VII. NORTHWESTERN INDIA IN GREEK AND INDIAN SOURCES (1)

1. The Idea of India

In this chapter I shall attempt to combine the Greek and the Indian evidence. It was pointed out in chapter I. that there is a general difficulty in such comparisons. The earliest Greek descriptions of India contain very little such information which is familiar to us from Sanskrit sources, and this is simply because they were not describing the same country and culture. As we saw in chapter II.5. the very name *India* is derived from the Indus river (OI *Sindhu*) and its original meaning was the Indian satrapy conquered by Darius, perhaps containing only the middle and lower Indus country. But very soon, perhaps beginning with Hecataeus or Herodotus,[1] it came to include the other south-eastern satrapies, too, and even the lands beyond as far as they were known. India was the eastern end of the οἰκουμένη, which soon vanished into the unknown. Herodotus' India ended at the Thar desert; nothing shows that he had any idea of the India (as we now know it) on the other side of the desert, and probably Ctesias was not much wiser. Only in the southeast might they have had some knowledge of further regions, but even here we cannot easily extend the Herodotean account very far, and it is not at all so clear that the *Mount Sardo* of Ctesias really is the same as the *Sardonyx Mountains* of Ptolemy.[2] When Alexander conquered the Indus country, all historians reported that he had conquered *India*. Alexander's intelligence gained some information of the country further in the east,[3] but apparently it was considered to be a mere appendage of "proper" India. Only with Megasthenes and the Hellenistic sea trade did the conception of *India* acquire more or less the same meaning as it had at least until 1947.

On the other hand, it is possible that the early Greek idea of India had a much longer extension in the north, as many tales coming through the northern trade route to the Indus were connected with India.[4] But the countries north of India, their extension and their

[1] The use of the terms *India* (Ἰνδική, not Ἰνδία) and *Indians* (Ἰνδοί) in Herodotus is analysed by Reese (1914, 64) and Vofchuk (1982b, 86f.); see also the more general account in Wecker 1916, 1268.

[2] See chapter III.3.

[3] Tarn (1923, again 1950, 275ff.) tried to deny that Alexander had heard of the Ganges and Doab, but was competently opposed by Meyer (1927). See also Eggermont 1971, 90f.

[4] E.g. the gold-digging ants and the river *Silas*. Both are discussed later in this chapter. Of course, I am not directly including Central Asia in India as was done by some early scholars (see e.g. Weyrauch 1814, 386, and Malte-Brun 1819, *passim*). See also Lindegger 1982.

distance were clearly unknown to our early Greek authors.

Even the western boundary of India contains problems. It seems to have changed several times according to the political changes, and for the early period there is no conclusive evidence. In later literature the Indus river is sometimes mentioned as India's western frontier,[5] but probably this was not the opinion of Herodotus and his predecessors. A much longer extension of India in the west is given by Pliny,[6] but his Northwestern India might be the territory ceded by Seleucus to Candragupta Maurya and then reconquered by Antiochus III.[7] The westernmost parts of it perhaps came to be considered as a part of India only after it had been under Mauryan government, and therefore had been under some Indian influence. The historians of Alexander give the impression that India begins where the dominion of the last Achaemenids ended, but even this cannot be true for the fifth century, when there certainly was an Indian satrapy. And we do not know where the western frontier of this satrapy was. As far as the ethnic and cultural unities are concerned, there never was a definite frontier between India and Iran. Indians lived west of the Indus, and Iranians always penetrated eastwards.[8] The whole northwestern country seems to have been a place of continuous movement, interaction and mutual influence.

Too often we more or less instinctively think of the later conception of India even in the early context. But the early India was not "India" at all in the sense it was later understood. In India the Aryan sphere of culture was known as Āryāvarta, the country of the Aryans corresponding more or less to what was later Hindustan.[9] But it only came later that it to some extent coincided[10] with the Western idea of India, and most of the India of the Greeks was definitely outside it. The first knowledge of the existence of this Aryan India came with the expedition of Alexander, and though the importance and extent of countries beyond Alexander's conquests was much underestimated, Onesicritus and Megasthenes had even heard of Ceylon.[11] Beginning with Eratosthenes, who made use of the new knowledge obtained by the historians of Alexander and early ambassadors, scientific geography included in its concept of India the entire subcontinent. Later even Southeast Asia was included and this greater India was divided into two parts, Ptolemy's Ἰνδικὴ ἐντὸς Γάγγου and Ἰνδικὴ ἐκτὸς Γάγγου.

This conception has continued ever since, in "Further *India*" and "*Indo*-nesia". But for a long time India proper remained the country conquered by Alexander. Until the late antiquity it was the accepted literary conception of India,[12] and its description was still sought from the historians of Alexander and from Megasthenes.[13] With Megasthenes it

[5] For India's boundaries in classical sources see Wecker 1916, 1268f.

[6] *N. H.* 6, 23ff. In some Buddhist sources Lamghan is the western boundary of India (Lévi 1915, 90).

[7] According to Eggermont (1966b, 62ff.) Pliny may have derived his account from a history of the expedition of Antiochus.

[8] The eastern policy of the early Achaemenids was a phase in this penetration, as were later the conquests of Sakas, Parthians and Kushans.

[9] A general discussion of the confines of Āryāvarta is found in Brucker 1980, 127ff.

[10] In the south it never coincided, as the southern boundary of Āryāvarta was the Vindhyas.

[11] Schwarz 1976, *passim*.

[12] To some extent even in the Middle Ages, see Karttunen 1987.

included also the early Mauryan empire. If we accept the suggestion that the Mauryas were considered to be the successors of the Achaemenids or of Alexander in the east, the limited earlier and the later wider conception of India come in a way nearer to each other.

In early times India was only the Indus region with its confines. In the east its boundary more or less coincided with the Thar desert. And this desert where the lost river of Sarasvatī once flowed was exactly the western boundary of Āryāvarta as it is stated in the Dharmasūtras.[14] For Aryan Indians – at least those who cared about the orthodox rules – it was forbidden to travel in western countries. Many śrauta and dharma texts prescribe expiations for such a sin.[15] The Indus region and its peoples are often mentioned in this connection.[16]

In a way the position of the Indus country in respect to the Indian (Indo-Aryan) culture is problematic. Although it was not considered as a part of Āryāvarta,[17] it does not seem to have been wholly separated from its culture or devoid of Vedic religion. There were Brahmans in the Northwest too. A rebirth as a northwestern or northern – which often means the same in Indian sources – Brahman was chosen several times by

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[13] Allan 1951, 860 and especially Dihle 1963, *passim*.

[14] *BaudhDh* 1, 1, 2, 9 **prāg ādarśāt pratyak kanakhalād** (v. l. **kālakād vanād**) **dakṣiṇena himavantam udak pāriyātram etad āryāvartam/ tasmin ya ācāraḥ sa pramāṇam** — east of Ādarśa, i. e. of the region where the Sarasvatī disappears. The same boundaries are given e.g. in *VāsDh* 1, 8 and also in Pat on P 2, 4, 10 **kaḥ punar āryāvartaḥ/ prāg ādarśāt pratyak kālaka-vanād dakṣiṇena himavantam uttareṇa pāriyātram/**. An even narrower conception was mentioned in *BaudhDh* 1, 1, 2, 10 **gaṅgāyamunayor antaram ity eke**, and still another, **yāvat kṛṣṇā** (scil. **mṛgā**) **vidhāvanti** (ib. 1, 1, 2, 12; cf. Manu 2, 22f.). These and other accounts of sūtras are also given in Brucker 1980, 93ff. For a discussion of the boundaries of Āryāvarta see ib. 127ff., and Chaudhuri 1949, on Indian attitude towards foreigners (*mleccha*) in general, Thapar 1971, 411ff.

[15] *BaudhDh* 1, 1, 2, 14 **āraṭṭān kāraskarān puṇḍrān sauvīrān vaṅgān kaliṅgān prānū-nān iti ca gatvā punastomena yajeta sarvapṛṣṭhayā vā** (both western and eastern regions are included). By offering a punastoma one gets back the right to participate in the Soma libations (*GautDh* 19, 7). Other sources (see Brucker 1980, 93f.) mention other expiations.

[16] A possible reference to this kind of travel prohibition could perhaps be seen in Ctesias' *Persica* (F 1b, 10, from Diodorus). In the account of the Indian expedition of Semiramis it is told how the Indian king Staprobates was prevented by Indian soothsayers from crossing the Indus. A long time ago Wilford (1801, 531) proposed an Indian origin for the king deriving his name from OI *sthāvarapati,* but this is unlikely. What Ctesias was telling was in fact a Near Eastern or Persian tale, and the conquests of Semiramis (especially his Indian expedition) have little historical background (cf. Borszàk 1976). The passage on the Indian expedition represents the general idea of India in the West, but contains no details. Wilford's etymology is unlikely, probably the name can be explained from Iranian. And the prohibition to cross the Indus may equally well be ascribed to military reasons without any general principle involved. When the oracle prohibiting the crossing is ascribed to Zeus, this is therefore no reason to try and identify Zeus with an Indian god (like Vofchuk 1982a, 62ff. with Indra). Zeus is Zeus and exhibits only the wholly non-Indian character of the account.

[17] This may have been one of the reasons for the often wondered silence of Indian sources about Alexander's campaign, as was noticed already by Lassen (1827, 58). In addition, there is the brevity of this episode in Indian history and the fact that we have very few authentic Indian sources from this period (see chapter VI.). Moreover, the few we still have are generally not interested in invasions. Also, it has often been suggested that the rise of the Mauryas soon after Alexander contributed to the oblivion of this episode, which was confined to the peripheral Northwest. See e.g. Narain 1965.

the Bodhisattva, according to Jātakas,[18] and the companions of Alexander met Brahmans in the Indus country. There are several reasons to suspect these Brahmans of unorthodoxy, at least in the eyes of their more orthodox colleagues of Āryāvarta.[19] But we know that at least one Northwesterner was accepted and even accepted as a great authority in as orthodox a field as Sanskrit grammar. Pāṇini was from the Northwest, born in Śalātura in Gandhāra, and we can hardly ascribe unorthodox customs to him. But even then the orthodox Brahmans must have been only a thin layer in a non-Vedic country. Even later[20] when the Indus country had for a long time been under the same rule as India proper (under the Mauryas, the Kushans and the Guptas) it was still looked upon with suspicion by orthodox Brahmans.[21] The main religion there never seems to have been Brahmanism, but for a long time it was Buddhism, and Islam came later.

2. *Falconry*

In a relatively well preserved chapter[22] Ctesias described a method of falconry used in India. Instead of falcons, he says that kites, eagles and ravens were used. There is little evidence of training kites or ravens, but eagles have been used up to present times (and perhaps still are) in near Central Asia,[23] and the method of training is described correctly. With the exception of some Mesopotamian tablets Ctesias' account of falconry is the first mention of the art in literature.

The art of hunting with falcons and hawks has old traditions in Mesopotamia and Iran. Mesopotamian tablets several times mention the use of the local form of peregrine (*Falco peregrinoides* Temminck, ssp. *babylonicus* Sclater) for hawking.[24] The silence of Herodotus and Xenophon (in the *Cynegeticus*!) suggests that the art was no longer exercised in the Achaemenian period, when there is no evidence at all for it. Later it

[18] Northwestern in J. 73 and 87, northern in J. 80, 99, 117 and 149. In two cases (80 and 99) he was educated in Taxila.

[19] This will be discussed in chapter VIII.8.

[20] Pāṇini himself may only belong to the Mauryan period, see chapter VI.1.

[21] On the contempt for Northwesterners see also the account of Pañjab religion in *Mbh* 8, 30 discussed in chapter VIII.5. In *KA* 3, 18, 8 insults to the Northwestern peoples are specifically mentioned (**prājjūṇakagāndhārādīnāṁ ca janapadopavādā vyākhyātāḥ**). *Prājjūṇa* is variously explained as *caṇḍālarāṣṭra*, Eastern Huns (*prāgghūṇaka*) or Ferghana (see Kangle's note ad l. and Scharfe 1968, 321f.).

[22] Ctesias F 45, 24 and 45g (from Aelianus), most recently discussed in Lindner 1973, 117f., Karttunen 1981 and Wilhelm 1987, 347f.

[23] Cf. Karttunen 1981, 106 and Le Coq 1914, *passim*.

[24] It is called in Akkadian *kasūsu* or *ḫasmar*, in Sumerian SÚR.DÙ^{MUŠEN}. See Salonen 1973, 184, 207 and 259 and Brentjes 1962, 639.

became very popular in Iran, but our evidence is centuries later than Ctesias.[25] In Europe it seems to be known only from the fifth century A.D., when it suddenly becomes very popular in Gallia.[26]

The origins of the art of falconry in Central Asia and further east lie in darkness. Nowadays, the art is known even in Japan, and in China it seems to have had a long history.[27] In Central Asia the sources are necessarily late, but show the art already existed and was popular in the region. A hawk in the banner of Attila, onomastic evidence from Kök Turkic inscriptions, Byzantian and Slavic hawking terms borrowed from Turkic, falconry scenes in Turkestan murals (beginning in the 8th century A.D.) and Siberian art, literary sources of the late first and early second millennium A.D.[28] – all show the popularity of the art there, and many scholars have suggested that Central Asia is its original home.[29]

In India there is very little evidence on falconry before the Islamic period, when it became quite common even in Hindu circles.[30] Yet there is some evidence showing that even earlier the art was not entirely unheard of. There are brief references where it is not always clear if falconry is meant or perhaps the hunting of wild falcons. Thus the supposed first mention in the *Rigveda* is uncertain,[31] and in spite of Durga's commentary *Nirukta* 4, 24 can perfectly well refer to the wild falcon.[32] But in the Pāṇinean tradition we find *śyainaṁpāta* – which in itself could well refer to a hunting wild falcon[33] – confirmed at least in the 6th century *Kāśikāvṛtti* to refer to falconry.[34] A similar instance

[25] Seneca, *Phaedra* 816ff. on Parthian falconry, then in Sassanian art.

[26] Keller 1913, 25. There are many books on hunting in classical literature (like those by Xenophon and Grattius), but they do not mention falconry at all. On the early history of Western falconry see Lindner 1973, 111ff.

[27] According to Laufer (1909, 233f.), the oldest representation of falconry in China is found in a bas-relief of the Han period.

[28] See Le Coq 1914, 2f., for Siberian art Laufer 1909, 232, for literary sources also Esin 1976, 197ff.

[29] E.g. Laufer 1909, 231 and Vögele 1931, 15.

[30] There is a chapter on falconry in Somadeva's *Mānasollāsa* (1129 A.D.; see Wilhelm 1987, 358f.) and in the 15th century King Rudradeva of Kumaun wrote a Sanskrit handbook on the art entitled *Śyainikaśāstra* (see also Wilhelm 1987, 349ff.). Terms of Persian and Turkish origin used by Rudradeva show that *his* art was probably originally learned from Muslims. For Muslim falconers of modern (19th century) Northwest India see Burton 1852.

