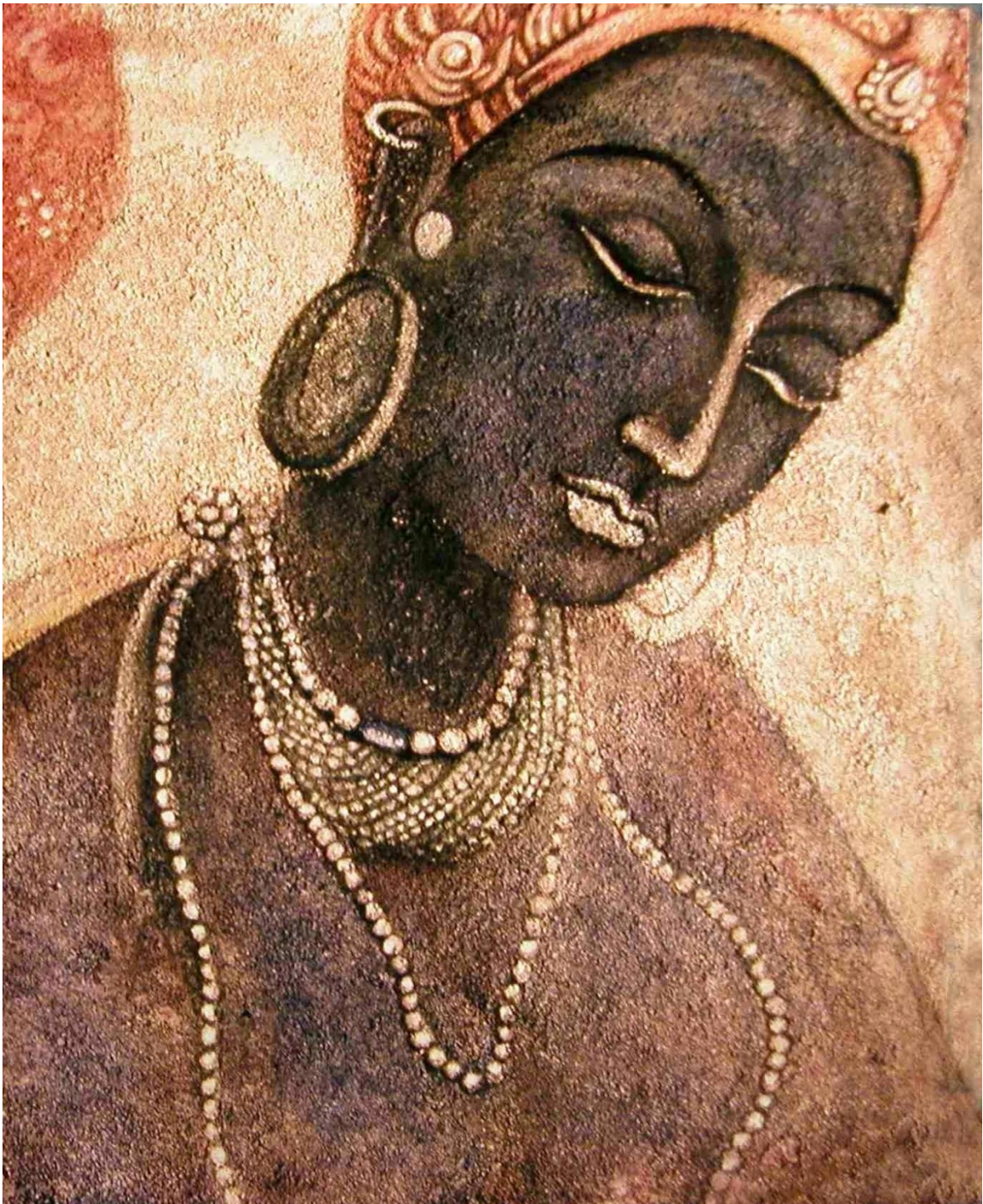


Important Dates in Indian History



Greek chronology is too defective, too bombastic, and too diametrically opposed to fact, to inspire with confidence anyone less prejudiced than the average European Orientalist. If one fact more than another has been set at rest by comparative mythology, it is that their fundamental religious ideas, and most of their gods were derived from religions flourishing in the northwest of India, the cradle of the main Hellenic stock.

Question

Suggested by A.P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*, provided by "an English F.T.S.," Frederick W.H. Myers, July 1883. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, V pp. 139-40, Question No. 7.

