Akbar’s Yogavāsiśṭha in the Chester Beatty Library*

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Summary: Two emperors of the Indo-Muslim Mughal dynasty, Akbar (r. 1556–1605) and his son and heir Gahāṅgīr (r. 1605–1628), are well known for their patronage of arts and crafts. Especially painting was held in high esteem, and father and son almost vied with each other in the production of pictures and illustrated books. Usually, these pieces of art can be easily assigned to the patronage of either Akbar or his son. One of them, however, a Persian translation of the religio-philosophical Laghu-Yogavāsiśṭha, poses a conundrum concerning its place of origin. Since this manuscript, now kept in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, bears an autograph of Gahāṅgīr, it was thought to be made for him. Nevertheless, the preface of this text proves clearly that this translation was done at Akbar’s behest. The present paper deals with the question, how such contradicting statements could happen. It gives a short overview of the different Persian translations of the Laghu-Yogavāsiśṭha and, according to a comparison with the Persian text, offers a new identification of seven illustrations in the Chester Beatty manuscript.

The founder of the Mughal dynasty, Zahīr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Bābūr (1483–1530), was himself a scion of the house of Timūr. Although he was born in Fergana, a province located in the northeast of modern Uzbekistan and hence far away from the urban centers Samarqand and Herat, he was nevertheless acquainted with the Timurids’ methods of how to cultivate his public image. Already his forefather Timūr had recognized the benefits of promoting himself through art and encouraged painting and building to this end. Timūr’s successors followed this example and especially painting was developed as an important means of political propaganda. Notably Sultan Husayn Mirza (d. 1506), the last Timurid ruler on Persian soil, who gathered the best poets, painters, and calligraphers at his court in Herat, was regarded as the paragon of urban sophistication.\(^2\)

Bābūr reports that he was acquainted with the celebrated style of painting being done in Herat, but we do not know whether Bābūr himself employed painters at his various courts. It seems that only his son Humāyūn

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1 Cf. L. Leach: Mughal and other Indian Paintings. London 1995, p. 158.
(1508–1556) took decisive steps to establish the first Mughal studio of painting. Akbar (1542–1605), Humayün’s successor, encouraged painting in a way that was unprecedented. Today we know of 45 illustrated manuscripts that were produced in these workshops, but many more may have since been lost. Apart from the “classics” of Persian literature, like Nizami’s *Hamisa*, or the *Bostān* and *Golestan* by Sa’dī, Akbar ordered to illustrate several dynastic histories including the multi-volumed *Akbar-nāma*. Moreover, since the late 1570s Akbar had a number of Sanskrit texts translated, part of which were also furnished with illustrations. Manuscripts like the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, kept in the Maharaja Sawai Mansingh Museum in Jaipur, enjoy worldwide attention today.

Although the translating of Sanskrit literature into Persian has been an integral part of the Indo-Persian cultural encounter ever since the *Pañcatantra* was rendered into Middle Persian in the sixth century CE, we can recognize an apogee of these activities during the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar. The translations from Sanskrit were tightly knotted with ambitious political efforts to weld the inhabitants of the Mughal empire on a religious and cultural level into a homogeneous whole. While the often mentioned *Dīn-i ilāhī* was intended to collect the numerous denominations of India into one all-embracing religion under Akbar’s leadership, the Persian language was meant to unite the subjects linguistically. The translations into Persian aimed at making the Sanskrit works part of a cultural heritage everyone felt closely linked to. Hence, some of these translations were copied several times and dispersed to important high officials to ensure that they received proper consideration.

Akbar’s son Salīm (b. 1569), who ascended the throne as Šah Jahan in 1605, equaled his father in his patronage of the arts. Already during his time as crown prince he maintained his own atelier and competed with the emperor for the most beautiful and interesting illustrations. A phase which proved especially prolific concerning Mughal painting, was Salīm’s stay in Allahabad, a town at the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna. Because of the strategic importance of Allahabad, Akbar had build a fort there that was one of the four important strongholds of the empire. When Salīm rebelled against his father shortly before his 31st birthday, he moved his establishments into this fortress where he remained from August 1600 until November 1604, interrupted by some months in Agra from about April to October 1603. Quite a number of illustrated manuscripts were produced in Allahabad for Salīm, while at the same time the painters at the imperial court in Agra worked for Akbar.

