FAME AND PHILOLOGY: R.C. CHILDERS AND THE BEGINNINGS OF PĀLI AND BUDDHIST STUDIES IN BRITAIN

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This article investigates some of the methods and motivations that underpinned the earliest scholarship in Pāli and Buddhist Studies in Britain, focusing in particular on the works of R.C. Childers (1838–1876) and his correspondence with T.W. Rhys Davids (1843–1922). I explore the variety of actors that helped inform, shape and publish R.C. Childers' scholarship, while also taking into account the reception of his work, its political significance, and its role as a commodity.

bhāgamattaṃ hi jānāsi, tava paññā parittakā,
uttamatthe ca sampatte sabbaññāṇam upehisi.
'An Essay in Pāli Translation: 1. Cor. xiii'
(Childers 1871a, 91)

On 8 June 1876, Mrs R.C. Childers sent a letter to Thomas William Rhys Davids: 'My husband has expressed a wish to see you.' Aged 38, Robert Caesar Childers, Professor of Pāli and Buddhist literature at University College, London, was seriously ill and had less than two months to live. His protégé, Rhys Davids, would soon replace him at University College and become the most influential scholar of Pāli Buddhism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, founding the Pali Text Society and assisting in the establishment of the School of Oriental Studies (later SOAS).[1]

While the career of Rhys Davids has somewhat overshadowed that of his predecessor, at his death R.C. Childers was recognised as one of Europe's preeminent Orientalists. On 29 July 1876 (861b), *The Examiner* lauded Childers' achievements in its obituary and declared his *Dictionary of the Pali Language* (2 vols: 1872, 1875) to be 'one of the great works of the century':

> In the death of Professor Childers, which took place on the 25th, the world of letters has suffered a severe loss. As one of the most distinguished Pali scholars of his time, he had gained an European reputation. His Pali Dictionary, the assiduous

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> labour at which cost him his life, was published only a few months ago. It is a moment of scholarly research and erudition, and will rank as one of the great works of the century. Professor Childers was a few years ago appointed Professor of Pali to London University College, and Assistant Librarian at the India Office.

Alongside his dictionary—to which I turn in greater detail below—Childers' most notable publications were an edition and translation of the *Khuddaka-pāṭha* (1869) and also an edition of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* (1874, 1876). A University College report (Notes and Materials for the History of the University College, London 1898, 33) on Pāli studies (possibly written by T.W. Rhys Davids) acknowledges that Childers' 'self-denying labours' were the 'foundation on which all our knowledge rests'. Echoing the myth of martyrdom that we find in his *Examiner* obituary the report also states that 'the severity of his work contributed in no small degree to his premature death'. I am reminded here of Margaret Cone's (1996, 3) lecture on 'Lexicography, Pali and Pali lexicography' in which she remarks: 'I do not say that lexicography is a dangerous pursuit—only that the project is often longer-lived than the writer.'

It is impossible to say whether Childers' dictionary truly contributed to his early death, though what is clear is that Childers' time in the Ceylon Civil Service—first as a writer and later as private secretary to the Governor, Sir Charles McCarthy (Childers 1875, 623)—was cut short in March 1864 due to bronchitis and that he spent much of the next decade battling ill health.

It is to this period of convalescence in Europe that I turn, for it was then that he took up the study of Pāli in earnest, ultimately establishing Pāli and Buddhist literature as a distinct discipline in the academy. In order to elucidate this pivotal period in the history of Buddhist Studies further, I have drawn information largely from his letters to T.W. Rhys Davids (RD T/20/1), who was then a young civil servant and budding Pāli scholar in Sri Lanka. This article, however, is not intended as a biography—that has still to be written—but explores the methods and motivations of R.C. Childers as expressed in these letters.

Pāli as a profession

Depictions of early Orientalists often oscillate between emphasising their role in colonial domination (Said 1979) or their earnest and often eccentric pursuit of knowledge (Irwin 2006). A letter from Childers (E260/4 1863),[2] then a civil servant in Sri Lanka, to his father reveals that his own 'Oriental studies' began out of a youthful lust for fame.

> My dear Papa,
>
> Your son may yet be known to notoriety as an author, yea as an Eastern scholar, think of that. As yet there is no Pali grammar published, although the want of such a thing is much felt by all Indian ~~Eastern~~ scholars. For several months I have

> been studying Pali which in Ceylon is written in the Singhalese character. I have got a number of paradigms of verbs, declensions etc. in fact the material of a grammar. I propose as soon as I have completed my collection of materials to write a philological grammar of the Pali language with an introductory essay on its connection with Sanskrit. I shall use the Devanagari or Sanskrit character, so that the book will be accessible to all Sanskrit scholars. If I succeed in bringing the book out I shall make a reputation. I shall show the manuscript to Max Müller when I go up to Oxford, get him to approve of it and then offer it to Parker, the great Oxford Publisher. All this is a secret till I go to England. James D'Alwis a native lawyer has written an introduction to a translation of part of a native grammar, but it will not much affect my specimens of grammar. He uses I believe the Singhalese character which is unknown in Europe. Congratulate me already on being famous. Were it not for a definite pursuit like this I should find it wretched work living in Ceylon.
>
> Believe me ever yours,
> RCC

That an 'Eastern scholar' might be 'known to notoriety' may surprise us now. However, in the middle of the nineteenth century great changes had occurred in the university system in Britain. Universities had transformed into secular institutions, academics had become professionals, for the first time there was funding for research as well as teaching, and there was a huge expansion in the number of subjects taught, particularly in the sciences (Engel 1983, 1–13). The new discipline of philology was one of these attractive, professional sciences and Max Müller, Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford, was its most celebrated exponent. His fame was such that he was included as a figure of jest in satirical magazines at the time. An article in *Punch* magazine (18 January 1873, 23a) stated that bankers were eager to know whether his publication of the Rig Veda will help them 'rig' the stock markets:

> Speculation and Sanskrit
>
> The new translation of an ancient work which PROFESSOR MAX MÜLLER is bringing out constitutes a theme of interest in commercial circles. Gentlemen on the Stock Exchange, especially, are anxious to know whether acquaintance with the *Rig Veda* hymns will help anybody rig the market.

With the dream of establishing a career as a philologist, Childers began to study Pāli in Sri Lanka, though his early endeavours were cut short due to illness and in a letter to Rhys Davids he states that it was not until around 1867, while back in Britain, that he firmly put his mind to Pāli studies:

> In the last six months before my departure I laid in a tolerable stock of Pāli, and about two years ago I again turned my attention to the subject and by dint of steady work have acquired a very fair proficiency in the language (3 June 1869).

