

MARINE SILK ROAD: EARLY MARINE COMMUNICATIONS

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ABSTRACT: This article studies the history of the Maritime Silk Road since ancient times. A new interpretation was also given, which was established in the scientific literature by looking at the history of the Maritime Silk Road, from new theoretical and methodological positions. The active conduct of Maritime trade in ancient times along the Trans-Caspian route was considered. This is confirmed by archaeological material.

KEYWORDS: Maritime Silk Road, trade routes, Trans-Caspian route, ancient times, maritime trade, China, Central Asia, silk, porcelain.

INTRODUCTION

Maritime trade routes have been used since antiquity. So, back in the days of the Zhou Dynasty, Emperor Wu sent his envoy Ji Qi to Korea. The latter, having reached Korea by sea, planted mulberry trees and taught the locals the art of silk making. The early Maritime Silk Road, which ran through the South China Sea, originated as a land route in southern China. It started in Sichuan, passed through Yunnan, then through Yangshang (Baoshan) led along the Irrawaddy River to Yangon (Rangoon, Myanmar). The path continued to the western coast of India and through the Indian Ocean led to the Mediterranean Sea[1]. Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi sent 500 young boys and girls to the east, led by Hu Fu, in search of the "elixir of immortality." Hu Fu and his people reached the shores of Japan and introduced the Japanese to the culture of sericulture. The Japanese revere Hu Fu as the "god of silk". It is known that the Han Emperor Wu repeatedly sent naval embassies to Southeast Asia, and they reached Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and the western coast of India.

THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Repeated attempts to get to China for direct purchases of silk were made by Roman merchants (the embassy of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, 166 AD, etc.). According to Chinese scientists in 266 AD. the first Roman merchants reached China. And in the V century. Chinese merchants visited Persia (by sea) [2]. Maritime trade was actively conducted in ancient times and along the Trans-Caspian route. This is confirmed by archaeological material. Chinese mirrors dated to the end of the 2nd-1st centuries. BC. found near the farm Grape (Lower Don) and with. Old Poltavka in the Lower Volga region. Particular attention should be paid to the materials of the Lebedev burial ground - a late Sarmatian monument of the 2nd-4th centuries. AD, located on the outskirts of Western Kazakhstan. Its originality lies in the fact that in the graves were found imported items, both of Western origin: Roman hinged enamel brooches, Asia Minor amphoras, beads, etc., and of Eastern - Central Asian, Western Asian and Chinese production: Han mirrors, Khorezmian pottery. The abundance of such diverse objects in one monument may indicate that; that the nomadic people who left these things controlled, or in some form participated in the caravan trade between the West and the East, along the route laid from the cities of Sogdia along the Syr Darya basin to the Northern Black Sea coast with a crossing on the Volga, and then with access to Tanais [3].

At a later time, "the Volga-Caspian route continued to function actively [4]. During the reigns of the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, the sea route between China and Japan was frequently used by silk merchants who amassed great wealth. The emperors of the Sui and Tang dynasties placed great emphasis on ties with Southeast Asia. They sent embassies to South Vietnam and Malaysia. In the Central Asian region, other water arteries were also involved in trade[5]. After the transfer of the capital of the Song Dynasty to Hangzhou, silk production is further stimulated here. In the 20s. 12th c. in Suzhou and Hangzhou, more than 9 thousand weavers work in the silk industry. The Maritime Silk Road became an alternative to the overland trade route to the Western regions opened by Zhang Jian. French researcher J.-P. Drezh notes that numerous data on the Sea Route between the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea have come down to us thanks to one of the most ancient messages - "Information about China and India" - a compilation collected in 851 from numerous stories of merchants[6]. In accordance with the route described in this source, the Arab ships left the Persian Gulf for the Indian Ocean and headed for the Maldives, India, the Andaman Islands, etc. From there, ships arrived in Guangzhou (Canton) through the Strait of Malacca. The journey usually lasted more

than a year. In Guangzhou, the Arab merchants who arrived were subordinate to the head - a Muslim who was responsible for fellow believers before the Chinese authorities.

At the end of this period, despite the fact that silk was still an important item of Chinese imports, porcelain gradually began to occupy the first place in the maritime trade.

One of the Arab merchants - Abu Said tells us about the organization of trade in Canton. Under the supervision of the Chinese authorities, the goods are stored until all the ships following this monsoon have entered the port. Arrest of cargo can last up to six months. The duties levied by the Chinese reach thirty percent of the value of goods.

The responsibilities of maritime trade commissariats include collecting taxes and monitoring the state's monopoly on certain types of goods. Taxes go up to 10% on pearls, camphor and small items, up to 30% on tortoiseshell, fir and large items. All taxes were paid in kind.

Maritime trade was conducted not only by the Arabs. It is known, for example, that after the battle on the Talas River in 751, which put an end to both Muslim expansion to the east and the active presence of China in Central Asia, a captive Chinese was sent home in 762 through the Persian Gulf on a Chinese junk. The transportation of goods by Chinese ships was carried out between Siraf and Canton. The route from Canton to the Persian Gulf is known, given at the end of the 8th century by the Chinese geographer Jia Dan [7].

Clear evidence of trading activity is the "Description of the Barbarian Peoples", "Zhufang Ji", written in the 12th century by Zhao Rukua, commissioner of maritime trade in Quanzhou.

Part of the work consists of brief notes on the lands with which China maintained relations during the Song Dynasty: Indo-China, Malaysia, India, the Philippines, Korea, Japan, the coast of the Gulf of Oman - as well as on the most separated lands, contacts with which remain hypothetical: Egypt, Somali Coast, Zanzibar.

In the second part - a description of products and goods imported into China: fragrant trees and resins for incense and medicines, drugs and perfumes, aloe from Cambodia, sandalwood from Java, incense from Oman and Dufar. Spices are also imported: pepper from India, cloves from the Moluccas, cardamom from Cambodia, ivory from Southeast Asia and Africa, rhinoceros horn from Indochina, cotton fabrics from Indonesia and Southeast Asia, from India and Persia (because China began to grow cotton only in the 13th century).

During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), as Chinese scientists note, "the climate of the Tarim oasis became more arid, many once prosperous oases of East Turkestan began to disappear, caravan

robberies became more frequent”[8]. Sea routes are once again becoming an alternative to the land routes of the Great Silk Road. In fact, there were two sea routes. One led through the East China Sea to Korea and Japan, and the other led through the South China Sea to the Mediterranean and East Africa.

Thanks to these expeditions, China’s prestige in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean increased significantly. Diplomatic and commercial exchanges are developing.

CONCLUSION

An important form of trade was the so-called. "ship trade". To manage it, the Song government appointed special observers in the cities of Guangzhou (Canton), Hangzhou, Mingzhou, and Wenzhou. The authorities set special taxes on the export of silk, ceramics, tea, etc. [9] Historical annals contain information about merchants from more than 50 countries who sailed to China for silk [10].

During the Song Dynasty, “trade in the form of tribute” was practiced, which consisted in the fact that foreign visitors gave the imperial court goods of their country, and the emperor presented them with silk and other expensive things in the form of gifts. The value of imperial gifts often exceeded the value of "tribute". Trade stimulated silk production in the Pearl River Delta and Fujian, as well as progress in shipbuilding and maritime science.

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10. In 1980, in the South China Sea, on the coast of Guangdong Province, a sunken ship dating back to the Song Dynasty was discovered. There were about 80 thousand different goods on the ship, which is much