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WHO ARE THE BRAHMANS? INDIAN LORE AND CYNIC DOCTRINE IN PALLADIUS' *DE BRAGMANIBUS* AND ITS MODELS

I have devoted a separate study[1] to the question of how far the account in the Alexander Romance of Alexander's meeting with the Naked Philosophers, later known as Brahmans, rests on genuine information about India. My conclusion was that the author of the Romance knew the Alexander historians but did not add any genuine knowledge; and that he incorporated a separate text of Cynic origin, the series of ten questions and answers.

The existence of this episode in an early form of the Romance prompted the redactor of A, our oldest surviving manuscript, to incorporate in his redaction the text of Palladius, *De gentibus Indiae et de Bragmanibus*. It is not included in the later recensions of the Romance. In A it follows the initial meeting and the question and answer session (Romance III.6): it takes the form of a debate between Alexander and the Brahman leader Dandamis (which I shall call B), followed by a discourse delivered by Dandamis concerning vegetarianism (C). Both these sections are based closely on a text preserved in a papyrus of the second century A.D., which seems certainly to have been part of a collection of Cynic diatribes.[2] The version of Palladius is introduced, in the MSS of Palladius himself as distinct from those of the Alexander Romance, by a short general account of the Brahmans which the author sends to an unnamed friend (A). In this he attributes the remainder of the treatise (B and C) to the Alexander historian Arrian 'who turned to philosophy in the reign of Nero.' (More detailed analysis below.)

The purpose of this article is to raise the same question as in my other study: how far does Palladius' text reflect genuine knowledge about Indian philosophers? A radical view of the encounter is that implied by the fullest recent account of Palladius' work, by Beverly Berg,[3] in which the author omits to make any reference at all to Indian philosophy, and treats the work simply as a derivative from a piece of Cynic doctrine written down by Onesicritus as a result of his difficult meeting with the philosophers. Berg's purpose is to elucidate the moral and religious milieu of the various layers of the text in Palladius, but I shall suggest that her analysis begins too late and that we should consider that there is an Indian bedrock in the tale.

The attribution of the work to the fifth-century bishop Palladius of Helenopolis has

[1] Richard Stoneman, 'Naked Philosophers: the Brahmans in the Alexander Romance and the Alexander Historians', forthcoming *JHS* 135 (1995).

[2] Pap. Genev. inv. 271. See Victor Martin, 'Un recueil de diatribes cyniques,' *Mus. Helv.* 16 (1959), 77–115; Penelope Photiades, 'Les diatribes cyniques du papyrus de Genève 271, leurs traductions et élaborations successifs', *Mus. Helv.* 16 (1959), 116–39. Some further amendments to the text are offered by J. T. Kakridis, 'Zum Kynikerpapyrus (Pap. Genev. inv. 271)', *Mus. Helv.* 17 (1960), 34–6 and 'Weiteres zum Kynikerpapyrus (Pap. Genev. inv. 271)', *Parola del Passato* 16 (1961), 383–6. The diatribe is followed in the papyrus by part of one of the letters of Heraclitus, a Cynic collection: see A. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles* (Scholars Press, 1977).

[3] Beverly Berg, 'Dandamis: an Early Christian Portrait of Indian Asceticism', *Class. et Med.* 31 (1970), 269–305.

been questioned, but there is at any rate no decisive reason to reject the attribution,[4] and the researches of Beverly Berg have shown that the work is a Christian one which would fit in the milieu of that date.

The textual history of the *De Bragmanibus* is almost as complicated as that of the Alexander Romance. Two widely differing stemmata have been proposed by the two recent editors of the work, J. Duncan M. Derrett and Wilhelm Berghoff.[5] For the purposes of my discussion the relative priority of the two recensions is of small importance, and I generally follow the slightly less elaborate text edited by Derrett which he calls the Versio Ornatior. This consists of two separate works, the first of which is a brief account (fifteen chapters) of the lands around the Ganges, derived from the information of a Theban scholar who was imprisoned there for six years, working in a flour mill, until he was released as a result of threats from a rival king and through fear of Roman reprisals. The four last chapters describe the life of the Brahmans who live an ascetic life, not by choice (the implication is a contrast with the life of Christian monks) but by fate. They live without farming, iron, houses, bread, wine or clothing and are in touch with the purposes of Providence (*τοὺς τῆς Προνοίας λόγους δυνάμενοι*). They live beyond the Ganges, while their women dwell this side of the Ganges, and the men cross over annually, in the cold months of July and August, to mate with them. If no pregnancy results within five years, they give up the attempt.[6] Palladius concludes this chapter with the information that the opusculum (*πονημάτιον*) which he now encloses is the work of Arrian, who turned to philosophy in the reign of Nero, 'the one who had Peter and Paul put to death'. This remark establishes the whole work in its present form as a text of Christian purport. The possibility that the remaining part is an early work of Arrian is a real one.[7] Arrian promises at *Anab.* VI.1.16 an account of the wisdom 'if such it is' of the Brahmans, in his *Indica*: but no such account appears in the *Indica* itself, which leads to the supposition that this separate monograph might represent a discussion omitted from the final version of that work.

