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Meluhha, Gerrha, and the Emirates

The present book sets the foundations of the Ancient History of the UAE. Through use of hitherto misinterpreted historical sources, the author identifies the land of the Emirates with the region Meluhha of the Assyrian – Babylonian sources. He then locates the legendary city Gerrha of the Ancient Greek and Latin texts in Abu Dhabi's territory. The author rejects the farfetched identification of Meluhha with the Indus Delta, which reflects Indian nationalistic ideas, and refutes the absurd effort to locate the yet unexcavated Gerrha in the province Al Ehsa of Saudi Arabia. He refers to ancient sources like Strabo and Ptolemy the Geographer who accurately located Gerrha while also expanding further on the land of today's Emirates. Contextualizing the re-interpreted sources within the History of the Ancient Orient, the author illustrates three millennia of pre-Islamic History of the Emirates, and reveals the land's great importance as key point in the vast commercial network of land/desert/sea routes between the East and the West; he thus sets a historiographical model at the antipodes of Orientalism, which has been the academic dimension of the Anglo-French colonialism.

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Orientalist, Historian, Political Scientist, Muhammad Shamsaddin Megalommatis, 56, is the author of 12 books, dozens of scholarly articles, hundreds of encyclopedia entries, and thousands of articles. Greek citizen of Turkish origin, he adhered to Islam when 36, devoted to the philosophical system of Muhyieldin Ibn al Arabi.

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Introduction to the Ancient History of the Emirates

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It is better to sin by being too strict than by being too soft.
Ibn Hazem – Al-Akhlāq wa'l-Siyar (Morals and Behaviour)
ch. IX, Treatment of Corrupt Character – 296

To my Palestinian friend and brother Ehab Khalil,
in remembrance of the Abu Dhabi days

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Preface

The present book does not consist in a concise Ancient History of the Emirates; it does not represent an effort of systematization of the textual sources relating to the ancient land of the Emirates. Furthermore, the ancient historical sources and the modern bibliography are not exhaustively discussed.

However, this book is the first effort to incorporate two key subjects into the modern historiography of the pre-Islamic history of the Emirates: Meluhha and Gerrha.

Meluhha is an ancient land known through Ancient Sumerian and Assyrian – Babylonian texts; due to the colonial involvement and owed to political needs of nationalistic character that were also instigated by the colonial academia of England and France into the political elites of the Indian subcontinent, Meluhha was falsely identified with the Harappa civilization cities in the Indus Delta area. References to Meluhha in Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets cover indeed a long period from the end of the 3rd millennium BCE down to the middle of the 1st millennium BCE.

Gerrha is an ancient city known through Ancient Greek and Latin texts; it was a key point in the trade between the South and the North, the East and the West during in the Antiquity. However, similarly with Meluhha, Gerrha was falsely identified as located in the area of today's Dammam in Saudi Arabia. References to Gerrha in Ancient Greek and Latin texts cover many centuries before and after the beginning of the Christian era.

In modern historiography, the falsifications are not only of academic, but also of political scope; as a matter of fact, what is targeted by the Orientalist colonial academics is the proper use of History by the different local states and nations. This is a very sophisticated plan that was comprehensively applied to all the former colonies of England and France. Neo-colonial America only followed on the same track.

The reason for the abovementioned situation is very simple; the establishment of a nation's historical overview by the indigenous people - and not foreign, colonial academia - sets the real beginning of the national independence and self-determination. This heralds the end of the intellectual, academic, educational, cultural, socio-economic, political and military neo-colonialism.

By fully incorporating past moments, cultural identity, and the land's historicity into a system of historical education geared to offer a historical perspective of self-perceived identity that is based on scientifically approved and historically correct data, a young nation creates the only solid national foundation for future generations.

From this viewpoint, the present book consists in the first non-colonial historiography of the land of the Emirates. It sets a historiographical model at the antipodes of Orientalism, which has been properly speaking the academic dimension of the Anglo-French colonialism; it thus unveils the vast disregard the Orientalist academia provenly had of the historical sources.

Chapter I. National History, National Identity and Colonialism

In the key effort toward establishing an anti-colonial historiographical system, the local scholarships and the political leaderships are expected to face always a tremendous opposition, either the effort is undertaken by an indigenous nation in Asia, Africa, and Latin America or sought after by a non-colonial, and therefore peripheral, European nation,. The anticipated opposition is expected to come from the colonial powers, mainly England, France and their successor, the US. The reason is due to the fact that the colonial historiography as a system is not independent and unrelated to political plots and interests, but it definitely sets the foundation on which is based these nations' ability to efficiently implement their policies, which proved to be so profitable to them and so disastrous to the colonized nations over the past 400 years.

False identity of a targeted, peripheral or newly-incepted nation, detachment of an indigenous nation from their true past, ignorance of the historical importance of their own land, disregard for their own historicity, and distance from their own cultural authenticity have all been important elements for the colonial academia's, diplomats' and regimes' agenda. All the aforementioned traits, if implemented, help create a situation in which every indigenous nation easily becomes manageable, maneuverable and controllable as per the interests of the colonial powers. It goes without saying that always the colonial powers' interests have been unquestionably catastrophic for the colonized nation with the targeted or even obliterated historicity.

The period of the colonial expansion of England and France (mainly 18th – 20th century) was not only characterized by military, political and economic expansion of the colonial powers; it was also typified by an extraordinary academic, intellectual, spiritual, religious, cultural and educational colonialism that greatly helped the colonial powers accommodate their colonial military, political and economic apparatuses, thus triggering among the targeted nations ceaseless wars, permanent underdevelopment, abject poverty, detrimental disasters, civil discord, severe disorientation from each colonized nation's real perspectives and potentialities, nationwide impotency, absolute misery, and at times a deceitful appearance of importance and/or strength that is in fact purely fake.

Chapter II. Orientalism and Hellenism

The academic ateliers of Paris and London forged indeed a multi-level distortion of the historical truth; they undertook the elaboration of an entirely false historical system based on counterfeit pillars, and in addition, they promoted the diffusion of this system, as well as of erroneous historical considerations, approaches, and conclusions across the world. At this point, suffice it here to state that Hellenism and Orientalism are two key, albeit not exclusive, pillars of the aforementioned counterfeit historical system, which was diffused worldwide through tyrannical, colonial means and sophisticated deceptions.

The sick nature of this system has been denounced over the past three decades by great scholars, like Martin Bernal and Edward Said; the former demonstrated that the Greco-centrist viewpoint, which characterized the Anglo-French colonial dogma, is genuinely rejected by both, the archeological evidence and the textual documentation that we have collected from Ancient Greece. Hellenism consists in purely false knowledge about Ancient Greece; worse, Hellenism is sheer racism. Hellenism does not only represent an insult against the rest of the world, and more particularly against numerous nations with history and civilization greater than that of the Ancient Greeks, but it also proved to be an efficient tool in detaching the modern Greeks from their Christian Orthodox identity, and in westernizing them at their own detriment.

On the other hand, Edward Said demonstrated that the Anglo-French colonial scholars, in their study of the Orient (which took the form of the creation of a great number of disciplines such as Egyptology, Assyriology, Hittitology, Iranology, Islamology, Indology, Sinology, etc.), have not objectively searched for the historical truth, but they discovered what they had beforehand desired to 'discover', merely projecting their preconceived and prejudicial, anti-Oriental (not only anti-Islamic but also anti-Oriental Christian) ideas and misconceptions on their absurd and fallacious 'studies', and consequently on all their - inevitably partial and absolutely erroneous - conclusions.

The monstrous and anti-human, academic, intellectual, spiritual, religious, cultural and educational colonialism took another form: that of the imposition of the aforementioned fake disciplines on the educational systems of their colonized lands. Quite indicatively, when a discipline was in the making, not one indigenous scholar originating from the land / civilization under study was allowed by the vicious, racist and evil Anglo-French colonial academia to participate in their researches and explorations. The reason was simple; vicious distortion in the making can be more easily detected by any intelligent scholar emanating from a local tradition (Islamic, Oriental Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, African, Latin American, etc.).

Illustratively, for more than 60 years after the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphics by Champollion and the ensuing formation of the discipline of Egyptology, not one Egyptian national was accepted in any related institution (archeological institute, library, museum and university) and not one Egyptian national was allowed to study and learn Egyptian hieroglyphics.

When the distorted disciplines of Orientalism were sufficiently established, then indigenous students from the lands / civilizations under study were accepted in the colonial countries' universities only to subserviently accept the disastrous and false teachings and be

subsequently sent back home as ‘’bon pour l’ Orient”. Everyone who dared challenge the erroneous colonial system of Orientalism was mechanically rejected and undeservedly defamed. Furthermore, the evil colonial academia kept their diplomatic and military counterparts duly and systematically informed about any ‘dangerous local challenger’, and the colonial establishments would mobilize all their resources against the local who would dare challenge the Orientalist fallacies. Finally, with the political establishment of the colonized lands under total colonial control, it was evident that the indigenous scholars, who would dare challenge the colonial aberration of Orientalism, would be immediately persecuted by the local puppets of the colonial powers, and therefore effectively marginalized, and duly kept under silence forever.

Finally, reaction came from inside the Western academia, with the aforementioned two scholars and with many others who recently contributed to the demolition, yet not completed, of the monstrous colonial formation of Orientalism.

Alteration of the historical past can be undertaken under many different forms, and in this regard, covering a specific subject under a dark veil of deep silence is just one method. Wherever you attest it, during the study of one historical point / subject, you can be sure that you don’t just deal with mere lack of knowledge or with a case of ignorance among the colonial scholars (and among the victims of their false teachings, their students) but you rather unveil a premeditated act and an academic forgery with vast political repercussions.

Chapter III. UAE Historical Heritage Threatened by Academic Colonialism

The United Arab Emirates emerged after 150 years of perfidious English colonialism that took the form of the establishment of the so-called Trucial States whose stance was adapted to the viciously anti-Islamic policies of colonial England.

If we are to evaluate developments in a pertinent and comprehensive manner, we have to take into consideration the critical fact that, during this period, Anglo-French and American academia, diplomats and agents invited (by means of scholarships) many Egyptians, Lebanese, Syrians, Palestinians, Iraqis, Iranians, Pakistanis and Indians (I deliberately use names of modern countries here!) to study (in various universities in England, France, America and other associated colonial – neocolonial territories or states) the history of their respective lands / civilizations in order to project onto these otherwise innocent, ignorant, naïve and unsuspicious students the extreme fallacies of the diverse branches of Orientalism, and the paranoid fallacy of Hellenism. They thus 'educated' these foreign students, who were selected among the small circle of the local puppets of the colonial powers, in a manner that proved to be absolutely catastrophic for the students' colonized, semi-colonized or (not yet colonized but) targeted lands.

However, the colonial powers did not invite any Emirati to study the history of his land, during the said period! This marks a level of differentiation.

It is true that each targeted land was dealt with differently, as per the specific needs of the colonial agenda for each country. But in the case of the land that came to be incepted as UAE in 1971-2, the differentiation was great; the colonial powers decided to leave the local intellectual – academic elite, which was under formation, and generally speaking, the entire indigenous nation in mystery as regards

a) the history of the surrounding lands (Mesopotamia, Syria, Phoenicia, Egypt, Sudan (Ancient Ethiopia), Yemen, Somalia, Iran, India, and Central Asia),

b) their own national Emirati history, and more particularly,

c) the pre-Islamic history of their own land that stretches from the Eastern coastlands of the Arabian Peninsula to the peninsula of Qatar.

Here, we have to specify that the illustrious history of the Islamic Caliphates in general, and the local Emirati history after the rise of Islam in the peninsula were traditional subjects that local students, ancestors of today's Emiratis, customarily studied at various levels, namely in the local religious schools (medressas) and in the great centers of Islamic Knowledge that surrounded their land, namely Muscat, Aden, Sanaa, Mecca, Medina, Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad, Najaf, Kerbala, Qom, Shiraz, Yazd, Kerman, Mashhad and of course Istanbul, where they used to pour in for many long centuries.

It is therefore essential at this point to make clear that the vicious theory according to which ignorance and illiteracy prevailed in the land of the modern state of the Emirates during the Islamic centuries is a heinous colonial attack against the national identity of the Emirates, and a permanent insult against every Emirati today. In fact, it consists in an absurd

denigration of the illustrious ancestral generations of the modern Emiratis, who lived in Art, Knowledge, Wealth, Faith and Spirituality, when the ancestors of the modern English and French were living in hellish darkness like barbarians, feeding on roots and insects, while practicing incestuous rites.

The aforementioned differentiation plan of the colonial powers as regards the territory of the Trucial States prevented the indigenous nation from acquiring even a rudimentary, albeit inaccurate and distorted knowledge of their pre-Islamic history, which is of primary importance for their nation-building effort. Owed to this colonial plan, the indigenous, modern Emirati nation was barred from becoming acquainted with the history and the civilization of surrounding nations with whom their ancestors interacted for no less than 5000 years!

If we were to compare the two colonial policies, we would conclude that the colonial attitude toward Egypt and Iraq was, although very negative, less harmful than the Anglo-French attitude against the 19th-20th c. Emiratis. This conclusion is based on a simple and solid consideration; the inaccuracies of the Western schools of History, the distortions of Hellenism, and the fallacies of Orientalism are such that they trigger immediate criticism and, through a certain process of critical thinking, several mistakes and falsifications, earlier learned as correct historical data and interpretations, are later questioned and finally rejected by the unbiased students. Contrarily, compact ignorance - as applied to the 19th-20th c. Emiratis - detaches the targeted indigenous nation from their true past, prevents them from assessing the historical importance of their own land, and finally condemns them to permanent paleness and impotency.

The aforementioned colonial policy in and by itself reveals the intentions and the targets of the colonial powers as regards the Emirates; the formation of a fake state and the inception of a pale, impotent nation deprived from the sense of nationhood, detached from their culture, and disconnected from their historical past, ready to be exploited because of their natural resources. Such an invalid nation would effectively be able to become a much praised ‘global hub of services’ (pretty much like Singapore or Hong Kong) in order to be further utilized by the colonial powers, which provenly leveraged the maximum part of the existing national wealth. In brief, it was a clear plan aiming at the ultimate destruction and the operational abolition of the indigenous nation.

In addition to the aforementioned policies, the colonial academia undertook an even more inimical attempt against the Emirates. They systematically attempted to disconnect the indigenous nation from their pre-Islamic past. To do so, they attributed parts of the historical heritage of the Emirates to other, surrounding countries. In other words, they usurped the 5-millennium long heritage of the Emirati nation. This point will be extensively discussed and effectively rejected later in this book.

And to come up with a fake coverage - a hypothetical interest mixed with hypocritical friendliness -, the colonial academia contributed to several excavation projects on Emirati territory that, although pertinently performed at the technical level and published in academic journals, never led (and they never could lead) to the composition of a concise National History of the Emirates. The colonial academia dealt with these projects extensively, because they were harmless enough for the colonial academia’s historical forgery. In fact, fragmentary knowledge, disparate archaeological data, and incoherent info

vanish to oblivion, having no real effect, and leaving the targeted nation in mystery about their diachronic presence in History.

Thus, the lack of a basic diagram of National History of the Emirates, the absence of references to the diachronic trends that shaped the nation's cultural identity across the ages, and the concealment of literary evidence relating to the Emirati national past surely suffice to deprive modern Emiratis from a historically justified feeling of national pride which is solidly based on 5-millennium long historicity, on glorious moments, and on historical greatness reported in Ancient Assyrian – Babylonian, Greek and Latin texts.

