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Reflections on the history of Jainism

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Like Buddhism, Jainism was born in the region I like to call Greater Magadha, the part of the Ganges plain east of the confluence of the two rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The Jina and the Buddha are supposed to have been contemporaries, and there are indeed early Buddhist text that mention Mahāvīra's demise. The two movements were aware of each other's existence, and there are good reasons to believe that they influenced each other. This influence was, as far as the earliest period is concerned, largely unidirectional: there is for this period much more evidence for Jaina influence on Buddhism than the other way round. I have discussed this influence from Jainism on Buddhism during the early period in various publications, and will not say more about it now.[□] In this paper I wish to concentrate on a more recent period, and on what appears to be a different region of the subcontinent.

Both Jainism and Buddhism spread over the Indian subcontinent in the centuries following their beginning. They did not always spread to the same regions. The presence of Jainism in Tamil Nadu, for example, has been confirmed by epigraphic evidence from at least the 2nd century BCE onward;[□] Buddhists did not arrive in this region until much later. Buddhists, on the other hand, settled in other regions, prominent among these the region sometimes referred to as Greater Gandhāra, in the north-western parts of the subcontinent. Buddhist thought went through important developments in that region. It is here that Abhidharma thought was systematized, so as to give rise of Sarvāstivāda philosophy. Features of this philosophy, presumably the first systematic philosophy of the

¹ See most recently Bronkhorst, 2009a, part 1.

[□] Mahadevan, 2003: 126 f.

subcontinent, include the belief in the momentariness of all that exists, the idea that all existing things are in reality successions of entities (the so-called *dharmas*) that last no longer than a single moment; further the atomic nature of matter and its consequence that the objects of our ordinary experience are aggregates. We find these ideas also in the Śvetāmbara canon, and there are reasons to think that they had been borrowed from Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma. Even the word *pudgala*, which survives in Jainism but with a sense altogether different from the one it has everywhere else, appears to be based on the Buddhist notion of *pudgala*.[□] For Buddhist scholasticism it designates the person conceived of as the totality of items (Buddhists would say *dharmas*) that constitute it. The use of *pudgala* in the Śvetāmbara canon shows a development from 'person' to 'material object' that is understandable if we take this development to start from the Buddhist notion of *pudgala*. The fact that the Buddhist *pudgala* and the soul as it came to be conceived of in Jainism share the all-important feature that they have a spatial dimension that coincides with that of the physical body points in the same direction: it has repeatedly been pointed out by scholars that the oldest texts of the Śvetāmbara canon have an altogether different notion of the soul.

It seems, then, that the Jainism that finds expression in parts of the Śvetāmbara canon and in later texts has undergone a strong influence from scholastic Abhidharma Buddhism of the Sarvāstivāda variety. Sarvāstivāda philosophy began in Greater Gandhāra, presumably during the second century BCE,[□] and appears to have remained confined to the Northwest for some centuries, with a strong branch in Kaśmīra. It produced there numerous texts, including the different *Vibhāṣās*, and the *Hṛdaya* treatises, culminating in the famous *Abhidharmakośa* and *Bhāṣya* of Vasubandhu and other works.[□] The awareness of the main features of this philosophy already in the *Sūyagaḍa*, one of the old texts of the Śvetāmbara canon, suggests that this influence took place at a relatively early date, presumably in north-western India. This, if true, would imply that Buddhism and Jainism exerted an influence on each other, in north-

³ See Bronkhorst, 2000.

[□] See Bronkhorst, 2002; 2004: §§ 8-9.

[□] See Willems, Dessein & Cox, 1998.

western India, during the final centuries preceding the Common Era and the first ones following it.

This is indeed likely. Even though there is little evidence of a Jaina presence in Greater Gandhāra during that period,⁶ Jainas were very much present in Mathurā from an early date onward.⁷ Indeed, it has been observed that “it is quite possible that the power of local traditions of the ancient holy site of Mathura themselves [sic] influenced and even shaped the development of Jain religiosity”.⁸ Mathurā and Gandhāra became the two main centres of the Indian empire of the Kuṣāṇas during the first centuries of the Common Era. Given that there were also many Buddhists in Mathurā, there can be no doubt that the new Sarvāstivāda philosophy was known there.⁹ It seems a safe bet to conclude that it was in Mathurā that the Jainas were confronted with these new ideas and used them to elaborate their own philosophical thought.

