Chapter-II
TRADE DURING THE PRE-MAURYAN PERIOD

Introduction

The trade between India and West Asia was continuing from the time of Indus Valley and prior to this also. From the time of Rig-Vedic period, the trade between two civilizations continued to increase slowly. If Aryans are accepted as the original inhabitants of Europe, then the Iranians and Aryans are two branches of the tree. Due to the geographical separation, the trade relation was hampered to a certain extent but the cultural continuity was maintained. But the trade enlivened these relations with passage of time. Trade relations between the two lands are not measured with exchange of goods only. The cultural transformation is a by-product of this relation. So knowingly or unknowingly the cultural migration took place through this trade relations and made the culture of India mosaic.

The invasion of Cyrus, Darius and Alexander gave a new turn to the continued relations. They not only controlled some parts of India but also broke the isolation of India. Indians learned the system of administration and it further created a fertile ground for the growth of trade. The journey of Skylax and Nearchus opened the new routes of trade. In this way the trade and cultural relations increased further.

The period between Rig-Vedic Age and the rise of Muarayan Empire was labeled as "Dark Age" in the Indian history mainly because of lack of sufficient materials to reconstruct its course. The meagre-archaeological evidences available in foreign lands, especially in Western Asia, points to the limited amount of commercial and cultural intercourse between India and western neighbours. From Sixth century B.C. onwards, we reach on firmer grounds as far as socio-economic-political history of India. The foreign invasion like Cyrus, Darius and Alexander brought more proximity. The political relations gave a boost to trade and cultural relations. Especially the invasion of Alexander was well documented in the world history. It was a turning point of Indian
history. He was accompanied by a number of Greek historians and their writings provide valuable data to reconstruct the trade relations between India and the West. Among the Indian sources the Jataka stories provide most indirect references about India's knowledge about foreign lands and India’s relations with other countries with Egypt and Mesopotamia. The archaeological sources also supplement these facts with more proofs and authenticity.

On the basis of available evidence, the historians fail to draw a clear picture of this trade. Again to present the commercial data of individual regions is undoubtedly a difficult task. But it is my sincere effort to collect the every possible evidence to present a full picture of trade as well as cultural relations.

In the sphere of religion, culture and other spheres like astronomy, language, and the perceptible changes were brought about by the contacts with West Asia. Again the trade with West Asia brought the prosperity and wealth to India. Indian goods were highly praised in the West while Indian demands for their goods were quite less. This led the trade to create a favourable situation for India. Therefore, India was known as the queen of Eastern Sea.

**Location of West Asian Empires**

The physical conformation of Western Asia is favourable to the growth of large empires. The vast plain which extends from the foot of Niphates and Zagros to the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, there is no natural fastness; and the race, which was numerically or physically superior to the other races inhabiting it readily, acquires dominion over the entire region. Similarly, quite to the same extent, in the upland region, which succeeds to this plain upon the east, there is a deficiency of natural barriers and the nation, which once begins to excel its neighbours, rapidly extends its influence over a wide stretch of territory. The upland and lowland powers are generally evenly balanced and maintain a struggle in which either side gives way; but occasionally the equality becomes deranged. Circumstances give to one or to the other an additional strength; and the result is, that its rival is overpowered. Then an empire of still greater extent is formed, both upland and lowland falling under
the sway of the same people.  

Ancient Egypt

Hecataeus, the ancient Greek geographer, rightly called Egypt as "The gift of Nile". The river rises in the vicinity of the Great Lakes of Equatorial Africa and flows about 4000 miles in a northerly direction for over 1600 miles without a tributary. Every year, in the beginning of June the water rise from twenty to forty feet. The stream overflows channels and inundates the surrounding countryside for an average width of thirty miles. After the middle of the October, the flood rapidly subsides and leaves a heavy deposit of rich alluvial soil. Silt precipitated at the river's mouths, has resulted in the formation of a greater delta, through which the river has cut a number of channels to the sea. Thus the Nile has wrested a long narrow strip of arable land from the surrounding desert; this fertile region, aggregating approximately 10,000 square miles in area was the land of Pharaohs.  

Another geographical consideration, which has been over emphasised perhaps, was the relative isolation of Egypt in Ancient times. Bounded on the South and West by Nubian and Sahara deserts on the East by Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea, the country was joined to Asia on the northeast by the Isthmus of Suez and the peninsula of Sinai. This was vulnerable point: Hyksos, Assyrians and Persians came into the land by this route and subjugated it. Yet only well organised and disciplined powers could attack Egypt successfully. She was sufficiently isolated to preclude conquest by incursion of barbarian nomads. Proximity to Asia in the northeast facilitated the commercial contacts with opportunities for cultural infiltration.  

During 6th century B.C., Egypt had become the part of Assyrian and Persian Empire. Only after the temporary renaissance of Nineteenth Dynasty, the decline of Egypt proceeded more rapidly than ever. The foreign possessions were intrivably lost; civil war was frequent until virtual chaos ensued. In this weakened condition, Assyrians and Persians occupied the land of Egypt and swayed their hegemony. But the heavy march of Alexander the Great compelled
Egypt to remain under his control. With the division of Alexander's empire, Ptolemy (323-283 B.C.) seized the control of Egypt, his dynasty endured until the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in 31 B.C. with the end of the Ptolemiac Kingdom. Egypt became a subject of Rome.¹⁰

**Persian Empire**

A number of people, who were called Semites, were living on the edges of the Arabian Desert from the beginning. Corresponding with the grasslands of the "Fertile Crescent" there are vast stretches in the north extending from lower Danube, North-east to the Black sea; then North and east of the Caspian, into Central Asia. Great extremes of temperature prevailed, with the result that agriculture was almost precluded. The nomadic populace from time immemorial had wrested a livelihood from the pasturage of extensive herds of cattle, following the grassy lands, north in summer and south in winter. Shortly after the introduction of copper, nomads in the steppes of east of the Caspian began a great westward migration either because of Mongolian pressure from the east or failure of grazing facilities. During the course of migration, some ultimately pushed southward and occupied the Iranian plateau on the east border of "Fertile Crescent". This group was formed primarily of the peoples who became known as the Medes and Persians.¹¹

The Medes were the first to come into contact with the peoples of the "Fertile Crescent". A great trade route from Mesopotamia to the Iranian plateau ran through heart of the region and contributed powerfully to the economic and cultural advance.¹² Proximity to Assyria naturally retarded the rise of political power of Media while the Medes were playing a great role in the affairs of "Fertile Crescent". The Kingdom of Persia was a vassal state of Media, southeast of Tigris and Euphrates Valley. The Persians had penetrated Elam and the surrounding territory; their migration probably was a direct result of the establishment of the Media Kingdom.¹³ Under Teispes, the ruler of Anshan, material progress was made towards the unification of tribes. When Cyrus, the grandson of Teispes, became the King in 558 B.C., the Persians had been
welded into a compact monarchy under the suzerainty of Anshan, although it was not until eight years later that he assumed the title of "King of Persia"."14

Cyrus (558 B.C.-529 B.C.)

The rise of Cyrus created a new history of Persia in the Middle East. Earlier to this, these areas were dominated by Assyrian empire. So the fall of Assyrian empire gave the birth of Persian Empire in 6th century BC whose first and foremost ruler was Cyrus. He (Cyrus) extended his empire up to the Mediterranean and brought under her yokes the Asiatic Greeks and Phoenicians. But Greeks checked his further westward expansion. At that time there was a constant struggle among the powers like Etruscan, Carthaginian and the Greek.

In the modern western usage the term Persia is applied to the whole Iranian plateau stretching from the Caspian in the West to the Hindu Kush in the east and from the Persian Gulf in the South of Steppes of Turkestan, the region of Oxus and the Yaxartes in the North.15

Cyrus was the fourth king of the line of hereditary succession of Anshan. For the first time, he brought the various tribes under one umbrella. He at first became the King of Persia and then the King of Babylon. Three different titles used by the King Cyrus were - the King of Anshan, the King of Persia and the King of Babylon. He started to rule over Persia from 538 B.C. He attacked Astyages (550-49 B.C). He won over the area and finally married the princess of the ruler. Then he preceded the Median capital Ecbatana and conquered it. Then he overthrew the ruler of Lydia (546 B.C.) who had occupied the west of Asia Minor. The Medians had occupied the east of Asia Minor. Then he proceeded and captured Babylon, which gave Cyrus a claim to the countries of the West to Phoenicia and Syria down to the borders of Egypt.16

Cambyses (529 B.C. - 522 B.C.)

During the reign of Cambyses, Persian rule over Egypt came to an end due to revolt. It took much time to Darius, to bring under control again. The history Cambyses is mainly based on the information provided by Herodotus and
Greek sources.

**Darius (521 B.C.-486 B.C.)**

After Cambyses, Darius, a member of the Cadet branch of the Achaemenid house and a devoted adherent of Zoroastrianism, captured the throne. In the early part of reign he tried to put an end to the Scythian and Cimmerian by making an expedition across the Bosphorous and Thrace to the Danube. His empire comprised the area from Egypt and Aegean Sea to the banks of Indus and Jaxartes and from Persian Gulf to the Black Sea and Caspian. In 492B.C., he extended his occupation of Thrace and Macedonia and in 490B.C., after destroying Samos and receiving the submission of Cyclades, the Persian forces burned Eritrea and landed in the Bay of Marthathon, north of Athens. But Athens, without the help of Spartans, succeeded in defeating the Persians and subsequently prevented the fleet from landing off Athens.

In 486B.C., Egypt revolted against excessive tribute and Darius was unable to check the revolt. Then his son Xerxes succeeded him.

**Xerxes (486 B.C.-479 B.C.)**

After accession to the throne, he put down the revolt of Egypt and another in Babylonia and completed his father's preparations in the West. In the spring of 480B.C., he made victorious march towards Thermopylae and invaded Africa. But then he suffered three continuous defeats, first on sea at Salamies, then on land at Plateau in 479B.C. and thirdly in another sea battle at Mycale on the Asiatic coast.

**Artaxerxes-I (479 B.C. - 424 B.C.)**

He immediately put down the Bactrian revolt supported by his brother and then he had to contend with Inaros of Egypt, who attempted, with Athenian aid, to liberate the country from Persian domination. The war lasted for 6 years and ended with reconquest of Egypt by Persia and the conclusion of treaty with Athens. The latter fixed the harbour of Phaselis as the limit for operations by the Greek and Persian fleets, on the West and East respective.
Darius - II (423 B.C. - 404 B.C.)

He faced many revolts by satraps, the most serious being that of Pissuthenes in Libya in 414 B.C. The king wanted two Greek coalitions, headed by Athens and Sparta, to wear one another out. But his satraps favoured first one city then the other and finally one placed under his son Cyrus the Younger. Meanwhile Egypt regained its liberty and kept it for sixty years.\(^{21}\)

Artaxerxes - II (404 B.C. - 358 B.C.)

He started open rivalry with his brother Cyrus the Younger who fell at Cunaxa in 401 after waging a war on the king. He was then engaged in war with Sparta in Asia Minor from 401 B.C. to 394 B.C. In this war, Sparta navy was destroyed at Cnidus and in the Corinthian war, which followed a Greek coalition, was organised against Sparta, permitting the revival of Athens under the leadership of Conon. But this did not prevent Spartans from achieving a revised political settlement under which they recognized Persian domination of Greek cities of Asia but secured Persian support for Spartan hegemony in Greece (386 B.C.).\(^ {22}\)

Artaxerxes - III (358 B.C. - 338 B.C.)

He ruthlessly suppressed the rebellions in the empire with the aid of Greek mercenaries. But his harsh treatment to the Asiatic Greeks began to attract the attention of Phillip - II of Macedonian whose expedition in 336 B.C. was designed to help them. The expedition ended in the same year when Phillip was assassinated, but a few months later Artaxerxes too was murdered and after a brief reign by his younger son Arses (who was quickly eliminated) the throne was passed to Darius - III.\(^ {23}\)

Darius - III (338 B.C. - 330 B.C.)

Alexander the Great at Issus and Gaugamela defeated him. after the fall of Persepolis. He fled to the eastern Satrapies, where in 330 B.C. Bessus put him to death, satrap of Bacteria. His murder usurped the Persian throne under the name of Artaxerxes - IV, but Alexander, who entered Bacteria after his occupation of
Hyrcania and Drangiana, brought him to book. The conqueror then took Sagdiana on his way to India (327 B.C.). By now all Persian possessions had passed to the Macedonian; he took over the rights of sovereignty and used the seals of the Kings he had put down.  

