

# **INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF SINDH FROM ITS PORT BARBARICON (BANBHORE) (200 BC TO 200 AD)**

BY  
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This period covers the rule of Bactrian Greeks, Scythians, Parthians and Kushans in Sindh, rest of the present Pakistan and parts of India.

The origins of the development of European trade in the Sindh and trade routes under notice go back to later part of the sixth century BC, and it involved continuous efforts over next seven centuries.

- (a) After Darius-I's conquest of Gandhara and Sindhu, admiral Skylax (a Greek of Caryanda), made exploratory voyage down the Kabul and the Indus from Kaspapyrus or Kasyabapura (Peshawar) to the Sindh coast and thence along the Arabian coast to the Red Sea and Egypt in 518 BC, completing the journey in 2 1/2 years and returning to Iran in 514 BC. The voyage was meant to connect the South Asia with Egypt. Darius-I also restored Necho-II's canal connecting the Nile with the Red Sea. Thus he made Egypt and not Mesopotamia the main line of communication between the Indian and the Mediterranean Oceans. Darius built 'the Royal Road' connecting various cities of the empire. It ran the distance of 1677 well-garrisoned miles from Euphesus to Susa. A much longer route than this was from Babylon to Ecbatans and from thence to Kabul, which was already connected with Peshawar. The great voyage of Skylax connected Peshawar with the Red Sea and Egypt, via the Indus and the Arabian Sea.

The earlier Egyptian navigation under Pharaohs had purely utilitarian and limited objectives were in no way similar to the great historical voyages, like one by Skylax, for general exploration. Egyptians had never tried to establish regular contact with Mesopotamia or the Indus valley. It was only during the Hellenistic period of the Ptolemy's that Egypt entered into voyages for exploration and large scale trade.

As against the Egyptians, the Sumerians (their period of greatness: 2850-1900 BC), navigated the Persian Gulf, at the latest under Sargon-I (2637-2582 BC). His successor Naram-Sin (2557-2520 BC), sent maritime expedition against countries called Dilman (Bahrein), Magan (Iranian Makran) or possibly Oman) and Melukhkha or Meluhha, which now has been confirmed as Sindh. Trade of Ur and Kish continued with Magan and Melukhkha and also two other countries further ahead called Gubi and Niduk-ki. These may well have been Kutch and Kathiawar, including the north-western part of Gujarat with Lothal as the port.

Ninaean (Western part of Arabian Peninsula) kingdom (1200-650 BC) and Sabaens (650-155 BC) of South Arabia, re-exported incense as well as spices of the South Asia to other countries. It is certain that their contacts with the South Asia must have been mainly through Sindh ports and only some time via Kutch, Kathiawar and north-western Gujarat but never further South beyond Lothal.

- (b) Ptolemy-II Philadelphus (285-246 BC) built a large port of Arsinoe (Suez) and reopened Necho's Canal. To link Alexandria with the Red Sea, he built a second port, Berenice, on the Red Sea. As the land route of 258 miles from Berenice to Coptos on the Nile took eleven days, he built a third port, Myos Hormos, in 274 BC, eighty miles north of Berenice, to cut down the distance to 180 miles and the journey to five days. Initially, the main object of opening this route was to acquire elephants, the tanks of Ancients, to oppose the Indian elephants of Seleucus.

The trade relations of the South Asia with Egypt were fully established during this period. Athenaeus reports of women, hunting dogs, cows and spices etc., from the South Asia carried on camels in a procession of this king, and also of the king's yacht having a saloon lined with stone from the South Asia. All these must have gone from Sindh's port Barbaricon to Myos Hormos, which had become an important port for the eastern trade.

- (c) Ptolemy-III Euergetes (246-221 BC) built the port of Adulis on the Red Sea.
- (d) Under Ptolemy- VII Euergetes-II (146-117 BC), a ship got wrecked in the Red sea and one of the survivors, a person from the South Asia, offered the geographer Eudoxus to guide him to that country. Eudoxus came to the South Asia (most probably Sindh) in 119 BC. He was the first navigator after Skylax to make a direct maritime communication between Sindh and Egypt. This was followed by similar communications on a considerable scale for about a century, when Romans on their arrival in Egypt in 30 BC saw the direct sea route with Sindh fully established. In the mean-time the land route between the South Asia, Syria and Egypt had deteriorated with the rise of Parthia, especially after Antiochus the Great's final bid and failure to suppress them in 206 BC. The inroads of Scythians and Yu-Ghis in Bactria and Anarchy in Syria further curtailed facilities of land-routes. This brought sea trade into frequent use and lent it great importance. The leading port then used for most of exports from the South-Asia was Barbaricon. The main reason which favored the growth of trade with the South Asia, besides Hippalus' discovery of trade winds, was the rise of the Roman Empire, which firstly gave security to trade routes and secondly created heavy demand for the luxury goods, resulting into unprecedented increase in the volume of trade.
- (e) During Ptolemy-VII Soter-II's rule (117-81 BC), his tutor Agatharchides wrote a geography (120-110 BC), which states that merchants of India (Sindh) brought their cargo to Aden (Arabia Eudaemon) and Muza (Mocha) on the Arabian Coast, wherefrom Egyptian merchants took it to Egypt via the Red Sea. This was written before the voyage of Eudoxus (120-100 BC).

