

Notwithstanding the extant Sanskrit text of *Siddhasāra* as adduced by Kahl (p. 134, n. 133) and parallels, the Arabic verb *shḥdh* I (“to sharpen”) would seem to fit “the mind” (*adh-dhihn*) better than “the male member” (*adh-dhakar*), as he conjectures.

“Female hyena” (*ad-ḍabu‘a al-‘arjā’*, pp. 317–8, with fn. 421; it need not actually have been lame, this being merely the animal’s traditional Arabic name!) was a customary ingredient of antidotes.

To conclude, may I add two comments on matters of secondary importance. I realize that as a non-native user of English I am liable to the same criticism that I am voicing here, yet I cannot refrain from expressing regrets that the text was not reviewed by a style- as well as content-sensitive editor before being sent to press. And finally, the cover illustrations demonstrate a patent lack of historical sensitivity; neither the Arabic nor Devanāgarī nor Eṣṭrangelā characters reflect Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī’s cultural milieu or personal erudition.

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TULSIDAS:

The Epic of Ram (trans. Philip Lutgendorf). Volume 1.
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TULSIDAS:

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Philip Lutgendorf, second to none among Western Tulsidas scholars in recent decades, here sets out on a new journey: translating Tulsi’s *Rāmcaritmānas* in a projected series of seven volumes. These first two books make a magnificent beginning, fully complementing Lutgendorf’s groundbreaking 1991 work *The Life of a Text: Performing the Rāmcaritmānas of Tulsidas*, and his prodigious related scholarship since that time. The familiar elegance of the Murty Classical Library of India (MCLI) is here put to excellent use, with the bespoke Devanagari and roman fonts reflecting each other’s clarity across the facing-page spread; each of the two books has a brief introduction and a modest selection of endnotes. The present two volumes accommodate *Bālkāṇḍ*; the remaining five will offer respectively: 3–4 *Ayodhyākāṇḍ*; 5 *Aranyākāṇḍ*, *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍ* and *Sundarkāṇḍ*; 6 *Lankākāṇḍ*; and 7 *Uttarkāṇḍ*.

The question of layout is probably the first aspect of these books to hit the eye (and then the mind and heart) of the *Mānas* aficionado. Since the time of the earliest printed editions of Tulsi’s text, the established practice has been to show *caupāi* stanzas standing foursquare as a pair of two-foot lines set one above the other: that is, feet A–B set above feet C–D. This traditional layout yields a ready appreciation of verse structure, an intimate part of Tulsi’s unsurpassed rhetoric. More

specifically, it also allows for a vertical parallelism of A with C (and sometimes of B with D): for example, grammatical or rhetorical parallels between A and C may set up a compositional counterpoint against the sequential connection of A with B and of C with D. I do not mean to suggest that such arrangements regularly involve formal dicolons, or that there is any *standard* pattern of syntactic, semantic, rhythmic, phonetic, or other parallelism between the vertically paired feet; rather that interplay of the kinds just mentioned may *occasionally* form part of the immensely subtle weave of Tulsi's poetic fabric. Such visual subtleties are essentially a gift of the printed tradition, having no corollary in either manuscript calligraphy or recitation – but it is a gift we have grown used to enjoying since the printed tradition began, and it is wholly lost when the four feet are regarded as separately listable items, with four line-breaks instead of two.

This new MCLI edition parts from the age-old tradition and does indeed set the *caupāī* as a sequence of four separate lines, stacked one upon the other. This reviewer huffed and puffed for a while at the sight of such a radical change, but was mollified when the reason for it became apparent: the new arrangement allows for an exact match between the layout of the Awadhi on the left-hand page and that of the English translation on the right-hand page, where the translator has, in most cases, artfully maximized this connection in his deployment of the English phrasing. This foot-for-foot equivalence greatly facilitates the dual reading of *mūla* and translation, and turns out to be one of the most successful and attractive aspects of the translator's approach.

