COMMERCE BETWEEN INDIA AND THE ARAB WORLD DURING 19TH CENTURY

ABSTRACT

THESIS

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BY

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"Commerce Between India and the Arab world During 19th Century", is the theme of our doctoral dissertation. In the first three chapters we have studied and analyzed India’s maritime trade in the 18th century with the Arab world. In order to understand the development of trade and commerce during the 19th century between India and Middle East, it is significant to note that India had a dominant position as a prosperous trading nation till the 18th century, and in many respects, enjoyed a far better position than those of European companies. Indian goods in Middle Eastern countries were in greater demand and her credit market was flourishing. India’s shipbuilding technology was more advanced than that of Europe. By the 1st half of 19th century, India was even competing with the European companies in the markets of Middle East. It was only with the coming of steamships and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 that British superiority over the Indian Ocean commerce became an established fact. In turn the Indian economy as a whole received a crippling blow with the penetration of British capitalism in India vis-à-vis the Arab world. Indian interests were subordinated to British interests leading to the ruin of Indian handicrafts and industries. Nevertheless, India continued its supplies of cotton cloth and silk to the littoral countries of Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Indian goods were still in demand in Turkish markets, though industrial products of Britain were fast replacing Indian handicraft goods in these markets.
The dissertation is divided into eight chapters. The chapter one is mainly based on India's trade relations with the countries bordering the Arabian Sea during 18th century. During this period while the rest of the ports of India had their orientation towards the south-east Asian regions, Surat was the only port of importance that was closely linked with the littoral countries of the Red sea and the Persian Gulf. Another significant change that one can observe is the concentration of Indian shipping operating in the direction of the two channels under the East India Company's flag. This trend indicates that there was no other powerful European nation or company other than the English East India Company which could control or assure protection to shippers on the high seas. This is evident, therefore, that by the 2nd half of the 18th century EIC had emerged as a single power in the western Indian Ocean which could not be challenged by any other European power. India's export to and import from the channels of Red Sea and the Persian Gulf and the countries of the Arab world actually did not decline. India enjoyed a favourable balance of trade with the countries of Middle East and her volume of trade remained high throughout the century. Her return cargo consisted of bullion besides items such as iron, copper, sena leaves, almonds and Venetian false beads etc. whereas India's export commodity composition was mainly based on gruff goods such as piece goods, varieties of textiles, sugar, rice etc.
In chapter two we have brought out facts and discussed about certain ethics, navigational conventions and customary laws relating to wreckage and compensation. From the point of view of their application it appears these were common to all the littoral countries of the ocean shores from the Straits of Madagascar to Japan. As a matter of fact, these were not statutory rules but their violation was considered a serious offence. However, as a matter of fact, there were some exceptions to the rule as well.

Plunder of ships by pirates on high seas was a clamity that the shippers of the Indian Ocean had to face. Indian rulers, however, always favoured the suppression of piracy but in the absence of any strong naval force generally succumbed to the pressure of pirates.

By 1800 all Indian ships which sailed from Surat were made to carry the Company's flag and enter "Mochulka". Having failed to observe this rule a shipper was subjected to payment of penalty. Certain conventions for carrying freight as well were prevalent in the Indian Ocean.

The third Chapter concentrates on participation of Sultan Tipu in the Indo-Arab trade. Designated as chief merchant or Malikut Tujjar he had a well organized trade by establishing commercial links with littoral countries of the Persian Gulf. He had various commercial depots or Kothies within as well as outside India. The Kothi which is frequently referred to in his correspondence was established at Muscat. He had one at Jeddah as well. He had agents
appointed to all these Kothis who were entrusted with the charge to look after them and promote the commercial interest of Mysore. It is through these agents that he made transactions and purchased commodities which he required from littoral countries of the Gulf. He imported war horses, green plants, rock-salt and technical know-how such as pearl-divers, experts on silk-worm rearing and shipbuilders. His export commodities mainly constituted of 'gruff goods', such as rice, cloths, spices and sandalwood.

Sultan Tipu deserves and could be called a planner and economist in his own right. The officials of East India Company had treated him as their deadliest enemy. Sultan Tipu had a plan to build a strong navy to defend his country and keep the Indian Ocean safe from the encroachment of Europeans, particularly the British.

He always laid emphasis on the construction of new ships by the merchants of Mysore. He activised the officials of his state by asking them to collect the items of trade from their respective Kachehris and store them to meet the requirements of various Kothies outside Mysore. Prices of sale and purchase were the special subject of consideration for Sultan Tipu. He, therefore, was not only the chief merchant of his state but a moderniser and innovator with foresight.

The chapter four is sub-divided into three sections. The first section relates to bills of exchange, drafts and currency rates in Red Sea trade. Bill of exchange or “hoondi” was used on a large scale by
Indian merchants as remittances from overseas to India during 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

The returning Indian merchants from the Red Sea had no other alternative but to send their cash to India by purchasing bills of exchange, particularly, from the agents of the East India Company at Mokha. Another crucial reason that made the Indian merchants to sell their dollars in the money markets of Mokha was the fair deal in rupee-dollar ratio. The Company on the other hand induced the Indian merchants to sell their dollars mainly on account of acquiring this currency for purchase of coffee as the trade in coffee during 18\textsuperscript{th} century had become very lucrative and its demand was very high in European markets. According to international conversion rate various currencies were converted into rupees and bill was issued to be drawn on the President and Council of EIC at Bombay or Surat or any port-city of India payable thirty days sight from stated dates. A table showing names of drawees and drawers together with the amount drawn has been attached with this section (i.e. Chapter 4-A). The day the twenty sets of bills were issued the rupee-dollar (Spanish) was in the ratio of 2:1. The section discusses by citing examples of issuance of numerous bills of exchange during different interval of times.

Precious metal from Europe as well found its way to the Red sea. Medium of transaction was particularity Spanish dollars. European companies brought gold and silver for their purchases of
Indian goods and Mokha coffee. A fairly good quantity of this precious metal found its way to India as well, either for minting or as treasure brought by Indian merchants. Its magnitude, however, is difficult to determine.

The second section of the chapter exclusively deals with the mode of customs levied on export-import goods at various ports of the Red Sea for which data is available for the 18th and 19th centuries. Port customs was by far the main source of income for the Imam of Yemen. Europeans in 1730 paid 3% on all description of goods whereas Muslim and Hindu merchants were subjected to customs payment ranging from 5 to 7.5 %. In 1737 Imam of Sanaa granted an exclusive privilege to the East India Company. Evidently there was no uniformity in the customs rates. It differed from port to port and from time to time.

Customs regulations exempted a merchant from payment of customs at Yembo (a port under the jurisdiction of Mohammad Ali Pasha) provided he had made the requisite payment at Jedda. In 1850, according to the provision of a treaty, the Pasha exempted the British Government from all charges except the regular customs duty. Similarly if "Raftias" or exit permits were issued by the Egyptian customs authorities the goods of EIC were exempted from payment of duty for the second time. Sublime Porte to some extent regulated such customs rates that were levied at the ports of the Red Sea and Basra. But in Yemen and Jedda practice of illegal exactions
such as "Majaba", "Sambookia", and "Ittasibiah" continued for a long period during 19th century. Indian trade was also subjected to such exactions.

Collection of extortion money by the customs authorities of Yemen was a subject of frequent complaints by the Indian merchants. Extortions in various forms were prevalent and those who showed resistance against such corrupt practices were subjected to various pressures and sometime punished.

The third section of the chapter discusses the significance of Basra as a strategic and commercial port of the Persian Gulf. Basra in the Persian Gulf was the main port for the Turkish merchants since the 17th century. A discord between the Mutasallim and the official incharge of the Residency at Basra led to imposition of embargo by the officials of EIC which resulted in the incident of 1820.

From the petitions of claim on account of losses submitted in 1820 to Governor in council by two Bombay-based prosperous merchants and shippers namely Nurseydass Purshotamdass and Shaik Aboo Bucker it is quite evident that the main sufferers on account of discords between the Turkish Government at Basra and the Company's officials were the Indian merchants and those officials paid little heed to their losses. The early decades from the turn of 19th century are also characterized by the British gunboat policy in the Gulf.
Chapter five is divided into two parts. The first Part deals with the shipping of Mohammad Ali Pasha into the Indian ocean and his trading affiliation with the East India Company. This aspect of his policy towards commerce between Egypt and India was hitherto not much known. During his reign India’s main ports of supply to the Red sea were Calcutta, Surat and Bombay. We have much information on English export to Suez from Bombay. Trade touched a high level mark between the Bombay Presidency and the Red Sea during 1816-18. Evidence also suggests that the volume of trade between the Indian ports and the Pasha’s ports of the Red sea was very high. There was a sharp upward movement in the volume of trade between 1815 and 1838. Jedda as a leading port of the Red Sea thrived only on Indian commodities. In 1833 the port received 10,000 tons of shipping. The Pasha also formulated customs regulation, and discouraged import of those commodities which were either produced or manufactured in his dominion. His reign is marked by the execution of various treaties of trade and commerce with the British Government. Whereas the other section of the chapter by and large deals with the merchant shipping in the Red sea. The period covered is the 1st half of the 19th century, and we have endeavoured to assess the Indian trade with the Red Sea. We shall see that many petitions of claim against the Imam of Sanaa have been submitted to the Governor in Council at Bombay. The amount of losses particularly guide us to the value and level of trade the Indian merchants had with the ports of Mokha, Jedda and
other ports of the Red Sea. We also understand that a large number of Indian merchants belonging to Surat and Bombay had regular and prosperous trade with Mokha, Jedda and other ports of the Red Sea and had faced many maritime problems. We have valuable information, which had not been hitherto taken note of relates to blockades organized by the East India Company in order to warn the government of Sanaa and punish the governor (Daulah) of Mokha. The documents indicate that the merchants from Bombay and Surat had lodged complaints with the East India Company, pleading that their goods were either seized, or robbed. The Company’s officials were requested to direct the Resident at Mokha to take care of the safety of ships and goods belonging to the Indian merchants. The chapter largely deals with all these complaints and grievances of Indian merchants operating in the Red Sea region.

The chapter six deals with the coming of steamships in the Indian Ocean and its impact on Indo-Arab trade. Replacement of sailing ships by steamships was indeed a revolution in navigation and world trade. But it gave a crippling blow to Indian and Arab owned sailing fleets. Apparently the steam shipping and Suez Canal helped the European trade more. On the opening of the Red Sea route to Europe and with the coming of steamships passing through the Suez Canal, the major beneficiary was thus undoubtedly Britain and Indo-Arab trade did not gain much as a consequence.
The chapter seven is divided into two parts. The first part mainly concentrates on the significance of the Suez Canal which was constructed by the French under De Lesseps. The Canal was opened for shipping in 1869. Interestingly, Palmerston was opposed to the construction because of the fear that during a war France might close the Canal to the British. As a matter of fact the Suez Canal shortened the sea route between Europe and India. Cheaper and faster voyages through the Canal became possible. While Damascus and Aleppo commercially suffered set back with the opening of the Suez Canal but it brought Iraq more firmly in the orbit of Indian Ocean trade. India and Britain came to have greater share of Iraq's trade. By 1914 India and Britain accounted for 50% of Iraq's exports and 2/3 of its imports. Trade of Venice with India as well revived with the opening of the Suez Canal. It served as entrepot of Indian goods and its volume rose to a very high level. Even though Indian goods lost some of their Middle Eastern markets owing to inflow of British industrial goods into those markets, however, evidence suggests that Indian piece goods had captured the Middle Eastern markets of Turkey and Aden and her volume of trade was rising. By 1893 English trade through the Suez Canal had increased tremendously.

The second part of the Chapter describes as to how the port of Aden came into prominence following the opening of the Suez Canal and the increased traffic that passed through it. Aden under
the pretext of maladministration came under the British imperial network in 1838. There was rapid rise of population of Aden since 1839. By 1880 its population had gone up to 35,000. The settlement was placed under the Bombay Presidency. Its prosperity as a thriving port got a boost up but only on the cost of Mokha and Hodaida. Its commercial prosperity would have been further advanced had railways been constructed from Sanaa to Aden. The annual exports and imports of Aden which in 1839 were Rs. 1,900,000, in 1897 reached a high water-mark to over Rs.30,000,000. There was a marked development of re-exports of gum and coffee from 1877, of ivory and spices from 1875 and rubber and hides from 1876. The value of coffee increased five times between 1870 and 1880 and was re-exported to London, Marseilles, Trieste and New York. Its main exports were cotton textiles since 1874. The port of Hodaida only competed with Aden while Mokha was on the dwindling.

Chapter eight is the overall assessment. What is important to note in this context is that the pace with which the industrial manufactures of Britain were capturing the Middle Eastern markets, survival of Indian textile goods into these markets was in spite of it quite flourishing. So long the Suez canal was not constructed, Bombay was the redistributive centre for EIC’s British industrial manufactures to the Arab world. At the same time India’s textile goods were also in great demand in Middle East. This further finds
corroboration in EIC’s enumeration of Indian textiles like “dotties”, fine piecegoods, “bowchas” and “asloof” which were exported to the Middle Eastern markets.

After the opening of Suez Canal there are varying indications that Indian textile was on diminishing. But Turkey still imported Indian textiles and silk through the Red sea. Her export of piece goods from Surat to the Red Sea was higher than from Bombay. Exports of Indian cloths and silk were also made to Damascus, Kaseem and Lohaj. Urban markets in both the Middle East and South-East Asia had remarkable influence on the growth of cotton in Gujarat and on Eastern coastal India. It is quite obvious, therefore, that during 19th century while Middle Eastern craft was dwindling the Indian craft was improving. This also shows that the British industrial manufacture of cheaper and attractive textiles had yet to occupy its prominence in textile export in the Middle Eastern countries.
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2001
Certified that the thesis entitled **Commerce Between India and the Arab World During 19th Century**, is the original work of Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad Khan, supplicating as a teacher under clause 7 of chapter XXV of Academic Ordinances, A.M.U., for the award of Ph.D degree in History.

March 2001

(Professor S.P. Gupta)
Chairman / Coordinator
PREFACE

Maritime history of Indian Ocean region has been a subject of great interest among historians. Beginning with W.H. Moreland many modern historians of maritime history have used both the indigenous as well as European sources to construct the history of the Indian Ocean region. The maritime trade and commerce has been studied by J.C. Van Leur, Holden Furber, Denys Lombard, K.N. Chaudhri, Ashin Das Gupta, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and others. Fernand Braudel, by and large, stands as a giant among all these, who although does not directly fall into their line; yet his work remains a lighthouse, bringing the Indian Ocean in his bid to ‘look East’ into the arena of greater Mediterranean.

My dissertation entitled “Commerce Between India and the Arab World During 19th century” seeks to focus on important region which has been left out by our predecessors or referred to in passing from an Euro-centric emphasis. My attempt is to make the theme more Indo-centric. Thus, there has been a long standing need of a work of such a kind in which Indo-Arab trade relations during 19th century in the context of Asian vis-à-vis world economy should be studied. The present work is an humble attempt to fill in this gap.
The Indian trade and commerce during the 18th century was not declining. Its industrial production was voluminous and a great volume of export and import was passing through the customs house of its important ports of Surat, Broach, Cambay, Manglore etc. Although, EIC had started shifting its commercial activities from Surat to Bombay from 1664, the former however remained a principal port on Western coast till the end of the 17th century. We have also evidence that Surat continued to be a prominent centre of commercial activities during the 18th century. It was only from the beginning of the 19th century that Surat’s importance started declining because of deindustrialisation ensued in India that synchronized with British political domination and the rising importance of Bombay.

It is interesting to note that many Indian rulers also had active participation in trade and commerce of their states. These great traders were the Nawab of Surat, Nawab of Arcot, Nawab Haider Ali and Sultan Tipu of Mysore. Their participation in trade and commerce must have been a source of encouragement for the ordinary merchants of their states as well as for those from abroad. Tipu Sultan, particularly to mention, went to the extent of having established diplomatic relations with a number
of Gulf countries and utilized his embassies there to supervise trade with those countries. At important sea-ports of the Gulf region commercial houses known as *Kothis* were established where agents (*gumashtahas*) were stationed to look after the commercial depots (or *Kothis*) and take care of whatever passed in between the port of Mysore and the Gulf.

The source material for it is varied and contained in foreign languages. It is important to note that for the 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) century India’s commerce with the Arab world material is available in Persian, as well as in the local Indian languages like Marathi, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Bengali and in four south Indian languages. Of special significance is the collection of Sultan Tipu’s own letters and orders in Persian contained in *Hukmnamaha-i Tipu Sultan* (India office Library, London). Some of these orders have been translated and published by William Kirkpatrick in his book, *History of Tippoo Sultan*. For the 18\(^{th}\) century trade on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts we have the diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai which is extent in several volumes besides collection of other private papers. There are also the letters, orders and grants of Nawab of Arcot in Persian many of which have been translated in English and preserved at the Tamil Nadu Archives in Chennai. Documents for the 18\(^{th}\)
and 19th century India’s trade with Malay peninsula are also available in Malay language.

While the European sources in Portuguese, Dutch, French and English provide rare and important information on the subject, data on Asia and Africa are also available in the Factory Records of the East India Company. These records also shed considerable light on commercial activities of Indian merchants with countries bordering the Indian Ocean shores. Besides, we get valuable information on the 19th century Indian commerce with the Arab world in the useful accounts of travellers. But the accounts of Indian merchants’ commercial activities are recorded mainly in context of their closer ties with the Company’s affairs in the East.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have spent a fairly long time in completing the present dissertation owing to many constraints. However, enthusiasm and circumstances rarely go hand in hand. Now I am supplicating my Ph.D. thesis as a teacher candidate. This is not a very happy situation for me, as I very much wanted to submit it under the supervision of my supervisor, late Professor Maqbool Ahmad. Indeed, I am grateful to him for his guidance and supervision and the insight that he gave me into the field of maritime history. I have greatly benefited from the suggestions and advice of my teacher Professor Irfan Habib, who supervised my work for a period and I acknowledge the debt I owe to him.

I am indebted to Professor S.P. Gupta, the Chairman and Coordinator, Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, for his interest and encouragement in getting this work completed by extending me every facility. Also thanks are due to my senior colleague Professor R.K. Trivedi for his keen interest in my thesis. The Centre of Advanced Study (Department of History) sanctioned to me a ‘study grant’ in 1986 for the collection of research material at the Maharashtra Archives. My thanks are also due to Dr. S.D. Karnik, Director, Western Regional Centre, Indian Council of Social
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I am also grateful to the Directors, of Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai, for their kind permission to give me access to the records of the East India Company. During my first visit to the Archives in 1986 Mr. Sanjev P. Desai, the then publication officer of the Archives, was of great help to me. I am greatly indebted to him for this. My grateful thanks are also due to other members on staff of the Archives for their prompt response to my requisitions of the records.

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My sincere intellectual indebtedness is due to Professor Nazir Ahmad (Retd.) of the Persian Department, A.M.U. and Professor Ishtiaq Ahmad Zilli who have unhesitatingly clarified many things whenever I approached them for their help.

Professor A.J. Qaiser (Retd.), Dr. M.P. Singh (Retd.), Professor Iqbal Husain (Retd.) Professor S.M.R. Naqvi, Dr. Afzal Husain and Mr. M.K. Zaman were of much help to me when I approached them for any advice or help. I gratefully acknowledge my gratitude to these colleagues.

My greatest debt is due to many staff members and authorities of various libraries in India for their prompt response to my requisitions and kind permission to use their library facilities. I especially mention to the Bombay-branch of the Asiatic Society Library (Mumbai), Bombay University Library, Prof. S. Nurul Hasan Research Library of the CAS, Department of History (A.M.U.), the Centre of West Asian Studies Library, A.M.U., the Maulana Azad Library and the Library of the Department of Islamic Studies. My thanks are also due to Professor A.C. Tikekar, Bombay University Librarian (1984-89), University of Bombay, for extending me all
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My special thanks are due to my friend and colleague Dr. Mohammad Afzal Khan for his assistance in checking the references and patiently reading the scripts. My younger colleagues, Dr. Sufian Ahmad Islahi of the Arabic Department, Dr. Iqbal Sabir, Mr. Wasim Raja, Dr. Pervez Nazir and Mr. Reyaz Ahmad Khan have also been helpful to me. I thank them for their help and assistance.

Computer processing of my thesis work was initially begun by Mr. Arif Jamal and later on taken up by Mr. Abid Jamal Siddiqui. Abid was always responding to my suggestions and patiently deleted or incorporated words or sentences in the text. I thank him for his efficient processing and wish him well in his career. Mr. Zahoor Ali Khan, the Senior Cartographer of our Centre and his colleague Mr. Faiz Habib also deserve special thanks for their kind cooperation in drawing the maps for the thesis.

The ordeal of research has been too long and one of neglect to my family. In spite of this my special thanks are due to my younger
brother, Shamim Akhtar Khan and his wife, both for their hospitality and care during my stay at Bombay. I record my deep sense of gratitude to my mother for her blessings. My late father, in fact, inculcated in me the spirit of enquiry and learning. He always inspired me and remains so in my cherished memory. My wife, Noorjañan, endured the stress and strain of my involvement in research with great forbearance and saved me from the worries of my family; so also my children and to them I owe a lot for their affection and loving care to me.

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ABBREVIATIONS

EIC     The English East India Company
IESHR   The Indian Economic and Social History Review
VOC     The Dutch East India Company
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INTRODUCTION

The Arabian Sea trade with India is believed to have begun from the third millenium BC when the merchants from ancient Dilmun traded with the cities of the Indus Valley. During this period the European trade with India across the Mediterranean was carried through intermediaries. While the Phoenicians dominated the western section of the trade routes, the routes on the eastern side passed through the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. This concentration or “narrowing” of the great commercial pathways between the east and the west in the ‘Levant’ or the ‘Fertile-Crescent’ remained a unique feature of world commerce till the rounding up of the Cape of Good Hope offered an additional passage.

The discovery of monsoon in the early Christian era helped replace ‘Coasting’. It is this achievement that made sailing possible from ports of the east African coast and the Red Sea to the western coast of India.

The period from 13 BC to 96 AD witnessed the zenith of Graeco-Roman trade with India. Pliny (69-79 AD) assessed Rome’s trade with India at 125,000,000 dinari and the outflow for
Arabian and Chinese trade at 12,500,000 *dinari*. But after 300 AD the Roman Empire declined and its coinage depreciated. As a result, its Indian trade also began to decay. The Greek sea traffic in the Indian Ocean declined correspondingly. There is complete absence of Roman coins in India after Caraculla (212-217 AD), suggesting a practical closure of the Roman-Indian commerce.

Upon the decline of the Roman Empire, Byzantine inherited control over this important commerce, since both Egypt (commanding the Red Sea) and Syria (with its entrepots receiving goods from the Persian Gulf) became parts of the Byzantine Empire. However, despite various ups and downs the oriental wares did reach the Roman territories. Thus owing to declining of Roman influence, Abyssinia, extended its limits to the Nile and to the straits of Bab al-Mandab, imposed tribute on chiefs and protected sea-routes of crucial significance. It also took over Yemen and dominated the Red Sea trade. The Greeks who occupied a premier position in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire were now quite familiar with the various countries of the Indian Ocean, the markets of south-west Arabia, East Africa, Ceylon and Bay of Bengal, the mouth of Ganges as far as the 'Golden Chersonese'. The Arabian peoples who had served as
carriers and middlemen in the Indian trade with the Mediterranean during the period of the Roman Empire gained much from contacts with India and China, in the east, and Sabea and Egypt in the west. Arab settlements on the Indian shores seem to have already existed prior to the advent of Islam and these became more numerous on the coasts of Malabar and Ceylon thereafter. The author of *Christian Topography* in the 6th century AD comments on the rarity of visits by the Roman merchants at the entrepots of Eastern Commerce. Asian trade was by now shared mainly by Arabs, Abyssinians and Iranians.

From the establishment of Prophet’s power at Medina till the period of Caliph Muawiyah, the Islamic regime could not pay much attention to seafaring and maritime trade. Foreign ships cast anchor in the little Bay of Shoaiba. Occasional voyages can only be cited from the Jiddah coast which replaced Shoaiba as the port in the period of Caliph Usman. Muawiyah (661-80 AD) is said to have been the first Arab ruler to have built a navy, but it was mainly confined to the Syrian coast. The Arab Caliphate from the time of Umar brought Egypt and the Fertile Crescent under the control of a single power, almost for the first time since Alexander. The immediate result was not helpful to Indo-
Mediterranean trade; indeed, Henri Pirenne in his classic *Mohammad and Charlemagne* speaks of a closing of the Western Mediterranean. Though Pirenne’s thesis might have been overstated, there does seem to have occurred a considerable decline in commerce between the western and eastern portions of the Mediterranean, and Alexandria also seems to have declined.

But if the trade with Western and Southern Europe decayed, the newly unified Middle East itself offered a vast market for Indian (and Chinese) goods. A new impetus to sea trade can be discerned soon after the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty in 750 AD particularly with the removal of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad in 762 AD. The ports on the Arabian coasts from which trade was conducted with Indian ports included Basra, Ubullah, Siraf in south-western Persia, Sohar, Muscat in Oman. By the mid 9th century, Muslim control over the Eastern and Central Mediterranean was firmly established and Byzantine fleet rarely ventured from its home bases. In the Indian Ocean, Arab supremacy was unchallenged.

By the 9th century India’s seaborne trade was monopolized by Arab sea-farers. But during the 10th century this monopoly of trade by the Arabs gradually weakened, especially in south-east
Asia, and from the 12th century when the Chinese, availing the opportunity, extended their navigations to the Malabar ports. The change partly reflected the decline of the Abbasid Empire in both political and economic terms.

During the Fatimid period the Jews based at Cairo had a large share in the Indian Ocean commerce. Alberuni (early 11th century) says that a Jew controlled the whole of the pearl fishery in the Persian Gulf. During the 10th century a group of Jewish merchants known as Radhnites obtained some prominence. Ibn Khurdadbeh (825-911) writes that this group of merchants carried merchandise from western Europe to the Near East and from China and India to the Mediterranean. The Radhnites, by and large, were engaged in luxury trade. Theirs was not a regular trade since they belonged neither to the Christian nor to the Muslim World. Voyages to India were made by Radhnites from Egypt through the Red Sea.

Driving away ‘unbelievers’ from the important trade of the Red Sea and giving encouragement to the extension of the Arab control over the Arabian Sea traffic, Salah al-Din (b. 532 A.H./1138 A.D.-d. 589 A.H./1193 A.H.) of Kurdish origin and founder of the Ayyubid dynasty) led to the rise of the Karimi merchants who were to play a prominent role in the mercantile
activity of the Indian Ocean. Like Salah al-Din his successor and nephew, Taqi al-Din Umar also gave encouragement to Karim merchants. The Karim’s commercial activities extended between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean during the 11th and 12th centuries. Simultaneously, the mercantile community on the west coast of India was widely engaged with the Middle East. Before 1147 the towns on the coasts of the Red Sea, Arabia and India were frequented by merchants from the larger cities of the Muslim West.

Aden in the 12th century was a small city, yet, strategically located was of great significance, a port in between the 'both sea'. From Aden ships sailed to Sind, India and China.

Muslims and Jews acted in partnership in undertaking maritime commerce as the large business and banking houses were in Muslim hands in Egypt. There were also sleeping partnerships. The Meccan always kept his capital employed by this means. Merchants were also assisted by a fairly developed system of credit and finance found in all countries bordering upon Arabian Sea. A rudimentary system of banking existed in the Arab world by the 10th century. Moneylenders in Sind and other Indian ports advanced loans of thousand dinars to merchants. The late 13th
century saw the growing dominance of the Karimis in the Middle Eastern countries. They held a monopoly of Egypt's trade with East Africa and the Far East. The Karim became so wealthy that they were capable of financing the Mamluk state. The organization of the Karim had its counterparts in the closely-knit caste or community of Hindu merchants in India. Ibn Battuta indeed compares the banyas of Deogir (Daulatabad) to the Karim.

During the 13th and 14th centuries the merchant guilds in South India were known as Virabalanja Sumaya or the Ayyavali, of these the collector guild or Sankarlu held considerable powers. They collected duties on exports and imports and paid a fixed sum to the government.

Indeed, when we examine the function of the guilds in South India we find that the amount of authority those guilds held was never enjoyed by the Karimis; nor do we have evidence that the Karim ever were authorised to collect taxes on the government's behalf nor did they enjoy authority to exempt any dealer from paying duty. But on the Indian coasts conditions must have varied a great deal. It is quite likely that in area like Gujarat the more individualistic Muslim merchants provided a competing (and complementary) element to the strongly knit Hindu trading
communities. The details of this encounter and interaction – their rivalry and relationship has not been taken account of.

A feature of the trade organization of the time was that the mercantile community either owned ships or hired them. The owners of ships themselves were wealthy merchants whose ships carried cargoes of their own as well as others. In the 11th century the ship owners in the Middle East were largely Muslims except for a few Christians. Many ships were owned by the ruling class, such as the sultans, ladies of the ruling houses, governors, generals etc. and also by the wealthier merchants. Jews of Aden also owned ships. The prominent Jewish merchants in Cairo were actually termed nakhoda (ship-master) around 1200 AD. They earned this title, apparently because of their participation in navigation on the Indian Ocean.

The Medieval sea-borne trade confronted and suffered considerably from piracy. Piratical activities on the Western coast of India continued in the subsequent centuries too. Marco Polo condemns their depredations. Sultan Qala'un (1279-1290 AD) and his successor had enforced very severe rules against pirates and also robbers harassing caravans between Nile and the Red Sea. Sultan Qala’un made efforts to safeguard and enhance both trade
and commerce (*Kitab al-Suluk*, Vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 581-2). Apart from this often merchant ships were seized by the governments, and confiscated the cargo belonging to persons who had connections with the shipowners.

Transactions in Arabian Sea commerce involved not only barter but large exchanges of uncoined metal as well as a variety of coins. In the Egypto-India trade of the 11th and 12th centuries the payment seems largely to have been made in kind. The orders for Indian goods were accompanied by payments in gold pieces, the international coinage of that period. Besides, metallic coins, countries of the Indian Ocean also used cowries as medium of transactions which were the particular export of the Maldives Islands.1 In Bengal, Ibn Battuta witnessed cowry shells being exchanged for rice. The Yemenites used them as ballast in their ships.

Merchants trading from the Arabian Sea ports suffered considerably from heavy taxation. The customs amounted to more than 10% of the value of the goods *taxed*. In some cases the government made trade a state monopoly.

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The main feature of the Indian trade with the Islamic and other countries during early medieval time had been generally that India exported spices, herbs and drugs and in exchange obtained gold and silver. India also exported iron and steel besides cloth, silk, indigo and other merchandise. Precisely, Indian cotton cloth and other textiles like shali, makhmal, kamkhab etc. were specially important items of export, particularly to South Asia and East Africa and even some reached Europe. These were carried by the Arabs to the Red Sea and from there to Damascus and Alexandria where they were distributed to the Mediterranean countries and beyond.

The nature of trade and commerce changed as changes in shipbuilding technology were evolved following the intrusion of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. There seems to be all round improvement in shipping activity, with the use of varieties of sails, capacity of accommodating more cargo, evolution of round ships that replaced the older junks etc. Constant efforts began to cover longer distance in shorter time etc. Infact what was lacking was not technique but the spirit of innovation for which the Indian shipwrights were making constant endeavours. These efforts seem to have nearly been achieved only by the end of the 17th century.
Carriers of Arabian Sea trade used divergent routes for their shipping to various ports. The routes on which Arab-owned ships plied were mainly those from Malabar to the Red Sea. Those ships also plied from Malabar and Konkan to Hormuz and from the Gujarat ports to the Red Sea ports. The routes on which Indian-owned ships sailed were from Gujarat and Malabar to Malacca, from Gujarat (rarely Malabar) to the East African ports, from Gujarat to Hormuz; from Gujarat and Konkan to the Red Sea; and lately, coastal routes on which smaller ships were employed.

Before the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope the main outlets of Eastern commodities to Europe were Alexandria and Aleppo. The Mamluk Kingdom of Egypt thus stood astride the main channels through which traffic went from the Indian Ocean to Mediterranean Europe. Commenting on the significance of the discovery and its impact K.M. Panikar, wrote that “The real importance of the new ‘discovery’ (of the Cape route by the Portuguese) lay in the fact that it broke the monopoly which the Venetians and the Egyptians had so long enjoyed in the trade with India.”

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The term 'Moor' embraced the Arabs as well as the Gujarati and Malabari Muslims. The Portuguese on their arrival found the 'Moors' dominating the Indian Ocean from Madagascar to the straits of Malacca.

Till the Middle Ages the Arabs controlled a large part of the Indian Ocean commerce. They maintained a hold over shipping based on Hormuz where merchandise of the East of all descriptions could be had.

At the mouth of the Red Sea, Aden too remained important, its merchants being described as very rich by Ibn Battuta. By 1500 A.D. Arabs' commercial activity had extended to south-east Asia. Tom Pires mentions the presence of Arab merchants at Malacca from Cairo, Mecca, Aden, Abyssinia, East African States and various other West Asian countries (*Suma Oriental*, vol. 1, p. 174). The Arabs also traded with Japanese ports. They traded mainly in pepper and took it from Malabar to the Red Sea and to Hormuz in their own ships. The Arabs based at Cairo functioned as intermediaries between Europe and India. Commodities of Italy, Greece and Damascus brought by the Arab merchants to Cairo were taken to the Red Sea and thence trans-shipped in their own ships to Gujarat. Their Cargoes consisted of gold, silver, quicksilver, vermilion, copper, rose water, wools and brocades.
These goods at Cambay were exchanged with the indigenous cotton cloth and spices from Malabar and Malacca.¹

Gujarati merchants and navigators were also very prominent in the Indian Ocean trade c. 1500. Their ships were of larger size and had expert seamen to man them. Their pilots possessed much skill and did a great deal of navigation. After the decline of the Delhi Sultanate the only North Indian state that took keen interest in sea trade was Gujarat. Gujaratis were strong element in the trade of the Malay Archipelago. There were in Malacca in the early 16th century, at least, 1,000 Gujarati resident merchants and 5,000 “transient sailors”. It appears that Gujarati Muslims traded more on the Aden-Gujarat-Malacca line.

