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von Jost Gippert (2024).

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Jost Gippert, Frankfurt 2024

The role of Iran in the Islamicization of the Maldives¹

Jost Gippert

The Maldivian Islands, a coral-based archipelago in the Arabian Sea southwest of the Indian subcontinent comprising nearly 1,200 islands in twenty-six atolls, have been continuously inhabited for at least 2,000 years. The language spoken on the Maldives is named Dhivehi; it is an Indo-Aryan language that developed, together with Sinhalese, via an Insular Prakrit from Sanskrit.² Since the middle of the twelfth century, when the reigning king was converted, the archipelago has been Islamic; before the conversion, the prevailing religion in the Maldivian kingdom was Buddhism, which left its traces, beyond ruins of mostly monastic buildings and related artefacts, in a few inscriptions on coral stone.³

Whereas the dating of the conversion is more or less undisputed,⁴ there has been much debate about the person who was responsible for it and, depending on this, the question of the role of Iran in the process. In an article published in 2003,⁵ I argued in favour of the tradition prevailing on the Maldives in local sources according to which the person in question was a certain Shaykh Jalal Yusuf al-Tabrizi, whose provenance from Iran is likely to have manifested itself in a layer of central terms of the Islamic faith which are attested from the end of the twelfth century onwards in Maldivian documents and which can be proven to be from Persian; this is especially true of *petāmbaru* 'prophet', which obviously represents a dialectal variant of Pers. *pay(ġ)āmbar*, *roda* 'fasting' < Pers. *rōza*, *namādu* 'prayer' < Pers. *namāz* and *miskitu* 'mosque', which presupposes Pers. *mazgīt* and thus opposes itself to *masudidu* 'id', which is likely to reflect Arab. *mašġid* directly as do, for example, *mudimu* 'muezzin' < Arab. *mu'adhḥin*, *mālimu* 'teacher' < Arab. *mu'allim* or *šādat* 'creed' < Arab. *shahāda*. The Maldivian tradition thus provides a similar picture to the traditions neighbouring Iran in Central Asia where the same or similar terms are of Persian origin, too.⁶

Subsequently, in the context of a survey of the oldest Arabic inscriptions of the Maldives and without taking notice of the linguistic evidence outlined above, Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot⁷ returned to a different tradition, according to which the conversion was exerted by a Maghribi man named Abu'l-Barakat al-Barbari. This tradition has as its key witness the Arabic traveller Ibn Battuta, a Maghribi himself, who sojourned on the Maldives in c. 1344 and who provided an account of the conversion in his detailed travel report, referring, among others, to an Arabic inscription in the

main mosque of the island's capital, Male.⁸ It seems therefore worthwhile examining the case again, all the more since some new evidence can be adduced.

Ibn Battuta's account and the Arabic inscription

In Ibn Battuta's report concerning his sojourn on the Maldives,⁹ the conversion of the islands takes a prominent place indeed. The traveller first quotes narrations by 'trustworthy persons among the population' according to whom before the conversion, 'every month there would appear to them an evil spirit of the jinn, coming from the direction of the sea and resembling a ship filled with lights', which used to take one virgin girl with it. Finally 'there came amongst them a man from the Maghrib called Abu'l-Barakat al-Barbari, who could recite by heart the Holy Qur'ān'; he went to meet the jinn instead, and on his reciting the evil spirit 'plunged into the sea'. Asked by the king, he repeated the procedure the next month, and the jinn did not show up again; by consequence, the king together with his court was 'converted before the end of the month', and the population of all islands followed soon after.¹⁰ As Ibn Battuta adds, 'They continue to hold the Maghribis in high respect because of him. He built a mosque which is known by his name and I read the following words on the grille (*maqṣūra*) of the cathedral mosque carved in wood: "The Sultan Ahmad Shanuraza accepted Islam at the hand of Abu'l-Barakat al-Barbari al-Maghribi."¹¹

