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PORTofCALL. African-European-Asian Encounters: Cultural Heritage and the Early Modern Indian Ocean
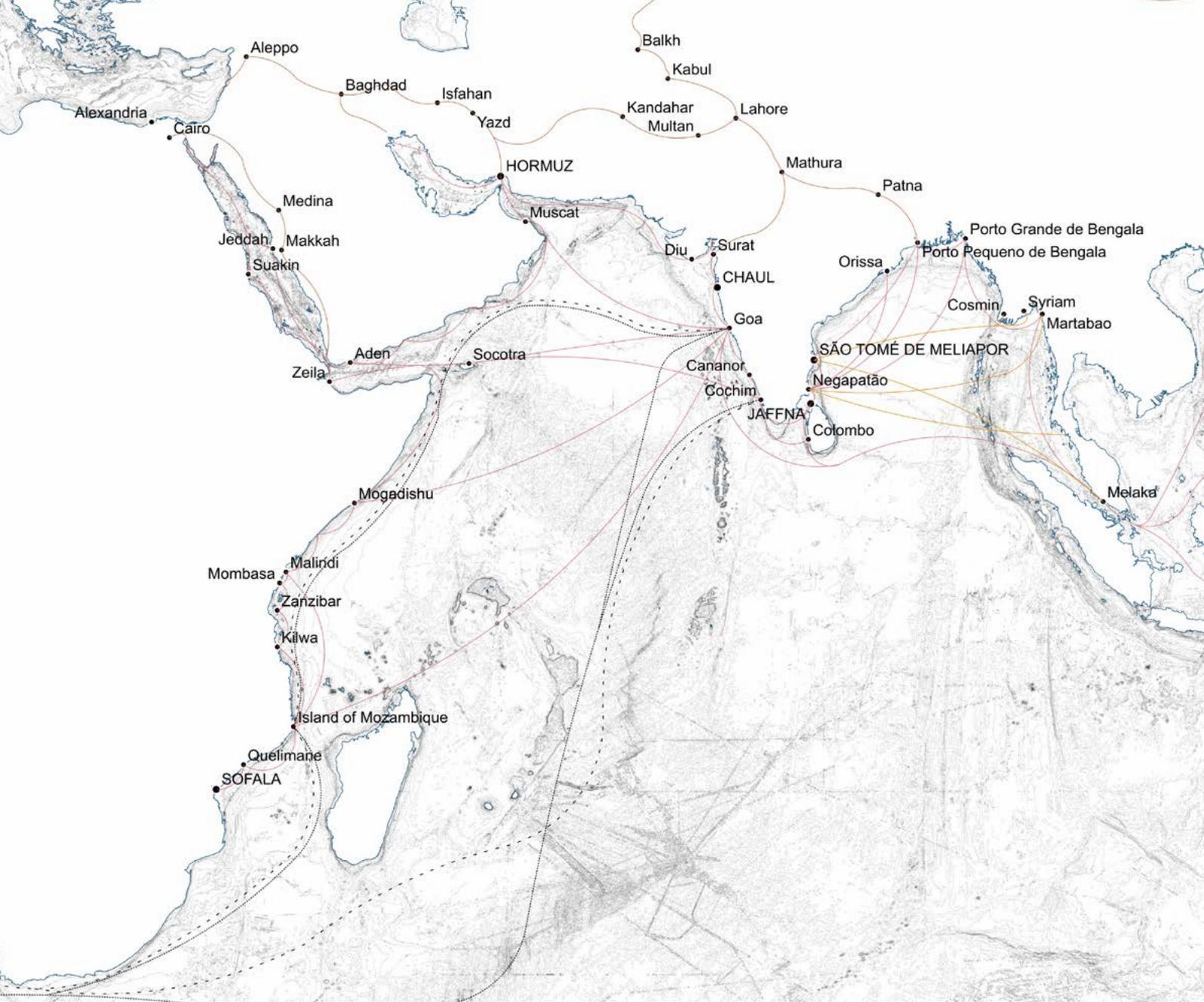
CHAUL

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Port settlements in the Indian Ocean formed the nodes of ancient maritime trade routes, often becoming landscapes of cultural encounters where mercantile societies thrived on the circulation of people, commodities and ideas, linking societies and cultures dispersed throughout Asia, the east coast of Africa and the Mediterranean. During the early modern period, European nations and trading companies overran the ocean's trade routes, monopolizing them, and imposed imperial and colonial projects that had a deep impact on the region's economies and societies. However, when the Portuguese first attempted to control the Indian Ocean's major maritime trade routes and ports, negotiation was as vital as naval power. The impact of these early modern African-Asian-European encounters and negotiations on the landscapes and habitats of the Indian Ocean's littoral regions were often as strong on the hinterlands and suburban areas surrounding the port cities controlled and/or developed by European colonial agency as on the port cities themselves.

In this context, the ancient emporium of Chaul was a crossroads of cultures, religions and spatial traditions, and the Portuguese presence, from 1521 to 1740, added a significant layer to the region's history. During that period, the 'twin' cities of Upper and Lower Chaul and their suburban areas formed a vibrant cultural landscape, with diverse building technologies and architectural expressions.

chronology

05

2nd century CE. First mentions of 'Chemula and Simulla', identified with Chaul.

12th century. Chaul is controlled by the Silhara dynasty.

14th century. Chaul comes under the control of the Bahmani sultanate.

ca. 1490. Chaul becomes one of the main port cities of the Ahmednagar Sultanate.

1515. The Portuguese install a trading agent ('feitor') in Chaul.

1521. An agreement with the Ahmednagar Sultanate leads the Portuguese to build a fortification in Lower Chaul / Revdanda.

1570-1571. Ahmednagar-Portuguese war and siege of Lower Chaul / Revdanda.

1636. Chaul comes under the control of the Bijapur Sultanate.

1672. The Maratha king Shivaji Bhonsale conquers Chaul and its region.

1740. The Portuguese cede Lower Chaul / Revdanda to the Maratha Kingdom.

1777. The French adventurer Chevalier de St Lubin lands in Chaul.

1818. The British occupy Chaul and its region.

1521 FORTIFICATION IN LOWER CHAUL

1740 CHAUL CEDED TO MARATHA KINGDOM

Lower Chaul / Revdanda ('Chaul')

Located at the mouth of the Kundalika River about 40 km south of Mumbai, the ancient port city of Chaul was one of the major trade emporiums of the Konkan coast, identified with *Chemula* in inscriptions at the Kanheri caves (ca. 180 CE) and with *Simulla* mentioned in Ptolemy's treaty on geography (ca. 150 CE). The port city continued to flourish during the medieval period and, towards the end of the fifteenth century, it became the main outlet of the Ahmednagar Sultanate, together with Dabhol.

