

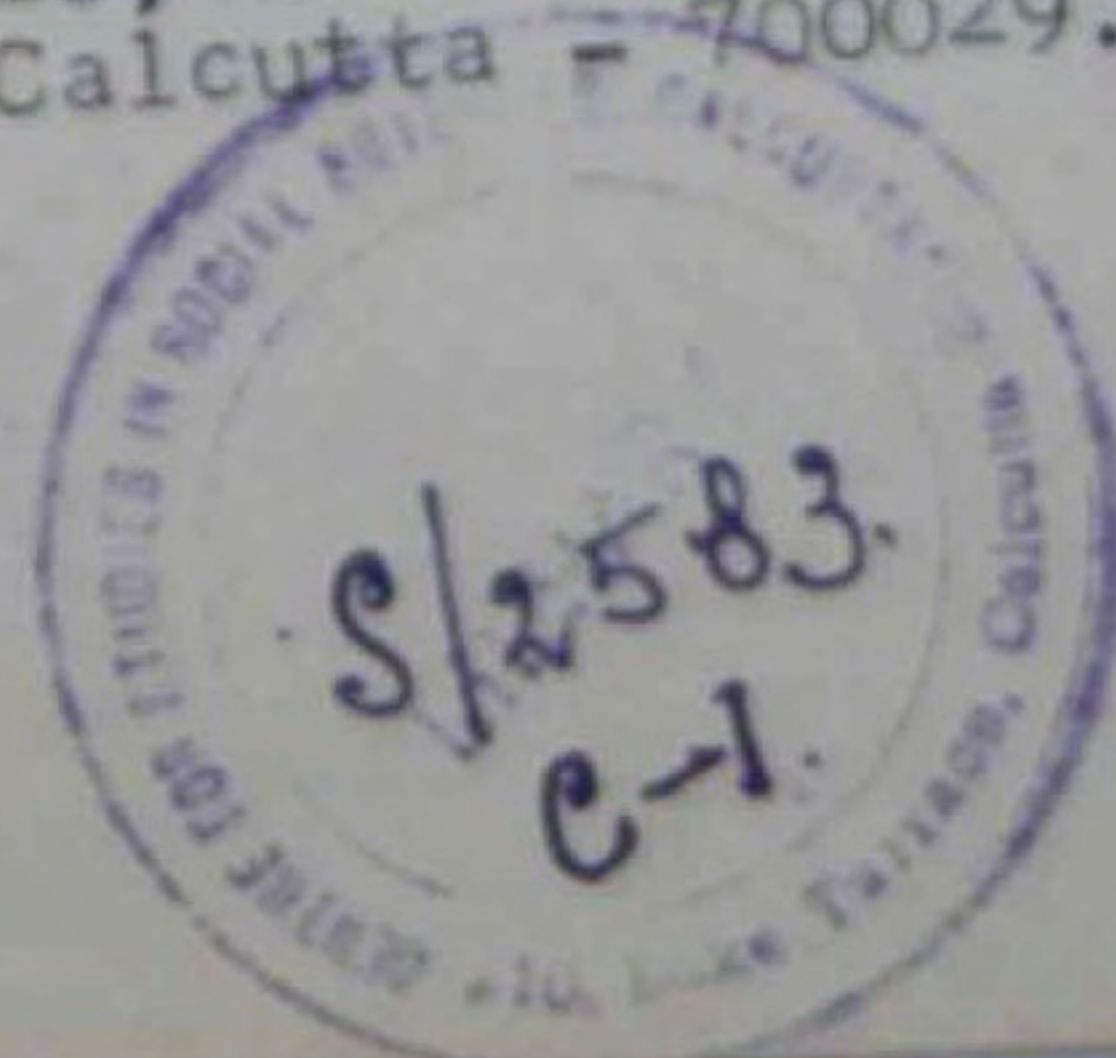
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THE CHANDERNAGORE-JUGDIA LETTERS:  
A LOOK AT THE FEIC'S EAST BENGAL  
TRADE FROM 1750 to 1753.

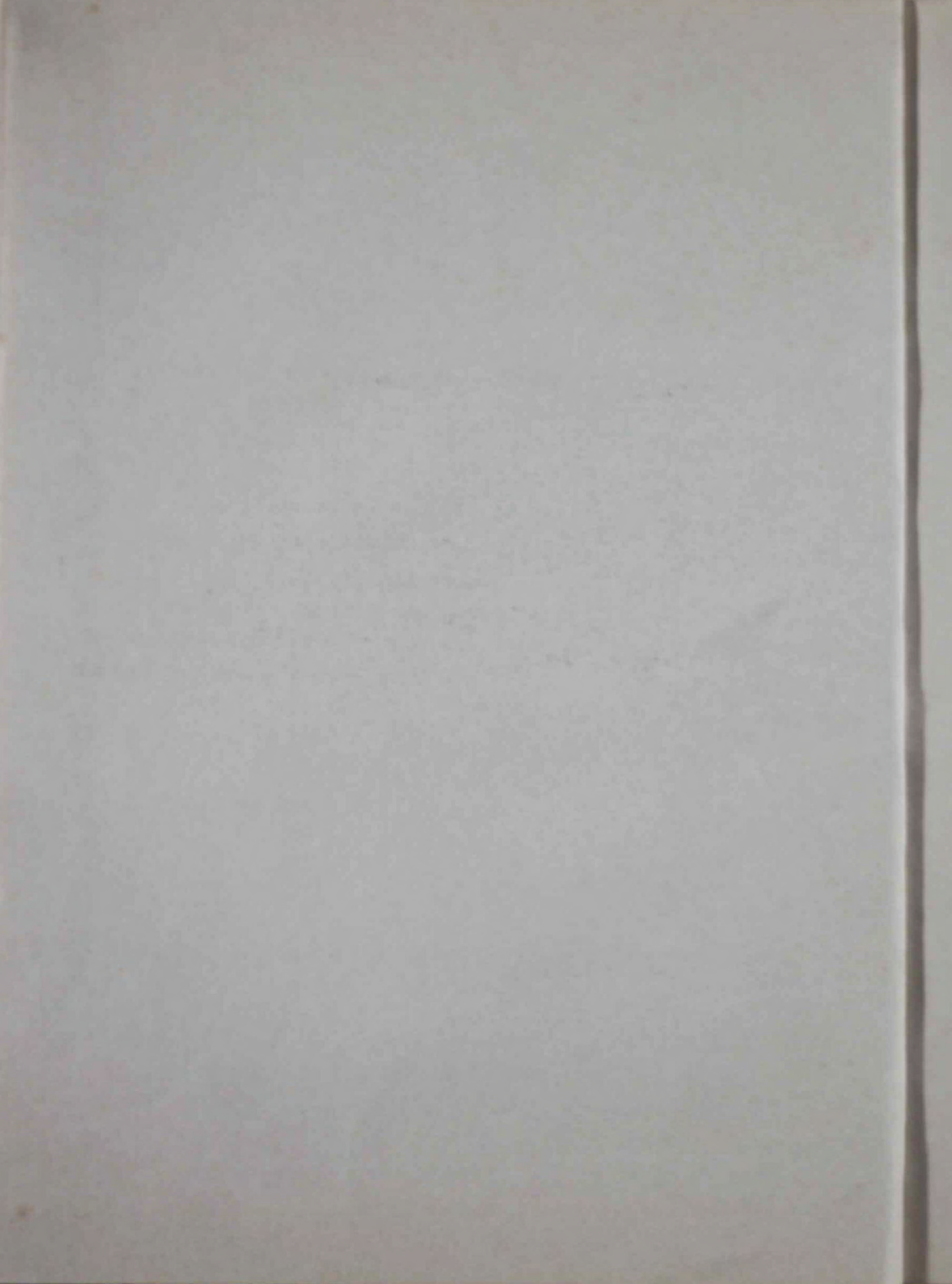
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## ABSTRACT

This article is a translation and a resume of the letters written by the council at Chandernagore of the French Compagnie des Indes to the French agents at Jugdia during the period 1750 to 1753.

