Republics in Greeks Writers
8. Republics in Greek writers

Next to the Buddhist literature, the writings of classical writers may be an important source of information of Republics. They clearly demonstrate the existence of the non-monarchical forms of government, both aristocratic, at the end of 4th century B.C.; when the Mauryan Empire was making. Magasthanese lived some times in India & as a Greek politician must be presumed to have possessed definite knowledge regarding the distinction between aristocratic & democratic forms of government. We ought not therefore hastate to accept this statement, that most of the cities in his time adopted the democratic form of government.¹

Magasthanese records the contemporary Hindu tradition that monarchy was the earliest form of organized form of government in India.² The McCodonian writers who comes with Alexandra’s. The great distinguish between monarchical & republican states which may be aristocratic or ‘free’ or autonomous or independent. While describing the duties of official Magasthanese says that they report everything to the king or the Magistrate where the people have a king and to the Magasthanese where the people are self government.³

The councilors of state who advice the king or the magistrate of self governed cities in the management of public affairs—⁴ Narrating the empire & civilized it.”

Magasthanese records to Indian tradition regarding Heracles thus: “They further assert that Hercules was born among them his descendants having reined for many generations and signalized themselves by great achievements. At last, however after many years had gone most of the cities adopted democratic form of government?⁵” Magasthanese further records
another Indian tradition that "form the times of Dionysus to Sandrocottus, the Indian counted 153 kings and a period of 6042 years; among these a republic was trice established."

In this champing against India, Alexander came across the following republics and his writers have finished a detail of these

**The Kathaians:**- These were the strongest nations of India and, "they enjoyed the highest reputation for courage and skill in the art of war." Their men & woman married by choice and costume of Sati was prevalent among them. According to Strabo "the handsome man chosen as king among them."

The Kathanian have been identified with the Kathas or Kathakas, the famous author of Kathopnisad by Dr. Jolly and K.P. Jayaswal. They have also been identified with Kantha or Kartha. Strabo points out them. Some writers pace Cathai and country of Soeithes, some of the monarchy in the tract between the river Hydapes and Acesines (i.e. Jhelum and Chanab); some on the other side of the Acesines and of the Hydraotes (i.e. Chenab & Ravi) on the confines of the territory of the other Poros, the nephew of Poros who was taken prisoner by Alexander.

Alexander comes across many other states, most likely republicans, on the bank of Ravi.

**Adrestai:**- From the way of Ravi with their capital at what the Greek writer called Pimprama were the community spelt as Adrestai, Adraistai & Adaestae. European scholars identified them with Arishthas of Panini and Gana-Patha. Arrian mentions two other republics without giving their name.
One more republic is described by Arrian. "It was reported that the country beyond the Hypasis was exceedingly fertile, & the inhabitants were good agriculturists, brave in war living under the excellent system of internal government, for the multitude was governed by the moderation." Strabo refers to tradition of same country.

**The Siboi:** They were friendly neighbors of another famous republics ‘Malloi’. They lived in the lower part of Rechna Doab in Sharkot region of the present district of Jhang, below the junction of the Jhelum & Chenab. A majority of scholars identify them with Siva people in Rigveda, where their defeat at the hand of Sudas is described. A Saibya is mentioned in the Aitareya Brahmana. The Ummadanti Jataka, Vessantara Jataka and the Sivi Jataka mention the Sivi (Sibi) country and its cities Aritthapura & Jetuttara.

The king Sivi Ausinara is mentioned in the Anu Kramani of Rigveda & Baudhayan Sutra. According to the Epics & purana tradition king usinara had five sons including Sivi each one of them founded a city. The city founded was named Sivipura. Ausinara become legendary for his kindness, piety & other virtues. The hawk & pigeon story enshrines the name of this king & spirit of self sacrifice. But in Drona Pravan Sivi’s father Usinara is the hero of the history.

**The Sudarace or oxydrate:** It is evident from the accounts curtius and Diodorus that they were the neighbors of the Siboi and the Agalassoi. They occupied a part of the territory below the confluence of the Jhelum and Chenab (in Montgomery district). In Sanskrit literature they were identified as Kshudrakas. They have confederation with Mallois. The alliance was cemented by 10,000 inter marriages. Dr. B.C. Law pointed out the contradictory statement regarding the pact between Oxydraki & Malloi.
According to Dr. A.S. Alteker the confederation was lasted for about a century. Panini mentions the Kshudrakas & Malavas seperatly. Patanjali refers to the victories of Kshudrakas which they themselves had won. The Mahabharata mention the Kshudrakas & the Malavas together.