Buddha's birth is placed (on p. 141) in the year 643 B.C. Is this date given by the Adepts as undoubtedly correct? Have they any view as to the new inscriptions of Asoka (as given by General A. Cunningham, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I, pp. 20-23), on the strength of which Buddha's Nirvana is placed by Barth (*The Religions of India*, p. 106), &c., about 476 B.C. and his birth therefore at about 556 B.C.? It would be exceedingly interesting if the Adepts would give a sketch however brief of the history of India in those centuries with authentic dates.

Answer

First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 2 (50), November 1883, pp. 35-44. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PHILOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL "DIFFICULTIES") V pp. 227-41.

Two questions are blended into one. Having shown the reasons why the Asiatic student is prompted to decline the guidance of Western History, it remains to explain his contumacious obstinacy in the same direction with regard to philology and archæology. While expressing the sincerest admiration for the clever modern methods of reading the past histories of nations now mostly extinct, and following the progress and evolution of their respective languages, now dead, the student of Eastern occultism and even the profane Hindu scholar acquainted with his national literature, can hardly be made to share the confidence felt by Western philologists in these conglutinative methods, when practically applied to his own country and Sanskrit literature. Three facts, at least, out of many are well calculated to undermine his faith in these Western methods:

- 1 Of some dozens of eminent Orientalists, no two agree, even in their *verbatim* translation of Sanskrit texts. Nor is there more harmony shown in their interpretation of the possible meaning of *doubtful* passages.
- 2 Though Numismatics is a less conjectural branch of science, and when starting from well-established basic dates, so to say, an exact one (since it can hardly fail to yield correct chronological data, in our case, namely, Indian antiquities) archæologists have hitherto failed to obtain any such result. On their own confession they are hardly justified in accepting the *Samvat* and *Salivāhana* eras as their guiding lights, the real initial points of both being beyond the power of the European Orientalists to verify; yet all the same, the respective dates “of 57 B.C. and 78 A.D.” are accepted implicitly, and fanciful ages thereupon ascribed to archæological remains.
- 3 The greatest authorities upon Indian archæology and architecture — General Cunningham and Mr. Fergusson — represent in their conclusions the two opposite poles. The province of archæology is to provide trustworthy canons of criticism and not, it should seem, to perplex or puzzle. The Western critic is invited to point to one single relic of the past in India, whether written record or inscribed or uninscribed monument, the age of which is not disputed. No sooner has one archæologist determined a date — say the 1st century — than another tries to pull it forward to the 10th or perhaps the 14th century of the Christian era. While General Cunningham ascribes the construction of the present Buddha Gaya temple to the 1st century after Christ — the opinion of Mr. Fergusson is that its *external form* belongs to the 14th century; and so the unfortunate outsider is as wise as ever. Noticing this discrepancy in a *Report on the Archaeological Survey of India*¹ the conscientious and capable Buddha Gaya Chief Engineer, Mr. J.D. Beglar, observes that “notwithstanding his [Fergusson’s] high authority, this opinion must be unhesitatingly set aside,” and — forth-with assigns the building under notice to the 6th century. While the conjectures of one archæologist are termed by another “hopelessly wrong,” the identifications of Buddhist relics by this other are in their turn denounced as “quite untenable.” And so in the case of every relic of whatever age.

When the “recognized” authorities agree — among themselves at least — then will it be time to show them collectively in the wrong. Until then, since their respective conjectures can lay no claim to the character of history, the “Adepts” have neither the leisure nor the disposition to leave weightier business to combat empty speculations, in number as many as there are pretended authorities. Let the blind lead the blind, if they will not accept the light.²

As in the “historical,” so in this new “archæological difficulty,” namely, the apparent anachronism as to the date of our Lord’s birth, the point at issue is again concerned with the “old Greeks and Romans.” Less ancient than our Atlantean friends, they seem more dangerous in as much as they have become the direct allies of philolo-

¹ Vol. III, p. 60

² However, it will be shown elsewhere that General Cunningham’s latest conclusions about the date of Buddha’s death are not at all supported by the inscriptions newly discovered. — T. Subba Row, *Acting Editor*.

gists in our dispute over Buddhist annals. We are notified by Prof. Max Müller, by sympathy the most fair of Sanskritists as well as the most learned — and with whom, for a wonder, most of his rivals are found siding in this particular question — that “everything in Indian chronology depends on the date of Chandragupta”¹ — the Greek Sandracottos.