The Gujaratis maintained brisk trade with East Africa as well. The people of Sofala and the city states like Kilwa, Malindi, Pemba, Mogadishu purchased Cambay cloth in exchange for gold, ivory and slaves. The Gujarati merchants were trading with Hormuz long before the Portuguese intrusion in the Indian Ocean. These merchants brought horses from Persian Gulf. There were Gujarati Muslim merchants on western Indian coast. Albuquerque noted the Hindu “banyas of Cambay” trading with those parts.

Pearson is of the opinion that the crews of the ships owned by the Hindus, were largely Muslims. The Gujaratis often sailed on long-distance routes. They sometimes kept themselves away from their homeland for quite a long period. For instance the ships of Rander remained for years away from their home in Gujarat.

The Malabaris, both Muslim and Hindu, traded with Malacca, at that time major entrepot for the goods of Chinese and Spice Islands. They owned their own ships. At Calicut, the Arabs purchased goods brought by Malabaris from Malacca, while they also carried away pepper and other produce of Malabar. The position of Calicut in the 14th and 15th century was that of an emporium where every thing could be obtained. Pepper grew all along the coast of Malabar. Zakariya Qazvini, a geographer in the 13th century, in his description of Malabar wrote that, “pepper goes from extreme East to the extreme West”.¹ In a letter by Rashiduddin which contains a list of order for Indian commodities, we find a demand for 300 mans of pepper. The Malabaris traded extensively with Kathiawad and Gujarat, as well as the Coromandel Coast, Ceylon and Maldives Islands. From the description of European travellers it appears that the majority of the merchants in Malabar were Muslims. Nairs were often found

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¹. Suleyman Nadvi, 'Commercial Relations of India with Arabia', *Islamic Culture*, vol. 7, April, 1933, p. 306.
working with these Muslims as secretaries. Malabaris were very good sailors. Muslim shippers employed fishermen. Malabari collaborated with the Muslims in Sea commerce.

Stagnation of Hindu seafaring or for that matter the dominance of Arab shippers did not restrain Hindus to continue their navigational activities. Enumerating various reasons for such restraints as it is contained in the *Dharmshastra* A.L. Basham is of the view that the text probably only applies to the Brahmins.¹ The question arises whether there was any stagnation at all to sea-travel in the Indian Ocean seafaring. Even if *Dharmshastra* deemed it a pollution to travel overseas, Hindu merchants and sailors had established settlements abroad. The Cairo Geniza documents refer to the presence of a number of Hindu merchants at Cairo. The documents also record the sinking of the ship of one Patam Soami, driven to Berbera. There were a number of other small boats of the same person which safely reached Aden.²

Portuguese, successfully crossed the Cape of Good Hope. Their success was spectacular as an example of their ‘Crusading Spirit’ as well as a result of their expertise and technical superiority in navigational techniques over their adversaries. The

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The ostensible aim was the "Search of Christians and spices" as King John II hoped, "for (the Kingdom of Prester John) would serve him as a way-station on the route to India, from hence Portuguese Captains would bring back those riches heretofore distributed by Venice."

The initial aim of the King of Portugal was to obtain monopoly of pepper trade in Europe by shifting the centre for pepper distribution from Venice to Lisbon by destroying the Levantine trade carried by Arab and Indian merchants. The main design of the Portuguese was to purchase pepper cheaply for Casa da India and to sell it almost at monopoly prices in Europe by extracting high profits. The Portuguese made payments in bullion, gold and silver. According to an estimate "120 to 150,000 tons of spices were bought (during the 16th century) almost without merchandise in return, for 150 tons of gold."

In order to establish an empire and to have control over the pepper producers, they adopted the strategy of subjugation of the rulers of the regions of Malabar in whose states pepper grew. These attempts of the Portuguese did not materialize in Calicut as

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2. Immanuel Wellerstein, op cit., p. 329
the Zamorin did not agree with the terms and conditions of Portuguese. In Cochin they succeeded in forcing the rulers to cooperate. Their attempts to monopolize the supply of Malabar trade, therefore, failed. The Portuguese also failed in their efforts to block the trade in spices carried by the Indian and Arab merchants. Hormuz was seized in 1515 and the Persian Gulf route was brought under their control but the Portuguese remained unsuccessful in taking Aden. We may infer from it that so long as Aden was not taken by the Portuguese the Arab and Indian merchants could not be eliminated. There is evidence to suggest that the Portuguese blockade of the Red Sea proved ineffective and the Arab and Indian merchants carried their trade undeterred. Moreover in 1570s the Portuguese confessed the futility of their blockade effort and discontinued it.¹

The Levant trade—the mainstay of Indo-Arab Commerce—retained its significance by and large throughout the course of the 16th century, in spite of disturbances created in the Arabian Sea by the Portuguese. The prosperity of the Commerce on this route increased during the 2nd half of the century and continued to be as important as the Cape-route. The data of pepper export to Lisbon

¹ M.N. Pearson, Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat, California, 1976, pp 46-47.
and to Levant, given by Jan Kieniewiez, supports such an assumption.¹

The royal Portuguese monopoly could not become a reality and the Levant trade continued. The Portuguese failed to overcome their basic economic weakness by their naval supremacy. Among other factors responsible for Portuguese failure, was the growing power of the Ottoman Turks.

The Portuguese tried to operate in Asian waters from a position of comparative dominance based on naval power. Their attempt was to destroy rivals particularly the Arabs and Indian Muslims by controlling and caring the trade. Yet, the Portuguese could never succeed in controlling fully the trade in Asian waters, and their prime object to ban all Red Sea trade was not successful. Panikkar is of the view that the gap created by the partial ouster of the Arab merchants, the Portuguese cartaz system was not filled up by the Portuguese themselves but was mainly by the Indian merchants who “were able to carry on their trade without competitions”. By 1530s the Turks became active again in the Persian Gulf and the Portuguese share in carrying trade started declining. By 1560, Alexandria was exporting as much spices to Europe as in the late 15th century.

During the course of 16th century the trade in the Asian waters adjusted itself to the new realities imposed by the Portuguese. The Asian merchants had largely retained their existing trade owing to the inherent weaknesses in the Portuguese system.

The dawn of the 17th century was marked by the establishment of two north European trading companies. The English East India Company was established in 1600 and the various Dutch companies merged to form the VOC in 1602. Naturally the emergence of these companies affected the entire pattern of Arabian Sea commerce. The Dutch had naval superiority over the slower and bulkier Portuguese carracks, hence they struck at the weakest and most crucial spot of their hold.

The Dutch reached the Spice Islands by avoiding India. The interlocking nature of Asian trade, created an immediate impact on the Arabian Sea trade. The Dutch monopolised the Sumatran pepper, and by supplying it in large quantities to Europe they drove out the superior Malabar pepper from the European and even Ottoman markets.

The Portuguese did not only face the Dutch onslaught, a number of other forces, too combined together to hasten their
passing away. The Turko-Persian conflict resulted in the decay of the silk trade through Aleppo, therefore, Hormuz declined. The Safavids’ attempts to develop Bandar Abbas (Gombroon) also contributed in the decline of the significance of Hormuz. In 1622 the Persian and English joint forces captured Hormuz from the Portuguese. The seizer of Muscat by the Arabs in 1647 completed their rout in the Persian Gulf.

For the Dutch the Arabian Sea area was a zone of secondary interest, whereas to the English East India Company it turned out to be of primary concern, during the 17th century. They turned to the Mughals for a hold in the Arabian Sea, and established a permanent English factory at Surat in 1613.

One of the major sources of early conflict between the English and the Indian merchants and the Mughal authorities originated in their attempts to participate in Gujarat’s trade with the Red Sea. This the Mughals would not agree to; and the conflict led to English plundering Indian ships calling at Red Sea ports in 1612 and causing considerable though temporary loss to the Gujarat trade.

To keep the English out of the Red Sea trade the Gujarat merchants resisted them in Mokha as well and were powerful
enough to succeed at least temporarily in their endeavour in 1610. In 1618 they (the English) had succeeded in procuring a farman from the Pasha of Sanaa allowing them trade with Mokha. In 1620s the Zaidi Imams of Sanaa ended the Turkish rule in Yemen, and the Imam’s port of Mokha began to flourish at the expense of Aden which declined rapidly due to Turkish maladministration. The privileges at Mokha thus were very timely and provided the English with an opportunity to gain an edge over others in the Red Sea trade.

In 1621 the Dutch tried to follow the English example and captured Gujarat ships in the Red Sea, and forced the merchants to take licenses from them on payment. The troubles continued during 1622-23 when the English again started attacking Gujarat ships. Even the vessels that had the licenses issued by the English were not spared. The ships belonging to Tavakkal Ali and Shivaji Baniya were captured. In 1623, Ganjbar, carrying 100 Gujarat traders of quality on board was captured. But Mughals owing to their pre-occupation in suppressing Khurram’s revolt were unable to take cognizance of these incidents.

However, the privileges enjoyed by the English at Mokha adversely affected the trade of the Indian merchants. This added
to the general set back suffered by Gujarat merchants' trade with the Red Sea as a result of the arrival of the Dutch and the English.

The fall of Hormuz in 1622 generally established the English strength in the Arabian Sea. But the Dutch too extended their trade to Persia in 1623 and having better financial resources and spices to sell in the Persian markets, they began to rival the English. The Gujarati merchants too gained by the disappearance of the Portuguese control. Persian merchants also started visiting Surat. The Persian port, Bandar Abbas (Gombroon) now replaced Hormuz.

In 1620s the hostilities between the Mughal and the Persian rulers provided a further fillip to Persian Gulf trade due to the stoppage of overland trade between the Mughal state and Safavid empire, much of the trade was directed to the Gujarat ports. When the Portuguese attacked the Gujarat shipping in the region, a short-lived alliance was formed between the Dutch and English and in 1625 they inflicted another defeat on the Portuguese.

The volume of Gujarat trade with Persia was so high that apparently the Gujarat shipping alone was not sufficient to cope with it. The Gujarat merchants forced the Dutch ships to unload
rice and cotton and carry their goods to Bandar Abbas. Similarly the English too were compelled by Hari Vaishya and Virji Vora to transport goods of Surat merchants to Gulf ports or to repay the loan of more than 30,000 laris the English owed to them. The English had to comply. The Gujarat trade with the Gulf flourished and the English had to face stiff competition from the Gujaratis at Bandar Abbas.

The Indian merchants' presence in the Persian Gulf in 17th century is an illustration of both their enterprise and resilience and the capacity of pre-modern systems of commerce for accommodation and adjustment. Their presence is also a reminder that one should not assume that pre-modern ideological and social systems that were necessarily hostile to trade and enterprise. The presence of Hindu usurers in an Islamic country like Iran is proof enough of that.

It appears that after the 1620s Gujarat and other Asian merchants re-asserted their position and were able to tide over the initial shock and setback to Arabian Sea trade. They were forced to concede some share to new rivals, the English and the Dutch, especially in carrying trade. On the whole a fairly large portion of the trade of the Arabian Sea was retained by the Indian shippers in spite of the flutter in the first decade of the 17th century.
It does not seem thus possible to agree with Neils Steensgaard's thesis that the emergence of North European companies in the Arabian waters simply destroyed the trade of the Asian merchants, the so-called 'peddlers'. According to Neils Steensgaard in 1620s the Dutch and English share in the Asiatic trade rose so much that the Asian peddlers were simply forced to give way for the new entrants. There was now a direct international trade through the Cape of Good Hope, which increasingly replaced the Levant route and an 'Asiatic Trade Revolution' took place. Our evidence, however, suggests that contrary to this assumption the trade in the Asian waters remained with the Asian traders; they only conceded some share to Europeans who were to depend on Gujarat merchants to a great extent not for the access to the market but also for credit facilities. The Arabian Sea trade thus only readjusted itself to new realities and no change meriting the designation of a revolution took place.

The Gujarat famine of 1630 adversely affected the Arabian Sea trade but the overseas commerce picked up quite soon. By 1633 the Gujarat ships were back again at Mokha. Zahid Beg and Shahbandar (Port Officer) of Surat too resumed their trading
activities. The re-emergence of Aden too helped in the recovery of Red Sea trade.

In the late 1630s the English resumed their piratical activities. This rekindled the hostilities between the English and the Mughal authorities. The disruption of links between Mokha and Cairo owing to Turko-Arab conflict further affected the Red Sea trade. But the Persian Gulf trade picked up as a consequence. In 1647 the Dutch attempt to monopolise Red Sea trade and their embargo on Gujarat ships, further disturbed the trade in the region.

The English faced rough weather in the Persian Gulf as well. The Dutch who were financially better off than the English and had a large number of ships in their fleet started outstripping their trade in the Gulf. The Dutch slashed down their freight rates at 1/3 of the freight charged by the English and drove away the British from the carrying trade. But the English carrying trade soon recovered owing to the Dutch attacks and embargoes on Gujarat shipping. In face of these attacks the Gujarat merchants preferred English shipping.

The troubles ensued during the 1660s as well. The English and Dutch refused to carry the cargo of Gujarat merchants as freight. The situation worsened so much that the Armenians and
Persians left Surat for Bandar Abbas. The Gujarat trade with Persia and Persian Gulf declined sharply.

The story of the Red Sea was somewhat different. Contrary to the decline of Gujarat trade in the Persian Gulf, the Gujarat merchants' trade with the Red Sea ports flourished during the 2nd half of the 17th century. After the closure of the English factory the Gujarat shipping picked up. The English themselves began using Gujarat vessels. In 1662 they hired a ship from Beni Das to transport their goods to Mokha. The ships belonging to Armenian merchants too were used by the English. The Red Sea market came back fully into the hands of Gujarat merchants in 1660s.

Trade in Mokha coffee developed particularly during this period. The Gujarat merchants brought coffee from Mokha to Surat. It was here coffee was bought and sent by the English East India Company to England.

During the 1680s the Dutch East India Company too followed suit, they too began buying Arabian coffee at Surat. After the closure of their factory at Mokha in 1684, they were totally dependent on Surat supplies for onward shipments to Europe. The demand was so high that the Surat merchants started also obtaining Abyssinian coffee though it was inferior to the Mokha coffee.
The Asian merchants in general and the Gujarat merchants in particular maintained their control over the Red Sea trade down to the early decades of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century as they did during the subsequent period. Merchant princes such as Mulla Ghafur, Muhammad Saleh Chellaby and many others flourished. Mulla Ghafur who was a \textit{Bohra} and came from a modest background achieved a runaway success. At the turn of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century he possessed a fleet of 21 seagoing ships. His successor Mulla Muhammad Ali owned 24 ships. He had a bitter feud with the Chellabis. This finally led to the ruin of the Mulla’s family in 1730. But were the great days of Surat’s trade over by the turn of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Ashin Dasgupta, an eminent historian of maritime trade, is of the view that Surat whose prosperity was dependent on the stability of three empires namely the Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman Empire began to decline with the disintegration of those states.\textsuperscript{1} But the ensuing account of Surat’s trade with the Red Sea suggests that the trade continued and might even have surpassed the volume of the previous century.

Chapter - 1

THE INDIAN TRADE WITH THE RED SEA, 18TH CENTURY

The banyas for generations had functioned as merchants and brokers at Surat as well as in marts of south-east Asia, Persian Gulf, the Red Sea. In the early 1730s the banyas of Diu sailed to Mokha under Portuguese protection. Mokha’s Supercargoes Diary in its entry of 1 April 1733 records the arrival of ‘the naqdy sway’, a banya ship under the Portuguese colour from Diu. Evidence on the other hand, suggests no relaxation of Portuguese towards Muslim-owned ships. One of many instances may be cited from the Surat Factory Diary. It mentions in its entry ‘Saed Ship’ being attacked by two ghorabs belonging to the Portuguese.

Other entries in the Diaries of 1733 at Mokha again record arrival of ships to Mokha owned by banyas of Surat. Without giving names of owners the entries of 23 April, 7 and 8 May 1733 only record arrivals at Mokha of “Two Banian ships from Diu”, “Two Banian vessels from Cormian” and “a Banian ship”, whose port of origin does not find mention.

1 Mokha, 1 April 1733, Mokha Supercargoes Diary 1725-1733, No 74, p 102
2 Surat, 1 August 1740, Surat Factory Diary, 1740-42, No 5, p 13
3 Mokha, 28 April, 7 and 8 May 1733, Mokha Supercargoes Diary 1725-33, No 74, pp 118, 132, 172
Entries of the East India Company records also suggest that in the 1730s there were some very prominent families of merchants of Surat like the Sidis, and Chellabis whose ships frequently visited Mokha. The entry of 23 April 1733 in *Mokha Supercargoes Diary* mentions arrival of "sidee ship" to Mokha from Surat.

Another entry of the same record of 1 May 1733 informs of the arrival of "a Gorab" at Mokha from Surat belonging to Hamid Chellabi. An early information in a late entry of 4 July 1733 shows arrival of "Futtee Salam" on 23 April to Mokha whose owner is mentioned as 'Mohamed alley' from Surat.

Jedda was the terminal for many ships from India. Merchandise from Jedda to Cairo or further west to Damascus or Morocco was carried either by caravan or on *dhow* to the Suez area. An entry of *Mokha Supercargoes Diary* of 20 July 1733 speaks of arrival of a "Gorab" from Jedda belonging to "Shahe Rachid from Bassidie". Another entry of 3 August 1733 reports of the arrival of "the Gunjavar Mecky" from Jedda.

The ship "Gunjaver Mecky" finds frequent mention in *Mokha Supercargoes Diary* and is reported making voyages between Surat and the Red Sea. According to the entry of 6 August 1733 contained:

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1 Mokha, 23 April 1733, *Mokha Supercargoes Diary 1725-33*, No 74, p 115
2 Mokha, 1 May 1733, *ibid.*, p 130
3 Mokha 4 July 1733, *ibid.*, p 172
4 Mokha 20 July 1733, *ibid.*, p 188
5 Mokha 3 August 1733 *ibid.*, p 191
in the *Mokha Supercargoes Diary* the owner of the ship was a 'Siddy' merchant. But a ship of the same name had been owned by “Ibrahim Chellaby” and after his demise the ownership seems to have passed to Ismail Chellabi. It was under his ownership the ship was shown making voyage to Jedda. By this time its previous owner Ibrahim Chellabi was dead.

There is almost no evidence of rivalry among the Indian traders sailing to Mokha. The Sidis and Chellabis made voyages together. In an entry of *Mokha Supercargoes Diary* of 6 August 1733 both the Sidi's ship *Gunjawar* and Chellabi's *Ghorab* are reported to have sailed together to Surat.

Much information related to transportation of freight cargo of the East India Company to and from Mokha by Indian merchants can be noted in the Company's records *Surat Factory Diary* in its entry of 31 August 1740 mentions loading large quantity of coffee from Mokha, on behalf of the East India Company, by Ahmad Chellabi. In another instance, a vessel owned by Chellabi was hired by the Company's Surat factors for Rs 5,000 in September 1740.

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5. Surat, 3 August 1740, *Surat Factory Diary, 1740–44*, No 5, p 13. Evidence to freighting of goods of European Companies on "India Vessels" are numerous.
another instance the Captain of the Ghorab ‘Generous Friend’ in the employment of the East India Company announced the departure of his vessel on 10 June, 1790 to Bombay.¹

Carrying coffee for freight by the Company’s ships was not a rare sight. We have Thomas Lunn, master of the Ghorab Generous Friend announcing departure of his vessel from Mokha on 10 June 1790. He agrees to take as freight to Bombay 300 bales of coffee at the rate of 3½ Spanish dollars a bale. The goods had to be taken out of the vessel within 10 days after the arrival of the vessel, otherwise they would be liable to demurrage. If agreeable to the sender he had to make an advance of Rs. 500 Spanish dollars for discharge at Bombay at the rate of Rs. 215 for 100 Spanish dollars. Bills were to be drawn on the Company at Bombay, payable 31 days after sight.²

Thus there were certain conventions prevailing for carrying freight to and from Mokha. For the transport of the East India Company’s cargo the factor at Mokha had first to apply to the nakhoda and only after his approval the freight was loaded.³

¹ Mokha, 29 April 1790, Mokha Factory, 1752-95, No. 76, p. 64.
² Mokha, 9 April 1790, Mokha Factory, 1752-95, No. 76, p. 64. See evidence of execution of an agreement between the Nakhoda Ghulam Husain Hanjeebhoy, agent for Taqi Chellabi and Messrs Loper and Ramsay, and the Factor of the East India Company at Mokha for freighting the Company’s 230 bales of coffee to Bombay on board the ship “Fez Soobhany”. The owner of the ship in all probability was Hajjee Esoph Bushir. Ibid., p. 65.
³ Mokha, 10 August 1795, Mokha Factory, 1752-95, No. 76, p. 155.
According to another convention apparently the trader and shipper both had to enter into an agreement before the consignment was loaded. When a ship was to be loaded for Bombay and other Indian ports there was a general announcement by the ship's captain himself. Terms and conditions of the loading and charges by and large, depended on the decision of the captain himself. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the cargo was carried by both the East India Company's ships and the ships of Indian traders presumably on competitive terms. An entry of 18 July 1752 in Mokha Factory says: “sailed the Daddaboy & Speedwell, having got about Lacks of dollars on Freight between them”.

Numerous entries in Surat Factory Diary of 1740s contain references to Surat ships sailing to Mokha. An entry of 30 September 1740 mentions the arrival of “a moor ship at the Bar of Surat” from Mokha. The owner of the ship was “Seyad Hosseni of Surat”. Sayyid Husaini’s ships usually sailed between Surat and Jedda.

The number of Indian ships visiting Surat in a particular period can be easily taken as an index of the volume of trade.

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1 Mokha, April 1790, Mokha Factory, 1752-95, No. 76, p. 155.
2 Mokha, 18 July 1752, Mokha Factory, 1752, No. 75, p. 60.
3 Mokha, 18 July 1752, Mokha Factory, 1752-1795, No. 76, p. 155.
4 Surat, 30 September 1740, Surat Factory Diary, 1740-1742, No. 5, p. 29. It is to be noted that the term ‘moors’ assumes entirely different interpretation during the period under consideration.
5 Surat, March 1741, Surat Factory Diary, 1740-1742, No. 5, p. 313.
between Mokha and Surat. Entries of 28 August, 3 and 8 September 1740 mention arrival of three ships to the Surat Bar from Mokha. The owners of two of these ships are mentioned as moors. The name of the third owner is given as Mubarak ('Moobrah'); the ship is said to have come from Jedda. The arrival of yet another vessel "Jutly alcare Grab" from Aden belonging to Haji Salim Ahmad of Surat is also reported.

In another entry another ship is mentioned as "Jutly Jung". The name of her owner was Fuckruddin (Fakhruddin). The ship plied between Surat and the Red Sea. Surat is said to have commercial contacts with Johanna (?) as it is well proved by the movements of ships between the two ports. An entry of 16 September 1742 of Surat Factory Diary refers to the arrival of a ship from 'Johanna', owned by 'Seia Jean'.

Entries in the East India Company's records of 1740 in Surat Factory Diary inform us of the incidents of depredations by Marathas and English. A letter of 16 September 1742 by the chief English Factor at Surat refers to the ships owned by the customs master of Surat. Referring to a 'Bottela' belonging to the customs master of Surat, the Factor mentions a plan to seize the ships. He

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says: “Resistance and the more we distress that Government sooner our Buness will be done”

An entry of 10 April 1742 reports the capture of a large ship of Surat (probably Sidi’s?) worth between three & four lack of rupees”, with its cargo being captured by the Marathas. Their aim was to render themselves “more formidableness to the traders of this port (i.e. Surat) and by that mean to enjoy the duties (duties of ?) Juggir which the Sidis are now in possession off who are miserably reduced that they are neither able to protect the trade of this port or the other olow (low?) territories”. However, even if the Marathas failed to achieve their desired goal of acquiring that port, “the subsidy they will oblige the merchants to take their pass”. Another ship named “Phazee Mazor” of Mulla Fakhruddin was seized and carried over to Bassein by the Marathas “Last March in her passage to Judda”. It seems the owner had to pay a ransom of twenty thousand rupees. The vessel used to ply between Surat and the Red Sea.

By the end of the 18th century the Surat shipowners came under very heavy pressure from the East India Company. After

4. Surat, 1 February 1742. Ibid., op.cit.
5. Surat, 10 September 1742. Surat Factory Diary, 1742-1744, No. 6.
Surat fell to the Company in 1800 all ships of “Indian subjects”¹ that left Surat had to carry the Company’s flag and were made to enter *mochalka* or “**Penalty Bond**”. In case the ships used flag other than “the British Flag” they had to pay heavy fines. Those merchants who resided in the Persian Gulf were refused the Company’s passes.²

There were momentary depressions in the Red Sea in the 18th century. The market of Mokha in July 1752, for example, seemed to have been quite different. Owing to this the goods of the French and Surat merchants remained unsold and “a great deal of money due on the country people also remained unrecovered”.³ The Governor of Mokha was not helpful in getting their money recovered (i.e. “no satisfaction is to be obtained by applying to the Governor”).⁴ In 1752 the markets both at Mokha and Jedda had been very dull when merchants could not sell half the goods they carried there.⁵ These conditions were confirmed by other reports as well:

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1. The term “Indian merchants” in the Company’s documents does not cover all Indian merchants for the reason that during 18th century there were merchants of Indian origin who were designated as “English merchants” such as Chellabis and Mulla Fakhruddin and “English subjects”. Michelgugeliembo Torri, ‘In Deep Blue Sea: Surat and its Merchant Class...’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review (IESHR)*, Vol. XIX (3 & 4), July–December 1982, p. 272et passim.
“Imported the Futtee Jung Gunjavar and small Dutch ship from Judda, who confirm the accounts already recovered from the place.” Or again: “sailed the Dutch ship, which imported from Judda the Inst. for Nagapatnam, having been thus Long detained, in Recovering their money from the merchants who have retur. (returned?)”  

When the markets, on the other hand, were favourable to the Indian merchants there were many advantages that the traders enjoyed. On their return voyage they brought treasure from the Red Sea, purchased the desired quantity of coffee and ivory and also advanced money to fellow-merchants. The Company too took loans from the Indian traders through bills drawn upon the president and Council in Surat or at other Indian ports. An entry in *Mokha Factory* of 9 August 1752 reports the arrival at Mokha of a ship “Futtee Rahimany” (Fath-i Rahmani) from Jedda. There were perhaps many merchants on board the ship having in their possession 51 bags of dollars which amounted to $29011.² There is a manifest of the cargo of the *Ghorab Marry Keteh* whose owner has been described as Ruttonjee Monackjee. The ship arrived at Surat from Jedda the 14th September 1796. The manifest contained a

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reference to 90 bags of dollars. Similarly another manifest of the cargo of the *Ghorab* “Cader Cua” belonging to Rustomjee Jasobhoy arriving from Jedda the 30 September 1798 listed 69 bags of dollars. Yet another of the manifest of the cargo of Boat *Salamat Surat* whose owner was Tahar Topral imported from Jedda and Mokha (October 1798) recorded 22 bags of dollars.

There are many such records which contain references to export of money, silver, coin and treasure to India from Mokha by Indian merchants. Another method obviously the easier one for individuals to remit money was by bills of exchange. The entry of 7 August 1752 in the *Mokha Factory* records a total collection of Rs. 47300 by the officials of the Company in the form of bills mainly from Indian creditors.

From an examination of the evidence contained in the East India Company’s records there remains no doubt that the share of Surat merchants and shippers was dominant in the Red Sea trade even during the second half of the 18th century. We have evidence relating to the year 1795. The ships arriving at Mokha in 1795 sailed from the ports of Surat (9 ships) Bombay (3), Kutch (3) Calcutta and other ports of Bengal (4), Tellicherry (2) and Madras (1). The details are given in the table below:

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1. *Latty Records*, vol. 449 of 1796-1800
The years 1790s were prosperous years for the Indian merchants. We have a list of varieties of goods that were taken to Mokha and other Red Sea ports from many ports of India. This also
shows the kinds of goods that were in demand in the market of Middle East exported through various Indian ports.

An entry of 5 May 1795 in the *Mokha Factory* records speaks of export of cargo from Porebunder that consisted of cotton, cotton thread, "Dungree cloth", and Cambay piece goods. These goods were carried to Mokha and Hodaida, both in the territory of Yemen. The same entry says of goods being exported from Surat to the ports of Mokha, Hodaida and Jedda. The sundry goods that find mention in the diary are cotton, rice, piece goods etc. Cambay during the season 1795 exported goods to Mokha and Jedda which consisted of rice and sundry others goods. The diary also speaks of goods exported to the Red Sea ports from Bombay, but unfortunately other details are lacking. The same season two ships from Tellichery took to Mokha and Jedda cargo consisting of goods like rice, sugar, pepper and betel leaf. The imports at Mokha and Jedda from Madras consisted of piece goods, rice, raw silk, sugar. We also have information of a Cambay ship convoying 3 ships from

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
Madras and carrying pilgrims to Jedda. Calicut exported to Mokha and Jedda, Bengal sugar, rice, piece goods and tobacco the same season. Another list of goods exported or re-exported from some Indian ports to Mokha and Jedda is available. But unfortunately the names of ports of exports do not survive owing to damage to the records. The goods include Bengal sugar, pepper, turmeric and Bengal and Surat piece goods, rice, cotton goods, tobacco, rice, Batavia sugar and iron.

On the other hand, we have manifests of cargo brought from Jedda. These contain information about varieties of items of trade and their quantity, the names of ships, their owners and the ports of origin and destination. The first manifest of the cargo is of "Grab Marry Keteh" whose owner was Ruttonjee Monackjee. The ship was reported to have come from Jedda, the 14 September 1796. The composition of its cargo is listed in table 2 below:

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Items of re-exports from the south-east Asian regions vis-à-vis Siam to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea must have been made from South Indian Coastal ports as it is evident from various manifests of the cargo of ships.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copper broken</td>
<td>32 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiracasis</td>
<td>53 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>almonds</td>
<td>44 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sena leaves</td>
<td>2 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsenic</td>
<td>1 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aual caro</td>
<td>1 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiracasis</td>
<td>11 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>almonds</td>
<td>4 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glass beads and false coral</td>
<td>11 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brass leaves and glass beads</td>
<td>7 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brass leaves</td>
<td>9 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollars</td>
<td>90 Bags</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latty Records, Vol. 449 of 1796-1800. This may not surprise us if pagination is not shown with the reference.

We have another manifest of cargo of the ship “Grab Cauder Cua” owned by Rustomjee Jasobhoy. The ship was reported as having arrived from Jedda and Mokha on 30 September 1798. The items of its cargo are given as under:

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copper broken</td>
<td>7 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass beads</td>
<td>4 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiracasis (Iron sulphate)</td>
<td>2 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loadhar</td>
<td>6 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nessue Ware</td>
<td>4 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsenic</td>
<td>4 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking glasses</td>
<td>3 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hing</td>
<td>2 muslees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt</td>
<td>100 gumbils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollars</td>
<td>90 bags</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latty Records, Vol. 449 of 1796-1800
Yet another surviving manifest is that of the ship “Salamat Surat” owned by Tahar Topral, a Chellabi. The ship is recorded as having arrived at Surat from Jedda and Mokha in October 1798:

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>copper broken</td>
<td>12 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiracasis</td>
<td>2 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acceeliaro</td>
<td>4 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glass beads</td>
<td>11 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>almonds</td>
<td>5 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neniece (Venice?) ware</td>
<td>19 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollars</td>
<td>22 bags</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There are items which are common to all the three manifests. The listing of bags of dollars shows that silver dollars continued to be imported from the Red Sea. Other items include local products such as sena, false beads and false coral, hiracasis (iron sulphate) etc. There are also items which seem to have been re-exported from the Red Sea having their origin in the Mediterranean area. Some previously important imports such as elephant teeth (from Africa) and coffee are now missing. It would mean that these once popular items were either not much in demand in India any longer or there were now alternative sources for these.

On the whole, taking the aggregate volume of import and export from the Red Sea it is possible to draw the conclusion that the trade during the second half of the 18th century with the countries of the Arab world and India did not really decline.
Traders of Surat some of whose names have already appeared in these pages also imported goods to Surat from Siam. The nature of goods shows these were meant for sale either to European traders in India or to be re-exported to European countries or Middle Eastern markets either through the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea.