The 26 letters deal with various aspects of the French Company's trade in Jugdia. There is also an introduction along with the translated text which attempts to place the Company investments in Jugdia against the broader background of Company investments in eastern Bengal in the mid eighteenth century.



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THE CHANDERNAGORE-JUGDIA LETTERS :  
A LOOK AT THE FEIC's\* EAST BENGAL  
TRADE FROM 1750 to 1753.

RILA MUKHERJEE

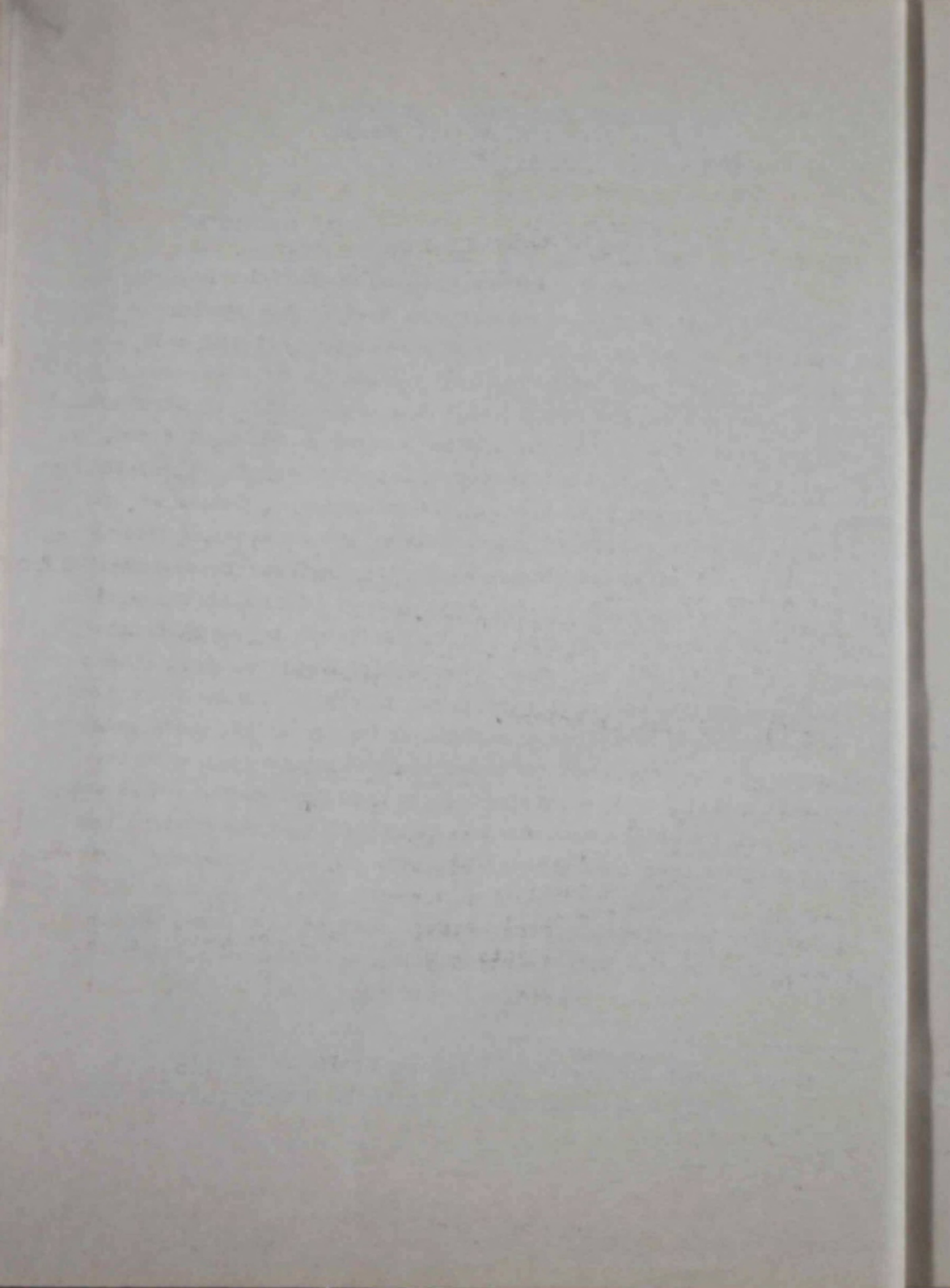
In the eighteenth century trading operations in Bengal became clearly delineated along certain axes in the western and eastern parts of the province. In the western part the axis of trading activities was dominated by two nodes : by the emerging port of Calcutta on the Hugli and the state capital of Murshidabad in the interior of the province. The journey northwards from the port town to the capital encompassed a number of smaller port towns such as Serampur, Bankibazar, Chandernagore, Chinsurah and Hugli as well as a series of market towns and production villages, the greater part of whose output was determined by the demands of the EICs as demonstrated by the sheer number of the East India ships anchored in these ports. It is difficult to quantify the exact portion of this output that satisfied local demand. However by mid-century the proportion of goods produced for local/regional/Asian markets was certainly diminishing in favour of goods produced for international consumption under the direction of foreign merchant capital. The supply side, on the other hand, was determined by political constraints and financial operations in Murshidabad further inland.

The topography of the western part of the province was dominated by the mart towns of Burdwan in the west, Hugli

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\* The French Compagnie des Indes is here referred to as the FEIC, and the English East India Company as the EEIC.







in the south, Kasimbazar in the centre and Malda further north in the province. Each mart town acted as the distribution point for a number of producing villages making specialised goods according to demands fixed in advance. Thus the Burdwan region encompassed the cotton and chiefly gara producing areas of Sonamukhi and its neighbourhood, Hugli/Calcutta appropriated the produce of the entire Hugli belt of both coarse cottons as well as some silk goods from Radhanagar, Kasimbazar provided silks from its environs as well as from areas as far south as Nadia (Kumarkhāli silk), Rajshahi in the east (containing the aurungs of Mulluck, Powa, Rampora and Chunecapara), Rangpur in the north (the white Rangpur silk, although expensive was sometimes invested in by the EICs), and the western region contiguous to Burdwan with its garas and doosutties. As the town of Kasimbazar appropriated more and more of produce from ever expanding areas, Malda - which had previously been important as a market town due to its strategic location on the Mahananda, which connected it to the Padma-Jumna river system on the one side thereby granting it access to eastern Bengal as well as to the Ganges system on the other which connected it to upper India and also due to its proximity to previous capitals of Bengal - lost some of its seventeenth century aura and ceded place to Kasimbazar as the foremost silk mart of Bengal, situated next to the capital and eminently suitable to undertake those financial transactions which were so vital to commerce.