Either of these dates [in the Chinese and Ceylonese chronology] is impossible, because it does not agree with the chronology of Greece . . . ²

It is then, by the clear light of this new Alexandrian Pharos shed upon a few synchronisms casually furnished by the Greek and Roman classical writers, that the “extraordinary” statements of the “Adepts” have now to be cautiously examined. For Western Orientalists the historical existence of Buddhism begins with Asoka, though even with the help of Greek spectacles they are unable to see beyond Chandragupta. Therefore,

before that time [Buddhist] chronology is *traditional* and full of absurdities.³

Furthermore, nothing is said in the *Brāhmanas* of the Bauddhas — *ergo*, there were none before “Sandracottos” nor have the Buddhists or Brahmans any right to a history of their own, save the one evolved by the Western mind. As though the Muse of History had turned her back while events were gliding by, the “historian” confesses his inability to close the immense *lacunae* between the Indo-Āryan supposed immigration *en masse* across the Hindookush, and the reign of Asoka. Having nothing more solid, he uses contradictory inferences and speculations. But the Asiatic occultists, whose forefathers had her tablets in their keeping, and even some learned native Pundits — believe they can. The claim, however, is pronounced unworthy of attention. Of late the *Smṛiti* (traditional history) which, for those who know how to interpret its allegories, is full of unimpeachable *historical* records, an Ariadne’s thread through the tortuous labyrinth of the Past — has come to be unanimously regarded as a tissue of exaggerations, monstrous fables, “clumsy forgeries of the first centuries A.D.” It is now openly declared as worthless not only for exact chronological but even for general historical purposes. Thus by dint of arbitrary condemnations, based on absurd interpretations (too often the direct outcome of sectarian prejudice), the Orientalist has raised himself to the eminence of a philological mantic. His learned vagaries are fast superseding, even in the minds of many a Europeanised Hindu, the important historical facts that lie concealed under the exoteric phraseology of the *Purānas* and other *Smṛitic* literature. At the outset, therefore, the Eastern Initiate declares the evidence of those Orientalists who, abusing their unmerited authority, play drakes and ducks with his most sacred relics, ruled out of court; and before giving *his* facts he would suggest to the learned European Sanskritists and archæologists that, in the matter of chronology, the difference in the sum of their series of conjectural historical events, proves them to be mistaken from A to Z. They know that one single wrong figure in an arithmetical progression will often throw the whole calculation into inextricable confusion: the multiplication yielding, generally,

¹ [Endnote 34 by Boris de Zirkoff: *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 274.]

² *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 275

³ [Endnote 35 by Boris de Zirkoff: *op. cit.*, p. 266. Italics are H.P. Blavatsky’s.]

in such a case, instead of the correct sum something entirely unexpected. A fair proof of this may, perhaps, be found in something already alluded to, namely, the adoption of the dates of certain Hindu eras as the basis of their chronological assumptions. In assigning a date to text or monument they have, of course, to be guided by one of the pre-Christian Indian eras, whether inferentially, or otherwise. And yet — in one case, at least — they complain repeatedly that they are utterly ignorant as to the correct starting point of the most important of these. The positive date of Vikramāditya, for instance, whose reign forms the starting point of the *Samvat* era, is in reality unknown to them. With some, Vikramāditya flourished “B.C.” 56; with others, 86; with others again, in the 6th century of the Christian era; while Mr. Fergusson will not allow the *Samvat* era any beginning before the “10th century A.D.” In short, and in the words of Dr. Weber,

. . . we have absolutely no authentic evidence to show whether the era of Vikramāditya dates from the year of his birth, from some achievement, or from the year of his death, or whether, in fine, it may not have been simply *introduced* by him for astronomical reasons.¹

There were several Vikramādityas and Vikramās in Indian history, for it is not a name but an honorary title, as the Orientalists have now come to learn. How then can any chronological deduction from such a shifting premise be anything but untrustworthy, especially when, as in the instance of the *Samvat*, the basic date is made to travel along, at the personal fancy of Orientalists, between the 1st and the 10th century?

