

West meets East: At the Borders of the *Oikoumenē* and Beyond

Lecture 1 - Introduction

CLAH6007

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Ancient “Geography”

- *geographia* – term that appears with Eratosthenes of Cyrene (3rd C BC) – *phusiologia* – *historia*.
- Ancient geography as a literary genre (though specialist studies did exist).
- The “river Ocean” representing the physical embodiment of *peirata gaiēs* “boundary of the earth” – critique of this idea by Herodotus.

What the Heck is the *Oikoumenē*?

- *hē oikoumenē gē* – literally “the inhabited earth” – however, may be better to understand it as the known world.
- Inner and an outer space - *eschatiai* or “most distant lands”.
- Notion of Antipodes developed since Aristotle – Crates of Mallos, paired *oikoumenē* in the North and South with those in western hemisphere.

“Thus we must take as an hypothesis that the heavens have five zones, and that the earth also has five zones, and that the terrestrial zones have the same names as the celestial zones... The limits of the zones can be defined by circles drawn on both sides of the equator and parallel to it, namely, by two circles which enclose the torrid zone, and by two others, following upon these, which form the two temperate zones next to the torrid zone and the two frigid zones next to the temperate zones... Now they call "temperate" the zones that can be inhabited; the others they call uninhabitable, the one on account of the heat, and the other on account of the cold... Since the celestial equator cuts the whole heavens in two, the earth also must of necessity be cut in two by the terrestrial equator... one is called ‘the northern hemisphere’ and the other ‘the southern hemisphere’... But neither is there an Oceanus in the centre of our whole inhabited world, cleaving the whole of it, nor, to be sure, is there a torrid spot in it; nor yet, indeed, is there a portion of it to be found whose "climata" are opposite to the "climata" which I have given for the northern temperate zone.” – **Strabo *Geog.* 2.5.3.**

At the Edges

“India and Africa are especially noted for wonders.”
– **Pliny *NH* 7.2.32.**

Nature run’s riot at the end of the earth:

“The proverbial expression about Libya, that “Libya always brings forth some new thing,” has been coined because of the tendency for even heterogonous creatures to interbreed there. On account of the paucity of water, different species encounter each other at the few places which posses springs, and there interbreed.” – **Aristotle *Gen. Animal.* 746b7-13** – (cf. Diodorus Siculus 2.51.2-4).

Module Contents

Theme 1 – Early Contact

- **L:** India in the early Greek imagination
 - Indian as it entered the Greek consciousness; Persians as intermediaries.
- **L:** Alexander the Great and the Conquest of India
 - Conquest and colonisation
 - The creation of a legacy in the Indian subcontinent
 - Alexander and the Indian philosophers



William Hastings - c.1466-70



Theme 2 – Greeks in Bactria and India

- **L:** The Empire of the Maurya
 - The Seleucids and the Maurya
 - Greeks under Indian rule
- **L:** The Graeco-Bactrian kings
 - Rebellion from the Seleucids
 - A Greek kingdom in Afghanistan
 - Ai Khanum
- **W:** Megasthenes
 - Life at Pataliputra
- **L:** The Indo-Greeks
 - Greeks beyond the Hindu Kush
- **L:** The Greek Legacy in Central Asia and Northwest India
 - Nomadic invasions
 - Legacy and adaptation of Greek culture
- **W:** King Menander and the Milinda Panha
 - A Buddhist king?



Theme 3 - The Ptolemies

- **L:** Elephant hunting and gold mining
 - Exploiting the Eastern Desert and Red Sea
- **L:** The Ptolemies and the Erythra Thalassa
 - Trade and exploration
 - Voyages to India?
- **W:** Discovery of the Monsoon
 - An ancient Columbus?
 - Eudoxus of Cyzicus and Hippalos.



