar and Efraim Lev in their book about early medieval medicine in the Islamic world also name a lot of the crops that Watson mentions in his work as being propagated by the rise of Islam and the Caliphate.²⁷⁵ Instead, their work highlights that the crops actually predate the Islamic conquests and were actually known across the Middle East as early as the Roman period such as wheat, rice and cotton.²⁷⁶ Whilst they do not agree with Watson that the crops were considered new in the Middle East, they do agree that they were gaining momentum in the markets in the Caliphate mentioning specifically Cairo several times, alongside the items that were involved in medicine making and perfumery.²⁷⁷

Amar and Lev mention the usage of the substances that they speak about, including the perfumes and their ingredients such as camphor and ambergris, and that they became very popular in the Caliphate amongst the elite,²⁷⁸ but they do not expand any further into the socio-

²⁷⁵ Amar, Zohar. and Efraim Lev. *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 51.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 51.

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 66-67, and 135.

²⁷⁸ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 135-137.

political effects of this which is where I intend for my thesis to bridge the gap. Especially given the fact that royal gifts were even affected to the point that the act became much more strictly ceremonial, and diplomatic behaviour suggests that the medicinal plants and perfumes that were considered a kingly gift. This was all symptomatic of how far the trans-Caliphal trade had gone in rooting itself into the societies it touched in Europe, the Middle East and South Asia which will be discussed further later.

In an earlier work by Zohar and Lev in their book *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine* published in 2016 the two historians emphasise that there were items of medicinal properties from South Asia (or transported through South Asia) that were being transported through Cairo. Presumably from the Indian Ocean into the Middle East, and if needed across the Mediterranean to Andalucía, and other parts of Europe.²⁷⁹ Whilst they base this on the Cairo *geniza* which means that it is also likely that a lot of these items were being transported through Sicily to the other European powers as well as the Umayyads in Andalucía,²⁸⁰ Zohar and Lev do not explore this aspect of the movement of the items. Instead, their work focuses on the multifaceted motives of why certain spices and plants were worth crossing vast distances for by merchants. They focus on how climate, yields, and politics affected the prices of the spices and medicinal plants, and how the transportation of these spices across the Indian Ocean were a continuation of the existing medicinal practices from as early as the time of the ancient Greeks where medicine was based in plant matter. Indeed, they account for this as Hippocrates mentions around 400 medicinal items, in which 91% is plant based.²⁸¹ Amar and Efraim do not expand further upon the socio-political effects of this, it is then logical that as the sphere of influence of the Arabs grew, as well as their trading contacts,

²⁷⁹ Amar, Zohar. and Efraim Lev. *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Genizah*, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 71.

²⁸⁰ Goitein, (1999), 154.

²⁸¹ Amar, *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, 58-59.

that they would take on this knowledge and attempt to expand upon this further, as we shall see in the coming chapters. This is because Arab scholars prided themselves on being well versed in the knowledge of the Greeks and attempting to expand upon it further.

In both Watson's work and that of Amar and Lev there was an adoption here of Islamic culture that is irrespective of Islam as a religion, and focused on the adoption of language, goods, and by extension cultures that Marshall Hodgson described as 'Islamicate' rather than 'Islamised'. The terms 'Islamization' or 'Islamic' holds connotations of conversion.²⁸² Contrary to this because my research includes any evidence of conversion to understand the prevalence of prolonged contact, I intend to use both terms throughout my research without exclusion. The more recent work on Islamic cultural influence instead of conversion that Andrew Peacock explores in his work which was published as recently as 2017.²⁸³ His work explores the idea that whilst the term Islamisation itself hold connotations of conversion, sometimes even forced conversion when it encounters Christendom and several other accusations. It also can mean the influence of Islam that transcended religion and simply spoke to human interactions that were occurring with the rise of the Islamic empire outside of the Near and Middle East.²⁸⁴

Indeed, early Arabic medicine and its infiltration into Europe through the movement of goods and how it was meant to be an expansion on the previous Greek store of knowledge that the Arabs used is not very well documented in terms of secondary works. Medicine made up a large part for the motives of the external trade of the Caliphate as it is human nature to seek cures for ailments. There has been little to none on where the influence came from in terms of the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean trade. As early as 1940 Henry Field wrote about the

²⁸² Hodgson, Marshall. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilisation*, Vol. 2, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974), 3-4.

²⁸³ See Peacock, *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 1-10.

collected customs of medicine in the Middle East that was in Southwestern Asia. Even before the breakdown of the British Empire he was able to recognise that the medicinal teachings in terms of customs in each area of the Middle East were different and that the area was not a monolithic bloc.²⁸⁵ However, the same has not been done extensively for the early medieval period and how the pursuit of medicinal knowledge touched and affected society in this formative period of the Islamic Empires.

However, the most recent and explosive book on the globalisation that was occurring during the time that I am studying is by Valerie Hansen.²⁸⁶ In her book she rightly argues that there was a global interaction post-1000 A.D. but she refuses to acknowledge it occurring any earlier or of significant trade routes and cultural cross-fertilisation between the Caliphates (either Umayyad or ‘Abbasid) and the surrounding areas. My research focuses on what led up to this, challenging the idea that it was not a process. Indeed, she recognises Islamic influence and rulership in India, but only as early as the Ghaznavids and does not acknowledge the conquest of Sind or anywhere near western India. Whilst her work is instrumental in understanding and putting to the fore that globalisation occurred before European imperialism, she does not go much further than that. She bases most of her work on the activities of the Norse and the Vikings in North America and beyond that she does not explore the activities of the rest of the world apart from Europe.²⁸⁷ The implication being that her work can be perceived as somewhat teleological as she continually then focuses it back to the European involvement that came by the end of the 1400’s with the Portuguese – even when she looks at India.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Field, Henry. ‘Folklore and Customs of Southwestern Asia’, *Anthropological Series Field Museum of Natural History*, Vol. 33, No. 1, (1940), 92-95.

²⁸⁶ Hansen, *The Year 1000*, 9-63.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 27-53.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 81-143.

Whilst she does discuss the relationship between Mahmud of Ghazna (d. 441 A.H./1030 A.D.),²⁸⁹ and the traders that come out of China, she does not seem to dub this as globalization. This is interesting given that the subcontinent and China are large enough areas for such communications, that even tensions should be noteworthy, and in the view of this study, proof of trans-regional and global attachments and connections. She seems to attach the idea of globalization from the European perspective outwards and how connected European entities were, in terms of North America, and even the involvement of the Venetians in Byzantium as well as the Genoese and other Italian states. However we are aware from projects such as the one in the early 2000s in Qālhāt that the Indian Ocean trade was in full swing in the Hormuz area by the thirteenth century²⁹⁰ and so much have begun much earlier in order to have such a big impact on the region by then.²⁹¹ Moreover, we are already aware from works such as Priestman's that there were definitely complex and long-standing trading routes between East Asia and the Middle East – or at least Basra, for centuries by the year 1000 A.D. This is actively proved by the archaeological evidence that was uncovered of ceramics found from the trading patterns of the Persian Gulf of the time.²⁹²

Additionally, we are aware from another paper by Rougelle Axelle, that areas such as Hadramawt (Yemen) had, had ports that linked to the Western Indian Ocean for the Persian trade as early as the time of Ptolemy. They also describe al Sihr as the chief maritime centre of the area throughout the Middle Ages including the ninth to twelfth centuries.²⁹³ The argument is agreed on by Ulrike Freitag, who argues that Hadramawt was well placed to be able to be a contact between India, the Middle East, and East Africa, although his work focuses on the

²⁸⁹ Ibid, and C.E. Bosworth, 'Farrukhī's Elegy on Mahmūd of Ghazna', *Iran*, Vol. 28, (1991), 44.

²⁹⁰ In the Gregorian calendar.

²⁹¹ Rougelle, Axelle. 'The Qālhāt Project: new research at the medieval harbour sit of Qālhāt, Oman (2008)', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 40, (2010), 303-305.

²⁹² Priestman, (2016), 25.

²⁹³ Rougelle, Axelle. and Anne Benoist, 'Notes on pre-Islamic and early Islamic harbours of Hadramawt (Yemen)', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 31, (2001), 203.

1800s onwards.²⁹⁴ In terms of the early medieval era, Rougelle does accept that the archaeological remains mostly date as far back as the twelfth century in the ceramics trade, however, the fact that we have evidence of ports as well as written evidence of them being well known is indicative previous contact despite the lack of surviving archaeology. Moreover, whilst the research here intends to look at the external trade of the Caliphate, and the idea of globalization without attaching the idea to any one political or regional mass it will look at the importance of key regions in the grand scale of the external trade. Also, the notion of connectedness over great distances will be considered irrespective of this, and it shall be from the Caliphate outwards and as a middle force.

The context of India, its politics and trade, in the current secondary literature:

The Indian subcontinent has been famously divided and diverse since time immemorial. There have been shifts in politics, kingdoms, and a myriad of other changes over the millennia that make the area almost a world unto itself. Despite this, there has always been a strong tradition of trade regardless of frequent political tensions between the many kingdoms, as al-Sīrāfi highlighted. Indeed, we are aware from the comprehensive studies of Romila Thapar, a Marxist South Asian historian, that by the 700s there had been a 3-century war between the Chalukyas of Badami which was near south-western India,²⁹⁵ the Pallavas of Kanchipuram who were in Southern India, and the Pāndyas of Madurai near Sri Lanka, who made up the three major kingdoms amongst many in the subcontinent.²⁹⁶ Her research is also careful to point out that this did not slow down trade, and agrees with the maritime historian Peter Ridgway that camphor was being traded on at least the eastern half of the Indian Ocean as early as 200 A.D. and continued to expand.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ Freitag, Ulrike. *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 3-12.

²⁹⁵ Thapar, Romila. *Early India, from the origins to A.D. 1300*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003), 330.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 328.

²⁹⁷ Ibid, 120, and Peter Ridgway, 'Indian Ocean Maritime History Atlas', *The Great Circle*, Vol. 27, No. 1, (2005), 37-38.

Whilst a comprehensive explanation of the political contexts, rulers, and factions of India at any time in history would need the study of several thesis' to cover just enough detail to do each region and political group justice. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that with the increase in the export of trade, this meant that there was now enough revenue for the emergence of new political powers in South Asia and Southeast Asia. In turn their increase in political stability meant that this also begot the attention of more international traders which fed into the trading cycle and provided more wealth and power in the areas most near the coast as well as those inland that had strong trading links for spices and other luxuries.²⁹⁸ A notable example of this is the Khmer state that rises in the eighth century around the city of Angkor in Java²⁹⁹ and Srivijaya that became the largest trading hub in the region from the seventh to the thirteenth century, as a result of its geographical location in the Indian Ocean trade.³⁰⁰ It was mostly a point of exchange and meeting point between the goliaths that were India and China and the Arab traders that were heavily involved in the Indian Ocean trade by this point.

We are not fully aware of the names of the kings that hosted various Arab traders, and other foreign traders alike. What current scholars are able to highlight is the names of their kingdoms and that is how they are addressed, e.g., the communal leader of Saymur was hosted to a feast by the Rashtrakuta king as he was accepted into that particular king's territories and had the responsibility of looking after the Muslim affairs at the port that his officials were responsible for. This has been established by secondary scholars such as Maqbul Ahmad and Prof. Ranabir Chakravarti which this research also uses.

²⁹⁸ Paine, Lincoln. 'The Indian Ocean in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', *Maritime Contacts of the Past: Deciphering Connections Amongst Communities*, Sila Tripathi, (ed.), (2015), 39.

²⁹⁹ De Saxce, Arian. 'Trade and Cross-cultural Contacts in Sri Lanka and South India during Late Antiquity (6th-10th Centuries)', *Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology*, (2016), 125.

³⁰⁰ Manguin, P. 'City-States and City-State Cultures in pre-15th-Century Southeast Asia', *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, (2000), 410.

We are also aware from the Historian Tanvir Anjum's work that there was a definite rift between the Hindu and Buddhist hardliners at the time as we are aware from the capture of Daybul that was discussed earlier. We are aware that it was a Brahman dynasty before in that region was toppled by the Arabs using Buddhist intelligence and help.³⁰¹ However, what is clear is that there does not seem to have been a backlash onto the Muslim minorities that were settling and trading that has been recorded at all. This seems to have been the status quo across polities across the subcontinent that were involved in the Indian Ocean trade (one of the very few). We are even aware that along the Konkan coast³⁰² as well as in the port of Gujarat the Muslim traders were given enough autonomy to make sure that trade always ran smoothly, and even incentivised them to keep returning as sea merchants, as they were exempted from specific taxes that were usually owed to the king which is no small matter in medieval society.³⁰³

Apart from the discussion of the general context of India and how it facilitated trade in the Indian Ocean, the perception of South Asia's relationship with the rise of the Islamic Empire has, in the light of British Imperialism been either completely ignored pre-390 A.H./1000 A.D. Or when discussed, it has been coloured by the stark contrasts of Hindu-Muslim tensions and factionalism. Whilst this is a relatively new phenomena in terms of mass conflict, there has been a projection of such a viewpoint back to the eighth century that is only recently being reconsidered. One has to keep in mind that there is a difference between Arab and Muslim in the timeframe that this research is analysing, and the two terms are not completely synonymous as Asif Manan makes clear in his introduction to the *Chachnamah*. In which he translated into 'The Book of Conquests'³⁰⁴ and includes a foreword on. Especially since the Arabs had been trading with the rest of Asia prior to the coming of Islam, and much

³⁰¹ Paine, (2015), 41 and Tanvir Anjum, 'Emergence of Muslim Rule in India: Some Historical Disconnects and Missing Links', *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (2007), 222-223.

³⁰² Map provided as *figure 7*.

³⁰³ Chakravarti, R. 'Nakhudas and Navittakas: Ship owning Merchants in the West Coast of India (c. AD 1000-1500)', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 43, (2000), 37-40.

³⁰⁴ Asif, Manan Ahmed. *A Book of Conquest*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 25.

like today, Arab does not always mean Muslim, as all three Abrahamic religions, as well as others, originate in the Middle East.

Whilst Eurocentric scholarship has already been discussed it is important to note here again in the example in the Cambridge History of India from 1965.³⁰⁵ Where it is claimed that in the eighth century the Muslims who made a military advancement into India, did so violently to the point that if the people that fell under newly acquired Muslim territory did not convert from the Hindu faith, their wives and children were enslaved *en masse*, and any man over the age of 17 years old was put to the sword.³⁰⁶ Whilst there is no evidence for this provided in the book, nor am I aware of any such actions for Indian and Arab sources occurring on large scales, there is an assertion that there is an element of misunderstanding here. Moreover, the context in which the text was written must be addressed. Whilst I gained this information from the reprint in 1965 after India had gained independence due the Britain's weakening from two world wars, it was originally published in 1922,³⁰⁷ when Gandhi was advocating for the coming together of the Indian masses regardless of caste and religion.

India is known for its role in the popularisation of spices and the signature dish of a curry. As mentioned earlier, what is less known is that a lot of the spices are indigenous to both East Asia and South Asia by this point in history and we cannot pinpoint them.³⁰⁸ Thus, the trading routes that allowed the spices to come into the rest of the world were pivotal and valuable as crops were spreading wherever they could, and they were cultivated because they were a secure income. In this context the region of Sind which was connected both to the mountain passes, the sea and other states as mentioned earlier was ideal for trading.

³⁰⁵ Haig, Wolsey, 'The Arab Conquest of Sind', *The Cambridge History of India, Turks and Afghans*, Vol. 3, (1965), 3

³⁰⁶ Ibid, 3-6.

³⁰⁷ British Library Website, link in bibliography.

³⁰⁸ Al-Sīrāfi, *Accounts of China*, 121-125.

Whilst we are aware that Arab merchants were definitely in South Asia from before the first century A.H./seventh century A.D. which Arezou Azad points out in his work about Afghanistan. We are aware of the motivation for the seizure of Indian lands by the Arabs from contemporary sources about potential wealth which were discussed earlier.³⁰⁹ We have literary evidence that Arabs had been trading in South Asia since before the time of the Prophet Muhammed's revelation and the rise of Islam in the middle of the first century A.H./seventh century A.D.³¹⁰ What we have later in the subcontinent is the large-scale administrative interest of the Islamic Empire which is separate and very different from the individual tribes that were involved in the area before.

The movement of people by the time of the Caliphate was becoming much more sophisticated and dynamic to the extent that Arab ex-patriate communities were being created in South Asia. Especially since Asif Manan proved in his work in 2016 that Arab families had settled in this region and had connected histories with the indigenous peoples.³¹¹ The fact that this was able to happen, and the evidence survived, such as gravestones,³¹² illuminates how many there must have been involved for even some to survive all this time.

In terms of the most current secondary works on the South Asian subcontinent and its interactions with Arab Muslims, the collection is confined to only two main texts; the most recent being by Sebastian Prange called *Monsoon Islam*, in 2018. It is the most recent work that exists about Islam in South Asia before the Mughals or the Ghaznavids; and back in 2011 Ronit Ricci wrote *Islam Translated*, where she explores the earliest interactions with Muslims in the regions. Although, the part of her work about Sumatra falls out of our bounds by 2 centuries and focuses on the works of travel writers such as Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn

³⁰⁹ Azad, Arezou. *Afghanistan's Islam*, (California: University of California Press, 2017), 39-41.

³¹⁰ In the Gregorian calendar.

³¹¹ Asif, Manan Ahmed. *A Book of Conquest*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 25.

³¹² *Ibid*, 25.

‘Abd Allāh al-Lawātī al-Ṭanjī ibn Baṭṭūṭah and his contemporaries.³¹³ The pool of resources in the secondary research of this field is scarce compared to works on the later Islamic Empires that sprout out of and extend into the subcontinent in the 1200’s onwards, and this is where I intend for my research to fit into the field.

With the literary and archaeological evidence that we have available thus far, there is enough of a structure for an in-depth study of the effects of the trade that Arab traders were involved with outside of the Caliphate. The lack of Indian sources allows my research the freedom of originality in the sense that the field is still so formative in the study of Islamic influence pre-390 A.H./pre-1000 A.D. that one can capitalise upon this. Whilst on the western frontier, in terms of Europe, the understanding of how the Carolingians and the Italian states engaged with the Caliphate and the traders from there is still a vital component that is only beginning to be seriously considered in the context of the larger world stage of the globalisation that was occurring by the eighth-ninth centuries.³¹⁴ But we are aware that this must have happened, just because Byzantium was still a part of Christendom and in the Middle East. Moreover, the distinctions we make between Europe and Eurasia are a modern phenomenon that we do not find in the pre-modern era, and it is normal that at least the elite circles were somehow connected to one another across borders.

The secondary sources specifically on the Arabs and the Carolingians:

Janet Abu-Lughod focuses on specific cities and routes that led to globalisation before even the earliest examples of European colonialism.³¹⁵ However her research focuses on the period that falls two centuries after my own and begins in 1250 A.D. Whilst she does make occasional reference to earlier times, this is not the focus of her research. Given that the early medieval

³¹³ Ricci, Ronit. *Islam Translated*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 8-153.

³¹⁴ In the Gregorian calendar.

³¹⁵ Abu-Lughod, Janet L. *Before European Hegemony, The World System A.D. 1250-1350*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 102-105.

era was one in which great stock was put into one's religion as it dictated your position in society, how far you could rise in government institution, and even how much tax you paid. One must also beware of the fact that the Islamic historians in general had their own biases, and it is rare for their patronage and political affiliation to not affect their history writing, especially when it came to how the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids dealt with, or emulated, Christian Byzantium.

It would not be erroneous to infer 'Abbasid chroniclers had the ability and the motive, to be overly critical of the Umayyads as the historian Peter Frankopan finds in his 2016 book *The Silk Roads*.³¹⁶ His work is somewhat problematic about the scholarship on the 'Standing Caliph' coin, in that he feeds into recent discourse that due to popular conjecture some historians have decided to insert notions that it may be a representation of the Prophet Muhammed. At present we have no substantial evidence for any depictions of the Prophet in medieval Islam before the year 1000 A.D, let alone a Prophetic *dinar*. To include this in any serious work of scholarship – such as the work of Frankopan in his book *Silk Roads*, is ahistorical and academically inviable to use as even a hypothesis.³¹⁷ Despite the contention that is still present in the historical works around the figure on the coin, the coin itself is a primary source that is scarce in its volume because it was quickly retracted and replaced with a second gold *dinar* that was entirely calligraphic in its design and therefore Islamically unimpeachable. Frankopan's book, whilst at times lacking in historical events, or erroneous in its use of primary sources by not contextualising them, is still a major work in the understanding of the trade routes of the classical and medieval era. His extensive use of primary sources indicates where at least one can go and research for themselves what happened in case he is misinterpreting, which it seems he does when it comes to reading the Arabic sources on occasion. Whilst there

³¹⁶ Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, 86-89.

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, 88-89.

are academically ‘better’ sources on coinage available that are analysed in this research, his work must be included due to its popularity and the volume at which it has been consumed. However, his text is still prominent in the historical field and would have to be considered to join the current discourse as he was published in 2015 and writes about the whole history of the connections of Eurasia, from the almost ancient times to the modern, within one thousand pages.

With all of this in mind one should always err on the side of caution in accusations of un-Islamic behaviour. Whilst the period of iconoclasm is not the focus of this piece of research, it must be mentioned in the evaluation of source materials here because it is a clear, and direct indication, of a social change that came from continuous contact with the Caliphate. As well as a reconfiguration of trade routes that took place with the consolidation of an Islamic Empire and the new relationships that were coming out of it. This study, however, does not weigh into the current historiography on iconoclasm itself, as it is already comprehensive and well established.

Spices and perfumes on the other hand leave little trace after being buried and so must be found in inferences, and be gleaned from investigation, such as knowing the origin of a substance to be able to place it as foreign. We are aware of the limitations of the historiography of culinary prestige in foreign foodstuffs in medieval Europe from the fact that there are already serious difficulties in reconstructing the early-medieval diet overall as discussed in Kathy Pearson’s work.³¹⁸ In her article she is explicit in noting the large differences in what historians think of early medieval diets in that they argue completely the opposite of one another in arguing that diets were diverse and nutritional enough or almost absolutely not.³¹⁹ Indeed Michel Rouche argues that the typical Carolingian on every level of society have an abundant

³¹⁸ Pearson, Kathy L. ‘Nutrition and the Early-Medieval Diet’, *Speculum*, Vol. 72, No. 1, (1997), 1-2.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, 1-2.

but not diverse source of food to choose from,³²⁰ whilst Renee Doehard completely disagrees.³²¹

European medieval court literature is rife with objects of splendour such as frankincense, spices, jewellery made of precious metals and silks. These too are the objects of study for art historians and medieval historians alike, who have laboured over their symbolic value for political purposes, and the ceremonies within which they are exchanged and presented. What is notable however is that there is very little work done on where these items came from, apart from the work that has been done by Michael McCormick who focuses on the slave trade. Florin Curta wrote a whole paper on the act of Merovingian and Carolingian gift giving which included the aforementioned items listed apart from slaves and who they were given between without mentioning how they had arrived in Europe. He makes a point of including that St Boniface had received a gift of spices and frankincense from the Archdeacon of the Roman Church³²² in the eighth century without discussing the level of extravagance that this was.³²³ However, it is stressed that by this point in medieval Europe gift giving essentially consisted of items that were not immediately needed for survival but were symbols of power and luxury – such as the surplus of horses that were included in tribute for western European monarchs.³²⁴

It is important to note here that there is a definite distinction between trade and gift giving but that they were very closely interlinked and had much the same motives behind them in elite circles. This is because trade is defined as a transaction in which there is a profit or need that is met by both (or more) parties that are involved, but there is a definite exchange in goods and services. Gift giving was more ambiguous and symbolic but had much the same

³²⁰ Rouche, Michel. 'The Early Middle Ages in the West', *A History of Private Life*, Payl Veyne (ed.), Vol. 1, (1987), 444-446.

³²¹ Pearson, (1997), 1.

³²² The term 'archdeacon' here is used by McCormick and this might be because the term does exist in the Syriac and Eastern Churches, or it might be a modern day equivalent.

³²³ Curta, Florin. 'Merovingian and Carolingian Gift Giving', *Speculum*, Vol. 81, No. 3, (2006), 680-681.

³²⁴ *Ibid*, 672-687.

connotations. The act of giving a gift was one of fealty when sending it to someone who was higher in society, or an act of benevolence to exude a message of power and the ability to be open handed in one's wealth. It is also a more tasteful form of payment when it came to prayers and religious favours as we see with gifts that were sent to the clergy. Having acknowledged all of this, gift giving did have a transactional purpose – it was just based on inference instead of an outright exchange.

Interestingly, the history of frankincense aside from its travel that is discussed by Nigel Groom (d. 2014 A.D.) is not discussed as a product in itself, or outside of the Middle East until its scientific study that was carried out in 1987³²⁵ and has since only been done in depth by Maguer Sterren in 2015 more than a half decade ago now.³²⁶ The lack of study on this ever-present Arab perfume in the Europe was deemed by the study in the 1980s as 'inadequate' as its position as a perfume as a component of religious ceremonies is still something that is left gaping in the current field of academia. Even though we are aware that it was constantly available in European churches. Whilst there is literature on incense in Western Europe in the early medieval period, there is not very much about it in the context of globalisation and where it came from and the socio-political ramifications of the movements of such products.

Indeed, Amar and Lev are both insistent on the role of Jewish merchants in the adoption of Indian substances into Arabian medicine and that items such as pepper, anacardium, and *balādhur*, were shipped to Cairo and from there to Andalucía and Europe.³²⁷ We are aware that this is probably true given the evidence we have of Nayray ibn Nissim (d. 489 A.H./1096 A.D.) who was a part of a trading clan in Egypt and worked to export goods into Sicily that were

³²⁵ Thulin, M. and A.M. Warfa, 'The Frankincense Tress (*Boswellia* spp., Burseraceae) of Northern Somalia and Southern Arabia', *Kew Bulletin*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (1987), 487.

³²⁶ Maguer, Sterenn Le. 'The Incense Trade during the Islamic Period', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 45, (2015), 175.

³²⁷ Goitein, (1999), 155, and Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 84-88.

received through the Indian Ocean.³²⁸ They even mention that camphor probably entered Europe as an effect of the link between Charlemagne and Hārūn al-Rashīd.³²⁹ Although they do not analyse the ramifications beyond the basic level which is where this research comes to the fore. Their book is the most recent addition to the historiography and is firmly a part of the new wave of historians that underline the lack of division in Eurasia beyond empirical boundaries of pre-European maritime exploration and imperialism.

Ellenblum's aforementioned work on the Eastern Mediterranean trade can also be accused of this as he argues that due to crop failures and the resulting shortage of food led to the persecution of the Jewish and Christian minorities.³³⁰ But in Goitein's work it is clear that it was more than plausible that members of the Jewish communities were still prominent members of societies, with official posts too.³³¹ Indeed, when cross-referenced it becomes clear that the Caliphate as a government was more than happy to work with non-Muslims as Manfred Wenner's work makes clear. In his study of the Arab control of the Alpine pass routes which connected Italy with the rest Western Europe for decades in the 900s³³² which would not have been possible without working with the Europeans.³³³ Indeed, scholars such as Abdi Shuriye, argue strongly that non-Arabs, Jews, Mawali, Persians, Turkish, Europeans and other religions and ethnicities, were included in the administration and economy in the 'Abbasid state without major divisions.³³⁴

Europeans and Arabs collaborating are not a surprising or new phenomenon in East-West relations, especially when one considers the fact that the European spice trade became a

³²⁸ Goitein, (1999), 153-154.

³²⁹ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 144-145.

³³⁰ Ellenblum, *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean Trade*, 4-7.

³³¹ Goitein, (1999), 10-22.

³³² In the Gregorian calendar.

³³³ Wenner, Manfred W. 'The Arab/Muslim Presence in Medieval Central Europe', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, (1980), 59.

³³⁴ Shuriye, Abdi O. 'Explorations on the 'Abbasids Political Culture in Pursuit of Sustainable System of Governance in the Muslim World', *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 4, (2016), 228-232.

source of immense wealth and prestige. Indeed, Clifford Wright goes so far as to argue that due to the opening up of trade routes as a result of the flourishing of the spice trade, it also fuelled the movement of wider social changes that led to the piqued interest of Europeans being open to the age of discovery and by extension the first of the renaissance.³³⁵ My own findings corroborate with this, however in order to validate this claim this research will have to see if the Carolingian Renaissance held any Arab or Asian influences that also coincided with the influx of spices and perfumes.

There is also the work of McCormick which strongly emphasises that Europe (especially the Italian states and Eastern Europe the latter of which has been discovered to contain hordes of Islamic silver coinage from the era)³³⁶ was continuously trading in with the Caliphate specifically in conjunction with slaves. His argument being that Europe (mainly through Portugal, Venice and Genoa) came onto the world stage as a major trading entity through involving itself into the existing trading network that the Arabs had set up, and they managed to come into it as counterparts – not colonisers as they are often depicted as - at this early stage. This study does not refute this part of the existing historiography, instead it intends to build upon and enhance it by arguing that alongside the slave trade it was spices and perfume that were crossing the Indian ocean the opposite way that really came to the fore in the European elite markets. The spice trade was an almost unstoppable force that brought Christian Europeans and non-Christian Arabs in close contact over multiple transactions over a period of years and eventually generations. The socio-political ramifications being that Christian Europe was made to adapt into a body that was much more willing to adopt the foreign items

³³⁵ Wright, Clifford A. 'The Medieval Spice Trade and the Diffusion of Chile', *Gastronomica*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (2007), 35-36.

³³⁶ Kovalev, Roman K. and Alexis C. Kaelin, 'Circulation of Arab Silver in Medieval Afro-Eurasia: Preliminary Observations', *History Compass*, Vol. 5, Issue, 2, (2007), 560-570.

and ideas— even with ideas that were considered heretical such as the Islamicate due to the universal stamps of power and wealth that came with foreign trade.

Whilst we are aware that historians such as Robin Donkin (d. 2006) are explicit in their argument that Asian spices such as nutmeg and even sandalwood (for perfume) are only found in Europe post-1300 A.D. Otherwise he discounts it as untrue and also argues that cloves and nutmeg, whilst present in European cookbooks post-1300 A.D., were still too expensive to create real demand.³³⁷ There is a definitive lack of absolute standstill when it comes to trade as Bryan Ward-Perkins argues with the fall of Rome.³³⁸ This is because demand came from the centres of wealth i.e. wealthy individuals, independent of any empire. Although there is a slowing down of trade as even Pirenne argued, the absolute stop is something that never seemed to have occurred, as we are aware of from the slave trade that McCormick discusses, and the fact that there never seems to have been a period after antiquity that European churches that could afford it did not have frankincense.

More recent historical work on the movement between the Arabs and the Mediterranean that meant that goods came further north is explored by Christophe Picard and was translated into English in 2018. Whilst he focuses on the Euro-Arab relations that were occurring in the pre-European imperialist movements towards the early forms of globalisation that are very well documented in history. He does not focus on the items that were traded or their effects in the societies that were touched by the flourishing spice and perfume trade that was occurring by the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. Instead he looks at the awareness that there was in chartering the water and how people wrote about the Mediterranean, and why.³³⁹ Indeed, he finds in his

³³⁷Donkin, Robin A. *Between East and West*, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003), 106-107.

³³⁸ Ward-Perkins, Bryan. *The Fall of Rome, and the end of civilisation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 135.

³³⁹ Picard, Christophe. *Sea of the Caliphs, The Mediterranean in the Medieval Islamic Society*, Nicholas Elliot, (trans.), (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard university Press, 2018), 10-11.

studies that a lot of the works that were written down were to prop up the administration.³⁴⁰ However, whilst some of his work coincides with the scope of this examination as he does mention the 900's. A lot of his work focuses on the early 1300's and just beforehand in order to explore the likes of ibn Khaldūn as that is one of the primary sources he uses. This extended analysis intends to come before this and bring to the fore the items that were being bought and sold, and transported, and their meaning, instead of just the works that were done on the bodies of water that they were transported across. Much like Valerie Hanson's work, his work focuses on the later period and whilst he does acknowledge some continuation in the Mediterranean trade after the fall of the Roman Empire, he does not expand upon it and really recognise it. Certainly, whilst his work marks a new school of history that is willing to examine globalisation aware from the ideas of European hegemony that come later but they are still clinging to the teleological past that quickly bled into the 1300s-1400s³⁴¹ which did lead to the European imperialist expansion.

Conclusion:

Whilst the sources available are a jigsaw to piece together for every region involved, all the evidence is conducive to proving that there was a form of early medieval globalism that the Caliphate was involved in. As well as this, that globalism affected the socio-political landscapes of Arab traders and their foreign colleagues. This was also true due to - and reinforced by – the Arabs making themselves the centre of the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean trade. This meant that the Europeans and the South Asians created soft-power networks through them to gain goods from either side of the Caliphal border and into their own spheres of influence.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 10-11.

³⁴¹ In the Gregorian calendar.

In terms of identity in the current historical field, we are aware that imagined nationalities were not a notion that had been popularised by this point, and so the distinctions between Southeast Asia and South Asia were not as pronounced as they are today. We are aware that the areas were so porous that even in antiquity it was easy for Buddhism to have infiltrated into Southeast Asia as early as the fourth century, which illustrates how connected the areas were.³⁴² Indeed, from what we saw in the accounts from al-Sīrāfī, the distinction is not made as the polities often bled into another and that making distinctions would be imposing a narrative onto this period that did not yet exist. What we do have is a distinction between South and Southeast Asia from East Asia – more specifically China during the Song era. Whilst East Asia is beyond the scope of this research, we are aware of this from when al-Sīrāfī makes the differentiation between the Tibetans and the Chinese as well in his discussion of musk and divided up his writing between the Indian Ocean and its territories, and then China was considered separately.

We see that the presence of Asian and North African food items and fragrances were present in European elite circles from the time of the ancients. But there has been a historical apathy in recognising the autonomy of the ‘orient’ in the expansion of its culture and food northwards into Europe and the socio-political ramifications. The Latin sources are indicative that whilst the Arabs may not have always been in the middle of such endeavours there was always movement between East and West. Later historians only recognise the role of Byzantium in transferring some of North African culture to Europe, but there has always seemed to be a non-Christian and non-Muslim aspect to the trade that has been ignored. This also simultaneously points at a level of coexistence that seems to have been expected, and taken

³⁴² Ray, Himanshu P. *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the maritime links of early south Asia*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 160.

as a given in the primary sources, and later ignored as too murky to understand in the secondary literature.

Early Medieval Indian Ocean Trade from 80-494 A.H./700-1100 A.D.

The context of the regions involved in the Indian Ocean Trade and the term South Asia before the Muslim conquests:

India was heavily involved in the Indian Ocean trade of perfumes and spices and thusly, needs to be considered independently, and then in terms of its relationship outwards with the Caliphate. This is because India itself, has changed depending on the era in which one is referring to, as well as, the fact that it is such a vast landmass at any point in history, that its borders in the early medieval period need to be defined. Alongside this, how its political landscape, and how that informed, or did not inform, its globalised trading relations.

The term South Asia is now synonymous with India. It relates to the whole area from Afghanistan that stops after the boundary of Bangladesh on the side that is now considered to be Southeast Asia. This describes a vast territory of land that is home to over a billion people and is a 20th century frame of reference. Andre Wink is very specific about what *al-Hind* means, which is the closest frame of reference we have to this area being India in the early medieval period, he divides the areas that we are looking at as India (*al-Hind*), which does include Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan is not included in his definition of *al-Hind* but it was one of the routes into India regardless of the label of the region, and so is discussed in this chapter. His definition also ignores the diversity in Southeast Asia that was prevalent by this point, which is evident in the map below,³⁴³ and provides an outline of all the different kingdoms connected by the Indian Ocean trade. It is valuable in that it does provide a frame of reference to what was, and was not, considered to be South Asia, from the early medieval perspective. When this chapter does refer to South Asia it will be in the vernacular of the 21st century for

³⁴³ See figure 6.

the purposes of clarity. India in this chapter is the same area that Wink specifies (India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka).

When looking at the Indian Ocean and the polities that were involved in the early medieval maritime trade in this area, it is important to understand the diversity of the region. Especially because outside of those who study the region, relatively few understand how large it is and that the regions were known in terms of kingdoms. They have historically not been vast swathes of territories such as ‘South Asia’ and ‘Southeast Asia’. In the historical field despite how small the Southeast Asian region is compared to the much larger East and South Asia it was still complex enough to have to be broken down into its specific times and kingdoms to be understood properly. In both cases they all acted individually from one another when needed which means that there is almost no sense of hegemony.³⁴⁴ This study will adjust the terms accordingly to be as precise as possible, and where it does not, it will be explained why a different frame of reference was adopted. The exact geography of all the principalities would be too complex a feat to summarise here as they were too numerous, and for the purposes of this research only an overview is needed. Therefore, unless a specific kingdom is involved the areas are referred to in terms of countries or even specific regions of India, such as the ‘Deccan’, which is in Central India.³⁴⁵ In terms of historical evidence of geography we have evidence of it being noted in the Vedic tradition but that was in terms of the migration.³⁴⁶ There is also debate on geographies based on Vedic and Buddhist accounts which is discussed by Burton Stein. The Buddhist texts focus on the movement of peoples and the integration of Chinese

³⁴⁴ Whitmore, John K. ‘Southeast Asia’, *A Companion to the Global Early Middle Ages*, Erik Hermans, (ed.), (2020), 66.

³⁴⁵ ‘Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History’, *The Met Museum*, 2017, <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/06/sss.html>

³⁴⁶ Shah, Bipin. ‘Vedic migration and geography of India before and after Alexander the Great’, *Vedic Geography-Proto Indo-European Studies*, (2007), 22-23.

Buddhist pilgrims by the first century A.H./seventh century A.D. who are believed to have on the most part co-existed peacefully with the indigenous Indians.

In contrast to the Buddhist accounts, the descriptions of the regions in the Vedic texts focus on kingdoms which encompass the areas between the Himalayas and the southern tip of the Indian landmass.³⁴⁷ India is illustrated as seven major empires in the map below,³⁴⁸ but as we are aware from the works of al-Sīrāfi included hundreds of minor kingdoms that were part of the larger whole. The Vedic order was also specific that it considered the reality of time and space at the local level.³⁴⁹ This is another reason why this research will be based on countries that are recognisable to all and only refer to kingdoms in case studies that are included. This study makes no value judgment on either the Vedic or Buddhist accounts but is focused on the political and economic landscape for the purposes of context and the places that this research is analysing. The significance of understanding these definitions being that the bridge between understanding the Indian Ocean trade on the wider scale of globalism has meant that outside of Indian historiography they still need to be stated to contextualise research.

In terms of the Arab sources that are used to understand the landscape they are also very comprehensive of different areas and what those areas contained in terms of tradable goods. Al-Sīrāfi is comprehensive in his accounts of Indian kingdoms he encountered on his way to China. He mainly encounters smaller islands off the coast of India such as the Maldives, which he called al-Dibajat. This was one of his first ports in his account where he says ‘they dive for pearls and can also find mines where gems such a rubies, yellow sapphires and blue sapphires are found. You can also find aloe wood, gold and in the sea; chanks’ (chanks are a

³⁴⁷ Stein, Burton. *A History of India*, David Arnold (ed.), 2nd Edition, (UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2010), 103-106.

³⁴⁸ See figure 5.

³⁴⁹ Parasher-Sen, Alok. ‘Perceptions of Time, Cultural Boundaries and ‘Region’ in Early Indian Texts’, *Indian Historical Review*, (2009), 185.

type of mollusc).³⁵⁰ His accounts are not clear about whether the items are naturally found there or brought to the islands to trade given their geographical position of being en route to China in the Indian Ocean from the Middle East. He then goes on to talk about Fansur (Barus, near Indonesia) that is also another coastal area, and that camphor could be found there, but this is probably in a local market as it is not indigenous to the coast. He progressed on to Khanfu (better known as Guangzhou) which is on the Pearl River, and was an entrepot of Arab and Chinese merchants to meet and trade.³⁵¹ Al-Sīrāfī and his contemporaries tend to focus on port towns almost exclusively which makes sense as excursions further in would take up resources, time, and funds.

Al-Mas'ūdī corroborated with his description and gave further details of a Muslim settlement in Chaul, which is just off the coast of India in Maharashtra, to be involved in trade.³⁵² Al-Mas'ūdī travelled throughout the Middle East and Persian areas, having also travelled to India at least once which is recorded. However, this is where his works are stopped in terms of regionality on this side of the world, but whether he did ever go so far as China, such as al-Sīrāfī is unknown but is not improbable, it is just not recorded. The significance being that whilst these scholars documented their travels, they were not exceptional; there were others making the same (or similar) journey to feed into the ever-growing luxury perfume and spice markets.

This travelling behaviour that both scholars describe of hugging the coast was not exclusive to the Arab merchants as he also described Chinese merchants trading in Oman or Yemen – the latter if the winds were too strong.³⁵³ Both of these areas are also situated on the

³⁵⁰ Al-Sīrāfī, Abu Zayd. *Accounts of China and India*, Tim Mackinosh-Smith, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 25.

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, 29.

³⁵² Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitab al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawhar*, (“*Les Prairies d'or*”), Barbier de Meynard, (ed.), Vol, 2, (1877), 85.

³⁵³ Al-Sīrāfī, *Accounts of China and India*, 29.

coast of the Caliphate, so this is a trading strategy that went both ways. On the way to China al-Sīrāfī also mentions ‘Kalah’ which is a kingdom next to Srivijaya,³⁵⁴ now off the coast of Malaysia on the Southeast Asian side of the Indian Ocean,³⁵⁵ which indicates that they used the Straits of Malacca. This is logical given that this naval passage is still the fastest way (excluding modern air travel) to China across the Indian Ocean. The fact that there is a clear pattern of behaviour and strategy is indicative of a procedure that was being followed to make the journey profitable and safe. This in turn infers prior knowledge because these journeys happened frequently. His description of each area, and what is available suggests frequent stops and explains the system of cabotage that was allowing for globalism to occur. On the way he was clearly involved or participating in local markets, of which the wares and accounts were valuable enough to be relayed back at the Caliphate. Thus, it is possible that he does not include the less fantastic journeys of these items being brought to the coast and islands from the mainland to be traded because it would be normalised to the reader, and they had to be sold at a premium.

In his accounts when he described the politics of the places he visits, al-Sīrāfī is careful to note down the different rulers and principalities that he encounters and does relate that most of them seem to follow what are now Hindu practices, such as statuesque deities.³⁵⁶ He also relates that this caused some hostility in receiving Muslims by rulers in terms of suspicion but nothing significant, al-Sīrāfī just mentions hostile attitudes but not real obstructions with trade.³⁵⁷ The only aberration from this was actually in China when a rebel uprising led to the massacre of 120,000 Muslims, Jews, Christians, and others in the sack of Guangzhou in 265-266 A.H./879 A.D.³⁵⁸ We are aware that prior to this the Arab population in the area had been

³⁵⁴ Ibid, 89.

³⁵⁵ Chafee, John. ‘Diasporic Identities in the Historical Development of the Maritime Muslim Communities of Song-Yuan China’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 49, No. 4, (2006), 397.

³⁵⁶ Al-Sīrāfī, *Accounts of China and India*, 39.

³⁵⁷ Ibid, 63.

³⁵⁸ Chaffee, (2006), 397-398.

many and prosperous.³⁵⁹ John Chafee has already done a study on this particular event and argues that whilst this must have been especially unfortunate to the trading families in the area, the sources are mostly silent on the issue.³⁶⁰ Still trade seems to have resumed as the Song Dynasty just rerouted the trading ports to be split up to then be at Hangzhou, Mingzhou, and Quanzhou.³⁶¹ The disruption at Guangzhou can then be seen as unfortunate enough to have made a change in trading routes. Despite this trade was considered so important that an alternative route was found for both the Arab and Chinese markets that were invested in Indian Ocean trade. Political circumstances, as stated in the introduction of this research, were not synonymous with the continuation of trade, and indeed trade continued despite unrest where disposable income was present. Chafee makes the case successfully that Muslims continued to flourish in these areas for many centuries after and continue trading. Proving that for the most part Indian Ocean trading was unimpeded before the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. The contention between whether there was a continuation or disruption depends on the micro and macro level. On the micro level there was an argument that there was enough disruption as Guangzhou lost the markets and financial benefits of the trade. But on the macro level, the rerouting meant that there was continuation for the markets of the elite back in Baghdad.

In modern sources historians, such as in Radharishna Choudhary's research, India has been known for being a place that has been made up of a diverse tapestry of people that have had different religions and languages for thousands of years.³⁶² When the Muslim conquests and interactions first start to occur in the first century A.H./seventh century A.D. onwards, they are entering into a subcontinent that is a far cry from being a hegemonic state as it was too large to be administered effectively from a single central point. The Muslims expansion and

³⁵⁹ Ibid, 397-398.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, 397 – 398.

³⁶¹ Ibid, 397-398.

³⁶² Choudhary, Radharishna. 'Asoka and the Taxila Inscription', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 20, (1957), 50-52.

trading relations were a continuation of pre-existing networks expanding westwards that parts of the subcontinent had been a part of for centuries.

The trading routes of individual actors that were catering to demands in the Roman Empire through the Persian Gulf were still running and being utilised all the way through to the fourth century A.H./third century A.D. with the rise of the Sasanians. This carries on up to the 600s and helped trade in the Indian Ocean territories to flourish.³⁶³ The Arabs entered a system of pre-existing connections across the subcontinent due to the Sasanian demand for goods. These networks were diverse with several South Asian traders, regions, and kingdoms involved in the movement of goods already by the first century A.H./seventh century A.D. This also reinforces the argument that globalisation occurred as a process pre- 390 A.H./1000 A.D. and evolved over time.

Historians such as Brian Ulrich disagree that a Sasanian market that was linked in any sophisticated manner to Arabia,³⁶⁴ which denotes the notion of a lack of globalisation on this side of the world in the Indian Ocean context. He argues that whilst there is Sassanian interest and trade in Arabia at certain times, it cannot be compared to other periods and is ‘highly speculative’.³⁶⁵ Except, as we shall see, the Sassanians had a strong central government that even Ulrich agrees gave out their equipment for the army and financial support directly from the centre which is no small feat for an empire in late antiquity. This is important for the later sections because there were entire systems of diplomacy that were rooted in being able to gift copious amounts of Indian Ocean spices and perfumes from one court to another in a system that the Arabs came into.

³⁶³ Ibid, 133-134.

³⁶⁴ Ulrich, Brian. ‘Oman and Bahrain in late antiquity: the Sassanians’ Arabian periphery’, *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 41, (2011), 377-378.

³⁶⁵ Ibid, 379.

Introduction of Arab Muslim contacts and conquests in the Indian Ocean:

Given that this research places itself as the bridge between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean trade in current historiography in the early medieval period, India itself was integral to the market that these trading links were feeding into. India was both the source of perfumes and spices, as well as a critical rest and trading stop on the way to China. The Indian Ocean trade was a series of links within the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Malaccan Straits from North Africa that stretched to East Asia. This operated within the Caliphate, the kingdoms of India, and China, through individual actors that could be used by the state but were on the most part, independent merchants. These trading links were used to transport high volumes of materials from one side of the Indian Ocean to the other via ships. In the early medieval period this was the best way to transport large amounts of items in a time efficient manner, but the journey was rarely from one point directly to another.

The key question this chapter explores is how India in the early medieval period fed into the Indian Ocean trade in relation to specifically perfumes and spices. This will be explored through the movement of goods through the Indian Ocean and how that affected both the people in the Caliphate and the subcontinent. The socio-political relations that were formed will be explored through the al-Sīrāfī accounts and the continued contact which led to Hindus and Muslims in South Asia being made to learn about one another's belief systems and cultures on trading and exploratory trips to facilitate trading relations. Al-Sīrāfī presents the subcontinent as somewhat of a mixed-bag in its reception of the Muslim traders where the hostility towards Islam and lack thereof depends on the principality and kingdom they are in, he does not relate any armed struggles,³⁶⁶ and apart from the primary sources about Sind specifically which are

³⁶⁶ Al-Sīrāfī, *Accounts of China and India*, 110-130.

discussed later, al-Sīrāfi's account is the earliest written report of interactions of Arabs and South Asians that we can study.

The reason why it is so important to understand pre-Ghaznavid India specifically in terms of its affiliations and contact with the Caliphate is that Arab contact with India is still overlooked in our current historiography. Most historical works have ignored the occurrences of the bloody takeover of Sind and parts of the Punjab, and the subsequent effect of Arab and Islamic influence in the area. Whilst Valerie Hansen argues that there was globalization after the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. in the region, she is careful to date this to the Ghaznavids, even though the Hindu rulers, and the 'Abbasids, and even the Umayyads, had been dealing with one another for centuries before this. Her argument lies in the premise that there was no globalisation before the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. and that this is when it started, whilst the evidence suggests otherwise.

