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(fl. near Ujjain, India, sixth century)

astronomy, astrology.

The best-known and most respected astrologer of India, Varāhamihira was the son and pupil of Ādityadāsa, a Maga Brāhmana and descendant of Iranian Zoroastrians who immigrated to northern India in the centuries about the beginning of the Christian era and who, while retaining some traces of the solar worship of their forebears, were absorbed into Hinduism. Varāhamihira himself stated that he was a native of Avantī or Western Mālwa (the region about Ujjain) and that he resided in the village Kāpitthaka, which is probably to be identified with the ruins at Kayatha about twelve miles from Ujjain. His date is established by his own adaptation in the *Pañcadiddhāntikā* of Lāta's epoch, 505, and by the references to him as an authority in the *Brāhmasphutasiddhānta* composed by Brahmagupta in 628. It has further been suggested that he was connected with the Aulikara court at Daśapura (Mandasor), and in particular with Yaśodharman, who was reigning in 532.

His numerous writings covered all of the traditional fields of astrology and astronomy in India, generally in pairs. It is evident from internal crossreferences that he composed the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* and *Brhatsamhitā* simultaneously toward the beginning of his career, although some additions were made to the latter after his other major works were completed. The *Brhājātaka* was probably composed toward the end of his life, and the other treatises fall somewhere in between.

Varāhamihira was not original in his writings. In genethliology he depended primarily on Sphujidhvaja's and Satya's expositions of an Indianized Greek system, in divination on the Indian adaptations by Garga and others of Mesopotamian omen-series, and in astronomy on representatives of three traditions: the Mesopotamian-influenced *vedāṅga*-astronomy as represented in the first century *Paitāmahasiddhānta*, the Indian versions of Greco-Babylonian solar, lunar, and planetary theory in the *Vasisthasiddhānta* and *Paulīśasiddhānta*, and the essentially Hellenistic astronomy of the *Romakasiddhānta* and Lāta's *Sūryasiddhānta*. Since we have very few other sources for studying these traditions in India in the period before 500, Varāhamihira's work is extremely valuable; and as we know little else about the Greek traditions that the sources of the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* depend on, it affords us a most useful if somewhat problematic insight into pre-Ptolemaic Greek astronomy.

Varāhamihira's works are as follows:

1. The *Pañcasiddhāntikā*, edited with translation and commentary by O. Neugebauer and D. Pingree, 2 pts. (Copenhagen, 1970–1971). This difficult text deals with solar, lunar, and planetary theory; problems of time and terrestrial latitude: eclipses: astronomical instruments: and cosmology. Something has been said of its sources and its importance above.
2. The *Brhatsamhitā* on divination, edited with the commentary of Utpala (966) by Sudhākare Dvivedin, 2 vols. (Benares, 1895–1897; repr., Benares, 1968); there are several English translations, of which the best is H. Kern, "The Brhat-Saṅhitā," in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1870), 430–479; (1871), 45–90, 231–288; (1873), 36–91, 279–338; and (1875), 81–134; this was reprinted in H. Kern, *Vespreide Geschriften*, 16 vols. (The Hague, 1913–1929), I 169–319, and II 1–154. This extensive treatise, besides being one of the most complete extant Sanskrit treatises on divination, is very valuable for the information it contains about Indian geography and society: see, for instance, J. F. Fleet, "The Topographical List of the Brihat-Sanhitā," in *Indian Antiquary*, 22 (1893), 169–195; and A. M. Shastri, *India as Seen in the Brhatsamhitā of Varāhamihira* (Delhi-Patna-Varanasi, 1969).
3. The *Samāsasamhitā*, Varāhamihira's shorter work on divination. This is now lost, but many of the quotations from it can be found in A. M. Shastri, "Contribution Towards the Reconstruction of the Samāsa-Samhitā of Varāhamihira," in *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, 23 (1963), 22–39.
4. The *Vatakanikā*, a third work on divination, is also lost save for some quoted verses; see P. V. Kane, "The Vatakanikā of Varāhamihira," in *Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal*, 1 (1963), 63–65.
5. The *Brhājātaka*, Varāhamihira's major work on genethliology; it has often been commented on and often translated. The most useful commentary is that of Utpala (966), published, for example, at Bombay in 1864. This is still the standard work on natal horoscopy in India. For its relation to Greek astrology, see *The Yavanajāataka of Sphujidhvaja*, D. Pingree, ed., which is to appear in the Harvard Oriental Series.
6. The *Laḡhujātaka* is the shorter treatise on genethliology. It also was commented on by Utpala, and it was translated into Arabic by al-Bīrūnī, who inserted it into his *India*. There are many editions: for example, with the Hindī ortikā of Kāśīrāma (Bombay, 1936). Unfortunately, there exists no critical edition of either of these popular textbooks on genethliology.
7. The *Brhadyātrā* is a major treatise on military astrology. An edition of it with the surviving fragment of Utpala's commentary, prepared by D. Pingree, is in *Bulletin of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras*, 20 (1972), 1, app., 1–92; 2, app., i–xiv; and 93–130; repr. (Madras, 1972).
8. The *Yogayātrā* is a shorter text on military astrology. The first nine chapters were published by H. Kern, "Die Yogayātrā des Varāhamihira," in *Indische Studien*, 10 (1868), 161–212; 14 (1876), 312–358; and 15 (1878), 167–184; and the whole, in imperfect fashion, by J. Lal (Lahore, 1944). A critical edition of the text with the commentary of Utpala has been prepared by D. Pingree.
9. The *Tikanikāyātrā* is a third treatise on military astrology. It was edited by V. R. Pandit, "Tikanikāyātrā of Varāhamihira," in *Journal of the University of Bombay*, 20 (Arts, No. 26) (1951), 40–63.
10. The *Vivāhapatala*, a text on astrology as related to marriage, is preserved in a unique manuscript at Baroda. An edition has been prepared by V. R. Pandit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Additional bibliographical references to those given above will be found in O. Neugebauer and D. Pingree, *Pañcasiddhāntikā*, II, pp. 152–154; A. M. Shastri, *India as Seen in the Brhatsamhitā* pp. 504–515; and D. Pingree, *Census of the Exact Sciences in Sanskrit*, series A, V. (forthcoming).

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