In contrast to Rhys Davids, who had to pursue his interest as a hobby, Childers was at liberty to research Pāli and Buddhist literature full time while recuperating. In a letter dated 23 November 1869, Childers admits to Rhys Davids that 'the great advantage I have over other students of Pāli is that I can devote my whole time to my work, and I shall give up all my energies to my dictionary till it is completed'.[3]

One might imagine that Childers' sudden loss of employment due to illness meant that for him Pāli studies became a surrogate career, its potential for prestige compensating for the loss of status that came with leaving the Civil Service. In his letters to Rhys Davids, Childers refers to 'Pāliyists', 'Pāli scholars', 'Pāli scholarship', 'Pāli scholars like ourselves' and 'our science' as if the discipline stood alongside the other new professional sciences of the nineteenth century rather than languishing, as it did in actuality, as a tangential limb of Sanskrit studies. That this was the reality is confirmed by a concise summary of the history and state of Pāli studies given by Müller (1898, ix) in the preface to the second edition of his translation of the *Dhammapada* published in the *Sacred Books of the East* series:

> I cannot indeed pretend to have improved the present edition very much, for I have not had any time left during the last few years to continue my study of Pāli. Nor has Pāli ever been more than a *parergon* to me. I began it in 1845 during my stay at Paris with Burnouf, who was then almost the only scholar who could read Pāli texts, and I still have a letter of his in which he apologises for his imperfect knowledge of the language. At that time Pāli scholarship had not yet become a special and independent study, but it was a kind of annexe to Sanskrit. Men like Bopp and Burnouf were expected to teach not only Sanskrit and Comparative Philology, but at the same time, Zend, the Prākrit dialects, and, as one of them, Pāli. Clough's Pāli Grammar (Colombo, 1824 and 1832) and Turnour's Mahāvanso (1837) were all that we had to depend on. Some advance was made by Spiegel and Westergaard, but the real impulse to an independent scholarlike study of Pāli literature came from my friend Childers, the author of the first Pāli Dictionary, published in 1875. Before that time the only names to be mentioned in Pāli scholarship were those of James D'Alwis, Spence Hardy, Spiegel, E. Kuhn, Minayeff, Senart, Weber, and last, not least, Fausböll. After the publication of Childers' Dictionary, the progress of Pāli scholarship has been very rapid, and the number of Pāli texts and translations has increased very considerably.

It was perhaps a combination of Childers' departure from the Civil Service and his desire to find a niche in which he could gain renown that allowed him to shape Pāli studies as a distinct discipline, rather than as a 'parergon' of Sanskritists. Childers' enthusiasm for the discipline is palpable and he often refers to the glorious future that awaits Rhys Davids as a scholar: 'You have before you the prospect of making a great fame as a scholar . . . ' (29 July 1869). In a letter dated 7 August 1872, Childers also congratulates Rhys Davids on being hired by the

Department of Ceylon Archaeology, though he also expresses disappointment that he will not fulfil his destiny as a 'great Pāli scholar':

> ... there can be no question that the interests of our science will be greatly advanced by your present appointment, on which I congratulate you heartily. This should be your 'speciality' and I recommend you to throw yourself heart and soul into the work. You are already most favourably known as a Ceylon archaeologist, and I expect to see you some day quite eminent in that department of science, which you have every opportunity of making entirely your own. I had hoped to see you become a great Pāli scholar and editor of texts like Fausböll, but it is just as well you should have taken up the important department of Ceylon archaeology, and you will find it an excellent passport to fame, while your Pāli studies will prove the greatest use to you in your investigations.

The growing professionalism of scholarship ensured that there were many such 'passports to fame' in Victorian Britain and in the 1870s philology was as good a ticket as any. Victorian society was awakening to the fact that fame was the logical outcome of being a successful professional. Writing in 1871, the artist and art critic Philip Hamerton (1871, 281) wrote of the desire for fame that

> so far from being peculiar to the artistic class, [it] is common to all men in their several spheres, each desiring that degree and order of renown which is suitable to his position, and necessary to his forceful and effectual life therein.

In the end, Childers did establish himself as an 'Eastern' scholar and obtained the reputation he desired. His great efforts led to the foundation of a professorship in Pāli and Buddhist literature at University College, London, and he was appointed to this role in 1873. The proceedings of the Annual General Meeting of the members of University College on 7 March 1874 (74) record this event as follows:

> On recommendation of the Senate, the Council have established a Professorship of the Pali language, the sacred language of Buddhism, the literature of which has attracted the attention of scholars interested in Oriental questions. At the same time the Council appointed to be occupant of the new Chair, Mr. R.C. Childers, a gentleman acknowledged to hold a foremost place among Pali scholars, and the author of the only existing English and Pali dictionary.

Scholarly foundations

R.C. Childers' name lives on in Pāli studies largely due to his dictionary and it is a common misconception that he had scarcely any resources or help for the task. Childers himself propagated this view in a section of the second edition of his dictionary entitled 'My Critics' when defending himself against criticisms from Albrecht Weber (1825–1901): 'Dr. Weber has made no allowance for the exceptional difficulties I have had to deal with, as the total absence of previous dictionaries, or even the merest vocabulary, to guide me, and the incredible

blunders with which almost all the texts I had to incorporate abounded' (Childers 1875, 634). The popular press also picked up on this aspect of his achievement in their reviews; the *Athenaeum*, for instance, wrote in a review (21 August 1875) that, 'His is the *first* dictionary of the Palī [sic.] language. He has not had a stone of another scholar's foundation to build upon—not even the merest vocabulary' (cited in Guruge 1984, lxxxvi).

While it is true that he did not have a Pāli dictionary based on European conventions, he did have access to the large body of Sanskrit lexicographical material available at the time. Childers relied upon the various Sanskrit dictionaries that had been published in nineteenth-century Europe, though he admits (1 November 1869) that he had never used Böhtlingk and Roth's *Sanskrit Dictionary* (1855)—the most comprehensive dictionary of its day—preferring instead Theodore Benfey's (1866) *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*:

> I have never used Boehtlingk & Roth. I had Wilson, but found it so cumbrous that I parted with it, and I find Benfey delightfully pleasant to use, and really it seems to contain everything there is in Wilson. Monier Williams has a very important dic. nearly ready for the press which will be more useful to Pāli scholars like ourselves than any other.

In addition to these Sanskrit dictionaries, Childers also had access to a traditional twelfth-century Pāli lexicon, the *Abhidhānappadīpikā*. This lexicon had been known of for a long time and was incorporated into Rev. Benjamin Clough's (1792–1853) *A Compendious Pali Grammar with a Copious Vocabulary in the Same Language*, published by the Wesleyan Mission Press in 1824. In his introduction, Clough (1824, iv) indicates that his work is largely a translation of the *Bālāvatāra*, a fourteenth-century pedagogical Pāli grammar; the *Abhidhānappadīpikā*; and the *Dhātumañjusā*, a list of Pāli verbal roots in the *Kaccāyana* grammatical tradition. Childers utilised an edition of the *Abhidhānappadīpikā* that had been published in 1865 by the scholar monk Vaskaḍuvē Subhūti (1835–1917), a pupil of Iṅduruvē Sumaṅgala (Malalagoda 1976, 182, n. 30). Although Childers cites the *Abhidhānappadīpikā* in many of his entries and mentions the work briefly in his introduction to his dictionary (Childers 1875, xi), it is Rhys Davids (1907, 49) in *Buddhism*: *Its History and Literature* who reveals how dependent he actually was on this lexicon:

> Soon after his retirement in 1866 he set to work to arrange alphabetically all the words found in the *Abhidhāna Padīpikā*, a vocabulary of Pāli in 1203 verses, then already edited by Subhūti Unnānsē, a well known Ceylon scholar. In making this re-arrangement Childers carefully added references to, and also other words taken from, the published texts, and from scholarly European books on the subject of Buddhism.

In *From the Living Foundations of Buddhism* Ananda Guruge (1984) researched Childers' correspondence with Vaskaḍuvē Subhūti, revealing his vast

debt to the scholar monk. His letters abound with questions about Pāli words and, such was his reliance on Subhūti and his contemporaries, it may be reasonable to consider his dictionary as a collaborative effort rather than the product of a single genius. Subhūti also appears to have rebuked him for not giving him enough credit in the first edition of his dictionary since, in a letter to the monk, Childers promises to make amends in the second edition (Guruge 1984, 17).

