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Aspects of the Acquaintance with Taprobane,
as revealed by Greek and Roman Writers

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ABBREVIATIONS EMPLOYED IN THE TEXT

| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| ASCAR | : | Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Administrative Reports |
| C.H.J. | : | Ceylon Historical Journal |
| C.P. | : | Classical Philology |
| C.Q. | : | Classical Quarterly |
| E.Z. | : | Epigraphia Zeylanica |
| F.Gr.H. | : | Fragmente der Griechischer Historiker |
| F.H.G. | : | Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum |
| G.G.M. | : | Geographi Graeci Minores |
| G.L.M. | : | Geographi Latini Minores |
| J.A.H. | : | Journal of Asian History |
| J.R.A.S.C.B. | : | Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society: Ceylon Branch |
| J.R.A.S.M.B. | : | Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society: Malay Branch |
| JRS | : | Journal of Roman Studies |
| Mhv. | : | Mahavamsa |
| OCD | : | Oxford Classical Dictionary |
| P.C.P.S. | : | Proceedings of Cambridge Philological Society |
| P.G. | : | Patrologia Graeca (ed. Migne) |
| P.T.S. | : | Pali Text Society |
| P.W., R.E. | : | Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie |
| UCHC | : | University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon |
| UCR | : | University of Ceylon Review |

INTRODUCTION

In studying the ancient history of Sri Lanka, foreign notices are considered a valuable supplement to the indigenous literature, inscriptions, coins and archaeological finds. The Pali chronicles and Sinhalese literature provide copious information concerning the political and religious history of the land; but they have very little to say on its economic history and foreign relations. Accordingly, European writers (e.g. Tennent, Lassen, Paquier) especially during the last century made use of foreign notices together with the indigenous literature to reconstruct the ancient history of the land. The Indians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Arabs, Chinese, Venetians, and Genoese were all called upon to bear testimony to the flourishing trade and economic prosperity enjoyed by ancient Sri Lanka as the great entrepôt between east and west. During the present century a large number of Sinhalese inscriptions have been published in the volumes of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* as well as in various other publications.¹ These are, for the most part, inscriptions on stone recording proclamations and donations by members of the royal family as well as other wealthy citizens to the clergy and other religious establishments. From these inscriptions some information can be gleaned concerning economic organization in ancient Sri Lanka; but even here references to foreign trade and diplomatic relations are very scanty. Hence the foreign notices still continue of necessity to be utilised as source material for the study of its history.

¹ Notably the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon administrative report, (ASCAR), *Spolia Zeylanica*, (S.Z.), the Ceylon Journal of Science, Section G, (Archaeology), and the Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, (JRASCB or JCBRAS).

The passages cited as Greek and Roman notices of Sri Lanka are usually those which refer to an island in the Erythraean or Indian Sea designated by the name Taprobane. Explanations as to the derivation of this name have been many and various, and the question has also been raised often as to whether the name denoted Sri Lanka, or Sumatra, or some other island. The early European writers on the subject made wild guesses concerning the derivation of the name Taprobane, tracing a connection not only to a Sanscrit root but even to Hebrew and Phoenician.¹ But these writers had no access to the indigenous chronicles of the island which use the Pali name Tambapaññi to designate Sri Lanka. The Mahavamsa even offers an explanation of its own for this name: "When those who were commanded by Vijaya landed from their ship, they sat down wearied, resting their hands upon the ground - and since their hands were reddened by touching the dust of the red earth, that region and also the island were named Tambapaññi" (Mhv. VII, 40-41, tr. Geiger). This explanation in itself may not be entirely satisfactory but it does establish that the name Tambapaññi was used to designate the island. The second and thirteenth rock edicts of Asoka also mention Tambapaññi, and the context makes it more than probable that in each case Sri Lanka was meant.² Once the Chronicles were published Tambapaññi was seized upon as the source of the Greek Taprobane, the Sanskrit form Tāmaparñi being considered as the possible intermediary, (cf. Lassen, loc. cit.). This also gave added strength to the conviction that the Taprobane of the Greek and Latin writers was the island of Sri Lanka. In addition, the Greek writers

1 For a discussion of these early opinions see Lassen, *Dissertatio De Insula Taprobane Veteribus Cognita*, §2, p.5 Footnote.

2 Rev. W. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1956, pp.10-11.

mention other names which were also applied in antiquity to the island. Such names are Palaisimoundou or Simoundou, Salikē, and Sieleidiba (cf. Ptolemy, Geogr. vii.4, 1; Periplus Maris Rubri 61; Cosmas Indicopleustes, Topographia Christiana, XI.445B) and derivations for these names have also been proposed. However, references to certain other names denoting places in the east have been taken by various modern writers to refer to this same island, and ancient descriptions under such names have been quoted as evidence for conditions in ancient Sri Lanka. Among such instances one may cite the Island of the Sun supposed to have been visited by Iambulos (Diodorus Siculus, II.55-60), the Island of Rachius in the Phoenician History of Pseudo-Sanchoniathon (cf. Tennent, *Ceylon* I, pp.547ff.), the Divi and Serendivi of Ammianus Marcellinus (XXII.7, 10), Sērinda in Procopius (Bell. Goth. IV.17), Sēria in Pausanias (vi.26, 8ff.), Sirindibēnoi in Epiphanius' De Gemmis (C.Q. III, p.218) the Diva Gens of the Expositio Totius Mundi Et Gentium (cap. 15), and Dibous or Dibēnoi in the Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius (III.4: cf. A. Hermann, P.W. s.v. "Taprobane"; Cosmas, ed. Winstedt, p.352 n.).

Leaving this last group of names for another occasion, (Appendix III), in a discussion of those passages in Greek and Latin authors which explicitly mention the island of Taprobane, we shall attempt to find out how far these notices reflect conditions contemporary with their authors and to what extent one is justified in using such descriptions as source material for the study of ancient history.

CHAPTER I

FIRST ACQUAINTANCES: ONESICRITUS AND MEGASTHENES

According to the information that has come down to us, the first Greek to write about Taprobane was Onesicritus of Astypalaea.¹ Pliny (N.H. vi, 81) says that Taprobane was thought for a long time to be another world known as the land of the Antichthones but without mentioning any names in connection with this opinion. He also says that the age and achievements of Alexander the Great made it clear that it was an island and follows immediately with the mention of Onesicritus. Onesicritus' book on Alexander fell into discredit in antiquity owing to the manner in which he allegedly wove fact with fiction. It has not survived, but a fragment relating to Taprobane is quoted by Strabo and Pliny.

Strabo restricts his use of Onesicritus to digressions (on the occasions when he diverges) from the source which Strabo is following at the time. According to Strabo (XV, C691) in his account of Taprobane, which is one of these digressions, Onesicritus says that its size is 5,000 stades without defining length or breadth, that it is twenty days' sail from the continent, but that ships sail badly because of inefficient gear and construction, that there are other islands between it and India, it being the southernmost, that amphibious creatures breed around it, some similar to various land animals. Pliny (vi, 81) says Onesicritus

¹ N. Vijesekara (C.H.J. I (1951), p.187), misinterpreting McCrindle's Ancient India, p.179, wrongly states that the earliest Greek account is that of Callisthenes. His error is the more culpable since he confuses Palladius inserted in Pseudo-Callisthenes with the historical Callisthenes, despite the correctness of McCrindle's notice.

wrote that elephants are bred there which are larger and more war-like than those of India.

Thus Onesicritus provides us with information concerning the size and location of Taprobane as well as the ships that visited it and its fauna. This information has been unduly discredited by modern commentators for several reasons. First of all, critics have been too ready to accept the verdict of the ancients including Strabo who considered Onesicritus a liar without allowing for the fact that he depended to a large extent on hearsay. The habit of recording marvellous details even when one does not believe in them is not uncommon among ancient geographers and historians. Secondly, the text of Strabo which gives Onesicritus' fragments on Taprobane is very corrupt, and, in attempting to restore it, external ideas have been read into it and unnecessary complications have been introduced. Thirdly, this earliest extant notice of Taprobane has been compared with accounts of later writers, whose information has been confused with what was said by Onesicritus, with the result that ideas have been imputed to him of such a kind as he never expressed, to judge from what survives. The consequence is that critics have attributed to him much more information about Taprobane than is given in the (two) ^{only} genuine fragments, and this has always been of a far inferior kind than what is contained in them. Strabo's quotation from Onesicritus makes no allusion to elephants, as Pliny's does; his information is in the vein of sailors' accounts and disregards the internal conditions of the island. Pliny, on the other hand, however briefly, with this mention of elephants, concentrates attention upon the situation inside the island itself.

Onesicritus gives the size of Taprobane as 5,000 stades. He has been charged therefore with exaggerating the size of the country and

perpetrating an error which has come down through the ages until very recent times. But he may not have been the first to do this. It has been pointed out that the ancient Hindus had exaggerated notions concerning the size of Lanka and that the Buddhist writers themselves accepted these exaggerated measurements and accounted for the present size of the island by episodes in which the sea encroached on vast areas of the country, (cf. Tennent, Ceylon, I, p.6). According to Strabo, Onesicritus gave the size (μέγεθος) without specifying length or breadth. Strabo is thinking as a geographer, and expects to know the length and breadth of the land. But what matters to a sailor is the "periplus", and it is not improbable that what Onesicritus has recorded is the circumference of the island. If this is so, the exaggeration will not appear to be much greater than the actual measurements.¹

We must also remember that Greek navigators of this time suffered from the lack of precision instruments. Mariners had to rely on the sun, the stars and the winds to tell them how far and how fast they had sailed. Thus many mistakes were made in measuring distances at sea. For instance Herodotus greatly exaggerated the size of the Black Sea, under-estimated that of the Bosphorus (cf. Herodotus iv, 85), and magnified considerably the Propontis and the Hellespont and Pytheas estimated the size of Britain at 425,000 stades (Diod. Sic. V, 24), and both Herodotus and Pytheas had some personal experience of the regions they describe. Thus we need not wonder if Onesicritus who did not reach Taprobane has exaggerated the size of Taprobane. The writers of succeeding generations, far from correcting this error, increased it. Most of them being scholars without first hand experience of the east,

¹ It may be observed in passing that the "Island Of The Sun" described by Iambulos is said to be 5,000 stades in circumference (cf. Appendix III). T. S. Brown (Onesicritus, 1949, p.76) notes that this is one of several points in which the account of Iambulos reminds one of the writings of Onesicritus, but he does not, of course, conclude that Iambulos borrowed expressly from Onesicritus.

borrowed their material from earlier writers and fitted what they thus learned into pre-conceived geographical notions.

According to Onesicritus Taprobane is twenty days' sail distant from the mainland. This is one reason why some commentators have expressed doubt as to the identification of Taprobane with Lanka. A. Hermann (*op. cit.* col. 2263) thinks this island was Iabadiu (modern Sumatra), whose ancient central point, according to him, is actually twenty days' journey from the southern tip of India. He concludes that someone who revised Onesicritus has probably transferred the description to Taprobane. This suggestion is unacceptable as there is nothing in the text of Strabo to suggest that the starting point which Onesicritus has in mind is the southern tip of India. The activities of Alexander were confined to the north west, and it is not impossible that Onesicritus' starting point should be placed somewhere in that region, perhaps at the mouth of the Indus. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the northern Indians who visited Sri Lanka by ship at this time came from the north west as well as from the north east. Buddhist literature refers to traders from north India visiting Baveru (Babylon), Tambapañni (Lanka) and Suvannabhūmi (the Golden Land, somewhere in further India) (cf. the Jatakas Mahājanaka, Sanka, Bāvēru, etc.). The only visitors to the island of Lanka at the time to which they refer seem to have been traders and shipwrecked mariners, such as those in the Valāhassa Jataka. The earliest mentioned ports of India all appear to have been situated on the western coast, e.g. Bhārukacca, Suppāra, Kalyāni in India. Kalyāni (Sinhalese, Kelani) was also the name of an early kingdom on the west coast of Sri Lanka situated on the river of the same name. Vijaya, while sailing to Lanka, is said to have touched at Supparaka (*Mhv.* vi, 46), although the Mahāvamsa situates Vijaya's homeland, Lata, on the eastern

coast of India. Thus a memory of a migration from northwest India seems also to have been preserved in this same story. Philological investigations also seem to indicate that the early "Aryan" settlers came from both coasts of north India.¹ The Mahāniddēsa contains a list of places visited by Indian merchants, and Tambapañni figures among them, (Edition, ^{P.T.S.} pp.154-5). Although it is not easy to determine the date of the traditions contained in these works we may safely conclude that, by the time of Onesicritus, maritime intercourse between India and Taprobane was well established. Mercantile interest is confirmed by the Divyāvādāna (tr. E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil, Cambridge, 1886, p.526) which states that Vijaya was the son of a merchant of north India, while according to Fa-Hien, the island originally had no inhabitants, but only demons and dragons dwelt in it. Merchants of different countries met here to trade. In consequence of these visits men of other countries hearing of the delightful character of the place flocked thither in great numbers

1 I do not, however, wish to follow the views of Lassen (Dissertatio p.17 n.) and Parānavitāna (Concise History of Ceylon) who place Lāta, the original homeland of Vijaya's company, in northwestern India, identifying it with Ptolemy's Larikē, modern Gujarat. Parānavitāna goes so far as to identify the Simhapura of the Mahāvamsa story with Sihor, and says that there was even a place called Vanga in that region, but this is very far fetched. Mhv. vi.4 definitely says that Lāta was on the way from Vanga to Magadha, and describes it as a forest country, a fact supported by the Jaina text Karanga-sutta, (Jacobi, Jaina Texts, I, p.84 quoted by B. C. Law, op. cit. p.58), where Ladha is described as a pathless country. This is probably the same as Lāta, and was a region extending from the southeast corner of Madhyadesa to the Bay of Bengal, and lay just to the northwest of Kalinga. According to the Mhv. vi.1, Vanga king's wife was a Kalinga princess. Thus the setting is clearly in northeastern India, and what needs to be explained is Vijaya's sojourn at Supparaka. This is due to the retaining of a partial memory of the migrations from northwestern India. The alternative is to envisage Vijaya as starting from the north-east, circumnavigating the Indian peninsula to touch in at Supparaka, staying there until his presence became unwelcome, and then returning south to Lanka. Journeys from the northeast to Bharukacca are recorded in the Jataka stories.

and so a great kingdom was formed.¹ The colonists who came to Sri Lanka from northeastern India certainly maintained regular and intimate contacts with their mother country, and it is probable that at least in earliest times their northwestern counterparts did the same. On the whole there is nothing to prevent the assumption that there was regular intercourse between Taprobane and the Indus region, and that Onesicritus had learned of such voyages to which he refers as being accomplished in twenty days. Certainly it was in that area that he got the information that Taprobane was an island, and that there were others adjacent.

As for Sumatra, it does not seem possible to believe, in the absence of positive evidence, that there was any contact at this date between that land and the northwestern part of India. The Suvanna-bhumi of Buddhist literature is generally to be identified with Burma, closer to the regions which the Greeks later called the Golden Chersonese. Moreover, the ignorance that pervades all classical authors other than Ptolemy concerning the regions east of India is impressive, and there is no need to bring in Sumatra at this stage of Greek knowledge concerning the east.

Another reason why Hermann believes that this description applies to Sumatra is that according to Onesicritus there are other islands between India and Taprobane while Taprobane is the furthest south. But we need not accept his conclusion once it is granted that Onesicritus is thinking of the route beginning at the Indus. We may compare Pliny (VI, 80) where he mentions several islands lying between the Indus and Taprobane; Patala, Chryse and Argyre, (whatever they may be), Crocala and Bibaga. Pliny is here compiling from older material, and some of

¹ cf. S. Beal, *Travels of Fa-Hien and Sung-yung*, New York, 1964, Fa-hien, cap. 38.

this information may well go back to Onesicritus. (For other such islands cf. Periplus 53, information from personal experience.)

Regarding the ships employed in the voyage between these two regions Onesicritus says that they sail badly being poorly masted and built without {belly bolts} on either side (ἐγκοιλίων μητρῶν χωρίς). This is one instance where in restoring a corrupt text its significance has been misinterpreted. A parallel was drawn between this text of Strabo and Pliny's account of the navigation in the neighbourhood of Taprobane (N.H. VI, 82), and Pliny's words were used to interpret Strabo's obscure and disturbed text by inserting πρῶραις after κατεσκευασμένας.¹ Thus the passage was taken to mean that the ships navigate badly, not only because the rigging is defective, but also because they are equipped at both ends with prows.

Pierre Paris (op. cit. p.299) rejects this emendation. He thinks that Strabo and Pliny are referring to two different regions, and consequently two different kinds of boats. According to him, Pliny is probably referring to the double-ended boats which can still be seen along the coasts of India and Sri Lanka, especially around the Gulf of Manaar. These are the canoes with a single lateral float known among the Sinhalese as Oruva. Strabo on the other hand, says Paris, is talking of a different kind of boat, the ἐγκοίλια μητρά being the bilateral floats of the boats which are some distance from the hull and separate (χωρίς). He says that boats of this kind with two lateral floats are found at present only in Indonesia. However, the Indonesians had to use their own boats when migrating to Madagascar and eastern Africa

¹ Müller and Dübner, *Strabonis Geographica*, Paris, Didot, 1853, Index Variarum Lectionum, pp.1032-3, quoted by Pierre Paris, C.H.J., Vol.1 No.4 pp.297-301.

and probably passed by Ceylon. Thus, Paris argues, Onesicritus gives us an important piece of information from which at least it can be concluded that at the time of Alexander the seas to the south of India were frequented by boats with double outriggers.

One may agree with Paris that Strabo's reference is not to the ends of the boat but to the sides. However, the passage can be explained satisfactorily without introducing new words into the text or having recourse to Indonesian boats. The function of the two participles is to be regarded as causal. Onesicritus here is not describing the boats but giving the reason for their bad sailing. The ships sail badly for two reasons: (1) they are badly rigged; (2) they are built without ἔγχοίλια μῆτρα on either side. These are "belly bolts", presumably bolts or nails used for fastening the boat together, and what Onesicritus means is that the boats in the area are fastened without the use of nails. There is no need to assume Indonesian influence, as Paris does. Onesicritus refers here to the kind of craft that used to be common in this region, known in Sinhalese and Pali as Dhōni. These craft (now obsolete) are described by Hornell (*Mariner's Mirror* 29 (1943), pp.43-6). About 50 tons burden, two-masted, with single outrigger float, their construction did not employ iron but planks sewn together by coir yarn, caulked and made tight by leaves between the edges. The sewing of these planks was done through holes bored along their edges, and coir yarn laced and tightened through them and over the caulking strips. The ends of these boats were similar, approximating to what the Greeks would call a prow. These craft, working the west coast daily, had their outriggers always on the port side only, to make use of the alternation of land and sea breeze - running northwards along the coast before the afternoon sea breeze, and travelling south before night land breeze. They were regularly

used during the North-East monsoon, from September onwards until the onset of the next south west monsoon, when they were withdrawn perforce for an annual overhaul. Such details bear a remarkable resemblance to account given in Pliny.¹

The statement of Onesicritus on which his account of Taprobane has been chiefly discredited is that amphibious creatures breed around the island some similar to bulls, others to horses, and others to other land animals. One must accept that Onesicritus only compares these creatures to land animals; not to human beings. But unfortunately he has been criticized (e.g. by Tennent) for saying that these creatures do resemble humans. What has happened is that scholars have compared this statement of Onesicritus with a passage in Aelian (H.A. xvi.18), and as a result what was said by Aelian is now attributed to Onesicritus. It is true that Aelian is largely indebted to earlier writers, but reading through his work, one cannot help noticing the attitude of the story-teller and rhetorician, and it is quite obvious that Aelian tells in his own way with rhetorical exaggerations what he has learned from previous authors, as is clear from his description of the marine animals of Taprobane, (H.A. XVI.18) where the mention of women occurs. The question of his exact source must remain unresolved.

1 Such boats as these are also mentioned by Palladius but he connects the practice of not using iron with the famous legend of the magnet stone, and remarks upon the use of wooden pegs in lieu (v. pp. 149 f.). Procopius also refers to these ships but dismisses the legend of the magnet stone. "The ships in the Indian Sea . . . have their planks fixed together to one another by iron going straight through them, but they are lashed together by nooses or ropes. The reason is not as most people believe that there are certain rocks there that attract iron to them . . . but it is a fact that the Indians or Aethiopians have neither iron nor anything else suitable for this purpose" (Procopius, I.19, 23-5).

The idea of constructing ships without iron is not peculiar to the Indian seas. Archaeology reveals examples in prehistoric Britain, as does Homer in the Odyssey (V.248).

Tennent, (Ceylon, I, p.528 n.3) thinks that the animal referred to by the informants of Onesicritus was the Dugong, Suckling (Ceylon, p.135). These animals are numerous on the northwestern coast of Sri Lanka around Manaar. Modern commentators themselves seem to have enhanced the fabulous nature of his statement by taking the Greek word κητώ in the extreme sense to mean monsters whereas the word could have a less frightening meaning. Although Onesicritus speaks of whales around Gedrosia which are a hundred yards long, (cf. Aelian, Hist. Anim. XVII, 6), it must be emphasised that with regard to these creatures of Taprobane he says nothing concerning their size.

According to Pliny (VI.81) Onesicritus wrote that elephants bigger and more warlike than those of India are bred in Taprobane. Aelian seems to have known this statement; for he expands it in his usual verbose and redundant manner, saying that they are larger, more powerful and intelligent than those of India (H.A. xvi.18). This statement, which has no parallel in Strabo, is erroneous, and may be traced to the ignorance that was prevalent in the ancient world regarding this matter. Curtius Rufus (viii.9.17) believed that the elephants of India were bigger than those of Africa, and Pliny (VIII.11) notes that India produced the largest elephants. It was natural to believe that the furthest places yielded the best of things; *omne ignotum pro magnifico est*, says Tacitus. Hence, since Taprobane was even further than India it was natural for them to believe that the elephants there were bigger and braver than even those of India, erroneous though this belief was. In fact, as Suckling says (op. cit., p.162), Ceylon elephants are smaller than the African.

Thus from the fragments which have survived, Onesicritus, the first Greek to write on Taprobane appears to have obtained information

which can be declared highly reliable, if we make allowance for the limitations of his period. He does not speak of the fabulous wealth of the island or its ideal life as his successors were to do. His fragments, however, do not record anything regarding the internal conditions of the country or its peoples, so that his report is of little help in studying the ancient history of Taprobane. What we can infer from it is that at this date the island was known as such to mariners on the west-Indian coast, that there were voyages between it and North India, and that reasonably precise information, however limited, was forthcoming from it.

Gosselin held that Onesicritus had visited Taprobane during a second voyage which he was ordered to accomplish, (cf. Tennent, I, p.525 note 1), but there is no ancient authority to support this statement, and it is mere assumption on Gosselin's part, based on the sailing distance. It is true that Solinus, in his description of Taprobane says that Onesicritus who was sent as admiral of the Macedonian fleet informed us of the size, products, and life of the country, (53, 2), and that it is possible to interpret the statement as meaning that Onesicritus was actually sent to Taprobane by Alexander, especially in view of his previous remark about the expansion of knowledge about the East at that time. However Solinus' work is borrowed and paraphrased from Pliny, and any divergences here, as elsewhere, are due largely to his own misinterpretation of his source rather than to consultation of any independent material.

One may be nearer the truth in assuming that it was possible for Onesicritus to obtain information about Taprobane while he was in northwestern India. We hear that he was sent by Alexander to Taxila to discourse with the sophists. Now Taxila was not only a centre of

learning but also a prosperous trading city, and centre of communications. Moreover, the mouth of the Indus from which the fleet set sail for Persia was also a rendezvous for traders, and Onesicritus could obtain his information at either place. But even though he did not go to Taprobane he shared with the earlier Greek writers a facility enjoyed by few of their successors; he was able to gather information about Taprobane while he was in its neighbourhood. Northern India remained firmly inside the Greek orbit, and from it he and his successors gleaned the details which have survived.

The immediate successor to Onesicritus among the writers on Taprobane was Megasthenes, whom Seleucus Nicator sent as ambassador to the Maurya emperor Chandragupta. His book became the basis for subsequent works on India by Greek authors. His residence at Patali-putra made it possible for him to get information concerning the eastern parts of India which was not available to the companions of Alexander.

His fragment on Taprobane, preserved by Pliny, (VI.81) contains the information that it was divided by a river, that the inhabitants were called Palaiogonoi and that it was more productive of gold and large pearls than India.¹ Thus we have in Megasthenes some meagre information concerning the geography, the people, and the products of Taprobane. His statement that Taprobane is divided by a river has been taken by some to mean that the island is separated from the mainland by a river.² But what Megasthenes said and probably meant was that the island was divided by a river.

1 Schwanbeck wrongly included as part of this same fragment, Solinus 53, 3 (Scinditur amni interfluo . . . et gemmis omnibus).

2 e.g. J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, pp.62-63.

Megasthenes says that the inhabitants of Taprobane were called Palaiogonoi. Lassen, (op. cit. p.9), takes this as a reference to the legend that the island was inhabited at first by the Rakshasas or giants, sons of the progenitors of the world. Schwanbeck (note ad loc.) rejects this view arguing that by this unusual term Megasthenes meant to name the nation and not to describe it. He also points out that Megasthenes is not in the habit of translating names, but of rendering them according to sound with some degree of paronomasia. Lassen had explained Palaisimundos (sic) from the Sanskrit pāli-sīmānta, "head of the sacred doctrine of Buddha", and accordingly, Schwanbeck prefers to derive Palaiogonoi from the Sanskrit pāli-janas, i.e. "men of the sacred doctrine". But Megasthenes was a contemporary of Chandragupta, and in his time although there may have been some Buddhists in the island, the religion was not yet formally established. This did not occur until the time of Asoka. Consequently, in the time of Megasthenes the island could not have been styled the head of the sacred doctrine. Other suggested derivations for this word are those of Tennent (Ceylon, I, p.528) who sees it as a hellenised form of Pāli Putra, "the sons of the Pāli", the first Prasian colonists; of Rasanayagam, (Ancient Jaffna, p.105), who maintains that the word (which he spells Palaigonoi) is a corruption of Palai Nagoi (Tamil, Palaya Nagar), i.e. Ancient Nagas; and of Goldstucker (in McCrindle, Ancient India ~~as~~ described by Ptolemy, p.253), who suggested that Palaiogonoi is probably Pāra-janas (a people on the other side of the river).

These theories derived, some with more, some with less plausibility from Oriental philology may be discarded. Palaeogonoi is what it appears, a Greek work as Lassen took it (cf. Plat. Com. fr. 90; Anth. Pl. 4, 295; LS, s.v.). But these parallels are in passage referring to Athens, and

in contexts which imply the tradition that the Athenians were autochthonous. In this sense Palaeogonoi bears some relation to aborigines, but the difficulty of such a theory is that it refers only to the prehistoric races of the island and not its inhabitants at the time of Megasthenes. A possible alternative is to date the Aryan colonisation of Lanka to a later time than is generally accepted, as Paquier and Rhys Davids did.¹ As a Greek word in the sense of "ancient born", a term used by Megasthenes as mere nomenclature, evidently becomes the basis for the tradition of longevity associated with Taprobane throughout classical antiquity which culminates in the reference by Palladius to its inhabitants as Macrobioi.

With regard to the products of Taprobane Megasthenes says that it produces more gold and large pearls than India. Gold is not a product of Sri Lanka but already in Megasthenes we have the association of gold with Taprobane, an association repeated in Ptolemy and some minor Greek geographers. Pliny (VI.89) does not say that gold is produced in Taprobane, only that it is held in high esteem. Stories of the fabulous wealth

1 Paquier (op. cit. pp.29-31) erroneously identifies Vijaya's father Sihlabahu with Chandragupta Maurya, the implication being that the colonisation occurs well after Alexander. The native chronicles preserve the tradition that Vijaya and his followers landed in Lanka the same day that the Buddha departed from this life. Rhys Davids, noticing the lack of geographical references to south India and Sri Lanka in the Buddhist Nikayas, thinks that the island could not have been colonised to any degree before the period of their composition, some time after Buddha's death. The colonisation had become a well established fact by Asoka's time. He therefore prefers to date the colonisation at some time in the interval, but nearer the date of this composition, and dismisses the Sinhalese tradition as a pious error. It may also be remarked that no Sinhalese inscriptions have been found before the end of the 3rd century B.C. However, the fact that these inscriptions are then found widely scattered throughout the island indicates that the Sinhalese had by then spread themselves far and wide. Accordingly, colonisation must have begun a good deal earlier, and the traditional date seems to be on the whole acceptable.

of Lanka seem to have been circulated in India from very early times, and Fa-hien in the passage already quoted attributes the colonisation of the island to its famed wealth.

Megasthenes is again the first Greek writer to mention the pearls of Taprobane, a point later made by the Periplus (61); Pliny (IX.58) who says that Taprobane was the chief pearl producer; Megasthenes limits himself to a mention of their size. Oriental literature also refers to pearls as an export of Lanka. Thus Mahabharata (tr. P. Roy, p.146) says that the king of the Sinhalas sent to king Yudhistira the best of sea-born gems and pearls, and the chronicles list pearls and gems among the presents sent by Vijaya to the king of Madura, and by Devanampiya Tissa to Asoka, (Mhv. VII.49; XI.16), and eight kinds of pearls are also named (Mhv. XI.14). Fa-hien (37 ad fin) also says that pearls are produced in the islands surrounding Lanka. The pearl banks belonging to Sri Lanka are all situated on the northwestern coast.

The fragments of Megasthenes have proved of considerable assistance in reconstructing the history of India in the time of the Maurya empire, and his veracity has been strongly defended.¹ But he is not so important as a source for the history of Taprobane, owing to the brevity of his information. What we have does not compare with the report of Onesicritus who wrote at an earlier date when India was only being opened to Greek knowledge. This is rather surprising, for we have reason to believe that at this date Sri Lanka maintained close contact with Pataliputra. Half a century later the island sends envoys to Asoka and receives in return the consecration of its king as well as the establishment of Buddhism. The narrative of this event (Mhv. XI-XIX) suggests that the

¹ e.g. J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India As Described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (ed. 2) p.234.

two countries had been in close contact for a considerable period. Yet from the fragments that remain of his work Megasthenes at the Maurya court does not seem to have learned anything more comprehensive about Taprobane. It would appear that the attention of Chandragupta, and hence of Megasthenes, was concentrated elsewhere.

CHAPTER II
THE HELLENISTIC WRITERS

Both Onesicritus and Megasthenes had the experience of seeing India personally. We now come to a group of writers of the Hellenistic age who were chiefly men of science and letters. They did not have firsthand knowledge concerning the east, but for their information on these regions they depended on earlier writers, chiefly the companions of Alexander the Great. The geographical works of these writers have perished, but fragments, including some on Taprobane, are preserved by later writers.

There are notices of Taprobane among the geographical fragments of Eratosthenes of Cyrene, (267-196 B.C.), preserved by Strabo and Pliny. According to Strabo (XV, C690), Eratosthenes' information about Taprobane is that it is an island out to sea, 7 days' sailing distance south from the southernmost part of India next to the Koniakoi, that it stretches about 8,000 stades towards Aethiopia, and that it breeds elephants. Pliny (Hist. Nat. VI.81) says that Eratosthenes also produced the measurement, 7,000 stades in length, 5,000 in breadth, and that there were no towns but 700 villages. Aelian (Hist. Anim. XVI.18) also seems to know this last passage, for, without mentioning Eratosthenes in this connection, he gives the same information as Pliny, differing only in the number of villages, 750.¹

From Eratosthenes, then, we have information concerning the nature, location, size, products and settlements of Taprobane. But

¹ On the strength of this passage, Mayhoff in his Teubner edition emends Pliny's number to 750 (DCCL).

again, as with Onesicritus, we find a difference of tone between the two fragments. As with that writer, the two fragments are mutually exclusive, except for the fact that the size of the country is given by both. But even here they differ radically from each other. According to Strabo Eratosthenes gives only the length as 8,000 stades. But according to Pliny he gives both length and breadth as 7,000 and 5,000 respectively. Again, as in the case of Onesicritus, the fragment preserved by Strabo has a maritime ring about it, while the one from Pliny is more geographical.

Unlike the informants of Onesicritus, Eratosthenes' sources are acquainted to some extent with South India. They mention the land of the Kōniakoi, the most southern parts of India being located next to it. Pliny (VI.86) mentions a promontory which he calls Coliacum as the point of India closest to Taprobane and four days' sail distant from the island, and Strabo elsewhere (XV.11) mentions the people called the Kōniakoi.

Already in Eratosthenes we find the beginnings of those errors which were to permeate almost all the Greek and Roman accounts of Taprobane in his statement that Taprobane is distant seven days' voyage southward from the southernmost parts of India which are next to the land of the Kōniakoi. Many years later we find Strabo himself placing the island too far south, making the last parallel of the inhabited world run past it or through it at its southern end. Ptolemy extends it two degrees beyond the equator. Then there is the exaggeration with regard to the size of the island, which has not yet been explained satisfactorily, and his additional statement that Taprobane extends in the direction of Aethiopia is picked up by later writers. Centuries later, indeed, we find the author of the Periplus (61), a mariner himself,

stating that the southern part of Taprobane extends westward and almost touches the opposite shore of Azania. Eratosthenes seems to have believed that Taprobane lay in an east-west direction, instead of north-south, and we find this error in Pliny as well even before it appears in map form in the Peutinger Table.

In Eratosthenes the elephants of Taprobane receive only passing mention, but he evidently showed more interest in social and political organization, since, according to Pliny, he says that there are no cities in Taprobane but 700 villages. Aelian (XVI.17) also says the same thing but gives the number of villages as 750. Both Pliny and Aelian here apply a fundamental distinction of Roman social organization and local administration, the 'vicus' being a civilian habitation which had not yet developed to the urban stage. For Caesar, it is the recognised pattern of habitation for his northern barbarians. Aelian's equivalent term (κώμη) signifies an unwalled village as opposed to a fortified city (polis).¹ Rahula (op. cit. pp.14ff.) points out that the words Gāma and Nagara are used indiscriminately in the Mahāvamsa both for "village" and "city" or "town", which he asserts is conventional use of the two terms in Pāli canonical texts, e.g. Dīgha Nikaya, II, p.53: "at that time two chief ministers of Magadha, are building a city (Nagaram) in the Pātali village, (Pātaligāme)". However this distinction is not observed in the early part of the Mahāvamsa, (cf. Mhv. VII.41-5 where Vijitam Nagaram is included among the villages founded by the ministers of Vijaya; ibid. X.42, "a village (gāma) named Kalaha Nagara was built there"). Mahāgāma, the name of the chief place in Rōhana, appears in

¹ Thus in Thucydides (I.5) we hear of cities that were unwalled and were settled in scattered villages. What is meant here is a city in the form of scattered villages. As an example from historic times we may cite Mantinea with its four villages.

the Mahavamsa and was always called a "gama" even after it became the capital of the southern kingdom. Even in ^{the second century} ~~C.I.~~ A.D., Ptolemy, while referring to the royal residence of Taprobane as a 'polis', still employs the older name when he calls it Anourogrammon (vii.4.10).

Literary works and inscriptions refer to "nagara"s (e.g. Mhv. XXXIII.37; Rasavāhinī, Vol.II p.166; E.Z., III, p.122). But we find such centres also referred to as gāma with a similar ambiguity, as in the case of Upatissagāma (Mhv. VII.44) which is called Upatissanagara (Dīpavamsa, IX.36). We have already mentioned Mahāgāma. But more usually the word gāma referred to villages. These were settlements generally associated with irrigation tanks which formed the basis of the civilisation of the time, each being administered by a headman (Gamika) and a village council. The native chronicles attribute great antiquity to this system of organisation. Thus in the Mahāvamsa (X.103) we read: "Ten years after his consecration did Pandukhabaya the ruler of Lanka establish the village boundaries over the whole of the island of Lanka".

We have no means of deciding whether the informants of Eratosthenes were familiar with this organisation or whether they had transferred to Taprobane the social structures known to them in Egypt. Eratosthenes probably wrote during the reigns of Euergetes, Philopater, and Epiphanes (246-180 B.C.), and during this period the explorations of the Ptolemies were largely restricted to the Red Sea and the Aethiopian tribes to the west and south. If we are to believe Strabo (II.3 and 4) it was not until the reign of Euergetes II after 146 B.C. that a Greek (Eudoxus) succeeded in reaching India by sea. Thus we must assume that Eratosthenes had to use for his information what was available to him in Alexandria, beginning with the works of Alexander's companions and possibly including

Megasthenes. Whoever it was, his informant had heard of southern India and of a nation called the Kōniakoi which dwelt there. But did he also have firsthand information regarding Taprobane?

The Mahāvamsa (X.90) says that Pandukhabaya set apart a section of Anurādhapura for the dwellingplace of the Yōnas (Yavanas or Greeks). From the dates of his reign (B.C. 377-307) it is conceivable that Greeks from N.W. India had made their way in some numbers to Lanka before he died, but there is some dispute concerning the received text, for in the Tika a variant reading 'so nam sabhagavatthan' occurs in some manuscripts, which has been interpreted as 'he fixed the common ground'. Comment in the Tika is lacking, so that reference to Yonas, who^{id} at first appears conclusive, is more open to question. If the manuscript reading is retained - and it appears stronger than the variant - then the establishment of such a foreign settlement in the capital at such an early date implies a very prompt reaction on the part of the Sinhalese to the new conditions brought about by Greek penetration into northwest India and the extension of Western interests after Alexander, and an equally prompt penetration of regions further afield by these newcomers to the northwest.

Two Greek coins have been found in Sri Lanka (Peiris, op. cit. p.12). One is from Acarnania Leucas, dated c.350-250 B.C., (i.e. of this same period). But these two coins and a contested verse from the Mahavamsa taken together do not provide in themselves evidence strong enough to assume a permanent presence on the part of Greeks in the island before the time of the Roman Empire and the source of Eratosthenes' information still remains a mystery.

Perhaps the answer ought to be sought in the improved communication between East and West resulting from the internal unity and external

prestige achieved by the Maurya empire. From its inception, this empire was in touch with the Greek kingdoms of the west. Seleucus was represented at the Maurya court by Megasthenes, and Antiochus I by Deimachus of Plataea. Both these ambassadors wrote works on India, Deimachus even recording a correspondence between Antiochus and Alitrokades (Bindusara) the second Maurya emperor. Dionysius, the envoy of Ptolemy Philadelphus, is also known to have written on India, although nothing of his work has survived. On the Indian side, we know from the 2nd and 13th Rock Edicts of Asoka that the empire was in touch with the Greek kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, and Cyrene, and the mention of these kings leaves no doubt that at this time the word "Yona" signified Greeks. According to these edicts, there were Greeks even within Asoka's own empire, and that this was no idle boast is proved by the recent discovery of two inscriptions from Kandahar. The first, discovered in 1958, is a bilingual proclamation in Aramaic and Greek. The other, which came to light in 1964, gives a Greek translation of the end of the 12th Rock Edict and the beginning of the 13th, the implication being that this is a fragment from a complete Greek version of the fourteen rock edicts, probably engraved on a wall. These inscriptions reveal the unity of Greek civilisation in the Hellenistic period reaching its furthest geographical limits in the east. They are not touched by any marks of degeneracy, isolation, or barbarisation. Nor are they slavish translations. Asoka's doctrine is presented in the current style and idiom of the Greek language. The vocabulary is that of the literary tradition, particularly of philosophy, religion and ethics, and this correspondence is also manifest in the style of composition. Even the lettering conforms to the practices current throughout the Hellenistic world. The implication is that the public of Kandahar for whom these documents were



intended, included intelligent and cultured Greeks familiar with the Greek philosophical and literary language and thought of their time. Moreover, they were in touch with the main centres of Greek civilisation: witness the discovery of a copy of the Delphic Maxims brought from Delphi by one Kineas having gone all the way to Delphi for this purpose (on the Inscriptions cf. Schlumberger and others: J.A. 1958, pp.1ff. and Comptes Rendus de l'acad. des Inscr. et B.L. 1964, pp.126-40). On the other hand, during Asoka's reign Sri Lanka was drawn into intimate contact with the Maurya empire. Thus there can be no doubt that Eratosthenes, who was a contemporary of both Asoka and Philadelphus, was in a position to augment what he learned from books in Alexandria with reports, written or oral, from Greeks or Indians who travelled between East and West as envoys or in some other capacity. That is probably why he has a better knowledge of South India and Sri Lanka than his predecessors, or indeed than many of his successors.

The opinion of Hipparchus of Bithynia (190 B.C. - c. 126 B.C.) has been preserved in the geographical work of Pomponius Mela, "Taprobane aut grandis admodum insula aut prima pars orbis alterius ^{id parcius?} <ut> Hipparcho dicitur, et quia habitatur, nec quisquam circum eam isse traditur, prope verum est" (Mela, III, ed. C. Frick, Leipzig, 1880). Clearly, the text of this passage is corrupt, and even when restored, as shown, its interpretation is ambiguous, since it is doubtful whether both alternatives belong to Hipparchus or the second only.

Pliny (VI.81) gives the impression that Taprobane was known as another world by the name of the Land of Antichthonos before the time of Alexander, and considering the information given by Onesicritus it may seem absurd to suppose that as late as the time of Hipparchus the insularity of Taprobane should be unknown. Hipparchus here does not

say anything about the Antichthones but speaks of Taprobane as the first part of another world. However, Hipparchus should have known that Taprobane was an island since it was known to Onesicritus and Eratosthenes. D. R. Dicks (The Geographical Fragments of Hipparchus, London 1960, pp.115-16) attributing both alternatives to Hipparchus, says ". . . it would seem that Hipparchus did not feel justified in basing a definite decision on the vague and contradictory evidence that was available and so left the question open," but from the text of Mela it is clear that Hipparchus concentrated simply upon the "other world" theory, and that the alternatives here canvassed ^{are} as those of Mela himself. Mela approved ^{are} of Hipparchus' opinion, citing the known facts that Taprobane was inhabited and that there was no record of its having been circumnavigated. Mela, in his disbelief of the insularity of Taprobane, appears to be an odd man out in his time.¹

The geographer Artemidorus of Ephesus (fl. B.C. 104) also mentioned Taprobane, and evidently in some detail. In Pliny (VII, 30) we read that Artemidorus reported that people lived to an extreme old age in Taprobane without suffering any physical deterioration. Here, for the first time in our sources, we have the association of Taprobane with the ideal living conditions of the golden age, and the development of the concept of longevity which was implicit in the name Palaeogonoi, an association which was to be repeated again and again in Greek and Latin

¹ The belief that there were other land masses than those known to us is as old as Plato (Tim. 24e), and speculations on this subject are common in classical literature (cf. 24; Aristotle, Met. I.13, II.5; De Caelo, II, 13, 2; Ps-Aristotle, De Mundo III; Theopompus, Fr. 74; Aelian, V.H., III.18; Polybius, III, 38; also Lucretius II, 1075). For instance, Britain and Taprobane were considered by the ancients as the ends of the known world, as will be seen, and certain parallels were imagined for the sake of symmetry. At present it may be of interest to note that Britain also, like Taprobane, was at first suspected of being the beginning of another continent (cf. Dio Cassius, XXXIX, 50; LX, 19; Anth. Pal. 462).

writers, (cf. Pliny, VI.91; "Agathemerus" II, 25, G.G.M. p.500). The Hellenistic ideas of Utopia here implicit receive a definite location, and anticipate the vague generalities of the Christian Paradise.

His figures for the size of the island are quoted by Stephanus of Byzantium, (s.v. Taprobane) as 7,000 stades in length and 5,000 stades in breadth. The text of Stephanus has 500 for the breadth, but Forbiger emends it to 5,000 to bring the account into line with the accepted tradition, since then the figures are identical with what Pliny gives as the measurements of Eratosthenes.

A fellow townsman of Artemidorus also noticed Taprobane in his work. This was Alexander of Ephesus who was nicknamed Lychnus. He too lived during the first century B.C., and following the prevalent tradition of the Hellenistic age, he wrote poems on astronomy and geography. Cicero mentions him in two letters to Atticus both of which belong to 59 B.C. (ad Atticum II.28, 7 and 20, 6). Cicero describes him as a negligent fellow and not a good poet, but in spite of all that, one who knows something and is not altogether useless. It may thus be assumed that through him the mention of Taprobane was once more brought to the awareness of the educated Roman. His geographical poems were known to Dionysius Periegetes, and his fragments on Taprobane are preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium and Eustathius as two versions of the same fragment. Stephanus quotes it in its original verse form (s.v. Taprobane), while Eustathius paraphrases it in prose, (Comm. in Dionys. Perieg. 591). His information about the island is very vague. He is misinformed about its shape, or else adapts it to accommodate his verse form, and his interest is concentrated mainly on the elephants of Taprobane, which seem to have become a commonplace by this time.

Two traditions run side by side - that of the theoretical geographer and that of the didactic moralist. Apart from Eratosthenes, neither adds very much fresh to the basic information which came from the age of discovery. The literary tradition had already diverged from the practical venturer, the culmination of Hellenistic knowledge being contained in Eratosthenes.

CHAPTER III

WRITERS OF THE EARLY ROMAN PERIOD

All the works^s discussed so far survive only in fragments. This is perhaps one reason why the information on Taprobane is scanty, although one wonders whether it would have made a great difference with regard to it if these works survived in entirety. With the beginning of the Roman Empire we have references from writers whose works have come down to us in a more or less complete form. But in spite of the fact that voyages to the east were now becoming more and more frequent the accounts of Taprobane still remain brief and vague.

We have already seen that Mela, following Hipparchus, speaks of Taprobane as not being circumnavigated, and leaves its insularity as the less likely of two alternatives. Ovid thinks of Taprobane as a remote place in the Indian Ocean, and in the tropics, and it is possible that he was aware that it is an island, depending on the reading adopted (see Sources)¹ (Ex Ponto I.5.80). In this context he mentions Taprobane almost in the same breath with Syene, a juxtaposition which curiously matches Dionysius' location of Taprobane on the tropic Cancer, whereon Syene lies, the common factors in both cases being tropic heat and distance.

Taprobane is also mentioned in the treatise De Mundo, (393 B.14) which figures in the Aristotelian Corpus but is generally believed to be

¹ 'cingit' (the reading of Merkel and Postgate) recognised the insularity of the place; but it is not derived from the best MSS., and in any case, though Ovidian, it appears too commonsensical in this context. 'pingit' (MSS. ABH) is not a really Ovidian metaphor here: it generally implies the decoration of embroidery; tingit (the reading adopted, cf. Owen O.C.T.) literally 'bathe', and Ovidian, is also used by him poetically as 'tinge'.

a work of later date. Here the author says that it is not smaller than Britain, situated beyond India and that it lay aslant to the inhabited world.¹

It is interesting to note that De Mundo itself places the island beyond India, whereas Strabo and other later geographers frequently make the island face west from India. But this is probably due not so much to accurate geographical knowledge as to the prevalent conception of Taprobane as being outside the inhabited world.

Another notable feature in this text is the comparison of Taprobane with Britain.² Strabo (II.5.32) says that Taprobane is no less in size than Britain. Since the date of the De Mundo is uncertain we cannot determine which of the two authors was responsible for this comparison or indeed whether one knew the other. We know that Strabo was largely influenced by the teachings of Posidonius. The De Mundo is also thought by some to be influenced by that thinker. One might speculate whether the comparison of Taprobane with Britain ultimately goes back to him. However, the extant geographical fragments of Posidonius do not contain any reference to Taprobane, and therefore we cannot arrive at any conclusion.

1 A Latin translation of De Mundo made by Apuleius, the celebrated author of the "Golden Ass" also survives. As we have it, this work displays astounding ignorance either on the part of the scribes or of the author himself. In the Greek version Taprobane is said to lie aslant to the inhabited world. But this Latin version reads: *Minores vero ultra Indos Bromane atque Zoxē*. The author or a copyist has read the Greek *λοξή* (aslant) as *Zoxē* and has taken this as the name of an island. P. Thomas emended Bromane to Taprobane, (Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*, etc. ed. P. Thomas, *De Mundo*, cap. 7, p.70). This correction is obviously supported by the Greek text, but the rest of the passage does not approximate to the original. We have to conclude that the author not only misunderstood the Greek source, but also knew nothing of the regions he was writing about; and the work deserves nothing more than passing mention.

2 Caesar is the first to give any definite measurements for Britain (v.12) and he says that up to his time it was pretty well unknown (iv.20).

But one thing we know for certain. From now on the comparison came naturally to Greek and Roman geographers. Britain and Taprobane were the ends of the known world, and parallel characteristics were thought of regarding them, so giving some sort of symmetry to the known world. I have already referred to the idea that Britain, like Taprobane, was thought at times to be the first part of another world. Even when their insularity was known, both islands were exaggerated in size; and just as the northern part of Britain was turned east and made to hug the coast of the European mainland (as in Ptolemy), so too the southern part of Taprobane was made to extend westward until it almost touched the eastern shore of Africa, (cf. *Periplus* 61).

The ideas regarding the size of the two islands seem to have undergone some change as time went on. Whereas the *De Mundo* says only that Taprobane is not smaller than Britain, Ptolemy (VII.5.11) says that of the most noteworthy islands the first is Taprobane and the second is Albion of the British Isles, and the criterion implied is clearly that of size. Britain was better known to the Graeco-Roman world of Ptolemy's time owing to the exploits of the Romans; thus Taprobane, being the lesser known, came to be thought of as the larger.

Apart from the quotations from Eratosthenes and Onesicritus in book XV C690-1, already quoted, and the comparison with Britain just mentioned, Strabo's *Geography* contains several incidental notices of Taprobane, chiefly in the second book. In II.1.14 he locates Taprobane opposite the Cinnamon coast, (Somaliland), and places it east on the same parallel; it is also south opposite India. Since in this description Strabo is proceeding eastward, from Africa, the words *πρὸ κείνου τῆς Ἰνδίας* imply that he considered Taprobane to be situated to the west of India as well as to the south. This is also confirmed by

his statement that it extends in the direction of Aethiopia. This was the prevalent belief in antiquity, and is also found in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (61). It seems that while some geographers placed Taprobane too far away on or beyond the edge of the inhabitable world, others who argued against them brought it too near to the African coast. It may be noted that Strabo gets his information from mariners and venturers and that the author of the *Periplus* was one himself. It is the practising sea-farers then, who place Taprobane nearer to Africa - while the theoreticians keep it firmly in the east - beyond anything Alexander had reached. The seamen, getting their information at first hand, seem to have preserved an echo of the trans-ocean trade route between S.E. Asia and Africa.

Strabo's account is based on hearsay, as is evident from the clear expressions to that effect. In this text the length of the island in the direction of Aethiopia is given as 5,000 stades, whereas in XV. C.690, he quotes Eratosthenes as saying that the length was 8,000 stades, and then goes on to cite Onesicritus' account where the size of the island is given as 5,000 stades, although as Strabo notes, length or breadth is not specified. But it is possible that Strabo considered 5,000 as being a more likely figure than 8,000. In fact, the sentence which links the fragments of Eratosthenes and Onesicritus gives us the impression that Strabo is checking one against the other. "Such are the accounts of Eratosthenes, and these, when supplemented by the accounts of other writers when they convey exact information will determine the nature of our description of India. Onesicritus, for example, says with regard to Taprobane . . ." (Compare the twenty days' sail of Onesicritus with the seven days' of Eratosthenes, who defines his point of departure.)

Among the products of Taprobane Strabo specifies ivory, tortoise shell, and other wares in large quantities. The quantity of ivory obtained in the island at the present day is small, but evidently in Strabo's time ^{the amount} ~~that~~ exported from the island was great enough to attract his attention.¹ The tortoise shells or (more properly) turtle shells of Taprobane are mentioned not only by Strabo but also by the author of the Periplus (61). Moreover, according to Pliny (VI.91) large tortoises formed the chief object of native fishing. It is however surprising that Pliny says that they form the roof of houses, but we have confirmation in the sophisticatedly exaggerated account of Aelian (Hist. Anim. XVI, 18). It is possible that Aelian is here elaborating in his own manner what he had found in the text of Pliny. On the other hand it is not improbable that both authors derived from a common original, and we have already seen how Aelian exaggerates the information regarding the elephants of Taprobane, which Pliny quotes as coming from Onesicritus.²

Turtle shell, often referred to as "Indian", seems to have come into use as an article of luxury in the west by the first century A.D., since references to it are frequent from the beginning of the empire. It was used above all by the wealthy Romans to provide a veneer for their rich furniture, in particular for decorating bedsteads made of ivory.

1 Warmington, (ip. cit. p.165) notes that the Indian elephants never produced such a large quantity of ivory as the African. Cosmas (XI. 449D) says that in his time African ivory was exported even to India.

2 In the Gulf of Manaar turtles are said to be found which frequently measure between four and five feet in length, and Tennent (Ceylon, I. p.190) says that he once saw a man resting under the shade of a turtle shell, "almost verifying the statement of Aelian". The Hawksbill turtle (*Chelonia Imbricata* of Linnaeus), which supplies the tortoise-shell of commerce, was in former times taken in great numbers in the vicinity of Hambantota, and there is still a considerable trade in the shell which is manufactured into ornaments, boxes, combs, etc. in the Galle area.

From Strabo's statement it is clear that the turtle-shell of Taprobane was known even before the discovery of the monsoon. After this discovery, the trade increased greatly, as is shown by the increase of references in classical writers from the time of Nero onwards. According to the *Periplus* the best of all turtle shell came from the Malay Peninsula (63), but the supplies from Taprobane still remained important enough to be mentioned in that work, (cf. Warmington, *op. cit.*, p.166).

In the present text Strabo provides evidence that confirms what we have already seen from oriental literature, namely the commerce that existed between Taprobane and the mainland of India. "There are brought from thence to the Indian markets ivory, tortoise-shell, and other wares in large quantities." From this Warmington (*op. cit.* p.10) makes the very probable deduction that at this time the Greeks did not come directly to Taprobane but were content to buy its products in the marts of India, where all of them were available, the Tamils being the middlemen who brought these goods from Taprobane to India. It was certainly a period of Tamil influence, and even control of Sri Lanka. Five Tamil kings, probably Pandyan, are recorded between 43-29 B.C., and their influence lasts longer still.¹ In II.5.14, Strabo cites navigators for the information that Taprobane is much to the south of India, that it is nevertheless inhabited, and is situated opposite to the island of the Egyptians and the Cinnamon country, and that the temperature of their atmospheres is similar.² Strabo is usually snobbishly mistrustful of the

1 An Indian king Pandion (?Pandya) sent envoys to Augustus (Strabo *ibid.*).

2 One cannot accept the opinion of J. Filliozat (*Revue Historique*, CCI, 1949, pp.7-8) who believes that Taprobane and the Cinnamon country were the same land. This opinion is based on a misinterpretation of certain passages in Pliny and Strabo. Thus, when Pliny (XII.42) says that cinnamon is brought to Southern Arabia across a wide expanse of sea by

information supplied by merchants and others who have sailed to the east. Not only are they few in number, but also unreliable. "As for the merchants who nowadays go from Egypt to India by way of the Nile and the Arabian Gulf, those who have gone round the coasts of India as far as the Ganges are few. They were all, moreover, people without education and therefore useless for giving any information about the geography" (XV.I.4). This attitude common to literate Romans seems to have prevented him from making good use of current information that could have been available to him. Instead he repeats the views of Eratosthenes, Hipparchus, Posidonius and other early scientific writers. The present passage is one of the exceptions, for here he makes use of information supplied by mariners, but one feels that this is rather in support of his general geographical argument. The point here is that Taprobane, though further south than India, is still in the inhabitable world, in fact in our world. Strabo is probably combatting those who placed Taprobane on the opposite side of the earth, an opinion which seems to have been current even in his own time. This discussion is continued

2 [cont.] the Troglodytes who are often linked by marriage to certain Aethiopians, Filliozat thinks that by Troglodytes and Aethiopians we should understand not the inhabitants of the west coast of the Red Sea, but the people of Sri Lanka, India, and even Indo-China, in whose lands cinnamon is most abundant, and who might be designated as Aethiopians in the wider sense of people with burnt faces, since they share many traits of appearance with the peoples of Africa. He also cites the opinion of certain authors quoted by Strabo (XVI.4.25) that most of the cinnamon exported by the Arabs came to them from India; and points out that Strabo attributes to the Cinnamon country the same latitude and characteristics as Taprobane and makes it the last of the inhabited lands, comparing this last point with Pliny's statement that Taprobane itself was for a long time considered to be another world. But there can be no doubt that in the passages cited by Filliozat, Strabo and Pliny are dealing with Africa. Moreover, the complete silence of Greek and Latin writers concerning the cinnamon of Taprobane is matched by a similar reticence on the part of the early writers of Sri Lanka; and the obvious implication is that this commodity was not produced to a significant extent on the island before the late middle ages. Hence, the Cinnamon country of Greek geographers could not have been the same as Taprobane.

at II.5.35, where Strabo defines the parallel of latitude applicable to Taprobane as "the parallel of the Cinnamon Country", and so places the island definitely inside the parallels of the known world.

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (61), an anonymous document probably belonging to the second half of the first century A.D., is a very different kind of work.¹ The text, where it refers to Taprobane, is extremely corrupt, but even so the passage has strong resemblances to Strabo II.1.14, not only in the mention of tortoise-shells among the products, but also in the placing of the island to the west of India and making it extend towards Africa. Concerning the northern part the author says that it is civilised, or cultivated.² A detailed study of Ptolemy's account of Taprobane and the evidence furnished by the indigenous literature and inscriptions seems to indicate that the northern part of the island had attained to a higher degree of civilisation than the south. We shall have occasion to speak of this in greater detail when we study the account of Ptolemy. His language indicates that the island was visited by ships and the implication is that they certainly used the Palk Strait at this time.

^{of Pirene} 1 The general consensus of modern opinion is that it belongs to the second half of the first century A.D. The extreme views, who dates it to the early third century have been contested by McDowell and Sircar, with evidence from Indian numismatics. Thorley, (unpublished thesis of University of Hull; 'The Intercourse between the Roman Empire and the East) while accepting the first century date, recognizes that there are later elements, and suggests that their intrusion is the result of updating the information of the Periplus, which, according to him, is no simple portolan, log or mariner's guide (as had been suggested by previous scholars), but a document compiled for the benefit of the Prefect's office in Egypt, detailing overseas commerce with a view to facilitating the administration of import and export duties. As such it finds a parallel with the agreed up-dating of items in the Notitia Dignitatum - also an official document.

2 McCrindle and Schoff, owing to Greek accent (ἡμέρα (noun), for ἡμερα (adj.)), wrongly interpret it to mean that the northern part of the island is one day's journey from India.

With regard to the products of Taprobane apart from the pearls and tortoise-shells which we have already discussed, the Periplus also mentions precious stones and muslins. Sri Lanka was famous throughout antiquity for her gems (cf. Mahābhārata and Mahāvamsa cited above, p.18). Such renown is also illustrated by some of the names which mean "the island of gems" given to it by foreigners, e.g. the Indian Ratnadvīpa, the Chinese Pao-chu, and the Arabic Jezirath Ul-yaqut. It is, however, interesting to observe that the Ratnapura district which is now famous for its gems, does not appear to have been settled in those days. This is also true of the entire south-western region from the Kaluganga to the Nilvalāganga. The earliest inscriptions in this region belong to the tenth century (U.C.H.C. Vol.I, p.10).

The Periplus mentions muslins (sindones) among the products of Taprobane. This island was never renowned for its textile industry in antiquity, although according to the foundation myth Kuvēni is portrayed as spinning cotton when Vijaya's men meet her.¹ But the author of the Periplus is not alone in referring to the export of textiles from the island, for Oriental literature preserves some such records. On the other hand there are many references to textiles being imported into the island, an early instance being mentioned in connection with the Dutthagamani story (Mhv. XXIII.23-33).

The author of the Periplus also mentions a new name for Taprobane current in his time: Palaisimoundou. The manuscript evidence for it is highly confused, and the name is a matter of speculation and theorising, both with regard to its correct form as well as its derivation.

1 (cf. Circe in the Odyssey.)

Pliny, (VI.85-6) quoting the envoys from Taprobane, gives Palaesimundum as the name of the capital city and also of a river near by. Perhaps this could be explained by assuming that the name was originally used for a city, and was later extended to cover the whole island, as was indeed the case with Tambapañni. Hermann, (P.W. s.v. "Taprobane") comes out with the suggestion that Taprobane and Palaisimoundou were the names of the capitals of two rival kingdoms on the island, and that depending on which of them was predominant the island was known by each name in turn. But this suggestion is not substantiated by the local sources.

But the real difficulty is with regard to the correct form of the name. Pliny gives it as Palaesimundum, but Ptolemy (Geography, VII.4.1) and the MS. of the Periplus separate Palai from Simoundou and take it as an adverb meaning "formerly", Ptolemy contrasting it with "nun de". Thus, according to him, Taprobane was formerly called Simoundou but now Salikē. This interpretation is taken up by some of Ptolemy's followers. Ptolemy's text has ἤτις ἐκάλειτο πάλαι Σιμούνδου νῦν δὲ Σαλική. Stephanus of Byzantium (S.V. Taprobane) says of Taprobane, ἡ πάλαι μὲν ἐκάλειτο Σιμούνδου νῦν δὲ Σαλική. The anonymous Geographiae Expositio Compendiaria (Agathemerus, Bk. II) has (VI.25, Müller, G.G.M. II p.500) ἡ πάλαι μὲν Σιμού^νδα καλουμένη, νῦν δὲ Σαλική.

On the other hand we have the testimony of Marcian of Heraclea who, three times in the course of his Periplus says that Taprobane was formerly (πρότερον) called Palaisimoundou.¹ The insertion of this word each time guarantees that Palai will not be taken as an adverb, and

¹ cf. Marcian, I. Proem. τῆ τε Ταπροβάνη καλουμένη, τῆ Παλαισιμούνδου λεγομένη πρότερον: I.8, ἡ Τ. νῆσος ἡ Παλαισιμούνδου καλουμένη πρότερον, νῦν δὲ Σαλική: cf. I.35 ἡ δὲ Τ. νῆσος πρότερον μὲν ἐκάλειτο Π., νῦν δὲ Σαλική.

this reiteration of the remark suggests that Marcian is desperately trying to correct an error which had been made current by Ptolemy's copyists. Moreover, as Pliny, who is our earliest evidence, gives the form as Palaisimundum, we may take this to be the true form of the name at this time. Ptolemy's ambiguity heightened by the two divergent interpretations of his successors, leads to the conclusion that he did actually write Παλαισιμούδου, that this was the current name, as confirmed by Pliny's Latin, and that therefore in the Periplus its substitution in place of the MS. πάλαι Σιμούδου by the editors, is justified as the lectio difficilior and the real representation of fact.

The derivation of this name has also been the subject of much speculation. There is no ancient name either for the whole island or for any part of it which has the faintest resemblance to this name.¹ Whatever its derivation, this name has certain peculiarities. Unlike Taprobane, and Sielediba, it cannot be traced directly to any name for the island in local language, literature or tradition. Moreover its use seems to have been confined to a very short period: not known to Strabo, first mentioned by Pliny and the Periplus, it is already obsolete by the time of Ptolemy. Though other names for the island, both native and Indian, have survived to the present day, there are no traces of this

1 Unsubstantiated derivations by da Bartholomeo, Mannent, Lassen, Tennent, Gerini, Rasanayagam and Hermann, and many others, all based on conjectural reconstructions from Oriental philology, may be dismissed out of hand. Only Raychaudhuri (Indian Antiquary, Oct. 1919, pp.195-6) condescends to find support from ancient literature (Arthasastra II.11), where the Commentary refers to Ceylon as Para-samudra(ka), and suggests that this form is the Sanskrit original for Palaesimoundou. Pieris and Schwartz receive this suggestion with some favour.

However, it must be noted that there is a parallel to the latter part of the name elsewhere in Ptolemy referring to a location in the island, viz. Andrisimoundou; and cogent explanations for the first part of it are still lacking, despite Renou's tendentious comparison with Andarae, Andhra (Pliny VI.67).

name in current usage. The use of this name in all probability was confined to the foreigners who traded in the ports of the island, and it was a foreign word which did not enter the native speech. If we accept Müller's conjecture for this passage in the Periplus, this is precisely what its author says, that the island generally known as Palaisimoundou is called Taprobane (Tambapañni) by the natives. Perhaps one may draw an analogy with the modern name "Ceylon" as well as other names which Europeans gave to various places in the island, which have never entered the local speech.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE ELDER PLINY: DILIGENTIOR NOTITIA

The fullest account of Taprobane belonging to the first century A.D. is found in Pliny's Natural History (VI.81-91). This account falls into two parts: the first part (81-83) is based on information given by earlier writers, among whom he explicitly names Onesicritus, Megasthenes and Eratosthenes. The second part (84-91) is devoted to an account of the arrival of four ambassadors from Taprobane and the information supplied by them, certain details of which are said to be corroborated by the accounts of Roman merchants.

From VI.84 we understand that the information of §§82-3 came from earlier writers but, as distinct from what he has done in §81, Pliny does not name his sources. He says that the island begins at the eastern sea and extends along-side India from east to west. This is of course a misconception which we have already come across in Eratosthenes (Strabo, XV. C690), but Pliny does not make it extend all the way to Africa. All the information that follows is of a nautical nature, and seems to have come from the reports of sailors who had been in this area, and it is also remarkable that most of it conforms to what we know of the local conditions as well as what we learn from oriental literature.

Pliny says that the island was at one time believed to be twenty days' sail from the country of the Prasii, the vessels then in use being, as he puts it, constructed of reeds and equipped with Nile rigging, but that the distance was later reduced to seven days according to the

course of "our ships".¹ Strabo (XV. C690) gives the sailing time from India to Taprobane as seven days according to Eratosthenes, while in C691 he gives the distance as twenty days according to Onesicritus, who also mentions the poor quality of the ships. According to Pliny the reduction of the time from twenty to seven days was due to comparison with Roman ships' sailing time. Thus it appears that three days' sail of native ships was considered to be roughly equivalent to one day's sail in "our" ships.

It was sometimes thought that both Pliny and Strabo referred to the same matter. Thus Jacoby (F.Gr.H. II.b.I, 134 note to Onesicritus Fragment 12) thinks that Eratosthenes was responsible for the reduction of the distance from twenty to seven, the implication being that the twenty days in Pliny's text also comes from Onesicritus. However, the similarity of the figures is best regarded as mere coincidence and the

1 Why Pliny should refer to the boats plying between Taprobane and the Prasii as reed boats is difficult to explain. Although it is sometimes believed that the ancient Egyptians employed them for sea voyages, reed boats are, and generally have been, confined to rivers and lakes and, as far as can be ascertained, they have never been used for voyages between Sri Lanka and the Ganges (Hornell, *Water Transport*, pp.46ff.). The mention of Nile rigging may have been an associated idea, prompted by the reference to reed boats, and it is possible that Pliny was describing the ships around Taprobane in an analogy which would be familiar to Roman readers (i.e. "rigging of the type used on the Nile"). If this was the case, it is just possible that the reference is to the use of the sails. The old Sinhalese coasters carried a square sail laced to a bamboo yard on each of their two pole masts (Hornell, *Mariners' Mirror*, XXIX. 1943, pp.44-5). Similarly the boats of the Nile as well as those of ancient Greece carried square sails (Torr, *op. cit.* p.78). However, by the middle of the first century A.D. a top sail had come into use on Graeco-Roman ships which helped to improve their speed. "A full rigged ship of this period must have had a main mast with a yard that carried a square sail below and a triangular sail above, a foremast or bowsprit with the yard and square sail only, and also a mizzen with perhaps a similar yard and a sail". (Torr. pp.90-91) believes that the rigging had been developed to this point by about 50 A.D. at the latest. If this view is correct, we have here perhaps an indication as to what Pliny meant when he said that the distance given according to native ships was re-calculated according to the speed of Roman ships.

attribution of this reduction to Eratosthenes is not justified. In fact the passages do not refer either to the same starting point or to the same coast. Eratosthenes calculates his seven days from the southernmost point of India which lay next to the country of the Kōniakoi while Onesicritus gives his twenty days from some point in northwestern India. But Pliny is talking about the distance "a Prāsiana gente". According to the geography of the ancient Indians the eastern division of their land was known as "Prācyā". The Greek form "Prasioi" usually denoted the inhabitants of the Magadha kingdom whose capital was Pātaliputra (Palibothra or Palimbothra in Greek, the modern Patna). The port of this empire was Tamralipti (Pali Tammalitti, Greek Tamalites, modern Tamruk), at the mouth of the Ganges. Tamralipti appears to have been the port in northeastern India regularly used for communication with Sri Lanka. The Pali literature of Sri Lanka refers to several voyages to and from Tamralipti (Mahavamsa XI.23, 38; XIX.6) associated with the introduction and establishment of Buddhism in the island. Thus even as late as the fourth century A.D., when the Kalinga prince bearing the Tooth Relic came to Sri Lanka, it was on a merchant vessel from Tamralipti that he made the trip. The times recorded in the Mahavamsa for these journeys vary from one day to twelve at least. It is interesting to note that the time taken by the envoys of king Devanampiya Tissa to sail from Jambukōla (a port in northern Sri Lanka) to Tamralipti is given as seven days (XI.23). On the other hand, we hear from Fa-hien who embarked for the "Kingdom of the Lion" on a merchant ship at Tamralipti, that he took fourteen days to complete his voyage (Fa-hien ch.36, trans. Beal)

Pliny goes on to say that the sea in-between is shallow, not more than six fathoms deep, but in certain channels so deep that no anchors

hold. On this account the ships have prows on either end, that they may not need to turn round in the narrows of the stream. The difficulty here is to decide whether by "mare inter est vadosum" Pliny intends to describe the sea between Taprobane and south India, or the whole distance from the country of the Prasioi. These ships are described as of about 3,000 amphorae burden, i.e. about 75 ^tons (cf. Torr, op. cit., p.25), the traditional Sinhalese yathra dhoṇi having a capacity upwards of 50 tons. Pliny is here clearly referring to sea-going merchantmen, and hence we must understand 'inter' as referring to the journey to the Prasii (cf. above, chapter I).

After saying that there is no observation of stars in navigation, and also that the Great Bear is not visible, Pliny adds an interesting detail about the way the local sailors find the direction of the land by use of birds. The idea of finding land by means of birds is perhaps as old as Noah's Ark. The practice is also described in a Buddhist text. But whereas Pliny speaks of it as a contemporary thing, Buddhist scripture speaks of it as a thing of the past. "Long ago Ocean-going merchants were wont to plunge forth upon the sea, on board a ship, taking with them a shore-sighting bird. When the ship was out of sight of land they would set the shore-sighting bird free . . . If on the Horizon it caught sight of land thither it would go, but if not it would come back to the ship again." (Digha Nikāya, Kēvaddha Sutta, I.222 Trans. Rhys Davids). However although birds were used for navigation, the direction of course by observation of stars was not altogether absent, as Pliny would have us believe. The idea was known to Buddhists (cf. the 'land-pilot' for night travel on land; Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, p.102)

Pliny says that navigators do not sail for more than four months in the year, and that they especially avoid the hundred days after the solstice, at which time it was stormy in those seas. A study of the text in relation to the actual circumstances of the locality will show that Pliny is in fact in this section now describing the short local voyages undertaken by native boats. He had already mentioned that the Great Bear is not visible in these regions (VI.83). In actual fact, the Great Bear is visible in Sri Lanka, but only from April to August. The sea around Sri Lanka is rough during part of the year, and these rough periods correspond more or less to the monsoons. The southern and western coasts are stormy from May to September, the northern and eastern coasts from December to February. Thus when Pliny says that the hundred days after the solstice are especially avoided this can only refer to the three months following the summer solstice - July, August, and September - and in that case Pliny's description refers to the southern or western part of the island. It also follows that what he has in mind is the local navigation and not the distant voyages to India for which the starting point was usually a port in northern Sri Lanka.

Pliny (VI.100-106) gives a detailed account of the commercial voyages between Egypt and India. He says that after the discovery of the shorter route the whole voyage could be made within a year. We learn that it took about thirty days to sail from Berenice to Cella or Cane, and from thence to Cranganore it was another forty days' voyage. Thus India could be reached from Egypt in about seventy days. We are told that travelling by sea began at midsummer before the Dog-Star rose or immediately after its rising (VI.104), and also that travellers set sail from India on the return journey at the beginning of the Egyptian

month Tybis which is our December, or at all events before the sixth day of the Egyptian month Mechir which is sometime around January 13th according to the Roman Calendar - so making it possible to return home in the same year (VI.106). Thus the sailors were in India or Sri Lanka between September and December, but they were not in a position to observe the local conditions during the rest of the year. Hence the absence of the Great Bear.

Pliny does not tell us who his informants were for 982 and 83 and, in the absence of independent evidence, we cannot attribute this report to any writer mentioned in his index to this book. But we can be pretty certain that these reports belong to a time after the Hellenistic navigators had learned to use the monsoons. Although Pliny and the author of the Periplus both knew the use of the Hippalus wind for navigation to India, it is not known to Strabo. Thus Pliny's informants were some of the first century A.D., not known to Strabo, or perhaps not made use of by that geographer who considered them illiterate and incompetent for his purposes. Sailors
a

It was only during part of the year that these navigators were able to experience the local conditions of the eastern regions. But their reports were accepted as supplying evidence for conditions throughout the year. Moreover their accounts were tailored to fit existing knowledge as well as preconceived geographical theories. Onesicritus and Nearchus had already reported that the Great Bear could not be seen beyond Carmania, and the astronomers had already propounded theories as to why this was so. Strabo (II.5.38) says that the Cinnamon people are the first who see the Great Bear for the whole year. Even at a later date we find Philostratus (V. Apoll. III.53) saying that in the Indian Ocean one does not see the Great Bear and the North Star.

Moreover the geographers had already placed Taprobane too far south, and this persisted even to the time of Ptolemy who stretched it over two degrees beyond the equator. Thus when fresh information arrived it was made to fit into what was already known or believed.

We now come to the story of the freedman of Annius Plocamus which serves as introduction to the arrival of the embassy from Taprobane. Several problems centre round this episode. First of all there is the problem of the date of this event. Pliny says that it happened in the time of Claudius. Dr. David Meredith (J.R.S. 1953, pp.38-40) published from the 1936-7 field notes of the late Dr. H. A. Winkler two inscriptions found in the Wadi Menih on the Berenice road, one in Latin and one in Greek, cut by a certain Lysas, slave of Publius Annius Plocamus. The Greek and Latin inscriptions (dated 2nd and 5th July respectively) both record that this slave was there in the thirty-fifth year of the emperor, who can only be Augustus. The date therefore is A.D. 6. This occurrence of the name of Annius Plocamus in such an appropriate context has prompted some scholars to assign the incident mentioned by Pliny to a much earlier time than the reign of Claudius, (e.g. Warmington, O.C.D., s.v. "Taprobane"; M. Wheeler, Rome beyond Imperial Frontiers (Pelican edn., London 1955), pp.155-6). There is, of course, no proof that the references in the inscriptions and in Pliny are to the same Annius Plocamus, and one need not go as far as Dr. F. F. Schwarz (Pliny the Elder on Ceylon, Journal of Asian History, VIII, p.36), in assuming that the Lysas of the inscription is identical with the freedman of Plocamus mentioned by Pliny, and concluding therefore that he carried on his business in the age of Augustus.

We cannot, however, overlook the fact that Pliny definitely says that the embassy came during the reign of Claudius. Since Pliny was

living in Rome during the late thirties and early forties of the century it is hard to question his veracity. Meredith thinks that the embassy probably arrived during the first three years of Claudius' reign; and it is even possible to conceive that Pliny himself had seen these visitors. Pliny shows a particular interest in new information, and does not hesitate to specify any change of conditions or recent additions to knowledge, (e.g. VI.105). So, in VI.81 he had already sketched the growth of knowledge about Taprobane. In the present passage (VI.84) he is contrasting what he has obtained from earlier writers with what has recently been learned from the delegates from Taprobane. One cannot imagine him attributing to his own times events that took place in the reign of Augustus at a time when he was not even born.

When Pliny describes Annius Plocamus as one who had bought the Red Sea vectigal the implication is that he held this ^{position} ~~office~~ at the time when the freedman reached Taprobane. But the presence of Lysas in the Egyptian desert in A.D.6 (if the reference is to the same Plocamus) indicates that he must have had some interest in the area as early as that date.

The difficulty can be explained in several ways. It could be argued that there were two people by the name of Annius Plocamus, a father and a son, belonging to a resident family in Egypt who were engaged in tax farming and that the younger Annius inherited the vectigal from his father. Such hereditary offices were common in Egypt. However, it must be noted that Pliny speaks of Annius Plocamus as having bought the vectigal from the financial office. The alternative is that the Annius Plocamus of Pliny and of the inscription are identical. But there are two possibilities, one that in A.D. 6 he was in Egypt, not as a tax farmer, but in some other capacity, perhaps a rich merchant engaged

in private trading, and that by A.D. 43 he had taken to farming the Red Sea vectigal. The dates of the inscriptions correspond interestingly with the time of the year considered best for sailing from Egypt to India using the summer monsoon, (Meredith, op. cit. p.40). The allocation of the Red Sea vectigal rights might well go to a merchant who had been working there for a long time and had experience of the area.

The second possibility is that Annius Plocamus may in fact have held the vectigal concession as early as A.D. 6, although this is not explicitly stated in the inscription. This means that he worked the Red Sea vectigal for at least thirty-five years, which, it may be argued, is a very long time to hold an imperial concession. According to De Laet (cited by Meredith; loc. cit.) the longest period during which a conductor held a portorium in Illyricum was eight years. But Egypt was Augustus' preserve and exceptions would not be out of place there. Long term holding of offices was not unknown in Egypt especially in the case of minor officials associated with finance. We hear of one Nicanor who held for forty-five years (A.D. 6-50) the rights to the desert transport business, working between Coptos and the ports of Myos Hormos and Berenice, and these dates significantly fall within the reigns of Augustus and Claudius (Meredith, op. cit. p.40). Thus Plocamus' holding of the vectigal rights for over 35 years is not all that improbable. The embassy must therefore be assigned to the reign of Claudius; the specific statement of Pliny is undoubtedly more worthy of trust than a number of implications derived from external evidence, and the Annius Plocamus is probably the same in both cases.

Some of those who are inclined towards an earlier date for the embassy from Taprobane have drawn our attention to a passage in the commentary to the Mahavāmsa, (Paranavitana, in the U.C.H.C. Vol.1, p.225;

Dr. Edmund Peiris, op. cit. p.18; Schwarz, loc. cit.). The Mahāvamsa (XXIV.47) says that king Bhatikabhaya "had a net of coral prepared and cast over the Cetiya" (i.e. the Mahātūpa). The commentary says, "He had a net of coral prepared; that is, he sent to the country of Romanukha across the sea, and got down red coral and had a perfect net of coral made suitable enough to be cast over"¹ (Vamsatthappakāsini, Vol.II p.630 ed. Malalasēkara).

