

## **ANCIENT INDIA, WEST AFRICA & THE SEA**

### **Why it could not be so**

In several articles this writer has pursued the subject several groups in antiquity were rather more in maritime contact than generally acknowledged.

Among those papers are those dealing with aspects of the Phoenicians titled "From the Red to the Med.: The Phoenicians in East Africa"; "Ajahi to Ajahi: The Phoenicians in West Africa"; "Canaan to Cornwall & Cork: The Phoenicians in West Europe". They are to be found on phoeniciaorg.

Other papers of mine discuss African aspects of maritime history but this article discusses ancient possible connections of "Greater" India with various parts of part of Africa that lays some emphasis on west Africa. By "Greater" India is the vast territory now broken up into the present-day countries of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka (= ex-Ceylon), Burma/Myanmar (?).

In many of those other articles, a pattern was set out that outlined some of the negatives under titles that resemble the present one of "Why it could not be". One the clearest statements of scepticism about ancient India and its maritime history comes in "The Phantom Voyagers: Evidence of Indian Settlement in Africa in Ancient Times" by Robert Dick-Read (2005). Dick-Read (ib.) looked at the well-known "Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-borne Trade & History of the Indians from the Earliest Times". In the latter, Radha Kumud Mookerjee (1912) studied Indian ships from Before Common Era (= BCE/BC) to those of Common Era (= CE/AD).

Dick-Read's book rightly lauds the achievements of the Austronesians as seafarers but does so for those west-going across the Indian Ocean towards Madagascar plus east Africa. More of the same comes with realisation that also from Island Southeast Asia (= ISEA)/Maritime Southeast Asia came a major ancestral strand of the Proto-Polynesians going east on to the western Pacific. Any efforts to compare this with Indian maritime history would be dismissed out of hand by Dick-Read (ib.).

Nor is the Indian case greatly helped when we read of giant sea-craft cited by Mookerjee plus others that some writers connect with stories of flying ships. The last point is not confined to ancient India. Other examples include over-enthusiastic Egyptocentrics proposing Egyptian hieroglyphs depict aircraft; the Before Adam series by Catherine Acholonu linking Igbo/Ibo myth to this; Celto/Irish tradition adds the flying-wheel of Mogh Ruith and the "cigar-shape" (?) of Adomnan's "Vita Columbae". They can all probably be safely and quickly be set aside.

On a more practical level, it can be noted giant ships are also claimed to be represented by the treasure-ships of Cheng-Ho (= Zheng-He). Zheng-He's flagship is guesstimated at 400 feet wide and 160 feet wide. This compares with Noah's Ark at circa (= ca.) 450 feet long and 75 feet wide and the Santa Maria of Christopher Columbus at ca. 85

feet and 25/50 feet wide. The nature of the Ark plus that of those referred to in the Sanskrit saga of the Ramayana stresses the mythical aspect of much of this. It is also thought that the dimensions of Zhenghe's ship(s) prompts doubts of whether a wooden vessel of that size could ever have been constructed.

More associated doubts come with the claimed dockyard at Lothal (Gujerat, India). The Rao (summarised on Wikipedia re. Lothal) and Leshnik (American Anthropologist 1968) conclusions about it are very different. It seems those of Shikaripura Rao (ib.) is the prevailing opinion but those of Laurence Leshnik (ib.) represent a sizeable and continuing set of questions. This other viewpoint has it this is but a large water-tank that is perhaps to be seen as a provincial version of the Great Bath of the Harappan Culture at Mohenjodaro (Pak.) and not as the oldest dockyard in the world.

East India has what is described as the oldest port in India by the author of "Ports of India: The Oldest Seven" which reads a little curious in the light of the mention of Kolkata (= Calcutta) as the oldest of Indian ports but which list also includes Lothal. Rao ((The Lost City of Dvaraka 1991) was also involved as the major investigator at the severally spelt Darka/Dvaraka/Dawarka that he attributed to the Hindu god named Krishna.

Setting aside the claims that the submerged/drowned-land corner of ISEA that is now called Sundaland was the home of Hinduism, we find that the opposite corners of India more of these lands flooded by the sea. Thus at Kumari in southeast India and Darka in the northwest but the attaching of religion to this brings its own difficulties.

Giving this an international setting once again, there is the almost religious disdain for the sea on the part of Neo-Confucian China. James Hornell (Water Transport 1946) showed such Greek writers as Strabo (1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE), Plutarch (ca. 50-120 CE) and Porphyry (3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE) saying Egyptians hated the sea and this is enough for Alessandra Nibbi (Revue d'Anthropologie 1993) to state Egyptians had no interest in the sea. On the other side of Africa from Egypt is Nigeria and here the orhenes (= priests) of the Igbo/Ibo people were also forbidden to travel in water-craft according to Northcote Thomas (JRAI 1917). Hornell (ib.) cited Mohammed saying "He who...goes on the sea is truly an infidel"; also Omar (4<sup>th</sup> Khaliffa/Caliph [= Successor] of M.) saying of the sea "Trust it little, fear it much. George Hourani (Arab Seafaring 1951 & 1995) further cited Caliph Omar ibn Khittab refusing permission for the Faithful to go to as it was unnatural.

The tenets of Hinduism are regarded as having been codified as the Manusmriti (= The Laws of Manu) that are given dates of anywhere between ca. 1500 BCE and ca. 500 BCE. This is a text in the ancient language called Sanskrit in which Manu tells us a Hindu could not remain a Hindu on going to sea. This hardly speaks for extensive Indian seafaring.

Online references that Hinduism originates in the drowned-lands of Sundaland would mean the traces of Hinduism in southeast

Asia will mean that they do not attest Indian influences there east of India. Indian influences west of India would be shown by such as Chola as Chaldean, Asura as Assyria, Pani as Phoenician, etc (as cited by Sushama Londe on Tribute to Hinduism online) but do these claims stand up to close scrutiny?