Alongside utilising the *Abhidhānappadīpikā*, Childers also made use of traditional Pāli grammars, specifically the *Kaccāyana-vyākaraṇa*, in his Pāli studies. In a letter dated 29 July 1869 he wrote to Rhys Davids recommending that he take up the study of *Kaccāyana*: 'I advise you to study Kaccāyana's grammar without delay, it contains numerous explanations of difficult forms. The chapters I have learned are Sandhi, Nāma, Akkhyāta and Kāraka. I am now going to attack "Kit".'

Throughout his letters to Rhys Davids, Childers refers to the help he receives from his correspondence with Vaskaḍuvē Subhūti and another scholar monk Yātrāmullē Dharmārāma (1828–1872), a pupil of Bentara Atthadassī (Malalagoda 1976, 182, n. 30). On 1 November 1868, he recommends that Rhys Davids study for a month with Yātrāmullē Dharmārāma, whom he describes as a 'most accurate and conscientious scholar', though he also encouraged the young civil servant 'to let pundits alone and get up thoroughly such works as Turnour's Mahāvaṃsa, Fausböll's Jātakas, Fausböll's Dhammapada, and so on'. In the next line, though, he states that: 'After a certain time pundits become very useful, and I now get most valuable letters from Yātrāmullē from time to time in answer to questions of mine.'[4] As a civil servant in Sri Lanka, however, Childers found it difficult to study with local Pāli teachers and mentions (1 November 1869) Pandit Baṭuvantuḍāvē, a close friend of Hikkaḍuvē Sumaṅgala (Blackburn 2010, 12, n. 23), as an 'excellent scholar' but that he 'learnt very little from him'. In a later letter (19 October 1871), however, Childers refers to a certain Cornelius Alwis[5] as his teacher in Sri Lanka and states that he 'was my pundit in Ceylon, and I owe a good deal of my oriental knowledge to him'.

Childers made most of his initial progress in learning Pāli by utilising some of the early European editions and translations. On 3 June 1869 he asked Rhys Davids, 'Have you got Fausböll's Dhammapada?', and continues, 'if not I hope you will accept a copy from me. If you have as yet made but little progress in Pāli I cannot give you better advice than to study Fausböll's Dhammapada till you have mastered every word'. In the introduction to his dictionary he even declares his pride at calling himself a 'pupil' of Viggo Fausbøll (1821–1908) (Childers 1875, xvii). Childers' debt to other European scholars in the creation of his dictionary has yet to be fully explored but from his letters it is clear that he was writing frequently to scholars such as Fausbøll asking them about particular Pāli words. Even to Rhys Davids, who was but newly initiated into the world of Pāli studies, Childers asks countless lexicographical questions and philological discussions fill much of their letters.

Methodological presuppositions

Childers' letters also reveal much information about his methodological presuppositions and his approach to Pāli and Buddhist Studies. In an influential article, 'Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravāda Buddhism', Charles Hallisey (1995) explores early approaches to the study of Buddhism and highlights that T.W. Rhys Davids had a philological and historicist approach with a positivist concern for origins. Both of these central approaches can be found latent in Childers' writings. The positivist historicism in Childers' work is exemplified in the preface to the second edition of his *Dictionary of the Pali Language* (Childers 1875, xi–xii), where he claims for Pāli the status of being the only true scriptural language of Buddhism:

> The Pāli or southern version of the Buddhist Scriptures is the only genuine and original one ... Our increasing familiarity with Southern Buddhism is rapidly rendering universal the belief that the North Buddhist sacred books, made several centuries after Gautama's time, are partly late outgrowths of Buddhism exhibiting that religion in an extraordinary state of corruption and travesty.

This concern for origins also pervades his philological work and in his 'Notes on Dhammapada', for instance, Childers (1871b, 227) analyses the work and its Sanskrit parallels and concludes that Sanskrit Buddhist texts are often an erroneous translation of the Pāli. While his methods were modern and European, Childers (1875, vii) makes it explicit in the preface to his dictionary that these discoveries merely 'confirm the Buddhist traditions, which assign to the Canon a venerable antiquity'. Despite positioning himself as a philologist, however, it is also interesting to note that Childers felt uneasy about his own philological skills. In a letter dated 23 November 1869 he confesses: 'I am indisposed to endorse your statement that there are Dravidian words in Pāli. I am not as strong on Pāli philology as I could wish.' On 8 September 1873 Childers also warns Rhys Davids: 'Be very careful what you say about these etymologies less you expose yourself to the ridicule of German philologists.'

With respect to the philological and historical bias among early Orientalists, Charles Hallisey (1995) has contended that these two dominant approaches were not simply a Victorian preoccupation but that these methods had an 'elective affinity' with Buddhist concerns for historical origins and Pāli philology in nineteenth-century Sri Lanka. Such an elective affinity is also evident in Childers' interaction with the Sri Lankan monastic community. Peppered throughout his 'Notes on Dhammapada' are references to his private communication with Vaskaḍuvē Subhūti and Yātrāmullē Dharmārāma. In a letter to Rhys Davids on the 8 December 1870, Childers states with respect to Dharmārāma that 'he is one of the most excellent men that ever lived, and I have no friend whom I value more'. That Dharmārāma also held Childers in high esteem is best illustrated by a poem, the *Cilḍars Aṣṭakaya*, which he wrote in honour of Childers in Pāli, Sanskrit and Sinhala (Guruge 1984, liii–lv).

Both Vaskaḍuvē Subhūti and Yātrāmullē Dharmārāma represented part of a small scholarly contingent in the Laṅkan *saṅgha* who were deeply involved in debates with Christian missionaries, and who were concerned with the protection and preservation of Laṅkan Buddhism. These monks placed emphasis on the study and critical evaluation of the Pāli Canon in order to affirm its integrity, antiquity, and religious authority. Childers was clearly influenced by the textual approach of these monks. For instance, in a letter to Subhūti (Guruge 1984, 10), he enquires about a 'society which had decided to edit and publish the Tipiṭaka'. This 'society' was the *Pelmadulla saṅgīti*, a council of monks including Dharmārāma and Subhūti who met in 1867 to produce authoritative editions of Pāli texts (Blackburn 2010, 7–18).

Childers saw himself as a sympathiser with this movement and in another letter to Subhūti (Guruge 1984, 15) he warns him of a contemporary Russian Orientalist, Ivan Minayev:

> He is a friend of mine—but not a very close friend. He is a fool who knows nothing. Do not present books to him. Sell them instead. He has a grant, I think, from the Russian Government to buy books. He makes such foolish statements (*mōḍakathā*) that Tripiṭaka and other similar works are not ancient. He is not friendly to Buddhism (*Buddhāgamaṭa mituru nā*).

In the preface to his dictionary, Childers derides the Western academics who challenge the age of the Pāli canon. With respect to the traditional view that the *tipiṭaka* records the dialogues of the Buddha, Childers (1875, ix) states:

> These high pretensions have drawn down, as was inevitable, the ridicule of many Western scholars, more than one of whom held the Buddhist sacred books to be late compilations, scarcely even reflecting the teaching of Gautama.

In particular he singles out the Russian Orientalist, V.P. Vasilev (1818–1900), and quotes him (Childers 1875, ix, n.2) in the German translation of his work, *Der Buddhismus* (1860), as stating that 'There can, it would seem, be no doubt that Çākyamuni actually existed, but what his actions were, and wherein his teaching consisted, these are questions in dealing with which we cannot rely upon the assertions of Buddhists', and that 'The Buddha appears less a person than as a term or dogma'.

