

Nearchus Epic Voyage: Traversing the Indus River to the Makran Coast

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Abstract

This study provides a detailed analysis of the historical significance of Alexander the Great retreat from India to the Makran Coast in 326 B.C. and the role played by Admiral Nearchus, a Greek explorer, in this expedition. It mainly focuses on Nearchus subsequent epic voyage down the Indus River followed by Coast of Makran (in present Balochistan province in Pakistan), and his encounters with various coastal towns, including the Ichthyophagy towns of Bagisara, Kolta, Kalima, Karbis, Mosarna, and Balomos. Further, the ancient history of the region, specifically the Makran Coast and the Ichthyophagy coastal towns are described. It also offers valuable insights into the customs, traditions, and indigenous flora and fauna of the people that Nearchus encountered during his expedition. Based on the information in relation with the area provided by the Greek Chronologists and archaeological evidence discovered at the Prahag area of present-day Pasni and Meri Qalat in Turbat, further supports the claim that the Ichthyophagy resided at the coastal Makran for over 4000 B.C. Furthermore, the paper highlights the challenges that Nearchus and his soldiers faced during their voyage, including storms, hostile natives, and perilous waterways. Nearchus hiring of a local seaman, 'Hydrakes', also offers a valuable perspective on the significance of local knowledge and expertise in navigating unfamiliar waters. The paper offers a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the historical significance of Alexander the Great retreat from India and the role played by Nearchus in this expedition, providing a valuable contribution to the field of ancient history, geography, and early discovery of Asia.

Keywords: Alexander the Great, Nearchus, Arrian, Coastal Makran, Ichthyophagy, Gedrosia

Introduction and Background of the Study

Alexander the Great left Nearchus, his admiral of the fleet at Patella, and proceeded to Gedrosia via coastal Makran. It is noteworthy to mention here that Nearchus was not the first choice for this expedition of the sea, according to Nearchus, Alexander communicated his thoughts to

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him and asked his advice in the selection of an appropriate person for this expedition. He proposed several names, but some refused the command for fear of failure in this regard, some due to lack of courage, and others out of a longing desire they had to return home. Therefore, when Nearchus realized that no one was willing and capable to take on this dangerous task, then presented himself as leading this journey. After accepting Alexander's offer, he addressed him with the following words: "I, O king, will undertake the charge of the fleet; and (if God prospers my endeavours) will convey both the ships and soldiers on board safe into Persia, if the sea along these coasts is navigable or if any human art of industry can accomplish it" (Rooke, 1814: 220-239). The annals of Greek chronologists revealed that Alexander at first appeared to deny his request because he was unwilling to put any of his friends in clear and visible danger. However, when Nearchus insisted on him and urged it strongly, then Alexander appointed him admiral of his fleet. When Nearchus assumed the charges of this voyage, he appointed soldiers as well as sailors for that expedition. Besides selecting the abled soldiers and sailors, he also loaded his boats with costly ornaments as well as enough ration and fresh water. Alexander knew the importance of this marine expedition, therefore, he himself had sailed out of both the mouths of the Indus River and into the sea. He also offered sacrifices to Neptune, and the rest of the marine deities, for the safety of the voyage as well as had also thrown several expensive ornaments into the sea (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023)[§]. These sacrifices and offerings clearly indicated the desire of Alexander who wanted the success of this expedition at any cost (Rooke, 1814).

Research Question and Methodology

Admiral Nearchus Epic Voyage was a historic expedition that traversed the Indus River to the Makran coast. This expedition is considered to be an important milestone in ancient history and had required a well-documented in various historical context of the Makran Coast. To analyse the various aspects of the voyage this study raises the question:

How did Nearchus' Epic Voyage contribute to the understanding of ancient maritime history, and what were the challenges faced

[§] Neptune was the Roman god of waters and seas, who controlled winds and storms. Also known as *Neptunus Equester*, he was recognized as a god of horses and horsemanship, as well as patron of horse racing, a popular form of entertainment for the ancient Romans. It is suggested that Neptune was an exact copy of the Greek deity Poseidon.

during the expedition in traversing the Indus River to the Makran Coast?

The methodology for this study is based on the following steps:

Identification of Coastal Towns

The first step involves identifying the names of the coastal towns mentioned in the Greek chronicles. This was done by analysing the information available about the area and comparing it with the names of the towns provided by the Greek chronologists. The parallels were drawn between the ancient Greek names and the present-day names of the coastal towns.

Analysis of Primary Sources

The next step involved analysing the primary sources available in the Greek chronicles, particularly the accounts of Nearchus and Alexander's retreat from Indus to Gedrosia, as narrated by Arrian in his works 'Annabalis' and 'Indica', as well as Strabo's 'Geography' and Diodorus Siculus's 'Bibliotheca Historica'. The accounts of these historians were used to gain a better understanding of the area and its historical significance.

Conversion of Greek Stadia to Kilometres

The next step involved converting the ancient Greek measurement of stadia into modern kilometres. This conversion was done using the formula that one stadia is equal to 183 meters. This conversion helped in establishing the distance between the coastal towns mentioned in the Greek chronicles.

