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In this volume in the *New Cambridge History of India*, Dr Stewart Gordon presents the first recent comprehensive history of one of the most colorful and least understood kingdoms of India: the Maratha polity. The kingdom was founded by Shivaji in the mid-seventeenth century and spread across much of India during the following century. It was subsequently conquered by the British in the nineteenth century, but none the less provided the basis for the formation of many princely states.

Since independence a huge mass of administrative documents of the Maratha polity and many important family papers have become available to scholars. Stewart Gordon draws on this material to explore the origin of the Marathas in the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan, their emergence as elite families, patterns of loyalty, and strategies for maintaining legitimacy. He traces how the Maratha armies developed from bands of lightly armed cavalry to European-style infantry and artillery and assesses the economics that funded the polity, especially taxation and credit. Finally, the author considers the legacy of the Maratha polity: the profound effects it had upon revenue administration, law, education, trade patterns, migration, and the economic and social make-up of Central India, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.

In this book, Stewart Gordon presents a picture of everyday life in the Maratha polity as well as an important example of the dynamics of kingdoms during this period. *The Marathas 1600-1818* will be widely read by students and specialists of Indian, military, and colonial history as well as by anthropologists.

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY
OF INDIA

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THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF INDIA

General editor GORDON JOHNSON

Director, Centre of South Asian Studies, University of
Cambridge, and Fellow of Selwyn College

Associate editors C. A. BAYLY

Professor of Modern Indian History, University of
Cambridge, and Fellow of St Catharine's College

and JOHN F. RICHARDS

Professor of History, Duke University

Although the original *Cambridge History of India*, published between 1922 and 1937, did much to formulate a chronology for Indian history and describe the administrative structures of government in India, it has inevitably been overtaken by the mass of new research published over the last fifty years.

Designed to take full account of recent scholarship and changing conceptions of South Asia's historical development, *The New Cambridge History of India* will be published as a series of short, self-contained volumes, each dealing with a separate theme and written by a single person, within an overall four-part structure. As before, each will conclude with a substantial bibliographical essay designed to lead non-specialists further into the literature.

The four parts are as follows:

- I The Mughals and their Contemporaries.
- II Indian States and the Transition to Colonialism.
- III The Indian Empire and the Beginnings of Modern Society.
- IV The Evolution of Contemporary South Asia.

A list of individual titles already published and in preparation will be found at the end of the volume.

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II · 4

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CONTENTS

<i>List of maps</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>General editor's preface</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>Glossary</i>	xii
Introduction: historiography and bibliography	1
1 The geopolitics of Maharashtra	10
2 Marathas and the Deccan sultanates	37
3 Shivaji (1630–80) and the Maratha polity	59
4 Family responses to invasion (1680–1719)	91
5 Baji Rao I's northern expansion (1720–1740)	114
6 Conquest to administration (1740–1760)	132
7 Centripetal forces (1760–1803)	154
Epilogue (1803–1818)	175
Conclusions	178
<i>Index</i>	196

MAPS

1	Maharashtra of the seventeenth century showing the main roads and towns	<i>page</i> 11
2	Political and military situation of the northern Deccan c. 1615–20	43
3	The Karnatak region	48
4	Main roads and forts of the Pune region c. 1660	72
5	Aurangzeb's campaign against the Maratha hill forts, 1700–07	102
6	Provinces of the Mughal Empire north of the Deccan c. 1720	115
7	Burhanpur, Khandesh, and Malwa c. 1750	126
8	Rajasthan, Agra, and Awadh c. 1740–60	136
9	India in 1798	170

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The New Cambridge History of India covers the period from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In some respects it marks a radical change in the style of Cambridge Histories, but in others the editors feel that they are working firmly within an established academic tradition.

During the summer of 1896, F.W. Maitland and Lord Acton between them evolved the idea of a comprehensive modern history. By the end of the year the Syndics of the University Press had committed themselves to the *Cambridge Modern History*, and Lord Acton had been put in charge of it. It was hoped that publication would begin in 1899 and be completed by 1904, but the first volume in fact came out in 1902 and the last in 1910, with additional volumes of tables and maps in 1911 and 1912.