The owner of the ship, *Feze Soobhany* was Tahar Topral Chellabi. The vessel arrived at Surat from Siam in October 1798 (date not mentioned). Her cargo consisted of the following items:

**Table 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tin</td>
<td>10332 slabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elephant teeth</td>
<td>1338 Pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>465 Bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>250 Parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agalawood</td>
<td>5 chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sundries loose</td>
<td>Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raw silk</td>
<td>2 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spanwood</td>
<td>3000 Pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China ware</td>
<td>188 rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sugar Candy</td>
<td>11 Tabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloves</td>
<td>4 Bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coir for her use deliverable to Syod</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>337 bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin</td>
<td>28 slabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agalawood</td>
<td>2 chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cloves</td>
<td>2 chests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Latty Records, Vol. 449 of 1796-1800. Tahar Topral seems to have as his agent Isaac Daood at Siam and the consignments were sent with his signature on the manifest. Ibid.*
There is a manifest of the cargo of the ship 'Cauderbux' owned by Nawab Truyhled (?). The goods were exported by the Nawab’s agent, Seyam Lalldoss. The date of the ship’s discharge of goods (from Siam) is recorded as 16 March 1799. The manifest has the following items:

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tin</td>
<td>900 slabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elephant teeth</td>
<td>905 Pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spanwood</td>
<td>500 Pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freighted</td>
<td>3900 Pieces= 4400 Pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>350 Bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agalawood</td>
<td>26 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullimal (Bullumal)</td>
<td>250 Freighted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China ware</td>
<td>9 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>about 125 Bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clove</td>
<td>5 Chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dammar</td>
<td>325 Bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardamoms</td>
<td>3 Bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortoise shells</td>
<td>1 Chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuhniq Polae</td>
<td>1 Bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin</td>
<td>245 slabs 7 chests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Boxes belonging to Mr. Soper</td>
<td>(perhaps the Customs Master of Surat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freighted goods belonging to the Arabs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar items are also listed among the cargo of the ships coming to Surat from Goomer and Dullah (pullah?). A comparative scrutiny of the items listed in the manifests of the cargo exported to the Red Sea from Surat and the manifests of the cargo imported at Surat from Siam would suggest that there are many identical items in the manifests, of both voyages. These goods must have been re-exported to the markets of the Middle East.

The participation of Indian rulers in the trade and commerce of India was not uncommon during the 18th century. Rulers of coastal India keenly participated in trade and commerce. Among the 18th century rulers of western India, the most active were persons holding in various positions of authority in Gujarat, Mysore and Arcot. They styled themselves as chief merchants in the hierarchy of merchants and exported goods of their regions abroad in their own ships. Port officers and governors as well had their shares in this lucrative trade. The ships of the Nawab of Arcot carried English names such as "Success Galley", "Generous Friends", and "Surprise", and were reported to have been sailing in convoy with English vessels.¹ The ship of the Nawab of Surat is reported to be a "Grab ship"². It is however difficult to assess in the absence of data the amount of the share of the Arabian Sea trade carried in ships.

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¹ Mokha, 28 April 1795, Mokha Factory, 1752–1795. No. 76, p. 37.
² Ibid
Were the great days of Surat's trade over by the turn of the 18th century? Ashin Dasgupta is of the view that Surat whose prosperity was dependent on the stability of three empires namely the Mughal, Safavid and the Ottoman empire, began to decline with the disintegration of those states. But the foregoing account of Surat's trade with the Red Sea suggests that the trade continued and might even have surpassed the volume of the previous century. The basic commodities still continued to be in great demand in commerce. Even Bombay, during the 18th century could not fully replace Surat in the Arabian Sea trade. The exchange of commodities and import and specie from Jedda continued throughout the 18th century. Surat's trade may have undergone momentary set-back but there was, perhaps, no overall constant decline. Aden's prosperity, for instance, at the turn of the 19th century depended largely on Indian trade whose major share was that of Surat.


Ashin Das Gupta seeks to substantiate his argument for the decline of Surat by the fall in the number of Surat ships at the end of the 17th century. But the evidence suggests that the Surat-based ships in 1795 still outnumbered the Indian shipping from Bengal and Bombay to the Red Sea, as we have seen above (9 ships from Surat at Mokha, compared with 7 from Bombay and Bengal).¹

¹ 'List of shipping Imported at Mokha and other ports in the Red Sea this season 1795', Mokha, 5 May 1795, Mokha Factory, 1752–1795. No. 76, op.cit., p. 38.
Chapter – 2
LAWS OF WRECKAGE AND NAVIGATION IN THE
INDIAN OCEAN

The Indian Ocean, over which much of the Indo-Arab trade was conducted, had its own laws and customs of navigation and wreckage, which developed over time, independently of the Mediterranean.

For the Indian law of wreckage, Marco Polo (c.1300) provides us with our earliest evidence: "And this naughty custom prevails over all these provinces of India, to wit that if a ship be driven by stress of weather into some other port than that to which it was bound, it was sure to be plundered."¹ About fifty years later Ibn Battuta reported that, "whenever a ship is destroyed, whatever is saved from it goes to the treasury."² But in the region of Calicut, "lawful proprietors collect whatever is thrown up by the sea."³ He further mentions the occasion of a ship in the territory of the Raja of Calicut. The Raja personally came to the place of wreckage where "A fire was lit before him on the coast, and his police officers

² Mahdi Husain (tr.), The Rehla of Ibn Battuta, Baroda. 1976. p. 192
³ Ibid
(zahamiya) belaboured the people so that they should not plunder what the sea has cast up”\(^1\).

Abdur Razzaq (15\(^{th}\) century) observed that if a vessel bound to some port was driven away to another roadstead, the inhabitants according to the practice, plundered the ship.\(^2\)

From the evidence cited above there remains no doubt that the customary law pertaining to seizure of wreckage had been in operation on the Malabar coast since early middle ages. The same old customary law continued in operation in the pre-modern period. During the period of Tipu Sultan (1785), for example, a dhow of two Muscat merchants namely Rutn Jee and Jeevan Dass, merchants and subjects of Muscat, was damaged in a storm and brought to Bhatkal (‘Bytekoal’), a seaport in Tipu’s dominions. The cargo of the damaged ship was unloaded and retained by Government. On the persuasion of the owners of the damaged dhow, the Imam of Muscat wrote to Tipu requesting him to return the cargo and the dhow belonging to the Imam’s subjects. In his reply, Tipu said that the dhow and its cargo had been restored to the owners, “although in such cases, it was customary for the prince, or the ruler of the place, where a ship happens to be wrecked, to take possession of it and whatever it contains”.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Rehla of Ibn Batuta, op. cit., p 192.
\(^3\) William Kirkpatrick, Letters of Tippoo Sultan, London. 1811, pp. 14, 181
Similar laws of wreckage appear to have prevailed on the Arabian coast. A wreck on the coast of Shihr and Dhofar is described by Nihawandi: The wreck was that of Rahimi, a ship belonging to Khan-i-Khanan. The vessel was on her voyage from Mokha to Surat. Nihawandi noted that the ruler of Shihr took away the entire property on board the ship. After the arrival of victims at Surat and having come to know of their misfortune Khan-i-Khanan issued orders to his officials at Surat to pay one lakh of rupees to them, out of which 50,000 rupees were paid to Mulla Shakebi and the other 50,000 to other victims.¹

While the laws of wreckage seemed to have been inexorably stern in the Indian Ocean, ethics seem to have recommended compensation. Nihawandi in *Ma'asir-i-Rahimi* describes a shipwreck in *River Indus* which had on board Iranian merchants. The ship was laden with rich cargo as the merchants hoped to make a huge profit in extensive land like that of India. Those wrecked, however, lost much of their property, to local inhabitants.² Khan-i-Khanan having come to know of the calamity issued orders to the vakils of his court to assess the cost of the cargo lost in the wreck and pay the affected

merchants their cost of the cargo and the profit that they could have made in India by selling those goods. On the testimony of trustworthy merchants the net cost of the cargo amounted to Rs. 1,25,000 which was sanctioned and entrusted for payment to the Diwan-i-Kul, Rai Sunder Das, who disbursed the amount accordingly from the revenues of the jagir of Ferozpur which was Khan-i-Khanan’s own assignment.

A 17th century traveller (1625-1631) and author of Bahrul Asrar, Mahmud bin Amir Wali Balkhi, in his account of voyage aboard a Portuguese ship sailing from Sri Lanka destined to Aji Rabiko and Shahr-i-Nau (both in the vicinity of China), describes the disaster when the ship was caught in a storm and wrecked on the coast near Cuttak in Orissa. The Portuguese made their escape from the scene of wreck, leaving everyone else behind because of the fear of the prevailing law of wreckage and navigation which authorised the port official to take possession of everything contained in the ill-fated ship. Moreover, since the place of occurrence was a bandar-i ghair qauli (a non-contractual port) they feared capture inevitable and risk to their lives as well.

1. Ibid., op. cit., Vol. II., pp. 571-572.
While the customary law of wreckage on the one hand authorised the state to take possession of ship's estate, the excesses committed by Mughal officials on the other hand were not thus to be overlooked. The author of the *Fath-i 'Ibriya* says as soon as it reached the ear of the Mughal officials that if a wrecked ship passed without paying *hasil*, the vessel was liable to be seized. These unlawful practices continued except during the reign of Feroz Shah Tughlaq and much later under Aurengzeb who were the only rulers to have prohibited it.¹

Shivaji during his negotiations with an embassy dispatched by the East India Company over the restoration of the remnant of goods on board a wrecked ship explained that it was against the “Laws of Conchen” (Konkan) to restore any ships or goods that were thrown on to the shore by storm or such other natural agency.² He said that if he granted the English Company an exemption from this practice, the French, Dutch, and other merchants as well would claim the same right. He, therefore, not only declined to concede the demand of the Embassy but added that he would not violate the custom that had continued for ages.³

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³ Ibid.
There is another instance of shipwreck at Warli (then under the East India Company's jurisdiction). The wreck is said to have occurred on 15 August 1670. The Calicut-based vessel was on her voyage back from Muscat. The ship consisted of 100 men among whom there were several banyas who carried valuables and horses. In the incident, only eleven men and two horses survived. Misfortune again fell upon the survivors. This time they were robbed of their belongings by the people of 'Verula' (Warli) and whatever still remained, the 'coolies' robbed them at the instigation of the Portuguese clergy of Bandara. Since the wreck took place within the jurisdiction of the Company stern measures were taken to punish the offenders. Investigation was conducted by Gray, then the Governor of Bombay, and those 'coolies' found guilty were whipped and kept prisoners. Inventory of recovered goods was made and sent to Surat. Recovery of a sum of 2005 abasses was made from the clergy and justices at Mahim were appointed in March 1671.¹

One may infer from the above account that the English here held that, contrary to local custom, robbery of a wrecked ship was an offence.

M. Torri in his article ‘In the Deep Blue Sea’, says that in 1763 a group of 58 non-ship owning merchants of Surat belonging to various business communities trading to Mokha, Jedda and Basra, made a declaration¹, duly certified by the Qazi, giving reasons (in favour of the East India Company) for not freighting their goods on ships belonging to “Mooremen and Indians”. One of the reasons advanced by these merchants was that the Indian ships left Surat too late and the other that Indian ships, which ran aground very easily. Torri says that the prevailing customary law of the land was that “wrecked ship and its cargo became the property of the authorities ruling the country on whose coasts the wreckage has occurred”.² He says that the Indian ship owners and Turkish or Arab ruler had clandestine understanding, and after the wreck the spoils were shared by both.

Yet Valentia has cited another instance of a wreck of Indian ships in 1803 on the coast between Mount Febx and Zaila. Soon after the wreck the chief of the coast seized all that was contained in

¹ In response to a letter of explanation issued by the Court of Directors at London to Mr. Hodges on the persuasion of the ‘Sublime Porte’ following the complaint by the Chellabis among the wealthiest ship-owners in India, originally from Turkey. The allegation about Indian ships running aground and leaving late from Surat seems to be an unfounded allegation.

² Michelgugliembo Torri, ‘In the Deep Blue Sea: Surat and its merchant Class During the Dyarchic Era (1759-1800)’, The Indian Economic and Social History Review (IESHR), July-December, 1982, Nos 3 & 4, Vol. XIX, pp 273-74
the ships. But he was kind enough to rescue the crew of the ships and extended his hospitality till they finally left for Mokha.¹

An incident of shipwreck in 1806 is placed on record by Ali Bey (an Aleppo Traveller), which is alleged to have taken place nearby Jedda in the Red Sea. He says an English ship was got struck over a rock. The ship was commanded by an English Captain and her owner was Petrucci, the English Vice-Consul at Rosetta and a friend of the Sheriff of Mecca.² After the wreckage the Arabs (as Ali Bey calls them) got into the ship and took possession of the cargo. The governor of Geneba, on the other hand, seized the hull and the rigging. The captain’s hue and cry for the return of the ship’s store was of no avail. He was even denied entry into the ship to bring out the necessary papers. His request to the Sheriff for a certificate of the misfortune that had befallen him in order to justify his position as a victim of the wreckage to the owner of the ship went obviously unheard.³ Ali Bey narrates that the captain was so much desperate

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² According to the account the Sheriff of Mecca had a very lucrative trade with Asian countries and for this brisk trade the English were very helpful to him. He was extraordinarily rapacious and always looked for money from captains of ships by unfair means. So far his shipping in the Red Sea was concerned, he always enjoyed priority over other merchants in matter of loading of cargoes. See Ali Bey, *Travels in Arabia.* London, 1816. Vol. 2, p. 121.

³ It appears as if before the actual wreckage, the Captain had already perceived some danger; he went personally to the Sheriff for a pilot and an anchor but the Sheriff put him to insult rather than rendering him any help. Ali Bey, *Travels,* Vol. 2, pp. 121-22.
that he made request for a certificate from Ali, who came to his help by certifying the catastrophe to the ship after taking the declaration of the sailors who had accompanied the captain.

Yet another aspect, slightly different, emerges from Ali Bey's description of another ship-wreck of a *dhow* around Jabel Hazen, also in the Red Sea. It was the *dhow* our traveller as well was aboard it. The wreckage was caused because of a large hole in the keel of the vessel near the prow, which had drawn a lot of water. Having been rescued by safety boats the passengers of the ill-fated ship wished the captain of another ship putting up anchor nearby to take them aboard and on his refusal they approached the captain of yet another ship. Ali Bey says that the captain's refusal was due to the fact that since there was frequent occurrence of misfortunes on ship in that sea (i.e. Red Sea), it was customary not to allow on board another ship, passengers or cargo of a wrecked ship, without its master's consent. However, as the survival of the ship became nearly impossible the captain signalled to the passengers to shift themselves to another one, which the latter did accordingly.

On law of wreckage there is account of Henry Pottinger of the year 1810. He says that in his presence in the *Darbar* of the ruler of

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1. Ali Bey at this juncture describes the disasters that the passengers aboard the *dhow* had to encounter and then subsequently how they were saved from the peril. Ali Bey, *Travels*, Vol. 2, p. 165.
Beluchistan a letter of the *Imam* of Muscat addressed to the Baluch ruler was presented by an Arab messenger. The letter took up the case of an ill-fated vessel of the *Imam*, driven away on the coast near Someany and wrecked there. However, from the letter it appears some trifling goods were recovered from the place of occurrence of the wreckage. The *Imam* in his letter requested the ruler that the recorded goods might be delivered to his people. The Baluch ruler in very audible tone made proclamation of the return of the ship’s store. This was just a gesture of goodwill and friendship; otherwise there was no compulsion or obligation whatsoever to return the ship’s store.¹

The age-old law of wreckage, however, was in no way in the interest of modern shipping in Asian waters. It was owing to this perhaps that the British in India made a demand upon Mohammad Ali *Pasha* to agree to a clause on issue of wreckage in the Red Sea. A provisional treaty thus concluded between the British government in India and the *Pasha* of Egypt on 28ᵗʰ May 1810 stipulates as under:

"*Should any British vessel either by contrary winds or any other unforeseen accident be wrecked or be obliged to run into any*

of the ports in the Red Sea under the Dominion of the Pasha of Egypt, and to unload her goods thus loaded to provide for the safety of the caravans as far as Cairo”.¹

A “cowlnama” (written Engagement)² granted by the Imam of Muscat to the East India Company dated the 1ˢᵗ of Jamad al-awwal 1213 A.H. (12 October 1798) in its sixth clause stipulated that

"On the occurrence of any ship-wreck of a vessel or vessels appertaining to the English there should certainly be aid and comfort afforded on the part of this government, nor shall the property be seized”.³

What the law of the Indian Ocean countries about compensation in cases of piracy on high seas was, is brought home to us by the position taken by Jahangir’s administration in case of piracy committed by Captain Hall and his men upon a Chaul-based vessel, off Mokha in 1623. There was a great loss of cargo. Among the victims there was a party of Turks who clamoured for justice from Saif Khan against the English. They demanded compensation for their lost property worth 85,000 rials of eight. The Turks promised Saif Khan 50% of the claim. Rastell, seeing no chance

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¹ Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 366 of the Year 1810, p. 6754.
² The “cowlnama” in all consists of seven clauses on various diplomatic issues. The documents are preserved at Maharashtra Archives, Bombay.
³ Secret and Political Department, No. 68 of the Year 1798, f. 5387.
of escape, paid 70,000 mahmudis to Saif Khan as bribe on condition that the latter would allow him to load indigo, which he, however, did not permit. But the English, who were first imprisoned, were released. In June the same year the matter was referred to the Emperor. The English won over the governor and other potential men like Asaf Khan and others at the court. Jahangir exonerated the English and remarked that “neither the complainants nor the defendants were subjects of his, and the event complained of had taken place outside his jurisdiction”.\(^1\) In other words, had the victims been subjects of the Mughal Empire, compensation from the English would have been due.

Danishmand Khan (then the Governor of Surat) confiscated the goods of the English merchants worth Rs. 184,000 (or more)\(^2\) and that of the Dutch merchants worth Rs. 456,000 (and more) to compensate Mullah Abdul Ghafur on suspicion that the piracy on the latter’s ship was the result of an English and Dutch conspiracy.

Finally, as Lorimer has pointed out, the Mughals bound the European powers in 1695 to cooperate with their officials in suppression of piracy. But the measure proved futile and the piracy

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by 1696 was so rife in the Indian Ocean that even the Americans found it profitable to construct ships at New York purposely fitted for piracy.¹

That the Mughal authorities felt a certain obligation towards the safety of their subjects' shipping is shown by the letters in Persian to the Portuguese viceroy, which are preserved in the Lisbon archives (photocopies in the Department of History, AMU).

In 1701, Basalat Khan, the Mughal Faujdar of Tal Kokan-i-Adil Khani, wrote to the ‘Wazarail’ (viceroy) of Goa to instruct the Captain of Diu to return the boat of a Hindu merchant of Surat seized by the captain. Another letter addressed to the ‘Wazarail’ (viceroy) by the Faujdar requests the return of the ship Muhammadi Salamati owned by one Sheikh Mohammad, again a merchant of Surat. The Portuguese authorities were also asked to see that the ship reached Surat safely (under the protection of the East India Company since the ship was carrying British Flag). There is yet another piece of evidence of a slightly different nature. This evidence comes from the demand for compensation for loss of cargo of a wrecked ship during depredations by pirates infesting the coast of Aden has been made by Haines (of Indian navy) on behalf of the

East India Company in January 1838 from the “sultan” of Aden who is described as “indolent and almost imbecile man, 50 years of age” and resided at Laha.¹

The outrage was alleged to have been committed by the pirates on the coasts of Aden on passengers and crew of some native craft carrying the British flag. The ill-fated ship is believed to have been wrecked in the neighbourhood of Aden. However, the Sultan undertook to make compensation for the plunder of the vessel and was made to sell the port and town to the English. But owing to the resistance of his son, the agreement reached between the British Government in India and the Sultan was declared null and vide by the former which resulted in British hostility and take-over of Aden on the 16 January 1838 by the naval steamer, Volege of 28 guns, and cruiser of 10 guns, with 300 Europeans and 400 native troops under Major Baillie.²

Investment of money on ships by Mughal officials for speculative motive for extra income was quite common at Surat and also in Bengal. But in cases of any untoward incident such as shipwreck or disaster like seizer of cargo of ships by European or

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² *Ibid*
pirates of the Indian Ocean, the investor in all probability was the loser.¹

Delay in reaching the destination could cause considerable loss to the owner of a ship. When in 1643 the ‘Discovery’ of the East India Company owing to the adverse wind was delayed at Surat there was a sharp rise in the rate of insurance from 3 to 30% which was a sure sign of great loss expected to be incurred by the insurers.²

A varying body of law dealt with how property of merchants who died while on their travels or on board the ship would be treated. Ibn Battuta says that one As-Sarsari’s brother (native of a town ten miles from Baghdad on the way to Kufa) was living in Cannanore and possessed immense wealth. He died willing his property in favour of his small children. As-Sarsari at the time of Ibn Battuta’s departure was about to leave Cannanore for Baghdad with his brother’s children and belongings, for says Ibn Battuta, “It is the custom of the inhabitants, of India as with those of the people of Sudan not to interfere with the property of the dead”.³

² President Fremlen at Swally Marine to the Company, January 17, 1643, English Factories in India, 1642-43, p. 92.
³ Rehla Ibn Battuta op. cit. (translation), op.cit. p. 185.
Ceasar Frederick (1581) tells us that the Portuguese had a 'House' known as "the school of sancta miseri cordia commissaria" in all cities under their jurisdiction.¹ These houses were placed under the jurisdiction of Portuguese governors, legally authorised to issue 'will' or 'Testament' on the payment ('if you give them for their pains') which the testate was allowed to retain in his possession. A 'Captain' on each voyage was privileged to recover the goods of these merchants who died during the voyage. In case of any dying intestate, the 'Captain' of justice for Portuguese Christians assumed in anticipation his own claim over the property of the deceased and by the time the heirs approached the authority concerned, the bulk of his belonging would have been consumed and very little left for the claimants.²

In another document from British Records there is an interesting case of one 'Cojah Cazar Gregorioa' a subject of Iran, who died intestate in a ship. He is said to have been born at "Shorret" circa 1730 to Persian parents. In its letter of claim for the Estate of Cazar Gregorioa to the government of India, the Persian government declares the year of Cojah's death as 1774; he had died

¹ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (20 volumes), Purchas & Sons, (London), 1905, Vol. 10, pp. 141-42. 'Cities' in the present context applies to perhaps port cities, the most famous among them were Hormuz, Goa, Malacca, Macao and Muscat which were commercially very important.
as an Iranian subject. The papers of the intestacy reveal that the 'Cojah' was engaged in trade during the middle of the 18th century and died on his return voyage from Bengal on the Middleton, which got wrecked at 'Tofelgate'. He had his consignments on board the ship. He had no relation nor friend and therefore the agent of the East India Company at Basra, Henry Moore, had taken charge of his property.

Ali Bey around 1806 observed that the captain of a richly laden ship from Maldive Island anchored at Jedda harbour passed away, having made no will. According to customary law the Sheriff at once took possession of the ship and its cargo. Afterwards the Sherif sent the ship to India in company of his own richly laden ship, but both of them were seized by the French and only one of them returned and that too only after unloading the confiscated cargo of both of them, about which the Sherif lodged protest to Napoleon.

Other local navigational customs may also be noted. Barkur (Faknar) on Malabar coast during Ibn Battuta's time was a port of call and our traveller says that according to the practice of the

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1. Political Department, Vol. 143 of 1870, ff. 8-20. It is noteworthy that since the deceased did not make any will or gift of his property the customary law of Iran, therefore, authorised the government to make the claim on behalf of the deceased.

country all ships passing through that port had to cast anchor there and pay tax. Ships that evaded payment were chased by the king’s officials and forcibly brought into the harbour and as punishment double the amount of tax was charged. These vessels were liable to be detained for any length of time.

Abdur Razzaq in the 15th century tells us of a practice that assured security to the merchants’ goods at Calicut. He says that the customs officers made themselves duty-bound to look after the merchandise stored in warehouses and kept strict watch over it. Only if a transaction was executed a duty of 1/40 was levied on the aggregate goods, and if it remained unsold no charge whatsoever was made.

By 1800 all those Indian shippers who sailed from Surat were made to carry the East India Company’s flag and enter ‘mochulka’. Ships that sailed under other than the British flag were liable to pay heavy fine. Certain conventions for carrying freight seem to have been prevalent in the Indian Ocean. For instance in 1795, for the transport of the East India Company’s cargo the factor at Mokha had

2. Ibid., *op.cit.*, p. 185.
first to apply to the captain (Nakhuda) and only when he agreed the freight was loaded. There was yet another convention in operation which made the traders and shippers both enter into an agreement before the consignment was loaded. The offer of carrying freight to Bombay and other Indian ports was made through a general announcement by the ship’s captain himself. The terms and conditions for carrying freight as well were decided by Captain of the ship. It is to be presumed that similar conditions for shipping had prevailed in earlier times as well.

1. Mokha, 10 August 1795, Mokha Factory 1752-1795, No. 76, f. 155.
2. Mokha, April 1790, Mokha Factory 1752-95, No. 76, f. 65.
3. Mokha, 29 April 1795, Ibid.
Chapter – 3

TIPU SULTAN AND HIS ATTEMPTED INTERVENTION IN INDO-ARAB TRADE

During the 18th century Tipu Sultan may be considered as one of the chief merchants of India.¹ The novel tradition of state economy laid out by Haider Ali was carefully carried on with better and improved mechanism by his son and successor. Tipu was a planner, strategist and economist in his own right.

Ever since the commencement of his rule in 1782 Tipu’s main effort was to make Mysore into a centre of commercial attraction and improve the quality of its products so that it could compete favourably in international trade. With a view to taking Mysore’s products to different parts of the world, envoys to various countries were entrusted with these commodities to sell them to obtain their own costs of maintenance. Diplomatic missions were thus converted into commercial enterprises.²

One target of Tipu’s commercial activities was Oman. At a very early stage of Tipu’s rule, commercial ties with Oman were

¹ For Haider Ali’s commercial bent of mind see Ghoolam Mohumed, Tarikh-i Tipu Sultan, Russapuylah, 1849, p. 683.
² For one of such many examples, see Mohibbul Hasan, History of Tipu Sultan, Calcutta. 1971, p. 131, (hereafter see M. Hasan).
established with the opening of a commercial depot (Kothi) at Muscat under the charge of a commercial agent (Darogha). Since the beginning of the 18th century the volume of trade passing through Muscat from and to the Persian Gulf had been rising steadily. Oman herself had no less than 15 ships of 400 to 700 tons each besides 3 brigs in the Port of Muscat alone in the time of Sayyid Sultan (1793-1800). The other port of Oman, Sur had at least 100 sea-going vessels of various sizes.¹

With the exception of a few items like sandal-wood and pepper under the control of Tipu Sultan (not a monopoly, as Kirkpatrick and Mark Wilks have asserted)² the ordinary merchants were not barred from dealing with indigenous products of Mysore. As such the Sultan being the chief merchant traded on behalf of the state whereas the merchants of Mysore were at liberty to carry on their own trade and make investments. The same was true about Oman. The Imam owned his own ships and carried on trade. However, ordinary merchants of Oman enjoyed

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² William Kirkpatrick, Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, London, 1911, pp 467-68, see also Mark Wilks, Historical Sketches of the South India (History of Mysore) Mysore, 1830, Vol 2, p 570
reasonable freedom to conduct their trade with any country they desired.

Cloth constituted one of the chief items of export of Mysore. Cloth-weaving industry was mainly concentrated at Bangalore, Waluru, etc. At both places quality cloth was manufactured and was mainly exported to Oman and other Persian Gulf ports. The embassy of Tipu Sultan to Constantinople that was dispatched in 1786 and halted at Muscat carried varieties of Mysorean cloths and shawls to be sold enroute to defray the mission's expenses. These cloths were sold through Maoji Seith and Abdullah, the Jew, both brokers at Muscat and neighbouring ports.

Evidence on supply of cloth to the Persian Gulf vis-à-vis Muscat are numerous. We have evidence of the supply of Indian piece goods to Muscat merchants for local consumption in Oman. These were supplied by English merchants most probably from Madras and Surat.

1. Francis Buchanan, Journey from Madras Through Mysore, Canara and Malabar, (Delhi, 1988), (3 volumes), Vol.1, pp. 40, 326 et passim It may be noted that there are various references relating to varieties of cloths, weaving industry, dyeing and spinning in Buchanan's description of Mysore which he wrote immediately after the fall of Seringapatnam. He has also given an elaborate account of prices of cloth at Bangalore. Ibid., pp. 220-21
Rice constituted one of the "gruff goods" in Mysore's regular consignment to Muscat. In 1775 Imam Ahmad sent an envoy to Mysore in an Omani ship called Rahmani to know of the cause of prohibition of rice export to Muscat. The cause for non-shipment for rice was explained by Haider Ali's representative at Mangalore (governed at that time by Tipu Sultan) to the Omani envoy. He returned satisfied to Oman.

Rice continued to be carried to Oman in bulk. Parsons once noted 4 ships of Muscat having rice for their cargo from Mysore. Tipu's own ships besides the ships of ordinary merchants and those of the Imam's ships, carried rice as ships' cargo to Oman.

There seems to have been a great demand for rice in a certain years by the Muscat and Kutch factories. In order to meet their requirements the asifs of Jamalabad, Wajidabadd and Malikuttujjar departments were ordered to purchase rice and supply it to those factories. However Tipu was quite hostile to the purchase of rice by the merchants of the Portuguese or the English ports. In a communication he strictly ordered his port

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1. The purpose of the Omani delegate to visit Mysore was also in response to the invitation of Haider Ali to put down piracy frequently committed on the Malabar coast which had caused interruption in the rice export to Oman. S.B. Miles, op.cit., p. 274. It is evident from all available sources that Mysore during Haider's time supplied rice to many foreign ports besides Muscat.
officials of all the sea-ports not to sell rice to merchants from Portuguese or the English ports. The English and Portuguese sent their merchants in the disguise of Muscat traders with money for making rice purchases to Mysore. The Sultan, therefore, informed the Imam that he considered only those as genuine Muscat merchants who had certificate under seal and signature of the superintendents of the Mysore factory at Muscat. Merchants in possession of such certificates would alone be entitled to purchase rice. For issuance of the certificate merchants did not have to pay any money.\textsuperscript{1} Ghulam Mohammed, the amil of Bangalore (Incharge of the Muscat factory) had special instruction to sell rice only to those merchants who produced certificates (chitty) from Mir Kazim.\textsuperscript{2}

The amils of Kurial (Mangalore) had special instructions that after the sale of rice to the agents of Maoji Seith, the chief broker at Muscat, if these agents further desired to purchase rice from the inhabitants of the districts under Mangalore they should be allowed without any let or hindrance.\textsuperscript{3} Maoji Seith must have been satisfied with the Sultan's order as it is evident from his letter to Tipu received through Ghaus Mohammed and Tarkam Dass (dated 16 January 1786). Maoji was desirous that Sultan

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., pp. 241-42.
\item[2.] Ibid., pp. 282-84.
\item[3.] Ibid., p. 239.
\end{itemize}
would as before, allow his *gumashtaha* (after their purchase of rice from the state managers) to also purchase their requirements of morahs (a weight equal to 80 lbs.) of rice from private parties.¹ Tipu on his part always had an eye on profit. In his letter to Mir Kazim (24 April 1786) he instructs him to sell rice at advantageous price. As far as the fixation of price of rice Tipu did it himself before the opening of the internal market to the outside merchants. It is also evident from the foregoing account that rice was not the monopoly of the state.²

On a later occasion, vide his circular to *Imam* of Muscat, he repeats his decision not to sell a single grain of rice in Mysore to any Nazarens, coming from Muscat or to any others except the merchants of Muscat having the requisite certificates, perhaps to give more force to his previous decision. The *Imam* was, therefore, asked to issue orders to Muscat merchants bound to the ports of Mysore, to bring along certificates from Tipu’s *Vakil* at Muscat, in order that they may be enabled to purchase and carry away (without obstacle) whatever commodities they may require.³

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¹ Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, pp. 238-39.
² M.H. Gopal, *Tipu Sutan’s Mysore* (an economic study), Bombay, 1971, p. 17; also *Hukmnamaha-i Tipu Sultan*, op.cit., fls. 139b-140a. To Mir Kazim, Darogaha at Muscat, 24 April, 1786, Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p. 283.
The Mysore factories (Kothies) of Muscat and Kutch were under the charge of the asifs of Jamalabad and Wajidabad or directly under the charge of Malikuttujjar department. These asifs were ordered by the Sultan to purchase rice, sandal etc., in addition to cinnamon for sale at Muscat and Kutch factories. Elsewhere Tipu prohibits the supply of the indigenous products like cinnmon and pepper and asked the men incharge to acquire them and supply them to the Sultan. Clearly there were no fixed and permanent rules in this regard and the rules varied from time to time as the situation demanded. The commodities which Tipu wanted to directly control and make profit from their sale are indicated in his correspondence with various commercial agents at Kothies in other countries. For example Mir Kazim, the commercial agent at Muscat, was ordered (17 November 1785) not to dispose of the black pepper and sandalwood under his custody but to wait till the price rose to a reasonable level. Similar instructions for the sale of sandalwood, pepper, rice and cardamom on advantageous terms appear in another of his letter. In yet another letter (19 November 1785) Tipu instructs Mir Kazim not to hastily dispose of the cinnamon, sandalwood, black pepper and rice imported from Mangalore and Kushalpur.

(Khushhalpur?). He advised him to keep them for sale until the price of those commodities had risen satisfactorily.¹ Again Tipu asks Mir Kazim and other commercial agents at Muscat (25 November 1785) to keep in store the pepper supplied to him earlier. Accordingly Mir Kazim had to stop the sale of pepper at Muscat. The broker was informed that the stock had been sent to Jedda factory, another commercial depot of Tipu Sultan established in 1786.² The stock should be kept ready and as soon as the price rose to 25 or 30 pagodas a candy it should be put up for sale.³ The Sultan is known to have taken recourse to this kind of measures on various occasions.⁴ Sometimes the Sultan himself fixed the prices of different commodities. For example on one occasion Mir Kazim was directed to sell the sandalwood of first sort at 120 pagodas a candy, the second at 100 pagodas a candy and the 3rd at 80 pagodas a candy. The latter also carried orders not to sell the sandal for less than the specified price even if the stock had to be kept for a year or two.⁵ In case of a fall in prices of pepper and sandalwood, their sale had to be stopped until the price had risen to a reasonable level. Cardamom could be sold at

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2. However the details of functioning of the factory at Jedda are lacking. Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., p. 189.
4. Ibid., p. 233.
5. Ibid., p. 209.

