

STUDIA ORIENTALIA
EDITED BY THE FINNISH ORIENTAL SOCIETY
65

INDIA IN EARLY GREEK
LITERATURE

by
KLAUS KARTTUNEN



HELSINKI 1989

Klaus **Karttunen**

India in Early Greek Literature.

Studia Orientalia, Vol. 65.

Copyright © 1989 by the Finnish Oriental Society,
Societas Orientalis Fennica,
Snellmaninkatu 9-11, SF-00170 Helsinki, Finland

Publication Secretary: Harry Halén

Maps: Copyright © Virpi Hämeen-Anttila & Klaus Karttunen

Cover design drawn by Mrs. Virpi Hämeen-Anttila, B.A.,
from Henrik Comell & Sigurd Wallin, Uppsvenska målarskolor
på 1400-talet. Stockholm 1933, pl. 23 Vaksala church.

ISSN 0039-3282
ISBN 951-9380-10-8
PunaMusta
Helsinki 1989

To my family

ABSTRACT

INDIA IN EARLY GREEK LITERATURE

KLAUS JUHANI KARTTUNEN
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI (SF)

In the early phase of Greek awareness of India (from the 6th to 4th centuries B.C.) the amount of reliable knowledge was scanty and mostly obtained through intermediaries. For Ionian ethnographers and other early authors India was a country of fabulous peoples and marvels of nature situated on the very edge of the inhabited world. When compared with the India known from more or less contemporary Indian sources it is not easily recognized as the same country. The fact is that it is not.

It should be obvious that the bulk of the Greek descriptions is probably connected with the Northwest, the country now comprising Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan and northwestern India. But with the exception of the histories of Alexander's campaign this viewpoint is rarely emphasized. Still it proves to be useful. A comparison of the accounts written by Herodotus, Ctesias, the historians of Alexander and Megasthenes with such material which is found in ancient Indian sources to be connected with the Northwest turns out to be profitable and shows many common points.

It is important to keep in mind that the country here called simply the Northwest was situated on the frontier of Iranian and Indo-Aryan, but it also formed a separate sphere of culture comprising several different ethnic elements and different traditions. In other periods, like the third millennium B.C. and the early first millennium A.D., this has been eagerly studied, but it is also true in the middle of the first millennium B.C.

There are no direct literary sources belonging to the Northwest of this period. Therefore our knowledge must necessarily be collected from diverse sources. Archaeological finds and inscriptions offer primary material from the country itself. Something may be culled from contemporary Iranian, Greek and Indian sources. Further material is found from later literary sources, among them also Chinese and Central Asian, and even from modern ethnographic literature.

The present study concentrates on contemporary literary sources, but without neglecting the other sources. Some emphasis is also laid on questions of chronology and on relations between the different sources. The Greek sources are discussed both as representatives of a Western literary genre, early ethnography, and as possible sources for Northwest India. A comparison with Indian sources and other evidence is then attempted in order to show the extent to which they can be used as such sources.

PREFACE

This study has grown during a long period in several different phases. When I first became interested in Graeco-Indian relations, I began to study the remains of the *Indica* of Ctésias. For a while I thought I would write a thesis on Ctésias, and thus for a long time collected material in order to explain the *Indica* through Indian material. Yet it turned out to be unsatisfactory to simply compare the Greek accounts and the Indian material. This has often been done since the early 19th century, and generally with unsatisfactory results. It proved necessary to deal with more than one author only. Attention must be paid to the Greek material of the period in its entirety, and many general questions must be considered and discussed. The use of Indian material also needed a stricter method than was commonly used.

Then I prepared a short paper about fabulous peoples in classical sources on India for the VI World Sanskrit Conference held in Philadelphia in October 16–21 1984. Afterwards, when I was preparing this paper for publication, it somehow took its own shape and became a draft in sixty pages for the present thesis. It was already wholly different from the paper, which was never published as such. Now it is finished as far as a work like this can ever be finished.

There are many people to whom I would like to express my deep feeling of gratitude. Firstly my teachers, Prof. em. Pentti Aalto and Prof. Asko Parpola in Indology, and Prof. em. Henrik Zilliacus, Prof. em. Holger Thesleff and Prof. Maarit Kaimio in Greek philology. They have all contributed in one way or another to the evolution of this thesis. Its very beginning was a short paper on Ctésias submitted in a seminar held by Professor Zilliacus in 1974 just before his retirement. My M.A. thesis on Ctésias and the *Κυνοκέφαλοι* (Karttunen 1977) was submitted to Professors Aalto and Kaimio, and afterwards I had an occasion to expound my ideas about Ctésias' *Indica* in a seminar under Professors Aalto and Parpola. The original draft for this book was read by Professors Thesleff, Kaimio and Parpola, and the two last-mentioned have been kind enough to read a more final version as well. Each time I have benefited from their valuable advice, which has naturally not been enough to prevent me from making some errors of my own.