Al-Hind has historically been a source of wealth in terms of gold, spices, and gems, for both internal and external empires since globalisation began to rise with the increase of long-distance trade and especially with the expansion of maritime trade that came towards the end of the fourth century A.H./first millennium A.D. Indeed, Sīrāf on the Iranian coast became a major storehouse of goods which were unloaded and taken onto smaller vessels for the markets in the Arab world and beyond.³⁶⁷ Conversely the ships would go to Gujarat, then Southern India, then to Sri Lanka, followed by crossing the Gulf of Bengal in order to reach what is now considered to be Thailand.³⁶⁸ Hence, the port of Sīrāf was important for trade going in both directions, and because of the fact that even though maritime trade was booming for the first time on such a large scale, the technology was not invented yet for direct voyages. However,

³⁶⁷ Alain, George. 'Direct Sea Trade Between Islamic Iraq and Tang China: from the Exchange of Goods to the Transmission of Ideas', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 25, (2015), 584.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 584.

travel accounts and studies of the journey across the Indian Ocean did allow for advances such as the mastery of the monsoon season to facilitate trading and journeys directly from India to Sri Lanka but the ships had to port at Sri Lanka to proceed further.³⁶⁹

The Arab traders from the Caliphate were building upon pre-existing knowledge to build an empire through both trade and military conquest. Traders were individual actors, and one must still acknowledge this. But the fact that the entire capital of the Caliphate was moved from Damascus to Baghdad so that the elite could be near the roads of wealth and the goods that came along with them meant that trade came hand in hand with the shaping of the socio-political future of the Caliphate by the 132 A.H./750 A.D. that even the location of where centres of power were, was partly based upon the Indian Ocean trade. Dionisius Agius proved in his work that this trade yielded mostly spices and perfumes which is also indicative of just how much weight was afforded to these items.³⁷⁰

We have evidence of communication and trade between the Tang and the ‘Abbasid Empires up to the fourth century A.H./tenth century A.D.³⁷¹ Even after the fall of the Tang Empire the movement of Chinese and Arab merchants did not seem to have been affected, as we have no evidence of any slowing down or break in trade. Indeed, the earlier maritime trading relationships seem to have flourished between the Muslim world and East Asia, indicating that the socio-political state of regions were not mutually exclusive to trade. Southern China became a magnet for sea traders instead, as we are aware of from the continuing of trade despite political upheaval. When the two empires did meet to trade in India, it became the key meeting point for merchants from both sides of the subcontinent to trade. It is important to note that within this context India itself brought many indigenous items to trade with the Arabs and was

³⁶⁹ Wink, Andre. *Al-Hind. The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). 45.

³⁷⁰ Agius, Dionisius A. *Classic Ships of Islam, From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 63-68.

³⁷¹ Gungwu, Wang. ‘Introduction’, *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), (2010), 4.

not just a pit-stop on the way to East Asia. This actively highlights further why the region that is now South Asia became a nexus for international trade in the early medieval era and linked the two sides of the known world together from Europe all the way to East Asia.³⁷²

The difference by the eighth century was that there was a new level of demand for perfumes, spices, Indian clothing, and precious gems.³⁷³ This is especially important because the introduction of a monetised system was due to the creation of a standing army that needed to be paid back in Baghdad. This in turn meant that a whole class of people in the Caliphate had expendable income which is why the Indian Ocean trade was becoming more popular.³⁷⁴ Goitein and Crone now agree that the Marwanid period especially, saw with it, the coming of a new Muslim monied class. They had deep pockets to spend with in the markets of the Caliphate,³⁷⁵ who in turn spent enough money on luxury goods that traders were motivated to create whole businesses on the spice and perfume trade of the Indian Ocean. Baghdad itself will be discussed in the next chapter as it was a dynamic society that needs to be discussed in full for this research. Whilst it is true, that focusing on the luxury products of spices and perfumes are an issue in understanding the full scale of interaction as it focuses on elite behaviour and their spending habits. They are still indicative of globalism in a way that few other products are, because for them to be present away from the natural growing points means that trade and communication had to have happened. Thus, Indian Ocean spices and perfumes in the Middle East and Carolingian Europe by their very presence indicate a wider level of interaction beyond the borders that the court they are in rules over. Also, due to the consumers

³⁷² Goitein, S.D. and Mordechai Akiva Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages: documents from the Cairo Geniza*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 3.

³⁷³ Alain, (2015), 591.

³⁷⁴ Donner, Fred. *The Early Islamic Conquests*, (N.J: Princeton University Press, 1981), 252.

³⁷⁵ Goitein, S.D. 'The Rise of the Near-Eastern Bourgeoisie in Early Islamic Times', *Journal of World History*, (1956), 586-596 and Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses, The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 51.

of these items being in the higher echelons of society, they are the most well documented for this period, which means that research and evidence of them is possible.

There is a definite increase in communication between India and actors from the Caliphate as recorded by al-Balādhurī.³⁷⁶ With frequent communication there was also varying degrees of acceptance of Arab Muslim merchants who practiced monotheism and were vehemently opposed to any form of anthropomorphism. The result was that their reception with Indian rulers was a mixed reaction that cannot be generalised with any sort of uniformity above the fact that some form of contact did exist amongst local peoples. Especially near ports which from written accounts most maritime traders did not venture far from, to make their journeys as efficient as possible.³⁷⁷

When trying to understand the reception of Arab traders in India there is an important distinction to be made between Arab and Muslim merchants in South Asia. This is because there is evidence that there were Arab merchants in the area before the revelation of Islam to the Prophet Muhammed in 11 B.H./610 A.D.³⁷⁸ Hence they could not have been Muslim which is further evidence that the proliferation of trade and the ensuing globalisation was a process that occurred over centuries that the Caliphate came into but did not start. With the spread of Islam in the Middle East and the surrounding lands some traders converted to Islam and continued to trade in the subcontinent. These foreign merchants took local wives which has been a historical practice in many trading towns and ports, such as in Sind. This helped to breach local language barriers and also to have someone trade in local markets for them whilst they are away, this also meant that this must have led to a small level of conversion as their households were either asked to or became Muslim of their own volition.³⁷⁹ Written evidence

³⁷⁶ Marsot, Alan-Gerard. 'Political Islam in South Asia: A Case Study', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 524, (1992), 158-159.

³⁷⁷ Al-Sīrāfi, *Accounts of China and India*, 31-50.

³⁷⁸ George, (2015), 592.

³⁷⁹ Bayly, Susan. *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 70-74.

of and about local women however is sparse because it is doubtful about whether they were literate, and because any manuscripts (either letters, receipts or even household lists of shopping etc.) would have perished in the South Asian climate over time.³⁸⁰

However, we are aware of them having definitely existed because al-Balādhurī writes that after the conquest of Sind that ‘the king of the island of Rubies’ sent to al-Hajjaj women who were born in his country as Muslims because their fathers who had been merchants had passed.³⁸¹ The existence of these women and the fact that the king thought it prudent to send them to other Muslims is suggestive of just how frequent communication and thereby trade was by this point.

What we do know most about the interactions with the local people is with the elite levels of society. There are accounts of Hindu kings being invited to meet with the Arabs for permission to trade on larger scales and being hosted with what is in essence their entourage.³⁸² This is substantial evidence of a level of cooperation between the native people and the foreign Muslim merchants. It also explains the motive and the prior knowledge the Arabs had to conquer of Sind and parts of the Punjab. This part of India was closer to the Arab world, and as so would have had the most contact with them. Due to entire early industries being made up for foreign consumption in India there was a definite interest to have some sort of agency in terms of power in the region that the Caliphate wanted goods from.

India became so pivotal to the trading and economic relations of the Caliphate throughout Asia and by extension with Europe, that the Caliphate expanded directly into the area up to Sind in a campaign between 90-93 A.H./710-712 A.D. and at the mouth of the

³⁸⁰ Karim, Abdul. *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992), 1.

³⁸¹ Al-Baladhuri, Ahmad Ibn Yahya. And Philip Khuri Hitti, Francis Clark Murgotten. *The Origins of the Islamic State, Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, (New York: Columbia University, 1924), 215-216.

³⁸² Wink, *Al-Hind*, 65 and al-Sirāfi, *Accounts of China and India*, 39.

Indus.³⁸³ We know this was for commercial gain, as the Arab armies decided to halt when they found the land lacking in wealth and so decided not to carry on further into India and halted their progress there. Sind was on the hinge of the Indian Ocean and the overland passageway into Central Asia and through that into East Asia.³⁸⁴

Sind eventually proved to be profitable for taxable income, and the controlling of maritime and land trading routes. Perfumes and spices came to the fore in terms of the newest staple of wealth that had to be present to mark an occasion. They became the indication of power, wealth, and good taste to such an extent that entire catalogues now exist on them being traded in court ceremonies. This has been studied by historians such as Florin Curta, and what this meant within the Caliphate is why locals in South Asia in the Indian Ocean context were seen as imperative to the system of cabotage that existed. Curta writes extensively on the formalities around gifting and what was considered to appropriate as a gift in Europe. In his findings the most common theme in such a ceremony is the presence of perfumery and spices which were accompanied by a plethora of other luxury items of which the majority were from the Indian Ocean trade.³⁸⁵

The courts involved in such ceremonies that concentrated on foreign goods were sophisticated economic centres that varied according to supply and demand. There is even evidence to suggest that the transregional trade across Asia and the Middle East was so connected due to merchant movement throughout South Asia that political and social change had a carry-on effect far beyond the borders of the original administration. Whilst Abu-Lughod focuses on a later form of globalism,³⁸⁶ she explains this process well, saying that the system in place was one where ‘merchants who obtained special dispensations and protections from

³⁸³ Wink, *Al-Hind*, 52.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 52.

³⁸⁵ Curta, Florin. ‘Merovingian and Carolingian Gift Giving’, *Speculum*, Vol. 81, No. 3, (2006), 680.

³⁸⁶ Abu-Lughod, Janet L. *Before European Hegemony, The World System A.D. 1250-1350*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 44-45.

local lords in return for their commercial services,' traded in places with a lack of centralised government. For instance, with the fall of Tang China in the beginning of the 900s there was a disturbance in the trade as far as Baghdad, but trade was not halted, it was just slowed.³⁸⁷ Moreover, even closer, in South Asia, rulers that were wary of Arab Muslim traders were still noted if they had commodities worth trading. Al-Sīrāfī is scrupulous in his account of the kings of al-Jurz (which is now Eastern Rajasthan and Northern Gujerat) which is a smaller kingdom of South Asia.³⁸⁸ He recounts that whilst the king is an enemy of the Arabs, his kingdom holds much silver and a rare type of ivory from the horn of a rhinoceros that is needed to make the finest belts to be traded in East Asia and the Arab lands.³⁸⁹

The willingness of trading with the kingdom suggests trading relations that transcend religious and state borders. Al-Sīrāfī admits to eating the type of rhinoceros that is specifically found in these lands and is indicative of frequent communication for the Arabs to be aware of the rhinoceros' meat being permissible to eat. The animal is not indigenous to any of the Arab lands, and for the Arabs to be aware that the meat was halal they had to be aware of the rhinos eating and living habits which al-Sīrāfī himself accounts in book one.³⁹⁰ Whilst this may be indicative that al-Sīrāfī was just informed of this by a local merchant, the fact that this was relayed to the Arab visitors suggests prolonged and continuous contact with one another for them to be aware of the dietary requirements of Muslim travellers and traders.

The interaction that involved the consumption of rhinoceros meat related by al-Sīrāfī is not indicative of widespread continuous contact between Arabs and India as a whole. The fact that he notes in his accounts the distances between each place as precisely as he can is indicative of frequent interaction as the route is already mapped out and someone must have measured it

³⁸⁷ Al-Sīrāfī, *Accounts of China and India*, 69.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

before they set out. Interestingly, his unit of measurement is Persian; *farsakh* which means around 12,000 cubits (around 5.5km) which denotes an even earlier pre-Arab contact outside of India and into the Middle East by merchants.³⁹¹ For instance al-Sīrāfī is even able to note the distances between the smaller islands of Harkan where ambergris washes up and the last of which is Sarandib (Sri Lanka) noting that there were only around 2 to 4 *farsakhs* between each island.³⁹² Whilst the fact that the measurements are noted may seem unimportant, it is also indicative of the ability to then measure distance and how much time it would take to travel from one destination to another. From this, one can also gage whether foodstuffs could be preserved enough to eat during a transit; and to ascertain whether a certain trade would be lucrative or even how profitable. All of this infers that the socio-economic factors of maritime trade by this point were all being closely studied, to intentionally make it flourish to benefit the Caliphate and their trading partners. Additionally, it means that you can trace that there were exchanges of knowledge occurring across the Indian Ocean and the genealogies of whence information came actively underlining globalisation.

Even with early globalism being present one must keep in mind that this was still a period of early navigational and maritime technology. We are aware from al-Sīrāfī's account that ports were especially important because if the winds were too strong then merchants were forced to sell and trade wherever they happened to beach to not make a loss on the journey.³⁹³ The Chinese were interested in importing frankincense, ivory, and copper ingots from the Arabs.³⁹⁴ In turn the Arabs were interested in acquiring spices from them through the Indian Ocean. Hence, the Arabs were so adamant in their pursuit of knowledge about the subcontinent, and with stability and peaceful relations there was an accessible gateway in the spice trade for

³⁹¹ Ibid, 25-31, and A. Houtum-Schindler, 'On the Length of the Persian Farsakh', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, Vol. 10, No. 9, (1888), 584.

³⁹² Al-Sīrāfī, *Accounts of China and India*, 25.

³⁹³ Ibid, 29.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, 45.

the rest of Asia. Indeed, Abu-Lughod wrote that the Red Sea was the preferred route to get to Asia (which she called the ‘Orient’) to trade.³⁹⁵ The reason for this being that the relation between trade and politics was intertwined, but not mutually exclusive. She demonstrates that with the fall of the Roman Empire the lack of centralised governments gave way to smaller lords controlling routes. This impacted trade enough that the trading routes and patterns were changed.³⁹⁶ However, they never stopped, instead they adapted. She bases her findings on the accounts of al-Muqaddasī which is used in part to ground her argument of globalisation prior to European hegemony too.³⁹⁷

The trade in the Indian Ocean with the Caliphate was very much a part of the economies of the Asian markets that Arab traders were inserting themselves into. The system of cabotage that was used meant that there were many markets that were included in this network of trading patterns and, due to the complexity and the number of markets that were included, meant that studies, accounts, and relationships all took time to compile. There was no hegemonic group that instigated this process, and no single point of time that created a sudden explosion in creating the systems of maritime trade that gave way to the luxury spice and perfume trade. Perfumes and spices were a large part of the demand that was driving the increase in trade, but they are not solely responsible. The distance that ships bearing spices had to be transported over made them symbols of luxury and wealth. They were carefully marketed, cultivated, and then studied. Those same studies that came out because of their proliferation only drove up their gold value when their medicinal properties were discovered, which will be discussed in the ensuing sections of this chapter.

³⁹⁵ Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 190-191.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 190-191.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 190-191.

The explicit and symbolic value of perfumes:

Perfumes were of highly regarded that there are early medieval accounts of the social capital they held, such as that written by the poet al-Sarī b. Muhammad al-Rafi' (d. 362 A.H./973 A.D.) which lists both perfumes and how highly they were regarded in the courts of the Middle East.³⁹⁸ The exchange of wealth in gifts and perfumes have been a part of the elite sphere since antiquity and the historiography we have available reflects that. Amar Zohar and Efraim Lev have said that perfumes have been in the archaic sources since the ancient times.³⁹⁹ By the early medieval period perfumes had become such a transnational staple of luxury and wealth that by the year 270 A.H./884 A.D. the governor of Sind included it in his tribute to the Caliph al-Mu'tamid (d. 279 A.H./892 A.D.).⁴⁰⁰ This means that that gift giving was used as a form of payment – in this case tax, which in the early medieval period took the form of tribute amongst the elite. We are aware that this was no trifling gift to curry favour with the ruler because the musk and ambergris were sent alongside a sizable elephant; a large two-humped camel for breeding, three silver idols, antelopes, and an entire throne just made from aloe wood.⁴⁰¹ Gifting was a form of publicly declaring fealty or friendship (or both), with the transfer of wealth in the early medieval period. It became intertwined with the position one had in the administration of the state or with external governments to the point that such processions of the above gifts to the Caliph al-Mu'tamid were formal ceremonies that had become a part of court ceremony for diplomats which is made clear in the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*.⁴⁰²

Given that aloewood, in and of itself, was enough reason for some merchants to trade long-distance, this exhaustive list suggests that this tribute-giving was a part of the ceremony

³⁹⁸ Zohar, and Efraim Lev. 'Trends in the Use of Perfumes and Incense in the Near East after the Muslim Conquests', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (2013), 11-16.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, 11.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibn Duqmāq, Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī. *Book of Gifts and Rarities, (Kitab al-Haqāyā wa al-Tujaf)*, Ghāda al-Hijāwī al-Qaddūmī, (trans.), (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, (1997), 83-84.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 83-84.

⁴⁰² Ibid, 83-84.

to pay the dues that were owed to the centre of power. This was also not an isolated event. Further on in the year 280-281 A.H./894 A.D. the Caliph al-Mu'tadid was sent a vast array of gifts including, and not limited to, 100 workhorses and 100 *mithqals* of musk.⁴⁰³ The gift also included a camel for breeding and items of silver. The frequency with which such processions were sent, infers a formal substitute for tax aside from gold. Especially because by the year 281-282 A.H/895 A.D. the amount of perfumery seems to have gone up that is presented to the Caliph, given that he is then given 1000 *mithqals*, and the other items of gold, silver, and animals were also all included.⁴⁰⁴ The politics of this being that it also allowed the Caliphate to continue to be ruled as more of a confederation of states from Baghdad, which in turn meant that perfume, just like gold took on a political role. We see this also in the fact that ambergris is mentioned in almost every notable event that we read about in the early Caliphate being burnt, from the wedding of Burhan to it just being present at dinners and formal ceremonies, it is always carefully written into any descriptive accounts.

Notably in the Arab accounts Indian Ocean perfumes and their ingredients had become a byword for wealth and power by the early medieval period within the Caliphate. They were seen as exotic and a symbol of the amount of expendable wealth the owner possessed. Perfumes and the aromatic substances that made them also had medicinal importance that was coming to the fore as studies into them progressed throughout this era. This came with the increase in trade as they then entered spheres of both necessity and luxury making their presence even more sought after.

Whilst the role of the perfume and spice trade in the Caliphate itself is explored in the next chapter, it is important to understand how Arab merchants and the elite conducted themselves in India. The station of the *Azd 'Uman* was facilitated greatly by the fact that they

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 87.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. 87-88.

governed areas such as Sind that the Caliphate needed in order to trade in perfumes and other items such as pearls, spices, cloth, beads, and metalwork from India, through the port of Oman.⁴⁰⁵ All of these items were also inherently luxury items in the early medieval period and thusly their presence in medieval homes in the Caliphate and at court was an indication of wealth and power. Given that symbolism informed power and vice versa, images could transcend language barriers and beyond transcontinental level. For merchants from the Caliphate, to be able to conduct trade throughout the rest of the known world for goods that it needed, Sind was strategically logical to attempt to control the area they needed raw materials from to cut out middlemen. The area that is now India played a crucial part in this as soon as it became controlled by the Caliphate – even more so than it had done previously.

The traders from the ‘Abbasid Caliphate had a vested interest in the Indian Ocean perfumes and spices as even if they did not sell in Baghdad they were also being sent to their surrounding areas and into Egypt. A substantial amount of these goods were also being traded by the Caliphate in Europe with the Carolingians as early as the 80 A.H./700 A.D., through a further system of cabotage but this time across the Mediterranean.⁴⁰⁶ Spices and perfume were pivotal for this trade as early as the court of Charlemagne.⁴⁰⁷ It is then logical that Arab expansion into Asia would lead to at least some physical encroachment into the subcontinent with the most monetary gain.

Within the Caliphate, when the Islamic Empires were still expanding there was a rocketing of the amount of gold that was available to those involved in the administration (even if they were acting as individuals in their trading lives). The increase of territory meant that there was also a massive increase in wealth available to those in power due to taxation. There

⁴⁰⁵ Wink, *Al-Hind*, 32. and Peter Frankopan, Peter. *The Silk Roads. A New History of the World*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 16.

⁴⁰⁶ Fried, Johannes. *Charlemagne*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 177.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 176.

are accounts of lavish weddings of the Caliphs being conducted with public displays of the wealth they bestow on their bride as part of the wedding celebrations, including precious gems and metal work in the form of jewellery that are imported from South Asia.⁴⁰⁸ There is a famous example of this being as early as the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd. When he got married and bestowed upon his wife a selection of pearls that were impressive in size, as well as tunics decorated with rubies, and a banquet which was followed by the guests receiving silver, gold, ceramic bowls and expensive perfumes stored in glass vessels.⁴⁰⁹ The significance of the source reporting this is that, as discussed in the previous chapter, the literature that was being produced and the documentation of the transfer of gifts and what they were made of, was used to help perpetuate the market of foreign goods that were being exchanged, namely in this case perfumes and spices. We are made aware of the magnitude of the market by the Belitung shipwreck, given that one vessel alone carried 60,000 pieces of Chinese ceramics - at least - which were excavated from the shipwreck.⁴¹⁰ The public display of wealth is notable in that all of the goods must have in some way come through Asia; camphor that is used for perfume, ceramics that were most commonly brought in from East Asia through the Indian Ocean or the subcontinent itself, and pearls, and gold, which were found along the coast as well as mined and hoarded in India respectively.

Moreover, the accounts of ibn Duqmāq in the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, highlight that such displays of wealth were important to the Arabs and Hārūn al-Rashīd's extravagance was not an anomalous event. Even gifts of playthings included inlays of gold and silver as seen in a gift of chess pieces.⁴¹¹ This is the case on even sombre events as when the vizier al-'Abbās ibn al Hasan was murdered in 295-6 A.H./908-909 A.D. in his farm there was also a large

⁴⁰⁸ Segal, Ronald. *Islam's Black Slaves: The Other Black Diaspora*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 121 and Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, 94.

⁴⁰⁹ Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, 93-94.

⁴¹⁰ Flecker, Michael. 'A Ninth-Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia', *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, (2010), 35-44, and George, (2015), 582-584.

⁴¹¹ Ibn Duqmāq, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 233-235 and 468.

volume of utensils made for him with ‘seven hundred gold and silver trays’ and also ‘a hundred thousand mithqals of ambergris.’⁴¹²

Michael Flecker also hypothesises that the Belitung ship could have been headed for the islands of Southeast Asia⁴¹³ in order to top up their stores of enough spices in order to return to West Asia with spices.⁴¹⁴ The inference here is that there were markets on both sides of the Caliphate that the Arabs were involved in with spices, and in order to capitalise on this the ship was well stocked with items that were needed on both sides of the journey and was replenished each way. Whilst spices were high in demand, they were a stock that were carried with more durable items to minimise losses if there were any on a voyage such as ceramics.

Additionally, the shipwreck was found near what the Chinese sources called the kingdom of Shilfoshi⁴¹⁵ which was a major port that linked Arabia, China, and India, as the kingdom controlled the Straits of Malacca.⁴¹⁶ All of this strongly indicates a systematic global trade that was catering to a large demand, that had perfumes and spices as a major component of it, but they were almost always accompanied by other luxury items. It kept its importance from the first century B.H.-sixth century A.H./seventh-thirteenth century A.D.,⁴¹⁷ which conveys the longevity of the trade that was occurring and the fact that it was lucrative enough for a small kingdom to be able to survive near the Tang dynasty. Its importance to South Asia is that it explains how the items all ended up going through the Indian Ocean and South Asia to get to West Asia, simultaneously making it integral to the Asian trade for the Arabs and introducing the Chinese goods to the region on a bigger scale – spices included.

⁴¹²Ibid, 131.

⁴¹³ Now considered Indonesia but borders were much more transient then, especially when smaller principalities were concerned.

⁴¹⁴ Flecker, (2010), 118-119.

⁴¹⁵ Now called Southeast Sumatra in: Ming-liang, Hsieh. ‘The Navigational Route of the Belitung Wreck ad the Late Tang Ceramic Trade,’ *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, (2010), 137-140.

⁴¹⁶ Ming-liang, (2010), 137.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, 137.

Perfumes had an explicit value in terms of being a symbol for power in the public sphere and became used to transfer wealth in gifting ceremonies. They were used in tributes, as part of taxes, and as a symbol of power and status. They were a staple in elite spheres from the time of antiquity, and the early medieval era just allowed the trade to proliferate by introducing Indian Ocean perfumes into the Middle East, and through there into Europe, on a larger scale. The archaeological evidence of shipwrecks indicates that whilst they were always accompanied by other luxury items, or at least covetable items that were less likely to spoil such as ceramics, they were always present on ships involved in the maritime trade.

The cultivation of perfumes and from whence their value came:

When it comes to perfume, incenses, and other aromatic substances, they could only be grown in certain places in the ancient and medieval world. This meant that they remained exotic and were difficult to procure as a result. Travelling was no small feat in the early medieval period and even items that were unlikely to spoil could still be lost en route between empires through any number of misfortunes which included piracy and shipwreck from extreme weather.

Moreover, their gold value only soared as climate was not something that could be controlled and so the items that were needed to make up perfumery had to be cultivated in the places that they originated from – at least in the beginning until cultivation techniques were transferred with prolonged contact. Even then, very few items were grown away from whence they originally came and the only real exchange of tree or plant growing material happened between South Asia and China, and that is only where the climate was similar. However, it was so long ago that we are not sure when and which way the transmission of this knowledge went. Frankincense and myrrh for example only grew partly in the mountains where they were

cultivated.⁴¹⁸ The trees they come from have been exclusive to Southern Arabia and the horn of Africa since the time of antiquity.⁴¹⁹

Similarly, the musk pods that were a key ingredient in luxury Arab perfumes,⁴²⁰ especially for state events such as Hārūn al-Rashīd's wedding were found in Tibet and China,⁴²¹ this meant that they had to be transported to the Middle East at great expense. The expense and gold value of the product was so high that al-Sīrāfi makes note of almost every aspect of its trade and production.⁴²² His descriptions and what he chose to record is indicative of what was important. Even the transportation of the product had to be taken into account in terms of the air that was involved as the maritime route that was used, as transporting the Chinese musk pods meant that it was exposed to 'moist vapours' which damaged the pods.⁴²³ But the fact that both Tibetan and Chinese musk pods are discussed suggests that an inferior product is better than no product at all, as otherwise there would be no need to make a note of this. The inference here being that this was so much in demand in perfume markets that it being present in any form was better than having none to hand.

Indeed, al-Sīrāfi does not shy away from the importance of India in the perfume trade and is very detailed in his descriptions. He catalogues where each item can be sourced in India to the point that there are very specific regions for each luxury item that is consumed in the Arab world. Whilst camphor is found on land and was taken to Baghdad and the surrounding Islamic lands through South Asia or the Indian Ocean, ambergris was usually found at sea. Al-

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 96.

⁴¹⁹ Beeston, A.F.L. 'The Arabian Aromatics Trade in Antiquity', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, (2005), 53.

⁴²⁰ Akasoy, Anna. and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 145-160.

⁴²¹ Al-Sīrāfi, *Accounts of China and India*, 105.

⁴²² Ibid, 105.

⁴²³ Ibid, 105.

Sīrāfī writes the most about this product in relation to South Asia because the best kind was found in the Zanj area,⁴²⁴ as well as the coast of al Sihr⁴²⁵ where it would wash up.⁴²⁶

Ambergris has always been a rare and valuable substance to have to make luxury perfumes because of the way it is made and the very specific circumstances it requires. The level of effort that is required to attain it is a feat of strength. Al-Sīrāfī recounts that when a whale swallowed some by accident and would die as a result, if a trader spotted it, they would hook the whale and drag it ashore to cut it open to release the substance again.⁴²⁷ This is no small feat in the early medieval era, and another reason why the substance was sold and marketed at a premium. The substance acts as both a ‘fixative’(meaning that it helps multiple substances mix together) whilst also preserving the organic materials as a sort of embalming substance to allow the perfume to mature instead of rot. The three parts of ambergris that allow this to happen are the main three are: *triterpene*, *alcohol ambrein*, *epicoprostanol andcoprostanone*.⁴²⁸ However, despite all that effort of manually having to shore the whale sometimes, al-Sīrāfī does not account of much more use of the whale beyond the function of gaining the ambergris. All of this suggests that the ambergris remained the primary motive for all this effort and as such was of enough value⁴²⁹ given its pivotal role in the production of perfume. Whilst it is true that there may be deliberate issues of omissions to keep the ambergris at a premium, and that there were other local uses of procuring the whale, as they are not documented in full it would be conjecture to try and discuss them. But it is important to

⁴²⁴ Southeast Africa in the Swahili Coast.

⁴²⁵ One of the Southeast Asian islands

⁴²⁶ Al-Sīrāfī, *Accounts of China and India*, 125-127.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*, 125-127.

⁴²⁸ Srinivasan, T.M. ‘Ambergris in Perfumery in the Past and Present Indian Context and the Western World’, *Indian Journal of History of Science*, (2015), 306.

⁴²⁹ The exact amount is never mentioned unfortunately, presumably as it was priced differently depending on where trade was occurring.

recognise that the possibility is present, and feeds into the motive of such writings being in part an ‘advert’ of sorts for these luxury products.

Whales had become such an integral part of the perfume trading business when it came to their contribution in fat and ambergris that their natural states and habitats were noted and shared beyond the simple wonder of seeing such magnificent beasts in the ocean. Ibn Shahriyār is careful to note down the locations and sizes of the whales observed. Including that another ship-captain had told him that he has seen ‘whales in the Sea of Samarqand, near the Sea of Harkand, into which they say the Samarqand River flows’.⁴³⁰ Samarqand is landlocked, and so it is possible that some of the accounts here, much like the descriptions of mermaids in the same collection, are embellished in order for the market of readers in the Caliphate. All of this is indicative of there being people who were interested in this specific trade and so would go to these areas for the excretions of these mammals for their aromatic qualities.

Even though perfumes had been used in the Middle East and Europe as early the Romans, the ingredients that were being introduced to the Caliphate by the time of the early Islamic Conquests were a whole new epoch in elite consumer life in the region. This included ambergris, saffron, and sandalwood. Additionally agarwood was also found in India which was used as a medicinal plant and as a chewing substance to sweeten the breath.⁴³¹ The presence of such a versatile item on the market made it worthy of being a royal gift; the Sasanian Khusraw Parvez is recorded in having sent some to the Caliph al Mutawakkil when his health seemed to have faltered temporarily which is made note of in newer works on Arabian medieval medicine.⁴³² But interestingly it is also in the original catalogue of the *Book of Gifts and*

⁴³⁰ Ibn Shahriyār, Buzruk. *The Book of the Wonders of India, Its Mainland, Its Sea and Its Islands, Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind, edited from MS. In the Aya Sofia Mosque of Istanbul and MS. Included in the ‘Umari’s Encyclopaedic Book*, Hikoichi Yajima, (ed.), (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2018), 55-58.

⁴³¹ Amar, Zohar and Afraim Lev. *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 137-141.

⁴³² *Ibid*, 141.

Rarities, which means that this was in essence considered a gift, and a valuable one too.⁴³³ The focus of the document however is again to highlight the benefits of the Indian Ocean trade, as well as to glorify the culture of the court. Hence any omissions of foreign medicinal substances that were harmful may not have been included or were just not considered to be the focus of the document. However as explained in the introduction, this research takes the Ian Netton approach, and looks at the documented as it happened.⁴³⁴ Hence, the fact that it was given from one ruler to another suggests that there were diplomatic motives behind it as ibn Duqmāq notes the exchanges of gifts, as well as the political intricacies they denote.

When looking at the contemporary sources and how they portray the Indian Ocean goods and their presence, they are very closely aligned with the state and its connections. Hārūn al-Rashīd's wedding is an especial example of opulence in terms of the items that are on obvious display, but also the wide regionality that it indicated in the trading relations that existed by then. The extravagance of his wedding seemed to have become the norm for elite societies as early as the year 164-165 A.H./781 A.D. When his paternal cousin married, the same vein of events occurred where people were gathered and amongst the silver bowls, and gold dirhams that were distributed, so were bags of musk.⁴³⁵ Along with this, at this particular wedding all of the Hashemite women were also presented with a large silver tray with scents.⁴³⁶ The repetition of the behaviour, and the fact that it became more extravagant with each time it was done - this time women were included – suggests that musk was a part of the ceremony of celebration in the 'Abbasid court. Whilst the effects of this will be considered in the next chapter about the Arabs themselves, it is important to note that the South Asian goods were

⁴³³ Ibn Duqmāq, *The Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 62-63.

⁴³⁴ Netton, Ian. *Islam, Christianity and the Realms of the Miraculous: A Comparative Exploration*, Edinburgh *Studies of Classical Islamic History and Culture*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 10-15.

⁴³⁵ Ibn Duqmāq, *The Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 121.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid*, 122.

penetrating the ‘Abbasid courts appetite for luxury and ingraining itself into the socio-politics of public events.

By the early late 200s A.H./900s A.D. perfumes had become so valuable that they were confiscated when the elite fell from favour, suggesting that their lack of station also excluded them from possessing these luxury ceremonial items. We see this with the wealth of the vizier Abu al Hasan ibn al Furat (d.312 A.H./924 A.D.)⁴³⁷ was confiscated in 300 A.H./912 A.D. It is noted that ‘the scents that were found among his hoarded possessions were eight hundred *manā* of green [succulent] aloeswood [sic], four hundred and twenty *manā* of musk, more than sixty *manā* of camphor, 45,000 *mithqāls* of ambergris.’⁴³⁸ This was apart from folded pieces of cloth, hundreds of thousands of dinars in cash and the land that he owned too.⁴³⁹ The fact that the scents here were hoarded to such an extent on the same basis of the gold, land, and fine clothing, is indicative of their symbolic and actual value in terms of gold to the elite. We do not have evidence of a monopoly, at least in Baghdad as that was a highly monetised economy by this era and the administrative classes could purchase small luxuries. However, the accounts do suggest that it was the elite that were importing large quantities of perfumes to make statements of power at ceremonies and tribute-giving occasions.

When it came to making statements, cloves also held a long-standing relationship with wealth and prestige in the Arab lands and had to be imported in from further eastwards towards China in the Indian Ocean trade. We are aware from of Imru’ al-Qays (d. 84 B.H./540 A.D.) who was one of the great pre-Islamic Arab poets that cloves made up part of the perfumes of the nobility.⁴⁴⁰ Anya King is also explicit about this in her works that concentrate on this

⁴³⁷ Sirry, Mun’im. ‘The public role of Dhimmis during ‘Abbasid times’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 74, No. 2, (2011), 193.

⁴³⁸ Ibn Duqmāq, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 216.

⁴³⁹ Ibid, 216.

⁴⁴⁰ King, Anya. ‘The Importance of Imported Aromatics in Arabic Culture: Illustrations from Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Poetry’, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 67, No. 3, (2008), 182.

particular era of Arabian history.⁴⁴¹ Al-Qays wrote about his many exploits amongst the higher echelons of society including the seduction of women by enamouring them with perfumes. Whether he meant as an aphrodisiac, or the inference of stability via wealth is not known, except that in any case he was successful. Whether this is true or not, the account and the mention of cloves illustrates prior knowledge of the substance. He was meticulous in his recording of the substances he used to make sure that the scene for his advances was as aromatic as possible in his poetry. He noted the frankincense and myrrh, but he also mentioned cloves in a way that sets them apart as something very noteworthy.

The way he describes perfumes amongst the luxuries that he lists suggest that their worth is so immense because they cost hundreds of dirhams per customer to transport to the Middle East in the sixth century all the way from Eastern Indonesia.⁴⁴² The pre-Islamic description here explains the already set precedent for perfumes in this area of the world. Moreover, the tree that cloves come from itself can only be harvested usually after the tenth year of growing and took so long to grow that that must have compounded its status.⁴⁴³ This was to such an extent that by the year 991 A.D. the government tax on cloves alone in China was one fifth.⁴⁴⁴ Cloves also had medicinal importance which shall be discussed in the ensuing section but what is important to note is that this also again added to their symbolic value.

Just like saffron and rose, cloves are recorded to have been used in the Roman period.⁴⁴⁵ Thus knowledge of them already existed in the perfume markets for Arab merchants (as we see from the records of the Jewish trader ibn Nissim) to trade in the market's further north of the Middle East, even beyond the later Umayyad Caliphate in Spain. But given the fact that they

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, 182.

⁴⁴² Ibid, 182.

⁴⁴³ Ptak, Roderick. 'China and the Trade in Cloves, circa 960-1435', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 113, No. 1, (1993), 2.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁴⁴⁵ Zohar, Amar. And Efraim Lev. (2013), 12.

were difficult to source around the Mediterranean region as it is so far from maritime Southeast Asia, it is not recorded as an important commodity just because the volume was so low.⁴⁴⁶ What we do have evidence of though, is fragrant oil, and what is of note is that so far, much of the perfume that has been discussed has had to be burnt; aloe wood, ambergris and incense all alike. But we have mention of fragrant oils in the older sources, however they are recorded as medicinal,⁴⁴⁷ illustrating how perfumery was as much about health, as it was a fancy of the elite who could afford it, even before the first century A.H./seventh century A.D.⁴⁴⁸

Spices from South and Southeast Asia:

Much like the perfume trade, spices were taking a new role in the early medieval period. South Asia especially seemed to be involved in producing cloves and nutmeg. Al-Sīrāfī imparts with this knowledge in his travel accounts when he lists the different items that the merchants of Oman acquire in South Asia aside from perfumery and he moves on to food.⁴⁴⁹ His lack of detail on exactly where both spices were found in East and South Asia suggested that the spices were prominent in all of these regions in Asia given that his style of writing is usually very regionally specific.⁴⁵⁰ We know that consumables were also a staple product that were exported from India. We only really have concrete evidence of where the items came from in secondary sources on the most part due the rise of interest in studying this, as we are aware from the genre of contemporary sources in the Indian Ocean trade, the accounts were fantastical when it came to describing provenance. Archaeological evidence is sparse, but we have a few examples.

The Belitung shipwreck was found near Belitung Island⁴⁵¹ and included at least 60,000 ceramics, some of which were containers for aromatic substances as well as spices, the personal

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, 11-12.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, 11-12.

⁴⁴⁸ When Islam was revealed.

⁴⁴⁹ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 125.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, 125.

⁴⁵¹ Indonesia.

effects of sailors, and even the type of wood that was being used for the ship which in this case seems to have been located to East African wood.⁴⁵² From it we evidence that spices such as star anise (*illicium verum*) were transported through the Indian Ocean at this time.⁴⁵³ The other aromatic substances that were being transported were so numerous that they are difficult to identify. Out of the three that were separated and could be named, the aromatic resin, star anise, and the ship's timber, they were also used to determine the age of an organic material.⁴⁵⁴ Whilst the carbon dating itself was too wide to be useable as it was 'around the middle of the first millennium'.⁴⁵⁵ The fact that there was enough of a residue of spices and perfumes to date, is indicative of the quantity that was being shipped, and how well it was preserved, and packed, in order to make the journey, all infers that this was a well-established trade. These spices brought with them medicine and aromatic properties that were extensively studied and were a strong motivation to make the lengthy journey across the Indian Ocean.

Spices and the medicinal plants they came from brought in a new epoch of Arabian medicine and how it was studied. Even the great writers of early Islam such as al-Ṭabarī were involved in the new possibilities. 'Ali ibn Sahl Rabban al-Ṭabarī⁴⁵⁶ (d. 256 A.H./870 A.D.) even argued that different types of pepper could help strengthen the stomach, help haemorrhoids, and stave off and lower black bile from collecting.⁴⁵⁷ Whilst some of the items were culinary and mostly safe to use, dangerous items were also found such as by the Persian Jewish physician Masarjawayh who in the second century A.H./ninth century A.D. discovered that the anacardium tree⁴⁵⁸ which gave us balādhur could be used to relieved pain. The issue was that the dosage had to be exact otherwise there would be severe side effects or even

⁴⁵² Flecker, 'A Ninth-Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia', (2010), 11-120.

⁴⁵³ Ibid, 111-112.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, 36.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, 114.

⁴⁵⁶ This is a different scholar from the previously mentioned hence the full name.

⁴⁵⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, 'Ali ibn Sahl Rabban, *Firdaws al-Hikma*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2002), 393-417.

⁴⁵⁸ The anacardium tree creates nut-like seeds that are the balādhur.

culminate into the death of the patient.⁴⁵⁹ This also meant that there was a real motive for cooperation in the movement of ideas and given though Masarjawayh is among the first to mention where balādhur comes from we can specifically pinpoint the genealogy of this knowledge and that it was a result of connectivity across the Indian Ocean. The knowledge and utilisation of these plants that take hold in the Muslim world seems to come with the usages attached to them to an extent but carry on being studied once they arrive to the Muslim world with the combination of both Greek methodologies, and Indian Ocean substances which we are aware of from the works of al-Kindī.

The medicinal plants were becoming so prevalent in the ‘Abbasid court that the elite were adopting it into their heritage. The story goes that the Arab speaking historian of Persian origin called al-Balādhurī in the court of Caliph al Mutawakkil was admitted to hospital and passed because he consumed a potion containing too much anacardium without being aware of its poisonous qualities which then meant that he was dubbed al-Balādhurī.⁴⁶⁰ Whether the story is true or not the fact that the item was present at the ‘Abbasid centres of medicine and accessible to the elite suggests that its presence was not of note unless someone was in danger, which in turn signifies frequent interaction for it to be a staple so far from its source.

It was common in South Asia to have been aware of the medicinal qualities that were available in plant matter and the humours of the body for centuries. Indeed, this became so renown that by 140 A.H./760 A.D. when the Caliph al-Manṣūr fell ill, he sent for Jurjīs ibn Bakhtishu who was at the time practising in a hospital in Gondeshapur and was chief physician there.⁴⁶¹ Hence as well as medicinal spices and products, actual people who knew how to use all of these things were also brought into the Caliphate, which was not uncommon for those

⁴⁵⁹ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 88-89.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, 88-89.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, 6.

who could afford to instigate such feats. This also means that these people were also another component adding to the demand for Indian Ocean goods as they brought with them knowledge and further motives into existing markets to expand the volume of medicinal spices within the Caliphate.

The tradition of looking at what was previously the Sassanian Empire for physicians resulted in the migration of the Bakhtishu family to the extent that Hārūn al-Rashīd made a place for them at court and seven generations of physicians were born through that family and served the ‘Abbasids.⁴⁶² The Bakhtishu family were a family of Nestorian Christian physicians,⁴⁶³ who were from South Asia that came to practice medicine in the ‘Abbasid court. Gondeshapur was a thriving centre of intellectual vigour and learning, as it became a haven for the intellectual elite who fled Byzantine persecutions.⁴⁶⁴ With them they brought Greek and Roman knowledge of philosophy and medicine that they continued to practice.⁴⁶⁵ This meant that the socio-political framework around these institutions of learning was one of acceptance and was very porous. The Byzantine state position of closing themselves off from this knowledge turned the Caliphate into an oasis of learning for all those who were willing to study these subjects without critiquing the state.

Whilst some of the items that made up early medieval cures were transforming the field of medicine they had to be treated with caution. Still, there are items that were traded that are still used today and are quite benign. For instance, tamarind is still used in South Asia to lower blood pressure and is indigenous to India. By 190 A.H./800 A.D. it was sent to Cairo and Sicily as well as other parts of the Maghreb for food and is noted to have had these effects on the

⁴⁶² Findlay, Ronald. and Kevin H. O’Rourke. *Power and Plenty*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 44-45 and S.Adil Gamal, ‘Part 1: Medieval Islamic Medicine’, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, Michael W. Dols. (trans.), S. Aldil Gamal, (ed. Of Arabic text), 6.

⁴⁶³ Wilson, Boydena R. *The Bakhtishu’: Their Political and Social Role Under the ‘Abbasid Caliphs (A.D. 750-1100)*, (New York: Xerox University Microfilms, 1976), 19.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, 20-21.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, 21.

body in relation to blood flow.⁴⁶⁶ Whether it was used in the same way is not recorded, however as people were aware of these qualities and it was documented to be able to have this effect on the body, the inference is that it is still possible that was a motive in its consumption.

Similarly, bamboo ash was also indigenous to India, Southeast Asia, and most notably Sind, even though today we associate it primarily with East Asia, and the substance was used to soak up toxins and recalibrate the balance of the substances in one's body.⁴⁶⁷ Notably bamboo ash specifically is associated with Jewish merchants, who had the substance shipped up to Andalucía and the rest of Europe which is indicative of the diversity of the Arab merchants involved to include more than just Muslim merchants. The Jewish mercantile community had strong relationships in the Persian Gulf, which was a part of this trading network, and also which again actively highlights the system of cabotage the Indian Ocean trade was a part of.⁴⁶⁸

The socio-political ramifications of this being that whilst the elite echelons of society were very interested in the trade and what it brought to the Middle East and Europe, the merchants themselves were individual actors.⁴⁶⁹ We are aware of this from the fact that traders such as ibn Shahriyār were not supported by the state. They just found a source of income from members of the elite who were interested in their work. Indeed, the people involved were supposed to be ordinary, but the effects that their involvement had in South Asia were tangible and far reaching.

The increased importance of South Asian substances and its geographical region meant that Persian physicians came into their own at this time, and indeed were known to don Arab

⁴⁶⁶ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 93.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 95.

⁴⁶⁸ Power, Tim. 'The Expansion of Muslim Commerce in the Red Sea Basin, c. AD 833-969', *Connected Hinterlands, Proceedings in the Red Sea Project IV*, Lucy Blue and John Cooper, (eds.), (2008), 115.

⁴⁶⁹ Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: Economic Foundations*, Vol. 1, (1999), 150-155.

attire to serve as mediators and practitioners of modern medicine for the time.⁴⁷⁰ Especially given that it was South Asian vegetables and spices that sometimes caused the illnesses from overindulgence, as was the case with Hārūn al-Rashīd who gorged on over 20 cooked aubergines (which is indigenous to India where it still grows in the wild)⁴⁷¹ and fell sick as a result.⁴⁷² It was then Persian physicians who were able to assist him.⁴⁷³ Whilst the dynamics of Arab-Persian society will be discussed in its own chapter about the Caliphate it is just as important to note here that the increase in trade and prolonged contact with South Asia was consolidating a sense of unity (if not completely) in societies within the Caliphate.

Conclusion:

The Indian Ocean trade and the Arab involvement in it, is integral to understanding early medieval globalism. The perfumes and spices that came out of it are attributed to Indian interaction in the maritime networks that were already established and were being expanded upon in the early medieval period. The prestige that they held in the elite circles of the Caliphate and the Carolingian court is a direct indication of the *lingua franca* of power in the known world by this stage. This is argued by Curta in his studies of Carolingian gifting which includes Indian Ocean spices and perfumes,⁴⁷⁴ which echoes the exchange of gifts that are related to have happened in the Caliphate by ibn Duqmāq.⁴⁷⁵

Given the fact that India had all these raw materials and knowledge to do with medicine to provide to anyone who controlled areas within it, it is then understandable that the merchants from the Caliphate thought that it would be worth at least attempting to encroach into a part of it. We are aware of this from al-Alam, accounting that it was directly considered into expansion

⁴⁷⁰ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 9.

⁴⁷¹ Aubaile-Sallenave, F. 'Bādenjān', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (2011), <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/badenjan-egeplant-aubergine>

⁴⁷² Al-Warrāq, Ibn Sayyār. *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, Nawal Nasrallah, (trans.), (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 29.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, 29.

⁴⁷⁴ Curta, (2006), 680-681.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibn Duqmāq, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 83-84.

that Sind had dry soil, and not much by the way of natural resources.⁴⁷⁶ Expansion further until resources could be found would cost too much with this factored in and so the Arab expansion was halted from continuing any further.⁴⁷⁷ This was in order to facilitate trade and gain better access to routes deeper into South Asia and by extension the rest of Asia if nothing else. Although one must concede that the political power of being able to control large swathes of land so far away was also symbolic of the strength of the Caliphate. Even if the original incentive had simply been economic, there was a message of unparalleled strength in being able to conquer Balkh as early as 90 A.H./708 A.D. and from there to encroach into India surely and steadily.⁴⁷⁸

Moreover, despite the takeover of Sind, the fact that there were still other Indian kingdoms that were willing to trade with the Caliphate and sent regular tributes to the Caliph annually suggests that politics and trade were interlinked. Although these accounts are only related to us from the Arabic sources which were patronised by the Caliph, which points to an incentive to present the power relation to be in favour of the Caliphate. In this case tribute recognising legitimacy and diplomacy. But this requires nuance, as we are aware that even in times of instability, where there was expendable wealth, trade still occurred even in strenuous political settings. Trade was integral to the long-term survival of the Caliphate and was used to both consolidate court culture, and a sense of legitimacy as well, and to additionally serve the purpose of finding a source of generating wealth beyond continuous warfare.