- (f) Silk moth, a native of Bengai and Assam, reached Northern China, where the Chinese became the first successful nation to unravel a single unbroken thread from its cocoon and developed it into commercially economical and successful proposition. Since direct trade route between China and the West evolved over several centuries, the Indus route became the shortest available passage for commerce.

After Seleucus Nicator's treaty with Chandra-Gupta Maurya, Nicator's men made a few sea voyages to South Asia (Sindh and Gujarat ports), but attacks on them by un-subjugated people of the Persian gulf, specially the inhabitants of Gerrah, quickly discouraged further attempts. Seleucids had to keep a fleet in the gulf to protect the trade. Patrodes, an officer of Seleucus-I and Antiochus-I (312-250 BC – for both) sailed to the Indian seas (Sindh and probably Gujarat). Eratosthenes acquired knowledge of the South Asia from him. Antiochus III and Atiochus IV took punitive expeditions against Gerrah in 205 and 165 BC, respectively. Soon Parthians (Iranians from Caspian sea shores) dominated Iran and the Persian Gulf and created a Parthian wall between the Eastern and the Western trade. Seleucids, maintained a major trading net-work across the Persian Plateau, from Seleucia, through Exbata and Merv to Bactria, from where the route went to Peshawar via Kabul, which were under Mauryan control. For Seleucids, the most profitable trade route could have been from Barbaricon, along the Persian Gulf and Euphrates to the Northern Syria, but this route is not recorded due to fragmentary accounts of their history.

Even when Bactria became independent (250-139 BC), it remained the junction of routes radiating from it to China, Siberia, the Central Asia, Persia and the new trading centre of the South Asia Taxila, the capital of Indo-Greek Bactrians. Parthains who controlled most of Persia by 145 BC, had under Tiridates (247-212 BC), deliberately shifted their capital to hecatempylas on caravan route from Seleucia to Bactria.

Kushans abolished Hindu Kush route and maintained an over-land route between the present Pakistan and the Roman Empire (then extending to Asia Minor), across the Caspian Sea, to the east of which extended their own border, and the western shores of the same sea were touched by the Roman Empire.

Khotan in Sinkinag became the meeting place of four civilizations-Greek, Iranina, Chinese and Indian-in the first century AD and helped in trade, especially of the Chinese silk, to Rome. The silk came to Barbaricon (probably Banbhore) on the Indus near the sea coast via Kashgar and Chitral and from there by flat bottom boats down the Indus to Barbaricon. This route from Kashghar to Barbaricon is termed as the Indus silk route.

Discovery of the trade winds by Hippalus in about 40 AD (some say 20 BC, and according to Hourani 90 BC) helped direct shipping from the Red Sea to the Indus ports. The trade winds were known to the Sindhians, Persians and Arabs at least a century earlier, but were kept a secret from the Graeco-Egyptians. However, the period from 2500 BC to 40 AD may be considered as the period of pre-trade-wind coastal sailing. Some very valuable records available on Sindh's trade with the west after the fall of

Cleopatra, the last of Ptolemys are Strabo, who wrote 'Geography' under Augustus (29 BC – 14 AD), in 23 AD, (2) Pliny the Elder, who wrote his Natural History under Nero, (3) Nespasian (54-79 AD), (4) Periplus of Erythraean sea (around 70-71AD), and (5) Ptolemy's Geography (140 AD), covering the period between 50 BC – 150 AD. Studies of these works by classical writers like Rawalinson, Charlesworth, Warmington, McCrindle, Belhelot and Schoff and excavations by many archaeologists have also identified the names of places on the trade routes then in use. Based on this information, a full account of Sindh's ancient trade can be developed. The route followed from Egypt was: by land on camels and through canals to Egyptian ports of Arsinoe (Suez), Myos Hormos (Abu Scha'ar) or Berenice, then by ships which came on the Somalian coast at Adulis and from there southwards to Muza (Mocha) on the Arabian coast, and thence to Acila or Cella or Ocelis, a watering place for ships. Making a turn around Babel Mandeb, ships reached the port of Eudaemon Arabia (Arabia Felix or Aden of today). In the early phases when trade winds were not known ships coasted along the Arabian Peninsula to the Persian gulf, touching Cape Syagrus (Ras Musandan or Ras Fortak), and then along the Makran coast to Barbaricon. The ships touched Sindh and Gujarat ports only a maximum trade was with Sindh. The Arabs, Persians, Sindhians and even traders from the Mediterranean knew about trade winds by mid-first century BC, but could not then made use of it as the route was controlled by Arabs and Somalian tradesmen and pirates. Hippalus, the Greek seaman who is credited to discovery of trade winds, in fact, had really very little to discover. The ships were already leaving Aden directly for Barbaricon, but not for Gujarat.