This idea is attractive for another reason as well. Mathurā is famous for the big Jaina stūpa that has been discovered there.¹⁰ This discovery is at first sight surprising, for Jainism is not primarily associated with stūpa worship. However, there are various historical sources that mention stūpas in connection with Jainism.¹¹ There is a story in which the Buddhist king Kaniṣka venerates by mistake a Jaina stūpa.¹² And Gregory Schopen (1996: 568 f.) refers to a passage in the early Buddhist canon (*Dīgha et Majjhima Nikāya*) in which mention is made of a *thūpa* (Skt. *stūpa*) in connection with Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, the ‘founder’ (or better, most recent Jina) of Jainism. Peter Flügel (2008; 2010) has recently

⁶ Gail (1994) draws attention to the presence of an Ardhaphālaka Jaina monk on a relief from Gandhāra.

⁷ Dundas (2006: 405-406) mentions “the lack of any obvious early Jain presence in the Gandhāra region equivalent to that of Buddhism”, and points out in a footnote (no. 47) that the *cheda sūtras* set Mathurā as the north-westerly limit for Śvetāmbara ascetic travel.

⁸ Cort, 2010: 32, with a reference to Kendall Folkert.

⁹ Damsteegt (1989: 299) is of the opinion “that the vocabulary of Buddhist inscriptions found at Mathurā shows a link with the North-West”. Furthermore, “[i]n Jaina inscriptions from Mathurā one or two phrases can be pointed out which indicate a connection with the North-Western Buddhists or with Buddhists of Mathurā” (ibid.).

¹⁰ Smith, 1900.

¹¹ See Cort, 2010: 29 f.; 126 f.

¹² Lévi, 1896: 457-463, 477. Mistaken identity between Buddhists and others is a recurring theme during this period; see Schopen, 2007: 68 ff.

pointed out that relic-worship is not absent in modern Jainism, but clearly it does not play a central role. It seems as if there has been a discontinuity in the history of Jainism: before the break, stūpa worship was part of regular worship, after the break, it was played down or suppressed altogether.

Certain texts of the Śvetāmbara canon explain why the bodily remains of *tīrthaṅkaras* are not worshipped. They are not worshipped because they *cannot* be worshipped; they cannot be worshipped because they were taken away by the gods.[□] We learn this from a passage in the *Jambuddīvapannatti*, a text contained in the Śvetāmbara canon, and an analysis of the passage concerned brings to light that the crucial paragraphs were added to a story that did not know about this divine intervention. In other words: the story of the removal of the bodily remains of the *tīrthaṅkaras* is a later addition to a text that itself is not particularly old. Some editors saw fit to pull away the rug from underneath all forms of relic worship related to the *tīrthaṅkaras*.[□]

This observation gains significance in light of the fact that the Buddhists appear to have done something similar yet different with regard to the bodily remains of the Buddha. Remember that the main surviving story as to the death of the Buddha is the point of departure of the relic worship that has characterized Buddhism in all of its forms through the ages: the remains of the incinerated body of the Buddha were distributed among a number of followers, each of whom did the necessary to pay homage to their shares. A sequel to the story recounts that Emperor Aśoka divided these remains further, so that there are in the end countless relics of the Buddha that the faithful can worship. In other words, the story of the death of the Buddha supports relic worship.[□]

An analysis of the sources suggests that this story may be an invention that may not correspond to historical reality. Indeed, a variety of features of the story, as well as some texts that had not so far received the attention they deserve, suggest that the body of the Buddha may not have been incinerated and subsequently divided, but rather that this body was put, as it was, in one single stūpa.

¹³ In their stead icons were sometimes made to stand in for the relics; Cort, 2010: 126 f.

[□] Bronkhorst, 2011: Appendix to chapter 3.7.

[□] So Strong, 2007.

This is not the moment to present all the relevant evidence once again.[□] The point to be considered is that Buddhism, at a rather early point in its history, may have adjusted some of its “historical” documents so as to suit the wishes of followers to worship the bodily remains of the Buddha.

