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SERIE ORIENTALE ROMA
XXIX

A BILINGUAL GRAECO-ARAMAIC
EDICT BY AŚOKA

The first Greek Inscription discovered in Afghanistan

TEXT, TRANSLATION AND NOTES BY G. PUGLIESE CARRATELLI AND G. GARBINI

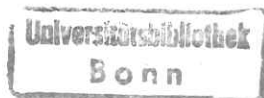
FOREWORD BY G. TUCCI

INTRODUCTION BY U. SCERRATO



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TUTTI I DIRITTI RISERVATI



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FOREWORD

by

GIUSEPPE TUCCI

Dr. Umberto Scerrato, former Counsellor of the Kabul Museum—in the year 1958—states forth in the pages that follow the way in which the bilingual inscription here published was discovered, and how the Kabul Museum came to know about it. The rubbing of the inscription reached Rome on May 16, 1958: the Italian Institute for the Cultural Relations between Italy and Asia (ISMEO) having ascertained that here was a bilingual inscription, in Greek and Aramaic, by Piodasses (Piyadasi, Priyadarśin) Aśoka, decided in favour of spreading information through the press about this important document. Several newspapers issued a communication on the subject, on May 22/23, while the find was subsequently more amply illustrated in an article by R. Gnoli in the “Messaggero” of May 27, and in another writing by L. Lanciotti in the “Giornale d'Italia”, of May 28.

There followed a brief essay, dated April 30, 1958, by Dr. Scerrato in “East and West”, Year IX, Nos. 1-2, with the accompanying photographic reproduction of the Greek text.

ISMEO then decided to start on a preliminary study of the document, in the belief that it would be inadvisable to delay too long the publication of the important Edict, in the Greek as well as in the Aramaic text, and that on the contrary it would be best to inform about its contents our colleagues in Asia, chiefly in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, to whom

of course the inscription would be of especial interest. The Greek text was therefore forwarded to Prof. Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli, of the University of Florence, and the Aramaic one to Prof. Giorgio Levi della Vida, of the University of Rome, so that they might attend to its editing and translation.

It is due to their kindness and scholarship if ISMEO was able to send to press a first essay on the document, to the only purpose of submitting to scholars the text of the bilingual inscription, as well as the first hermeneutical aids, with that spirit of collaboration that has always informed the activities of the Institute.

As the Italian text brought out in the same *SOR.*, No. XXI, is out of print, and as a new edition that should take into account new research studies has proved itself necessary, the Institute has attended to a new edition of the volume in English. Prof. Levi della Vida has been unable to take charge of the revision of the translation he had himself made of the Aramaic text of the inscription, so that, at his suggestion, the task has been entrusted to Prof. Giovanni Garbini, of the University of Rome.

For my own part, I have little to add to the first Foreword preceding the first Italian edition, because both Prof. Pugliese Carratelli and Prof. Garbini have discussed in the pages that follow the problems to which the inscription gives rise, and the interpretations of the scholars that have studied it, after its first publication.

The text of the edict cannot be said to be identical with any of the texts already known, although it is inspired by the same principles, and one often comes across sentences that occur frequently therein.

As to the Greek, *παρὰ τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ*, I am still of the opinion that it corresponds to what is written in edicts XI and XII, and that it is intended to mean "during

the past and for the remaining time", meaning by "the past" the antecedent and by "the remaining (time)" what takes place after death (see also E. Lamotte, "*Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*", p. 796).

No doubt the inscription, that implicitly confirms the importance of the Greek element in that part of the Asian world, is bound to give rise to additional controversy, which will further stress and clarify its significance, such being exactly the aim our publication proposes to attain in the interest of our common studies.

This inscription proves once more how very close to us are the countries of Asia, how closely bound they are to our own history, through remote but uninterrupted events: it therefore ensues that every document which is brought to light represents a common heritage of our culture.

INTRODUCTION

by

UMBERTO SCERRATO

Within six years of the discovery of the Aśokan bilingual inscription in Greek and Aramaic a very sizeable specialized bibliography has sprung up in connexion with it¹⁾. This was only to be expected, for the find was an exceptional one.

The inscription came to light during digging work in April 1957, a few miles west of present-day Kandahar²⁾. It

¹⁾ See the bibliography on p. 29 ff. and p. 41.

²⁾ It is only right and proper to recall the name of the person who gave news of the inscription's discovery and, by drawing attention to it, saved it from very probable destruction. I am referring to Mr. Abdul Bay Ashna, the Head of the Omaccio Baba School of Kandahar, who reported the fact in a detailed letter to Mr. Ahmad Ali Kohzad, the then President of the Afghan Historical Society. It was the latter who informed of the discovery and read and translated for me some passages from the letter Abdul Bay Ashna sent. I remember with what sense of wonderment he described these two inscriptions placed one above the other but written in different scripts which were neither Arabic nor "English", though the characters of the first bore a close resemblance to western ones. The first six or seven letters of the Greek inscription had, with much good sense, been reproduced in the letter, and at once gave an idea of the importance of the discovery. It was not clear, on the other hand, whether the inscriptions were long or short, for according to Mr. Kohzad the letter did not explain whether the figures of 14 and 8 given respectively for the first and second inscriptions referred to lines or letters. The well-deserving teacher, sensing the importance of the discovery, expressed his concern about the fate of the monument as the uneducated inhabitants of the area were growing convinced that the inscription was "English", and might have destroyed or at least seriously damaged it. Moreover, he declared that it might become the prey of quarrymen by whom it had been fortuitously uncovered, although he had seen to it that public works by local authorities were suspended. In my capacity at that time of Advisor to the Kabul Museum, I informed the then Director, A. Rahim Ziai, who asked me to send in a report on the matter to the Minister of Education, H. E. Ali Ahmad Popal. An interview with the Minister followed, and I stressed the urgent need to examine the Kandahar find which could be

is cut into the face of a rocky outcrop forming part of the furthestmost northern spurs of the Kaitul massif which acts as a rugged and mighty natural bastion protecting the westward-lying town of old Kandahar (known locally as Shar-i-Kuna)¹⁾ whose site was abandoned after the ruinous siege laid by Nadir Shah in 1738. The inscription was buried beneath a layer of detritus 4–5 feet thick, and is situated on the hillside only a few yards away from the upper country road crossing the vast ruined area of Shar-i Kuna:

of signal importance. H. E. A. A. Popal arranged for me to be taken at once to the spot to carry out the necessary investigations and collect materials for the eventual study of the find. With everything in order, administratively, I was able to leave for Kandahar on the first available plane the day after the end of Ramazan in the company of Mr. Ahmad Ali Motamedi, an official of the Kabul Museum, and now its Director. With material supplied by the Italian Archaeological Mission we made a plaster cast (still in the Kabul Museum) and all necessary photographs. Upon return we made both a written and verbal report to the Minister upon the results of our survey. H. E. A. A. Popal at once grasped the significance of the find and was anxious for news of it to be disseminated as quickly as possible: he invited me to send all necessary material for the study of the inscription to those scholars who would publish their finds without delay. This was done with all possible speed, and already by August 1958 the first edition of the Kandahar inscription was published: *Un Editto bilingue Greco-aramaico di Asoka*, with Text, Translation and Notes by G. Pugliese Carratelli and G. Levi della Vida, Preface by G. Tucci and Introduction by U. Scerrato (Serie Orientale Roma, XXI), Rome 1958. I myself had already briefly reported on the matter in the Magazine *Ariana* of the Afghan Historical Society (no. 2, April-May 1958) and subsequently in *East and West*, IX, nos. 1–2, 1958, and in *Archeologia Classica*, X, 1958.

On the same day that Mr. Motamedi and I returned to Kabul, M. Jean-Marie Casal of the Délégation Archéologique Française arrived at Kandahar and also made a plaster cast and took photographs of the bilingual inscription which, if I am not mistaken, led to a further report at the end of 1958 by D. Schlumberger, L. Robert, A. Dupont-Sommer and E. Benveniste published in *Journal Asiatique*, CCXLVI, fasc. I, 1958.

¹⁾ Concerning Kandahar, see *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, II (1st edition) cols. 754–756, s. v. *Kandahar*² by Longworth-Dames; E. Caspani-Cagnacci, *Afghanistan crocevia dell'Asia*, Milan, 1951³, pp. 251–254; K. Fischer, *Kandahar in Arachosien*, in *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther Universität, Halle Wittenberg*, VII, 1958, pp. 1151–1164, containing an ample bibliography.

that is to say, it lies on the eastern side of the the small depression separating the two northernmost spurs of the Kaitul massif which lead up to the cliff face where Baber's famous Cehel Zina were carved in 1517. The inscription, then, lies outside the medieval perimeter walls of Shar-i-Kuna but almost at its northern entrance, only a short distance from the road leading to Girishk and Herat.

The inscription is set within a trapezoidal panel only a few centimeters deep that was fashioned in the slightly depressed centre of the main easterly and strongly sloping face of the massif. The edges of this panel are roughly hewn, but the central portion was smoothed with the maximum care and as far as the texture of the stone would allow. The inscription does not occupy all the space available and its total height is 55 cm.

The upper part consists of the Greek text the height of which is 31 cm.; it is made up of 13 ½ lines of unequal length which form an irregular right-hand margin. The letters are not deeply incised and are of varying dimensions, the average height being 1.4–1.5 cm., but some of them reach a height of 1.7 and even 2.2 cm. The omicrons are generally pretty tiny — 0.7 cm. The workmanship is not very accurate, yet the influence of good epigraphic models of a severe style existing from the III–IV centuries A.D. is evident; though in one or two details we seem to catch an echo of the cursive script¹⁾. There is unfortunately a lack of direct stylistic parallels in the same area; but we do now possess an epigraphic document of great interest which is not too distant in space or time — the one singled out by Ghirshman and published by Robert that exists

¹⁾ Cfr. Pugliese-Carratelli, p. 32.

in northern Iran: it affords a striking comparison, stylistically, with the Aśokan inscription ¹⁾.

The Greek text is, on the whole, in a good state of preservation: the only gaps are in the first three lines and they can all be filled with ease and certainty except for the first line where some doubt persists, not over the sense but over the way the text should be completed ²⁾. The inscription is splintered here and there but the letters are still legible. It should be noted that every line ends with a complete word except for lines 2 and 9 where the words are divided but without breaking up the syllables.

A space of 2 cm. separates the Greek from the Aramaic portion. The latter is well preserved; there are only a few cracks running across the last three lines but the reading of the text is unaffected. There are eight lines altogether but the last is not complete. They are well in line on the right-hand margin even if a little slanting, and fairly well in line on the left. They are slightly longer than the Greek lines and the letters are a good deal smaller. The characters are well and elegantly cut, regular in appearance, and stylistically similar to the two inscriptions of Taxila and Jelalabad which are contemporary with this one ³⁾.

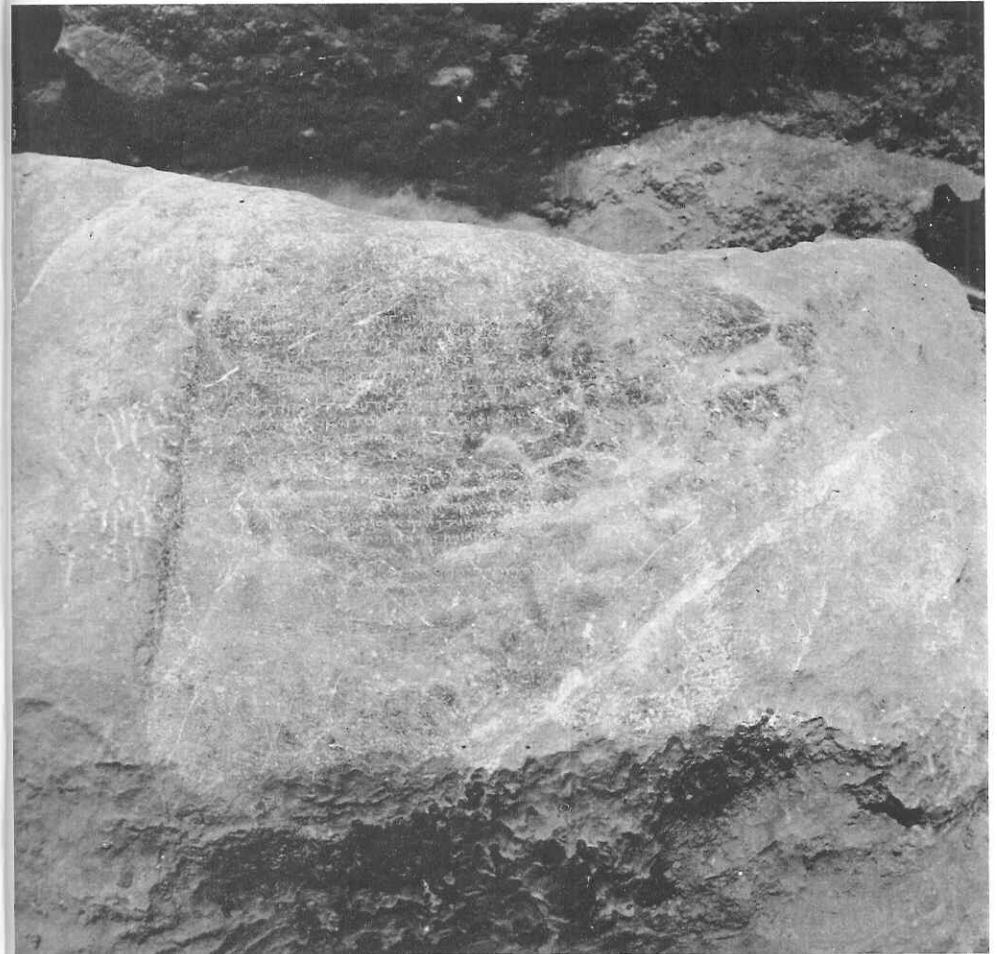
In these Greek and Aramaic redactions of the edict, which does not match exactly with any of the other edicts extant, Aśoka ⁴⁾ is not mentioned by name but referred to in

¹⁾ An accurate palaeographic analysis of the Greek inscription has been carried out by L. Robert, in *Journal Asiatique*, pp. 8–11. Concerning the influence of the cursive script, cfr. Pugliese-Carratelli, p. 32.

²⁾ L. Robert, *Inscription Hellenistique d'Iran*, in *Hellenica*, XI–XII, 1960, pp. 85–91, pl. V.

³⁾ E. Herzfeld, *A new Aśokan inscription from Taxila*, in *Epigraphia Indica*, XIX, 1928, pp. 251 ff. F. C. Andreas, *Erklärung der aramäischen Inschrift von Taxila*, in *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, phil. hist. Klasse*, 1931, pp. 6 ff.

