

sources over dates is noted, the explanation sometimes at least lies in the use by the non-European source of the Old Calendar (this is evidently the case, for example, on p. 374): the continued use of the Old Calendar in the second half of the nineteenth century is indicated in a Syriac inscription at Mulanthuruthy of 1863 (*Recueil*, I, pp. 148–149). On p. 473 it is said that the Church of the East Monastery of Mar Augen, on Mount Izla, passed to the Syrian Orthodox in 1504: this was not the case, for colophons of manuscripts written there indicate that it still belonged to the Church of the East as late as 1838, and the first known Syrian Orthodox manuscript copied there is dated 1842. Mysteriously the pagination of the book jumps from p. 492 to p. 527 without any apparent loss of text (something else has gone wrong on p. 370).

Finwick has undoubtedly made an important contribution to the history of the ‘New Party’ during the second half of the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century. Not only have many details and uncertainties been clarified, but (more importantly) he has successfully brought out the importance of the wider role played by the bishops of Thozhiyur especially in the developments that took place in the nineteenth century, with, on the one hand, the tensions between those who promoted close links with Antioch and those who sought to weaken the ties of dependence (eventually resulting in the twentieth century in the split into two separate Churches), and, on the other hand, the emergence of the separate Mar Thoma Church.

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI: AN EPIC OF ANCIENT INDIA. VOLUME VI: YUDDHAKĀṆḌA. Translated by ROBERT P. GOLDMAN, SALLY J. SUTHERLAND GOLDMAN, and BAREND A. VAN NOOTEN. pp. xviii, 1655. Princeton, New Jersey and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2009.
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Here, thirteen years after the previous volume and twenty-five years after the first, is the sixth and penultimate volume of the Princeton translation of the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa* as critically reconstituted in Baroda.¹ In their preface the Goldmans explain that the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* would have appeared earlier had they not been “heavily burdened with instructional and administrative duties” in the interim (p. xiii); but for the reader it will have been worth the wait. Like its predecessors, the volume will be reprinted in Delhi by Motilal Banarsidass.

In terms of pages, the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* is nearly three times the size of any of the previous Princeton *Rāmāyaṇa* volumes; though printed on very thin paper, it is massive. It contains an introduction (by the Goldmans), the translation (first draft by van Nooten, revised by the Goldmans), extensive notes (ditto), several glossaries, a list of thirty-one emendations or corrections of the critical edition (the verses affected are marked with an asterisk in the text, and the emendations are explained in the notes), a bibliography, and a detailed index.

The introduction (pp. 3–118) is lucid and useful, if occasionally repetitive. It includes a narrative synopsis of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* and its place in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and discussions of its main themes and characters; of its style and structure; of the history of its translation and interpretation; and of this translation. The Goldmans emphasise, admittedly anachronistically, the cinematic qualities

¹For the Sanskrit text, see P. L. Vaidya, (ed.), *The Yuddhakāṇḍa: the sixth book of the Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa, the national epic of India* (Baroda, Oriental Institute, 1971, with full critical apparatus); R. T. Vyas, (gen. ed.), *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa: text as constituted in its critical edition* (Baroda, Oriental Institute, 1992); www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rys/index.htm.

of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*; which is to say that the modern medium of cinema has employed many old narrative techniques. The introduction includes split infinitives, which will annoy some readers; and unfortunately it misquotes Arnold's 'Dover Beach' in fn. 8 (there is a crucial 'as' missing), and refers to several sources that do not appear in the bibliography (or perhaps appear there with different names or dates).² As well as a rounded orientation to this *kāṇḍa*, there are some interesting research results: the Goldmans reverse the previous consensus view of the relative chronology of the commentators Kataka Mādhavayogin and Maheśvaratīrtha (p. 105), and draw interesting conclusions about the relationships between previous translators (pp. 115–117; H. P. Shastri's 1959 translation, currently widely used, is shown to have been significantly influenced by – and to have duplicated mistakes from – Alfred Roussel's 1903 French translation).

The Princeton translation reads well, but may tend to feel slightly formal and mannered. Such a response is anticipated by this admission (p. 109):

In our efforts to render every word and nuance of the text as closely as possible in an alien idiom and to map the architecture of Vālmīki's verses into readable English prose, we were often forced by the highly compacted style of the epic Sanskrit to resort to a prose style less felicitous than we would have liked.