Let us now return to Mathurā under the Kuṣāṇas. Buddhism was at this time a religion in which the cult of relics played a central role. Jainism, too, had some place for the cult of relics, but not quite as much as Buddhism. Moreover, the presence of both Buddhist and Jaina stūpas was a source of confusion, perhaps even of conflict,[□] and we have already seen that there is a story according to which King Kaniṣka venerated by mistake a Jaina stūpa. In this situation the need may have been felt to distinguish Jainism from Buddhism. The most obvious and straightforward way to do so was to leave relic and stūpa worship to the Buddhists. One of the ways in which this could be accomplished was by providing additional information as to what happened to the bodily remains of *tīrthāṅkaras*: they did not remain on earth and could not therefore be worshipped. Somehow this project succeeded, with the result with which we are familiar: stūpa worship plays only a minor role in Jainism, which profoundly distinguishes itself in this respect from Buddhism.

At this point I will cite a sentence from John Cort's recent book *Framing the Jina* (2010: 127). He concludes a discussion with the following statement: “It may well be that the Jain stupa at Mathura is the sole remaining archaeological evidence of a wider practice of Jain relic worship that subsequently disappeared, for reasons that are equally unclear.” Our discussion so far has come to the same conclusion, with this difference that we can propose a tentative answer to the question as to why Jaina relic worship disappeared. To repeat it once more, this may have been due to the competition with Buddhism to which Jainism was exposed for a number of centuries in and around Mathurā, and to which Jainism

[□] Bronkhorst, 2009.

¹⁷ Quintanilla (2007: 252 n. 6) quotes the following passage from S. B. Deo: “The *Vyavahāra Bhāṣya* refers to a Jewelled *thūba* (*stūpa*) at Mathurā, due to which ill-feeling spread between the Jainas and the Buddhists, which ultimately resulted in the defeat of the Buddhists. People at Mathurā were said to be devoted to *Jina* images which they installed in their houses.”

responded by abandoning the cult of bodily relics and concentrating on other things.

If there was a discontinuity in the history of Jainism in Mathurā, we might hope that archaeological evidence could provide us with information that the surviving texts try to hide from us. One could argue that such evidence exists in the form of the so-called *āyāgapaṭas* (“large, intricately carved stone plaques”) found in fairly large numbers in Mathurā. One researcher, Sonya Rhie Quintanilla (2000: 91 n. 47; quoted in Dundas, 2006: 386), claims that “[t]he earliest known Jaina texts significantly postdate most of the *āyāgapaṭas* by at least several hundred years”, which can hardly be accepted in this form. But it seems likely that the surviving redaction of the Śvetāmbara canonical texts postdates these *āyāgapaṭas*, and we have seen that this surviving redaction may have adjusted matters here and there in accordance with newly felt needs. It is therefore very interesting and no doubt significant that some *āyāgapaṭas* from Mathurā depict stūpas as their main central element (Quintanilla, 2000: 105). May we assume that these *āyāgapaṭas* date back to a period when stūpas were still part of regular Jaina religious life?□

The idea of a discontinuity in the history of Jainism is attractive for another reason as well. The strict vegetarianism of Jaina monks is hard to reconcile with certain canonical passages that clearly speak about eating fish and meat. Suzoko Ohira (1994: 18-19) has tried to reconcile the two by proposing a break in the history of Jainism: “It is ... feasible to assume that the rigid vegetarianism of the present day Jainas commenced at ... a later time [than the time of composition of those canonical texts that speak of eating meat]” (p. 19). Ohira guesses that this break took place “most probably after the mass exodus of the Jainas from Mathurā to the South and West, where they were bound to impress the local people by their exemplary deeds”. If we consider that the abandonment of relic worship may have been inspired by similar motives, there is no a priori reason to exclude that both are two sides of the same break.

¹⁸ Quintanilla dates the *āyāgapaṭas* between the second century BCE and the third century CE.