⁴⁾ W.B. Henning, *The Aramaic Inscription of Aśoka found in Lampaka*, in *BSOAS*, XIII, 1949–1950, pp. 80 ff.



The bilingual inscription of Aśoka's Edict.

the official way as the one "with the friendly look". This, indeed, is customary: the Maski edict and the one recently found at Gujjarra¹⁾ are the sole exceptions to the rule. Unfortunately this descriptive tag has not been translated in the Greek version but merely transcribed Πιοδασσης which is derived from the Prakrit form *Piyadassi*, while in the Aramaic part of the inscription (which also makes no translation) we find the word *Prydrs* as in the Taxila inscription: it derives from a form close to Sanskrit, *Priyadrasi*, as found in the Shahbazgarhi and Mansera edicts.²⁾

Although the two redactions are remarkably similar and correspond in their meaning, they are yet independent of each other, and the Greek one at least shows that it is not a mere servile translation of the Prakrit original. They were adapted to the cultural needs of the peoples they were addressed to, and are consonant with that spirit of tolerance and understanding which characterised the law-making of Aśoka who was inspired by the precepts of the Buddha himself.

The Kandahar bilingual inscription can boast of several distinctions: it is the most westerly proof of Buddhism yet found, Aśoka's sole Greek inscription, the most easterly of Greek inscriptions, and the first complete Aramaic inscription discovered in the area reaching to the Indus. As evidence of the meeting between East and West it is without doubt extremely stimulating and fraught with implications; in fact, it is the starting-point for the solution or renewal of manifold problems and opens up new prospects for research.

¹⁾ D. C. Sircar, *Gujarra Inscription of Aśoka*, in *Epigraphia Indica*, XXXI, 1956, pp. 204-210.

For the edicts consult J. Bloch, *Les Inscriptions d'Aśoka*, Paris 1950.

²⁾ Cfr. Benveniste, in *Journal Asiatique*, pp. 37-38.

The use of Greek and Aramaic in this Aśokan edict—which, though brief, enunciates the basic principles of the Dharma—distinguishes it from the other numerous edicts associated with Aśoka, which were all written in Prakrit and in Brahmi alphabet except those of Shahbazgarhi and Mansera where the Kharoṣṭhī alphabet was used.

Clearly, the Kandahar edict was not intended for Indian peoples. The region in which it came to light was for two centuries under the Achaemenians and had been claimed by Alexander the Great as a part of the Achaemenian Empire. The Iranian influence on Indian culture in the N. W. provinces, where Kharoṣṭhī script had long been in use, was very old but became clearly apparent during the Mauryan rule. Even if indirectly, such influence can probably be viewed as the outcome of Alexander's conquest which had its effect upon the organisation of the Mauryan empire and art ¹⁾. The practice of inscribing rock faces has been attributed to Iranian influence as also have certain Achaemenian protocol formulas governing the redaction of Aśokan edicts; nor must it be forgotten that some Iranian terms are used in the edicts of the north-west provinces ²⁾. As the latter had been Achaemenian satrapies, it is hardly surprising that decrees relating to this area should have been couched in Aramaic—the language used in Achaemenian chancelleries from Asia Minor to the Indus. ³⁾ Moreover, the fragmentary Pul-i Darunteh inscription in Lagh-

¹⁾ For a clear outline of the matter see M. Bussagli, *Profili dell'India Antica e Moderna*, Turin 1959, ch. IV, pp. 64 ff. and the relevant notes on pp. 80 ff. See also R. Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, Oxford, 1961, pp. 126 ff. and Appendix VI, pp. 267 ff.

²⁾ Cfr. L. Renou and J. Filliozat, *L'Inde classique*, I, Paris, 1947, p. 160.

³⁾ H. H. Schöder, *Iranische Beiträge*, I, pp. 1 et ff. Bühler, *Indische Paläographie*, p. 20; Henning, in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I, IV, 1, Leyden-Cologne, 1958, pp. 21 ff.

man and the very much damaged one at Taxila afford further evidence of the way this language endured.

It is significant that the first version of the Kandahar inscription is in Greek. Under the Seleucids, as is known, Greek began to replace Aramaic as the language of the imperial chancellery: but in our view, the use of such a language in the Aśokan edict is due to the fact that the inscription was intended for a Greek-speaking community. Since the edict cannot have been intended as evidence of Aśoka's religious propaganda for peoples outside his empire, the Greek text was obviously meant for Greeks living within the empire's borders. In fact Edicts V and XIII were meant for the *yonas* who probably gave their name to an administrative division of the Maurya empire which had a conspicuously Greek character. Therefore, the edict proves beyond all shadow of doubt that the *yonas* under Aśoka were Greeks and not Iranians or Persianized peoples as might still have been argued before the text's discovery. It also shows what an important role the Greeks had already assumed in the life of these territories around the middle of the III century B.C.

The presence of Greeks in Achaemenian Oriental satrapies is attested well before Alexander's conquest. The myths of Dionysus and Hercules concerning the invasion of India hint, perhaps, at far more tangible data; but at any rate groups mainly of Ionians were deported to Sogdiana and Bactria by the Achaemenians, and Alexander met them just as he met a semi-Greek population at Nysa.¹⁾ One thing is certain: the influx of Greeks into these regions must have been far more evident after the Macedonian's campaigns; and whatever the duration of the first Greek

¹⁾ Cfr. A. K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, Oxford 1957.

invasion, it must have left in its wake groups—even if perhaps not numerous—which displayed an activity socially important and decisive for the region's economy.

In any case the fact remains that this Aśokan inscription is the most concrete testimony of the presence of Greeks in these regions, a presence that was formerly attested solely by abundant series of coins apart from a few ambiguous historical references ¹⁾.

As is known, the town of Kandahar is to be placed in the Harakuwatis of the Persian cuneiform inscriptions, the Ἀραχωσία of the Greeks, the ar-Ruhag of the Arabs, and the Zabul and Zabulistan from the IV century A.D. onwards, though the territorial limits of the area thus indicated have varied considerably down the ages. ²⁾ On the basis of the bilingual inscription we can identify Arachosia with the region of the Yonas referred to in this way in Edicts V and XIII because of its markedly Greek character, which is attested at a later period by Isidorus of Charax who describes a city in Arachosia as being Greek in appearance. ³⁾ The inscription serves, then, to solve the controversial question of the length of the first Macedonian domination in what had been Achaemenian satrapies and to fix with sufficient accuracy the western confines of the Maurya empire.

Upon the death of Alexander the Indian provinces declined into anarchy and quickly fell an easy prey to King Candragupta who had placed his state on solid foundations. At the close of the IV century, Seleucus Nikator, who was

¹⁾ A. Foucher (avec la collaboration de M.me E. Bazin-Foucher), *La vieille route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila* (MDAFA, I, 2), Paris 1947, p. 385.

²⁾ A. Bombaci, *Ghazni*, in *East and West*, VIII, 1957, pp. 250 ff.

³⁾ Isid. Char., in *Geographi Graeci Minores* (ed. K. Müller, Paris 1854), 19, p. 254.

Alexander's heir in Asia, took advantage of the quarrels going on in the West between Alexander's other successors, who were his rivals, and attempted to reincorporate the old Oriental satrapies within his kingdom. A vindication of Achaemenian rights may be perceived in this enterprise, but he was mainly governed by his fundamental sense of the unity of these territories of Upper Asia ⁵⁾. However, unlike his predecessor, he did not come upon a situation of political chaos and disintegration: he was faced with the unified Maurya state of Candragupta. ¹⁾

We do not know if a clash took place between the followers of Seleucus and Candragupta: an agreement was certainly stipulated. According to Strabo, who invokes the authority of Eratosthenes, Seleucus ceded to Candragupta his rights over at least part of the Paropamisadae, Aria, Arachosia, and Gedrosia in exchange for marriage rights (ἐπιγαμία) and 500 elephants. ²⁾ Further confirmation of this agreement finds more concise expression in Appian, who speaks of a pact (φιλία) and of a κῆδος, ³⁾ and in Justin who mentions a "pactio". ⁴⁾ Opinions about the value and extent of Seleucus's cession and over the exact interpretation of the ἐπιγαμία have always been controversial. ⁵⁾

¹⁾ Bussagli, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 ff. and note 13, pp. 82–83.

²⁾ Strab., *Geogr.*, XV, 2.9 (ed. A. Meineke, Leipzig, 1853).

³⁾ Appian., *Syr.*, 55 (ed. P. Viereck and A. G. Roos, Leipzig, 1939).

⁴⁾ Justin., *Hist. Philip.* XV, 4. (ed. O. Seel, Leipzig, 1935). These and other passages pertaining to this question have been published by V. A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, Oxford 1957, a lithographic reprint of the IV ed., Appendix F, pp. 158–160.

⁵⁾ We use "Upper Asia" to indicate Ptolemaeus's ἄνω Ἀσία. For V. A. Smith (*op. cit.*, p. 159) the cession was an extensive one, but small in the opinion of Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1951², p. 100. Cf. Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 6, note 2. Foucher, *op. cit.*, p. 209 seems nearer to reality, at least as far as the western boundary is concerned.

We now know that the territory was not just nominally ceded nor restricted to the eastern portion of these regions as, on the basis of a passage by Pliny and in the absence of archaeological evidence, could easily have been believed.¹⁾ At any rate, there seems no doubt that the cession of Arachosia is to be interpreted in a wide sense even if some uncertainty persists, for example, over the cession of the northern part of the Paropamisadae, though its lower area was securely held by Aśoka as the Pul-i Darunteh inscription proves.

The pact that was sealed was indubitably advantageous to Seleucus, for he was faced with problems in the West, and it gave him the freedom to watch over these difficult regions; at the same time he came into possession of a first-class military force of 500 elephants. But more important still was the fact that the political equilibrium reached in Upper Asia and the relations established between Seleucus and his powerful neighbour (which were to remain traditional between these two powers)²⁾, afforded Alexander's successor peace of mind on this frontier and also permitted more extensive use of the important southern trade route.³⁾

In the light of the bilingual inscription and with the evidence afforded by Strabo, the interpretation of the clause of the treaty between Seleucus and Candragupta regarding the *ἐπιγαμία* becomes clear: it can only be understood as a *jus connubii*, as Bouché-Leclerc rightly surmised.⁴⁾

¹⁾ Smith's extensive cession theory, (*op. cit.*, p. 159) is based mainly on Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, VI, 20; but the whole passage was not quoted. Studied as a whole, in fact, it tends to confirm a limited cession. Cfr. Bombaci, *op. cit.* pp. 251-252 and notes 20 and 23.

²⁾ The famous embassy of Megasthenes and then that of Deimachus of Plataea are to be recalled.

³⁾ Cfr. M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, I, Oxford, 1941, p. 459.

⁴⁾ Bouché-Leclerc, *Histoire des Séleucides*, Paris, 1913, pp. 29-30.

That a Greek element played a certain role in the Maurya empire in the times of Aśoka is confirmed by the Greek version of the Edict and by the fact that a Greek population is referred to in at least two of the Major Rock Edicts (V and XIII), as has been pointed out.

This clause of the treaty makes it certain that the Greeks were firmly settled in the Oriental satrapies following Alexander's campaigns; they may have even been grafted on to communities established there at some earlier date. The clause, indeed, is intended to safeguard the interests of the Greek community which must have had its importance to earn special mention in the treaty. According to Bouché-Leclerc's interpretation, this *jus connubi* authorised mixed marriages between Greeks and Indians; it was, then, an important measure reflecting the concern felt about overcoming the obstacle of the caste system that was spreading, which would enable the Greeks to participate actively in the life of the Maurya empire and have an established social position¹⁾. The inscription, in our view, does much to substantiate this hypothesis: it stresses the importance that the Greek element had assumed in the Maurya empire, and shows indirectly that, at the end of the IV century, the Greeks already had a social status as fallen *kṣatriyas* or not impure *śūdras*, which it was generally held they only achieved much later.²⁾ The *ἐπιγαμία*, then, as Foucher observed, would be the Greek embodiment of the indigenous tradition that looked upon the companions of Alexander as a degenerate species of *kṣatriya*.

¹⁾ Cfr. Foucher, *L'art du Gandhâra*, II, Paris 1918-22, p. 450.

²⁾ Cfr. L. De La Vallée-Poussin, *L'Inde aux temps des Mauryâs*, Paris 1930, pp. 59-60, and pp. 199-202. Compare now in this connexion the observations that have been made in the light of the Kandahar inscription by M. Bussagli, *op. cit.*, p. 83, note 13, and p. 85 note 23.

It is not possible to ascertain whether the clauses of the treaty envisaged also a $\kappa\eta\delta\omicron\varsigma$, that is a marriage pact between the two families, which is what Arrian relates. In spite of the difficulties involved ¹⁾ it cannot be rejected out of hand: it could explain the excellent relations that were maintained between the Seleucids and the Mauryas even if political and economic reasons were the main justification for this. The treaty of friendship between Seleucus and Candragupta ensured an equilibrium of some duration in the Indo-Iranian provinces of Upper Asia. This was to have a direct bearing on the development of the Greek communities whose rights were recognized in the clauses of the treaty; indeed, about seventy years after the Macedonian's conquest Aśoka made official use of the language of these communities in one of his edicts thus showing how widespread and generally understood it was ²⁾.

If the use of Greek for an inscription is singular in a territory coming under the authority of an Indian sovereign, the use of Aramaic is no less surprising even if an explanation is at hand: the region had been an old Iranian province and it is logical to assume that the tradition of the Achaemenian state language was maintained. Satrapal offices must have survived during Macedonian domination (when Greek was added) and continued their use of Aramaic when the Mauryas took over. The importance of Aramaic for administrative purposes in the former Iranian provinces is borne out by the Taxila and Pul-i Darunteh inscrip-

¹⁾ De La Vallée-Poussin, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

²⁾ Concerning the problem of the knowledge of Greek writing in north-west India in the time of Pāṇini and the new light thrown on the matter by the bilingual inscription, cf. Pugliese-Carratelli, *Gli Editti di Aśoka*, Florence 1960, p. 9, and also here p. 37. As is known, formerly it was thought that Greek writing could only have been known in the region after the Bactrian conquest of the Panjab. Cfr. De La Vallée-Poussin, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-42.

tions. A tradition had been preserved and was still flourishing; for the language is similar to that of Achaemenian papyri of V century Egypt Imperial Aramaic, that is to say. ¹⁾ Although scholars are not agreed in their interpretation of the inscription, the high percentage of Iranian words is not disputed; and as Benveniste has pointed out, they indicate borrowings from an old type of Iranian language ²⁾. This is to be attributed not so much to the conservative nature of the chancery language, as to the fact that use is made of a number of words drawn from the religious vocabulary of the Avesta. As far as we know (which is not a great deal) these regions were inhabited by Iranian peoples who obviously had no written language. Now it was natural for Aśoka, in addressing them, to use not an Indian language but one they were accustomed to through its use by scribes in official communications: Achaemenian Aramaic. ³⁾ And the presence of Avestan religious words in the inscription shows that it was intended for a population that was Iranian in religion as well as in language. Both Dupont-Sommer and Benveniste have held the view that these terms are a notable, if indirect, piece of evidence suggesting that the Aramaic redaction of the Dharma was addressed to a population practising the Mazdian religion. ⁴⁾ And Benveniste cautiously opines that these Iranians are to be identified with the Kambojas. ⁵⁾ For on the basis of

¹⁾ Cfr. Levi Della Vida, *Un editto bilingue* etc., 1958, p. 29; Benveniste, in *Journal Asiatique*, p. 43.