Thus it appears to be pretty well proved that in ascribing chronological dates to Indian antiquities, Anglo-Indian as well as European archæologists are often guilty of the most ridiculous anachronisms. That, in fine, they have been hitherto furnishing History *with an arithmetical mean, while ignorant in nearly every case, of its first term!* Nevertheless, the Asiatic student is invited to verify and correct *his* dates by the flickering light of this chronological will-o'-the-wisp. Nay, nay. Surely “An English F.T.S.” would never expect us in matters demanding the minutest exactness, to trust to such Western beacons! And he will, perhaps, permit us to hold to our own views, since we know that our dates are neither conjectural nor liable to modifications. Where even such veteran archæologists as General Cunningham do not seem above suspicion and are openly denounced by their colleagues, palæography seems to hardly deserve the name of exact science. This busy antiquarian has been repeatedly denounced by Prof. Weber and others for his indiscriminate acceptance of the *Samvat* era. Nor have the other Orientalists been more lenient: especially those who, perchance under the inspiration of early sympathies for biblical chronology, prefer in matters connected with Indian dates to give heed to their own emotional but unscientific intuitions. Some would have us believe that the *Samvat* era “is not demonstrable for times anteceding the Christian era at all.” Kern makes efforts to prove that

¹ *The History of Indian Literature*, Trübner's Oriental Series, 1878, p. 202

the Indian astronomers began to employ this era “only after the year of *grace* 1000.”¹ Prof. Weber referring sarcastically to General Cunningham, observes that

. . . others, on the contrary, have no hesitation in at once referring, wherever possible, every *Samvat*- or *Samvatsara*-dated inscription to the *Samvat* era. Thus, *e.g.*, Cunningham in his *Archaeological Survey of India*, iii, 31, 39, directly assigns an inscription dated *Samv.* 5 to the year B.C. 52 . . . &c.,

and winds up the statement with the following plaint:

For the present, therefore, unfortunately, where there is nothing else [but that *unknown* era] to guide us, it must *generally remain an open question which era we have to do with in a particular inscription, and what date consequently the inscription bears.*²

The confession is significant. It is pleasant to find such a ring of sincerity in a European Orientalist, though it does seem quite ominous for Indian archæology. The initiated Brahmans know the positive dates of their eras and remain therefore unconcerned. What the “Adepts” have once said, they maintain; and no new discoveries or modified conjectures of accepted authorities can exert any pressure upon their data. Even if Western archæologists or numismatists took it into their heads to change the date of our Lord and Glorified Deliverer from the 7th century “B.C.” to the 7th century “A.D.,” we would but the more admire such a remarkable gift for knocking about dates and eras, as though they were so many lawn-tennis balls.

Meanwhile to all sincere and enquiring Theosophists, we will say plainly, it is useless for anyone to speculate about the date of our Lord Sang-gyas’ birth, while rejecting *a priori* all the Brāhmanical, Ceylonese, Chinese, and Tibetan dates. The pretext that these do not agree with the chronology of a handful of Greeks who visited the country 300 years after the event in question, is too fallacious and bold. Greece was never concerned with Buddhism, and besides the fact that the classics furnish their few synchronistic dates simply upon the hearsay of their respective authors — a few Greeks, who themselves lived centuries before the writers quoted — their chronology is itself too defective, and their historical records, when it was a question of national triumphs, too bombastic and often too diametrically opposed to fact, to inspire with confidence any one less prejudiced than the average European Orientalist. To seek to establish the true dates in Indian history by connecting its events with the mythical “invasion,” while confessing that

. . . we look in vain in the literature of the Brahmans or Buddhists for any allusion to Alexander’s conquest, and although it is impossible to identify any of

¹ [Endnote 36 by Boris de Zirkoff: Main text and quoted material seem to be somewhat confused at this point. The following passage is to be found in Prof. Weber’s *History of Indian Literature*, pp. 202-3, *fn.*:]

According to Kern, Introduction to his edition of the *Brihat-Samhitā* of Varāha-Mihira, 5ff. (1866), the use of the so-called *Samvat* era is not demonstrable for early times at all, while astronomers only begin to employ it after the year 1000 or so.]

² [Endnote 37 by Boris de Zirkoff: Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 203, *fn.* The last sentence has been italicized by H.P. Blavatsky]

the historical events, related by Alexander's companions with the *historical tradition* of India,¹

amounts to something more than a mere exhibition of incompetence in this direction: were not Prof. Max Müller the party concerned — we might say that it appears almost like predetermined dishonesty.