The Malloi:- While returning Alexander first reached the nation called the Malloi. The Malloi have been unanimously identified with Malavas. Although it is certain that the Malavas were occupying a territory in the Punjab at the Alexander's invasion, yet there some difference of opinion about the exact location. Smith places their country below the confluence of Hydapes (Jhelum) & Akesines (Chenab) i.e. in Jhang and Montgomery district. According to McCrindle, their territory lay between the doab of Akesis and Hydrotees (Chenab and Ravi) and the confluence of Indus and Akerince (Multan and Montgomery districts). The Mahabharata puts them in the Punjab with the Sibis and Trigarata. Rapson thinks that they were two tribes of this name. But most of the scholars believe that they migrated to Rajasthan.

Panini dose not mention them by name but in one of his Sutras, he designated certain as an Ayudhajivi Samghas. Commenting on this Sutra, Kasika includes the Malavas and Kshudrakas. However, Patanjali actually mentions them by name. Malloi is also mention in Divyavadan. In the great Bharata war they fought for the Kaurvas. Arrian calls them race of independent Indians.

It was in siege of the capital of the Molloi that Alexander nearly lost being fatally injured by a barbed arrow. This city has wrongly assigned by Diodorus and Curtius to the Oxydrakai, but Arrian and Plutarch clearly state that the city belonged to the Malloi and not to oxydraki. The Macedonian & the Greek writers assert that the enlarged Macedonian army
crushed and annihilated them & razed their utatles to dust & neither woman nor children escaped the diabolical slaughter. But these hyperbolic claims of classical writers appear grossly exaggerated, because when Alexander celebrated his victories after leaving India, Malloi and Oxydratai- the two nation’- ‘hundred ambassadors’.

Dr. Jayaswal thinks that the Malloi and the Nagas were enthiknically connected. In Nalanda Inscriptions of 226A.D. It is mention that Malavas were the descendants of Ikshvaku. According to Dr. D.C. Sircar the name of Malavas like that of the Malaya mountain range, is probably derived from the Dravidian word ‘Maloi’ meaning hill. R.O. Doughas Opines that ‘Malaya’ was the older from of the tribal name 7 it was derived from the name of the king ‘Mala’. According to S.K. Chakraborty. “Mala’ was the name of the founder of the Malava tribe.

The Abastonoi:- Diodorus calls them the Samabastai, Arrian, Abastanoiu, Curtius Subarace and Orocius, Subagre. Their territory lay below the Malava country, above the confluence of Chenab & the Indus, on the bank of lower Chenab. They have been identified with Sanskrit Ambasathas almost unanimously by the scholars. The Aitareya Brahmaṇa mentions an Ambastha king whose priest was Narada.

The Mahabharata places them along with Malavas, Sivas, Kshudrakas and other north-western tribes. In Puranas they are mentioned as a Avana Kshatriyas the kinsmen of Sivis. In Bashaspatya Arthasastra, the Ambastha country is mentioned in conjunction in Sindh. In the Ambatha Suta of Digha Nikaya, An Ambattha is called Brahmana. A Jataka describes them as a formers. In Smiriti literature their parents were mixed of Brahmana & Vaishya. Manu described them as Physicians. According to the Dr. B.C. Law ‘an elephant
driver, a Kshatriya a ‘mixed caste was called Ambastha Majumdar\textsuperscript{57} calls them ‘Brahma Kshatriyas’. They seem to have changed their constitution from monarchical to republican one.

Diodorus states that “they were a people inferior to none in India, either for numbers or for bravery.\textsuperscript{58} Curtius refers to them as a powerful Indian tribe where the form of government was democratic & not regal”.

