

ramparts and the rigorous system of guarding the frontier-passes⁸. In view of this jealously maintained isolation it cannot surprise us to find that Kalhaṇa's horizon northward was practically limited by the petty hill state on the Upper Kiṣangaṅgā and its tributaries, which he designates as *Daraddēśa*, 'the Darad land.' The seat of its chiefs, referred to by the name of *Daratpurī*, 'the town of the Darads', may have stood at the present Gurēz⁹. This, the main settlement of the valley, was the residence of the Nawābs who ruled the tract until the Sikh conquest. On account of the advantages offered by its position in the widest and most central portion of the valley, Gurēz was probably a place of some importance in earlier times, though among its rude log-huts and near the rubble-built fort no remains of antiquity could be traced by me.

Once beyond this point the guidance of the Chronicler fails us completely for the historical topography of the route. It is, indeed, significant, as I have pointed out elsewhere, that 'Kalhaṇa, when describing the home of the "Mleccha" chiefs from the north who, in his own time, invaded Kashmīr together with the Darads of the Kiṣangaṅgā Valley (viii. 2762-4), can treat us only to details of the mythical geography of the Himālaya regions'¹⁰. Judging from Kalhaṇa's usual accuracy in matters topographical we may feel convinced that he would not have withheld from us the old Sanskrit designations of Astōr, Gilgit, and the other Dard valleys from which the northern allies were undoubtedly drawn, if those territories had been as familiar to him as they are now to the educated Kashmīrī.

Alberūnī's
notice of
Dard
valleys.

Considering this restricted knowledge prevailing in the Kashmīr of Hindu times, and the complete inaccessibility of Kashmīr itself to all Muhammadans, it is remarkable that Albērūnī, more than a century before Kalhaṇa, should have succeeded in obtaining any information, however scanty, about that northern region. In my *Memoir on the Ancient Geography of Kashmīr*, I have shown the value attaching to the chapter of Albērūnī's *India*, which contains his description of Kashmīr derived from indigenous sources¹¹. He refers there to the mountains of 'Bolor and Shamīlān' as visible for two marches on the left of the traveller who enters the Kashmīr Valley from the western 'Gate', i.e. through the gorge of Bārāmūla. At present we can trace neither the name *Shamīlān* nor the designation *Bhattavaryān* given by Albērūnī to the tribes which inhabit those mountains, and whose 'king has the title of Bhatta-Shāh'. But the position indicated, and the use of the term Bolor, which has been applied to Gilgit and Baltistān for centuries, plainly show that Albērūnī's informant meant the mountain-region of the Darads, forming the confines of Kashmīr to the north and north-west. This is confirmed by the subsequent mention of 'Gilgit, Aswīra, and Shiltās' as the chief places of those tribes; for here it is impossible to mistake a reference to the modern Gilgit, Hasōra, and Chilās¹².

SECTION II.—CHINESE HISTORICAL RELATIONS WITH GILGIT

Nowhere among the Darads do we meet with written records of any antiquity or other evidence which could throw light on the early history of the region traversed by the 'Gilgit Road'. Nor are there archaeological remains to offer us guidance; at least I did not succeed in tracing any going back to pre-Muhammadan times until Gilgit itself was reached. But

⁸ See my introduction to *Rājat*, I. pp. 30 sq.

⁹ Compare my note to *Rājat*. vii. 911; regarding Gurēz and the neighbouring portions of the valley, see *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 15 sqq.

¹⁰ See *Rājat*, I. p. 31, note 6.

¹¹ See *Rājat*, II. pp. 359 sqq., §§ 12-14.

¹² See Albērūnī, *India*, transl. Sachau, i. p. 20; for a possible explanation of the term *Bhatta*, see my note, *Rājat*, II. pp. 363-4.