

## **A New Interpretation of the Edicts of Aśoka from Kandahar**

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**Abstract** From Alexandria of Arachosia, present-day Kandahar, we have two edicts in Greek, issued by the sovereign Maurya Aśoka (c. 270-230 BC). Arachosia, the ancient Eastern satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire – corresponding to present-day southeastern Afghanistan – had long seen the meeting of the Iranian world to the west and the Indian world to the east. As from the end of the fourth century BC, after the conquest by Alexander the Great and the occupation of the eastern dominions of the Empire by Seleucus Nicator, it was to see a conspicuous Greek presence, strikingly attested by the epigraphs of Aśoka. The first edict – discovered in 1957 – is in two languages, Greek and Aramaic, while the second – discovered in 1963 – is in Greek alone. On the basis of texts from the court of Maurya of Pāṭaliputra, both of them constitute summaries of and propaganda for the conversion and moral principles inspiring Aśoka, subsequent to his bloody conquest of Kalinga. Our aim here is to take stock of certain issues, proposing a new completion for the opening lacuna in the Greek section of the bilingual epigraph, and casting doubt anew on the originality of the Greek texts, considering the attribution of the region to Indian, rather than Seleucid rule after the pact between Seleucus Nicator and Candragupta Maurya, Aśoka's grandfather (c. 305 BC).

**Summary** 1 Prologue. – 2 The Greek Incipit on the Kandahar Bilingual Stele. –3 The Epithets of Aśoka in the Kandahar Inscriptions and the Originality of the Texts. – 4 The Dominion of Kandahar in the Age of Aśoka: the Contribution of the Epigraphs.

**Keywords** Arachosia. Aśoka. Greek-Aramaic edict. Kandahar.

### **1 Introduction**

The epigraphic production of Aśoka was clearly intended to be read by the aristocratic class. It was the high officials of the administrations who read the inscriptions and acted as mediators. In Alexandria of Arachosia the languages chosen for divulgation were Aramaic, used by the Achaemenid administration, still very close in time, and Greek, the language of the government following immediately upon the Persian administration.

Daniel Schlumberger and Émile Benveniste, among the first to address the Greek-Aramaic<sup>1</sup> edict found at Kandahar in April 1957 (Schlumberger, Dupont-Sommer, Robert, Benveniste 1958, 1-48), hold that the Greek section of the edict shows a certain originality also at the conceptual level, which they see as distancing it from the original Indian model and, indeed, from comparison with the Aramaic text. They argue that Kandahar was entirely under the Mauryan hegemony as from the pact entered upon in 305-303 BC between Seleucus I Nicator and Candragupta Maurya, Aśoka's grandfather.

The reason why I believe it is now time to re-examine the epigraphs lies in the fact that the certainties – in some cases more asserted than demonstrated – of the first scholars who studied them constitute the basis on which many still work, and after so many years they have come to be credited as incontestable truths.<sup>2</sup>

1 Aramaic survived as diplomatic language in the chancelleries of the Hellenistic kingdoms that rose from the ruins of the Persian Empire. I concur with Franz Altheim and Ruth Sthiel (1959, 247) that “the Aramaic text of the bilingual Kandahār inscription shows the penetration of later, chiefly East Aramaic peculiarities” and “the second version of the bilingual inscription is Aramaic and must be read as Aramaic. That the Aramaic text was meant *only* to be the substratum of an Iranian reading is an assertion that cannot be proved” (256). There are five of Aśoka's inscriptions in Aramaic in the Afghan territory: one from Pol-i Darūnta in Laghmān (Henning 1949-50, 80-8); an Indo-Aramaic one (Benveniste, Dupont-Sommer 1966, 440-51); one on the Laghmān River and another from the homonymous province (Dupont-Sommer 1970). Laghmān lies on the northern bank of the Kabul River in the vicinity of Jalalabad. It includes the valleys of the lower course of the Alingār and the Ališang; known to Sanskrit scholars as *Lampāka* or *Lambāka*, it lies on the north-western border of India, apparently corresponding to the satrapy of the Paropamisadai, possibly part of Aśoka's Empire (Tarn 1951, 99-102).

2 For example, Gerard Fussman (1974, 369-89) and Paul Bernard (1985, 85-95; 2005; Bernard, Rougemont 2012, 167-71), endorsing Schlumberger's theses on the pact between the two sovereigns and attribution of Arachosia to the Maurya Empire from then until the conquest by Demetrius I of Bactria (c. 190-185 BC). The same position is still maintained in the study on the epitaph of *Sōphytos*, discovered at Kandahar in 2003 (Bernard, Pinault, Rougemont 2004, 265-69; Coloru 2009, 136-7, 145-6, 189-91; *contra* Bopearachchi 1996; Fussman 2010, 695-713; Maniscalco 2014, 83-94; forthcoming b). The conviction of the Indian origin of the name, together with the certainty that Arachosia was still Mauryan on the arrival of the son of Euthydemus, have misled other scholars (e.g. cf. Fraser, Matthews 2009, 156 fn. 27). Although it is beyond our scope here to go into these issues, I feel I must stress my total dissent for different reasons: when Bernard, on the basis of the agreement of the *epigamia*, ratified by Seleucus and Chandragupta, grants that the mother, grandmother or great-grandmother of *Sōphytos* could perfectly well have been Greek, one might equally well object that they could have been Indian or, for that matter, autochthonous Iranian, seeing that Bernard (1985, 92-3) holds that the clause of the *epigamia* concerned the autochthonous, and not Indian, population in Arachosia. Following through with this line, *Sōphytos* himself might well have been Greek and his great-grandmother Indian, for example. If the policy of mixed marriages really existed, any observation about the ethnic composition of the families will be, at the same time, both legitimate and speculative. However, we should not lose sight of the simplicity of the basic facts: we are dealing with a written name and it makes sense in Greek, not by virtue of an Indian etymology (cf. Maniscalco 2014, 86-9), in the context of a Greek

## 2 The Greek Incipit on the Kandahar Bilingual Stele

The Greek epigraph<sup>3</sup> on the bilingual stele – almost entirely intact, once on display at the Museum of Kabul, but missing now for several years – was engraved within the outline of a trapezoidal plaque on a large calcareous stone situated at the side of the road that runs through ancient Kandahar (Guarducci 1969, 91).

The *incipit* shows a lacuna: Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη [...] ὠν βασιλεὺς Πιοδάσσης εὐσέβειαν ἔδειξεν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. The first completion, proposed by Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli (Pugliese Carratelli, Levi Dalla Vida 1958, 10) and Louis Robert (1958, 10-4), is πλήρη[θέντ]ῶν, which should thus be translated as “completed ten years King Piodasses revealed pity (εὐσέβειαν) to

