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Graeco-Indica — A Survey of Recent Work

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Graeco-Indian studies, as I would like to call my field of study, can be viewed from many angles. One fundamental distinction is whether the point of view is classical or Indian, although these two can also be combined.¹ An Indian historian is naturally interested in classical literature only when it gives some real information on India. But in classical philology the picture of India, be it real or imaginary,² is interesting. Though sometimes criticised, the Indian standpoint³ has its justification, although it risks wrong conclusions by ignoring the classical connection. In addition to the question of what the ancients knew about India and what kind of contacts they had with India, it is very important to study classical references and literature on India as literature, especially as an important part of the classical ethnography.⁴ Another question, often discussed but still all but clear, is the relation between classical literary τόποι and really new information from India.

Besides these philological aspects Graeco-Indian studies nowadays have other dimensions. The campaign of Alexander, the relations of Hellenistic monarchies and the Roman Empire with India, as well as the commerce between India and the west bring us to the field of history, and the Graeco-Buddhist art of northwestern India (now Pakistan) to that of art history. The Indo-Greek kingdoms and their successors in Bactria and

¹ This was done e.g. by O. Stein (see p. 75).

² This interesting aspect — the legend of India in classical literature — is discussed in my forthcoming paper *The Country of Fabulous Beasts and Naked Philosophers — India in Classical and Medieval Literature*.

³ It has been severely criticized under the name orientalist standpoint by Zambrini (see note 69).

⁴ This has been done e.g. by Dihle (p. 76) and Zambrini (p. 84).

northwestern India have already been eagerly studied for nearly 250 years.⁵ Here the traditional point of view has been numismatical (with some meagre textual evidence) and numismatics is still one of the most important tools in reconstructing their history. But from the 1920s onwards more and more archaeological⁶ and even epigraphical⁷ material has come to light. The importance of numismatics for the study of the commerce between India and the west has often been underestimated,⁸ and here too we now have some archaeological evidence to deal with.

Much has been written on the supposed influences between classical and Indian religions and philosophy. This can perhaps be labelled history of ideas (and to an extent, comparative religion), but the actual results are rather meagre. With the exception of few striking cases⁹ the supposed influences are mostly based on superficial or general similarities without any evidence of actual contact. The history of science is involved in the influence which took place in astronomy¹⁰ and perhaps in medicine.¹¹ Even literary influences have sometimes been proposed, but nothing has been proven.

In this article I shall mostly concentrate on the philological

⁵ Beginning with T.-S. Bayer, *Historia regni Graecorum Bactriani*, St. Petersburg 1738 (not seen by me).

⁶ The excavations in many cites of Soviet Central Asia, Afghanistan (esp. Ai Khanum and Surkh Kotal) and Pakistan (esp. Taxila) have yielded a rich harvest.

⁷ In addition to the many Indian inscriptions and those written in the Bactrian language (it was one of the official languages of the Kuṣāṇa empire found only in 1957) there are several Greek inscriptions found during the last 30 years in Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan.

⁸ See P. L. Gupta, *Roman trade in India* (Satkari Mookerji Felicitation Volume), Varanasi 1969, 169—180.

⁹ The Buddhist influence in Manichaeism is perhaps the best case. There is some evidence (and much discussion) for Indian influence in the thinking of Pyrrho and in Neoplatonism, but even here nothing definite has been shown.

¹⁰ Very ably discussed in many studies by David Pingree.

¹¹ Much is uncertain, but at least the companions of Alexander were impressed by the skill of Indian physicians with snake bites and some Indian medicines were used in Greece. The Indian elephants of Hellenistic rulers had Indian mahouts who taught their science of tending and curing elephants (Filliozat, *Les gajaçāstra et les auteurs grecs*, JA 222 [1933] 163—175).

standpoint. Indo-Greek history I have left out altogether,¹² as well as studies published in Russian¹³ (in fact most of these deal particularly with the Indo-Greek aspect). With these exceptions my task is to give a survey of important contributions to the Graeco-Indian studies published during the last ten years.

