A NOTE ON TAMIL RELATIONS WITH SOUTH THAILAND AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF PTOLEMY'S TACOLA

by

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Western historians have warned time and again against an exaggerated view of early Indian influence in the Far East. They make their point by reminding us that none of the countries in this area have ever been under colonial rule by any Indian Power;[1] that each of the countries in the Far East has developed its own identity whilst incorporating outside influences compatible with its national character. In this light, let us briefly discuss—as have many before us, an aspect of Tamil relations with South Thailand. The epigraphical evidence available consists of two Tamil stone inscriptions: one found in district Takuapa, province Phangnga, on the west coast of peninsular Thailand; the other at Vat Mahādhātu in the town of Nakorn Srithamarāj (Ligor) on the east coast of peninsular Thailand. Both inscriptions have been published by Coedès[2] who says that the only document on the Malay Peninsula which may be attributable to the first half of the ninth century is the Tamil stone inscription found at Takuapa. This mentions that a tank or pond named *Avani-Nāraṇam*, dug by the chief of *Naṅgūr*, was placed under the protection of the members of the *Maṇigrāman*, residing in the military camp. Coedès points out that *Avani-nārāyaṇa*, being a surname of the Pallava King Nandivarman III who reigned from A.D. 826 to 849, may indicate an approximate date for the inscription[3] –one of the few documents found

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1   Coedès, G., *Les peuples de la péninsule indochinoise*, Paris 1962, p. 54.

2   Coedès, G., *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, IIe Partie, 1961, stone inscriptions XXVI and XXIX. According to Prof. Hultzsch, translator of inscription XXVI, the language is Tamil and the script Tamil of an archaic type. The language of the second face of Inscription XXIX is also Tamil as is the script, though of a later date than that of Inscription XXVI–possibly Chola period.

3   Coedès, G., *Les Etats Hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie*, Paris 1964, pp. 200-01.

outside India, in a vernacular of that country.[4]   Unfortunately, the Tamil inscription from Wat Mahādhātu, dating from the Chola dynasty, is too damaged to yield much information.[5]

The site of the discovery of the Tamil inscription at Khau Brah Nārāyana close to Takuapa (*takua* = lead and formerly also tin; *pā* = jungle, forest), yielded also three damaged stone sculptures: a standing four-armed Hindu deity, which, as Coedès suggests, could possibly represent Śiva, and a male and female deity.   These are illustrated by le May in his *Buddhist Art in Siam* (figures 41 and 42). The style of the figures being clearly South Indian, more specifically Pallava, these could well date from the same period as the Tamil inscription found nearby.[6] In fact, we may even speak of a Tamil influence in the Pallava style of these three almost life-size stone sculptures now partially covered by a tree.   Obviously no longer in situ, the original site of the figures and the inscription has not been established with certainty.

