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India and the Hellenistic World

by
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PREFACE

In 1989, when I published my doctoral dissertation, entitled *India in Early Greek Literature*, I had no clear idea as to how exactly I would go on with my Graeco-Indian studies. Soon enough, however, I decided to go on where I had stopped, chronologically, and discuss Graeco-Indian relations throughout their history. In this plan, *India in Early Greek Literature* is the first volume, and now I present volume Two, *India and the Hellenistic World*. In the first volume I have discussed the Greek accounts of India and the relations between India and Greece until Alexander's Indian campaign. Later authors, like Megasthenes, were mentioned only when their information was relevant for this purpose. This time my focus is on the Hellenistic period in the narrow sense of the word, from Alexander to the rise of Roman Imperial hegemony. I am presently working on volume Three, *India and the Roman West*, which I hope to be able to conclude within a few years. If all goes well a fourth volume on late Antiquity will conclude the series. A side issue of this is a separate volume dealing with the Yonas and Yavanas (both originally signifying Greeks) in Indian literature.

The main object of my plan is to collect, explain and discuss the relevant passages in Greek and Latin literature in their relation to Greek and Roman society and literary traditions as well as to the then existing information about India and other Asian countries, in some cases Africa too. My methods are philological, but I have also made an earnest attempt to find out and utilize the new evidence offered by such disciplines as archaeology, epigraphy, and numismatics. The importance of the new finds in Central Asia/Afghanistan/Pakistan, in South India/Sri Lanka, and to a lesser degree in Egypt is so great that it cannot be ignored even in a philological study. I can only beg the pardon of specialists in these fields – many of whom have actually been very helpful – if I have blundered somewhere because of my ignorance of some finer points of methodology.

Often I have had to give in to the sheer impossibility of keeping strict chronological boundaries. We are not always able to decide what belongs to the Hellenistic (in the narrow sense) or the Roman period, or both, and there is some necessary overlapping between the present volume and the future book about Rome. This can be seen especially in chapters IV and V, where all information culled from the literature of the Roman period has been included and only late authors like Cosmas are deemed too late. Reviewers are welcome to reproach me, but this seemed to be the only reasonable course of action. After all, much of what has been said e.g. by Pliny and Aelianus without any reference to the source, clearly hails from the Hellenistic period, but here too it is impossible to draw a clear boundary.

Of course, I could have modified my title in order to make it correspond more closely to all the chapters of the book, but then I would probably have ended up with something very complicated. And though some critics seem to appreciate it, I do not like to return to

the colophon-like titles of many lines in length that were used in the 16th century (when they actually represented the first phase in an evolution from mediaeval colophon to modern title). And even allowing myself these slips from strict chronology, I shall have enough interesting questions to discuss in the next book, *India and the Roman West*. To balance the two volumes I have also left the vexed question of possible influences or interaction in the sphere of philosophy and religion to the next volume. Those colleagues who would like to know my opinion as to whether Scepticism was influenced by Indian philosophy, or Pāśupata by Greek philosophy, will thus have to wait.

A large part of this work was written in Freiburg in Germany, where I had the opportunity to spend two periods, in 1991/92 and 1994/95 as an Alexander von Humboldt scholarship holder. My deepest thanks go therefore to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. They not only financed my stay in Germany, but were ready to help in many kinds of material problems connected with my work. The rest of the work has been financed by the Finnish Academy. From January 1994 I have been a full-time Research Fellow of the Academy and in this position I am also able to continue with the next volume.

Next my thanks are due to my generous host in Freiburg, Professor O. von Hinüber, who has, in addition to the free use of his Department and personal library, read a large part of a preliminary version of the manuscript and offered very valuable comments. Especially I have benefited from his profound knowledge of MIA.

Some parts of this book and related matters I have been able to discuss in guest lectures (in Cracow, Gothenburg, Groningen, Halle, Lyons, Naples, Rome, St. Petersburg, Stockholm), in sessions of the South Asian Archaeology Conferences (in Berlin, Helsinki and Cambridge) and in the Finnish Society of Classical Philology, and I have often received valuable comments.

A great number of colleagues have sent me their publications or given their advice. Especially I should like to mention here U. P. Arora (Bareilly), O. Bopparachchi (Paris), P. Callieri (Rome and Bologna), M. R. Cimino (Rome), P. Daffinà (Rome), A. Dihle (Heidelberg), H. Falk (Berlin), E. Garzilli (Perugia), T. Marszewski (Cracow), H. P. Ray (Delhi), J. Sachse (Wrocław), J.-F. Salles (Lyons), R. Salomon (Seattle), F. F. Schwarz (Graz), M. Taddei (Rome and Naples), and D. P. E. Weerakkody (Peradeniya). My thanks can no longer reach P. H. L. Eggermont (1914–1995).

Without the help of J. Vasil'kov (St.Petersburg) and A. Viginin (Moscow) several important Russian contributions would have been missing from my sources. Special mention must also be made of J.-F. Salles for offering a preprint of *De Romanis*' book, and of Stefan Faller (Freiburg), who helped greatly with sources concerning Sri Lanka. It was with hesitation that I wrote my chapter about Sri Lanka as I know that both Mr. Faller's dissertation and Dr. Weerakkody's monograph on the subject will be appearing shortly.

I must also thank my friends Bertil Tikkanen and Martti Leiwo for talking and listening. I have often obtained wider perspectives in the meetings of the Finnish Society of the History of Learning. Mr. Pertti Seppälä has kindly helped me to quote uniformly in the

Preface

Pinyin system the few Chinese names mentioned, and my brother, Krister Karttunen, has checked numerous botanical names for chapter V.1.

Michael Cox, Lic. Theol., has kindly checked and patiently corrected my English and in addition offered his advice about the few Hebrew words discussed by me.

Finally I must express my deepest thanks to my wife Tuula, and my two sons, Einar and Reino. While for me the work often involved so much fun and enjoyment, they could only see the hard side of it.

Klaus Karttunen

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