

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

U.P. ARORA, ed, *Yavanika: Journal of the Indian Society for Greek and Roman Studies*, vols 1 to 8 (Publisher ISGARS, C/o Department of Ancient History and Culture, Rohilkhand University, Bareilly). Rs 100.00 \$ 25 each.

The eight volumes of *Yavanika* are a collection of articles on various aspects of ancient Graeco-Indian Studies by reputed scholars, both Indian and foreign. They seek a reappraisal of several problems, concerning Indo-Greek numismatics, historiography, and socio-political, economic and cultural history. The journal *Yavanika* has an edge over many other such journals, as it is not restricted to Indo-Greek history but includes South Asia's relations with the Graeco-Roman world in ancient times. As such, it would not be out of place to call it the only journal of its kind in South Asia. The articles explore in depth several aspects of the subject covering a wide range viz., religion and mythology, classical accounts, art-motifs, trade and commerce, philosophy, even flora and fauna as well as epigraphical, numismatic and archaeological evidence. Consequently, the reader is benefited by a multi-dimensional approach.

***Yavanika* 1 (1991)**

In this first issue of the journal, K.V. Soundara Rajan has presented an interesting note on the multiple interpretations of the term, *Yavanika*. He confirms that the journal's title connotes that it shall be a 'curtain raiser for important research work. And, he is quite correct. The issue comprises papers that announce the ambit of the journal. 'A New approach to the History of the Greeks in India', by Osmund Boppearachchi presents a fresh interpretation of the numismatic source material that modifies some of the historical interpretations made by Tarn and Narain. The complex and perplexing interpretation of the monograms of Indo-Greek Coinage, that he undertakes, is remarkable.

Two major articles, one by D.P.M. Weerakkody on 'Sri Lanka's Diplomatic Mission to Rome in the First Century AD', and the other by U.P. Arora on 'Roman Age Authors on Ancient India', deserve special attention since they relate to the cultural interaction between the two worlds of East and West, in which the journal specializes. Arora has shown that the Roman Age authors followed the traditional image of India as formed from earlier Greek writings, and omitted all new and authentic information, which they might have received from traders and sailors of those days. However, despite the Roman Age feelings of

superiority, the image of the Indians in the Graeco-Roman world continued to remain an idealistic one.

Eliki Zannas, in her paper 'Hellenization of the East', concludes that the process of Hellenization dates back earlier than Alexander's conquest. Presenting the example of Gandhāra art, she points out that in the long journey from the Mediterranean world towards the east up to the Indus, Hellenistic art must have had to undergo several alterations.

In other articles, B.N. Mukherjee gives a new interpretation to some phrases of the Greek version of Rock Edict XIII of Aśoka; A.K. Sinha compares the hedonistic philosophical schools of Cārvāka and Epicurus; and M.I. Siddiqui proposes the warehouse model for Indo-Roman Trade of the early centuries.

The Book Review section provides reviews of books in the field. In this issue Abhay K. Singh reviews the 'Analysis of Reasonings in Archaeology – A Case of Graeco Bactrian and Indo Greek Coins'; and Sunil Gupta has reviewed 'The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity.'

Yavanika 2 (1992)

In this issue A.K. Narain, in 'Approaches and Perspectives', has delved into important aspects of historiography and reaffirms his point of view about Indo-Greek history.

Among other contributing scholars, Paul Le Valley has investigated the philosophy and identity of the naked wise men of Taxila – the gymnosophists, and finds the source of their ideas in the philosophy of Sanjaya. This paper titled 'What Did the Gymnosophists Believe?', is full of comparative information from Lokāyata, Jainism and other sources. He concludes that the gymnosophists were perhaps the Agranikas of Indian records.

Sukumari Bhattacharjee has focussed upon certain peculiar similarities between Vedic, Greek and Roman mythologies with respect to the phenomenon of 'dawn.' It is her surmise that the peculiar and paradoxical aspect in the different mythologies must have an Indo-European origin.

U.P. Arora has in an insightful paper, 'Understanding Greek Nomenclature in Classical Accounts of India,' cautioned against the risk of misinterpretation involved in the translation of Greek accounts of

Indian history. Citing instances of misinterpretations that have caused discrepancies in information on Indian history, the author has established the case for an understanding of the Greek language and cultural background of the Greek authors, which is imperative before an authentic and reliable translation can be made. In this light, the need for a reinterpretation of McCrindle's work is evidently urgent.

Osmund Bopearachchi rectifies the identification of the deity on the silver drachm of Hermanes. In the paper 'Elephant Headed Gaṇeśa or Zeus Mithra,' Bopearachchi defends the opinion that the deity is Zeus Mithra and not Gaṇeśa as suggested by Narain earlier.