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the current price but in no case at a loss. The rationale behind this was that the loss of weight of cardamom as a result of keeping for long periods, could be tolerated but the price of a commodity could not be allowed to fall. This was an important element in market mechanism evolved and strictly observed by the Sultan (Tipu to Mir Kazim. 12 January 1786).

For profit, trade and friendship Tipu sometimes went out of the way to help merchants. On an instance a dhow belonging to Rutnjee and Jeevan Dass, both subjects and merchants of Muscat, having been wrecked, drifted to the coast of Bytekoal (on the coast of Canara), a seaport of Mysore. The Imam of Muscat personally wrote to Tipu for the return of the dhow. Tipu in his reply (11 November 1785) reiterated that the customary law of wreckage followed in Mysore did not permit the return of the ship and its cargo, but because of the cordial relations between the Imam and him the dhow has been returned to its owners.

One of the many items Tipu desired to be sent to Mysore from the Persian Gulf by his commercial agent was pearls. In a letter to Mir Kazim (6 May 1785) Tipu reminds him to purchase large and brilliant pearls of the finest kind. But he also asks

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1 Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p 231
2 Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op cit, pp. 180-81
Kazim to purchase them at low price.\textsuperscript{1} Frequent reminders that his commercial agent should purchase quality articles at cheaper cost suggest that the Sultan wanted to train them all that methods applicable in marketing. In another letter Mir Kazim was asked to buy and send more pearls to the Sultan.\textsuperscript{2} Yet in another letter the Sultan ordered Mir Kazim to purchase pearls to the amount of Rs. 10,000. But again he was reminded that the purchase was to be made at low rates.\textsuperscript{3}

Besides purchase of pearls, Tipu seems to have conceived the idea of developing a pearl industry of his own. Thus in a letter he asked Mir Kazim to send ten divers, with advance money for their expenses, to Mangalore.\textsuperscript{4} These pearl divers had to be sent from Bahrain and Hormuz along with their families.\textsuperscript{5} On receipt of a sealed packet of pearls with a memorandum of the purchase price of those pearls the Sultan complains to Mir Kazim of the heavy price at which these pearls were purchased.\textsuperscript{6} Mir Kazim in another letter was asked to go to Hormuz for purchase of round pearls as there was no need of small ones.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{1} Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p 200.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p 458
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid, p 233.
\textsuperscript{4} Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p. 231.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid, pp 282-83, 186-87
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid, p 231.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, p 209
We have several references in Tipu’s correspondence in which he asked his officials in Muscat to send him plants as well as dry fruits. In a letter addressed to Mir Kazim (6 May 1786) Tipu asks him to send young date trees and pistachio plants, almonds as well as saffron plants and saffron seeds besides silkworm, shipwrights and pearl divers along with men having skill in taking care of these plants. In another communication Tipu also reminds Mir Kazim to purchase 30 mans (weight) of pistachio nuts, 200 mans of almonds, 15 mans of monukkas without stones. In another letter he issues instructions to Mir Kazim to annually purchase 100 rails of almonds and 30 rails of pistachio nuts and send them to the amil of Mangalore.

While ordered to send cultured silk-worms and men to take care of them, Mir Kazim was also ordered to procure 1 or 2 mans of saffron seed. A similar letter was also sent to the Dallal at Muscat. Tipu seems to have conceived the idea of establishing sericulture in Mysore. In another communication to the commercial agent at Muscat, Tipu desired the Dallal’s agents posted at different places to collect silk worms and send to him

4. Ibid., p. 188
persons acquainted with sericulture. Likewise Mir Kazim was also ordered to send some young date trees (*khurma-i naunihalan*) with persons skilled in management of their cultivation.

In many cases Tipu had personal knowledge of the regions where particular plants or drugs could be acquired. For instance he writes to Mir Kazim that he knew of the regions where saffron was cultivated. In another letter he says it is a native to Persia. Similarly he had personal knowledge that Kishm Island was the place for rearing of silk worms and asks Mir Kazim to send some of the silk worms and their eggs to Mysore together with 5 or 6 men acquainted with rearing silk culture.

Other major items imported by Tipu from the Persian Gulf regions were sulphur and rock-salt. Sulphur, the main ingredient of gunpowder was mainly imported from Muscat. In one of his orders he says every year 600 *raths* of sulphur of best quality be purchased from the Muscat factory for preparation of gunpowder. All details regarding the execution of the transaction should be brought to the knowledge of the Sultan.

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1 *Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan*, pp 282-83
2 *Ibid.*, 188
4 *Ibid.*, p 188
5 *Hukumnamaha-i Tipu Sultan, op cit*, fs 141b-142a, 11b-12a
communication to his commercial consul (17 November 1785) Tipu says that his ship anchored at Muscat should be unloaded in two days and the loading of sulphur, lead, and copper should also be completed within two days. In case the work exceeded 4 days, Mir Kazim would have to bear the extra expenses. He was also charged to report to the Sultan the arrival and departure of ships of the Sultan to and from Muscat.\(^1\) Once the Sultan asked the commercial consul at Muscat to purchase sulphur and copper cheaply.\(^2\) The moderation in purchase price of commodity had always been a matter of special consideration for Tipu. In a letter to Mir Kazim (12 January 1786) he asked him to buy sulphur when price had come down to a moderate level.\(^3\) However Mir Kazim had to see that a regular supply of sulphur was furnished from time to time.\(^4\)

Rock-salt, the use of which was perhaps not known to Tipu, surprises him when he comes to know of arrival of its shipment instead of sapphires. He asked the commercial agent to explain the use of Rock-salt in Mysore with the minutest detail of the mineral. This was to be sent to the amil of Mangalore and the

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2. Ibid. p. 209.
4. Ibid., p. 282-83.
sample to the Sultan for information. In another communication Tipu thanked Mir Kazim for having sent the sample of rock-salt to him. Equally in another letter Tipu commends Mir Kazim for his skill in lading the Sultan’s ships with mineral salt instead of sapphires (*sang-i nilam*) and instructs him to continue sending it. Mir Kazim on another occasion (6 May, 1786) was asked to buy a large quantity of rock-salt and load on *dhows* that had carried rice to Muscat for sale. He had further to send the consignment of rock-salt from time to time to the *amil* of Mangalore together with an account of its cost.

Import of gold and silver, coined or uncoined, has always been a matter of concern to Tipu. Many of his commercial communications contain information on dispatch of gold to him. In one of his orders he says that uncoined gold and silver as much as it is available from *Kothies* may be purchased.

Horses formed an important item of import from the Gulf to Mysore, mainly through the Muscat merchants. The main source of supply of horses of good breed to the Deccan states was Persia.

4. *Ibid*, p. 300
5. *Ibid*.
The regular supply again seems to have been made largely from the Persian Gulf regions. Horse dealers, brought horses for Haider Ali, and on the way if any horse lost its life and the dealer having cut the tail and ear brought these before him, on the verbal assurance of the dealer of the price of the horse, Haider Ali would pay half the price from his own treasury.¹

Horses to Tipu were as important as rice to the Omanis. A letter of 20 February 1782 by the Sultan to Mir Kazim directs him to induce the Muscat merchants to visit Mysore in a large number and bring horses in empty dingies for sale and for return cargo purchase rice. Simultaneously the consul was also asked to persuade the Imam of Muscat to issue orders to the same effect to his merchants.² Tipu seems to have had a special liking for good breed of horses and mules of Persian origin. The Sultan in another letter to Mir Kazim asks him to dispatch some mules of good stock.³ In another letter to Mir Kazim the Sultan desired him to send some one to Rustakh and procure five large asses and dispatch them to Mysore.⁴

¹ Tarikh-i Tipu Sultan, op.cit., p. 683.
² Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., p. 6.
⁴ Ibid, pp. 282-83.
From Tipu’s order issued to the six asifs of the Sarkar-i Khodadad we understand that every year 1050 horses were purchased officially. The number of horses to be purchased and paraded before the Sultan were allocated to various Kachehrs: Kachehri Zafarabad, 100 horses; Kachehri Faiz Hisar 200 horses; Kachehri Farrukhyab Hisar 100 horses, Kachehri Shikohabad 200 horses and Kachehri Gardoonshikoh 250 horses; Kachehri Azimabad 200 horses. If 1050 horses were officially purchased on behalf of the state in one year, the aggregate purchase in the entire realm of the sultan must have been higher.

Tipu tried to encourage trade by making concessions in customs. Maoji Seith, the dallal of Muscat was granted remission of duty to 4/10 of the total whereas ½ of the total was granted to the Imam of Muscat, who was designated as the chief merchant of Oman. Regarding the remission of ½ of the duty on the Imam’s ships and dhows at the port of Mysore, there is a letter of Tipu Sultan addressed to the Imam. He had issued orders to the governors of his ports. The Sultan asked the Imam to continue sending ships and dhows with merchandise to the ports of

Mysore. Regarding remission of duty on Maoji Seith, Tipu Sultan instructs the amils of the ports (11 January 1786) to demand only 6/10 of the duty which it seems was customary since old times. Maoji Seith also enjoyed remission of anchorage duty. Tipu wrote to the amil of the port of Calicut (16 January 1786) to remit the customary anchorage duty in favour of 5 dingies of Maoji Seith.

The reduction of duty on ships of Oman in Mysore was not a one-sided affair. It was reciprocal. While the customs duty in general was 10% on goods of all description at the Oman ports, the duty on merchants of Mysore was only 6%. Such customs concessions and facilities were given by Tipu to other merchants coming from outside the country as well. In January 1787 Tipu in his correspondence with some Armenian merchants promises to exempt them from duty on goods that they would bring to Mysore ports.

The Sultan established a royal board of 9 commissioners of trade with 17 foreign and 30 home factories carrying instruction of profit-oriented transaction of exports and imports.

Commodities like tobacco, sandalwood, pepper and precious metals were declared state monopoly. Wilks also endorses the view that the regulations were meant to benefit people at large and motivate them of the participation in trade and commerce of the country.

On deposits Mark Wilks says if the share of depositors was up to the amount of 500 rupees he received 50% at the end of the year and if 500-5000 rupees his annual profit was 25% and that above 5000, 12%. Depositors were at liberty to withdraw on demand any part of the deposit together with their up-to-date interest. Tipu thus collected funds for financing his coastal and the Gulf trade. It has been stated,

"That only two or three years previously to the extinction of his power, he had conceived the idea of creating a very formidable naval force. It may, indeed be reasonably doubted, whether either the resources of his country, or his genius were equal to the realization of so bold a plan, but it is as well, perhaps, that he

1 Mark Wilks, _op.cit_., p. 570.
was not allowed time for the experiment”\(^1\).

As to the construction of ships of ordinary merchants he issued order to the asifs of Kachehri Jamalabad, Wajidabad and Majidabad that the merchants of Kachehri Jamalabad should construct 11 sail of three-masted and two-masted ships and merchants of Kachehri Wajidabad and Majidabad 10 sail of three-masted and two-masted ships each. These ships they had to construct at their own cost. He also guaranteed them the supply of cargo for their ships wherever they desired. But for all practical purpose for transportation of cargo bigger ships should be used in trade. They should not trade in smaller ships. Asifs of the three Kachehris were asked to obtain agreement from the merchants of those Kachehris. The merchants were given option to get the ships ready within one year. Till then they could trade in ships of any size.\(^2\)

On one occasion Tipu in his communication to Mir Kazim at Muscat ordered him to send 10 shipwrights familiar with the construction of dhow\(s\) together with 100 Khallasis.\(^3\) After the arrival of these shipwrights Tipu expresses satisfaction at their skill in construction of dhow\(s\) and dingies. He again asked the commercial agent to further recruit 4 or 5 shipwrights and send

\(^1\) Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., p. 234.
\(^2\) Hukmnamah-i Tipu Sultan, op. cit., fls.139b-140a.
\(^3\) Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., p. 234.
them to Mangalore. Once he issued order to his official, Mahmood Ali Khan, on the problem of sheathing ('Coppering') ships and asked him to consult shipwrights in the matter of sheathing and enhancement of durability of ships. Tipu's ships of war including cargo and pilgrim ships must have been many. M.H. Gopal is of the view that for trading purpose Tipu's government had its own ships. Mohibbul Hasan is of the view, however, that the Mysore's ships were technologically ill-constructed and therefore inferior to European ships. This impression of his emanates from a shipwreck in the Shatt-al Arab.

The Bombay shipyard that had been dependent for its timber on the hinterland of the western coast now obtained easy access for its supply to the forests of Malabar and Mysore after the fall of Tipu Sultan. This placed the British at advantage over her rival, France. For construction of better ships for the Royal Navy the services of Wadia family was made use of.

1. Select letters of Tippoo Sultan, pp. 282-83.
2. Ibid., p 356.
3. Waqa-i Manazil-i Rum, op cit., p. 11.
5. Waqa-i Manazil-i Rum, op cit., Introduction.
6. Ibid.
Wilks seems to suggest that Tipu Sultan was quite ignorant of commercial and political economy and therefore in 1784 he ordered the total eradication of all the pepper vines of the marine districts and reserved those of inland growth to trade with the true believers from Arabia. Wilks says that it was not possible for him to understand whether prohibition of growing red pepper was in order to promote black pepper or due to some other motive.

Sultan, according to Mark Wilks, was convinced that since England's power was founded on commercial prosperity and, therefore, he too wanted to enhance his power on the same basis.

The relations of Tipu with Oman were based primarily on reciprocal trade and friendship. In one of his letters to Mir Kazim, Tipu says that the former's deputation at Muscat had the sole purpose of buying and selling and he was always to look to the commercial advantage of the Sultan. However he could indulge in business matters on behalf of Mysore if it was in the interest of the state, eventhough not sanctioned by the Sultan.

3. *Ibid*.
As to funding the trade by local raising of credit, there is no frequent mention of bill of exchange in Tipu’s commercial transaction but the evidence suggests the practice was not uncommon either. In a transaction of 160 bales of cloth sold at 13,000 qurs-i rumi in the possession of Nurullah, the chief of the embassy to Constantinople sent in 1786, Abdullah, the purchaser of the cloth at Basra, 16 November 1786 issued a bill of exchange of the said amount drawn on a banker at Baghdad. Simultaneously we hear of receipt of 20,000 hun-i haidari by the envoys of Tipu Sultan bound to Constantinople. This money was paid to them by Prem and Sewa, both the agents of Maoji Saith at Basra on account of the goods which he had purchased at Muscat.

Tipu’s commercial interests extended beyond Oman to Basra. Basra, a strategic commercial port, situated near the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates. In 1786 it was garrisoned with 11 Turkish ships of war and two small ones beside some trading vessels operating in the Persian Gulf. Tipu seems to have visualized its commercial importance much earlier. Next to Muscat the port which could be of a great value and could control the flow of trade was Basra where commercial depot

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1 Waqa-i Manazil-i Rum, op cit., pp. 41-42.
2 Ibid., p. 41.
3 Waqa-i Manazil-i Rum, op cit., p 53.

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could be established for transaction of Mysorean products. Tipu, therefore, desired to obtain possession of the port of Basra in farm. With this view in mind the Sultan issued instruction to the chief members of the embassy in 1786 to make every inquiry of the port and possibility of attaining consent of the Turkish governor and his inclination to farm out the port.¹ But nothing came of attempt. Basra's strategic importance lies in the fact that it served as an entreport and distributing centre to Turkish Iraq especially Baghdad vis-à-vis Levant and Europe by the way of Aleppo and Asia Minor and in the north to the Caspian, Iranian and Armenian regions.²

Goods of Mysore which had already attracted the attention of merchants of different regions were also popular at Basra. Members of Tipu's embassy proceeding to Constantinople in 1786 during their brief sojourn found ready customers to dispose some of their goods which they carried to meet out their expenses.³

². Lorimer, op.cit., I(1B), p. 166.
³. Waqa-i Manazil-i Rum, p. 41; also History of Tipu Sultan, p. 134.
[A] Bills of Exchange, Draft and Currency Rates in the Red Sea

Considerable flow of treasure in India from the Red Sea continued even during the 18th and 19th centuries. The flow was either in form of silver bullion or liquid assets sent to India as remittances through bills of exchange, also known as hundis. The hundi system as a means of money remittance to India from abroad during the early medieval period must have been prevalent as evidence tends to suggest the presence of Indian sarrafs and money changers at various commercial centres like Mokha, Constantinople and Malacca. For our period we have various records of the English East India Company which contain much information on hundis particularly at Mokha.

To begin with we have evidence from 1752. The Mokha factor says of having signed twenty sets of “Bills of Exchange” (Friday 7 August 1752).¹ His definition of a set is “two bills

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each". The total bills were of 20 sets and amounted to Rs. 47,300. The bills were drawn on the Chief and Council at Surat payable at thirty days sight after stated dates. The rate of exchange on that day at Mokha was Rs. 200 to S.P. $100 (Spanish Dollars). The names of persons from whom the amount was procured and those in whose favour the bills were drawn are given in the attached table (on pp. 94 & 96).

A letter of 10 September 1800 addressed to the Secretary of State by the Resident at Baghdad, Harford Jones, mentions that the Pasha of Baghdad on the Vazir's solicitation sent the Resident a sum of Rs. 25,000 in bills of exchange drawn on Damascus and Aleppo. However no further details are provided. We have a substance of a letter (9 May 1832) from Meeya Kurreem Bhaee Ibrahimjee, acting native agent at Mokha addressed to R. Money, acting Persian Secretary to Government. The letter refers to having previously sent a bill issued on 27 April 1832 drawn on the Governor in Council, payable 1 to 30 days sight of an amount of 1500 German Crowns. On that particular date the exchange rate was Rs. 215 to 100 Crowns. The total amount remitted in favour of Meeya Chandabhaee Allee Bhai was Rs. 32,250. The same native

1. *Secret and Political Department Diary*, No. 101 of 1800, pp. 6636, 6648
agent in another letter of 9 August 1832 to the Acting Persian Secretary speaks of having sent a "hoondi" of 10,000 German Crowns issued on 17 July 1832 in favour of Chandabhaee. The bill was drawn on the Governor at Bombay. Abdool Rasool, a native agent of the East India Company at Mokha and also a merchant issued bill drawn on the Bombay Government in favour of one Hajee Mahmud Ali who had also advanced the former a sum of Rs. 4956, 4 (as?) in 1840. But the Bombay Government refused to honour the bill saying that the said native agent had no authority to draw bills on the Bombay Government. Abdool Rasool says by way of complaint that the agent of Hajee Mahomed Ali Saffer now charges him interest on the amount for time on account of the non-payment of the bill. Abdool Rasool further says that he was not made aware of the Government Regulations. But in another dispatch dated 23 November 1840, addressed to the Governor, Abdool Rasool, the Government Agent at Mokha, conveys to the Governor of having received from the Vakeel of Hajee Mahomed Ali Saffer the sum of Rs. 2284 German Crowns (Furansa Rials) at the rate of exchange of Rs. 217 to 100 per Furansa rials, making in all Rs. 4956¼. Abdool Rasool therefore requests the Governor to

1. Political Department, vol.57/500 of 1831/32/33, op.cit., p. 5; also ibid., (3 Sep., 1833), p.45.
pay the same to *Hajee Mahomed Ali Saffer* in Bombay 31 days after sight. The bill was drawn in duplicate.¹

Exchange rate constantly varied in the money market. For the bills of exchange drawn on the Governor in Council (Bombay) the German Crowns began to be exchanged for rupees. In 1831 German Crowns 15000 exchanged to Rs. 32,250 and the rate of exchange was 100 Crowns for 215 rupees.² This was the rupee-crown rate at Mokha market in May 1832. Then in November 1840 the rate was Rs. 217 for 100 German rial ("per Furansa Rial") which probably may mean 100 German Crowns.³ At Jeddah, in November 1868 the rupee was quoted at 2 shillings. The pound according to the current exchange rate equalled 137½ *piastres* and the rupees 2½ *piastres* only.⁴ At Baghdad the indigenous currency was *Kerases* (Kerans?). H.C. Rawlinson writing from Baghdad dated 31 May 1849 says the exchange rate between *kerans* and the Company's rupees was 209:100.⁵

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⁴ *Political Department*, Vol 32 of 1869, p. 47.

⁵ *Ibid.* Vol 192/2360 of 1849, p 293
The exchange of silver (bullion) with Spanish Dollars (current Dollars) was not uncommon sight during the 18th century. Mokha Factor writing to the President and Governor at Bombay says of having exchanged 28464 ounces of the Company's silver for a similar weight of current dollars on the same terms as mentioned in previous certificates.¹

Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Changer</th>
<th>Exchanged with</th>
<th>Quantity of Silver (oz)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mokha Factor</td>
<td>Iwah, broker to Richard</td>
<td>1433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokha Factor</td>
<td>Bouchier</td>
<td>45337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokha Factor</td>
<td>Mahmudboy Jafferboy</td>
<td>4447 ½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokha Factor</td>
<td>Esabhoy Aloojee</td>
<td>4447 ½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mootaboy Rasboy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: The list continues till the total weight is 28464 oz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mokha Factor 1752, No. 75. pp. 52-55

The broker, Iwah again appears (Sunday, 12 July 1752) proposing to the Mokha Factor to exchange silver for Spanish Dollars $ 1600. Finley agreed thereto and exchanged 14232 oz. for two certificates to be transmitted to Bombay. Since two of the ships of Esabhoy Aloojee and Moosaboy Rasboy had fixed their sailing schedule to Bombay, this induced three merchants namely Mahmudboy Jafferboy, to exchange silver for dollars. Mahmud Jafferboy exchanged 5337 oz. of silver for $6000 the

¹. Mokha, Sunday 12 July 1752, Mokha Factory 1752, No. 75. pp. 52-55.
others 4447½ oz. for $5000 each. The factors strongly hoped that their entire stock would be exhausted. The ships *Dadabhoy* and *Speedwell* had both put silver as treasure freight. Iwah was directed to acquaint the merchants and to convey to them that the silver purchased by them would be received at the same rate. The schedule date of sailing of the ship was August 1752. The *Stretham's* freight according to the above arrangement, therefore, would be reduced as little as possible by those two ships sailing at earlier date, owing to the Mokha factor's offer aforesaid.¹

The flow of a large amount of treasure to Surat and Bombay was a continuous process. Its variation however was subject to the circumstance. During 1804-05 there was considerable flow of treasure from Mokha and Jedda. The *Wahabi* depredation during this period had become unmanageable and therefore the Indian merchants began to transfer their liquid assets to Bombay.²

The returns for Indian goods were made in dollars and sequins with which the Indian fleet returned to India. This

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sometimes caused an acute scarcity of silver in the Egyptian market. There seems to have been considerable trade between Bombay Presidency and the Red Sea between 1816-18 as shown by the flow of amount of treasure to Bombay and Surat in the statement of Bombay Customs House of 25 June 1818.

### SETS OF BILLS OF EXCHANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRAWN IN FAVOUR OF</th>
<th>AMOUNT RECEIVED OF</th>
<th>AMOUNT (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xeriph Ally;</td>
<td>Abdul Rahim</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdel Rahim Meah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaluddin Abdul Cadir Esub</td>
<td>Sulaiman Sally</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jivandass Govindjee</td>
<td>Luckmechund Savichund;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luckmechund Veachund</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jivandass Govindjee</td>
<td>Verchund Bowan</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venmo Uidass Gerderass</td>
<td>Rozdar Verjee</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measaudella Mahmud;</td>
<td>Rozdar Verjee</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bochajee Tiebyjee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luttioboy Hitherboy</td>
<td>Hiaboy Conjee</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiaboy Nungboy</td>
<td>Rahimboy Chanderboy</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Hossein</td>
<td>Ibrahim Jeva</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malickjee Doosaboy</td>
<td>Haq Hussenjee Meleckjee</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togboy Hossenboy</td>
<td>Mootaboy Togboy</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jafferboy Shaikhboy</td>
<td>Currimboy Nureboy</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahomud Cassem</td>
<td>Shaikh Adam Hossein</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mereboy Togdboy</td>
<td>Cuttabboy Addumboy</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaikh Ally Buckus Shaikh, Ally</td>
<td>Mootaboy Tieb</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sets 19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carried over</td>
<td>Rs. 4,4300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brought over</td>
<td>Rs. 4,4300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rs. 47,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chundaboy Sulimanjee</td>
<td></td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The list continues till the total amounts to Rs. 47,3000

**Source:** Mokha 7 August, 1752, Mokha Factory 1752, pp. 69-71

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2. *Secret and Political Department Diary*, No. 307 of 1818, p. 719. For the above statement see the table given in chapter V(A) entitled, ‘Mohammaad Ali and the Trade with India’, p. 151.
(B) PORT CUSTOMS IN THE RED SEA (1800-1830)

Customs on all imports and exports was the major source of income for the Imam of Sanaa, a tributary of the Ottomans. The data available from the 18th and the early 19th centuries on the nature and mode of customs charged at various ports of the Red Sea are of some relevance in studying the conduct of India's trade with the Arab world.

During 18th century the chief source of the income of the Imam of Yemen was Mokha customs. The customs varied in rates. In 1730 the Europeans paid a uniform duty of 3% on all descriptions of goods whereas the Muslim and Hindu merchants were subjected to customs payment ranging from 5 to 7.5%.

The Imam of Sanaa granted an exclusive privilege in 1737 to the East India Company to buy 600 bales of coffee as duty-free against an annual payment of goods worth Rs. 400 to the Daulah of Mokha which the Company further strove to cut down to a sum of Rs. 300 in 1793.

The Memorandum of customs paid at Mokha on imports in 1810 clearly shows that there was no uniformity in the customs.

rates payable by merchants of different origins. For instance the English East India Company and other British merchants still paid at the rate of 3% ad valorem on all kinds of goods.

Ali Beg, a traveller of Aleppo, on his visit to the Red Sea in 1807, observed that the Sherif of Mecca, Sherif Ghalif, himself a merchant and shipowner, increased the rate of customs at Jedda resulting in resistance from the merchants.¹

Sometimes customs levied on East India Company or other British subjects in the Red Sea ports under the Egyptian rulers and within the control of the Sherif of Mecca led to retaliation from the East India Company. This is borne out by the evidence contained in the minute of the proceeding of the East India Company of 11 May 1826:

"Instances have occurred where the Sherif of Judda has exacted heavy duties on the company's woolens and we have retaliated by directing the same duties to be levied on the Judda vessels trading to Bombay and Surat.²"

The variation in customs rates often depended on the quality of goods or the nationality of the men involved.

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² Mokha Residency, Minutes by W. Warden, *Political Department*, Vol. 238 of 1826, pp. 68-69. The Minute further stipulates that should the charges at Jedda be at all extravagant and in case the Sherif of Mecca refuses to grant concessions to the Company's cruisers he could be brought to the observance of a reasonable conciliatory conduct, by refusing all indulgences to the shipping from the port resorting to a British one. *Ibid.*
Customs at 5% on Surat piece goods were levied on imports at Mokha by the East India Company or by British merchants. The customs were paid by the purchaser not by the importer.\textsuperscript{1} On the other hand, Musalman natives paid 7½% customs on piece goods at Mokha whereas Hindu merchants had to pay at the rate of 8¾%. The medium of payment was either Spanish Dollars or German Crown, "With the Exchange between the Dollars and Crown added"\textsuperscript{2}.

The situation at Jedda was different from that of Mokha. On piece goods, for instance, the native Arab merchants were charged at the rate of 16% advalorum. Customs on items like drugs, cotton, sugar candy and soft sugar and those articles calculated by weight had to be paid at the rate of 11% advalorum. But the East India Company and other European merchants paid only 8% advalorum on all description of goods.\textsuperscript{3} The commercial treaty between the British Government in India and Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt in 1810 in clause 8 says that any English merchant or for that matter any English subjects passing through Egypt or on their way from India to Europe or vice-versa along with his baggage or travel

\textsuperscript{1} Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 366 of the year 1810, p. 6807.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
equipages (which had its particular definition by the Customs House) will not be subject to customs duty. The Pasha himself gave his assurance on this issue. The 14th Clause of the treaty stipulates that Indian raw material or Indian manufactured goods that came from India and were imported into Egypt were subject to payment of a duty of 3% advalorem either in "kind or coin", depending on convenience of the receiver. The customs duty was to be paid on arrival of goods at Cairo. However, the customs incharge under the employment of Mohammad Ali was empowered to check goods that had been unloaded from British ships or belonged to British subjects. Those ships, as a rule, were expected to carry exact note or invoice of goods. But if the goods thus carried sustained any damage the Egyptian Government was liable for payment of such damage (Clause 15). In Clause 16 of the treaty, the Pasha agreed to grant British subjects more concessions than the native merchants. The clause stipulates that goods originally imported from Yemen or Abyssinia by English subjects would be charged 15% less than the native merchants. This meant that British subjects had to pay a mere 3% as they were charged

earlier. It would also seem that the final decision was left in the hand of the East India Company. On the other hands those goods of Egyptian origin which were consigned in British ships or otherwise imported to India on account of British subjects had to pay in reciprocal terms a customs of 3% advalorum.

The 18th clause of the treaty of 1810 takes note of goods the British merchants exported from India, Abyssinia or the states of Yemen to Europe or Turkey via Alexandria or Damietta. The duty was payable on the re-exports of the items. On the other hand a “Terchit receipt” had to be obtained for the goods being exported to Turkey, “that no further Duty may be exacted which is conformable to our capitulations”.

Capitulations (the 19th Clause) and other usages stressed that European articles of trade would pay 3% whether meant for consumption within Egypt or for re-export. Similarly the export quality of vine of “Indies” would pay 3% advalorum.

Clause 20 of the treaty lays down certain conditions on the shippings of the subjects of the sublime Porte and the

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1. Ibid., p. 6763-4.
2. Secret and Political Department Diary., No. 366 of the year 1810, p. 6765.
3. Ibid., op cit., p. 6766
natives of Egypt. These shippers could not carry on trade with India in British ships without the proper approval of the relevant authority of the East India Company in India. As such the merchants had to fully abide by the rates of duties imposed on foreigners by the East India Company. The treaty also stipulated that ships under Turkish colours and with a Turkish crew shall be at liberty to carry on traffic with the subjects of the "Indies" paying duties at the rates of the Company.¹ The treaty also acceded to the demand that Mohammad Ali be allowed to receive duty-free products of India, valued up to Rs. 1,000,000.²

Burkhardt (1814) observed that after establishing himself as the ruler of Egypt Mohammad Ali assumed the title of "Waly" or governor of Jedda, Suakin and Habesh as well and had customs officers appointed at the customs houses of those ports. Earlier those officers were subordinate to the Sherif of Mecca.³

Before Mohammed Ali's appearance on the scene, Jedda was under the jurisdiction of the Sherif of Mecca and its

¹ Secret and Political Department Diary, No 366 of the year 1810, p 6766.
² Ibid., p 6766-67 In faith the treaty was signed and sealed Cairo 28 May 1810 by John Benzoni, Assistant to the British Mission in Arabia
³ Burkhardt, op cit., Vol 1, pp 87-88
customs constituted main source of his income. But theoretically the town was under the jurisdiction of a Turkish *Pasha*. Initially, the *Sherif*’s share of the income of Jedda was $\frac{1}{3}$, which was subsequently enhanced to $\frac{1}{2}$. But gradually the *Sherif* assumed jurisdiction over Jedda and the *Pasha* was consequently reduced to the position of dependence on the *Sherif*. This was a clear manifestation of the weakness of the Turks.\(^1\)

The customs at Jedda were known as “*ashour*” and accordingly levied at the rate of 10% on all goods of import. Malpractices sometime led to over-valuation and sometime under-valuation.\(^2\) Customs on coffee, for instance, in the period of the *Sherif* was at $5$ the quintal which could be computed at 15-20% while spices paid at lower rates. The customs levy on Indian piece goods was at higher rate, besides there being many abuses in the mode of collection of customs.\(^3\)

The *Wahabis* had become so powerful by this time that the *Sherif* could no longer force them to pay customs. In the face of the terror unleashed by them, the Indian merchants felt their property insecure and began to transfer their treasure to

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India. In spite of these conditions, which must have adversely affected realization of the customs, the aggregate figure of customs collection in 1814 was $400,000 which was equal to 8,000 purses or 4 million piastres.\(^1\) Thus, according to Burkhardt's estimate, it gave an annual importation of about 4 millions of dollars, "a sum certainly below rather than above the truth".\(^2\) Customs were also levied on domestic produce entering the town from the interior of the country.\(^3\)

The proceeds of customs of Jedda was shared between the Sherif of Mecca and the Pasha of Jedda. Later on it was entirely appropriated by the Sherifs. But at the turn of the 19\(^{th}\) century Mohammad Ali asserted his authority and took over the entire administration and utilized the amount for his own purpose.\(^4\) In the given conditions it is quite possible that Indian goods were over-charged at Jedda.\(^5\)

In a second treaty, formally ratified with the merchants of Jedda, Mohammad Ali first demanded payment of joint-customs by ships, both of Suez and Jedda at the customs house of Suez. The rate of customs was initially fixed at 12% but was later

\[\text{References:}\]
\[1. \text{Burkhardt, Vol. I, pp. 93-94.}\]
\[2. \text{Ibid., p. 94.}\]
\[3. \text{Ibid., p. 95.}\]
\[5. \text{Ibid., op. cit., pp. 93-94.}\]
reduced to 9% upon all imports into Suez from India, which was 6% more than the usual customs charge levied on European merchants in the ports of the Turkish sultan. It was expected that this arrangement would lead to the opening up of an active trade.

