

*Was writing known
before Panini?*



First published in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 1 (49), October 1883, pp. 18-21. Republished in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, V pp. 294-310. Frontispiece: Letter O by Ilia Krughoff.

[The authorship of this remarkable article is uncertain. In the light of other writings from the pen of H.P. Blavatsky, this article can hardly be pronounced as being definitely hers, either in style or actual wording. Yet, in many places it approaches her own manner of writing. Some students consider it to have been written by T. Subba Row; others by Mohini Mohun Chatterji; still others think that, whoever may have actually written it, the material was added to and gone over by H.P. Blavatsky herself. It is also quite possible that the writer of this epoch-making article may have had direct help and inspiration from one of the Adepts. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

I AM ENTRUSTED WITH THE TASK of putting together some facts which would support the view that the art of writing was known in India before the time of our grammarian — the Śiva-taught Pānini. Professor Max Müller puts forward and maintains the contrary opinion ever since 1856, and has the approbation of other illustrious Western scholars. Stated briefly, their position is that the entire absence of any mention of “writing, reading, paper, or pen,” in the Vedas, or during the whole of the Brāhmaṇa period, and the almost if not quite as complete silence as to them throughout the Sūtra period, “lead us to suppose that even then [the Sūtra period], though the art of writing began to be known, the whole literature of India was preserved by oral tradition only.”¹ To support this theory, he expands the mnemonic faculty of our respectable ancestors to such a phenomenal degree, that like the bull’s hide of Queen Dido, it is made to embrace the whole ground needed for the proposed City of Refuge, to which discomfited savants may flee when hard pressed. Considering that Professor Weber — a gentleman who, we observe, likes to distil the essence of Āryan aeons down into an attar of no greater volume than the capacity of the Biblical period — admits that Europe now possesses 10,000 of our Sanskrit texts: and considering that we have, or have had, many other tens of thousands which the parsimony of Karma has hitherto withheld from the Museums and Libraries of Europe, what a memory must have been theirs!

Under correction, I venture to assume that Pānini was the greatest known grammarian in India, ranked among the Rishis and than whom there is no higher in history, whether ancient or modern: further, that contemporary scholars agree that the Sanskrit is the most perfect of languages. Therefore, when Prof. Müller affirms that “. . . there is not a single word in Panini’s terminology which presupposes the existence of writing,”² we become a little shaken in our loyal deference to Western opinion. For it is very hard to conceive how one so pre-eminently great as Pānini should

¹ *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 501

² *ibid.*, 507

have been incapable of indenting characters to preserve his grammatical system — supposing that none had previously existed — if his genius was equal to the invention of classical Sanskrit. The mention of the word *Grantha*, the equivalent for a written or bound book in the later literature of India — though applied by Pānini¹ to the *Veda*;² to any work;³ to the work of any individual author, and⁴ to any work that is studied, do not stagger Prof. Müller at all: *Grantha* he takes to mean simply a composition, and this may be handed down to posterity by oral communication. Hence, we must believe that Pānini was illiterate; but yet composed the most elaborate and scientific system of grammar ever known; recorded its 3,996 Rules only upon the molecular quicksands of his “cerebral cineritious matter,” and handed them over to his disciples by atmospheric vibration, *i.e.*, oral teaching! Of course, nothing could be clearer: it commends itself to the simplest intellect as a thing most probable. And in the presence of such a perfect hypothesis, it seems a pity that its author should⁵ confess that “it is possible” that he “may have overlooked some words in the Brāhmanas and Sūtras, which would prove the existence of written books previous to Pānini.” That looks like the military strategy of our old warriors, who delivered their attack boldly but nevertheless tried to keep their rear open for retreat if compelled. The precaution was necessary: written books *did* exist many centuries before the age in which this radiant sun of Āryan thought rose to shine upon his age. They existed, but the Orientalist may search in vain for the proof amid the *exoteric* words in our earlier literature. As the Egyptian hierophants had their private code of hieratic symbols, and even the founder of Christianity spoke to the vulgar in parables whose mystical meaning was known only to the chosen few, so the Brahmans had from the first (and still have) a mystical terminology couched behind ordinary expressions, arranged in certain sequences and mutual relations, which none but the initiate would observe. That few living Brahmans possess this key but proves that, as in other archaic religious and philosophical systems, the soul of Hinduism has fled (to its primal imparters — the initiates), and only the decrepit body remains with a spiritually degenerate posterity.⁶ I fully perceive the difficulty of satisfying European philologists of a fact which, upon my own statement, they are debarred from verifying. We know that from the present mental condition of our Brahmans. But I hope to be able to group together a few admitted circumstances which will aid, at least to show the Western theory untenable, if not to make a base upon which to stand our claim for the antiquity of writing. Three good reasons may be postulated for the correctness of the claim — though they will be regarded as circumstantial evidence by our opponents.