The article by a Chinese Scholar, Liu Yingsheng, provides information on the 'Indirect Graeco-Roman Influence on Chinese Muslims,' particularly regarding the scientific literature including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, etc. B.N. Mukherjee has shown many references, which indicate Hellenic dominance in the Indian borderland, in the treatise by Isidore of Charax. The short article 'The Stathmoi Parthikoi and the Greek Culture in Arachosia', is full of useful facts. This volume of *Yavanika* also has three books on numismatics reviewed by A.K. Singh.

***Yavanika* 3 (1993)**

In the third issue, the archaeological theme is enriched by papers of Ajai Mitra Shastri, B.N. Mukherjee, Alok Tripathi and Sunil Gupta. The paper 'Yavanas in Western Indian Cave Inscriptions', by Shastri focuses on the inscriptions of the *Yavana* donors from Nasik, Karla and Junnar caves. Their names reflect that the *Yavanas* were Indianized. The liberal attitude prevailing in matters of religion during the Sātavāhana period led to generous endowments to Buddhist caves by *Yavanas* and other Indians. This was, thus, not an indication of their religious leanings.

Mukherjee points out the existence of a 'mixed script' that existed in ancient Indian borderlands and probably served as a medium of writing in the regions of Sogdiana, Bactria and Kamboja. The development of a mixed script provides an important link in the study of Hellenism in the East.

Alok Tripathi has reported the finds of a variety of amphorae during excavations at Elephanta in his paper 'Amphorae from Elephanta Island,' and provides evidence of commercial traffic of goods between India and

the Western world during the early centuries AD. Surprisingly, none of the ancient texts mention Elephanta as an important port and site.

A 'List of Explored and Excavated Early Historic Sites in India Yielding Material Evidence of Indo-Roman Trade' has been contributed by Sunil Gupta, who has presented the documentation of Mediterranean objects and artefacts, which have been considered an indicator of trade. A distinction has been drawn between sites of Indo-Roman trade and sites of Hellenic influence.

Papers on themes relating to culture are F. Diezde Velasco's 'Serpentine Power in Greece and India,' which seeks to unravel and interpret the significance of serpents in Greek mythology by a comparative study of *Kundalini*, the serpentine power in Tantrism. Examining the parallels, Velasco emphasizes that whereas in the Greek case, super-human potentialities are reflected in heroes/kings/diviners, in the Indian case they are beings liberated from human bondage. In a paper, 'Some Common Mythological Motifs in Greece and India,' Sukumari Bhattacharji points out certain common beliefs of the people as reflected in their myths. The sharing or giving of part one's life span to a loved one, is one such motif in Indian and Greek myths, she explains.

Other papers include D.P.M. Weerakkody's 'Sri Lanka's Fauna and Flora as known to Greek and Latin Authors,' which surveys 800 years of references to the island Taprobane (Sri Lanka) and the bounty and prosperity of the island during that period. The paper, 'Greek Rulers in the Land of Sind' by Asma Ibrahim of Pakistan, provides a numismatic study to identify certain Indo-Greek rulers in the land of Sind, whom she prefers to name as the 'Indus-Greek' kings. The volume's Book Review section has three reviews by U.P. Arora, A.K. Sinha and A.K. Singh.

***Yavanika* 4 (1994)**

'The Platonic and Upaniṣadic Concepts of Time' by A.K. Sinha, examines the philosophies of Plato and that of the Upaniṣads and provides an insight into the notion of time in a culture, that is intimately connected to the ethos of the culture. Whereas Greek culture stresses on 'part and whole' the Indian culture stresses on 'co-origin and co-existence' – this is the basic difference that makes the two seemingly identical concepts of time distinct in reality.

'Graeco Roman Accounts on Indian Animal World' by U.P. Arora, covers the Greek knowledge of Indian fauna from Achaemenid days to Roman Age writings. The animals referred to by Greek writers have been corroborated with ancient Indian literary sources by the author. He has highlighted the various writings on the Indian elephant, which was prized by the Greeks.

Articles on discoveries made in Afghanistan in the recent past, find a place in the present issue. Osmund Boppearachchi makes available a detailed account of the 'Recent Discoveries: Hoards and Finds of Ancient Coins from Afghanistan and Pakistan.' The readers shall benefit from relevant information about a dozen coin hoards discovered during 1992-94, including the Ai Khanum-IV; Mir Zakah-II Swabi, Bajaur, Mian Khan Sanghon Daska (Sarai Salleh), Khauzi-Khelai and Puskalavati coin hoards.