composition, in an area where Greeks were present. Effectively, from 305 BC to the renewal of the *φιλία* (Polyb. 11, 34, 11) between Antiochus III (223-187 BC) and Sophagasenus - Eggemont (1965-66, 58-66) identifies him with Somaśarman Maurya (208-201 BC); Schmitt (1964, 67) defines him “ein Kleiner lokaler Raja”; anyhow I agree with Paolo Daffinà (1975-76, 57-8) that “maurya o non maurya era in quel momento il re dei territori indiani che confinavano con il regno di Siria ed è comprensibile che Antioco - fallita la sua campagna contro i Parti e i Greci di Battriana - cercasse di assicurarsi almeno l'amicizia del suo confinante indiano, ristabilendo con lui quei rapporti di buon vicinato che erano sempre intercorsi tra l'India e il regno di Siria”; probably his rule was reduced to Gandhāra (cf. Charpentier 1930-32, 304 fn. 1; Filliozat, Renou 1947, 224; Daffinà 1967, 37) – about a century later, although there were no significant changes for the region, remaining where every scholar had previously placed it. Bernard (1985, 90) and Coloru (2009, 186-7) fail to take into account that, as from the death of Aśoka, Mauryan power lapsed into a decline as sudden as it was inexorable. Thus, even though we might contemplate a Mauryan Arachosia up until the reign of Aśoka, it would be still less likely subsequent to it. As for the point that it would have been easier for Demetrius to attack a Mauryan rather than Seleucid Arachosia (Bernard 1985, 90; Bernard, Pinault, Rougemont 2004, 265-9; Coloru 2009, 136-7 2012; Bernard, Rougemont 2012, 167-71), it is surprising to note the failure to consider the importance that the year 187 BC had for the Seleucid Empire – it was a fatal date. After the defeat suffered by his fleet in 191 BC, and again in 190 BC, by the Romans, beaten at Thermopylae, where he had challenged Rome the year before, and having abandoned European soil, Antiochus III was to be defeated at Magnesia, in Asia Minor at the end of 190 BC. Submitting to the Treaty of Apamea (188 BC), he died soon after, in 187 BC. Santo Mazzarino (1957, 180) observes that the Treaty of Apamea «segnò l'assoluta scomparsa di ogni influenza seleucidica». Although Bernard holds that the treaty ratified by Euthydemus and Antiochus would have constituted an insurmountable obstacle for the invasion of Arachosia, once Antiochus was dead, Demetrius could hardly have hoped for a better time to attack the region, then far removed, not only geographically, from the ambitions of the last Seleucids for ever. For a summary of the various interpretations and clauses of the agreement, including the extent of Seleucus's cessions of Arachosia, Gedrosia and Paropamisadai, cf. Maniscalco 2014, 70-9; forthcoming a.

3 For the Indian edicts of Aśoka, I have made use of the unpublished translations by Paolo Daffinà provided in lessons in 2002 and 2003. For the section of the bilingual stele in Aramaic, reference is made to Pugliese Carratelli and Levi Dalla Vida (1958). For the Greek section of the bilingual edict (XXXIII), as also for the monolingual Greek epigraph (XXXIV) from Kandahar, the translations are mine (cf. Maniscalco 2014, 39-45). For the original texts cf. Hultzsch 1925; Bloch 1950; Eggermont, Hoftijzer 1962. For further translations and an up-to-date bibliography cf. Pugliese Carratelli 2003; Bernard, Rougemont 2012.

men"; the passive aorist participle would stand as the only attestation of the verb \*πληρέω, alongside the form πληρώω, explained as normalisation (Benveniste 1958, 46) of the morphological relation between the adjective πλήρης 'full, filled' and the present denominative πληρώω; thus, from πλήρης the new present \*πληρέω would be formed; hence the participle reconstructed by the scholars. The hypothesis that the form constitutes a *hapax* does not represent a problem: two more hapaxes are attested at Kandahar, in the bilingual edict ἐνήκοοι 'listening indulgently', and in edict XXXIV, διαμεινώω<sup>4</sup> 'to improve, to increase'.

It's my opinion that these attest to the sensitivity of the Greek redactor, who had the Indian original in hand, but could not make use of any official or literary Greek model, drawing upon all the resources of his language, in the effort to render Indian philosophical concepts to a Hellenic readership. Nevertheless, it hardly seems correct to complete the text with the invention of a term and then justify it, attributing it with the status of a *hapax*, nor does there appear to be much sense in devising *nebenform* for such a very common term as πληρώω. Another point raised is that three rather than four letters would fit well in the space of the lacuna. For this reason, Margherita Guarducci (1969, 91; 2005, 145) proposes Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη[ῶντι]ων "being fully ten years (from his consecration)", but the possibility of completion with four letters, not totally ruled out by Guarducci, is accepted, as we shall see, by Carlo Gallavotti (1992). Before considering Gallavotti's hypothesis, a point that needs to be made is that the objection by the scholar (1992, 35), that the temporal indication 'ten years complete' (Mazzarino 1973, 232-5; Daffinà 1988, 50-7) does not fit in conceptually with the inscriptions of Aśoka, remains unconvincing. For example, the *incipit* of *RE* (*Rock Edition*) XIII from Shāhbāzgarhī runs "in the eighth year of reign..." (*athavasabitasa Priyadrasine raja*), or indeed the final section of *RE* IV from Gīrnār "in the twelfth year from consecration (*dasavasabhisite*) King Piodasses dear to the gods had this edict engraved". The importance of the chronological reference, in relation to the drastic changes, resulting from the sovereign's conversion, is evident in *RE* VIII, Kālsī

4 Cf. XXXIV, 10-1: καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα ἐπασκοῦσι ταῦτα μὴ ὀκνεῖν λέγειν ἵνα διαμεινώσω δια παντὸς εὐσεβοῦντες, "and there should be no hesitating in saying these things to those who (already) cultivate such precepts, in order that they may better themselves, dedicating themselves to piety (εὐσεβοῦντες) incessantly (διὰ παντὸς)". Instead of the aorist subjunctive διαμεινώσω from διαμείνω 'I remain/I persevere' (cf. Pugliese Carratelli 2003, 120-122; Christol 1983, 32-3, 41) favours the present subjunctive διαμεινώσω from διαμεινώω 'I make better/I increase', from ἀμείνων 'better', comparative of ἀγαθός; Gallavotti conjectures an earlier, non-specified origin of the verb (1992, 43-4). In my translation the second ταῦτα in the phrase is the object of λέγειν, unlike the interpretation by Gallavotti, who associates it with διαμεινώσω (1992, 44).

Nei tempi andati i re partivano per viaggi di svago. In quelle occasioni c'erano la caccia e altri divertimenti simili. Orbene il re *Devānāṃpriya priyadarśin*, passati dieci anni dall'*abhiṣeka* (*daśavaṣabhisite*) si è recato alla *Sam̐bodhi*.<sup>5</sup> Da ciò i viaggi del *Dharma*.<sup>6</sup>

Edict XXXIV, 11-12 runs: Ὀγδῶμι ἔτει βασιλεύοντος Πιοδάσσου κατέστραπται τὴν Καλίγγην, ([having] passed eight years of [the] reign of Piodasses, [he] conquered Kalīṅga).<sup>7</sup> The calculation of time does not differ in the inscriptions and, indeed, serves to appreciate the changes coming about in the sovereign after witnessing the horror, slaughter and deportations provoked by the violence of war, which moves *Devānāṃpriya* (Scharfe 1971)<sup>8</sup> to remorse and to embracing the *Dharma*.

Gallavotti (1992) draws evidence from the Hellenistic epigraph at Acre to fill the lacuna.

The short composition consists of the claim the child Artemis makes to her father Zeus for the honours paid by humans to the other gods: ὄλλοις δ' εἰσι τεχνῶν εὐρήματα, κάρποι ἅπασιν, / μνημείων ὅσοι τιμαὶ καὶ ἀγεῖ' ἄσεβοῦσιν (or: ἀγεῖα σέβοῦσιν), "sono per gli altri le invenzioni delle arti, per gli altri i frutti,/i santi onori dei monumenti e le punizioni per gli empì (oppure: gli onori per i devoti)" (1983, 1-4).

The ambiguity of the expression (ἀγεῖ' ἄσεβοῦσιν/ἀγεῖα σέβοῦσιν) befits the sense of the term chosen for the Kandahar lacuna, τὸ ἄγος, as well

5 In contrast to the 'itinerary of Pleasure' (*vihārayātā*) pursued by the kings, Aśoka asserts the 'itinerary of the Norm' (*dhammayātā*). At the court of Candragupta, Megasthenes, Ambassador of Seleucus Nicator (cf. Beloch 1925-1927, 360; Brown 1955; 1957; Daffinà 1967, 33-4; Bussagli 1984, 43-6; Bosworth 1996; Bearzot 2007; Maniscalco 2014, 79-83; forthcoming a), observed that the sovereign only issued forth on three solemn occasions: judicial hearings, public sacrifices and big hunts. Alongside the route of his procession, ropes were stretched, which were not to be passed on pain of death; the king was constantly surrounded by armed women, his bodyguards (Strabo., 15, 1, 55). Aśoka broke with this practice; he left the court, mixed with his subjects and mingled among them (cf. Filliozat 1949a, 225-47; Filliozat, Renou 1947, 214-18).