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An illustrated manuscript from this period, a Persian translation of the Sanskrit Laghu-Yogavāsiṣṭha kept in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, is the topic of this article. This religio-philosophical text, transliterated as Ḡog Bāśīṭha, deals with the illusory nature of the empirical world and the way to mental deliverance. Its main protagonists are the wise and holy Vasīṣṭha and his royal disciple Rāma who, regardless of his future occupation as temporal ruler, gains perfect knowledge and becomes a jīvan-mukt, a person freed during lifetime.

Obviously, the Mughal emperors were especially interested in this text, since quite a number of translations exist. The union of spiritual enlightenment and temporal duties, as it was presented in the Laghu-Yogavāsiṣṭha, was completely congruent with the public image promoted of Akbar, and at least in part of his immediate successors.

On the basis of its dating given in the colophon of the Chester Beatty Ḡog Bāśīṭha, T.W. Arnold ascribed this manuscript, which contains no reference to its place of origin, to Akbar. About sixty years later, Linda Leach rejected this ascription. Owing to a note that seems to be affixed by Ġahāngīr on the first folio, she assumed that this manuscript was made by order of prince Salim.

The present article mainly pursues two aims:
1. By adducing evidence from the manuscript itself it wants to show that Arnold was – at least partly – right with his ascription to Akbar, and
2. it will describe all those illustrations that have not yet been interpreted correctly.

1. The translation of the Chester Beatty Ḡog Bāśīṭha

The colophone of the Chester Beatty Ḡog Bāśīṭha is dated fifteenth Āzar of the Ilāhī-year 47 (December 1602), but contains no reference to the place where it was written. T.W. Arnold saw “no adequate reason for doubting the correctness of this date” and concluded Akbar to be the patron of this translation as well as of this manuscript. However, Linda Leach deciphered a note on the margin of fol. 1v from which she inferred that this

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5 Leach 1995, p. 155.
7 Arnold 1936, p. 22.
manuscript must have been commissioned by prince Salim when he resided in Allahabad. Since Linda Leach did not give the full transcription and translation of Gahāngīrī’s note, it may be useful to quote it here completely, although the last part can be read and translated only tentatively:

Allāhu akbar – in kitāb-i Gōg Bāsīthā, ki az ḥikāyāt-i mutaqaddimin ast ści (?) dar zamān-i sāh-zārdagī (siel) dar sīnn-i bīst-u ... (s)ālagī dar baldat-i ... az hindi ... ŭā āwardam, ba-gāyat kitāb-i Īāb ast, agar ści (?) kasi ba-gūs-i hoš shinūd wa agar az sad yakī-rā ba-ḥātir dāsta bā ... albatā (?)... (u)mīd ki bi-sānād (?)... (az) adāt-i zāhīr ... bāţīn ba-maqṣad.

“God is great! – This book Gōg Bāsīthā [sic!] which belongs to the stories of the ancients, (and) which I translated in the time when I was crown-prince in my twenty...[unreadable]...th year in the town of ...[unreadable], is a very good book. Whenever somebody hears it with the ear of understanding, and if he considers only one percent of it, it is surely to be hoped that he will make the bāţīn [“what is beyond this world”] his destination by the instrument of the zāhīr [“what belongs to this apparent world”].”

To conclude from this autographical note that Salīm commissioned this manuscript during his time in Allahabad confronts us with two incongruities: First, Gahāngīrī did not state here that he ordered this manuscript but that he translated the book Gōg Bāsištā. Even though we may not take this literally and expect himself to be the translator, it is nevertheless noteworthy that Gahāngīrī himself does not claim to have made this illustrated Gōg Bāsīthā. Hence we could only conclude from his words that he commissioned this translation when he resided in Allahabad. However, this supposition raises other problems, because Salīm wrote that he made the translation when he was in his twenties. When he came to Allahabad in July 1600, he was already 31. A translation ordered by Salīm when he was in his twenties would have to bear a date between Īāhī 34 and Īāhī 44. In Īāhī 47, the date of the Chester Beatty Gōg Bāsištā, the prince was already 33. To harmonize Salīm’s note and the date of the manuscript, one could infer that the text was translated at least four years prior to 1602 and copied and illustrated only after the prince had moved to Allahabad. However, there are some arguments against this version either. Although Linda Leach men-