When the trade did develop it was to great advantage of Barbaricon. In words of Pliny five hundred and fifty million Sesterces worth was mostly paid in gold each year for the trade of the whole South Asia. In terms of volume it was trifling but being mostly luxury goods, cost wise it was large. By this time Alexandria, the emporium of the Eastern trade, had become a city of half million people. It reprocessed and exported these goods along with the Egyptian wheat to Rome.

From the knowledge available it could be assumed that the ships sailed to the South Asia by trade winds in phases:

- i. In the first phase, the latest about 50 BC to 50 AD, ships traveled directly from Syagros or Aden (Arabia Eudaemon) to Barbaricon on the Indus. The seamen were Arabs, Persians, Sindhians and Indians up to 40 AD, when Graeco-Egyptians also joined. At the end of this period the Seamen became more daring and started sailing direct to other ports of South Asia.
- ii. In the second phase, which started around 50-60 AD, they sailed directly to Sigerus (South of Broach) or Meliziara of Periplus and returned back.
- iii. In the third phase about 60-70 AD, ships left Ocelis or Aden direct for Muziris on the Malabar coast and took about forty days each way.

- iv. In the fourth phase, ships left the Coromandal coast direct for Malacca and returned back.

According to Periplus, goods were sent from Barbaricon at the mouth of Sindhus (Sindhu or Indus) to Minnagara (probably Patala or Bahmanabad which was held by Parthians then). The imports included figured linen (probably from Egypt), topaz, coral, storax, frankincense, glass vessels, silver and gold platen and a little wine. Exports from this port consisted of costus (a plant for perfume), bdellium (an aromatic gum) bycium (a cosmetic), nard (Nalada ointment), turquoise, lapis lazuli (from Badakhshan), seric skins (from China), cotton cloth, silk yarn (from China) and indigo.

At Barbaricon, Indian, Tibetan, Persian (Khorasanian) and Chinese goods could be obtained.

Even after the discovery of trade winds, the ships from the Red Sea did not travel direct to the Indian ports. Before the discovery of trade winds, ships from the Red Sea came to Eudaeman Arabia (Aden) and Cane, took the coast line touching Syagros, Moscha, crossed the Persian Gulf opposite Ras Musandan, then moved along the Iranian and Makran coast to Barbaricon. The Indians from places right up to Burma sent their goods to Barbaricon. A few Indian and Burmese ports worth the mention are: Barygaza, Calliena, Simylla (in Gujarat), Muziris, Carura, Bacare, Nekynda (on the Malabar Coast), Colochoi, Camara, Alosygni Palura on (Caromandal coast), Gange (in Bengal) and Temala in Burma.

By about 50 BC this route went into disuse. A new or the first phase of direct sailing from Aden had started. In this phase ships sailed directly from Aden or Cane into Barbaricon at the mouth of the Indus, in the summer (April to August), with the help of south westerly winds in these months, and sailed back from Barbaricon to the mouth of the Red Sea in the winter months (October to February). In this phase, trade from Sindh must have been highest from all time of the Ancient world. It took hardly 20 days to travel from Aden to Barbaricon. For at least a hundred years this was the route mostly used for the trade with the South Asia.

The second phase started between 50-60 AD, when ships sailed from the Red Sea direct to Barygaza in Gujarat. Barygaza became emporium of spice trade of South India. Spices were being brought there along the sea coast from the peninsular India. In this phase Barygaza also managed to export Chinese silk, which reached it from Kashgar via Taxila, Mathura and Ujjain. This route opened up as Kushans did not control the Lower Sindh and therefore tried to send silk via Oxus route, and most probably blocked the Indus Valley silk route to Barbaricon. This resulted in diversion of silk from Taxila to mathura and thence to Barygaza.