- 1 It can be shown that Phoenicia was acquainted with writing from the date of the acquaintance of Western history with her first settlements: and this may be

¹ In I, 3, 75

² In IV, 3, 87

³ In IV, 3, 116

⁴ In VI, 3, 79

⁵ *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 523

⁶ Not only are the *Upanishads* a secret doctrine, but in dozens of other works as, for instance, in the *Aitareya Āranyaka*, it is plainly expressed that they contain *secret doctrines*, that are not to be imparted to anyone but a *Dvija* Brahman.

dated, according to European figures — 2760 B.C., the age of the Tyrian settlement.

- 2 Our opponents confess to knowing nothing whence the Phoenicians themselves got their alphabet.
- 3 It can be proved that before the final division and classification of the languages, there existed two languages in every nation:
 - (a) the profane or popular language of the masses;
 - (b) the sacerdotal or secret language of the Initiates of the temples and mysteries — the latter being one and universal.
- 4 Or, in other words, every great people had, like the Egyptians, its Demotic and its Hieratic writing and language, which had resulted first in a pictorial writing or the hieroglyphics, and later on in a phonetic alphabet.

Now it requires a stretch of prejudice, indeed, to assert upon no evidence whatever that the Brahman Āryans — mystics and metaphysicians above everything — were the only ones who had never had any knowledge of either the sacerdotal language or the characters in which it was reproduced. To contradict this gratuitous assumption, we can furnish a whole array of proofs. It can be demonstrated that the Āryans borrowed no more their writing from the Hellenes or from the Phoenicians, than they were indebted to the influence of the former for all their arts and sciences. [Even if we accept Mr. Cunningham's "Indo-Grecian Period," for it lasted only from 250 to 57 B.C., as he states it.] The direct progenitor of the Vedic Sanskrit was the sacerdotal language (which has its distinct name but cannot be given). The Vāch — its *alter ego* or the "mystic self," the sacerdotal speech of the initiated Brahmin, became in time the mystery language of the inner temple, studied by the Initiates of Egypt and Chaldea; of the Phoenicians and the Etruscans; of the Pelasgoi and Palanquans, in short, of the whole globe. The appellation DEVANĀGARI is the synonym of, and identical with, the Hermetic and Hieratic NETER-KHARI (divine speech) of the Egyptians.

As the discussion divides naturally into two parts as to treatment — though a general synthesis must be the final result — we will proceed to examine the first part, namely, the charge that the Sanskrit alphabet is derived from the Phoenicians. When a Western philologist asserts that writing did not exist before a certain period, we assume that he has some approximate certitude as to its real invention. But so far is this from true, it is conceded that no one knows whence the Phoenicians learned the characters, now alleged (by Gesenius first) to be the source from which modern alphabets were directly derived. De Rougé's investigations make it extremely probable that "they were borrowed, or rather adapted from certain archaic hieroglyphics of Egypt": a theory which the *Prisse Papyrus*, "the oldest in existence," strongly supports by its "striking similarities with the Phoenician characters." But the same authority traces it back one step farther. He says that the ascription (by the myth-makers) of the art of writing to Thoth, or to Kadmus, "only denotes their belief in its being brought from the East (Kedem), or *being perhaps primeval*." There is not even a certainty whether, primevally or archaically, "there were several original alphabetical systems, or whether one is to be assumed as having given rise to the various modes of writing in use." So, if conjecture has the field, it is no great disloyalty to declare

one's rebellion against the eminent Western gentlemen who are learnedly guessing at the origin of things. Some affirm that the Phoenicians derived their so-called Kadmean or Phoenician writing-characters from the Pelasgians held also to have been the inventors or at least the improvers of the so-called Kadmean characters. But at the same time, this is *not proven*, they confess, and they only know that the latter were in possession of the art of writing "before the dawn of history." Let us see what is known of both Phoenicians and Pelasgians.

If we enquire who were the Phoenicians, we learn as follows:

From having been regarded as Hamites on Bible testimony, they suddenly became Semites — on geographical and philological evidence. (?) Their origin begins, it is said, on the shores of the Erythraean sea; and that sea extended from the Eastern shores of Egypt to the Western shores of India. The Phoenicians were the most maritime nation in the world. That *they* knew perfectly the art of writing no one would deny. The historical period of Sidon begins 1500 B.C. And, it is well ascertained that in 1250 Sanchoniathon had already compiled from annals and State documents, which filled the archives of every Phoenician city, the full records of their religion. He wrote in the Phoenician language, and was mistranslated later on into Greek, by Philo of Byblus, and annihilated bodily — as to his works except one small fragment in Eusebius, the literary Śiva, the *Destroyer* of all *heathen* documents that fell in his way. To see the direct bearing of the alleged superior knowledge of the Phoenicians upon the alleged ignorance of the Āryan Brahmans, one has but to turn to European Universal History; meagre though its details and possible knowledge, yet I suppose no one would contradict the historical facts given. Some fragments of Dius, the Phoenician, who wrote the history of Tyre, are preserved in Josephus; and Tyre's activity begins 1100 B.C. in the earlier part of the third period of Phoenician history, so-called. And in that period, as we are told, they had already reached the height of their power; their ships covered all seas, their commerce embraced the whole earth and their colonies flourished far and near. Even on Biblical testimony they are known to *have come to the Indies by the Red Sea*, while trading on Solomon's account about a millennium before the Western era. These data, no man of science can deny. Leaving entirely aside the thousand and one documentary proofs that could be given on the evidence of *our* most ancient texts on Occult Sciences, of inscribed tablets, *etc.*, those historical events that are accepted by the Western world are only here given. Turning to the *Mahābhārata*, the date of which — on the sole authority of the fancy lore drawn from the inner consciousness of German scholars, who perceive in the great epic poem proofs of its modern fabrication in the words "Yavana" and others — has been changed from 3,300 years to the first centuries after Christ (!!) — we find:

