VII. INDIA AND THE GREEK WEST

While all this was happening in the East,[1] the West was gradually turning in another direction. Whilst the Near East had been, from the Greek viewpoint, in the middle of events during the first part of the Hellenistic period, the focus was now shifting to the West, with the rise of Roman power. In literature, easternmost Hellenism is rarely mentioned, even when it still existed, and the India of Alexander and his successors is more and more transferred to the realm of history and legend.

At the same time, however, new means of contact were developing on the practical level. Although the bulk of our evidence for Indo-Western commerce comes only from the Roman Imperial period, its beginnings are already to be seen in the Hellenistic Age. This will be more fully discussed in the next volume of our studies. Now I have concentrated on its origins, although occasional overstepping of our chronological limits has often been unavoidable.

A new feature here was the growing familiarity with the Ocean, the Erythraean Sea of the ancients. For Alexander and his men it was still completely unknown, but exploration was started as soon as the Ocean was reached at the mouths of the Indus and it continued during the time of the successors of Alexander. Real and imaginary naval ventures were described in literature, and the distant islands of the Eastern Ocean became a new scene for utopias and fabulous stories.

1. Unchanging Literary Image

In the Greek (and Latin) literature of the Hellenistic West, India is mostly mentioned solely in the context of Alexander. It was no canon (like that suggested by Dihle for the Roman period)[2] – yet! But India *was* distant, and in Greek eyes it only gained importance when Alexander went there. The Indian ventures of the Seleucids were too episodic to attract much notice. Megasthenes had been on the spot, and his work was read, of course, but on the whole very few literate men actually went to India after Alexander and the early Hellenistic period. The Indo-Greeks did, but from the Western perspective they were themselves distant and peripheral, and few cared about their achievements.

1 See the preceding chapter.

2 Dihle 1964a.

For most subsequent authors the contemporary historians of Alexander were therefore thought to be the only reliable authorities on India. "Beyond the Hyphasis nothing certain is known."[3] Megasthenes, too, was read and used, but with suspicion and therefore, happily for us, mostly provided with references. Eratosthenes was used because he alone gave a critical evaluation of earlier sources.

Soon the Parthians cut off the land-route, and the direct sea-route from Egypt to India was not yet opened (cf. VII.2). Still India seems to have had some role in literature. In addition to the historians of Alexander and the ambassadors discussed above (chapters II and III), our meagre remains of early Hellenistic literature contain some further references to India. Some have already been mentioned in the chapters on science (IV and V); now it is time for us to discuss the rest.

A missing source among the Hellenistic literature on India is the *Indica* of **Basilis**.[4] A *terminus ante quem* is given in the reference by Agatharchides, who died c. 130 B.C.[5] The work is clearly referred to as the *Indica*, but Basilis is said (in F 2) to have described and perhaps even visited Meroe, too. A related figure is thus Simonides the Younger (*FGrH* 669), who also went to Meroe, remained there for five years, and is mentioned (together with Basilis) by Pliny among the authorities consulted in the sixth book of his *Naturalis Historia*.[6] But nothing more is known either of Basilis or of Simonides. Perhaps Basilis was somehow connected with the Ptolemaic ventures in the South and with the beginnings of direct trade with India.[7] Simonides' book was probably an *Aethiopica*.

We have no more than two testimonia and two fragments from Basilis (and from Simonides only two testimonia). While Agatharchides (T 1) says that Basilis, together with Hecataeus,[8] described the East, Pliny seems to list him among his sources on Ethiopia (T 2), and mentions him again in his description of that country (F 2). The remaining fragment (F 1, by Athenaeus) is ascribed to the second book of a work called the *Indica*, but the subject, Pygmaei and the geranomachia motif,[9] can just as well be connected with Ethiopia as with India.

Still less do we know of **Eudoxus**, whom Pliny mentions among his authorities on the fabulous peoples of India beside Megasthenes, Ctesias, Tauron and Onesicritus.[10]

3 Arrianus, *Ind.* 6, 1; cf. Strabo 15, 1, 27 & 37.

4 *FGrH* 718.

5 Basilis T 1 = Agatharchides, *De Mari Rubro* 65 (Photius).

6 In addition to the central Asian and Indian account (6, 18, 46 – 26, 106), book 6, as part of the geographical section of Pliny's work, also includes Asia Minor, Arabia, and Ethiopia.

7 Wecker's suggestion (1916, 1294) that he, like Dionysius, was a Ptolemaic ambassador to the Maurya court is no more than a mere guess. It is possible, of course, but nothing really points to it.

8 Probably Hecataeus of Miletus was meant, as Hecataeus of Abdera wrote about Egypt. On the other hand, it seems somewhat curious that such an author as Hecataeus of Miletus, of the early fifth century B.C., would have been quoted by Agatharchides, writing well before the archaic mode of the Roman Imperial period, while Megasthenes and the historians of Alexander were ignored. Or did Photius in his excerpt (after all, we do not have the original of Agatharchides) ignore some further names, but include the archaic Hecataeus?

9 On this, see Karttunen 1989a, 128ff.

10 Pliny 1, 7. Eudoxus is also mentioned by Tzetzes (*Chil.* 7, 144, 646) in a list of authors describing fabulous peoples and other marvels.

Our only fragment mentions the fabulous Struthopodes or 'the sparrow-footed people' in South India (Pliny 7, 2, 24). Perhaps he was Eudoxus of Rhodes, mentioned by Marcianus (*Epit.* 2) among authors such as Androsthenes, Sosander (cf. II.4 on both), Hanno, Pytheas, and Scylax. No better is our knowledge of **Tauron**: only a reference among Pliny's sources, and an Indian tribe (Choromandae) mentioned in the same passage of Pliny (7, 2, 24).

There are many Hellenistic authors who only occasionally refer to India. **Duris** of Samos in his history (*FGrH* 76) described Alexander's campaigns and thus also the Indian part of them. Among his rather numerous fragments, however, there are only three that concern us here. One (F 47) refers to Prometheus and the Caucasus, here probably meaning the Hindukush,[11] another (F 27) to Dionysus and his legendary campaign in India. The third (F 48 from Pliny) might have been an attempt at providing a rational explanation of the fabulous races of India. A mongrel race is said to have been born from a union of Indians with wild animals. Such an explanation could well have been offered for instance for the dog-heads. On the other hand, Duris is said to have been much more interested in dramatic effect and in sensational matters than in rational explanations.

Phylarchus the historian[12] also belongs to the third century B.C. His work was an example of so-called "tragic history", even in this respect continuing the work of Duris, and perhaps his lengthy history is not one of to our greatest losses in Hellenistic literature. It probably contained little about India; the emphasis seems to have been on Greek history. Among his fragments we find an account of the supposed devotion of elephants to their human masters (F 36 from Athenaeus), related only indirectly to India. More important is the F 35, in two versions (from Apollonius' *Mirabilia*, and Athenaeus), which gives the aforementioned account (chapter VI.1) of a strong aphrodisiac root presented by Sandrocottus to Seleucus. An otherwise unknown piece of Hellenistic speculation is given in F 78 (Plutarch, *De Iside*). It is an attempt to derive Egyptian religion from India, claiming that Dionysus brought two bulls from India to Egypt, one called Apis and the other Osiris. In other sources Dionysus, the conqueror of India, is himself identified with Osiris.[13]

An understandably polemical reference, cited from the *Commentaries* of **Ptolemaeus VII** (Euergetes II; after 182–116 B.C.), preserved for us by Athenaeus (10, 438), states that Antiochus Epiphanes adopted "Indian revels and carouses" and therefore "spent large sums".[14] Since the days of Alexander Indians had had a place in Hellenistic festivities. Chares tells us that Indian conjurors participated in the programme of the great marriage celebrations at Susa, and that Calanus' death was celebrated by a drinking con-

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11 So Jacoby in his note *ad l.*

12 *FGrH* 81 with 5 testimonies and 85 fragments.

13 E.g. Diodorus 1, 19, 7f. and 4, 1.

14 Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 10, 52, 438 Πολυπότης δὲ ἦν καὶ Ἀντίοχος ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ κληθεὶς Ἐπιφανής, ὁ ὁμηρεύσας παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Εὐεργέτης ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ τῶν Ὑπομνημάτων κἀν τῷ πέμπτῳ φάσκων αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς Ἰνδικοὺς κώμους καὶ μέθας τραπέντα πολλὰ ἀναλίσκειν. Quoted from the Loeb text of Athenaeus. Jacoby in the *FGrH* (234 F 3) emends Ἰνδικοὺς to Ἰταλικοὺς.

test in Indian style.[15] In fragments of Megasthenes (F 32 in Strabo 15, 1, 56) and of the historians of Alexander Indian festivities and processions are often described.

Hellenistic paradoxographical works or collections of marvel stories naturally contained material from India, the land of marvels *par excellence*, but less than one would suppose. Material collected by **Callimachus** is preserved through the extant collection of Antigonus. There are only two Indian references, and both go back to Ctesias (F 407, 67 & 82 Pfeiffer). **Isigonus** of Nicaea (perhaps third or second century B.C.) is mentioned by Gellius (*N. A.* 9, 4) together with Ctesias and Onesicritus, and by Tzetzes (*Chil.* 7, 145) with Ctesias and Iambulus. Pliny (*N. H.* 7, 2 27) quotes from him the account of the Indian Cyrni, a people with an average life-span of 140 years.

In the second century B.C. the Stoic philosopher and grammarian **Crates** of Mallus mentioned another Indian example of long-lived people, the Gymnetes, who were supposed to live longer than a hundred years.[16]

Hegesander of Delphi wrote a collection of anecdotes (*Hypomnemata*), which contained, *inter alia*, the well-known account of correspondence between Antiochus and Bindusāra, who asked the Seleucid monarch to send him, among other presents, a sophist. His fragments come mostly from Athenaeus and Plutarch, and the latest datable events give a *terminus post quem* in the middle of the second century B.C. There is no more reason to derive his Indian fragment from the *Indica* of Daimachus than to suppose that Hegesander himself was an ambassador to Bindusāra.[17]

The only fragment known from the first-century rhetorician **Potamon** of Mytilene[18] states that Alexander named a city in India after his dog Peritas. A less reliable author ascribed the same anecdote to such an early author as Theopompus.[19] The passage is easy to understand as a rhetorical parallel to Bucephala, named after a horse. It has thus nothing to do with history (or with India) and the story is much more likely to have originated in the first than the fourth century B.C.

In the second half of the first century B.C. **Timagenes** of Alexandria wrote a little-known history of "kings", which has been quoted for Alexander's Indian campaign (F 3). The passage seems to be related to Cleitarchus. Another short fragment mentions "that brass rained from the sky in brazen drops" in India.[20] One is bound to ask how McCrindle could know that Timagenes "wrote an *excellent* history of Alexander and his successors."[21] Rather his book may have been an universal history in rhetoric style.

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15 Chares F 4 (from Athenaeus) on the wedding and F 19ab (from Athenaeus and Plutarch) on the drinking contest.

16 In Pliny 7, 2, 28. In another passage of Pliny (7, 2, 31) Crates is quoted for Ethiopian Trogodytae who are swifter than horses.

17 The fragment is found in Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 14, 652f–653a. It has been ascribed to Daimachus by Schwarz 1969, but see chapter III.5 above. Hegesander as an ambassador in Scharfe 1971, 218.

18 *FGrH* 147 F 1 in Plutarch, *Al.* 61.

