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The Period of Prosperity in Relations Between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms During the Third Century Bc

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Abstrat

This study explores the economic, political, and cultural implications of Coinsemergence in the Kingdom of Gerrha, focusing on its interactions with the Ptolemies and Seleucids. By examining artifacts, coins, inscriptions, and historical records, we uncover the ties between the Gerrha and Hellenistic kingdoms. Evidence points to robust trade, cultural exchanges, and conflicts like the Great Gerrha War. Findings underscore Gerrha's pivotal role in Middle East-Mediterranean trade and mutual cultural influences with the Hellenistic world. The study encourages further archaeological efforts and interdisciplinary research for a holistic view of these ancient relationships. The study suggests boosting archaeological exploration to reveal Gerrha's.

Keywords: Thaj, Hellenistic, Seleucid, Arabian Peninsula, Gerrha's Coins

1. Introduction

The Kingdom of Gerrha is one of the most important kingdoms in the Arabian Peninsula due to its economic significance in the ancient world. Historical sources have differed regarding the correct pronunciation of the name of the Kingdom of Gerrha. The Greeks referred to it as "ḲppaY," which is equivalent to "Gerrh" in ancient Latin (Smith, 2006). However, classical sources and texts indicate that the accurate name is "Gerrha" (Figure 1, 2) Below. Some modern sources and studies also refer to this region as "Gerrha" (Mandaville, 1963). (Strabo, 2018).

According to Strabo's geographical description, this kingdom is in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula and emerged in the 3rd century BC. The reputation of this kingdom has spread since the 4th century BC, when it became a renowned trading city in the northeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula with its own dedicated port. Pliny reported the city's commercial importance and its stone salt-built towers, while Strabo mentioned that the people of Gerrha also used land routes for trade, particularly in aromatics (Pliny, 1969; Derince, 2022). Due to its strategic location and commercial significance, neighboring states coveted Gerrha, especially during the time of Alexander the Great, who aimed to seize it (Wright, 1932). He did manage to capture it, but he died in 323 BC, leading to the division of his empire among his generals and the formation of several kingdoms, notably the Ptolemaic Kingdom and the Seleucid Kingdom. Economic and political relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and these Hellenistic kingdoms began to flourish in the 3rd century BC, marking one of the most important historical periods. This is the Hellenistic era (Préaux, 1989), during which multiple conflicts arose between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids over asserting their influence on each other's

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kingdoms. This led both parties to seek new territories for control on the one hand and to increase their economic resources on the other (Grainger, 1990). They both aimed to expand their influence over the Arabian Peninsula region, especially the Kingdom of Gerrha and its capital, Thaj. It was one of the major economic powers during the 3rd century BC (Mandaville, 1963; Suleman et al., 2023) This subject posed the research problem for this study, which was the flourishing relations and connections between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms during this century.

Figure (1,2). illustrate the location of the Kingdom of Gerrha and its ancient capital, Thaj, based on recent Danish archaeological discoveries.



The influence of the Hellenistic civilization (Hellenistic Period) extended from the eastern Mediterranean to Asia. It began with the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and ended in 31 BC, when the last Hellenistic kingdom in Egypt was invaded by Rome. The Hellenistic civilization was characterized by the fusion of Greek language and customs with the culture of the Near East. The word "Hellenistic" is derived from "Hellazein", which means to speak in Greek or to resemble the Greeks. Ancient Greece. (2023).

In the 3rd century BC, the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms enjoyed robust relations. Positioned strategically along the Silk Road, Gerrha aimed to expand its political and commercial influence. Concurrently, the Hellenistic realms pursued territorial expansion across the Middle East. This era witnessed extensive exchanges encompassing trade, knowledge, services, and culture between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms, spanning economics, sciences, and arts. (Pribanus et al., 2023)

A key player in this interaction was the Seleucid Kingdom, ruling over substantial portions of Central and Eastern Asia with influential cities like Babylon, Susa, and Alexandria. Collaboration extended to the Roman Empire, which was expanding its sway in the Middle East. This interplay facilitated the cross-pollination of ideas, techniques, and cultures, leaving a notable imprint on the Kingdom of Gerrha. Both Hellenistic and Roman cultures wielded considerable impact during this transformative period (Sherwin-White, 1984; Cabrera Quercini et al., 2022)

The cultural and economic relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms in the third century BC stand out as one of the most significant periods in the history of the ancient Middle East. During this time, the Kingdom of Gerrha held a strategic position on the Silk Road and was ardently working to expand its commercial and political influence in the region. The Hellenistic kingdoms, too, sought to extend their reach in the area. Such trade, cultural, and political ties allowed different civilizations to familiarize themselves with and influence each other.

Among the Hellenistic kingdoms closely interacting with the Kingdom of Gerrha was the Seleucid Empire, whose dominion extended over a vast part of Central and Eastern Asia. The Seleucid Empire encompassed major cities such as Babylon, Susa, and Alexandria, which dominated the cultural and economic landscape of the region. The trade and cultural connections between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic realms provided robust support for commerce and the economy in the area (Green, 1993).