This second part of the *De Bragmanibus* (the part interpolated in the Romance) is written in a quite different, more ornate style, and launches directly into an account of the Alexander story with the words 'Dandamis said ...'[8] It falls into two connected episodes. In the first (B) Dandamis invites Alexander to visit the Brahmans, and Alexander opens the discussion with a prayer to Wisdom the mother of Providence, and explains that he has come to see the Brahmans of whom Calanus has told him. (The reference to Wisdom the mother of Providence has been interpreted by Berg as a clear piece of Gnosticism. However, Pronoia at least was already in the tradition.

[4] P. R. Coleman-Norton, 'The Authorship of the *Epistola de Indicis Gentibus et de Bragmanibus*', *Class. Phil.* 21 (1926), 154–60. The opinion is shared by Beverly Berg (n. 3) and by J. D. M. Derrett (n. 5).

[5] J. Duncan M. Derrett, 'The History of "Palladius on the Races of India and the Brahmans"', *Class. et Med.* 21 (1960), 77–135; Wilhelm Berghoff, *Palladius de Gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1967). Derrett proposes that rec. Θ influenced rec. Σ; Berghoff that Θ and Σ both derive from an original text by 'Arrian'. See the stemmata in Berghoff 20 and 27.

[6] Mating only for procreation seems to be a Christian motif; cf. B. D. Shaw, 'The Family in Late Antiquity: the Experience of Augustine', *Past and Present* 115 (1987), 3–51.

[7] J. D. M. Derrett, (n. 5), sect. iii. Contra: G. C. Hansen, 'Alexander und die Brahmanen', *Klio* 43–5 (1964), 351–86 (365f.).

[8] The name Dandamis is itself worth comment, as it seems to mean 'staff-bearer', from the Sanskrit *danda*, a staff, which it was incumbent on the highest grade of Brahman to carry always: *Laws of Manu* 4.36. (The *Laws of Manu* are cited throughout this article from the Penguin translation by Wendy Doniger with Brian K. Smith (Harmondsworth, 1991).)

Diodorus three times refers to *Pronoia theia* as influencing Alexander's successes,[9] and Pronoia is the presiding deity throughout the Romance.) This prompts Dandamis to inveigh against Calanus who was seduced away from the Brahmans by the temptation of wealth; he then delivers a series of precepts on the conquest of self and of desire. This thought may seem to have a somewhat Buddhist ring to it, but the whole speech is related closely to Alexander's situation, for example when Dandamis says (6) that killing is not bravery; true bravery is to master the internal man.

Alexander now sends his companion Onesicratos (*sic*) with the message that Dandamis is to come to him and receive gifts; but if Dandamis declines, Alexander will cut off his head. Dandamis outlines a policy of passive resistance, refusing to comply and pointing out that 'God breeds no violence, and receives all souls when fate releases those that are not conquered by desire.' (Again, the idea that release is offered to those who are not conquered by desire could be a Buddhist touch; but the conquest of desire, and release, are also aims of the Brahman ascetic.[10]) He mentions the vast tracts of land which the world conqueror has not subdued, and then declines Alexander's gifts as useless to him. 'Desire of gold would destroy my sleep' (16). This possibly Buddhist thought is followed by the possibly Christian one that Alexander can cut off his head but cannot destroy his soul,[11] and that God will ask an account of every soul and punish the unjust. (The Hindu looked forward to a choice of 21 Hells for different kinds of sinner,[12] so this need not be a Christian importation.)

Alexander now agrees to visit the old man and states that he has come in search of wisdom. We hear no more of Onesicratos. This second episode begins with Dandamis castigating Alexander for his insatiable desire of conquest. 'You have no room in your heart for the service of God... all the world is not enough for you' (21). This topos, which one might call, after Tolstoy's story, 'How much land does a man need?' is certainly a Cynic topos, but it is enunciated also by the Indian sophists in Arrian's account of the meeting, which implies that it belonged to the original historical accounts.[13]

> King Alexander, each man possesses no more of this earth than the patch we stand on; yet you, though a man like other men, except of course that you are restless and presumptuous, are roaming over so wide an area away from what is your own, giving no rest to yourself or others. And very soon you too will die, and will possess no more of the earth than suffices for the burial of your own body.