These are harsh words to say, and calculated no doubt to shock many a European mind trained to look up to what is termed "scientific authority" with a feeling akin to that of the savage for his family fetich. They are well deserved nevertheless, as a few examples will show. To such intellects as Prof. Weber's — whom we take as the leader of the German Orientalists of the type of Christophiles — certainly the word "obtuseness" cannot be applied. Upon seeing how chronology is deliberately and *maliciously* perverted in *favour* of "Greek influence," Christian interests and his own predetermined theories — another, and even a stronger term should be applied. What expression is too severe to signify one's feelings upon reading such an unwitting confession of disingenuous scholarship as Weber repeatedly makes² when urging the *necessity* of admitting that a passage "has been touched up by *later interpolation*," or forcing fanciful chronological places for texts admittedly very ancient — as

. . . otherwise the dates would be brought down too far or too near!³

And this is the keynote of his entire policy: *fiat hypothesis, ruat coelum!*⁴ On the other hand Prof. Max Müller, enthusiastic Indophile, as he seems, crams centuries into his chronological thimble without the smallest apparent compunction. . . .

These two Orientalists are instances, because they are accepted beacons of philology and Indian palæography. Our national monuments are dated and our ancestral history perverted to suit their opinions; and the most pernicious result ensues, that History is now recording for the misguidance of posterity the false annals and distorted facts which, upon their evidence, are to be accepted without appeal as the outcome of the fairest and ablest critical analysis. While Prof. Max Müller will hear of no other than a Greek criterion for Indian chronology, Prof. Weber⁵ finds Greek influence — his universal solvent — in the development of India's religion, philosophy, literature, astronomy, medicine, architecture, *etc.* To support this fallacy the most tortuous sophistry, the most absurd etymological deductions are resorted to. If one fact more than another has been set at rest by comparative mythology, it is that their fundamental religious ideas, and most of their gods were derived by the Greeks from religions flourishing in the northwest of India, the cradle of the main Hellenic stock. This is now entirely disregarded: because a disturbing element in the harmony of the critical spheres. And though nothing is more reasonable than the inference that the Grecian astronomical terms were inherited equally from the Parent stock, Prof. Weber would have us believe that "it was, however, Greek influence that first infused a

¹ [Endnote 38 by Boris de Zirkoff: Max Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 275. Italics are H.P. Blavatsky's.]

² *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*

³ [Endnote 39 by Boris de Zirkoff: These passages could not be found.]

⁴ [A pun on "fiat justitia ruat caelum," meaning "let justice be done though the heavens fall," by replacing *justice* with *hypothesis*.]

⁵ *op. cit.*

real life into Indian astronomy.”¹ In fine, the hoary ancestors of the Hindus borrowed their astronomical terminology and learned the art of star gazing and *even their zodiac* from the Hellenic infant! This proof engenders another: the relative antiquity of the astronomical texts shall be henceforth determined upon the presence or absence in them of asterisms and zodiacal signs; the former being undisguisedly Greek in their names, the latter are designated “by their Sanskrit names which are translated from the Greek.”² Thus “Manu’s law-book being unacquainted with them” [the planets] — is considered as more ancient than Yajñavalkya’s *Code*, which “inculcates their worship,”³ and so on. But there is still another and a better test found out by the Sanskritists for determining with “infallible accuracy” the age of the texts, apart from asterisms and zodiacal signs: any casual mention in them of the name “Yavana” — taken in every instance to designate the “Greeks.” This, apart “from an *internal* chronology based on the character of the works themselves, and on the quotations, *etc.*, therein contained, is the only one possible,”⁴ we are told. As a result — the absurd statement that “. . . the Indian astronomers regularly speak of the Yavanas as their teachers . . .”⁵ *Ergo* — their *teachers* were Greeks. For with Weber and others “Yavana” and “Greek” are convertible terms.