It's evident that the cultural ties between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms manifested themselves vividly in the arts, architecture, literature, philosophy, and sciences. These relationships enabled diverse civilizations to acquaint themselves with each other and exchange ideas, techniques, and cultures. Such exchanges fostered the growth of various civilizations and expanded the horizons of thought and culture.

Furthermore, these relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms helped to bolster peace and stability in the region. They prevented the onset of perpetual conflicts and preserved political and economic stability (Ancient North Arabian, 2004)

In essence, the cultural and economic ties between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms in the third century BC are pivotal in the annals of the ancient Middle East. These trade, cultural, and political interactions allowed different civilizations to acquaint themselves with and impact each other. These ties enhanced peace and stability in the region, staved off persistent conflicts, and aided in maintaining political and economic equilibrium. Therefore, studying this period is crucial for understanding Middle Eastern history and the influence of various civilizations on one another. Research and exploration in this field continue to unearth more details and insights about these vital cultural and economic relationships (Green, 1993).

During the third century BC, the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms established significant ties that marked a pivotal historical era in the Middle East. Situated in the eastern region of Jordan and southern Syria, the Kingdom of Gerrha governed this area from the seventh century BC to the third century BC. The interactions between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms were sparked by Hellenistic expansion in the region. This expansion aimed at exerting influence over the border regions shared by the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic domains. Consequently, control over certain border areas shifted to the Hellenistic kingdoms, leading to the establishment of Hellenistic cities that retained their distinct characteristics under Hellenistic governance. The third century BC marked a transformative phase in Eastern history as the flourishing ties between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms ushered in advancements in arts, sciences, technologies, and trade. This era facilitated a rich exchange of cultures and knowledge between these kingdoms, shaping a significant transitional period in the Eastern historical narrative. (Getzel M., 2006) In summary, the interactions between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms in the third century BC were a turning point in the Middle East's history. These relationships impacted cultural exchanges, peace, and stability, underscoring the dynamic interplay of civilizations in the ancient world.

Research Problem

Historically, there have been periods of prosperity and decline, and these periods often exert long-lasting impacts on cultures. In some instances, the influence even extends to the lives of nations and their people. A prime example of such a period is the flourishing relationship between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic dynasties in the 3rd century BC. Despite the immense significance of this era, knowledge about it remains relatively insufficient due to the scant historical research that has addressed it. This gap underscores the crux of the research problem, aiming for a profound

understanding of the factors leading to this prosperity. What elements enabled these relationships to achieve success and continuity? Were military power and geographical security the primary contributors, or did trade and culture play more pivotal roles?

This research issue also endeavors to uncover the truth about the impacts these relationships had on the political, economic, and cultural structures of both parties. How did policies, economics, and culture evolve based on these interactions? Are there any tangible influences from these relationships that persist and resonate even today?

Perhaps the primary dimensions of this problem can be elucidated through the following questions:

1. Can the real value of these relationships be gauged through modern studies?
2. How can researchers bridge the existing gaps in our current understanding of this crucial period?
3. How were the relationships between Gerrha and the Hellenists perceived sociologically and psychologically? How have these perceptions evolved over time?
4. What profound impact did this prosperous period have on the cultural identities of both Gerrha and the Hellenists?
5. How can contemporary studies assess the true significance of these ties in the history of the Middle East and the Hellenistic world?

Research Objectives

Based on the previously identified research problem, the research objectives can be outlined as follows:

1. To understand the economic impact of the emergence of coins on the kingdom of Gerrha,
2. to explore the political conflicts between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids and their influence on the political relations with the Kingdom of Gerrha.
3. It seeks to investigate the cultural and artistic exchange between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms, along with the incorporation of certain religious complexities into the kingdom.

Research Methodology

To achieve its objectives, this study will employ a multidisciplinary historical methodology. It relies on the historical approach, which focuses on understanding events within their historical context. This involves a deep dive into historical records and archives, analyzing primary and secondary evidence, and examining physical evidence such as ancient tools, inscriptions, artworks, and historical buildings. Furthermore, the study may also utilize a multidisciplinary approach, demanding a comprehensive understanding of historical events by acknowledging the cultures of nations, geographical incidents, and political events that contributed to their formation. The research methodology may also extend to a critical approach that emphasizes in-depth and analytical assessment of sources and evidence. This includes evaluating the reliability and accuracy of sources, revealing patterns and tendencies, and examining connections between events and various circumstances. The study may also encompass archaeological excavation reports and the analysis of artifacts, which affirm the flourishing ties between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic dynasties—evident in coins, papyri, and clay figurines. By integrating these methodologies, a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the relationship between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic dynasties in the 3rd century BC can be achieved. The study was implemented using a descriptive-analytical approach, beginning with a historical narrative in the introduction. It then presents excavation reports and analyzes the archaeological findings. These discoveries demonstrate strong ties between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms through coins, papyrus documents, and clay figurines.

Scope of the Research

1. **Objective limits:** The study will primarily focus on analyzing the relationships that flourished between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. It will emphasize the key political, cultural, and economic events that contributed to this prosperity.
2. **Geographical limits:** The research will be conducted at Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, the study may require examining places that were significant during the 3rd century BC, such as sites of conflicts or trade between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms.
3. **Temporal limits:** The study will cover the 3rd century BC, which witnessed the flourishing of relationships between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms.