- 1 Ample evidence that the ancient Hindus had navigated (before the establishment of the caste system) the open seas to the regions of the Arctic Ocean and held communication with Europe; and
- 2 That the Pandus had acquired universal dominion and *taught the sacrificial mysteries to other races*.¹ With such proofs of international communication,

¹ See *Mahābhārata*, Book 14.

and more than proved relations between the Indian Āryans and the Phoenicians, Egyptians and other literate people, it is rather startling to be told that our forefathers of the Brāhmanic period *knew nothing* of writing.

Admitting for the argument only that the Phoenicians were the sole custodians of the glorious art of writing; and that as merchants they traded with India; what commodity, I ask, could they have offered to a people led by the Brahmans so precious and marketable as this art of arts, by whose help the priceless lore of the Rishis might be preserved against the accidents of imperfect oral transmission? And even if the Āryans learned from Phoenicia how to write — to every educated Hindu an absurdity — they must have possessed the art 2,000 or at least 1,000 years earlier than the period supposed by Western critics. Negative proof, perhaps? Granted: yet no more so than their own, and most suggestive.

And now we may turn to the Pelasgians. Notwithstanding Niebuhr's rebuke who, speaking of the historian in general, shows him as *hating* "the spurious philology, out of which the pretences to knowledge *on the subject of such extinct people* arise," the origin of the Pelasgians is speculated upon to have been either that of swarthy Asiatics (*Pell-asici*) or from some mariners — from the Greek *Pelagos*, the sea; or again to be sought for in the Biblical *Peleg*! The only divinity of their Pantheon known well to Western History is Orpheus, also the "swarthy," the "dark-skinned"; represented for the Pelasgians by *Xoanon*, their "Divine Image."¹ Now if the Pelasgians were Asiatics, they must have been either Turanians or Semites, or — Āryans. That they could not be the former, and *must* have been the last-named, is shown on Herodotus' testimony, who declared them the forefathers of the Greeks — though they spoke, as he says, "a most barbarous language." Further, *unerring* philology shows that the vast number of roots common both to Greek and Latin, are easily explained by the assumption of a common Pelasgic linguistic and ethnical stock in both nationalities. But then how about the Sanskrit roots traced in the Greek and Latin languages? The same roots must have been present in the Pelasgian tongues? We who place the origin of the Pelasgoi far beyond the Biblical ditch of historic chronology, have reasons to believe that the "barbarous language" mentioned by Herodotus was simply "the primitive and now extinct Āryan tongue" that preceded the Vedic Sanskrit. Who could they be, these Pelasgians? They are described generally on the meagre data in hand as a highly intellectual, receptive, active and simple people, chiefly occupied with agriculture; warlike when necessary, though preferring peace. We are told that they built canals, subterranean water-works, dams, and walls of astounding strength and most excellent construction. And their religion and worship originally consisted in a mystic service of those natural powers — the sun, wind, water, and air (our *Soorya*, *Maruts*, *Varuna* and *Vayu*), whose influence is visible in the growth of the fruits of the earth, moreover, *some of their tribes were ruled by priests, while others stood under the patriarchal rule of the head of the clan or family*. All this reminds one of the nomads, the Brāhmanic Āryans of old under the sway of their Rishis, to whom were subject every distinct family or clan. While the Pelasgians were acquainted with the art of writing, and had *thus* "a vast element of culture in their

¹ [See "Orpheus' legend and works" in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

possession before the dawn of history,” we are told (by the same philologists) that *our* ancestors knew of no writing until the dawn of Christianity!

