



## ČAČ-NĀMA

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**ČAČ-NĀMA**, Persian translation of an early anonymous Arabic history of Sind compiled at Arōr in the 3rd/9th century; it was translated some time after the year 613/1216 by ‘Alī b. Ḥāmed b. Abī Bakr Kūfī, an Arab scholar residing at the court of Qabāča (d. 625/1227) in northern Sind. For subsequent Indo-Persian historians the *Čač-nāma* has been the major source for the history of pre-Islamic and Arab Sind. It comprises an account of the pre-Islamic Buddhist and Brahman dynasties (ed. Dā’ūdpōta, pp. 14-72), a history of the initial Arab raids on Makran and Sind (pp. 72-93), and a detailed chronicle of the campaigns and conquests of Moḥammad b. Qāsem Ṭaqafī (pp. 94-247), to which the translator has added an introduction (pp. 1-14) and conclusion (pp. 247-49). The original Arabic version is no longer extant, but Kūfī’s translation has survived and been referred to variously as *Fatḥ-nāma-ye Send*, *Menhāj al-dīn wa’l-molk*, *Menhāj al-masālek*, *Tārīk-eSend*, *Tārīk-eqāsemī*, and popularly as the *Čač-nāma*.

Two major historiographic traditions are expressed in the *Čač-nāma*—the indigenous Brahman tradition of Arōr, for which it is the only source, and the classical Arab tradition, which it transmits in detail. The local Arōrī tradition informs the first quarter of the text which concerns the Buddhist Sīharsī dynasty, the revolt of the Brahman Čač (after whom the book takes its title), and the subsequent reign of the Sīlā’ej dynasty up to the time of the Arab conquest. To a significant extent, this portion of the *Čač-nāma* can be viewed as an independent work that was later incorporated with the Arab material. In contrast to later sections it contains no disparaging descriptions of non-



Muslim religions, gives no specific *esnād* for any of its information, and accommodates romantic and mythic material of the type usually associated with medieval north Indian historiography. This cohesive, non-Islamized section of the text was probably a discrete, possibly oral, Brahmanical history of the family of Čač similar to local chronicles of royal dynasties in contiguous areas. It is organized primarily around caste issues of purity and pollution among the various competing princely families of Sind.

In addition, an Islamized Brahmanical tradition was called on elsewhere in the text to augment the Arab material on the conquest, usually to express a Brahman perspective on the events (see, e.g., the traditions attributed to *barāhema-ye Arōr*, p. 234, *mašāyek-e barāhema*, p. 197, and Rām Sīāh Brahman, p. 179). The interpolated passages exhibit an attempt at Brahmanizing the Arab conquest through a gloss on the original treaties, which emphasizes the importance of caste to Arab polity (MacLean, pp. 45-48, 77-82), and through providing the arid Arab text with an apparatus of pollution politics (compare, e.g., the tales of Arab and Brahman sexual misconduct, pp. 20-29, 54-67, 228-33, 243-47).

There can be little doubt that the author was conversant with the same Arab tradition of the conquest of Sind that was handed down by Balāḍorī, Ṭabarī, Ya‘qūbī, Ebn Kāyyāṭ, and others. Apart from the incorporation of an indigenous tradition, what distinguishes the *Čač-nāma* from the earliest Arab histories is its abundance of details. For example, while other sources (e.g., Balāḍorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 437) mention only the exchange of letters between Ḥajjāj and Moḥammad b. Qāsem, the *Čač-nāma* provides the text of about twenty of them (pp. 98-103, 115-17, 125-30, 141-43, 149, 152, 163-64, 191-92, 196-97, 240-41). The particulars of the short Arab accounts are not generally

contradicted by the expanded version of the *Čač-nāma*: the concatenation of events, the Arabic poetry, the names of participants, and the *rāwīs* are familiar.

The major single informant of the *Čač-nāma* is Abu'l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Moḥammad b. ‘Abd-Allāh b. Abī Sayf Madā’eni (d. 215/830 or 225/839), who is cited throughout under various forms of his name. It is probable that the bulk of the non-indigenous material found in the text, including that attributed to earlier *rāwīs* such as Abū Bakr Hoḍalī (d. 159/775), also is derived from Madā’eni. The



author of the *Čač-nāma* could have drawn on Madā'enī's lost *Ketāb tağr al-Hend*, *Ketāb 'ommāl al-Hend*, *Ketāb fath Makrān*, *Ketāb aḳbār Taqīf*, and *Ketāb fotūḥ al-Hend wa'l-Send* (Ebn al-Nadīm, *Fehrest*, ed. Flügel, p. 103; tr. Dodge, I, p. 225; Yāqūt, *Mojam* III, p. 457). Since Madā'enī was the major source on Sind for subsequent historians and none of his major works have survived, the *Čač-nāma* is valuable not only for its comprehensive account of Sind but also for its transmission of an important lost historical tradition.

The style of the *Čač-nāma* is simple and clear, and even though 'Alī Kūfī indicates his intention of embroidering the translation with various stylistic embellishments to render it more appealing in Persian (p. 11), these are limited to adroit metaphors for the rising and setting of the sun and moon (e.g., pp. 118, 173, 199, 231, 238), the inclusion of a few of his own Persian verses (pp. 13, 21, 22, 27, 231), and the addition of 7th/13th century titles to 2nd/8th century names (Moḥammad b. Qāsem, for example, is styled Karīm-al-Dīn, p. 127, and 'Emād-al-Dīn, pp. 93, 106, 141, 163).

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