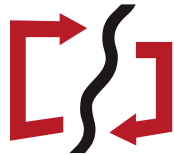




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SOUTH ASIA
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Indians in Roman Egypt in Texts and Images

Charlotte Schmid (École française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris)
Ingo Strauch (Universität de Lausanne)

In this presentation we examine recent discoveries that shed new light on the presence of Indians in Egypt between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD. Inscriptions in three different languages and scripts have been discovered in the Valley of the Kings, within the ancient capital of Thebes. The individuals responsible for these inscriptions originated from several regions of present-day India: some from the northwestern area of the subcontinent, others from its western regions, and still others from the southern extremity of the Indian peninsula. Their inscriptions can be correlated with recent finds from Berenike, a Red Sea port that has been under excavation for more than three decades.

At Berenike, longer inscriptions in Indian languages have been uncovered; these were produced locally and provide evidence of an active Indian religious presence in the settlement. This interpretation is further supported by the discovery of representations of Indian deities, likewise manufactured in Egypt. It is plausible that Berenike served as the main point of entry into Egypt for those individuals whose names are recorded in no fewer than six tombs of the Valley of the Kings.



Vrishni Triad Stele from Berenike

Cultural & Religious History of South Asia

DEPARTMENTAL COLLOQUIUM

Date: **Tuesday 09.12.2025**

Time: 16:15–17:45

Venue: Room 010.01.05

Organizers: Rodney Ast (Institute for Papyrology) • Ute Husken (Department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia) • Michael Radich (Department of Buddhist Studies)