While we might agree with Hallisey that there was an elective affinity between British Orientalists and certain sections of the Sri Lankan *saṅgha*, Childers' philology cannot be considered an equivalent practice to that of the Sri Lankan monastic literati. Set within its colonial framework, Oriental philology, to quote Edward Said (1979, 132), 'embodies a peculiar condition of being modern and European, since neither of these two categories has true meaning without being related to an earlier alien culture and time'. The truths of this science represented the European modernity of its wielders and the traditions that came under its scrutiny were repackaged and reordered in relation to it. In Childers'

(1875, xiii) preface, for instance, he consoles his Buddhist audience about the fact that comparative philology disproves their belief that Pāli is the 'primeval language':

> If the proud boast that the Magadhese is the one primeval language fades in the light of comparative philology, Buddhists may console themselves with the thought that the teaching of Gotama confers upon it a greater lustre than it can derive from any fancied antiquity.

The political ideology attached to the publication of Childers' dictionary can also be seen from how this work was received by some sections of the British media. In its review of his dictionary *The Times* (2 December 1875, 4e) declared that:

> It is to the highest degree creditable to himself and an honour to the scholarship of England. But its highest praise, after all, is that through the light which it throws on the inmost thoughts and imaginations of the native mind of India, it cannot but serve to quicken the intelligent sympathy of Englishmen with the subject millions of that colossal empire whose name still conveys to most of us but the vague idea of a distant and barbaric splendour.

Even those Sri Lankan scholars who were not averse to European philology were often excluded from participating in this form of colonial enquiry since European Orientalists presented their results according to a common set of international standards, which ultimately removed what was distinctly Sri Lankan from the knowledge they produced. When writing to Rhys Davids, for instance, Childers (31 August 1872) advises him

> to put Classical Buddhist names in their Pāli or Sanskrit forms, and write Mahinda or Mahendra and not as you have done Mahindu. Remember you are writing for a great Indian and great European public, to whom Sinhalese forms are unknown and unintelligible.

There was a strong movement too for Pāli to be written in Roman script in order to produce a system of transcription that could be read by all Western academics. Writing on 7 July 1870, for instance, Childers was quite insistent on the fact that Pāli should be published in Roman script (or 'European characters'):

> Let me advise you to adopt Fausböll's system of transcription. Several attempts have been made to improve on it but with lamentable want of success. Minayeff's in particular being a most miserable failure. As by common consent Pāli is to be printed in European characters in future, it is of the utmost importance that there should be a uniform system of transcription.

In an earlier letter Childers is a little more lenient on the issue of transliteration, though still encourages Rhys Davids to use Roman rather than Sinhala script. On 1 November 1869, for instance, Childers states:

> I am delighted to hear you are soon going to print. Do you think of publishing the text of the Dīgha Nikāya only? It would be of the utmost value to use, but I should think you would do better to publish in England with the text in Roman characters and a translation. At the same time I quite see the vast boon that the text alone in Singhalese characters would be to natives, and I dare say the sale would be quite as great as if the text in Roman characters and a translation were printed. What we European students sigh for are printed texts, manuscripts are very difficult to get and very wearisome to read. If during your residence in Ceylon you could manage to print in the Singhalese characters say a third of the Tripitaka you would confer upon us an incalculable boon on us all, and win the foremost place in the roll of Pāli scholars.

Even in the letter to his father (E260/4 1863) that I quoted at the beginning of this article, Childers openly admits that the use of Sinhala script by his local competitors was to their disadvantage:

> James D'Alwis a native lawyer has written an introduction to a translation of part of a native grammar, but it will not much affect my specimens of grammar. He uses I believe the Singhalese character which is unknown in Europe. Congratulate me already on being famous.

Dictionary diplomacy

The often unequal exchange of philological knowledge between monks and Orientalists during this period is best encapsulated by two meetings Subhūti had with the British royal family. The first occurred in 1870 when Subhūti met the Duke of Edinburgh who was in Sri Lanka on an imperial tour. Subhūti was part of the delegation of monks who welcomed the Duke to Sri Lanka and presented him with a copy of his recently published Pāli lexicon, the *Abhidhānappadīpikā*. In addition, a special Pāli verse was composed for the occasion. Childers was particularly interested in this meeting and on 8 June 1870 enquired about it with Rhys Davids: 'May I ask you to send me as quickly as possible a copy of the Pāli address presented to the Duke of Edinburgh by the natives of the Southern Province.'

I was fortunate enough to find T.W. Rhys Davids' own copy of Subhūti's 1865 edition of the *Abhidhānappadīpikā* (classmark: SIN491.373 ABH) at Peradeniya University Library, in which he has signed the inner cover and dated it 'Matale, 6.1868'. Rhys Davids was only 25 at the time and this work is possibly his first contact with Pāli while a writer in the Civil Service. Rhys Davids appears to have found the meeting in which Subhūti offered the Duke of Edinburgh a copy of the *Abhidhānappadīpikā* significant since a newspaper article describing the event, with a translation of the Pāli verses composed for the visit, was pasted on the inner cover:

> The Budhist [sic] Priests of the Western Province

> Among the many expressions of loyalty which the visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh to Ceylon has called forth, one may be particularly mentioned from its, perhaps, unique speciality. The Budhist [sic] priests of the Maritime Provinces assembled in numbers to see His Royal Highness land at Colombo; a large body of them also attended the levee at Queen's House. But Waskaduwae Subhiti Terunnanse [sic], presented to His Royal Highness, on his return to Colombo last evening, a copy of the *Abhidhànappadipìka* [sic], a Pali Dictionary he has recently edited and published, together with a magnificent Burmese Ola, on which was written the prayers used at the ordination of the priets [sic] in the Upasampada degree. The characters were in black on a vermilion ground, gorgeously emblazoned with gold and emblematic figures, conspicuous amongst which was the sacred Hanza—the national emblem of the Burmese. The books were accompanied with a short address in the shape of a Pali Stanza, of which the following is a pretty close translation:—
>
> Long live Edina's Royal Duke, who from the Eastern hill
> Of England, like the full moon comes, fair Lanka's sky to fill.
> With rays resplendent, that beneath the rays of regal grace
> May bloom, as bloom the lilies white, the whole Sihali race.
>
> His Royal Highness was graciously pleased to acknowledge the present in the following terms by the hand of his Equerry, Captain Haig:—
>
> Sir, I am desired by the Duke of Edinburgh to express to you his thanks for the two volumes you have presented to him: one volume being a Sacred Buddhistical book, the other a Dictionary of the Pali Language. His Royal Highness is pleased to accept these works in the same spirit in which you offer them, as tokens of the loyal respect you entertain for the Queen and her family.

Subhūti's relations with the British government can perhaps be understood in the context of debates within the *saṅgha* concerning the patronage of Buddhism. Blackburn (2010, 143–144) has shown that the *saṅgha* viewed a lack of royal patronage for Buddhism as a threat to the security of the religion and its culture. This anxiety had arisen due to the fact that the British government had largely reneged on the 1815 Kandyan Convention, in which they had agreed to maintain the Buddhist religion as it had been done by the kings of Kandy. The increasing influence of Christian missionaries and their supporters in Britain, such as Lord Stanley and Earl Grey, had forced the colonial government in Sri Lanka in the 1840s and early 1850s to sever all ties and associations with the Buddhist *saṅgha*. The subsequent Governors of Ceylon had to devise a system in which the *saṅgha* could regulate itself, even though the *saṅgha* objected to this (De Silva 1981, 267–268). P.E. Wodehouse, when giving evidence to a Select Committee on this issue, stated, with respect to the severance of relations between the British government and the *saṅgha*, that 'the priests always took up the position of saying, "the Queen is the

head of our religion, and that we wish it to be; that is what you promised, and what you are bound to do"' (Report of the Select Committee on Ceylon 1850, 253).