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**Assyria and Chaldea**

Assur was located in on the northeast corner of the 'Fertile Crescent' on the east bank of the Tigris. It was on a plateau, bounded by mountains on the north and east, desert on the west and Akkad on the south. The position of the city on the Tigris was midway between the upper and lower Zab: both rivers facilitated expansion to the east. Little more than one hundred miles to the west, was the valley of Khabur, control of which subsequently proved vital to the economic interests. Powerful neighbours surrounded Assur. To the south, there was Kassites, who after 1800 B.C. conquered Babylon. To the northeast, was the Kingdom of Van (Urartu) to the west and northwest, were Aramaeans, Hittites and Mittani. Assur continually had to fight these belligerent peoples, with the consequent development of her virility, discipline and military powers. Compared with Babylonia, Assyria was rich in natural resources. There were adequate supplies of building stone and minerals. The climate was temperate, the soil for the most part, fertile and arable without irrigation.  

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With the accession of Tiglath-Pileser-III (745-727 B.C.) the empire became strong after a brief decline. After his accession to the throne Sarduris of Van was compelled to accept his suzerainty. After a brief reign of Shalmaneser V (727-22 B.C.) a usurper who assumed the name of Sargon-II (722-705 B.C.) was crowned as a result of rebellion. In the first year of Sargon's reign, rebellion in Palestine brought prompt reprisal with the conquest of Samaria (North-Palestine). But the main threat of action in Sargon's reign was the south Merodach-Baladan, ruler of Babylon, made a coalition with Elamites with the result that Assyrian commercial interests were hampered. The allies were defeated separately and Babylon came under direct Assyrian control.  

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After Sargon, the powerful ruler in this line was Sennacherib IV (705-681
B.C.). He quelled the revolution in Babylon and finally annexed it. Tyre and Sydon were captured in addition with Jerusalem. But Jerusalem was escaped from the capture when Sennacherib's army left the siege. The reign of Sennacherib came to an end with his assassination by one of his sons. However Esarhaddon (681-668 B.C.) another son, ultimately captured the throne. Another coalition of Elamites and Chaldeans was suppressed by Essarhaddon. A hostile Syrian alliance, instigated by Egypt was formed under the leadership of Sidon,

but the military power of empire proved well able to crush the uprising. Upper Egypt was placed under native rulers who acknowledged the Assyrian suzerainty. Under Esarhaddon the territory reached at its peak.

But under Assur-bani-Pal (668-626 B.C.) the empire fell into rapid decline. Egypt went out the control and other vassal states became powerful taking the opportunity of weakness of Assyria. After the death of Assurbanipal, a civil war in Assyria gave Nabopolassar, the governor of Babylon the opportunity to establish Chaldean supremacy in Babylonia (625 B.C.). Palestine and Syria revolted without reprisal. Cyaxeres united the Medes and defeated the Assyrian forces along the upper Euphrates. In 614 B.C., a coalition of Medes and Chaldeans succeeded in capturing Assur.

The Chaldean Empire (625 B.C.-539 B.C.)

With the internal weakness of Assyrian empire, the Chaldeans in conjunction with Medes, hastened to capitalise on this opportunity. Cyaxeres the King of Media attacked Asur, when the success of the movement seemed assured; Nabopolassar, and the Assyrian governor of Babylon in 626 B.C. won the independence of Chaldea. A joint expedition under Cyxeres and Nabopolassar. then marched against Nineveh and capitulated in 612 B.C. Nabopolessar was in a precarious position because Median allies turned against him and attempted to incorporate Chaldea to his empire. In other side the Assyrians supported by Egypt posed another challenge.

In 610 B.C. Egyptians sent an army; they captured Carchemis and massacred the Babylonian citizens and Chaldean sympathisers. In face of this
imminent danger, the Chaldean and Median alliance was revived. Nebuchadrezzar (son of Nabopolassar) of Chaldea, together with Median allies defeated the Egyptian army. Finally Syria and Palestine were annexed to Chaldean empire. Under the rule of Nebuchadrezzar (604-561 B.C.) the revolt of Jadah was foiled and Jews were taken captive.\textsuperscript{33}

After the death of Nebuchadrezzar (561 B.C.) the period of dissension started in Babylon. The energies of ruling class were sapped by luxury and debauch. When that last ruler Nabonidus withdrew from anti-Persian coalition formed under leadership of Croesus, Lydia was conquered by Cyrus, founder of Persian Empire (586-529 B.C.). Cyrus then conquered Akkad and began to attack Chaldea from Elam. Babylon was taken by Persians without a siege (539-538 B.C.).

Finally the Persian Empire engulfed the whole Assyrian as well as Chaldean empire.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Trade Routes}

Various trade routes were opened for West Asia from the time immemorial. The different merchant communities have adopted different routes according to the suitability. Both Buddhist and Brahminical texts are replete with the references of sea borne trade of India. In addition with these sources, there are all sorts of evidences of literary, inscriptional and numismatic, both Indian and foreign. As a matter of fact, in various foreign works, there are abundant allusions of India's commerce, arts, and manufactures, indicating the glorious position she once occupied and for long maintained as the "Queen of Eastern Seas."\textsuperscript{35}

From prehistoric times, the great trade routes have connected India with the West. Among these routes, the easiest and the oldest one was a Persian Gulf route, running from the mouth of the Indus to the Euphrates and at Euphrates, the roads branch off to Antioch and the Levantine ports.\textsuperscript{36} There was the overland route from the Indian passes to Balkh, and from Balkh, either by river, down the Oxus to the Caspian, and from the Caspian to the Euxine, or entirely
by land, by the Caravan road and which skirts the Karmanian \(^{37}\) desert to the north passes through the Caspian Gates. And this route reaches at Antioch by way of Hekatompylos and Ktesiphon. Finally there was a circuitous sea route, down the Persian and Arabian coasts to Aden up the Red Sea to Suez and from Suez to Egypt on the one hand and Tyre and Sidon on the other. \(^{38}\)

The Persian Gulf trade was at first principally in the hands of Chaldeans, a troublesome nation that was always busy in piracy. \(^{39}\) But Sennacherib exterminated them in 694 B.C. with the aid of a great fleet, which he built upon the Tigris. After breaking the nests of piracy, Sennacherib sent the pirates to dwell in Gerrha. \(^{40}\) The trade of the Persian Gulf then fell into the hands of the ubiquitous Phoenicians, a colony of whom, according to Justin, \(^{41}\) had settled in the Babylonian marshes, having been driven out of their own land by earthquakes. In the days of Strabo, there are more evidences about the presence of merchants at the mouth of Persian Gulf. \(^{42}\)

Bahrain Island was the main centre where all the ships were carrying the water for their journey. \(^{43}\) In comparison to Bahrain coast, Makran coast was inhospitable and there was nothing to offer the merchants. The immense trade with all nations carried on by Phoenicians may be estimated by studying the remarkable passage in which the prophet Ezekiel prophesises the overthrow of great city of Tyre in 573 B.C. by Nebuchadrezzr-II. "Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of multitude of thy riches; with silver, iron, tin and lead, they traded for thy wares... Clan also and Javan going to and fro, occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia and calamus were in thy market... And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee sayings "who is there like Tyre, like her that is brought to silence in the midst of the sea? When the wares went forth out of the seas, thou fillest many peoples: thou didnt enrich the kings of earth with multitude of thy riches and thy merchandise". \(^{44}\) Herodotus refers to the Phoenician ships as "taking to long voyages, loading their ships with Assyrian and Egyptian wares". \(^{45}\)

When Assyrian empire was overthrown (606 B.C.) Babylon took the
place of Nineveh as the queen of western Asia. In the cities and crowded market places, the merchants of different countries were found. Among them were Iranian traders, Jewish captives, and Phoenician merchants from distant Tarshish and Indians from the Punjab who came to sell their wares. Babylon was the great resort of different races that were coming from different places for trade purposes. There are many stories in the Jataka about the Indian merchants' travel to Babylon. A Babylonian colony may have sprung up on the borders of India, for Strabo tells us that the followers of Alexander found at Taxila a marriage market conducted on his well known Babylonian principle. The commercial intercourse between India and Semitic nations was mainly carried on by sea. The merchants travelling through Hindu Kush to Mediterranean parts were facing many wild tribes on their way. Again the journey through this mountain and deserts was a tedious task for the merchants. So the merchants usually preferred to the sea-routes. But it does not mean that the traders were not traveling through deserts. No doubt, the caravans traveled from immemorial times to the great emporium of Bactria, where the roads from India, China and the West converged, there the cargos were shipped into rafts and floated down the Oxus the Caspian and thence partly by land and partly by river to the Euxine. Those who were traveling entirely by land, they followed the great road which still skirts the Karmanian Desert to the north, passes through Caspian Gates and crossing the Euphrates at Thapsacus, ends at Antioch and Levantine ports.

Another important trade route between India and West Asia was that which ran from the north of the Red Sea to the India up to the Arabian coast. This route carries the importance because it linked India not only to gold fields and the fabulously wealthy incense country of Southern Arabia and Somaliland, but to Egypt and Judaea. Through Judaea, Indian goods found another outlet by way of adjacent ports of their allies of Tyre and Sidon, to the Mediterranean.

From time immemorial, the famous Egyptian traders were trading in the Red Sea by fetching the spices from the land of Punt and Arabia Felix. Undoubtedly, the Indian goods were brought to Aden by the Arabian vessels,
though it was clear that Egyptians were poor sailors. On the suggestion of Solomon, the Tyrian monarch prepared a fleet of "ship of Tarshish" at Ezion Geber. The "navy of Tarshish" made a voyage to the East, bringing back with them a vast quantity of gold and silver, ivory, apes, peacocks and plenty of almug trees and precious stones. The port at which these goods were loaded is called Ophir. It is presumed that Ophir was the important port of India because India was rich in gold. Ophir may be Sophir, which is applied in Coptic in South India or Suppara in Gujarat.

King Solomon tried to appropriate a share of this trade for the Jewish people by creating the facilities for the Eastern traders both on land and sea routes. He built various resting places on the land route for the caravans in the cities of Tadmore (Palmyra), Baalbec (Heliopolis) and Hamaath (Epiphania). And his foresight in protecting these caravan trade routes bore fruits in trading centres of Mesopotamia, viz. Babylon, Ctesiphon, Seleucia and Ossis., which all flourished for a long time on the profits of the commerce with the East.

Phoenicians were not so bad sailors. They were bold sailors as they were, ever accomplished the lengthy voyages from Suez to Indian port, particularly a South Indian port, in the primitive vessels then in use. Usually the sailors were traveling along the coast and the voyages would have to go right up the Arabian and Persian coasts, an enormously long way. It is much more probable that Ophir was an enterpot of Arabia where the boats and wares of different countries like India and Arabia was entering. Basically the primitive trade was passed from tribe to tribe and port to port. Ophir was probably at the mouth of Persian Gulf, on the coast of Oman. Hither came for export the gold from the rich fields of Southern Arabia, which has made Ophir famous. The death of Solomon, gave blow to the trade, the trade of Ezion Geber gradually declined with chequered fortunes of the Jewish nation.

During the time of Buddha, there are many references about India's trade with Western Asia. Rhys Danids says, "Sea going merchants availing themselves of the monsoons were in the habit at the beginning of the 7th B.C. of trading
from ports on the south west coast of India (Sovira at first, Supparaka and Bharukachha) to Babylon". This evidence of Jataka and some of the Sanskrit law books leads to Jackson to conclude that the ships from Broach and Suppara traded with Babylon from 6th century B.C.

The Supparaka Jataka informs us that sea merchants once started from Bharukachcha and passed Khuramala, Nalamala, Valabhamukha, Agnimala, Dahimala and Nilakusamala. As these names are mentioned in the Gathas they are very old. Dr. Jaiswal has identified Khuramala with some ports on Persian Gulf situated in South-eastern Arabia. Agnimala according to him could be identified with the seacoast near Aden and some parts of Somaliland. Dadhimala is the Red Sea and Nilakusamala is a part of Nubia situated in northeast coast of Africa. Nalamala is the canal joining the Red Sea and the Mediterranean and Valabhamukha is same part of the Mediterranean in which even today we find volcanoes. If Jaiswal's identifications are correct then we will have to agree that Indian navigators were well acquainted with the sea route between Broach and the Mediterranean. But Greek and Latin sources point out that Indian sailors had no knowledge about this route.