Nor is there *a priori* reason to think that the break took place after the mass exodus of the Jainas from Mathurā. We know that in Mathurā itself a crisis situation forced the Jainas in subsequent years to reconstitute their textual tradition, and presumably also their other traditions.[□] The crisis and the subsequent events are described in Jinadāsa's *Nandī-cūrṇi*, a text that dates from 676 CE. The passage concerned reads, in Wiles's translation (2006: 70-71):

It is said, there was a time of profound and difficult famine for twelve years, because [the ascetics] were again and again ... lapsing [from the rules] for the sake of food, scriptural learning (*suta*) perished through the absence of understanding (*gahaṇa*), text-work (*guṇaṇā*), [and] *aṇuppeha* [?]. Then in the time of plentiful food in Mathurā there was a great meeting of ascetics with the faithful, headed by Ācārya Khandila, saying: 'Who remembers whatever [let him recount that for us].' Thus the *Kāliyasuta* [texts] were gathered. Because this was done in Mathurā it is said to be the Mathurā recension. And that approved by the Ācārya Khandila was done in his presence and is said to be the mode of explanation. ...

Others say: that scriptural learning (*suta*) was not destroyed, but in that very difficult famine the other main bearers of the mode of explanation perished. Only the teacher Khandila remained. In Mathurā the mode of explanation was again set forth for the ascetics, therefore it is called the Mathurā recension, the mode of explanation in his presence it is said.

This passage mentions no date, and Wiles points out that dates are not assigned to this event until many centuries later, and then only in tentative and qualified statements. In other words, we cannot derive much information from Jinadāsa's passage concerning the date of the great famine and the subsequent gathering of texts in Mathurā, except of course that these events must have taken place before 676 CE, the year in which the *Nandī-cūrṇi* was composed.[□]

However, this statement does make clear that there was a break in the tradition of Jainism in the area of Mathurā. It seems fair to assume that this break did not only concern the memorized scriptures, but Jainism in all its aspects, which had been calamitously shaken until its foundations. It makes sense to

¹⁹ See Balbir, 2009.

²⁰ Wiles (2006) traces in detail the way in which most modern scholars have come to dates in the fifth or sixth century for the council, without sufficient justification in the texts.

attribute the other discontinuities considered above to this same period, whatever may be its exact date.

The theory presented so far explains a number of otherwise obscure facts related to the Śvetāmbara canon. It explains not just why some of its texts are acquainted with Sarvāstivāda philosophy, but also why a number of them have themselves adopted positions from that philosophy; it explains why the word *pudgala* has acquired such an altogether unusual meaning in these texts, why Jainism has largely abandoned relic worship and how and why the story of the disappearance to heaven of the bodily remains of *tīrthaṅkaras* found its way into this canon. It may even explain why the Jainas abandoned meat eating. But it also raises new questions.

Modern scholars tend to agree that it was under the Kuṣāṇas that the Buddhists from north-western India adopted Sanskrit as the language of their scriptures.[□] New texts were henceforth written in Sanskrit, and many of the older texts were translated into Sanskrit.[□] This massive change from a Middle Indic language to Sanskrit has puzzled investigators, but it now seems clear that it was just one side of a larger process: the in-depth brahmanization of Buddhism in this region. Its newly composed texts do not just use Sanskrit, but offer a thoroughly brahmanized vision of the surroundings in which Buddhism arose and survived. We know now that Buddhism did not arise in brahmanized surroundings — Greater Magadha was not brahmanized territory[□] — but the Buddhists who had

²¹ Not only the Buddhists. Apart from some few minor exceptions, “the earliest Sanskrit inscriptions are found in Mathurā, which has yielded several records of the first and second centuries A.D., that is, the time of the Śaka Kṣatrapas and the early Kuṣāṇas, which are written in Sanskrit or a dialect very closely approaching it.” (Salomon, 1998: 87). See further Salomon, 1998: 88: “The Sanskrit inscriptions from the earliest phase at Mathurā ... are mostly Brahmanical in affiliation. ... Moving on to the period of the Great Kuṣāṇas (i.e., Kaniṣka and his successors ...), we now find more Mathurā inscriptions in reasonably standard Sanskrit, including for the first time some of Buddhist content.”

[□] It is possible that the general revision of all buddhist texts and the composition of new commentaries that supposedly took place under Kaniṣka played a crucial role in this process; see Lamotte, 1958: 648. It is however not certain that the association of Kaniṣka with this “synod of Kaśmīra” is historically reliable; Willems, Dessein & Cox, 1998: 116 ff.