Research Concepts and Terms

- **Gerrha:** An ancient Arabian tribe residing in the Arabian Peninsula.
- **Hellenistic Kingdoms:** The states established after the death of Alexander the Great and the division of his empire, predominantly influenced by Greek culture. (Green, 2008).
- **Hellenistic Era:** The time following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC until the Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BC.
- **3rd Century BC:** The time period spanning from the year 300 BC to 201 BC. (Pre-Islamic Arabic, 2020).
- **Maritime Trade:** A significant economic activity between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms.
- **Prosperity:** Growth and progress in the relations between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. (The Encyclopedia of Ancient History, 2013)
- **Handicrafts and Cultural Exchange:** The Exchange of Goods and Ideas Between Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms
- **Alliances and Wars:** Military and political confrontations between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms, as well as potential alliances formed. (Green, 2008)
- **Migration:** Population movements between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms.
- **Temples and Religions:** Shared religious places and rituals between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. (Retso, 2003).
- **Hellenistic Kingdoms:** States formed after the death of Alexander the Great, where Greek culture predominated.
- **Third Century BC:** The time from the year 300 BC to 201 BC.
- **Prosperity:** In this context, it refers to a period of growth and development in the relations between the Gerrha and Hellenistic kingdoms. (Casson, 1991).
- **Diplomacy:** The practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of states, in this case, between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms.
- **Trade:** The transfer of goods and services from one place (Kingdom of Gerrha) to another (Hellenistic Kingdoms), and vice versa. (Bonner, 2005).

Study Significance

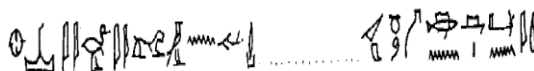
The study holds significant importance due to its focus on the prosperous interactions between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms in the third century BC. Its significance lies in several aspects:

- **Historical Insight:** The study aims to provide a deeper understanding of a crucial period in ancient history by examining the relationships between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. This investigation can enhance our comprehension of these civilizations and their interactions during the third century BC.
- **Cultural Exchange Illumination:** By analyzing the period of prosperity, the study can reveal the dynamics of cultural exchange and influence between the two entities. Through a comprehensive exploration, it can be revealed how these civilizations mutually impacted each other's cultural, artistic, and philosophical development during that era.
- **Economic Factors Clarification:** The research seeks to uncover key economic factors and trading systems that contributed to the prosperous period between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. By studying trade patterns and economic mechanisms, it offers insights into ancient economies and their role in shaping inter-regional relationships.
- **Diplomatic Relations Investigation:** This study aims to uncover the nature of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. Through the examination of historical records, diplomatic correspondence, and related sources, it provides insights into the role of diplomacy in maintaining peace and fostering prosperity in antiquity.
- **Future Research Contribution:** The study's findings can be a valuable reference for future historical and archaeological investigations concerning the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. The insights generated can guide future explorations, excavations, and studies, further advancing our collective understanding of this historical epoch.

Results

Connections among the Kingdom of Gerrha, Egypt, and Mesopotamia before the Hellenistic era:

Geographical studies indicate that Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula shared proximity and contiguity, leading to entrenched relations between them in the second half of the second millennium B.C. Some evidence also points to the antiquity of their relationship (Cary, 1965). For instance, a document written in Demotic script indicates the presence of trade relations dating back to around 775 B.C.



It can be translated as "He procured a spear made of wood... from the lands of Arabia..." (Najmuddin, E. D., p. 8). Trade relations began to flourish between Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Kingdom of Gerrha. Documents and inscriptions from the fourth century B.C. point to trade caravans traveling to Egypt. Numerous other records mention various commodities that Egypt imported from the Arabian Peninsula, notably myrrh, frankincense, aloe, and goats (Natural History, 1960, Vol. IV, Bk. XVI, Ch. LIX). Regarding the relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and Mesopotamia on the eve of the Hellenistic era, these ties had commenced since the inception of the Seleucid Kingdom. (Jouguet & Dobie, 1928)

The Relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms during the Hellenistic Era

The economic and trade relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms evolved during the third century. Historical studies indicate that the initial relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Ptolemaic Kingdom were amicable and peaceful, relying solely on the exchange of key commodities such as incense, perfumes, spices, and frankincense (Rostovtzeff, 1938). Studies and

historical sources also suggest that the Seleucids maintained favorable relations with the affluent Gerrhaians on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula along the Arabian Gulf (see Map No. 1), where the city of Gerrha supplied the Seleucids with incense and certain spices. (Jouguet & Dobie, 1928).

Meanwhile, relations with the Greek kingdoms were limited to the exchange of a few goods (Grant, 1982) Upon reviewing the historical studies, the researcher notes that the relationship between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms was predominantly based on trade exchanges, bolstering the economic resources of the Hellenistic realms.

In the Hellenistic period (spanning from the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC to the Roman invasion of Egypt in 30 BC), the Kingdom of Gerrha emerged as a major state in the Arabian Peninsula, exerting significant influence in the region. Simultaneously, the Hellenistic kingdoms ruled adjacent areas to Gerrha, including Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Mesopotamia. These kingdoms held considerable sway in the region, aiming to expand their influence and establish robust trade relations with neighboring states.