Given that Dravidian is a language evidently once spread over the area of the Harappan Culture of what is now Pakistan and northwest India and Tamil is held to be one of the tongues derived from it, a link between Dravido/Tamil remains possible. On the other hand, Tamils called Cholas were very much a regional power of southeast India not the northwest/Pakistan. What more definitely rules out any Chola antecedents for the Semitic Chaldeans is chronology. The Chaldeans as a separate people before it came to mean astrologer had come and gone by ca. 500 BCE, whereas the Cholas are first noted at ca. 300 BCE with their great rise being of ca. 900 CE.

Asura seems to have meant devil, drunkard, etc. In this light we find a German Kaiser referring to “a contemptible little army” and more German propaganda to rats in Tobruk (Libya). These terms referred to the British Expeditionary Force in Belgium in World War I and the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army in the desert warfare of World War II respectively. In both cases, the Old Contemptibles plus the Desert Rats became terms of honour. So words can change meaning but Asura as the origin of the name of the Assyrians is both uncomplimentary and improbable.

Equally so for any equation of Sanskrit Pani as Semitic Phoenician, the more so given that one meaning of Pani seems to be thief. When the Spanish first came across one Pacific island-group, a number of items went missing and the Spaniards named them the Ladrones (= Islands of Thieves). This again uncomplimentary name was soon dropped in favour of that honouring a Spanish queen when coming under permanent Spanish rule and became known as the Marianas. They still have that name. In any case, Pani does resemble Poeni but this in turn is a Latinisation of the Greek name from which we get Phoenician and is far too late to have a bearing on the ancestry of that people. The name the Phoenicians gave themselves was based on that seen in the Bible as Canaan. Even as late as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE Augustine could write that the remnants of the Phoenician settlers at Carthage still called themselves Chanani (= Canaanites).

More words in an Indian language is in the book titled “1421” by Gavin Menzies (2003). This is in an inscription at Janela in the Cape Verde Islands off west Africa. It would have commemorated the great feat of Zheng-He of having crossed the Indian Ocean and then circumnavigating Cape Agulas at the southernmost point of Africa and then getting as far north in west Africa as the just-seen Cape Verdes and Senegal. The Indian ship depicted on the Mauro Map as off the coast of southwest Africa would help this but would leave unexplained why such a feat by the Chinese would have been recorded in Chinese not by the obscure Tamil-source language of Malayalam.

Menzies does trouble his readers with a picture of the supposed inscription at Janeela. Zheng-he is known to have marked his progress

westwards by inscriptions, as at Galle (Sri Lanka). The Galle stele is akin to the rather more famous Rosetta Stone in being known in three languages but that of Galle praises Buddha in Chinese, a local form of Shiva in Tamil and Allah in Persio/Arabic. Whereas our purported inscription at Janela more resembles some of Barry Fell's obscurer "translations" based on scratched rocks, so means very little.

### **Going east**

There is probably enough of the negative terms here and it should be said there are views that are entirely the opposite. Among them are Africa to India marked by what past authors have severally termed the Out-of-Africa (= OOA), Oceanic Negro, Beachcomber, Strandlooper or Ichthyophagi Trail.

The development of genetic research has done much to clarify what is going on along this OOA-trail. It seems there were considerable genetic mutations, so means the genomorph will have altered greatly along it. As to the phenomorph in east Africa, the mix of hair tightly-coiled, wavy plus straight becomes more and more based on straight from India onwards. The black skin plus tightly-coiled hair of the phenomorph that led to the Greek term of Aethiopes (= Burnt-faces) for the physical appearance of most Africans, especially in Sub-Sahara.

This would be demonstrated by Aithiopia (later variants being Aethiopia & Ethiopia) being applied to as far away as India. Some physical proof comes with what is probably the most famous single artifact of the Harappan (= Indus, Indus Valley or Indus Valley) Culture. This is the "dancing-girl" from Mohenjodaro (Pak.) who has been described in the now-gone terminology as "of the true Negro" seen of west Africa. Still later Europeans further brought west African descriptions still further east in the name of that part of west Africa facing the Gulf of Guinea applied by Spaniards to the west Pacific island of New Guinea. Another recognition of this comes with the French-coined word of Melanesia (= Islands of the Blacks).

A map by "Tribute to Hinduism" (online) shows on one side of India is Aparasamudra (= Arabian Sea) and that the east coast faces the Parvasamudra (= Bay of Bengal). Going further east puts us among the islands of southeast Asia seen above as ISEA with another name being Nusantara. Still going east are the island-groups of the just-seen Melanesia, Micronesia plus the much more famous Polynesia.). Still more descriptive terminology involves Remote Oceania and Nearer Oceania being used of the latter three groups.

Going eastwards from India involves the work of such as messrs. Smith and Fornander. The major difficulty is that they are pioneering efforts on matters Polynesian and are often dismissed by later researchers. However, they are cited by Elsdon Best (*The Maori as He Was: A Brief Account of Life as it Was in Pre-European Days* 1934). Further is Best (ib.) and Brian Sykes (*Blood of the Isles* 2007) drawing attention to both India plus somewhere called Hawaiki.

Sykes (ib.) is one those basing arguments based marrying with folklore with genetics. He shows how closely the accounts in the Irish

traditions in Lebor Gabala Erenn (= Book of Conquests) compare with genetic evidence. Sikes (ib.) shows an African strain about the island of Lewis (off west Scot.) at Stornaway opposite the stone circle of Callanish that locals say was built by Africans.

Strong oral-lore in the part of “Greater India” that is northwest Pakistan occurring among the Hazara of a Mongol ancestry is confirmed by genetics according to Sykes (ib.). The same writer also says the name of Hawaiki combines with genetic research to attest Island Southeast Asia (= ISEA = “Indonesia” = Nusantara [= Islands]) as the original Hawaiki (= Homeland?). He might also have added that this was also where the tongues collectively grouped as the Austronesian (= AN) languages probably originate and that this is true of both the Indo/Malay and Polynesian groups.