[□] Bronkhorst, 2007.

adopted Sanskrit thought differently.[□] They obviously lived and worked in surroundings that were brahmanized in the sense that Brahmins had come to play central roles at and around the royal court. All others who depended upon royal support had to be able to plead their cause in Sanskrit. The Buddhists of north-western India had realized that, and had therefore wholesale shifted to Sanskrit.

What about the Jainas of Mathurā? Dundas (1996: 147) has suggested “that the well documented Jain connection from around the second century BCE with the north-western city of Mathurā which was located in the region of Āryāvarta, the heartland of traditional brahman users of Sanskrit, may have effected some kind of gradual shift in Jain linguistic usage ..., which subsequently percolated into more outlying areas of Jain activity in the west and south”. According to this position, which its author calls “difficult to prove”, the adoption of Sanskrit by Jaina authors began in or around Mathurā during the centuries surrounding the beginning of the Common Era.

This position is confronted with difficulties. To all appearances, the partial adoption of Sanskrit by Jainas took place much later, many centuries after the time of the Kuṣāṇas.[□] The one exception appears to be the *Tattvārtha Sūtra*. R. Williams (1963: 2) has shown that this text is much closer to the Digambara *śrāvakācāras* than to the Śvetāmbara *śrāvakācāras*. An analysis of its doctrinal content, moreover, suggests that its author was a Yāpanīya.[□] It is true that Padmanabh S. Jaini (1995) does not exclude that certain Kuṣāṇa sculptures from Mathurā depict Yāpanīya monks, Jaini is also definite about the Śvetāmbara, or rather proto-Śvetāmbara, affiliation of the Jainas of Mathurā (p. 311):[□] “The affiliation of what at a later time came to be designated as the Śvetāmbara sect with the region of Mathura is corroborated by the depiction on Mathura sculptures of their legend of the transfer of Mahāvīra’s embryo by Harinegamesi

[□] Bronkhorst, 2011: chapter 3.5.

²⁵ Note however that the fairly ornate structures of the *Aupapātika Sūtra* and the *Anuttaraupapātikadāsā Sūtra*, involving regular compounding and long rhythmic sentences, might, according to Dundas (2006: 388), “be compared from a stylistic point of view with the famous inscription of 150 CE of the satrap Rudradāman, whose Sanskrit prose is of a similar form and the apparent product of a nascent belles lettristic culture.”

[□] Bronkhorst, 1985.

²⁷ See Quintanilla, 2000: 105-106 n. 67; 2007: 250-252, for further information and references on these so-called Ardhaphālaka Jainas.

as well as inscriptional evidence of certain ecclesiastical groups (*gaṇa*, *gaccha*) traceable to the list of the Elders (*sthavirāvalī*) in the Śvetāmbara texts.” The combination of Yāpanīya and Digambara features allows us to surmise that the Tattvārtha Sūtra was composed in the South, presumably some time between 150 and 350 CE. In other words, this text may have been composed at the time of the Kuṣāṇas, but not in their realm. There is an early Śvetāmbara commentary on it, the *Tattvārthādhigama Bhāṣya*, composed in Pāṭaliputra, presumably before 450 CE; Pāṭaliputra, too, is far from Mathurā. Then there is the *Sarvārthasiddhi*, a commentary by Devanandin, apparently composed soon after the beginning of Skanda Gupta's reign, i.e. not long after 455 CE.[□] Apart from these, there may not many surviving Jaina Sanskrit texts from before 500 CE. Judging by this evidence thus interpreted, Mathurā plays no role in the introduction of Sanskrit into Jainism.

We have seen that the authors and editors of the Śvetāmbara canon were aware of philosophical developments outside the Jaina community and even adopted some of them without adopting Sanskrit. To this observation a further one can be added. The *Viyāhapannatti* of the Śvetāmbara canon contains an early expression — in the story of Jamāli — of the position that came to be known by the name *anekāntavāda*. This position constitutes a solution to what Matilal has called “the paradox of causality”: how can a pot be produced if there is no pot to begin with? There is no time at present to enter into the details of this paradox,[□] and of the solution offered by the Jainas.[□] It is however important to be aware that this paradox occupied the minds of all Indian philosophers — Buddhist, brahmanical and Jaina — roughly from the time of Nāgārjuna on.[□] The fact that the Śvetāmbara canon presents a solution to this problem (disguised in the story of Jamāli) shows, once again, that its authors interacted with other non-Jaina thinkers. It shows however more. It shows that these Jaina thinkers were ready to participate in the debate, propose a solution, without joining the other participants in choosing Sanskrit as vehicle of communication. Clearly, the Jainas were

[□]Bronkhorst, 1985.