²⁾ Benveniste, *Ibidem*, p. 44.

³⁾ On its use as a language for correspondence, see Henning, *Handbuch*, cit., pp. 21 ff.

⁴⁾ Dupont-Sommer, *Journal Asiatique*, p. 34; Benveniste, *Ibidem*, pp. 46-47.

⁵⁾ Benveniste, *op. cit.*; cfr. D.C. Sircar, *The Land of the Kambojas*, in *Purāṇa*, V, 1963, pp. 251-257; it, too, establishes the same correlation for the Aramaic text without quoting Benveniste.

Indian tradition they can assuredly be deemed Iranians: the only known word of their language is Iranian; they are known as horsemen and breeders of horses; and their religious duty was to kill insects, serpents, worms and frogs, which was a typical prescription of the Mazdian religion. Moreover, the Kambojas at least from the time of Pāṇini in the IV century, are frequently associated by Indian authors with the Yavanas: both are twice mentioned in Edicts V and XIII; indeed, in the latter they are referred to with the compound word *Yonakambojesu*.¹⁾ Therefore while, there is no doubt that the Greek text of the Kandahar Edict is addressed to Greeks whom we have identified with the Yona of Edicts V and XIII, it is also plausible that the Aramaic text was intended for the Kambojas.

Although this hypothesis is inviting and satisfying, we do not deem it far-fetched to put forward another one, concerning the nature of these Iranians associated with the Kandahar inscription.

Let us go back for a moment to Edicts V and XIII. In the former the Yonas and the Kambojas are mentioned together with the Gandhārāns, and, as has been observed, the specific grammatical nature of the wording stresses the contiguity of these three peoples. In Edict XIII the Gandhārāns receive no mention, perhaps because they had been completely won over to the Dharma,²⁾ but the Yonas and the Kambojas are referred to in such a way as to em-

¹⁾ Concerning the Kambojas, see E. Kuhn, in *Studies in Honour of P.B. Sanjana*, 1904, p. 213 ff. (non vidi); S. Levi, *Pré-Arien et Pré-Dravidien dans l'Inde*, in *Journal Asiatique*, CCIII, 1923, pp. 52 ff.; J. Charpentier, *Der name Kambyses*, in *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik*, 2, 1923, pp. 144 ff.; A. Foucher, *La Vieille Route*, cit. II, p. 271; S. B. Chaudhuri, *Huns, Yavanas and Kambojas*, in *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, XXVI, 1950, pp. 118-127.

²⁾ A. Foucher, *La Vieille Route*, cit. p. 283, note 3.

phasize their suggested contiguity, so that one is almost led to deem that they were intermixed.

Until the extent of Aśoka's dominions towards the West was established, these three peoples might have been conceived of as occupying a very restricted area. But this view no longer seems necessary and they can be considered to have been distributed over an area that was a good deal more extensive. The peoples of the Aparanta are listed in the Aśokan Edicts as roughly running from south-west to north-east, and this probably reflects their true geographical location. In this list the Kambojas occupy an intermediate position between the Yonas and the Gandhārāns. Their location is in the extreme north-west of India, in that territory on the left bank of the Kabul where data gleaned from various sources suggest they should be centred,¹⁾ while the Yonas have a territory further west at their disposal: Arachosia.

It was an area where a variety of peoples of different cultures met and intermixed, and although our knowledge of the ethnography of the region is scanty, it is clear that it must have been occupied by populations who were mainly of Iranian origin. And it is among these that we must look for the people to whom the Aramaic redaction of the Aśokan Edict was addressed; and among those centred upon the old city of Kandahar above all. The data that can be invoked are not numerous, but Thomas's hypothesis,²⁾ taken up by Foucher, seems to us to be very plausible. The view put forward is that in the territory of Arachosia, at least in its eastern portion, and in the area of present-day Seistan, roughly in the middle and lower basin of the

¹⁾ Foucher, *ibid*, p. 271; Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 252; C. A. Lewis, in *Purāṇa*, IV, 1962, pp. 133 ff.

²⁾ Thomas, *Sakastana*, in *JRAS*, 1906, pp. 181 ff.

Hilmand, the Scythian or rather Saka settlements were of very ancient date.¹⁾

Given that the Greek redaction is addressed to the Greeks of the Kandahar district, and the Aramaic one to the Iranians also living in this locality, I do not think it is overbold to suggest that it was intended for the Scythians (who had been settled there for a long time) and not to the Kambojas who are most probably to be assigned to an area further east. We know nothing of the religious practices of the Iranian peoples of the Seistan-Arachosia area, but tradition tells us that this region was an important centre of the Mazdian religion.²⁾

Benveniste's conclusion, after an analysis of the language of Iranian religious concepts, that the Mazdian religion prevailed in this part of Asia appears convincing; yet we now know for certain that in Achaemenian times the religion practised in the area was either a non-Zoroastrian Mazdaism or a religion probably reflecting an Indo-Aryan phase. This can be affirmed on the basis of our recent discoveries in Seistan where a large building, sacred in character, dating from Achaemenian times has been excavated: its religious rites went beyond a fire cult and included animal sacrifice to three principal divinities.³⁾ Even if we postulate the persistence of such cults—something

¹⁾ Foucher, *La Vieille Route* cit., pp. 187 ff.; 190, note 21 and pp. 198; 201.

²⁾ At present we can draw from late testimony preserved in various Pehlevi texts that clearly reflect a much older tradition. On the other hand, the identification of Hamun-i Hilmand with the Lake Kaşaoya of the Avesta, Yašt XIX, 66, proposed by Sir A. Stein, *Innermost Asia*, II, 1928, p. 923, still remains the most plausible one.

³⁾ The building is part of a large inhabited centre situated in the area of the sands in Persian Seistan, south of the big village of Qal'ah-i Nau: a rough sketch of the building before excavation is included in my article about this locality in *East and West*, 13, 1962, pp. 186–197. Very brief references to the 1962 excavation campaign are to be found *Archeologia, Rassegna Mensile*, I, 10, 1963.

we cannot be certain about—the Aśokan religious message would have been no less relevant. At any rate, nothing prevents our assuming that the Scythians living in this area had also by the middle of the third century B.C. embraced the Mazdian religion and assimilated its religious language.

Classical sources ignore the Scythians during this period just as they do the Kambojas; but the latter, at least after the IV century, are mentioned in India in conjunction with the Yavanas. The influence exerted by Indian sources and Aśoka's Edicts was evidently a strong one. It is also worth noting, as Foucher suggested, that upon the evidence of the inscription carved on the famous Mathurā capital with lions, the Kambojas might possibly be associated with the Śakas and be one of the latter's royal clans.¹⁾

As a general principle, we believe that our hypothesis relating the Aramaic inscription of Kandahar to the Scythians of the Seistan-Arachosia region cannot be discarded. At the same time, provided linguistic difficulties which we cannot pronounce upon do not arise, we are in favour of associating the fragmentary Aramaic inscription of Pul-i Darunteh (from the left bank of the Kabul river) with the Kambojas.²⁾ Moreover, this does not exclude territorial contiguity with the Yonas; nor does it conflict with the geographical location suggested for the Kambojas.

Furthermore, the bilingual inscription offers some clues of first importance to the historical topography of Afghanistan. As we have stated, it was carved at the entrance

¹⁾ Foucher, *La Vieille Route* cit., II, p. 271.

²⁾ Henning, in *BSOAS*, XIII cit., has pointed out the presence of middle Indian and not Iranian words; and these have been explained as quotations of characteristic words appearing in Aśokan Edicts with reference to injunctions contained in the latter.

of the Shar-i Kuna of Kandahar confirming the tradition according to which this site goes back to pre-islamic times. It was perhaps placed near a sacred area (as it not uncommonly occurs with Aśokan edicts) whose sanctity seems to have been perpetuated, if only a short distance away Babur had his Cehel Zina carved representing the small ivan guarded by two chained lions and covered with inscriptions. The choice of such a site for the Edict was not fortuitous: it was part of a well-defined plan. Like all great edicts and the majority of the Minor Rock Edicts, it was placed on the outskirts of the Empire as though to mark its confines.

The simple formulation of the Dharma embodied in it fulfils the requirement of a propaganda programme. The Edict was placed at the entrance to an important city that saw a great movement of people and traffic, and on a trade route as well: that is, the southern branch of the great caravan route that linked « Upper » Asia with Persia and the Mediterranean, which became known to history owing to the conquests of Cyrus, and was trodden by the army of Alexander.¹⁾

Archaeological knowledge of this southern road is still hazy; but data are being amassed which allow us to reconstruct its course at various points and thus establish clues to help us work out Alexander's itinerary. The Kandahar inscription marking the passage and settlement of the Greeks, offers an excellent starting-point for future research. It should not be forgotten that at Ghazni at the other end of Arachosia a large Buddhist sanctuary was discovered almost at the same time as the Kandahar inscription. Now

¹⁾ Cfr. Bombaci, *op. cit.*

this sanctuary remained in being for a long time, and was undoubtedly built on a very ancient religious site; such a discovery was a further stage in our knowledge of the course of this southern road.¹⁾ Both the inscription and the sanctuary back up the later testimony of Hsüang-tsang who, in 644, tells us that ten stūpas of King Aśoka existed in the kingdom of Zabul – the territory lying roughly between Kabul and Kandahar.²⁾

The inscription's discovery leaves no doubt that the mother city of modern Kandahar cannot be dissociated from the work of Greek colonizers who came with the Macedonian or in his wake; it proves unequivocally that the Greek foundation is to be sought in the site of Shar-i Kuna and not elsewhere, as had been authoritatively imagined in the absence of archaeological data³⁾.

It is intriguing to try and find a classical name for Shar-i Kuna. Many attempts preceded the bilingual find, and conjecture oscillated between Alexandria and Alexandropolis in Arachosia. The data afforded by classical sources are, alas, very scanty and often contradictory, at least in the form they have come down to us. Unfortunately, the oldest Arab writers make no mention of Kandahar, since the most important centre of the region was then situated further south at the confluence of the Argandab with the Hilmand: that is, at Bust, the *Bestia desolata* of the Tabula Peutingeriana. Only after Bust was destroyed in 1150 at

¹⁾ The southern road between Kandahar and Kabul in climbing up the Arghandab valley swept over the Hazara mountains west of Ghazni and cut out this last-named town according to Foucher, *L'itinéraire de Hsüang-Tsang en Afghanistan*, in *BEFEO*, 1925, pp. 257–284; *La Vieille Route* cit., II, pp. 200–202 and 230–234; contra cfr. Bombaci, *op. cit.*, pp. 254–255.

²⁾ *Si-yu-ki*, transl. Beal, II, p. 284.

³⁾ Foucher, *La Vieille Route* cit., p. 202, and note 17.

the hands of the Ghurid ruler 'Alā'u'd-Dīn, did Kandahar resume its importance.

The information we derive from Alexander's surveyors contains no reference to an Alexandria founded by the Macedonian in Arachosia, but only the record of an indigenous centre called "the Arachosii", that is οἱ Ἀραχωτοί of Eratosthenes in Strabo ¹⁾, and an "oppidum Arachosiorum" in Pliny ²⁾.

News of an Alexandria and an Alexandropolis in Arachosia is only to be found in later sources—in Isidorus ³⁾ of Charax, Ptolemy ⁴⁾, and Stephanus of Byzantium: ⁵⁾ but their information is contradictory, and only more thorough archaeological research may, with luck, clear up the matter. These sources have often been discussed without any satisfactory conclusions being reached; and still are today, even if fundamental doubts about the antiquity of cities such as Kandahar and Ghazni have been removed.

As far as the identification of Ghazni is concerned, Droysen's analysis ⁶⁾ of the above-mentioned passages may be held as the most satisfactory in view of the fact—now proven—that Ghazni lay on the old great southern route. According to Droysen it is identical with the Alexandropolis in Arachosia mentioned by Isidorus; since the distances given by Isidorus tally, it lies on a river, the Ghazni, that can with reasonable arguments be shown to be the Arachotos, ⁷⁾ and it is situated in the easternmost part of Arachosia at the end of the great route of the Parthian

¹⁾ Strab., XI, 8, 9.

²⁾ Plin., *Nat. Hist.* VI, 21, 61.

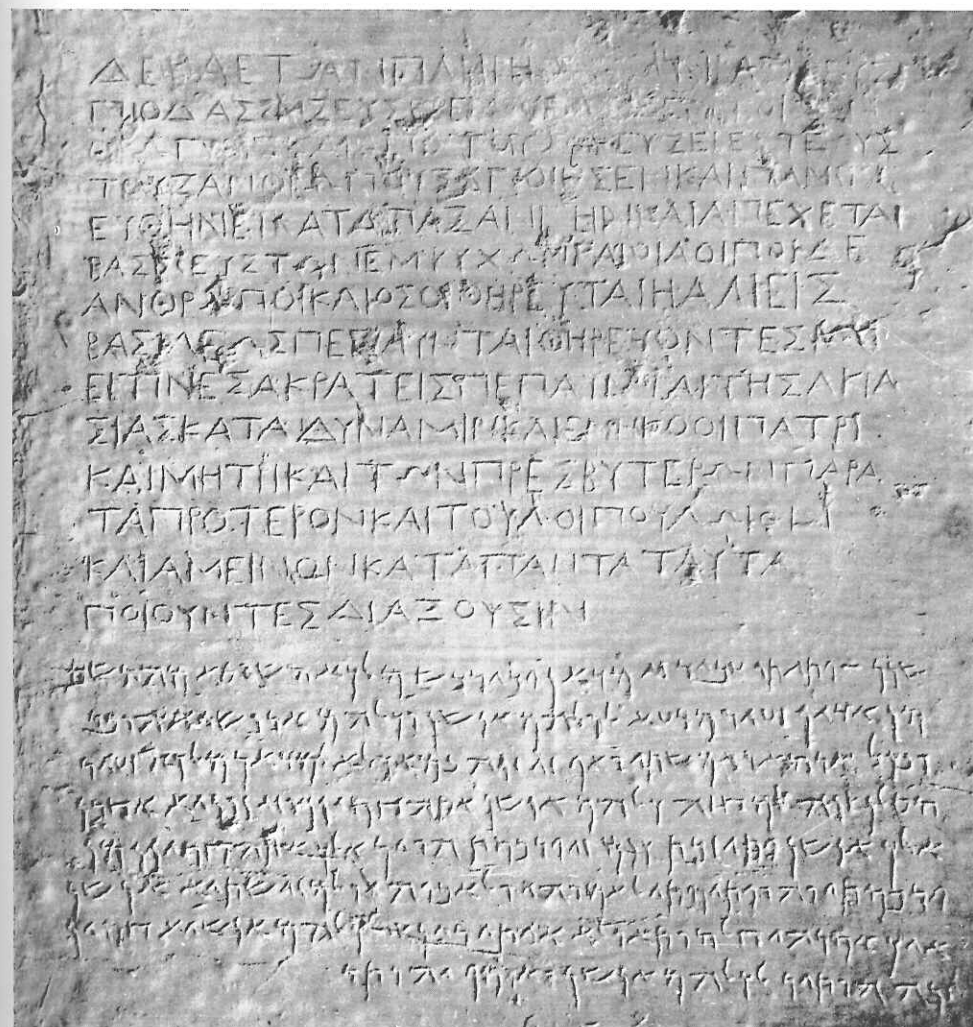
³⁾ Isid. *Char.*, 19.