The Indian word of samudra was seen to translate as sea and combined with dvipa (= a Sanskrit word for island) apparently gives us Dvipa Samudra (= Sumatra?). In such Indian works as the Mahabarata, Ramayana, Rigveda, etc, there are mentions of Varuna (the Hindu sea-god) occurring in ISEA, Sita (wife of Rama), etc, being sought there. If the dates of ca. 1500/1000 BCE for these Indian sagas hold true, it will be obvious that Indian naval expeditions to the islands were happening at this early period.

Varuna was once the king of the Hindu gods but lost status over time according to Erica Goy (Varuna: The Judgemental God online). This resembles what Joseph Olumide Lucas (Religion of the Yorubas 1949) wrote of Olokun as the one-time chief god named Olokun. The more so that both Varuna and Olokun became gods of the sea of the Hindus in India and the Yorubas of Nigeria in west Africa. Other online sites state Varuna became Baruna/Barunha in Indo/Malay. Some of these sites tell us that Baruna took on a meaning of something like this is it/this is home/this is ours that then evolved into the name for the whole of Borneo.

Other names of Indian origin for Borneo include not just Dvipa Varuna/Baruna (giving later Borneo for the island and/or Brunei for part of Borneo) plus Dvipa Saka (= Island of Teak [Trees?] = Borneo?). Among yet more such names are Dvipa Suvarna (= Isle of Gold = Sumatra); Dvipa Yawa/Yava (= Isle of Barley = Java); Dvipa Siele (= Isle of Warriors and/or Lions = Sri Lanka/Ceylon); Dvipa Lakshad (= 100,000 Islands = Laccadives); Dvipa Mal (= Garland of Islands? = Maldives); Dvipa Mahad or Mahal (= Great Island? = Madagascar?); Dvipa Sukhadra (= Isle of Bliss = Socotra); Dvipa (= Dipa/Diba? = Bajuns?).

Best (ib.) is one of those referring to the opinion of some past writers that the word of yawa/yava (= barley) in the language of ancient India called Sanskrit became applied to the ISEA island of Dvipa Java (= Island of Barley). He cites Smith saying this was the origin of the Polynesian concept of Hawaiki meaning Homeland and Sykes (ib.) was shown to state that genetics brings this to the AN-groups of ISEA. Hawaiki became Havaiki (Society Is.); Avaiki (Cook Is.); Hawaii (north Poly.); Savai (Samoa); Havai (mid. Poly.); Hiva (Marquesas); Hova (Madagascar).

The above-seen question-marks immediately signal some of these names are problematical but further recognition of the Indian influences in southeast Asia came with the term of “Indonesia”. It means Indianised islands) for most of the islands that were otherwise known as Nusantara (= Islands) and are to be distinguished from Melanesia (= Islands of Blacks), Micronesia (= Small Islands), Polynesia (= Many Islands), etc.

Elsdon Best (ib.) further referred to the place called Irihia according to the legends of the Polynesians settled in in New Zealand called Maoris. He says because of Maori pronunciation, Vrihia became Wirihia or Irihia. Best related the Sanskrit word of vrihi (= rice) to Polynesian words of vari, wari, pari, etc for the same grain (so adds another Sanskrit-based word for a crop to Polynesian). Smith is cited by Best saying that wari occurs in Hawaiki te-varinga for the homeland (seen above as “ISEA) in the myths of the Pacific island of Rarotonga. The relevance of this is simply put, namely that Vrihia is identified as a Sanskrit term for India/part of India.

That many of these islands were once part of the now-drowned Sundaland has been touched on. As has the suggestion that Hinduism may originate here. On the other hand, far more likely is that the birthplace of Hinduism is as is generally accepted is India. This is as true of Jainism plus Buddhism.

Stories of military adventures are generally well to the fore in histories of most nations and things military from India were certainly known in ISEA and from c1500/1000 BCE at that on the above. However, not to be overlooked is that the main vehicle for Indian influences in southeast Asia was commercial and religio/cultural. This remains today with the Indonesian island of Bali still largely imbued with Hinduism despite being surrounded by Islam.

The Wikipedia article on “Hinduism in Indonesia” says there are a number of theories about how Indian religions got to ISEA/Indonesia. One involves migrating Indian Kshatrya (= Warriors). There is no valid reason why the Kshatryas/Shatris are the only factor in this and to judge from the ISEA temple-art, warriors were always part of the overall set-up. These soldiers staying when Indians ceased to rule in ISEA compares with what is said about Africans left behind when Egypt left what is now Georgia according to a story from Herodotus (5<sup>th</sup> BCE Greek).

Beyond ISEA or “Indonesia” and on to south China, an article by Rong Xinjiang (Land Route or Sea Route: Commentary on the Study of the Paths of Transmission & Areas in which Buddhism was dissemination during the Han Period) is translated by Xingui Zhou (Platonic Papers 2004). The author regards it as probable the first Buddhism came overland from India by the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE and that of any sea-borne transmission was of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. CE.

However, Londe (ib.) cites such European authorities as messrs Phillips (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society 1965) and Lacouperie (Western Origins of Chinese Civilisation 1966) say this would not have been the oldest maritime contacts between India and China. They cite accounts of Indian ships with bird-headed stems and connect this

with a placename from the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit. This Sanskrit placename is that of Lanka being echoed as Lang-ka/Lang-ga in east China as the base of Indian traders by 700/650 BCE. The importance of this site comes home when it is recognised that it became the main base of the German Imperial Pacific fleet.

Apparently the arrival of Islam to these Indianised states making up what is now mainly ISEA/Indonesia comes from the perhaps surprising direction of China. The argument goes that it came with the fleet of Zheng-He according to Wikipedia on Zheng-He. Islam usually had a point-of-sword introduction but that coming with Zheng-He seems to have been relatively peaceful.