Few scholars have made Graeco-Indian contacts their special field of study. Among the most important from the first half of the present century was undoubtedly Otto Stein (1893—1942). A selection of his short studies and reviews has recently been published in the excellent *Glasesapp-Stiftung* series including 25 selections of „Kleine Schriften“ of German indologists.¹⁴ Stein was an indologist interested in the old Indian state and social history, epigraphy and especially the contacts between India and the classical world. Often these interests were connected. In his thesis¹⁵ he made a comparison between Megasthenes and the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya showing that the differences between the two texts are much more important than the similarities. From this he concluded a much later date for the Arthaśāstra, which has recently been confirmed by other means.¹⁶ Another major contribution of his was the long and still extremely important RE-article on Megasthenes.¹⁷

The present volume contains a good and representative selection of Stein's studies. Only 151 pages out of 656 are dedicated to Graeco-Indian questions (other articles contain some incidental references, see the

¹² For this subject see the survey by Frank L. Holt, *The Ancient World* 9 (1984) 2—12.

¹³ At least I would like to mention the volume *Drevnjaja Indija. Istoriko-kul'turnye svjazi*, edited by G. Bongard-Levin and published in Moscow 1982. It contains several articles dealing with Graeco-Indian questions (S. Y. Berzina on ancient India and Africa 17—41, Bongard-Levin and S. G. Karpyuk on Buddhism in classical and early Christian literature 42—52, M. A. Dandamayev on Indians in Iran and Mesopotamia in the Achaemenid period 113—125, V. G. Lysenko on Indian and Greek atomism 187—201 and many others).

¹⁴ Otto Stein, *Kleine Schriften*, hrsg. von F. Wilhelm (*Glasesapp-Stiftung* 25), Stuttgart 1985, XXV, 663 p.

¹⁵ *Megasthenes und Kauṭilya*, Wien 1921.

¹⁶ See note 75.

¹⁷ RE XV 1932, 230—326. He wrote many other RE-articles, among them the long studies on Nysa, Taxiles and Tiladai.

Sachregister), but in these pages there are several important contributions. Thus e.g. the studies on „Wundervölker Indiens bei Skylax“ (90—98), „Indien in den griechischen Papyri“ (163—186) and “Yavanas in Early Indian Inscriptions” (351—365) are still indispensable, although it would be very useful to collect the new material contained in the papyri and inscriptions published since the days of Stein.¹⁸

After a relatively quiet period Graeco-Indian studies have been revived in many excellent studies by the two classical scholars, A. Dihle and F. F. Schwarz. Most of them belong to the 60s and 70s, both scholars having lately turned their attention more to other aspects of classical philology. But now we have a fine volume of the collected articles of Albrecht Dihle.¹⁹ With the exception of *Umstrittene Daten*²⁰ all his contributions to classical ethnography and to Graeco-Indian contacts of the Roman period are included beginning with the early studies in Greek ethnography — „Zur hellenistischen Ethnographie“ (21—46) and the inspiring „Der fruchtbare Osten“ (47—60) — and concluding with a new study, „Serer und Chinesen“ (201—215). It is always a delight to read professor Dihle. With his sound judgement he puts limits on any wild speculation and deserves the full attention of everybody interested in Graeco-Indian questions. “The Conception of India in Hellenistic and Roman Literature” (89—97) is of fundamental importance for our understanding of the classical idea of India and the many contributions to Indian subjects in early Christian literature are always illuminating.

Dihle’s contribution to ANRW is now republished (118—152) with some additions by the author,²¹ but the original volume²² must still be used because of the massive study of Manfred Raschke it contains. Actually this “New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East” with its nearly 800 pages, 1791 footnotes and 158 pages of bibliography is almost

¹⁸ The articles of Stein were published in 1929 and 1935 respectively.

¹⁹ A. Dihle, *Antike und Orient. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, hrsg. von V. Pöschl und H. Peersmann, Heidelberg 1984, 235 p.

²⁰ *Umstrittene Daten. Untersuchungen zum Auftreten der Griechen an Roten Meer*, Köln-Opladen 1965.