⁴⁾ Ptol., *Geog. Hyph.* VI, 20 (ed. Nobbe, II, Leipzig, 1845).

⁵⁾ Steph. Byz., *Ethn.* s.v. Ἀλεξάνδρεια, no. 12, ἐν Ἀραχωτοῖς (ed. A. Meineke, Berlin, 1849, p. 71).

⁶⁾ J. G. Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, III, Gotha, 1878², pp. 217–220.

⁷⁾ Droysen, *op. cit.*, III, p. 218; cfr. Bombaci, *op. cit.*, note 14 on page 257.



The Greek and Aramaic text of the inscription.

Empire¹⁾. The Alexandropolis of Isidorus is, then, reckoned to be the same as the Alexandria in Arachosia mentioned by Ptolemy; it is situated on the river Arachotos about half way between its source and the Arachosia marshes, that is, the lake of Ab-i Istada²⁾.

The identification of Ghazni with Alexandria in Arachosia proposed by Tarn is unacceptable, because it is based on an erroneous interpretation of a passage in Arrian, III, 28, that refers, instead, to Alexandria in the Caucasus.³⁾ But—albeit with some hesitation—we do not feel that Tarn's proposed correction of passages in paragraphs 18 and 19 of Isidorus should be rejected⁴⁾. If it is accepted, there is no contradiction between Isidorus and Ptolemy as far as Alexandria is concerned, while Alexandropolis would then become identified with Kandahar. However, Tarn's interpretation of paragraph 18 after correction is, in our view inadmissible. For the English scholar thinks that the word πλησίον which fixes the position of Alexandropolis should be understood to refer to the whole paragraph — that is, to Alexandropolis in Sakastan—⁵⁾ and not, as we believe

¹⁾ Isid. Char., 19.

²⁾ Cfr. Droysen, *l.c.*, note 7 p. 20.

³⁾ Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 470; contra E. Bazin-Foucher, in *Journal Asiatique*, CCXXX, 1938, p. 514; Bombaci, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

⁴⁾ We quote the relevant passages from Müller's edition, pp. 253–254:

18. 'Εντεῦθεν Σακαστανή Σακῶν Σκυθῶν, ἡ καὶ Παραϊτακηνή, σχοῖνοι ζγ'. 'Ενθα Βαρδὰ πόλις καὶ Μῖν πόλις καὶ Παλακεντὶ πόλις καὶ Σιγὰλ πόλις· ἔνθα βασιλεία Σακῶν καὶ πλησίον 'Αλεξάνδρεια πόλις (καὶ πλησίον 'Αλεξανδρόπολις πόλις)· κῶμαι δὲ ἔξ.

19. 'Εντεῦθεν 'Αραχωσία, σχοῖνοι λς'. Ταύτην δὲ οἱ Πάρθοι 'Ινδικὴν Λευκὴν καλοῦσιν· ἔνθα Βιὺτ πόλις καὶ Φάρσανα πόλις καὶ Χοροχὰδ πόλις καὶ Δημητριάς πόλις· εἴτα 'Αλεξανδρόπολις, μητρόπολις 'Αραχωσίας· ἔστι δὲ 'Ελληνίς, καὶ παραρρεῖ αὐτὴν ποταμὸς 'Αραχωτός. 'Αχρι τούτου ἔστιν ἡ τῶν Πάρθων ἐπικράτεια.

Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 471, proposes to read the passages of Isidorus 18 and 19, quoted by us, as follows: in 18,—expunging 'Αλεξάνδρεια πόλις and keeping 'Αλεξανδρόπολις πόλις while in 19 he removes 'Αλεξανδρόπολις and replaces it by 'Αλεξάνδρεια.

⁵⁾ Tarn, *l.c.*

more logical, to the city mentioned in the itinerary just beforehand.

The location of Alexandropolis (to be identified with Kandahar) in Sakastan during the time of Isidorus is not at all incompatible with what we said about Kandahar situated in Arachosia. Isidorus was evidently referring to the administrative and political division—introduced by the Parthians—which was in force at his time, and we know that the border lines of Sakastan and Arachosia have varied a great deal down the ages, and in the I century A.D. Sakastan may well have included a part of western Arachosia.

Such a situation seems to be reflected in the later writings of Stephanus which may well echo the truth. In his list of Alexandrias, he lists as no. 12 ἐν Ἀραχώτοις and as no. 15 παρὰ τοῖς Ἀραχώτοις, ὁμοροῦσα τῇ Ἰνδικῇ. No. 12 would refer to Alexandria-Ghazni, while no. 15 would indicate the Alexandropolis of Isidorus, 18. In fact, the latter, situated in Sakastan, would, according to our interpretation of Isidorus, be παρὰ τοῖς Ἀραχώτοις “near the Arachosii” (in conformity with the territorial division of the I century), and at the same time ὁμοροῦσα τῇ Ἰνδικῇ, that is, bordering upon India, thus agreeing with what Isidorus, 19 tells of Arachosia which the Parthians called White India. Indirect confirmation of this is provided by Stephanus’s reference, coming shortly after, to Ἀραχωῖτοι, πόλις Ἰνδικῆς¹⁾.

These identifications can, perhaps, be accepted as cautious working hypotheses while we await a final answer that

¹⁾ Steph. s.v. p. 110.

It seems to me very arduous to identify Kandahar with Alasanda that is, Alexandria, the principal city of the Yavanas according to the *Mahāvamśa* (XXIX, 40)—the Alasanda of the *Milindapañha* (Cfr. Pugliese-Carratelli, p. 37; Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 255), where, with far greater likelihood, the city has been identified as Alexandria in the Caucasus.

maybe only fresh discoveries will afford. With regard to sources, a wary circumspection is advisable, and at this stage it is as well to recall Müller’s words of warning: “Pro libitu haec impune adornare licet.”

The Kandahar Edict, even if it evades exact dating, clears up quite decisively the general problem of the Aśokan chronology: that is to say, the way in which the years of rule recorded in some of the Edicts are to be calculated. It used generally to be agreed that the calculation should be in terms of completed years; but doubt was cast upon this assumption by the rather valid objection raised by Mukerji.¹⁾ The Kandahar Edict, however, solves the matter unequivocally; the Greek text, in fact, includes the reference to a tenth year expressed in such a way that, whatever reading we attribute to the lacuna of the first line, it must be understood to mean that completed years are referred to.²⁾ Neither the Greek, nor probably the Aramaic text tells us which event in the tenth year is referred to; but it is not difficult to deduce from the other Edicts that the reference is to the King’s consecration which, according to Eggermont’s recent chronology, occurred in 269–268 B.C.³⁾ The clue that this affords—259–8 B.C.—is particularly important in the history of Aśoka’s spiritual development: the visit to Bodh Gaya that, according to the Major Rock Edict VIII, Aśoka made after ten years of completed rule is evidently recalled in the inscription, and also the beginning of his legislative activity (Minor Rock Edicts).⁴⁾

¹⁾ R. Mookerji, *Aśoka*, London 1928, p. 184, note 6.

²⁾ Cfr. R. Thapar, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

³⁾ P.H.L. Eggermont, *The Chronology of the Reign of Aśoka Moriya*, Leiden 1956.

⁴⁾ Cfr. Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

It remains to be seen in what period of legislative activity the Kandahar Edict should be included. Though it does not correspond to any of the known edicts it yet contains all the known principles of the Dharma; and it would seem that it is to be considered an "editio brevis" of the Mercy text which Aśoka expressly refers to in the Major Rock Edict XIV.¹⁾

Hultzsch's opinion that the Minor Rock Edicts are the oldest of all is generally accepted; for according to the Rupnath and Sahasram redactions the order to have the proclamation of the Dharma carved on rock faces and pillars is not yet an accomplished fact during the eleventh year of the reign.²⁾ Such an operation was taking place during the thirteenth year according to what can be surmised from the pillar-carved Edict VI that is commonly held to refer to the Mercy text of the Major Rock Edicts. The Major Rock Edict IV was carved twelve years after consecration occurred, as also was the III, while the V dates from the thirteenth year. The Major Rock Edict XIII must have followed immediately and, on the basis of the well-known synchronism with western kings, should, it seems, be dated to the years 256–255 B.C.³⁾

In view of its contents, it has been proposed that the Kandahar Edict should be assigned to that period when Aśoka's legislative activity seemed to undergo interruption; that is, between the promulgation of the great edicts and the pillar edicts, or immediately afterwards.⁴⁾ We do not

¹⁾ E. La Motte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien. Des Origines à l'ère Śāka*, Louvain 1958, p. 794.

²⁾ E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka* (CII, I), Oxford, 1925, p. XLIV;

³⁾ The problem, in fact, has not yet been finally settled; cfr. below Pugliese-Carratelli, pp. 37-39.

⁴⁾ Thapar, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

think that the contents lend weight to this thesis; for although the Mercy text is expressed in a very simple manner, such a form of expression does not differ from that used in some redactions of the Minor Rock Edicts. The Kandahar Edict may speak of the Mercy text as already operative with its beneficial influences; but this does not contrast with the tone of the Major Rock Edicts. In our opinion, the Kandahar Edict belongs to the first phase of diffusion of Aśoka's humanitarian code.

As we have seen, the Kandahar Edict is not to be viewed as part of Aśoka's religious propaganda outside the boundaries of his Empire; on the contrary, it is closely linked to his work of propaganda inside his territories. (Cf. Major Rock Edicts V and XIII). In Edict V he proclaims: "Thirteen years after consecration I have created the ministers of Mercy. They watch over all religious communities, observing Mercy, fostering Mercy for the good and happiness of those who are devoted to it among the Yonas, Kambojas, Gandhārans, Ristikas, Pitnikas and the other western peoples."

The Kandahar Edict may well be the direct fruit of this propagation of the Dharma, and its contemporaneity with Edict V may be substantiated by a comparison with what is proclaimed in Edict XIII, which declares that the victory of Mercy, which the King dear to the gods holds to be the principal victory, "has been oft-times obtained here and in the midst of all neighbouring peoples . . . here in the dominion of the king, in the midst of the Yonas and the Kambojas... everywhere peoples are following the teachings of the king dear to the gods." Such quotations prove that the Dharma had been proclaimed in the land of the Yonas; it was already a *fait accompli*; and, therefore, the Kandahar Edict clearly seems to us to precede Edict XIII.

A passage in the first of the separate edicts of Kalinga also argues in favour of an early date. For these, as is known, Mukerji has very convincingly proposed an early date immediately prior to the Major Rock Edicts, because in the first Kalinga Edict there is a reference to the despatch, which is to take place every five years, of Dharma inspectors to the various districts—something that has already accomplished by the time of Edict III, after twelve complete years of rule. Hence, according to Mukerji, the Kalinga Edict is to be assigned at least to the previous year.¹⁾ This edict contains a passage that can be paralleled to line 11 onwards in the Greek text, thus to some extent arguing the contemporaneity of the two texts: but unfortunately it is over the interpretation of these very lines of the Greek text that exegetes are in disagreement.²⁾

Strictly speaking, it cannot be excluded that the Kandahar Edict's initial chronological reference "ten years having been completed" should be understood not as a general reference to the journey to Bodh Gaya and to the proclamation of the law, but as a precise reference to the promulgation of the law in Arachosia and to its inscription on the Kaitul rock face. The verb ἐδέχεν would need to be given the sense of "material publication" which, however, does not seem sufficiently proven in this case.³⁾ If this were so, the Kandahar Edict would be contemporary with the Minor Rock Edicts.

In conclusion, we believe that the Kandahar bilingual inscription can be assigned to Aśoka's first period of legi-

slative activity. It was perhaps contemporary with the Minor Rock Edicts, but a more probable date is one between the separate Kalinga Edicts and Major Rock Edict V—earlier, that is, than Major Rock Edict XIII and, in terms of absolute chronology, between 258 and 256 B.C.

¹⁾ R. Mookerji, *op. cit.*, pp. 208–214; Eggermont, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–69.

²⁾ Cfr. La Motte, *op. cit.*, p. 796; see Pugliese-Carratelli, pp. 33 ff.

³⁾ Gallavotti, *The Greek Version of the Kandahar Bilingual Inscription of Aśoka*, in *East and West*, 10, 1959, p. 187.

