

The Indika

F45. Phot. Bibl. 72 p. 45a21-50a4 (T10)

[Ctesias] says about the Indus River that it is forty stades wide at its narrowest point and two hundred at its widest. (2) He claims that the population of the Indians is nearly greater than the rest of the world combined. (3) There is a worm which inhabits the river and is the only animal to live in it, and (4) no men live beyond India. (5) It does not rain but India is irrigated by the river. (6) Ctesias describes a gemstone called *pantarba*, which when it was thrown into the river, was retrieved clinging together 477 gems and precious stones that belonged to a Bactrian dealer.

(7) Ctesias describes the wall-destroying elephants, the small monkeys with tails four cubits in length, (8) and roosters of enormous size. There is a bird called the *bittakos* which has a human voice, is capable of speech, and grows to the size of a falcon. It has a crimson face and a black beard and is dark blue as far as the neck ... like cinnamon. It can converse like a human in Indian but if taught Greek, it can also speak Greek.

(9) There is a spring which throughout the year fills with liquid gold and from it one hundred clay jugs are drawn annually. The jugs must be made of clay since the gold solidifies when drawn off and the vessel must be broken in order to remove it. The spring is square with a perimeter of

sixteen cubits and a depth of one *orgyia*. Each jug retrieves one talent of gold. There is iron at the bottom of the spring from which Ctesias says two swords were fashioned and given to him; one was from the king the other from the king's mother Parysatis. He maintains that the sword if stuck into the ground can ward off clouds, hail and hurricanes, an act he claims to have personally witnessed the king perform on two occasions. (10) The dogs in India are huge and they fight with lions. (11) There are large mountains where the sardonyx, the onyx, and other precious stones are quarried. (12) It is very hot there and the sun appears ten times larger than in any other land. Many people die of suffocation in these places. (13) Ctesias says that there is a sea there which is no smaller than the Greek Sea. Its surface up to four dactyls deep is so hot that no fish can approach the heat and survive so they all live below this level.

(14) The Indus River flows through the plains and mountains and the so-called Indian reed also grows there. These reeds are as thick as two men's embrace and as high as the mast of a large tonnage merchant ship. Some are even larger than this and some are smaller, such as is to be expected on a large mountain. The reeds can either be male or female. The male lacks a pith but is very strong whereas the female has a pith.

(15) There lives in India a beast called the martichora which has a human face, is the size of a lion, and is red like cinnamon. It has three rows of teeth, human ears, and light blue eyes like a man's. It has a tail like a land scorpion on which there is a stinger more than a cubit long. It also has stingers on either

side of the tail as well as on the end like a scorpion. If approached, it stabs with a stinger inflicting a fatal wound. If its opponent fights from a distance, then it points its tail at him and fires stingers as if from a bow, but when assailed from behind, it stretches its tail straight out. It can fire stingers as far as a *pletheron* and the stingers are completely fatal to everything except elephants. Each stinger is one foot long and as wide as the thinnest reed. The word 'martichora' means man-eater in Greek because it mostly captures and devours humans, but eats other animals as well. It fights with both its talons and stingers, which Ctesias claims grow back after being fired. Many of these creatures live in India where the natives kill them by firing arrows while riding elephants.

(16) Ctesias claims that the Indians are very just people; he also describes their customs and manners. (17) There is a holy place in the uninhabitable region where they honor Helios and Selene. This sanctuary is fifteen days journey from Mt. Sardo. For thirty-five days each year the sun cools in that region so that they can honour him with a festival and return home without being burned.

(18) There are no thunder, lightning, or heavy rainstorms in India, but heavy wind and hurricanes frequently wipe out whatever is in their path. The rising sun until midday stays cool, but for the rest of the day it causes severe heat for most of India. (19) Indians are not dark-skinned from the sun but by nature, for some of them, both men and women, are very light-skinned, even if they are a minority. Ctesias claims to have personally seen two such women and five such men of Indian stock. (20) In his desire to prove that the sun is cool in

India for thirty-five days, he says that the fire flowing from Aetna does not destroy the middle of the region because the men are just, although it destroys everything else. In Zacynthus, there is a spring filled with fish from which pitch is drawn. In Naxos, there is a spring from which sometimes flows a very sweet wine. Near Phaselis in Lycia, there is an unquenchable fire which burns night and day atop some rocks and it cannot be extinguished by water, which makes the flames burn brighter, but by rubbish.

(21) In the middle of India live black men called Pygmies who speak the same language as the rest of the Indians. They are very small; the tallest is two cubits while most are one and a half cubits in height. They have very long hair that reaches their knees and even lower and their beards are the longest of any man. Since they grow such a long beard, they wear no clothes at all but comb the hair from their head down their back well below their knees and pull their beards down the front to their feet and then gird the hair around their entire body using it in place of clothing. Their penises are so large that they reach their ankles and are thick too, while they themselves are snub-nosed and ugly. Their sheep are like lambs, their asses and oxen are nearly the size of rams, and their horses, mules, and all other livestock are no larger than rams. (23) Three thousand of those Pygmies accompany the king of the Indians, for they are excellent bowmen. They are very just and follow the same laws as the Indians. (24) They hunt hare and fox not with dogs, but with ravens, kites, crows, and eagles.

(25) There is a lake in their region with a perimeter of 800

stades on the surface of which oil settles when the wind is calm. They sail in skiffs through the middle of the lake and skim the oil from the surface with small cups and use it; they also use sesame oil. The lake also contains fish. They use oils from walnuts as well, but the oil from the lake is better.