Relationships between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms were initiated in the 3rd century BC when the Hellenistic king Seleucus I arrived in Iran and founded the Seleucid Empire. In 312 BC, the Seleucid king Seleucus entered Gerrha and established control, initiating a period of cultural and trade exchange between Gerrha and the Hellenistic realms.

Despite its size, Gerrha occupied a strategic position along the route between South and North Arabia. It boasted substantial natural resources, such as incense, pearls, and oud. This made Gerrha a pivotal destination for Hellenistic traders seeking to expand their commercial influence in the region.

These relationships led to a strong Hellenistic cultural influence on Gerrha society. Art, literature, and science of Hellenistic origin began to spread, and Gerrha adopted some Hellenistic customs and traditions.

Over time, relations shifted to military conflicts as Hellenistic kingdoms attempted to control Gerrha and its resources. Significant wars transpired, with Gerrha sometimes successfully defending its independence and other times succumbing to Hellenistic control.

Among these conflicts, the Great Gerrha War (110–105 BC) stands out, where the Nabatean Kingdom attacked Gerrha with the support of the Hellenistic Arsacid Kingdom. Following this war, Gerrha surrendered to the Nabateans and ceased to be an independent state.

Nevertheless, trade relations persisted between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms, turning the region into a vital trade hub connecting the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Gerrha society underwent substantial Hellenistic cultural influence, adopting various customs, traditions, arts, and sciences.

Similarly, Hellenistic kingdoms were influenced by Arabian and Islamic cultures afterward. Cultural and trade relations between the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean extended into later eras. The relations between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms during the Hellenistic era constitute a crucial period in the region's history, marked by significant cultural and trade exchanges among nations and peoples in the area.

In addition to trade and cultural relations, diplomatic ties also existed between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. The Hellenistic kingdoms sought to secure their borders and enhance relations with neighboring states, while Gerrha aimed to safeguard its independence and protection against military attacks.

The Ptolemaic (Egyptian) Hellenistic kingdom wielded substantial influence in the region, leveraging it to improve relations with Gerrha and secure trade privileges. Multiple trade agreements were forged between Gerrha and the Ptolemaic kingdom, ensuring protection for traders and merchant ships and reducing customs fees on traded goods.

The Hellenistic kingdoms also sought to use Gerrha as a strategic ally in the region, occasionally offering military support. In 306 BC, Hellenistic king Antiochus I provided military assistance to Gerrha in its war against the Sabaeans, aiding in regaining control of crucial ports.

These diplomatic relations were significantly impacted by political changes within the Hellenistic kingdoms. Changes in rule and policy among kings influenced relations with Gerrha and other states in the region.

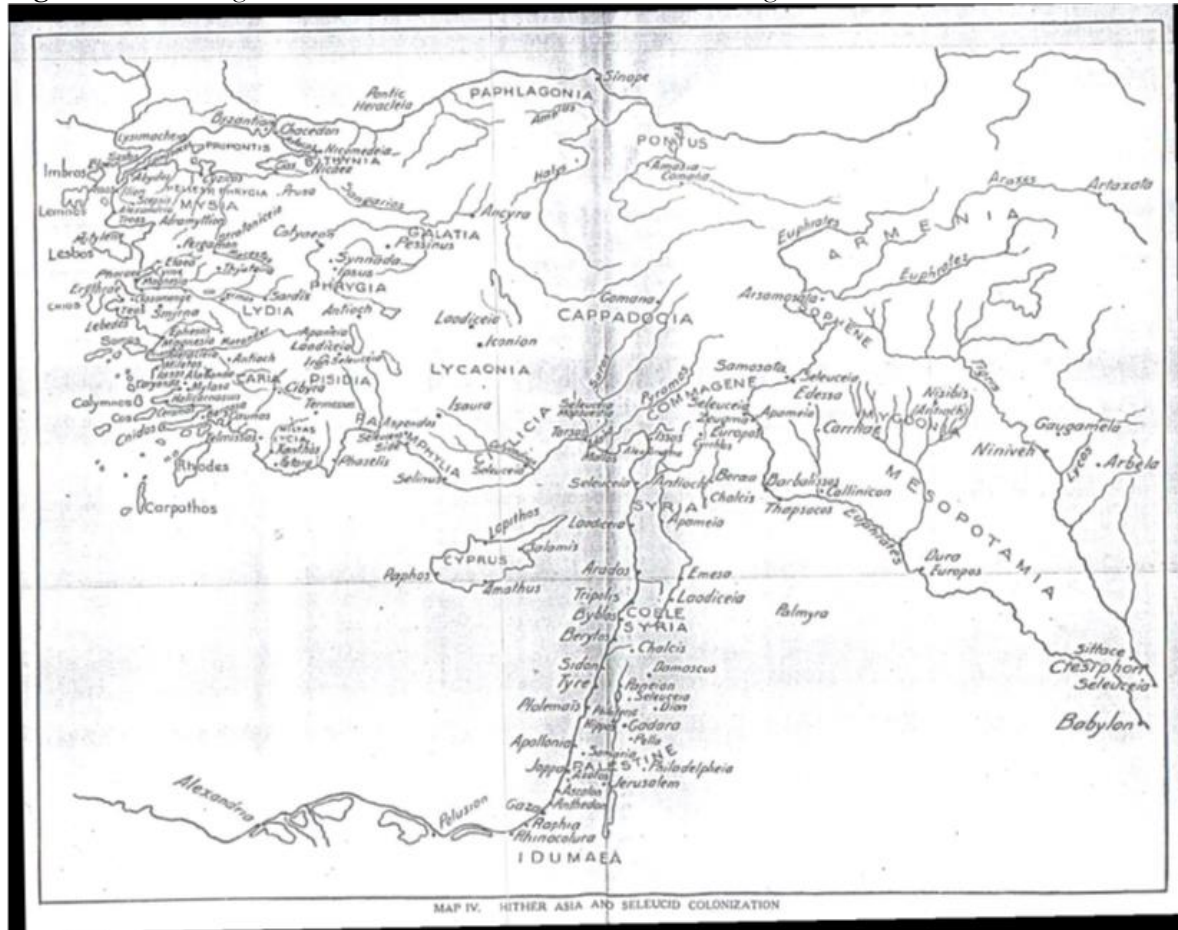
In conclusion, the relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms were complex and spanned a long period of history, encompassing cultural, trade, and diplomatic exchanges, military skirmishes, and political conflicts. This era is pivotal for comprehending the relationships among states and peoples in the region and the influence of different cultures and civilizations on the history and societies of the area. (Starr, 1991)