Comparison of Distances and Geographical Characteristics

The final step involved comparing the distances established through the conversion of Greek stadia to kilometres with the present-day distances between the coastal towns. This comparison helped in identifying the towns that matched the description provided in the Greek chronicles. The geographical characteristics of the towns were also taken into consideration to establish a more accurate match. This methodology helped in identifying the coastal towns mentioned in the Greek chronicles and gaining a better understanding of the historical significance of the area. It provided a systematic approach that relied on

the analysis of primary sources and the comparison of geographical characteristics to establish a match between ancient and modern towns.

The Contemporary Geographical Location of Regions in Nearchus Memoirs

During his voyage in the coastal Makran, Nearchus had made several stopovers in order to procure fresh water and food supply as well as the rough sea also hindered his further expedition in the sea. These delays or obstructions are provided with vast information regarding the small towns and dwellings located in this coastal belt. The present geographical positions of these areas are based on three main criteria, (1) the distance between two coastal areas as mentioned in the dairy of Nearchus and their comparison with an absolute location in modern maps, (2) the geographical features of these areas as described by Nearchus, and (3) finally, comparing the names provided by him which are with some modifications are still in use. Based on these points the detailed description of these areas is as follows (see Appendix 1):

Hub River (Abbiras, Arbitae, Arabitae, Arabis)

Following Alexander's tradition, Nearchus also offered sacrifices to Jupiter the Preserver (Encyclopaedia Mythica ,2023)**. From the mouth of the river Indus, it took almost seven days in sailing in the sea, Nearchus reached the outskirts of the country of Arabitai. Nearchus described the local inhabitants of this country as an Indian nation and mentioned that the country receives its name from the river Arabis. When Nearchus continued his sea journey westwardly he anchored at the mouth of the Arabis River. This area is suggested as the modern Hub Chowki area of Balochistan province in Pakistan, where the Hub River merged into the sea. In the proximity of this area, they spotted two uninhabited islands from where the Greek sailors collected numerous marine shellfish. These islands are presently called Churna islands. The Arabis is described as the boundary between Arabitai and Oreitae countries. Ptolemy and Pliny categorized this area as the 4th delta of the Indus River. These chronologists in their annals also described the neighbouring mountainous areas (Arabita mountains) which rise from the north and finally ended up in the south. Based on Nearchus's diary, Arrian narrated that, the Greek admiral encountered Arabitai tribes near Kokala (present-day Karachi). Therefore, the Arabitai tribes resided in modern days Karachi (in Sindh province) to Hub (in Balochistan

** In the Greek mythology, Jupiter was the brother of Neptune and Pluto, the Roman parallels to Poseidon and Hades respectively.

province) areas. Pliny in his book described them as Arbae while in Puranas (Hindu religious texts composed in Sanskrit) they were called Abhiras (see Diodorus, 1931; Pliny, 1993; Winternitz, 1962; Stein, 1943; and Eggermont, 1975).

Naka Khari (Pagala) and Sonmiani (Kabana)

From River Arabis, Nearchus continued his westward voyage, and reached another coastal town which he named Pagala. The distance between River Arabis to the latter was estimated at 200 stadia which is equivalent to 38 km. According to Greek chronologists, this area is famous for its bronze artefacts. Philostratos, a Greek chronologist, described this town as Pegadai, on the contrary, Ptolemy called it Chalkitis kora (the land of bronze). Pliny narrated that this small coastal town is situated in the proximity of the Pomanus River and belonged to the Pandae area. Interestingly, Pliny mentioned that it was the only area in the Indian region which was under the rule of females. It may possible that he had mistakenly mentioned the land of Pandae which was located in the southern sphere of India. Based on information regarding the distance between this place and with Arabis River, it is quite possible that this coastal town was the present-day Naka Khari (see Pliny, 1993; Winternitz, 1962; Stein, 1943; Dobbins, 1992; and Eggermont, 1975). Sonmiani (Kabana) was located at the terminal of Sonmiani Hor. Since antiquity, this coastal town was flourished as an important seaport. Based on the information provided by Nearchus, no doubt Kabana was the Sonmiani coastal town. Because of good anchorage, Nearchus ordered his sailors to make a stopover at this seaport.

Khandewari or Liari (Alexandria Apud Origala, Alexandria en Makarene, Alexandria (Town of Nearti), Alexandria (Built by Leonnatus), Rhambakia, Harmatelia, Ratira, Kokala, Argenus, Oraia Emporium, City of Rhamnai, Vitabhaya, Ronka?)

The exhaustive list of the naming of this area in the annals of Greek chronologists clearly endorsed the assumption that they took this area seriously (Dobbins, 1992; Holdich, 1900-1; and Eggermont, 1975). It is suggested that because of this small town, Alexander took the pain of this difficult expedition in the coastal Makran. It is mostly because this coastal area was categorized as the main centre of Oreitae tribes. Even though Strabo described the aloofness and isolation of these tribes from the main Indian confederate of armed forces who joined the Persian international army, it seems to me that they were part of this multi-ethnic Indian army who fought alongside with the Persian army in the plains of Greece. Otherwise, Alexander a genius of military tactics could not risk

the lives of his enormous army along with their families. It is difficult to ascertain the geographical location of this area with the help of modern maps, however, it may be possible that this coastal town is located between the western part of Sonmiani Bay and Phor River which is now called Khandewari or Khattaniara or Khatoor. Like the names of this town, the Greek chronologists also called the inhabitants of this area by different names i.e., Dari, Heritage, Neoritai, Agoritae, Abortae, and Organagae. The last in the list of these names were mentioned by Pliny which is categorized as an ethnic name which belonged to Argenuus. According to Justin, the king of this area was Ambus or Ambiregis who was the ruler of Ambi. On the contrary, Orosius called him Ambira. In Puranas, Panini called the inhabitants of this region Varteyas. However, in Mahabharata, they were named Vairamas. In some other ancient Sanskrit sources, they were named Sanvira and resided in a city called Roruka. It is suggested that this area had been called Oritene or Oritana which was later on changed into Origala and Kokala.

