

ricette), antipasti (8), minestre e verdure (6), carne e interiora (10), pesce (34), desserts (37) e, alla fine, vari condimenti, odori e spezie.

Riguardo alla convivialità greca e ai rituali connessi con il cibo e il mangiare, per non parlare della storia dell'alimentazione nella Grecia antica, rimane decisamente necessario consultare altre opere, mentre questo libro mi pare che possa funzionare perfettamente nella cucina di oggi (sui gusti personali non si può discutere, però, la murena [p. 123] la cucinerei senza miele e menta, aggiungendo due capperi e un pizzico di prezzemolo, benché quest'ultimo, considerato come simbolo di morte, non sembra sia stato usato dai greci in cucina).

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GRANT PARKER: *The Making of Roman India. Greek Culture in the Roman World*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2008. ISBN 978-0-521-85834-2. XV, 357 pp. GBP 55, USD 99.

Many regions and cultures that held a perpetual fascination for the Greeks and Romans seem remarkably less formidable today in terms of exoticism – just think of Britain, for instance – but for the western readership this is hardly the case with India. While the vigorous "occidentalism" and the *hyper Thoulēn apista* of classical literature barely survived the later cultural centrality of the formerly peripheral western lands, orientalism obviously enjoyed a much more prolonged and complicated *Nachleben* – the ramifications of which are still with us today, as should be clear to anyone who has so much as leafed through their Edward Said. The most unsettling corollary of this long-lived Indographic tradition is the possibility that certain themes and motifs (*topoi*) ultimately deriving from ancient literature have effectively been enshrined in the subsequent literary tradition. In extreme cases such images have wielded their influence unchallenged until a very recent time (e.g., the British Raj), and in some instances the modern observers still are prone to "know" things about India that were as confidently "known" by the Romans, and with almost as little factual basis to back this notional iconosphere up. Indeed, the imagined India is another prominent example of how little any actual contacts with the imagined community may change the entrenched and widely shared "xenology" concerning that community within a literary culture.

In this ambitious and erudite monograph Grant Parker addresses the creation, content, and reception of the Indian iconosphere among the ancients, particularly the Romans. Hence there is comparatively little to interest those who seek another study of the flow of goods between the Mediterranean world and South Asia; instead, any scholar of geographical and ethnographical tradition, cognitive aspects of the Indographic literary mode, and discourse of the exotic in ancient literature will find the book at hand a veritable treasure trove teeming with riches that greatly resemble the Asiatic ones that so captivated the Romans. The book is practically divided into three parts, all of which treat different aspects of the discourse on India: its creation, its features, and its contexts.

The introductory Part One consists of the necessary and fundamental early history of Indographic writing, as the subcontinent was first opened to Greek enquiry by the Achaemenid hegemony, and proceeds to map the impressions that north-western India left on Alexander's Greeks. One particularly worthy feature of these early chapters is the emphasis laid on the key

role of the Achaemenid Empire as not only a vehicle for Indography, but also its generator – something which Scylax of Caryanda well illustrates, but which is also retained as a useful framework for the discussion of Herodotus. Likewise, Ctesias' paradoxographic account and its problematic influence on the respectability of the genre is nicely examined (28–33) – though even more useful is the observation (17–8) that paradoxographic elements seem to have played a significant role already earlier. The relevant theoretical framework of climatic determinism from the Hippocratic *Airs, waters, places* onwards is carried along throughout the work.

Alexander's Indian sojourn is traditionally conceived as the formative kernel of Greco-Roman Indography. Parker, however, rightly stresses that besides deriving much from already existing representations, the Alexandrian Indography likewise cannot be clearly separated from, for instance, Megasthenes' stay at the court of Chandragupta Maurya. Such toning down of any postulated abrupt changes in "xenology" is very well justified. Importantly, from the Alexandrian period onwards stems the bulk of "knowledge" on the Indian ascetics and philosophical schools (39) with their unimpeachable alien wisdom – a theme which would become very influential throughout the western Indographic tradition. Of great worth is the brief but thoughtful reference (40) to the application of the theories of information gathering and the construction of knowledge to the Indographic writing. In this context, the theoretical framework of "middle ground" in the creation of ancient ethnographical knowledge might be of use for the study of India, too; at any rate, the concept has recently been applied to the processes of negotiating identities along the Imperial Rhine frontier, for instance by Greg Woolf. Part One also engages with the perpetually fascinating Greco-Bactrians and Indo-Greeks with a minimalistic eye for potentially brewing scholarly myths (allowed by the enthusiasm of W. W. Tarn and others) that is most sobering.