[□]See Bronkhorst, 1999.

[□]See Bronkhorst, 2003.

[□]On the date of Nāgārjuna, see Walser, 2002.

influenced by texts that were composed in Sanskrit without themselves adopting this language.

How do we explain that the Jainas of Mathurā could resist the adoption of Sanskrit where the Buddhists could not? To my knowledge, the texts provide no answer to this question. It may however be useful to recall the reason why the Buddhists of that part of the subcontinent had turned to Sanskrit: they depended upon royal support and had to plead their cause at court. These Buddhists depended on royal support because Buddhism had by that time become a religion with sometimes big monasteries and stūpas to maintain. To cite a recent study by Gregory Schopen (2007: 61): “Even in the later [i.e., later than Aśoka] inscriptions from Bharhut and Sanchi there are no references to vihāras, and they begin to appear — though still rarely — only in Kharoṣṭhī records of a little before and a little after the Common Era, about the same time that the first indications of permanent monastic residential quarters begin to appear in the archaeological record for the Northwest, and this is not likely to be mere coincidence. ... Permanent quarters, to remain so, required upkeep and maintenance; such maintenance required donations beyond mere subsistence; such donations required the further maintenance of long-term relationships with donors.” Among these donors, we may add, we must count the royal court.

Jainism may have found itself in a different situation. We have already seen that the Jainas of Mathurā may no longer have supported the cult of stūpas. Within the Śvetāmbara community, moreover, there has been an ongoing debate for or against the temple-dwelling monks who were sedentary inhabitants of temples or of monasteries built beside temples.[□] In the course of this debate, it appears, neither side won, or won for long. The Śvetāmbara community may distinguish itself in this respect from the Buddhists of North India, where monastic life succeeded in imposing itself, almost to the exclusion of monks who preferred to live without regular residence. This does not mean that the Jainas of Mathurā did not need support. To cite Dundas (2002: 114-115): “[D]onative inscriptions ... show that by the turn of the common era Jainism was patronised at Mathurā by people such as traders, artisans, jewellers and indeed courtesans: in

[□]Dundas, 2002: 136 ff.

other words, the skilled and moneyed male and female middle classes from whom the lay community has usually, although not exclusively, been constituted. This bears clear witness to the fact that Jainism was not in its earliest period a purely ascetic religion and that the patterns of worship, devotion and practice which gradually emerged within it proved attractive to lay followers whose interaction with monks and nuns on a formal basis provided the means for the maintenance of the religion.”[□] It is yet tempting to think that the needs of these Jainas left them relatively independent of the royal court, allowing them to continue using Prakrit rather than Sanskrit.

This position appears to be supported by epigraphical evidence. Smita Sahgal observed in 1994: “[In North India, Jainism] not only ... existed in the period [from 200 BCE to 300 CE], it actually flourished. It failed to catch the attention of the historians because unlike [Brahmanism and Buddhism] *it did not receive state patronage* (at least in north India), and hence is not mentioned in those sources connected with royal life.” (p. 205-206; my emphasis, JB). Indeed, “none of the inscriptions found so far refer to donative land grants at this point of time. Unlike the Buddhists, the Jainas still did not acquire any land base. Jaina monks basically remained wanderers.” (p. 226).[□] Sahgal refers in this context to the *Vyavahārasūtra*, according to which “the Jaina monks should not cultivate links with king or people close to him and at the same time do nothing to incur his displeasure”.[□] Dundas (2002: 118) insists that “[t]he ancient texts which legislate for ascetic behaviour are adamant that it is improper for monks to take alms from a king”, and refers in this connection to Vaṭṭakera’s *Mūlācāra* and to Haribhadra on the *Āvaśyakaniryukti*. Dundas (2006) calls Jainism during its first eight centuries or so a “non-imperial religion”, and supports this with the

³³ There were Jaina temples and shrines in Mathurā “from perhaps as early as the second century BCE” (Cort, 2010: 30 f.).