Thus the Pelasgic language, that “most barbarous language” spoken by this mysterious people, what was it but Āryan: or rather, which of the Āryan languages could it have been? Certainly it must have been a language with the same and even stronger Sanskrit roots in it than the Greek. Let us bear in mind that the Aeolic was neither the language of Æschylus, nor the Attic, nor even the old speech of Homer. As the Oscan of the “barbarous” Sabines was not quite the Italian of Dante nor even the Latin of Virgil. Or has the Indo-Āryan to come to the sad conclusion that the average Western Orientalist will rather incur the blame of ignorance when detected than admit the antiquity of the Vedic Sanskrit, and the immense period that must have elapsed between this comparatively rough and unpolished tongue when compared with the classical Sanskrit — and the palmy days of the “extinct Āryan tongue”? The *Latium Antiquum* of Pliny, and the Aeolic of the Autochthones of Greece present the greatest kinship, we are told.¹ They had a common ancestor; the Pelasgian. What then, the parent tongue of the latter unless it was the language “spoken at one time by all the nations of Europe — before their separation”? In the absence of all proofs to the contrary, it might have been expected that the *Rig-Brāhmanas*, the *Mahābhārata* and every *Nirukta* should not be treated as flippantly as they now are. It is admitted that however inferior to the classical Sanskrit of Pānini — the language of the oldest portions of *Rig-Veda*, notwithstanding the antiquity of its grammatical forms, is the same as that of the latest texts. Everyone sees — cannot fail to see and to know — that for a language so old and so perfect as the Sanskrit to have survived alone, among all languages, it must have had its cycles of perfection and its cycles of degeneration. And, if one had any intuition, he might have seen that what they call a “dead language” being an anomaly, a useless thing in nature, it would not have survived, even as a “dead” tongue, had it not its special purpose in the Reign of immutable Cyclic Laws; and that Sanskrit which came to be nearly lost to the world is now slowly spreading in Europe, and will one day have the extension it had thousands upon thousands of years back — that of a universal *language*. The same as to the Greek and the Latin: there will be a time when the Greek of Æschylus (and more perfect still in its future form) will be spoken by all in Southern Europe while Sanskrit will be resting in its periodical *pralaya*; and the Attic will be followed later by the Latin of Virgil. Something ought to have whispered to us that there was also a time — before the original Āryan settlers marred the purity of the sacred Sanskrita Bhāshya among Dravidian and other aborigines admitted within the fold of Brāhmanical initiation — when Sanskrit was spoken in all its unalloyed subsequent purity and therefore must have had more than once its rises and its falls. The reason for it is simply this: classical Sanskrit was only *restored*, if in some things perfected by Pānini. Neither Pānini, Kātyāyana or Patañjali created it; it has existed throughout cycles and will pass through other cycles still.

Professor Max Müller is willing to admit that a tribe of Semitic nomads, fourteen centuries before the year one of the Westerns — knew well the art of writing, and had their *historically and scientifically proven* “book of the covenant and the tables ‘with

¹ [See “Aeolians, Dorians, Ionians,” in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

the writing of God upon them.” Yet the same authority tells us that the Āryans could neither read nor write until the very close of the Brāhmanic period. “No trace of writing can be discovered (by the philologists) in the Brāhmanical literature before the days of Pānini.” Very well, and now what was the period during which this Śiva-taught sage is allowed to have flourished? One Orientalist, Böhrtlingk, refers us to 350 B.C., while less lenient ones like Professor Weber, land the grammarian right in the middle of the second century of the Christian era! Only after fixing Pānini’s period with such a remarkable agreement of chronology (other calculations ranging variously between 400 B.C. and 460 A.D.), the Orientalists place themselves inextricably between the horns of a dilemma. For whether Pānini flourished 350 B.C. or 180 A.D., he could not have been illiterate; for, *firstly*, in the *Lalita Vistara*, a canonical book recognized by the Sanskritists, attributed by Max Müller to the *third* Buddhist council (and translated into Tibetan) our Lord Buddha is shown as studying, besides Devanāgarī, 63 other alphabets specified in it as being used in various parts of India; and *secondly*, though Megasthenes and Nearchus do say that in their time the laws of Manu were not (popularly) reduced to writing,¹ yet Nearchus describes the Indian art of making paper from cotton. He adds that the Indians wrote letters on cotton twisted together.² This would be late in the Sūtra period, no doubt, according to Professor Müller’s reasoning. Can the learned gentleman cite any record within that comparatively recent period showing the name of the inventor of that cotton-paper and the date of his discovery? Surely so important a fact as *that*, a novelty so transcendently memorable, should not have passed without remark. One would seem compelled, in the absence of any such chronicle, to accept the alternative theory — known to us Āryan students as fact — that writing and writing-materials were, as above remarked, known to the Brahmans in an antiquity inconceivably remote — many centuries before the epoch made illustrious by Pānini.