If the Murshidabad-Calcutta axis dominated trade in the western region in the pre-Plassey period with its twin



nodes of political authority in the north and commercial undertakings in the south, the trading situation in eastern Bengal was somewhat more amorphous. Historically, this part of Bengal had never looked to northern India for its markets quite so much as the western side of Bengal had; although its fine muslins were produced and destined for royal courts and the north Indian caravan trade in luxury goods, its chief trading partners had been principalities east of the Bay, and its main production, coarse cottons, (the finer ones have naturally attracted more attention because of their exoticism) such as baftas were the mainstay of its production.

From the time of the Mughal conquest of Bengal in 1576, their location of a capital city of Mughal Bengal had vacillated between the area of what is now north Bengal (the Gaur-Pandua-Tanda-Rajmahal region except for a brief period during Azim-us-Shan's viceroyalty when Burdwan was a temporary capital) and the eastern side (the Dacca-Suvarnagrama region). As late as in 1704, Bengal had the distinction of possessing two state capitals; while Murshid Quli Khan transferred the state capital to the west in Murshidabad, Dacca stayed the Mughal capital under Azim-us-Shan. After the grant of Subahdari to Murshid Quli in 1718, Dacca remained a subsidiary capital where the Chota ('Chhuta') Nabab usually resided. This was a region of commercial importance, and it remained politically sensitive being an area composed of several principalities of previous Portuguese-Arakanese influence as well as those of semi-independent Hindu kings. The nawwara fleet to combat the Arakanese-Portuguese-Magh raiders retained



its headquarters in Dacca even after the defeat of the Arakanese in Chittagong in 1666, and as late as in the mid-eighteenth century, while western Bengal was reeling under repeated Bargi attacks this area never remained quite free from the Magh menace as testified by correspondence from the EICs (see letters no.1 and 7).

Jugdial, or Jogidialya or Jougdeia (as the contemporary sources referred to it) lay right at the centre of this disputed area. Situated approximately halfway between Dacca and Chittagong in an area fought over by Tripura, Arakan and the Mughals, and opposite the seventeenth century Portuguese stronghold of Sandwip, this area producing coarse goods of commercial importance (chiefly baftas and sanas), was important enough to be marked as early as in c.1550. in de Barros' largely inaccurate map of Bengal<sup>1</sup> as well as to be mentioned in the Ain in 1598.<sup>2</sup>

There is some confusion as to when exactly Jugdial was settled by the French. The extensive 'Memoire sur le commerce de l'Inde : Precis de celui que faisait l'ancienne Compagnie des Indes et celle etablie en 1785' written on April 7, 1814,<sup>3</sup> claimed that Jugdial was given ('cedé') to the French in 1710,<sup>3</sup> but another contemporary document claimed that the French presence there was established by Dupleix in 1735.<sup>4</sup>

Jugdial lies at the mouth of the river Feni, at the point where it debouches into the Bay opposite the island of Sandwip. The Feni connected with the Karnaphuli at whose mouth lay the

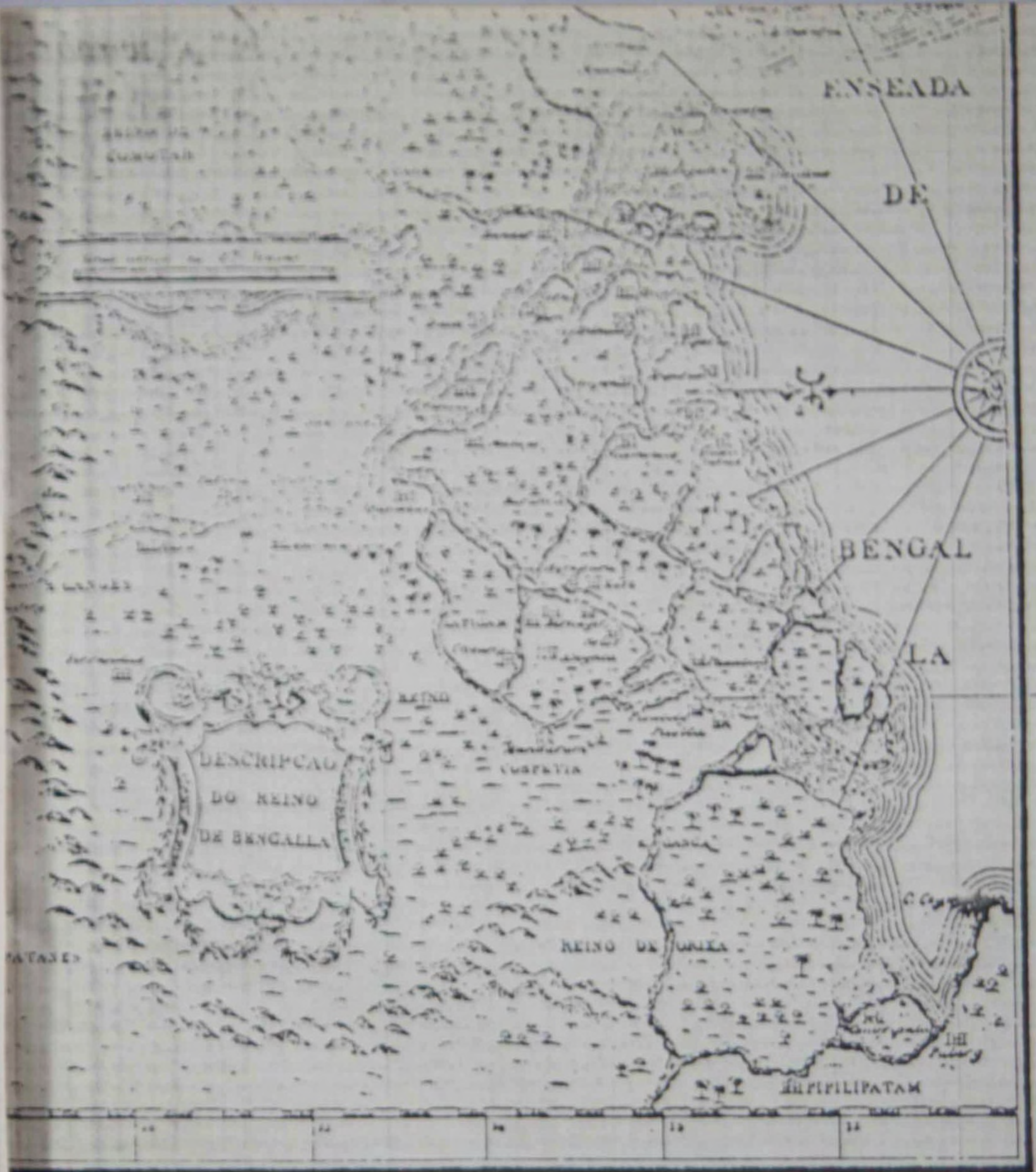


port of Chittagong and thus the Karnaphuli-Feni river system provided easy access into the interior of the region linking Chittagong with Jugdia and Dacca. It is worth noting that the French presence in eastern Bengal was quite prominent in the eighteenth century, 'Chatighan' or Chittagong entered into the grandiose plans for French expansion in the Bay upto Pegu under the administration of Dupleix in Bengal<sup>5</sup> and after 1765 the French were thinking of withdrawing from the English political orbit in western Bengal, giving up Chandernagore and exchanging it for Chittagong.<sup>6</sup> Small wonder then that Jugdia played an important part in French expansionist dreams in the eighteenth century.