19 *FGrH* 115 F 340 in Pollux, *Onomasticon* 5, 42.

20 *FGrH* 88, F 12 in Strabo 15, 1, 57.

21 McCrindle 1901, 63, note 3, Italics mine. Our meagre evidence on Timagenes has been discussed by Reuss 1902.

Even in fragments the scientific works of King **Juba** of Mauretania (c. 50 B.C. – 23 A.D.) contain several references to India (mostly preserved by Pliny), although he seems to have written more about his own Africa.[22] In some cases he is the intermediate source for earlier accounts, for instance the summary of Onesicritus' account of the coastal voyage in Pliny seems to come from Juba.

Alexander Polyhistor (in the middle of the first century B.C.) may even have written a monograph (an *Indica*), but among his many fragments[23] there are only a few dealing with India. He is quoted by Clement of Alexandria on Brahmans (F 18, see also F 94) and by Stephanus of Byzantium on Gedrosia (F 118) and Topazos island (F 136). He is perhaps the same Alexander whom Tzetzes mentions in his list of authorities about (often Indian) marvels (F 141).

The great history as well as the other works by **Nicolaus Damascenus** (second half of the first century B.C.) are lost, but at least there are a great number of fragments,[24] and several of them refer to India. We see that he had used earlier sources (Herodotus in F 110 on the Padaeans, Ctesias in F 1 on Semiramis, and Megasthenes in F 103 on loans and perhaps in F 112 on the Prausioi),[25] but the Indian embassy to Augustus, personally seen by Nicolaus, is also mentioned (F 100 in Strabo 15, 1, 73). A majority of his fragments come from the anthology of Stobaeus.

Very little is known of Hellenistic literature in the Farther (i.e. farther than Seleucid and Roman) East (cf. VI.3 above), certainly much less than was suggested by Tarn. Our greatest loss is probably the first-century B.C. historian **Apollodorus** of Artemita with his Parthian history (*FGrH* 779), known and to some extent used by Strabo. It was impossible to write a Parthian history without taking the Bactrian Greeks into account, but unfortunately only one of our few fragments deals with them.[26] At least it shows that Apollodorus had also dealt with their Indian campaigns. At the end of the first century B.C. **Isidorus** of Charax wrote an itinerary from the Euphrates to Arachosia called 'Parthian stations' (Σταθμοί Παρθικοί).[27]

In this connection we may also mention a papyrus fragment[28] of a historical work dealing with Alexander's campaign against the autonomous Indians. The fragment corresponds to Arrianus, *Anabasis* 5, 21, 4.

Our meagre knowledge is also due to the fact that the historical literature of the Hellenistic period has as good as disappeared, and only a few fragments remain – and they are rarely really representative. The historians of the Imperial period were more interested in their own time, in the Roman past, and occasionally in Alexander. The most important excep-

22 *FGrH* 275 with 100 fragments considered certain.

23 *FGrH* 273 with 142 certain fragments.

24 *FGrH* 90 with more than 100 fragments, some of them quite long.

25 See also F 106 on a people called the Aritonoi, who kill nothing, and F 124 on satī.

26 F 7ab (both from Strabo).

27 *FGrH* 781 and Schoff 1914 (with English translation and a commentary).

28 *Pap. Cairo* 49635 (or 49653), published by C. C. Edgar in the *Ann. Serv. Ant. Eg.* 26, 1926, 208f. (unavailable to me). See Pearson 1960, 258.

tion, too, the *History of Successors* by Arrianus is lost.[29] We shall now undertake a rapid survey of such histories (both Hellenistic and later) that are extant for the period after Alexander.

We have seen that **Polybius** (2nd century B.C.) always (and only) mentioned India when there was history worth mentioning – from the Greek viewpoint, of course, and that was not very often. This excluded everything where the Greeks themselves were not involved. Notwithstanding the honour in which the naked ascetics were sometimes held, Indians were still considered barbarians, just some of the many, and even such a major event as Aśoka's war in Kaliṅga – so important to us – was only one of many barbarian struggles and so completely devoid of interest and never mentioned at all. Here, again, we must bear in mind the fact that, as important as Aśoka with his edicts seems to us, extant classical literature wholly ignores his existence.

Only a minor part (approx. one third) of Polybius' history is extant. The work comprises the history of the period 220–168 B.C., and concentrates on the rise of Roman power, witnessed by Polybius himself. Here India comes into question only in connection with the history of Bactria, and this is related very briefly. Even Bactria was relevant only in its relation to Parthia and thus to the Seleucids. Only the fact that the latter had interests both in the West and in the East gives us these valuable glimpses of Bactrian and Indo-Greek history.

Among our other extant sources the situation is more or less the same as with Polybius. **Diodorus** of Sicily in the first century B.C., too, mentioned India rather often in his universal history – when his sources did so. In the extant part of his history this was mainly in connection with Alexander (book 17). Book 2, 35–42 forms a short excursus on India, partly derived from Megasthenes, and other parts of his work contain a number of scattered references to India. He is, unfortunately, our main source on early Hellenistic history, including eastern affairs. From him we also have the account of the legendary Indian campaign of Semiramis (at least partly from Ctesias, cf. Daffinà 1990) and of the travels of Iambulus.

Strabo of Amaseia (64/63 B.C. – after 23 A.D.) pointed out himself (15, 1, 2ff.) that India's importance lay in Alexander's history, although Apollodorus of Artemita was also included among his sources. It is revealing, however, that in book 11 on Bactria he used Apollodorus as an important and entirely reliable source, but in book 15 on India he even quotes the very same passage as utterly suspicious and unreliable. In his lost historical work he probably told the story as culled from Alexander's historians, and perhaps added something on the Indo-Greeks from Apollodorus.[30] Nevertheless, his long chapter on India (15, 1) is the best extant classical account of India, surpassing even Arrianus' *Indica*. On a more theoretical level he discussed the geographical location of India in book 2, comparing the theories of the earlier Hellenistic geographers Eratosthenes and Hipparchus.

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29 *FGrH* 156. There is a short epitome in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius ("codex" 92). Lost also is the abridgement of Arrianus' work by Dexippus (*FGrH* 100).

30 On Strabo's relation to Apollodorus (with F 7ab in 11, 11, 1 & 15, 1, 3) see Strabo 11, 9, 3 (*FGrH* 91 F 1) and Dihle 1978, 125.

For **Arrianus** (second century A.D.) Alexander was the main theme and India was included only for that reason. The *Indica* (or the first part of it) is a typical example of an ethnographic excursus added to a history, here as a separate appendix. In his case it seems rather fitting that the India described is what it was five centuries earlier, compiled from the histories of Alexander and Megasthenes.[31] In the *Anabasis* he had mainly followed Ptolemaeus and Aristobulus, in the *Indica* his main authorities were Megasthenes and Nearchus. His purpose in the latter work was to provide a background to Alexander's Indian campaign and to describe the naval voyage of Nearchus. For him it was thus legitimate to draw from old sources. It was much worse when a description of Alexander's India was given, where a contemporary picture would have been more in place (e.g. in a major part of Pliny's account). It is a pity that Arrianus' *History of Successors* is lost, with the exception of the short summary by Photius.

Latin literature mostly derived its knowledge from Hellenistic sources, although Pliny also added some more recent information (Hippalus winds and the Taprobanian embassy, but see VII.2 below). Juba was apparently important as a literary middleman. The lost monograph on India by the Stoic philosopher **Seneca** is practically unknown,[32] but must have influenced Pliny. Also in the first century A.D. **Pomponius Mela** gave an account of India in his geography (3, 7), and **Curtius** Rufus added an excursion on India in his *History of Alexander* (8, 9, 1–36). These as well as the Greek geographical poem of **Dionysius Periegetes** will be dealt with in more detail in the next volume of my studies.

The most important Latin source on India is of course Pliny or C. **Plinius** Secundus (23/24–79 A.D.), whose great encyclopaedic work *Naturalis Historia* contains a geographical account of India in book 6, 46–106, now to be consulted from the edition with commentary by André and Filliozat (1980).[33] But there is much more about India in other parts of his great work. Thus Book 7 contains an account of fabulous peoples of India (7, 2, 21–32) and book 12 an account of Indian plants (12, 10, 21 – 19, 36). A number of Indian plants are mentioned elsewhere in the same book, and the zoological and mineralogical books contain a great number of scattered references to India. Much of this has already been discussed in chapter V above, and in my next volume I shall attempt a general evaluation of this material.

Justinus (perhaps in the third century A.D.), too, was concerned with India only in connection with Alexander and the Bactrian Greeks, and even the latter were hardly considered worth mentioning. Certainly there was more in **Pompeius Trogus**, who wrote the 44 books of his *Historiae Philippicae* in the first century B.C. or A.D., but his work is lost to us, and Justinus is, unfortunately, not too reliable as a source for **Pompeius Trogus**, whom he epitomized rather carelessly, emphasizing the anecdotal and moral aspects at the expense of exact history. He was also, as is natural, more interested in Roman than in Eastern history. Sometimes the preserved summaries of Trogus' books give some idea of what we have missed.

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31 On occasional later material see Schwarz 1975.

32 *FGrH* 644 with two fragments only.

33 See also Schwarz 1995.

2. Growing Commerce

The origins of commerce between India and the Western world go back to the dawn of history. In its beginnings it was commerce between India and the ancient Near East. These early relations have been discussed in my earlier book[34] and, as was shown there, much of the supposed evidence must be dismissed. After Alexander, the situation began to change, although the majority of the evidence belongs to the Roman Imperial period, when direct trade between India and the Roman West flourished.

The direct sailing route from Ptolemaic (and later Roman) Egypt to India was important, but at the same time it is the best attested in our sources. Strabo, the *Periplus*, Ptolemy, Egyptian Papyri, Tamil inscriptions in Egypt, Roman coins and other artefacts in South India and beyond, the testimony of Tamil sources etc. – all are somehow connected with it. But in fact direct trade using this route came on the scene rather late, and has often been overemphasized. While it flourished, it was probably the most important route for Indian products coming to the West and *vice versa*, but there were other routes, too, and Asian trade contained much besides.[35]

An ancient trade route followed the coastline from Indian harbours to the Persian Gulf with ancient island entrepôts of the southern Gulf coast, Dilmun/Tylus or modern Bahrain and Failaka on the Kuwait coast,[36] with Babylon and Seleucia in Mesopotamia, and later also with Mesene/Characene at the northern end of the Gulf and Palmyra in Syria, though these two were probably important only in the Roman Imperial period). The route was certainly very ancient; it was used already in Sumerian times, and again in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods.[37] It is true that for Alexander's navy the

34 Karttunen 1989a, 11ff. (early Mesopotamian), 15ff. (early Red Sea), 19ff. (cinnamon and cassia), 22ff. (late Mesopotamian), 48ff. (the Achaemenid period).

35 Much has been written about ancient international trade in the Indian Ocean. Among the most important general contributions are Hvostov 1907 (with Rostovzev 1908, again 1932), Charlesworth 1924 & 1951, Warmington 1928 (1974), Kortenbeutel 1931, Tarn 1951, 361ff., Wheeler 1954, more recently Miller 1969, Raschke 1978, Dihle 1978, Sidebotham 1986, Salles 1988 & 1994, and De Romanis *forthcoming*. Especially in early studies the viewpoint was often one-sidedly Western, and such a classic as Warmington 1928 based his discussion mostly on classical evidence. While my present purpose – the role of international trade in Indo-Hellenistic relations and in Western awareness of India – forces me more or less to take the same one-sided viewpoint, it is important here to make a particular reference to such important studies as Hourani 1963 considering the question from the Arabian side and e.g. Singh 1988 and Begley 1986 & 1994 for the Indian side. For the numismatic evidence the most recent general contribution is Turner 1990, for the archaeology e.g. Begley & De Puma 1991 and Nagaswamy 1995 (with Karttunen 1995b) can be consulted.