(26) There is an abundance of silver in their region and the silver mines are not deep, but they say the mines in Bactria are deeper. There is gold in India but it is not found washed in the rivers as happens in the Pactolus River, rather it is found in the numerous large mountains where the griffins live. These are four-footed birds the size of a wolf with legs and claws like a lion. The feathers on the breast are red while those covering the rest of the body are black. Because of these creatures, it is hard to obtain the gold from the mountains, although it exists in large quantities.

(27) The sheep and goats of the Indians are larger than asses and they rear four to six offspring at most. They have large tails which they remove from those ripe for motherhood in order to assist in breeding. There is no swine either domesticated or wild in India. (28) The palms in India and their dates are three times the size of those in Babylon. (29) According to Ctesias, there is a river of honey which flows from a rock. (30) He speaks at length about the just nature of the Indians, the high regard they have for their king, and their disdain for death.

(31) There is a spring and when someone draws water from it, it solidifies like cheese. If you give someone three obols of this curdle to drink in water, he would tell you everything he has ever done, for it deprives him of his senses and sanity for

the entire day. The king uses this when he wants to discover the truth in allegations. If the accused confesses, he is ordered to starve himself to death, but if nothing is proved by this, he is acquitted.

(32) The Indians do not suffer from headaches, ophthalmia, toothaches, cold sores, or putrefaction. They live for 120, 130, and 150 years and some live to be as old as 200 years old.

(33) There lives in these parts a serpent which is a span in length and has a body like beautiful crimson and a bright white head. It has no teeth and is hunted in the burning mountains where the sardonyx is quarried. It does not bite but wherever it vomits, the entire area rots. It produces two fluids when hung by its tail: one is an amber-coloured substance and the other is black. The amber-coloured drug is extracted while the snake is still alive and the black drug after it is dead. When a sesame-seed size droplet of the poison extracted from the living snake is administered, the person who drank it immediately perishes with his brains flowing out through his nose. When the other poison is administered, it brings on consumption causing death in close to a year.

(34) There is a bird called the *dikairon* which in Greek means 'just'. It is the size of a partridge egg and it buries its excrement so it cannot be found. If found and someone drinks as much as a sesame-seed sized dollop in the morning, he is overcome by sleep, lays down deprived of his senses, and dies by sunset.

(35) There is a tree called the *parebon* which is the size of an olive tree and is only found in the royal gardens. It yields no flowers or fruit and has only fifteen roots which are thick

under the ground; its thickness is equal to that of an arm at its thinnest point. Wherever a span of this root is set, it snatches and attracts everything to itself – gold, silver, bronze, stones, and everything else except amber. If as much as a cubit of this root is placed somewhere, it attracts lambs and birds; they do most of their hunting in this manner. If you want to solidify up to a *chous* of water, you could do so with an obol of the root and the same goes for wine which you could hold in your hand like bees-wax and it dissolves the following day. This is given as a remedy for bowel irritation.

(36) There is a river flowing through India which is not very big but about two stades wide called the *Hyperchos* in Indian, which in Greek means 'bringing all good things'. This river carries down amber every year for thirty days. They say that there are trees in the mountains which hang over the water (there are streams in the mountains). When it is the season the tree produces droplets of sap just like the almond tree, pine, or any other tree, but it only produces them for thirty days each year. When this sap falls into the river, it solidifies. This tree is called the *syltchora* in Indian which in Greek means 'sweet' or 'pleasant'. The Indians gather the amber from the river. The tree also produces fruit in clusters just like a grapevine and the berries are similar to the nuts from Pontus.

(37) According to Ctesias, in these mountains live men who have the head of a dog. Their clothes come from wild animals and they converse not with speech, but by barking like dogs, and this is how they understand each other. They have larger teeth than dogs and claws that are similar but longer and more rounded. They live in the mountains as far as the Indus River

and they are black and very just, like the rest of the Indians with whom they associate. Since they understand what the other Indians say but cannot converse, they communicate by barking and making gestures with their hands and fingers like the deaf and mute. The Indians call them *Kalystrio*i which in Greek means Cynocephaloi ('Dog-Headed People'). They have 120,000 people in their tribe.

(38) Near the source of the river grows a crimson blossom from which comes a purple dye as good as that of the Greeks but much brighter. (39) There are animals there the size of the scarab and red like cinnabar which have incredibly long feet and are soft like a worm. These creatures live in the trees which produce amber and they feast on their fruit. They also kill the tree just like the pests that destroy the vines in Greece. The Indians grind up these bugs and dye their red cloths, garments, and whatever else they wish. These are better in quality than the dyed garments of Persia.

(40) The Cynocephaloi who dwell in the mountains do not work but live off the wild game. They make a kill and then bake the meat in the sun. They raise sheep, goats, and asses and drink both fresh and sour milk from sheep. They eat the fruit off the *siprachora* tree (which is very sweet) from which amber is produced. They dry the fruit and put it in large baskets like the Greeks do with raisins. (41) The Cynocephaloi make rafts, load them with cargo of this fruit along with the purple dye purified from the flower, and 260 talents annually. This and the same amount of the substance used to make the red dye along with 1,000 talents of amber are sent each year to the king of the Indians. They gather more of it and sell it to

the Indians in exchange for bread, meal, and cotton garments. They also exchange the fruit for swords which they use to hunt wild game (they also use bows and spears, and they are very skilled with both). Because they inhabit lofty and inaccessible mountains they are unfamiliar with war. Every fifth year the king gives them a gift of 300,000 bows, the same number of javelins, 120,000 light shields, and 50,000 swords.

