



The Yemen-India Commercial Relations during the Period (3rd Century BC- 1ST Century AD)

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Abstract:

This study aimed to trace the commercial relations between Yemen and India in ancient times from 3rd B.C to 1st A.D, by analyzing epigraphic inscriptions, archaeological remains, and classical sources. On the other hand, the exchange of rare natural products has played a significant role in the development of the relations between the two regions. Moreover, the researcher also touched upon many aspects such as: the role of commercial ports by development of commercial activity, the most important commercial ports and goods and their geographical locations which known in that time, the commercial seaways that ships navigated at that time. These routes contributed to improve the commercial ports, which declined later because of shifting the commercial routes away from them. On the other hand, the study also examined the methods employed by the Yemeni merchants to monopolize both local and Indian goods, which caused them to get huge profits and wealth, thereby enhancing and expanding Yemeni trade across vast regions of the ancient world. Furthermore, the research emphasized the political and economic impacts of the commercial relations between Yemen and India.

Key words: Yemen, India, goods, incense, ports, Indian Ocean, trade roads.

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العلاقات التجارية بين اليمن والهند من (القرن الثالث قبل الميلاد - القرن الأول الميلادي)

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الملخص:

سعى البحث إلى تتبع العلاقة التجارية بين اليمن والهند في العصور القديمة من القرن الثالث قبل الميلاد، إلى القرن الأول الميلادي، من خلال النقوش الكتابية والمخلفات الأثرية والمصادر الكلاسيكية. كما أسهمت المنتجات الطبيعية النادرة بين منطقتي الدراسة بدور مهم في تطور تلك العلاقة، وتطرق البحث إلى دور الموانئ التجارية في ازدهار الحركة التجارية، وأهم تلك الموانئ التجارية ومواقعها الجغرافية والبضائع التجارية التي اشتهرت بها، والطرق التجارية البحرية التي سلكها السفن التجارية في العصور القديمة، التي أسهمت في ازدهار الموانئ التجارية، وانهارها بمجرد تحول الطرق التجارية عنها، كما تطرق البحث إلى أساليب اليمنيين في احتكار السلع التجارية المحلية والقادمة من الهند، ما أدى إلى جني ارباح وثروات كبيرة، أسهمت في شهرة وانتشار التجارة اليمنية في مناطق واسعة من العالم القديم، واهتم هذا البحث كذلك في توضيح أثر العلاقات التجارية بين اليمن والهند في الجانب السياسي والاقتصادي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اليمن، الهند، البضائع، البخور، الموانئ، المحيط الهندي، الطرق التجارية.

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© نُشر هذا البحث وفقاً لشروط الرخصة Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)، التي تسمح بنسخ البحث وتوزيعه ونقله بأي شكل من الأشكال، كما تسمح بتكبير البحث أو تحويله أو إضافته إليه لأي غرض كان، بما في ذلك الأغراض التجارية، شريطة نسبة العمل إلى صاحبه مع بيان أي تعديلات أجريت عليه.



INTRODUCTION

Over many centuries Yemen has been integrally linked to Western India. Geographical and social diversity distinguished the Yemeni-Indian relations. We may trace this diversity through the cultural interactions and hybrid architectural fabrics of various regions. Foreign styles, particularly Indian and ornamental features, have been introduced as typological and aesthetic changes.

Yemen had highly flourished in its monopoly on spice trade and fertile soil. The Greek philosopher Ptolemy thus coined the term "Eudaimon Arabia" which was translated by the Romans to "Arabia Felix" (fortunate Arabia). In this regard, Yemeni architectural history represents a dialogue between cultures inside and outside the country, most notably with the Indian subcontinent. Since the beginning of civilization, man has used the Arabian Sea as a trading route to the world's wealth and it is called Waters of Memory.

The first sea- trading route was known to man passed through this sea. Shortly after 3000 BC ships raced along the coast from and to southern Arabia and India to exchanging goods.

The research was divided into an introduction, two main sections, a conclusion, appendices, and a list of sources and references.