36 On Bahrain see Bowersock 1986, who also discusses the question of Phoenician origins in the Gulf region (Strabo), which has caused so much speculation and confusion in scholarly literature. For a more general discussion of the history and archaeology of the Arabian side of the Gulf see Potts 1990 (with Salles 1992), further Salles 1993 & 1994a.

37 Karttunen 1989a, 11ff., Salles 1989 & 1990, and Potts 1990.

Gedrosian-Carmanian coast and the Persian Gulf was an adventure, but nevertheless, competent pilots were found for it (they even knew the languages of peoples living on the coast) and other difficulties were not too great.

The ancient port of Tylus (Bahrain) was flourishing even then (Androsthenes with Theophrastus), and it has been suggested that the later flowering of Hellenistic Seleucia on the Tigris was at least partly due to the trade of the Gulf.[38] Pearson (1960, 146f.) is probably too critical in supposing that Nearchus' venture was not repeated, and that there was hardly any Hellenistic naval activity east of Carmania. It has been suggested that the silence of our (Greek and Latin) sources about this route – it is hardly mentioned even in such a well-informed text as the *Periplus* – depended on the fact that trade here to a much greater extent remained in Arabian and Indian hands than in the Red Sea.[39] Another reason may be that in the Hellenistic period this trade-route led to the lands of the Seleucids, about whom there is much less detailed information than about the Ptolemies, and in the Roman period in Parthian territory, while Egypt became and remained Roman. From literature we learn that the Gulf route was used later, too. According to Dio, Trajan saw a vessel setting sail to India at the mouth of the Tigris and expressed his wish to follow it and repeat Alexander's achievements.[40]

In addition to the Gulf, an ancient trade connection seems to have existed between India and South Arabia. Though there is hardly any direct evidence for the early period, much points to the importance of South Arabians (Sabaeans and Minaeans) and to their role as middlemen. Other important participants in this trade in Arabia were the Nabataeans in the west and the Gerrhaeans by the Gulf. The origins of the South Arabian trade are uncertain, but cassia and cinnamon came to the Greek West already in the times of Sappho and Herodotus and it was often supposed that they actually grew in South Arabia.[41] Nearchus was able to find pilots for his Indo-Iranian coastal voyage and as Onesicritus suggested an exploration of the Arabian eastern coast, perhaps there were pilots for that, too. Though the evidence is meagre, it seems that Indian and Arabian ships had already been familiar with the coasts of the Arabian Sea for centuries by the time the Greeks first appeared.

In the Ptolemaic period the South Arabian route certainly flourished. At the time (c. 120 B.C.) of the first Ptolemaic direct sailing to India under Eudoxus of Cyzicus, this route between India and South Arabia was already certainly known both to Indians and Arabians.[42] An additional testimony is probably found in a fragment of Agatharchides preserved in two versions by Diodorus and Photius.[43] Agatharchides, who was a contemporary of Eudoxus and well informed about Ptolemaic ventures in the Red Sea, told

38 Tarn 1951, 60ff. (on Seleuceia).

39 Cf. Salles 1996,261f., who also quotes some examples of a Greek presence in the Gulf area.

40 Dio Cassius 67, 28; cf. Salles 1994b, 166ff.

41 Karttunen 1989a, 19ff. and V.1 above. Note, however, that De Romanis (*forthcoming*) has reopened the old argument, according to which cassia and cinnamon were originally African products and only much later identified with the Asian spices now known by these names.

42 See Poseidonius' account (F 28) of Eudoxus' venture and of his Indian pilot in Strabo.

43 F 105ab in Photius, *Bibl.* 250, 105, 459b and Diodorus 3, 47, 8f.

that the islands of the Arabian Sea (perhaps Soqotra) were visited by sailors "from every part and especially from Potana, the city, which Alexander founded on the Indus river, when he wished to have a naval station on the shore of the Ocean." As Potana is apparently the same as Patala in the Indus delta, this probably refers to Indian ships. Evidence for international trade carried in Indian vessels is found e.g. in the Jātakas.[44]

A question difficult to answer is whether this trade was carried on by coasting or by direct sailing? Pliny's account of the development of sailing (see below) does not help us here as he is concerned only with Greek ships. For a long time it has been taken for granted that long before the Greeks the Indians and Arabians knew how to use the monsoon for sailing.[45] I am inclined to accept this view, too, but it is perhaps important to point out that it remains a hypothesis. For early Arabian shipping there is hardly any evidence at all,[46] and the Indian evidence is rather against monsoon sailing on the open sea.

Indian wares first came to Egypt in South Arabian ships or in caravans *via* the Nabataeans. The next step was the opening of the Red Sea route from Egypt to India. The ancient Egyptians already knew the route to the southern end of the Red Sea, but certainly had no idea of India.[47] In Achaemenid times Indian wares such as cassia and cinnamon came from South Arabia, and in early Ptolemaic Egypt we again meet some Indian imports. The famous Bacchic procession or *Pompa Bacchica* of Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus included a cart representing the return of Dionysus from India, with elephants, parrots, peacocks, Indian dogs and oxen, and some real Indians. Columns surrounding a dining-salon were made of Indian marble.[48] The very existence of Dionysius the ambassador, about whom we know next to nothing, shows that even in the third century B.C. Ptolemaic Egypt had some interest in India. It was preceded by an exploration of the Red Sea, launched by Alexander himself and resolutely carried on by the Ptolemies.[49] An additional interest lay in the possibility of obtaining war elephants in Ethiopia (see V.3 above), which also turned out a success.

The direct sea route to India was apparently opened in order to continue trade without Arabian middlemen. There seem to have been several attempts at this. Most famous is the story of the shipwrecked Indian who guided Eudoxus of Cyzicus to India c. 120 B.C.[50] Though there certainly was interest enough in Egypt for opening direct trade relations with India, so that our shipwrecked Indian was strictly speaking not necessary

44 A summary e.g. in Singh 1961.

45 So already Vincent at the end of the 18th century, quoted approvingly by McCrindle 1879, 135. Then e.g. Böker 1962, 406, Thorley 1969, 212, Sidebotham 1986, 8, and Ray 1986, 2f.

46 The interesting remains found in Oman and studied by Cleuziou and Tosi 1994 belong to the third millennium B.C. and on their voyages to Indus and Sumer these ships were probably coasting.

47 Karttunen 1989a, 15 and 19ff.

48 The procession was described by Callixenus of Rhodes, quoted by Athenaeus 5, 197–203. There are a great number of studies extending from Kamp 1864 to Coarelli 1990.

49 The history of Ptolemaic activities on the Red Sea and beyond as told by Agatharchides and others is summarized in Sidebotham 1986, 2ff., more fully in De Romanis *forthcoming*. On explorations beyond Bab el-Mandeb in the 2nd century B.C. see also Dihle 1978, 558ff.

50 Poseidonios F 28 in Strabo 2, 3, 4. See e.g. Rawlinson 1926, 96ff. and Thiel 1939.

for this development, I see no reason to doubt his existence (with Dihle 1978). True, there is a certain similarity between his story and that of the libertus of Annius Plocamus in the first century A.D., but shipwrecked seamen floating to foreign lands there have always been, as well as well-documented cases in later history.[51]

Spices and precious stones Eudoxus brought back from his two voyages, and these two were among the most important imports from India during subsequent centuries. The possible role of the Indo-Greeks in the development of this direct trade has often been suggested, but remains a hypothesis.[52]

Here we come to the problem of Hippalus. In Pliny (6, 26, 100) Hippalus is the name of the wind (and the reading is uncertain), but the *Periplus* (57) expressly names Hippalus (Ἵππαλος) as a sailor (κυβερνήτης), and so he has been viewed by the majority of scholars. For some he was the steersman of Eudoxus,[53] for others a captain of the early Roman period, whose invention was the immediate reason for the new flourishing of international trade.[54] But it is also possible that he was not a sea captain at all, but just a name for the wind erroneously personified.[55] The wind itself was already noted during Alexander's campaign on the Sind coast,[56] but its importance for sailing was really understood only much later, at least by the Greeks.

Strabo's testimony is important for the history of the direct trade of the Hellenistic and Augustan period.[57] It had been rather restricted during Ptolemaic times (but nevertheless existed), and greatly enlarged in volume during Augustus' time, when no less than 120 vessels annually left Myos Hormos for India. The reason for this growth is not necessarily nautical. The battle of Actium and the subsequent occupation of Egypt by Augustus ended a long period of continuous turmoil and warfare in the Hellenistic East. An increase in trade due to peaceful conditions, a flourishing economy, and an increased demand for exotic luxury imports are sufficient explanation for this development. Strabo himself connects it with the Arabian expedition of his friend Aelius Gallus, but the increased Roman activity on the Red Sea in the Augustan period was a consequence of and not a reason for the increased trade.[58] Even the Ptolemies had had a special officer, the Epistrategus ἐπὶ τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς καὶ Ἰνδικῆς θαλάσσης, known from epigraphic evidence.

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51 During the 18th century shipwrecked Japanese sailors and fishermen were often found on the shores of Kamchatka. They were not sent back, but used as teachers in a Japanese language-school founded by Peter the Great in St. Petersburg and later moved to Irkutsk.

52 Dihle 1974 & 1978, 367ff. (and before him Tarn 1951, 367ff.)

53 E.g. Thiel 1939, 206f. and Böker 1962, 406.

54 E.g. Charlesworth 1924, 60, Rawlinson 1926, 109ff., Warmington 1928 (1974), 45ff., Miller 1969, 194, Thorley 1969, 212, Schwarz 1974, 166, and Singh 1988, 22f.

55 André & Filliozat 1980, 134, and Eggermont 1988. Tarn 1951, 369 mentions this as a possibility.

56 Arrianus, *Anab.* 6, 21, 1; *Ind.* 6, 7 & 21, 1. Cf. Tarn 1951, 368.

57 Strabo 2, 5, 12 (on Gallus' expedition and Indian trade) & 14 (sailors' information on Taprobane); 15, 1, 4 (on unlearned merchants of his own time); 15, 2, 13 (what those who now sail to India tell about whales); 16, 4, 24 (on various routes for wares brought by ship from India); 17, 1, 13 (on the great value of Indian trade); and 17, 1, 45 (Coptus as emporium).

58 On this Roman activity see e.g. Sidebotham 1986.

A curious piece of evidence for connections during late Ptolemaic times is found in the claim that after the battle of Actium Cleopatra planned to take refuge in India.[59]

The real flourishing of Indian trade seems to have come only in the first century A.D., and is thus beyond the scope of the present work. Nevertheless, a short survey of the situation in the first century A.D. is given here. Often it is impossible to define and understand it without taking into account later developments.