After asserting their power at sea and raiding the coastlands, the Portuguese established a factory downriver from the city of Chaul in 1515, profiting from the trade in horses with the Persian Gulf, and other commodities.[1] This factory was fortified in 1521, and a settlement developed around it, known as Lower Chaul ('Chaul de Baixo') in Portuguese documents, as to distinguish it from the existing city of Chaul, later designated as Upper Chaul ('Chaul de Cima'). This settlement expanded as trade in Chaul flourished, being elevated to the status of a city by King João I in 1546.[2] Part of this settlement was fortified with a bulwarked wall following the 1570-71 war with the Ahmednagar Sultanate. Within this defensive wall, large churches and convents were built, together with other structures such as the hospital, a courthouse, and a *Misericórdia* house (Fig. 1).

Neighbouring the city of Chaul were hamlets with Koli, Agri and Bhandari populations, indicating the importance of fishing, salt and toddy tapping/palm wine in the local economy. The Kundalika River was navigable up to the dual settlement of Roha/Ashtami, where there appears to have been considerable trade activity during the sixteenth century.[3] Portuguese merchants travelled frequently up river, and in the settlement known to them as the 'Estamim de Chaul', commodities were unloaded or loaded on small boats travelling back and forth to the larger vessels anchored off Lower Chaul.

1. Frederico D. Antunes, "Chaul," in *Dicionário de História dos Descobrimentos Portugueses*, vol. 1, dir. Luís de Albuquerque (Lisbon: Caminho, 1994), 240-42.

2. The City of Chaul to the governor João de Castro, 10 Dec. 1546, in *Obras Completas de D. João de Castro*, vol. 3, ed. Armando Cortesão and Luís Albuquerque (Coimbra: Academia Internacional de Cultura Portuguesa, 1976), 273.

3. In the late nineteenth century, the river was navigable up to Roha for vessels of fifteen tons, and up to the village of Gophanvadi for vessels of fifty tons (James M. Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1883), 11:378-79).

4. Gerson da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein* (Bombay: Thacker & Vining, 1876), 51-162.

figure 1

5. Gritli von Mitterwallner, *Chaul, eine unerforschte Stadt an der West- kiiste Indiens (Wehr-, Sakral- und. Profanarchitektur)* (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1964).

6. Sila Tripati and Anuruddh S. Gaur, "Onshore and Nearshore Explorations along the Maharashtra Coast: with a View to Locating Ancient Ports and Submerged Sites," *Man and Environment* 22, no. 2 (1997), 73-83; Vishwas Gogte, "Discovery of the Ancient Port City of Chaul," *Man and Environment* 28, no. 1 (2003), 67-74; Vishwas Gogte et.al. "The Ancient Port at Chaul," *Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology* 3 (2006), 62-80; Cibele E. Aldrovandi, *As Exéquias do Buda Sâkyamuni: Morte, Lamento e Transcedência na Iconografia Indiano-Budista de Gandhâra*, PhD thesis (University of São Paulo, 2006).

7. *O Tombo de Chaul*, 1591-1592, ed. Artur T. Matos (Lisbon: CNCDP, 2000).

8. Sidh Losa Mendiratta, *Dispositivos do Sistema Defensivo da Província do Norte do Estado da Índia, 1521-1739*, PhD thesis (University of Coimbra, 2012).

Lower Chaul was ceded by the Portuguese to the Maratha kingdom in 1740, and together with Upper Chaul both urban settlements quickly declined, with trade being diverted to the British controlled city of Mumbai and other ports. Abandoned and ruined buildings became tucked under dense palm groves, and by the time the British occupied the region, in 1818, both Upper and Lower Chaul had completely lost their urban character and maritime trade (Fig. 2).

Historical and archaeological interest in Chaul was nurtured by the Goan doctor Gerson da Cunha (1844-1900) who wrote extensively about the ruined settlement.[4] This interest was developed by the German art historian Gritli von Mitterwallner (1925-2012), who chose Lower Chaul's Christian religious architecture as the main topic of her PhD thesis.[5] More recent archaeological activity has centred on Upper Chaul and has revealed a wealth of medieval and early modern artefacts,[6] while re-discovered documental sources published mostly by Portuguese scholars have provided new insight into Chaul's history.[7]

The defensive structures of Lower Chaul and Korlai fort were also recently studied and surveyed (Fig. 3).[8] However, the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the region continues to suffer erosion, as new buildings and infrastructure developments are taking over the archaeological sites and changing the cultural landscape.
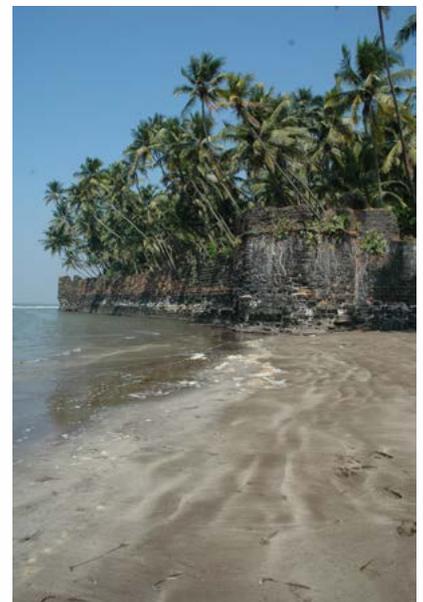

figure 2

figure 3

Throughout the medieval period, the port city of Chaul is mentioned in several documents. A tenth-century account notes a flourishing city under the rule of the Silhara kings with a large Muslim population thriving on trade,[9] and a twelfth-century document describes Chaul as "a spacious and beautiful town, with magnificent buildings and exquisite surroundings."[10] Around 1490, Chaul became part of the Nizam Shahi Sultanate, and in its port "cotton, textiles, wheat and rice" brought by ships from the Gulf of Khambhat or by caravans from the Deccan plateau were exchanged for horses, spices, areca nuts, coconuts, drugs, palm sugar and other commodities brought by ships from the Persian Gulf, the Malabar coast and other ports of the Indian Ocean.[11] A late sixteenth-century source mentions that silk brought in bulk from China was weaved in Chaul.[12]