Flourishing Ties Between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms During the Hellenistic Era

Historical and archaeological evidence suggests that relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms began to flourish in the third century BC. This made the Kingdom of Gerrha an attractive prospect for these kingdoms, especially the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms. Both were on the lookout for new territories; they each sought control over the kingdom on the one hand and aimed to boost their economic resources on the other (Grainger, 1990). However, it is worth noting that the two kingdoms.

"It is worth noting that the two kingdoms were unable to exert their political influence over it, which resulted in strengthening their relations with it (Mandaville, 1963). The flourishing of ties between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Ptolemaic Kingdom began during the reign of King Ptolemy II (Philadelphus). He embarked on explorations of the coasts of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, managing to engage in some trade deals with the city of Thaj, the capital of the Kingdom of Gerrha. Goods were then transported via the overland route to the east of the peninsula (Rostovtzeff, 1981). However, this relationship quickly ended due to Gerrha's alliance with the Seleucids, with whom they had friendly political relations and commercial dealings. The relationship between the Kingdom and the Seleucids reached its peak during the reign of King Seleucus Antiochus III (223–187 BC). He led several military campaigns, on the one hand, to extend his influence over the Arabian Peninsula and, on the other, to achieve his economic (Jouguet & Dobie, 1928). Among these campaigns, he led a naval expedition in 205 BC against the city of Gerrha and succeeded, securing overland trade routes, especially with the city of Thaj. This led to the establishment of friendly relations with the Gerrha. Antiochus III continued his campaign and took the overland route on his return from India, thereby securing both overland and maritime routes linking the Seleucid Kingdom and the Arabian Peninsula (Jouguet & Dobie, 1928). It is essential to note that the city of Gerrha was never a Seleucid city. Instead, the people of Gerrha were trade partners with the Seleucids, engaging in commerce and exporting goods such as spices, incense, and frankincense. As for the Greek kingdoms, relations flourished with the Kingdom of Gerrha in the 3rd century BC through commercial exchanges and Coinstrade (Hadas, 1972); (Jouguet & Dobie, 1928).

Figure 1. Illustrating the overland trade routes of the Seleucid Kingdom



*Referenced from Jouguet & Dobie, 1928. *Macedonian Imperialism and the Hellenization of the East* (M.R. Dobie, Trans.). London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co. Ltd., Map. 3.

The Unearthed Archaeological Evidence of Strong Relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms in the Hellenistic Era

There are numerous indications and findings of the engagement of the people of Gerrha in trade and their connections with neighboring societies, extending even to more distant peoples, such as their interactions with some Greek islands. Through the excavations carried out by the Danish expedition team, these archaeological discoveries came to light. Among these findings are the appearance of coins, artistic influences, and certain artifacts. Additionally, some Greek deities have been uncovered within the Kingdom of Gerrha.

Coins

The Danish expedition uncovered numerous coins with Greek influence at the archaeological site of the city of Thaj. These coins have been dubbed "Gerrha coins" in certain sources. The initial discussion regarding these coins was presented by Mrkholm in 1979 (Mrkholm, 1938). In the same year, "El-Fard Beeston" published an article proposing Thaj as the most significant archaeological site for Gerrha coins. The obverse side of the coins features the head of Heracles, the esteemed guardian deity

of Alexander the Great. On the reverse side, there is a depiction of the seated figure of the god Zeus on a throne, holding an eagle in his right hand and a scepter in his left (Dayton & Dayton, 1979) and Figure (3). Furthermore, within the archaeological site of Thaj, a collection of Ptolemaic coins was discovered. These coins display a distorted Figure of the head of Heracles, with both cheeks nearly filling the entire face of the coin. On the reverse side, an eagle is portrayed, and in front of it, the vertically positioned letter "sh" is visible. The eagle occasionally appears with a slightly curved, elongated beak and a forked tail resembling the Ptolemaic coins from the era of Ptolemy II (Robin, 1974) Moreover, several Seleucid coins were also found in the Thaj area, along with the presence of Greek deities, the most prominent of whom is the deity.