Significantly, this speech is immediately followed in Arrian by a reference to Alexander's famous meeting with the Cynic Diogenes at the Isthmus. It should be noted, however, that this direct encounter of Alexander with the Brahmans is incompatible with Onesicritus' account in which he states that he was sent by Alexander to converse with the philosophers, and that Alexander did not meet with them directly. The abbreviated nature of the narrative in Arrian may be enough to account for this inconsistency.

From this point onwards we have another witness to the text in the form of a papyrus of the mid-second century A.D.[14] containing the remainder, in fragmentary form, of the meeting with Dandamis, followed by a letter of Heraclitus to Hermodorus about his treatment by the Ephesians. Both these works have been identified by their original editor as Cynic diatribai, and this is a description with

[9] Diod. Sic. xvi.92.2; xvii.49.4; xvii.103.7.
[10] Manu 6.49, 81.
[11] The phrase echoes that of Calanus in Philo, *Quod Omnis Probus Liber est* 96, which will be discussed further below.
[12] Manu 4.87f., 6.61, 12.16, 12.74f.
[13] Arr. Anab. vii.1.1.
[14] Note 2 above.

which I have no quarrel. The bedrock of Palladius is a Cynic text. It follows the Cynic model of the encounter of a philosopher with a king and purveys generally Cynic doctrine about the life according to nature. In summarizing the rest of Palladius' text I shall however draw attention to elements which seem to have Indian analogues and may derive from an earlier stratum than the Cynic treatment, as well as to Christian and other philosophic overlays.

Section 23 continues with a more general discussion of asceticism by Dandamis, who now asserts that God is within him and that if Alexander will live with him and hear him he will be wealthy. Here perhaps one hears the voice of the haughty Indian guru asserting his superiority over Western culture. Dandamis claims that he is not 'a grave of other creatures' (this metaphor will become prominent later) but receives food according to providence, who also gives him knowledge of the future. (In the papyrus this knowledge comes simply from God.) Dandamis continues by attacking Alexander for the destruction he wreaks around the world, states that if Alexander kills him he will go to God the maker of all things, and (30) will look down from heaven on Alexander suffering the evils he has heaped up for himself. This last item, which recalls the parable of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom looking down on Dives in hell, is not in the papyrus, which continues directly as Palladius does now, with Alexander admitting that what Dandamis says is true. The hero suffers a crisis of confidence, seeing himself enmeshed with plots by his companions, and involved in a fate he cannot escape. 'How shall I answer god who gave me this lot?' (34). He asks Dandamis to accept his gifts rather than dishonouring him. (The Brahman is enjoined by Manu[15] not to accept gifts from kings not of the ruler – Kshatriya – class.)

This passage is in marked contrast to the confident tone of Alexander's statement at this point in the Romance, that he goes on conquering because that is the way the world is made.

> For my part I would like to stop making war, but the master of my soul does not allow me. If we were all of like mind, the world would be devoid of activity: the sea would not be filled, the land would not be farmed, marriages would not be consummated, there would be no begetting of children. How many have become miserable and lost all their possessions as a result of my wars? But others have profited from the property of others. Everyone takes from everyone, and leaves what he has taken to others: no possession is permanent.

Then, in both the Romance and Palladius, Dandamis accepts oil from Alexander, and pours it into a fire. This is an entirely proper offering for a Brahman.[16] Alexander then departs.

Dandamis now (Palladius 41) embarks on a tirade against Calanus, the sage who deserted them, and repeats that the Brahmans will give an account of their lives to God; they despise the empty doxa of others, who do not care for the really good (τοῦ ὄντως καλοῦ, a very Platonic phrase).

At 45 Dandamis begins a long invective against the eating of meat, which is not represented in the papyrus because of its fragmentary state; we know that there was a discourse on this subject because the papyrus shares the opening phrases with the text of Palladius. However, it seems likely that Palladius has expanded greatly on what was in the papyrus. 45 states that it is wrong to kill animals, 46 attacks the practice of sacrifice, 47 attacks greed in general, 48 contains the very Cynic proposition that the mad are better off than the drunk, 49 inveighs against

[15] Manu 4.84; cf. 4.186, and 247–50 on acceptable alms.

[16] Manu 3.210; cf. 4.53 on the holiness of fire. The point is significant against those who think that the Brahmans of these texts are Jains, as Jains avoid the use of fire. P. Dundas, *The Jains* (1992), 44.

enslavement to the body, which is valueless compared to the soul (which might be a Buddhist thought[17] but could equally be regarded as what we call Manichaean), and 51 states that it is better to be fed to beasts than to eat them, a remark which certainly alludes to the wild-beast shows of the Roman empire and belongs to a second or third century A.D. context. Chapters 53ff. discuss the shortcomings of other philosophic schools, and conclude with a final invitation to Alexander (who, it should be remembered, left the scene at chapter 40), to come and live with the Brahmans.

