

The Hague, 2001), and it is constructive to compare the two sets of proposals. Chirikba, a native Abkhazian now resident in Holland, does not go as far as Potier in advocating any redrawing of Abkhazia's south-eastern border with Mingrelia, and yet even this offering was not universally well received in Abkhazia, which indicates just how difficult resolving this knotty issue is going to be. A further complication is that Abkhazia finally declared independence on 12 October 1999, which places any discussion on (con)federation with/in Georgia under an even larger question mark.

Elsewhere in his chapter Chirikba rightly stresses that, contrary to how the Georgian-Abkhazian war is often portrayed either in deliberately misleading statements from Tbilisi or in ignorant western pronouncements, this was never a war of secession—Abkhazia

responded to armed aggression and won a *de facto* independence. Echoing an observation in the introduction when Coppeters asks why those Westerners who have concerned themselves for Georgia's (and usually not Abkhazia's) fate have displayed, often despite relevant experiences at home, no apparent interest in urging the sides to come to some sort of federative *modus vivendi*, Chirikba alludes to the role that could usefully be played by 'non-partisan international mediators and guarantors'—the difficulty lies in the distinct pro-Georgian (?pro-Shevardnadze) bias displayed by most of the international players, who are largely new to the area and have little understanding of the subtleties of the situation on the ground, not only in this conflict but across the Caucasus as a whole.

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RICHARD SALOMON: *A Gāndhārī version of the Rhinoceros Sūtra: British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragment 5B. With a contribution by Andrew Glass.* (Gandhāran Buddhist Texts, 1.) xvii, 234 pp., 8 pl. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2000.

The earliest South Asian literary manuscripts, dating from about the first century A.D., have been preserved in eastern Afghanistan, thanks to a local practice of interring them in jars when well past their prime. The Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project of the British Library and University of Washington (Seattle) has undertaken the task of unrolling, reconstructing, and deciphering some of these congealed birch-bark scrolls in Kharoṣṭhī script and Gandhārī Prakrit orthography. Following closely upon his preliminary description of the British Library collection in *Ancient Buddhist scrolls from Gandhāra* (1999), Richard Salomon has now provided, together with excellent facsimiles, an edition of one of the best preserved texts, a set of verses corresponding to *Khaggavisānasutta*, the 'Rhinoceros Sūtra' of Khuddakānikāya. Studies of fragments corresponding to texts from Ekottarāgama, Dharmapada, Avadāna, and Abhidharma are currently being prepared by other participants in the project.

The survival of much of an Uddāna index of verses, and the use of fibre-optic light to reveal a few obscured syllables, have made possible a painstaking reconstruction of this Gandhārī '*Khargaviṣāna*' text, remarkably instructive in spite of the disintegration of the third pāda of most verses (where textual variation is particularly prevalent). It differs strikingly from the Pālī in its readings. These tend to be in agreement with Sanskrit versions, and seem to pose no very serious threat to the authenticity of the Pālī tradition in this respect.

The very different arrangement of its verses may be another matter. Salomon notes that,

by comparison with the Pālī, the Gandhārī may well attest an early stage in the process of 'standardization and canonization' (p. 48), but his impression of homogeneity (p. 41, end) and his objection to the reconstruction of an *Urtext*, at least in the present state of knowledge, make him disinclined to pursue this aspect of the matter.

He takes the opportunity to survey, comprehensively and critically, the secondary literature bearing on the text's antiquity and importance. Its modest size has made it possible to compile complete dossiers of the physical disintegration of the manuscript (before and after interment); its orthography, phonology, and grammar; and the 'patterns of variation' that are discernible in the wording of the text. Andrew Glass has contributed a pioneering study of its penmanship, as a basis for the identification of damaged letters and for confirmation of its dating. This includes a valuable table depicting all the attested syllables.

Salomon rightly urges the rendering 'Rhinoceros' for '*Khargaviṣāna*', in preference to 'Rhinoceros Horn'. He is willing to concede a fundamentally punning intent (p. 13), although this would obscure both the image of the solitary grazing rhinoceros and (if it occurs at all outside the imagination of later compilers and commentators) that of the uniqueness of the Indian rhinoceros's horn. The later commentators have, however, somewhat unnecessarily made nonsense of the Niddesa (Nidd II E° 129) by correlating its phrase 'like it' with 'horn' rather than 'rhinoceros': 'As the rhinoceros has (*khaggassa hoti*) one single horn (*visānam*), so like it (*tassadiṣo*) one should conduct oneself (*loke car-*) alone rid-of-encumbrances (*muttabandhano*)'.

The Niddesa can be attempting here to combine the text's rational meaning with an explanation of *khaggaviṣāna* 'rhinoceros' as 'one-horned *khagga*', hence in effect 'one should be minimally encumbered like the one-horned rhinoceros'. The explanation agrees with the opening verses of both Pālī and Gandhārī, which proscribe not the society of

one companion, but that of a plurality of companions. Nevertheless, the phrase *eko care* shows that the idea of solitary perambulation is paramount.