The occupation of India by Achaemenids again opened the land routes to West Asia. The campaign of Cyrus and Darius-I were political in nature. The campaigns of Cyrus continued up to the river Jaxartes and of Darius-I to the Indus. According to Pliny, however, Cyrus reached upto Kapisi and Herodouts is of the opinion that the campaigns of Darius reached upto the Indian Ocean.

Darius at first decided to subdue the lower Indus and then reach the Arabian Sea. Probably with this intention he dispatched Skyalx to explore the lower Indus. His flotilla started from Multan. A little below the city of the left bank of the Chenab, Darius' fleet was made ready which after sailing for two and half years reached Egypt. In the course of the voyage the fleet touched the Egyptian ports of the Red Sea thus ensuring the safety of the ports on the western Indian coast as well. With this conquest from the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris upto the mouth of the Indus, Sind came under his control.
and the peace of the Indian Ocean was ensured.\textsuperscript{73}

The invasion of Alexander brought a great change in the trade. After the conquest of Tyre by Alexander the Great and the foundation of Alexandria, the Egyptians came into the field of commerce and after the successive decline of the Jewish, Phoenicians and Persian powers in Western Asia, they retained the monopoly of the trade with Arabians for about 900 years.\textsuperscript{74}

\textbf{Export and Import of Goods}

India, "the Queen of Eastern Seas" was famous for different goods that exported to different parts of world. The evidences, which are available, clearly show that in the pre-Mauryan phase, India had cultivated trade relations successively with Phoenicians, Jews, Assyrians, Greeks, Egyptians and Romans. A genial climate and a fertile soil coupled with industry and frugality of the Indian people, rendered them virtually independent of foreign nations in respect of their necessaries of life, while their secondary wants were few.\textsuperscript{75} Therefore, export exceeded the import not only in quantity but also in price; and the balance of trade was in favour of India. There are various epigraphic, literal as well as archaeological sources available in this respect. On the basis of these sources the idea about the import and export of goods can be constructed.

The Jewish annals mention the names of various articles, which may be traced to Indian origin. Thus "ivory" is in the Herbrew text \textit{Shen fiabbin} \textsuperscript{76} elephant's teeth, a literal translation of the Sanskrit ibhadanta.\textsuperscript{77} The word used for 'ape' is not the ordinary Hebrew one but \textit{Koph} obviously the Sanskrit \textit{Kapi}. "Peacocks" are \textit{thuki-im} the Tamil \textit{tokei}.\textsuperscript{78} Tin, the late Sanskrit, \textit{Kastira} may have come from Far East to Greece or vice-versa. India proper has no tin ore.\textsuperscript{79} Ivory reached Greece at an early period from India. The 'ape' like the ivory of Solomon also found its way to Egypt, if the Egyptian \textit{Kafu} like Hebrew \textit{Koph} comes from \textit{kapi}. Among the substances, which originally came from Dravidian ports, mention may be made of rice, which like ivory was originally brought to Europe by Arab traders.\textsuperscript{80} The Tamil \textit{arisi} became \textit{aruz} in Arabian. Other articles of trade which reached Europe at various dates from Dravidian ports are:
aloes (tamil [aghit], Hebrew - [ahal]) Cinnamon (Tamil [Karappu], first mentioned by Ktesias); ginger (Tamil [pippali]) and the beryl-stone (Tamil and Sanskrit [Vaidury]).

Jataka stories inform us that various kinds of birds and beasts including the valuable Sind horses were exported to West-Asia. Among the animals monkey and among the bird’s peacocks, parrots and crows were important. India provided Europe with wool from the fleeces of the sheep bred on northwestern mountain ranges, famous in the days of Alexander the Great. Only, Chalcedony, lapis lazuli and jasper then esteemed as precious stones. Other products were resinous gum, furs, asafetida and musk. The embroidered woolen fabrics and coloured carpets were highly prized in Babylon. But the most valuable of the exports of India was silk, which under the Persian Empire, is said to have been exchanged by weight with gold. It was manufactured in India, as well as obtained for re-export from China. Next to silk in value were cotton clothes ranging from coarse canvas and calicoes to muslin of the finest texture. India also supplied foreign countries with oils, brassware, a liquid preparation of the sugarcane, salt, drugs, dyes and the aromatics while she had also a monopoly in the matter of the supply of pepper, cinnamon, and other edible spices which were in great demand throughout Europe.

Again the Indian teak was found in the ruins of Ur. It is assumed that this wood must have been sent by sea from the ports of Malabar Coast, for it was only there that teak grew near enough to the sea, to be exported with profit in those early times. Again muslin was the most favourite item of Babylonians, which must have been brought by sea from India. The Indian beam of Cedar is found in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar at Birs Nirmud. Again two rough logs of Indian wood are found in the Temple of Moon God at Ur, which was also built by Nebuchadnezzar.

The principal commodities imported from India were gold, precious stones, ivory etc. Further, according to Wilkinson, the presence of indigo, tamarind wood and other Indian products have been detected in the tombs of
Egypt and Lassen has also pointed out that the Egyptians dyed cloth with indigo and wrapped their mummies in Indian muslin.\textsuperscript{88}

In comparison with export, import was quite less. Through the ages, India had occupied a unique position in the commercial world as the main supplier of the world's luxuries. As a consequence, she enjoyed the balance of trade clearly in her favour. A balance that could only be settled by the export of treasure from European and West Asian countries that were commercially indebted to her.\textsuperscript{89} India desired nothing in exchange of vast number of goods except some precious metals. Thus she has been for many centuries the final depository of a large proportion of metallic wealth of the world.\textsuperscript{90} India imported mainly tin, lead, glass, amber, steel for arms, coral and to small extent medicinal drugs from Europe and Western Asia. From Arabia, India was indebted for frankincense, which was used in temples.\textsuperscript{91} There were some goods, which were imported from West Asian countries. But the goods, which were exported, had outnumbered the goods, which were imported. A great question disturbs the scholars that how the countries of West were repaying cost of goods, which were exported from India. Some of the hoards of foreign coins, which are found in different parts of India, are indicating that probably they were paying for the extra goods in cash. But this view does not provide the satisfactory answer to this question because what was the use of these coins in India is another puzzling question. But the need of metals by Indians was satisfied in some extent by these coins. No conclusion can be drawn on this fact unless and until further proofs are not coming in this way.

**Political Contacts and Administrative Impacts**

India's relation with Iranians is very old. It is generally presumed that the Aryans and Early Iranians were two branches of a single stem. After the migration of Aryans or Indo-Iranians to India, the old cultural link between the two lands severed. The two people turned their backs upon each other and developed their distinctive civilization apparently without least mutual influence. The geographical barriers created a chasm in the relations between the two
lands. But in 611 century B.C. the political scenario changed a lot and helped the Iranians to establish their old contacts. In the first half of this period, the Uttarapatha beyond the Madhyadesha, like the rest of India, was paralleled into a number of small states, the most important of which were Kamboja, Gandhara, and Madra. These small states were not only wealthy but also disunited which attracted the attention of foreign invaders in order to satiate their desire to amass the untold wealth of India. Taking the opportunity of this fragmented politics, the Achamenian monarch swayed their influence.

Kurush or Cyrus (558-530 B.C.) the founder of Persian Empire led an expedition through Gedrosia to India. But the exact limit of his territory in India, conquered and annexed by him during this campaign is difficult to determine. We have two opposite versions about the extent of empire of Cyrus in India.

Herodotus, Ctesias and Xenophon, the three classical writers point out that Cyrus conquered parts of India. According to Herodotus, Cyrus conquered the borderlands between India and Iran comprising Seistan. Sattagyidia and Gandhara. Ctesias has suggested that the Indians fought on behalf of the Debrikes against Cyrus. An Indian fighter inflicted a wound on Cyrus, which caused his death. These Debrikes were probably some frontier tribes of India. According to Xenophon, Cyrus brought under his rule Bactrians and Indians and that he extended his sway from Syria up to the Indian Ocean (Erythrean Sea). Xenophon narrates a story that some Indian kings sent an embassy to Cyrus to pay him tribute. On the basis of these evidences it is supposed that Cyrus had conquered Gandhara, which was part of India.

But the statements of Nearchus and Megasthenes go against the above evidences. Nearchus, a Greek writer of Alexander's time has rejected the possibility of Cyrus's advance in India. He has narrated a story heard from the people of Baluchistan that Cyrus made an attempt to invade India through Baluchistan and suffered a great loss of his army and escaped with seven men only. Megasthenes has remarked that, "the Indians had never engaged in
foreign warfare, nor had they ever been invaded and conquered by any foreign power except Heracles and Dionysus and lately the Macedonians”. He has pointed out that the Persian hired mercenary troops from India called Hydrakes.

Probably Nearchus and Megasthenes were misguided and thought river Indus as the western boundary of India and the land lying the west of the Indus as outside of India.\(^9^{9}\) As Cyrus conquered the western part of India, which was part of India. Megasthenes held the view that foreigners never attacked India. That Cyrus conquered the land to the West of Indus is attested by other Greek writers. Pliny states that Cyrus conquered Kapisa in the Ghorband valley. Arrian states that Indians living between Kabul and Indus were subjected to the Assyrians, Medes and to the Persian under Cyrus and paid tributes imposed upon them.\(^1^{0}^{0}\) However, it is reasonable to conclude that Cyrus definitely conquered Afghanistan and Baluchistan i.e. Hindukush and the Kabul valley. Whether he conquered territories upto the Indus, it is not definitely known.

During the reign of Darius-I (522-486 B.C.) the Persians made some real advance in India. The Bahistan inscription mentions that Gandhara was the part of Darius-I Empire.

Inscription-VII (Thus) Saith Darius the King: these are the provinces which are subject unto me and by the grace of Auramazda became King of them: Persia, Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, the (Islands) of the Sea, Sparda, Ionia (Media) Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdina, Gandara, Scythia, Sattagydia, Arachosia and Maka; twenty three lands in all.\(^1^{0}^{1}\)

This is further confirmed by the Susa Palace Inscription of Darius, which mentions that teak was brought from Gadara (Gandhara) for the construction of the palace of the Emperor.\(^1^{0}^{2}\)

The extent of the empire of Darius in India was not merely confined to Gandhara but extended further towards the Indus is well attested by the Naksh-i-Rustam and the Persepolis inscriptions. In these inscriptions Gandhara and Sindhu or Hindu (Punjab)\(^1^{0}^{3}\) are mentioned as the provinces of Darius' empire.
The Hamdan Gold and Silver Tablet Inscription also mention Sindhu as a province of the empire of Darius.\textsuperscript{104}

Like all other foreigners, Darius was also motivated by the wealth of India, which he came to know from the different sources.\textsuperscript{105} He probably, like Alexander, advanced up to India from Baktra and reaching the river Indus at the town of Kaspapyrus, frontier city of Gandhara, he sent an expedition under a Greek mercenary, Skylax of Karyanda, to explore the river down to its mouth.\textsuperscript{106} Presumably, Skylax had ordered to find his way to the Red Sea and not to return by the shorter Persian Gulf Route, with which the Persians were probably well acquainted. He completed his adventurous voyage in two and half years' duration to reach at Arsinol, the modern Suez already used by the Egyptians for the trade with the East.\textsuperscript{107} The time he took, from that one may infer that Skylax probably enquiring his way from port to port. He traced his route along the old trade route to Ophir, and from Ophir to Aden along the Arabian coast. Skylax has double distinction of having been the first Greek to visit India and to make Red Sea voyage. The latter feat was not repeated till the days of Eudoxus, three centuries later.\textsuperscript{108} Unfortunately the work of Skylax is lost but some parts of original text have been found in the work of Herodotus.\textsuperscript{109}

Darius annexed northwestern part of Indus Valley and made it twentieth satrapy of Persian Empire. But some scholars opine that the part of India was not conquered by him but he had inherited from his father Cyrus. Whatever may be the fact, Indian Territory was the part of his empire. The Indians were paying 360 talents of gold dust as tribute. This gold dust was probably collected from the gold mines of Dardistan.\textsuperscript{110}

The Persian Empire reached at its furthest limit under Darius. Darius earned the fresh laurels in India in addition what he had inherited from his predecessor. The extent of Indian conquests of Darius can't be determined. It is however, reasonably held that Darius undoubtedly conquered some territories in Punjab lying to the East of Indus. That the Persian Empire did not extend beyond this limit is inferred from the silence of Herodotus. The explicit statement of
Herodotus that Darius never conquered the country south of Indus and the desert of Sind and Rajputna also confirms this.