²¹ 216—223 contain additions by the author to all articles published here.

²² ANRW II 9, 2 (1978).

awe-inspiring and yet the author has the nerve to call it a paper!²³ The text itself is less than 100 pages and gives — with very full documentation — a realistic appraisal of eastern commerce. Aptly he shows the difficulties of archaeological evidence, thus limiting wild speculation.

During more than twenty years Franz Ferdinand Schwarz has written on many aspects of Graeco-Indian contacts, mostly from the point of view of classical literature but also with attention to the Indian evidence. From the last ten years we have four papers by him. „Herrschaftslöwe und Kriegselefant“²⁴ contains a careful analysis of the Candragupta episode in Justinus' *Epitoma Pompei Trogi*. He tries to reconstruct a western version of the Candragupta legend known from India.²⁵ „Invasion und Résistance. Darstellungsmöglichkeiten in der Alexanderliteratur“²⁶ deals with the divergent accounts of Indian ascetics in Alexander histories. In “The itinerary of Iambulus — utopianism and history”²⁷ he examines the geographical and historical background of Iambulus' utopian romance of travels²⁸ which lies in the Hellenistic knowledge of India and Sri Lanka, the subject of many of his earlier articles. Much space is given also to the ancient Indian (Mauryan) knowledge of Sri Lanka. This he tries to compare with the Diodorus' epitome of Iambulus, although this hypothesis does not seem wholly successful. „Diplomatie und Selbstverbrennung. Strabon über die Indiensgesandtschaft an Augustus“²⁹ examines the Indian (northwest Indian according to Schwarz) embassy to Augustus and the spectacular suicide of Zarmanochegas in Athens. To these we may add the reviews of Eggermont's³⁰, Feldbusch's³¹ and Sedlar's^{31a} studies.

²³ Introductory note in p. 604.

²⁴ *Hommages à M. J. Vermaseren III*, Leiden 1978, 1116—1142.

²⁵ Cf. his earlier article in *Das Altertum* 18 (1972) 85—102.

²⁶ *GB* 9 (1980) 79—110.

²⁷ *Indology and Law (Studies in Honour of Prof. J. Duncan, M. Derrett)*, Wiesbaden 1982, 18—55.

²⁸ Cf. his earlier article in *E & W* 25 (1975) 181—200.

²⁹ *WZRo* 34 (1985) 51—55.

³⁰ P. H. L. Eggermont, *Alexander's Campaigns in Sind and Baluchistan*, Leuven 1975, reviewed in *GB* 9 (1980) 212—216.

³¹ *Der Brief Alexanders an Aristoteles über die Wunder Indiens. Synoptische Edition*, hrsg. von M. Feldbusch, Meisenheim am Glan 1976, reviewed in *Gnomon* 54 (1982) 250—254.

^{31a} See note 51, reviewed in *Gnomon* 58 (1986) 510—515.

In spite of those other dimensions mentioned earlier, the texts are always the main source of study. Studying and even translating the texts is an important task because so many scholars with no competence in classical languages are interested in Graeco-Indian questions. Often they can do no better than use McCrindle's old translations, and many problems and misunderstandings can be traced back to McCrindle. Actually John Watson McCrindle (1825—1913) was no bad scholar in spite of his defects. He had a good classical education, but he wrote most of his books³² in India where he apparently had no good library to consult. He did not know what was published in Europe and had to manage with few and often very old secondary sources. Especially in his earlier books the notes were already badly antiquated when they were first published more than a hundred years ago. Yet his books were a remarkable achievement and formed a corpus which gave a good foundation for further studies. With care they can be consulted even now.

But unfortunately the corpus was converted into a canon, a final verdict of Greek accounts of India. This has been true especially in India where classical scholarship is rare and classical libraries nonexistent. His books are reprinted with new notes³³ and there are several rearranged selections from them.³⁴ Too few have understood that his translations are not always reliable, his notes antiquated and his collection of classical accounts incomplete. And even the correct translations are mostly based on now antiquated editions. After Jacoby,³⁵ Frisk,³⁶ Renou,³⁷ Breloer-Bömer³⁸ and many others a new translation corpus is a very urgent

³² Ancient Indian as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, Calcutta 1877, . . . by Ktesias, 1882, . . . by Ptolemy, 1885, . . . in *Classical Literature*, Westminster 1901, *The commerce and navigation of the Erythraean Sea*, Calcutta 1879, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*,²1896, and *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, London 1897.