Theme 4 – The Indian Ocean Trade

- **L:** A new age of globalisation / “oikoumenisation”
 - Nature of the trade
 - Imports and exports
- **L:** Balancing the scales
 - Did Rome suffer a haemorrhage of gold to the East?
- **W:** Merchant Diaspora
 - Indians in the Empire
 - Romans in India – “Yavanas”?
- **L:** The Chronology of the Trade



Theme 5 – The Reception of Rome and India

- **L:** Rome and India in scholarly thought
 - Ethnography, Empires and Commerce
 - Evolution of scholarship
 - Archaeological flourishing
- **W:** British and Roman Empires in India
 - “Greater Rome and Great Britain”
 - Colonial architecture and classicism



The East Offering Its Riches to Britannia" by Spiridione Roma (1778)

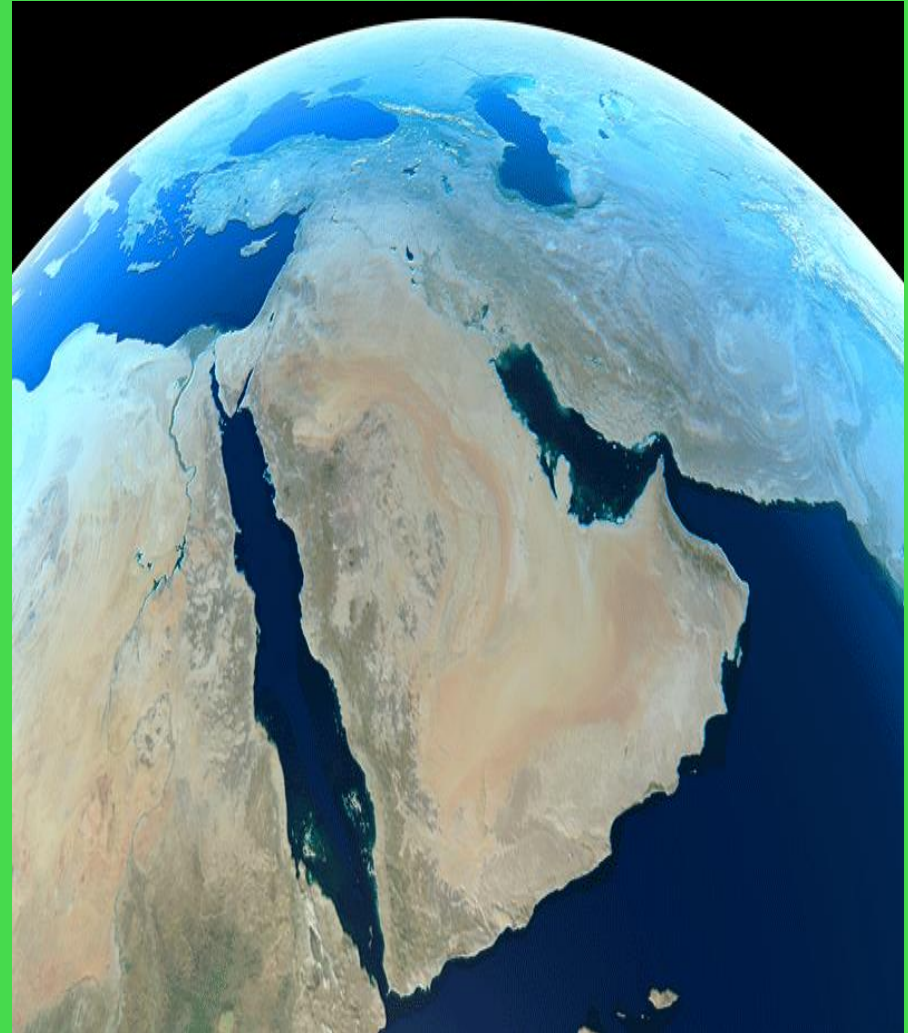
Theme 6 – Indian in the Roman Imagination

- **L:** The fabulous and exotic in Rome
 - Indian goods and Roman society
 - Moral outrage?
- **L:** India in the Graeco-Roman imagination
 - Conception of Indian societies
 - The fantastical and fictitious?
- **W:** Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*
 - Magician or Philosopher?
 - The periphery as the centre



Theme 7 – Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf

- **L: Arabia Felix**
 - A land to be conquered
 - The Incense trade
- **L: Palmyra and the Persian Gulf**
 - Between Rome and Parthia
 - Protecting the caravans
 - Destruction



Theme 8 – Christianity in India and Sri Lanka

- **W:** Early Christianity in India
 - St Thomas and India
 - Cosmas Indicopleustes



“The island has also a church of Persian Christians who have settled there, and a Presbyter who is appointed from Persia, and a Deacon and a complete ecclesiastical ritual. But the natives and their kings are heathens...” - **Cosmas Indicopleustes** *Christian Topography* 11.365.