[31] RV 4, 26 and 27. Schneider 1971, 36f. takes it as certain with weak arguments. Without any evidence he claims that falconry was known in Central Asia from what he calls "graue Vorzeit", and supposes the Vedic Aryans learned the art from there. But in fact there is no Central Asian evidence old enough to justify such an idea. The eagle motif of Bronze Age Bactria (Parpola 1988, 239 and fig. 25) can easily be explained otherwise and the falcon carrying soma is not so near a parallel for the hunting falcon to suggest that the legend could not be invented without the knowledge of falconry. See also Schmidt 1980, 16. Dave (1985, 204f.) tried again to find Vedic evidence for falconry, but could not find enough. The question remains open.

[32] This case is mentioned as uncertain by Schneider (1971, 37).

[33] The term as such is not found in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, but sūtra 6, 3, 71 (**śyenatilasya pāte ñe**) indicates *śyainaṁpāta*, which is mentioned in *Kāś* too.

[34] *Kāś* on P 6, 3, 71 **śyenapāto 'syāṁ krīḍāyām śyainampātā**, on P 4, 2, 58 also gives **śyainaṁpātā**. The related term *śyenapāta* was used for other arts, it was for instance one of the 11 ways to hold a lasso and one of the 32 ways of fencing in the Purāṇic Dhanurvedaśāstra (*Agni-Purāṇa*

is Manu's *pakṣiṇāṁ poṣaka,* translated as a 'bird-fancier' by Bühler, but explained to be a "trainer of falcons etc. for hunting" in Medhātithi's commentary.[35] A little later in the same list there is also a *śyenajīvin,* "one who lives by falcons", and this time the reference seems certain. Bühler translates it as a falconer, Kullūka and Medhātithi (who connects it with the earlier passage) as one who buys and sells falcons.[36] Both terms are included in a list of persons not to be entertained at a śrāddha by an orthodox householder.[37]

There are some further, but still pre-Islamic passages showing a knowledge, if not the practice of the art in India. In Amarakośa *śyainaṁpātā mṛgayā* is mentioned as a method of hunting and is connected with Pāṇini 4, 2, 58.[38] In the *Rājataraṅginī* a falconer is made town prefect by king Kalaśa (1063–89 A.D.).[39] Hemādri (late 13th century A.D.) mentions in the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* the sale (and theft) of eagles and falcons.[40] Kṣemendra (middle of the 11th century A.D.) quotes from the poet Dīpaka a verse about a prince whose arm is torn by the grasp of falcon's claws.[41]

Thus it seems that although falconry was not popular in pre-Islamic days, its existence was at least known in India. The silence of the *Arthaśāstra* (despite a curious parallel use for hawks and other birds in 13, 4, 14) shows that it was not a royal sport.[42] The prohibition to entertain a falconer indicates that it was not impossible to meet a falconer in India. As the nearest country where we know falconry was practised was Iran, a good explanation would be that the art was known and in operation in Northwest India. Pāṇini makes it likely that it was already known in the early period, and Pāṇini was a Northwesterner himself.

It remains to discuss the birds mentioned by Ctesias. A great variety of different species of birds have been used in different countries where falconry is known. As for India, Rudradeva and Burton list several species of falcons, hawks, goshawks and hobbies, but no eagles or ravens.[43] But at least later the eagle (*Aquila fulva*) has been

and others, see Losch 1955, 212).

[35] Manu 3, 162 (152 in Jha's edition); Medhātithi ad l. **śyenādīnām ākhetārtham.**

[36] Manu 3, 164 (Jha 154); Kullūka ad l. **śyenair jīvati krayavikrayādinā;** Medhātithi ad l. **śyenair jīvati krayavikrayādinā prāguktaḥ pakṣiṇāṁ poṣakaḥ pañjarādi saṁsthitānāṁ dhārayitā.**

[37] Manu 3, 151–166.

[38] *AK* 2907 (3, 7), reference to P in 2906.

[39] *Rājat.* 7, 580 **sevāvaśīkṛtaḥ śyenapālaṁ sa nagarādhipam/ cakre vijayasiṁhākhyaṁ hatāśeṣamalimlucam//.**

[40] Dave 1985, 205, note 1.

[41] *Aucityavicāracarcā* p. 141: **śyenāṅghrigrahadāritottarakaro ... nṛpasutaḥ.**

[42] Wilhelm 1987, 349.

[43] *Śyainikaśāstra* 4, 20f. and Burton 1852, 13ff., see also Wilhelm 1987, 353ff. In an editor's note to the *Suśruta* edition, sūtrasth. 46, 74 (p. 190) *śaśāda/śaśaghātī/śaśaghnī* is identified as the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaëtos*), but it seems much more likely that it is a kind of goshawk (so in Shastri's note to Rudradeva), more exactly a hawk eagle (Dave 1985, 210). The crested hawk eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus* Gmelin) eats i.a. hares (Ali 1977, 25) and is used for falconry in the Northwest, where it is later called *shahbaz* and often used to hunt hares (Burton 1852, 13 and 79). On the other hand, Dave (1985, 204f.) tries to show that the golden eagle was used in falconry in ancient India (identifying *śyena* as the golden eagle), but fails to give sufficient proof.

much used and appreciated in Central Asia,[44] where it is used to catch hares and foxes, exactly as in our Ctesias passage. According to Le Coq, its training follows closely the method described by Ctesias.[45] Kites are not commonly used in falconry, but as a great variety of different kinds of eagles, hawks, falcons and even owls and shrikes[46] has been used, it does not seem too surprising. It is also possible that Ctesias has somewhat misunderstood the information given to him.[47] As to ravens, Pliny refers to a case of ravens trained for a kind of falconry in Asia Minor,[48] and later it is found used in some parts of Asia.[49]

To conclude, we have from Ctesias a remarkably early description of falconry. As the India known to Ctesias was the Northwest and as it is quite possible that the art was already known in Central Asia, it seems likely that falconry belonged to Northwest India. This explains why the art is so rarely mentioned in Indian literature – yet its existence was known. The first more or less certain mention in India comes from Pāṇini, who was himself a Northwesterner and a contemporary or not too much later than Ctesias. Reese's hypothesis that Ctesias' account belonged to the description of the Pygmies places too much confidence on Photius' careless epitome and can be dismissed.[50]

3. Indian Dogs

The fierce dogs of India, this *genus intractabilis irae*,[51] were already known in the early period beginning with Herodotus. The Achaemenian governor of Babylon had a large kennel of these dogs and Xerxes took many of them along with his army.[52] Xenophon refers to them as used in hunting deer and wild boar[53] and Ctesias praised their

[44] Le Coq 1914, 3ff. and Esin 1976, 197ff. According to Esin (197), the manual of falconry compiled by order of caliph al-Mahdī in the late 8th century mentions eagles used for falconry in Maghreb, too.

[45] Le Coq 1914, 5f.

[46] According to Vögele 1931, 36f. owls in Iran and *ibid.* 38 shrikes in Caucasus.

[47] Lindner 1973, 118. Wilhelm (1987, 348) says briefly that kites are used, while Lindner (*ibid.*) asserts that "Milane bestenfalls passiv, niemals aber aktiv an der Beizenjagd mitwirkten".

[48] *N. H.* 10, 60, 124 *nec non et recens fama Crateri Monocerotis cognomine in Erizena regione Asiae corvorum opera venantis eo quod devehebat in silvas eos insidentes cornoculo umerisque; illi vestigabant agebantque, eo perducta consuetudine ut exeuntem sic comitarentur et feri.*

[49] Vögele 1931, 31. Unfortunately, Vögele gives no details; it seems that he did not want to waste time on such an "unworthy" bird.

[50] See Reese 1914, 74 and 79f.

[51] As characterized later by Grattius (*Cynegeticus* 159), who calls them Chinese dogs. These Indian dogs have been discussed in McCrindle 1896, 363f., Keller 1909, 108ff., Orth 1913, 2545, Saletore 1975, 213f. and Lilja 1976, 11 and 79.

[52] Hdt 1, 192 (Babylon) and 7, 187 (Xerxes). A third instance is perhaps Hdt 3, 32 mentioned below.

valour.[54] Unfortunately, we have only the short sentence of Photius for Ctesias and cannot therefore be sure if he was a source for Aristoteles, who mentioned Indian dogs several times and explained their valour as the crossbreeding of the tiger and the dog.[55] Thus Indian dogs were already a well-known breed in the West well before Alexander, and the famous Molossian dogs were perhaps their descendants.[56]

The historians of Alexander and Megasthenes[57] leave no doubt that these dogs were much appreciated in the Indus country. Sopeithes had a kennel and arranged a fighting display before Alexander – dogs against bulls and lions. Alexander was very happy to be given some of these dogs as a present. Earlier Herodotus told of a similar fight between a lion cub and two pups without clearly saying that the pups were Indian.[58] The fame of Indian dogs was sealed, and they were a much appreciated breed in the West, too.[59]

When we turn to the Indian evidence, we cannot immediately find these brave Indian dogs. The common dog of Aryan India was evidently not of the same breed, according to the *Atharvaveda* he was very much afraid of lions.[60] Unlike their Iranian neighbours,[61] the Aryan Indians generally despised the dog and held it to be an impure animal.[62] Yet it is not clear how old this attitude is and how well our sources reflect the attitudes of other classes than the Brahmans. Among the common deprecation there is also some evidence of a more positive attitude. It also seems that there were several breeds.

In the *Rigveda* the dog is not particularly despised[63] and in one hymn the watchdog

[53] Xenophon, *Cyneg.* 9, 1 and 10, 1. Cf. *RV* 10, 86, 4.

[54] Ctesias F 45, 10 περὶ τῶν κυνῶν τῶν Ἰνδικῶν ὅτι μέγιστοί εἰσιν, ὡς καὶ λέοντι μάχεσθαι.

[55] Aristoteles, *H. An.* 7, 28, p. 607a; *Gen. An.* 2, 7, p. 346 and *Part. An.* 1, 3, p. 643b, also Pseudo-Aristoteles, *Probl.* 10, 45, p. 895b (all collected in Bolchert 1908, 17f. and Reese 1914, 33). The passage on cross-breeding is from *H. An.* (φασὶ δέ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τίγριος καὶ κυνός γίγνεσθαι τοὺς Ἰνδικούς, οὐκ εὐθὺς δὲ ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῆς τρίτης μίξεως· τὸ γὰρ πρῶτον γεννηθὲν θηριῶδης γίγνεσθαί φασιν. ἄγοντες δὲ δεσμεύουσιν εἰς τὰς ἐρημίας τὰς κύνας. καὶ πολλαὶ κατεσθίονται, ἐὰν μὴ τύχῃ ὀργῶν πρὸς τὴν ὀχείαν τὸ θηρίον). Later the same is told of Hyrcanian dogs by Grattius (*Cyneg.* 161ff.). The classical world had greater confidence in the possibilities of crossbreeding than we do. It was also believed that Laconian dogs descended from the crossing of dogs and foxes. See Grmek 1988, 50f.

[56] See Lilja 1976, 11, 50 and 79.

[57] Aristobulus F 40 and probably Onesicritus (see Pearson 1960, 225), Megasthenes F 21a), then often in later literature, e.g. Diodorus 17, 92, Curtius 9, 1, 6, Pliny 8, 61, 148 and Aelianus 4, 19 and 8, 1.

[58] Hdt 3, 32. Orth (1913, 2545) identifies them as Indians.

[59] Egyptian sand has preserved funeral verses dedicated to the Indian dog of Zeno, a Ptolemaic fiscal official of the third century B.C. (Stein 1929, 35).

[60] *AV* 4, 36, 6cd **śvânaḥ siṁhám iva dṛṣṭvā té ná vindante nyáñcanam** "like dogs on seeing a lion, they do not find a hiding-place" (tr. by Whitney).

[61] In Iran the dog was much appreciated as a creation of Ahura Mazda, see the many passages of the Avesta (especially *Videvdat* 13) quoted by Miller (1880, 40ff.) and Willman-Grabowska (1932, 30ff.).

[62] In the modern Northwestern tradition the dog is not important. Dogs are occasionally mentioned accompanying gods and demons (Jettmar 1975, 252 and 354) and their faithfulness to men is appreciated (*ibid.* 421). A more negative attitude is seen in Kalash mythology, where the devil is said to have a dog's appearance when seen by men (*ibid.* 338, see also 438) and the sacrifice of dogs is several times mentioned as an offence against the gods (*ibid.* 344, 346 and 353).

is addressed very favourably.[64] Indra, Rudra and Yama had dogs.[65] But already in the later Veda the dog's impurity is well attested,[66] and in later literature it is a common theme. In the aforementioned list of sinful vocations causing exclusion from a śrāddha we find a "breeder of sporting dogs".[67] But here it is also interesting to notice that dogs *were* bred for sporting purposes. It is also noteworthy that the dog is not always despised in popular religion.[68]

There are passages that allow us to suspect that especially among Kṣatriyas the attitude towards dogs was different before the Brahmanic influence became too overwhelming. In any case there have always been people who have kept dogs for guarding and hunting purposes. The fierce breed known in the West was not unknown. The watchdog of the *Rigveda* was used in hunting as were the Indian dogs in Xenophon. While Sopeithes' dogs fought with lions, the Mācala dogs of Vidarbha are said to have killed tigers.[69] In the great epic a pack of hunting dogs rouses a sleeping lion.[70] One Jātaka tells how the king goes to hunt "with a well-trained pack of clever pedigree hounds"[71] and another makes a clear difference between the dogs living in a cemetery and the pack of hounds bred in the royal kennel.[72] In the text it becomes clear that royal kennels were a usual feature of the time.[73]

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[63] See Hopkins 1894, 154f. and Willman-Grabowska 1932, *passim*.

[64] *RV* 7, 55, 2 – 4 **yád arjuna sārameya datáḥ piśaṁga yácchase/ vīva bhrājanta ṛṣṭáya úpa srákveṣu bápsato ni ṣú svapa// stenáṁ rāya sārameya táskaraṁ vā punaḥsara/ stoṭ̣ṛn índrasya rāyasi kím asmân ducchunāyase ni ṣú svapa// tváṁ sūkarásya dardṛhi táva dardartu sūkaráḥ/ stoṭ̣ṛn índrasya rāyasi kím asmân ducchunāyase ni ṣú svapa//.**

[65] Indra and Yama discussed in Willman-Grabowska 1932. A mighty dog of Indra is also found in the *Mahākaṇhajātaka* (J. 469). For Rudra see *AV* 11, 2, 30 (**rudrásyailabakārébhyo 'saṁsūktagilébhyaḥ/ idáṁ mahâsyebhyaḥ śvábhyo akaraṁ námaḥ**) and *VS* 16, 28 (**namaḥ śvabhyaḥ śvapatibhyaś ca vo namo namo bhavāya ca rudrāya ca namaḥ**), Arbman 1922, 37 and 257ff. and Falk 1986, 18f.

[66] Macdonell & Keith s.v. *śvan*, Gonda 1980, see index s.v. *dog*. An early example of the Brahman contempt for dogs is found in *ŚB* 12, 4, 1, 4, where a dog as well as a vicious boar and a ram defile an Agnihotra offering if one of them runs between the fires (**trayo ha tvāva paśavo 'medhyāḥ/ īrvarāha aiḍakaḥ śvā teṣāṁ padyadhiśrite 'gnihotre 'ntareṇa kaścit saṁcaret kiṁ tatra karma kā prāyaścittir iti**).

