

Indian and Western Asian Cultural Contacts

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Throughout the earliest career of man in Asia, it is to India that we must turn to as the dominant power by the sheer weight of its advanced civilization. To us, therefore, it is of vital interest to lift the curtain and peer into the ages which bequeathed so precious a legacy. From the references in indigenous and foreign contemporary literature, India has always been famous for its domestic and foreign trade. The original home allotted to man by his Creator was in the mild and fertile regions of the east. There the human race began its career of improvement; and from the remains of sciences which were anciently cultivated, as well as arts which were anciently exercised in India, we may conclude it to be one of the first countries in which humankind made any considerable progress in their early career.

Although Waddell (1968: 505) declared in the third decade of the twentieth century that he had discovered 'the complete official king-lists and chronicles of the early Aryans from the first king of the First Aryan Dynasty continuously down in unbroken line to the classic historical period—which fortunately have been preserved by the eastern or Indian branch of the Aryans—the unique key to the king-lists of the Sumerians and Babylonians and Early Dynastic Egyptians', and that he had recovered through the Sumerian dynastic records 'the exact dates of all the famous Aryan kings and priest-kings celebrated in the Indian Vedic psalms and epics', it is a pity that Indian scholars, by and large, have not paid adequate attention to the historic records left behind by the Indo-Aryan rulers of ancient Western Asia. In our books on ancient history, their description is generally confined to a brief reference to the Boghaz Koi Tablets (which contain a text of the Treaty of Friendship between the Hittite king Suppilulium and the Mitanni king Mattiwaza), on which the

four Vedic deities, viz., Indra, Mitra, Varuna and the Nasatyas are mentioned. Other Mitanni kings, namely, Dushratta, Artama, and Shattruhana are also briefly referred to in these books. Again, a casual reference to the discovery in Boghaz Koi (Turkey) of an Indo-Aryan text on horse-training pertaining to the same period (i.e. second millennium BC) finds place in these books. From the Boghaz Koi site have also been discovered the massive stone images of the wind god and his consort, and 'thus the Vedic *Marut* or *Vayu* was also represented in the Aryan Hittite Pantheon'. (Nag 1954: 49). However, these two original documents, and hundreds of other Indo-Aryan and Semitic documents unearthed in Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Israel have altogether been ignored by the Indian scholars. A close study of these documents will undoubtedly prove to be rewarding. Lack of opportunities to study the cuneiform alphabet and the Akkadian, Hurrian, Kassite and Hitti languages in which these documents are written has hampered research into this phase of ancient history. Whatever we know is because of the efforts of the western scholars such as Waddell, Götze (1933), Sayce (1933) and others who were well versed in both the Sanskrit and the Semitic languages and have tried to project an unbiased view that the western Asian civilization owe to the great Indian tradition.

Nag (1954: 107-108) may be nearer to the truth when he says that 'with the Kassites with Aryan names, definite Indo-Aryan races were marching from East to West in the early seventeenth century BC and they must have swept through Palestine into Egypt in their swift chariots'. This has been clearly brought out by the Palestinologist Albright (1949). Many cuneiform tablets of the 15-14th century BC have been discovered in Palestine; and, after carefully analysing the personal names, the experts discovered that:

...about one-third (of these names) can be identified without hesitation as *Indo-Aryan*. These Indo-Aryans (of Palestine) were part of the great southward migration, which brought the Vedic Aryans... southwest into northern Mesopotamia, the precursors of the Mitannis; many personal names belonging to them have been found in cuneiform tablets from Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine—all dating between BC 1600 and 1250. As P.E. Dument has shown, perhaps "a fourth of these names like *Indaruta* (Amarna Tablets) are identical with names in the Vedas and other early Sanskrit literature".

These names provide evidence that Indic deities such as Indra (the storm god), Yamin and Surya were once worshipped in Palestine. A

few Mitanni or Hurrian names appear in the cuneiform tablets of the Late Bronze Age from Palestine. The Hurrians were first identified (1889) by reference to a letter written in Hurrian by Tushratha, king of Mitanni, to the Egyptian Pharaoh of the Amarna period. In 1915, the very name *Hurrian* was discovered in a Boghaz Koi tablet. Since then, there has been a noticeably rapid progress in the reading of the Hurrian and Hittite documents. The Hittite inscriptions make no ethnic distinction between the two elements in the Hurrian partnership. These Hurrians, along with the Mitannis, played a major part in the history of Western Asia for more than one thousand years (2300-1200 BC). The so-called blank period of the 2nd millennium BC (2000-1000 BC) history of Western Asia has been filled up by Indo-Aryans like Hyksos, Kassites, Mitannis and Hittites.

Nag (1954: 70) is of the view that 'about 1750 BC, Aryan language speaking Kassites emerged from northwestern Iran and held sway over Babylonia for five centuries (1746-1180 BC). Ethnically, the Kassites were Indo-Aryan speaking people and their chief god was *Suryah*, the Sun. Another god called *Maruthah* might be the Vedic Marut, deity of wind and storm. The word for Kassite god was *Bughas* (equal to Sanskrit *Bhagavan*?).

From 1887 onwards, hundreds of cuneiform tablets have been found in the Egyptian archives of Tell el-Amarna, that throw a flood of light on the politics and social life of that epoch. In the fourth millennium, sites of Jericho shrines were discovered with animal figures and *linga* (phallus) symbols which obviously was a cult object in Palestine.

In Greek history, we find definite mention of the Indian merchants. In the early days of Roman Empire, India was a great commercial centre for Italian and Egyptian merchants as it was at a much earlier period for all Asiatic races from Phoenicia in the west to China in the east. In more than one epoch, the resources of India—natural, industrial as well as intellectual—had made the wealth of great empires. Its delicate tissues, its marvellous colours and dyes, its porcelains and pottery, its works on metals and ivory, its spices and precious stones, its dainty essences and perfumes, have not only been the wonder and delight of Europe, but in no slight degree helped in the revival of its arts. But the then Indian scholars did not travel. Only here and there do we find traces of embassies, sent for political objective to the courts of China and to the empire of Rome and to the monarchies of Egypt. Yet from the time of Alexander downwards, the intellectual life of India was profoundly perceived throughout

the ancient world. Greece, Persia, Egypt and China went to sit at the feet of those serene dreamers on the banks of the Indus and the Ganges under the shade of the banyan trees; and there they marvelled at the power of philosophy and to achieve way to ideal virtue. And what treasures of European fable, legend and mythic lore further testify to the indebtedness of Europe to India, is the sphere of imagination and fancy; the Magic Mirror, the Golden Egg, the Purse of Fortunatus, the Cape of Invisibility! *Ex Oriente Lux!*

The purpose of the present paper is to bring to light the various individual Western Asian Indo-Aryan rulers mentioned in Indian texts (Vedic hymns, the great epics—Ramayana and Mahabharata, and Puranas). This paper is also meant to highlight the fact that the ancient Oriental world, i.e. Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Arabia, Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Iran owes much to India in order to understand their own ancient history and civilization.