The implications of the inscription and of its position relative to the related Pallava-style sculptures at Takuapa, has been most recently discussed by Alastair Lamb.[7] Following a visit to the site he proposes that the Tamil inscription and the three stone figures were removed from an original location on the plain called Tung Tük (tung = plain, tük = stone [brick] building) on Kakao Island[8] at the mouth of the Takuapa River.   Further, from surface finds at Tung
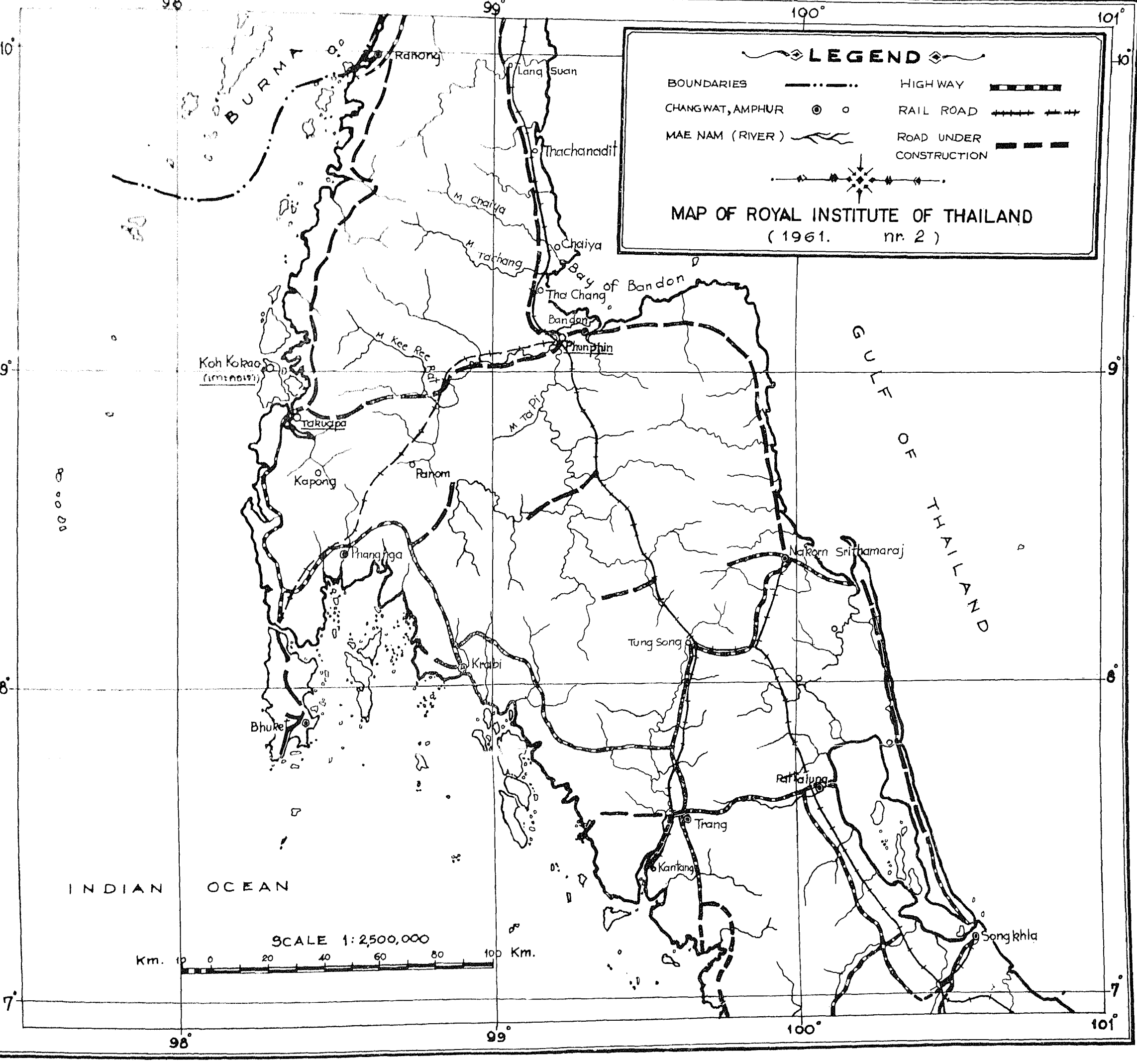
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4   *Ibid*, p. 62.

5   A third Tamil inscription known in the Far East, is that of Lobu Tuwa in Sumatra which dates from A.D. 1088. See Krom, N.J., *Hindoe Javaansche Geschiedenis*, The Hague 1931, p. 304.

6   For the story of the discovery of the three stone figures and the Tamil inscription, see Bourke, W.W., 'Some Archaeological Notes on Monthon Puket', *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 2, 1905, pp. 55-57 with facsimile of a portion of the inscription.

7   Lamb, A., 'Takuapa. The Probable Site of a Pre-Malaccan Entrepôt in the Malay Peninsula' pp. 76-86 in Bastin, J. and Roolvink, R. (eds), *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 1964.

8   Prof. Lamb uses the name 'Kakao Island'. Apparently this is meant to be the name of the island เกาะคอเขา (Koh Ko Kao) in which Tung Tük is situated.