THE GREEK SECTION OF THE INSCRIPTION

by

GIOVANNI PUGLIESE CARRATELLI

After the first edition (here referred to as *EP*) which appeared in the volume published by IsMEO (*Un editto bilingue greco-aramaico di Asoka*, Rome 1958), the Greek text has been published and commented on by the following: D. Schlumberger and L. Robert (with A. Dupont-Sommer and E. Benveniste), *Une bilingue gréco-araméenne d'Asoka*, in *Journal Asiatique*, 1958, pp. 1-18 (and 19-48); F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *The Aramaic Version of the Kandahar Bilingual Inscription of Asoka*, in *East and West*, N. S. 9, 1958, pp. 192-198 (and later in Altheim and Stiehl's *Geschichte der Hunnen*, I, Berlin 1959, pp. 397-408); C. Galavotti, [1] *Il manifesto di Asoka nell'Afghanistan*, in *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale*, 1, 1959, pp. 113-126, and [2] *The Greek Version of the Kandahar Bilingual Inscription of Asoka*, in *East and West*, N. S. 10, 1959, pp. 185-191; P. Nober, in *Verbum Domini*, 37, 1959, pp. 369-377 (a review of the volume published by IsMEO); D. D. Kosambi, *Notes on the Kandahar Edict of Asoka*, in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2, 1959, pp. 204-206 (quoted by Robert, *Bull.* 1960; non vidi); J. Pouilloux, *Choix d'inscriptions grecques* (Paris 1960), p. 165 f., No. 53; P. H. L. Eggermont and J. Hoftijzer,

The Moral Edicts of King Asoka (Textus Min. XXIX, Leiden 1962), pp. 5 f., 42 f., 46 (bibliography). The matter has, moreover, been discussed by: Eggermont, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 15, 1959, p. 160 (a review of the IsMEO volume); F. Zucker, *Mitteilung über eine kürzlich gefundene griechisch-aramäische Bilingue des Königs Asoka*, in *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 7, 1959, pp. 103–105; F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *The Greek-Aramaic Inscription of Kandahar and its Philological Importance*, in *East and West*, N. S. 10, 1959, pp. 243–260 (later in *Gesch. d. Hunnen*, II, 1960, pp. 167–177); J. & L. Robert, *Bulletin épigraphique*, in *Revue des Études Grecques*, 72, 1959, pp. 268–270, No. 488, and 73, 1960, p. 204 f., No. 421; G. Klaffenbach, in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 82, 1961, col. 516 (a review of Pouilloux's *Choix*); E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien* (Louvain 1958), pp. 789–798 (non vidi), and *Lo spirito del Buddismo antico* (Venice–Rome [1960]), p. 53 f. (according *La Nouvelle Clio*, 10–12, 1958–1962, fasc. 4–6, p. 272 Lamotte thinks that ‘le texte grec est la traduction servile d’un texte indien’: but see infra p. 36); R. Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (Oxford 1961), esp. pp. 32, 226, 260 (A. L. Basham's version). Lastly, I myself have dealt briefly with the inscription in *Gli editti di Asoka* (Florence 1960), pp. 8 f., and 71.

δέκα ἐτῶν πληρη[...]ων βασιλεὺς
 Πιοδασσης εὐσέβειαν ἔδειξεν τοῖς ἀν-
 θρώποις, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου εὐσεβεστέρους
 τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐποίησεν καὶ πάντα
 5 εὐθηνεῖ κατὰ πᾶσαν γῆν· καὶ ἀπέχεται
 βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐμψύχων καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ δὲ
 ἄνθρωποι καὶ ὅσοι θηρευταὶ ἢ ἀλιεῖς

10 βασιλέως πέπαινται θηρεύοντες· καὶ
 εἴ τινες ἀκρατεῖς πέπαινται τῆς ἀκρα-
 σίας κατὰ δύναμιν, καὶ ἐνήκοοι πατρὶ
 καὶ μητρὶ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων παρὰ
 τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ λώιον
 καὶ ἄμεινον κατὰ πάντα ταῦτα
 ποιοῦντες διάξουσιν. (*vacat*)

L. 1 πληρη[θέντ]ων (for πληρωθέντων) *EP*, Robert, Pouilloux; πλήρη[ς] (indeclinable) ὄντ]ων Gallavotti (2), πλήρης [όν]των Klaffenbach (from the photograph in *Journal Asiat.*); Altheim and Stiehl read πληρηθ[έν]των on a cast (*East and West*, 1959, p. 243). The formation of a verb *πληρέω from πλήρης (on the analogy of εὐθαλής: εὐθαλέω, σιτομέτρης: σιτομετρέω) seems to Benveniste ‘le fait d’une langue vivante’ (*Journal Asiat.*, 1958, p. 46); in the opinion of Ernst Fraenkel, *Griechische Denominativa* (Göttingen 1906), p. 89, πληρόω was probably formed on analogy of μεστόω or in opposition to κενόω, μονόω etc. On account of the constant use of πληρόω in the dates, a form from *πληρέω seems preferable to the unusual πλήρης εἶναι (on which see Crönert, *Memoria Graeca Herculi*, 1903, p. 179 f.). As for the gap, πληρηθέντων and πλήρης ὄντων take up the same space.

L. 10 f. ἐνήκοοι: this is the first corroboration of ἐνήκοος, known so far only from two authoritative mss. of Pollux's *Onomasticon* (2nd century A. D.). In the 2nd book, 82, a fragment of the Attic comedy-writer Phrynichus (5th century B. C.) is quoted: “ἐνήκοος γενοῦ” ἐν εὐχῇ παρὰ Φρυνίχῳ τῷ κωμικῷ. Editors, including Edmonds, *The Fragments of Attic Comedy*, I (Leiden 1957), p. 472, frgm. 73, have preferred the other reading ἐπήκοος (which is the suitable term for describing whoever ‘grants’ an εὐχή). In the Greek translation of the Old Testament ἐνάκουω is = ‘obey’. – πατρὶ καὶ μητρὶ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων: like ἐπήκοος, ἐνήκοος allows the use of a dative in the same way as a genitive. This change of case may have been due to Indian influence: compare, in the 4th rock edict of Asoka, *matapitūṣu vudhānaṃ suśruṣa* (Shahbazgarhi), *matapitūṣu suśruṣa vudhrana suśruṣa* (Mansehra).

“Ten years (of reign, or since the consecration) having been completed, king Piodasses (Piyadassi) made known (the doctrine of) Piety to men; and from this moment he has made men more pious, and everything thrives throughout the whole world. And the king abstains from (killing) living beings, and other men and those who (are) huntsmen and fishermen of the king have desisted from hunting. And if some (were) intemperate, they have ceased from their intemperance as was in their power; and obedient to their father and mother and to the elders, in opposition to the past also in the future, by so acting on every occasion, they will live better and more happily”.

A number of features of the writing such as the form of the letters and their different sizes, the slight inclination towards the right, the absence of serifs and the irregularity of the intervals, recall contemporary papyrus writing. The following features are worth mentioning: the Λ of αλιεις (l. 7), the P of ακρατεις (l. 9), the M of δυναμιν (l. 10), the Π of παρα and of λοιπου (l. 11 and 12), the large N at the end of lines 12 and 14, the tendency to round the acute angle of the central linear mark in the letter Σ, and the frequent downward lengthening of the vertical strokes in P and Υ. A minute examination of the writing as compared with that found in numerous inscriptions of the Greek-Oriental world has been undertaken by L. Robert in *Journal Asiat.*, pp. 8–11.

The concepts expressed in the edict are familiar to those who have read other Aśoka inscriptions, especially the rock edicts. The words πάντα εὐθηνεῖ κατὰ πᾶσαν γῆν are not exactly paralleled in the Indian edicts; but compare in ‘Minor Rock Edicts’ the passage referring to the period

of happiness brought about by the general observance of the *dhamma* (vide Bloch, *Les inscriptions d’Asoka*, p. 146, and note 7). Εὐσέβεια is equivalent to *dhamma* (and the term used by the Greek scribe shows that he recognized that the *dhamma*, as preached by Aśoka, contained a religious inspiration); εὐσεβέστεροι seems to translate a **dhammavaḍḍhita* ‘grown in Piety’ (cfr. the pillar edicts VI and VII: *jane dhammavaḍḍhiya...vaḍḍhitthā*); ἐμψυχον is the exact translation of *p(r)āṇin*, and the expression ἀπέχεται ~ ἐμψύχων recalls the Greek tradition of the ἀποχή ἐμψύχων, abstention from eating meat (see, in this connexion, L. Robert, in *Journal Asiat.*, pp. 14–16; cfr. also Nicol. Damasc., fr. 106, *FGrHist*, II, p. 388 Ἀρίτονοι – perhaps the Buddhist Arahants – τῶν ἐμψύχων οὐδὲν ἀποκτείνουσι, on which the Kommentar of Jacoby, and Tomaschek in Pauly–Wissowa–Kroll, *Realenc.*, II, col. 1717); ἀκρασία indicates the absence of *sa(m)yama* ‘control of senses’, and κατὰ δύναμιν matches an expression like *aggena parākkamena* (‘with great effort’) which often occurs in Indian edicts to indicate willingness required in the perfect observance of the *dhamma* (Morpurgo, quoted by Gallavotti); ἐνήχοος well conveys the meaning of ‘intent upon listening’ inherent in the desiderative of *śru-*, whence comes *susruṣa* or *susūsā* (‘obedience’) in the Indian edicts. The inversion of the ‘mother–father’ order – which is the standard one in Indian edicts and is also preserved in the Aramaic version – conforms to the Greek mentality. The use of πρεσβύτεροι suggests that in the Indian original the corresponding term was *thaira* or *vuḍha* rather than *guru* ‘venerable, master’ (as in rock edict XIII).

The interpretation of lines 10 f. is the most controversial. In *EP* I have referred the sentence ἐνήχοοι ~ διάξουσιν

to the ἀκρατεῖς who have restrained from ἀκρασία thanks to the power of the *dhamma*, and I think that παρὰ τὰ πρότερον is to be taken with καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ. Schlumberger and L. Robert separate παρὰ τὰ πρότερον from καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ and interpret: 'Et ils sont devenus obéissants . . . , à l'inverse de ce qui était le cas précédemment'. Tucci sees in παρὰ τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ an echo of *hidalokiko paralokiko* 'in this world and in the next' of the rock edicts XIII (Bloch, p. 132), and XI (p. 121), and his interpretation has been accepted by Lamotte and Gallavotti. A. Morpurgo (in Gallavotti [1], p. 122 note 14) would relate the Greek expression to a nexus of the type *idha ca . . . paratrā ca*, indicating both a spatial and a temporal relation. Certainly the frequency with which the Indian edicts celebrate the fruits obtained 'in this world and the next' (or 'in Heaven': rock edict VI and pillar edicts I, II and VII) through the observance of the *dhamma* supports the opinion that such an expression existed in the Indian text that the Greek interpreter took as his model. Yet, even if this expression did exist, the ambiguity of the Greek text shows that the interpreter did not clearly understand it. For we can hardly think that a Greek who was not uncultured, and was also obviously acquainted with the religious jargon of his time – what is evidenced by an expression like λώιον καὶ ἄμεινον – should recur to expressions like τὰ πρότερον and τοῦ λοιποῦ to match Indian phrases not so vaguely allusive, and refrain from couching in the accurate language he had been using an idea that, in addition, was not alien to Hellenistic eschatology. On the other hand, the interpretation of παρὰ τὰ πρότερον as 'contrary to past practice' is not contradicted by the fact that obedience to parents and to teachers is (as Gallavotti has observed) a traditional Indian rule, so that there would have been

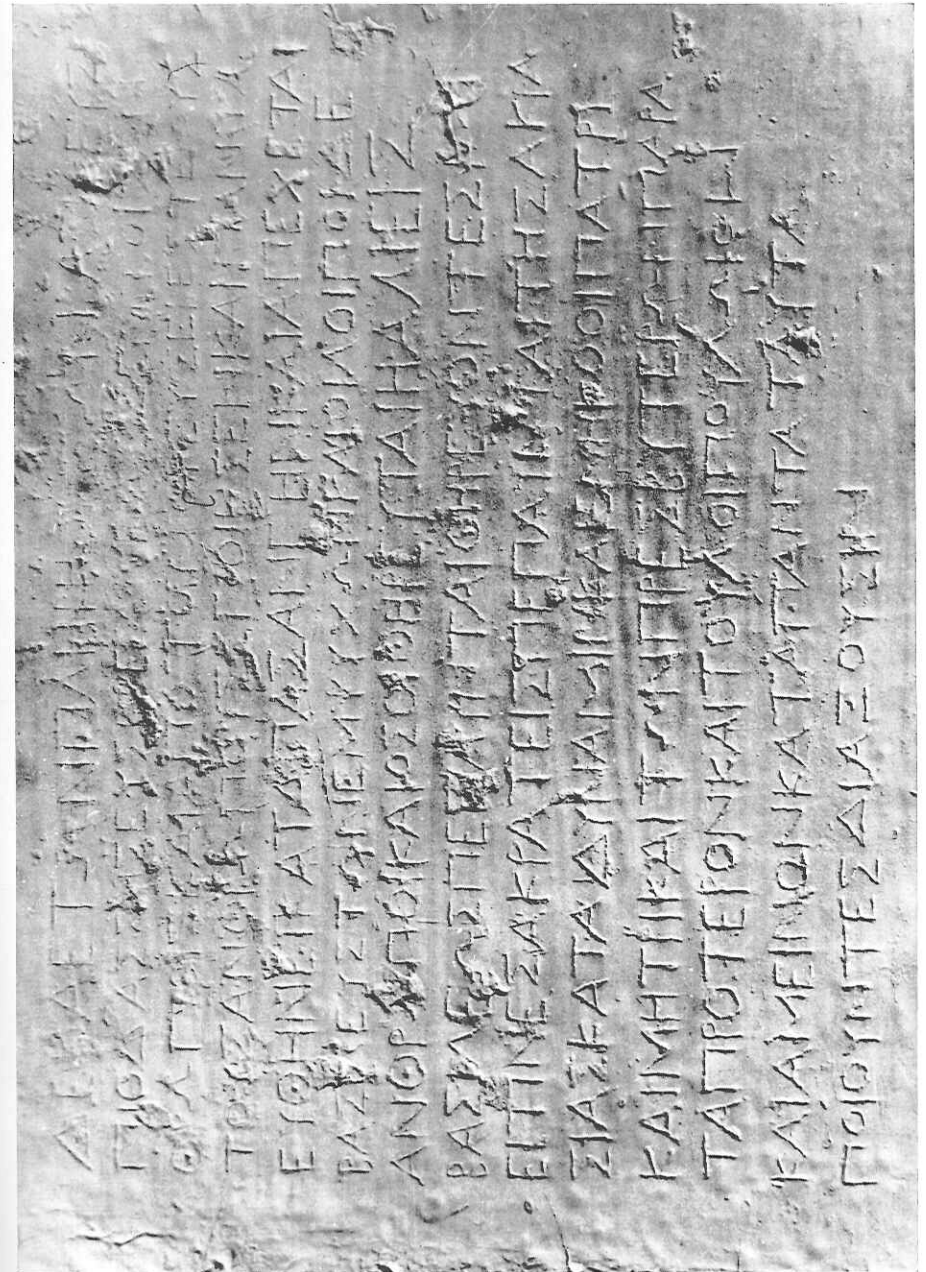
no reason for talking of it as though it were an innovation due to Aśokan ethics. In fact, in several edicts Aśoka insists on the moral renovation arising from the observance of *dhamma* precepts whether old or new. In rock edict IV (Bloch, p. 97 ff.) we read, for example: 'In the past, for many centuries, the killing of animals and violence towards living beings; lack of reverence towards parents . . . have been on the increase . . . Thanks to the teaching of Piety, abstention from violence towards living beings (i. e. *ahimsā*, another of the oldest Indian moral notions), reverence for parents, obedience to mother and father, obedience to elders, which for many centuries were unknown, are now on the increase'. In addition, reference can be made to rock edicts I, VIII and X and pillar edicts VI and VII. As I did in the Italian version (*EP*, p. 12), J. and L. Robert have suggested that παρὰ τὰ πρότερον could be understood as 'en comparaison de la situation antérieure' (*Bull. épigr.*, 1959, p. 269). As to τοῦ λοιποῦ, the interpretation 'in the future' is corroborated by the corresponding sentence of the Aramaic version, as it has been translated by Dupont-Sommer: 'Cela a été profitable pour les hommes et sera encore profitable'.