The famous correspondence between the Egyptian government and its officials on the one hand and sister governments in Asia on the other, which was discovered at Tel el-Amarna, made us acquainted with the Mesopotamian kingdom of Mitanni and many of its rulers. Among the letters was one from a king Dusratta which was written in the native language of the country. Nearly twenty years later, the discovery of the cuneiform tablets preserved in the libraries of the Hittite capital at Boghaz Koi in Cappadocia brought to light fresh information concerning Mitanni. Not only did we acquire a large amount of additional knowledge as regards its history and princes, but we also learned that Mitanni was not homogeneous in either population or speech. Along with the deities of Mitanni and Babylonia certain deities with Indian names are invoked in its records. Next to Mitanni, another name is employed which could be read as 'Kharri' or 'Kharriyan' and in which Dr Winckler proposed to see the name of the Aryans.

Meanwhile, attempts had been made to explain some of the names of the Egyptian officials in Syria mentioned in the Tel el-Amarna tablets as of Iranian origin. The tablets had already informed us that Artatama was the grandfather of Dusratta, while Artassumara was his brother. Also, a Mitannian is mentioned who bore the name of Artessupa. It was easy to see in them the Iranian *arta*. The fact that Mitra is stated to be a name of the Sun god in one of the tablets from the library of Assur-bani-pal was quoted as a proof that an Iranian language was once spoken in the immediate neighbourhood of Assyria.

But a further knowledge of the Hittite records showed that the attempt to explain the Mitannian names from an Iranian dictionary was illusory. The names of the deities invoked in the Mitannian documents are not Iranian, but the Vedic Indra, Varuna, Mitra and Nasatya. It became evident, therefore, that the Indo-European language spoken in Mitanni and its neighbourhood was not Iranian, but Sanskrit. As far the syllabary from the library of Assu-bani-pal is concerned, it belongs to a period when Assyria had long been in contact with Media and other Iranian tribes.

The conclusion derived from the names of the deities in the Mitannian documents was confirmed by further discoveries. Among the tablets found at Boghaz Koi is the copy of a work by an author named Kikkuli, descriptive of horse breeding and racing. This work was in the hands of certain sections of the population of eastern Asia Minor, whose language was not Hittite. The technical words and terms used in those profession, however, naturally passed into the Hittite language and their connections with Sanskrit are quite apparent. Among them are the names of the numerals: *aika* 'one', Skt. *eka* (not Zend *aeva*); *tera* 'three', (Skt. *Tri*), *panza* 'five' (Skt. *pañca*); *satta*, *sapta*, 'seven' (Skt. *sapta*); *nawa* 'nine' (Skt. *nava*). Thus, we have *aikawartanna*, 'one turn'; *terawartanna* 'threefold turns'; *panzawartanna* 'five turns', where *wartanna* is the Skt. *wartana*. From these Sanskrit-speaking horse breeders, the Hittites derived one of their names for the fire-god Agnis as well as the words *yugan* 'a yoke', probably also *yugas* 'one-year-old' and *tayugas* 'two-year-old' used for horses and oxen.

It thus became evident that if we wished to find eastern Indo-European elements in the proper names recorded in the Tel el-Amarna and Boghaz Koi tablets, we must have recourse to a Sanskrit dictionary, not a Zend one. Accordingly, several German scholars of whom Porzig (1927) was the most prominent, made an attempt to precisely follow this exercise. He found etymologies not only for the names of the Mitanni princes, but for many other leading characters as well; *abiratta*, for example, becomes the 'Old Indian' *abhi-ratha* 'Owner of a superior chariot', *artassumara* is *ṛta-smara*, 'remembering the sacred law', while Kretschmer turns the name of the Amorite prince of Kadesh, Aitaggama, into *Eta-gama* 'Rider of a Piebald'. Thapar (1961:59) is also of the opinion that the 'presence of Indo-European element in the language of Cappadocia is ... attested as early as the beginning of the second millennium BC. These betray the Aryan element of the ruling class on the upper

Euphrates about the time, when movements of people with fresh ethnic elements were taking place. Curiously enough, the forms of these elements are more akin to Sanskrit than to any Iranian dialect.'

Support for these 'Old-Indian' etymologies is supposed to be found in the fact that several of the Mitannian names begin with the prefix 'Arta'. The word has a strong Aryan appearance, and in places where we do not know the origin of a name or even the language to which it belongs, it is easy to discover Indian etymologies for the names in which it appears. Unfortunately, however, the letter of Dusratta shows that *art-* is also a Mitannian word which forms part of the compound *att-art-(ippi)*, 'grandfather', a compound of *att-ippi* 'father'. The Mitanni may of course, have borrowed it from their Aryan neighbours. The same might be the case with some other elements in Mitannian names which seem to bear Aryan impressions. The name of Dusratta himself has thus far eluded any satisfactory Aryan etymology. Husing made it into the Skt. *dus-ratha*, 'with a bad chariot'; Scheftelovita explains it as *dus-raddha*, 'difficult to overcome'. The first explanation is obviously impossible; the second encounters phonetic difficulties.

The belief that the Mitanni and 'Khariyans' were separate peoples finds no support in the texts. The first name had a wider signification than the second and its origins are still unknown. If it were of 'Asiatic' derivation, Mita-na or Mitanna would mean 'land of Mita' or Midas, implying occupation by invaders from Asia Minor, at some time or other. As for the 'Khariyans', the first syllable of the name is represented by a character which has the variant values of *khar*, *khur*, and *mur*. Winckler has selected *khar* because he wished to identify the word with 'Aryan', which is a phonetic impossibility. *Khur* is now generally read by the German scholars for the equally impossible intent of identifying its holders with the Horites of Southern Palestine and Edom. The correct reading is *mur*. Murri claim connection with the city of Mirrekhnas or Murrekhnas mentioned in the Syrian List of Thotmes III (Nos. 160,177), where we have the name of Mura with the territorial suffixes *-na* and *-kh*. Leromant long ago identified the name with that of Urrakhinas, a town in Qurkhi, west of Diarbekir, which was captured by Tiglath-Pileser I.

In the letter of Dusratta Masrienne and Murwu-kha, where *-kha* is the territorial suffix as in Mukis-khe 'the country of Mukis', interchange with Mizzirre 'Egypt', and Mitanni. The native name of Mitanni, accordingly, must have been Murwu, Murwu-khe. In the

Hittite cuneiform texts, *Mur-las* signifies 'Mitannian': *Mur-li-li* 'in the Mitannian language', and *Muru*, it is worth noticing, is stated by Shalmanese III (*Black Obelisk*, 130) to have been a stronghold of Arame, the son of Mallos, as found upon the coins, and it would correspond with the Hittite *Murlas*.