It is not necessary here to discuss in detail archaeological evidence at the western end of this trade. The routes from Red Sea ports to the Nile, described by Strabo and others, have been confirmed by actual finds. Excavations of the port of Leucos Limen at Quseir el-Qaddim have yielded, among other things, some Indian inscriptions.[60]

In the Roman Imperial period, a considerable part of the evidence for this trade comes from the field of numismatics, from numerous finds of Roman coins in India. However, for the early commerce of the Hellenistic period, this evidence tends to give a negative result. In South India, very few Roman coins of the Republican period are found, and even the few reported ones are always found in the context of later (early Imperial) issues.[61] This seems to suggest that there was no direct commerce with South India before Augustus or that at least its extent must have been meagre. Why else would early issues have been unacceptable to Indians, who were apparently very fond of the coins of Augustus and Tiberius, and accepted occasional Republican issues among them? But what about Hellenistic coins? While so much is written about Roman coins in India, we rarely hear about them. They might be rare, but certainly they are not non-existent. According to Tchernia, Ptolemaic bronzes are not uncommon in India and the earliest-known Hellenistic coin is a 3rd-century B.C. silver of Cyzicus.[62] Roman coinage in India apparently was used as bullion,[63] and in this respect Hellenistic coins would probably have been acceptable as well, if they were available in any considerable number.

All the thousands of Roman Imperial coins come from South Indian hoards, and this makes their interpretation rather complicated.[64] In an archaeological context Roman coins are rare. From Arikamedu not a single find has been reported, and long excavations at Taxila brought to light only one denarius of Tiberius.[65] In North India there are no

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59 Plutarch, *Antonius* 81. Cf. Schmitthenner 1979, 103f., and Ramaswami 1991.

60 On the excavations, see Whitcomb & Johnson 1980 and Sidebotham 1991, on inscriptions, Salomon 1991 & 1993.

61 Turner 1990, 6f. (note) and 18; Gupta 1969, 170.

62 Tchernia in 1993, 533, referring to Peter Berghaus' article, inaccessible to me, in A. K. Jha (ed.), *Coinage, Trade and Economy, 3rd Int. Colloquium.* Nashik 1991. See also Nayar 1978 for a clay imitation (bulla) of a Ptolemaic stater found in South India.

63 Turner 1990, 19.

64 An interesting case seems to be the new Laccadive find mentioned by Turner (1990, 42), and probably containing an exceptionally great number of Roman Republican issues, but I have been unable to find more details about it.

65 Turner 1990, 12f. At Chandravalli layer 5 has yielded a denarius of Tiberius together with a coin of Yajña Sātakarṇi (Ray 1986, 48f.). The excavations at Karur in Tamilnadu have uncovered one Roman silver coin and one square Cera copper in a stratigraphic context. The Roman coin is unfortunately badly corroded and unidentified. See Nagaswami 1995, 64.

hoards, and therefore also the number of Roman coin-finds is meagre (mainly consisting of Stūpa deposits).

In North India, even Roman Imperial issues are rare. This problem has puzzled scholars for a long time. It was not because of an absence of trade. The *Periplus* testifies to the importance of Barygaza, Barbaricon, and other northern marts. Several hypotheses have been suggested. Perhaps Western coins were, for some reason, not accepted. Perhaps most of them were melted for local issues. There are certainly no hoards of imported coins as in the South, and even there Western coins are rarely found in an archaeological context. But even before the Kushan period (during which southern trade was flourishing and well attested by coin finds, too), for which such an explanation has been offered, there was a stable and well-regulated money economy in the North and especially in the Northwest. In the *Periplus* we read of Indo-Greek issues being still current in Barygaza (Gujarat), after more than a century. At least one major hoard of Indo-Greek coins has been reported in Gujarat, thus confirming the account of the *Periplus*.[66]

In this connection, we must also note the implications of geography for the history of trade. If the first commercial ventures from Egypt to India were made coasting, or at least using the shortest route across the open sea (cf. the Hippalic stages in Pliny), the ships would have landed in the North, in Sind (with Barbaricon) or in Gujarat (with Barygaza).[67] In that case it is rather unlikely that they would have further proceeded all the long way to South Indian ports. South Indian products were certainly available in the North, too, and probably it took some time to realize that they would be much cheaper in their country of origin. The middlemen were certainly not eager to reveal that this was the case.

This leads us to the problem of the role of the Indian west coast in international trade. Unfortunately, no sea-port belonging more or less to our period has been properly excavated here. Literary sources give us the impression that such excavations could turn out to be very interesting. Thus, for instance, the *Periplus* and Pāli sources make the importance of Sopara very clear.[68] Thus far it is poorly attested by material finds. However, some antiquities connected with Western trade have been recorded from inland sites.[69] Several Yavanas (and a few Yonas) are mentioned in Buddhist cave inscriptions of Western India, but their identity is still unclear.[70] From literary sources we know of several further marts such as Paithana, Tagara, Limyrike, and Calliena.[71]

When we go further to the south, according to the *Periplus*, we arrive at the great port of Muziris in Kerala, also known from Tamil classics as Mucir_i. This place, too, is still unexcavated, the exact location being still undiscovered, but from Kottayam in its

66 See Deyell 1984 and VI.3 above.

67 On Barygaza, see the Periplus 43–49; Tarn 1951, 147ff. & 320f., Ray 1986, 17f. & 57ff., and Gokhale 1987.

68 See Charpentier 1927, 111ff., and Ray 1986, 17f. & 59f.

69 Mentioned e.g. by Margabandhu 1965 and in several articles of Begley & De Puma 1991. For the difficulty of excavations see Begley, *ibid.*, 7.

70 Cf. VI.5 above.

71 See the *Periplus* 51f., for Indian literary and archaeological evidence see Ray 1986, 60ff., and Singh 1988, 30ff.

supposed neighbourhood comes a great hoard of Roman gold coins – perhaps even deposited by a Roman merchant (as supposed by Turner)?[72] A recently published Greek papyrus from Egypt refers to a transaction made at Muziris, to be paid in Egypt.[73]

A fascinating question is posed by the famous Roman map known as the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. Was there really a *templum Augusti* in Kerala as it claims? It has been suggested on the one hand that it could have been built in Muziris by Western merchants, who resided there either permanently or at least when waiting for the season of the return voyage, as a kind of meeting-place and cultural centre (like the gymnasium in a Greek city, such as Ai Khanum). It has been even claimed that the Roman Imperial cult might have had some support among the local population, but such a claim seems completely unwarranted. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that the whole Augustan temple is merely the result of a corrupt reading of some local name.[74] Perhaps the temple really belonged to Agastya, the famous saint of South India, whose name could easily be misinterpreted as Augustus.[75]

We may here note the importance of the concentration of coin hoards. A concentration of first-century A.D. hoards is found in the area around the Palghat Gap; only later did there come another in Andhra Pradesh. The numismatic evidence thus points strongly to the conclusion that in the first century A.D. direct trade normally still did not go beyond the southern tip of India. However, confirming that only rarely did Western ships reach the Ganges, Strabo[76] also confirms that even then it was not entirely unheard of.

To some extent this is also borne out by the *Periplus*, which gives many fewer details for the east coast than for the west coast of India. From coin-finds we can further see that to some extent Western imports could reach Tamilnadu through land-trade using the Palghat gap, which has always held a key position in local trade and traffic because of its location as the only feasible way of communication between the Nilgiri and Annamalai Mountains, separating Kerala and Tamilnadu, and also because of the economic importance of the neighbourhood, with its important beryl mines.[77]

All this is quite clear, but then we must somehow explain the problem of Arikamedu. How is it possible that layers clearly corresponding to the first century A.D. (with inscribed amphorae and other datable finds) in a sea-port on the eastern coast of Tamilnadu contain Western ceramics?[78] The rich finds of Karur, the Cera inland capital east of the

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72 Turner 1990, 8f. For Muziris see e.g. Schoff 1912, 205ff., Margabandhu 1983, 189f., and Stern 1991, 116.

73 Harrauer & Sijpestein 1985, Casson 1986 & 1990.

74 So Herrmann 1938, 50; a real temple of Augustus still accepted in Stern 1991, 116.

75 Jouveau-Dubreuil in the *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* 19, 1929 (unavailable to me), approvingly quoted by Ray 1995, 80.

76 Strabo 15, 1, 4: οἱ νῦν δὲ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου πλέοντες ἐμπορικοὶ... μέχρι τῆς Ἰνδικῆς σπάνιοι μὲν καὶ περιπεπλεύκασι μέχρι τοῦ Γάγγου. For the development of international trade on the eastern coast see also Ray 1993c and 1995, 84f.

77 See V.6 above and Gupta 1969, 172.

78 It must be noted, however, that the amount here as well as at other sites in India is not as remarkable as has been supposed. According to recent studies, a Western origin can be accepted only with Roman amphorae and terra sigillata (so-called Arretine ware), while the Indian Red Polished Ware

Palghat Gap underlines the importance of the land trade.[79] Here it must also be noted that a late date for direct commerce between the east coast and the Hellenistic (Roman) West also has consequences for the dating problem of such Tamil classics as mention the *Yavanar* arriving at and residing in ports of the east coast.[80]

Without going deeper into the numismatic evidence, for which I lack the necessary competence, I quote the conclusions Paula Turner draws from this evidence.[81] According to her analysis of hoards, she distinguishes between three different (active) phases in trade. First comes the early trade in denarii, which apparently gained a major thrust in the latter part of Augustus' reign,[82] but perhaps began earlier. This phase, however, did not last long: Roman silver became unacceptable even before the Neronian reform (debasement). Instead, gold was now used, and a number of hoards contain predominantly Tiberian and Claudian aurei. Silver and gold do not come from the same hoards, and it is further pointed out that while denarii were probably hoarded quickly, in unworn condition, the aurei circulated for a long time and were hoarded when already worn.[83] The rarity of Flavian coins[84] suggests a quieter phase in trade (or at least the Romans did not so often pay in cash). A new flourishing in the monetary trade came in the 2nd century, when Roman aurei again become common. These post-Trajan hoards are mainly concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, by the Krishna River. This, of course, does not mean that this inland area was the most important commercial centre, for some reason it was just here that coins were hoarded in this period. Though we are now going far beyond the chronological scope of our study, we must briefly add that while early Roman copper is only rarely found in India, there are a great number of late (4th/5th century) finds both from India and from Sri Lanka.[85]

The reluctance of early Western sailors to circumnavigate India – and the waters after Kanyakumari are said to be dangerous, indeed – is further testified to by the fact that Sri Lanka was apparently excluded from direct trade. The Roman coins found there nearly all belong to the late Imperial period, though a few early finds, beginning with Neronian issues, have also been reported.[86] Pliny's account of the embassy from Taprobane (if it

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and Rouletted Ware cannot be used as testimony for any Western presence or active international trade. See various contributions on ceramics in Begley & De Puma 1991 (with Begley's summary in p. 4f.).

79 See Nagaswamy 1995 (with Karttunen 1995b).

80 The testimony of the Tamil classics has been presented and analyzed by Meile 1941a. See also Zvelebil 1956 and Nagaswami 1995, 96ff.

81 Turner 1990, 42f. See also Gupta 1969.

82 The Gaius and Lucius Caesares reverse types of Augustus and the seated lady PONTIF MAXIM type of Tiberius are the most common types of Roman silver found in India, and heavily outnumber all other types (Turner *l. c.*).

83 Turner 1990, 15.

84 These are all gold; no post-Neronian silver has been found. See Turner 1990, 25ff. and Gupta 1969, 171f.

85 See Gupta 1969, 177ff., and Krishnamurthy 1994 on India, Walburg 1980 and Bopearachchi 1993b on Sri Lanka. I shall return to this in my future book on the Roman period.