⁴⁷⁶ Minorsky, V. (trans.), 'Ḥudūd al-‘Ālam, The Regions of the World, A Persian Geography 372 A.H./ 982 A.D.', *E.J.W. Memorial Series, New Series*, C.E. Boworth, (ed.), Vol. XI, (1970), 63.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 63-80.

⁴⁷⁸ Azad, Arezou. *Afghanistan's Islam*, (California: University of California Press, 2017), 39-41.

Trade with Caliphs, theologians, and philosophers

Introduction:

The rise of the Islamic Empires was by no means the introduction of globalised trade in the Middle East. The Muslim Arabs came into a pre-existing system in which the overland routes for trade were well established and naval trade was steadily developing. This was a process that had been in the making over centuries, and could be dated back to antiquity during the Roman Empire. Hence, this is not the sole reason for the rise in prominence of the Umayyad and later ‘Abbasid Caliphate. Instead, the Indian Ocean trade of perfumes and spices allowed it to enter into the established *lingua franca* of power and diplomatic relations that the Sassanids had already been well aware of as will be explored in this chapter. Moreover, it aided the Caliphate in being able to communicate in subtle languages of power through gifting ceremonies, even whilst being surrounded by older well established empires.

The reason why the rise of the Islamic Empires and their survival is so exceptional, is that they were surrounded by the ancient and powerful empires that were the Zoroastrian Sassanids, the Christian Byzantines, and further west the Christians of Europe. The fact that they kept their independence seems miraculous on its own, let alone flourishing through regular external trade from the time of antiquity. Mecca itself was known for its trade and was situated in the middle of a caravan route,⁴⁷⁹ but was at the same time remote and easy to defend. Apart from Mecca the overall reason why this was possible for the rest of Arabia was because it had (and has) a harsh climate and terrain, which meant that barring some areas in the north and south-west it was almost impenetrable for long stretches of time.⁴⁸⁰ This meant that it was easy

⁴⁷⁹ Abd al-Latif, Bahjat Kamil. ‘The Prophet Muhammed and the Universal Message of Islam’, *The Spread of Islam throughout the World*, Idris el Hareir and El Hadji Ravane M’Baye, (eds.), Vol. 3, (2011), 25.

⁴⁸⁰ Taha, Abd al Wahid Dhanun. ‘The Historical Process of the Spread of Islam’, *The Spread of Islam throughout the World*, Idris el Hareir and el Hadji Ravane M’Baye, (eds.), Vol. 3, (2011), 123.

to defend and remain autonomous and allowed for the circumstances for a new empire to be formed.

Whilst there is discussion as to whether Mecca really was a centre of trade - Patricia Crone argues it was not⁴⁸¹ – but the evidence of the major trading tribes in Arabia having congregated there, including the textual sources and the evidence of precious metal mines in the surrounding areas strongly suggests a trading culture.⁴⁸² Crone disagrees with Watt that there was significant evidence of Meccan trade,⁴⁸³ but she also ignores (or is unaware of) the work done by Gene Heck on the materials that could be sourced there in order to trade, as well as the goods that could be brought to trade there, alongside the metal trades. Especially as she starts her study with the question ‘The conventional account of Meccan trade begs one simple question: what commodity or commodities enabled the inhabitants of so uncompromising a site to engage in commerce on so large a scale?’⁴⁸⁴ Heck’s research answers this question without doubt to be gold – which has been a motive for Man since time immemorial. Crone’s book also ignores the variety of the population of Mecca and the fact that it was met at as a famously hybrid place of worship, even before the coming of Islam, as well as for trade which meant that people were already travelling there so it is then logical that despite the hostile terrain an exchange of goods would be facilitated.

However, once the ‘Abbasid Caliphate established itself in Baghdad 145 A.H/762 A.D. and the surrounding areas in what is now Iraq, the new capital was much better situated for transcontinental trade. We are aware that this was important as the Caliphs paid special attention to where markets were placed.⁴⁸⁵ We know this from the fact that it is alleged in the

⁴⁸¹ Crone, Patricia. *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 150-168.

⁴⁸² Gene W Heck, ‘Gold Mining in Arabia and the Rise of the Islamic State’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (1999), 367-379.

⁴⁸³ Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, 3.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 3-5.

⁴⁸⁵ Khaznehkatbi, Ghaida. and Ahmad Farras Oran. ‘The economic system under the ‘Abbasid Dynasty’. *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Economics*, (2009), 259.

accounts of the history of Baghdad that al-Manṣūr is said to have made this point when he laid the foundation of Baghdad as the capital of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate as medievalists recognise it today, when he described the ships coming through the Euphrates, as well as ships coming with supplies coming through the Tigris.⁴⁸⁶ Whether this was actually the reason or not when the city was established by al-Manṣūr and his court, the fact that it is recorded by al-Ṭabarī:

‘This is the site on which I shall build. Goods can come here via the Tigris, the Euphrates, and various canals. Only a place like this can support both the army and the populace. He marked the boundaries of the city and calculated the extent of its construction. With his own hand he set the first brick in place while saying the words "In the name of God" and "Praise God" and "The earth belongs to God who makes heirs of it those of His servants whom He wishes, and the outcome is to the upright. He concluded with the statement "Build, then, with God's blessing."⁴⁸⁷

This makes it clear that this was the reasoning and was more than plausible by the time of his writing. It also illustrated how much the people believed that international trade was integral to the foundation and wellbeing of Baghdad and the centre of the Caliphate whether the above happened or not.

Even the choice of overlord of Baghdad needed special consideration due to the sheer amounts of wealth that would be coming through due to the international trade, and the Caliph al-Manṣūr went about this as soon as the foundation started to be built further highlighting the importance of the international trade:

‘According to Bishr b. Maymūn al-Sharawī-Sulaymān b. Mujālid: Upon al-Manṣūr’s return from the region of al-Jibāl, he asked about the account that the army commander had heard

⁴⁸⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, ‘‘Abbasid Authority Affirmed’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, (Ta’rikh al-rusul wa’l-muluk)*, Jane Dammen McAuliffe, (trans.), Vol. XXVIII, (1995), 241-243.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid, 241.

from the physician. This was the physician who had told him about the report of a certain Miglāṣ that they had found in their books. He stopped at the monastery that lay opposite his [future] palace known as al-Khuld. Al-Manṣūr summoned the head of the monastery and had the Patricius, the master of Raḥā al-Biṭrīq "Mills of the Patricius"), brought to him as well. Others whom he summoned were the overlord of [the village of] Baghdad, the overlord of al-Mukharrim, and head of the monastery known as Bustān al-Qass ("Garden of the Priest") and the overlord of al-'Atīqah. The caliph questioned them about the places where they lived, asking what they were like in heat and cold, in rainy and muddy weather, and in terms of bugs and vermin. Each one told him what he knew from personal experience. Next, the caliph dispatched men on his own behest and ordered each of them to spend the night in one of these villages. Accordingly, each of these men passed the night in one of these villages and brought the Caliph information about it. Al-Manṣūr next sought the advice of those whom he had summoned and examined carefully what they said. Their unanimous choice fell upon the overlord of Baghdad, so the caliph had him brought for consultation and careful questioning. (Now he was the *dihqān* whose village still stands in the quarter known as that of Abu al-'Abbās al-Faḍl b. Sulaymān al-Ṭūsī. To this very day the domes of the village are still maintained in good repair, and his house survives intact.)'

Baghdad was a bustling city with an impressive population of around 250,000-500,000 even in the early medieval period,⁴⁸⁸ that was enough for demand in this one city to generate enough incentive for voyages to procure the goods that were in fashion there. In comparison the population of London just after the year 1000 A.D. was around 10,000-15,000.⁴⁸⁹ Whilst Lassner's numbers are speculative as we can never be sure of the exact number of people that

⁴⁸⁸ Lassner, Jacob. *The topography of Baghdad in the early Middle Ages: text and studies*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 107-110 and 282-283.

⁴⁸⁹ Eldridge, Alison. 'History, The Early Period', *Britannica*, (2020), <https://www.britannica.com/place/London/History>

inhabited Baghdad, we do know that in proportion, even modest estimates of the city are large enough to suggest that the market there alone could spur the trade and create enough incentive to cross the Indian Ocean and back for luxury goods in a system of cabotage that allowed for globalisation. Especially as we are aware from the accounts of al-Ṭabarī that the market in Baghdad could be relied upon for ‘animals, clothing, and other essential items’ as early as the years 74-81 A.H./ 693-701 A.D. for a cavalry, so the proportions of trade were already there.⁴⁹⁰

The demand was so great that Iraq itself was the instigator for the conception of specific markets,⁴⁹¹ such as factories being made to make aesthetically pleasing fabrics that were for consumption in that area alone.⁴⁹² This, coupled with the fact that there seems to have been an increase in disposable income for even those on the lower strata of society meant that markets and their wares were booming for at least the first 300 years of the Caliphate.⁴⁹³ If Maya Schatzmiller is correct even for just some of the lower strata of society of Baghdad then this with the combination of Lassner’s projections of the demography of Baghdad is integral in understanding just how sustainable the luxury goods trade was in this period in the Caliphate, and in the global systems of connections that were being made. Schatzmiller’s work on the economy within the Caliphate is extensive and she even explores the entire legal framework that was consolidated around *waqf*⁴⁹⁴ and the support of learning institutions and social welfare that were being born out of what was a prosperous society, however this is based on studies from the fifteenth century.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, ‘The Marwanid Restoration: The Caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik, A.D.693-701’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Ṭārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, Everett, R. Rowson, (trans.), Vol. XXII, (1989), 60-62.

⁴⁹¹ Narshakhī. *The History of Bukhara*, R.N. Frye, (ed. and trans.), (New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007), 19-21.

⁴⁹² Narshakhī, Abu Bakr Muhammad, *The History of Bukhara*, (Massachusetts: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1954), 20.

⁴⁹³ Schatzmiller, Maya. and Sevek Pamuk. ‘Plagues, wages and economic change in the Islamic Middle East’, *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 74, No. 1, (2014), 196-229.

⁴⁹⁴ Arabic for charitable donation.

⁴⁹⁵ Schatzmiller, Maya. ‘Islamic Institutions and Property Rights: The Case of the ‘Public Good’ Waqf’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, (2001), 44-45.

However, as recently in 2011, she argues that this is from early economy growth between the years 750-1100 A.D.⁴⁹⁶ The crucial part of her research here being that many ordinary people had disposable income (in comparison to before) that allowed them to spend it on small luxuries such as spices and perfumes on smaller scales than the elite but a visible one. This is corroborated by the writings of ibn Khurradāḡbih who recorded that ‘Abbasid revenue for Iraq alone by the reign of al Mutawakil (d.246 A.H./ 861 A.D.) was 78 million dirhams per year at least in his reign alone in terms of taxation.⁴⁹⁷ This was just from the revenue (*al-kharāj*)⁴⁹⁸ at this point in the ‘Abbasid era.⁴⁹⁹ In turn this fuelled foreign trade because of the rise of an expendable income and gifting to display wealth on the elite level usually included luxury gifts which explains why the *Book of Gifts and Rarities* took such care and showed so much enthusiasm in recording them,⁵⁰⁰ not just for understanding the amount, but how some taxes were being paid too, as mentioned in the earlier chapter. Schatzmiller is even critical of the idea that the rise of the European powers later, that we recognise as early forms of colonialism, are not recognised as coming into a pre-existing system and instead being dubbed a ‘European miracle’.⁵⁰¹

This again goes directly against the Hansen argument, and whilst the majority of Schatzmiller’s other scholarship is clearly focused on the eighth century A.H./ fourteenth century A.D. onwards,⁵⁰² and beyond, she is clear that the foundations were laid pre-390

⁴⁹⁶ Schatzmiller, Maya. ‘Economic Performance and Economic Growth in the Early Islamic World’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, (2011), 132-133.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibn Khurradāḡbih, Abū al-Qāsim Ubaydallāh ibn Abdallāh. *Kitāb al-masālik*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), (Leiden: Brill, 1889), 14-20.

⁴⁹⁸ *Al-kharāj* means taxes that are raised from lands or taken as tributes.

⁴⁹⁹ Alam, Muhammad Reza. and Mansour Zarra-Nezhad, ‘Estimation of Total Revenue of the Early Muslim Governments’, *Pensee Journal*, Vol. 76, No. 3, (2014), 140-144.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibn Duqmāq, Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī. *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, (*Kitāb al-Haqāyā wa al-Tujaf*), Ghāda al-Hijāwī al-Qaddūmī, (trans.), (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, (1997), 77, 98, 110—111.

⁵⁰¹ Schatzmiller, (2011), 133-134.

⁵⁰² Schatzmiller, Maya. ‘Aspects of women’s participation in the Economic Life of Later Medieval Islam: Occupations and Mentalities’, *Arabica*, Vol. 35, No. 1, (1988), 36-58, and Maya Schatzmiller, ‘Women and Property Rights in Al-Andalus and the Maghrib: Social Patterns and Legal Discourse’, *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (1995), 219-257.

A.H./1000 A.D. This is supported by the earlier work of Udjang Tholib whose studies reinforced the power of the markets and the reliance on trade Baghdad had by the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. arguing that there was a decline in the power of the centre of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate which correlated with the sharp decline in the economy.⁵⁰³ David Waines’ article from 1977 attributed this to the ‘Abbasids having to also combat the rise of the Umayyads in Spain and the Fatimids in Egypt, eventually leading to a decline of agriculture in Iraq although the internal economy is not the focus of this research.⁵⁰⁴ This was attributed to merchants looking for alternative markets to Baghdad when the civil wars resulted in them being divested of their wares without consent too many times and was compounded by the fact that there was insufficient disposable income as war meant that no-one could afford to buy their goods. This meant that other cities became more economically viable.⁵⁰⁵ All of this starting in the early medieval period meant that with frequent trade being encouraged, this was bleeding into a complex series of relationships from one end of the Indian Ocean to another in this early medieval growth of globalisation. Hence the Umayyads and the ‘Abbasids also decided that they needed to join the *lingua franca* of sovereignty with their own coinage as trade and their empires expanded synonymously which was another long-term effect of the same movement towards globalisation. Whilst the source-based evidence does illustrate that the boom in the monetary economy was over in Baghdad by the year 1000 A.D. it by no means hindered the Indian Ocean trade which was just more focused on Cairo.

With the introduction of an ‘Islamic’ or ‘Muslim’ coin during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik, coinage started to gain momentum in their presence in terms of volume in trade in the early medieval period. This was particularly the case in the second half of the seventh century

⁵⁰³ Tholib, Udjang. ‘The economic factors of the ‘Abbasid decline during the Buwayhid Rule in the fourth/tenth century’, *Al-Jamiah Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 2, (2009), 343-345.

⁵⁰⁴ Waine, David. ‘The Third Century Internal Crisis of the ‘Abbasids’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 20, No. 3, (1977), 282-283.

⁵⁰⁵ Tholib, (2009), 343-345.

when the Islamic Empire was looking to establish itself in its own right as it continued to look to expand while maintaining the lands it had already gained.⁵⁰⁶ The introduction of a coinage system was also due to the pressing need to have a standardised system with which to pay a standing army which had been formed beforehand.⁵⁰⁷ Moreover it meant that the Arabs could expand their pre-existing trading relationships with Asia in order to establish diplomatic relations whilst also making a lucrative profit in the plethora of goods that the rest of Asia was able to provide, but mainly in the buying and selling of spices and perfume. Whilst it is important to distinguish that the traders themselves were individuals on the most part, their activity was a part of a larger framework that was built by the government politically. These same people were often pillars of society and could also have been officials given their large spheres of influence from moving around and the capital they accrued.

The knowledge and new possibilities that came with new products coming out of Asia meant that entire schools and centres of learning cropped up in Baghdad in the pursuit of South and East Asian medicinal knowledge. This also became a gateway of Persian physicians to take up dominant positions as healers at court, and as accepted members of society. The Persian physicians dressed in Arab garments to show that they were a part of the life there as well as mediators for the South Asian legacy of medical knowledge with robes of long sleeves as mentioned in the prior chapter.⁵⁰⁸ This is also seen in the works of al-Kindī and Ibn al-Haytham which were analysed extensively illustrating that the pursuit of medical knowledge impacted trade and society too. However, it is still important to note that even with all the written evidence we have of scholarly work, the ‘early Islamic elite culture’ is something of a mystery

⁵⁰⁶ Bessard, Fanny. ‘Politics and Economics of the Early Caliphate’, *Routledge Handbook on Early Islam*, Herbert Berg, (ed.), (2018), 196.

⁵⁰⁷ Kennedy, Hugh. ‘Military pay and the economy of the early Islamic state’, *Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. 75, (2002), 155-169.

⁵⁰⁸ Amar, Zohar. and Afraim Lev. *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 9.

to us according to the historian Hugh Kennedy as recently as 2011.⁵⁰⁹ Thus, this study is using the findings to learn more about the societies themselves that were involved.

The study of perfumery which came with the introduction of different spices and resin woods also meant that entirely new markets were beginning to be formed that took the Arab world by storm. The newly formed Islamic Empires wished to be seen as just as advanced and learned as their contemporaries on the diplomatic stage as we see in the gifting staples that were becoming uniform when being presented to the Caliph from both Africa, Europe, and South Asia. Indeed the work by Dimitri Gutas proves just how accepting of foreign ideas and systems the courts of the Caliphs were as he wrote on the reforms made by the Caliphate up to the year 750 A.D. and that ‘Abd al-Malik based this upon pre-existing Greek systems.⁵¹⁰ He even argues that there were Greek speaking Arabs in Umayyad circles.⁵¹¹ This was not impeded by the coming of the ‘Abbasids and Gutas reinforces the primary account that this research mentions in the previous chapter, that there was even an Indian embassy that was received by al-Manṣūr between the years 154-156 A.H./771-773 A.D. that brought with it a set of astrological tables that were translated from Pahlavi and studied within the Caliphate.⁵¹² Such an occurrence of the transmission of Indian ideas of science and maths to within the Caliphate is remarkable and it is even called the ‘Golden Age’ of Arabic science which is also the title of Gutas’ book.⁵¹³ In order to keep to the scope of this examination, this will be limited to how it affected the Caliphate in this section through its external trade and became integral to the socio-political stage of courts and diplomatic relations.

⁵⁰⁹ Kennedy, Hugh. ‘Great estates and elite lifestyles in the Fertile Crescent from Byzantium and Sassanian Iran to Islam’, *Court Cultures of the Muslim World*, A. Fuess and J-P. Hartung, (eds.), (2011), 54.

⁵¹⁰ Gutas, Demitri. *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and early ‘Abbasid Society (2nd – 4th/8th – 10th centuries)*, (London: Routledge, 1999), 17-18.

⁵¹¹ Ibid, 17-18.

⁵¹² Ibid, 113-114.

⁵¹³ Al-Khalili, Jim. *Pathfinders: the golden age of Arabic science*, (London: Penguin, 2012), 225.

We are aware from newer studies such as Adam Bursi's that perfumes that contained saffron, musk, and ambergris were used to adorn the Ka'aba and the Dome of the Rock.⁵¹⁴ His study accounts that there was an entire ritual around burning these 'luxurious materials' and allowing the fragrant smoke to 'billow out' and spread throughout the prayer area in holy sites in order to get them ready for worshippers, and once this was done the holy sites would be reopened and worshippers would 'rush to pray' whilst it still smelt of the substances.⁵¹⁵ However, the religious significance of this in Islam is a much bigger topic, the significance of the keepers of the holy spaces using these specific luxury items is important to understand how perfumes became a part of the Islamic culture and their significance in terms of value in gold and importance are then deemed in the eighth century when we know this happened.⁵¹⁶

To ascertain in more detail the level of penetration external trade of the Arabs had in the Caliphate, the way that they traded will also have to be considered, as well as the level of demand in the Caliphate itself, and if that changed according in different areas of the Muslim world. Hence, the socio-economic factors of the international trade that the Caliphate was involved in will also have to be considered. This was because, whilst the upper echelons of government were mostly (there were always some Christians and Jewish people in the administration) monopolised by those who identified as Muslims, trade was usually done and conducted by private individuals in an unofficial capacity. Also, from the bottom to the middle strata of the government, there is ample evidence that the Jewish population,⁵¹⁷ as well as other non-Muslims were very involved with the state.⁵¹⁸ Whilst these people (of all religions) could be traders and government officials, the two did not necessarily mean that their mercantile

⁵¹⁴ Bursi, Adam. 'Scents of Space: Early Islamic Pilgrimage, Perfume, and Paradise', *Arabica*, Vol. 67, (2020), 202.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid, 202.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid, 202-204.

⁵¹⁷ Ackerman-Lieberman, Phillip I. 'Revisiting Jewish Occupational Choice and Urbanization in Iraq under the Early 'Abbasids', *Jewish History*, Vol. 29, No. 2, (2015), 114-115.

⁵¹⁸ Goitein, (1956), 52-55.

conduct was one that was being specifically pushed by a government agenda rather than just fiscally lucrative.

Moreover, what is abundantly clear in the early medieval period is that there was an increasing sense of human hopefulness in the pursuit of ascertaining of medicinal knowledge that drove the markets that transported spices, camphor, and musk to the Caliphate from across the Indian Ocean. Health and illness were serious issues, and during the Umayyad Caliphate alone there were four plagues.⁵¹⁹ A lot of the items that we associate with Indian dishes, dyes, and perfumes also have medicinal qualities, which is what made them that much more valuable. Saffron for example, was a medicine, spice, perfume, and dye all in one.⁵²⁰ Saffron itself is believed to be Greek in origin but in the sources is always put with the Indian Ocean goods which suggests it was being cultivated in India too by this time or was at least seen as just as prestigious. These items, all came into the perfume and spice trade, but contextualising them in their essential usefulness is important to understand why Arabs were so interested in studying and exoticizing these foodstuffs in the first place. It also seems logical then to make such items - that were turned into luxury commodities such as spicy foods and perfume which were considered frivolous - so expensive. It was another reason for it to be a staple of power and wealth. Access to medicine and physicians were also a sign of wealth in the medieval period (indeed to an extent this is still the case in the 21st century with the difference of private and social healthcare) and to be able to use their products in a hedonistic way was also a show of power.

The ceremonies that marked major life events became underlined with the presence of perfumes including musk and ambergris, as well as having spices and South and East Asian

⁵¹⁹ Conrad, Lawrence I. *The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 249-306.

⁵²⁰ Amar, Zohar. and Efraim Lev. *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Genizah*, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 81.

fruits on the menu or banquet involved.⁵²¹ Weddings, circumcisions,⁵²² and state events, all held such costly items in abundance and it was expected for the patron involved to then hand out portions of each item to the guests all the way down to the lowliest of those present in order to display their power as well as their generosity. Note that the same action was mirrored by the Carolingians as discussed in the next chapter. This included diplomatic missions to the Caliph as well as tributes that also acted as a form of tax that shall all be explored in this chapter.

Trading in South Asia as a market and as a proxy:

To appreciate the perfume and spice trade in relation to the Islamic Empire, it is important to contextualise the Caliphate itself geographically and politically in the markets it was making itself a major part of. The ‘Abbasid capital in Baghdad was the new focal point in the government of the Caliphate that marked the renewed image of the Caliphate being more in-tune with its Persian subjects. As well as taking advantage of the two great Mesopotamian rivers that linked the area with the Indian Ocean and up to the rest of the near and Middle East. The trade with South Asia was one that was being developed by Arab traders intentionally, and the Belitung shipwreck that was excavated with the findings published in 2010, was a significant window in how the Arabs traded. This is because the researcher François Louis who was involved in the analysis of the findings in the Belitung Shipwreck was able to establish that the ship was made in the Arab style with African wood that is indigenous to Zimbabwe.⁵²³ It was constructed with a technique that was completely without iron nails and was simply the wood woven into one another to float.⁵²⁴

⁵²¹ Khusraw, Nāṣir-i. *Book of Travels*, Wheeler M. Thackston, (ed. and trans.), (USA: Mazda Publishers, 2001), 70-74.

⁵²² It is common practice for Muslim men to be circumcised, and many Muslim societies hold celebrations when this is performed on a son.

⁵²³ Louis, François. ‘Metal Objects on the Belitung Shipwreck’, *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Wind*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds.), (2010), 85.

⁵²⁴ Guy, John. ‘Rare and Strange Goods: International Trade in Ninth-Century Asia’, *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds.), (2010), 20.

Additionally, aside from what the ship was made out of, the personal possessions found on the ship were of West Asian or Arabian provenance and are believed to have belonged to the crew, given that they would be the only people aside from merchants to hold personal effects on the vessel.⁵²⁵ We are aware that this vessel would not have had any passengers aside from this, as no remains of any bodies were found and the sheer size of the cargo also indicates the same. There were 60,000 pieces of ceramics, inferring this ship was one of the many that were continually being sent back and forth across the Indian Ocean to trade between China and the near and Middle East. We know now from more recent excavations that this trade proliferated throughout the Middle East and even outside of the larger centres of trade and learning. The excavation of Ramla⁵²⁶ allowed the archaeologists to excavate a diverse number of ceramics which suggests that even the lower classes were buying into this market.⁵²⁷ Whilst it was very possible for the Arabs to have travelled all the way to East Asia themselves, as in al-Sīrāfi's account, South Asia was the usual entrepot for East Asian and West Asian goods that were then traded on both sides of the subcontinent. The Belitung shipwreck is an example of this as it had on board both Chinese ceramics as well as spices and aromatic resins. Resins were most likely to be retrieved in South Asia (although some could also be found in East Asia), and it is unlikely that the ceramics were from anywhere but East Asia. In fact, as the book shows, we know that most of the ceramics originated from the same workshop in Southeast Asia although who it belongs to and the exact location is yet to be determined,⁵²⁸ and there were seals that identified the makers on the bottom on the ones that remained intact. The shipwreck was also found just off the coast of Sumatra with items that were in demand both at in Baghdad and on the that side of Asia. It is entirely possible that the Arab merchants on board

⁵²⁵ Flecker, Michael and J. Keith Wilson, 'Dating the Belitung Shipwreck', *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Wind*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), 40.

⁵²⁶ Toueg, Ron. And Yael Datia Arnon. 'Ramla: Final Report', *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, (2011), 123.

⁵²⁷ Gorzalczany, (2009), 1025.

⁵²⁸ Louis, (2010), 90.

were hedging their chances by mixing their cargo to make sure that their trip was as lucrative as possible, given that medicinal plants were also found which were typical of the South Asian market.⁵²⁹

Thus, it was typical for any trade that the Arabs were engaged in to include some spices and perfumes to make sure that should anything spoil there was also a safety net so that the journey was not a loss. We see this in the cargo lists that Goitein translates from the Cairo Geniza which includes medical and culinary herbs alongside silk and glass.⁵³⁰ This includes the below:

- 'Flax, exported from Egypt to Tunisia and Sicily.
- Silk ([imported] from Spain and Sicily) and other fabrics, from Syrian or European (Rum) cotton to North African felt, and textiles of all descriptions, from robes to bedcovers.
- Olive oil, soap and wax from Tunisia, occasionally also from Palestine and Syria.
- Oriental spices, such as pepper, cinnamon, and clove, sent from Egypt to the West.
- Dyeing, tanning, and varnishing materials such as brazilwood, lacquer and indigo (sent from East to West); sumac and gallnuts (from Syria to Egypt); saffron (from Tunisia to the East).
- Metals (copper, iron, lead, mercury, tin, silver ingots), all West to East.
- Books (Bible codexes, Talmuds, legal and edifying literature, grammars, and Arabic books).
- Aromatics, perfumes, and gums (aloe, ambergris, camphor, frankincense, gum Arabic, mastic gum, musk, betel leaves).
- Jewellery and semiprecious stones (gems, pearls, carnelians, turquoises, onyxes, and the like).
- Materials (such as beads, "pomegranate" strings, coral, cowrie shells, lapis lazuli, and tortoiseshell) used for ornaments and trinkets, items that loomed large in his papers.
- Chemicals (alkali, alum, antimony, arsenic, bamboo crystals, borax, naphtha, sulfur [sic], starch, vitriol).
- Foodstuffs, such as sugar, exported from Egypt, or dried fruits, imported from Syria.
- Hides and leather. Also furs and shoes. All coming from, or through, Tunisia and Sicily.
- Pitch, an important article.
- Varia, such as palm fiber [sic], and items not yet identified with certainty'.⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ Ibid, 85.

⁵³⁰ Goitein, (1999), 153.

⁵³¹ Goitein, (1999), 154.

It is also the case that because of the damp sea air that items such as ceramics, which were much more durable, were used in case the spices or perfume spoiled so that the merchants always had something to trade in. In either case, it was the spices and perfumes that were the luxury items, whilst ceramics – due to the volume on just one ship – must have been a mass consumer item that whilst reliable, was not as valuable on the market. However, since the ingredients for perfumes were easy to store and high in demand, it also guaranteed them a spot on most ships to meet the growing demand in markets such as those in Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus.

To understand just how pervasive, the influence of perfume was on the people within the Caliphate, one needs to understand the level of prestige it had when it was used. In the year 159/160 A.H./776-777 A.D. it is recorded that the entire Ka’bah⁵³² was covered with perfume when the cloth that covers it was being taken down for the annual re-draping.⁵³³ The level of prestige that perfume held is actively displayed here, as it was used in the holiest site of Islam. This was no small thing, we also have a passage from the scholar ‘Abdallāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah (d. 213 A.H./828 A.D.) who was from Baghdad, that ‘the smith and the perfumer were sought after alike’,⁵³⁴ indicating how ‘needed’ or ‘essential’ perfume was, by those who could afford it.

Perfume: The Accounts of India and China by al-Sīrāfi alongside his contemporaries:

Perfume had become such a symbol of affluence and luxury that al-Tha’ālibī described India as a place where there is an abundance of pearls and sapphires and was also home to trees that are ‘exceptional in their aloes’ and ‘hold leaves with aromatic sweet-smelling perfumes’.⁵³⁵

⁵³² The house of God towards which all Muslims pray to.

⁵³³ Al-Tābarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, Annales quod scripsit Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al- Tābarī*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), Vol. 3, (Leiden: Brill, 1901), 1083-1084.

⁵³⁴ Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Anwā’* (Hyderabad: Matba’at Majlis Da’irat al-Ma’arif al-Uthmaniya, 1956), 21.

⁵³⁵ Al-Tha’ālibī, Abū Manṣūr. *The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information: The Lata’if al-maxarif al-Tha’ālibī*, C.E. Bosworth, (trans.), (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), 139.

The fact that he grouped the three items together is indicative of the level of prestige that was held by perfume. Moreover, his account was also careful to illustrate that there were products that were attributed to specific countries, such as Tibetan musk being one of the best and different types of ambergris that depended on region too.⁵³⁶ Interestingly, his regionally specific account of musk and ambergris agrees with al-Sīrāfī's,⁵³⁷ indicating that there was a level of consensus on being aware that the ingredients of perfumery and their value in monetary terms depended on their source and region of origin. It is then logical that merchants followed the demand, and at least attempted to focus their trade where possible, on those regions to make the most profit from their trading voyages.

Both writers noted down the gems and the perfumes that could come out of India which suggests that both the substances and the stories about them were items of consumption.⁵³⁸ Significantly both writers are also careful to note that India was abundant in gems, precious metals, and perfumes which suggests that the Arab writers of the time had reached an agreed hierarchy of what was considered valuable. Perfume was set at the top of that hierarchy. Whilst we have discussed the effect of this on the Indians and how this increased trade for them as a stopping point to China. It should be noted that in Park's work she successfully proves that the merchants from Baghdad followed the maritime route across the Indian Ocean including stops in India until they reached at least the Guangzhou port to trade with the Chinese.⁵³⁹ Hence this is not debated as a potential in this chapter – it happened with evidence.

In relation to the writings of al-Sīrāfī one must keep in mind that his audience was predominantly an Arab one as his original writings were in Arabic. He was also a traveller from

⁵³⁶ Ibid, 139.

⁵³⁷ Al-Sīrāfī, Abu Zayd. *Accounts of China and India*, Tim Mackinosh-Smith, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 105.

⁵³⁸ Ibid, 105 and 113, and al-Tha'ālibī, *The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information*, 139.

⁵³⁹ Park, Hyunhee. *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds, Cross-Cultural Exchange in Pre-Modern Asia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21.

the Caliphate which is where he was a native as well. He was writing for an audience at home who were interested in these items or at least why they were important and catering to a society that wanted to believe in the excitement of such travels and what they could allow one to yield from them. It is pivotal to the study of the socio-political effects in the external trade of the Caliphate to note that literature was produced and affected by the increase in trading relations and their frequency which naturally helped shape the societies involved in the Caliphate as time went on. Especially as this was a highly literate society and so the information was widely available if one was able to access the material, but unlike the medieval West, literacy was not entirely exclusive to governmental and clerical spheres of society.

The Middle Eastern elite and middle-class interest in South and East Asian goods, and the fantastical stories of how the substances that were on the market were retrieved, as well as the areas that they were from, were all a part of the allure of the items themselves and their foreignness. In a time when it was a particular point of power and wealth to have items shipped from vast distances to adorn oneself, or their surroundings, such writings only added to public demand of information thereby fuelling the sense of the exotic and thereby making such items more desirable. Indeed, the poet al-Sarī b. Muhammad al-Rafi' (d. 362 A.H./973 A.D.) wrote a whole treatise on just perfumes and dedicated chapters of songs that mentioned over 20 different perfumed plants and liquids that were known for their scents that we know of in the Muslim world.⁵⁴⁰ He even wrote a chapter on the fragrances used by Arabs and mentions specifically musk, ambergris, and camphor. His romanticising of the perfumes and their origins is indicative of how much they were valued and exoticized in the Caliphate amongst those who coveted and purchased the items. It was accounts such as these that also perpetuated the demand for the perfume market and the study of perfumery and what these substances were capable of.

⁵⁴⁰ Zohar, Amar. and Afraim Lev. 'Trends in the Use of Perfumes and Incense in the Near East after the Muslim Conquests', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (2013), 19.

One must keep in mind that camphor is a common ingredient of perfumes but began its career on the markets of East Asia in ancient times for its medicinal uses. Later it was used in the pre-Islamic period during the Sassanian dynasty and then entered South Asia and beyond as an aromatic substance.⁵⁴¹

The study of perfumes and medicines became closely intertwined, as many ingredients were the same and a lot of the medicinal plants that were known in ancient Asia were later coming to the fore as perfumes in the near and Middle East with Arab mercantile contact.⁵⁴² The cycle of merchants, traders, and travellers talking about the exotic foreign substances that made up perfumes; them being sought after and sold, all meant that the market expanded further. Consequently, works such as Yūḥannā ibn Māsawayh (d. 242 A.H./857 A.D.) were directly catering to a society that was interested and invested in the Indian Ocean goods he was discussing.⁵⁴³ He wrote a study on ‘simple aromatic substances’ and divided perfumes into two groups; then studied them, listed their ingredients, and classified them in terms of hierarchical standing.⁵⁴⁴ This gives us an insight into the socio-economic value that perfume held, as all other studies we have from this time are scientific, religious, and medicinal. None are just about the value of a luxury product independently.

Perfume and the application of it on oneself had become such an indicator of character and standing that foul bodily odour that could be detected by others had become a basis for insult by the year 190 A.H./806 A.D. and became an issue of diplomacy.⁵⁴⁵ It was unkempt and ill-mannered to be without it. Indeed al-Ṭabarī records that members of the elite would encourage their families to use perfume open-handedly so that they would ‘rise in the view of

⁵⁴¹ Ibid, 19-20.

⁵⁴² Ibid, 19-20.

⁵⁴³ Ibid, 20.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid, 19-20.

⁵⁴⁵ Al-Sīrāfī, *Accounts of China and India*, 123-124.

the common people'.⁵⁴⁶ The substance had become such a symbol of luxury and celebration that weddings of state had to have gifts of musk with great quantities of it being given out to guests and even in some cases servants in order to create goodwill.⁵⁴⁷ Hārūn al-Rashīd is noted for taking part in this, suggesting that it was an important component of diplomacy and celebration given that it was considered important enough to make a record of from his wedding celebrations. The fact that the distribution of gifts of perfume were a part of the official state occasion that was recorded, displays how ingrained it was becoming in the culture of the Middle East. As mentioned before Hārūn al-Rashīd made it a point to adorn his wife with items that would especially highlight his wealth and ability to procure such items, as well as celebrate the occasion.⁵⁴⁸ Perfumes and the prestige of the Arabs became so synonymous with one another that the Arabs are credited with new crops, knowledge, and farming techniques that made its mass consumption achievable by early medieval standards.⁵⁴⁹ We are also aware that Hārūn al-Rashīd's wedding was centred around gifting to all those who attended, and whilst this was not indicative of the population as a whole,⁵⁵⁰ the fact that he conducted such ceremonies for major events concerning the Caliphate was a feat of extraordinary wealth.⁵⁵¹

The Arab involvement in the trading of perfumes also meant that their diplomatic relations were affected by the introduction of high-status perfumes into elite society, both within and beyond the Caliphate. We are aware that a ruler from India⁵⁵² sent al-Ḥasan b.

⁵⁴⁶ Al-Tābarī, Vol. 3, (1901), 1438-1440.

⁵⁴⁷ Frankopan, Peter. *The Silk Roads, A New History of the World*, (London: Bloomsbury 2015), 94.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 94.

⁵⁴⁹ Amar, Zohar. 'Trends in the Use of Perfumes and Incense in the Near East after the Muslim Conquests', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (2013), 11.

⁵⁵⁰ Schick, Irvin Cemil. 'The Harem as Gendered Space and the Spatial Reproduction of Gender', *Harem Histories, Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, (2010), 71.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid*, 71.

⁵⁵² Al Qaddummi wrote that it was the King of India, but we are aware that India at this point was made up of many kingdoms as it had been for much of history. Whilst it is possible that this was due to the lack of understanding about the subcontinent, this was most likely a purposeful act of trying to make the items seem more charming as by this point relations were frequent enough for more awareness as we are aware from al-Sīrāfi's accounts as well as Ahmed ibn Faḍlān.

Sahl⁵⁵³ official gifts which notably included Indian aloe woods that had heretofore never been seen by the Arabs.⁵⁵⁴ The fact that this was especially mentioned and noted down, and aloe woods were considered a prestigious enough gift to be sent abroad and presented in relationships of diplomacy is a window into the depth of value of the substance, as well as how it was shaping the ways that peoples and states behaved. Both within the Caliphate itself beyond the governmental sphere and what was received there, the indigenous people were buying and trading agarwood between Cairo, Alexandria, the Maghreb, and Sicily.⁵⁵⁵ We are aware of this due to the letters of merchants which suggests that this was done on smaller scales, and not in large events, due to the fact that they are not all recorded in official records.⁵⁵⁶

Moreover, the Indian Ocean trading relations brought to the fore new fruits that were known for their fragrance. We are aware from the works of 'Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Mas'ūdī (d.344 A.H./ 956 A.D.) that the early form of the orange (not to be confused with the sweet orange we know today) travelled from India to Oman, Iraq, modern day Syria, and Egypt, and he is meticulous in mapping this out for his reader.⁵⁵⁷ Again underlining that he did this in a society where such works were consumed, is notable in understanding the status of perfume and how it was being received in the Caliphate. Writers and travellers such as al-Mas'ūdī, al-Sīrāfī, and their contemporaries needed to have consumers or patronage to sustain themselves. If not, then they had to trade themselves or were a part of the monied classes as al-Ṭabarī was. In any of these cases their interest in perfume would still suggest that they were taking note of it because of its societal prevalence as a note of wealth and prestige as well as their personal preference and interest in the subject. The fact that we have several accounts of

⁵⁵³ He was an 'Abbasid official and the 'local' governor of what is now Iraq during the reign of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibn Duqmāq, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 79-81.

⁵⁵⁵ Amar, (2013), 23.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid, 23-24.

⁵⁵⁷ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitab al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawhar*, (*"Les Prairies d'or"*), Barbier de Meynard, (ed.), Vol, 2, (1877), 438-439.

how perfume was transported in the Arabic language by ninth and tenth century writers, and even the great philosophers such as al-Kindī also highlights that people and institutions were interested in the items that they were investing into or just buying to own the items and adorn themselves.

One must keep in mind that perfume itself was not new to the Near and Middle East, and that frankincense and myrrh had been found and traded from there outwards up into Europe since the time of antiquity during the Roman Empire in the fifth century B.C. at least, and still is today.⁵⁵⁸ The reason for which was because they were used in churches and religious ceremonies and still are in many European and Middle Eastern churches even today. But this practice dates back to at least the Roman period.⁵⁵⁹ The tree that this was harvested from was indigenous to Southern Arabia (now Somalia), Yemen, and Oman.⁵⁶⁰ The *Bosweilla* tree that had the substance could also be found in West India, which may also indicate how the perfume trade started on the Asian side of the Caliphate later.⁵⁶¹ However, it is important to note that the perfume industry was just one of many that was expanded in the early medieval era, and that Arab traders had previously been involved in using perfume and precious metals in order to trade outwards to find external sources of wealth.

However, the new and surging rise in consumerism was clearly occurring by the eighth century for there to be such large volumes and varieties of items being transported by just one merchant. Let alone whole families and business clans that were involved in the Indo-Arab trade from Asia means that it makes sense that the scholarly elite, including philosophers and the clergy took an interest in this shift in societal appearance and the way that it was working. Thinkers such as al-Kindī, who urged people to minimise their possessions, and his opposition

⁵⁵⁸ Le Maguer, 'The Incense Trade during the Islamic Period', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 45, (2015), 175.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, 175.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid, 175.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid, 175.

of people who called him dangerous for his studies of ancient Greek non-Muslim books which was also a product of the external trade of the Caliphate, were all by-products of this.

The way that perfumes were given as a gift were all noteworthy in the early Caliphates. The act of gifting between major rulers has already been discussed in the previous chapter. However, within the borders of the Caliphate itself gifting was a way in which one could grease the pole upwards to gain favour. As we see through extravagant parties and outright presentations of wealth. However, there seem to have been very stringent societal conventions that were expected when one gave a gift to one's superior. Al-Ṭabarī relates that on one occasion Hārūn al-Rashīd's great-uncle al 'Abbas ibn Muhammad (his death date is unknown, and he is only identifiable through the genealogical table which is included at the beginning of the book) presents him with some costly perfume which he calls *ghāliyah*.⁵⁶² But when he does so he makes the mistake in reciting how costly and valuable the gift he is presenting to the Caliph is. To fully understand the meaning of the importance of this instance it is important to first relate what happened and what was wrong.

The etiquette in giving the gift here is not adhered to, and it enrages ibn Abī Maryam and he is recorded to have sprung up and demanded that he wanted the perfume instead, and Hārūn al Rashīd obliges him.⁵⁶³ However, one has to remember that the Caliph was meant to be considered to be the 'most generous and open-handed of men!'⁵⁶⁴ which is difficult to live up to on such grand scales. At which point the original giver of the perfume, al-'Abbās, is also incensed and tells ibn Abī Maryam that he should be ashamed of himself for coveting something that he had denied himself in order to present it to the Caliph for no other purpose but to please him, possibly assuming- wrongly as we shall discuss later – that he was taking

⁵⁶² Al-Ṭabarī, 'The 'Abbasid Caliphate in Equilibrium', *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l muluk)*, C.E. Bosworth, (trans.), Vol. XXX, (1989), 310.

⁵⁶³ Al-Ṭabarī, Vol. 3, (1901), 1444-1446.

⁵⁶⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, 'The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate', *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l muluk)*, Carole Hillenbrand, (trans.), Vol. XXVI, (1989), 103.

advantage of the Caliph's hospitality and generosity.⁵⁶⁵ To which ibn Abī Maryam replies in a stream of expletives including that that giver was 'the son of a doxy'⁵⁶⁶ whilst the Caliph is racked with laughter and proceeds to be obscene whilst insultingly wasting the perfume by smearing it all over himself in a vulgar manner in front of all those present and calling a servant to send it to his wife to 'smear on her [intimate area]'.⁵⁶⁷ This seems like harsh recourse for the act of giving a valuable gift freely to one's superior.

But then ibn Abī Maryam explains himself by asking:

'Do you not realize that everything which the heavens shower down and everything which the earth brings forth is his [the Caliph's]? Likewise, everything which is in this present world is the possessions of his hand, beneath his seal ring and in his grasp!'⁵⁶⁸

Meaning that such a gift as *ghāliyah* is what is due and is his if he should wish it no matter the giver. He goes on to say:

'...then a fellow like this [meaning al 'Abbas] popped up in his presence, praising the *ghāliyah* and orating at great length in describing it, as if he were a grocer, or druggist, or date merchant!'⁵⁶⁹

At which point Hārūn al-Rashīd was beside himself with laughter to such an extent that he allegedly 'almost choked to death' and it is recorded that he bestowed upon ibn Abī Maryam that day the generous sum of one hundred thousand dirhams.⁵⁷⁰ All of this is of importance; the Caliph's reaction in not reprimanding the obscene behaviour of ibn Abī Maryam; that he was rewarded instead of embarrassed, and even the fact that he felt validated enough to jump

⁵⁶⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, Vol. XXX, (1989), 310.

⁵⁶⁶ 'Doxy' being an antiquated word for 'whore'.

⁵⁶⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, Annales quod scripsit Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), Vol. 2, (Leiden: Brill, 1901), 744-746.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid, 744-746.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid, 744-746.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid, 744-746.

up and interject in the formal ceremony of gift giving to the Caliph himself, is indicative of how set such conventions were.

The events that al-Tābarī records for posterity all highlight that ceremony around the items were as important as the items themselves. Whilst gift giving was highly common in this period, and even expected, one was meant to be humble when presenting something to one's superior. The act of giving a gift was meant to be one of subservience or benevolence; the two are very different. What al- 'Abbās did when he had the gall to narrate the value in terms of its rarity of the *ghāliyah* to Hārūn al-Rashīd was insulting because there was an expectation that as Caliph, Hārūn al-Rashīd is entitled to all the treasures within his borders. Wealth emanated from the centre, at least in appearance. Perfumes were used then, in the perception and presentation of power to such a degree that it could be both the undoing of a man to present it incorrectly as al 'Abbas did, and the making of a man to react to this correctly as ibn Abi Maryam did. This is no frivolous or petty thing in the early medieval period. The uses of perfumes had become a central component in the perceptions of hierarchy.

Perfumes and power had become so synonymous that they even had a presence during times of war and political instability. It is again al-Tābarī who records that between the years 198-218 A.H./813-833 A.D. during the succession struggle which followed al-Rashīd's death⁵⁷¹ al-Amīn found himself at a disadvantage.⁵⁷² The following is recounted by Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl-Ḥafṣ b. Irmīyā'īl.⁵⁷³ In the account, it is said that in order to keep morale with the existing troops there was a need to make sure that his image as the chosen one of God and as the Commander of the Faithful was seen to ring true. In this effort, his followers preceded him on the campaign trail to make sure that his entrance was fit for someone of his

⁵⁷¹ Kennedy, Hugh. *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, (London: Pearson, 1986), 147-150.

⁵⁷² Ibid, 147-150.

⁵⁷³ Al-Tābarī, 'The Reunification of the 'Abbasid Caliphate', *The History of al-Tābarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l muluk)*, C.E. Bosworth, (trans.), Vol. XXXI, (1992), 1-9.

station in order to convey the message that his station was one that only he alone could claim.

The account is recorded as the following:

‘When Muhammad wished to cross from the palace at al-Qarar to a house that was in the Garden of Mūsā he had a floating bridge in that place-he ordered that [carpets] should be spread in that audience room (*majlis*) and that it should be perfumed.