Geiger's dates for Bhatikabhaya, calculated from Mhv. and Culavamsa, are 38-66 A.D. Codrington and Parनावитана, sceptical of the accuracy of tradition concerning lengths of early reigns in the Chronicles, rearrange the dates to B.C. 22 - 7 A.D., neatly within the relevant years of Augustus' principate as required by the inscription. Geiger's dating, however, which follows the tradition of the Chronicles, fits no less neatly to the reign of Claudius, as required by Pliny. In the absence of incontrovertible proof both for the suggested redating of the episode described by Pliny ^{and} for that of the regnal [^]years of the Sinhalese kings, the traditional interpretation of both western and indigenous sources should be retained. It will also be evident that the political conditions as described by the ambassadors suit the reign of Bhatikabhaya better than that of any later king who has been suggested by those who seek to displace the received chronology (e.g. Tennent I, 557, Schwarz op. cit., p.40). It is a well documented fact that coral from the Mediterranean was exported to the east in antiquity. Pliny (XXXII.21) says that there was a great demand for coral in India, "Coral is as precious among the Indians as Indian pearls are among the Romans". The Arthasastra (II.11.42, cf. Schwarz, J.A.H. VIII, p.37) says that "Alakandaka and Vaivarnika are two sorts of coral which are of Ruby-like

¹ Mhv. Tika XXXIV.47 (Vol. II, p.630) reads:

parati^rne Romanukharattham nama pesetva surattapavalam aharapetva etc.

colour" and the commentator Battasvamin explains that both Alakanda and Vivarna are maritime countries (Samudraikadēśah, which Schwarz translates "situated in the sea"). Alakanda in this context is almost certainly the Egyptian Alexandria.

Coral beads in large quantities have been found at Mahatittha (Mantotte) as well as at other localities, and some of these may have come from the west. All in all we may take it that the commentator to the Mahavamsa is recording a historical fact when he says that king Bhātikabhaya sent overseas to the country called "Romanukha" and got down red coral. The fact that he had to send overseas for it indicates that it was not being imported to the island in large enough quantities at the time either through India or directly from the west.

The embassy to Rome in the time of Claudius, although the first recorded governmental contact, need not be taken as the first encounter between the inhabitants and the west. As has been seen, the first part of Pliny's account reflects some previous firsthand experience, coming from authors whom he calls 'prisci'. Bhatikabhaya sending someone to the "Romanukha" country for coral instead of buying it from India implies that he was not ignorant of that country and its trade. According to Pliny, the immediate cause of the embassy to Rome was that the King of Taprobane was impressed by the integrity of the Roman currency, but perhaps Pliny's fondness for the anecdote had made him miss the real import of the embassy, which may not have been sent for purely commercial reasons.

If the ornament of coral was destined for the greatest religious edifice in his kingdom, the presumption must be that Bhatikabhaya, portrayed in the Chronicles as a devout and lavish patron of Buddhism, would not regard such a mission as an ordinary commercial transaction.

Both the purpose and the quantity of coral required would call for negotiations at the highest level, that is of an official embassy. Pliny's interest in the information concerning Taprobane given ^{by} the envoys nearly a generation previously disguises the essentially religious motive which inspired their mission. Specific references to Romans are extremely rare in oriental literature, westerners generally being designated as Yavanas or Yonas. Such references generally are confined to astronomical treatises.¹ The survival of the term 'Romanukharattham' in the Tika may well be significant of the extraordinary importance attached to this mission and of its official nature.

Certain details in the story have also been questioned. It has been asked, for instance, what the freedman of a Red Sea tax farmer was doing around Arabia, whether he was sailing round Arabia in pursuit of customs-defaulters (Warmington, op. cit. p.341 note). Plocamus' sphere of operations in the Mare Rubrum would certainly cover the whole coast of southern Arabia, and it would be natural enough for his freedman, engaged on his patron's business, not to confine his activities to his official "district". We learn that his cargo included Roman denarii, which were confiscated by the king, but the implication is that they were not the full content of the hoard, and that foreign coins, presumably got in this venture, formed some part of it and provided a basis for comparison.

It has also been felt that fifteen days was too short a time to travel from Arabia to Taprobane, and Warmington (loc. cit.) suggests that we should read XL instead of XV. Pliny (VI.104) says that normal sailing time in the monsoon from Arabia to India was forty days. Here

1 Cf. W. E. Clark in *Legacy of India*, ed. Garratè (1937) p.350.

the fifteen days were counted from Carmanis, and not from Arabia, and the weather was certainly not normal. It was blowing a hurricane from the North. Warmington also gratuitously assumes that this is the story of a man who did not know the use of the monsoons. The discovery of the monsoons did not mean that from then on ships sailed without being caught in, or wrecked by, adverse winds, and ^{the} monsoons here have nothing to do with the case, the gale being northerly. When Pliny presents the freedman as sailing round Arabia, that should be regarded as the fact of the matter. The question is, which way? Solinus says it was on the outward voyage (Arabiam petens, 53.5), but that is his own interpretation of Pliny's statement. It would be more reasonable to interpret it as the return voyage from the mouth of the Persian Gulf, where he would actually be carried by northerly gales along and beyond the Car^manian coast; and this would be consistent with ^{the} implied presence of foreign coins among his cargo as suggested above. Schwartz's (op. 34) assumptions about the various changes of course in the freedman's outward journey are beside the point.

The port in Taprobane where the freedman landed is known to Pliny as Hippuros. This place has been identified with Kudiramalai. In Tamil Kudiramalai means "Horse Mountain" and it is very probable that Hippuros is made up of the Greek words for horse (Hippos) and mountain (Oros). Kudiramalai is a haven on the north-western coast of Sri Lanka not far from Mantotte. It lay close to a pearl bank of the same name, and there are remains of an ancient habitation in the locality.¹ If this identification is correct we have here the translation into Greek

¹ cf. Brohier, C.L. Notes on an ancient habitation near Kudiramalai, J.R.A.S. (C.B.) lxx, no.82 1929, pp.388-97.

of a local Tamil term. The place was certainly known to the Tamils in consequence of their invasions, and interestingly enough, in the Sinhalese chronicles, Tamils and horse-traders are frequently linked. The most likely presumption is that the Greek name was given to the place during the period of Tamil control when the Pandyas were in a position to exploit such pearl banks for their Western trade.

Pliny says that the king of Taprobane perceived the honesty of the Romans when the captured denarii turned out to be of the same weight although their types indicated that they were issued by different persons. The incident has been confused with the story which Cosmas narrates about Sōpatros who convinced the king of Taprobane of the greatness of the Romans by demonstrating the superiority of Roman coins. It has sometimes been thought that the freedman in Pliny's story likewise impressed the king by showing him Roman coins, (e.g. Toussaint, History of the Indian Ocean, English Translation, London, 1966, p.35). But the real significance of Pliny's story is that these coins were seized (*captiva pecunia*) and that they were weighed and found to be equal in weight.

Although we do not have explicit evidence for such an early period from Sri Lanka, there is some reason to believe that the state had certain rights over the cargo of ships that were wrecked or cast on its territory. In narrating the birth of Dutthagamini (second century B.C.) the Mahavamsa says, "'A ship filled with vessels of gold and so forth has arrived.' This they announced to the king (sc. of Māgama), and he bade them bring (the precious things) to him." (Mhv. XXII, 64, tr. Geiger). A twelfth-century inscription of Parakramabahu says "if ships laden with horses, carry horses for the service of the Treasury, and are wrecked, a fourth share should be taken by the Treasury and the other three parts

should be left to the owner. If merchant vessels are wrecked, a half share should be taken by the Treasury, and the other half left to the owner." The denarii in the freedman's ship were thus, in all probability, confiscated by the king in this same manner. It follows that the freedman himself was brought to the king along with the cargo not because he was the first Greek to land on the island, but because his ship had entered the king's territory. The coins were weighed, most probably, because they were destined for the royal treasury. This suggestion further implies that the coins were taken for their metal value rather than as currency. This is in keeping with views of Wheeler (op. cit., 361-2) and Bolin (State and Currency in the Roman Empire to 300 A.D., (1958), p.73) that in the Principate Roman coins of precious metal exported to the east were intended for use as bullion and not as currency (see also, Numismatics and Archaeology, p.194 below).

Pliny tells us that the embassy from Taprobane to Rome consisted of four envoys. It is an interesting coincidence that in the third century B.C. the Sinhalese embassy sent by Devanampiyatissa to the Mauryan emperor Asoka also consisted of four envoys, (chief minister, chaplain, treasurer, and another minister) (Mhv. XI.20ff.). The leader of this embassy is called Rachia. Several explanations of this name have been attempted. Casie Chetty, for instance, conjectured that "Rachia" may mean Arachia (i.e. Aracci) a Sinhalese designation of rank which "exists to the present day". In support of this hypothesis he cited the sending of aracci as ambassador around A.D. 1540. On such evidence, the identification of Pliny's Rachias with such a late official title, is most unlikely. Tennent (ibid. p.532) identifies it with the term 'Raja'. This term is found in ancient inscriptions of Sri Lanka and was used to designate a king. The king of Anuradhapura was known as

Maharaja, while other subordinate rulers were called "raja". There is no evidence, however, to show that the term as used in Sri Lanka denotes an envoy or officer of state.

Recently it has been suggested that Rachias was probably Ratiya or Ratika, which occurs frequently in Sinhalese inscriptions of the early centuries A.D. and signifies the administrator of a district (U.C.H.C. Vol.1 pt.1 p.17 n.14). These chieftains administered subdivisions of larger territorial units. The Labuatabandigala inscription of the fifth century A.D. speaks of one Ratiya Sumanaya, and ^a rock _^ inscription at Burutakanda in the Hambantota district mentions Ratiya Siva son of Ratiya Maka (cf. Peiris, C.H.J. X. 1961, p.19). Thus the title seems to refer to an administrative office which could be inherited perhaps. We learn from these inscriptions that the "ratiya"s donated Sthupas as well as fields, reservoirs, revenues from water-rates and money to the Buddhist clergy.¹ Thus it is reasonable to assume that officials entrusted with territorial administration were sometimes employed in diplomatic missions as well, and the identification of Rachia with Ratiya may be correct. Ratthika also occurs in a list of dignitaries in one of the Pali canonical texts (Anguttara Nikaya, III. 74-300; cf. Schwarz, Pliny the Elder on Ceylon, p.39). According to this text Ratthika is a prince having the rank of general and a hereditary title to the succession. Hence Schwarz (op. cit. p.40) thinks that Rachias who represented the Sinhalese realm in Rome must have been a high official as defined by the literary statement rather than a chieftain

1 Ratiya or Ratika is derived from the Pali Rattika or Rattiya (Sanskrit Rastrika or Rastriya). The Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman uses the word "rastriya" in referring to Pushyagupta the "high-commissioner" of Chandragupta Maurya in Surashtra. So, Raychaudhuri, Political history of ancient India, (1923), p.161.

as defined by the epigraphical evidence. However, the Pali canonical texts refer to conditions in North India of an earlier time, whereas the inscriptions refer to contemporary conditions in Sri Lanka, and so if Rachias is to be identified with Ratiya^a at all, it must be with native variety rather than any other.

A more promising suggestion is implied in Tennent's observation (Ceylon, I. p.532) that Rakkha (Sanskrit: Raksha) is a name of some renown in Sinhalese annals. There is late evidence: Rakkha was the general whom Parakramabahu^u I (12th century) sent to reduce the south of the island. There is also some earlier indication of the use of Raksasa as a personal name in India. In the Sanskrit play "Mudrārākshasa" by Visākadatta, Raksasa occurs as the name of one of the characters, a minister of the last Nanda king who attempts to overthrow the new rule of Chandragupta Maurya. However the identification of Rachia with Rakkha will only become fully acceptable if evidence can be produced to prove that Rakkha was used as a proper name in ancient Sri Lanka.

We may also note that Rakkhita was a popular termination for Buddhist names, especially of the clergy, and that it goes back to ancient times.¹ There is nothing to prevent us from assuming that the ancient kings of Sri Lanka sometimes sent Buddhist monks as envoys to foreign power, as was certainly the case with missions to China in 5th century A.D., considering the fact that in pre-Buddhistic times a Brahmin chaplain was included among Devanampiyatissa's envoys to Asoka. Asoka's own Buddhist missionaries were probably entrusted with secular

1 e.g. Mahavamsa, XII.4 and 5: "To Vanavāsa he sent the thera named Rakkhita, and to Aparantaka the Yona named Dhammarakkhita, to Maharattha (he sent) the thera named Mahādhammarakkhita, but the thera Mahārakkhita he sent into the country of the Yona."

commitments as well. Some of Pliny's statements concerning Taprobane, as will be seen, appear less absurd if they are taken to apply to the Buddhist clergy rather than to the nation as a whole. Yet, however plausible such an interpretation may be, Pliny's own account gives some indications that ^{Rachia} he was a layman. We are definitely told that he was at the head of the embassy; also (VI.88), that his father had often gone to the land of the Seres. The use of "commeasse" in this context suggests a frequent and more or less regular going back and forth. Thus his father was either a merchant who had to go there often on business, or else he was a royal envoy to that land. The first alternative appears more probable as he is mentioned in the same breath, as it were, with the fact that the Seres were known by commerce as well. But if the second alternative is preferred, we have here a father and son both of whom have served as envoys. This seems to suggest a family inheriting some high state office which entailed service as envoys of the king in foreign courts, which might be taken as a point in favour of the identification with Ratiya of the inscriptions mentioned above.

Pliny does not tell us anything with regard to the purpose of the embassy or its outcome. Schwarz (loc. cit.) supporting his hypothesis that Rachias was a Rattika (which he interprets as an heir apparent in the rank of a general) conjectures that he was sent also with the purpose of exploring the strategical situation of the Romans by means of a military expert. For later, he says citing Palladius, the Ceylonese were fully aware of the military superiority of the Romans. This sounds a rather far-fetched example of 'posthoc propter hoc'.

Warmington (op. cit. p.43 and 119) believes that the embassy was sent for commercial reasons, but thinks that it did not open up direct commerce. According to him, its purpose was perhaps to confirm with

Rome an arrangement with the Tamils. The reason why he feels that trade relations did not improve is that Dionysius Periegetes, while showing a certain familiarity with the Ganges region, knows nothing of Taprobane other than that it is the mother of Asian elephants and that its seaboard was infested with monstrous sea-creatures. But this ignorance was probably due more to the fact that Dionysius did not utilise current material, than to such material not being available.

As to the outcome of the embassy, in the absence of explicit evidence one can only attempt a guess. The superior quality of the information on the island available to Ptolemy is a definite indication of improved relations between Taprobane and the west. Pliny mentions two ports in Taprobane, namely Hippuros and Palaesimundum. But neither he nor the author of the Periplus knows of any emporia on the island. Ptolemy on the other hand mentions for the first time two emporia on the coast of Taprobane, namely, Modouttou and Ta^rakorⁱ. M. P. Charlesworth (Studies in Roman Economic and Social History, pp.139-40) observes that the Periplus mentions over twenty emporia altogether and that Ptolemy enumerates some sixteen between Barygaza and the Ganges delta, apparently one emporion to serve each district or region. He thinks that these are harbours approved or designated either by a king's decree or by the provisions of a treaty, as places where business between people of different nationalities may be transacted lawfully, where lawful dues and taxes may be imposed, where possibly foreigners reside, with a garrison of soldiers or a small police post. He refers to the statement of the Periplus (§19) that Leuce Come ranks as "a kind of emporion" and that it is the reason why a tax collector and a centurion with a detachment are sent here. Regarding the places in India designated as emporia, Charlesworth says: "I feel in fact that all these places are

officially approved harbours arranged by mutual agreement between rulers in the empire and India reached by means of embassies". It is interesting to speculate whether Ta^rlakōⁱ and Modouttou emporia, which are first mentioned by Ptolemy, were the result of negotiations conducted in Rome by Rachia and his fellow envoys. However from the Sinhalese side, at least, the purpose attributed to the embassy is a religious one, even if it be related to commercial transactions, and the Mahavamsa's account of Bhatikabhaya reveals how spectacularly this purpose was achieved.

The remainder of Pliny's account consists of information on the geography of the island as well as its political and social conditions, information which he claims to have learned from the ambassadors. This part of the text is the most baffling, for in the majority of instances what Pliny says does not square with what we know of ancient Sri Lanka. This is all the more surprising, since in the earlier part of the description Pliny had reflected a growth in western knowledge of Taprobane not only in the relative freedom from the fabulous, but also in the correspondence to what we learn from independent sources. The absurdities have sometimes been attributed to misinterpretation or misunderstanding by the Romans, of the words of the ambassadors whose language was not known to them (Edmund Peiris, *op. cit.* p.17).

Pliny had quoted Eratosthenes as saying that Taprobane had no cities but 700 villages (VI.81). When he now says that there are 500 towns he may be updating Eratosthenes with the *diligentior notitia* which he has received from the envoys. But we must observe that whereas in VI.81 Pliny had used the words *Urbes* and *Vicos*¹ he now uses the word *Oppida*. The royal residence itself is called *Oppidum*. Apparently, even at

¹ For the significance of these terms, cf. p.22-3 above.

this date there was nothing which Pliny could call Urbs. However, the mention of towns may well reflect the progress in the native social organization since the time of Eratosthenes which had been brought about in consequence of the introduction of Buddhism to the island, and the civilizing influence of the Buddhist way of life.

As regards the rest of the geographical information given by Pliny, there are no lakes in Sri Lanka of the kind described or of such great size as Megisba. Tennent (Ceylon I. p.533) thought that this was most probably an exaggerated account of some of the great irrigation tanks. Heeren^{o7} (op. cit.) thought the port referred to was Trincomalee, into which the Ganga (i.e. Mahaveli Ganga) flowed, and even suggested that Palaesimundu could be the town which Bertolacci had called Pontjemolli. Lassen, (Dissertatio, p.21) assuming that the lake was Kalāveva, identified the river Cydara with Malvatu-Oya, and the river Palaesimundu with Marchikatti a river which empties into the sea near the harbour of Kudiramalai. He identifies the town Palaesimundu with Anuradhapura and suggests a possible derivation of the name from ^{ks.} Pāli-Sīmānta, "Abode of the sacred doctrine". Lassen says that according to the Mahavamsa the Kālāvāpi was rebuilt by king Vasabha implying that it existed even before his time. This is not true. The tank known as Kālāvāpi (Sinhalese: Kalāveva) was built only in the latter part of the fifth century A.D. by king Dhatusena, (Culavamsa, XXXVIII.42). The Mahavamsa (XXXV.94) attributes twelve tanks to Vasabha but these have not been identified satisfactorily. One of them is called Kāli, and it is obvious that Lassen has confused this with Kālāvāpi. When Pliny says that two rivers emerge from the lake, Lassen thinks that we ought to understand that the waters of the tank were led into the river by canals. This is a forced interpretation and the idea is not

suggested by the Latin "ex eo erumpere". A. Hermann (P.W. s.v. "Taprobane") identifies the river Palaesimundu with the Kelani Ganga, and the city of that name with Kelaniya which was the capital of a kingdom in antiquity. He thinks that Megisba is not one of the artificial reservoirs near Anuradhapura, but a mountain lake in the source region of the Mahaveli and Kelani rivers. But we do not hear of the kingdom of Kelaniya after the time of Dutthagamani, and it is most probable that it had ceased to exist as an independent state by the first century A.D.

Schwarz (Pliny the Elder on Ceylon, p.44) makes the very probable suggestion that Megisba is a reflex of the Pali "mahā-vāpi" "a large tank", a form attested and given a geographical location in Pali literature (cf. Rahula, op. cit., p.269 n.). The location, however, is in Rohana (but compare "Giant's Tank"). On the whole none of the interpretations cited above seems to be satisfactory as there is no lake in the island, natural or artificial, to which Pliny's description could be applied, unless one is to assume that as in the case of the island itself so in the case of this lake the dimensions are greatly exaggerated.

Pierre Paris (op. cit. p.295) is of ^{the} opinion that these details do not refer to the island of Ceylon at all. He thinks that we are in Sumatra with its length of 1,060 miles, its lake Toba, with its peculiar shape, and one might well wonder, he adds, if Rachias' capital was not really Srivijiya (Palembang) below the equator. He even points out that the distance from the mouths of Palembang to Singapore (250 miles) ^{is} corresponds well to the four days of navigating to cape "Coliacum" with (at half way) the passage before the archipelago of Lingga to be equated with Pliny's Island of the Sun.

However, there is no justification for taking Sumatra for the island to which the freedman of Annius Plocamus was blown away, and

from which an embassy arrived in Rome. Not only does the mention of Hippuros and the cape of Coliacum suggest Sri Lanka, and its neighbourhood, but also it is quite obvious that the Graeco-Roman name Taprobane has a closer resemblance to Tambapanni, the ancient name for this island, than to any other geographical name. The gems and pearls referred to as products of Taprobane are still the products of Sri Lanka, and for these the island enjoyed a greater renown in antiquity than ever Sumatra seems to have done. If an embassy ever did come from Sumatra, we have no evidence that western relations with that country improved, or even existed, as a result of it. On the other hand, relations with Sri Lanka appear to have improved considerably, as one may judge from Ptolemy's additional knowledge of the island as well as from numismatic evidence.

One reason why Paris attributes this description to Sumatra is that the island is apparently placed beyond the equator. But this cannot stand as an argument when we are concerned with an age in which geographical knowledge had not arrived at anything like exactness. It should also be noted that Sumatra could not have been reached by Greek ships in fifteen days from Arabia even with gale force winds. As for Paris' hypothesis that Rachias' capital was Sri Vijaya, or Palembang, our knowledge of Southeast Asian history does not lead us to accept it. Not only is the identification of Palembang with the seat of the Sri Vijaya empire hypothetical, but the empire itself is not known to have existed before the last quarter of the seventh century A.D.¹

¹ B. A. Salatore (India's Diplomatic Relations with the West, Bombay, 1958, pp.231ff.) attempted to prove that the embassy came from the Pandyas. He identifies Tamrapanni with the river of that name in South Indian mainland, ignoring both native and western traditions and their mutual correspondence. But the kingdom of the Pandyas was well known to western writers, among them Pliny himself (VI.105). Pliny could not have confused the Pandyan kingdom at this time with Taprobane which he explicitly calls an island.

Pliny says that the sea between Taprobane and India is very green and full of thickets. The crests of these underwater trees are said to be broken by the rudders of ships. These remarks are generally taken to refer to coral reefs or mangroves. Theophrastus (History of Plants, IV.7.3-6) had already mentioned mangroves in the region of India. Ptolemy, in terms reminiscent of Pliny's "perviridi", will mention Prasodes Kolpos (a 'green' gulf) on the southwestern coast of Taprobane.

The astronomical details at first sight are as incomprehensible as the geographical. We are told that the delegates admired the Great Bear and the Pleiades at Rome "as if they were in a new heaven". They said that the moon is not visible above the earth "except from the eighth to the sixteenth". Canopus, a large bright star, illuminated their nights. But the greatest marvel for them was that their shadows fell into the Roman heaven and not into theirs, and that the sun rose on the left and set on the right rather than the other way round (Pliny VI.87). We are told that the envoys admired the Great Bear and the Pleiades as if they were set in a new sky. This has often been taken (as it was probably by Pliny himself) to mean that their wonder was on seeing these stars for the first time. The west had already heard that the Great Bear could not be seen in many of the Indian lands for either the whole or part of the year (cf. Strabo II.1.20, Pliny II.73.183-5). But it is also possible that the admiration was based on their seeing the stars in this sky as they had never seen them before in their home country. In fact, one may see all the constellations in Sri Lanka, even though it may be only for part of the year, but in Italy these stars of the Northern hemisphere would be more easily visible and higher in the sky than ever they had been at home. If one assumes, as we have every right to do considering sailing times from Sri Lanka, that the

envoys were in Rome at mid-summer and that they were comparing observed phenomena there with what they knew could be observed in Taprobane at that same time of the year, then the details about the shadows and the sun gain some coherence, however obscurely expressed by Pliny. In Rome the shadows would fall to the North, whereas in Taprobane, the sun having moved northwards to the Tropic, the shadows would fall to the south. As for the sun rising and setting on the right rather than the other way round, this again must be taken as relative to the position of a man facing the sun at midday, in which case in Rome he would have the rising sun on his left while in Taprobane this would appear on the right, and similarly with its setting. Canopus a star not visible in Italy shines brightly in Ceylon, as Pliny says the envoys reported, but the contrast which is effected between Canopus and the moon is so garbled as to be incapable of resolution. When Pliny says "8th to 16th", the temptation is to interpret this as "days" (as was done by editors as different as those of the Delphin and Loeb editions, anticipated by one MS. of Solinus in the corresponding passage). This interpretation does not make sense,¹ and the gender normally would demand that it refer to hours. If so, there are two possibilities of measurement on the Roman pattern - the sacerdotal, from midnight to midnight, and the "vulgar" from dawn to dawn, and also one on the Sinhalese pattern of 60 hours (30 of daylight and 30 of night). Somewhere in the communication of this item from the envoys to Pliny, some necessary element has been lost or misrepresented in the telling, so that no obvious interpretation is possible. The observations, if they came from the delegates, also

¹ This is perhaps some misconception by Pliny or his Roman informants of a statement made in terms of the Sinhalese lunar calendar with its Buddhist connotations. The important days for Buddhists are the uposatha - the full and new moon days, and the 8th day following both full and new moon, this last being termed the "8th of the bright half", (cf. Mhv. tr. Geiger, Appendix D, p.296, s.v. uposatha). The ideas of "bright half" and "dark half" of the month may thus be at the back of the present passage - but the actual dates, or hours, of darkness remain garbled.

imply that there was among them someone who was interested in astronomy. Even if, as Pliny says, stars were not observed for navigation, they were certainly observed for astrological purposes. The Sinhalese monarchs, like their Indian counterparts, maintained Brahmin chaplains, in whose duties astrology must have played a very important part. It may not be out of place to recall that both a Brahmin chaplain and an astrologer were included in the Sinhalese delegation to Asoka (Dipavamsa xi.29).

Pliny also heard from the delegates that the side of the island which faces India and is southeast of it extended for ten thousand stadia (Pliny, VI.88). This is the greatest length ever attributed to the island in Graeco-Roman literature. They also told him of the Seres beyond the Hemodi mountains with whom they engaged in commerce, the father of Rachia having gone frequently there. The Seres are described as tall red-haired, blue-eyed, harsh-voiced, and engaged in silent barter:- this last detail, says Pliny, is corroborated by Roman merchants (*nostris negotiatores*). Some (e.g. Warmington, p.123) have thought that the Seres referred to here cannot be the Chinese, but were the Ceras who, together with the Pandyas and the Colas made up the three principal kingdoms of ancient South India. According to these critics the Hemodi mentioned by Pliny cannot be the Himalayas which are more than 2,000 miles distant from the island, but rather the mountains which terminate the plains of the Carnatic. McCrindle (*Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, p.105, n.4) while observing these opinions, maintained nevertheless that it was with the Seres or Chinese that the trade here mentioned was carried on. Pierre Paris (*op. cit.* p.296) observes that these Seres are portrayed as perfect Indo-Germans, who can only be the Yueh-chi, i.e. Kushans. He points out that at this time (the middle of the first century A.D.) there was no longer any need to cross the

Hemodus to go and see the Kushanas. One only had to go up the Indus.

I am inclined to accept the opinion that the commerce described by Pliny was carried on with some "Chinese" tribe further north than India. The silent barter mentioned here cannot be one carried on with a civilised nation and hence the description cannot apply to the Ceras or the Kushans in India. The account seems to apply rather to a tribe of savages, and is in fact very similar to the accounts of the Veddahs of Sri Lanka itself, given by foreign travellers through the centuries.¹ Hardouin even suggested reading "Advenas ibi ferarum occursare" instead of "advenas sibi Serarum occursare". (It is interesting to note that Capella in his paraphrase of the passage transfers the description to the people of Taprobane.)

That Pliny confused the Seres with the Ceras is unlikely. He certainly knew of the Ceras of Southern India. In VI.104, he gives the name of the king of Muziris as Caelobothras, which is almost certainly a rendering of the title Ceraputra. In Graeco-Roman literature the word Seres is regularly used to denote the Chinese as known through communication by land. In the present context the word may very well denote some peoples beyond the Himalayas, where in fact Pliny locates them.²

1 Pliny's ambassadors set the scene for the trade away from Taprobane. It is Fa-Hien the Chinese pilgrim of the fifth century who first mentions silent trade in the island itself. But he relegates it to pre-historic times saying that it was the demons who originally inhabited the island that carried on this trade with foreign merchants. (Fa-Hien, Travels 38). Al Buruni, the Muslim historian of the 11th century, also refers to this custom in connection with Sri Lanka, and reports the belief of the Arab mariners that these inhabitants were either demons or savages (Tennent, Ceylon, I, p.569). The practice is associated with the Veddahs of Sri Lanka by European writers, and by other Chinese authors after Fa-Hien.

2 It has been proposed that these Seres should be located somewhere in the Tarim Basin. Hennig identified them with the Tochari, Hermann and Tarn with the Wu-Sun or that section of the Tochari-Yueh-chi who

The trade of the Sinhalese with these tribes was possibly an extension of the contacts that had already been established between the island and North India. If one may hazard a speculation, the beginnings of such contacts may well go back to the third century B.C. when the empire of the Buddhist monarch Asoka could have provided the natural link. Alternatively we could consider these contacts as part of the general overland trade between the peoples of central and eastern Asia and the west in which northwestern India played an important part as intermediary (Wheeler, in *Aspects of Archaeology etc.*, p.352). This trade was still flourishing in the next century when Ptolemy wrote his *Geography*. For at the Stone Tower (Tashkurgan) in the Pamir region the Greeks found not only Parthians, Indians and Kushanas, but also the Chinese and their middlemen (both classed as Seres) who dealt with silk (Cary and Warmington, *The Ancient Explorers*, p.196). Traders of Taprobane were perhaps among this international crowd. They may even have attended fairs such as those which the author of the *Periplus* (965) associated with the borderlands of the Chinese and which too were based on the silent method. On the other hand it is interesting to note that at a later date the Stone Tower, the meeting place of so many nations, is itself associated with this silent trade (Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIII.6.60, 67-8).

Allusions to this method of trading are not unknown elsewhere in Greek literature. Both Herodotus (iv.196) and Cosmas (II.52) record the practice as existing at their respective periods in different parts of Africa. The practice seems to have been not uncommon in antiquity, doubtless used by the Graeco-Roman traders when dealing with those peoples who were beyond the borders of the civilised world as known to

2 [cont.] had remained behind in the Wu-Sun country. Well before Pliny's time, the Seres are mentioned by Apollodorus, and as his work is rather too early for this term to be used for the Chinese, Hermann and Tarn prefer to regard them as middlemen of the Chinese trade who dwelt near Issyk-kol. A. K. Narain (*Indo-Greeks*, pp.170-1) therefore thinks that the name Seres, which was first given to Kashghar was later applied to the whole of China.

them. As such the idea was as familiar to the West as it was to the ambassadors from Taprobane.

Yet it must be emphasised once again that Pliny's account of the silent trade does not belong to Taprobane. It is the usage of the Seres familiar to the envoys from Taprobane and confirmed by the accounts of western merchants. One important fact emerges from the account. The Seres as known to the merchants of Taprobane at this time were known only through the land route from India. It was, however, about this same time that the Chinese themselves first began to traverse the Indian Ocean in their own ships (B. J. Perera, C.H.J. Vol.1, p.306) and it is possible that communications by sea began not long afterwards. Numerous Chinese embassies are recorded in the fifth century and beyond. In the early sixth century Cosmas refers to ships which came to Taprobane bearing silks from China. All this, as well as the superiority of Chinese notices of the island to those of the Graeco-Romans and Arabs, testifies to the close relations of the Chinese with Sri Lanka. Pliny is the first to inform us of the existence of such contacts. In characteristic moralising tone Pliny points out that Taprobane, for all its remoteness, is not lacking in the vices of our world. Perhaps at this time the Romans thought of the island as an ideal place where the conditions of the golden age were realised, and Pliny's point is that this was not entirely the case. His apparent realism makes the place less of a Utopia. Pliny says that even there gold and silver are valued, as well as gems and pearls, and also a marble similar to tortoise shell. It is difficult to establish the significance of the last remark as we do not know of any substance of value of the kind described.

Although Pliny says that Taprobane is not lacking in the vices of the Romans, the picture that he draws of the political and social

conditions in the island is largely that of an ideal society and may have been intended as a contrast to the situation in Rome. The ambassadors are represented as saying that although the bulk of their own wealth is greater than that of Rome, the Romans made greater use of theirs. This need not be interpreted as a diplomatic flattery of the Romans for making better use of their resources. It is rather a criticism of the Roman way of life. In the previous paragraph Pliny had denounced luxury, and the implication of the present passage is that the people of Taprobane, although they too use gold, silver, pearls and precious stones, do not indulge in luxury as the Romans do. The details that follow are meant to substantiate and illustrate this point: no one keeps a slave; no one sleeps into the day or within daytime; houses are of moderate height; the price of grain never goes up; there are no law-courts or litigation. In short, the island is free from the evils of contemporary western society, evils which derive ultimately from the love of riches. To the early Sinhalese, brought up on the teachings of the Buddha, Roman luxury must have appeared extravagant.

This idealization, put by Pliny in his ambassadors' mouths, is tendentious. The statement that there were no slaves is not correct. We learn from inscriptions that there were slaves in the Sinhalese society of the early centuries A.D. An inscription from Ilukveva, which has been assigned to this period on palaeographical grounds, records the donation of a cave by a male slave and a female slave (E.Z. IV, p.135). The Pali commentaries mention four kinds of slaves classified, not according to the type of work done, but according to the method by which they became slaves, i.e. born slaves, bought slaves, those captured in war, and those who gave themselves up to slavery for various reasons (Samanta Pāsādikā p.747; Sumangalavilāsini p.168 ed. Rhys Davids and Charpentier).

That there were a large number of slaves attached to the monasteries is evident from the donations made for their support, and the proper treatment of slaves had been enjoined by the Buddha. Thus there was certainly a fairly large slave population. (Cf. P. T. Gunasingha, "Slavery in Ceylon during the period of the Anuradhapura kingdom", C.H.J. X. 1961, pp.47-59.)

Nor is it true of ancient Sri Lanka that there were no law-courts or law suits. The existence of courts on a district basis is attested by the Vevalkatiya inscription, (E.Z. I. p.245). Again, according to inscriptions local mercantile and other corporations were also employed upon ancillary functions in the administration of justice, (E.Z. III. p.74), and fees from law courts are mentioned (cf. Nicholas and Paranavitana, Concise History of Ceylon, p.107).

According to Pliny, Hercules is said to be the god worshipped in Taprobane. A. Hermann, (op. cit. p.2269) thinks that one has possibly to understand Buddha under this blanket name. But we must not forget that the Greeks identified the Indian gods with those of their own mythology, e.g. Siva with Heracles and Vishnu with Dionysius (cf. Schoff, Periplus p.238, who refers to Arrian (Megasthenes) on the origin of the Pandyas). It is not impossible that in the present context too Sivaism is meant. There were many Hindus settled in Sri Lanka at this time, chiefly at ports and centres of commerce such as Mahatittha and Gokanna. Mahatittha was the site of the ancient temple of Tiruketisvaram. (Compare also the occurrence of "Siva" as a personal name, Mutasiva, Mahasiva, etc.)

The envoys also report that the King's dress is that of Father Liber (Dionysus) while the people's dress is that of the Arabs (VI.90). As Pliny has already spoken of the worship of Heracles, "cultum" in

this context must refer to dress. The remark about "Father Liber" may well have been the envoys' reaction upon seeing artistic representations during their visit, and comparisons then made to the king's dress on state occasions. As for the dress "like that of the Arabs", this is again mere comparison and need not be used in support of any view that Arabs had already penetrated deeply into Taprobane, or indeed into India (cf. G. R. Tibbetts, *J.R.A.S.M.B.* XXIX, 3 (1956), p.196, who however interprets "cultum" as customs or religion).

Now follows an account of the kingship of Taprobane. The king, we are told, is elected by the people for his advanced age and gentleness. He must be childless, and if he begets a child afterwards he is made to abdicate lest the kingship should become hereditary. The people give him thirty governors and he does not condemn anyone to death without the consent of the majority of these, but even then there is the possibility of appealing to the people who appoint seventy judges for this purpose. If these acquit the accused, then those thirty are held in no honour but the greatest disrespect. These details concerning the judiciary may seem to contradict the earlier statement that there were neither law-courts nor litigation, but that statement refers to civil disputes between individuals. Here we are in the realm of criminal law, and capital punishment. We are also told that if the king commits a crime he is condemned to death, but that no one inflicts a physical penalty. Instead, nobody has anything to do with him.

These details do not correspond to what we know of Sinhalese kingship in the early Anuradhapura period. Kingship was hereditary, and appears to have passed from brother to brother and then to the eldest brother's son (cf. *Mhv.* ch.XXI, XXXII-XXXVII passim).¹ The

¹ Bhatikabhaya himself succeeded his father and was succeeded by his brother (*Mhv.* XXXIV).

Buddhist Clergy, on the other hand, seems to have had a hand in matters regarding succession to the throne.¹ The brotherhood of Bhikkhus is generally called Sangha (i.e. community), and by a confusion of meanings in the process of interpretation, may have led the Romans to suppose that the king was elected by the people as a whole.

If our hypothesis is acceptable, namely that when Pliny says that the king is elected by the people, we must understand the Sangha, we might also venture to suggest a possible explanation of the procedure adopted towards delinquent kings (VI.91). The obvious meaning of "aversantibus cunctis" is that all people turn their back on the king. But suppose we understand Sangha for "the people". We know that when a king went wrong the monks could flout him by the act of Pattanikkujjana ("turning down the bowl") signifying their refusal to accept alms. Such a procedure is sanctioned by the Vinaya rules as an expression of the monks' disapproval of a householder's character or conduct, (Culavagga, V. 20, 6-7). From a somewhat later date we have an instance of this practice being actually carried out in Sri Lanka, in the case of King Dāthōpatissa II, A.D. 650-658 (cf. Mhv. xlv.31: cf. Ravula op. cit. p.68, "the greatest insult to a layman").

With regard to Pliny's account of the kingship of Taprobane, some interesting observations have been made by Chester G. Starr, ("The Roman Emperor and the King of Ceylon", ^{C.P.} 51 (1956) pp.27-29). He thinks that this description throws much more light on the political thinking of

¹ "All the counsellors assembled, and when they had summoned together the whole brotherhood of Bhikkhus into the Tuparama, they, with the consent of the brotherhood, consecrated the prince Thulathana as king that he might take the kingdom under his protection." (Mhv. XXXII. 17-18; cf. ibid. 20, "During three years did Lanjatissa use the brotherhood slightly and neglected them with the thought: 'they did not decide according to age.'")

the Roman aristocracy than it does on early Sinhalese organisation; even more important, he thinks, we apparently have here one of the very earliest indications of the arguments used by the philosophical opposition to the first century Caesars. To quote Starr's own words: "The tendency of civilised peoples to view foreign lands, especially distant and poorly known parts, in the romantic light of "the noble savage" is a persistent one, both in ancient and in modern times. Difficulties of translation at times suggest such perversions of the truth but far more often psychological attitudes lead men to mirror in their pictures of other civilisations the problems and ills of their own societies". Against this background may be placed Pliny's statements on Sinhalese kingship.

Starr^{rr} points out that at this time the Roman empire had a strong tendency in practice toward hereditary succession; regardless of constitutional theory, sons were usually expected to succeed their fathers on the throne. On the other hand, the principate was also recognised by this time to have strong tendencies toward autocracy. Claudius ostensibly essayed to maintain the senate's dignity; yet he curbed the freedom of movement of its members, and seriously encroached on senatorial functions. His secret trials, moreover, were a scandal of the reign, and the emphasis in Pliny's Taprobane on the existence of thirty governors who alone could impose capital punishment "may well have a contemporary application to Claudian Rome".

Starr therefore concludes that the description of the limited elective kingship of Ceylon circulated in the reign of Claudius "was probably phrased to fit the Roman scene. The last real effort to unseat the principate had petered out as the senate wrangled on the death of Gaius; thereafter the aristocracy could hope only to ameliorate the

character of the autocracy under which they must live. The ground of debate was so moved from the senate floor to the studies of philosophers, especially those of Stoic tinge". One of the important tenets of this philosophical opposition was the election of the best man as ruler.

"Modern accounts of the opposition have usually connected this argument with the fact that Vespasian had two sons, but the tale of Pliny suggests strongly that the idea was already bruited in the era of Claudius who himself had a son."

This is a very plausible explanation as far as the political atmosphere of Pliny's account is concerned, although one must admit that it is not sufficient as an explanation of other natural and social details. Moreover, it cannot be that the whole picture of the political situation was entirely drawn up by the aristocracy; Pliny is quite positive that his account came from the ambassadors. As Starr himself suggests, the account may have been distorted to suit the fancy of the Romans. Also discernable in this narrative are certain elements common to the utopian kingdoms described in ancient fantasy pieces, such as the kingdom of Musicanus described by Onesicritus and the Island of the Sun described by Iambulus. However, as has been demonstrated above, there are in Pliny's narrative of the ambassadors' report, certain features which can be traced in the native sources as characteristic of the Sinhalese social and political life at this time. It should also be remembered that Bhatikabhaya, the Sinhalese ruler contemporary with Claudius, as well as his predecessor and successor, is remembered chiefly for his contributions to religion and agriculture. Bhatikabhaya himself is represented as an extremely benevolent king who not only made liberal grants to Buddhist shrines, monks, and learning, but also exempted his subjects from taxes they owed him, (Lamotte, p.535). These kings of the

first century A.D. had been preceded by a period of strife and turmoil in which, according to the Mahavamsa, the rulers had reached the lowest point of degeneracy. It is therefore possible that when the island was finally liberated from the corrupt rule of queen Anula and her minions, Buddhist thinking in Sri Lanka began to concentrate more and more on the rights and duties of kingship. Hence some of the idealised thinking revealed in Pliny's account may have had its origin in Sri Lanka itself. Even in the judicial field (where according to Pliny, the king's power was very much restricted), Bhatikabhaya appears to have introduced some kind of reform. The *Samantapāsādikā* (II. p.307) says that he willingly discharged on his ministers and monks his duties as head of the judiciary. Having once heard of a wise judgement given by the Thera Abhidhammikagodha, he decided that all disputes should thenceforth be handled by him. Again, when a controversy arose between the Abhayagiri and the Mahavihara, the king assigned to his minister, the Brahmin Dighakarayana, the task of settling the dispute. He would have been likely to be neutral; and the monks of the Mahavihara won the case.

The next piece of information is that festival days in Taprobane were spent in hunting, and that the most popular hunt was that of elephants and tigers.¹ In the story of the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka king Tissa is represented as going out hunting on a solemn festival day, when he encountered and was converted by Mahinda (*Mhv.* XIII.1). Hunting as an occupation was followed by many inhabitants, especially among the poor, and the literature of Sri Lanka contains many references to hunters, even after the introduction of Buddhism. Buddhism does not encourage

¹ Elephants and tigers are also mentioned as part of the fauna of Taprobane by Ptolemy (VII.4.1) a century later. Tigers are not found in Sri Lanka, and Hermann (*loc. cit.*) suggests that leopards were meant. If by leopards he means cheetahs, he is probably right.

hunting as a sport; in fact, it does not endorse killing at all. Yet the specific prohibition of killing by Amandagamini, the second king to follow Bhatikabhaya, seems to indicate that the practice did persist in Buddhist times (Mhv. XXV. 6; Rahula op. cit. p.73), and this prohibition had to be repeated several times thereafter. In this case, Pliny's information may well have a basis in fact.

Pliny next remarks upon the care lavished upon agriculture in Taprobane. There is no need to question this statement. The highly developed irrigation systems of ancient Sri Lanka are well known and are still being used. This irrigation system helped the ancient Sinhalese to grow a second crop during the dry season of the year. We even hear of a third or "middle" crop which was cultivated with the help of surplus water. He observes that the vine is not used, but that orchard fruit is abundant. Although India was considered the birthplace of Dionysus, the absence of the vine there was something which the Greeks noticed. From their point of view, a land without the vine was not truly fertile. One of the ideal features of the utopias of Onesicritus and Iambulus was that even the vine grew in them. Pliny considers its absence in Taprobane worthy of special mention. He also mentions the great delight with which fishing is carried on (for which cf. Rahula op. cit. pp.243ff.). Tortoise fishing, and the use of the shells for the dwellings of families is a theme to be elaborated by Aelian.

Long life is one of the blessings which members of classical utopian states enjoyed. Pliny rounds off his account of Taprobane by saying that a human life of hundred years is there considered moderate. A maximum figure of 150 is given by Palladius, who also adds that on this account the inhabitants of Taprobane are called Makrobioi. Our earliest definite evidence for the attribution of long life to the people of

Taprobane had come from Artemidorus of Ephesus, as quoted by Pliny. Now the envoys from Taprobane itself confirm this Western notion, and they almost certainly had a better idea of other traditions and the actual conditions in the island. It is worth pointing out that the Chronicles assert that the early kings of Sri Lanka from Vijaya to Devanampiyatissa, and several after him, enjoyed reigns of quite remarkable length - 40 years being not at all uncommon. The usual modern explanation has been that the chroniclers expanded such reigns to obtain desired synchronisms, but the appearance of this tradition of longevity in such sources as Pliny, based upon the account of natives, should indicate that the traditional account is early and not without some justification.

Pliny's account of this embassy and the information gleaned from it is nearer the time, and in fact almost contemporary. As such, it demands respect, and requires to be explained rather than to be explained away. He may elsewhere (XXXII.53.143) speak of the fabulous element which is attached to tales from Taprobane, but here he introduces it as "diligentior notitia" and no less insistently concludes "Haec de Taprobane insula comperta".

CHAPTER V

LATER LATIN NOTICES DERIVED FROM PLINY

Pliny's Natural History provided the basis for a number of later handbooks dealing with natural science, geography, and other branches of learning. Not surprisingly, some of the geographical sections of such works included accounts of Taprobane paraphrased or summarised ultimately from Pliny's description. As sources for history these accounts have no independent value, but they are of some interest as an indication of the influence exerted by Pliny and the manner in which the ancients understood his sometimes terse and obscure narrative.

Of these the most comprehensive account comes from C. Julius Solinus styled Polyhistor. His *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, written probably around the middle of the third century, is almost entirely based on Pliny and Mela, and was the chief medium through which later writers learned of the geographical details (and others) contained in Pliny's Natural History (cf. Solinus, ed. Mommsen, pp. XVIII-LV; H. Walter, *Caius Julius Solinus und seine Vorlagen*, C. et M. xxiv (1963), 86-157). The 53rd chapter is devoted to Taprobane, and here Solinus reproduces most of Pliny's account, but with consistent "improvements" of diction and arrangement.

Solinus begins by paraphrasing Pliny's reference to Taprobane, originally considered to be another world inhabited by the Antichthones, and proceeds direct to ^{the} achievements of Alexander. This is followed by a statement to the effect that Onesicritus, sent as commander of the Macedonian fleet, informed us of details about this land and its general conditions, (53.2). It was perhaps this statement that prompted some

writers, such as Gosselin, to believe that Onesicritus was actually sent to Taprobane by Alexander, (cf. Tennent, Ceylon, I, p.525 n.1), but as Solinus' account is based on Pliny that interpretation cannot be regarded as a matter of historical fact. There is no suggestion in Pliny or anywhere else that Onesicritus reached the island.

Pliny had reproduced information from Onesicritus, Megasthenes, and Eratosthenes, citing each in turn and clearly defining what each had said. Solinus mentions only Onesicritus by name, and thus by implication attributes all the information that follows to this writer. He is careless not only in the handling of his sources but even in citing them. Thus Onesicritus is made responsible both for the dimensions of the island, which, according to Pliny, came from Eratosthenes, and also for a garbled version of the statements of Megasthenes, so that we are told that the island is divided by a river flowing in-between, that part of it was filled with wild beasts and elephants larger than those of India while the other part is occupied by men, and that it abounds in pearls and all sorts of gems. In the corresponding passage of Pliny, there is no mention of gems. The reference is obviously transported from Pliny VI.89, where it is said that pearls and gems are esteemed in Taprobane.¹ Solinus makes no mention of the name Palaeogoni which, according to Pliny, was assigned to the inhabitants by Megasthenes. Instead he contents himself by saying that men inhabit one part of the island.

Pliny had also clearly distinguished between what he had learned from ancient writers and what he had learned from the ambassadors who

¹ Solinus returns to the subject of pearls in his concluding remarks about Taprobane (53.23), where he says that the largest pearls are gathered there in the greatest number; and this leads him to the long description of the pearl oysters which is borrowed from the ninth book of Pliny.

arrived from Taprobane in the time of Claudius (VI.84), but this distinction is not observed by Solinus. He mixes both kinds of information, and rearranges the account so that passages dealing with closely related subjects are brought together. For instance, after giving Pliny's own comments (VI.83) that there is no observation of stars in navigation and that the Great Bear is not visible, Solinus adds that the Pleiades never appear, that the moon is seen from the eighth to the sixteenth only, that Canopus, a large bright star shines there, that the sun rises on the right and sets on the left, details which are taken from the account of the ambassadors in Pliny (VI.87). Solinus then goes back to the original account and narrates how shore-sighting birds are used instead of the observation of stars for navigational purposes.

In the account of how the freedman of Annius Plocamus reached the island, Solinus differs from Pliny in one respect with a precision which is based merely on his own interpretation. According to Pliny, the freedman was sailing "round Arabia" when he was snatched by winds from the north and blown beyond Carmania. But Solinus says that he was sailing to Arabia (*Arabiam petens*). It may also be pointed out that all the MSS. of Solinus give Thracia as the name of the chief delegate from Taprobane and also the number of 40 (not 30) *rectores* but these may charitably be regarded as errors for which the author himself was not responsible. Mommsen made the obvious corrections for which we have the authority of Pliny.

The extent to which Solinus could mangle his sources is revealed by the manner in which he handles Pliny's account of the relations between Taprobane and the Seres. Pliny had said that the Seres are seen beyond the Hemodi mountains and are known to the people of Taprobane through commerce. In Solinus, however, the people of Taprobane can see the coast

of the Seres from their own mountain ranges. Again, according to Pliny, the ambassadors described the Seres as taller than normal, with red hair, blue eyes, and harsh voices. Solinus transfers this description to the people of Taprobane itself, and omits any reference to the silent barter which, according to Pliny, was carried on with the Seres by visiting merchants. Conspicuously absent also from Solinus' account is the puzzling passage in which Pliny reports the great lake Megisba in the interior of the island, with the two rivers flowing from it, and the city of Palaesimundu with its population of 200,000. Some of the details regarding sea-faring and the construction of boats are also omitted.

There is, however, one statement in Solinus for which no parallel can be found from Pliny or any other writer he is known to have utilised. Solinus says that the greater part of this island is scorched with heat and consists of vast deserts, a statement to be repeated ad nauseam by his successors (53,21). Perhaps Solinus has referred to Taprobane a description originally made of some other region of India. However, it is evident that concurrent with the notion of immense productivity and richness associated with Taprobane, there was in the Roman empire another report which pictured the island as being parched with heat and extending in vast bare plains. Dionysius Periegetes had sung of Taprobane as lying under blazing Cancer, and this poem was rendered into Latin in a highly coloured rhetorical version by Avienus, who emphasizes both the heat and size (cf. also Priscian, 779-781). Perhaps Solinus also had heard of this report, although it is equally possible that the geographical proximity of the island to India inspired this description of its extremes of climate.

There are instances where Solinus has adapted his source to suit the cultural background of the Roman audience of his time. Thus, where Pliny says that a man condemned to death has the right of appeal (appellatio) to the people, Solinus uses the traditional, specifically Roman, expression "provocare ad populum". Again, where Pliny says that the king's dress is that of Father Liber, Solinus develops the idea, to say that the king wears the syrma as we see Dionysus dressed, the syrma being a robe and train worn by actors and so no stranger to Dionysus, and equally familiar to the Roman theatre-goer. Again, regarding the fondness of the people of Taprobane for tiger and elephant hunts he says that they do not hunt common spoils "plebeias praedas", an idea taken from the Roman hunting games. Thus, while Pliny had reported the statements of the delegates with very little comment but with some moralizing, Solinus has introduced cultural analogies from Roman life, but with a minimum of uplifting discourse.

Early in the fifth century, Martianus Capella included in his *Disciplinae* a brief survey of geography for which he appears to have consulted both Pliny and Solinus.¹ The ground plan is in the main borrowed from Pliny, but the contents are, for the most part, taken from the summary account of Solinus. Capella's debt to both these sources is manifest in his account of Taprobane.

Thus the information which Pliny derived from Onesicritus, Megasthenes, and Eratosthenes is presented in the correct order, and not mixed together as in Solinus, although Capella does not mention

1 The *Disciplinae* is an allegorical work, written in the style of the Menippean satires, i.e. in a mixture of prose and verse. In it the seven liberal arts are represented as bridesmaids at the wedding of Mercury and Philologia. The summary of geography is spoken by Geometry.

these authors by name. On the other hand, the astronomical details and the facts concerning life on the island are presented in the order followed by Solinus. There is no mention of the journey of the freedman or the arrival of ambassadors from Taprobane. Capella also follows the error of Solinus in attributing the description of the Seres to the inhabitants of Taprobane, but he introduces from Pliny the account of silent barter which Solinus had left out of his account; the result, however, is that this trade is now represented as being carried on in Taprobane rather than among the Seres.

Capella's attempts to abridge his sources have sometimes led him into error. In reporting the visit of envoys from Taprobane to Rome, Pliny says that at Rome they were surprised to find the sun rising on their left and setting on their right rather than the other way round. Capella, having made no mention of the arrival of ambassadors, has the sun rising on the left in Taprobane.¹ Elsewhere abridgement has robbed statements of their precision. Pliny and Solinus had said that according to the reckoning of Roman ships, Taprobane was seven days' distant from the Prasii, whereas Capella simply notes that the island is seven days from India, which may be a very different matter.

On one point, Capella contradicts his sources directly. According to Pliny and Solinus, a delinquent king, although condemned to death, was not executed, but banished from human contact. Capella however says that the king has his throat cut.

¹ Solinus had rationalised Pliny's statement to describe the phenomena they had reported as observable in Taprobane, and had the sun there rising on the right. Capella has transferred Pliny's statement from Rome direct to Taprobane.

Capella does not mention any of the cultural analogies which Solinus had introduced into Pliny's account. In this he is on the whole closer in spirit to Pliny than to Solinus in his account of Taprobane, but this is probably the accidental result of the need for extreme curtailment. Although he may not have been conscious of it, Capella, by his compression and his handling of his sources, has enhanced the idealised concept of Taprobane, turning it into the land where things are on a scale which verges upon the marvellous. It is a vast land, with the largest elephants and pearls, with men larger than anywhere else and living longer than anybody else, and this element of the marvellous becomes a persistent part of the later tradition concerning the island.

In the seventh century, Isidorus of Seville, in his encyclopaedic work Etymologiae (or Origines) included a very brief account of Taprobane which derives from Pliny through Solinus. At xiv.3.5, Taprobane is said to be full of gems and elephants, and in xiv.6.12, he correctly observes that Taprobane is situated below India towards the east. But like Pliny and Solinus, he relegates the island to the confines of the world, when he says that the Indian Ocean begins from that island, thus presenting a view already expressed by Orosius and Jordanes. According to Isidorus the island is 875 miles long and 625 miles broad. As Dicuil will observe, he has simply converted the information which Pliny had given in Greek measurement into the more familiar Roman miles, and so adapted it to the understanding of his readers. Like Solinus, he says that the island is divided by a river, that it is entirely filled with gems and pearls, and that one part is full of beasts and elephants while the other part is occupied by men.

We also hear from him another fable which we have not met with before, namely that the island has two summers and two winters and springs.

This is a statement concerning India to be found in Pliny VI, 21, 58, Solinus 52, 1 and Martianus Capella VI, 694, which Isidorus has here transferred to Taprobane. Later in the direct line of descent was Dicuil, the Frankish geographer, who published in A.D. 825 a survey of the world "Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae", which was almost entirely based on Pliny and Solinus; his account of Taprobane (VII.26-33) being largely borrowed from Solinus, does go further afield, however, for his information since, besides citing the dimensions as given by Isidorus, he quotes the relevant lines from Priscian's version of the Periegesis, with comments suited to the learning of his time.

Thus the influence of Pliny's account of Taprobane, through intermediaries like Solinus, went down by direct line of descent well into the Middle Ages, to be supplemented by the occasional scraps of borrowed information which can be traced in the stereotyped lists of place names which are the materials of scholarship for the geographers and philosophers of a later day (cf. Chapter X). His influence was not restricted to Latin texts, but spread also into writings in the vernacular languages. The account of Taprobane in the imaginary travels of Sir John Mandeville for instance, goes back ultimately to the descriptions of Pliny and Solinus, but of these successors not one can be regarded as contributing to or expanding the store of learning which Pliny had bequeathed.

CHAPTER VI

THE GEOGRAPHY OF PTOLEMY

How Graeco-Roman knowledge concerning Taprobane had improved by the early part of the second century A.D. can be seen from the account of the island contained in the Geography of Claudius Ptolemy (c. A.D. 150). Apart from some references contained in his delineation of the methods and principles to be applied in his work, Ptolemy devotes one chapter (VII.4) to a detailed description of Taprobane and another (VIII.28) to a discussion of its map.

In VII.4 Ptolemy begins by saying that opposite the Indian Cape Kōru is the projecting point of Taprobane, the island formerly called Simoundou, now Salike, the inhabitants of which are named Salai. These people bind up their long hair like women. The country produces rice, honey, ginger, beryl, hyacinth, and has mines of every sort - of gold and of silver and other metals. Among its fauna are elephants and tigers, (VII.4.1). These last items of information are ^{of a type} comparatively rare in Ptolemy.

This is the only place where Ptolemy mentions additional names for the island. He uses the classical name Taprobane regularly and consistently throughout the work, (cf. I.14.9, VII.4, 11, VIII.1.3, etc.). Like the MS. of the Periplus, Ptolemy separates Simoundou from Palai and takes it as the former name which had become obsolete by his time and replaced by a new name, Salikē.¹ Tennent (Ceylon I, p.536 n.2)

¹ Jacqueline Pirenne (Journal Asiatique 1961, p.453) in attempting to prove that the Periplus was written after Ptolemy, argues that Ptolemy was wrong in believing that Salikē was a contemporary name

after noticing Burnouf's derivation of Salikē from Sri Lanka, proposes one of his own from the Egyptian Siela-keh, i.e. the land of Siela. Neither of these conjectures takes into account the nature of the name. Salikē is a place name derived from Salai the ethnic name, a derivation in keeping with the practice common in Greek. Thus Salikē (Nēsos) is the island of the Salai. If a derivation is desired, it should be sought for Salai and not for Salikē. On philological grounds it is more likely that Salai is a derivation of Sinhala (Pali: Sīhala; Sinhalese: Sihala or Hela).¹ In that case Ptolemy provides an early instance of this name which was to be used increasingly in subsequent centuries in Oriental sources, before it reappears in Cosmas, and such knowledge on Ptolemy's part is instructive for the quality of the sources of information available to him.

In Ptolemy's Geography the accounts of various regions are generally confined to a list of place names with their co-ordinates, but in the

1 [cont.] which had superseded the old name Simoundou. Pointing out that it was simply the third Sinhalese name for the island, Sinhala Dvīpa, which the Greeks did not use, she supports this with the statement of Cosmas that the island was called Sielediba by the Indians and Taprobane by the Greeks. According to her, the truth therefore is that the island was "also" called Salikē. The purpose of Pirenne's argument is to show that if Salikē is not a more recent name than the others then one is not justified in placing the Periplus before Ptolemy on the ground that its author did not know this name. But one cannot approve of Pirenne's suggested substitution of 'also' for 'formerly' for which there is no hint in the texts of Ptolemy. Ptolemy was stating facts as known to him and his informants, and Salikē was a new name as far as western records were concerned.

1 J. R. Sinnatamby (Ceylon in Ptolemy's Geography, Colombo, 1968, pp.6-7) proposes to derive the name both of the island and of the people from the name of the city Saliur immediately opposite the island on the Indian coast, i.e. an extension of Tamil influence into Sri Lanka. In support, he compares the known case of Tāmrāparni which is the name of a place in South India as well as that of Sri Lanka. But if the name was so transferred from Saliur we would expect to possess evidence of its use in Sri Lanka from other sources, but none exists.

case of Taprobane and India, he throws in a considerable amount of information. This material doubtless came from mariners and merchants whose oral and written accounts Ptolemy claims to have utilised in his description of the east. This is borne out by the fact that such incidental information often consists of the location of commercial products, particularly frequent being notices of mines of precious stones and metals. Warmington (op. cit. pp.109-110) observes that almost always the information is such as is not found in earlier extant writers. Of pepper, for instance, Ptolemy says nothing; all knew its source. It may be noted however that the suggestion has since been made that Marinus seems to have included such details regularly ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ his works (Lopaschek, P.W. Suppl. X. Ptolemaios als Geographiker).

Without questioning the fundamental accuracy of this statement it may nevertheless be pointed out that some of the products which Ptolemy attributes to Taprobane had been previously mentioned by Greek authors. Such are the elephants, tigers, gold and precious stones. He is, however, the first to name the precious stones, which he calls beryl and hyacinths. Pliny has restricted himself to gems, in general, and the Periplus is equally imprecise. Cosmas too will speak of the hyacinth as a product of Taprobane, also mentioning the famous one placed on a temple.

Ptolemy is also the first to mention by name some of the food products of Taprobane. Pliny had already noticed the abundance of fruit, the diligent cultivation of fields, and the low price of grain. Ptolemy however names rice, honey, and ginger. Rice is also mentioned in the treatise of Palladius as forming the diet of the inhabitants of Taprobane, together with milk, fruit, and mutton, and it remains the chief food crop even to the present day. Honey was produced in the forests

and mountain regions and the Veddhas of Sri Lanka have become famous through the ages for its collection. Ginger was also an important article of commerce in the island in antiquity. From the chronicles we learn that ginger, together with tumeric, was the chief object of the merchants who travelled to the highlands in ox wagons to fetch them, and sold them at Anuradhapura and other places where they were in demand (Mhv. XXV.21, Thupavamsa, p.69; cf. U.C.H.C., Vol.1, book 3, Ch.8, n.24). Thus, unlike his predecessors, Ptolemy knew of the products of the interior, and we shall see presently that his geographical knowledge of that area is also far more advanced than that of his predecessors.

He does not expressly say that these products were exported although this could well be the case if he got to know of them through merchants. A clearer indication would have been useful, especially because rice is listed among the products. The Pattinappalai, a Tamil poem of the Sangam period, in dwelling on the cosmopolitan nature of the port at Kaveri, mentions foodstuffs from Sri Lanka among the goods brought from various countries and stored in its warehouses.¹ On the other hand the Chronicles record a number of severe famines, (e.g. Mhv. XXXII.29, XXXVI.20 and 74, XXXVII 189). Thus our historical sources do not support the popular view that Sri Lanka was in ancient times the "granary of the east" exporting rice to foreign lands. All we can say is that the demands of the native population must have been met for the

1 "High-mettled steeds from over the seas,
 Bags of black pepper brought in ships propelled by sails
 Gems and gold of the northern mountains
 Sandal wood and aghil of the western ghats
 Pearls of the southern seas
 Goods procurable in (the region of) the Ganges,
 The produce of (countries watered by) the Kaveri,
 Foodstuffs from Ceylon and precious goods from Burma."

Pattinappalai II.185-191; cf. C. Rasagayagam, Ancient Jaffna, p132 note.

most part by the local output. It may be remarked that according to inscriptions of the Anuradhapura period, grain deposited in banks earned interest in grain. However this situation changed with the decline of the dry zone civilisation, and from the ninth century onwards we hear increasingly of rice being imported to Sri Lanka from South India (cf. B. J. Perera, C.H.J. Vol.1, pp.200-201).

Ptolemy goes on to give a description of the island chiefly in terms of the longitude and latitude of various places. He begins at the northern extremity of the island, which he calls North Cape, proceeds southward down the western coast and returns along the eastern coast to North Cape. In the course of this Periplus of the island Ptolemy mentions eight capes: Boreion, Galiba, Andrisimoundou, Cape of Zeus, Cape of Birds, Cape of Dionysus, Cape of Whales, and Oxeia. He locates five havens: of Priapis, of Mordoula, of the Sun, Bizala, and Spatana. Of bays he mentions two: Prasodes and Pausi. On the north eastern coast he locates two emporia: Modouttou and Tarakori. He names thirteen coastal towns: Margana, Iogana, Sindokanda, Anoubingara, Anoubartha, Odoka, Dagana, (Sacred to the Monn), Krokobara, Bokana, Amaraththa, Prokouri, Nagadiba, and another town called Anoubingara.

Ptolemy also displays detailed knowledge concerning the interior of the island. We may justly call him the first western writer to do so, in as much as Pliny's description of the interior lake does not square with facts. Proceeding from North to South he mentions two mountains or mountain ranges (Galiba, Malaia) and five rivers of which he locates both mouth and source of each, (Phasis, Ganges, Soanas, Azanus, Barakes), and also mentions the elephant grounds. Again, from North to South, of inland towns he mentions six: Anourogrammon the royal residence, Maagrammon the metropolis, Adisamon, Pedouke, Oulippada, and Nakadouma. Another

geographical feature mentioned by Ptolemy is a Great Coast between the Haven of the Sun and Prokouri city, on the east coast of the island.

Few of Ptolemy's place names in Taprobane can be identified with any degree of certainty (despite the many attempts which have been made to do so¹). Indeed, most of them are unintelligible. They are probably local names transcribed from imperfect pronunciation by foreigners and perhaps further distorted by the many copyists and revisers of Ptolemy through the ages. The place names in Ptolemy's Taprobane display certain features of interest. For instance, although most do not resemble local names ancient or modern, in many instances we can recognise well-known suffixes locally used for designating places. Thus the Grammon of Anourogrammon and Maagrammon is the Sanskrit Grāma (Pali gāma, Sinhalese gama). Ptolemy also finds it in vii.1 in certain places in northern India, e.g. Tilogrammon, Pentagramma, Asigramma, Naagramma and Nigranigramma. Although the word properly means village, Ptolemy uses it for cities and even capitals, a practice also found in Buddhist literature. We have already observed that the capital of Rohana was always known as Mahāgāma. Similarly in North India, along the trade route from Savatthi to Rajagaha, we find Hatthigāma and Bhandagāma mentioned along with such prominent places as Vesali, Pātaliputra, and Nālanda (cf. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p.102). Gana in Margana, Iōgana, and Dagana could either be a corruption of Gama or a transcription of Gana, meaning a collection or group - a community, in any case.

1 Cf. Tennent, *Ceylon Vol.1* p.536 with map. Gosselin, *Recherches sur la Géographie des anciens III*, p.303 chart XIV. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*, ed. S. M. Sastri, Calcutta, 1927, pp.247-59. Berthelot, *L'Asie ancienne etc.* pp.357ff. Hermann, P.W. s.v. "Taprobane". C. Rasanayagam, *Ancient Jaffna*, Madras 1926 pp.95ff. C. W. Nicholas, *Ptolemy's Island of Taprobane*, *Bulletin of the Ceylon Geographical Society* March-June 1950, pp.93-6 and map, followed by Brohier and Paulusz, *Land maps and Surveys*, Vol.2 1951, pp.23-5, and Edmund Peiris, op. cit. pp.19-23. Sinnatamby, op. cit. ch.3 pp.29ff. esp.

Diba in Nagadiba is of course Dīpa (Sanskrit Dvīpa) which originally designated any locality, but later took on the specific meaning of island (cf. Mhv. (tr. Geiger) 1.30 n.). We may also compare Sielediba (Sanskrit Simhala Dvīpa, Pali Sīhala Dīpa), which Cosmas gives as the Indian name for Taprobane. Sindokanda contains the Sinhalese word Kanda, meaning mountain or hill. Similarly Nanigiroi contains Giri, a suffix which means rock. Anoubingara ends with Gara (house, abode) suffixed to many of Ptolemy's eastern place names, (e.g. Bramagara, Kattigara). Spatana, which Ptolemy gives as the name of a haven in Taprobane could be the remnant of a name ending in -Pattana (port or fort). A rather puzzling suffix is -ba in Galiba. (In modern Sinhala this suffix means: in the direction of.) It is also found in some of Ptolemy's north Indian place names, Maliba, Gamaliba, Tathilba. It may be noted Pliny mentions a lake in Taprobane called Megisba.

It is evident that Ptolemy's use of these suffixes is confined to Taprobane, Northern India, and Further India. On the other hand, in South India, Dravidian suffixes such as -our (-ur, i.e. village) are frequent. This shows that the intensive permeation of Tamil place names in Sri Lanka, which we find in later times, had not taken place to such an extent in Ptolemy's time. We have already referred to an important exception, Kudiramalai, which is apparently the original of Pliny's Hippuros.¹

1 Although Hippuros is generally considered to be a translation of the Tamil Kudiramalai, "horse-mountain", there is another possibility. Ptolemy mentions a town on the northwestern coast called Sindokanda. Sindu in Sinhalese means a horse (from the Pali Saindava), and Kanda means mountain. Is it therefore possible that the Hippuros where the freedman landed was the same place which Ptolemy calls Sindokanda? In that case it follows that the place originally had a Sinhalese name Sindukanda "horse-mountain" which was later replaced by its Tamil version, Kudiramalai, and that the Greeks knew enough of the local

[cont.]

Regarding Ptolemy's topography of India, Vogel (loc. cit.) has observed that the Greek names are generally reproduced not from Sanskrit, but from Prakrit. Thus we have Diamouna corresponding to Pali Jamunā rather than Sanskrit Yamuna; Ozēnē to Ujjēni rather than Ujjayini; Tamalitēs to Tāmalitti rather than Tamralipti. This statement holds good also for some names in Taprobane. Thus we have Nagadiba from Nāgadīpa rather than Nāgadvīpa. On the other hand we notice that the termination Grammon corresponds to the Sanskrit Grāma than to the Pali form Gāma. Even in the India of Ptolemy transliterations from Sanskrit are not altogether absent, e.g. Zadadros or Xadaros (VII.1.27) from Satadru; Palimbothra or Palibothra from Pataliputra, (cf. also Taprobane from Tamraparni rather than Tambapanni). But on the whole Vogel's statement holds good: the trace of Sanskrit forms is probably due to their having entered Greek from Prakrit forms closer to Sanskrit than to Pali. Thus the derivations are not from the hierarchical Sanskrit or Pali, but from intermediate forms from the languages in everyday use. This in fact is what we can expect when we realise the Greeks got their information through trade contacts rather than from written sources, Hindu or Buddhist.

A. Hermann (loc. cit.) observing the occurrence of Indian names such as Kattigara in Ptolemy's account of Further India, conjectures that for that part of the geography dealing with India and the east Ptolemy utilised the reports of Sinhalese navigators. This theory cannot be accepted. For one thing, the names and details could well have been transcribed by Greek navigators themselves, having heard them from Indians or other local peoples. Moreover, among Ptolemy's place names

1 [cont.] language, whether Sinhalese or Tamil to translate this place name by Claudius' day. However, there is no record, written or traditional, regarding a Sinhalese form of this name, which if authentic is preserved only by Ptolemy. Pliny calls Hippuros a Harbour. ^{HGU} Ptolemy's Sindokanda is a city, although one can see the Harbour of Priapis in its neighbourhood. /ks

in Taprobane and India there are many names which could only have been given by Greeks. In India, for example, apart from such historically attested names as Bouke^{pr}kala, (Ptol. vii.1.46), we find Nagara or Dionysopolis, Sagala or Euthydemia, Theophila (VII.1.60), the Trinesia and Heptanesia, (VII.1.95), a mountain range called Apokopa (which according to the Periplus 15 is also the name of a mountain range in Azania), a river called Pseudostomos, a place called Heortē, and even a Byzantium (VII.1.7). In Taprobane itself, of his names for capes all save two are Greek, as are two of the names for havens and the bay of Prasodes, (a highly descriptive term). However, none of the coastal towns are Greek, although two descriptive glosses are.

Similarly, the rivers of Taprobane and certain other geographical features have names which are strongly reminiscent^{of,} or duplicates of, other places in the ancient world. The Ganges is called after the great river in India, but this name "Ganga" was doubtless brought by the colonists from that region. But what are we to make of Azanos, so reminiscent of Azania the ancient designation of east Africa (Periplus, 15, 61) or the Azanius Oceanus (Pliny, VI.108); ^{of} Barakēs, which is also the name of a Gulf (Periplus 40) and also, as Barakē, is given to an island off the southwest coast of India (Ptol. VII.1.98)? ^{of} Phasis which is also a river in the Colchis region and the River Soanas which reappears in Sarmatia and Albania (V, 9, 12; V, 12, 7)? More obviously, the Periplus mentions an Aigialos Megas (15) on the western shore of the Persian Gulf, while Prasōdes is also the name of a sea (Ptolemy, VII.2.1, VII.3.6).

Moreover, certain geographical features of the coast of Taprobane have names associated with figures of Graeco-Roman religion and mythology (e.g. Zeus, Dionysus, Helios, Priapis (sic!)), which are mainly confined

to the south of the island, beyond 4°N . The probable explanation is that these names were given by foreigners, and that is why their local equivalents cannot be detected. As I have observed in connection with Palaisimoundou, these names did not enter the speech or ~~writing~~ ^{writing} of the natives, and therefore they have not survived in local records. The same is true of more modern names given by Europeans to places in the island, e.g. Kandy, Slave Island, Nigombo, Foul Point, etc., where the natives know these places by local names. 53/

In VII.4.9, Ptolemy names thirteen tribes or peoples which inhabit the island. Here again he proceeds from north to south and generally arranges them in pairs one on the west and one on the east. Thus the most northern parts of the island are possessed by the Galiboi and the Modouttoi, and below these the Anourogrammoi and the Nagadiboi, and below the Anourogrammoi the Soanoi, and below the Nagadiboi the Semnoi; southwards of these lie the Sindokaiⁿdai towards the west followed by the Boumasanoi, as far as the feeding grounds of the elephants: towards the east, the Tarakhoi lie below the Semnoi, with the Bokanoi and Mordouloi below them, while in the extreme south are the Rhodanganoi and the Nanigiroi.

This organisation into peoples, which Ptolemy reports, has no parallel in native sources, although they have much to say regarding the castes or guilds and the territorial divisions according to which provincial government was organised (cf. U.C.H.C. Vol.I, pp.13-14).

One striking feature of this list is that the tribes in the northern part of the island, with the exception of the Semnoi, derive their names from those of geographical features in the area. In the south, apart from the Bokanoi and Mordouloi, none of the tribes is connected to geographical names. Apparently there is a difference between the north #

and the south with regard to organisation. Along with this there is the suggestion of a difference in the level of civilisation between the north and the south. The north was better known to foreigners and was more advanced in civilisation. We have already observed how in Ptolemy's nomenclature features of the coast in the south are associated with Greek gods. Such analogizing is probably the result of a lack of intercourse with natives. On the other hand, both the emporia, all the harbours, and all the important coastal and inland towns are placed north of Ptolemy's equator. South of the rivers Azanos and Barakes there are only four towns: Odōka, Dagana, Krokobara, and Nakadouma, and the feeding grounds of the elephants are also in this same region. A higher level of civilisation in the north is attested by the Periplus (61) where it is stated that the northern part is cultivated. In his outline of the map of Taprobane (VIII.28), Ptolemy names three cities, calling them the most important, and producing astronomical calculations concerning them. These cities, Tarakori, Maagrammon, and Nagadiba, all belong to the north. All this goes to show that Graeco-Roman knowledge was largely confined to the north of the island, and also that the population with whom they dealt most directly was largely concentrated there.

These conclusions, arrived at through a study of the Greek writers, ^{to} are confirmed by indigenous sources. The earliest settlements of the Sinhalese were on the northern, western and southeastern parts of the country represented by the three principal kingdoms Anuradhapura, Kelaniya, and Rohana. The distribution of inscriptions and monuments indicates that by the end of the first century A.D., while other areas show visible signs of habitation, there is no evidence of early settlements in the southwestern region (from the Kalu Ganga to the Nilvalā Ganga,

or in the Ratnapura district immediately inland, despite its modern fame for gems), the earliest inscriptions in this region belonging to the tenth century.

As early as the third century B.C. the northern kingdom of Anuradhapura appears to have had precedence over the others. It was this kingdom which received the Maurya consecration from Asoka, and Anuradhapura continued to be the capital of the island until 1017 A.D. The chronicles concentrate their narratives on this kingdom, and we do not hear much about the others, apart from the fact that Rohana and the hill country are mentioned occasionally as the asylum of the defeated and the disaffected, (cf. Mhv. XXXV.27ff., XXXVII.6, etc.).

Again, in the Chronicles, as in Ptolemy, there are few references to ports in the south. The port at Gōdapabata, and the haven of Sakkarasobbha are mentioned, the latter as the place where Ilanaga (first century A.D.) landed when he came with Indian troops to regain his kingdom (Mhv. XXXV.28). But there is no evidence before the eleventh century concerning Galle, the most important port in the south, which in the late Middle Ages served as the rendezvous for Arab and Chinese ships of the Indian Ocean. It is not mentioned in Sinhalese literature before the "Sandesa" poems of the 14th and 15th centuries. Thus, regarding the superior civilisation of the north in ancient times the native sources are in complete agreement with the account of Ptolemy.¹

The ethnic names in Ptolemy's Taprobane which do not derive from his geographical names are, the Semnoi, Boumasanoi, Tarakhoi, Rhodanganoi, and Nanigiroi. Edmund Peiris (op. cit. p.22) is of the opinion that

¹ This fact needs to be emphasised, since Tennent (vol.i, p.568) has argued that Galle, in the south of the island, was the chief port of ancient maritime trade in the Indian Ocean.

these may be clan names of totemistic origin, i.e. Tarakhoi from Taraccha, (Sanskrit Taraksa, "Hyena"), the Mordouloi from Moriya (Peacock), the Sennoi (the reading of inferior MSS.) from Sunaka (dog) and even the Bōkanoi from Gokanna (stag). This hypothesis would indicate that the tribes in the north were organised according to territorial divisions, while those of the south were totemistic. But this hypothesis does not explain all the names in the south, and moreover, other derivations have been proposed, such as the derivation from Rōhana of the reading Rhogandanoi of the inferior MSS. It has sometimes been suggested that the name Semnoi is one of religious significance. Clement of Alexandria mentions a group of Indian sages called Semnoi, who are distinguished from the Brachmanes and are said to worship a kind of pyramid beneath which they imagine that the bones of a divinity of some kind lie buried (Stromat. III.194, ed. Dindorf). This appears to be an obvious reference to Sramana, the term denoting monks of non-Brahmanical religions, and especially associated with Buddhist monks.¹ It has therefore sometimes been thought that the Semnoi in Ptolemy's Taprobane refer to a religious group rather than a tribe. Thus Hermann (op. cit. p.2267) following Lassen (Ind. alt. III. p.223) says that the Semnoi are not a race, but the Buddhist priests designated as Arahaths. It is true that in his description of India Ptolemy sometimes mentions religious groups as if they were tribes. Thus we hear of one place occupied by the Brahmanes, and another by the Dryllophulitai who, according to Berthelot, are not a race, but rather a Hindu sect (op. cit. p.354). Thus there is some point in the argument that the Semnoi of Taprobane are a religious group.

¹ The term is correctly transcribed in the Greek version of Asoka's 13th Rock Edict.

My own opinion, however, is that this term is Greek, and is used descriptively in contrast with the Tarakhoi. Semnoi (the august, the reverend, the proud and the haughty) and Tarakhoi (the disorderly, the disturbers of the peace) are the characteristics of two tribes with contrasting qualities. In Ptolemy these tribes are located in close proximity to each other along the eastern half of the island between Bokana to Nagadipa. The terms seem certainly to have been attributed by Greek navigators, reflecting their personal experiences in dealings with the natives, perhaps the welcome received from them.