The First Main Section: Relationship between Yemen and India.

This section is subdivided into two sub-sections.

- Frist period.
- Second period.

The Second Main Section: Trade Roads between Yemen and west India.

This section includes four sub-sections.

- Qana Seaport Road – Ports of Northwestern India.
- Qana Seaport Road – Barygaza port.
- Qana Seaport Road – Muziris port.
- Qana Seaport Road – Socotra Island – Muziris Port

1. Relationship between Yemen and India

Ancient Yemenis established many of the commercial cities that became important centers in the roads of trade caravans in many different places in the Arabian Peninsula, such as Gerrha Port, which became one of the important commercial ports on the Arabian Gulf, which receives the goods (coming from) India and Mesopotamia (Hourni, 1955). Then, these goods are transported by camels along the commercial roads spreading all over the Arabian Peninsula. Didan (Alula) is the Ma'in colonies in the northwest of the Arabian



Peninsula (al Bakr, 1973), which were commercial centers of Main' Kingdom (Tarn, 1929) (Salh, 2010). Therefore, talking about trading and commercial exchange as well as term of Arab traders which was referred to in many history writings before Islam were indicating Yemeni trader (1980، علي).

Ancient Yemeni kings established commercial relations with the neighboring kingdoms, so as to facilitate and serve the business process, as was mentioned in the ancient writings and inscriptions, for instance, it was mentioned that Yatha'a Amr, King of Saba (Ness & Akrodi, 1999), offered gifts to Sinahhieriba (685 BC), King of Assyria, for facilitating trade caravans passing to the north of the Arabian Peninsula as well as Mesopotamia (Fischer & Otto, 1980).

Since Yemen produces incense, laden and many other goods, and does not produce spices which became one of the most important goods sought for in the Arabia markets known by ancient Yemeni traders, who preserved the secret of the source of that trade and created many fairy tales regarding the danger of approaching the places of producing such goods, in order to continue to dominate their trade (Jalal, 1967). Then, the Yemeni kingdom rulers increasing concern / care is shown through the enactment of trade laws that organize selling and buying process in the most markets of ancient Yemen kingdom.

Indian subcontinent is considered one of the most important resources that supplies Yemen with the products and goods. This means that there is a relationship between the cities and ports of Western India and the coasts of eastern Yemen that overlook on the Arabian Sea. In spite of the fact that there were different relationships, the discoveries and monuments are not enough compared with the size of those goods which covered the markets of the ancient world.

Malabar Coast became the director of foreign traders, who were known in the popular tradition as 'Yavanas'. Though many of the historians and archaeologists agreed that this word means the foreign traders, some of them said that it does not refer to all foreign traders; instead it refers to Greek and Roman particularly (Chelliah, 1962).

The relationship between Yemeni traders and West India, especially Malabar Coast, goes back to BC, when Yemenis were very knowledgeable about navigation, because the word 'sea', was mentioned in many Yemeni inscriptions ((Ry 533/ 9) (Ir 13/13) (Ir 13/ 3)). The Indian coast was one of the most important marine directions for Yemeni ships which brought goods from different places of the ancient world. Therefore, the trade movement, between Yemen and west India was of two different periods:

1.1.The First Period:

This period extends from 1000 B.C. to the first century AD, when there was contact in this period between the northwest India and the Arabian Peninsula, it was mentioned in many history books that



commercial relationship between Arabian Peninsula and Melukhkha goes back to 2500 B.C. (Bowen, 1956) in addition to many archaeological remains, such as stamps, gems of Indian characteristics, which were found in various places in the east coast of Arabian Peninsula overlooking on the Arabian Gulf (Al-Ahmad, 1965), as a proof of the existence of a commercial relationship between the two regions, since the dawn of history.