Figure (3). Model of a Coin (Mrkholm, 1979).

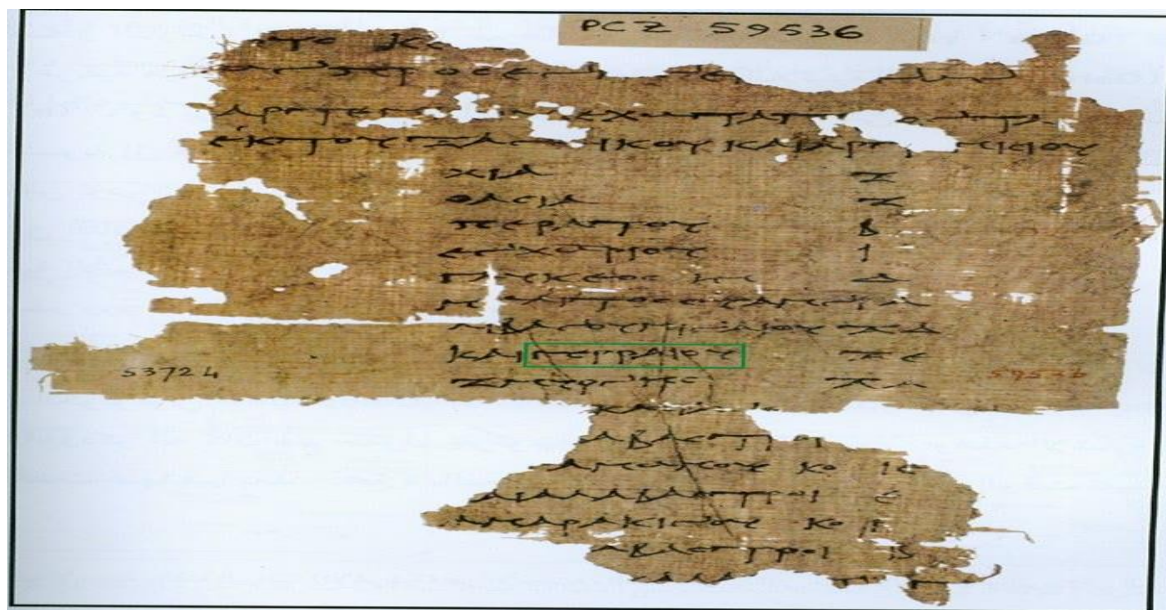


Silver Coin of the Four-Drachma Denomination from the Eastern Region – Thaj.

The deity Apollo, whose Figure first appeared during the reign of King "Antiochus I," was depicted. Likewise, some coins featured minting locations such as "AMP," which was minted on coins dating back to the reign of King Demetrius I, found at the Thaj site. During the reign of Antiochus III, the Figure of an elephant was also minted on several coins, attributed to his famous expedition to India. Various depictions of lions, chariots, and horses with and without horns (Jouguet & Dobie, 1928) emerged. The appearance of these coins within the Kingdom of Gerrha, as uncovered by archaeological findings, signifies the flourishing trade relations and connections between it and the Hellenistic kingdoms.

Papyri

A fragment of a papyrus from the collection of Zenon was discovered. These papyri contain records documenting the economic conditions during the Ptolemaic era. The papyri detail taxes and societal divisions. This papyrus dates back to the reign of the Ptolemaic king "Ptolemy II" (Philadelphus) in the years 284–246 BC. Its dimensions are 21 cm in length and 31.5 cm in width (Rostovtzeff, E.D., pp. 1035, 1070). The text of the papyrus mentions Zenon, who was responsible for trade during the time of Apollonius, acting as the economic minister under King Ptolemy II. Zenon's activity and skill in managing Apollonius are well known. The remaining content of the papyrus indicates that Zenon was tasked with obtaining large quantities of incense and fragrances, which Egypt imported from the Kingdom of Gerrha, Yemen, and East Africa, for use in temple rituals. This document signifies strong trade connections between the Ptolemies and the people of Gerrha, particularly during the reign of King Ptolemy I (Archive of Documents at the Library of Alexandria; Rostovtzeff, E.D., pp. 1035, 1070) (see Figure 4).



Source: Archive of the Library of Alexandria.