[Continuing] My assistants and I spent the night getting perfume and aromatics, gathering apples, pomegranates, and citrons, and putting them in the rooms. My assistants and I stayed up all night. After I had prayed the morning prayer, I gave an old woman a piece of ambergris incense containing 100 *mithqāls*⁵⁷⁴, like a melon, and said to her, "I've been up all night and am very tired. I have to get some sleep. If you see the Commander of the Faithful coming on the bridge, put this ambergris on the brazier"-and I gave her a small silver brazier with coals on it. I told her to blow until she burnt it all. I went onto a bark (*harrāqah*) and fell asleep. Before I knew what was happening, the old women came in a panic and woke me up. "Get up, Ḥafṣ," she said. "I've gotten into trouble." "What is it?" I said. She said, "I saw a man coming on the bridge, alone, resembling the Commander of the Faithful in build. There was a group of people in front of him and one behind him, so I didn't doubt that it was he. So, I burned the ambergris; and when he came, it was 'Abdallāh b. Mūsā, and here is the Commander of the Faithful coming now!" I cursed her and upbraided her, and gave her another piece like the first to bum in his presence. She did so. This was when things began to take a turn for the worse.’

Hence when Muhammad b. Ismā‘īl was on such a trip in order to ready an area for the Caliph to pass through he was scrupulous in his duties.⁵⁷⁵ He and his assistants ‘spent the nights getting perfume and aromatics, gathering apples, pomegranates, and citrons, and putting them

⁵⁷⁴ This is a Persian unit of measurement.

⁵⁷⁵ Al-Tābarī, Vol. XXXI, (1992), 9-12.

in the rooms' of where the Caliph was meant to stop at.⁵⁷⁶ The obvious connotations here of perfume having such symbolic importance that it accompanied the Caliph even in times of unrest and political instability has already been discussed. The other inference being that there was another stored lump of ambergris and that even the brazier used was made of silver elucidates how deep aromatic substances had pervaded into the culture of the elite as well as the common people by the ninth century. Everything was prepared for, down to making sure that even the brazier was not made from any common metal. The fact that it is noted that silver is used suggests how perfume also created demands on other markets too with the utensils were needed to use it correctly. Moreover, the rigidity of how things are presented to the Caliph and around him mirror the previous account of events with Hārūn al-Rashīd. The latter was careful with every aspect of the use of perfumes and even when his slave girls were adorned with perfumes and brought to him it was specified that perfume was also burnt in a silver urn around him so that the air itself smelt sweet.⁵⁷⁷ It was of utmost importance in the previous example and the type of perfume was considered integral to note too. Ambergris has already been stated to have come out of the Indian Ocean trade with the rise of the maritime movement that was happening in tangent with these events within the Caliphate. The fact that it had to be imported meant that it was still exotic and known for being valuable in the 800s. It being specifically mentioned as the thing to be used to greet the Caliph would be too coincidental to be serendipitous. Ambergris was used because it held connotations of wealth and plenty that one needed to exude power, even more so in a time of political instability.

Perfumes and their application also became a symbol of one's standing in terms of military prowess and station. By the early ninth century when men were appointed as commanders they would have their beards 'daubed' in perfume and as part of the ceremonial

⁵⁷⁶ Al-Tābarī, Vol. 2, (1901),

⁵⁷⁷ Al-Tābarī, Vol. XXX, (1989), 320-321.

bestowing of honour.⁵⁷⁸ These men became known as the ‘perfume commanders’ and the tradition was carried on.⁵⁷⁹ The social anthropological aspect of Indian Ocean perfumes permeating themselves into Middle Eastern society is extremely clear here. Interestingly, in this case too, a specific perfume was used called *ghāliyah* which was a perfume contained ‘musk, ambergris, camphor, and oil of ben’⁵⁸⁰ which was always used when applying perfume on each other’s beards amongst men as a sign of especial favour.⁵⁸¹ Hence, perfume had its own place in war and the military, as well as any other diplomatic mission. We are aware that when an Arab delegation went to China to be received by the king, upon arriving they excused themselves to be readied to be received and made sure to apply *ghāliyah* to themselves as representatives of the Caliphate.⁵⁸²

Perfumes from the Indian Ocean trade had found a place in the social circles of the Caliphate from the eighth century onwards to the point that most people could at least recognise foreign aromatics and the fact those who were able to use them in vast quantities were people of power. Their presentation on the tables of the elites during mealtimes, their burning at weddings, and other celebrations, as well as their presentation in the formal political acts such as gift giving, were all linked to or included perfumery that came out of, or through South Asia. Perfumes became a staple at all these events and in the formalities of establishing hierarchy through tribute and gifting. No detail of which was meant to be overlooked over when it occurred, even in the direst settings. It is with perfumes that we see how symbolic items of power become synonymous with wealth, and even sources of wealth and power themselves. The meaning behind the items coming into the Caliphate and how they are used by the elite

⁵⁷⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, Vol. XXXI, 130-131.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. 130-131.

⁵⁸⁰ Oil of ben here being the same as the oil of ban earlier – the translators just spell it differently.

⁵⁸¹ Al-Ṭabarī, Vol. XXXI, 130-131.

⁵⁸² Al-Ṭabarī, ‘The Zenith of the Marwanid House’, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta’rikh al-rusul wa’l muluk)*, Martin Hinds, (1990), 226, and al-Ṭabarī, Vol. 2, (1901), 977-978.

meant that their roles in society took on a meaning of their own. Almost irrespective of who was using them, it was just in how they were used.

The Book of the Wonders of India in the Arab World; the new class of intellectuals and merchants:

The Book of Wonders by Burzurg ibn Shahriyār al-Ramhormuzī, (d. 338 A.H./950 A.D.) is a collection of stories no more than two hundred pages and is compiled in an almost ad hoc fashion, presumably the order in which ibn Shahriyār heard the accounts. Each story is its own chapter or section, and the names capture the main event the story centres around and where in the Indian Ocean that the story took place. As a source it is little studied in comparison to its contemporaries such as al-Sīrāfī's, *Accounts of China and India*, which have been just as valuable for this study.

Ibn Shahriyār was a sea captain who frequently passed through the Indian Ocean from West Asia to East Asia and back. He created compilations of stories from travels and sea captains which have already been discussed in this research, but there is contention about who this really is. This is arguably the ibn Shahriyār al-Ramhormuzī from the town of Ramhormuz in Khuzistan, who was of Persian origin, but whether he had any other name is not found.⁵⁸³ But his work is invaluable for this research, as he accounts for details such as his involvement in the Indian Ocean trade in terms of his studies in cartography and sailors' tales,⁵⁸⁴ and highlighting a whole genre of travel writing that had become popular in this era. His work, and he himself in his reports, was also the embodiment of the Arabian-Persian-Indian tripartite connection in the Indian Ocean that brought goods to and from the markets of the Caliphate.⁵⁸⁵ Especially as his death in the early eleventh century was actually during the height of Arab

⁵⁸³ Shafiq, Suhanna. *Seafarers of the Seven Seas, The Maritime Culture in the Kitab 'Aja'ib al-Hind by Buzurg Ibn Shariyar (d.399/1009)*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2013), 54-55.

⁵⁸⁴ Freeman-Grenville. G.S.P. 'Some thoughts on Buzurg ibn Shahriya al-Rahmormuzi: "The Book of the Wonders of India"', *Studies in History, Trade and Society on the Eastern Coast of Africa*, (1982), 63.

⁵⁸⁵ Nabhan, *Cumin, Camels and Caravans: A Spice Odyssey*, 34.

involvement in the navigation of the Indian Ocean.⁵⁸⁶ What is notable about his writing is that despite his name being Persian, his accounts were in Arabic.⁵⁸⁷ New Persian as a literary language was only just beginning to be used at this time, which suggests that the integration into Arab culture by this point was one that was high enough that the language was proliferating much more than it had done during the Umayyad period, and yet he still wrote in Arabic.

Given the lack of visibility of his work in the current historical field, as well as how invaluable a source his stories are means that they must be analysed as this has not been done before. This is compounded by the fact that this study finds that whilst there are strong comparisons with the stories of Sinbad which will be analysed further in this section,⁵⁸⁸ the stories by ibn Shahriyār claim to be factual, whereas Sinbad never makes such claims and is intended to be recreational. Despite this, ibn Shahriyār is integral in understanding the commercial importance of the need to accept that voyages were much more mythical and dangerous to mark up the economic value of the goods that he brought over. His works are indicative of societal beliefs and what was valued in the Caliphate- particularly Baghdad – as it has already been extensively discussed that this was a highly monetised and consumerist society. Secondly, the fact that such literature existed and that there was a market for it, as well as people willing to buy into it. Thirdly, it is a perfect example of how these luxury items were presented to be so valuable in the first place, and why they then became symbols of wealth and because of that, also symbols of power.

Ibn Shahriyār does not provide maps about the routes that were taken, although we are already aware from other chroniclers about trading towns and naval connections.⁵⁸⁹ Instead his stories range from impossibly fantastical mermaids and snakes as large as cows that were

⁵⁸⁶ Shafiq, *The Maritime Culture in the Kitab 'Aja'ib al-Hind by Buzurq Ibn Shariyar*, 54-55.

⁵⁸⁷ Freeman-Grenville. (1982), 63.

⁵⁸⁸ Housman, Laurence. *Sinbad the Sailor and Other Stories from the Arabian Nights*, (U.S.: Read Books, 2017), 45-65

⁵⁸⁹ For maps see *figures 4, 5, 6 and 7*.

apparently spotted by sailors,⁵⁹⁰ to the much more real and hard-hitting political ramifications of potential issues with foreign or non-Muslim merchants. Whilst they can be entertaining, what they provide for the historian is an insight into the everyday lives of the people involved in the Indian Ocean trade who are not often studied or have survived the test of time. The main issue with almost all pre-modern histories is that what survives are the accounts that are made of the elite, because they are the ones that have the need and the ability to create documents or just have them commissioned for them. Ibn Shahriyār's work in documenting the sights of sailors whose names have hitherto not been mentioned in the history books (although some such as al-Sīrāfi have) gives us a new perspective into the sociological impacts that came from the new trades and those that were involved in them.

The fact that the luxury products that were coming out of the Indian Ocean were so important to politics automatically meant that those who were involved in the trade, however lowly, became embroiled in the power-politics of those who were consuming the products. We see this in the life of the Jewish merchants in Oman that he writes about and the strong sense of community that was built upon the trading networks that had been in place for years by the tenth century. The involvement in the Indian Ocean trade by one Jewish trader called Ishaq ibn Yahuda⁵⁹¹⁵⁹² even led to mass protest when his wealth incurred the jealousy of another who decided to abuse him to the Caliph who at the time was al-Muqtadir.⁵⁹³ The story itself has several elements that are important to the external trade of the Caliphate and so must be broken down into several parts in order to fully understand how cosmopolitan it was, even if the majority of the sources are from the upper echelons of society.

⁵⁹⁰Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 63.

⁵⁹¹ Whilst ibn Yahuda means 'Son of a Jew' and 'yahudi' is now used as a derogatory anti-Semitic slur in many cases, in this account ibn Shahriyār presents this as his actual name without any connotations of prejudice which is clear from the rest of the account of his story.

⁵⁹² A death date is also not provided and unobtainable.

⁵⁹³Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 63.

Firstly, ibn Shahriyār is clear that the allegations against ibn Yahuda⁵⁹⁴ were the result of envy by ‘an evil man’ and that he had this on the authority ‘from several of [his] seafaring friends’ that this was the case.⁵⁹⁵ We are aware that envy could be a dangerous thing when brought to the attention of the court as we are already aware of the story of al-Kindī and some of his other contemporaries which will be discussed in the next section, which makes this tale very believable. Ibn Shahriyār recounts that following a dispute with a fellow Jewish man, ibn Yahuda left Oman and went to India to find and make his fortune. It is recorded that he left with no more than about 200 dinars to his name and no one heard from him for three decades until he decided to return to Oman in 308 A.H./921 A.D.⁵⁹⁶ This may be exaggeration – both the amount of time he was gone, and the level of poverty, given that we are aware of regular journeys occurring through the Indian Ocean by this stage, as well as the fact that journeys were costly. However, he did leave, and he returned to Oman as a wealthy man.

His return takes a political turn when he decides that he wants to avoid customs and the tax of one-tenth that is extracted from all merchants upon arrival so he made a deal with the leader of Oman⁵⁹⁷ at the time that was priced at one million dinars.⁵⁹⁸ The fact that he chose to do this instead of paying the tax is indicative of just how lucrative the cargo of one ship can be that this is considered the thriftier alternative. One must also keep in mind that it is more than possible that this was a bribe to evade punishment for being caught for not paying taxes. This does not seem improbable as we are aware that just the eyes of a whale can produce a small fortune in fat, let alone the rest that can be culled and gutted out of the carcass.⁵⁹⁹ Alongside this, gems, silks, cloths, and spices would have travelled on the ship as was the custom for

⁵⁹⁴ This could be confused to mean the plural of Jewish traders, and in other contexts could mean this, but on this occasion it is clear that this is one male individual Indian Ocean trader.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 61-63.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 61-63.

⁵⁹⁷ We are unaware of who this was at the time given that we do not have exact dates.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 62.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 9.

ships that were travelling this route by this stage in order to diversify their trade as much as possible. The leader of Oman⁶⁰⁰ seems to have been aware of this, as on a single occasion made ibn Yahuda sell him ‘100,000 *mithqals* of musk of the top quality.’⁶⁰¹ Even for the time this was considered to be an enormous amount as ibn Shahriyār relates that this was all ibn Yahuda was believed to have possessed in musk, and even also sold the governor 40,000 dinars worth of materials in textiles and then did another 20,000 dinar deal with another man.⁶⁰² Whilst what the deal was for and the name of the other man is not shared, it is indicative of the level of wealth and a sense of social mobility in this regard.

The sheer magnitude of the wealth of tens of thousands of dinars being discussed here should not be underestimated as the governor had to be offered a sizeable amount to flout the law and not collect tax which was one of his major duties. However, this may have been an unofficial norm as ibn Shahriyār depicts ibn Yahuda as a victim of gross jealousy when he is arrested by the Caliph’s men when al-Muqtadir learns of this.⁶⁰³ But even the arrest itself is steeped in imagery that belongs and is the product of the transcontinental trades that the people within the Caliphate were involved in which inevitably had shaped, and became a part of, the politics of the empire.

The jealous (unnamed) man, who had not extracted from ibn Yahuda what he wanted, then went to the vizier of al-Muqtadir⁶⁰⁴ and told him all he could to ruin the reputation of the Caliph.⁶⁰⁵ However, the vizier paid no heed to him, either suggesting that this was of no consequence or that this was already well known and considered to be something that was accepted as a *de facto* arrangement, suggesting that bribery might have become a part of the

⁶⁰⁰ Who remains unidentifiable from the literature that has survived.

⁶⁰¹ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 63.

⁶⁰² Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 61-62.

⁶⁰³ Ibid, 61-62.

⁶⁰⁴ Who remains unnamed given the frequent changes of al-Muqtadir’s viziers and the fact that this story is given no dates by ibn Shahriyār.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 63.

landscape of the maritime trade. Especially since ibn Shahriyār records that people all over the country knew of ibn Yahuda and how wealthy he had become.⁶⁰⁶ However the man persisted and then managed to get the attention another court member who had access to the Caliph. When al-Muqtadir was told about this trader by a member of his court who ibn Shahriyār also condemns as ‘evil’ he sends his black eunuch called Fulful⁶⁰⁷ along with some other men to arrest and bring ibn Yahuda back to Baghdad to be punished.⁶⁰⁸ Even this is a testament to the trading levels of the time as *fulful* literally means ‘pepper’ and the fact that he was black suggests that he was captured and bought for the court of al-Muqtadir from the East or Central African slave trade. He was named after a luxury food item from South Asia that was also dark is indicative of the references that were becoming commonplace at the Caliphal court.

Aside from this, when Fulful got to Oman, and the governor was informed of the Caliph’s orders he complied immediately, and ibn Yahuda was arrested without delay or argument.⁶⁰⁹ However, the governor made sure to simultaneously tell ibn Yahuda that he would clear the entire affair for him and get him out of the bind he had found himself in, if he could be reimbursed with a generous sum that he wanted for his own private gain.⁶¹⁰ In essence he wanted another bribe. Whilst ibn Shahriyār does not clarify if said bribe was paid, the implication is clear as the governor goes on to covertly spread word amongst the merchants that the arrest of a Jewish trader was prejudiced, as well as a threat to all other foreigners and local businessmen who would be affected by the disruption to trade.⁶¹¹ They were told that they

⁶⁰⁶ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 61-62.

⁶⁰⁷ No other information is provided about him to give context.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 63.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 61-62.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid*, 61-62.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid*, 61-62.

were now ‘to be at the whim of arbitrary power and the jealousy of the poor and the wicked’.⁶¹² Upon which sign the markets decided to close both in fear and protest.⁶¹³

The two things that are clear here is that there was a sense of community at these markets and that they were connected to one another to communicate quickly and effectively. Given the nature of merchants they were prone to moving from one place to another which meant that news travelled with them in the pre-modern era, this also meant that they made connections where they went. In this case the townsfolk and foreigners were reported to have signed a petition to complain that after the arrest of the Jewish merchant, vessels would no longer come to Oman to dock as there was no longer any security for them there and they would warn one another that they should not frequent the coasts of Iraq any longer.⁶¹⁴ This sort of organisation is very close to the boycotting of modern times, and what it shows is that there was a definite level of interaction across borders for these people and it was effective as they felt that they were able to make such demands in the early medieval period.

The riots were so bad that in the end the eunuch Fulful and his men just extracted 2,000 dinars from ibn Yahuda and left for Baghdad.⁶¹⁵ Even still, having escaped corporal punishment, ibn Yahuda was irate at having to pay more for his trouble.⁶¹⁶ This makes sense given that he awarded the governor of Oman with a black vase that was coated with a gold shimmer that contained goods that valued at already 50,000 dinars, and inside of it there were ‘golden fishes with ruby eyes, surrounded by musk of the first quality.’⁶¹⁷

The role of the perfume being a part of the first bribe and the second bribe, as well as the fact that there already seemed to be a set precedent for tax-evasion is indicative of how

⁶¹² Ibid, 61-62.

⁶¹³ Ibid, 61-62.

⁶¹⁴ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 63-64.

⁶¹⁵ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 61-63.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid, 61-63.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid, 61-63.

dynamic the maritime trade had become. It had expanded to accommodate a whole illegal side of it, which was thriving by the tenth century, and was known to have existed. There were also traps that were accounted for, which ibn Shahriyār warned against, such as the island of Zabaj⁶¹⁸ which had a large town called Majapawt⁶¹⁹ (both of which are in Southeast Asia in modern-day Java) according to Abū Ṭāhir of Baghdad,⁶²⁰ which had ample amounts of ambergris in it.⁶²¹ Ibn Shahriyār noted the worries and news in which merchants and sailors were interested in. He goes on to say that despite there being so much ambergris to be found there, whenever merchants loaded their ship with it, they would quickly be brought back through piracy.⁶²² The islanders used all sorts of ‘tricks’ to sell the ambergris to strangers who did not know any better and then they would somehow get their wares back from them. Ibn Shahriyār does not elucidate exactly how this happened – just that it did which is indicative of the risks involved in the perfume trade, or at least the perceived risk, given he must have thought it interesting enough to note being a shipmaster himself.

This is not the first time that ibn Shahriyār warns against the risks of not minding the strength of higher powers and withholding something that they deem their right, or they see as outright theft. He later recounts a story where a slave was flayed alive and killed for theft.⁶²³ The gruesome account does not include specifics, what manner of slave was killed, what he stole or even exactly when this was. What it does make clear is that there is a real corporal punishment involved when a South Asian ruler thinks that they are being cheated or not receiving something they think they deserve. The description of slave is also somewhat vague

⁶¹⁸ Believed to be a kingdom in antiquity in Southeast Asia, but given the lack of evidence it does suggest that ibn Shahriyār may have been sensationalising his tale – we cannot be sure. However, as we see later ibn Shahriyār later confirms this to have been in Indonesia and so perhaps is corroborating a fact of the time.

⁶¹⁹ A region of Java found in Indonesia – also in Southeast Asia.

⁶²⁰ No other information is provided about him and so a death date cannot be provided except that he must have been around in the early 900s which is when all of ibn Shahriyār’s tales seem to be dated in.

⁶²¹ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 87.

⁶²² Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 87-89.

⁶²³ Ibid, 123.

at this point in history. We are aware that all throughout the medieval era, there was a hierarchy of slavery, and most people were indentured to some extent; the nobles to a king, servants, and peasants to a noble, and then the traditional description of people who were captured in war, or even just for the sake of being sold. The ambiguity in ibn Shahriyār's account is possibly to warn against anyone of any social standing that they are not immune to such punishment. It also adds to the mystery, and sense of danger that is involved in the Indian Ocean trade by this time.

The Book of the Wonders of India is a work that ties in with the cosmopolitanism that was being beckoned into the medieval centres in the near and Middle East. Granted, as has been acquiesced before, some of his stories may have been mere hyperbole. Such as, the story he tells of a new king ascending to the throne in South Asia, and as an act of allegiance he recounts a gruesome custom which he dubs as 'Hindu' whereby the lords of his land come forward and pay allegiance to him by cutting of their finger in honour of him.⁶²⁴ We have no evidence of this, but the mysterious customs combined with the gruesome story does add a level of danger to the exploits of travelling and trading abroad which must have helped with keeping prices at a premium. Especially since he takes care to note down the ever-present worry of tigers and crocodiles that were present in South Asia (which is even now still very real) that he locates especially near the sea of Berbera too on the way to the island of the Zanj which was very dangerous.⁶²⁵ Given that this was also where slaves were captured from, it makes sense that it would be made to seem as dangerous as possible.

The juxtaposition of describing this directly after the court of the Chinese ruler is also interesting. This is because before this ibn Shahriyār recounts a story he was told where a

⁶²⁴ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 67.

⁶²⁵ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab 'Aja'ib al-Hind*, 63-65.

merchant went to Lubin⁶²⁶ in China and met the prince who was sitting on a golden throne, encrusted with rubies and was ‘covered with jewels like a woman’.⁶²⁷ The picture that is painted in this story is resplendent with opulence and everything is described in the glory of the prince. Including describing that ‘the queen was beside him [and was] even more richly dress[ed].’⁶²⁸ Moreover, he was wrapped with collards of gold and emeralds ‘such as none of the kings in the east and west possess[ed].’⁶²⁹ On top of this, near him stood ‘500 female slaves of all colours, wearing different silks and jewels.’⁶³⁰ All of this is indicative of how important it was for these kings to make sure that their wealth and power was displayed so that there was no ambiguity on their political standing. The presence of the slaves, their noted societal station, and the fact that they were different ‘colours’ which in this case we can safely take to mean that they were of different ethnicities is also important to note as just like in the case of the Indian courts and the Caliphal courts, foreign slaves were a staple of wealth and the ability to control another. The universal languages of power are something that ibn Shahriyār reinforces with this, even if the account is not completely true or was embellished for artistic effect. The fact that he associated this with wealth and power is indicative of a foreign slave’s standing and meaning at court and society at large.

The ability to control someone is something that has been a part of the message of power in slavery that has been the case since time immemorial and has been discussed before. What has been less discussed is that fact that the languages of control and defeat outside of the Caliphate were also important for merchants and traders to be aware of and is something that ibn Shahriyār also takes an interest in and notes down. He does this with both military and

⁶²⁶ Related to have been in the southernmost part of China and a port-area in: Donald Daniel Leslie, ‘The Survival of the Chinese Jews, The Jewish Community of Kaifeng’, *Monographies Du T’oung Pao*, Vol. X, (1972), 11.

⁶²⁷ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 65.

⁶²⁸ Ibid, 65.

⁶²⁹ Ibid, 65.

⁶³⁰ Ibid, 65.

fiscal control and wrote about being aware of all of this when going into different areas outside of the sphere of power of the Islamic Empire.

From an economic point of view, he recorded customs duties in areas such as Ceylon⁶³¹ being very efficient and the king had posted a levy on all imports of merchandise as soon as they docked into his port.⁶³² Whilst this may seem as standard from a modern understanding, it is important to note that traders were still considered to be private individuals, and the involvement of the state was unprecedented. However, the income of tax revenue is clearly a way that the state had a vested interest in these individuals and whilst ibn Shahriyār does not explore this, the meaning is clear. Especially in a later incident that he records,⁶³³ where an Arab sailor went into a temple in South Asia⁶³⁴ and was disrespectful in that he hid behind an idol in order to be ‘lecherous’ (the specificities of which were not included).⁶³⁵ When a servant of the temple discovered the sailor,⁶³⁶ he was captured and taken to the king to be tried.⁶³⁷

It seems that the usual punishment for defiling a temple in any way was execution via cutting the offending party up into many pieces as was suggested at the trial.⁶³⁸ However, the king abstained from this due to the Arab provenance of the sailor and said that this was because there was an agreement between his administration and the Arabs and that there was even an ambassador called al-‘Abbās b. Mahān⁶³⁹ who the king already knew of to delegate this to.⁶⁴⁰ Whilst the sailor was an individual, and independent of the Caliphate itself, the fact that his

⁶³¹ This is also called Sarandib, or Sri Lanka as we would know it now and is elucidated in the footnotes of, ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of Wonders*, 106.

⁶³² Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 69.

⁶³³ Later in the order of his accounts, whether this is chronological we cannot be sure.

⁶³⁴ It is not specified exactly where, but given that it was a sailor it was most probably in port town or city near the coast where the sailor’s ship had docked.

⁶³⁵ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 83.

⁶³⁶ In this case ‘servant of the temple’ is closer to a member of the clergy and is not an actual servant in the traditional sense that one would think of a servant.

⁶³⁷ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 91-93.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid*, 91-93.

⁶³⁹ Once again no other information is provided about him, and so a death date cannot be provided.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 83.

provenance took on a political meaning when being tried is indicative of how interwoven diplomacy had become with free-movement and the people involved in foreign trading links. This in turn is also indicative of just how much politics was affected by trade and its smooth continuation and growth in the early medieval period, not just within the Caliphate, but in the areas that the Caliphate traded with as well.

We know that this became somewhat of a rule in the areas that the Arabs traded in, and that they received some exemptions, as according to ibn Shahriyār when he narrated a further instance when a foreign ruler changed a rule. He speaks of the king of Zabaj ‘and the Land of Gold’ and ‘that no one, Muslim or foreign, or their own subjects’ could sit crossed legged in the presence of the king as it was ‘condemned to a heavy fine, according to his means.’⁶⁴¹ The position however, proved to be too much for a shipmaster called Jahud Kuta⁶⁴² who had been granted an audience with the king and after a lengthy conversation had to relieve himself by no longer sitting ‘in the required position.’⁶⁴³ However, he made no other sign of disrespect it would seem, and concluded his business and was allowed to leave without a punishment being exacted straight away.

Instead, the king decided to speak to his vizier and ask him why he thought that the shipmaster had positioned himself as such knowing what he was doing. The vizier had had a ready reply and had justified the actions of Kuta⁶⁴⁴ by saying that due to his age, sitting in such a manner had proved too much and he had changed his position to relieve his old body of uncomfortableness. Thus, instead of the king taking offence, or just allowing this to happen the once with this trader, ibn Shahriyār states that on that day he then decided that ‘It pleases us to

⁶⁴¹ Ibid, 90.

⁶⁴² A death date cannot be provided.

⁶⁴³ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 104.

⁶⁴⁴ It is important to note that the word ‘Kuta’ in most South Asian languages is actually derogatory way of referring to a person as a dog, and so this may not actually be his last name but a curse due to his actions.

dispense Muslims from this custom,⁶⁴⁵ meaning that any of the Arab traders were allowed to now forgo this formality. The translation of Arab instead of Muslim is made here for this research because we know there were Jewish traders involved in the Indian Ocean trade, and it is altogether possible that the traders and buyers in the subcontinent see them as a homogeneous bloc, rather than with a sense of plurality. Especially as we have no accounts of South Asian reactions to Judaism yet in early modern historiography at all. Moreover, the fact that the king made sure to extend this favour to all Arabs is also indicative of how important the trade had become to his region too – as a ceremonial act of fealty in the early medieval period is no small thing to forgo. Symbolism and political legitimacy went hand in hand, and thus there had to be a tangible gain for this to be allowed which highlights the weight that was held in the maritime trade by this point.

Finally, in terms of military power, even if it was not considered a direct threat, it was important to understand how polities outside of the Caliphate worked to understand their hierarchies, who was who, and how they worked. Especially in areas that were rich in raw materials such as the ‘Incense Land’ that ibn Shahriyār writes about that was known for how many aromatic substances it could produce judging by its name and the fact that ibn Shahriyār took such an interest in it. In this region, the way that defeat is impressed after a conflict on the losing party by the Hindus of the area is that they make the people who have lost cut their hair to signify their defeat at the hands of the victor who keep their long hair.⁶⁴⁶ This would be important for a merchant to know, because the socio-political standing of a tribe or trading party, or even individual, is also tied up in their wealth in the early medieval era- and since then too. Being aware of this custom, means that going in, one is aware of who is desperate and just suffered a defeat, if there has been conflict in the area recently, and as a by-product of

⁶⁴⁵ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 104.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 94-100.

this, how the local economy is doing. All these things are of interest to a newcomer, traveller, and especially a trader or merchant.

The technique of making sure that the dangers of a place are mentioned and then the items that come out of it being especially beautiful and rare is not an unknown marketing tool and it is something that is repeated through ibn Shahriyār's work. His works include the sailors' tales that describe there being snakes the size of a dog's head in South Asia, as well as cannibals to beware of. Then this is immediately followed by a tale about the diamonds that come out of the Kashmir region. The detailed and somewhat daring story he tells of how the diamonds were retrieved fed directly into the idea of the exotic to market these diamonds. Moreover, the story is also a part of the market for an adventure book that one would read for entertainment. He recited the tragic conditions of lower caste⁶⁴⁷ Hindus who worked in the valleys in horrendous conditions to retrieve diamonds to earn a living, but that they knew that profit was almost guaranteed since the diamonds were so brilliant that the region was famous for them.

Even the description is made to sound mythical as ibn Shahriyār narrates that he was told that 'there is a valley between two mountains, where fire burns ceaselessly, night and day, winter and summer. It is there that the diamonds are.'⁶⁴⁸ The only way that even the lower caste Indians went to this place was by gathering in bands to reach the valley. They then sacrificed a sheep and cut it into bits which they then threw over the side and set vultures loose to retrieve the meat, and somehow between this they went down the valley and retrieved bits of diamonds that the diamond miners then gathered to be sold. Around the fires that were apparently ever-present in the mines, there were snakes and vipers so numerous that 'no man can go there and not perish.'⁶⁴⁹ The reason for description and the fact that people were so willing to put

⁶⁴⁷ Castes are a social class that Hindus are born into and are believed to be reincarnated higher or lower depending on their current life in the next – this is not believed to be surmountable in one's current life.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab 'Aja'ib al-Hind*, 100-101.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 100-101.

themselves in such danger is due to the sheer amount of wealth that was involved in the trade and there being so much to gain. Even still, the record of large birds being used in order to retrieve diamonds are eerily close to the tales of Sinbad the Sailor in the *Thousand and One Nights*, which are also based in the ‘Abbasid period and could be another early medieval marketing ploy in order to sensationalise the gems that were being bought out of the Indian Ocean trade.⁶⁵⁰ Which story was informed by which, we cannot be sure, but this does reinforce that there was an Arab audience that was interested in the fantastical stories of the Indian Ocean – true or not, and that there was a heightening awareness of this and the products involved. Especially because the stories themselves were compiled in the ninth century, and from thence they survived after being received well.⁶⁵¹ The Sinbad stories romanticised the maritime life to a great extent as something that the sailor felt stirred within him and being a trader who encountered cannibals, exotic lands full of gems, and spices that were the definition of heady.⁶⁵² It is not inexplicable to see the connection with ibn Shahriyār’s work and what may have motivated him. Especially because the stories are specifically stated to be during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, which is a romantic long-ago time for the current reader but would have been very relevant to the contemporary reader of ibn Shahriyār’s works.

In 316 A.H./929 A.D. Ismā‘īlawayh,⁶⁵³ a trader who was known to ibn Shahriyār, paid just a tenth of what his vessel had on it at the port of Oman in taxes and this already mounted up to 600,000 dinars. The amount of danger and peril people put themselves through is understandable in the medieval era to harvest and collect these goods and for entire administrations to at least encourage it. Even if they were not directly involved, by having

⁶⁵⁰ Adam, Augustyn and the editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Sinbad the Sailor, Literary Character’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (2016), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sinbad-the-Sailor>

⁶⁵¹ Lawler, Andrew. ‘Sailing Sinbad’s seas: Archaeologists are rediscovering the Ancient Maritime Silk Road, which once powered more East-West commerce than the famed Central Asian land route’, *Science, New Series*, Vol. 344, No. 6191, (2014), 1441.

⁶⁵² Housman, *Sinbad the Sailor and Other Stories from the Arabian Nights*, -65.

⁶⁵³ No other information about him personally is provided or when he died.

diplomatic relations to provide exemptions to the people who do trade across borders to minimise disruptions. Especially if one ship can bring in up to 600,000 dinars alone, and we are already aware that it is not unheard of for traders to warn one another to avoid an area if they felt that the ruler involved was unjust to foreigners.

This same tactic is done again when he recounted an impossibly large snake that swallowed a whole crocodile in South Asia,⁶⁵⁴ and this was immediately followed by a description of a type of cinnamon that was exclusively found in Ceylon. Aside from its obvious culinary importance, ibn Shahriyār chose to focus on the other uses of the spice, which is that it is ranked to be ‘better than Brazil wood, saffron, bastard saffron or any other red dye,’⁶⁵⁵ and that it was used to dye clothing and thread. Again, the hierarchy of spices that was mentioned before is made explicit here, as is the fact that they were also highlighted for their properties outside of the culinary field, which simultaneously opened more markets as more buyers became interested and gave more reasons for it to be sold at a premium as demands grew.

The wider cross-cultural connections of merchant accounts:

Ibn Shahriyār’s work is indicative of the effect the international trade of the Caliphate was having on the written culture of the time. Whilst the literature being produced in the early medieval era is a study unto itself - to understand how society was being shaped through the prolonged contact across continents, it is essential to at least acknowledge this product of societal views in its culture. Written texts are one of the most telling in terms of the environment that was being fostered by different circles of the elite. Christendom outwardly levied a ban on exploring new and different medical practices to combat any chance of heresy and witchcraft, when we are aware from the Carolingian Renaissance that this was not the case. In contrast to this *dār al-Islam* welcomed new medical practices with outstretched arms for the majority of

⁶⁵⁴ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 102.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibn Shahriyār, *Kitab ‘Aja’ib al-Hind*, 134.

the elite.⁶⁵⁶ It is also important to keep in mind that there were no monolithic blocs to the societies on either side of the Mediterranean, and much like modern politics, there were mixed receptions to the introduction of foreign perfumes and spices to all of the societies involved. Indeed, institutions such as colleges and hospitals started to be set up in the Caliphate that were dedicated to new learnings and discovery.⁶⁵⁷ The ‘Abbasids were fervent in their encouragement of the sciences and intellectual and cultural life. During the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd a centre of study and research was established called *Bayt al-Ḥikmah*.⁶⁵⁸⁶⁵⁹

Whilst Gutas argues successfully that this was probably just a library,⁶⁶⁰ and whilst he may be right, the pursuit and collection of this knowledge on the elite level is indicative of the value placed on it, even when it is not explicitly stated. Additionally, this makes especial sense, when it is taken into account that it was viewed as an act of pleasing God to be able to care for and heal the sick when possible (as is the case in every Abrahamic religion) and was a part of Prophetic miracles which the scholar Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Yazīd ibn Mājāh, (d. 273 A.H./886-887 A.D.) recorded.⁶⁶¹ However, despite noble intentions there was still an element of worry against the corruption of Islamic ideals and societies, that were pervasive in its rhetoric in traditional circles that is also a socio-political element of any era when globalisation is at play.

Scholars such as al-Kindī dedicated themselves to the sciences and his work alone is extensive in the pharmacological formulae he sets out in order to list the ingredients for medicinal drugs.⁶⁶² In his studies we are able to discern the European transmissions of

⁶⁵⁶ Meyer, Adolphe E. *An Educational History of the Western World*, (New York: McGraw, 1965), 97-98.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid, 97-98.

⁶⁵⁸ Amin, Abd al-Amir Hussain. ‘Islam in Bilad ar-Rafidayn (Iraq)’, *The Spread of Islam throughout the World*, Idris el Hareir (ed.), Vol. 3 (2011), 213.

⁶⁵⁹ Literally means ‘House of Wisdom’ or learning.

⁶⁶⁰ Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 129.

⁶⁶¹ Richardson, Kristina L. *Difference and Disability in the Medieval Islamic World*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 23.

⁶⁶² Adamson, Peter. *Al-Kindi*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

knowledge into the Arab world, as al-Kindī used Aristotelian conceptions in his works and studies on medicine in order to expand upon Greek science and go beyond those limits.⁶⁶³ From his life and his actions we are also able to glean the way that globalisation and the new sense of transcontinental connectedness was affecting societies at the elite level. Al-Kindī belonged to an intellectual circle of ninth century Baghdad that was dedicated to looking into the Greek works that were available and turning them into a coherent philosophy,⁶⁶⁴ as well as recording different types of perfumes and medicine that eventually filtered back up to Europe. Indeed, the Arab legacy in Greek thought, and the way it re-entered Europe means that European medicine is indebted and influenced by traces of Arab thought and design.⁶⁶⁵

Whilst it may seem that al-Kindī and his work on philosophy are only rudimentary in understanding the socio-political effects of trade and ongoing contact as it is natural for books to travel amongst the elite of connected nations. What is in them is also telling of the society that he was living in. For instance, when he advises society to minimise their possessions,⁶⁶⁶ this may be symptomatic of living in Baghdad in the ninth century. Given that it was a city that was deeply involved in the trade with Asia and must have partaken in consumerist society as we are aware of the heightening popularity of perfumes, silks, spices, and gems. The Indian Ocean trading goods that al-Kindī used in his studies were also symptomatic of excessive wealth. Moreover, the market for these perfumes and spices specifically being catered to the elite meant that his disapproval of a conscious overindulgence in them was a direct criticism of those in power. The overindulgence here is also depicted in the mountains of spices and

⁶⁶³ Ibid, 162.

⁶⁶⁴ Adamson, Peter. (ed.) *Studies on Plotinus and al-Kindi Aristotelianism and the Soul in the Arabic Plotinus*, (2014), 212.

⁶⁶⁵ McVaugh, Michael R. *Arnaldi de Villanova, Opera Medica Omnia*, (Granada: Seminarium Historiae Medicae Granatensis, 2014), 212.

⁶⁶⁶ Adamson, *Al-Kindī*, 151.

perfumes that had to be involved in the hosting of elite dinners, which threatened the very core of court ceremonies with which political legitimacy was gained.

Indeed, food dishes were so important in the Middle East by the ninth century that a lot of the higher echelons of society were suffering from overindulgence which meant that flights of extravagance were increasingly criticised.⁶⁶⁷ Even by the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd himself, who was quick to point out when one had gone too far.⁶⁶⁸ We are aware of this as he chastises his half-brother Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī (d. 224 A.H./839 A.D.)⁶⁶⁹ when he offered Hārūn al-Rashīd a dish that went down in the history books as the fish dish that cost one thousand dirhams.⁶⁷⁰ The dish was made up of fish tongues as part of an aspic dish and was made up of 150 of them, and the Caliph said that they were not worth such an outrageous expense.⁶⁷¹ What is important to note though is that offering luxury cuisines was not an outrageous act of bribery in the Caliphate at this time, and the act of feeding ones superiors was meant to be an avenue that allowed the giver to gain access to the top and ease the ascent of the social ladder for those further down.⁶⁷² But this also means that displays of opulence were likely to have happened whenever there was someone in need of a particular favour. This in turn would have been commented on by those in the intellectual circles such as al-Kindī who could see and observe in these societal shifts and write about them. This is directly because of the increase in, and the constant global contact that the Caliphate was in due to the Indian Ocean trade that al-Kindī explored in his work through the usage of Indian Ocean spices and perfumes.

⁶⁶⁷ The use of food as a form of political manoeuvring is repeated in the recipe collection multiple times and seems to have been commonplace. We see this in the works of ibn al-Warrāq, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 29-31.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid, 29-31.

⁶⁶⁹ Farmer, H.G. and James Robson, 'The Kitāb al-Malāhī of Abū Tālib Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salama', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 2, (1938), 233.

⁶⁷⁰ The use of food as a form of political manoeuvring is repeated in the recipe collection multiple times and seems to have been commonplace. We see this in the works of ibn al-Warrāq, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 31.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid, 31.

⁶⁷² Ibid, 31.

One must keep in mind that whilst literacy rates in the Middle East were not dominated by the clergy who in the medieval West were one of the elite, al-Kindī's audience was still made up mostly of members of the Caliph's family, and other aristocrats, fellow scholars, students, and theologians of every walk of life.⁶⁷³ These were the very people that were directly involved with the global trade of perfumes and spices across the Indian Ocean, either as consumers, patrons, or both. Whilst he was not indigenous to Baghdad he did become a person of note there once he established himself, and he has managed to join the elite in a comfortable position of exaltedness, and was even the tutor of the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim's son Ahmad.⁶⁷⁴ Why this is notable is that al-Kindī became a famous, if not legendary figure, by the end of his lifetime due to his multi-faceted studies of Greek theology, medicine, and philosophy.⁶⁷⁵ The increase in trade, consumerism, and the popularity of Indian Ocean perfumes and spices amongst the elite and his very own circle was one that was also highly politicised in circles of power in their symbolism. It is in al-Kindī's life that we see closely how the socio—political effects of this can change the course of one's life so closely.

Whilst there is no clear evidence of the specific reason why, al-Kindī fell from favour during the reign of the Caliph al Mutawwakil, his large library was confiscated, and his position in society destroyed and he was apparently physically beaten.⁶⁷⁶ Whilst the library itself was restored to him in due course al-Kindī's life lost a lot of its former glamour and he no longer held any position of any importance in Baghdad by the late ninth century.⁶⁷⁷ However, al-Kindī remained respected as a scholar even after his demise, given that ibn al-Nāīm took it upon himself to record and present the facts of al-Kindī's life and his treatise on Greek philosophy managed to survive for so long in its complete form. This is because whilst al-Kindī rose to

⁶⁷³ Ivry, Alfred L. 'Part 2', *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics, A Translation of Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq, al-Kindī's Treatise of 'First Philosophy' (fi al-Falsafah al-ūlā)*, (1974), 4.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid, 3-5.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid, 3-5.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid, 3-5.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid, 3-5.

fame in a favourable environment when he began to come to the forestage in Baghdadi aristocratic society. This came at a time with a politicisation of faith and scholarship that ensued to become an institution that was set up in the name of rational faith called the Mu'tazilah in 217 A.H./833 A.D.⁶⁷⁸ One of their central principles was to use the methods of Greek logic to discuss issues of faith, and whilst this is a complex issue, it is not the focus of this study.⁶⁷⁹ Even so they were a neutralist Islamic organisation and a significant movement in the early medieval period by the tenth century, that came to being with continuous external trade and medicinal items from the maritime trade in Basra and Baghdad. We can be certain that al-Kindī clashed with the suspicious and hostile attitudes that came with the distrust of secularism, and the foreign culture of the Greeks that were considered to be the antithesis of Islamic Arab society to some in more traditional circles.⁶⁸⁰ Even though the medicinal advances of the time were based on the combination of Greek understanding of using the elements of the earth to heal the body, with the combination of Indian Ocean herbs and spices. Whilst al-Kindī was an individual, the fact that the prolonged contact with the outside world also created a backlash is also important to note when looking at the socio-political effects of the external trade of the Caliphate. Indeed, his entire standing in society seems to have been changed according to the attitude that was being fostered towards the non-Muslim foreigners. The importance of this to this study is that it illuminates the fact that there was a growing disenchantment with the idea of foreign items and ideas of being a source of knowledge and wealth in the intellectual circles of the Caliphate. There was also a counter movement of those who profited from this move towards a more commercial and connected society, and these social movements were a result of continuous trade and contact.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid, 4-5.

⁶⁷⁹ Zeidan, Adam. 'Mu'tazilah', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (2020), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mutazilah>

⁶⁸⁰ Ivry, Alfred L. 'Part 2', *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics, A Translation of Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq, al-Kindī's Treatise of 'First Philosophy' (fi al-Falsafah al-ōlā)*, (1974), 4.

He wrote a treatise in order to defend his studies into Greek thinkers and especially Aristotle, arguing that there was no shame in finding the truths of life from foreign sources.⁶⁸¹ He argued that it was more natural to be grateful to the founders of any knowledge regardless of their source.⁶⁸² The fact that he had to present such a defence, and it is so well recorded and discussed, to the point that ibn Nadim also took to preserving it, elucidates the hostility of the environment that was being fostered in light of traditional circles being worried about the changing intellectual landscape of the Caliphate. Especially because there were widespread doubts about some of the studies, such as that of alchemy, which was famously studied by Pythagoras, Demokriton (the ancient Greek pre-Socratic philosopher), Plato, and Aristotle,⁶⁸³ in trying to alter that which had already been decreed by God. Whilst the works of the theologians who grappled with these ideas and in an increasingly hostile environment has been studied, in terms al-Kindī, al-Farābī (also known as Alfarabius in the English speaking world), and ibn Sina (Avicenna on the European side of the Mediterranean).⁶⁸⁴ The fact that this was in light of the increasing societal changes that came with prolonged contact has yet to be acknowledged as one of the effects of the *longue duree* of the movement of merchants, their wares, and with them, ideas. In essence the foreign goods, of perfumes and spices and their potential for both harm and medicine, meant that there was an increase in suspicion around them. They have been discussed before in terms of being marketed as objects of mystery, but there were also adverse consequences to this.

Al-Kindī's life and the political climate's shift is one that is pivotal in understanding how diverse the reception to transcontinental relations were in the Caliphate. Given that entering the universal language of wealth and power that involves owning certain items such

⁶⁸¹ Ibid, 57-58.

⁶⁸² Ibid, 57-58.

⁶⁸³ Fück, J.W. 'The Arabic Literature on Alchemy According to An-Nadim' (AD 987), Abu l-Faraj Muhammed Ibn Ishāq an-Nadim', *Ambix, The Journal for the Society of Alchemy and Early Chemistry*, Vol. 4, (1915), 83-85.

⁶⁸⁴ Adamson, (2014), 211-212.

as silk, perfume, and spices by the turn of the millennium was meant to have been a given for the elite who were in contact across borders. It also meant that for the first time instead of being conquerors or merely trading partners and consumers, the Arabs were major players on the world stage. As a result the study of European philosophy and medicine became something that was dangerous due to its provenance, which is indicative of the political landscape of the societies that it was occurring in.

The issue was that a lot of the ancient Greek thinkers had notions that were considered dangerous for monotheistic societies of the early medieval era. One of al-Kindī's favourite problematic topics of the Greek thinkers was the notion of infinity, time, and the fact that there was no infinite being – or the possibility of there being one was highly improbable.⁶⁸⁵ The fact that his thinking in this strain of study was considered an issue, if not heretical, is clear from his writing in the *Epistle on the Unity of God and Finitude of the World*. In the text he expresses clearly that he believes in the unity of God and went on to explain that whilst he argues that this world was finite and had an ending he still believed in God.⁶⁸⁶ The fact that this had to be explicitly written down is indicative of doubts upon his faith and by extension his character in Islamic society. We are aware that his standing in the elite circle before his denunciation was such that it attracted envy. Whilst this seems unsurprising as court circles were notoriously known to have conspired for the most favours to be acquired from the Caliph, the case of al-Kindī is important because it goes down in history as an inditement in how fragile an occupation science was in this period, even somewhere as supposedly open minded as the Caliphate was meant to have been. So much so because al-Kindī himself came from a noble family and his own father had been the governor of Kufa for the Caliph al-Mahdī (d.169

⁶⁸⁵ Shamsi, F.A., 'Al-Kindi's Epistle on the Unity of God and the Finitude of the World (translation)', in: Shamsi, (1978), 185.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid, 189-190.