This translation is not asking to be judged on the grace and beauty of its English. But the style is nonetheless continuous and polished, the care with which the sentences have been composed is clear, and the scholarly value of such a translation is not to be gainsaid. And one wonders whether any scholarly translation – for all that one would have to be a scholar to do it – could survive the attempt to devise a satisfactorily poetic English style to reflect the loose demotic style of 'epic Sanskrit'.³ For scholarly purposes the most significant criticisms would be that the translation has been done carelessly or by someone who is insufficiently familiar with one or other of the languages involved; and none of this obtains in the present case. The translation is consistent and assured, and bespeaks profound textual engagement.

Some comments on the presentational format used for the Princeton translation.⁴ The translation has a separate paragraph for each numbered verse (or, where the syntax demands, for every smallest group of verses). But the translation is in prose, and English prose is normally presented in paragraphs whose beginnings and ends are dictated by – and contribute to the reader's perception of – the arcs of the narrative. Thus, for all that it avoids introducing what cannot be found in the original, the Princeton micro-episodic style visually omits some expected narrative-structural prompts, and so sometimes makes the reading harder work than it could be. The reader may compare the quotation on pp. 23–24 in the introduction, where, exceptionally, the convention is suspended.

An allied – though comparatively minor – alienating factor is the appearance, at the end of each *sarga*, of the colophon formula, "The end of the Xth *sarga* of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* of the *Śrī Rāmāyaṇa*". The retention of these lines gives the impression of fidelity to the manuscript tradition, but omitting them would have eased the read, since the information they provide is also on the title page, in the running heads, and in the legend '*Sarga X+1*' which follows the colophon formula immediately in all cases but the last.

²For example: Pollock 1971 (p. 4 fn. 4), R. Goldman 2003a (p. 37 fn. 46), R. Goldman 1978 (p. 83 fn. 183), Ramanujan 1992 (p. 112 fn. 44), and Biardeau 1999 (p. 115 fn. 47).

³For grammatical details of the difference between 'epic Sanskrit' and Pāṇinian Sanskrit, see Thomas Oberlies, *A Grammar of Epic Sanskrit* (Berlin, 2003).

⁴In addition to these comments, one cannot help but notice the use of unconventional orthography: as in previous volumes, the 'ñ' in 'Lañkā', 'Añgada', and so on is presented not as n-with-overdot but as n-with-macron, a character that I cannot find on any of my computer's extended character-sets.

The disproportionate size of this volume is not explained by the size of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. At 4,435 verses it is the longest *kāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but a considerably higher fraction of this volume's bulk is taken up by the notes (pp. 496–1551) than was the case for any previous volume. The introduction explains this circumstance in various ways (pp. 107–108), mentioning the “longer and more numerous appendix passages in the critical apparatus”; the various extraordinary theological-commentarial lucubrations that the *kāṇḍa* has spawned; the difficult technical terms that the proliferating battle scenes throw up; and the commentarial deliberations over the precise chronology of the *kāṇḍa*'s events. Some readers will perhaps question whether such prolix annotation was necessary; it is quite a struggle repeatedly to turn from the translation to the notes, especially as one approaches the end of the *kāṇḍa*.

As the introduction makes clear, there have been many previous translations of the *Rāmāyaṇa*; but it would be a sufficient justification of the Princeton edition that it “offers the reader a rendition of the only scientific reconstruction of the poem based on a critical analysis of all its major recensions and subrecensions” (p. 112). The Baroda critical edition may seem to reconstruct the text as it was before the various developments within the manuscript traditions, so that the reader is here as close as can be to the ‘original’.⁵ Seeing such a text complete in English is an urgent desideratum for the *Rāmāyaṇa* as it is for the critically reconstituted Poona *Mahābhārata* and *Harivaṃśa*; and so this translation would be a great boon even were it accompanied only by minimal notes.

But the Princeton edition has a more extensive ambition (p. 108):

As with the previous volumes, we hope that the density of the annotation, offering as it does a complete discussion of virtually every one of the poem's numerous textual, exegetical, cultural, and rhetorical difficulties, and at least a summary of the commentarial discussions and debates these difficulties have provoked, will provide all those interested in this culminating section of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story an apparatus for achieving the fullest possible appreciation of it.

It might seem that this edition, and in particular this volume, comes close to making good on this offer, at least as far as surviving Sanskrit and scholarly “commentarial discussions and debates” are concerned. In addition to the fruits of modern Indology, a dozen Sanskrit commentaries are drawn upon in the discussions, none of which are available in English translation, and many of which are comparatively inaccessible even in Sanskrit. The notes thus bespeak considerable leg-work as well as meticulous scholarship by the Princeton team, and constitute a digest that will be of lasting value in *Rāmāyaṇa* studies – and that will be so regardless of one's attitude to the critically reconstituted text, for all the material attested in some but not all manuscripts (that is, the primary apparatus of the 1971 Baroda edition) is translated or at least summarised in the notes. There will be readers who are more interested in the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself than they are in the history of its reception, and perhaps some of these might feel that these two things should be kept separate; but such an argument would be part of the history of the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s reception, as would the fact of a new translation, with or without notes. In the end, then, the main arguments against the extensive annotation would be that it delays the publication of the translation and inflates its price.