It was only Diodoros who informed us that the Greeks had founded a city in this area which they named Alexandria, therefore, the chronologists who later on followed him, in their annals mentioned that Leonnatus was appointed as the satrap of Alexandria. Moreover, Pliny also agreed with Diodoros that Greeks founded an Alexandria in this area, however, according to Julius Valerius the name of the city was Alexandria Apud Origala. Stephanos suggested that this was the 13th Alexandria which was founded by the Greeks to commemorate their victory in this region. The same author also informed us that this area was originally called Nearti which was a small town in Macarena. Despite discrepancies found in the naming of this city, it is clear that the Greek Chronologists considered this town as an important place where Alexander's army fought a fierce battle against the local tribes. Arrian informed us that after the pacification of this city, Alexander installed Leonnatus as the governor of this city in order to facilitate the Nearchus sailors who followed him. When Nearchus reached this coastal town, he named it Rhambakia and built a small garrison in this area in order to control the warrior tribes who resided in the neighbouring hilly areas.

It may be possible that with the help of archaeological findings we may locate the actual geographical position of this coastal town, however, unfortunately in this whole region, the prehistoric findings are only located in Balakot near Windar city. The archaeological findings collected from Balakot belonged to the pre-and Mature Indus Periods, therefore at the time when Alexander visited this area, it already vanished in thin air. If we assume that there were some archaeological findings were present which belonged to the early historical period, it

quite possible that due to tidal movements, they were disappeared in the course of history. Some ancient sources narrated a story which related to the defeat of a king named "Sambus", who was mistakenly named Ambus by Curtius. Moreover, according to some sources, there was a city named Harmatelia which was originally named Harmatena, a small town of Harma. In the same way, Rhambakia was a small town of Rhamba. In this regard, it is suggested that all these names i.e., Harma, Rhamba, and Ambus were originally the modified names of Ora. In ancient Sanskrit sources, this area is mentioned as Vitabhaya which was the capital city of king Udayana. In some old Sanskrit sources, there is another name Roruka also found which is suggested as the capital city of Oreitae tribes. These sources also informed us that it was a coastal town which belonged to Herukaccha (see Panini. (n.d.); Diodorus, 1931; Pliny, 1993; Agrawal, 1953; Arrian, 2011; Holdich, 1900-1; Stein, 1943; Eggermont, 1975; Dobbins, 1992; and Huntingford, 1980).

Hingol (Alexandria of the Soriano, Stobera, Sigerus, Asthagoura, Tomeros)

According to Greek sources, the Hingol River was the boundary line between Gedrosia and western India. Ptolemy described this river as the 7th mouth of the Indus River, which he named Lonibara. However, the other Greek sources called this river Tonberus or Tomeros. The people who resided near the banks of this river were called by Pliny as Parirae or Parisarae and Bassuertae. Besides these tribes, he also mentioned the name of another warrior tribe as Sauri who were resided in the foothills of Mount Maleus. According to ancient Hindu sources, the said tribe were originally Sauvira and belonged to Abhiras or Aebiati tribes. All these small tribes were combined and made a large Varteyas or formed the multi-ethnic Oretai tribe. The Hindu scriptures of the first century A.D. frequently mentioned the name of these tribes in their texts. In Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, the local inhabitants of this area were categorized as Gedrosians who resided in the country named Parsidae.

Unlike these abovementioned Greek chronologists, Arrian even though, mentioned that in the proximity of this river, the local inhabitants resisted the European invader under the command of Nearchus, however, he did not mention the name of these tribes. According to Arrian the Greek naval forces under the command of Nearchus when anchored in a river swollen by winter rain, the name of which was Tomeros. And at the outlet of the river was a lake. Men in stifling huts inhabited the narrow strip of land near the shore. When they saw the fleet approaching, they were amazed, and extending themselves in line along the shore they

found into the military array to prevent the men from landing (Arrian, 2011; Chinnock, 1893)^{††}.

In ancient Hindu scriptures, they were also named Pardayanas of Patanjali or Paradas. Based on these naming, Ptolemy suggested that the coastal town of Pardabathra situated in the lowland areas of the Indus River was considered the 7th mouth of the Indus River. Ptolemy also informed us of the presence of a city in the proximity of Lonibarai, which he named Bardaxima which is considered an ancient Hindu Tirtha or a pilgrimage site. This ancient Tirtha was located near Perdene, a small city in the Paradas area. It may possible that Ptolemy informed us about the Hinglaj Tirtha which is since antiquity been considered an important place of worship in Hinduism. Moreover, Stephanos also mentioned the 14th city of Alexandria developed in Sauri or Sorae area. Besides these names, this area is also reported with different other names. For instance, Stobera of Philostratos named this place Touberns which suggested originated from Tomeros. Ptolemy also named this coastal city Asthagoura, while Pliny is called the coastal area of this town Sigerus. It is suggested that Sigerus belonged to Sigerdis Empire which was according to Strabo conquered by Menander and Demetrios (see Strabo 1857; Pliny, 1993; Agrawal, 1953; Arrian, 2011; Holdich, 1900-1; Stein, 1943; Eggermont, 1975; Mukherjee, 1972; and Huntingford, 1980).