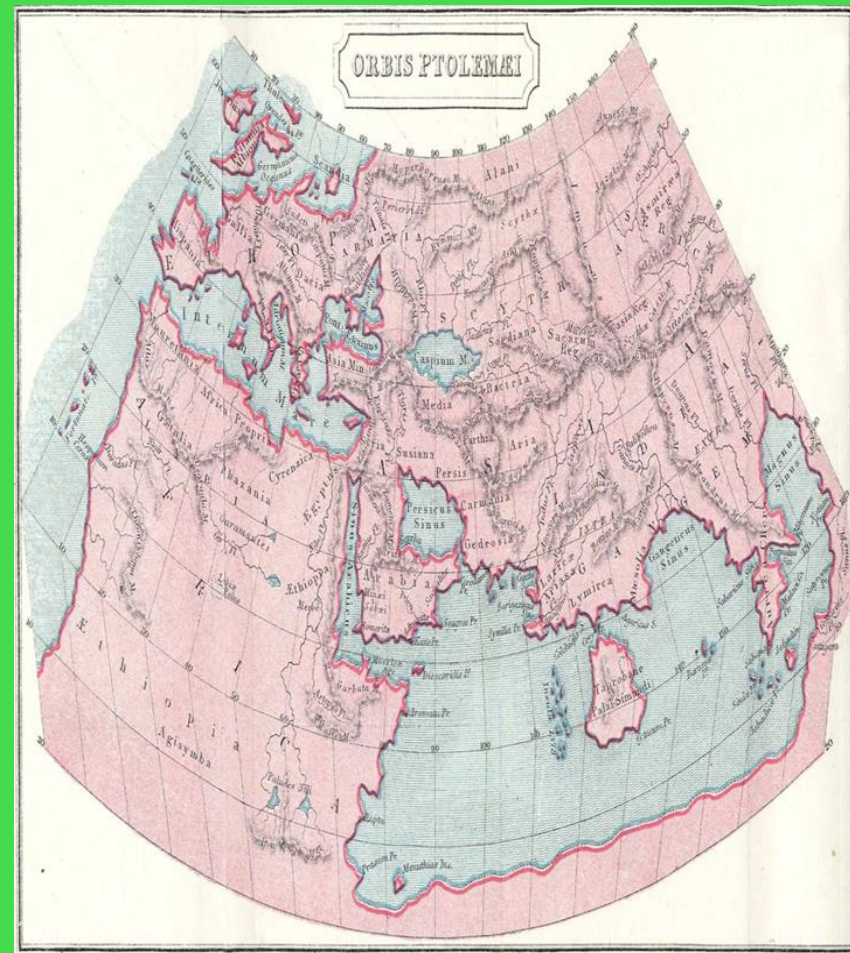
Theme 9 – East Africa

- **L:** The Wild East – Nomads of the Eastern Desert
 - Relations between the Roman military and the indigenous population
- **L:** Rome and East Africa
 - Kingdom of Meroë
 - Kingdom of Axum
 - Wars on the Red Sea
- **W:** “Raft men” – The ancient cinnamon route?



Theme 10 - The Far East

- **L:** China, southeast Asia and Rome
 - Roman embassies to India?
 - The land of Chryse Chersonesos
 - Roman finds in the Far East
- **L:** The Silk Road
 - Northern Syria and Mesopotamia
 - Parthian silk monopoly?