Greek names, descriptive for the most, are concentrated along the coast of the southern part of the island, and so indicate that these regions were visited by Western mariners. It thus follows that by Ptolemy's time the island had been circumnavigated and logged. However, the colourful terms applied to these tribes and to other named localities on the Eastern coast (e.g. Oxeia, the Great Coast, and the detail attached to the Prokouri) reveal a closer familiarity with the eastern area than ever before. The explanation undoubtedly lies in the facilities provided by this coast for the consolidation of the trade with the Coromandel, the Ganges and even Further India. It may be remembered that Ptolemy is the first Greek geographer to give detailed information concerning those regions beyond the Ganges, and that for more than a century before his time a trading centre recognised as Roman, had flourished on the Coromandel coast. That Taprobane in the meantime had served in promoting this intercourse is confirmed by the fact that Ptolemy's two named emporia are both located on the N.E. coast of the island, ideally situated to handle the commerce to and from the Bay of Bengal. In such a case with the developing concentration on the part of western traders upon this focal point, it is not to be wondered that

Ptolemy's information for this area reveals an indebtedness to the vivid phraseology of mariners.

With regard to the identification of place names, two principal methods have generally been adopted in approaching this problem. One is the comparison of Ptolemy's co-ordinates with the modern map of Sri Lanka, paying attention to the general direction from place to place rather than the actual distance, bearing in mind that Ptolemy has exaggerated to a great extent the size of the island. Scholars who followed this method have arrived at different conclusions depending on how they chose to explain and correct Ptolemy's exaggerations. The second method is the comparison of nomenclature. In this connection it must be realised that the results would be reliable only if Ptolemy's names are compared with ancient place names rather than their modern equivalents. The danger of this method is the temptation to seize upon superficial resemblances and to attribute too much to errors resulting from ignorance on the part of copyists or the transfer of letters or syllables at any stage. In fact the best results from this method have been obtained where it was used in conjunction with the first method.¹

Of the inland cities, Anourogrammon, which Ptolemy calls the Royal residence is of course Anuradhapura, which from its foundation

¹ Critics of Ptolemy have sometimes overlooked the scientific nature of his work and have been too ready to impute error and ignorance to him. As a consequence they have often neglected Ptolemy's co-ordinates and attempts have been made to identify his place names purely on the resemblance of sound. The wild extremes to which such a procedure could lead may be seen in the work of C. Rasanayagam (pp.98ff.), who arrives at an absurd conclusion, when he locates in northern Ceylon some of the most important places in southern India (e.g. the district of Paralia, and towns like Kamara, Sopatma and Podouke, some of the most important S. Indian places named in the Periplus and Ptolemy).

in the fourth century B.C. to the beginning of the 11th century A.D. served as the capital of the most important kingdom. It is the one city in the Taprobane of Ptolemy which can be located definitely with regard to both nomenclature and location. Berthelot (op. cit. p.366) is of opinion that the co-ordinates of this city as well as of Maagrammon were calculated by observation of stars, and not from conversion of distances as in other cases. He points out that the distance between these two places is not subject to the usual exaggeration which he attributes to a confusion between two Indian measurements, one Hindu and one Buddhist, both designated by the term Yōjana.

Ptolemy calls Maagrammon the Metropolis and places it southeast of Anourogrammon and southwest of Nagadiba. The ancient capital of Rohana was called Mahāgāma (modern Tissamahārāma) but it does not correspond to Ptolemy's Maagrammon in location, although it too lay in a southeasterly direction from Anuradhapura. Ptolemy's Maagrammon is situated on the Ganges river. Tennent, (Ceylon, I, p.536 n.2) according to his identification of that river with the Mahaveli Ganga, thinks that it is the modern Bintenna whose ancient name was Mahiyangana. H. W. Codrington, (Short History of Ceylon, p.52, cf. also p.3) half agrees, but suggests as a possible alternative Māgamtota, in the neighbourhood of Polonnaruva. However, he assumes the place to be the royal residence, whereas Ptolemy describes Maagrammon as the metropolis and Anourogrammon as the royal residence. We do not hear of a Sinhalese king moving his residence from Anuradhapura until the mid-fifth century A.D. when Kassapa I went to live in Sigiriya. In the eyes of foreigners Maagrammon appeared as the Metropolis because of its significance for administrative purposes. In book VIII, 28, when Ptolemy names the most important cities of Taprobane he omits Anourogrammon and mentions only Maagrammon, Nagadiba,

and Tarakōri. Thus, Maagrammon was more important than Anourogrammon at least from the standpoint of western merchants. However, the identification of Maagrammon with Māgantota or Mahiyangana is rejected by Nicholas (ASCAR 7, pp.47-9), on the grounds that in Ptolemy's time Magantota was known as Kahagamtota (attested by a second century inscription from Minvila) from its Pali name Kaccakatittha (Mhv. XXV, 12).

Marganⁿa on the northwest coast is identified with the town Magana mentioned in Sinhalese inscriptions of King Vasabha (124-168 A.D.) and of Mala Tissa (223-241 A.D.). The native information is therefore contemporaneous with that of Ptolemy.¹ It was a place in Rajarata (i.e. Northern Province) situated west of Anuradhapura and important enough to give its name to a district. It is mentioned in Sinhalese works of the fourteenth century, viz. the Saddharmalankaya (p.704) and Sangasarana (p.39). According to the latter text the Magana temple was five yojanas distant from the king's residence.² It may be noted that Stephanus cites Marcian to the effect that Margana is an Indian town.

1 Cf. Codrington, JRASCB XXVIII, no.73 (1920), pp.54-5 and 'Ceylon Coins and Currency' p.193. The inscriptions are from two sites in the neighbourhood of Marichchikaddi, i.e. Sinadiyala and Ussayppukallu.

2 Cf. B. J. Perera, op. cit. p.123. The town Magana, however, is not mentioned in the Pali works as far as we know. On the other hand, in connection with the discovery of pearls, Mhv. XXVIII.16 mentions a place called Uruvela, which is also situated five yojanas west of Anuradhapura. Geiger locates it on the Kalā-Oya, the ancient Gonaka river. This town was founded by Uruvela, one of the followers of Vijaya (Mhv. VII.45). The name Uruvela, in turn, is not mentioned in Sinhalese literature or inscriptions. For this reason writers such as B. J. Perera, (loc. cit.) think that Magana and Uruvela are the same place. Others, however, such as Edmund Peiris, (p.22) prefer to take Magana and Uruvela as two different places situated close to one another, and to identify Uruvela with Iḡgana which Ptolemy places immediately to the south of Margana.

Of the two important mountain ranges mentioned by Ptolemy the more southerly is called Malaia. It is said to be the source of the rivers Soanas (123° E 3° N),¹ Azanus (123° E 1° S) and Barakes (128° E 2° N), and it must encompass the towns of Pedouce (124° 20' E 3° 20' N) and of Oulippada (126° 20' E 2° 20' N). In the Mahavamsa the term Malaya is regularly used to signify the hill country of Sri Lanka (VII.67; XXIV.4; XXVIII.21 etc.). The name Oulippada has been identified very plausibly by both Tennent and Sinnatamby as a reference to the sacred footprint on Adam's peak, part of this range, since pada is the native word for 'foot(print)'. Even today the peak is known as Siripada. The legend of the sacred footprint on the peak appears in Fa-hien (ch.38) and the Mahavamsa (I.77) both in the fifth century A.D., and if this identification is accepted, once again we have in Ptolemy an even earlier record of its sanctity, in the same way that he provides the earliest record of the local name of the island in his notice of Saliḱe. More arguable however is the case of Nagadiba. Nagadipa or Nakadiva was the ancient name of the Jaffna peninsula and well known as the site of the Buddha's second visit to the island (Mhv. I, 44-70). During the Anuradhapura period it was a province governed by a minister (U.C.H.C. Vol.1 p.13), but originally Nagadipa must have been the name of particular locality in such an area. Ptolemy places his Nagadiba, which he calls a city, on the eastern coast between the harbour of Spatana and gulf of Pausi.²

1 The reading 8° N must be wrong in view of Ptolemy's express statement that it flows from Malaia. The ω group of MSS. read 3° .

2 In his list of islands surrounding Taprobane Ptolemy mentions a Nagadiba which has the same latitude as Nagadiba city, but which is placed further east from Taprobane. The Susondi Jataka (no. 360) (which was written down in Ceylon) also refers to an island called Nagadipa which is encountered on a voyage from Broach to the Golden Land. Gerini (loc. cit.) thinks that Ptolemy and the author of the Susondi Jataka are both referring to Naggadipa, "the island of the naked" where the

Geiger in his translation of the Mahavamsa (I.47 note) says that Nagadipa was apparently the northwestern part of the island. This is an error, and I think that Col. Gerini (op. cit. p.379, note 10) and Sinnatamby (op. cit. p.42) are right in suggesting that its location should be sought on the eastern coast of northern Sri Lanka. This is borne out not only by the co-ordinates of Ptolemy, but also by a reference in the Valāhassa Jataka (no. 196) where the she-goblins of Sirisavatthu in Tambapanni are said to wander on foot "along the sea-shore as far as Kalyāni on the other side and Nāgadīpa on this side". As Kalyāni (Kelani) is on the west side of the island about six miles north from Colombo, Nagadipa has to be sought on the eastern side.

With regard to the inland towns, it may be profitable to note the very plausible hypothesis formulated and demonstrated by J.Ph.Vogel (Ptolemy's Topography of India: his sources; in Festschrift Ernst Herzfeld, pp.226-234) "If we assume," says Vogel, "that Ptolemy derived his information from Greek merchants who had made extensive travels in the interior of India, the places in his topographical lists will have to be sought along the ancient trade routes." He goes on to demonstrate this by identifying certain well-known trade routes of India using the evidence of Ptolemy and the Periplus. Now if we apply this hypothesis to Ptolemy's account of the inland towns of Taprobane (VII.4.10), we notice that they progress from Anourogrammon southward as far as the equator, going southeast first to Adisamon, and then southwest to Pedouke, from which point the progress is again southeast towards Nakadouma on the equator. Here we have two southeasterly routes, one from Anourogrammon

2 [cont.] children of Vijaya and his followers are said to have landed (Mhv. VI.45). He identifies it with the Greater Nicobar, and thinks that it has been called Nagadipa through a confusion resulting from the similarity of the names.

to Adisamon and another from Pedouke to Nakadouma, perhaps with a link between Adisamon and Pedouke. If we assume the existence of this link then we have here a road from ~~Anourogrammon~~ into the hill country. The existence of such a route is attested in native literature. Thus Mhv. XXVIII.21 reads, "A merchant from the city (Anuradhapura) taking many wagons with him, in order to bring ginger and so forth from Malaya, had set out for Malaya." Again it may be observed that Ptolemy is the first Greek to mention the production of ginger in Taprobane, and perhaps this list follows the ginger route into the Malaia hills.

Immediately after his description of Taprobane, Ptolemy says that the island is faced by 1378 other islands, of which he gives the names and localities of several. The ancient Hindus also knew of the existence of many islands in the sea around India and Sri Lanka, but they gave the number as 12,000.¹

Ptolemy locates these islands on the west, south, and east of Taprobane, thus making, as it were, a garland round the great island. Warmington thinks that the islands referred to are the Maldives rather than the Laccadives, as the former are more likely to be encountered by mariners on their way to Taprobane. This archipelago is about 400 miles west of Sri Lanka and consists of numerous "atolls" or groups of islets, a good many of which are hardly any more than coral reefs. As they are all west of Taprobane, they are not adequate to explain Ptolemy's list. It is probable that he has also included the small islands scattered along the coast of Sri Lanka. Ptolemy represents them as further apart owing to the general exaggeration of his distances.

¹ Thus the Cōla king Rājarāja I (985-1012 A.D.) in his inscriptions claims to include in his dominions Sri Lanka and "the twelve-thousand ancient islands of the sea"; cf. Rāsanāyagam, Ancient Jaffna, p.262).

From the assumption that the "Maldives" are mentioned, Warmington (op. cit. p.125) infers that the sudden outburst of trade with Taprobane in the time of Ptolemy may have been brought about by a final development in the use of the monsoons so as to sail direct to the island from the Red Sea. This may have been so, for in the following centuries Cosmas knew Taprobane better than India which seems to have lost some of its commercial importance in favour of the island.

In VIII.28, Ptolemy outlines the twelfth adjacent map of Asia which consists of Taprobane and the islands. He says that the parallel that runs through the middle of the island has the same ratio as the meridian and that the whole map is surrounded by the Indian Ocean. As the most important cities of the island he mentions three: Nagadiba, Talakōru, and Maagrammon. For each of these cities he gives the length of the longest day and the distance from Alexandria in hours, and observing that at each place the sun reaches the zenith twice a year, he gives the distance from the summer tropic on each occasion. Here we have further information regarding the location of these cities which has been interpreted as indicating revision of his original work (P.W.).¹

His figures for Talakōru, the emporium, are definite; but in the case of Nagadiba the distance from the tropic is given approximately while for Maagrammon the metropolis, which is an inland town, the distances both from Alexandria and the tropic are given in approximate numbers. If we compare this with Ptolemy's outline of India, we find that here too the figures tend to be more definite regarding market towns on the coast and places in southern India, e.g. Semulla, Barygaza, Muziris, etc. It is probable that the degree of definition is a reflection of the

¹ Berthelot had already noted these divergences.

degree of contact western traders had with these towns.

Apart from the two chapters dealing with Taprobane, Ptolemy's geography contains three incidental notices of the island. In I.14.9, in discussing the voyage from the Golden Chersonese to Kattigara, Ptolemy says that Marinus placed the meridian, which is drawn through the source of the Indus river, just west of the most northerly promontory of the island of Taprobane which lies opposite cape Kōru, and points out that the meridian drawn through Kōru is distant from the meridian drawn through the Fortunate Islands by little more than 125 degrees. In VII.1, Ptolemy gives the longitude of Kōru as 125.40. The longitude of the sources of the Indus river is 125 degrees. Thus it is apparent that Ptolemy was content to accept the location attributed to the island by Marinus.

In VII.5.11, in the course of his descriptive summary of the map of the inhabited world Ptolemy gives a list of ten islands and peninsulas arranged obviously according to size. According to this list the first is Taprobane, the second is Albion of the British Isles, the third is the Golden Chersonesus, and fourth comes Hibernia of the British Isles. The opinion of Strabo and the De Mundo was that Taprobane was not smaller than Britain. But Ptolemy names it positively as the largest island in the world.¹ Its area is about 25,500 square miles.

In VIII.1.3, Ptolemy discusses the errors of previous cartographers and says that they misplace the Indian Sea to the north of Taprobane. This is obviously a reference to the mistaken notions of certain Greek geographers who placed the island too far to the south. We have already

¹ Ptolemy extends it from 12.30 N to 2.20 S, 120.30 E to 132 E (the Greenwich location of the island is 6° N - 9° 40' N, 79.40 E - 82° E, with an area of 25,500 miles).

seen how Eratosthenes placed it seven days distant from the southernmost point of India and how some Greeks even thought of it as part of a southern continent. Strabo however had argued that it belongs to the inhabited world, and Ptolemy, although he extends the island beyond the equator, also feels that it should be placed more to the north than his predecessors had done. We shall see later how Dionysus Periegetes goes to the other extreme and brings the island so far north as to lie under Cancer.

There is no doubt that Ptolemy's account of Taprobane marks the highest point of Graeco-Roman knowledge about the island. Unlike his predecessors, he correctly makes the island extend from north to south. Although he is misinformed regarding the size, he has got its shape very close to reality. He is the first to mention the indigenous name (Salike), and the sacred footprint. He knows about the interior and its products far better than Pliny. His account reflects a difference in the level of civilisation between the north and the south, a fact corroborated by the local literary and archaeological sources. From the fact that he is able to give a complete periplus of the island, and from the occurrence of Greek names on the southern coast, we may conclude that by his time the island had been circumnavigated by western mariners.

h3/ Few Greek writers after him added anything to the knowledge of the island that he has preserved. Many were content to repeat his account in varying degrees of condensation.

CHAPTER VII

LATE GREEK NOTICES DERIVED FROM PTOLEMY

Ptolemy marks the culmination of Greek achievement in scientific geography. Subsequent writers were content to epitomise his account of the known world, sometimes interpolating material from previous authors. With rare exceptions, they took no notice of contemporary accounts of the east, and with regard to Taprobane their descriptions are mere summaries of what Ptolemy had to say concerning the island.

One of the earliest followers of Ptolemy was Marcian of Heraclea (c. 400 A.D.). He describes Taprobane in his "Periplus of the Outer Sea of the East and West and of the Great Islands in It". According to the prologue, this work, although incorporating material from other works, is primarily based on "the divine Ptolemy". Hence near the beginning of his study he incorporates almost word for word Ptolemy's named lists of gulfs and islands (Ptolemy VII.5.10-11), and makes more explicit here what Ptolemy had merely implied - that Taprobane was the greatest island in the world.

In I.16, outlining the geography of southern Asia, Marcian gives the location of "the greatest island Taprobane" opposite the middle of the Indian mainland, with the Periplus of the island in I.35-6 (Muller, G.G.M. I. p.535). According to him, the Cape of Taprobane called Boreion lay opposite the cape of India called Kōru. He explicitly says that the island now called Salikē was formerly called Palaisimoundou and thus differs radically from the received text of Ptolemy. (For this form of the name cf. I, 1 and I, 8.)

Marcian indicates the situation of Cape Boreion as follows:

26460 stades from the eastern boundary of the inhabited earth, 61626 from the western boundary. Its distance from the equator is 6350 stades.

As we have them in the text, the figures for the distance from the eastern and western boundaries of the known world do not correspond exactly with the co-ordinates of Ptolemy. Ptolemy (I.14.9) says that the distance from Kōru to Kattigara amounts to about 52 degrees, and that the meridian drawn through Kōru is distant from the meridian drawn through the Fortunate Islands by little more than 125 degrees. In VII.1.11 he locates cape Kōru or Kalligikon on the Argaric bay in the Pandaion region at 125.40 E 13.20 N.¹ In VII.4.1, he locates Cape Boreion opposite cape Kōru at 126° E, 12.30 N.

Marcian gives the length of Taprobane as 9,500 stades, the width 7,500, and the circumference as 26,385. These figures are greater than those given by any Greek writer before him; in fact they are the greatest dimensions that any writer has attributed to the island. Berthelot (op. cit. p.362) had explained the figures for the circumference as the consequence of Marcian's use of some unknown source other than Ptolemy, and had ventured into conjecture as regards length and breadth. However, as regards the actual figures given by Marcian, it may be noted that in Ptolemy, the most northerly point in Taprobane is 12.30 N (Cape Boreion) while the most southerly is an island attached to his account, Bassa (VII.4.12), 6.30 S. The length of these 19 degrees would be (on the assumption of 500 stades per degree) exactly Marcian's 9,500. The 7,500 stades of width appear to have been arrived by a similar calculation in

^u
¹ So Nobbe, following ω . Renou^u, following $X\Gamma$ etc. reads 125° 20' E 18° N, which on Ptolemy's reckoning would put Kōru on the same latitude as Barygaza.

a slightly different manner. Although the westernmost islands in Ptolemy are located at 116° E (Monakhe and Philekos), the first to be named on his list is Vangana (120° E, cf. VII.4.11) and the last Sousouara at 135° E (ib. 13) - a distance of 7,500 stades. It would appear that Marcian's exaggerated distances are the consequence of taking the islands adjacent as part of the main island itself, and thus all Berthelot's elaborate calculations, conjectures and textual emendations are completely out of place. Marcian actually does what he says he intended to do - namely to follow Ptolemy.

Marcianus goes on to summarise what Ptolemy had said regarding the island, i.e. that there are thirteen tribes (ethnē) or satrapies, a favourite pairing of his, twenty-two notable cities and marts, two mountains, five rivers, eight capes, four havens, two great gulfs, and one great coast. Marcian here is continuing the epitome of Ptolemy's account which he had begun with his rationalisation of distance based on Ptolemy's co-ordinates, and he sets the pattern of the list form which was to remain a major feature of the later geographical tradition.¹

The island is again mentioned under the name of Salikē in an anonymous epitome of geography, which is given in the MSS. as the second book of Agathemerus. In VI.25 (Müller, II, p.500) the author refers to Salikē as a very great island and locates it in the Indian Sea by the Indian mainland. He says that the island was formerly called Simounda but now Salikē. It is interesting to note that the name Taprobane does

¹ Müller says that the latter part of chapter 35 containing the periplus of the island is missing from the MSS. and he quotes from Stephanus of Byzantium the entry on Margana, on the assumption that it is a fragment from this lost periplus. Stephanus says, "Margana, a city of India: Marcian in the Periplus".

not occur even once in the course of the treatise, whereas Ptolemy had used it as the regular name for the island. This author regularly calls it Salikē.

Although based on Ptolemy, this brief account of Taprobane expresses something of the idealised conceptions that we find in earlier writers such as Artemidorus. The author reports from hearsay that in this island all things necessary for life are produced, that it has all sorts of mines, and that the men who inhabit the island bind up their hair in the manner of women.

He also adapts from Ptolemy the often quoted list of famous islands but with variations, both of gradation and of nomenclature where a Latin influence is visible. Salikē now ranks first among all the largest islands of the world, Albion comes second and Hibernia third (VIII.27).

The date and authorship of this work are in doubt, but that is of no consequence for our purpose since it displays no independent knowledge of the island. However it is of some value in supporting the text of Ptolemy, for the proper name Simounda, though misspelt, does support the reading of Ptolemy's manuscripts as opposed to the rendering of Marcian, by its separation from πάλαι.

Another late authority was the grammarian Stephanus of Byzantium, a contemporary of the emperor Justinian. His Ethnologica is a reference work dealing mainly with place names and adjectives formed from them, but it incorporates much geographical knowledge reproduced from earlier writers, including much from Ptolemy. This work was epitomised by one Hermolaus not long after the time of Stephanus. Both this and the original are lost, and what we now possess is a further condensation of the epitome of Hermolaus, together with a few fragments of the original. The material is arranged in alphabetical order.

Under Taprobane, we are told that it is a very large island in the Indian Sea, and Alexander Lychnus is quoted, as above. The island's name was formerly Simoundou but now Salikē. It may be observed that Stephanus keeps palai (παλαι) and Simoundou (Σιμούδου) separate and well apart from each other. In this he agrees with the text of Ptolemy and the MS. of the Periplus, and thus is at variance with the information given by Marcian and by Pliny before him. He gives the dimensions of the island according to Artemidorus (for whom see above).

In discussing other place names, Taprobane is sometimes mentioned incidentally. Thus in his notice on Phasis, having said that it is a city in Asia near the river Phasis in Kolchis, founded by the Milesians, etc., Stephanus says that there is another river Phasis in Taprobane.

Concerning Argura, he says that it is the metropolis of Taprobane island in India, which means the island of barley. It is most fertile and produces a great quantity of gold. Now, according to Ptolemy, Maagrammon was the metropolis of Taprobane and Argura was the metropolis of Iabadiu, the Island of Barley. Hence the emendations of Bochart and Meineke (v. Sources). But the error is more likely to arise from the ignorance of the epitomisers. Instances of geographical confusion are frequent in this work, especially with reference to the east. Thus Barygaza is described as one of the most important marts of Gedrosia, and there are long-standing confusions concerning various localities.

The chief value of Stephanus' notice of Taprobane is that it has preserved for us fragments of the two Ephesian writers Artemidorus and Alexander Lychnus. It also provides one more piece of evidence to support those who prefer to take Palai Simoundou as two separate words.

Taprobane is again noticed in the Armenian Geography once attributed to Moses of Chorene. This work is based on a Greek geography

written by Pappus of Alexandria (fourth century A.D.) who in turn based his work on that of Ptolemy. The work has come down to us in two versions, a longer one and a shorter redaction, and Taprobane is noticed in both versions.¹ In the longer version, the author says that Taprobane is a large island of India, and the largest island in the entire world. He gives the size as 1100 miles from north to south and 510 miles from east to west. He also says that it lay beyond India and is surrounded by the Indian Sea. The list of products here given is identical with that of Ptolemy: rice (explained as being a kind of millet), ginger, beryl, hyacinth and other precious stones, much gold and silver, and also elephants and tigers. There are two mountains in the centre, one called Taliba (obviously miswritten for Galiba of Ptolemy VII.4.8) which is the source of two rivers, and the other called Malea, which is the source of three rivers.

Then follows what is probably an insertion from some source other than Ptolemy, for we find another list of products and some place names in addition to those given by Ptolemy - imperishable woods, ginger, pearls and precious stones. There are two cities 150 miles apart, one is called Manakor, the other Royan. Between them is a mountain named Gaylase from which flows a river in which the most precious stones are found. Dr. Hewsen thinks that Gaylase is a confusion for the Galiba already mentioned. He suggests that Ptolemy's Margana or Talakōru is represented by Manakor, and that Royan probably stands for Iōgana or the present Rakvāna. We may however note further its resemblance to Rōhana, the ancient kingdom in the southeast, perhaps preserved in a reading of Ptolemy's ethnic name Rhogandanoi.

¹ I am indebted to Dr. Robert H. Hewsen, Professor of History at Glasboro State College, New Jersey, U.S.A., who has very kindly supplied me with information on the Armenian Geography together with the text and translations of the passages referring to Taprobane.

According to our author, there are twelve nations in the north who always dress their hair like that of women. Two of these nations are called the Hačacank̄ and the Hacayink̄, names which find no equivalent in Ptolemy. However the Armenian Geographer agrees with Ptolemy that in the south the plains are used for pasturing elephants.

Now follows a fable which is not found in any other report on Taprobane. "They say that one nation which dwells in this country is made up of women and at a certain time of the year dogs come among the elephants and have intercourse with the women who give birth to twins, one a male puppy and the other a human girl. The sons cross the river to their fathers while the girls remain with their mothers." The author, rather sceptically however, suggests that this is just an allegory, for, as he says, the same thing is said about the Amazons in the Book of Alexander, i.e. the Alexander Romance, commonly known as Pseudo-Callisthenes, which was adapted into Armenian in the fifth century, and according to Dr. Hewsen, the passage in question appears at S.252 of this Armenian version. There is an instance where the author has misinterpreted Ptolemy's words. According to him, "Ptolemy says that there are temples of the moon in the southern extremity of the island". Ptolemy (VII.4.5) actually says, Δαγάνα πόλις ἱερὰ Σελήνης - Dagana, a sacred city of the Moon, but the Armenian geographer reads ἱερὰ as a neuter plural noun meaning "temples".

The remainder of the description is summarised from Ptolemy. There are 1378 other islands around Taprobane, some inhabited and others uninhabited, of which only nineteen are known by name. The equator crosses the south of the large island.

In the shorter redaction, the name of the island is given as Taprobania, and again it is said to be the largest of all islands. The measurements

are the same as those given in the longer version, but whereas the longer version placed the island beyond India, this version says that it is east of India. This may appear a small difference but the author apparently had a better idea of its location than most Greek geographers, including Strabo and Cosmas, who placed the island to the west of India. Mention follows of the 1378 other small islands around Taprobane, and we are told that it has mountains, rivers, and twelve nations, that gold, silver, precious stones, aromatics, elephants and tigers are found there, and that the men of this country dress their hair like that of women, but most of these are borrowings from Ptolemy. Nothing is said concerning the south with its elephant pastures, temples of the moon and the mysterious race of women.

According to one MS. of the shorter version, which Dr. Hewsen calls S.1683, it was said that this island was the place of Satan's fall. There is no mention of this tradition in any other ancient author, and both its origin and its significance are obscure. Tennent, (Ceylon, I. p.546, n.) was of the opinion that this was an allusion to the footprint on Adam's Peak, but the text does not justify this interpretation. We may also note that although our author derives through Pappus from the Geography of Ptolemy, he knows the island only as Taprobane. He does not mention any of the other names by which it was known to Ptolemy.

All these notices are of value only as indications of the esteem accorded to the geography of Ptolemy and the influence exerted by that work on ancient writers. There is no attempt to reproduce the scientific details: no reference is made to the co-ordinates. What is handed down is recorded with confusions and errors. Nor is there any question of any independent historical value. They reflect the defects inherent in western scientific writing in its decadent period, its reliance on old books and the neglect of fresh material, and its lack of contact with the outside world of its time.

CHAPTER VIII
THE SOPHISTIC TRADITION

We have already observed that Ptolemy's acquaintance with Taprobane was an immense advance on the confused accounts of his predecessors, and that his description reflects the improvement of western contacts with the island. But even in the literature extant from his time his account of the island is unique, for this improved knowledge made no impact whatsoever on other Mediterranean writers of the second century A.D. These were content to reproduce earlier accounts colouring them with literary and scholastic touches, but even their handling of these older authors reflects an ignorance which is in marked contrast to the fresh and factual account of Ptolemy.

Two features of the fauna of Taprobane received frequent attention from Graeco-Roman writers, namely, its elephants and the strange creatures that inhabited the sea around it. Notices of these two features go right back to the first Greek writer on Taprobane, Onesicritus. Reports of these animals persisted through the centuries, and even Ptolemy mentions a Cape of Whales and the feeding grounds of the elephants. And it is these same two aspects that were picked up for elaboration by two other writers from this period who produced substantial accounts of the island, viz. Aelian and Dionysus Periegetes.

Claudius Aelianus, (146-222 A.D.) was born in Praeneste, and taught rhetoric at Rome. Though a Roman, he wrote in Greek. His *Historia Animalium* contains a notice of Taprobane which occurs in the account of the animals of India in book XVI. Schwanbeck detected several echoes of Megasthenes in this account, and conjectured that much of it was based

on that writer. He pointed out, for instance, that the author knew with unusual accuracy the interior parts of India. Then, again, he makes very frequent mention of the Prasii and the Brahmins. Schwanbeck therefore decided to print this extract among the incerta as fragment LIX of his edition of Megasthenes. He however made it clear that this was only a conjecture with a certain degree of probability, but subsequent writers sometimes quote this text as Megasthenes' own notice of Taprobane, (e.g. Edmund Pieris, op. cit. p.10).

In dealing with Taprobane, Aelian does not mention any sources by name, but simply uses such phrases as, "as I hear", "they say" and "from what I can learn". Many of his statements we have already come across in Pliny, but there they were ascribed to Onesicritus, Eratosthenes, or the envoys from the island. Indeed, for his work as a whole, Aelian cites by name no authority later than the early first century A.D., and for India in particular few, if any, after the third century B.C. Moreover, Aelian pays no attention to being faithful to his sources. Especially in dealing with animals, he retells what he finds in his authorities with exaggerations and undue redundancies. Thus, one cannot attribute to Megasthenes, or any other single author for that matter, everything that is found in Aelian's description of Taprobane. It is a compilation from diverse, and sometimes unidentifiable sources, which has been used by Aelian as the starting point for his own excursions into the world of fable and sophistry.

Of Taprobane Aelian says that it is a long and mountainous island having a length of 7,000 stadia and a breadth of 5,000. These figures are the same as those given by Pliny as coming from Eratosthenes, and the two authorities agree in the statement that follows, namely that there are no cities but only villages. Aelian however gives their number

as 750 and not 700 as Pliny quotes from Eratosthenes. He adds that the houses are made of wood and sometimes of reeds. Then follows the account of the huge tortoises whose shells of fifteen cubits have the relative merit over tiles in providing shelter from the sun, and especially from the violent storms of rain frequent in the island. He also says that the island has palm groves, where the trees are planted with wonderful regularity all in a row, in the way we see the keepers of pleasure parks plant shady trees in the choicest spots. This is presumably mere sophistic elaboration.

He next elaborates on the idea, first mentioned by Onesicritus, that the elephants of Taprobane are larger in size and more war-like than those of India, and adds that the islanders export them to the mainland opposite, in boats which they construct expressly for this traffic from the wood supplied by the forests of the island, and he says that they dispose of their cargoes to the king of the Kalingai. This piece of information is not met with elsewhere in Greek writers, and this is our only evidence for the elephant traffic between the two countries.

Kalinga was a kingdom on the east coast of India stretching from the river Vaitarani in Orissa to the neighbourhood of the Godavari. It is not directly opposite Taprobane as Aelian would have us believe. It was a kingdom of considerable importance and the Jataka stories and the Hindu Epics mention its ancient kings. It seems to have been a part of the Magadha kingdom in the time of the Nanda dynasty, but if Pliny's account of the kingdom is derived from Megasthenes, it is evident that it had attained independence in the time of Chandragupta, (Raychaudhuri, Political History of India, p.160). It was conquered by Asoka, but some time after his death it became independent once more and reached

the zenith of its power under Karavela. Throughout ancient history relations between Sri Lanka and the Kalinga Kingdom appear to have been close and intimate. Kalinga figures prominently in the foundation myth of the Sinhalese, (cf. Mhv. VII.1), and in the fourth century A.D. it was a Kalinga prince who brought the Tooth Relic to Sri Lanka. Four centuries later, the king of Kalinga, when his country was invaded by the Colas, entrusted his regalia to the charge of the Sinhalese king. In subsequent times there were marriages between the two royal houses and this eventually gave rise to the so-called Kalinga dynasty of Sri Lanka. In the face of such long-standing relations, we may be certain that Aelian, in speaking of elephant traffic, has recorded an historical fact.

However, two closely linked problems are raised by this statement, namely, the period to which it refers and the source followed by Aelian. The statement presumes the existence of an independent king at Kalinga who was powerful enough to maintain traffic with Taprobane. Thus we have a choice between the period immediately before Asoka's conquest and the later period of supremacy under Kāravēla.

The condition of Kalinga before Asoka's conquest is reflected not only in Pliny's account (VI.12.65) based on Megasthenes, but also by the facts recorded in Asoka's own 13th Rock Edict. Both authorities are agreed on the tremendous military strength of the kingdom. According to Pliny, the king of Kalinga had 60,000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry, and 700 elephants always equipped ready for active service. Asoka says that in the Kalinga conquest 100,000 persons were carried away captive, 100,000 were slain, and many times that number died. Thus it is evident that during the period from Chandragupta to Asoka, Kalinga power had grown rapidly, and it was probably the threat of this growing kingdom that

induced the Maurya emperor to conquer it.

On the other hand, the military power attained by Kalinga under Kāravēla is attested in his Hathigumpha or "elephant-cave" inscription, probably dating from around 156 B.C., which is however preserved in a rather mutilated form, (cf. Cambridge History of India, I, pp.534-7). According to this inscription, the text of which is heavily restored and contested, Karavela, in his second year, sent a large army of horse, elephants, foot-soldiers, and chariots to the west, in defiance of Satakarni; and in his fourth year he humbled the Rastrikas of the Maratha country and the Bojakas of Berar, both feudatories of the Andhra kings of Pratisthāna. In his eighth year, turning to the north, he harassed the king of Rājagriha, who fled at his approach; in his tenth year he sent an expedition to Bhāratavāsa; and in his twelfth year he produced consternation among the kings of Uttarapatha, and humbled the king of Magadha. We may also note the coincidence that among his trophies are mentioned elephant ships, probably ships specially constructed for transporting elephants, like those mentioned by Aelian, (cf. C. Rāsanāyagam, Ancient Jaffna, p.117). It is now generally accepted that there was a Greek invasion of Magadha a few years before the date of this inscription. Thus it is not impossible to imagine information regarding Kalinga passing to the west by means of the Indo-Greeks.¹

1 It is true that, in line with the literary tradition of pagan writers of the early Roman empire, Aelian is content to use as his sources for India the writings of Ctesias, the Alexander Historians, and early Hellenistic writers such as Megasthenes and Eratosthenes. But there is some ground for thinking that information on India from sources later than Eratosthenes was available to him, if he cared to use it. For instance, in Hist. Anim. XV.8, he mentions pearl fishers in the harbour of Perimula during the period of Eucratides king of Bactria, i.e. at the beginning of the second century B.C., an unusual synchronism for him. Perimula is also mentioned by Pliny, (VI.72 and IX.106), and appears to have been on the southwestern coast of India (cf. A. Dihle,

Nevertheless, the likelihood is that Aelian's information concerning the traffic with Kalinga comes from an older source, probably Megasthenes, and that the period referred to is that before Asoka's conquest. Both Pliny and the Mahavamsa testify to the existence of regular communication by sea between Taprobane and the country of the Prasii, and it is not difficult to imagine that the same mode of communication existed between Taprobane and the Kalingae. Moreover, Aelian's sources for Taprobane do not on the whole date from a time after Eratosthenes, since the society that he describes is a rather primitive one. He knows nothing of the agricultural or urban life of the people, nor of the political and commercial organisation which took place after the introduction of Buddhism. Aelian, like the late Hellenistic writers, relied on the earliest sources and described a society that existed in the island several centuries back, but he deploys his material with all the exaggeration and antithesis of rhetoric.

This last point can be illustrated from his remarks on the great size of the island. Not only is the island covered with forests and elephant pastures, but owing to its great size inhabitants of the interior know of the sea only at second hand while the coastal dwellers, in turn, "are ignorant of the way in which elephants are hunted and only know of it by hearsay: they devote themselves to catching fish and sea-monsters".

1 [cont.] "The Conception of India in Hellenistic and Roman Literature" P.C.P.S. 190, (n.s. no.10) 1964, pp.15-23). The notice of Perimula, as well as that of Kalinga, could have come to Aelian from some later source.

Aelian's own report that the superior elephants of Taprobane were exported to Kalinga has met with some expressions of surprise since according to the Arthasastra (II.2.15) the elephants of Kalinga itself were rated among the best in northern India. (cf. H. Scharfe, "The Maurya Dynasty and the Seleucids", Ztschr. f. Vergleichende Sprachforschung, LXXXV, 1971, pp.211-225, esp. p.213).

The contrast of social and economic material in such a stylised rhetorical form serves to heighten the impression of the island's size which had come down in more factual detail. Aelian proceeds to describe these monsters. The description is probably an exaggerated account of the Dugong. We met it for the first time in Onesicritus, who reported the existence of amphibious creatures similar to horses, oxen, and other land animals. But in Aelian's hands the story grows to surrealistic dimensions. According to him, these creatures have heads of lions, panthers, and rams; and there are even others which appear like satyrs and women, with tails of great length and claws or fins instead of feet.¹ They are amphibious and eat grass like cattle and pick up seeds like birds. They are fond of dates, and shake the trees to make the fruit fall. All this they do by night and go back to the sea at dawn. He has heard that whales frequent this sea, and that they come near the shore and lie in wait for tunnies. The dolphins are reported to be of two sorts, one fierce and sharp-toothed, which gives endless trouble to the fishermen, while the other kind is naturally tame, swims about in the friskiest way and is quite like a fawning dog - evidently a contrast of shark and dolphin. Aelian's account of the animals of Taprobane ends with the description of the sea hare whose prickly hair is so poisonous that it

¹ A passage in this account (XVI.18) has sometimes been interpreted as Aelian's report on the painters of ancient Sri Lanka (for instance, by D. B. Ponnampereuma). This view is derived from a misleading translation by McCrindle (Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, pp.102-3). "This sea contains certain strangely formed creatures, to represent which in a picture would baffle all the skill of the artists of the country, even though they are wont to paint monsters which consist of different parts of different animals pieced together . . ." In fact, the survivals of mosaic show that Roman artists of the day were fond of presenting sea creatures of peculiar forms. Aelian is here talking of such Roman art, to make his point for a Roman reader - a change of taste from Hor. A.P. 1-5.

can inflict immediate death to anyone who touches it, and of the root growing in the island which is an antidote to this poison. Aelian colours this description with the redundancies and exaggerations characteristic of the sophistic story-teller.¹ Characteristically, affliction and antidote are juxtaposed, and the passage ends with moralizing cliché.

It has already been observed that Aelian does not indicate his sources when dealing with Taprobane. Nevertheless, his accounts of its strange animals have been attributed to Onesicritus and Megasthenes. This is incorrect. Although the accounts of these writers contain much that is fabulous, the extant genuine fragments do not allocate them to the region of Taprobane. Nearchus appears to have given an account of gigantic whales living around Gedrosia,² in exactly the terms here given by Aelian (Pliny N.H. ix.37 = Nearchus fr. 30 (Jacoby, F.Gr.H.)). Thus what was originally spoken about the Gedrosians is now related concerning Taprobane, and moreover the marvellous element is magnified by the rhetorical presentation. As geographical knowledge grows the marvels are pushed further away to regions yet unknown, and the details are accumulated and multiplied as time goes by. Hence Aelian's account of Taprobane has little independent value in studying the civilisation of the island in his time.

- 1 The description is apparently of one of the spiney globe-fishes, according to Scholfield (Aelian, Historia Animalium, Loeb Library, p.287).
- 2 Aelian himself (XVII.7) cites Onesicritus and Orthagoras to the effect that around Gedrosia there were whales half a stade in length and wide in proportion to their length. When they blew their nostrils they threw the foam so high that people who were unused to it thought they were thunderbolts. Q. Curtius (X.1.12) also places these beasts around Gedrosia (citing Nearchus and Onesicritus). He says that these creatures were equal in size to big ships (cf. also Diod. Sic. XVII. 106.7).

There are, however, a few statements whose truthfulness cannot be denied, but these are mostly commonplace in classical accounts of the island, e.g. the existence of palm trees, elephant hunting and fishing. The export of elephants to Kalinga is a valuable piece of information not mentioned elsewhere as far as we know. But this, like much else in Aelian, refers to conditions that existed centuries before. The fresh knowledge that was utilised by Pliny and Ptolemy has not reached Aelian. The Taprobane he describes is the island of the third century B.C., and perhaps with intrusive material from other areas.

Much the same can be said concerning the account given in the *Periegesis* of Dionysius. This is a geographical treatise written in hexameters. It shares with epic its metre and diction, and with rhetoric the element of the marvellous. The work is generally dated to the second century A.D. and is believed to have been written in the time of Hadrian, but the system it expounds is roughly that of Eratosthenes. It does not take into account recent additions to knowledge.

Dionysius calls Taprobane the island of *Kōlias*. Both the Scholiast and Eustathius explain *Kōliados* as "of Aphrodite". Eustathius says that the island is so called because the men wear glittering jewels in the manner of women, bind their long hair, and devote themselves to the rituals of Aphrodite. If this was the accepted explanation in antiquity we may compare it with Ptolemy's statement that the men of Taprobane wear their hair in the manner of women. We also meet the time-honoured concept that the island produced the best elephants. Dionysius calls the island "mother of Asian-born elephants".

Taprobane is placed under "glowing Cancer". Strabo (II.5.14) had placed Taprobane on the same parallel as the Cinnamon Country, i.e. Somaliland. Dionysius makes the southern coast of Asia from India

eastwards trend towards the north. As a result he brings Taprobane further north than any previous geographer, and places it on the parallel that runs through Syene, i.e. the Tropic of Cancer. He however agrees with other classical writers with regard to the great size of the island, for he says that it is wide in extent.

Dionysius peoples the sea around Taprobane with monstrous creatures that are like to great mountains in size and have long trails of bristly thorns on their backs. Their savage jaws are a vast chasm, and often they devour entire ships, crew and all. Such evils have the gods placed for the wicked over land and sea! Thus we are again in the realm of the fabulous, the mariner's tale, and the didactic, rather than of geography. Once more, too, there is no trace of the recent contacts which supplied Pliny and Ptolemy with copious details. The fabulous and dangerous monsters of the sea which were so much a part of the world of Odysseus received new life in the hands of Alexander's companions, who helped to bring them nearer the time, though at the same time relegating them to distant seas. The accounts of Aelian and Dionysius are merely extensions of this same tendency into the second century A.D. in the best sophistic manner.

On the other hand we must not forget that the people of the east also had their own stories concerning the dangers that beset the sea-farer. Thus the Valāhassa Jātaka (no. 196) represents Tambapanni island as a place infested with Ogresses possessing the magic gift of changing themselves into beautiful maidens, who lured sea-farers into their arms and then devoured them with sharp teeth. Another Buddhist legend describes the Timingala, a gigantic monster of insatiable appetite living in mid-ocean. He is described in terms very much like those used by Dionysius: glaring with eyes that filled the crew with terror, it opened its gulf-like

jaws so wide that the sea was sucked in foaming and swelling. The ships were drawn irresistibly to it, quite unable to escape the current which pulled them inexorably into the monster's belly, where they were ground to shreds, (J. Auboyer, Daily life in ancient India, p.78). Stories of this kind were probably circulated in very early times among sea-faring nations, and when told of distant places they probably passed for fact in the popular mind. Whether Dionysius seriously believed in them or not, he found it convenient to use them in order to give his work the touch of the marvellous which was considered to be so integral a part of the rhetorical didactic genre. The fabulous elements in this account are due to literary convention, and do not indicate a decline in eastern trade as has sometimes been suggested (e.g. by Warmington, op. cit.).

Two Latin versions of the ⁵Periegeis were made in antiquity, one by Rufus Festus Avienus (fourth century A.D.) the other by Priscian the grammarian (early sixth century A.D.). Avienus' version is a paraphrase which includes some rhetorical additions (Descriptio Orbis Terrae, 772-794). Thus, concerning Taprobane he dwells on the huge size of the island (779-80). He also lengthens out the description of the sea monsters and the misery they create. Priscian, on the other hand, summarises his original to the point of leaving out some of the details. Thus, for instance, there is no reference to the size of the island, (Priscian, Periegesis e Dionysio, 595-603).

There are also two prose works in Greek which are based on the Periegesis. One is a paraphrase by an anonymous writer, the other is a synopsis by Nicephorus. In the Paraphrase of lines 587-605, (G.G.M. II, p.417) Taprobane is called the Great Island of Kōlias or Aphrodite, and is referred to as the mother of the elephants who have their birth from Asia. The breadth of the island is said to be in

accordance to its magnitude. The Synopsis of Nicephorus apparently derives from the paraphrase just mentioned (554-619; G.G.M. II, p.463). Where the Paraphrase gives a synonym for a word in the poem, Nicephorus uses the synonym. Thus he calls Taprobane "The island of Aphrodite and mother of elephants". In speaking of the tribes of Arabia, Nicephorus, following the Paraphrase, mentions the legend first mentioned by Herodotus, that cinnamon was brought to Arabia by birds. Unlike Herodotus they say that cinnamon comes from the uninhabited islands around Taprobane, (lines 933-61, G.G.M. II, p.466). It is interesting to note that even as late as this author's time, cinnamon is not associated with the island of Taprobane itself.

In addition, by way of exegetical material on the Periegesis, we possess not only the scholia, but also a commentary by Eustathius, bishop of Thessalonica (12th century A.D.). The Scholia are mainly of two kinds, geographical and mythological. Commenting on the first line of the poem, the scholiast says that the Indian or Erythraean sea begins at the Arabian Gulf and extends to the Great Gulf in the east, having at its midpoint the island of Taprobane, as does Marcian. He also reproduces from Ptolemy (VII.5.1) the list of famous islands and peninsulas. Ptolemy had said that, of these, the first was Taprobane, obviously thinking merely of size. For him Taprobane was simply the largest island in the world. But the scholiast has glossed upon Ptolemy's words and expanded his implication, for he says that Taprobane of the Indies ranks first in size and fame.

Commenting on line 593, the scholiast says that Taprobane is a sacred island of Africa. There appears to be a corruption in the text here. For, although it is true to say that Byzantine writers often did not make a clear distinction between Africa and India, the placing of

Taprobane in Africa cannot be due to the ignorance of the scholiast. In his comments on the first line, he spoke of Taprobane as being in the Indian or Erythraean sea, midway between the Arabic Gulf and the Great Gulf in the east. In quoting Ptolemy's catalogue of famous islands and peninsulas, he had referred to the island as ἡ Ἰνδικῆ Ταπροβάνη. I therefore propose to read Ἀφροδιτῆς instead of Ἀφρικῆς, for in commenting on the next line the scholiast says that κωλιάδος equals Ἀφροδιτῆς, and attempts to account for the origin of this name.

The commentary of Eustathius makes considerable use of the scholia, and also quotes from Ptolemy, Strabo, and other writers. Thus in §568, commenting on the great size of Britain he quotes from Ptolemy VII.5.1, the catalogue of famous islands and peninsulas, but he too says that Taprobane ranks first in both size and fame.

In §591, he follows the Ptolemaic tradition by saying that Taprobane was once called Salikē and that it is an island on the high seas not smaller than Britain. He then quotes from Alexander Lychnus the statement already cited. He also explains why Dionysius calls it the island of Aphrodite (see above), and commenting on Dionysius' statement that Taprobane lay under blazing Cancer, Eustathius quotes Ptolemy to the effect that the island is under the sign of Aries. Müller suggests that this reference is to Ptolemy VIII.28, but the statement does not seem to occur in Ptolemy at all. Eustathius also gives several accounts of the origin of the word Kōliados. Some of these are taken from the scholia. To support Dionysius' saying that the island is of immense size, he quotes from Strabo (XV.690) his remarks upon the size and location of Taprobane (§596). In §1107, Eustathius says that according to Dionysius the Gangetic region extends as far as the region of Kōlias or Taprobane where the beasts of the Erythraean Sea are found.

Concerning

This is about all the geographical information ~~on~~ Taprobane that can be gathered from him and it is obviously a compilation of derivative material. The rest of his comments consist mainly of elucidations of poetic and grammatical usages.

The existence of so many paraphrases, translations and commentaries testifies to the tremendous popularity that the Periegesis enjoyed throughout ancient and mediaeval times. The scientific Ptolemy must have been in the minority. Aelian and Dionysius represent the attitude of the rhetorical and didactic authors. Unlike Ptolemy, these writers made no use of recent material, not because it was not available, but because it was less attractive and also inappropriate for a literary genre that depended on rhetoric more than on anything else for its effectiveness.

CHAPTER IX

TRAVELLERS' TALES: PALLADIUS AND COSMAS

The late Greek and Roman notices of Taprobane are derived for the most part from Pliny, Ptolemy, and Dionysius Periegetes. Rarely do they display any knowledge of the island independent of these authors. There are however two Greek writers who, while making use of earlier material also incorporate personal experiences of their own as well as of their acquaintances. The writers in question are Palladius and Cosmas Indicopleustes. These two authors throw some fresh light ~~(concerning)~~ on Taprobane and India and the relations these lands maintained with the west. It is to the credit of both writers that they are careful to distinguish between their own observations and what they learned from other sources written or oral.

The short treatise "On the Races of India and the Brahmins" attributed to Palladius consists of two parts. The first, often referred to as the 'Comonitorium Palladii', is an account of the Brahmins based on what the author has learned not only from books and hearsay, but also from a Theban scholasticus who had travelled to the east. The second part is an account of the philosophical interchanges between Alexander and the Brahmins, which is generally believed to be based on a juvenile work of Arrian.

The work has come down to us both in Greek and Latin. The Greek version is preserved not in its original form but in several later stages of adaptation. Earlier versions of the second part are witnessed by a recently published papyrus and the so-called Excerpta Palladii. But both parts 1 and 2 have come down to us in two subsequent versions

which Derrett calls the *Versio Ornatio* and the *Versio Ornatio et Interpolata*.¹ The last version is also inserted in some MSS. of the Alexander Romance known as the *Pseudo-Callisthenes*.²

The Latin translation is attributed in some MSS., to St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. It has come down to us in three redactions. The oldest and most reliable is the one preserved in several MSS., and commonly known as the Vatican version after the location of two of its most important copies. It is a more or less faithful rendering of the Greek original, although not altogether free from mistranslations and other errors. The so-called Bamberg version is a later, and somewhat abridged, rendering based perhaps on a copy of the Vatican version. It is preserved in a single MS. of the 11th century. However, until quite recently, the work was known chiefly through the so-called Sixtine Latin version, which is undoubtedly a literary fraud perhaps on the part of some humanist who has attempted to render comprehensible in the light of his own classical knowledge, what he thought to be deficient or erroneous in the Latin version he found. Some of his blunders leave no doubt that he had never consulted the Greek original. This redactor, shocked by the crudeness of the Latin text at his disposition, has attempted to improve it by polishing up the syntax, rephrasing, changing the order of ideas, rewriting certain passages, and even filling in what appeared to him as gaps, by utilising his knowledge of classical authors such as Pliny and Ptolemy. Ambrose is made the narrator, and Palladius the recipient of the work. Moses, bishop of Adule, is given the role of Ambrose's informant, and Moses in his turn is made to derive his information from

1 J. D. M. Derrett, "The History of Palladius on the Races of India and the Brahmins". *Classica et Mediaevalia*, XXI, 1961, pp.64-135.

2 cf. Müller's edition of Ps. Callisthenes, Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1877, pp.102ff., which also reproduces the Sixtine Latin version discussed below.

the Theban scholasticus, whom the redactor represents as having actually visited Taprobane, the island being made the site of his captivity and the home of the pepper-gathering people. The point of view is European throughout. The redactor, who could not explain the presence of an Indian princeling at Axum, has transferred him to Muziris, having extended the Theban's voyage to that point with the help of Pliny's account (VI.101-4) of the navigation to India. Again, by means of a misplaced borrowing from Pliny (VI.92), he divides Taprobane into four Satrapies. In consequence of these absurdities, one is compelled to reject the Sixtine version as a worthless piece of nonsense. Our rejection of this text needs to be strongly emphasised in view of the fact that this tampered version has misled even such eminent modern authorities as J. I. Miller, (op. cit. pp.190ff.) into accepting its fantasies as facts. The following discussion is based on the Greek text as edited by Berghoff, and the genuine Vatican version of the Latin translation as given by Cracco Ruggini.¹

The Greek MSS. attribute this work to one Palladius, and it has sometimes been thought that the writer in question is Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis, author of the Lausiaca History and the Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom. In his introduction, the author refers to a former work of his which was sent to the same distinguished recipient and was received with much enthusiasm, thus prompting him to write a further work on the Brahmins. This seems to imply that the work is a follow-up to an earlier book. Accordingly some writers, including Berghoff and Cracco Ruggini, are inclined to accept the identity of Palladius with the author of the Lausiaca history. Some scholars, moreover, have

¹ W. Berghoff, *Palladius de Gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus*, Beitrage zur klassischen philologie, 24, Meisenheim - Glan, 1967, 55 p. L. Cracco Ruggini, "On the Christianisation of Pagan Culture" (in Italian), *Athenaeum* XLIII, 1965, pp.3-80: cf. Appendix III and IV, where the V & B Latin versions of the *Commonitorium* are reproduced. Cf. also A. Wilmart, *Revue Benedictine*, XLV, 1933, pp.29-42.

attempted to find similarities of diction and style between this treatise and the two works of Palladius already mentioned, (cf. Coleman Norton, C.P. XXI, 1926, pp.154-9). But the identification was already contested by Tennent in the last century (Ceylon, I, p.538, n.2) and this viewpoint has been taken in recent times by Derrett, Hansen, and Desanges. These writers argue, on grounds both of style and dating, that the treatise cannot be the work of the Bishop of Helenopolis. All one can be certain of is that the author was a resident of Egypt. When he mentions Thebes, he does not say which one he means, although the Greek city of that name must have by this time lost its importance. That he was a Christian is evident from the many echoes we find in the treatise of the Christian thinking current in the late Roman empire, e.g. the identification of the Ganges with the Phison of Holy Scripture.

Palladius says that he himself went only as far as the capes of India, with Moses Bishop of Adulis, but returned immediately on account of the unbearable heat. For his own knowledge of the Brahmins, therefore, he is indebted to a man from Thebes, a scholasticus, i.e. a member of the legal profession. This lawyer, we are told, being bored with his profession, decided to give it up and travel east in order to see India and make acquaintance with the Brahmins. He travelled with a presbyter, and came first to Adulis and then to Axum, "where there was a petty ruler of the Indians residing there". Remaining there, he acquired close acquaintance with them and then wished to proceed to the island of Taprobane. He found some Indians going by ship from Axum for the purpose of trade and he tried to get further east, (*ἐνδότερον* - Palladius I.4; cf. Cosmas, xi, 15; 445D) and he approached the land of the pepper-gathering Bisades. Here he was arrested by the local chief for daring to enter his territory, and was condemned to work in a bakery. He remained with

them for six years in the course of which he learned much about the neighbouring lands. We are definitely told that he did not reach Taprobane, but that he learned about the island from others.

Derrett (JAOS 82, 1962, pp.21-31) suggests that the Theban had to go to Axum probably in order to ask permission to embark on a ship of the Axumites, since the latter jealously guarded the monopoly of the carrying trade. He also supposes that at Axum the Theban found a small Indian community ruled by a petty Indian princeling. According to him, it is only natural that the Indian exporters should wish to be represented at the headquarters of their middlemen. On the other hand Desanges (Historia, xviii (1969) pp.627-639; esp. p.631, cf. p.628) following Hansen thinks that the princeling referred to is the local king of Axum: Palladius calls his subjects "Indians" as a result of the ambiguity in the use of the term India, which sometimes designated Aethiopians. For the same reason he also thinks that the "Capes of India" visited by Palladius and Moses was really Cape Guardafui. He alludes to the statement of Ephorus (in Pliny VI.199) that one cannot leave the Red Sea because of the heat, and to Pliny's own location of Barigaza (sic) in Aethiopia (VI.175), a mistake due, he thinks, to a confusion between the sea route and the land route. Desanges and Hansen's view here seems the less likely, since Palladius definitely associates India with the Brahmins, the Ganges and Taprobane, and differentiates between India and Aethiopia (i, 6). Palladius does not give the name of the Indian port where the Theban landed. Derrett (op. cit. p.26) thinks it was Bacare. The pepper-gathering tribe among whom the Theban fell into captivity are called Bisades. They are described as "stunted like ^{the} fellows with big heads, unshaven and lank haired".¹ The author expressly

¹ cf. Ptolemy VII.2.15. See Renou p.52 lines 12-15:

says that they are different from the rest of the Indians and Aethiopians.

J. Horatio Suckling (Ceylon, I, pp.194ff.) rejects Tennent's identification of this tribe with the Veddhas of Sri Lanka, not only because the Thebandid not arrive in the island, but also because the Palladian reference to the Bisades is borrowed from Ptolemy, who places them in the extreme north of India. "Except in those great features common to ill-fed barbarous races the Bisades bear no resemblance to any Sinhalese people, for though like the Veddhas they are puny, ill-shaped, and live in caves, and recognise a domestic chief, the Veddhas unlike them have no king living in a palace, no political existence, and no arts such as the existence of a baker implies." He thinks that the

1 [cont.] καλοβοι δ' οὕτως τοὺς Σησαδάδας εἰσὶ γὰρ κολοβοὶ καὶ δασεῖς καὶ πλατυπρόσωποι, λευκοὶ δὲ τὰς χροῶς. Also Periplus 65: Κατέτος δὲ παραγίνεται ἐπὶ τὴν συνορίαν τῆς Θινδῆς ἔθνος τι, τῷ μὲν σώματι κολοβοὶ καὶ σφόδρα πλατυπρόσωποι, . . . αὐτοὺς λέγεσθαι Σησατάς, παρομοίους ἀνημέροις. Palladius' description of the Bēsadaī is paraphrased by Johannes Lydus, but he erroneously attributes it to Ctesias the Cnidian and locates the tribe below Axum, even though Ctesias in the 5th century B.C. could not have spoken of Axum which was founded only around the beginning of the Christian era.

Ἡ γένεσις τοῦ πιπέρεως κατὰ τοὺς παλαιοὺς καὶ Κτησίαν τὸν Κνίδιον τοιαύτη· ἔθνος ἐστὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀζούμην, Βησσάδαι τοῦνομα, σώμασι μικροῖς καὶ ἀδρανεστάτοις κεχρημένοι, κεφαλαῖς μεγάλαις καὶ ἀκάρτοις καὶ παρὰ τὴν Ἰνδῶν φύσιν ἀπλόθριξιν· σπηλαίοις δὲ ἐνοικοῦσιν ὑπογελοῖς καὶ κρημνοβατεῖν ἐπιστάμενοι διὰ τὴν τοῦ τόπου συντροφίαν· οὗτοι ἀπὸ δεινδρυφίων· κολοβῶν ταῖς θάμνοις παραφουμένων τὸ πέπερι δρέπόμενοι συνάγουσιν. (- de Mensibus, IV.14, p.77 ed. R. Wuensch, Leipzig, Teubner, 1898).

people described were the aboriginal hill tribes of India on the Malabar coast, where pepper abounds, and that since Ptolemy's system did not recognise the peninsular character of India these tribes were placed further north. Derrett (*op. cit.*, p.28 n.57) also thinks that the passage is interpolated. But he is confident that the phrase δενδρύφια γάρ εἶσι κολοβά is genuinely from the Theban. According to him, the meaning is that the living trees, bushes, or shrubs were kept to a particular shape for use as pepper-vine supports, a feature which suggests pepper cultivation in the foothills of the Ghats.

However, the claims of Malabar as the site of the Theban's captivity have been challenged recently by J. Desanges, (*op. cit.* pp.633ff.). He points out that both Ptolemy and the author of the *Periplus* place the Bēsadaī beyond the Ganges, the former above Mt. Meandrus, and the latter in the neighbourhood of the Chinese. He argues for their identification with the Bisades of Palladius not only on the resemblance of the name, but also of the descriptions. But it should be observed that the *Periplus*, as well as Ptolemy, places them in the neighbourhood of malabathrum producing regions, whereas Palladius places them in the pepper-country. According to Desanges, this association of the dwarfish tribe with the short pepper shrubs has misled Palladius into placing them in Malabar, thus transferring the location of the Theban's adventures to regions better known to the Greeks and Romans. The Theban says that while in captivity he learned a great deal about neighbouring peoples. From this Desanges argues that in order to learn about the Brahmins of the Ganges valley, the Theban ought to have been in captivity in a place reasonably close to the Ganges. Moreover, as the author together with Moses the Bishop of Adulis had visited the capes of India and, assuming that he did reach India, was still unable to see the Brahmins (I.1),

the fact that he relies on the Theban for a description of them implies that the latter had penetrated much further. On all these grounds Desanges identifies the Bisades of Palladius with the mountain tribes of Assam. In support of his theory, Desanges cites Liebermann (*Contact between Rome and China*, Ann Arbor, 1953, p.179), who identifies the Besadai with the Mongoloids of the mountains of Assam, and observes that the dumb commerce attributed to the Chinese by Mela, Ammianus, and Pliny (the last on the authority of the Sinhalese envoys to Claudius) is attributed by the Chinese to non-Chinese peoples, e.g. by Fa-Hien to the Sinhalese of times past, and by a tenth century work to the inhabitants of the shore of the "western Sea". With this, Desanges compares the inability of the Theban to communicate with the Bisades as he did not understand their language. He also cites Berthelot's location (p.398) of the Besadai of Ptolemy in the mountains of northwestern Assam, and Tomaschek's identification of the Besadai (P.W., s.v.) with the Tibeto-Burmans of the mountains northeast of India, and his comparison of their name with the Sanskrit Vaisada. Desanges oddly draws attention to the important part played by the dwarfs of the Mekong valley (which is not in Assam), in the commerce between China and the Roman empire, and points to the literary and archaeological evidence which appears to testify to contacts between the far east and the Red Sea area. Thus, Desanges finds in the Bay of Bengal and Assam the limits of the Theban's voyage.

He also thinks that the Theban travelled on an Indian ship and reached the Bay of Bengal having avoided Sri Lanka for some unknown reason. He supports this hypothesis by citing the route taken by sailing ships from Bombay to Calcutta, which avoided Sri Lanka by making use of the interplay of monsoons and the "alizés" of the southern

hemisphere. These ships sailed south as far as 10 degrees south, and then proceeded up the eastern coast of India. He says that a boat from Adoulis could avoid Muziris and Sri Lanka by bending south in this manner. But the practice he refers to was one that was followed in the eighteenth century (cf. Berthelot, p.369, fig.14), and was doubtless prompted by the political conditions then prevalent in the east, Sri Lanka being then under Dutch rule. One may question the validity of Desanges' assumption that the same practice was followed in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. Between the reigns of Augustus and Justinian, we have the testimony of four important writers - Strabo, Periplus, Ptolemy, and Cosmas - to the effect that the circumnavigation of the Indian peninsula was the normal means employed in reaching the Ganges. We shall see later that Desanges' theory also fails to explain the activities of the Great King resident in Taprobane, whose interference brought about the Theban's release. The Theban's release appears to have been determined by the political situation in the area. According to Palladius (I.4) there dwelt in Taprobane the great king of the Indians to whom the petty kings of that land (India) were subject like satraps. A rival of the chief who was detaining the Theban reported this detention of a noble Roman citizen to the Great King who was resident in Taprobane (ibid. I.10). The king sent an officer to investigate the matter, set the Theban free, and had his captor punished by flaying him.

The Theban's adventures are universally accepted as belonging to the 4th or 5th century A.D., but as far as we know, no Sinhalese king of that time extended his rule over any part of India. One has to think, therefore, of an Indian king who was then resident in Taprobane. Desanges (op. cit. p.639) thinks that Palladius was wrong in stating that the great king of the Indians resided in Taprobane.

This error, he thinks, stems from the mistake of placing the Bisades in the pepper country (Malabar) when in actual fact they lived in Assam. According to him, the Theban's voyage belongs to a period in Indian history (after 357 A.D., see below) when the Bēsādes of Assam as well as the inhabitants of Sri Lanka recognised the sovereignty of one great monarch. He believes that this situation existed in the Gupta era from the time of Samudragupta (335-375 A.D.) who, according to him, was sovereign of both Assam and the Sinhalese.

It is not possible to agree with this explanation. Desanges is not correct in holding that Sri Lanka belonged to the empire of the Guptas at any time. In the Allahabadh Panegyric inscription of Samudragupta, Kamarupa (a kingdom in Assam) is mentioned among the eastern frontier kingdoms which submitted to the mighty Gupta emperor, (cf. Raychaudhuri, Political History of Ancient India, 1923, p.278). On the other hand, the people of Sinhala and all other dwellers in islands are mentioned among the foreign powers who established diplomatic relations with Samudragupta. The Sinhalese king at this time was Meghavanna (accession A.D. 363), whose reign was immortalised by the arrival of the Tooth Relic from Kalinga. A Chinese historian relates that Meghavanna sent an embassy with gifts to Samudragupta and obtained his permission to erect a splendid monastery to the north of the Holy Tree at Bodh Gaya, for the use of pilgrims from Sri Lanka (Raychaudhuri, op. cit. p.80). Thus it is clear that Sri Lanka was not part of the Gupta empire, and so the great king resident in Taprobane could not have been the Gupta emperor. He could not have been the Sinhalese king either, since he could not interfere in Assam (if that was the place) which submitted to the Gupta emperor. Moreover, Sri Lanka's links with eastern India were of a religious and peaceful nature, and did not involve force.

Thus, although Desanges can cite Ptolemy and the Periplus to support his theory that the Theban was captured in Assam, this theory does not stand when compared with the known facts about oriental history in this period.

Far more satisfactory is the suggestion of Derrett that the Great King was a "Pandya emperor controlling parts of Ceylon, and in fact domiciled there instead of Madura in order to consolidate his hold on certain ports and perhaps supervise colonisation" (op. cit., p.30). If this were the case, he could well have intervened if the Theban were captured, as Derrett believes, in the foothills of Malabar. The only difficulty in this case is Derrett's own dating of the event (ibid. 25ff.).¹

The reason for the Theban's release and the flaying of his captor is given as follows: "They greatly respect and fear the Roman empire, thinking that it could even invade their country because of its supreme courage and inventive skills" (I.10). According to Derrett, this must refer to a period when some power in India (or Sri Lanka) had reason to fear Rome, and it appears to him that the period of the emperor Julian fitted perfectly. He therefore suggests that the Theban was released in 361-3: as he was in Malabar six years, he must accordingly have been captured in 355-7. He also points out that the author could not give the reason for the Theban's release in the present tense, unless

¹ Derrett thinks that in all probability the work was written in the latter part of the fourth century A.D., although the *Versio Ornatio* may have been made in the fifth. He points out that scholasticus was a legal title current from the time of Diocletian, that the bishopric of Adulis was established only after c. 325 A.D., when Frumentius, first bishop of Axum, took the faith to Abyssinia; and that the titles and honorific names used in the work are those current chiefly in the fourth century. Derrett's contention that Sri Lanka anticipated Julian's arrival in the east by sending her leaders to him is based on the reference to Serendivi in Ammianus Marcellinus XXII.7.10, but this passage does not refer to Sri Lanka, (cf. Appendix III).

the possibility that the Indians were afraid of Rome still carried conviction, so that he cannot have written after 375, by which time Roman ambitions in Persia had come to an end.

The difficulty with this dating is that it does not correspond with any period of foreign rule in Sri Lanka. The fourth century A.D. was a relatively peaceful era in the history of the island, when, under the first kings of the "Lesser Dynasty" it enjoyed independence and prosperity, and made considerable achievements in agriculture, religion, and the arts. It was only in the fifth century that South Indian rule once again spread over the island. A Tamil invasion took place under a leader called Pandu who slew the Sinhalese king and assumed sovereignty. The Mahavamsa describes him as a Tamil (Damila), and later Sinhalese tradition calls him a Chola, but his name suggests Pandyan nationality. Pandu was followed by five other Tamil kings: Parinda, Kudda-Parinda, Tiritara, Datiya, and Pitiya. Three of them extended their patronage to Buddhism, and one even adopted the title Buddhadasa, "Servant of the Buddha". In the case of the four kings whose parentage is known, the succession to the throne was dynastic, i.e. from father to son or elder brother to younger brother. On all these considerations we may agree with the inference of Paranavitana (Concise History of Ceylon pp.122f.) that they were not leaders of a band of freebooters but members of a royal dynasty of Tamils commanding troops consisting of their own subjects. The last of these kings was defeated by Datusena, who thereby restored the monarchy to the Sinhalese. The six Tamils are said to have ruled for 27 years (A.D. 433-60).

If late Tamil sources can be believed, in the year 358 of the Saka era (A.D. 436) Kullakkotu Maharaja, a Cola king, came to Trincomalee and began to make extensive repairs to the Tirukonesar temple at

Tambalagam while Pandu Maharaja was ruling Lanka from Anuradhapura. Pandu Maharaja is also said to have expelled from Kīrimalai in Jaffna the Mukkuvas who were helping the Sinhalese traders supplying dry-fish to foreign markets, (Yālpāna-vaipava-mālai, pp.4-5; cf. Rasanayagam, Ancient Jaffna, pp.227-8). Rasanayagam thinks that this step was taken on religious grounds, "Being a Tamil, and perhaps a Hindu, it is no wonder that Pandu was instrumental in driving away the Mukkuvas who were desecrating such a holy place as Kīrimalai, and thereby were a source of great annoyance to the Hindus". But the reference to Sinhalese dryfish dealers in foreign markets suggests that Pandu's real motive was a commercial one, and it is most likely that this Pandya invasion was an attempt to secure the trading facilities offered by Sri Lanka.

From these considerations we have to conclude that if the Great King of the Indians resident in Taprobane was a historical figure, the most likely date for him would be the middle of the fifth century rather than the middle of the fourth century as Derrett has suggested.¹ Derrett's date is ultimately based on the idea that the fear and admiration of the Romans was the result of Julian's campaigns in the east. But such an attitude on the part of the Orient need not be confined to the time of Julian. Pliny (VI.85) in the first century had already recorded the impression that Roman justice made on the king of Taprobane; and again in the sixth century Cosmas (XI.19; 448D) reports how the king of Taprobane proclaimed the Romans as "famous, powerful, and wise".

The possibility of assigning the work to a date later than that proposed by Derrett has also been argued by Desanges (op. cit. pp.628ff.).

¹ The adoption of this mid-fifth century date for the Theban's adventures means that we cannot accept the treatise as the work of Palladius Helenopolitanus, who died in 431. It also follows then that St. Ambrose could not have prepared the Latin version.

The author tells us that, a few years earlier, he had gone as far as the "capas of India" with the blessed Moses, bishop of Adulis (I.1).

Frumentius, who first evangelised Axum, was still bishop there in A.D.

357-8. Therefore the work has to be assigned to a date later than

that year. Moreover, rather than being simply a scholasticus from

Thebes, were he a σχολαστικὸς φοροῦ Θηβαΐδος, he could not have been

before the time of Theodosius (A.D. 379-395) who created the "Comes et

dux limitis Thebaici", to whose tribunal such scholastici belonged.

On the other hand we know that the description of the Bisades was

paraphrased by John the Lydian who was a contemporary of Justinian in

the 6th century A.D. Desanges also refers to M. de Villard's conclusion,

based on philological grounds, that the work could not have been written

after the fifth century. Besides, if de Villard is right in assuming

that bishop Moses' visit had for its purpose the establishment of contact

with the newborn church in India rather than mere tourism, then his

visit should have taken place well before the end of the fifth century,

by which time the churches in India were affiliated to the Persian

church. This last argument, though probable, is not totally convincing

as it is based on hypothetical considerations.

In attempting to bring the date within a narrower limit, Desanges

refers to the small importance attached to the king of Axum, and points

out that between the reigns of Ezana, contemporary of Constans, and

Elesban, (Caleb) contemporary of Justinian, Axumite power had dwindled

somewhat, due to the expansion of the Himyarites. Moreover, the fact

that the Theban was unable to reach Taprobane, and that he had to sail

on an "Indian" rather than a Roman ship, suggests a period when Alexandrine

contacts with the east as well as Axumite contacts with Taprobane were

restricted. In this connection Desanges points to the fact that finds

of Roman coins in South India do not go beyond Honorius (A.D. 394-423). This is not exactly correct. On the one hand, coins of Theodosius II (A.D. 408-450) and beyond, have been found in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, Roman coins were exported to, and were used in, the ancient east long after their date of issue. In fact the largest number of late Roman coins found in the island (numbering 1675) comes from Sigiriya, which was the short-lived capital of Kassapa.¹

However, it is possible to accept the general conclusion to which Desanges, with due caution, arrives, namely that it is more appropriate to date the work in the fifth century rather than the fourth. Further, it can be maintained that if the Theban's account is historical as it certainly seems to be, the conditions it describes can only belong to the middle of the fifth century, as far as the history of Sri Lanka is concerned. The work itself may have been written not long after the Theban's return, based either on his oral testimony or on a written account.

Derrett thinks that the Theban's captivity and release are linked up with the current situation of the spice trade and the inter-relationships between Sri Lanka, Malabar, the Axumites, and the Romans. Thus, he suggests, the Theban's mission which might be interpreted as a commercial reconnaissance, met with reactions which, on the part of the Axumites, amounted to non-co-operation, and on the part of Malabar to the downright hostility which prevented his entry into Sri Lanka, now becoming a rich

1 Elsewhere I have put forward the suggestion that the sudden abundance of fourth century Roman and Indo-Roman copper coins in Sri Lanka may be connected with the Pandyan occupation of 433-60 A.D. to which time I assign the probable date of the Theban's captivity and release.

entrepôt for spices, and resulted in his six year captivity. The king in control of Ceylon and Malabar, (whom he assumes to be a Pandya, despite the 4th century dating of the episode), ordered the Theban's release and the severe punishment of his captor, the local sub-king, from a desire not to disturb relations with Rome and the commercial advantages that accrued therefrom. This interpretation of Derrett's, however, requires the rejection of what the Theban adduced as the reason for his release, viz., the threat of Roman power. ^{Desanges goes even further in pursuit of the commercial motive, & asks whether the real purpose of the trip to} India was not simply the creation for himself of a fortune through oriental commerce, since he had already failed in the legal profession. Regarding the treatise as a whole, too, the possibility of a commercial purpose has been canvassed. Derrett himself (Cl. et Med. 21, 1960, p.72, n.49) suggests that the recipient of the work was perhaps an official in Egypt interested in reopening direct trade with South India and Sri Lanka, pointing out that the honorifics used at the opening are consistent with his being either a civilian or an ecclesiastic of eminence.

It is not impossible that the Theban's captivity and release took place against the background of commercial rivalry in the east. But what emerges clearly from a study of the text is that the author is far from making any claim to assist the expansion of Roman commerce with the East. His motivation is purely philosophical. The second part of the book is a record of Alexander's supposed encounters with a Brahmin sage, and the first part is merely intended as an introduction giving the geographical and social background of the Brahmin community. It is the diligence, love of learning, and good taste of the recipient as well as his favourable disposition towards the earlier work that prompted the author to dedicate it to him. There is no suggestion of the worldly gains that it might bring. The Theban's own motive in

going east was a spiritual one even though, like Fa-hien in the same century, he followed what was then the normal, indeed the only, course for travellers of his kind, of embarking with merchants.

It remains to consider the description of Taprobane which the author gives on the basis of the Theban's account (I.4-6). In keeping with the traditional accounts which one first meets in Hellenistic times, (cf. Pliny VI.91, VII.30), the inhabitants of Taprobane are called Makrobioi, their long lives extending up to 150 years, "owing to the temperate climate and the inscrutable will of God". The Latin translator, perhaps influenced by this reference to Providence, appears to have read Makarioi, for he translates the name as Beati, - an inspired misreading.

We are told that the island is surrounded by about a thousand other islands to which the author gives the name Maniolai.¹ The author says with a prudent caveat implying some disbelief, that, since the magnet stone which attracts iron is found in these islands ships with iron nails on their approach are held by the power of the stone and are unable to depart. But there are local ships for crossing to the great island which are constructed without iron and with wooden pegs.

That the ships which sail to Taprobane were constructed without iron appears to have been a fact well known in antiquity. Onesicritus alluded to this practice (see above p. 10f.), and as time went on the absence of nails in eastern ships was accounted for by the fable of the magnet stone. But before Palladius the lodestone was never located in the immediate neighbourhood of Taprobane. Although our author attributes it to the Theban, this description, like that of the Bisades, comes no doubt ultimately from Ptolemy, who (VII.2.31) says that adjoining

1 According to Gerini (op. cit. p.243) the term Maniolai is probably derived from some Sanskrit name for the lodestone, e.g. Ayaskānta-mani, Ayomani, or simply Mani, which served as a base for some compound like maniyāla or Maniyālaya.

the Island of the Satyrs there are said to be others, ten in number, "where they say that boats with iron nails are held up, perhaps because the stone of Heracles is found there, and so they guild their ships with wooden pegs". These islands, called Maniolai are inhabited by cannibals of the same name. In VII.4.11ff., Ptolemy describes a chain of islands surrounding Taprobane and numbering 1378. Both the name and the description of Ptolemy's Maniolai are here applied, whether by confusion or ignorance, to this island chain. The mixing of the two accounts does produce a more sensational element in the narrative.

The Maniolai of Ptolemy were ten in number and were placed ten degrees east from Taprobane. In Palladius, they are a thousand in number, and are placed west of Taprobane, for they lay in the way of the Theban as he sailed from Africa. Thus the position of the magnet rocks appears to have moved westward with time. Priaulx (*Indian Travels*, etc. p.247, quoted by McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, 1927, p.242) used this fact to support his contention that the Roman traffic in the eastern waters declined gradually after 473 A.D. and finally disappeared. But it is plain that the westward movement results from misunderstanding on the part of Palladius rather than from historical circumstances.

There is perhaps one more reminiscence of the Ptolemaic tradition. Both Ptolemy (VII.4.8) and Marcian of Heraclea (I.36) mention five rivers on the island, Ptolemy giving their names. Palladius more vaguely says (I.6) that the island has five navigable rivers.