The wooden object Ibn Battuta refers to has been identified with an oblong board of considerable length (3.21 × 0.22 × 0.05 cm) which is today kept in the National Museum in Male¹²; the inscription it bears (in three lines written horizontally) concerns the construction of the (second) Hukuru (Friday) Mosque in the capital in 738 AH (1337 AD). Even though the board is quite well preserved (except for several holes that were obviously applied to fix the board on the grille), the reading of the inscription is hampered severely by the fact that it is written with but very few diacritics.¹³ This is especially crucial for our question as it concerns the name of the converter, which extends from the end of the first to the beginning of the second line. As Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show, there are several severe damages in the board, which may not yet have existed when Ibn Battuta inspected it; but even then, his reading remains doubtful: at the end of the first line (Figure 5.1), there is no clear indication of the *b*- of his *barakāt*, the image rather suggesting a reading like 'bw 'lrk't than *abū-l barakāt*,¹⁴ and the second line (Figure 5.2) clearly begins with the remnants of a word that he omitted, probably to be restored as *yw-f* as representing *yūsuf*, written with a haček-shaped diacritic that indicates an *s* to be distinguished from *š* (cf. note 34). The word following it is the decisive one: the reading 'l-brbry = *al-barbarī* is indeed possible but others are so, too; in case the voluminous knot after the *l* represents not just one but two characters, even 'l-tbryzy = *al-tabrīzī* can be assumed.

This suggestion seems to be supported by a calligraphic copy of the inscription that was produced on the occasion of a third construction of the mosque in 1067 AH (1656–7 AD). This copy was applied in five lines on a wooden board that was integrated into the room divider separating the prayer room from the entrance hall, to the left (or south) of the doorway; on the right hand side, it is 'mirrored' by a board of the same



Figure 5.1 Wooden board with Arabic inscription from the Hukuru Mosque, Male, 738 AH (final part).



Figure 5.2 Wooden board with Arabic inscription from the Hukuru Mosque, Male, 738 AH (initial part).

size with a similarly executed inscription concerning the third construction.¹⁵ Even though the copy does not contain many more diacritics than the original of 738 AH (cf. Figure 5.3),¹⁶ it clearly suggests the reading *'l-tbryzy = al-tabrīzī* in its second line, with two dots belonging to either the *t* or the first *y* (cf. Figure 5.4). Of the remaining parts of the name, *yūsuf* is well discernible here while the preceding element is not; we seem to read *'bw 'l-rk'r* but in no way *al-barakāt*.¹⁷ The same reading is suggested by an undated board inscription that is preserved in the Friday Mosque (cf. Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.3 Copy of 1067 AH of the inscription of 738 AH.



Figure 5.4 Copy of 1067 AH of the inscription of 738 AH, excerpt with the converter's name in the middle.

The *Tarikh* and the *Gan Filā Fatkoḷu*

A similar but still different name is found in the so-called *Tarikh*, a chronicle of the Maldives which was compiled in Arabic by a certain Hasan Taj al-Din (d. 1727 AD) in the early eighteenth century. Here, the person who converted the king in the twelfth century is named Shaykh Yusuf Shams al-Din al-Tabrizi.¹⁸



Figure 5.5 The converter's name in an undated board inscription, Hukuru Mosque, Male.



Figure 5.6 The Gan Filā Fatkoḷu.

With this name form, the *Tarikh* agrees with an inscription in Dhivehi that is nearly contemporary with the calligraphic Arabic one we have dealt with above. This inscription, which was applied in eighteen lines on a large wooden board (1.7 × 0.54 m) in the so-called *Dives akuru* script, a cursive Indian script of the Brahmi type resembling that used for Sinhalese and running from left to right,¹⁹ concerns the foundation of a mosque on the island of Gan in the southernmost atoll, Addu, and is dated 23 Muḥarram 1062 AH (5 January 1652 AD). Here, the conversion of the Maldives is clearly indicated as an event of the 548th year after the Hijra, that is, 1153 AD, and the name of the converter is discernible, in mixed Arabic and Dives akuru spelling, as Shaykh Yusuf Shams al-Din al-Tabrizi. Even though the board, usually named Gan Filā Fatkoḷu (Figure 5.6),²⁰ is heavily damaged just at the given position in line 5 (cf. Figure 5.7), the reading can be ascertained thanks to an older photograph that shows the same context without damage (Figure 5.8); on this basis, the phrase in question can be restored as *shaykh jalāl yūsuf al-tabrīzī-ge don timan kale-ge karāmāt paḷu koṭu dakkhai*, that is, 'Shaykh Jalal Yusuf al-Tabrizi, showing (and) expressing his, the lord's, own great power.'²¹