Artistic Influences

The tombs of Tell Al-Za'ir are among the most significant tombs excavated at the Thaj site. They are named after their discoverer, "Waleed Al-Za'ir," and date back to the Hellenistic era, spanning from 323 BC to the early 1st century CE. Inside these tombs, a wooden coffin was found containing the remains of a girl, referred to as the "Unknown Girl." Among the contents were a crown, a palm leaf, an armlet, earrings, bracelets, and a mask, all crafted from pure gold and precious gemstones. This discovery led to naming this tomb "The Thaj Treasure." The most noteworthy finding was a golden mask exhibiting Greek influences. Similar items can be found in Greek civilization, with the most renowned being the mask of the hero Agamemnon (Dickson, 1984, pp. 1–8). Additionally, some researchers suggest the presence of Egyptian influences, with resemblances to the statue of Egyptian king Tutankhamun, signifying trade relations between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. This tomb is coins displayed in the National Museum in Riyadh (see Image 5).

Figure (5). Comparative Illustration of the Golden Mask from the Tomb of Tell Al-Za'ir – Thaj, the Agamemnon Golden Mask of Greek origin, and the Golden Mask of the Egyptian King Tutankhamun. Implications for Trade Relations with the Kingdom of Gerrha.



Religious Influences

After the archaeological excavations at the historic site of Thaj were undertaken by English and Danish missions, a significant number of pottery vessels and coins were discovered. Some of these

artifacts depicted Greek deities, indicating the presence of religious and belief-related connections between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic realms (Lapp, 1984). One of the most notable pieces of evidence supporting this notion is the offering of sacrifices to the deity.



The previous source have been cited in this work: Abdul Rahman, Abdul Rahman Ali's "Greek Artistic Influences on Ancient Arabian Arts" from the Journal of Studies in Archaeology and Heritage, Issue No. 11, 2020, with the page reference of 43 and depicted in Figure (B-10) Additionally, Al-Senan Maha's research on "Similarities and Artistic Ties between Arabia and Egypt in the Hellenistic Era" in the Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2019, includes references on page 351 and Figures 3 and 4. Furthermore, the Egyptian Museum and the Commission for Antiquities and Tourism in Riyadh also contribute to the references used in this study.

"Adeshu" is a distortion of the Greek deity "Hades." Additionally, the name of the deity "Isis" is also echoed in more than one tomb where the distorted name "Esi" is used, a misrepresentation of the Egyptian goddess Isis (Araniam & Potts, 1984).

Discussion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the historical connections and interactions between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms, illuminating aspects of trade, diplomacy, and cultural exchange. The discussion is organized into three main sections, each delving into distinct dimensions of these relationships.

Connections among the Kingdom of Gerrha, Egypt, and Mesopotamia before the Hellenistic era

Geographical studies underscore the entrenched relations between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula during the second half of the second millennium B.C. Proximity and contiguity led to trade interactions, as supported by documents in Demotic script from around 775 B.C. These documents reveal the existence of trade relations involving commodities like wood and aromatic products from the lands of Arabia (Najmuddin, E. D., p. 8).

Relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms during the Hellenistic Era

The evolution of economic and trade relations between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms takes center stage. Historical studies illuminate the initial exchange of key commodities, such as incense, spices, and perfumes, between Gerrha and the Ptolemaic Kingdom. The import of incense and spices from the city of Thaj demonstrates the Seleucid Kingdom's good relations with Gerrha. Diplomatic ties and trade agreements played a significant role in fostering these connections (Jouguet & Dobie, 1928).

The Hellenistic period witnessed the emergence of the Kingdom of Gerrha as a notable player in the Arabian Peninsula. Simultaneously, neighboring Hellenistic kingdoms sought to expand their influence and trading networks. Amidst political and military challenges, trade, diplomatic alliances, and cultural exchanges flourished in the relations between these entities. The strategic role of the Kingdom of Gerrha along trade routes bolstered its significance, while Hellenistic customs and traditions found resonance in the region.

Flourishing Ties Between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms During the Hellenistic Era

The study emphasizes the crucial historical period in which the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms enjoyed flourishing relations during the third century BC. Economic interests and the pursuit of new territories were the driving forces behind the interactions. The Kingdom of Gerrha's strategic positioning along trade routes heightened its appeal, contributing to the economic enrichment of both parties (Grainger, 1990). Notably, despite limited political influence, the bonds of trade between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms grew stronger (Mandaville, 1963).

The Unearthed Archaeological Evidence of Strong Relations Between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic Kingdoms in the Hellenistic Era

Archaeological findings provide tangible evidence of the robust connections between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. Excavations have unearthed a wealth of artifacts, including coins, artistic influences, and even religious ties. Notable among these are the Gerrha coins with Greek influences, depictions of Greek deities, and a golden mask showcasing Greek artistic styles. These archaeological revelations affirm the depth and breadth of trade and cultural ties between Gerrha and the Hellenistic realms.

Conclusion

The studies and sources highlighted the economic and trade significance of the Kingdom of Gerrha due to its strategic location. This rendered it desirable to neighboring Hellenistic kingdoms, particularly the Ptolemaic and Seleucid realms. The connections with these kingdoms secured economic resources through the exchange of goods, spices, incense, and myrrh. This study also reveals a crucial outcome: the commercial and economic ties between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic realms resulted in artistic and cultural influences. Recent archaeological findings, such as the golden mask discovered in the Tell Al-Za'ir tomb and the Ptolemaic and Seleucid coins, attest to this phenomenon.