Archaeological prospections and excavations on the riverfront area of Upper Chaul have yielded pottery ware, including Chinese pottery dated between 1400 and 1700 CE[13] Other artefacts found during the archaeological works relate to the Silhara (ca. 1000-1200 CE) and Bahmani/Nizam Shahi (ca. 1350-1630) periods.[14] A 350 meter embankment wall still marks the city's medieval riverfront, now found in the mud flats of the Kundalika River.[15]

The early seventeenth-century description of Upper Chaul by the Italian Pietro Della Valle provides us with an overall idea of its cityscapes and landmarks, many of which probably dated back to earlier periods. The Italian differentiated between the city's Islamicate core area and a surrounding Hindu "suburban" area.[16] A few years following Della Valle's visit to Chaul, the city's male adult population was estimated at 3000, with many "good weavers and carpenters."[17]

Della Valle identifies several buildings within the central area including the principal Mosque, one of the most conspicuous landmarks along the city's waterfront.[18] During the sixteenth century, the Portuguese referred to it as the "big Mosque." When a red flag was hoisted atop the building, it signalled war with the Europeans and the suspension of commercial activities.[19] A French map from 1777 still depicts it as a prominent landmark (Fig. 4).[20] The Hammam Khana baths, about 160 meters north of the Mosque, is one of the most interesting archaeological sites of Chaul (Fig. 5). Although Della Valle makes no mention of the structure, it had "cisterns for heating and storing water."[21] A Portuguese map from the 1730s identifies the Baths as the *Casa das Bailadeiras* or "Dancing Girls' House" (Fig. 6).[22]

9. Elisabeth Lambourn, "Clues fr West Asian Mercantile Networks," in *Ports of the Ancient Indian Ocean*, ed. Marie-Françoise Boussac, Jean-François Salles and Jean-Baptiste Yon (New Delhi: Primus, 2016), 382.

10. Jean-Charles Ducène, "The Ports of the Western Coast of India according to Arabic Geographers (Eighth-Fifteenth Centuries Ad): A Glimpse into the Geography," in *Ports of the Ancient Indian Ocean*, eds. Marie-Françoise Boussac, Jean-François Salles and Jean-Baptiste Yon (New Delhi: Primus, 2016), 165-78.

11. António Bocarro, *Livro das plantas de todas as fortalezas, cidade e povoações do Estado da Índia Oriental*, in Arquivo Português Oriental, ed. António de Bragança Pereira, tom. 4, vol. 2 (Bastorá: Tipografia Rangel, 1938), 197-98.

12. Jacques de Coutre, *Andanzas asiáticas*, eds. E. Stols, B. N. Teensma and J. Verberckmoes (Madrid: Historia, 1991), 346.

13. Sila Tripati and Anuruddh S. Gaur, "Onshore and Nearshore Explorations along the Maharashtra Coast: with a View to Locating Ancient Ports and Submerged Sites," *Man and Environment* 22, no. 2 (1997), 82.

14. Vishwas Gogte, "Discovery of the Ancient Port City of Chaul," *Man and Environment* 28, no. 1 (2003), 69; Vishwas Gogte et.al. "The Ancient Port at Chaul," Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology 3 (2006), 62-80.

15. Cibele E. Aldrovandi, *As Exéquias do Buda Sâkyamuni: Morte, Lamento e Transcedência na Iconografia Indiano-Budista de Gandhâra*, PhD thesis (University of São Paulo, 2006), 633-34; Vishwas Gogte, "Discovery of the Ancient Port City of Chaul," *Man and Environment* 28, no. 1 (2003), 70.

16. Pietro Della Valle, *Viaggi di Pietro Della Valle* (Brighton: G. Gancia 1843), 790-5.

17. António Bocarro, *Livro das plantas de todas as fortalezas, cidade e povoações do Estado da Índia Oriental*, in Arquivo Português Oriental, ed. António de Bragança Pereira, tom. 4, vol. 2 (Bastorá: Tipografia Rangel, 1938), 197.

18. Pietro Della Valle, *Viaggi di Pietro Della Valle* (Brighton: G. Gancia 1843), 791.

19. Gaspar Leite de Fonseca to Gaspar Melo de Sampaio, 21 Feb. 1621, in *Fragmenta Histórica* 6 (2018), 477; Georg Schurhammer, *Die Zeitgenoessischen Quellen zur Geschischte Portugiesisch-Asiens und Seiner Nachbarlaender zur Zeit des Hl. Franz Xaver* (Rome: Institutum Historicum S. I., 1962), 146.

20. *Plan du port de Chaul… / levé par François Warnet*, 1777. Bibliothèque Nationale de France. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b532583542 [Accessed 2 August, 2023]

21. Pushkar Sohoni, "Medieval Chaul Under the Nizam Shahs: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation," in *The Visual World of Muslim India: The Art, Culture and Society of the Deccan in the Early Modern Era*, ed. L. Parodi, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 64-6.

22. *Planta de Chaul*, [entre 1700 e 1725?]. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. http://purl.pt/20829 [Accessed 2 August, 2023]

23. Pietro Della Valle, *Viaggi di Pietro Della Valle* (Brighton: G. Gancia 1843), 793.

24. Gerson da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein* (Bombay: Thacker & Vining, 1876), 159.
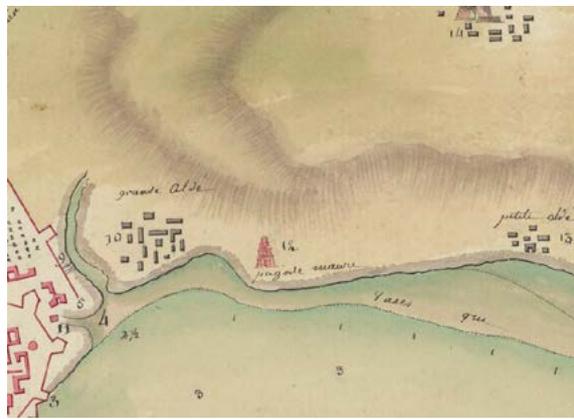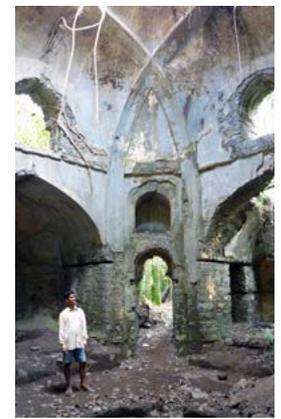
figure 4

figure 5

The area surrounding the Islamicate centre of Chaul was dotted with Hindu temples, with the one dedicated to Rameshwar, at the north-eastern limit of the city, being the most important (Fig. 7).[23] Most of the city's Hindu population lived in this area, where there were also several water tanks and other Hindu temples.[24] At the northern edge of the urban areas was the tank of Bhavale Talav, with a Muslim mausoleum nearby (Fig. 8).[25]