(42) The Cynocephaloi live not in houses but in caves. They hunt animals with bows and javelins and capture them by way of pursuit since they are fast runners. Their women bathe once per month when their menstrual cycle comes but at no other time. The men do not bathe but wash their hands, anoint their bodies three times per month with the oil from milk, and use hides to wipe themselves down. They do not wear shaggy clothes but very thin strips of leather and this is done by both the men and the women. Members of the wealthiest class wear clothes made of linen, but these men are few. They do not have beds but make mattresses of straw. The one who possesses the most sheep is considered to be the richest since the rest of their possessions are approximately of equal value. (43) All of them, both men and women, have a tail just above the rear end like that of a dog, only bigger and hairier. They fornicate with their women on all fours like dogs and it is shameful for them to do it any other way. They are just men who enjoy the greatest longevity of any people, for they live for 170 years and some of them even reach the age of 200.

(44) They say another race lives beyond these people past the source of the river. These men are dark like the rest of the Indians and do not work, eat grain, or drink water. Instead,

they tend many flocks of sheep, oxen, goats, and cattle and drink only milk and nothing else. When their young are born, they do not have an anus nor do they have bowel movements. They have buttocks but the orifice is grown together. Consequently, they do no pass excrement but they say their urine is like cheese, not thick but foul. They say that once they drink early in the morning and again in the middle of the day, they ingest a sweet root which does not allow milk to solidify in their abdomen. They gnaw on this root in the evening and vomit everything up with ease.

(45) There are wild asses in India the size of horses and even bigger. They have a white body, crimson head, and deep blue eyes. They have a horn in the middle of their brow one and a half cubits in length. The bottom part of the horn for as much as two palms towards the brow is bright white. The tip of the horn is sharp and deep vermillion in colour while the rest in the middle is black. They say that whoever drinks from the horn (which they fashion into cups) is immune to seizures and the holy sickness and suffers no effects from poison, whether they drink wine, water, or anything else from the cup either before or after ingesting the drug. He also says that other asses, both tame and wild, and the other solid-hoofed animals have no astragalos or bile in the liver. However, these creatures do have an astragalos and bile in the liver. The astragalos, which is similar in size and shape to that of an ox, is the most beautiful I have ever seen. It is as heavy as lead and the color of cinnabar even at its deepest points. This animal is extremely swift and strong and neither horse nor any other animal can overtake it in pursuit. It begins running

slowly, but the longer it runs, the more speed it picks up as it exerts itself brilliantly. Usually this animal cannot be hunted, but when they bring their young to pasture and are surrounded by many men on horseback, they choose not to flee and abandon their colts; rather, they fight both with their horn and by kicking and biting. They kill many horses and men, but they are taken down by the bow and javelin, as one could never capture them alive. Their flesh is inedible on account of its bitterness, but they are hunted for their horns and astragaloi.

(46) In the Indus River there is a worm that resembles the one that lives in the fig tree and is more or less seven cubits long. They say it is so wide that a ten-year-old child could hardly embrace it. It has two teeth, one up top and one below, and eats whatever it grabs with these teeth. Throughout the day they live in the mud of the river but come out by night. When it comes across an ox or camel on land, it bites it, then drags the beast into the river and consumes everything except the intestines. It is caught on a giant fishhook baited with a kid or a lamb and fixed to an iron chain. After catching one, they hang it up for thirty days and set a jar under it because thick oil drips from it enough to fill ten attic *kotylae*. When the thirty days have passed, they discard the worm, secure the oil, and bring it to the king of the Indians. The king is the only one to possess it, since it is not permitted for anyone else to have the oil from the worm. Whatever this oil is poured on, whether wood or living being, it becomes kindled and burns with a fire that can only be extinguished by a lot of thick clay.

(47) There is a tall tree in India which is similar to the cedar or cypress but with leaves like the date-palm only a little wider. It has no axil but blooms like the male laurel and bears no fruit. In Indian it is called the *karpion* and in Greek the 'scented rose'. It is a rare tree and droplets of oil drip from it which they wipe up with wool and wring out into containers made of stone. It is slightly red in colour, somewhat thick, but gives off the most pleasant of scents; they say its fragrance can be detected from a distance of up to five stades. It can be possessed only by the king and his relatives. The king of the Indians sent some to the Persian king and Ctesias claims to have personally seen it and said that he smelled a fragrance which defied description or comparison.

(48) Ctesias maintains that their cheese and wine are exceedingly sweet and that he personally tasted them and so knows from firsthand experience.

(49) He says that there is a spring in India with a perimeter of five *orygia* and square in shape. The water is in the rock at a depth of up to three cubits, but the water itself is three *orygia* deep. The most prominent of Indians, men, women, and children, bathe in the spring and jump in it feet first. When they jump into it, the water casts them back out. It not only repels men, but any other creature whether living or dead, is cast out onto dry land. This holds true for simply anything thrown into it except iron, silver, gold, and bronze; these items sink to the bottom. The water is very cold and sweet to drink. It makes a great noise like water boiling in a kettle and is used to clear up dull-white leprosy and mange. In Indian it is called the *Ballade* which in Greek means 'useful'.

(50) In the mountains of India where the reed grows, there is a tribe of men numbering 30,000. Their women give birth only once in their lifetime and their children have very beautiful teeth on both the upper and lower jaws. From birth each man and woman has white hair on their head and eyebrows for the first thirty years of their life. Their hair all over their body is white; after this it begins to turn black. When they reach the age of sixty, their hair is totally black. These men have up to eight fingers on each hand and likewise eight toes on each foot; the same goes for the women. They are very warlike and 5,000 of them serve the king of the Indians as archers and javelin men. According to Ctesias, they have ears big enough to cover their arms as far as the elbow and their entire back at the same time and one ear can touch the other.