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8 Leach 1995, p. 155.
9 Does mean: the paper is torn here. Question marks in brackets mean: the reading of the preceding word is not sure. Single letters in brackets mean: the paper is torn here but these seem to be the missing letters.
11 Leach 1995, pp. 155, 158.
tioned the translator Farmuli speaking of Salīm rather than Akbar as his patron. ¹² Farmuli’s preface (from fol. 1v to 3v) mentions, on the contrary, three times Akbar’s name. He is called

Fol. 2r:
[...] baḥrāt-i zillu Llāhī suraymān-nišānī hilāfat-panāhī sāhib-qirān Ġalāl ud-Dīn Akbar pādişāh – hallāda Llāhī ta’āla màlka-bū […]

“[...] His majesty, shadow of God, seal of Solomon, protection of the caliphate, lord of conjunction, Ġalāl ud-Dīn Akbar Pādişāh – may God perpetuate his reign! [...]”

Fol. 2v:
[...] hangāma-yi mardānagī wa dili tīrā fərōg-afzā-i pēša hizb-brī wa šerī ma’raka-arvāz sajā’at bazm-āvāy himmāt wa sahāvat Abū ’l-Muzaffar sulṭān-i salīm sāḥ Akbar gāzī – abbadā la-bū ta’āla màlka-bū! […]

[...] [He is] an assembly of courage and valour, light-increasing, fierce and lion-like, from battle-illuminating valour, banquet-adorning magnanimity and munificence, Abu ’l-Muzaffar¹³, the perfect sultan, Şāh Akbar Gāzī – may God perpetuate his reign! [...]”

Though the word “salīm” looks at a first glance as if “prince Salīm” was meant, a more accurate translation shows that “salīm” functions as an adjunct to sulṭān and both qualifies the following “Şāh Akbar”.

Fol. 2v:
wa aḡar samand-ṭabī’at-rā dar maydān-i suḥānwarī wa nukta-dānī ba-γawālan mi-aʿrīd suḥān-sīmāsān-i buland fitrāt wa ḡaḥi-manisān-i sitūda-hībrat ‘āḡe wa qusūr-i ḡod muṭarif šūda mufr-i ḍāmūṣī bar laṭ mī-nihand. wa sāḥib bārin ma’rīn in abyāt-ast ki bādībāt az mašrīq-i tavī waqqād wa zahān-naqqād ān qibla-yi dīn wa dunyā¹⁴ čūn nayyir-i sa’dat šaraf tūlū’ yafta – bāyat:

tā bawad bar āsān hū’urṣūd-i anwār bādhāb, bādhāb-i haft bišwar bād Akbar bādhāb

“[...] And when he gallops about his steed-like temperament on the battlefield of rhetoric and the understanding of subtleties, the high-minded eloquent ones and those of praiseworthy experience with the nature of wisdom confess their errors and affix the seal of silence to their lips. A witness of this are the following verses ascending the height like the luminary of good fortune [as]

¹² The translator’s name is given on fol. 3a line 7, not as Arnold says on fol. 322, line 7 – perhaps a reading error in the process of printing. Linda Leach corrects this error, cf. Leach 1995, p. 155.


an improvisation\textsuperscript{15} from the place of sun-rise of this bright genius and understanding critic, this qibla of religion and world, as long as in the sky the resplendent sun will be the badšāh, may Akbar Bādšāh be the bādšāh of the seven climes.

This threefold mention of Akbar leaves no doubt that this translation was not ordered by Salim. But how does it happen that Salim declares this translation to be his? We get nearer to the answer if we remember that there is a rendering done by the scholar Nizām ad-Dīn Pānīpatī that was indeed made for the prince. While only two copies of the translation for Akbar could be located — the illustrated one in the Chester Beatty Library and another one in the Punjab Public Library of Lahore\textsuperscript{16} — Salim's/Gahāngīr's version, transliterated as “Ḡog Bāsīsta”, came down to us in many manuscripts. It turned out to be a difficult task to discern all manuscripts of Pānīpatī's version\textsuperscript{17}, because his text is handed down in different forms: Either with\textsuperscript{18} or without\textsuperscript{19} preface, ending sometimes with sarga (Skt. “chapter”) 43, some-

\textsuperscript{15} This means that Akbar extemporized these verses.

