

## SRI LANKA AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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Sri Lanka's relations with the Roman Empire constitute a chapter in the island's early history that is evocative, yet nebulous. Although it has never failed to rouse popular imagination, yet it is a subject about which our evidence is most scarce and least precise. In consequence, fantastic accounts and captivating theories have been built upon insufficient foundations. There can be no doubt, however, that relations with the Roman Empire constituted an important element of the economic and cultural life of ancient Sri Lanka which has not been adequately projected in indigenous sources. A fresh examination of the available evidence may therefore lead to a better understanding of life during the early Anuradhapura period.

The opening up of Sri Lanka to the Romans was a direct outcome of the economic expansion made possible by the establishment of the Roman Principate under Augustus and the peace it gave to the strife-torn ancient world. The commercial supremacy of Rome and Italy and the impetus given to free trade had far-reaching consequences. The period of the Julio-Claudian emperors saw an unprecedented growth in Roman enterprise in the East, for which Hippalus' discovery of monsoon navigation and the destruction of Aden were essential prerequisites.<sup>1</sup> But the rediscovery of Sri Lanka, with its infinite prospects for the geographical and economic enhancement of this enterprise, appears to have been the result of a happy accident of history.

The Romans had, of course, heard already about this island, which the Greeks had described under the name of Taprobane. Onesicritus, an admiral of Alexander the Great, had noticed its elephants and amphibious creatures<sup>2</sup>. Megasthenes, the Seleucid envoy to Chandragupta Maurya, had mentioned its gold and large pearls, noticing that it was divided by a river, and that its inhabitants were known as Palaiogonoi, i.e. "men of ancient birth."<sup>3</sup> Eratosthenes, the famous Alexandrian geographer, had even produced its measurements, (though with considerable exaggerations), and said that it had no cities, only 700 villages<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the educated Romans, avid for the knowledge of the Greeks, could not have long remained ignorant about an island, which had already begun to inspire poets and fabulists as a utopian land, where the dream of the golden age had been realised<sup>5</sup>. It is no surprise, therefore, to find an early Latin poet of the empire singing of "where the Indian waters bathe Taprobane"<sup>6</sup>.

But it was only in the reign of Claudius (A. D 41-54)<sup>7</sup> that the first recorded encounter between Rome and Sri Lanka took place. Pliny the Elder has preserved a vivid account in his *Natural History*:<sup>8</sup> "A freedman of Annius Plocamus, who had bought from the Treasury the tax farm of the Red Sea, was sailing round Arabia. There he was carried along by winds from the north past Carmania and, on the fifteenth day, made harbour at Hippuros in that island; and in consequence of the kind hospitality of the king he learned the local language thoroughly over a period of six months, and afterwards, in reply to his questions, described the Romans and Caesar. In what he heard the king got a remarkably good idea of their honesty, because, among the captured money there were denarii which were of equal

weight, although their various types indicated that they were issued by several persons. Encouraged to friendship chiefly by this, he sent four ambassadors with Rachia as their leader."

It has sometimes been asked why the Romans, who had dared to endure the rigours and perils of a long voyage to South India, should not have continued their ventures to Sri Lanka. The popular and obvious explanation has been that the South Indian kingdoms effectually prevented and prohibited western merchants from trading directly with the island<sup>9</sup>. But it is also possible that the Romans, or rather their Greek subjects, did not feel the need to go all the way to Sri Lanka as long as its products could be obtained easily and abundantly in the marts of India. Strabo, in one of his notices of Taprobane, says, "There are brought from thence to the Indian markets ivory, tortoise-shell and other wares in large quantities."<sup>10</sup> However, this situation must have changed during the latter part of the first century A. D., when increasing demand for oriental luxuries might have forced the Romans to appropriate fresh supplies. Thus, like many coincidences in history, the rediscovery of Sri Lanka appears to have occurred at the right moment.