Even though the Theban did not reach Taprobane he learned that the trees there were never without fruit, "for when one branch is flowering, another is coming up to fruit, and a third bears ripe fruit". This statement is true of the coconut palm and certain other tropical

vegetation. It is possible that the description was originally intended not for all the trees of the island, but for the palm trees which the author goes on to describe. He says that the island has dates and palm trees which produce both the big "Indian" nut and the small aromatic nut. Thus what we have here is not one more idealised description of the romantic kind, but a more matter-of-fact account of the actual situation. We are told that the inhabitants live on rice, milk, and fruit; that they do not have linen or wool but dress themselves in well-worked sheep-skins; that they eat the flesh of goats and sheep, and that the pig is not found there, nor in fact anywhere beyond the Thebaid, in India and Aethiopia, because of the great heat.

The authenticity and value of Palladius' account of Taprobane have often been questioned on the ground that its elements are inappropriate as well as traditional. Their inappropriateness was strongly asserted by Horatio Suckling, (Ceylon, I, 194ff.); "Only that the island described is called Taprobane, one would hardly suppose it had any reference to Ceylon, so unlike are some of the details to the reality". He particularly mentions the clothing of the Sinhalese in sheepskin as being amusing and unsuited for a tropical climate. The broad-tailed sheep spoken of, he says, are not found in the island, but in Africa and Kandahar.¹ As regards the traditional and the derivative, Desanges, (op. cit. p.629, 630) following Hansen, (Klio, 43-5, 1965, p.378) says that this description contains a series of unacknowledged borrowings from Ctesias, especially the reference to the absence of pigs. He even goes so far as to suggest that it is these borrowings which misled John the Lydian into thinking

¹ Derrett, J.A.O.S. 82, p.28, N.55, points out that the Dunba type of sheep have thick fleece not suitable for working as wool, and large tails.

that the description of the Bisades came from Ctesias. But it must be pointed out that, apart from a few remote resemblances in subject matter, the account of Palladius does not resemble the extant fragments of Ctesias in language, style, or thought. The details are on the whole realistic, and are very unlike the marvellous fables of Ctesias. There is no reason why most of the account could not have been true of ancient Sri Lanka, once allowance has been made for the second-hand transmission.

Cracco Ruggini's opinion (*op. cit.* pp.29ff.) is that whatever is given as the direct experience of Palladius or the Theban does not derive from previous literary sources, although there are certain partial correspondences with the *Periplus* and Ptolemy; whereas when notices are recorded by hearsay, one can find more exact parallels in other sources, above all Ctesias and Ptolemy; "but even when they are fantastic they seem to be demonstrable as having a basis in effective tradition and local legend". This generalisation does not always hold good. For instance, although the Theban is said to have spent six years among the Bisades, his description of their appearance is very reminiscent of the corresponding passages in Ptolemy and the *Periplus*.

In spite of these shortcomings, modern scholars are on the whole justly inclined to regard the Theban's voyage as a historical fact, and to stress the importance of his long-neglected account in the reconstruction of oriental history. The current attitude is well represented in the words of Derrett (*op. cit.* pp.23-4) "If the Theban was a real person and if his report, so far as it has survived, is reliable, it is a valuable contribution to South Indian history. For it throws light on a period notoriously lacking in authorities. The contrast between "Palladius'" scraps and the extracts he uses from the Theban's own words is sufficiently striking, and the vivid and relevant remarks of the Theban

concerning his reasons for going to India and the experiences there, strongly suggest that he was real. Whether what he reports can be relied upon depends largely upon the willingness of historians to add his information to what is already known from other sources."

It is now evident that such sources are available in the Sinhalese chronicles, and that the information of Palladius complements such narratives of the internal history of Sri Lanka under Pandyan rule with some picture of its international implications.

No less significant is the notice of the sixth century writer Cosmas Indicopleustes. He was probably an Egyptian Greek who, after a long career in overseas trade, became a monk and devoted the rest of his life to writing theological works. The one work of his that has come down to us is the Christian Topography in twelve books. The eleventh book is devoted to "Indian" plants and animals, and to the island of Taprobane. This book as well as the twelfth are not found in the best MS., namely the Vatican; and some have suggested that they have been put together from other works of Cosmas. Thus it is said that the description of Taprobane comes from a geographical work now lost.¹ But from internal evidence we know that Cosmas made frequent additions to his work, and it is not impossible that the last two books were added towards the end of his life. They contain much that conforms in thought and detail to what is said in the earlier books. In fact the account of Taprobane which constitutes a large portion of book XI is anticipated in two brief notices of the island, one in the second and the other in the third book.

¹ Cf. for instance, J. W. McCrindle, *The Christian Topography by Cosmas Indicopleustes*, p.VIII; cf. also D. T. Devendra, *JRASCB* (n.s.) V, 1 (1957), pp.85-9, who thinks that the eleventh book was put together from the loose leaves of Cosmas; *Cosmas Indicopleustes*, ed. W. Wolska-Conus (*Sources Chrétiennes* 141) pp.36, 141.

Similar views are expressed by S. F. Schwarz (*Kosmas und Siedidiba, Ziva Antika*, XXV, 1975, pp.469-490, cf. p.475) who thinks that books XI and XII did not originally belong to the Topography. He thinks that book XII (which deals with the *Old Testament* in the light of Chaldaic, Persian, Babylonian and Egyptian sources) was perhaps connected with the astronomical treatise which Cosmas had composed for a "diakon~~omologos~~" according to the second prologue of the Topography; while the eleventh book stems from the description of the whole earth which, according to the first prologue, was dedicated to one Constantine. Schwarz points to the fact that the 11th century MS. from Sinai expressly introduces the 11th book as "another discourse external to the book". He also considers the final equation of India with Evilat as an attempt on the part of Cosmas to integrate into the work as a whole the material of the 11th book which he must have felt to be a foreign body within the Topography.

In book II ch.45-6, Taprobane is noticed in the course of a description of the silk route. Cosmas says that the silk country, which he calls Tzinista¹ is situated in the remotest of all the Indian lands, and lies to the left of those who enter the Indian sea, beyond the Persian Gulf and the island called by the Indians Sielediba (the reading of Book XI) or Selediba (Book II), and by the Greeks Taprobane. Again, he says that the silk route by land is much shorter than the one by sea (cf. Appendix I, No.32(i)). With regard to the general accuracy of his statement, McCrindle (Christian Topography, p.49, n.1) pointed out that the Persian Gulf has a length of 650 English miles while the distance from Ceylon to the Malacca Peninsula alone is nearly twice that distance.

One striking feature in this description of the sea route to the silk country is that Taprobane, and not India, is thought of as the central point of the journey, which is thus made to break into two distinct parts. Cosmas is perhaps talking in terms of the actual experience of navigators. In the 11th book the countries beyond Taprobane are referred to as the inner countries, while those west of it are called outer countries. This division is apparently made in relation to the central position of Taprobane. W. Wolska-Conus (XI.15 n.) points out that whereas Cosmas applies the term Inner India to Asiatic India,

1 This is a name for China. Sinae was the ordinary name for the people of the silk bearing country as reached by sea, whereas the Seres were the silk people as approached by land. The Periplus calls the region This or Thina, and according to Ptolemy their metropolis was Kattigara. Tzinista is generally thought to be southern China, but some think that it is more probably Malaya, Cochin China, and the coast of the Gulf of Siam (e.g., Winstedt, Christian Topography, p.334). Tzinista is the Indian-Persian form meaning "the Land of China" (Sanskrit, Chinasthana; Persian, Chinistan; and the Tzinisthan of the Syriac inscription at Si-an, cf. Hudson, Europe and China, p.110; also Yule; Cathay and the Way Thither, vol. I, pp.1-34). "Cynstn" for China is found in a Sogdian letter of the first century A.D., cf. Yule, loc. cit.

the practice of other Greek and Syrian writers was to apply it to the inhabitants on the shores of the Red Sea, - a practice probably going back to the days when that region furnished an exchange for merchandise between Rome and India, and was therefore inhabited by many immigrant Indians. According to her, the way Cosmas arranges the countries in relation to Taprobane shows that his informants came from that island, perhaps Nestorian sailors and merchants of Syrian origin. But it may well be that much of his information came from his friend Sōpatrus and his party, whose encounter with the king of Taprobane is narrated a little later in the book.

Cosmas calls the island Sieleidiba. The name is obviously derived from Sanskrit (and Sinhalese) Simhala Dvipa (Pali, Sīhaladīpa). He says that it is the Indian name for the island which the Greeks call Taprobane. He says nothing about any other names given to it in the Ptolemaic tradition, but, like Ptolemy, he uses Taprobane as the ordinary Greek name for the island - a name which has held its ground from the time of Onesicritus. From what Cosmas says, it is evident that in his time the island was known to the Indians as Simhala Dvipa. This is borne out by the fact that the term Simhala, is used during the several centuries before Cosmas, in literary and epigraphical sources from India.¹ At an earlier age, Asoka had referred to the island

¹ E.g., the Mahabharata (Transl. Pratapchandra Roy, Calcutta 1889, Sabhaparva, p.146, 115f.) the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta (JRASCB, XXXII 84, 1931, pp.55-63), and the copper plate grant of the Western Chalukya king Pulakesin I, dated Saka 411 (A.D. 489-90, cf. Ind. Ant. VII. p.215; cf. C. Rasanayagam, Ancient Jaffna, p.230, where it is erroneously said to be perhaps the earliest mention of the word "Sinhala" in an authoritative Indian record. Pearls from the island are referred to as Simhalaka in the fifth century work, the Brhat-samhita of Varahamihira (ch.81, v2, cf. U.C.H.C., p.363).

as Tambapanni, while in the Ramayana it was known as Lanka. The early 5th century Chinese account of Fa-Hsien also calls the island "the Kingdom of the Lion", and the Mahavamsa preserves the aetiological myth connecting the race with the lion according to the native Sinhalese tradition. It is clear that since the 3rd century B.C. increased contacts with India following the conversion to Buddhism had induced a standard usage of this name for the island which is here echoed in Cosmas.

In book III, ch.65, in a discussion on the spread of Christianity, Cosmas says that in Taprobane there was a church of Christians. On this subject, Taprobane is the furthest eastern limit of his knowledge, and from there Cosmas works westwards and northwards naming the places where Christian churches are found. The Christian church in Taprobane is noticed again in book XI. 14 as one of resident Persian Christians, with a Presbyter ordained in Persia, a deacon and a complete ecclesiastical ritual, but the natives and their kings were heathens.

This is the only authentic record of Christianity in ancient Sri Lanka prior to the advent of the Portuguese, although legendary claims are sometimes made which cannot be substantiated. Thus, according to Labourte (cited by Winsted, *op. cit.* p.345) there was a monastery of St. Thomas in Taprobane in the middle of the fourth century A.D. but this has not been verified so far. There was also a curious tradition that the island was visited and converted by the Eunuch of Candace, queen of Aethiopia, and he along with St. Thomas were put forward in Portuguese times as rival claimants to the Sacred Footprint on Adam's Peak.

There are, of course, traditions regarding the existence of Christianity in India centuries before the time of Cosmas. St. Thomas was believed to have visited Parthia and India, in the time of king Gondophares, and to have suffered martyrdom near Madras after founding

seven churches in the Malabar. The Apostle Bartholomew is also supposed to have visited India. Pantaenus the friend of Clement and Origen was said to have gone to South India towards the end of the second century and found there people who were acquainted with the Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew, which had been brought thither by Bartholomew. But the Christian church which in the time of Cosmas was well established in Sri Lanka and India was one of the Persian Christians of the Nestorian sect, since Cosmas says that the presbyter in Taprobane was ordained in Persia, and India also had a bishop from Persia. A Nestorian tomb inscription in India has been dated as early as 547 A.D. (Chwolson, cited by Winstedt, p.345).

Cosmas tells us that the natives and their kings were ἀλλόφυλοι; following McCrindle I take this to mean heathens. Tennent translates: "the natives and their kings are of different races".¹ But as Cosmas has been talking about the Christian church of the immigrant Persians, it is obvious that his contrast is between them and the pagan natives. This statement leads us to conclude that the Christian church set up in Taprobane primarily met the religious needs of the Persian community settled there. Although in subsequent centuries the missionary activities of the Nestorians were widespread in the east, they do not seem to have introduced the faith to the natives of Sri Lanka. Even if there were converts, Christianity did not settle down permanently in the island. The ninth century Arab travellers Ibn Wahab and Abu Zeyd do not refer to Christians, though they mention Jews and Manichaeans in the service of the king, who was tolerant to all religions. Marco Polo too calls

1 This is also the view of Schwarz (op. cit. p.481) who sees here the difference between the Indo-Aryan ruling class and the subjected indigenous population, the Veddhas. We cannot endorse this view for the reason given below.

the Sinhalese idolators, whereas he is particular to mention the existence of Christians in other eastern lands.

Cosmas does not tell us where this church was, and it is probable that he was talking in terms of a body of faithful rather than a religious building. But it has sometimes been surmised that the church mentioned was in Anuradhapura, on the ground that the Persians would have settled in a centre of trade, and Anuradhapura was one in those days (cf. C. M. V. Fernando; "Early Christianity in Ceylon in pre-Portuguese times", U.C.R. VI.3, July 1948, pp.196-200, esp. p.197). But the settlement, as well as the church, may equally have been situated near one of the important ports. Two ancient references are cited to attest the existence of a foreign quarter at Anuradhapura, but their value is not unquestioned. The first is the statement in the Mahavamsa (X.74) that, as early as the fourth century B.C., king Pandukabhaya laid out a quarter for the Yonas near the west gate of the city. But apart from the historical difficulties concerning the presence of Yonas (whether Greeks or Persians are understood), in the island before the time of Alexander the Great, it has been pointed out that the reading Yonasabthagavatthu is not supported by the best MSS. in Sri Lanka which read "so tan sabhāga vatthan" i.e. "he (fixed) the common ground", (cf. A. M. Gunasekara, Sabaeans and Yavanas, JRASCB Notes and Queries, pt.4, July 1914, no.26). The other is a supposed reference to the dwellings of the Sabaeans in the description of Fa-Hsien. But the term Sap-pho is now generally interpreted as referring to the Sarthavahas, the chiefs of the trading class who figure prominently in Buddhist literature (cf. JMBRAS XXIX, pt.3, 1956, p.203).

The discovery of a "Persian" cross in Anuradhapura in 1912 has also lent support to the view that the Christians dwelt in that city.

But it must be pointed out that the cross cannot be dated to the time of Cosmas. It is supposed to derive from the crosses found in South India. Of these the small cross from Kottayam and the St. Thomas Mt. cross have been attributed roughly to the middle of the seventh century, the Kadamuttam cross to the end of the ninth century, and the other big cross from Kottayam (with the additional Syriac text) is thought to have been elaborated a century later (A. S. Ramanatha Ayyar, "A New Persian Cross from Travancore", *Ceylon Antiquary*, IX.4, April 1924, pp.188-196; esp. p.193). One need not, however, adopt the extreme view of D. T. Devendra (*loc. cit.*), that the Anuradhapura cross is later than 1547, and should be placed in the 17th century.

On the one hand, there is evidence, apart from the testimony of Cosmas, ^{to} the existence of Persian contacts during the later Anuradhapura period, although they are not referred to in the native chronicles. Tabari and Hamza record an invasion of the island by king Khosroes I, Nushirwan (A.D. 531-78)¹, (cf. Tennent, *Ceylon*, I, p.580). In the seventh century when the Buddhist monk Vajrabodhi came to Ceylon, he found at a port on the island a fleet of thirty-five Persian ships which had come to trade in precious stones, and Hui Chao, a pilgrim who travelled to India in 727, says that the Persians obtained all kinds of precious objects from the island, (cf. B. C. Colless, "The traders of the Pearl",

1 Persian interest in the island can be traced back to at least a century and a half earlier. We learn from Chinese sources that as early as A.D. 380 the Persian king asked for the hand of the daughter of the Sinhalese king and sent a gold bracelet as a present (Liu Hsin-ch'i, *Chiao Chou Chih*, quoted by O. W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1967, p.81). But one cannot agree with the statement of many writers (including Wolters himself, *loc. cit.*) that we have the testimony of Procopius (*Bell. I.xx.9ff.*) to the effect that by the first half of the sixth century Persian traders had established themselves in Sri Lanka, where they received the far-eastern trade arriving at that island. Procopius does not refer to the island as Taprobane, or under any of its alternative Greek names.

Abr-Nahrain, ix, 1969-70, pp.17-38). Thereafter, they seem to have given way before the Arab trade supremacy.

On the other hand, even if the Persians were not responsible for the Anuradhapura cross we must not forget that even before the tenth century, there was always a large immigrant population of South Indians, who had settled in and around the capital both as traders and as mercenary soldiers. There may have been a few Christians among them, although we hear nothing to the effect, and we need not rule out the possibility of a cross of the South Indian type being erected by them. Thus the cross may date from before the 11th century, but it cannot be taken as evidence for the location of the Christian church mentioned by Cosmas.

We now come to the main account of Taprobane in Cosmas (XI.13). He says that Taprobane is a large island of the ocean lying in the Indian Sea, located beyond the Pepper Country i.e. Malabar, and containing the hyacinth stone, whatever he may mean by this - jacinth, sapphire or amethyst (cf. McCrindle, Christian Topography p.364 n.1). Ptolemy (VII.4.1) also mentions the hyacinth together with the beryl as a product of Taprobane. Perhaps Cosmas is using the word in a general sense to mean precious stones. S

Like Ptolemy, Palladius, and Fa-Hsien, Cosmas too mentions the small islands which surround Taprobane. He says that they have fresh water and coconut trees (Argellia (MSS) nargellia (conj. Winstedt), cf. Sanskrit, nalikera: classical Sinhalese: neralu), and adds "They nearly all have deep water close up to their shore".¹

1 McCrindle regarded ἀσοβαθός as a barbarous form of ἀγχιβαθός, and emended accordingly, and is followed by Wolska-Conus. Yule read ἀσώταται. Schwarz (Cosmas, p.478) recognises here a late expression from colloquial speech which sounds like a navigating term appropriate to the "illiterate" periplooi. According to him this is real seafarer's information which fits in with what he calls the "log-book character" of this note.

Cosmas says that according to the natives the island has a length of 300 "gaudia", which he explains as 900 miles, and a like extent in breadth. Cunningham (Ancient Geography, of India, I, p.640) suggests that the word Gaudia is derived from a Sanskrit measure "gavukos" corresponding to the distance at which the lowing of an ox could be heard. The correct derivation, however, seems to be from the Sinhalese Gavū (Pali, "gavuta"). It was Tennent who pointed this out, (Ceylon, I. p.543 note), but his explanation of the word is inaccurate: he says it represents the distance a man can walk in an hour and therefore expresses a somewhat indeterminate length according to the nature of the ground to be traversed. But not only is the hour of sixty minutes foreign to the traditional Sinhalese system of measuring time, but also, the word Gavū is used to express a more determinate length. Four gavutas made up a Yojana. Geiger (Mahavamsa, translation, Appendix D, s.v. "yōjana") says that although a yōjana usually equalled twelve miles, in practice it seems to signify a length of eight miles. According to Cosmas, 300 gaudia equals 900 miles. Thus his gavū appears to be related to the twelve mile yōjana and is indicative of the high quality of Cosmas' information about Sri Lanka.¹

According to Cosmas, there were two kings in the island "ἐναντίοι ἀλλήλων". This has been interpreted in two ways, and a case has been made for both. The normal interpretation, that they were "at feud with one another", may be regarded as a reference to the political struggles of the late fifth century, i.e. Dhatusena's opposition to the Tamil invaders or, more appropriately, Moggallana's war against his brother

1 Centuries later, in the Polonnaruva period, king Nissankamalla regularised the measurements and brought into effect a gavū of two and a half miles which became known as Nissanka-gavū, (U.C.H.C. I. pp.13-14).

Kassapa I. Cosmas goes on to say that one king owns the hyacinth while the other has the rest of the country wherein is the harbour and the emporium "for it is a great mart of the people in those parts". It is also interesting to note that apart from this statement and the assertion that the natives and their kings are heathens, Cosmas speaks of the king of Sieldiba as a single person, in this reproducing the situation in which his informants, like Sopatros, had found themselves.

The alternative, and less satisfactory, interpretation is that of Tennent, who links the phrase closely with the following sentence and concentrates upon the purely geographical location of the two ("ruling at opposite ends of the island"), wrongly identifying the port referred to as Galle. The meaning of "possessing the hyacinth" (ἔχων τὸν ὑάκινθον) has been disputed. It is commonly rendered as "the part of the island where the hyacinth was produced". According to Tennent, however, the reference is to the famous precious stone of immense size mentioned later by Cosmas as well as by other foreign writers on the island. But it must be remembered that in the time of Cosmas, and also of Hiouen-thsang a century later, the famous gem belonged to a temple, not to the king. Moreover, if the usage of Cosmas is ^{any} ~~something~~ to go by, it is very anything probable that he means the hyacinth-producing region, since in XI.16, he uses τὸ καρυόφυλλον to designate the Clove-Country.

Moreover, one cannot accept Tennent's suggestion that the port and emporium signified Galle for the implication of this would be that both kings possessed the southern part of the island. ^{Also} ~~Moreover~~, there is not enough evidence to prove its antiquity. Its earliest notices in Sinhalese literature come from the Sandesa or message poems of the 14th and 15th centuries. The majority of writers prefer to identify the port with Mantote, or Mantai (Mahatittha) which is not far from

the old capital Anuradhapura and was directly connected with it by the ancient road system. The sum total of literary and archaeological evidence goes to show that it served as the regular port for foreign trade and travel from as early as the fifth century B.C. to the 12th century A.D. and beyond.¹

According to Cosmas, there are many temples on the island and on one of them, which stands on an eminence, there is a hyacinth as large as a pinecone and fiery red. This may be an early mention of the famous great ruby which figures prominently in mediaeval notices of the island. The Chinese pilgrim Hiouen-thsang, a century later than Cosmas, relates that at Anuradhapura on a spire surmounting one of its temples there was elevated a ruby which with its transcendent lustre illuminated the whole heavens. It was visible night and day for a long distance and from far off it appeared like a bright star (cf. Schwarz, Kosmas p.482). Marco Polo again relates that the king of Ceylon was reputed to have

¹ Mahātīttha is first mentioned in the Mahavamsa (VII.58) as the landing place of Vijaya's second wife who came from Madura in South India. Although it was mainly as the port for communication with South India that Mahātīttha developed, there are records of contact with northern India, as for instance when the Kalinga prince bearing the Sacred Tooth Relic landed there in the fourth century A.D. It was the proximity to South India that made it possible for this port to take part in the trade with the western world. That it did so is revealed by the cosmopolitan character of the archaeological finds, (cf. below - pp.212 ff.). Mantai was a regular landing place for invading armies from South India who could count on the support of Tamils resident there (cf. Mahavamsa, XXV, 80; XXXIII, 39). But in an age when the chief exports of the island were all royal monopolies, the situation of Mahātīttha close to the capital Anuradhapura ensured its importance as the principal port of the island throughout ancient and mediaeval times. The 7th century hymnodist Sundaramurti Nayanar speaks of Mantai as a port of many ships, and the late tenth century Arabic work Hudud Al Alam says: "There is a large city called Muvās (Mantota?); it is situated at the extremity which lies towards Hindustan. Whatever this island produces is carried to the city, and therefore to the cities of the world," (B. J. Perera, C.H.J. I, pp.110-112). Thus foreign writers and archaeological evidence both attest the international character of this port, and we may conclude that the description of Cosmas also applies to Mahātīttha.

the grandest ruby that ever was seen - one that was flawless and brilliant beyond description. He says it was as long as one's hand and as wide as a man's arm, spotless, shining like fire, not to be bought for money, (III.14). He further says that the great Kublai Khan wished to purchase this at a very high price but the Sinhalese king refused to part with it for all the wealth in the world as it was handed down to him as an heirloom. The gem is also mentioned by Jordan de Severac (c. 1323) (cf. Winstedt's note on p.322 l.9). We do not know the ultimate fate of this gem, if indeed the same stone is meant by all the writers (inasmuch as the later notices describe it as the king's private possession); but we do hear of a "carbuncle" of unusual lustre, the "red palace-illuminator" being purchased for the emperor of China early in the fourteenth century (Tennent, Ceylon, I. pp.543-4).

According to Cosmas, the hyacinth was placed on a temple. Hiouen-thsang says it was in Anuradhapura. Tennent however thinks it was at Mihintale. The Mahavamsa has several references to kings who bestowed jewels of immense value to the Buddhist shrines (e.g. Jetthatissa (3rd century A.D.), Mahavamsa, XXXVI. 125-6). Tennent himself points out that diamonds were fixed at the head of Sthupas as a protection against lightning (Ceylon, I. p.508).

Cosmas now goes on to demonstrate the important place which the island held in international commerce. Due to its central position the island is much frequented by ships from all parts of India, and from Persia and Aethiopia, and likewise sends out many ships of its own. He also tells us that from Tzinista and other trading places east of Cape Comorin the island receives silk, aloes, cloves, clove-wood, sandalwood and other products, and these are again passed on to the western marts such as Malē, Calliana, and Sindou, as well as to Persia,

the Himyarite country, and Adoulis. The island receives imports from all these and passes them to the ports in the east, and at the same time exports its own produce in both directions.

From this account it appears that the island took an active part in this trade. Not only did foreign ships and products pass through Taprobane, but the island sent out its own products as well as ships of her own. Apart from the hyacinth Cosmas makes no mention of any other products of the island. Other Greek writers assign to it not only precious stones and metals, but also pearls, ivory, tortoiseshell, and muslins. Ptolemy adds rice, ginger, and honey. According to the Chinese work T'ai P'ing Yu Lan, (982, 4347B quoted by Wolters, p.80) the products of the island are cinnabar, mercury, "hsun-lu", turmeric, storax, costus, and such perfumes. All the above lists include items that formed part of the transit trade. It is difficult to determine what was locally produced for export other than ginger, turmeric, pearls, ivory, and precious stones, for which we have authority of the native chronicles as well.

As for the ships of the island, it has sometimes been thought (e.g. Tennent, I. p.540) that these ships must have been manned by Malabars, Arabs, Persians, and other foreigners, as the Sinhalese themselves had no shipping worth speaking of, and were notoriously averse to trade and seafaring.¹ It is true that the native literature in

1 "In Tan times Sinhalese ships had a reputation for being large, and Cosmas remarks that Ceylon sent out ships; yet recent studies of early Sinhalese shipping and trade have not suggested that in the fifth and sixth centuries the island had become an important shipping centre in its own right," (Wolters, p.148). Wolters refers to C. W. Nicholas, "Sinhalese Naval Power", U.C.R., XVI. (3-4) 1958, pp.78-92, and also to the article by B. J. Perera, cited below. Ships were certainly used in warfare. Shortly before the time of Cosmas, king Moggallana I had turned his attention to strengthening his fleet.

Sinhalese has very few references to native sea-faring; but then this literature is religious in character and does not generally reflect the economic life of the country. Moreover, it was all produced centuries after the time of Cosmas, when the prosperity which the island enjoyed under the Anuradhapura kings had waned as a result of internal turmoils and constant foreign invasions. The *Saddharmāḷankāraya* is a significant exception. Based largely on the Pali work *Rasavāhini*, and other early sources, this work includes a large number of stories set in Sri Lanka, and throws considerable light on the everyday life in the island. In this work, there are several references to Sinhalese traders who went abroad for business purposes. Classical Sinhalese writers sometimes display a considerable knowledge of navigation, and these writers include not only Buddhist monks but also prominent members of the lay community. Moreover we hear of traders from the island putting in at foreign ports, and of Sinhalese people residing abroad. The *Mahavamsa* records voyages to India in the last centuries B.C. (VIII.12, IX.6, 23, XVIII.8, etc.), and it is reasonable to think that these voyages continued in the succeeding centuries. Kien Tchen found Sinhalese men at Canton, and the inscriptions of Airlanga, the Javanese king of the 11th century, mention Simhala merchants among the foreigners who put in at his ports (G. Coedès, *The Indianised States of Southeast Asia*, p.146). The *Culavamsa* (XLI.38) mentions a merchant who returned from a trip to Kasi in the early sixth century, and we hear of two brothers, *Buddhamitra* and *Buddharaksita*, residing at Broach (*Barygaza*) which was an important emporium, (B. J. Perera, I. pp.313ff.). The cumulative evidence suggests that here too Cosmas had a more realistic appreciation of the maritime activities of the island in his time, as might be expected of a commercial venturer, than modern sceptics would allow.

The exports of the island were royal monopolies, so that individuals could not have taken interest in trade on their own initiative; but the kings, especially when they were strong enough to keep their kingdom united, prosperous, and free from foreign invasions, probably paid attention to foreign trade on an organised basis. They may have used the services of Tamil and Arab seafarers; but on the whole our evidence suggests that there was a considerable amount of trade and seafaring in the hands of the Sinhalese, and Cosmas, whose accuracy in other matters is well demonstrated, was probably right when he said that the island dispatched ships of her own adding her own products to the transit goods that were carried to east and west.

Cosmas now gives a periplus of the Indian coast beginning at the Indus and working southwards to Taprobane and then north east to Tzinista. Compared with his copious account of Taprobane, his information on India is very scanty. This is especially true of the eastern part of the journey: Marallo, Kaber, Clove Country, China. In the first century A.D. the Periplus could give more details, and Ptolemy devoted two whole chapters (VII.2 and 3) to eastern Asia, displaying a comprehensive knowledge of the east Indian coast. Cosmas knows nothing of this coast or its famous river, the Ganges, nor does he mention the Golden Chersonese. It has sometimes been suggested that being a Nestorian Christian interested more in the religious than the commercial aspect of geography, Cosmas has given us a lopsided picture, (cf. B. C. Colless, art. cit.). However Cosmas' interest in commercial matters, of which he had first-hand experience, is evident in all his writing and especially in the 11th book, in which religious matters are very much off-stage. It is more likely that Cosmas' silence on the far east reflects the lack of acquaintance on the part of western navigators whom he knew with regions

beyond Taprobane. That island now became the terminus of western navigation in the Indian Ocean, for here it was possible to exchange wares with the cargoes brought from the eastern countries. O. W. Wolters indeed (op. cit., pp.71-86 and pp.139-158) argues that the Persian shipping went no further than Sri Lanka in the fifth and sixth centuries and that in that period Malay shippers monopolised the trade in "Persian" merchandise (i.e. luxury goods from western Asia) to China. In the 7th and 8th centuries one hears of Persian ships sailing beyond Sri Lanka, but there is no evidence to show that this took place in the time of Cosmas. If Persian ships had been sailing beyond Ceylon the island would not have been so famous an entrepôt at that time (cf. op. cit. pp.146-7),¹ and if the middlemen of the Red Sea did not penetrate beyond Taprobane, far less is it likely that Byzantine Greeks had any acquaintance with the far east at this time.

There is perhaps an alternative explanation for the scantiness of this description. Its real purpose is not to enlighten us on the geography of India or the eastern trade route but rather to emphasize the commercial importance of Taprobane. The point that Cosmas wishes to make is that Taprobane is 'mediatrix' in the great eastern trade route by sea. Up to now, the Greeks and Romans had thought of Taprobane as the distant isle at the eastern end of the inhabited world. Even Pliny, who had better information than his predecessors, spoke of it as being "banished by nature to the confines of the world" (VI.89). Cosmas knew, from the

1 As for their rivals, the Axumites, their influence in Indian waters had declined by the sixth century, (cf. Wolters, p.74). We do not hear of their ships trading at that time. Cosmas however mentions the Aethiopians putting in at Taprobane, trading in emeralds with the Huns of northern India, and exporting ivory to India, Persia, the Himyarite country, and the Roman empire. But the travels of his friend Sōpatros as well as those of the Theban "scholasticus" belong in all probability to the fifth century.

experience of his own kind, that the situation was very different:
 "This Sielediba, then," he repeats, "placed as one may say in the centre with regard to India and possessing the hyacinth producing region, receives imports from all the seats of commerce and in turn exports to them, and is thus itself a great seat of commerce". Consistent with this view is the fact that his account of the island, like those of the Periplus and Ptolemy, is free from those idealised descriptions of utopian conditions, which affect most classical accounts of Taprobane and are not altogether absent even from Pliny.

Cosmas now narrates with vividness and enthusiasm/ the adventures of his friend Sōpatros who, having gone on business to Taprobane and being granted audience with the king at the same time as a Persian ambassador, convinced the king of the superiority of the Romans over the Persians by comparing the coins of the two nations. The business man's expertise is clearly revealed: the factual details about the coinage, best quality gold, the implication that its export is conducted in some quantity, and the commercial rivalries in these Eastern markets are cases in point ~~the fact~~. Tennent (Ceylon, I, p.542 n.2) thinks that the king in question was Kumaradasa, (515-542), but his arguments are not convincing. Cosmas writing before 547-9 A.D. says that Sōpatros had been dead for the last thirty-five years as far as he knows. We need not assume that Sopatros made this voyage in the last year of his life, and the vivid narrative has all the marks of an elderly man reminiscing on the achievements of his youth. The incident probably took place sometime in the second half of the fifth century.¹

1 C. R. Beazley (Dawn of Modern Geography, I. (1897) p.191) perversely thought that Cosmas was inaccurate in saying that Sōpatros was dead for the last 35 years, or else our information was misleading. According to him Sōpatros probably travelled after Justinian's accession in

[cont. ...]

Tennent also doubts the historicity of the incident. "This story would, however, appear to be traditional as Pliny relates a somewhat similar anecdote of the ambassadors from Ceylon in the reign of Claudius,¹ and of the profound respect excited in their minds by the sight of the Roman Denarii". There is no record in Pliny that the Sinhalese envoys to Rome were impressed by Roman Denarii. It was the king of Taprobane who was convinced of Roman justice from the integrity of their coins. There was no question of gold coins either. The silver denarii were taken from the ship, and there is no suggestion that the freedman deliberately impressed the king by showing the coins, as Sōpatros did. His account does resemble anecdotes which illustrate the superiority of the Greek over the Barbarian, which we find in Herodotus, and also has the qualities of oriental "judgement" stories told of wise men. But the event could well have occurred in real life, and some of the details can indeed be recognised as historical. The visitors were met by the local officials and the customs house officers. An inscription from Mahatittha refers to the king's officers in charge of the collection of taxes at this port, with mention made of an officer styled "mavutuladdan"

1 [... cont.] 527 A.D. He saw a possible connection between this visit and Justinian's southern or Abyssinian enterprise. It is, however, far more prudent to take Cosmas at his word since he is talking about someone known to him personally. Thus a date in the late fifth century appears to be preferable. It is very probable that the journey took place after 460 A.D. when Dhatusera defeated the Pandyas and restored Sinhalese-Buddhist power at Anuradhapura. Schwarz (Kosmas p.484) suggests the reign of king Moggallana I (495-512), and this is very plausible in view of the importance assigned by Cosmas to the maritime affairs of the island, since Moggallana is known to have strengthened the Sinhalese fleet. However, Sōpatrus and his party are not the only informants of Cosmas regarding eastern affairs. If the identification of the Gollas of XI.20 with Mihirakula (515-550) is correct (Schwarz, Kosmas p.471), then it appears that the information on India under the Huns belongs to a later date.

1 Even Wolska-Conus (Top. Chrét. III. p.348 n.17) seems to toy with this idea.

i.e. officer in charge of Mahātittha (Epigraphia Zeylanica II, p.105). The story of Nandiya in the Saddharmalankaraya also says that the king appointed a royal official for the collection of taxes at Mahatittha (I. p.119).

The Persian is referred to as a πρεσβύτης. McCrindle translates "an old man". The correct interpretation however is that of Montfaucon, namely that he was an ambassador. It cannot be the case that all foreigners were conducted to the presence of the king, but envoys obviously would be. Sōpatros and his party who had gone thither for the sake of business were lucky enough to arrive at the right moment to be received on the same terms. This turned out for the worse as far as the Persians were concerned and makes the point of the sailor's yarn. Behind the story of the coins there is perhaps a fact, namely that the king considered the relative merits of the two competing nations with regard to trade, and decided in favour of the Romans. The state honours accorded to Sōpatros amounted to a sign of this recognition.

There is one final notice of Sieldiba and its king (XI.22). This passage is important for the information it contains regarding the traffic in elephants and horses. We are told that the king of Sieldiba buys both the elephants and the horses that he has. The elephants he pays for by cubit measure: for the height is measured from the ground and the price is reckoned at so many nomismata for each cubit. Horses from Persia he buys, exempting the importers of them from paying custom dues. According to Cosmas, the practice of the Sinhalese king with regard to elephants is different from that of the Indian kings who catch their elephants wild and tame them, training them for war.

The statement of Cosmas is generally interpreted to mean that elephants and horses were both imported to the island, and surprise

has sometimes been expressed that he should refer to the import of elephants whereas Taprobane itself was known as the home of elephants and exported them. The passage however does not expressly say that elephants are imported, and it is natural to take it in the sense that the king bought them locally from those who caught and tamed them. The sale of elephants was a royal monopoly, but their capture may have been allowed to individuals on occasion, although we cannot be certain about this. The Maharatmale inscription of king Vasabha (2nd century A.D.) refers to an "elephant tax" (hatipati) which was probably a general tax on the possession of elephants, or perhaps a tax paid by those capturing elephants for sale (Epigraphia Zeylanica, I. p.67).¹

The practice of valuing elephants by their height, which Cosmas mentions, seems to have survived for a long time in fact well into the 15th and 16th centuries. Nikitin, the early Russian traveller, says that Ceylon exported elephants and ostriches, the former valued by size and the latter by weight. Francisco Rodriguez, writing at the beginning of the 16th century says that elephants are sold by the cubit, measured from the forefoot to the top of the shoulders, (Perera, loc. cit.).²

The import of horses, on the other hand, is well documented. They were among the earliest imports to the island, and indigenous literature contains many references to their import. They are however always referred to as coming from South India. Perhaps they ultimately

1 H. W. Codrington (op. cit. p.35 n.2) wrongly translates ἀγοράζειν, with consequent errors of interpretation.

2 This practice was not confined to Sri Lanka. "The kings of India and China make a great work about the height of their elephants; they pay very dear in proportion as this attribute increases," Edrisi I.97, quoted by Yule, op. cit. p.339.

came from the Indus valley since horses are often called Saindava, that is, coming from Sindhu, (Mahavamsa, XXIII 70ff.). Cosmas is the only writer who attributes them to Persia. Probably the South Indian traders acted as dealers in Sri Lanka, for horses which came from further west. These South Indian horse dealers seem to have been of considerable political consequence. Sena and Guttika who usurped the Sinhalese throne in the second century B.C. are described as sons of a "horse-shipman" (Assanavika, cf. Mahavamsa, XXI.10) who used to bring horses to the island. Later tradition makes them horse dealers themselves. In the tenth century A.D., the Chola invasion which put an end to the Anuradhapura kingdom was said to have been brought about by a certain horse-dealer from South India who informed the Chola king regarding the chaotic conditions then prevailing in Sri Lanka (Culavamsa, LV.10).

Thus Cosmas' account of Taprobane corresponds in many details to what we know of contemporary conditions in Sri Lanka. So remarkable is the correspondence to fact, that it has sometimes been maintained that he actually visited the island (e.g. McCrindle (op. cit. p.vi), Devendra (art. cit.), G. Comes (Indica III(i), 1966, 7-24)). But these assumptions are not justified. The scantiness of Cosmas' account of India indicates that he had no first-hand acquaintance with that land.¹ His account of

1 The statement of Cosmas that he had seen the χοιρέλαφος or pig-stag (apparently peculiar to India) and eaten its flesh, does not amount to proof that he visited India, cf. Schwarz, Kosmos und Siedelung, p.474). On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent one from assuming that in his commercial travels he visited some ports on the west Indian coast and perhaps even saw one of those elephant fights which he so vividly describes. If this was so, it is surprising that he does not say much about these ports other than naming a few products and stating that all of them were under kings who had herds of elephants, and that some of them had Christians. We do not find in him the copiousness of the Periplus, and this is hard to account for, unless one were to imagine that all these places were put out of focus by the overwhelming importance he attached to Taprobane.

Taprobane is more detailed, but in this case his informants were in all probability Sōpatros and his party from Adoulis who had gone to the island and met its king. Even so, one cannot help noticing that Cosmas does not mention a single town in the island by name. Regarding what he writes in the eleventh book, Cosmas says: "all these matters I have described and explained partly from personal observation, and partly from accurate inquiries which I made when in the neighbourhood of different places" (XI.21). This remark undoubtedly applies to Africa as well as India, and Cosmas himself tells us which of these parts he visited personally. He also tells us which plants and animals he has seen, and which he has not. He is a writer of remarkable honesty; and if he does not tell us that he has been to India or Taprobane, then the chances are that he did not visit these regions, even though ancient tradition calls him the "Indian Navigator".

One fact that emerges from the description of Cosmas is that Taprobane had taken over from the west Indian markets the role of transmitting merchandise between east and west. Contrary to what has sometimes been said of the island being the great emporium of the east from ancient times, all our evidence, not least the coinage, both Roman and native, makes it clear that this prominence was a quite recent phenomenon in the time of Cosmas. This prominence resulted from the increased importance gained by the maritime route to China in the later part of the fourth century owing to disturbances on the land route and the loss of Roman influence in the regions of the Caspian and the Persian Gulf (Warmington, p.140). Of course, the overland route was still important for the Persians who imported silk from China. Cosmas (II.45) tells us that much silk was brought through this route which he reckoned as the quicker by far. But the sea route was becoming more important with the growth

in prosperity of Southern China which now began to demand western goods increasingly.

Another factor which became increasingly relevant from the second half of the fifth century was the expansion of the Hephthalites or White Huns. Having become powerful in Western Turkestan they established themselves in the commercial centres of Sogdiana and Bactria. In 484 they defeated and killed the Sassanid ruler Peroz, and by the end of the century they were in occupation of Gandhara, thus having the gateway open to India. Cosmas tells us that they oppressed the people, and Theophanes says that they deprived the Persians of the trading centres used by the Seres (Müller, F.H.G. IV. 270). Yule (p.204) thinks these ports were in Sindh. In any case, it looks as if some of the favoured west Indian ports now became difficult of access. Cosmas makes no mention of Barygaza (Broach) or Muziris. Significantly, Broach was at this time in the hands of the Gurjaras, a tribe associated with the Huns (V. A. Smith, Oxford History of India, p.163).

These circumstances might help to explain why the centre of Indian trade shifted to Sri Lanka during the fifth century, and why the Persians maintained so much interest in the island. But perhaps the main reason was the Pandyan, who on losing their outlets to the west, diverted the attention of their customers to Sri Lanka, which they invaded and ruled in the first half of the fifth century. Whatever the explanation may have been, there is no doubt that what Cosmas describes is an early instance of how Sri Lanka's history was shaped by events on the international scene due to its central position.

CHAPTER X

X : LATE MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES

It remains to mention some miscellaneous notices of Taprobane which appear in late authors, most of whom wrote in Latin. Two of these were connected with the Roman court circle probably in the late fourth century A.D. and continue the classical pagan tradition. The rest are Christian writers, historians and cosmographers, who expound theories based in part on classical geography and in part on holy Scripture. The information given by all these authors is very scanty and is of little value as independent source material. In many cases their notices of Taprobane are restricted to a mere mention of its name. When they do say something about the island it is usually a case of each one repeating what has been obtained by borrowing from earlier writers. Indeed, the divorce between literary tradition and actual acquaintance has now become almost complete. It must also be pointed out that with regard to most of these authors their dates are a matter of scholarly dispute and it is not possible to present them in a definite chronological order.

The two pagan writers are "Vopiscus" and Ampelius. "Flavius Vopiscus" was one of the contributors to the collection of biographies of Roman emperors known as the Historia Augusta, generally thought to date from the last years of the fourth century A.D.. He refers to the people of Taprobane in his account of the emperor Tacitus (Tacitus, XV.2). Describing the events that allegedly took place around 275 A.D., he relates how the soothsayers predicted that in a thousand years there would arise a Roman emperor who will give judges to the Parthians and the Persians, keep the Franks and the Alamanni under Roman law, leave no barbarian in the

whole of Africa, place a governor over the Taprobani, (qui Taprobanis praesidem imponat), send a proconsul to Ireland (?), judge all the Sarmatians, possess the entire earth surrounded by the ocean, all her nations having been conquered, and then restore power to the senate and live under the old laws; he himself will live for 120 years and die without an heir. The passage, given in the form of a prophecy, represents some of the ideas held by certain elements of Roman society, in line with the literary interests of the time. The references to the restoration of power to the Senate and to the projected conquest of Ireland are Tacitean in origin: those to the king dying without heir, after attaining such an advanced age echo Pliny in his account of Taprobane, and the use of the term proconsul is deliberately anachronistic. Such references back to the 1st century A.D. gain point when it is remembered that, according to "Vopiscus" the Emperor Tacitus claimed a family connection with the historian.

As Syme has observed (Ammianus and the Historia Augusta (Oxford, 1968) pp.140-1), this is the work of an elaborate hoaxer. This vision of the recovery of past glories and the resurrection of Roman imperial power by the elimination of competitors old and new is presented with tongue in cheek. The ideas are those current in the propaganda of the 4th century, with the epic tones of imperial panegyric echoed here, but whereas the stock stuff of such rhetoric had for centuries brought India and Britain into the reckoning, "Vopiscus" here goes even further afield - to Taprobane and to Ireland. He has taken one more step along this well-trodden path and has moved to the ends of the earth, before revealing that this is no more than wishful thinking, impossible of fulfilment in a thousand years.

At about this same time Lucius Ampelius wrote his notebook, the *Liber Memorialis*. In the sixth chapter which is devoted to geography, he mentions the island of Taprobane. After mentioning four inhabited regions of the earth (whereas other writers like Macrobius speak of two only) he draws a distinction between Antichthones and Antipodes, and goes on to say there are eleven famous islands in "our" sea, (i.e. the Mediterranean), while in the ocean to the east is Taprobane, to the west, Britain, to the north, Thyle, and to the south, the Fortunate Islands. Unlike certain earlier writers (cf. Pliny VI.81), Ampelius does not associate Taprobane with the Antichthones. He places the island in "our" region. But it is still on the confines of that region forming its frontier together with Britain, Thule, and the Fortunate Islands. Ptolemy had drawn up a list of the ten most famous islands and peninsulas, and this list was repeated by later writers in various modified forms, with additions and omissions as the case may be. We shall have occasion to mention several such lists of islands. The list of Ampelius is an early example, and is quite in place in a commonplace book.

The remaining notices on Taprobane come from Christian writers. Here scientific geography gives way to dogmatism, and classical notions are mixed with, or have as substitutes, concepts derived from Holy Scripture, as, for instance, in the Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes (*vide supra*). But Cosmas with his wealth of personal observation acquired in the course of his travels, and his keen interest in everything human, was able to infuse into his work freshness and vividness, and it is of considerable value to the student of ancient life. Such qualities however are rare in other Christian writers whose geographical knowledge is derivative, scanty, and perverted by influence of Holy Writ.

One fact that emerges from a study of these writers is that their geographical descriptions are literature based on, or influenced by, early world maps, which were the ancestors of the mediaeval "mappa-mundi" representations which often accompany manuscripts of Latin works. These Christian maps generally represented the terrestrial paradise as lying east of India. Four rivers rise here, and, travelling under the earth, manifest themselves in various regions. Of the four rivers mentioned in the book of Genesis, the Pheison was equated by some with the Ganges and by others with the Indus or Hyphasis, and Evilath, the land which this river encompassed, was equated with India Dimyrike, which, together with India Thermanica and India Serica, formed the Tripartite India of Christian Geographers, (cf. for example, the Ravenna Cosmography).

Among these maps, the earliest example we have is the Peutinger Table, so named after its one-time owner Conrad Peutinger. It is probably a Christianised version prepared during the last days of the Roman empire of an earlier Roman road-map, although the present version may be a mediaeval copy. In it, the known world is represented on a long parchment roll, in the twelfth segment of which Taprobane is represented as a long island lying parallel to India. Its only marked feature is a mountain range, and it stretches from near the mouth of the Indus to a point opposite Tyndis. Halfway between these two points on the mainland opposite the island is a city and junction of roads named Clymaine (Kalliena?); these lead, one westwards to the Persian Market (cf. Philostorg. III.4) and ultimately to Ecbatana, one northwards to Palimboth^ra and beyond, and one eastwards. Further east from Tyndis, Muziris is marked, with a lake and a temple of Augustus (a relic from an earlier day); thereafter follows the Pirate coast (Ptol. VII.1.7) and then the map proceeds northwards through Cotia^ra (cf. Ptol. VII.1.9)

to the Ganges mouth, ⁹ and the position of which agrees with that given in the literary notices of this and later times.

The location of Taprobane at the mouth of the Pheison is first met with in literature in the surviving portion of the Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius. According to him the Pheison is the river which in classical times was known as Hyphasis. He traces its origin from Paradise and places its mouth in the Erythraean Sea just opposite the island of Taprobane in the same way as the map had done. On the banks of this river he mentions the clove, "be it fruit or flower", and takes this as proof of Pheison's origin in Paradise, (Philostorgius III.20, Migne B.G. 65, col. 493). Philostorgius makes a distinction between the Pheison/Hyphasis and the other three rivers of Paradise, for whereas these others go underground and are interconnected (as in the map), the Pheison proceeds on the surface and provides visible evidence of its origin in Paradise by the transport of the clove, a product of that sacred region, through the intervening desert down to its mouth. Cosmas, with more personal knowledge as a merchant, will place the Clove Country further east from India, unconnected with any notion of an earthly Paradise. Whether consciously or not, Philostorgius has invested Taprobane with a certain odour of sanctity by this geographical association with the Pheison, the only river which, according to him, comes straight from Paradise.

The location of Paradise on the eastern frontier of India was to have important consequences for the mediaeval mythology concerning Sri Lanka. Early pagan writers had associated this island with an ideal life, but this was not taken up by the Christian writers to a noticeable extent. They, however, by associating the island with the Pheison helped to bring Paradise to the neighbourhood of Taprobane.

One MS. of the shorter redaction of the Armenian Geography associated the island with the fall of Satan, but it was left to the Muslims of the Middle Ages to find in Sri Lanka the place to which Adam was exiled from Paradise, and to associate the sacred Footprint on Adam's Peak, and the Adam's Bridge of the Palk Strait with him. The idea that Paradise was not very far from the island persisted for a long time, for, in the fifteenth century, John Marignolli was assured by the natives that Adam's Peak was only forty miles distant from Paradise and that on a good day it was possible to hear the water falling from the river which "went out of Eden to water the Garden", (cf. G. H. T. Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages*, London, 1938, p.184).

The best known of these ecclesiastical writers was Paulus Orosius, a Spanish priest who wrote during the early fifth century A.D. His *Historia Adversus Paganos* was written to show that Christianity was not responsible for recent calamities but that on the contrary, greater misfortunes had befallen the empire in pagan times, and, so far from undermining it, the new religion has enhanced the strength of civilising influences in every country where it had been embraced. He includes a geographical introduction so that "when the theatres of war and the ravages of disease shall be described, whoever wishes to do so may the more easily obtain a knowledge not only of the events and their dates but of their geography as well". This geographical summary is significant in view of its influence on mediaeval Christian writing as well as on Christian cartography.

His description of the world is written with a map in mind, as one can see from his language. For Orosius, as for the authors of the *Expositio* and of the ^uPe~~r~~tinger Table, the world begins in the east with Asia, where lies the mouth of the river Ganges facing the eastern Ocean.

On its left is situated the promontory of Caligardamana and lying off this to the South East is the island of Taprobane. Here the sea begins to be known as the Indian Ocean. Later he says that India has forty-four different nations, if one excludes the island of Taprobane which has ten cities (or states), and the many other habitable islands.

Caligardamana is probably Cape Comorin, or else it is what Ptolemy calls Kōru, for Taprobane is said to lie hard by it. Orosius seems to have known the true position of the island, although he knew nothing of the lands east of the Ganges. Like other Christian writers, he names the Indian Ocean as beginning from Taprobane. He also follows the common pattern of Christian geographers by beginning with Paradise in the east and proceeding towards the west. The statement that the island has ten states (civitates) is something not known to us from earlier sources. Eratosthenes had stated that there were no cities, but 700 villages (vici) (750 κῶμαι Aelian); the envoys to Claudius had mentioned 500 towns (oppida): including the capital. Ptolemy had given 13 tribes, 20 cities (πόλεις), 2 emporia and was followed in this by Marcian. Orosius' source for his number of 10 civitates is unknown. Is it possible that Orosius, drawing upon more recent information, here represents some development in the conditions of the island since Ptolemy's day? Since literary confirmation is lacking either in the native or in the Western records, and despite the prevalence of Roman coinage of the 4th century in the island, this must remain an open question in the present state of our knowledge. It may be noted that Palladius mentions no city at all, and that Cosmas limits himself to the mention of one emporium and the capital city (τὴν πόλιν). In any case, Orosius' statement provides the inspiration for subsequent Christian writers.

Another work that was extensively used by Christian writers (e.g. Cassiod. Div. Lect., 25) was the Cosmography attributed to one Julius Honorius. It claims to be the result of a survey of the whole world carried out by four learned men who were sent out for this purpose by Caesar Augustus. The work consists of lists of mountains, rivers, countries, islands, and other geographical features. It exists in two versions: (Riese, Geographi Latini Minores, pp.24-45). In the first version the list of islands in the eastern ocean is given as Hippopodes, Iannesia, Solis Perusta insula, Taprobane, Silenfantine, Teron, Carpathon, Cypros, Rhodos, Cythera, Creta. The last five islands omitted in Version B belong to the Mediterranean Sea and one might be puzzled as to how they came to be included in the eastern ocean. In view of the variant tradition it certainly appears to have been due to an error on the part of the copyist. Part of the explanation may be found in the alleged connection of the cosmography with the survey of Augustus. As the four surveyors were sent in different directions from Rome, all these islands would be listed in the eastern part. The error arose from confusions of the eastern part with the actual Eastern Ocean.

Of the islands outside the Mediterranean, the names may be traced as information derived or distorted from Pliny. Thus Hippopodes insula, located somewhere off northern Scythia, appears in Pliny N.H. iv, 13, 95, to be echoed in Solinus (19, 7): Iannessi (in other lists, Iannesia) appears to be a perversion of the Iambe insula of Pliny N.H. vi, 33, 168, situated in the Red Sea (? $\text{I}\alpha\mu\beta\eta\ \nu\eta\sigma\omicron\varsigma$):¹ Solis insula perusta confuses two Plinian references, (a) vi, 26, 97 - insula quae Solis appellatur,

1 Parthey (on Ravenna Cosmography V, 29) identified it with the Iabadiou of Ptolemy vii, 2, 29. Renou is more hesitant.

rubens, in qua nullum non animal absumitur causis incertis. The reference to this island off Carmania, itself picked up by Solinus (54, 4), attracts the attention of these later writers because of its unusual characteristics, which become a subject of great confusion; but the island itself is confused with (b) Pliny N.H. vi, 24, 86 - the island of the Sun (Ramesvaram) located in the Palk Strait. Taprobane follows in this list, presumably because of the close association between it and the Island of the Sun in Pliny; and the final item marks a return to the Red Sea area and Egypt with garbled versions of Elephantis insula (N.H. v, 10, 59) and of Ptolomais Epi Theras (vi, 34, 171 - Πτολεμαῖς ἡ τῶν Ἀγρωῶν of Periplus, 3). Thus this list of Honorius goes no further east than Taprobane, and in this it conforms with approach taken by Orosius.

This list of islands is reproduced with variations by subsequent writers who also incorporate into it some details picked up from the descriptions of Orosius and others. Thus Jordanes in his History of the Goths lists the islands as follows: Hyppodes, Iamnesia, Solis Perusta, Taprobane, Silefantina and Theron. All these islands he locates in the eastern sea but he does not include the Mediterranean islands with them as Version A of Honorius had done. He says that the Solis Perusta Insula is uninhabitable but vastly extended in length and breadth. This reminds one of what Solinus had said regarding Taprobane, that a large part of it was scorched and desert. As for Taprobane itself, Jordanes following Orosius says that it contains ten cities well appointed (munitissimas), apart from towns or estates. He also says that these islands are not described by any writer, but that they are inhabited. Jordanes here is confessedly derivative, merely following the account of Orosius.

The Ravenna Cosmography is an anonymous work based on Cosmography by one Castorius, which is thought by some scholars (e.g. Pigulewskaya) to be based on the Peutinger Table. The author however supplements Castorius with material from other sources. At the end of his work (V.28) he gives a complete list of all the important islands in the whole world, with the help of Christ the Lord. In the Ocean of India Thermantica Elamica, in the extreme south, he places the following islands: Ypode, Iamnesia, Silefentina, Theron, Argire, Atyron (or Auron), Colera, Agathodimon, Sinda Maior, Opta, Afrondiscolias. By introducing Argire, Atyron (? Satyron), Agathodimon and Sinda from Ptolemy's account (vii.2, 27-30) of Further India, the compiler has extended the limits of the known world beyond Taprobane, and derivative though he may be, his information is more in line with the superior tradition of Greek geography. Afrondiscolias is more difficult to explain: the Periegesis of Dionysius had referred to Taprobane as the island of Koliass, which commentators explain as the island of Aphrodite. Perhaps there is an echo of it here in garbled form. The Ravenna Cosmographer does in fact go on to mention Taprobane and Chryse, Taprobane being described as the most splendid island, situated in the extreme south, in which are found ten most famous states, as attested to him by his reading of Paulus Orosius.

In an earlier passage (II.4) The Ravenna Cosmographer gives us the location of Taprobane, and here he is in agreement with the Peutinger Table. He says that the Indus flows between Parthia and India. After citing the opinion of Orosius that it flows into the Erythraean Sea, and that of others who make it fall into the Persian Gulf, he gives it as his personal knowledge that it empties into the southern ocean in front of the island of Taprobane thus supporting the testimony of

Orosius. As the Peutinger Table was prepared as an extremely elongated roll, the cartographer had to describe the whole world within a limited span of latitude, and this necessitated the disorientation of many geographical features. Thus the peninsular nature of India is disregarded, and the entire coast is delineated from right to left directly above Taprobane, so that the Indus does in fact empty into the ocean facing the western end of the island.

The Cosmography of Aethicus is a composite work consisting of two parts.¹ The first part, which is called *Expositio* is a list of place-names which has very much in common with the Cosmography of Julius Honorius. The second part, called the *Descriptio*, is almost identical with the geographical section of Orosius' history. In the *Expositio*, the list of islands in the eastern sea is given thus: Hippodes, Taprobane, Silefantine, Theros, Cypros, Rhodos, Chytera, Creta, Carpathus. (*Aethici Cosmographia*, I.3, G.L.M. p.73). The list is the same as the one given in the first version of Julius Honorius, except for the fact that Aethicus has omitted two islands, namely *Iannesi Insula* and *Solis Perusta Insula*.

In the *Descriptio* the author, reproducing Orosius, speaks of Taprobane as lying to the east below cape Caligarda and says that the Indian Ocean begins to be so called from there. Whereas Orosius, Jordanes, and the Ravenna Cosmographer had said that Taprobane has ten states, Aethicus says that it has twenty. The number 20 would coincide with the number of cities mentioned by Ptolemy, but this may be a matter

¹ The author combines the two methods of geographical division current among Christian writers, namely, the fourfold division according to cardinal points, which is followed by Julius Honorius, and the threefold division associated with the three sons of Noah, which is followed by Orosius.

of pure chance, since the text is as confused as his information.¹

With this treatise of Aethicus is sometimes confused a very different and probably later work, the *Cosmography of Aethicus the Iстриan* (cf. H. Wuttke, *Die Cosmographie des Ister Aithikos*, 2nd ed. Leipzig, 1853; C. R. Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography*, Vol. I, p. 355). The Greek original is lost. What we have is a Latin version claiming to be by a priest called Jerome. As we have it, the work is full of confusions, and is unintelligible in many places. The narrative is concerned with the travels of Aethicus by sea and land, his observations on the products of the earth and men of different nations, and his trading ventures and his disputations with other philosophers. Taprobane is mentioned three times, but we learn nothing about the island, apart from the traditional association with gems.

At II.24 we are told how Aethicus, having reached the Ganges which to him also was the eastern frontier of the world, sailed with his disciples to other parts of the world and to the great and small islands from the south to the west, from Taprobane to Sirtinike and from Caliopa to Riakeon. From here he sailed beyond Gades and the pillars of Hercules, where he stayed for a year disputing with a couple of philosophers.

At II.64, speaking of a kind of pearls called Phyretros which according to him are produced in two islands of the northern sea called Ocrea and Samnite, which pay tribute to Albania, Aethicus says that

1 Cyprus and Rhodes occur again in the description of the north. In fact the work abounds in confusions. Corsica appears in the west as well as in the south. Arabia appears among towns and Noricum among islands. Such errors could occur in copying, especially if the lists are in double columns, but they betray a basic ignorance rather than knowledge of the subject matter. This growing ignorance is not to be wondered at in view of the disintegration of the Western Roman world under the impact of barbarian invasions, and the separation of Europeans from the East (~~from~~) following the expansion of Islam.

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these pearls are like those produced in Taprobane, except that they are fewer and coarser.

In II.83 he speaks of a stone called Lachon which according to him gives its name to the province of Laconia south of Macedonia. This stone is said to be found nowhere else save in that region and in the ocean between Trabundum and Taprobane where the river Trabundia empties into the Red Sea. He also says that from this island, the red earth from this stone spreads far and wide (a vague reminiscence of Island of the Sun of Pliny and Solinus). Which region and river, if any, is meant by Trabundum and Trabundia is uncertain. The association of Taprobane with red earth is interesting. According to a legend preserved in the Mahavamsa it was the copper-coloured earth of the island which gave it the name Tambapanni. But the reference in Aethicus is probably a coincidence ^{and} should not be regarded as in any way connected with the oriental legends regarding Sri Lanka. The resemblance arises from the perverse imagination of this author, based upon his vague recollections of Latin literature.

For our last text on Taprobane we reach once again the realms of verse. The Versus de Provinciis Parcium Mundi is a cosmographical poem of the seventh century based on the geographical books of the Origines of Isidorus Hispalensis and ultimately reproduces^s in some kind of form the information to be gained from Pliny and Solinus. In all 129 lines are preserved in the various MSS., two of which from Paris were used by Pertz who first published the work, (Abhandlungen den der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, Philologische-historische klasse, 1945, pp.253-270). The poem was probably written with a world map in mind and, like many Christian cosmographies, it begins in the east with a description of the earthly paradise and works westward ending with

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Britain, the Orkneys, and Iceland. The author begins with a general description of Asia in six lines, and follows this with nine lines on earthly paradise. He then speaks of India which has in its rich land many nations and large cities. Then he mentions the island of Taprobane which nourishes elephants. It is rich in gold and silver, and produces many gems: chrysoliths, beryl, diamond, carbuncle, lychnites, as well as two kinds of pearls, which he calls margaritae and uniones. He goes on to mention unicorns, camels, serpents and monkeys, and also the golden mountain guarded by beasts; but all these last remarks probably apply to India in general rather than to Taprobane in particular. As the author derives largely from Isidorus, the list of gems cannot be considered as an authentic account of the products of the island. It is rather an amplification and enumeration designed for poetic effect. The poet has amplified Isidorus' remark that the island produces pearls and gems.

There is here no genuine acquaintance with the island. It has once more been relegated to the area of legend and myth, which the Greeks a thousand years before had transformed into a real geographical entity for the western world.

CHAPTER XI

XI NUMISMATICS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

In the foregoing we have brought together and discussed all the literary evidence for Greek and Roman acquaintance with Taprobane. It remains to compare this evidence with what is known from archaeology in order to find out whether the main features revealed by the literary evidence can be confirmed by the pattern of Graeco-Roman finds on the island. Unfortunately this is not as easy an undertaking as one would have wished it to be. For, although the literary material is generally accessible in up-to-date editions of excellent scholarship, it has so far been impossible to obtain systematic information concerning relevant archaeological excavations in Sri Lanka.

The only area in which detailed accounts are available is with regard to the Roman coins found on the island. This is due largely to the labours of J. Still, and H. W. Codrington.¹ But even in this field there is much to be desired. On the one hand, there are no comprehensive reports of any Roman coin finds since the publication of Codrington's work in 1924. A find of 2828 Roman coins was reported from Debaraveva, in the Magam Oattu, but the details of the 276 identified coins have not been published (ASCAR, 1950, p.632). On the other hand, even in the work of Codrington little is said concerning the find spots

¹ J. Still: "Roman coins found in Ceylon" JRASCB XIX, 58, (1907) pp.161-190; J. Still: Catalogue of Coins exhibited in the Colombo Museum, Colombo 19-8, pp.13-26; H. W. Codrington: Ceylon Coins and Currency, Colombo 1924, ch.4, pp.31-50 and 249-50. For a discussion cf. Warmington, Commerce, pp.120-125. For references cf. H. A. I. Goonatilleke: "A bibliography of Ceylon Coins and Currency", The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, VI.2, July-December 1963, pp.187ff.

of early imperial coins in general and of silver coins in particular.

Under these circumstances, all one can hope to do is to summarise the knowledge as far as it is available, observe the main features revealed by this material, and suggest explanations which can only be provisional and tentative. No definite conclusions can be drawn until comprehensive and scientific reports are available.

In discussing the coin finds of Sri Lanka it has been customary to compare them with the more extensive finds in south India.¹ This is only natural, considering the geographical proximity of the relations. In this connection it is interesting to observe that, while there is some resemblance between the two regions with regard to coins of the fourth century and beyond, there is very little resemblance in the earlier period.

Codrington records eight republican silver denarii found in Sri Lanka. We do not know where they were found or whether they were found individually or as a hoard. They range in date from 144 to 49 B.C. This is in sharp contrast to South India where the rarity of republican denarii is a marked feature of the hoards. Fifteen republican coins were known to Sewell, but only two very worn specimens were recorded from South India, in a hoard from Kallakkinar in the Coimbatore district, and belonged to 50 and 39 B.C. respectively (Rodewald, n.389, Bolin, p.73). Although elsewhere, as late as the Flavian times a great part of Roman coins in circulation seems to have consisted of republican

1 The standard work on Roman coins found in India is still the article by Robert Sewell, JRAS 1904, pp.591-637. Wheeler produced two revised lists, Ancient India no.2, July 1946, pp.116-121, and Aspects of Archaeology, ed. W. F. Grimes, London, 1951 pp.375-81. For recent discussions cf. S. Bolin, State and Currency in the Roman Empire, to 300 A.D., Stockholm 1958, pp.65-77; M. Seshadri, "Roman Contact with South India", Archaeology XIX, 4, Oct. 1966, pp.244-7; C. Rodewald, Money in the Age of Tiberius, 1976, pp.47-51. *J.I. Miller, Spice Trade of the Roman Empire, 1969, ch. xiii, pp. 216-241.*

denarii, such coins do not appear to have found their way to Southern India, where Roman trade is now known to have existed from as early as the beginning of the Empire. Thus the occurrence of republican denarii in Sri Lanka is difficult to explain in terms of Roman commerce with South India.

A similar peculiarity is seen in the imperial coins of the first, second, and third centuries A.D. In Sri Lanka the series of silver denarii, though few in numbers, continues through this period as well. Codrington mentions fourteen silver coins: Tiberius (two specimens), Domitian, Hadrian, Lucius Verus, Marcus Aurelius, Faustina the Younger (two coins), Commodus, Geta, Julia Domna, Julia Mamaea, and two Antoniniani of Philip the Elder. There are no reports of any gold coins from this period. Thus Sri Lanka provides no parallel to the South Indian hoards of well preserved, full weight gold and silver coins with their two predominant types of Augustus and Tiberius. Moreover, the structure of later coin hoards from South India demonstrates that of the post-Neronian coins aurei were used in the Roman-Indian trade to the virtual exclusion of denarii (Bolin, p.75). But in Sri Lanka, where no aurei are reported, twelve of the fourteen silver coins recorded are post-Neronian. This is a small number, but contrasts remarkably with their scarcity in the wider geographical area of South India.

With regard to these coins too, we know very little regarding the circumstances in which they were found. The coin of Geta was purchased in Colombo by H. C. P. Bell (Still, Roman Coins, p.172). Of the two coins of Tiberius, which are of the same type, one seems to have come from a hoard, for it was the only legible coin out of 28 silver pieces which came from a find at Panadura on the coast south of

1 Still, JRASCB, 1907, p.170, cites Sir Alexander Johnston to the effect that at Mantota "a great number of Roman coins ... particularly of the Antonines, have been found". There remains no detailed record of them.

Colombo, unearthed by a native while digging a grave.¹ Barrow suggested that the coins may have been part of the collection of some Dutch gentleman curious in such matters. But it may not be altogether a coincidence that the one legible coin in the find should belong to that type of Tiberius which was preferred in South India, i.e. the "Pontifex Maximus" type. It is said to have weighed about 59 grains, i.e. nearly 3.81 grams. Bolin has drawn our attention to the high weight of Augustan and Tiberian coins found in South India. Coins of Tiberius found at Karur, for instance, weighed on the average 3.76 grams. Thus there is a possibility that the Panadura find represented a hoard of the South Indian type which, if not originally destined for the island, must have been brought from South India at some time or other.

The rarity of republican denarii in southern India, the predominance of pre-Neronian gold and silver coins of two fixed types, and the frequency of post-Neronian aurei to the virtual exclusion of denarii, indicate that in their trade with this part of the world the Romans exported coins of the highest value. What then can we make of the situation in Sri Lanka where, apart from the two Tiberian coins just mentioned, there are no pre-Neronian imperial coins of high value and where the only Roman coins of precious metal are the republican and post-Neronian silver coins rarely found in the hoards of South India? It may also be mentioned regarding post-Neronian coins in general, that in the whole of India Sewall knew only a few score dating from between 69 and 217 A.D., and about a dozen from between 217 and 364. Compared with this, the Roman coins found in Sri Lanka, though few, are

¹ G. Barrow, *Ceylon Past and Present*, 1857, pp.82-5, cited by Donald Ferguson, "Roman coins found in Ceylon", *JRAS* 1904, pp.156-7.

out of all proportion, considering its smaller geographical extent. Not knowing the circumstances of the finds, however, one cannot draw positive conclusions but the likelihood is that a substantial quantity of Roman coins reached the island during the first centuries of the empire. Why is it then that more coins have not turned up?

If one leaves aside all consideration of the accidental nature of the finds, J. Still (Roman Coins, p.164) suggested two explanations for the rarity of Roman precious metal coins in Sri Lanka. One is that trade may have been carried on by barter, "as the natives were not used to seeing large quantities of coined money". His second explanation was that gold and silver coins no longer current (as distinct from silver eddlings which remained in use for a long time), were melted down for making ornaments or for religious dedications especially in the troubled times of foreign invasions. Still referred to the rarity of genuine specimens of the Sinhalese gold and silver coinage of the 12th and 13th centuries and suggested that like them, their more ancient Roman predecessors might also have been melted down.

Warmington (pp.122-3) while accepting Still's explanations as part of the truth, gives another reason which he thinks is the chief explanation for the scarcity in Sri Lanka of coins of the first two centuries of the Empire as opposed to their abundance in nearby south India during the same period. The Greeks were content to find the products of the island in the west Indian ports and the marts of the Pandyas and Cholas to which they brought money. He points out that when a ruler of Ceylon saw Romans and good Roman money, he was surprised.

The incident referred to here is of course the famous one reported by Pliny (VI.84) where the king of Taprobane was struck by the honesty

of the Romans when he discovered that among the money taken from the ship of Annius Plocamus' freedman, the denarii were of equal weight although the types on them indicated that they were issued by several people.

This passage is usually taken to mean that up to this time the Sinhalese king had never seen Roman coins at all. But this need not be the only possible implication. In Pliny's story it is the variety of types all of the same standard which astonished the king. We have already seen that gold and silver coins exported to India consisted largely of two well known types, one each of Augustus and Tiberius. Now the freedman's ship was not originally destined for India, and his cargo may therefore have contained denarii of many types. The several people who struck them are not explicitly stated to be emperors, and the denarii may have included coins of the consulate, since outside South India such coins were in use well into Flavian times.

Thus Pliny's statement does not necessarily exclude the possibility of Roman coins of the two well-known types reaching the island before the arrival of the freedman. The fact that some of the South-Indian hoards contain coins of Augustus and Tiberius only, makes it likely that in the time of Tiberius the flow of Roman coins to India had already begun. This last point seems to be confirmed also by the fact that at Chandravalli, in Mysore, two denarii of Augustus and Tiberius were found in a stratum which also produced two fragments of Arretine ware and a sherd of the black rouletted pottery which was popular in India chiefly during the Arretine and pre-Arretine periods, i.e. before 50 A.D. (Ancient India, no.2, pp.45ff.). It should also be remembered that Tiberius deplored the sending of Roman money "to peoples outside our domains or even to our enemies in payment for precious stones," (Tacitus, Annals, III.53). Considering the closeness of the contacts

between Sri Lanka and South India at this time, it would be very strange that Roman coins should not have found their way into the island at a time when their export to South India was at its peak.

Moreover, one cannot overlook the fact that indigenous sources for this period indicate familiarity with, and use of, coined money in Sri Lanka. The Mahavamsa and its commentary refer to large amounts of money spent by kings of the island in the erection of religious edifices as well as in personal remunerations. It is true that the Mahavamsa, though it uses earlier material, was written in the fifth century A.D., at a time when the use of coins was familiar, and the author may have read into the past the familiar conditions of his own day. It has also been suggested that the sums represent the total cost of the undertaking rather than the actual quantity of money. But it may not be altogether without significance that the first reference in historical times concerns king Elara, a South Indian usurper who ruled the island for forty years during the second century B.C. (Mahavamsa XXI.26). Dutthagamini, who overthrew him, is represented as spending large sums of money on religious works. Similar expenditures are attributed in the third and fourth centuries A.D. to Jetthatissa and Mahasena (ibid. XXXVI.124-5, XXXVII.45). The sums mentioned are extremely large, but this may be due to poetic exaggeration. More reliable figures are found in inscriptions, which have the added merit of being contemporary documents (Codrington, Appendix D). The earliest are those of king Vasabha and Gajabahu (2nd century A.D.).

Apart from the reasons given by Still and Warmington, there seems to be yet another explanation for the disappearance of precious metal coins. There are some grounds for thinking that they were re-exported in some quantity either in their coined form or, more probably,

as bullion. This can be deduced from a few scattered hints in our literary evidence. It is not only the Pali chronicles that speak of the island's wealth of gold and silver. Among western authors the idea is as old as Megasthenes, who thought that the gold of Taprobane was more abundant than that of India (Pliny, VI.81). Pliny himself (VI.89) on the authority of the envoys from Taprobane says that gold and silver are much esteemed in the island. But it is Ptolemy who expressly mentions gold, silver and other minerals among the products of Taprobane. Perhaps the reference is merely due to association, since the island was known to produce pearls and gems, or else to gold and silver passing through the country in transit trade. But if Ptolemy's list represents the products that were exported from Taprobane, then it follows that foreign merchants were able to obtain gold and silver there, and melted down coins may have formed part of the supply as the island did not produce these metals.

Apart from the silver coins already mentioned, Sri Lanka also has a few early imperial coins struck in the less valuable metals. The earliest is a second brass of Augustus. There is also a Greek coin of Tiberius from the Roman protectorate of Judaea, A.D. 24-5. The others are mainly second or third brass. Among the emperors and empresses represented are Claudius, Vespasian, Hadrian, Faustina the elder, Elagabalus, Maximinus I, Postumus, Tetricus the elder, Diocletian, Maximinus II, Maximian II, Maxentius II, Licinius. Some of the latest coins in this group were found among the large hoards of fourth century copper coins discussed below. The coins of Postumus and Tetricus the elder, rulers of the short-lived empire of Gaul, are difficult to explain. In Codrington's list these coins are mentioned as purchased at the Kandy Bazaar.

Among these coins of inferior metal, there is an interesting series of Alexandrine tetradrachms of the Ptolemaic standard, mostly struck in billon.¹ Warmington, who doubts the possibility of Roman coins entering the island at this time through direct trade, thinks that these "debased tetradrachms" were passed on by South Indian Tamil merchants in order to get rid of them. However, most of these coins bear the date of issue, and it is interesting to observe that in the majority of cases these coins come from the early years of each emperor's reign. Thus we have coins from Nero's third year, Vespasian's first year, Hadrian's third and fourth years, and the first three years of Diocletian. The coins are too few to permit generalisation but it seems likely that care was taken to introduce the coins of a new emperor to their destination in the east.

It is not just Roman coins that are rare in Sri Lanka in early times. Very few foreign coins of any nation (including India) are recorded. Codrington mentions two Greek copper coins, one from Acarnania Leucas (c.350-250 B.C.) and the other of Seleucus iv (187-75 B.C.).² Two Parthian drachmae are mentioned as well as an Indo-Parthian coin of Azes II (c. 10 A.D.). Of three Indian coins found at Vallipuram, one seems to be an Andhra issue of the second or third century A.D.,

1 The coins are of Nero, Vespasian (two coins), Hadrian (three coins), Lucius Verus, Commodus, Aurelian (three coins), Probus, Diocletian (four coins) and Maximian. The coins of Nero and Vespasian were found at Kurunegala, and one of the coins of Aurelian was found in the river bed at Badulla. Alexandrine billon coins of Hadrian and Trajan have also been found on the west coast of India, Codrington, p.31.

2 A roughly circular silver coin weighing 3.52 grams and bearing the head of Dionysus is identified by Paul E. Pieris as a Naxos issue of c. 500 B.C. (*Spolia Zeylanica*, VIII, pt.30, June 1912, p.145; cf. Goonetilleke, op. cit. no.67). But it is not mentioned by Codrington, and must therefore be suspect.

and another seems to be Kushan. A late second century Kushan coin of Vasudeva has been identified. A copper coin from Attikuli in the Mannar district bears a legend in Brahmi characters datable to the third century A.D.

If this scarcity of foreign coins is an indication of the absence of foreign traders on the island, it would be hard to reconcile with the literary evidence especially with regard to the second century A.D. For Ptolemy was not only able to name the main products of the island, but his description leads us to believe that the entire coast had been circumnavigated. Some of the more southerly ports have Greek names derived from Hellenistic analogies. As we shall see presently, such a conclusion would also conflict with the existence of Arretine ware and other foreign articles datable to the first century of the Roman empire.

With regard to Roman coins of the fourth century the situation is very different. There is a sudden outburst of finds consisting mainly of copper coins of the period. Moreover, for the first time, there is a resemblance between the coin finds of Sri Lanka and those of the Madura district where too these copper coins have been found in great abundance. These coins occur not only singly but also in hoards. Most of them are extremely worn but it has been possible to read them with sufficient accuracy, and they bear the mint marks of famous cities of the Roman empire (Still, Roman Coins, p.166). The most abundant issues range from Constantine the Great to Arcadius and Honorius, and the coins of these last two emperors are probably the most frequent, occurring in almost every hoard.

Apart from these genuine Roman coins, a large number of imitations have also been discovered in the Madura district of South India as well as at a few places in Sri Lanka. They are generally of copper, but a

few gold coins also are known. Codrington divides these so-called Indo-Roman coins into two classes, while observing that the line of demarcation between the two is not always clear. The coins of the first class adhere closely to the original with the exception of the lettering, "which baffled the native minters"; the second class, far less skilfully executed than the first, are known as the Naimana type, from the place in southern Sri Lanka where a large find of these was made (op. cit. p.35). These coins, while imitating the portrait head of the emperor on the obverse, reproduce on their reverses, with varying degrees of crudeness, imitations of those types common to Roman coins which are most frequent. There are also attempts to reproduce the effect of the legend. Both Still and Codrington have discussed these imitations in detail.