Xerxes (486-465 B.C.) came to the throne as the successor of Darius-I and maintained his hold over Indian provinces. But he failed to make any forward movement in India due to the commitments in Greece. Herodotus states that Xerxes requisitioned large number of troops including infantry and cavalry from India for invasion of Greece. They were denoted by two terms, "Gandarians and Indians". The Gandarians, according to Herodotus were bearing boars of reed and short spears and the Indians as being clad in cotton garments and bearing can bows with arrows tipped with iron. Among the interesting relics of Persian dominion in India, mention is sometimes made of "Taxila inscription in Aramaic characters of the fourth and fifth century B.C." The Persians are attributed to the introduction of Khorosti alphabet, "The Persepolitan capital" and the words like "dipti (rescript)" and 'nipista (written)' occurring in the inscription of Ashoka. Persian influence has also been traced in the Preamble of Ashokan edicts.

The defeat of Xerxes in Greece initiated the process of decline of Persian power in India. But Artaxerxes Mnemon (418-398 B.C.) had a tiger and two swords of Indian steel sent to him from India, according to the Greek physician Ctesias who was the resident in the Persian court at Susa.

However, the Achaeminian (Persian) rule over India continued up to 330 B.C. In that year Darius-III, the last Achaemenian rulers summoned Indian troops to fight against Alexander, the Great, at Gaugamela and Arbela. The Indians in addition with Bactrians, Sagdarians had come to the aid of Darius-III, all were under the command of Bessus, the viceroy of land of Bactria. Barsaents, the viceroy of Arachoitia, led the Arachoitians and the men who were called mountaineer Indians. There were few elephants about fifteen in number belonging to the Indians who lived this side of Indus. But the hold of Achaemenians over India at that time was very feeble and the defeat of Persians by the hands of Alexander brought the chapter of Indo-Persian relations to the
R.C. Majumdar holds a different view about the continuation of Persian rule in north-western India during Darius-III. According to him, after the rule of Xerxes, the Persian domination over India weakened which gave an opportunity to raise the heroes like Porus and heroic tribes like Asmakas whom Alexander faced during his invasion. The Indian army employed by Darius-III at Arbela might have been the mercenary troops.

**Results of Persian Domination over India**

The impacts of Persian dominion over India are mostly indirect and did not last for long time. It was an episode in Indian history, a triumph without result. It inspired the rulers of India, particularly in Magadha, to set up vast empires in imitation of Leviathan Empire of Persia.

The invasion of Alexander was the byproduct of Persian domination over India. Alexander followed the route, which was largely used by Persians. After the invasion of Alexander, the relation between Persia and India continued in an unabated zeal. Persia served as the high way of contact between India and Greece. Indian scholars visited Greece though Persia and some Indian philosophers debated with Socrates.

Again the exploration of Persian navigator Skylax opened better trade routes of communication between India and western Asia. Ashokan scripts like Kharosti was derived from the Persian script Aramaic and Persian alphabet like Yavanani entered into the family of Indian language.

The excavation of Achaemenid town at Taxila gives some interesting facts about Kharosti script. There was an Aramaic inscription, which has been examined by Herzfeld who read it as "Priyadarshan" which is identifying the Mauryan ruler Ashok. John Marshall observes, "The discovery of this inscriptions is of special interest in connection with the origin of the Kharosthi alphabet, since it confirms the view that the Kharosti was derived at Taxila (which was the chief city of Kharosthi language prevalent area) from Aramaic,
the latter having been introduced into the North-West of India by the Achaemenids after the conquest of the country about 500 B.C.".123

There is a great debate over the question that whether Kharosti was originated in India or was originally the script of Kashgar.124 After the discovery of Kharosti documents in Central Asia, it may be taken as finally settled. None of these documents are earlier than Christian era, while on the other hand, the epigraphs of Ashoka in northwestern India are all written in Kharosti script.

According to Buhler, the Kharosti language came to India by the Persian officials in satraps. It became wide prevalent in India when Indian officials, village headmen and heads of town maintained their records in Kharosti script.125 At first the Indian probably used Aramaic characters, just as in later times they used the Arabic writing for a number of their dialects, and they introduced in course of time the modifications observable in the Kharosti alphabet. This supposition of Buhler was strengthened by the fact that the vowel system and the compound consonants in Kharosi point to the fact that they were elaborated with the help of Brahmi, which was the original script of Indians.126 It prevailed in most part of the country while Kharosti was used only in the region which once had passed under the foreign rule.127

The Persian coins like Daric and Shekels influenced the Indian coinage.128 Persian influence on Mauryan dynasty was felt largely. The Mauryan palace at Pataliputra and Ashokan pillars were influenced by Persian architecture.129 The Mauryas even borrowed some court manners and hair washing ceremony from the Persians.130 Early Buddhism influenced the philosophical movements in Persia like Manichacism. Later on Zoroastrianism of Persia made its impact on Mahayana Buddhism.131

**Alexander's Invasion of India**

Alexander resolved to launch the invasion of India after inflicting the first blow on Emperor Darius-III of Persia. The approximate cause of Indian campaign of Alexander may be varied. India's vast wealth and prosperity was the chief factor of his invasion. Again he felt it necessary to conquer the remaining
parts of the Persian Empire in order to give the real meaning to his adopted title, "The Great King of Persia". His expansionist zeal was further awakened when an embassy from the King of Taxila met him at Sagdiana. This is the first recorded instance of the Indian seeking foreign aid against fellow Indians. But Dr. Smith has suggested that Alexander wanted to surpass the heroism shown by the mythical heroes like Heracles and others.

In the spring of 327 B.C., when the snows of Hindukush melted away, Alexander crossed the mountain with 30,000 men. He divided his army into two parts. A part of the army proceeded under Hephaestion and Perdiccas and marched along the southern bank of Kabul valley with a view to reach the Indus. The second part of the army was laid by Alexander himself was to move along the valley in the north of the Kabul river. On their way they subjugated many tribes who opposed them. One tribe, Massagans, who inflicted a serious wound on Alexander, which nearly cost his life. Finally the mighty army of Alexander inflicted a severe blow on Massagans and mercilessly butchered 7000 mercenaries. Diodorus and Plutarch have condemned Alexander for his cruelty. But V. Smith has justified the massacre on the ground of military expediency.

Alexander crossed the river Indus, in the spring of 326 B.C. Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila greeted him and offered his homage as an overlord and presented rich tributes. Alexander sent an envoy from Taxila to Elder Porus or Paurav whose kingdom was situated in between Jhelam and Chenab, asking for his submission. But Porus gave a defiant reply and prepared for the battle. Mr. Bevan suggested that Paurav did not fight for India's honour, solidarity and Indian nationalism. He is correct in some extent because the concept of nationalism was rare among the ancient rulers and almost all rulers were fighting for protection of their own kingdom. But Porus' desire to face the death of honour instead of surrendering like cowards to the foreign rulers, is indicative of his nationalist fervour, typical to the age in which he lived.

Porus accepted the defeat because his army could not stand against vast
well-equipped army of Alexander. After that, Alexander had a sweeping march up to Beas.\(^{139}\) The war weary soldiers of Alexander refused to proceed after Beas. In that situation, Alexander had no way out excepting to return. On his way of return journey, he subdued some tribes. At Patala, Alexander divided his army into three sections for homeward journey. One section marched through Archosia (Kandahar) and Drangiana (Seistan); Alexander himself marched at the head of second section through Gedrosia (Baluchistan) and the third part led by Nearchus sailed through Persian Gulf.\(^{140}\) The Macedonian army returned to Persia in 324 B.C. While Alexander was encamping at Babylon, he was attacked with fever and died in 323 B.C.

**Impact of Alexander's Invasion**

Alexander's adventure to include India in his principalities was a part of his much-cherished ambition of World Empire. Some of the scholars are fascinated by the splendour of Alexander's name and the so-called vision of "Hellenizing the East" Mr. V. Smith has estimated the military success of Alexander in India with remark, "The triumphant progress of Alexander from Himalayas to the sea demonstrated the weakness of greatest Asiatic armies when confronted the European skill and discipline."\(^{141}\) Prof. Bury has explained the noble intentions of Alexander in India as follows. "The advance to the Indus was no mere wanton aggression. The solid interests of commerce underlay the ambition of Macedonian conqueror".\(^{142}\) Though commercial interest was one among the prime motives of Alexander, he could not take concrete initiatives in this direction. He could not live long to fructify his ambitions.\(^{143}\) But his contribution to the commercial linkages between India and West was no less praiseworthy. He built a harbour at Patala, where Indus splits into two branches. It remained as an important trade centre of western trade and was the principal harbour in northwestern India until Barygaza rivaled its claims. Phillip, the satrap of Parthia, was put in charge of the new provinces with the orders to push on the development of colonies and the completion of naval docks and other commercial undertakings with all speed.\(^{144}\) On reaching the mouth of the river
Indus, Alexander determined to build a dock at the end of eastern arm as he found there an excellent natural harbour forming a lake like basin.\textsuperscript{145}

Alexander set up the trading depots at various places on the way of his long and arduous journey. Bukephala and Nikaea were built on the bank of Hydaspes; Alexandria on Indus was the important spot where Akesines joins the main stream.\textsuperscript{146} Alexandria in Indus became an important port through which Indian traders carried out their trade to the West.\textsuperscript{147} It survived till the overthrow of Macedonian power in the Punjab, for many years and became famous under Bactrian king as a great Graeco-Buddhist centre. "Alasanda of Yonas" is mentioned in the Mahavamsa, as the capital of "yona country" and 30,000 monks are said to have come from this place to the dedication festival of the great tope of Ruanvelli in 137 B.C.\textsuperscript{148} We have curiously enough, in the name of this town, the only mention in Indian literature of the name of the great Macedonian conqueror.\textsuperscript{149}

Alexander, during his preparation of return journey, came to know from Indians that there was a fair sea-route to Mesopotamia. Admiral Nearehus was given orders by Alexander to sail from the mouth of the Indus to the Euphrates.\textsuperscript{150} The Admiral acquired flotilla of riverboats, some of which were 30 oared built in the Punjab by a tribe known as Ksatri (Xathori)\textsuperscript{151} to make a sea-voyage of nearly 1500 miles. The fleet set sail along the coast of Persian Gulf and despite the gales of rough sea, reached Ormuz, which is a testimony to the hardy structure of Indian built boats of those days. Bulland comments that, "From a maritime stand point its (the sea voyage of Nearchus) special interest lies in the proof that even twenty three centuries before our times, the sea men of the East were already quite familiar with the navigation of Indian Ocean between India and Persia, and aware that at the proper season of the year a west bound coasting voyage between the countries was safe and feasible even for river craft".\textsuperscript{152}

The exploration of Indus-Valley was the beginning of the new chapter of India-West relations. We can't gauge what might have been the result .if
Alexander was alive for a long time to carry out his schemes. Would the Indus valley have become the centre of Hellenistic culture, as Egypt and Syria became, where the civilization of the East and West blended to form a new product? The question never got a satisfied answer due to the immature death of Alexander. The voyages and expeditions of Alexander in the northwest opened up new lines of communication between India and west and added to the store of geographical knowledge and trade. Just like Columbus, Alexander did not bring India into the map of the world; he opened four distinct trade routes, which helped the traders in later dates. He discovered the route via the land route through Kabul, Mullah pass in the Baluchistan, and through Gedrosia (Makran) and the maritime route through the Persian Gulf.

Culturally, India was greatly influenced by coming in contacts with Macedonians. Alexander broke the wall of separation between the East and West and established the direct contact between the Indian and Mediterranean civilizations. This contact did not cease with the decay of Alexander's empire. All subsequent contacts between India and Greece are the legacies of Alexander's campaign. Alexander's invasion opened the door of cultural contacts between India and Greece. India received from Greece the lessons of astronomy, Gandhara Art and the art of coinage. The Aethian type of 'owl' coins and silver drachms are impacts of this contact. Whether Mauryan art and architecture was influenced by Greek style of art and architecture is difficult to determine. India, on other hand influenced Greece with her philosophy and religion.

Some of the scholars view the invasion of Alexander was culturally barren because India was not Hellenized and she continued to live her life of splendid isolation and soon forgot the story of Macedonian deluge. Again they point out that Alexander's invasion was so superficial that there is no faintest allusion to his deeds in the works of Hindu, Buddhists and Jainas also. Probably these scholars have not paid adequate attention to the indirect impacts in the sphere of art, architecture, education etc. that became prominent in the age.
of Mauryas.

