

Fars and Two Iraqs under Mongol Rule: Kish Merchants' Trade Network in the Indian Ocean

Yokkaichi Yasuhiro

Since ancient times, two Iraq districts, Iraq 'Arab and Iraq 'Ajam, have been the boundary between the Arab and Iran worlds and a node of commodity distribution and migration among Egypt, Syria, Hijaz, Rum, and Iran. Meanwhile, Fars had international trading ports used as bases by Indian Ocean merchants including Kish merchants who were patronized by the Il-khanate. Commercial goods were brought from China, Southeast Asia, and India to not only Azarbaijan, the center of the Il-khanate, but also Iraq, Rum, Hijaz, Yemen, Syria, and Egypt. The royal family of Kish undertook Indian Ocean trade as *ortuq*, or privileged merchants of the Il-khanate, and offered them pearls from the Persian Gulf every year. In turn, the Il-khanate protected them and gave the king of Kish, Shaykh al-Islām Jamāl al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Tībī, an official post. He received the title of *Malik Islām* and the official post of vice-governor or *hākīm* of Fars province, which he administered at Siraz. At the time, his son, Fahr al-Dīn Ahmad al-Tībī, was dispatched as an envoy to Yuan China and traded there for four years. As such, the Il-khanate and Kish formed a patron–client relationship. Kish also had a similar relationship with the Pandyan Kingdom along the Coromandel Coast of South India. Taqī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Tībī, a brother of Jamāl al-Dīn Ibrāhīm, was appointed as supervisor of the international port of the Pandyan Kingdom. In this manner, Kish initiated maritime trade between the Persian Gulf and South India under the aegis of large states, such as the Il-khanate and Pandyan dynasties. Thus, Fars played the role of a commercial hub for maritime trade in the western Indian Ocean in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The *Nūr al-Ma'rif*, the collection of the Rasulid Sultanate's official commercial and administrative documents in the reign of Sultān al-Muzaffar Yūsuf (647-94 AH/1249-95 AD), includes the customs tariff of Aden Port used by the end of the thirteenth century. Based on these records, goods from China, India, Fars, and Iraq were imported to Aden, and a large number of the goods transited Kish Island. In this manner, Kish merchants edged into the market of Aden Port. They had two commercial routes, namely, that between Fars and Aden and that between Iraq and Aden via Hijaz.

Based on the assertion of Bernard Lewis, Arabic historians believe that the center of Islamic economic sphere shifted from Baghdad to Cairo and that the mainline of the western Indian Ocean moved from the Persian Gulf route to the Red Sea route after the decline of the Abbas Caliphate. However, judging from the multilateral trading network of Kish merchants, the framework may not be simple as he showed. Fars and Iraq under Mongol rule were the hubs of international trade, whereas the Persian Gulf and Red Sea were, through the intermediary of Fars and Iraq, incorporated in the same multilateral trade network.