It is, however, striking, given the promise of “an apparatus for achieving the fullest possible appreciation”, that we are not supplied with the full Sanskrit text, which would be the expected first port of call. With regard to this point and many of the others made above, we should celebrate, and lament anew the demise of, the Clay Sanskrit Library, which in 2005 and 2006 reprinted volumes

⁵Notwithstanding attempts to reconstruct versions that would hypothetically have predated the version the critical editors have reconstituted. See for example John and Mary Brockington, translation, *Rāma the Steadfast: an early form of the Rāmāyaṇa* (London, 2006).

1–5 of the Princeton translation in pocket-sized editions, with the English in full paragraphs, with the colophon formulae omitted, with parallel Sanskrit text on the left-hand facing page, with notes omitted, and with pruned introductions. The ideal companion-volume to the Princeton *Yuddhakāṇḍa* is seemingly not to be.

As for the narrative contents, the *Rāmāyaṇa* is one of the most extraordinary, most brilliant, most terrible, and most loved of humankind's literary creations, and those who have not yet done so should start with the *Bālakāṇḍa*. In the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* Rāma's enmity with Rāvaṇa comes to a head: their armies fight at length (hence the title), and Rāma kills Rāvaṇa. Despite his misgivings in terms of the results for his and his family's reputation, Rāma takes his abducted wife Sītā back. His term of exile completed, he returns to Ayodhyā and rules it in proverbially righteous fashion; and if the story were to end there, he would live happily ever after.

Many scholars have imagined that the story once did end there, as it does in the *Mahābhārata* version (*Mahābhārata* 3.258–275). Some of the same scholars have imagined that Rāma was once just a man, and that his also being an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu was a later addition. One significant contribution of the Princeton team has been their having taken a hard line against this latter idea, showing through their cumulating introductions that Rāma's dual character and his forgetting his divine identity are vital aspects of the drama (see for example pp. 50–51; at *Rāmāyaṇa* 6.105, now that he has killed Rāvaṇa and discharged his divine mission, Rāma is told who he really is). With regard to the former idea, we now await the Princeton *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

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BUDDHISM AND EMPIRE. By MICHAEL WALTER. pp. xxvii, 311. Leiden, Brill, 2009.
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Walter puts forth two bold and thought-provoking theses: that the Tibetans have been significantly influenced by the Indo-Europeans in prehistory and that the Tibetan empire was Buddhist already at the dawn of history. To treat these two ideas within the covers of one volume was a mistake. Not only does Walter fail to provide detailed treatment of the primary sources and full consideration of previous scholarship, his work employs a highly idiosyncratic system for citations, and is peppered with spelling errors and inconsistencies.¹ Neither argument comes across as careful and persuasive. Walter's analysis relies on new interpretations of a number of key concepts in Old Tibetan religion and political philosophy. While always interesting his proposals are seldom convincing. I discuss two terms *bla* and *sku-bla* in detail.

Walter sees his suggestion of Indo-European influence as in opposition to the Tibeto-Burman hypothesis. Many of Walter's methodological objections to Tibeto-Burman linguistics as currently practised are spot on.² However, his total despondency regarding the potential of Tibeto-Burman linguistics is unwarranted. While he is correct that Tibeto-Burman studies "cannot [...] be said to have any import for the study of the intersection of early Tibetan, Chinese and Burmese cultures",

¹The Sanskrit word *saṅgha* is misspelled *sangha* throughout. Mongolian *altan ordo* is written *altan ordu* (p. 291). 'Géza Uray' becomes 'Geza Uray' (p. 125). The famous 16th century historian is Dpa'-bo Gtsug-lag on page 124 but Dpa'-bo Gtsug Lag on the facing page (p. 125). Works in the bibliography are not ordered chronologically, e.g. Beckwith's publications are listed in the order 1984, 2006, 2006, 1983, 1977, 1993 (p. 297). The dictionary *Dag yig gzar bsgriḡs* was not published in Dharamsala in 1990 (p. 114) but rather in Xining in 1979 (Bsam-gtan 1979).

²In particular his scepticism concerning Matisoff's 'allofams' (p. 83).