While part of the monastic community still had hope that the British government would support Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Blackburn (2010, 143–196) has shown that during this period some monks, such as Hikkaḍuvē Sumaṅgala, actively sought patronage from other Buddhist monarchs, in particular the king of Thailand. Subhūti's attempts to strengthen relations with the British government can perhaps be seen in terms of his continued desire for the British government to patronise Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

In 1876 another royal visit to Sri Lanka, this time by the Prince of Wales, led to another lexicographical gift. This time the British delegation came with five copies of Childers' recently published dictionary and gave them to monastic dignitaries, including Subhūti. Childers wrote to Subhūti at the time to ask if the dictionary had been presented to him by the Prince of Wales (Guruge 1984, 34). However, it appears that the presentation of the dictionaries caused tension within the monastic *saṅgha* and a letter from Childers to Subhūti mentions the bickering that took place between the monks because of this (Ibid.). Having received the dictionary, some monks, such as Hikkaḍuvē Sumaṅgala, also criticised the work and Childers wrote to Subhūti saying:

> I know very well that my Dictionary is full of errors. I will be very happy if you or the other scholars would point them out to me. Now I am working on the second edition. In it the errors found in the first edition will be corrected. (Guruge 1984, 35)

The British media hardly reported the negative reviews that were coming out of Sri Lanka and instead focused on the fact that it was enthusiastically taken up by the monks there. For instance, in 'Buddhist Manuscripts in Ceylon', an article reporting on a survey of Sri Lankan manuscripts conducted by Louis de Soyza, the *Pall Mall Gazette* wrote on 12 November 1875 (9b):

> At the Ridi Vihara or 'Silver Abbey' the manuscripts, some of which were of extraordinary beauty, were preserved in a large box curiously painted and set with precious stones, and from the depths of this box the monks produced 'with some pride' a copy of the first volume of Professor Childers's 'Pali Dictionary'!

Within this narrative, we can see the delight felt at the fact that Childers' dictionary was stored side by side with the monastery's valuable manuscripts. Quite literally, R.C. Childers' dictionary had entered, if not displaced, traditional learning.[6] When the criticisms of the monks in Sri Lanka were noted by the press, the monks were derided as being ungrateful. This was the attitude of an article in the *Bury and Norwich Post* ('Posthumous Honours' 7 November 1876, 3), which recorded that the Volney gold medal had been awarded to Childers for his dictionary:

> The telegraphic despatch from Paris, in the *Times* of Saturday, records how to Professor Childers was adjudged the Volney gold medal for his Dictionary of the

> Pāli language—highly praised by every review, except of course (for a prophet is no prophet in his own country), in Ceylon, that has for centuries lacked a good Pāli lexicon, and now grumbles at having received it! At Paris on Thursday, five Academies united in rightly and justly paying the Volney tribute to Professor Childers.

This period of dictionary diplomacy between the British government and the Sri Lankan *saṅgha* can hardly be called a success. Childers played down, or at least did not emphasise, the pivotal role of traditional scholarship in the inception of his dictionary and he also did not give sufficient recognition to the help he had received from Sri Lankan monks, choosing instead in 'My Critics' to portray himself as a lone pioneer. Nor did Subhūti obtain the state patronage of Buddhism in Sri Lanka that he had been working so hard for. The criticisms from some members of the *saṅgha* of the dictionary and the vitriolic attitude of the British media certainly did not help. Within this curious exchange of dictionaries it is easy to see, albeit in a very nascent form, why the early 'elective affinity' between European and traditional Sri Lankan philology was so short-lived.

Philological rigour or rancour?

The letters between Childers and Rhys Davids reveal that he was in correspondence with a wide network of Pāli scholars and enthusiasts. Childers' closest acquaintance and a name he raises in almost every letter is that of Dr Reinhold Rost (1822–1896), a German Orientalist who held the position of librarian for the India Office, to which he was appointed in July 1869, and to whom Childers dedicated his *Dictionary of the Pali Language*. Favourable mention is also often made of Hans Julius Eggeling (1842–1918) who was appointed Professor of Sanskrit at the University College, London, before moving to the University of Edinburgh in 1875. With the addition of Max Müller, Professor of Comparative Philology at the University of Oxford, this triumvirate of Orientalists formed the basis of Childers' close associations.

In his letters, however, Childers reveals the intense competition and sometimes utter contempt that he felt for his other peers. As mentioned above, in Sri Lanka Childers had developed some incredibly close friendships with the monastic community, though he had also acquired a few enemies and said as much to Rhys Davids in a letter dated 19 October 1871: 'I have at least as many friends in Ceylon as I have enemies.' His strong ties with Sri Lanka are best illustrated by the fact that he responded to Rhys Davids' gift of a fourteenth-century Pāli grammar edited and published in Sri Lanka by stating (5 March 1870) that 'I have also to thank you for a copy of Bālāvatāra. I have received altogether five copies from five different friends . . . '. However, among the Pāli scholars at the time none was more loathed by Childers than James D'Alwis. He especially disliked the fact that D'Alwis' writings on Pāli and Buddhism were patronised by the Ceylon Government:

> Luis de Soysa told me about the provided government library of Pāli books, and I wish it were to be carried out by a more competent man than James Alwis, who is a regular bungler, and ludicrously ignorant of Pāli. (5 March 1870)

Again, on 1 November 1869 Childers writes: 'I am quite disgusted with their giving the cataloguing of Buddhist M.S.S to that imposter James D'Alwis'. And again on 16 May 1871: 'I fear the Ceylon Government are resolved to do nothing for literature and archaeology except print James Alwis' worthless books, and it is really no use making applications to them.' Childers' vehement attacks on D'Alwis as a second-rate Pāli scholar are, it seems to me, unfounded and it is likely that he was envious of the support the government provided to a rival Sri Lankan scholar. However, he also indicates (31 August 1870) that D'Alwis may have fallen out with both Nicholas Trübner, Childers' publisher, and Reinhold Rost: 'Let me strongly advise you to give James Alwis no help, he will only treat you with ingratitude, he behaved abominably to Trübner and to Dr. Rost and is utterly unreliable.' Childers also appeared to fear D'Alwis' potential criticisms of his dictionary and told Rhys Davids (19 October 1871) that he had written to an intermediary, Cornelius Alwis, that

> I was lest at all afraid of James Alwis' opinion, and that if he published any prejudiced and unjust attack on my dictionary he would only make himself excessively ridiculous and do me no harm. Where his criticisms were just I should be glad to be set right.

Among the Western scholars with an interest in Pāli, Childers held a similar level of disregard for the Russian Orientalist Ivan Pavlovich Minayev (1840–1890), taking exception in particular to the fact that Minayev was publishing in Russian:

> I have ordered Williams & Norgate to send you Kuhn's Kāraka, and this and the essay by Müller in the volume I have sent you are the only articles on Pāli that have appeared of late. Minayeff a Russian has an edition of the Pātimokkha in the press and I will send you a copy when it comes out. He has been foolish enough to print it in the nāgarī characters with a Russian translation!! (25 August 1869)

A year later, Childers complained (7 July 1870) again to Rhys Davids about Minayev's work:

> Minayeff has brought out an edition of Vuttodaya full of blunders, and with such frightful solecisms as aṇubhavanam (!!). I have seen a copy, but have none of my own. I hear his Pātimokkha is out, the text in Nāgarī with a Russian translation (!!!). There are certain Pāliyists who seem bent on bringing Pāli scholarship into contempt.