Commercial and Cultural Contracts

The period between the Rig Vedic Age and the rise of Mauryan Empire has been often labelled as the, "Dark Age" of Indian history. Because during this time there is great scarcity of materials to reconstruct the history in details, the meager archaeological evidence available in foreign sources, especially West Asia points to the limited amount of cultural and commercial intercourse between India and her western neighbours.157 It is from Sixth century B.C, onwards, that we reach on firmer grounds as far as socio-political economic history of India both in internal and external contexts, is concerned. The Jatakas as well as Buddhist sources provide knowledge and relations with other countries especially about Egypt and Mesopotamia. Alexander's invasion is a well-documented event of world history, besides being a turning point of history. He was accompanied and followed by a number of Greek historians and their writings directly provide us the valuable in formations for the history of this period.158

Egypt

In one of the Egyptian inscription, it is clearly mentioned that the goods like ebony, ivory and Abyssinians and Somali traders supply cotton goods.159 It is usually expected that the traders of Abyssinia and Somali lands received ebony from India, where alone this wood was found during this period.160 Elephant hunters of Abyssinia and Somali lands used axes, Adzes and swords of Indian manufactures.161 Indian traders used to sail straight to Abyssinia and with their frequent visits to the region they became quite familiar with the various parts of Nile.162 According to Wilkinson, indigo, tamarind, wood and other Indian products have been found in the Egyptian tombs.163 It has also been pointed out that Egyptians dyed cloth in indigo and wrapped their mummies with Indian muslin.164

Considering the perfection, which Egyptians attained in the science of embalmment at such an early age and the use of Indian muslin for the purpose,
one can safely say that the two countries had close commercial contacts during those days.

**Judaea**

The Hebrew King, Solomon, took several steps for the development of maritime activities. To make Jerusalem as magnificent as the capitals of his neighbours, he needed gold, silver and rare type of wood in sufficient quantities to beautify the city. So he asked his ally Hiram of Tyre to lend some of his skilled seamen to build a fleet for use of eastern waters. The part of Eziongeber, modern Akaba, at the northern extremity of the right arm of the Red Sea became their headquarters and soon they crossed the straits of Beb-el-Mandeb and reached to the port of Ophir, their final destination. From Ophir they returned with four hundred and twenty talents of gold as well as sandalwood, ivory, apes and peacocks. The voyage took three years. In the light of this description the part of Ophir has to be located some where on western Indian coast. The export of vast quantities of gold from it suggests its identification with the "Barabaricom" of Greek traders, which stood at the mouth of Indus. Another point, indirectly in favour of this identification may be the recovery of significant amount of gold jewellery from Indus-Valley sites in early times, i.e. 3rd and 2nd millennium B.C.

Again most interesting fact is that some of Hebrew items bore close resemblance with Indian names of goods. For ape, the Hebrew word Koph is identical with Sanskrit words Kapi. On the other hand peacocks seems to have been imported into these ancient lands from the south Indian ports, as the Hebrew word fhuki for peacock seems to have been derived from the Tamil tokei. The Hebrew word (shen bobbin) for ivory, also appears to be a translation of Sanskrit ibha danta, e.g. elephant's teeth.

Besides above-mentioned terms, many other words also point to India's influence on Hebrews. Hebrew almug is probably a variation of the Sanskrit Valgu, Hebrew sadin, Arabic Batin and Greek sindon, all seem to be derived from Sindhu, which stood for Indian cotton cloth. Hebrew Karpas and
Greek Karpuss are also derived from Sanskrit Karpasa (Cotton).\textsuperscript{172}

About the land routes of India and Judaea, there is little information about this. The land route journey was difficult and dangerous due to the presence of wild beasts and wild tribes also. In any case, the route must have been passed in the Caspian and north of Carmanian desert to Buikh, where the roads running to China and India converged.\textsuperscript{173}

**Assyria**

Representatives of Indian elephants, apes and Bactrian camels can be noticed on the obelisk of Shalmanesar-III (859 B.C.) an Assyrian King.\textsuperscript{174} These animals were likely to be imported from India by over land route\textsuperscript{175} passing through Makran. This archaeological evidence supports the export of Indian animals to Assyria, particularly elephants and apes.

Including all these animals, birds too reached in Assyria. There is evidence that a peacock was among the wonderful birds, received as a tribute by Tiglath Pilaser-III (744-727 B.C.).\textsuperscript{176} During the reign of the same king certain other Indian articles were also exported from India to Assyria. Tribute paid to this king from Chaldean State of Bit-Yakin, included mostly Indian articles - precious stones, pearls, timber, stripped clothing and spices of different kinds. During this period, the parts of Persian Gulf were the thriving centres of commerce.\textsuperscript{177}

In foreign countries, the Indian cotton was highly praised. One interesting fact is that, Sennacherib; a king of Assyria was responsible for the introduction of cotton plant in Assyria. He was very fond of Indian cotton. He had a fleet built on the Persian Gulf by Phoenicians carpenters and he is reported to have sailed against the Babylonian King Merodach Baladan who fled to Magitu on the coast of Elam. The very cause of conflict was the trade with India. One can easily assume the importance of trade out of this conflict.

The articles, which were imported from India, were mainly cotton, rice and peacocks.\textsuperscript{178} The fact that the word 'Sindhu' which is taken to mean cotton, is
written on tablets found in the library of Ashur banipal, an Assyrian king (668-627 B.C.), goes to confirm the export of cotton from India. It is reported that this king is known to have sent for Indian plants, including the 'wool bearing trees' of India. Such evidence proves the antiquity of cotton trade between India and Assyria.

The above-mentioned details indicate that West Asia had commercial contacts with India and Indian articles were highly liked by the people. But out of this it is very difficult to determine the exact nature and quantum of trade. Sometimes it appears that the relations though started with commerce, it spread to other areas.

When the commercial intercourse developed, the contacts were established in other spheres also. According to some scholars the Brahmi script, which can be traced back to the Phoenician alphabets, which are said to have reached India through Mesopotamia. This, however, is a controversial issue and nothing can be said with certainty either in favour or against the contention; some scholars opine about the indigenous origin of Brahmi script, which is equally acceptable.

Iran

Relations between India and Iran were not confined to political only but to other spheres like commercial, economic and cultural also. From the time immemorial, both the countries had started their relations. The Iranian influence on the economic field is clearly visible. Persian coins were in circulation in the region of Sind and Punjab. The Danes (Persian gold coins) are rare in India but 'sigloi' or 'shekels' silver coins have been discovered in large number. Some of the 'sigloi' discovered, bear peculiar countermarks on both sides. According to some numismatic sources, historians point out that they resemble the counter marks of indigenous Punch-marked coins. Some marks of these coins are similar to Brahmi and Kharoshi letters. Scholars like Rapson thinks that both the types of these coins were made in India and were continuing side by side.
Two types of 'daric' coins are noticeable. Type I datable to 5th and 4th century B.C. on the obverse, the figure of King holding a spear and stringed bow and wearing kidaris and kandhys; and an irregular oblong incuse on reverse. It has some resemblance with gold coins of Darius-1.\textsuperscript{187}

Type - II assigned to a later date, seems to be a copy of Darius - III's coin. It is double daric. On the obverse, there is the depiction of the Achaemenid king as an archer, half kneeling to the right. There are Greek letters and a symbol in front and an inscription behind and beneath the figure of the king.\textsuperscript{188} On the reverse side occur "wavy bands", irregular in use, with the conventional pattern formed a curved line in relief.\textsuperscript{189} Type-11 consists of Greek monogram or Greek letters.\textsuperscript{190} It seems that Alexander issued them after the defeat of Achaemenids.

Whether these coins came to India in commercial intercourse or were struck here for purpose of trade is not clear. Foreign invasions, to some extent, are responsible for the introduction of the coins. Whatever the reasons behind the introduction of coins, it obviously became helpful for the growth of trade and commerce. There are some direct evidences, which substantiate the facts of trade. The records of Curtius, Diodorus and Arrian refer to the articles that Alexander presented as gifts to the king of Taxila. Along with several articles of gold and silver, many Babylonian and Persian pieces of embroidery find mention in the lists of the gifts.\textsuperscript{191} Nearchus, an admiral of Alexander's navy, described a secured port with the name of Alexander's haven, where he stayed for twenty-four days at the time of Greek invasion.\textsuperscript{192} This shows that the harbour existed before the arrival of Greeks and the Iranians must have developed it for trade and other purposes.

Arrian informs us that when Nearchus made departure for home by sea, he got an Indian guide in Gedrosia.\textsuperscript{193} The guide had a very good knowledge about sea routes up to Ormuz. From this fact, it can easily be inferred that Indian vessels were sailing along the coast of Gedrosia to Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Maritime trade witnessed a marked development after the Persian conquest. It is interesting to note that a Hindu woman, called Busasa, had a lodge under police
supervision at Kish for travelers and merchants.\textsuperscript{194}

Silk and ivory were exported from India to the Persian empire in exchange of gold.\textsuperscript{195} Some inscriptions on clay tablets and on stone slabs recovered from the palace of Darius-I in Susa confirms the export of ivory from India.\textsuperscript{196} Some scholars have given the credit of introducing iron working in the Indian region of Achamenid Empire to the Persians, although recent archaeological discoveries don't support this contention.\textsuperscript{197} These evidences provide light about the close commercial contacts between India and Iran.

It was a result of the Achaemenid conquest that a new industry of blanket making developed in Indian borderland.\textsuperscript{198} Kamboja was one of the border land of Indian Territory, which was inhabited by mainly Iranians. In Mahabharat, it is clearly mentioned that, "the Kambojas they enjoy blankets (Kamhala) or beautiful things". The blankets manufactured by the people of Kamboj were largely used in Rajasuya sacrifice.\textsuperscript{199} The Kamboja King presented to Yudishitra\textsuperscript{200} many of best kinds of skin, woollen blankets made of the fur of animals living in jungles in the earth and also of cats, all inlaid with threads of gold. This blanket trade, which flourished in Kamboja, was a result of Achamenid occupation of India.

According to some scholars the practice of exposing the dead to the birds prey, common in Taxila,\textsuperscript{201} which was introduced in India by Magians after the Achaemenid conquest of India. The Mahasilava Jataka and Siksamuccaya bear clear references to it. There are various theories regarding the origin of these Magians tribal people. Thus Dr. Vidyabhushana observes: "It appears me very probable that while about 515 B.C., Darius the king of Persia, sent an expedition to India, some of his Persian subjects in Nisibis (off Herat) immigrated to India and having found Punjab over-populated by orthodox Brahmanas. came down as far as Magadha (Bihar) which was at that time largely inhabited by Vratyas or outcaste people.\textsuperscript{202} This theory has been severely criticised by the later scholars, and indeed there is absolutely no evidence that the Persians in the Achaemenid days advanced as far as Eastern India. The presence of custom of exposing the
dead to birds of prey however requires explanation. The Apasthamba Dharmasastra refers to the customs of burials and exposure of the dead on a raised platform. On the basis of this, Dubreil claims that this system of exposure of dead bodies to animals has existed among the Aryans in their early home in Central Asia.

The colonialisation of Alexander created a fusion of Persian with Hellenistic Ideas, which took place in Bactria and the neighbouring countries. This hybrid culture was introduced in India by Alexander's invasion. And it continued to flourish as a result of peaceful commercial intercourse between the Mauryan Empire and Western Asia or as a result of subsequent invasions of the Bactrian Greeks, Scythians, Parthians and Kushanas, all of who must have been imbued to a greater or lesser degree with the Graeco-Persian culture. Hence, it will be wrong to assume that all Persian elements in Indian culture found their way into India at that time when the Persian Empire extended over North-West of India.

**Babylonia**

The evidences of commercial contacts and communications between India and Babylon go back to Harappan period. But very little information of this relation is available in the post Harappan period. But Skylax's exploration of India and discovery of a new route proved very useful in furthering the trade and cultural contacts between India and Babylonia.