The decision to send an embassy to Rome was inspired, according to Pliny, by the king's perception of Roman honesty when the captured denarii turned out to be of the same weight, although their types indicated that they were issued by different persons. Apparently the coins were seized (*captiva pecunia*) and weighed. Why? There is some reason to believe that the state had certain rights over the cargo of ships that were wrecked or cast on its territory. In the second century B. C. we hear of king Kāvantissa who, on hearing of the miraculous arrival of a ship laden with precious things "bade them bring (the precious things) to him,"<sup>11</sup> while as late as the 12th century A. D. Parākramabāhu I, in his Nainativu Tamil inscription says, "If merchant vessels are wrecked, a half share shall be taken by the treasury and the other half left to the owner."<sup>12</sup> It is therefore highly probable that the denarii from the freedman's ship were similarly confiscated as part of the cargo. They were weighed, no doubt, because they were destined for the royal treasury, the implication being that the coins were taken most probably for their metal value rather than as currency. In fact Wheeler and Bolin have suggested that the Roman coins of precious metal exported to the east at this time were intended for use as bullion and not as currency.<sup>13</sup>

It is usual to deduce from this story that up to that time the king of Sri Lanka had never seen the Romans or their money. But Pliny's words do not necessarily carry this implication, it was the variety of types, contrasted with the uniformity of standards, which impressed him. We know that gold and silver coins exported to India at this time consisted largely of two well-known types, one each of Augustus and Tiberius. But the freedman's cargo, which was not destined for India, may well have contained denarii of many types, including coins of the consulate which were in use outside India well into the time of the Flavian emperors. The "several people" who struck them, and whose images were on them, are not specifically designated as emperors.

The fact that some South Indian hoards contain only coins of Augustus and Tiberius is an indication that in the time of Tiberius the flow of Roman money to India had already begun. This is supported by the discovery at Chandravalli in Mysore of two denarii of

Augustus and Tiberius in a stratum which also produced two fragments of Arretine pottery and a sherd of the black rouletted ware, which were popular in India chiefly during the Arretine and pre-Arretine period, that is, before A.D. 50.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the emperor Tiberius himself deplored the sending of Roman money "to peoples outside our domains, or even to our enemies" in payment for precious stones.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the draining of Roman money was already a matter of growing concern during his reign. Considering the geographical proximity and the close political and commercial relations between southern India and Sri Lanka, it would be very strange indeed if Roman coins did not find their way into the island in quantities at a time when their export to South India was at its height.

It was during Pliny's own life-time that the emperor Nero debased the Roman denarius by reducing its silver content. The result, for oriental commerce, appears to have been that the Indians refused to accept the Neronian and post-Neronian denarii and insisted on being paid in gold coins or in pre-Neronian silver coins. Thus, in recounting the reaction of the king of Sri Lanka, Pliny may have given voice to the disillusionment of thoughtful Romans, who could still remember the good old days when the soundness of the Roman currency was the key to international prestige.

In fact, the entire account of the island appears to have been recast with a view to its propaganda value. It has been shown, for instance, that the description of the limited, elected kingship of Taprobane, which Pliny professes to have obtained from the envoys, has been phrased to serve as a criticism of the Roman Principate which, at this time, had a strong tendency in practice towards hereditary succession and autocracy.<sup>16</sup> "Their king," Pliny tells us, "was elected by the people on grounds of age and kindliness, and because he had no child: and if he had a child afterwards, he would abdicate, lest the kingship should become hereditary. Thirty governors are given him by the people, and no one is condemned to death except by the verdict of the majority; even so there is the right of appeal to the people, and seventy judges are appointed; if these acquit the accused, those thirty no more enjoy respect, their disgrace being very serious."<sup>17</sup>

This ideal conduct of the king is matched by that of his subjects; no one had a slave, no one slept into the day or during day-time; their houses stood moderately high above the ground; the price of grain was never raised; there were no law-courts or litigation; Hercules was worshipped.<sup>18</sup> In short, the island is practically free from the evils of contemporary Roman society, which are rooted ultimately in the love of riches and luxury.