L. Robert has discussed in *Journal Asiat.*, p. 17, the formula λώιον καὶ ἄμεινον, common in oracular questions and responses.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that *piyadassi* (sanskrit *priyadarśin*, 'benevolent-looking'), a term often found with the royal title *devānāmpīya* (sanskrit *devānāmpriya* 'dear to the gods') has not been translated. We have only the transcription Πιοδασσης, and this shows that the Greek scribe understood it to be a proper name rather than an epithet: it supports the hypothesis I outlined in *Gli editti di Aśoka*, p. 4 f., that it was a 'royal name'

assumed in the act of consecration. (The name Aśoka, as it happens, occurs in only two examples of the Minor Rock Edict, and in one of these *Piyadassi* stands before it).

An authoritative opinion on the Greek version and its author has been given by Benveniste in the *Journal Asiat.*, p. 45: 'le grec de notre inscription a tous les caractères d'une langue vivante. L'auteur de cette rédaction a su habilement la simplifier, en omettant les difficultés où s'embarrasse le traducteur araméen, et il a accommodé à l'esprit grec le modèle indien... Il manie le grec avec aisance et en homme cultivé'. That Aśoka had Greek subjects is proven by two rock edicts which mention 'those who are devoted to the *dhamma* amongst the Yonas' (edict V), and people who 'amongst the Yonas... follow the *dhamma* as taught by the king dear to the Gods' (edict XIII). Greeks (*Yona*) and Iranians (*Kamboja*) lived in the region corresponding to eastern Afghanistan today: Arachosia; and at least a part of this area, where other Aramaic Aśoka inscriptions have been found, belonged to the empire of the Mauryas. In the Surāstra peninsula on the north-west coast of India, too, the Greeks must have been prominent in activity if not in number, since a Girnar inscription of the 2nd century A. D. testifies that that province was governed on behalf of Aśoka by a 'king of the Greeks' (*Yonārājā*) who had an Iranian name, Tuṣāspa. Then again, in the diaspora of missionaries following the Buddhist council of Pataliputra that took place in the 17th year of Aśoka's reign, mention is made of a *yona*, Dhammarakkhita, who was sent to 'the West', meaning to Surāstra or to the country of Sopara (while an Indian, Mahārakkhita, was sent to the country of the *Yona*). The Greek edict of Kandahar testifies the importance of the *yona* element in the empire of the



The Greek inscription photographed on the reverse of the rubbing.

Mauryas. It reminds us of an interesting, though obviously exaggerated tradition. According to the Ceylonese chronicle *Mahāvamsa* (XXIX 40) at the beginning of the 1st century B. C. thirty thousand Buddhist monks coming from 'Alasandā, a city of the Yonas', gathered in Ceylon to take part in the dedication of the great *stūpa* near Anurādhapura. Alasandā (= Alexandria) has been identified as Alexandria in the Caucasus, the homeland of the king Menander, but it can also be identified as Alexandria in Arachosia (whether Kandahar or Ghazni).

This new document of Greek culture in Aśoka's empire affords a new approach to the problem of the term *yavanānī* defined as the feminine of *yavana* by the grammarian Pāṇini, who was born near Taxila in the Punjab probably in the 4th century B. C. According to his oldest commentator, Kātyāyana (3rd century B. C.) *yavanānī* means the *yavanalipi* – i. e. 'Greek writing'. It has been objected that this could not have been known in the Punjab before this region was conquered by Bactrian Greeks (vide L. de La Vallée-Poussin, *L'Inde aux temps des Mauryas* [1930], p. 37); but the discovery of the Kandahar inscription substantiates Kātyāyana's assertion.

The opening time reference establishes the term *post quem* of the edict at the completion of the tenth year since the *abhiṣeka*, the 'anointing' or consecration of the king. The indication that a decade has been completed means that also in the other edicts dated 'x years since the consecration' the calculation of time is made in terms of complete years. The date, then, is reckoned to be 259/8 B. C. according to the conclusions of L. Eggermont in *The Chronology of the Reign of Asoka Moriya* (Leiden 1956) which have been generally accepted (also by R. Thapar, *Aśoka*, p. 19 f. and 33). In that year Aśoka also

began the pilgrimage mentioned in rock edict VIII: 'the king Piyadassi, dear to the gods, ten years after the consecration set out for the place of illumination' (of the Buddha at Bodh-Gayā). In the pillar edict VII Aśoka declares: 'twelve years after the consecration I had a text of Piety written for the well-being and happiness of the world'. This *dhammalipi* has been identified with the series of 'Major Rock Edicts', in the 13th of which Aśoka states that he sent his ambassadors to five Greek sovereigns, i. e. Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy (II) of Egypt (285-246 B. C.), Antigonus Gonatas (283-239), Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus (272-240). The identification of Antiochus, whether I (280-261) or II (261-246), is still doubtful. Among the other kings, Magas was the first whose reign came to an end: the year of his death is reckoned as 258 B. C. by Tarn (*Antigonos Gonatas*, 1913, p. 449), as 250 by Beloch (*Griechische Geschichte*², IV 2, 1927, p. 186 f.), between 252 and 250 by Eggermont (in *Acta Orientalia*, 1940, p. 103 f.) and by Chamoux ('Le roi Magas', in *Revue Historique*, 216, 1956, p. 18 f.). The problem is far from being solved (vide P. M. Fraser's remarks in *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie d'Alexandrie*, 39, 1951, p. 135 note 1, and in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 43, 1957, p. 108). However, we should point out that, if the term *ad quem* for the dispatch of the ambassadors is reckoned as the year 258 B. C., - i. e. the year of Magas' death according to the 'high' chronology - the dispatch itself would coincide with the beginning of the preaching of the *dhamma* and the great 'pilgrimage of Piety' (the *dhammayāttā*). Consequently, the edict of Kandahar and the contemporary Indian edicts such as the 'Minor Rock Edicts' and probably also the two Kalinga edicts, would

mark the actual beginning of the preaching of the *dhamma*. In fact it is quite likely that Aśoka, in the renewed fervour of his faith, wished to acquaint friendly countries with his message at the very time when he first ordered its dissemination in his own kingdom. In this case, disregarding traditional uncertainties, Antiochus of Syria should be identified with Theos II who succeeded Soter I in 261 B. C.

THE ARAMAIC SECTION OF THE KANDAHAR INSCRIPTION

by

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In the Kandahar bilingual inscription the Aramaic text ¹⁾ is separated from the Greek version above it by a space of about 2 cm. The Aramaic inscription runs to eight lines, each one containing from 38–41 characters except for the last which is shorter and contains only 27. There

¹⁾ The Aramaic part of the inscription was first reproduced by G. Levi Della Vida in the monograph *Un editto bilingue greco-aramaico di Asoka* (*Serie orientale Roma*, XXI), Rome 1958, pp. 15–32, published by the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente. Shortly after, as one of a series of contributions by French scholars, a study by A. Dupont-Sommer was published. It is to be found (pp. 19–35) in *Une bilingue gréco-araméenne d'Asoka* which appeared in *Journal Asiatique*, 246 (1958), pp. 1–48. The French scholar did not utilize Levi Della Vida's study although he had read it. Subsequently further articles on the Aramaic part of the text appeared: F. Altheim-R. Stiehl, *The Aramaic Version of the Kandahar Bilingual Inscription of Asoka*, in *East and West*, 9 (1958), pp. 192–98 (it also appeared in German in F. Altheim's *Geschichte der Hunnen*, II, Berlin 1960, pp. 167–177); P. Nober, in a review of the IsMEO volume, published in *Verbum Domini*, 37 (1959), pp. 369–77; F. Altheim-R. Stiehl, *The Greek-Aramaic Bilingual Inscription of Kandahar and its Philological Importance*, in *East and West*, 10 (1959), pp. 243–60 (it later appeared in German in the first volume devoted by these authors to *Die aramäische Sprache unter den Achaimeniden*, Frankfurt am Main [1960], pp. 21–32); J. J. Koopmans, *Aramäische Chrestomathie*, Leiden 1962, pp. 174–78; P. H. L. Eggermont-J. Hoftijzer, *The Moral Edicts of King Asoka*, Leiden 1962, pp. 44–46.

are 305 characters altogether¹⁾. The length of the lines varies from 44.5–45.5 cm.; and the height of the characters is about 0.7–0.8 cm.

The palaeographic and linguistic aspects of the Aramaic part of the inscription will be briefly dealt with in the last pages of this study, but it must be said at once that the inscription raises conspicuous difficulties for the scholar. These are due, in essence, to the presence in an Aramaic text of several words most probably of Iranian origin which (it seems legitimate to assume) are based in their turn on Indian expressions. Despite the great efforts of scholars like E. Benveniste, F. Altheim, and R. Stiehl, the interpretation of both Iranian and Indian words is still very hypothetical: indeed, it is almost a case of the Aramaic context throwing more light on the Iranian words than vice versa. Another difficulty is raised by the Greek inscription placed above the Aramaic one; for it is practically autonomous and corresponds to the Aramaic text only in the general ethical content of the message it expresses. In fact, there is hardly a Greek phrase corresponding exactly to an Aramaic one. And lastly, another factor cannot be overlooked: our knowledge of the language in which the inscription is written is only very approximate: even today no grammar or dictionary of Imperial Aramaic exists.

It will be as well, then, to bear these snags in mind when judging the comment upon the inscription that we are going to make. Such a comment, like others before, aims merely at serving as a preliminary approach to a text of very great historical and linguistic interest.

¹⁾ The reason why these figures given by Dupont-Sommer are not the same as those given by Levi Della Vida (lines of 37–41 signs with a total of 301) is that there are slight differences in the way these two scholars read the text.

שנן—פתיתו עביר זי מראן פרידרש מלכא קשימא מהקשט 1
 מן אדין זעיר מרעא לכלהם אנשן וכלהם אדושיא הובד 2
 ובכל ארקא ראם שתי ואף זי זנה במאכלא למראן מלכא זעיר 3
 קטלן זנה למחזה כללהם אנשן אתהחסינן זי נוגיא אחדן 4
 אלך אנשן פתיזבת כנם זי פרבסת הוין אלך אתהחסינן מן 5
 פרבסת ורופתיסתי לאמוהי ולאבוהי ולמזישתיא אנשן 6
 איך אסרהי חלקותא ולא איתי דינא כללהם אנשיא חסין 7
 זנה הותיר לכלהם אנשן ואוסף יהותר 8

Comment and Translation.

— שנן: Although the words “years 10” clearly indicate a date, it seems very unlikely that they are to be construed as meaning “in the 10th year”. The form of the absolute plural militates against such an assumption. The horizontal stroke that is customarily used to indicate the figure 10, whether in Aramaic or Phoenician inscriptions, or in papyri, appears in our text without its usual curved appendix on the left.

פתיתו: This word is one of the most difficult in the whole inscription. There has been some discussion about whether it appears or not in an Aramaic papyrus found in Egypt and dating from the 5th century B. C. G. R. Driver¹⁾ at first argued that it was present but subsequently changed his mind²⁾. But it must be pointed out that a tear in the papyrus just at the point where the third letter ' appears makes Driver's new proposed reading

¹⁾ G. R. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B. C.*, Oxford 1954, p. 35. The word occurs in line 4 of the 13th letter.

²⁾ *Editio minor* (1957), p. 87

פתחתו no surer than the former one פתיתו, which is still, therefore, a very possible interpretation.

With the exception of P. Nöber, all scholars hold the word פתיתו to be of Iranian origin, although the meanings attributed to it vary. The Semitic character of the word has, on the other hand, been upheld by Nöber (who reads it as פתית linking ו to the following word as a conjunction, though he does not exclude the possibility of the reading פתיתו). The German scholar considers it a 3rd person feminine perfect plural (i. e. the predicate of שנין) from a root *פתח, a phonetic variant of ברח, as it exists in Arabic ("to cut, decide, terminate") and in Akkadian ("to bring to a conclusion"). But this hypothesis is beset by two difficulties. First, there is no evidence of a root *פתח; and it is not easy to overcome the problem by invoking the root ברח, for although both in northwest Semitic and Akkadian during the first millennium B. C. the phonetic shift $p > b$ was common, the opposite phenomenon of a shift $b > p$ was not. Second, it must be recognized that if, syntactically, we join the word פתית (or פתיתו) to the preceding שנין, the difficulty remains of finding a satisfactory explanation for the word עבד coming immediately after. On the reasonable assumption, then, that the word פתית is of Iranian origin, we must now attempt to establish its meaning.

So far two hypotheses have been formulated. Believing פתית to be the exact equivalent of the Greek πλεονη[θέντ]ων, E. Benveniste¹⁾ suggests the reading *patitava*—"durée", and interprets the whole phrase as "(après une) durée de 10 ans". But a number of objections remain: the difficulty of arguing a syntactical nexus with the word

¹⁾ *Journal Asiatique*, 246 (1958), pp. 36–37.

שנין as was evident in Nöber's hypothesis; the impossibility of alleging any syntactical relationship between שנין and פתיתו so as to justify the dependence of the latter on the former; and lastly the assumed correspondence between פתיתו and πλεονη[θέντ]ων that is merely a hypothesis waiting to be proved¹⁾.