The Memoire sur le Commerce de l'Inde, referred to before<sup>7</sup> clearly posits the importance of Jugdia to French schemes for trade in Bengal. It claims that the nations of Europe could more easily give up other branches of commerce in Bengal than that of Jugdia, because whereas in other parts of the province luxury goods formed the basis of trade commerce in Jugdia was undertaken on the basis of coarse goods for everyday life.<sup>8</sup>

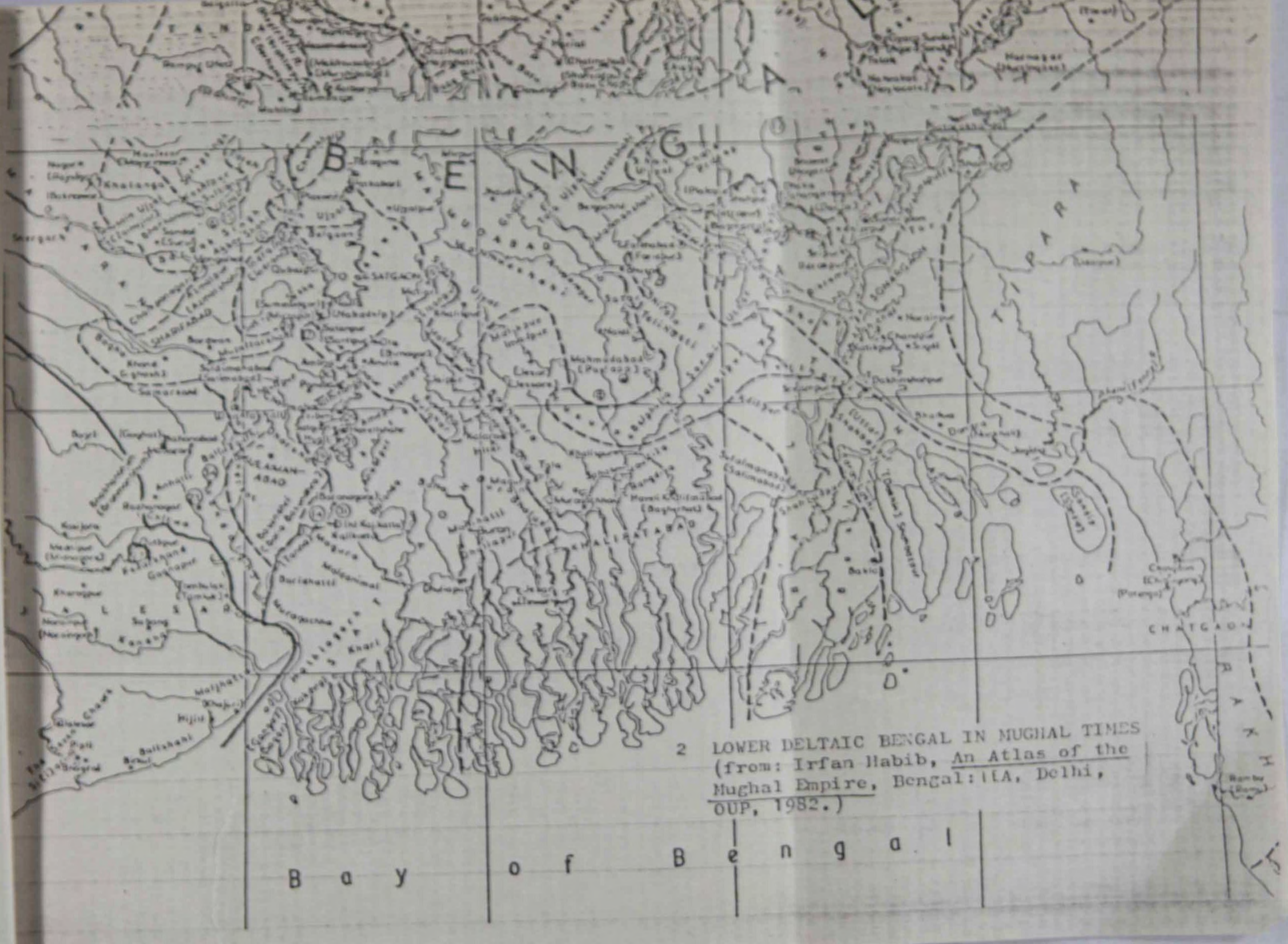
Jugdia provided the following : baftas of various gradations, cassas or khasas, hamams, sanas, garas, romalls (called 'nappes') and serviettes, as well as cloths referred to as 'toiles à quatre file' (whose literal translation should be cloths with four threads as opposed to doosutties or those with double threads) and 'bazins communs' which I have been unable to identify by its English equivalent. The price range of these cloths was from 5 francs to 30 francs a piece.<sup>9</sup>





1 LOWER DELTAIC BENGAL IN PRE-MUGHAL TIMES  
 (from : de Barros' map of Bengal reprinted  
 in J.J.A.Campos, History of the Portuguese  
 in Bengal frontis piece, Patna, Janaki  
 Prakashan, 1979).