Special thanks are due to my two friends Martti Leiwo (Lic. Phil.) and Bertil Tikkanen (Ph.D.) for their encouragement and for many inspiring conversations we have had about my thesis and related problems; to Dr. Tikkanen also for initiating me into the secrets of the computer. The preliminary version was read and commented on, in addition to those mentioned above, by Mr. Leiwo and Professors Saara Lilja (Helsinki), Franz Ferdinand Schwarz (Graz) and Romila Thapar (Delhi). The comments Dr. Harry Falk (Freiburg) has made on my published papers have often been valuable for the present thesis. Several colleagues in related fields have always been willing to give advice from the point of their own subject area. To my deep regret the enormous scholarship and wise judgment of Prof. Jussi Aro (1928–1983) was lost to us all so early. I would also like to mention Dr.

René Gothóni (Comparative Religion), Prof. Tapani Harviainen (Semitics), Mr. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila (Semitics), Ms. Raija Mattila (Assyriology), Mr. Pertti Seppälä (Sino-logy) and my brother Krister Karttunen (Botanics).

Further I must thank Prof. U.P. Arora (Bareilly), Prof. A. Dihle (Heidelberg), Prof. P.H.L. Eggermont (Louvain), Dr. Hans Bakker (Utrecht), Dr. I. Puskás (Budapest), Prof. D. Schlingloff (München), Prof. F.F. Schwarz (Graz), Professors F. Tola and C. Dragonetti (Buenos Aires), Dr. Ja.V. Vasil'kov (Leningrad), Mrs. Rosalía Vochuk (Buenos Aires), Prof. F. Wilhelm (München), Dr. A. Zambrini (Firenze) and Prof. K. Zysk (Eastern Michigan University) for sending offprints of their studies. Without their generosity my list of sources would be short of several important items.

Mrs. Virpi Hämeen-Anttila, B.A., has with great care and skill drawn the maps according to my specifications.

Mr. Mark Shackleton, M.A., lecturer in English at the University of Helsinki, has kindly checked and patiently corrected my English.

During the work the Finnish Cultural Foundation has granted two yearly scholarships (1986–87). They were essential for the writing of this book, and I am very grateful for this assistance. I must also thank another foundation, Heikki ja Hilma Honkasen Säätiö, for a shorter scholarship (1989), which enabled me to finish the work. My sincere thanks are also due to the Finnish Oriental Society for accepting my work in its series *Studia Orientalia*.

Finally I would like to thank my wife Tuula for her patience and interest in my work, and my two sons Einar and Reino, who have been as forbearing as their tender age allows!

Klaus Karttunen

CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
CONTENTS	3
I. INTRODUCTION	5
II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES	11
1. <i>The Ships of Meluhha</i>	11
2. <i>King Solomon and the Gold of Ophir</i>	15
3. <i>Incense and Aromatics</i>	19
4. <i>Mesopotamia and the Re-establishment of the Northern Route</i>	22
5. <i>The Great Kings</i>	32
6. <i>The Opening up of the East: Bactrians and Carians</i>	39
7. <i>The Achaemenian Empire: Peoples and Wares</i>	48
8. <i>The coming of the Greeks</i>	55
9. <i>The Impact of Achaemenian Rule in India</i>	60
III. GREEK SOURCES	65
1. <i>Scylax of Caryanda</i>	65
2. <i>Hecataeus of Miletus</i>	69
3. <i>Herodotus of Halicarnassus</i>	73
4. <i>Ctesias of Cnidus</i>	80
5. <i>Incidental Notes</i>	85
6. <i>Companions of Alexander</i>	89
7. <i>Scientists on India</i>	94
8. <i>Megasthenes and Later Sources</i>	96
IV. SPURIOUS GREEK SOURCES	103
1. <i>Homer and India</i>	103
2. <i>Greek Philosophy and India</i>	108
V. THEORY AND INFORMATION IN GREEK ETHNOGRAPHY	121
1. <i>On τόποι</i>	122
2. <i>Fabulous Peoples in Greek Sources</i>	127
3. <i>India and Ethiopia – the Old Confusion</i>	134
4. <i>The Northern Paradise</i>	138
VI. INDIAN SOURCES	141
1. <i>Pāṇini and Patañjali</i>	142
2. <i>The Arthaśāstra</i>	146
3. <i>Epics</i>	147
4. <i>The Dharmaśāstra</i>	150
5. <i>Buddhist Literature</i>	151
6. <i>Veda</i>	153