The greater number of Roman copper coins found on the island belong to the last half of the fourth century A.D., but their very worn state indicates that they were in use for a long time. Codrington has suggested that the latest limit for their use was probably the first half of the seventh century. He based this suggestion on two facts. Firstly, that direct western trade ceased with the fall of Alexandria in A.D. 638, and secondly that only one coin has been found in Polonnaruva, a city first mentioned in connection with the reign of Aggabodhi I and used as a royal residence at least as early as the time of Aggabodhi IV (658-674 A.D.). Thus, if we allow the widest limits, the coins would have been in use for some three hundred years. This is not ^{at} all surprising in the ancient world, where coins enjoyed a very long period of circulation. But it may be instructive to inquire whether one could locate within these broad limits a more precise date for the coin hoards of Sri Lanka. This would enable us to get a glimpse of the historical

conditions in which these coins were used and perhaps even find an explanation for their occurrence in the form of hoards, a feature almost foreign to coin finds of earlier date.

At Sigiriya, out of a total of 1697 coins found, 1685 were Roman or Indo-Roman. This place was the capital only in the reign of Kassapa I (479-497 A.D.), and it was handed over to the monks on his death. The latest Roman coins are those of Arcadius and Honorius. Now even at the earliest reckoning, Sigiriya did not become the capital until well over fifty years after the death of Honorius in 424 A.D. Thus the coins were in circulation at least for over half a century before they were abandoned.

In the largest hoards, such as those from Colombo, Balapitiya, and Boragoda, the latest coins included are those of Arcadius and Honorius. These hoards could not therefore have been deposited until well into the fifth century A.D. Moreover, a few hoards contain in addition to the above, coins of Theodosius II, whose reign ended only in 450 A.D. Such hoards are Vatapulva, Kapuhēnvala (Tangalla district), and Valaichchenai (eastern province). These hoards also contain Indo-Roman coins and the Kapuhēnvala hoard is said to have included a Sassanid or Indo-Sassanid coin. It was the opinion of H. Mattingly that the local imitations of the Roman "third brass" may be due to the fact that very few of this species of coin were issued by the Roman mints after the reign of Theodosius II. Thus the Indo-Roman series would commence in the second half of the fifth century (Codrington, p.250). Since these imitations have been found at Sigiriya, Naimana, Kalmunai (in Jaffna), Anuradhapura, and many other places, it is apparent that the majority of the copper hoards were lost during the second part of the fifth century A.D. at the earliest.

The occurrence of these well worn copper coins "at almost every petty port" as well as at various places in the interior has led to the very plausible supposition that, at the time they were in use, these coins formed the currency of the island. Consistent with this is the fact that few other coins of the period, whether local, Indian, or foreign, have been found. The Roman hoards sometimes contain Sassanid or Indo-Sassanid coins, and coins of Yezdigerd I (A.D. 397-417) have been recognised among them. Codrington also mentions some gold coins, purchased in Colombo, of the Çuptas, and of Harsha, the 7th century ruler of Kanauj. Some copper coins of the "small lion or dog" type have been found at Anuradhapura, and these are thought to belong to the Pallavas of South India with whom Sri Lanka had close contact in the later Anuradhapura period (Still, Catalogue, nos. 219-224). But on the whole, the Roman copper coins predominate. It was once thought that the presence of the "third brass" in large quantities at Madura was a possible indication of the presence of a colony of resident Roman agents in the Pandyan capital (Codrington, ch.4, S.5). In Sri Lanka these coins are not confined to one locality. Codrington believed that in both countries the introduction of the "third brass" was possibly a successful commercial speculation on the part of the western merchants who could not have failed to notice the practical absence of small change. That this currency met with popular favour is evident, he says, from the fact that it was imitated.

However, if the presence of these coins indicates the activities of "western" merchants, one cannot assume that they came from the Roman or Byzantine empire itself. There are grounds for believing that in the earlier centuries of the empire Graeco-Roman merchants did actually penetrate into South India, but in the fifth century, the situation had

changed. The narrative of Palladius concerning the adventures of the Theban lawyer shows that it was not easy for the "Romans" to get into the eastern waters. The 11th book of Cosmas, despite its mention of a Christian church in Sri Lanka, gives the impression that the "Romans" had been made to recede very much into the background by the activities of the Axumites and the Persians.

According to Warmington (pp.123-4) the abundance of coins at this time is due partly to revival of western energy through Axumite, Himyarite, and Persian middlemen after the foundation of Constantinople as the seat of empire, and partly to the gradual shifting of the focus of trade from the Malabar coast southward to Ceylon, which appears as the main focus of trade in Indian seas by the sixth century. He therefore thinks that Roman coins were brought by the middlemen. Warmington also believes that the frequency of the coins of Arcadius and Honorius is due to the fresh demand for pearls, spices, and precious stones created by the barbarians who harassed and invaded the western empire.

According to Warmington it was the Indians themselves who produced the imitation coins, and the cessation of the Roman coins after Honorius is due to the fact that the middlemen, considering the supplies to be inadequate in view of the native imitations, ceased to import. However, we have already seen that the issue of "third brass" was cut down after Theodosius II, and it is more likely that the Indo-Roman coins were the result rather than the cause of the cessation of Roman coins. On the other hand, the opinion of Chwostow and Warmington that the Roman coins were brought by the middlemen is acceptable, in view of the diminished Roman activities in the east revealed by our literary evidence.

The above explanation may account for the presence of the "third brass" in the east; but it is not sufficient to account for the special

features peculiar to the coin finds in the Madura district, and Sri Lanka. The similarity in the coin pattern of these two regions at this time suggests that they had some aspect in common not present elsewhere. Perhaps the explanation lay in the history of the two nations.

It has already been mentioned that the latest coins in some of these hoards could not have been lost until c. 450 A.D. Now in mid-fifth century, Sri Lanka was under foreign rule, having been invaded by South Indians under one Pandu, probably a Pandya chief from Madura. He set up a dynasty at Anuradhapura which, according to the Mahavamsa, ruled for 27 years (433-460 A.D.) until it was uprooted by the Sinhalese under Dhatusena. It is possible that Roman copper coins as well as the imitations were introduced into the island largely by these Tamil invaders from Madura.

In general, the coin finds in Sri Lanka are restricted to the coast and their greatest concentration in hoards occurs on the western and southern shores. They are fewer in the north, and seem to come mainly from places which, apart from their political and economic importance, are also of some religious significance, e.g. Anuradhapura, Mihintale, Sigiriya, Kantarodai, Udappu, and Mantota.

On comparing this pattern with that of the distribution of early inscriptions (which provides a rough indication of the distribution of population) it becomes clear that outside the main capital cities and ports, such as Anuradhapura, Sigiriya, Mantota and Rohana, where there is a correlation such as one expects to find, the regions of dense population have yielded fewer coins while the heavier finds are concentrated in thinly populated regions.¹

¹ W. Rahula, A History of Buddhism in Ceylon (Colombo 1966) gives a map which indicates distribution of inscription sites as known in 1956. Codrington (Ceylon Coins and Currency, p.32) lists find sites of coins, which may be plotted on a modern map to provide the basis for this comparison.

The ancient settlements of Sri Lanka were based largely on the production of food crops under irrigation, and were concentrated mainly in the dry zone which was suitable for this purpose. The wet zone of the south west, on the other hand, was largely covered with jungle, and produced not only the so-called "cash crops" such as ginger, turmeric, pepper, and (later) cinnamon, but also the ivory and precious stones which were so important for the island's foreign trade. Thus the ports on the south western coast, where so many coins are found, would have acted as outlets for the commercial products of the wet zone.

It thus appears that the sudden outburst of coin hoards of the fifth century is connected in some way with the island's capacity to produce the precious items of foreign commerce. Reference has already been made to the increased demand for these luxuries in the west. The Tamils of South India who traditionally supplied these commodities to western merchants and/or their middlemen, were doubtless pressed for increased supplies; and it was natural that they should explore and exploit fresh sources. It is probably here that one should look for the background and the purpose of the Tamil invasion of Sri Lanka in mid-fifth century. The invaders ruled from Anuradhapura, but their interests penetrated far beyond the northern kingdom. We learn from inscriptions that they patronised Buddhist shrines in the south.

The burying of hoards would be a desperate measure adopted in troubled times, and two possibilities might be suggested. First that they were hidden by natives in order to protect them from the Tamils who penetrated into the south in search of commodities and, presumably, proved a harassment to the local communities. If this was so, then it follows that the copper coins were used as currency by the Sinhalese of the time. The second, and perhaps the more probable explanation is

that the hoards represent the possessions of the Tamils who had to abandon them when they were repelled by the Sinhalese under Dhatusena. The Tamils must have brought large quantities of coin from Madura, perhaps for their own use, or perhaps to pay the natives who gathered spices for them. That the hoards were abandoned due to the Sinhalese uprising is consistent with their constitution which implies a late fifth century date for them. The use of the copper coins probably continued in the island after the repulse of the Tamils, and the scattered finds throughout Sigiriya are perhaps testimony to the commotion that must have followed the defeat and death of Kassapa I.

The Pandya invasion appears to have produced a change in the coinage pattern of Sri Lanka as compared with that of South India. As distinct from the differences of earlier periods, the similarity of the coin pattern in the two countries continues for some time. This is evident from the presence in both countries of gold coins of the later emperors, especially those of Byzantium. The coins found in India include those of Theodosius II, Marcian, Leo, Zeno, Anastasius and Justin (Codrington p.31). The gold coins in Sri Lanka include those of Valens, Arcadius, Theodosius II, Basiliscus, Leo, Zeno, Justinian and Heraclius I. In addition, it is recorded that early in the nineteenth century a pot of gold coins inscribed "konob-obryza" were found in the north of Sri Lanka, apparently in the Jaffna peninsula. As Codrington says, these may have been solidi of the Byzantine period.

Codrington (op. cit. 252-3) also mentions eighteen coins bought from a man in Colombo which may or may not have been found in Sri Lanka. If they constituted a hoard, then it was a very extraordinary one. For, together with coins of Constantius II (two coins), Valentinian I, Valens, Honorius (three coins), Theodosius II, Anastasius, Justinian

(two coins), and Maurice Tiberius, there was a coin of Titus (A.D. 79-81). The occurrence of this early coin in a collection largely consisting of Byzantine solidi is difficult to explain.¹

The presence of solidi indicates that gold was the precious metal that was now preferred in India and Sri Lanka. The South Indians had indeed preferred the Roman aureus to the denarius ever since Nero reduced the silver content of the latter. But as no aurei, and few denarii, are found in Sri Lanka, we cannot know whether a similar tendency prevailed on the island. But from the fifth century onwards the preference for gold coins is evident. Like the copper coins, the gold coins were also imitated. An imitation half-solidus was found between Veyangoda and Mihirigama (Codrington p.45). Mention is also made of four specimens of a thin gold coin with a bust on the obverse and a cross on the reverse. Though based on late Roman types, the bust displays oriental features (Codrington, p.42; and in Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register, I, p.202). Moreover, native sources dealing with the later Anuradhapura period refer to gold coins (Suvanna), whereas in earlier times the coin mentioned was the Kahapana. In the Polonnaruva period the Sinhalese kings issued their own gold coins for which the prototype, according to Codrington, was the Gupta coinage, of which a few specimens are recorded from Sri Lanka. On the other hand, S. Paranavitana thinks that the Sinhalese kalanda could have been based on the Roman solidus. A gold coinage with the Kalanda as standard and

1 There is perhaps a parallel in two mediaeval hoards of Chinese coins, one found in the royal precincts of Polonnaruva, the other from Yapahuva. (W. Willett, "Ceylon and China, pt.3", Ceylon Today, X.2, pp.19-20). Both hoards, while containing chiefly coins of Chinese emperors from T'ai-tsung (976-988) to Li-tsung (1225-1265) also contain coins of Kao-Tsu, the first T'ang emperor (618-627 A.D.) who reigned over 300 years before T'ai-tsung.

fractional pieces of half, quarter, and eighth, is said to have been in circulation in the ninth and tenth centuries (Concise History of Ceylon, p.165). Inscriptions of the later period generally mention sums of money in terms of kalandas of gold, (cf. those cited in Codrington, Appendix D).

To return to the Byzantine period, it appears that the preference for gold coins was exploited by the Roman merchants and their middlemen. We learn from Cosmas that the best gold coins were picked out for export to the east, and that they competed successfully with the silver coins of the Persians. Cosmas tells us how Sopatrus succeeded in convincing the Sinhalese king of the superiority of the Romans by getting him to compare the image on the Roman gold coin with that on the Persian silver coin. Reference has already been made to the doubts of Tennent and others regarding the authenticity of this story, doubts arising from an unwarranted comparison with Pliny's story concerning the freedman of Annus Plocamus. Warmington (pp.294-5) even goes so far as to say that the admiration for the Byzantine coinage in Ceylon in the sixth century must be taken "not as a fact but as a mournful reflection upon what really happened in days gone by". But there is no reason to doubt the historicity of Sopatros' adventure, and there is certainly no justification for identifying it with the story of Pliny which after all concerns an incident that took place some five centuries before Cosmas.

Taken literally, the story of Sopatros reveals that the king was already familiar with Roman and Persian coins. The way Sopatros tells the king "You have both kings here", and "You have the money of both kings", and also the fact that the king ordered the coins to be produced, implies that he already possessed coins of both nations. One need not therefore assume that the king was unfamiliar with foreign coins, or that

he was looking at them for the first time. What Sopatros invites the king to do is to look at the coins in a new way, i.e. compare them with each other and from such a comparison, to draw his own conclusion about the culture, wealth and power of the two empires, which the king duly does. However, when Cosmas says later that the king of Sieldiba values elephants at so many nomismata per cubit of height, this need not imply that the king did his transactions in Roman money only. Cosmas is speaking in terms familiar to his Greek readers and all that can be inferred is that money, Roman or otherwise, was offered in exchange for elephants. As Cosmas does not tell us where the elephants came from, we do not even know whether the payments were made to natives or foreigners.

If Persian drachmae and Roman solidi reached the island in quantity in the fifth and sixth centuries, their disappearance may be due not only to melting down, but also to the large-scale plundering that accompanied the many foreign invasions of the late Anuradhapura period. The chronicles continue to mention lavish sums of gold spent by the kings in religious works. Thus in the eighth century, Aggabodhi I is said to have spent 26,000 Suvannas (gold coins) in repairing the dilapidated structures at the Cetiya Pabbata (Mahavamsa, XLVIII.7). Melting down is perhaps documented in the Mahavamsa account of king Mahinda II (ninth century). We are told that "out of his great wealth he also made an image of the Teacher out of 60,000 of pure gold" (ibid. XLVIII.137).

The use of the silver drachma appears to have continued into the Polonnaruva period. In the Anuradhapura Ruvanveli Dagoba inscription of Nissankamalla (Epigraphia Zeylanica, II.81), it is stated that this king with his chief queen and the heir apparent mounted the scale

pans and caused great showers of gifts to fall by throwing down in the king's street unlimited quantities of wealth including the seven kinds of jewels, and silver "tiram". The word "tiram", as the editor suggests, may represent the drachma. If so, it is interesting to observe that the Sinhalese form derives not from the Sanskrit "dramma" but from the Arabic "dirham" or Persian "diram" through the Tamil form "tiramam" found on several Pandya and Chola inscriptions of the 11th-13th centuries (Codrington, "Ridi Tiram", JRASCB XXIV.68, 1916, Notes and Queries, pt.5 pp.LXXIX-LXXX). The derivation, if correct, indicates the possible route through which the coins reached Sri Lanka. Codrington, following Wikramasingha, thinks that the coin in question may have been the silver drachma of the Greeks. But it may well be the Persian drachma which, as we learn from Cosmas, was found in the island even in Sopatros' time, or perhaps an Arabic coin. Further, one cannot exclude the possibility that the reference is simply to the silver eldlings which are known to have been current for a long time in ancient Sri Lanka. However, in the absence of any positive evidence to the effect that the eldlings at this time acquired the general name of "tiram", it is more probable that the word signifies some foreign silver coin.

The above is all that can be said with confidence at the moment with regard to Roman coins found in Sri Lanka. Our information on artefacts of Graeco-Roman origin is even less satisfactory. Such objects have been reported from time to time as being found at various sites throughout northern Sri Lanka. But reports concerning them are very inadequate, and without systematic details (e.g. with regard to stratification), one cannot understand them in their cultural or chronological context. Two sites appear to be of primary importance: Mahatittha (Mantota, or Mantai), the site of the famous shrine of Tiruketisvaram,

and Kantarodai, an ancient settlement in the Jaffna peninsula. The importance of these sites for evidence concerning foreign trade was stressed by C. Rasanayagam (Ancient Jaffna, pp.84-5), and more recently by W. Begley in the outline of a project for archaeological exploration in northern Sri Lanka (Expedition, Bulletin of the University Museum of Pennsylvania, IX.4, Summer 1967, pp.21-29). This project did not go ahead at the time due chiefly to economic reasons. The Archaeology Dept. of the Sri Lanka government has carried out recent excavations on both sites, but reports are not available, although it has been rumoured that objects of Graeco-Roman origin have been found.

We have already mentioned the literary evidence that goes to show that Mantota was the great port of the Anuradhapura kingdom throughout its long existence, and the probability that it was the great port and emporium mentioned by Cosmas. The ruins above ground on this site are all comparatively modern, brick and mortar of the Polonnaruva period.¹ But excavations have yielded pottery, glazed and unglazed glass of various colours, chank shells and ornaments made from them, as well as large quantities of beads and coins (ASCAR 1907, p.28). A. M. Hocart stressed the importance of Mantai as being one of the few stratified sites in Sri Lanka, and an exceptionally good one at that, as it had at least nine feet of debris and perhaps a good deal more. Thanks to some coins, he was able to date the surface layer and obtained "a good idea of the pottery and beads of the 13th and 14th centuries". In the 1928

¹ Hugh Nevill (Taprobanian, Dec. 1887, p.167) noticed the peculiarity of the stone-work which did not compare with anything else on the island. He conjectured that it belonged to a transition form between the Persian or Saracen and the Chinese and Japanese; but he was unable to decide whether it was imported from the east or the west.

excavations, a depth of 19 feet was reached, in the course of which minor changes in the pottery were noticed (cf. ASCAR 1926, p.15, 1927 p.16, 1928 p.J6, and 1929 p.J5).

But it was the excavations of S. Sanmukanathan that revealed the significance of the site in terms of Graeco-Roman contacts (ibid. 1950, p.15, and 1951 p.G33). He reported the discovery of considerable types and forms of pottery from Rome, Arabia and China and among them Arretine pottery "which should be a source for dating the strata". He also found beads of considerable variety and a small ivory miniature of a chariot drawn by four horses. The pottery included "such varied and clearly recognizable types as Roman red ware, Arikamedu-type rouletted ware, Chinese celadon and Persian glazed ware of mediaeval times, indicating a long occupation" (Begley, p.23). Hugh Nevill (loc. cit.) has described some glass fragments found in the mounds of Mantota, including both blown and moulded glass, which might bear comparison with Mediterranean products, and may have been imported.

Accounts of coin finds in this area are extremely nebulous. The claims of the Portuguese to have found Roman ruins and coins of Claudius cannot be taken seriously. The coins described are now thought to belong perhaps to Constantine I. During the last century, a great number of Roman coins of different emperors, chiefly of the Antonines, were reported, but none has been preserved or described (Still, Roman Coins, p.169). Thus one has to depend solely on the evidence of Arretine ware for determining the chronology.

Among the finds at Kantarodai, Rasanayagam mentions (p.84) large quantities of beads of various kinds and fragments of necklaces of different shapes and sizes made of glass and coral, carnelian and agate, jade and alumina, with holes perforated for stringing together,

and ancient coins both Roman and Indian. "These finds have almost all been confined to the western portion of the village which should represent the residential quarters of royalty, while temples and sacred buildings seem to have been placed more towards the east". In a footnote Rasanayagam says that the beads etc., were inspected by Prof. Flinders Petrie at Dr. Nell's request. "The professor is certain that they are Egyptian of the Ptolemaic period and came by way of trade between Egypt and Ceylon." Roman coin finds on the site were reported as 150 small bronze of the fourth century, including Constantine I, Constans, Valentinian, Theodosius, Arcadius, Honorius, and one Indo-Roman (Codrington, p.33). Most of the above material was collected during the excavations carried out by P. E. Pieris early in the present century.

More recent archaeological finds at Kantarodai include substantial quantities of pottery, as well as iron slag, coral pieces, and a fragmentary Lakshmi plaque, all in association with rouletted ware (Begley, pp.25-6). The pottery was broadly of three kinds: (1) a limited quantity identical with the rouletted ware and its variants from Arikamedu "in all likelihood imported from the Indian coast". One rim sherd of a Roman red ware cup was also found; (2) parallels to the "megalithic black and red ware of South India, where it is found extensively in association with the iron age material, a few sherds also being found at Arikamedu"; (3) a thick ware used for larger jars and cooking vessels, most probably of local manufacture. (Sherds of the first two types were also found at the Gedigē site at Anuradhapura.)

The occurrence of imported pottery at Mantota, Kantarodai, and other sites in northern Sri Lanka indicates the close contact that was maintained with South India, where the island participated in the

international trade of the ancient world. Systematic excavation and study should eventually lead to fixing the date of such contacts. Especially significant in this respect is the Arretine ware and the rouletted ware of the Arikamedu type. Wheeler (Ancient India, no.2, p.35) proposed A.D. 20-50 as the inclusive period for the Arretine pottery at Arikamedu.¹ As for the rouletted black ware, it is present at Arikamedu in all strata of all excavated sites, thus both preceding and outlasting the Arretine ware by an appreciable margin. It is however more abundant in the pre-Arretine and Arretine strata, than in the post-Arretine, thus signifying that the type became less popular after the middle of the first century A.D. "The first appearance of the

1 M. P. Charlesworth, while accepting Wheeler's dating of the Arretine ware at Arikamedu, thinks that a slightly later date might be possible "since India would offer a safe dumping ground for out of fashion stuff" (Studies in Roman Economic and Social History, pp.135-6). J. Filliozat, (Revue Historique, CCI 1949, pp.1-29; esp. pp.19-21) while granting the possibility of Arretine ware being imported to Arikamedu after A.D. 50, thinks nevertheless that Wheeler's dating can be confirmed. He suggests that, in as much as the Brahmi script of Asoka's edicts persists in Sinhalese inscriptions of the first century A.D., the Tamil inscriptions at Arikamedu, written in the same script, need not necessarily date from the second century B.C. as has been previously suggested, but may be as late as the first century A.D. He has tentatively dated one inscription to A.D. 24 by comparing its date with that of the two Tonigala inscriptions of Vattagamani Abhaya (Valagamba). These latter are dated from the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka, and Filliozat thinks that the same Asokan era was used on the peninsula which, like Sri Lanka, was included in the cultural sphere of Asoka, as we learn from the 2nd and 13th rock edicts. Filliozat therefore agrees with Wheeler that the trading station was in operation from the first half of the first century A.D.

Rodewald (op. cit. n.401) draws attention to the observations of Ludwig Ohlenroth (Germania, XXX 1952, pp.309-92) who has pointed out the absence from the Arikamedu sherds of the decoration characteristic of that period (A.D. 20-50), and from a comparison of them with the Arretine ware found in datable contexts in Roman camps in Germany, Oberaden, Oberhausen and Haltern, concludes that they should rather be attributed to the later years of Augustus; for the kind found is that which predominates among the later finds at Haltern, a camp destroyed in A.D. 16. This does not affect the present discussion to a significant extent, but is worth bearing in mind, should there arise the possibility of examining in detail Arretine ware from Northern Sri Lanka.

rouletted pattern at Arikamedu is therefore as early as the first century B.C. or the beginning of the first century A.D. . . . while its terminal date is determined by the latest occupation in the southern sector of the town, attributable to circa A.D. 200" (ibid. pp.45ff.). Although the pattern originates from the Mediterranean, the origin of the product itself is uncertain, and the varieties of distinctly inferior fabric and degenerate rouletted pattern may have been manufactured locally (ibid.). From the above it is clear that one cannot compare the rouletted ware of Sri Lanka with those of Arikamedu, and investigate any possible connection until full descriptions of the sherds are furnished.

For the time being, we may accept for our purpose the preliminary observations of the Pennsylvania team concerning the habitation area of Kantarodai as outlined by Wimala Begley (p.24). She notes substantial surface finds of sherds parallel to those of iron age and early historical wares of South Indian (i.e. "megalithic" black and red ware and rouletted Arikamedu type pottery in all its varieties). A trial excavation showed top levels coeval with the early Arikamedu period, but deeper excavation could not be carried out. The information from this reconnaissance thus confirmed the upper levels as being of 1st and 2nd century date, with the lower levels still a matter of conjecture, and certainty depending upon further full-scale investigation and adequate recording.

From this it appears that northern Sri Lanka was in commercial contact with India during the early centuries of the Christian era when Arikamedu was flourishing as a trading station on the east-Indian coast. The presence of Arretine pottery points to the conclusion that articles of foreign origin were already arriving on the island during the first half of the first century A.D. This is consistent with the evidence of

the chronicles which represent the island under Tamil influence, and sometimes under Tamil rule, during the first centuries B.C. and A.D. and also with the testimony of Strabo who says that much cargo was brought from Taprobane to the Indian markets. It should also be pointed out that these findings do not contradict Pliny's statement that better knowledge of the island became available during the reign of Claudius, or our identification of the delegates from Taprobane with those envoys of Bhatikabhaya who were sent to the Roman country to obtain coral. The retrojection of this diplomatic mission back to the time of Augustus on a priori grounds is thus quite unnecessary. Even if the island were opened to western commerce only by this embassy, it could have taken place early in the reign of Claudius, and thus would not exclude the arrival of Arretine ware before the middle of the century. On the other hand, the excellent information concerning the climate and navigation of the Sri Lanka coast that Pliny obtained from previous writers and set forth in VI, 82-3, makes it likely that at the beginning of the first century A.D. the Romans in Indian markets had obtained not only the natural wealth of Taprobane, but also considerable knowledge regarding the island. Thus, as far as can be ascertained, the archaeological evidence is in agreement with the chronicles and the western writers with regard to the island's foreign contacts in the early days of the Roman empire. Only the numismatic evidence seems to be lacking, and the explanations mentioned above are on the whole acceptable. It may also be observed that the excavated sites at Arikamedu have not yielded any Roman coins in those layers which have provided evidence of occupation during the first two centuries A.D., even though Roman coins of the first century are abundant in the rest of South India.

One problem that needs investigation is the commercial context in which one can understand the provenance of Graeco-Roman objects in northern Sri Lanka. Mortimer Wheeler has suggested that the purpose of settlement at Arikamedu was to consolidate the trade with Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. At Arikamedu, apart from glass and clay, the substances most extensively used for the manufacture of beads are chalcedonic and crystalline quartz in their many varieties (Wheeler, *Ancient India*, 2, p.121). They are found in many districts throughout India, but they also occur in Sri Lanka, whose gems and pearls were of ancient renown. If some of the material at Arikamedu did come from Sri Lanka, then the pottery, beads, and other articles may have formed the cargo that was sent in exchange for them. Some gem producing regions of the Deccan have yielded Graeco-Roman artefacts. Many of the coins come from the beryl-producing Coimbatore district, and Arikamedu type rouletted ware has turned up at Chandravalli and Brahmagiri in the Chitaldrug district of northern Mysore, and at Amaravati in the Nellore district of the Madras presidency, both sites in the neighbourhood of gem producing areas. Thus the artefacts in northern Sri Lanka may also indicate the early exploitation of the natural wealth of the island.

On the other hand, Roman red ware and rouletted ware, beads and other articles of Graeco-Roman origin have turned up at many ports on the West Indian coast as well as in the interior (C. Margabandhu, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, VIII. 1965, pp.316-22). Red polished ware and Graeco-Roman antiquities are found at a number of places in and around Kathiawar and Gujarat provinces in general. This was one of the areas producing semi-precious stones. Among the finds at Broach (the Barygaza of the Greeks) were beads in large quantities in all stages of manufacture, indicating a local

industry. The rouletted wares from Nasik (on the Godavari) are said to be similar to those of Arikamedu.

The occurrence of Graeco-Roman objects and a bead industry in western and central Deccan as well as on the east coast is perhaps an indication of the existence of overland caravan traffic during this period. The finding of similar material at several sites in northern Sri Lanka suggests that the island was drawn into this network of Indo-Roman trade, though in what context we cannot yet say. Mantota is located on the Palk Strait "on the route of ancient overseas trade from the Mediterranean to the east, and in close proximity to the southeastern coast of India" (Begley, p.23). But whether the role of "mediatrix" between east and west, which Cosmas in the early sixth century assigned to the island, was already being played in the first century A.D. is something that cannot be determined in our present state of knowledge. All we can say is that our literary evidence does not lead us to believe it.

One peculiarity of the Sri Lanka finds may conveniently be mentioned here. Unlike in India, foreign articles in northern Sri Lanka are found either on sites of religious significance or in settlements associated with shrines. This is true of Mantota, Kantarodai, Vallipuram, Anuradhapura and many other places. It is also significant that the only instance of western imports mentioned in the Pali literature of Sri Lanka concerns the homage paid to a Buddhist shrine by king Bhatikabhaya. Religion seems to have played an important part in determining the nature of demand for foreign articles. Thus archaeology strengthens the evidence of the chronicles which constantly stress the importance of religion in the political and cultural life of the people of Sri Lanka.

Wheeler (Aspects of Archaeology, pp.370f.) concludes from the archaeological evidence at Arikamedu that within the first two decades of the first century A.D. Roman "factories" were already being established in certain major east coast ports for the dual purpose of exploiting local traffic with Ceylon and of prospecting up the east coast towards the Ganges and Indonesia. But, according to him, until the third quarter of the first century A.D. there was no regular direct communication between Rome and Ceylon, and Roman vessels were not in the habit of rounding Cape Comorin; hence the importance of the overland route from west to east through the Coimbatore gap in the early years of the principate. Hence too the absence in Sri Lanka of Roman coins from the first half of the first century A.D. Wheeler refers to the remark of Strabo (XV. C686) that only stray individuals had in his day sailed round India towards the Ganges and that no useful information was forthcoming from them. He also points out that for the author of the Periplus first-hand knowledge stops at Nelcynda on the Malabar coast, but does not seem to consider Pliny's comments about the sailing times from the island to the Ganges. Indeed, although some part of the information which Pliny received from the Sinhalese embassy was confirmed by the reports of Roman prospectors (Pliny, VI.88), Wheeler thinks that they had not yet visited the island but must have received some account of it through trade channels: "Otherwise the Roman castaway would not have been such a novelty to the local king".

A similar view is also expressed by M. P. Charlesworth (loc. cit.) who thinks that the Arretine ware could not have been brought to Arikamedu in western ships, which may not have rounded Cape Comorin until the end of the first century. He too points to the lack of first hand knowledge in the Periplus beyond Cape Comorin, and says that the pottery was

brought by Indian, and not Roman ships, or was perhaps conveyed overland through the Coimbatore gap. In other words, not more than an occasional Graeco-Roman ship got through to the eastern side of the Indian peninsula, until after the end of the first century A.D. He questions the capacity of the average Graeco-Roman ship to surmount the formidable barrier of Adam's Bridge between India and Sri Lanka, and suggests that the rarity of Roman coins of the first three centuries A.D. in Sri Lanka shows that the alternative, i.e. the circumnavigation of the island, was not yet in use.

It would now appear that these conclusions will need modification to some extent once details of finds in northern Sri Lanka are available. For instance, the occurrence of Arretine ware in association with other pottery types also found at Arikamedu makes it very likely that the Palk Strait was in use, perhaps concurrently with the overland route, for the transport of merchandise between east and west India. The fact that so many coin hoards were lost in the Coimbatore gap, on the other hand, may mean that it was not the safest route for Roman wares. The sea route would have been the safer, especially once the Romans (with their archers on board, garrison at Cape Comorin, Periplus S.59, and similar measures) were able to keep in check the menaces of the "pirate coast". In any case it was the cheaper route. It is therefore possible that both routes were used concurrently from the very beginning, and that the sea route was perhaps even preferred, leading eventually to the abandonment of the overland route as deduced by Wheeler from the cessation of Roman coins in the second century.

The early use of the route through the Palk Strait is confirmed not only by the excellent quality of Pliny's pre-Claudian information (VI.82-3, which incidentally includes remarks on the shallowness of the

sea in-between), but also from the statements of the Periplus (S.60). Regarding the marts and anchorages on the eastern shore among which Kamara, Podouke and Sopatma are mentioned, the Periplus says that merchants from Limyrikē and the north arrive there, that the native coasting vessels found there proceed as far as Limyrikē, that there are other vessels called "sangara" and Kolandiophonta (the latter being employed for voyages to Chryse and the Ganges), and that these marts import all the commodities which reach Limyrikē, absorbing likewise nearly every species of goods brought from Egypt, and most exports from Limyrikē. Significantly, the author then goes out of his way to mention the products of Taprobane before resuming the coastal description, showing thereby that the island had been drawn into this brisk commerce. A mid-first century date for the Periplus makes it more or less contemporary with the evidence of the Arretine pottery, and would be in harmony with Pliny's pre-Claudian information. The cumulative evidence is therefore in favour of believing that the Palk Strait was in use by the middle of the first century A.D.

The suggestion of Charlesworth that these goods were conveyed by native ships is admissible, in as much as the Periplus expressly says that this was the case. Pliny too describes the special reversible craft peculiar to this area, with their tonnage of about 3,000 amphorae. But it does not follow that the trade itself was entirely in the hands of the natives,¹ or that the Romans did not take an active interest in

1 One cannot endorse the opinion of Filliozat (op. cit. pp.10ff.) that the Romans took no active part in organising the Indian trade. Filliozat thinks that, since according to Pliny's timetable the Roman ships in India stayed for only a couple of months, the merchandise was collected beforehand at those designated ports which the Periplus describes. While some Yavanas may have penetrated into Indian towns

[cont. ...]

the regions beyond Cape Comorin. They may not have personally gathered the products of the east, but one cannot imagine them leaving the whole concern in the hands of natives. If there were Roman factories on the east coast of India, then it is quite probable that there were "Romans" in those regions. It is in this context that one should read the accounts of the Tamil poets concerning the dwellings of the Yavanas at Puhar on the Kaveri river.

There is, however, no literary evidence whatsoever before the arrival of the Sinhalese embassy to indicate the presence of Romans in Sri Lanka, apart from the fact that knowledge about the island was available to them from sources other than the companions of Alexander or the Greek envoys at Pataliputra. The Sinhalese, on the other hand, may have been aware of Roman enterprise on the mainland. Bhatikabhaya, in any case, knew enough about them to send to Rome for coral, instead of buying in Indian marts, when he needed this commodity for a special religious occasion.

1 [... cont.] and even dwelt there as just one more caste, the actual organisation of the commerce was, he says, in the hands of the Indians who had much to gain from it. He refers to Pliny's remark that pepper was brought to Bacare in native "monoxyllae", and points out that Indian merchandise was brought to the Mediterranean by various intermediaries across a number of routes well before the establishment of Roman power. In other words, the Romans could obtain eastern merchandise without having to go and look for it.

r/ This hypothesis completely ignores our evidence. The hoards of Roman coins in India, the increased references to exotic goods (especially Indian products) in the Augustan and post-Augustan literature of the Roman empire, and the references to western commerce in the contemporary Tamil literature leave no doubt that once the use of the monsoons was discovered, peace was restored under Augustus, and Aden - the entrepot of the middlemen - was subdued, direct commerce between east and west grew more and more intensive. The arrival of foreign embassies to the emperors, the sophisticated customs organisation in Egypt, and the existence of works like the Periplus, all lead us to believe that the role of the "Roman" merchants in eastern trade was not simply that of passive clients. Indeed, the record of a Temple of Augustus at Muziris in the Peutinger Table indicates permanent and intensive settlement at an earlier date.

CHAPTER XII

XII CONCLUSION

In the course of this research an attempt has been undertaken to bring together all the available notices of Taprobane in Greek and Latin texts, and to find out what sort of a picture of the island they created for the readers of the West. Not only are all the texts now brought together in one place for convenient study, but, for the first time, they have been systematically classified.

The study began by asking how far these writings reflect contemporary conditions in Sri Lanka, and how useful they are as sources for the ancient history of that land. Once the texts were arranged chronologically, it was evident that many of the later writers did not provide independent information, but merely reproduced what was learned from earlier writers. It therefore became clear that what had hitherto been considered as primary sources, had themselves to be subdivided into original sources and derivatives. Moreover, it was possible to classify all the derivative notices according to the common originals to which they were traced. For instance, several of the late Latin notices ultimately go back to Pliny, while many late Greek writers owe their information to Ptolemy. Hence the prevalent practice of quoting indiscriminately from individual writers (such as "Agathemerus") as primary sources for Sri Lanka can no longer be commended. Of some forty Greek and Latin authors who have written on Taprobane, only a handful deserve our attention as primary sources. The knowledge of the island first revealed by a companion of Alexander, culminated in the excellent and exhaustive accounts of Pliny and Ptolemy, and little was added to that knowledge thereafter, with the exception, possibly of Palladius, and certainly of Cosmas.

We maintain that the Taprobane of the Graeco-Roman writers is Sri Lanka not only because of its resemblance to the ancient name Tambapanni, but also because the particulars agree on the whole with what is revealed in indigenous sources. This is especially true of the accounts of Pliny, Ptolemy, and Cosmas, all of whom were able to obtain reliable accounts from people who had firsthand experience of the island. Where they differ from local records, the explanation is not that they describe different parts of the island, as A. Hermann believes, but that their reports represent different points of view. The chronicles are primarily interested in the religious development of the island, and for them a good government was one that patronised Buddhism. Agricultural achievements of rulers are, of course, duly noted and praised, inasmuch as it was the irrigation works that largely provided the revenue for the maintenance and well-being of the Buddhist clergy. The foreign sources, on the other hand, reflect Graeco-Roman achievements in navigation, exploration and commerce, and the resulting growth of descriptive and mathematical geography that was characteristic of the period in which the best of them were written. Hence, their observations represent a necessarily secular point of view, although some writers did not ignore altogether the religious life of Taprobane.

Although written from different points of view, one is often struck by the remarkable extent to which local and foreign sources not only complement, but even corroborate each other. For instance, the chronicles concentrate their attention chiefly on the king and his officers, and have little to say regarding ordinary people. Now, in those Graeco-Roman sources derived from first-hand experience, i.e. Pliny, Ptolemy, Palladius and Cosmas, the only individuals mentioned are, again, the king and his officers. Hence, for these writers too, just as for the chroniclers,

the most important man of the island was the king; although both Pliny and the chronicles reveal that his powers were not altogether unlimited. Even with regard to details considered fabulous or idealised, there is sometimes agreement between native and foreign sources. Thus the long life attributed by western writers to the people of Taprobane is not only repeated by Chinese authors (Tennent, Ceylon, I, p.587), but also finds a parallel in the extreme lengths of reign which the chronicles attribute to certain kings of Sri Lanka. Again, the marvels told about the monstrous creatures that infest the waters around Taprobane are also found in oriental legends, especially in the Jataka stories.

One feature common to most foreign notices of Taprobane is that they invariably exaggerate the size of the island.¹ Apart from certain farfetched mathematical explanations which are on the whole inadequate, the two best known explanations are, (1) that the exaggerations are a vestige of the belief held at one time that Taprobane was the southern continent or the beginning thereof, and (2) that the exaggerations represent a confusion on the part of Greeks, between two local measurements of different lengths both of which bore the same name, i.e. the Indian word "yojana". Both these explanations have been supported in the past, but it is also possible that when distances were recorded by the number of days' sail involved, figures given in terms of local ships were calculated in stades or degrees, without making allowance for the greater speeds attained by western ships. That the ancients themselves were not totally unaware of this problem is seen from Pliny (VI.82) where

¹ cf. Dipavamsa, XVII.1-2: "The excellent island of Lanka is thirty-two yojanas long, eighteen yojanas broad, its circuit is 100 yojanas, and is surrounded by the sea and one great mine of treasures. It possesses rivers and lakes, mountains and forests". Fa-Hien (ch.37) however gives the dimensions as fifty yojanas from east to west and thirty yojanas from north to south.

he says that the given distance of twenty days between Taprobane and the Prasian nation was adjusted to seven in terms of the speed of Roman ships. However, it has not been possible to find a general explanation that would cover all cases of exaggeration, although one particular case has been successfully explained: the extremely great and unprecedented dimensions given by Marcian follow from the inclusion of the islands which Ptolemy had represented as encircling Taprobane.

In view of the copiousness of certain notices, it might be asked how much direct contact there was between Taprobane and the Graeco-Roman world. On this point our sources have little to say. In the time of Onesicritus as well as of Strabo, Greek knowledge concerning Taprobane was the indirect result of Indian communications with the island and western communications with India. Even in later times, when Romans attempted to reach the island, the success of their ventures seems to have depended to some extent on the amount of latitude which the monopoly of intermediaries allowed. Surprise has been expressed that the Romans who had dared and endured the rigours and perils of a long voyage to south India, where they are even known to have resided, should not have gone on to Sri Lanka. The possibility has been canvassed that south Indian kingdoms did actually prevent and prohibit the Romans from trading with Sri Lanka (B. J. Perera, C.H.J., I, p.301). In support of this it has been pointed out that Sri Lanka's contacts with north India stopped abruptly after the reign of Devanampiya Tissa, and that this interruption corresponds to the earliest period of South Indian invasions: invasions which may have been undertaken for the purpose of controlling the ports of Sri Lanka with a view to preventing the island "from trading with the Romans and Persians". The preponderant Hindu influence at the main ports of the island, and such late evidence as the difficulties

encountered by the Theban (in Palladius) in his attempts to reach Taprobane, lend some support to this view. But it must be remembered that the above-mentioned interruption of relations with North India may equally be due to the decline of the Maurya empire after the death of Asoka. In fact when in the fourth century A.D. a new empire did come into being in north India under the powerful Guptas, Sri Lanka's relations resumed; and this time too, the emphasis was on religious matters. On the other hand, by the time of Cosmas, the Persians were actually settled in the island, and maintained their own Christian liturgy. Nevertheless, in general, it would be a fair statement to say that the trade between Sri Lanka and the western world was chiefly carried on through intermediaries.

As for actual visits of Roman citizens to the island, our sources record only two instances: the freedman of Annius Plocamus and Sopatros, an acquaintance of Cosmas. It is now clear that only one Sinhalese embassy to Rome is recorded in literature: (the alleged embassy to Julian is based on a misinterpretation of Ammianus Marcellinus XXII.7.10, cf. Appendix III). Both Pliny and the commentator on the Mahavamsa refer to this embassy which took place in the time of Claudius when Bhatikabhaya was king of Sri Lanka. The delegates provided Pliny with fresh information concerning the island, and their arrival seems to have opened a new era in Roman-Sinhalese relations witnessed by the detailed knowledge of the island that was available to Ptolemy. Very few additions to this knowledge are recorded until the arrival of Sopatros which probably made possible the detailed account of Cosmas. This writer reveals fresh acquaintance with the island at a time when it was gaining some international significance. The comprehensive foreign contacts which he attributes to the island are supported, at least with regard

to the far east, by the numerous reports of diplomatic and religious missions exchanged between Sri Lanka and China during the fifth and succeeding centuries, and with regard to the west by the prolific discoveries of late Roman coins of the period. According to Cosmas, the importance of the island lay in its favourable geographical situation.

But there can be no doubt ^{that} religious factors were also involved. ^L By this time, Sri Lanka was famous as the stronghold of orthodox Buddhism and it may not be irrelevant to point out that in the fifth century Buddhaghosa and others began the translation of Sinhalese commentaries on Buddhist texts into Pali in order to make them useful for Buddhists abroad. Sinhalese learning was now available to the rest of the world. Interestingly, this internationalisation of learning coincided with the rise of Sri Lanka as an entrepôt of eastern trade.

that

This role as intermediary, however important that may have been at certain periods, was not the only reason why Sri Lanka was important in the eastern trade of the Hellenistic and Roman world. There is no doubt that the island itself provided some of the luxury commodities that reached the West, chiefly natural products, such as gems, pearls, ivory, and tortoiseshell, which Graeco-Roman writers often associate with Taprobane. There is hardly any mention of cinnamon, and it has been suggested that the cinnamon of Sri Lanka was a well kept secret jealously guarded from the west by the Indian or Arab intermediaries. However, inasmuch as neither the better-informed Chinese authors nor the earliest indigenous sources make any mention of cinnamon, it is more likely that it was not produced on the island at that time to an extent significant enough to attract attention.

What the island received in return for her products is difficult to tell. Apart from the Roman coral mentioned in the Mahavamsa Commentary

and the Persian horses mentioned by Cosmas, our authorities are silent with regard to imports, and the foreign coins and artefacts, the discovery of which have so far been intermittently announced, paint only an incomplete picture. However, we do have reports of the commodities exchanged as gifts by embassies between Sri Lanka and Buddhist powers in India and China (cf. for instance, Mhv. XI). If these in any way represent the pattern of commercial exchanges, then we have to conclude ^{that} in general, Sri Lanka while exporting her natural wealth, of raw material of high value, imported largely manufactured objects, valued not so much for the intrinsic value of their material as for their skilful execution or cultural significance. At a guess one might say that Sri Lanka's exchanges with the Graeco-Roman world also followed this pattern.

Our sources are also silent regarding any exchange of culture or ideas. It is true that Greek doxographers such as Clement of Alexandria display some knowledge of Buddhism. But this knowledge came through the empires of Asoka, Milinda, and especially Kanishka, the great Kushan monarch. Sri Lanka's contributions in this field were rather directed towards southeast Asia and China. It may also be pointed out that, whereas over forty Greek and Latin authors mention Taprobane, the ancient literature of Sri Lanka is almost silent on the non-Indian foreigners with whom the island came into contact. With the possible exception of Mhv. X.90, the Yonas known to them are the subjects of Asoka and Milinda, or the monks of Alasanda city of the Yonas who came for the foundation of the Mahathupa in the time of Dutthagamini (Mhv. XXIX, 39). Influences of Greek, Egyptian, or Assyrian origin have sometimes been traced in the architectural or sculptural remains of the island; (C. M. Enriquez, Ceylon Past and Present, p.103); but if such influence did really exist, it was probably through the intermediary of the Gandhara and

similar schools of India.

Tennent, (Ceylon, I, p.593), has observed with regard to the Chinese notices on Sri Lanka, that unlike other foreigners acquainted only with the seacoast and mercantile communities established there, the Chinese provide notices on the manners of the Sinhalese, and even minute particulars of their domestic habits, which attest a continuous intercourse and an intimate familiarity between the people of the two countries. "The explanation", he says, "is to be found in the identity of the national worship, attracting as it did the people of China to the sacred island, which had become the great metropolis of their common faith, and to the sympathy and hospitality with which the Sinhalese welcomed the frequent visits of their distant co-religionists". It is true that the Greek and Latin notices in general do not reflect an intimacy of this kind. None of them can claim to a deep understanding of Sinhalese life and thought, ^{is} as revealed in a writer such as Fa-Hien. Yet these writers, in describing the island from a secular point of view, and supplying us with certain details not recorded in the indigenous tradition, provide a valuable complement which, when used critically and systematically, helps to further our knowledge concerning Sri Lanka in antiquity.

APPENDIX I

SOURCES

A. GEOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF TAPROBANE

1. ONESICRITUS

(i) περί τῆς Ταπροβάνης Ὀνησίκριτός φησι μέγεθος μὲν εἶναι πεντακισχιλίων σταδίων, οὐ διορίσας μήκος οὐδὲ πλάτος, διέχειν δὲ τῆς ἡπείρου πλοῦν ἡμερῶν εἴκοσι. ἀλλὰ κακοπλοεῖν τὰς ναῦς, φαύλως μὲν ἰστιοπεποιημένας, κατεσκευασμένας δὲ ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐγκοιλίων μήτρων χωρίς. εἶναι δὲ καὶ ἄλλας νήσους αὐτῆς μεταξὺ καὶ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς, νοτιωτάτην δ' ἐκείνην. κήτη δ' ἀμφίβια περί αὐτὴν γίνεσθαι, τὰ μὲν βουσί, τὰ δ' ἵπποις, τὰ δ' ἄλλοις χερσαίοις ἔοικότα.

μητρῶν MSS.

STRABO XV, 1, 15 (Jacoby, F. Gr. H.,
II, B i, No. 134, fr. 12).

(ii) Taprobanen alterum orbem terrarum esse diu existimatum est Antichthonum appellatione. ut insulam esse liqueret Alexandri Magni aetas resque praestitere. Onesicritus classis eius praefectus elephantos ibi maiores bellicosioresque quam in India gigni scripsit.

PLINY, N.H. VI, 81 (Ibid., fr. 13).

2. MEGASTHENES

Megasthenes flumine dividi, incolasque Palaeogonos appellari, auri margaritarumque grandium fertiliores quam Indos.

PLINY, N.H. VI, 81 (Ibid., III C,
No. 715, fr. 26).

3. ERATOSTHENES

(i) τὴν δὲ Ταπροβάνην πελαγίαν εἶναι φασὶ νῆσον, ἀπέχουσαν τῶν νοτιωτάτων τῆς Ἰνδικῆς τῶν κατὰ τοὺς Κωνιακοὺς πρὸς μεσημβρίαν ἡμερῶν ἑπτὰ πλοῦν, μῆκος μὲν ὡς ὀκτακισχιλίων σταδίων ἐπὶ τὴν Αἰθιοπίαν· ἔχειν δὲ καὶ ἑλέφαντας. τοιαῦται μὲν αἱ τοῦ Ἐρατοσθένους ἀποφάσεις.

STRABO, XV, 1, 14.

(ii) Eratosthenes et mensuram prodidit, longitudinis VII stadiū, latitudinis V, nec urbes esse sed vicos DCC.

PLINY, N.H. VI, 81.

4. HIPPARCHUS

Taprobane aut grandis admodum insula aut prima pars orbis alterius <ut> Hipparcho dicitur, et quia habitatur, nec quisquam circum eam isse traditur, prope verum est.

<ut> Frick

alterius. id parcius dicitur: Ranstrand.

MELA, Chorogr. III, 7, 70.

5. ARTEMIDORUS

(i) Artemidorus in Taprobane insula longissimam vitam sine ullo corporis languore traduci.

PLINY, N.H. VII, 2, 30.

(ii) Ταπροβάνη· νῆσος μεγίστη ἐν τῇ Ἰνδικῇ θαλάσῃ. . . . ἡ πάλαι μὲν ἑκαλεῖτο Σιμούνδου, νῦν δὲ Σαλική, πλοῦ μῆκος· οὖσα ἑπτὰκις πού χιλίων σταδίων, πλάτος δὲ πεντακοσίων.¹ τὰ αὐτὰ δὲ καὶ Ἄρτεμίδωρος ἐνάτῳ Γεωγραφουμένων.

¹ πεντακοσίων MSS. πεντακισχιλίων Forbiger.

STEPHANUS of BYZANTIUM s.v. Taprobane.

6. ALEXANDER LYCHNUS

(i) Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ καὶ Λύχνος

Νῆσος τετράπλευρος, ἀλιστέφανος Ταπροβάνη

θηρονόμος πέπληθεν εὐρύνων ἐλεφάντων.

STEPHANUS of BYZANTIUM s.v. Taprobane.

(ii) Ὅτι ἡ Ταπροβάνη . . . τετράπλευρος, θηρονόμος, πεπληθυῖα εὐρύνων ἐλεφάντων, ὡς φησιν Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ καὶ Λύχνος ἐπιλεγόμενος.

EUSTATHIUS, Comm. in Diog. Perieg.

591 (G.G.M. II, 330).

7. OVID

Quid tibi, si calidae, prosit, laudere Syenae,

aut ubi Taprobanen Indica tingit¹ aqua?

1 tingit 0 : pingit, cingit, other MSS.

Ex Ponto 1, 5, 79-80.

8. STRABO

ἔάν σὺν ἔτι προσθῶμεν ὑπὲρ τὴν Μερόην ἄλλους τρισχιλίους τετρακοσίους, ἵνα
 (i) ~~τὸ πλάτος τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀφ' ἑξῆς φησὶν [ὁ Ἐρατοσθένης] ἀπὸ
 τὴν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων νήσον ἔχωμεν καὶ τὴν Κινναμοφόρον καὶ τὴν
 μὲν Μερόης ἐπὶ τοῦ δὲ αὐτῆς μεσημβρινοῦ μέχρι Ἀλεξανδρείας εἶναι
 Ταπροβάνην, ἔσεσθαι σταδίους τρισμυρίου
 μυρίους, ἐνθένδε εἰς τὸν Ἑλλησπόντον περὶ ὀκτακισχιλίους.~~

I, 4, 2 (C. 6~~4~~3).

(ii) τὴν ἀνταίρουσαν τῇ Κινναμοφόρῳ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ παραλλήλου
 πρὸς ἕω κειμένην ὑποβῶμεν. αὕτη δ' ἐστὶν ἡ περὶ τὴν Ταπροβάνην· ἡ
 δὲ Ταπροβάνη πεπλοστευται σφόδρα, ὅτι τῆς Ἰνδικῆς πρόκειται πελαγία
 μεγάλη νῆσος πρὸς νότον· μακρύνεται δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν Αἰθιοπίαν πλεον ἢ
 πεντακισχιλίους σταδίους, ὡς φασιν, ἐξ ἧς καὶ ἐλέφαντα κομίζεσθαι

πολὺν εἰς τὰ τῶν Ἰνδῶν ἐμπορία καὶ χελώνεια καὶ ἄλλον φόρτον. ταύτη δὴ τῇ νήσῳ πλάτος προστεθὲν τὸ ἀνάλογον τῷ μήκει καὶ δίαρμα τὸ ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἐκ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς τῶν μὲν τρισχιλίων σταδίων οὐκ ἂν ἔλαττον ποιήσῃε διάστημα, ὅσον ἦν τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρου τῆς οἰκουμένης εἰς Μερδην, εἴπερ μέλλει τὰ ἄκρα τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἀνταίρειν τῇ Μερδῇ· πιθανώτερον δ' ἐστὶ καὶ πλείους τῶν τρισχιλίων τιθέσθαι.

II, 1, 14 (c. 72).

(iii) Οἱ δέ γε περὶ Δηίμαχον τοῖς τρισμυρίοις ἐὰν προσλάβωσι τὸ ἐπὶ τὴν Ταπροβάνην καὶ τοὺς ὄρους τῆς διακεκαυμένης, οὓς οὐκ ἐλάττους τῶν τετρακισχιλίων θετέον, ἐκτοπιοῦσι τὰ τε Βάκτρα καὶ τὴν Ἀρίαν εἰς τοὺς ἀπέχοντας τόπους τῆς διακεκαυμένης σταδίους τρισμυρίους καὶ τετρακισχιλίους, ὅσους ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰσημερινοῦ ἐπὶ Βορυσθένη φησὶν εἶναι δ' Ἰππαρχος.

II, 1, 17 (c. 74).

(iv) τῆς τε γὰρ Ἰνδικῆς νοτιωτέραν πολὺ τὴν Ταπροβάνην καλουμένην νήσον ἀποφαίνουσιν [οἱ περιπλεύσαντες τὰ ἐξῆς μέρη], οἰκουμένην ἔτι, καὶ ἀνταίρουσαν τῇ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων νήσῳ καὶ τῇ τὸ κιννάμωμον φερούσῃ γῆ· τὴν γὰρ κρᾶσιν τῶν ἀέρων παραπλησίαν εἶναι.

II, 5, 14 (c. 119).

(v) πρώτη δ' ἐστὶ τούτων ἡ Ἰνδική, ἔθνος μέγιστον τῶν πάντων καὶ εὐδαιμονέστατον, τελευτῶν πρὸς τε τὴν ἐψῶν θάλατταν καὶ τὴν νοτίαν τῆς Ἀτλαντικῆς. ἐν δὲ τῇ νοτίᾳ ταύτῃ θαλάττῃ πρόκειται τῆς Ἰνδικῆς νήσος οὐκ ἐλάττων τῆς Βρετανικῆς ἢ Ταπροβάνη.

II, 5, 32 (c. 130).

(vi) τῷ δὲ λεχθέντι μεσημβρινῷ παράλληλός πως παράκειται ἕωθεν ὁ Ἀράβιος κόλπος· τούτου δ' ἔκβασις εἰς τὸ ἔξω πέλαγος ἡ Κινναμωμόφορος ἐστίν, ἐφ' ἧς ἡ τῶν ἐλεφάντων γέγονε θήρα τὸ παλαιόν. ἐκπίπτει δ' ὁ παράλληλος οὗτος τῇ μὲν ἐπὶ τοὺς νοτιωτέρους μικρὸν τῆς Ταπροβάνης ἢ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐσχάτους οἰκουοντας, τῇ δ' ἐπὶ τὰ νοτιώτατα τῆς Λιβύης.

II, 5, 35 (c. 132-3).

(vii) Τὴν δὲ Ταπροβάνην πελαγίαν εἶναι φασὶ νῆσον, ἀπέχουσαν τῶν νοτιωτάτων τῆς Ἰνδικῆς τῶν κατὰ τοὺς Κωνιακοὺς πρὸς μεσημβρίαν ἡμερῶν ἑπτὰ πλοῦν, μῆκος μὲν ὡς ὀκτακισχιλίων σταδίων ἐπὶ τὴν Αἰθιοπίαν· ἔχειν δὲ καὶ ἐλέφαντας· τοιαῦται μὲν αἱ τοῦ Ἐρατοσθένους ἀποφάσεις· προστεθεῖσαι δὲ καὶ αἱ τῶν ἄλλων, εἴ ποῦ τι προσακριβοῦσιν, ἰδιοποιήσουσι τὴν γραφήν. Οἶον περὶ τῆς Ταπροβάνης Ὀνησίκριτός φησὶ, μέγεθος μὲν εἶναι πεντακισχιλίων σταδίων, οὐ διορίσας μῆκος οὐδὲ πλάτος, διέχειν δὲ τῆς ἡπείρου πλοῦν ἡμερῶν εἴκοσι· ἀλλὰ κακοπλοεῖν τὰς ναῦς, φαύλως μὲν ἰστιοπεποιημένας, κατέσκευασμένας δὲ ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐγκοιλίων μήτρων χωρὶς· εἶναι δὲ καὶ ἄλλας νήσους αὐτῆς μεταξὺ καὶ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς, νοτιωτάτην δ' ἐκείνην· κήτη δ' ἀμφίβια περὶ αὐτὴν γίνεσθαι, τὰ μὲν βουσί, τὰ δ' ἵπποις, τὰ δ' ἄλλοις χερσαίοις ἐοικότα.

XV, 1, 14-15 (c. 690-1).

9. Ps.-ARISTOTLE

τούτων δὲ (Βρετανικῶν νήσων) οὐκ ἐλάττους ἢ τε Ταπροβάνη πέραν Ἰνδῶν, λοξῇ πρὸς τὴν οἰκουμένην, καὶ ἡ Φεβδλ καλούμενη, κατὰ τὸν Ἀραβικὸν κειμένη κόλπον.

De Mundo 393 b. (Bkk.).

10. APULEIUS.

In altera parte orbis iacent insularum aggeres maximarum, Britanniae duae, et Albion et Hibernia, iis quas supra diximus, maiores. verum hae in Celtarum finibus sitae sunt. minores vero ultra Indos Taprobane atque Loxe.

De Mundo VII.

11. PERIPLUS MARIS ERYTHRAEI

Περὶ δὲ τὴν μετ' αὐτὴν χώραν, ἤδη πρὸς ἀνατολὴν τοῦ πλοῦς ἀπονέουοντος, εἰς πέλαγος ἔκκειται πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν δύσιν νῆσος λεγομένη Παλαισιμούδου, παρὰ δὲ τοῖς ἀρχαίοις αὐτῶν χαρακτηρίζεται¹ Τάπροβάνη. ταύτης τὰ μὲν πρὸς βορέαν ἐστὶν ἡμέρα καὶ διαπλεῖται τοῖς εἰς τὸν Πλιονακιστινείτ καὶ σχεδὸν εἰς τὸ κατ' αὐτῆς ἀντιπαρακείμενον Ἀζανίας παρήκει. γίνεται δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ πιρικὸν καὶ λιθία διαφανῆς καὶ σινδόνες καὶ χελῶναι.

1 ἀρχαίοις αὐτῶν ἐπιχωρίοις prop. Müller.

12. PLINY

(i) Quae memoranda ac prope fabulosa de fertilitate terrae et genere frugum arborumque aut ferarum ac volucrum et aliorum animalium traduntur suis quaeque locis in reliqua parte operis commemorabuntur, quattuor satrapiae mox paulo, ad Taprobanen insulam festinante animo.

Sed ante sunt aliae: Patale quam significavimus in ipsis faucibus Indi, triquetra figura, CCXX p. latitudine; extra ostium Indi Chryse et Argyre, fertilis metallis, ut credo: nam quod aliqui tradidere aureum argenteumque his solum esse haut facile crediderim. ab his XX p. Crocala et ab ea XII Bibaga ostreis ac conchyliis referta, dein

Coralliba VIII a supra dicta, multaeque ignobiles.

Taprobanen alterum orbem terrarum esse diu existimatum est Antichthonum appellatione: ut insulam esse liqueret Alexandri Magni aetas resque praestitere. Onesicritus classis eius praefectus elephantos ibi maiores bellicosioresque quam in India gigni scripsit; Megasthenes flumine dividi, incolasque Palaeogonos appellari, auri margaritarumque grandium fertiliores quam Indos. Eratosthenes et mensuram prodidit, longitudinis VII stadium, latitudinis V, nec urbes esse sed vicos DCC. incipit ab Eoo mari inter ortum occasumque solis Indiae praetenta et quondam credita XX dierum navigatione a Prasiatica gente distare, mox, quia papyraceis navibus armamentisque Nili peteretur, ad nostrarum navium cursus VII dierum intervallo taxata. mare interest vadosum, senis non amplius altitudinis passibus, sed certis canalibus ita profundum ut nullae anchorae sidant: ob id navibus utrimque prorae, ne per angustias alvei circumagi sit necesse; magnitudo ad terna milia amphorum. siderum in navigando nulla observatio - septentrio non cernitur; volucres secum vehunt emittentes saepius, meatumque earum terram petentium comitantur. nec plus quaternis mensibus anno navigant: cavent a solstitio maxime centum dies, tunc illo mari hiberno.

Hactenus a priscis memorata. nobis diligentior notitia Claudi principatu contigit legatis etiam ex ea insula advectis. id accidit hoc modo: Anni Plocami, qui Maris Rubri vectigal a fisco redemerat, libertus circa Arabiam navigans aquilonibus raptus praeter Carmaniam, XV die Hippuros portum eius invectus, hospitali regis clementia sex mensum tempore inbutus adloquio percontanti postea narravit Romanos et Caesarem. mirum in modum in auditis iustitiam ille suspexit, quod parvis pondere denarii essent in captiva pecunia, cum diversae imagines indicarent a pluribus factos. et hoc maxime sollicitatus ad amicitiam legatos

quattuor misit principe eorum Rachia. ex his cognitum D esse oppida, portum contra meridiem adpositum oppido Palaesimundo omnium ibi clarissimo ac regio, \overline{CC} plebis. stagnum intus Megisba $\overline{CCCLXXV}$ p. ambitu, insulas pabuli tantum fertiles complexum; ex eo duos amnes erumpere, Palaesimundum iuxta oppidum eiusdem nominis influentem in portum tribus alveis, quinque stadiorum artissimo, XV amplissimo, alterum ad septentriones Indiamque versum, Cydara nomine. proximum esse Indiae promunturium quod vocetur Coliacum, quadridui navigatione medio in cursu Solis insula occurrente; mare ibi colore perviridi, praeterea fruticosum arboribus, iugas earum gubernaculis detergentibus. Septentriones Vergiliasque apud nos veluti in novo caelo mirabantur, ne lunam quidem apud ipsos nisi ab octava in XVI supra terram aspici fatentes, Canopum lucere noctibus, sidus ingens et clarum. sed maxime mirum iis erat umbras suas in nostrum caelum cadere, non in suum, solemque ab laeva oriri et in dextram occidere potius quam e diverso. iidem narravere latus insulae quod praetenderetur Indiae \overline{X} stadiorum esse ab oriente hiberno; ultra montes Hemodos Seras quoque ab ipsis aspici notos etiam commercio: patrem Rachiae commeasse eo: advenis sibi Seras occursare. ipsos vero excedere hominum magnitudinem, rutilis comis, caeruleis oculis, oris sono truci, nullo commercio linguae. cetera eadem quae nostri negotiatores: fluminis ulteriore ripa merces positas iuxta venalia tolli ab iis si placeat permutatio, non aliter odio iustiore luxuriae quam si perducta mens illuc usque cogitet quid et quo petatur et quare.

Sed ne Taprobane quidem, quamvis extra orbem a natura relegata, nostris vitiis caret: aurum argentumque et ibi in pretio, marmor testudinis simile, margaritae gemmaeque in honore; multo praestantior est totus luxuriae nostra cumulus. ipsorum opes maiores esse dicebant, sed apud nos opulentiae maiorem usum: servom nemini, non in diem aut

interdiu somnum, aedificia modice ab humo exstantia, annonam numquam augeri, non fora litesve esse, coli Herculem, eligi regem a populo senecta clementiaque liberos non habentem, et si postea gignat, abdicari, ne fiat hereditarium regnum. rectores ei a populo XXX dari, nec nisi plurium sententia quemquam capitis damnari; sic quoque appellationem esse ad populum et septuaginta iudices dari; si liberent ii reum, amplius XXX iis nullam esse dignationem, gravissimo probro. regi cultum Liberi Patris, ceteris Arabum. regem, si quid delinquat, morte multari, nullo interimente, aversantibus cunctis et commercia etiam sermonis negantibus. festa venatione absumi: gratissimam eam tigribus elephantisque constare. agros diligenter coli, vitis usum non esse, pomis abundare. esse et in piscatu voluptatem, testudinum maxime, quarum superficie familias habitantium contegi: tanta reperiri magnitudine. vitam hominum centum annis modicam.

Haec conperta de Taprobane.

N.H. VI, 79-91.

(ii) v. Page 240 a(ii)
 (iii) v. Page 241 a(ii)
 13. SOLINUS

Taprobanem insulam, antequam temeritas humana exquisito penitus mari fidem panderet, diu orbem alterum putaverunt et quidem quem habitare Antichthones crederentur. verum Alexandri Magni virtus ignorantiam publici erroris non tulit ulterius permanere, sed in haec usque secreta propagavit nominis sui gloriam. missus igitur Onesicritus praefectus classis Macedonicae terram istam, quanta esset, quid gigneret, quomodo haberetur, exquisitam notitiae nostrae dedit. patet in longitudinem stadiorum septem milia, in latitudinem quinque milia. scinditur anni interfluo. nam pars eius bestiis et elephantis repleta est maioribus multo quam fert India: partem homines tenent. margaritis scatet et

gemmis omnibus. sita est inter ortum et occasum. ab eoo mari incipit praetenta Indiae. a Prasia Indorum gente dierum viginti primo in eam fuit cursus, sed cum papyraceis et Nili navibus illo pergeretur: mox cursu nostrarum navium septem dierum iter factum est. mare vadosum interiacet altitudinis non amplius senum passuum, certis autem canalibus depressum adeo, ut nullae umquam ancorae ad profundi illius fundamenta potuerint pervenire. nulla in navigando siderum observatio: utpote ubi septentriones nequaquam videntur vergiliaeque numquam apparent. lunam ab octava in sextam decimam tantum supra terram vident. lucet ibi canopos sidus clarum et amplissimum. solem orientem dextra habent, occidentem sinistra. observatione itaque navigandi nulla suppetente, ut ad destinatum pergentes locum capiant, vehunt alites, quarum meatus terram petentium magistros habent cursus regendi. quaternis non amplius mensibus in anno navigatur.

In Claudii principatum de Taprobane haec tantum noveramus: tunc enim fortuna patefecit scientiae viam latiore. nam libertus Anni Plocami, qui tunc Rubri maris vectigal administrabat, Arabiam petens, aquilonibus praeter Carmaniam raptus, quinto decimo demum die adpulsus est ad hoc litus portumque advectus qui Hippuros nominatur. sex deinde mensibus sermonem perdoctus admissusque ad colloquia regis quae compererat reportavit. stupuisse scilicet regem pecuniam quae capta cum ipso erat, quod tametsi signata disparibus foret vultibus, tamen parem haberet modum ponderis: cuius aequalitatis contemplatione cum Romanam amicitiam flagrantius concupivisset, Rachia principe legatos ad nos usque misit, a quibus cognita sunt universa.

Ergo inde homines corporum magnitudine omnes homines antecedunt: crines fuco inbuunt, caeruleis oculis ac truci visu, terrifico sono vocis. quibus inmatura mors est in annos centum aevum trahunt: aliis

omnibus annosa aetas et paene ultra humanam extenta fragilitatem. nulli
 aut ante diem aut per diem somnus. aedificia modice ab humo elevata.
 annona eodem semper tenore. vites nesciunt: pomis abundant. colunt
 Herculem. in regis electione non nobilitas praevalet, sed suffragium
 universorum. populus eligit spectatum moribus et inveterata clementia,
 etiam annis gravem. sed hoc in eo quaeritur, cui liberi nulli sunt:
 nam qui pater fuerit, etiamsi vita spectetur, non admittitur ad regendum:
 et si forte dum regnat pignus sustulit, exiit potestate: idque eo
 maxime custoditur, ne fiat hereditarium regnum. deinde etiamsi rex
 maximam praeferat aequitatem, nolunt ei totum licere: triginta ergo
 rectores accipit, ne in causis capitum solus iudicet: quamquam sic
 quoque si displicuerit iudicatum, ad populum provocatur atque ita datis
 iudicibus septuaginta fertur sententia, cui necessario acquiescitur.
 cultu rex dissimili a ceteris vestitur sormate, ut est habitus, quo
 Liberum patrem amiciri videmus. quod si etiam ipse in peccato aliquo
 arguitur, morte multatur: non tamen ut cuiusquam attrectetur manu,
 sed consensu publico rerum omnium interdicta ei facultate: etiam conloqui
 potestas punito denegatur. culturae student universi. venatibus indulgent
 nec plebeias agunt praedas, quippe cum tigrides aut elephantum tantum
 requirantur. maria quoque piscationibus inquietant marinasque testudines
 capere gaudent, quarum tanta est magnitudo, ut superficies earum domum
 faciat et numerosam familiam non arte receptet.

Maior pars insulae huius calore ambusta est et in vastas deficit
 solitudines. latus eius mare adluit perviridi colore fruticosum, ita
 ut iubae arborum plerumque gubernaculis atterantur. cernunt latus
 Sericum de montium suorum iugis. mirantur aurum et ad gratiam poculorum
 omnium gemmarum adhibent apparatus. secant marmora testudinea varietate.
 margaritas legunt plurimas maximasque.

14. MARTIANUS CAPELLA

Sed in Taprobane insula maiores elephanti quam Indici, ampliores etiam margaritae sunt. quae patet in longitudine stadiorum septem milia, in latitudine quinque milia; scinditur fluvio interfluente atque Indiae praetenta est, in quam septem dierum iter, ut Romanis navibus approbatum. illic et illud mare absque canalibus profundis senum passuum altitudine deprimitur. ibi septentriones non apparent, vergiliae numquam, lunam ab octava in sextam decimam tantum supra terras vident; ibi sidus clarissimum Canopus; sol ortivus in laeva conspicitur. in navigando nullum sidus observant, avium, quas vehunt, volatus sequuntur; quaternis per annos mensibus navigant. homines ibi corpore grandiores ultra omnium mensuram, rutulis comis, caeruleis oculis, truci oris sono, nullo linguae commercio genti alteri sociantur. cum negotiatoribus aliis in ripa fluminis merces apponunt ac vix complacitas mutant. aetas illis ultra humanam fragilitatem prolixa, ut mature pereat, qui centenarius moritur; nulli per diem somnus; annona eodem semper tenore; aedificia humilia parvaque, vitem ^s neciunt; redundant pomis. Herculem colunt; regem eum, qui mitior annisque gravior ac sine prole fuerit, eligunt et, si in regno prolem susceperit, remonent hereditarium formidantes imperium. cum quo tamen alii triginta cognoscunt et, si fuerit provocatum, septuaginta iudices fiunt. rex Liberi patris cultu componitur et, si peccaverit, interdicto omni usu et colloquio iugulatur. culturas et venatus amant, verum tigridum aut elephantorum; piscationibus delectantur praesertimque testudinum, quarum superficie domos familiarum capaces operiunt.

15. ISIDORE

Taprobana insula Indiae subiacens ad Eurum, ex qua oceanus Indicus incipit, patens in longitudine octingentis septuaginta quinque millibus passuum, in latitudine sexcentis viginti quinque millibus. Scinditur amne interfluo, tota margaritis repleta et gemmis. Pars eius bestiis et ^e Elephantis repleta est, partem vero homines tenent. In hac insula dicunt in uno anno duas esse aestates, et duas hiemes, et bis locum vernare floribus.

Etymologiae XIV, 6, 12

(cf. ibid. XIV, 3, 5;

Insulam quoque Taprobanam elephantis refertam).

16. DICUIL

Liber de Mensura Orbis VII;

§§ 26-30: verbatim citation of Solinus 53, 1-7;

§ 31 : verbatim citation of Priscian, Periegesis, 595-602;

§ 32 (length and breadth of the island) cites Isidore,

Etym. XIV, 6, 12 and Solinus 53, 2, with variant readings (following the inferior MSS. of Solinus)

Eochites for Antichthones,

praetenta India for praetenta Indiae;

and erroneous interpretation, dierum XXI cursus for dierum

XX primo cursus.

17. PTOLEMY

(i) Ἐδέδεικτο δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ Κῶρου ἀκρωτηρίου μέχρι τῆς Χρυσῆς Χερσονήσου μοιρῶν λδ' καὶ τεσσάρων πέμπτων· πᾶσα ἄρα ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ Κῶρου μέχρι Καττιγάρων μοιρῶν ἐστὶν ἔγγιστα νβ'. (7) Ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν διὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Ἰνδοῦ ποταμοῦ μεσημβρινὸς ὀλίγῳ δυτικώτερός ἐστι τοῦ βορείου τῆς Ταπροβάνης ἀκρωτηρίου κατὰ τὸν Μαρῖνον, ὅπερ ἀντίκειται τῷ Κῶρου· τούτου δ' ἀφέστηκεν ὁ διὰ τῶν ἐκβολῶν τοῦ Βαίτιος ποταμοῦ ὠριαία διαστήματα η', μοίρας δὲ ρκ', καὶ ἔτι ὁ διὰ τῶν ἐκβολῶν τοῦ Βαίτιος τοῦ διὰ τῶν Μακάρων νήσων μοίρας ε'. ὥστε καὶ ὁ μὲν διὰ τοῦ Κῶρου μεσημβρινὸς ἀπέχει τοῦ διὰ τῶν Μακάρων νήσων μικρῷ πλέον μοιρῶν ρκε', ὁ δὲ διὰ Καττιγάρων τοῦ διὰ τῶν Μακάρων νήσων μικρῷ πλέον τῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ μοιρῶν ροζ', κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν σχεδὸν διάστασιν τοῖς ἐπὶ τοῦ διὰ τῆς Ῥοδίας παραλλήλου συλλελογισμένοις.

Geographia I, 14, 8-9.

(ii) Ταπροβάνης νήσου θέσις.