Chapter IV. Neighboring Nations & Cultures – Key Components of UAE National History

Before examining the fundamental historical sources relating to the Pre-Islamic History of the Emirati Nation, we have to briefly name the surrounding nations / civilizations with whom the indigenous Emirati nation interacted over the past five millennia. This point helps guide the nationwide educational effort that has to be undertaken in the future, if nation-building and national history-writing are among the goals of the present Emirati administration.

Diachronically, the land of the Emirates and the indigenous nation were interrelated with
a) the Sumerians, the Assyrians and the Babylonians of Mesopotamia (3rd – 1st millennium BCE),
b) the Elamites of SW Iran (3rd – 1st millennium BCE),
c) the Aramaeans of Mesopotamia, Syria and North Arabia (1st millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE),
d) the different nations that inhabited the Iranian plateau (Atropatene / Azeri, Median, Persian, Parthian, Baluch and others / 1st millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE), and
e) the pre-Islamic Yemenites, who were organized in various states such as Sheba, Himyar, Qataban, Hadhramawt, Oman, etc. (1st millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE).

To lesser extent, the land of the Emirates and the indigenous nation were interrelated with
f) the different nations of the Valley of Indus and the Indian Sub-continent (2nd millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE),
g) the Horn of Africa nations, mainly the Ancient Somalis of the state of Punt (2nd millennium BCE), as well as the Somali inhabitants of the Late Antiquity states of Other Berberia and Azania (1st millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE),
h) the Ancient Egyptians and the Ancient Sudanese (called 'Ethiopians' in the Antiquity, unrelated to the modern state of Abyssinia which is fallaciously called Ethiopia / 2nd millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE), and
i) diverse Central Asiatic nations and states, namely the Bactrians, the Sogdians, the Arachosians, etc. (1st millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE).

Following the preaching of Prophet Muhammad and the expansion of Islam, and down to modern times, the land of the Emirates and the indigenous nation were also interrelated with
j) the nations that progressively accepted Islam among the above-mentioned,
k) the Arabs of Hedjaz (1st – 2nd millennium CE), and
l) the various Turkic nations that progressively accepted, defended and promoted Islam, notably the Seljuk and the Ottoman Turks (2nd millennium CE).

At this point, I have to clarify that I herewith don't mention colonial nations that appeared in the area of the Emirates as threat and invaders (such as the Portuguese and the English). In this case, the historical interaction was detrimental and calamitous for all Emiratis and for all Muslim nations.

In addition to the aforementioned, the history of the land of the Emirates and of the indigenous nation is also interrelated with
m) the Ancient Greeks, and

n) the Ancient Romans, who saved in their texts a great number of references to the land of the Emirates, thus forming the most abundant historical source of the Pre-Islamic History of the Emirates (1st millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE).

At this point, I have to clarify that never did a Greek-speaking or Latin-speaking administration control any part of the Emirates' territory. Alexander the Great invaded the Persian Empire (controlling amongst others Anatolia, Phoenicia, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau) and advanced as far as Punjab (Pentapotamia), but neither did his army or fleet (under admiral Nearchus) reach the territory of the Emirates.

On the other hand, the Romans, who around the year 25 BCE arranged a successful naval expedition against Aden (then known as Arabia Felix) and in later periods reached up to the Caspian Sea shore and the North of Mesopotamia (under Trajan, beginning of the 2nd century CE), while warring with Iran, never attempted to put under control the Emirati national territory.

Thus, the importance of Ancient Greek and Latin for the Emirates' national history-writing hinges on textual evidence – exclusively.

Among all aforementioned nations and states, the only to control the Emirati territory for several pre-Islamic periods proved to be Iran, either at the times of the Achaemenid / Hahamaneshian dynasty or during the Sassanid / Sassanian period.

The Achaemenid (550 BCE – 330 CE) control of the Emirati territory was vague and limited, involving local policy adjustment rather than military occupation. In addition, due to the Achaemenid economic policies and administrative practices, the Emirati territory rose to great importance in the trade routes between East and West.

Contrarily, the Sassanid (224 – 651 CE) control of the Emirati territory meant full annexation and incorporation into the Iranian Empire, and this development triggered a certain decline in local wealth and gradual decadence until the emergence of Islam.

Even more important for the Emirates' national history-writing have been the Aramaeans who, based in the area of today's Sham (Southeast Anatolia, Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Mesopotamia, and Southwest Iran), managed to progressively setup the entire East – West network of trade routes that gradually but effectively interconnected all lands between Rome and China in an unprecedented commercial and cultural inter-exchange, which lasted for many centuries until the rise of Islam, only to be subsequently used by Muslim merchants, scholars, sailors, and faith advocates. Aramaeans were physically present on Emirati territory; along with the Ancient Yemenites and some Iranian settlers (of lesser importance), they are the true ancestors of the modern Emirati nation. This will be better illuminated further on in this book.

The above table definitely places the land and the nation of the Emirates at the epicenter of a great number of nations, lands and civilizations; this did not occur by coincidence or without an important role for this land and nation. In fact, the Emirates were located at a very strategic position in the trade network between East and West; the impressive present wealth of this nation is not without historical precedent.

For many long centuries, during its great and long past, the land and the nation of the Emirates repeatedly became greatly famous for their fabulous wealth. That trait was indeed predestined to effectuate a major comeback in our times!

Chapter V. National History of the Emirates - Diachronic Trends

First and foremost, the Pre-Islamic History of the Emirates cannot be reconstructed without a strong link with the trade routes between Mesopotamia and the Gulf region for the 3rd and the 2nd millennia BCE.

More importantly, due to the increased interconnectedness of all three continents of the ancient world during the second half of the 1st millennium BCE and down to the emergence of Islam, the History of the Emirates during the Late Antiquity (the times between Shah Cyrus / Kurosh of Achaemenid Iran and Prophet Muhammad) cannot be reconstructed without a strong link with the complex network of trade routes that brought Europe, Africa and Asia closer for more than a millennium (550 BCE – 642 CE).

From first view, one may assume that the mere location of the Emirates between Mesopotamia, from one side, and the Eastern coastland of the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa region, from the other side, was the true reason of its strategic importance; this however would be quite relative.

In fact, as per the existing textual evidence, the Emirati territory was more important for its own resources than its intermediate position between the aforementioned regions - at least for the earlier pre-Islamic period of Emirati history, e.g. the Sumerian – Akkadian – Assyrian / Babylonian history of the Emirates, which covers the period between the end of the 4th millennium BCE and the year 539 BCE (date of the fall of Nabonid Babylonia) when Achaemenid Iran rose to prominence under Cyrus.

For approximately 2500 years, the area of the Emirates was at the easternmost confines of the Mesopotamian world. Of course, there were scarce Mesopotamian explorations of, and exchanges with, the Eastern coastland of the Arabian Peninsula, and the Horn of Africa region, but these contacts never intensified. The reminiscence of the Assyrian explorations in, and contacts with these lands, is saved in Arrian's Indica (XXXII.7), many centuries after the disappearance of the Ancient Assyrians from History. The above excerpt reads: "Those who had knowledge of the district said that this promontory belonged to Arabia, and was called Maceta; and that thence the Assyrians imported cinnamon and other spices". During the period between the end of the 4th millennium and the year 539 BCE, the Sumerians, the Akkadians, and the Assyrians / Babylonians called the area of today's Emirates 'Meluhha'.

Chapter VI. Assyrian - Babylonian Literature about UAE territory: Meluhha

Throughout the existing vast cuneiform literature either in Sumerian or in Akkadian (Assyrian – Babylonian), we have found many late 3rd millennium BCE references to Meluhha. Akkadian is the oldest Semitic language known, and Sumerian language differed from Akkadian as much as Arabic does from Chinese, but the Akkadians adopted Sumerian cuneiform writing for their language.

In the Sumerian / Assyrian–Babylonian texts, not much is said about Meluhha itself, except for the products that were thence imported in Mesopotamia. What is very clear is the reference of Meluhha in connection with the 'Lower Sea' (Tiamtum Shapiltum in 'classical' Akkadian of the 3rd millennium BCE), which was the term by which the Assyrians and the Babylonians denoted the Gulf in contradiction with the 'Upper Sea' (the Mediterranean).

The seaside lands of Mesopotamia were customarily described as 'Sealand', a geographical term that covers the extreme South of today's Iraq and the adjacent parts of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. One has to bear in mind that the local topography of that part of the Gulf differed very much at those days, because over the millennia the Twin Rivers' flow helped create sizeable alluvial lands, and we have now great difficulty in accurately demarcating the coastline at the times of the Mesopotamian Antiquity.

Ethnically, the term 'Sealand' can describe different nations at different moments across the almost 3-millennium long Mesopotamian History, namely Sumerian population (3rd millennium BCE), Babylonian inhabitants (2nd millennium BCE) or Chaldaean Aramaeans of Bit Yakin (1st half of the 1st millennium BCE).

What existed beyond the Mesopotamian Sealand?

For all the Mesopotamians, there was a sequence of lands at the southeastern confines of their world: the island of Tilmun (or Dilmun), Magan and Meluhha; the latter was indeed the furthermost point known to the Sumerians and the Assyrians / Babylonians. As a matter of fact, Magan was immediately east of the island Tilmun, and Meluhha was further on in the east.

The only commonly accepted and solid identification of one of the above locations is that of Tilmun, which corresponds to the island nation of Bahrain. Magan is usually identified with Oman; however, this is wrong. The most plausible identification of the land Magan of the Mesopotamian literatures is the Qatar peninsula, immediately east of Bahrain Island.

Furthermore, the reason for which conventional scholars still believe Magan's identification with the land of today's Oman (and not the land of the Emirates too) is even more extraordinary! This situation is due to the fact that, when the first Assyriologists of the late 19th and early 20th century studied for the first time the cuneiform Assyrian / Babylonian texts pertaining to Magan, Oman was already a semi-independent country disputed by the English and the French, whereas the Emirates had not yet been conceptualized by the Western Orientalists and colonial diplomats as a nation, involving a national territory, a national history, and an historicity across the ages. The Emirati territory was indeed part of the English colonial sphere (as 'Trucial states'); it was inconsequentially and confusingly

heard of, and therefore absolutely disregarded. A simple geographical overview of the NE corners of the Arabian Peninsula is enough to convince any observer that, except suggested otherwise by historical sources, the territories of today's Emirates and Oman constitute an undividable geographical entity.

In fact, had Magan been associated with Oman during the period between the 3rd millennium BCE and the middle of the 1st millennium BCE, it would have also been inextricably related with the Emirates. However, this is not so. Magan was not located either in Oman or in the Emirates.

As it often happens, a first mistake gives easily birth to a second. Having erroneously identified Oman with Magan, the early Assyriologists were driven to the impossible association of Meluhha with the Gujarat peninsula in India; this assumption prevailed for long, and it was even published in the highly revered scholarly publication Reallexikon der Assyriologie, entry Meluhha (online available here: http://books.google.ae/books?id=O1yFrzi-MgYC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ar&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false / on page 53).

The basic reason for which it is impossible to locate Meluhha in Gujarat is the undeniable fact that the cuneiform textual evidence locates Meluhha strictly in the 'Lower Sea' area, and there hasn't yet been a single indication that the term 'Lower Sea' denoted for the Sumerians and the Akkadians - Assyrians / Babylonians not only the Gulf but also the Indian Ocean, i.e. the sea beyond the Ormuz straits.

In fact, for no less than 2500 years, the term 'Lower Sea' denoted only the Gulf, and although archeological evidence makes it clear that Mesopotamians imported from the Indus valley and the East African coast, we have absolutely no textual mention of these remote lands, and seas.

Another mistake, extremely frequent at the days of the early Assyriologists but easily discernible today, is the assumption that the Emirates' national territory should be excluded from any effort of identification of Meluhha just because of the harsh desert conditions that prevail there today; in fact, these conditions have prevailed in the area only over the past few centuries. The aforementioned projection proved to be totally false, because modern technologies, used over the recent decades, allowed us to have a more accurate insight into the natural environment where ancient nations lived and prospered, into their habitat, and into their daily life. This conclusion does not concern only the region of today's Emirates, but many other countries across different continents as well. Indicatively, all the pyramids of Egypt and Sudan that stand today in the middle of the desert, surrounded by the desert sand, were built in perfectly arable lands; furthermore, the Red Sea coasts of Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea and Yemen, the north Somali coastlands, and the shores of Hadhramawt and Dhofar were covered by great forests. The same concerns the territory of the Emirates as well. The Emirati coastland was not a desert before two or four millennia.

Great Assyriologists like B. Landsberger considered the name Meluhha to be of Sumerian origin. However, the misplaced identification of Meluhha triggered further misconceptions and farfetched attempts, as various scholars tried to associate it with Proto-Dravidian languages of the Indian South.

Chapter VII. Assyrian – Babylonian 'Meluhha': UAE territory, not Indus Valley

More recently, Pakistani and Indian specialists of Ancient History of the Indus Valley and the Indian Peninsula, who have no background in Assyriology but implement a great political agenda and are well-known for their nationalistic mindset, tried - in a most misleading attempt - to associate Meluhha (not anymore with Gujarat but) with the 2nd millennium BCE Indus Valley civilization.

This effort is partly due to problems related to the Indus Valley material record, and more specifically to the disproportionate types of documentation scholars and researchers have collected from the local archeological sites, among which Mohenjo Daro and Harappa are the largest. These sites are known for their great monuments and the unearthed vast archeological evidence. In the other hand, the epigraphic documentation, attested under the form of an early ideogrammatic system, is scarce if compared with the abundant epigraphic documentation from Mesopotamia (which is the largest among all the civilizations of the Antiquity). Worse, the Indus Valley writing has not yet been deciphered.

Indus Valley specialists have therefore unearthed a great number of sites, and they brought to the daylight an abundance of monuments, but the recorded textual evidence is of no help as long as it remains undeciphered. They therefore cannot reconstitute the Indus Valley past as pertinently as Assyriologists managed to evidence the Mesopotamian heritage. Trying therefore to establish a farfetched historicity for the Indus Valley, they misinterpreted the term 'Meluhha' by associating it with the Indus Valley states that flourished at the end of the 3rd and during most of the 2nd millennium BCE. However, most of the significant archaeological sites excavated in the Indus Valley were located deep in the inland; this fact is prohibitive for any association attempt between the Indus Valley sites and the Mesopotamian term 'Meluhha', because Meluhha was definitely a coastal territory, and it was not so far from both, Tilmun and Magan.

Certainly, there were contacts between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley; but specialists have already concluded that the trade route linked the middle Zagros Mountains, east of Mesopotamia, with the Indus Valley, by crossing the Iranian plateau and the Baluchistan plains. Tepe Yahya in today's Iran seems to have been an important entrepot on this trade route. There was no navigation involved, and there was no coastal trade route across the northern shores of the Gulf.

This means that, if the Indus Valley sites had been identified with Meluhha, we would have been forced to identify Magan and Tilmun (known for their position in-between) with parts of the Iranian plateau, which is practically impossible, because Magan is a coastland and Tilmun is an island.

We know for instance that Tilmun was not only located between Mesopotamia and the eastern states of Magan and Meluhha, but it also played the role of an intermediate entrepot for the Mesopotamian trade with Magan and Meluhha. Cuneiform documentation from the Ur III period (end of 3rd millennium BCE), pertaining to the commercial exchanges between the Neo-Sumerian states and Meluhha, makes clear that the Mesopotamian imports from Meluhha were successively transported via Magan and Tilmun; this is a clear

indication that Meluhha cannot be associated with the area around Indus' estuary whereby no major site was excavated.