³³ Megasthenes and Arrian, by R. C. Majumdar, Calcutta 1960, the same by R. Jain, Delhi 1972, Ptolemy by R. Jain, Amsterdam and Faridabad n. d.

³⁴ R. C. Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India*, Calcutta 1960; B. N. Puri, *India in Classical Greek Writings*, Ahmedabad 1963; first part of K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India*, Madras 1939 and others. All these authors are well-known scholars of Indian history, but do not know Greek at all.

³⁵ FGrH II (Historians of Alexander) and IIC (Ctesias and India literature).

³⁶ Periplus-edition, Göteborg 1927.

³⁷ Edition of Ptolemy 7, 1—4 (India), Paris 1925.

³⁸ *Fontes historiae religionum Indicarum*, Bonnae 1939.

desideratum for Indian historians and other scholars unable to use the original sources.

Although the new corpus is still missing, some important translations have actually been published. Leaving aside the translations of classical authors giving some incidental notes on India we can notice that all Jacoby's fragments from the historians of Alexander have been translated in 1953³⁹ although apparently never used in Graeco-Indian studies. But during the last decade three new translations have been published and these we shall deal with more comprehensively.

The posthumous *Periplus* translation of G. W. B. Huntingford⁴⁰ is the fourth English version of this important text⁴¹ but the first one made from the text of Frisk. The author was a specialist on East Africa and his long notes and excursions shed much new light on the parts dealing with Africa and Arabia, but from the Indian point of view they are therefore a little disappointing. Some important secondary sources are missing, but the reviewer is disarmed by the fact that the author was living at Málaga far from all good libraries. Nevertheless it is an important addition to the study of eastern commerce during the Roman period.

The famous French indologist Jean Filliozat (1906—1982) had a lifelong interest in Graeco-Indian studies⁴² and wrote before his death an interesting summary of the field.⁴³ Collaboration with J. André⁴⁴ resulted in a new edition, translation and very elaborate commentary (p. 59—139) of the second part of Pliny's book VI.⁴⁵ The commentary is full of interesting information especially of the geography of India and the neighbouring countries, and an appendix (143—165) gives a more general picture of India as described by Pliny.

³⁹ C. A. Robinson, *the History of Alexander the Great I*, Providence R. I. 1953.

⁴⁰ *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea by an unknown author, with some Extracts from Agatharkhidēs 'On the Erythraean Sea'*, transl. and ed. by G. W. B. Huntingford (*Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, Second Series 151*), London 1980, XIV, 225 p.

⁴¹ The earlier were Vincent 1807, McCrindle 1879 and Schoff 1912.

⁴² See e.g. *Les relations extérieures de l'Inde*, Pondichéry 1956, and our footnotes 11 and 56.

⁴³ *La valeur des connaissances gréco-romaines sur l'Inde*, JS 1981, 97—135.

⁴⁴ They were working on another book, *L'Inde vue de Rome. Textes latins de l'antiquité relatifs à l'Inde* (see JA 271 [1983] 7). I hope it will still appear.

⁴⁵ *Pline l'Ancien, Histoire naturelle, Livre VI, 2^e partie. Texte établi, traduit et commenté par J. André et J. Filliozat (Coll. Budé)*, Paris 1980, 182 p., 4 maps.

Our third book is also the result of fruitful collaboration. Gerhard Wirth and Oskar von Hinüber have published a Tusculum-edition of Arrian's *Anabasis* (Wirth) and *Indica* (von Hinüber).⁴⁶ Presently we are more interested in the latter part. The edition is not critical, the Tusculum fashion allows only a small list of variants. But the translation is the first ever made by a competent indologist who is also able to deal with Greek,⁴⁷ and its value is enhanced by a good commentary (p. 1075—1140). Filliozat's Pliny and von Hinüber's Arrian are thus the only up to date and competent commentaries on classical texts dealing with India. After them it would not be too difficult a task to make a new translation and commentary of the fragments of Megasthenes on the basis of Jacoby's text.