Here we can contrast suggestions of Kushite Africans in Georgia on the Black Sea and Chinese soldiers left behind in ISEA. The Kushites being referred to are those that are said by Herodotus to been left behind in Georgia by “Sesostris” and prompted Frank Yurco (in *Black Athena Revisited* 1996) to suggest they had been abandoned. Whereas this is not said of the Indian soldiers left behind on Indian ending in ISEA (as noted just above) or Chinese Muslim troops of Zheng-He left behind that Wikipedia says they were largely responsible for the introduction of Islam in ISEA. In all these cases, the staying behind was their choice

### **Going West (mainly AN)**

Island-names involving the Sanskrit word of dvipa were seen to the west of India as well to the east of India but the achievements of the Austronesians tend to overshadow this. The latter is given a full and popular treatment in “The Phantom Voyager: Evidence of Indonesian settlement in Africa in ancient times 2005).

The Austronesians were also to the south in what are now the northern parts of what is now called Australia. It is known the Austronesians were the major ancestral strain of the Polynesians on the Pacific Ocean east of both ISEA plus India.

There is also a tendency to replace the Genesis and Atlantis legends with those about Sundaland incorporating most of what has been since been called the islands of Nusantara. What formerly were usually regarded as Indian traits to be seen across the Indian Ocean region (= IOR) were seen as those emanating from ISEA on the authority of a series of works by James Hornell. This especially means (Man 1928; *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* = JRAI 1934; *Water Transport* 1946, etc).

It was seen the Austronesian (= ANs) Indo/Malays from what are variously known as Maritime Southeast Asia or Island Southeast Asia (= ISEA) were also called Nusantarans or Islanders. We also find Hornell (ib.) arguing for Islanders as the Pre-Tamil inhabitants in south India. He does so citing Tamil tradition.

A great Austronesian achievement would be the ca. 4500 miles by sea at one go between ISEA and east Africa attributed to AN sailors. Even if we take these Austronesic ANs/Indonesians as having covered the lesser distance of ca. 4000 miles, this would still be no

mean feat. The more so given that from the rati described by Pliny (1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Roman), it would appear that this all occurred on open rafts.

Another early vessel-type is the dugout-canoe with outrigger. It seems long narrow canoes were very unstable at sea. One method of achieving stability would be by lashing two canoes together. A stage in development would be a reduced second craft in size but still resembling the original, as reported by William Dampier (17<sup>th</sup> Eng.). Further reduction of the smaller boat would be into no more than a float or outrigger but still attached by poles to the main vessel. One form was the canoe with the single outrigger with its close relative having two outriggers. The latter especially dominated in ISEA according to the mapping done by Hornell (1946).

Of the traits that Hornell thought came with ANs from ISEA to south India, probably the best known are the coconut plus the scraper used to remove the flesh from the nuts. Undoubtedly the plainest evidence of the AN presence in the IOR west of India is the AN-based language of Madagascar called Malagasy.

Again the arguments for the ANs in east Africa is based rather more on anthropology than archaeology. Hornell (Man 1928; JRAI 1934 & MM 1933) called attention what he regarded as the ISEA sources of the canoes of the Great Lakes region of east Africa. Messrs. Lydecker (Man 1919) and Hornell (Mariner's Mirror = MM 1941) held that shipwrecked ANs on the Bajun Islands off east Africa were the origin of the east African sea-craft called the mtepe further to be seen as distantly related to the Great Lakes canoes.

Hornell put forward the case for the Austronesian/Indonesian source of the monument so famous that that the Zimbabwe structure actually named the country of Zimbabwe (= ex-Rhodesia). Dick-Read does not go that far but saw a mixed AN/Afro grouping as responsible for what lay behind the monument.

Claims that Indonesia has the oldest Pyramids in the world, brings us to that part of east Africa that is Egypt. This would support the views of Robert Schoch (The Pyramid Builders 2002) that from ISEA came the Austronesian builders of the Egyptian Pyramids.

Several articles by Roger Blench would take this further. Among them are "The Ethnographic Evidence of long-distance contacts between Oceania & East Africa [in The Indian Ocean in Antiquity ed. Julian Reade 1996]; The Movement of Cultivated Plants between Africa & India in Prehistory online; Austronesians on Madagascar & the East Coast of Africa online; Ancient Connections between Insular SE Asia & West Africa [2004] online.

This is not intended to be exhaustive, the more so given that Blench is constantly adding to his already extensive list. The title of the last fits with the sections of earlier version of this article suggesting ancient passing from ocean to ocean was probably somewhat more frequent than generally allowed.

A number of traits sourced in ISEA apparently unknown in east Africa or on any trans-African overland route appear in west Africa. Thus types of Musas (=banana/plantain family) are held to originate in ISEA, not east Africa but in west Africa between 1000-500 BCE.

Plantain-leaf noisemaking instruments plus unique modes of pegging drumheads likewise connect ISEA and west Africa. Elephantiasis is held to be of ISEA sources occurs in west Africa, as shown by figurines of the Nok (Nigeria) Culture (again of ca. 1000-500 BCE).

Hornell (1934) cites Diego Couto (16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> c. Portuguese) saying Indonesians had circumnavigated the southern tip of Africa when passing from ocean to ocean, so replicated the earlier voyages. On the other hand, it was seen that Hornell's works were a major factor in the transferring of seeing much previously shown as of Indian origin to an Indonesian focus.

Something else already seen is that the achievements of the severally called "Indonesians", Austronesians, ANs, ISEA-folk, Indo-Malays, etc, are not to be gainsaid. However, this is again not to be pursued at the denigrating of those of other cultures in other countries.