A.H./785 A.D.), and Hārūn al-Rashīd himself.⁶⁸⁷ Hence, al-Kindī himself came from a family with at least some political leverage even before he entered the patronage of the Caliph al Mutawwakil at court.⁶⁸⁸

It seems it was being at court that was his downfall, as it was at court that he attracted the envy of a rival clan and in this the sons of a courtier called Mūsā ibn Shākīr plotted against him. It is reported that they had done so with anyone who seemed to surpass them in scientific and philosophical knowledge.⁶⁸⁹ Indeed when they decided to retaliate against him in a bid to undercut him before he could eclipse them with his own fame and reputation, they denounced him to the Caliph and made sure that he was considered to be dangerous or at least worth of spurn. Notably, they also took possession of al-Kindī's libraries without proper permissions, and given the action taken by the Caliph when he found out seems tantamount to theft. Especially since we are aware that when the Caliph al Mutawwakil did find out, the sons of ibn Shakir were made to restore the texts to al-Kindī.⁶⁹⁰ Moreover we are also aware that a lot of the *ulama*⁶⁹¹ at this point in history still had to earn a secular income in order to maintain their household and to live.⁶⁹² Whilst it was true that patronage was given, it did not always cover the whole cost of sustaining an entire section of society on the generosity of other members of the elite. It then makes sense that they would also have a qualm with al-Kindī's denunciations of too many possessions making people lose sight of what was important. The *ulama* themselves were actors in trade and had a stake to lose, and it is vital to note that the Caliphate

⁶⁸⁷ Hoyland, Robert G. and Brian Gilmour. *Medieval Islamic Swords and Sword making. Kindi's treatise "On swords and their kinds"*, (translation and commentary), (Oxford: The E.J.W Gibb Memorial Trust, 2006), 1.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid, 1-6.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid, 1-4.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid, 1-4.

⁶⁹¹ Religious Muslim scholars in Islamic theology and law.

⁶⁹² Cohen, Hayyim J. 'The Economic Background and the Secular Occupations of Muslim Jurisprudents and Traditionalist in the Classical Period of Islam', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (1970), 16-71.

was a very dynamic society and had many actors that were involved in the trading habits within and outside of the Islamic Empire.

The combination of the events of al Mutawwakil insisting on preventing the ibn Shakir clan of seizing the library and the fact that the Caliphs that al-Kindī and his father served under were all famous of their patronage of scholarly work suggests the magnitude of their stations.⁶⁹³ The ‘Abbasid Caliphs leading up to the year 1000 A.D. particularly focused on the commissioning of translations of foreign works in Arabic,⁶⁹⁴ which suggests that there was more at play here than mere jealousy. The same Caliphs also encouraged the production of original research, which means that there must have been an element in al-Kindī’s work that was considered to have gone too far.

This was accompanied by the backdrop of an increasing number of people who were really questioning the power of God and the Qur’an itself. Indeed, there is the notable occasion where a man called Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād was imprisoned and died there in 232 A.H./846 A.D due to his denying the creation of the Qur’an through divine means.⁶⁹⁵ This was due a whole movement called the *Jahmiyyah* that was questioning the powers of God, which also sparked a whole range of scholarly and philosophical writing for and against it,⁶⁹⁶ that has already been fully explored by Montgomery Watt (d. 2006). What is important to this study is that even the vernacular was changing in this political climate, to the point that it became a term of abuse to call another member of society and especially a Muslim a ‘jahmite’.⁶⁹⁷ It was this movement in society, combined with the foundation that had already been set in Greek thought for these questions that created a backlash in Muslim society within the Caliphate against foreign

⁶⁹³ Hoyland, *Medieval Islamic Swords and Sword making*, 1.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid, 1-2.

⁶⁹⁵ Watt, Montgomery. ‘Political Attitudes of the Mu‘tazilah’, *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. ½, (1963), 38.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid, 38-39.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid, 39.

thoughts that were perceived as intriguing. This also included thoughts that belonged to polytheism such as Hermeticism and astrology. Whilst astrology itself was still considered a science at this time, there were still major components of Greek mythology that had to be overcome for it to be considered sound enough for mainstream Islamic early medieval high society.

Ancient Greek thinkers from Empedocles, Pythagoras, and Apollonius had, for some Muslim members of the intellectual circles, the old-world prestige and exotic foreignness that was becoming popular as a marketing tool in almost every consumer item of the Arab markets in the cities.⁶⁹⁸ Indeed, ibn Sina had the same effect in Frankish European societies and held an allure of mystique around his distinguished intelligence that gradually meant that he was adopted as Avicenna into mainstream philosophical studies.⁶⁹⁹ In the case of the early medieval Middle East, it would only then follow that the literature that was being consumed would follow this same pattern. However, Greek Hermeticism and those who followed it was a dangerous concept to be seen to believe in, in any early medieval society that subscribed to an Abrahamic religion and the Islamic world was no exception.⁷⁰⁰

The Hermeticism and astrological components of the rising level of philosophy of Islamic thinkers was one that started long before al-Kindī, and indeed even in ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*⁷⁰¹ there are themes of astrology and therefore heretical writings that were deemed to be problematic.⁷⁰² In al-Nadīm's work the theme of astrology and its importance as a field of study is dated back to the time of the kings of Persia, before the Caliphate, and were so imperative to scientific learning that even the materials which astronomical tables were drawn on were of

⁶⁹⁸ Peters, Francis E. 'Hermes and Harran: The Roots of Arabic-Islamic Occultism', *Magic and Divination in Early Islam. The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, Emilie Savage-Smith, (ed.), Vol. 42, (2004), 58-59.

⁶⁹⁹ Goichon, A.M. 'L'évolution philosophique d'Avicenne', *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, T. 138, (1948), 318-320.

⁷⁰⁰ Peters, (2004), 58.

⁷⁰¹ *Fihrist* is Persian for a bibliographic work, the term is common in Arabic vernacular too.

⁷⁰² Peters, (2004), 58-61.

significance to such a standard that could almost be considered holy.⁷⁰³ According to al-Nadīm they were written with the specific purpose to be preserved and durable and so they were written on the bark of the white poplar tree which was called Tūz which was discovered to be so effective that the peoples of India, China, and the other surrounding territories also duplicated this style of record keeping.⁷⁰⁴ This all indicates that the ideas of astrology and their diffusion on Asia highlights the interconnectedness that meant that ideas were already travelling before the Caliphate got involved and these ideas were already in the minds of the scholars that were working in the region. The subsequent bookstores that were built in regions such as Isfahan which are discovered in the middle of the tenth century were then transported back to Baghdad according to the *fihrist*.⁷⁰⁵ Astronomy was well known in the area and the likes of al-Kindī were not *avant garde* thinkers in this regard.

The fact that this movement and the introduction of these ideas pre-dated al-Kindī, suggests that this problem was in the making for a long time and probably grew alongside the prolonged contact that merchants and everyday people were having across the Mediterranean. Especially given that the Caliphate was so highly literate and so ideas were so easy to travel into the minds of those who were willing to seek them. This is especially because, whilst we are aware that al-Kindī received preferential treatment from the Caliph in the beginning of his career. As discussed earlier, it was not uncommon for powerful families such as the Barmakids and institutions to give patronage to the study of what was considered science.⁷⁰⁶ Unlike in Europe, there were no gatekeepers of knowledge as the Church had been. Anyone was able to seek information provided they had the capital and physical access to do so.

⁷⁰³ Al-Nadīm, Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq. *Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, Dodge Baynard, (ed. and trans.), Vol. 2, (1970), 576.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid, 576.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid, 578-579.

⁷⁰⁶ Peters, (2004), 62.

However, you could also fall from favour, and we are aware that the criticism that al-Kindī faced was not an anomalous event, as Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 263 A.H./877 A.D.) was also imprisoned twice during the Caliphate of al Mutawwakil.⁷⁰⁷ On one such occasion he lost all his books which was a bitter lamentation for him for years to come. We are aware that this was probably due to his scholarly activities given his confiscation of books and the fact that it was clear that the Caliph was very aware of him. Indeed, it is said that ibn Ishāq regained favour with al Mutawwakil by curing him successfully once of an illness and as repayment the Caliph awarded him with three houses.⁷⁰⁸ The fact that he was never restored his manuscripts, nor does the Caliph encourage any idea of him regaining it even when he is restored in favour is indicative of the social movement of the time – at least at court. Especially since ibn Ishāq focuses on translations of Greek works to do with philosophy,⁷⁰⁹ and medicine and this was prone to accidents and misunderstandings depending on the translations.⁷¹⁰ Indeed, the cure he gives the Caliph is almost undoubtedly from such works as he focuses on medical works, and he admits himself of making a mistake from a faulty manuscript. Although he only became aware of it decades later when a student names Hubaish⁷¹¹ comes to him with the correct version after collecting a certain number of Greek manuscripts himself.⁷¹²

Given that he was a physician this could lead to accidents and lead to societal backlash as seen with al-Kindī. However, the fact that the Greek manuscripts were still being collected by student of ibn Ishāq, and people were still willing to go to him to seek knowledge on the Greek medical works, is also indicative of how strong the tide of interconnectedness had become. It was a part of the intellectual landscape of the Caliphate to such a degree that even

⁷⁰⁷ Meyerhof, M. 'New light on Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and his period', *Isis*, Vol. 8, (1926), 685-689.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 689.

⁷⁰⁹ Meyerhof, M. 'The History of Trachoma Treatment in Antiquity and During the Arabic Middle Ages', *Bulletin of the Ophthalmological Society of Egypt*, Vol. 29, (1936), 33-40.

⁷¹⁰ Meyerhof, (1926), 689-691.

⁷¹¹ The death date of this student is known as ibn Ishaq did not see fit to expand upon who he was.

⁷¹² Meyerhof, (1926), 689-691.

Caliphal punishment could not quash the movement. Also, it is important to note that a lot of the intellectual elite practised as physicians and the usage of medicines and being able to cure illnesses in the early medieval period was a lucrative vocation. Greek medicine was made up mostly of plant-based medicines and was almost universal in being studied by the major scholars of the early Islamic era, even if there was contention about the origin of the knowledge.

Indeed, the illnesses that ibn Ishāq focused on are very advanced for the era. He focused on ophthalmology in his studies of the Greek works and the cures for how to treat eye conditions.⁷¹³ What is specifically discussed, and it seems that Egyptian physicians like ibn Ishāq who investigated Greek manuscripts were aware of, is that Indian herbs and spices could be used to treat said medical conditions. In particular cloves could be used to treat an infected eyelid, and Indian malabathrum and saffron could be used to treat ophthalmia (which is the medical term which means swelling of the eye) as part of a salve.⁷¹⁴ Due to the high risks of any applications to eyes, and the fact that in his own admission using Greek manuscripts was risky in that the surviving works were just that, surviving, which meant that they were pieced together and had holes which left space for mistakes. This means that the censure that he came under when his books were taken away are almost understandable if he was making mistakes on people's vision. Especially given that these people probably had to pay for his services and so must have been a part of the elite or at least the monied classes.

Whilst it is possible that he may not have made mistakes and it was just the possibility that worried people, coupled with his interest in Greek philosophical works like al-Kindī, when juxtaposed with the societal context that he was in his fate does not seem so sensational. Especially when one considers the condemnation of the upper echelons of society as ignorant and uninformed when he compares them to 'beasts' by the eighth-century scholar Ṣāliḥ

⁷¹³ Meyerhof, (1936), 48-49.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid, 48-49.

ibn 'Abd al-Quddūs (d. 166 A.H./783 A.D.).⁷¹⁵ He is unsurprisingly executed by al Mahdi in 166 A.H./783 A.D., but his main complaint was that if one wrote about fish and vegetables there was 'much merit' for the writer. But those who focused on science were considered 'irksome and boring'.⁷¹⁶ This may seem tame but considering that his audience were those who could afford books on cookery and luxury items, and that included the same people were those in power in early medieval society anywhere in the known world. This meant that he was insulting people who decided who was and was not in favour. His execution as a heretic later in this context is not uncommon in the medieval world.

We are also aware of those who were actively pushing back against such acts of censorship from the works of Abū al Faraj 'Alī ibn Hindū (d.410 A.H./1019 A.D.).⁷¹⁷ Ibn Hindū was a medical practitioner in the eleventh century, and he was also careful to take stock of the definition of medicine and from whence the medicine he practiced originated. Whilst he proves in his writings that South Asian goods were already considered integral to medicine as has already been proved by saying explicitly that camphor cooled the body when needed and musk brought it warmth when needed.⁷¹⁸ He was also clear about spices and states that pepper (which was mostly if not solely from South Asia at this point) was used for numbness in the extremities.⁷¹⁹

What he focuses on is the definition of medicine and that he wanted those who were still learning to be aware of as his work was for, as the title makes clear, students i.e., those who were looking for knowledge on the subject. What this also highlights is that he felt the need to do this and commit it to writing which suggests either a misunderstanding or lack of

⁷¹⁵ Rodinson, Maxime. 'Studies in Arabic Manuscripts Relating to Cookery', *Medieval Cookery*, Barbara Inskip, (trans.), (2001), 112.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid, 112.

⁷¹⁷ Richardson, *Difference and Disability in the Medieval Islamic World*, 117.

⁷¹⁸ Ibn Hindū, Abū al-Faraj 'Alī. *The Key to Medicine and a Guide for Students, Miftāh al-tibb wa-minhāj al-tullāb*, Dr. Aida Tibi, (trans.), (Reading: Garnet Publishing Ltd., 2010), 7.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid, 9.

awareness in the field. He underlines that the medical profession that he practices in, and the studies he works from, originated and developed in India, Persia, and Byzantium.⁷²⁰ He states that the scholars there made sure they expanded their knowledge on the subject of medicine and were far more advanced than ‘ignorant’ peoples that depended on nature to cure their bodies and illnesses such as the nomadic Arabs, the Turks, Slavs, and the Zanj.⁷²¹ In so doing, he also recognises that the life-saving medicine that he practiced was foreign in nature and was adopted by the Arabs. He draws heavily on why medicine is so important and that it has been so since the time of the Greeks.

Like al-Kindī he also draws on their teachings, particularly Aristotle, Diocles (the ancient Greek mathematician and geometer), Hippocrates, Praxagoras, Asclepiades, and Galen, as well as many others.⁷²² He also emphasises that those who demonise the pursuit of medical knowledge were to be ignored and if not punished. Indeed, he is rather harsh when he says that those who discredit medicine should also by the same logic abstain for food and drink when hungry or thirsty as their beliefs would lead them to further ignorant and detrimental actions.⁷²³ His hard-line approach is probably in the face of widespread contention on the validity of medicine, and how ‘Islamic’ it was at the time given that in the early medieval era, the actions of a physician could have led to death easily as we discussed in the dosage of medicines earlier. Whilst he upholds the study of medicine so rigorously, ibn Hindū is also clear that there are risks and he addresses them.

In his treatise to his students he is clear that medicine requires trial and error which was similar to early medieval European medical practice. He was careful to note that the wrong administering of medicine could lead to death, even in cases that were to only treat minor

⁷²⁰ Ibid, 9.

⁷²¹ Ibid, 9.

⁷²² Ibid, 23.

⁷²³ Ibid, 11.

ailments such as diarrhoea.⁷²⁴ He related one such incident of someone suffering from that same ailment and the physician not being able to help and the patient subsequently passing away.⁷²⁵ The physician as a consequence was under attack from a group who were denying the fact that medicine was natural. Given that this sort of criticism occurred to more than one scholar, and ibn Hindu himself seems to be giving a second-hand account of it, suggests that there was a growing sentiment of distrust in foreign elements. Especially those that as discussed earlier were ‘un-Islamic’ depending on what the interpreter believed them to belong under the umbrella of the Islamicate culture that there was in the Caliphate at that time. Further proving that the increased contact with the outside world that came with the external trade of the Caliphate and globalization was not always met with open arms in the Caliphate. Human behaviour has always been capricious, and the early medieval period is not an exception to this.

What makes ibn Hindu notable, however, is that his very name suggests that there was a level of conversion in thoughts and even religion because of external trade that has hitherto not been discussed. The idea being that medicine was a trade that was directly linked to spices and perfumes and the people that were involved. But ibn Hindu’s name itself is indicative of a movement of ideas. Ibn Hindu – which means *son of a Hindu* – quite literally in Arabic, suggests that there were people who were included in the medical field of the Caliphate who openly embraced their ancestral otherness – seemingly polytheist or otherwise.⁷²⁶ The societal allowance for this to happen, and for there to be no recorded backlash unlike the case of al-Kindī suggests a sense of habituation of those who came from outside becoming accepted as someone of prominence and learning that the socio-political effects are rather poetically entangled with ibn Hindu keeping his name as it was.

⁷²⁴ Ibid, 11.

⁷²⁵ Ibid, 11.

⁷²⁶ The word seemingly is used as there is contention about where the Hindu faith believes in many gods or the reincarnation of one god in many forms thus being monotheist.

The idea that he may be descended from Hindus and kept his name is not as uncommon as it may seem as he started as a native in Rayy (Tehran) in South Asia and was trained in the typical style to be considered a learned man in the early medieval period.⁷²⁷ He was an accomplished poet, calligrapher, and medical scholar.⁷²⁸ Indeed, he became so proficient that he attracted students from all over Persia and that is what prompted his writing on the medical treatise discussed above. He genuinely had students that he was teaching and there was an active audience, suggesting that this was a feasible way of life in this period that people were pursuing. It is also then logical that he would be a firm defender of the use of Indian goods in medicinal products after the proven worth despite the risks, and the usage of the Greek legacies in medical works. He had proximity to the subcontinent and obvious ties to the area or at least the beliefs that were popular there. As well as the fact that he came from a region that had, had Greek transmission of thought since antiquity into the area because of the Persian and Sassanian empire, if the legends are in anyway true about the emperors and South Asian rulers. Apart from this however, works on ibn Hindu himself as a man remain scarce, and that may be due to that fact that he spent most of his life away from the big centres of learning in the major cities and was also away from the courts there too.

Indeed, it is only in the works of Ali ibn Riḍwān (d. 451 A.H./1060 A.D.) that we have a voice on the division between the empiricists and the dogmatists without the hard-lined approach of either. He argued that Greek and Persian drugs should not be prescribed to Egyptians as their constitutions were not as coarse and strong as theirs, but he is not vehemently opposed to their way of medicine.⁷²⁹ He does not demonise it, nor does he condemn those who are wary. Instead, he explains that from the position of Cairo at least, that one should be wary

⁷²⁷ Tibi, A. and M. Nasser, 'Ibn Hindu and the Science of Medicine', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Vol. 1, (2007), 55-56.

⁷²⁸ Ibid, 55-56.

⁷²⁹ Ibn Riḍwān, 'Part II: Ibn Riḍwān's *On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt*', *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, Michael W. Dols. (trans.), S. Aldil Gamal, (ed. Of Arabic text), (1984), 126.

of swindlers who posed as doctors and due to their ignorance would make mistakes.⁷³⁰ Given that we are aware that even as early as this period counterfeits were being made of everything from coins to (as discussed earlier) ambergris and camphor, it then makes sense that there would be people willing to at least capitalise in this market of medicine that was always considered to be needed. Hence elucidating why there was growing mistrust that was bleeding over even as far as Cairo. Ibn Riḍwān remains to be one of the very few centrist sources left regarding this.

Although the Greeks and Persians are considered by ibn Riḍwān to practice a form of medicine that was unsuited to the Egyptian physique and temperament. He did still advocate for the administering of the medicinal items that originated in the area that is now called India. He talks about pepper which is definitely South Asian, in order to control the body temperature of a patient.⁷³¹ Whilst he does not speak about the potential repercussions of societal backlash in response to the wrong administering of imported substances for medicine, the fact that he does not specify that these were foreign, indeed he recommends them after warning against Greek and Persian medicinal practices, means that there is a possibility that he genuinely believed them to be Arab.⁷³² Or that they had been practiced in the area for long enough that they were thoroughly adopted into Egyptian society to the point that it was generally accepted. This would be logical given that Cairo was a major city in which international trade was happening at high volumes consistently for centuries by the year 1000 A.D. It would then make sense that the people there would have been more acclimated to the substances that were being brought up from South Asia for both Arab consumption, and that of Europe. Given that the city

⁷³⁰ Ibid, 122-123.

⁷³¹ Ibid, 134.

⁷³² Ibid, 126.

was used as a stopping point for ships heading further north as we are already aware of from the life and literary legacies of ibn Nissim.

Indeed, ibn Riḍwān even talks about the fact that spices affected the way that other foodstuffs were bought by Egyptians in the markets of Cairo. He mentions that in the buying of meat people want the best and freshest items, and those are usually the ones that are grilled along with spices.⁷³³ Given that he mentions the use of pepper, saffron, clove juice, and aloe wood as medicinal substances it is not far-fetched to assume that they would be on the dinner table too.⁷³⁴ Especially given that he thought that they were trustworthy enough to consume after he warned against the practices of foreign medicinal practices. This may also be due to the Islamicate aversions to the ways in which some of these foreign discoveries in medicine were made. Christians and Muslims alike (who made up sizeable proportion of the population of the near and Middle East apart from the Jewish population) were averse to the dissecting of the deceased to ascertain the functions of the body.⁷³⁵ There were connotations of sinfulness in this that was uncomfortable in the context of the Islamicate and compounded the issue of those who argued that the modern forms of medicine that were being introduced were ungodly. This is even though most Islamic scientific thought came to fruition in the early Islamic empires via the educated classes due to the introduction of Greek ideas. Indeed, Islamicate science came to embody newer but unrecognisable aspects of Hellenistic culture such as constantly looking at the balances and humours of the body and prescribing medicinal plants to treat temperatures and imbalances.⁷³⁶

Ibn Riḍwān's work is decisive in portraying how Hellenistic medicinal science and spices from South Asia had infiltrated Islamicate culture to the extent that the ideas behind

⁷³³ Ibid, 137.

⁷³⁴ Ibid, 133.

⁷³⁵ Gamal, S. Adil. 'Part 1: Medieval Islamic Medicine', *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, Michael W. Dols. (trans.), S. Aldil Gamal, (ed. Of Arabic text), (1984), 22.

⁷³⁶ Ibid, 3.

them were already considered to be thoroughly Arab by the tenth century. This is specifically because he seems to be touting that only Arab medicine is good for Arab people as he follows his warning against Greek and Persian practices in medicine being applied to those in Cairo. Whilst it could be argued that he argues that what he is prescribing to the people of Cairo is only for those there, this seem doubtful that the audience was meant to be so regional only because he takes the time out to commit it to paper and warn against Persian and Greek medicinal thoughts, but notes nothing on any other Arab physicians, although he must be aware of them to feel compelled to write this down for a reader. He does not mention anything against the practices of somewhere like Baghdad for instance, which was a major centre of learning, especially because it was so interlinked into the long-distance trade that brought spices and perfumes that could also be medicine into the Middle East. Hence, he considers his work and his methodology to be Arab, even though we are aware that it is the culmination of centuries of cultural transmission that was made available through prolonged and continuous contact through trade.

The pattern of medicine and Greek philosophy being closely intertwined in the early Islamic Empires became cemented in the fact that the prominent physician Abu Bakr Muhammed ibn Zakariyya al-Rāzī (d.313 A.H./925 A.D) was said to have been the greatest physician of the era and his work was based upon observations of illnesses, and he was a critical compiler of Greek, Syrian, and earlier Arabic medical knowledge.⁷³⁷ In turn this was later passed on to European practitioners of medicine. Even in his eminence, and the fact that his works are partially translated into Latin,⁷³⁸ his behaviour is mirrored by others around him to suggest that this was not unusual. Indeed, even in the Bakhtishu family that was mentioned before of having originated from Gondeshapur, kept up their interest in both philosophy and

⁷³⁷ Meyerhof, (1935), 321-323.

⁷³⁸ Ibid, 321.

medicine in tandem with one another as the generations at court carried on. We see this as late as the lifetime of Ubaidallah ibn Jibrail ibn Bakhtīshū^c (d. 395 A.H./1005 A.D.).⁷³⁹

Their prominent position at court and the fact that this was contingent upon favour from the Caliphs suggests that this behaviour was normal and if it had not been the norm given their high status, they would have given it up if considered too dangerous. Especially given that we are aware as discussed before that whilst non-Muslims were accepted into the governmental structure in the Islamic Empire, those that were closest to the Caliph were almost exclusively Muslim. Hence for the Bakhtishu family to continue in their pursuit of Greek knowledge, despite this suggests that there were more factors at play than just the notion of sinful ideas. Especially because, the Bakhtishu family had originally decided to take up residence in the Caliphate after making peace with the Caliph al-Manṣūr as they found themselves in an unfavourable position, which Boydena Wilson explores but admits that the sources do not elucidate further than hinting that it was with the Archbishop of Gondeshapur.⁷⁴⁰ Thus whilst admittedly time had passed, they did not have anywhere to turn apart from Baghdad in terms of ancestral lands, and so they would have been eager to retain their favour at court. Ergo, we are aware that there must have been a line in which there was a crossing that made it dangerous to suddenly have ideas that were considered foreign. Indeed, when ibn Jurjīs was initially invited to treat the Caliph al-Manṣūr, it was done as accommodatingly as possible, as the invitation was in both Arabic and Persian.⁷⁴¹ Illustrating that the Caliph was even willing to adjust invitations to be enticing or welcoming to those outside of the Caliphate. It was issues of political instability, plague, and the encroachments of foreign powers as well as an influx of merchants all resulted in such ideas. Given that throughout history it is only when people feel

⁷³⁹ Meyerhof, M. 'An Arabic Compendium of Medico-philosophical Definitions', *Isis*, Vol. 10, (1928), 340-341.

⁷⁴⁰ Wilson, Boydena R. *The Bakhtishu': Their Political and Social Role Under the 'Abbasid Caliphs (A.D. 750-1100)*, (New York: Xerox University Microfilms, 1976), 26.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid*, 27.

most threatened that they feel the need to clamp down on any form of otherness. This seems to also be the case for the near and Middle East. We are aware that ibn Ishāq, al-Kindī, ibn Bakhtishu, and ibn Riḍwān were all known for writing both commentaries on theological discussions, philosophy, and medicine.

Indeed, as the line of the Bakhtishu family wore on, they moved further away from the glamour of court with the changing atmosphere but even one of the last notable Bakhtishu scholars did not relent on the pursuance of outside medical knowledge. Ubaidallah Ibn Bakhtishu (d.450 A.H./1058 A.D.), had even translated some works of Galen in his writing about medicine and how to treat a patient.⁷⁴² He also referred to Aristotle and his cures included the uses of anise and ambergris.⁷⁴³ The combination of European medical knowledge and South Asian spices in cures underline just how important outside sources of information had become in the scientific and medical fields of the near and Middle East by this point.

Also, it is important to note that the idea of ‘foreignness’ did not only apply to Europeans and the Middle Eastern Muslims. The Caliphate was also split by the year 132 A.H./750 A.D. between the Umayyads in the area that is now Spain and the ‘Abbasids that had taken over the Middle East. The Umayyads still viewed the ‘Abbasids as usurpers and the idea that there was a homogenous *ummah* even as early as the eighth century would be false. Especially politically, let alone religiously. Hence, the idea of erring from religious and political lines became doubly predictable when two Caliphs were vying for control. Having said that, much like with the Byzantine Empire this did not stop the movement of ideas and goods. Indeed, for the goods of the Arab traders to get through ‘Abbasid lands to northern Europe they had to get through or at least pass the Umayyad Caliphate. Hence, the borders

⁷⁴² Kahl, Oliver. *Ubaidallah Ibn Bakhtishu' on Apparent Death, The Kitab Tahrir da'in al-ahya*, Arabic Edition and English Translation, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 2 and 55-90.

⁷⁴³ Ibid, 51-60.

were very much porous despite the enmity. The ‘Abbasid Caliphate’s attitude towards this did not alter according to the ‘type’ or ‘sect’ that was trying to get involved in the Indo-European trade across the Middle East either as we are aware from the works of Goitein that even the Fatimids were able to get involved in the trade up to South India and Sri Lanka.⁷⁴⁴ Indeed, through the works of Abū al-Qāsim Ṣā’id al-Andalusī (d.462 A.H./ 1070 A.D.),⁷⁴⁵ we are aware that the intellectual and merchant elite were very much in contact with each other’s ideas if not personally in conversation. This is because he speaks highly of the works of scholars that still presided in the formerly Umayyads lands that were taken over and being held (at the time of al-Andalusī) by the ‘Abbasids including the Bakhtishu family’s work.⁷⁴⁶

He is particular that they were important for the works of medicine that they produced and that they had distinguished themselves in the sciences.⁷⁴⁷ Interestingly, he mentions specifically that they were Christian,⁷⁴⁸ which may have also been why they were spared the same treatment that Muslim practitioners of science and philosophy bore the brunt of such as al-Kindī, and ibn Hindu managed to escape by being far from the centre. Hence, it may not have been the substances themselves that came from the outside that became offensive – it was the affiliations they had with certain people and ideas that became hazardous to the bodies of those involved.

Whilst the philosophical works of the likes of al-Kindī could be explosive in their ramifications, and the likes of ibn Hindu were obviously political or at the very least societal criticisms. We are aware that there were also other areas that literature was beginning to proliferate which were much safer; or at least we are not currently aware of any negative

⁷⁴⁴ Goitein, S.D. *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, (London: Brill, 2009), 325.

⁷⁴⁵ Al-Andalusī, Abu’l-Qasim Qadi sa’id. ‘A chapter on Roman (Byzantine) sciences in an eleventh century Hispano-Arabic work’, *Islamic Studies*, M.S. Khan, (trans.), Vol. 22, No. 1, (1983), 41-45.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid, 44.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid, 44.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid, 44.

consequences suffered by their authors because of them. Food was one such subject that was quickly coming to the literary fore in the early Islamic Empires. Ibn al-Warrāq was one such author and his work that survives in manuscript form at the University of Oxford, focuses on cookery and the medicinal and negative effects of different foodstuffs.⁷⁴⁹ Given that he was in contact with the ‘Abbasid elite in tenth century Baghdad, and that he is also one of the few that have survived from this period his work is pivotal to understanding the culture around food that was being manufactured by this new influx of foreign entities. Muhammad Ahsan is clear in his study that ibn al-Warrāq was a product of his society and explores this in relation to ‘Abbasid society specifically.⁷⁵⁰ However, it is important to note that these spices came with the need to understand them, how they worked, and how to cook them.

The role of new foods and the dangers they potentially brought with them:

The Arabs entered a political stage where dining ‘well’ was imperative in establishing the dominance of a ruler. Abū ‘Umar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (d. 138/139 A.H./756/757 A.D.) who was a transmitter of hadith and scholar,⁷⁵¹ recorded that the Persian kings had been so particular about their table that when in one instance ‘A drop of food fell on his [the king’s] hand when his cook was once serving him’ and the cook knew he would be put to death.⁷⁵² The penalty was abated when the age of the cook was taken into account as being too old to punish so direly, but he was still sentenced to one hundred lashes and let go from his position in the royal household.⁷⁵³ Thus the importance of the dinner table and the display of control was so integral even before the Arab conquest of the Persian lands, that it makes sense

⁷⁴⁹ The use of food as a form of political manoeuvring is repeated in the recipe collection multiple times and seems to have been commonplace. We see this in ibn al-Warrāq, Hunt, No. 187.

⁷⁵⁰ Ahsan, Muhammed Manazir. *Social Life Under the ‘Abbasids, (170-289/786-902)*, (US: ProQuest, 2017), 114-115.

⁷⁵¹ Hassan, Mona F. ‘Relations, Narrations, and Judgments: The Scholarly Networks and Contributions of an Early Female Muslim Jurist’, *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (2015), 337.

⁷⁵² Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Abū ‘Umar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad. *The Unique Necklace, Volume II*, (Lebanon: The Centre of Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 2009), 29.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid*, 29.

that such a precedent continued within the Islamic Empire as it expanded eastwards. Although with this expansion came a shift in how the dinner table was important, as the increase in maritime trade and the volume of foreign foodstuffs such as spices and vegetables meant that there were new elements at play such as health risks that were involved in unknown foods not being cooked properly. With foreign spices the added danger was accidental poisoning that could lead to temporary ill health such as an upset stomach which has previously been discussed. To even more dire consequences such as death. Spices being used had to be used properly by chefs who were comfortable with using them and feeding them to clients with a lot of disposable income, and as such, people with a lot of power. This meant that there was a very specific form of impact that cooks had on medics, because they would have been adept in using the items for consumptions, again feedings into the sociological impacts that one use of spices could have beyond their intended use.

Especially because ibn Warrāq notes that specific foods were also used as a gift-exchange or act of fealty when he records the process of preparing them. One such example being an account for a recipe of Kardanj chicken (grilled on a rotating spit), which an official sent as a gift to his superior, governor Mu'nis al-Muzaffar (d.320 A.H./932 A.D.), on a summer day.⁷⁵⁴ Spices were used of course as expenses were not spared, but this does explain further the significance of the dinner table and how Indian Ocean goods became integral to this.

The use of food as a form of political manoeuvring is repeated in the recipe collection multiple times and seems to have been commonplace. We see this in the *Annals of the Caliphs Kitchens* by ibn al-Warrāq where he describes the notable dishes and political figures that use the dinner table to manoeuvre these complicated political relationships. He consistently makes note of black pepper, saffron, ginger, and spikenard, and other Indian Ocean spices that

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid, 31.

originate in India throughout the text.⁷⁵⁵ The text also lists and is organised in terms of political dinners and events with the presence of ostentatious dishes and what they are made of closely reported. The most notable example being when the Caliph al-Muhtadī (d. 279 A.H./870 A.D.) came to power, he did away with the men of his predecessors. But the Caliph spared Abū Nūḥ al-Kātib, the secretary vizier because Abū Nūḥ's mother used to send the new Caliph presents of *kamakh* 'fermented condiment' and nougat, and olives as big as eggs, as well as other gifts that were luxuries.⁷⁵⁶ Whilst these things specifically were not Indian Ocean goods, they do highlight the importance of food on the diplomatic landscape and thus how the spices and perfumes that came to be a part of the adornment of these dinner tables. This actively highlights that these meals were coming into a system that valued notability in food to foster relationships between political actors.

In the *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh*⁷⁵⁷ which is translated and dissected by A.J. Arberry, there is specific attention to detail and even the items that are worn to a feast are considered of note. The level of attention is so high that even the spices that are used must be the very best of the best. Only the 'choisest [sic] of cloves' are desired for the elite,⁷⁵⁸ as well as the presence of tarragon and mint, and only the 'finest ginger and pepper best'.⁷⁵⁹ What was worn at these extravagant banquets was also of note and we are aware that robes were also made of fine cloth with interlaces of gold threading at the waist.⁷⁶⁰ Indeed, cloves are mentioned with spikenard and musk, as well as ambergris in ibn al-Warrāq's work, as one of the primary spices used to 'perfume the cooking pot' in order to make it fit for the elite to consume.⁷⁶¹ The fact that spices were brought in just to make food smell good – not even for the taste itself sometimes – and at

⁷⁵⁵ Ibn al-Warrāq, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchen*, 20-31.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibn 'Abd Rabbih. *The Unique Necklace*, 32.

⁷⁵⁷ The Book of Dishes.

⁷⁵⁸ Arberry, A.J. 'A Baghdad Cookery Book (Kitab al-Tabikh)', *Medieval Cookery*, Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arberry and Charles Perry, (trans.), (2001), 25.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷⁶¹ Al-Warrāq, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 91.

great expense, is indicative of the level of wealth that was being displayed on the tables of those who could afford to be so ostentatious. We are aware of this as sweeteners such as ‘sugar, bees’ honey, (*‘asal al-nahl*), red sugar and honey’ are also recommended by ibn al-Warrāq for flavouring.⁷⁶² The displays of wealth on both the table and the people attending were a far cry from the humility and simple ways of the Prophet Muhammed and the Rāshidūn⁷⁶³ that followed him. But the fact that the precedent had changed so quickly, and dramatically with a two centuries is testament to the power that the objects and foods had on the diplomatic stage of the world in the early medieval era. This was an era where ostentatious displays of wealth through food was an indication of class in a society that seemed to have been obsessed with it. This is fed into the level of demand that further drove the market of spices and perfumes in the Middle East to expand further consolidating it as a globalised trading item.

Despite the obvious pleasing aspects of food that ibn al-Warrāq focuses on, he is nothing but scrupulous and he does (admittedly later) include in his work the properties of cloves being that they ‘are hot and dry.’⁷⁶⁴ As well as the fact that ‘They strengthen the stomach and the heart.’⁷⁶⁵ He does the same of Indian spikenard and musk, ambergris, and aloe wood. All meticulously put down in a list, indicating that there was an element of medicinal interest even by the those interested in the kitchens working in the early Islamic Empires,⁷⁶⁶ so much so, that even the language was affected. There are now multiple phrases in the Arabic language that attribute illness specifically from a seed that is consumed or a particular bark of a tree. The specificity of the phrases suggests that the need to know where illness comes from in food is

⁷⁶² Ibid, 91.

⁷⁶³ Rashidun means ‘the four Rightly Guided Caliphs’ which included Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali.

⁷⁶⁴ Al-Warrāq, *Annals of the Caliphs’ Kitchens*, 138.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid, 138.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid, 138.

something that became prevalent to at least those who were able to dabble in the consumption of foodstuffs they did not fully know the side effects of.⁷⁶⁷

The above examples are Arab and specifically Baghdadi which makes them a valuable insight into that landscape, but it is very introspective. However, with the combination of archaeological evidence, travelogues, and cookbooks one can piece together the societal effects of trade with South Asia and through there East Asia. Jamal ad-dīn Yūsuf b. Ḥasan. ibn ‘Abdahladi a scholar on cuisine in the early medieval era⁷⁶⁸ explains using cookbooks that lower Mesopotamia had rice as a delicacy and a luxury foodstuff for the monied classes,⁷⁶⁹ whereas this was already being farmed extensively in Asia.

For this to be possible there had to be communication with the people in Asia who had already been cooking with the items. Also, just for it to be worthy to be brought over to the Caliphate across the Indian Ocean and seen as something worth buying, they had to be informed about the product. Moreover, studies into items and literature provided a sense of prestige to further the allure of spices, especially when new properties such as medicinal uses and aromatic properties were found that could be added to perfumes or in an apothecary. The fact that the literature was being produced (or at least the surviving literature that we have available) after the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D., suggests that the foreign goods involved in making the cuisine were increasing in their importance. It was no small thing to decide to study a subject and write down your findings in the medieval era. Especially given that this was a period in which only that which was considered worth noting was written down, and whilst literacy rates were better

⁷⁶⁷ Lane, Edward William. *Arabic-English Lexicon, Book 1-Part 2*, (London: William and Norgate, 1865), 690-695.

⁷⁶⁸ Death date unknown and is not to be confused with Ibn abd al-Hadi who passed in 1343 A.D./743 A.H. and was from what is now Syria.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibn ‘Abdahladi, Djamal ad-din Yusud b. Hasan. ‘The Cookery Book’, *al-Mashrik*, S.H. Zayyat (trans.), (1937), p. 371ff.

in the Middle East than in the West, they were still mostly to do with the elite, who were also the ones that were consuming luxury products.

The enduring social symptom of having cuisine take such a prominent role in the household and state functions, meant that entire ceremonies of behaviour started to be formed around food, and what was acceptable in some cases and what was not. This was to the point that food was classed as almost just as important as the dress of the nobility and is recorded alongside one another by the likes of the contemporary writer al-Washshā (d. 234/235 A.H./ 936/937 A.D.) who wrote the *Kitab al-Muwashā* (The Book of Brocade). Although, in his work he mostly focused on textiles, given that this varied the most according to the region.⁷⁷⁰ His work is particularly interesting as he was said to have been a private tutor of princes at the Caliphal court.⁷⁷¹ Nevertheless, Caliphs became known for how much they spent on their meals, and their inner circle followed in this behaviour to the point that the lavish amounts of spices used and the amount that was consumed became harmful.⁷⁷² Indeed, due to the fact that the more expensive a dish was the more prestigious it was deemed, spices were used in excess and at great quantities to the point that it is believed that the Caliph al-Manṣūr is reported to have passed away, due to the suffering from a stomach ailment that was believed to be from the direct result of consuming food in excess.⁷⁷³ We are aware of this because of the account where he invited ibn Jurjīs to treat him, and after examining the patient, both physician and Caliph decided that the best course of action would be to reduce his food intake.⁷⁷⁴ Food in itself became such a staple of wealth that the quantity and ingredients were indicators of wealth and power in and of themselves. This also explains why foreign medicines were also starting to come to the fore to some extent too. As the ailments were caused by foreign substances, it

⁷⁷⁰ Ahsan, *Social Life Under the 'Abbasids*, 89.

⁷⁷¹ Raven, W. 'al-Washshā' *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. (eds.), (2012), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7880

⁷⁷² Ahsan, *Social Life Under the 'Abbasids*, 117.

⁷⁷³ Ibid, 117.

⁷⁷⁴ Wilson, *The Bakhtishu*, 27.

makes sense to look to those regions again for the cure, as the people from there would have been consuming the items for much longer and found a way to become immune or reduce the side effects.

Moreover, the importance of the liberality of the Caliphs in their food consumption and how generous they were in relation to this was even memorialised upon their deaths as any other case of gift giving was. After the death of the Caliph Abū al-'Abbās, it was stated that he was liberal in money and food and gave gifts in excess that included cloths and perfumes.⁷⁷⁵ The fact that this was considered important enough to record upon the event of his death is telling of how central food and its role had become at court. Even in cases of safe conduct, such as what happened when 'Abd Allah was captured, it was impressed that those that belonged to the 'Abbasid family were especially attuned to the fact that their status in the hierarchy still be upheld, and that the luxuries of the person would be retained.⁷⁷⁶ This was not limited to just what one wore which was specified too but included food and drink at a particular standard. Given that all the luxuries were staples of the prestige of courts and the upper classes of the 'Abbasids it is then understandable why food and its access was so political. To be able to have it in great swathes was put in the same standing of money, and other staples of power that had to be retained – even in imprisonment.

The combination of liberality and foreign foods taking a central role in diplomatic relations, internal family politics and security of oneself is perfectly seen in al-Ma'mūn's wife.⁷⁷⁷ Al-Ma'mūn married a woman who was nicknamed Būrān (192-271 A.H./807-884 A.D.), whose father was al-Ḥasan b. Sahl. He was secretary of and governor for the 'Abbāsīd

⁷⁷⁵ El Cheikh, Nadia Maria. 'To be a Princess in the Fourth/Tenth-Century 'Abbasid Court', *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, Metin Kunt, (eds.), (2011), 216.

⁷⁷⁶ Robinson. C.F. and A. Marsham. 'The Safe-Conduct for the 'Abbasid 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali (d. 764)', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 70, No. 2, (2007), 267.

⁷⁷⁷ Perry, Charles. 'Buran Eleven Hundred Years in the History of a Dish', *Medieval Cookery*, Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arbery and Charles Perry, (trans.), (2001), 241.

Caliph al-Ma'mūn in Iraq,⁷⁷⁸ and brother of the vizier al-Faḍl b. Sahl,⁷⁷⁹ and his security was tenuous as his brother had been poisoned (there is speculation that it was by al-Ma'mūn or at least under his order) and had himself spent time in Hārūn al-Rashīd's prison.⁷⁸⁰ The wedding was then a way to consolidate the relationship between the family and the inner circle of the Caliph and ensure that no further misfortunes befell them. It makes sense then that the dishes and opulence of the wedding managed to survive and the accounts that we have are from 125 years later.⁷⁸¹ It is said that that when al-Ma'mūn arrived there was a shower of pearls to greet him and Būrān lit a candle of pure ambergris in the wedding chamber to keep it fragrant.⁷⁸² The dishes notably included a lot of pepper, herbs, spices, and aubergine.⁷⁸³

The presence of aubergine is also important in recreating and locating the retellings of the dish that were named after Būrān later in the *Kitab al Tabikh*⁷⁸⁴ which was written three hundred years later, and the role of aubergine was sizeably less prominent and is little used in the tenth century recipe.⁷⁸⁵ What is important to note however is that the dishes presented at the wedding of al-Ma'mūn became so famous that there were accounts written about it long after its occurrence. Whether hyperbolised or not, their recording placed significance on these events and what they symbolised, which indicates that being able to host such an event was no small feat. Being able to host food items that came from India in ninth century Baghdad and the surrounding areas had a place in diplomacy and spilled over into the social gatherings of the elite where diplomatic relationships were executed and formed. Especially since we are aware that Baghdad was ripe for trade given its geographical advantage of the two rivers which

⁷⁷⁸ Kennedy, Hugh. *The Early 'Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History*, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 208.

⁷⁷⁹ Sourdel, D. 'al-Ḥasan b. Sahl', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, (eds.), (2012), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2754

⁷⁸⁰ Perry, (2001), 241.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid, 241-242.

⁷⁸² Ibid, 241-242.

⁷⁸³ Ibid, 241-242.

⁷⁸⁴ *Kitab al Tabikh* means 'Book of Dishes'.

⁷⁸⁵ Perry, (2001), 243.

ran through the city connecting it to both sides of the Caliphal borders which is recorded as early as the ninth century by Arab geographers such as al-Muqaddasī,⁷⁸⁶ which highlights just how important trade and supply lines were for the elite and where they chose to settle.

With all this being said, the idea of hospitality itself and treating one's guests well was a notion that has been ingrained in the early medieval Caliphate from the time of the Prophet Muhammed according to hadith tradition. It is recorded that he said that 'There is no good in him who is not a giver of hospitality', and 'the best among you is he who feeds his people.'⁷⁸⁷ This is present in the mocking of such 'misers' who are stingy with their food sources when entertaining guests as is seen in the writings in *Kitāb al-Bukhalā*⁷⁸⁸ by Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 254 A.H./868 A.D.)⁷⁸⁹. It is recorded as one of the most undesirable qualities in a man and host was to be stingy with one's food and accept hospitality from those that you would not intentionally try to do the best for in return.⁷⁹⁰ It is true that similar sentiments are found in most religions and is not just a response to the harsh and often dangerous environment of early medieval Arabia.⁷⁹¹ When the Muslim armies conquered Iran, which allowed for a lot of the foreign substances that were at the wedding ceremony of Būrān and al-Ma'mūn to be present in vast volumes, they encountered a civilisation that was already in the throes of an extravagant precedent in display dining.⁷⁹²

The Persian court had elaborate and detailed conventions about the best of foods and they were recorded as the stuff of legends and had long standing traditions that were said to

⁷⁸⁶ Al Muqaddasī, Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr. *The best divisions for knowledge of the regions*, Basil Anthony Collins, (trans.), (London: Garnet, 1994), 439-458.

⁷⁸⁷ Perry, Charles. 'Elements of Arab Feasting', *Medieval Cookery*, Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arbery and Charles Perry, (trans.), (2001), 227-228.

⁷⁸⁸ Means the 'Book of Misers'.

⁷⁸⁹ Guzman, Roberto Marin. 'La literatura arabe como Fuente para la historica social: el caso del Kitab al-Bukhala' de al-jahiz', *Estudios de Asia y Africa*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (1993), 32.

⁷⁹⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, Abū 'Uthmān ibn Baḥr. *The Book of Misers, al-Bukhalā*', R.B. Sergeant, (trans.), (Lebanon: Garnet Publishing Ltd., 1997), 1-3.

⁷⁹¹ Perry, 'Elements of Arab Feasting', 228.

⁷⁹² Ibid, 229-230.

have dated back to ancient times.⁷⁹³ The numerous Persian dishes in medieval Arabic cookery and the Persianate competitive gourmet feasts in the circles of the ‘Abbasid Caliphs and by the Caliphs themselves also attests to Persian influence in the early Islamic Empire.⁷⁹⁴ Some dishes were very highly regarded,⁷⁹⁵ such as those that included perishables all the way from South Asia like aubergine, whilst others were not. Even still, the presence of items such as spices which were still valuable regardless of their longevity if preserved right, meant that their place and volume in the hierarchy was very clear in each region of the Caliphate where wealth was present such as Baghdad. All of this carried onto the twelfth century,⁷⁹⁶ which means that it is then logical that the spices and styles of cooking that came with Persian influence permeated the rest of the near and Middle East.

Entire infrastructures within the palaces were set up to accommodate this new display of wealth, that entailed massive amounts of food. We are aware that food always had a level of prestige in monetary terms in the Caliphate as members of the army were sometimes paid in salt. Hence, the idea of substituting money itself for foodstuffs that were needed for survival (as salt is needed in extremely warm climates) means that the precedent was already there. When foreign spices started to be introduced on a larger scale, it made sense that space was made in conventions of measuring power and wealth, alongside all the other comforts that came with the onset of increased maritime trade that was coming through the Indian Ocean and into the near and Middle East.

Metals and money in the Caliphate:

The movement of Indian Ocean perfumes and spices was also indicative of the movement of wealth and diplomatic relations. Due to the luxury status of both substances, they were proxies

⁷⁹³ Ibid, 229-230.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid, 229-230.

⁷⁹⁵ Charles, Perry. ‘What to order in Ninth-Century Baghdad’, *Medieval Cookery*, Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arbery and Charles Perry, (trans.), (2001), 220.

⁷⁹⁶ Perry, ‘Elements of Arab Feasting’, 230.

for early forms of globalised contact. But to be able to purchase them, one needed avenues with which to pay for the items that could transcend regions, and also not be susceptible to spoilage as bartering for other foodstuffs would have been. Hence, it is important to understand the economy of the early medieval era in the areas that are being discussed. Especially because the increase in globalised trade also meant that coinage, and a standardised amount of gold was needed in order to be able to exchange them with merchants who only dealt in luxury goods.