What are we to make of this text? Not many scholars have studied this text, but nonetheless there are as many characterizations of its philosophic position as there are scholarly studies. Before the discovery of the Cynic papyrus it was assumed that Palladius' was simply a Christian text, though its precise orientation could and can be disputed: Berg sees it as a Gnostic text with Encratite elements, while Photiades interprets it as an Arian one.[18]

The question to be asked, however, is whether any of this need prevent the fundamental points being made from being Indian in origin. The argument could take two forms, the stronger of which proposes a direct influence of Indian asceticism on Christian asceticism. This view derives most of its support from the words of Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium heresiarum* VIII.7:

τίς ἡ πλανὴ τῶν 'Εγκρατίτων κενοδοξία, καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἐξ 'Αγίων Γραφῶν τὰ δόγματα αὐτῶν συνέστηκεν, ἀλλ' ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ παρ' 'Ινδοῖς Γυμνοσοφίστων

Hippolytus (fl. A.D. 234) was well informed about Brahmans, whose doctrine he described at some length in an earlier passage of the *refutatio* (I.24). There is no doubt that India and Indian ideas were becoming more familiar to the western world in the second and third centuries A.D. as a result of regular trading links and the visits of Indian ambassadors to the west as well as of Greek philosophers to the east.[19] Bardaisan of Edessa acquired a good deal of knowledge about Indian philosophy from a group of Indian ambassadors on their way to the court of Elagabalus;[20] while in the third century Plotinus is said to have embarked for India in the expedition of Gordian III in search of wisdom, though he had to abandon the journey: in this desire he was probably influenced by his teacher Ammonius Saccas, who may have been a Buddhist.[21] There is no reason to suppose that Hippolytus had to have direct access to the Upanishads to learn what he knew about Indian doctrines.

Hippolytus[22] attributes the origin of Encratite doctrines to the Brahmans. Now *ἐγκρατεία* is indeed a characteristic of the Brahmans as described by Greek writers. It is also a Cynic virtue. If Hippolytus was seeking a non-Christian origin for Encratitism, he need have looked no further than the Cynics.

The weaker form of the argument then would derive the Cynic ideas in the papyrus and Palladius from Indian origins. How far can this view be sustained? Among those

[17] Cf. D. M. Lang in [St John Damascene], *Barlaam and Ioasaph* (Loeb Classical Library, 1983), p. xvi.

[18] Berg, op. cit.; Photiades, op. cit. (n. 2).

[19] Jean W. Sedlar, *India and the Greek World* (Totowa, NJ, 1980), 167–99.

[20] On Bardaisan see H. J. W. Drijvers, *Bardaisan of Edessa* (Assen, 1966), 175, 218, and note 61 in my companion study (above n. 1). Other examples of India featuring in western thought and literature at this period are the *Acts of Thomas* and Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* – whose professed 'Indian' philosophy is really a 'spiritualized Pythagoreanism': Sedlar (op. cit. in n. 19), 195. See also Apuleius, *Florida* vi and vii.

[21] Porph. *Vit. Plot.* p. 8; Sedlar, op. cit. (n. 19), 199–207.

[22] As proposed by J. Filliozat, 'La doctrine des brahmanes d'après St Hippolyte', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 130 (1945), 64. Hippolytus' most likely source is Bardaisan. G. C. Hansen (op. cit. in n. 7), 361f., suggests that Hippolytus used a Gnostic version of *de Bragmanibus* for his account of Brahman lore: but there is a great deal in Hippolytus that is not in this work.

who emphasize the Cynic aspects there is considerable division between those who see it as pure Cynic doctrine[23] and those who allow that some Indian ideas may have penetrated the interpretative barrier and influenced what Onesicritus recorded.[24]

If we look back at what Strabo records of Onesicritus' account of his meeting,[25] there does seem to be a fairly close correspondence between that text and ours concerning the main elements: the avoidance of pleasure and pain; abstinence from meat; inquiry into natural phenomena including prognostics; the acceptance of oil alone as a gift; and the discussion of suicide by fire as practised by Calanus. There are two topics on which Palladius dilates at some length but which are not treated in the Alexander Romance at all. The first is in the invective against the renegade sophist Calanus and his death by fire, and the second is in the discourse on vegetarianism. Let us examine each to see how far the water of Brahman doctrine has run clear through the mud of intervening centuries and variant apologetic purposes.