There are rather few general surveys in the literature on Graeco-Indian questions. In a way, nobody has superseded the exhaustive study Lassen included in the four volumes of his *Indische Altertumskunde* in the middle of the 19th century. Lassen is, of course, badly antiquated, but nevertheless still worth studying and too rarely studied. McCrindle did not write a general survey and Rawlinson did not even meet the standards of his own time.⁴⁸ A compact and good introduction is the long RE-article „India“ by Wecker,⁴⁹ but it is already 70 years old.⁵⁰ Now we have a new book by Jean W. Sedlar⁵¹ who tries to survey Graeco-Indian contacts from the very beginnings until the rise of Islam. The author is neither a classical philologist nor indologist but a historian. Her attempt is not so much to make an original study as to critically evaluate all the existing

⁴⁶ Arrian, *Der Alexanderzug, Indische Geschichte, griechisch und deutsch hrsg. und übersetzt von G. Wirth und O. von Hinüber* (Samml. Tusculum), München-Zürich 1985, 1152 p.

⁴⁷ Chantraine's edition and translation in Budé-series (1927) is very good, but his notes are shorter and of course already somewhat antiquated.

⁴⁸ H. G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World*, Cambridge 1916, 2nd edition with few corrections 1926.

⁴⁹ RE IX (1916) 1264—1325.

⁵⁰ It can be supplemented with many other RE-articles dealing with India written by Tomaschek, Kießling, Wecker himself, Herrman, O. Stein, Treidler and many others. In *Kleine Pauly* Indian questions are examined e.g. by Treidler, Derrett and Schwarz.

⁵¹ J. W. Sedlar, *India and the Greek World*, Totowa N. J. 1980, XXI, 381 p.

studies. There are necessarily shortcomings in a book like this. Too old authorities have sometimes led her to wrong ideas,⁵² sometimes she has not known all the literature involved⁵³ and made bold statements without understanding the complicatedness of the question.⁵⁴ Yet her standpoint is fresh and her judgement very sound. Much space is given to supposed influences in the realm of religion and philosophy. She examines the arguments critically, but without prejudice and shows clearly how weak they are, even in such popular cases as Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism, not to speak of Greek philosophy of the classical period. It is also our opinion that there should be some direct evidence for influence before vague similarities can be taken into account. The sound and cautious judgements of Sedlar deserve to be read with attention by everyone inclined to see influences (Indian in the west and vice versa) everywhere.

Much has been written on the supposed Indian influence in early Greek philosophy. There are many vague similarities, few striking parallels and no evidence of any direct borrowing. Of course it is no longer acceptable to consider Greek philosophy as something self-sufficient and unique. Greek culture and thinking received much from others, from Egypt, from Iran, perhaps even from India.⁵⁵ There was a possibility of direct contact, in the Achaemenian empire and its metropolises where Greek and Indian subjects certainly had an opportunity to meet each other. Nevertheless we are on dangerous ground if we try to build much on this kind of evidence. And even here, there are two approaches. One is to found the hypothesis on really striking points and to try to find the most plausible explanation.⁵⁶ But it is also possible to jump from one vague

⁵² E.g. the supposed vague knowledge of India in Homer (there is none) from McCrindle (1877) in p. 9 and Bactrian inscriptions undeciphered from Schlumberger (1961) in p. 65.

⁵³ Schiern (1875) is the only authority on the gold-digging ants (p. 12) although there are many other, more recent and perhaps better theories.

⁵⁴ The critics of the hypothesis that the Biblical Ophir was located somewhere in India have certainly more to say than “the rather gratuitous assumption that Mediterranean sailors could not possibly have reached so distant a country as India in King Solomon’s time” (266).

⁵⁵ See M. L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*, Oxford 1971 (sometimes too bold hypotheses).