Despite having only studied Pāli and Sanskrit for a few years and being admittedly insecure about his own philological skills, Childers does not hesitate in his letters to use his knowledge to discredit his competitors. For instance, he

critiques the Wesleyan missionary Robert Spence Hardy (1803–1868) and his 'Manual of Buddhism' (Hardy 1853) and encourages Rhys Davids (16 May 1871) to disregard his work:

> First Abassaram is one of Hardy's stupid blunders for Ābhassara, the man did not know a word of Pāli and ought to have said so in his book. Never quote him as an authority, his books are a mass of inaccuracies.[7]

It is difficult to interpret all of Childers' rebukes as simply the results of the rigours of academic critique and it is possible, as in the case of D'Alwis, to detect more personal undercurrents at work.

Childers also had little time for the works of the recently deceased Eugène Burnouf, noting to Rhys Davids on 16 May 1871 that, 'You cannot trust a word of Essai sur le Pali'. A couple of weeks later (1 June 1871) he elaborates on his criticism of this work and states:

> I have parted with my Essai sur le Pali and Observations, as I found them utterly worthless, but I perfectly remember the passage which amused me very much, as the author speculated how the Sanskrit ty can be turned into ḍ in Pāli, the simple fact being that they were ignorant that in Pāli 𑀝 stands both for cc and for ḍ.

Even Max Müller, who was later to become a friend of Childers, does not escape criticism, though his early opinion of Müller (1 November 1869) appears to have been influenced by the negative view of him held by Reinhold Rost:

> As regards Müller's two papers on Pāli grammar I am of opinion that a third will never appear. Dr. Rost and I waited a lay while for another paper before binding, and we are certain that he does not intend to finish what he has begun. Dr. Rost says that Müller is a very desultory man, who takes up a subject with great ardour and then drops it for another. His papers are very useful, but they are more a réchauffé of what is to be found in Fausböll's notes to Dhammapada without any addition of new matter, I think.

Fausbøll is the only scholar at the time who comes away unscathed in Childers' letters and he clearly held the Danish scholar in high esteem. On 23 November 1869, Childers remarked that Fausbøll was the one scholar who was truly equipped to take on the task of writing a Pāli dictionary:

> The man in all the world who is able to produce the best Pāli dictionary is Fausböll (with whom I correspond a great deal), but his time is greatly taken up, almost entirely with Sanskrit and Danish work, and he has I believe no intention of publishing a dictionary.

Again it is quite evident that even professional scholars such as Fausbøll were unable to commit much attention to Pāli.

Manuscript circulation

A theme that occupies a large part of Childers' letters to Rhys Davids is his request for manuscripts and other Pāli related materials. He clearly felt isolated working in Britain, away from the manuscript collections of Sri Lanka, and it was very important to him to have a constant supply of new Pāli texts. Writing on 15 June 1871 he states: 'I fear I trouble you greatly with my requests for MSS, but I value so dearly that you send me that I cannot resist the temptation of asking you for more.' In almost every letter Childers thanks Rhys Davids for a manuscript or book that he has sent and also regularly mentions the European publications he has acquired for Rhys Davids in return. There is not the space here to list all of the texts that were sent by Rhys Davids to Childers and, instead, I wish to highlight the processes by which he secured copies of manuscripts and the economic aspect of the acquisition of these manuscripts.[8] Childers' initial request to Rhys Davids (25 August 1869) for manuscripts reveals many details about the process by which he acquired them:

> I shall be greatly obliged to you if you can from time to time send me a Pāli manuscript. Accurate M.S.S. are most difficult to procure and there is only one priest in Ceylon who sends me faultless ones. But I should think you would be able to get me tolerably good ones and if you could now and then get one copied for me by one of your copyists and send it to me by post I should esteem it a great kindness. You must let me know in each case what the copyist fee was, and my bookseller shall remit it to you in coin by registered letter. I have sent many times to Ceylon this way and in five pound notes, and they have always reached their destination safely. Perhaps to begin with you will be so good as to send me Buddhaghosa's commentary on Sigālovāda Sutta (සිගාලොවාදු සුත්ත අට්ඨකථා) in Pāli, written either on paper or on palm leaf, whichever is more convenient. I prefer myself M.S.S on paper, and I think it possible that the copyists may write more quickly on paper, but if they object to using anything but palmleaf that will do just as well.

This passage reveals that Childers was receiving manuscripts from Sri Lanka and was paying fairly large sums for them. It also appears that monks were getting manuscripts copied for him, though clearly only one at the time did so to his satisfaction. The payment for manuscript copying is significant since it provides a glimpse at the profitability of manuscript dealing at the time. In response to being sent a very good manuscript, copied by a certain 'Mr. Dahanāyaka', Childers offered (26 December 1870) to send five pounds, which is equivalent to approximately £500 in today's money:

> I am very grateful to Mr Dahanāyaka for the way he has executed your commission, and I am anxious to do something for him by way of remuneration. I therefore enclose a five pound note, which they will change at par at the Oriental Bank, and I shall be much obliged to you if you remunerate Dahanāyaka from it in any way you think best. I know nothing about him, whether he is a

> priest or layman. If he is a professional copyist I suppose he would prefer receiving a money fee.

Taking into account the number of manuscripts that Childers requested from various scholars, it soon becomes clear that he must have been spending a vast sum of his own money acquiring manuscripts. In a discussion with Rhys Davids about the Dīpavaṃsa, Childers also revealed (11 May 1870) that he had offered 20 pounds (approx. £2000 today) for an old manuscript of the work:

> There is said to be a man in the Uva district who has an ancient copy quite perfect which escaped the famous destruction of books in I forget what king's time. I offered £20 for it last year but found I could not from England take any efficient steps to secure it.

Childers also offered his monastic correspondents books or other services for providing him with manuscripts. On 8 February 1871, for instance, Childers wrote to Rhys Davids concerning Yātrāmullē Dharmārāma and comments: 'I had a letter from him by last mail with three Pāli MSS. I wrote to him in reply, and also sent him the Sanskrit dictionary Śabdastoma Mahānidhi.' This work was a Sanskrit-Sanskrit dictionary compiled by Tāranātha Tarkavācaspati, Professor of Grammar in the Government Sanskrit College of Calcutta, and published in 1869. Yātrāmullē Terunnānsē and Childers' other monastic collaborators may also have gained social influence through his friendship. For instance, Childers wrote to Rhys Davids (1 November 1869) that Dharmārāma 'wrote to me to say that a former pupil (golaya) of his named Samuel Vijayasēkara was an unpaid clerk in the Galle ~~police~~ Fiscal's office, and asked if I could get him promoted to a paid employment.'

From the letters Childers sent to Subhūti, it is clear that he was also sending the scholar monk editions of Sanskrit works that had been published in Europe and India in exchange for manuscripts. Subhūti was mostly interested in medical works and Childers took great pains to secure him a copy of the *Suśruta-ṭīkā*, a commentary on the medical manual the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, ultimately getting Theodor Goldstücker (1821–1872) to have a copy sent from Calcutta (Guruge 1984, 1–29). The desire for Sanskrit materials, in particular medical works, can perhaps be understood in the context of the philological concerns of the Sri Lankan monks of the time. Blackburn (2010, 34–69) has shown that some sections of the Sri Lankan monastic community were interested in recovering their lost śāstric heritage and invested heavily in sciences, such as medicine, astrology and grammar.

