

Dāūd kṣṛt Čandāyan, vols 1-2, edited by Shyam Manohar Pandey (Sāhitya Bhavan, Allahabad, 2018), 479+396pp, ISBN 81-8234-094-2.

Maulānā Dāūd's *Čandāyan*, the first Indo-Sufi romance, one of the earliest works of Hindavi, the vernacular literary tradition of the Hindi belt. As a full-fledged literary composition, it is only preceded by the *Rāula vela* and Jain Maru Gurjar narratives. *Čandāyan* augmented their existing repertoire by drawing on local folklore and on the Persian masnavi tradition. The example of Dāūd shows that soon after the establishment of Islamic dynasties in North-India Muslims not only took pride in their Indian heritage but developed Islam with the cultural achievements of the subcontinent.

The text has an intriguing history. The *Čandāyan* is known today in five fragmentary and dispersed illustrated versions and two incomplete unillustrated copies.¹ Only one of them, the Fatehpur/Bikaner manuscript, is in the Nagari script. Although the work is almost six and a half centuries old, its available manuscripts were produced over the course of two centuries. Estimates span from the late fifteenth until the seventeenth century. No manuscript copies are available from the three centuries following the early seventeenth century, the period of the most intensive Hindi manuscript production. It seems that *Čandāyan*'s glory was overshadowed by the more sophisticated *Padmāvat* and Dāūd's work fell into oblivion.

Although some scholars reported to have consulted its manuscripts already in the second half of the 19th century, none of their sources seem to have survived. The *Čandāyan*'s currently available manuscripts started to come to light after the Patna-based scholar Syed Hasan Askari published a description of the Maner/Bihār manuscript in 1954. Since the 1960s, the text has been edited again and again by some of the most outstanding scholars of early Hindi. Mata Prasad Gupta (1960, 1962, 1967, Allahabad), Vishvanath Prasad (1962, Agra), Parameshvari Lal Gupta (1964, Bombay), Muhammad Ansarullah (1996, Patna) and Shyam Manohar Pandey (2018, Allahabad). Each edition improved our earlier knowledge of the text. For example, apart from that of Ansarullah's Urdu-script edition, each one had access to more and more manuscript material. This, however, does not mean that the work gets longer. Parameshvari Lal Gupta's 1964 edition had 452 stanzas. Mata Prasad Gupta's 1967 version presents only 397 stanzas as genuine exiling 78 more to the appendix as spurious. Most scholarly work has since been primarily engaged with M.P. Gupta's 397-stanza reconstruction. Even Ansarullah's Urdu-script version has the same structure as Gupta. S. M. Pandey's edition, however, challenges this view and presents a new version with 416 stanzas in the main text with 26 further suspects in the Appendix.

The major editors also had different strategies and followed different manuscripts. M.P. Gupta, presented a composite text, Ansarullah followed predominantly the

¹ Mataprasad Gupta, ed. *Čandāyan: Dāūd-viračit pratham hindī sūfi prem-kāvya* (Agra: Pramanik Prakashan, 1967), pp. 52-56, Jeremiah P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India* (London: The British Library, 1982), pp.63, 69-70; Muḥammad Anṣārullāh, *Čandāyan* (Patna: Idārah-yi Taḥqīqāt-i Urdū, 1996), pp. 33-34; Qamar Adamjee, "Strategies for Visual Narration in the Illustrated Chandayan Manuscripts" (New York University, 2011), pp. 8-11, etc.

Manchester manuscript and Pandey follows primarily the Nagari-script Fatehpur/Bikaner manuscript, which though a relatively late one, is the most complete of all. It is important to bear in mind that the present edition does not claim to represent Dāūd's text. We have to admit that it is impossible to reach there when we only have manuscripts dating one or two hundred years after the author. It is much more modest, practical and modern as it presents what we can perceive as the Bikaner/Fatehpur tradition of textual transmission.

Most of Pandey's additional stanzas are taken from the Fatehpur/Bikaner manuscript, including a long section of 22 stanzas (vv335-356) about Lorik's fight against the gambler Mahopati and other events. Pandey gives various arguments for including them as genuine. The editor maintains that they form part of the folk version of the story, called *Lorikāyan*. Furthermore, the use of words in them that were documented only in 15th-century Persian dictionaries but lost later, such as *beluk* for 'arrow' in v339 indicates the early origin of these stanzas.²

Apart from revising the structure established by M.P. Gupta, this new edition enriches our knowledge of this important early Hindi work in several other levels. It also presents new readings for many lines and new interpretations for lines that are the same as in Gupta's edition. Just to quote an example

SMP325 (MPG323) l.1.

janami na čhūṭa pirama kara bāndhā, pirama khāṇḍa āhaī bisa sāndhā.

MPG [Lorik said:] the one who is bound by love is never released; [for that person] love is a poisoned sword.

SMP The bonds of love are not released in one's entire life; love is sugar, mixed with poison.

As has been mentioned above, based on the ever growing accessible manuscript material, the text of *Čandāyan* has been edited by five experts on the field of Old Hindi. Apart from the *Rāmčarit-mānas* that saw critical editions by Nanda Dulare Vajpeyi, Shambhunath Chaube, Mata Prasad Gupta and Vishvanath Prasad Mishra between the late 1930s and 1962, no other text of Old Hindi literature has received such distinguished academic attention.

Professor Pandey should be warmly congratulated on this outstanding work enriching our understanding of early Hindi literature and of India's past.

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² Stefano Pellò, "Local Lexis? Provincialising Persian in Fifteenth-Century North India," in *After Timur Came*, ed. Francesca Orsini and Samira Sheikh (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 181.

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