Last but not the least, those who assume that Meluhha can be possibly identified with the Indus Valley sites, should offer a convincing response to the following question:

- Why on earth did the Indus Valley trade with Mesopotamia, even if we assume that it was transported across the sea and not over the continental trade routes, needed to transit through Tilmun (i.e. modern Bahrain), which is far from the hypothetical navigation line connecting the estuaries of Indus and of the twin rivers, Euphrates and Tigris, of Mesopotamia?

The only possible answer is that the hypothetical maritime trade between Indus Valley and Mesopotamia would not need a transit through Tilmun (i.e. modern Bahrain).

For the supposed maritime transportation of the Indus Valley trade with the various Mesopotamian states, Tilmun (Bahrain) would be first, a small and unimportant island, and second, an absolutely useless deviation.

Even if we attempted to combine the wrong identification of the term 'Meluhha' with the historical fact of Meluhha merchandises being transported to Mesopotamia via Tilmun, we would have to totally reject such an assumption because, based on textual evidence, there is absolutely no reference to a hypothetical Tilmun thalassocracy. Only this eventuality would make the stopover in Tilmun necessary. Yet, the stopover was quite real, and with no Tilmun thalassocracy involved.

This means that, even if the Indus Valley sailors preferred to sail alongside the Arabian Peninsula's coastlands to the estuary of Euphrates, and if the Indus Valley merchants and products sailed on local boats safely as far as Tilmun, they would certainly be able to advance further on up to the southern Mesopotamian harbor-cities, without a stopover in Tilmun. Navigation from the Indus estuary to the southern Mesopotamian harbors would not be subject to a stopover in Tilmun / Bahrain in any way.

The literary evidence that makes state of Mesopotamian imports from Meluhha, being successively transported via Magan and Tilmun, reveals also a situation of mutual dependence among the three locations, and this imposes immediate propinquity.

Taking into consideration the geographical background, we can safely conclude that the island of Tilmun could acquire importance as a transit point and an entrepot in a trade with Mesopotamia only for the nearby coastlands of the modern states of Qatar and the Emirates that have therefore logically to be respectively identified with Magan and Meluhha.

Meluhha, Magan and Tilmun were of great importance indeed for the Sumerians and the Akkadians - Assyrians / Babylonians. For this reason, the diverse political authorities that ruled the Mesopotamian nations did their best to keep Meluhha, Magan and Tilmun out of reach of the Elamites, the worst enemy of the Mesopotamian states.

A permanent archrival of the Sumerian states, Akkad, Assyria and Babylon, Elam was located east of Mesopotamia, in today's SW Iran; the area east of Tigris river used to be

called by Greeks and Romans 'Transtigritane' during the Late Antiquity. Elam is the name (ethnic and geographic term) by which the Assyrians and the Babylonians used to call the non-Semitic state that tried persistently to infiltrate in Southern Mesopotamia. In their own language, the Elamites called their country Anshan; Elamite writing has been deciphered, and the decipherment brought forth vast textual evidence about a three millennia long Mesopotamian civilization, which at different moments expanded across the southern confines of the Iranian plateau and the northern shores of the Gulf.

Elam's expansion in the east could threaten the commercial relations of the Sumerians and of the Akkadians - Assyrians / Babylonians with Magan and Meluhha. We have indications that Meluhha sided at times with Elam against the Sumerians and the Akkadians - Assyrians / Babylonians. Other textual references shed light on the bilateral relations, and make state of bilingual, Assyrian / Meluhha interpreters ('emebal Meluhha').

Chapter VIII. Assyrian – Babylonian Texts about Meluhha – Emirates

In the famous text 'Malediction of Akkad', we read that the great Akkadian emperor Naram Sin (ca. 2254-2218 BCE) grew the people of Meluhha up; on this occasion, the Meluhha people were described as "the inhabitants of the black land".

In a hymn to Ninurta, dating back in the times of Gudea of Lagash (ca. 2144-2124 BCE), we find that Mesopotamians imported lapis lazuli and carnelian from Meluhha.

In the religious text 'Enki and the World Order', we notice that the great Sumerian god of the Water (known as Ea among the Assyrians and the Babylonians) made a critical decision about the destiny of Meluhha. Enki blessed that country to be the territory of great trees, to have vast plains covered by 'Mesh' trees and other great plants and bamboos, and to be endowed with warriors experienced in battle, great cattle, francolins, chicken and the divine bird Haja (peacock ?). As per the Enki Order of Creation, Meluhha would be gifted with gold and tin for the production of bronze.

The Sumerian – Assyrian / Babylonian holy text 'Enki and Ninhursaga' brings forth a religious 'explanation' of the intermediary role played by Tilmun (Bahrain) island in the trade between Mesopotamia and the coastal lands of Magan and Meluhha, immediately east of Tilmun. Enki makes the wish that the people of Magan and Meluhha bring their merchandises to the entrepot of Tilmun as offerings to Ninsikila, Enki's female associate divinity.

Typical Meluhha merchandises imported in Mesopotamia were luxurious products, such as precious stones (gem stones und precious wood), precious metals and ivory. Assyriologists like G. Pettinato and Heimpel published analytical accounts of the Meluhha imports in Mesopotamia, examining (the former) literary and lexicographical data, and (the latter) royal inscriptions and administrative data. Carnelian, lapis lazuli, 'Shuba' and 'Nir' precious stones, precious wood (gish.esi), 'sea wood' (gish-ab-ba), and 'Mes-Meluhha-wood' were the most ordinary, valuable objects imported from Meluhha.

With respect to metals and precious metals, frequently mentioned among the Meluhha merchandises imported in Mesopotamia were: gold, tin, copper, and Ku-NE-A (unidentified).

On the other hand, the ivory imports from Meluhha were used by some scholars as an 'argument' in support of the Meluhha – Indus Valley (or Gujarat, or India) theory. This, in and by itself, shows the nature of the farfetched assumption; it has again to do with a projection of modern times' conditions and traits onto the historical past. Today perhaps, the only extant elephants in the wider area between the Mediterranean and India are to be found in the subcontinent; but this was not the case during the Mesopotamian Antiquity. Elephants existed not only in the Arabian Peninsula but also in Syria, and more specifically in the Orontes Valley (today's Hatay province of Turkey) whereby the Assyrian emperors of the 2nd and the 1st millennium BCE reportedly used to hunt them, pretty much like they frequently hunted lions in parts of today's Southeastern Turkey (Hakkari).

High period for the Meluhha – Mesopotamian contacts and exchanges proved to be the 2nd half of the 3rd millennium and the early 2nd millennium BCE. It is certain that we have fewer references to Meluhha during the times of the Kassite dynasty of Babylonia and the

early post-Kassite times. This is rather due to developments of political order that occurred in the wider area of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Chapter IX. Meluhha – Emirates, and the Late Use of 'Meluhha' in the Assyrian Imperial Annals

The exorbitant use of the geographical term 'Meluhha' in the imperial inscriptions and the Annals of the Neo-Assyrian emperors, and more particularly those of the Sargonid dynasty (722 – 609 BCE / Sargon of Assyria – Sinakherib – Assarhaddon – Assurbanipal et alii) has confused many scholars; it is true that during this period, Assyrian scribes used the term 'Meluhha' to describe the land of North Sudan that they had customarily described as Mat Kusi (land of Cush); the term Mat Kusi remained in use in parallel with the Meluhha neologism.

However, Mat Kusi is exactly the country the Ancient Greeks called Ethiopia (lit. 'the country of the burned-face people'), which has nothing to do with the modern dictatorial state of Abyssinia that viciously usurped and widely misused the fair name of historical Ethiopia.

The end of the 8th and the 7th century BCE was the only period during which the Assyrians invaded Egypt, annexed the Nile Valley to their empire, and kicked the Sudanese (Ethiopian) kings of Thebes (Luxor) back to North Sudan where was located their early capital at Napata (today's Karima, 750 km south of the present Egyptian – Sudanese border, alongside the Nile).

The issue was early noticed by W. F. Albright, a famous Orientalist, who wrote a scholarly article in the scholarly periodical Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (JEA - vol. 7, p.80 -7). It was perhaps too early to establish a plausibly trustful conclusion; the article's title demonstrates the approach: 'Magan, Meluhha, and the synchronism between Menes and Naram Sin'. No one supports today this farfetched interpretation.

Naming North Sudan and the Red Sea coast of Sudan as 'Meluhha' can be due only to an analogy with the earlier use of the term. In vain, many tried to extract a possible reference to dark-skinned or black-head people, whereas others attempted to setup theories of transcontinental resettlements between the Horn of Africa region and the Dekkan (the Indian South), speaking of a theoretical common origin for both, East Africa's Kushites and the Dravidians on the West Indian coast. There is nothing to prove any of these misleading opinions and farfetched innuendos. In this regard, Bernard Sergent's references to the subject are deprived of any accuracy, let alone proof.

Yet, it is clear that, for an erudite emperor like Assurbanipal (669 – 625 BCE), an analogy existed between the specific term's earlier use and the Sargonid times' adaptation. If we make the correct assumption that, for the Sargonid emperors' scribes, there could not be any identification of ethnic content between the people inhabiting Meluhha during the 3rd – 2nd millennia BCE and the 1st millennium BCE Kushites at Egypt's southern borders, we can understand that the only possible analogy used was of geographical character.

What geographical analogies could exist between the 3rd-2nd millennium BCE 'Meluhha' – Emirati coastland in the Gulf and the 8th-7th century BCE 'Meluhha' – Kush/Ethiopia and the Sudanese coastland in the Red Sea?

Based on well-documented Assyrian world perceptions, geographical concepts, attested attitudes toward the surrounding environment, and more importantly, on the Assyrian theoretical system of geographical determinism, we have first to take into consideration the following parameters:

a. the Gulf was viewed as a lower level of the earth's surface (or more probably a region located 'more in the south'), if compared to the Mediterranean Sea (that the Assyrians - Babylonians called 'Upper Sea'). This conceptualization must have also been extended to the Red Sea when Assyria under the Sargonids invaded Northwest Arabia, Palestine, and – last – Egypt.

b. In the Gulf area, the furthermost point known to the ancestors of the 7th century BCE Assyrians was Meluhha (located beyond Tilmun and Magan); in the Red Sea region, the furthermost point known to the 7th century BCE Assyrians was the Sudanese coastland of Mat Kusi - Kush (Ethiopia).

c. While Tilmun and Magan in the Gulf area and the Egyptian coastland in the Red Sea region were occupied by the Assyrian forces of Assarhaddon and Assurbanipal (7th century BCE), Meluhha was an uncontrolled land beyond the borders of the vast Assyrian empire, either we take into consideration the earlier use of the term (for today's Emirates' coastland in the Gulf) or we refer to the later use of the term (for today's Sudanese coastland in the Red Sea).

d. Finally, in both cases, Meluhha was located on the right side of the sea as the Assyrians looked either from Mesopotamia toward the entire Gulf region and the Gulf's eastern confines (earlier use of the term) or from Palestine and Egypt toward the entire Red Sea region and the Red Sea's southern confines (later use of the term). The Assyrian viewpoint was later diffused among the Greeks and the Romans, and this is attested for instance in Arrian's Indica. Speaking of the Gulf coastlands of the Arabian Peninsula, Arrian says exactly this (Indica, 43):

"On the right side of the Red Sea beyond Babylonia is the chief part of Arabia, and of this a part comes down to the sea of Phoenicia and Palestinian Syria, but on the west, up to the Mediterranean, the Egyptians are upon the Arabian borders". (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/arrian-bookVIII-India.asp)

Here, we have first to specify that the Ancient Greek geographical term "Red Sea" encompasses a) the Indian Ocean, b) the Gulf and c) what we call today 'Red Sea', which was then called 'Arabian Gulf'; Arrian used in this case the all-inclusive term "Red Sea", instead of the usual term "Persian Gulf", because he was discussing about the coastlands of the Arabian Peninsula and he wanted to point out that the land (i.s. the Arabian Peninsula) extended from "the right side of the Red Sea beyond Babylonia" to the territories of Egypt and Palestine.

In this text, we can easily notice the prevailing attitude of seeing the Gulf coastlands of the Arabian Peninsula as "the right side of the sea beyond Babylonia". So, the Sargonid Assyrians, who invaded and annexed Egypt, would similarly view the Kushitic – Sudanese coastland of what we call today 'Red Sea' as "the right side of the sea beyond Egypt".

At this point, we can safely conclude that Meluhha represents the earliest phase of pre-Islamic Antiquity of today's Emirates, and that the existing Assyrian – Babylonian literature about Meluhha illustrates the Emirates' earliest civilization and cultural heritage, which has already been evidenced thanks to a certain number of archaeological excavations.

The identification of Meluhha with the Arabian Peninsula's coastland beyond Qatar and up to the straits consists in the most solid effort of locating the Ancient Mesopotamians' 'Far East'. In fact, the cuneiform literature evidencing Meluhha forms the earliest bulk of national historiography for the modern Emirati nation.

With the collapse of the Nabonid state of Babylonia (539 BCE), and the subsequent rise of Achaemenid Iran, the Emirates' National History enters a new chapter that is more important, better documented, and lasts for more than a millennium, down to the arrival of Islam.

Chapter X. The Aramaean Foundations of UAE History: the Rise of Gerrha (539 BCE – 641 CE)

Whereas the Emirates' territory, known as Meluhha, was for more than two millennia a land at the confines of the Mesopotamian world, following the rise of Achaemenid Iran and the subsequent great changes brought about in the then known world, the old land of Meluhha acquired even greater importance. This was due to the fact that it was located at the epicenter of a vast and complex network of trade routes that emerged due to the administrative policies of the Achaemenid empire and interlinked the Mediterranean world, Iran and the East African coastlands with Central Asia, India and China.

During this period, the Emirati territory was not known under a particular ethnic name or toponymic; to refer to the most authoritative 'Geography' by Ptolemy, a corpus dated back in the 2nd century CE, the entire territory of today's Oman, Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia up to the modern city of Dammam was part of 'Felix Arabia' (Eudemon Arabia in Greek), which was a term used to denote basically Yemen.

At this point, we have to mention the classical geographical division of the Arabian Peninsula into three parts, after their respective natural characteristics:

a. Petraia Arabia (lit. Stone Arabia), an area identified with modern Hedjaz, the mountainous, arid land that stretches between the southern borders of today's Jordan and the oasis of Najran,

b. Desert Arabia, the central part of the territory of the modern state of Saudi Arabia, and

c. Felix Arabia (in total contrast with the earlier parts, as it was endowed with natural riches and abundant vegetation).

Modern scholars make a dramatic mistake, identifying Felix Arabia with only Yemen. In fact, Najran is a historically permanent and inalienable part of Yemen. Furthermore, ancient geographers and historians considered as parts of the Arabia Felix the following modern territories: Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and part of the Arabian Peninsula's northern coast between Qatar and Kuwait.

The above division demonstrates that even in the Late Antiquity, the Gulf's southern coastlands were not as dry and arid, as desert and barren as they have been over the last few centuries.

More importantly, this division corresponds to the fundamental traits of the historical identity of the UAE, placing the country naturally, geographically, historically and culturally closer to Oman and Yemen than to Hedjaz (Saudi Arabia).