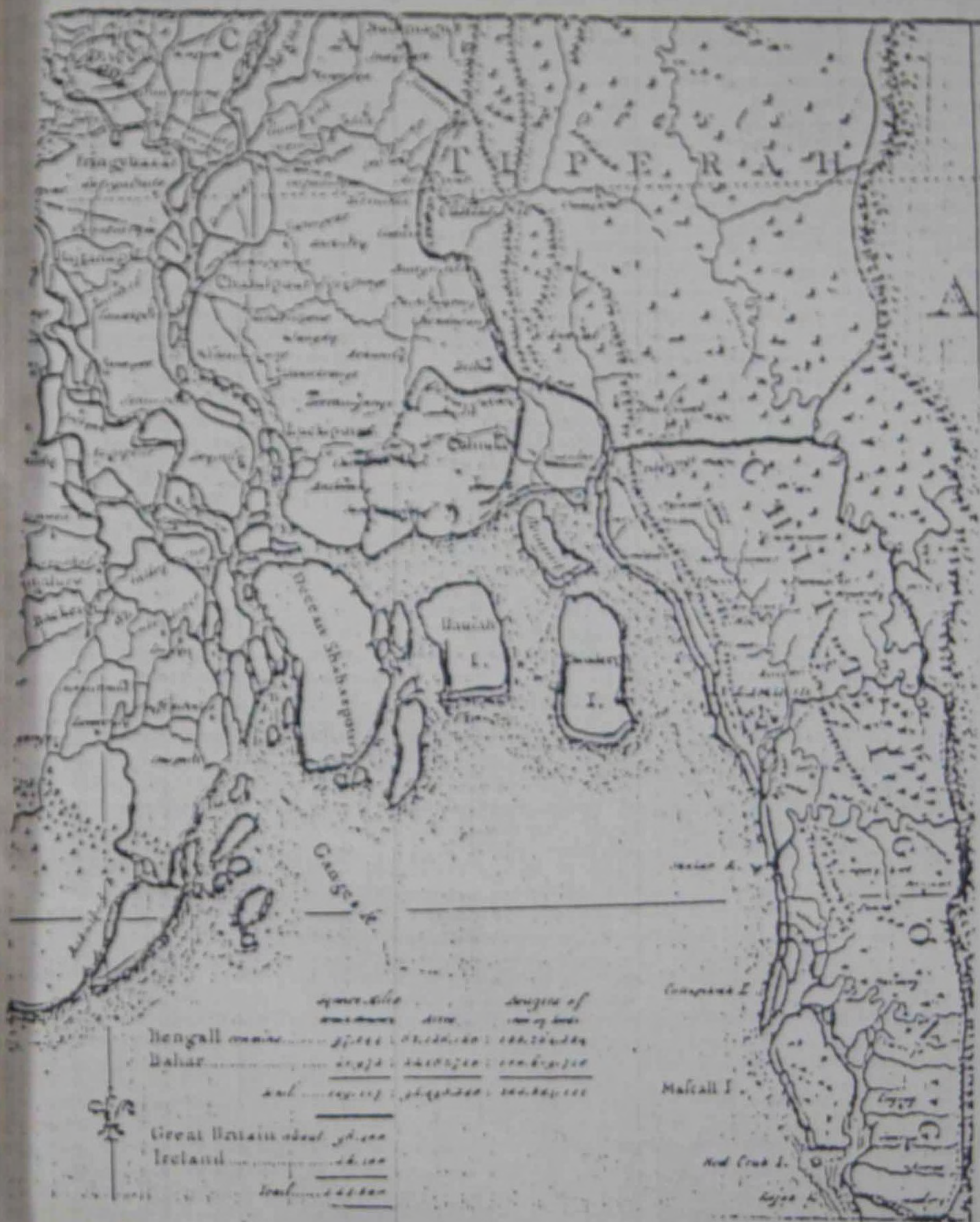
2 LOWER DELTAIC BENGAL IN MUGHAL TIMES  
 (from: Irfan Habib, An Atlas of the Mughal Empire, Bengal: (A, Delhi, OUP, 1982.)

B e n g a l



Handwritten text in a script, likely Arabic or Persian, visible along the right edge of the page. The text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the angle and lighting.





3 THE HINTERLAND OF JUDDIA IN THE 18th CENTURY  
 (From: James Rennell's Memoir of a Map of Hindustan or the Mughal Empire and His Bengal Atlas, (Ed.) B.P.Ambasthya, N.IX- Bengal and Bahar, Patna, N.V. Publications).







The same document estimates the trade in Jugdia and its environs to be of the following magnitude <sup>10</sup>:

	<u>Francs</u>	<u>Sicca Rupees</u>
The English East India Company	: 2000000	1000000
The French East India Company	: 1500000	750000
The Danish Company	: 800000	400000
European Traders	: 2000000	1000000
The Indians	: 3000000	1500000
	or more	

Contemporary English documents have no such precise figures on the value of trade in Jugdia but the document referred to quotes the figure of 7000000 ff approximately as that quoted by the English chief for the total trade of Jugdia in the pre Plassey period. The magnitude of the investments of different individual and corporate traders in Jugdia is apparent when we bear in mind that English estimates of the value of goods exported from Dacca in the pre-Plassey period put English Company exports at a value of S.Rs.350000 annually upto 1756 and French Company exports during the ten years period from 1746-1755 at S.Rs.28.5 lakhs, that is approximately S.Rs.280000 per annum.<sup>11</sup> The only other investment figures comparable to those for Jugdia are the EEIC's figures for their silk investment. In Kasimbazar between 1733 and 1750 the average spent on different grades of silk by the EEIC was SRs. 772 060; in 1745 as much as SRs.1594780 was spent; moneys invested in 1733 and 1744 came close to this figure.<sup>12</sup>



According to Hunter<sup>13</sup> baftas, woven from cotton from the Tripura hills, formed the single most important item in the EEIC's trade at Jugdia. He estimates that the EEIC's trade in baftas amounted to Pound Sterling 120000 (S.Rs. 1200000) annually. Apart from the availability of various types of cotton goods in Jugdia, an added attraction was the abundant and cheap labour in the region.<sup>14</sup>

As far as the organisation of trade in Jugdia was concerned it seems that Jugdia was under the Mughal jurisdiction of Dacca.<sup>15</sup> The area was probably included in the term 'The Dacca Aurungs' which comprised Titbadi, Dhamra, Jangalbarry, Sonargaon, Narainpur, Chandpur and Srirampur.

It was however not under the Jagat Seth's financial jurisdiction, and therefore monetary difficulties were often encountered. In 1752 the Dacca factors of the EEIC suggested Cullinda (Kalindi) as a more suitable place to remove the Jugdia factory to as it was only five hours distance from Jugdia, was a big mart for baftas and had the advantage of being 'under Juggut Seat'.<sup>16</sup>

It was mentioned that trade in Jugdia was fraught with difficulties. There was no central authority and the competition of the private traders along with that of the EICs created confusion. Trade here was not so well regulated as in Dacca and in mart towns in western Bengal.<sup>17</sup>

The procurement here seems to have been cornered by a ring of merchants referred to as delolls by both the EEIC and



the FEIC.<sup>18</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century the procurement from the Dacca aurungs seem to have been concentrated in the hands of 5 'Dacca Delolls' one of these survivors, Royjee, was encountered by John Taylor when he wrote his account of Dacca in 1800-1801.<sup>19</sup> Another Dacca dalal was named as Bandoo Singh by Taylor and the Reton Monique (Ratan Manik) referred to in the letters that follow was probably one of the Dacca delolls referred to by the English as he supplied the EEIC with goods as well. He had dalals working under him in areas as far away as Srirampur in the region.<sup>20</sup> A EEIC letter of October 23, 1752 mentions that these Dacca dalals had applied to Murshidabad for a parwana allowing them to control the cloth business of Jugdia and all the Dacca aurungs, and had obtained such a parwana.<sup>21</sup> The control exercised by Ratan Manik and his dalals over the procurement of the FEIC at Jugdia is well borne out by the letters that follow and seems to belie the statement of an early nineteenth century French document that the advantage of trade at Jugdia was that no advances were made to the weavers and that the cloths were bought at the markets for ready money.<sup>22</sup> Or perhaps, the dalals had been wiped out by then.