6 Aśoka's pilgrimage to Bodhgayā lasted 256 nights (Brahamagiri): "Il re caro agli Dei così ha detto: Discepolo laico (*upāsaka*) per più di due anni e mezzo, in verità, per un anno non sono stato per nulla zelante. Ma da oltre un anno mi sono recato dal *Sam̐gha* e il mio sforzo è intenso". Aśoka revered the Threefold Jewel (*Triratna*) (Bhabra): "È a voi noto, o Reverendi (riferito al *Sam̐gha*), quanto sono grandi da parte mia il rispetto e la fede per il Buddha, per il *Dharma* e per il *Sam̐gha*. Qualunque cosa sia stata detta, o Reverendi, dal Beato Buddha, tutte sono ben dette...".

7 Cf. Shāhbāzgarhī RE XIII, *Aṭhavaṣa abhisitasa Devanapriyasa Priyadrasine rajjina Kaliga vijita*.

8 "In *devānāṃpriya* Hartmut Scharfe ha scorto la traduzione di φίλος τῶν βασιλέων 'caro alle divine maestà', difatti Seleuco sancì con Candragupta una relazione di φιλία-pactio: Aśoka presentandosi in tal modo dichiarerebbe nei confronti del re di Siria lo stesso ossequio e rispetto che suo nonno accordò a Seleuco" (Maniscalco 2014, 77).

as the formulation thus constructed: Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη[ς ἀγέ]ων (da dieci anni fornito delle sacralità) (1992, 39).

The substantive τὸ ἄγος (Chantraine 2009, 12-3) expresses sacral possession, consecration and execration; according to Gallavotti this might have corresponded to

una certa interpretazione dell'*abhiṣeka*, quale si riflette nell'iranismo *ptytw* della versione aramaica, (Gallavotti 1992, 39)

harking back to one of the possible senses of the term, in the translation by Levi Dalla Vida (Pugliese Carratelli, Levi Dalla Vida 1958, 20).

In my opinion, Gallavotti's suggestion improves upon the 1958 completion, conveying the idea of the sacred investiture of the sovereign, while the identification of the ablatival genitive δέκα ἐτῶν and πλήρης as attribute, associated with the king, is plausible. The doubtful side of it, on the other hand, lies precisely in the reference to the semantic ambivalence of τὸ ἄγος, which is supposed to justify its use.

The *incipit* of the version in Aramaic runs: *šnn 10 ptytw*, and the point of contention is the rendering of the Aramaic *ptytw*. Benveniste, recognising its conjectural nature, translated *ptytw*, tackling the difficulty of finding a sense corresponding to that of πλήρη[θέντ]ων conjectured by Robert, thus reconstructing an original \**patitav-* to vocalise *ptytw* as *pāitita*, to which he attributed the sense of 'duration'; hence we would have "[having] passed ten years" (1958, 36-7).<sup>9</sup>

The interpretation I find most convincing is the one that stresses the sacral sense of the term, as Antonino Pagliaro indicated to Gabriele Levi Dalla Vida (Pugliese Carratelli, Levi Dalla Vida 1958, 20) for the aramaic version; the vocalisation as \**patyasti* suggests a sense of 'justice, fairness', but also 'expiation, purification'; thus, "in the tenth year, Our Lord the King, done justice (or purification)". The Aramaic nexus (*šnn 10 ptytw*) is taken to translate the Indian *daśavaṣabhisite*, 'consecrated for ten years'.

I cannot believe that the Iranian redactor meant to endow the ceremony of royal consecration with an ambivalent sense, or ascent to the throne with a more generic sense, as postulated by Gallavotti. Consequently, it hardly seems appropriate to insist on the presumed ambiguity of *abhiṣeka* for the Greek version, nor indeed for the Aramaic one. Nor can we imagine the Indian sovereign presenting himself through formulas that gave rise to confusion or negativity; rather, far more simply, the stonemasons must have had to indicate the time, when the reign began relying on the Indian

9 Altheim and Stiehl (1959, 243) criticised the proposal, conjecturing the Avestan *patyāstō* 'obedience' to vocalise *ptytw*.

text, for which it would be absurd to hypothesise the ceremony of *abhiṣeka* being taken negatively.

In light of all this, I would fill the lacuna in this way: Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη[ς ἀγν]ῶν, “invested (filled/brimming) with the sacred (powers)/manifold sacredness” also “invested/filled with purifications”. The advantage lies in the unequivocal nature of the term chosen: with ἀγνός there is no risk of misunderstanding, nor of semantic ambiguity, which does not befit the context. The adjective, known and employed since the times of Homer – who was, however, unacquainted with the use of τὸ ἄγος and ἅγιος – expresses purity, veneration.

It is an attribute of the divinities, ἀγνή Περσεφόνη (Od., 11, 386), χρυσόθρονος Ἄρτεμις ἀγνή, “chaste Artemis of the golden throne” (Od., 5, 123), but it can refer to human beings. In a famous fragment by Alcaeus, Sappho is ἰόπλοκ ἄγνα μελλιχόμειδε, «with violet hair, venerable (pure), with a sweet smile» (fr. 384, 1, [Voigt]). Furthermore, it can also be associated with physical phenomena and objects: ἄλσος ἀγνόν, ‘sacred wood’ (Hymn. Merc., 187), while the ἀγνὰ θύματα are ‘bloodless sacrifices’, which Thucydides contrasted with ἱερεῖα (1, 126, 6). During the Hellenistic age the term was used to express rectitude and probity. Being unambiguous, but with a more limited semantic sphere (Liddell, Scott 1978, 12; Chantraine 2009, 24-5) than ἄγος, it is to be preferred. The use of the substantivized adjective ἀγνός may raise some eyebrows, but it had already been attested in Aeschylus (Supp., 223). Moreover, the adoption of ἀγνός seems to me to guarantee greater concordance between the two versions, but, above all, it comes closer to the context: by linking ἀγνός with πλήρης the redactor conveyed the sense of consecration and purification of the monarch. Indeed, πλήρης itself is a verbal adjective, derived from πίμπλημι, ‘to fill’ (Chantraine 2009, 869-70), but also ‘to fulfil, accomplish’. It indicates fullness, filling, not only in the physical sense – for example πλήρης γένηται ὁ ποταμὸς (Her., 2, 92, 2), or πλήρης σελάννα (Sappho, Diehl, 88, 1 [Chantraine 2009]) – but also in the sense of psychic fullness or satisfaction (Soph., Oid. C., 778). Therefore, I believe that the adjective πλήρης can be rendered with ‘invested, filled, full of’; it takes the genitive and, more rarely, the dative case and, so, the association with ἀγνών, as also with ἀγέων, proposed by Gallavotti, raises no problems.

Having maintained completion with πληρη[θέντ]ων until 1995 and by taking the cue from Gallavotti, Pugliese Carratelli, proposed a new reading (1995, 677-9; 2003, 117): πλήρη[ς ἐλέ]ων, ‘overcome by compassion’. This interpretation would be borne out by the use of the term τὸ (but also ὁ) ἔλεος in the epigraph found at Kandahar in 1963. In my opinion, this interpretation presents some critical aspects.