**The Xanthri & the Ossadioi:** In sanskrit\textsuperscript{60} literature they were identified with Kshatriya. Man treated them as a mixed origin according to Saint Martius. In Mahabharata the Ossadioi was identified with Vasati. The Mahabharata associates them with the Sibis and Sindhu-Sauviras of lower Indus Valley. Ptolemy also mentions the Xathroi.\textsuperscript{61} Dr. Raychandhary believes that this territory was established in Ravi & Indus on lower Chanab.\textsuperscript{62}

**The Sudrai (Soqodoi) and the Massanoi:** In Sanskrit literature Sadaroi was identified as a Sudra tribe. According to the Greek writers their capital ‘Basileion’ stood on the Indus. Here Alexander founded another Alexandria after getting their submission. They were defeated with Masssanoi. Patanjali mentions them Abhiras. During Nakula’s western campaign he defeated Abhiras at the river Saravasti Vanishes in to desert.\textsuperscript{63}

**The Mousikonos (Musicani):** Its capital was Alor in Sukkur district. According to Strabo, they were most opulent in India; citizen took their meals in common & did not the institution of slavery.\textsuperscript{64}

**The Brachmanoi:** In the ‘nation called Brachmanoi\textsuperscript{65} the Brahmans exercised considerable influence. Dr. Jayaswal identified them Brahmanakas mentioned by Panini.\textsuperscript{66} These Brahmana
republican were imbued with burning patriotism although they were a people given to
Philosophy.

**The Phegelas**67:- In Sanskrit literature it is mentioned as Bhagala.68

**The Glausai or Gdaukanikoi**69:- Dr. Jayaswal identified with the Glauchukaynakas of Kasika.70

Alexandra’s Invasion did not only cover the whole Punjab but majority of the states with whom
Alexander came in contact were non-monarchical or republican. They were only few monarchies
like those of Pores and Abhiras.71 Plutarch further states that ‘Alexander then not only reinstated
Pores in his kingdom with the little of Satrap, but added a large province to it subduing the
inhabitants whose form of government was republican.71

Flick, however dines that there were republican states in the times of Magasthanese.

Dr. R.C. Majumdar emphatically and rightly refuses the contention of Fick.72

In the 4th cent. B.C. the non-monarchical form of government was more popular in
Punjab them the monarchical one.73 These republicans were martial in character, gave a very
stout, robust and determined resistance to monarchical Invader.

**Republics in Greek Writers: A Constitutional Survey**:- It have been noticed that we have
various type of constitution. We have for instance, the democracy of the Ambassthas. The
democratic tradition are found in Ambassthas and having a second house composed of elected
elders. They elected their generals also. Apparently, every man in the community had direct
franchise, the Greek calling the constitution a democracy.
The Kshudrakas and Malavas who had no ‘king’, ‘Counsel’ as they sent 100 or 150 representative to negotiate the treaty of peace.

In the constitution of Kathians or the Kathus we find as a elected ‘king’. In this state children were born to their parents as citizen first and individuals after wards, the state deciding as to which of the prospective citizens were perfect in ‘limbs and features’ and which of them should be allow growing in to Manhood. (Diodorus, XCI). The Saubhuta constitution was similar. In these states, man was really a political animal. The individual existed for the state. To seem the life of the group, the individual sacrificed himself and his sentiments as father and mother.

The constitution, like that of Patala, which provided for the election of a king, council, was what Kautilya calls a ‘Rajasabdopjvibnah Samgha’ a republic which recognized the title of ‘Rajan.74 Such elected ‘Kings’ also obtain amongst the Lichchavis. The elected king was not necessarily the leader of the army. Amongst the Lichchavis, the leadership of the army vested in another elected chief called Senapati (General). An elected ‘king’ president was the feature of the Sakayan constitution.

In the constitution of the Patala the “council of elders” ruled. They had two so called ‘kings’ heredity in two families, for the purposes of command in war only. Heredity, ‘royal’ families in republican bodies is also mentioned. In Mahabharata.75 The Patala king was elected by the whole community. The constitution of Patala was mixed i.e. aristocracy and democracy. The ultimate political authority in all these cases rested with the Gana or Samgha.
The executive authority in these republics it was in some constitutions delegated to a second chamber or the house of the elders, while in others these are indication that it remained with the general Gana or parliament. According to the Greek writers the council of elders at Patala had the supreme authority, and the Ambasthas listened to the advice of second house. They were Vridhamans which are mentioned in Mahabharata.