Roman luxury must have appeared extravagant to the envoys from Sri Lanka, brought up, no doubt, on the teachings of the Buddha. In fact, I am of the opinion that the Buddhist attitude and way of life provide the background for many of their statements, so that they themselves may have been responsible for some at least of the idealising tendencies in their account, as preserved by Pliny.

In fact, one might go further and say that the primary purpose of the embassy was a religious one. The commentator to the *Mahāvamsa* says that Bhātika Abhaya, in the course of his lavish offerings to the Mahāthūpa, "sent to the country of Romanukha across the sea and got down red coral and had a perfect net of coral made, suitable to be cast over, (the chetiya)."<sup>19</sup>

If the ornament of coral was destined for the great religious edifice of his kingdom, we have to presume that Bhātika Abhaya (A.D. 38 – 66), who is portrayed in the chronicles as a generous patron of Buddhism, would not regard such a mission as an ordinary commercial transaction. The purpose of importation and the quantity of coral required would call for negotiation at the highest level, i. e. that of an official embassy. Pliny's interest in the information, supplied by the envoys almost a generation earlier, disguises the essentially religious motive, which inspired their mission.

Nevertheless, the embassy must have also achieved results of a more mundane nature. The superior quality of the information available to Ptolemy regarding the island is a positive indication that, during the intervening hundred years, relations between Sri Lanka and the West had become closer.<sup>20</sup> Ptolemy is the first to mention the names of emporia on the island, of which he mentioned two, viz. Modoutou and Tarakoru.<sup>21</sup> Charlesworth has observed that the *Periplus Marius Erythraei* mentions over twenty emporia altogether, while Ptolemy enumerates some sixty between Barygaza and the Ganges delta; apparently one emporium to serve each district or region.<sup>22</sup> Charlesworth thinks that these are harbours approved or designated either by a king's decrees or by the provisions of treaty as places where business between people of a different nationality may be transacted lawfully, where lawful dues and taxes may be imposed, and where, possibly, foreigners resided with a garrison of soldiers or a small police post. He supports this with the statement of the *Periplus*<sup>23</sup> that Leuke Kome ranks as a kind of emporium, and that this is the reason why a tax-collector and a centurion with a detachment are sent here. Regarding the places in India designated as emporia, Charlesworth says, "I feel in fact that these places are officially approved harbours, arranged by mutual agreement between rulers in the empire and India, reached by means of embassies." Can this apply equally to the two emporia in Taprobane, and are we entitled to consider them as the result of negotiations conducted in Rome by Rachia and his party?

In many ways Ptolemy's account marks the highest point of Graeco Roman knowledge about the island. Although he was misinformed about its size, he got its shape close to reality, and was the first to represent it as extending in a north-south direction. He also had a better idea of its interior, its products, and the names of inland towns, such as Anourogrammon, the king's residence, and Maagrammon, the metropolis. He knew the Malaya range and the rivers that flowed from it.<sup>24</sup> From that he was able to give a complete description of the coast round the island, and from the occurrence of descriptive Greek names along the southern shore, we may conclude that by his time Sri Lanka had been circumnavigated by mariners from the Roman empire.

In their trade with Southern India, the Romans took special care to ensure that coins of the best quality were exported thither. This is evident from the rarity in this region of Roman silver coins from the republican period, and the predominance, among imperial coins, of pre-Neronian gold and silver pieces of two fixed types, (one each of Augustus and Tiberius), and the frequency of post-Neronian gold pieces, to the virtual exclusion of silver.