Part Two, on the features of Indographic discourse (69–143), is structured around the twin registers of literary description (chapter 2) and visual depiction (chapter 3). Of these registers, description is accorded vastly more attention; it is examined in relation to the genres of sustained descriptive Indography, to its topics or contents, and – perhaps most usefully – to the various literary tropes and modes used in the descriptions. Though such technical aspects of Indography have been cursorily examined by, among others, James S. Romm in his *The Edges of the Earth* (1992, Princeton), Parker's more detailed and very up-to-date treatment will probably surpass the earlier classic in what it comes to the eastern reaches of the *oikoumenē*. The rest of the part 2 is occupied by chapter 3, devoted to the visual representations of India. While this section seems rather meager in comparison with the preceding one, the fact seems to derive more from the actual dearth of Indian iconography rather than from any authorial decision or personal inclination; on the contrary, among other valuable interpretations, Parker proposes a plausible explanation (143) for the strange lack of any visual depictions of Indian wise men (when compared with the influence of the literary *topos*).

Part Three, the longest of the subdivisions (147–307), treats the contexts of the discourse on India, divided into chapters on the commodities and the proverbial Indian riches (ch. 4), the imperial discourse of power, domination and universality (ch. 5), and the motif of wisdom and the existence of India as the epitome of holiness (ch. 6). Despite constantly drawing from archaeological data of Indo-Mediterranean trade, the chapter on commodities is solidly anchored on the literary texts, in both what they can tell us on the actual flow of goods and, even more interestingly, on the perceived provenance of much of the luxury commodities of Imperial Rome. The moralism and the rhetoric of power are there to be found, too, but the

valence of trading-related discourse on India to the Roman observers/consumers can hardly be overstated. Excitingly, some Indian sources to this exchange are moreover brought to contribute to the discussion: Tamil poems mentioning the beautiful ships of the *Yavana* (173) are just one example. The trade constituted a *topos* in the other end of the network, too.

In the next chapter Parker discusses the themes of dominion, imperial symbolism and providential universality, with a now-to-be-expected wide range of sources from Plato to Cosmas Indicopleustes. For the Roman discourse of imperial space, the crucial attribute of India was the fact that it lay definitely outside the *imperium* – unlike the formerly "exoticized" western lands. In this sense, India was ideal in perpetually anticipating the future glory of any *princeps* being eulogized; something which is affirmed time and again by plentiful passages from the authors, and which was elementally joined with the *imitatio Alexandri*. The Christianization of the empire did not really challenge the usefulness of India, as Parker points out in a fine sub-section (227–40), while some of the late imperial panegyrics are taken into account as well. Finally, as a crowning delight of the work, the theme of Indian wisdom and holiness is taken up (251–307) – arguably the most enduring legacy of Greco-Roman Indography. Unlike so many barbarian peoples that were characterized as impious, morally defective or just plain stupid, the Indians loom large as the mystified paradigm of righteousness, much like their predecessors and structural forebears, the Ethiopians of Homeric epic. Wide-ranging and erudite, the chapter weaves inspiring connections between the images of the Brahmans and Gymnosophists on the one hand, and the Cynic sages and Christian holy men on the other – hence explaining part of the enduring literary fascination with Indian philosophers, the quintessential "alien sages". Other similar groups, such as the Magi and the Druids, are largely left aside from the comparative dynamics, but this can hardly be criticized in a work of such scope.

The book is copiously annotated with a balanced and relevant apparatus of footnotes, with almost all crucial passages displayed in the original. In debating the earlier scholarship Parker does not exactly shy away from expressing his criticism, but does this in a courteous and reasoned fashion throughout. There are very few things that could have been improved on, but one such is the Index (355–57), which is sketchy and not very helpful in a book with such a wealth of information. However, the fact hardly reduces the importance of *The Making of Roman India* as a very significant contribution to our understanding of the complex processes of portraying cultural differences and negotiating the use of conventional narrative elements in ancient representations of India. It may well become a classic on the subject.

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JESPER MAJBOM MADSEN: *Eager to be Roman. Greek Response to Roman Rule in Pontus and Bithynia*. Duckworth, London 2009. ISBN 978-0-7156-3753-1. IX, 166 pp. GBP 50.

LOUISE REVELL: *Roman Imperialism and Local Identities*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-88730-4 (hb). XIII, 221 pp. GBP 45, USD 80.

The debate regarding what it meant to be Roman in the Roman Empire has been ongoing for at least a century. One cornerstone of this debate is the question of Romanization, of a (perceived) cultural identity across the Empire and the ways in which this Roman-ness was manifested