In the third phase which started around 70 AD, ships sailed from the Red Sea mouth, direct to south India and back. Barygaza lost considerable trade. During the fourth phase ships could leave south India (Caromandal coast) for Malacca and back, being guided by monsoon winds. But Barbaricon still exported the goods of the whole of the north

western South Asia right up to Delhi, along the rivers, whose combined waters the Indus was draining near Barbaricon to the sea. It also exported the Chinese, the Tibetan and the Central Asian goods as it was cheaper to transport them via the river Indus and sea than in caravans through long Transoxiana route.

From 200 BC to the middle of first century BC, Egypt was the leading importer and re-exporter of goods from Sindh. It was also the cultural centre of the world. Mainly due to statesmanship of Ptolemaic kings. Alexandria had become the centre of art, theoretical sciences, philosophy, literature, poetry and applied sciences (Hero's steam engine, pneumatic devices, automatic opening of doors and water clocks, etc., and parchment paper were developed there) and it continued to contribute to the development of sciences up to 250 AD. (The leading scientists produced by Alexandria were: Eratosthenes, Appollonius, Pergacus, a student of Euclid, Ctesibius, Aristarchus of Samothrace, Hipparchus of Bithynia, Claudius Ptolemy, Strabo, Galen, Dioscorides who used material of Alexandria library, and Diophantus). With the fall of Ptolemy in 30 BC, and the rise of Roman Empire, Alexandria became mainly the re-exporter of Asian goods. Most of Sindh's trade was by the sea, but land routes between Sindh and Persia, China and Central Asia were also operative.

**The routes with these countries in order of their importance were:**

- i. From Sindh via the Indus to Peshawar and from there by land to Kabul, Bactria, and Kashghar. From Kashghar, several roads went out to China. This was the most favored route of that time.
- ii. From Sindh via Multan and Gomal pass to Kabul and Bactira. This route was less preferred than the Khyber Pass, though it became very popular in the middle ages and gain in the modern times.

The Indus Valley silk route from China to Sindh ports, bifurcated from the main Transoxiana route at Kashghar and from there via Tashkurgan to Chitral, across 15,000 feet altitude of the Himalayan peaks, to Caspapyra (Peshawar) and then along the river Indus to the sea.

An alternative route was from Kashghar to Merv (Margus or Morgiana), and from Merv two routes came to Sindh, one via Bactria, Kabul, Khyber pass, Caspapyra and thence by the Indus; the other from Merv to Kandhar, Bolan pass, Sibi, Alore and then down the Indus.

- iii. From Upper Sindh (Alore) via Mula pass or Bolan Pass to Alexandropolia (Kandhar), wherefrom routes went to Bactira, Persepolis or Gulashkird. Persepolis was connected with Charax and Petra. Bactria was connected with Antiochia and Seleucia and the last with Antiochum on the Mediterranean. This route was not favored by the Greeks of Roman times, but preferred by Arabs of the middle ages.

- iv. From Sindh (Patala or Minnagara to Rhambacia (near Lasbella), Kiz (Kech near Turbat), Pur (in Iran), Gulashkird and Persepolis. This land route was not much used as it ran along the Makran coast, which was frequented by ships, and besides was water-less and was infested by loosely ruled Parthians. The route was as disastrous then as centuries later, yet it was occasionally used to avoid the Gulf pirates.

The Chinese themselves controlled the trade routes from Lanchow to Merv in the north and also from Lanchow to Pataliputra via Urasa through Tibet or from Chengtin to Pataliputra via Assam. The routes from China to the Bay of Bengal or Sopatma on Caromandal coast were also controlled by the Chinese, as they used their own ships.

However, routes from Merv to Peshawar, Kashghar to Peshawar via Bactria, and Khotan to Peshawar across Chitral hills along the river Indus and from Peshawar to Barbaricon, or Peshawar to Barygaza via Taxila and Madura were controlled by the merchants of the South Asia. Goods from Pataliputra were transported to Barygaza via Madura.

After the discovery of monsoon winds and direct routes from Aden to Barygaza in 50-60 AD, Barygaza became competitor of Barbaricon for the Chinese silk. The route used for diversion of silk was Caspapyra (Peshawar) to Taxila, Madura, Ozene (Ujjan) and Barygaza. Yet another Chinese silk route to Barygaza via Tibet was: Lhasa to Gongtok, Pataliputra (Palibothra), Madura, Ozene and Barygaza. Even for the spices of the South India as well as East Indies, the Barygazanas developed a land route from Pityandra on Caromandal coast to present Hyderabad (Deccan), Tagara, Paethana and Barygaza. These routes in time helped the Barygaza to get major portion of the export business.

The summer monsoons are less favorable for navigation in the Arabian sea and sailors used almost exclusively the winter one. The wood used for boats was teak and sheesham, as other woods are attacked by marine microbes, which bore through it and turn it into a sieve.