86 Still 1907, Walburg 1980, Bopearachchi 1993b. As in the case of India, the scholars (Still and Walburg) discussing Roman coin-finds mostly ignore the Greek ones, though their evidence would

really was from Sri Lanka), which is described as a wholly unknown place, confirms the lack of contact. See further VII.3 below.

Although the first knowledge of South-East Asia and South China may originate in the late Hellenistic period (the source of Mela), the Far East – with Alexandrian and Roman finds (coins, lamps, beads etc.) – was apparently only included in Western trade contacts during the Roman Imperial period, and even then Western ships probably only rarely ventured beyond India.[87]

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Now we must turn our attention to various land-routes which were used (or supposed to be used) for trade and communications between India and the West in the Hellenistic period.[88] Often the question has been simply dismissed with reference to the Parthians blocking all trade. But while it is probably true that frequent wars between the Parthians and Seleucids, later between the Parthians and Romans, often blocked land-trade, we should certainly not think that the Parthians were against trade in principle. On the contrary, while they perhaps at least occasionally impeded free passage of foreign merchants, they well knew how to gain profit as middlemen.[89]

There is much more information available about sea-trade than about land-trade. There is hardly any archaeological evidence connected with it,[90] and the literature is mostly silent. Instead of the detailed *Periplus* furnishing us even with some details of trade we have here merely the scanty road account by Isidorus. But while direct evidence is missing, the roads were certainly there, from the Achaemenid period on and even earlier; for they were used by Alexander and by the Seleucids. In the Roman period Ptolemy and the *Tabula Peutingeriana* described the Iranian road network. Certainly these roads were used by merchants.

The main land-route from the Hellenistic West to the East started from Seleucia in Mesopotamia (which was easily reached from Antioch and the Mediterranean) and went through Ecbatana, Rhagae and Hecatompylus to Antioch in Margiana (Merw). Thence it was possible to proceed eastwards to Bactra (Balkh), an important centre, from which roads branched to the north (to Sogdiana and the Steppes), to the east (to Central Asia and

be closely related. Peiris 1961, 12 mentions two stray finds of unknown provenance, an early Hellenistic coin of Acarnania and another of Seleucus IV.

87 See e.g. Wolters 1967.

88 For a general survey see e.g. Charlesworth 1924, 97ff., Warmington 1928 (1974), 18ff., and Thorley 1969, 213ff. Great care must be used with Herrmann (1910, 1922, 1938), who had the custom of referring to his own earlier (and often rather speculative) hypotheses as if they were solid evidence.

89 They actually stopped the Chinese on the way to the West, according to the Chinese sources, in order to keep their position as middlemen in the silk trade. See e.g. Hirth 1885, 39 & 137ff., and Ferguson 1978, 593

90 Even the Western imports found during excavations at Begram may have arrived through sea-trade (*via* Barbaricon) as well.

ultimately to China) and to the southeast (to Paropamisadae and India). From Antioch in Margiana another branch led southeast to Alexandria in Ariana (Herat), Drangiana (Seistan) and Alexandria in Arachosia (Kandahar). It was this route, from Seleucia to Merw and further to Kandahar, which is described by Isidorus in his *Parthian Stations*. From Kandahar there were three possible routes to reach India, the northeastern route to Kabul, which linked up with the route coming from Bactra and went on to Peucelaotis (Charsadda) and Taxila, the southeastern route through the Bolan Pass to the Indus and the southern route to Gedrosia. From Taxila it was possible to turn south through the Indus valley to the delta and the great mart of Barbaricon or to follow the eastern route to the Ganges and Pāṭaliputra (with a branch to the south, to Ozene/Ujjayinī and Barygaza/ Bharukaccha).

There was also a southern land-route leading from Seleucia at least as far as Persepolis and Carmania, but it is uncertain whether the connection to India through the barren lands of Gedrosia was ever important. Alexander had difficulties enough there, though a somewhat northern route (still in Gedrosia) could have been less troublesome.[91] There seems to be no evidence for this route being used in ancient trade.

Then there is the problem of the northern route. The idea of bypassing Parthians in the north is easy to conceive of, and our sources certainly testify to a certain interest in the idea, but did this route really exist? Its existence has been claimed for the early Hellenistic period and it was still known in the first century B.C., but beside the literary sources there is hardly any evidence at all for this route being used for Indian trade. The main sources are Strabo (referring to Aristobulus and Patrocles) and Pliny (quoting Varro).[92]

The idea was that Indian wares were brought to the Oxus, then shipped by river to the Caspian Sea and over the sea to its western coast, and from here to Pontus and the Black Sea, which was already part of traditional Greek trade. The supposed existence of a Caspian outlet of the Oxus at this time and the question of its navigability has been much discussed. While Herrmann believed in it and Harmatta claimed to have found some kind of archaeological evidence for it, Tarn vigorously denied the existence of this outlet and of trade using the Northern route.[93] Warmington wisely left open the question of changed hydrography, but pointed out that wares could also have been carried from the Oxus to the Caspian by land.[94] In any case this northern route was hardly important for Indian trade.

91 Warmington 1928 (1974), 24f., Cary 1949, 196.

92 Strabo 2, 1, 15; 2, 1, 17 (Patrocles F 4a); 11, 5, 8; 11, 7, 3 (Aristobulus F 20; Patrocles F 5) and 11, 11, 6 (Patrocles F 4b); Pliny, *N. H.* 6, 19, 52. Schur 1923 and Wissemann 1984 made an attempt to explain Roman interest in the northeast (with numerous references from Roman literature) at least partly from this trade route.

93 Herrmann often, e.g. in 1930b, Harmatta, *Studies on the History of the Sarmatians*. Budapest 1950, 34 (unavailable to me) and more recently Jusupov (see F. Grenet in *Abstr. Ir.* 10, 1987, 59); Tarn 1951, 112f. and 488ff., followed by Thomson 1948, 127f., Pearson 1960, 163f., and Bernard 1982b, 221. See also IV.4 above.

94 Warmington 1928 (1974). The existence of Indian trade using this northern route is further accepted by Schur 1923, Charlesworth 1924, 104ff., Filliozat 1956a, 12f., Thorley 1969, 215, André & Filliozat 1980, 71, and Wissemann 1984. Filliozat 1964, 255f. suggested that the route might have been used between India and the Black Sea as early as Achaemenid times.

Supposed Goths in India,[95] and so-called Indians in Germany,[96] are both too easy to explain differently, and therefore cannot be used here as evidence.

We cannot wholly pass over here without mention the famous Silk Route, though it more properly belongs to our next volume, dealing with the Roman period. The first reconnaissance by the Chinese in the West took place only at the end of the second century B.C. (see VI.4 above). Even before, however, there probably was some trade through middlemen. Perhaps it was this which aroused the interest of the Chinese, in addition to the political motives of Zhang Qian's mission. Both the classical *Seres* and Indian *Cīna* often seem to refer only to these middlemen. However, a major part of our evidence comes from a later (often much later) period and will be discussed in future in connection with the Roman period.

3. Islands of the Ocean

In addition to pure commerce and references to it, as discussed in the preceding chapter, the new sea-route also brought other kind of new knowledge, although it did not often reflect itself in high-level literature. Practical handbooks like the *Periplus* and Ptolemy's *Geography* used it, but they belong to the Imperial period, outside the scope of the present study. Still, some curious cases are left for us to discuss here. In most cases we can follow the studies of F. F. Schwarz and D. P. M. Weerakkody,[97] and not much is left to be found out through new analysis. The first case is Taprobane, which so clearly belongs

95 *Irila* and *Cita* "of the Gatas" in Junnar cave inscriptions (Lüders 1912, nos. 1154 & 1182, the latter perhaps also in a Karle inscription, cf. Laeuchli 1984, 208), first suggested as Goths by Konow 1912 (and accepted i.a. in Mayrhofer 1958, but rejected by the majority of scholars). See VI.5 above.

96 Mentioned by Pomponius Mela 3, 5, 45 and Pliny, *N. H.* 2, 67, 170. The existence of two separate sources shows that they were really thought to be Indians, as corruptions in the manuscript tradition are thus excluded. But this does not necessarily make them real Indians. They came by sea, and how could Indians possibly have come to Germania by sea? This curious account has been the reason for many flights of imagination. Some have thought that Indians were actually using the NE passage or Russian rivers. Pointing out quite rightly that these people were not necessarily real Indians, even if the Roman officers posted in the confines of Germania (and probably with little knowledge of real India and Indians) thought so, André (1982) goes on to suggest the Eskimos, who at least later would have been driven ashore on European shores. Not impossible, but we just do not know. There have been many other similar explanations; as a curiosity I should like to mention Schiern 1880 (known to me only through Estlander 1880), who suggested that these *Indi* were Finns or Lapps shipwrecked on the Baltic Sea. While Hennig votes for the Eskimos or even American Indians, Bengtson 1955 (and before him Warmington 1928 [1974], 27) suggested real Indians using the northern route to Caspia. But from here it is still a long way to Germania.

97 Schwarz 1974ab & 1976, Dihle 1978, 567ff., Weerakkody *passim*. The study of classical accounts of Taprobane was commenced rather early, see e.g. Burnouf 1826 & 1857, Heeren 1832, Lassen 1842, Paquier 1877. See further Herrmann 1932b (with many errors and inaccuracies due to his unfamiliarity with Indian philology) and references below.

in the context of maritime contacts, although the first accounts came from Onesicritus and Megasthenes.

As to the place itself, it seems quite clear that Taprobane (Ταπροβάνη) is Ceylon, the present-day Sri Lanka. The ancient name corresponds well to the MIA (Aśoka and Pāli) *Tambapaṇṇi(dīpa)*, OIA *Tāmraparṇi*,[98] though with *mr* > *pr* Taprobane seems to originate in a different MIA dialect. In India the same name is also attested for a river of Tamilnadu, opposite the island. It has also been suggested that Taprobane could be Sumatra,[99] but as the Western traditions of Taprobane begin with information obtained by Alexander's men near the Indus, Sumatra seems certainly much too far away and then we would have to believe that classical literature passed Sri Lanka completely by. In Buddhist sources there is a tradition for sailing to Sri Lanka from western India; the name fits Sri Lanka perfectly, and geographical details of later literature can be often related to Sri Lanka.

The first knowledge of Taprobane came through Alexander's campaign in Northwest India, where the distant island was apparently known and visited. Earlier this route had been used by the Sinhalas, when they first arrived on the island. Perhaps they did not cut off relations to their old home, which is supposed to have been somewhere in or near Gujarat.[100] If a sea route between Gujarat and Sri Lanka thus existed, it could easily have been used by merchants of the Indus valley, too, where even Brahmans were said to participate in distant voyages. Our Greek account comes from Onesicritus.[101] His informants reached the island in twenty days from the mouths of the Indus.[102] He mentioned the large elephants of the island and the curious aquatic creatures living around it (see V.4 above) and commented on the poor quality of ships going there.[103] The large elephants of Taprobane soon became a steady epithet of the island and they are found in literature until late antiquity.