Attention has been asked above to the interesting fact that the God Orpheus, of “Thracia” (?), is called the “dark-skinned.” Has it escaped notice that *he is “supposed to be the Vedic Ribhu or Arbhu, an epithet both of Indra and the Sun”?*³ And if he was “the inventor of letters,” and is “placed anterior to both Homer and Hesiod,” then what? That Indra taught writing to the Thracian Pelasgians under the guise of Orpheus,⁴ but left his own spokesmen and vehicles, the Brahmans, illiterate until “the dawn of Christianity”? Or that the gentlemen of the West are better at intuitional chronology than conspicuous for impartial research? Orpheus was — in Greece — the son of Apollo or Helios — the sun-god, according to corrected mythology, and from him received the phorminx or lyre of *seven* strings, *i.e.* — according to occult phraseology — the seven-fold mystery of the Initiation. Now Indra is the ruler of the bright firmament, the disperser of clouds, “the restorer of the sun to the sky.” He is identified with Arjuna in the *Samhitā* and *Śatapatha-Brāhmana*,⁵ and Arjuna was the

¹ *Strabo*, XV, i, 53 & 66

² *ibid.*, XV, i, 67

³ *Chambers’ Cycl.* VII, 127

⁴ According to Herodotus the Mysteries were actually brought from India by Orpheus.

⁵ Although Prof. Weber denies the existence of any such person as Arjuna, yet there was indeed one.

Chief of the Pāndavas:¹ and though Pāndu the *white* passes for his father, he is yet considered the son of Indra. As throughout India all ancient cyclopean structures are even now attributed to the Pāndavas, so all similar structures at the West were anciently ascribed to the Pelasgians. Moreover, as shown well by Pococke — laughed at because too intuitional and *too* fair though, perchance, less philologically learned — the Pāndavas were in Greece, where many traces of them can be shown.² In the *Mahābhārata*, Arjuna is taught the occult philosophy by Krishna (personification of the Universal Divine Principle); and the less mythological view of Orpheus presents him to us as “a divine bard or priest in the service of Zagreus . . . founder of the Mysteries . . .” the inventor “of everything, in fact, that was supposed to have contributed to the civilisation and initiation into a more humane worship of the deity . . .” Are not these striking parallels? And is it not significant that in the cases of both Arjuna and Orpheus the sublimer aspects of religion should have been imparted along with the occult methods of attaining it by masters of the mysteries? Real Devanāgarī — non-phonetic characters — meant formerly the outward signals, so to say, *the signs used in the intercommunication between gods and initiated mortals*. Hence their great sacredness and the silence maintained throughout the Vedic and the Brāhmanical periods about any object concerned with, or referring to, reading and writing. It was *the* language of the Gods. If our Western Critics can only understand what the Ancient Hindu writers meant by *Bhūtalipi*, so often mentioned in their mystical writings, they will be in a position to ascertain the source from which the Hindus first derived their knowledge of writing.

A secret language, common to all schools of occult science once prevailed throughout the world. Hence — Orpheus learnt “letters” in the course of his initiation. He is identified with Indra; according to Herodotus he brought the art of writing from India; his swarthier complexion than that of the Thracians points to his Indo-Āryan nationality — supposing him to have been “a bard and priest” and not a god; the Pelasgians are said to have been born in Thracia; they are believed (at the West) to have first possessed the art of writing, and taught the Phoenicians; from the latter all modern alphabets derive. I submit, then, with all these coincidences and sequences, whether the balance of proof is on the side of the theory that the Āryans transmitted the art of writing to the people of the West; or on the opposite, and wholly unsupported, one that they, with their caste of scholarly Brahmans, their noble secret sacerdotal and “barbarous” popular vernacular — in the high antiquity, their redundant, high-class literature, their acquaintance with the most wonderful and recondite

¹ Another proof of the fact that the Pāndavas were, though Āryans not Brahmans, and belonged to an Indian tribe that preceded the Brahmans and, were later on *Brahmanized*, and then outcasted and called *Mlechchhas*, *Yavanas* (*i.e.*, foreign to the Brahmans) is afforded in the following: Pāndu has *two* wives: and “it is not Kuntī, his lawful wife, but Mādri, his most beloved wife,” who is burnt with the old king when dead, as well remarked by Prof. Max Müller, who seems astonished at it without comprehending the true reason why this is. As stated by Herodotus (v. 5), it was a custom amongst the Thracians to allow the most beloved of a man’s wives to be sacrificed upon his tomb; and “Herodotus (iv. 17) asserts a similar fact of the Scythians and Pausanias (iv. 2) of the Greeks” (*Hist. of Anc. Sans. Lit.*, p. 48). The Pāndavas and the Kauravas are called esoterically *cousins* in the Epic poem, because they were two distinct yet Aryan tribes and represent two *nations* — not simply two families.

[The reference to Herodotus should be IV. 71. This may be a proof-reader’s error, but it may also be one of the instances spoken of by H.P. Blavatsky herself, when references seen in the astral light became reversed when she was disturbed in her work. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

² [See full text of Pococke’s *India in Greece*, in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

potentialities of the human spirit — were illiterate until generations upon generations before the era of Pānini the grammarian and last of Rishis. When the famous theorists of the Western colleges can show us a river running from its mouth back to its spring sources in the mountain nullahs, then may we be asked to believe their theory of Āryan illiteracy. The history of human intellectual development shows that humanity always passes through the stage of ideography or pictography before attaining that of cursive writing. It therefore remains with the Western critics who oppose the antiquity of Āryan Scriptures to show us the pictographic proofs which support their position. As these are notoriously absent, it appears they would have us believe that our ancestors passed immediately from illiteracy to the Devanāgarī characters of Pānini's time.