Roman subjects did not reside in Sindh or the South Asia nor did people of the South Asia live in Alexandria. Arabs were intermediaries in the first century BC. They sold goods from the South Asia to the Egyptians, Jews, Arabs, Syrians, Meds and Parthians did visit and live in Alexandria. Aden (Arabia Eudaemon) was the meeting place between Ptolemaic Greeks, Sindhians and Indians. The Sabaeans of the southern Arabia and Gerrhaeans of Persian Gulf, who were the intermediaries for the sea trade, had become very wealthy. Their activities were checked only for a short time by Ptolemy II and III (285-246 and 246-221 BC respectively).

The Arabians made full use of the sea and desert routes and helped the Africans to keep mostly Sindhians and occasional Indians off the Red Sea and to keep secret from the Greeks the use of monsoons. By 115 BC. Yemen (the South West Arabia) came under

the power of Humarifes, and the north-western corner of Arabia came under Nabataean Arabs. The latter with capital at Petra controlled silk route from China through Iran. The Scythians, who had at one time maintained garrisons along the silk route, blocked it both from China and the South Asia. Augustus (29 BC – 14 AD) was thus compelled to take steps to make trade with the South Asia easier, safer and profitable. In 25 BC armies were sent to subdue the hostile Arab tribes and destroy Aden, their market place.

After this expedition 120 Egyptian ships of 500 ton capacity each left for the East every year. All of them must have touched the Sindh port of Barbaricon as ships had to sail along the coast, all the way. The mariners were in constant fear of inhospitable Arabian coast and shoals in the Red Sea. They had to sail under armed guard and with the help of professional guides.

At the time of Pliny, independent traffic from Rome to the South Asia was fully developed, but Arabians and Axumites were not quite eliminated as the middle men.

By the time of Periplus, the southern Arabs were ruled by King Karibil, who controlled both Sabaites (Sabaeans) and Humerites and was in communication with Rom through embassies. This reduced the risks to trade. But the Arabians and Somalians jointly kept the merchants from Sindh and west coast of India off the Red Sea, and did not allow them to go farther than Ocelis. They could not keep Romans and Axumites off the Red Sea or Erythraean sea. From Barbaricon goods were carried to Minnagara (City of invaders) ruled by Parthian (Pahlava) princes. Since Kushans controlled the northern Sindh, Minnagara must have been in the Lower Sindh probably at or near Patala or Bahmanabad. Trans-shipment took place at Barbaricon in flat bottom boats to ply upstream of the river Indus. The Gulf of Cambay (Kutch, Kathiawar and the northern Gujarat) was ruled by Sakas whose capital was another Minnagara near Chitor. The dwindling of Barbaricon trade may have been due to Kushan and Parthian conflict in Sindh and stoppage of imports from the up-countries. Sakas of Kutch, Kathiawar, Malwa and northern Gujarat having taken advantage of it, got the products of the northern India, the Kushan countries, China and Tibet, by alternative routes to Barygaza. Advantage of monsoon winds then went to the Peninsular Indians who improved the local shipping. At the end of first century AD, silk route via Oxus was fully established by the Kushans. This also caused loss of business to Barbariconians.

At the end of the first century AD differences arose between the Chinese and the Kushans over the control of Sinkiang, and the Chinese General Pan Chao defeated a massive Kushan invasion in 90 AD. These political developments cut off the Indus Silk route across Chitral and trade of Barbaricon suffered. However in, the second century AD the Kushans reestablished the main silk route.

At the time of Agatharchides (110 BC), it was Sabaeans who controlled the trading with the west and not the Sindhians, whose port was the main exporter. The merchants from Sindh, Persia and Kirman (Carmania), met at Socotra (Dioscordia) off the Arabian and African coasts.

The distance from Aden or the mouth of Euphrates to Barygaza was double of that to Barbaricon, but southern Indian goods were cheaper at Barygaza, and so it usurped larger share of business. In the whole of the first and second centuries AD, the Greeks, Syrians, Jews, Axumites, Somalians and Arabians remained the middle men between Rome and the South Asia. The Arabians were residing both in Rome and the South Asia for business reasons.

During the rule of Trajan (98-117 AD) Pliny himself saw ships sailing to the South Asia from Charax and Apologus. Trajan, unable to advance on India, built a Red Sea fleet to control the passage to, and commerce with the South Asia in 117 AD. He sent ambassadors to the South Asia, presumably to Kushan Kings in 107 AD.

At the time of Claudius Ptolemy (140 AD), Patala (probably Minnagara) still existed, and also Barbaricon as Barbara, but the established mart was at Monoglosson.