The *History* was a great success, and it was followed by a whole series of distinctive Cambridge Histories covering English Literature, the Ancient World, India, British Foreign Policy, Economic History, Medieval History, the British Empire, Africa, China and Latin America; and even now other new series are being prepared. Indeed, the various Histories have given the Press notable strength in the publication of general reference books in the arts and social sciences.

What has made the Cambridge Histories so distinctive is that they have never been simply dictionaries or encyclopedias. The Histories have, in H. A. L. Fisher's words, always been 'written by an army of specialists concentrating the latest results of special study'. Yet as Acton agreed with the Syndics in 1896, they have not been mere compilations of existing material but original works. Undoubtedly many of the Histories are uneven in quality, some have become out of date very rapidly, but their virtue has been that they have consistently done more than simply record an existing state of knowledge: they have tended to focus interest on research and they have provided a massive stimulus to further work. This has made their publication doubly worthwhile and has distinguished them intellectually from

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

other sorts of reference book. The editors of the *New Cambridge History of India* have acknowledged this in their work.

The original *Cambridge History of India* was published between 1922 and 1937. It was planned in six volumes, but of these, volume 2 dealing with the period between the first century AD and the Muslim invasion of India never appeared. Some of the material is still of value, but in many respects it is now out of date. The last fifty years have seen a great deal of new research on India, and a striking feature of recent work has been to cast doubt on the validity of the quite arbitrary chronological and categorical way in which Indian history has been conventionally divided.

The editors decided that it would not be academically desirable to prepare a new *History of India* using the traditional format. The selective nature of research on Indian history over the past half-century would doom such a project from the start and the whole of Indian history would not be covered in an even or comprehensive manner. They concluded that the best scheme would be to have a *History* divided into four overlapping chronological volumes, each containing about eight short books on individual themes or subjects. Although in extent the work will therefore be equivalent to a dozen massive tomes of the traditional sort, in form the *New Cambridge History of India* will appear as a shelf full of separate but complementary parts. Accordingly, the main divisions are between I. *The Mughals and their Contemporaries*, II. *Indian States and the Transition to Colonialism*, III. *The Indian Empire and the Beginnings of Modern Society*, and IV. *The Evolution of Contemporary South Asia*.

Just as the books within these volumes are complementary so too do they intersect with each other, both thematically and chronologically. As the books appear they are intended to give a view of the subject as it now stands and to act as a stimulus to further research. We do not expect the *New Cambridge History of India* to be the last word on the subject but an essential voice in the continuing discussion about it.

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GLOSSARY

Afagis	first generation immigrants from Arabia or Central Asia
Ahir	armed lineages, located in north-eastern Malwa
babti	from the Persian, a portion or share of the government revenue from a district; the actual fraction varied from 16 percent to 22 percent
bakhar	an indigenous history or memoir
bargir	cavalryman riding a horse belonging to his leader; later, refers to light cavalry generally
bargir-giri	a style of warfare based on light cavalry which emphasized mobility rather than frontal attack in a plains battle
bhakti	fervent popular Hindu faith expressed in vernacular songs, often associated with Krishna
Bhandari	a Maharashtrian caste, which originally prepared liquor from coconut trees
Bhil	'tribal' hunters and gatherers located across a broad band of Rajasthan, Madya Pradesh, and Maharashtra
bigar	a tax payable in local labor
bigha	unit of land measure, typically 400 square rods, but the size of the rod varied from district to district
chaudhri	in areas north of Maharashtra, the head of an elite family controlling village and pargana rights in a local area
chauth	the claim to one-quarter of the government's share of the revenue
C.K.P.	Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu, a non-Brahmin writer caste
daftar	a compilation of documents, often from one family or one official
Dakhni	a language which evolved mainly in the Muslim courts of the Deccan with elements of Arabic, Persian, North Indian Urdu, and the indigenous Deccan languages; also refers to Muslims born in India
dakshina	the distribution of presents to Brahmins
darbar	a formal audience
Deccan	'South', generally refers to the area south of the border of a kingdom based in North India
dehezada	detailed register of the villages and landholdings in a pargana
Desh	the plateau area of Maharashtra which is located east of the Ghats