(51) These are the stories Ctesias writes and asserts that they are completely truthful; adding that he personally saw some of the things he wrote about while others he heard from firsthand witnesses. He says that he omitted many other more incredible tales in order to not seem untrustworthy to those who have not seen them personally. These are some of the stories in his work.

F45a. Arrian *Anab.* 5.4.2 (Eust. Dion. Per. 1143):

According to Ctesias, if he is a credible source, the Indus River at its most narrow point is forty stades across, while it is a hundred stades across at its widest point, but most of the river is in between these two distances.

F45bα. Aelian *NA* 17.29

When the king of the Indians attacks an enemy, 120,000 war elephants are leading the charge. I hear that another 3,000 elephants of exceeding size and strength follow trained to attack and tear down the enemy walls on the king's order. They tear down the walls with their chest, according to Ctesias who claims that he wrote this after hearing it, and also that he had personally seen date-palms in Babylon uprooted and toppled by elephants in this same manner with extreme violence. However, they only do this on the orders of an Indian mahout.

F45bβ. Aelian *NA* 16.2 [L]

There are huge roosters that do not have a red comb like our native ones but instead have a colourful one like a crown of flowers. Their tail feathers are not protruding nor curved in a spiral, but are flat and they drag them around like the peacock whenever they do not hold them erect and stand them upright. The feathers of the Indian cock are gold and dark green like an emerald.

F45c. Tzet. *Chil.* 7.738

If someone thinks that the reeds in Arabia defy belief, says Tzetzes, then who would believe Ctesias who writes that the reeds of India are 2,000 *orgyia* thick and that one of their knots makes two merchantmen?

F45dα. Arist. *HA* 2.1 p. 501a 24

None of these species has two rows of teeth. There is one such

species, if we are to believe Ctesias, for he describes a beast in India called the martichora which has three rows of teeth on both jaws. It is the size of a lion and just as hairy with similar feet; however, its face and ears are human, it has light blue eyes, and it is the colour of cinnabar. It has a tail like that of the scorpion with a stinger at the tip and it shoots its stingers like a javelin. It makes a noise like a syrinx or salpinx. It can run as fast as a deer and is a savage man-eater.

F45dβ. Aelian *NA* 4.21 (Philes *De an. props.* 38)

There seems to be an Indian beast of irresistible strength which is the size of the largest lion, red in colour like cinnabar, and as hairy as a dog. In Indian it is called the martichora. It has a face that more closely resembles a man than a beast. It has three rows of teeth on its upper and lower jaws which are very sharp at their cutting edge and larger than a dog's. Its ears also appear human in shape, but they are larger and hairy. It has blue eyes which also look human. I think its feet and claws resemble a lion's. The stinger of a scorpion is attached to the tip of the tail which is a cubit long and has stingers on either side. The tip of the tail pricks its victim when close at hand and instantly kills him. If someone pursues it, then it discharges its stingers horizontally like arrows and can shoot them very far. When it unleashes its stingers toward the front its tail bends back, and when it aims them toward the rear it stretches its tail out flat like the Saka. Whatever it hits it kills, with the exception of elephants. The stingers used for shooting measure one foot in length and are as thick as a rope. Ctesias claims and maintains that the Indians corroborate this, that in

place of the discharged stingers a new one grows as if it were the offspring of this dreadful item. As Ctesias himself says, it is especially fond of human flesh and it kills many. It does not lay in wait for one person, but chases after two or three and vanquishes all of them by itself. It prevails upon the rest of the animal kingdom, but could never overpower a lion. This animal takes great pleasure in having its fill of human flesh living up to its name, for the Indian name in Greek means 'man-eater' and is so-called from this habit. It is as swift as a deer and the Indians hunt their young before they develop a stinger and smash their tails with stones so they are never able to grow them. It emits a sound most closely resembling that of a salpinx. Ctesias claims to have seen one such creature which was brought to the Persian king as a gift, if he is a credible witness about these matters. However, when one hears of the peculiar characteristics of this animal, his attention is drawn to the Cnidian's history.

F45dy. Paus. 9.21.4

In the account given by Ctesias there is a beast in India called the martichora by the Indians and the 'man-eater' by the Greeks which I take to refer to the tiger. It has three rows of teeth on each jaw and a stinger on the tip of its tail. It defends itself with these stingers in close combat and discharges them when fighting at a distance like a bowman's arrow. I think excessive fear for the beast has led the Indians to receive a false account from each other. (5) They were also deceived as to the colour of its skin. When the tiger appeared before them in the rays of the sun, they thought it was red and either

because of its speed or, if it were not running, its continuous twisting and turning, they could not see it up close.

F45dδ. Plin. *NH* 8.75

Ctesias writes that amongst these same men there is found an animal called the Mantichora which has three rows of teeth like a comb, the face and ears of a human, and bluish eyes. It is red in colour with the body of a lion and a tail with stingers like a scorpion. Its voice is as if the sounds of the pipe were mixed with a trumpet and it is a creature of great speed which avidly goes after human flesh.

F45εα. Antig. *Hist. mir.* 166 [F 107 XXXVIII Pf]

According to Callimachus, Ctesias writes in his history about the so-called immortal flame near the land of the Phaselitai on Mount Chimaera. If someone throws water on this fire, it burns brighter. However, if rubbish is thrown on it, then the fire is extinguished.