\textsuperscript{16} MANŽUR AHSAN 'ABBĀSĪ: Taʃīl-i fīhrīst-i makhṭūтāt-i fārisiya. Lahore, Punjab Public Library 1963, no. 22.


\textsuperscript{19} The following manuscripts have no preface: (a) Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Walker 117; (b) London, India Office, no. 806; (c) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (see E. BLOCHE: Catalogue des Manuscrits Persans. Paris 1905, no. 223, (d) London, British Museum Add. 5644. They all start with “brahmanān-i hind-vā dar wahdat-i zāt-ī haqq subhāna tā'āla”.

times with sarga 46. Nevertheless, it concerns always the same translation of which approximately fifteen copies are kept in European, Iranian and Indian libraries, museums and private collections. In 1981 Muḥammad Riẓā Ḡalālī Naʿīnī published a critical edition of Panipati's rendering. In the preface of his book he mentions that copies of this translation are to be found not only in the important libraries of Iran but also in numerous public and private book collections in the provinces of the country. Consequently, we can assume an even wider spread of this text than the inventory apparent in the catalogues makes suppose.

Below some excerpts from Nizām ad-Dīn Panipati's preface to give proof that his text is the translation for Saлим:

p. 1:
čān ʾāli-ḥażrat-i mutašāli-yi manqabat ʿutārid-fiḥmat muṣṭārī-taḥat malik-i sīrāt falak-rutbat Faridūn-manzar Ğamšīd-maḥbar āḫtar auğ-i ʿazamat wa kāṃgarī nayyir-i ʿāsmān-i ʿizzat wa baḥtyārī bizabr-pēša-yi ᵜāḡat wa mādanagāh Āfštīn-dānīs Arīsto-farzanagī

p. 2:
šah wa šāhzāda-yi šahāniyān wa nūr-dīda-yi Ḵudāy-gān wa wali-yi ʿabd-i šāhānšāh-i ṣamān saлим at-tāb zakī āz-zahan Sultān Salīm Bahādūr

p. 1:
When [...] the sublime majesty of high glory, like Mercury in intelligence, with a countenance like Jupiter, a king of good manners, of sky-high rank, from his outward appearance like Feridun, in his interior like Jamshid, the predominant star in the highest point of magnificence and happiness, a luminary in the heaven of power and prosperity, lion-like in valour and prowess, a Plato in knowledge, an Aristoteles in wisdom,

p. 2:
king and heir-apparent of all men, light of the eyes of god, crown prince of the šāhānšāh of the time, gentle and from pure understanding, Sultān Salīm Bahādūr

The manuscripts Ġalālī Naʿīnī consulted for his edition of Panipati's translation do not indicate the date of completion. The preface of Panipati, however, corroborates Gāhāngīr's marginal note in the Chester Beatty Library, in that is was made before he acceded to the throne, because he is

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21 The edition of Panipati's translation is hardly available. My sincere thanks to Dr. David Durand-Guédy for sending a copy to me from Tehran.
called “crown prince”. Besides, in his catalogue of manuscripts in the library of Qum, S. A. Husaynī mentions the year 1006 H (= 1597/98 CE) as the date of translation.\footnote{Cp. Husaynī 1987, ms. no. 5252.} Probably, this Ġōg Bāsištā manuscript in Qum contains a date that had been omitted in other copies. In 1006 H, Salīm was twenty-eight years old. This corresponds to Gahāngīr’s information as well as to the allusions of Pānipātī’s preface. Thus it is highly probable that Salīm ordered his translation when he was twenty-eight years old, before he went to Allāhabad and before Akbar had his one made.\footnote{It is noteworthy that Akbar’s translator Farmūlī cooperated with the same authority, namely pāban Miśra Haqqīpūrī (Farmūlī fol. 3a), who had already lent his support in rendering the text to Nizām ad-Dīn Pānipātī, cf. Gaṅgī 1981, p. 3.}