One of the most interesting features of Chaul was the absence of any fortification, for the period when it was the major maritime outlet of the Ahmednagar Sultanate.[26] The overall friendly relations between the Sultanate and the Portuguese from the early 1500s onwards may help to explain the lack of fortifications in Upper Chaul. When those relations soured, the strategic promontory at the south side of the Kundalika River became the major point of contention. Only following the Mughal annexation of Ahmednagar in the 1630s was a fortification built in the city of Upper Chaul.
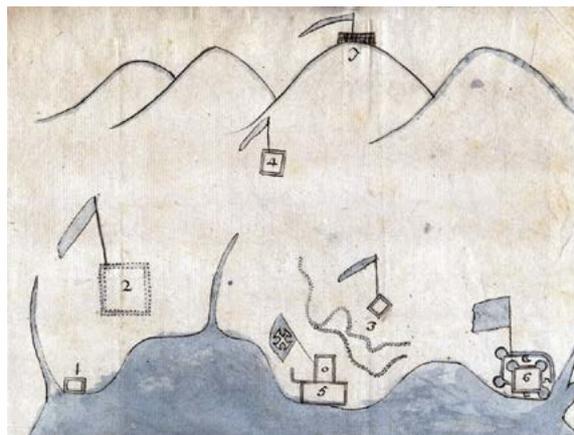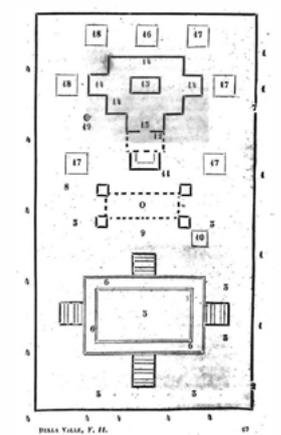

figure 6

figure 7

25. James M. Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1883), 11:300.

26. Ludovici Varthema's brief description of Chaul from ca. 1504 where he mentions a "well walled" city must be questioned. The Portuguese were active in Chaul from 1509 onwards, building a factory in 1516 and a fortification in 1521 downriver from Chaul. Portuguese accounts don't make any reference to such a wall, nor does it appear in the first visual document depicting the city by the governor João de Castro, from ca. 1539.
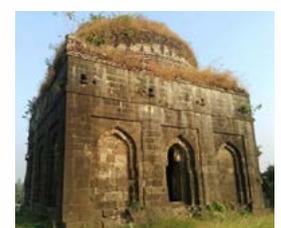
figure8

During the first half of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese—controlled settlement of Lower Chaul/Revdanda grew, spreading northwards along the road that connected the Portuguese factory to the city of Chaul via the Rameshwar Temple. This area had many palm groves that were the main sustenance of the local Hindu community of the Bhandari caste, whose main occupation was 'toddy-tapping' or extracting the sap from the palms' flowers and then distilling it to produce spirits. In this suburban area, about 1,2 kilometers north of the factory, a chapel dedicated to St. Sebastian was built around 1556, or shortly before, suggesting a growing Christian population (Fig. 9).[27] About 300 meters to the north of this chapel, one of the priests of the city's main secular church, Fr. Brás Dias (fl. 1550-80), built a country residence with a chapel dedicated to St Blaise. This property was donated to the Recollect Franciscans in 1570-71.[28] The missionaries re-consecrated the chapel to the Mother of God ('A Madre de Deus') and established a convent and dormitory in the priest's residence (Fig. 10). This convent became the most important structure in this suburban area, known as the Small Field of Chaul ('Campo Pequeno de Chaul') or the Field of St Sebastian ('Campo de São Sebastião').

From the early seventeenth century onwards, the Portuguese built defensive structures along the northern and north-eastern flanks of the Field of Chaul, eventually forming a defensive wall interspaced with turrets. This defensive system began with the fortification of the Mother of God convent and its compound walls, and then spread both to the west, with a turret on the beach, and to the east, with five more turrets built along the north and eastern flanks of the Field. In the 1720s, this linear fortification had 19 artillery pieces, and was defended by 124 soldiers and by a 234 strong Bhandari militia.[29]

27. Father Gonçalo Silveira to Father Gonçalo Vaz in Lisbon, Jan. 1557, in *Documenta Indica* vol. 3, ed. Joseph Wicki (Rome: Monumenta Historica Soc. Iesu, 1954), 628.

28. Paulo da Trindade, *Conquista espiritual do Oriente*, ed. Félix Lopes (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1962–64), 2:201-3.

29. Sidh Losa Mendiratta, *Dispositivos do Sistema Defensivo da Província do Norte do Estado da Índia, 1521-1739*, PhD thesis (University of Coimbra, 2012), 203-17.
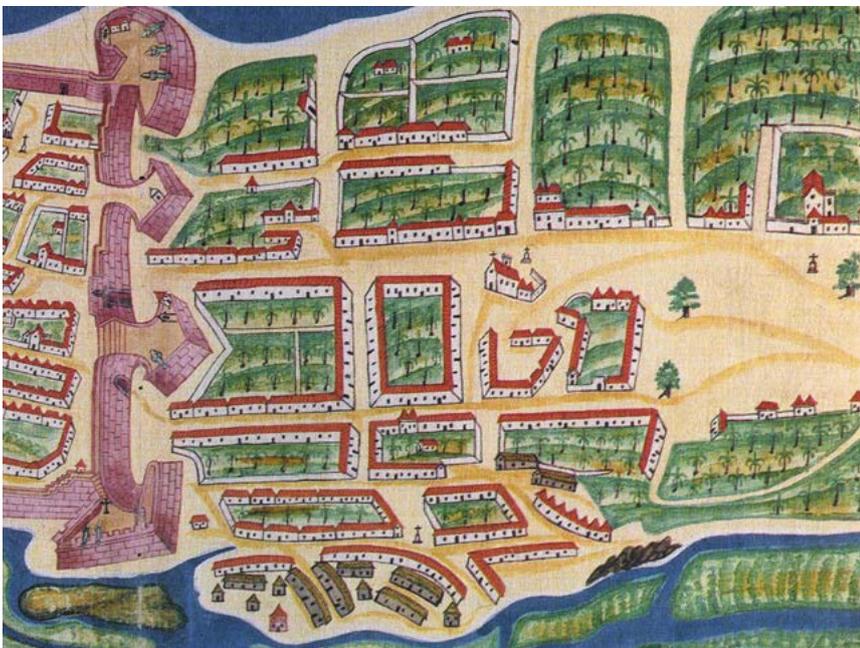

figure 9

30. Archbishop of Goa Cristóvão de Sá e Lisboa to Rome, 10 May 1621, in Achilles Meersman, *The Franciscans in Bombay*, Appendix 2 (Bangalore: St Anthony's Friary, 1957), 223.