The market

An important and pervasive theme in Childers' letters that I wish to draw attention to is the role played by the publishing industry in the production of Orientalist scholarship.[9] Childers realised that his path to success lay in publishing popular works and encouraged Rhys Davids to 'publish as much of your material

as possible' (19 August 1873). One result of the professionalisation of the study of Buddhism was that Buddhist knowledge became a commodity that was sold in books and journals. One publisher in particular, Trübner & Co., seems to have had a tremendous amount of influence on the discipline. For instance, on 21 March 1871, Childers writes to Rhys Davids:

> Trübner sent me also your second letter about Dīpavaṃsa and asked my opinion about the size of the volume, importance of the work etc. I referred him to my first letter on the subject, which it seems he had forgotten. He found the letter after some search and wrote to you. Trübner is doing a good deal for Buddhism and Pāli. He has got the whole thing in his hands, and every one who wants to publish on either subject goes to him now. Williams and Norgate are nowhere in the race.

It is difficult to overstate the role that Nicholas Trübner, a German publisher and Orientalist who had settled in Britain, had on the popularisation of Orientalist writings. If Orientalist scholars gained in prestige and fame through the publication of their works, Nicholas Trübner amassed a vast fortune. Writing after Trübner's death in *The Bibliographer*, William Heinemann summed up well his influence on the popularisation of Orientalist knowledge (1884, 173 cited in Mumby 1934, 166–167):

> Nicholas Trübner was the friend and adviser of all who were engaged in the study of Oriental literature. His firm during this period has been the intermediary between Europe and the East. His agents are scattered all over the globe, and they send from the remotest parts the literary productions of every people of the world to London. Here they are catalogued and carefully described, and *Trübner's Record* makes them widely known among librarians and scholars. *Trübner's Record* is, in fact a unique publication, such as could have been designed by no other than Nicholas Trübner. It claims to be nothing but a 'Register of Important Works'; but, far from being a mere catalogue of almost every literature, it also informs its readers of every important event in the Oriental literary world.

Trübner's name lurks in the bibliographic records of the most successful and popular Orientalist works of the age, yet his role and influence has scarcely been mentioned as a driving factor in Orientalism. Trübner's company masterminded the publication of Sir Edwin Arnold's (1879) *The Light of Asia* and *The Song Celestial; Or, Bhagavad-Gītā* (1885), for instance, and managed to capture the popular appeal of non-European cultures in Victorian Britain. It is in this light, that Trübner's role in the publication of Childers' Pāli dictionary may be understood. In a letter, dated 1 June 1871, Childers makes it explicit that his academic success rested on the profitability of the sale of his dictionary:

> Do you think you could induce some of the priests and temples in your neighbourhood to subscribe to my dictionary. If you could it would be a great

> kindness to me, as I am most anxious that Trübner should have a good sale, it will be the making of me if he does. It is true I get not profits from the dictionary, but if successful it will establish my reputation as a Pāli scholar.

Rhys Davids appears to have obliged as in a later letter (27 July 1871) Childers thanks him for obtaining subscribers to his dictionary: 'I am most grateful to you for getting me subscribers.' Childers' desire to have as wide an audience as possible for his dictionary and Trübner's own commercial interests may go some way to explain the almost popular style of his dictionary. Compared with the other dictionaries of the time—such as Theodore Benfey's *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, a work which provided cognate words in Greek, Latin, Gothic and Anglo-Saxon—Childers' work shunned the fashion for comparative philology and provided only Sanskrit equivalents for his Pāli lexicon. In this regard, Guruge (1984, lxxxviii) has also observed that Childers 'combined a Pāli Dictionary with an Encyclopaedia on Buddhism. Key words on Buddhist doctrines were treated in such detail that articles of varying length were written on them quoting a variety of publications of the day to present diverse opinions and interpretations'. The lack of philological focus to his dictionary could be explained by the fact that Childers did not have the linguistic skills to carry out such a task; he was admittedly unsure of his own Pāli philological skills and had only been studying Pāli and Sanskrit for seven years before the publication of the dictionary.

Other stylistic features of his dictionary were developed to give his work a mass appeal. In the prospectus to his dictionary published in 1870 (730) in *Trübner's Record*, Childers defends his use of the Roman script and also the arrangement of Pāli words according to the Roman alphabet, arguing that 'I have assimilated the plan of my dictionary as much as possible to that of a Latin or French dictionary, and the veriest tyro will know at once where to look for the word he wishes to have explained'. The scope for publishing such a dictionary attests to the popularity and enthusiasm Victorian society had for learning non-European classical languages such as Sanskrit. In 1876, the American diplomat Elihi Burritt wrote a Sanskrit popular primer entitled *A Sanskrit Handbook for the Fireside*, designed to be studied independently in one's spare time much like the many 'teach yourself' manuals that exist today. The potential popularisation of Sanskrit learning did not escape the comic derision of the Victorian media and *Punch* magazine (4 March 1876, 76a) wrote an article *Philology 'In Sport'* making fun of Burritt's work:

> Philology 'in Sport'
>
> It is agreeable to notice a praiseworthy effort to make the study of abstruse languages no longer a task and a drudgery, but a pastime and a pleasure. *A Sanskrit Handbook for the Fireside* has our cordial wishes for its success through many editions to come; and we hopefully look forward to a time when the

> language, dealt with in this very alluring manner, will have become as familiar as Irish or Scotch, Ersc or Gaelic, to many a solitary student by his lonely hearth, to many a fair philologist in her comfortable chimney-corner.
>
> We are betraying no secrets, abusing no confidence, in announcing that this help to Sanskrit is only the first of a series of Handbooks planned to while away odd moments and unconsidered minutes. The following pleasant little manuals may be expected to appear in due course:—
>
> *Garden Strolls among Greek Roots*.
> *Chinese at Tea-time*.
> *Arabic over a Cup of Coffee*.
> *A Gujarati Handbook for the Easy Chair*.
> *Siamese in the Summer House*.
> *Hungarian: a Book for those who are kept waiting for Dinner*.
> *How to Study Polish while you are having your Boots blacked*.
> *Tamil and Telugu: a Breakfast-in-Bed Book*.
> *Turkish over a Pipe: a Bird's-eye view of the Language*.
> *Anglo-Saxon in a Country Ramble*.
> *Icelandic: a Book for the Chimney-Corner*.
> *Half-Hours with the Hardest Languages*.

Childers was aware that the popular nature of his own work may well face criticism and pre-emptively acknowledged such criticisms in his prospectus (Childers 1870, 730) by arguing that the nature of the Pāli language demands a different treatment:

> If I am told that this is unmethodical, unsystematic, unbefitting the dignity of an Oriental language, I reply that works intended to aid the Pāli student should be rough and ready, like the language with which they deal. For Pāli does not possess the classic regularity of its eldest sister Sanskrit, though what it loses in regularity it gains in elasticity and vigour.

While his dictionary was received with generally positive reviews, Childers did face criticism and openly admits in 'My Critics' (1875, 624) that his lack of philological focus was due to the largely non-specialist subscribers to his dictionary:

> I shall make no attempt to reply at full length to Dr. A. Weber's criticism upon me in the Centralblatt of Feb. 8, 1873. In the first place, a considerable portion of his critique is directed against the form or plan of my work as being scientific; and I may reply generally, first that I purposely adopted an unscientific form to suit the convenience of non-Sanskritists (who prove to be about two-thirds of my subscribers); secondly that, in a first edition at least, I have a right to be judged by the matter and not the form of my work; and thirdly that Dr. Weber has really put himself out of court in this matter by bestowing, in this identical number of

> Centralblatt, the warmest praise upon Monier Williams' Sanskrit Dictionary, which is also on an unscientific plan.