MAP OF ROYAL INSTITUTE OF THAILAND
(1961.   nr. 2)

LEGEND

BOUNDARIES —·—··—··— HIGHWAY
CHANGWAT, AMPHUR ◉ ○ RAIL ROAD
MAE NAM (RIVER) ～～ ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION

BURMA

Ranong
Lang Suan
Thachanadit
M. Chaiya
M. Tachang
Chaiya
Bay of Bandon
Tha Chang
Bandon
Phunphin
Koh Kokao
(เกาะคอเขา)
M. Kee Rec Rat
M. Ta Pi
Takuapa
Kapong
Panom
GULF OF THAILAND
Phangnga
Nakorn Srithamaraj
Tung Song
Krabi
Bhuket
Pattalung
Trang
INDIAN OCEAN
Kantang
Songkhla

SCALE 1:2,500,000
Km. 10 0 20 40 60 80 100 Km.

Tük, Lamb is led to believe that this could have been the site of 'an entrepôt situated at the mid-point of the sea routes between the ports of the Indian Ocean and those of the Chinese Seas.'[9] This is an important conclusion; however, it is one long since arrived at. In 1935, F.H. Giles (Phya Indra Montri), late President of the Siam Society, from information supplied by Scott, an eyewitness, remarked that 'it seems quite clear that Tung Tük was a great emporium or mart where traders met, and it is probable that the gold dust he [Scott] refers to as having been found in the sand amongst the ruins was either an article of trade or the currency used.'[10] Giles also indicates why the watershed between the Takuapa and Menam Luang rivers was of importance in establishing an overland route across the peninsula from Takuapa to a site on the Bay of Bandon close to the ancient town of Jaiyā which may have been a centre in the maritime Srīvijaya Empire.[11]
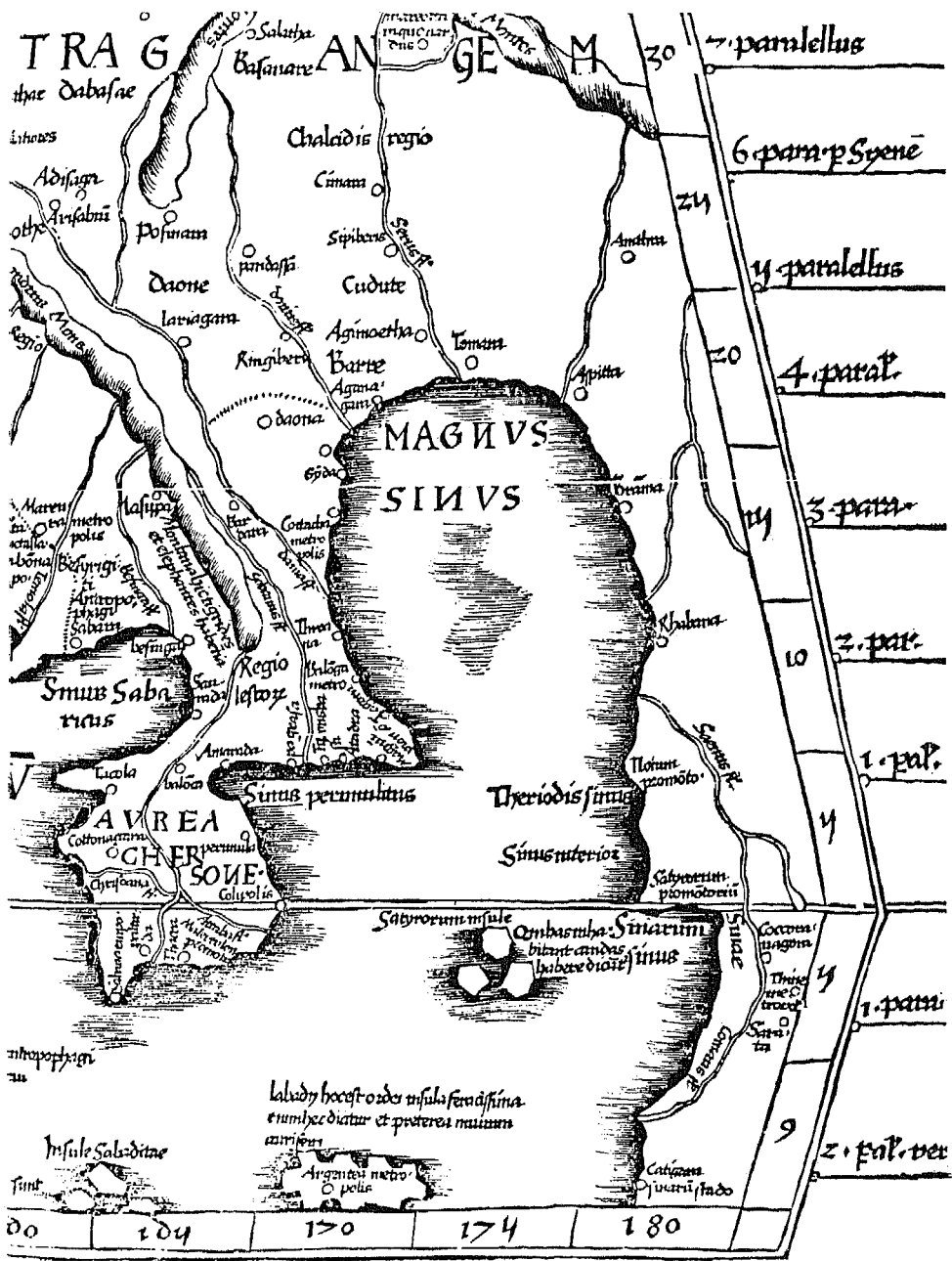
The gold dust of Takuapa brings to mind the considerable number of gold ornaments which have been excavated from the Funan site at Oc-Eo in the region of the delta of the Mekong; more particularly in that the beads associated with the Funan civilisation have also been found at Tung Tük.   Though Lamb's surface finds suggest a seventh to tenth century civilisation at Tung Tük,[12] we are reluc-