Our evidence clearly indicate that the Imam of Sanaa was keenly interested in maintaining friendship with the English. The officials of the East India Company, on the other hand, were aware that the financial position of the Imam was not sound. Basing his estimate on statement of Niebhour, Robert Finlay, an assistant surgeon in the service of the East India Company, concludes that the total income of the Imam was 500,000 crowns per month. But according to his own estimate, "the figure did not exceed that sum annually". He further says that after an examination of statements of different persons, he found the estimate of revenues contradictory and variant. Therefore, the estimate that he has advanced is based on his personal calculation. Irregularities in form of bargain and bribes in collection of customs also precluded opportunities of enhancing his income.

1. Journal of Journey to Sanaa from Mokha by Assistant Surgeon Robert Finlay in the Months of August, September and October, 1823". Political Department, 22/166 of 1820. (pp. 1-36), p.32.
The income derived by the Government of Sanaa from manufacturers during 2nd decade of the 19th century was very small. The Jews and banyas were the main traders in gold and silver. The Imam struck no coin but a “comasee” 200 to a German Crown and a “hisf”, 5 to a “comasee”. These coins were made by the Jews. Manufacture of coarse woollen cloth was basically for carpetting but sometimes it was worn by the poorer classes as well. The only resource worth mention was the coffee whose export value was very high. Raisin, walnuts, almonds, aloes and Sanaa leaf were also exported in small quantities.¹

We have the translation of a grant (in Arabic) from the Imam of Sanaa addressed to captain Bruce, Government agent, received at Mokha, 14 January 1821. The Imam agrees in principle to all the demands made through his vakeel, Fathullah El Mohee. The duty was fixed at 2 2/4 in lieu of 3½, the same as charged from the French (written in the month of Rabiussani 1236 A.H. or January 1821).²

¹ Political Department, Vol. 22/168 of 1824, p. 130.
² Translation of a letter from Imam of Sanaa to Captain Bruce, Government Agent. Received 14 January 1821, with seal and signature of the Imam. Political Department. Vol 14/34 of 1820-21, p. 220.
The Grant stated that: "It is hereby agreed and directed that the British duties shall hereafter be in lieu of 3½% to 2¼% to the English and all their merchants on Exports and that the Imports shall be the same 2¼%".¹

We have another copy of a literal translation from the Arabic concerning the 7th article of the treaty of Mokha.

In a direction from the Bombay Castle to the Deputy Secretary and transfer incharge of the office of country correspondence on other points of argument was made for the reply to the letter from the Daulah of Mokha to the Governor at Bombay. In response to the letter of the Daulah some follow up action and explanations were undertaken by Captain Bruce during his visit there on the 9 January 1821. But in spite of all the exercise the terms of the Treaty remained ambiguous. The Governor in Council readily consents to give the Imam the benefit of the most favourable construction by admitting that the reduction of duty to 2¼ in imports and exports applies only to English merchants. This communication is dated 28 June 1821.²

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¹ Political Department, Vol. 14/34 of 1820-21, p. 221.
² Political Department, Vol. 14/34 of 1820-21, p. 392.
A copy of the letter of Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone to the Daulah of Mokha dated 29 June 1821 is available. It says inter alia:

“I have had the pleasure to receive your letter informing me that in answer to the claim of the people of Suart to pay 2¼ per cent duty the same as is stipulated to be paid by English merchants, you told them that the duty in reference to them remained unaltered and that no mention was made of them in the article reducing the duty to 2¼ per cent.

In reply I have to acquaint you that notwithstanding it was my intention to have stipulated for the reduction of duties in from of the native merchants trading to Mokha under the protection of the British flag, equally with the English, as explained by Captain Bruce to you on the visit to you on the 9th, January yet the terms of the treaty are ambiguous, I readily can consult to give the Imam the benefit of the most favourable construction by admitting that the reduction of duty to 2¼ per cent imports and exports applies exclusively to English merchants”.

Further, the chief secretary to the Government, Bombay Castle, writing to John Elphinstone, chief at Surat on 28 June 1821 (No. 820 of 1821) says that:

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1 Political Department, Vol. 14/34 of 1820-21, p. 393.
"I am directed to communicate to you for the information of the traders from Surat to Mocha that as the terms of the Treaty are ambiguous the Governor in council has afforded to the Imam the benefit of the most favourable construction by admitting that the reduction of duty to 2¼ per cent on imports and exports applies exclusively to English merchants".

On a careful examination of the evidence available in this regard it would appear that the English themselves were perhaps not very clear about the statement made by the Imam's vakeel. In practice, however, the duty remained 2¼% on all imports and exports of the Company's goods as well as the merchandise of the traders operating under the English Flag as contained in article 7. Other articles of the Treaty of Mokha are needed to be carefully considered. The first article empowers the English Resident at Mokha to retain 30 soldiers, same as the Residents at Basra, Baghdad and Bushire. The next article binds the Imam to respect and honour the dignity of the English Resident (vakeel). The third article concerns the arrangements upon death of Englishmen. As regards the English merchants' ships, they used to pay 400 rials as anchorage but in terms of this Treaty, the duty was abolished forthwith and these vessels
were put at par with those of the Government vessels (i.e. the English East India Company's) and the war ships (i.e. men of war of Royal Navy). They were to enjoy this privilege even if their cargo was brought on shore. This was discussed and settled without reference to Sanaa on the condition that hostilities should cease and that the entrance to the port should not be closed during the season. Article 6 takes into consideration the shippings of the merchants carrying trade under the British flag. According to it all merchants who are dependent on the English government for protection and carry on trade under their flag, may continue to transact their trade at Mokha, especially the Muslim merchants of Surat. In case of any dispute arising among them, the decision should be made in accordance with the Mohammedan law.

This article also stipulates that in case any dispute between the people, the English Resident, and the subjects of the Imam belonging to the port of Mokha, the Resident may depute a representative to the court of the Hakim of Mokha to observe the proceedings. If a native of the country is found to be in the wrong, the Hakim of Mokha would furnish him, but in case the wrong has been committed by an English soldier, then
the punishment will be meted out to the guilty by the Resident. This article was referred to the Imam for his consideration.

Article 7 concerns customs affairs at Mokha. The rates for both imports and exports at the port of Mokha for the English Government i.e. the English East India Company and the English merchants were to be the same, i.e. 2½%. It was dated Rabiussani 1236 A.H. (1821A.D.) and signed by William Bruce, the Government agent, 15 January 1821 with seal of Ameer Fathullah Mehdi (vakeel); and others.

Another document reveals that there was still some flaw in the arrangement which needed to be corrected. It perhaps refers to the omission of the paragraph in the 6th article of the Treaty of January 1821.

The Imam of Sanaa writing a letter to Mountstuart Elphinstone in July 1821 A.D./Shaban 1236 A.H. expresses satisfaction over the conclusion of the treaty. At the same time he explains about certain “departure” from the terms of the agreement. The Imam sent his representative, Haji Mohammad

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1 *Political Department, Vol. 14/34 of 1820-21, op cit. p 393*
2 *Ibid*
3 *Ibid*
4 *Political Department, Vol 14/34 of 1820-21, p 436*
Wallee Saffar to explain his viewpoint with the hope that the Governor would pay due attention to him. As a mark of friendship a gift of two Arab horses was also dispatched for the Governor.¹

The statement of the envoy from Mokha reveals that the merchants trading with the ports of the Imam were required to make certain contributions annually to meet the exigencies of the state. This was an old custom. The money thus collected in advance was deducted from the customs levied on the merchant. This was agreed upon between the Musalman and banya merchants and the Sanaa Government. No objection was ever raised against the practice. But now, Bheemjee, a broker to the company, refused to agree to the Government of Mokha’s demand. The Government was forced to take some harsh measure against the defaulter. Unfortunately, Robinson took it upon himself to defend him which resulted in an exchange of harsh words. The envoy expressed apprehension that it may lead to serious misunderstanding between the two states. Bheemjee also acted as broker to all visiting shippers at Mokha, refused to pay the brokerage tax due from him saying

¹ Translation of a letter from Imam Mehdee of Sanaa to Mountstuart, the month of Shahan 1236 Hijra. (July 1821), Political Department, Vol. 14/34 of 1820-21, pp. 454-58.
he was the servant of the English Government. Americans purchased coffee through Bheemjee. For this they had to pay one dollar a Frazil. Bheemjee again declined to pay brokerage tax on coffee. He would also not allow the Imam’s agent to directly sell it to the Americans. Bheemjee had large assets and extensive dealings in the Mokha territories. The Imam, extremely annoyed with his behaviour, desired through his envoy to get him replaced.\textsuperscript{1} In protest against the charges and the recommendation, Dongesey Iadowjee, the chief manager of Nanjee Seaskaran at Bombay (Bombay, 10 October 1821) addressed a petition to Elphinstone, President and Governor in the Council. In this petition he denounced all the charges against the firm of Seaskaran stemmed from ill-intention and deliberate attempts made at the persuasion of others to malign the character of Nanjee Seaskaran, who enjoys protection of the President and Governor in Council. Iadowjee therefore prayed that no action should be taken against Bheemjee because of his usefulness for the Company as he not only acts as broker on its behalf but also runs a Broker’s House for the use of the East India Company.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Political Department}, Vol. 14/34 of 1820-21, p. 463-65.  
\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Political Department}, Vol 14/34 of 1820-21, p. 463
The petition of the chief manager was followed by another petition of Seaskaran Heerji, the broker to the English East India Company at Mokha, to Mountstuart Elphisteone, Governor of Bombay dated 21 July 1822. In this petition he justifies non-payment of the requisites of the Imam on the ground that the Sanaa Government owed a sum of $30,000 to Bheemji upto 1820. He was, therefore, not required to advance any cash on account of customs. He further argues that the practice prevailing in Sanaa is that the brokers and other banya merchants pay the customs demanded from them by the ruler of Sanaa after deducting duty on their own demands. The Sanaa authorities could not borrow from Muslim merchants nor could they be subjected to any substantial demand. They were also not in a position to make significant advances to the Sanaa Government. Whereas the demand upon Seaskaran was more than on other individuals. The amount of customs liable to be paid by the broker was so small that there could hardly be any adjustment against them.

It would seem that the Sanaa authorities demanded from him more than was due. Consequently he was weary of

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1. Seaskaran Heerji, the English East India Company's broker at Mokha to Mount-stuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, 21 July 1822, Political Department, 22/84 of 1822.
advancing any cash. The matter was amicably settled. The Diwan gave a written statement that $28,300 was due to the Imam and it would have to be paid during the monsoon of 1820. The sum will be liquidated against the customs payable by the broker. Afterward the broker would advance only an annual loan of $4,000 to the Sanaa Government. Seaskaran further says that the amount of the customs liable on him was $700 and was likely to be paid by the Americans.¹ The matter was reported to the Resident and as desired by him, it was paid by the broker. Seaskaran also having received reports of $20,000 on account of the demands of last year and the present year which would be shown on adjustment account.²

A commercial treaty concluded between Hutchinson, the British Resident at Aden and the Sultan of Aden (Lohaj in 1822) stipulates fixation of uniform customs rate of 2½% on all imports and exports on all British subjects, European or Indian.³ The British ships were exempted from payment of anchorage duty as well.⁴ Commercially Aden had declined and

¹ From the information available it is evident that the Americans had been frequenting the Red Sea since last 25 or 26 years. Soon after the arrival of their ships they reported to the Residency office and inquired of the particulars of customs Political Department, 22/84 of 1822, pp 104 - 8.
² Ibid, p 108
³ Political Department, Vol 22/84 of 1822, p. 79.
⁴ Ibid. The treaty also stipulates of exemption of duty on merchandise brought for re-exportation.
in 1830 a uniform customs rate of 2½% on all imports and exports was fixed with a further addition of nominal harbour dues.\footnote{J R Wellested, \textit{Travels in Arabia}, London, 1829, (2 Vols.), Vol 2, p 397} Besides this, the Imam (Sultan?) also levied a tax on pilgrims and thereby made an annual income of $ 12,00,000 as is borne out by the petition of Maodass Ransordass to Charles Colville, acting Governor in Council dated 4 April 1821.\footnote{Political Department, Vol 23/33 of the Year (1821\textdegree). pp 70-71}

Makalla, another port of the Red Sea under the jurisdiction of Mohammad Ali Pasha, Governor of Egypt, charged a uniform rate of 10% as customs in 1834. On the other hand, the adjacent ports also continued with a rate of 10%. Mohammad Ali who himself was an active participant in shipping and also owned several ships of his own, lowered the duty at Makalla from 10% to 5%.\footnote{J R Wellested, Vol 2. \textit{op cit.}, p 397} As a result ships bound for other ports began to anchor at Makalla.

Wellsted has provided a comparative assessment of the customs charged at Yembo and Jedda. He says that both the Red Sea ports derive their revenue from the customs fixed at 10%. He is critical of the irregularities prevailing in customs collection. Customs charges were fixed by over-rating and
under-rating the cost of the articles. No customs was charged at Yembo if goods from Jedda were imported to that port under the certificate of customs payment by the Customs Master of Jedda.¹

British hegemony seems to have reached its culmination during 1850s in the Red Sea. Following the conclusion of a treaty between the British and the Turkish Government in 1856, the Court of Directors expressed satisfaction on learning that the terms of the treaty were effectively put into practice. According to the Treaty, the British commerce of the Red Sea was now exempted from all charges except the regular customs duties.²

Indian trade of the Red Sea was subject to various import and export duties. Details of such duties levied on ports of the Red Sea during the 1850s are available. For instance there was "Sambookia", a tax levied on landing of merchandise boat. It was levied on Indian merchants in Yemen as well as Jedda. Later on it was repealed by Namick Pasha through an order to the Governor of Yemen.³ Now the merchants were subject to

² Secretary to Government to the Acting Vice-Consul, Bombay Castle, 7 April 1856, Political Department, Vol. 34 of 1856/57, p. 79.
³ British Consulate, Jedda, 28 October, 1857, Stephen Page, Acting Vice-Consul and Acting Agent at Jedda to Anderson, Secretary to Government, Political Department, Vol. 34 of 1856-57, pp. 153-156
only one kind of tax known as "Majaba" but it was also included into the Treaty of Commerce of 1854. The English seem to have believed that Namick Pasha expected only just and reasonable amount of customs from the English commerce. Moreover extortion on English goods and "fiscal abasses" (fiscal abuses?) such as "Ittasibiah" were abolished by the order of the Sublime Porte in 1855. Certain abuses also seem to have been practised in Yemen. Authorities of Yemen, for example, levied such cesses as $0.50 a bale as town dues; $1.50 a camel load of tobacco as transit dues and $1.00 a bale of goods as boat hire. The East India Company's agent at Jedda strongly felt that such petty cesses needed to be withdrawn. In a dispatch to the British ambassador at Constantinople, the company's agent at Jedda made a request to persuade the Bombay authorities to help remove these anomalies. But the reports of office of commissioner of customs clearly indicate that the cesses levied on import goods on the Ports of Mokha, Hodaida, Jedda were exactly on the same pattern as levied by the English at Bombay on goods from those ports. Further more there was no complaint regarding these anomalies by the

merchants of Bombay and Surat. The Bombay Government however, found no substance in the complaint of the agent and therefore the matter was dropped. However, goods arriving at Jedda with the exception of those from India, were accompanied with “Raftias” or Government Permits; the duties having been paid in some of the ports lower down the sea, and therefore no further duty was levied at Jedda. Similarly no duty was charged on the merchandise transhipped at Mokha. The “Raftias” or “Teskeret” (perhaps exit duty) on arrival at Jedda being refused and the merchants ordered to recover the former duties from the Government of Yemen since Mokha and Hodaida were under the Pashalik of Yemen, and so under the Turkish Government. There was vizirial order from Constantinople to customs authorities that duty on all goods arriving from Tecca (under the Viceroy of Egypt) at Suakin for which merchants had the requisite raftias, was to be refunded. Apprehension was expressed by the agent at Jedda that second attempt might be made to levy duties on goods for which customs have already been charged in Yemen at the ports of Hodaida and Mokha. The illegal exactions in the Yemen were

1. Bombay, 1 May 1856, Office of Commissioner of Customs, Salt and Opium, to the Secretary to Government, Political Department, Vol. 34 of 1856-57, pp.337-38.
2. Ibid., op. cit., Vol. 34 of 1856-57, pp. 337-38.
3. Statements of the imports and exports at the port of Jedda during the year 1855 as also the return of British trade in vessels under the British flag during the same period from the authorities of Jedda port. Political Department, Vol. 34 of 1856-57, pp. 107-08.
those of "majaba", and "sombokia". "Majaba", levied exclusively for the Sublime Porte, affected every trader.¹

Appointment to Daulahship was based on payment of a certain amount of money to the Imam of Sanaa. The Daulah had under him subordinate officers as assistants. These assistants were "Bash Katib", Qazi, and in case of a seaport town an Inspector of shipping known as "Amir Bahr". Appointments to these officers also were made on payment of sums of money.²

A close scrutiny of the evidence would suggest that the management of ports and collection of duties was marked by many malpractices. The assistant surgeon, Robert Finlay, in the service of the East India Company noted that there was no regularity in collecting the duties. Often there was bargain on payment of duties and bribe and it was so prevalent that it was used, "to let more pass than he pays duty for".³

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1. Stephen Page at Jedda to British Ambassador at Constantinople, 10 July 1857, Political Department, Vol. 34 of 1856-57, pp. 351-56. Both the terms, 'Raftias' and 'Teskeret' appear to be synonymous; while the first one has its Persian origin, the second one has its Arabic origin. Both the terms may apply to export permit as well. The term Tazkrat during the medieval times has been used in the sense of travel document. For detail see Bayazid Beyat, Tazkirai-i Humayun-w-Akbar, (ed.) H. Husain, Calcutta, 1941. p.355.

2. Journal of Journey to Sanaa from Mokha by Assistant Surgeon Robert Finlay in the month of August, September and October 1823, Political Department, Vol. 22/166 of 1824 (pp 1-36), p 32

3. Ibid.
COMPLAINTS AGAINST EXTORTION

Complaints against extortion of money by the customs authorities of the ports of Yemen are frequent. One form of extortion was to extract money on promise to allow "credit" (concessions) in customs. This fact was brought out in the petition of Seaskaran Heerji submitted to the chief Secretary to the Government. He complains of extortion of money by the Daulah of Mokha, with a promise to allow him a credit in the customs. Daulah's excesses had reached such an extent that he put a chain around the neck of Seaskaran in spite of the fact that he was the Company's broker. The Daulah also extorted money by exacting fine on the petitioner's men who were on their way to Mokha on business. Seaskaran expresses apprehension of further harm to his cargo sent in several vessels from Bombay, Cutch, Porebunder, Veravul and Mangalore to Mokha. While seeking protection for his cargo and vessels by the officers of the East India Company he also requests the Secretary to the Government to instruct the authority of the Company at Mokha for reimbursement of the extortion money from the Daulah and measures against further molestation.¹

¹ Petition to Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to Government by Seaskaran Heerjee, the East India Company's broker at Mokha, Bombay, 23 August 1820, Political Department, Vol. 28/33 of 1820-21.
Complaints of extortion contain much information regarding the treatment of merchants and the mode of customs. Writing to the Secretary to the Government the Resident at Mokha says that he was under the impression that the Indian subjects would be brought at par with the Arab traders for the purpose of customs duties. In this connection, he refers to the articles of the treaty concluded between Captain Bruce on the English East India Company's behalf and the Imam of Sanaa on payment of customs. But in practice the situation was different; while Arabs paid 15% the Indians had to pay more.¹ By 1827 the financial condition of the Mokha Government had deteriorated. Consequently it decided to meet the expenses by raising a compulsory loan on the merchants and leaving them to be repaid through customs. This practice was quite common. But the Resident was determined not to allow such a levy on merchants under the Company's protection.² He suggested that if prompt steps were not taken against such conduct in future, there would be no end of the matter.³ M.E. Bagnold writing to Davidas Runsordas, a merchant of Bombay, says the Daulah at

¹ Political Department, Vol. 23/278 of 1827, p. 235. What Captain Bruce says is that the Arab merchants exercised considerable influence in the Red Sea and there was measure in continuation to oust the other traders as well, particularly the European traders from the Red Sea. The influence of Arab merchants increased with the passage of time.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid
Aden had obtained forced loans from all the banyas, treated them with great cruelty and even put one of them to death. Davidass Runsordass also had agents in the Red Sea for his business. Merchants were ill-treated at Lohaj as Bagnold has reported and the claims of Davidass Runsordass could not be satisfied owing to the non-payment of the Sanaa Government.¹

Forcible exaction of 2500 Rials is reported in a letter from Shaikh Tyab Ibrahimji, native agent at Mokha to Watson, the Persian Secretary, dated 21 February (received 2 April) 1833. The exaction (avania?)² was made from Meeya Kurreem Bhaee Ibrahimjee by two Turks, namely Juneen Agha and Mohomed Bilmas and their Vakil, Syeed Mohomed Bar. The demand for refund had been made but it was yet to be paid.³ Again there is reported exaction of 3000 Rials from merchants of Mokha by the Turks. This is contained in the translation of the accounts of events which took place at Mokha and other places. It is dated February 1833. In this Juneen Agha is reported to have been instigated by Syeed Mohomed Bar. Merchants were plundered and 2500 Rials were exacted from Meeya Kurreem

². Avanias and extortions from merchants by the Turkish marauders by no means were new during the 19th century. It was practiced even during the 18th century and merchants were made to pay the money. See Hamilton Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West.* Oxford, 1957, Vol. I, p.303
³. *Political Department,* Vol. 57/500 of 1831/32/33
Bhaee. However, on this occasion he was given a receipt with the seal of Agha Mahomed Bilmas affixed to it.\textsuperscript{1} Again there was extortion of 1500 Rials from the merchants by Mahomed Bilmas, on 22 February 1833. Much pressure was applied to collect extortion money. A merchant of Muscat, Khalaf Ilmas, was imprisoned on his refusal to pay the extortion money. One Syed Abdullah Akeel was sent to jail for the same reason. Pressure continued to be applied on these persons even after ten-day imprisonment. Even then they refused compliance.

Consequently one eye of each was taken out. This harassment ultimately led Syed Abdullah to pay 500 Rials but had nothing to meet the demand. Finally, he was ordered to be killed, other merchants took pity on his condition, collected from among themselves 1000 Rials and gave them to Bilmas and got the victim released. The Turkish marauders, being independent terrorised the inhabitants in many ways.\textsuperscript{2} Ibrahimjee, the native agent at Mokha further says that Bilmas took 2500 Rials from Skaikh Tayab Ibrahimjee by floating a false report that he was going to Jedda and Mecca. He promised repayments of all extortions, present and future, to all the

\textsuperscript{1} Political Department, vol . 57/500 of 1831/32/33.
\textsuperscript{2} Political Department, Vol 57/500 of 1831/32/33

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merchants. Syeed Mahomed Bar stood surity for the payment on behalf of Bilmas who had extorted Shaikh Tyeb Ibrahimjee. But the marauders constantly posed a threat to the merchants and refused to pay back the amount of 2500 Rials that they had exacted from Shaikh Tyeb Ibrahimjee. Syeed Mahomed, however, stuck to his promise of paying the Surat merchants the exacted amount at the opening of the season (April). The native agent deplored the great oppression and dreadful harassment carried on at Mokha. The Turkish marauders acted treacherously on the directions by Mahomed Bilmas. The native agent at Mokha informs the Persian Secretary dated 1 April (received June 1833) of the plight of the merchants at Mokha. The letter was tabled for discussion on which the minute was drawn by the President in council at Bombay dated 9 July 1832. It contains the decision that before the opening of the fair season (i.e. trading season at Mokha) the state of insecurity of that part of Arabia (i.e. Mokha and the adjacent ports) should be known to the traders at Bombay and Surat.

1. *Political Department*, vol 57/500 of 1831/32/33
2. Ibid.
Situated at the confluence of the twin rivers of Tigris and Euphrates on the Shatt-al-Arab and an outlet for Iraq, Basra is a principal port of the Persian Gulf. In 1786 Basra was protected with 11 Turkish ships of war and two small ones.¹

The dispatch of a pinnace to Basra in 1635 marked the first contacts of the East India Company (hereafter EIC) to Turkish Arabia. In anticipation of its regular trade with Turkish Arabia/Turkish Iraq EIC first sent experimental cargo to Basra in 1640, then the principal port of the Persian Gulf region. The EIC then opened its factory at Basra in 1643 and with the outbreak of hostilities between the Dutch and the Persians in 1645 the Company removed its property at Bandar Abbas to Basra. For some reason the Company withdrew its Basra factory in 1657 and a permanent factory, subordinate to Bandar Abbas, was opened only in or about 1723-4. The Company’s Gulf trade during all this period seems to have been carried on from Bandar Abbas and Surat.²

1. Abdul Qadir, Waqa-i Manazil-i Rum, (ed.) Mohibbul Hasan, Calcutta, 1968, p. 53. The Bank from Basra to Lebanon in the east known as Shatt-al-Arab, grew finest dates in the world. The plantations stretched some 50 kms. in length upon both sides of the old bed of the Euphrates above and below Hillah.

In two different Capitulations between the British Ambassador and the Turkish Sultan in 1661 and 1675 the British were assured commercial rights and trade concessions in Turkish dominions besides concessions in customs duty and right to "consulage" over which difference arose from time to time between the Resident and the customs authorities at Basra. The "consulage", however, was apportioned out between the Company’s servants at Basra and the government of Bombay. Of this "consulage" called customs, 50% had to be credited directly to the Company from 1784. The 1730s and 1740s was difficult time for EIC’s servants at Basra as Nadir Shah took them to task for their assistance in the city’s defence during the conflicts between the Turks and the Persians. Similarly in 1743 their neutrality led to the factors’ imprisonment by the Turks. Relations of the Residency’s servants with the Mutasallim of Basra were sometimes cordial and sometimes cool and it was this discord that ultimately led to the Basra episode of 1820.

The East India Company’s Records of the Persian Gulf speak of cordial relations between the Residency and the tribes of the Persian Gulf. Mail services for the Company was maintained by some of these tribes to Bombay and Aleppo on behalf of EIC. Under the circumstances if any trouble arose, joint Anglo-Turkish campaigns were undertaken to put down
the recalcitrant tribes. Such measures against them were taken between 1762 and 1768. Occasional differences between the Pasha and the Residency posed problems for the latter and to defuse such problems the Resident had to go to Baghdad in order to meet the Pasha. In 1758 Khojah Raphel, an Armenian merchant represented the Resident. From 1781 Khojah Marcar represented the Company's interest at Baghdad and his appointment was recognized by the Court of Directors and he was granted a salary. In 1798 he was succeeded by another Armenian named Khojah Petrus. In 1798 a political residency was established at Baghdad.¹

The East India Company lost its Basra trade during 1773-9 on account of an outbreak of plague and the occupation of the town by the Persians. In 1793 under Samuel Manesty the Residency was moved to Kuwait. The Company's position of the Persian Gulf trade thus has been described by Al-Qasimi as under:

"On the whole, the trade in the Arabian Gulf during the last quarter of the eighteenth century was shared by the East India Company, with its establishments

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¹ It is interesting to note that the Agency during the 18th century enjoyed privilege over the Residency but the reversal of the posts from commercial to political enhanced the Residency's prestige over the Agency. Factory Records: Persia and Persian Gulf, G29, Op.cit.
of Basra and Bushire Residencies, and the Agency at Muscat, and Persian, Armenian, but mostly Arab and Indian, merchants and shipowners. Merchandise was carried between India and the Gulf by very few vessels belonging to the East India Company, and by more vessels belonging to the Arabs. However, the increasing share of the East India Company was at the expense of both the Indians and the Arabs”

Following the suspension of Manesty and Harford Johnes, the joint factor, Nathaniel Crow, a new Resident to Basra, was sent with the joint deliberation and consent of the Government of Bombay and the Governor General of India, but in the meantime the Pasha agreed to Manesty’s terms for the return of the Residency to Basra which was accordingly done in 1795.

During the sojourn of the celebrated Indian traveller Abu Taleb “Londoni” in 1803 at Basra, the Mutasallim of Basra was Abdullah Agha and the British consulate functioned for the purposes of EIC and to protect merchants who sent their cargo under the Company’s protection. With the exception of some differences the relations of Samuel Manesty, the Resident at

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Makul, were cordial with the *Pasha* of Baghdad and the *Mutasallim* of Basra.¹

Changes in the political situation of the Arab provinces of Turkish Arabia seem to have taken an abrupt turn with Muhammad Ali’s coming to power in Egypt in 1805. The penetration of Capitalism into the non-capitalist market with the supply of manufactured goods to Asian markets changed the entire outlook of the Middle Eastern markets. The concept of free trade, purely a western idea to the traditional world of Asia, was alien to the Asian rulers and the middle class. But the Ottoman Sultan had to agree to all the demands of the English that they made in the Treaty of Dardanelles, concluded on 5 January 1809 (the treaty contains in all 76 clauses). The above treaty marked the conclusion of peace between the English and the Porte on one side and the Porte and Russia on the other.² The Treaty of Dardanelles allowed the English to establish consulates in the ports of Aleppo, Alexandria, Tripoli,

¹. Abu Talib Khan, *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan*, (tr.) Charles Stewart, Delhi, 1972, p. 319. Makul, where the EIC had a small factory, was a little distant from Basra. Manesty, above all his official position and sensitive disposition, had very close acquaintance with Aga Mohammed Abdal Nubby, the leading merchant of Basra, *Ibid.*, pp. 317-18.
Mohammad Ali like the Turkish monarch also had to agree to various terms of a treaty which he signed with the East India Company in 1810.²

There was no love lost between the British and Abdullah Pasha at Baghdad till the year 1810. But the Company’s trade since the end of the 18th century seems to have been at a low ebb partly because of the internal troubles in Persia and the Turkish Arabia and partly owing to decline of profit as a result of competition between the costly English woolen and the cheaper French goods. French ambitions in the Middle East and the Company’s continued interest in the Persian Gulf took new political turn. But the 1810 witnessed the final cessation of the French threat in the Middle East. Upon Manesty’s dismissal as Resident at Baghdad both the Residencies of Basra and Baghdad were brought under Claudius James Rich, the Baghdad Resident. The new Resident’s relations with Abdullah Pasha between 1810 and 1813 were quite cordial. As a gesture of friendship the Pasha in 1812 (May or June) issued decrees

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¹. Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 372 of the year 1811, Maharashtra Archive, Bombay.
². Ibid.
ordering the Mutasallim of Basra to surrender the British renegades and to desist from enslavement of British Indian subjects. With the takeover of the Pashaliq of Baghdad by Daud Pasha (1813?) the relationship between James Rich and the new Pasha remained cordial for sometime. Exchange of new complimentary letters between Daud Pasha and Evan Napear, the Governor of Bombay, took place through the Resident. Rich worked as Resident at Baghdad whereas his assistant remained at Basra when in 1812 the designation of the Residency was changed to “Political Agency in Turkish Arabia”, empowering the Resident to stay at his leisure either at Baghdad or at Basra with a European Assistant to act on his behalf during his absence at either place.¹

By the middle of 1819 the relations between Daud and Rich seem to have changed. In an attack on a mounted messenger of the Political Agency the culprits were suspected to be Pasha’s men. But this apart, Captain Taylor, the Political Assistant, had strict order from the Government of Bombay to observe neutrality in the conflict between the Turks and the Najdi Arabs at Basra, except to afford help to British Indian

subjects. Orders were also given to Captain Taylor to shift the Political Agency from Basra to Bushihr or to the island of Qishm in case of danger.¹ As 1820 drew near allegations of Pasha’s show of near disregard for European treaty rights and his violation of various terms of trade were made by the political Agent. In 1820 the Resident at Baghdad directed his assistant at Basra, to strike the factory flag in view of the seizure of goods of the Company’s merchant Svoboda at the Basra Customs House. Svoboda, according to Lorimer, was a European merchant who since long had traded at Baghdad.² But EIC’s other documents carefully corroborated show that the person under consideration is ‘Anton Savoboda’ and was in the employment of the Company.³ The quarrel arose between Savoboda and the Pasha of Baghdad over the payment of double duty on his goods—once in Aleppo and on arrival at Baghdad. He further alleged in his statement to the Political Agent dated 6 December 1821 that the Pasha had asked him to leave the country under threats and ultimately he was constrained to bind himself by promising the latter to pay the duty at Baghdad and not at Aleppo⁴.

2. Ibid., p. 1325.
3. Political Department 871 of 1822, p. 50. Ibid., pp. 73-75.
4. Ibid., pp. 50, 73-75.
In continuation, as Lorimer says, Captain Taylor had further instruction from Rich in November 1820 to suspend all communication with the Basra Government and to prohibit commercial and other intercourse between vessels under British colours and the natives of the country. Following seizure of goods of Savoboda, Captain Taylor responded by withdrawing his staff from Basra to Muhammareh. The differences between Rich and the Pasha at Baghdad further intensified and Rich withdrew in 1821.

The main sufferers from the quarrel between the Political Agent, Claudius Rich, and the Governor, Daud Pasha were the Indian shippers at Basra. It is by and large evident from the two documents submitted as petition to Mount Stuart Elphinstone, Governor in Council at Bombay, by two prominent merchants of Bombay, Nurseydass Purshotamdass on 19 May 1821 and Shaikh Aboo Bucker 30 May 1821. Both these merchants were shipowners and had lucrative trade with Basra and other ports of the Persian Gulf. The nature of both the documents relating to the Basra incidents pertain to the effects of the gunboat policy of EIC in the Gulf.