As we already said, the aforementioned division was basically geomorphologic of character; it helped people distinguish lands as per their own natural characteristics. This makes clear to modern scholarship and specialized researchers that had the Emirates' territory been arid and desert at those days, Ptolemy the Geographer would have classified it as part of the Desert Arabia – which he did not!

Because of the area's geomorphologic traits, divisions of ethnological – cultural – linguistic character followed the lines predetermined by nature. People living in the Emirati coastland, Oman, Yemen and Najran were far more interconnected at all levels than the isolated, if not marginalized, Arab inhabitants of Hedjaz.

As far as Political Geography is concerned, Felix Arabia was never one state, kingdom or empire; the vastness of the wealth, the diversity of the economic activities, and the imperatives of the landscape (diversely high mountains, very long wadis, and not easily accessible coastlands) allowed the formation of many separate kingdoms that for most of the pre-Islamic times were equally strong and wealthy, and therefore managed to remain independent. Rivalries and wars were relatively scarce or effectively unimportant, because the accumulated wealth was pretty well shared by all, and this did not allow for long wars and unnecessary collateral damage.

What follows is a brief diagram of the political institutions that existed across Felix Arabia. In the area of occupied Najran and North Yemen, the major states included Sheba, Qataban and Himyar. The latter controlled also the western parts of the modern state of South Yemen and the great city-harbor of Felix Arabia, which is identified with the modern city of Aden. Sheba (with Marib as capital) was the militarily stronger Yemenite state, whereas Qataban developed an entire thalassocracy across the Indian Ocean already before the prevalence of Achaemenid Iran over Nabonid Babylonia. Qatabani sailors were great specialists in local meteorology, and used effectively the monsoons to sail fast, safely and effectively. They also explored the East African coastlands mainly from the Horn of Africa and further to the South, as far as modern Mozambique.

Around the end of the 2nd century BCE, Sheba and Himyar waged a war against, and prevailed over, Qataban – to the detriment of all, because their victory signified weaker Yemenite naval control over the Red Sea straits. The unfortunate development allowed Ptolemaic Egypt to expand in the area. United Sheba and Himyar ruled over the East coast of Africa that they colonized, taking benefit of the earlier Qataban presence and know how, but in the East – West trade, there was no more Yemenite exclusivity.

For a brief period, part of Yemen was invaded by Axumite Abyssinia as per the demands of the Eastern Roman Empire; the act was a direct attack against the Iranian control of the East – West trade. Because of the Iranian economic interests were threatened, the development brought about the Iranian occupation of Yemen that ended with the overwhelming adhesion of Yemen to Islam, following the preaching of Ali at Sanaa, two years prior to the death of Prophet Muhammad.

Hadhramawt (known in Ancient Greek texts as 'Livanotoforos Hora' – the Frankincense-bearing country) was another independent state within the geographical region of Arabia Felix; it controlled the central and eastern part of the modern state of South Yemen and parts of the Dhofar region. As Sheba and Himyar colonized the East African coast (known as Azania) from the Horn area down to the coastland of Mozambique, Hadhramawt colonized the island of Socotra (Dioskouridou).

Furthermore, in the area of today's Oman, Omana was an independent state during the first two centuries of the 1st millennium CE.

No major state existed in the part of Felix Arabia that stretched beyond Omana, from the Ormuz straits to the estuary of Euphrates and Tigris. Smaller towns and villages depended on the few sizeable cities. Thanks to several Ancient Greek and Latin texts, we know many names of cities, towns and villages that existed at those days on today's Emirati territory. The most important was the richest: Gerrha. Within an interconnected world of commercial and cultural exchanges, Gerrha rose gradually to global prominence, 2000 years before the modern state of the Emirates materialized a global economic miracle.

Chapter XI. Gerrha, Achaemenid Iran, and the Interconnectedness between Africa and Asia

Before expanding on Gerrha and its plausible location, it is important to briefly describe the major historical developments that helped increase the area's importance greatly.

After the fall of Navonid Babylonia to Kurosh (Cyrus) in 539 BCE, Iran expanded in Mesopotamia, Eastern Anatolia, Syria, and across the East Mediterranean coastland. Cyrus' successor, Kambujiya (Cambyses) expanded greatly in Africa, invading and annexing Egypt, parts of Libya, and the North of Sudan (525 BCE).

The early Achaemenid expansion needed urgently an excellent administration of the newly acquired lands and coastlands that were vast. Cambyses' successor, Daryavush (Darius) proved to be a visionary administrator and managed to quickly setup a well-organized empire, perfectly interconnecting its parts by means of safe land routes and maritime connections. Due to the size of the Achaemenid Empire, the communication / transportation infrastructure brought faraway lands, like India and Egypt, Oman and the Balkans, Russia and Yemen, much closer. Thanks to the universalist Achaemenid imperial ideology, which was molded after the Assyrian Sargonid prototype, the world became a smaller place. Consequently, the territory of today's Emirates and Oman became very important.

To establish an alternative route to Egypt, which was already an Iranian province, Darius favored the establishment of a regular maritime connection; to do so, he asked Scylax the Caryander to undertake the circumnavigation of the Arabian Peninsula, starting from the Gulf, alongside the Arabian Peninsula coastlands, and across the Red Sea up to the area of Suez (that became later known as Arsinoe).

In the area of today's Suez, ended the old 'Suez Canal' that Pharaonic times' Egyptians had first dug in order to transfer their fleet from the Nile and the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. During the 1st millennium BCE and prior to the Iranian invasion and annexation, the old canal was fallen in desuetude. Darius reopened the canal to facilitate straight contact and transportation between Egypt and Iran through an alternative route, which reduced the importance of the land connection, which involved crossing of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia (where the Iranian political control was not quite stable at least in the beginning).

The inauguration stele (a trilingual document in Babylonian Cuneiform, Old Persian Cuneiform, and Egyptian Hieroglyphic) was found in the course of modern excavations, and its text sheds light on this point. This great development increased the importance of the wider region of the Emirates and Oman, as almost the entire Egyptian trade of Iran was transited through this area.

Although controlling a vast empire stretching from Central Asia and North India to North Sudan and Libya in Africa, and from Sudan to Ukraine and Macedonia in Europe, Darius did not attempt to control militarily several nearby countries, namely Oman, Yemen (central part of Arabia Felix) and the Horn of Africa (today's Somalia). However, he managed to attach them to his global vision and imperial policy. As a matter of fact, at those days, for the Iranian Empire, the direction toward further expansion was the West.

Darius and his successor, Khashayar Shah (Xerxes), attempted to annex Carthage and the Greek cities-states south of Macedonia; however, in either case, they marked little success. The military expansion effort of the Iranians proved to be fruitless to Persepolis, but it helped the Yemenite states survive, prosper, and even expand their influence over East Africa. The effort to expand beyond the empire's western borders absorbed great resources and attracted the interest of the Iranian administration totally. The ensued lack of focus on Yemen and the Horn of Africa allowed the Yemenite states to strengthen their position and increase their wealth. This situation lasted long due also to the fact that the Achaemenid Empire of Iran did not invade, annex or fully control the territories across the Gulf's southern coast, except for small parts of the territories of today's Emirates and Oman that are close to the Ormuz straits.

Controlling militarily and annexing politically Yemen and Somalia would in fact be far more important for Xerxes and his vast empire than invading the tiny and marginal Greek states or even subduing Carthage and gaining control over the West Mediterranean trade in the process. The relative Iranian indifference for Oman, Yemen and the Horn of Africa region proved to have a great impact on the National History of the Emirates.

The Sabaean Yemenites (kingdom of Sheba) and their neighbors from Qataban, Himyar and Hadhramawt managed to put under control the rapidly increasing trade between East Africa and Iran; this was added to the wealth accumulated due to the export of Yemenite products that were already known and sought after in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Iran, and the Mediterranean world. The development created a wealth surplus. Iranian navies circumnavigated the Arabian Peninsula, establishing better connection between Egypt and Fars, Iran's political center. However, due to Qatabani Yemenite thalassocracy across the Indian Ocean, a tremendous part of wealth escaped the hands of the imperial administration.

Age-old traders and renowned merchants, the Sabaean Yemenites were used to transfer their merchandises across Hedjaz (Petraia Arabia) to Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia. But by now, due to Qatabani Yemenite thalassocracy across the Indian Ocean, the trade volume and the product variety increased tremendously, and so had the number of purchasers. Yemenite, East African and South Indian goods were highly demanded in Iran, Central Asia, and Caucasus; they were very much sought after in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria and Palestine (the Asiatic lands annexed to Iran), in Egypt and the North of Africa, and across the vast European provinces of Iran, e.g. Macedonia, Thrace, other parts of the Balkans, and the Bulgarian, Romanian and Ukrainian coastlands.

The need for an additional trade route necessary to serve the increased Sabaean trade had already become evident; the old route across Hedjaz was not enough anymore. Maritime transportation would not serve much in this regard, as it would increase the product cost. A much shorter land / desert route would do. The end of this road that crossed the Arabian Peninsula from Southwest to Northeast was Gerrha.

Chapter XII. Gerrha's Prominence in Antiquity - Harbinger of the Present UAE Rise

Gerrha rose to economic prominence relatively fast, and due exclusively to the Sabaean and East African trade. The location of Gerrha has not yet been accurately identified, because no excavation brought to surface the magnificent remains that the Ancient Greek and Latin textual references allow us to imagine. There are many good reasons for any unbiased researcher and specialist to believe that Gerrha was located on the territory of the UAE, and more specifically west of Abu Dhabi. This will be discussed later; at this point, suffice it to say that there is conclusive historical textual evidence and strong interpretative argumentation refuting the aberration that Gerrha would have possibly been located somewhere in the Saudi Arabian province of Al Ehsa. Those who support this fallacy are either fully unaware of ancient sources or totally bound to colonial agendas of academic, intellectual, cultural and political contents; as a matter of fact, there is not a single valid evidence to support this fallacy.

Gerrha rose exactly during the times of the Achaemenid dynasty of Iran (550 – 330 BCE). From Gerrha, the Sabaean and East African trade was further transported to either Mesopotamia - Anatolia or to the central provinces of Iran, or – also – to Central Asia. The route started at the northernmost confines of Yemen and the Najran area, passed from the then confines of the vast desert actually known as Rub al Khali, and reached the territory of today's Emirates at a distance of ca. 350 km from the straits where Iranian navy and army were present and tasked to levy customs on imported goods.

This being so, the Sheba - Gerrha land / desert route became a serious alternative to the sea trade route between Egypt and Iran, which was envisioned by Darius; the two routes did not exist in terms of rivalry, simply the Sheba - Gerrha land / desert route escaped totally from the Achaemenid Iranian control, and this ended up in a colossal loss of wealth for the already very wealthy Iranian Empire. Subsequently, this great wealth was accumulated in Gerrha. This situation means also that North African and even Egyptian products were transported by sea until the Sabaean harbors in the Red Sea, and then dispatched by caravans alongside the land / desert route to Gerrha.

Gerrha, like the Sabaean Yemenites, had good relations with Iran, and this allowed for lower taxes and customs. The ethnic origin of the Gerrhans is neither Yemenite nor Arab. Ancient Greek sources make state of an Aramaean arrival in the area, probably dated back to the Nabonid Babylonian times (609 – 539 BCE), before the rise of Achaemenid Iran. The Aramaeans were a Semitic nation, with affinities with the Assyrians and the Babylonians, the Phoenicians and the Arabs. The Aramaeans spread first in Syria and Mesopotamia at the beginning of the 12th century BCE; they formed independent kingdoms, like Aram Dimashq, Bit Adini, Bit Yakin, etc. until they were progressively annexed by Assyria. Later, in the times of Late Antiquity (539 BCE – 622 CE), the Phoenicians, the Babylonians, and other nations of the wider region were linguistically, culturally and ethnically assimilated with the Aramaeans. Aramaic writing was introduced among many other nations for the writing of their languages; this was due to the fact that the Aramaeans were skillful merchants and crossed vast territories in Asia and in NE Africa, and consequently Aramaic became widely known. Aramaic became, after the Assyrian – Babylonian, the world's second international language, and texts in Aramaic have been discovered in all the regions between Northwest Africa and China. Today, the entire population of Arabic speaking

people in Iraq, Syria, SW Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Emirates, Northern Saudi Arabia, SE Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine are Aramaeans, who have been progressively arabized linguistically, due to their earlier Islamization.

Strabo, writing at the end of the 1st century BCE (which means a few years after the Roman invasion of Egypt – 30 BCE), specified in his Geographica (16.3.3) that, after circumnavigating around Arabia, Gerrha was located at a distance of 240 stadia (an ancient measurement) from the Ormuz straits, in a steep gulf creek. He added that first to inhabit Gerrha were Chaldaean refugees from Babylonia.

Strabo's reference can be best contextualized in the Nabonid times, when the Babylonian kings made an effort to duly control the vast masses of Aramaeans, who had entered their empire or had been relocated there by the Assyrian emperors during the 7th century BCE. Known through Assyrian / Babylonian sources as Kaldu, the Chaldaeans were one of the Aramaean tribes, and had earlier inhabited the southernmost confines of Mesopotamia. We can certainly assume that Aramaeans intermingled with the earlier inhabitants of the wider Meluhha region, but according to Strabo, the city of Gerrha was founded exclusively by the Aramaeans. This is the reason Gerrha excelled in trade and finally it became a key point in the complex network of trade routes between East and West; the rulers of Gerrha were the allies of the Aramaean merchants who were omnipresent and powerful across the land and desert routes from Upper Egypt and Western Anatolia (Turkey) to Yemen, India, Central Asia, and China.

The rise of Gerrha left an everlasting stamp on the National History of the Emirates. Aramaeans had already great experience in the trade. Transferring their know how to the area of the Emirates (Meluhha), the Chaldaean Aramaeans effectively turned this place into the world's most successful economy and to the top transit point in the trade between East and West.

During the Achaemenid times, the Aramaeans controlled the Iranian trade and highly contributed to its expansion. In fact, only Aramaean populations and rulers could make of Gerrha the world's wealthiest city that ancient textual evidence convinces us that it was. The impact of the Aramaeans on the trade between the Mediterranean and China was unique; Maes Tatianus, an Aramaean, is the first person historically known by his name to have traveled from the area of Syria – Mesopotamia (epicenter of the Aramaeans) to China.

Aramaean alphabetic writing replaced the Old Persian cuneiform writing around the end of the Achaemenid times, thus introducing the alphabet among Persians; Aramaic alphabetic characters were used for the writing of Kharosthi (one of the two early writing systems of Ancient India), and of many Central Asiatic languages.

Benefitting from the vastness of the Achaemenid Empire, and utilizing earlier regional trade networks, Aramaeans setup a complex system of trade routes between the Mediterranean and China. Land routes crossed the Iranian plateau and Central Asia and then through Eastern Turkestan to China, whereas sea routes from Egypt and Azania (the name of Ancient Somalia during the Late Antiquity) to the estuary of Euphrates and Tigris in the Gulf and to the Indus Delta were interconnected, thus offering, through the Indus Valley and Eastern Turkestan, an effective alternative to the Mediterranean / Egyptian / East African sea route trade to China.

The position of Gerrha within this vast trade network was of capital importance. Gerrha rose to prominence, by
a) controlling Sabaean Yemenite and East African trade directed to Anatolia, Syria-Mesopotamia, Persia, Caucasus, Central Asia (all five being Iranian provinces) and China,
b) offering a key transit to the Southwest Indian coastlands' trade with Iran, and vice versa,
c) overseeing merchandises transported from Anatolia, Caucasus, Syria-Mesopotamia and occasionally from the Mediterranean world to Southwest Indian coastlands and states, and vice versa, and
d) being an alternative route for Egyptian and Mediterranean trade with Central Asia and China, and vice versa.