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9   Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 82.   Trade routes crossing the Peninsula are discussed by Coedès, *Les Etats . . . op. cit.*, p. 60.

10 See 'Remarks on the Land Routes across the Malay Peninsula,' *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol 28, 1935, pp. 79-84. In Mr. Scott's relevant letter, dated 4th January 1934 and included in *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84 it is stated 'that in 1908 or 1909 a considerable amount of coarse and fine gold was recovered from the top two or three feet of the ground at Tong Teuk on the Island of Kow Kaow, Takuapa'. Mr. Scott, a tin miner, makes it clear that this gold must have been brought to the site by man.

11 This route has been explored by H.G. Quaritch Wales, see his 'A Newly Explored Route of Ancient Indian Cultural Expansion,' *Indian Art and Letters*, vol 9 no 1, 1935 and the romantic *Towards Angkor, in the footsteps of the Indian Invaders*, 1937. See Giles, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82 regarding the possibility of a west-east route across the peninsula between Srīvijaya on Sumatra and Nakorn Thom, a centre in the Khmer Kingdom, *via* Sri Mahaphoti in Thailand.

12 Lamb, *op. cit.* p. 82.

TRA G ... AN GE M 30

thae dabasae

Salatha

Basanare

inhows

Chaladis regio

Adisagn

Cunam

Arisabni

othe

Posnam

Spiberie

Amathu

24

pandassa

Cudute

Daone

lariagam

Agimoetha

Toram

Ringibetri

Barte

Agama

gam

daona

Apitta

MAGNVS

SINVS

Gyda

briama

Maren

metro

polis

Hasupa

Bar

pam

Cotadra

metro

polis

20

bona

Besyrigi

Artitopor

lixigu

Sabam

Thma

ua

Khabana

Regio

lestor

besmp

inloma

metro

Smus Saba

rius

San

Amanda

inloan

Nohum

promoto

Theriodis sinus

Lucola

Sinus permulitus

AVREA

Sinus interior

Satyrorum

promotorii

GHER

SONE

Colipolis

Satyrorum insule

Ombasmha Sinarum

bizant anidas

habere diate sinus

Sinae

Cocum

nagora

Thise

tre

troed

San

ta

Laludy hocest ordo insula feradsima

enumhec diatur et preterea maium

auriseri

Insule Saliditae

Argentei metro

polis

Catigara

ivarri stado

sunt

60   164   170   174   180

A section of *INDIA EXTRA GANGEM* from Ptolemy's woodcut map, circa A.D. 1541

TABVLA VNDE=
cima Aſiæ

continet Indiam extra Gangem, ↄ
Synarum regionem.

S I Æ tabula undecima
cõtinet Indiam extra Gan-
gem, & Sinas.
Parallelus ipſius medius ſe
rè eandem rationem habet
quam meridianus.