F45εβ. Plin. *NH* 2.236

Mount Chimaera burns in Phaselis and the flame is undying both by day and night. According to Ctesias, this fire is inflamed by water but is extinguished by earth or dung.

F45fα. Excerpt Const. *De an.* 2.67 (Suppl. Aristot. I 1 ed. Lambrás p. 53.27)

In India dwell those called the Pygmies who possess a great tract of land in the middle of the region. The men are dark-skinned like the other Indians and speak the same language,

but they are extremely small with the tallest being two cubits while most, both men and women alike, are only one and a half cubits tall. Throughout their childhood they go around wearing cotton garments, but when they reach adolescence, they grow their hair long. The rest of the Pygmies have hair which reaches their knees and even longer while their beards exceed those of any other race. As a result, they say that, since they are small, they pull their beards down to their feet and their hair down their backs well below their knees. Because they grow their beard so long, they no longer wear cloaks but drape themselves in the front with the hair from their beard and in the back with the hair from their head. Then they gird their hair tightly around their entire body and so, in lieu of cloaks, they clothe themselves in their hair. They have very large penises which reach their ankles while they themselves are snub-nosed and deformed and look nothing like the rest of the Indians. Their women are small and ugly, just like the men. Their horses are like rams or a little bigger, their sheep are as small as lambs, and their asses, mules, and other livestock are no bigger than rams.

F45fβ. Ebd. 2. 556 (p. 139.27)

Amongst the Pygmies, just as they themselves are small, so are their sheep and other livestock.

F45fy. Aelian *NA* 16.37 [L]

The so-called Psylloi in India (for there are others in Libya) have horses no greater than rams, and sheep which seem as small as lambs, while their asses, mules, oxen, and other livestock are similar in size.

F45g. Aelian *NA* 4.26

The Indians hunt hare and fox in the following way: they have no need of dogs when hunting, but they gather the young chicks of eagles, crows, and kites which they raise and train for the hunt. This is their method: they attach meat to a tame hare and domesticated fox, release them to run, send the birds after them on foot, and allow them to remove the meat. The birds pursue them with all their might and when they capture either a hare or a fox, they grip the meat and seize it as their prize. This is their bait and it is very enticing. Then, when they have perfected their skill in hunting, the Indians release them to hunt wild hare and fox. In the hopes of acquiring their accustomed meal, whenever they see one of these animals, they charge after it, quickly snatch it up, and return to their masters, according to Ctesias. In lieu of the meat hitherto fastened to the animals, the birds receive the innards of their prey as a meal. This is where we learned this practice.

F45h. Aelian *NH* 4.27

I hear that the griffin is an Indian animal with four feet with exceedingly strong talons which most closely resemble a lion's. They have plentiful feathers on their backs with black plumage but red in the front while their wings are white. Ctesias claims that the neck is adorned with deep blue feathers; the beak and head are like an eagle, similar to what an artisan would draw or mould, and its eyes are a fiery red. It makes its nest in the mountains but it is impossible to capture a full grown one; however, they can be taken into captivity when they are young. The Bactrians who are

neighbours with the Indians say that the griffins guard the gold in that region and that they dig it out and weave their nests with it while the Indians gather what falls off. The Indians deny that these griffins are guardians of the aforementioned gold, for the griffins have no need of gold (in saying this I think they speak plausibly). However, when the Indians come to gather the gold, the griffins, in fear for their young, fight with the invaders. They contend with other animals whom they easily overpower, but they do not stand against lions or elephants. Fearing the might of these beasts, the natives do not retrieve this gold by day, but only do so at night, for they are more likely to go unnoticed at this time. This area where the griffins dwell and their gold is mined is frighteningly desolate. Those hunting the aforementioned material arrive in groups of one or two thousand, armed and carrying shovels and sacks. They watch for a moonless night before beginning to dig. If they escape the notice of the griffins the reward they reap is two-fold, for they return home with both their load and their life. When those possessing the knowledge of the goldsmith have refined the gold, they acquire immense wealth in exchange for the aforementioned dangers, but if they are detected they are killed. They return home, as I have learned, after three or four years.

F451a. Aelian *NA* 3.3

The sheep belonging to these men have tails a cubit wide, according to Ctesias.

F451b. Excerpt. Const. *De an.* 2.556 (Suppl. Aristot. II p. 139.13)

Ctesias says the Indians have sheep and goats which are larger than the biggest asses. For the most part, each ewe and goat produces up to six young, but neither bears less than three while most bear four. They have long and wide tails just reaching the ground, which they drag around; they are as much as a cubit in width. The Indians cut the tails from the breeding females because they cannot be mounted by the males unless their tails are removed. It is very sweet to eat and each tail has ten *minae* of fat while the smaller ones have only five. They make oil from this fat and often use it in their cooking. They tear open the tail of the male ass and remove three *minae* of fat or sometimes up to four. Then they sew it back up and restore it to health, for unless this is done, the ewes will not be able to carry around their tails. They do this every year as the fat grows back and the tail returns to its original condition.

F451y. Aelian *NA* 4.32 [L]:

The flocks of the Indians are something worthy to learn of. I hear that the goats and ewes are bigger than the largest asses and they bear four young each; neither the Indian goat nor the ewe would ever bear less than three. The tails of these sheep reach their feet and the goats have the very large tails that just touch the ground. The shepherds practise the custom of removing the tails of the ewes for breeding so they can be mounted. They also extract oil from the fat of these animals. They slash open the tails of the males, remove the fat, and stitch them back together. The cut heals back and every trace of it vanishes.