Kalus and Guillot, who did take into account the *Tarikh* but not the Gan Filā Fatkoḷu, maintain the view that the converter was a *barbarī*, that is, a Maghribi. To cope with the inconsistent threads of information, they propose to see a historical change of the local tradition here, which was provoked by an increasing influence of the Persian author Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273) and his teacher, Shams-i Tabrizi (1185–1248). They conclude, 'Jusqu'au milieu du XIV^e siècle, le missionnaire est un



Figure 5.7 The Gan Filā Fatkoḷu, lines 4–6, excerpt.



Figure 5.8 The Gan Filā Fatkoḷu, line 5, excerpt, photograph before 1940.

certain Yūṣuf originaire du Maghreb. Puis entre cette date et la fin du XV^e siècle ..., une nouvelle tradition se fit jour à Male, l'assimilant au maître de Rûmî, Shams al-din al-Tabrîzî.²² It is clear that their key witness remains Ibn Battuta, given the ambiguity of the inscription of 1337. However, the reliability of the traveller's account is rather doubtful, as can easily be shown.

The name of the converted king

As we have seen above, Ibn Battuta mentions not only the converter of the islands but also the king who was converted, quoting his name as 'Sultan Ahmad Shanūrāza' from the Arabic board inscription. This is again in contrast to the *Tarikh*, according to which the king was called *al-sulṭān muḥammad al-ʿādil*.²³ Another chronicle of the Maldives, written in the local language, provides a totally different name: according to the so-called *Rādavaḷi*,²⁴ the king was born as a 'Prince Funei' (or 'Donei', 'Dovemi') (*funei / donei / dovemi kalamī/unjān*) and enthroned as 'Buvanādittā' or 'Bovanāditta', a name clearly reflecting Sanskrit *bhuvanāditya*, lit. 'Sun of the World'. In the short record of this king, the conversion is mentioned only implicitly, without naming the converter; the entry reads²⁵: *henevi māvākinage fut funei kalamunjān sirī buvanātittā mahāraduna vet mi kalā islān nu ve raskan kuḷa hai duvahāi islān dīnu gai raskan kuḷa hai duvahāi aharu 25* – 'Prince Funei, son of his excellency the general, became Śrī Bhuvanāditya the Mahārāja; all the days of this man ruling without being a Muslim and all the days of his ruling in the Islamic faith are 25 years.' This information is by and large confirmed by two copper plate grants in Old Dhivehi which are datable to the last decade of the twelfth century. Here, the king appears with a slightly different name as *śrī tribuvana āditya mārasun*; even though the duration of his government is given as thirty-five, not twenty-five years, there can be no doubt that we have the same ruler here, with *tribuvana āditya* reflecting Sanskrit *tribhuvanāditya*, 'Sun of the



Figure 5.9 The Gan Filā Fatkoḷu, line 5, excerpt.

Three Worlds.²⁶ Considering the fact that the copper plate grants are fairly close to the date of the conversion, the name form and the duration as given here are likely to be authentic²⁷; it is all the more remarkable that the grants do not mention the conversion at all.

Yet another name for the king is found in the *Gan Filā Fatkoḷu* which calls him *al-sultān dharumaṣ kyuru dharumavanta rasu-*, that is, ‘King Dharmavanta named Sultan Dharmas’ (Figure 5.9), with *dharmaṣ* reflecting Sanskrit *dharma* (nom. sg. *dharmaṣ*) ‘right, justice’ and *dharumavanta*, the adjective *dharmavantam* (acc. sg.) ‘just’, lit. ‘full of justice’. This now provides a link to the *Tarikh* where king Muḥammad bears the epithet *al-‘ādil* ‘the just’, which can be regarded as an exact counterpart of the Sanskrit term we see in the *Fatkoḷu*.