It seems likely from the EEIC records mentioned further down in this article that there were at least two sets of dalals operating in the region : one, the Dacca Dalals who were attempting to monopolise the entire cloth trade of the region, backed in their efforts by the local court in Dacca, and who continually frustrated the EEIC in the latter's efforts to bypass them and deal with a second group of independent dalals in the area. This explains the trials



experienced by the EEIC in its efforts to shift the Jugdia factory in the years from 1752 to 1754. Ultimately the shift was effected due to the EEIC bypassing both the Dacca Dalals and the Dacca Durbar and by getting the sanction directly from the Murshidabad Durbar. This in some measure explains the EEIC's success in Jugdia, while the FEIC were probably powerless dealing as it did with the Dacca Dalals as its chief intermediaries.

In the FEIC hierarchy of settlements, Jugdia, along with Balasore, Dacca, Kasimbazar and Patna, was subordinate to the Council of the FEIC at Chandernagore. The investment order along with the necessary funds were relayed from Chandernagore to Jugdia. The letters that follow were written by M. Duval de-Layrit in Council to M. Albert and then to M. Nicolas successive chefs at the French settlement in Jugdia. There letters are written over a period of three years, starting from September 21, 1750 and going on to December 17, 1753. There are twenty six letters in all. They can be found in a volume titled 'Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers, 1745-1757, at the library of the Societ  Historique de Pondichery (Acc. No.F.110/AC 164/F.156), 1 rue Romain Rolland, Pondicherry 605001. I have translated these letters into English and a short resume of the Chandernagore-Jugdia letters is given in the forthcoming pages. I have numbered these letters so as to make reference easier. They have been arranged chronologically, and not thematically, and short headings in the margins refer to their contents.



The twenty six letters that follow contain references to political events in the region (the Magh raids), the state of commerce in Jugdia, private trade of FEIC officials there, as also the discontinuities in production of certain types of cotton goods.

They contain detailed information on the intermediaries used for procurement in that part of Bengal, the FEIC's difficulties in dealings with these intermediaries and problems encountered in procurement. These letters contain various references to the depreciating quality of the cottons invested in there, their rise in prices, exorbitant finishing costs, late deliveries and short-falls in supply. Most of all, these letters are testimony to the growing indebtedness of the dalals of the region, their inability to pay back the moneys owed by them to the FEIC, the difficulties encountered by the FEIC officials in recovering these dues and the gradual crisis in trade in Jugdia as evidenced from these letters written from 1750 to 1753.

These factors which were symptomatic of a crisis in the producing areas were not unique to Jugdia alone. During the same period evidence from the silk producing area around Murshidabad pointed to a similar breakdown in the supply areas contiguous to Murshidabad. The problems encountered there were similar to those just described: deteriorating qualities and soaring prices, inadequate and retarded supplies, growing indebtedness of the merchants, and progressively bitter



relations between the EEIC and the merchants.<sup>23</sup>

From the indications we get from these letters it is evident that by the mid-eighteenth century cotton production in Jugdia was quite exclusively linked to the Investment demands of the East India Companies. It is also quite clear that the EEIC had taken the lead there, as elsewhere, in dictating production, simply by virtue of the sheer magnitude of the demand of its Investment, and by the fact that it was the single most important buyer in Bengal by this period. Therefore because of this compulsion to provide goods for investments, there occurred a disjunction from the home market during the process of readjustments of the production process in Jugdia. The results of this disjunction were those described before. Thus it was that there were discontinuities in production; certain items were no longer produced in Jugdia such as baftas of the B.2 variety (see letter no.10) and sanas (see letters no.13 and 14). It was pointed out that baftas were no longer produced in Jugdia by 1753 as the EEIC did not take them (see letter no.19). Another indication of a disjuncture was diminishing inland trade and the decay of traditional production centres and the rise of new centres as can be seen in the shift in emphasis from Jugdia to Lakhipur. Therefore by mid-eighteenth century we can already foresee some of the signs of deindustrialisation appearing in Jugdia under the twin impetus of the domination of foreign capital and the subversion of the production process as also the weakness of local mercantile organisation and the decay of political authority in the region.



A letter written in 1752 by an EEIC official from Jugdia to the EEIC's council at Fort William pointed out that the price of baftas had risen by twenty per cent.<sup>24</sup> The rise in prices was corroborated by a contemporary French document. It was noted that by 1750 the prices of goods from Jugdia, Dacca and Patna had risen by twentyfive per cent.<sup>25</sup> The inferior quality of Jugdia goods was attested to in an EEIC letter dated January 31, 1755.<sup>26</sup> It was noted that the dalals, through whom all cloths except the finest were procured, neglected their quality while they increased their quantity in response to greater demand.<sup>27</sup>

It is therefore quite evident that matters in Jugdia were coming to a crisis. On June 20, 1753 the FEIC noted that the EEIC had abandoned its Jugdia factory and that the FEIC might soon have to do the same (see letter no.23).<sup>28</sup>

The Kasimbazar Factory Records of the EEIC show that in February 1753 the Jugdia factors decided on Lakhipur to which to remove the Jugdia factory, and requested the Kasimbazar factors to secure a parwana from the nawab at Murshidabad to that end.<sup>29</sup> Previously, in 1752, Kalindi had been chosen as the site<sup>30</sup> but this plan had now been abandoned. But the Lakhipur project had still not been effected for in June 1753 we find another entry in the KFR noting that the EEIC's business at Jugdia had been practically stopped as the local authorities there had put peons on the EEIC's dalals' gomastha. The Jugdia factory therefore needed Kasimbazar's help urgently in procuring the parwana from the darbar at Murshidabad.<sup>31</sup>



If the Jugdia letters of the FEIC are mute testimonies to the insolvency of the dalals, the KFR of the EEIC are a vocal statement of the measures these dalals were prepared to take to safeguard their interests. By February 1754 it was evident that the local durbar (obviously the Chota Nabab's seat at Dacca) was instrumental in preventing the EEIC's Jugdia factory from shifting to Lakhipur. The EEIC's business was at a standstill in Jugdia and the parwana from Murshidabad sanctioning the shift was eagerly awaited there.<sup>32</sup>

In 1755 the EEIC's factory had been shifted to Lakhipur but the dalals of Jugdia had not yet accepted defeat. In July 1755 it was mentioned that the Lakhipur factors had written to Kasimbazar informing its factors that although the Nawab's parwana had been effective and the new factory was now established at Lakhipur the Jugdia dalals were trying to get the parwana revoked in Murshidabad so that they could again be employed by the EEIC. The Kasimbazar factors were asked by their Lakhipur counterparts to prevent this at all costs. The matter was sufficiently serious for the Kasimbazar factory to send a wakil to Jugdia to investigate into the case of the dalals there.<sup>33</sup> By August the matter of the Jugdia dalals had still not been resolved. The Kasimbazar factors wrote to Bailie that they would try to stop the Jugdia dalals being successful at the durbar through Diwan Rajballav with whom the EEIC were on good terms.<sup>34</sup> The FEIC letter dated February 16, 1753 (see letter no.19) obviously referred to these matters and noted that the affair of the Jugdia dalals was very complicated.



There are no references to the affair of the Jugdia dalals after this. In 1755 it was noted that the quality of the Jugdia baftas was improving.<sup>35</sup> The FEIC letters to Jugdia are not entered in the volume after December 17, 1753, but in a letter dated April 9, 1786 Dangereux, the French chief at Chandernagore, described Jugdia as being still important.<sup>36</sup> In this he placed Jugdia fourth in importance after Patna, Kasimbazar and Balasore. Dacca was fifth in importance, followed by the subordinate French settlements at Kirpaye, Caricola, Chopur and Monipur.