But there is no strong evidence of a similar concern in their dealings with Sri Lanka where, apart from two coins of Tiberius of the type preferred in South India, there are no pre-Neronian imperial coins of high value, the only Roman coins of precious metal being the

republican and post-Neronian denarii, which are rare in the hoards of southern India.<sup>25</sup> Is it because the Romans, content with buying Sri Lankan products in Indian markets, did not think it worthwhile to promote themselves in the island? Were they perhaps effectively barred from doing so by the middlemen?<sup>26</sup> Or is it because the Romans felt no need to do this, since the initiative for friendship originally came from Sri Lanka?<sup>27</sup>

It is true that our literary evidence does not point to the presence of Roman subjects in Sri Lanka before the arrival of Plocamus' freedman. But reliable information about the island was available to them from sources other than the companions of Alexander and the Greek envoys in India.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the people of Sri Lanka may also have been aware of Roman enterprise on the mainland. King Bhātika Abhaya, in any case, knew enough about them to be able to send directly to the *Romanukha* country for coral, instead of buying it from the Indian markets, when he needed this commodity for a special religious occasion.

In this connection it may be relevant to observe that it is either on sites of religious significance or on settlements associated with shrines that articles of foreign origin have been mainly discovered in northern Sri Lanka. This is true of Mahātīttha, Kantarodai, Vallipuram, Anuradhapura and many other places. It is true that these places bore commercial significance as well; but religion appears to have played an important part in determining the nature of the demand for foreign articles. In this respect too, archaeology corroborates the testimony of the chronicles, which constantly stress the importance of religion in the cultural life of ancient Sri Lanka.

The occurrence of imported pottery at Mahātīttha, Kantarodai and other sites in northern Sri Lanka is an indication of the close relations with South India, through which the island participated in the international trade of the ancient world at this time. Specially significant in this respect is the Arretine ware and the rouletted ware of the Arikamedu type.<sup>29</sup> This helps to date the contacts to the early centuries of the Christian era, when Arikamedu was flourishing as a trading station on the east Indian coast. The presence of Arretine pottery indicates that articles of foreign origin were already arriving in the island during the first half of the first century A.D., in exchange for local produce. This agrees not only with the statement of Strabo, already noticed, that much cargo is brought from the island to the Indian markets, but also with the picture of the chronicles, which represent the island as being under South Indian influence, and sometimes even under foreign rule, during the first centuries B.C. and A.D.

The commercial context of the foreign articles demands investigation. Wheeler<sup>30</sup> has suggested that the purpose of the settlement at Arikamedu was to consolidate the trade with Sri Lanka and South-east Asia. At Arikamedu, apart from glass and clay, the substances most used for the manufacture of beads are chaledonic and crystalline quartz in their many varieties. They are found in many districts throughout India, but they also occur in Sri Lanka. If the island did provide some of the materials at Arikamedu, then the pottery beads and other articles may have been exchanged for them. We know that some gem-producing regions of the Deccan have yielded Graeco-Roman articles, while many Roman coins come from the beryl producing Coimbatore district. Arikamedu-type rouletted ware

has turned up at Chandravalli and Brahmagiri in the Chitaldrug district of northern Mysore and at Amarāvati and the Nellore district of the Madras State, all in the neighbourhood of gem-producing regions. Similar artifacts from northern Sri Lanka might also indicate the exploitation of the natural wealth of the island, and this must be balanced against the evident scarcity of Roman coins or precious metal on the island.

On the other hand, Roman red ware and rouletted ware as well as beads and other articles of Graeco-Roman origin have turned up at many ports on the West Indian coast as well as in the interior.<sup>31</sup> Red polished ware and Graeco-Roman antiquities are found at a number of places in and around Kathiawar and Gujarat provinces in general. This was one of the areas producing semi precious stones. Among the finds at Broach, there were beads in large quantities in all stages of manufacture, indicating a local industry. Rouletted ware from Nasik and Godavari are said to resemble those of Arikamedu.