Products / Goods were transported from the places of their production to the places of their importing on the Arab Sea, by rivers. The evidence of transportation by rivers is the transportation of the soldiers of Alexander the great by Hindu River from the place of their availability to the mouth of river in Arab Sea, then to the head of the Arabian Gulf (Arrian, 1983) (Ziadh, 1975). Furthermore, the closeness of this region from the coasts of Arabian Peninsula helped to flourish the commercial movement between the two sides. The trade ships sailed near the coasts in this period. Yet, there is no indication that these ships have sailed in the sea away from these coats. This movement was going on during the whole year, moving from one port to another for trading.

1.2. The second Period:

The second period stars from the beginning of the first century A.D. and the beginning of the marine travels to reach the land of spices, as the journey important of the Periplus of the Erythraei Sea, which emergence of Romans in the near east and their domination of Levant and Egypt, after the elimination of Seleucids and Ptolemy's and their intention to dominate the global trade between East and West. Their goal became clear: they wanted to reach the places of producing goods in India without depending upon the Yemenis as mediators at that stage; especially they were able to change the balance of power in the East. Their start was an attempt to destroy the Kingdoms in the South of Arabian Peninsula by sending a huge campaign under the commanding of Aelius Gallus in 24 B.C. in order to control the trade coming from the East to the Arab world. However, the campaign failed to control Yemen (Strabo, 2000).

The other choice that Roman had is to dominate the trade on the Red Sea, and the sailing from it to India. Roman's tried to reach the places of producing goods (Ziadh N, 1984). However, those attempts ended in failure (1980، علي)، until the Roman sailor, Hippalus, could identify the wind movement in the Arab Sea. He also discovered the monsoon which helped to push the commercial ships along the sea directly towards the south of India, without the need to pass through the old roads, near the coast of Arabian Sea to reach Muziris (1975، ماهر، رستوفتريف).

The trade marine roads contributed in the flourishing of the commercial relationship between Yemen and India from one side, and from another side between Yemen and the Mediterranean Sea. The beginning of



those roads can be identified through identifying their directions between the coasts of Eastern Yemen and the coasts of Western India. Based on this, we have the following information:

2. Trade Roads between Yemen and west India

2.1. Qana Port Road – Ports of Northwestern India (Barbaricum)

The port of Barbaricum was located at the mouth of the river Indus. It was the most important seaport from the very beginning of Indian history (Brandtner & Panda, 2006), Barbaricum has been mentioned by numerous foreign and local sources and was considered a great port and a market town. It was also the first port on the northwestern coast of the subcontinent of India which transferred the goods from India and Central Asia to the markets in western of the ancient world (Xinru, 2010). Presently Barbaricum is existed some 60 kilometres near the modern city of Karachi, and is known as Bhambhor by the natives (Benjamin, 2018).

This road is considered one of the first marine roads between Yemen and the coasts of West India where commercial ships were sailing from Qana (Bir Ali) Port towards the northwest, near the Arabian Gulf, and then the commercial ships change their directions towards the East until they reach the ports of northwestern India. The date of frequenting this road goes back to B.C., especially the part that extends between Magan and Indian Coast in which Nearchus 326 B.C., commander of the campaign of Alexander the sailed to the head of the Arabian Gulf (Arrian, 1983) (Arrian, 1848). As for the other second port, which extends from the Arabian Gulf to the port of Qana, it was occupied. The commercial ships were transporting goods through this road from the South of Arabian Peninsula to the port of Gerrha and vice versa. The author of "The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea". (Wilfred, 1912)

2.2. Qana Port Road – Barygaza

Barygaza was located in the state of Gujarat "known as Konkan" on the eastern side of the Bay of Cambay or Khambhat (21o .41' N, 73o .01' E). Currently, it is several kilometers from the sea on the north bank of the Narmada River (Stiles & Gatherer, H, 1993). Bharuch/Broach is also known by the same ancient name Bharukachcha, Bhrukaccha, Bhriku-Kachha and Barygaza mentioned in the classical sources (Mishra & Ray, 2017). The borders may be determined approximately as extending from the Mahi River on the north to Daman on the south and from the Gulf of Khambay on the west to the Sahyadri Mountains on the east (Kapoor, 2002) The emergence of this road began with the increase of the trading between Yemen and Western Indian coasts, and it is the road that the history resources indicated since the first century A.D, where the ships were starting their voyages from Qana towards northeast to the near Ra'as Fartik, after that the ships go eastwards until they reach the port of Barygaza in Gujarat (Wilfred, 1912).