But it so happens that *Yavanāchārya* was the Indian title of a single Greek — Pythagoras; as *Śamkarāchārya* was the title of a single Hindu philosopher; and the ancient Āryan astronomical writers cited his opinions to criticize and compare them with the teachings of their own astronomical science, long before him perfected and derived from their ancestors. The honorific title of Āchārya (master) was applied to him as to every other learned astronomer or mystic; and it certainly did not mean that Pythagoras or any other Greek “Master” was necessarily *the* master of the Brahmans. The word “Yavana” was a generic term employed ages before the “Greeks of Alexander” projected “their influence” upon Jambu-dvīpa — to designate people of a younger race, the word meaning *Yuvan* “young,” or *younger*. They knew of Yavanas of the north, west, south and east; and the Greek strangers received this appellation as the Persians, Indo-Scythians and others had before them. An exact parallel is afforded in our present day. To the Tibetans every foreigner whatsoever is known as a *Peling*; the Chinese designate Europeans as “red-haired devils”; and the Mussulmans call every one outside of Islam a *Kafir*. The Webers of the future following the example now set them, may perhaps, after 10,000 years, affirm upon the authority of scraps of Moslem literature then extant that the Bible was written, and the English, French, Russians and Germans who possessed and translated or “invented” it, lived, in Kafiristan shortly before their era, under “Moslem influence.” Because the *Yuga Purāna* of the *Gārga Samhitā* speaks of an expedition of the Yavanas “as far as Pātaliputra,” therefore, either the Macedonians or the *Seleucidae* had conquered all India! But our Western critic is ignorant, of course, of the fact that Ayodhyā or *Sāketa* of Rama was for two millenniums repelling inroads of various Mongolian and

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 251

² p. 255

³ pp. 249-50

⁴ [Endnote 40 by Boris de Zirkoff: These passages could not be found.]

⁵ p. 252

other Turanian tribes, besides the Indo-Scythians — from beyond Nepal and the Himalayas. Prof. Weber seems finally himself frightened at the Yavana spectre he has raised, for he queries:

. . . whether by the Yavanas it is really the Greeks who are meant . . . or possibly merely their Indo-Scythian or other successors, to whom the name was afterwards transferred.¹

This wholesome doubt ought to have modified his dogmatic tone in many other such cases.

But — drive out prejudice with a pitch-fork it will ever return.² The eminent scholar though staggered by his own glimpse of the truth, returns to the charge with new vigour. We are startled by the fresh discovery that: — Asuramaya,³ the earliest astronomer, mentioned repeatedly in the Indian epics, “is identical with ‘Ptolemaios’ of the Greeks.” The reason for it given is, that

. . . this latter name, *as we see from the inscriptions of Piyadasi, became in Indian “Turamaya,” out of which the name “Asuramaya” might very easily grow; and since, by the later tradition, . . . this Maya is distinctly assigned to Romakapura in the West.*⁴

Had the “Piyadasi inscription” been found on the site of ancient Babylonia, one might suspect the word “Turamaya” as derived from “Turanomaya,” or rather *mania*. Since, however, the Piyadasi inscriptions belong distinctly to India and the title was borne but by two kings — Chandragupta and Dhammāsōkō — what has “Ptolemaios of the Greeks” to do with “Turamaya” or the latter with “Asuramaya”; except, indeed, to use it as a fresh pretext to drag the Indian astronomer under the stupefying “Greek influence” of the Upas Tree of Western Philology? Then we learn that, because “Pānini once mentions the Yavanas, *i.e.*, *Ἰαῶνες*, Greeks, and explains the formation of the word *yavanānī* — to which, according to the *Vārttika*, the word *lipi*, ‘writing,’ must be supplied” — therefore the word signifies “the writing of the Yavanas,”⁵ of the *Greeks* and none other. Would the German philologists (who have so long and so fruitlessly attempted to explain this word) be very much surprised, if told that they are yet as far as possible from the truth? That — *yavanānī* does not mean “Greek writing” at all but any foreign writing whatsoever? That the absence of the word ‘writing’ in the old texts, except in connection with the names of foreigners, does not in the least imply that none but Greek writing was known to them, or, that they had none of their own, being ignorant of the art of reading and writing until the days of Pānini . . . (theory of Prof. Max Müller)? For Devanāgarī is as old as the *Vedas*, and held so sacred that the Brahmans, first under penalty of death, and later on — of eternal ostracism, were

¹ [Endnote 41 by Boris de Zirkoff: Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 251, fn. 276.]

² [Paraphrasing English proverb, “you can drive Nature out with a pitchfork, but she’ll always come back.”]

³ Dr. Weber is not probably aware of the fact that this distinguished astronomer’s name was Maya merely; the prefix “Asura” was often added to it by ancient Hindu writers to show that he was a Rākshasa. In the opinion of the Brahmans he was an “Atlantean” and one of the greatest astronomers and occultists of the lost Atlantis. — T.S.R., *Acting Editor*.

⁴ [Endnote 42 by Boris de Zirkoff: Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 253. Italics are H.P. Blavatsky’s.]

