

Maisie Carroll

Professor Kale

HIST B258

September 8, 2026

Takeaways 1

From “Presidential Address: Maps in the Mind and the Mobility of Asia” by David Ludden, I learned that maps cannot be taken as fact, as they are influenced by political and historical factors. Maps do not completely accurately portray geographical fact, and create political spaces and states that often cannot be truly defined. This is especially true for maps created by nations, as they are intended to portray the nation in a particular way in regards to its neighboring states and peoples. I was especially interested in the idea that Asia is actually mobile, as it is a collection of places that are ever changing instead of existing in permanent boundaries. Boundaries of states and cities are constantly changing throughout history, and there is no reason that the boundaries of today are any more permanent than those that existed hundreds of years ago. This made me think of the way we often discuss history as happening to fixed groups of people or fixed states, and forget that borders and understandings of different groups have constantly changed, and may not fit what we understand them as today. When we study the history of India, that India does not have the same boundaries and population as India today.

In “Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-135” by Janet L. Abu-Lughod I learned how interconnected the Indian subcontinent was. It was a central point of travel and trade for people from the Mediterranean and Southeast Asia. Located right in the center of the Indian Ocean, India both benefitted and lost from this location. It benefitted from

being accessed through these trade routes and received surpluses from trade. India was central to this trade in the thirteenth century. Afterwards though, this location also meant it was in the center of powers that were constantly looking to expand (the Arabs and China.) India's geography is central to understanding its relationship with its bordering states and peoples. It is in the midst of an ocean that is filled with profitable trade routes used by many, and is a key point of access to this ocean that is envied. This revealed to me how important India's geography is in understanding its history.

entrepots - an intermediary center of trade

Ibn Majid - Arab navigator and cartographer

macroecology - a subfield in ecology that studies the patterns and processes by which components of ecological systems generate structures and dynamics

Chola - a Tamil dynasty originating from southern India and ruled over the Chola empire

Vijayanagara - a late medieval Hindu empire that ruled over much of southern India

Territorialism - behavior of defending a geographical area from intruders

environs - districts around a city