Blench (Aust. impact on ... East Af. ...) has written that the coconut scraper is far too generalised an implement to rely on it for tracing antecedents. As for it having been introduced to south India by Pre-Tamil islanders called Tyvans (= Islanders in Tamil), it is Hornell himself that tells us that the islanders of Tamil legends were from what in his day was called Ceylon but now is Sri Lanka.

The Malagasy language Madagascar has already been seen as of undoubted proven AN/Indo-Malay origin. This means Madagascar shows us exactly what an AN-settled east Africa would look like but there is absolutely no sign of this Indo-Malay presence in east Africa. In any case, voyages of up to 4000/4500 miles at one go are surely fanciful, the more so if the Plinian description of open rafts is correct but then many intervening stopovers are now being suggested.

Another unlikely argument was always that ANs came to an uninhabited Madagascar. The presence of small mammals evidently dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE shows a human occupation on the island at those dates since they are not native to the island, so were boat-borne to there. Moreover, Malagasy folklore recorded in "Madagascar in the Ancient Malayo/Polynesian Myths" by Keith Taylor (in *Explorers in Early Southwest Asian History* edd. messrs. Whitmore & Hall = Michigan Papers 1976) tells of Pre-AN occupants of Madagascar.

A story seen to be from Lydecker (ib.) has shipwrecked ANs in the Bajun Islands. After being rescued by locals they then gratefully taught mtepe-building to the Bajunis who called them Wadiba. Yet notions of benign and amiable Wadibas somewhat contrast with the bellicose nature of these people in the traditions of elsewhere in east Africa recorded by James Allen (*Swahili Origins* 1993).

Sea-craft indicated by this story to lie behind the proto-mtepe having been brought westwards with the wrecked ANs/Wadibas led Allen (ib.) to search for the form in intervening areas. He found none, even in the Maldives. As to the story among the Bajunis, Adriaan Prins (*Tanganyika Notes & Records* 1959), Neville Chittick (*International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 1980), Allen (ib.), etc, went seeking the story among the Bajunis and all came up blank.

Something very similar concerns the canoes of the Great Lakes region of east Africa. Hornell's several writings about the Austronesian origin of them and the mtepe were cited already. However, Chittick (ib.) looked for the mtepe as an east African development and messrs. Worthington (*Mariner's Mirror* 1933), Huntingford (*Man* 1937), Wicker (*Egypt & the Mountains of the Moon* 1991), etc, did so for the Great Lakes canoes.

### **Going West: Indians**

Many of the comparisons linking India and that part of Africa called Egypt can be put to one side straightaway with some certainty. One is that of the Indian shikara (= tip of Hindu temples) and the Stepped Pyramids of Egypt made by Niranjana Babu Bangalore (*Vastu, Temples & Pyramids* online). Another is that a part of India that Muzafar Ali (*The Geography of the Puranas* 1966) says was called Lhasa is to be identified with the Punt/Ta-Neter that Egyptians said was the homeland of their gods.

India-as-Punt would attest at least knowledge of the IOR/ Gulf of Aden/Straits of Mandeb/Red Sea route to Egypt in northeast Africa. This would also give an antiquity to that knowledge. However, far more certain methods of way-finding on these sea-routes are attested by entirely other lines of evidence.

The evidence of the Pre-AN settlement of Madagascar is usefully summarised by works of Blench. Most of that evidence is linguistic but Blench (ib.) also refers to bones of hippos showing obvious signs of butchery at early date. It confirms changes of the same period in the vegetational history of the island are due to the activity of humans.

Another confirmation of this Pre-AN colonisation is the presence of small mammals on Madagascar. It is known that *Rattus exulans* (= Pacific rat) and *Rattus rattus* (= black rat) were carried in vessels to even the remotest islands of the Pacific plus islands off Canada respectively. The claimed Indian origin of the black rat has great significance for us here in this respect, the more so given that it seems the Asian house-shrew came in Indian vessels.

Dwipa/dvipa plus jawa/java/hava names were ultimately seen to attach to Indians east of India and more do so to Indians west of India. The yava/java/hava names may also relate to Hova itself apparently now a little-used alternative for the basic population of Madagascar who are otherwise termed Malagasy. Cyril Hromnik (*Indo-Africa* 1980) says blood-group B dominates amongst Indians and the Hova and that this contrast with the mainly blood-group A among the Immerina who appear to be the rulers of the island before the French colonised Madagascar. Malagasy tradition has it that the AN ancestors of most of the Malagasy landed in the northeast of the island

Among those writing about the arrivals was messrs. Furneaux (*Glimpses of India* 1895 [as Londe id.]); Rapson (*The Coins of the Andhra* 1908 [as Londe ib.]); Smith (*Ships as Evidence of the Migration of Early Cultures* [Journ. of the Manchester Egyptian &

Oriental Society 1916]); Hornell (Water Transport 1946); Bowen (Boats of the Indus Civilisation [Mariner's Mirror 1956]).

Of them, Smith (ib.) plus Hornell (ib.) wrote of several traits transmitted from Egypt towards India but this is doubted by Bowen (ib) who reversed this as going from India towards Egypt. It would emerge from the comments of Furneaux, Rapson and others that this had a long history behind it. Also that this passed to vessels of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE and came through the depictions on coins of Andhra and Pallava ruled parts of India can be traced to masulas of recent times. Given that it was said that Malagasy legends have the Proto-Malagasy landing in the northeast of Madagascar, it must have interest that Hornell, Hromnik, etc, state that it is the surf-breaking plank-built and flat-bottomed Indian masula that dominated the Madagascan northeast.

The southern tip of peninsular India is Cape Comorin possibly echoed by the name of the Comoro Islands a little to the northwest of Madagascar. For another suggested origin see "East Africa & the Sea ...". However, Comorin naming the Comoros is very definitely more convincing than seeing a misspelt and misplaced Mogadishu as the source of the name of Madagascar. Getting from Madagascar to east Africa would be greatly helped by such as Mount Karthala (Comoro Islands). It is a volcano that by the very nature of it being very active and belching out smoke makes it a very visual marker for those en route riding the monsoons between Madagascar and east Africa according to Robert Dick-Read (ib.).