31. *Itinerario do M. R. P. Fr. Tistão da Cunha, Religioso de S. Francisco*, Ms. ALC 391. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, fl. 4.
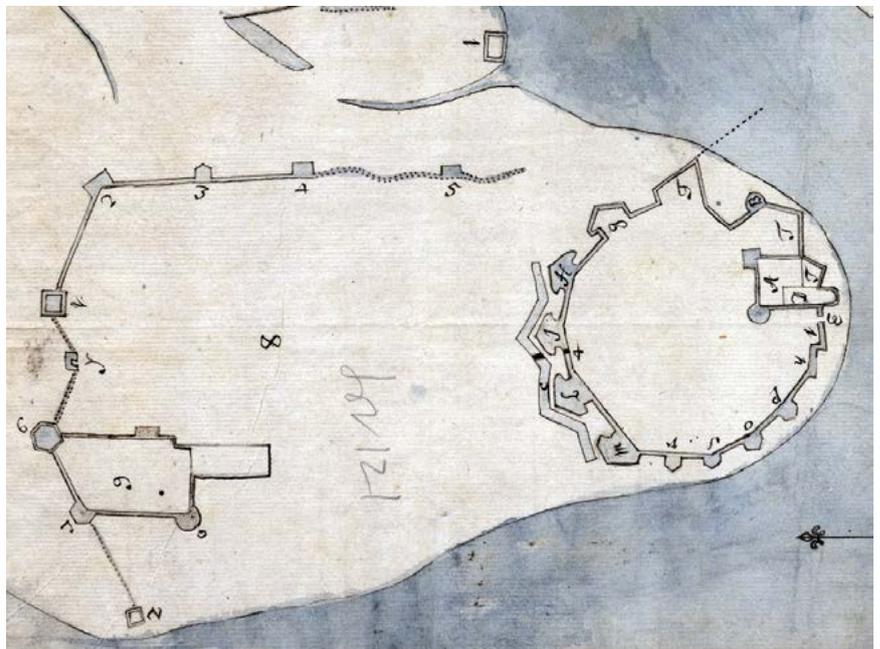

figure 10

The wall's main gate stood near the convent of the Mother of God, leading beyond to another suburban area known as the Field of St John ('Campo de São João'), or Large Field of Chaul ('Campo Grande de Chaul'). This outer suburban area included a chapel built at an uncertain date before 1621, dedicated to St. John the Baptist.[30] The Field of St John wasn't fortified, but there was a turret near the Paulo Creek,[31] which also marked the northern limit of the territory controlled and claimed by the Portuguese Crown in the region since the 1570-71 war.

Both in the Small and Large Fields of Chaul, many Christians owned landed houses, while large sections of the non-Christian population lived in chawls ('challes'), which were clusters of dwellings built of ephemeral materials (adobes, wickers, thatch, etc) within larger properties, usually belonging to Christian owners. Chawls were organized by caste and/or occupation, and could be seasonal habitations for rural populations engaged in non-agricultural work.

Following the abandonment of Chaul by the Portuguese in 1740, the Marathas permitted the Franciscan Recollect missionaries to remain in possession of the Mother of God convent. Its church was the only one in the region of Chaul that remained functional throughout the departure of the Portuguese and the transfer of sovereignty to the new Indian power. Soon after, the Franciscan missionaries built a new church in Korlai, where a small Christian Indian community still lives today.

The Portuguese recognised early on the strategic value of the steep promontory in front of Chaul on the opposite bank of the Kundalika River. During the 1520s they built a small tower on the ridge meant for observation and smoke-signalling (Fig. 11). This defensive device was abandoned in the second half of the sixteenth century, as the Ahmedanagar Sultanate and the Portuguese agreed on de-militarizing the promontory. However, in 1593 the Sultanate built an extensive fortification along the ridge. This structure was conquered by the Portuguese in the following year. The fortification was adapted and extended (Fig. 12), as Portuguese converted part of the population of the nearby village of Korlai, building the parish church of Our Lady of the Sea ('Nossa Senhora do Mar') at the close of the sixteenth century. Inside the fortification, a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Good Journey ('Nossa Senhora da Boa Viagem') was also built to cater to the garrison (Fig. 13).

Korlai ('Morro de Chaul')

13

figure 11

figure 12

32. Sidh Losa Mendiratta, *Dispositivos do Sistema Defensivo da Província do Norte do Estado da Índia, 1521-1739*, PhD thesis (University of Coimbra, 2012), 401-24.

figure 13

The Portuguese attached great strategic value to the Morro de Chaul, especially from the beginning of the Maratha threat in the mid-1600s. A raid by a small party in 1646, probably commanded by the then teenager and future Maratha King Shivaji Bhonsale (1630-80), killed the fort's captain and carried away firearms and gunpowder (Fig. 14). The fortification benefited from various interventions and refurbishments until 1739, when Sambhaji Angre (ca. 1690-1742) attacked it. During that battle, the Portuguese garrison destroyed the church of Our Lady of the Sea, as the besieging forces had temporarily occupied it.[32] Korlai fort was delivered to the Marathas in 1740, and the village's Christian population became isolated. The Recollect Franciscans from the Mother of God convent built a new church in the 1740s, dedicating it to Our Lady of Mount Carmel ('Nossa Senhora do Carmo'), and this church still stands at the centre of a small Catholic community (Fig. 15).

figure 14

figure 15

Figure 1 Ruins of the Dominican convent and church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, chancel and nave area, Lower Chaul / Revdanda, built ca. 1550-1569, rebuilt 1571- ca. 1585 (photo by Sidh Losa Mendiratta, 2009).

Figure 2 Ruins of the Franciscan convent and church of St Barbara, church tower over the transept area Lower Chaul / Revdanda, built ca. 1560-1570 (photo by Sidh Losa Mendiratta, 2010).