Let the Orientalists bear in mind the conclusions drawn from a careful study of the *Mahābhārata* by Muir in his *Original Sanskrit Texts*.¹ It may be conclusively proven on the authority of the *Mahābhārata* that the *Yavanas* (of whom India as alleged knew nothing before the days of Alexander!) belong to those tribes of Kshatriyas who in consequence of their non-communication with, and in some cases rejection by the Brahmins, had become from *twice-born* — “Vrishalas,” *i.e.*, made *outcastes*.²

Śakah Yavana-kāambojās tās tāh kshatriyajātāyah vrishalatvam parigatāh
brāmanānām adarśanāt Drāvidās cha Kalindās cha Pulindās chāpy Uśīnarāh
Kolisarpāh Māhishakās tās tāh kshatriya-jātāyah ityādi.³

The same reference may be found in verses 2158-9. The *Mahābhārata* shows the *Yavanas* descended from Turvasa — once upon a time Kshatriyas, subsequently degraded into *Vrishalas*. *Harivamśa* shows when and how the *Yavanas* were excommunicated. It may be inferred from the account therein contained of the expedition against Ayodhyā by the *Yavanas* and the subsequent proceedings of Sagara that the *Yavanas* were, previous to the death of the said expedition, Kshatriyas subject to the Government of the powerful monarchs who reigned at Ayodhyā. But on account of their having rebelled against their sovereign and attacked his Capital, they were excommunicated by Sagara who successfully drove them out of Ayodhyā, at the suggestion of Vasishtha who was the Chief minister and Guru of Sagara's father. The only trouble in connecting the Pelasgians with, and tracing their origin to the Kshatriyas of Rājputāna, is created by the Orientalist who constructs a fanciful chronology, based on no proof, and showing only unfamiliarity with the world's real history, and with Indian History within historical periods.

The value of that chronology — which places virtually the “primitive Indo-Germanic-period” before the *ancient* Vedic period (!) — may, in closing this article, be illustrated with a final example. Rough as may be the calculations offered, it is impossible to go deeper into any subject of this class within the prescribed and narrow limits of a

¹ Vol. I, pp. 391, 480, 482

² *Mahābhārata Anuśāsanaparva*, verses 2103 ff.

³ [Quoted from *Original Sanskrit Texts on the origin and history of the people of India, their religion and institutions*, collected, translated and illustrated by John Muir, second edition, revised, in 5 vols., London, Trübner & Co., 1863-71. This passage is to be found in Vol. I, p. 482, and is translated therein as follows:

“These tribes of Kshatriyas, viz. Śakas, Yavanas, Kāambojas, Drāvidas, Kalindas, Pulindas, Uśīnaras, Kolisarpas, and Māhishakas, have become Vrishalas from seeing no Brāhmins.” — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

magazine article, and without recourse to data not generally accessible. In the words of Prof. Max Müller:

The Code of Manu is almost the only work in Sanskrit literature which, as yet, has not been assailed by those who doubt the antiquity of everything Indian. No historian has disputed its claim to that early date which had, from the first, been assigned to it by Sir William Jones.¹

And now, pray, what is this extremely “early date”? “From 880 to 1280 B.C.,” — we are told. We will then, for the present purpose, accept this authoritative conclusion. Several facts, easily verifiable, have to be first of all noticed:

- 1 Manu in his many enumerations of Indian races, kingdoms and places, *never once mentions Bengal*: the Āryan Brahmans had not yet reached in the days when his *Code* was compiled the banks of the Ganges nor the plains of Bengal. It was Arjuna who went first to *Banga* (Bengal) with his sacrificial horse.²
- 2 In the Ayun a list of the Hindu kings of Bengal is given. Though the date of the first king who reigned over Banga cannot be ascertained, owing to the great gaps between the various dynasties; it is yet known that Bengal ceased to be an independent Hindu kingdom from 1230 after Christ. Now if, disregarding these gaps, which are wide and many, we make up the sum of only those chronological periods of the reign of the several dynasties that are preserved by history, we find the following:

	Years
24. Kshatriya families of Kings reigned for a period of	2,418
9. Kaista Kings reigned for . . .	250
11. Of the Adisur family reigned for . . .	714
10. Of the Bhupal family reigned for . . .	137
10. The Vaidya Rajas reigned for . . .	689
10. Of the Pala dynasty (from 855 to 1040, A.D.) reigned for . . .	185
	4,393

If we deduct from this sum 1230, we have 3163 years B.C. of successive reigns. If it can be shown on the unimpeachable evidence of the Sanskrit texts that some of these reigns happened *simultaneously*, and the line cannot therefore be shown as successive (as was already tried) well and good. Against an arbitrary chronology set up with a predetermined purpose and theory in view, there will remain but little to be said. But if this attempt at reconciliation of figures is shown simply as in every other case claimed upon “critical, internal evidence,” then, in the presence of these 3163 years of an unbroken Hindu line of powerful and mighty kings the Orientalists will have to show, a very good reason why the authors of the *Code of Manu* seem entirely

¹ *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 61

² *Yavanas* are mentioned in *Rājadharmā Anuśāsana Parva* as part of the tribes peopling it.

ignorant even of the existence of Bengal — if its date has to be accepted as not earlier than 1280 B.C.! A scientific rule, which is good enough to apply to the case of Pānini, ought to be valid in other chronological speculations. Or, perhaps, this is one of those poor rules which will *not* “work both ways”?