Dharmas and Dharmavanta

As a matter of fact, the name Dharmavanta is the one that has traditionally been associated with the converted king on the Maldives. Under this name, he is revered in a small mosque in the centre of the capital, Male, which is situated on *Dharumavantha Magu* (‘Dharmavanta Street’) and called *Dharumavantha Rasgefaanu Miskiy* (‘Mosque of King Dharmavanta’)²⁸; in addition, there exist a *Dharumavantha* school and an eponymous hospital. In contrast to this, the shorter name form, *Dharmas*, seems no longer to be known. However, there are some attestations of this name in Arabic sources that are even nearly contemporary with the conversion. The first one appears in the *Geography* by the twelfth-century scholar Muhammad al-Idrisi, who – in the translation by Amadée Jaubert – writes about the Maldives: ‘Tous les habitants de ces îles sont soumis à la domination d’un chef qui les rassemble, les protège et les défend ... C’est sa femme qui rend la justice et qui parle au public sans être voilée ... Le nom de cette reine est *Demhera*.’²⁹ Curiously enough, in one of the two Paris manuscripts that were used by the translator (Bibliothèque nationale de France, mss arabe 2221 and 2222), the latter name belongs not to the queen but to the island in question (cf. Figures 5.10 and 5.11); this, however, is contradicted by the testimony of another twelfth-century scholar, Abu Mansur Mawhub ibn al-Jawaliqi, who in his account of the Maldives, quoted by the thirteenth-century author Ibn al-Wardi, says, ‘Le roi de



Figure 5.10 ‘Queen Damhara’ in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms arabe 2221, 33r, excerpt.

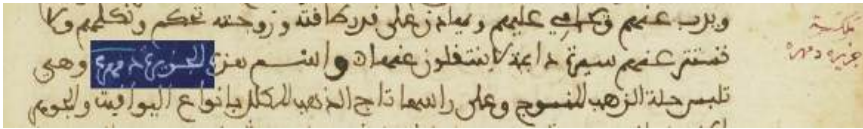


Figure 5.11 ‘Island Damhara’ in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms arabe 2222, 18v, excerpt.

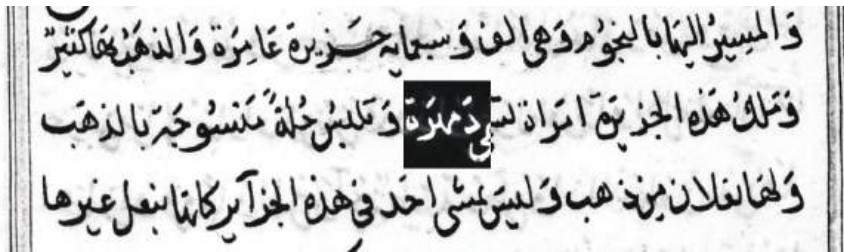


Figure 5.12 ‘Queen Damhara’ in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. arabe 6010, 65r, excerpt.

ces îles est une femme appelée Damhara’ (cf. Figure 5.12 showing the passage in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms arabe 6010).³⁰

It is true, of course, that both authors are talking about a queen here, not a king, and that *Damhara* is not exactly the same name as *Dharmas*. However, if we start from the basic form *dharma*, which in the sense of ‘(act of) right’ has often been attested as a common noun in Maldivian documents since the twelfth century (with spellings such as *darmma*, *d(h)aruma*, etc.),³¹ and consider that it tended to be misspelt as *dammar-*, and so on, in Sanskrit names such as *Dammarāditya* (Skt. *Dharmāditya* ‘Sun of the Right’), *Damarubovana* (Skt. *Dharmabhuvana* ‘World of Right’), *Dammaruvira* (Skt. *Dharmavira* ‘Hero of Right’) or *Dammarumalōka* (Skt. *Dharmaloka* ‘World of Right’),³² we may well understand that the name was distorted when it was taken over into Arabic.³³ And if we further consider that a Sanskrit word in *-a* was prone to be treated as a feminine in Arabic, we may grasp the idea how a king named *Dharma* might have become a queen.