The IOR monsoon-system does not reach Red Sea coasts and Egypt but knowledge of it did. Egypt to India and/or ISEA as Punt would tell for no mean feat of navigation but is unlikely to be real. Very much more certain is what lies behind the story of the transmission of monsoons to Egypt. This is related in "The Story of the Half-Drowned Sailor" by Kay Corcoran (Land of Gold: Maritime Spice Trade Route from Southeast Asia to Rome online).

This Half-drowned Sailor ended up being shipwrecked on the Red Sea coasts of Egypt according to Strabo (1<sup>st</sup> BCE Greek) and the PME-author has it that he taught a Greek named Hippalus how to utilise the monsoons. Sean McGrail (Boats of the World 2001 & 2004) shows this arose from a wrongly-made conversion of the Greek word of hippalus (= undersea wind) into the name of Hippalus. This means not only was "Hippalus" far from being the first to utilise the monsoons, he was not even the first European. He did not exist.

The element of this story that tends to be missed is that Greeks held it was appropriate to attribute navigational expertise to Indians. So did other groups, as shown by the French writers messrs. Ferrand and Grosset-Grange cited by David Halpern (The Origin of the Carolinian Sidereal Compass 1985) and Hromnik (ib.) respectively. Ferrand noted an Indian star compass apparently matching those of some Pacific ones and Grosset-Grange showed the Indian origin of many Arab Urjuzas (= Sailing Manuals). Another Indian navigator would be the Gujerati of the same name as the famous ibn Majid (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> c. Arab) who showed the Portuguese the route across the Indian Ocean.

To Indian star-maps helping way-finding at sea are added other types. The Indian maps of Puranic type are really mainly for mapping the heavens in a religious sense but not solely so. The latter is exemplified the well-known story of the “Hindu Map”. This is said to be an ancient Indian map used by John Hanning Speke (19<sup>th</sup> c. Brit.) help him to the first European to find the source of the River Nile. When doing so, he commented on the fact that he found it much more useful than European ones.

We saw that Prins (ib.) compared the Indian pattamar and the east African mtepe when ruling out ISEA sources for the type in the Bajuns. Also if another name for the Bajun Islands was the Dipa/Diba came with the Wa-diba, it should be recalled that this name is of Indian origin. Hromnik (ib.) also suggests a further Indian connection with how monsoons affected east Africa. He says that another Indian boat-type was the musum-basa (= monsoon-boat) that in east Africa may partly lie behind the modern state-name of Mozambique.

Dick-Read (ib.) probably rightly identifies a Mozambique region as Sofala that would not originally have identified with the city of Beira (as now). The name of Sofala comes from the Arabic sufail from the sandbanks making along part of the Mozambique very tricky of approach. This fits with Europeans describing the channel between Tanzania and Mozambique on the one hand and Madagascar on the other as dangerous since the days of Marco Polo (13<sup>th</sup> c. Italian). Blench has described the way that the current from this Mozambique Channel swept vessels to where it becomes the Benguela Current.

Roger Blench (2004) is probably showing drift voyages but Felix Chami (The Unity of Ancient African History 2006) has strongly argued for something more purposeful when coming from the Mozambique Current into the Benguela Current. This was forcefully putting forward the case for ancient circumnavigations of Africa being very much more frequent than the surviving literature allows.

Chami-led excavations in Tanzania have shown Indian crews on the east African coast over the millennia and it should not come as a great surprise that more are seen to have been involved on the opposite coast of Africa. This is shown by the comments of Bernard Sergent (On the African Origin of the Dravidians online), the map compiled by Fra Mauro Camaldolese (15<sup>th</sup> c. Italian), etc, that again stretch over several millennia. Sergent (put online by Sunther Visuvalingam on the Francisco Brighenti site) pointed to several Indian traits on these Atlantic-facing shores of Africa. That this was still going on at very much later dates is shown by the Indians noted on the Mauro Map.

Hromnik (ib.; Digging Stick 1985; Journal of Asian & African Studies 1993, etc) has argued that Indian traits in terms of two-wheeled chariot, triple-curved bow, claimed digging-stick as really a version of the Indian yoni, etc, appear in native rock-art of western South Africa. That the ethnicae here were not as devoid of water-borne nous as generally assumed can probably set alongside the constant denials of the Hromnik studies. The more so given that this too is shown by rock-art right across southern Africa.

The Blench 2004 article shows “Ancient Connections between SE Insular Asia & West Africa in the Light of Ethnobotanical & other Evidence”. Much of what is claimed to attest ISEA links with Africa from a number of authors is disputed by other writers, as shown above. Hromnik should definitely be added to this.

The Blench article touches on the matter of types of plant having come round the southern tip of Africa by sea and reaching Atlantic-west Africa. He discussed three types in particular, taro, Musaceae and water-yams. Of them, probably the most interesting are the Musaceae (= plantain/banana family). Lynton Dove White (The Canoe Plants of Hawaii 2003 & online) gives them Indian sources (as opposed to the more normal ISEA attribution) and says they came to Tahiti. This would have involved the same kind of storage system that Blench (ib.) says would be needed for Musa having no proven overland route from east to west Africa, so came by sea to west Africa.

This presumably means that the sophisticated fruit-storage system referred to by Blench (ib.) was available to Indians going on to the Pacific and on to the Atlantic. With some varieties of Musaceae apparently unknown in east Africa or any overland route across Africa, those reaching west Africa at dates of probably the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE come to mind. The more so given that to this same horizon are attributed such as the occurrence of elephantiasis, early instruments, etc at approximately the same date in west Africa.