Figure 3 Ruins of bulwarked wall, western face, Lower Chaul / Revdanda, built 1571- ca.1590 (photo by Sidh Losa Mendiratta, 2009).

Figure 4 Map of Chaul and region, detail of Upper Chaul, 1777 (Plan du port de Chaul... / levé par François Warnet, 1777. Département Cartes et plans, GE SH 18 PF 207, DIV 7 P 8 D, Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

Figure 5 Ruins of the Hammam Khana baths, Upper Chaul, built seventeenth century (photo by Saurabh Malpani, 2010).

Figure 6 Map of Chaul, detail of Upper Chaul, ca. 1736, ([Anon], Iconografia, d-370-v, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa).

Figure 7 Rameshwar Temple, schematic ground plan, Upper Chaul, ca. 1623 (Pietro della Valle, 1623, pub. in Della Valle, P. 1843. Viaggi di Pietro Della Valle, vol. II. Brighton: G. Gancia, 793).

Figure 8 Muslim Mausoleum, Bhavale Talav, Upper Chaul, built sixteenth century (photo by Alpish Patel, 2018).

Figure 9 Upper Chaul and the Field of St Sebastian, 1634-1635, view associated with Pedro Barreto de Resende, detail (António Bocarro and Pedro Barreto de Resende, Livro das plantas de todas as fortalezas, cidades e povoaçoens do Estado da Índia Oriental, 1634-1635, Cod. CXV 2-1, Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Distrital de Évora, Évora).

Figure 10 Map of Chaul, detail of the Field of St Sebastian, ca. 1736, ([Anon], Iconografia, d-370-v, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa).

Figure 11 Ruins of the Korlai Fort, Korlai, built 1592-1594, rebuilt during the seventeenth century (photo by Sidh Losa Mendiratta, 2010).

Figure 12 Korlai Fort, 1634-1635, view associated with Pedro Barreto de Resende, detail (António Bocarro and Pedro Barreto de Resende, Livro das plantas de todas as fortalezas, cidades e povoaçoens do Estado da Índia Oriental, 1634-1635, Cod. CXV 2-1, Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Distrital de Évora, Évora).
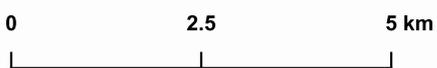
Figure 13 Ruins of the chapel of O. L. of the of the Good Journey, Korlai Fort, Korlai, built seventeenth century (photo by Sidh Losa Mendiratta, 2010).

Figure 14 Tombstone, Korlai Fort, Korlai, seventeenth century (photo by Sidh Losa Mendiratta, 2009).