It seems that Jugdia's importance declined at the end of the eighteenth century. Hunter mentioned that only Kalindi was a place of any consequence so as to be marked on contemporary maps.<sup>37</sup> Jugdia and Lakhipur no longer existed.

I have attempted in this article to reconstruct a picture of Company trade in Jugdia in the pre-Plassey period against the backdrop of declining productivity within the framework of the existing organisation of production. I have supplemented the French sources wherever possible with English Company sources; I hope the result is an adequate picture of the travails of trade under Company aegis in Eastern Bengal prior to 1757.

The abbreviations used are the following :

Archives :

- 1) Archives Nationales, Section Outre mer, rue Oudinot, Paris, henceforth ANSOM, Oudinot, Paris.



- 2) Archives Nationales, Paris, henceforth A.N. Paris.
- 3) India Office Library and Records, London; henceforth IOLR, London.

Archival Series :

Affaires Etrangères : AE  
Series Colonies : C<sup>2</sup>  
Home Miscellaneous Series : HMS  
Kasimbazar Factory Records : KFR

Letter 1

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia dated September 21, 1750.

Intermediary : This letter refers to the use of dalals in the procuring of garas.

Quality : Excessive rains that year had resulted in bad quality goods.

As Maghs are expected to attack the sunderban area Chandernagore instructs Albert to pass down all goods to Chandernagore soon.

pp.397-398

Letter 2

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia dated October 31, 1750.

Late deliveries : Speaks of excessive rain in the eastern part of Bengal resulting in late deliveries.

p.401



Letter 3

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated November 17, 1750.

- Intermediary : Refers to the use of dalals in procurement.  
Quality : Garas sent are not very satisfactory.  
Finishing : The Council instructs M. Albert that if the rates of the washers of garas in Jugdia are too expensive then the garas are to be sent to Chandernagore in an unfinished state.

p.402

Letter 4

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated December 18, 1750.

- Problems in Procurement : Speaks of the unreliability of dalals.  
Quality : The garas sent have not been very satisfactory.  
Late deliveries : The late arrival of the garas have delayed the sailing of the ships from Chandernagore to Pondicherry. Albert should avoid such delays in future.

p.404

Letter 5

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated January 13, 1751.

- Problems with Intermediaries : Albert had complained against Rotonne Monique (Ratan Manik) the chief of the dalals in Jugdia, in his letter to the Council of December 15, 1750. Chandernagore replies that they are unable to accept this charge as Ratan Manik is trusted by the EEIC.



- Insolvency of dalals : Albert is to ensure that Ratan Manik pays his dues to the FEIC. Also, before discharging Ratan Manik from the FEIC's Investment, he should make sure that his removal does not cause any problems for the FEIC.
- p.404
- Letter 6
- M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated February 27, 1751.
- Problems with Intermediaries : The Council grants permission to Albert to discharge Ratan Manik from the FEIC's service.
- p.410
- Letter 7
- M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated April 16, 1751.
- Problems with Intermediaries : Albert is instructed to employ good dalals nad merchants and to control them.
- Insolvency of dalals : As Albert is in financial straits he should attempt to recover the advances from the dalals.
- Political events : The defeat of the Maghs by the Muslims had angered the Raja of Arakan who is reported to be sending another fleet to Chittagong.
- Commerce : Trade in Jugdia unregulated. Purchases are made in an unsystematic manner.
- Private trade of FEIC officials hampering Co. trade : Sieur Jambon of the FEIC is carrying on a private trade with the dalals of Jugdia.



Letter 8

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated May 5, 1751.

Insolvency of dalals

: Refers to the Jugdia dalals owing Albert Rs.8045 which he is trying to recover.

Procurement

: Apparently Ratan Manik operates over a wide area as his dalals had previously offered their services to M. Leyrit at Srirampur.

p.413

Letter 9

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated July 26, 1751.

Finishing

: The unfinished baftas are to be sent to Pondichery.

Late delivery

: They should not arrive late as they did last year.

Insolvency of dalals

: Since Albert has not yet succeeded in recovering money from the dalals he should try his hardest to do so.

p.415-416

Letter 10

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated August 31, 1751.

Price rise

: The baftas are too expensive, and there is a

Shortfall

: shortfall of 800 to 900 pieces out of the 3000 demanded.



Discontinuity of certain categories : The lower category of baftas known as B.2 is no longer made in the aurangs.

Price rise : The hamams are very expensive. They now cost Rs.75 per corge\*. The FEIC therefore has decided not to invest in them.

Insolvency of dalals : Albert is again urged to recover the advance money from the dalals.

pp.418-419

Letter 11

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Albert at Jugdia, dated December 16, 1751.

Quality : The goods sent are of a very bad quality.

Late deliveries : They also arrived late.

p.422

During this interval Albert is transferred to another post. M. Nicolas now takes over as agent or chief of the FEIC at Jugdia.

Letter 12

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated March 25, 1752.

Goods available : Nicolas had written to Chandernagore about the goods manufactured at Jugdia. Baftas are available but only  $\sphericalangle$ 'silk stuffs.'  $\sphericalangle$  in

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\*Corge : measure in units of twenties.



- Shortfall : He can only get 200 pieces of the 1000 baftas demanded. It is impossible to get hamams in the quantities demanded.
- Price rise : The price of hamams is between Rs.70 to Rs.105 the corge.

p.430

Letter 13

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to Nicolas at Jugdia, dated May 3, 1752.

- Quality : Informs Nicolas that the baftas sent are of a very poor quality.
- Shortfall : Their quantity is also less than what was demanded. Nicolas is expressly instructed not to contract for more baftas as the Council will try to procure them at Chandernagore.
- Discontinuity of certain items : As sanas are no longer produced, Nicolas is instructed to try to get production going again in this item. He can offer a small incentive to the dalals to furnish this item if it should otherwise prove impossible.

pp.431-432

Letter 14

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated August 5, 1752.

- Discontinuity of items : This is to confirm reception of Nicolas' letter of July 10, 1752 to Chandernagore in which he had informed the Council that it was absolutely impossible to procure sanas at Jugdia any more.

p.433



Letter 15

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated October 5, 1752. This letter acknowledges the reception by the Council of a letter (date not mentioned) sent by Nicolas by the boat of Doukiram\*.

p.434

Letter 16

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated November 5, 1752. : The Council understands from Nicolas' letter (no reference to date) that the dalals will not furnish the total investment unless chittes (Chintzes)\*\* are included. This is regretted as they are expensive and not worth more than the baftas the dalals previously provided.

p.436

Letter 17

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to Nicolas at Jugdia, dated November 28, 1752. Informs Nicolas of the despatch of two boats of cauris of 340 bags to Jugdia.

p.437

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\* Dukhiram Manjee most probably.

\*\* Chittes are called a kind of malmal (Letter dated October 23, 1756 of the Chandernagore Council to the FEIC Council at Masulipatam in the same volume.).



Letter 18

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated January 6, 1753. As above.

p.440

Letter 19

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated February 16, 1753.