Ras Malan (Malana, Mt. Meleus, Alexandria Malan)

Nearchus described this lofty mountain as Malana which is located near the western coast of Oretai country. Since the Greek period, this mountain retains the same name as the Malan. According to Pliny, this Mountain range runs from north to south and belonged to three powerful local tribes including Oretai, Sauri, and Monaedes. Based on Nearchus Diary, Arrian narrated that this mountain is the western boundary of Oretai country and beyond this, the Greek soldiers did not find any person of Indian origin. From this point onward, the whole area described as the country of Gedrosia. Therefore, the Oretai country expanded from the Arabis River to the mountains of Malana. Pliny informed us about a Parsidae or Paradas who were resided near the banks of Tomeros River (Hingol River) who were also resided on the western part of the Malana. When Nearchus attacked this tribe, they were dispersed and moved eastwardly and finally merged into Indian race, even though, they originally belonged to Iranian race. As far as this area

^{††} Enyalios or Enyalios in Greek mythology is generally a son of Ares by Enyo and also a nickname of Ares the god of war.

had to be the western limit of Indian subcontinent, it seems to be added later on, when these areas were merged into the greater Mauryan Empire. Ptolemy described the residents of this area with different names, i.e., Mandalae, Mandralae, and Malandae. Further, Pliny described these people as Monaedes who were resided in this area along with Sauri. Stephanos informed us that after pacification of this coastal town, the Greeks established the 16th city of Alexandria in this area. Except Stephanos, no other Greek chronologists mentioned the establishment of Alexandria in the Malana area (Pliny, 1993; Cunningham, 1871; Stein, 1943; Eggermont, 1975).

Ormara (Bagisara)

According to Nearchus from Malana onward they were travelled in a coastal country which belonged to Ichthyophagoi (living largely on sea food: fish eaters). The Ichthyophagoi were inhabited the coastal area from Malana to Gedrosia. Strabo with the help of older texts which he used as a supplement, described the country and people of Ichthyophagoi. He narrated,

“[T]he greater part of the country inhabited by the Ichthyophagoi is on a level with the sea. No trees, except palms and a kind of thorn, and the tamarisk, grow there. There is also a scarcity of water, and food produced by cultivation. Both they and their cattle subsist upon fish and are supplied by rainwater and wells. The flesh of the animals has the smell of fish... The fish are taken in nets made of the bark of the palm” (Strabo, 1857).

Unlike Strabo and Arrian who briefly described these Ichthyophagoi, Photois added a few facts on the habits, customs, and beliefs of these Ichthyophagoi in “the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea^{††}” written by an unknown author. According to Photois “...there live the Ichthyophagoi [Fish-eaters] who go stark naked, both men and women, and indulge in common procreation of children. They have an instinctive knowledge of pleasure and pain, but none of the moral qualities” (Huntingford, 1980). It is noteworthy to mention here that the Greeks or later European writers who described the life and customs of the natives of the New World also used the same account. Even though some Europeans imagined the native communities as an ideal primitive society, living freely in a simpler and more peaceful state than in Europe.

^{††} The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea By an unknown author with some extracts from Agatharkhides “On the Erythraean Sea” as epitomised by Photois. Book V, 31. The Hakluyt Society London.

However, the Greek and Roman chronologists described them as barbaric, a term which they used to describe people who did not speak their language or share their culture. As far as the habitats of these Ichthyophagoi concerned, in this regard, Photois tells us “The places nearest to the sea are devoid of all that might sustain life, as are also those adjacent to the great coasts. But the country inland offers good hunting; and the people are averse neither to fish nor to any kind of game”. Further, when the tide comes in, which it does twice a day, the sea covers the whole ridge, bringing with it from the swirling waters a great many fish to the shore, which then remain there, seeking their food from these hollows, and recesses. When the tide goes out, the water recedes through the stone filling of the hollows, but the fish, left inside, afford nourishment to Ichthyophagoi.

Photois also informed us about the local flora of this region as well as the cooking techniques which these Ichthyophagoi employed for their survival in this harsh, desolate place. In this regard he narrated that the whole catch of fish is thrown together on to the hot surface of the rocks at midday, and it is not long before the heat makes the flesh fall away from the bones, provided the heap is big enough and well stirred. The bones are collected into piles which from a distance look like enormous tumuli... The dried food thus obtained is eaten by all, who lie down to eat, according to appetite, and not by weight or measurement (Huntingford, 1980).