The occurrence of Graeco-Roman objects and the existence of a bead industry in the western and central Deccan as well as on the east coast may point to the existence of overland caravan traffic during this period. The discovery of similar material at several sites in northern Sri Lanka suggests that the island was somehow drawn into this network of Indo-Roman trade, though in what context we cannot yet say. Mahātīttha is located on the Palk Strait "on the route of ancient overseas trade from the Mediterranean to the East, and in close proximity to the southeastern coast of India".<sup>32</sup> But evidence is as yet insufficient to prove that the role of *mediatrix* between East and West, which Cosmas in the early sixth century assigned to Sri Lanka, was already being played in the first century A. D., as John de Silva would have us believe.<sup>33</sup>

This role of *mediatrix* was in effect the result of the growth in importance of the sea route to the East in the latter part of the fourth century A. D., owing to disturbances on the land route, and the loss of Roman influence in the regions of the Caspian and Persian Gulf.<sup>34</sup> The rise of the Sassanids in Persia and the revival of trade under the Byzantine emperors was matched by the growth in prosperity of Southern China, which now began to increasingly demand the luxury articles that came from the West by sea. Meanwhile, the Western Roman empire became increasingly harassed by the barbarian invasions. There grew a fresh demand for pearls, spices, and precious stones. The South Indian merchants, who traditionally supplied these commodities to the western merchants, or rather their Axumite middlemen, must have been pressed increasingly for supplies; and it is natural that they should have taken to exploring and exploiting fresh sources. It is probably here that one should look for the background and the purpose of the occupation of Sri Lanka by Paṇḍu and his successors in the mid fifth century A. D. The invaders ruled from Anuradhapura, but their interests penetrated far beyond the northern kingdom. We know that they patronised Buddhist shrines in the South.<sup>35</sup>

Consistent with these circumstances is the change in the constitution of Roman coins from the fourth century onwards. There is a sudden outburst of finds, consisting of mainly copper coins of the period as well as Indo-Roman imitations. Moreover, for the first time there is a similarity in the constitution of coin hoards from Sri Lanka to those of the Madura district. Here too these Roman copper coins and their imitations have been found in great

abundance. They are found, not only as singles, but also as hoards. Most of them are extremely worn, but it has been possible to read them with sufficient accuracy, and many bear the mint marks of famous cities of the Roman empire. The most abundant issues range from Constantine the Great (c. A.D.247 - 337) to Arcadius and Honorius, and the coins of the two last emperors are probably the most frequent, occurring almost in every hoard.<sup>36</sup>

Unlike in Madura, the Roman copper coins of Sri Lanka are not confined to one locality. Their occurrence at almost every petty port as well as at various places in the interior, and the well-worn state in which they are found, has led to the very plausible supposition that, at the time they were in use, these coins formed the currency of the island. Consistent with this is the fact that few other coins of the period, whether local, Indian, or of any other nation, have been found.

Codrington believed that in both countries the introduction of this copper coinage was possibly a successful commercial speculation on the part of the western merchants, who could not have failed to notice the practical absence of small change. That this currency met with popular favour is evident, according to him, from the fact that it was imitated.<sup>37</sup> According to Warmington,<sup>38</sup> the abundance of coins at this time is due, partly to the revival of western energy through Axumite, Himyarite and Persian middle-men after the foundation of Constantinople as the seat of the empire, and partly to the gradual shift of the focus of trade from the Malabar coast southward to Sri Lanka, which becomes the main centre of trade in the Indian seas by the sixth century. He therefore thinks that the Roman coins were brought by the middlemen, and that it was the Indians themselves who produced the imitations. According to him, the cessation of the Roman coins after Honorius is due to the fact that the middlemen, considering the supplies to be adequate in view of the local imitations, ceased to import. However, it was the opinion of H. Mattingley that the local imitations of the Roman third brass may be due to the fact that very few of these species of coin were issued by the Roman mints after the reign of Theodosius II, whose reign ended in 450 A.D. Thus, the Indo-Roman series would commence in the second half of the fifth century<sup>39</sup>, and it is more likely that they were the consequence, rather than the cause, of the cessation of Roman third brass.