F45k α . Arist. *HA* 8.28 p. 606a8

According to Ctesias, although he is not entirely reliable, there are no swine in India, either wild or tame, but the bloodless and scaled beasts are all large.

F45k β . Aelian *NA* 3.3

The peculiarities of the nature of these animals are as follows: Ctesias says there are neither wild nor tame pigs in India.

F45k γ . Excerpt. Const. *De an.* 2.572 (Suppl. Aristot. II p. 143.17)

Ctesias claims 'there are no swine in India either tame or wild. No Indian would ever eat the meat of swine anymore than he would that of a human'.

F45k δ . Aelian *NA* 16.37 [L]

They say that there are no swine in India either tame or wild. The Indians are disgusted at the prospect of eating this animal and they would never consume pork, just as they would never eat human flesh.

F45k ϵ . Val. Max. *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 8 ext. 5 [L]

The Ethiopians make less astonishing claims about the longevity of this king, when, according to Herodotus, they say that he lived longer than 120 years; the same assertion is made about the Indians by Ctesias.

F45l. Aelian *NA* 4.36

The historians say that India is rich in drugs and suitable for

growing these plants. Some of these drugs are used to heal those on the verge of death from animal bites, since there are many in this region, and remove them from these dangers. Others are used to quickly cause death, such as the venom from the snake. This snake is a span in length and of a very deep crimson colour, but the head, as they describe it, is not crimson but white, not off-white, so to speak, but a white brighter than snow or milk. This snake has no teeth and is found in the hottest parts of India. It cannot bite and you could think that it is tame and gentle, but wherever it spits, so I hear, whether on a man or beast, each limb affected rots away. After capturing it, they hang it by its tail so its head is facing down towards the ground and then they place a bronze vessel under its mouth. The drops from its mouth pour into the vessel and this runoff thickens and congeals; if you saw it you would think it was sap from an almond tree. When the serpent dies they remove the vessel and replace it with another, likewise made of bronze. When the snake is dead, a wet discharge similar to water in consistency flows out. They allow this to happen for three days at which time this substance congeals. There is a difference in colour between the two substances; the latter is very dark while the former is the colour of amber. If you give anyone a sesame-seed sized droplet of this substance, simply putting it into wine or food, the person will first be seized with violent convulsions, then his eyes roll back, his brains melt down and pass out the nose, and he dies an agonizing but swift death. If you administer a smaller portion of the drug, death becomes inevitable but takes time. If you dispense even a sesame seed sized droplet of the dark substance which discharged from the dead serpent, it causes

suppuration while consumption seizes the victim and he wastes away within a year. Many survive for two years dying gradually.

F45m. Aelian *NA* 4.41

There is a species of very small Indian birds which build their nests both amidst the lofty rocks and also the so-called smooth cliffs. The little bird is the size of a partridge egg and I think its colour is orange. The Indians call it *Dikaïron* in their language, but the Greeks, as I hear it, call it *Dikaion*. If someone should ingest a speck of its dung placed in a drink, he would die by evening. The death is like sleep – very pleasant and free of pain – the sort the poets like to call ‘limb-relaxing’ and ‘easy’. This death would bring freedom from pain and therefore is most pleasing for those in need of it. The Indians go to great lengths to acquire it, for they consider it the source of forgetfulness of troubles for its owner. The Indians also include this substance among their most precious gifts for the Persian king who receives it as a prize revered above all others; he hoards it as a remedy and antidote for incurable illness, if he should contract one. No one else in Persia possesses this substance except the king himself and his mother. Therefore, let us compare the drugs of India and Egypt and see which are more sought after. First of all, the Egyptian drug curbed and suppressed pain for one day whereas the Indian drug provided oblivion from ills for eternity. The one was a gift of a woman and the other came from a bird or some secret of nature which frees men from truly grievous bonds via the aforementioned agent. The

Indians are lucky enough to possess it so they can be freed from the imprisonment of this life whenever they wish.

F45nα. Apollon. *Hist. mir.* 17

According to Ctesias, there is a tree in India called the *parebon* which attracts whatever is brought near it including gold, silver, tin, bronze, and all other types of metal. It also draws in birds that fly close by. If the tree is taller, then it even attracts goats, sheep, and other animals of a similar size.

F45nβ. Hsch. s.v. *πάριβον*
parebon: according to Ctesias it is a tree.

F45o. Plin. *NH* 37.39

Ctesias claims that there is a river in India called the Hypobarus which, as the name implies, brings all good things. It flows from the northern regions to the eastern part of the ocean near the mountains wooded with the amber-bearing trees. This tree is called the *psittachora* which means ‘pleasant sweetness’.

F45oβ. Psellus ed. P. Maas [L]

(1) In India there flows a river two stades wide called the *spabaros* which in Greek means ‘the bringer of all good things’. According to Ctesias, this river brings amber for thirty days each year. They say that a mountain looms over the river where there are large trees from which sap drops into the river causing it to solidify and become amber. This tree is called the *zetachora* which in Greek means ‘sweet’. He claims that

the tree also bears fruit in bunches like grapes on the vine, but its berries are like the Pontic nut.

(2) Men dwell on the mountain who have the head of a dog but the rest of their body is human. They shout to the other Indians and communicate with them, but instead of talking they bark like dogs. They eat the fruit from these trees and the raw meat from wild animals which they hunt. They also keep many sheep and their teeth are larger than a dog's. They wear black garments made of hide and they drink milk from their sheep. All of them have tails, men and women alike, below the haunches just like a dog.