This was not new as pre-Islamic Arabia was heavily involved in trade before its unification under any one single ruler during the late seventh to early eighth century. The Quraysh were heavily involved in trade before they occupied Mecca as rulers, but even if they were a powerful tribe within the city,⁷⁹⁷ they were not *de facto* rulers. Arabia and the surrounding lands had been involved in external trade from the time of antiquity on such a large scale that thousands of gold and silver mines are still dateable in the region to have been historically foraged for the retraction of precious metals.⁷⁹⁸ The trade that was indigenous to the region beforehand and its *longue duree* must be considered to fully understand the effects of the external trade of the Caliphate post-700 A.D. This is because one must be able to contextualise what the change was, where, and how it was different. Whilst this has been in large part done in the beginning of this chapter, what this section intends to look at specifically is the role of precious metals and monetized economy and how the role of these two things became very specific in the trading of spices and gold from South Asia up to Europe, and how the pre-existing trading networks evolved into the large and convoluted mass that was later dubbed the Silk Roads.

We are aware from the tenth century Yemeni geographer al-Hamdānī (d.334 A.H./945 A.D.) that the Sassanids mined silver in the Yemen and even opened up a land route through

⁷⁹⁷ Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, 169.

⁷⁹⁸ Heck, (1999), 367-369.

central Arabia to transport silver from the region all the way back to Persia.⁷⁹⁹ This connotes that the area was already undergoing constant reconfigurations of trade routes in order to make transport of goods more efficient and secure, and thus the continuation of this during the 700's was a part of this process. This is important because, whilst spices and perfume were not directly involved, it highlights that trading routes to Asia – particularly areas near to South Asia – were already sought after and that what made the period of 700-1100 A.D. exceptional was the fact that the variety, volume, and demand for such items had drastically changed to have become much larger in every respect.

Indeed, al-Hamdānī's interest in this in and of itself is indication enough of the pervasiveness of trade, as he was from the Bakīl strand of the Hamdan tribe which made up a confederation-like group in the northern highlands of the near and Middle East.⁸⁰⁰ This is because there had to be a motive for him to research and account for these events; they had to be considered noteworthy. Moreover, he also most likely needed an audience which suggests that in his writing one could infer that an audience existed, as this is what led to patronage of scholars from courts and institutions. This is important because it indicates that there were trade routes that were being built and actively pursued to link the Middle East and Asia and that this was a process that was being engineered through the rising demand for goods and interconnectedness through advances in naval and overland transportations. Hence, by the time of the 'new' perfumes and spices trade of the ninth century, there was already a precedent of actors within the Caliphate being gradually directly involved in the areas it was heavily trading with and taking on aspects of that culture. It was from the Sassanians that the Persian language

⁷⁹⁹ Al-Hamdani, Abu Muhammed al-Hasan. *Kītab al-Jawharatayn al'Atiqatayn al-Ma'i'atayn: al-Safrd' wa al-Baydd'*, H. al-Jasir, (ed.), (Riyadh: Dar al-Yamamah, 1987), 13.

⁸⁰⁰ Mahoney, Daniel. 'The Political Construction of a Tribal Genealogy from Early Medieval South Arabia', *Meanings of Community Across Eurasia*, (2016), 172.

filtered through to and was partly adopted by the ‘Abbasids, as well as art and literature, and later etiquette, decorum, and South Asian luxuries that involved all this.

All of this meant that a need for currency was being developed as the choice of bartering was becoming something that was cumbersome and not as stable for long distance trade. Whilst previously, the area between the Sasanian Empire and Byzantium had used a hybrid system of bartering and Byzantine coins on the most part. However, Sassanian coinage were also used, but Byzantine coins were more common because they were recognised in a larger area as the equivalent of the ‘American Silver Dollar’ of the early medieval era as was mentioned earlier. The issue with this lay in the fact that coinage was usually used to indicate the sovereign and rightful ruler of a region, and thus, having foreign coinage started to become problematic as the Caliphate consolidated itself into a government that could join the world stage as an empire within its own right. On the diplomatic side too, there was a need to have an Arab ‘Islamic’ coinage to express the independence and sovereign right of the Caliph apart from the Byzantine emperor, as was discussed earlier.

The coinage itself is deeply connected to the external trade of the Caliphate, even if it was mainly circulated within its borders because of the fact that the monetised economy was needed for the borders where the army was mostly stationed, and also the ports.⁸⁰¹ We cannot say how much this was per soldier, in 892 A.D. where the expenditure was measured in gold *dīnārs* the total daily expenditure in the ‘Abbasid Caliphate was 7,915 *dīnārs*.⁸⁰² This is no small amount given that this was all weight in gold.

Due to the nature of the trade being mostly by sea by the middle of the eighth century the plotting of the mints that are marked in figure 4 suggest that the coins were used in order

⁸⁰¹ See figure 4.

⁸⁰² Kennedy, Hugh. ‘Military pay and the economy of the early Islamic State’, *Historical Research*, Vol. 75, (2002), 159-160.

to buy and sell at the ports and also for the armies. In this sense, the external trade of the Caliphate was not just creating whole new aspects of markets in the Middle East with new perfume substances and spices, it was also changing the way that they operated into a very monetized society in comparison to before. Indeed, having vast amounts of gold in coinage and being able to transport it by camel, due to the natural resources of gold in the area meant that the velocity of trade was allowed to rocket exponentially.⁸⁰³

Indeed, having vast amounts of gold in coinage and being able to transport it by camel, due to the natural resources of gold in the area meant that the velocity of trade was allowed to rocket exponentially.⁸⁰⁴ We are aware from both al-Wāqidī and al-Ṭabarī that it was not uncommon for a caravan to have over two thousand camels, and at least two caravans having over 1500 camels each and carrying 50,000 gold dinars worth of merchandise.⁸⁰⁵ The fact that by this point in the eighth century, merchandise was valued by the measurement of gold dīnārs, and the quantities were so large are indicative of how the system had evolved into something new – as gold dinars were new too. Like all medieval societies bartering still existed on the local level, but the markets had shifted to create a more efficient system to streamline transactions.⁸⁰⁶

Medieval Islamic coins themselves became a commodity, as one needed to remember that gold was still a luxury product, and just like perfumes coinage was also used along with perfumery as a form of gift giving by the eighth to the ninth century. Gifting became the way to celebrate occasions and to foster good-will amongst diplomatic circles and across borders, as discussed earlier in relation to perfumes and spices. Hence, in this way the necessity for coinage to keep up with the demand of paying a standing army and trading across continents,

⁸⁰³ Heck, (1999), 379.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid, 379.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid, 379.

⁸⁰⁶ Shaw, Eric H. 'Ancient and medieval marketing', *The Routledge Companion to Marketing*, D.G. Brian Jones and Mark Tadajewski, (eds.), (2016), 26-34.

also shaped the way that celebrations were conducted. Even in the case of diplomatic relations, just as perfumes could have been an aggressive gift of supposed superiority as they had been to the Byzantine Emperor, the coinage was the same and sparked the ‘War of Images’ which has been much discussed in academia in terms of Byzantine-Arab relations.

Gold and coinage (including silver coinage) especially, were a product of the increasingly sedentary nature of the government that was occurring within the Caliphate as it progressed up to the millennium. The external trade of Arab traders and the need to meet the increasing hunger of the elite to consume foreign products meant that Islamic coinage was the most appropriate means to gain such products without using the coinage of another ruler and thereby undermining the Caliph. Moreover, the coinage itself took on a socio-political role of being a staple of events and occasions as well as diplomatic gifts and envoys which were a domino effect of the same movement of the rise of globalisation that was occurring through prolonged interaction across borders. Gold has always been a stable (or the most stable) source of capital that could easily be exchanged no matter where you are in the world and the early medieval near and Middle East was no exception to this rule. Especially when one considers that standing armies need to be paid and are just as dangerous for their own government as well as outsiders when payment is not received. Gold has been the lubrication to systems of government from time immemorial, and its significance in the face of increase trans-continental trade and the introduction of coinage still increased. Luxury items meant that gold was the currency to use, and long distances meant that it was much more practical than any other form of payment.

The formation of the merchant elite and the development of food consumption:

By the ninth century the ‘Abbasid Caliphate was consolidated enough that internally the elite started to increasingly form itself as a social class with sets of codified social and political

behaviours.⁸⁰⁷ This became such a phenomenon that Fanny Bessard in her recent book *Caliphs and Merchants: Cities and Economies of Power in the Near East* published in 2020 argues that there were openly consumerist industries that were expanding. She includes the expansion of infrastructure, from the vessels of food such as ceramics, to the processing of food too, which was an indication of one's social status.⁸⁰⁸ The diets of the elite population of the near and Middle Eastern society invariably altered according to the shipments of food that were coming into the areas involved in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean trade. Rice was a crop common for South Asia and the region that is now called China, and cookbooks from the Islamic Empire contain numerous recipes of rice dishes which were considered delicious and also prestigious meals.⁸⁰⁹ This was probably the case because it was only during the time of the 'Abbasid Caliphs that rice was introduced in to the Middle East on a large scale.⁸¹⁰ Rice plantations only came with the turn of the millennium, and even then it was only for the elite in lower Mesopotamia for years from South and East Asia.⁸¹¹ With this came a new strand of the elite that heretofore had only made up a small section of the upper classes, and to a lesser extent, the merchant class.

Whilst we know non-Muslim Arabs were still involved in the government and the clerical elite as they had always been in the region, this also spilt over into the merchant clans that were forming in almost an institutionalised way. We see this in the life of Nayray b. Nīssim, who was mentioned earlier in this chapter who was a prosperous and well-known merchant of Egypt. The famous merchant had a well-documented amount of success in trading across the Mediterranean for the best part of half a century. He had started his career as a scholar and

⁸⁰⁷ Bessard, Fanny. *Caliphs and Merchants: Cities and Economies of Power in the Near East (700-950)*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 253.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid, 103-127.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibn 'Abdalhadi, Djamal ad-din Yusud b. Hasan. 'The Cookery Book', *al-Mashrik*, S.H. Zayyat (trans.), (1937), p. 371ff.

⁸¹⁰ Ashtor, Eliyahu. 'The Diet of Salaried Classes in the Medieval Near East', *The Medieval Near East: Social and Economic History, Collected Studies*, (1978), 2.

⁸¹¹ Ibid, 2.

arrived in Fustat in order to complete his studies in the 1040s A.D.⁸¹² It was there that he began to really take part in the trading connections that were available and through his lineage and connections on his mother's side managed to marry into a family that was considered to be a business clan.⁸¹³

The fact that he had to be recommended by his tutor and his mother to enter the trading relations is indicative of institutionalisation, this was definitely in a time that trade was increasingly becoming such an integral part of elite society. To the point that even the gifts given to servants were recorded to measure the magnanimity of a master, meant that it is logical for those allowed into this process were increasingly vetted beforehand. We are aware of even low-level gifting because of the vizier Ḥāmid b. 'Abbās (d. 208 A.H./824 A.D.), who had it recorded during the first half of the tenth century that he offered gifts to all of his guests, servants, and even the slaves were given white bread.⁸¹⁴ Whilst bread itself could be found in the Middle East indigenously, the idea of gifting and including what was considered to be even the lowliest of peoples, is something that occurred on a large scale due to the fact that, there was by this time a formalised ceremony of receiving and giving out foreign gifts, as the Caliphate was entering into world politics and inevitably had taken on this aspect of elite medieval culture that was universal in the areas from Europe all the way to China.

What is important to note here is that elite society was creating new avenues to join through the merchant elite. Whilst this did not include the uber elite of the Caliph's inner circle, they were included in the relationships that were being fostered as seen by the vizier taking part in the gifting. It also shows in the fact that ibn Nissim felt the need to marry into a business family and did so through specific contacts. This was after the career and subsequent downfall

⁸¹² Goldberg, Jessica L. *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean, The Geniza Merchants, and their Business World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 33.

⁸¹³ *Ibid*, 34.

⁸¹⁴ At- Tanūkhī, Al-Muḥassin ibn 'Alī. 'Nishwar al-Muhadara', *The Table-talk of a Mesopotamian Judge, Part I*, D.S. Margoliouth, (trans.), (1922), 14.

of al-Kindī which was explored earlier. This may explain that whilst ibn Nissim was a pivotal part of the Radhanite Jewish community in which he was adopted in Fustat, he was careful to be discreet and never to take part in political and societal issues openly.⁸¹⁵ Whilst we are aware that he was definitely Jewish from the letter that was sent from his mother cautioning him not to fall behind on his Torah⁸¹⁶ studies, he is reluctant to publicly address or take part in the struggles over leadership of a Palestinian institution of learning that was important to Jewish learning.⁸¹⁷ His reluctance to join into the discourse may have been personal disinterest, however this seems unlikely as we are aware of a letter from one of his correspondents from Jerusalem who ibn Nissim knew through his sister, and in this letter his associate warns him to show increasing discretion in his public life. It may be that by this time, the movement for the administration to take note of what pillars of the community were saying, even if they were scholars and merchants, may have meant that the environment was not one that was completely free in this respect any longer.

Also, ibn Nissim participated in scholarly debates, taught in Fustat, and did give legal opinions within his own community (who were mostly of Jewish descent) which meant that it was unlikely that he remained sans opinion considering contemporary controversies in leadership and academia that he was presented with. Indeed, he was given the title of ‘senior of the academy’ with great prestige and respect from the Babylonian Academy and was the only merchant within his lifetime to receive such an honour.⁸¹⁸ The title is indicative of his higher learning and his role in the community which would also suggest that his role in politics would have been a given. His lack of inclusion combined with the cautions that he received from associates that were at centres of commerce, learning, and government such as Jerusalem,

⁸¹⁵ Goldberg, *Trade and Institution in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 34-36.

⁸¹⁶ The Torah is the Jewish holy scripture that is typically made up of 5 parts of books.

⁸¹⁷ Goldberg, *Trade and Institution in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 34-36.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid*, 34-36.

suggests that to do so would have been detrimental to him in some way. This is not wild conjecture when one considers the case of al-Kindī. Both of their lives highlight that whilst Arab traders were private individuals, the political climate also affected their behaviour, or they were forced to feel the consequences of falling out of favour of the administration through their actions.

The coming of the year 1000 A.D in the near and Middle East meant that merchants could make a fortune in trading foodstuffs and perfumes from Asia into the region and up to Europe. The fact that the rulers of the newly formed Islamic Empires (in the sense of both Umayyad Spain and ‘Abbasid Baghdad) meant that political relationships were being fostered outside of immediate spheres of influence. This meant that gifting took on a diplomatic role that involved foreign goods such as spices and perfumes which became a staple in almost all elite occasions; even private functions such as weddings (not including state weddings such as the marriages of the Caliphs). The act of gifting and the permeation of spices and perfumes into the households of all those who could afford them, meant that societal behaviour at large was altered too. The ability to be able to give one another gifts meant that it became the norm for those who could afford it, and so did the consumption of spices and perfumes personally. The role that perfumes and spices played in low level and political relationships meant that there was a new level of importance and significance attributed to them which led to further studies and writings and even a hierarchy of which perfumes and spices were the most notable and which were not. Hence, everything within the Caliphate was slowly evolving and adapting itself into fitting into the role that it was playing in its external linkages and trading routes and relationships.

Conclusion:

The external trade of the Caliphate, like everywhere else in the known world, was felt in the near and Middle East increasingly as globalisation grew in tandem with the growth of trans-

continental trade. The way that it was received was complex, but it is important to note that human nature was still an aspect of society in the early medieval period, just as it has always been. Fear of the unknown and unpredictable consequences from foreign entities, that were at the time, still 'new' in a sense to the general population also grew in tandem with the popularisation of foreign substances. Still, as exotic as these substances were they were not completely shrouded in mystery from complete alienation as we have been led to believe in the era predating European colonial history and connectivity.

Medicine became deeply involved in the elite reception of the knowledge and ideas that were taking hold in society which came with prolonged contact. The reason why this research focuses on medicine is that it is interwoven with the spice and perfume trade which are the indicators by which this study recognises globalisation and its effects.⁸¹⁹ Since it was also such a controversial subject within the Caliphate due to the fields roots in the ancient Greek philosophers who were pagan, and in the fact that a lot of the spices and items that were used belonged to areas outside the Caliphate and came from the east, it is logical that early medieval Muslim societies would have had issues with its origins.⁸²⁰ But its practice also became dangerous, and this is where there has been a gap in the history.

We are aware that medicine has often meant that people have been inadvertently killed because of the experiments doctors and physicians have performed on their patients to attempt to treat them throughout history. Curing substances have often also been poisonous if the dosage was exceeded by a few drops and the Caliphate was no different.⁸²¹ The fear and distrust that stemmed out of this affected more than just physicians and the field of medical practice; it also affected politics. Medicine came from the trans-continental trade and those who became

⁸¹⁹ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 2-5.

⁸²⁰ Peters, (2004), 58.

⁸²¹ Perry, (2001), 241.

too embroiled in the ideas were potentially in bodily danger as we are aware from the fate of al-Kindī. Revisionist histories rarely emphasise this part of the Caliphate, or that even such a group within the elite existed and are quick to romanticise the Arabs for their forward thinking, especially compared to their European counterparts. What we see evidence of here, is a much more three-dimensional Caliphate, with people who had genuine concerns, and given that these people were mostly of the elite as you had to be to afford physicians and modern medicines, their opinion was considered important.⁸²²

This is not to discount however that the trade that came from outside of the Caliphate was used as a point of power, wealth, and even pride on the most part by the administration itself. Even if there were naysayers within it. The act of gifting and using perfume in almost an institutionalised way is indicative of the fact that there were still positive connotations attached to the goods that came out of the trade links with South Asia. Perfumes and spices that were made from the same substances that made up the medicines that became so controversial in the early medieval near and Middle East were also integral medicines. Perfumes themselves became a sign of indulgence and even if they were occasionally condemned by hardliners for the obscene amounts of wealth that was sometimes squandered to buy vast amounts at costly prices for extravagant parties.⁸²³ On the most part, they were ornamental and to indicate the status of the wearer, receiver, and giver of the substances. They also had diplomatic value as gifts, and were used almost aggressively, but their worth remained symbolic rather than being able to do actual bodily harm.

Spices on the other hand were of a different nature. Whilst it is true that they were used in medicines, and medicine was dominated by plant matter, when it came to cuisine spices were a much more political affair than their counterparts in foodstuffs crossing the Indian Ocean.

⁸²² Ivry, (1974), 4.

⁸²³ Perry, (2001), 243.

Their presence at dinner tables were a display of opulence, power, and just a symbol of what the owner was able to procure and the esteem in which they held their dinner companions and guests.⁸²⁴ They brought with them new eating tools and etiquette to ritualise this wealth, and the overconsumption with them spilt into medicine once again. But this is true of overconsumption of anything. Spices were however a vast source of wealth and income to those who dealt in it and led to whole clans of merchants being formed.

In essence the foodstuffs that were involved in the external trade of the Caliphate shaped the Caliphate itself as much as the rest of the world. Society was shaping what it viewed as a luxury and how these things were classed and whether they were seen as forces of good or anti-Islamic. The other roles that these same foodstuffs took on such as in medicine, thought - processes and even poisoning tools that were coming to the fore (although this study does not explore the conscious administering of such substances) meant that there was a whole new protocol and aspects of society that were cropping up. Including those who dealt specifically in perfumes and spices, and their uses and dangers.

Anyone who dealt with food and preparing it for the tables of the elite and those in power made sure that they were at least vaguely aware of the effects that the items in the dishes they were preparing could have on their employers and patrons. We see this in the inclusion of each spice and aromatic substances in the writings of ibn al-Warrāq.⁸²⁵ Despite the risk, their presence was needed because they were still considered to be integral. In fact the presence of perfume in any notable event marked it out as an occasion of importance. The burning of ambergris – and specifically ambergris not just any perfume – was another such component that was expected to be in the presence of importance events. In both cases they took on a role of their own in the message they could convey for all those who were watching and hearing

⁸²⁴ Al-Warrāq, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 29.

⁸²⁵ Ibid.

about them to such an extent that they took on roles of their own, separate from being items of luxury to just enjoy.

Christendom and the Caliphate

Introduction:

The Pirenne argument is that there was a significant slowing down of the Mediterranean trade after the rise of the Islamic Empires that effectively cut Europe off from ‘the Orient’ in comparison to the volume of connectivity that existed under Roman rule.⁸²⁶ Henri Pirenne’s summary of events is now considered too Eurocentric to be completely accurate.⁸²⁷ We are aware from manuscripts such as the *Codex Sangallensis* (a Swiss medicinal manuscript) from the ninth century that Indian Ocean perfumes and spices were permeating into Europe through the Middle East throughout this time.⁸²⁸ It is then important to understand the effects this had on society and politics at large on the European side of the Mediterranean, in order to then gain a fuller nuanced picture of this globalised trade.

We are aware that more recent academics such as McCormick do agree with Pirenne to some extent that mass trade had decreased significantly. There is a caveat to this agreement as McCormick has written extensively that trade was still frequent, but the nature of the trade had shifted to be focused on slaves which by its very nature had less demand than grain, as slaves could only be purchased by those who could afford them.⁸²⁹ His work focuses on the Slavic region of Europe and how Venice used these people to trade them across the Mediterranean for the demand that was very present in the Caliphate which is widely agreed upon.⁸³⁰ He uses mainly merchant accounts and receipts as well as archaeological records such as coinage hoards.⁸³¹ Little mention is made of spices and perfumes and the smaller luxury products that

⁸²⁶ Pirenne, Henri. *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1939), 163-164.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid*, 163-164.

⁸²⁸ ⁸²⁸ Burrige, Claire. ‘Incense in medicine: an early medieval perspective’, *Early Medieval Europe*, (2020), 219-220.

⁸²⁹ McCormick, Michael. *Origins of the European Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6-19.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid*, and Roman K. Kovalev. and Alexis C. Kaelin, ‘Circulation of Arab Silver in Medieval Afro-Eurasia: Preliminary Observations’, *History Compass*, Vol. 5, Issue, 2, (2007), 560-570.

⁸³¹ McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 31-33.

were very much present. But McCormick does make the strong case that elite trade was alive and well.

This chapter intends to elaborate on the relationships that were forged and broken throughout the early medieval period through the lens of the movement of spices and perfume, as well as their presence and usage in Christian courts. This will be through the continuation of trade throughout the changing socio-political landscape that came with the rise of a more globalised economy, political sphere, and the monetised society that was developing a taste for Asian goods down to even the bottom of the social ladder. The domino effect of this being that the consumption of various spices came with studies in the causes and cures of illnesses in people too. Especially as Arab studies of new medicines at this time had a knock-on societal effect on the intellectual and monied elite who could afford their services on both sides of the Mediterranean. This spread into the Carolingian Empire with the movement of these same goods, which also led to the learning and movement of transcription that helped to form the new font Caroline Minuscule which set off the first of the four major Renaissances of Europe. All of this is suggestive of substantial trade of Indian Ocean goods in Europe that was gradually growing with increased awareness of the items, and what they could do, as we will see with the medicinal recipes and the links to power that they represent in Carolingian Europe.

Moreover, with the shifting of the economy and the way in which people trade, comes the need to understand that social mobility became a much more widespread concept in that courts seemed to become much more amenable to newcomers from other empires to join theirs. This is because it is these individuals who were responsible for bringing said luxury Asian goods into Europe – particularly Western Europe which this research focuses on. Even if the empires that these newcomers were arriving from were rivals to their new hosts. Especially, in terms of the Caliphate and the scholars who are still celebrated today in Islamic history. At this point, whilst the Abbasid Caliphate is considered the ‘main’ or most dominant Caliphate on

the stage of world politics as it had control of most of the near and Middle East and the Hijaz which for Muslims was imperative to claim superiority or at least the claim of divine favour as Islamic rulers. The Umayyads however, were still a very much present force in Andalucía⁸³² for almost four centuries.⁸³³ They also played a pivotal role in the movement of Asian goods into the rest of Europe, and much like with the ‘Abbasids and the Byzantines, there was still a willingness to trade, and political antagonisms did not make these two relationships mutually exclusive. Without such willingness it is unlikely such vast quantities of foreign goods could have even made it further north beyond the lands near the Mediterranean.

We are aware that such movement must have existed because there are hundreds of thousands of dirhams which had been found all over the coast of the Baltic Sea, as well as in Poland and near what is now Russia.⁸³⁴ Whilst this was the Central Asian trade and not the Mediterranean trade,⁸³⁵ the indication of globalisation is still inherent. The dirhams are evidence of not only the presence of cross-religious and continental trade but how frequent and intense it was during the fourth and fifth centuries A.H./ninth and tenth centuries A.D.⁸³⁶ The sheer numbers of traders and amount of wealth that was passing through these areas meant that it is logical that physical infrastructures, such as the main markets to congregate to, have financial and legal arrangements that helped sustain it as well as the merchant diasporas that were emerging as time went on and their local families.⁸³⁷ Whilst this in and of itself is not the Mediterranean trade, this is just to mention that this research acknowledges that the section of globalisation that is being focused upon, and the merchant actors were participating in, is

⁸³² Now would be referred to what was called ‘Muslim Spain and Portugal’.

⁸³³ Hebert, Raymond J. ‘The Coinage of Islamic Spain’, *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. ½, (1991), 113-116.

⁸³⁴ Jankowiak, Marek. ‘Infrastructure and organisation of the early Islamic slave trade with northern Europe, Dirhams for Slaves’, by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Khalil Research Centre, University of Oxford, (2017), 1.

⁸³⁵ Noonan, Thomas. ‘When and how dirhams first reached Russia [A numismatic critique of the Pirenne theory’, *Cahiers du Monde Russe*, (1980), 402-405.

⁸³⁶ Jankowiak, 1-3.

⁸³⁷ Ibid, 1-4

indeed a part of a much wider network, and perfumes and spices were not the only component, they are just the focus for this research. The trade with the Slavic states (in what is today Croatia) was still very much active in terms of slaves at this point that this research focuses on but will not be discussed due to limited scope as it is a topic unto itself.

To understand the socio-political effects of the Caliphate in Christian Europe for the Carolingians, it is important to contextualise the setting in which the perfume and spice trade was entering and the political and religious climate of the time. This is because to fully appreciate the diversity that existed within Christendom as well as the Caliphate one must appreciate the fact that Christianity was still being canonised into the form that we recognise it today in this period and later still.⁸³⁸ This is a period where religion and state power were not mutually exclusive in every known part of the medieval world.

The relation to trade with all of this is that all the events above were occurring on the world stage in a way that was unprecedented to be so closely knit with the events of other empires across the Mediterranean up until then. This is because the gold solidi that Charlemagne had minted were calibrated so that they had enough gold in them to be exchanged with the Caliphate. This also meant that the courts in between the two empires, such as in Sicily, could engage in the system of cabotage that was developing, and consume the same luxury products. Also this indicates is that these coins were expected to be transferred beyond just both the Caliphal and Carolingian spheres. The most common way such an event would occur is with trade and the exchange of diplomatic gifts that usually contained the transmission of some sort of gold or precious metal in the medieval period. The former activity, however, would have been the most proliferate due to the expansion of maritime trade and the heightened

⁸³⁸ Moreland, John and Robert Wan de Noort, 'Integration and Social Reproduction in the Carolingian Empire', *World Archaeology*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (1992), 322-327.

demand for Asian goods such as perfumes, gold, silks, spices, and metalwork in the Carolingian court that both fuelled and was the cause of this.⁸³⁹

The Mediterranean trade and its effects on society:

The trade between the Caliphate and the Carolingians which developed into intellectual movements that passed medicinal, philosophical, and political knowledge should not be ignored if one is going to explore the globalisation of the economic networks of the early medieval world. There are accounts from al-Kindī and ibn al-Nadīm (both scholars in Baghdad in the early medieval Caliphate) showing that the Arabs prided themselves on the knowledge of the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome.⁸⁴⁰ They even had commentaries in the markets of the Middle East on different theories and standpoints that were discussed amongst scholars and celebrated when understood if considered particularly complex. Indeed, in the field of medicine the Arabs were keen on poring over Greek works, just before and during the Carolingian Renaissance (also the first renaissance).⁸⁴¹ The relevance of this being that with the transmission of these same spices and perfumes with medicinal properties also coming to Europe, meant that that same learning started to take hold there too.

This became the case to such an extent that later when the translation movement began to translate originally Greek works from Arabic into Latin for European consumption, Arab medical works also came to the fore. We see this in the eventual culmination of the work of ibn Sina (Avicenna) and also of ibn Zakariyya al-Rāzī whose work on measles and smallpox was translated into Latin for the European side of the Mediterranean, even if this was after the period this study focuses on, it is a process.⁸⁴² The fact that the medicine that was used was

⁸³⁹ Fried, Johannes. *Charlemagne*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 176-177.

⁸⁴⁰ Peters, Francis E. 'Hermes and Harran: The Roots of Arabic-Islamic Occultism', *Magic and Divination in Early Islam. The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, Emilie Savage-Smith, (ed.), Vol. 42, (2004), 58-59.

⁸⁴¹ Amar, Zohar. and Afraim Lev. *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 2-5.

⁸⁴² Meyerhof. M, 'Thirty-three clinical observations by Rhazes (circa 900 A.D.)', *Isis*, Vol. 23, (1935), 321.

mostly based on Greek works meant that the cures were plant based and were found in spices and items that were also used in perfumery, which in turn meant that the value of such items continued to soar in terms of gold.

This affected the Indian Ocean trade due to the system of cabotage that existed in more ways than one, as well as shaped European tastes once again. Perfumes and spices were always accompanied by other luxury items as we see this in the aesthetics of art that were being produced in Europe at this time in the Carolingian Empire. As discussed earlier the Arabs would trade in South Asia for ivory that was popular in China and notably for this study, Carolingian Europe. We know this because the *Cathedra Petri* which has eighteen ivory panels with the trials of Hercules is testament to this.⁸⁴³ The importance of this being that ivory had to be imported from India which we are aware did happen from the accounts of al-Sirāfī as mentioned in the previous chapter. Their importance in this study lays in the fact that the material used itself is indicative of the level of connectivity that the transcontinental trade had now given that eighteen panels in no small feat. Especially considering that the ivory used had to have come out of the Middle East given that elephants are not indigenous to Europe at all and explains why the Arabs were so willing to work and trade with Indian rulers who were already wary of Muslims to some extent. Whilst elephants are not indigenous to the Middle East either, they are to South Asia and the imagery is most likely to be a filtration of that culture being transferred across the Middle East and across the Mediterranean. In some ways they became a symbol of imperial rule, and whether it is true or not, they are recorded as being a part of Charlemagne's first imperial hunt in the *Annales Regni Francorum*.⁸⁴⁴ The reason for

⁸⁴³ Moffit, John F. 'Bernini's "Cathedra Petri" and the "Constitutum Constantini"', *Notes in the History of Art*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (2007), 25.

⁸⁴⁴ Einhard, *Annales regni Francorum, 802-805*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 117.

which was that there was a definite demand for the materials on both sides of their trading expeditions in East Asia and Europe.

Exotic beasts such as elephants being used in imagery in the Carolingian Empire became a staple of imperial rulership and the projection of this. To do this the ivory trade enjoyed the popularity of being commissioned for notable panels in churches that were endowed by the elite as well as for book covers to demonstrate piety, power, and depict notable events. Another specific example to demonstrate the popularity of ivory in order to depict wealth and piety is the ivory panel book covers that are attributed to the Carolingians (dated to between 820-870 A.D. by the British Museum)⁸⁴⁵ that depict the Miracle at Cana.⁸⁴⁶ The ivory used was most probably the Indian Ocean variety as we are aware already that it was used in gifting processions that included spices that were Asian and we are aware from al-Sīrāfi that Arab traders went specifically to India for the type of ivory found there that was also found in rhino horns.⁸⁴⁷ This was used by Arab traders in his account to trade within China further on in their travels as well as in Baghdad back in the Caliphate and beyond which explains how it filtered in to Europe through the expanding process of cabotage that was happening in tandem with this.⁸⁴⁸

Einhard himself wrote about how when Charlemagne was famously crowned as emperor in Rome in the year 183 A.H./800 A.D. he refused to wear clothing made of silk that was considered foreign as it was associated with the Indian Ocean trade as it had to come from China. He only wore them once at the specific request of the Pope who at the time was Hadrian I (d.795 A.D.), on only one occasion. There is no mistaking this for anything but the symbolic

⁸⁴⁵ British Museum, *Book Cover*, (1914), 1856,0623.20, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1856-0623-20

⁸⁴⁶ This was the first miracle that is attributed to Jesus (apart from his birth) in the Bible where he turns water into wine.

⁸⁴⁷ Al-Sīrāfi, Abu Zayd. *Accounts of China and India*, Tim Mackintosh-Smith, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 39-43.

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 39-43.

gesture of being proud of Christendom and rejecting foreign clothes as well as making sure to publicly renounce being ostentatious. This indicates that foreign clothing by this point was considered a sign of opulence that could be considered excessive considering the vast sums of money that was required. Einhard is clear on this when he writes in the original Latin:

‘Peregrina vero indumenta, quamvis pulcherrima, respuebat nec umquam eis indui patiebatur, excepto quod Romae semel Hadriano pontifice petente et iterum Leone successore eius supplicante longa tunica et clamide amictus, calceis quoque Romano more formatis induebatur.’⁸⁴⁹

The above excerpt does say that the tunic Charlemagne wore in the end was in the Roman fashion, one can assume that the fabrics were not imported as this is the statement that they wanted to make. As well as the fact that it makes clear that there was an inner-European discourse about how to protect Christendom from the influences of those on the outside,⁸⁵⁰ which led to the infamous ‘War of Images’ that has already been much discussed in the historical field. This was combative of influences such as the Arabs with their Asian goods and the new ideas and practices that came with them. We know of this because Charlemagne was not the only Frankish ruler who was practising restraint in the consumption of foreign goods – at least when it was politically savvy to do so. Aside from the above excerpt of Einhard we are aware from Theodulf who was a nobleman and judge (d. 205 A.H./821 A.D.)⁸⁵¹ at around the year 181 A.H./798 A.D. that the Visigoth (which is what Theodulf is referred to as) struggled and was victorious against greed, judiciary corruption for temporal wealth, and vanity.⁸⁵² He

⁸⁴⁹ Einhardi, *Vita Karoli Magni*, (Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1911), 27-28, and Einhard, *Vie de Charlemagne*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014), 54.

⁸⁵⁰ Clauss, Jan. ‘Imports and Embargos of Imperial Concepts in the Frankish Kingdom. The promotion of Charlemagne’s Imperial Coronation in Carolingian Courtly Culture’, *Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages*, Christian Scholl, (ed.), (2017), 111-112.

⁸⁵¹ Rand, Edward Kennard. ‘Dom Quentin’s Memoir on the Text of the Vulgate’, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (1924), 212.

⁸⁵² Clauss, (2017), 112.

even goes on to list what was used in order to try and sway his honour recounting ‘Arab rugs, fine worked cups probably of Roman origins, the riches of the fantastic Island of Ceylon, gems, spices and ivory of India, fragrant [sic] from Assyria, the riches of Persia, Sheba, Baghdad and Cordoba...’ and so forth.⁸⁵³ The exact word that is used for the spices is ‘amomo’ which in the Latin refers to plants that are usually edible in this context as it is clearly from the ‘Indus’ which is India.⁸⁵⁴ However, the names of the exact substances are not used to identify the spices, it is made clear that an array of gifts was lavish at the very least as the gems were on show to be noted, presumably as a sign of strength.⁸⁵⁵ This umbrella term is frequent in the sources and means that we do not have specific examples of exactly what was being given usually, apart from the exception of pepper which has already been discussed in the letters of Boniface. The fact that he makes especial mention of the fact that these items were used and were usable is indicative of just how valuable Asian goods were deemed to be by this point in Christendom. This also actively highlights that whilst the luxury trade was not a mass trade in Western Europe as it was for Baghdad, it was still significant and growing in the early medieval period.

The listing of aromatics and spices (despite not being specifically named on their own) as items of value also further proves that by this stage they were almost as important in Europe as they already were in the Arab world. Especially as they are specifically pointed out to be foreign Asian substances that could not be sourced near to the Carolingian Empire. Additionally, the fact that both Theodulf and Charlemagne make the point that they can afford these items, but that they were making the choice not to be frivolous is important, because they are being clear that they have the excess income to do this if they wished. The temptation that seems to have been obviously present in elite spheres of Christendom in Europe for there to have been more than one instance of leaders openly, and pointedly rejecting such items to prove

⁸⁵³ Theodulf, ‘Theodulfi Carmina’, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, (1881), 460-462.

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 461-462.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 460-462.

their piety and honourableness,⁸⁵⁶ is indicative of how sanctifying spiritual and mundane spaces was proliferate enough to guard against. This is not so unbelievable as this was also an issue in the Caliphate itself with the introduction of more maritime trade, and those traders involved wishing to bypass the taxes when at port. What is also important to note is that the introduction of large-scale markets that were undeniably foreign meant that there were indirect effects in Christendom that are still prominent as points of history today. For instance, with the formation of a Christian European identity that Charlemagne was attempting publicly he also made sure to add a religious and pious aspect to this movement, as this was where he gained his legitimacy from.

Given that we are aware that on the European side of the Mediterranean by the third century A.H./eighth century A.D. Charlemagne was actively pursuing legislation that would make it punishable for scribes to transcribe incorrectly any religious works, which in the medieval world meant vast amounts of the written evidence that was produced. To aid this process of perfecting transcription the aforementioned script Caroline Minuscule was introduced which for the first time did not allow minuscule letters to overlap one another;⁸⁵⁷ had clear margins, and the ductus of each character was independent of the line above and below it.⁸⁵⁸ The clarity was to allow for both lack of mistakes in transcriptions and to be used across borders, which also affected trade and communication which are not mutually exclusive. Why this is also important is because the ancient Greek works that are still celebrated in Europe today as revolutionary ideas and theories were being translated into Latin for consumption to restart in Europe for the first time since the classical ages, but they were being translated into and sometimes from Arabic;⁸⁵⁹ suggesting prolonged societal and economic contact that was

⁸⁵⁶ Clauss, (2017), 111-112.

⁸⁵⁷ Ganz, David. 'The preconditions for Caroline minuscule', *Viator*, XVI, (1987), 23-32, and Ganz. (2007) 148.

⁸⁵⁸ Paris, MSS Latin 9388, 198 ff.

⁸⁵⁹ Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 202 and Maria Mavroudi, 'Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic during the Middle Ages: Searching for the Classical Tradition', *Speculum*, Vol. 90, No. 1, (2015), 28-30.

impacting society thoroughly through the movement of peoples, who in this case were mostly traders that came into contact with the intellectual elite who in turn were interested in these works because of the luxury items that were involved such as cloves and ambergris, but later for their medicinal components too.⁸⁶⁰ In turn these elite were the ones that had enough disposable income to be able to pursue new learning and were recording it for posterity.

Sicily (which was under Muslim rule until the eleventh century)⁸⁶¹ is a prominent example of this as most of the goods that were being transported to Europe were being transported there from Cairo, and then further up north. This trade was dominated by Jewish and Arab traders who also felt comfortable enough to be engaged in regular trade between Andalusia and Europe and the 'Abbasid Middle East. Why this is notable is because the Umayyads at this point still (and almost always) viewed the 'Abbasids as usurpers and maintained that they would one day retake the Middle East. For trade to be continuously flowing through the two areas meant that the people involved had to be viewed by the administration as benign enough to be allowed to come and go as they pleased. One should acknowledge that there are some anomalous accounts of some scholars and travellers who fell from high favour for being viewed as treasonous by either Caliphate. Al-Kindī being only one such example as mentioned in the earlier chapter, for seeming to criticise the elite sphere too harshly for their consumerism. This was combined with him also seeming too interested in the scholarship and practices of the Greeks who were non-Muslims. On the most part however, we do see that by and large the traders and merchants were safe to travel through. Indeed, if they had not been then transporting regular shipments of perfume, spices, medicinal plants, and

⁸⁶⁰ Leclerc, Lucien. 'Les sciences en Orient, leur transmission en Occident par les traductions latines', *Histoire de la médecine Arabe. Exposé complet des traductions du grec*, Vol. 2, (1876), 12-38.

⁸⁶¹ Kennedy, Hugh. 'Sicily and al-Andalus under Muslim Rule', *Non-Carolingian Europe, Part III*, Timothy Reuter, (ed.), (2000), 660-667.

other luxury items would have been a very different affair if the Muslim territories of Spain had been considered out of bounds.

Spices:

Spices that were brought to the Carolingian Empire through the Indian Ocean trade were a part of the language of power and prestige in this part of the world as much as they had been in the Caliphate. This is because transport costs and mortality rates as overheads were high – this was at least the case in the early stages of the Islamic Empire when the maritime economy was still coming to fruition. The domino effect of this being that the items then had a level of prestige that made them messages in and of themselves.

Spices came to the fore in this respect for many years in the higher echelons of medieval European society. Venice was at the forefront of this import of foreign goods and made a fortune from it during the fifth century A.H./tenth century A.D. all the way up to the eighth century A.H./thirteenth century A.D. which indicates how ingrained spices from the Indian Ocean and their presence had become in European society.⁸⁶² They were by no means a passing fad and became deeply ingrained in societal conventions. Indeed, we even have evidence of ecclesiastical circles being involved in purchasing and gifting spices, from the fact that St. Boniface mentioned in the previous chapter, is recorded in a letter to have been given with frankincense and spices by a friend of his.⁸⁶³ As well as their importance and how that differed according to locations, and finally why a lot of the foreign origins are not included in historical European sources and scholarship.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶² Rodinson, Maxime. ‘Venice, the spice trade and Eastern influences on European Cooking’, *Medieval Cookery*, Barbara Inskip, (trans.), (2001), 201.

⁸⁶³ ‘S. Bonifatii et lulli epistolae’, *Monumenta Moguntina*, Philippus Jaffe (ed.), (1866), 155-156 and 199.

⁸⁶⁴ There are scientific publications on Indian Ocean spices and perfumes that are used in the beginning of this research in the explanations of what they are. However, they are not historical works about how they disseminated into Europe and the wider socio-political ramifications of this.

We have examples of cookbooks and accounts of spices being coveted amongst the powerful at Carolingian courts that indicate that there was a demand for the products on the northern border of the Mediterranean.⁸⁶⁵ Indeed, for an ingredient to be included in a recipe book there must be a motive for the recording of the dish because it is considered foreign, lavish, or simply special; sometimes all three of these things. It is rare in any given society that every day meals are recorded in any way. Hence, medieval cookbooks are one of the few textual indicators that we have available that can pinpoint which spices were popular; where they were popular, and when, and if not in cookbooks, by accounts of the feasts and banquets that were held for special occasions.

By extension the importance of this lies in the fact that most of these spices originated in East Asia but came through to Europe by transporting them through the subcontinent of India and sailing from there to the Arab lands and up into Europe. The soft trading networks at work here are much easier to pinpoint in terms of the spice trade because you can pinpoint where the foodstuffs are being cooked and thus are being bought. Also allowing us to glean where it was that specific spices were most popular and from where, given that some were made in what is now considered China and transported across the continents to get to Europe and some could be grown much closer in South Asia and even the Middle East itself. This is especially the case as due to the lack of modern farming spices, could only be retrieved from whence they could be naturally found or similar climates with people that had the cultivation knowledge that could not be created artificially at the time. The socio-political effect of this trade slowly growing and becoming more prevalent in Europe by the fifth century A.H./eleventh century A.D. was

⁸⁶⁵ Curta, Florin. 'Merovingian and Carolingian Gift Giving', *Speculum*, Vol. 81, No. 3, (2006), 688-689, and Boniface, (1866), 155-156.

that the spice trade in and of itself became a source of great wealth in Europe too, the trade became almost as popular and frequent as that of grain.⁸⁶⁶

The usage of spices and the language around them is also indicative of the levels of awareness that the Europeans had of Asia and who the Arabs were trading with to transport spices to them. The words ‘pepper’ and ‘ginger’ which are both considered to be English are actually from Indian roots of Pali and Prakrit (languages mostly associated with the middle of India), which the Greeks and Romans seemed to have been aware of,⁸⁶⁷ as the same words in both languages are remarkably similar.⁸⁶⁸ This challenges any literature that exoticizes early medieval Asia from the European perspective as a mysterious land that the Arabs kept hidden away from the Europeans and shrouded it in myth and secrets is far from the truth and also dispels the long standing work of Pirenne. However, more recent work such as that of Jill Norman in 1991, also argued that the Arabs wished to keep Asia a ‘secret’ in order to maintain their monopoly on the trade that was coming through their territory.⁸⁶⁹

However, we are already aware that this was untrue and there are multiple examples of evidence of prior European contact with Asia. The word for ‘aloe’ in Greek and in the English are both sources of significant confusion, as the word means either the fragrant wood that is used for make perfumes which was a booming business – especially as ambergris became highly commercialised which will be discussed later on in this chapter – and the bitter medicine that was used in medicines (and still is).⁸⁷⁰ Spices and perfume became pivotal in gifting, as were medicinal items, which meant that they became the centre of celebration, taxation and diplomacy throughout the known world including the Caliphate and Christendom.

⁸⁶⁶ Wright, (2007), 35-36.

⁸⁶⁷ The Greek for pepper is pronounced ‘piperi’ and the ginger is ‘piperoriza’ (both spelt phonetically).

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid, 35-36.

⁸⁶⁹ Norman, Jill. *The Complete Book of Spices*, (New York: Viking Studio, 1991), 10.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid, 59-77.

This can be attributed to earlier examples that date back to the first century A.H./seventh century A.D. of Saint Isidore of Seville (d.14-15 A.H./636 A.D.).⁸⁷¹ He accounts that he thinks that black pepper comes from India where it is guarded by vicious snakes and thus had to be burnt to retrieve it safely which in turn kills the snakes and gives the pepper its flaky and black texture.⁸⁷² He also seems aware that cinnamon comes from Arabia, although I believe that this is due to the Indian Ocean trade that the Arabs were already involved in as it originates in Asia.⁸⁷³ However, whilst his account falls earlier than the period being discussed it does shed light on European views and what they meant by pepper – especially that it indeed was black pepper most likely as he goes on to describe that black pepper was most sought after given that it was viewed as more fresh to the extent that he warned people to beware of merchants who sprinkled lead on their pepper to sell it at a higher price.⁸⁷⁴ He also makes clear that aloe wood was popular for incense (or at least in demand) in his sphere and this is further help in this study because of the fact that aloe is unhelpfully the same word for both the medicinal plant and the wood as mentioned earlier. So is the assertion that it is a sweet-smelling wood used for incense elucidates further the market in the Mediterranean trade and how it linked to the Indian Ocean trade by the time our study begins in 183 A.H/800 A.D.⁸⁷⁵ His account of how the items were imported in order to be sold are probably not accurate factually, but they do tell us about the level of awareness of Indian substances and how they were thought of in Europe. Here I use the Ian Netton approach that he applied to the Arab sources, but to Europe, and look at the narration and what they could mean as if the source was true as that is what it is conveyed to be.⁸⁷⁶ The fact that the process is also considered dangerous and

⁸⁷¹ Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, Stephen A. Barney, (trans.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), i.

⁸⁷² Ibid, 349.

⁸⁷³ Ibid, 265.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid, 349.

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid, 349.

⁸⁷⁶ Netton, Ian. *Islam, Christianity and the Realms of the Miraculous: A Comparative Exploration*, *Edinburgh Studies of Classical Islamic History and Culture*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 10-15.

exoticized, most likely added to the allure of owning it, and is also indicative of attitudes towards why Europeans themselves did not make the journey prior to the turn of the first millennium. Isidore's work was very widely available in Western Europe as seems to follow the pattern that we find in literature in the Caliphate, that exoticizes these items to retain and even inflate their status. The explicit reasoning for this is never stated, as it could be both for the sale, as well as greater attention, but we do know that such methods were successful in achieving both.

His account includes a story about the way that cinnamon is retrieved and then brought to Europe. The actual process of it being harvested from the inner bark of a tree that is described at the beginning of this research is replaced, with an account in which there is a 'bird of Arabia' called *cinnamoligus* because it constructs nests out of cinnamon which are upturned and disturbed to gather the spice in order for it to be traded.⁸⁷⁷ Whilst as the title of the book suggests his work focuses on the origins of the names of the spices and how they came to be, the accounts themselves are telling of how the spices came to be in Europe. Cinnamon is very much a product of the Indian Ocean trade, but the attribution of it to an 'Arabian' bird may be because the spice is associated with the Arab trade across the Mediterranean. Additionally, the complexity of having to locate a nest and harvest from it allows the spice to be sold at a premium and further exoticizes it, as he also recounts that cinnamon would be found and merchants would 'sell them at very high prices, for merchants value cinnamon more than other spices' due to the procurement process.⁸⁷⁸ To then cement this idea of fantasy, Arabia itself is set into a context of extraordinariness as 'Its woods produce both myrrh and cinnamon: it is the birthplace of the bird phoenix, and one finds precious stones there: the sardonyx, iris crystal,

⁸⁷⁷ Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, (trans.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 265.