There are some hoards, such as those of Vatapulva, Kapuhenvala, and Valacchenai, whose latest coins could not have been deposited until the middle of the fifth century. We must also remember that Sigiriya, which has yielded so many of these coins, became a royal residence only in the later part of this century, (A.D.479 - 497). All these considerations make it highly probable that the Roman copper coins as well as the imitations were introduced into Sri Lanka chiefly by the invaders from southern India.

These coins, it may be observed, have been found in greater abundance in places along the western and southern coast. They are rarer in the north, and seem to come mainly from places which apart from their political and economic importance, also carry some religious significance, e. g. Anuradhapura, Mihintale Sigiriya, Kantarodai, Udappu and Mantai.

Now, it was the wet zone of the southwest, with its tropical jungles, that produced not only the cash-crops such as ginger, turmeric, pepper, and (later) cinnamon, but also the ivory and precious stones, which were so important for the island's foreign trade. The ports in this region, where so many of the coins were found, must have acted as outlets for these products. It is thus apparent that the sudden outburst of Roman coin hoards in the fifth century must be connected in some way with the island's capacity to produce the precious items of foreign commerce.

The nationality of the foreign rulers is a matter of conjecture. They are referred to as Tamils in the chronicles, and the name Paṇḍu, borne by the first of them, might suggest Pāṇḍya origin. But it is not unlikely that they belonged to the Kalabhra dynasty, which exercised its authority over the whole of south India at this time.<sup>40</sup> Kalabhra origin would explain their leanings towards Buddhism.

Their commercial policy appears to have been broadly one of jealous competition with the intermediaries and of conciliation with the producer (Sri Lanka) and the customer, the Roman Empire. This is evident, on the one hand from the religious patronage already referred to, and, on the other hand, from the adventures of the Theban lawyer, which may conveniently be assigned to this period.<sup>41</sup>

This lawyer, who travelled east in order to see India and make acquaintance with the Brahmins, was arrested by a local chief of the pepper-gathering Bisadae, and was detained for six years. A rival of the chief, who was detaining the Theban, reported this detention of a noble Roman citizen to the Great King, who was in Taprobane, and to whom the petty kings (of India) were subject as satraps - so says Palladius, who has recorded the incident. The king sent an officer to investigate the matter, had the Theban set free, and had his captor punished by flaying him. "For," says the author, "they greatly respect and fear the Roman Empire, thinking that it could even invade their land, owing to its supreme courage and inventive skill."<sup>42</sup>

This same regard for the glory, power and wisdom of the Romans is brought out in the adventure of Sopatros, which Cosmas Indicopleustes narrates with such vividness and enthusiasm that it is worth quoting in full.<sup>43</sup>

"Anyway, one of the business people from here, named Sopatros, who has been dead for the last 35 years, to my knowledge, once reached the island of Taprobane on a business venture, when a ship from Persia had just cast anchor. So, the people from Adoulis and Sopatros with them, disembarked, as did the people from Persia, with whom there was a Persian envoy also. Then, as was the custom, the local magistrates and the tax collectors welcomed them and took them off to the king. The king welcomed them, received their salutations and told them to sit down; and then he asked: "How are your countries, and how are things getting on there?" "Nicely" they replied. Then, in the general conversation, the king put the question, "Which of your kings is the greater and the more powerful?" The Persian got his word in first, and said, "Our king is the more powerful and greater and richer, and he is the king of kings. And whatever he wills, he is able to put into effect." Sopatros kept quiet; and then the king said, "What about you, Roman? Haven't you anything