F45pα. Plin. *NH* 7.23

In many mountains there is a race of men with the head of a dog and clothed in animal skins. Instead of a voice they issue howls. They are armed for the hunt with talons and feast on birds. According to Ctesias, they numbered more than 120,000 at the time of his writing.

F45pβ. Tzet. *Chil.* 7.713

Ctesias claims that there are amber-producing trees and dog-headed peoples in India. He maintains that they are very just and live by hunting.

F45pγ. Aelian *NA* 4.46

There are creatures in India the size of dung beetles which are red in colour. If you saw them for the first time you might liken them to cinnabar. They have very long legs and are soft to the touch. They live in the amber-producing trees and feed

on their fruit. The Indians capture these creatures, mash them up, and use them to dye their dark-red garments, chitons, and whatever else they wish to turn this colour and paint. Raiment of this sort was brought to the Persian king and their beauty was a source of amazement for the Persians. It was compared to the native Persian garments and amazingly was found to be far superior. According to Ctesias, this was because it was brighter and more noticeable than the revered Sardinian robes. They are produced in the part of India where the dung beetles and *Cynocephaloi* live. These people get their name from the appearance and nature of their bodies. For the most part, they have a human figure and go around clothed in animal skins. They are just and do no wrong to anyone. Instead of talking they bark, but still they understand the Indian language. They feed on the flesh of wild animals which they capture with the greatest of ease, for they are very fast runners. They kill what they catch, break it up into pieces, and cook it with the heat of the sun instead of fire. They raise goats and sheep and, although they feed on the flesh of wild animals, they drink the milk from the domesticated animals they rear.

F45q. Aelian *NA* 4.52

I have heard that there are wild asses in India no smaller than horses which have a white body, a head which is almost crimson, and dark blue eyes. They have a horn on their brow one and a half cubits in length. The lower portion of the horn is white, the upper part is vermilion, and the middle is very dark. I hear that the Indians drink from these multicoloured horns, but not all the Indians, only the most powerful, and they

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Translation

pour gold around them at intervals as if they were adorning the beautiful arm of a statue with bracelets. They say that the one who drinks from this horn will never experience terminal illnesses. No longer would he suffer seizures or the so-called holy sickness nor could he be killed with poison. If he drank the poison first, he would vomit it up and return to health. It is believed that the other asses throughout the world, both tame and wild, and the rest of the other solid-hoofed animals do not have an astragalos in their ankle nor do they have bile in their liver. According to Ctesias, however, the one-horned Indian asses have astragaloi and are not lacking bile. They say their astragaloi are black and if someone should grind them up they would be the same on the inside. These creatures are not only faster than other asses, but horses and deer as well. They begin to run lightly, but gradually they run harder and to pursue one is, to put it poetically, to chase the intangible.

When the female gives birth and guides her newborns about, the sires join them in the pasture and watch over their young. These asses are found on the most desolate plains in India. When the Indians set out to hunt them, the asses allow those that are still young and tender to graze behind them while they fight and charge the horsemen at close quarters and strike them with their horn. Such is their strength that nothing can endure their impact. Everything succumbs to them and gets pierced; however, if by chance it is crushed to pieces, it is rendered useless. They have attacked the sides of horses and ripped them open, disembowelling them. For that reason, the horsemen are too afraid to go near them because the price for getting too close is a horrible death for both themselves and

the horses. The asses also have a deadly kick and their bite reaches such a depth that whatever is caught in its grip is completely torn away. You could not capture a full grown ass alive, but they are killed with javelins and arrows and when it is dead, the Indians remove the much revered horn from the animal. The flesh of the Indian ass is inedible because it is so bitter.

F45r. Aelian *NA* 5.3

This Indus River is without creatures, save only the worm they say inhabits it. In form it is similar to the worms born and reared in trees, but the ones in the river approach seven cubits in length, although you could find them bigger or smaller. Their width is such that a ten-year-old boy would hardly be able to embrace them. These creatures have one tooth on both the upper and lower jaw which are square and a *pygon* in length. Their teeth are so powerful that they easily crush whatever they grasp, whether it is a stone or an animal, either tame or wild. They spend the day below at the bottom of the river pleasantly dwelling in the mud and sediment where they remain hidden. By night they go forth onto land and whatever they come across, whether it is a horse, ox, or ass, they crush it, drag it into their own habitat, and eat it in the river; they devour every limb except the intestines. If hunger lays hold of them even in the daytime, then they creep upon camels or oxen as they drink from the riverbank, seize them by the tip of the lips, and in a violent rush drag them with a firm grip into the water and have their meal. Each animal is covered by skin two dactyls thick. The following way for hunting them

has been devised: they lower a thick, powerful hook fastened to an iron chain rigged with a thick rope of white flax. They then wrap both up in wool in order to keep the worm from gnawing through them. Next, they bait the hook with either a lamb or a kid and lower it into the water. Up to thirty men hold the rigging ready to hurl javelins and armed with daggers while sticks of very strong cherry wood are kept at hand should it be necessary to club the worm. When the worm has taken the bait and been hooked, they drag it out, kill the beast, and then hang it in the heat of the sun for thirty days. Thick oil is squeezed from it into a ceramic vessel and each worm produces up to ten *kotylae*. This oil is sealed and brought to the king of the Indians and no one else is allowed to possess as much as a drop of it. The rest of the carcass is useless. The oil has such power that if you wanted to burn up a heap of wood and spread the embers, you could pour a *kotyla* of this substance on it and kindle the flame without first putting a spark to the wood. If you wanted to burn up a man or animal, you could pour this on him and he is immediately consumed. They say that the king of the Indians uses this oil to destroy the cities that have become hostile. He does not wait for battering-rams, penthouses, or any other siege engines since he takes the cities by burning them to ashes. He fills the earthenware vessels which contain as much as a *kotyla* each and seals them at the top before hurling them at the gates. When they hit the embrasures the vessels shatter upon impact causing the oil to sink down and an unquenchable fire covers over the doors. The fire burns their weapons and fighting soldiers with its superior strength. However, it can be subdued

and extinguished with a large amount of rubbish poured over it. This is the account given by Ctesias of Cnidus.