The Kshudrakas-Malavas seems to have followed the non-delegation system. The Government of the city-states in Punjab is taken by Greek writers to have as a rule democratic'. "At last after many generations had come & gone, the sovereignty, it is saved; was dissolved and democratic form of government was set up in the cities."\(^{76}\)

"Most of the cities adopted the democratic form of Government, though same retained the kingly, until the invasion of the country by 'Alexender."\(^{77}\) The Greek writer also describes the aristocratic type of democracy. In which the power held by a few families the rulers were the subject of Gana they have described as aristocratic. For example state the other side of Hupanis (Beas). This had a gana or parliament of 5000 members. Yet it was called aristocratic. "For the multitude was governed by the aristocracy, who exercised their authority with justice & moderation." It was according to the Greek view. An excellent system of internal government. The Gana of 5000 was not a direct assembly for only those was entitled to sit there who furnished the state with an elephant. This was an essential qualification for seat to Gana. The population of state was composed of 'good agriculturist and man brave in war. Every agriculturist & every fighter could not have an elephant. Evidently the elephant men represented the 'no-elephant' men. This mixed type of constitution found in Patala constitution. The heredity
'kings' were under the control of the house of elders. It was an aristocratic in form but democracy in spirit.

The large number of 5,000 by Greeks is not without parallel in India culture, the Jatakas describes in Lichchavis as having 7,707 kinglets-Rajakas). Their rules were mixed of poor and rich people; who used to gather in the usual assembly in the House of Law on the call of tocsin. Probably, all they did not attend as they do not do in modern parliaments.

**Critism:-** It is evident from the Dinosyo. Dionysus and Heracles tradition recorded by Magasthenese that the non-monarchical form of government was established after the monarchial form had existed for centuries.

The Greek call it democratic expressly. They use the term 'republican' almost synonymously. Arrian recorded two inferences-firstly heredity was involved in these states which was monarchial or republican. Secondly, the republican president was called magistrate by the Greek. He might have magisterial power and not regal, being subject to the sovereign assembly.

The classical writers recorded the 100 & internal ground of sphytes and trans-Beas republics. In the background of their mature political wisdom & a legacy of political of insight and sagacity, this almost ecstatic and a legacy of political relevant. They appreciated their justice & moderation in particular.

The Malloi, oxydratkai, Brachmanoi and city of Nysa were the lovers of freedom and liberty & were eager to defend it at all costs.
While the sabacae constitution has been expressly described as democratic, the constitution of the unnamed trans Beas them. The two aristocratic were ruled by the governing bodies of 5000 & 300 respectively. How these members were elected or selected & how their president or selected is not given.

Since, Sabacae elected their president to face Alexander. Dr. Alterkar infers the election of president for specific president.\textsuperscript{80}

Greek writers have not furnished any distinguishing features of the democracies and aristocracies. Since, they clearly distinguish between the two, there must been same difference. In the case of aristocracies the exact number of their governing body is given, but in his case of democracies it not given. It is evident from the description of the city-state of Nyasa that they (members of aristocracies) were considered as a best man. They may have been identical with the counselors of state who advised the magistrate (President) of the republics on the matter of management of public affairs.\textsuperscript{81}

Dr. Majumdar describes the aristocracies as Oligarchies.\textsuperscript{82} According to Dr. Jayaswal although essentially democratic, they had hereditary kings. He identifies this type of constitution with the Kulasamghas of Kautilya and Rajkulas of the Mahabharata.\textsuperscript{83}

Dr. Beri praised have spectacle approach with the evidence of classical writers. He thinks that the classical writer have a Hellenic approach (i.e. the prevalent democratic form of polity) in their description of early India. This doubt of Dr. Beni Prasad is not altogether unfounded, because we have been seen that while describing the Sophytes & the Kathaian constitution, these writers refers to the custom of chalet, king (ugly & deformed children were
killed). Since this is uncorroborated by Indian evidence for state at any time, it appears to be purely a reflection of their Spartan constitution.

But the doubt of Prasad is only partly correct. Most of the classical writers appear to be authentic and reliable. The Greek writers had a highly developed sense & the knowledge of state institutions. In this background their entire account can not be rejected as Hellenic projection.

Notes & References

1- McCrindle’s tradition, Page 40.
2- McCrindle’s – Magasthanese & Arrian, Page 200.
3- Ibid XII.
4- Ibid, Page 212.
5- Ancient India as Described by Magasthanese & Arrian, Page 38.
6- McCrindle: The Indica of Arrian Ch. IX, Page 203.
7- Arrian: Anabasis V, 22 II, Pages 115.
8- Starbo XV, 30; McCrindle: Ancient India as Described by classical writers, Page 38

11- Panini II 4, 20.