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 265.

malachite, and opals'.⁸⁷⁹ This would then further explain why there is no real elaboration on how exactly the spices got to the Western European side of the Mediterranean in the contemporary sources, as whilst they definitely had to be present, accounting for them so closely would have devalued them.

There are fantastical claims about snakes in India that make the place sound as if it is infested with snakes of mythical sizes. This may have contributed to why Europeans did not travel there prior to the middle to late medieval period, although it seems unlikely. Most definitely the description of the snakes and the dangers and exoticism that they posed added to the allure of items that were coming out of the South Asian subcontinent. Ibn Shahriyār described snakes that were so deadly that they could consume cattle and elephants.⁸⁸⁰ Some were true even if it sounds improbable as we are currently aware of sea snakes in South Asian waters.⁸⁸¹ Indeed all the way up until 1539 even European maps of the Indian Ocean still depict dragon like snake beasts that attack ships.⁸⁸² Despite all of this, it did not abate or even slow down the spice trade at all, and most likely just meant that the mark-up for prices was higher in Europe as well, especially when one considers the fact that the earlier description of the harvesting of black pepper. Whilst snakes were a danger that caused worry, the accounts of them being as big as a dog's head in Malaya seems improbable and extremely rare.⁸⁸³

The *longue durée* of the continued spice trade meant that there were an entire set of tools and etiquette rituals were created to go around the cuisine that was arriving in Europe even as late as the seventh century A.H./thirteenth century A.D. Whilst this falls later than the remit of this examination into the early medieval period it is important to note, that the value

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid, 286.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 25-29.

⁸⁸¹ Chowdhury, Biswajit Roy. and Buroshiva Dasgupta, *Natural Wonders of Asia, The Finest National Parks of India, Thailand, the Philippines & Malaysia*, (London: New Holland, 2005), 17-18.

⁸⁸² National Library of Sweden, Manuscript shelfmark KoB 1 ab.

⁸⁸³ Ibn Shahriyār, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 70.

of spice did not diminish in terms of how much they cost in gold or in their symbolic value either. In fact we can tell from the case of Cyprus as one of the closest islands to the Muslim ‘world’ and yet the spice powders that were used on state occasions were still so costly that for the same price one could have bought enough basic food for several villages which could be hundreds of *dīnārs*, if not thousands depending on the occasion.⁸⁸⁴ Special tools were also used for eating with on special occasions which went with the spiced foodstuffs, which were used for the sake of status and to support a political agenda.⁸⁸⁵ The relevance here lays in the fact that the role of cuisine and that of the spices in them were a source of political power, and symbol of wealth for hundreds of years, and carried on successfully in their career at the dinner tables of the elite in Europe long after they had taken root in the period between 200-500 A.H./700-1100 A.D.

Additionally, gift giving by the Carolingian era in early medieval Europe became a ceremonial and public endeavour that was a symbol of the munificence of rulers, subservience to the state, display of wealth and power and finally, the symbolic act of friendship.⁸⁸⁶ Within the Carolingian state, the almost standard gift to present was a horse, it was when there were foreign dignitaries that had to be appeased or cajoled into friendship that moveable goods come to the fore in a form could not easily have been livestock or land.⁸⁸⁷ There are also examples of coloured garments, frankincense and spices in the form of cinnamon and pepper most prominently in a sealed packet,⁸⁸⁸ that later became normal and respectable gifts to exchange – especially amongst the clergy.⁸⁸⁹

⁸⁸⁴ Weaver, William Woys. ‘The Court Cuisine of Medieval Cyprus’, *In the Presence of Power: Court and Performance in the Pre-Modern Middle East*, Maurice Pomerantz and Evelyn Vitz, (eds.), (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 3-5.

⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 1-4.

⁸⁸⁶ Curta, (2006), 681-688.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 681-688.

⁸⁸⁸ Boniface, *Benedictionis etenim munusculum ob recordationis nostri memoriam*, 155-156.

⁸⁸⁹ Curta, (2006), 681-688.

The gift giving events very much mirrored what happened in the Islamic Empire at this point, where the king gave gifts to all those who resided at the palace during the ceremony. This included the lowliest of palace servants. We are aware of this from the fact that Louis the Pious did this at Easter and included all those on duty on the day as well as the nobles.⁸⁹⁰ Indeed, this seems to have taken such a place in the Carolingian court that it was being duplicated in other European courts as a sign of the change in the language of magnanimity amongst rulers. We are aware of this from Theophylact (d.1107 A.D. and was a Byzantine archbishop), as he accounts that the Roman church was behaving similarly with letters when they were sent between two notable people as discussed earlier.⁸⁹¹ However, these items were not indigenous to medieval Europe and had to be acquired from overseas.

We have several examples of gift giving including items such as frankincense and pepper which originate from what is now considered Southern Arabia and the Indian Ocean trade (respectively). Even the lowly members of the clergy received frankincense in return for some form of spiritual help as we have a letter that is sent to a woman in return for prayers of help and aid.⁸⁹² The letter in question being to the Abbess Cuniburg and given we do not possess the reply of the request we can assume that such transactions were considered usual.⁸⁹³ However, in the cache of letters that this study uses, the origins of the items are not mentioned, except for their European markets.⁸⁹⁴ This does not elucidate how the items got there, but they do indicate that social behaviour had come to integrate them to a degree that they had become a part of a gifting hierarchy that was considered integral to social etiquette that made up the fabric of elite medieval circles. Indeed, we have an example of Boniface himself being sent a

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid, 688.

⁸⁹¹ Boniface, *Benedictionis etenim munusculum ob recordationis nostri memoriam*, 142.

⁸⁹² I should make clear that I class her as lowly on the hierarchy because of medieval society and particularly the Abrahamic religions favouring men when looking for spiritual guidance and aid; this has been the case for the most part throughout Christendom and the Caliphate since time immemorial. This is a running theme in, *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, from which this comes from.

⁸⁹³ Dennehard, *The Letters of Saint Boniface* (1976), 78.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid, 78.

face-towel as well as pepper, and frankincense, suggesting that he was due more given his station.⁸⁹⁵ Throughout these letters the origins of these items and why they are considered prestigious enough to be gifts (because they were imported across the world at great expense and thus were luxury items) came with an assumption of knowledge of the standard, that seems to have been implicit by this stage. The tradition of members of the clergy sending each other mainly pepper along with letters and other artefacts continued for the Carolingians to the point that the tradition was carried through to the Saxons who thought it appropriate to continue these practices.⁸⁹⁶

Perfumes on the European side of the Mediterranean:

The historian Fernand Braudel (d.1985) wrote that the Mediterranean has always been a cultural bridge between the civilisations on either side of it since the Greek and Roman civilisations.⁸⁹⁷ This reinforces the argument of this research that the coming of Indian Ocean perfumes into the Middle East, and specifically Egypt, meant that the pre-existing contacts meant that eventual proliferation into Europe naturally happened between individual merchant actors. Whilst perfumes are still considered to be expensive if one looks at designer brands, the ingredients that are used are not far from the original base ingredients when they first came to the fore through the Indian Ocean trade. Ambergris and musk are still the major ingredients, but the key difference lies in the symbolic meanings and the people involved. However, perfumes in the early medieval period were a very masculine affair. They signalled elegance, taste, and expendable wealth as they do now, but in the early medieval period they also suggest power, and status.

⁸⁹⁵ Cardinal-Bishop Benedict, (1976), 167.

⁸⁹⁶ Pertz, Georgius Henricus. (ed.), 'Rodulfi Gesta abb. Trudonensium, Lib IX', *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, (1752), 287.

⁸⁹⁷ Braudel, Fernand. *A History of Civilisations*, (London: Penguin, 1995), 50-92.

Recent historians agree that perfumery was a major component of the Arabian market by the third century A.H./ninth century A.D. and that this reached as far as Europe. Amar and Lev go so far as to assert that the introduction of camphor was symptomatic of the link between Charlemagne and Hārūn al-Rashīd in their gifting.⁸⁹⁸ Which does not seem unlikely given that we are aware that the ‘Abbasid and Carolingian empires were linked in diplomatic friendliness,⁸⁹⁹ and there are accounts of *missi dominici*⁹⁰⁰ from both sides sending gifts to one another. Although interestingly, the Arab chroniclers are careful to note what they gave, not what they received.

The permanent and consistent presence of perfume meant that the extensive amount of research that went into perfumery at the time; the study of the ingredients, and the process of their collection, are all critical in understanding their importance in medieval life. This is made clear in the *Thimiama* manuscript (a medicinal recipe from Western Europe)⁹⁰¹ that names specifically Indian Ocean perfumes in the medicinal recipe. The medicinal aspect of this manuscript and the highlighting of Indian Ocean goods strongly highlights that for those who could afford it, the Indian Ocean trade was rising in significance and becoming a staple that was associated with both health and wealth.

The fact that ‘new’ perfumes that had medicinal properties (the ones named being aloe wood, ambergris, and musk)⁹⁰² were mostly considered to be made from items that came out of South and East Asia. They arrived in Europe via shipment to Cairo, by the end of the ninth century to the beginning of the tenth century. From Cairo the goods were shipped to Andalucía and further north, and their journey is indicative of how lucrative a shipment they were. In quantitative terms, we rely mainly on the *geniza* records in which ibn Nissim lists his products,

⁸⁹⁸ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 145.

⁸⁹⁹ Davis, Jennifer R. ‘Inventing the Missi’, *The ‘Abbasid and Carolingian Empires*, (2018), 13.

⁹⁰⁰ Latin for ‘men sent by the king’ which applies for both empires.

⁹⁰¹ Author unknown.

⁹⁰² *Thimiama*, csg. 761. (transcribed and uploaded in 2021), 66.

and he is not explicit, except that the shipments were lucrative. We do know that they were worth transporting from one end of the known world to the other and so there had to be a level of assurance of a return in wealth for the merchants doing this.

We are aware that aromatic substances such as incense were used in early medieval churches throughout Christendom, which meant that for centuries they have been a performative item that were present to depict the Godliness of the ruler who was patron. Whilst we are aware that this was the case in the churches that we frequented by those attended by the elites, due to the nature of the medieval world, smaller regional churches are still shrouded from remembrance due to a lack of records. Clouds of incense were meant to be present, alongside items of gold and silk that were set upon silk cloths and instruments inlaid with precious gems.⁹⁰³ There was a need for these items to be very visible and their presence alone was a statement.⁹⁰⁴ This was a long-standing tradition as far north as Italy from the fifth century as we are aware from the accounts of churches in Ravenna where perfume was evidently and noticeably present.⁹⁰⁵ Hence there was a tradition of trade that was already present that was just expanded with the coming of the proliferation of maritime trade and the presence of more traders crossing the Mediterranean. Moreover, by the fourth century A.H./ninth century A.D. the very fact that incense was brought over at a premium and then burnt is indicative that the need for it must have been perceived as real. Whilst some of the items may have been diplomatic gifts between rulers too.

Apart from churches, a very recent study from April 2020 by Claire BurrIDGE explored, and proved, that incense was used for its medicinal qualities in Europe too,⁹⁰⁶ much like in their

⁹⁰³ Helms, Mary W. 'Ineffable Illumination: Early Medieval Church Treasure and the Preservation of Heaven's Light', *Anthropos*, Bd. 109, H. 1, (2014), 103.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 103.

⁹⁰⁵ Heath, Anne. 'Elevating Saint Germanus of Auxerre: Architecture, Politics, and Liturgy in the Reclaiming of Monastic Identity', *Speculum*, Vol. 90, No. 1, (2015), 107.

⁹⁰⁶ BurrIDGE, (2020), 219-220.

counterparts in the Caliphate. Her source base is the *Codex Sangallensis* (this is a collection of manuscripts in the Abbey library of St. Gallen in Switzerland) which is dated to 184 A.H./800 A.D. because of the insular script⁹⁰⁷ that it is written in.⁹⁰⁸ The author of these recipes that include these substances is unknown.⁹⁰⁹ One notable example is a recipe that includes *Thimiama* which includes aloe wood, ambergris, musk, and camphor and is also described by Isidore of Seville as ‘incense’.⁹¹⁰ Given that we are already aware that Isidore as we have already established was involved in buying Indian goods such as black pepper,⁹¹¹ it makes sense that there would be other items of the Indian Ocean trade in the region too. What makes the inclusion of aromatic substances in medicine notable is that they were being studied intensely in the Arab-Persian spheres of the medieval world and their presence on this European side of the world would suggest another transfer of knowledge and another level of quite a dynamic process of globalisation before the ending of the first millennium.

Burridge does not explore the Arab ties that these items inherently have with their presence in Europe. Or that they physically could not be present without the items first going through the Indian Ocean trade to get across the Mediterranean later in the cabotage system that had to exist in this era for items to travel so far. Burridge is however comprehensive on the seven recipes that included aromatic substances. The items included were aloe wood, camphor, and musk which were at the core of all the recipes.⁹¹² This reinforces that there had to have been contact with the Arab side of the Mediterranean and for it to be frequent enough to be considered globalised by the year 184 A.H./800 A.D.

⁹⁰⁷ Insular script is very specific to the eight century onwards, as it was a script specifically formed to not overlap the ductus of the characters from one line to another to aid clarity and can also be linked to the Carolingian Empire and Renaissance.

⁹⁰⁸ Burridge, (2020), 219-220.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid, 219-220.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid, 220-221.

⁹¹¹ Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, i.

⁹¹² Burridge, (2020), 235-240.

However, despite the focus of this piece of research being perfumery, the fact that it was deeply interwoven with other items to get to Europe is indicative of how frequent and in demand it was to be shipped there. Whilst frankincense is still used today and has been from antiquity. For it to have a presence in Europe it had to have been shipped across the Mediterranean from southern Arabia, and from the medieval period, ambergris, camphor, and aloe wood also came into their own in the perfume markets of Europe as the new scents to be consumed in the higher ranks of society. Ambergris became so sought after that counterfeit versions started to be made.⁹¹³ Added to this bitter citrus fruits started to enter Europe for the first time for their aromatic qualities, and its name *naranj*⁹¹⁴ started to infiltrate European languages as it started to gain momentum as a sought-after object. However, given that *naranj* is the Persian word for the item, we can glean that it was probably new at this time as in earlier accounts the European languages adopted the Roman and Greek names, who in turn had taken on the original Indian names that the item had. The new term being Persian in origin suggests that they adopted it from what were probably the Arab merchants that were transporting the items. The reason why I say Persian and not Arab is that in the previous chapter, it was already established that Persian physicians became mediators and served in ‘Abbasid courts in Arab clothing as Indian medicine, spices, and perfumery came to the fore. It then makes sense that it was their words that entered the Arabic language and from there the European vernacular.⁹¹⁵ Especially since, studies into the period immediately after the period this research focuses on is linked to the Indian Ocean trade explicitly such as the work by Peter Spufford. He explicitly linked pepper and spices to the Asian trade, and that the volume of trade in these items were

⁹¹³ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 151.

⁹¹⁴ Naranj means orange in Arabic now but the fruit that came over was an earlier form that we do not consume.

⁹¹⁵ Indeed, in French, English, Portuguese, German and even Egyptian Arabic the word ‘orange’ seems to be universal.

an ‘enormous quantitative change in the volume of international trade’.⁹¹⁶ This was however, in the 1980s and has since not been drawn upon in the same way in the historiography.

The origins of the use of *naranj* however in Europe, and just in general is not fully explored and still very much shrouded in darkness in relation to its counterparts such as ambergris and camphor. Due to its bitterness, there is doubt about whether it was edible, or just used to decorate a table as we know happened in the Caliphate as was discussed in the previous chapter. The only comprehensive history of the *naranj* (of which there is only one in the English-speaking world) maintains that ‘the flowers and seeds are the sources of neroli and petitgrain oils, the base of many perfumes. The skin or zest contains oils that have insecticidal value, and these have numerous medicinal applications.’⁹¹⁷ However, the historian Julie Holt concedes that there is no substantial evidence of this apart from the secondary works that they piece together and little archaeological evidence in the form of seeds and paintings. She argues that the arrival of the fruit in Europe much like other spices are ‘poorly documented’⁹¹⁸ and that ‘a single mineralized seed (possibly of lemon) was found at Pompeii dating to the early second century CE’⁹¹⁹ which both falls out of the timeframe of this research, and by her own admission is an educated guess but not concrete by any means. We only start to get clear evidence in contemporary sources of the uses of citruses and *naranj* and the sweeter ‘orange’ with much later Portuguese involvement in the fifteenth century.

The importance of spices, aromatic and otherwise, came to the fore so dramatically that Wright even named the phenomena of the booming trade post-390 A.H./1000 A.D. a ‘spice orgy’ as they were being consumed in order to display wealth.⁹²⁰ Whilst he focuses on the

⁹¹⁶ Spufford, Peter. *Money and its uses in Medieval Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 251.

⁹¹⁷ Holt, Julie Zimmerman. ‘Citrus Fruits: Origins and Development’, *Encyclopaedia of Global History*, Claire Smith (ed.), (2014), 1481.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid, 1482.

⁹¹⁹ Ibid, 1482.

⁹²⁰ Wright, Clifford A. ‘The Medieval Spice Trade and the Diffusion of Chile’, *Gastronomica*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (2007), 35.

period after 390 A.H./1000 A.D. it is important to note that this was a result of the process that included trading across the Mediterranean for centuries by this point. Whilst perfumes and aromatics such as camphor and frankincense had to be a result of the trading relationships with the Arabs, we have no proper mention of this among the elite sources where the fact that only that they are found in local markets are mentioned. This could possibly be because much like the mercantile practices of the Arabs, this just added to the exoticism of the products to not discuss their procurement, just that they came from a great distance which added to their value.

Hence such connections were taken for granted. Given the fact that gift giving, the number of perfumes, and where they were from could also be presented aggressively and allude to superiority. Ergo, the amount of perfume a ruler could spare and hand out in gifts was indicative of their wealth and greatness. Another potential reason to explain the lack of presence of the Arab involvement in the spices being used in Carolingian Europe being recorded properly in the contemporary sources and subsequently studied was that mercantile culture was different in the Christian World than it was in the Arab-Islamic sphere. As discussed, the Caliphate was very overtly a very consumerist society that was open about the success and involvement it had in trade – even through individual actors, as is recorded in the work of ibn Duqmāq. Their contemporaries, however, did not acknowledge this part of their monetary interests in the same way, as for a lack of better term, it was not considered ‘proper’ to be involved in such endeavours which could involve loans, and thus usury which meant that even if the spices and perfumes were being universally accepted in the known world, the cultures that consumed them differed.

With all of this in mind it is important to note that these perfumes came into a pre-existing market of demand for perfumes in the Middle East and from there to Europe as there was already a thriving business of frankincense from the Arab lands, that was providing Europe

lands with aromatic substances from antiquity.⁹²¹ The movement of aromatic substances entering Europe is actually an ancient exchange of goods and the movement of frankincense, myrrh and cinnamon especially were known as Arabian products by the Greeks as early as the eleventh century B.H./fifth century B.C.⁹²² The Greeks used incense in their temples and also in processions of power and faith hence the idea of perfumes being a signifier of a person's status, or lack thereof was already deeply embedded into world politics by Euro-Middle Eastern politics and diplomacy.⁹²³

Frankincense trees were considered to have come from a 'distant land' by Greek writers and hence their allure can be understood. Their source did not change with the coming of the early medieval era. Another form of frankincense producing resin was the *Boswellia papyrifera* which could have originated in Ethiopia and several parts of the Sudan which was even further from Europe. Although it did not have the same commercial value as that from Arabia and Somalian frankincense due to its lesser quality this was still how far one had to go for a substance that was of poorer quality. No substitutes could be cultivated closer to Europe or the Mediterranean Greek churches and temples. Myrrh too was used for these purposes and only grew from some types of *Commiphorae* trees which were exclusive to Arabia.⁹²⁴ We have evidence of this trade as early as the eighth century B.H./second century A.D., and that by that time there were already caravan routes that stretched and linked all over Arabia,⁹²⁵ which elucidates further the longevity of the trade in this context and just how far it reached.

⁹²¹ Amar, *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, 137.

⁹²² Groom, Nigel. *Frankincense and Myrrh. A Study of Arabian Incense Trade*, (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1981), 5.

⁹²³ *Ibid*, 5-7.

⁹²⁴ Beeston, A.F.L. 'The Arabian Aromatics Trade in Antiquity', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, (2005), 53.

⁹²⁵ *Ibid*, 55-56.

Conclusion:

Prolonged and continuous contact with the early Islamic Empires meant that European customs and traditions of etiquette were undoubtedly changed. Hierarchies of what was luxury meant that spices and perfumes were coming into their own in Europe as well, this was much the same as their Islamic counterparts across the Mediterranean. This included the introduction of whole ceremonies around gifting and what could be given in public displays of wealth to project to those in attendance the power of the giver, or also the fealty in which they were acting towards the recipient.

Gifting was also another form of taxation, and we are aware that the spices, perfume, and other Arab trades became pivotal in this because this was how lesser rulers paid tribute to larger political entities. In the medieval era this was especially important because most empires acted as a confederation of states, given that the communication technology to allow for message to send across vast distances quickly did not exist yet to only have one centre of governance. Tribute and gifting solved the issue of wondering how to extract taxes without having to worry about yields, plunder, and military action against those who neglected to pay (although this undoubtedly did happen at times).

Gifting and making sure that items that were recognisably from South Asia, or the Middle East, also became integral to diplomacy. Hārūn al-Rashīd and Charlemagne are the greatest and most well-known examples of this as they exchanged gifts that were noticeably luxurious, and very South Asian (or were at least transported through South Asia), such as *balādhur*,⁹²⁶ camphor, textiles, depictions of exotic animals on tapestries, ambergris, and musk. The reason why the link between gifting and diplomacy is also important to understanding the role of the Caliphate in Europe and vice versa is to grasp the fact that political animosity and

⁹²⁶ A pain relief medicinal item from the anacardium tree which produces nut-like seeds that are the *balādhur*.

economic pragmatism were not mutually exclusive spheres on the diplomatic world stage even in the early medieval period. Whilst it is true, on religious grounds the Caliphate and the Carolingians were on opposing sides, and their legitimacy rested on being antagonistic towards one another, this affected trading links and diplomacy in terms of the movements of goods and peoples very little, if at all.

Spices and perfumes became so integral to the landscape of communication by the elite in Christendom that they became normal gifts to include with letters of friendship, requests for prayers and for church services. Frankincense which is indigenous to Southern Arabia is still used in church services today, and substances such as ambergris are still valued high in their status in perfumery in the modern world. The continuation of these trading contacts from the early medieval period to the tenth century A.H./fifteenth century A.D. is when they come into the academic sphere undoubtedly just because of the colonial ramifications, and how recently the institutions of governance broke down. However, we are aware that there was a higher level of connectivity across continents in the early medieval period than was previously assumed in the historical field. The proliferation of perfumes and spices are testament to this in the way that they affected medieval Europe long before the year 390 A.H./1000 A.D. and the significance of this trade. The translations that led to medicine, scholarship, and the revival of the Greek works are still feats of knowledge and movement that are wondered at today by scholars of the Renaissance.

Conclusion

This research challenges the argument that globalization occurred exclusively after the end of the first millennium of the common era as argued by recent historians; notably Valerie Hansen. Instead this research contends that the Islamic Empires came into pre-existing system that they then expanded upon. The connectivity between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean trade in the early Islamic period was indicative of there being a continuous relay system of contact. The rise in maritime trade that occurred with the improvement of naval technology meant that there was a marked shift from the overland 'silk route' to a naval one. Most notably the increased awareness of naval routes and geography that facilitated the trade of spices and perfumes from the eighth century onwards, is something that has seldom been explored in the current historical landscape. The movement of these goods gave way to tremendous changes that have sparked discourse for decades from the rise of the Islamic Empires to the Carolingian Renaissance. This includes the fact that a major reason the entire capital of the Caliphate was situated in Baghdad was so that those with wealth were better positioned to be able to access goods that came into the city via naval trade, in a way they could not do in the previous capital in Damascus.

The role of perfumes and spices, their gold value, symbolism, and medicinal qualities, meant that their only soared with their proliferation. This value had to be measured in gold coinage as even though we are not aware of specific amounts, the quantities are always dirhams or *dīnārs*, which meant that they were measured in terms of gold. This was enhanced by the fact that their popularity led to more studies into the substances which brought out newer properties for which they could be utilised as time went on. In many cases, perfumes and spices could only be sourced in very specific, sometimes very remote, locations so their appearance in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean markets could be used as a proxy for other sorts of connectivity such as the movement of ideas due to prolonged and regular communication.

The long-term permeation of spices and perfumes can be seen in the longevity of the careers of those who were involved in their trade. The lucrative and life-long careers of merchants such as ibn Nissim are indicative of just how embroiled entire groups of societies had become in the foreign trade and how social standing had to be something that merchants were acutely aware of. Ibn Nissim being explicitly told not to get involved in divisive discourses in the Jewish communities that he was a prominent member of makes sense when one considers how harshly the early medieval administrations came down upon persons they thought as upsetting the status quo and thereby their own power. We are aware of this from the fate of al-Kindī when he fell from favour due to his fascination with the Greeks, and those who took offense to him and his writings. All of this is indicative of the level of importance that luxury goods such as perfumes and spices had gained in early medieval society by this stage in history. It also highlights just how crucial being connected to one another was when it came to the Caliphal and other courts that had adopted perfumes and spices as signs of status. These connections had to be maintained for perfumes and spices to be available in the known world, there was no way of locally creating or sourcing them in the Middle East in the eighth century.

Additionally as a result of trade, we also know of Muslim populations become increasingly diverse in this period of time as they proliferated and trade outwards creating smaller populations away from Baghdad and the Middle East altogether. Cities such as Basra made several million dirhams per year out of the external trade, there were local divisions amongst Muslim traders and travellers such as the example of the Muslim Italians who spoke Arabic but ibn Ḥawqal could still not find a way to relate to. Even still, we have detailed accounts of travels abroad external to the Caliphate, including several detailed descriptions of India that were fantastical but must have sold well to have been a genre of writing at the time by the likes of al-Sīrāfī and ibn Shahriyār. Internally to the Caliphate too, there are catalogues

of how much was being taxed annually in each town and the sheer amounts of wealth that was being brought into the area, with Basra collecting 6 million dirhams in one year.

Moreover, despite all the calamities that befell al-Kindī, and the fact that it was the foreign trade that brought people into the centre stage of the attention of the elite, without the benefits that this includes, it would make no sense to put yourself in such a perilous position. However, when one considers that the sheer wealth that could be gained from one shipment if it was done well, then it becomes a much more viable way of living in the early medieval era. We know from accounts of al-Sīrāfī and Ibn Shahriyār that the maritime trade could make a man a fortune by one successful shipment, and a career could set him up for life. This was all on the condition that it was if he made sure to steer clear of political issues as much as possible.

However, whilst merchants were entitled to be private individuals, when they involved themselves in what was considered a luxury product, they inevitably met the governing elite. This meant that if they had a regular contact in elite circles, they created a link with their regular customers who could afford such products, and thus also had power in early medieval society. We see this from the story of the leader of Oman who was unhappy that a merchant that paid him regular 'taxes' was arrested. Ibn Shahriyār's account of the leader of Oman covertly warning the other merchants and their decision to create a stir is indicative of just how influential these ties were. The fact that this worked, and the merchants completely recognised that they had some political leverage is interesting in that their response of one that was a boycott.

What we see with the trade of spices and other aromatic goods such as ambergris, is that the spread of their popularity from the top downwards into the monied classes meant that a large section of society (in Baghdad alone the population was an impressive number of 250,000-500,000 who were by this time at different levels a part of the monetised society

there)⁹²⁷ was able to enjoy the perfumes and spices that were on the market in South Asia, the Middle East and, eventually, Europe. We see this in the studies that were being conducted on the spices and the innovations in the medicinal field, and the re-emergence of the Greek works that dealt with philosophy, medicine, and other sciences. The phenomenon of the Carolingian Renaissance was partly born out of this, as was the original works of ibn Sina, al-Kindī, and ibn Hindu.

When it comes to what is now considered Europe, this research focused on the Carolingians because this was the best documented empire of the time in the West and was also in contact with the Caliphate and through there with the Indian Ocean trade. This research is in part a remedy to this when it comes to the movement of perfumes and spices and their effects as far out as Europe and by extension the socio-political ramifications of this trade in the early medieval period that was occurring out of the frequent exchange of luxury goods. The presence of pepper, frankincense, and perfumes were a direct effect of the continuous exchange between the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean trade, which was alongside the overland trade. Naval trade was frequent enough to be considered regular for this time, and yet is not prominent in the historiography thus far.

New political rivalries and relationships were born, or at least expanded to fit around the trading relationships that were being made. Whilst the term ‘Caliphate’ can refer to at least three different states in this period, the Umayyads, the ‘Abbasids, and the Fatimids, this research focuses on Baghdad and so has referred to the ‘Abbasids due to the markets of Baghdad as a major economic and trade centre. Perfumes and power had become so interchangeable in political standing that they even had a role in times of war and political instability as we are aware from the succession struggle that the Caliph al-Amīn faced. His use

⁹²⁷ Lassner, Jacob. *The topography of Baghdad in the early Middle Ages: text and studies*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 107-110 and 282-283.

of ambergris in his arrival to prepare for battle is an account that was meant to feed into the specific purpose of conveying power with analogies of wealth and preparedness.

Even more so, the diplomatic relations from the Caliphate outwards became embroiled in the Indian Ocean trade so much so that it became a matter of course that gift giving would include perfumes, spices, and other forms of Indian and East Asian clothing, and adornments, to display wealth as well as a degree of respect between leaders. This study is meant to aid in bridging the gap between the idea of globalisation such as this occurring because of European intervention, to proving that it was a much more organic process firmly rooted in the Indian Ocean and Middle Eastern environments that occurred the three centuries leading up to the year 1000 A.D and just after.

Images

Coins:

Arabic Coins:



Figure 1 – Obverse Gold Dinar of Abd al-Malik, (British Museum, (1954),1011.2,

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=1442923001&objectid=902731)



Figure 2 - Reverse of Gold Dinar of Abd al-Malik, (British Museum, (1954),1011.2,
http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=1442925001&objectid=902731)

Manuscript:

Latin:



Figure 3 – Illumination of a prince being crowned between two ecclesiastical dignitaries in the Byzantine style which was made in a Carolingian court and is indicative of the type of cultural transmission that was typical across the Mediterranean, Paris, MSS Latin 1141, III

+17 + I ff. from: <http://www.europeanaregia.eu/en/manuscripts/paris-bibliotheque-nationale-france-mss-latin-1141/en>

Maps:

English:



Figure 4 - Map plotted by myself of the mints that were created under the administration of the Umayyads made from compiling information from Schulze (2010), p. 332.

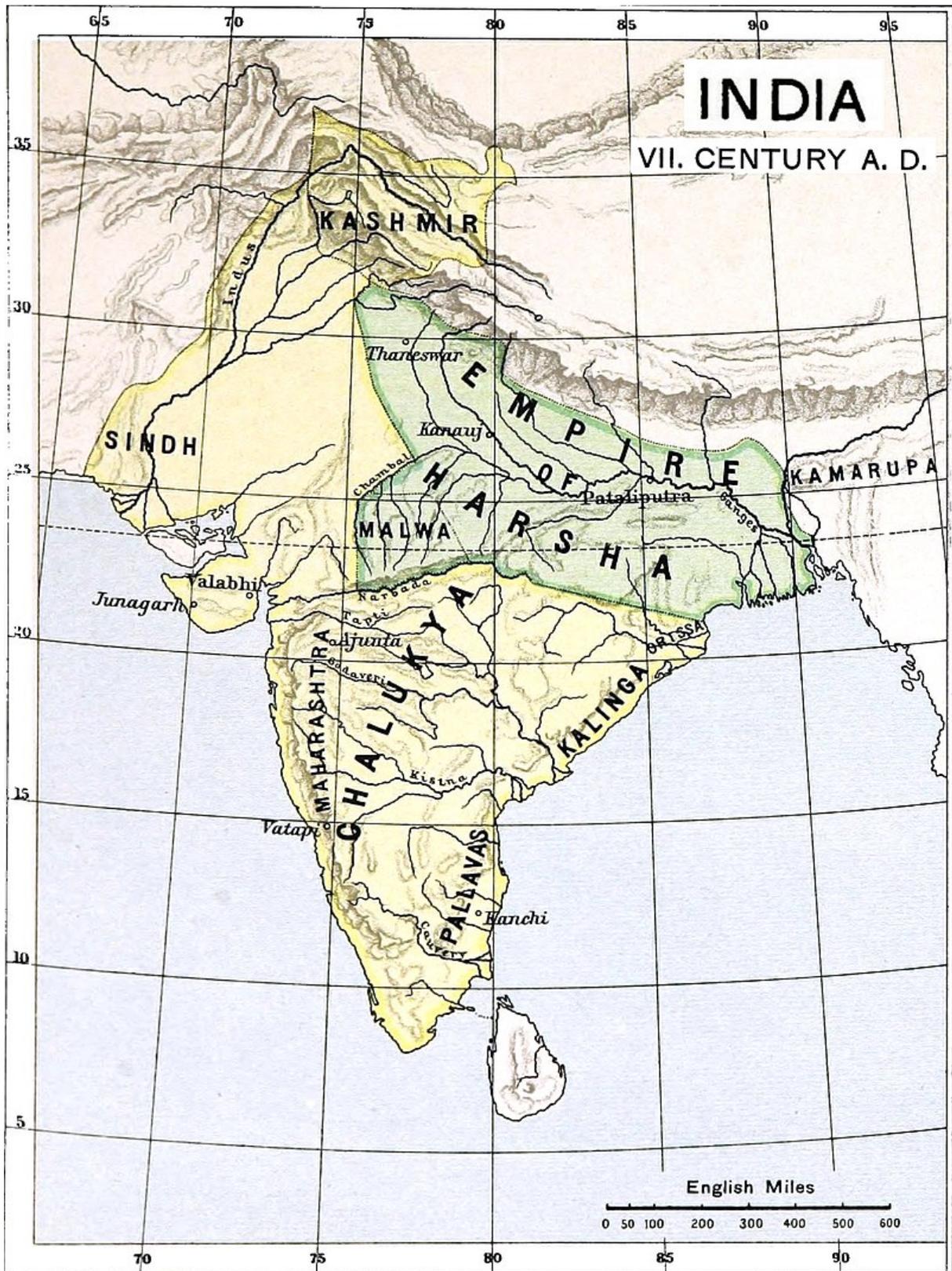


Figure 5 - By Charles Joppen, *Historical Atlas of India*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907), Public Domain.

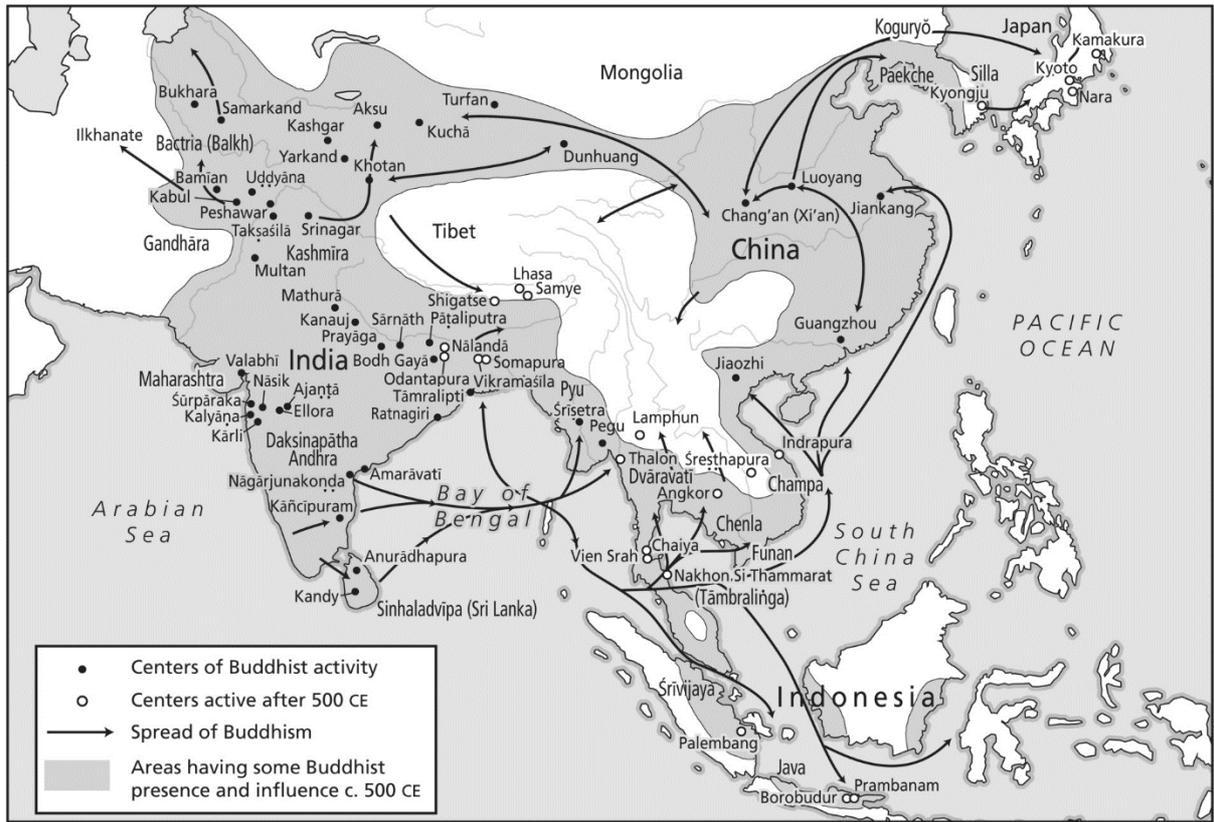


Figure 6- Sen, T. *The Spread of Buddhism*, B. Keda & M. Wiesner-Hanks, (eds.), *The Cambridge World History*, (2015), 447-480.



Figure 7 – Singh, Anurudh K. ‘Probable Agricultural Biodiversity Heritage Sites in India: XX.’, *The Konkan Region. Asian Agri-History* Vol. 18, No. 3, (2014), 257-282.

Raw Materials:



Figure 8 – Frankincense from the Middle East



Figure 9 – Saffron flowers – the red stems coming out is what the spice is made from.



Figure 10 – Raw ambergris.



Figure 11 – A musk pod.



Figure 12 – Cinnamon sticks refined to be ready for cooking.



Figure 13 – Dried cloves typically now used for cooking.



Figure 14 – Nutmeg in its dried and spice form after being harvested from the fruit of the *Myristica* tree.



Figure 15 – A pepper tree before harvesting and the production of black pepper that we are used to today.



Figure 16 – A *cinnamon verum* tree's bark before harvest and cultivation.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Al-Andalusī, Abū al-Qāsim Ṣāʿid. 'A chapter on Roman (Byzantine) sciences in an eleventh century Hispano-Arabic work', *Islamic Studies*, M.S. Khan, (trans.), Vol. 22, No. 1, (1983), 41-45.

Al-Balādhurī, Ahmad ibn Yahya. And Philip Khuri Hitti, Francis Clark Murgotten. *The Origins of the Islamic State, Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, (New York: Columbia University, 1924).

Al-Hamdani, Abu Muhammed al-Hasan. *Kītab al-Jawharatayn al'Atiqatayn al-Ma'i'atayn: al-Safrd' wa al-Baydd'*, H. al-Jasir, (ed.), (Riyadh: Dar al-Yamamah, 1987).

Al-Jāhiz, Abū 'Uthmān ibn Bahr. *The Book of Misers, al-Bukhalā'*, R.B. Sergeant, (trans.), (Lebanon: Garnet Publishing Ltd., 1997).

Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitab al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawhar, ("Les Prairies d'or")*, Barbier de Meynard, (ed.), Vol. 2, (1877), 438-439.

Al-Muqaddasī, Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr. *The best divisions for knowledge of the regions*, Basil Anthony Collins, (trans.), (London: Garnet, 1994).

Al-Nadīm, Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Ishāq. *Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, Dodge Baynard, (ed. and trans.), Vol. 2, (1970), 570-842.

Al-Sīrāfī, Abu Zayd. *Accounts of China and India*, Tim Mackinosh-Smith, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

Al-Ṭabarī, 'Ali ibn sahl Rabban, *Firdaws al-Hikma*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2002).

Al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr. *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, Annales quod scripsit*

Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), Vol. 1, (Leiden: Brill, 1901).

- *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, Annales quod scripsit Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), Vol. 2, (Leiden: Brill, 1901).
- *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, Annales quod scripsit Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), Vol. 3, (Leiden: Brill, 1901).
- ‘The ‘Abbasid Caliphate in Equilibrium’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, C.E. Bosworth, (trans.), Vol. XXX, (1989), 1-312.
- ‘The Reunification of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, C.E. Bosworth, (trans.), Vol. XXXII, (1992), 1-214.
- ‘The Zenith of the Marwanid House: The Last Years of ‘Abd al-Malik and the Caliphate of al-Walid’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, (Ta’rikh al-rusul wa’l-muluk)*, Martin Hinds, (trans.), Vol. XXIII, (1990), 1-230.
- ‘Al-Masur and al-Mahdi A.D. 763-786/A.H. 146-169’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, Hugh Kennedy, (trans.), Vol. XXIX, (1990), 1-264.
- ‘The Conquest of Iran’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, G. Red Smith, (trans.), Vol. XIV, (1994), 1-165.
- ‘‘Abbasid Authority Affirmed’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, (Ta’rikh al-rusul wa’l-muluk)*, Jane Dammen McAuliffe, (trans.), Vol. XXVIII, (1995), 1-292.
- ‘The war between brothers’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, Michael Fishbein, (trans.), Vol. XXXI, 1-250.
- ‘The Zenith of the Marwanid House’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, Martin Hinds, (1990), 1-230.
- ‘The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, Carole Hillenbrand, (trans.), Vol. XXVI, (1989), 1-256.

- ‘The Marwanid Restoration: The Caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik, A.D.693-701’, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk)*, Everett, R. Rowson, (trans.), Vol. XXII, (1989), 1-200.

Al-Tha‘ālibī, Abū Manṣūr. *The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information: The Lata’if al-maxarīf al-Tha‘ālibī*, C.E. Bosworth, (trans.), (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968).

Al-Warrāq. Ibn Sayyār. Hunt, No. 187, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

- *Annals of the Caliphs’ Kitchens*, Nawal Nasrallah, (trans.), (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

Apicius, Marcus Gavius. *Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome*, Joseph D. Vehling (trans.), (New York: Dover Publications Inc. 1977).

Arbery, A.J. ‘A Baghdad Cookery Book (Kitab al-Tabikh)’, *Medieval Cookery*, Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arbery and Charles Perry, (trans.), (2001), 19-90.

At-Tanūkhī, Al-Muḥassin ibn ‘Alī. ‘Nishwar al-Muhadara’, *The Table-talk of a Mesopotamian Judge, Part I*, D.S. Margoliouth, (trans.), (1922), 14-20.

Boniface, ‘S. Bonifatii et lulli epistolae’, *Monumenta Moguntina*, Philippus Jaffe (ed.), (1866), 8-315.

British Museum, *Book Cover*, (1914), 1856,0623.20,

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1856-0623-20

British Museum, Obverse Gold Dinar of Abd al-Malik, (1954),1011.2,

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=1442923001&objectid=902731

British Museum, Reverse of Gold Dinar of Abd al-Malik, (1954),1011.2,

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=1442925001&objectid=902731

Cardinal-Bishop Benedict, ‘LVXXIV [90], Cardinal-Bishop Benedict to Boniface (Nov 751)’, *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, WTH Jackson, (ed.), (1976), 166-167.

Dennehard, Lullus. ‘XXXIX [49], Dennehard, Lullus, and Burchard to Abbess Cuniburg asking for her prayers for help (739-741)’, *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, WTH Jackson, (ed.), (1976), 77-78.

Eginhard, *Vie de Charlemagne*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014).

Einhard, *Annales regni Francorum, 802-805*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Einhardi, *Vita Karoli Magni*, (Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1911).

Fredunbeg, Mirza Kalichbeg. (trans.), *The Chachnamah. An Ancient History of Sind*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1985).

Goitein, S.D. and Mordechai Akiva Friedman, *Indian Traders of the Middle Ages: documents from the Cairo Geniza*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

Gordon, Matthew S. *The work of Ibn Wadih al-Ya'qubi. An English translation*, Vol. 1, (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

- *The work of Ibn Wadih al-Ya'qubi. An English translation*, Vol. 2, (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
- *The work of Ibn Wadih al-Ya'qubi. An English translation*, Vol. 3, (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

Housman, Laurence. *Sinbad the Sailor and Other Stories from the Arabian Nights*, (U.S.: Read Books, 2017).

- Ibn ‘Abdalhadi, Djamal ad-din Yusud b. Hasan. ‘The Cookery Book’, *al-Mashrik*, S.H. Zayyat (trans.), (1937), p. 371 ff.
- Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Abū ‘Umar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad. *The Unique Necklace, Volume II*, (Lebanon: The Centre of Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 2009).
- Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Lawātī al-Ṭanjī. *Travels in Asia, 1325-54*, HAR Gibb, (trans.), (London: Routledge and Sons, 1929).
- Ibn Duqmāq, Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī. *Book of Gifts and Rarities, (Kitab al-Haqāyā wa al-Tujaf)*, Ghāda al-Hijāwī al-Qaddūmī, (trans.), (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, (1997).
- Ibn Faḍlān, Ahmed. *Mission to the Volga*, James E. Montgomery, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2014).
- Ibn Hindū, Abū al-Faraj ‘Alī. *The Key to Medicine and a Guide for Students, Miftāh al-tibb wa-minhāj al-tullāb*, Dr. Aida Tibi, (trans.), (Reading: Garnet Publishing Ltd., 2010).
- Ibn Khurradādhbih, Abū al-Qāsim Ubaydallāh ibn Abdallāh. *Kitāb al-masālik*, M.J. de Goeje, (ed.), (Leiden: Brill, 1889).
- Ibn Munqidh, Usama. *The Book of Contemplation, Islam and the Crusades*, Paul Cobb, (trans.), (London: Penguin, 2008).
- Ibn Riḍwān, Ali. ‘Part II: Ibn Riḍwān’s ‘On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt’, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, Michael W. Dols. (trans.), S. Aldil Gamal, (ed. Of Arabic text), (1984), 75-149.
- Ibn Shaddād. ‘Antarah. *War Songs*, James E. Montgomery, (trans.), (New York: New York University Press, 2018).

Ibn Shahriyār, Buzruk. *The Book of the Wonders of India, Its Mainland, Its Sea and Its Islands, Kitāb ‘Aja’ib al-Hind, edited from MS. In the Aya Sofia Mosque of Istanbul and MS. Included in the ‘Umari’s Encyclopaedic Book*, Hikoichi Yajima, (ed.), (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2018).

Ibn Shahriyār, Buzurg. *The Book of the Wonders of India, Mainland, Sea and Islands*, G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, (trans. and ed.), (London: East-West Publications, 1981).

Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Anwā’* (Hyderabad: Matba’at Majlis Da’irat al-Ma’arif al-Uthmaniya, 1956).

Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, (trans.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Ivry, Alfred L. ‘Part 2’, *Al-Kindī’s Metaphysics, A Translation of Ya’qūb ibn Ishāq, al-Kindī’s Treatise of ‘First Philosophy’ (fi al-Falsafah al-ūlā)*, (1974), 53-114.

John of Cappadocia, Tribonian. *Codex Iustinianus* 4.32.26.1-2.

Joppen, Charles. *Historical Atlas of India*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907).

Kahl, Oliver. *Ubaidallah Ibn Bakhtishu’ on Apparent Death, The Kitāb Tahrīm da’in al-ahya*, Arabic Edition and English Translation, (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

Khan, Ghanzafar Ali. ‘Saudi Arabia launches new banknotes’, *Arab News*, (2016), from: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1023626/saudi-arabia> .

Khusraw, Nāṣir-i. *Book of Travels*, Wheeler M. Thackston, (ed. and trans.), (USA: Mazda Publishers, 2001).

Lane, E.W. *The Arabic Lexicon*,

<http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/%d8%ad%d9%86%d8%b7/> .