The reception of his dictionary by the British media at the time also indicates that his work was viewed both as a lexicon and also as something of a compendium of Buddhist doctrine. In its review, *The Times* ('A Dictionary of the Pali Language' 2 December 1875, 4e) declared the work to be 'made accessible to the general reader by the adoption of the European alphabetical system, and the transliteration of all the Pali words into English ... It is in fact not only a Dictionary of Pali, but an Encyclopaedia of Buddhism'. An article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* ('New Books and New Editions' 7 October 1875, 10b) stated that Childers' dictionary was 'of great value both to the philologist and to the student of comparative religion'. The *Westminster Review* ('Miscellanea' April 1876, 598–9) too praised the work as it

> will not only meet the wants of the students of classical Pali, but will also be found of the highest value to the Christian missionary and to the student of comparative religion. Care has evidently been taken to make it available for the general student as well as for the Oriental scholar.

The article goes on to state that 'this work is not only a Dictionary of Pali, but it is also an Index to all that has been written during the last forty years on the subject of Southern Buddhism'.

The power of the publisher, in particular Trübner, in shaping the academic output in the late nineteenth century is nowhere better illustrated than in Trübner's 1870 publication of 'Buddhaghosha's Parables' by Captain T. Rogers. Childers was aware of its publication and wrote to Rhys Davids on 26 December 1870: 'Buddhaghosa's Parables is just out, I suppose you have had a copy.' The story of the publication of this work clearly demonstrates that the desire for the 'classical' over the vernacular was not simply an academic bias, but was the preference of publishers who ultimately took into account the mood of the market. 'Buddhaghosha's Parables' was principally an English translation of a Burmese version of tales from Buddhaghosa's *Dhammapada* commentary. The work is peculiar as it has a strange introduction, comprising of a translation of the *Dhammapada* by Max Müller. Müller (Intro., in Rogers 1870, v–vi) felt the need to explain his contribution to the publication of this Burmese work at length:

> A few words seem required to explain the origin and history of this book. About the end of last year, Captain Rogers, after having spent some years in Burundi, returned to England, and as he had paid particular attention to the study of Burmese, he was anxious, while enjoying the leisure of his furlough, to translate some Burmese work that might be useful to Oriental students. He first translated 'The History of Prince Theemccwizaya,' being one of the former lives (yātaka) of Buddha. Although this work contains many things that are of interest to the student of Buddhism, it was impossible to find a publisher for it. I then advised Captain Rogers to undertake a translation of the parables which are contained in Buddhaghosha's 'Commentary on the Dhammapada.' Many of these fables had

> been published in Pāli by Dr. Fausböll, at the end of his edition of the 'Dhammapada;' but as the MSS. used by him were defective, the Pāli text of these parables had only excited, but had not satisfied the curiosity of Oriental scholars. It is well known that the Burmese look upon Buddhaghosha, not indeed as having introduced Buddhism into Burmah, but as having brought the most important works of Buddhist literature to the shores of the Gulf of Martaban, and I therefore hoped that the Burmese translation of Buddhaghosha's parables would be as trustworthy as the Pāli original. In this expectation, however, I was disappointed. When I received the first instalment of the translation by Captain Rogers, I saw at once that it gave a small number only of the stories contained in Buddhaghosha's Pāli original, and that the Burmese translation, though literal in some parts, was generally only a free rendering of the Pāli text. Nor does it seem as if the translator had always understood the text of Buddhaghosha correctly.

From Müller's opening statements it becomes clear that a translation of a Burmese work was only considered to be worthwhile if it helped uncover some details about Buddhaghosa's original Pāli commentary on the *Dhammapada*. Despite the efforts of Müller, it appears no publisher was willing to publish such a work:

> However, in spite of my pleading, no publisher, not even Mr. Trübner, who certainly has shown no lack of faith in Oriental literature, would undertake the risk of publishing this collection of parables, except on condition that I should write an introduction. Though my hands were full of work at the time and my attention almost exclusively occupied with Vedic researches, yet, I felt so reluctant to let this collection of Buddhistic fables remain unpublished, that I agreed to take my part in the work as soon as the first volume of my translation of the 'Rig Veda' should be carried through the press. (Intro., in Rogers 1870, viii)

From this introduction it is clear that the focus on the 'classical' was not just a methodological bias of early Orientalists but that publishers actively refused to print translations of vernaculars. Trübner's pressure on Müller to add a translation of the *Dhammapada* as a preface to *Buddhaghosha's Parables* is testament to the fact that the publishing industry and the book market also played a significant, and often neglected, role in the production of Orientalist materials.

Conclusion

The letters of R.C. Childers reveal that his Pāli scholarship was created out of a complex synergy of actors with various motivations. His first forays into Pāli and Buddhist literature were strongly motivated by the prestige of being a professional scholar. This is not to say that Childers was not genuinely interested in Buddhism but that the respectability of being a scholar propelled him into the study of Pāli.

There was also an elective affinity between Childers' philological approach, marked by positive historicism, and that of the Sri Lankan monks he collaborated

with. However, their motivations were by no means identical to his and, while they assisted in his search for canonical texts and commentaries, his monastic collaborators were interested in using Childers to acquire Sanskrit śāstric literature, government patronage, and perhaps also social influence. There was also a thriving market for copies of manuscripts and it appears that Childers had often spent quite large sums in acquiring the various texts he needed. The profitability of his dictionary was also a concern for his publisher and it appears that the book market had a considerable influence on Orientalist output at the time.

Despite Childers' seeming ambivalence towards imperialist concerns—he was more intent on his personal success than the machinations of empire—his dictionary was also used by the colonial government as part of its diplomacy with the Sri Lankan *saṅgha*. In the case of Childers, however, the articulation of the most aggressive Orientalist discourse was not located in academia or government but in the popular media and Victorian society at large.

The short career of R.C. Childers, then, demonstrates that many of the characteristics attributed to Orientalist works are perhaps wrongly associated solely with the authors themselves. I have shown that his historicist and philological approach, the production of his groundbreaking dictionary, and the colonial ideology associated with it were all shaped by many hands. This reinforces the fact that the location of Orientalism, as a discourse in a Saidian sense, was far more diffused than a mere roll-call of Orientalist scholars would suggest.

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NOTES

1. There is a biography of T.W. Rhys Davids, *The Genesis of an Orientalist*, written by Ananda Wickremeratne (1984). Other notable studies, such as Almond 1988; Hallisey 1995; Harris 2006 (125–139); Snodgrass 2007, have also explored the influence of Rhys Davids on Buddhist Studies.

2. This is the only letter quoted from Mss Eur E260 (British Library). All the other letters referred to in this article are from RD T/20/1 (Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge).
3. In quoting Childers' letters I have tried to reproduce them as accurately as possible. In doing so, I have kept all underscores, italicisations, etc., as they are found in the original.
4. Childers' correspondence with Dharmārāma may well be contained with Dharmārāma's other papers (Or. 2258) that are stored in the British Library.
5. Cornelius Alwis was a prominent Christian in Sri Lanka who converted back to Buddhism after losing in a 10-day debate with Piyaratana Tissa of the Amarapura Nikāya (Young and Somaratna 1996, 152).
6. This narrative mirrors other such accounts of the discovery of the English book as an emblem of colonial authority noted by Homi K. Bhabha (1985) in 'Signs Taken for Wonders'.
7. For an excellent analysis of Spence Hardy's engagement with Buddhism, see Snodgrass 2009.
8. I hope in the near future to publish the transcriptions of the letters mentioned in this article.
9. My insights in this regard are indebted to the art historian Samar Faruqi, whose work focuses on the relationship between British Orientalist art and the Victorian art market.

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