Circunſcribitur autem tabula

Ab ortu terra incognita.
A meridie ſinu magno, & Gangetico, qui
in pelago ſunt Indico.
Ab occidente India intra Gangem.
A ſeptētrionibus parte Saccarum, & Scy-
thia extra Imaum montē, atↄ Serica.

Inſigniorũ ciuitatũ Indiæ extra Gangē

Tacola maximam diē habet horarũ æqui-
noctialium 12 ¼. Et diſtat ab Alexãdria
uerſus ortũ ho.6 ⅓. Hic quoↄ ſol bis in
anno ſit ſupra uerticem, diſtaus à tropi-
co æſtiuo ab utraↄ parte gra.79 ½.
Zabæ maximam diem habet hor.12 ¼. &
aliquid plus. Diſtatↄ ab Alexan. uerſus
ortum hor.7 ½. Hic quoↄ ſol bis in an-
no ſit ſupra uerticē, diſtãs à tropico æſti
uo ab utraↄ parte gradibus 78 ½.
Toſala maximam diem habet hor.13 ½. Et
diſtat ab Alexan. uerſus ortũ ho.6. Hic
autem ſol ſemel in anno ſit ſupra uerti-
cem in ipſo tropico æſtiuo.
Tugma maximã diem habet .hor. 13 ⅓ ₁₂.
Et diſtat ab Alexan. uerſus ortũ ho.6 ⅔.
Hic quoↄ ſol bis in anno ſit ſupra uer-
ticem, diſtans à tropico æſtiuo ab utraↄ
parte gradibus 18 ¼.
Trilingũ maximã diē habet hor.13 octaua
parte. Et diſtat ab Alexãdria uerſus or-
tũ hor.6 ¼. Hic quoↄ ſol bis in anno ſit
ſupra uerticem, diſtãs à tropico æſtiuo
ab utraↄ parte gradibus 39 ½.
Marcura maximam diem habet horarũ
12 ¼ ¼. Et diſtat ab Alexandria uerſus or
tum hor.6 ½. Hic ſol bis in anno ſit ſu-
pra uerticem, diſtans ab utraↄ parte à

tropico æſtiuo gradibus 57. quinta ↄte.
Randamarcota maximã diem habet hor.
13. ½ ¼. Et diſtat ab Alexandria uerſus or
tum hor.7 ½. ferè.
Metropolis Argyre in Iabadij inſula, ma-
ximam diem habet hor.12 ½. Diſtatↄ
ab Alexãdria uerſus ortum, auſtrali po
lo ſuper terram eleuato hor.7 octau-
parte. Hic quoↄ ſol bis in anno ſupra
uerticem ſit diſtans à tropico hyæmali,
ex utraↄ parte partes 68 ₁₂.

Sinarum ciuitates inſigniores.

In Sinis Aſpithra maximam diem habet
hor.13. Et diſtat ab Alexãdria uerſus or
tum ho.7 ⅓ ½o. Hic quoↄ ſol bis in anno
ſit ſupra uerticē, diſtaus à tropico æſti-
uo, ab utraↄ parte gra.45 ½ ₁₂.
Sinæ metropolis maximam diē habet ho.
12 ⅔ octaua parte. Et diſtat ab Alexan-
dria uerſus ortũ horis 8. ferè. Hic quoↄ
ſol bis in anno ſit ſupra uerticem quum
diſtat à tropico hyberno ab utraↄ par-
te gradibus 82. ½.
Cattigara ſtatio maximam diē habet hor.
12 ½. Et diſtat ab Alexandria polo Au-
ſtrali ſuper terram elato ad ortũ horis
7 ½¼. Hic quoↄ ſol bis in anno ſit ſupra
uerticem, diſtans à tropico hyberno ab
utraↄ parte gradibus 68. ¼.

Vndecima Aſiæ tabula continet à parti-
bus 136. aut per fontes Diamonis flu-
minis, qui Gangi admiſcetur 134 ½. uſↄ
ad partes 180. Et ſit Longitudo partiũ
aut 44. aut 46. ¼. Latitudo ab æquino-
ctiali ad Boream partibus 37. Ab æqui
noctiali uerò ad auſtrum 8¼. uel 9. Fitↄ
Latitudo 45 ½. aut 46.   25