The solution put forward by Levi Della Vida²⁾ and accepted by Altheim and Stiehl³⁾ appears much more plausible at least in terms of syntax. פתיתו now becomes the subject of עבד and, corresponding to the Iranian **patītō*, is held to mean "equalization of guilt and punishment, expiation". The only uncertainty is what is meant by a reference to "expiation". In fact, as Levi Della Vida has pointed out, this "expiation" would seem to be related to the conversion to Buddhism: that is, to the "illumination" that according to the 8th Aśoka inscription took place 10 years after the royal consecration. In this connexion, an observation seems pertinent. All the Aśoka inscriptions bearing a date (no small number – four out of fourteen of the most important plus ten others) calculate such a date from the year of the royal consecration. We should, then, expect our inscription to refer to this rather than, as it seems, to the conversion. But it is not an impossible assumption that the meaning of פתיתו,

¹⁾ It is relevant to point out here that the lacuna in the Greek text at this point is such that it can only be filled in by reference to the Aramaic. But this has not been possible; cfr. C. Gallavotti, *Il manifesto di Aśoka nell'Afghanistan*, in *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale*, I (1959), pp. 114–116; idem, *The Greek Version of the Kandahar Bilingual Inscription of Aśoka*, in *East and West*, 10 (1959), pp. 186–87.

²⁾ *Un editto bilingue*, cit., pp. 20–21.

³⁾ *East and West*, 9 (1958), pp. 192–93. The same scholars noted later (*East and West*, 10 [1959], pp. 243–44) that the Aramaic construction — שנין פתיתו עבד constituted an interesting "anticipation, in Aramaic garment, of the Middle Persian and New Persian periphrasis by means of *kartan*, *kerden*".

whose precise semantic value does in the last resort escape us, in some way indicates the sovereign's consecration, but indirectly, so as not to ignore the value of his religious works.

עבד: The tentative interpretation put forward by Dupont-Sommer and accepted by Nober, i. e. "came about", is extremely hypothetical, since it postulates a meaning for the verb עבד that it does not possess in Semitic languages (the parallel with Latin *factum est* is quite arbitrary), and also because the construction of this verb with the relative ך, equivalent to "that", appears to lack attestation. Accordingly, it is preferable to follow Levi Della Vida, Altheim and Stiehl, and take עבד as a perfect passive, meaning literally "was made", and the noun פתירו as its subject.

ך: The meaning of the whole sentence turns on the interpretation placed on this relative pronoun. Having noted and rejected the interpretation put forward by Dupont-Sommer and Nober, we must recognize that other scholars are far from being agreed on this point. Levi Della Vida's view is that it is a relative with a genitive function (common enough in Aramaic, and also in Hebrew and Phoenician, at the time of the inscription): but Altheim and Stiehl consider ך to be a causal conjunction – "because" – although they admit that such a use is not borne out in Biblical Aramaic or in Egyptian papyri. From a strictly linguistic viewpoint the only solution not raising difficulties is Levi Della Vida's. Moreover, the objection to it expressed by Altheim and Stiehl – that "a genitival relation across a separating word would have first to be exemplified by precedents ¹⁾" – is without substance, for

it is quite possible for a governed noun which is preceded by the relative particle to be separated from the noun following it ¹⁾.

מראן פרידש: The name of the sovereign is written in an Indian form of a Sanskrit type (hence, it differs from the form used in the Greek text Πιρδασσης), and is preceded by the title "our lord". The use of this attribute for Aramaic kings is exemplified in the oldest known texts ranging from "our lord Hazael", inscribed on ivory from Arslan Taş, to the *Mari* "my lord" designation found in Assyrian annals referring to a king of Damascus.

מלכא קשיטא מהקשט: All scholars who have examined this inscription are agreed in attributing the force of a perfect "has promoted truth" to the causative participle מהקשט. The noun קשיטא depends on this and forms a paronomastic expression. This is in itself possible; yet in my opinion the syntactic form of these words favours another construction. The proleptic position of the accusative, in fact, suggests that the expression מהקשט should be considered as a unit closely bound to the substantive מלכא to which it is in apposition. In this way the participle conserves its full inherent value: "the king who promotes truth". There are two arguments which make this interpretation more probable than the one advanced hitherto. First, we remove the syntactical contradiction of a finite verb (עבד) and a nominal form (מהקשט) to indicate two actions both of which are in the past (apart from the far from negligible fact that the action of "promoting the truth" is to be understood

¹⁾ *East and West*, 9 (1958), p. 192.

¹⁾ Cfr., for example, the Biblical Aramaic מֵאֲנִי בֵּית-אֱלֹהִים דִּי יְהֻדָּה וְכַסְפָּא (Esdras, VI, 5).

in a continuous sense, that is, as a present, and not limited to a specific moment of time). Secondly, it should be borne in mind that while according to the proposed interpretations the word מלכא remains detached from קשיטא מהקשט so as to refer to מראן פרידרש, in the Taxila inscription the expression מראן פרידרש appears twice, and is apparently not followed by any other title¹⁾. Nor can this expression be compared to מראן מלכא in line 3 since there the name פרידרש is lacking.

מן עדן זעיר מרעא: Although the sense remains practically unchanged these words can be read in two different ways according to the interpretation placed upon the verb זעיר. If it is deemed to be a passive perfect of the basic root (on the analogy of עביר in the preceding line), the translation will be: "since then evil has diminished". But as Dupont-Sommer has suggested זעיר can be taken as an active perfect of the intensive theme (though here with causative value as in Syriac), and if this is so the translation will be: "since then (the king Priyadarši) has caused evil to diminish". The first suggestion has the advantage of interpreting the grammatical form in a more obvious manner; but the fact that, in the words immediately following, an action is expressed with Priyadarši as subject stands in favour of the second hypothesis. However, the fact that in this second case the causative sense of the verb is expressed by a causative theme supports the view that in the first case, too, such a clearly causative

¹⁾ Notwithstanding the fragmentary state of the inscription I deem it unlikely that the word מלכא followed פרידרשי, since the original size of the stone would not seem to warrant the assumption that the missing part of the text was particularly long. In this connexion, the fact that the first words of the inscription follow one another without gap in the text can be adduced.

form of the verb would have been used if the aim had been to stress the work of the sovereign.

One final observation: in the word מרעא the sound ' is used (corresponding to protosemitic *q*), while in similar cases this inscription uses the *q* (cfr. ארקא for example). This alternation, revealing the abandonment of the historical spelling (largely used in this inscription) in favour of an orthography closer to the language phonetically, appears also in other documents of imperial Aramaic.

לכלהם אנש: "to all men". Here the pronoun suffix -הם proleptically used is to be noted.

אדושיא: We do not know the meaning of this word. Morphologically it looks like an emphatic Aramaic plural. Assuming that it is not an Aramaic term, Altheim and Stiehl have postulated an Old Persian origin (**adauš-*). The meaning of the word would then be "not-loved" and so "hostile": it fits the context well.

אכר: The causative form of the verb חובר. It is difficult to accept Nöber's hypothesis; he considers the first character of the following line, ו, to be the end part of the word חוברו (thereby taken to be a 3rd person perfect plural and a causative passive form; but apart from anything else, the perfect plural ought to have the suffix -ן as in (אתהחסינן)). In his interpretation, Nöber has alleged the perfect correspondence here between the Greek and Aramaic text; but this is a rare occurrence in this inscription; and cannot be invoked to give support to such an abnormal graphic and morphological particularity as that of placing a suffix in the following line (in a text that does not split words) – a suffix, moreover, that is different from the one used elsewhere in the inscription. Furthermore, at the end of the line in question there is a blank space which could easily accomodate the sign ו.

Altheim and Stiehl¹⁾ have advanced the most satisfactory explanation of these words. They have recognized **ראם** to be an Aramaic word (the past participle of the root **רומ** "to arise") so that the (Iranian) word **שתי** "joy", identified by Benveniste, no longer raises syntactical difficulties through its relation to **ראם**; difficulties that the French scholar had tried to surmount by means of "une sorte de dvanda 'paix-joie'". The connexion of **ראם** with Iranian roots raises more serious problems – not least of these is the use of **א** as *mater lectionis*. All this goes to make the interpretation of German scholars preferable.

ואף זי זנה: Dupont-Sommer's interpretation of these words is "and moreover there is this". The whole sentence beginning with these words is a difficult one, and even if the explanation put forward by Altheim and Stiehl²⁾ seems unacceptable (for example, they have failed to see the real significance of Dupont-Sommer's remarks about **זי**), it must be admitted that Dupont-Sommer's explanation does not remove all the difficulties. In particular it is the demonstrative **זנה** that eludes satisfactory interpretation. (Cfr. also note 2, pag. 53).

זעיר קטלן: Unlike the use of **זעיר** in the preceding line, the word has here the function of an adjective, the object of the following active participle **קטלן** (with an impersonal meaning).

זנה למחזה: As Dupont-Sommer believes, these words are probably to be understood to mean "seeing this": that is, **זנה** is the object of the infinitive **למחזה** (which has the value of a participle). We should, however, expect

to find the conjunction **ו** placed in front of these opening words. It may be that the two sentences are bound together by the two demonstratives **זנה**, which seem to correspond to each other and whose function in the position they occupy is not, in reality, very clear.

אתהחסינן: the 3rd person perfect plural of the causative reflexive theme from the root **חסן**. Noteworthy are the retention of the prefix **ה** of the causative (usually assimilated to the preceding **ת**), and the *mater lectionis*, indicating a vowel *i* or *e* where *a* is usually found. The form has been explained by Dupont-Sommer as archaic and dialectal (cfr. the final notes in this connexion).

זי: This reading is clearly preferable to **זי** given by Dupont-Sommer. Palaeographically, it is not easy to defend **א**, nor does **זי** have any meaning.

פתיובת: This is an Iranian term, *patizbāta*, the meaning of which according to Old Persian is "to be forbidden, prohibited". But Nober has rightly pointed out that the enunciation of such a royal ban conflicts with the picture of moral happiness outlined in the previous lines. By invoking later usages of this word, Nober equates **פתיובת** with a very different meaning, i. e. "they have eschewed" fishing. Thus the abandonment of this activity is no longer the outcome of a ban imposed by the sovereign but the consequence of moral discipline accepted by the fishermen.

כנם: An adverb corresponding to the Biblical Aramaic **כְּנָמָא**; the form **כנם** has already been reconstructed as **כנם** by Kraeling in an Aramaic papyrus¹⁾.

פרבסת... פרבסתי: These two closely connected words

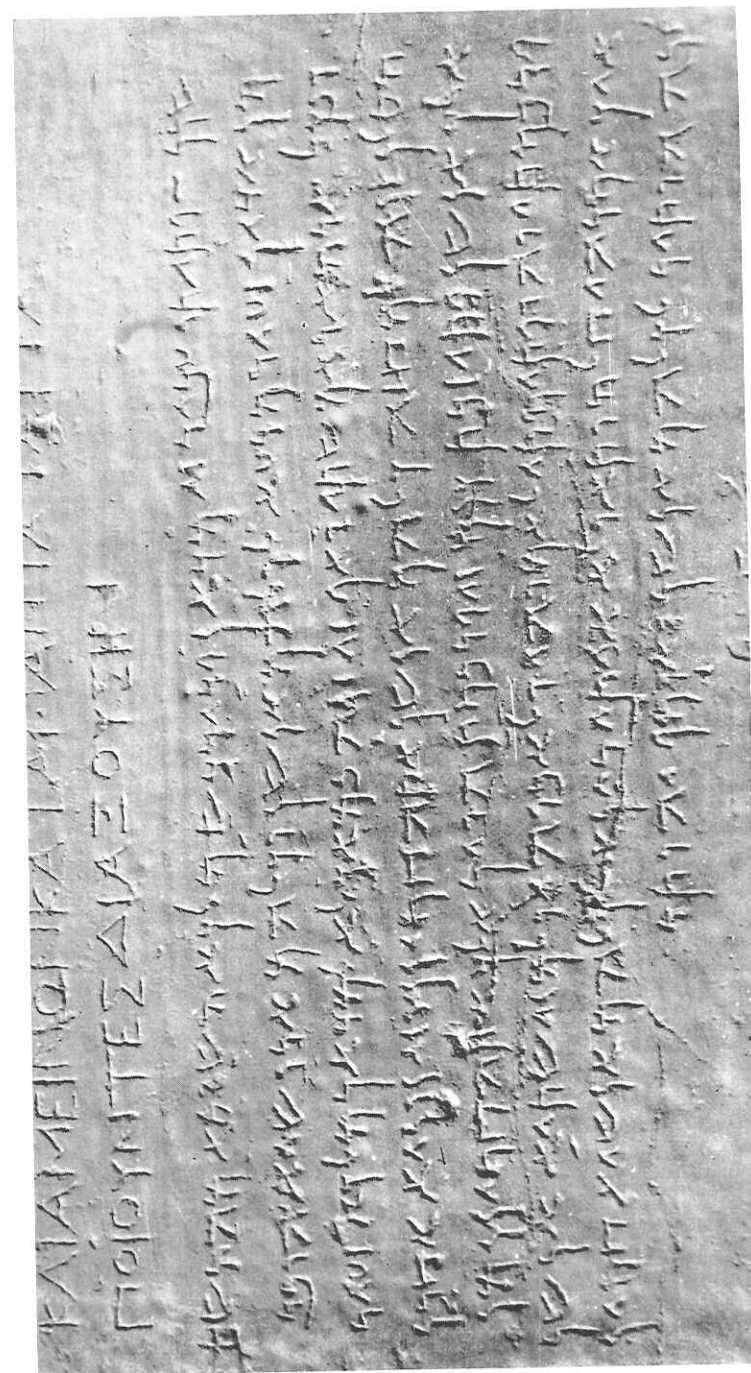
¹⁾ *East and West*, 10 (1959), p. 244.

²⁾ *Ibidem*, pp. 244–45.

¹⁾ E. G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri*, New Haven 1953, pag. II, l. 2.

are of Iranian origin. On the assumption that they correspond to the Greek words ἀκρατεῖς and ἀκρασία, a number of scholars have been at great pains to interpret them in such a way as to justify the basic meaning of “intemperate people” and “intemperance”. Rejecting Pagliaro’s interpretation, as relayed by Levi Della Vida, of **fra-bast* as “unhealthy ones” since the form should be פרבזד (in fact, such an interpretation does not follow the text, פרבסת being separated from פרבסת), Altheim and Stiehl have proposed **pari-basta* – “tied around” for פרבסת; פרבסת would then be the abstract noun. Thus interpreted, the term פרבסת would have a figurative meaning, i. e. “those who are bound (by mental tendencies)”, as the German scholars have argued. Benveniste, on the other hand, has postulated the form **frabasta*–, having not the usual meaning of “contained, restrained”, but the opposite one of “unbridled”. Such a hypothesis preserves the parallelism of the Greek and Aramaic texts. Although completely divergent, the two solutions put forward are both possible and, within certain limits, plausible. It is interesting to note that Nöber first rejected Benveniste’s hypothesis as improbable, but later in the final part of his study accepts it outright after having found cases of *frbst* in Iranian with a meaning similar to that postulated by Benveniste.