1. Τῷ δὲ Κῶρου ἀκρωτηρίῳ τῷ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἀντίκειται τὸ τῆς Ταπροβάνης νήσου ἄκρον, ἣτις ἐκαλεῖτο πάλαι Σιμουίνδου, νῦν δὲ Σαλίκη· καὶ οἱ κατέχοντες αὐτὴν κοινῶς Σάλαι, μαλλοῖς γυναικέοις εἰς ἅπαν ἀναδεδεμένοι· γίννεται δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς ὄρυζα, μέλι, ζιγγίβερι, βήρυλλος, ὑάκινθος, μέταλλα παντοῖα χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων· γεννᾷ δὲ καὶ ἐλέφαντας 5 καὶ τίγρεις.
2. Τὸ μὲν οὖν εἰρημένον αὐτῆς ἀκρωτήριον καὶ ἀντικείμενον τῷ Κῶρου ἐπέχει μοίρας ρκς ιβ λ' καὶ καλεῖται Βόρειον ἄκρον.
3. Ἡ δ' ἄλλη περιγραφὴ ἔχει τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον μετὰ τὸ Βόρειον ἄκρον, ὃ ἐπέχει μοίρας ρκς ιβ λ', ⁽¹⁾

1. ὁ ... λ' om. ΣΩ (ἀλλ. εἰρημένον post τὸ), WC; ρ ... λ' om. X

| | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Γαλίβα ἄκρον | ρκδ | ια L' | 10 |
| Μαργάνα πόλις | ρκγ L' | ι γ' | |
| 'Ιωγάνα πόλις | ρκγ γ' | η L' | |
| 'Ανδρισιμούνδου ¹ ἄκρον | ρκβ | ζ L'δ' | |
| Σοάνα ποταμοῦ ἐκβολαί | ρκβ γ' | ς δ' | |
| αἰ πηγαί τοῦ ποταμοῦ | ρκγ | η | 1 ^a 15 |
| Σινδοκάνδα πόλις | ρκβ | ε | |
| Πριάπιος ² λιμὴν | ρκβ | γ γ' | |
| 4. 'Ανουβιγγάρα πόλις ³ | ρκα | β γ' | |
| Διδς ἄκρα | ρκα | β | |
| Πρασώδης κόλπος | ρκα | α | 20 |
| 'Ανουβάρθα ⁴ πόλις | ρκα γ' | ἰσημερ. | |
| 'Αζανοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐκβολαί | ρκγ | νότ. α | |
| αἰ πηγαί τοῦ ποταμοῦ | ρκς | βόρ. α | |
| 'Οδώκα πόλις | ρκγ | νότ. β | |
| 'Ορνέων ἄκρα | ρκδ | νότ. β L' | 25 |
| 5. Δαγάνα πόλις ἱερὰ Σελήνης ⁵ | ρκε | νότ. β | |
| Κροκοβάρα ⁶ πόλις | ρκβ ⁷ | νότ. γ | |
| Διονύσου ἄκρον ⁸ | ρλ | νότ. α L' | |
| Κηταῖον ἄκρον | ρλ | νότ. L' | |
| Βαράκου ποταμοῦ ἐκβολαί | ρλα | βόρ. α | 30 |
| αἰ πηγαί τοῦ ποταμοῦ | ρκη | βόρ. β | |
| Βωκάνα ⁹ πόλις | ρλα | νότ. γ' ¹⁰ | |
| Μορδούλα λιμὴν ¹¹ | ρλα | νότ. β γ' ¹² | |

1^a (Lat.) γ : ω (recte)

1. 'Αναρισιμούνδου ω | 2. Πριάπιδος ω | 3. πόλις om. Γω | 4. Νούβαρθα ω Νουβάρτα Γ | 5. Σελήνη ω (exc. Ur2) | 6. Κορκοβάρα ω (exc. B) Κόρκοβα ΓΒ | 7. Legendum : ρκς γ' ω? | 8. Διονύσου πόλις ω | 9. Βουκάνα X Κωμάνα Γ | 10. Legendum : βόρ. α γ' : ω? | 11. Μαρδουλάμνη Γ | 12. Legendum : βόρ. β γ' : ω ?

| | | | |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|----|
| 6. Ἀμαράθθα ¹ πόλις ² [ἐν ἄκρα] ² | ρλα | νότ. γ δ ³ | |
| Ἑλίου λιμὴν | ρλ | δ | 35 |
| Αἰγιαλδς Μέγας | ρλ | δ γ' | |
| Πρόκουρι πόλις ἐν ἄκρα ⁴ | ρλα | ε γ' | |
| Βιζάλα ⁵ λιμὴν | ρλ γ' | ςς ι | |
| Ὁξειία ἄκρα | ρλ | ςς' | |
| Γάγγου ποταμοῦ ἐκβολαί | ρκθ γ' | ς γ' | 40 |
| αἱ πηγαὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ | ρλς ⁶ | δ | |
| Σπατάνα λιμὴν | ρκθ | η | |
| 7. Ναγαδίβα πόλις | ρκθ | η ι' | |
| Παῦσι ⁷ κόλπος | ρκη ι' | θ | |
| Ἄνουβιγγάρα πόλις | ρκη γ' | θ γ' | 45 |
| Μοδούττου ⁸ ἐμπόριον | ρκη | ια | |
| Φάσιος ποταμοῦ ἐκβολαί | ρκς | ια γ' | |
| αἱ πηγαὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ | ρκς | η | |
| Ταρακόρι ⁹ ἐμπόριον | ρκς γ' | ια γ' | |
| μεθ' οὗ τὸ Βόρειον ἄκρον. | | | 50 |
| 8. Ὅρη δ' ἐστὶν ἀξιόλογα τῆς νήσου τὰ τε καλούμενα Γάλιβα ¹⁰ ἐξ ὧν | | | |
| ῥέουσιν ὃ τε Φάσις καὶ ὁ Γάγγης, καὶ τὸ καλούμενον Μαλαβα ἐξ οὗ ῥέουσιν | | | |
| ὃ τε Σοάνας καὶ ὁ Ἀζανδς καὶ ὁ Βαράκης, καὶ εἰσιν ὑπὸ τοῦτο τὸ ὄρος ¹¹ | | | |
| μέχρι θαλάσσης ἐλεφάντων νομαί. | | | |
| 9. Κατέχουσι δὲ τῆς νήσου τὰ μὲν ἀρκτικώτατα Γάλιβοι καὶ Μοδούττοι, ¹² | | | |
| ὑπὸ δὲ τούτους Ἀνούργραμοι καὶ Ναγαδίβοι καὶ ὑπὸ μὲν τούτους | | | |

1. Ἀβαραθθα Γ | 2. ἐν ἄκρα om. Γ ω (exc. UrAΩZ) | 3. Legendum : βόρ. γ δ' : ω? | 4. ἐν ἄκρα om. Γ | 5. Ῥιζάλα Γω | 6. Legendum : ρκς : ω | 7. Πάσι Γ Πάτι ω | 8. Μοδούτου Γ (Μ. ἐ. ἢ Μοδόρης Α) Μοδούνηου Χ | 9. Ταλακῶρι Γ ω (exc. UrWE) Ταλάκωρυ UrWE Τ. ἢ Ἀλακότη Α | 10. Γαριβα Χ (cf. §3) | 11. τούτου τοῦ ὄρους Χ | 12. Μοδούττοι (cf. §7) Μουδ- Γ Μουνδοττοι Χ Μοδοντοί ω

Ἄνουρογράμμους Σόανοι, ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦς Ναγαδίβους Σέμνοι,¹ ἔτι δ' ὑπὸ
 τούτους Σινδοκάνδαι² μὲν τὰ πρὸς δυσμὰς καὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦς μέχρι τῶν νομῶν
 τῶν ἐλεφάντων Βουμάσανοι, Τάραχοι δὲ τὰ πρὸς ἀνατολάς, ὑφ' οὓς Βωκᾶνοι
 καὶ Μόρδουλοι καὶ μεσημβρινώτατοι Ῥοδαγγᾶνοι³ καὶ Νανιγίροι. 60

10. Πόλεις δ' εἰσὶν ἐν τῇ νήσῳ μεσόγειοι αἴδε

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|----|-------|----|----|
| Ἄνουρόγραμμον βασίλειον | ρκδ | Λ' | η | γ' | |
| Μαάγραμμον μητρόπολις | ρκζ | | ς | γ' | |
| Ἄδίσσαμον | ρκθ | | ε | | |
| Πηδοῦκη ⁴ | ρκδ | γ' | γ | γ' | 65 |
| Οὐλιππάδα | ρκς | γ' | β | γ' | |
| Νακαδούμα | ρκη | Λ' | ίσημ. | | |

11. Πρόκειται δὲ τῆς Ταπροβάνης στίχος⁵ νήσων ἅς φασιν εἶναι τὸν
 ἀριθμὸν ατοη. ὧν μέντοι τὰ ὄνόματα φέρεται εἶσιν αἴδε.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|----|------|----|----|----|
| Οὐαγγάνα | ρκ | ια | γ' | 70 | | |
| Κανάθρα | ρκα | γ' | ια | δ' | | |
| Ἄρνέων | ριθ | | η | Λ' | | |
| Αἰγιδίων | ριη | | η | Λ' | | |
| Μονάχη | ρις | | δ | δ' | | |
| Ἄμμίνη | ριζ | | δ | Λ' | 75 | |
| 12. Ἰεράκος | ριη | | νότ. | γ | | |
| Φίληκος | ρις | | νότ. | γ' | | |
| Εἰρήνη | ρκ | | νότ. | Λ' | | |
| Καλανδαδιοβα | ρκς | | νότ. | ε | Λ' | |
| Ἄράνα | ρκε | | νότ. | δ | γ' | 80 |
| Βάσσα | ρκς | | νότ. | ς | Λ' | |

1. Σέννοι UrΣΩZ | 2. Σινδοκάνδαι Renou (cf. §3) : Σανδοκάνδαι Γω
 -αις X | 3. Ῥοδαγγᾶνοι Γ Ῥογάνδανοι ω | 4. Ποδοῦκη Γω | 5. στίφος Γω

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------------|----|
| Βαλάκα | ρχθ | νότ. ε L' | |
| 'Αλάβα | ρλα | νότ. δ | |
| Γουμάρα | ρλγ | νότ. α γ' | |
| 13. Ζάβα | ρλε | ίσημερ. | 85 |
| Βιτάλα | ρλε | δ δ' | |
| Ναγαδήβα ¹ | ρλε | η L' | |
| Σουσουάρα | ρλε | ια δ ² | |

1. Ναγαδίβα ω | 2. Post Σουσουάρα sequitur in Γ

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|
| Τὸ δυτικώτατον τῆς νήσου μόρας | ροζ | α |
| Τὸ νοτιώτατον μόρας | ςςι | νότ. |
| Τὸ ἀνατολικώτατον μόρας | νς | α |
| Τὸ βορειότατον μόρας | ιγ | βόρ. |

Geographia VII, 4, 1-13.

(iii) Τῶν δὲ ἀξιολογωτέρων
νήσων

ἡ χερσονήσων πρώτη μὲν Ταπροβάνη, δευτέρα δὲ τῶν Βρετανικῶν ἡ 'Αλουϊῶνος, τρίτη δὲ ἡ Χρυσή Χερσόνησος, τετάρτη δὲ τῶν Βρετανικῶν ἡ 'Ιουερνία, πέμπτη δὲ ἡ Πελοπόννησος, ἕκτη δὲ ἡ Σικελία, ἑβδόμη δὲ ἡ Σαρδῶ, ὄγδοη δὲ ἡ Κύρνος, ἑννάτη δὲ ἡ Κρήτη, δεκάτη δὲ ἡ Κύπρος.

Geographia VII, 5, 11.

(iv) Παρὰ γὰρ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν τὸ μὲν 'Ινδικὸν πέλαγος μετὰ τὴν Ταπροβάνην ἐπὶ τὰς ἄρκτους ἀπέστρεψαν, ἐνστάντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ πίνακος πρὸς τὴν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀνατολάς προχώρησιν, ἐπεὶ μηδὲν εἶχε τοιοῦτον ἐπὶ τῆς ὑπερκειμένης κατὰ τὸ βόρειον Σκυθίας ἀντιπαραγράφειν.

Geographia VIII, 1, 3.

(v) Ασίας Πίναξ ιβ'.

1. Ὁ ιβ̄ καὶ τελευταῖος πίναξ τῆς Ἀσίας περιέχει

τὴν Ταπροβάνην νήσον

σὺν ταῖς περὶ αὐτὴν νήσοις. Ὁ δὲ διὰ μέσου αὐτοῦ παράλληλος λόγον ἔχει τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν μεσημβρινόν.

2. Περιορίζεται δὲ ὁ πίναξ πάντοθεν Ἰνδικῶ πελάγει.

3. Τῶν οὖν ἐν αὐτῇ διασημοτέρων πόλεων

ἡ μὲν Ναγάδιβα τὴν μεγίστην ἡμέραν ἔχει ὥρων ιβ̄ L', καὶ διέστηκεν Ἀλεξανδρείας πρὸς ἕω ὥραις τέσσαρσιν ἡμίσει καὶ δωδεκάτῳ· τὸν δὲ ἥλιον δις τοῦ ἔτους λαμβάνει κατὰ κορυφὴν, ἀπέχοντα τῆς θερινῆς τροπῆς ἐφ' ἐκάτερα μοίρας ὀ ἔγγιστα.

4. Ἡ δὲ Ταλάκωρυ τὴν μεγίστην ἡμέραν ἔχει ὥρων ιβ̄ γσ', καὶ διέστηκεν Ἀλεξανδρείας πρὸς ἕω ὥραις δ̄ γ' καὶ ιε'. ὁ δὲ ἥλιος ἐκεῖ δις τοῦ ἔτους γίνεται κατὰ κορυφὴν, ἀπέχων τῆς θερινῆς τροπῆς ἐφ' ἐκάτερα μοίρας ξβ̄.

5. Τὸ δὲ Μαάγραμμον μητρόπολις τὴν μεγίστην ἡμέραν ἔχει ὥρων ιβ̄ γιβ', καὶ διέστηκεν Ἀλεξανδρείας πρὸς ἕω ὥραις δ̄ καὶ L' ἔγγιστα· ὁ δὲ ἥλιος δις τοῦ ἔτους ἐκεῖ γίνεται κατὰ κορυφὴν, ἀπέχων τῆς θερινῆς τροπῆς ἐφ' ἐκάτερα μοίρας ὀβ̄ καὶ γο' ἔγγιστα.

Geographia VIII, 28.

(vi) Ὁ δωδέκατος καὶ τελευταῖος ἀπὸ μοιρῶν ρις̄ ἕως μοιρῶν ρλε̄· γίνεται μῆκος μοιρῶν ιθ̄· πλάτος ἀπὸ βορείων μοιρῶν ιβ̄ L' ἢ διὰ τὴν Κῶρυ ἀκρωτηρίου καταγραφὴν ὡς ἂν φαινόμενον τῆς πρὸς τὴν Ἰνδικὴν σχέσιν τῆς Ταπροβάνης ἐμφάνη μοιρῶν ιγ̄ γ'. ἀπὸ δὲ νοτίων μοιρῶν ζ̄ L'. ὡς συνάγεσθαι πλάτος μοιρῶν ιθ̄ Lγ' ἢ ὄλων εἴκοσι.

Geographia VIII, 30, 26.

18. MARCIAN of HERACLEA

(i) Τὸν περίπλουν ἀναγράψαι προειλόμεθα ἐν βιβλίοις δυοῖ, τὸν μὲν ἑξῶν καὶ μεσημβρινὸν ὠκεανὸν ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ βιβλίῳ, τὸν δ' ἐσπέριον καὶ τὸν ἀρκτῶν ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ, ἅμα ταῖς ἐν αὐτοῖς κειμέναις μεγίσταις νήσοις, τῇ τε Ταπροβάνῃ καλουμένῃ, τῇ Παλαισιμούνδου λεγομένη πρότερον, καὶ ταῖς Πρεττανικαῖς ἀμφοτέραις νήσοις. ὣν τὴν μὲν πρώτην κατὰ τὸ μεσαίτατον τοῦ Ἰνδικοῦ πελάγους κείσθαι συνέστηκε, τὰς δ' ἑτέρας δύο ἐν τῷ ἀρκτῶ ὠκεανῷ.

Prol. 1.

1. Παλλιγεμούνδου cod.

(ii) Τῶν δὲ μεγίστων νήσων ἢ χερσονήσων, καὶ τῆς πρώτης τάξεως, πρώτη μὲν ἡ Ταπροβάνη νῆσος ἢ Παλαισιμούνδου καλουμένη πρότερον, νῦν δὲ Σαλική. δευτέρα δὲ τῶν Πρεττανικῶν ἢ Ἀλβίων, τρίτη δὲ ἡ Χρυσή Χερσόνησος, τετάρτη δὲ τῶν Πρεττανικῶν ἢ Ἰουερνία, πέμπτη δὲ ἡ Πελοπόννησος, ἕκτη δὲ ἡ Σικελία, ἑβδόμη δὲ ἡ Σαρδῶ, ὄγδοη δὲ ἡ Κύρνος, ἑννάτη ἡ Κρήτη, δεκάτη ἡ Κύπρος.

I, 8.

(iii) Καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο τὸ τῆς Γεδρωσίας ἔθνος κείμενον τυγχάνει. ἑξῆς δὲ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ Ἰνδικὴ ἢ ἐντὸς Γάγγου ποταμοῦ κειμένη, ἧς κατὰ τὸ μεσαίτατον τῆς ἡπείρου νῆσος καταντικρὺ κείται μέγιστη Ταπροβάνη καλουμένη. Μετὰ δὲ ταύτην ἡ ἑτέρα ἐστὶν Ἰνδικὴ ἢ ἐκτὸς Γάγγου ποταμοῦ, ὅρου τυγχάνοντος ἑκατέρων τῶν Ἰνδικῶν γαιῶν.

I, 16.

(iv) Τῷ ἀκρωτηρίῳ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς τῷ καλουμένῳ Κῶρυ ἀντίκειται τὸ τῆς Ταπροβάνης νήσου ἀκρωτήριο τὸ καλούμενον Βόρειον. Ἡ δὲ Ταπροβάνη νῆσος πρότερον μὲν ἑκαλεῖτο Παλαισιμούνδου, νῦν δὲ

Σαλική. Τοῦτο δὲ τὸ ἀκρωτήριον τῆς νήσου τὸ ἀντικείμενον τῷ Κῶρῳ, ὅπερ ἔφαμεν καλεῖσθαι Βόρειον ἄκρον, ἀπέχει ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ ἀνατολικοῦ ὁρίζοντος σταδίους „β ,ςυξ', ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ δυτικοῦ ὁρίζοντος σταδίους „ς και ,αχκς', ἀπὸ δὲ μεσημβρίας καὶ ἰσημερίας ὡς πρὸς ἄρκτους σταδίους ,ς τν'.

Μετὰ δὲ τὸ Βόρειον τοίνυν ἀκρωτήριον ἡ ὅλη περιγραφή καὶ ὁ περίπλους τῆς Ταπροβάνης νήσου τὸν τρόπον ἔχει τοῦτον· κατὰ μὲν διάμετρον τῷ μήκει στάδιοι ,θφ', τῷ δὲ πλάτει στάδιοι ,ζφ'. ἔχει δὲ ἔθνη ἦτοι σατραπείας ιγ', πόλεις δὲ ἐπισήμους καὶ ἐμπόρια κβ', ὄρη ἐπίσημα β', ποταμοὺς ἐπισήμους ε', ἀκρωτήρια ἐπίσημα η', λιμένας ἐπισήμους δ', κόλπους μεγάλους β', αἰγιαλὸν μέγαν α'. Οἱ πάντες τοῦ περίπλου τῆς Ταπροβάνης νήσου στάδιοι „β ,ς τπε'. Καὶ περὶ μὲν τῆς Ταπροβάνης νήσου τοσαῦτα εἰρήσθω.

[Μαργάνα, πόλις τῆς Ἰνδικῆς. Μαρκιανὸς ἐν Περιπλῳ. Steph. Byz.

s.v.]

I, 35-6.

19. STEPHANUS OF BYZANTIUM

(i) s.v. Ταπροβάνη.

νήσος μέγιστη ἐν τῇ Ἰνδικῇ θαλάσῃ. Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ καὶ Λύχνος.

Νήσος τετράπλευρος, ἀλίστεφανος Ταπροβάνη

θηρονόμος πέπληθεν εὐρύνων ἐλεφάντων. ἡ πάλαι μὲν ἔκαλεῖτο Σιμούνδου, νῦν δὲ Σαλική, πλοῦ μήκος· οὖσα ἐπτάκις πρὸς χιλίων σταδίων, πλάτος δὲ πεντακοσίων. τὰ αὐτὰ δὲ καὶ Ἀρτεμίδωρος ἐνάτῳ Γεωγραφουμένων.

(ii) s.v. Μαργάνα.

πόλις τῆς Ἰνδικῆς. Μαρκιανὸς ἐν Περιπλῳ. ἔστι καὶ Μαργάσαι πληθυντικῶς. τὸ ἔθνικόν Μαργανεῖς.

(iii) s.v. Ἄργυρα.

μητρόπολις τῆς ἐν Ἰνδικῇ Ταπροβάνης νήσου,¹ ἧ ἔστι κριθῆς νήσου. καὶ γὰρ εὐφορωτάτη ἔστι καὶ πλεῖστον ποιεῖ χρυσόν.

1 so three MSS. v.l. Ταπροβάνη νήσω or Ταπροβάγκα.

Bochart (cf. Ptol. vii, 2, 27) : Ἰαβαδίου.

Meineke : νήσου, <ὡς δὲ ἄλλοι Ἰαβαδίου> ἧ

20. ANONYMI, Geographiae Expositio Compendiaria

(i) Ἔστι δὲ καὶ τῆς ἡπείρου ταύτης κατὰ μὲν τὸ Ἰνδικὸν πέλαγος μεγίστη νήσος, ἣ πάλαι μὲν Σιμοβνδα καλουμένη, νῦν δὲ Σαλική, ἐν ᾗ φασὶ πάντα γίνεσθαι τὰ πρὸς τὴν χρῆσιν τὴν βιωτικὴν, ἔχειν τε παντοῖα μέταλλα, καὶ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας αὐτὴν ἄνδρας μαλλοῖς γυναικεῖοις ἀναδεῖσθαι τὰς κεφαλὰς.

VI, 25

(ii) Τῶν δὲ νήσων τῶν πάνυ μεγίστων πρωτεύει μὲν παρὰ πάσας ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ἡ Σαλική, δευτερεύει δὲ ἡ Ἀλουίω, τὰ δὲ τρίτα φέροισ' ἂν ἡ Ἰουερνία. Τῶν δὲ ἄλλων μὲν μεγάλων, ἐλαττόνων δὲ ἡ κατὰ τὰς εἰρημένας, πάλιν τετάσσεται πρώτη μὲν Σικελία, δευτέρα δὲ Σαρδονία, τρίτη δὲ Κύπρος, τετάρτη δὲ Κρήτη, πέμπτη ἡ Εὐβοία. Τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν καὶ τρίτην ὡπερ ἐν μεγέθει τάξιν ἔχουσῶν πρώτη μὲν ἂν εἴη ἡ Κορσικὴ ἢ καὶ Κύρνος, δευτέρα ἡ Λέσβος, τρίτη δὲ ἡ Ῥόδος.

VIII, 27.

21 Ps.-Moses of Chorene : Armenian Geography (Translation by Robert H. Hewsen)

v. Translation of Sources 254 a (i) (ii)

TAPROBANE : ITS FLORA AND FAUNA

22. AELIAN

17. Ἐν δὲ τῇ καλουμένῃ Μεγάλῃ θαλάττῃ καὶ νῆσον ᾗδουσι μεγίστην, καὶ ὄνομα αὐτῆς ἀκούω Ταπροβάνην. πάνυ δὲ δολιχὴν πυνθάνομαι καὶ ὑψηλὴν τὴν νῆσον εἶναι, καὶ μῆκος μὲν ἔχειν σταδίων ἑπτακισχιλίων, πλάτος δὲ πεντακισχιλίων, καὶ ἔχειν οὐ πόλεις, ἀλλὰ κώμας πενήκοντα καὶ ἑπτακοσίας. στέγας δὲ ἔχουσιν ἔνθα κατάγονται οἱ ἐπιχώριοι ἐκ ξύλων πεποιημένους, ἤδη δὲ καὶ δονάκων. τρίκτονται δὲ ἄρα ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ θαλάττῃ καὶ χελῶναι μέγισται, ὡς περ οὖν τὰ ἔλυτρα ὄροφοι γίνονται. καὶ γὰρ ἐστὶ καὶ πεντεκαίδεκα πήχεων ἐν χελώνιον, ὡς ὑποικεῖν οὐκ ὀλίγους. καὶ ἡλίους πυρωδεστάτους ἀποστέγει, καὶ σκιὰν ἀσμένους παρέχει, πρὸς γε μὴν τῶν ὄμβρων τὰς καταφορὰς ἀντίτυπὸν ἐστὶ, καὶ κέραμου παντὸς καρτερώτερον, τὰς τε ἐμβολὰς τῶν ὑετῶν ἀποσεύεται, καὶ κροτούμενον ἀκούουσιν οἱ ὑποικοῦντες, ὡς ἔς τι τέγος ἐμπιπτόντων τῶν ὑδάτων. οὐ δέονται γε μὴν ὡς κέραμον ῥαγέντα ἀμείψαι. σκληρὸν γὰρ τὸ χελώνιον, καὶ ἔοικεν ὑπορωρυγμένη πέτρῃ καὶ ὑπάντρῳ τε καὶ αὐτορόφῳ στέγγῃ.

18. Ἡ τοίνυν νῆσος ἣ ἐν τῇ Μεγάλῃ θαλάττῃ, ἣν καλοῦσι Ταπροβάνην, ἔχει φοινικῶνας μὲν θαύμαστῶς πεφυτευμένους ἐς στοίχον, ὡς περ οὖν ἐν τοῖς ἀβροῖς τῶν παραδείσων οἱ τούτων μελεδωνοὶ φυτεύουσι τὰ δένδρα τὰ σκιαδηφόρα, ἔχει δὲ καὶ νομάς ἐλεφάντων πολλῶν καὶ μεγίστων. καὶ οἷ γε νησιῶται ἐλέφαντες τῶν ἡπειρωτῶν ἀλκιμώτεροί τε τὴν ῥάμην καὶ μείζους ἰδεῖν εἰσὶ, καὶ θυμοσοφώτεροι δὲ πάντα πάντη κρίνουντο ἂν. κομίζουσι τε οὖν αὐτοὺς ἐς τὴν ἀντιπέρας ἡπειρον ναῦς μεγάλας τεκτηνόμενοι (ἔχει γὰρ δῆπου καὶ δάση ἣ νῆσος), πιπράσκουσι τε διαπλεύσαντες τῷ βασιλεῖ τῷ ἐν Καλίγγαις. διὰ μέγεθος δὲ ἄρα τῆς νῆσου οὐδὲ ἴσασιν οἱ τὰ μέσα

αὐτῆς οἰκοῦντες τὴν θάλατταν, ἀλλὰ ἡπειρώτην μὲν βίον τρίβουσι, περιερχομένην δὲ αὐτοῦς καὶ κυκλουμένην πυνθάνονται θάλατταν. οἱ δὲ τῇ θαλάττῃ πρόσικοι τῆς μὲν ἄγρας τῆς τῶν ἑλεφάντων ἀμαθῶς ἔχουσιν, ἀκοῆ δὲ αὐτῆν ἴσασι μόνη· περὶ γε μὴν τὰς τῶν ἰχθύων καὶ τὰς τῶν κητῶν ἄγρας τίθενται τὴν σπουδὴν. τὴν γὰρ τοι θάλατταν τὴν περιερχομένην τὸν τῆς νήσου κύκλον ἄμαχόν τι πλῆθος καὶ ἰχθύων καὶ κητῶν τρέφειν φασί, καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι καὶ λεόντων ἔχειν κεφαλὰς καὶ παρδάλεων καὶ λύκων καὶ κριῶν δέ, καὶ τὸ ἔτι θαύμα σατύρων μορφᾶς κήτη ἔστιν ἃ περιφέρει καὶ γυναικῶν ὄψιν, αἷσπερ ἀντὶ πλοκάμων ἄκανθαι προσήρτηνται. ἔχειν δὲ καὶ ἄλλας τινὰς ὑμνοῦσιν ἐκτόπους μορφὰς, ὧν τὰ εἶδη μηδ' ἂν τοῦς δεινοῦς γράφειν καὶ κρᾶσεις σωμαίων συμπλέκειν ἐς τερατεῖαν ὄψεων ἀκριβῶσαι ποτε καὶ σοφία γραφικῇ παραστήσαι δύνασθαι ἂν· προμήκη δὲ ἔχει τὰ οὐραῖα καὶ ἐλικτὰ, πόδας γε μὴν χηλᾶς ἢ πτερύγια. πυνθάνομαι δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ ἀμφίβια εἶναι, καὶ νύκτωρ μὲν ἐπινέμεσθαι τὰς ἀρούρας· πόαν μὲν γὰρ ἐσθίειν τῶν ἀγελαίων τε καὶ σπερμολόγων δίκην, χαίρειν δὲ καὶ τῷ φοίνικι τῷ δρυπέπει, διασεύειν τε ἐκ τούτου τὰ δένδρα ταῖς σείραις περιβάλλοντα αὐτὰς ὑγρὰς οὔσας καὶ οἶας περιπλέκεσθαι. τοῦτον οὖν τὸν φοίνικα ἐκ τοῦ σειμοῦ τοῦ βιαίου καταρρέοντα ἐπινέμεσθαι· ὑπολήγει δὲ ἄρα νύξ, καὶ σαφῆς οὐπὶ ἡμέρα, καὶ ἐκεῖνα ἠφανίσθη καταδύντα ἐς τὸ πέλαγος, ἐφ' οὗ μέλλοντος ὑπολάμπειν. εἶναι δὲ καὶ φαλαίνας φασὶ πολλάς, οὐ μὴν ἐς τὴν γῆν προϊέναι αὐτάς, τοῦς θύννους ἐλλοχῶσας. καὶ δελφίνων δὲ γένη δύο φασὶν εἶναι, τὸ μὲν ἄγριον καὶ κάρχαρον καὶ ἀφειδέστατον ἐς τοῦς ἀλιέας καὶ σφόδρα ἄνοικτον, τὸ δὲ πρῶτον τε καὶ τιθασὸν φύσει· περισκιρτᾷ γοῦν καὶ περινήχεται, καὶ ἔοικε κύνιδίῳ ἀϊκάλλοντι, καὶ ψηλαφήσεις, ὃ δὲ ὑπομένει· κἂν τροφὴν ἐμβάλῃς, ἀσμένως λήψεται.

19. Λαγῶς θαλάττιος (τῆς μέντοι Μεγάλης· τὸν γὰρ ἕτερον εἶπον τὸν ἐκ τῆς ἑτέρας) ἀλλ' οὗτος γε ἔοικε τῷ χερσαίῳ πάντα πάντη πλην τῶν τριχῶν. τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἡπειρώτου ἡ λάχνη ἔοικεν ἀπαλή τε εἶναι καὶ ἐπαφωμένῳ μὴ ἀντίτυπος· ἔχει δὲ οὗτος ἀκανθώδεις τὰς τρίχας καὶ ὀρθάς, καὶ εἴ τις προσάψαιτο, ἀμύσσεται. φασὶ δὲ αὐτὸν ἐπ' ἄκρα τῆ φρίκη τῆς θαλάττης νήχεσθαι καὶ μὴ καταδύνειν ἐς βάθος, ὥκιστον δὲ εἶναι τὴν νῆξιν. ζῶν δὲ οὐκ ἂν ἀλώῃ ῥαδίως. τὸ δὲ αἴτιον, οὐκ ἐμπίπτει ποτὲ ἐς δίκτυον, οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ καλάμου πρόσσειν ὀρμιᾷ καὶ δελέατι. ὅταν δὲ ἄρα νοσήσας ὅδε ὁ λαγῶς εἶτα ἡκιστος ὦν νήχεσθαι ἐκβρασθῆ, πᾶς ὅστις ἂν αὐτοῦ προσάψῃται τῆ χειρὶ ἀπόλλυται ἀμεληθεὶς. ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆ βακτηρίᾳ ἐὰν θίγη τοῦ λαγῶ τοῦδε, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς πάσχει τὸ αὐτό, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ οἱ τοῦ βασιλίσκου πρόσψάμενοι. ῥίζαν δὲ ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ κατὰ τὴν Μεγάλην θάλατταν φύεσθαι φασὶ καὶ εἶναι πᾶσιν εὐγνωστον, ἥπερ οὖν τῆ λιποθυμίας ἀντίπαλός ἐστιν. προσενεχθεῖσα γοῦν τῇ τοῦ λιποψυχοβντος ῥινὶ ἀναβιώσκειται τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ἐὰν δὲ ἀμελήθῃ, καὶ μέχρι θανάτου πρόσεισι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ πάθος· τοσαύτην ἄρα ἐς τὸ κακὸν ὅδε ὁ λαγῶς ἔχει τὴν ἰσχύν.

History of Animals XVI, 17-19.

23. DIONYSIUS

Κεῖθεν δὲ στρεφθεὶς νοτίης προπάροιθε κολώνης,
 αἰψά κε Κωλιάδος μεγάλην ἐπὶ νῆσον ἴκοιο,
 μητέρα Ταπροβάνην Ἀσιγγενέων ἐλεφάντων,
 ἧς ὕπερ, οὐρανίησιν ἀειρόμενος στροφάδεσσι,
 δινεῖται κατὰ κύκλον ἐν αἰθέρι Καρκίνος αἴθων.
 αὐτῇ δ' εὐρυτάτη μέγεθος πέλει· ἀμφὶ δὲ πάντη
 κήτεα θῖνες ἔχουσιν, Ἐρυθραίου βοτᾶ πόντου,
 οὔρεσιν ἡλιβάτοισιν ἑοικότα· τῶν δ' ὑπὲρ ἄκρων
 τέτρηχεν νώτων περιμήκετος ὄλκδος ἀκάνθης.
 Δυσμενέων τοὶ παῖδες, ἐλισσόμενοι περὶ πόντον,
 κείνοις ἀντήσειαν ἀλάμενοι· οὐ γὰρ ἔρωῃ
 λυγροῖς ἐν στομάτεσσιν, ἐπεὶ μέγα χάσμα τέτυκται·
 πολλάκι δ' αὖ καὶ νῆα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀνδράσι νηδὺς
 κείνα καταβρώξειε τεράατα· τοῖς γὰρ ἀλιτροῖς
 εἰν ἄλι καὶ γαίῃ κακὰ μυρία θῆκατο δαίμων.

Periegesis, 591-605.

24. AVIENUS

Contemplator item, ceu se mare flectat in austrum,
 inque notum oceanus freta ponti caerulea curvet;
 altaque Coliados mox hic tibi dorsa patescent
 rupis, et intenti spectabis cespitis arces.
 Pro quibus ingenti consistens mole per undas
 insula Taprobane gignit tetros elephantos,
 et super aestiferi torretur sidere Cancri.
 Haec immensa patet, vastisque extenditur oris
 undique per pelagus; latus autem protinus olli
 agmina cetosi pecoris, vaga monstra profundī,
 alludunt. Fervent Erythraei marmora ponti
 tota feris: haec, ut rigidi juga maxima montis,

nubibus attollunt latus omne et terga tumescunt;
 instar in his rupis spinae tenor arduus astat,
 molibus in celsis scrupus quoque creber inhorret.
 Ah, ne quis rapidi subvectus gurgitis unda
 haec in terga sali lembum contorqueat unquam;
 ah, ne monstrigenis hostem licet inferat aestus
 fluctibus: immodici late patet oris hiatus,
 quippe feris antro panduntur guttura vasto;
 protinus haec ipsas absorbent fauce carinas,
 involvuntque simul mox monstra voracia nautas

Descriptio Orbis Terrae, 772-793.

25. PRISCIAN

Hinc tepidos proram convertens navis ad austros
 Taprobanen venies, generat quae magna elephantas
 per fines Asiae. Jacet haec sub sidere Cancrici;
 litoribus cujus saliunt densissima cete,
 quae pascit vastum mare Rubrum, montibus aequa,
 tenditur horribilis quorum per terga, per arcos
 spina, ferens cladem fatumque sub ore feroci:
 quippe solent pariter navem sorbere virosque.
 Nam mala tam pelagus quam terra merentibus offert.

Periegesis, 595-603.

26. PARAPHRASE (of DIONYSIUS)

Ἐκεῖθεν δὲ στραφεὶς ἔμπροσθεν τῆς νοτίας ἄκρας ταχέως ἐπὶ τὴν
 Ταπροβάνην, μεγάλην νῆσον τῆς Κωλιάδος, ἥτοι τῆς Ἀφροδίτης, παραγενήσῃ,
 τὴν μητέρα τῶν ἐλεφάντων τῶν ἐξ Ἀσίας τὸ γένος ἔχόντων. ὑπὲρ ἧστινος
 Ταπροβάνης ἄνωθεν ἐν τῷ ζωδιακῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κύκλῳ ὁ διάπυρος καρκίνος
 ἀναστρέφεται, ὡς ἐπιπολάζοντος τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκεῖ διὰ τὸ μέγεθος αὐτῆς.
 Καὶ γὰρ πλατεῖά ἐστὶν ἡ Ταπροβάνη κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος. Οἱ δὲ περὶ αὐτὴν

αίγριαλοι τὰ κήτη ἔχουσι, τὰ βοτᾶ, τουτέστι τὰ θρέμματα, τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης, τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς ἢ τοῖς μεγάλοις ὄρεσιν ἀφομοιούμενα ἢ ἀπεικαζόμενα, κατὰ δὲ τὸν νῶτον αὐτῶν ἢ πολλῇ καὶ ἐπιμήκῃ τῆς ἀκάνθης περιπλοκῇ τραχύνεται. Τῶν δὲ δυσμενῶν καὶ ἀγρίων ἀνδρῶν παῖδες περὶ τὸν πόντον πλανώμενοι αὐτοῖς ὑπαντήθειαν· οὐδαμῶς γὰρ ἐκφυγεῖν ἔνεστι τὸ μέγα χάσμα τῶν στομάτων, πολλάκις δὲ τὰ τέρατα ἐκεῖνα, ἥτοι τὰ Ἐρυθραῖα κήτη, τὴν ναῦν σὺν τοῖς ἀνδράσι τῆς νηὸς ἢ σὺν τοῖς ναύταις καταπλοῖεν. Τοῖς γὰρ κακοῖς ὁ θεὸς πανταχοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ γῆ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ μυρία κακὰ ἠτολίμασεν.

11.591-605.

27. NICEPHORUS

(i) Στραφεῖς δὲ ἐκεῖθεν ἔμπροσθεν ἐπὶ τῆς νοτίας κολώνης εὐρήσεις τὴν Ταπροβάνην τὴν μεγάλην νῆσον τῆς Ἀφροδίτης, τὴν μητέρα τῶν ἐλεφάντων. Ὑπεράνωθεν δὲ ταύτης ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ κύκλῳ ἀναστρέφεται ὁ λαμπρὸς καρκίνος. Ἔστι δὲ πλατέα κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος· πανταχοῦ δὲ περὶ αὐτὴν οἰκοῦσι τοῦ Ἐρυθραίου πόντου τὰ θρέμματα, ἥγουν (θῖνες καὶ) κήτεια ὅμοια τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς ὄρεσιν, ὅπου δυσκόλως τις δύναται ἐκφυγεῖν τὰ στόματα αὐτῶν· πολλάκις γὰρ ταῦτα κατέπιον καὶ ποῦς ἐκεῖθεν περιπλέοντας σὺν ταῖς ναυσίν.

Geog. (G.G.M. II, 463).

(ii) Ἡ γῆ τῶν Ἀράβων μυρίζει καὶ θύου καὶ σμύρνης καὶ τοῦ εὐώδους καλάμου καὶ τοῦ λιβάνου καὶ τῆς κασίης· ταῦτα δὲ ἔχει, διότι ἐκεῖ λέγουσι τὸν Διάνυσον λυθῆναι ἐκ τοῦ μηροῦ τοῦ Δίδος, καὶ γεννηθέντος αὐτοῦ ἐγένοντο εὐώδη ἅπαντα καὶ τεθυμιασμένα, ἐν τῇ βοσκῇ δὲ βαρύνονται τὰ πρόβατα τοῖς δασέσι μαλλοῖς, αἱ λίμναι δὲ αὐτόματι καταρρέουσι, καὶ αἱ ὄρνιθες ἔρχονται ἐκεῖθεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀοικητῶν νήσων τῶν περὶ τὴν Ταπροβάνην, φέρουσαι τὰ φύλλα τῶν ἀφθάρτων κινναμῶμων· τὸ κιννάμιον δὲ ἐστὶν ὅμοιον ἀμπέλῳ κατὰ τὴν βλάστησιν.

Geog. (G.G.M. II, 466).

28. PARAPHRASE

(ii) ADDENDUM

Καὶ γὰρ ἀληθῶς κατὰ τὴν γῆν ἐκείνην αὐτὸν τὸν Διόνυσον ἀπὸ τοῦ καλῶς ἐρραμμένου αὐτοῦ μηροῦ ὁ Ζεὺς ἔλυσεν. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ γεννήσαντος ἢ γεννηθέντος αὐτοῦ εὐώδη ἅπαντα καὶ τεθυμιαμένα ἐγένοντο. Τότε δὲ καὶ τὰ πρόβατα τοῖς δασέσι μαλλοῖς ἐν τῇ βοσκῇ ἐβαρύνετο, αὐτόματοι δὲ τοῖς ὕδασι καὶ αἱ λίμναι κατέρρεον, ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἐτέρων ἀοικήτων νήσων, ἤγουν τῶν περὶ Ταπροβάνην, αἱ ὄρνιθες παρεγένοντο ἀκεραίων καὶ ἀφθάρτων κινναμώμων τὰ φύλλα φέρουσαι.

lines 933ff. (G.G.M. II, 422).

29. SCHOLIAST on DIONYSIUS

(i) Τὸ τε Ἰνδικὸν πέλαγος, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς, ἄρχεται μὲν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀραβικοῦ κόλπου, παρατείνει δὲ μέσον ἔχον Ταπροβάνην νήσον ἕως Μεγάλου τοῦ παρ' Ἰνδοῖς τε καὶ Σινδοῖς οὕτως καλουμένου ἑξοῦ κόλπου.

line 1 (G.G.M. II, 429).

(ii) Πρωτεύει μὲν ἡ Ἰνδικὴ Ταπροβάνη μεγέθει καὶ δόξῃ· μεθ' ἣν ἡ Βρεττανικὴ καλουμένη, παρὰ δὲ τοῖς οἰκοῦσιν αὐτὴν Ἀλουιωνίς, τρίτη δὲ ἡ Χρυσή, χερρόνησος Ἰνδική· τετάρτη τῶν Βρεττανῶν ἡ ἑτέρα, λεγομένη παρ' αὐτοῖς Ἰουερνία· πέμπτη τούτων ἡ Πελοπόννησος, καὶ ἡ Σικελία μετ' αὐτὴν ἕκτη· Σαρδῶ μετ' ἐκείνην ἑβδόμη· μετὰ δὲ ταύτην ἡ Κύρνος ὀγδόη· Κρήτη δὲ τάξεως ἑννάτης· μετὰ δὲ ταύτην ἡ Κύπρος οὕσα δεκάτη τῷ καταλόγῳ, εἰπεῖν δὲ κορωνίς. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ὁ Πτολεμαῖος δρίζει.

Ibid.

(iii) 592. Κωλιάδος : 'Αφροδίτης. . . .

593. 'Η δὲ Ταπροβάνη τῆς 'Αφρικῆς¹ νῆσος ἱερά . . .

595. φησὶ δὲ ὅτι ἐκεῖ κείται ὁ καρκίνος κατὰ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ

εἶδος κλίμα. Αἴθωνα δὲ αὐτὸν εἶπεν, ἥτοι διὰ τὸ τοῦ θηρίου διάπυρον, ἢ ὅτι ὁ ἥλιος ἐν αὐτῷ γινόμενος σφοδρῶς καίει. Κατὰ κύκλον δὲ, ἢ διὰ τὴν περιφέρειαν ἢ τὴν θερινὴν τροπὴν.

¹ 'Αφροδίτης legendum.

lines 592-5 (G.G.M. II, 452).

30. . EUSTATHIUS

(i) Ὅτι τὸ μέγεθος τῶν Βρεττανίδων νήσων οὐ μόνον ὁ Διονύσιος ἐνέφηνεν, ἀλλὰ δηλοῖ καὶ ὁ Πτολεμαῖος ἐν τῇ γεωγραφικῇ ὑφηγήσει, λέγων ὅτι τῶν νήσων πρωτεύει ἡ 'Ινδικὴ Ταπροβάνη μεγέθει καὶ δόξῃ, μεθ' ἣν ἡ Βρεττανικὴ, τρίτη ἡ Χρυσήχερρόνησος, τετάρτη ἑτέρα Βρεττανῶν ἡ 'Ιουερνία, πέμπτη Πελοπόννησος, Σικελία μετ' αὐτὴν ἕκτη, ἑβδόμη Σαρδῶ, ὄγδοη Κύρνος, Κρήτη ἑνάτη. ἐπὶ δὲ ταύταις ἡ Κύπρος οὕσα δεκάτη γίνεται τοῦ καταλόγου κορωνίς. Καὶ Πτολεμαῖος μὲν οὕτως εἰς δεκάδα κορυφοὶ τὰς μεγίστας νήσους, συναριθμῶν αὐταῖς καὶ δύο χερρονήσους.

Comm. on lines 568ff. (G.G.M. II, 328-9).

(ii) Ὅτι ἡ Ταπροβάνη ποτὲ Σαλικὴ ὀνομασθεῖσα νῆσος ἐστὶ πελαγία, οὐκ ἐλάττων τῆς Βρεττανικῆς, κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν, τέτραπλευρος, θηρονόμος, πεπληθυῖα εὐρίνων ἐλεφάντων, ὡς φησὶν Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ καὶ Λύχνος ἐπιλεγόμενος. ταύτην τὴν νῆσον ὁ Διονύσιος μητέρα φησὶν ἐλεφάντων Ἀσιηγενέων. λέγει δὲ αὐτὴν καὶ Κωλιάδος νῆσον μεγάλην, ὃ ἔστιν Ἀφροδίτης, ὅποια καὶ ἡ Κύπρος, διὰ τὸ καὶ τοῦς ἐν τῇ Ταπροβάνῃ ἀνθρώπους γυναικεῖω κόσμῳ φαιδρύνεσθαι, ἄλλως τε τὰ εἰς Ἀφροδίτην θρυπτομένους, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐμπλεκομένους

τὰς τρίχας. Ἴστορεῖ δὲ καὶ τὸν καρκίνον τὸ θερινὸν ζῴδιον ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς δινεῖσθαι τῆς νήσου, οὐρανίαις ἀειρόμενον στροφάδεσσιν, ὡς τοῦ ἐκεῖ κλίματος ὑπὸ τὸν καρκίνον κειμένου. Πτολεμαῖος μέντοι τὸν κρίδν τὸ ζῴδιον ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς εἰλεῖσθαι φησι.

Comm. on lines 591ff. (G.G.M. II, 330).

(iii) Ὅτι εὐρυτάτη τὸ μέγεθος ἡ Ταπροβάνη. φησὶν οὖν καὶ ὁ Γεωγράφος. "Ταπροβάνη πελαγία νῆσος μεγάλη, πολὺ τῆς ἡπείρου διέχουσα." Ἔχει δὲ κατὰ τὸν Διονύσιον καὶ κήτη πολλὰ ὄρεσιν ἡλιβάτοις ἐοικότα, οἷς ὑπὲρ ἄκρων νώτων τέτρηχεν, ὃ ἔστι τετράχυνται, μήκιστος ὄλκδς ἀκάνθης· ὧν καὶ τὰ στόματα λυγρὰ λέγει, καὶ χάσμα οὕτω μέγα φησὶν αὐτοῖς εἶναι, ὡς πολλάκις καὶ νῆα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀνδράσιν ὑφ' ἐν καταβρῶξαι. . . . Λέγει δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα κήτη καὶ τέρατα καὶ βοτὰ πόντου Ἐρυθραίου, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἡ νῆσος κείται.

Comm. on lines 596ff. (G.G.M. II, 331).

(iv) Οὕτω τιμίους λίθοις καταστρώσας τὴν Ἰνδικὴν ὁ Διονύσιος ἐπάγει ἐπιφωνηματικῶς κατὰ συντομίαν, ὅτι παντοῖον ὄλβον αὔξει, ποταμοῖς οὔσα κατάρρυτος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα. Ναὶ μὴν, φησὶ, καὶ οἱ λειμῶνες ἐκεῖ ἀεὶ κομῶσι πετάλοις· ἄλλοθι μὲν γὰρ κέγχρος αὔξεται, ἄλλοθι δὲ ὕλαι θάλλουσιν Ἐρυθραίου καλάμου, τοῦ ἀρωματικοῦ δηλαδὴ, Ἐρυθραίου λεγομένου διὰ τὸ τὴν Ἰνδίαν ἕως καὶ εἰς τὸν Ἐρυθραῖον παρήκειν ὠκεανόν· ὅπερ δῆλόν ἐστι καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τὴν Γαγγίτιν χώραν κατὰ τὸν Διονύσιον περὶ τὰ τέρατα ἔλκεσθαι τῆς Κωλιάδος γῆς, ἥτοι τῆς Ταπροβάνης, ὅπου τὰ μέγιστα κήτη, ἅπερ αὐτὸς Ἐρυθραίου πόντου εἶπε βοτὰ.

Comm. on lines 1107ff. (G.G.M. II, 400).

31. PALLADIUS

(i) Παλλαδίου περί τῶν τῆς Ἰνδίας ἔθνῶν καὶ τῶν Βραγμάνων

1. Ἡ πολλὴ φιλοπῶνία σου καὶ φιλομαθία καὶ φιληκοΐα καὶ φιλοθεΐα, ἀνδρῶν ἀρίστων ἐγκαλλώπισμα, καὶ ἕτερον ἡμῶς προετρέψατο προσδιηγήσασθαι πρᾶγμα ὑπερβολῇ φιλοσοφίας γέμον. κινούμενοι τοίνυν ἡμεῖς τῇ σῇ φιληκοΐᾳ πρὸς τοῖς εἰρημένοις προσεξηγησόμεθά σοι καὶ τὸν τῶν Βραγμάνων βίον, ὧν μὲν ἐγὼ οὔτε τὴν πατρίδα ἱστορήσα οὔτε τοῖς ἀνδράσι συντετύχηκα. πόρρω γάρ εἰσιν ἀπωκισμένοι καὶ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς καὶ τῆς Σηρικῆς τῷ Γάγγη παροικοῦντες ποταμῷ, ἐγὼ δὲ εἰς τὰ ἀκρωτήρια μόνον ἔφθασα τῆς Ἰνδικῆς πρὸ ἐτῶν ὀλίγων μετὰ τοῦ μακαρίου Μωϋσέως τοῦ ἐπισκόπου τῶν Ἀδουλήνων· καὶ ἀγρίῳ καύματι ληφθεὶς - τοιούτου ὄντος ὡς τοῦ ὕδατος ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς ἀναβλύζοντος ψυχροτάτου εἰς ὑπερβολὴν καὶ ληφθέντος ἐν ἀγγείοις παραχρῆμα βράσειν - τοῦτο τοίνυν θεασάμενος αὐθις ὑπέστρεψα μὴ στέξας τὸν καύσωνα. ὁ δὲ Γάγγης οὗτος ποταμὸς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐστὶν ὁ καλούμενος Φεισῶν, ὁ ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς κείμενος, εἰς ὧν τῶν τεσσάρων ποταμῶν τῶν λεγομένων ἐξιέναι ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου.

2. Διήγημα δὲ φέρεται Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ τῶν Μακεδόνων βασιλέως ἐξηγησαμένου ποσῶς τὸν βίον αὐτῶν· κάκεινῳ δὲ τάχα ὑπῆρχεν ὡς ἐκ παρακούσματος· οὔτε γὰρ αὐτός, ὡς οἶμαι, τὸν Γάγγην ἐπεραιώθη, ἀλλ' ἄχρι τῆς Σηρικῆς φθάσας, ἔνθα τὸν μέταξον οἱ σῆρες τίκτουσιν, κάκει λιθίνην στήλην στήσας ἐπέγραψεν· Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ Μακεδῶν ἔφθασε μέχρι τοῦ τόπου τούτου.

3. ἐγὼ δὲ ποσῶς τὰ περί τῶν Βραγμάνων δεδύνημαι μαθεῖν παρὰ τινος Θηβαίου σχολαστικοῦ, ἐκουσίως μὲν τὴν ἀποδημίαν ποιησαμένου, ἀκουσίως δὲ τῇ αἰμαλωσίᾳ περιπεσόντος. οὗτος, ὡς ἔλεγεν, ἀφυῆς ἐγεγόνει ἐν τῇ δίκανικῇ καὶ ἀκηδίᾳ ληφθεὶς ἐκίσσησεν οὕτως τὴν τῶν Ἰνδῶν ἱστορήσαι χώραν. 4. καὶ διαπλεύσας μετὰ πρεσβυτέρου ταύτην κατέλαβε πρῶτον τὴν Ἀδούλην, εἶτα μετ' ἐκείνην τὴν Αὔξουμην, ἐν ᾗ ἦν καὶ

βασιλίσκος μικρὸς τῶν Ἰνδῶν ἐκεῖ καθεζόμενος. ἐκεῖ δὲ χρόνισας καὶ πολλὴν συνήθειαν κτησάμενος ἠθέλησε καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Ταπροβάνην εἰσελθεῖν νῆσον, ἔνθα εἰσὶν οἱ λεγόμενοι Μακρόβιοι. ζῶσι γὰρ εἰς τὴν νῆσον ἐκείνην ἕως ἑκατὸν πεντήκοντα ἐτῶν οἱ γέροντες δι' ὑπερβολὴν τῆς τῶν ἀέρων εὐκρασίας καὶ ἀνεξερευνήτου κλίματος θεοῦ. ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ τῇ νήσῳ καὶ ὁ μέγας βασιλεὺς κατοικεῖ τῶν Ἰνδῶν, ᾧ πάντες οἱ βασιλίσκοι τῆς χώρας ὑπόκεινται ὡς σατράπαι, καθὼς αὐτὸς ὁ σχολαστικὸς ἡμῖν διηγήσατο μαθὼν καὶ αὐτὸς παρ' ἐτέρων. οὐ γὰρ δεδύνηται οὐδ' αὐτὸς εἰς τὴν νῆσον εἰσελθεῖν.

5. παράκεινται γὰρ ταύτῃ τῇ νήσῳ (εἰ μὴ ψευδὲς ἐστὶ τὸ λεχθέν) ὡς χίλια ἄλλαι νῆσοι τῆς ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης ἐμβαλλούσης εἰς αὐτάς. ἐπεὶ τοίνυν ὁ μαγνήτις λίθος ὁ τὸν σίδηρον ἐπισπῶμενος ἐν ἐκείναις γίνεται ταῖς νήσοις ταῖς λεγομέναις Μανιόλοις, ὃ ἂν ἀπέλθῃ πλοῖον σιδηροῦς ἔχον ἤλους κατέχεται ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ λίθου φύσεως μὴ δυνάμενον παρελθεῖν. ἔστι δὲ ἰδικῶς τὰ διαπερῶντα πλοῖα εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν μεγάλην νῆσον ἄνευ σιδήρου ἐπιούροις ξυλίνοις κατεσκευασμένα.

6. ἔχει δέ, φησι, καὶ πέντε ποταμοὺς μεγίστους ἢ νῆσος αὕτη, ἐν οἷς νῆες διαπορεύονται. ὡς δὲ διηγοῦντο αὐτῷ οἱ ἐκεῖθεν, οὐδέποτε ὀπώρα λείπει ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ἐκείνῳ τῆς νήσου. ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ γὰρ, φησι, ὅς μὲν ἀνθεῖ κλάδων, ὅς δὲ ὀμφακίζεῖ, ὅς δὲ καὶ τρυγᾶται. ἔχει δὲ καὶ φοίνικας καὶ τὸ κάρυον τὸ μέγιστον τὸ Ἰνδικὸν καὶ ἀρωματίζον. ζῶσι δὲ οἱ οἰκήτορες τοῦ τόπου ἐκείνου γάλακτι καὶ ὀρύζῃ καὶ ὀπώρα, ἐρίου οὐ τίκτομένου παρ' αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ λίνου, προβάτων δὲ δέρματα καλῶς εἰργασμένα περὶ τὴν ὀσφῦν περιτίθενται μόνον. ἔστι δὲ καὶ πρόβατα τετριχωμένα ἄνευ ἐρίου γαλακτιφόρα λίαν πλατείας ἔχοντα οὐράς. κέχρηνται δὲ καὶ κρεωφαγία αἰγῶν καὶ προβάτων. χοῖρος γὰρ ἀπ' Ἰθβαῖδος οὐκέτι εὕρισκεται ἐν τοῖς μέρεσιν Ἰνδίας ἢ Αἰθιοπίας δι' ὑπερβολὴν καυμάτων.

7. διηγείτο οὖν οὗτος ὁ σχολαστικός, ὅτι ἀπὸ τῆς Αὐξούμης εἰδῶν
 τινὰς πλοιαρίους διαβαίνοντας Ἰνδοῦς ἐμπορίας χάριν ἐπειράθη ἐνδότερον
 ἀπελθεῖν· καὶ φθάσας ἐγγὺς τῶν καλουμένων Βισάδων τῶν τὸ πίπερ συναγόντων·
 ἔθνος δὲ ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνο πάνυ σμικρότατον καὶ ἀδρανέστατον, λιθίνοις
 σπηλαίοις ἐνοικοῦντες, οἵτινες καὶ κρημνοβατεῖν ἐπίστανται διὰ τὴν τοῦ
 τόπου συστροφὴν καὶ τὸ πίπερ οὕτως ἀπὸ τῶν θάμνων συνάγουσι· δενδρῦφια
 γὰρ εἰσι κολοβά, ὡς ἔλεγεν ἐκεῖνος ὁ σχολαστικός. εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ
 Βισάδες ἀνθρωπάριά κολοβά μεγαλοκέφαλα, ἄκαρτα καὶ ἀπλότριχα· οἱ δὲ
 λοιποὶ Αἰθίοπες καὶ Ἰνδοὶ μέλανές εἰσιν καὶ νεανικοὶ καὶ φριξότριχες.

8. "ἐκεῖθεν δέ", φησι, "κατασχεθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ δυναστεύοντος πραγμάτων
 ἐπειρώμην ὡς τόλμήσας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν· καὶ οὔτε ἐκεῖνοι
 τὴν ἀπολογία ἐδέχοντο τὴν ἐμὴν μὴ ἐπιστάμενοι τὴν διάλεκτον τῆς ἡμετέρας
 χώρας, οὔτε δὲ ἐγὼ τὰς παρ' ἐκείνων εὐθύνας εἰς ἐμὲ γινομένας ἐγνώριζον.
 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐγὼ τὴν ἐκείνων ἠπιστάμην γλῶσσαν, μόναις δὲ ταῖς διαστροφαῖς
 τῶν ὄψεων ἀλλήλοις ἐστοιχοῦμεν γνώριμά σημεῖα. ἐγὼ μὲν τὰς ἐκείνων
 ἐγκληματώδεις φωνὰς ἐκ τοῦ ὑφαίμου τῆς χροῆς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ τοῦ
 ἀγρίου τρισμοῦ τῶν ὀδόντων καὶ τῶν κινήσεων τῆν τῶν λεγόμενων παρ'
 αὐτῶν ἐστοχαζόμενὴν δύναμιν, ἐκεῖνοὶ δὲ αὖ πάλιν ἐκ τοῦ τρόμου τοῦ ἐμοῦ
 καὶ τῆς ἀγωνίας καὶ τῆς ὠχρότητος τοῦ προσώπου τό τε τῆς ψυχῆς ἐλεεινὸν
 διὰ τῆς τοῦ σώματος δειλίας ἐναργῶς κατεμάνθανον.

9. κατασχεθεὶς οὖν παρ αὐτοῖς ἐξαετίαν ὑπηρετήσα, τῷ ἀρτοκοπέῳ
 παραδοθεὶς εἰς ἐργασίαν. ἦν δὲ τὸ ἀνάλωμα τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτῶν, φησι,
 μῦδιος εἰς σίτου εἰς ὅλον αὐτοῦ παλάτιον, κάκεῖνος οὐκ οἶδα πόθεν φερόμενος.
 οὕτως δέ, φησιν, ἐν τῇ ἐξαετίᾳ ἠδυνήθην πλείστα ἐκ τῆς γλώσσης αὐτῶν
 σημειώσασθαι, δι' ὧν καὶ τὰ παρακείμενα λοιπὸν ἔθνη μεμάθηκα.

10. ἀπελύθη δέ, φησιν, ἐκείθεν τῷ τρόπῳ τούτῳ· ἕτερος βασιλεὺς ποιήσας μάχην μετὰ τοῦ κατέχοντός με διέβαλεν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν μέγαν βασιλέα τὸν ἐν Ταπροβάνῃ νήσῳ καθεζόμενον ὡς ἄνδρα ἀξιόλογον Ῥωμαῖον αἰχμάλωτον λαβὼν τοῦτον ἔχει εἰς ὑπηρεσίαν ἀγενεστοάτην. ὁ δὲ πέμψας κριτὴν ἕνα καὶ μαθὼν τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν ἀσκοδαρῆναι ὡς ὑβρισάντα Ῥωμαῖον· πάνυ γὰρ τιμῶσι τε καὶ φοβοῦνται τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν ὡς δυναμένην καὶ τῇ χώρᾳ αὐτῶν ἐπιβῆναι δι' ὑπερβολὴν ἀνδρείας καὶ εὐμηχανίας."

(ed. Berghoff).

(ii)(a)

Incipit Commonitorium Palladii

I. Mens tua, quae semper amat discere et semper est accensa in amore sapientiae, etiam iniunxit nobis, ut alium laborem facere deberemus, hoc est, quomodo vivit gens Bragmanorum et qualem consuetudinem habet. Ego quidem neque illam gentem neque patriam illius vidi. Multum enim longe est illa terra non solum ab India sed etiam ab ea regione, quam Sericiam nominant, attamen iuxta fluvium Gangen. Perrexi autem ante aliquos annos usque ad finem Indiae cum Musaeo episcopo Dulenorum, et ibi cum stare non potuissem propter nimium solis ardorem, eo quod talis ardor solis ibi erat, ut etiam viderem aquam bullire in vasculis, quae implebantur ex fontibus, statim redii in meam terram, quia tantum incendium sustinere non poteram.

Hic autem fluvius, qui Ganges dicitur, ille est, quem sancta scriptura Fyson nominat, unus de illis quattuor fluminibus, quae de Paradiso exeunt. Hoc autem dicit historia Alexandri, imperatoris Macedonum. Quamvis dicat idem Alexander de vita et moribus

Bragmanorum, tamen ipsum Gangen fluvium, ubi illi habitant, non transivit; tantummodo enim usque ad illam regionem fuit, quae Seritia dicitur, ubi et ipsum sericum nascitur, et ibi fecit ponere marmoream columnam et scripsit in ea hunc versum: Ego Alexander huc usque perveni.

Ego tamen de ipsis Bragmanis potui aliquid cognoscere, quod mihi narravit quidam Thebeus scolasticus, qui propter hanc causam voluntate sua illic peregrinari voluit. Hic ergo, ut ipse dicebat, cum desideraret scire patriam Indorum, cum quibusdam senioribus illic navigavit; et primum venit ad loca Dulenorum et postea venit ad loca Sumitarum. Dicebat autem isdem Thebeus, ut esset ibi regulus Indorum parvus, et cum esset ibi praedictus Thebeus permultum tempus, voluit etiam pergere ad illam insulam, quae Taprobane dicitur, in qua illi habitant, quibus est nomen Beatorum. Qui vivunt per centem quinquaginta annos propter aërem bene temperatum et domini voluntatem. In hac itaque insula erat rex maximus, cui omnes alii reguli erant subiecti, et illos regulos vocavit ille rex maximus praefectos, sicut praedictus Thebeus nobis dixit; nam et ille ab aliis hoc audivit, quia et ille in predictam insulam non introivit. Sunt autem mille aliae insulae in rubro mari, quae sunt subditae ad istam praedictam insulam, in quibus sunt illi lapides, quos magnetes nominamus, qui trahunt ad se ferrum. - Etiam si qualiscumque navis advenerit, quae habuerit de ferro clavum, statim apprehendent eam et non dimittunt eam. Habitatores autem de illis insulis quando faciunt naves, non ibi mittunt clavos ferreos, sed tantum clavos ligneos et semper cum illis vadunt ad illam insulam, ubi habitat ille rex magnus.

II. In iam dicta insula Taprobane sunt quinque maxima flumina, et sicut Thebeus nobis dicebat, nullo tempore ibi poma minuuntur;

in una enim arbore dum unus ramus in flore est, et alter ramus prope est ad maturitatem, alius iam matura poma habet. Sunt autem in eadem insula dactali et nuces grandissimae et corili, id est avellanae. Vivunt autem habitatores ipsius terre de pomis et de lacte vestimenta que non habent nec de lana nec de lino, sed tantum pelles pecorum sibi vestiuntur. Pecora vero ipsius terrae non habent lanam, sed pilos et setas; lac multum habent et habent caudas latas, et habitatores illius insulae manducant carnes caprarum et pecorum. A Thebaida enim usque ad regiones Indiae et Ethiopiae homines non possunt habitare propter nimium ardorem solis. Praedictus itaque Thebeus dicebat nobis, quod vidisset homines de India, qui fuerant cum navibus in eisdem partibus propter negotium, cum quibus et ego ipse in navibus volui ire usque ad fines illarum insularum, et perrexi usque ad Vessadas fines, ubi piper nascitur et colligitur. Gens autem illa, quae in eadem terra habitat, parvam staturam habet et sine aliqua utilitate est et semper colligit piper cum ramusculis suis. Arbores vero, quae piper mittunt, parvas stirpes habent. Homunculi autem, qui hoc colligunt, sunt subtiles et habent maiora capita et planos capillos; populi vero Ethiopiae et Indiae capillos crispas habent. Dicebat vero et isdem Thebeus, quod in eodem loco ille, qui fortior erat, me apprehendere fecit. Ceperunt primum homines mihi calumniari et mecum causare, quare ego ausus fuisset in patriam eorum intrare et terram eorum contingere. Ego autem cum dulcibus verbis volebam me excusare et defendere, ut de manibus illorum me liberare potuissem; et neque illi me intellegebant, neque ego illos intelligebam, quia nec illi linguam meam neque ego illorum intelligebam, sed tantum ex solis vultibus nos intelligebamus. Ego intelligebam, quod essent irati contra me, quia cum tortis oculis me conspiciebant, et illi poterant me intellegere, quia hoc, quod dicebam, cum timore et tremore

dicebam; sed illi nullam misericordiam mecum fecerunt, sed statim me comprehenderunt et per sex annos iusserunt mihi, ut servirem in pistrino. Expensum autem rex ipsorum non habebat in toto suo palatio, nisi tantum unum modium de grano. Post sex autem annos cepi aliquid discere de lingua eorum et cognoscere loca illius terre. Sed de captivitate mea hoc modo liberatus sum. Rex autem cum supradicto rege litem habebat et accusavit eum ad illum regem maiorem, qui habitabat in insula Taprobane, ut apprehendisset nobilem hominem et Romanum et misset eum in suo servitio ad faciendum opus de pistrino. Quod cum audisset ille rex magnus, statim misit suum fidelem, qui cognosceret, si hoc verum esset annon. Qui cum venisset et me vidisset in tali servitio positum, statim nunciavit regi omnia, sicut viderat. Quod cum audisset rex, precepit illum regem, qui me in servitium miserat, vivum discoriare eo, quod hominem Romanum ausus fuisset in servitium mittere. Sic autem illi dicunt, ut debeat honorari Romanus imperator atque timeri, quia si voluisset imperator Romanus, potuisset illos iactare de suo regno.

Commonitorium Palladii I-II, (ed. Pfister).

Addendum (ii) b ; v. pages 282 ω-ϛ

32. COSMAS INDICOPLEUSTES

(i) 45. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ποθοῦντες τὰ πολλὰ μαρθάνειν καὶ περιεργάζεσθαι, εἴπερ ἦν ὁ παράδεισος ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ γῆ, οὐκ ὤκνουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ φθάσαι μέχρι τῶν αὐτόθι. Εἰ γὰρ διὰ μέταξιν εἰς τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς γῆς τινες ἐμπορίας οἰκίτρᾶς χάριν οὐκ ὀκνοῦσι διελθεῖν, πῶς ἂν περὶ τῆς θέας αὐτοῦ τοῦ παραδείσου ὤκνησαν πορεύεσθαι; Αὕτη δὲ ἡ χώρα τοῦ μέταξιου ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ἐσωτέρᾳ πάντων Ἰνδίας, κατὰ τὸ ἀριστερὸν μέρος εἰσιόντων τοῦ Ἰνδικοῦ πελάγους, περαιτέρω πολὺ τοῦ Περσικοῦ κόλπου καὶ τῆς νήσου τῆς καλουμένης παρὰ μὲν Ἰνδοῖς, Σελεδίβα, παρὰ δὲ τοῖς Ἕλλησι,

Ταπρόβανη, Τζίνιστα ούτω καλουμένη, κυκλουμένη πάλιν ἐξ ἀριστερῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ, ὡσπερ καὶ ἡ Βαρβαρία κυκλοῦται ἐκ δεξιῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. Καί φασιν οἱ Ἴνδοί, οἱ φιλόσοφοι, οἱ καλούμενοι Βραχμάνες, ὅτι ἐὰν βάλῃς ἀπὸ Τζίνιστα σπαρτίον διελθεῖν διὰ Περσίδος ἕως Ῥωμανίας ὡς ἀπὸ κανόνας τὸ μεσαίτατον τοῦ κόσμου ἐστὶ, καὶ τάχα ἀληθεύουσιν.

46. Πολὺ γὰρ ἀριστερὰ ἐστίν, ὡς δι' ὀλίγου χρόνου βασταγὰς μεταξίου γίνεσθαι ἐκ τῶν ἐκεῖ, ἐκ διαδοχῆς ἐτέρων ἐθνῶν, ἐν Περσίδι διὰ τῆς γῆς, διὰ δὲ τῆς θαλάσσης πάνυ πολλὰ διαστήματα ἀπέχουσα ἀπὸ τῆς Περσίδος. Ὅσον γὰρ διάστημα ἔχει ὁ κόλπος ὁ Περσικὸς εἰσερχόμενος ἐν Περσίδι, τοσοῦτο διάστημα πάλιν ἀπὸ τῆς Ταπροβάνης καὶ περαιτέρω ποιεῖ ἐπὶ τὰ ἀριστερὰ εἰσερχόμενος τις ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Τζίνιστα, μετὰ τὸ καὶ διαστήματα πάλιν ἱκανὰ ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Περσικοῦ κόλπου, ὅλον τὸ Ἴνδικὸν πέλαγος ἕως Ταπροβάνης καὶ ἐπέκειντα. Διατέμνει οὖν πολλὰ διαστήματα ὁ διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐρχόμενος ἀπὸ Τζίνιστα ἐπὶ Περσίδα, ὅθεν καὶ πλῆθος μεταξίου ἀεὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Περσίδα εὐρίσκεται. Περαιτέρω δὲ τῆς Τζίνιστα οὔτε πλέεται οὔτε οἰκεῖται.

Christian Topography II, 45-6.

(ii) Ἐν Ταπροβάνη νήσῳ ἐν τῇ ἐσωτέρῃ Ἰνδία, ἔνθα τὸ Ἰνδικὸν πέλαγος ἐστίν, καὶ Ἐκκλησία χριστιανῶν ἐστίν ἐκεῖ καὶ κληρικοὶ καὶ πιστοί, οὐκ οἶδα δὲ εἰ καὶ περαιτέρω. Ὅμοίως καὶ εἰς τὴν λεγομένην Μαλέ, ἔνθα τὸ πέπερι γίνεται, καὶ ἐν τῇ Καλλιάνῃ δὲ τῇ καλουμένη, καὶ ἐπίσκοπος ἐστίν ἀπὸ Περσίδος χειροτονούμενος. Ὅμοίως καὶ ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένη Διοσκορίδους κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ Ἰνδικὸν πέλαγος, ἔνθα καὶ οἱ παροικοβντες ἐλληνιστὶ λαλοῦσι, πάροικοι τῶν Πτολεμαίων τῶν μετὰ Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Μακεδόνα ὑπάρχοντες, καὶ κληρικοὶ εἰσιν ἐκ Περσίδος χειροτονούμενοι καὶ πεμπόμενοι ἐν τοῖς αὐτόθι καὶ χριστιανοὶ πλῆθος. ἦν νήσον παρέπλευσα

μέν, οὐ κατήλθον δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ· συνέτυχον δὲ ἀνδράσι τῶν ἐκεῖ ἑλληνιστὶ
λαλοῦσιν, ἐλθοῦσιν ἐν τῇ Αἰθιοπία.

Ibid. III, 65.

(iii) Περὶ τῆς Ταπροβάνης νήσου

13. Αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νῆσος ἡ μεγάλη ἐν τῷ Ὠκεανῷ, ἐν τῷ Ἰνδικῷ
πελάγει κειμένη, παρὰ μὲν Ἰνδοῖς καλουμένη Σιελεδίβα, παρὰ δὲ Ἑλλησι
Ταπροβάνη, ἐν ἣ εὐρίσκεται ὁ λίθος ὁ ὑάκινθος· περαιτέρω δὲ κεῖται
τῆς χώρας τοῦ πιπέρεως. Πέριξ δὲ αὐτῆς εἰσὶ νῆσοι μικραὶ πολλαὶ πάνυ,
πᾶσαι δὲ γλυκὴ ὕδωρ ἔχουσαι καὶ ἀργέλλια· ἀσπύραθαί δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον
πᾶσαι εἰσιν. Ἔχει δὲ ἡ νῆσος ἡ μεγάλη, καθὼς φασιν οἱ ἐγχώριοι, γαῦδια
τρίακῶσια εἷς τε μήκος ὁμοίως καὶ πλάτος, τουτέστι μίλια ἑννακῶσια. Δύο
δὲ βασιλεῖς εἰσιν ἐν τῇ νήσῳ, ἐναντίοι ἀλλήλων· ὁ εἷς ἔχων τὸν ὑάκινθον,
καὶ ὁ ἕτερος τὸ μέρος τὸ ἄλλο, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶ τὸ ἐμπόριον καὶ ὁ λιμὴν· μέγα
δὲ ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ τῶν ἐκεῖσε ἐμπόριον.

14. Ἔχει δὲ ἡ αὐτῇ νῆσος καὶ Ἐκκλησίαν τῶν ἐπιδημούντων Περσῶν
χριστιανῶν καὶ πρεσβύτερον ἀπὸ Περσίδος χειροτονούμενον καὶ διάκονον
καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν λειτουργίαν. Οἱ δὲ ἐγχώριοι καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς
ἀλλόφυλοι εἰσιν. Ἱερὰ δὲ πολλὰ ἔχουσιν ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ νήσῳ· εἷς ἓνα δὲ
ἱερὸν αὐτῶν ἐφ' ὑψηλοῦ κείμενον ἐστὶν ἓνα ὑάκινθιν, ὡς φασί, πυρροῦν
καὶ μέγα ὄν ὡς στρόβιλος μέγας· καὶ λάμπει μακρόθεν, μάλιστα τοῦ ἡλίου
αὐτὸ περιλάμποντος, ἀτίμητον θέαμα ὄν.

15. Ἐξ ὅλης δὲ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς καὶ Περσίδος καὶ Αἰθιοπίας δέχεται ἡ
νήσος πλοῖα πολλὰ, μεστῆς οὖσα, ὁμοίως καὶ ἐκπέμπει. Καὶ ἀπὸ μὲν τῶν
ἐνδοτέρων, λέγω δὴ τῆς Τζινίστα καὶ ἑτέρων ἐμπορίων, δέχεται μέταξιν,
ἀλοήν, καρυόφυλλον, ἔυλοκαρυόφυλλον, τζανδάναν, καὶ ὅσα κατὰ χώραν εἰσὶ.
καὶ μεταβάλλει τοῖς ἐξωτέρω, λέγω δὴ τῇ Μαλέ, ἐν ἣ τὸ πίπερ γίνεται,
καὶ τῇ Καλλιανῇ, ἔνθα ὁ χαλκὸς γίνεται καὶ σησάμινα ξύλα καὶ ἕτερα

1. ἀγχιβαθαί ἀπὸ. *incrinde*.

ἱμάτια - ἔστι γὰρ καὶ αὕτη μέγα ἐμπόριον -, ὁμοίως καὶ Σινδοῦ, ἔνθα δὲ μύσχος καὶ τὸ κοστάρην καὶ τὸ ναρδόσταχυν γίνεται, καὶ τῇ Περσίδι καὶ τῷ Ὀμηρίτῃ καὶ τῇ Ἀδούλῃ, καὶ πάλιν τὰ ἀπὸ ἐκάστου τῶν εἰρημένων ἐμπορίων δεχομένη καὶ τοῖς ἐνδοτέρω μεταβάλλουσα καὶ τὰ ἴδια ἅμα ἐκάστῳ ἐμπορίῳ ἐκπέμπουσα.

16. Ἡ Σινδοῦ δὲ ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς. Διαιρεῖ γὰρ ὁ Ἰνδοῦ ποταμὸς, τουτέστιν ὁ Φεισῶν, εἰς τὸν κόλπον τὸν Περσικὸν ἔχων τὰς ἐκροίας, τὴν τε Περσίδα καὶ τὴν Ἰνδίαν. Εἰσὶν οὖν τὰ λαμπρὰ ἐμπόρια τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ταῦτα, Σινδοῦ, Ὀρροθᾶ, Καλλιανᾶ, Σιβῶρ, ἡ Μαλέ, πέντε ἐμπόρια ἔχουσα βάλλοντα τὸ πέπερι, Πάρτι, Μαγγαρούθ, Σαλοπάτανα, Ναλοπάτανα, Πουδαπάτανα. Λοιπὸν ἔξω ὡς ἀπὸ πέντε νυχθημέρων τῆς στερεᾶς εἰς τὸν Ὠκεανὸν ἐστὶν ἡ Σιελεδίβα, τουτέστιν ἡ Ταπροβάνη. Εἶτα λοιπὸν ἐνδοτέρω εἰς τὴν στερεὰν ἐμπόριον ἡ Μαραλλῶ βάλλουσα κοχλίους ἐστὶ, Καβέρ βάλλουσα τὸ ἀλαβανδηνόν, εἶτα ἐφεξῆς λοιπὸν τὸ καρυόφυλλον, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἡ Τζινλίστα τὴν μέταξιν βάλλουσα, ἧς ἐνδοτέρω οὐκ ἔστιν ἕτερα χώρα· ὁ Ὠκεανὸς γὰρ αὐτὴν κυκλοῖ κατὰ ἀνατολάς. Αὕτη οὖν ἡ Σιελεδίβα μέση πως τυγχάνουσα τῆς Ἰνδικῆς, ἔχουσα δὲ καὶ τὸν ὑάκινθον, ἐξ ὅλων τῶν ἐμπορίων δέχεται καὶ ὅλοις μεταβάλλει, καὶ μέγα ἐμπόριον τυγχάνει.

17. Ποτὲ γοῦν τις ἀπὸ τῶν ἐνταῦθα πραγματευομένων ὀνόματι Σώπατρος, ὃν ἴσμεν πρὸ τριάκοντα πέντε ἐτῶν τελευτήσαντα, εἰσελθὼν ἐν τῇ Ταπροβάνῃ νήσῳ πραγματείας ἕνεκα ἔτυχε καὶ ἀπὸ Περσίδος ὀρμησθαι πλοῖον. Κατήλθον οὖν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἀδούλης, μεθ' ὧν ἦν ὁ Σώπατρος, κατήλθον καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ Περσίδος, μεθ' ὧν ἦν καὶ πρεσβύτης Περσῶν. Εἶτα κατὰ τὸ ἔθος οἱ ἄρχοντες καὶ οἱ τελῶναι δεξάμενοι τοὺτους ἀποφέρουσι πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα. Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς δεξάμενος καὶ προσκυνηθεὶς κελεύει αὐτοὺς καθεσθῆναι· εἶτα ἐρωτᾷ.

Πῶς αἱ χῶραι ὑμῶν καὶ πῶς τὰ πράγματα; οἱ δὲ εἶπον· Καλῶς· εἶτα ὡς ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ ἠρώτησεν ὁ βασιλεύς· Ποῖος τῶν βασιλέων ὑμῶν μαιζότερος καὶ δυνατώτερος;

18. Ὁ δὲ Πέρσης ἀρπάσας τὸν λόγον ἔφη· Ὁ ἡμετέρος καὶ δυνατώτερος καὶ μαιζότερος καὶ πλουσιώτερος καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλέων ἐστὶ· καὶ εἴ τι θέλει, δύναται· Ὁ δὲ Σῶπατρος ἐσιώπα· Εἶτα φησὶν ὁ βασιλεύς· Σύ, Ῥωμεῦ, οὐδὲν λαλεῖς; Ὁ δὲ Σῶπατρος· Τί ἔχω εἰπεῖν, τούτου ταῦτα εἰπόντος; Εἰ θέλεις μαθεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἔχεις ἀμφοτέρους τοὺς βασιλέας ἐνταῦθα· κατανόησον ἐκάστῳ καὶ ὁρᾷς ποῖος λαμπρότερος καὶ δυνατώτερός ἐστιν· Ἐκεῖνος ἀκούσας ἐξενίσθη λέγων· Πῶς ἔχω τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους βασιλέας ἐνταῦθα; Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Ἐχεις ἀμφοτέρων τὰς μόνιτας, τοῦ μὲν τὸ νόμισμα, τοῦ δὲ τὴν δραχμὴν, τουτέστι τὸ μιλιαρσίον· κατανόησον τῇ εἰκόνι ἐκάστου καὶ ὁρᾷς τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

19. Ὁ δὲ ἐπαινέσας καὶ ἐπινεύσας ἐκέλευσεν ἐνεχθῆναι ἀμφότερα· Ἦν οὖν τὸ νόμισμα ὄβρυζον, λαμπρόν, εὖμορφον· τοιαῦτα γὰρ ἐκλεκτὰ προχωροῦσιν ἐκεῖ· ἦν δὲ καὶ τὸ μιλιαρσίον, ἅπαξ εἰπεῖν, ἄργυρος, καὶ ἀρκεῖ μὴ συγκρινόμενος τῷ χρυσίῳ· Στρέψας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἀντιστρέψας καὶ κατανοῶν ἀμφότερα, ἐπαινέσας πάνυ τὸ νόμισμα, ἔφη· Ὅντως οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ λαμπροὶ καὶ δυνατοὶ καὶ φρόνιμοι· Ἐκέλευσεν οὖν τὸν Σῶπατρον τιμηθῆναι μεγάλως, καὶ καθίσας αὐτὸν εἰς ἐλέφαντα μετὰ τυμπάνων τὴν πόλιν περιήγεν ἐν τιμῇ πολλῇ· Ταῦτα ὁ Σῶπατρος ἡμῖν διηγήσατο, καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὄντες ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἐκείνῃ ἀπὸ Ἀδούλης ἀπέλθόντες· Τούτων δὲ γενομένων, ὡς ἔφησαν, ὁ Πέρσης πάνυ ἐνετράπη.