Nurseydass Purshotamdas in his petition to the Governor in Council at Bombay declares himself as the owner of the vessel *Elizabeth*. The cargo consisted articles to the value of more than Rs. 34,000. These articles according to the general manifest were as under:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Packages</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2616</td>
<td>Bags</td>
<td>rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>509</td>
<td>bars</td>
<td>iron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>325</td>
<td>tubs</td>
<td>sugar candy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>chests</td>
<td>cassia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>bundles</td>
<td>piece goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>bundle</td>
<td>broad cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>chest</td>
<td>sugarwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>boxes</td>
<td>steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>tubs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ship sailed from Bombay for Basra on 9 July 1820 and arrived there on 7 November 1820, presumably after visiting other ports of the Arabian Gulf as well. The captain of the ship was an Englishman, Joseph Keys. Having arrived at Basra he made arrangements to purchase dates for the return cargo to the values of 2000 German Crowns which he converted into *aine Piastres*, the currency current at Basra. For that purpose he threw away the Ship's ballast and prepared to take on board about 80 Curras of dates. Before any of the return cargo was shipped, EIC's official at Basra (name not

1. *Political Department of 1820-21*. Vol. 28/33, p. 86.
mentioned) put an embargo on the Indian shippers. There were to be no trade relations with any subjects of Turkey and the ship had to leave the Basra Port with immediate effect on a short notice. Complaint of the loss thereby incurred was made by Joseph Keys to the Resident of Basra, Captain Taylor. Joseph Keys’ request to allow him to purchase the dates at Basra was turned down by the Assistant Political Agent. Instead, he was asked to take on ballast from a distant place, which the ship’s crew had to do with much difficulty. The captain of Elizabeth, however, failed to get permission to unload the goods on board the ship, which were destined for Basra. The captain then applied to sail for Bushire but was refused permission. He was informed through the commander of EIC’s Cruiser Aurora that he would not be allowed to quit the anchorage. On this order Captain Joseph Keys sought permission to purchase dates at Basra in exchange, the payment to be made in Piastres. The permission was granted after much difficulty.

1. It is quite evident that EIC discouraged Indian merchants from trading at Basra but the possibility as well cannot be ruled out that the motive of EIC was to have exclusive monopoly of the trade of Arabia, particularly in the situation when the competition had begun intensifying.
The petitioner, Nurseydass Purshotamdass, presented claims of compensation for loss involved in the absence of return cargo and non-sale of the petitioner's goods, he sustained a loss, he claimed, of upward of Rs. 6,000. The petitioner appealed to the Governor in council at Bombay for indemnification for the loss sustained in consequence of the orders of the Resident or office of the Company at Basra.

Details of Elizabeth's cargo that remained unsold:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Packages</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>bundle boxes</td>
<td>3 pieces broad cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>small bundle</td>
<td>China soft sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>silk piece goods containing 20 pieces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other petition submitted to the Governor in Council at Bombay was that of Shaikh Aboo Bucker Abdullah, merchant and a Mohammedan inhabitant of Bombay and dates to 30 May 1820. He was the owner of the ship Fazel Karim. The ship left Bombay for Basra on 22 November 1820. The cargo consisted of several articles and freight goods and carried the property of the petitioner worth Rs. 2,000. The vessel, on account of prolonged detention by EIC's men at Basra, could not deliver

1. Political Department of 1820-21. vol. 28/33, p. 83.
2. Ibid., p. 84.
3. Ibid.
the cargo, owing to which the owner incurred heavy expenses and demurrage and lost profit on return cargo.¹

Aboo Bucker in his petition asserts that he expected the return of Fazel Karim at the scheduled time so that he could transport and load the dates the ship was to bring from Basra on another ship Futta Alvadowd and make her departure for Siam in time. The delay caused to Fazel Karim and Futta Alvadowd there was a loss of Rs. 7,625. The petitioner, therefore, was constrained to purchase dates at the enhanced rate of Rs. 27 a Candy while the dates Fazel Karim brought from Basra after a considerable delay could only be sold at the rate of Rs. 13 a Candy in the Bombay market. By this difference in price the petitioner lost a sum of Rs. 5670 and as a consequence of detention of the Fazel Karim another sum of Rs. 22,655.

Aboo Bucker, therefore, prays in the petition submitted on 30 May 1821 for compensation against the losses that he had suffered wholly in consequence of the detention of his cargo ships by the Company’s servants at Basra.² The petitioner in addition furnishes other information to support his claim of

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¹. Political Department of 1820-21, vol. 28/33, op. cit. p. 11.
². Political Department of 1820-21, pp. 118-19
losses. He supplies the letter of Daniel Kitchner, the captain of the ship addressed to R. Taylor, the assistant Political Agent at Basra. The letter was written aboard the ship Fazel Karim dated 19 January 1821, off the Haffer Creek. He informs the assistant political agent of the detention and manifest of cargo aboard the ship. He further alleged on behalf of the ship’s owner that no official intimation of embargo was given at the Port of Basra prior to the departure of the ship from Bushire, and in consequence of the detention the expenses incurred on the ship amounted to Rs.130 a day (a dirm?). Daniel Kitchner further stated that his main interest was to deliver the freight on board his ship for which bills of lading had been signed for consignment to Basra. On 29 January 1820, after a delay of 9 days, he received a letter from Captain Macllard, the Commander of EIC’s Cruizer Aurora, prohibiting Fazel Karim from proceeding further. Macllard in his letter reminded Kitchner of the latter’s silence over his verbal communication to him.

Many more facts can be culled from the contents of the declaration of protest that Daniel Kitchner made in accordance

with the public instrument of Protest on 22 May 1821 by personally appearing before Frederick Ayrton, a Notary Public, at Bombay. Kitchner declares himself as master of the ship *Fazel Karim*, burthen between 348 tons or 300, anchored in the Bombay harbour and belonging to the port of Bombay. The ship had set sail on 22 November 1820 from the Bombay port on a voyage to Basra in the Persian Gulf and arrived off Mohammareh on the River Euphrates on 19 January 1821. As the ship was proceeding up the Euphrates it was detained by John Macllard and brought to anchor. This was done under the proclamation of the British Resident. The appearant (Daniel Kitchner) further declared that he was informed by John Macllard that embargo had been laid on all vessels sailing under British flag to the port of Basra.

The crew of *Fazel Karim* were further directed not to have any communication with the natives of Basra or places to the northward of the anchorage of the vessel. However, Daniel Kitchner, insisted on transmitting on 21 January 1821 a letter to R. Taylor, the Company’s assistant political agent at Basra protesting against the detention. With indignation Kitchner says that the behaviour of Macllard and his men aboard the
Company’s *Cruizer Aurora* was irresponsible and they acted at the instigation of the assistant Political Agent at Basra and brought so much loss to the ship’s owner.

It is quite evident from the examination of the two documents noted above that coercive measures were used by the Company’s men unmindful of the interests of Indian shipping. This could be compared with the reaction of Claudius Rich, the Political Agent at Baghdad, when the Company’s European inmate Savoboda (Suabada) was asked to make declaration to pay customs at Baghdad and not at Aleppo.\(^1\) Compared to the severity of restrictions imposed on the Indian shipping, Savoboda’s highly magnified grievance had hardly any basis.

One cannot avoid inferring that the Company’s officials were not happy with the Indian ships’ share of the trade between Turkish Arabia and India. Indian ships made modest profits by tapping into this prosperous commerce; but even this did not receive protection or consideration from the British authorities. The Indian merchants who suffered losses at Basra by the Company officials’ embargo were just left to fend for themselves.

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Mohammed Ali is justly regarded as one of the first Asian modernisers, remarkable for his vision and organizing abilities. There is however one chapter of his career and work which has been neglected, but on which the Maharashtra Archives at Bombay have much information, namely, his policy towards commerce between Egypt and India. This had interesting potential for the expansion of Indo-Arab trade; but the later construction of the power of Mohammed Ali made it into a mere episode.

As an introductory to this study, we might begin by noting that Mohammed Ali’s interest in commerce was not only as a ruler but also as a participant. It is little known that he himself had ships plying over the Arabian Sea, and that he invested considerable sums in this commerce. Facts on this come again principally from the Maharashtra Archives.

Before coming to power as the ruler of Egypt in 1805 Mohammad Ali Pasha had already engaged in commerce. His ships plied in the Mediterranean and traded with Malta.
1810 Mohammed Ali, with conclusion of a provisional treaty with the East India Company, received for his household use Indian goods worth Rs. 10,00,000 through the Company's agents. Until this time he seems to have established no direct link with Indian ports.¹ Mohammed Ali's contact as a trading magnate with Indian ports is said to have begun in 1816 and in the first round his ship brought from Bombay "A richly comparisoned" elephant which he gave as a present to the Sultan of Turkey. Burkhardt (1814-16) is of the view that the Egyptian ruler was "disposed to speculate on his own account"².

In 1818 Mohammed Ali is said to have sent a fleet of seven vessels to Bombay which carried a million dollars, half of which amount was entrusted to the care of W. Martinice and the other half to a Greek agent. The remittance of such a big amount was described as a preliminary of such a big amount was described as a preliminary trial for future investment at Bombay.³

1. *Secret and Political Department Diary No. 366 of 1810*, pp. 766-67
3. *Secret and Political Department Diary No. 307 of 1818*, pp. 734-35. The document also mentions the Pasha's two vessels being taken by the Wahabis. Henry Salt, the author of the letter, says the Pasha felt it absolutely necessary to use force against the Wahabis for having created trouble in the Red Sea. Mohammed Ali's ships also frequented Bushire where they were made to pay annually the "Light House" charges and pilotage fees of Rs. 40. (Bombay Superintendent Office, 27 July 1826, *Political Department, Vol. 238 of 1826*, pp. 124-25).
Transactions through agents were the main features of the Pasha's business with Indian ports. In 1818 the Pasha's main agent at Bombay was Martruce who also served as general agent for English Firms like Messrs Brigg, Schatz & Welona, both having their business houses at Cairo and also for Messrs Briggs Lee and Co. of Alexandria, who operated between Egypt and India in conjunction with Messrs Forbes & Co. of Bombay.\(^1\) Martruce had originally travelled to India on Mohammed Ali's behalf for commercial transaction. Mohammed Ali had another agent who looked after his business and lived at Sanaa.\(^2\) His elder agent at Jedda on the Red Sea was Hassan Agha and the "Vakeel" who replaced him was Mohammed Zurgham.\(^3\)

As Mohammed Ali became a shipowner in the Indian Ocean, his ships plied between Bombay and the Red Sea carrying cargo to various ports of the Arabian Sea and vice-versa. We have list of his ships and their tonnage. A list dated 1 July 1818 gives dates of ships' arrivals and departures from the port of Bombay to the Red Sea and vice-versa. The ships on their voyage between Bombay and Jedda also called at other ports of the Red Sea.\(^4\)

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1. Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 307 of 1818, pp. 734-35  
2. Ibid. p. 735  
3. Political Department, Vol.238 of 1826, p.132; also Political Department, 57 500 of 1831:32/33, p. 74.  
4. Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 307 of 1818, Customs Master to Warden
One of Mohammed Ali’s ships was ‘Suakin’ whose captains were Hussain and W.O. Martruce. It was a cargo ship of 200 tons. The information in the East India Company’s record reveals that the ship under the Turkish flag sailed from Suez, calling at Jedda and Mokha, and arrived at Bombay in September 1816. It then sailed in convoy with a “Brig” named Ibucle (“J. buck” = James buck?) of 150 tons whose captain was Hamid. This ship too made voyages under Turkish colours. These ships sailed from Bombay in February 1817 for Surat where they loaded their cargo and finally left on their return voyage for the port of Suez.  

Another of his ships was “Alest Raymov” of 500 tons, whose earlier name was “Bay of Bombay”. The captain of the ship was Hussein and it was purchased in December 1816 by Mohammed Ali from Mrs. J.M. Taskeehy Hussein Aga for Rs. 1,30,000. The ship too carried the Turkish flag. It was cleared from Bombay for Suez in April 1817. It was freighted principally by Premjee Purshootum, “a respectable native firm” of Bombay. The ship sailed again from Bombay in January 1818 for Surat. After having completed her cargo it cleared out for Suez.

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1. H. Shank, the Customs Master to Warden, 25 June 1818, Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 307 of the year 1818. It appears the chief commander of both the ships was W.O. Martruce.
2. Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 307 of the year 1818
Yet another cargo ship "Carbrant" of 300 tons under the command of one Cassim arrived at Bombay under Turkish colours in September 1817. The ship along with other European ships, cleared from Bombay for Suez in October 1817. It was freighted by "Mahomed Alee Caiva", a respectable "Mogul merchant" of Bombay. The "brig", "Futtee Eslan", of 133 tons, under Turkish colours, with Captain Abdul, arrived at Bombay in September 1817 directly from Suez. It cleared from Surat for Suez in October 1817.

Mohammed Ali’s personal interest in Indo-Red Sea commerce was probably an important factor behind his attempt to control areas across the Red Sea. He vigorously extended his authority over the Western portions of the Arabian peninsula. The Turkish marauders’ efforts to frustrate the administration of Mohammed Ali was brought to an end by his complete rout of them by the third decade of the century.

It may be recalled that by the beginning of the 19th century the Wahabis had become so powerful that they got exempted from payment of customs at Jedda. After a pitched battle with the Egyptian army, their power came to an end.

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1 Secret and Political Diary, No 307 of 1818, pp 714-15 The second decade of the 19th century is marked by construction of a large number of ocean-going and coasting ships by Red Sea merchants at Bombay which may be taken as index of the volume of trade between India and the Red Sea
2 Political Department, 57 500 of 1831 32/33
3 See Burkhardt, op cit
4 Political and Secret Department Diary, No 473 of 1819, p 5676
During 1804-05 there was considerable flow of treasure from Mokha and Jedda. The Wahabis depredation during this period had become unmanageable and therefore the Indian merchants sent their liquid assets to Bombay. Campaign against the Joasemese was also launched by Pasha's son Ibrahim Pasha in collaboration with the British military and naval power.

In December 1820 the Pasha seems to have taken control of the province of Hejaz. This act of his must have further extended his power in the Red Sea. Mohammed Ali further deployed an army under the command of his son Ibrahim Pasha to establish full control over the coast of Red Sea as far as Aden and Mokha.

Keeping in view the enterprising ventures and the benefit that Egypt could derive from the presence of the British, Mohammed Ali allowed them rights of free entry into his ports. However, in view of the political situation prevailing in Europe he also maintained neutrality. This factor again prevented any friction from British, though this phase was very short-lived. Initially it was owing to his plan to construct the

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1. Report on External Commerce of Bombay for the year 1804/5
2. Arabia and Mocha Diary, No. 323 of 1819-1821, folio 1-1A & 2
3. Political Department, No. 14 of 1820-21, p. 174
4. Ibid. No. 98 of 1823
5. Secret and Political Department, No. 103 of 1800, p. 7691
6. Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 366 of 1810, p. 6786
Suez with his own investment, that he opposed the idea of its construction by other powers.

His prohibition of import of the West Indies coffee in Egypt implied that the ruler wished to encourage Yemeni coffee. Thus his openness to British trade was not unqualified. This view is reinforced by some other measures taken by Mohammed Ali.

In 1831 Mohammed Ali thought of a plain to transfer the customs of Jedda to Suez and thereby control direct trade relations between India and Egypt. The other reason for the transfer was thought of to put a check of the flow of large amount of treasure which was sent to Jedda for purchase of Indian commodities by Cairo merchants.¹

The Pasha discouraged import of such goods as were or could be produced locally. Wellsted noted in 1833 that Mohammed Ali prohibited importation of essential commodities from India to Yembo and made the people of Yembo purchase them from Egypt, at price fixed by Mohammed Ali himself.² Severe penalties were pronounced if any one imported essential commodities to Yembo.³ The rigour of such a strict regulation

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2. Ibid, p. 216.
3. Ibid.
is borne out by the fact that the cloth that did not bear the Pasha’s stamp, if used in Yembo, was liable to be seized. This may be taken as a token of protective measure of the Pasha to safeguard his own developing textile industry.

Measures were also taken to check smuggling. Officers were appointed to keep watch over the people carrying contraband.

Trade of the Red Sea with India seems to have accelerated between 1806 and 1816. The Customs Master of Bombay in correspondence of 25 June 1818 says that in this period the English and Arabs were the principal traders between the port of Bombay and Mokha and Jeddah.

At the turn of the 19th century India’s main ports of suppliers to the Red Sea were Calcutta, Surat and Bombay. Jeddah by and large was the chief port for Indian goods which were supplied onward to Egypt. Jeddah merchants purchased Indian goods in wholesale after the arrival of Indian fleet in the beginning of May. These merchants were advanced credit by Cairo merchants for their purchase.

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1. Wellsted, pp. 216-17
2. Ibid., pp. 215-16
Merchandise that was purchased at Jedda was finally shipped to Suez and sold at Cairo from where these were further supplied to the Mediterranean. The returns for these goods were made in dollars and sequins with which the Indian fleet returned to India. This caused an acute scarcity of silver in the Egyptian market.¹ According to the Customs Master’s report of 1814/15 there was unusual export of Mokha coffee to the value of upwards of Rs. 171,000 from the Red Sea to India destined for the United Kingdom which again caused scarcity of coffee in the Egyptian market.²

The first private English export to Suez from Bombay was made by Messrs Forbes and Company of Bombay in February 1815 on a ship “Danish Beggy”, whose owner was Mohammed Ali Cawa, a respectable native merchant, resident at Bombay. Mohammed Ali rendered cooperation with Messrs Brigs in 1818 in their plan to establish a commercial company with its base at Cairo. The aim of those interested in this venture was to supply the Mediterranean with Indian produce through Egypt.

There seems to have been considerable trade between Bombay Presidency and the Red Sea 1816-18 as shown by a statement from Bombay Custom’s House dated 25 June 1818.³

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¹ Burkhardt. Vol. I, p. 35
² Bombay, 25 June 1818, Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 307 of 1818, pp. 709-10
³ H. Shank. Customs Master to Warden, Bombay. Secret and Political Department Diary. No. 307 of 1818, p. 708
The volume of trade in 1815 at the port of Jedda alone was worth 4 million Dollars of which the major part should have comprised imports from India. There was a sharp upward movement in the volume of trade from 1815 till 1838, when we have another estimate. Jedda still enjoyed its position as the leading port, and the major trading activity in the Red Sea centred here. In 1833 Jedda had ten thousand tons of shipping beside large baglas which also carried the same amount of shipping.

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1 Wellsted, Vol II, p 297
Taking 1801 as the base year the English export from Bombay to Red Sea had by 1921 increased three times while imports to Bombay had just doubled.¹

Mohammed Ali's customs policy may now be considered. In 1798 the rate of customs at Mokha on import of goods of the East India Company and British merchants was 3% ad valorem. This rate was exactly in accordance with customs of 3% charged in 1730 if not earlier from the Europeans.² The valuation of goods for customs in all respects was made only in accordance with its market price. Surat piece-goods, imported by the East India Company or by British merchants, were charged 3%. But the customs in this instance was paid not by the importing agency but by the purchaser who was made to pay the customs.³ Customs on piece-goods from “mussalman natives” was exacted at 7.5% in Spanish Dollars or in German Crowns. The rate again coincides with the figure for 1730 when it varied from 5 to 7.5% and that too realized from the “Muslim and Hindu”.⁴ The Hindus (“Hindoo”), taken as distinct trading

². See statements relative to the duties to be imposed on articles at Mokha (1798), Secret and Political Department Diary. No. 366 of the year 1810, p. 6807. Also K.N. Chaudhuri, The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760, Cambridge, 1978, p. 370.
³. Secret and Political Department Diary. No. 366 of the year 1810, p. 6807
⁴. Ibid. also K.N. Chaudhuri. op. cit., p. 370
community at Mokha, were subjected to a duty of 8¾% in 1798.¹

The mode of customs at Jedda paid by merchants in the year 1798 again shows variations. They paid 16% advalorum or piece goods which is in sharp contrast to the rate charged at Mokha in the same period. Native merchants were charged at 11% advalorum. On other descriptions of goods like drugs, cotton, sugar candy and soft sugar including those articles which were calculated by weight. The East India Company and other European merchants paid 8% advalorum on all kinds of goods.²

A change was brought about by Mohammed Ali’s treaty with East India Company in 1810. Clause 14 of the commercial treaty stipulated that Indian raw materials and Indian manufactured goods imported into Egypt would pay a uniform duty of 3% advalorum either in “kind or coin” whichever was demanded by the customs. The duty was deemed payable only after the arrival of goods at Cairo.³

¹ Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 366 of the year 1810, p. 6807.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid, p.6762. Clause 8 of the treaty exempted English merchants from payment of duty on goods that only passed through Egypt from India to Europe and vice-versa (Ibid, p. 6807). But the customs-incharge was empowered to check goods unloaded from British ships belonging to British subjects. These ships as a rule had also to carry an exact note or invoice of goods. On the other hand, in case goods thus carried sustained any damage the Egyptian Government was liable of payment of compensation for the damage.
Clause 16 shows Mohammed Ali's desire for increasing trade with the British Empire. As token of encouragement he agreed to more customs concessions to the English subjects than the native merchants. As such the clause has a provision of 15% deduction in customs of goods of Yemeni or Abyssinian origins brought by the English subjects into Egyptian territory for sale.¹ The rate of customs on British subjects continued to be 3% as in the past. But the demand for a further cut in the rate by the English persisted. Clause 17 of the treaty set a reciprocal rate of 3% on goods of Egypt exported to Indian ports.² The provision further stipulates, that all articles coming from Europe or other parts of Turkey, Syria which have paid import duty shall not pay any customs on their being re-exported from Suez and Cossair. Clause 18 relates to exports of goods by British merchants from India, Abyssinia or the states of Yemen to Europe or Turkey via Alexandria or Domeitta. On such goods as were exported from these countries, customs could be exacted only at the time of export. But the customs thus charged were to carry a "Terchit receipt" (clearance receipt?) to avoid further levies particularly on goods exported to Turkey.³

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¹ Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 366 of the year 1810, p. 6762.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p. 6765.
Clause 19 for all practical purposes specifies a customs of 3% ad valorem on export goods for consumption in Egypt or for re-exportation of items like vine and American tobacco coming from Malta. The same rate of 3% was fixed for “the wine of Indies” as well.¹

Clause 20 of the treaty of 1810 stipulates that those of the subjects of the Sublime Porte and those natives of Egypt could only trade with India in British ships if they agreed to abide by the laws of the East India Company. But ships under Turkish colours and with a Turkish crew were deemed at liberty to traffic with the subjects of the Indies in every respect at the rates allowed to the Company.

If the Indian goods arrived at Mokha after March 25 (after 20th of Nauroz) customs on those goods increased by 50% (i.e. 50% of the usual duty). The Customs Master of Surat thought the customs charged at the rate of 2½% from Europeans and 7½% from Mohammadan subjects to be quite reasonable.²

1. Foul dealing by customs authorities of the Red Sea ports, however, cannot be ruled out. Besides other anomalies, the customs officers for their personal gain brought down the cost of goods by 15 or 20%, Secret and Political Department Diary. No. 372 of the year 1811, op. cit., p. 1606.
2. Surat January 10, 1811, Secret and Political Department Diary. of 1811 No. 372.
The rate of customs of the year 1811 seems fairly high on piece-goods at Jeddah. Indian, Arabian and Muslim merchants paid 15% on piece-goods. Large bales of Surat, Cambay and Patan paid a specified fee of four, six and eight dollars at Jeddah, Mokha and Basra respectively. Customs on Indian spices like pepper, ginger and cinnamons was charged 10% with an additional fee of 2½%. As against the high rate of customs on Indian piece-goods the English goods were charged 8% ad valorem.¹ Small bales of Surat, Cambay and Patan were charged at 1.25(S.P. $ 1.25?) each at Jeddah, Mokha and Basra. Bengal rice paid 10%. The rate had just doubled in 1811 as against 1773 when the import duty on Bengal goods of all descriptions was 5% in Egypt.²

The aggregate collection of Jeddah port customs in 1814, even after much diminution owing to duty-free passing of goods, has been estimated at 4,00,000 annually which according to Burkhardt would put an annual import of

1. Customs Master at Surat to Deputy Secretary to Government, Surat 10 January, 1811, Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 372 of the year 1811, p. 1606.
2. Imperial Record Department, Calcutta, Persian Correspondence (being letters which passed between some of the Company's servants and Indian rulers and notables, preserved at the National Archives, New Delhi), p. 121. Also Secret and Political Department Diary, No. 372 of the year 1811, p. 1601.
approximately 4 million dollars, "a sum certainly below rather than above the truth". Burkhardt says that the customs rate was uniform at all ports under the jurisdiction of the Pasha of Egypt during his visits.

In a second treaty formally ratified, with the merchants of Jeddah, a demand for payment of joint-customs by ships, both of Suez and Jedda at the customs house of Suez was made by the Pasha of Egypt. The rate of customs was initially fixed at 12% but was reduced to 9% upon all imports into Suez from India which was 6% more that the usual customs charged on European goods at the ports of the Turkish Sultan. The arrangement was hopefully made to bring about an opening of brisk commerce with Egypt.

A treaty was signed between Captain Bruce with the Imam of Sanaa on 15 January 1821. The Imam agreed to a reduction of 2¼% against previous rate of 3% on all British

1. John Lewis Burkhardt, *Travels in Arabia* (2 Vols.), London, 1829, Vol. 1, p. 94. Out of the total collection of customs of Jedda 1/3 and subsequently ½ of it was shared by the Sherif of Mecca. The term for customs at Jedda was *ashour* and it was fixed at 10% but abuses sometimes led to over-rating and sometimes under-rating (*Ibid.*, pp. 88-89). Burckhardt is of the view that *Pasha* of Egypt took possession of all harbours and customs houses of Hejaz. He was under the impression that the *Pasha* was aiming to shift the customs of Jedda to Suez, a prelude to a plan to maintain direct link with India. But the Jeddah merchants would not let the scheme be given practical shape (*Ibid.*, p. 38)


exports and imports. Madodas Ransordas in his petition of 4 April 1821 to Charles Coville, acting Governor in Council, says that the *Imam* of Sanaa levied tax on pilgrims besides exactions on coffee. Thus the total income accruing from customs alone amounted to a sum of 12,000,00 (Rs.?).¹

However, the customs rates charged at Mokha and Jedda for some years following Burkhardt's visit to the Red Sea regions are not available. The subsequent information is related to the year 1822. In this year a commercial treaty signed between Hutchinson, the British Resident at Aden, and the Sultan of Aden (Lohaje) stipulates fixation of a uniform rate of customs of 2½% on all imports and exports by British subjects, Europeans or Indians.² British ships according to the treaty were exempted from payment of anchorage duty as well.

The British Resident at Mokha in his letter of 22 August 1824 addressed to the Chief Secretary to the Government at Bombay says the rate of customs charged by the *Imam* was 3% on all imports and exports above which a nominal amount of *batta* also was charged. This action of *Imam* in the opinion of the Resident was in violation of the provision of the treaty of 15 January 1821, which stipulated in its article 7 that “no more

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shall be levied than 2¼% upon Imports and Exports”.¹ However, before the reduction to 2¼%, the normal duty charged on British exports and imports at Mokha had been 3%.² The same rate of customs of 2¼% was also charged from French at Mokha.

The superintendent at Bombay writing to Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor in Council, dated Bombay, July 27, 1826, says that Mohammed Ali’s merchant ships that came from Jedda to Bombay harbour paid the customary “Light House dues” annually, and pilotage fee, forty rupees more than English merchants ships.³ Besides, as a token of reciprocal measure the East India Company levied the same rate of customs on Jeddan vessels at Bombay which the Company paid at the Jedda port.⁴ Evidence suggests that the rate of customs charged at the ports of Mohammed Ali and the Sherif of Mecca and that on Indian ports under the jurisdiction of the East India Company was reciprocal:

“Instances have occurred where the Shereef of Jedda has exacted heavy duties of the Company’s

¹. Political Department, Vol. 22/166 of 1824, pp. 398-99.
². Mokha Residency, 22 August 1824, Political Department, Vol. 22/166 of 1824, pp. 120-23
³. Political Department, Vol. 238 of 1826, pp. 124-25
⁴. Ibid., pp. 68-69
woolens and we have retaliated by directing the same duties to be levied on the Judda vessels trading at Bombay and Surat".\(^1\)

J.R. Wellsted (1831) informs us that the rate of customs of Jedda and Yembo (another port under the Pasha's jurisdiction) was 10\%. But goods imported into Yembo from Jedda under "Exemption Certificate" by the Customs master of Jedda was let in duty-free at Yembo.\(^2\) Commercially Aden had dwindled by the third decade of the 19\(^{th}\) century, only waiting to be declared as British protectorate in 1838. However, the customs duty there too was 2\(\frac{1}{2}\)% on all imports and exports besides normal harbour dues.\(^3\) Makalla, another Red Sea port under Mohammed Ali charged a uniform rate of 10\% in 1834. Ships called at Makalla to evade exorbitant rate of customs charged at other ports of the Red Sea.\(^4\) Owing to his policy of customs concessions Mohammed Ali is said to have lowered the rate of customs of Makalla from 10\% to 5\%.\(^5\)

From a treaty between the British and the Turkish Government in 1856 it appears that dual jurisdiction prevailed in the Red Sea, that is, of the Ottomans and that of the

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Egyptian ruler. The treaty deemed the British commerce in the Red Sea exempt from all charges except the regular customs duties.¹

It can be seen that Mohammed Ali's efforts were largely successful in establishing a fairly regular customs structure, with such exceptions as Yemen, where he did not exercise much control. This effort accorded with British commercial interests in the region, so that no conflict could arise. Egypt was still economically too weak commercially and industrially to benefit from such protective measures as Mohammed Ali undertook domestically. Perhaps, this was the reason why his customs measures do not particularly reflect a real policy of protection.

¹ Secretary to Government to the Acting Vice-Consul, Bombay Castle, April 1, 1856. Political Department. Vol. 34 of 1856-57. p. 79.
(B) Merchants In The Arabian Sea Trade, First Half, 19th Century

As we have seen India had considerable trade with the countries of the Middle East. The records of the East India Company give us detailed accounts of their shipping which also shed some light on indigenous shipping, magnitude of trade and nature and composition of commodities as well as commercial practices in Indian and overseas markets. Such information has, however, to be culled from documents relating to individual cases.

We may begin by considering the case of Madowdass Ransordass, a banya merchant and inhabitant of Bombay who carried on regular trade with the Red Sea, both with ports under the Imam of Yemen and other ports of the Red Sea, particularly Jedda. The correspondence of Madowdass with the official of the East India Company at different intervals of time, deals often with claims against the authorities of Yemen on account of losses sustained by him.¹

In a letter of 5 April 1820 referring to Madowdass Ransordass’s earlier petition, Francis Warden, Chief Secretary

¹ *Political Department, op. cit.*, Vol. 28/33 of 1820, p. 97
to the Bombay Government, speaks of having forwarded his petition to the officer in charge of the Residency at Mokha who was directed to make use of his good offices with the Imam of Sanaa for the recovery of his claims. Another petition concerns the plunder of cargo of his ghorab Bombay Merchant. It is addressed to Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay. Madowdass says that after having called at the ports of Mokha and Hodaida the vessel arrived at the port of Lohaja on 26 June 1820 where beduin Arabs attacked the vessel and plundered cargo belonging to him worth $15000. The goods of several other merchants as well were plundered. Madowdass requests the chief secretary to help him obtain compensation from the Imam of Sanaa. In another petition to Elphinstone 19 August 1820 he first refers to the Bombay Government’s blockade of the port of Mokha and other ports under the Imam of Sanaa. Long before the proclamation of the blockade Madowdass had dispatched to Mokha his cargo on the ghorab (brig), the Bombay Merchant, and merchandise worth Rs.130,000 on other vessels from Bombay and Calcutta. The goods were consigned to his agents Gangadass Munjee and Jairam Dayal who had left Bombay for Mokha and other places in the Red Sea in December 1819: they were to dispose off the

1. *Political Department, op. cit.*, 28/33 of 1820-21, p. 72
2. Ibid.
goods and send return cargo purchased from the proceeds of sale. He solicited the protection of his cargo and vessels by the officers in charge of the blockade since they formed property of a British subject. The commander of the squadron was thereupon asked to protect the vessels upon the application of the ships' captains and the agents of Madowdass Ransordass, provided they were within the limits of the area of blockade.¹

Madowdass again submitted a petition to Francis Warden, Chief Secretary of Bombay, dated Bombay, 21 March 1821. In the petition hope is expressed for speedy recovery of the amount of his claim provided his agent at Lohaja or Mokha could manage to get the claim admitted by the Imam.² If so Madowdass would accept it in instalments from the customs collected at Mokha.³

Madowdass Ransordass wrote to Charles Colville, the Acting Governor, on 29 March 1821. Here he identifies himself as a ‘Banya’, and informs the Governor of the departure of many vessels of the season, expected to sail to Mokha within 3 or 4 days. He asked for British Residents intercession at Mokha on his behalf.⁴ Colville received another petition from Madowdass Ransordass dated Bombay, 4 April 1821. This

1. Political Department, Vol. 28/33 of 1820, pp. 29-30
2. Bombay, 21 March 1821, Ibid., p. 68
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 66-69. The exact object, however, does not appear in the petition.