Subsequent to the Kaliṅga military campaign, edict XXXIV from Kandahar, summarising rupestrian edicts XII and XIII, records ἀπ’ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου ἔλεος καὶ οἶκτος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν, καὶ βαρέως ἤνεγκεν, “from that

time (i.e. the time of conquest) compassion and regret overcame him and deeply was he oppressed". Sorrow and remorse befell Aśoka and led him to conversion. However, the terms do not describe the consecration or enthronement of the Indian sovereign; it is from the time of the *abhiṣeka* that calculation of the years of the reign begins, and not from the moment of conversion. Without taking this into account, Pugliese Carratelli (1995, 679) holds that the redactor of the bilingual version seems to have made use of the plural of ἔλεος to evoke the feelings of the sovereign, and adds

la mutata integrazione dell'*incipit* comporta una diversa datazione dell'editto greco-aramaico: poiché la conquista del Kalinga avvenne otto anni dopo l'*abhiṣeka*, vale a dire intorno al 260, la bilingue posteriore di dieci anni alla conquista, deve datarsi al 250 a.C. (Pugliese Carratelli 1995, 679)

Thus the bilingual edict would be the only one dated on the basis of the conversion (and on a lacuna), rather than the enthronement, and there seems to be no need for such a choice. Only the subjugation of Kalinga is dated on the basis of the sovereign's ascent to the throne. Neither the conquest, nor any other event, have ever constitute a point of reference, from which the chronological record of the king's deeds begins. The only exceptions to this practice for dating are to be found in the edicts of Er-ragudi (XXIV) and Brahamagiri (XXV). These were promulgated at the end of the pilgrimage, lasting 256 nights, but clearly here we have a case (since it is the same event described in both) associated with a particular event, which remains a *unicum*.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the fact that ἔλεος appears in edict XXXIV does not seem to me to prove anything in particular, apart from the fact that the redactor knew Greek.

**10** *Vāssa* (Skt. *varṣa*) 'rain' indicates a 'year' in the inscriptions of Aśoka; the season of retreat is fixed by the Buddhist rule as the four months of the season of rains. Aśoka records the duration of his pilgrimage; an extraordinary deed, making his conversion clear. The King made sure that his official acts tallied with the traditional astronomical computation, which he never ceased to respect, when he had converted to Buddhism. The Brahmanic calendar hinges on conjunction of the moon with a stars group or with one star (*nakṣatra*); the days of the month of lunar sidereal revolution correspond to the interval between two successive conjunctions of the moon with the same star; the sidereal month consists of 27 and 1/3 days. The year lasts 366 days. Since the retreat lasted 109 days (27 days and 1/3 × 4), subtracted from 366, they give the 257 days and 256 nights of duration of the pilgrimage. It would have been impossible for Aśoka to follow the prescriptions of his time more scrupulously: the retreat began with the season of rains, close to the summer solstice. The sovereign reflected the path followed by the sun, which interrupts the *uttarāyana*, its course towards the north. "Apôtre du dhamma, de la Norme, Asoka avait voulu, avec une précision scientifique, lui être deux fois fidèle: il s'était conformé, en pratiquant pieux, à une prescription du dhamma bouddique, tout en se réglant, en roi, sur le dhamma cosmique" (Filliozat 1949b, 154). Cf. Daffinà 1988, 54; Meile 1949, 193-225.



### 3 The Epithets of Aśoka in the Kandahar Inscriptions and the Originality of the Texts

The Aramaic title *mr'n Prydrš* and the Greek Πιοδάσσης are calques of the Indian *Piyadassi/Priyadarśin* 'benevolent gaze'.<sup>11</sup> The bilingual epigraphs open with standard formulas: βασιλεὺς Πιοδάσσης εὐσέβειαν ἔδειξεν, "King Piodasses disseminated piety" and *mr'n Prydrš mlk' ksty' mhqst* "our lord *Prydrš* shows the truth". In another Aramaic inscription, the sovereign, again defined with the formal expression *mr'n*<sup>12</sup> *Prydrš*, is the "establisher of justice" (Dupont-Sommer 1970, 158-73). Corresponding to the Greek εὐσέβεια is the Aramaic *ksty'* 'truth'. The *Dharma* and the epithets of the sovereign were rendered with essentially analogous terms, though not calques of one another. The two versions (Benveniste 1958, 37-8, 42-3) did not derive the Greek from the Aramaic or vice versa. In my opinion, the fact that they are independent of one another does not imply that the two did not translate a single Indian original; rather, the French scholar detects, in the differing translations, evidence of two distinct traditions, and thus the possibility of another Indian original version behind the bilingual edict. What Benveniste offers is a suggestion, not a certainty, although what he doubted became a certainty for many, who followed after him. Εὐσέβεια and *ksty'* express the Law, of which Aśoka took on the task of ecumenical diffusion. This is the first and most important reason why I feel it is imprudent to make so much of the hypothesis of distinct traditions, failing to appreciate the function they were to serve. Returning to the title, there is no great difference to be noted. The epithets used are those appropriate for the king and evoke the characteristics of gentleness and benevolence, which he declares inspire him, recalling the ideals of royalty associated with the Hellenistic monarch (Festugière 1972, 210-25). Aśoka consistently presents himself both with the title of *Devānāmpriya/θεόφιλος*, 'friend of the Gods, dear to the divine majesties' and with the epithet *Piyadassi - Priyadarśin / ἱλαρός - εὐμενής*, 'benevolent'.<sup>13</sup> In my

11 The kings preceding Aśoka (Kālsī) were attributed with the epithet *Devānāmpriya*, rather than *rājāno*, while the epithet *Piyadassi* qualified Aśoka alone. Cf. Benveniste 1964, 143-6.

12 The title *mr'n* continues the use of the Achaemenid administrative language: it appears in the Elephantine Papyri in Aramaic, where it designates the other dignitaries; Aršāma, satrap of Egypt and Bagavahya, governor of Judaea, are defined *mr'n*, cf. Benveniste 1964, 143.

13 Cf. Shāhbāzgarhī (*RE* XIII): "il *Devānāmpriya* desidera, per tutti gli esseri, integrità (*savra-bhutana*), autodomínio (*akshati saṁyamam*) e condotta equanime di fronte alla violenza (*samachariyam rabhasye*)". In the place of the latter, we read at Gīrnār and Kālsī *mādava* 'kindness' (Hultzsck 1925, 24-5, 68, 69 fn. 6). Upright moral conduct is common to the Indian monarch and the Hellenistic kings. For the Greeks, filial reverence and firmness in faith were of fundamental importance, including the recommendation to abstain from feeding animals (although this was already a Pythagorean concept); cf. Yailenko 1990, 239-56. The essence of the *Dharma* renders the message unique for the Greek conception;

opinion remains a mystery, because Benveniste insisted on translating the Aramaic *ptytw* in such a way as to correspond to the πληρη[θέντ]ων, completed by Robert and Pugliese Carratelli, in view of the fact that he himself postulated two distinct traditions. In the line of the interpretation established by Benveniste, the edict should be the original creation of one of Aśoka's officials at Kandahar, and, accordingly, this would justify the different redaction since

s'il pouvait s'occuper personnellement des affaires du Magadha il devait laisser à ses fonctionnaires chargés de provinces lointaines une très large délégation d'autorité. (Fussman 1974, 376)<sup>14</sup>

Kandahar is considered part of the Indian dominion, one of the 'provinces lointaines' but, if it really had been so, why was it that only at Kandahar someone took it upon himself to record the sovereign's wishes, without the original text coming from the Maurya court, as was the case in the rest of the kingdom? It would have been quite a different matter to observe, rightly, that

Asoka fait adapter son texte original aux habitudes des diverses provinces suivant en cela le précepte du Bouddha lui-même. Une certaine liberté laissée aux traducteurs témoigne qu'ils n'ont pas prisonniers de l'original. (Bloch 1950, 43)

Fussman (1974) takes the content of the bilingual epigraph as a summary of the first eight rupestrian edicts, and goes on to wonder how it is that some of the information present in the texts, presumed to have prompted it, is missing from the inscription. On the basis of these absences, he asserts the originality of the inscription.

