



Interest in the eastern Mediterranean is further illustrated by a diagram of the ‘Bays of Byzantium’, which opens a navigational guide to twenty-eight ports of the Aegean Sea. This guide to the Aegean begins very near the bay on the Turkish coast (opposite the island of Rhodes) where in the 1970s a ship-wreck was discovered dating to about 1025, the time of the composition of the *Book of Curiosities*. The ship came from Egypt, as did almost certainly the author of the *Book of Curiosities*. This recently discovered manuscript corroborates information gained from the shipwreck and provides new information on the patterns of Arab trade in the waters of the eastern Mediterranean, for the most part under Byzantine control in the early eleventh century.

The Mediterranean, however, was not the only concern of the author of the *Book of Curiosities*. His map of the Indian Ocean (Figure 47) is also oval in shape and combines the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the waters off the east coast of Africa. It is possible that the author was

Figure 46 above. The Mediterranean Sea from the *Book of Curiosities* compiled about 1020–1050. MS. Arab. c. 90, fols 31b–32a (12th–13th cent.).