Bernard Sergent (On the African Origin of the Dravidians) adds what he regards as proof positive of the maritime connection between the IOR and west Africa. Once again these are traits feeding into the hypothesis that there was rather more rounding of Cape Agulhas at the southern tip of the continent of Africa than presently accepted. This would attest passing from the Indian to the Atlantic Oceans at dates in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE.

More signs of going from ocean to ocean would be attested by what is suggested by messrs. Chami (ib.) and Hromnik (1981, 1985; 1993, etc.). Chami wanted there to be a mix of natives and Magrebi elements from which emerged the group(s) given an absolute welter of names that include Khoi, Khwe, Bushmen, Queyna, etc, coming into southwest Africa. Hromnik (ib.) does not repeat the Chami case of Carthaginians and/or Berbers from the Magreb mixing with locals but that Indians plus locals give us Queyna antecedents.

Hromnik (1993) also described the triple-bow as “The Bow of Siva alias Heitsi Eibib in the Rock-art of the Cape Queyna”. More Khwe/Queyna rock-art attests a light chariot having two spoked wheels again linked by Hromnik to the Indian god named Shiva/Siva. An object generally regarded as a digging-stick used when planting during a primitive stage of agriculture is regarded as a version of the Shiva-linked vulva image of Yoni type.

Acholonu (ib.) traced more items that are Shiva-linked to south Nigeria. Thus the Nigerian Eze Eri (= King Eri) and Indian Shiva bearing arm-bands, bracelets, anklets, masses of beads, metal staff, animal horn, leopard symbol, many snake motifs, woven cloth, etc. The Acholonu books are an interpretation of the Igbo/Ibo people of

southeast Nigeria and she says Igbo metal bells also connect with Shiva. Again there are the Igbo/Yoruba talking-drums, highly ornate metalwork, equally ornate pottery, etc, all take us back to Shiva.

They are underlined by more that connect with that Indian deity named Krishna already shown to be one of the Indian words meaning black. Among them are feathers of the crown of the Igbo initiates of the Ozo cult and Krishna; the elaborate model shells at Igbo-Ukwu and the conch shell of Krishna; the Igbo Oja (= flute of the Goddess) and that of Krishna; dances of the Igbo Mpkonkiti and those described in the Indian epic called Mahabarata starring Krishna.

There is also the stylised peacock of an Igbo Eze (= King) from Anambra (Nigeria) and that of the third member of the Hindu trinity known as Vishnu. More of the same comes with some of the innumerable beads found during the excavations at Igbo-Ukwu (Nigeria). And there are carvings at Igbo-Ukwu of Indian-style elephant-heads and ornately-beaded wares of Igbo-Ukwu and India. Tariq Sawandi (Yorubic Medicine: The Art of Divine Herbology online) shows the Ifa Herbology of the Yoruba people of Nigeria resembles the Ayurveda medical system of India for words, meanings, spellings and methods.

Equally is what the authors cited by Sergent (ib.) inform him about the Saora people of southeast India. The Saora are speakers of a language belonging to the Munda family of tongues indicative of Far Eastern sources but differ from other Munda-speakers in significant respects. They include the African affinities of Saora shamanism plus a particular form of the lyre-like instruments called a cithara uniting south India and west Africa.

It is pity the Acholonu books come replete with the Sahara explained as resulting from nuclear war between spacecraft; belief in the views of messrs. Sitchin, Von Daniken, Velikovsky, etc; doubts about dates obtained by radiocarbon-14 but goes too far in correcting these C14-dates; Igboland as the single-source of world civilisation.

On the other hand, the sources consulted do reveal that there are several anomalies pointed out by some Nigerian scholars about the excavations by Thurstan Shaw at "Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria" (1970 & elsewhere). Shaw (ib.) put forward dates centring on ca. 900 CE on based radiocarbon-14 determinations for the three sites at Igbo-Ukwu but the conclusions about these C14-dates have been the subject of challenge.

Notable here is "Dating Problems at Igbo-Ukwu" by Babatunde Lawal (= Journal of African History 1973). Acholonu (ib.) has also forwarded other dates based on external comparisons. Another of the anomalies result from the interpretations about the burial-vault of an Eze Nri (= King of Nri) labelled as Igbo-Jonah.

The Wikipedia entry on the "Igbo people" tells us that Pre-Igbo pottery at Nsukka (Nigeria) has good Igbo affinities. The suggested ca. 2500 BCE stands close to some of the Acholonu dates based on external comparisons. However, Pre-Igbo/Igbo being known in their part of Nigeria for more than 4000 years plus quasi-republicanism being the best known trait of Igbo governance brings other problems.

The quasi-republicanism is nicely summed up in the Igbo saying of “Igbo enwegh eze” (= Igbos have no king). This being so, the position of the figure buried in the vault of Igbo-Jonah at Igbo-Ukwu becomes even more anomalous. The more given that Acholonu (ib.) points out this kind of monument runs counter to Igbo tradition.

By the time of Shaw’s ca. 900 CE for the three sites at Igbo-Ukwu of the shrine of Igbo-Isaiah, the burial-vault of Igbo-Jonah, a cache at Igbo-Richard, Nigeria and the rest of west Africa had a vast array of metalworking. So yet another anomaly arises from the Igbo-Ukwu excavations, namely that only the *cire-perdue* (= lost-wax) technique of bronze-working has been attested at Igbo-Ukwu.

Leopold Senghor is one of those pointing up another linkage of west African and Indian bronzes through the terms of *xanjar* and *xancar*. *Xanjar* is a word from the west African language from Senegal called Wolof and *xancara* is from the language of the Indian type of language known as Telegu. *Xanjar* from Wolof and *xancara* from the Dravido/Tamil language of Telegu mean bronze and working with bronze respectively.