[□] See further Sharma, 2001: 147: “There is no evidence that Jainism enjoyed the patronage of the Kuṣāṇa rulers. The credit for the popularity of Jainism at Mathurā during the Kuṣāṇa period goes to its splendid monastic organisation and the religious zeal and fervour of its adherents.” Further Chanchreek & Jain, 2005: 281: “There is nothing to show that Śaka or Kuṣāṇa kings themselves had any particular weakness for this religion.”

[□] Reference to S. B. Deo, *History of Jaina Monachism*, p. 234, not accessible to me.

observation that it seems to have been given only sporadic royal sponsorship (p. 385).[□]

Let us return to the *Tattvārtha Sūtra*. It was composed in Sanskrit, presumably in South India. It is not completely independent of the developments that affected the Śvetāmbara canon, for some of the Buddhist scholastic influence we identified in the Śvetāmbara canon has also affected the *Tattvārtha Sūtra*: the atomic nature of all that exists, including time and space, and the peculiar use of the term *pudgala*. The *anekāntavāda*, on the other hand, is not clearly present in the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* (even though commentators introduce it). All this suggests that the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* was composed before the Śvetāmbara canon had reached its present shape.

If we stick to the idea that the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* was composed in South India, we are entitled to speculate about the reason why Jainism presumably started using Sanskrit there rather than in the region near the brahmanical heartland. It suggests that the Jainas in southern India, and the Digambaras in particular, had a different relationship to the royal courts than the Jainas of Mathurā. To put it more precisely: presumably the southern Jainas were more dependent upon the royal courts than the Jainas of Mathurā. Interestingly, there are indeed indications that suggest that the southern Jainas were in the possession of more “property” than their coreligionists in the north. This property included caves[□] and monasteries accompanied by substantial land endowments.[□] Sources from the fifth century CE already accuse certain monks of having virtually abandoned mendicancy and taken to a settled mode of life, tilling the ground and selling the produce.[□] These developments led to the emergence of the *bhaṭṭāraka*,

³⁶ See further Dundas, 2006: 391: “[E]arly evidence of regular Jain patronage by royal houses, while not nonexistent, is sketchy. Revealingly, there are no depictions of *tīrtaṅkaras* on royal coinage, even that of the religiously highly pluralistic Kushanas, and no substantial evidence of royal land grants to the Jain community ... Early Jain images ... lack royal insignia, such as the parasol, which occur only at a later date ...”

[□]The inscriptions from Tamil Nadu recorded by Mahadevan (2003: 162), some of which date to a time well before the beginning of the Common Era, were for a large part associated with Jaina caves.

[□]Dundas, 2002: 123.

[□]Dundas, 2002: 122.

whom Dundas (2002: 123) calls “the pivotal figure in medieval Digambara Jainism”. If we assume that these conditions prevailed when the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* was composed, they may have been to at least some extent responsible for the use of Sanskrit in this text. The author of the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* and his southern coreligionists needed royal support, and needed to be ready to present the fundamental doctrines of their religion in the only language acceptable at the brahmanized courts: Sanskrit.

These reflections about the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* and the reasons behind its choice of language are speculative. But also the other observations that I have proposed raise a number of questions, most of which require further study. I have suggested that Śvetāmbara Jainism has been profoundly influenced during its formative period by Buddhism of the Sarvāstivāda variety, and much less by Brahmanism. Apparently it felt the need to distinguish itself from Buddhism, and the interruption of a stūpa cult may be an outcome of this. There was less competition with Brahmanism, because Śvetāmbara Jainism had much less to do with the royal court than Buddhism, and it was at the royal courts that Brahmanism had become successful at the time. Śvetāmbara Jainism had less to do with royal courts, because its monks and nuns lived, more than the Buddhists, the lives of mendicants and had no (or fewer) monasteries and caves to maintain. The situation in the south was different. For reasons that cannot be explored here, the southern Jainas had come into the possession of caves and monasteries. As a result they depended on handouts from above, and therefore on royal support. They had to be represented at the courts, so that they had to give in to using Sanskrit where the Śvetāmbaras had not felt this need.

I repeat that many of these claims can be questioned, and perhaps even proved wrong. But even if proved wrong, I hope that these discarded claims will then contribute to a fuller and better understanding of the history of Jainism.

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