I. CALANUS[26]

Strabo[27] cites the case of Calanus as an example of disagreement among the historians. 'Some state' that he went away with Alexander as a eulogiser of the king. Falling ill at Pasargadae, he had a pyre built and burnt himself to death. 'But Megasthenes says that suicide is not a dogma among the philosophers... Calanus was without self-control and a slave to the table of Alexander; and that therefore Calanus is censured, whereas Mandanis [the Dandamis of Palladius' text] is commended.' Arrian[28] echoes this description of Calanus as lacking in self-control. Onesicritus too[29] has Dandamis rebuke Calanus for his arrogance. Plutarch on the other hand offers no hint of criticism but rather makes Calanus the speaker of a parable about an ox-hide which is clearly meant to be taken as a wise one. In Philo[30] Calanus becomes a noble representative of the true philosophic attitude, and states that the philosophers generally burn themselves alive at the onset of old age, as an indication of their superiority to what troubles the body. In Strabo[31] Onesicritus has Mandanis argue for suicide by fire in cases of illness. Philo has conflated the deed of Calanus with the words of Mandanis and attributed the teaching to the former.

In Palladius (II.4; 11; 41) the criticism of Calanus is all directed at his greed in following Alexander's court. There is no mention of his self-inflicted death by fire, though a couple of fire-metaphors in chh. 4 and 41 hint at knowledge of the tradition.

Megasthenes was certainly right to say that suicide is not a regular feature of any kind of Indian ascetic discipline. Brahmans – or orthodox Hindus generally – are permitted by Manu to take their lives in case of sickness,[32] but suicide by fire is reserved for those who have killed a priest.[33] Jains indeed do regard death by fasting

[23] J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch: Alexander – A Commentary* (Oxford, 1969), 179; Claire Muckensturm, 'Les Gymnosophistes étaient-ils des cyniques modèles?' in M. O. Goulet-Cazé and R. Goulet (edd.), *Le Cynisme ancien et ses prolongements* (Paris, 1993), 225–39.

[24] Derrett (op. cit. in n. 5). Truesdell S. Brown, *Onesicritus* (Berkeley, 1949), chapter 2, argued (unconvincingly in my view) that Cynicism is of Indian origin. The position is lucidly rejected by Doyne Dawson, *Cities of the Gods* (Oxford, 1992), 128, who emphasizes the Pythagorean affinities of Cynicism. See additional note, p. 510.

[25] Str. 15.1.65.

[26] See in general J. McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great* (Bombay, 1896), 386–92.

[27] Str. 15.1.68.

[28] Arr. *Anab.* vii.2–3.

[29] Str. 15.1.2.

[30] *Quod Omnis Probus Liber est* 96; cf. *Vit. Abraham* 182.

[31] Str. 15.1.65.

[32] B. N. Puri, *India in Classical Greek Writings* (Ahmedabad, 1963), 84 n. 1.

[33] Manu 11.74.

as an ideal form of death: the practice is known as *sallekhana*[34] and is a religious act unconnected with any impulse from sickness; but Jain ascetics would not commit suicide by fire, since they are forbidden to kindle or use fire in any form.[35]

Nonetheless, Indian philosophers achieved some moderate notoriety in the world of the Roman Empire for their propensity to burn themselves to death. A notable example is the philosopher Zamorus or Zarmonochegas who came to Rome in the reign of Augustus, had himself initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, and then burnt himself to death.[36] The same practice was reported by Bardaisan as recorded in Stob. *Phys* 1.54 and Porphyry, *De Abst* IV.18.[37]

It is notable too that Cynics looked with approval on self-immolation, the best-known case being that of the philosopher Peregrinus whose death is the subject of Lucian, *De Morte Peregrini*. That being so, the Cynic Onesicritus perhaps had a tendency to approve those who committed suicide voluntarily. Diodorus[38] contains a description of the people of the Happy Island on the Equator, who drug themselves to death on reaching a certain age. This account is generally thought to derive from Onesicritus.[39]

In sum, the treatment of Calanus from the early sources to Palladius does seem to preserve a genuine Indian controversy over suicide by fire. Such suicide was certainly practised by some Indian ascetics, but the orthodox Hindu view would be opposed to it. This is the view that Megasthenes accurately reports. That there were accounts of Calanus of a different tendency is clear from the account in Philo which has Calanus praise suicide without any hint of controversiality. The known Cynic accounts (Onesicritus, the Geneva papyrus and Palladius) omit all reference to the burning and concentrate on abusing Calanus for his greed and arrogance. It would appear that the Cynic writers glossed over the suicide, which was not approved of by Hindus though it was by Cynics, and emphasized the aspects of the controversy in which Hindu and Cynic thought coincided. The Cynic writers provide us with genuine information which they have adapted to their own philosophical purposes. The Alexander Romance is not interested in such philosophical debate at all.

II. VEGETARIANISM

There is no doubt that Brahmans, in common with Buddhists, Jains and many other kinds of Indian ascetic, practised vegetarianism. Manu[40] makes quite clear that this is expected of the advanced Brahman, on grounds of non-violence. Acquiescence in the slaughter of animals will impede the progress of the Brahman to heaven or a higher life. At the same time Manu does not altogether forbid the eating of meat to those who feel the need for it. His position seems somewhat contradictory, in part no doubt because he could not openly flout the Brahman custom of animal sacrifice, which had somehow to be found a place in the system. So he declares that there is

[34] P. Dundas, *The Jains* (London, 1992), 155f. [35] Dundas 138.