Another item of bronze-work seemingly connects west Africa and “Greater” India. The most common ancient Greek label for the bulk of Africans was *Aethiopes* (= Burnt-faces = Black Africans) that also leads to that of Ethiopia. The term of Ethiopian took in not only mainly east Africa but also the Dravido/Tamil or Harappan populations of Greater India. Leopold Senghor (Dravidians and Africans online) wrote that those in the country now called Ethiopia has the fine features, black skins, straight hair, etc. of Dravidian India and that this was recognised by the last Emperor of Ethiopia.

That the physical form of what was once known as the “true” Negro dominant in west Africa was known in ancient “Greater” India seems shown by the bronze figurine called the “Dancing-girl” from the Harappan site of Mohenjo-daro. This fits with Sergent’s consistent use of Negro-African for much of the same population otherwise classified as western *Aethiopes* in the oldest Greek terminology.

Nor should it be forgotten that Senghor (ib.) also lists Wolof *kamara* and Telegu *kamara* that both translate as blacksmith’s caste. Also that west African language called Bambara has *numu* (= forge) mirroring Telegu *inumu* (= iron). Further is Senghor showing the Wolof *ec* applied to producing yarn from raw cotton and that from the Dravido/Tamil-group language of Pengo came the word of *ec* meaning to card cotton.

To these instances of survivals of presumably once-tied languages stretching from west Africa to the Dravido/Tamil tongues of Greater India can be added further comments made by Sergent (ib.). Having seen that early types of instrument were seen to attest cross-cultural fertilisation, more of the same is shown by Sergent.

This time there are what Sergent (ib.) considers the particular specimens of the archaic form where that is no more than a bow. This was then struck to make a noise and this makes it a primitive percussion instrument. Sergent (ib.) says they only occurred among the Malinke naming Mali in west Africa and in the south of India.

A vessel-type of south India and then the *Maris Erythraei* or Erythrean (= western Indian Ocean) is that called the *kattu-maran*. It may be it was akin to the *rati* also attested on the Indian Ocean by Pliny (1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Roman) and apparently like the twin-hulled *Kaimiloa* taken by Eric de Bisschop (1940) from the Indian to the Atlantic Oceans. To be instantly recognised is that the *kattu-maran* has undergone considerable development to become the mainly twin-hulled catamaran of modern times.

Nor would this have been solely confined to the remote past. Alongside what has been said on pages above is what has been written in “West Africa & the Sea in Antiquity” about things happening in southwest Africa that indicate more was going on there in antiquity than generally accepted. Here belongs another reference to what has been called the *Fra Mauro Map*. It refers to the Indians reaching as far north in west Africa as the Green Island(s) generally acknowledged as a straightforward translation of the Cape Verde Islands.

If this indicates that Indian crews were capable of sailing for thousands of miles on the Atlantic, occasional words on the far side of the Atlantic in South America from the Dravido/Tamil tongues of ancient India may prove significant. An origin in Amerind (= Amerindian = Native American) of South America is usually considered improbable and the European connection is looked at on pages below.

Possibly the most famous example is the Tamil *anaikondra* (= elephant killer) as *anaconda* for large reticulated snakes that kill prey by constriction. It is curious that the word of python that may be of Greek derivation has not joined the Indo/European (= I/E) linguistic groupings that constantly absorb and adapt Greek words as was normal in mostly Post-Roman times.

Nor would this be the only possibility of Indians affecting Amerind notions of natural history. Most notable here would be representations of elephants. So far is known to me, no-one has argued for transport of elephants across the Atlantic Ocean at the dates looked at here. However that someone with knowledge of these animals crossing the Atlantic and expressing this knowledge sculpturally remains a possibility on the strength of what is claimed for carvings at Copan (Mex.), Jalapa (Mex.) and the Yalloch (Mex.) vase, etc. There are also comparisons of the games called *pallankulli* in India and *pachisi* in Mexico.

An Indian vessel generally described as a *jangada* is seen as the *shangadam*, *shangada*, *jangada*, *sangara* plus other spellings. The original plus the *kattu-maran* are among ancient Indian types that translate as bound/tied-logs. This probably means they originally were very alike. As ancient ocean-going forms, *kattu-marans* are attested as part of the Chola fleet invading Indonesia to the east of India and as *jangadas* or *sangaras* are attested on the east African coast.

This should mean the *jangada* is a very ancient type on the Indian Ocean and presumably part of what Blench (ib.) and others have seen as the type of vessel(s?) capable of sweeping round from the Mozambique Channel into the Agulhas Current then the Benguela

Current off southwest Africa. A developed form may have looked something like the Kaimiloa vessel taken by Eric de Bisschop (The Kaimiloa Voyage 1940) across the Indian Ocean, the coasts of Atlantic-west Africa and then Europe. In doing he seems to have followed a route partly that of Indians mapped by Fra Mauro.

This Mauro Map has been referenced above and seems to illustrate that these Indians got to as far north as the Green Island(s) that are usually accepted to be a straightforward description of what were later called the Cape Verde Islands by the Portuguese.

When the jangada on the far side of the Atlantic is added to this, a curious distribution still pertains but is less isolated than might appear at first glance. Jangada as a word of Tamil origin in the part of South America now named as Brazil, means anaconda from the same direction also does not stand entirely alone.

The narrow neck of land that is the Panama Isthmus separates the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. So Pacific influences can be expected to have reached northeast Brazil yet in the case of the jangada, this is ruled out by no less an authority than Robert LeBaron Bowen (Mariner's Mirror 1956) in "Boats of the Indus Civilisation".

A nice test of the theory that the occasional Tamil words in South America can only have come with the Portuguese is provided by the jangada. As with anaconda, it is unknown why any European people should have adopted Indian words then transferred them to thousands of miles across two oceans to South America, the more so given that there are perfectly good cognates that are very much nearer.

Moreover, the elaborate rigging of Portuguese and any other European sailing-ship totally contrasts with the simple attaching of sails to the mast or spar characteristic of the jangada. What is not to be overlooked here is the fundamental point that the jangada is an **Indian type of vessel**.

Harry Bourne



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