It is evident that to the establishment of the above mentioned trade network, two other important sociopolitical factors contributed greatly, besides Achaemenid Iran's unity, vastness, and communication / transportation infrastructure: the political division of the Indian North and South into many states and nations that were constantly waging war one upon the other, and the traditional dependence of India on sociopolitical and cultural developments occurring in Iran and Central Asia.

Chapter XIII. Gerrha and Alexander the Great

When Alexander, King of Macedonia, invaded the Achaemenid Empire, he preserved its entire sociopolitical infrastructure, administrative practices, and economic activities. In fact, the 'great' invasions of Alexander the 'Great' are a modern academic fabrication well-orchestrated by the Hellenist and Orientalist forgers in order to fully support the racist theory of Western European superiority and the assorted version of History that they produced. The so-called exploits of Alexander were nothing more than the substitution of the Achaemenid dynasty by the Macedonian king; only in Pentapotamia (Punjab) and the North of India, Alexander went beyond the borders of the Achaemenid state.

Certainly, viewed from the eyes of the Ancient Greek microcosm, Alexander's military achievement looks immense and unprecedented; but it would be an impartial modern scholar's mistake to make his the viewpoint of so unimportant ancient testimonies. The importance of each and every Ancient Greek city did not reach the level of even a major city of Ancient Elam (such as Susa or Dur Untash, e.g. the modern site of Chogha Zanbil), the pariah of the Ancient Mesopotamian world. In Ancient Greece, there were never cities that could be compared to Nineveh, Babylon, Ur, Uruk, Assyria, Hattushas, Ugarit, Heliopolis, Thebes, and Memphis in terms of socio-economic magnitude, cultural-intellectual creativity, scientific-academic establishment, and administrative hierarchy and sophistication.

Beyond the above objective observations, one has to admit that Alexander's legacy across Greek, Oriental, and Muslim literatures and traditions left a highly positive impression, as the magnificent opus 'Sekandernameh' by the great Azeri epic poet Nezami highlights. However, this critical point has always been passed under silence by Hellenist and Orientalist colonial forgers who – as in so many other cases – promote a monstrous deformation of the historical sources and reality, viciously altering traits and characters.

If we carefully study Alexander's imperial policies, during and after the completion of his military adventures, we discover an absolute continuity as regards the imperial Achaemenid Iranian tradition, in terms of royal procedure, imperial ideology, mixed marriages, administrative practices, and religious tolerance. By substituting the Iranian monarchy with his own, Alexander tremendously consolidated the old Macedonian royal practices, and at the same time rejected the pseudo-democratic, tyrannical and inhuman policies of the Greek city-states whereby slavery flourished, and 'free' population were only the male adults, e.g. less than 10% of each city (slaves usually totaling 80 – 90% of the inhabitants).

It was not without reason that Alexander transferred his capital from Macedonia's marginal Pella to Babylon in Mesopotamia, at the geo-strategic center of his empire. Viewed from an holistic and impartial standpoint, Alexander's policies, practices and dictates, and their theoretical background testify to a willingness to make of the Macedonians and the Greeks an integral part of the Orient and to Orientalize the structure of their societies.

Last echo of all these developments, and of the imperial Achaemenid Iranian continuity, which was ensured personally by the Macedonian king, can be found in the Islamic Iranian epic 'Shahnameh' (composed by the great Persian epic poet Ferdowsi at the end of the 10th century CE) whereby Alexander (Iskander) was portrayed as an ordinary Shah of Iran. This explains also why Alexander was proclaimed Pharaoh in Egypt, following the example of Cambyses, Darius and the other Iranian rulers of Egypt.

I expanded on the issue, because Alexander's expeditions constitute indeed an important moment for the history of the Emirates and for Gerrha's historical role in the trade between East and West. Alexander tried to put the entire region of the Arabian peninsula (located between Mesopotamia – Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, India, and Iran) under control, but despite an early success, he failed.

When Alexander was in Egypt, he sent Anaxicrates to explore the Arabian Peninsula's coastlands, starting from Egypt; in this regard, his role was similar to that of Scylax the Caryander under Darius, but his trajectory opposite. It seems that Anaxicrates reached the Red Sea straits of Bab el Mandeb, but did not proceed further on. Consequently, the coastlands of Himyar, Hadhramawt, Oman and Gerrha remained unexplored and unknown to him, and to his king. We have every reason to believe that in the mind of the Macedonian King, who had just become a Pharaoh, the rapidly increasing East – West trade and the ensuing great wealth must have been the target that was hidden behind his order.

Later on, Alexander ordered in Babylon a big harbor to be built in order to facilitate the trade with the East, which was passing through Gerrha. The harbor was planned to afford anchorage for 1000 ships of war; this means that it was huge. In Arrian's Anabasis (book vii, chapter 19: 4 and 5), we read that Alexander undertook all these preparations in order to attack Arabia. Further on, we read that the plan to invade Arabia may have been due to the fact that the people of the Arabian Peninsula were the only 'barbarians' (the Ancient Greek term means simply the 'non-Greek'; the word itself is of Assyrian Babylonian etymology) of the wider region, who had not sent an embassy to him or done anything else to show respect to Alexander. However, the text did not specify whether this plan of Alexander concerned the Yemenite Sabaeans, Qatabanis and Hadhramis, the Aramaean Gerrhans or the Arabs of Petraia Arabia (Hedjaz) and those of the desert.

If we take into consideration another excerpt of Arrian's Anabasis, we may conclude that Alexander's plan rather concerned the inhabitants of Felix Arabia, i.e. the Sabaeans, the Qatabanis, the Hadhramis, the Omanis and the Gerrhans; the text reads: "the land fertility induced Alexander to attempt to invade the land" (book vii, chapter 20: 2). In the same text, we find an enumeration of the basic merchandises that, produced in Arabia Felix and transported via Gerrha, made the Sabaeans and the Gerrhans prosperous and wealthy: cassia, myrrh, frankincense, and cinnamon!

It seems that, despite his advance in Iran, Central Asia, and India, Alexander never forgot his back thoughts and the secret desire to annex the Arabian Peninsula. According to the historical records, for three more times (!), Alexander ordered a naval expedition to be sent around the Arabian Peninsula; this demonstrates an extraordinary persistence! However, all three expeditions failed.

Chapter XIV. Why Gerrha Cannot Be Located in Al Ehsa Province of Saudi Arabia

The first expedition involved the dispatch of a triaconter (a vessel with 30 oars) under Archias, who was ordered to investigate the course of the voyage alongside the coast of the Arabian peninsula; however, they sailed up to the island of Tylos (which is the Ancient Assyrian / Babylonian Tilmun, i.e. today's Bahrain) and did not dare to venture beyond that point (book vii, chapter 20:6 and 7).

This event offers a very strong argument against the erroneous effort to identify Gerrha with a possible location in the Saudi coastland between Qatar and Kuwait, which was supported amongst others by David W. Tschanz (www.aramcoexpats.com/articles/2002/08/lost-city-of-gerrha-still-attracts-searchers). In fact, if Gerrha had been located there, Archias would have mentioned the city while undertaking his voyage alongside the northeastern coast of the peninsula.

At this point, I have to deplore all earlier efforts that were at times attempted by great scholars like Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d' Anville who identified Gerrha with Qatif, Carsten Niebuhr who preferred Kuwait, and C. Forster who suggested that the ruins at the head of the bay behind the islands of Bahrain were the ruins of Gerrha. It is quite obvious that the aforementioned scholars never studied the Ancient Greek and Latin texts that relate to Gerrha.

Even more absurd is the recent effort undertaken by Abdulkhaliq Al Janbi (in his book 'Gerrha, The Ancient City of International Trade' – in Arabic) to identify Gerrha with the old city of Hajar or the remains of Al-'Uqair in Al Ehsa province of Saudi Arabia; deprived of any reference to key textual information (see below), this book seems to be part of a Saudi expansionist agenda mixed again with vicious historical falsification.

In fact, beyond the existing ancient sources, there is a far more convincing argument that explains the reason for which Gerrha could not be located in the Saudi Arabian coastland between Qatar and Bahrain. To understand this point, it takes a good study of the vast commercial network that was progressively setup between East and West during the Late Antiquity; great attention should be first paid at the nature, the traits and the functionality of this triple network that offered possible alternatives among land, desert and sea routes.

Gerrha came to existence because Aramaeans (Chaldaeans) moved to its location and built up the city as per their own needs as merchants; this was quite typical of the Aramaeans. They used to setup new cities in diverse countries; as example, they founded Kaine ('new') city in Upper Egypt at a strategic location on the road that linked the Nile Valley with the Red Sea coast. Kaine survived down to our times as Qena, 60 km north of Luxor.

As the Aramaeans totally controlled the trade with Yemenites across the peninsula and other parts of the Asiatic landmass, they were the primary partners of the Sabaeans, the strongest Yemenite kingdom in land. In coordination with the Sabaeans, and in full understanding of their mutual, commercial – economic needs, the Aramaeans founded Gerrha. In fact, the city location should serve the needs of the Sabaean – Aramaean trade and the diffusion of East African and Yemenite merchandises to Mesopotamia, Iran, Caucasus, and Central Asia.

More specifically, the location of Gerrha would serve the Sabaean – Aramaean interests by being at the end of a road and at the beginning of a bifurcation. This means that, from, Gerrha Yemenite and East African products for Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria, Armenia, and Caucasus would be dispatched toward the West; on the other hand, merchandises for Iran, Central Asia and India would be shipped toward the North and the East.

If one takes into account the above, focuses on a map, and draws a line, starting from the land of the Sabaeans and advancing to the North, one immediately understands that the necessary bifurcation point (Gerrha) could not be located in any other land except the territory of today's Emirates.

If Gerrha were located in the area of today's Al Ehsa province of Saudi Arabia, its location would not serve the Sabaean – Aramaean interests at all, as it would expose the East African and Yemenite merchandises with Central Asia as destination to Arsacid Parthian taxes and customs, as the Iranian borders were very close.

Even worse, for the interests of the Sabaean – Aramaean trade, there would not be any need at all for a city to be built in the area of today's Al Ehsa province of Saudi Arabia; instead of founding Gerrha there, the Chaldaean Aramaeans would have rather dropped the useless project altogether.

Why building a city at a point so close to the southern part of Mesopotamia (today's Iraq and Kuwait), since the long road from North Yemen (ca. 1500 km from Marib to the area of Al Ehsa province of Saudi Arabia) further advancing for a relatively small distance (ca. 300 km) would soon reach the Iranian borders at the southwestern confines of Mesopotamia? Caravans transporting goods from Yemen would not need to stop in any city if they had already reached the territory of Al Ehsa province of today's Saudi Arabia; they would simply advance and soon reach their destination.

So, to effectively search for a possible location of an ancient city located on the trade network between East and West like Gerrha, one must first understand that it should be pretty far from Mesopotamia in order to have a reason and chance to exist.

Chapter XV. Macedonian Naval Expeditions around the Peninsula, and Gerrha

Another naval expedition was undertaken by Androsthenes, who sailed around a part of the Arabian Peninsula, and wrote a book narrating his explorations. The book is now lost, but it was studied during the Late Antiquity by various historians and geographers. For instance, Strabo, who wrote 300 years later, quoted Androsthenes' book (Strabo, book 16, 3:1).

Later on, Alexander demanded one more naval expedition to be undertaken, and this was carried out by Hieron of Soli; Arrian (Anabasis, book vii, chapter 20: 7, 8) narrates that the instructions were to sail as far as the Arabian Gulf (this means today's Red Sea) up to Egypt, and that Hieron advanced more than all previous explorers, but still failed to complete the exploration.

The aforementioned developments occurred in the period 330–323 BCE, two centuries after the inception of the Achaemenid state and the first circumnavigation of the Arabian Peninsula which was successfully undertaken by Scylax of Caryander. As one can easily understand, they boded only well for Gerrha, as the Aramaean caravan city – state in the southern coastlands of today's Emirates remained out of the borders of the Macedonian Emperor's state, as many other adjacent regions did, namely the Arabian Peninsula's northern parts, Oman, the various Yemenite states, and Azania (Somalia). Out of the Macedonian control was also Kush (Ethiopia, in today's Northern Sudan), and the same occurred as well to the tiny Abyssinian state around Adulis (near today's Massawa, in Eritrea) and Axum.

An important moment of the National History of the Emirates proved to be February 324 BCE. It was then that Alexander's fleet was ordered to sail under Admiral Nearchus from Indus estuary back to Mesopotamia, while the army would cross Gedrosia (today's Baluchistan), Carmania (today's Iranian province of Kerman), and Persia (Fars) to Babylon, Alexander's new capital that gave his state an imperial dimension.

The first part of the itinerary would of course be fluvial, because this fleet had not sailed from the Mediterranean or from Mesopotamia to India while Alexander progressively advanced from Mesopotamia through Iran to India, but it was built in Hydaspes river (today's Jhelum river) to address Alexander's needs for war with the Northern Indian states.

During the trip, Nearchus had to remain behind and oversee repairs that had to be made during the journey. Sailing off the coastlands of Gedrosia (Baluchistan) proved to be an extremely harsh attempt to the extent that the Macedonian marines and officers became unrecognizable! As a matter of fact, when Nearchus' fleet reached the coast of Iran beyond the straits, he came to know that Alexander and the Macedonian army in their return movement were in nearby Carmania; he then set out along with Archias to meet the Macedonian king. However, Alexander and his chief-of-staff had at first some difficulty to recognize them. Following the brief encounter and the subsequent discussions and religious tasks (sacrifices), Nearchus and Archias returned to the fleet and sailed to the estuary of Tigris and Euphrates, and further on to Susa (in today's Iran) to encounter Alexander again. While crossing the Persian Gulf, Nearchus managed to explore parts of the Arabian coastland, and he wrote down a special report. Almost five centuries later, the Roman

historian Arrian in his Indica (XLIII) used info gathered by Nearchus' sailors, while writing the following:

"On the right side of the Red Sea beyond Babylonia is the chief part of Arabia, and of this a part comes down to the sea of Phoenicia and Palestinian Syria, but on the west, up to the Mediterranean, the Egyptians are upon the Arabian borders. Along Egypt a gulf running in from the great sea makes it clear that by reason of the gulf's joining with the high seas one might sail round from Babylon into this gulf which runs into Egypt. Yet, in point of fact, no one has yet sailed round this way by reason of the heat and the desert nature of the coasts, only a few people who sailed over the open sea. But those of the army of Cambyses who came safe from Egypt to Susa and those troops who were sent from Ptolemy Lagus to Seleucus Nicator at Babylon through Arabia crossed an isthmus in a period of eight days and passed through a waterless and desert country, riding fast upon camels, carrying water for themselves on their camels, and travelling by night; for during the day they could not come out of shelter by reason of the heat.

Yet from the Arabian gulf which runs along Egypt people have started, and have circumnavigated the greater part of Arabia hoping to reach the sea nearest to Susa and Persia, and thus have sailed so far round the Arabian coast as the amount of fresh water taken aboard their vessels have permitted, and then have returned home again. And those whom Alexander sent from Babylon, in order that, sailing as far as they could on the right of the Red Sea, they might reconnoitre the country on this side, these explorers sighted certain islands lying on their course, and very possibly put in at the mainland of Arabia. But the cape which Nearchus says his party sighted running out into the sea opposite Carmania no one has ever been able to round, and thus turn inwards towards the far side".