[67] Manu 3, 164 (Jha 154) **śvakrīḍin**, Kullūka ad l. **krīḍārthaṁ śunaḥ poṣayati**, Medhātithi ad l. **śvabhiḥ krīḍati śvakrīḍī krīḍārthaṁ śuno bibharti**.

[68] Mitra 1928 mentions several examples from different regions.

[69] *JB* 2, 442 **te haite vidarbheṣu mācalās sārameyā api ha śārdūlaṁ mārayanti** "these are the Mācala dogs of the Vidarbha country, descendants of Saramā. They can even kill a tiger" (tr. by W. Rau).

[70] *Mbh* 2, 37, 8 **vṛṣṇisiṁhasya suptasya tatheme pramukhe sthitāḥ/ bhaṣante tāta saṁkruddhāḥ śvānaḥ siṁhasya saṁnidhau//.**

[71] *Bhallāṭiyajātaka* (J. 504) **susikkitakoleyyakasunakhagaṇaparivuto.**

[72] *Kukkurajātaka* (J. 22), see e.g. the verse said by the dog (Bodhisattva) living in a cemetery:

ye kukkurā rājakulasmi vaddhā
koleyyakā vaṇṇabalūpapannā
te 'me na vajjhā, mayam asma vajjhā,
nāyaṁ saghaccā dubbalaghātikāyan ti.

[73] See also Chattopadhyay 1967, 232. Most of the following references are found from her article.

In Indian epics we often find these royal hounds, although the Brahmanic contempt comes through now and then. A hunting party of the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava princes is accompanied by a dog and its keeper.[74] Our Northwestern link is found in the *Rāmāyaṇa,* where Bharata is given a present of hounds who were bred in the palace, huge dogs with fangs like spears and the strength and courage of tigers.[75] They come from the Kaikeyas, the Kekaya country of the Pañjab.[76]

Hunting with a pack of hounds (*śvagaṇikā*) was a favourite pastime of the Kṣatriyas. It was apparently mentioned by Pāṇini[77] and Chattopadhyay gives several references to Kālidāsa and later poetry.[78] Some of these hounds have golden leashes or collars. A Bharhut scene depicts the hunter attacking his game with hounds.[79] The *Arthaśāstra* prescribes a fine of 54 paṇas for the theft or killing of dogs and other pets[80] and refers to dog kennels.[81] The Superintendent of Pasture Lands has among his helpers hunters with packs of hounds.[82] Varāhamihira devotes one chapter (*BS* 62) to the prognostics of dogs and tells the characteristics of a good dog bringing welfare to his keeper. There is a late account of hunting with a pack of hounds in Rudradeva's *Śyainikaśāstra* (3, 64–69).

The most famous dog in ancient India is without doubt the faithful dog of Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Mahāprasthānikaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata.* The dog accompanies his master on the hard journey to heaven, but is not admitted inside, and loyally Yudhiṣṭhira declines to enter without his companion. Perhaps we might connect this with the non-(Vedic-)Aryan features of the Pāṇḍavas such as their polyandry, still met with in the Western Himalayas but a horror to the Aryans.[83] With this Himalayan connection it is interesting to notice that in a much earlier age (the early second millennium B.C.) the dog seems to have enjoyed a honoured position in the Neolithic culture of Kashmir, where it was sometimes the custom to bury the dog with its owner.[84]

Royal pedigree hounds (Sanskrit *kauleya*) were a part of Kṣatriya life and seem to have been found throughout India. Yet there is at least some evidence suggesting that keeping dogs was common in the Northwest and that Northwestern dogs were

[74] *Mbh* 1, 123, 15f. **atha droṇābhyanujñātāḥ kadācit kurupāṇḍavāḥ/ rathair viniryayuḥ sarve mṛgayām arimardanāḥ// tatropakaraṇaṁ gṛhya naraḥ kaścid yadṛcchayā/ rājann anujagāmaikaḥ śvānam ādāya pāṇḍavān//.**

[75] *R* 2, 64, 21 **antaḥpure 'tisaṁvṛddhān vyāghravīryabalānvitān/ daṁstrāyudhān mahākāyāñ śunaś copāyanaṁ dadau//** As to the strength and courage of tigers, cf. what the classical sources say about their hybrid origin.

[76] Saletore 1975, 213. According to Dey (s.v.), Kekaya is situated between the Satlej and the Beas.

[77] P 4, 4, 11 **śvagaṇāṭ ṭhañca**, according to *Kāś* ad l., one who **śvagaṇena carati** is **śvāgaṇikaḥ**.

[78] Chattopadhyay 1967.

[79] Agrawala 1963, 162.

[80] *KA* 4, 10, 2.

[81] *KA* 14, 3, 23 **śunakaphelakāḥ**.

[82] *KA* 2, 34, 9 **lubdhakaśvagaṇinaḥ parivrajeyur araṇyāni.**

[83] See below, in VII.13.

[84] Allchin & Allchin 1982, 113. Brentjes (in Tucci 1977, 93) mentions dogs in the petroglyphs of Swat (Godgara I) and compares them with Central Asian scenes of worship which include dogs.

appreciated for their strength and valour. From classical sources we know that the Northwestern dogs were indeed worthy of this fame. Their breeding was begun quite early, as we meet Indian dogs in the Near East as early as the fifth century B.C. It even seems likely that there were watchdogs in the Indus civilization.[85]

4. Fat-tailed Sheep

I shall mention only in passing the Ctesianic account of the fat-tailed sheep (and goats) of India.[86] If there is any truth at all in his account (in which case we must at least ignore the goats) then it clearly must belong to the Northwest country. In modern times fat-tailed sheep are common in some areas of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia, but not found further in the east.[87] Unfortunately, however, we do not know if they were there nearly two and a half millennia ago. Indian literature is silent about them, and the first information even about the fat-tailed sheep in Iran is only by Marco Polo.[88] Of course, sheep in general were kept from very early times (in the Indus civilization and earlier) in the Northwest,[89] and there is probably no reason even to expect that the Indian texts would inform us about the tails of Northwestern sheep.

On the other hand, we know that these sheep have a very long history in Arabia, which may have been their country of origin. Arabian fat-tailed sheep are mentioned by Herodotus, who said that they have small wagons under their tails.[90] Earlier they were depicted in Sumerian art of the late fourth millennium,[91] and the rock engravings of Central Arabia (third or second millennium B.C.) show them too.[92] There are several different breeds – Herodotus mentions two – and the Sumerian and Arabian types are said to be different.[93] The Central Asian breed with an exceptionally heavy tail could be third.

Ctesias is not reliable enough an author to be taken as the sole authority for the

[85] Conrad 1968, 234ff. See also Meadow 1987, 890 (on dogs in Tepe Yahya and Daimabad).

[86] Ctesias F 45, 27 and F 45i).

[87] Wilson 1836, 46 and Lambrick 1975, 102. Watt s.v. *sheep* does not discuss the fat-tailed sheep. As far as goats are concerned I have never heard (with the exception of Ctesias) that they could have such a tail (see e.g. Brentjes 1962, 549ff.).

[88] Benedict 1941, 169.

[89] Conrad 1968, 219ff., Meadow 1987, 904ff. and B. Compagnoni in Stacul 1987, 142ff. Among the bone finds it is often difficult to distinguish between sheep and goats (Conrad 1968, 219), and in seals and sculpture the tail is rarely clearly discernible (*ibid.* 220), which might indicate the absence of fat-tailed sheep.

[90] Hdt 3, 113. See also Keller 1909, 312.

[91] Anati 1968, 1.

[92] Anati 1968, 7ff.

[93] Anati 1968, 4, see also Keller 1909, 312.

existence of fat-tailed sheep in the Northwest as early as the fifth century B.C. But at least he makes it a possibility worth considering.

5. Rhinoceros

The one-horned Indian ass described by Ctesias,[94] later destined to be one of the prototypes of the unicorn legend, seems to owe its origin to the Indian rhinoceros. Several details in Ctesias' description seem to refer to the rhino,[95] and especially the anti-poisonous effects ascribed to its horn prove the eastern origin of the account. But what is curious is that this medical use of rhinoceros horn is not attested in ancient India[96] but in China, where it seems to have an old tradition.[97] It is unlikely that Ctesias could have known anything of China or heard of such Chinese customs as the use of the rhinoceros horn. It is also unlikely that Ctesias could in this respect have influenced China, where the horn was in fact used to prevent poisoning,[98]. while Ctesias' account is simply a literary

[94] Ctesias F 45, 45 and F 45q. Megasthenian (F 27b) ἵππους ... μονοκέρωτας ἐλαφοκράνους are perhaps the same (on these see also Sachse 1981, 31f.), but probably his account is not derived from Ctesias. Megasthenes (not Cleitarchus as suggested by Eggermont, 1984a, 227f.) was probably the source for Pliny, *N. H.* 8, 31, 76 (*in India ... asperrimam autem feram monocerotem, reliquo corpore equo similem, capite cervo...*). With Ctesias and Pliny we can hardly accept Sachse's hypothesis that Megasthenes actually meant a mythological figure (Ṛṣyaśṛṅga). In the one-horned καρτάζωνος of Aelian (16, 20) with its Indian name we have a better account of the Indian rhinoceros. For other references in later classical literature see Steier 1935.

[95] See Steier 1935, 1780ff. Ctesias' description might also owe some features to the real wild ass (or even an antelope, see Steier 1781f.) of Northwest India. As some seem to think that the great difference between the rhino and the ass makes it impossible that Ctesias could point to a rhino (an animal, however, he had not even seen), we can notice with Steier that the rhino does not differ more from the ass than, say, the hippopotamus from the horse or the elephant (*bos Lucanus*) from the bull. See also Laufer 1914, 96f., note.

[96] The oldest reference to its use in India according to Watt (s.v. *rhinoceros*) comes from the Dutch traveller, Linschoten (1590). Laufer (1914, 155, note) adds a slightly earlier account by Garcia da Orta (the middle of the 16th century), who had himself noticed its use in India. Bautze (1985, 426f.) refers to the rarity of carved rhinoceros horns in India, and suggests that European travellers were merely "seeing" their own Western traditions in India. But while stressing the Western nature of the tradition, Bautze disregards its origin in Ctesias and its existence in China (briefly mentioned by him on page 426). It will be seen that my interpretation is somewhat different. In Sanskrit sources the common method of discovering whether food or drink is poisoned is to watch the reactions of different animals (especially birds) brought near it or given a sample of it (see Kapadia 1953 and Suśruta, Kalpasth. 1, 28ff.). Among medical glossaries *Dhanv* does not mention the rhino, and *Rājan* 19, 2 (p. 402) gives only a list of synonyms (**khaḍgaḥ khaḍgamṛgaḥ krodhī mukhaśṛṅgo mukhevalī/ maṇḍako vajracarmā ca khaḍgī ca prīṇasaś ca saḥ**).

[97] See Laufer 1914, 75 and 153ff. (note). Later it was also used in Europe (Laufer l. c., Briggs 1931, 277).

[98] It would be interesting to know if rhinoceros horn actually has any virtues. But I have not seen any

curiosity. In China rhinoceros horn is also reputed to be an aphrodisiac, and unfortunately for this seriously endangered species it is still used for this purpose in East Asia.

Nevertheless, Ctesias' account and Chinese use must have some link. There is still a possibility that the horn has been used in India, despite the silence of Indian sources. This silence is perhaps not conclusive. In spite of some unorthodox features,[99] Indian classical medicine mostly complied with orthodoxy, and this is perhaps reflected in the fact that drugs of animal origin are very rare in Indian *materia medica*. The most important exception seems to be the use of the meat of some animals as a medicine, mentioned for instance by Caraka.[100] The meat of peacocks, mongooses, godhā lizards and spotted deer is even used as a preventive against poison,[101] but the rhinoceros is never mentioned in this connection. It may well be that rhinoceros horn was not a part of established medicine and was not therefore mentioned in its literature. Even then it could be used by charlatans or tribal medicine men. The Chinese use of the horn and the existence of the animal only in India and further east[102] seem to prove that Ctesias had genuine eastern information, yet he could not have acquired it from China.

We may notice that even in Aryan India the rhinoceros was not without religious and magical significance. Most of the evidence has been collected by Briggs and Bautze.[103] In medicine its meat is prescribed as "a destroyer of cough, astringent, remover of winds, good for liver, pure, life-prolonger, restrainer of urine and keeper of (health?)".[104] Some older Dharmasūtras allow the consumption of its meat, too.[105] There is a connection between the rhino and ancestors. One group (gaṇa) of ancestors is called the Eka-śṛṅgas,[106] and rhinoceros' meat is offered to the ancestors in a śrāddha.[107] In this

account of its chemical composition.

[99] Like dissection in Suśruta, Śārīrasth. 5, 47ff., cf. Zysk 1986.

[100] Caraka, Cikitsitasth. 8, 149ff., see also Chattopadhyay 1968, 59ff.

[101] Suśruta, Kalpasth. 1, 81 **mayūrān nakulān godhāḥ pṛṣatān hariṇān api/ satataṁ bhakṣayec cāpi rasāṁs teṣāṁ pibed api**. Kalpasth. 1 is a general account of the prevention of poisoning (Annapānarakṣākalpa).

[102] It is impossible that Ctesias' account could point to the African species.

[103] Briggs 1931, 280ff. and Bautze 1985, 405ff., some further references are given in Chakravarti 1906, 370f. In addition to literary sources, Bautze also pays attention to archaeology and art.

[104] Chakravarti 1906, 371 from Suśruta (Sūtrasth. 46, 103 **kaphaghnaṁ khaḍgapiśitaṁ kaṣāyam anilāpaham/ pitrīyaṁ pavitram āyuṣyaṁ baddhamūtraṁ virūkṣaṇam**). The metre demands of course the reading **pitryaṁ**, and instead of being 'good for the liver' (Chakravarti) both seem to mean 'relating to ancestors' (so explained also in the Hindi ṭīkā). According to Monier Williams, **virūkṣaṇa** is 'drying, astringent'. Caraka contains some further uses of rhinoceros flesh and dung, see Chakravarti l. c.

[105] *GautDh* 17, 27 (list of forbidden food with exceptions) **pañcanakhāś cāśalyakaśaśaśvāvidgodhākhaḍgakacchapāḥ**. The same list (with modifications) is found in *ĀpDh* 1, 5, 17, 37, *ViDh* 51, 6 and Manu 5, 18. But *YDh* 1, 177 mentioned by Chakravarti (1906, 371), does not mention rhino meat (at least in Stenzler's edition). Some later texts forbid it, see Chakravarti l. c. On rhinoceros meat being eaten see also Bautze 1985, 406f., 409 and 411f.

[106] *Mbh* 2, 11, 47 Bomb. (133*, 1, 6 crit. ed.) quoted in Defourny 1976, 22, note 16.