Next to Onesicritus was Megasthenes. His account of Taprobane is also found in Pliny.[104] His information was probably gleaned in Pāṭaliputra, the Maurya capital, and

98 This was first pointed out by Burnouf 1826, 142ff. (and again in Burnouf 1857, 19ff. & 84ff.), who had found Tāmbapaṇṇaya (*sic*) in a Pāli manuscript from Thailand. Pāli Tambapaṇṇa is attested for instance in the *Mahāvaṃsa* 7, 41. Burnouf's original hesitation at equating MIA *tāmba* with OIA *tāmra* was removed by Lassen 1842, 6ff. (suggesting a form like **Tāmbra-* as the origin of the Greek form). Then e.g. Paquier 1877, 41ff., Herrmann 1932, 2261, Schwarz 1976, 241f., André & Filliozat 1980, 110, Sorrentino 1980, 187ff., and Weerakkody 1992c, 118f.

99 This is an old idea, according to Burnouf 1857, 92f., first suggested by Saumaise (Salmasius) in the 17th century and repeated by Wilford at the beginning of the 19th century. It has been followed e.g. by Fergusson 1904, Herrmann 1932, and Paris 1951. For criticism see e.g. Schwarz 1976, 239f., and Weerakkody 1984, 5ff.

100 Geiger 1960, 22f., further Schwarz 1976, 246f., and Weerakkody 1984, 5f.

101 F 12 (Strabo 15, 1, 15) & 13 (Pliny, *N. H.* 6, 24, 81); see e.g. Paquier 1877, 8f., Delbrück 1956, 30f., Schwarz 1976, 237ff., Pédech 1984, 152f., and Weerakkody 1984, 2ff.

102 Taking with Schwarz (1976, 242ff., also Weerakkody 1984, 5) this distance of 20 days from the mouth of the Indus and not from the Tamil coast, Herrmann's argument (1932b, 2263) for geographically otherwise rather unimaginable Sumatra falls down. The islands in between mentioned by Onesicritus can easily be explained as the Lakshadweep Islands.

103 See Paris 1951, 22f., and Weerakkody 1984, 6ff. on textual problems in this passage.

104 *N. H.* 6, 24, 81 = F 26; see Schwarz 1976, 250ff., and Weerakkody 1984, 13ff.

thus had a wholly different geographical orientation. Megasthenes calls the islanders *Palaeogoni*,[105] knows of a river dividing the island (the Mahaväli Ganga), and mentions the gold and pearls of the island.

Before Eratosthenes the Greeks apparently had no clear idea of the geography of Taprobane. After him they had, but it was entirely distorted. The account of Eratosthenes has been summarized by Strabo,[106] and some additional information is found in other passages of Strabo and Pliny.[107] The size of the island was made immensely larger than in reality, and it had a much longer extension from west to east (5,000 stadia) than from north to south.[108] Indeed, Strabo and the *Periplus* assert that from Azania (the Somali coast) it was a relatively short distance to the western end of the island.[109]

Hellenistic speculation made Taprobane the country of the Antipodes or Antichthones, a conception which now became popular. On a theoretical level, such a country was mentioned for the first time by Plato. For Taprobane it has been attested by Mela, who apparently derived it from Hipparchus, and by Pliny, who states that it was long claimed for the island[110]

After all this, the Western idea of Taprobane was still very vague. That direct trade did not reach the island before the late Imperial period is clearly shown both by numismatic (only 4th- and 5th-century Roman coins found in any great numbers)[111] and literary evidence (the first accounts of actual voyages to the island). In the first century, when the first Taprobanian embassy arrived in Imperial Rome, it was a sensation, and nobody seemed to know where they really came from. Again we meet the problem of interpreters. Members of the embassy were asked about their country, and their account is preserved by Pliny (6, 24, 84ff.).[112] This account, however, contains so many fantastic and utopian elements that one cannot really identify their country from it, and it has even been suggested that in reality they came from Sumatra.[113] There is suspiciously much that was

105 The name is discussed below.

106 Strabo 15, 1, 14f.; see Weerakkody 1984, 18ff. & 1992a.

107 Strabo 2, 1, 14; 2, 5, 14; and 2, 5, 32 & 35. Pliny, *N. H.* 6, 24, 81ff.

108 The number 5,000 shows that Eratosthenes was here using Onesicritus, who, however, did not specify whether it meant length or breadth. On this enormous size in later classical geography, see Lassen 1858, 293f.; a similar error in proportions was also made by Faxian, as has been noted by Dihle (1978). There is also an Indian parallel. According to classical Indian astronomy, Ujjayinī and Laṅkā lay on the same meridian (Renou & Filliozat 1953, 184), though in reality the meridian of Ujjayinī lies a long way west of the west coast of Sri Lanka. This was long ago compared with the classical accounts by Burnouf 1857, 11ff., and briefly referred to by Weerakkody 1984, 4.

109 Herrmann 1938, 53, as often, is too keen to visualize maps. Such an idea could also arise without them.

110 Mela 3, 70; Pliny, *N. H.* 6, 24, 81 *Taprobanen alterum orbem terrarum esse diu existimatum est Antichthonum appellatione*. See further Schwarz 1976, 247f., Parroni 1984, 420f., and Weerakkody 1984, 24. It had an enormous afterlife in geography as the *terra australis incognita*, and continued until the 18th century, when Cook finally found the real southern continent (but no Antichthones).

111 See VII.2 above.

112 The Plinian account of Taprobane, contained in the *N. H.* 6, 24, 81–91, has been discussed e.g. by Lassen 1842, Priaulx 1861, Paquier 1877, 17ff., Starr 1956, Peiris 1961, 14ff., Schwarz 1974ab, De Romanis 1988, and Weerakkody 1990, 165f. & 1991, 1994 & 1995a.

113 Fergusson 1904, Paris 1951.

mentioned earlier in connection with India (by Megasthenes, cf. III.2 above) and even Gedrosia (turtle-shells used as roofs, cf. V.2 above). Albeit the accidental journey of the freedman of Annius Plocamus to Sri Lanka and the subsequent Sri Lankan mission to Rome were probably historical; it seems that they caused more rumours than an actual increase in knowledge in the West.

While much of Pliny's information was apparently culled from other sources, some parts have been commonly accepted as really pertaining to Sri Lanka. But even in this case the interpretation has often turned out to be complicated enough. While it is easy to accept that the leader of the embassy was called Rachias, no agreement has been reached about which Pāli or Sinhalese name this should correspond to.[114]

Another problem in Pliny's account is the Seric trade of the Taprobanians (6, 24, 88). Kennedy (1904) explained away the Plinian Seres as the Cheras of Kerala; Pliny is thought here to have also confused the Nilgiris with the Himalayas. Herrmann (1938, 28f.) thought that they really crossed the Himalayas and visited the Tarim basin, the population of which he had, on other evidence too, identified as the Seres. Blue-eyed and red-haired people are seen in Central Asian wall-paintings (*ibid.* 29f.). But as he cannot then believe that his civilized Central Asians – we note the racial bias in the study published in 1938 – could have exercised mute trade, he removes this part of the account and explains that Pliny must have found it in some other source dealing with a different people also called Seres (*ibid.* 31). I am afraid that this is neither very convincing nor methodologically acceptable. We have probably to turn back to Kerala, though it is clearly stated by Pliny that these Seres were living beyond the Himalayas. But it is possible that something different was told and that Pliny used the existing tradition about the Seres, which included for instance the mute commerce.[115]

The *Periplus* is very brief in its account (ch. 61) of Taprobane and unfortunately the only manuscript is not too well preserved and offers several textual difficulties. What is clear is that it was formerly called Taprobane, but now Palaesimundu, and that its western end is supposed to be close to the African coast.

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114 *N. H.* 6, 24, 85 & 88. Tennent identified this as *rājā* 'king' and was followed by many scholars, e.g. Paquier 1877, 22f., McCrindle 1901, 104, Rawlinson 1926, 152, and Lamotte 1953, 108. Referring to Paranavitana, Peiris 1961, 19 suggested Sinhalese *Raṭiya* = Pāli *Raṭṭhika* (OIA *rāṣṭrika*), a kind of district ruler known from inscriptions (thus also Schwarz 1974a, 169f. & 1974b, 39f., but see Weerakkody 1991, 55f.). André & Filliozat 1980, 114f. reject both *rājā* and *Raṭiya*, as Rachias is clearly given as his personal name, not as a title, and suggest *Rakkha*, which has been occasionally used in Sri Lanka. This Rakkha has also been discussed by Weerakkody 1991, 56. Considering that Sinhalese kings often employed Buddhist monks for diplomatic missions I prefer to think that Rachias is abridged from some monastic name terminating in *-rakkhita*. I cannot see why "it seems reasonable to assume that Rachia himself was a layman", as stated by Weerakkody 1991, 56. *Rakkhita* was actually suggested by Marquart 1913, ccv, note 2.

115 *ultra montes Hemodos Seras*. In a modified form Herrmann's thesis has been accepted by Liebermann 1957 (a Saka people living in the western part of Chinese Central Asia). The Chera hypothesis has been supported by André & Filliozat 1980, 117. Long ago Priaulx (1861, 347f.) suggested that trade was conducted on Sri Lanka itself, with the Veddas, and actually a few centuries later Faxian 38 (Beal 1884, lxxii & Legge 1886, 101) stated that mute commerce was conducted with the aborigines (Rakshasas) of the island. But in classical literature mute trade was a topos which was often located in various parts of the world.

Echoes of Onesicritus and Eratosthenes are heard in the account of Aelianus (*N. An.* 16, 17f.). He quoted the supposed large measurements for the island and Eratosthenes' claim that there were no towns on the island and then described the elephants, giant turtles and sea monsters.[116]

The geographical dictionary of Stephanus of Byzantium is a late and poorly transmitted work,[117] but for the lemma Taprobane he had used much earlier sources, Artemidorus of Ephesus and Alexander Lychnus (both of the first century B.C.). Again we have the measurements given by Eratosthenes, a length of 7,000 stadia and a breadth of 5,000 (in the text erroneously 500), the three names (Taprobane, Simundu and Salice), and a reference to elephants.

Only with Ptolemy (7, 4) can we be absolutely sure that Taprobane means Ceylon, but while he had a (relatively) clear idea of India, his account of Taprobane is still wholly distorted.[118] Nevertheless, it contains a great number of details, even the ancient capital, Anurādhapura, is mentioned as Ἀνουρόγραμμον βασίλειον ('royal city'), and in any case there was nothing better before the 16th century.

Among the minor geographers Dionysius Periegetes (591ff.) knew Taprobane to be a large island, the mother of elephants, and surrounded by marine monsters. Marcianus of Heracleia confirms that Παλαι- is really part of the name and not a Greek word.[119] In many respects his work is close to Ptolemy's. The so-called Pseudo-Agathemerus is a Byzantine text of the 9th century and does not concern us here.

After this survey of classical references to ancient Taprobane, we have still to discuss other names used for the island, although this brings us beyond the chronological limits set for our study.

As was mentioned above, Megasthenes (according to Pliny 6, 24, 81) called the inhabitants of Taprobane *Palaeogoni*. The same beginning is found in the name Παλαισιμούνδου/ *Palaesimundus*, according to Pliny (6, 85) the capital, according to the *Periplus* (61) and Ptolemy (7, 4, 1) another name for the island. Stephanus (*s.v.* Taprobane) clearly interpreted the latter name as πάλαι Σιμούνδου 'earlier (called) S.' by inserting other words in between. Renou divides the words of Ptolemy into two, which also seems to be the actual intention of the author,[120] but *Palaeogoni* seems to indicate that the first part, too, is a part of the name, and Marcianus explains it as being earlier (πρότερον) called Παλαι-

116 For these, see V.3 & V.4 above, for Aelianus' account also Peiris 1961, 23f., and Weerakkody 1984, 10f.

117 See Weerakkody 1984, 24ff., and Karttunen 1989b.

118 On Ptolemy's account of Taprobane see e.g. Warmington 1928 (1974), 117f., Peiris 1961, 20ff. and Weerakkody 1982. Sinnatamby 1968 I have not seen.