B.N. Mukherjee has contributed to the epigraphic evidence regarding the construction or renovation of a sanctuary by a Greek or Iranian/Indian in the note 'Palamedes of a Surkh Kotal Inscription.' The paper 'On the Identification of a *Yavana* Artist' by Anamika Roy interprets the epigraphic term 'Nagabu' on some Amravati Inscriptions as the name of a *Yavana* artist. Suchandra Ghosh's paper 'Cybele: Syncretistic Development in Afghanistan' emphasizes that Cybele as the mother goddess, war goddess, and goddess of fortune probably influenced the Indian religious concepts of 'Rajya Lakṣmī' and 'Durgāsīmhavāhinī' and thus establishes close contacts between the Greeks and Indians in ancient north-west India.

The issue ends with a book review of 'Ancient Rome and India', by U.P. Arora.

***Yavanika* 5 (1995)**

Some new facets have been highlighted in this issue. The study of Graeco-Indian parallels are not limited to mythology, but include the epics of the two cultures. R.A. Malagi studies the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Iliad* to show how in the great epics, history and eternity meet to reinforce truth that is ultimate. Both epics embrace the whole gamut of human existence – the polarities of bondage and freedom, hope and despair, tragedy and glory; and the truth of poetry and the truth of life become

one. The article, 'The Poetry of Truth: A Bifocal Perception of the *Iliad* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*' is a praiseworthy piece of literature.

Another comparison, opened with this issue, lies in the field of historiography. A.K. Sinha seeks to study the history writing of 'Thucydides and Kalhaṇa' with reference to the politico-cultural situations of the times, and focuses on linkages in the framework of cultural ties between Greece and India, as well as their individuality. After a detailed discussion, he concludes that the personalities and writings of the two historians differed because of the basic difference in the cultural ethos of Greece and India, and that the notion of 'Itihasa' in India was different from the western notion of 'history.'

Sukumari Bhattacharji in her article 'Gods of Death and Fate in Ancient Greece and India', has examined many representations of death and fate in the myths of the two civilizations. The author puts forward the view that the growing predominance of the theory of *Karma* shared the functions and responsibilities of fate and precluded the need to personalize/anthropomorphize the god of fate in Indian mythology.

Two papers and one note relate to overseas contacts. Michael Kordosis has discussed the land and sea routes from the Greek world to India in the paper 'The Routes From Byzantium to India and Vice-versa According to Kosmas Indicopleustes.' L.N. Swamy discusses the overseas routes in 'Karnataka's Contact with the Graeco Roman World on the Basis of Literary Accounts,' examining the artefacts found in Egypt, the writings of Ptolemy, Strabo and Pliny the Elder, and the archaeological evidence of the Deccan. D.P.M. Weerakkody has discussed Sri Lanka's trade contact with Kalinga based on the writing of Aelian. He feels that trade in elephants must have even existed then.

The traditional view about the 'Origin of the *Yavanas*' has been discussed by Demetrios th. Vassiliades. Mention of the *Yavanas* in the Epics and Purāṇas is discussed and the author brings to light indirect evidence about *Yavanas* in Vedic literature. However, the traditional view of the Indian origin of *Yavanas* is refuted.

There are two books reviewed here, one by A.K. Sinha and another by Rekha Chaturvedi.

Yavanika 6 (1996)

Of the six articles in this issue, two research papers deal with the recent past. The other articles relate to ancient sculptural art, the language affinities, the enigma called the 'ants gold' and the Greek institution of the gymnasium. The scope of the journal is widened as scholars of other branches of knowledge have also contributed to it.

In the article 'Greek Influence on Indian Sculpture,' Paul Le Valley has examined the Greek influence on Indian sculptures in the pre-Gandhāra art period. Besides a stylistic comparison, he has studied the iconography through sculptural techniques and the theory of body proportions. His tabulated study brings out remarkable facts which suggest that Mauryan art, particularly the nude torsos, was influenced by the Greek ideals of sculpting the human figure.

Theodora Gota has reviewed the transformation of the Greek gymnasium during the Hellenistic period. One of the reasons for this was the change in the fundamental concept of Greek education, of harmonising the mind and body. She has explained how the gymnasium became the bath gymnasium in a later period.

R.K. Dube, an expert on metallurgical engineering has delved into the identification of the famous 'ants gold,' which has been reported in early Greek writings on India and the Indian epic, the *Mahābhārata*. Dube suggests that the ant gold/pipilaka gold is in fact placer gold found in the plains of Dansar in the Ladakh region.

Subhash Kak pleads for the revision of etymological dictionaries in the light of the antiquity of Vedic Sanskrit in the paper 'Indic Language Families and Indo-European.'

