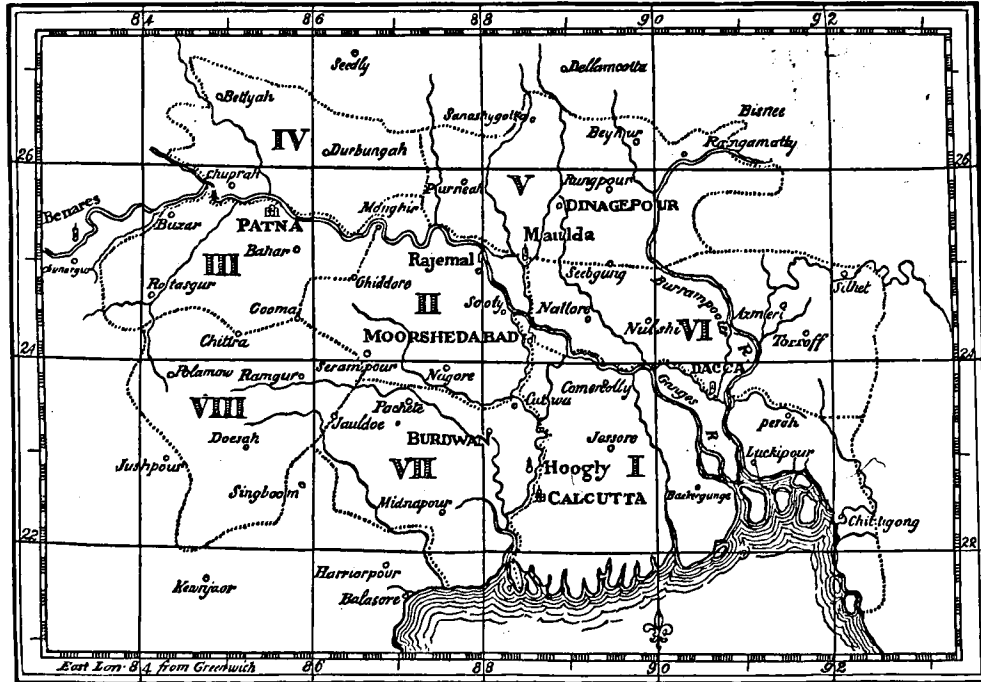


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FROM "MAPS OF BENGAL AND BEHAR"

J. RENNELL, 1779

5135.

STUDIES IN THE
LAND REVENUE HISTORY
OF BENGAL

1769—1787

BY

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*"saepe etiam duris errando in cotibus alas
attrivere, utroque animam sub fasce dedere:
tantus amor florum et generandi gloria mellis.
ergo ipsas quamvis angusti terminus aevi
excipiat....."*

*at genus immortale manet, multosque per annos
stat fortuna domus."*

Georgics, iv. 203-9.

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INTRODUCTION.

The two documents which are the subject of this study are now published in full for the first time. A large portion of the Amini Report is embodied in the second volume of Harington's "Analysis"; the Report on the kanungos has never been reproduced, so far as I know, in any work at all.

Both reports are documents of first class importance to students of that period of the British connection with India which dates from the assumption of the Diwani in 1765 and closes with the establishment of the Permanent Settlement in 1793.

In addition to reproducing these documents, I have endeavoured to supplement them as far as possible with information gained by a close and detailed perusal of the voluminous minutes of the various Committees of Revenue between 1772 and 1786. These minutes are in manuscript and are preserved in the Bengal Government's Record Office. They have been referred to in the foot notes as C.C.P., R.B.P., G.G.P. and C.R.P. respectively.

C.C.P. are the proceedings of the Committee of Circuit formed under the presidency of Warren Hastings to prepare the settlement of the revenue and to place the administration of the Diwani on a firm and business-like footing.

The remaining Committees are the Committees of Revenue and an explanation is necessary.

In 1769 the Supreme Council in Calcutta delegated its authority in revenue matters to a Select Committee drawn from its own members. In 1772 this Select Committee appointed the Committee of Circuit referred to above. The Committee of Circuit, when submitting its proposals to Government, recommended that the whole Council should resolve itself into a Committee of Revenue. This proposal was adopted in October, 1772 and the proceedings of this Committee are classed in the Bengal Government's Records as the Revenue Board's proceedings (R.B.P.). This Committee remained in charge until November

1st, 1774, when the new Council as reconstituted under the Regulating Act met for the first time, but the proceedings were recorded until December 31st, 1774 as the Revenue Board's proceedings. On January 1st, 1775 the Committee of Revenue changed the title of its proceedings, and all proceedings from that date until February, 1781, are recorded as the Governor-General's proceedings (G.G.P.). In 1781 the Committee of Revenue was again reconstituted and composed of covenanted civil servants junior to, and immediately subordinate to, the Supreme Council. The first President of this reconstituted Committee was Mr. David Anderson, one of the preparers of the Amini report. Its proceedings are known as the Committee of Revenue's proceedings (C.R.P.). This Committee was again reconstituted in 1786 when the Board of Revenue was established. Although the term "Board" is first officially used to designate the Supreme Committee of Revenue in 1786, the previous Committees of Revenue, *viz.*, those of 1772, 1774 and 1781 habitually refer to themselves and are referred to as "the Board."

The Provincial Councils of Revenue established in 1773 are, of course, very different from these Committees, but the Calcutta Provincial Council of Revenue is more often called by contemporaries the Calcutta Committee of Revenue. It must not be supposed that this Calcutta Committee of Revenue was the Supreme Committee of Revenue, the Board sitting in Calcutta.

I have modernised the spelling of all Indian words in the two documents, except such words as *cutcherry*, which, like *Cawnpore*, has become so widely known in its eighteenth century spelling that any other form would render it unrecognisable. Our predecessors in India spelt Indian words phonetically, and repeatedly spelt the same word five or six different ways in the same letter. Their pronunciation must have been somewhat crude if their spelling is any guide to it: they habitually spelt "rani" as "ranny", and "duckinsavagepore" is hardly a phonetic or graceful rendering of "Dakshinashabazpur." To reproduce the eighteenth century spelling of these geographical and revenue terms would be very much as

if the historian of the last war were to reproduce the names of French and Flemish towns in the phonetic rendering of the pronunciation of the B.O.R.

I have to express my grateful thanks to the Government of Bengal for their permission to reprint these documents ; and also to the Officers of the Bengal Government Record Office for their unflinching and courteous help, especially to Mr. P. Diaz, late keeper of the Records, Mr. J. Cesar, the present keeper of the Records, and Mr. S. C. Roy, who officiated in that post : to these gentlemen and their staff I wish to express my sincere thanks for all their kindness. But in particular do I wish to express my indebtedness to my friends Mr. F. D. Ascoli, I.C.S. and Mr. A. Cassells, I.C.S. Mr. Ascoli placed most generously and unreservedly at my disposal his extensive knowledge of Bengal Revenue history, and Mr. Cassells, as Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Political Department, arranged that every facility in consulting the Records as well as the assistance of his competent staff should be given to me.

I have also to thank other friends ; Sir Evan Cotton, C.I.E., Mr. F. M. Abdul Ali, Mr. W. H. Thomson, I.C.S. (Retd.), Dr. S. N. Sen, Ph.D., Mr. Vaughan Jones, and Mr. C. W. Gurner, I.C.S., for their help at various times. My experience has been happy in that I never sought assistance in this work on any point which was not cordially and generously given by those from whom it was asked.

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R. B. R.

HOOGHLY COLLEGE,
CHINSURA.
March, 1926.

*I must state that in the revenue history I differ profoundly from
the conclusions drawn by this author.

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