[107] *GautDh* 15, 15 ... **pitaraḥ prīṇanti ... vārdhrīṇasena māṁsena kālaśākacchāgalohakhaḍgamāṁsair madhumiśraiś cānantyam**, again in Manu 3, 272 and some other texts (see

connection we may perhaps note that according to a late Purāṇa rhinoceros meat is said to please the goddess for 500 years.[108] Briggs also mentions some present uses of the rhino in connection with ancestors.[109]

Briggs quotes both from literature and present usage examples of yogis using rings or earrings made of rhinoceros horn, and some further cases where its hide, blood or meat is used for magical purposes.[110] As to vessels made of rhinoceros horn or hide, we may add one reference to sacrificial vessels made of either.[111]

Defourny has attempted to explain the religious importance of the one-hornedness – met also in the one tusk of the Varāha Avatāra, in the horned dolphin saving Manu from the deluge and in the one-horned ascetic Ṛṣyaśṛṅga[112] (and in the one tusk of Gaṇapati). When horns are normally in pairs, the one horn pointing directly to heaven is naturally considered important. Its verticality is compared with the offering post (yūpa) and the *axis mundi*. Therefore, it was also regarded as a horn of salvation.[113] This might explain the magical power ascribed to rhinoceros and especially its horn. We may also note that the horn and especially the single horn is sometimes regarded as a symbol of the ploughshare and fertility.[114]

When we come back to the account of Ctesias, there is still a further explanation. In spite of the possibility mentioned above, considering the silence of Indian sources an origin outside India proper is much more likely. As South-East Asia as the origin of Ctesias' account is as impossible as China, we are left with our Northwestern country, the country described by Ctesias as India. Nowadays, it is sometimes pointed out that the rhinoceros lives only in the very Northeast of India, but this is a rather recent development. We have seen that it was not unknown to Aryan India, and there is also evidence, both earlier and later than Ctesias, showing that it was found even in the Indus country.

Among the seals of the Indus civilization there are several beautiful pieces showing realistic rhinoceroses.[115] A Jātaka mentions rhinos (*khagga*) living near the Western Ocean.[116] In the early sixteenth century A.D., we have an account by emperor Bābar

Chakravarti 1906, 371 and Bautze 1985, 411).

[108] *Kālikāpurāṇa, Rudhirādhyāya* referred to by Briggs (1931, 281).

[109] Briggs 1931, 280ff.

[110] Briggs 1931, 280ff.

[111] *ViDh* 54, 19 **śleṣmajatumadhūcchiṣṭaśaṅkhaśuktitrapusīsakṛṣṇalohaudumbara-khaḍgapātravikrayī cāndrāyaṇaṁ kuryāt.** *Khaḍgapātra* is translated by Jolly as a vessel made of rhinoceros *horn*, but according to Bautze (1985, 410f.) the skin is actually meant. That the skin was also used for armoury is told in *JB* (2, 103 **khaḍgakavaca**) and *KA* (2, 18, 16 ...**śiṁśumārakakhaḍgi-dhenukahastigocarmakhuraśṛṅgasaṁghātaṁ varmāṇi**, according to Kangle this should mean entire skins with hooves and horns used as armoury). Jaipur museum contains some 18th century shields made of rhinoceros hide (Bautze 1985, 410).

[112] There is plenty of literature on Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, see e.g. Lüders 1897, Schlingloff 1973 and Vasil'kov 1979.

[113] Defourny 1976, 20ff.

[114] Atre 1985, 5f.

[115] Pointed out in this context by Briggs (1931, 280) and Bautze (1985, 406ff.). For illustrations see Joshi & Parpola 1987, seals M 274–277, H 88 and K 39. See also Conrad 1968, 253. On the so-called unicorn seals see Atre 1985.

about a rhinoceros hunt near Peshawar, and even then the animal was no rarity there.[117] Rudradeva of Kumaon reported that rhinos were hunted by a team of five or six horsemen.[118] We do not know what kind of rhinoceros lore was current in the Northwest in the days of Ctesias, but it might have been something of the kind told by Ctesias. Among the countries where rhinoceroses have been found, Northwest India is the best possible link for China, India and ancient Greece.

6. Gold-Digging Ants

In the well-known passage of his Indian logos Herodotus tells the curious story about the gold-digging ants. These giant ants and the gold sand of their country are given as an explanation for the great amount of gold brought from India to the Great King.[119] Some additional information was later given by Nearchus, who said he saw some skins of these insects, and by Megasthenes, who located the story in the land of Derdae, probably corresponding to the modern Dards, known to have been gold merchants in ancient as well as in modern times.[120] There were also some horns of the giant ant, which were brought to the west.[121] The ants are quite often mentioned in later literature,[122] but all real information seems to go back to the three authors mentioned above.[123]

The story has fascinated scholars ever since, and the interest increased when Wilson

116 *Daddabhajātaka* (J. 322).

117 Quoted in Briggs 1931, 279.

118 *Śyainikaśāstra* 3, 37f. **khaḍgābhisaraṇe śastā pañcaśā eva sādinaḥ// vaśyās turaṅgāḥ śasyante śikṣitā ye gatāgate/ tvarayā pṛṣṭhato vedhyaḥ kṣudraśaktyā tu sādinā//** and 3, 24 on the merits of hunting **tathārthopārjanaṁ mattahastigaṇḍānubandhanāt/ viṣāṇājina-kastūrimaṇipakṣādyupārjanāt**. *Viṣāṇa* may refer either to the elephant's tusks or to rhinoceros horn.

119 Hdt 3, 102–105. For a different interpretation of the actual form of this tribute see Walser 1966, 95.

120 Nearchus F 8; Megasthenes F 23; on the gold trade of the Dards see Tucci 1977, 18ff. and P'jankov 1987, 266f., on Megasthenes Stein 1932, 237.

121 Pliny 11, 36, 111. This may also be due to a purely Western fictitious interpretation of some curiosity.

122 References in Schwanbeck 1846, 72 and Schiern 1873, 5ff. (Schiern goes beyond classical antiquity).

123 To these we should perhaps add a Sophocles fragment from Photius' *Lexicon* (Nauck F 26 = Radt F 29) apparently locating the gold-digging ants in Ethiopia (Σοφοκλῆς Αἰθίοψι τοὺς ἐσφιγμένους μύρμηκας τῇ σαρκώσει· τετράπτεροι γὰρ νῶτον ἐν δεσμώσασιν σφηκοὶ κελαινόρινες). In this case the similar tradition attested in Philostratus and some other late authors would also originate in the early period. But though the Sophocles fragment belongs to a play called *Aethiopes*, its contents are not restricted to Ethiopia, and for the fragment in question no location is indicated. Nauck suggested that it may belong to a description of Mesopotamia, Memnon's native land. In any case, the confusion between India and Ethiopia is so old and well attested long before Sophocles that we hardly need to bother with *Aethiopes*.

found an Indian parallel.[124] A passage in the *Mahābhārata* describes the presents brought to Yudhiṣṭhira from various countries and directions, and among them the ant gold is also mentioned.[125] The direction of its origin is clearly in the north or northwest, as peoples like the Khaśas are mentioned just before. Lately it has been shown that this is not the only reference to ant gold in Indian sources. According to Buddhaghosa, the *hāṭaka* gold mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra,* the *Mahābhārata* and Buddhist canonical scriptures, is also brought by ants.[126] There are also some stories and references to ant gold in Tibetan and Mongolian sources,[127] but unfortunately they belong to a much later period, and an Indian (or even Western) origin is not excluded as their source, though Laufer tried to show the opposite.

Many theories have been proposed in order to explain the gold-digging ants and it is not my intention to enter into a detailed discussion of them or make a choice among them. In any case I think that there have already been enough more or less unfounded guesses about which explanation sounds the best. But perhaps a short survey of the various theories and their origin is still worthwile and may shed some light on the general nature of the question.

According to Schiern, the last scholar who gave his support to a literal explanation – that there really were giant ants who dug gold somewhere in the then unknown wastes of Central Asia – was Larcher in 1786. A little later (1788) Rennell suggested that the ants were just ordinary termites who had been greatly exaggerated by storytellers.[128]

Count Veltheim suggested that the gold came from Gobi, where it supposedly was washed by children using fox skins. The heaps of washed sand near the river resembled ant hills and thus the story of the gold-digging ants was fabricated in order to keep strangers out. The skin seen by Nearchus was, of course, a fox skin.[129]

The idea that the story was invented in order to keep strangers out of the gold mines or gold washing places was sound, but the fox rested apparently only on the fact that foxes are mentioned as a comparison in classical sources. When it is said that the ants are bigger than foxes, this is of course no reason to say that the ants are foxes. Therefore Veltheim's fox was soon replaced by another theory using the same explanation for the origin of the gold (washed in Central Asia) but choosing another animal. This animal was the so-called marmot Moorcroft had observed in Ladakh.[130] As an explanation for the gold-digging

[124] Wilson 1841, 135f.

[125] *Mbh* 2, 48, 4:

te vai pipīlikaṁ nāma varadattaṁ pipīlikaiḥ/
jātarūpaṁ droṇameyam ahārṣuḥ puñjaśo nṛpāḥ//

[126] Hinüber 1985, 1123f. referring to *Manorathapūraṇī* 2, 239, 21 (quoted by Hinüber **hāṭakan ti kipillikāhi nīhaṭasuvaṇṇaṁ**).

[127] See Laufer (1908) and Herrmann (1938, 13ff.), who summarized the Central and (rather irrelevant) East Asian evidence.

[128] Schiern 1873, 9, note 3 (Larcher, from his Herodotus translation, Vol. III, Paris 1786, p. 339) and 10, note 1 (Rennell). Several other early theories are discussed by Malte-Brun (1819, 376ff.) and Schiern (1873, 8ff.). Few were sober enough to follow the wise conclusion of Albertus Magnus (13th century A.D.): *Sed hoc non satis est probatum per experimentum* (quoted in Schiern 1873, 8).

[129] Veltheim 1800, 273ff.

ants it was first proposed by Malte-Brun,[131] in another form by Ritter.[132] The last-mentioned has been one of the favourite theories supported by many scholars.[133]

Wilford received much less support with his suggestion of a leopard, but notwithstanding his bad reputation as a scholar and his questionable method of comparing modern Hindi words for big ant (Wilford's *cheuntá*, apparently *cīṁṭā*) and leopard (*chittá*, i. e. *cītā*), he was favoured by Alexander von Humboldt.[134]

Among lesser theories of the 19th century, hamsters (Heeren in 1818),[135] hyenas (Wahl in 1807) and jackals (Kruse in 1856) were suggested. Bastian (in 1868) even suggested banners illustrated with ants (and griffins) waving above some forerunner of the Great Wall.[136] Showing a rare common sense among these early scholars Mannert was content with the notice that the Indians "waren wohl klug genug, die wahren quellen ihrer Schätze nicht anzugeben."[137]

A popular new theory was proposed by Schiern in 1873. According to him, the ants are Tibetan miners, who are small of stature, industrious like ants and dig many shafts which resemble ants' holes.[138] This theory has found many adherents among scholars,[139] in spite of the huge chronological gap between any known Tibetan miners[140]

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[130] Moorcroft 1818, 442 (this is a reset reprint of the 1812 original, where the page number is 439 according to Ritter 1833, 593) wrote that in the country between the Satlej and the Indus he saw "animals of fawn colour, about twice the size of a rat, without a tail, and having much longer ears than rats; *Q. Marmot?* They burrow in the ground..." The animal in question has often been identified with the Himalayan marmot also found in Central Asia, but from Prater 1971, 202 we learn that both the Himalayan marmot (*Marmota bobak* Müller) and the long-tailed marmot (*Marmota caudata* Jacquemont) have tails (13 and 30 cm resp.) and very small ears. The ground squirrel or suslik (*Citellus*) has also tail and small ears. Therefore I cannot identify the animal seen by Moorcroft, but as far as the gold digging ants are concerned, I doubt if it is really important to know which kind of animal Moorcroft actually saw.

[131] Malte-Brun 1819, 380f. suggested a combined theory in which Rennell's termites, Veltheim's fox skins and Moorcroft's marmots were all included.

[132] Ritter 1833, 659f.

[133] E.g. Schauffelberger 1845, 40, Schwanbeck 1846, 73, Lassen 1847, 850, Bunbury 1879, 257, Issberner 1888, 17, Tomaschek 1901, 2153, Wecker 1916, 1301, Charpentier 1918, 480 (hesitating), Chantraine 1927, 43f. (note 2), Hennig 1930, 331 and even Karsai 1978, 66. Those who care about the animal mostly identify it as the Himalayan marmot. Sachse (1981, 71) accepts a slightly modified version of the marmot theory: as marmots are gentle animals without any correspondence to fierce ants, some local (Dardistan) beasts of prey may have had their characteristics applied to the marmots when the ant story was created. The advocates of the marmot theory are probably interested in hearing that there is some kind of a marmot cult in Hunza and Tibet (mentioned by Jettmar 1975, 282).

[134] Wilford 1822, 468 and Humboldt 1847, 422, note 65.

[135] Heeren 1818, 253 "eine Thierart, die dem Hamster gleich sich in die Erde gräbt" but adding wisely "es kann auch sein, dass es blosse Dichtung ist ... eine Karavanenlegende."

[136] All quoted by Schiern 1873, 11f. (Wahl and Kruse) and 17 (Bastian).

[137] Mannert 1829, 12.

[138] Schiern 1873, *passim*. In a more general way a human explanation was suggested by Malte-Brun, who wrote: "Ne ce pourroit-il pas aussi qu'une tribu indienne eut réellement porté le nom de *fourmis*...?" (Malte-Brun 1819, 382, quoted also by Schiern 1873, 16).

[139] McCrindle 1874, 94 and 1896, 341f. and 1901, 44f., McCartney 1954, 234 and still Sedlar 1980, 12, without even mentioning other theories.

[140] Even when known, they are mostly restricted to Ladakh.

and our sources.

This miner theory was approved by Ball, who completed it by suggesting that the gold-guarding griffins of Ctesias[141] were the big mastiffs of the same (or at least the modern Ladakhi) miners.[142] These mastiffs were mentioned by Schiern, but only as an explanation of some characteristics of the ants, such as their extreme swiftness and their meat-eating.[143] Some later scholars have simply identified the ants with the mastiffs.[144] On one occasion McCrindle even brought the Moorcroftian marmots into the picture by explaining that the skins are those of marmots, whilst the living ants are miners.[145]

Further animals have been brought in by way of explanation. There is a theory about badgers, but the evidence lies as far as away in Nevada, U. S. A.[146] Without mentioning Wilford, Herrmann suggested leopards or other beasts who killed miners.[147] Recent support has also been given to an old idea of George Rawlinson, who suggested that the ants were pangolins.[148] Reese combined the pangolin and the marmot theories by referring to the sandhills of auriferous earth heaped up by pangolins and interpreted by the people as done by marmots because they had never actually seen nocturnal pangolins. Only in India was the animal referred to as an ant.[149] Another version of the theory was proposed by Jennison, who located it in the Yarkand basin. According to him, the burrowing animal was the pangolin, but the danger came not from it but from the warlike nomads of the region. He was sure enough of his explanation to write: "The story is so simple that the naturalist can have no difficulty in naming the gold-finding ant, nor in explaining the historian's lapses from accuracy."[150] I venture to disagree.