Its postulation of a neuter *viṣāna* is as suspect as the imputed sense 'one single horn'. Feminine *viṣānā*, possibly also *viṣānakā* (Whitney-Lanman, at AV 6.44.3), was used to denote 'hardshorn' as a medicinal substance (AV 3.7.1), with explicit etymological reference to the fact that the antlers are regularly shed (AV 6.121.1). The evidence (*EWA*, I, 443f) suggests that there was an indigenous word for 'rhinoceros', of which NPers. *karg*, *kargadan* (Steingass), *karkadān* (*EWA*), Greek *kar[*k]a-zōnos* (or read *kar[*g]a-* for attested *κάρτα-*?), Gandhari *khargavis[ā]ṇa* and Skt. *khāḍga*, *khāḍgaviṣāna* are all adaptations. This tends to imply that *viṣānā* was introduced into the animal's name by analogy with antler mythology; and Gandhari (with its voiced sibilants) would be the likely source of the extended forms in Persian and Greek. The word would then be on a par with Skt. *mrganābhi* and Mh. Pkt. *migapuccha* (*BSoAS*, 62/3, 1999, 533f.), which signify either the musk-deer or musk itself. Salomon's insistence that the attested Gandhari *kharga-* is an artificial spelling (p. 77, etc), as compared with Pali *khagga*, needs to be modified.

He infers a 'pattern of interrelationship and influence' (p. 18) between the Gandhari text and the Dhammapada and Sn *Aṭṭhakavagga*, and he shows that these have probably influenced the Gandhari reading in several cases. Where it is a question of the arrangement of the verses, however, it may be the Pali version that is at fault. It is suggested (p. 17) that Pa. 31 and 23 have become contiguous in Ga. 12–13 in acknowledgement of the fact that Sn 774ab shares phrases with both; but it seems equally possible that the more original sequence is preserved in Gandhari and in *Aṭṭhakavagga*. The contiguity of similar phrases in Dhp 331bc and Ga. 34f contrasts with their arbitrary dispersal in Pa. 8 and 40.

Despite the doubts expressed on p. 47, the fact that the Gandhari text is marginally shorter than the Pali may also tell in favour of the authenticity of its structure. Salomon has shown (p. 197f.) that it had 40 verses, presented as four sets of ten; and it is able to support its structure with an Uddāna index of 40 verse-openings. The Pali text in Sn has 41 verses; and the later Apadāna compilation offers 42 verses, by including both the Sn and Gandhari versions of the initial verse.

The Sanskritized text in *Mahāvastu* makes out of the same initial verse a complete framework, with the Gandhari reading represented in its verses 2–3, and the Sn reading duplicated in its concluding verses 11–12. It has been understood to attest 500 verses, but seems rather to offer a demonstration that any given verse of the original may be multiplied with slight variations in order to provide individual enlightenment for 500 'Pratyekabuddhas' (*sarvā khāḍgaviṣāṇagāthā vistareṇa kartavyā ...*).

The volume includes both the Pali and 'Sanskrit' versions of the 'Rhinceros Sūtra', with full critical apparatus, and a Gandhari word index. An associated Kharoshti fragment

bearing a dozen or so words from some other unidentified manuscript is edited in an appendix. Two misprints may be noted, if only for their extreme scarcity value in an important and immaculate publication: p. 38, line 8 from end, refers to Appendix 3 in lieu of Appendix 2; and p. 152, line 8, has F 12 for F 13.

The remarkable success of the rescue and conservation by British Library staff, and of the decipherment and reconstruction by the team in Seattle, holds a promise of yet more revolutionary insights into the construction and meaning of the earliest Buddhist texts, with opportunities to identify more certainly, and to appreciate more directly, the intentions and the skills of the poets.

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RONALD INDEN, JONATHAN WALTERS and DAUD ALI (ed.): *Querying the medieval: texts and the history of practices in South Asia*. 235 pp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. £32.50.

This book contains three substantial essays dealing with the history and texts of South Asia between the sixth and twelfth centuries. As the title indicates, the authors have attempted to re-think these centuries in significant ways and to write new histories of the post-Gupta period. The result is stimulating, challenging and, in the final analysis, important. However much we may take issue with specific points or the handling of certain themes, this is a book which historians of medieval India will find difficult to ignore.

The book focuses on different geographical areas, dynasties, texts and religious dispensations, but forms a coherent whole. This is due to the fact that the contributors share a methodological and theoretical position, the most important aspects of which are: (1) that texts in South Asia are not static descriptions of external historical realities but were part of a 'scale of texts', that is, they were composed and re-worked in response to other texts and a variety of surrounding historical events; (2) that texts not only articulated and responded to particular circumstances but were part of the process by which situations were constituted, that is, texts were seen as having a power to create new social, religious and historical realities; (3) that texts were not composed by single individuals in the modernist sense but were produced by 'complex authors', that is, a tangle of sages, scholars, scribes, readers and listeners, all of whom, directly or indirectly, helped shape the texts that are preserved for us to study. To support this theoretical framework, the authors cite Collingwood, Vološinov, Barthes, Foucault and others. In addition to these shared theoretical principles, the present volume is held together by the idea of 'imperial formation', an historical model developed by Inden to explain the political constitution of India from the Gupta period to the rise of the Sultanate.

Within this framework Inden, in the first essay 'Imperial Purāṇas: Kashmir as Vaiṣṇava