Course Layout and Assessments

- Three hours a week on Tuesday 9:15; Thursday 13:15; Friday 15:15.
- Friday are Workshop days – preparatory reading prior to the session, questions with group discussion.
- **Assessments:**
 - one essay – 2, 500 words – worth 50% - deadline 28/10/14
 - one Exam – 2 hours – January Exam period:
 - Section A “Gobbets” – Choice of six questions (3 passage and 3 images), need to answer three of them - worth 50% of total mark for the exam.
 - Section B “Essays” – Choice of four questions, answer one – worth 50% of total mark for the exam.

Coursework Questions

1. Do our sources allow us to understand whether Alexander the Great had any coherent strategies and objectives in mind while campaigning in Bactria and India?
2. To what extent does the evidence allow for a detailed reconstruction of the development of the Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kingdoms?
3. To what extent did the reign of Augustus usher in a new phase in trade in the Indian Ocean?
4. Discuss the characterisation of Indian philosophy and wisdom in Greek and Roman sources and why so many of these ideas persist for so long?

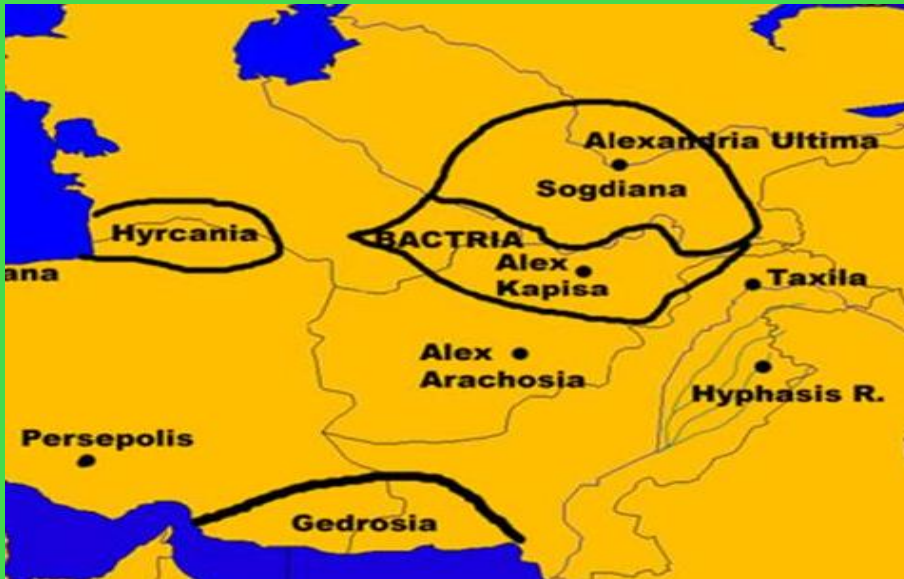
Key Locations and Place Names



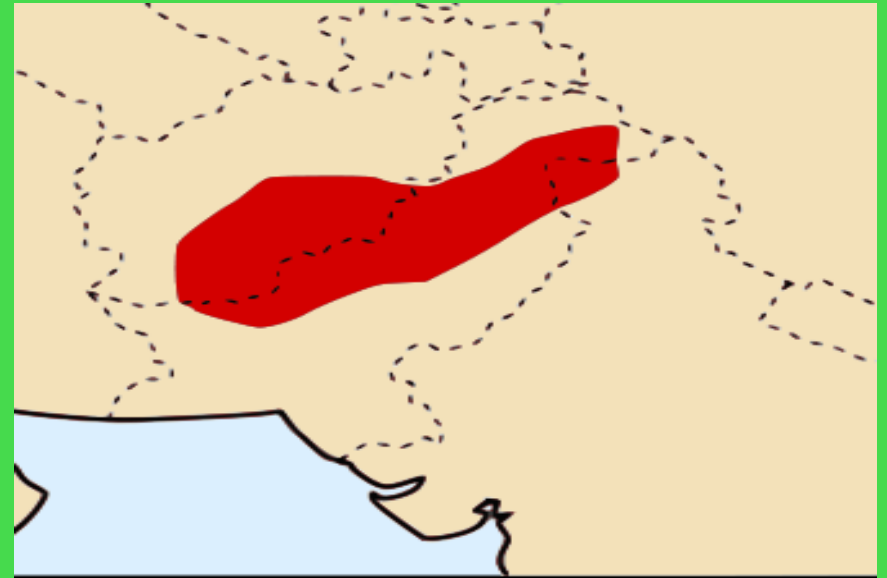
Indian Subcontinent



Central Asia



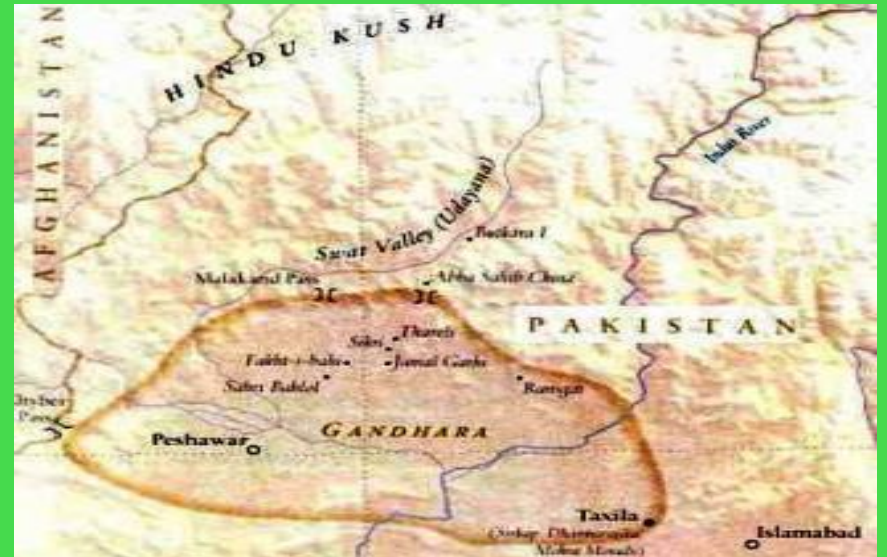
Bactria and Sogdiana



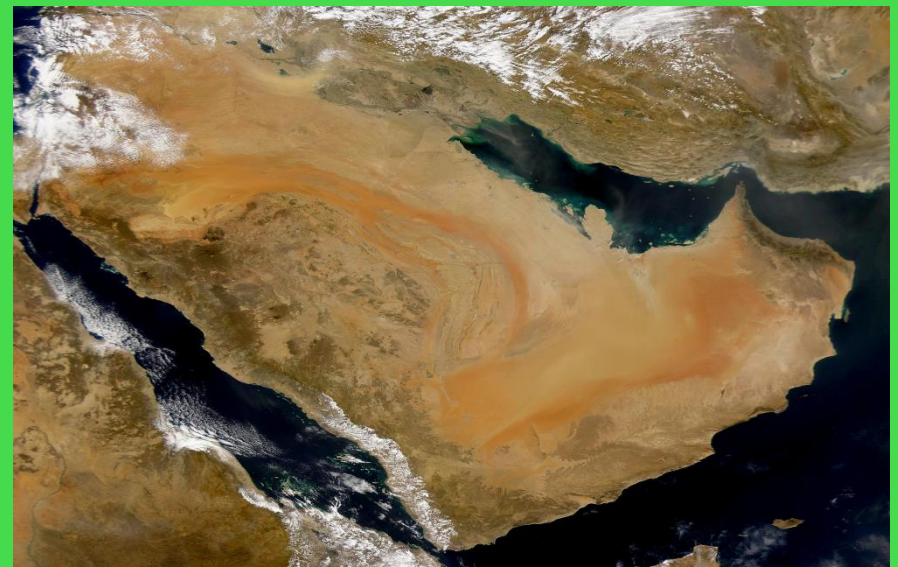
Arachosia



Hindu Kush / Paropamisadae



Gandhara



Aethiopia (Ethiopia) – Axum

Arabia Felix / Eudaimon Arabia



Serica

Azania

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