2.3. Qana Port Road – Muziris

Mouziris or Muziris was one of the most important ports in southwestern India (Cin Tan, 1994). Muziris has several other names in later historical sources and literature as Muchiri, Muchiripattanam, Murachipattanam, Machiripattanam, Muyirikode (Ferenczi, 2017).

This commercial road extended from Qana Port on the coast of Hadramawt, where ships travel directly in the sea until they reach Muziris port on the coast of Malabar, with the help of the Monsoon. The use of this road goes back to the first emergence of the Romans in the East and their control on the trade roads on the Red Sea, and also the way they were attempting to know the old commercial sources which were monopolized by Yemenis for long centuries. Hippalus discovery of the northwestern monsoon helped make a revolution in the old global trade, and also make a short cut of the long road that the ships were passing through the ports of Eastern Arabian Peninsula and West of India to reach the extreme of South India, and these voyages took around forty days to reach the Malabar Coast according to what the historical resources (Shehab, 1987).

2.4. Qana Port Road – Socotra Island – Muziris Port

This road is considered one of the important trading roads between Yemen and Malabar Coast. A lot of trading ships crossed this road since the beginning of the first century. The western port of this road represents Socotra Channel, famous for trading ships. Before the discovery of the monsoon, the trading ships were bringing important goods from Socotra Channel, such as manure, tortoise leather, and fragrance, a lot of Pattanam trading the era of the second Pattanam, whereas the people were concerned with the trading of old Yemen.

The Yemeni traders tried to come across the Arabian Sea to bring commercial goods from the coast of West India. These relationships appear to be so old, related to the third century B.C. Some heritage instances and evidence emphasize the existence of a trading relationship between the two areas.

- In the third century B.C, there was a trade relationship between Lothal port of Harappan Civilization in the state of Gujarat, and ports of the Arab island east, the people of Hindu valley imported copper from Magan whereas copper doesn't appear in this period in Rajasthan (Rao, 1979).

-Many pieces of crockery were discovered by technology in the Malabar Coast in Pattanam. This kind of crockery belongs to the third century B.C. and to the crockery of the south of Arab peninsula (Buffa, 2014)¹. This emphasizes that Yemeni traders arrived at Malabar Coast since a long time very early, before the Roman traders arrive this place very early (P. J, 2008, And some Indian crockery was available in Khor Rori port written on the some al-Musnad letters from the Arab Island South (Cherian, 2014).



- During one process of prospection in Yemen was found one statue for an Indian dancer (woman) (fig-1), dating to the second century A.D. This means that the relations are available between the two areas (Phillips, W. 1955).

- The inscription (Ja /931) indicates that the Il'azz Yalut king of Ḥaḍramawt did a great celebration, and many foreign visitors attended this celebration, including two Indian ambassadors named (*Dhrdh*) and another ambassador from Palmira (بافقيه، وآخرون، 1985). This attendance emphasizes that the trade relationship between Ḥaḍramawt and India was available at that time. Kingdom of Ḥaḍramawt was the force to control the coming trade from India, east of Africa via Qana port, connecting the trade between the west and the east. The trade land road directed towards the north, then to Gerrha, and this road was called the incense road (Alaqeel, 2023).

-As given and mentioned above that Socotra Island was an important trade station between Yemen and Malabar Coast. Inside this island there is Cave containing inscriptions and decorations in an old Indian Brahmin inscription (figs-1). These inscriptions refer to between the second and third centuries A.D. Almost all of them are rather short and contain the names of persons who eternalize in the way their persons at the place (Strauch, 2004&2003، عربش)، this emphasizes that the Indians settled there during their trips to Yemen, stressing the existence of the relationship between the two areas.