to say?" And Sopatros replied, "What can I say, after these statements of his? If you want to know the truth, you have got both kings here. Have a look at each of them, and you can see which is the more glorious and powerful." On hearing this, the king was astonished, and said, "How have I got both the kings here?" He replied: "You have the coins of them both, the nomisma of the one, and the drachma (i.e. the miliarision) of the other. Look at the image on each of them and you will see the truth." The king praised and commended the idea and ordered both coins to be produced. Well, the nomisma was of gold, brilliant and of fine shape - for the coins which are exported there are specially selected - whereas the miliarision, to put it in a nutshell, was of silver, and that is enough to rule out any comparison with the gold coin. The king turned both coins over and over, and inspected them, and full of praise for the nomisma, he said, "Surely, the Romans are glorious, powerful and wise." So he ordered Sopatros to be highly honoured, and he mounted him on an elephant and, to the beating of drums, paraded him round the town in great honour. That is the story that Sopatros and his companions, who went to that island from Adoulis, told me. At this, so they said, the Persian went away in shame and disgrace."

The authenticity of this story has been questioned, and it has even been described as "a mournful reflection of what really happened in days gone by."<sup>44</sup> But the regard for Roman gold, attested here by Cosmas, is amply corroborated by the provenance in both India and Sri Lanka of gold pieces of the later emperors, especially those of Byzantium. Like the copper coins, these gold pieces were also imitated. Indeed, the South Indians had preferred the gold coin to the silver ever since Nero reduced the silver content of the latter. But, from the fifth century onwards gold appears to have become the preferred metal even in Sri Lanka, as far as Roman coins of precious metal are concerned. If Paranavitana is correct,<sup>45</sup> the Roman solidus may have been the inspiration for the gold coinage of Sri Lanka, with the *kalanda* as standard, and fractional pieces of half, quarter, and eighth, which is said to have been current in the ninth and tenth centuries. Thus, the influence of Roman money, the integrity of which first attracted Sri Lanka to relations with the Roman Empire, appears to have outlived those relations by many hundreds of years<sup>46</sup>.

#### REFERENCES

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3. Jacoby, *op. cit.* no. 715m fr. 26 (Pliny *loc. cit.*)
4. Strabo v. 1.14 and Pliny *loc. cit.*
5. Cf. Artemidorus in Pliny vii. 30 and Alexander Lychnus in Stephanus Byzantinus. s. v. "Taprobane".
6. Ovid, *Ex Ponto* i. 5.80.
7. Cf. Pliny vi. 84.

8. Pliny *loc. cit.*
9. B. J. Perera, "The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon" *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, vol. I, 1951, P. 301
10. Strabo ii. 1.14; E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India* Cambridge, 1928 p. 10
11. *Mahāvamsa* ed. W. Geiger. London, Pali Text Society, 1908 v. 64
12. Cf. K. Indrapala, "The Nainativu Tamil Inscription of Parākramabāhu I" *University of Ceylon Review* vol. XXI no. I 1963 p. 63-70.
13. R. E. M. Wheeler, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers* London, 1954 p. 361-2; S. Bolin, *State and Currency in the Roman Empire to A. D. 300* Stockholm 1958 p. 73.
14. R. E. M. Wheeler, "Arikamedu : an Indo-Roman Trading Station on the East Coast of India" *Ancient India* no. 2 p. 45 f.
15. Tacitus, *Annales* lii. 53.
16. Chester G. Starr, "The Roman Emperor and the King of Ceylon" *Classical Philology* vol. LI 1956 p. 27-30.
17. Pliny vi. 90-91.
18. *ibid.*
19. *Vamsatthappakāsinī* vol. 2 ed. G. P. Malalasekera, London, Pali Text Society, 1936. p.60 Geiger's dating of Bhātika Abhaya (A. D. 38-66) makes him a contemporary of Claudius. But Codrington and Paranavitana prefer an earlier date (22 B. C. to A. D. 7), which would make him a contemporary of Augustus. The occurrence of the name of P. Annius Plocamus in two inscriptions from A. D. 6 has led some scholars to re-date the journey of the freedman also to the time of Augustus. (D. Meredith : "Annius Plocamus : Two Inscriptions from the Berenice Road", *Journal of Roman Studies* vol. XLIII 1953 p. 37-40; E. F. Schwarz, "Pliny The Elder on Ceylon" *Journal of Asian History* Vol. VIII 1974 p. 23-48.; Wheeler, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers op. cit.* p. 155-6. However in the absence of incontrovertible proof, (it being possible to explain the inscriptions otherwise), I feel that the traditional interpretation of the sources, both western and indigenous should be retained.
20. Ptolemy. vii. 4.1 .
21. Ptolemy vii. 4.7