From the above excerpts, we understand that, although Nearchus is believed to have set foot on Tylos island (Bahrain), he did not disembark on any point of the territory of today's Emirates and Gerrha or even on Mount Mussandam on the Arabian Peninsula's promontory in the straits; however, he saw Mount Mussandam from far. Thus, we can safely claim that the Emirati, Omani and Yemenite territories remained out of reach for Alexander's army and fleet, despite the fact that their great wealth was well-known.

Despite all his efforts, Alexander's state could not survive his founder; it was divided among his successors, and even they had difficulties to control their vast territories. The largest of all four states of Alexander's successors was the Syrian state of the Seleucids, with Antioch (today's Antakya in Hatay, Turkey) as capital. It controlled today's Eastern Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Mesopotamia, the Iranian plateau, the Central Asiatic provinces, and the entire territory of today's Afghanistan and Pakistan, which were then known as Bactria, Arachosia, Gedrosia and Pentapotamia. The louse Seleucid control over the eastern provinces had an early consequence; 60 years after Alexander's death, the Iranian plateau, the Central Asiatic and the Eastern provinces were lost to the Seleucid Empire of Syria that was limited in only the lands of Eastern Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Syro-Palestine.

Chapter XVI. Arsacid Parthian Iran, Seleucid Syria, Ptolemaic Egypt, and Gerrha

In Parthia (northeastern provinces of today's Iran) rose a dynasty that expelled the Macedonians, declared Iran's independence, and controlled most but not all the territories lost to the Seleucids of Antioch. Subsequently, the few Macedonian garrisons left in Bactria, separated from Antioch, seceded from Iran, and ruled the largest part of today's Afghanistan (then known as Bactria). Except Bactria (under Macedonian administration), several minor states emerged in the areas of Gedrosia, Arachosia and Pentapotamia, east of the Parthian Iranian state.

The above developments boded also well for Gerrha and helped the Aramaean city rapidly increase its importance in the trade routes between the Mediterranean, East Africa, Central Asia and China. Surrounded by many local states with little control over regional affairs, Gerrha played politics to promote its economic status. To Gerrha's greatest benefit, this situation lasted long. The Parthian dynasty of Iran, known as Ashkanian (Arsacids), proved to be the longest in three millennia of Iranian History; the Arsacids remained in power for ca. 475 years (250 BCE – 224 CE), until the rise of the nationalistic Persian dynasty of Sassanian (Sassanids). This period highlights Gerrha rise to economic prominence.

Other developments took place soon to help further increase Gerrha's importance. The rise of the Arsacids in Iran gave birth to a certain rivalry with the Seleucids of Antioch, and the event involved marginal countries as well, from Pontus and Armenia to North India. In addition, the weakened Seleucid Empire entered into a bitter rivalry with the Ptolemies who ruled Egypt and inherited also the islands of Cyprus and Crete from Alexander's empire. The strong presence of the Ptolemies in Eastern Mediterranean could asphyxiate the Seleucids of Antioch. Seleucid Syria was definitely stronger, but did not prevail easily. Parthian Iran and the Roman Republic greatly benefitted from the Syro-Egyptian effort of mutual destruction.

Because of the constant wars between Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria, the eastern provinces of the Seleucid state (that were located west of the Parthian Empire of Iran) gradually managed to achieve a certain degree of autonomy; many small Aramaean states were then formed, notably Adiabene (Northern Transtigritane – on the central part of the territory of the Ancient Assyrian Empire, east of Tigris river), Tadmor (Palmyra in today's Eastern Syria), Rekem / Petra of the Nabataeans (in today's Southwestern Jordan), Hatra (in today's NW Iraq), and Characene (in today's South Iraq and Kuwait). Their typical localism was beneficial to the role Gerrha used and aspired to play.

During the 3rd century BCE various ambassadors of either the Seleucids or the Ptolemies moved to India to encounter kings like Chandragupta Maurya, Bindusara and Ashoka. Megasthenes was sent by Seleucos I of Syria, but he certainly moved from Iran, crossing Bactria and Pentapotamia, to reach Pataliputra. Deimachus met Bindusara and wrote down the most trustworthy description of India; his account is by now lost, but was greatly appreciated by Late Antiquity authors, such as Strabo.

Dionysius was sent to Ashoka by Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt; Pliny the Elder saved the details. In this case, it is more probable that the Egyptian delegation sailed through the Red Sea from an Egyptian harbor (possibly Myos Hormos - Hurghada) to the western coast

of the Arabian Peninsula, and then they traversed the Hedjaz mountains and the desert up to some part of the Arabian peninsula' coast in the Gulf nearby Gerrha, before sailing further to the area of Indus estuary, in order to avoid the Seleucid garrisons that protected the territory of Egypt's great rival in the southernmost confines of Palestine and Mesopotamia.

The lure of wealth generated in Gerrha by the Aramaean traders and inhabitants was too attractive for Antiochus III the Great (222-187 BCE) to disregard. In 205 BCE, he decided to launch a large-scale military incursion against the Gerrhans in order to secure for his country a reasonable portion of their trade. He probably advanced beyond Mesopotamia, across the northwestern coastland of the Arabian Peninsula, but was finally diverted from his goal of capturing the city, because the Gerrhans offered to pay a great tribute involving 500 talents of silver, 1000 talents of frankincense, and 200 talents of 'stacte' myrrh.

Even this serves as an indication that Gerrha was not located in Al Ehsa province of Saudi Arabia; had the city been located nearby the Seleucid borders in Southern Mesopotamia, it would have been invaded easily, and Antiochus III would not have had any reason to possibly accept the Gerrhan tribute.

Anxious to balance the only potential threat, the Arsacid Empire of Iran, Gerrha continued paying tribute to Seleucid Empire even in later periods. And to balance Seleucid Syria, the Gerrhans had good relations with Ptolemaic Egypt as well.

At those days, another exploration was undertaken by Ariston, who was supported by the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt, and sailed the other way round; the expedition started from Egypt and marked a success in exploring the western coastlands of the Arabian Peninsula (Agatharchides, fragm. 103, GGM – Geographi Graeci Minores - I, p.190 -191). However, it is highly unlikely that he reached the Bab el Mandeb straits of the Red Sea, let alone any region beyond.

During the same period (3rd century BCE), the greater scholarly attempt to write down accurate information and to setup full maps of the entire region between Egypt, Mesopotamia and India was undertaken by Eratosthenes of Cyrene (today's Benghazi in Libya), the famous librarian of the Library of Alexandria. His map of the Arabian Peninsula and the details included for the area of the Emirates and Oman demonstrate an advanced level of knowledge about the region. Science could only increase thanks to the accelerated study of earlier Egyptian and Babylonian scientific texts, which was undertaken by people like Hipparchus (190-120 BCE).

Chapter XVII. Agatharchides on Gerrha and Sheba (the Sabaean Yemenites)

It was at the middle of the 2nd century BCE that Agatharchides wrote an acclamation about Gerrha in his treatise 'On the Red Sea'. At this point, one has to keep in mind that the term 'Red Sea' in Ancient Greek denoted the entire Indian Ocean, the Gulf, and today's Red Sea, which was then called 'Arabian Gulf'.

"It seems that there is no wealthier nation than the Sabaeans and the Gerrhans; the latter are used to cash all the taxes and customs involved in the trade between Asia and Europe. They helped Ptolemies' acquisitions in Syria increase in wealth very much, and thanks to Phoenician labor, they built up profitable trade companies, and much more" (Agatharchides, fr. 102, GGM, I, p. 189 – 190).

Egyptians tried to improve their relations with the Lihyan Arabs of North Hedjaz whose tribal leaders imitated the Egyptian royal practices, by making of the name of the Ptolemies an early Arabic synonym for 'king'; their title 'Tulmai' or 'Talmai' was saved indeed in Greek inscriptions. Trying to take greater benefit from the Red Sea trade, Egyptians and Alexandrian Greeks set up colonies alongside the Red Sea coast, like Ptolemais Theron (today's Suakin) in the Sudanese (Meroitic Ethiopian) coastland. A certain rivalry between Alexandria and Gerrha started becoming more evident.

By the time Artemidorus Ephesius undertook his exploration (around 100 BCE), a great change had occurred in Yemen, and this contributed to a further increase in Gerrha's wealth. The combined forces of Sheba and Himyar invaded the strongest maritime force among the Yemenite states, Qataban, in an effort to take greater benefit of the enormous wealth accumulated at Timna, the Qatabani capital (modern Beihan in Shabwah governorate). The major outcomes of this event were the end of Qatabani Yemenite thalassocracy across the Indian Ocean, and the subsequent Sabaean – Himyarite combined control over the former Qatabani colonies in parts of Somalia and East African coastlands (then called Azania) down to today's Darussalam in Tanzania and the northern coast of today's Mozambique. This development greatly affected Gerrha because of the excellent relationship between the Gulf city-state and the Sabaeans. East African products transported through Gerrha to parts of Asia and Europe certainly had lower cost after Qataban disappeared from the scene.

However, the same event triggered also another development that was quite opposite to the Sabaean – Gerrhan interests; the Sabaeans and the Himyarites were less experienced than the Qatabanis across the seas. Consequently, the collapse and disintegration of Qataban, which was the stronger naval force among the Yemenite states, allowed Ptolemaic Egypt to further expand in the Red Sea and the Bab el Mandeb straits. This signified lower taxes and customs for a great number of products, greater Egyptian presence in, and control over, the Horn of Africa trade, and an increased Alexandrian antagonism with Gerrha for the diffusion of East African, Yemenite, Omani and Indian merchandises across the Mediterranean.

Chapter XVIII. The Romans in Egypt, the Roman Naval Expedition to Yemen, and Gerrha

The antagonism between Alexandria and Gerrha progressed slowly; for about one century (from the end of the 2nd century BCE to 30 BCE), Ptolemaic Egypt was an ailing power, because of many internal problems. During this period, Rome expanded considerably in the East and the West. When Rome completed the conquest of the Mediterranean coastlands and Octavian invaded Alexandria (30 BCE), Egypt as a Roman border province acquired a greater importance.

Great interest was immediately shown to ensure a Roman alliance with Meroe, capital of Ethiopia (Ancient Sudan, a totally different country and nation than modern Abyssinia that has fallaciously used the name). The Meroitic – Roman alliance greatly consolidated the former Ptolemaic Red Sea colony Ptolemais Theron (today's Suakin), which became a Roman entrepot in the Red Sea.

Then, Octavian sent a naval expedition against Yemen, which is the furthermost point ever reached by a Roman military. The high customs charged by the Yemenites on all East African, Indian and other Oriental products, transported to Roman Alexandria, was the reason of the Roman naval expedition against Arabia Felix (today's Aden), a former Qatabani harbor that had been in Sabaean – Himyarite hands for ca. 150 years.

The destruction of Arabia Felix, few years after the fall of Alexandria, ushered the wider region into an era of intense trade with Rome; the new era lasted ca. 250 years and despite Alexandria's prevalence in the trade between Rome and the East, Gerrha retained its wealth as the key point of the East African and Yemenite trade with Iran, Mesopotamia, Caucasus, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.

Chapter XIX. Strabo's Textual References to Gerrha

At the end of the 1st century CE, the Cappadocian historian, geographer and scholar Strabo, who was a Roman citizen and supported explicitly pro-Roman ideas and viewpoints, while only writing in Greek, composed his 17-volume masterpiece 'Geographica'; he referred to Gerrha, and saved the following key details about the Orient's wealthiest city: (Strabo, 16.3 – 4 / English translation is available:
http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/16C*.html)

"3. After sailing along the coast of Arabia for a distance of two thousand four hundred stadia, one comes to Gerrha, a city situated on a deep gulf; it is inhabited by Chaldaeans, exiles from Babylon; the soil contains salt and the people live in houses made of salt; and since flakes of salt continually scale off, owing to the scorching heat of the rays of the sun, and fall away, the people frequently sprinkle the houses with water and thus keep the walls firm. The city is two hundred stadia distant from the sea; and the Gerrhaeans traffic by land, for the most part, in the Arabian merchandise and aromatics, though Aristobulus says, on the contrary, that the Gerrhaeans import most of their cargoes on rafts to Babylonia, and thence sail up the Euphrates with them, and then convey them by land to all parts of the country.

4. On sailing farther, one comes to other islands, I mean Tyre and Aradus, which have temples like those of the Phoenicians. It is asserted, at least by the inhabitants of the islands, that the islands and cities of the Phoenicians which bear the same name are their own colonies. These islands are distant a ten days' sail from Teredon and a one day's sail from the promontory near the mouth of the gulf at Macae".

The above text by Strabo irrevocably demolishes all assumptions and efforts to locate Gerrha on modern Saudi territory; even more so, the evidence brought forth by Strabo helps accurately locate Gerrha in the wider area of today's Abu Dhabi Emirate, somewhere in the western coastland of the UAE.

The text narrates details about the Gulf's coastlands, starting from the Hormuz straits and advancing toward the estuary of Euphrates and Tigris in Mesopotamia (today's Iraq and Kuwait); across paragraph 2 (one paragraph before the above text), the author describes in detail the Persian coastland from Hormuz to the westernmost ends of the Gulf that Strabo calls the 'outlet of Euphrates'. Strabo then deals with the southern coastland, proceeding analogically, from East to West.

The analogy becomes even more evident when, after the description of Gerrha, the text focuses on the islands of Tyros and Arados that correspond to today's Bahrain and Muharraq respectively.

Strabo then gives details about the distance between the two islands and the promontory of today's Qatar peninsula (today's Madinah ash Shamal) that he names "the mouth of the gulf at Macae". This makes stronger the effort to identify Qatar with the Assyrian / Babylonian land of Magan that was located between Tilmun (Tylos / Bahrain) and Meluhha (Gerrha / Emirates). Magan may have easily been deformed to Macae in Greek. Actually, it was one day's sail from Tylos (Bahrain) to the northern end of Qatar's peninsula.

Strabo also gives details about the distance between the two islands and Teredon, at the estuary of Euphrates; to sail alongside today's Saudi Arabian Gulf coastland to the mouth of the river, it would take 10 days' sail. However, there was no major settlement in this coastland, and consequently, Strabo did not mention anything.

In addition to the aforementioned, Strabo gives key info and precise details that only vicious, colonial forgers of History and imbecile, ignorant authors can disregard. Strabo offers an accurate estimate of Gerrha's location. As per the above text, Gerrha was located at a distance of two thousand four hundred stadia from the Ormuz straits.

Stade (or rather stadion) is an Ancient Greek unit of length that has some known variants; the Attic stade equals 185 m, whereas the Olympic stade makes 176 m; however, ancient authors, starting at least with Eratosthenes (who died ca. 130 years before Strabo was born), when counting distances in itineraries, used another stade variant that totaled 157 m. This means that two thousand four hundred stadia equal 377 km.

The modern city of Dubai lies at a distance of 190 km from Khasab, the major Omani city in Musandam Peninsula. Abu Dhabi lies at a distance of ca. 130 km from Dubai. This makes a total of 320 km of modern road, at times close to and at times far from the coastline. However, Khasab lies at a certain distance from the straits that are exactly located between the two capes, Ras Qabr Hindi in the southeast, and Ras Shuraytah in the northwest. In-between lies Jazirat (island) Musandam from where ancient geographers and navigators must have started their calculations. Khasab is not linked by land road with the extreme coastland between the aforementioned two capes. Of course, the modern road system is not made of direct lines, and in addition, it does not follow ancient itineraries. In the Antiquity, calculations were made in terms of sailing off the coast, and the navigation line was straight except the landscape imposed otherwise.