[36] Dio 54.9; Str. 15.1.73, deriving from Nicolaus of Damascus (McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature* 78 nn.). Other examples: Cic. *TD* v.27(= McCrindle, op. cit. 68 n. 1); Pomponius Mela iii.7.40. See Anton van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-killing in Classical Antiquity* (London, 1990), 38; though no discussion is offered.

[37] McCrindle (op. cit. in n. 26), 167ff., 170. [38] Diod. Sic. ii.57.

[39] Truesdell S. Brown, *Onesicritus* (Berkeley, 1949), ch. 2. The motif recurs in a Christian work, *The Narrative of Zosimus* (Ante Nicene Fathers add. vol. ii.219–24), and seems to have been a topos of Cynic utopias. For a recent study of this work see Chris Knights, '"The Story of Zosimus" or "The History of the Rechabites"?', *Jnl for the Study of Judaism* 24 (1993), 235–245. [40] Manu 5.33, 45, 54–6.

equivalent virtue in abstaining from meat and in making a horse-sacrifice annually for a hundred years.

The Greeks knew that many Indians, especially 'philosophers,' practised vegetarianism, and knew also that one reason adduced was the doctrine of reincarnation; you might be eating your grandmother. This is a belief characteristic of the Jains and is not emphasized by Manu. Some also believed that Pythagoras had learnt vegetarianism from Indian philosophers.[41] It seems likely, however, that a Greek would not need to go to India to hit on the idea that vegetarianism might be meritorious, and in fact the variety of arguments adduced for it in various Greek texts suggests that Greek philosophers were quite capable of thinking up their own justifications for their preferred course of life. It is important to note the difference between the Greek and Indian motives for vegetarianism: whereas Hindus practise vegetarianism as part of asceticism to loosen their ties to the body and to promote their own holiness, Cynics practise it (when they do) as means of attaining *ataraxia*.[42]

The main justifications put forward for vegetarianism in the speech of Dandamis in Palladius are as follows.

1. It is wrong to kill animals, and to use (exploit) them.
2. You make yourselves into graves of beasts, buckets full of rotting limbs.[43] This is revolting, and if you were to leave off meat for two days you would not be able to bear its smell.
3. In fattening your body you attenuate your soul.
4. You make yourselves worse than the animals, because you fail to choose a vegetable diet. Even wolves would eat fruit if their constitutions would allow. You should imitate grazing beasts.
5. Sacrifices are very expensive.
6. You indulge your greed.
7. Your greed makes you ill.

None of these arguments is very well-expressed philosophically, but the moral position of the speaker is reasonably clear. It seems that a similar argument appeared in the papyrus, though probably in a shorter form.[44] All that is preserved in columns V and VI is the assertion that 'you kill animals' and, after a long gap, remarks on the Brahmans' abstention from drinks other than water, which conclude the vegetarian section in Palladius.

The first thing that should be said is that there is little that is obviously Cynic about these arguments. The suggestion that men should live like grazing beasts seems in accord with the Cynic advocacy of a life according to Nature; but even Diogenes

[41] Apul. *Flor.* 15. John Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World* (1975), 47 and 64 accepts this chain of influence. A more sceptical view is taken by Sedlar (op. cit. in n. 19), chapters 1–5. Daniel A. Dombrowski, *The Philosophy of Vegetarianism* (Amherst, 1984; reissued as *Vegetarianism: the Philosophy Behind the Ethical Diet*, Wellingborough, 1985) 35–54 points rather to the influence of Egyptian priests and 'Orphics' (on whose non-existence see M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems* [Oxford, 1983]). Iamblichus, *de Vit. Pyth.* offers no source for Pythagoras' views. See also note 63.

[42] The same point is made by Paul Pedech, *Historiens compagnons d'Alexandre* (Paris, 1984), 114. Cf. Doyne Dawson (op. cit. in n. 24), 132: the Cynic's aim is not to eliminate desire but to control it. Dawson remarks (124) that the passage of Strabo where Onesicritus derives from Mandanis' remarks the idea that freedom from pleasure and pain is to be aimed at, is one of the clearest pieces of Cynicism in the encounter.

[43] The phraseology is rather strikingly echoed by Ovid, *Met.* xv. 88–95 in his account of the Pythagorean objection to meat-eating: *heu! quantum scelus est, in viscere viscera condi / congestoque avidum pinguescere corpore corpus / alteriusque animantem animantis vivere leto!*...