⁵ [Endnote 43 by Boris de Zirkoff: Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 220-21.]

not even allowed to mention it to profane ears; much less to make known the existence of their secret temple-libraries. So that, by the word *yavanānī*, “to which, according to the *Vārttika*, the word *lipi*, ‘writing’, must be supplied,” the writing of foreigners in general, whether Phœnician, Roman, or Greek, is always meant. As to the preposterous hypothesis of Prof. Max Müller that writing “was not used for literary purposes in India” before Panini’s time (again upon Greek authority), that matter has been disposed of by a Chela in the last number of this Journal.

Equally unknown are those certain other, and most important facts [fable though they seem].

First, that the Āryan “Great War,” the *Mahābhārata*, and the Trojan War of Homer — both mythical as to personal biographies and fabulous supernumeraries, yet perfectly historical in the main — belong to the same cycle of events. For, the occurrences of many centuries [among them the separation of sundry peoples and races, erroneously traced to Central Asia alone] were in these immortal epics compressed within the scope of single Dramas made to occupy but a few years.

Secondly, that in this immense antiquity the forefathers of the Āryan Greeks and the Āryan Brahmans were as closely united and intermixed, as are now the Āryans and the so-called Dravidians.

Thirdly, that, before the days of the *historical* Rama from whom in unbroken genealogical descent the Oodeypore sovereigns trace their lineage, Rajpootana was as full of direct post-Atlantean “Greeks,” as the post-Trojan, subjacent Cumae and other settlements of *pre-Magna Graecia* were of the fast Hellenising sires of the modern Rajpoot.

One acquainted with the *real* meaning of the ancient epics cannot refrain from asking himself whether these intuitional Orientalists prefer being called deceivers or deceived, and in charity give them the benefit of the doubt.¹ What can be thought of Prof. Weber’s endeavour when

. . . to determine more accurately the position of *Ramayana* [called by him the ‘artificial epic’] in literary history . . .

¹ Further on, Prof. Weber indulges in the following piece of chronological sleight of hand. In his arduous endeavour “to determine accurately” the place in history of “*The Romantic Legend of Śākya Buddha*” (translation by Beale), he thinks,

. . . the special points of relation here found to Christian legends are very striking. The question which party was the borrower Beale properly leaves undetermined, yet in all likelihood [!!] we have here simply a similar case to that of the appropriation of Christian legend by the worshippers of Krishna. (p. 300 *fn.*)

Now it is this that every Hindu and Buddhist has the right to brand as “dishonesty,” whether conscious or unconscious. Legends originate earlier than history and die out upon being sifted. Neither of the fabulous events in connection with Buddha’s birth, taken exoterically, necessitated a great genius to narrate them, nor was the intellectual capacity of the Hindus ever proved so inferior to that of the Jewish and Greek mob that they should *borrow* from them even fables inspired by religion. How their fables, evolved between the 2nd and 3rd centuries after Buddha’s death, when the fever of proselytism and the adoration of his memory were at their height, could be *borrowed* and then appropriated from the Christian legends written during the first century of the Western era, can only be explained by a — German Orientalist. Mr. T.W. Rhys Davids (*Jataka Book*) shows the contrary to have been true. It may be remarked in this connection that, while the first “miracles” of both Krishna and Christ are said to have happened at a Mathura, the latter city exists to this day in India — the antiquity of its name being fully proved — while the Mathura, or Matarea in Egypt, of the *Gospel of Infancy*, where Jesus is alleged to have produced his first miracle, was sought to be identified, centuries ago, by the stump of an old tree in the desert, and is represented by — an empty spot!

he ends with an assumption that

. . . the modifications which the story of Rāma . . . underwent in the hands of Valmiki, rest upon an acquaintance with the conception of the Trojan cycle of legends; and I have likewise endeavoured to determine more accurately the position of the work in literary history. The conclusion there arrived at is, that the date of its composition is to be placed towards the commencement of the Christian era, and at all events in an epoch when the operation of the Greek influence upon India had already set in!¹