3. CONCLUSION

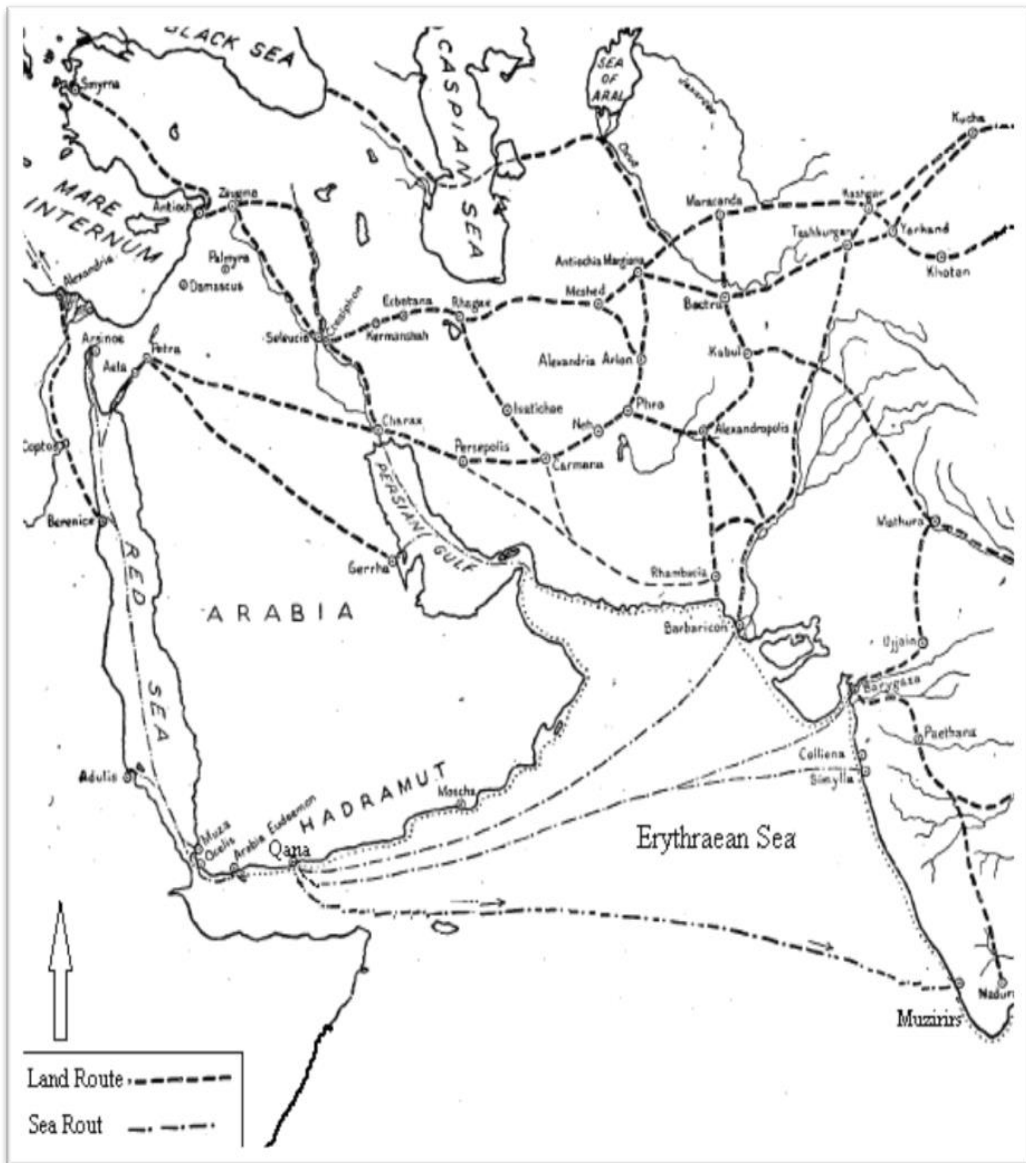
There is much evidence of contact between the Yemeni ports and the Indian Ocean region and Yemeni and Indian traders increased their activity to and from the Indian sub-continent. This commercial interest in turn reinforced the activity of Indian merchants in the Arab Sea, notably, Yemen, who acted as middlemen for Indian trade with the Roman Empire, and the ships came from Indian ports and crossed the Arab Sea, and stopped at the ports of Southern Arabia, in particular Qana (Bir Ali).