Even though in modern time the winter season described as the best time to fish because the sea comparatively calm, however, in antiquity the Ichthyophagoi loathed this season because the tidal current does not approach their shores where they mostly carried out their fishing. It is mostly because they were not well acquainted with boat manufacturing. Therefore, during winter season they again approached these leftover piles of fish which they were collected during the summer season as well as lived shellfish. In this regard, Photois tells us “They take the following steps against sudden spells of cold weather which interrupt the fishing: traveling the whole length of the shore, they collect certain shells which are found there, of immense size, and so large in fact as to be unbelievable to those who have not seen them. In these they find compensation for the difficulties of the weather” (Huntingford, 1980).

However, for human survival food is not the only required they need to drink regularly, therefore, these Ichthyophagoi also needed water for sustaining their life. The scarcity of potable water in the Makran coast already mentioned in preceding pages, which destroyed major portion of Alexander army along with animals, therefore, these Ichthyophagoi also faced the same problem, but they well acquainted

with the water sources available in their surroundings. In this regard Photois narrated that

“Their drinking water is obtained in a still more remarkable way. For four days they have a holiday, with songs and merry-making, distracted by nothing on account of the ease with which their food is prepared. When the fifth day arrives, they go inland to a district lying at the foot of the mountains to get water, where are the rivers of the Nomads, who water their herds there. They start in the evening, and when they reach the watering-places of the Nomads, they stand round the water in a circle and then, kneeling with hands on the ground, they drink like cattle, not with one continuous draught, but with frequent pauses. When in this way they have filled their bellies with water like jars, they make their way back to the sea with difficulty” (Huntingford, 1980).

The abovementioned narration clearly shows the Greek chronologist's prejudices and stereotypes towards the indigenous fish-eater communities inhabited in coastal Makran and neighbouring gulf regions. Besides “barbarian”, these chronologists also used the term savage to describe people they believed to be uncivilized. Even though went about naked at first and wore only a cloth made of animal hides but their lifestyle based on a sincere honesty. They cheat and injure no one. They were well acquainted with the surroundings and equipped with practical knowledge of how to survive in this harsh environment. On the other hand, the conqueror of the world, Alexander the Great faced the hardship which he saw never before in his short-lived carrier. The adaptability of these indigenous communities with their environment clearly shown in this below mentioned passage narrated by Photois:

“In this way, the, live the Ichthyophagoi, who have their habitations in the inlets and tortuous parts of the coast; and those who claim for themselves the outer shore thrive continually by fishing in this way... Whence it seems to me that they have no definite indication of knowledge, but that they regulate all their lives by custom, expressed in words, sounds, and imitative signs” (Huntingford, 1980).

When Nearchus reached at the coastal town of Bagisara, he found the shores of this area were suitable for anchorage, therefore he ordered his sailors to disembark from their ships and boats and retired. At a distance seven miles from this coastal town, the Greeks spotted a small dwelling which they named as Pasira where Pasiran people were resided. When they left this coastal town, they moved around an

enormous promontory standing before the sea. It seems Nearchus anchored his ships and boats in the Eastbay of modern Ormara town, possibly the small dwelling which they named as Pasira located in the eastern side of this town (Ghut area of Ormara?). Arrian also informed us, when Nearchus moved around this promontory he again anchored on the western side of the shore (West Bay area of Ormara). In the West Bay area, he ordered to dig some wells in order to procure fresh water. Palani described the Pasiran as Bassuertae who were resided near the banks of Tonberos river (around Hingol River). It may be possible that based on Pasira, Ptolemy described the capital city of Gedrosia as Parsis (Pliny, 19993; Holdich, 1900-1; Stein, 1943; Eggermont, 1975; Dobbins, 1992).

Ras Basol (Kolta)

Nearchus left Bagisara at midnight and after a distance 38 km he reached another coastal town which he named as Kolta. It is suggested this town located in proximity of area where River Basol enter into the sea. In this area, Nearchus ordered to dig some wells in order to procure fresh water. It is noteworthy to mention here that none of the Greek chronologist described this river as the mouth of Indus River. It means they no more considered these areas as parts of Indian subcontinent (Arrian, 2011 and Dobbins 1992:21).

Kalimat (Balara, Kalima, Kalyba)

After Kolta, Nearchus again stopped at another coastal town which he named as Kalyba. Some chronologists also referred this place as Kalima. In their annals they also mentioned the signs of some agricultural activities as well as the presence of dates orchards in this area. Philostratos mentioned the presence of numerous dates orchards and Myrtle trees in this area^{§§}. In this area Nearchus found a suitable place for anchorage, therefore he ordered his sailors to disembark from their ships and boats. The Greek chronologists also mentioned an island located in proximity of Balara which they named as Karnine. Besides this island, some chronologists also mentioned the presence of another island in the proximity of this coastal town which they named as "Island of Selera." Apparently, both of them located at the same latitude, therefore, it may be possible that the Greek chronologists called a single

^{§§} *Myrtus communis* (Balochi name Moorth): This plant has long been used in folk medicine to treat several ailments. In coastal Makran, the powdery paste of foliage parts of this plant has been used as antiseptic for cloacal aperture of infants.

island with different names. From Ichthyophagoi coast context, Arrian also mentioned Nosala island which was located in the deep blue sea. He told us a very interesting story related with this island. This story also explained the myths that prevailed among these Ichthyophagoi communities.