In 180 AD Jews were trading at the mouth of Indus and had established a trading colony in Afghanistan. The trade with South Asia deteriorated in the beginning of the third century BC. The decline had started during the rule of Nero (died 68 AD) and it ceased entirely with the reign of Caracalla (217 AD). There was slight revival under Byzantines. The exports of Sindh and the South Asia between 68-217 AD were more in textiles and industrial products and less in luxury items. Items of export from the Sindh port of Barbaricon were: the Chinese and Tibetan hides and furs, muslins, perfumes, unguents, pearls, precious stones specially beryl, iron, raw skins, dyed skins of Chinese origin, rough skins with furs left on and woolen coats of north western South Asia. The redirection of trade via Barbaricon may be attributed to weakening of Kushans. The Tibetan furs belonged to mountain ounces (lynx) and snow leopards. Even Parthian furs came via Indus. Kashmir wool must also have been an item included in the exports. Indian Elephant was another item of export but most probably it went by land and not by the sea. Somelions and leopards (exhibited by the Roman kings Sulla and Pompey) were shipped from the South Asia. The tiger too was exported to Rome and so the breeds of Indian and Tibetan hounds, which were stripped. The humped cattle (*Bos Indicus*) was exported to Persia, Syria and Africa. It belonged to Southern Sindh, Kutch, Kathiawar, and Marwar. It must have been exported mostly by land. One-horned Rhinoceros, which existed in the river Indus up to 16<sup>th</sup> century, may have been exported to Rome and definitely not by land but by sea. Musk ('mushk') or perfume of deer from Gilgit, Tibet and north-western China was also exported from Barbaricon. Rhinoceros horns were taken to China by Romans in 166 AD. The latter were using it there as aphrodisiac until very recent times. Up to the reign of Ptolemy-II (246 BC), ivory was imported in Egypt from Africa but later on ivory from the South Asia too was imported. The Romans used Indian ivory from the beginning of their Empire. This ivory was exported by land, but substantial quantities were also shipped by sea and mostly from the Sindh port of Barbaricon up to 50 AD. They used ivory for furniture, table legs and etc. At the time of Pliny most of ivory was imported from the South Asia as African supplies had dwindled due to over-killing of elephants for many decades for ivory. 'Sanda' (a lizard or reptile), mostly found in Sindh, Arabia and Baluchistan, was used in Greek medicines and its fat was used instead of olive oil even for edible purposes. Even crocodiles from the South

Asia were exported for food and medicines. Oyster pearls were also exported. Oysters were found on the Sindh coast. The Romans paid for these pearls with amber, copper, lead, coral, and coined money of gold from the beginning of Christian Era. Oyster beds still exist near Karachi. Silk yarn was exported from Barbaricon in exchange for frankincense. Lac dye was an other item of export from Barbaricon.

The spices and aromatics were exported to the west from the South Asia by the Arabians for ages, possibly soon after domestication of the camel. Most of these spices were produced in South India and they must have been imported into Sindh for re-export on a large scale until about 60-70 AD. After this date the Romans carried out trade direct with South India. The spices exported were cinnamon, malabathrum oil, red, black and white pepper, oil of spikenard, costus, myrrh, gums, rhubarb and sugar. Of the spices, the source as well as various forms of Cinnamon, i.e., bark, leaves, oil and etc., was kept a secret by Arabians, Indians, Africans from the Greeks and the Romans. Spikenard, cactus (*Saussurea Lapa*) of Kashmir, northern Punjab, and Patalene (the lower Sindh), Myrrh (*B. pubescens*) an inferior kind probably from Sindh and Baluchistan hills, gums of various kinds from Afghanistan, Sindh and Baluchistan (*Pistacia Khinjuk* and *Pistacia Cabulica*), Indigo from Sindh (sent in the skins of camels, and Rhinoceroes), rhubarb, sugar, cotton linen, muslins, sheesham wood (from Sindh and Punjab), deodar of the Punjab, dry fruits (of Afghanistan and Baluchistan), cereals, namely rice, sorghum (Millets), and wheat etc., were exported from Barbaricon even after direct routes had been established with Barygaza and the peninsular India. The discovery of trade winds caused a fall in prices, as, firstly, it broke the monopoly of Barbaricon, and secondly, it cut down cost of transshipment at Barbaricon. Frankincense was imported into Barbaricon for exchanging it with Chinese silk. Lapis lazuli which came mostly from Badakshan, was exported from Barbaricon. Same way, green turquoise came from Hindu Kush. The imports into Barbaricon, for export inland in the South Asia and beyond to Tibet, China, Afghanistan and the Central Asia were: 'Yavan' (Greek or Europeans) women, coral of various colors specially red, figured linen from Egypt, wines in small quantities, frankincense, decorated silver vessels for presentation to the rulers, gum, stone, and opaque glass, etc. Very little gold came to Barbaricon after 70 AD due to state of balance in trade, but for about a hundred years i.e., 27 BC – 70 AD bullion and gold currency was sent to the South Asia in exchange for its goods.