Murwe, Murri, Mur are, I believe, the same name as Murru, the original Sumerian form of the name Semitized later as Aurru, where the initial vowel is the prothetic *a* before the double consonant *mw*. In the later Assyrian days, the name, like the other name Hittite, came to include the Semites of the West, but primitively, it denoted the Mitannian population of Subaru or Mesopotamia, which extended to the Mediterranean on the one side and to the eastern bank of the Tigris on the other. We know from the Egyptian monuments that this Amorite population belonged to the blond race with blue eyes and thus, it claimed relationship with the blonds of the Caucasian region. An early Sumerian poem found at Kish tells us how Lugalbanda, the Sumerian ruler of Der, crossed the Tigris and 'expelled the wicked Murru from the whole of Sumer and Akkad', establishing his capital at Erech. We have here a tradition of the Sumerian conquest of Babylonia, where the inhabitants then were blond Amorites from whom the Sumerians distinguished themselves in their later literature as 'the black-haired race'.

To sum up: (1) there is no evidence for the belief, now abandoned, that there was ever any Iranian element in the population of the Near East in the Tel el-Amarna age. (2) There were, however, in both Mesopotamia and Eastern Asia Minor a race of people who spoke—not a derivative language from Sanskrit—but Sanskrit itself and who occupied themselves with breeding and training horses. (3) There is no evidence that these people bore the name of 'Kharriyan'. Instead of reading 'Kharriyan', the name must be read Murriyan which, in fact like the name Hittite, is identical with the native name of Mitanni (Murwu). (4) Arguments derived from the conjectural etymologies of proper names are always hazardous, more especially where the language to which the names belong is unknown. (5) The single support for ascribing an Indian etymology to certain Mitannian and other names breaks down on examination, *arta* being a Mitannian as well as an Indo-European word. While, therefore, it is possible that some of the personages mentioned in the Tel el-Amarna and Hittite texts were Indian and bore Indian names, we have no proof of the same at present that such was indeed the case. We must be satisfied with the fact that Sanskrit was spoken

in the Near East in the fifteenth century before our era, and that a Proto-Indian people were once included within the limits of the Hittite Empire. (Sayce: 1933).

ŠUNAŠŠURA: AN INDIAN KING OF KIZWATNA

For a long time, it has been known that in the Amarna age, i.e. in and around 1400 BC, there were many Indo-Iranian rulers in the Syrian and Mesopotamian kingdoms. In particular was the dynasty of the Churri and Mitannian Empire—which represent a highly significant phase in the period we are concerned with—that belongs to the constituent part of the population of the ancient Near East (Meyer, ed. *Geschichte des Altertums*, i, 2 & 455, 265). Having reached the culmination of its influence, the Mitannian kingdom extended to the coast of the Mediterranean (Gotze 1928:22). We are, therefore, not surprised to meet Indo-Iranians also in the adjoining parts of Syria and even Palestine. Their names have already been collected and interpreted by several scholars: Hommel (1898), Scheftelowitz (1902), Bloomfield (1908) and Friedrich (1929). To their list might be added the name of Šunaššura which occurs in Hittite cuneiform documents (see especially the treaty of a Hittite king with Sunassura of Kizwatna published in *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazkoi*, I, 5, and translated by D.D. Luckenbill (1921).

Beyond any doubt, *Šunaššura* is a name of the same type as *Artatama*, *Artamanya*, *Šutarna*, *Mattiwaza*, *Aitagama*, & c. If we look for an Indo-Iranian interpretation, we can easily recognize at the end of the compound the Indian *sura* and Avestan *sura*, 'strong, brave, hero'. Here, the Ind. *ś* is replaced by *š* in cuneiform writing in the same manner as, for instance, in the name *Piridašwa*, which certainly contains the Indian word *aśva* and probably means one 'who possesses a war horse (Porzig 1927:267). It is more difficult to recognize the Indian and Avestan word which we suppose was equivalent to the first part of *Šunaššura*. The *š* of cuneiform writing suits Ind. *ś* as well as Ind. The first equation is shown above. The other we have, for instance, in *Suwardatta*, i.e. 'given by the sun god (*svar*)', or in *Subandhu*, i.e. one 'who has noble relatives', & c. So, it is possible to suppose *suna-* or *suna-* as the relevant word. But only the former gives a satisfactory meaning: *sunam* often occurs as an adverb denoting 'prosperity, with success' (*Petersburger Worterbuch*, vii, col. 257). It occurs in the compound *suna-hotra*, a Vedic proper name (ibid.), which implies the name of a family of

priests; it also conforms to their behaviour well because it evidently implies 'one whose sacrifice (is, leads) to prosperity'. I quote it because its structure seems quite related to that of the name under discussion. *Šunaššura* looks like the counterpart if not to *Suna-hotra*,—then to *Suna-hotr-*, which equation—it is our scientific duty to add—is merely hypothetical. This counterpart is evidently adapted to the other class from which the king came: namely the class of the warrior, 'the hero to prosperity'. For the idea underlying this name, we have an instructive test in the strophe *Rgveda*, V, I. 54,7: 'The man will prosper (*susuvat*) as king and right lord who sacrificing fulfils his (i.e. Indra's) commandments.' Here, we have the connection of the hero king with 'prosperity' in quite the same manner as in the name of the king of Kizwatna.

The spelling *Su-na-as-su-ra*, throughout observed, gives by its middle *ss* a reference to the place of accent: *Suna-sura*. It would be entirely in accordance with the rules prescribed by grammarians concerning the accentuation of a *Tatpurusa* with indeclinable first part (Wackernagel, *Altindische Grammatik*, p. 106 f. quotes the passage from Panini VI.2, 2 which states this accentuation).

Šunaššura is a king of Kizwatna. To recognize that he bears an Indian name—since we can eliminate Iranian, because *sunam* is not to be found in Iranian—i.e. that he descends from a family of Indian rulers, is of importance as to the localization of his country Kizwatna. Yet, the general supposition is, that the country is to be localized on the northern shore of Asia Minor (Garstang-Mayer 1923: 172ff) Unger (1926: 366 f.); Forrer (1926: 38 ff.); Bilabel (1927: 270 ff.; Meyer, ed., 1928: 158, note 1). In contradiction, Gotze (1933) is convinced that Kizwatna was situated on the coast of the Mediterranean round the gulf of Issus. From the Indian character of the king's name, he derives a new argument for his opinion. This argument alone, he confesses, is by no means decisive, but it strengthens his position in a very convenient way. If this localization is accepted, the country of the Indian dynasty immediately joins to the territory known long ago as ruled by Indo-Iranians. In the north of Asia Minor, however, on the Black Sea, an Indian would be totally isolated, and we would be forced to assume that he had been separated by a singular fate from the Churritic-Mitannian territory where Indo-Iranians are more familiar. Such a supposition, in any case, is very unlikely.