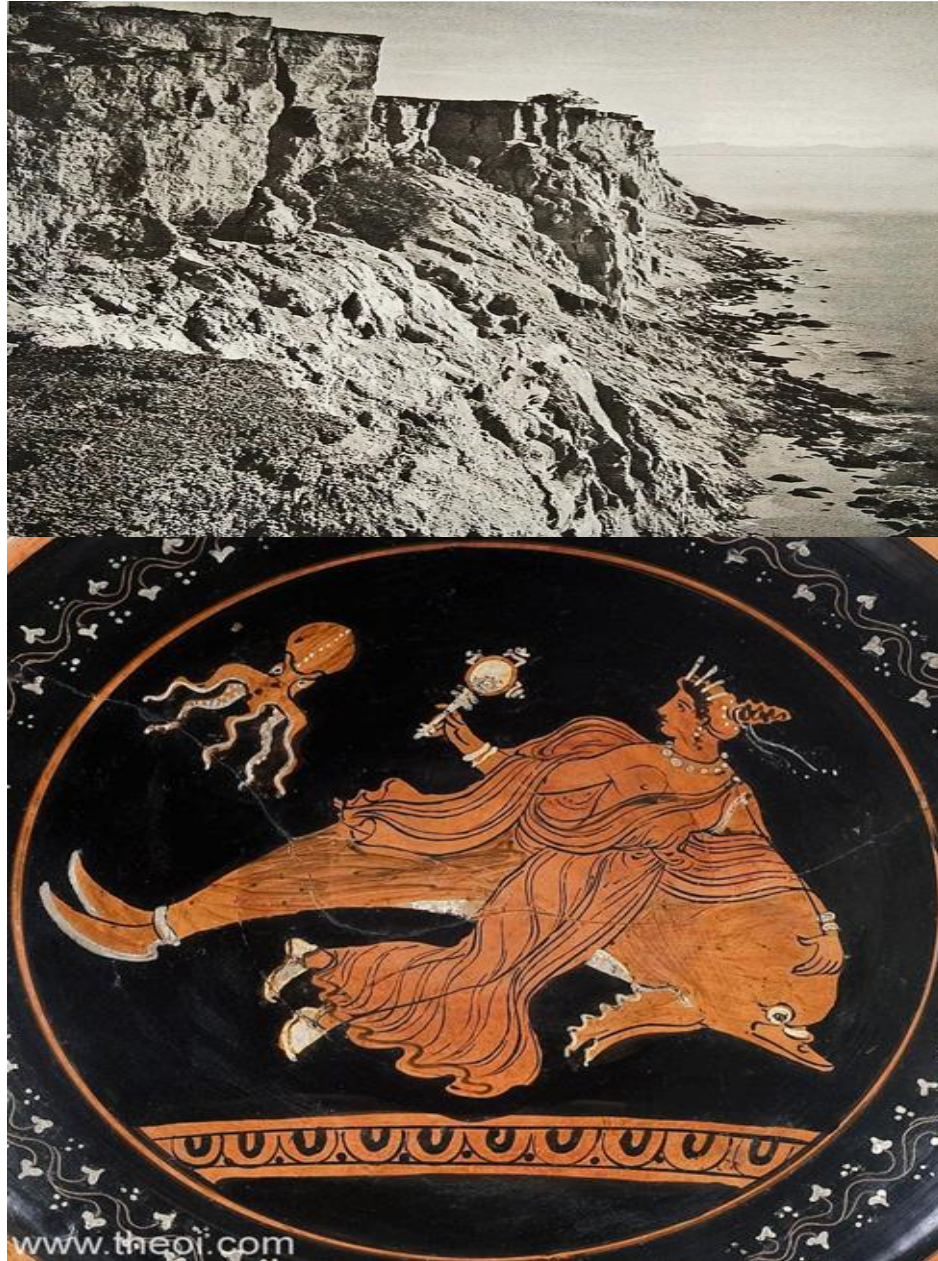


Figure 1: Nereids of Nosala/Karnine, Island of Selera

With the help of this island (Karnine, Nosala or Island of Selera: Balochi name Huft-Talar, seven rocks, also known as Astola) we can measure the actual distance between different coastal towns. Because beyond Malan, it is the only geographical spot which is still located in the southern direction of Ichthyophagoi country. Locally known as Haft-Talar, this island situated 32 km southeast of Kalamat coast. Ptolemy called this island as Asthala which is phonetically similar to Astola. Arrian wrote the distance from the nearest coast to this island is 100 stades (18.5 km) which is according to modern standard does not correct (Pliny 1993; Arrian's Anabasis, 2011; Holdich, 1900-1).

Rumbra (Karbhis)

From Kalama Nearchus continued his westwardly marine expedition in the Makran shorelines and made a stopover at another coastal town which belonged to Ichthyophagoi. When the Greek sailors landed in this desolate coast the local when saw one of the most modern and well-equipped army, they fled to interior. The Greek chronologists named this coastal town as Karbis. At a distance of three and half miles of this coastal town, they noticed the signs of a small hamlet which they named as Kissa. It seems that this small coastal town was located in proximity of a small rivulet which is now locally called Rumra or Rungra. It may also possible that during prehistoric time this small coastal hamlet was located in proximity of modern Badok Coastguard Check post near Shadi Kaur at Pasni. According to Arrian, when Nearchus left this area, he navigated around a huge lofty mountain and then anchored to another coastal area. Based on Arrian description this mountainous range was 17 to 18 miles long which seems some kind of exaggeration. Anyway, based on the geographical location and geological description it seems this lofty mountain which was described by Arrian was Juddi located at Pasni Bundar. The modern distance between Rumra hamlet and Pasni Bundar is 30 km. According to some other sources this coastal mountain was Koh -i-Zaren which is located in proximity of Juddi (Arrian, 2011; Dobbins, 1992: 22).