[44] Cf. Berg (op. cit. in n. 3), 288.

must have realised that wolves live no less naturally than cattle. In fact, Diogenes is not generally regarded as a vegetarian; many sources record that he met his death through a demonstration of a different kind of indifference to man's limitations, namely by trying to eat a raw octopus.[45]

The arguments are disappointing in comparison with those of two other writers who wrote in praise of vegetarianism, Plutarch and Porphyry, who consider it for its moral effects on the practitioner as well as in the light of possible human duties to animals.

Plutarch's *On the Eating of Meat* begins with an expression of the revoltingness of dead meat and the statement that it is unnatural for men to eat meat. The bulk of his discourse is devoted to the interesting proposal that the slaughter of animals is morally damaging to the slaughterer; abstinence from meat is a training in kindness and in avoidance of extravagance and waste; the second essay puts forward the view that slaughter sets one on the path to tyranny. He also considers the possibility of metempsychosis, drawing on the ideas of Empedocles, and before the fragment breaks off he is considering whether men in fact have a compact with animals – Do Animals have Rights? Seneca also favoured vegetarianism but, perhaps surprisingly, never associated it with opposition to animal shows.[46]

Porphyry's *On Abstinence* contains in Book IV a review of the practice of abstinence in many foreign peoples, including the Indian Gymnosophists, his information on whom derives from Bardaisan of Edessa who probably had first hand information as well as knowing the work of Megasthenes.[47] The fact that Porphyry is so explicit about the teachings of different schools shows that his own view is essentially eclectic. His main arguments in Books I and II are that vegetarianism is good for you, and especially good for philosophers; and that sacrifice is acceptable but because we sacrifice animals we do not therefore have to eat them, especially not if we are philosophers. In Book III, having shown that the eating of meat does not contribute to temperance, frugality, piety or the theoretic life, he goes on to consider the rights of animals and the question whether we can use them. He also discusses the sagacity of animals, in which respect they resemble us, and argues that it is justice to deprive oneself of bodily things and so become more like God.

The sophistication and eclecticism of Porphyry's argument in particular show how little is really on offer in Palladius. Nevertheless, the existence of these texts and the wide range of sources mentioned by Porphyry are sufficient to suggest that Palladius' diatribe could have been developed entirely in Greek circles, though not necessarily Cynic ones.[48] Dombrowski remarks that Porphyry's gymnosophists sound remarkably like Neoplatonists![49] The diatribe has been attributed to the Brahmans because of their known vegetarianism, though it does not preserve Brahmanical ideas, and attached to a predominantly Cynic account of the Brahmans.

Can we be more precise about the philosophical affiliations of the vegetarian doctrine in our texts? Vegetarianism in general is a Utopian idea in Greek and Roman literature, and associated with ideas of the Golden Age.[50] Utopian writings became

[45] Farrand Sayre, *Diogenes of Sinope* (1938), 88f.: Stob. 3.98.9 from Sotades; DL 6.34, 6.76; Athen. 8.341 et al. mult.

[46] Ep. 108; Dombrowski (op. cit. in n. 41), 80, 85.

[47] See above note 22 and my companion study (op. cit. in n. 1).

[48] There are some general remarks on Porphyry in Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast* (1992), ch. 4, pp. 104–7, a discussion which, however, mentions neither the Cynics nor Palladius.

[49] Dombrowski 119.

[50] A. D. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York, 1965), 117–52, esp. 145–51. Dombrowski (op. cit. in n. 41). It is associated also with the Scythians: Ferguson (op. cit. in n. 40), 18.

a common genre in the Hellenistic age, and many of the Utopias described have one or more features in common with the life of the Brahmans: for example, the Utopian world described by Dionysius Scytobrachion practises no growing of corn: its inhabitants eat only what the earth freely provides.[51] This was also a Cynic doctrine, represented for example in the Letters of Anacharsis.[52] It is also presented as the practice of the Brahmans in the Alexander Romance and the other texts.

Another feature of Hellenistic Utopias is that they were commonly located at the edges of the earth – either far off among the Scythians or in a legendary land like the Meropis of Theopompus[53] or the Happy Land of Iambulus.[54] Euhemerus located his Utopia, the Sacred Isles (modelled on Homer's Phaeacia) well beyond South Arabia and near to Ocean.[55] The fact that the Brahmans likewise lived at the edges of the known earth made them a natural vehicle for Utopian ideas.[56] In fact, as the edges of the known world receded, the Brahmans moved to follow them: once the Ganges was better known, writers began to locate them on the Ganges and not at Taxila at all,[57] and in Christian writers they are found to be the last stop before the Earthly Paradise.[58]

Many of the Hellenistic Utopias are Cynic in inspiration,[59] so that it was natural for a Cynic writer to use the Brahmans as the vehicle for his ideas on vegetarianism. The discussion in our texts, then, though it rests on the known vegetarianism of Indian ascetics, uses them purely to put forward Greek ideas on the subject, and we cannot deduce from them anything about Indian beliefs, which in fact they often contradict.