(iv) Οἱ δὲ κατὰ τόπον βασιλεῖς τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἔχουσιν ἑλέφαντας, οἷον ὁ τῆς Ὀρροθα καὶ ὁ Καλλιανῶν καὶ ὁ τῆς Σινδοῦ καὶ ὁ τῆς Σιβῶρ καὶ ὁ τῆς Μαλέ, ὁ μὲν ἑξακόσια, ὁ δὲ πεντακόσια, ἕκαστος πλεόν ἢ ἕλαττον. Ὁ δὲ τῆς Σιελεδίβα καὶ τοῦς ἑλέφαντας οὓς ἔχει καὶ τοῦς ἵππους, τοῦς μὲν ἑλέφαντας πηχισμῷ ἀγοράζει - μετρεῖται γὰρ ἀπὸ τῶν χαμαὶ τὸ ὕψος αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὕτω συμφωνεῖ τῷ πήχει παρέχων, φέρε εἶπεῖν, πεντήκοντα ἢ ἑκατὸν νομίσματα ἢ καὶ πλεόν -, τοῦς δὲ ἵππους ἀπὸ Περσίδος φέρουσιν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀγοράζει καὶ τιμῆ ἀτέλειαν τοῦς φέροντας. Οἱ δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν στερεὰν βασιλεῖς ἡμεροῦσιν ἐκ τοῦ ἀγροῦ τοῦς ἑλέφαντας καὶ κτῶνται αὐτοῦς εἰς πολεμικὴν χρεῖαν.

Ibid. XI, 22.

33. SCRIPTORES HISTORIAE AUGUSTAE

Quo tempore responsum est ab haruspibus quandocumque ex eorum familia imperatorem Romanum futurum seu per feminam seu per virum, qui det iudices Parthis ac Persis, qui Francos et Alamannos sub Romanis legibus habeat, qui per omnem Africam barbarum non relinquat, qui Taprobanis praesidem imponat, qui ad Iuverniam insulam proconsulem mittat, qui Sarmatis omnibus iudicet, qui terram omnem, qua Oceano ambitur, captis omnibus gentibus suam faciat, postea tamen senatui reddat imperium et antiquis legibus vivat, ipse victurus annis centem viginti et sine herede moriturus.

Vita Taciti, 15, 2.

34. AMPELIUS

Clarissimae insulae in mari nostro undecim: Sicilia, Sardinia, Creta, Cypros, Euboea, Lesbos, Rhodos, duae Baleares, Eubusus, Corsica, Gades. In oceano ad orientem, Taprobane. Ad occidentem Britania. Ad septentrionem Thyle. Ad meridiem, Insulae Fortunatae. Praeter has in Aegaeo mari, Cyclades duodecim.

Liber Memorialis 6.

35. Peutinger Table

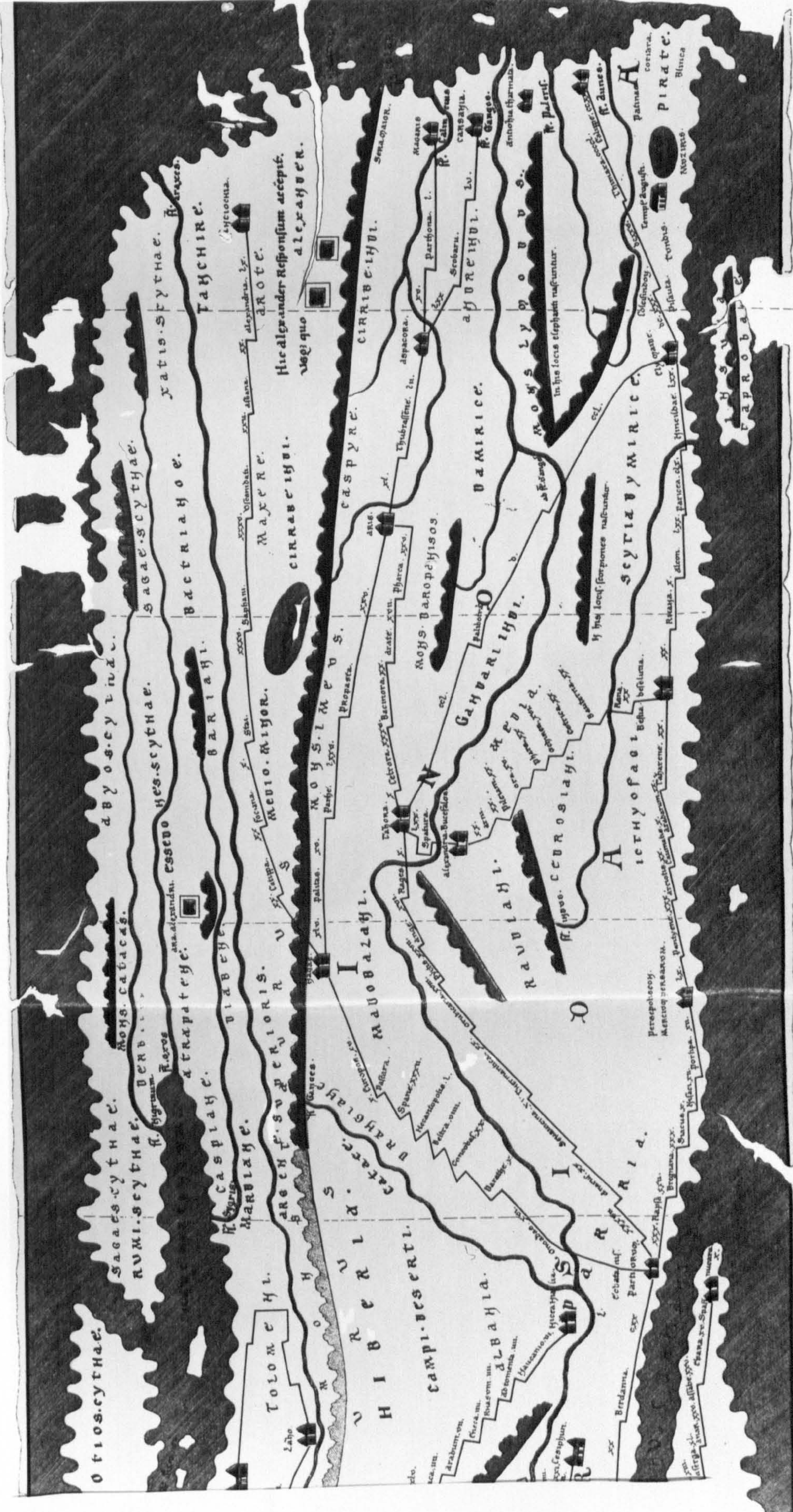
Insula Taprobane

(see map)

(Section 12)

36. PHILOSTORGIUS

Ὅτι κείσθαι τὸν Παράδεισον οὗτος εἰκασίαις χρώμενος λέγει, κατὰ τὰς ἰσημερίας τῆς ἡούρας, πρῶτον μὲν ἐξ ὧν τὰ πρὸς μεσημβρίαν δῆλὰ ἐστὶ πάντα οἰκούμενα σχεδὸν μέχρι τῆς ἔξω θαλάττης, ἣν θάλατταν ὁ ἥλιος ἤδη συμφλέγει καθέτως ἐπ' αὐτῇ τὰς ἀκτίνας ἐρείδων· καὶ ἡ διὰ μέσου λεγομένη ζώνη τοῦτο ἐστίν. Ἔτι δὲ καὶ διότι ὁ νῦν Ὑφασις καλούμενος ποταμὸς, ὃν ἡ Γράφη φεισῶν ὀνομάζει, καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦ παραδείσου ἀναβλύζων, ἐκ τῶν ἀρκτῶν μᾶλλον τῆς ἀνατολῆς μερῶν ἐπὶ τὴν μεσημβρίαν φαίνεται ῥέων, καὶ εἰς τὸν ταύτη ὠκεανὸν τὸ ρεῖθρον εἰσερευγόμενος, ἀντικρὺ τῆς νήσου Ταπροβάνης. Οὗ παρὰ τὰς ὄχθας τοῦ ποταμοῦ εὕρισκεται τὸ λεγόμενον κάρυόφυλλον, εἴτε καρπὸς, εἴτε δὲ καὶ ἄνθος τυγχάνει. Καὶ πεπιστεύκασιν οἱ ἐκεῖνη, τῶν ἐκ τοῦ Παραδείσου τοῦτο δένδρον εἶναι. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἡ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ γῆς ἔρημός τε ἐστὶ δεινῶς ἅπασα καὶ ἀκαρποτάτη. Ἐκ δὲ τοῦ φέρειν τὸν ποταμὸν τὸ ἄνθος, ἐπίδηλόν ἄν εἶη ὡς οὗτος ὁ ποταμὸς ὑπὸ



O F I O S . C Y T H A E .

S A G A E S . C Y T H A E .

R U M I . S C Y T H A E .

C A S P I A H A E .

M A R U L A H A E .

A R C H E F . S O P E R I O R I S .

B A R I A H I .

M A D O B A Z A H I .

C A T A C I .

H I B E R L A X .

C A M P I . B E R S E R T I .

A L B A H I A .

S A M A R K A N D .

B U K H A R A .

H E R A T .

S I R I A .

P E R S I A .

I N D I A .

C Y P R O S .

A R A B I A .

S I N D I A .

H A M A D A N .

D B Y O S C Y L I A .

S A G A E S C Y T H A E .

B A C T R I A H O E .

B A R I A H I .

M E D I O . M I Y O R .

C I R R A B C I H B I .

M O H S I M E V S .

C A S P Y R C .

C I R R I B C I H B I .

M O H S B A R O P H I S O S .

B A M I R I C C .

G A H V A R I H B I .

K A R T U L A H I .

C C U R O S I A H I .

S C Y T I A B Y M I R I C C .

A I T H Y O F A O I B E H A .

R I W A J A .

P I R A T E .

T A P R O B A C .

O F I O S . C Y T H A E .

S A G A E S C Y T H A E .

B A C T R I A H O E .

B A R I A H I .

M E D I O . M I Y O R .

C I R R A B C I H B I .

M O H S I M E V S .

C A S P Y R C .

C I R R I B C I H B I .

M O H S B A R O P H I S O S .

B A M I R I C C .

G A H V A R I H B I .

K A R T U L A H I .

C C U R O S I A H I .

S C Y T I A B Y M I R I C C .

A I T H Y O F A O I B E H A .

R I W A J A .

P I R A T E .

T A P R O B A C .

Cyropolis
Recit

Saitan

Pr. Sindjid

Hamadan

Taq pr. Damagan

Baghin

Yalalpur

Kuhak s. Bost

Zarang

Andschian

Pr. Ahmadabad

Siwasempel

Meru

Akiepe

Kism

Meru

Pittina
Tavoy

γῆς ἅπας ῥεῖ, μηδαμῶθι καταδυόμενος· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τὸ ἐκεῖθεν φυόμενον ἠδύνατο φέρειν. Ἔχει δέ τι καὶ ἄλλο σύμβολον τῆς παρὰ τὸν Παράδεισον γεηρᾶς ἐπιμιξίας· φασὶ γὰρ ὡς ἐάν τις τύχοι πυρετῶ λαύρῳ φλεγόμενος, εἰς τὸν ποταμὸν βαπτισάμενος, παραυτίκα τοῦ νοσήματος ἀπαλλάττεται. Ὁ δὲ Τίγρης καὶ Εὐφράτης, διότι καταδύουσι καὶ πάλιν ἀνίσχουσιν, οὐδὲν ἐκεῖθεν δύνανται κομίζειν ὡς ὁ Ὑφασις. Οὐδέ γε ὁ Νεῖλος.

Historia Ecclesiastica III, 10

(Migne, P.G. 65, 493).

37. OROSIUS

13. Asia ad mediam frontem orientis habet in oceano Eoo ostia fluminis Gangis, a sinistra promunturium Caligardamana, cui subiacet ad Eurum insula Taprobane, ex qua oceanus Indicus vocari incipit:

14. a dextra habet Imavi montis - ubi Caucasus deficit - promunturium Samarae. Cui ad aquilonem subiacent ostia fluminis Otterogorrae, ex quo oceanus Sericus appellatur.

15. In his finibus India est, quae habet ab occidente flumen Indum, quod Rubro mari accipitur, a septentrione montem Caucasum; reliqua ut dixi Eoo et Indico oceano terminatur. 16. Haec habet gentes xliiii, absque insula Taprobane, quae habet X civitates, et absque reliquis insulis habitabilibus plurimis.

Adversus Paganos I, 2, 13-16.

38. JORDANES

Ceterior vero eius pelagi ripa, quam diximus totius mundi circulum, in modum coronae ambiens fines suos, curiosis hominibus et qui de hac

re scribere voluerunt perquam innotuit, quia et terrae circulum ab incolis possidetur et nonnullae insule in eodem mare habitabiles sunt, ut in orientali plaga et Indico Oceano Hyppodem, Iamnesiam,¹ Solis perustam quamvis inhabitabilem, tamen omnino sui spatio in longo latoque extensam: Taprobanen quoque, in qua (excepto oppida vel possessiones decem munitissimas urbes decoram):² sed et aliam omnino gratissimam Silefantinam: nec non et Theron, licet non ab aliquo scriptore dilucidas, tamen suis possessoribus affatim refertas.

Getica I, 1, 6-7 (ed. Mommsen).

I, 1, 4 = Orosius 1, 2, 1.

1. cf. (a) Iulius Honorius p.691 (Gron.):

Insulae orientales Oceani quae sunt Hippopodes insula, Ianessi insula, Solis perusta insula, Taprobane insula, Silenfantine insula, Teron insula.

(b) Rav. 5, 29 p.419:

In Oceano vero Indiae . . . sunt diversae insulae . . . id est Ypode, Iamnesia, Silefentina (al. silefantia, silefentia), Theron.

2. (a) Oros. 1, 2, 16:

Insula Taprobane, quae habet X civitates.

(b) Rav. ib., p.420:

Item . . . est insula quae dicitur Taprobane . . . in qua decem civitates fuisse nominatissimas legi, ut testatur mihi Paulus Orosius sapientissimus Orientis perscrutator.

39. IULIUS HONORIUS

Insulae Orientis Oceani quae sunt: Hippopodes insula
Iannessi insula
Solis perusta insula
Taprobane insula
Silenfantine insula
Teron insula
Carpathon insula
Cypros insula
Rhodos insula
Cythera insula
Creta insula

Cosmographia (Version A), Riese,

Geographi Latini Minores pp.24-55.

(Version B omits Carpathon -- Creta)

40. ANONYMI RAVENNATIS

(i) Inter quam Parthorum patriam et Indiam transit fluuius maximus qui dicitur Indus, qui, ut dicit Paulus Orosius, in mare Rubrum ingreditur; ceteri vero dicunt quod in Persicum colfum mergitur; attamen scimus quod in meridianum mergitur Oceanum ad faciem insulae Taprobanae.

Cosmographia II, 4.

(ii) In Oceano vero Indiae Thermanticae Elamice, id est hac extrema parte meridiana, sunt diversae insulae, ex quibus aliquantas designare volumus, id est

- Ypode
- Iamnesia
- Silefentina
- Theron
- Argire
- Atyron
- Colera
- Agathodimon
- Sinda maior
- Opta, item
- Afrondiscolias.

Item et in ipsam extremam partem meridianam est insula quae dicitur Taprobane valde splendidissima, in qua decem civitates fuisse nominatissimas legi, ut testatur mihi Paulus Horosius sapientissimus Orientis perscrutator.

Ibid. V, 29.

41. AETHICUS

(i) Oceani orientalis famosae insulae sunt:

- Hippopodes
- Taprobane
- Silefantine
- Theros
- Cypros
- Rodos
- Chytera
- Creta
- Carpathus

Cosmographia I, 3.

(Riese, G.L.M. p.73)

(ii) Asia a media fronte in oriente habet in oceano Eoo ostia fluminis Gangis, a sinistra promontorium Caligardam, cui subiacet ad eorum insula Taprobane, ex quo oceanus Indicus vocitari incipit. A dextra habet Imaui montis iugum, ubi Caucasus deficit ad promuntorium Samara,† quod aquiloni subiacet et ad ostia fluminis Octogordi, ex quo oceanus Sericus appellatur. In his finibus provincia India est, quae habet ab occidente flumen Indum, quod Rubro mari accipiatur; a septentrione montem Caucasum; reliqua eius, ut dixi, Eoo et Indico oceano terminantur. Haec habet gentes numero XLIIII absque insula Taprobane, quae habet xxi† reliquis civitatibus, quae in aliis habitabilibus insulis illic sunt.†

Ibid. II, 5. (G.L.M. 91-2).

42. AETHICUS ISTER

(i) Idem Aethicus philosophus explanat, praeter terram Eden ad orientem positam quia propter ardorem validum solis in mare orientale accedere non potuit. Ad alias mundi partes mare oceani cum discipulis suis scrupolisissimo labore navigasse se dicit oportuno tempore in insolas tam in magnas quam et in modicas, a meridie ad occidentem, a Tabrobane ad Sirtinicen et a Calicopa usque ad Riakeon.

Cosmography II, 23-4.

(ed. Wuttke; Leipzig 1853)

(ii) Habet ipsa Albania sub tributum duas insolas in mare septentrionale, Ocream et Samnitem in longitudine dilatatas, in latitudine coartatas, quae aurum in aliquibus sirtibus gignunt et margaritas, velut Tabrobana, sed rariores et grossiores.

Ibid. II, 64.

(iii) Quem lapidem (sc. lachon) aliubi non se invenisse adserit nisi inibi et in oceano inter Trabundum et Taprobanam insulam, ubi et ostium vel egressionem Trabundiae robore mare adfirmat. Et ab ea insula rubicundissimam humum ab ipso lapide longe lateque diffusam; a longe vero ut incaluerit sol tam disparile varietate conspicere, ut autem solis diversa radiantia variantem aut sidera caeli serena. Ibi enim magnus valde invenitur, istinc parvus.

Ibid. II, 83.

43. VERSUS de PROVINCIIS PARCIUM MUNDI

India habet in ipsa oppulenta patria,
Gentes plurimasque gestet atque magna oppida;
Insula quoque Taprobane elephantos nutrit.
Auro argento est fecunda atque plures gemmulas
Chrisolitus atque berillus adamans carbunculus
Leonitas margaritas uniones pullulat;
Septacum, miranda ave et in cantu nobila,
Unicornes et cameli dracones et simiae;
Ubi sunt aurei montes, quos custodiunt beatiae.

16-24.

ed. Pertz, Abh. Akad. Wiss. Berlin.

(Philol.-hist. Klasse) 1845,

pp.253-70.

(A)

COMMONITORIUM PALLADII

Mens tua, quae et discere et multum discere cupit, immenso sapientiae amore succensa etiam aliud nobis opus quod efficere deberemus iniunxit, hoc est Bragmanorum consuetudinem vitamque monachorum. ego quidem neque ipsos neque patriam ipsorum vidisse me memini: longo enim terrarum spatio non solum ab India, sed etiam ab ea quam Sericeam nominant regione seiuncti sunt. habitant tamen iuxta fluvium quem Gangem vocant. accessi autem ante aliquot annos usque ad summa Indiae loca cum Museo episcopo Dulenorum; ubi cum intollerabili aestus ardore flagrarem videremque aquam quae hauriretur ex fontibus mox fervere in ipsis qui eam susceperant vasis, continuo regressus sum, quia incendium tantum tollerare non poteram. hic autem fluvius, qui dicitur Ganges a nobis, ille est quem Scripturae Sanctae Fyson vocant, unus de quattuor illis qui de Paradiso exire perhibentur. talia vero refert Alexandri Macedonum imperatoris historia. quocumque modo vitam et instituta referat, non tamen Gangem ipse transgressus erat neque visa sed audita referebat; tantummodo enim illam usque regionem quae Sericea dicitur fuit, ubi ipsum sericum nascitur et ubi lapideam sibi poni fecit columnam, in qua scripsit hunc titulum: "ego Alexander hucusque perveni". ego tamen de ipsis Bragmanis potui aliqua utcumque cognoscere a quodam Thebeo scholastico, qui ob hoc ipsum sponte quidem sua peregrinari voluit; in captivitatem tamen incurrit invitus. hic ergo, ut ipse referebat, cum lentioris esset ingenii in forensis advocationis officio, incongruae sibi artis tedio fatigatus cognoscere patriam desideravit Indorum et cum quibusdam senioribus navigavit. primumque Adulenorum, postea Axumitarum attigit loca; esse autem illic ac dudum ibidem degere videbatur regulus quidam parvulus Indorum. inter quos cum consuetudinem magnam per diuturnum tempus habuisset, voluit etiam ad illam insulam

quae Tabrobane vocatur accedere, in qua illi quibus Beatorum nomen est vivunt aetate longissima; nam usque ad centum et quinquaginta annorum perveniunt senectutem propter incredibilem aurarum temperiem et incomprehensibilem divini iudicii voluntatem. in hac ipsa insula rex quoque maximus degit Indorum, cui omnes alii subiacent reguli quos satrapas vocant, sicuti scholasticus nobis ille referebat, ut ab aliis et ipse cognoverat (neque enim memoratam insulam fuerat ingressus). dicunt autem, si tamen vera narrantur, huic ipsi insulae mille alias Rubri maris insulas, quas Maniolas nominant, adiacere, in quibus ille quem magnetem vocant nascitur lapis, quem aiunt ad naturam suam ferri trahere naturam. cum ergo navis illuc aliqua fuerit adpulsa clavos ferreos habens, mox illic tenetur neque quoquam abire permittitur, vi nescio qua naturali ut supra dixi lapidis impedita. esse autem certas specialiter naves loquuntur habentes ligneos clavos nulloque penitus ferro ligatas, quae inde ad illam insulam magnam solent transfretare, quae tamen insula quinque maximos fluvios habere memoratur. in qua, ut ille referebat, numquam deesse poma perhibentur; sub uno enim tempore eadem in arbore dum alter ramus in flore est alter venturae maturitatis colore variatur, alterius vero fructus metuntur. habent et dactilos, et nuces Indicas grandes habent et minutas, odoratissimas quoque nuces quas corylos nos vocamus. vivunt autem habitatores ipsius loci pomorum et orizae et lactis cibo; non lanae usum illic, non lini habent, sed solis pellibus ovium confectis bene terga velantur; oves autem ipsae setarum pilis non lanae vellere vestiuntur, habentes magnam copiam lactis et caudas admodum latas. ipsorumque quadrupedum, tam ovium quam caprarum, carne vescuntur; sues autem a Thebaide usque ad Indiae Ethiopiaeque regiones propter intollerabiles aestus nequeunt inveniri. scholasticus ergo nobis ille referebat hoc dicens: Indos quosdam,

inquit, inveneram, qui de Axumitarum locis mercandi gratia navibus transfretabant; cum quibusdam ingredi etiam ad interiora temptavi, accessique usque ad eorum quos Bessadas nominant fines, apud quos et piper nascitur atque colligitur. ipsa autem admodum parva atque inutilis gens est, quae intra speluncas saxneas vivit et per praecipitia magna discurrere natura patriae edocta consuevit. piper autem cum ramusculis suis colligitur; ipsas enim arbores quasi quasdam humiles ac parvulas stirpes esse dicebat; nam et ipsos exiguos homunculos esse et grandia quosdam capita asserit habere cum levibus ac detonsis capillis; reliquum vero Ethiopum atque Indorum genus crispatis naturaliter comis horret. in quo ego, inquit, loco ab eo qui illic plurimum poterat correptus ac tentus sum; qui cepit mihi, inquit, calumniari eo quod eorum patriam soliumque contingere ausus fuissen. et neque illi excusationem ac defensionem meam aequis animis audiebant (nec enim poterant linguae meae intelligere sermonem) neque ego criminis causam quod mihi obiciebatur sciebam, quia illorum verba non noveram; ex solis tamen vultibus nostris invicem nos intelligere videbamur. ego quidem ex aspectu luminum torvo et ex stridore dentium saevo motus poteram nosse verborum; illi vero ex tremore meo atque pallore sensus meos misericordia magis dignos suspicabantur. tunc ergo ab ipsis occupatus ac tentus sum, et per sexennium me in pistrino suooopus facere iusserunt; expensa autem regis ipsorum unius tantum modii frumenti in toto palatio eius erat et ipsum illum unde exhibere consuevisset ignorare dicebant. post sex autem annos, dum paulatim ediscerem eorumdem loquelam potuissemque multa de vicinis nationibus locisque cognoscere, ad postremum hoc modo de captivitate memorata potui liberari. rex alter, cum supradicto rege iurgio facto, accusare eum apud maiorem illum imperatorem voluit, qui in Tabrobane insula erat, dicens quod nobilem virum civemque Romanum in

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deterrimam captivitatem atque extremum servitium redegisset, quique illuc alium cognitorem continuo transmisit ac deinceps, rei veritate perspecta, protinus eum qui convictus in memorato crimine videbatur exui tota sui corporis pelle praecepit, eo quod civi Romano fecisset iniuriam: dicuntur autem non solum fortiter honorare Romanorum imperatorem, sed fortiter et timere, tamquam qui praeclaro ingenio ac virtute magna possint, si velint, ad regionis ipsorum excidium pervenire.

Mss. Latini. (Vatican tradition)

1. ONESICRITUS

(i) Concerning Taprobane Onesicritus says that it is five thousand stades in size, without defining its length or breadth; that it is twenty days' voyage distant from the mainland; but that ships sail badly since their sailing gear is inefficient and they are built without belly bolts on both sides; that there are also other islands between it and India, though that island is the southernmost; that amphibious creatures exist around it, some similar to oxen, others to horses, and others to other land animals.

Jacoby, F. Gr. H., No. 134, fr. 12

(STRABO XV, 1, 15).

(ii) Taprobane, under the name of the land of the Antichthones, was for a long time considered to be another world. The age and achievements of Alexander the Great proved clearly that it was an island. Onesicritus, a commander of his fleet, wrote that bigger and more war-like elephants are produced there than in India.

Ibid., fr. 13 (PLINY, N.H. VI, 81).

2. MEGASTHENES

Megasthenes wrote that it is divided by a river, that the inhabitants are called Palaeogoni, and that they are more productive of gold and large pearls than the Indians.

Ibid., No. 715, fr. 26 (PLINY, N.H.

VI, 81).

3. ERATOSTHENES

(i) They say that Taprobane is an island in the ocean seven days' sail distant towards the south from the southernmost portions of India, around the Koniakoi; that its length is about eight thousand stades in the direction of Aethiopia; and that it has elephants too. Such then are the statements of Eratosthenes.

STRABO, XV, 1, 14.

(ii) Eratosthenes also gave the measurement (of Taprobane) as 7,000 stades in length, 5,000 in breadth, and said that it has no cities, but 700 villages.

PLINY, N.H. VI, 81.

4. HIPPARCHUS

Taprobane is either a very big island or, as is said by Hipparchus, the first part of another world; and since it is inhabited and no one is reported to have sailed round it, he is probably right.

MELA, Chorogr. III, 7, 70.

5. ARTEMIDORUS

(i) Artemidorus says that in the island of Taprobane people live a very long life without any bodily weakness.

PLINY, N.H. VII, 2, 30.

(ii) Taprobane: a very large island in the Indian sea. . . . It was formerly called Simoundou but now Salike, being about 7,000 stades sailing distance in length and 500 in width. Artemidorus also says the same¹ in the Ninth Book of his Geography.

¹ Only the measurements are to be attributed to Artemidorus.

6. ALEXANDER LYCHNUS

(i) Alexander, nick-named Lychnus, (says):

A four-sided island, sea-crowned Taprobane, rearer of beasts, is full of fine-nosed elephants.

STEPHANUS of BYZANTIUM s.v. Taprobane.

(ii) Taprobane . . . is four-sided, rearer of beasts, full of fine-nosed elephants, as Alexander nick-named Lychnus says.

EUSTATHIUS, Comm. in Diog. Perieg.

591.

7. OVID

What good would it be to you if you were praised in hot Syene or where the Indian waters bathe Taprobane?

Ex Ponto 1, 5, 79-80.

8. STRABO

(i) [Next in determining 11,500 more] if, then, we further add three thousand four hundred stades beyond Meroe so as to include the island of the Egyptians, the Cinnamon bearing Land, and Taprobane, we shall get thirty eight thousand stades.

I, 4, 2.

(ii) Let us pass on to the region which rises up opposite to the Cinnamon-bearing Land and lies on the same parallel towards the east. This is the region around Taprobane. It is firmly believed that Taprobane is a large island in the ocean which lies in front of India towards the south. It stretches lengthwise towards Aethiopia more than five thousand stades, as they say, and from it both ivory is brought in abundance

to the markets of the Indians, and tortoise-shell and other merchandise. If we allot to this island a breadth corresponding to its length, and include the crossing from India, the distance would come to not less than three thousand stades: as much as that from the boundary of the inhabited world to Meroe, if indeed the capes of India are to rise opposite Meroe. But it is more convincing to put down even more than three thousand.

II, 1, 14.

(iii) If the followers of Deimachus add to the thirty thousand stades (given as the distance to the passes to Bactria and Sogdiana supra § 14) the distance to Taprobane and the torrid zone, which should be estimated at not less than four thousand, they will relegate from our world Bactra and Aria into the places that are distant from the torrid zone by thirty four thousand stades, which is what Hipparchus gives as the distance from the equator to the Borysthenes.

II, 1, 17.

(iv) For, (those who have sailed to the east) tell us that the island called Taprobane is much further south from India though inhabited for all that, and that it rises opposite to the Island of the Egyptians and the Cinnamon-bearing Land; for the temperature of their climates is very much alike.

II, 5, 14.

(v) In this Southern sea there lies in front of India an island not smaller than Britain, namely, Taprobane.

II, 5, 32.

(vi) This parallel is produced on the one side just about to the more southerly parts of Taprobane or to its furthest inhabitants, and on the other side to the southernmost parts of Libya.

II, 5, 35.

(vii) They say that Taprobane is an island in the ocean seven days' sail distant towards the south from the southernmost regions of India around the Koniakoi; that its length is about eight thousand stades in the direction of Aethiopia, and that it has elephants too. Such, then, are the statements of Eratosthenes. But the additional statements of others, also, wherever they are accurate, will characterise my description. For instance, concerning Taprobane Onesicritus says that it is five thousand stades in size without defining its length or breadth; that it is twenty days' voyage distant from the mainland; but that ships sail badly since their sailing gear is inefficient and they are built without belly bolts on both sides; that there are also other islands between it and India, though that island is the southernmost; that amphibious creatures exist around it, some similar to oxen, others to horses, and others to other land animals.

XV, 1, 14-15.

9. Ps.-ARISTOTLE

Not less than these (the British Isles) is Taprobane, situated beyond India, sideways on to the inhabited world, and the island called Phebol which lies near the Arabian Gulf.

De Mundo 393 b.

10. APULEIUS

In the other part of the world there lie the heights of very large islands, the two islands of Britain, Albion and Hibernia, which are greater than those mentioned above. These lie in the country of the Celts; but smaller islands beyond India are Taprobane and Loxe.

De Mundo VII.

11. PERIPLUS MARIS ERYTHRAEI

And in the area after this, as our course now bends away eastwards, there lies out to sea towards the west an island called Palaisimoundou, but by the old native population, Taprobane. Of this, the portions towards the north are cultivated and the passage is made by . . . and it practically reaches to the portions of Azania that lie opposite to it. There are produced in it pearl, translucent gems, muslins, and tortoise-shells.

61.

12. PLINY

Remarkable and almost fabulous reports current about the fertility of soil and the type of crops and trees or beast and birds and other animals will be related each in its own place in the rest of the work, as will be the four satrapies very shortly, for our ¹⁵ ~~with~~ ^{knights} ~~hurries~~ ^v on to the island of Taprobane.

But before that there are other islands: Patale, which we have shown is situated at the very mouth of the Indus, triangular in shape, 220 miles in breadth; outside the mouth of the Indus, Chryse and Argyre, rich in minerals, so I believe, for I do not find it easy to believe what some people have reported, that their soil is composed of gold and silver. Twenty miles further on is Crocala, and Bibaga another twelve miles from that. This is full of oysters and shellfish. Then comes

Coralliba, eight miles from the island mentioned above, and many of no importance.

Taprobane, under the name of the land of Antichthones, was for a long time considered to be another world. The age and achievements of Alexander clearly proved that it was an island. Onesicritus, a commander of his fleet, wrote that bigger and more war-like elephants are produced there than in India. Megasthenes wrote that it is divided by a river, that the inhabitants are called Palaeogoni, and that they are more productive of gold and large pearls than the Indians. Eratosthenes also gave the measurements as 7,000 stades in length, 5,000 in breadth, and said that it has no cities but 700 villages. It begins at the eastern sea and extends from east to west alongside India. It was once believed to be twenty days' sail distant from the Prasian nation; later, because the voyage was made with reed boats and tackle of the Nile, the journey was fixed at a span of seven days, according to the speed of our ships. The sea in between is shallow, not more than six yards deep, but in certain channels so deep that no anchors touch the bottom. For this reason ships have prows at either end so that they do not need to turn about in the narrows of the channel. Their capacity is about three-thousand amphorae. There is no observation of stars in navigation - the Great Bear is not visible. They take birds with them which they send out fairly frequently, and follow their path as they seek land. Their sailing season is not more than four months in the year. They chiefly avoid the hundred days from the solstice, that sea being wintry at that time.

So far the details are those recorded by the ancients. More accurate information came our way during the reign of Claudius when ambassadors actually arrived from that island. This happened as follows: A freedman of Annius Plocamus, who had had bought from the Treasury the tax farm of the Red Sea, was sailing round Arabia. There he was carried along by winds from the north past Carmania, and on the fifteenth day made harbour at Hippuros

in that island; and in consequence of the kind hospitality of the king he learned the native language thoroughly over a period of six months, and afterwards in reply to his questions described the Romans and Caesar. In what he heard the king got a remarkably good idea of their honesty, because among the captured money there were denarii which were of equal weight, although their various types indicated that they were issued by several persons. Encouraged to friendship chiefly by this he sent

four ambassadors with Rachia as their leader. From them it was learned that there are 500 towns and that there is a harbour facing the south next to the town Palaesimundum, which is the most famous of all in that region and the residence of the king with a population of 200,000. Inland there is a lake, Megisba, 375 miles in circumference, encompassing islands that produce only pasturage; that two rivers spring out of it - one called Palaesimundus which empties into the harbour near the city of the same name with three channels the narrowest being five stades and the widest fifteen; the other, Cydara by name, flowing towards the north and towards India. The nearest cape of India is that called Coliacum, being a journey of four days, where in mid-course one meets the Island of the Sun. The sea there is very green in colour and moreover full of thickets of trees, and the rudders of ships brush against their tops. They wondered at the Great Bear and the Pleiades visible in our country as if in a new part of the heaven, saying that in their own country even the moon cannot be seen over the earth except from the eighth to the 16th, and that Canopus, a huge bright star shines at night. But to them the greatest surprise was that their shadows fell towards our sky and not towards theirs, and that the sun rose on the left and set towards the right rather than the other way round. These same people told us that the side of their island which stretches along India is 10,000 stades long, lying to the southeast; that beyond the Hemodi mountains the Seres also are faced by them and are known to them through commerce also; Rachia's father had often gone there; and the Seres came to meet them on their arrival. The people themselves are taller than average, with red hair, blue eyes and a harsh tone of voice; they do not use speech in their dealings. As for the rest it is the same as what our merchants tell us, ^{namely} that merchandise is placed on the further bank of a river alongside what they have to sell, and they take home if they are pleased with the barter: the hatred of luxury is

rendered more justified in no other way than if one travels in imagination to that place and reflects what is sought, how, and why.

But, although banished by nature outside the world, even Taprobane is not without our vices. There too, gold and silver are valued; a marble which resembles tortoise-shell, pearls and gems are highly esteemed. The sum total of their luxury is greater by far than ours. They told us that their wealth was greater, but that there was greater enjoyment of wealth among us: no one had a slave; no one slept into

PLINY

(ii) Text:

Neque enim omnes Indiae Aethiopiaeque aut Syriae desertorumve norimus feras aut volucres, cum hominum ipsorum multo plurimae sint differentiae, quas invenire potuimus. accedat his Taprobane insulaeque aliae atque aliae oceani fabulose narratae.

N. H. xxxii, 53, 143.

Translation:

For in fact we do not know of all the wild animals or birds of India and Aethiopia, or of Scythia or the deserts; while even of mankind itself the varieties we have been able to discover are by far the greatest in number. Add to these Taprobane and various other islands of the ocean about which fabulous tales are told.

N. H., xxxii. 143.

the day or during daytime; their houses stood moderately high above the ground; the price of grain was never raised; there were no law courts or litigation; Hercules was worshipped; their king was elected by the people on grounds of age and kindness, and because he had no child; and if he had a child afterwards he would abdicate lest the kingship should become hereditary. Thirty governors are given to him by the people and no one is condemned to death except by the verdict of the majority; even so, there is the right of appeal to the people, and seventy judges are appointed; if these acquit the accused, those thirty no more enjoy respect, their disgrace being very serious. The king's dress is that of Father Liber, the dress of the others that of the Arabs. If the king commits some crime, he is condemned to death, but no one slays him; all turn away from him; and refuse to associate with him even by speech. Their feast days are taken up in hunting: the most popular hunts being those of elephants and tigers. Fields are cultivated carefully; the use of the vine does not exist, but fruits are plentiful. In fishing too they take great delight, especially for turtles, whose shells give shade to native families: for they are found of such great size. A human life of hundred years they consider moderate.

Such is information we gathered concerning Taprobane.

N.H. VI, 79-91.

(ii) v. Page 240 a(ii)
 (iii) v. Page 241 a(ii)

13. SOLINUS

People thought for a long time, before the boldness of men thoroughly explored the sea and provided a reliable account, that the island of Taprobane was another world, indeed the one which the Antichthonas were believed to inhabit. But the achievements of Alexander the Great did not allow the ignorance that arose from widespread error to remain much longer, but he spread the glory of his name into these remote regions. So Onesicritus, admiral of the Macedonian fleet, was sent and provided for our information

full details of that land, its size, products and condition. It extends for 7,000 stades in length, 5,000 in breadth. It is divided by a river that flows through the middle of it. For part of it is full of wild beasts and elephants much bigger than those of India; human beings occupy the other part. It is rich in pearls and gems of all kinds. It lies

PLINY N.H. ADDENDUM.

ix. 54. 108:

Atque (in margaritae) Indis quoque in insulas petuntur et admodum paucas: fertilissima est Taprobane et Stoidis, ut diximus in circuitu mundi, item Perimula promuntorium Indiae.

And for the Indians too (pearls) are sought by venturing to the islands, & not so many of these either. The most productive is Taprobane, and Stoidis, as we said in our circuit of the world; also the promontory of Perimula in India.

between east and west. It begins in the eastern sea and stretches alongside India. Originally it was 20 days journey to it from the Indian tribe of the Prasii, but that was when the journey there was made in boats made of reeds and of the Nile type: later the journey became one of seven days, according to the speed of our boats. A shallow sea lies in between, not more than six yards deep, but in certain channels it is so deep that no anchors can ever reach firm ground at the bottom. There is no observation of the stars in navigation, naturally when the Bear is not seen at all and Pleides never appear. They see the moon above only from the eighth to the sixteenth. Canopus, a big, bright star, shines there. They have sun rise on the right, sunset on the left. So, since they have no sailing directions to assist them, they carry birds for them to make landfall as they journey to their destination: as they make their way to land, they use their flight as a guide for directing their course. Sailing takes place for no more than four months per year.

This was all we knew about Taprobane until the reign of Claudius: then fortune laid open a broader way to knowledge: for a freedman of Annus Plocamus, who was at the time handling the taxes of the Red Sea, while making his way to Arabia, was carried by northerly winds along the coast of Carmania and finally after a fortnight fetched up on this coast and the harbour called Hippuros. He learned the language in the six months following, had audience with the king, and brought back the report of what he had observed. He said that the king was amazed at the coinage which was taken with him, for, although it was stamped with different faces, it yet had the same measure of weight; reflecting on such fair dealing he became the more warmly desirous of friendship with Rome, and sent envoys, led by Rachias, all the way to us, and from them all our information came.

Thus the people there surpass all men in physical size. They dye their hair red, and have blue eyes, savage expressions and a fearsome sounding voice. Those who die young live up to a hundred; all the rest

enjoy a hoary old age which extends almost beyond the bounds of human frailty. No one sleeps either before daytime or in daytime. Their buildings reach a moderate height from the ground. Agricultural production is always at the same level. They are unacquainted with the vine, but have a wealth of fruits. They worship Hercules. In choosing a king, it is not noble birth that is most important, but universal consent. The people chooses a man who is respected for his character and ingrained kindness, and is also getting on in years. But the following qualification is looked for in him, that he has no children; for anyone who is a father, even though respected for his manner of life, is not allowed to become king; and should he have a child during his reign, he is deprived of power; and this precaution is especially taken in case the monarchy become hereditary. Then, even if the king display the greatest fairness, they do not allow him to be all-powerful: thus he gets thirty governors, so that he should not be sole judge in capital cases: yet here too, if the judgement be displeasing, there is appeal to the people, and in that case 70 judges are appointed, and a verdict is pronounced which must not be questioned. The king is attired in dress different from the rest, with a long robe, the kind of garb which we see Father Liber wear. But if even he be found out in any crime, the death penalty is imposed, not however by the application of physical force by anyone, but by popular consent he is barred from association in everything, even the possibility of conversation being denied him as his punishment. They are all keen on farming, and they enjoy hunting, but they do not chase ordinary quarry, for tigers or elephants are the only things they look for. The seas also they disturb with their fishing, and they delight in catching sea turtles, whose size is such that their shell can make a house and take a large family comfortably.

The greater part of this island is scorched by the heat and ends in vast wildernesses. A sea of vivid green washes its coast, and it is full of vegetation so that the tops of trees are for the most part brushed away by ships' rudders. They see the coast of the Seres from the peaks of their mountains. They admire gold and apply the decoration of gems of all kinds to beautify their drinking cups. They cut marble multi-coloured like tortoiseshell. They collect very big pearls in large numbers.

Collectanea 53, 1-22.

14. MARTIANUS CAPELLA

But in the island of Taprobane the elephants are bigger than the Indian ones, and the pearls are larger too. It stretches for 7,000 stades in length, 5,000 in width. It is split by a river that flows through the middle, and it extends alongside India, to which the journey takes seven days, as was proved by Roman ships. There that sea, apart from deep channels, goes down to a depth of six yards. There the Bear does not appear, the Pleiads never, and they see the moon above the earth from the eighth to the sixteenth only; there the most brilliant star is Canopus: the rising sun is seen on the left. In sailing they take note of no constellation, but follow the flight of birds which they carry with them. Their sailing season is for four months of the year. The people there are of a physical size taller than everyone else. They have red hair, blue eyes, harsh sounding voices, and use no verbal communication in their relationships with other people. Along with other traders they put out their merchandise on a river bank and with much ado make exchange for the stuff that pleases them. Their age extends beyond that of human frailty, and so anyone who dies at the age of 100, dies prematurely: nobody sleeps during the daytime: their price of grain is always at the same level: their buildings are low and small; they are unacquainted with the vine but have plenty of fruits. They choose as king the man who is of kindly disposition, getting on in years, and childless, and if, during his reign, he has a child, they dethrone him in dread of an hereditary monarchy. But with him thirty other people hear cases, and if there is any appeal, seventy judges are set up. The king is dressed in the garb of Father Liber, and if he commits any crime, he is barred from every kind of intercourse and conversation, and has his throat cut. They are fond of farming and hunting, but the hunting of tigers and elephants. They enjoy fishing, especially for turtles, and with their shells they roof quite extensive family houses.

15. ISIDORE

The island of Taprobana lies below India to the south-east, where the Indian Ocean begins. It extends for 875 miles in length and 625 miles in width. It is split by a river which runs through the middle, and the whole of it is filled with pearls and precious stones. Part of it is full of wild beasts and elephants; men occupy the other part. In this island, people say, there are two summers and two winters a year, and that the place twice blossoms with flowers.

Etymologiae XIV, 6, 12.

16. DICUIL

v. Text.

17. PTOLEMY

(i) But it had also been shown that the distance between Cape Cory and the Golden Chersonese is $34^{\circ} 48'$: so the full distance from Cory to Cattigara is approximately 52° . (7) But the meridian drawn through the source of the River Indus lies, according to Marinus, a little west of North Cape in Taprobane, which lies facing Cory. The meridian passing through the mouth of the River Baetis is distant from this by an interval of 8 hours, i.e. 120° , with the meridian through the Islands of the Blest a further 5° distant from this; so that the meridian running through Cory is a little more than 125° distant from that through the Islands of the Blest, and that through Cattigara is distant from that through the Islands of the Blest by a little more than 177° . This practically agrees with the distance we calculated in our reckoning through the Rhodian parallel.

Geographia I, 14, 8-9.

(ii) Location of the Island of Taprobane.

1. Opposite the promontory of Cory in India there lies the extreme point of the island of Taprobane, which in the past used to be called Simoundou, but is now called Salike. Its inhabitants are commonly called Salae, and they are clad completely in woollens like women. Among them are found rice, honey, ginger, beryl, and hyacinth, and they have mines of every sort, gold, silver et cetera. It also produces elephants and tigers. 2. Its promontory mentioned above and lying opposite to Cory has as its location $126^{\circ} 12' 30''$, and is called North Cape. 3. The rest of the description, after North Cape which is located at $126^{\circ} 12' 30''$, is as follows

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| Cape Galiba | 124 | 12 30 | |
| Margana city | 123 30 | 10 20 | |
| Iogana city | 123 20 | 8 30 | |
| Cape Andrisimoundou | 122 | 7 45 | |
| Mouth of River Soanas | 122 20 | 6 15 | |
| Source of the River | 123 | <u>8</u> | (or 3) |
| Sindocanda city | 122 | 5 | |
| Priapios harbour | 122 | 3 20 | |
| 4. Anoubingara city | 121 | 2 20 | |
| Cape of Zeus | 121 | 2 | |
| Prasodes Bay | 121 | 1 | |
| Anoubartha city | 121 20 | Equator | |
| Mouth of River Azanus | 123 | 1 S. | |
| Source of the River | 126 | 1 N. | |
| Odoca city | 123 | 2 S. | |
| Cape Orneon | 124 | 2 30 S. | |
| 5. Dagana, sacred city of Selene | 125 | 2 S. | |
| Crocobara city | 122 | 3 S. | |
| Cape of Dionysus | 130 | 1 30 S. | |
| Cape of Cetaeon | 130 | 0 30 S. | |
| Mouth of River Baraces | 131 | 1 N. | |
| Source of the River | 128 | 2 N. | |
| Bocana city | 131 | 0 20 S. | |
| Mordoula harbour | 130 | 2 20 S. | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| 6. Amaraththa city [on promontory] | 131 | 3 15 S. |
| Harbour of Helios | 130 | 4 |
| Great Strand | 130 | 4 20 |
| Procouri city on promontory | 131 | 5 20 |
| Bizala harbour | 130 20 | 6 10 |
| Cape Oxeia | 130 | 7 10 |
| Mouth of River Ganges | 129 20 | 7 20 |
| Source of the River | 137 | 4 |
| Spatana harbour | 129 | 8 |
| 7. Nagadiba city | 129 | 8 30 |
| Pausi bay | 128 30 | 9 |
| Anoubingara city | 128 20 | 9 20 |
| Modouttou market | 128 | 11 |
| Mouth of River Phasis | 127 | 11 20 |
| Source of the River | 126 | 8 |
| Tarakori market | 126 20 | 11 20 |

and thereafter North Cape.

8. Notable mountains on the island are those called Galiba, whence flow the Phasis and the Ganges, and the one called Malaea, from which flow the Soanas, the Azanus and the Baraces: below this mountain as far as the sea there lie the elephant pastures.

9. The most northerly parts of the island are inhabited by the Galiboi and the Modouttoi: below these lie the Anourogrammoi and Nagadiboi,

and below the Anourogrammoi the Soanoi, and below the Nagadiboi the Semnoi: again, below these lie the Sindocandae towards the west, and below them, as far as the elephant grounds, the Boumasanoi: the Tarachoi occupy the eastern section, and below them are the Bocanoi and the Mordouloi, the most southerly being the Rhodanganoi and the Nanigiroi.

10. The inland cities in the island are as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Anourogrammon, residence of the king | 124 30 | 8 20 |
| Maagrammon, metropolis | 127 | 6 20 |
| Adisamon | 129 | 5 |
| Pedouce | 124 20 | 3 20 |
| Oulippada | 126 20 | 2 20 |
| Nacadouma | 128 30 | Equator |

11. There lies off Taprobane a mass of islands said to be 1378 in number. Those which are named are as follows:

| | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|
| Vangana | 120 | 11 20 |
| Canathra | 121 20 | 11 15 |
| Orneon | 119 | 8 30 |
| Aegidion | 118 | 8 30 |
| Monache | 116 | 4 15 |
| Ammine | 117 | 4 30 |
| 12. Ieracus | 118 | 3 S. |
| Philecus | 116 | 0 20 S. |
| Eirene | 120 | 0 30 S. |
| Calandadiva | 126 | 5 30 S. |
| Arana | 125 | 4 20 S. |
| Bassa | 126 | 6 30 S. |

| | | |
|-----------|-----|---------|
| Balaca | 129 | 5 30 S. |
| Alaba | 131 | 4 S. |
| Goumara | 133 | 1 20 S. |
| 13. Zaba | 135 | Equator |
| Bitala | 135 | 4 15 |
| Nagadeba | 135 | 8 30 |
| Sousouara | 135 | 11 15 |

Geographia VII, 4, 1-13.

(iii) Of the more important islands or peninsulas the first is Taprobane, the second Albion in the British Isles, the third the Golden Chersonese, fourth Hibernia in the British Isles, fifth the Peloponnese, sixth Sicily, seventh Sardinia, eighth Corsica, ninth Crete, tenth Cyprus.

Geographia VII, 5, 11.

(iv) For this reason they have misplaced the Indian Ocean northwards after Taprobane, for the map does not allow them further progress eastwards, since it could not make any corresponding insertion in the blank to the north of Scythia.

Geographia VIII, 1, 3.

(v) The twelfth map of Asia.

1. The twelfth and last map of Asia comprises the island of Taprobane with its adjacent islands. The parallel which bisects it has the same ratio as the meridian. 2. The area of the map is enclosed on all sides by the Indian Ocean. 3. Of the more important cities it contains,

Nagadiba has a longest day of $12\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and is distant eastwards from Alexandria by $4\frac{7}{12}$ hours. It has the sun twice a year at zenith, with a variation from the summer solstice of approximately 70° on each occasion. 4. Tarakori has a longest day of 12 hours 40 minutes, and is distant from Alexandria eastwards by 4 hours 24 minutes. The sun is there at zenith twice a year, with a variation from the summer solstice of 62° on each occasion. 5. Maagrammon, the metropolis, has a longest day of 12 hours 25 minutes, and is distant from Alexandria eastwards by $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours approximately. The sun is there at zenith twice a year, with a variation from the summer solstice of $72^{\circ} 40'$ approximately.

Geographia VIII, 28.

(vi) The twelfth and last map covers longitude 116° to 135° , an extent of 19° . Its latitude is from $12^{\circ} 30' N.$, or, using the delineation of Cape Cory as an indication of Taprobane in relation to India, it may be regarded as $13^{\circ} 20'$. Its southern limit is $6^{\circ} 30'$, so that the latitude in total is $19^{\circ} 50'$, or 20° in round numbers.

Geographia VIII, 30, 26.

18. MARCIAN of HERACLEA

(i) I have elected to describe the circumnavigation in two books, that of the eastern and southern ocean in Book I and that of the western, northern one in Book II, together with the greatest islands located in them, that called Taprobane, previously named Palaesimoundou, and both of the British Isles. The former of these, it is agreed, lies in the middle of the Indian Sea, the two others in the northern ocean.

Prol. 1.

(ii) Of the islands and peninsulas that are the greatest and of the first order, first is the island of Taprobane which previously was called Palaesimoundou but now Salice; second is Albion in the British Isles, third the Golden Chersonese, fourth Hibernia in the British Isles, fifth the Peloponnese, sixth Sicily, seventh Sardinia, eighth Corsica, ninth Crete, tenth Cyprus.

I, 8.

(iii) After this comes the province of Gedrosia, and immediately after that there lies cis-Gangetic India, and straight opposite it, off the very centre of the mainland lies the very large island named Taprobane. After that comes the other, trans-Gangetic India, the river being the boundary which separates both Indian regions.

I, 16.

(iv) (35) Opposite the promontory of India called Cory lies the promontory of the island of Taprobane called North Cape. The island of Taprobane previously used to be called Palaesimoundou: now

it is called Salike. This promontory of the island which lies opposite Cory, which as I have said is called North Cape, is 26,460 stades distant from the eastern horizon, 61,626 from the western horizon, and 6,350 northwards from the south i.e. the equator. (36) After North Cape the whole description and circumnavigation of the island of Taprobane is as follows: through the diameter, it is 9,500 stades long, 7,500 stades wide. It has 13 tribes or satrapies, 22 cities and marts of note, 2 ranges of mountains, 5 rivers, 8 promontories, 4 harbours, 2 great bays and one great strand. The total extent of the circumnavigation of the island of Taprobane is 26,385 stades. So much is to be said about the island of Taprobane.

I, 35-6.

19. STEPHANUS of BYZANTIUM

(i) s.v. Taprobane.

A very big island in the Indian sea. Alexander, nick-named Lychnus, (says):

A four-sided island, sea-crowned Taprobane, rearer of beasts, is full of fine-nosed elephants. It was formerly called Simoundou but now Salike, being about 7,000 stades sailing distance in length and 500 in width. Artemidorus also says the same in the Ninth Book of his Geography.

(ii) s.v. Margana.

It is a city of India. So Marcianus in the Periplus. There is also Marganai in the plural. The tribal name is Marganeis.

(iii) s.v. Argyra.

A metropolis of the island of Taprobane in India. This means the island of barley, for it is very fertile and it produces very much gold.

20. ANONYMI, Geographiae Expositio Compendiaria

(i) There belongs to this continent in the Indian Sea a very large island formerly called Simounda, but now Salike. In this, so it is said, is produced everything for the needs of life, there are minerals of all kinds, and the men who inhabit it tie up their hair like women.

VI, 25.

(ii) Of the very greatest islands, the one which takes first place over all others in the world is Salike: second place is taken by Albion, third possibly by Hibernia. Of the other islands which, though large, are smaller in comparison with those above, once again Sicily will hold first place; second Sardinia, third Cyprus, fourth Crete, fifth Euboea. Of the remainder, in the third class of size, as it were, first would be Corsica, i.e. Cynos, second Lesbos, third Rhodes.

VIII, 27.

21. Ps.-MOSES of CHORENE: Armenian Geography (Translation by Robert H. Hewsen)

(i) Long Redaction.

(36) The thirty-sixth country, Taprobane, is a large island of India and the largest island in the entire world. From north to south is 1,100 miles long and from east to west 150 miles wide. It lies beyond India and is surrounded by the Indian Sea. Rice is found there which is [a kind of] millet; ginger; beryl, hyacinth and other precious stones, and also much gold and silver and elephants and tigers. It has two mountains in the center, one called Galiba, which is the source of two rivers, and the other called Malaea, which is the source of three rivers. Here are found imperishable woods, ginger, fine pearls, and the most precious stones. There are two cities, they say, 150 miles apart. One is called Manakor and one called Royan. Between them is a mountain named Gaylasē from which flows a river in which the most precious stones are found. There are twelve nations in the north who always dress their hair like that of women. Two of these nations are called the Hac'acank' and the Hac'ayink'.

In the south the plains are used for pasturing elephants. They say that one nation which dwells in this country is made up of women and that at a certain time of the year dogs come among the elephants and have intercourse with the women who give birth to twins, one [male] puppy and the other a [human] girl. The sons cross the river to their fathers while the girls remain with their mothers. But I believe that this is just an allegory for they say the same about the Amazons in the Book of Alexander [the Great]. The allegory means that they are

a quick-turning¹ people. Ptolemy says that there are temples of the moon in the southern extremity of the island. There are 1,378 other islands around Taprobane, some inhabited and others uninhabited but of which [only] nineteen names [are known to us]. The Equator crosses the south of this large island.

1 "This passage appears to be corrupt" - Hewsen.

(ii) Short Redaction.

(36) The forty-second, Taprobana, is the largest of all islands. It is 1,100 miles in length and 510 in width. It is east [of India]¹ and has 1,378 other small islands around it. It has mountains, rivers and twelve nations. Gold, silver, precious stones; aromatics, elephants and tigers are found there. The men of this country dress their hair like that of women.²

1 "The text has yelic' kalon, which Saint-Martin corrected to yelic' kalon Hodkac' "east of India," which is of importance since most ancient geographers, including Ptolemy, placed Ceylon to the west of India." (Hewsen)

2 "At this point in the text S1683 (but not S1877 or S1944) has a passage stating that it is said that this (Ceylon) was the place of Satan's fall. I have been totally unable to trace the origin of this tradition or to find any other reference to it. It is not in Cosmas Indicopleustes' Christian Topography although this work contains much on Ceylon and we know that it was used as a source by the author of the ASX." (Hewsen)

TAPROBANE : ITS FLORA AND FAUNA

22. AELIAN

17. In the so-called Great Sea they tell the tale that there is a very big island, and I am told that its name is Taprobane. I am informed that the island is very long and high, is 7,000 stades in length and 5,000 in width, and that it has no cities but 750 villages. They have huts, where the natives dwell, made of wood and sometimes even of reeds. In this sea very large turtles also are produced, and their shells are made into roofs, for a single turtle shell is even 15 cubits in size, so that no small number of people live underneath it. It keeps off the most fiery sun and gives shade to the people who enjoy it, and, what is more, it can stand up to a deluge of rain, and since it is stronger than any tile, it shakes off the beating of the rain-storms, and the shelterers below listen to the rattle, as if the water were falling on to a real roof. Yet they do not need to replace it, as is the case with a broken tile, for the turtle's shell is hard and is like a rock that has been hollowed away or a cavern roof with natural vaulting.

18. Now, this island in the Great Sea which they call Taprobane has palm-trees wonderfully planted in rows, just as in lush parks the park-keepers plant shady trees. It also has grazing grounds for many elephants of great size. The elephants of the island are physically stronger and bigger in appearance than those of the mainland, and may be judged more intelligent in every way. The people build big ships (for the island, of course, is also forested) and convey them to the opposite mainland, and they sail across and sell them to the king of the Calingae. Because of the size of the island the inhabitants

of the interior have no personal knowledge of the sea but live the life of a mainlander, informed by report of a sea that surrounds and encircles them. Those who live by the sea are ignorant of elephant hunting, knowing of it only by hearsay, but they devote themselves to the hunting of fish and sea-beasts. For people say that the sea surrounding the circuit of the island produces an enormous number of fish and sea-monsters, and indeed that these have the heads of lions, leopards, wolves and rams, and, more marvellous still, that some of these creatures have the shape of satyrs and the face of women with spines attached instead of hair. They tell the tale that they have other outlandish shapes too, whose form not even experts in painting and creating combinations of bodily shapes to astound the eye could ever render accurately or present with artistic skill; and they have tails that are very long and coiled, and for feet, claws or fins. I am told that the things are amphibious too, and that at night they feed in the fields, for they eat grass as cattle and birds do. They also like the fruit that ripens on the palms, and in consequence they give the trees a thorough shaking with their coils: these they throw around them, since they are supple, and capable of twining round them. So they feed upon the fruit that falls because of their violent shaking. Then, as the night comes to an end and it is not yet clear daylight, these creatures dive into the sea and disappear, just as the east begins to glow. And they say that there are many whales too, but that these do not come out on to the land, for they lie in wait for the tunny-fish. They also say that there are two kinds of dolphin, the first fierce, sharp-toothed and quite merciless towards fishermen and utterly without pity, the second naturally tame and gentle. Anyway, it leaps and swims around, and behaves like a playful puppy: handle it, and it puts up with it: if you throw food to it, it will take it gladly.

19. The sea-hare - the one of the Great Sea that is; the other one from the other sea I have spoken of already - well, this one looks like the land animal in every possible way except for the hair, for the fur of the mainland hare feels soft and does not stand up to anyone handling it. This one has spiny, upright hairs, and if anyone touches it, he gets pricked. They say that it swims on the rippling surface of the sea and that it doesn't dive deep, but swims very fast. It cannot easily be caught alive, the reason being that it never falls into a net, and it does not go near the line and bait of a fishing-rod either. Now, when this hare falls sick and so is unable to swim and is cast up on shore, anyone who puts his hand on it dies if he is not treated. And what is more, even if he touches this hare with a stick, he will suffer the same experience through it, just like those who touch a basilisk. They say that a root grows in the island in the Great Sea, easily recognised by all, and that it is an antidote against swoons. Anyway, if applied to the nose of a man in a swoon, it revives him; but if he is neglected, the man's affliction goes on until he actually dies, such is the power for evil that this hare possesses.

History of Animals XVI, 17-19.

23. DIONYSIUS

Thence turning before the southern cape, you would quickly reach the great island of Colias, Taprobane, mother of Asian-born elephants. Above it, raised aloft in celestial revolutions, fiery Cancer whirls in orbit in the heaven. It is very wide in extent: around it on all sides its shores harbour sea-monsters, beasts that graze the Erythraean Sea, like huge mountains: on the surface of their backs bristles a long ridge of spines. May the sons of our foes, journeying over their sea, lose the way and encounter them, for there is no escape in their grim jaws which are a yawning gulf. May those monsters again often swallow ship, crew and all: for sinners god has created countless evils on sea and land.

Periegesis, 591-605.

24. AVIENUS

Note too how the sea bends towards the south and how the ocean curves the blue sea straits towards the south wind: here the lofty ridges of the rock of Colias soon appear, and you will see the heights of the land rising up. In front of them, set in mighty mass in the waves, is the island of Taprobane, producer of dread elephants and parched from above by the constellation of torrid Cancer. It spreads hugely and extends with vast shores everywhere through the sea. Far and wide off its coast sport schools of sea-monsters, roving creatures of the deep. All the waters of the Erythraean Sea swarm with beasts which, like lofty peaks of an unyielding mountain, lift their whole

body to the clouds, and their backs swell up. On them stands a high row of spines, like a rock, and on their lofty mass there also bristles many a stony spike. Ah! let no one, borne by the surge of the rapid wave, ever turn his boat toward the surface of this sea: ah! let not the tide bear him, even though he be an enemy, on waves so productive of monsters. The gaping of the huge jaw yawns wide, for the gullets of the beasts open with vast chasm. Forthwith they swallow the very ships in their jaws, and soon the hungry monsters gobble the sailors too.

Descriptio Orbis Terrae, 772-793.

25. PRISCIAN

From here turning the prow of your ship towards the south winds you will come to Taprobane which, great as she is, produces elephants on the borders of Asia. It lies under the star of Cancer, and on its shores leap great shoals of sea-monsters which the boundless Red Sea rears, as large as mountains, on the backs and shoulders of which stretch bristling spines, bringing death and destruction under their fierce faces, for they are accustomed to swallow ship and men alike. For sea, no less than land, brings evil to those who deserve it.

Periegesis, 595-603.

26. PARAPHRASE (of DIONYSIUS)

From there turning in front of the southern cape you will quickly come to Taprobane, the great island of Colias (otherwise Aphrodite), mother of elephants that have their origin in Asia. High above this Taprobane in the zodiacal circle of the heaven revolves fiery Cancer, since the sun there rides overhead because of the size of the island. For in size Taprobane is extensive; the shores around it have sea-monsters,

the herds (i.e. the offspring), of the Erythraean Sea bearing the likeness of (i.e. resembling) lofty (i.e. great) mountains, and along their backs great, long interlacing spines bristle. May the sons of fierce and hostile men, wandering on the sea, encounter them, for it is absolutely impossible to escape the great gulf of their jaws; and often may those monsters (i.e. the whales of the Erythraean) swallow the ship with the men in it (i.e. the sailors). For evil men god has prepared countless evils everywhere both on land and on sea.

11.591-605.

27. NICEPHORUS

(i) Turning forward from there at the southern cape you will find Taprobane, the great island of Aphrodite, the mother of elephants. Up above it in heavenly orbit revolves bright Cancer. It is extensive in size, and everywhere around it dwell the offspring of the Erythraean sea (i.e. its shores harbour sea-creatures) like lofty mountains, where one can with difficulty escape their jaws, for often these have swallowed even those who voyage around it, ships and all.

Geog. (G.G.M. II, 463).

(ii) The land of Arabia . . . is fragrant with incense, myrrh, sweet rush, frankincense and cassia. It possesses these because there, it is said, Dionysus was released from the thigh of Zeus, and upon his birth everything became fragrant and scented with incense, and in the pastures the sheep became weighed down with thick fleeces, waters flow of their own accord, and thence come birds from the uninhabited islands around Taprobane, bringing leaves of purest cinnamon. Cinnamon is like the vine in its growth.

Geog. (G.G.M. II, 466).

28. PARAPHRASE

(ii) ADDENDUM

In fact, in that country (Arabia) Zeus released Dionysus himself from his neatly sewn thigh. Hence at his birth everything became fragrant and scented with incense. Then too the flocks were weighed down with thick fleeces in the pastures, and lakes of their own accord flowed with water, and from the rest of the uninhabited islands, i.e. those around Taprobane, birds began to appear bringing leaves of pure, indestructible cinnamon.

lines 933ff.

29. SCHOLIAST on DIONYSIUS

(i) The Indian sea, part of the Red Sea, begins at the Arabian Gulf, and with the island of Taprobane at the centre it extends as far as the Great Gulf, as the eastern gulf is called by Indians and Sindians.

1.1.

(ii) Taprobane in India takes first place in size and report, followed by the island called Brettanice - Albion by its natives - with Chryse, the Golden Chersonese in India, third. The other of the British islands, called Hiberia by the people, is fourth, and the Peloponnese fifth, followed by Sicily sixth. Sardinia is seventh, and then Corsica eighth. Crete is ninth in order, followed by Cyprus, tenth in the list and capping it, so to speak. This is the list as defined by Ptolemy.

1.1.

(iii) 592. Of Colias : of Aphrodite . . .

593. Taprobane is an island sacred to Aphrodite . . .

595. He says that there Cancer occupies its own region.

He calls it "gleaming" either because of the fieriness of the creature or because when the sun is in it, it burns fiercely. "In orbit" either because of its revolution of the summer solstice.

lines 592-5.

30. EUSTATHIUS

(i) The size of the British Isles is not only indicated by Dionysius but also revealed by Ptolemy in his geographical account. He says that Taprobane in India takes first place among islands in size and report, followed by Brettanice, with the Golden Chersonese third. Fourth is the other of the British Isles, Hibernia, fifth the Peloponnese followed by Sicily sixth, seventh Sardinia, eighth Corsica, and Crete ninth. After them comes Cyprus in tenth place, capping the list. Ptolemy groups the greatest islands into ten in this way, including two peninsulas among them.

lines 568ff.

(ii) Taprobane, formerly called Salike, is an island in the ocean, not less than Bretannice, according to report, four-sided, haunt of beasts, full of fine-nosed elephants, as is said by Alexander, nicknamed Lychnus. Dionysius says that this island is the mother of Asian-born elephants. He also calls it the great island of Colias, that is of Aphrodite, as Cyprus is too, because of the fact that the men in Taprobane deck themselves out in women's attire, since they are effeminate and in particular, they have their hair bound up. He relates

also that Cancer revolves its summer cycle above the island itself, raised aloft in heavenly orbit, the zone there lying under Cancer. Ptolemy however says that the sign of Aries revolves above it.

lines 591ff.

(iii) Taprobane extends most widely in size. So the Geographer too says, "Taprobane is a great island in the ocean, a long way away from the mainland". According to Dionysius, it also has many sea-monsters like lofty mountains, on the surface of whose backs there projects a long ridge of spines. Their jaws also he describes as "grim", and he says that their maw is so vast that often they swallow ship, crew and all, in one gulp. . . . He says that such monsters and portents are the flocks of the Erythraean Sea, in which the island lies.

lines 596ff.

(iv) By "strewing" India with precious stones, Dionysius develops concisely the conclusion, that it enhances prosperity of every kind, since it is watered by rivers on this side and that. Indeed, he says, the meadows there are crowned with foliage: here millet grows, there woods luxuriate with Erythraean reed, i.e. aromatic reed, called Erythraean because India extends even as far as the Erythraean ocean. This is clear from the fact that according to Dionysius the Gangetic land extends as far as the boundaries of the land of Colias, or Taprobane, where the greatest sea-monsters exist, which he describes as the flocks of the Erythraean Sea.

lines 1107ff.

31. PALLADIUS

(i) On the Nations of India and the Brahmins (Greek)

1. Your great devotion to study, learning, discourse and religion, most gifted Sir, has bidden me give an account of a second matter which is full of perfect wisdom. Hence, inspired by your interest, I shall add to my previous discourse to you a full account of the life of the Brahmins, too. I have not visited their country, nor have I met the people, for they live far beyond both India and Serica, dwelling by the side of the River Ganges, whereas I just went as far as the capes of India a few years ago in the company of the blessed Moses, bishop of Adulis. There I experienced the fierce heat, - it is such that, when water bubbles out from a spring ice-cold and is collected in jars, it boils immediately - well, upon seeing this, I turned back again since I could not stand the heat. This river Ganges is the one which among us is called Pheison, mentioned in the Scriptures, one of the four rivers which are said to issue from Paradise.

2. There is a current narrative of Alexander King of Macedon who gave some account of their life, but he too probably got it from hearsay: for he personally, I believe, did not cross the Ganges, but got as far as Serice, where the Seres produce silk, and there he erected a stone pillar and put on it the inscription, "Alexander of Macedon reached this place".

3. I however have been able to learn something about the Brahmins from a scholasticus of Thebes, who went abroad willingly but unwillingly fell into captivity. He, so he said, had no aptitude for law, was overcome with boredom for it and so got a hankering to visit the land of the Indians. 4. In the company of a presbyter he sailed along and touched in first at Adulis here, then, after that, at Axume,

where there was even a minor kinglet of the Indians in residence there. There he spent some time and gained a deep acquaintance with them, and he wanted to go to the island of Taprobane also, where the so-called Macrobioi live. On that island the old people live to 150, because of the wonderful clemency of the climate and the inscrutable will of God. In this island there lives also the great king of the Indians, to whom all the minor kings of the land are subject, like satraps. This is what the scholasticus personally told me, but he ^{even} ~~too~~ learned it from other people, for he too was unable personally to enter the island.

5. For around this island there lie (unless the story is false) about 1,000 other islands, washed by the Red Sea. The magnetic stone which attracts iron is found in those islands called Manioloi, and if any boat with iron nails goes near, it is held fast by the force of the stone and cannot pass by. The vessels that sail across to that great island are peculiarly equipped with wooden pegs, without iron.

6. This island, he says, also has five very big rivers, in which ships sail. The fruit season, so the natives told him, never ceases in that part of the island, for in the same spot, he says, one branch is in flower, another is forming its fruit, and another is being picked. It also has palms, and the very big Indian coconut and the small, aromatic nut. The inhabitants of that place live on milk, rice and fruit: wool is not produced there, nor linen, but they just wrap finely worked sheep skins around their middles. They have sheep that are hairy, but with no wool, which produce milk and have a very broad tail. They use the flesh of goats and sheep for eating too. Pigs are not found at all in the parts of India or Ethiopia from the Thebaid onwards, because of the excessive heat.

7. Well, this scholasticus told the tale that he found some Indians making the passage from Axume in their boats for the purpose of trade, and that he tried to go further east. He reached the neighbourhood of the people called Bisadae, the pepper-gatherers. That people is very small and weak: they live in caves in the rock, and are capable of making their way on precipices because of their acquaintance with the locality, and that is how they gather pepper from the bushes, for the trees are stunted, as that scholasticus said. The Bisades too are stunted little fellows with big heads, unshaven and lank-haired. The rest of the Ethiopians and Indians are black, upstanding fellows, and bristly-haired.

8. "Then," said he, "I was arrested by the local ruler and was tried for daring to enter their country. They did not accept my defence, since they did not know the language of our country, nor did I understand the charges they brought against me, for I did not know their language either, but simply by the twisting of the eyes we communicated with each other in recognizable gestures. I came to recognize their accusing remarks from the bloodshot colour of their eyes and the savage grinding of their teeth, and guessed the meaning of what they said from their movements. On the other hand, from my trembling and anguish and the paleness of my face, they clearly realized my pitiable state of mind through my physical trepidation.

9. So I was arrested and was a slave among them for six years, handed over to work in the bake-house. The amount spent by their king," said he, "was one modius of corn for his whole palace, and I don't know where it came from. And so," he said, "in these six years, I was able to interpret a great deal from their language, and hence I have got to know the neighbouring tribes besides.

10. I was released from there," said he, "in the following way: another king made war on the one who kept me captive, and accused him before the great king who resides in the island of Taprobane, of taking prisoner an important Roman and keeping him in basest servitude. The king sent a judge, and, upon learning the truth of the ~~matter~~^{matter}, ordered him to be flayed alive, for doing injury to a Roman, for they respect and fear the Roman Empire very much, thinking that it could even invade their country because of its supreme courage and inventive skills."

(ed. Berghoff).

(ii) Memoir of Palladius (Latin)

I. Your intellect, always eager to learn and always kindled with the love of wisdom, has also enjoined upon us the duty of undertaking another task, that is to describe the manner of life of the race of Brahmins and their customs. I have not seen that race nor its country, for that land is far distant not just from India but also from that country people call Sericia, but it is near the river Ganges.

But some years ago I travelled as far as the border of India with Musaeus, bishop of the Duleni; since I could not stay there because of the excessive heat of the sun (for the sun's heat there was such that I even saw water boil in the jars which were being filled from the springs, I returned immediately to my own country, because I could not stand such an inferno.

Now this river called Ganges is the one which Holy Scripture calls Fyson, one of those four rivers which issue from Paradise. This is what the history of Alexander, emperor of Macedon, says. Although this same Alexander speaks of the life and customs of the

Brahmins, yet he did not cross the river Ganges itself, where they live; for he just got as far as the country called Seritia, where the actual silk is produced, and there he had a marble column erected, and wrote this inscription upon it, "I, Alexander, got as far as here."

However I have been able to gather some knowledge of the actual Brahmins, because a certain Theban scholasticus told me of it. He of his own volition wanted to visit there for this reason. So he, according to his own story, was eager to know the country of the Indians, and he set sail there with some elders. And first he came to the settlements of the Sumites. Now the same Theban said that there was there a minor kinglet of the Indians. And when the aforementioned Theban had been there for a long time, he wished to go to that island which is called Taprobane, in which those people live who have the name of the Blessed (Beati). These people live for 150 years owing to the very temperate climate and the will of the Lord.

So in this island was the great king to whom all the other kinglets were subject, and those kinglets that great king called prefects, so the aforementioned Theban told us. For even he heard this from others, because he too did not enter the island aforementioned.

There are 1,000 other islands in the Red Sea which are attached to that aforementioned island, in which there are those stones which we call magnets. They attract iron. Even if any ship approaches with nails of iron, they straightaway stop it and do not let it go. Now the inhabitants of those islands, when they build boats, do not put iron nails in them, but only wooden nails, and they always go in them to that island where that great king lives.

II. In the above named island of Taprobane there are five very great rivers, and as the Theban told us, at no time do the fruits fail there,

for on one and the same tree one branch is in flower, another is coming up to fruit, and still another bears ripe fruit. There are in the same island dates and very large nuts, and nuts like the filberts of Abella. The inhabitants of this land live on fruit and milk, and do not have clothes of wool or linen, but they dress themselves simply in animal skins. The sheep of that land do not bear wool but hairs and bristles: they have plenty of milk and broad tails, and the inhabitants of that island eat the flesh of goats and sheep. For from the Thebaid as far as the regions of India and Ethiopia men cannot live because of the excessive heat of the sun. So the above-mentioned Theban told us that he had seen men from India present in those parts with ships for trade "and I too wanted to go with them by boat to the borders of those islands, and I went as far as the borders of Vessadae, where the pepper is produced and gathered. The tribe that lives in that same land is small in stature and not much good for anything, and it always gathers the pepper, twigs and all. The trees which produce the pepper have stunted growth. The dwarfs who collect it are tiny, with big heads and straight hair; the peoples of Ethiopia and India, however, have curly hair." The same Theban went on; "In this place the man in power had me arrested. First people began to accuse me and dispute with me as to why I had dared enter their country and set foot on their land. I wanted to excuse myself with pleasant words and to defend myself, so that I could free myself from their clutches: but they did not understand me nor I them, because they did not know my language nor I theirs, but we made ourselves understood simply by our facial expressions. I understood that they were angry with me, because they looked at me with rolling eyes, and they could understand me, because I said what I did say with fear and trembling. But they had

no pity for me, but they held me prisoner without more ado, and for six years bade me slave in the bakehouse. Now their king had only one peck of grain as the amount expended on the whole of his palace. After six years I began to learn some of their language and to get to know the places of that country. But I was freed from my captivity in the following way. A king quarrelled with the king above mentioned, and laid accusation against him before that greater king who lived in the island of Taprobane, for arresting a gentleman and a Roman, and sending him as his slave to work in the bakehouse. When that great king heard this, he immediately sent a trusted officer to find out whether this was true or not. When he came and saw me languishing in such slavery, he straightaway told the king all that he had seen. And when the king heard this, he ordered that king who had sent me into slavery to be flayed alive, for having dared to send a Roman into slavery. They actually say that the Roman emperor should be honoured and feared, for, if the Roman emperor had so wished, he could have expelled them from their kingdom.

Commonitorium Palladii I-II, (ed. Pfister).

32. COSMAS INDICOPLEUSTES

(i) 45. Yet men, eager to learn much and to delve into the question whether Paradise is on this earth, have for the most part not hesitated to go as far as that. For if some people do not hesitate to go for silk to the ends of the earth for the sake of some wretched trade, why would they hesitate to set out for the sight of Paradise itself? This silk country is in the most interior part of all India, on the left side as you enter the Indian Sea, far beyond the Persian Gulf and the island called by the Indians Selediba, by the Greeks Taprobane.

It is the so-called Tzinista, again surrounded by the Ocean on the left, as Barbaria too is surrounded by it on the right. And the Indian philosophers called Brahmins say that if you stretch a cord from Tzinista through Persia to Roman territory, it goes like a straight line through the middle of the world and they are perhaps right.

46. It is very far to the left, so that loads of silk carried overland from there reach Persia in little time, passing through different tribes in succession, though by sea it is a very long way away from Persia. For one covers the mileage that the Persian Gulf takes on its way up to Persia, when one moves on again leftwards from Taprobane and beyond to reach Tzinista itself: and that is after having a good long distance to cover from the start, from the head of the Persian Gulf, across the whole of the Indian Sea, as far as Taprobane and beyond. So the land-journey from Tzinista to Persia cuts off long distances, and that is the reason why plenty of silk is always found in Persia. Beyond Tzinista there is neither sailing nor dwelling.