In 606 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar conquered Assyria and Babylon became one of the most prominent cities of Western Asia. Merchants from different countries, especially from Egypt, Palestine, Phoenicia and India, assembled here and used the markets of the city as their meeting place. Indian merchants had a colony there, which continued to exist in the later period also. The presence of Indian merchants at this place is proved by the reference to them in the tablets bearing the business records of the great farm of Murashu and Sons at Nippur. It appears that probably in their turn, the Babylonian merchants also built an establishment in India at the frontier town of Taxila. According to S:rabo, the
followers of Alexander saw a marriage market at Taxila, arranged in well-known Babylonian style.\textsuperscript{212}

Information about India-Babylonian contacts is largely found in Buddhist literature. The well-known Baveru Jataka\textsuperscript{213} indicates regular commerce and continuous navigation between these two countries through the Persian Gulf. According to the story told in it,\textsuperscript{214} some Indian merchants went to Babylon\textsuperscript{215} through sea for the sale of crows and peacocks. It appears that in this period Indians were the first rate expert mariners. It has been pertinently suggested that the age of commercial intercourse might be earlier than the date of Jatakas, as the folk tales on which these stories are based, were of much earlier date.\textsuperscript{216} According to a scholar, peacock became symbol of commercial and cultural contacts between the two countries.\textsuperscript{217} Probably export of this bird began after exploration of the Indus by Scylax.\textsuperscript{218}

Precious stones, dogs\textsuperscript{219} (Indian hound) and wood were main articles of export to Babylon. The records of Herodotus\textsuperscript{220} also confirm the export of Indian animals; a Persian governor of Babylon had large number of big Indian hounds. The discovery of Indian cedar in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar at Birs Nirmud\textsuperscript{221} and of two rough logs of Indian teak in the second story of the temple moon at Mughur\textsuperscript{222} (of Chaldeas) rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzr and Nabonidus, bear ample testimony of this fact.

Cultural influence is closely related to the commercial contacts. A similar story of Judgement of Solomon King of Judae\textsuperscript{223} is found in Mahosadha Jatak. According to Rawlinson probably it came to India along with the Babylonians at the time of captivity (597-538 B.C.). It has been suggested that in the field of astronomy, the idea of designating the days of the week after the name of sun, moon and five planets originally belonged to Babylon and possibly from there it came to India. It has been pointed out that relic worship and stupa architecture are not of Indian origin and may have been derived from Babylonian tradition of urn\textsuperscript{224} burials. Urn burials were, however, in vogue, in India. in the Harappan and post-Harappan cultures.
It is thus clear from the facts that the contacts between India and Babylonia had been established from Harappan period. But it continued to flourish in different periods although there are many missing links.

Greek Empire

After conquest of some parts of western Asia, the Greek hero, Alexander marched into India. His conquest of Indian territories was another point of culmination of India-West Asian relations. The voyage of Skylax, a Greek sea captain of Caryanda, whom Persian king Darius-I sent out in the latter part of Sixth century B.C. to explore the Indus, helped in bringing the Indians and Greeks together in that period. It is said that he had found his way from the city of Kaspapyrus in the Paktiyakan district, sailed down the stream to the sea and after the voyage of thirty months, reached the lower Kabul valley. His journey might have taken him through a part of Kashmir and the bulk of Indus-Countries. The fact that Alexander found several settlements of the Greeks in the Trans-Indus and Afghanistan areas during the course of his invasion is a further evidence of such contacts. The people of Nysa, reported of themselves to the Greek King, as Greeks. The Persian King Xerexes also found an Ionian Greek colony between the boundaries of Balkh and Samarkand. In Ktesias's Indica (400 B.C.) a Dravidian word Karpion can be noticed from Cinnamon. According to Dr. Caldwell, it can be identified with Tamil and Malayalam word Karppu or Karuppa similar to Sanskrit Karpura. The Greeks also borrowed some other Tamil words. These are following: Greek oryza from Tamil arts, Greek ziggiberos from Tamil injiver, Greek peperi from Tamil Pipali etc. This philological evidence goes to show that Greek knew of some South-Indian articles, which they obtained from India through commercial intercourse. Alexandria was then the famous centre of international trade and cosmopolitan civilization of that time. Here converged the trade routes from Ethiopia, Arabia, India and Egypt. The Greeks were fond of Indian merchandise-rice, peacocks and sandalwood; are reported by Sophocles (495-405 B.C.). These articles were probably exported to Greece directly from
India. The peacock was an important item of export. It appears that peacock had reached the Greek market by about the 5th century B.C. and became popular in the time of Pericles, when the birds were seen at many public exhibitions.

Some of the Greek coins, which are found in India, testify the commercial intercourse between the two countries. Two silver coins, bearing the name of Alexander and one silver coin of Phillip Arrhideace have been found in the excavations at Bhir Mound in Taxila. On the obverse of first two coins is a carving of Alexander's head wearing the lion skin and on the reverse there is Zeus seated on a throne with the eagle on his right hand and the sceptre in the left. According to Marshal, they can be dated to 3rd or 4th century B.C. This is the first and unique recorded find of Greek coins in India. Marshal holds very strongly that they were brought to India from outside. A few unique silver decadrachms, issued by Alexander, found at sites outside India, bear on the obverse a device of an elephant with two riders followed by a warrior on a prancing horse and an reverse a standing figure of Alexander, shown as God Zeus. According to some numismatics, the obverse device represents Alexander's battle with Porus, although some scholars do not accept this view.

Indian Kings also copied Greek styles of coins. The coin of Sophytes (Saubhuti) who were ruling in the Punjab at the close of 4th century B.C. is purely Greek in style. The regular intercourse had its impact on Indian culture and Hellenic influence is noticeable in several spheres.

Some legends, ideas and philosophical concepts are common to Greece and India. We are not sure in which country they originated. Sometimes it is argued that both the countries independently developed it though it seems similar. It may be a matter of coincidence.

The Mahasodhak Jatak bears close similarity with the story related to the judgment of Solomon. Another famous story of Hippokleides, who was careless about his wife at the time of dancing, seems to be similar to the Jatak story of the silly young peacocks who danced so indecently that he shocked the
father of golden goose and lost his wealthy bride. The story of the wife of Intaphernes who pleaded for her brother's life saying that she could get another son or husband but not another brother, finds its parallel in the Uchchanga Jataka.

In the sphere philosophical thoughts, Indians may have influenced the Western philosophical thought to some extent. According to Garbe, the theory of Greek philosopher Thales (6th century B.C.) that everything comes out from water, and that of Anaximander that the first thing is not water but infinite atmosphere or air which is the root of the universe, these elements are similarly found in Vedic texts also. Probably the Greek philosophers learnt these things from Persia, where they had come for a mission of pilgrimage for philosophical studies. The theory propounded by Zenophanes (c.575 B.C.) father of Eleatic school that the God and the Universe both are one, eternal and unchangeable is more akin to the spirit of the Indian pantheism than the Hellenic spirit. Furthermore, William Jones has shown that the Sankhya System and Pythagorean Philosophy (550 B.C.) have some similar features. Similarly, the belief in the transmigration of soul from one body to another in the Pythagorean philosophy is supposed to be Indian origin based on the philosophy of Brahmanas and Upanishadas. Some scholars believe that Indian philosophical system went to the foreign countries through the Hellenistic system.

There are other philosophical systems of West, which also bear close similarity to Indian philosophy. The views of Heraclitus (500 B.C.) that, "all bodies are the transformation of fire and everything that exists is derived from it and strives to return to it" are similar to the thought of Chandogya Upanishad. Garbe compares it with the Sankhya theory of innumerable annihilations and reformations of the Universe. The philosophy of Empedocles (450 B.C.), which describes about eternity in destructibility is borrowed from the Indian philosophy. Belief in the transmigration of souls and in the development of material world out of the primeval matter, which is governed by three virtues - lightness, activity and heaviness, is quite similar to three Gunas - Sattva, Rajas
and Tamas of Sankhya Philosophy.

Sometimes this is believed that these philosophers were migrating to different countries. During their journey they were teaching their philosophy and learning the philosophy of other countries. There is an interesting story, about Indian philosopher who found his way to Athens and held an interview with Socrates (469-399 B.C.). When Socrates told that his philosophy consisted of an enquiry into human life, the Indian philosopher smiled and told, that no one can understand the human affairs unless he had no knowledge of divine.

This clearly establishes the fact that there was some sort of interactions between the two countries. Probably the Greek philosophy was more influenced by the ancient Indian philosophy. Plato (427-347 B.C.) the disciple of Socrates was also impressed by Indian philosophy. He paid visit to different countries of the world including Persia. Some scholars believe that he had come to India for some time. His theories of the bondage of soul to matter and its liberation therefrom, his doctrine of reincarnation, seem to be distinctly Sankhyan. According to Hopkins, Plato derived the Sankhyan thoughts from the Pythagoras. His smile of the Charioteer and the horses recalls the smile of Kathopanishad, "of the body with a car, the soul with a charioteer, the senses with the horses and the mind with the ruins". Unwrick says that Plato's conception for his republics is probably an echo of Indian ideas and his division of ideal polity as Guardians, Auxiliaries and Craftsmen, is similar to the Hindu caste system, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas. The smile of the cave, referred to in the 7th book of the Republic, recalls the Vedantic doctrine of Maya or illusion.

The legend, that Universe was created from the body of Zeus, after he had swallowed Phanes, the offspring of the great 'world egg' is almost similar to the story of the coming into being of "Supreme-soul by thought of the golden egg" (Brahmanda) was mentioned in the tenth book of Manu. Max Mueller points out the amazing similarity between the language of Plato and Upanishads. Rawlinson believes it as a accidental. But the possibility of influence of Indian
philosophy on Plato cannot be denied in total.

Indian logic was also influenced by the Greek system of logic. The definition of the most important logical terms and the explanation of various structures seem to have been derived from the prior Analytics of Aristotle.\(^{260}\) (384-322 B.C.). It is usually believed that the logic started in India by Akshapada, whom was a monk residing near Broach of Kathiwar. Probably he learnt this system from any person or traders coming from Alexandria, a trade centre had close connection with Broach. At Alexandria, the Greek philosophical works were preserved in library through the efforts of Callimachaus.\(^{261}\)

It is clearly visible that Indian religion had left indelible impacts on the religion of Greek. The Greek Gods like-Zeus, Minerva, and Helios can be identified with Indian Gods - Indra, Ushas, Savitar.\(^{262}\) Buddhism also has something common with Orphism in Greece.\(^{263}\) Both the sects lived in monastic communities, abstained from taking life or eating meat and believed in the doctrine of Metempsychosis.\(^{264}\)

The exchange of idea was not confined to the sphere of religion and philosophy; it was extended to other spheres like mining, armies also. It is generally inferred that the Indians learnt the system of mining from the Greeks.\(^{265}\) The word surangi in Sanskrit, meaning mine, seems cognate with word 'syrinx' which is the Greek word for mine.\(^{266}\) The idea of palisade may have been introduced through the Indians enlisted in the Greek armies.\(^{267}\) In the field of medicine also there was some exchange of ideas also. Greek physical conception of the wind was influenced by the Indian nervous activity. It has been claimed that in 4th century B.C. "Hippocratic treaties of the winds" was influenced by the Indian conception, which was already in vogue in about 8th C.B.C.\(^{268}\)

From this, one can clearly presume that Indians and Greeks had close connection not only in the matters of trade but also in other spheres of culture, philosophy, logic, medicine etc. Alexander's invasion accentuated the process of intermingling. Religion, literature, coinage were the fields where the exchange is
clearly perceptible. The quest of knowledge had dragged the Greek philosophers to Indian soil to unravel the Indian philosophy in front of the world.

The Traders

The traders were going through either by land routes or sea routes. The traders had different kinds of experiences in different routes. Again they were taking some precautionary measures to avoid the difficulties in the journey. Both the routes were not free from troubles.

Caravan Traders

In spite of many difficulties in traveling there is hardly any doubt that the masters of caravan increasingly carried the internal and external trade of India. Though the basic motive of these traders was to earn the money through the commercial activities, they were interested sometimes to carry the culture to the distant land. It is usually believed that the trade during the ancient India was peaceful and free of troubles. But the fact is that the traders were facing a lot of difficulties in their way of journey. Like today, even in those days the robbers and thieves were posing great danger to the trading activities. Again some tribes in the jungles were disturbing the traders. Forests were infested with wild beasts and caravans often missed the right direction and proceeded in a wrong direction. In these types of journey, the leader of caravan play a leading role by taking the right decision by his intelligence and experience and keeps a proper control over all the members of his group. He usually took care of arrangement of food and proper distribution. Again in the time of danger he never lost the equanimity of the mind. It is mentioned in Jataka that when a caravan entered into a forest, then the master of Caravan issued an order to his followers that without his permission they should not eat strange leaves, fruits and flowers. Once his followers fell ill by eating the forbidden articles but the master of the caravan cured them by administering emetics.