Pasni, Ras Zaren (Mosarna, Mousarna)

When Nearchus navigated around a lofty mountain and anchored, they called this coastal town as Mosarna. They procured fresh water from this coastal town and also noticed the presence of a small fishermen village in this area. Ptolemy called this place as Mousarna. According to Dobbins who described and identified all these coastal

towns with the help of information provided by the Greek chronologists and compared them with modern maps, suggested that this lofty mountain which is located near the shore was Koh-i-Juddi. This coastal rock located in southeast direction of present day Pasni Bundar.

Major Mockler who was the British residence of Gwadar during the late 19th century, narrated that Nearchus did not mention the distance between Kalama and Mosarna, however, he just narrated that they were navigated around an enormous mountain (promontory: which was 150 stades = 15 km) and then anchored at the coast. According Major Mockler this mountain was Koh -i-Zaren. According to Muller the Mosarna was the Greek name of Koh -i-Zaren. However, Major Mockler did not agree with this assumption and with the help of Arrian's account he suggested that Mosarna was in reality the name of coastal town where Nearchus after navigating around a lofty coastal rock and then anchored. In modern time this locality is the Rik-i-Pushat area of Pasni Bundar. It may also possible when Greek visited this coastal town, at that time this hamlet was located between Koh -i-Zaren and Juddi. However, the area which is located in between these two mountains is a rocky area not suitable for anchorage. Therefore, probably they were anchored on the western side of this mountain. Arrian also mentioned that Mosarna was a safe Harbour where the Greek naval force also procured fresh water. With the help of information provided by the Greek chronologists it may possible that this Harbour was situated in the western bay of Pasni area where the local still fetch fresh water from ancient wells (Arrian, 2011; Dobbins, 1992; Holdich, 1900-1; Mockler, 1879)***.

Ras Shomal Bundan (Balomos)

The distance between Mosarna and Balomos was 750 stades = 75 km. According to Major Mockler if we considered the distance between Koh -i-Zaren to this area, this coastal town going to be the modern Barambah where a dry stream with the same name which inundated during heavy rain. However, Dobbins suggested that Balomos was actually Ras Shomal Bundan and Nearchus overestimated the distance (Mockler, 1879: 136). It is noteworthy to mention here that before reaching this place, Nearchus hired a local guide named Hydrakes who was the resident of Gedrosia and well acquainted with these coastal towns. Therefore, from Balomos to onward, Nearchus navigated these areas without any difficulty. However, we missed the names of several

*** On the identification of places on the Makran Coast mentioned by Arrian, Ptolemy, and Marcien. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*. New Series, Vol. II (2): pp. 135-136, 152.

small coastal hamlets which were otherwise due to enforced anchorage possibly secured a space in the annals of Greek chronologists.

Gwadar (Barna, Badara)

According to Nearchus the distance between Balomos to Barna was 400 stades (40 km). With the help of information provided by Nearchus no doubt this small town was present day Gwadar which Arrian named as Barna. Unlike Arrian, Marcian called this coastal town as Badara. When Nearchus visited this town, it was developing coastal area, which was connected by trade with the Gedrosia and other neighbouring areas. The Greeks were astonished when they saw flowering gardens, orchards of distinct kinds of fruits including dates. For the first in this wilderness, they found a place which according to their criteria should be categorized as “civilized”. They also impressed from the manners of the local inhabitants who always ornamented themselves garlands made of different flowers. The local inhabitants grew diverse kinds of fragrant flowering plants. Ptolemy called this place as Badara (Dobbins, 1992; Holdich, 1900-1 opt. quoted. P. 137).

Ras Pishukan (Dendrobosa, Derenobosa)

From west bay of Barna, Nearchus started his coastal expedition westwardly and after traversing a distance of 200 stades (20 km) he reached another coastal town which he named as Dendrobosa. According to Dobbins this coastal town was Ras Pishukan. Marcian called this town as Daranobbila. Major Mockler agreed that this town located westwardly of Gwadar, however, in this regard he informed us that possibly it was an island which is now submerged into the sea. Major Mockler also informed us the old folks of this area narrated that there was an island in this area where they took their goats for grazing in their childhood, however, now this island has been completely swallowed by the sea. Based on these stories, Major Mockler suggested that Dendrobosa was actually the name of island which was located near the sea (Mockler, 1879 opt. quoted. 137).

Ankara River (Zorambus)

The distance between west bay of Barna and Zorambus river was 250 stades (25 km). According to Major Mockler, the source of this small river is located in the Daramb mountainous range. The phonic similarity between Daramb and Zorambus suggested that this river named because of this mountainous range. It is noteworthy to mention here that the information regarding the Zorambus were provided by the Greek chronologist Marcian (Mockler, 1879: 135).