Christian Topography II, 45-6.

(ii) In Taprobane, an island in inner India, where the Indian Sea is, there is also a Christian church there, and clergy and faithful, but I do not know whether there are any further on. Similarly, in the place called Male, where pepper grows, and in the place called Kalliana, there is also a bishop, ordained in Persia. Similarly, in the island called Dioscorides in the same Indian Sea, there the inhabitants speak Greek, since they are settlers of the Ptolemies, the successors of Alexander of Macedon, and there are clergy ordained in Persia and sent to those parts, and a community of Christians. I have sailed past this

island but never landed on it, but I have met people from there, Greek speakers, who had gone to Ethiopia.

Ibid. III, 65.

(iii) About the island of Taprobane

13. This is the great island in the Ocean, lying in the Indian sea, called Sielediba by the Indians and Taprobane by the Greeks. There the stone called hyacinth is found. It lies further on than the land of pepper. Around it there are very many small islands, all with fresh water and coconuts: all of them are for the most part with deep water close in. The great island, so the natives say, is 300 gaudia, i.e. 900 miles, in length and the same in breadth. There are two kings in the island, confronting one another, one of whom is in possession of the hyacinth country, and the other has the other part, where the market and the harbour are; and the market there is a big one.

14. The same island has also a Church of Persian Christians resident there, and a presbyter ordained in Persia, and a deacon, and all the liturgy of the church. The natives and the kings are pagans. They have many temples in the island itself, and on one of their temples, placed on high, there is a hyacinth, so they say, glowing red and as big as a big pine-cone. It glitters from afar, especially when the sun shines on it, and it is a spectacle without peer.

15. From the whole of India, Persia and Ethiopia the island, acting as intermediary, welcomes many ships, and likewise despatches them. From regions of the interior, i.e. Tzinista and other markets, it imports silk, aloes, ^{c/}zoves, clove-wood, sandal wood, and all the native products. And it re-exports them to the people of the exterior, i.e. to Male, where pepper grows, and to Calliena, where copper is produced,

and sesame wood and cloths of various sorts - for this too is a big centre of trade -, similar^{ly} to Sindou, where musk, costus root and spikenard come from, and to Persia, Himyarite country and to Adulis. In return it gets the produce of each of the afore-mentioned markets, and passes them on to the peoples of the interior, and at the same time exports its own native products to each of these markets.

16. Sindou is the start of India; for the River Indus, i.e. the Pheison, with its outlet in the Persian Gulf, separates Persia from India. The famous marts of India, then, are as follows: Sindou, Orrotha, Calliena, Sibor, Male with five ports exporting pepper, Parti, Mangarouth, Salopatana, Nalopatana and Poudapatana. From there about five full days' sail from the mainland in the Ocean lies Sielediba, i.e. Taprobane. Then further on from there towards the interior on the mainland lies the port of Marallo, which exports shells, and Kaber, exporting alabandine, then, next after that, the clove country, and finally Tzinista, which exports silk. There is no other land beyond that, for the Ocean encircles it on the East. So, this Sielediba, situated as it were in the middle of India, and with the hyacinth producing country too, receives wares from all the marts and exports to them all, and it is a great centre of trade.

17. Anyway, one of the business people from here, named Sopatros, who has been dead for the past 35 years to my knowledge, once reached the island of Taprobana on a business venture, when a ship from Persia had just cast anchor. So the people from Adulis, and Sopatros with them, disembarked, as did the people from Persia, with whom there was a Persian envoy also. Then, as was the custom, the local magistrates and the tax collectors welcomed them and took them off to the king. The king welcomed them, received their salutations, and told them to sit down,

and then he asked, "How are your countries, and how are things getting on there?" "Nicely," they replied. Then, in the general conversation, the king put the question, "Which of your kings is the greater and the more powerful?"

18. The Persian got his word in first and said, "Our king is the more powerful, and greater and richer, and he is the king of kings. And whatever he wills, he is able to put into effect". Sopatros kept quiet; and then the king said, "What about you, Roman? Haven't you anything to say?" And Sopatros replied, "What can I say, after these statements of his? If you want to know the truth, you have got both kings here. Have a look at each of them, and you can see which is the more glorious and powerful". On hearing this, he was astonished, and said, "How have I got both the kings here?" He replied, "You have the coins of them both, the nomisma of the one, and the drachma (i.e. the miliarision) of the other. Look at the image on each of them, and you will see the truth".

19. The king praised and commended the idea and ordered both coins to be produced. Well, the nomisma was of gold, brilliant and of fine shape, for the coins which are exported there are specially selected, whereas the miliarision, to put it in a nutshell, was of silver, and that is enough to rule out any comparison with the gold coin. The king turned both coins over and over, and inspected them, and full of praise for the nomisma, he said, "Truly, the Romans are glorious, powerful and wise". So he ordered Sopatros to be highly honoured, and he mounted him on an elephant, and to the beating of drums paraded him round the town in great honour. That is the story that Sopatros and his companions who went to that island from Adoulis, told me. At this, so they said, the Persian went away in shame and disgrace.

(iv) The local kings of India keep elephants: for instance, of the kings of Orotha, of Calliana, of Sindou, of Sibor and of Male, one has 600, one 500, and some more, some less. But the king of Sielediba buys both the elephants he has and the horses. He buys the elephants by cubit measure; the elephant's height is measured from ground level, and so he strikes a bargain, offering a price of so much per cubit, say 50 nomismata, or 100, or even more. The horses they bring him from Persia, and he buys them and honours the importers with freedom from tax. The kings on the mainland, however, tame the elephants from the country, and get them for use in war.

Ibid. XI, 22.

MISCELLANEOUS LATE REFERENCES.

33. SCRIPTORES HISTORIAE AUGUSTAE

On this occasion the soothsayers foretold that at some future time there would be a Roman emperor from their family, descended through either the male or the female line, who would give judges to the Parthians and the Persians, subject the Franks and the Alamanni to the laws of Rome, drive out every barbarian from the whole of Africa, establish a governor at Taprobane, send a proconsul to the island of Iuverna, act as judge to all the Sarmatians, make all the land which borders on the Ocean his own territory by conquering all the tribes, but thereafter restore the power to the senate and conduct himself in accordance with the ancient laws, being destined to live for one hundred and twenty years and to die without an heir.

S.H.A. Tac. 15, 2.

34. AMPELIUS

The eleven most famous islands in our sea are Sicily, Sardinia, Crete, Cyprus, Euboea, Lesbos, the two Balearics, Ebusus, Corsica and Gades. In the ocean, to the east there is Taprobane, to the west Britannia, to the north Thyle, and to the south, the Fortunate Isles. Besides these, in the Aegean Sea are the twelve Cyclades.

Ampe⁽lius, Lib. Mem. 6.

35. PEUTINGER TABLE,

The island of Taprobane.

See p. 276.

36. PHILOSTORGIUS

Philostorgius says that Paradise lies in the direction of the eastern equinox, conjecturing, first from the fact that all the areas to the south are obviously habitable practically as far as the outer sea, and the sun then continually scorches this sea by directing its rays straight down upon it: and this is the area called the middle zone. Secondly, the river now called the Hyphasis, which Holy Scripture names the Pheison and itself has its source in Paradise, clearly flows from the more northerly parts of the East in a southerly direction and discharges its current into the Ocean on this side opposite the island of Taprobane. On the banks of this river is found the clove, whether that be fruit or even flower. The local inhabitants are convinced that this tree is one of those in Paradise, for the whole country beyond them is utter desert and barren. From the fact that the river brings the flower down, it becomes clear that this river flows entirely above ground and nowhere

takes a subterranean course: otherwise it could not bring down a product from up there. It provides yet another indication of its connection by land with Paradise, for they say that, if anyone is attacked by raging fever and is dipped in the river, he is immediately rid of the disease. The Tigris and the Euphrates, however, since they go underground and then re-emerge, cannot bring anything down from there as the Hyphasis does: nor yet can the Nile.

Ecclesiastical History III, 10.

37. OROSIUS

13. Midway down as it faces East, Asia has the mouth of the river Ganges in the Eastern Ocean: to the left it has the promontory of Caligardamana, and lying off this to the South-east is the island of Taprobane: from there the Ocean begins to be called "Indian".

14. To the right it has the promontory of Samarae of Mount Imavus, where Caucasus ends, and lying northwards of this are the mouths of the river Ottorogorra; thereafter the Ocean is called "Seric".

15. Within these boundaries lies India: it has to the west the river Indus which discharges into the Red Sea, to the north Mount Caucasus. For the rest, as I have said, it is bounded by the Eastern and Indian Oceans. 16. It contains 44 nations, not counting the island of Taprobane, possessing ten cities, and a large number of habitable islands besides.

Against the Pagans I, 2, 13-16.

38. JORDANES

However, the nearer coast of this sea which we have described as the circumference of the whole world, encircling its confines like a garland, is well enough known to men of learning and those who have

desired to write on this subject, because the circumference of the earth is occupied by inhabitants, and some islands in the same sea are habitable. For instance, they say that in the East and in the Indian Ocean there are Hyppodes, Iamnesia, the desert island of the Sun, which, though uninhabitable, yet over all its area extends far and wide: Taprobane also which, leaving out of account towns and estates, possesses ten well appointed cities. There is also another island, a most charming one, Silefantina, and also Theron. Although these are not described by any author, yet they are quite full of occupants of their own.

Getica I, i, 6-7.

39. IULIUS HONORIUS

The islands of the Eastern Ocean are:

the island of Hippopodes, the island of Iannessi, the desert island of the Sun, the island of Taprobane, the island of Teron, the island of Carpathon, the island of Cyprus, the island of Rhodes, the island of Cythera, the island of Crete.

Cosmography (Riese, G.L.M. 22ff.)

(Version B of the text omits Carpathon - Creta insula)

40. ANONYMUS OF RAVENNA

(i) Between this country of Parthia and India there flows a very great river called the Indus. This, as is stated by Paulus Orosius, enters the Red Sea, though others say that it flows into the Persian Gulf. However we know that it flows into the southern Ocean opposite the island of Taprobane.

Cosmography II, 4.

(ii) In the Ocean of India Thermantica Elamice, that is in this extreme southerly part, there are various islands, some of which I wish to name; to wit

Ypode, Iamnesia, Silefentina, Theron, Argire, Atyron, Colera,
Agathodimon, greater Sinda, Opta, also Afrondiscolias.

Also in that extreme southerly part is the island called Taprobane.
It is a very fine place, where I have read that ten very famous cities
existed, - so I am informed by Paulus Horosius, the most learned
investigator of the East.

Ibid. V, 29.

41. AETHICUS

(i) The well-known islands of the Eastern Ocean are:
Hyppopodes, Taprobane, Silefantine, Theros, Cyprus, Rhodes, Cythera,
Crete, Carpathus.

Cosmography I, 3. (G.L.M. 73).

(ii) Facing east and halfway down, Asia has the mouths of the river Ganges in the Eastern Ocean; to the left is the promontory of Caligarda, and lying off this to the south-east is the island of Taprobane, and from there the ocean comes to be called "Indian". To the right it has the range of Mount Imavus where Caucasus ends near the promontory of Samara. This lies† off to the north and towards the mouths of the river Octogordus, and from there the ocean is called "Seric". Within these boundaries lies the province of India, which on the West has the river Indus which empties into the Red Sea, and on the North Mount Caucasus: the rest, as I have said, is bounded by the Eastern and Indian Oceans. It has 44 nations apart from the island of Taprobane which has twenty† cities with other cities which exist in other inhabited islands in that area.†

Ibid. II, 5 (G.L.M. 91-2).

42. AETHICUS ISTER

(i) The same philosopher Aethicus explains everything, except for the land of Eden lying to the East, because he could not enter the Eastern sea owing to the great heat of the sun. He says that he sailed the ocean sea with his disciples to other parts of the world with most careful toil, and in due time to islands both great and small from south to west, from Tabrobane to Sirtinice, and from Calicopa as far as Riakeon.

Cosmography II, 23-4.

(ii) Albania has two tributary islands in the northern sea Ocrea and Samnite, extended in length, narrowed in width, which produce gold in some sand-dunes and pearls, as Tabrobana does, but fewer and coarser.

Ibid. II, 64.

(iii) He asserts that he found this (lachon) stone nowhere else save there and in the Ocean between Trabundum and the island of Taprobana, where he affirms that there is the mouth or the issue of Trabundia in the Red Sea. And from that island the very red soil is spread far and wide by that stone: he saw it shining from afar, as the sun grew warm, with such diverse colouring that you would guess that it glowed with the shifting rays of the sun or take it for the serene stars of heaven.

Ibid. II, 83.

43. VERSES on the PROVINCES OF PARTS OF THE WORLD

India possesses within itself a wealthy land and has very many nations and great towns. The island of Taprobane too nurtures elephants. It is rich in gold and silver, and it is bursting with many gems, topaz and beryl, diamond and carbuncle, rubies, pearls, great and small. It has the parrot, a wondrous bird renowned in song, unicorns and camels, serpents and apes. There are the mountains of gold, guarded by wild beasts.

Lines 16-24.

APPENDIX II

Interlinear inscriptions from Sri Lanka

Our study of Greek and Roman acquaintance with Taprobane is based largely on reports supplied by the writers of Greece and Rome, although we have given due consideration to evidence supplied by oriental literature and archaeological finds. Recently, a new class of evidence has been produced, namely the so-called interlinear inscriptions published by the late Prof. Senarath Paranavitana. In the following we give our reasons for questioning the genuineness of these documents and for refraining from utilising them in our research.

Paranavitana's alleged discovery was made in June 1964, and was first announced in two articles, one in the University of Ceylon Review (XXI. no. 3, pp.103ff.), the other in the Artibus Asiae (Essays offered to G. H. Luce, Ascona, Switzerland, 1966 vol. 1, pp.205-212). There is also in the University Library of Ceylon, a typescript of a paper read at the University, six months after the discovery, on 31st October 1964, entitled: "An account of Alexander the Great and Greek culture in a universal history written in the reign of Mahasena". Of more recent articles, "References to Greek and Roman Celebrities in Ancient Historical Writings of Ceylon", Palma, (The Classical Association of Ceylon) 1972, pp.145-6, from the Association's Bulletin no. 7, July 1969) should also be noted. Subsequently, the contents of these inscriptions were published in the original Sanskrit, together with English translations and Prof. Paranavitana's own observations, in three books: Ceylon and Malaysia (Lakehouse Investments Ltd., Colombo, 1966), The Greeks and the Mauryas (ibid. 1971), and Story of Sigiri (ibid. 1972).

We shall, for the most part, limit ourselves to a consideration of the last two works, inasmuch as they claim to have a special bearing on the period covered by our study.

It must be pointed out, first of all, that scholars have been almost unanimous in rejecting this evidence, although the account of Greco-Roman activities in the Indian sub-continent has not been subjected to close and consistent scrutiny, and these refutations of Parnavitana's theories have been decidedly vehement, as for instance Dr. Sirima Kiribamune, in an article in the Ceylon Journal of Humanities (Vol. 1, no. 1, January 1970, pp.76-92). The interlinear inscriptions themselves have come under considerable attack. Two distinguished historians from Sri Lanka, Dr. R. A. L. H. Gunawardene (University of Ceylon Review, XXV.1-2, April-October, 1967), and Dr. K. Indrapala (J.R.A.S.C.B. New Series, XI. 1967) have firmly stated that these inscriptions are not visible at all; and considering their long experience and distinguished achievements in epigraphical studies, this conclusion cannot be taken lightly. It is also significant that Parnavitana's evidence relating to various aspects of cultural history has been rejected by specialists in their respective disciplines. Thus J. H. McLeod, a historian of the Sikh religion, has refused to place any credence on the interlinear documents from Sri Lanka which claim to have any bearing on his branch of study (South Asia Journal of South Asian Studies, no. 3, August 1973).

But it is not merely the opinion of distinguished scholars that leads us to reject the interlinear inscriptions as evidence. The account of the manner in which these writings were produced and preserved, as well as their actual contents, gives rise to serious considerations which lead us to the conclusion that they are anything but genuine. Parnavitana's own account of them abounds in many details which are improbable, unhistorical and even absurd.

In his publications already cited, Parnavitana explains how he became aware of the existence of these interlinear inscriptions while re-examining inscriptions on the Abhayagiri Vihara grounds. According to him, these consisted of minute writing inscribed for the most part between the lines of original inscriptions and sometimes over them, not only horizontally but also vertically and even diagonally. He says that there are sometimes many layers of this type of writing on the same slab, with some of these scribblings in the script of the 12th and 13th centuries, while others show the writing in vogue in the fifteenth century. The scribblings of later date have been executed on top of those of earlier periods. This process has been repeated several times, and at first sight this writing appears as a jumble of criss-cross lines scratched on the stone with no purpose; but intense observation enabled Parnavitana to recognise the forms of letters here and there, and to distinguish the writing of one period from that of another by the difference in the size of the letters and their form, as well as by the varying depths to which they had been incised. Further struggles proved to him that "the language was Sanskrit, and in a few weeks time, a continuous passage was deciphered. Further investigation revealed that similar documents were incised on scores of stone slabs and pillars which were originally meant for Sinhalese records of the 9th to 15th centuries. The repetition of some documents on different stones facilitated their decipherment" (cf. The Greeks and the Mauryas, pp.5f.).

Some of these documents purported to deal with the relations that Sri Lanka had with the Malay kingdom of Suvarnapura or Srivijaya, on the island of Sumatra. According to Parnavitana, the records engraved on the order of Magha (who ascended the throne in A.D. 1215)

are the earliest of these interlinear inscriptions and were made illegible on purpose by his opponents who succeeded him. The great majority of documents now deciphered had been written down at the behest of Parakramabahu vi (1412-1467). But thereafter many other writings, expressing contrary views to them were engraved in the time of Buvanekabahu vi. Some of the material thus engraved was specially drawn up for the purpose, but there are also extracts from books on history then current but now lost, some of which were not available in Sri Lanka even in those times, so that copies were brought from the libraries of Suvarnapura for the purpose of engraving them on stones. According to Paranavitana, these books included the Raja-vamsa-pustaka (Book of Royal Dynasties) by a writer of the third and fourth centuries A.D. named MahaBuddharaksita-Sthavira, several later essays based on it by Buddhapriya Sthavira, a Parampara Pustaka (Book of Traditions) by Bhadra Sthavira, and a chronicle of Srivijaya known as Suvarnapura-Vamsa.

Much the same fate befell the documents concerning the history of Sigiri prepared by Ananda Sthavira, during the reign of Parakramabahu vi (1412-67) (cf. Story of Sigiri, Pref. pp.ivff.), who caused them to be engraved as interlinear inscriptions. But after the demise of this king, the antagonists of Ananda made the inscriptions illegible by having other writings incised over them. With the advent of Parakramabahu viii, a pupil of Ananda, of the same name, arrived from Palembang and re-incised his master's documents on the same stones. "In order to make this writing, incised on several earlier layers, legible as far as possible, he adopted the device of altering the direction of the writing. Instead of the horizontal lines of the earlier incisions, the documents were recorded this time in vertical lines as well as in lines slanting downwards or upwards, from the left of the stone," (Story of Sigiri, Pref. p.vi).

This account of the transmission of documents has nothing in it to claim credence. There are indeed many instances elsewhere where the same stone was used for several inscriptions centuries apart, a famous example being the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta, which was engraved on a pillar containing an edict of Asoka. But the practice of making extant inscriptions illegible by means of minute interlinear writings which themselves can hardly be seen, let alone read, is unparalleled in history. It is hard to imagine that anyone should engrave them with the purpose of preserving them for posterity, as they could not have been read even in their own time, and have up to now evaded trained epigraphists save Parnavitana himself. It is moreover curious that all the published documents maintain an unorthodox "Suvarnapura" view of history. Although Parnavitana maintained that counter incisions were made, giving the point of view of the orthodox party, he never produced any of their records from interlinear sources. This is strange, to say the least.

Another reason why we question the authenticity of Parnavitana's documents is the incredible amount of learning and familiarity with foreign languages displayed by their supposed authors. Concerning the author of the Raja-Vamsa-Pustaka (The Greeks and the Mauryas, p.8), Parnavitana says, "Mahabuddharaksita was a Sinhalese born in Ceylon. He entered the monastic order in his youth as a member of the Abhayagiri fraternity. After acquiring a knowledge of the scriptures he went to India and gradually drifted as far as the Pananada country (Punjab) where at that time (towards the end of the third century) there were still people of Greek speech and culture. In order to preach the Buddhist doctrine to them, Mahabuddharaksita acquired a sound knowledge of the Greek language and literature. While residing in the Pananada country,

Mahabuddharaksita travelled to lands beyond the Indus as far as Central Asia, acquiring a knowledge of many languages such as Persian, Latin, Pahlavi, and the Indo-Aryan dialects prevailing in various regions."

The same prodigious knowledge of foreign languages is displayed in the twelfth century by Buddhapriya Sthavira who is said to have written, among other things, a History of the Greek Kingdoms (Yavana-Rajya-Vrttanta) (ibid. p.9). He was born at Suvarnapura. Having adopted a religious career, he acquired a sound knowledge of Sanskrit, Pali, and the local languages, and is said to have become proficient in Greek, Persian, and Arabic. "It may be presumed that he learned these languages from merchants who sojourned in Ceylon and Srivijaya. . . . Buddhapriya supplemented the material gathered from the R.V.P. with his own knowledge of Greek history derived from books as well as from merchants and envoys coming from abroad." In the same century, Bhadra Sthavira, the supposed author of the Parampara Pustaka, is also said to have possessed a knowledge of Greek (ibid. p.10).

Coming down to the fifteenth century, we meet a great historian and archaeologist who flourished in the reign of Parakramabahu vi, Ananda Sthavira the author of documents on Sigiri, (cf. Story of Sigiri, Pref. pp.iiiiff.). "Ananda Sthavira was well grounded in Sanskrit. . . . He had also a good knowledge of Pali and Sinhalese when he arrived in Ceylon. . . . He was acquainted with the inscriptions of Ceylon and their historical importance by a study of Sumangalacarya's Silalekhana Sangraha; and had some knowledge of Indian epigraphy as well; this he had gained by a perusal of the Silalekhana Sangraha, of Sivasarma Pandita. While in Ceylon he lost no opportunity of improving his knowledge of Sinhalese inscriptions and the ancient Sinhalese language in which they were written, by a study of the relevant documents

available to him. . . . He had also some acquaintance with Greek and Latin, which continued to be studied by a few Pandits of Suvarnapura . . . and also of Persian and Arabic."

One cannot accept the view that Greek, whatever its survival in the area, was so widely used in the Punjab in the late third century A.D. that Mahabuddharaksita had need of, or facilities for learning it to the extent that he is said to have done. That whatever Greek there may have been had already largely disappeared from current usage in India by this time is indicated by numismatic evidence. For, although some Indian coins bore legends in Graeco-Roman characters well into the Gupta period, after the time of the early Western Satraps such as Nahapana and Castana these legends performed a purely ornamental function and signified little or nothing. Even less is it likely that Greek and Latin were studied in the 12th or the 15th century either in Sri Lanka or Suvarnapura. If the language, literature and philosophy of the Greeks and Romans were studied in those days, it is strange that their influence should be restricted to the interlinear documents. There is not the slightest trace of Graeco-Roman learning in the Sinhalese and Pali literature of the late Middle Ages. This is specially significant since two of the personages mentioned by Paranaivitana are asserted to be known to us also through extant works. One is Buddhapriya Sthavira (12th century A.D.) who is identified by him with the author of the Pali Grammar called Rūpasiddhi and the Pali poem known as Pajjamadhu. The other is Garudacarya, who is similarly identified with Gurulugomi, author of two extant Sinhala prose works, namely, the Amavatura and the Dharma-Pradipika. Paranaivitana says that he possessed a knowledge of Greek, Latin, and the Persian languages in addition to that of Sanskrit, Pali, Sinhalese and Malay, and could read ancient inscriptions

of Ceylon and India. However, in none of these works is there any trace^a of western influence, literary, philosophical, or linguistic. It is^L also extremely questionable whether there were any students of and treatises on epigraphy in India or Sri Lanka such as those adduced above by Paranavitana before the dawn of modern archaeology.

According to evidence adduced from the inscriptions by Paranavitana, the informants on whom these writers depended were also endowed with phenomenal learning. In the course of a discussion supposed to have taken place at Polonnaruva during the reign of Parakramabahu i (1153-86), Buddhapriya Sthavira is said to have quoted opinions of^a certain Alexander, a merchant from Byzantium (Ruma-Vanija), to support references to the Mauryas and Greeks contained in the Suvarnnapura Vamsa. We are told that Parakramabahu vi had exhaustive inquiries made about this Rumavanija. No reliable information could be obtained, and it was agreed by the scholars of the time (15th century) that "Rumavanija" was a nom-de-plume of Buddhapriya Sthavira himself, (The Greeks and the Mauryas, pp.10-11). But whether he existed or not, his opinions are cited as the last word for questions of Greek philosophy, history and literature. Thus, "According to Buddhapriya, this Ruma merchant came to Srivijaya on a date corresponding to c. 1079, returned home after a short stay, came back to Srivijaya, and stayed there for five years during which period he is said to have acquired a profound knowledge of Sanskrit and its literature as well as of the Malay language. He also, it is said, translated into Greek an extensive history of Srivijaya written in Malay, wrote a book in Greek (giving a summary in Sanskrit and Malay) about the classification of languages, and returned to his own land, where he died. He is said to have propounded a theory about the classification of the languages of the world into a number of families, and

included the ancient and modern languages of north India and Europe (Sanskrit, Persian, Latin and Greek) as of the same family, thus anticipating the well-known discovery of Sir William Jones." (An account of Alexander the Great, p.4)

In the inscriptions, according to Prof. Paranavitana, it is this same Alexander who informs Buddhapriya that "Bramanoi" of the Greek texts is a scribal error for "Gramanoi", thus confirming the theory that Alexander the Great's last battle in India was fought with the Gramaneya tribe. On this point, Buddhapriya also consulted two Byzantine envoys who are unmentioned in "Greeks and Mauryas", one named Samuel, and the other Paulus, who at different times came to Suvarnapura, (ibid. pp.11ff.). Paulus is said to have visited Polonnaruva also, in the 20th year of Parakramabahu I. Samuel reassured Buddhapriya that the reading Gramanoi was actually to be found in some MSS. then existing in the Byzantine empire. Similarly, it was the Persian ambassador to the court of Srivijaya, Mahammad Rasik by name, who informed Buddhapriya that the name of Darius was given as Dharayatvasu in the old Persian inscription at Behistun: and that the old Persian form of Pasargadae was Parsa-gada (in this anticipating a modern observation by Girshman). He stated that these old Persian forms were known to very few even in his own country (ibid. p.21). Regarding the transcription of Berenice as Suvarnakshi (Golden-eyed), a Byzantine envoy at Srivijaya stated that there exists in Hesiod a form meaning 'gold' identical with, or resembling, beren (ibid.). Regarding the transcription of Hōmēros as Gōmāra ("cow-killer") in Sanskrit, 'Samuel, who was a profound Greek scholar, and had written a Greek Lexicon before he came to Srivijaya, had given his opinion that in Hesiod the word Homeros has a meaning identical with, or similar to, "cow-killer".' Again, 'appealing to Hesiod,

Samuel has stated that in ancient Greek Helena has the meanings attached to the Sanskrit Kalyana ('beautiful'). It goes without saying that is no foundation for such statements in our classical texts.

What is most remarkable about these writers and their informants is that not only are they endowed with phenomenal learning, but in some particulars they have anticipated by many centuries the discoveries of modern research and the opinions expressed by scholars in modern times. We have already seen how Alexander, the Byzantine merchant, had anticipated the philological discoveries of Sir William Jones. But he was not alone in so doing. "After the discovery that Persian, Greek and Latin belong to the same family of languages as Sanskrit, the question of their inter-relation also engaged the attention of the scholars of those days in Ceylon, South India and Srivijaya. The question was formulated as to whether Greek, etc., were sisters or daughters of Sanskrit. This question was formally debated at a conference of learned men in the reign of Parakramabahu vi in 1442, and the decision was that these languages were related as sisters, but Sanskrit was the eldest" (The Greeks and Mauryas, p:34). But even these scholars were not the first to discuss such matters, for according to Paranavitana's account they were known in the third century A.D. "It has been stated by Maha-buddharaksita Sthavira in the Raja-vamsa-pustaka that the Saka language should be included together with Sanskrit in one group of languages, that there is a great resemblance of the ancient Saka language with the ancient Persian language, and that it is even possible to take the ancient Saka language as a dialect of the ancient Parasika language . . ." (Story of Sigiri, p.136; v. also Greeks and Mauryas, pp.33-4). No extant source has testified to the existence of a comparative philology of this nature before modern times, and it is difficult to see how an author of the 3rd century A.D. could speak of an "ancient Saka language".

Another anticipated theory concerns the origin of the Sinhalese race. The traditional view has been that they came from north-eastern India. But, during the last century, C. Lassen (Dissertatio de Insula Taprobane, p.17, note) sought to locate their origin in the west by identifying the Lata or Lala of the Vijaya story with a coastal province of northwest India known as Lata (the Larike of Ptolemy, VII.1) rather than with Radha in east Bengal. In support of this he cited the fact that the Mahavamsa represents Vijaya as having sojourned at Suppara, a port in western India, on his way to Lanka. A number of subsequent historians were disposed to accept this view, and Prof. Paranavitana himself sought to strengthen it by pointing out the existence of a Simhapura and a Vanga in north west India which could fit the account of the Vijaya story, (cf. his chapter on Aryanisation in the University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon, Vol. I pt. 1). The gist of his theory is that the Sinhalese, who were originally from the upper Indus valley, settled down in the Lata district of western India, before they came to Lanka. Now, in the Greeks and the Mauryas (pp.116ff.), we are given the account of Mahabuddharaksita, who relates how the Sinhalese race originated in northwest India, and how the Simhala kingdom of Tamraparni was founded as an indirect consequence of the incursion of Greeks into the Indian world. According to this account Simhala was the leader of the so-called Gramaneya tribe on the Indus, with whom Alexander is said to have fought his last battle, and then entered into a treaty of friendship. After Alexander's departure Simhala is said to have settled in Malabar, in a place which Paranavitana calls the Pundra Country. "Murunda Siva the son of Simhala born of the Greek princess who was the sister of Seleucus Nicator left the Pundra country and came to the island of Tamraparni. He conquered the sovereignty of Tamraparni

from the family which was then having dominion over it, and he established his rule in that island. He was thus the founder of the Sinhalese royal family in the island of Tamraparni, though not referred to as Simhala. Murunda Siva himself was entitled to that epithet as he was the head of the Gramaneya clan. According to one account it was Simhala himself who after having established himself as ruler of the Pundra country came to the island of Tamraparni and wrested it from those who were then exercising dominion over it" (ibid. p.118). Ancient literature has preserved more than one account of the colonisation of Lanka. They are found in the Mahavamsa, the Divyavadana, and the Travels of Fa-Hien, to name the best known sources. But there is not the slightest evidence to support this fanciful account, which runs counter to all historical documents, Graeco-Roman as well as oriental.

A similar anticipation concerns the famous Sinhalese embassy to Rome. According to Pliny, this embassy arrived in the reign of Claudius, as a consequence of the shipwreck of a freedman of Annius Plocamus. When Meredith published two inscriptions from Egypt containing the name of Annius Plocamus and dated in the 35th year of an emperor who could only be Augustus, it was felt that the date of the embassy should be brought forward considerably, even to the reign of Augustus, in spite of Pliny's express statement, (cf. Wheeler, Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers, 1955, pp.154ff.; Warmington, Oxford Classical Dictionary, (2nd ed.) s.v. Taprobane). The only Sinhalese king known from native sources to have sent someone to Rome was Bhatika⁴Abhaya who, according to Geiger's dating, was a contemporary of Claudius. Others prefer to date him earlier, and Paranavitana's own dating is 19 B.C. to 9 A.D., which makes him contemporary with Augustus. Now, in an account of the Roman Empire, (Roma-rajya-vrttanta) Buddhapriya is

represented as saying that the first embassy sent by a Sinhalese monarch to the Roman empire was in the reign of Augustus, and not of Claudius as said by Pliny, (An account of Alexander the Great and Greek Culture, p.6; cf. Palma, 1972, p.146).

Concerning the Roman coins found in Sri Lanka, E. H. Warmington (The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India, Cambridge 1928, p.123) observed: "The Roman coins in Ceylon became abundant only during the fourth and fifth centuries, and the worn state of many of them and the predominance of one type suggests that the object was circulation." He also cites the curious observation of a friend of his that when discovered by the natives ancient coins are passed into circulation again. In the Story of Sigiri (p.66), in the narration of the inscription, as rendered by Paranavitana, the abbot of Abhayagiri Vihara says the following to the king: "Formerly, the agents of the merchants from the Roman empire (Roma-Rajya) went to the villages in the Simhala kingdom and gave token coins (salakas) of copper struck in imitation of the gold coins of the Roman empire in order to purchase spices such as pepper. The villagers in their turn, use these token coins for buying such goods as salt, glass-bangles and glass beads. Those token coins of copper are still in circulation among the villagers."

But it is not only theories of other scholars that are anticipated in the interlinear inscriptions. They also mention Paranavitana's own theories. For example, they provide confirmatory evidence for the theory of the Malaysian origin of the Kalinga dynasty of Sri Lanka, a theory which Paranavitana had previously elaborated in a series of articles.

Another obvious instance is the theory concerning the significance of Sigiri. Taking as his starting point the statement in the Culavamsa

(XXXIX.5) that Kassapa built at Sigiri an abode "Like another Alakamanda and dwelt there like the God Kuvera", Paranavitana had already demonstrated that the purpose of the peculiar characteristics of the remains of Sigiri was to give to the rock a semblance to Kailasa, on the summit of which in Hindu and Buddhist mythology the fabled paradise of Kuvera was located, (JRASCB New Series, I. pp.129-186). Epigraphical confirmation of this theory was sought in the Timbirivava inscription where Kasabala-alakapaya-maharaja was explained as Kassapa, lord of Alaka, (*Artibus Asiae*, XXIV. 3-4, G. Coedes Felicitation Volume 1961, pp.382-7).

Up to this point, the explanations were based on extant evidence, both literary and archaeological, the ruins themselves being taken as the main piece of evidence. But in 1972 there appeared the book entitled "Story of Sigiri" based, so it was claimed, on the works of the Ananda Sthavira of the fifteenth century, which were preserved in interlinear inscriptions. Its contents revealed an account of this monument very similar to the conclusions reached by Paranavitana in his own previous researches. Two striking instances may be cited. In the Artibus Asiae article just quoted the paintings are explained as follows: "The possibility therefore is that the ladies of the Sigiri paintings are personifications of the clouds themselves, and the phenomenon associated with the clouds, lightning, - the cloud damsels (Meghalata) and the lightning princesses (Vijjukumari) known to the people of ancient Ceylon. In support of this contention it may be stated that in a well-known description of Alakamanda (as Alaka is called in Pali) in the Theravada Buddhist scriptures, namely in the Atanatiya Sutra, of the Digha Nikaya, still recited ceremonially by the Ceylon Buddhists to ward off evil (parita), the emergence of clouds from a lake at this paradise of Kuvera is particularly emphasised," (ibid. p.385). Compare with this what we read in

Story of Sigiri (p.123):

"The rock of Simhagiri was coated with lime-plaster and made to appear white in colour so as to make it accepted that Simhagiri rock was Mt. Kailasa. On the side of the rock coated with lime plaster above the gallery there are Apsarases painted in the form of cloud damsels and lightning princesses."

Concerning the large pond at the summit of the Sigiri rock, Paranavitana had written (Artibus Asiae, XXIV. p.386) "It is very probable that this pond was meant to represent the celestial lake or pond (Rahada) named Dharani, if the lay-out on the summit represented the paradise of Kuvera, as we have suggested above." But here is what we find in the Story of Sigiri (p.119): "That pond was called Dharani after the name of the pond located in the city of Alakamanda of Kuvera. It is given in the Atanatiya Sutra that clouds go about in the directions starting from the pond named Dharani of Kuvera and that other clouds come to it and rain down."

In the Concise History of Ceylon (1961, p.122) with reference to the foreign invaders of the fifth century A.D., Paranavitana had expressed some doubt as to the origin of their leader. "Pandur, the name of the leader of the invaders, suggests a Pandya origin, but he may equally well have been a prince of the Kalabhra dynasty which, having gained mastery over south India, ventured to extend its dominion to Ceylon." But in the Story of Sigiri (p.11), this possibility has become a fact attested by ancient authorities. "The invader who put an end to the rule of the 'Rice thief of great might' or Karalsora or Kalabhrasvara is named Pandu the Damila, in the Mahavamsa (cf. 38.2), In the P.P., as stated above, he was a prince of Kalabhra origin, and had married

the daughter of Upatissa the elder brother and predecessor of Mahanama.
 . . . The name of this Kalabhra prince also occurs in the variant form of Pundraka which is close enough to Pandu as it is given in the Mahavamsa."

An anticipation of the most absurd kind occurs in connection with Parnavitana's theories regarding the Indus Valley civilisations. On p.2 of The Greeks and the Mauryas (1971) Parnavitana says: "It is the opinion of the present writer that the monumental and epigraphical remains brought to light during the last four decades in the Indus Valley pertain to the Indo-Aryans. The pictographic writing on the hundreds of seals discovered at Harappa, Mohenjodaro and other sites of the Indus Valley civilisation has been deciphered by him pursuing a clue furnished by the ancient inscriptions of Ceylon. The language of these all too brief documents is found to be an archaic variety of the Indic language known as Sanskrit." It has since turned out, however, that the conclusions were accepted and proved centuries before Parnavitana proclaimed them. For, according to the Story of Sigiri (pp.136-7), it was stated by Mahabuddharaksita Sthavira, according to these interlinear inscriptions, "that the language that was current in the ancient Sindhu empire was similar to the ancient Saka language, that the language of the Sindhu empire is a prototype of the Samskrita language, that the Saka people can be taken as inhabitants of the ancient Sindhu empire who had gone westward and had come back to their original home, that characters resembling characters on the seals that were in use in the ancient . Sindhu empire are in vogue even at present among some Saka people, and that they have the ability to read these characters. It has been said by Buddhapriyacarya that the veracity of the last statement in the Rajavamsa Pustaka is proved by the evidence of the prevalence among the Saka

people in the neighbourhood of Suvarnnapura, of characters resembling the characters on the seals that were in use in the ancient Sindhu empire."

In the assessment of the content of these inscriptions, it is extremely difficult to believe that so many discoveries and conclusions of modern research were anticipated by the ancients, and yet were never handed down in the literary sources that have come down to us in a legible form. One is therefore left with the conviction that the theories were read back into fabricated documents for which great antiquity and learned authorship are claimed.

However, what prevents us most from placing any credence in them is that they are full of impossibilities which can only be the result of oversight on the part of a modern fabricator. The first examples that come to mind are the renderings of proper names, personal, ethnic, and linguistic. In the account of Greek philosophy (The Greeks and the Mauryas, pp.26ff.), it is with the utmost disbelief that one can read such renderings as Sūkrtesa (from Greek Sōkratēs with a long o) and Plātava for Plāton. These forms certainly betray the influence of modern English pronunciations. We also question the term Misara Rajya (G & M p.133, et al.) for Egypt, occurring in texts supposedly dealing with the familiarity ^{of Mahabuddharaksita} with Greek culture. He, it may be remembered, is assigned by Paronavitana to the third and fourth centuries A.D., but Misra is the Arabic name for Egypt, and was never used by the Greeks. But our strongest objections are reserved for the linguistic terms Grika, Latina, and Sammitika (Semitic) (cf. p.142, Samskr̥tbhasa ca Pārasikabhasa ca Grikabhasa ca Latīnabhasa). The Greeks referred to themselves as Hellenes and were known to the Indians as Yavana or Yona. They were not known as Greeks in the east until the advent of Europeans in modern

times. Neither was Latin a name used in the east. The word was not so very common in classical Greek usage, either. Even in the time of the Roman empire, to speak Latin was "Rhomaizein" (e.g. Appian, Hannibalica, 41; Philostratus, Vita Apol. V.36), and both the Romans and their Byzantine successors were known in the east as Romans, and are mentioned as such in both Greek and Indian literature. If the author of a Sanskrit document had any reason to mention Grika and Latina he would not have done so without an explanation to the effect that the Yavanas and the Romans were meant by these terms, since they would not be familiar to his readers. It is more than likely that these occurrences reflect a modern writer's familiarity with English usage. This is borne out definitely by the reference to Sammitika (Semitic) languages, (Story of Sigiri, p.8). This word cannot have been used by Mahabuddharaksita in the fourth century. The English word 'Semitic' is adapted from modern Latin Semiticus which in turn is derived from late Latin Semita, and the earliest mention of the English word goes back only to 1826, (Oxford English Dictionary, s.v.). We are forced therefore to conclude that these interlinear texts cannot claim the antiquity assigned to them by Parnavitana.

Other absurdities are obvious to anyone familiar with the history of the period under discussion. For instance, Alexander the Great, having conquered the Gramaneya tribe at the mouth of the Indus, is represented as contracting by treaty to give his daughter in marriage to Simhala, the chief of that tribe, (The Greeks and the Mauryas, p.18). As Alexander had no daughters, this could only be an extremely long term agreement, and not surprisingly, Simhala ends up marrying the sister of Seleucus Nicator, (ibid. p.19).

In the historical account of the Greeks in Bactria and India (The Greeks and the Mauryas, chapters 7-9), there is no mention by Parnavitana of the nearly contemporary account given by Polybius. In contrast, however, he cites (p.86) from Strabo details from a lost work of Apollodorus Artamitenus, a piece of research which makes the neglect of the fuller and more reputable source the more striking. In fact, it is not merely a case of neglect, but often one of contradiction, as on p.79, where the statements of Polybius XI.39 (ed. Loeb) are in flat opposition to those of Parnavitana's text, both with regard to the identity of the intermediary (Teleas, not Euthydemus), and to the alleged relationship between Diodotus and Euthydemus.

Parnavitana's reconstructions also fly in the face of known numismatic evidence, as on pp.100-1, in the case of the alleged sons of Menander. Strato, known from coinage certainly to be Menander's son, remains unnoticed, while, of the alleged sons, Eucratides is actually the enemy of Menander and Euthydemus has no connection with him at all. As for chronology, Parnavitana's story places Eucratides a full thirty years later than Justin does, while Kanishka the Kushan is a hundred years too early. The chronological structure with which he rounds off his account of Greek rule in India (pp.104ff.) is at best unconfirmed, and only too often contradicted by other reputable sources or by coin evidence. It remains an arbitrary and misleading conflation, whether the responsibility be that of Buddhapriya or of Parnavita himself.

Another anachronism is the influence which Christianity is said to have exerted on the politics of Sri Lanka during the fifth century A.D. (cf. Story of Sigiri, pp.110-117). The entire narrative looks like a reading back into the fifth century of conditions that existed in the 16th and 17th centuries, when the Portuguese attempted to gain

political control by inducing Sinhalese kings and nobles to embrace Christianity, while the allegiance of the natives fluctuated between that religion and Buddhism.

The starting point for Paranavitana's speculations is the verse from the Culavamsa (XXXIX, 20) where Moggallana, the brother of Kassapa, who was then in exile is represented as returning to Lanka on the advice of the Niganthas (i.e. Jains), accompanied by twelve chief comrades. Contrary to any considerations of probability, Paranavitana denies the presence and influence of Jains in Sri Lanka at this period, but maintains that these are Christians. According to him, the word Nigantha really refers to the Nicenes, who were called thus after the Council of A.D. 325, in order to distinguish them from the Arians. In a footnote he says that the reference to Nicenes implies the existence in Ceylon of other Christians who did not follow the Nicene creed. According to him the author of the Culavamsa took them as Jains due to ignorance. Now, a detailed knowledge of the heresies of India was an important part of Buddhist learning, and Jainism was considered as one of the six such principal doctrines in the time of Buddha. It is therefore most unlikely that the learned Buddhist tradition should make such a great error in confusing them with a foreign religion with which it had doctrinally very little in common. Moreover, if, as Paranavitana maintains, the author of the Culavamsa knew neither of Christians nor that they were called Nicenes, it follows that Christianity did not exist in Sri Lanka to such an extent as to influence Buddhist learning to any degree, or be noticed by its exponents. According to Paranavitana, the twelve principal comrades are an obvious reference to the twelve disciples of Christ, and the fact that Moggallana was accompanied by them points to his coming, not merely as a convert to the Christian

faith, but as an incarnation of Christ, in which capacity he was advised by his spiritual mentor, he could wreak terrible vengeance upon those who had been hostile or even lukewarm to his cause. But no one would fail to realise that such a masquerade could hardly impress Moggallana's opponents or even his subjects as a whole unless they were already Christians familiar with the doctrine of the second coming. It is impossible to ascertain the existence of any Christians among the native Sinhalese of the fifth century. Indeed, Cosmas, who attests the existence of a Christian Church of the immigrant Persians, expressly says that the natives and their kings are heathens.

It is also difficult to accept the view maintained throughout in The Greeks and the Mauryas (e.g. pp.26-35) that the poetry and prose works of the Greeks and Romans were known, translated, and studied in Sri Lanka and other eastern countries during the periods under discussion. Parnavitana was not the first to make this statement. Already in the last century Paquier (op. cit. p.30), observing the similarity of the Vijaya story to the wanderings of Odysseus, maintained that the author of the Mahavamsa imitated the writings of Homer, and even repeated them. To prove his point, he alluded to the similarity between the story of the sirens and Vijaya's encounter with the Yakshinis of Lanka. Even as early as the second century A.D. we find this sort of belief current in the Roman empire: both Plutarch and Aelian (Var. Hist. XIII, 48) maintained that the Gedrosians read Homer, Euripides and Sophocles, thanks to the invasion of Alexander the Great; and Dio Chrysostom (Orations, 53.6f.) states that "It is said that the poetry of Homer is sung by the Indians, who have translated it into their own language and modes of expression, so that even these Indians . . . are not unacquainted with the woes of Priam and the weeping and wailing of Andromache and

Hecuba, and the heroic feats of Achilles and Hector; so potent was the influence of what one man had sung." This last statement might possibly have been based on some acquaintance on the part of the Indo-Greeks, with the Indian epics. But it was Parnavitana who first stated this as a fact and claimed to prove it by epigraphical evidence. It is a matter for regret that some recent writers should have taken these claims so seriously (cf. H. Lane Fox, Alexander the Great (1973), pp.484, and 492).

In the preface to the Story of Sigiri, (p.VIII), we are told, "In many places the scholar who has supervised the task of having these documents incised on stone, has given along with the text variant readings occurring in the MSS. of the Parampara Pustaka when the text is derived from that source, or suggested possible alternative renderings, when the text interlinearly incised is a translation, as in the case of the Simhagiri Vistara. Where the text incised on stone contains grammatical errors, emendations are suggested. These critical notes, as we may call them, have been incised on the text that was being written down on stone. They therefore contribute to the difficulty of deciphering the document, to elucidate which they have been given." If such critical notes were incised on a text, which itself was incised in minute characters in between and over the lines of inscriptions, which have not escaped the action of the elements, it is a most remarkable feat indeed if they could be detected, let alone read. It is more likely that these so-called critical notes were invented to excuse in anticipation any bad grammar that might be pointed out in the Sanskrit text which, as we have demonstrated, can only be a modern forgery.

It must be understood that the foregoing is not intended as a denial of the historical achievements of Parnavitana. Where he has

allowed himself to be guided by scientific methods, and restricted himself to what can be learned from genuine sources, and drawn legitimate conclusions from them, his contributions are of great value. But none of these merits can be claimed for his work on the interlinear inscriptions, and we regret therefore that we are forced to dismiss them as works of fiction which do not merit a place among our evidence.

APPENDIX III

Falsa et Dubia

The primary sources for the study of Greek and Roman knowledge concerning Sri Lanka consist of notices on Taprobane. From Ptolemy (VII.4.1) we learn that this island was also known as Palaisimoundou and Salikē. Cosmas' equation of Taprobane with Sieleidiba and the fact that in all the more important notices the island is placed near Southern India, leave no doubt that the Taprobane of the Graeco-Roman writers was none other than ~~was~~ the island now called Sri Lanka. However, it has sometimes been maintained by modern writers that the island was known to Graeco-Roman authors under other names also. The following is an attempt to demonstrate that in the absence of ancient authorities for the equation of these names with Taprobane, such descriptions cannot properly be applied to Sri Lanka.

It has sometimes been too readily accepted that when ancient authors speak of an island in the east they invariably mean Sri Lanka. Similarly, places inhabited by Indians or affording utopian living conditions are also automatically referred to it. Now it is quite obvious that Sri Lanka was not the only island in the east familiar to the Greeks and Romans. Furthermore the term "India" acquired confused connotations among the minor writers of the later Roman Empire, and was often used to designate Aethiopia and other places east of Egypt. Again, although it is true that classical accounts of Taprobane do sometimes reflect utopian thinking, such idealisation was not confined to accounts of the island: one need only read the descriptions of various other places given by the Alexander historians to realise the utopian tendencies influencing them.

The identification of Taprobane with Tambapanni (an ancient Pali name for Sri Lanka) is not based purely on the similarity of sound. Our studies have shown that the best Graeco-Roman accounts correspond in many details to what is known from indigenous sources. But in reading these alleged notices one cannot help noticing the lack of correspondence to fact. When verisimilitude is attributed to them, it is usually due to misinterpretations of the texts in question.

These alleged notices can be broadly classified into three groups: (1) fictitious accounts of imaginary travels and adventures; (2) notices concerning the production and trade of silk; (3) references to ethnic or place names in which one can recognise the stem "div"- which in many Indian languages signifies "island".

Of ancient travel stories which in modern times have been associated with Sri Lanka the earliest is the account of the visit of Iambulos to an island whose name, one may infer, was "the Island of the Sun". Iambulos' own account, perhaps in an abridged form, is preserved by Diodorus Siculus (II.55-60), who inserts it between his descriptions of Arabia and Aethiopia, not realising the fictitious character of the narrative, but taking the account of the island and its discovery as matters of historical and geographical fact. But even in ancient times there were those who refused to take this narrative seriously. The second century writer Lucian of Samosata, in a satirical work called "the True History" (I.4), mentions him together with Ctesias as having written accounts of eastern lands without a single basis in fact. "Iambulos also wrote much that was strange about the countries in the great sea: though the falsity of his fictions is patent to everybody, still the design of the composition is not unpleasing". After these remarks of Lucian, one is surprised to find certain modern writers

accepting this narrative for fact, let alone applying it to Sri Lanka.

According to Diodorus, the learned merchant Iambulos, on his way to the Arabian spice country, was kidnapped with a companion and ultimately fell into the hands of an Aethiopian tribe, who used them as scapegoats for the purification of their land. They put them in a well-provisioned boat and told them to sail south, when they would come to a happy island and kindly people among whom they would have a blessed life. They sailed over a great expanse of sea, encountering many storms, and in four months came to the island of which they had been told. It was circular in shape and had a circumference of 5,000 stades. Then follows the description of the island and its inhabitants, but halfway through this the author begins to speak of seven islands, which are identical to one another. After seven years, Iambulos and his friend were expelled as corrupt villains, and after another four months' voyage, arrived in India, where the companion lost his life. Iambulos was received by the learned phil-hellenic king of Palimbothra who sent him to Greece through Persia. Diodorus adds that Iambulus wrote many things about India not known to previous writers. He does not tell us what nationality he was, but his name has been recognised as Syrian.

^{O.C.}
(~~C.D.~~ D. s.v. "Iambulus".)

Many writers of the last century were inclined to consider the narrative as historical. Their problem was to identify the island. Pridham (Ceylon and her Dependencies, 1849, pp.4f.) had no doubt whatsoever that Iambulos had visited Sri Lanka. "Of all the later Greek writers" he says, "Diodorus Siculus had the most certain and correct information of its position and extent. His description of the inhabitants, of their manners, institutions, of the products of the country, etc., though blended with much of the marvellous, and even

fabulous, is given with a breadth of detail and general fidelity, to which none of his successors have in any respect an equal claim." Previous to this, Ramusio and Wilford had argued for Sumatra, and Lassen for Bali island. Tennent (Ceylon, I. p.531 n.4) thought that there are no justifiable grounds for identifying it with Ceylon, pointing out that Diodorus refers to the island as having been discovered recently, whereas Sri Lanka had been known to the Greeks 300 years earlier. "In the pretended account of this island given by Iambulus I cannot discover a single attribute sufficient to identify it with Ceylon. On the contrary, the traits which he narrates of the country and its inhabitants, when they are not manifest inventions are obviously borrowed from the descriptions of the continent of India, given by Ctesias and Megasthenes." However, Tennent does not hesitate to make use of Iambulos' account in connection with Sri Lanka, when it suits him to do so. Thus, in a footnote to vol. II, p.106, he says: "Their slender limbs and the absence of beards among the Sinhalese is noticed in the story of Iambulos as recorded by Diodorus." The attitude of Horatio Suckling is equally ambiguous, (op. cit. I. p.181); "The details of the voyage are quite fabulous, but the description of Ceylon is not inaccurate; among other things he mentions the custom of polyandry." This last remark is probably a misinterpretation of Iambulos' remarks concerning the absence of marriage and the community of children.

Modern writers are generally in agreement with regard to the fabulous nature of the narrative; but one can still see a certain reluctance to cast it off altogether, and more than one writer has suggested the possibility that somewhere at the back of it is an account of Sri Lanka. Farrington (Head and Hand in Ancient Greece, London 1946, pp.75ff.) who is otherwise convinced of the utopian nature of this

account, nevertheless admits that certain details afford some excuse to Diodorus for supposing it to be historical. "There is, for instance, the practice of writing vertically from top to bottom, and the plant that yields a bright soft down from which clothes are made. These suggest the east; and it is quite possible that these particulars may indicate actual acquaintance on the part of some traveller with the island of Ceylon. But this will not suffice to rescue Diodorus from the reproach of excessive credulity." C. H. Oldfather, in the Loeb translation of Diodorus (vol.2, p.65, n.1) says: "Perhaps Ceylon, if the unknown writer of the following account of a fabulous people and a political utopia localised it in any known spot." Warmington, *op. cit.* p.43, is also inclined to recognise some facts in the story. "The story is full of fable, but the one fact seems to be that the man was drifted to Indian regions by a monsoon wind."

A more positive attitude is adopted by Schwarz who would like to identify the island with Sri Lanka, ("Arrian's Indike on India", *East and West*, N.S. XXV. 1-2, March-June 1975, pp.181-200, esp. pp.183-7). His reasons are the following: (1) The island was known to Onesicritus and Megasthenes, from whose accounts Iambulos could have borrowed; (2) by the end of the 2nd century B.C., under Ptolemaic patronage, the practice of going to India by sea for commercial purposes had begun; (3) the route described by Iambulos is the route of the first navigators of the Indian ocean, and Iambulos shows "quite a good knowledge of India and its geographical situation"; (4) the mention of a learned phil-Hellenic king at Palimbothra is consistent with the 2nd century B.C. dating inferred from the knowledge of the sea route to India, since the Maurya dynasty continued into the first quarter of that century. Schwarz is therefore inclined to acknowledge the historicity of the account and to identify the island with Sri Lanka.

The arguments are not conclusive. The narrative, as we have it, does not display an accurate knowledge of the sea route or the geography of India. The island is placed at a four months' distance both from Aethiopia and India. As for Palimbothra, its inland location could have been borrowed from a previous account of that city. We must also remember that the object of the voyage was not commercial. It was a forced journey, and nothing is said about the route except that the two men sailed to the south, which in any case could not have brought them to Sri Lanka. It is true that there are a few features which remind one of some of the more idealised statements in Pliny's account of Taprobane, (e.g. the abundance of fruit, tall healthy natives who enjoy extremely long lives, the rule of the oldest man, the invisibility of the Bear and other stars, simple non-indulgent living, the catching of fish), but the narrative of Iambulos was composed centuries before Pliny's account, and many of these details could have been borrowed from the Alexander historians or other early writers on India, without necessarily going back to accounts of Taprobane. These writers however did not speak of Taprobane when they mentioned these details; they were concerned with other regions in the east. The one possible exception is the 5,000 stade circumference attributed to the island; this same figure was given by Onesicritus as the size (*μείεθος*) of Taprobane (Strabo, XV p.691). Apart from that, there is nothing to suggest that Iambulos borrowed from Onesicritus' account of Taprobane, or indeed from any other account of the island. For the antecedents one should rather look to accounts such as that of the land of Musicanus in which, according to Onesicritus, the inhabitants are longlived, living even up to 130 years, and lead a simple mode of life in spite of abundant resources (Strabo, XV.I.54). Onesicritus also noted the reappearance of the Great Bear in Carmania,

(Pliny, II.183-5) and Nearchus had observed the total or partial disappearance of certain constellations in the east, (Arrian, Indika, XXV.4-6). In particular he notes the disappearance of the Great and Little Bears (Strabo, II.1.20). We must not forget that Diodorus introduces Iambulos as one who had devoted himself to learning. Evidently he had read the accounts of the east by previous writers and utilised them in order to provide a convincing setting for his tale. To quote the observation of T. S. Brown: "As his purpose was to amuse, or sometimes to elevate his readers, rather than to inform them, he was perfectly free to borrow details from any number of writers, and to fit them into his own plan", (op. cit. pp.72ff.).

Moreover, the utopian tendencies in the narrative are obvious. The people are divided into tribes, each ruled by the eldest man, who had to die at a given age. Children were held in common, and slavery was unknown. Each member of each tribe served every office in turn. All needs were supplied by the earth, sometimes without human labour. The people lived in unity and concord. There is no distinction between rich and poor.

Modern writers are on the whole agreed with regard to the utopian character of this narrative. Their disagreements are mainly concerned with the philosophical influences behind it, (i.e. whether it is a Stoic utopia or a Cynic one), and whether it had any impact on the Pergamene revolt led by Aristonicus, (cf. Farrington, loc. cit., Tarn, Alexander the Great, II. pp.411-14; cf. also D. R. Dudley, J.R.S. XXI. 1941, pp.97-9). These problems however do not concern us, at present. What we must decide is whether the account applies to Sri Lanka or not. Now it is quite obvious that we are dealing with a work of fiction. Although the erotic element is not present, the narrative has certain features

common to Hellenistic romances, e.g. kidnapping of a merchant party, working as herdsmen, scapegoats, etc. There is perhaps also a certain satirical element in the reproduction of political ideas. Witness the testing of children by flying them on a bird, possibly a skit on Plato's eugenics.¹ As such, and possessing no basis in fact, it should be firmly rejected as not constituting a notice of ancient Sri Lanka.

The other travel account is easier to dispose of, in as much as it is now almost universally regarded as a forgery, viz. the Phoenician History of Sanchoniathon. Philo of Byblos is said to have produced an alleged translation of this work into Greek. This we learn from Porphyry (de Abst. II.56) and from such late writers as Theodoret (de Cur. Graec. Affect. Serm. 2) and Suidas. The latter describes Sanchoniathon as a Syrian philosopher who lived at the time of the Trojan war. The Greek translation of Philo which was in eight or nine books, is lost; but extracts are preserved chiefly by Eusebius (Praep. Evangel. I.7-8 etc., de Laud. Constant. cap. 3), but also by Johannes Lydus (de Mensibus, p.116; de Magistr. p.130). The nature of its contents and the fact that it is not mentioned by such early Asiatic writers as Josephus and Philo Judaeus have led many scholars to doubt the genuineness of Sanchoniathon's work, and to believe that the Greek version is a forgery on the part of Philo himself, intended to further his euhemeristic theories. It has even been pointed out that the name Sanchoniathon which Philo chose for the author of his alleged original was not a personal

1 There is also a certain preoccupation with the numbers four and seven, and their compounds: four months' voyage to and from the island, four hundred members to each tribe, seven characters each written in four different forms, seven islands in which the visitors remain for seven years, animals with four mouths, etc. This is perhaps reminiscent of that interest in ideal numbers of earlier Greek philosophy, which the author who thought out this utopia here employs almost ad nauseam.

name at all, but represented the Sacred Books of the Phoenicians, Sanchoniath, i.e. "the entire law of Chon". But whether regarded as person or thing, some modern scholars are still inclined to accept the historicity of Sanchoniathon in view of the resemblances between his fragments and the contents of cuneiform documents recently discovered at Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit, (Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology, s.vv. Philo 7, and Sanchoniathon; O.C.D., s.vv. Philo 5, and Sanchoniathon). It should however be pointed out that the correspondences could result from Philo's own familiarity with ancient Phoenician religion and mythology.

What concerns us however is a curious manuscript, the discovery of which was announced in 1835 by F. Wagenfeld who published it with a Latin translation at Bremen in 1837. It was claimed to be the entire text of Philo's Greek translation of Sanchoniathon. A protracted dispute followed, in which some scholars argued that it was the genuine work of Philo, while others rejected it, going to the extent of accusing Wagenfeld of wilful deceit. The circumstances are narrated at some length by Tennent, who also provides an English translation of the extract with which we are concerned, (Ceylon, I pp.547-552). Tennent thinks that the document in question is probably "one of those inventions of the Middle Ages in which history and geography were strangely confounded with imagination and romance".

In books VII and VIII there appears the account of an "Island of Rakhios" in the eastern sea, explored by Syrian navigators who went thither in ten ships under the leadership of three commanders. Their visit is dated to a time shortly after the conquest of Citium in Cyprus by the Phoenicians, when Hiram reigned at Tyre and Solomon at Jerusalem. Rakhios is the name of the chief ruler of the island whose capital

o/ R~~ak~~hapatta is situated in the hilly regions at the centre of the island. Two explanations for this name may be suggested. One is that the island of Rakhios is a translation of the Sanskrit Raksasa-Dvipa (the island of giants) which was one of the names applied to Sri Lanka in ancient Sanskrit texts such as the Lalita-Vistara (Gerini, op. cit. p.497, n.1). In that case, the king's name Rakhios may represent Rakkha (Skt. Raksa) a name of some renown in ancient Sri Lanka. It was the name of one of Parakramabahu's generals in the 12th century, (Tennent, Ceylon, I p.532) and Rokhapatta, the name of the capital may be a transcription of some such term as Rakkha-pabbata, i.e. the hill of the Rakkha. The second, and far more likely explanation is that Rakhios is borrowed from Rachia, which, according to Pliny, was the name of the chief ambassador from Taprobane. As Philo was a younger contemporary of Pliny, the allusion would have afforded the fabricator a chance to give his narrative a touch of credibility.

Whatever may be the origin of the name, it is obvious that the description of the "island of Rakhios" is intended for Sri Lanka. Some of the resemblances are remarkable. It must however be pointed out that if the island described were actually Sri Lanka, it is the Sri Lanka, not of the time of Sanchoniathon nor even of Philo, but the Sri Lanka of late mediaeval or early modern times.

In the familiar manner of travel accounts, the author narrates how the visitors on landing, were received by the inhabitants and their local governor, who, having entertained them for a week, conducted them with great honour to the capital in the interior, where they were presented to king Rakhios. Presents were exchanged: "to the Syrians who brought horses and purple robes and seats of cedar, the king gave in return pearls, gold, two thousand elephants' teeth, and much unequalled

cinnamon; and he entertained them as guests for thirty days".

Elephants are mentioned elsewhere, including a few white ones, who were recognised as superior by the rest. Only Rakhios had the privilege of riding on a white elephant.

The island is surrounded by the sea except in the north-west, where there is an isthmus providing passage to the opposite coast. It was constructed by Baaut and her footprint is still to be seen in the mountain. This is clearly an allusion to the legends, probably Muslim, concerning the sanctity of Adam's Bridge and Adam's Peak. The king is said to trace his descent from Baaut.

The size of the island is given as six days' journey in breadth and twelve days' journey in length. It is populous and delightful; its natural products are magnificent. The sea furnishes fish of the finest flavour and greatest abundance to the inhabitants of the coast. Wild beasts, of which elephants are largest of all (cf. Aelian, Hist. Anim. XVI. 18), are numerous in the mountains. "They find stones containing gold in the rivers, and pearls on the seashore." There is also the most fragrant ¹⁷ of Cassia. All this could have been borrowed from classical accounts of Taprobane, the one exception being Cassia or Cinnamon, with which Graeco-Roman writers never associated the island itself. Even the two paraphrases of the Periegesis associate it only with the surrounding islands and Sinhalese literature does not mention Cinnamon until a comparatively late date.

If the accounts of Adam's Bridge and Adam's Peak are based on Muslim legends, then the narrative cannot be earlier than the penetration of Arab influence in the island. The mention of cinnamon also calls for late dating. One gathers the same impression from the author's account of the political and economic conditions on the island.

"Four kings govern the island, all subordinate to the paramount sovereign, to whom they pay as tribute cassia, ivory, gems, and pearls; for the king has gold in the greatest abundance. The first of these kings reigns in the south, where there are herds of elephants, of which great numbers are captured of surprising size. In this region the shore is inhospitable, and destitute of inhabitants, but the city, in which the governor resides, lies inland, and is said to be large and flourishing. The second king governs the western regions which produce cinnamon, and it was there the Syrian ships cast anchor. The third rules the region towards the north which produces pearls. He has made a great rampart on the isthmus to control the passage of the barbarians from the opposite coast; for they used to make incursions in great numbers, and destroyed all the houses, temples, and plantations they could reach, and slew such men as were near, or could not flee to the mountains. The fourth king governs the region to the east, producing the richest gems in surprising profusion; the ruby, the sapphire, and diamond. All these, being the brothers of the great king in Rokhapatta, are appointed to rule over these places, and he who is the eldest of the brothers has the supreme power, and is called the chief and mighty ruler."

It is obvious that the emphasis here is on the so-called cash economy. There is no mention of food-crops; and the conditions described seem to date from after A.D. 1215 when, following the Kalinga invasion under Magha, the Sinhalese abandoned the dry zone and migrated into the interior where they concentrated on producing merchandise for commerce. In fact the barbarian incursions are described in very much the same terms as those used by native chronicles for the invasion of Magha, or even that of the Cholas before him, in the 11th century. If the economic scene described belongs to a date after 1215 A.D., it would harmonise

well with the emphasis given to cinnamon, and to the sanctity of Adam's Bridge and Adam's Peak since both these factors gained in importance in the subsequent centuries. In these centuries too, the island was more often than not divided into several kingdoms: although the neat division into five may well be the author's own invention.

The last time Sri Lanka was under a single ruler was in the time of Parakramabahu vi, in the first part of the 15th century. Thereafter, Jaffna became independent, and the rest of the island was divided among various members of the royal family. With the spread of European influence in the maritime regions, the Sinhalese began to look more and more towards the hill capital of Kandy as the last stronghold of native power. Now, the Portuguese historians of the time left detailed accounts concerning the island, and it is possible that the fabricator was aware of these accounts as well as those of the classical writers. Perhaps it may not be totally irrelevant to notice that the MS was alleged to have been discovered in a Portuguese convent. Thus, even if Wagenfeld was not guilty of wilful deception, he may well have been the victim of such an act. We may also observe in passing how the author has attempted to put some local colour into his narrative by referring to details such as the rutting season of elephants and the practice of riding in palanquins.

Although the description may have been intended as that of Sri Lanka, it cannot be included among Graeco-Roman notices of the island since it is undoubtedly a late forgery. The picture it creates is not one of Graeco-Roman times. Of course, these conclusions apply only to the account of the Island of Rakhios; no account has been taken of the rest of the work, which, in any case, has by now ceased to attract the attention of savants.

Even the best classical notices of Taprobane, though accurate in many respects, often present problems of correlation to local documents. This is only natural in view of the many difficulties in the process of transmission. But in the case of Sanchoniathon, the perfect correspondence in matters of geography, economics, and politics is too good to be true, and can only be the result of comparatively modern intellectual exercise.

The second class of alleged notices consists of references to a certain island associated with the production of silk. Winstedt and Hermann are responsible for identifying this island with Sri Lanka. But it must be pointed out at once that Sri Lanka was never associated with the production of silk, since the industry (though not the product) was repulsive to Buddhists. The notices come from Pausanias and Procopius, but in neither case is there even sufficient geographical justification to identify the island with Taprobane.

Pausanias (VI.26.9) mentions a well known island of silk (Sēria) in a bay of the Red Sea. He has heard that it is created not by the sea, but by the Silk River, just as the Egyptian Delta is created by the Nile. These silk people, he says, and the people of the neighbouring islands of Abasa and Sakalia belong to Aethiopian race, though some people claim they are not Aethiopians but Scythians mixed up with Indians. Now there is nothing here to suggest Sri Lanka. It is true that the "Red Sea" in ancient times included the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, and Peter Levi (Penguin Pausanias II, p.366) mentions the possibility of the Silk River being the Indus, since in Pausanias' time the Scythians had penetrated to the Indus region. But the mention of a bay, and the neighbouring islands of Abasa¹ and Sakalia (abode of

¹ Abaseni is an older name for the Axumites prior to their migration to Africa from Arabia in C I A.D., cf. Miller, Spice Trade, p.79.

the Sakas?) should be sufficient indication that Sri Lanka is not in question. Pausanias is probably thinking of some location in the modern Red Sea area, where it was usual to find populations of mixed origin, as one gathers from the Periplus' account of Dioscorides (or Socotra). In any case, the Greeks and Romans were extremely vague in their notions regarding the location of the silk island; and one cannot read into them definite ideas which are only the result of modern conjectures.

The other notice is the famous one in Procopius (Gothica IV.17) concerning the smuggling of the silk worm into the Byzantine empire by certain monks. These monks are said to have come from the Indians. They said that they had lived for a long time in a country where there were many nations of the Indians, and which goes by the name of Sērinda. They are also said to have gone back to India and brought a supply of eggs to Byzantium. According to Theophanes, of Byzantium, however, it was a Persian who brought the eggs concealed in a walking stick, when he came away from the country of the Seres, (Müller, F.H.G. IV. p.270; cf. Yule, op. cit. I. pp.203ff.). Again there is no reason to take this country to be the same as Taprobane. Sērinda is probably a combination of the Seres and the Indoi (much like the modern Indo-China) denoting the homeland of the silk industry. As I have already pointed out, as a Buddhist country, Sri Lanka was never in favour of sericulture and it is very unlikely that Sinhalese monks would have undertaken a task which would have been repulsive to them. We are left with the conclusion that these were Christian monks, and although they may well have penetrated into India, there is no evidence for their existence in Sri Lanka.

While on the subject of Procopius, it may be convenient to deal with the common error of those who believe that we have his testimony to the effect that by the first half of the sixth century Persian traders

had established themselves in Sri Lanka, where they monopolised the far-eastern trade passing through the island. The passage in question (Persica I, XX.9-13) relates how Justinian's attempts to consolidate the support of the Aethiopians and the Homerites in the war against Persia were frustrated. His proposal to the Aethiopians was that they should purchase silk from India and sell it among the Romans, thus themselves gaining much money as well as saving the Romans from having to pay their enemies. But the Aethiopians could not meet this demand because it was impossible for them to buy silk from the Indians, "for the Persian merchants always locate themselves at the very harbours where the Indian ships first put in, since they inhabit the adjoining country, (ὅτε χώραν προσικοῦντες τὴν ὄμορον), and are accustomed to buy the entire cargo." The "adjoining country" is taken to mean Sri Lanka, presumably on the understanding that the "harbours where the Indian ships first put in" were in India. But as Procopius is describing events that took place in the Arabian area, it must be understood that these harbours were in the country adjoining Persia itself, i.e. the Hadramaut. But even if the "adjoining country" were the land adjoining India, reference to the usage of the time shows that even in this case Persia itself rather than Sri Lanka would be meant, since Cosmas tells us that the Indus forms a boundary between Persia and India, (XI.16).

On the other hand we know from the Periplus (14) that even as early as the first century A.D., Indian ships used to visit the African coast. In the fourth century, the De Gemmis of Epiphanius mentions Indian ships putting in at a place near Berenice (C.Q. III, pp.218ff.), and Palladius in the fifth century mentions Indians who crossed the Indian Ocean for the sake of commerce. Hence what Procopius meant was clearly that the Persians intercepted the Indian ships which made

their way to the Arabian and African coasts. In the absence of any specific reference to Taprobane in Procopius, one should not assume, relying merely on conjecture, that the island had anything to do with the event narrated by him, even though the presence of Persians in Taprobane itself at the time, is established from other reliable evidence.

The third group of alleged notices is the result of linguistic fallacies. Just because certain place names include the root Div- it has been thought that they refer to Sri Lanka, although the word may equally apply to any other island. This misapplication has been furthered by the attribution of S̄erinda and S̄eria to Sri Lanka, as mentioned above. The Arabs in the Middle Ages called Sri Lanka Serendip. It has therefore been thought that the Serendivi or Sirindibenoī of Roman writers also refer to the same island.

The identification of the Serendivi in Ammianus Marcellinus (XXII.7.10) is an error of much consequence, since on it is based the widespread belief that Sri Lanka sent an embassy to Julian. The passage in question is as follows:

"Deputations hastened to him more speedily than usual: on one side, the peoples beyond the Tigris and the Armenians begged for peace. On another, the Indian nations as far as the Divi and the Serendivi vied with one another in sending their leading men with gifts ahead of time; on the south, the Moors offered their services to the Roman state; from the north and the desert regions, through which the Euphrates flows to the sea, came embassies from the Bosporani and other hitherto unknown peoples" (tr. John C. Rolfe, Loeb edition 1936).

The Divi and the Serendivi here mentioned among the Indian races have been identified with the inhabitants of the Maldives and Sri Lanka respectively. But since the general purport of this passage is that delegates arrived from the four directions, the "Indian nations" would cover all the races east of Egypt, thus illustrating once again the tendency in the fourth century to use the term "Indian" as a blanket description. Moreover, in other Roman works of the period the island is always known by its regular classical name Taprobane. The Divi and Serendivi, on the contrary, are new names for tribes regarding whose location the Romans had only the vaguest ideas.

This last point will be clear if we compare what Ammianus says with the notice of the Dibenoi and the Sirindibenoi which occurs in a letter written by Epiphanius bishop of Cyprus (A.D. 370) to Diodorus Bishop of Tyre, concerning the twelve gems that were on the robes of Aaron. The letter has been preserved in Greek, Latin and Coptic, but only the Latin version is preserved in a more or less complete form. In it the Dibenoi and the Sirindibenoi are mentioned among the nine tribes into which the "Indians" were formerly divided. But the author tells us that in his time there were more than that number because they had further divided among themselves, the Dibenoi separating from the Fish-eaters, and the Sirindibenoi from the Evilaei. (*Sed nunc multo plures sunt quippe divisi a societate quam inter se prius habuerant Dibenoi ab Ichthyopagis et Sirindibenoi ab Evilaeis*; Migne P.G. XLIII. col. 329-30). The passage is missing from the Greek version (*ibid.* col. 296). The Coptic version says that the Dibenoi are separated from the Fish-eaters, the Sirindibenoi from the Hole-dwellers (Troglodytes) and the Lentibenoi from the Eueilaioi (A. O. Winstedt, C.Q., III. 1909, pp.218-22).

Early Christian writers identified the Euilath of scripture with India, and this may have been a confirming factor in the eyes of those who wish to identify the Dibeni with the Maldives and Sirindibeni with Sri Lanka. However, Winstedt himself mentions the possibility of comparing the Dibeni with the Debai or Debedai, an Arab tribe mentioned by Diodorus (III.44) and Eueilaioi with the Aualitai near Bab-el-Mandeb or the Euaila of Ptolemy (VI.7.41) in the south of Yemen. Moreover Schoff, (*Periplus*, pp.162-3, n.37) following Holdich (*Geographical Journal* VII.388) observes that the island of Haptalu off the Makran coast, the Astola of Ptolemy, and a centre of Sun worship, was locally known as Serandib. He thinks that although the Saracens gave this name to Ceylon it seems to be related to the island of Sera, Serapis, or Masira, off the Arabian coast. Hence there is the possibility that the Divi and the Serendivi should belong to the Arabian rather than Indian regions, and therefore the identification of the Serendivi with Sri Lanka is not at all satisfactory.

That both the Dibeni and the Sirindibeni should be placed near Arabia is confirmed by the fact that of the nine original tribes of "Indians" mentioned by Epiphanius, the first seven belong to the Red Sea area. The seventh of these are the Sabenoi, identified with the Sabaeans, so that the Dibenoi and the Sirindibenoi who follow them should be in their neighbourhood. A wide leap from southern Arabia to the Maldives and Sri Lanka would not make sense, and would not warrant the association with the Fish-eaters and Hole-dwellers who in any case were in earlier times located on the African coast. One possible explanation is that Serendib was originally an island in the Arabian Sea, and that the Arabs, when they discovered Sri Lanka and heard its Indian name Simhala-Dvipa, transferred to it the name familiar to them which would have approximated

in sound. If so, what we have in Ammianus and Epiphanius, are the traces of an original Serendib, which is not identical with Taprobane.

It then follows that we can neither endorse the identification of Sri Lanka with the Diva Gens of the Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium (cap. 15, ed. Rouge Paris 1966) or with the Dibanoi of Philostorgius (H.E. III 4). The Expositio and its derivative the Descriptio (both of which enumerate countries of the world in an east-west direction) place this nation between Choneum (or Ioneum), the land of the Huns, and India Major. It is said to be ruled by elders, as are some of the preceding countries, and its extent is given as 210 days' march.

Rouge is prepared to grant that, despite the possible comparison of Diva with Sielediba, the name might represent collectively the dwellers of the east Indian islands, although he thinks that there is some case for Ceylon in that the route described is the one by sea to Axum. Pigulevskaja (op. cit. p.72 and 104) is equally uncertain, although prepared to admit the comparison with Sielediba.

This comparison, however, is misleading, and how misleading can be demonstrated if we examine the reference to the Dibanoi in Philostorgius. According to him, Dibou was the homeland of the "Indian" Theophilus whom his fellow natives sent as a hostage to Rome, and who, afterwards, was sent by the Romans as a missionary to Arabia, India, and Axum. Since Philostorgius mentions Taprobane by name in III.10, if Theophilus came from that land, one would expect him to say so. As he does not identify the two nations, it is clear that they remained distinct in his mind. Laistner (Travel and Travellers in the Middle Ages, ed. A. P. Newton, London, 1930, ch.2, p.33) thought that Theophilus was a native of Diu island, off the Gujarat peninsula to the west of the gulf of Cambay. It is however more probable that Socotra (Dioscorides) is meant,

(cf. Pigulewskaja, loc. cit., and A. Dihle, "Die Sendung des Inders Theophilus", *Politeia und Respublica (Palingenesia)* IV, Wiesbaden 1969, pp.330-6). Dihle is of the opinion that the India visited by Theophilus was the land we associate with that name, which was believed to have been evangelised by St. Thomas. He thinks that Theophilus' reforms in that land were necessitated by the fact that the church of India had lost touch with the rest of Christendom during the third century when direct trade with Egypt by sea had declined. But the account of the Indian mission is inserted between the South Arabian and Axumite missions, and it is very likely that the Indians in question are the inhabitants of the regions between those two countries. Moreover, the Indians in general, and Sri Lanka in particular, had no historical reason at this time to send hostages to Rome whereas it would not be out of character in the Middle East where, at this time, Rome was in conflict with Persia. Hence, Theophilus' homeland and the destination of his "Indian" mission should be sought in the neighbourhood of Arabia, and not in India proper or in Sri Lanka.