Connections between India and Greece in modern times have been very interesting, since in this encounter Indian films have succeeded in conquering the heart of Greece from around 1960. Helen Abadzi has researched the effects and influence that Indian cinema exerted upon the Greek population in the paper 'Hindi Films of the Fifties in Greece: The latest Chapter of a Long Dialogue.' The article by Manoranjan Mohanty has discussed 'Cyprus and the EU' and hopes for some solution regarding the political future of Cyprus. The issue ends with three reviews of books and the news section.

Yavanika 7 (1997)

The seventh issue has devoted half its pages to studies in Greek classics. Professor Pratap Bandhopadhyay has examined 'The Didactic Role of Greek Tragedy and its Perennial Value.' The author considers *prabhusammita*, *suhṛtsammita* and *kantasammita* as the three different ways of imparting instruction, and the last one is the way that poetry adopts. The Greeks regarded their poets as true teachers of the people. The scholar surveys a number of important Greek concepts like *arête*, *aidos*, *dike*, *sophrosyne* and *hybris*, and explains their place in different Greek tragedies. The author concludes that the Greek tragedians' philosophy of moral order finds a unique parallel in the Indian philosophy of retribution (*karmaphalavāda*).

Prof. D. Placido has presented a brilliant exposition on classicism in his paper, 'Classicism or Humanism: The Classic Model and the Concern for Mankind.' The author advocates that classicism is not a monolithic world, but on the contrary, 'the concept of classics includes all the writers and artists who, with their enormous variety, shapes a unity characterized by its diversity,' which is 'the democratic moment in the axis around which all classicist trends are consolidated.'

'Sophocles and Indian Poetics' is the paper by Asha Choubey, which studies Oedipus in the light of the *rasa* theory propounded by Bharata in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The author believes that absence of *hamartia* may safely be taken as so much of *karuṇa* in Oedipus plays. The other half of the volume has a selection of papers on numismatics, epigraphy and archaeology. Aashi Agarwal has highlighted the 'Impact of the Western Kshatrapa Coinage on Ancient Indian Numismatics.' O.P.L. Srivastava has given a note on a recent discovery of a clay-sealing from Erich, which bears the name 'Aparadatasā' and could be Greek. During World War I (1914-19), many Indian soldiers perished in Greece. Helen Abadzi has published an article on a cemetery at Thassaloniki, where 384 Hindus, 107 Muslims, 26 Sikhs and 3 Christians were laid to rest.

Sunil Gupta has explored Indo-Roman Trade and has tried to verify the social, cultural and legal 'structures,' which influenced commodity exchange between Roman Egypt and peninsular India. The study ponders over the comparison of statutes in the *Arthaśāstra* with the economic regulations prevailing in Egypt.

The volume has incorporated reviews of three books, viz. *Iliad* by Vinod Chandra Pande, *Ancient Greek and Indian Theatre* by Asha Saxena, and *The Periplus Maris Erythraei* by Lionel Casson.

Yavanika 8 (1998)

The eighth issue of *Yavanika* has brought out some interesting articles on Greek literature and mythology.

Worthy of mention is Ramkrishna Bhattacharya's 'King Oedipus, Verses 873-81: A Study.' The author discusses the chorus in the play and suggests that the chorus speaks and sings more from ignorance than from knowledge.

In the paper 'Oceanus, Its Vedic and Chinese Connections,' G.V. Padhya has delved into the various sources to comprehend the mythology and origin of Oceanus. The scholar feels that many myths originated in the area of Balkhash, including the one under reference.

Steven Muhlberger has, in his paper 'Democracy in Ancient India,' discusses the republican polities of ancient India and proclaims that Indian republicanism gains a strong claim on the attention of historians, especially those with an interest in comparative or world history.

The volume has other sections like book reviews, news and notes, etc.

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MARIE-FRANCOISE BOUSSAC and JEAN-FRANCOIS SALLES, eds, *Athens, Aden, Arikamedu: Essays on the Interrelation between India, Arabia and the Eastern Mediterranean* (Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1995). Pp. 272. Rs 400.00.

This book¹ has eleven papers of which four refer to the relations between India and the Greek world from the early classical period to late Roman times. One paper looks at the presence of Greeks through the Yavanas

1. The book is reprinted from *Topoi*, vol. 3/2 (Lyon, 1993), pp. 387-623. The journal *Topoi Orient-Occident* is an annual publication of the Societe des Amis de la Bibliotheque Salomon Reinach (Institute of Classical Archaeology, University Lumiere Lyon-2), Maison de L'orient Mediterranee, 7, rue Raulin, 69007, Lyon, France.