However, neither Cynics nor Pythagoreans were necessarily vegetarians.[60] The texts we are dealing with seem then to be a Cynic text with a particular vegetarian edge. Several of the points made have a definitely Christian quality (notably the passages about wild beast shows).[61] We should conclude, then, that the papyrus version of the text probably contained less detail about vegetarianism than Palladius: Palladius has added ideas of his own, but they have equally little to do with India.

The only passages of Palladius, then, which are not a recollection of Indian teaching are precisely those which have no correlative in the Alexander Romance. Everything in the Romance can be correlated to Brahman ideas and suggests that, as

[51] Scytobrachion: Diod. Sic. iii.53.4–6 (*FGrH* 32.7).

[52] Anacharsis, *Ep.* 9, p. 48. 29f. Malherbe: *γῆν ἔχομεν πᾶσαν πάντες. ὅσα δίδωσιν ἔκουσα, λαμβάνομεν, ὅσα κρύπτει, χαίρειν ἐῶμεν.* See in general J. F. Kindstrand, *Anacharsis: the Legend and the Apophthegmata* (Uppsala, 1981).

[53] Theopompus: *FGrH* 115F75.

[54] Iambulus: Diod. Sic. ii.57. For a speculative argument for Iambulus' influence on the Essenes, see D. Mendels, 'Hellenistic Utopias and the Essenes', *Harv. Theol. Rev.* 72 (1979), 207–22.

[55] *FGrH* 63.1.30ff. (= Diod. Sic. v.41.4ff.): Ferguson (op. cit. in n. 40), 110–12.

[56] E.g. Dio Chrysostom 35.18–24; translation in McCrindle (op. cit. in n. 26), 174–7.

[57] Philostratus, *Vit.Ap.Ty.* for example.

[58] *Narrative of Zosimus* (above n. 39); Cosmas Indicopleustes II.96.

[59] Doyne Dawson (op. cit. in n. 24, 172) sees Iambulus and Euhemerus as primarily Stoic in inspiration, inasmuch as Cynics were opposed to any kind of state, even a utopian one. But it must be admitted that Cynic ideas on 'the natural life' were an important component of Stoicism, and it is this strand which is to the fore in these utopias.

[60] Dombrowski (op. cit. in n. 41), 39–41 gives the data on the Pythagoreans. On Cynics, see the remarks about Diogenes above.

[61] Some Christian writers felt uneasy about meat-eating. Clement, *Strom.* 7.32 claimed that pagan sacrifice was an invention of mankind to excuse the eating of flesh. Tertullian, *De jejunio* 9 praised the simple bread-and-vegetables diet of Daniel and Elijah. There is some general discussion of this subject, with several incorrect references, in Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast* (1993), ch. 5, 108–29.

in so many other instances, the Romance preserves a core of historical fact in a confused and disordered form – as if the author was writing from memory, and a poor memory at that. The discussion about vegetarianism and the controversy about Calanus derive from Cynic writings composed with knowledge of, but independently of, the historical accounts of Alexander. Palladius' work is a composite based on Cynic writings which in turn drew on the account in the Alexander Romance among other texts concerning Alexander and the Brahmans. An additional Christianizing layer has been added in the text as we have it, making it a Christian protreptic to the monastic life.

This conclusion might make us wonder, again, whether the ascription of parts B and C of Palladius to Arrian is really compatible with that author's historical or philosophical principles. The doubt about its philosophical appropriateness could be assuaged by regarding the opusculum as an early work of Arrian, in a Cynic phase before his thinking developed into a (perhaps) more 'mature' Stoicism; but as a historian Arrian is generally agreed to have been seeking to report accurately rather than to embroider his narrative with rhetorical topoi.[62] The question of Arrian's alleged authorship must be left open.[63] [64]

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[62] See however A. B. Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander* (Oxford, 1988), for some scepticism about this valuation of Arrian: he emphasizes the role of rhetorical models in certain parts of the *Anabasis*.

[63] Some of the ideas in this article were influenced by Richard Sorabji's lectures on vegetarianism in antiquity; his book *Animal Minds and Human Morals* (London, 1993) unfortunately appeared too late for detailed citation in this article. See esp. chh. 13 and 14 on Pythagorean, Neoplatonic and Christian attitudes to sacrifice and meat-eating.

[64] Addition to n. 24: Daniel H. H. Ingalls, 'Cynics and Pasupatas: the seeking of dishonor' (*Harv. Theol. Rev.* 55 (1962), 281–98, considers the possible origins of some aspects of Cynic asceticism in an ancient Indian cult of Shiva, and suggests that the Cynic ways may be a parallel development to Indian practices, from the same ancient origin.