Addendum

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS – FRAGMENTS) XIII pp. 313-18.

[The Manuscript of this Fragment in H.P. Blavatsky's handwriting is in the Adyar Archives. It consists of two sheets written on both sides. Some of the information contained therein runs parallel to what H.P. Blavatsky stated in Answers to "Some Inquiries Suggested by Mr. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*" which may be found in Vol. V (1883) of the present Series. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

They are asked whether there is not "some confusion" in the letter quoted on p. 62 of *Es. Buddhism* regarding "the old Greeks and Romans said to have been Atlanteans." They answer none at all. The word "Atlantean" is a generic name.¹

Very naturally those interested in the Secret Doctrine have to make their choice; they have either to accept as their infallible guide

(a) the modern philologist, the archaeologist, the ethnologist and the general historian;

(b) those who are in their possession of the Secret Doctrine and *will* bring to light someday their authentic and irrefragable proofs; or (which would be the most reasonable);

(c) try to follow truth between the two parallel paths — modern research and the Secret Doctrine.

This is the course offered to them but they must have patience. Auguste Comte was not the first philosopher who found that before rebuilding one had to destroy. None feels a greater admiration and respect for hard working philologists and archaeologists than the "Adepts" — none sees more clearly their mistakes than the humble individuals last named. Indeed, it seems impossible to refrain from smiling at some of their speculations. Yet there is no help for it. How can one risk to bring forward an evidence based entirely upon the secrets of the Esoteric doctrine, which doctrine, unless the whole of it is trusted into the hands of those whom it alone can enlighten, would be worse than useless; for, isolated proofs picked out [at] random, wide and apart, would do more harm than good. How, for instance, correct this most important mistake started by Prof. Max Müller who says that "before the time of Pānini [the grammarian], and before the first spreading of Buddhism in India, writing for literary purposes was absolutely unknown," and "writing was practised in India before the time of *Alexander's conquest* [?!] — though it may not have been used for literary purposes."² Now on this solitary mistaken notion hangs the fate of nearly every chronological calculation relating to India and its antiquities. On its demonstration depends the rectification of a thousand errors; chief one of them — the correct date in the world's chronologies of the Vedic age, and a number of most important works. What is Prof. M. Müller's evidence showing that writing was unknown before the date assigned by him:

- "There is not a single word in Pānini's terminology which presupposes the existence of writing";

¹ Insert white small page. [It is missing.]

² [*History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 507, 515]

- “. . . there is no mention of writing materials, whether paper, bark, or skins, at the time when the Indian Diaskeuasts¹ collected the songs of their Rishis; nor is there any allusion to writing during the whole of the Brāhmana period”;
- Megasthenes and Nearchus state that the laws of the Indians were not reduced to writing;
- “. . . the words for ink (*masi, kālī, mela, golā*) and pen (*kalama*), have all a modern appearance”; the words *lipi*, writing, and *dharmalipi*, a sacred writing, do not occur in any work of genuine antiquity; and
- the Brahmans “never speak of their *granthas* or books,” and “we never meet with [the name of] a book, or a volume, or a page” in old Brāhmana writings; nor does *Manu* or “the whole of the Brāhmana literature, show one single vestige of the art of writing.”²

There are the chief proofs. Having shown so much and stated repeatedly that neither in *Manu* nor Pānini there is *not one word* relating to any object used in writing or reading, presupposing, we find the Professor confessing a few pages further:

- 1 In *Manu's Code of Laws*³ we read: “All the three castes may *read* the *Veda*, but the Brahman alone is allowed to proclaim it.” The authors of the ancient *Sūtras* knew nothing of the art of writing,
- 2 Nevertheless, one word in them seems to strengthen the supposition to the contrary: “several of the *Sūtras* are divided into chapters called *patalas*. This is a word . . . meaning . . . a covering, the surrounding skin or membrane . . . if so, it would seem to be almost synonymous with *liber* and *biblos*, and it would mean *book*,” *etc.*⁴
- 3 “There is another word in Pānini which might seem to prove that, not only the art of writing, but written books were known at his time. This is *grantha* . . . [which] occurs four times in our texts of Pānini . . . ”
- 4 “The word *Lipikara* is an important word . . . in the *Sūtras* of Pānini . . . [as it] can be legitimately adduced to prove that Pānini was acquainted with the art of writing.”⁵
- 5 In *Manu's Code of Laws*⁶ we read: “What is given by force, what is by force enjoyed, by force caused *to be written* (*lekhita*) . . . *Manu* has pronounced void.” Now any unbiased person who would read the above *pros* and *cons verbatim* quotations from Prof. M. Müller's *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* — must see that the scales of evidence both ways are pretty well balanced. Yet the

