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(fl. western India, 149/150)

astrology, astronomy.

The word Yavaneśvara is a title (meaning “Lord of the Greeks”), not a proper name; it or its equivalent, Yavanarāja, was borne by several officials in western India during the rule of the Western Ksatrapas (ca. 78-390), and perhaps earlier under Asoka, in the middle of the third century b.c. Their function was evidently to act as leader of the Greek merchants settled in the area. The one in whom we are interested was responsible for the translation of a Greek text on astrology into Sanskrit prose in 149/150, during the Western Ksatrapas. The Greek original was composed in Egypt (probably at Alexandria) in the first half of the second century b.c., and therefore is one of the earliest Greek astrological texts known to us in a substantially complete form, although not in the original. Unfortunately, even Yavaneśvara’s prose translation is no longer available, and we must be content with the versification of it made by Sphujidhvaja in 269/270.

In translating this text Yavaneśvara did his best to make it appeal to an Indian audience. He interpreted illustrations of the deities of the Decans and Horās that appeared in the Greek manuscript, for instance, in terms of śaivite iconography; and he introduced the caste system and some elements of the older Indian astral-omen texts and of *avarveda* into his work. Yavaneśvara also included a version of a Greek adaptation of Babylonian planetary theory, in an attempt to make it possible for Indians to become astrologers (see essay in Supplement). He was extremely successful, and the basic methodology of all of Indian horoscopy can be traced back to his translation and another, lost translation from the Greek that was known to Satya (in the third century?).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

An ed. of the *Yavanajātaka* of Sphujidhvaja by D. Pingree, in the Harvard Oriental Series, will contain all available information about Yavaneśvara.

David Pingree