12-Mahabharata VIII, 85, 16 (Bl. R.).

13-Hamilton and Falconer’s Translation of Strabo’s Geography III, Page 92.

14-Arrian, V 21; McCrindle: Invasion of India by Alexander, Page 116.

15-Panini VI, 2.100.

16-Gana – Patha on Panini IV, 2.75.

17-Arrian V, 25; McCrindle: Invasion of India by Alexander.

18-Curtius, IX.14.

19-McCrindle: Invasion of India by Alexander.

20-Raychandhari, H.C.: Political History of Ancient India, Page, 252

Sastri K.A.N. comprehensive History of India II, Page 120.

21-Rgveda VII 18, 7; Vedic Index, vol. I, Page 381-382.

22-Aitareya Brahmans VIII, 23; Vedic Index I, 31.
23-Jataka No. 527.

24-Jataka No. 547.

25-Rgveda, X, 119.

26-Baudhayana Srauta III, Page 53, 22.

27-Law B.C.: Tribes in Ancient India, Page 84.

28-Mahabharata III Page 6, 207; XIII, 67; XIV 90 (Bl.R.).

29-Mahabharata, Arona Pravan, Ch. 130, 131 (Bl.R).


31-Mahabharata II 52, 15 VII, 68-69 (Bl.R).

32-Dr. Law B.C.: Tribes in Ancient India, Page 61.


34-Panini, IV, 2, 45.

35-Curtius IX.4.

36-Smith J.A.R.S. 1903, Page 631.

38-Mahabharata Sabha Pravan XXXII 7, (Bl.R.).


40-Law B.C. Tribes in Ancient India, Page 62.

41-Panini V, 3, 117.

42-Patanjali IV 1, 68.

43- Mahabharata VI 59, 135 (Bl.R.), Smith: Early History of India (1914), Page 94 notes.

44-Arrian, VI. 6.


46 - Sircar D.C.: The Age of Imperial unity, Page 163.

47- Doughlas R.O. J.A.S.B. No. Supp XXXVII, Page 45-N.


50- Mahabharata Shanti Pravan XXXII, 7.95 L.11-14-15 (Bl.R.).

51- Pargiter A.I.H.T., Page 108-09.


54- Jataka; IV, Page 363.

55- Manu; X.47.


57- Cunningham A.G.I. notes, Page 670.

58- Diodorus, XVII, 102; McCrindle: Alexander, Page 292.


60- McCrindle: Invasion of India by Alexander, Page 156.

61- Mahabharata VI – 51 – 14 (Bl.R.).


63- Mahabharata Shabha Pravan LXII, 1 (Bl.R.).

64- Strabo XV- 34, McCrindle: Ancient India as Described in classical Literature, Page 41.

65- Arrian VI, 16: Diodorus, XVII, C, 11.


68- GanaPatha on Panini, IV, 2, 80.

69- McCrindle: Alexander, Page 111.

70- Majumdar R.C. Corporate life in Ancient India, Page 209.

71- Majumdar R.C. Corporate life in Ancient India, Page 236-237.

72- Ibid, Page 239.

73- It was probably a constitution of the sort which prevailed amongst the Kunidas, a state was probably whose coins were struck in the name of the king and the political community. Their king is always mentioned there as ‘Amoghabhuti’ of unfailing prosperity; and the scene application appears for centuries (150 B.C. to 100 A.D.); this was an official title and not a personal name (as wrongly interpreted by numismatics). V. Smith (C.I.M. vol II PP. 161-167). The leader of the Gana of the V. Mihira Br. S. IV.24 (Kaulindan Gunapungavan); XIV.

30, 32. Ptolemy had Kulindrine; the Vishnu. Kulindras and
Markendeya Puranas. Kaulinda Cunningham C.A.I.71. Their coins are found between Ambala and Saharanpur. Their proposed identification with Kunets (which ought to be kanets) of Simla hills (A.S.R., XIV P. 120) is doubtful.

74- Ch. XIV below.

75- Diodorus III, 38, McCrindle Magasthanese, Page 38.


80- Alteker A.S. State & Govt. in Ancient India, Page 126.

81- Alteker A.S. – State & Govt. in Ancient India, Page 212.

82- McCrindle: Magasthanese and Arrian, Page 133.

83- Majumdar R.C.: Corporate life, Page 246-249.

84- Beni Prasad: State in Ancient India, Page (168-169).