119 *Periplus maris externi* 1 Prooem. τῇ τε Ταπροβάνῃ καλουμένῃ, τῇ Παλαισιμούνδου λεγομένῃ πρότερον; 1, 8 πρώτη μὲν ἡ Ταπροβάνη νῆσος ἡ Παλαισιμούνδου καλουμένη πρότερον, νῦν δὲ Σαλική; and in the same way with three names in the Periplus of Taprobane in 1, 35; in addition Taprobane is mentioned in 1, 16. The *Periplus* of Marcianus is preserved only in an abridged version and the actual Periplus of Taprobane is missing.

120 ἥτις ἐκαλεῖτο πάλαι Σιμούνδου, νῦν δὲ Σαλίκη. In 7, 4, 3 Ptolemy also mentioned a town Ἀνδρισιμούνδου.

σιμούνδου.[121] Even if Ptolemy or at least the manuscript tradition of Ptolemy interpreted the name as two words, this is not necessarily correct.

It is understandable that early scholars preferred to see in the first part of these names the Indian word *pāli*, so intimately connected with Ceylon throughout its history. Thus Schwanbeck explained the first name, *Palaeogoni*, as **pālijana*, supposedly meaning 'people of sacred law', without understanding that before Aśoka's mission such a name would be completely unwarranted for Sri Lanka and its inhabitants. Of this Lassen made **pallijana* 'village people', referring to Eratosthenes' statement that on the island there were no towns, but many villages. Unfortunately, there is no foundation at all for these etymologies, as both words are completely unattested as geographical names. For the very same reason, however, we have to dismiss Filliozat's Tamil explanation, **Paḷaiyakaṇam* or **Paḷayakaṇam* 'groupe des anciens'. As a matter of fact, the word seems to be so heavily graecized that perhaps it can no longer reveal its origin, even if this is extant at all.[122]

For the second name Lassen again accepted an initial *pāli* and for the latter part Sanskrit *sīmanta* 'head', thus explaining it as the principal site of sacred law. This was actually much more acceptable than the view of Herrmann, who accepted Lassen's **pāli-sīmanta*, but referring to Tennent took Palai/Pāli as an equivalent of Megasthenes' *Prasioi* and thus explained it as "Hauptsitz der Prasier". Even if we follow the local tradition and locate the origin of the Sinhalese in eastern India,[123] this seems hardly acceptable. The main problem with these explanations is again that they all involve names which are nowhere attested.[124] In this respect we must definitely prefer Raychaudhuri's *Pārasamudra* 'beyond the ocean' which is actually found in the *Arthaśāstra* (2, 11, 28) and explained in a commentary as Sri Lanka.[125] We may note here that much earlier

121 Long ago Burnouf 1826, 137f., preferred to accept πάλαι as a Greek word ('formerly, long ago'), but was soon rightly criticized by Lassen 1842, 9ff., and accepted by Burnouf himself in Burnouf 1857, 87f.

122 Schwanbeck 1845, 38; Lassen 1874, 696; André & Filliozat 1980, 111. Lassen in his earlier study (1842, 9) and again Peiris 1961, 10f., explained it in Greek, a combination of παλαιός 'ancient' and γόνος 'race' as referring to Pre-Aryan aborigines. The same explanation has been accepted by Weerakkody 1884, 15f., too, pointing out that παλαιόγονος is actually used in Greek for autochthonous peoples and that the choice of word by Pliny (*appellari* instead of *nominari*) did not necessarily suggest a proper name. Weerakkody 1884, 15, also mentions C. Rasanayagam (*Ancient Jaffna*. Madras 1926, 105) suggesting Tamil **Paḷayanākar* 'ancient Nagas'.

123 Herrmann takes this for granted, but actually it seems more likely that the Sinhalese originally came from the west of India.

124 Lassen 1842, 13ff.; Herrmann 1932, 2261f. Early speculation was discussed by Burnouf 1857, 90ff. (leaving the origin of Simundu open). Prasioi also in Paquier 1877, 43f. Unattested is also Tamil **Paḷaiya/Paḷayacamuttiram* 'ancient ocean' suggested by André & Filliozat 1980, 115. Referring to M. Rasanayagam's *Ancient Jaffna* Peiris 1961, 19 offered another arbitrary Tamil solution, **Paḷaisīlamaṇḍalam*. The same was already given in Rasanayagam 1922, 31, where the author explained his *sīlam* as an intermediate form in his supposed development of Tamil *īḻam* 'Sri Lanka' > *sīlam* > *sīhalam* > *siṃhala*. This is hardly acceptable; all the evidence points to *sīhala/siṃhala* being a totemic name related to OIA *siṃha* 'lion' (see e.g. Geiger 1960, 28) and the *Tamil Lexicon* actually derives Tamil *īḻam (īḻamaṇṭalam)* from Pāli *sīhalam* (OIA *siṃhala*). Sorrentino 1980, 193f., compares *īḻam* to *ilaṅkai* (OIA Laṅkā).

125 Raychaudhuri 1919, followed by Schwarz 1974b, 43. This is not accepted because it is a foreign name (Indian, but why should the name not be of Indian origin?) by Weerakkody 1982, 32, but no other explanation is offered instead. In Weerakkody 1992c, 123ff., he discusses the problem again,

Goldstücker had suggested *pārajana* 'people beyond (the sea)' for *Palaeogoni*, but I cannot say whether he had any textual evidence for this.[126]

In the above-mentioned passage of Ptolemy (7, 4, 1) and in some later sources we have another name for the island, Σαλίκη, with a related name for its people, Σάλαι. Taking Σάλαι as the primary form (Σαλίκη being easily understood as a Greek derivation from it) the great majority of scholars seem to accept a comparison with the traditional name of 'Lion Island', Pāli *Sīhaladīpa* (OIA *Siṃhaladvīpa*).[127] There are some further names in late sources which can be (and have been) well compared with Sīhaladīpa.[128] They include the *Serendivi* of Ammianus Marcellinus (22, 7, 10),[129] the Σιελεδίβα of Cosmas Indicopleustes (2, 45 and 11, 13, confronting Sielediba as an Indian name for Greek Taprobane), and perhaps even the Σηρίνδα of Procopius (*De bello Gothico* 4, 17).[130] Of the same origin, perhaps through Arabic *Sarandīb* is probably *Zeilan*, the Portuguese name of the island (Marco Polo's *Seilan*).[131]

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now taking a somewhat more favourable opinion towards *pārasamudra*. From an article by S. W. Epa Seneviratne (in the *Silver Jubilee Volume of the University of Kelaniya* 1986, 473ff.) he quotes *pāre samudrasya* from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *pārasamudde Laṃkāyaṃ* from the late *Rasavāhinī*, and refers to Lévi's opinion (1936, 95ff., discussing the parallel name Andrasimundu) that *Simundu* must stay for *samudra*.

126 Weerakkody 1984, 15, quoted his opinion from the second edition (1927) of McCrindle 1885 and supposed that Goldstücker had started from Raychaudhuri and the *Arthaśāstra*, but Goldstücker died as early as 1872. The reference is in fact found in the first edition, McCrindle 1885, 253, too, but it states plainly "Goldstücker *l. c.* note 59", and I have been unable to find out where this *l. c.* is mentioned. Perhaps he was referring to Goldstücker's posthumous *Literary Remains* (1–2. London 1879), a book presently unavailable to me. Discarding philological and historical difficulties Schwarz 1974b, 28, accepted both Tennent's *pāliputra* 'sons of the Pāli' supposedly referring to Prasians and Schwanbeck's *pālijana* 'people of the Pāli', as well as *pārajana* as equal possibilities. In his more detailed discussion (Schwarz 1976, 255ff.) he hesitatingly accepts the latter, but leaves the question open.

127 Thus, for instance, Lassen 1842, 16f., Paquier 1877, 44, Schwarz 1974b, 25, Sorrentino 1980, 192 (*sīhalaka*), and Weerakkody 1982, 33 & 1992c, 126f. Early conjectures were discussed by Burnouf 1826, 141 & 1857, 96ff., who himself, rejecting Siṃhala, left the question open. Sinnatamby 1968 (quoted by Weerakkody 1982, 33) derived Salice from the Indian town *Saliur*, situated on the opposite coast of Tamilnadu. Weerakkody 1992b, 85f. & 1992c, 127f. rejects Serendivi as a name for Sri Lanka (the reasons are not important here), but accepts Sielediba.

128 The first two thus explained by Burnouf 1826, 139ff. & 1857, 103f., Lassen 1842, 16f., Schwarz 1974b, 25, and Sorrentino 1980, 190ff.; all three by Herrmann 1932, 2261.

129 This name was then used by the Arabs (*Sarandīb* in al-Biruni) and Persians. A popular story book translated in the 16th century from Persian into Italian and then into many other languages, *Peregrinaccio di tre figliuoli del re di Serendippo*, reintroduced the name into Europe and later gave rise to the English word *serendipity*. See Cammann 1967.

130 This was the place from which the Nestorian monks smuggled silk cocoons to Justinian. While others search for it in China or, rather, in Central Asia, Herrmann (1923, and briefly in 1932, 2261) is convinced that it was Ceylon. However, Herrmann seems to have been often convinced by what were in fact only very tenuous hypotheses. It seems that R. Winstedt had earlier suggested the same. Weerakkody 1992b, 83f. has recently discussed the question, rightly rejecting Herrmann's hypothesis.

131 For Arabic references and for the origin of Ceylon see Yule & Burnell *s.v.* Ceylon.

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On the coast west of the Indus mouths and off Gedrosia Alexander's navy visited several islands which were described by Nearchus.[132] At the end of his Indian account, just before Taprobane, Pliny (6, 23, 80) listed these islands as Patala (in fact part of the Indus delta), Chryse and Argyre, Crocala, Bibaga and Toralliba. In another passage (6, 36, 198) he quoted Cleitarchus (F 29) about more or less marvellous islands of the Eastern Ocean. Of these, Chryse and Argyre, situated off the Indus mouth, it was said by Pliny's source (Onesicritus?) that their very soil consisted of gold and silver, though Pliny concluded that it only meant rich mines. They are not mentioned by Arrianus, but all other islands mentioned in this passage belong to Alexander's history, and the golden island is actually mentioned by Curtius (10, 1, 10f.) as reported by Nearchus and Onesicritus. Curtius adds that on this islands horses were unknown. They were probably originally small islands near the coast, but soon they grew in size in geographical literature, and were finally considered comparable to Taprobane. At the same time their location was also moved farther to the east.

In the geography of Pomponius Mela (3, 70) Chryse was situated off the Tamus peninsula, the supposed continuation of the Himalayas on the sea coast, and Argyre off the Ganges mouths. Mela, too, had heard the old tradition (*ita veteres tradidere*) of their golden and silver soil, and again they are mentioned just before Taprobane. Mela seems here to confuse the history of Alexander with later traditions. According to the *Periplus* (63), Chryse is situated off the Ganges, while Argyre is not mentioned. The opposite country east of the Ganges is also called Chryse. The island is in easternmost India, directly under the rising sun. The rising sun is the only indication of location given for Chryse by Dionysius Periegetes (587ff.), but again the island is mentioned just before Taprobane. The *Tabula Peutingeriana* has *Arcirse insula* located off the eastern end of the Himalayas.