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thanks Government for help in recovering losses sustained at Lohaja. Madowdass further claims to have conducted trade for many years with the ports of the Red Sea. He has also knowledge of the financial resources of the Imam which he derives from customs: coffee duties and tax on pilgrims to Mecca. Thus the total income accruing from all the above sources amounted to $12,00,000. Finally the petitioner requests the acting Government to help him get indemnification for the loss that he has sustained. In the post script he also informs of the schedule of the sailing of a ship from Bombay to Mokha.¹

In another letter of 21 July 1820 to Francis Warden, Madowdass seeks his indulgence in the matter of his claims on the Government of Sanaa regarding his property plundered at Lohaja. The petitioner expressed strong hopes of some satisfactory arrangement through the British authorities for collection of his claims out of the customs of Mokha in instalments.²

Another petition was submitted to Elphinstone, on 27 September 1821. The petitioner (Madhowdass) says that in March 1820 he sent from the port of Bombay his ghorab,

1. Political Department, Vol. 28/33 of 1820-21, pp. 70-71
2. Ibid., p. 78. The petition of Madowdass Ransordass, however, was directed by the Governor in Council to be translated by the petitioner to the Resident at Mokha, Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to the Resident at Mokha. 20th November 1821. Political Department. Ibid., p. 91.
Bombay Merchant whose Captain was Henry William Hyland. The cargo consisted of goods bound for the ports of Mokha, Hodaida and Lohaja under the jurisdiction of the Imam of Sanaa. The Bombay Merchant having touched the ports of Mokha and Hodaida arrived at the port of Lohaja in June 1820 and landed her cargo there. The cargo consisted of sundry goods, pearls and dollars. The petitioner refers to having sent several ships prior to the Bombay merchant.

Soon after having landed from the Bombay Merchant the petitioner's super-cargo was made aware of the appearance of "wandering Arabs". Henry William Hyland requested the Daulah (port governor) to refund customs paid to enable him to reload the unloaded cargo, but the Daulah refused to grant permission, assuring the super-cargo of protection from any disturbance. But the Arabs made a surprise attack and plundered all the goods of petitioner which amounted to about $15,000 in value as well as dollars in coin together with goods of several other merchants which ran into lakhs. The plundered property amounted to 10 lakhs of dollars. This statement was supported by an affidavit from the master of the petitioner's Ghorab, W. John Lawrence Morley. Madowdass, a subject of the English holding a passport issued by the Company’s
authority, requested the Government to submit a claim on petitioner's behalf to the Imam of Sanaa.¹

The petition by Madowdass is referred to in the letter of Francis Warden, addressed to the Resident at Mokha dated 20 November 1821. Madowdass also submitted a copy of the petition on 12 November respecting his claims against the Imam of Sanaa.²

In another petition (12 November 1821) submitted to Francis Warden Madowdass thanks the chief secretary for his favourable response (July 1821) regarding his claim on the Imam of Sanaa for his property plunder of cargo at Lohaja.³ He also expresses hope of some arrangement by the British authorities at Mokha would pay him out of the customs of Mokha.⁴

After a period of six years Madowdass Ransordass was still in the hope of recovery of the claim of the losses. He was of the view that the Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone could

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¹ The petition of the claim submitted by Madowdass is further confirmed by the letter of Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to the Government, addressed to the Resident at Mokha. Madowdass seems to have submitted a copy of the petition on 12th of November representing his claims on the Imam of Sanaa. The letter was written on 20 November 1821. *Political Department, Vol. 28/33 of 1820-21, p. 81, 97-98*

² *Political Department, Vol. 28/33 of 1820-21, p. 81, 97-98.*

³ A correspondence of Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to the Government, dated 21 July 1821 is in response to the Secretary Henderson who is said to have made inquiry of Madowdass Ransordass. The reply is obviously not encouraging as far as recovery at Lohaja is concerned. *Political Department, vol. 28/33 of 1820-21, p. 76.*

have secured indemnification from the *Imam* of Sanaa. In a strongly worded statement he says that only through the board of the Governor was indemnification possible. If the Company's authority failed to effect recovery, "the English flag will be poor protection to commerce".¹ He proposes that the duty on goods he was sending to Mokha be freed of tax towards liquidation of his claim.²

Owing to the blockade of the ports of the *Imam* and embargo against vessels entering those ports, Indian merchants suffered considerable losses. The blockade of Sanaa by the squadron of the East India Company took place in April 1820. Its main purpose was to stop the flow of trade of all the ports of the *Imam* of Sanaa and inflict punishment on the offending *Daulah* of Mokha, indemnification of losses sustained by the Company and individuals and satisfaction for other offences and injuries.³

In a letter by the *Secret Department* of the Company to the Chief at Surat written from Bombay Castle, 18th July 1820, describes the plan of the blockade. The native merchants of

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¹ Political Department, Vol. 18/203 of 1825, p. 162
² Madowdass Ransordass (sig. in Gujarati), Bombay, 15 November 1825 to Mountstuart Elphinstone, President and Governor in Council, Political Department of 1825, pp 162-63
³ Ibid.
Surat were warned not to venture out to trade with the ports belonging to the Imam of Sanaa.¹

There is a petition by 24 merchants, resident at Surat, who were regular traders with the ports of the Red Sen. It is addressed to Mountstuart Elphinstone, August 1820. The names of some of these merchants are Abdullah Wakil, Mulla Ruknuddin Ali, Ibrahim bin Ahmad and Al-Sayyid Abdur Rahman. It recites that the Surat merchants were informed by the Chief of Surat that owing to war between the Company’s troops and the Hakim of Sanaa the traders had to keep themselves away from the ports of the Imam. The Representative’s report suggests that there had been very meagre demand for goods sent to Mokha and Hodaida the previous season. The agents also communicated that only 50% of goods could be sold by them and the other 50% had to be stored in the ware-houses of their agents. These agents included Abdul Karim, Virjee, Ranchorjee Chuttorbhoja, Girdher Bhanjee, Ukbhoy Vussonjee, Moolji Khodudof, Sewchund Chuttorbhiz, and Roopjee Freccomjee Velljee. The petitioners, being apprehensive of the plunder of their goods by

the Ruler of Sanaa, requested the President and Governor in Council to instruct the officers in charge of the blockade to ensure protection of their goods and ships together with the agents themselves.

The petitioners agreed that the remaining 50% of their goods could be stored at Mokha though much loss was caused to them on this account. Money too remained uncollected owing to which there would be adverse effect on their credit with the bankers. In response to this petition the Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government (18th August 1820), repeated a warning to guard against their embarking on trade with the ports belonging to the Imam of Sanaa at the opening of the season.

Prajee Guness, yet another petitioner, tells of having sent good and merchandise to the ports of the Imam of Sanaa from Mandvee and Mongrol worth approximately Rs. 60,000. The goods were consigned to the petitioner’s agents Herchand Moolchand and Primchand Iacckad and Kanjee Vatta in different vessels. Prajee Guness, apprehensive of serious

1. Political Department, Vol. 28/33 of 1820-21, p. 40. The petition was addressed to the Governor in Council by the merchants trading to the Red Sea. This was dated Surat 9 August 1820, Political Department, Vol. 28/33 of the year 1820-21, p. 41
2. Political Department, Vol. 14/34 of 1820/21, pp. 92-93.
consequences to his cargo and vessel, requested the Bombay
Government to communicate to officers in charge of blockade to
protect his goods as well as those of his agents which had been
landed there. The petitioner also requested permission to carry
on trade with such other ports not under blockade as the
officers of the squadron might deem expedient.¹

Motichand Ameechand writes to Francis Warden, Chief
Secretary to Government, Bombay, 20th August 1820, informing
him that he had shipped to Mokha and other ports under the
Imam of Sanaa considerable quantities of merchandize before
the declaration of the blockade. He too is apprehensive of
severe loss of cargo, and complained that the British authorities
should have permitted the vessels to clear out before the
declaration of the blockade. He expresses the hope that the
Government would communicate to the officers in charge of the
blockade to ensure safety of his vessels and goods and help
prevent confiscation of goods loaded in the Imam’s territories.
Subsequently, he requests the Secretary to allow him to trade
with such territories of Imam as were not under blockade.²

¹ Prajee Guness. Bombay 20 August, 1820, to Francis Warden, Chief
Secretary to Government, Political Department, Vol.28/33 of 1820-21,
p.27
² Political Department. Vol. 28/33 of 1820-21, pp. 31-32

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Dhrumsey Hemchand in his petition of 20 August 1820 addressed to Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to Government, seeks protection of his ships and its cargo worth Rs.65,000. Before the declaration of blockade the consigner had shipped his cargo to the ports of the Imam, comprising considerable quantities of merchandise from Bombay, Bengal and Porebander to the value of approximately Rs.65,000. These were consigned to the petitioner’s agents Guness, Mogchand and Moteechand Vuchraz and Dual Amerchand. The petitioner was apprehensive of most serious loss, since the “Dow Dhamee” and different other vessels are still in the Red Sea.  

Another petition to Francis Warden, is from Ameechand Kemjee written Bombay 22 August 1820. The petitioner refers to the late proclamation declaring Mokha and other ports belonging to the Imam of Sanaa under the state of blockade. He submits that before the proclamation the petitioner had shipped to the ports of the Imam considerable goods and merchandize from Porebander and Bombay worth nearly Rs.50,000, consigned to his agents Modowji Verji, Tayroz Damoder Iewa Lowjee and Damoder Anjee for the ‘Dinging (Dingy) Bombay named Gunesspura, belonging to the petitioner. It sailed to the

1. *Political Department.* vol. 28-33 of 1820-21, pp.33-34.
ports under the *Imam* of Sanaa together with other vessels. The petition too sought the Company’s help to prevent confiscation of the goods landed in the territories of the *Imam* and permission to trade in the areas the Company’s officers might deem expedient.¹

In a dispatch of 22nd August 1820, I. Henderson, Secretary to Government, wrote to Captain Bruce, perhaps Resident at Mokha, enclosing a copy of the letter from Ameechand Kemjee.² A petition Bombay 22nd August 1820 was submitted by Maow *Seaskaran* Heerjee, the East India Company’s broker at Mokha. He says in his petition that long before the proclamation of *Imam*’s ports being placed under a state of blockade, he had dispatched cargo on board the vessels sailing from Bombay, Porebandar, Mangalore and Kutch, for Mokha, Hodaida and other ports. These goods were to the value of some lakhs of rupees to be delivered to the petitioner’s own shop at Mokha but consigned to *Seaskaran* Heerjee, the Company’s broker at Mokha, for disposal at other places as well. The petitioner requests the president to order the officers

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². I. Henderson, Secretary to Government, 22 August 1820, ibid.
employed in the blockade to protect the vessels and goods and
property belonging to him as a British subject. But this could
only be done on the application of the commanders of the
petitioner’s vessels either on his behalf or on the behalf of his
agents, wherever they are within the limits of the
proclamation. The letter was forwarded by L. Henderson from
Bombay Castle on 22nd August 1820 asking the Mokha
Resident, Captain H. Bruce, to protect the property of the
petitioner.

In his petition of 23 August 1820 to Francis Warden,
Chief Secretary, Bombay, Heerji identifies himself as the
Company’s broker at Mokha. He explains that money had been
extorted from him by the Daulah of Mokha with a promise to
allow the petitioner a credit in the customs. Instead the Daulah
put a chain in his neck regardless of the consideration that he
was the Company’s broker. The Governor also fined the
petitioner’s men who were on their way to Mokha from India
on business. Seaskaran Heerjee further speaks of having
sent several vessels from Bombay, Cutch, Porebander, Veraval
and Mangalore for Mokha. In his petition he requests the Chief

1. Nanjee Seaskaran for Maow Seaskaran Heerjee at Mokha, the Company’s
broker, Bombay, 22 August 1820, to Mountstuart Elphinstone, Political
Department, Vol.28 33 of 1820-21, p. 22.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 36.
Secretary to Government to grant him a letter so as to enable him to send it to the officers in charge of the blockade seeking their assistance against any injury from the Arabs. He also requests the Secretary to the Government to instruct the English authorities at Mokha to obtain reimbursement of the money extorted from him by the Daulah and take measures against further molestation. In another letter to Francis Warden, Bombay 28 August 1820, Heerjee reports a famine in Yemen owing to which there was little sale of goods especially piece-goods that he had obtained from Surat. He further reports the dispatch of an army from Yemen and plunder of Lohaja for 15 days. Owing to the plunder merchants had fled to upper country and some to Kamran. The market at Jedda also was unfavourable for the sale of Bengal and Surat piece-goods. The coffee price had risen to 110-112 and 115 a bhar. He speaks of sending his dhow Salamat Ras. He informs the Chief Secretary for having sent one bag of coffee of 50lbs. and a jar of preserves on his ship and hoped the addressee would accept

1. Political Department, Vol. 28/33 of 1820-21, p. 36.
2. The incident finds mention in another letter of Seaskaran Heeji addressed to Mountstuart Elphinstone dated 6th Sharavumud 1876/29 August 1820. It mentions the plunder of Sohar by the Imam's army (27th June–10th July) and fleeing of the banya and Arab merchants to the island of Kamran and of the great losses sustained by them. Translation in Political and Secret Department, Vol. 36 2 of 1820-21, pp. 224-234.
it and favour him with a letter. Yet another letter of Seaskaran Heerjee addressed to the Governor Elphinstone is dated 5th of Mahasood/8 February 1821. In this letter he says the present times were unfavourable owing to a very low state of trade. The household expenses were very high.

Bheemjee Callianjee was the son of Seaskaran Heerjee. He commanded great respect among the Bombay merchants, and the East India Company owed a large sum of money to his firm. By the end of the 1820s the firm was already 150 years old. At Mokha particularly the firm had always supplied broker's services to the British Factory and Seaskaran Heerjee could with pride appeal to the Records of Government in proof of these services. Seaskaran was always loyal to the English East India Company, and transaction between the Imam and the Company were generally executed through him. He enjoyed protection of the Company as well. Seaskaran in 1817 also saved a European vessel and its valuable cargo from plunder. He complained of the conduct of the Daulah, on the basis of which the Daulah was dismissed and the property of the vessel restored to the English authorities.

1 Political and Secret Department (Turkish Arabia and Mokha), Vol. 36/2 of 1820-21, p 219
2 Ibid., p 38
3 Political Department, Vol 57/500 of 1831/32/33, p 19.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid
Bhimjee Callianjee in a letter to G.W. Anderson, Governor in Council (undated) reminds him that in 1824 the petitioner then resident at Mokha shipped on board the *Brig May Anne* under commander Lingard, a large quantity of coffee in 100 large bales and 25 small bales, to his agents at Bombay. While on her voyage the ship was seized by pirates of Barbara and plundered. Callianji says that he is aware of the fact that considerable sums of money had been recovered from time to time by the English Government from the "smattee" tribe of Barbara. He requests that a portion of the amount so recovered be paid to the petitioner. Captain Lingard himself came to Bombay in 1825 when the General Pay Master was directed to advance a sum of money for support under a promise of repayment after the recovery of the property or its value from the chiefs of Barbara. The first estimate of the total loss according to Captain Lingard submitted to the English Government was S.$37,833 (Spanish Dollars), subsequently various categories of losses such as profit, interest, etc. were added to the total and the amount of claim was enhanced to S. $72,732. But the petition for the enhanced amount was rejected by the Governor in Council. In any future settlement of Captain Lingard's claims the Government was to be guided only by the first statement of the loss.
On account of stern measures taken by the English, the Shaikhs of Barbara on 6 February 1827 entered into an agreement with Captain Brumer, the commander of H.M. Tomar and agreed to pay S. $15,000 (Rs.32,227.2.63) in full payment of all demands which were made upon them on account of the plunder of Mary Anne.

The total amount received by Captain Lingard towards his claim from 1st to last as compensation for his losses was S. $33,718.3.20 which was equivalent to Rs.14,91,000.0.57 which is said to be in excess of the amount recovered by the Government from the Shaikhs of Barbara.¹

In his notice of information to the Board Captain Lingard gives the following inventory of goods which was consigned to Bombay on board his Brig. Mary Anne: Bheemjee’s 100 large Muscati Bales of coffee, that of Residency Moonshi’s large English Bales of coffee and an Arab merchant’s 27 large Bales of Gum Arabic. All these goods were taken aboard at Mokha and consigned to Bombay. These were seized along with the property of Captain Lingard. In response the instruction was communicated to Captain Bremer on 20 December 1826 to proceed against the Shaikhs of Barbara. Captain Ligard thus

reposed his confidence and property under the protection of the British flag.

Captain Bremer in his report says that a compromise was arrived at with the Shaikhs for a sum of S. Rs.15,000 (Rs. 32,227.2.63) which was less than the moiety of the admitted claims submitted by Captain Lingard. A sum of Rs.1491.0.57 was actually paid to Captain Lingard by the Government so that the Government was a looser to the extent of the latter amount in addition to the expense of the measures adopted against the Shaikhs.¹

We have then a petition to George Arthur Bart, Government and Resident in Council, by Bheemji Callianjee (a Hindu merchant formerly of Mokha and now of Bombay) dated 10 October 1842. He acknowledges receipt of reply in response to his application from the Secretary Willoughby dated 18 June 1842 that the petitioner’s claim on account of the loss of his coffee by the plunder of the Brig Mary Anne in 1824 by the

¹. Political and Secret Department, Vol. 1260 of 1841 and 1842, p. 110. In the post script there is a reply to Bheemjee’s earlier petition by Secretary, Government of Bombay, 21 June 1842, in which he refuses to entertain his claim after such a considerable lapse of time. A forwarding letter by the solicitor of Bheemjee is also mentioned in the document. It is addressed to L.R. Reid, Secretary to Government. The solicitor refers to a petition of his client relative to return of cargo shipped by him at Mokha in 1824 (1825?). The cargo was shipped on board the Brig Anne and was plundered by pirates. Ibid., op.cit.
natives of Barbara could not be entertained owing to the delay in advancing his claims, a settlement of the claims of victims of the plunder of that ship having already been made. Bhimjee asserted that he had submitted his claim well in time but the procedure adopted by the Government for the recovery of the goods seized by the Barbara Arabs was made known to the petitioner by the Chief Secretary only after his return from Mokha to Bombay. Bheemji, however, says that he was as much a sufferer as Captain Lingard. But the latter was compensated to the amount of about Rs. 35,000 for his losses. He accuses British Government of acting with partiality in such cases as the one under consideration. He blames the Government for not making him aware of even the amount that the Government received from the Shaikhs of Barbara. Whatever amount had been received should have been divided among all the victims.

It appears that Company withdrew its favour from Bheemjee after he had left its service. In one of his petitions Bheemjee is seen complaining that his firm has suffered on account of the authorities at Mokha for having withheld

2. Ibid.
business from the House of Seskaran Heerjee whereas the fact was that the Company still owed a large sum of money to the firm. From the period the Company’s affairs were conducted by the House of Seaskarn Heerji, money was owed by persons in authority both at Mokha and other ports in the Red Sea.¹

Bheemji Callianji left Mokha in 1827 leaving the firm under the charge of his brother Petamber Callianji: The English Factory too was removed from Mokha to Aden. Bheemji’s request to the Company to appoint his brother permanently as broker went unheeded. Instead he was dismissed from his temporary service as broker and in his place another person was appointed. Meanwhile Bheemji’s brother died of plague.²

By 1827 the Establishment of Seaskaran (Seshkurn) at Mokha and in the Red Sea had fairly well prospered.³ However, Bheemji took his removal from the Company’s service as broker as a disgrace for a man of his stature. He, therefore, suspected conspiracy behind it and wanted to know the charges. But his plea went unheeded. From 1827 up to 1832 Bheemji remained at Porebnander. He desired a relation of his,

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1. Political Department, vol. 57/500 of 1831/32/33, p. 22.
2. Political Department, vol. 57 500 of 1831/32/33.
3. Ibid., p. 22.
Russordas (Ransordass) Ameechand to be appointed broker, as representing the House of Seaskaran Heerji, at Mokha. He also requested the Governor in Council to order his subordinates at Mokha to provide protection to the firm that it may carry on its business peacefully.\(^1\) Bhimji's pleas were again rejected by the Governor in Council on 22 April 1832.\(^2\)

One may insert here a tabular statement of goods shipped by Indian merchants from Bombay on board the *Ghorab* or *Brig*. *Bombay Merchant* under the command of Captain Henry William Hyland and plundered at Lohaja as showing the kinds of goods that were exported from Bombay to the Red Sea during the first half of the 19\(^{th}\) Century:

**GOODS OF PRAJEE GANESH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>TOTAL VALUE (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambay piece goods</td>
<td>2 Bales</td>
<td>6025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surat piece goods</td>
<td>1 Bale</td>
<td>1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malabar gagrey</td>
<td>16 Robbins</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapoor kachery</td>
<td>2 Chests</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expenses, charges or freight fee on the above goods at the rate of 35% a hundred: Rs.</td>
<td>2636</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>10165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. *Political Department, vol. 57 500 of 1831/32/33*, p. 25
GOODS OF DHARAMSEY HEMCHAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>TOTAL VALUE (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambay piece goods</td>
<td>1 Bale</td>
<td>3025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutch piece goods</td>
<td>5 Bales</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expenses, charges or freight fee on the above goods at the rate of 35% a hundred: Rs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GOODS OF RAMCHAND LALLJEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>TOTAL VALUE (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambay piece goods</td>
<td>1 Bale</td>
<td>2750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expenses, charges or freight fee on the above goods at the rate of 35% a hundred: Rs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total Rs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>19782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The personal assistant to the Resident, Mokha in a letter dated 1\textsuperscript{st} October 1825 to Chief Secretary to Government refers to a complaint made by several merchants of the use of force and violence in the Mokha Customs House. The Nakhuda of the ship concerned was persuaded to let the cargo remain on board the ship till some arrangement with the Daulah was made.\textsuperscript{1} It was soon settled that payment of customs be made, and there should be a deduction on account of the annual purchases of goods for the household of the Imam.\textsuperscript{2} He was, however,

\textsuperscript{1} Political Department, Vol. 14:34 of 1820-21, p. 428 (No.2 of 1821)
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., Vol. 238 of 1826, pp.7-9.
surprised to learn that the merchants had landed every bale, paid Rs. 8,000 in advance of customs and sold to the Daulah voluntarily double that amount in goods to the very person against whom such a serious complaint had been lodged.

These merchants wrongly asserted that they had taken the Qazi's security for the payment. So far as the settlement of accounts was concerned, the Daulah declared his inability to pay more than a portion of the claim against him and agreed to return the rest of the goods. Therefore the merchants were recommended the terms offered by the Daulah, awaiting a reference to the Imam. However, they agreed to the former suggestion and left a claim against the local Government of nearly $8,000, but it was difficult for them to recover this sum.¹

Another document is a letter written by Chief Secretary to the Resident at Mokha, B. Dominicitte addressed to Henry Meriton, Superintendent of Marine. The letter is undated. It reports the arrival of Derria Beggy to Mokha from Jedda, it being understood that her destination was Bombay. Indian merchants as well as Ramsay and the writer were of strong belief that the vessel belonged to Mohammad Ali Khan whereas

¹ Political Department, Vol 238 of 1826, pp. 7-9
the ship was engaged by Abdur Rahman Azil. The ship was loaded with cargo of coffee for the East India Company and Surat merchants. Coffee was also consigned to other ports in India (the names of ports not mentioned). The specie consigned to Bombay by the ship amounted to G.C.(German Crown) $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs.\(^1\)

The *Derria Beggy* would be the first vessel that would sail from Mokha to India positively on or before 29 July 1824. But immediately after a letter of protest jointly signed by the merchants arrived from Jedda asking the Company not to allow their treasure being put on board the *Derria Beggy* because the ship was sailing under suspicious circumstances and belonged to a man of a bad character.\(^2\) Not even a single merchant at Jedda would deem it safe to trust their money on board the *Derria Beggy*. The merchants were alarmed when Said Aqil publicly asserted that the *Derria Beggy* was an enterprise of his eldest brother, the *Daulah* of Zofar (Dofar). The English were in search of that man since much earlier. As the merchants expressed serious concern over the safety of their money there had also cropped up some misunderstanding between the

\(^1\) *Political Department, Vol. 22/166 of 1824, p.50* (48-106).
English and the Mokha Government. The merchants assembled at the Factory. They were advised by the Chief Secretary to adhere to their own judgements to act as they thought best, as the property was their own. Thus on 23 August 1824 the merchants landed back their money though they had paid the freight charges to the Nakhuda, and these were not refunded. In the meantime the Derria Beggy seems to have completed loading its cargo. The reason for the vessel's further delay on Mokha road for a fortnight was not made known. According to the information available to the Chief Secretary the news circulated in Mokha that Said Abdur Rahman did so and that too intentionally to collect the entire goods and treasure and make his way to Zofar where he would share it with his eldest brother and sell the vessel and escape into the interior. The Chief Secretary was therefore not in favour of Derria Beggy leaving Mokha for Bombay.

The Nakhuda of the vessel visited the Factory but once only.

Coupled with the reasons stated above and Said Aqil's breach of agreement to sail on the 19th or 20th July 1824 the

1. Political Department, Vol. 22 166 of 1824, p. 53.
2. Ibid.
Chief Secretary sent his men for the purpose of preventing any more freight coming on board the ship. From reliable sources the Secretary was informed that it was for more treasure that he remained on the roads. He was also of the intention that he would stop till most of the vessels bound to different ports of India had taken their final departure from the Red Sea. Curiously enough, the Derria Beggy also had on board a valuable investment of the Company.¹

In a letter of 5 May 1827 by the Secretary to the Bombay Government to the Resident at Mokha, the Secretary says that the Resident was to exercise his power for the recovery of the money of the Surat merchants which was the primary object of the policy in relations to the states in the Red Sea. Even use of force was justified.² But through various sources it is quite apparent that the financial position of the Imam of Sanaa was so bad, that the claims of the merchants could not be met. These merchants were victims of losses of their cargo by the plunder of Lohaja. The Pasha of Jedda too had a claim of 5,000 dollars³.

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¹ Political Department, vol. 22/166 of 1824, pp. 48-106.
² Secretary to the Bombay Government, 5 May 1927. Ibid., Vol.23/278 of 1827, p339.
³ Mokha, 14 May 1827. Ibid.
The East India Company’s Resident at Mokha in his letter to Devidass Herjeevandass says the Imam could not satisfy his whole claims owing to the anarchy prevailing in Yemen. But Devidass Herjeevandass, the Bombay merchant, was expected to be allowed reduction of $\frac{1}{4}$ from duties on goods imported and exported by the Vizir of Devidass Herjeevandass. The Imam was also requested to give some concessions to Herjeevan’s trade at Mokha and Hodaida but that too was doubtful.¹ There is information about the claims of the Surat merchants in the correspondence of Resident at Mokha. It is stated that according to the stipulations made with the Resident by the late Daulah, Amir Bashir, for $21,000$, which was $\frac{2}{3}$ of the original claims, which during the season (in August 1828), had been liquidated but with some difficulty. The balance would become payable on or before the conclusion of the season. But the Resident again describes the very deranged state of the Imam’s Finances and the realization of the balance at the conclusion of the season seemed to be difficult. The only possible resort was to stop the trade of the Imam’s ports.²

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² Ibid.
The trade of Yemen deteriorated to such a great extent by 1827 that Sultan Mohsin of Lohaj (Capital of Yemen) asked the Resident at Mokha to revive the trade of Aden which had declined considerably. The situation was further aggravated and became chaotic by the presence of the Turkish agent who showed much harshness towards the Yemen merchants. Commodities of Yemen were brought with much difficulty to the coast nor could the Indian goods reach the interior in consequence. The Sultan adopted some measures to revive the trade by reducing the duties for the following two years to 3% and after that period not more than 5%. On goods carried by ships of the British flag 2 1/4%, the same amount as at Mokha, was to be paid.¹ He made declaration of withdrawal of allegiance from the Sublime Porte and extended friendship to the English restoring the old relations that had been established during the period of the Imam’s father.²

Next we hear of the situation prevailing in 1833 through private Akhbar (news) from Mokha received 31 July 1833. This informs of return of Albanians under Bilmas from Hodaida to Mokha. This move they had made on the refusal of the Shaikh

¹ Political Department, Vol. 23/278 of 1827.
² Ibid.
of the Aseree Arabs to cooperate with them in their attack on Jedda and Mokha. Thus the entire shipping of Surat and Bengal remained detained at Mokha up to 31 July 1833 (25th of Saffer), and the report said that they were about to return to India with their "Larges" undisposed of. It also was made known by the Secretary to Governor of the arrival of Mohammad Ali Pasha at Jambo.\textsuperscript{1} We have information about the return of four vessels to Surat from Mokha on 28 September 1833. The news received is dated 28 October 1833. But the nature of cargo they contained does not find mention.\textsuperscript{2} Just before the above information (dated 31 July 1833), another document mentions the arrival of the Bengal and Surat traders at the port of Mokha during the shipping season.\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Political Department, Vol. 57/500 of 1831/32/33, p. 32.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p. 45
  \item \textsuperscript{3} Bengal and Surat traders to Jedda, April-June (season of trading at Jedda), Ibid, p 28
\end{itemize}
COMING OF STEAMSHIPS AND THE DECLINE OF INDIAN SHIPPING IN THE ARABIAN SEA

One need not underline the fact that the replacement of sailing ships by steamships in the nineteenth century brought about a revolution in navigation and world trade. Steamships began to be introduced in the Arabian Sea, and gave a crippling blow to Indian and Arab-owned sailing fleets. Yet it is prudent to recall that steamships replaced sailing ships on the high seas fairly slowly. Though Britain was the greatest shipping nation, had as late as 1860, as many as 6,876 sailing ships compared with 447 steamers.¹

As early as the 1830s the introduction of steam navigation in the Red Sea began to be planned. Wellsted (1833) welcomed the plan, though suitable anchorages had to be identified and developed. He approved of bringing steamships up to the port of “Mersa Zahab” (The Golden Port) in the Gulf of Aqaba.²

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The Company that initiated steam-borne trade in the Red Sea as well as the Gulf was the British India Steam Navigation Company. According to Zwemer till 1862 no steamer had been introduced in the Persian Gulf. It was only in that year that steamer services began, initially for six-weekly, then for monthly and fortnightly and finally a weekly service was established. The British India Steam Navigation, being the pioneer, commanded other lines engaged in the trade between India and the Persian Gulf.¹

The Suez Canal set the seal on the supremacy of the steam-ship, since it could not be used by sailing ships.² India's maritime trade climbed from £99.6 million in 1859 to £162.8 million in 1877,³ partly made possible by increase in the steam tonnage in the Canal, which had risen by 1875-6⁴ to 26.5% in the total tonnage of both steam and sail, calling at Indian ports.⁵ By 1897 English steamers dominated the Arabian Sea trade. English manufactures not only flooded Indian markets, but were carried across the sea: Reels of thread in Najd and jack-knives in Jabal-Shammar were all now of English

2. Knowles, op. cit., pp. 299-300
5. Knowles, pp. 299-300.
manufacture. Thousands of bags of rice in Hasa and Bahrain were shipped in English ships from Rangoon and distributed in the inland area on camels.¹

The currency in circulation during the last decade of the 19th century all along the Arabian coast from Aden to Basra was now the Indian rupee. The Maria Theresa dollar was current in the interior, but it was becoming scarce and loosing popularity among the Beduins of the interior. The mark on the rupee coin represented a girl's head ("abu bint"), while the eagle ("abu tair" i.e. the father of a bird) was stamped on the Austrian dollars.

The French also launched steamer service in the Persian Gulf in 1897. There was soon a break of the service but after some time again the service was re-opened.²

The British India Steam Navigation Company established a weekly steamer service from Bombay to Basra and back. The steamers called at the intermediate ports in the Persian Gulf after leaving Karachi, viz. Gwadur, Muscat, Jask, Bandar Abbas, Lingah, Bahrain, Bushire, Fao and Mohammareh. The journey took 14 days and the distance covered was 1900 miles.³

¹ Zwemer, _op cit_., p 225
² Zwemer, _op cit_., p 225
³ Wellsted, _op cit_., p 153
The Aziziya Misriya Steamship Company began service from 1870 in the Red Sea. After some pause, it once again began regular service from 8 July 1872 plying between Suez and Jedda, Suakin and Massawa. Taking over the contract from the Austrian Llyod in 1873 it started a monthly mail service between Constantinople and Jedda. Hodaida once again emerged as the port for Sanaa and proved its superiority over other ports. The Turks controlled much of the Arabian Peninsula including the Suez-Aden route to the East. The Suez Cannal was initially important to Turkey for the transport of mail, troops and supply of grain from Odessa to the Turkish garrisons in Arabia. Abyssinian slaves, eunachs and “galla women” as well were exported to Turkey through the Canal.¹

By the turn of the century the sailing ships trading in the Arabian Sea decreased much in size and number. Between 1884-85 and 1904-5 the tonnage of steamships using Indian ports had increased from 4.3 million tons to 13.5 million tons; but the tonnage of sailing vessels declined from 2.3 million tons to the insignificant one of 353,000 tons. Such sailing vessels as still plied were “now almost entirely native craft, engaged in trade with East Africa, Arabia, Persia and Southern Asia”.²

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¹. D.A. Farnie, op.cit., p. 127
². Imperial Gazetteer of India (The Indian Empire). (Reprint), op.cit., Vol. III. p 276.
One can see that Indian trade expanded considerably with the opening of the Canal. But the gain from this went largely to British-owned shipping; steamships could better pass through the Suez Canal than sailing ships. By 1904-5 the share of steamships in the total tonnage of India’s maritime trade had gone up to 97.3%. By 1896(?), the tonnage of vessels passing through the Canal and entering and leaving the ports of India by that route had risen to 26.5% of the total tonnage of ships visiting Indian ports.¹

While the Suez Canal added to India’s trade generally, it proved to be an adverse factor for Indo-Arab trade, by the fact that short-range maritime trade lost its cost advantage. Entries of customs clearances are indicative of the fact that in 1904-5 61% of the total tonnage of the trade was conducted to and from the United Kingdom and other British colonies.² Indian-owned sailing vessels, confined to Arabian Sea had their share reduced to well under 2.7% of the entire sea-borne trade of India. On the opening of the Red Sea route to Europe and with the coming of the Suez Canal, the major beneficiary was undoubtedly Britain, and Indo-Arab trade did not gain much as a consequence.