⁵⁶ Examples of such attempts are West’s discussion of metempsychosis (o. c. 60—62), Filliozat’s theory of medical influence (*La doctrine classique de la médecine indienne: ses*

possibility to another, to build hypothesis on hypothesis, until one has cooked up a mess which does not really merit a serious discussion. This is unfortunately the case with the recent book by Timothy J. Lomperis.⁵⁷ The ultimate result of his jumping is that Plato has probably studied the Upaniṣads himself or at least got most of his ideas from somebody familiar with them. With his vague and often seeming parallels the author gives a good example of the wrong use of the cumulative method. Of history he seems to have a very vague idea, of criticism perhaps no idea at all.⁵⁸ His conclusive argument is metempsychosis (what else), and as it is so often mentioned elsewhere, a comment is perhaps not superfluous. There really is some similarity between Greek and Indian doctrines of metempsychosis.⁵⁹ According to Lomperis we are underestimating the creative ability of the human mind if we suppose that similar ideas have developed more than once. But when religious ideas are equipped with moral values, is it so strange that similar ideas get similar values attached to them? The ethical doctrine of metempsychosis as it is known from Greece and India is, in my opinion, the most likely moral interpretation of the primitive metempsychosis. Therefore the Thracian origin for the Greek metempsychosis is not out of the question, and anyway it is more safe to turn to West than to Lomperis in search of influences.⁶⁰ In Lomperis' book there is a chain of hypotheses supporting each other instead of a chain of evidence supporting a hypothesis.

origins et se parallèles grecs, Paris 1949) and Pingree's studies in astronomy (summarized in his *Jyotiḥśāstra, A History of Indian Literature VI 4*, Wiesbaden 1981, 8ff.).

⁵⁷ T. J. Lomperis, *Hindu Influence on Greek Philosophy. The Odyssey of the Soul from the Upanishads to Plato*, Calcutta 1984, 87 p.

⁵⁸ Thus he thinks it very likely that there were Indian merchants coming to Athens in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. For the supposed Indian elements in Orphism he quotes Eduard Schuré, who was himself no critical scholar, quoting Francis Wilford who wrote in the beginning of the 19th century and was already then considered too credulous a scholar with a too lively fantasy. As to the parallels of Lomperis, I do not find it too striking that the idea of, say, Radhakrishnan or Gandhi of the Upaniṣads had some common points with Urwick's idea of Plato.

⁵⁹ See West l.c. and Sedlar 22ff.

⁶⁰ It must be kept in mind that the chronology of the Upaniṣads is still more complicated than indicated in standard textbooks.

Few seem to be aware of the fact that Graeco-Indian studies have lately been flourishing in faraway Argentina. Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti, both professors in Buenos Aires and well-known scholars of Buddhist philosophy have written⁶¹ a long article on the idea of India in the Augustan age.⁶² The point of view is Indian and sometimes one misses a little more classical perspective, yet they know very well all the source material and present it aptly. Two thirds deals with the earlier period giving the necessary background — all this was more or less known in the Augustan period. But the importance of the article lies in its concentrating on one clearly defined period, which should perhaps be done more often. They have collected all the passages referring to India from the Augustan poets — as far as I know for the first time.

A pupil of them, Rosalía C. Vofchuk has written a series of articles examining what classical authors have written of Indian religion. This is an often discussed subject, but only too rarely is the point of view of individual authors and their ideas taken into account (with the exception of Megasthenes). Until now she has dealt with Herodotus,⁶³ Ctesias,⁶⁴ Nearchus,⁶⁵ Onesicritus⁶⁶ and Megasthenes⁶⁷ and will probably keep on with her studies. The tone is often rather general — this is probably to be excused because she is writing in Spanish — and in her earlier articles she knows the secondary literature rather imperfectly, but in this as well as in other respects her later work presents a riper accomplishment. Emphasis is again on the Indian side and the meaning of the classical literary traditions is rarely noticed.

