

An analysis of economic and cultural synergies in ancient Greek-Egyptian maritime trade

C.T.S.S. Perera^{1*}

¹Department of Western Classical Culture and Christian Culture, Faculty of Humanities, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Diplomatic relations between Greece and Egypt can be dated back to the bronze age of Greece (c. 3000 BCE). Ample literary and archaeological resources attest to the mutual relationship developed and maintained between these two nations that flourished in Europe and Africa. Their bilateral interactions were extended through mercenary support, Greek settlements in Egypt, maritime trade facilitated by Greek ports in Egypt, Athenian maritime-based economy, and close relations of Ionian islands with Egypt. Accordingly, this research investigates the intricate maritime trade networks between Greece and Egypt, focusing on the cultural and the economic exchanges that facilitated mutual growth and development specifically from the 8th to the 4th centuries BCE of Greece before the conquests of Alexander the Great. A historic method and an eclectic method under qualitative research methodology were adopted to identify the key historical recordings of Greek-Egyptian maritime activities for the analysis. The long-term economic synergies resulting from Greek-Egyptian maritime trade through the ancient port cities of Naukratis, Heracleion, and Canopus, resulted in the permanent Greek presence in Egypt. These port cities served as fundamental hubs for commerce and cultural exchange, facilitating the flow of goods, intellect, and the cultural impact between Greece and Egypt. The influx of Greek goods, such as olive oil, wine, and pottery, met with Egyptian exports like grain, papyrus, and textiles. The economic benefits of this trade were profound. The study emphasizes the importance of these ancient interactions in fostering economic development and cultural integration, laying the groundwork for future scholarly exploration of ancient maritime trade networks. In conclusion, the maritime trade between Greece and Egypt significantly contributed to the long-term economic and cultural synergies that shaped both the civilizations, exemplified by several economic and maritime agreements signed between Greece and Egypt in the 21st century CE.

Keywords: Cultural exchange, Diplomacy, Egypt, Greece, Maritime commerce.

*sathsi.perera@gmail.com
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4334-6874>