Further epigraphic evidence

There is one more witness to the Sanskrit name of the king, namely, the Arabic inscription of 1337. Here, the ruling sultan is introduced in the middle of the first line, with his name being given as *al-sultān darmas muḥammad bin ‘abdallāh* (cf. Figure 5.13); in a more calligraphic form, the same also appears in the copy of the inscription of 1656–7 (cf. Figure 5.14).³⁴ In this way, the inscription provides a perfect link of the ‘Sanskrit’ tradition with the Arabic one as provided by the *Tarikh*. We thus arrive at the following scenario concerning the king’s names: born as a prince *Donei* or the like,³⁵ he was given the Sanskrit name *Tribhuvanāditya* when he was enthroned; being renowned for his righteousness, he received the epithet *Dharmavanta* or, shorter, *Dharmas* (as if being the incarnation of ‘right’ himself). When he was converted to Islam, he adopted the Arabic name Muhammad, with the epithet being translated as *al-‘ādil*. But where in this scenario do we find Ibn Battuta’s Ahmad Shanuraza?

As a matter of fact, a word that can be read as *shanūrāza* does appear in the Arabic inscription, too, even two times; however, not as denoting the king but, as is clearly visible, of a vizier who received the order to construct the mosque (line 1, Figure 5.15) and to entertain it afterwards (end of line 2 and beginning of line 3, Figures 5.1 and 5.2).



Figure 5.13 Wooden board with Arabic inscription from the Hukuru Mosque, Male, 738 AH (middle, with name highlighted)



Figure 5.14 Copy of the inscription (middle, with name highlighted).



Figure 5.15 Wooden board with Arabic inscription from the Hukuru Mosque, Male, 738 AH (middle, with name highlighted).

The copy of 1656–7 contains the same information, with the spelling rather suggesting a reading like *shanfurāza*.³⁶ In both inscriptions, it is further clear that two different viziers are meant, one acting for the founder of the mosque, Darmas Muḥammad, and one for the king who cared for its renovation in 1337. It is the latter then whose long name includes Ibn Battuta’s Aḥmad; it can be made out as *shihāb al-dīn aḥmad bin abū al-fath jalāl al-dīn ‘umar bin ṣalāḥ al-dīn*.³⁷ In contrast to this, *šan(f)ūrāza* is not a name but simply a title: attested since the copper plate grants of the twelfth century in the form *seneviras-* and later developing into *heneviras-*, it designed the ‘commander-in-chief’ as the Dhivehi equivalent of Sanskrit *senāpati-rāja* (lit. ‘king of the masters of the army’).³⁸

Conclusion

As we have seen, Ibn Battuta’s account of the conversion of the Maldives contains two crucial errors: the name Ahmad does not pertain to the king who was converted but to his successor 184 years later, and *shanūrāza* is not at all part of one of the kings’ names but the title of their viziers. Considering these errors, the name of the converter as read by the traveller does not engender much confidence either, even less so since Ibn Battuta may have been seduced by his own, Maghrebi, provenance to read it as he did. Curiously enough, he also knows the name of one Shaykh Jalal al-Din al-Tabrizi; in a later chapter where he deals with the region of Kamarupa in Assam, he writes, ‘My object in going to these mountains was to meet a saint living there, Shaykh Jalal al-Din of Tabriz.’³⁹ This information, too, is based on a confusion: the saint Ibn Battuta claims to have visited must have been Jalal Mujarrad Kunyai (c. 1271–1346 AD), who was indeed an important figure in the spread of Islam in Bengal but who was nowhere else named a Tabrizi; on the other hand, the region knew a certain (Abu ‘l-Qasim) Jalal al-Din al-Tabrizi who was ‘one of the founders of the Suhrawardi order in India’, but

this one 'had been dead for about a century' (since 1244) when Ibn Battuta arrived there.⁴⁰ Be that as it may, we may conclude that the case for a Maghrebi converting the Maldives to Islam is rather weak. Taking the linguistic evidence as outlined at the beginning of this treatise into account, a provenance of the converter from Iran remains much more probable.