Ptolemy, too, located Chryse and Argyre in Southeast Asia, but not as islands. Chryse is mentioned as a peninsula (Χρυσῆ χερρόνησος) in 7, 2, 5, and as land (Χρυσῆ χώρα) in 7, 2, 17. The golden peninsula was also familiar to Marcianus of Heracleia (16) and Pliny (6, 20, 55 *promunturium Chryse*). It is likely that we here have no longer a development of Alexander's history, but more recent information based on Indian geography, where the Golden Country (Suvarṇabhūmi) seems to refer to Burma or Malacca. The silver country (Ἀργυρῆ χώρα) of Ptolemy 7, 2, 3 & 17, is, however, without an Indian model.[133]

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132 On the Indian coast: Arrianus, *Ind.* 21, 7 (Crocala 150 stadia west of the Indus mouth), 21, 11 (Bibacta off Alexander's Haven), 22, 2 (the desert island of Domai); on the Gedrosian coast: Arrianus, *Ind.* 31 (Nosala, the island of the sun). For the latter cf. Onesicritus F 28 in Pliny, *N. H.* 6, 26, 97. I have left several unnamed islands unmentioned.

133 Parroni 1984, 110 suggests Malacca for Chryse and Sumatra for argyre, which could then correspond to Indian Suvarṇadvīpa 'golden island'. Some scholars have suggested that Chryse chora could be Burma, while the peninsula is Malacca.

It seems that originally the *islands* were part of Alexander's history and situated off the Indus mouths, while later tradition of the *lands* belonged to easternmost India or Southeast Asia. This later tradition seems to belong to the late Hellenistic period, because it was already familiar to Mela. These two traditions were soon confused so that the islands, too, were moved to the far east.[134]

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The fantastic journey of Iambulus is told by Diodorus (2, 55–60).[135] Despite the scepticism of the ancients, some modern scholars have sought for his utopia in various islands in the Indian Ocean such as Sri Lanka, Soqotra, Bali and Madagascar.[136] At least in the case of Southeast Asia with its many islands, any real knowledge seems to have reached the Graeco-Roman West only with the intensified trade-relations of the early Imperial period.[137]

It is clear that we here have merely a piece of utopian literature. There was no journey of Iambulus, and in its essence his island was pure fiction. It was true that it did not leap out from nothing, from pure fantasy and nothing else. The author, Iambulus, used what he had read, and was probably influenced by the Indian utopias of Onesicritus.[138] He actually made an attempt to put his imaginary journey at least partly on the map. He started from Arabia and Ethiopia and returned through India. In between was the imaginary world of islands, which may or may not have arisen from Onesicritus' account of Taprobane.[139] His case is somewhat similar to that of Philostratus and Apollonius, but while we at least have Philostratus' book in its entirety, from Iambulus only a few fragments survive. It remains true that he "cannot be trusted for any statement of fact unless we already know the fact independently."[140]

Panchaïa, the island of Euhemerus, where Greek gods had been historical kings, was also claimed to be situated somewhere in the Indian Ocean.[141] Here we have another case of either pure fiction or perhaps free use of some real account. Theories as to its identification have been put forward, but we cannot really say much. It might be that Euhemerus,

134 See Ball 1884, 236; Tomaschek 1896, 800 & 801 and 1899, 2490 & 2490f. & 2495; Cœdès 1910, Index ss. vv. Chryse & Argyre; Pullé 1912; Herrmann 1938, 49; Brown 1949, 118f.; André & Filliozat 1980, 109f.; and Parroni 1984, 419f.

135 He is further referred by Lucianus (*Verae hist.* 1, 3) and Tzetzes (*Chil.* 7, 144) to as an unreliable author.

136 See Schwarz 1983, 43, and Weerakkody 1992b, 75f.

137 See e.g. Cœdès 1910 & Marszewski 1964.

138 Brown 1949, 72ff.

139 The possibilities of historical interpretation have been exhausted by Schwarz 1975a, 183ff. and 1983. He was perhaps somewhat too optimistic (see the criticism in Dihle 1978 and Weerakkody 1992b, 74ff.)., though, he, too, made it clear that it was a "fictional utopia" (Schwarz 1983, 43).

140 Quoted from Brown 1949, 74.

141 Diodorus 5, 41–46 and 6, 1; *FGrH* 63. The name is Παγχαία (----) and thus *Panchaia* (not *Panchaea*) in Latin. See Ziegler 1949 and Brown 1949, 66ff.

who wrote early in the third century B.C., copied something of geographical literature, but his main account was clearly fictitious, and he had no reason to be fair with his geography. In addition, the early date of Euhemerus seems to exclude all detailed knowledge of the Indian Sea and its Islands.

The Roman senator Manilius, quoted by Pliny, told that the young phoenix bird carried its nest, made of cinnamon and frankincense, to the City of the Sun near Panchaïa.[142]

Fabulous islands and utopias were rather common in Greek tradition. When they were put on the map, they tended to travel farther with the widening geographical perspective (as in the cases of Antilia and Brazilia).[143] Tradition continued. In the Christian cosmography of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages the Garden of Eden was supposed to lie somewhere beyond India or near Taprobane. The tradition of Euhemerus and Iambulus was followed by Thomas More and Jonathan Swift in a later world.

4. India and the Hellenistic World: A Conclusion

Time has come to say some words in conclusion. In many respects the Hellenistic period can be seen as an exceptionally active phase in relations between India and the Western world, at least from the Greek perspective. For India the West always seemed to be too marginal and changes between different periods in Western history did not reflect themselves in Indian sources at all, with the possible exception of the Indo-Greeks.

Before Alexander's campaigns, India was for the West a fairy-land at the end of the world, a land of which nothing definite was known. It was full of marvels and fairy tales and no one, with a very few exceptions (Scylax), had ever been there. It was not even interesting enough to be dealt with in any detail, and no one cared to search for the more reliable information which was probably available in the metropolises of the Achaemenid Empire.

Alexander removed the distance, first conquering Persia and then himself going to Northwest India with his armies. Although the Indian satrapies were soon abandoned, the sphere of Hellenism was extended much farther to the east than Greek culture and even Greek geographical knowledge had been able to reach before him. For two centuries and more Bactria and Eastern Iran, even parts of Northwest India were included in the Hellenistic world as well as the Seleucid Near East, Ptolemaic Egypt, and even the traditional Hellenic world of Greece and its colonies. However, it must be again emphasized that being Hellenistic is a relative concept. For the Greeks – both in the ethnic and cultural

142 *N. H.* 10, 2, 4f. *prope Panchaiam in solis urbem.*

143 On these fabulous islands of the Atlantic, see Tarn 1951, 297f., for a Chinese parallel, ib. 295ff. See also Schwarz 1987 on Greek utopias.

senses, for people identifying themselves as Greeks, the Hellenes – in the West as well as in Bactria and India these lands were part of the Hellenistic world. But, to take the other extreme, for an Indian sage living in, for instance, Taxila, Hellenism had no meaning at all, and he was certainly as right, perhaps even more right, than the Greek prince ruling his country in considering it part of India participating in Indian civilization. In a way both were right, of course, and in fact the situation was much the same in the Iranian North and in the Semitic Near East.

The importance of the Hellenistic period in Graeco-Indian relations lies in the fact that now there was a much greater amount of direct contact than ever before or after. We know of Greek soldiers and mercenaries, of kings and diplomats, of colonists and traders, of slave girls and even of philosophers and scholars going to the East. Bindusāra did not get his sophist, but Pyrrho, and perhaps Clearchus too, visited India. Of Indians coming to the West we know much less, but at least we hear of ambassadors (probably there were more than just those sent and mentioned by Aśoka), of traders (the guide of Eudoxus)[144] and of Buddhist missionaries.

During this relatively short period India was for the West much more than the country of wonders somewhere far off at the very end of the world. The Northwest was described in detail by contemporary (and often eye-witness) historians of Alexander, and the numerous riches, marvels, and useful products of Indian nature, agriculture and industry were duly noted by rising Hellenistic science (e.g. Theophrastus and Eratosthenes). Geographers used Indian evidence for their physical and climatological theories and on a practical level attempts were made to introduce Indian plants and animals into the West. Soon there were authors of monographs, such as Megasthenes, dealing not only with Alexander's Northwest but with the mighty empire of the Mauryas. For the Greeks India had now truly become a part of this world, a political entity to be noted, and a rich land with enormous prospects for trade.

The active flourishing of international sea-trade between India and Egypt really belongs to the Roman Imperial period, but its beginnings were in the Hellenistic era. Much less is known of land-trade, though occasional glimpses of evidence show that caravans were travelling and dogs barking, even if only a few echoes reach us.

It is important to note that the Hellenistic picture of India had an enormous afterlife. Hellenistic literature, although to a great extent lost to us, is the key to the major part of subsequent literary accounts of India in the classical West. The literature of the Roman period was tradition-bound, and independent and fresh information was little esteemed and rarely accepted. Instead, a few sources deemed classical, *viz.* the historians of Alexander and Megasthenes (even Daimachus was forgotten!), were accepted as a kind of canon and all information was derived from them without thinking of changes that might have taken place during the intervening centuries.[145]

144 He might have been a seaman, too, but in any case he had participated in a commercial venture.

145 This situation has been aptly analyzed by Dihle 1964a. Such works as the *Periplus* and the *Geography* of Ptolemy are not real exceptions, as they were not considered literary works. Only Pliny took a somewhat middle position. All this will be discussed in more detail in my future book on India and Rome.

The picture of Hellenistic relations with and knowledge of India is fascinating indeed, but at the same time it is frustratingly fragmentary. Hardly any work of this period has been preserved in its entirety, and of many we have only a few fragments or even less. It is quite certain that the parts of Megasthenes never cited in his fragments must needs have contained much that would be valuable for us, shedding further light on that interesting and extremely important, but also poorly documented, period of Indian history. Nevertheless, of Megasthenes' work we at least have a respectable number of fragments, so that we are even able to attempt to form an idea of what his work was like. We are not so fortunate in the case of his colleagues Daimachus and Dionysius, not to speak of such works as the two *Indicas* by Basilis and Alexander Polyhistor. We have no idea what Amyntianus wrote about elephants or Amometus about the country of Uttarakuru. Orthagoras, Sosander and Tauron are mere names to us. Apollodorus of Artemita, Pompeius Trogus and many another who might have written about the fascinating history of the Indo-Greeks are more or less lost and all we can produce is a poor and unreliable skeleton of reconstruction mainly based on legends and pictures on coins.

Nevertheless, as I have tried to show in these pages, there is still a great amount of information to be culled from a careful reading of extant texts (and still more, I am convinced, which has escaped my notice or my combinatory skills). Moreover, archaeology, with related fields such as epigraphy, papyrology and numismatics, is all the time able to present fresh evidence, and from all parts of the ancient world, from Egypt and the Near East, from Arabia and Iran, from Central Asia and Pakistan, from India and Sri Lanka. Even if the great majority of Hellenistic literature is irrevocably lost to us I hope that this book of mine is not a conclusion but rather the beginning of new studies and fresh interpretations.