Recommendations

Based on the main results, the study suggests some recommendations, as follows:

1. **Promote Archaeological Exploration:** Support further excavations at sites like Thaj to unveil historical ties between the Kingdom of Gerrha and Hellenistic kingdoms. These digs can illuminate trade routes, cultural links, and religious bonds, enhancing comprehension of their historical interactions.
2. **Foster Collaborative Research:** Encourage interdisciplinary studies among scholars to comprehensively delve into the intricate historical relationships between the Gerrha and Hellenistic kingdoms. This holistic approach, combining archaeological, historical, and linguistic evidence, offers a more nuanced interpretation of their interactions during the Hellenistic era.
3. **Enhance Cultural Awareness:** Organize Museum exhibitions showcasing archaeological finds to raise public consciousness about the profound historical connections between Gerrha and the

- Hellenistic realms. Develop educational programs to engage schools, universities, and the community, fostering a deeper appreciation for the region's historical heritage.
4. **Preserve Cultural Heritage:** Implement conservation efforts to protect uncovered archaeological sites and artifacts in the Kingdom of Gerrha. Establish strategies for site management, artifact restoration, and long-term preservation, ensuring future generations benefit from these historical remnants.
 5. **Investigate Political and Military Conflicts:** Arabian Peninsula specialists should thoroughly examine the Kingdom of Gerrha's associations with Hellenistic kingdoms during the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, considering political and military clashes. This exploration could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of that era.

Limitations

1. **Incomplete Historical Records:** Gaps in historical records might limit the accuracy of interpretations, potentially omitting crucial details.
2. **Fragmented Archaeological Evidence:** Degradation and preservation issues with artifacts could hinder a complete understanding of cultural exchanges and trade relations.
3. **Lack of Available References:** Challenges stemming from the scarcity of references and sources during the studied period might impact the depth of analysis.
4. **Biased Documentation:** Historical accounts and artifacts might be influenced by the biases of the time, affecting the accuracy of information.
5. **Absence of Original Excavation Reports:** The lack of original excavation reports from the Danish mission limits access to detailed archaeological context.

Future Directions

1. **Further Archaeological Excavations:** Conduct targeted excavations at sites like Thaj to uncover additional artifacts and evidence for a more complete understanding.
2. **Multidisciplinary Approach:** Collaborate with experts from diverse fields for a holistic understanding of relationships, integrating different perspectives.
3. **Advanced Analytical Techniques:** Employ scientific methods like isotopic analysis and DNA studies to gain insights into trade networks and cultural influences.
4. **Comparative Studies:** Compare archaeological findings from Gerrha with those from neighboring regions to contextualize relationships and understand regional dynamics.
5. **Future Vision and Collaboration:** Collaborate with relevant authorities for continued excavations at Thaj and collaborate on comprehensive studies to understand the economic ties and their impact on the Hellenistic realms.

Study Implications

The study's findings offer significant implications across multiple dimensions. Firstly, they reveal the intricate web of trade and cultural exchange between the Kingdom of Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. Through the exchange of valuable goods like incense, spices, and precious materials, these ancient civilizations facilitated a robust network of economic growth and cultural diffusion spanning the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, and various Hellenistic realms.

Secondly, the research sheds light on the complex diplomatic and political dynamics of the time. It underscores the strategic alliances, military support, and shifting leadership within the Hellenistic

kingdoms that influenced the nature of relations with Gerrha. This reveals how these states navigated their political interests and sought to maintain borders and influence.

Moreover, the archaeological evidence uncovered through excavations—coins, papyri, artifacts, and architectural structures—provides tangible proof of the depth of interactions between Gerrha and the Hellenistic kingdoms. These discoveries offer insights into economic ties, religious connections, and the significant cultural influence that characterized this historical period.

The study also highlights the phenomenon of cultural diffusion and exchange. The adaptation of Hellenistic customs, art, and religious practices in Gerrha, as well as the spread of Greek deities, underscores the extent to which cultures mingled and influenced one another, transcending geographical boundaries.

Furthermore, the strategic importance of the Kingdom of Gerrha emerges as a key theme. Its favorable location and abundant resources turned it into a pivotal trading center and a desirable ally for the Hellenistic kingdoms. This underscores how geopolitical and economic factors played a pivotal role in shaping relations and power dynamics.

The research delves into the complex historical dynamics of the time, moving from peaceful trade to military conflicts. Events like the Great Gerrha War highlight the fluid nature of alliances and the significant impact of conflicts on the region's history.

In addition, the study emphasizes the enduring socioeconomic impact of these historical interactions. The transformation of Gerrha from an independent state to a bustling trade hub underscores the lasting consequences of these relationships on societies and economies.

The research also underscores the role of historical narratives and their contribution to the identity of regions and peoples. By revealing the intricate interplay between ancient civilizations, the study enriches our understanding of how historical events have shaped contemporary societies.

Lastly, the study highlights the importance of international collaboration in uncovering historical truths. Collaborative efforts, such as the Danish expedition and English missions, demonstrate the significance of pooling resources and expertise to preserve and uncover the past.

Overall, the study's implications encompass trade, culture, diplomacy, geopolitics, and the enduring impact of historical interactions, all contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of ancient civilizations and their lasting influence on our world today.

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