Earlier translators of the *Mānas* include F.S. Growse, Magistrate and Collector of Bulandshahr, whose translation as *The Rāmāyana of Tulsi Dās* was published in Allahabad in 1883; this text remained for many years the standard English version, and was influential on Growse's successors. Like most translations (apart from an unsuccessful rhymed version by A.G. Atkins, Delhi, 1954), Growse's text is in English prose. He renders the opening two stanzas of the Awadhi text thus:

O Ganes, of the grand elephant head; the mention of whose name ensures success, be gracious to me, accumulation of wisdom, storehouse of all good qualities! Thou too, by whose favour the dumb becomes eloquent, and the lame can climb the vastest mountain, be favourable to me, O thou that consumest as a fire all the impurities of this iron age.

Growse's diction reflects a Victorian mode of piety suggestive of the King James Bible, which is more or less contemporaneous with Tulsi's epic; he expands on Tulsi from time to time, for example naming "Ganes" where the poet offers only the epithet *karibara badana* "fine elephant-faced". Lutgendorf sits closer to the original wording in this and also in his retention of the third-person optative of Tulsi's verbs (*karaiū, dravaiū*); and as already mentioned, he gives line breaks in close imitation of Tulsi's *caupāī* feet:

He whose recollection brings success, / great elephant-headed lord of
legions, / a mass of wisdom and abode of auspiciousness – / may he be
gracious to me.

He by whose grace the mute gain eloquence / and the lame scale lofty
summits – / may that merciful one, who burns all the dross / of this
dark age, take pity on me.

The two translators take different strategies to accommodate Tulsi's massed relative clauses; and strangely, both choose the idea of "eloquence" to render *bācāla*, for which "loquacious" or "garrulous" would capture Tulsi's relishable irony more pointedly. No translator can address the metrical subtleties of Tulsi's composition (in this opening sequence of verses he exploits a variant of *sorthā* metre to great rhetorical effect); but the verse-layout of Lutgendorf's translation lends it readability and grace, besides providing a conveniently neat match for readers with one finger on the Awadhi line and another on the English. The translator bases his version on the ubiquitous Gita Press edition but helpfully signposts the translated narrative by dividing the English text into chapters headed "Prologue", "The story of Shiva and Bhavani", "Causes of Ram's incarnation", etc.

Readers and scholars may endlessly debate the detail of this or that word or phrase (is "dross" technically combustible?), but when all is said and done, we have in these paired volumes an excellent rendering of the first part of Tulsi's classic: a fine new version for our times.

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AUDREY TRUSCHKE:

Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court.

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This book is an important contribution to two of the most exciting fields in South Asian scholarship over the past decade: early modern literary history and studies of the Mughal court. It provides a wealth of new information about the impact of Sanskrit intellectuals and Sanskrit knowledge on Mughal culture, a largely overlooked aspect of the empire. Mughal encounters with Sanskrit occurred from approximately 1560 to 1660; after that Hindi became the preferred medium into Indian knowledge, which received less imperial patronage from emperor Aurangzeb. Much of Audrey Truschke's book concerns the even shorter timespan from the 1580s to the 1610s, when Mughal involvement with Sanskrit reached its peak under emperors Akbar and Jahangir. In demonstrating the continuing significance of Sanskrit into the seventeenth century, as well as the multilingualism at the imperial centre, Truschke extends the insights of her mentors Sheldon Pollock and Allison Busch in a new direction. The resulting work will lay to rest once and for all any doubts that the Indian environment shaped Mughal kingship and ideology in notable ways.

Truschke may not be the first scholar to point out the presence of Sanskrit in and around the Mughal court, but she has studied the phenomenon far more extensively than anyone previously. The prodigious amount of research she has conducted, including the reading of numerous unpublished manuscripts in multiple archives, is impressive. Even more noteworthy is Truschke's command of Persian in addition to Sanskrit; this makes it possible for her to trace the trajectories of Sanskrit texts as they were adapted and transformed into Persian forms. Truschke gives equal attention to both sides of the multicultural "encounters" that transpired at the imperial court – thus, three of her substantive chapters deal exclusively with Sanskrit texts