F45^{sc}. Antigon. *Hist. mir.* 150

[Callimachus] says that Ctesias writes about one of the lakes in India which does not receive anything thrown into it, like the lakes in Sicily and Media, except gold, iron, and bronze. If something falls into the lake horizontally, it expels the object upright and it cures the so-called white disease. On another lake oil floats on the surface on a calm day.

F45^{sb}. Paradox. Flor. 3

There is a spring in India which casts those who dive in back out onto dry land as if from a catapult, according to the history of Ctesias.

45t. Plin. *NH* 7.23 (F45p)

Amongst a certain Indian race the women give birth once in their life and their offspring are immediately grey-haired.

F46a. Aelian *NH* 16.31

Ctesias says in his account of India that the so-called Cynamolgoi, who are adamant dog-breeders, raise many dogs which are similar in size to those in Hyrcania. The Cnidian claims this is done because from the summer solstice to the middle of winter herds of cattle roam about as if a beehive or wasps' nest had been disturbed. The cattle are countless in number and are wild, violent creatures who vent their anger with their horns. They cannot remove these creatures in any

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other way except to unleash their dogs which are well-bred and always trained for this purpose and so can easily contend with and overcome the cattle. They remove the parts of their flesh deemed suitable for consumption and dole out the rest to the dogs gladly sharing their fruits with their benefactors. During the season when the cattle no longer roam this region, these men use their dogs to hunt other species. They milk their bitches, from which act their name is derived, and drink it as we do with the milk of sheep and goats.

F46b. Pollux. 5.41

The Cynamolgoi are dogs who live around the southern marshes who take their nourishment from the milk of cows. They fight with the Indian cattle who attack the people during the summer, according to Ctesias.

F47a. Antigon. *Hist. mir.* 146 (F I 1'a)

[According to Ctesias] in India there is a spring called the Sila not even the lightest object thrown in floats, but everything sinks.

F47b. Plin. *NH* 31.21

Ctesias writes about a pond called the Side in India in which nothing floats and everything sinks.

F48a. Arist. *HA* 3.22 p. 523a26)

It is untrue what Ctesias writes about the sperm of elephants.

F48b. Arist. *De gen. an.* 2.2 p. 736a2

Translation

For Ctesias of Chnidus is clearly wrong on what he says about the sperm of elephants, for he says that it hardens when it dries and becomes similar to amber. This does not happen.

F49a. Arrian. *Ind.* 3.6

Ctesias of Chnidus says that the territory of India is equal to the size of the rest of Asia.

F49b. Strabo 15.1.12

While Ctesias says that India is no smaller than the rest of Asia.

F50. Athen. 10.45 p. 434 D (Eust. Hom. *Od.* s 3)

Ctesias claims that in India it is not permissible for the king to get drunk.

F51a. Plin. *NH* 7.23: (F45pc; F45t)

The same author (sc. Ctesias) writes that the race of men who are called the Monocoli have one leg but show amazing agility by jumping. These same men are also called the Sciapodes because when it is hot, they lay on the ground on their back and shade themselves with their feet. They inhabit a region not far from the Troglodytes. Turning again to the west from these people are those who lack necks and have eyes on their shoulders. (24) There are also satyrs in the mountains of the eastern part of India in the region of the so-called Catarcludi. Satyrs are extremely swift animals running sometimes on all fours and sometimes upright in imitation of a human. Because of their speed, they are never captured unless old or sick.

F51b. Tzetz. *Chil.* 7.621-41 (Kiesling 629-49)

There is a book by Scylax of Caryanda written about India which claims that there are men called the Sciapodes and the Otoliknoi. Of these the Sciapodes have very broad feet and at midday they drop to the ground, stretch their feet out above them, and give themselves shade. The Otoliknoi have huge ears which they use to cover themselves like an umbrella. This Scylax also writes numerous tales about the Monophtalmoi, the Henotiktontes, and countless other strange marvels. He speaks of them as if they were true and none of them fabricated. Since I have not seen any of it, I consider these tales to be lies. That they have some elements of truth is attested by the fact that many others claim to have seen such marvels and ones even more incredible in their lifetime. This list includes Ctesias, Iambulos, Isigonos, Rheginos, Alexander, Sotion, Agathosthenes, Antigonos, Edoxos, Hippostratos, and countless others, including Protagoras himself and even Ptolemy, Aksestorides and other writers of prose some of whom I am personally familiar with and others I am not.

F52. Plin. *NH* 7.28 (Onesikritos 134 F11)

Crates of Pergamum calls the Indians who live beyond one hundred years the Gymnetae, but many call them the Macrobiai. Ctesias describes a race of these people called the Pandarae situated in the valleys, who live for 200 years. In youth they have white hair but it turns black as they reach old age. (29) In contrast to these people, there are some neighbours of the Macrobiai whose lives do not exceed forty

years and whose women bear children only once. Agatharchides relates this same story and adds that they feed on locusts and are swift runners. Clitarchos gave them the name of the Mandi and Megasthenes names 365 of their villages. Their women gave birth at the age of seven and reach old age at forty.