VII. NORTHWESTERN INDIA IN GREEK AND INDIAN SOURCES (1)	157
1. <i>The Idea of India</i>	157
2. <i>Falconry</i>	160
3. <i>Indian Dogs</i>	163
4. <i>Fat-tailed Sheep</i>	167
5. <i>Rhinoceros</i>	168
6. <i>Gold-Digging Ants</i>	171
7. <i>Gold-Guarding Griffins</i>	177
8. <i>Cynocephali</i>	180
9. <i>Silas/Sailodā</i>	186
10. <i>Σκώληξ</i>	190
VIII. NORTHWESTERN INDIA IN GREEK AND INDIAN SOURCES (2)	193
1. <i>Fabulous Peoples in Indian Sources</i>	193
2. <i>Cannibals</i>	197
3. <i>Pāṇḍava</i>	202
4. <i>Wine</i>	207
5. <i>Heracles and Dionysus</i>	210
6. <i>The Sun Cult</i>	219
7. <i>The Customs of Taxila</i>	223
8. <i>The Bad Habits of the Northerners</i>	225
IX. CONCLUSIONS	231
REFERENCES	237
INDEX LOCORUM CITATORUM	265
GENERAL INDEX	269
MAPS	

Addenda et corrigenda

(Karttunen, *STUDIA ORIENTALIA* 65)

- p. IV
p. 2 line 7
p. 6 note 8
p. 8 line 2 from below
p. 13 line 5 from below
p. 24 line 11 from below
p. 35 note 213
p. 37 note 226 line 1
p. 46 note 309
p. 55 line 10 from below
p. 60 line 5
p. 92 note 208
p. 100 lines 6 & 10 from below
p. 103 line 5
p. 111 note 74
p. 128 note 43
p. 129 line 14
p. 132 note 70, last line
p. 136 note 98 line 2
p. 139 line 2
p. 149 lines 2 and 11 from below
p. 188 line 3 from below
p. 189 line 4 from below
p. 195 line 9
p. 196 note 15, line 6
p. 199 note 37, line 2
p. 204 line 6 from below
p. 206 note 91 line 1
p. 210 note 117
p. 213 line 5
p. 213 note 139 line 2
p. 217 line 2
p. 222 note 204 line 2
p. 222 note 205 line 5
p. 222 note 208
p. 223 note 211 line 6
p. 233 line 16
p. 234 note 15
p. 245
- Comell => Cornell
Vochuk => Vofchuk
Karttunen 1086a => Karttunen 1986a
eviudence => evidence
Μακαρηνη => Μακαρηνή
horned => horned animal
delete 'many'
Αιθίορες => Αιθίορων
ἀκτὰς => ἀκτὰς ἐπ' ἀξειφύλλους
a hereditary operators => the hereditary operators
Aśoka => Aśokan
188 => 188ff.
Deimachus => Daimachus
out => our
Tola & Dragonetti => Tola & Dragonetti 1986,
3-7 => 2-7
Byzantinian => Byzantine
Deimachus => Daimachus
τούτος => τούτοις
delete comma after 'that'
search of => search for
one => 10 000
in the north of => north of
southwest => southeast
rākṣasasya => rākṣasasya
suvaḥ => muvaḥ
ao => as
Fragments => He quotes fragments
nārataṃ => 'nārataṃ
were => that
πολυχρύσους => πολυχρύσους
River => river
μέλανος => μέλανος.
delete ῶ
perignem => per ignem
σθνοικεῖν => συνοικεῖν
othe => other
1988 316f. => 1988, 316f.
BAKKER *forthcoming*. "Some methodological considerations with respect to the critical edition of Puranic literature", has now appeared in *ZDMG* Supplement 7, 1989, 329-341.
- p. 265 column 1 line 15 from below 95 => 81
p. 265 column 1 line 4 from below 52 => 53
- In the *Index locorum* in some references page numbers must be added by one.