However, supposing one might speak of originality in the case of a summary, what exactly are the 'absences'?

1. The redactors of the bilingual epigraph make no mention of the planting of trees and creation of wells and cisterns – actions which Aśoka ordered to be carried out throughout the kingdom, as we read in edict II from Gīrnār. Fussman imputes this to the torrid climate of the sun-beaten Indian province (Fussman 1974, 380-5).

consider the exceptional nature of the repentance of the sovereign weighed down by the gravity of the actions committed; cf. Festugière 1972, 221-5.

<sup>14</sup> Fussman sought to demonstrate a sort of federal organisation of the kingdom; *contra*: "The Mauryan centralized monarchy became a paternal despotism under Aśoka. The previously held idea of the king being a protector, remote from the affairs of his subjects, gave way to the belief that he had complete control over all sphere of social and political life" (Thapar 1997, 95).

2. The three categories of officials, reported in edict III from Girnār – tasked to carry out “giri d’ispezione completi ogni cinque anni, allo scopo di istruire nella dottrina del *Dharma*, oltre che per i compiti ordinari” – are missing.
3. There is not the slightest mention in the Kandahar bilingual epigraph (nor, we might add, in the Greek monolingual epigraph) of the *Dhammamahāmātā* (*RE* V Mānsehrā).
4. There is no reference to the ritual pilgrimage of 256 nights and, finally, all reference to the Brahmins and the ascetics is omitted since they “n’existaient pas chez les grecs” (Fussman 1974, 383).

By virtue of these absences, the bilingual epigraph is held to reverberate with the “liberté de décision et d’action des hauts fonctionnaires royaux” (384). But if this is, in fact, a compendium, would it not make sense to repeat all the material it summarises? Otherwise, what sort of summary is it? Moreover, what originality would the redactors have shown in contents if, as Fussman supposes, they had abided by the contents set out in the first eight edicts to draw up the text? If, indeed, Kandahar belonged to the dominion of Aśoka – a conviction, in which Fussman is by no means alone (e.g. cf. Bernard 1985, 85-7; 2005; 2012; Coloru 2009, 136) – then it would represent no small obstacle to an objective reading of the epigraph. The Greek inscriptions clearly reveal a firm intention of moral proselytism: they celebrate not so much the sovereign himself, as his conversion. This would account for the absence of the ritual pilgrimage, which is more evocative of the role of the monarch in his realm. In the engravings addressing his subjects, the king illustrates the ways and forms of dissemination of the *Dharma* and reference is made to all the activities of a practical nature performed in the Empire, but this is not the case at Kandahar. Consequently, in my opinion, there is no need to fall back on the aridity of the climate to justify the fact that the Kandahar’s inscriptions make no mention of the woods planted, or the construction of drinking troughs for animals (and if the city had been part of the Indian Empire there would also have been all the more need for the latter). Instead of weighing up the possibility that Kandahar, like much of Arachosia, might have belonged to the Seleucid kingdom, the most disparate reasons are lined up to interpret the departure of the Afghan edicts from the rest of the sovereign’s epigraphic *corpus*.

It would be beyond our scope to review the whole series of classical sources (Strabo 15, 2, 9; Appian Συριακή, 55; Pompeius Trogus in the epitome of Justin 15, 4, 21), on which we depend entirely for evidence of

the pact between Seleucus and Candragupta,<sup>15</sup> but it is worth recalling here Strabo (15, 2, 9):

Ἡ δὲ τάξις τῶν ἔθνῶν τοιαύτη παρὰ μὲν τὸν Ἰνδὸν οἱ Παροπαμισάδαι, ὧν ὑπέρκειται ὁ Παροπαμισὸς ὄρος, εἴτ' Ἀραχωτοὶ πρὸς νότον, εἴτ' ἐφεξῆς πρὸς νότον Γεδρωσηνοὶ σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς τὴν παραλίαν ἔχουσιν ἅπασι δὲ παρὰ τὰ πλάτη τῶν χωρίων παράκειται ὁ Ἰνδός. Τούτων δ' ἐκ μέρους τῶν παρὰ τὸν Ἰνδὸν ἔχουσί τινα Ἰνδοὶ πρότερον ὄντα Περσῶν, ἃ ἀφείλετο μὲν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος τῶν Ἀριανῶν καὶ κατοικίας ἰδίας συνεστήσατο, ἔδωκε δὲ Σέλευκος ὁ Νικάτωρ Σανδροκόττω, συνθέμενος ἐπιγαμίαν καὶ ἀντιλαβῶν ἐλέφαντας πεντακοσίους.

The distribution of the populations is as follows: along the Indus the *Paropamisadai*, above which rises mount Paropamisos; successively, to the south, the *Arachotoi*; further south the *Gedrosenoi*, together with other populations that hold the seaboard; the Indus flows through the entire expanse of these lands. On one side [ἐκ μέρους] of these [τούτων], along the Indus [παρὰ τὸν Ἰνδὸν], some [τινα] are held by Indians, having been [who were once /πρότερον ὄντα] Persians, which Alexander seized from the Aryans and founded there his colonies [κατοικίας], [and] Seleucus Nicator yielded [ἔδωκε] to Chandragupta [Σανδροκόττω], ratifying the *epigamia* and receiving in exchange [ἀντιλαβῶν] five hundred elephants.

Strabo confines Seleucus' territorial cessions only to the areas, bordering the course of the Indus (παρὰ τὸν Ἰνδὸν), of Arachosia, Gedrosia and Paroῖ pamisadai. This geographically precise and specific indication should not be ignored, as Coloru (2009, 136) seems to do, or distorted, extending at will the areas ceded, as far as including even Areia, as Bernard (1985, 85-7) does.<sup>16</sup>

For the absence of officials in the bilingual version of the *Dhammamahāmātā*, we read in edict III of Gīrnār:

<sup>15</sup> Cf. e.g. Wolsky 1947, 20-1; Daffinà 1967, 30-4; 1977, 14-5; for a *résumé* cf. Maniscalco 2014, 70-9.

<sup>16</sup> “Dans un cadre géographique aussi vaste, la notion de territoires voisins de l’Indus peut très bien ne pas se réduire aux zones riveraines du fleuve et déborder largement au-delà de la limite occidentale de son bassin” (Bernard 1985, 87; cf. Bernard 2012, 167-70). On the other hand, to cite an earlier observation of mine, “se l’Areia avesse fatto parte del dominio di Candragupta, come si spiegherebbero le rifondazioni di Sōteira, di Hērakleia-Achaia e di Artakoana stessa, visto che esse furono eseguite sotto Antioco I tra il 280 e il 270 a.C.? Bisognerebbe postulare una riconquista seleucide negli anni immediatamente successivi al patto, ma pare improponibile. Ammettendo poi la perdita greca dell’Areia, la Battriana rimarrebbe tagliata fuori dal dominio seleucide e dal momento che, sino alla secessione di Diodoto, cioè nel 240 a.C. circa, la Battriana era inclusa nel regno seleucide, non è credibile mancasse continuità territoriale con il resto dell’impero” (Maniscalco 2014, 74; forthcoming a).

nel dodicesimo anno dalla consacrazione, ho detto: in tutto il mio regno i dignitari, il governatore e il procuratore di ogni provincia facciano un completo giro d'ispezione.