Of course, these Indians were, also in Kizwatna, a very thin stratum of nobles and warriors. Perhaps, only the king's family was Indian.

In the population many a different ingredient might have been mingled together. For instance, the name of a Kizwatna *Ammi-hatna* (*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghakoï*, v, 1, col.1, line 1) refers to one that can be identified. It is surely 'Amoritic', that is to say, it belongs to a very old layer of Semites. Its occurrence in Kizwatna points to the same direction as that of the Indian name discussed here. The home of the Amorites is (in spite of all objections) northern Mesopotamia. Therefore, an Amorite on the gulf of Issus can be explained historically; he would be isolated and appear very strange on the Black Sea.

So, we come to the conclusion that the name Sunassura is an Indian one and that his country Kizwatna was situated on the Mediterranean.

Singh (1995, 2, 70-71) is also of the opinion that 'big merchants engaged in international trade' have been mentioned by name in the *R̥gveda* more times than those in the Buddhist texts. He refers to Kakṣivan Auṣija and Uṣija who are referred there for twenty and thirty-one times, respectively. Sudasa, like many others, was also engaged in trade. He is also of the opinion that Bharatas and their rivals Purus were also engaged in trade. He is of the opinion that 'there is no doubt that trade operations were conducted on a very impressive scale which itself could raise every outstanding business house in public esteem to be addressed as *raja*, 'the illustrious one', and he identifies them with outstanding Aryan personalities found in the West Asian records. He quotes T. Burrow (1955) at length:

The earliest recorded traces of Aryan people come neither from India nor from Iran, but from the near east. The presence of Aryans in this area is recorded principally in documents of the Mittani kingdom of the northern Mesopotamia during the period 1500-1300 BC. The list of royal names preserved in a variety of cuneiform documents has a distinctly Aryan appearance, even though their interpretation is not absolutely certain in all cases. The names of these kings are as follows: Sutarna, Asussatar, Artadoma, Artasumara, Tusratha, Mativaza. In the Indo-Aryan form, these names, respectively, will be Sutarna (cf. Ved. Sutarman-), Prasastra—'director, ruler', (Sauksatra—son of Suksatra-?), Rtadhaman- (nom. Rtadhama, same as Vedic) Rtasmarā—'mindful of right', Tvisratha (same as Vedic) Tvesaratha—'having running chariots' and Mativaja—'victorious through prayer'. In addition, in private documents from this area written in Assyrian, there have been found a number of proper names of local notables which can be interpreted

as Aryan, e.g. Artmna, Bardasva, Biryasura, Purusa, Saimsura, Satavaza, which may respectively stand for Rtamna, 'mindful of the law, Varddhasva—'son of Vrddhasva', Viryasura—'hero of valour; Purusa—'man, male', Ksemasura, 'hero of peace or security', Satvaja—'he who has won prizes' (Burrow. Cf. V-Vajasati).

This was a period of the expansion of Mitanni influence in the surrounding territories. Consequently, we come across rulers of neighbouring principalities having similar Aryan names, and this extends as far as Syria and Palestine. The clearest example of Aryan names among these are- Svardata: Svardata—'given by heaven', Satuara: Sa-vara—a stem bearing the same relation to Skt. Satvan—'powerful, victorious: a warrior' as does Skt. Isvara—'lord', to Av. Isvan—Artmanya: Rtamanya- 'thinking on the law'. Biridasva: Vrddhasva 'possessing large horses', Biryawaza: Viryavaja- 'having the prize of valour', Indarota: Indrota (RV)-'helped by Indra', 'Subandhu'- Subandhu...

The contemporary Hittite kingdom had close relations both of peace and war with the Mitanni kingdom, and some of the documents from the Hittite capital provide important evidence on the presence of Aryans in the Mitanni country. The most interesting of these documents is a treaty concluded between the Hittite King Suppiluliuma and the Mitanni king Matiwaza (c. 1350 BC). Among the divinities sworn by in this document, there occur four well-known Vedic divinities. They are Indra, Mitras(il), Asatia(nna), Uruvanass(il), which, stripped of their non-Aryan terminations, are unmistakably Vedic Indra, Mitra, Nasatya and Varuṇa. It is clear that not only Aryan language, but also Aryan religion in a form closely resembling that known from the *Rgveda*, was current in this region of the Near East during this period.

Among the archives of the Hittite capital there exists a treatise on the care and training of horses. This is written in Hittite language, but the author, who had the charge of royal horses, was a Mitanni called Kikkuli. Furthermore, some of the technical terms used in the work are Aryan. These are *aika vartanna*, *tera v0*, *satta v0*, and *navartanna* (hapl. For *nava-v0*)= Skt. *Eka vartan-*, 'one turn (of the course)', and likewise for the numbers three, five, seven and nine. The existence of these loan words in the Hittite texts clearly shows the priority of the Aryan loan words.

In addition to the above evidence, there are few Aryan traces among the documents of the Kassite dynasty of Babylon (c.1750—1170 BC). The Kassites themselves were invaders from the east,

from the Iranian plateau, and their language, of which nothing is known, has no connection whatever with the Aryans or Indo-Europeans. Nevertheless, in a list of the names of gods with Babylonian equivalents, we find a sun god Surias (rendered Samas) which must be clearly identified with Skt. Marut—though some difficulty is caused by the fact that the Skt. word always occurs in the plural. Among the kings of the dynasty, one has a name which can be interpreted as Aryan: Abirattasa: Abhi+ratha- 'facing chariot' (in battle).

The Kassites were settled primarily in the Mitanni kingdom, and if they are found outside that territory, those areas were specifically affected by Mitanni political and cultural expansion. There is no doubt that even the few Kassite names should be traced to this source, since in Iran, from where they migrated, there is no trace of such connections in the early part of the next millennium.

These Aryans appear in Mitanni region from 1500 BC as the ruling dynasty, which means that they must first have entered the country as conquerors.

Thus, it is clear that India's cultural contacts with the outside world go back to prehistoric times, particularly the eastern Indian neolithic and Harappan cultures. In historical times, contacts between Indian and the Achaemenian Empire, the Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms and the Roman world were well developed. Indeed, by the third century BC, a caravan highway ran from Taxila via Kandahar, Herat and Ecbatana to Seleucia and was joined by the Taxila-Kabul-Bactria route. Besides, there was also a coastal sea route to Seleucia along the Persian Gulf and up the Tigris. It was by this route that Greek travellers, envoys, and craftsmen reached the Mauryan Empire. As a result of India's regular and intimate contacts with the west, a considerable number of foreign objects have been found at various sites.