Bird's eye distance of ca. 375 km from Jazirat (island) Musandam, involving a curve parallel to the modern Emirati coastline, indicates a terminus around the area of the modern towns Al Rafiq, Tarif, and certainly not beyond Al Mirfa. We have also to take into consideration that Gerrha was not a coastal city but lied safely in the inland at a distance of two hundred stadia distant from the sea, which means ca. 30 km from the coast. The triangle area between Al Rafiq, Al Mirfa and Habshan is certainly the approximate location of Gerrha, as per Strabo's authoritative text.

Except the details about the city location, Strabo's reference to Gerrha offers a great number of details about the world's wealthiest city of those days; however, a full analysis of the above excerpt goes far beyond the limits of the present introductory book.

It is however noteworthy that in another point of his Geographica, Strabo saves an earlier account of the entire Arabian Peninsula, namely that of Artemidoros. In that point, there is another reference to Gerrha: (Strabo, 4.18 / English translation is available: http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/16D*.html)

"18. After saying all this about the Troglodytes and the neighboring Aethiopians, Artemidorus returns to the Arabians; and first, beginning at Poseidium, he describes Arabians who border on the Arabian Gulf and live opposite the Troglodytes. He says that Poseidium lies farther in than the Aelanites Gulf; and that contiguous to Poseidium there is a

grove of palm trees, which is well supplied with water and is highly valued because all the country around is hot and waterless and shadeless; and that here the fertility of the palms is wonderful; and that a man and a woman have charge of the grove, being appointed to that charge through hereditary right. They wear skins, and live on dates from the palm trees; but on account of the number of wild beasts they build huts in trees and sleep there. Then, next, one comes to the Island of Phocae, 201 which was so named from the number of seals there. Near the island is a promontory, which extends to the Rock of the Nabataean Arabians, as they are called, and p343 to the Palaestine country, whither Minaeans and Gerrhaeans and all the neighboring peoples convey their loads of aromatics. Then one comes to another coast, which was formerly called the coast of the Maranitae, some of whom were farmers and others tent-dwellers, but is now called the coast of the Garindaeans, who destroyed the Maranitae by treachery; for the Garindaeans attacked them while they were celebrating some quadrennial festival, and not only destroyed all the people at the festival but also overran and exterminated the rest of the tribe. Then to the Aelanites Gulf, and to Nabataea, a country with a large population and well supplied with pasturage. They also dwell on islands situated off the coast nearby; and these Nabataeans formerly lived a peaceful life, but later, by means of rafts, went to plundering the vessels of people sailing from Egypt. But they paid the penalty when a fleet went over and sacked their country.

19 Bordering upon these people is the very fertile country of the Sabaeans, a very large tribe, in whose country myrrh and frankincense and cinnamon are produced; and on the coast is found balsam, as also another kind of herb of very fragrant smell, which quickly loses its fragrance. There are also sweet-smelling palms, and reeds; and serpents a span in length, which are dark-red in color, can leap even as far as a hare, and inflict an incurable bite. On account of the abundance of fruits the people are lazy and easy-going in their modes of life. Most of the populace sleep on the roots of trees which they have cut out of the ground. Those who live close to one another receive in continuous succession the loads of aromatics and deliver them to their next neighbors, as far as Syria and Mesopotamia; and when they are made drowsy by the sweet odors they overcome the drowsiness by inhaling the incense of asphalt and goats' beard. The city of the Sabaeans, Mariaba, is situated upon a well-wooded mountain; and it has a king who is authority in lawsuits and everything else; but it is not lawful for him to leave the palace, or, if he does, the rabble, in accordance with some oracle, stone him to death on the spot. Both he himself and those about him live in effeminate luxury; but the masses engage partly in farming and partly in the traffic in aromatics, both the local kinds and those from Ethiopia; to get the latter they sail across the straits in leathern boats. They have these aromatics in such abundance that they use cinnamon and cassia and the others instead of sticks and firewood. In the country of the Sabaeans is also found larimnum, a most fragrant incense. From their trafficking both the Sabaeans and the Gerrhaeans have become richest of all; and they have a vast equipment of both gold and silver articles, such as couches and tripods and bowls, together with drinking-vessels and very costly houses; for doors and walls and ceilings are variegated with ivory and gold and silver set with precious stones. This is Artemidorus' account of these peoples, but the rest of his statements are partly similar to those of Eratosthenes and partly quoted from the other historians".

Chapter XX. Gerrha and the Anonymous Author of the Text 'Periplus of the Red Sea'

Writing almost one century after Strabo, the anonymous author of the famous Ancient Greek text 'Periplus of the Red Sea' preserves for us a captain's and a merchant's notebook as regards the navigation and the trade between Alexandria, East Africa, Arabia, Central Asia, India and China. He presents his data as per nautical charts; first, the entire schedule from Arsinoe (modern Suez) to Rhapta (Darussalam, Tanzania) alongside East Africa's coasts, and then the longer and perplex schedule of those sailing from Arsinoe to Arabia Felix (Aden) alongside the western coasts of the Arabian Peninsula, and thence either alongside the Yemenite and Omani coast to the Ormuz straits and beyond up to the Delta of Indus and further on to the western coast of India or straight from Aden and the Horn of Africa ('Akroterion Aromaton': Cape of Perfumes) to the western coast of India and further on to Palaisimundu (Sri Lanka), the East Indian coast, Chryse (Indochina and Indonesia), and China.

The text describes the important geomorphologic traits, the existing entrepots, and the merchandises available across the entire Yemenite and Omani coastlands, successively mentioning cape Syagros (Ras Fartak in today's SE Yemen, near Al Ghaydah), the Omana gulf (immediately after cape Syagros), the mountains of the Dhofar coastland, the Asikhon coastland (between today's Fararah and Sawqirah), and the islands of Zenobios (Khuriya Muriya). The author proceeds further, narrating about the part of Oman that was then under Arsacid Parthian Iranian administration and control.

Further on, the text refers to the island of Sarapis (Masirah) that was then inhabited by the priests of the 'fish-eaters' (Ichthyophagi), and confirms the use of the Ancient Yemenite language (which was very different than pre-Islamic Hedjaz Arabic) as the native language of all the Omanis as well. Then, the anonymous author of the text goes on describing the geomorphology of the Omani coastline that turns to the Northwest after cape Ras el Had. In the area of the Ormuz straits, the anonymous author of the 'Periplus of the Red Sea' mentions the existing small islands (Calaios islands), the Kalon ("Good") mountain, and Assabon (Musandam) mountain on the straits.

Describing what is important for the East – West trade from an Alexandrian point of view, the author of the 'Periplus of the Red Sea' does not mention Gerrha because he does not mention the entire Gulf region except for two lines; there he states that the Gulf is very long and quite large, adding that an entrepot named Apologou was nearby Spasinu, the capital of the small Aramaean kingdom of Characene that was located at the estuary of Euphrates. The fact that this text avoids any reference to Gerrha reflects to some extent the rivalry between Alexandria and Gerrha across the trade routes between East and West. The most probable reason for not mentioning Gerrha is that the author, who probably was a captain or a merchant who had repeatedly and extensively traveled in most of the areas he described in his text, found it necessary to obliterate any mention to Alexandria's greatest rival, because of his own economic interests.

It goes without saying that Gerrha linked its interests with the destiny of the Arsacid Parthian dynasty of Iran, while also maintaining very good relations with Tadmor / Palmyra, the major Aramaean state in Syria / Mesopotamia, and with Kushan, the powerful Eastern Iranian state that controlled an immense area encompassing today's Afghanistan and vast

territories of Pakistan, India and Central Asia, after the Macedonian state of Bactria collapsed.

The pearl trade between Gerrha in the Gulf and Palmyra, Doura Europos, Hatra, Edessa (Urhoy / Urfa) and Rekem / Petra in the area of Syria – Mesopotamia can be reconstructed thanks to Palmyrene inscriptions found in the Aramaean state of Characene, near the estuary of Euphrates.

Chapter XXI. Pliny the Elder and Gerrha

If an Alexandrian businessman like the author of the 'Periplus of the Red Sea' needs to hide the truth for his own lucrative interests, a state scholar in charge of the archives of an empire needs nothing to hide; that is why Pliny the Elder mentioned Gerrha in his grand opus Natural History. On repeated occasions, we have attested Pliny's reliance on official documentation that we have to fully trust, as it was classified for the needs of the Roman imperial administration.

Naturalis Historia, as the title stands in Latin, is a vast encyclopedia encompassing all the knowledge acquired by Roman experts in terms of natural sciences (geology, mineralogy, botany, zoology and astronomy); it is the largest single work survived from Roman imperial times. Divided into 37 books (or parts), Natural History features 15 chapters on Botany (chapters 12 to 27). Speaking about the tree called stobrum (which still remains unidentified, although it seems to have similar effects as aloe), in his 12th book, Pliny the Elder speaks of Gerrha (ch. 40); an English translation is available here (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0137%3Abook%3D12%3Achapter%3D40):

"The Arabians import from Carmania also the wood of a tree called stobrum, which they employ in fumigations, by steeping it in palm wine, and then setting fire to it. The odour first ascends to the ceiling, and then descends in volumes to the floor; it is very agreeable, but is apt to cause an oppression of the head, though unattended with pain; it is used for promoting sleep in persons when ill. For these branches of commerce, they have opened the city of Gerrha (spelt Carræ in Latin), which serves as an entrepot, and from which place they were formerly in the habit of proceeding to Gabba, at a distance of twenty days' journey, and thence to Palestine, in Syria. But at a later period, as Juba informs us, they began to take the road, for the purposes of this traffic, to Charax and the kingdom of the Parthians. For my own part, it would appear to me that they were in the habit of importing these commodities among the Persians, even before they began to convey them to Syria or Egypt; at least Herodotus bears testimony to that effect, when he states that the Arabians paid a yearly tribute of one thousand talents, in frankincense, to the kings of Persia.

From Syria they bring back storax, which, burnt upon the hearth, by its powerful smell dispels that loathing of their own perfumes with which these people are affected. For in general there are no kinds of wood in use among them, except those which are odoriferous; indeed, the Sabæi are in the habit of cooking their food with incense wood, while others, again, employ that of the myrrh tree; and hence, the smoke and smells that pervade their cities and villages are no other than the very same which, with us, proceed from the altars. For the purpose of qualifying this powerful smell, they burn storax in goat-skins, and so fumigate their dwellings. So true it is, that there is no pleasure to be found, but what the continual enjoyment of it begets loathing. They also burn this substance to drive away the serpents, which are extremely numerous in the forests which bear the odoriferous trees".

The text does not only highlight Gerrha's importance, but it also offers an important time perspective, mentioning (in association with Gerrha) Herodotus' reference to Yemenite trade with Achaemenid Iran, which establishes Gerrha's rise in the early Achaemenid times (end of 6th century BCE).

Chapter XXII. Ptolemy the Geographer - his Description of Yemen, Oman, and the Emirates

Last author of the Late Antiquity to mention Gerrha is Ptolemy the Geographer who was one of the world's leading scholars in the 2nd century CE, and wrote ca. 100 years after Pliny the Elder. Ptolemy the Geographer was unrelated to the deposed and extinct Macedonian dynasty of Ptolemies, but his use of the personal name of the dynasty founder hints at a certain national(ist) Egyptian and (therefore) anti-Roman ideological position. As a matter of fact, Ptolemy the Geographer was an Upper Egyptian, born around Thebes (today's Luxor), who wrote in Greek in order to have readership across the Mediterranean. As he was a Roman citizen, he is assumed to have lived and worked in Alexandria whereby a vast documentation was available in the Library. His Geography is one of his major opuses; it comprises of two parts, an introduction with extensive discussion about the data collected and the methods used, and the main part of the work, which is an atlas (books 2 to 6).

Geographike Hyphegesis, as the title stands in Ancient Greek, contains more than 4500 names of cities and more than 200 names of mountains – an unprecedented point of foremost erudition. In his Geography, Ptolemy included extensive topographic lists, names of cities, towns, villages, hamlets, countries, provinces, areas, mountains, rivers, lakes, bays, islands, peninsulas, promontories, capes, etc.; his map covered entirely the then known world, which spanned over 180 degrees of longitude, from the westernmost point (the Canary islands) to the easternmost point (China's coastland). As far as latitude is concerned, Ptolemy's world spanned over 80 degrees from Thule (Iceland) to the southernmost confines of Africa (the area of Mozambique), and Southeast Asia (Cattigara).

In his 5th book, Ptolemy expands on parts of Asia, starting with Pontus (today's Black Sea coastland of Turkey) and Bithynia (today's Marmara Sea coastland of Turkey), e.g. the northwestern region of today's Turkey. In the book's 4th part (and table), he describes Cyprus, Syria Coele (Phoenicia), Palestine, Petraia (Stone) Arabia, Mesopotamia, Desert Arabia, and Babylonia.

In his 6th book, Ptolemy proceeds further to the east, describing other regions of Greater Asia (the term was used in opposition to Minor Asia, e.g. the area today's Turkey), notably Assyria, Media, Susiana, Persia, Parthia and Desert Carmania (1st part and table). Immediately after that part, Ptolemy expands on Arabia Felix (the term covers the territories of today's Najran, Yemen, Oman, Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain) and Carmania (today's Iran region between the city of Kerman and the Ormuz straits); it makes therefore sense for him to place the regions that are adjacent to the Ormuz straits altogether in one unit (6th book, 2nd part and table / or units 7 and 8). The next part covers Hyrcania, Margiana, Bactria, Sogdiana, the land of Sacae, and the part of Scythia around Imaon Mountain; these regions cover a vast space of today's Eastern Iran, Northern Iran, NW Pakistan, Afghanistan, South & SE Turkmenistan, South Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

As it is already said, the description of Arabia Felix is included in the 2nd part of Geography's 6th book; it covers unit 7, whereas Carmania is illustrated in unit 8.

The chapter on Arabia Felix starts like all the chapters with a brief text that establishes the demarcation of the area under discussion; the Ancient Greek text is available online:

(http://books.google.ae/books?id=vHMCAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false). I translated from Ancient Greek to English all the excerpts from Ptolemy's Geography that have been herewith included.

"From the North, Felix Arabia is delineated by the exposed southern parts of Petraia (Stone) Arabia and Desert Arabia; from the west, it is demarcated by the Arabian Gulf (the Ancient Greek term denotes the Red Sea), and from the south by the Red Sea (the Ancient Greek term denotes the Indian Ocean). And from the East, it is delimited by the Persian Gulf, and by the Sea that stretches from the Gulf's mouth (e.g. the Ormuz straits) up to cape Syagros".

Ptolemy then enumerates the coastal cities and towns, starting with the Red Sea coastlands of Arabia Felix that were successively inhabited by Thamnyditai, Sidenoi, Darrai, Banoubaroi, Arsai, Kinaidokolpitai, Kassanitai and Elisaroi. All these Yemenite ethnic groups were located in Yemen's western shores; among the towns inhabited by Elisaroi, Ptolemy mentions well-known entrepots and harbours, namely Mouza Emporion (lit. 'Mouza the entrepot'), which is identified with the modern Yemenite village Al Mukha (http://www.mochaoffice.org/almukha%20history.htm) and Okelis Emporion. As the 'Periplus of the Red Sea' offers more insight into the activities undertaken at Mouza, we know that this entrepot was among the largest existing in the entire Red Sea region.