Pishukan Bundar (Kophas)

When Nearchus left Dendrobosa, he reached another coastal town which he named as Kophas. The distance between these places were mentioned as four hundred stades (40 km). As mentioned in preceding pages, before reaching this place, Nearchus anchored in a small town which he named as Dendrobosa which was suggested an island which is now submerged in this sea. Therefore, it may possible that this island was located in proximity of Gwadar particularly in the west bay of this coastal town. Dobbins did not agree with this information and suggested that Kophas or Kophanta in reality was the coastal town of Gwadar located in the Iranian coastal Makran. He narrated that at this area, Nearchus met with some local fishermen who provided him freshwater. However, if we consider the distance between modern city of Gwadar and Gwatar, it would be around 175 or 200 km. On the other hand, the distance between Barna and Kophas was only 40 km. Similarly, Dr. D.D. Vincent categorized the Kuidza as Gwattar. On the other hand, Major Mockler suggested that Kuidza located on western direction of Pishukan at a distance of 80 km which is most probably the modern coastal town of Pasabandan. Of this coastal town Arrian narrated that the seafront of this coast embedded with numerous rocks which made it difficult to anchorage particularly during rough sea. After departure from this coastal town, Nearchus reached at coastal town of Tiz (modern Iranian coastal town of Chabar).

Nearchus Epic Voyage had marked a significant impact in ancient history for several reasons, such as his encounters with Persians and Indians, cultural exchange, Greek art, ideas, and influence on philosophy and religion. Nearchus and his soldiers persevered and eventually reached the Persian Gulf after a voyage of more than a year. The geography, indigenous flora and fauna, the customs, and traditions of the people he met, and many other things were noted by Nearchus during the expedition. His expeditions offer insightful perspectives on the history and early discovery of Asia.

Conclusion

Nearchus marine expedition of coastal encountered several natural hurdles but with his courage, responsibilities, and highly celebrated skipper, Alexander the Great, he fulfilled his promised and brought all his men safe and secure at the final destination which was coastal town of Gedrosia. During this voyage he informed us different coastal towns, their inhabitants, local customs, flora, and fauna, as well as the geography of these areas and opened up a new area of

understanding in ancient history. His information gives us the true picture of early historic coastal Makran and enhances our knowledge regarding the courage and resilience of the indigenous coastal people, who despite all odds well equipped with knowhow of survival in this cruel, desolate wilderness where chances of survival were negligible.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Description of coastal Makran as narrated by Greek Chronologists

Greek name	Present Name	Distance		Tribes	Remarks
		Stadia	Km*		
Arabis	Hub River	----	----	Arabitai	Nearchus met Arabitai tribe near Korokala, found two islands in sea
Thence to Pagala	Naka Khari	200	37	Oretai	Famous for

					Bronze objects: Ruled by a Queen?
Kabana	Sonmiani	450	83.25	Oretai	Due to good anchorage, Nearchus made a stopover
Rhambakia/Origala/Kokala, Alexandreia	Khandewarior Liari	200	37	Main center of Oretai	One of the main reasons of Alexander's expedition on Makran coast; Fierce battle between Greeks and native; Leonnatus installed as Governor; Nearchus built a small garrison;
Tomeros: (some chronologists also mentioned this area as 14th city of Alexandria	Hingol River	500	92.5	Oretai, Sauviras, Parsidae (Gedrosia ns	7th mouth of Indus; a confederacy of small tribes combined made a large Oretai; 600 strong local tribesmen fought, slain, captured and fled; described as "barbarians"; no mention of Hinglaj
Malana: 16th city of Alexandria	Ras Malan	300	55.5	Oretai, Parsidae (Gedrosia ns	Western coast of Oretai; western limit of Indian region, Local tribesmen again fought; Beginning of Gedrosia
Bagisara	Ormara	600	111	Ichthyo.	Country of fish eaters (Ichthyophagoi); No trees except palms, dwelling made of
Kolta	Ras Basol	200	37	Ichthyo.	Wells were dug,
Kalima, Balara, Kalyba	Kalimat	600	111	Ichthyo.	Some agricultural activities; suitable place of anchorage; Island of Selera or Nosala 110 stadia from shore; Story of

					the Nereid
Karbis	Rumbra, Rungra	200	37	Ichthyo.	Desolate coastal area, local fled once they saw Greeks
Mosarna	Pasni, Ras Zaren	400	74	Ichthyo.	Zaren and Juddi; Prahag area, ancient remains of Ichthyophagoi
Balomos	Ras Shomal Bundan, Barambah?	750?	138?	Ichthyo.	Distance former and latter seems to be exaggerated; Hydrakes, a Gedrosian Nakhuda was hired by Nearchus
Barna, Badara	Gwadar	400	74	Parthian? Persian?	First time Greek encountered “civilization”; orchards and gardens; trade with Gedrosia; ornamented with garlands; Batal Dam?
Dendrobosa, Derenobosa	Ras Pishukan	200	37	Ichthyo.	Located west of Gwadar, Island in sea
Zorambus	Ankara River	250	47	Ichthyo.	Mountain range of Daramb seen from sea
Kophas	Jiwani/ Gwattar	400	74	Ichthyo.	Actual location confusing

**Distance in km measured based on 1 stade = 185 meter (almost exactly 1/10 nautical mile)*