Archaeological Evidence of Cross-Cultural contacts with Western Asia in the Third-Second Millennium BC

The highly resourceful craftsmen of Indus cities could even produce scientific instruments in shell, of which compass and linear scale are good examples. Many of the luxury articles of gemstone and ivory were exported to Bahrain, and Ur, Kish and Brak in Mesopotamia, besides Susa in Elam. The Harappan merchant was not satisfied with acting merely as an agent for selling the local products for limited

profit to the foreigner who came from Bahrain and Sumerian cities. He encouraged the sailors to meet the challenge of the open seas and reach distant lands in their own ships so that overseas products, especially pure copper, tin and cosmetics could be procured at cheaper rates in exchange of the much-prized ivory boxes and inlays and beads of gemstones processed at Lothal and Chanhu-daro. King Sargon boasts that ships from Dilmun, Magan and Meluhha which brought gold, copper, etc., were berthed in the port of Agade. (Rao 1991: 14) Some of the copper ingots from Susa, with which Lothal had indirect trade contacts, compare favourably with the Lothal ingots in size, shape and weight. The Mohenjo-daro ingots vary from 15 to 24 cm in diameter and are bun-shaped like the Lothal ingots which are 10 cm in diameter and weigh 1,438 kg (Rao 1991:177).

Ivory-working and Double spiral-headed pins and rings

At Mohenjo-daro, the ivory combs were produced for export to Syria and elsewhere. The ivory rods of Ugarit (Ras Shamra) found in the excavations by Claude Scheffeur closely resemble the ivory rods of Lothal (Rao 1991: 186). There appears to have been an intrusion of some new elements in the post-Harappan phase at Lothal. For instance, the double spiral-headed copper ring occurring for the first time in Lothal B is traceable to Minoan III (Rao 1991: 329). One is reminded of the double spiral-headed copper pins from the uppermost layers of the Neolithic phase in Gufkral (Kashmir), which closely resemble the Early Cycladic/ Early Helladic pins reported from Greece (Tripathi 1988: 52).

Seals and Sealings

Outside the Indian subcontinent, Indus seals have been found in Ur, Kish, Brak, Agade, Susa, Nippur, Bahrain and Failaka. A sealing circular in plan and bearing impressions of swastika produced by drawing parallel lines in cardinal directions must have been used for sealing a jar retrieved from Brak in the Euphratus-Tigris Valley where Indus seals and weights are found and a seal of similar motif also occurs. None of the original seals affixed on the terracotta and faience sealings has been found at Lothal, nor are sealings of Lothal seals found at the site. The fact that the seal owners of Lothal sealings residing elsewhere exported and imported goods to and from Lothal is also true (Rao, 1991:194).

Sculpture

A steatite head of a bearded person from Mohenjo-daro (17.8 cm high) has half-closed eyes which suggests of mythical contemplation. He wears an upper garment decorated with a trefoil design, which also occurs in Sumerian art at Ur. The astral connotation of the trefoil design is supposed to indicate that the statuary may represent a priest or king (Rao 1991: 197).

Burials

The Cemetery H at Harappa covering an area of 3000 sq m was discovered by Vats in 1928 and excavated between 1928 and 1931. It lies south of the Citadel. Burials of Stratum II of Cemetery H belong to the Mature Harappan Culture and those of Stratum I to a post-Harappan Culture known as Cemetery H Culture. Another Cemetery, R 37, lying 77 m. south of the eastern section of Cemetery H is assigned to the Mature Harappan phase. Mortimer Wheeler connected the two cemeteries stratigraphically in 1946 and established their sequential relationship. One of these burials in a grave pit lined by mud-bricks at Harappa (2.1 m long, 0.61 to 0.77 m wide) contained the body of a female. The lid of the coffin was made of *deodar* wood. A copper ring was found on the middle finger of the right hand and a shell-ring was placed on the left side of the head, and two more rings of shell were found above the left shoulder. Out of 37 pots found in the grave only one was placed in the coffin. This burial has close resemblance to the coffin burials of the Sargonid and pre-Sargonid periods of Mesopotamia (Rao 1991: 300).

Chatterji and Kumar (*Indian Archaeological Survey*, 1961, p. 32) made a comparative study and racial analysis of human remains at Harappa and came to the conclusion that 'the Harappan skulls compare favourably with specimens recovered from various equally ancient sites in western Asia, e.g. Ur, Al-Ubaid, Kish, etc.'

Weights

Mainkar's (1984: 141-152) suggestion that the weight of 18.165 g in the second series was the lower unit, and 336.33 g was the higher unit, which closely corresponds to 1 qedet and 20 qedets, respectively, of the Egyptian weight system (Rao 1991: 312).

The Harappan sailors studied carefully the trade routes and monsoon activities two thousand years before Hippolus 'discovered' the trade winds. When the Harappan merchant offered goods, finance, and perhaps boats also, the captains of the sea could not resist the temptation to go to distant lands and earn huge profits for themselves and their financiers. As a maritime power, the Harappans developed brisk overseas trade and established merchant colonies in Bahrain, Failaka and the Euphrates-Tigris Valley. They built the first dockyard of the world and contributed in no small measure to facilitate international trade by introducing their weight unit and script in Bahrain and Oman. The circular seals with Indus motifs or script or both occurring in the Sumerian port of Ur and in the intermediate harbours on the islands of Bahrain and Failaka in the Persian Gulf, the discovery of the Bahrain type circular seal and the terracotta figures of 'bearded Sumerian' and 'mummy' at the Lothal port are all suggestive of a flourishing overseas trade between Lothal on the one hand and the ports on the African coast and the Persian Gulf on the other. In due course, the Indus merchants established colonies in Ur, Brak, Kish, Arpachiya, Susa and Hissar where Indus goods and trade mechanisms have been found in excavations. (Rao 1991: 15). The thin Harappan arrowheads having a barb but no tang are rare in Sumer and Elam but common in Minoan III. The spearheads of the type of dirk weapons of Syria and Palestine are very few in number here (Rao 1991:175).

Pottery

The Reserved Slip Ware which occurs in 2371-2316 BC levels at Ur, Kish and Brak in Mesopotamia and at Lothal in 2200 BC is found at Desalpur in 2100 BC levels (Rao 1991:157). In the post-Harappan cultural centres of Saurashtra (Rangpur and Lothal, dated in c. 1700 BC), and Daimabad in Ahmednagar district, footed cups or goblets of Lustrous Red Ware, having their exact Iranian parallels (Sialk and Hissar), have been reported (Sankalia, 1975-76, 73). At Navdatoli in the Malwa region we get the Channel-spouted bowl of the Iranian type, dated in c. 1600 BC (Sankalia, 1975-76, 74). At Ahar in southern Rajasthan, 38 terracotta beads bearing incised decorations were found in the layers dated in c. 1800 BC. Eight of these beads show designs which are identical with those of Troy, while one recalls that from Anau in Central Asia (Sankalia, 1975-76, 75). Sinha (1961: 57) is of the opinion that 'the reserved slip ware of the Indus Valley was not only

found in Sumer during the Uruk period but also in the lower levels at Carchemish far up the Euphrates. Similarly the comparison of the polychrome pottery of the Indus Valley with various types of painted pottery from Baluchistan raises one of the knottiest problems of archaeology and chronology.'