Kadphises-II Kushan (64-78 AD) struck coins of same weight, purity, size and likeness as the Roman coins of pre-Nero era probably in connection with traffic of silk, which they managed to export at least partly to Mesene and Characen rulers of the Near East, and through them to the Roman Empire. This may have caused some loss of trade to Barbaricon, which by about that time was in hand of Parthians, the adversaries of Kushans.

Rise of Mercantile Community and the Cultural Influence.

- a) The Indo-Greek kings of the north-western parts of India, including Sindh, encouraged contacts with the western Asia and the Mediterranean world.

- b) Scythians, Parthians and Kushans brought the Central Asia within orbit of traders of the South Asia, and this in turn opened trade and trade routes with China.
- c) The boom in mercantile activity brought those associated with commerce to the forefront and indirectly the religions preferred by them, i.e., Buddhism and Jainism also gained popularity and spread far and wide.
- d) Industries were organized in areas, where raw materials specially cotton were readily found. Sindh developed its textile industry during this epoch of trade activity.
- e) Hybrid Indo-Greek art of the Gandhara which developed during these centuries, originated from Graeco-Roman style of Alexandria, wherefrom bronze and stucco pieces of sculpture traveled both along the silk route and Alexandria – Barbaricon sea route, to Taxila. Their arrival coincided with new ideas on saints and heavens in Buddhist theology, which accepted the new sculpture and painting as an artistic expression of creative activity and proved to be vastly productive through patronage by mercantile community and royal contribution.
- f) Economic impact of trade with the West resulted in formation of guilds in the urban centres. The artisans joined these guilds, which offered special status and degree of security. Leading guilds in Sindh must have been those of textile workers, potters and carpenters (for ship building). The guilds controlled quality of work, helped development of new designs, fixed wage rates and prices of articles, provided on-the-job training and restricted number of members according to demand of articles they produced.
- g) There was exchange of ideas on astronomy and medicine with the West, and up to the middle of first century AD these contacts took place to a large extent through Sindh.

#### Decline of trade from Barbaricon.

The trade with Sindh and the South Asia was on decline after Nero (68 AD) and thenceforth remained limited to textiles and industrial goods only, as Roman empire was facing economic crisis. Added to this, Petra the chief centre of distribution of goods to the Mediterranean ports was destroyed in 105 AD. Palmyra gained some importance for this purpose but was sacked by Aurelian in 273 AD, and the trade of the South Asia was diverted to Batne near Euphrates, at a day's journey from Edessa.

With the opening of silk route through the Kushan controlled Transoxiana, the silk trade along the Indus Valley silk route declined, but of the quantity exported from the ports of the South Asia, a sizeable portion still passed from Barbaricon (Debal), as the Indus valley route was shorter than the routes to Barygaz.

Kushans probably never controlled the Lower Sindh, which, most probably, was contemporaneously under Parthian or Scythian control. This created a situation whereby

Kushans, were compelled to divert the trade of Sindh. The over-land silk route decayed in the third century AD, as Parthians lost to Sassanians. Kushan Empire started decaying and the Chinese were driven out from Tarim Basin. The Chinese used sea route up to the Bay of Bengal and some times to Caromandal coast, but never dealt directly with Graeco-Egyptians or the Romans. The Indians were the intermediates for the Chinese goods which they re-exported. Most probably, the Indians and the Chinese met at Go-Oc-Eo in southern Cambodia. From there the Indian shipped goods to the West. The land route further decayed due to wars between Roman and Persian empires from time to time, and the Chinese abandoned the land route in favor of sea route, thus causing loss to Barbaricon trade.

In the beginning of the fourth century AD, Huns broke loose from China and started moving west-wards. These pastoral nomads, put pressure on all civilizations of the classical world, Chinese, Guptas and Byzantines. They reached France, Spain, Italy, Constantinople, Greece, Persia in the fourth and fifth centuries and disturbed the trade. Alexandria too fell into decay and the trade of the South Asia came into the hands of the Arabs. Adule was developed as a principal port of Ethiopia and became a great centre of commerce. The Arabs, and later on the Persians, controlled most of the sea trade from the South Asia until the arrival of the Portuguese in the South Asia.

## SOURCES

The basic text on the subject is Warming ton's 'Commerce between Roman Empire and India', London 1928, but information in it had to be supplemented by a large number of sources; namely Hourani E. 'Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean', Princeton 1950, Mookerji R.K., 'History of Indian Shipping' London 1957; Wilson, 'The Persian Gulf from the Earliest times to the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, London 1954, Rogers H., The Indian Ocean, London 1932., Villiers A.J., The Indian Ocean, London, 1932, Charlesworth M.P., Trade routes and commerce of the Roman Empire., Rawlinson, A.g., India and the Western world from the earliest times to the fall of Rome, Cambridge, 1926.