Again, in Mānsehrā we read

perlungo tempo non vi sono stati Ministri del *Dhamma*. Da me, nel tredicesimo anno dalla consacrazione sono stati istituiti i *Dhammamahāmātā*; essi hanno il compito di occuparsi di tutte le comunità religiose, per l'instaurazione del *Dhamma*, per il progredimento del *Dhamma*, per il benessere e la felicità di chi è dedito al *Dhamma* tra gli Yona, i Kamboja, i Gāndhāra.

The institution of the Ministries came three years after the bilingual Kandahar edict, and yet Fussmann (1974) remarks that, seeing that they were instituted for moral care of the subjects Yona and Kamboja, “*donc les populations de Kandahar*”, it is surprising that the bilingual version makes no reference to them [*sic*]. The same applies to the other categories of officials, established in the twelfth year of the reign. At least Fussmann does not deduce from this ‘absence’ proof of Indian rule in Arachosia, as others would take pains to do after him. Nor, finally, are there grounds to argue that the Brahmans and ascetics were not named because they did not exist where the Greeks were. In the second part of the monolingual epigraph, summarising edict XIII (Shāhbāzgarhī), the βραμεναι ἢ σραμεναι – the *bramaṇa va śramaṇa* of the original text – make an appearance (l. 17).

Henning (1949-50, 80-8) studied the Aramaic term *shyty*, which appears no fewer than nine times in the inscription from Laghmān, and in which has been recognised the transposition of the Indian *sahitaṃ* or *samhitam*, ‘composed of/in accordance with’. This formulaic expression links with the extracts from the various edicts to be summarised; each assertion was preceded by “in accordance with that edict...”. This constitutes further evidence that the Greek epigraphs derived from the original Indian text.

Christol (1983, 31-2) argues (referring back to Fussman) that

les grecs semblent avoir eu quelque difficulté à assimiler le protocole royale, (Christol 1983, 31-2)

one example being the passage (already considered in relation to the completion by Pugliese Carratelli) ἔλεος καὶ οἴκτος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν. Comparison with the corresponding phrase in edict XIII, *sebāḍham vedaniyamate... devānaṃpiyasa*, is taken as evidence of the equivalence of the Indian title, *devānaṃpiyasa*, with the pronoun αὐτὸν, and thus far this is plausible, given that the Greek summary may have preferred the pronoun to the epithet. In the same edict, we find the epithet in the genitive absolute case with the

verb expressing royal power βασιλεύοντος Πιοδάσσου – and the bilingual version, too, uses both βασιλεύς and the epithet: what could we expect to express royalty more than this? Nevertheless, Christol states that the fact that we have no evidence of the political statute of the Greeks of Arachosia – apart from the certainty [*sic*] that the region had been ceded by the Seleucids (not by Seleucus) to the Maurya (to Candragupta) in 303 BC – and

l'effacement relatif de la personne royale dans la traduction grecque semblent témoigner un esprit républicain, (Christol 1983, 32)

so the Greeks

devaient jouir de l'autonomie de fait, sinon de droit, que donne l'éloignement des centres politiques (32).

It hardly seems likely that the Greeks of Arachosia, hemmed in by the Indian kingdom to the east, and the Seleucid kingdom to the west, could have maintained an order, resembling a no less vague 'republic', until the age of Aśoka. What *de facto* or legally established freedom could they have enjoyed? And, above all, how can it be formulated on the basis of an αὐτὸν? As for the originality, consider the Greek text of the bilingual version:

Δέκα ἐτῶν πλήρη[ς ἀγν]ῶν βασιλεὺς  
Πιοδάσσης εὐσέβεια[ν ἔδ]ε[ι]ξεν τοῖς ἀν-  
θρώποις, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου εὐσεβεστέρους  
τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐποίησεν καὶ πάντα  
εὐθηνεῖ κατὰ πᾶσαν γῆν. Καὶ ἀπέχεται  
βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐμπύχων, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ δὲ  
ἄνθρωποι· καὶ ὅσοι θηρευταὶ ἢ ἀλιεῖς  
βασιλέως πέπαυνθαι θηρεύοντες· καὶ  
εἴ τινες ἀκρατεῖς' πέπαυνται τῆς ἀκρα-  
σίας κατὰ δύναμιν. Καὶ ἐνήκοοι πατρὶ  
καὶ μητρὶ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων παρὰ  
τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ,<sup>17</sup> λῶιον  
καὶ ἄμεινον κατὰ πάντα, ταῦτα  
ποιοῦντες, διάξουσιν.

For ten years [having been] invested with purifications king  
Piodasses indicated piety to men  
and, from this moment, more pious  
rendered men, and every thing

17 I have chosen to insert the comma and the preceding full stop.

prosper on all the earth. And he abstains, the king, from living beings and so the other men; and those that [were] hunters or fishermen of the king desisted from hunting; and if some [were] violent, they took a distance from intemperance as far as they were able to. And in respectful listening [ἐνῆκοοι] to the father and to the mother and to the elders during the past [παρὰ τὰ πρότερον] also in the future, more befittingly and preferably in every respect [λῶιον καὶ ἄμεινον κατὰ πάντα], observing these precepts [ταῦτα ποιοῦντες]<sup>18</sup> they will behave.

The greatest difference between the translations lies in the interpretation of the nexus παρὰ τὰ πρότερον. Robert (1958, 16-7) translates

Ils sont devenus obéissants à père et mère et aux gens âges contrairement à la situation antérieure

and observes that

les éditeurs de la version araméenne remarqueront que là l'accent est porté sur un état antérieur d'obéissance, comme dans les formules des édits indiens. La divergence doit être marquée.<sup>19</sup>

Benveniste (1958) points out that in Aramaic the order of parents is reversed as compared with the Greek (πατρὶ καὶ μητρὶ); in fact, we have the expression *hwptysty l' mwhy w- l' bwhy*, thus "obedient to the mother and to the father". The formula corresponds to one repeated many times; for example, in edict XIII from Shāhbāzgarhī, *sadhu matapituṣu* (whose variant at Girnār is *mātarica pitarica*) *suśruṣa* 'docile obedience to the mother and to the father'. The departure of the Greek version from the Aramaic and Indian is taken as yet another sign of its independence (Benveniste 1958, 40-2). This discrepancy between the versions in the bilingual epigraph is stressed by Fussman (1974), Christol (1983) and Pugliese Carratelli (2003, 117-9), the only discordant voice being that of Gallavotti (1959, 185-91). The latter – although Giuseppe Tucci, too, had referred to this possibility in 1958,

<sup>18</sup> I agree with Gallavotti (1959, 188): "I have put ταῦτα ποιοῦντες at ll. 13-14 between commas in order to make it clear (differing in this from one or two of the published translations) that neither ταῦτα should be joined to κατὰ πάντα nor κατὰ πάντα should be joined to ποιοῦντες. The expression ταῦτα ποιοῦντες sums up all the rules prescribed by the *dhamma*: behaving this way, i.e. by following Aśoka's law, men will be well from every point of view"

<sup>19</sup> More recent translations have remained consistently in the sense of contrast, which is also in agreement with the 1958 completion; cf. Virgilio 2003, 206-7; Bernard, Rougemont 2012, 169-71.

in the first publication of the epigraph in Italy – proposes a translation of the nexus  $\text{παρὰ τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ}$  on the basis of the Prakrit, or, better, Kharōshṭī expression *hidalokiko paralokiko* “in this and in the other world” (1959, 188). Gallavotti prefers to see the nexus as agreeing with the period that goes from  $\text{λῶιον}$  to  $\text{διάξουσιν}$  (in the French translation, however, a full stop is placed after  $\text{παρὰ τὰ πρότερον}$ , which is possible, considering “ἐνήκοοι as a nominal sentence”, cf. Gallavotti 1959, 188):

during the preceding conditions and in the future they will live better and more happily.