Ptolemy names the Bab el Mandeb Yemenite promontory 'Poseidion Akron', cape of Poseidon (the Ancient Greek god of the sea that corresponds to the Roman god Neptune), one city, and the mount Kaboubathra. Immediately after that part, started the land of the Omeritai who are identified with the Himyarite Yemenites. Soon after, Ptolemy mentions Arabias Emporion, which corresponds to Arabia Felix city of the earlier text 'Periplus of the Red Sea' (paragraph 26); this site is identified with modern Aden.

Immediately, east of Aden started Hadhramawt (Adramiton Hora; Land of the Hadhramis), which seems to have expanded at the detriment of Himyar at the times of Ptolemy the Geographer. In that part, while proceeding toward the East, Ptolemy mentions several cities and locations that had already been mentioned by the unknown author of the text 'Periplus of the Red Sea'.

After including the city of Moskha in Hadhramawt (which clearly means that the earlier attested state of Oman had collapsed and was incorporated in Hadhramawt), Ptolemy describes the land of Sahalitai that stretched until the Ormuz straits. Ptolemy's Didyma Mountains are identified with Al Hajar al Sharqi and Al Hajar al Gharbi mountains, and Ptolemy's Black Mountains or Assabon are identified with Ruus al Jibal at the end of Musandam Peninsula. In the area between Muscat and Musandam Peninsula (that belongs partly to Oman and the Emirates), Ptolemy mentions two cities, namely Kossara (or Kosseudi) and Abissa, and cape Korodabon (Ras As Sikkan). In the aforementioned area, he also locates an Oracle of Artemis, an Ancient Greek goddess identified by the Ancient Greeks with the Persian goddess Anahita of the Mithraist Iranians; this bears witness to a persistent Persian presence in Oman during the Arsacid times. Finally, in the very area of the straits, Ptolemy mentions Kryptos limen, which in Ancient Greek means literally 'hidden harbor' that can be identified with Khawr al Hablayn.

At that point (unit 7, paragraphs 12 and 13), Ptolemy starts a recapitulation, mentioning collectively the coastal mountains and rivers of Arabia Felix.

Chapter XXIII. Sharjah (Sarkoe) and Umm Quwain (Kawana) Mentioned by Ptolemy the Geographer

With paragraph 14, Ptolemy enters into the description of the 'Persian Gulf'; beyond the straits, he mentions some fish-eating populations first. Ptolemy states that they lived in deep bays, and we have every reason to believe that this description corresponds to the area around Khawr Shim; the term used signifies that the fish eating tribes were deprived of a sophisticated social hierarchy. He then adds that the inner part of the bays was inhabited by Macae. This area seems to be around modern city Khassab in Musandam Peninsula.

Proceeding to the southwest, in the direction of the modern Emirati coastland and the cities of Ras al Khaimah, Umm al Quwain, Ajman and Sharjah (lit. Al Sharqah), Ptolemy mentions the data below, in the following order:

(& 14) The Land of Nareitai (whereby the following places are to be found)

Regma city
Sacred capes of the Sun (Hiera Heliou akra, in Greek)
Lar river estuary
the springs of the river
Kanipsa city
Kavana (or Kawana) city

Regma city must be located in the area of the modern city Bukha (Oman), whereas the Sacred capes of the Sun were probably situated in the Emirati coastland north of Ras al Khaimah. River Lar's estuary must have been in the coastland around Ras al Khaimah, which is probably built on the very site of Kanipsa city.

Furthermore, the name Kavana (or Kawana) suggests that there is an ancient, pre-Islamic etymology of the modern city's name (Umm al Quwain); anyhow, the common explanation of the city name ('mother of the two powers') seems to have merely been an Interpretatio Arabica, i.e. an effort to associate a pre-Islamic name to an Arabic word. With Kavana (or Kawana), Ptolemy completes the description of the Land of Nareitai, and comes across the land of Attaioi.

The land of Attaoi comprises of the following settlements:
Sarkoe city
Karada city
Atta city

Sarkoe corresponds to modern Sharjah (written Sharqah), and it seems to have been the first historical mention of the world-known modern city of the Emirates. Consequently, along with Kawana – Umm al Quwain, Sarkoe is the modern Emirati city with the greatest historicity. Ptolemy the Geographer's mention of both names demonstrates a 20-century long continuity of both city names.

Beyond Sarkoe, and due to the vicinity of the location, as per Ptolemy's estimates, we can attempt to identify Karada with modern Dubai; Atta city seems to be the capital city of the Attaioi territory or at least the ancestral location of the tribe that controlled the area. We can

locate Atta in the whereabouts of Jebel Ali, 35 km southwest of Dubai or further on in that direction. Beyond the land of Attaioi was located the land of Gerraioi, the Gerrhans – inhabitants of Gerrha, and of the surroundings of the great city.

Chapter XXIV. Confirmation of the Location of Gerrha in the UAE, and Ptolemy the Geographer

As per Ptolemy's description, the land of Gerraioi comprises of the following cities:
Magindanata or Matintana city
Gerrha city
Bilbana city

The yet-unidentified Magindanata or Matintana city has a name of possibly Iranian etymology. In the coastal zone of Abu Dhabi Emirate, several archeological places have been excavated, and certainly one of them could possibly be the ancient Magindanata or Matintana. The good relations between Gerrha and both the Persian Achaemenid and the Parthian Arsacid dynasties that ruled respectively from 550 to 330 BCE and from 250 BCE to 224 CE makes the propinquity of various Iranian populations look quite normal and ordinary.

As we safely rely on Strabo's precise information to accurately locate Gerrha in the whereabouts of the modern cities Al Rafiq, Tarif, Al Mirfa, and Habshan, we notice that from the area of Jebel Ali (possibly identified with Atta) until the triangle area delineated among the above mentioned cities, at the times of Ptolemy the Geographer, there was only one settlement noticed and referred to. The distance exceeds 200 km, and this leads us to the conclusion that this part of today's Emirati territory was less inhabited than the land between Atta (Jebel Ali) and the Ormuz straits.

Beyond Gerrha, Ptolemy mentions one more city belonging to the land of Gerrhans, namely Bilbana. Here again, we have a toponym of possibly Iranian etymology. Bilbana must have been located in the area west of the modern town of Al Mirfa.

Chapter XXV. Western UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Al Ehsa as per Ptolemy the Geographer

Beyond that point, Ptolemy mentions three adjacent territories successively, as per below:

Land of Thaimoi
Eithar city
Gulf of Magon
Istriana city

Land of Leanitai
Mallava city
Penisnula cape (Khersonesos akra)
Leanites gulf
Itamos harbor
Adarou city

Land of Aboukaioi
Holy Gulf (Hieros Kolpos)
Koromanis city

We can vaguely identify the land of Thaimoi with the westernmost confines of the Emirati territory, around Ruwais, Jebel Dhanna, Al Hamra, and beyond. The Gulf of Magon can be approximately associated with the area around Sila and the gulf formed between the main coastland of the Emirates and the southeastern confines of the Qatar peninsula. The name of the gulf constitutes a remarkable point; it consists in a late reminiscence of the Assyrian / Babylonian toponym Magan that we earlier identified with the Qatar peninsula, and which was located - as per the Mesopotamian historical sources - between Tilmun (Bahrain) and Meluhha (Emirates).

According to Ptolemy's references, the land of Leanitai corresponds to the modern state of Qatar. Mallava city must have been located between Doha and the peninsula's northernmost promontory, around Al Ruwais. The Leanitai seem to have originally settled in Qatar's western coastland and for this reason the gulf of Bahrain was named Leanites gulf by Ptolemy.

The last territory of Arabia Felix (that stretched from modern Najran and North Yemen to the Saudi province of Al Ehsa) belonged to the Aboukaioi. They seem to have inhabited the Saudi Arabian coastland opposite Bahrain, and the shores of Hieros Kolpos (lit. Holy Gulf), which must be identified with the small gulf east-southeast of the modern city of Dammam. There was located the only city mentioned on the land of Aboukaioi, Koromanis. Ptolemy closes the list by adding the following sentence: "Beyond which is located the end of this land toward the desert, and Maisanites gulf". This makes sure that, at those days, the coastland between Dammam and Kuwait was desert; this perfectly corresponds to the narrations about the expeditions sent by Alexander the Great. Maisanites gulf is to be identified with the small Gulf of modern Kuwait, near the estuary of Euphrates.

Chapter XXVI. UAE Islands Mentioned by Ptolemy the Geographer

Further expanding unit 7, Ptolemy goes on describing the inland parts of Felix Arabia, involving a list of mountains, a list of populations and ethnic groups, and a list of cities. At the very end of unit 7, Ptolemy presents several lists of islands that were located alongside the coastland of Felix Arabia. In paragraph 47, he enumerates the islands located in the 'Persian Gulf' as per below:

Apfana island
Ihara
Tharro
Tylos
Arados

It is clear that Ptolemy proceeds from east to west, as he did in the parts dedicated to the coastland. As we know that Tylos and Arados correspond to the modern islands of Bahrain and Muharraq respectively, we can conclude that the first three islands mentioned by Ptolemy, Apfana Island, Ihara and Tharro, were situated between Qatar's eastern coastland and the Ormuz straits; we can therefore attempt to identify with some of the modern UAE islands.

Apfana may be identified with the island Sir Abu Nu'air, 65 km off the Emirates' coast where archaeological finds date back to the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Abu_Nu%E2%80%99ayr; http://www.ameinfo.com/265395.html); another possible identification is Abu Musa island, ca. 50 km north of Sir Abu Nu'air (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Musa) or even Tunb island, ca. 50 km north of Abu Musa and closer to the straits

Ihara can be identified with Sirri island, another 50 km west of Abu Musa island (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirri_Island) or with Das island (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Das_Island) that lies at almost half the distance between the Emirati and the Eastern Qatari coasts.

Tharro can be identified with Dalma island (www.dalmaisland.com; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalma_%28island%29) where several excavations brought to light the material civilization of the local pre-Islamic inhabitants; no less than 20 archaeological sites have already been identified on the island thus far.

Chapter XXVII. The Rise of the Sassanid Empire of Iran, and the End of Gerrha

Chronologically, Ptolemy is the last author to offer us an analytical insight into the Emirati coast. Few decades after he compiled his data, a major event of the Late Antiquity took place. The Arsacid Parthian dynasty was overthrown in Iran, and the rise of the Sassanid Empire marked another phase of Iranian expansion, at times more overwhelming than that of their Achaemenid ancestors whose glory and prestige the Sassanids pledged to reinstate and revalidate. The event (224 CE) was of global dimensions; in terms of World History, after the fall of Babylonia (539 BCE) that marked the end of the Ancient World, the rise of the Sassanid dynasty is one of the two most critical dates of the Pre-Islamic World (along with Alexander's conquests, 334-330 BCE).

The rise of the Sassanid dynasty heralded incessant wars with the Roman Empire that turned the entire area between the Caucasus Mountains and the Bab el Mandeb straits of the Red Sea into a battlefield. The Perso-Roman clash took another dimension one century later, with the Christianization of the Roman Empire (330 CE), and the historical phenomenon ended only with the arrival of Islam, the subsequent detachment and Islamization of the eastern provinces of the Oriental Roman Empire (636-645 CE), and the demolition of the Sassanid Empire (637-651 CE).

As the Oriental Roman Empire continued opposing the Islamic Caliphate and other related kingdoms (steadfastly until the early 12th century and as late as 1453), the Christian – Islamic confrontation was patterned after the earlier Perso-Roman rivalry; in geopolitical terms, the Sassanid Empire was not really destroyed, but merely substituted by the early Caliphate – in terms of form rather than contents.

Gerrha declined and fell to oblivion, when it was annexed to the Sassanid Empire (224 CE), which evidently turned the Gulf into an Iranian 'lake' for more than 400 years. As a mere Iranian city controlled by Sassanid garrisons, Gerrha was not allowed to continue its lucrative commercial activities, and the bulk of the wealth was sent to Istakhr, the Sassanid capital at Fars, in order to finance the wars that led to the annexation of Oman, Yemen, North India, and Central Asia into the Sassanid Empire. With the collapse of the state of Kushan, no major state was left in India, and China was too far and often divided into many kingdoms. Then, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Cappadocia and Anatolia became the terrain of the incessant Perso-Roman wars.

Thus, the territory of today's Emirates that had been an important center of civilization, art, trade, and wealth for almost three millennia (2500 BCE – 224 CE) fell to insignificance and marginalization (224 – 651 CE), before becoming an ordinary Islamic territory ruled from the faraway capital of the Caliphate.

About Muhammad Shamsaddin Megalommatis

Orientalist, Historian, Political Scientist, Muhammad Shamsaddin Megalommatis, 56, is the author of 12 books, dozens of scholarly articles, hundreds of encyclopedia entries, and thousands of articles. He speaks, reads and writes more than 15 modern and ancient languages.

Born Christian Orthodox, he adhered to Islam when 36, devoted to the philosophical system of Muhyieldin Ibn al Arabi. Greek citizen of Turkish origin, Muhammad Shamsaddin Megalommatis studied and/or worked in Turkey, Greece, France, England, Belgium, Germany, Syria, Israel, Iraq, Iran, Russia, Egypt, Sudan, UAE, and Somalia, and carried out research trips throughout the Middle East, Northeastern Africa and Central Asia. His career extended from Academic Research & Education, Journalism, Publications, Photography, and Translation to Website Development, Human Rights Advocacy, Technical Writing, PR & Marketing, and Sales & Brokerage. He traveled in more than 80 countries in 5 continents.

He rejected the Greco-Romano-centric version of History and the colonial fallacies of Orientalism and Hellenism, and he supported Martin Bernal´s Black Athena and Edward Said's Orientalism. He refuted Greek nationalism and the fallacious historical dogma that is tyrannically imposed in Greece, where he also pleaded for the European History by J. B. Duroselle, and defended the rights of the Turkish, Pomak, Macedonian, Vlachian, Arvanitic, and other minorities of Greece.

Muhammad Shamsaddin Megalommatis

- advocates for National Unity, Substantive Independence and Effective Rehabilitation in Somalia,
- defends

- the Human & Civil Rights and the Right to National Independence of the Yazidis, the Aramaeans, the Baluch, and the Iraqi Turkmen,
- the ongoing liberation struggle of the tyrannized Oromo, Ogadeni, Sidama, Afar, Kaffa, Shekacho, Hadiya, Gedeo, Kambatta, Wolayita, Agaw, Berta, Gumuz, Anuak, and Nuer nations that have been persecuted and butchered in the Neo-Nazi colonial state of Abyssinia (Fake Ethiopia)
- the epic effort of the Berbers and the Tuareg to form their nationhood
- the Human & Civil Rights of the Furis (Darfur), the Bejas, and the Nubians

- calls for Freedom and National Independence for Catalonia, Scotland, Corsica, Euskadi (Bask Land), (illegally French) Polynesia, and Kabylia
- supports the Liberation of 25 million Azeris tyrannized in occupied Southern Azerbaijan,
- demands international recognition for Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,
- sponsors the Secession of occupied Sanjak (Sandzak) and Voivodina from the monstrous tyranny of Serbia, and
- denounces the colonial fabrication of 'Islamic Terrorism' and 'Al Qaeda', a fake, non-existing organization

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