The traders were taking care of various things like the possibility of roads being ruined, water would become scarce, and there would be no food and grass for bullock and availability of fresh vegetables. Water scarcities were the very
common problem and for that reason the caravan leader kept a proper control over water by issuing the order. Due to the scarcity of water, the group of traders perished in the desert. Journey during the daytime in the deserts was very difficult due to scorching heat. And, therefore, the caravan carried with it water, oil, rice and travelled during the night. In the morning the travellers arranged their wagons in circle and covered them with an awning. After finishing their breakfast they rested for the whole day in the shade. After the sunset, taking their dinner they pushed on their wagons and resumed their march. Their travel in the deserts was like sailing in the ocean. A guide (Sthalaniyamaka) with the help of stars guided the caravan. When they crossed the desert they throw the water and wood, which bore a lot of burden. The guide seated on the leading wagon and marking the movements of stars guided the caravan.

In spite of so many difficulties the traders continued their journey. Sometimes they were assisted by armed men to protect them from the dangers of robbers and man-haunting tribes and wild animals. In these types of journey, the caravan leader's experience, presence of mind, his knowledge about geography and astronomy, gave them success.

Sea Merchants

In Jataka stories many sea voyages are mentioned which point to the difficulties of Indian sailors. The Baveru Jataka (Jataka 339) informs us that some merchants of Varanasi taking the direction finding birds with themselves when they set out on a sea voyage to Babylonia. This voyage was performed through the Arabia Sea and Persian Gulf. The Supparaka Jataka (463) tells us that the brave sailors of Ancient India passed through Khuramala (the Persian Gulf) the Agnimala (Red Sea), Dadhimala Nilakusamala, Nalamala and Balabhamukha (the Mediterranean Sea). However history informs us that before the Christian era the Indian navigation did not proceed beyond Bab-el-Mandeb. Taking this into account, it is usually believed that Arab merchants to Egypt carried out the Indian goods and then it was passed into other countries. But some scholars don't believe in this principle.
In Ancient India, sea travellers had to face many difficulties and dangers and those who returned home safely, were considered lucky. In such conditions, the near and dear ones of the traders often dissuaded them to carry out such a long journey. But unlike the medieval sailors, the sailors of Ancient India were brave and adventurous. At one place it is said that when a wealthy merchant of Varanasi built a ship and decided to take a sea voyage, his mother tried her best to dissuade him, but as he was determined to sail, he left his mother weeping and boarded the ship.275

In Ancient India, the wooden ships were drowned by the whirlpools. Their greatest weakness was their very simple construction. Unlike the Arab merchants and sailors, India merchants were unable to build the boats and ships which could stand against the whirlpool and winds in the mid-sea. Usually the ships, which were made of timbers, are unable to withstand the pressure of water. The water seeped through the joints of timber and sinks the whole ship.276 When the ship began sinking the merchants prayed to their gods to save them from the calamity.277 When they saw their prayer did not bear fruits, they left the wrecked ships. But before abandoning the ships the voyagers filled themselves with ghee and sugar which could sustain them for long-time. It is mentioned in Sunkha Jatak that on the seventh day of Sunkha's voyage, the ships developed the leaks and the sailors were unable to bale the water out. Fearing for their lives, they became boisterous but Sankha, keeping calm took a servant with him and oiling his body and partaking a meal of ghee and sugar climbed the mast and plunged into the sea and floated for seven days.278

The Jataka further informs us that the ships were made of timber planks (daruphalakani). They sailed with favourable wind (erakvyayutta).279 We get further information about the construction of the ships. Besides its outer framework it was provided with three mast (kupa), rigging (Yottaran) sails (sittam), planks (padarani) and oars (lankharoh).280 The helmsman controlled the movement of the ship with the help of steering wheel.281 The navigators were tracing the route by closely viewing the position of stars. Sometimes people who
had much more experience about navigation assisted them.

Like the ancient Phoenicians and Babylonians, the Indian sailors also used direction-finding birds for locating the seashore. These direction-finding birds were released from the ships. In Keraddhasutta of Dighanikaya, in the words of Buddha, "In very ancient times the sea going merchants took the direction finding birds on their ships which were released when required. They flew on all directions and alighted when they saw solid grounds. But if no such ground was seen they returned to the same ship." There are also references about the direction finding birds in Baveru Jatak. According to this Jatak, the Babylonians had no knowledge of such birds and, therefore they bought it from an Indian merchant, but the Babylonian literature is explicit on the point that the Babylonians knew about the direction finding birds from the hoary past. It is mentioned in the story of Gilgamesh that the ship of Utanipishtam reached the Nistir Mountain and then settled down. At first he released a pigeon, and afterwards a sparrow to find the shore. In the end a crow was released and when it did not return then it was decided that the seashore was very near.

Some strange customs were prevalent in the journey. When the ship was in trouble then the reason for that is assigned to the presence of some unfortunate voyagers. His name was found out by casting the lot. There is very little material in Buddhist literature, which tells us about the programme of entertainment of voyagers in the ship. Music was the common mode of entertainment or amusement. One Jataka tells us very interesting story about a musician in the ship who became responsible for the wreck of the ship. Because when he started to display the music, the ship was surrounded by big fishes and sea animals to hear the music and caused the wreckage of the ship.

There does not seem to have existed any agreement between the sea merchants except that they hired a ship in groups. It is mentioned in one of the Jatakas that the two merchants had entered into a partnership for carrying the trade with five hundred wagons. In another Jataka, partnership between several merchants is mentioned. The horse merchants from Uttarapatha also
carried on their business in partnership. It was possible in a limited degree to prevent unhealthy competition and to realise proper prices. 289

There was difference in the views of Buddhist and Brahmins about this international trade. The parochial viewpoint of Brahmans was that the whole world was confined to the country between Vindhyas and Himalayas, in the South to the sea, in the west to the Indus and in the east Brahmaputra River. For the Brahmanic culture, Aryavarta was the centre of the Universe and those who are living outside were treated as hateful Mlechhas. 290 In the matters of food and drinks and in the marriage, the caste system held sway, and, therefore fearing contacts with foreigners sea voyage was forbidden, though it is open to question that in Ancient India how many people have followed the general ban. 291 The Buddhists, however, did not believe in the caste system and therefore, we get many accounts of sea voyage in the Buddhist literature which are almost absent in the Brahminical literature. 292

The trade which continued for a long time was not due to get the goods of foreign countries and to sell the good of our own country in the lands of foreigners. The traders in Ancient India were not only merely mercenary traders but also ambassadors of Indian culture. Crossing the geographical boundaries they helped the human society to come closer. 293

Herodotus' Account of India

Herodotus, whom Cicero dubbed the Father of History, was able to offer considerable information about the distant land of India. Herodotus was born at Haticamassus in Asia Minor and then dependent on Persians about the year of 484 B.C. 294 He was thus born as a Persian subject and was interested in the affairs of Persia and Egypt. He compiled a history of Achaemenids and of Scythians, but as Keane has observed. "his knowledge of India was meagre and most vague." 295 Herodotus knew that India was one of the remotest provinces of the Persian Empire towards the East, but of its extent and exact position, he had not proper conception. 296
Sources of Knowledge

An analysis of his account shows that his knowledge of India was derived from the following sources.

I) The information that he was able to collect for himself in the course of his travel.

II) The information supplied to him by the Persians.\textsuperscript{297}

III) The work left by Scylax of Caryanda.\textsuperscript{298}

IV) The narrative of Hecatarus of Miletus.\textsuperscript{299}

Hensdotus, as a traveler, travelled different parts of the world, though the dates of travelling are difficult to determine. He visited the Persian capital Susa and advanced as far as the land of Scythians in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{300} So it may be presumed that in course of his travels, he might have gathered some information about India. But we don't know whether he did see the Achaemenid epigraphs. Macan thinks that, "The Achaemenid records which have within living memory greatly modified our knowledge of the rise and progress of Persian power were inaccessible to Herodotus, but his account of that empire and its organisation must go back, at second or third, to such documents and written records."\textsuperscript{301}

The documents and written records of the Persians throwing light on India which may be divided into two groups, the Persian inscriptions and the Avesta. The references to India in the Achaemenid epigraphs have already been noted and it is clear from them that they show nowhere any knowledge of the interior of India. This closely agrees with the account of India as preserved in Avesta. The date of Avesta is highly controversial but most of the scholars agree to the point that Venandiad is the earliest part of work and may have been pre-Achaemenid period. There is the mention of sixteen countries, which were created by Ahura Mazda. One among them is Hapta Hindu or Sapta Sindhu, which is also occurring in Rig Veda.\textsuperscript{302} Max Muller thinks that the expression of 'Sapta Sindhu' refers to the five streams of Punjab with Indus and Saraswati. While Ludwig, Lassen and Whitney hold that Kubha should be substituted for
the last named river.\textsuperscript{303}

Again in another statement of Velanid, it is clearly mentioned that the religion of Ahura Mazda was introduced in the Sapta Sinhdu areas and the people of the region or at least a section of it, had Iranian blood in them.\textsuperscript{304} This reminds us of the statement of Xerxes in his Persepolis epigraph that he suppressed the worship of the Daivas and introduced that of Ahura Mazda in its place,\textsuperscript{305} while the traces of Iranian blood is found in the borderland of Indo-Iranian region. All the anthropologists again admit it.

The work of Scylax

For his account, Herodotus utilized the work of Scylax of Caryanda.\textsuperscript{306} Possibly, he was the first Greek historian to write anything about India (515BC). The work of Scylax is unfortunately lost which is preserved in the works of later writers partly in the form of references. In his History, Herodotus has preserved the following account of his.

A great part of Asia was explored under the direction of Darius. He being desirous to know in what part the Indus that produces crocodiles, discharges itself into the sea. Skylax set out from the city of Caspatyrus and the country of Pactyce, sailed down the river towards the east and then to the sea; then sailing on the sea westwards, they arrived in the thirteen months at the place where the King of Egypt dispatched the Phoenicians, whom I before mentioned to sail round Libya. After these persons had sailed round, Darius subdued the Indians and frequented the sea.\textsuperscript{307}

The above account of Herodotus, in any case, shows that Scylax actually came to India and started his journey from "the city of Caspatyrus and the country of Pactyce. Sir Aurel Stein identified these places with north Afghanistan and Kabul respectively. Majumdar, however, mentions that it appears from the account of Herodotus that the city of Caspatyrus in Pactyce was quite close to the lower Indus-valley bordering on the desert."
About Indians

Herodotus thought that Indians were the most remote nation living in the east and beyond them was a desert. He was ignorant about the Ganges Valley and the Great Himlayan chains. He knew however, that 'there are many nations of Indians and they don't speak the same language as each other, some of them are nomads and others are not. These Indians wear a garment made of rushes, which, when they have cut the reed from the river and beaten it, they afterwards paint like a mat and wear it like a corselet.' 308

Thus Herodotus knew that, "there are many nations of the Indians" and he enumerates some of them-

(1) Other Indians, living to the east are nomads and eat raw flesh; they are called Padaeans.

(2) Other Indians have the following different customs; they never kill anything that has life, nor sow anything....

It is generally presumed by historians that they were Buddhists or Jainas.

(3) Herodotus knows further of Indians who were inhabiting very far from the Persians, towards the south and were never subject to Darius.' From his description, as it is generally thought by some scholars that they were Dravidians.

(4) There are other Indians bordering on the city of Caspayrus and the country of Pactyce, settled northward of India, whose mode of life resembles that of the Bactrians.

It gives an idea that Herodotus had knowledge about the different classes of Indian people who were living in different parts of Achaemenid Empire. 309

Herodotus knew that Indians are by far the greatest multitude of all races of men whom we know but he had hardly any knowledge of the civilized Indians in Gangetic Valley. Again his reference about cannibals is no way related to Gonds who were cannibals. 310 His account of the Indians, who killed their own relatives on the approach of old age, seems to be a transference of Sogdian
custom on Indian soil, for we learn it on the authority of Plutarch that Alexander
taught the Sogdians not to kill their fathers. Strabo quotes Onesicritus to the
effect that people of Bactria had reared dogs that were trained to eat the dying.
When Alexander conquered, Indian subcontinent, he stopped this practice.