Notes

1. The research for this article was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy – EXC 2176 'Understanding Written Artefacts: Material, Interaction and Transmission in Manuscript Cultures', project no. 390893796, and by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 101019006). The research was conducted within the scope of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures at Universität Hamburg.
2. *Dhivehi* lit. means 'Islanders' *scil.* language' (quasi Sanskrit *dvīpa-vāsika*; the usage of *dh*, etc. in rendering Dhivehi words follows a different principle from Sanskrit and does not indicate aspirated consonants). For details on the history of Dhivehi, cf. Sonja Fritz, *The Dhivehi Language: A Descriptive and Historical Grammar of Maldivian and Its Dialects*, I (Würzburg, 2002), 1–15; Jost Gippert, 'An Outline of the History of Maldivian Writing', in *Grammatica et verba. Glamor and Verve: Studies in South Asian, Historical, and Indo-European Linguistics in Honor of Hans-Henrich Hock on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Chen Shu-Fen and B. Slade (Ann Arbor, MI, 2013), 81–98. Note that *atoll* is the only Maldivian loanword that was borrowed into European languages (Dhivehi *atoḷu*, older *ateḷu*; cf. Sonja Fritz and Jost Gippert, 'Bergland unter', in *Chomolangma, Demawend und Kasbek. Festschrift für Roland Bielmeier*, ed. Brigitte Huber, Marianne Volkart and Paul Widmer (Halle, 2008), 427–8).
3. For a survey cf. Jost Gippert, 'Buddhism in the Maldives', in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, 4 (*History*) (Leiden, forthcoming), and 'Epigraphy of the Maldives', in *Handbook of Epigraphic Cultures*, ed. Kaja Harter, Ondrej Skrabal and Jochen Vennebusch (Berlin, 2024); for individual Buddhist inscriptions, cf. Jost Gippert, 'A Glimpse into the Buddhist Past of the Maldives. I: An Early Prakrit Inscription', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 48 (2004), 81–109, and 'A Glimpse into the Buddhist Past of the Maldives. II: Two Sanskrit Inscriptions', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens/Vienna Journal of South Asian Studies* 55 (2013–14), 111–44.
4. The generally accepted date is 1153 AD (cf. below); the Maldivian historian Hassan Ahmed Maniku argued for a slightly earlier date (1147–8 AD; Hassan Ahmed Maniku, 'Conversion of Maldives to Islam', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Sri Lanka Branch* n.s. 31 (1986–7), 75 and 80).
5. Jost Gippert, 'Early New Persian as a Medium of Spreading Islam', in *Persian Origins: Early Judaeo-Persian and the Emergence of New Persian. Collected Papers of the Symposium, Göttingen 1999*, ed. Ludwig Paul (Wiesbaden 2003), 31–47.
6. Gippert, 'Early New Persian', 37 with reference to Bert Fragner, *Die 'Persophonie': Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens* (Berlin, 1999), 28.

7. Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot, 'Inscriptions islamiques en arabe de l'archipel des Maldives', *Archipel* 70 (2005), 33–41.
8. A third proposal had been published some years earlier by Hassan Ahmed Maniku according to whom 'it was Abul-Barakath from Barbarin in Sri Lanka (in other words from Beruwala)' who was responsible for the conversion (Maniku, 'Conversion', 80). This proposal, which is based on Ibn Battuta's account, will not be discussed further on as it merely builds upon a different interpretation of the name.
9. C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti, *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, Texte arabe, accompagné d'une traduction, t. IV (Paris, 1858), 110–65; chapter 19 in Samuel Lee, *Travels of Ibn Batūta*, trans. from the abridged Arabic Manuscript Copies preserved in the Public Library of Cambridge with notes (London, 1829), 176–83; chapter 17 in H. A. R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūta A.D. 1325–1354*, translated with revisions and notes from the Arabic text edited by C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti, with annotations by C. F. Beckingham, IV (London, 1994), 822–46. The excerpts, published as Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325–1354*, trans. and selected by H. A. R. Gibb with an introduction and notes (London, 1929), do not contain the chapter in question.
10. Gibb, *Travels* IV, 829–30; cf. Defrémery and Sanguinetti, *Voyages*, 126–7; Lee, *Travels*, 179–80; cf. also C. H. B. Reynolds, 'Linguistic Strands in the Maldives', *Contributions to Asian Studies* 11 (1978), 159–60.
11. Gibb, *Travels* IV, 830–1; cf. Defrémery and Sanguinetti, *Voyages*, 129. Lee, *Travels*, 180, gives the name form *Shanwān*.
12. Excellent images of the so-called Board of Shihaabuddheen have been provided by the *Maritime Asia Heritage Survey* project (R. Michael Feener (ed.), <https://maritimeasiaheritage.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/>), under the shelf mark MAHS-MDV-COL-001-O-0006; they are accessible at <https://arches.maritimeasiaheritage.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/report/968ca946-28fb-4cac-aece-dce8a43e9e10> (accessed 17 April 2024).
13. The inscription has been edited several times so far; for references cf. Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions', 29.
14. Because of the ambiguity of the final character, which appears like a small lying half-moon in the very corner of the inscribed space, the readings 'l-zk't and 'l-rk'b as proposed by Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions', 29, are likewise possible.
15. Both boards are on the spot still today; for images showing the arrangement cf. <https://goo.gl/maps/NgxfWoqVUtwHDAKA8>, <https://goo.gl/maps/Rr4N1FJL57vLVNqe6> and <https://goo.gl/maps/djdctCGcSY5qTxs6>.
16. For a greyscale rendering cf. *Mālē Hukuru Miskit* (Male, 1980), 38 (reproduced in Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions', 31).
17. Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions', 31, read 'l-rk'b, which seems also possible (cf. their discussion in pp. 32 and 37), while the reading 'l-brk't provided in *Mālē Hukuru Miskit*, 32, remains unfounded.
18. *Tarikh*, ms. A, p. 33, line 17; cf. the reproduction in Hikoichi Yajima, *Ḥasan Tāj al-Dīn's The Islamic History of the Maldive Islands*, with supplementary chapters by Muḥammad Muḥibb al-Dīn and Ibrāhīm Sirāj al-Dīn, vol. I: Arabic Text (Tokyo, 1982), [33] (facsimile); cf. (10) for the edited text. The same spelling occurs a second time on p. 33, lines 8–9.
19. Lit. 'Islander's script'; cf. Gippert, 'Outline', 82–96, for details as to the script.
20. Lit. 'Board Document of Gan'; cf. Gippert, 'Early New Persian', 43–5.
21. The photograph was published in H. C. P. Bell, *The Maldive Islands: Monograph on the History, Archaeology, and Epigraphy* (Colombo, 1940; repr. Male, 1985), plate J; cf. Gippert, 'Early New Persian', 45, for a previous account. The word *don* (if read

correctly) for 'lord, master' was introduced to the Maldives during the short period of Portuguese rule over the islands (1558–73 AD). Note that the switch from the Arabic script (in the transcript marked by underlining) to *Dives akuru* occurs within the *nisba*, *al-tabrizī*; usually we should expect it just before the case ending (-ge, genitive), but similar cases abound in the given inscription and other documents of the period in question. Cf. Gippert, 'Early New Persian', 46, as to the peculiar shape of the *zī* akṣara.

22. Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions', 41. For a first reference to the Persian author cf. Maniku, 'Conversion', 76, who styles him a 'famous Persian literary figure' and sees 'chronological differences which are hard to reconcile'.
23. For the attestations in the Tarikh, cf. Yajima, 'Islamic History', II: Annotations and Indices (Tokyo, 1984), 159.
24. The *Rādavaḷi*, lit. 'Line of Kings' (corresponding to Sinh. *rājāvaliya* 'id.'), is contemporary to the Tarikh (it ends with King Muḥammad Došimena (r. 1704–21 AD)); it is preserved in one complete and several fragmentary manuscripts, partly written in *dives akuru* and partly in the later *thaana* script.
25. The passage is quoted after the (anonymous) facsimile edition of the complete manuscript in *thaana* script, *Rādavaḷi* (Male, 1979), 10; the wording of the two other witnesses quoted in Bell, 'Monograph', 198–200, is similar.
26. For the text passages cf. Hassan Ahmed Maniku and G. D. Wijayawardhana, *Isdhoo Loamaafaanu* (Colombo, 1986), 1, and *Loamaafaanu: Transliteration, Translation and Notes on Palaeography*, I (Male, 1982), 8, where a different transliteration system has been applied.
27. The name form as appearing in the *Rādavaḷi* can easily be explained by a quasi-haplography of *śrī tri-*; the confusion of twenty-five and thirty-five may be due to a transmission in the local script where the digits for '2' and '3' are easily confused. The variants *donei* and *funēi* for the prince's name as occurring in the copies of the *Rādavaḷi* may be due to the same confusion, given that the respective characters in the *thaana* script reflect the older digits '3' and '2'; cf. Gippert, 'Outline', 97, for the historical background of the *thaana* script.
28. The coordinates are 4°10'38.5" N, 73°30'42.0" E. Cf. Tej Singh and Atul Kumar Yadav, *Conservation of the Dharumavantha Raasegefanu Mosque, Male, Republic of Maldives* (Lucknow, 2004) for details.
29. Amadée Jaubert, *Géographie d'Édrisi*, Traduite de l'arabe en français d'après deux manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du roi et accompagnée de notes, I (Paris, 1836), 67.
30. Gabriel Ferrand, *Relations de voyages et textes géographiques arabes, persans et turks relatifs à l'extrême-orient du VIII^e au XVIII^e siècles*, Traduits, revus et annotés, I (Paris, 1913), 415. The passage is also found in manuscripts Munich, BSB, cod. arab. 461, p. 182; Paris, BnF, arabe 2193, f. 73v; and BnF, arabe 6272, f. 110r.
31. The Corpus of Old Dhivehi Texts (<https://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcc/ind/nind/adhiv/adhiv.htm>, presently under construction) yields more than ninety occurrences (cf. <https://tinygu.de/daruma>).
32. Cf. <https://tinygu.de/dammaru> for attestations in the Corpus of Old Dhivehi Texts.
33. The identification with *dharma* was also proposed by S. Maqbul Ahmad, *India and the Neighbouring Territories in the 'Kitāb Nuzhat Al-mushtāq Fi'khtirāq Al-'āfāq' of al-Sharīf al-Idrisī* (Leiden, 1960), 24.
34. Note that in the older inscription, the -s of *darmas* carries a similar diacritic as the name of *yūsuf* does, with no counterpart in the copy. As pointed out by Kalus and

- Guillot, 'Inscriptions', 34, the name *'abdallāh* 'correspond au nom habituel qu'on donne, a posteriori, au père d'un nouveau converti à l'islam'.
35. The local names for princes as occurring in the *Rādavaḷi* remain obscure.
36. Thus read by Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions', 30.
37. Thus restored by Kalus and Guillot, 'Inscriptions', 29.
38. Cf. Reynolds, 'Strands', 160, who correctly identifies 'Shanivirāzā' with Sinh. *senevirājā* 'commander in chief'; cf. also *henevi* 'general' in the passage from the *Rādavaḷi* quoted above. The spelling with *-f-* might be meant to render the *-v-* in the Dhivehi word.
39. Gibb, 'Travels IV', 869–70; cf. Lee, 'Travels', 195.
40. Gibb, 'Travels IV', 870, n. 14.

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