Figure 15 Church of O. L. of Mount Carmel, Korlai, built ca. 1745 (photo by Sidh Losa Mendiratta, 2007).
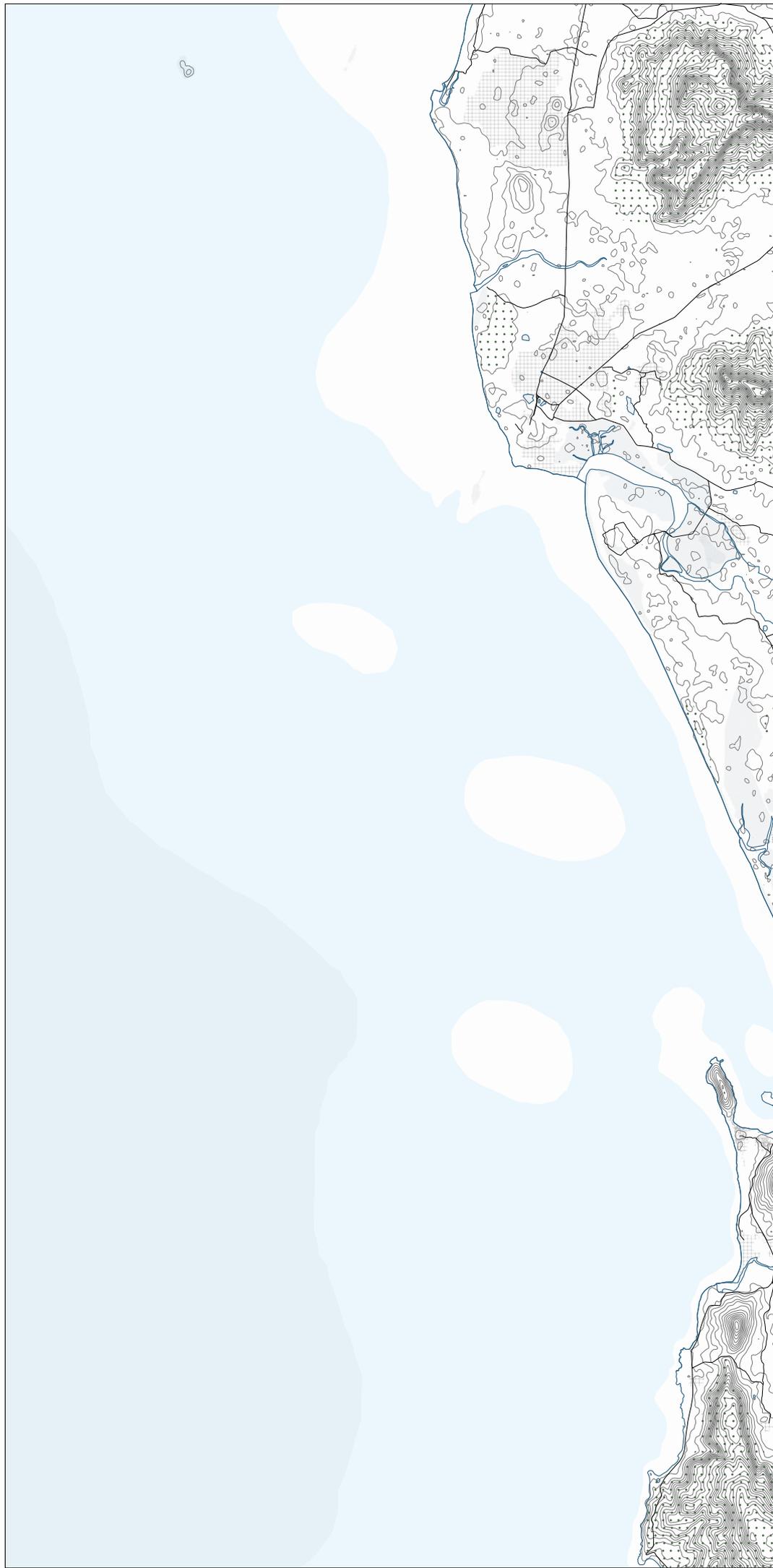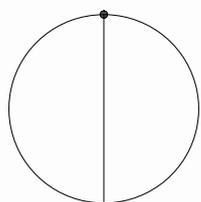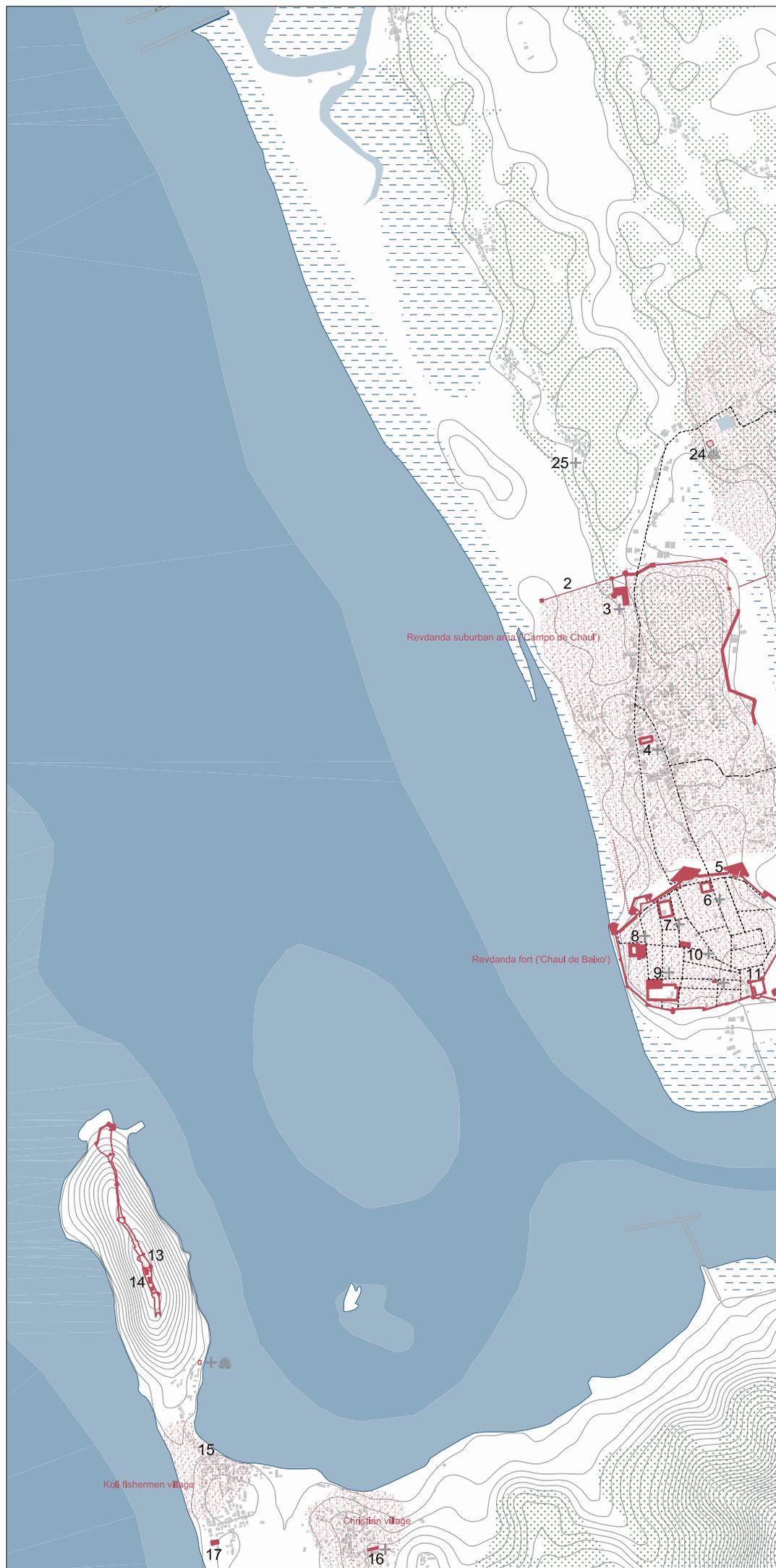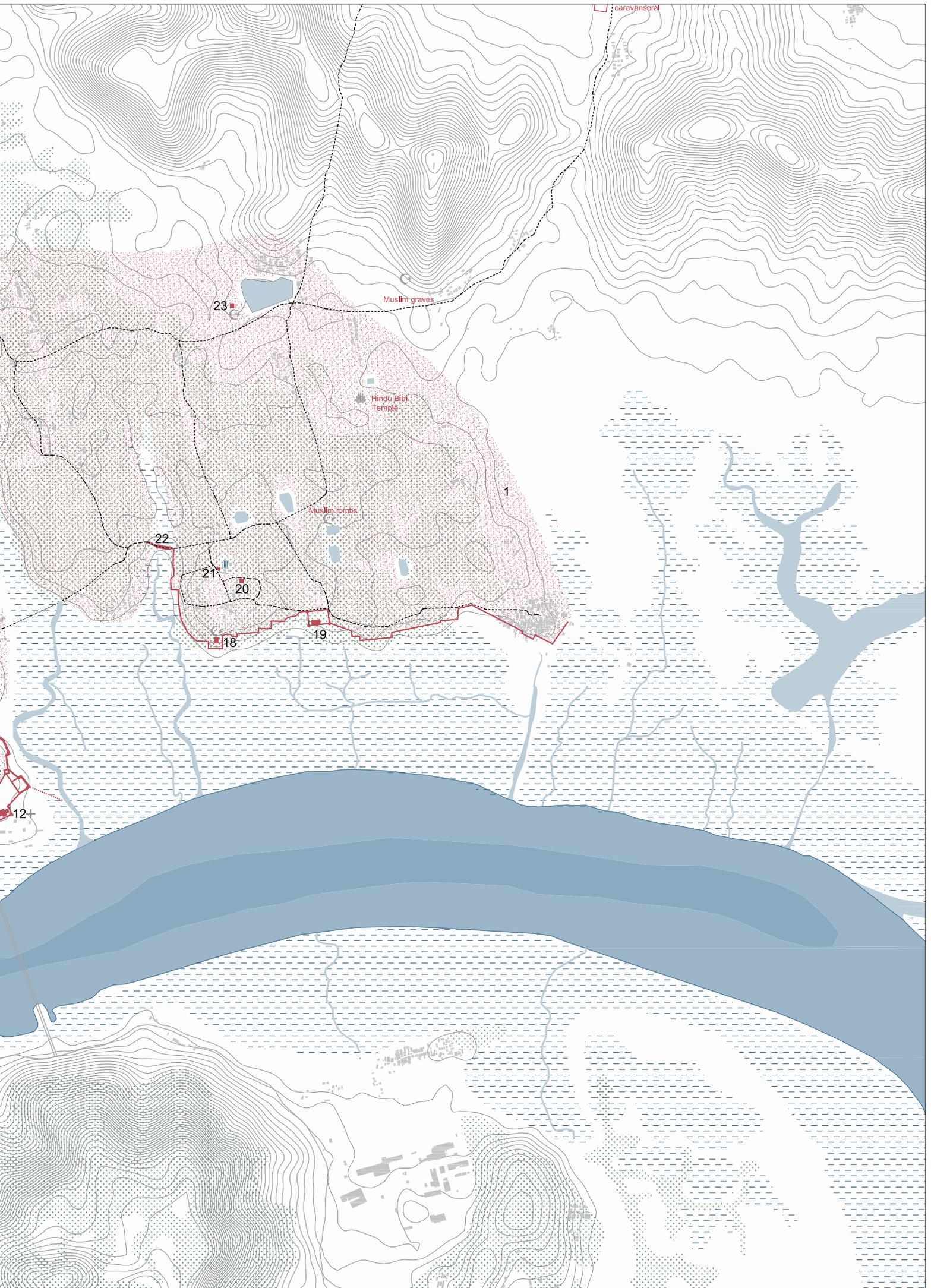
1. Islamic city
2. Campo de Chaul fortification
3. Madre de Deus Franciscan fortified convent
4. Church of São Sebastião
5. City walls
6. Jesuit convent
7. Augustinian convent
8. Franciscan convent of Santa Barbara
9. Dominican convent of Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe
10. Misericordia
11. Fort (1521-23)
12. Church
13. Fort
14. Korlai fort
15. Morro
16. Nossa Senhora do Carmo
17. Nossa Senhora da Boa Viagem church
18. Principal Masjid
19. House of the Thandar / Dewan
20. Hamam Khana Baths
21. Pir Sayyad Ahmad Dargah
22. Bridge
23. Bhavale Masjid or Dargah
24. Rameshwar Temple
25. São João Batista church