It is true that the curious appearance of a pangolin fits much better with imaginary ants than that of marmots or dogs (or miners!), but there are also serious difficulties. The pangolin seems to be one of those animals which avoids exposing its burrows and does not heap up sandhills.[151] Further, it is apparently met neither in Tibet, Ladakh and

[141] See next chapter.

[142] Ball 1888, 341f. This idea is often ascribed to McCrindle (1901, 44f.), but he was in fact citing Ball without even omitting a reference.

[143] Schiern 1873, 44ff.

[144] Suggested already by Ball (*l. cit.*) and then proposed by Rawlinson (1926, 32f.) and Bevan (1922, 396).

[145] McCrindle 1901, 3. Among arguments used for the miner theory we can notice the supposed heaps of alluvial gold resembling ant hills (ascribed to Wilson and mentioned approvingly by McCrindle and others on several occasions). But Wilson's (1841, 136) actual words were: "the Hindus apparently imagined that the ants cleared away the sand or soil, and left the ore exposed". The horns of the gold-digging ants mentioned by Pliny are explained in the miner theory as the horns of wild sheep used by the miners as pickaxes.

[146] Regenos 1939, 425f.

[147] Herrmann 1938, 15f. supported by Hoffmann 1975, 35. The starting-point is again the auriferous earth piled up by real ants.

[148] Rawlinson 1862, 409 supported (though hesitatingly) by Puskás (1978, 79f.).

[149] Reese 1914, 69f.

[150] Jennison 1937, 190ff.

[151] Prater 1971, 302f. Puskás (1978, 79) quotes herself W. Elliot's words in Brehms: "The pangolin works very carefully, only some surface disorder show where they are."

Central Asia nor even in Kashmir and Dardistan.[152] In India its classification has been a problem indeed, yet it is never thought to be an insect, but a fish, the *khavalla-* or *silecchiya-maccha* of Jaina animal lists (e. g. in the *Uttarajjhayaṇa*), the "jungle fish" of modern India.[153] The Indian names for pangolin Puskás quotes from Brehms are in fact not so hard to identify as she thinks,[154] but they do not contribute in any way to the problem of the gold-digging ants.

Laufer suggested that the gold came from the Central Asian–Siberian area and took the Tibetan and Mongolian accounts as representative of an ancient local tradition, and thus identified the ants with a Mongol tribe having a name resembling the Mongolian word for ant.[155] This theory has not found much support, a new and perhaps in this respect more critical generation of scholars has been more keen to notice the vast chronological gap between the classical and Indian accounts and Laufer's Central Asian sources (as well as the Ladakhi miners). Yet as important a scholar as Otto Stein supported him.[156]

Tarn followed Laufer regarding the origin of the ant gold, but explained away the ants as a mere tale, a version of the well-known folk tale of ants collecting grains for the hero, now applied by middlemen to explain the origin of the gold they brought from Siberia in order to keep any would-be rivals out of the trade.[157]

Then there is the idea that instead of the gold sand mentioned by Herodotus the gold actually consisted of grains, according to Puskás alluvial gold of granulous shape, somehow resembling ants and therefore called ant gold. The source of this gold she locates in Dardistan.[158] The same idea – ants as gold grains – is suggested apparently independently by Lindegger, but he locates the gold country in Tibet. The story of the ferocious gold-digging ants was then fabricated in order to protect the gold trade.[159]

In her recent study König analyses several older theories, but finds them inconclusive.[160] Referring to the folk tale already mentioned she connects our ants with the well-known Indian motif of gold hidden in termite hills.[161] But this gold is more connected with cobras, which often live in deserted termite hills,[162] and it seems to be too restricted to India proper to be used as an explanation of the ant gold coming from Dardistan,[163]

[152] "The plains and lower slopes of hills of India south of the Himalayas" according to Prater 1971, 302.

[153] Kohl 1954, 365f.

[154] Puskás 1978, 86f., note 51. As to the names, Prater (1971, 301) gives *khauli mah, khawala manjar* and *kassoli manjar* as the pangolin's Marathi names. The last one is mentioned by Brehms as such and the rest are related both to Brehms' *kaballa, kaballaya* (this is also mentioned by Kohl [1954, 365] as its Sinhalese name) and Prākrit *khavalla*. The first name mentioned by Puskás from Brehms (*bayar kit*) is clearly Hindi *bajrkīt*, Sanskrit *vajrakiṭa* (Yule & Burnell 1903, s.v. Pangolin).

[155] Laufer 1908, 449ff.

[156] Stein 1932, 238.

[157] Tarn 1951, 107.

[158] Puskás 1978, 80 and 83.

[159] Lindegger 1982, 34.

[160] König 1984, 62ff.

[161] König 1984, 69ff.

[162] Vogel 1926, 20f. and *passim* (see Index s.v. *ant hill* and *treasures*) and König 1984, 69ff.

[163] Tucci 1977, 10ff. gives good evidence of the Dards being gold merchants. But although they probably

Western Tibet or even Siberia.

There is not much more to be said about all these theories. I find it as difficult to believe in the foxes or marmots or mastiffs or pangolins as in the Tibetan gold miners or the Mongolian tribes or the grains that resemble ants. The words George Rawlinson wrote some 125 years ago are to a great extent still valid: "Modern research has not discovered anything very satisfactory either with respect to the animal intended, or the habits ascribed to it."[164] The fact is that we do not know. We need evidence, not ingenious guesses.

Leaving aside the various explanations offered about the ants we can note as perhaps the most important fact that there was a tradition about the gold-digging ants known both in Iran and India. Herodotus acquired his version from the Persians[165] (either through Hecataeus or directly), and according to Karsai there might be Persian elements in the story itself (the role of the camels).[166] He is, of course, right when he points out that the gold-digging ants cannot belong to a *Pañcatantra* type of instructive moral tales,[167] though I am not so sure that this was exclusively the only type of tale told in India or that we really can ascribe the structure used by Herodotus solely to the Persians.[168] But in any case the tale was told by the Persians and was located in Northwestern India. This location is confirmed both by Indian evidence and by Nearchus and Megasthenes, who apparently had access to local (not Persian) tradition. The setting could be Dardistan.

The country of the Dards, however, was only where the ant gold appeared, its real origin is unknown. The desert mentioned by Herodotus and others does not explain anything, because it could well represent only the τόπος of the world that ends in deserts.[169] Therefore Herodotus did not necessarily mean the Thar desert[170] nor any particular region to the north or northeast of India.[171] The gold may have come from Ladakh, from Central Asia or even from Siberia through the ancient route across the Pamir.[172] The story of the ants guarding gold was either fabricated by gold merchants or brought with the gold from its original country.

There was also another, related tale about fabulous animals guarding auriferous earth, and before a final conclusion we must also consider it.

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dealt with ant gold – as was said by Megasthenes – it is not certain that the gold itself and the legend protecting its source originally belonged to Dardistan.

164 Rawlinson 1862, 409.

165 Hdt 3, 105 ὡς Πέρσαι φασί.

166 Karsai 1978, 67ff.

167 Karsai 1978, 62ff.

168 Karsai 1978, 69: "Wir können nur soviel als erwiesen ansehen, dass die Annahme der indischen Herkunft des Märchens irrtümlich ist, und dass Herodot bei der Bearbeitung des Materials sich jenes Konstruktionsschemas bediente, das in den persischen Geschichten angewendet wurde."

169 Mentioned in this context by Lindegger (1982, 34).

170 As supposed by Altheim & Stiehl (1970, 439f.).

171 Cf. Herrmann's attempt at location (1938, 11ff.).

172 See e.g. Jettmar 1983 and 1984, 73f. for this route.

7. Gold-Guarding Griffins

It does not seem possible to keep wholly separate the stories about gold-digging ants and gold-guarding griffins.[173] These two stories are so similar that they must be somehow related, though they became known in the West by different routes. But as the griffins do not belong to India, we can be rather brief with them and the many questions involved.

Originally the griffin is an iconographical motif with wide distribution in the Near East.[174] Its history begins as early as in Pre-Dynastic Egypt and – perhaps independently – in the Mesopotamia and Elam of the fourth millennium B.C. At an early date it was introduced into Syro-Palestina – where it found relatives in *cherubim* – Anatolia, Urartu, Cyprus and Minoan Crete. From Crete it was carried to mainland Greece, where it was popular in the Mycenaean period and the period of orientalizing art. The wide distribution of the early griffin suggests a connection with various myths, though they are not often known. Accordingly there are also several different types of griffin such as the Egyptian royal bird, the falcon-headed griffin; the Mesopotamian divine lion, the lion-headed griffin; the eagle-headed griffin, and so on.[175] These different types originating in different countries were probably connected with different myths and perhaps not related to each other at all. When the motif was then borrowed by a different culture, it may have taken place either in connection with the borrowing of a related myth, or with a reinterpretation of the motif connecting it with some local myth, or it may have been borrowed as a purely decorative motif with no myths involved. The details do not concern us here.

The griffin did not stop in the Near East and Greece. It was carried east from Elam,[176] was used in Luristan art and became famous as a royal animal in Achaemenian art. Here it belongs mostly to the Mesopotamian lion-griffin type, but the eagle-headed type was also common in Iranian art.[177] In India the griffin is a late import from the Achaemenian or Hellenistic West, it is found mainly in early Buddhist sites like Bharhut, Sanchi and Sarnath.[178]

But the motif also migrated to the north and northeast, where it is common in Eurasian animal style.[179] In the fifth or fourth century B.C. it had even reached China.[180] Both

[173] Hennig 1930 is an attempt to do so.

[174] Bisi 1964 and 1965 form together the best survey of its history in early art.

[175] Summarized from Bisi 1965.

[176] In the Indus civilization it seems to have been unknown.

[177] See Bisi 1964.

[178] Combaz 1937a, 133 and 1937b, pl. 58. Indian examples are listed in 1937b, 19.

[179] Rudenko 1958, 106ff. and Bisi 1964, 35ff. In the western parts of the area (South Russia) the Greek eagle-headed type was imported with Greek art, but in Asia the Iranian influence was much more important. See e.g. Phillips 1955, 172 and Azarpay 1959, 324ff.

lion-headed and eagle-headed types are found in the animal style even in Siberia (for instance in Pazyryk).[181] What is perhaps important is the fact that this Eurasian griffin seems to be not so much the royal animal as a furious beast.[182] This could well mean that it was adapted into local folklore; perhaps the imported motif was accepted as an illustration of some local fabulous beast. I shall come back to this soon.

While the griffin is well known in oriental art, our earliest literary sources only come from classical Greece. There are three different accounts of it, by Herodotus, Aeschylus and Ctesias.[183] Herodotus, referring to Aristeas of Proconnesus,[184] locates the gold-guarding griffins in the far north or northeast, where the one-eyed Arimaspeans stole gold from them and apparently sold it to the Issedones. No details of the griffins were given. The account is variously located by scholars in the Urals, Siberia, Central Asia and even Tibet.[185]

Aeschylus speaks of griffins as the hounds of Zeus.[186] He mentions them together with the Arimaspeans and the motif of guarding is included. Gold is not directly mentioned, but a river running with gold is said to be in the country of the Arimaspeans. They form a part of the journey of Io, which was directed towards the sunrise, viz. the east. Only in a later stage of the journey would the old confusion of Ethiopians in the east and the south bring her to the Nile. The connection with the Arimaspeans, the motif of guarding, and to some extent even the direction, mean that this account cannot be kept separate from the Aristean – Herodotean tradition.[187]

According to Ctesias, griffins seem to belong to India,[188] which is difficult to explain without making Ctesias appear untrustworthy. The long fragment 45 h) preserved by Aelianus gives us many details, for instance the different colours of the parts of the animal, which belong clearly to the eagle-headed type of Greek art. It may be that Ctesias

[180] Esin 1976, 189.

[181] Bisi 1964, 48.

[182] Hančar 1952, 183ff. and Rudenko 1958, 106ff. But here the griffin is always attacking wild animals, not miners.

[183] It was mentioned by Hesiodus (F 152 πρῶτος Ἡσίοδος ἐτερατεύσατο τοὺς γρῦπας), but the text is not preserved.

[184] Hdt 3, 116; 4, 13 and 27, for Aristeas see Bolton 1962 (and criticism in Herington 1964, 79f.).

[185] An exact location is not so important to us. For various theories see e.g. Hennig 1935, Phillips 1955, 166ff. and Bolton 1962, 104ff. Perhaps the most interesting among them is the Dzungarian Gate suggested by Bolton (1962, 93ff.) and Pekkanen (1986, 178ff.).

[186] *Prom.* 802–806

ἄλλην δ'ἄκουσον δυσχερῆ θεωρίαν·
ὀξυστόμους γὰρ Ζηνὸς ἀκραγεῖς κύνας
γρῦπας φύλαξαι τόν τε μουνῶπα στρατὸν
Ἀριμασπὸν ἱπποβάμον', οἳ χρυσόρρυτον
οἰκοῦσιν ἀμφὶ νᾶμα Πλούτονος πόρου.

[187] P'jankov (1976, 21f.) stressing the contrast between Zeus (Aeschylus) and Apollo (Aristeas) and interpreting Io's direction erroneously as southern tried to make the two accounts wholly different. But see Bolton (1962, 45ff.), who derives Aeschylus directly from Aristeas. One could speculate here about the possible role of Hecataeus as an intermediary.

[188] F 45, 26 and 45h), Philostratus, *Vita Ap.* 3, 48 probably related.

had acquired some of these details from Achaemenian sculpture,[189] and in fact the text itself contains a reference to the works of art.[190] But this reference is so closely combined with the eagle head – and the royal Achaemenian griffin was always lion-headed – that it seems more likely that Ctesias was referring to Greek art. As the griffin of Greek art was already connected with a similar legend when Ctesias told a new version of the same legend, a reference to Greek works of art does not make him a liar. It is even possible that he still thought the Achaemenian lion griffin was the same animal. Even the eagle headed-griffin is not unknown in Iranian art, though it is not found in Achaemenian art.

According to Ctesias, the story of the gold-guarding griffins is told by Indians and Bactrians. He himself learned it mostly from the latter. It is the only full version of the griffin story we know from early literature. According to this version, the gold is not actually stolen from the griffins but dug up stealthily during the night when the fierce animals cannot see the miners. The country is desert – again the desert at the end of the inhabited world and associated with gold-digging ants as well – and here the griffins nest in high mountains. The expedition arranged in order to fetch the gold[191] lasts three or four years.

According to Bolton and P'jankov,[192] Ctesias has just cooked up his story combining three Herodotean passages, those on griffins of Scythia, on gold-digging ants of India (Central Asia) and on the cinnamon birds of Arabia.[193] This may be so, but it is also possible that Ctesias acquired another (Bactrian) version of the story known in different (Scythian and Indian) versions from Herodotus. It is not necessary to suppose that his Bactrian informants described the animal as an eagle-headed griffin, for it is missing from the Bactrian art of the period.[194] Perhaps Ctesias interpreted the story in the light of Greek tradition (Aristeas) and Greek art.