¹ D.A. Farnie, p. 171
² Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. III, p. 276
CHAPTER 7

THE OPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL (1869) AND
THE EMERGENCE OF ADEN

A SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUEZ CANAL

The narrow triangular isthmus that separates Asia from
Africa, and the Atlantic from the Indian Ocean (Mediterranean
and the Red Sea) is a geographical curiosity that has been
commented upon since ancient times. The project of a canal
cutting through the isthmus at its narrowest width on its
Western edge was dreamt of or even attempted in earlier times;
it was only in the second half of the 19th century that the
project could be realized as the result of French enterprise.

The construction of the Canal whose plan was initially
conceived by Mohammad Ali Pasha, remained unrealized till
the French took over construction under De Lesseps and opened
the Canal in 1869. Palmerston opposed the construction
particularly out of the fear that during a war France might close
the Canal to the British. He also feared that by controlling the
Canal the French might take over Aden and Mauritius.
However, these dark forebodings were not fulfilled owing
ultimately to British financial resources, which enabled Britain to buy up the Khedive's share in the Canal in 1875.

The Suez Canal immensely shortened the sea route between Europe and India, and the overland route (Alexandria-Jeddal Mokha) joining the Mediterranean and the Red Sea could now be replaced by the ships making direct voyages. Following the Canal's opening within a short time (21 November 1869-1 May 1870) 940 transits were made by Arab boats and 145 transits by sea-going ships.¹

A Syrian author of the 19th Century, Kurd Aly, says that the volume of Indian trade with Aleppo during 17th and 18th century was fairly high. But he is of the view that the trade of Aleppo and Damascus suffered a set back with the opening of the Suez Canal particularly because of the shift over of the merchants of Aleppo and Damascus to Beirut, and Alexandria, Cairo, Manchester, Tantama (?) and Marseilles and other African and Asian cities. The number of those who travelled overland to Hejaz and West Asia decreased because of the cheaper and faster voyage through the Canal. The trade of Damascus now remained confined to its own area.² The Suez

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1. D.A Farnie, p. 102
Canal helped to bring even Iraq more firmly in the orbit of Indian Ocean trade. Previously its main trade was with Iran, now (1869 onwards), India and Britain came to have greater share of Iraq's trade. By 1914 India and Britain accounted for 50% of Iraq's exports and 2/3 of its imports.

**SUEZ CANAL-INDIA**

The opening of the Canal once again elevated Venice to an advantageous position and made it the emporium of Indian goods. The credit may be ascribed to continuous efforts of the Venetian merchant community. Venice now became an entrepot of Indian goods, through the Canal it enjoyed the credit of being the main European port of access to the Suez route. This would mean its Eastern trade had risen to a very high volume. It became, in the words of Farnie, "the unrivalled emporium of Eastern trade and traffic". Brisk trade, therefore, led to the construction of a new harbour at Venice in 1869 whereby to eliminate the use of lighters. Venice even regained its 1847 level of population in 1870-72.

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2 Ibid. *op cit*, p 132
3 D A Farnie. *op cit* p 141
4 Ibid. *op cit* For detail see Farnie's ensuing pages on Venetian commerce with the East
TURKEY-SUEZ CANAL-INDIA

Turkey’s traditional crafts had already suffered on account of inflow of British industrial goods. The new routes from Persia via Russia and the Suez Canal greatly diminished the transit trade of Turkey. Uptil the later Tanzimat period the customs on imported goods was comparatively much lower than the customs on local exports goods. The ratio of exports and imports was 4:1. The major flow of goods was from European countries which gave the impression of Turkey as an European colony, supplying cheap raw material and in return importing finished industrial goods. European capital as well was flowing into Turkey with accelerating speed.¹

So long as the construction of railways from Bombay inland up to Delhi and Lahore was not complete, the Indian overseas trade was mainly conducted from Calcutta.² Now, however, Bombay replaced Calcutta as India’s principal port owing to the vast stream of traffic passing through the Suez Canal.³

By 1893 English trade through the Suez Canal had increased tremendously. The gross tonnage in 1893 that passed

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2. Ibid
3. Ibid., pp. 292-93.
through the Canal was 10,753,798 of which 7,977,728 tons passed under the British flag. In Zwemer's view the English trade constituted $\frac{4}{5}$ of the total tonnage. The total figure of ships during the same period that passed through the Canal was 3,341 out of which no less than 2,405 ships belonged to the Great Britain.¹

B. THE EMERGENCE OF ADEN

The surging increase in traffic through the Suez Canal brought into sudden prominence the port of Aden, which fronting the Indian ocean but stands close to the narrow entrance of the Red Sea. It had a strategic position, aptly described by J.R. Wellsted in 1832: it stood on a lofty promontry and was joined with the mainland by a very narrow isthmus, 200 yards in breadth, over which a causeway ran.² It was thus a natural port.

Wellsted believed that the decline of medieval Aden had begun with the supremacy of the Portuguese. He also adds that Aden, an entrepot of the Indian trade, supplied Indian goods through Egypt to Venice and Geneva; but its decay set in with the discovery of the new passage around the Cape of Good

¹ Zwemer, Arabia: The Cradle of Islam, op. cit., p. 226
² J R Wellsted, Vol II, p. 385
Hope.¹ The harbour had by 1832 become almost empty. The population as against 30,000 during the 17th century was by 1832 reduced to 800 only, consisting of Arabs, Sumalis and the descendents of slaves. Huts were to be seen on the ruin of the old magnificent buildings. There were about 20 families that took interest in trade; the rest subsisted either by supplying the *Hajj* boats with wood and water, or by fishing. The city residents included some banya merchants who monopolised the greater part of the trade. They lived in good houses and exercised considerable authority in town.² By the middle of the 18th century the port had been evacuated by the Turks, leaving it again into the hands of the local sultan.

Despite the fact that Aden’s significance had dwindled, on account of its excellent harbour it was still visited by several vessels from the Somali ports of Berbera and Bundar Kassim.³

The ruler of Aden, Sultan Mohassan, inherited a great treasure from his uncle Ahmed. Ahmed had been “the most politic of the chiefs of Yemen”. He is said to have encouraged trade and commerce, and invited merchants from India and

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Egypt to reside in his territories. Sultan Mohassan walked in the footsteps of his uncle and was equally desirous to extend commercial intercourse between India and Aden. He also had in his possession the document of the treaty his predecessor had concluded with Sir Home Popham. Its content and nature were not known, and J.R. Wellsted was of the view that it was not possible to have it put into effect.

Aden, in its extreme decay, still received nutmeg, pepper with the “chief of all spices” from India; silk-yarn too, but not gold and precious stones. Seventy ships of about 200 tons each from the Red Sea still were employed in this trade. Leaving Arabian ports in September the bigger ones sailed in an eastern direction as far as Ras Fartak and the smaller ones to Ras al-Had, whence these sailed across the Arabian sea to Porebandar. Each vessel carried a pilot but few had instruments, capable of making observations. Even the astrolable and cross-staff were rare. Some of the navigators determined their position by the “dislocation” of the water and appearance of snakes. By 1871 trade had come to a standstill owing to attacks on the caravans that passed through Yemen for Aden.

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In 1820 Captain Haines of the Company's navy visited Aden and in 1829 the Directors entertained the idea of making Aden a coaling station for its steam-ships but the plan was abandoned. Following an outrage committed on the passengers and crew of a bagla wrecked near Aden an expedition was dispatched against the place by the Bombay government in 1838. It was at this juncture that the decision to annex Aden was arrived at.¹ In January 1839 with a force of 300 Europeans and 400 Indian troops in the “Volage” and “Cruizer”, Aden was bombarded and taken by storm.²

The area of Aden, consisting of jabel Ihsan or “Little Aden” including the harbour now annexed was estimated at approximately 35 square miles. The population exclusive of the garrison was only 19,239 in 1872.³ However there was rapid rise of Aden population since 1839. By 1880 the population had gone up to 35,000. Indeed, the rate of growth of Aden Population was higher than either Port Saeed or Bombay during the decade after the opening of the Suez Canal.⁴ During

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2. Zwemer, p 218.
4. Zwemer, p 335
his stay from 28 October 1885 to March 1886 in Aden Zwemer wrote:

"The population of Aden is made up of Arabs, all Moslems, mostly sunnis of the shafii; Africans, mostly Somalis who are all shafii Moslems; Jews; natives of India, mostly Moslems, the rest being Hindus, a few Parsis and a few Portuguese from Goa. In 1872, for every five Arabs there were less than three Somalis; but I am told that now they are numerically equal. The Arabs and Somalis together make up the great bulk---about four fifths---of the whole. In 1872 the Jews numbered 1,435; they are now reckoned at more than 2,000. The Europeans, the garrison and camp followers number about 3,500".1

The British spent a considerable amount of money to fortify and develop the port. Aden was attacked four times from land by Arabs but their attempts failed.2 The settlement was placed under the Government of the Bombay Presidency, the authority in Aden being wielded by a Resident and had two assistants for his support.3

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1. Zwemer, p. 335.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 219.
Aden's seizer by the British in 1839 its position as a prosperous city revived. It once again attained its status of commercial centre for all southern Arabia. But this was only at the cost of Mokha and Hodaida. Indeed, it could become the commercial capital of all Western and Southern Arabia provided a railroad to Sanaa was built.¹ But Zwemer is of the view that the plan could only materialize if the Turks left Yemen's capital. From 1839 up till 1850 the rate of customs at Aden was the same as that charged at Indian ports. Zwemer makes us believe that from 1850 Aden was declared a free port. During the first 7 years after 1839 the average annual imports and exports of Aden were Rs. 1,900,000. In the next seven years the annual average rose to Rs. 6,000,000 and trade continued to grow. After the Suez Canal opened it grew immensely. In 1897 it reached a high water-mark to over Rs. 30,000,000.²

In Aden there was a marked development of re-exports of gum and coffee from 1874, of ivory and spices from 1875 and of rubber and hides from 1876. The value of coffee increased five times between 1870 and 1880 and was re-exported to London, Marseilles, Trieste and New York. Its main imports were cotton textiles since 1874. By 1891 Hodaida was only competitor with Aden and having overtaken Mokha.³

¹ Zwemer, op cit., p 226
² Zwemer, p 226
³ D A Farne, op cit., p 136
A new dimension was imparted to trade between India and the Arab world with the change in the complexion of East-West trade as a consequence of triumph of the Industrial Revolution in Britain by the beginning of the 19th century. Britain now began to seek market for its products, with cotton textiles in the van. Since the Suez Canal was yet many decades away, Bombay became a redistributive centre for British manufactures. By 1804 the exports of Bombay had risen to Rs. 170,92,879 whereas the imports stood at Rs. 1,19,60067 only.\(^1\)

During 1804-5 there was considerable import increase to Bombay of Surat cotton amounting to Rs.23,4961 in 1805 alone. But in 1804 there was decrease in cotton import to Bombay from Surat owing to ill-managed operations of the *cotton committee* which ultimately led to its dissolution.\(^2\) But Surat’s import of cotton increased to Rs. 9 *lakhs* during the same period, roughly to 4 times compared to its cotton export.

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2. *Ibid*
a figure much higher than its supply. However, the Bombay export increased to Rs. 1591782. Out of this Rs. 8 lakhs was in treasure which was sent to Surat as a partial payment of cotton purchased in Gujarat.\(^1\) What were the cotton goods that found market in the Middle Eastern countries is brought out from the East India Company’s inventory of goods. These goods were “dotties”, fine piecegoods, “bowchas” and “assloof”.\(^2\)

Cotton was also exported to China. The quantity of cotton export to China during the year 1804-5 amounted to Rs. 36 lakhs in which the proportion of Gujarat cotton exported to China was very small. During 1804 the quantity exported to China was 50,000 Candies. There was bumper cotton harvest in 1804. The Bombay merchants alone had bought cotton of Rs. 45 lakhs.\(^3\) Available information suggests cost of cotton a candy rose to Rs. 90 with labour of Bombay ports and freight charges inclusive.\(^4\)

There are varying indications to believe that the magnitude of Indian textile export to the Arab world would have been on diminishing around 1807 not because of the flow

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2. Ibid
4. Ibid
of the industrial manufacture of England alone to the Middle Eastern market but also because of the manufacture of cloths in some of the Middle Eastern cities such as Damascus, a city of immense capital and a centre of commerce of extraordinary importance. It was the importer of large quantity of fine cloth of India and Persia; simultaneously Damascus manufactured a large quantity of cloth itself. The magnitude of its cloth manufacture comes from the idea that there were several streets of warehouses from one end to the other. The number of manufactures of silk and cotton stuffs at Damascus alone were estimated at 4,000. However linen was not manufactured nor flax grown there.¹

Merchant capital seems to have grown quite large. Two of the leading capitalist merchants of Damascus namely Schatti and Mehemed Sua’s capital is estimated at 5 million francs each.²

From 22 September 1816 to 30 April 1818 the total exports of cotton from Bombay Presidency was Rs. 20100. Out of this total the export to Turkey was Rs. 2300 and the export to England Rs. 17800.³ This would mean there was drastic fall

¹ Ab Bey, Travels, op. cit, Vol. II, pp 267-273  
² Secret and Political Department Diary, No 307 of 1818  
³ Ibid
in cotton exports. But these exports only were made through the Red Sea.

We have details of other textile items which were exported to the Red Sea from Bombay or vice-versa. The first of these items is broad cloth which was imported to Bombay from the Red sea to the amount of Rs. 3790 between 22 September 1816 to the 30 April 1818. But the Turkish export of broad cloth from Bombay to the Red Sea exceeded the import to Bombay by Rs. 5264.¹ Turkish import of piecegoods from the Red Sea to Bombay was Rs.499 whereas the Turkish export of piecegoods from Bombay to the Red Sea amounted to Rs.39,391. Including English export of piecegoods was of worth Rs.16116 from Bombay to the Red Sea the total export rose to Rs. 55507. Similarly the Turkish export of raw silk from Bombay to the Red Sea was Rs. 4971 whereas the export of raw silk by the English amounted to Rs. 51562. The total export of raw silk by the Turkish ships and the English ones from Bombay to the Red Sea was Rs. 4171 whereas the export of raw silk by the English amounted to Rs.51562. The total export of raw silk by the Turkish ships and the English ones from Bombay to the Red Sea amounted to Rs.56233. During the same period of 22 September 1816 to 30 April 1818 the Turkish export of shawls from Bombay to the Red Sea was Rs. 1,34,019

¹ Secret and Political Department Diary. No. 307 of 1818.
whereas the English export was worth Rs. 11000, making the total to Rs. 145019. But the Turkish export of piecegoods from Surat to the Red Sea was fairly high – a figure much higher than the export of piecegoods from Bombay. It was worth Rs. 3,84,009. The Turkish export of coloured silk from Surat to the Red Sea was however quite negligible and amounted to Rs. 368 only.\(^1\) However the Indian cotton goods continued to be exported from Bombay to the Red Sea ports even during 2\(^{nd}\) decade of the 19\(^{th}\) century which suggests the Middle Eastern markets had even till now the taste for the Indian cotton cloth.

We have examples of three consignors who shipped their piecegoods to the Red Sea ports in June 1820 from Bombay in the *Brig Ghorab Bombay Merchant*. The detail of these goods are as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Consignor</th>
<th>Description of goods</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Amount (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prajee</td>
<td>Cambay Piecegoods</td>
<td>2 Bales</td>
<td>6025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Bale</td>
<td>1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surat Piecegoods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhurrumsey</td>
<td>Piecegoods</td>
<td>1 Bale</td>
<td>3025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uanchand Dhurrumsey</td>
<td>Cutch piecegoods</td>
<td>5 Bales</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uanchand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramchand Lalljee</td>
<td>Cambay Piecegoods</td>
<td>1 Bale</td>
<td>2750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Total including expenses, charges, freight fee at the rate of 35% = Rs. 19782.

_Source: Political Department, vol. 28 33 of 1820-21, p. 50._

In 1832 Indian *silk yarn* was exported from India to Lohaj (Lahedsje) though manufactures of all kinds are scarce there.\(^1\) By 1833 Mohammad Ali's scheme of self-sufficiency in cloth manufacture had reached some target as it is borne out by the rigour of his regulation which stipulated that the cloth that did not bear the *Pasha’s* stamp was liable to be seized. This was an indication that the *Pasha* was taking protective measure to safeguard his own developing textile industry.\(^2\)

Even though instances are there of efforts being made to establish cloth-weaving industry in Bombay and elsewhere in India on industrial pattern, one of which was cotton-spinning mill established in 1854 by Cwasjee Davar who was a Parsee.\(^3\) But practically India's export of textile manufacture seems to have been reduced substantially. Even Egyptian's manufacture of cloth had ceased to a great extent by 1856 under Sa'ad *Pasha*. The British imports from Suez during the year 1855 consisted of 90% of the cotton goods.\(^4\) This would have consisted of twist, yarn, cotton etc. It would obviously mean that if at all there was import of Indian textile to Egypt it was

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1. J R Wellsted, *Travels*, Vol II, p 411 Our traveller noted that the silk weaving industry of Lohaj employed 30 weavers The yarn in the industry was brought from India *Ibid*
2. *Ibid*, p 216
3. D A Farnie, p 37
4. *Ibid*
on very small scale. We have frequent description of the European manufactures such as "Grey domestics", long cloths, tanzeb and "madd sollam".¹ Those varieties of textiles imported into Egypt from Basra were mainly checked cotton, used as outdoor dresses by the country people and middle classes, both in Jedda and Egypt. Cotton goods to Jedda to Egypt were also imported from Persia.²

Palgrave (1862-1863) observed cotton growing at Kaseem. Indian silk was also exported there but the quantity was quite meagre. Palgrave says that cotton-shrub of Kaseem was identical in species with that cultivated in Gujarat and Cutch. The inhabitants of Kaseem were well acquainted with its use but the quantity was quite meagre for export but there was hope of favourable circumstances of cotton cultivation that might enhance the wealth of the country. It was mainly because of the congenial climate and fertile soil of Kaseem. The cotton plants were numerous as in India and the quantity was also not inferior to India.³ But despite all this there was market shift in the pattern of trade. As like 17th century, 18th and 19th century.

¹ Famie, p 37
² Ibid.
³ W G. Palgrave, Personal narrative of a year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia (1862-63), London, 1908, p. 149
Middle Eastern countries remained the main market of Indian cotton textile. This phenomenon suggests that the English Industrial Revolution and manufacture of cheaper and attractive textile of Britain had yet to occupy its prominence in textile export to the Middle Eastern countries. It is quite likely the situation might have changed after the opening of the Suez Canal.

However, Middle East was still importing large amount of Indian textiles and silks. In return Middle East sent to India pearls, dates, fruits, horses, carpets and a large amount of bullion. It was indeed a strange precipitation in trade position that on one side the crafts of the Middle East was dwindling whereas Indian craft was improving. Urban markets in both the Middle East and south-east Asia cattered remarkable influence on the growth of cotton in Gujarat and on the Eastern coastal India.¹

Date by far was the main export of the Middle East to India. Mesopotamian region remained by far the main producer of dates though date was grown in all parts of Arabia including upper Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor. According to an estimate

the River country i.e. Tigris and Euphrates alone produced 150,000 tons.\textsuperscript{1} Hasa and Oman too produced date but the quantity was comparatively inferior than that of Basra.\textsuperscript{2}

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Zwemer. \textit{op cit}. p 122\textsuperscript{a}
\item \textit{Ibid.}
\end{enumerate}
\end{flushleft}
CONCLUSION

The maritime trade of India till the end of 18th century, still annually accounted for a substantial volume of both exports and imports. Besides, the considerable shipping in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, bulk of India's trade from Coromandel-Malabar coasts and Bay of Bengal passed to the south-east Asian regions of Siam, Perak, Malacca and Indonesian Archipelago as far as Philippines and South China. Many traditional merchant communities of India traded, particularly in cotton piece goods and received in return the products of those regions. From China they preferred silk, tea and Chinaware. The trade, was evidently lucrative and prosperous. The Dutch merchants of the Coromandel and the West Coasts in the meantime shifted their base of operation to Batavia in Indonesia which was strategically and commercially more suitable to them. From India the VOC (Dutch East India Company) procured textiles for sale to south-east Asian regions and purchased the products of south-east Asia for export to Europe. Soon after their migration to Indonesia, the Dutch took to coffee cultivation and sugar-cane plantation. On the other hand the
lucrative trade of Mokha coffee now largely came under the control of the East India Company; whereas its competitors had a very small share in it.

The French had their commercial and political headquarters at Pondichery and carried on brisk trade in Indian commodities with the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Their main business with the Red Sea was in coffee which they bought and brought to Pondichery for transhipment to France. Their trade with the countries of south-east Asia was almost negligible. This region, therefore, saw many Indian trading magnates developing huge business links with the countries outside India. They had dealings with European companies as well. Nawab of Arcot was one of them. He owned his own ships. This is evident from the well-maintained diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai. The diary reveals multidimensional facts about the trade and trading communities of south India and their dealings with European companies. From the same diary we get information about the French association with the indigenous business magnates including the Nawab of Arcot.
The defeat of the French by the English in the Carnatic wars was the turning point in the history of maritime trade in the Indian Ocean. The East India Company acquired control over the entire Indian Ocean and the bulk of the Indian trade passed into its hands. Carnatic wars, therefore, mark a watershed that no foreign or indigenous power in India could challenge the East India Company's supremacy on the high seas. French presence, thereafter, had been reduced to a negligible mark in the Indian Ocean and they could no longer pose any serious threat to the British. The Dutch also found themselves under compulsion to quit their last settlement at Chandarnogor in Bengal and thus further providing opportunity to the English to consolidate their military and commercial bases of operation in Bengal. These events, therefore, changed the outlook of the Company from a merely commercial enterprise to governing and controlling power on an alien soil ushering in an era of colonialism in India.

Surat, was a big port on the western coast of India, it survived till the end of the 18th century. This was partly because of the shift of loyalty by Indian merchants to East
India Company and many of them joined the Company’s service. Secondly, the East India Company had yet to develop Bombay. However, Bombay replaced Surat when the Company shifted its major establishments over there with a large number of population. K.N.Chaudhuri is of the view that the decline of Surat was gradual. Whereas, the trade of Surat, we are told, by the middle of the century had expanded to such an extent that Indian shipwrights had to enlarge the shipping capacity to accommodate more and more goods. Rice, sugar, textiles, grains and indigo constituted Indian commodities to Red Sea and Persian Gulf regions. Coffee, ivory, almonds, Venetian falsebeads, sena leaves and incence and dry and green fruits, horses, iron and copper metals were brought as return cargo. There was constant flow of bullion (gold and silver) throughout the century. By and large the aggregate volume of India's trade with the countries of the Arab world remained fairly high throughout the century. In some respects it even surpassed the volume of the previous century.

A specific feature of maritime activities in Indian Ocean is characterised by centuries-old navigational
conventions. These were common not only to the countries bordering the Indian Ocean alone but broadly speaking to all Asian countries from the littorals of north-eastern Africa to as far as Japan. While the customary law of wreckage provided the confiscation of goods of a wrecked ship by a state, at the same time there are many examples of salvage by the Indian rulers as well. The role of State in relation to such conventions had a significant bearing on the navigational and commercial activities in Indian Ocean. Besides, there were many other conventions related to freighting of goods, departure of a ship, property of a deceased, insurance etc. which were accordingly made known for public information through notification or verbal communications. What is more important for our period in this regard was the safety of Indian shipping. Since the East India Company maintained its supremacy on the high seas the Indian shippings were largely subjected to operate under the Company's flag by entering into mochalka or penalty bond.

In India maritime trade and commerce was never a monopoly of mercantile communities alone. During Mughal period we hear of rulers, members of royal household and
high nobles taking active part in trading activities. They owned ships and traded with many countries of Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian coast and eastern coast of Africa. This practice continued throughout Mughal period and following the Mughals the rulers of 18th and 19th centuries also never missed an opportunity to take part in maritime trade and make profit. These rulers could enlarge their profit in commerce through manipulating their official status and misusing the services of local officials.

These rulers often referred to as 'chief merchants' or 'Trader-rulers', owned ships and maintained commercial relations with countries of the Indian Ocean shores. The prominent among 'Trader-rulers' during 18th century were the Nawab of Gujarat, Raja of Tanjore, the Nawab of Arcot, Nawab Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan. The latter had a well organized trade with the countries of the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and other ports of coastal India. In order to build his country strong and safeguard it from the menace of foreign invasion he embarked on an ingenious plan of raising a formidable and strong navy, but the circumstance and his financial condition were unfavourable to him, therefore, the
plan remained unmaterialized. In the meantime, Tipu met his tragic end.

Tipu was always ready to help a friendly country even by overlooking the law of his own land. Thus responding the letter of the *Iman* of Muscat he went out of the way to help the two Hindu merchants and subjects of the *Imam*. Where as for the East India Company, he was an eye-sore and a formidable enemy. Their main target was to remove Tipu from the political scene of India in order to further consolidate their colonial rule in India.

Another 'Trader-ruler' having his operations in the Middle East, was Mohammad Ali Pasha of Egypt. Before coming to power as Ottoman Governor of Egypt his ships plied in the Mediterranean and he had lucrative business at Malta. However, very little is known about his shipping in the Indian Ocean and his trading affiliation with the East India Company. Nevertheless for transacting his Indian business with EIC the Pasha had his agents posted either at Bombay or Calcutta and his ships plied between India and the Red Sea.
With the expansion of Pasha's rule to Turkish Arabia, the Arab provinces responded to changes brought about by industrial development in Europe. We observe the penetration of capitalism into the non-capitalist market with the supply of manufactured goods to Asian markets. This penetration drastically changed the entire outlook of the markets of Middle East. The concept of free trade, purely a western idea to the traditional world of Asia was, indeed, alien to the Asian rulers and merchants. The Ottoman Sultan agreed in principle to the demands of the English which they had made in the Treaty of Dardanelles, concluded on 5th January 1809. Mohammad Ali Pasha in similar manner was made to agree to various terms of a treaty which he had signed with the East India company in 1810.

Pasha seems to have taken some stringent measures to promote the export of his country. He imposed restrictions on import of West Indies Coffee to encourage Yemeni Coffee. He discouraged import of such goods as were or could be produced locally. It was observed in 1833 that the Pasha prohibited import of essential commodities from India to Yemen and the people there were asked to procure them...
from Egypt. Thus the Indian cloth that did not bear Pasha's stamp, and was on sale in Yembo, was liable to be seized. He also put a strict vigilance on smuggling.

However, at the turn of 19th century India's main ports for supply to the Red Sea were Calcutta, Surat and Bombay. We have information on English exports to Suez from Bombay. Trade touched a high level mark between the Bombay Presidency and the Red Sea during 1816-18. Evidence suggests that the volume of trade between the Indian ports and those of Red Sea was very high. The volume of trade in 1815 at Jedda alone was worth 4 million dollars, of which the major share seems to have been the imports from India. There was a sharp upward movement in the volume between 1815 and 1838. Jedda, as a leading port of the Red Sea, thrived on supply from India. In 1833 the port received 10000 tons of shipping, besides large baglas whose tonnage touched almost the same level.

Pasha, it is said, made sincere efforts to regulate customs structure. He intended to modernise customs rules despite differences in rates from item to item. His reign was marked by the executions of various treaties of trade and commerce with the British Government.
The fall of Seringapatam in 1799 and the end of the Napoleonic influence on the Indian Ocean littoral vis-a-vis the Red Sea (1798), as assessed from the mercantilist perspective led to the British dominance over the international trade. The disintegration coupled with degeneration of the Turkish Empire at the turn of the 19th century as the only largest buffer zone to sustain European hegemonic pressure, had created a power vacuum in the body politics of Asia. Still many trading nations were struggling to rub shoulders with each other, and it was only to counterbalance the French pressure in the Mediterranean and the Levant that capitulations were signed between Great Britain and Turkey.

Britain had all along tried hard for more than fifty years to establish her hegemony over international trade and to a great extent enjoyed it. The emergence of Germany as a strong military and economic power soon shattered the British hopes of dominance over the world economy. Colonial India under the British imperialism, suffered irreparable economic loss owing to large scale de-industrialisation coupled with deurbanisation. This imbalanced the Indian overseas trade. British imports of industrial machine goods increased and export of Indian
piece goods declined. Further, gradually India was forced to supply primary goods. Such a development which had far reaching effect on India’s economy dated from 1st quarter of 19th century and continued thereafter. Export of cotton piece goods and silk goods gave way to raw cotton, indigo and opium.

During the Ottoman dominance over Arabian peninsula, the French and Dutch enjoyed privilege of reduced rate of customs. Where as for Indian merchants there were different rates of customs, and the English during 19th century pressed for more concessions.

For European companies and free traders the rates of customs charged at ports of Arabian sea and the Persian Gulf was a crucial issue which involved substantial amount. Since 1730 Europeans were levied only 3% customs on all descriptions of goods at ports under the Imam of Yemen. But Indian Muslim and Hindu merchants were subjected to customs payment ranging from 5 to 7.5%. Further, the East India Company enjoyed certain exclusive privilege while the Indian merchants were denied it as they did not have any mercantile organisation similar to European companies.
During 19th century the rate varied as per the quality of goods on the one hand and the nationality of the merchants on the other. The levy on Surat goods was 5% provided the goods were exported to Mokha by EIC or the British merchants. The Muslim merchants (most probably Indian Muslims) paid 7½% whereas the Hindu merchants were subjected to 8¾%. The medium of payment was either Spanish Dollar (S. $) or German crown.

A significant feature of Indian trade with the Arab world is marked by the considerable flow of treasure into India through the ports of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf during 18th and 19th century. The flow was either in the form of bullion or liquid assets sent to India as remittances through bill of exchange known as *hundi* which was a legal tender (written order) equivalent to a Bill of Exchange. There were certain features common to a ‘bill’ and a *hundi*. In a period when traveling by sea was hazardous and the frequent shipwrecks happened the only possible option open to merchants was to send their remittances through bankers or *sarrafs* and get the bills of exchange issued to be discounted at one of the Indian port-cities. For our period we
have various records of the English East India Company which contain information on *hundis*, particularly in relation to coffee trade. In a *hundi* certain amount is mentioned and it is payable either at sight or on a determinable future date. Further more, “both the instruments of credit are subject to stamp duty”.

Indian bankers (*sarrafs*) had long attained specialisation in their business. During the 1st half of 19th century numerous Indian commercial financial firms had earned reputation of international level. Their credibility was so well established in the world money market that they advanced credit to various companies. The East India Company was one of them. However, in the commercial circles this organisation led to the system of remittance. These remittances to Indian port-cities were made in form of treasure and bullion as during 18th century.

The process of preparing Bills of Exchange is quite interesting. The exchange rates of various international denominations in the world exchange market varied from time to time. For instance, in 1832 the value of rupee went down by 15% and value of Crown became more stable from
the level of 1757. Thus the exchange rate continued to vary in the money market.

We have seen that during the 1st half of the 19th century many petitions of claim against the Imam of Sanaa were submitted to the Governor in Council at Bombay. The amount of losses, particularly, enable us to evaluate the quantum of trade the Indian merchants had with the ports of Mokha, Jeddah and other ports of the Red Sea. These petitions that a large number of Indian merchants belonging to Surat and Bombay had regular and prosperous trade with those ports and had faced many maritime problems. We also have significant and valuable information, which had not been taken note of relating to the blockades organized by the East India Company, to warn the government of Sanaa and punish the governor (Daulah) of Mokha. The documents clearly indicate that how the merchants from Bombay and Surat had lodged complaints with the East India Company, pleading that their goods were either seized, or robbed. The Company's officials were requested to direct the Resident at Mokha to take care of the safety of ships and goods belonging to the Indian merchants.
During our period the items of exports from India mainly constituted the cotton piece goods, silk and silk goods. As far as the imports of goods into India were concerned we are told that the demand for horses still continued in India till the end of the 19th century. The other import commodities were dry and green fruits, woolens, carpets and sena leaves, besides import of bullion which still continued in India.

The steam shipping, the opening of Suez Canal and tele-communication revolutionised trade from India to Europe and the Red Sea. Apparently the steam shipping and Suez Canal helped the European trade more. India's European maritime trade because of steam shipping, increased from £ 99.6 million in 1859 to £ 162.8 million in 1877. With the introduction of steam shipping by EIC in Arabian Sea its trade naturally increased. The trade of the Gulf regions, Arabian coast and Eastern coast of Africa had risen from 4.3 million tons in 1884-85 to 13.5 million tons in 1904-05.

Trade between India and the Red Sea by sailing ships during the above period declined from 2.3 million tons to 0.3 million tons. Nonetheless, the introduction of steam shipping...
and the opening of the Suez Canal did considerably affect the increase in the volume of commerce as well as the trade destinations. Now Aden and Turkey emerged as potential marts for the goods imported from India. The Gulf countries alone remained no more the target of Indian goods which were now directed to Aden and Turkey where new markets for Indian piece goods came into being. This fact reveals that although the trade between India and Gulf countries would appear to be declining, but in fact the total volume of trade Aden and Turkey had increased. The East India Company with the introduction of steam shipping to Persian Gulf compensated their earlier losses.
The bibliography broadly contains two sections. The first section deals with original sources both MSS and published in Arabic, Persian and English. Secondly there are modern works and published articles. Largely chronological order is being followed and only the sources which have been referred to and cited in the thesis are listed.

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5. Political Department, 1823, No. 98
6. Political Department, 1824, Vol. 22/166
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