Chambā, a western-Himalayan district in Himachal Pradesh bordering Jammu and Kashmir in the north-west and Panjāb in south-west (Maps 1 and 1.1), has acquired the centre-stage as it furnishes a rich source material in terms of inscriptions and copper plate grants beginning from the early eighth century CE. Though Cunningham was the first to draw attention towards these epigraphs,¹ Vogel² and Chhabra³ published 140 of these, divided into two chronological phases. Along with epigraphs, the focus has been on the royal genealogy-vaṃśāvali, which was compiled (written) in the first half of the seventeenth century. In a sense, the documents produced in this study add to the source base through which the history of Chambā is constructed. Intricacies involved in contextualising the history of Chambā can be comprehended better if the severity of terrain and ecology (Maps 1.2 & 1.3) are appre-ciated.⁴ Chambā was divided into five administrative units—Bhramaur, Chambā, Churah, Pāngī, and Bhaṭṭiyāt—each corresponding to an autonomous territory, marked by an exclusive valley, flanked by natural boundaries (Map 1.2). The greater Himalayan range surrounded the Chambā territorial state on the north-west, and the outer Himalayas or Dhauladhāra range from south-east to south-west.

In between ran the Pīr-Pañjāl range from north-west to south-east, cutting the state into a rough half. The average valley table rested on the elevation of 1000–3000 metres, surrounded by peaks higher than 5500 metres. The terrain of the valley was rugged, dotted with hillocks and

---

¹ Alexander Cunningham, Archaeological Survey Reports, 1902–03, pp. 252–64.
² J. Ph. Vogel, Antiquities of Chambā State, Part I, Memoir of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 36.
³ B. Ch. Chhabra, Antiquities of Chambā State, Part II, Memoir of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 72.
Map 1.1  Physiography of the Western Himalayas