Much Graeco-Indian study is concentrated on Megasthenes⁶⁸ and

⁶¹ They have earlier published an article on Las inscripciones griegas del emperador indio Ashoka, AHAM 1977—1979, 251—264.

⁶² F. Tola y C. Dragonetti, Augusto y la India, AHAM 1982, 148—241.

⁶³ R. C. Vofchuk, Las costumbres y creencias filosofico-religiosas de la India según Herodoto de Halicarnaso, Argos 6 (1982) 85—97.

⁶⁴ Costumbres y cr. de los indios s. Ctesias de Cnido, Papeles de la India 10—11 (1981—82) 59—76.

⁶⁵ Las cost. y cr. fil.-rel. de la India s. las informaciones de Nearco de Creta, Bol. Asoc. Esp. Orient. 1982, 277—293.

⁶⁷ Megasthénés y la religion de la India (Oriente-Occidente 1), Buenos Aires 1985, 32 p.

⁶⁸ Among shorter studies on Megasthenes we may note Skurzak, Eos 67 (1979) 69—74,

now we shall turn to him. A long article by Andrea Zambrini⁶⁹ is extremely important from the methodological standpoint. His intention is to connect Megasthenes consistently with the classical tradition, especially with classical ethnography. Actually his two chapters are a kind of introduction to a larger study and we are eagerly awaiting its appearance.^{69a} The first chapter deals with earlier research on Megasthenes (71—102). Schwanbeck, Timmer, Breloer, Stein, T. S. Brown, O. Murray and their methods are critically analysed and their respective weaknesses clearly pointed out. The second chapter analyses the earlier ethnographical literature on India (and Egypt) in its relation to Megasthenes. He is sometimes hard in his criticism (perhaps too hard with Timmer and Brown), but the only real fault of his study lies elsewhere. As so many before him, he is too sure that the extant fragments give a reliable picture of the work. This is not true even in Ctesias⁷⁰ and Megasthenes, not to speak of the meagre remains of Scylax and Hecataeus of Miletus. Yet the author often follows the far-reaching hypotheses of Reese,⁷¹ which are sometimes open to criticism. Nevertheless the way he defines Megasthenes' place in ethnographical literature and his relation especially to Hecataeus of Abdera deserves our praise.

Megasthenes is often discussed among Indian historians. The standpoint is here purely Indian, they do not know Greek and very often have no idea of the problems and methods of classical philology. And when even the methods of Indian historical research are only vaguely

Puskás and Kádár, *ACIDebrec.* 16 (1980) 9—17, Sachse, *Eos* 70 (1982) 237—241, and Falk, *Acta Orient.* 43 (1982) 61—68.

⁶⁹ A. Zambrini, *Gli Indiká di Megasthene*, *ASNP* 3, 12, 1 (1982) 71—149. He has published another article on Megasthenes: *Idealizzazione di una terra: etnografia e propaganda negli Indiká di Megasthene*, *Forme di contatto . . .*, *Atti del convegno di Cortona* (Coll. Ec. Fr. Rome 67), Pisa-Roma 1983, 1105—1118.

^{69a} It is published in *ANSP* 3, 15, 3 (1985) 781—853 and deals with many aspects of the interpretation of Megasthenes. As I obtained a copy only after having finished the present survey I shall deal with it on another occasion.

⁷⁰ See my forthcoming paper *The Indica of Ctesias and its Critics*, *Demetrios Galanos Commemoration Vol.* Bareilly 1987.

⁷¹ See W. Reese, *Die griechischen Nachrichten über Indien bis zum Feldzuge Alexanders des Großen*, Leipzig 1914.