Rather than accept one or other of these hypothetical solutions it would seem wiser to study the Aramaic text without any *a priori* ideas about a parallel between it and the Greek text. If, indeed, it is true that the Greek εἴ τινες ἀκρατεῖς πέπαυνται τῆς ἀκρασίας κατὰ δύναμιν (“if any were intemperate they have, as far as possible, put an end to intemperance”) seems close to the Aramaic זי פרבסת אלך אתהחסינן מן פרבסת (“those who were *prbst*



The Aramaic inscription photographed on the reverse of the rubbing.

have given up *prbsty*"), the correspondence is not perfect even admitting that פִּרְבִּסְתִּי is to be understood as ἀκρασία. The Aramaic text is devoid of that hypothetical character expressed in Greek by the conditional conjunction εἰ and the limitation κατὰ δύναμιν. But further: there is a notable difference between the two texts in the preceding sentence. The Greek is as follows: ὅσοι θηρεύται ἢ ἀλιεῖς βασιλέως πέπαυνται θηρεύοντες ("those who [are] huntsmen and fishermen of the king have desisted from hunting"); but in the Aramaic version only the fishermen are mentioned (וְנִיִּיִּי אֲחִירִי); the huntsmen and the equivalent of βασιλέως, are omitted. Methodologically, then, this fact leads us to be chary of assuming that פִּרְבִּסְתִּי/פִּרְבִּסְתִּי must perforce correspond to ἀκρατεῖς/ἀκρασία. Let us now return to the Aramaic text.

As Altheim and Stiehl have rightly observed¹⁾, the central part of the inscription consists of three sections each beginning with the relative pronoun וְ preceded by various particles. At line 3 we have וְנִיִּיִּי that, following Dupont-Sommer, I have translated "and moreover", but which could have the force of a relative pronoun proper²⁾; at line 4 וְנִיִּי "and those who"; and at line 5 וְנִיִּי "similarly those who". Each of these three statements exemplifies an aspect of that "joy that has arisen throughout the land": the cooks in the royal kitchens, and other men likewise, are killing fewer animals; the fishermen have given up fishing; and lastly, those who were *prbst* have

¹⁾ *East and West*, 10 (1959), p. 245.

²⁾ The translation of Altheim and Stiehl is "those who". The interpretation of the German scholars has not here been followed owing to the difficulties that it raises over the words coming after. Yet I should not exclude the possibility that a different interpretation for וְנִיִּי might be a better rendering of the whole sentence than the one proposed by Dupont-Sommer and accepted here in the absence of a more satisfactory solution.

eschewed *prsbty*. In view of the essentially external aspect of the moral regime introduced by Aśoka as illustrated in the first two statements, something analogous is to be expected in the third; and the presence of the adverb כנם "similarly" is further evidence that the words that follow must be in some respects equivalent to those that preceded. And as, first, fishermen are spoken of, it seems plausible to expect a reference to huntsmen; accordingly, just as the ἀλιεῖς of the Greek text are matched by the Aramaic periphrasis זי נוניא אחרן, the θηρευταί could have their counterpart in the phrase זי פרבסת הוין. That would amount to attributing the meaning "huntsmen" to פרבסת and "hunting" to פרבסתי. Clearly, such a hypothesis should be checked in terms of Iranian – something outside the control of the writer. However, it is worth pointing out that the basic meaning of the Iranian root *band* ("to bind") can, to some extent, be associated with the idea of hunting in so far as this may involve the use of nets for catching animals alive.

In short, we can affirm that the problem posed by פרבסת/פרבסתי has still in the last resort to be solved. The Greek text sanctions a reference both to intemperance and to hunting (but the correspondence of the two texts is a general one and not such as to justify the use of one to interpret the other); and the readings based on Iranian have so far appeared to be conflicting and hence doubtful.

הופתיסתי: This is a word of Iranian origin interpreted both by Benveniste (and Dupont-Sommer) and by Altheim and Stiehl as *hupatyasti*, "good obedience", which occurs also in the Taxila inscription. However Altheim and Stiehl's explanation of הופתיסתי as an instrumental form seems highly improbable; for the Iranian words in this inscription are inserted in a wholly Aramaic context,

syntactically (and also morphologically sometimes – a point that has escaped the German scholars: cfr. אדושיא and מוזהיאי, emphatic plurals). At the same time Dupont-Sommer's interpretation also meets with considerable difficulties. Taking הופתיסתי as a noun, the French scholar is obliged to postulate a nominal clause devoid of a verb. This cannot be upheld, and he has to complete the clause with the verb "règne". If it is borne in mind that line 3 contains a similar clause with a verbal form ראם שתי (which Dupont-Sommer overlooked) a nominal clause as a possible solution here seems unlikely. The interpretation suggested by Levi Della Vida and Nober would, then, seem preferable: they have taken הופתיסתי as an adjective, and the word ἐνθήκοι in the Greek text supports this. In this case, however, the word אנשן must be taken as the subject of the predicative הופתיסתי. Syntactically, such a solution is possible since it permits us to translate the text literally without having recourse to constructions (like the relative clause adopted by Levi Della Vida and the adjective turned into a finite verb by Nober) not sanctioned by the Aramaic text. In the second place such a solution enables us to avoid the double syntactical irregularity stressed by Dupont-Sommer: that of an absolute noun preceded (instead of followed) by an emphatic attribute.

לאמרהי ולאברהי: Compared with the Greek text there is here an inversion of terms, but as Benveniste has pointed out this occurrence is frequent in Indian texts. Grammatically, it is worth noting the form of the suffix ויהי in the feminine אם (instead of the regular form אמר). The use of the singular pronoun suffix ("his") with a plural subject ("men") has a natural explanation: the noun to which the suffix is joined is singular – men obey "mother

and father", everyone his own parents. An analogy is afforded by אסרהי in the next line.

מזישהי: a noun of Iranian origin (*mazišta-*) with the Aramaic emphatic plural suffix.

חלקותא: The verb אסר followed by a 3rd person singular masculine suffix has been understood as a plural by Levi Della Vida, Altheim and Stiehl, and as a singular by Dupont-Sommer and Nöber. In the first case the subject would be אנשן; in the second חלקותא. The first interpretation is based on a morphological datum; i. e. that the suffix -הי presupposes a third person plural verb, such as אסרו. Apart from the fact that the explanations of the whole passage given by those scholars taking אסר as a plural cannot be upheld, it is important to observe that the presence of the suffix -הי after a 3rd person plural verb is not constant. -הי is not only not attested in the oldest Aramaic texts, it is sometimes absent even in the later ones, while it does appear now and again after a 3rd person singular too¹⁾. The second interpretation, then, fits the context more plausibly and does not give rise to the same serious objections: it is not rare to find a masculine form of the verb with a noun of feminine gender²⁾.

What is odd is the emphatic feminine form חלקותא, seeing that only masculine forms of the noun are known to have been used. An abstract form in -ות, common enough in both Aramaic and Hebrew, seems to have become current in the eastern part of the Aramaic area as is proved also by the formation זכרות exemplified in the Taxila inscription. The preference for abstract forma-

¹⁾ Cfr. M. Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, Weimar 1898, p. 404.

²⁾ H. Bauer-P. Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, Halle-Saale 1927, p. 334.

tions has been attributed by Andreas¹⁾ to Iranian influence that is not reckoned to have acted upon the morpheme itself (as Levi Della Vida seems to think), but on the accentuation of a word's abstract form.

ולא איתי דינא: The latest interpretation that Altheim and Stiehl have offered of these words is not very convincing. איתי דינא is thus thought to form "a constructus compound" with the meaning "existence of the judgment"; and the expression to be negated by the negative לא forming a kind of compound term to be joined to חלקותא. Such a construction is clearly artificial but was needed by the German scholars to justify a specific interpretation of the text based on the (erroneous) assumption that הופתיסתי is a substantive in the instrumental case. Dupont-Sommer has given us the right understanding of these words: "and there is no judgment".

חסין: "Pious" is the meaning, as Dupont-Sommer has correctly said; the absolute state of the attribute after the emphatic state of the substantive אנשיא should be noted.

זנה: The word refers to what has already been said: that is, observance of the law.

חותיר: a causative perfect of יתר, "has benefited".

אוסף: a form deriving from the root יסף, a causative theme. It is a perfect for Levi Della Vida (who stresses the prefix א- instead of ה-), and is considered an adverb by Dupont-Sommer. Although a morphological explanation is difficult, the sense is clear, for the causative form of the verb יסף is used to indicate the repetition of the action expressed by another verb. אוסף יהותר may be translated as: "will continue to benefit".

¹⁾ F. C. Andreas, *Erklärung der aramäischen Inschrift von Taxila*, in *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philol.-Hist. Kl.*, 1932, pp. 6-17.

Having concluded our examination of single words and phrases we can give a translation of the whole text; a translation, however, that contains some gaps and uncertainties:

“ For 10 years expiation (?) has been made by Our Lord Priyadarši, the king who promotes truth.

Since then evil has diminished for all men, and he has caused all hostile things to disappear, and joy has arisen throughout the whole earth. And moreover, there is this (?): for the feeding of Our Lord the king, little

is killed; seeing this (?) all men have given up (killing animals), and those who caught fishes,

those men have given up (doing it); similarly, those who were *prbst*, they have given up

prbsty. And men (are) obedient to their own mother and father and to the elders,

as destiny has laid down to them. And there is no judgment for all men (who are) pious.

This has benefited all men and will continue to benefit ”.

Palaeographic and Linguistic Observations.

The form of writing used in the Kandahar inscription is basically the same as the other two Aramaic inscriptions found at Taxila and Pül-i Darunteh. The presence in the same text of different forms of the same sign is common to all three, and is especially marked in the Kandahar inscription. Such difference appears significant in so far as it often reflects not just accidental variants but different stages in the development of a specific sign. The two forms of the letters כ, ה, and מ are, in fact, examples

of two successive phases occurring between the type of writing common around 500 B.C., and the so-called “ square Hebrew ” form practised at the beginning of the Christian era. Such oscillations are evidence of a transitional phase and fully justify the opinion of Levi Della Vida that the inscriptions in Aramaic found in Afghanistan are broadly contemporary, despite undeniable differences in the writing of specific letters.

The principal differences between the Kandahar inscription on the one hand and those of Taxila and Pül-i Darunteh on the other are as follows:

a) In the Kandahar text the sign כ is sometimes joined to ה, נ, ד and ת; but this phenomenon does not occur in the other inscriptions.

b) The sign ס in the Kandahar inscription appears to be more developed (that is, closer to “ square Hebrew ”) than in the other texts.

c) In the Pül-i Darunteh inscription the sign כ has a markedly more archaic – or, more exactly, “ archaizing ” – form than in the other two.

d) The sign מ in the Pül-i Darunteh inscription forms an acute angle in its upper part instead of being round as in the Kandahar and Taxila texts.

Linguistically speaking, the Kandahar inscription is extremely interesting owing to the general significance of a number of its particulars. One of the most striking features is undoubtedly the presence of a number of words of Iranian origin that the scribe was evidently unable to translate into Aramaic. Only in a few cases do these Iranian words assume an Aramaic vesture (אדושיא in line 2, and מישתחיה in line 6); more frequently, they retain an Iranian form even when Aramaic would have required

the use of particular suffixes. פתיכת in line 5 ought to have had either the suffix ך of the participle, or the suffix ך of the perfect; פרבסת in line 5 should have had the participle suffix ך; and הופתיסתי in line 6 needed the suffix ך of the participle, if our interpretation of the meaning is correct. The remaining words (פתירתו in line 1, שתי in line 3 and פרבסתי in line 6) while conserving an Iranian form, do not require suffixes in Aramaic since they are singular nouns in the absolute state. This clearly shows that the most eastern form of Aramaic, though yet far from only being able to supply heterogrammes to Middle Iranian languages, has gone beyond the stage when the terms it accepted from other languages – primarily from Iranian, but also from Egyptian and Greek ¹⁾ – were absorbed into its own phonological and morphological system.

The inability of Aramaic to withstand the power of assimilation of the Iranian languages in this borderline area is further confirmed by some orthographic and morphological phenomena revealing a significant lack of vitality in the language. The conservation of historical forms of writing (ן for די, ננה for דנה, causatives with the prefix ה instead of א, and ארקא for ארעא), in contrast with the use of an orthography closer to the phonological state of the language (מרעא, אודן, אוסף, the prefix את-) proves that Aramaic is better known as a written and cultural than as a spoken language.

This state of affairs is clearly borne out by the existence of some grammatical forms that would be inexplicable if we did not postulate their formation on the analogy of more common forms accepted as paradigms. For example, when we have אתהחסינן (lines 4 and 5) where the prefix

¹⁾ For the relative bibliography, see G. Garbini, in G. Levi Della Vida (ed.), *Linguistica semitica: presente e futuro*, Roma 1961, p. 89, note 113.

ה of the causative is not assimilated to the preceding ת, and where the *mater lectionis* ' indicates the vowel *e* (or ultimately *i*) in the position of the regular vowel *a*, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the word was formed by materially adding the reflexive prefix את- to the regular causative החסינן, thereby completely ignoring all the changes of a phonological character that the new form entailed in the spoken language ¹⁾.

The same may be said about the word אמודי. Vis-à-vis the regular form אמה (with the suffix *-ēh* instead of *-ūhī*) it must be explained as an analogical formation, purely literary and artificial, on the pattern of אבודי that comes immediately afterwards.

From what has been said the linguistic characteristics of the Kandahar inscription are evident. As a marginal manifestation, geographically speaking, of Imperial Aramaic, this inscription is to be viewed as an example of that international language that came to the fore of the time of the Assyrian empire and became the principal means of communication in the Persian empire. It was recognized as the official language of the Achaemenids throughout the empire (and so also in regions speaking languages different from Aramaic), and became fixed in a form of writing that was to diverge from the spoken language which, through subsequent transformations, passed into the Middle Aramaic languages. When the Christian

¹⁾ Dupont-Sommer is inclined to take this verb as "une forme archaïque (ou dialectale)". This seems unlikely, since the reflexive forms with the prefix את- (or ה-) are not found before the Imperial period (the only exception is the odd form התנאבן appearing in the Aramaic inscription of Bar-Rakib), and cannot, therefore, be reckoned archaic. As for the supposed "dialectal" character of this inscription, I think it must be excluded, for the Kandahar inscription, as I have tried to show, is cast in a purely written language – probably by an author whose mother tongue was Iranian.

era was approaching the various forms assumed by Imperial Aramaic concealed very different linguistic realities under the apparent uniformity of a common written cultural language. Just as Nabataean was matched by spoken Arabic and Palmyrene by an eastern Aramaic language, the Aramaic of Kandahar was paralleled by an Iranian language. The very fact of the geographical position in this last case confirms the hypothesis that we are dealing with a written language only.

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