Trade and Commerce

Rao (1961:47) is of the opinion that 'many of the objects of non-Harappan origin found at Lothal, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro clearly indicate close trade relations between the Indus valley and Saurashtra on the one hand and the Persian Gulf islands and Mesopotamia on the other, especially in the Sargonid Period'. The most convincing proof is a circular seal of ivory from Lothal assignable to the Kassite period. It bears close resemblance to the Bahrain seals. Some of the Bahrain seals bear Indus animal motifs. The occurrence of several Indus type seals at Ur, Kish, Susa and Lagash is also a well-known fact. The terracotta sealings from Lothal bearing impressions of packing material on their back clearly suggest a commercial use. Among them is one bearing the impression of a stamp seal similar to the one found at Brak. It is, therefore, evident that Lothal had trade contacts with Bahrain islands and Sumerian cities.

Other evidences from Lothal, which suggest contact with West Asia, consist of: bun-ingots of bronze which are almost identical with those from Susa, the painted potsherds with a technical similarity to the reserved slip ware from the Sargonid levels of Brak and Ur, bronze amulets of couchant bull comparable with those from Ur and Susa, and bronze pins with bird-head similar to those found in Hissar III B and Hittite levels of Alishar Huyuk. The spacer-beads of gold from Lothal are comparable with those from the Royal Cemetery at Ur. The cubical chert weights from Kish, gold-bordered agate beads with lenticular section from the Mycenaean tombs and the thin disc-beads of gold from Hissar III B are also comparable with similar objects from Lothal. 'These evidences are impressive enough to conclude that Lothal had trade relations with West Asia. Ivory, chank-shell, beads of gemstones and cotton or cotton goods were probably exported from Lothal, and imports consisted of chert and steatite for making blades and beads respectively, and bronze ingots for making implements. In this connection, the clay tablets of Ur throw some light. They mention the goods imported from Meluhha, Makkan and Telmun or Dilmun' (Rao 196: 48).

During the reign of Saragon of Agade in Mesopotamia (Iraq), the Semites carried on brisk trade with the Harappans who had established overseas settlements in Ur, Kish, Brak, Failaka and Oman and further north also, which were mostly merchant colonies (Rao 1991: 300). Dilmun tablets give a list of 22 articles of trade. This list includes ivory, gold, gemstone, beads, wool, etc. Further, the Indus weight system was in vogue in Bahrain in 2000 BC. During the Late Harappan period, there was a decline in trade for a short while, but it picked up quickly with the participation of the Phoenicians who were identified with the *Paṇis* mentioned in the *R̥gveda* 'as a trading community which does not make any offerings' (R.N.Dandekar 1979: 98,108, 170-71, 197). Donald Harden (*The Canaanites* (Penguin) remarks, 'The Phoenicians as a people cannot be differentiated from the general mass of Canaanites until somewhere during the later half of the second millennium BC', and adds, 'The Canaanites were certainly autochthonous, and the date of their coming into the country has been disputed. It is usually recognized that there were several waves of migrating Semites coming, it is thought, from Arabia or the Persian Gulf. Many now equate the first main northward migration with the movement which brought the Akkadian overlordship to Mesopotamia about 2350 NC, the second with the influx of Amorites towards the end of the third millennium and the third with that of the Aramanes at the end of the Bronze Age' (Rao 1991: 220). Besides, the Harappan trade contacts with West Asia via Bahrain and Ur, the Late Harappans too continued to have trade and cultural contacts with Bahrain, Cyprus and Syria, as is indicated by the seal, inscribed jar and stone anchors of Dwarka-Bet Dwarka (Rao 1991: 281).

Indus pottery, weights and seals have been found in Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Bahrain and Failaka. Tepe Yahya, a Proto Elamite site in Iran excavated by Lamberg Karlovsky (1973: 1-43) in 1967-69, has yielded a pot stamped with Indus seal. Altin Depe in Turkmenia was also a Harappan outpost where Indus pottery, seal and weights are found (Masson and Srianidi 1972). Balakot, an ancient port situated near the Makran Coast, has yielded interesting evidence of Indo-Sumerian trade (Rao 1991: 60). The trade contact which Lothal had with Bahrain, Failaka, Oman and the Mesopotamian and Elamite cities including Brak, Ur and Susa is suggested by the assorted relics of foreign origin such as Reserved Slip Ware, terracotta sealings and gold beads with axial tube, bull-amulet of bronze and Bahrain type seal found at Lothal. Imports

consisted of copper ingots besides some perishable goods. Exports included ivory and shell inlays, beads of gemstones and semi-gems, and perhaps cotton goods and ivory articles, which reached such remote places as Ras Shamra in Syria. Contact with Egypt is suggested by the terracotta chessmen with ivory handles and models of mummy gorilla of Egyptian affinity recovered at Lothal (Rao 1991: 120). The chess set found in the Tomb of Queen Hatshepsut in Egypt bears a close resemblance to the Lothal set (Rao 1991: 23). Sinha (1961: 58) is of the view that 'some of the etched carnelian beads found in the same tomb at Ur' from which the monkey statuette is found, may be 'actual imports from Sind or Punjab'.

Terracotta Figurines

Terracotta male figures are rare at the Harappan sites of the Indus valley and Gujarat. The best specimen comes from Lothal. With Sumerian features, these have bald head, square-cut beard, pointed nose and slit eyes. The eye-sockets are indicated by depressions. The pointed nose and long square-cut beard are the features alien to Indus art. 'The curious style of hairdressing as seen in Eshunna statues suggests indebtedness to Indian fashion' (Sinha 1961: 58).

One of the tombs has yielded a statue of a squatting monkey precisely similar to one found at Mohenjo-daro. The monkey is not native to Iraq; so this must be set down to an Indian influence (Sinha 1961: 58).

A faience bead from Lothal, lenticular in section and with gold border, is reminiscent of a similar jasper bead from Minoan II. A bun-shaped copper ingot from Lothal may be compared with Sumerian ingots. The same site has yielded a copper amulet with a bull figure similar to one found in Susa during the second millennium BC. The movement of peoples from Iran and perhaps even from the Caucasus region into India is evidenced by the stray finds of copper and bronze items. A Copper Hoard from Khirdi in Nagpur district includes a fine bowl with a long protruding channel spout, with analogues in pottery and metal at Giyan I, Sialk, etc., and another simple bowl of copper reminiscent of examples from Sialk. Among the Copper Hoards from Fatehgarh and Bithur in the Ganga valley and Kallur in the Deccan are swords or discs of copper with midribs from the Koban culture of the Caucasus (c.1200-1000 BC). A copper spearhead from Chandoli and a fragmentary one from Navdatoli are similar to the spearheads found in the graves at Geyer in Palestine,

datable to the close of the eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt, though they may not be imports. Lothal has again yielded a seal of the Persian Gulf origin—a circular steatite object with two jumping gazelles flanking a two-headed dragon on the obverse and a large boss, four circles and three grooves on the reverse.