**Gold Digging Ants**

Herodotus gives an interesting account of gold digging ants, which threw,
up mounds of gold dust in the desert.\(^{311}\) And out of this gold dust, Indians paid
their tribute to the Great King Darius.\(^{312}\) It was said this gold was guarded by
gigantic ants but the Indians, mounted on swift she-camels, plundered the gold
at mid-day when the ants were asleep in their holes.\(^{313}\) These ants were smaller
than dogs but larger than foxes and threw up the gold in excavating their
burrows. Some of them were in the possession of Darius-I. Later writers talk of
having seen their skin\(^ {314}\) or even their horns. The curious story arose from the
Sankrit Paippilika ," ant-gold" a term applied to alluvial gold from its
resemblance to the earth of ant-hills.\(^{315}\) The gold was carried off from the
miners of Dardistan who still keep fierce yellow mastiff to guard their houses.
These mastiffs were the "ants" of the legend, the horns that Pliny asserts, were
the horns of wild sheep, which mounted in the handles, are still used by the
miners and farmers of Ladak as pickaxes.\(^ {316}\) The exorbitant demands of Persians
exhausted the gold of Dardistan. For this reason, it is seldom mentioned in later
literature. Many scholars accept this story as false because mines of metals like
gold and silver were not known to exist in India. Scholars like Heeren and
Lassen alludes doubtfully to Pliny's statement. They point out that it was
presented wrongly because India's trade with gold producing countries likes
Burma and Tibet, which was misconceived by the different authors.\(^ {317}\) No
conclusion can be drawn on this fact and it awaits more evidences.

**Indo-Achaemenid Empire**

According to Herodotus, Darius conquered the region of Sind after the
exploration of the river Indus by Scylax and his party. But it is partly true
because after the conquest of India by Darius, Scylax traced the route. Again he
had pointed out that Darius received 360 talents in gold dust as tribute of his Indian satrapy and this was the largest amount paid by any other province of the empire. Same scholars doubt about the truthfulness of this statement because the area conquered by Darius was arid region. Therefore, it seems utter impossibility to pay such a vast amount of revenue. But Smith thinks that owing to the changes in the course of rivers since ancient times, 'vast tracts in the Sind and the Punjab, now desolate, were then rich and prosperous.' Cousens contradicts this theory and points out that a great geological change seems to have hardly occurred to alter the character of the soil.

If it will be accepted that Arian is the party of Alexander, then he does not mention about the gold of India. The epigraph of Darius also mentions that though India was providing ivory and teak wood for the construction of Susa palace, the gold was procured from the satrapies of Sardis or Bactria. From this it is clearly evident that if the gold was abundant in India why Darius imported gold from Bactria, not from India. No final conclusion is drawn on this statement.

Though the account of Herodotus provides a good knowledge about Indians, sometimes it drags into controversies. It is generally presumed that Herodotus' information is basically based on secondary sources.

**Conclusion**

History of West Asia is closely related with the history of India. The two regions had established their political and trade relations from the very beginning. Though it passed through many ups and downs in different periods, it continued without any break. From 6th century B.C., the trade with West Asia attained a new height due to political relations, which was established with the invasion of Cyrus. Politically the invasion of Cyrus was a triumph without results. But from the trade and cultural point of view it carries a great importance. Indian merchants carried their goods to different parts of Persian empires and through the channels of trade, wide relationship between India and Western Asia was established. Again the exploration of Skylax, Persian
navigator, opened better routes of communication between the two subcontinents. In the sphere of culture, the impacts of Persians were widely felt in the Mauryan period. The Mauryan art and architecture, specially the pillars of Ashok, were influenced by the Greek and Persian styles. Ashokan scripts like Kharosti were undoubtedly derived from Persian script Armaic. Again Ashok's rock-inscriptions bears close resemblance to Darius' inscription. The possibility of Ashok's imitation to Darius' inscription can't be denied. Again Persian coinage, court styles had created impacts on Indians. It will be highly unworthy to say that Indians had no way influenced the Persians. Early Buddhism influenced the movements in Persia like Manichacism. Again the similarities between the stories of Jatak, and the judgement of Solomon and Babylonian mythology, clarify the suspense. But it is difficult to know who had influenced whom to what extent.

Alexander's invasion was another milestone in the path of this relation; it no way hampered the smooth progress of relations. His invasion of India was a wanton aggression, mayhem and bloody warfare in the chapter of Indian history. But his solid interests to establish a commercial intercourse are clearly visible. His immature death and breaking down of his vast empire gave a burial death to his long cherished ambitions. He broke the wall of separation between the East and West and the process of Hellenization started from this period. All subsequent contacts between India and Greece are the legacies of Alexander's campaign. In real sense, Alexander opened the floodgates of foreign invasions. He set up various trading centres, which helped the merchants to carry out their trade. Mauryan Empire, which rose from the ashes of Macedonian empire, helped the traders to carry out their peaceful, trade in a full swing and to bring the wealth and prosperity to India. The routes traced out by Alexander to India added further to the geographical knowledge of traders.

The trade between India and West Asia was basically indirect. The Indian traders were not carrying all the goods directly to western part of Asia. Sometimes the Arab traders and Jewish traders were carrying the goods from
India. When Indian traders were carrying the goods, they were carrying up to the point of Alexandria and a little further to this point. Then other merchants carried these goods because Indian boats were not so much strong enough to travel long in the sea against the tides. But some of the evidences support the presence of Indian traders in West-Asian countries, whose number was quite low. Basically most of the trade was carried on indirectly.

On the basis of archaeological and literary sources, the names of the goods, which were exported as well as imported, have been identified. This points out that the balance of trade was in favour of India. Indian goods were highly acclaimed in Western countries and it drained the heavy amount of money from their treasure. It was a great concern for the rulers but they could not check the import of Indian goods. Nothing could be told about its prices but it can be presumed safely that the quality of the goods was undoubtedly high. That was the single most reason why these goods were praised in different parts of world.

Again the trade of recent days is totally different from those days. Now days, the goods, which cost more in one country, can be brought from other country if it is found cheaper. But in those days, the goods, which were unavailable in one country, could be imported from other country. This means that the non-availability of goods determine the list of imports. These countries rarely produced the Indian products, which were exported to other countries. Again if they were producing the same, it might not fulfill their demands. This was the fundamental law, which was determining the course of trade.

India is a vast country having large flora and fauna. The fertile soil of India was producing the agricultural products, which was enough to meet the demands of the people. In contrast, the West Asian territory was not fertile enough to meet the needs of their people. So the West Asian people were dependent on agricultural products of India. Again the small-scale industries and cottage industries under the system of guilds were producing the good quality of goods. And the people were trained sufficiently to produce the good things.
which were liked by the people. Therefore, the woolen, silk and cotton garments were highly praised in foreign countries. The Indian people had few secondary wants. This was the reason for the balance of trade, which was in favour of India.

One question which always puzzles the scholars that if balance of trade was in favour of India then how the countries of West Asia were paying for the extra goods. Large quantity of foreign coins, which were excavated at different places, is the probable answer of this question. But another question arises that what was the use of these coins. Only one thing is clear that to some extent these coins were fulfilling the needs of metal of India. This question still awaits answer.

In the sphere of culture, the relations between India and West Asia carry special importance. Both regions were influenced by each other to a great extent. In the matter of architecture, the Mauryan palace, Ashokan pillars bear a close resemblance with Iranian style. Kharosti and Aramic scripts were introduced in India. Greek philosophy, religions are highly indebted to Indian counterparts but the Greek syllogism, medicine, mining technology created influence on India. Greek thinkers perhaps came to India to explore the ancient knowledge of India. Religion, literature, coinage, philosophy were the important areas where the considerable exchanges of ideas took place.

Trade was the only medium through which cultural migration took place. On the other hand, political domination also helped to some extent for this cultural transformation. When two ancient civilizations grew up in one continent it is obvious that the relationship would grow up between them, which happened in the case of India and West Asia. Again these two civilizations share their origin from one place, if Aryans had come from Europe. In this critical situation, the cultural mingling and transference were a common incidence.

The foregoing description makes it clear that India's relations in the matter of cultural, economic as well as political continued to be strengthened with West Asian countries with the passage of time. Such countries were Egypt.
Judaea, Assyria, Iran, and Babylon etc. In these countries, new fields of mutual relationships were discovered in different spheres. The advanced techniques of sea-voyage and road journeys helped the people in this respect. The fact that man's quest for developing new relations knows no bound is attested by the above mentioned contacts which India developed with other countries during this period.
END NOTES

1 Asthana, S., *History and Archaeology of Indian Contacts with other Countries*. p 163.
2 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
13 Ibid. p. 78.
14 Ibid. p. 79.
15 *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. iv, p. 4.
16 Ibid. p. 8.
18 Ibid. p. 82.
20 Ibid. p. 8.
22 Ibid. p. 126.
24 *Cambridge, Ancient History*, vol. IV, p. 9.
28 Ibid. p. 57.
29 Ibid. p. 58.
31 Ibid., p. 106.
33 Ibid., p. 72.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Strabo, *Geography*, XVI, p. 5.
42 Herodotus, VII p. 89.
43 Strabo, *Geography*, XVI, pp. 3-5.
45 Herodotus, vol. IV, p. 32.
46 Smith, V.A., *Early History of India*, p. 34.
47 Ibid.
48 Asthana, S., *History and Archaeology of Indian Contacts with other Countries*, p. 138.
49 Ibid., p. 139.
52 Strabo-II, p. 15
53 Ibid
54 Rawlinson, H.G., op.cit., p. 10.
55 Ibid. p. 10.
56 Warinington, E.H., *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, p. 9.
It is interesting to know that gold dust was available in the Upper Indus bed in these days. Herodotus also refers about "gold digging ants" in the region. Modern scholars have concluded that these so-called "gold digging ants" were Tibetan Mastiffs who grounded the gold rivers of Dardistan and are also mentioned in the Mahabharat, vide -Age of Imperial Unity, p.41.
113 Ibid.
114 Ray Choudhury, H.C., Political History of Ancient India, p. 195.
115 Ibid.
118 Raychoudhury, H.C., op.cit., p. 196.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
121 Raychoudhury, H.C., Political History of Ancient India, p. 195.
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126 Ibid. p.56.
127 Ibid. p.56.
128 Ibid. p.56.
130 Ibid.
131 Thapar, R., A History of India, p.59.
132 Sastri, N.K., Age of Nandas and Mauryas, p.46.
133 Ibid.
134 Smith, V.A., Early History of India, p.52.
135 Majumdar, R.C., Age of Imperial Unity, p.52.
137 Smith, V.A., Early History of India, p.59. Smith's arguments are highly subjective.
139 Majumdar, R.C., Age of Imperial Unity, p.54.
140 Smith, V.A., Early History of India, p. 115.
141 Smith, V.A., Early History of India, p. 117.
142 Burry, Bun History of Greece, p.56.
143 Ibid.
144 Arrian, Expedition of Alexander, VI, p.15 quoted by G. Rawlinson, Intercourse between India and Western World.
145 Ibid. (The course of the river was changing so rapidly that it is difficult to identify it. This is the part to which Nearchus gave the name of Nausathmos Alexander's Haven. It may be port called by the strange name of Barbarikon in the Periplus. Cambridge History, vol.1, p.550.
146 Ibid.
147 Mahavamsa, (trans) Turnur, p. 110.
148 Rawlinson, H.G., op.cit., p.35.
150 Ibid.
152 Wheeler, M., Alexander the Great, p. 136.
154 Bevan, A., Cambridge History of India, p. 3 45.
155 Smith, V.A., Early History of India, p. 117.
157 Asthana, Shashi. History and Archaeology of Indian Contacts with other Countries, p.163.
158 Ibid.
159 Ayenger, S. K., The Trade of India", Indian Historical Quarterly-II, p.3
160 Ibid. p.9.
161 Ibid.
162 Mookherjee, R.K., Indian Shipping, p. 91, 54.
164 Asthana, S., History and Archaeology of Indian contacts with other Countries, p. 165.
165 Ibid. p. 167.
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167 Ibid. p.218.
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Ibid.

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208 Rawlinson, H.G., Intercourse between India and Western World, p.7.


211 Asthana, S., op.cit., p. 173.


213 Strabo-IV, p.62.

214 Chattopadhyaya, S., op.cit., p.102.

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215 Chandra, Moti, Sartovala, p.59 though identification of Beveru with Babylon is not quite definite, yet the majority of Historians subscribe to this identification.


Chandra, Moti, op.cit. p.59.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

Keane, P., Evolution of Geography, pp. 5-6.

Herodotus explicitly refers to the Persians while giving his account of gold digging ants.

Herodotus, IV, p. 44.

Ibid., 36,

Chattopadhyaya, S., op.cit, p.43.


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Asthana, S., op.cit, p.51.

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Ibid.

Pliny says they were of the colour of cats and the size of Egyptian wolves.

Strabo, (XV, 1.44), Megasthenes, Schwanbeck and Marten report that the skins of those ants were imported from Tibet and central Asia. The famous statue of Anaitis at Baktra was “clothed in bearer-skins”


Indian Antiquary, vol-XII, 1884, p.229.

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