It seems quite likely that the scholar took inspiration from the final section of Shāhbāzgarhī:

Questa iscrizione del *Dharma* è stata incisa a questo scopo: affinché i miei figli e pronipoti non pensino di fare un'altra conquista [ma] nel loro regno prediligano la tolleranza ed il mite castigo e pensino a quella conquista che è la conquista (o vittoria) del *Dharma*, la quale vale per questo e per l'altro mondo (*hidalokiko paralokiko*). Tutta ed ogni gioia sia quella gioia del *Dharma* che vale per questo e per l'altro mondo.

This proposal is preferable to that of the French school, although my preference is for temporal continuity, applying to obedient docility (in fact, ἐνήκοοι makes clear the propensity to be a good listener, expressed by *śru-*, hence *śusrūṣa* ‘obedience’ in the original texts), lovingness due to the father, to the mother and to the elders, thereby according with the frequent Indian reference to devotion to parents, also taking into account the fact that the formulas Gallavotti hypothesises do not appear in the original versions which the bilingual version evidently summarises.

Moreover, I do not believe that  $\text{παρὰ τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ}$  would readily be understood by a Greek as “in present life and in future time”, as Gallavotti (1959, 188) has advanced. Nevertheless, the possibility of associating only  $\text{παρὰ τὰ πρότερον}$ , rather than the entire nexus  $\text{παρὰ τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ}$  with ἐνήκοοι, cannot be ruled out (even by Gallavotti), and this has left the field open to a considerable variety of solutions, all equally valid from the grammatical point of view. Coming, now, to Robert and Pugliese Carratelli, what need is there to postulate a difference between the various redactions of the bilingual version? Would Aśoka have wanted to address the readers of the Aramaic version in one way, and the Greeks in another? Rather, it is (and should have been) more worthwhile to seek out the reasons for the accordance, rather than those for the divergence. It is worth noting that  $\text{παρὰ}$ , with the accusative, may



reasonably be understood with the sense of 'in, during, along',<sup>20</sup> but also "strictly according to, without deviating from" (Liddell, Scott 1996, 1303). My objection is not so much a matter of language, as of the way to penetrate the sense of the sovereign's words. In fact, it would appear that the Greeks were implicitly being reproached, and advised on how to behave with their parents and elders, while the contrary sense emerges in the Aramaic version, where we read in Benveniste's translation

et (règne) l'obéissance à sa mère et à son père et aux gens âgés conformément ('yk) aux obligations qu'a imposées à chacun la sort. (Benveniste 1958, 30)

Benveniste holds that the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic particle 'yk – 'as, according to' – is κατά, but this certainly does not mean that we have to translate παρὰ as 'differently': why stress this adversitive sense ignoring the fact that with παρὰ, with a durative and temporal meaning, a more logical sense is restored, which is also close to that of the Aramaic? The two texts of the bilingual version are not reciprocal calques, which would account for a choice of not entirely analogous propositions, but also the notion of conformity and accord, evoked by 'yk, should have pointed to a positive reading of παρὰ. My impression is that this meaning has been sacrificed for the sake of an alleged originality – more stated than demonstrated – of the Greek text.

It might be objected, to justify the use in a negative sense, that the sovereign's conversion amounted to a break with the Brahmanic past, and it is true that the radical transformation also had repercussions on the devotion to parents and elders, enhancing it, as we read in the edict of Gīrnār. Moreover, Brahmagiri recites (*Minor Rock Edition, MRE I-II*):

obbedienza va resa alla madre e al padre, allo stesso modo agli anziani. Salda compassione deve essere mostrata verso gli animali, la verità deve essere detta e queste virtù del *Dharma* essere praticate. Ugualmente l'allievo deve manifestare riverenza al maestro e chiunque deve analogamente condursi con i congiunti. Questa è un'antica regola e questa conduce alla lunga vita. Perciò bisogna compierla.

It's my conviction that the reference to the ancient origins and traditional, rather than original or creative, nature of these customs, which practice of the *Dharma* assimilates and appropriates, is yet another factor pointing in direction of the reasons given. Further confirmation can be inferred from

20 "Avec l'accusativ 'auprès de', l'accusativ peut aussi exprimer l'extension 'le long de': et au sens temporel 'pendant'" (Chantraine 2009, 826). Cf. *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, 6, 196; Gallavotti 1959, 188.

the Greek monolingual version:

εὐ]σέβεια καὶ ἐγκράτεια κατὰ πάσας τὰς διατριβάς· ἐγκρατῆς δὲ μάλιστα ἐστίν, ὅς ἂν γλώσσης ἐγκρατῆς ἦ καὶ μήτε ἑαυτοὺς ἐπα[ι]νώσι μῆτε τῶν πέλας ψέγωνισι περὶ μηδενός, κενὸν γὰρ ἐστίν, καὶ πειρᾶσθαι μᾶλλον τοὺς πέλας ἐπαινεῖν καὶ μὴ ψέγειν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. Ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς αὖξουσιν καὶ τοὺς πέλας ἀνακτῶνται, παραβαίνοντες δὲ ταῦτα ἀκλεέστεροι τε γίνονται καὶ τοῖς πέλας ἀπέχθονται. Οἱ δ' ἂν ἑαυτοὺς ἐπαινώσι τοὺς δὲ πέλας ψέγωνισι φιλοτιμότερον διαπράτ(τ)ονται, βουλόμενοι παρὰ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἐγλάμψαι, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον βλάπτου[σι] ἑαυτοὺς· πρέπει δὲ ἀλλήλους θαυμάζειν καὶ τὰ ἀλλήλων διδάγματα παραδέχεσθαι[ι], ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες πολυμαθέστεροι ἔσονται παραδιδόντες ἀλλήλοις ὅσα ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐπίσταται καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα ἐπ[α]σκοῦσι ταῦτα μὴ ὀκνεῖν λέγειν ἵνα δι αμεινώσιν διὰ παντὸς εὐσεβοῦντες. Ὀγδόωι ἔτει βασιλεύοντος Πιοδασσου, κατέστρεπται τὴν Καλίγγην, ἣν ἐζωγρημένα καὶ ἐξηγμένα ἐκεῖθεν σωματῶν μυριάδες δεκαπέντε, καὶ ἀναιρέθησαν ἄλλα μυριάδες δέκα, καὶ σχεδὸν ἄλλοι τοσοῦτοι ἐτελεύτησαν. Ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου ἔλεος καὶ οἶκτος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν, καὶ βαρῶς ἤνεγκεν δι' οὗ τρόπου ἐκέλευεν ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἐμψύχων σπουδῆν τε καὶ σύντα[ξ]ιν πεποίηται περὶ εὐσεβείας. Καὶ τοῦτο ἔτι δυσχερέστερον ὑπέλιπε ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὅσοι ἐκεῖ ὤκουν βραμεναὶ ἢ σραμεναὶ ἢ καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς οἱ περὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν διατριβόντες, τοὺς ἐκεῖ οἰκοῦντας ἔδει τὰ τοῦ βασιλέως συμφέροντα νοεῖν, καὶ διδάσκαλον καὶ πατέρα καὶ μητέρα ἐπαισχύνεσθαι καὶ θαυμάζειν, φίλους καὶ ἐταίρους ἀγαπᾶν καὶ μὴ διαψεύδεσθαι, δούλοις καὶ μισθωτοῖς ὡς κουφότατα χρᾶσθαι τούτων ἐκεῖ τῶν τοιαῦτα διαπρασσομένων εἴ τις τέθνηκεν ἢ ἐξήκται, καὶ τοῦτο ἐμ παραδρομῇ οἱ λοιποὶ ἡγνύνται, ὁ δὲ [β]ασιλεὺς σφόδρα ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐδυσχέρανεν. Καὶ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν εἰσιν...