One of the indications of change in the socio-religious practices of the Late Harappans is the sudden appearance of a copper ring with a double spiral head reminiscent of the sacred wedding ring of the Hindus from Lothal Phase V. Further, it is interesting to find that similar rings are found in Minoan III, and in all probability, it came with renewed overseas trade with Crete or Cyprus of which there is evidence in Dwarka (Rao 1991:125). The triangular, 3-holed stone anchors of Dwarka weighing 75 to 250 kg are identical with those used in Cyprus and Syria in fourteenth to twelfth century BC (Rao, 1991: 151). A cylinder seal apparently of stone set in a gold handle and bearing two lines of cuneiform inscription ascribed to c. 2000 BC, now in the Nagpur Museum, may have come to central India from the country of its origin, though its 'find spot' is not known.

Harappan Chronology

To date the Harappan culture, 'evidence of the Indo-Mesopotamian contact or "artefact-associations" constituted the main basis of Indus chronology' (Brunswig 1975: 112), and 'the chronology of the Indus civilization became generally synchronized with that of Sumer, Akkad, and Old Babylonia' (Brunswig: 1975: 114). Marshall proposed its date between c. 3250 and 2750 BC on the basis of proof of intercourse between the Indus valley, Mesopotamia and Elam, as afforded by seals and other objects and motifs which indicate connections between the Indus valley civilization and contemporary Mesopotamia (Marshall 1931:103-6). Harappan seals have been found, among other places, in Ur, Kish, Lagash and Umma from the period at least of Sargon of Akkad who ruled in 2371-2316 BC (Marshall 1931). Sinha (1961) also accepts a comparative study of Sumerian and Indus Valley antiquities as the right method for 'arriving at a chronological scheme (of the Harappans). An Indus Valley seal was found at Ur in the pre-Sargonid period, while among the late Harappan antiquities were found odd little conical copper toilet cases, of which one (encountered) in the Royal tomb at Ur and Kish is not later than 2700 BC. An Akkadian palace at Eshunna with a bathroom and privies connected with a vaulted sewer is

attributed to Indian influence.' As such, the cultural contact between Harappans and others from 2371 BC stand established. Buchanan has reported the impression of a Harappan seal on a dated cuneiform tablet of the tenth year of King Gungunum of Larsa who ruled from 1932 to 1906 BC (Allchin 1968: 141). Apart from seals, other artefacts like beads, etc., have been found from Iran to Syria in the period 2000-1700 BC. In the Sumerian and early Akkadian inscriptions (c. 2300-1770 BC), references are found for the import, by boat, of copper ore, ivory and precious stones. Romila Thapar (1975: 1-41) identifies Magan of Makan, Meluhha and Dilmun, mentioned as exporting centres in these inscriptions, with Sindh and Baluchistan, Gujarat and parts of western India, respectively. The material that helped in fixing the chronology includes nearly thirty Indus seals discovered at various sites in Iraq and certain objects of probable West Asian origin found at the Harappan sites (Lal 1953: 87). Other articles, including seals, sealings and seal imitations were found at Ur, Umma, Tell Asmar and Kish from pre-Sargonid, Sargonid, Kassite and Larsa levels and etched carnelian beads from Akkadian deposits were found at Tell Asmar; besides gold disc beads with an axial tube used at Mohenjo-daro and found at Mesopotamian sites of Early Dynastic III, Akkadian in date, and in Troy IIG (about 2300 BC), also supplement the evidence of seals (Wheeler 1968: 99, 113). The evidence of the 'Persian Gulf' seal at Lothal, a 'Persian Gulf' seal with Indus script at the Barbar culture site on the island of Failaka and the Harappan weights, as also carnelian beads unearthed at the Barbar also suggest 'that the Harappans from the Indus region maintained some form of contact with the Barbar culture sometime between 2400 and 1900 BC' (Brunswig 1975: 119). In fact, the 'Persian Gulf' seals in general can be used 'as a chronological anchor to pin down Indus-Mesopotamian-Persian Gulf contact to a time span between 2400 and 1900 BC' (Brunswig 1975: 118).

However, the date of the early contacts of the Indus Civilization with western Asia may go still earlier. Shastri (1961) has correctly dated the contact of the 'Indus Civilization with Mesopotamia and Iran in the middle of the fourth millennium BC' on the basis of archaeological and other evidences. He is of the opinion that 'these contacts continued down to the Sargon's time (twenty-fourth century BC) and even later'.

Besides the above artefacts, we find Aryan names in the documents of Mitanni, Nuzi and Khattis (Hitites). Atleast eighty-one Aryan proper names (13 from Mitanni, 23 from Nuzi and 45 from Syrian

documents) are known (Dumont: 251). The Mitannians have a king Tusratta (i.e. Dasaratha) who worships Raman (Rama) as his family deity (vide letter of Tusratta to Amenhotep III, dated in c.1400 BC in Tell el-Amarna archives). The chronological development of the deity seems to be in the order of Rama (Indian)—Raman (Mitanni)—Rahaman (Semitic) (Roy, 1975-76:149). A treatise on the training of horses written by one Kikkuli, a Hittite horse trainer, in Sanskrit language has been found in the Bogaz Koi archives (c. 1400 BC). Finally, the Bogaz Koi treaty (1380 BC) between the Hittite king Suppilulium and the Mitanni king Mattiwaza, invokes the Vedic gods Indra, Varuna, Mitra and Nasatyas as guardian deities of the treaty, who were definitely Indian and not Indo-Iranian gods, as thought by some scholars.

A careful study reveals the substratum of Vedic thought and culture in the Indus Civilization. The worship of fire, offering of sacrifices to gods, the unity of animal, human and plant life as depicted in Indus seals and later Indian sculptures as also described in the *Rgveda* and classical literature, and the idea of a daily bath for physical and spiritual cleansing practiced by the Hindus are all contributions of the Harappans (Rao 1991: 336).