Insolvency of the dalals

: Nicolas is instructed to recover the sums owed to the FEIC by the dalals.

Discontinuity of certain items

: As the English at Jugdia do not take baftas any more, they are no longer produced.

Intermediaries

: This has resulted in a great inconvenience for the French. M. Renault has informed the Chandernagore Council that the affair of the Jugdia dalals is very complicated and it would not be resolved soon.

pp.444-445

Letter 20

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated March 20, 1753. In this the Council makes the following points to Nicolas :

Insolvency

: (1) The dalals have not acquitted their debts to the FEIC since the departure of M. Albert,

Problems in Procurement

: (2) the dalals have not fulfilled their engagements since that time.

Nicolas is therefore instructed not to make any advances to them unless they clear their debts or fulfil their engagements to the FEIC.

p.446



Letter 21

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated April 17, 1753. Notes that Nicolas had advanced Rs.1000 to the dalals despite the Council's decree to the contrary.

Insolvency

: The Council hopes that the dalals can recover the money from the weavers and pay the FEIC back. They regretfully note that the debts of the dalals at Jugdia are escalating each year instead of diminishing.

p.448

Letter 22

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated May 20, 1753.

Insolvency of dalals

: The Council insists on the repayment of debts and makes the point that no new debts are to be contracted.

p.448

Letter 23

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated June 20, 1753.

Crisis in Procurement

: The Council insists that all debts are recovered. Otherwise Nicolas is hereby instructed to appoint new dalals or abandon the factory as the English have recently done.

p.450



Letter 24

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated July 15, 1753. The Council is pleased to note that despite Nicolas acting against orders and advancing money to the dalals, the dalals kept their word and there were no shortfalls in supplies that year.

Insolvency

: Nicolas however should continue to press the dalals for recovering the dues of the FEIC. The Council orders a consignment of goods for Ile de France and Bourbon.

pp.450-451

Letter 25

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated July 16, 1753. This letter countermands the order of goods for Ile de France and Bourbon given in the preceding letter.

Insolvency

: If Nicolas is still unable to recover money from the dalals he may leave the factory and the Council will instruct M. Caillot to take his place.

p.451

Letter 26

M. Duval de Leyrit in Council at Chandernagore to M. Nicolas at Jugdia, dated December 17, 1753. The letter runs as follows : we hope that you



will be able to retrieve from your dalals whatever they owe to the Company and you are hereby instructed to make arrangements for your departure so as to arrive in Chandernagore the soonest possible after you have sent all the merchandize which shall be returned to you for the adjustment of your accounts with the dalals.



## NOTES

1. See Campos, JJA, 1979, frontispiece.
2. Jarrett, H.S., and Sarkar, J., 1949, Vol.II, p.151 and Habib, Irfan, 1982, plate 11A, Bengal : Political, 1595.
3. Affaires Etrangeres (AE) B III 459, ANSOM, Oudinot, Paris.
4. C<sup>2</sup> 115 : Memoire des Etablissemens Francais en Asie Et Principalement Ceux du Bengale, par le capitaine Darrac, chef de la loge de Dacca, 1822, A.N., Paris.
5. As above.
6. Toussaint, 1974, p.164.
7. See note 3.
8. "'L 'Europe renoncerait plus facilement aux autres branches du commerce de Bengale qu'à celui de Jougdia, ce commerce roulant presque' entierement sur des marchandises de la premiere necessite, au lieu que dans toutes les autres parties de Bengale, les objets de luxe en font la base''.
9. AE B III 459
10. I have found no references to the rate of conversion between the french franc and the sicca rupee. This is because the franc was not a unit of currency used in the East India Trade at this time; it is probable that the author used the franc only as an unit of account for the French public for whom the tract was destined. Contemporary works put the livre tournois as the currency used by the FEIC; Furber estimates its value to the pound sterling to be 20:1 and to the silver rupee of Bengal to be 20:10 or 2:1 (Furber, Holden, 1976, pp.386-387). According to Dermigny the ratio of the L.t. to the rupee



was 22.50:8.58 in the second half of the eighteenth century, or 2.6:1 (Dermigny, Louis, 1964, p.1565). I have followed Furber's estimates for the calculations in this article.

11. HMS 456, the Dacca series by John Taylor, 1800-1801, pp.103-105, IOLR, London.
12. Mukherjee, R., 1985, Table 1.
13. Hunter, W.W., 1876, Vol. VI, p.288.
14. AE B III 459.
15. C<sup>2</sup> 115, A.N., Paris.
16. HMS 804, Fort William dated October 23, 1752, p.8, IOLR, London.
17. See letter no.7.
18. See HMS 804, Fort William, dated October 23, 1752, p.8, IOLR, London, and the EEIC letters.
19. HMS 456, Dacca Series, p.37, IOLR, London. The 'Dacca Dellolls' were mentioned as early as on July 25, 1684 by William Hedges. 'This day five Dellolls or Brokers of Dacca...went to Mr.Beard's Chamber.' Their visit to Hugli was viewed with apprehension by the EEIC. See Hedges, William, 1887, Vol.I, p.152.
20. See letter no.8.
21. HMS 804, Fort William October 23, 1752, p.8, IOLR, London.
22. '.....l'avantage de ce comptoir est quon n'y fait aucune avance aux tisserands, des toiles sont portees aux marches et on les achete comptant', AE B III 459.



23. See Rila Mukherjee, July 1988.
24. HMS 804, Fort William November 13, 1752, p.20, IOLR, London.
25. C<sup>2</sup> 116, Inde : Memoires Generaux 1716-94, Carton 146 n<sup>o</sup>15, A.N., Paris. The figure of 25% as the general increase in price in the region is corroborated by HMS 804, as in no.23, p.20.
26. HMS 804, Fort William, January 31, 1755, pp.5-6, IOLR, London.
27. HMS 456, Dacca Series, p.181, IOLR, London.
28. This contradicts Hunter who claims that the EEIC opened their Jugdia factory only in 1756. (See Hunter, 1876, Vol.VI, p.247). This misapprehension may be due to the fact that from 1752 the EEIC were thinking of shifting their Jugdia factory (see note 15) and between 1752 and 1754 they wavered between Kalindi and Lakhipur, both near Jugdia, as the site of the new factory. During this period the EEIC's business at Jugdia was probably very marginal (see the deliberations of the EEIC on this matter between 1752 and 1755 as described in the text).
29. KFR Volume G 23/12 Consultation of February 1, 1753, IOLR, London.
30. See note 15.
31. KFR Volume G 23/12, Consultations of June 28, 1753, IOLR, London.
32. KFR, Volume G 23/12, Consultations of February 5, 1754, IOLR, London.



33. KFR, Volume G 23/12, Consultations of July 18, 1755,  
IOLR, London.
34. KFR, Volume G 23/12, Consultations of August 11, 1755,  
IOLR, London.
35. HMS 804, Fort William, December 19, 1755, pp.1-3, IOLR,  
London.
36. C<sup>2</sup> 115 Memoire des Etablissemens Francais en Asie, etc.,  
A.N. Paris.
37. Hunter, 1876, Vol. VI, p.288.



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