It is not so important at present to ascertain the reliability of Ctesias. But his account does fit quite well with other evidence. The gold-guarding griffins of the Northeast (in Herodotus and Aeschylus) and the gold-digging ants of India (or rather Central Asia north of India) seem to be related, and Ctesias' version is somewhere between. In later sources these different versions are sometimes intertwined. Aelianus, for instance, claimed that the gold-digging ants live in the same country (συνοικοῦντες) as the Issedones, and their neighbours are, of course, here again the Arimaspeans, who fetch the griffin gold.[195] Arrianus mentions ants and griffins together in India, although he is wise

189 Suggested by several 19th century scholars and Jacoby (1922, 2038).

190 F 45h ...στόμα δὲ ἔχειν ἀετῶδες καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὁποίαν οἱ χειρουργοῦντες γράφουσί τε καὶ πλάττουσι.

191 An expedition fetching fabulous riches from the end of world is a τόπος. I have discussed it in Karttunen 1988.

192 Bolton 1962, 65ff. and P'jankov 1976, 21f.

193 Hdt 3, 116, 102ff. and 111.

194 P'jankov (1976, 23) concludes from this that Ctesias could not get his story from Bactria. But at least in an earlier period griffins were known in Bactria, too (see Parpola 1988, 233 and 257 and Sarianidi 1988, 1284f.). Among these Bactrian examples the lion-griffin is the common type, but an occasional eagle-griffin is also seen (e.g. Sarianidi 1988, 1285 and pl. II, 6).

195 Aelianus, *N. An.* 3, 4.

enough not to believe them,[196] and in Megasthenes we find a one-eyed people (Μονομμάτοι) in India.[197]

Traditions of fabulous gold-guarding beasts are encountered in eastern sources, too. In the Iranian tradition found also in Central Asia, the giant bird *Sēnmurv/Sīmurg* lives in a mountain and guards a treasure, which parallels the griffin story.[198] Griffins themselves are found in Eurasian art, though the gold-guarding motif is not present. But at least royal Achaemenian griffins are guards. Some authors have also shown that there are elements in later Central Asian – Siberian folklore which can perhaps explain the griffin story.[199]

A Central Asian legend had many directions in which to travel. It may be found in the West, in South (India), but also in the East. Fortunately, we do have a Chinese version of the same tradition. In two early Chinese accounts of the horrors of the far west and north "red ants huge as elephants, and wasps as big as gourds" are mentioned.[200] The later of these two texts also mentions a one-eyed people and winged tigers (*qiongqi/ch'iung-ch'i*). The one-eyed people (Arimaspeans?) are mentioned in several other Chinese sources, too. Unfortunately, the gold is missing from the Chinese accounts, but they still seem to represent the same tradition. The ants correspond to the gold-digging ants and a parallel for the griffins may be seen both in the giant wasps and in the winged tiger. Neither Western nor Chinese sources represent the original legend as such, but give interpretations of it where their own tradition has an important role. Nevertheless, they all reflect Central Asian–Siberian folklore and when a connection with India is mentioned, it means the Northwest, which always had close links to the north.

8. Cynocephali

In a long passage Ctesias dealt with the dog-headed people of India[201] and afterwards they became a very common subject in Western *mirabilia* literature.[202] Though the word

196 *Anab.* 5, 4, 3

197 Megasthenes F 27b).

198 P'jankov 1976, 24. See also Schmidt 1980.

199 Alföldi 1933, 567f. and Bolton 1962, 80ff. with references. As the griffin story does not belong to India, I shall not go into details here. The question of the solar character of the griffins is also left out.

200 Quoted by Bolton (1962, 81f.) who (or Professor Hawkes, whom he thanks for Sinological information) dates *Chao Hun* (or *Ch'u Tz'u*?, in Pinjin *Zhao hun* and *Chu ci*) to the mid-third century B.C. and *Shan Hai Ching* (*Shanhai jing*) to the first century B.C. (but containing much older material). Later golden gadfly and gold-digging ants are mentioned in the Mongolian version of the Geser epic quoted by Laufer (1908, 431), who knows some Chinese parallels too.

201 F 45, 37ff.

202 See Kretzenbacher 1968, some additions in Karttunen 1984. Cf. also Marquart 1913, CCff. (Africa)

κυνοκέφαλος is found earlier in Herodotus, who mentions them in Libya,[203] Ctesias' work contains the oldest description of them. At the same time it is by far the longest and one of the best preserved passages of his *Indica* in the epitome of Photius.

These dog-headed people have been discussed quite often since Lassen, and mostly it has been accepted that they really represent some Indian (but not Indo-Aryan) people.[204] On the strength of Herodotus some have maintained that they must originally belong to Africa.[205] In my earlier studies I have tried to show that in classical literature there are three different traditions about a dog-headed people, located in Libya, Ethiopia and India. Of these the Ethiopian Dog-heads represent only a misunderstanding of the Κυναμολγοί of Agatharchides, sometimes erroneously ascribed to Ctesias, too, and the Libyan Dog-heads may be wholly independent of the Indian people.[206] This is supported by the Eastern evidence I shall discuss next.

The Indian evidence is unfortunately rather late as it comes from the Purāṇas, nevertheless it does consistently point to the Northwest. There is a geographical list included in several Purāṇas,[207] which we may call the "River list", as the peoples and places are listed according to the major rivers. Two verses are given under the Sindhu and the last name but one in all versions is *śunāmukha*.[208] The name corresponds to Ctesias' Κυνοκέφαλοι, who are also said to live near the Indus.[209] Another perhaps related name is found in the astrological Kūrmavibhāga list[210] among the northern peoples, but the

and 1930, 36ff. (Iran), Molé 1951 (Iran), Fenikowski 1938 (Mediaeval and Eastern Europe), Klinger 1937, 122f. (Slavic peoples) and Toivonen 1937, 97f. (the Baltic countries and Finland).

203 Hdt 4, 191.

204 See e.g. Lassen 1852, 654ff., Marquart 1913, CCff., Reese 1914, 71ff., Wecker 1925 and Lindegger 1982, 51ff. I have myself discussed them extensively in Karttunen 1977 (some parts summarized in Karttunen 1984).

205 Bunbury 1883, 340f. and still Dihle 1984, 203f.

206 Karttunen 1984. Marquart (1913, CCIII) suggests that the Herodotean Dog-heads might be monkeys. This is not impossible. Later the word was commonly used for a baboon (*Comopithecus hamadryas*) and the first examples are nearly contemporary, from Aristophanes (*Eques* 415f.), Plato (*Theaetetus* 161C and 166C) and Aristoteles (*H. An.* 2, 8, 502A). I collected the occurrences of κυνοκέφαλος as the name for the baboon in Karttunen 1977, 32ff. and discussed them *ibid.* 108f. Klinger's (1937, 120f.) attempt to show that κυνοκέφαλος in Aristophanes does not mean baboon but a dog-headed giant, a chthonic demon, which should supposedly be the original meaning, is hardly convincing.

207 According to Sircar 1971, 65 they are *Brahmāṇḍa* 51, 40ff., *Matsya* 121, 39ff. and *Vāyu* 47, 38ff. The text with variants is given in Sircar 1971, 65ff. There is another version quoted a long time ago from the (late) *Prabhāsakhaṇḍa* of *Skandapurāṇa* by Wilford (1808, 336ff.). It has often been quoted as the only source (e.g. Wecker 1925, 26 and still Lindegger 1982, 108), but can now be discarded in favour of the better evidence given by Sircar (see also my note in Karttunen 1984, 33).

208 Text according to Sircar 1971, 68f.:

daradāṁś ca sakāśmīrān gāndhārān aurasān kuhūn/
śivapaurān indramarūn vasātīṁś ca visarjayān//
saindhavān randhrakarakān bhramarābhīraromakān/
śunāmukhāṁś cordhvamarūn sindhur etān niṣevate//

209 Ctesias F 45, 37 οἰκοῦσι δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι μέχρι τοῦ Ἰνδοῦ ποταμοῦ.

210 *BS* 14 and Parāśara quoted in Bhaṭṭotpala's commentary on *BS*, further *MārkP* 55 and al-Bīrūnī.

reading is ambiguous as in *turagānanāśvamukhāḥ* (as it is in most manuscripts) the name after the Turagānanas might be read either as *śvamukha* or as *aśvamukha*.[211] A horse-headed people is not unknown in Indian sources, but here the shorter reading is mostly accepted.[212]

In addition to the ethnic names directly pointing to a dog-headed people the names for low castes (*caṇḍāla*) like *śvapāka* and *śvapaca* (both meaning 'one who cooks dogs') are often mentioned in connection with the Ctesianic Dog-heads.[213] These dog-eaters as well as the Dog-heads proper might well have been given this mocking name by other peoples. We may also note in passing that there is epigraphic as well as literary evidence for a people called *Kukura* somewhere in southern Rajasthan.[214]

This Indian evidence is mostly very late for our purposes. The same must be said of the Iranian Dog-heads.[215] Markwart finds in Middle Iranian literature and in the *Šāh-nāme* several accounts of them (called *saksar* or *sagsār*).[216] They are often mentioned in connection with other fabulous peoples known from classical sources and contain similar characteristics as in Ctesias.[217] But as these sources are so late, a borrowing from the West (e.g. from the *Alexander Romance* or even Ctesias himself) is wholly acceptable, and therefore a direct borrowing from India as suggested by Markwart[218] is not very likely.

As there is very little evidence for the spread of Ctesianic fabulous peoples in the East, even late sources are not worthless as evidence as we find several of them in different countries. In addition to Indian and Iranian sources there are also Chinese accounts, where a country of the dogs is located somewhere in Central Asia or Tibet.[219] The first brief mention is from the early Han period,[220] and a later source (in the 10th century

[211] *BS* 14, 25:

kaikayavasātiyāmunabhogaprasthārjunāgnīdhrāḥ/
ādarśāntardvīpitrigartaturagānanāḥ śvamukhāḥ//

[212] E.g. by Kern (*BS* translation *ad l.*), Kirfel (1920, 88), Sircar (1967, 97 and 234) and Bhat (*BS* edition *ad l.*). Aśvamukha has been accepted by Pargiter (note to translation of *MārkP* 55 [58], 43), as the Purāṇa (55, 43 **tathaivāśvamukhāḥ prāptāś civiḍāḥ keśadhāriṇaḥ**) gives no other possibility, but even he compared them with the Dog-heads. The *BS* passage has been connected with Ctesias e.g. by Lévi (1904, 83). Dog-head (śvamukha) is also confirmed by al-Bīrūnī. In Karttunen 1977, 129ff. I have collected Indian names of peoples connected with dogs or horses.

[213] See e.g. Benfey, 1840, 42 and Wecker 1925, 26.

[214] Sircar 1971, 271ff. and Dey s.v. The epigraphic evidence comes from the inscriptions of Rudradāman and Śrī Puḷumāvi, both in the early centuries A.D.

[215] But see also Parpola 1988, 218 (especially note 185).

[216] Markwart 1930, 36ff., see also Molé 1951. The oldest of these passages seems to be *Ayātkār i Žāmāspīk* 9, where several fabulous peoples are mentioned: **varcašmān u vargōšān u duvālpādān u vitastikān u sagsarān** "Breast-eyed, Breast-eared, Spindle-shanked, Pygmies and Dog-heads" (quoted in Humbach 1960, 45).

[217] Markwart 1930, 49ff.

[218] Markwart 1930, 52f. Molé 1951, 136f. suggests a Western origin for the Iranian Dog-heads and related legends. Iranian fabulous peoples (especially *asāra* 'ἀκέφαλος' found already in Avesta) are also discussed by Humbach (1960, 44ff.)

[219] Discussed in Lindegger 1982, 57ff.

[220] *Yanzi chunqiu* (*Yen tzu ch'un chi'u*) according to Lindegger 1982, 59.

A.D.) confirms that its inhabitants have a dog's head and a human body. We may also notice that according to the same source the women are wholly human. Other Chinese sources make the country of the dogs a neighbour to the country of women (Strīrājya of Sanskrit sources). Medieval Western tradition similarly makes the Dog-heads the husbands of the Amazons. Some of the Chinese sources we refer to here are the same, where we find also the "soft river" Ruoshui (Jo-shui) related to Greek (including Ctesias) and Indian sources.[221]

We may also note that Ctesias' description of his Dog-heads contains several features which might very well be Indian. Their economy based primarily on shepherding suits very well the conditions in, say, the western Himalaya, where sheep have apparently always been very important. At the same time hunting and shepherding as main occupations[222] is somewhat un-Aryan, and the extensive use of sheep's milk is definitely so.[223] The oil made of (sheep's) milk has been compared with ghee.[224] The small insect living in their country and yielding good red dye could well be the lac insect, as a red dye is an important side product in addition to lac.[225]

Un-Aryan habits, a different appearance (referred to as dog's head), a different language ("barking") and black skin[226] make it likely that we have here an actual people

[221] See Lindegger 1982, 57ff. and chapter VII.9. As to the Western tradition connecting Dog-heads and Amazons, e.g. Adam of Bremen told of a *Terra feminarum* situated east of the Baltic Sea where male children are Dog-heads (*fiunt cynocephali*).

[222] Ctesias F 45, 40 ὅτι οἱ Κυνοκέφαλοι οἰκοῦντες ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν οὐκ ἐργάζονται, ἀπὸ θήρας δὲ ζῶσιν· ὅταν δ' ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτά, ὀπτῶσι πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον. τρέφουσι δὲ καί πρόβατα πολλὰ καὶ αἶγας καὶ ὄνους, πίνουσι δὲ γάλα καὶ ὀξύγαλα τῶν προβάτων.

[223] *GautDh* 17, 24 **nityam āvikam** (scil. **kṣīram**) **apeyam auṣṭram aikaśapham ca.**

[224] Suśruta, Cikitsāsth. 24 speaks very approvingly of anointing the body with oil. Ghee is mentioned in 24, 34 **tan na prakṛtisātmyartudeśadoṣavikārivat/ tailaṁ ghṛtaṁ vā matimān yuñjyād abhyaṅgasekayoḥ//.**

[225] This was fully discussed in Karttunen 1977, 63ff. As to the tree where this coccid lives, no less than 43 different species are mentioned (listed in Watt s.v. *Coccus lacca*, discussed in Karttunen 1977, 69ff.) including those few mentioned by some scholars in connection with Ctesias (Kiessling 1916, 331, Tola & Dragonetti 1987, 174, note 43). For a different approach to the tree see Johnston 1942, 29ff. A possible connection of the name given by Ctesias to this tree (F 45, 36 σιπταχόρα) with the Iranian word (Avestan ***xšvid/xšvīd-***, OP ****xšifta-***) for 'milk' (Johnston 1942, 249f. and Szemerényi 1958, 189) makes one think of some milky tree like those of the genus *Ficus*.