sea water

marshy area

water tanks

woods

urban and suburban areas

+   Christian place of worship

☪   Muslim place of worship

卍   Hindu place of worship

0   0.5   1km

Revdanda suburban area ('Campo de Chaul')

Revdanda fort ('Chaul de Baixo')

Koli fishermen village

Christian village

caravanseral

Muslim graves

23

Hindu Bibi
Temple

1

Muslim tombs

22

21

20

18   19

12

descriptions of Chaul.

— various authors

20

We arrived in Chaul on the twenty-eight of the said month [of December 1597] with fair weather. […] Up this River of Chaul about half a 'league', on the same side as our town, is the settlement of the moors our neighbours, which is called Upper Chaul. In this settlement live also many gentoos, almost all merchants and artisans of different arts, namely of all kind of quilts, of turned writing boxes, beds, and other pieces, and turned trinkets, weavers of fine and prime silks. Here one can find rich things, an infinity of very curious crystal trinkets, ivory, turtle shell, mother-of-pearl, bloodstones and milkstones, some of which are of great approval, and many other sorts of merchandise: and therefore Upper Chaul is a perpetual fair, where one can find almost all things of silk, cloth, and trinkets that from India come to Portugal

"Etiópia Oriental" Fr. João dos Santos, 1608 (ed. de 1891)
[p. 318]

Fr. João dos Santos

Today afternoon, after writing letters, the Reverend Priests the Dominican Visitor Fr. Gonçalo da Madre de Deos, and Fr. Hacinto de Santa Prisca came to see me (with whom I had met the day before at sea). The Fr. Prior of São Domingos did me the same courtesy; when finished, I went for a walk to the celebrated Field of Chaul, and passing abreast our Convent [of the Mother of God] I knelt to pray to the Mother of God, and then continued until the Large Field, which is that of São João, if the Small one is that of São Sebastião, and at the fort of Ganganim I turned back around, returning to the College [of the Jesuits].

"Itinerario do M. R. P. Fr. Tistão da Cunha, Religioso de S. Francisco", ca. 1695, Ms. ALC 391. BNP
[Fl. 4]

Fr. Tistão da Cunha

21

Judge Domingos Dourado de Oliveira

In the city of Chaul there are five convents, but each one of them with a limited number of Clergymen, and in all of them there will be between twenty-five and thirty, but with such little occupation, that they don't even have choir singing […]; beyond the [city's] walls at a distance of a stone shot there are several streets of gentoos of sundry occupations and different trades, and this place is the famed Field of Chaul, and almost every day one can see here those same Clergymen, if not all then most of them, some buying curiosities, others ordering them, and some just buying candles, and all of them so forgetful of their obligation to preach the faith […] And from this place distant a musket shot (as the infidel's lands are not further away) are several pagodas with monkeys, and other monsters of stone as Gods, and in them many Yogis so penitent that is causes horror to see them, who are continuously teaching, and preaching the false dogmas of the gentoos, and almost everyday the gentoo residents of the Field of Chaul go to listen and to learn that false doctrine.

Letter by Judge Domingos Dourado de Oliveira dated Goa, 19 January 1703 pub. in Archivo Portuguez Oriental, Fascículo 6, Supplementos 1 & 2, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1992 [p. 163.]

Anonymous

Moreover, this Field of Chaul has 150 Bandarins [Bhandaris] for its defence, with their guns, who don't have quarters assigned to them in the Factory because they were favoured with the rent of the the Plate ('Chapa') of the Wine that this city has, and it is worth 450 xerafins, and they are bound to be ready for service to the Crown.

"Mapa Geral das Fortalezas e Cidades…" (1736). Ms. 456, BNP [Fl. 40]

The ancient emporium of Chaul was a crossroads of cultures, religions and spatial traditions, and the Portuguese presence, from 1521 to 1740, adds a significant layer to the region's history. During that period, the 'twin' cities of Upper and Lower Chaul and their suburban areas formed a vibrant cultural landscape, with diverse building technologies and architectural expressions.