¹ [Text Editors]

² [*op. cit.*, pp. 515, 514, 520, 512, 501]

³ X, 1

⁴ [*op. cit.*, pp. 509, 524. For all the above quotations see also pp. 468-80 of the revised edition by Dr. Surendra Nāth Sāstrī of Müller's work as part of the *Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies*, Vol. XV. Varanasi: Vidyavilas Press, 1968. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

⁵ [*op. cit.*, p. 520]

⁶ VIII, 168

great Cambridge Sanskritist adds to the last quoted sentence the following most extraordinary remark, “But this is only another proof that this metrical paraphrase of the Laws of the Mānavas is later than the Vedic Age.”

It is on such evidence that the respective works . . . assign. To this we can say but the following: Were there not one single word in the whole range of Indian *sacred literature*, which would show the slightest reference to the arts of reading, writing or to any idea of authorship, we would still maintain that this is no proof; simply because that which is adduced by the Professor as a proof against, is the strongest evidence in favour of the pending question. When he quotes such sentences as “we nowhere meet in the Buddhist literature, *etc.*,”¹ he ought to be the first one to perceive that which he does not; namely, that *for ages the Vedas as all our sacred literature were deemed too holy to be put in writing* and that the act was at one time punished by death. First the initiated Brahmans, more than all the Brahmans in general, had alone the right to “proclaim” or speak out whether the *Vedas* or the sacred Mantras. . . . Were they open for it we would cite hundreds of lokas to that effect. When they were put into writing, for a long time, the Brahmans alone had custody over them. Why? Because the whole of the sacred literature is a series of occult treatises; of doctrines and practical teaching of the science of sciences, expressly couched in a conventional language, such sentences generally meaning quite the opposite that they were made to say, and several thousands of words having one exoteric and one esoteric meaning, absurd and repellent when understood in that dead letter, sublime and grand when interpreted with the help of the secret Code. No initiate could or can be one unless he has committed this code to memory. Even when written out in their exoteric language the four *Vedas* were a forbidden work to the three lower castes. One example given on p. 283 of the August issue of *The Theosophist*, 1883,² is sufficient to show how careful were the initiates to conceal their real meaning. It is given in the Reply by Tara Nath to the Query in article: “Narcotics *versus* Occultism.” In it he shows that the word “Rāmarasapanam” recommended as necessary for the Yogis the esoteric language *a certain kind of meditation* for occult purposes. No wonder if your Orientalists do not find such words as volume, book or paper in the older works; nothing more natural than that the first scribes who committed these works to writing should have avoided adding one single word to either what was *Smṛiti* or *Śruti*, since all such words in sacred literature were avoided as blasphemous and sacrilegious, considered as dragging down holy works on the level with the profane ones. Yet it does seem puzzling to understand how a Brahman-scribe, not a *Kayastha*, the name of the writer “caste,” (whose name does not occur in *Manu* just for the reason given), should be charged with having *no idea of writing* while actually performing that process with the oldest texts. Had not such a restriction been placed upon the Brahmans who were the first to reduce the sacred literature to writing, the *Kāyasthas* — the despised writer caste, the progeny of a Kshatriya father and a Śūdra mother, would have never failed to add many a foreign element to the original text as they have actually done later. Nor can one feel surprised to find such obsolete words as *adhyāya*, lectures, *praśnas*, queries, and others the meaning of which is

¹ p. 519

² Vol. III

dual and the key to which is the secret *Code* and replaced finally by the purely exoteric terms such as we find in the later works; and which led Max Müller into the erroneous supposition that there was no writing and for literary purposes before Buddha's time. Quite true, the *Kayastha* caste was small, and sprung only a few centuries before the Buddhists. But this is no reason why there should have been no writing before their time. The relative antiquity of various works of the so-called (by the Orientalists) second period of Sanskrit turn in a vicious circle [more] upon works in common than in Āryan *bhāsha*. The Brahmans alone spoke both the tongue of the Gods (Sanskrit and its hieratic supplement, the *Senzar*), the Sanskrit *bhāsha* and the Prakriti *bhāsha*. The tongue of the gods was unknown to all but themselves. Metal plates mentioned in Yajnavalkya's lawbooks are not spoken of in Manu's *Code*, yet there are fourteen plates in existence with engraved mantras preceding the particular *Code* spoken of by seven centuries.

. . . The idea that while a small . . . tribe of presumably Egyptian runaway slaves are shown on the *authority* (!) of their scriptures to have been . . .

[End of the Fragment]