The case is hopeless. If the “internal chronology” — and external fitness of things, we may add — presented in the triple Indian epic, did not open the eyes of the hypercritical professors to the many historical facts enshrined in their striking allegories; if the significant mention of “black Yavanas,” and “white Yavanas” indicating totally different peoples could so completely escape their notice;² and the enumeration of a host of tribes, nations, races, clans, under their separate Sanskrit designations, in the *Mahabharata* had not stimulated them to try to trace their ethnic evolution and identify them with their now living European descendants — there is little to hope from their scholarship except a mosaic of learned guesswork. The latter *scientific* mode of critical analysis may yet end some day in a consensus of opinion that Buddhism is due wholesale to the *Life of Barlaam and Josaphat*,³ written by St. John of Damascus; or that our religion was plagiarized from that famous Roman Catholic legend of the 8th century in which our Lord Gautama is made to figure as a Christian Saint,⁴ better still, that the *Vedas* were written at Athens under the auspices of St. George, the tutelary successor of Theseus. For fear that anything might be lacking to prove the complete obsession of Jambu-dvīpa by the demon of “Greek influence,” Dr. Weber vindictively casts a last insult into the face of India by remarking that *if* European “Western steeples owe their origin to an imitation of the Buddhist topes⁵ . . . on the other hand, in the *most ancient Hindu edifices* the presence of Greek influence is unmistakable.”⁶ Well may Dr. Rājendra Lāla Mitra hold out “patriotically against the

¹ p. 194, *fn.*

² See Twelfth Book of *Mahābhārata*, Krishna’s fight with Kālayavana.

³ [These are the principal characters of a legend of Christian antiquity, which was a favourite subject of writers in the Middle Ages. It is the story of how Barlaam, a hermit of Senaar, converted Josaphat, the son of King Abenner (Avenier) who is supposed to have reigned in India in the third or fourth century A.D. Both Abenner and Josaphat became ultimately hermits. The graves of Barlaam and Josaphat became renowned with miracles. Both these personages found their way into the Roman Martyrology (27 November) and into the Greek Calendar (26 August).]

The story is a Christianized version of one of the legends of Gautama the Buddha, mainly from the Ceylonese tradition. The name Josaphat is a corruption of the original Ioasaph, which is again corrupted from the middle Persian Būdāsif (*Budsaif* = *Bodhisattva*). The Greek text of this legend, written probably by a monk of the Sabbas monastery near Jerusalem at the beginning of the seventh century, was first published by Boissonade in his *Anecdota Graeca* (Paris 1832) IV, and is reproduced in J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, XCVI, among the works of St. John Damascene. This authorship is open to questioning, on the basis of careful scholastic analysis.

Latin translations (Migne, *Patrologiae, etc., series Latina*, LXXIII) were made in the twelfth century and used for nearly all the European languages, in prose, verse and in miracle plays. In the East, this legend exists in Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Armenian and Hebrew.

Cf. Isis Unveiled, Vol. II, pp. 580-81. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

⁴ [See “Gautama Buddha beatified!” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁵ Of Hindu Lingams, rather. — *Ed. Theos.*

⁶ p. 274. [Endnote 44 by Boris de Zirkoff: Italics by H.P. Blavatsky]

idea of *any* Greek influence whatever on the development of Indian architecture.”¹ If his ancestral literature must be attributed to “Greek influence,” the temples, at least, might have been spared. One can understand how the Egyptian Hall in London reflects the influence of the ruined temples on the Nile: but it is a more difficult feat — even for a German professor — to prove the archaic structure of old Āryāvarta a foreshadowing of the genius of the late lamented Sir Christopher Wren! The outcome of this palæographic spoliation is that there is not a title left for India to call her own. Even medicine is due to the same Hellenic influence. We are told — this once by Roth — that “only a comparison of the principles of Indian *with those of Greek* medicine can enable us to judge of the origin, age, and value of the former,” and “*à propos* of Charaka’s injunctions as to the duties of the physician to his patient,” adds Dr. Weber — “he cites *some remarkably coincident expressions from the oath of the Asklepiads.*”² It is then settled. India is *Hellenised* from head to foot, and even had no physic until the Greek doctors came.



“Antiquity of the Atlanto-Aryan tribes in Europe,” “Atlantean credentials of the New World,” and “Atlantean origin of Greeks and Romans,” in our Atlantean Realities Series.

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¹ [Endnote 45 by Boris de Zirkoff: Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 274, fn. 321a. The words of R.L. Mitra are quoted from his work *The Antiquities of Orissa*, Calcutta, 1875. Italics are H.P. Blavatsky's.]

² [Endnote 46 by Boris de Zirkoff: Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 268, fn. 307. All italics are H.P. Blavatsky's. The reference to Roth, as given by Weber, is *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xxvi, 441 & 448, 1872.]