22. M. P. Charlesworth, "Roman Trade with India : a resurvey" *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honour of Aloian Chester Johnson*, ed. P. R. Coleman -Norton, Princeton N. J., 1951, p. 139-40.
23. *Periplus op. cit* 19.
24. Anourogrammon is of course Anuradhapura. Maagrammon is not Magama at modern Tissamaharama, but a town nearer to Anuradhapura, such as, for instance, the town of that name, which is said to have existed near Potuvil. Among other possible identifications, Barakes river may be the Valuka or Maha-Valuka i. e. the Mahaveli, in which case Bokana at its mouth must be the port of Gokanna, i. e. Trincomalee. Nagadiba is Nāgadīpa, but what town was intended it is difficult to determine.
25. H. W. Codrington *Ceylon Coins and Currency*, Colombo 1924 p. 31-50 and 249-50.
26. E. H. Warmington, *op. cit.* p. 122-3.
27. However, there is some reason to believe that care was taken to introduce the coins of new emperors as soon as possible. Interesting in this connection is the series of Alexandrian tetradrachms of the Ptolemaic standard, mostly struck in bullion. (Codrington, *op. cit.* p. 231). These coins are mostly from the earlier years of an emperor's reign, e. g. Nero's third year, Vespasian's first year, Hadrian's third and fourth years, and the first three years of Diocletian. We are reminded that it was in the figures on Roman coins that the king of Taprobane found such eloquent testimony. Thus, it is not possible to accept Warmington's suggestion that these tetradrachms were passed on by South Indian Tamil merchants in order to get rid of them. (Warmington, *loc.cit*).
28. Cf. Pliny vi. 82-3.
29. W. Begley, "Archaeological Exploration in Northern Ceylon" *Expedition : Bulletin of the University Museum of Pennsylvania* vol. IX no. 4 Summer 1967 p. 21-29.
30. Wheeler, "Arikamedu" p. 121.
31. C. Margabandhu, "Trade Contacts between Western India and the Graeco-Roman World in the Early Centuries of the Christian Era - an Archaeological Restatement" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* vol. VIII 1965, p. 316-322.
32. Begley, *op. cit.* p. 23
33. John de Silva, "Ceylon and Chinese Porcelain before 1500" *Asian Affairs* October 1979 p. 268.
34. Warmington, *op. cit.* p. 140.
35. W. A. Jayawardhana, "Successors of Mahasensa" *The University of Ceylon History of Ceylon* vol. I. pt. 1, Colombo, 1959 p. 293-4.

36. J. Still, "Roman coins found in Ceylon" *Journal (Ceylon Branch) of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol. XIX (58) 1907 p. 166.
37. Codrington, *op. cit.* chapter 4 Section 5.
38. Warmington, *op. cit.* p. 123-4.
39. Codrington, *op. cit.* p. 250.
40. C. W. Nicholas and Parnavitana, *A Concise History of Ceylon*, Colombo 1961 p. 122.
41. Palladius *De Gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus* ed. W. Berghoff i. 3-10.
42. *ibid* i. 10
43. *Cosmos Indicopleustes* ed. Wolska-Connus xi 17-19
44. Warmington *op. cit.* p. 294-5.
45. Nicholas and Parnavitana *op. cit.* p. 165
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