Hourani considers Ophir as Sindh. Breasted J.A., A history of Egypt from the earliest times to Persian conquest, London 1920, discusses Pharoach hatshepsut (1470-1475) and Necho-II's efforts to connect the Nile with the Red Sea. Skylax's voyage is described by Herodotus in the Histories. Tr. By Aubry de Selincourt, London, 1954.

The Achaemenian period is covered by Greek works of Herodotus and Ctesias. The best work on the period is Olmstead, 'History of Persian Empire' Chicago 1948. Alexander's historians and Nearchus' Indica give information on his efforts to connect the Indus mouth with that of Euphrates and the latter with Red Sea and Egypt.

The trade with Sindh and trade articles are described by Scoff in 'The Periplus of Erythraean Sea', Philadelphia, USA 1912.

Geography of Ptolemy is discussed by McCrindle J.W., in *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, Bombay, 1884.

Strabo's geography pertaining to the South Asia is also translated by McCrindle in 'Ancient India as described in the classical literature', Westminster, 1901. He did the same with Pliny's *Natural History*.

On Roman contact, with the South Asia there are classical works: Pliny's *Natural History*, *Periplus of Erythraean sea* and *Ptolemy's Geography*, in addition to *Agatharcides* and *Strabo*. To this may be added Dr. F.A. Khan's articles on Banbhore excavations which have proved beyond any doubt that the Banbhore site survived from second century B.C., to first quarter of thirteenth century. It may have been called Barbaricon, Barbari, Debal and Banbhore through the centuries.

*Yuktikalpatru*, A Sanskrit treatise on ship building, gives interesting details about various kinds of ships, their length, width and height, materials of construction, methods of decoration, painting materials, shape of prows, cabins of ships, ships for transport of horses and elephants. An Indus seal from Mohenjo Daro portrays a boat with sharply upturned prow and stem similar to those on Minoan seals, pre-dynastic pottery of Egypt and cylindrical seals of summer. The absence of mast suggests that these boats were used on riverain waters. Another boat with a mast scratched on a pot-shred, was probably for use both on the river and the sea. Sanchi stupa sculpture belongs to second century BC, to second century AD. The prows of ships shown in this sculpture confirm to the description in *Yuktikalpatra*. Ajanta Cave paintings show Embassy from Pulakesi-II of Kanauj in the court of Khsru-II King of Persia, in 625-26 AD, in which ships and boats shown belong to the classification of *Yuktikalpataru*. Sindh must be having similar boats.

Buddhist sacred Books known as Jatakas, describe without any doubt the marine intercourse between the South Asia and Babylon (Babiru or Bavera), from 500 BC to Asokan times and also export of horses from Sindh to Benares, via the sea to bay of Bengal then up-stream to Benares. Rhys Davids, the translator of Buddhist sacred books, mentions that sea going merchants availing themselves of monsoons at the beginning of 7<sup>th</sup> century BC or perhaps at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, were trading from the ports on the South west coast of the South Asia first from Suvira (Sindh) after wards from Bupparka and Bharukachachha (Broach) to Babylon. These merchants were mostly Dravidians (Meds and other seamen on Kutch, Sindh and Makran coast) and not Aryans.

The information on Mauryan shipping and Board of Admiralty comes from *Arthasastra* of Kautliya, well described by V.A. Smith.

On roman trade with India, Wheeler in *Rome beyond its Frontiers* has analyzed the findings of Roman coins in the South Asia and has deduced useful conclusions.

Beadstead's *Eastern Asia* also touches the South Asia. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of Roman Empire*, London, 1940, describes the eastern trade, economic and political conditions, as well as decline of Alexandria. The Arabian role in the Indian Ocean and

the Gulf is described by Hitti P.K., Sumerian Contacts with Sindh and chronology has been adopted from Breasted. Hitti describes Minaeans, Sabaeans and their successor Himayarites. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century BC trade with Babylon is discussed by Mookerji. Among Alexander's historians Arrian is most reliable and he has based his history on Ptolemy-I Soter, the King of Egypt and Nearchus: His Indica described voyage of Nearchus. A large number of translations are available. I have referred to Rogers. Arrians probably did not use Aristobolus as his source. This has recently been fully exploited by Eggermont. W.W., Trans 'Hellenic Civilization' has been used for Seleucids and Breasted for Ptolemyan of Egypt. Chronology of Ancient world by Neville Williams is another important source on Ptolemy.

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