GLOSSARY

Deshasta	a group or person indigenous to the Desh of Maharashtra
deshmukh	head of an armed elite family in control of a pargana
Deshpande	records keeper for a pargana
Dhangar	shepherd
diwan	the head of the king's administration, usually the highest civilian office in the kingdom
faraskhana	a police office
Ghats	the western mountains which parallel the coast 30–50 miles inland; term used for steps leading down to a river or tank, often constructed as an act of religious merit
havildar	in Bijapuri usage, a government-appointed civilian/military administrator over several parganas; more generally, a leader of a troop of cavalry
hon	a gold coin
hundi	a check, payable at sight or in a specified time in a distant city
inam	hereditary grant for special services or merit
istawa	a stepwise increasing revenue settlement commonly used in recovery from natural disaster or devastation
jagir	a grant for the maintenance of troops
Jat	largest cultivating caste in much of North India, formed into lineages which competed for control of the Delhi–Agra–Gwalior area
kamavisdar	Maratha local administrator; his area was usually several parganas
Konkan	coastal plain, below the Western Ghats
Kshatriya	one of the four large Vedic categories of peoples; responsible for fighting in wartime and ruling in peacetime
Kulkarni	village records keeper
kumkum	ground color, especially used for the forehead mark
Kunbi	cultivator
Lohar	ironworker
mahal	from a simple term for 'house', the administrative use came to mean a revenue district as small as a single village or as large as a pargana
mansab	Mughal grant of revenue for maintenance of a specified number of troops
Marathi	Sanskrit-based language of the current state of Maharashtra
mirasdar	an owner of village agricultural land
mokasa	an assigned portion of the government's share of the revenue
muqqadam	village headman
muzumdar	general term for records keeper
nayak	armed elite families in South India; usually their original service had been with Vijaynagar
nazar	formal gift to a superior, often in return for the grant of rights to revenue

GLOSSARY

palki	a sedan-chair for travelling
pargana	a long-standing geographically compact unit of 20–100 villages
patil	village headman
peshwa	the head of the central government records keepers; later the head of the Maratha polity
peth	a sector or district of a city usually centered on a market
pindaris	irregular troops attached to the Maratha armies used mainly for plunder
pir	a Muslim saint
Prabhu	a non-Brahmin writer caste
pundit	a Brahmin scholar
qazi	Muslim judge, whose decisions were based on Sharia law
Rajput	a broad spectrum of men in military service in North India which slowly evolved into a caste
rasad	the advance paid by a kamavisdar to the Maratha government which was recovered from the revenues of his area; typically, one-third to one-half of yearly estimated revenue
Rohilla	immigrant Afghans who had settled mainly in an area east of Delhi and formed one of the main competing groups in the second half of the eighteenth century
sanad	a contract, specifying rights and responsibilities
sannyasi	Hindu holy man who has renounced the world
saranjam	non-hereditary grant for maintenance of troops
sardar	broad term for noble or noble family
sardeshmukh	a high position of authority over a group of deshmukhs
sardeshmukhi	the claim to one-tenth of the government's share of the revenue, based on a position as sardeshmukh or head of the deshmukhs, generally a royal right
sarkar	a Mughal administrative division, smaller than a subah, and usually composed of several parganas; also, a general term meaning government
sarnobat	a Persian term meaning the leader of a band
silahdar	a Persian term meaning a cavalryman who enlisted with his own horse and equipment
subah	A large Mughal administrative unit, typically dozens of parganas
subahdar	the administrative and military head of a province
Sutar	carpenter
swaraj	independent rule, that is, not dependent for legitimacy on a sanad from any other power
tacavi	government loans at low rates for building or rebuilding local infrastructure
Thakar	a caste centered in Northern Konkan, also a title of respect given to a leader
upari	a landless laborer, often seeking refuge from some disturbance in his home village

GLOSSARY

vazier	in Muslim sultanates of the Deccan, the highest official after the sultan
vritti	a long-standing grant for religious service or merit
watan	the home, core rights forming the basis of a family's status and wealth
zamindar	a broad Mughal term covering a wide variety of local armed landed elites