[226] Ctesias F 45, 37 ἐν τοῖσδε τοῖς ὄρεσί φησιν ἀνθρώπους βιοτεύειν κυνὸς ἔχοντας κεφαλήν... φωνὴν δὲ διαλέγονται οὐδεμίαν ἀλλ' ὠρύονται ὥσπερ κύνες, καὶ οὕτω συνιᾶσιν αὐτῶν τὴν φωνήν... μέλανες δέ εἰσι καὶ δίκαιοι πάνυ, ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι Ἰνδοί, οἷς καὶ ἐπιμίγνυνται. καὶ συνιᾶσι μὲν τὰ παρ' ἐκείνων λεγόμενα, αὐτοί δὲ οὐ δύνανται διαλέγεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῇ ὠρυγῇ καὶ ταῖς χερσὶ καὶ τοῖς δακτύλοις σημαίνουσιν ὥσπερ οἱ κωφοὶ (καὶ ἄλαλοι). Here their righteousness is the only feature which is probably due to Greek embellishment, but then a people living as far away as the Dog-heads did had necessarily to be righteous (see chapter V.1.). As to the language, with a dog's head it was only natural to call it barking, and anyway foreign languages were rarely given the right of full human speech (cf. Greek βάρβαρος). Even a different dialect of the same language may be easily described as "unintelligible" like Eastern OIA **he 'lavo** instead of Vedic **he 'rayo** in *ŚB* 3, 2, 1, 23f. It is called unintelligible, barbarous and Asura talk leading to destruction (**te**

living in Northwest India, perhaps in the western Himalaya.[227] But I do not think it is wise to attempt any exact geographical or ethnographical identification. This has been often attempted, they have been made for instance Muṇḍas[228] or Tibetans,[229] always with some but wholly insufficient evidence. It has not always been wholly understood how heterogenous Northwestern ethnography must have been with Indo-Aryans, Iranians, Nuristani and Dardic peoples, Tibeto-Burmans, Burušaškis, perhaps Muṇḍas – and we must never forget the possibility of "x" or several "x's", ethnic elements later fully assimilated by the existing ones.[230]

It remains to note the "Indian" name given by Ctesias to the Dog-heads. Καλύστριοι should have the same meaning as Greek Κυνοκέφαλοι.[231] As the attempt to find any Iranian (what Ctesias' "Indian" words often seem to be) or Indo-Aryan form corresponding to this explanation has not met with any success, several other, more or less correct explanations have been offered. They include *kālavastra* 'of black habit',[232] *kaluṣṭra/kharoṣṭra* a mock name of uncertain meaning,[233] *kaluṣa* 'dirty',[234] a contamination of *kukura* and *kurukṣetra*[235] and *kālīstrīya* 'of black women' or *kauleyaśrita*

'surā āttavacaso he 'lavo he 'lava iti vadantaḥ parābabhūvuḥ// tatraitām api vācam ūduḥ/ upajijñāsyāṁ sa mlecchas tasmān na brāhmaṇo mlecched asuryā haiṣā vāg). See also Parpola 1988, 219 on *a-nāsaḥ/an-āsaḥ*/ἄστομος.

227 But not necessarily. The river of their country, called variously Ὕπαρχος/Σπάβαρος/*Hypobarus*/Ὕσπορος can be explained through *Ὑσπάβαρος from either Iranian (OP) *Vispabara* or OIA (perhaps through MIA!) *Viśvabhara*, and this has been compared with the Swat (OIA *Suvāstu*) by Lévi (1904, 83). The same comparison can also be made with Wecker's (1925, 25) *subhara*. A location between the Swat and the Indus would be quite acceptable. I have already pointed out in chapter III.4. how uncertain the old identification of the Ὕπαρχος etc. with the Ganges actually is. Lévi's Swat is accepted by André & Filliozat (1986, 370). It might also be significant that according to Ctesias amber is found in the river, and Chinese sources mention the amber of India (Laufer 1907, 225ff.). According to Laufer, the first mention of amber in China refers to the amber of Ki-pin, which in early sources refers more probably to Kapiśa than to Kashmir (Stein 1900, 354 and Lévi 1915, 102). On amber see also chapter III.5.

228 Thus e.g. Marquart (1913, CCVf.) made them a Munda people which, according to Marquart, formed a substratum in the Western Himalaya languages (Kanawari a. o.).

229 Lévi 1904, 83: "The Tibetan populations have exactly the traits of the *Kalystrioi* mentioned by Ktesias: mountaineers, hunters, eaters of meat, herdsmen, rich in sheep, above all dirty, with a dirtiness which is rendered still more striking by contrast with the regular and frequent ablutions of the Hindus. Their physiognomy, and their harsh language, bristling with monosyllables, also correspond..." Tibetans are also opted for by Lindegger (1982, 54f.). Herrmann (1938, 20), who wants to see in dog-headed and dog-like peoples of Ctesias and Asian folklore some reminiscence of *Sinanthropus Pekinensis*, is entirely fantastic! But his remarks (*ibid.* 21f.) on Tibetan traditions of mountain demons and ape-men may be noted in connection with the Dog-heads, although they are from a much later period.

230 Cf. Tikkanen 1988, 316f.

231 Ctesias F 45, 37 καλοῦνται δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰνδῶν Καλύστριοι (Καλύπτριοι), ὅπερ ἐστὶν Ἑλληνιστὶ Κυνοκέφαλοι.

232 Suggested by Vans Kennedy and, referring to him, by Benfey (1840, 41f.), criticized already by Lassen (1852, 656), but often mentioned later.

233 Lévi 1904, 83 (on meaning see 82f.).

234 Reese 1914, 86 (with the misprint *kaluṭa*), again (without misprints) Tola & Dragonetti (1987, 184).

235 Schafer 1964, 499f.

'of doglike appearance'.[236] But these are all pure guesses. We can dismiss them on the ground that they have nothing to do with the meaning given by Ctesias (in other cases his "Indian" words are often easily explained from Iranian). There is also an Iranian etymology suggested by Marquart,[237] who corrected the Greek into Σαδύστριοι and derived it from OP **sa-dauxštr-* 'milkers of dogs'. This is better in meaning, but in addition to an unwarranted correction it involves Κυναμολγοί, who hardly belong to India or Ctesias at all, but to Ethiopia and Agatharchides.[238] Therefore we cannot but conclude that we do not know. Even a connection with the Καλλατίαι of Hecataeus and Herodotus,[239] though possible, is rather haphazard.

Although we cannot exactly identify the Dog-heads, and if they are a primitive non-Aryan people this is not very surprising, they clearly belong to Northwest India. There is also the possibility suggested orally by Professor Asko Parpola that the Dog-heads are in fact the same as the Vrātyas, the unorthodox Aryan people often mentioned in Vedic literature. There are many references connecting the Vrātyas or their god Rudra with dogs.[240] They are also clad in skins and their gṛhapati wears dark (*kṛṣṇaśa*) clothing,[241] which brings Benfey's *kālavastra* to mind. A difficulty is that generally the Vrātyas belong to the east, but in the *Mahābhārata* Madras, a Northwestern people with unorthodox habits, are called the Vrātyas[242] and in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* Rudra is mentioned as "a man in black garments coming from the north".[243]

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[236] Lindegger, somewhat incongruously, gives both in different places (1982, 53ff. and 108). Both are hardly acceptable as such.

[237] Marquart 1913, CCVIIIf.

[238] See Lindegger 1982, 67f. and Karttunen 1984. The Ethiopian location was suggested by Marquart himself (1893, 539f.), too, but later he changed his opinion in favour of Ctesias and India (1913, CCVIIf.). He was too hard on Agatharchides, who was actually a much better author than Ctesias.

[239] Suggested already by Benfey (1841, 41), then often repeated (e.g. Lindegger 1982, 53f.).

[240] *AV* 11, 2, 30 on Rudra's howling dogs, *VS* 16, 28 on dogs and masters of dogs in Rudra's retinue, *ŚŚS* 4, 20, 1 on Rudra's sons as wolves, *HGS* 2, 2, 7, 2 addressing Ekavrātya as a dog (*śunaka*) and some later works. See Arbman 1922, 29 and 37 and Falk 1986, 18f. As sattrins seem to be related to the Vrātyas (Falk 1986, 30ff.) we may also note with Falk (1986, 40) that in two Upaniṣadic passages (*ChāgU* 2 and *ChU* 1, 12) dogs are mentioned as sattrins. On Vrātyas in general see e.g. Hauer 1927, Parpola 1973, 34ff. and 1988, 251ff. and Falk 1986, 17ff., on dogs in India see chapter VII.3.

[241] Parpola 1973, 38 and Falk 1986, 20.

[242] *Mbh* 8, 30, 36 (cf. VIII.5.).

[243] *AB* 5, 2, 14 **puruṣaḥ kṛṣṇaśavāsy uttarata upodatiṣṭhan.**

9. Silas/Śailodā

The wonderful fountain variously called Σίλας/Σίλλης/*Sides*†[244] is mentioned by several classical authors beginning with Hellanicus, Ctesias, Democritus and Megasthenes.[245] It is a very good case of a parallelism between Western sources on India, Indian sources on the Northwest and even Chinese sources on what is the Southwest seen from China. Here I can be rather brief as I have already discussed it in my article.

There are several more or less independent Eastern traditions related to our miraculous fountain. In them it is always a river, not a spring, but then a river beginning from a spring is also mentioned by Megasthenes. In Indian sources the most important version is the River Śilā or Śailodā forming the boundary of the mythical northern paradise of Uttarakuru.[246] This river is said to be very difficult to cross because everything, with the exception of the *kīcaka* reed growing on its banks, changes into stone when touched by the water. Therefore the river is called *Śilā* 'stone' or *Śailodā* 'stone-water'.

Another version of the story is found in Buddhist literature, both Pāli[247] and Chinese.[248] Here the river is called *Sīdā,* Chinese *Ruoshui* (*Jo-shui*), and its water is said to be so light that nothing can float on it, not even a feather. In Indian epic and purāṇic

[244] This reading of Pliny has been mostly thought to be corrupt but see Karttunen 1985, 64f.

[245] Collected and discussed in Lindegger 1982, 75ff. and again in Karttunen 1985, 55f. See also Andrć & Filliozat 1986, 419f.

[246] The main versions are the *Mahābhārata* 2, 48, 2–4 and the *Rāmāyaṇa* 4, 42, 37f. with an important addition in insertion 930* of the critical edition of the latter work. These and some further sources are quoted and discussed in Karttunen 1985, 61ff. (to references there, Lévi 1918, 133 and Agrawala 1956, 9f. must be added) where it was also noted, how most of these sources have not been noticed in most studies of Western accounts of the spring. To make reference easier I shall give them again. *Mbh* 2, 48, 2–4 **merumandarayor madhye śailodām abhito nadīm/ ye te kīcakaveṇūnāṁ chāyāṁ ramyām upāsate// khaśā ekāśanā jyohāḥ pradarā dīrghaveṇavaḥ/ paśupāś ca kuṇindāś ca taṅgaṇāḥ paratańgaṇāḥ// te vai pipīlikaṁ nāma varadattaṁ pipīlikaiḥ/ jātarūpaṁ droṇameyam ahārṣuḥ puñjaśo nṛpāḥ//**; *R* 4, 42, 37f. **taṁ tu deśam atikramya śailodā nāma nimnagā/ ubhayos tīrayor yasyāḥ kīcakā nāma veṇavaḥ// te nayanti paraṁ tīraṁ siddhān pratyānayanti ca/ uttarāḥ kuravas tatra kṛtapuṇyapratiśrayāḥ//** (an account of the Uttarakuru follows), and insertion 930* (before 38*cd*, in some mss. before 38) found in all northern recensions **sā na śakyā nadī tartuṁ puṇyā paramadurgamā/ tasyāḥ spṛṣṭvā tu salilaṁ sarvaḥ śailo 'bhijāyate// te tu tīragatās tasyā mahākīcakaveṇavaḥ/ samāgacchanty asaṁgena saṁgamaṁ te parasparam//.**

[247] *Nimijātaka* (J. 541) verses 424f. with their commentary:

uttarena nadī sīdā gambhīrā duratikkamā/
naḷaggivaṇṇā jotanti sadā kañcanapabbatā//
parūḷhakacchā tagarā rūḷhakacchā vanā nagā/
tatrāsuṁ dasasahassā porāṇaisayo pure//

sīdā nāma nadī gambhīrā nāvāhi pi duratikkamā ahosi, kiṁkāraṇā: sā hi atisukhumodakā, sukhumattā udakassa antamaso morapiñjaṁ pi tattha patitaṁ na saṇṭhāti sīditvā heṭṭhātalam eva gacchati ten' ev' assā Sīdā ti nāmaṁ ahosi (*sīdā* derived from *sīdati* 'sink').

[248] Examined by Lindegger (1982, 75ff.).

literature a river *Sītā* or *Śītā* is mentioned as situated next to the Śailodā, and in Jaina cosmographies there is a river *Śītodā* 'of cool water'.[249] This Sītā/Śītā is commonly identified with the Yarkand river of Central Asia, and Central Asia or Tibet is also always the geographical context of the stone river or light river of our sources.[250] It is, however, better to see it as a mythical river than to try to put it on a map.

A further examination of these sources shows that there are several other features mentioned in connection with this river which we meet again in classical accounts on India. In *Mahābhārata* the ant gold was brought by "the kings who live by the river Śailodā between Mount Meru and Mount Mandara and enjoy the pleasing shade of bamboo and cane".[251] In Herodotus, Nearchus and Megasthenes there is no mention of a river (or even a spring) in connection with the gold-digging ants, but there is an interesting passage in Aelianus, which may perhaps be connected with this.[252] The passage is somewhat complicated by the presence of the Issedones, who belong to another tradition (the griffins) than the gold-digging ants. Yet a river which the ants do not cross may well be compared with the river which nobody can cross without a boat made of a special kind of reed. It might also be that the river is here mentioned as the means to shake off the ferocious ants' pursuit.[253] The origin of Aelianus' account is not given and there is no use in guessing.[254]

Chinese sources locate Dog-heads in the same region as our river and the country of women. The latter are found in Sanskrit sources, too, as Strīrājya, which is located in the far north. In the *Mahābhārata* the river is situated in a mythical country (between Meru and Mandara), and in the *Rāmāyaṇa* it is said to be the southern boundary of the happy paradise of Uttarakuru.[255] Uttarakuru was the country where milk and honey flowed, which makes one think of the river of honey flowing out of a stone in Ctesias.[256] Jewels and gold were found in place of stones and sand, which may be connected with the gold sand dug out by the ants in Herodotus and other classical sources. The people there had a life span of several millennia, and longevity is also met with in classical sources.[257]

[249] Karttunen 1985, 63.

[250] Karttunen 1985, 62f.

[251] Van Buitenen's translation. He seems to take *kīcakaveṇu* as a dvandva, but a comparison with the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*kīcakā nāma veṇavaḥ* in the critical edition, *mahākīcakaveṇavaḥ* in insertion 930*) seems to suggest that a karmadhāraya is meant.

[252] *N. An.* 3, 4 οἱ μύρμηκες οἱ Ἰνδικοὶ ‹οἱ› τὸν χρυσὸν φυλάττοντες οὐκ ἂν διέλθοιεν τὸν Καμπύλινον ποταμόν. Ἰσσηδόνες δὲ τούτοις συνοικοῦντες τοῖς μύρμηξι. Unfortunately, the rest is not preserved in the manuscripts; there follow only the last words of a mutilated chapter (καλοῦνταί τε καί εἰσιν).

[253] Crossing a river (running water) in order to get rid of one's pursuers is a common motif in folklore.