In the Indian sub-continent a major process of cultural exchange was taking place prior arrival of the Roman to, Malabar coast, and back westwards, towards the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf. The Hindu and Yemeni traders know very well about all the major ports that surround the Arabian Sea.

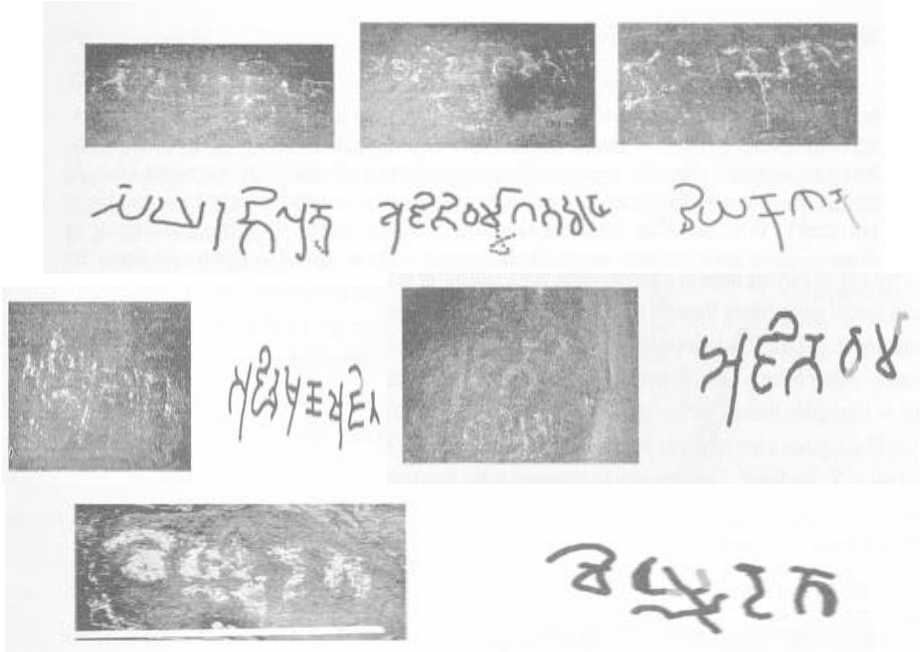
When the goods arrive to the Qana port, and the Yemenis traders transfer it towards north to Mesopotamia, Levant, Egyptian, by overland roads, that means the Yemen was a center of the ancient global trade, since the third century B.C. till the end first century B.C.



(Mab-1) The Ancient Trade Routes between Indian and Western World (Davies , 1959). p. 7



(Figure -1) Brahman scripts from Socotra Yemen. (Strauch, 2004), p. 135



(Figure- 2) Indian woman dancing from south Arabia (Phillips, W. p. 51)



(Figure-3) This inscription mentions there two Indian attended a ceremony with King of Ḥaḍramawt. (محمود..، 1985)



- 1 Hyry w- 'dgm Tdmry—
- 2 yhn Qmtrn w-Flqt
- 3 Ks²dyyh(n) Dhrdh w-M—
- 4 nd(h) (H)ndyyhn s²w'w
- 5 mr³-s¹m ▶'i'd Ylt◀ m—
- 6 lk Hqrmt

(Figure- 4) South Arabian Ovoid Jars from Pattanam. (Cherian, P,J & Menon, J, 2018), p. 55)



Table 1: The Main Goods Exchange between Yemen and India

Goods Imported from India to Yemen	Goods Exported from Yemen to India
Spices, Pepper, Cinnamon, Cardamom	Incense, Myrrh, Frankincense
Precious, Stones, Ivory	Tortoise Shells, Pearls
Cotton Fabrics, Silk	Woolen Fabrics
Iron, Gems	Copper from Magan



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