We learn that navigation made its first efforts on the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf. These seas lay open the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, and washing the shores of the most fertile and the earliest of the civilized countries seemed to have been destined by nature to facilitate their communication with one another. We find, accordingly, that the first voyages of the Egyptians and the Phoenicians—the most ancient navigators mentioned in history—were made in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. Their trade was not confined to the countries bordering upon these water bodies. They extended the sphere of their commerce and are said to have opened a communication by sea with India. The Phoenicians taught the art of navigation to the ancient world. The principle sources of our knowledge of early Indian trade are derived from scattered hints in ancient Indian literature, beginning with the Indian scriptures and from several passages in the *Mahabharata*, notably the enumeration of gifts that were brought by the various nations to the great *rajasuya* ceremony of *Yudhisṭhira*. As regards navigation in Vedic India, it was diligently pursued, which could not but be expected in a tract of the Indus, so intersected by streams. Even voyages on the open sea are hinted at and merchants are mentioned, though seldom. Kaegi, in his Introduction to the 'Rig Veda', says that there was navigation

in the streams of the Punjab and, on the Ocean (cf. Voyage of Prince Bhujya) and trade only existed in barter. And it is narrated there that the two Asvins (who represent morning and evening twilight) brought back Prince Bhujya, who sailed in a hundred-oared ship (*sataritram navam*) and went to sea and was nearly drowned, 'in vessels of their own along the bed of the Ocean'. Thus:

Safe comes the ship to haven,
Through billows and through gales;
If once the great Twin brethren
Sit shining on the sails

But the first trade between the West and India of which we have any definite knowledge was that carried on by the Phoenician and Hebrew mariners from Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea; and an account we have of this trade implies the role of the Phoenicians in it, the Phoenicians who first made their appearance on the Erythrean or Red Sea. By Red Sea here we must imply the entire Indian Ocean between Africa and the Malaya Peninsula; and curiously the *Purānas* represent it in that manner when they describe the waters of the *Arunodadhi*, as reddened by the reflection of the solar rays from the southern side of the Mount Sumeru, which abounds with red rubies. Of the fact that a trade existed between Western Asia and Babylonia on the one hand and Hindusthan on the other, there cannot be any doubt. M. D'Anville suggests three routes for this intercourse with the western world. The first route climbs up the precipitous and zigzag passes of the Zagros Range, which the Greeks called the "Ladders", into the treeless regions of Persia. This route was barred for centuries by the inveterate hostility of the mountaineers and did not become practicable until "the Great King Darius" reduced the Kurdish highlanders to a condition of vassalage. The second route traverses the mountains of Armenia to the Caspian Sea and Oxus and descends into India by the passes of the Hindukush. Articles of commerce doubtless passed along this way from early times, but the trade was of little importance, fitful, intermittent and passed through many intermediate hands, until the Parthian domination obliged more merchants to take this route. Lastly, there is the sea, and this alone affords a direct and constant intercourse.

Now we come to the important question: when and in which period indeed did a regular maritime intercourse first arise between India and Western Asia? From the history of Chinese coinage, it is quite certain that an active sea-borne commerce sprang about 700 BC between Babylon and Farther East with India having an active share

in it. From the time of Darius Hystaspes (c. 500 BC), the Babylonians lost their monopoly in it and it passed largely into the hands of the Arabs, whom the Greeks found controlling and in possession. Ample evidence is forthcoming that maritime intercourse existed between India and Babylon in the seventh century BC. The relevant evidence is adduced below.

Firstly: Shalmaneser IV of Assyria (727-722 BC) received presents from Bactria and India, especially Bactrian camels and Indian elephants. (Winckler). Secondly: H. Rassam found a beam of Indian cedar in the palace of Nebuchadrezzar III of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (c. 580 BC) at Birs Nimrud, part of which is now exhibited in the British Museum. Thirdly: The *Baveru Jataka* relates the adventures of certain Indian merchants, who took the first peacock by sea to Babylon. The *Jataka* itself may go back to 400 BC, but the folk tales on which it is founded must be much older. Prof. Minayeff saw in the *Baveru Jataka* the oldest trace in India of Phoenician-Babylonian intercourse. Fourthly: Certain Indian commodities were imported into Babylon even in the days of Solomon c. 900 BC. These products were known to the Greeks and others under their Indian names. Rice, for instance, had always been a principal article of export from India (vide the *Periplus of the Erythrean sea*) and it was a common article of food in the time of Sophocles (Gk. *Oryza* is identical with the Tamil, *arisi* for rice). Again, Aristophanes repeatedly mentions peacock and assumes that it was as well known to his audience as the common fowl with which he contrasts it. Peacocks, rice and Indian sandalwoods were known in Palestine under their Tamil names in the days of Hebrew chroniclers of Kings and Genesis. Fifthly: Baudhayana's condemnation of the northern Aryans, who took part in the sea trade, proves that they were not the chief agents, though they had a considerable share in it (J. Kennedy 1898: *J.R.A.S.*).

These evidences then warrant us in the belief that maritime commerce between India and Babylon flourished at least in the seventh and sixth centuries BC. 'Crowds of strangers lived in Babylon,' says Berossus (c. 850 BC). But the seventh and the sixth centuries are the culminating period of Babylonian greatness and developed into the greatest commercial entrepot of the world. With Nebuchadrezzar Babylon became the wonder of the world where the merchants of all countries used to throng. The secret of her greatness lay in her monopoly of the treasures of the east, in the shouting of the Chaldeans in their ships and in the swarthy Orientals who frequented her bazaars.

Of all parts of the mighty oceans that encircle the earth, none (except the Mediterranean) seems by its position and shape more adapted to play a part in the history of the world than the Indian Ocean. From the historical standpoint, the Indian Ocean takes a very high place. This Ocean—lying as it does on the southern edge of the old world, penetrating at so many points the lands of ancient history and offering such facilities for international intercourse—has been the theatre of events, which are not wanting in grandeur and are sometimes eminently suggestive. In reality, it discloses prospects of remarkable depth and reveals glimpses of the rise and fall of nations. From the earliest times, it has been a great link of communication between the East and the West. The commerce of the Indian Ocean goes back far into remote antiquity. The ancient Egyptians and Phoenicians were certainly the earliest authenticated navigators of the Indian Ocean and its adjoining parts. Although the Egyptians relished spices and were always in search of direct communication with the countries producing spices, we get the reference of the first attempts at a direct maritime communication with India from the west by the Phoenicians in the second millennium BC. Even at the time of the expedition sent by Hiram of Tyre and Solomon, the magnificent and wise king of the Hebrews, to Ophir from Ezion-geber and Elath, the route to that mysterious land of gold was well known and regularly frequented. The magnet, however, which chiefly attracted navigators into this ocean was the peninsula of India. The fact that the Vedic hymns and Man's Code mention Aryan voyages, which extended even to the ancient island of Diascorides (Socotra) is again and again brought forward as a proof that trade and communications existed between India and the west. The Indian Aryans never made a permanent habit of navigation. India never felt the need of seeking the outside world, but it was always destined to be the goal for other nations, by land as well as by sea. From its vast treasures it has given to the world more than any country on the earth.

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