- <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/anise%20seed?cat=50> .
- <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B1?cat=50> .
- <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF?cat=50> .
- <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%86%D9%81%D9%84?cat=50> .
- <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%B1?cat=50> .
- <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%83> .
- <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A9+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A8> .
- <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D8%B2%D8%B9%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86> .
- *Arabic-English Lexicon, Book 1-Part 2*, (London: William and Norgate, 1865).

Leclerc, Lucien. 'Les sciences en Orient, leur transmission en Occident par les traductions latines', *Histoire de la médecine Arabe. Exposé complet des traductions du grec*, Vol. 2, (1876), 1-587.

Loyn, H.R. and John Percival, (eds.), 'The Reign of Charlemagne: documents on Carolingian Government and Administration', *Documents of Medieval History*, Vol. 2, x-164.

McVaugh, Michael R. *Arnaldi de Villanova, Opera Medica Omnia*, (Granada: Seminarium Historiae Medicae Granatensis, 2014).

MGH Capit 1:87, *Capitulare de Villis*, Chapter 70, p. 90.

Minorsky, V. (trans.), ‘Ḥudūd al-‘Ālam, The Regions of the World, A Persian Geography 372 A.H./ 982 A.D.’, *E.J.W. Memorial Series, New Series*, C.E. Boworth, (ed.), Vol. XI, (1970), 45-524.

Narshakhī, Abu Bakr Muhammad, *The History of Bukhara*, (Massachusetts: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1954).

- *The History of Bukhara*, R.N. Frye, (ed. and trans.), (New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007).

National Library of Sweden, Manuscript shelfmark KoB 1 ab.

Paris, MSS Latin 1141, III +17 + I ff. from:

<http://www.europeanaregia.eu/en/manuscripts/paris-bibliotheque-nationale-france-mss-latin-1141/en>

Paris, MSS Latin 9388, 198 ff. from: <http://www.europeanaregia.eu/en/manuscripts/paris-biblioth-que-nationale-france-mss-latin-9388/en>

Pertz, Georgius Henricus. (ed.), ‘Rodulfi Gesta abb. Trudonensium, Lib IX’, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, (1752), 213-488.

Priestman, Seth. ‘The British Museum Siraf Project’, *British Institute of Persian Studies Newsletter*, No. 32, (2007), 4-6.

Procopius, ‘Hyperon ton polemon’, H. Dewing, (trans.), *History of the Wars, Secret History, Buildings*, Vol. 1, (1967), 450-460.

Sen, T. *The Spread of Buddhism*, B. Keda & M. Wiesner-Hanks, (eds.), *The Cambridge World History*, (2015), 447-480.

Shamsi, F.A., 'Al-Kindi's Epistle on the Unity of God and the Finitude of the World (translation)', in: 'Al-Kindi's Risala Fi Wahdaniya Allah Wa Tahani Jirm Al-'Alam', *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (1978), 189-190.

Singh, Anurudh K. 'Probable Agricultural Biodiversity Heritage Sites in India: XX.', *The Konkan Region. Asian Agri-History* Vol. 18, No. 3, (2014), 257-282.

Stern, Samuel. 'The Arabic Translations of the Pseudo-Aristotelian Treatise *De Mundo*', S.M Stern, (ed), *Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Thought*, (1983), 187-204.

The Bible, *Psalm 115:8-3*

Theodulf, 'Theodulfi Carmina', *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, (1881), 437-581.

Thimiama, csg. 761. (transcribed and uploaded in 2021), 66.

The Qur'an, *Surah as-Saf*, 61:9.

Weerakkody, D.P.M. (trans.), 'Taprobane: Ancient Sri Lanka as known to Greeks and Romans', *Christian Topography*, Vol. XI, (1997), 240-250.

Secondary Sources

Abbas, Tahir. *Islamophobia and Radicalisation, A Vicious Cycle*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Abd al-Latif, Bahjat Kamil. 'The Prophet Muhammed and the Universal Message of Islam', *The Spread of Islam throughout the World*, Idris el Hareir and El Hadji Ravane M'Baye, (eds.), Vol. 3, (2011), 21-54.

Abderrahmane, Taha. 'Discussion entre Abū Sa'īd al-Sīrāfī, le grammairien et Mattā b. Yūnus, le philosophe', *Arabica*, T. 25, Fasc. 3, (1978), 310-323.

Abu-Lughod. Janet L. *Before European Hegemony, The World System A.D. 1250-1350*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

Ackerman-Lieberman, Phillip I. 'Revisiting Jewish Occupational Choice and Urbanization in Iraq under the Early 'Abbasids', *Jewish History*, Vol. 29, No. 2, (2015), 113-135.

Adam, Augustyn and the editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Sinbad the Sailor, Literary Character', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (2016), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sindbad-the-Sailor>

Adamson, Peter. (ed.) *Studies on Plotinus and al-Kindi Aristotelianism and the Soul in the Arabic Plotinus*, (2014), 200-250.

- *Al-Kindi*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Adelson, Howard. And Robert Baker, 'The Oath of Purgation of Pope Leo III in 800', *Traditio*, Vol. 8 (1952), 35-80.

Afsaruddin, Asma. 'In Praise of the Caliphs: Re-Creating History from the Manaqib Literature', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, (1999), 329-350.

Agius, Dionisius A. *Classic Ships of Islam, From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

Ahmad, S. Maqbul. 'Travels of Abu'l Hasan 'Ali b. al Husayn al Mas'udi', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 28, (1954), 509-524.

Ahsan, Muahmmmed Manazir. *Social Life Under the 'Abbasids, (170-289/786-902)*, (US: ProQuest, 2017).

Akasoy, Anna. and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

Alain, George. 'Direct Sea Trade Between Islamic Iraq and Tang China: from the Exchange of Goods to the Transmission of Ideas', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 25, (2015), 579-624.

Al-Khalili, Jim. *Pathfinders: the golden age of Arabic science*, (London: Penguin, 2012).

Al-Saidi, and Ahmed al-Harrasi. 'Phytochemical Analysis of the Essential Oil from Botanically Certified Oleogum Resin of *Bosweillia sacra* (Omani Luban)', *Molecules*, (2008), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6245470/>

Amar, Zohar. and Afraim Lev. *Arabian Drugs in Early Medieval Mediterranean Medicine*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

- 'Trends in the Use of Perfumes and Incense in the Near East after the Muslim Conquests', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (2013), 11 - 30.
- and Yaron Serri. 'On ibn Juljul and the meaning and importance of the list of medicinal substances not mentioned by Dioscorides', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (2014), 529-555.

Amin, Abd al-Amir Hussain. 'Islam in Bilad ar-Rafidayn (Iraq)', *The Spread of Islam Throughout the World*, Idris el Hareir (ed.), Vol. 3 (2011), 209-222.

Anjum, Tanvir. 'Emergence of Muslim Rule in India: Some Historical Disconnects and Missing Links', *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (2007), 217-240.

Anonymous, *The Cyclopedia of India, Biographical-Historical-Administrative-Commercial*, Vol. 1, (1907), 1-2.

Ashtor, Eliyahu. 'The Diet of Salaried Classes in the Medieval Near East', *The Medieval Near East: Social and Economic History, Collected Studies*, (1978), 1-24.

Asif, Manan Ahmed. *A Book of Conquest*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Aubaile-Sallenave, F. 'Bādenjān', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (2011),

<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/badenjan-egeplant-aubergine>

Axelle, Rougelle. 'The Qālhat Project: new research at the medieval harbour sit of Qālhat, Oman (2008)', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 40, (2010), 303-319.

- and Anne Benoist, 'Notes on pre-Islamic and early Islamic harbours of Hadramawt (Yemen)', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 31, (2001), 203-214.

Azad, Arezou. *Afghanistan's Islam*, (California: University of California Press, 2017).

Bakhsh, Alireza Omid. 'The Virtuous City: The Iranian and Islamic Heritage of Utopianism', *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (2013), 41-51.

Barthold, V.V., 'V.V. Barthold's Preface', *E.J.W. Memorial Series, New Series*, C.E.

Boworth, (ed.), Vol. XI, (1970), 1-44.

Bayly, Susan. *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

BBC, 'War', (2009), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/islamethics/war.shtml>

Becher. *Charlemagne*, (London: Yale University Press, 2003).

Beeston, A.F.L. 'The Arabian Aromatics Trade in Antiquity', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, (2005), 53-64.

Bessard, Fanny. *Caliphs and Merchants: Cities and Economies of Power in the Near East (700-950)*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

- 'Politics and Economics of the Early Caliphate', *Routledge Handbook on Early Islam*, Herbert Berg, (ed.), (2018), 196-200.

Bhavan, B.V. (ed.), 'The Age of Imperial Kanauj', *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. 4, (1955), 1-505.

Bischoff, *Latin Paleography*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Bocco, Diana. 'How Cinnamon Works', *HowStuffWorks.com*, (2009),

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/botany/cinnamon1.htm>

Boivin, Nicole. and Alison Crowther, Mary Prendergast, and Dorian Q. Fuller, 'Indian Ocean Food Globalization and Africa', *The African Archaeological Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4, (2014), 547-581.

Bosworth. C.E. 'Farrukhī's Elegy on Mahmūd of Ghazna', *Iran*, Vol. 28, (1991), 43-49.

- 'The Development of Persian Culture under the Early Ghaznavids', *Iran*, Vol. 6, (1968), 33-44.

Boulnois, Luce. 'Gold, Wool, and Musk: Trade in Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century', *The Tibetan History Reader*, Gray Tuttle and Kurtis S. Schaeffer, (eds.), (2013), 457-476.

Boyce, Gray Cowen. 'The Legacy of Henri Pirenne', *Byzantion*, Vol. 15, (1940-1941), 449-464.

Braudel, F. *Civilisation and Capitalism, 15th-18th century, The perspective of the World*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

- *A History of Civilisations*, (London: Penguin, 1995).

British Library Website,

http://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?frbrVersion=337&tabs=moreTab

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2345678>

Brown, Michelle. *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts from*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

Brubaker, Leslie. And John Haldon. *Byzantium in the iconoclast era*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

- 'Representation c. 800: Arab, Byzantine, Carolingian', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. 19 (2009), 37-55.

Brun, Jean-Pierre. 'The Production of Perfume in Antiquity: The Cases of Delos and Paestum', *The American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 104, No. 2, (2000), 277-308.

Bulliet, Richard. *Cotton, Climate, and Camels in Early Islamic Iran, A Moment in World History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

- Bulliet, Richard. *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period, An Essay in Quantitative History*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1979).

Burnett, Charles. 'The semantics of Indian numerals in Arabic, Greek and Latin', *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 34, No. ½, (2006), 15-30.

Burridge, Claire. 'Incense in medicine: an early medieval perspective', *Early Medieval Europe*, (2020), 219-255.

Bursi, Adam. 'Scents of Space: Early Islamic Pilgrimage, Perfume, and Paradise', *Arabica*, Vol. 67, (2020), 200-234.

Cahen, Claude. 'Le commerce musulman de l'océan Indien au Moyen Âge', *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l'océan Indien*, M. Mollat, (ed.), (1970), 180-193.

Chaffee, John W. *The Muslim Merchants of premodern China: the history of a maritime Asian trade diaspora, 750-1400*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

- 'Diasporic Identities in the Historical Development of the Maritime Muslim Communities of Song-Yuan China', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 49, No. 4, (2006), 395-420.

Chakravarti, R. 'Nakhudas and Navittakas: Ship owning Merchants in the West Coast of India (c. AD 1000-1500)', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 43, (2000), 35-64.

Chaudhuri, Kirti N. *Asia before Europe, Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Chowdhury, Biswajit Roy. and Buroshiva Dasgupta, *Natural Wonders of Asia, The Finest National Parks of India, Thailand, the Philippines & Malaysia*, (London: New Holland, 2005).

Chin, Tamara. 'The Invention of the Silk Road, 1877', *The University of Chicago Press Journals*, Vol. 40, No. 1, (2013), 194-219.

Choudhary, Radharishna. 'Asoka and the Taxila Inscription', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 20, (1957), 50-54.

Citarella, Armand O. 'The Relations of Amalfi with the Arab World before the Crusades', *Speculum*, Vol. 42, No. 2, (1967), 299-312.

Clark, Hugh R. *Community, Trade and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century*, (MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

- 'Muslims and Hindus in the Culture and Morphology of Quanzhou from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Century', *Journal of World History*, Vol. 6, No. 1, (1995), 49-74.

Clarke, Nicola. 'Medieval Arabic accounts of the conquest of Cordoba: Creating a narrative for a provincial capital', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 1, (2011), 41-57.

Clauss, Jan. 'Imports and Embargos of Imperial Concepts in the Frankish Kingdom. The promotion of Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation in Carolingian Courtly Culture', *Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages*, Christian Scholl, (ed.), (2017), 77-116.

Cohen, Hayyim J. 'The Economic Background and the Secular Occupations of Muslim Jurisprudents and Traditionalist in the Classical Period of Islam', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (1970), 16-71.

Conrad, Lawrence I. *The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

Crone, Patricia. *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

- *Slaves on Horses, The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

Curta, Florin. 'Merovingian and Carolingian Gift Giving', *Speculum*, Vol. 81, No. 3, (2006), 671-699.

Dalby, Andrew. *Empire of Pleasures: Luxury and Indulgence in the Roman World*, (London: Routledge, 2000).

- *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices*, (California: University of California Press, 2000).

Daltry, Jennifer C. 'Making business scents: how to harvest incense sustainable from the globally threatened lansen tree *Protium attenuatum*', *Oryx*, Vol. 29, Issue 3, (2015), 431-441.

D'Amico, Erica. 'Approaches and perspectives on the origins of Venice', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, Vol. 62, (2017), 209-230.

Davis, Jennifer R. 'Inventing the Missi', *The 'Abbasid and Carolingian Empires*, (2018), 13-51.

De Saxce, Arian. 'Trade and Cross-cultural Contacts in Sri Lanka and South India during Late Antiquity (6th-10th Centuries)', *Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology*, (2016), 121-159.

De Vos, Paula. 'The "Prince of Medicine": Yuhanna ibn Masawayh and the Foundations of the Western Pharmaceutical Tradition', *Isis*, Vol. 104, No. 4, (2013), 667-712.

Devra, G.S.L. 'Arab Invasion and the Decline of Western Maurya Confederacy', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 76, (2015), 195-198.

Dijkman, Jessica. And Bas van Bavel, Michele Campoplano, 'Factor Markets in Early Islamic Iraq, c. 600-1100 AD', *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 57, No. 2, (2014), 262-289.

Donkin, Robin A. *Between East and West*, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003).

Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, (N.J: Princeton University Press, 1981).

Ducène, Jean-Charles. 'Une nouvelle source arabe sur l'océan Indien au Xe siècle : le Ṣaḥīḥ min aḥbār al-biḥār wa-'aḡā'ibihā d'Abū 'Imrān Mūsā ibn Rabāḥ al-Awsī al-Sīrāfī', *L'Afrique orientale et l'océan Indien : connexions, réseaux d'échanges et globalisation*, Vol. 6, (2015), 1-13.

Duke, James A, *CRC Handbook of Alternative Cash Crops*, (Florida: CRC, 1993).

El Cheikh, Nadia Maria. 'To be a Princess in the Fourth/Tenth-Century 'Abbasid Court', *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, Metin Kunt, (eds.), (2011), 199-216.

Eldridge, Alison. 'History, The Early Period', *Britannica*, (2020),

<https://www.britannica.com/place/London/History>

Elias, Jamal J. *Aisha's Cushion*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

Ellenblum, Ronnie. *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

El-Ramady, Ibrahim Gamal Eldin. 'An Early African Poet', *African Arts*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (1970), 67.

Evans, J.A.S. 'Justinian and the Historian Procopius', *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 17, No. 2, (1970), 218-223.

Farmer, H.G. and James Robson, 'The Kitāb al-Malāḥi of Abū Ṭālib Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salama', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 2, (1938), 213-249.

Fatimi, S.Q. 'In Quest of Kalah', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1960), 61-101.

Field, Henry. 'Folklore and Customs of Southwestern Asia', *Anthropological Series Field Museum of Natural History*, Vol. 33, No. 1, (1940), 6-169.

Findlay, Ronald. and Kevin H. O'Rourke. *Power and Plenty*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Flecker, Michael, 'A Ninth-Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia', *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Wind*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), (2010), 101-120.

- and J. Keith Wilson, 'Dating the Belitung Shipwreck', *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Wind*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), (2010), 35-44.

Frankopan, Peter. *The Silk Roads. A New History of the World*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

Freeman-Grenville. G.S.P. 'Some thoughts on Buzurg ibn Shahriya al-Rahmormuzi: "The Book of the Wonders of India"', *Studies in History, Trade and Society on the Eastern Coast of Africa*, (1982), 63-70.

Freitag, Ulrike. *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

Fried, Johannes. *Charlemagne*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Frizzo, Caren D. 'Essential oils of Camphor Tree (*Cinnamomum camphora* Nees & Eberm) Cultivated in Southern Brazil,' *Brazilian Archives of Biology and Technology*, Vol. 43, No. 3, (2000), https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1516-89132000000300011&lang=en

Fück, J.W. ‘The Arabic Literature on Alchemy According to An-Nadim’ (AD 987), Abu l-Faraj Muhammed Ibn Ishāq an-Nadim’, *Ambix, The Journal for the Society of Alchemy and Early Chemistry*, Vol. 4, (1915), 81-144.

- ‘Buzurg b. Shahriyār’, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, (2012), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1575

Gamal, S. Adil. ‘Part 1: Medieval Islamic Medicine’, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, Michael W. Dols. (trans.), S. Adil Gamal, (ed. Of Arabic text), (1984), 1-74.

Ganz, David. ‘Carolingian Manuscript Culture and the Making of the Literary Culture of the Middle Ages’, *Literary Cultures and Material Book*, (2007), 147-158.

- ‘The preconditions for Caroline minuscule’, *Viator*, XVI, (1987), 23-44.

Ghaffari, Sammad. And Neda Roshanravan. ‘Saffron; An update review on biological properties with special focus on cardiovascular effects’, *Biomedicine and Pharmacotherapy*, Vol. 109, (2019), 21-27.

Ghorbani, Reza. and Alireza Koocheki, ‘Sustainable Cultivation of Saffron in Iran’, *Sustainable Agriculture Reviews*, Eric Lichtfouse, Vol. 25, (2017), 169-204.

Gibb, Hamilton, ‘Al-Sīrāfi’, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, (London: Brill, 2020),

https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=&s.q=al+sirafi

‘Ginger’, U.S department of Health and Human Services,

<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/ginger>

Goichon, A.-M. ‘L’ēvolution philosophique d’Avicenne’, *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l’Étranger*, T. 138, (1948), 318-329.

Gordon, Matthew S. 'Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility', *Concubines and Courtesans*, (2017), 27-51.

Gorzalczany, Amir. 'Ramla (South)', *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel/ ארכיאולוגיות חדשות: ארכיאולוגיות חדשות*, Vol. 121, (2009), 1025-1031.

Ghosh, Suchandra. 'Maritime trade between the Persian Gulf and West Coast of India (C.3rd century A.D. to 7th century A.D.)', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 64, (2003), 132-144.

Gilfillan, S.C. *Inventing the Ship*, (New York: Columbia University, 1935).

Goitein, S.D. *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, (London: Brill, 2009).

- *A Mediterranean Society: Economic Foundations*, Vol. 1, (1999), 1-492.
- 'The Rise- of the Near-Eastern Bourgeoisie in Early Islamic Times', *Journal of World History*, (1956), 586-596.

Goldberg, Jessica L. *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean, The Geniza Merchants and their Business World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Granara, William. 'Ibn Ḥawqal in Sicily', *Journal of Comparative Poetics, The Self and the Other*, No. 3, (1983), 94-99.

Gresh, Geoffrey F. *To Rule Eurasia's Waves, The new great power competition at sea*, (U.S.: Yale University Press, 2020).

Grierson, Philip. 'The Coronation of Charlemagne and the Coinage of Pope Leo III,' *Dark Age Numismatics, Selected Studies*, (1979), 825-833.

Groom, Nigel. *Frankincense and Myrrh. A Study of Arabian Incense Trade*, (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1981).

Guerin, Alexandrine. And Faisal al’Naimi. ‘Territory and settlement patterns during the ‘Abbasid period (ninth century AD); the village of Murwab (Qatar)’, *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 39, (2009), 181-196.

Gungwu, Wang. ‘Introduction’, *Shipwrecked. Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), (2010), XVIII-1.

Gutas, Demitri. *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and early ‘Abbasid Society (2nd – 4th/8th – 10th centuries)*, (London: Routledge, 1999).

Guy, John. ‘Rare and Strange Goods: International Trade in Ninth-Century Asia’, *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), (2010), 19- 29.

Guzman, Roberto Marin. ‘La literatura arabe como Fuente para la historica social: el caso del Kitab al-Bukhala’ de al-jahiz’, *Estudios de Asia y Africa*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (1993), 32-83.

Hadj-Sadok, M., “Ibn K̲h̲urradādhbih”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, P.

Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel (edts.), (1960),

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.soas.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3257

Haig, Wolsey, ‘The Arab Conquest of Sind’, *The Cambridge History of India, Turks and Afghans*, Vol. 3, (1965), 1-10.

Hajeski, Nancy J. *National Geographic Complete Guide to Herbs and Spices: Remedies, Seasonings, and Ingredients to Improve your Health and Enhance your Life*, (Washington: National Geographic Society, 2016).

Hall, Kenneth R. 'Ports-of-Trade, Maritime Diasporas, and Networks of Trade and Cultural Integration in the Bay of Bengal Region of the Indian Ocean: c. 1300-1500', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 53, No. ½, (2010), 109-145.

Hamid, Ismail. *The Malay Islamic Hikayat*, (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1983).

Hansen, Valerie. *The Year 1000, When Explorers Connected the World- and Globalization Began*, (New York: Scribner, 2020).

Harash, Rinat and Maayan Lubell, 'Trove of 1,000-year-old gold coins unearthed in Israel', *Reuters*, Ed Osmond, (ed.), (2020), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-archaeology-gold-coins/trove-of-1000-year-old-gold-coins-unearthed-in-israel-idUSKBN25K0US>

Hassan, Mona F. 'Relations, Narrations, and Judgments: The Scholarly Networks and Contributions of an Early Female Muslim Jurist', *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (2015), 323-351.

Haw, Stephen G. 'The genus *Azelia* and the Belitung Ship', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 29, No. 3, (2019), 505-518.

Haywood, John A., "Al-Mas'ūdī". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Masudi>

Head, Constance. 'On the date of Justinian II's Restoration', *Byzantion*, Vol. 39, (1969), 104 - 107.

Heath, Anne. 'Elevating Saint Germanus of Auxerre: Architecture, Politics, and Liturgy in the Reclaiming of Monastic Identity', *Speculum*, Vol. 90, No. 1, (2015), 60-113.

Hebert, Raymond J. 'The Coinage of Islamic Spain', *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. ½, (1991), 113-128.

Heck, Gene W. 'Gold Mining in Arabia and the Rise of the Islamic State', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (1999), 364-395.

Helms, Mary W. 'Ineffable Illumination: Early Medieval Church Treasure and the Preservation of Heaven's Light', *Anthropos*, Bd. 109, H. 1, (2014), 103-118.

Hodges, Richard. 'The Adriatic Sea 500–1100: A Corrupted Alterity?', *Byzantium, Venice and the Medieval Adriatic: Spheres of Maritime Power and Influence, c. 700–1453*, Magdalena Skoblar (ed.), (2021), 15-44.

- 'Reviewed Work(s): Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, AD 300-900 by Michael McCormick', *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2, (2002), 285-286.

Hodgson, Marshall. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilisation*, Vol. 2, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974).

Holt, Julie Zimmerman. 'Citrus Fruits: Origins and Development', *Encyclopaedia of Global History*, Claire Smith (ed.), (2014), 1092-2022.

Hooker, Lucy. 'The problem with the world's most expensive spice', *BBC News*, (2017),

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-41110151>

Horton M. C. 'East Africa and Oman, c. 600 – 1856 CE', *Al-Salimi and Staples*, (2017), 255-279.

Houtum-Schindler, A. 'On the Length of the Persian Farsakh', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, Vol. 10, No. 9, (1888), 584-588.

Hoyland, Robert G. and Brian Gilmour. *Medieval Islamic Swords and Swordmaking. Kindi's treatise "On swords and their kinds", (translation and commentary)*, (Oxford: The E.J.W Gibb Memorial Trust, 2006).

Humbert, Geneviève, "al-Sīrāfi", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, (eds.), (1960),

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.soas.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1090

Ivry, Alfred L. 'Part 1', *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics, A Translation of Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq, al-Kindi's Treatise of 'First Philosophy' (fi al-Falsafah al ūlā)*, (1974), 1-52.

Jackson, Peter. 'The Neoliberal University and Global Immobilites of Theory', *Area Studies at the Crossroads*, (2017), 27-44.

Jankowiak, Marek. *Infrastructure and organisation of the early Islamic slave trade with northern Europe, Dirhams for Slaves by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Khalil Research Centre, University of Oxford*, (2017), 1- 111.

Kaplanis, Costas. 'The Debasement of the "Dollar of the Middle Ages"', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 63, No. 3, (2003), 768-801.

Karim, Abdul. *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, (Dhakha: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992).

Khalidov, Anas B. 'Ebn Ḥawqal, Abu'l-Qāsem Moḥammad', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (2011),
<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/ebn-hawqal>

Keaney, Heather. 'Confronting the Caliph: 'Uthman n. Affan in Three 'Abbasid Chronicles', *Studia Islamica*, Vol. 106, No. 1, (2011), 25-48.

Kennedy, Hugh. *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, (London: Pearson, 1986).

- *The Early 'Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History*, (New York: Routledge, 2016).
- 'The Muslims in Europe', *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, R. McKitterick, (ed.), (1995), 249-271.
- 'Military pay and the economy of the early Islamic state', *Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. 75, (2002), 155-169.
- 'Great estates and elite lifestyles in the Fertile Crescent from Byzantium and Sassanian Iran to Islam', *Court Cultures of the Muslim World*, A. Fuess and J-P. Hartung, (eds.), (2011), 54-79.

Khan, Itidar Alam. *Historical Dictionary of Medieval India*, (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, 2008).

Khan, M.S. A chapter on Roman (Byzantine) sciences in an eleventh century Hispano-Arabic work', *Islamic Studies*, M.S. Khan, (trans.), Vol. 22, No. 1, (1983), 51-71.

Khatun, Toslima. 'The reconfiguration of trade routes from the Middle East to Central and East Asia between the 7th and 11th centuries', *AISU Journal*, (2018), 181 – 200.

Khaznekatbi, Ghaida. and Ahmad Farras Oran. 'The economic system under the 'Abbasid Dynasty'. *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Economics*, (2009), 259-266.

King, Anya.

- 'Scent from the Garden on Paradise: Musk and the Medieval World', *Islamic History and Civilisation*, Vol. 140, Hinrich Biesterfeldt, (ed.), (2017), 1-10.
- 'The Importance of Imported Aromatics in Arabic Culture: Illustrations from Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Poetry', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 67, No. 3, (2008), 175-189.
- 'Tibetan Musk and Medieval Arab Perfumery', *Islam and Tibet – Interactions along the Musk Routes*, (2011), 145-162.

King, Geoffrey R.D. 'Islam, Iconoclasm, and the Declaration of Doctrine', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2, (1985), 267 - 277.

Kovalev, Roman K. and Alexis C. Kaelin, 'Circulation of Arab Silver in Medieval Afro-Eurasia: Preliminary Observations', *History Compass*, Vol. 5, Issue, 2, (2007), 560-580.

Kraft, Kraig H. 'Multiple lines of evidence for the origin of domesticated chili pepper, *Capiscum annum*, in Mexico', *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences of the United States of America*, (2014), 6165-6170.

Kuvian, George Thomas, *Historical and Cultural Dictionary of India*, (N.J: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1976).

Labib, Subhi Y. 'Capitalism in Medieval Islam', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 29, No. 1, (1969), 79-96.

Lak, Daniel. 'World: South Asia Kashmiris pin hopes on saffron', *BBC News*, (1998),
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/212491.stm

Lassner, Jacob. *The topography of Baghdad in the early Middle Ages: text and studies*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970).

Le Maguer, Sterenn. 'The Incense Trade during the Islamic Period', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 45, (2015), 175-183.

Leslie, Donald Daniel. 'The Survival of the Chinese Jews, The Jewish Community of Kaifeng', *Monographies Du T'oung Pao*, Vol. X, (1972), 3-60.

Levtzion, Nehemia. 'Ibn-Hawqal, the Cheque, and Awdaghost', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (1968), 223-233.

Lewis, Bernard. *Race and Colour in Islam*, (London: Harper Torchbooks, 1971).

Lewis, Robert. (ed. and author), 'Pepper', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (2020),

<https://www.britannica.com/plant/pepper-plant-Capsicum-genus>

Lohr, Martin. *The Chlamydomonas Sourcebook*, (USA: Elsevier, 2009).

Lopate, Philipp. And Edward Said. 'Edward Said', *Bomb, New Art Publications*, No. 69, (1999), 70-75.

Lopez, R.S. 'The Silk Industry in the Byzantine Empire', *Speculum*, Vol. XX, (1945), 38-39.

Louis, François. 'Metal Objects on the Belitung Shipwreck', *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Wind*, Regin Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby, (eds), (2010), 85-92.

Maguer, Sterenn Le. 'The Incense Trade during the Islamic Period', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 45, (2015), 175-183.

Mahoney, Daniel. 'The Political Construction of a Tribal Genealogy from Early Medieval South Arabia', *Meanings of Community across Eurasia*, (2016), 165-182.

Majumdar, R.C. (ed.) 'The Classical Age', *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. 3, (1954), 167-177.

Malik, Jamal. *Islam in South Asia*, (Brill: Leiden, 2008).

- *Islam in South Asia*, (India: Orient Blackswan, 2012).

Manguin, P. 'City-States and City-State Cultures in pre-15th-Century Southeast Asia', *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures. An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, (2000), 409-416.

Marsot, Alan-Gerard. 'Political Islam in South Asia: A Case Study', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 524, (1992), 149-169.

Martensson, Ulrika. "It's the Economy, Stupid": Al-Ṭabarī's Analysis of the Free Rider Problem in the 'Abbasid Caliphate', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 54, No. 2, (2011), 203-238.

- 'Introduction: 'Materialist' Approaches to Islamic History', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 54, No. 2, (2011), 117-131.

Mavroudi, Maria. 'Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic during the Middle Ages: Searching for the Classical Tradition', *Speculum*, Vol. 90, No. 1, (2015), 28-59.

Melchert, Christopher. 'Religious Policies of the Caliphs from al-Mutawakkil to al-

Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, 'Incense', s.v., (2020),

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/incense>

Meyer, Adolphe E. *An Educational History of the Western World*, (New York: McGraw, 1965).

Meyerhof, M. 'The History of Trachoma Treatment in Antiquity and During the Arabic Middle Ages', *Bulletin of the Ophthalmological Society of Egypt*, Vol. 29, (1936), 26-87.

- 'Thirty-three clinical observations by Rhazes (circa 900 A.D.)', *Isis*, Vol. 23, (1935), 321-356.
- 'An Arabic Compendium of Medico-philosophical Definitions', *Isis*, Vol 10, (1928), 340-349.
- 'New light on Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and his period', *Isis*, Vol. 8, (1926), 685-724.

McCormick, Michael. *Origins of the European Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

- 'Rats, Communications, and Plague: Toward and Ecological History', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (2003), 1-25.

Ming-liang, Hsieh. 'The Navigational Route of the Belitung Wreck and the Late Tang Ceramic Trade,' *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, (2010), 137-144.

Miquel, A., "Ibn Ḥawḳal", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, P. Bearman, Th.

Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, (eds.), (1960),

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.soas.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3193

Mitchiner, Michael. 'Evidence for Viking-Islamic Trade Provided by Samanid Silver Coinage', *East and West*, Vol. 37, No. ¼, 139-150.

Moffit, John F. 'Bernini's "Cathedra Petri" and the "Constitutum Constantini"', *Notes in the History of Art*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (2007), 23-31.

Moreland, John and Robert Wan de Noort, 'Integration and Social Reproduction in the Carolingian Empire', *World Archaeology*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (1992), 320-334.

Morgan, Victoria. And Stephen McPhillips, Sandra Rosendahl. 'Abbasid rural settlement in northern Qatar: seasonal tribal exploitation of an arid environment?' *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 45, (2015), 185-197.

Munt, Harry. 'Oman and late Sassanian Imperialism', *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*, (2017), 265-385.

Muqtadir', A H 232-295/A D 847-908', *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (1996), 316-342.

Nabhan, Gary. *Cumin, Camels, and Caravans: A Spice Odyssey*, (California: University of California Press, 2014).

Nelson, Janet L. 'Presidential Address: England and the Continent in the Ninth Century: I, Ends and Beginnings', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 12, (2002), 1-21.

Netton, Ian. *Islam, Christianity and the Realms of the Miraculous: A Comparative Exploration, Edinburgh Studies of Classical Islamic History and Culture*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

Norman, Jill. *The Complete Book of Spices*, (New York: Viking Studio, 1991).

Paine, Lincoln. 'The Indian Ocean in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', *Maritime Contacts of the Past: Deciphering Connections Amongst Communities*, Sila Tripathi, (ed.), (2015), 37-53.

Parasher-Sen, Aloka. 'Perceptions of Time, Cultural Boundaries and 'Region' in Early Indian Texts', *Indian Historical Review*, (2009), 183-207.

Park, Hyunhee. *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds, Cross-Cultural Exchange in Pre-Modern Asia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Peacock, Andrew C. *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

- 'Reviewed Work(s): Interaction on the Maritime Silk Road: From the Persian Gulf to the East China Sea. East Asian Maritime History 10 by Ralph KAUZ', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 56, No. 1, (2013), 137-139.

Pearson, Kathy L. 'Nutrition and the Early-Medieval Diet', *Speculum*, Vol. 72, No. 1, (1997), 1—32.

Pearson, Michael. 'Islamic trade, shipping, port-states and merchant communities in the Indian Ocean, seventh to sixteenth centuries', *The Maritime Oecumene, Part III*, (2011), 317-365.

Perry, Charles. 'Būrān Eleven Hundred Years in the History of a Dish', *Medieval Cookery*, Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arbery and Charles Perry, (trans.), (2001), 239-250.

- 'Elements of Arab Feasting', Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arbery and Charles Perry, (trans.), (2001), 225-232.
- 'What to order in Ninth-Century Baghdad', *Medieval Cookery*, Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arbery and Charles Perry, (trans.), (2001), 217-224.

Peters, Francis E. 'Hermes and Harran: The Roots of Arabic-Islamic Occultism', *Magic and Divination in Early Islam. The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, Emilie Savage-Smith, (ed.), Vol. 42, (2004), 55-86.

Petruzello, Melissa. (ed. and author), 'Black Pepper', *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (2020), <https://www.britannica.com/plant/black-pepper-plant>

Philips, John Edward. 'Some Recent Thinking on Slavery in Islamic Africa and the Middle East', *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol. 27, No. 2, (1993), 157-162.

Picard, Christophe. *Sea of the Caliphs, The Mediterranean in the Medieval Islamic Society*, Nicholas Elliot, (trans.), (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard university Press, 2018).

Pierce, Graham. And Cristina Brito and Vera L. Jordao, 'Ambergris as an overlooked historical marine resource: its biology and role as a global economic commodity', *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom*, (2015), 1-12.

Pingree, David. 'Abu Sa'id Hasan Sīrāfi', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (2002), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sirafi>

Pirenne, Henri. *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1939).

Power, Tim. 'The Expansion of Muslim Commerce in the Red Sea Basin, c. AD 833-969', *Connected Hinterlands, Proceedings in the Red Sea Project IV*, Lucy Blue and John Cooper, (eds.), (2008), 111-118.

Prange, Sebastian. *Monsoon Islam. Trade and Faith on the Medieval Malabar Coast*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Priestman, Seth. *Ceramic Exchange and the Indian Ocean Economy (AD 400 – 1275), Volume 1: Analysis*, (London: The British Museum, 2021).

- 'The Silk Road or the Sea? Sasanian and Islamic Exports to Japan', *Journal of Islamic Archaeology*, (2016), 1-35.

Priolkar, Anant Kakbar. 'The Goa Inquisition; being a quatercentenary commemoration study of the Inquisition in India', *Bulletin of SOAS*, Vol. 27, (2009), 233-234.

Ptak, Roderick. 'China and the Trade in Cloves, Circa 960-1435', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 113, No. 1, (1993), 1-13.

- *China, the Portuguese, and the Nayang: Oceans and Routes, Regions and Trades (c.1000- 1600)*, (London: Ashgate, 2004).

Qadir, C.A. *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*, (London: Routledge, 1991).

Ranasinghe, Priyanga. and Shehani Pigera. 'Medicinal properties of 'true' cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*): a systematic review', *BMC Complement Altern Med*, (2013),

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3854496/#>

Rand, Edward Kennard. 'Dom Quentin's Memoir on the Text of the Vulgate', *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (1924), 197-264.

Raven, W. 'al-Washshā' *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. (eds.), (2012),

http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7880

Ray, Himanshu P. *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the maritime links of early south Asia*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Reichert, Bruce. 'Not all of those giants were European: Arabic scientists in the Middle Ages', *Science Scope*, Vol. 13, No. 5, (1990), 46-49.

Reyes, Raquel A.G. 'Glimpsing Southeast Asia Naturalia in Global Trade, c. 200 bce-1600 ce', *Environment, Trade and Society in Southeast Asia*, David Henley and Henk Schulte Nordholt (eds.), (2015), 96-119.

Ricci, Ronit. *Islam Translated*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Richardson, Kristina L. *Difference and Disability in the Medieval Islamic World*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

Ridgway, Peter. 'Indian Ocean Maritime History Atlas', *The Great Circle*, Vol. 27, No. 1, (2005), 34-51.

Robinson. C.F. and A. Marsham. 'The Safe-Conduct for the 'Abbasid 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali (d. 764)', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 70, No. 2, (2007), 247-281.

Robinson, Majied. 'Statistical Approaches to the Rise of Concubinage in Islam', *Concubines and Courtesans*, (2017), 11-26.

Rodinson, Maxime. 'Venice, the spice trade and Eastern influences on European Cooking', *Medieval Cookery*, Barbara Inskip, (trans.), (2001), 199-216..

- Rodinson, Maxime. 'Studies in Arabic Manuscripts Relating to Cookery', *Medieval Cookery*, Barbara Inskip, (trans.), (2001), 91-164.

Rouche, Michel. 'The Early Middle Ages in the West', *A History of Private Life*, Payl Veyne (ed.), Vol. 1, (1987), 444-446.

Ruixiuan, Zhang. And Wang Jiakui, Michael Stanley-Baker, 'Clinical Medicine Texts: The Earliest Stone Medical Inscription', *Imagining Chinese Medicine*, Vivienne Lo, (ed.), (2018), 373-388.

Rustow, Marina. *The Lost Archive*, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020).

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin, 2003).

Schaffer, Edward. *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand. A Study of T'ang Exotics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).

Schatzmler, Maya. and Sevek Pamuk. 'Plagues, wages and economic change in the Islamic Middle East', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 74, No. 1, (2014), 196-229.

- 'Islamic Institutions and Property Rights: The Case of the 'Public Good' Waqf', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, (2001), 44-74.
- 'Economic Performance and Economic Growth in the Early Islamic World', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, (2011), 132-184.
- 'Aspects of women's participation in the Economic Life of Later Medieval Islam: Occupations and Mentalities', *Arabica*, Vol. 35, No. 1, (1988), 36-58.
- 'Women and Property Rights in Al-Andalus and the Maghrib: Social Patterns and Legal Discourse', *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (1995), 219-257.

Schick, Irvin Cemil. 'The Harem as Gendered Space and the Spatial Reproduction of Gender', *Harem Histories, Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, (2010), 69-84.

Schulze, Ingrid. and Wolfgang Schulze, 'The Standing Caliph of al-Jazira: some problems and suggestions', *The Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol. 170, (2010), 331 – 353.

Schottenhammer, Angela. 'Yang Liangyao's Mission of 785 to the Caliph of Baghdad: Evidence of an Early Sino-Arabic Power Alliance?' *Bulletin d'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient*, Vol. 101, (2015), 177-241.

Segal, Ronald. *Islam's Black Slaves: The Other Black Diaspora*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001).

Sen, Tansen. 'The Intricacies of Premodern Asian Connections', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 4, (2010), 991-999.

Shafiq, Suhanna. *Seafarers of the Seven Seas, The Maritime Culture in the Kitab 'Aja'ib al-Hind by Buzurg Ibn Shahriyār (d.399/1009)*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2013).

Shah, Bipin. 'Vedic migration and geography of India before and after Alexander the Great', *Vedic Geography-Proto Indo European Studies*, (2007), 1-55.

Shahid, Irfan. *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, (USA: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995).

- 'Exploring trade practice and market before and after the advent of Islam in Arabia', *Journal of Emerging Economies & Islamic Research*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (2018), 5-18.

Shamsi, F.A. 'Al-Kindi's Risala Fi Wahdaniya Allah Wa Tahani Jirm Al-'Alam', *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (1978), 185-201.

Shaw, Eric H. 'Ancient and medieval marketing', *The Routledge Companion to Marketing*, D.G. Brian Jones and Mark Tadajewski, (eds.), (2016), 23-40.

Shiller, Robert J. *Narrative Economics: How stories go viral and drive major economic events*, (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

Shuriye, Abdi O. 'Explorations on the 'Abbasids Political Culture in Pursuit of Sustainable System of Governance in the Muslim World', *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 4, (2016), 228-236.

Sidebotham, Steven E. *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route*, (California: University of California Press, 2011).

Siddiqui, M.Z. 'Boswellia Serrata, A Potential Antiinflammatory [sic] Agent: An Overview', *Indian J. Pharm Sci*, (2011), 255-261.

Sirry, Mun'im. 'The public role of Dhimmis during 'Abbasid times'', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 74, No. 2, (2011), 187-204.

Smith, Julia M.H., 'Einhard: The Sinner and the Saints', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 13, (2003), 55-77.

Sourdel, D. 'The 'Abbasid Caliphate'', *The Cambridge History of Islam*, (1977), 104-140.

- 'al-Ḥasan b. Sahl', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, P. Bearman, Th.

Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, (eds.), (2012),

https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/search?s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&search-go=&s.q=al-%E1%B8%A4asan+b.+Sahl

Spufford, Peter. *Money and its uses in Medieval Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Srinivasan, T.M. 'Ambergris in Perfumery in the Past and Present Indian Context and the Western World', *Indian Journal of History of Science*, (2015), 306-323.

Stein, Burton. *A History of India*, David Arnold (ed.), 2nd Edition, (UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2010).

Steger, Manfred B. *Globalization, A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Subbarayalu, Y. 'The Tamil Mercheant-Guild at Barus', *Histoire de Barus, Sumatra: le site de Lobu de Lobu Tua; I: etudes et documents*, (1998), 25-33.

Taha, Abd al Wahid Dhanun. 'The Historical Process of the Spread of Islam', *The Spread of Islam throughout the World*, Idris el Hareir and el Hadji Ravane M'Baye, (eds.), Vol. 3, (2011), 123-152.

Thapar, Romila. *Early India, from the origins to A.D. 1300*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003).

- 'Reporting History: Early India', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 40, No. 7/8, (2012), 31-42.

The Met Museum, 'Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History', 2017,

<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/06/sss.html>

Tholib, Udjang. 'The economic factors of the 'Abbasid decline during the Buwayhid Rule in the fourth/tenth century', *Al-Jami ah Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 2, (2009), 343-376.

Thulin, M. and A.M. Warfa, 'The Frankincense Tress (*Boswellia* spp., Burseraceae) of Northern Somalia and Southern Arabia', *Kew Bulletin*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (1987), 487-500.

Tibbetts, G. R. *A Study of the Arabic texts containing material on South-East Asia*, (Leiden: Taylor & Francis, 1979).

Tibi, A. and M. Nasser, 'Ibn Hindu and the Science of Medicine', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Vol. 1, (2007), 55-56.

Tolmacheva, Marina. 'Concubines on the Road: Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's Slave Women', *Concubines and Courtesans*, Matthew Gordon, (ed.), (2017), 163-189.

Toueg, Ron. And Yael Datia Arnon. 'Ramla: Final Report', *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, (2011), 123.

Uchechi, Amadi H. 'Wildlife harvesting and bushmeat trade in Rivers State, Nigeria: The resilience of the African civet, *Civettictis civetta* (Carviora: Viverridae and records of rare species', *Journal of Ecology and The Natural Environment*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (2020), 117-119.

Ulrich, Brian. 'Oman and Bahrain in late antiquity: the Sassanians' Arabian periphery', *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 41, (2011), 377-385.

Vardanyan, Aram. 'The Administration of the 'Abbāsīd North and the Evidence of Copper Coins (AH 142–218 / AD 759–833)', *American Journal of Numismatics (1989-)*, Vol. 28 (2016), 201-230.

Van Spengen, Wim. 'The Geo-History of Long-Distance Trade in Tibet 1850-1950', *The Tibetan History Reader*, Gray Tuttle and Kurtis S. Schaeffer, (eds.), (2013), 491-524.

Vionis, Athansios K. 'Understanding Settlements in Byzantine Greece', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 71 (2017), 127-174.

Waine, David. 'The Third Century Internal Crisis of the 'Abbasids', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 20, No. 3, (1977), 282-302.

Walker, Rose. *Art in Spain and Portugal from the Romans to the Early Middle Ages*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

Ward-Perkins, Bryan. *The Fall of Rome, and the end of civilisation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Watson, Andrew. *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World, The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques, 700-1100*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Watt, W. Montgomery. 'Muhammad', P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton, Bernard Lewis, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 1, (1977), 33 - 40.

- 'Political Attitudes of the Mu'tazilah', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. ½, (1963), 38-57.

Wenner, Manfred W. 'The Arab/Muslim Presence in Medieval Central Europe', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, (1980), 59-79.

Wheeler, Robert. 'Arikamedu: An Indo-Roman Trading-Station on the East Coast of India', *Ancient India*, Vol. 2, (1946), 17-125.

Whitcomb, Donald. 'The archaeology of Oman: a preliminary discussion of the Islamic Periods', *Journal of Oman Studies*, Vol. 1, (1975), 123-157.

White, Adrian. 'Is burning incense bad for your health?', *Healthline*, (2018),

<https://www.healthline.com/health/is-incense-bad-for-you>

Whitehouse, David. 'Chinese stoneware from Sīrāf: The earliest finds', *South Asian Archaeology. Papers from the First International Conference of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe*, N. Hammond, (ed.), 241-255.

- 'Chinese Porcelain in Medieval Europe', *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 16, (1972), 63-78.

Whitemore, John K. 'Southeast Asia', *A Companion to the Global Early Middle Ages*, Erik Hermans, (ed.), (2020), 66-93.

Wilkinson, J. C. 'Oman and East Africa : new light on early Kilwan History from the Omani Sources', *The International Journal of African History Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2, (1981), 272-305.

Wilson, Boydena R. *The Bakhtishu': Their Political and Social Role Under the 'Abbasid Caliphs (A.D. 750-1100)*, (New York: Xerox University Microfilms, 1976).

Wink, Andre. *Al-Hind. The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Witton, Patrick. *Indonesia*, (Melbourne: Lonely Planet, 2003).

Wood, N., M. Tite, C. Doherty, and B. Gilmour. 'A technological examination of 9th-10th Century A.D 'Abbasid Blue-and-White Ware from Iraq, and its comparison with 8th century AD Chinese Blue-and-White Sancai Ware', *Archaeometry*, (2007), 665-684.

Wright, Clifford A. 'The Medieval Spice Trade and the Diffusion of Chile', *Gastronomica*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (2007), 35-43.

Wright, O. 'Al-Kindī's Braid', *Bulletin of SOAS, University of London*, Vol. 69, No. 1, (2006), 1-32.

Yamprasert, Rodsarin. Et al. 'Ginger extract versus Loratadine in the treatment of allergic rhinitis: a randomized controlled trial', *BMC Complement Medicine and Therapies*, (2020), [Ginger extract versus Loratadine in the treatment of allergic rhinitis: a randomized controlled trial \(nih.gov\)](#)

Yoeli-Tlalim, Ronit. 'Islam and Tibet: Cultural Interactions – An Introduction', *Islam and Tibet: Cultural Interactions*, Ana Akasoy, (ed.), (2016), 1-16.

Zeidan, Adam. 'Mu'tazilah', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (2020), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mutazilah>