understood, the result may be something hardly worth mentioning. As an example we can take the book by Narain Singh Kalota,⁷² a poor compilation from McCrindle and a small number of other, mostly antiquated authorities put together in a curious English⁷³ without anything new to offer. Fortunately this is not always the case, and the Indian standpoint must have its place in spite of hard criticism. Although Megasthenes is clearly bound to his Greek background he really visited India and described much what he saw there. He is one of the few sources on ancient India which can be dated with any certainty. Yet he must be used with the utmost care and only together with independent Indian evidence. This is done with some success in a recent book by S. R. Goyal⁷⁴ although even he has some shortcomings. The first part (1—69) is purely indological dealing with Arthasāstra,⁷⁵ the second (70—134) is on Megasthenes. He concentrates mainly on two points, writing in India and the Indian gods. According to Megasthenes the Indians did not know writing — this has often been cited as an example of his errors — and now Goyal examines the possibility that he was right. As he points out there is no certain evidence of writing known in India before Aśoka (3rd century B.C.) and according to his hypothesis it was invented only during his reign. This is perhaps too bold, but anyway writing may have been adopted only during the early Maurya period. Goyal knows very little about anything published outside India but with his sound judgement he makes good use of what he has. Thus he does not know the severe criticism Dahlquist's book⁷⁶ has met in the west, but he knows very well how to show its shortcomings himself. His own theory, that the Indian Dionysus and Heracles are syncretic combinations of many Indian figures, is the same as the one proposed by Vofchuk and, in the case of Dionysus, by von

⁷² N. S. Kalota, *India as described by Megasthenes*, Delhi 1978, 128 p.

⁷³ The only really interesting feature in his book is to notice how much Hindi has influenced his syntax.

⁷⁴ S. R. Goyal, *Kauṭilya and Megasthenes*, Meerut 1985; XVIII, 149 p.

⁷⁵ He supports very aptly the late dating of the work (perhaps in the third century A.D., according to Goyal).

⁷⁶ A. Dahlquist, *Megasthenes and Indian Religion*, Uppsala 1962. See the reviews by de Casparis, *JRAS* 1963, 280—281, Budruss, *Gnomon* 37 (1965) 718—723, Hartman, *Temenos* 1 (1965) 55—64, and Kuiper, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 11, 2 (1969) 142—146.

Hinüber. Personally I disagree with them, because there is now some additional evidence for the traditional theory (Śiva and Kṛṣṇa), but this I shall discuss in another context.

It is gratifying to notice that the tyranny of McCrindle is probably coming to an end even in India. There is one Indian scholar who really knows classical Greek and can use his sources competently. Until now Uday Prakash Arora has published only one book not related to Graeco-Indian questions⁷⁷ and two articles dealing with Megasthenes and other authors,⁷⁸ but we are eagerly awaiting his further studies.

Last I would like to mention a book — in two volumes until now — not connected with India but, unexpectedly, with Tibet. Peter Lindegger⁷⁹ is very well aware that there is nothing definitely connected with Tibet among his sources, but as he writes, “es zeigt sich kein anderer Weg, den tibetischen Raum seiner vermeintlichen Geschichtslosigkeit zu entreißen.”⁸⁰ For this purpose he has collected everything (possibly) connected with the countries bordering on Tibet, translated the passages, analysed and compared them with other, Chinese and Indian as well as archaeological, evidence. There is little perhaps connected with Tibet, but still we must congratulate the author on a very interesting work. The first volume approaches Tibet from the northwest, the second from the southwest. The third and last will deal with Ptolemaic account. We hope it will soon be published and encourage the author to continue his work even further on the same lines.

⁷⁷ U. P. Arora, *Motifs in Indian Mythology, their Greek and other Parallels*, New Delhi 1981 (on comparative mythology).

⁷⁸ India vis-a-vis Egypt-Ethiopia in classical accounts, *Graeco-Arabica* 1 (1982) 131—140, and Greek image of the Indian society, *Μακεδονικά* 12 (1982) 470—482. In addition he has several publications in Hindi.

⁷⁹ P. Lindegger, *Griechische und römische Quellen zum peripheren Tibet. Teil I: Frühe Zeugnisse bis Herodot (Der fernere skythische Nordosten) (Opuscula Tibetana 10)*, Rikon/Zürich 1979, 238 p., and *Teil II: Ueberlieferungen von Herodot bis zu den Alexanderhistorikern (Die nördlichste Grenzregionen Indiens) (Op. Tib. 14)*, *ibid.* 1982, 192 p.

⁸⁰ In preface to part II, VIII.