Respect and temperance in every dispute, but temperance is shown above all by those who have command over their word, for no reason flattering or humiliating their neighbour; such behaviour is vain, and indeed it is well to strive to give just praise to one's neighbour, never offending him in any way. Respecting these precepts, they enhance themselves and attract their neighbour, while, violating them, they become somewhat ignoble and make themselves hateful. Those who extol themselves and blame their neighbour for the sake of greater glory, wishing to shine above the others, bringing yet greater shame upon themselves: it is well to respect one another and learn from one another reciprocally; following these rules they will become wiser, exchanging what each of them knows, and there should be no hesitation in repeating these principles to those who cultivate them so that, being ever compassionate, they may improve. In the eighth year of his reign Piodasses conquered Kalinga, from there were imprisoned and deported a hundred and fifty thousand men, a hundred thousand more were crushed and almost as many died. From that moment compassion and remorse filled him and he suffered deeply, thus he prescribed abstaining from living beings and turned zeal and order towards piety. And the king received an even

deeper sorrow – that those who lived there, Brahmans or ascetics or also any others, who dedicated themselves to piety, who, living there, were to respect the things close to the sovereign's heart, admire and respect the master, father, mother, love friends and companions and tell no lies to them, treat slaves and domestic servants with the upmost mildness – if anyone of these that behaved in such a way is dead or has been deported, and those who remain in the meantime think on this, then the king is dreadfully devastated. Also in the remaining peoples...

Having been accomplished the conquest of Kaliṅga in the eighth year of his reign, the king grieves that the human beings killed and deported held dear respect and love for relatives and the master (at Shāhbāzgarhī reference is to the elders, *suśruṣa guruna*, but the sense does not change) which now he is preaching. Here the monarch addresses a Brahmanic context, what better proof? If this applied to his own subjects, and also to those professing a creed other than his, would it not apply all the more to the Greeks of Arachosia?

In short, expressing his grief for a crushed Indian population, whose respect and care for parents he recognised, is it likely that, at the same time, he would recommend the Greeks only to respect father and mother, in contrast with the past? At this point, the originality of the bilingual edict seems devoid of good sense, apparently having lost logical accord with the Aramaic version, with which it is associated.

Once again, however, we appreciate the originality of the *Dharma*, consisting in a pressing call for pity, filial piety, respect, reverence to the master, attention to those apparently different from us, tending not to wish to shine but to receive, rejecting war and conquest of other peoples, bringing out the intrinsic, ancient equality with themselves. Finally, the fact that mention of the father comes before that of the mother – unlike the Indian original, of which the Greek is a faithful calque (Norman 1972, 18)<sup>21</sup> – reflects, I believe, the habitual Greek practice, to which the epigraph is adapted, and no more than this.

#### 4 The Dominion of Kandahar in the Age of Aśoka: the Contribution of the Epigraphs

Schlumberger (1958, 4-7) holds that there would be no sense in Aśoka's being allowed to have his official proclamations engraved in Greek, in the territory of the city, if it was dominated by the nearby Antioch. If we were

21 Reference to the elders is omitted in the Greek monolingual version, while in the Indian original of Shāhbāzgarhī it followed reference to the father and mother (*mata pituṣu suśruṣa guruna suśruṣa*).

to follow the approach of the French school, there would be no point in Aśoka's references (Shāhbāzgarhī, *RE* XIII) to the possibility of promoting his doctrines abroad, among his neighbours (*āparānta*), i.e. Aṃtiyoka (Antiochus II of Syria, 262/61-246 BC), Aṃtekina (Antigonos Gonatas of Macedonia, 276-240/39 BC), Turamāya (Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 285-246 BC), Magā (Magas of Cyrene, ?-until 250 BC) and Alikasudara (Alexander of Epirus, 272-240/39 BC) (cf. Pugliese Carratelli 1953; Eggermont 1956; Daffinà 1988). In fact, the victory of *Dharma* meant for him the ability to disseminate his message both to the West, in the Hellenistic kingdoms, and to the other populations of southern India as far as Tāmraparṇī (Ceylon?).<sup>22</sup> Both the Greek edicts attest to the extraordinary export and reception of the Buddhist precepts, and, in light of the propaganda and cultural outreach, in pursuit of which they were composed, the use of Greek is fully accounted for; it should not necessarily be seen as a sign of physical possession of Arachosia in the Indian Empire.

One last point should be made *ex absentia*: the populations inhabiting the territory on the western borders of the Maurya Empire included the Kamboja - <sup>23</sup> the ancient Iranian inhabitants of hodiernal Kāfiristān, the Capisene (Daffinà 1975-76, 53-4) - together with the Yona and the Gandhāra (Mānsehrā, *RE* V). These would be visited by the *Dhammamahāmātā*, the superintendents of the Law. The Kamboja are named after the Yona, i.e. the Greeks, and the areas they occupied bordered the Indian Empire if not overlapping within it, but neither of the two appear in the inscriptions of Alexandria in Arachosia. At the same time, let us bear in mind that there is no mention of the *Dhammamahāmātā* in the bilingual version. Nevertheless, to account for the absence of the ministers of the *Dharma*, Bernard (1985, 89) states that the Yona in Aśoka's inscriptions can only be the Greek settlers at Kandahar, adding:

peut-on imaginer que ces colonies, si elles avaient été d'obédience séleucide, auraient toléré le contrôle de censeurs venus d'un État étranger et qui s'arrogaient le droit de pénétrer dans la vie privée des citoyens? (Bernard 1985, 89)

22 The *Taprobane* of the classical sources, but also *Tāmraparṇī*, “dalle ali (o piume) di rame” (Daffinà 1988, 63-4), is a river in southern India, the present-day Tāmravari; there is no certainty that it was Ceylon, or the southernmost tip of India.

23 “Leur religion les caractérise sans discussion possible comme des Mazdéens” (Benveniste 1958, 47) and “les Kambojas de l'Arachosie parlaient une langue iranienne et observaient des prescriptions mazdéennes; mais leur mazdeisme n'était de stricte orthodoxie” (Bernard 1985, 92 fn. 1), but “bisognerebbe riflettere sulla facilità con cui si ignora la nozione che i Kamboja non appaiono in alcun editto proveniente da Kandahar o dall'Arachosia in generale; pertanto come possono essere i Kamboja dell'Arachosia a parlare una lingua iranica, considerata la diversa collocazione geografica? Ma seppure ne ipotizzassimo la presenza a Kandahar, come stabilirne il grado di ortodossia mazdea?” (Maniscalco 2014, 47).

In short, having decided, with his customary way of proceeding, from certainty to certainty, that post-Achaemenid Arachosia was Indian, the scholar accounts for the absence of officials saying that it was only to be expected – considering the presuppositions, one might add.

Bernard refutes the thesis of Schober (1981, 167), who put down the absence of the ministers of the *Dharma* in the Kandahar epigraphs to its independence from the Maurya Empire, and from the jurisdiction of these Imperial officials. As we have seen, however, this is not the case, at least as far as the bilingual version is concerned, while no information are provided by the monolingual one as the final section has been lost. However, turning to the final part of the original text (Shāhbāzgarhī), we find no reference to the institution of the ministers of the *Dharma* but, more generically, to the existence of messengers of the king:

anche là dove i messaggeri del *Devānāṃpriya* non si recano, quelli pure, avendo udito la pratica del *Dharma*, i precetti del *Dharma*, l'insegnamento del *Dharma* del *Devānāṃpriya*, si conformano e si conformeranno al *Dharma*. Quella in tal modo conseguita è una vittoria universale ed è l'essenza della gioia.

In any case, I do not believe that it suffices to invoke the non-mention of the *Dhammamahāmātā* to demonstrate that Arachosia did not belong to the Indian Empire (to asseverate this we have already examined much more substantial issues), and, certainly, not to assert the contrary.

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