[254] The preceding chapter (3, 3, where there are fat-tailed sheep but no pigs in India) comes from Ctesias, but he can hardly be the source of 3, 4. It is very unlikely that Ctesias would have written either on gold-digging ants or on Issedones. Both were first mentioned by Herodotus, and it seems that Ctesias was deliberately leaving out anything mentioned in the Indian logos of Herodotus.

[255] Karttunen 1985, 64. For Strīrājya and Uttarakuru see also *Rājat* 4, 172ff. and 185.

[256] F 45, 29 καὶ ποταμόν φησιν ἐκ πέτρας ῥέοντα μέλι.

[257] Here most important are perhaps the long-living people ascribed by Pliny to Ctesias (F 52

According to epic sources, Uttarakuru was also a country where the ancient law of promiscuity was still in force, a feature which has been connected with the polyandry still met with in the western Himalayas.[258] This may well be compared with several classical accounts of Eastern promiscuity,[259] though they can also easily be explained by the early ethnographical theory (see chapter V.1.).

We should not forget the reed used in order to cross the river. The word *kīcaka* is not restricted to the banks of our river, and it has mostly been identified as a kind of hollow bamboo.[260] In later Classical Sanskrit it was often mentioned as producing a beautiful sound in the wind.[261] But even here the Northwestern connection is not missing. A check of the occurrences in Kālidāsa showed that it is always mentioned together with Kashmir, Kailāśa, the mythical Kinnaras or some other Northwestern feature.[262] In any case, a reed which provides a means to cross a river where everything else turns into stone must somehow be special, even if it is not given a very special name. In a late geographical account we meet a people called the Kīcakas, but although the geographical context is the same, the lection is unclear.[263] In the *Mahābhārata* the Kīcakas live in Madhyadeśa.

These reeds are never found in classical accounts of the wondrous spring. But it may well be asked whether the gigantic reeds described by Ctesias are the same as these *mahākīcakaveṇavaḥ*. They grow in the same mountains where the Indus is said to flow and we remember that the Dog-heads, too, lived in mountains bordering on the Indus. This Indian reed is so big that two men can hardly put their arms around it and as high as the mast of a merchantman having a capacity of one talent. That bamboo has probably contributed is seen in its being dioecious. A fragment adds that two boats are made of a single section between nodes.[264] The same was mentioned also in Ctesias' *Persica*,

...Macrobios. Ctesias gentem ex his, quae appelletur Pandarae, in convallibus sitam annos ducenos vivere). See also F 45, 50 and Marquart 1913, CCIXff. (discussing both). Thomas (1906, 202) pointed out that both Arabic and Chinese authors were speaking of the longevity of the inhabitants of Ferghana, and nowadays it is often ascribed to those of Hunza.

258 Winternitz 1897, 730. In India this old law – which also seems to contain an element of sexual freedom allowed to women – was kept in honour by great ṛṣis, and Winternitz (*ibid.* 729) asked if this is not sarcasm.

259 See e.g. Hdt 3, 101 and Megasthenes F 27b9.

260 *Arundo karka* Roxb. according to Mayrhofer s.v. *kīcaka* (also Suppl.), where various theories about its derivation – perhaps Dravidian – are discussed. Of Indian medical lexicons Dhanvantari (4, 137) mentions *kīcaka* as a synonym of *vaṁśa*, but the *Rājanighaṇṭu* makes it a different plant, a hollow bamboo (215 **anyas tu randhravaṁśaḥ syāt tvaksāraḥ kīcakāhvayaḥ**). There seems to be some confusion with the scientific name of this plant. In older floras it is called *Arundo karka* Retz. or *Arundo Roxburghi*, nowadays *Phragmites karka* (Retz.) Steud. It is not a bamboo, but a reed. (I owe this information to my brother Krister Karttunen.)

261 *AK* 971 **veṇavaḥ kīcakās te syur ye svananty aniloddhatāḥ**; *Megh* 58 **śabdāyante madhuram anilaiḥ kīcakāḥ**...

262 Thus *Megh* 58, *KumS* 1, 8 and *Ragh* 2, 12 and 4, 73.

263 *MārkP* 55, 48f. (58, 48f. in Pargiter) ...**yena kinnararājyaṁ ca paśupālaṁ sakīcakaṁ// kāśmīrakaṁ tathā rāṣṭraṁ abhisārajanas tathā**/ Pargiter too reads *kīcaka* but Sircar (1967, 97) prefers *kucika*. In the better tradition (*BS*) we find *kīra* in its place. Although the people known as the Kīcaka here might be compared with the Dīrghaveṇus of the *Mbh* passage quoted above, I dare not connect this with our river and its reeds, as was done by Pargiter in his note *ad l.*

where it is added that the treelike reed never rots.[265] While the gigantic measures of this Indian reed were fully consistent with the Western ethnographic idea about the nature of India and other remote countries, they might at the same time also reflect an Eastern tradition connected with the fabulous country of Uttarakuru and the river separating it from other countries. Combined with other common elements this seems a more likely explanation than the mere exaggeration of bamboos growing on the Indus (yet Herodotus told of similar reeds growing near the mouth of the Indus)[266] or a distorted account of the coconut or palmyra palm.[267]

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that our river does not have any exact geographical location,[268] although it can be vaguely located in the north of Northwest India (like Meru and some other mythical places, too). It is a mythical boundary, the uncrossable line between the human world and a mythical paradise. As such it is related to other mythical boundaries, especially to the various rivers of the underworld.[269]

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264 Ctesias F 45, 14 ὅτι ὁ Ἰνδὸς ποταμὸς ῥέων διὰ πεδίων καὶ ὀρέων ῥεῖ, ἐν οἷς καὶ ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰνδικὸς κάλανος φύεται, πάχος μὲν ὅσον δύω ἄνδρε περιωργυιωμένοι ‹μόλις› περιλάβοιεν, τὸ δὲ ὕψος ὅσον μυριοφόρου νεὼς ἱστός· εἰσὶ καὶ ἔτι μείζους καὶ ἐλάττους, οἵους εἰκὸς ἐν ὄρει μεγάλῳ. εἶναι δὲ τῶν καλάμων καὶ ἄρρενας καὶ θηλείας· ὁ μὲν οὖν ἄρρην ἐντεριώνην οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ἔστι κάρτα ἰσχυρός, ἡ δὲ θήλεια ἔχει and 45c εἰ θαῦμα δὲ νομίζοι τις Ἀρράβων τοὺς καλάμους,/ ὁ Τζέτζης λέγει, τοὺς Ἰνδῶν καλάμους τῷ Κτησίᾳ/ ὡς διοργυίους γράφοντι τὸ πλάτος τίς πιστεύσοι;/ καὶ τοῖς ἓν γονάτιον δύο ποιεῖν ὀλκάδας. From Ctesias perhaps comes also Pliny *N. H.* 7, 2, 21 ***harundines vero tantae proceritatis ut singula internodia alveo navigabili ternos interdum homines ferant.*** Real bamboos were seen by the companions of Alexander and described by Theophrastus (*H. Pl.* 4, 11, 13) and Megasthenes (F 8 and 27b, again with gross exaggeration). It was confused with the Ctesianic giant bamboo in Pliny *N. H.* 16, 65, 162, where real bamboo is described with the addition that ***navigiorumque etiam vicem praestant, si credimus, singula internodia.***

265 F 1b, 17, 5 (Diodorus in the Semiramis episode) καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ τοῦ καλάμου κατεσκεύασε πλοῖα ποτάμια τετρακισχίλια· ἡ γὰρ Ἰνδικὴ παρά τε τοὺς ποταμοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἑλώδεις τόπους φέρει καλάμου πλῆθος, οὗ τὸ πάχος οὐκ ἄν ῥᾳδίως ἄνθρωπος περιλάβοι· λέγεται δὲ καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτων κατασκευαζομένας ναῦς διαφόρους κατὰ τὴν χρείαν ὑπάρχειν, οὔσης ἀσήπτου ταύτης τῆς ὕλης.

266 Hdt 3, 98 ...οἱ δὲ ἐν τοῖσι ἕλεσι οἰκέουσι τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ ἰχθύας σιτέονται ὠμούς, τοὺς αἱρέουσι ἐκ πλοίων καλαμίνων ὁρμώμενοι· καλάμου δὲ ἓν γόνυ πλοῖον ἕκαστον ποιέεται. Bamboos or other reeds of the Indus have been suggested as an explanation e. g. by Lassen (1852, 633f.) and Lambrick (1975, 101f.). Gross exaggeration of the dimensions of Indian bamboos is also seen later, see Yule & Burnell s.v. *Bamboo*.

267 The idea of Ball (1888, 336f.). But the nodes show that a graminaceous plant is meant.

268 Different locations have often been suggested by modern scholars (e.g. Yarkand, Helmand and Jaxartes, cf. Thomas 1906, 202 and 463) and perhaps by some ancient.

269 This relation is suggested by Sachse (1982).

10. Σκώληξ

Soon after the description of the Dog-heads[270] Ctesias gives a curious account of a gigantic worm living in the Indus.[271] The worm resembles the maggots which live in figs or in timber, but it is seven cubits long and very plump. During the night it comes out of the water and hunts horses, oxen and camels. It has just two teeth. It is only captured with much difficulty, and is then hung up in the sun for thirty days. In this way it begins to drip a thick oil which is inflammable and can burn anything. The Indian king is said to use it as a terrible weapon, much like the Byzantians later used Greek fire.

This worm has often been connected with the crocodile,[272] but its curious characteristics are not easily connected with the reptile. Rumours of the actual crocodile and its voracity may have contributed, but there is also another explanation.[273] It was suggested by Lassen[274] that the worm may have a mythological origin, that it is a fire weapon given by the serpent god and mistaken by Ctesias as a real animal. Lassen in his time had very little evidence for this idea, but now there is considerably more to say about it than the mere importance given to snakes and Nāgas in the Northwest.

Nāgas were in possession of magical fire and "the fiery blast of their nostrils" carried destruction. Even the breath of an ordinary snake was considered to be poisonous, sometimes also its sight.[275] There is a close connection between Nāgas/snakes and water.[276] The two long teeth of our worm can be much better compared with the fangs of a snake – though they are situated in both jaws – than the rows of teeth of a crocodile.

First among the Nāgas is Śeṣa or Ananta, the cosmic serpent, bearer of the earth and of Viṣṇu.[277] An incarnation of Śeṣa is Balarāma, the brother of Kṛṣṇa. Both Śeṣa and Balarāma are often represented with identical attributes such as the hood, the plough and the mace.[278] Both are in several ways connected with the northwestern direction[279] and especially with the mouth of the Indus. Without going into all the details, I would like to refer to an article by Asko Parpola, where he attempts to show a connection between the mythical Pātāla (abode of Śeṣa and the Nāgas) and the geographical one situated in the

[270] Reese 1914, 80 proposed that it belongs to the country of the Dog-heads themselves, but in the fragments it is clearly indicated that the worm lives in the Indus.

[271] Ctesias F 45, 46 and 45r, briefly mentioned also in 45, 3.

[272] For the first time, I think, by Baehr (1824, 335), later e.g. Wilson 1836, 60f., Ball 1888, 326ff. and Lambrick 1975, 102.

[273] I am now mostly summarizing what I wrote in Karttunen 1977, 95ff.

[274] Lassen 1852, 641f.

[275] Vogel 1926, 15ff.

[276] Vogel 1926, *passim* (see Index s.v. *water*).

[277] Vogel 1926, 192ff.

[278] Vogel 1926, 196 and Joshi 1979, 32ff.

[279] In passing we may notice that Balarāma's mother, Rohiṇī, an incarnation of the Mother of snakes (*sarpamātā*), was a princess from Bāhlīka (Bactria). See Joshi 1979, 2.

Indus delta,[280] as well as between Pātāla and the *tāla* 'the wine palm' (*Borassus flabellifer* L., Palmyra palm).[281] This palm is very common in the Indus Delta and an emblem of Balarāma, who is called *tālaketu/tāladhvaja/tālabhṛt/tālāṅka*.[282] A further point of comparison is that between Balarāma, the famous drunkard,[283] and the Vaḍavāmukha, the unquenching fire (thirst) at the bottom of the sea just outside the Delta.[284]

When we now turn back to our worm, we find some common points. The maggots in timber are white and in Philostratus we find it actually said that the Indian worm is white, too.[285] Balarāma, when considered as born from Viṣṇu, derived his origin from the white hair of the god (when Kṛṣṇa came out of the black hair) and has accordingly a fair complexion.[286] In ancient Tamil literature he is called the Veḷḷai-nākar or 'white serpent', and Vāliyōn̲ 'the white one'.[287] In many legends Balarāma is specially connected with rivers.[288]

When we turn back to Śeṣa, we even find a legend which could perhaps explain the method for obtaining the burning oil as described by Ctesias.[289] In the *Harivaṁśa-Purāṇa* Śeṣa is represented as hanging from a tree in ascetic fervour for a thousand years, distilling *kālakūṭa* poison from his mouth, and thus burning the world.[290] We may also notice some other Nāgarājas with connected features. Thus, Takṣaka has his home in Takṣaśilā (or Kurukṣetra) and is called the White One (*śveta*).[291] When the gods and the Asuras churned the Ocean they made the snake Vāsuki their churning rope. After a thousand years the poison-spitting heads of the serpent bit the rocks with their fangs. A terrible fire-like poison called *hālāhala* came forth, and would have burnt up the whole world if Śiva had not swallowed it.[292]

Thus, it seems possible that the worm represents Balarāma/Śeṣa who is, either by Ctesias or in some Northwestern tradition unknown to us, interpreted as a ferocious aquatic animal. The crocodile may have contributed.[293] It is another case of a Northwestern tradition which is no longer preserved in its original form but in the more or less

[280] Parpola 1975a, 131f.

[281] Parpola 1975a, 138 and 140. It was mentioned as τάλα by Megasthenes (F 12), cf. Stein 1922, 71 and Hinüber 1985, 1105.

[282] Parpola 1975a, 140 and Joshi 1979, 5.

[283] See Joshi 1979, 48f. He is often depicted as carrying a wine flask and his eyes are misty from intoxication (*madavibhramalocana*). Of course he drinks Palmyra toddy, too.

[284] Parpola 1975a, 131f.

[285] *Vita Ap.* 3, 1 (related to Ctesias, cf. Reese 1914, 90f.).

[286] Joshi 1979, 16 (quoting *Mbh*).

[287] Parpola 1975a, 132f., where he also connects Balarāma with the white *śuklapakṣa* half of the moon and with the (equally white) planet Venus.

[288] See Joshi 1979, 1ff.

[289] It has been noticed in this connection by Goossens (1929, 39f.).

[290] *Harivaṁśa* 12076ff. as summarized by Hopkins (1915, 24).

[291] Vogel 1926, 204f. On a connection between the Nāgas and Taxila see also Dani 1986, 2f.

[292] Vogel 1926, 199f. (referring to *R* 1).

[293] I cannot, however, agree with Goossens (1929, 37ff.) when he connects the worm, the crocodile, Śeṣa, real serpents, Gangetic river dolphins and the ὀδοντοτύραννος of Pseudo-Palladius.

scanty accounts of Greek and Sanskrit literature.