For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned here that besides the translations for Salīm and Akbar, there is a third translation of the Sanskrit Laghu-Yogavāsiṣṭha for prince Dārā Sukōh (1615–1659) that was, according to its preface, finished in the year 1066 H (1655/1656 CE). Quite a number of copies from Dārā Sukōh’s translation\footnote{Concerning the question, who made the translation for Dārā Sukōh, see Franke 2005, p. 117f.} are extant.\footnote{Since 1968 a critical edition is available, cf. Tara Chand/S. A. H. Abidi: Ġōg Bāsišt. Calcutta 1968.} One of them is kept as Add. 5637 in the British Library. Up to now this manuscript was thought to be written for Akbar, because the preface mentions the year 1006 H and the name “Muḥammad Akbar Bādsāh”. Except for this, the whole text agrees exactly with the translation for Dārā Sukōh. For an unknown reason, the original date 1066 H was exchanged for 1006 H, and the name Dārā Sukōh for Akbar Bādsāh.

To sum up, there are three\footnote{There is also the Tuhfah-i mağlis of Sayḥ Suﬁ Šarīf Ḥubghānī, mentioned by Dārā Sukōh himself in the preface to his Ġōg Bāsišt. But this epitle of the Laghu-Yogavāsiṣṭha contains no more than a dozen folios; this small scale forbids to count it as a proper translation. Cf. W. Pertsch: Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. Berlin 1888, no. 1077/4 and Chand/Abidi 1968, p. 4.} different translations: The first one was done for Salīm by Nizām ad-Dīn Pānipātī, presumably in 1597/98. The second one was ordered by Akbar and rendered into Persian by a certain Farmūlī, a disciple of Kabīr, in 1602. One copy of this is the Chester Beatty Ġōg Bāsištā. The third one was done for Dārā Sukōh by an unknown translator in the year 1655/1656.

So the most obvious explanation for Gahāngīr’s note could be that he, during an inspection of his library, just made a mistake and thought the present translation to be his. Or perhaps, he was aware of this being a manuscript for Akbar but wanted to hint to the fact that he also ordered a translation of the Yogavāsiṣṭha – decently indicating that his text is the older one!
2. Description of some illustrations

The comprehension of the Ćog Bāśītha-illustrations is complicated by the fact that they do not always show what is described in the text immediately before. Sometimes, the related passages precede the paintings by several folios (cp. fols. 152v/121v; 166v/161v), in other cases they follow the pictures (cp. fols. 7r/7v; 178v/180r; 41v/43r). It was T.W. Arnold who first identified the contents of the Ćog Bāśītha-illustrations in 1936. Linda Leach adopted Arnold’s interpretations for the most part, but offered more detailed descriptions. After a close examination of the text, an interpretation different from that proposed by Arnold and Leach emerges for some of the illustrations.

Folio 7r (fig. 1) is described by Arnold (p. 23) and Leach (p. 161) as Rāma (Pers. Rāmcand) standing before his father Daśaratha (Pers. Daśaratha), who sits on his throne. However, Rāma looks much too old here and the whole scene fits much better to the text on the following page relating how king Daśaratha had a golden armchair brought to the Rishi Viśvāmitra (Pers. Viśvamitra). In consequence, the illustration on folio 7r does not show Daśaratha on his throne, but the Rishi Viśvāmitra on the golden armchair. The kneeling person in front of him is not Rāma, but his father Daśaratha who shows his deep respect to the wise man.

Folio 41v belongs to the story of Queen Līlā and King Padma: After Padma’s death, Līlā is shown her husband’s new life as king Vidūratha (Pers. Bidūratha).
Lilā is also allowed to see their past incarnations as the brahmin couple Arundhati and Vasistha (Pers. Basistha). The illustration depicts a king or a prince carried in a litter and accompanied by his retinue. An old brahman on the right side in the foreground is watching the scene. Since we find a description of prince Vidūratha, the reincarnated husband of queen Lilā, in the lines preceding the illustration, Arnold and Leach expected this prince to be illustrated here. However, the text on fol. 41r tells us that Vidūratha was enthroned while Rishi, brahman and wise men were sitting in a row in the east, the bigger and smaller kings were standing in the west, elephants, horses and chariots filled the northern portal, and the gate to the south (fol. 41v) was adorned with beautiful and graceful women.²⁹

This account does in no way correspond to our illustration, since one might expect to see a hall in the interior of a house and four groups of people arranged around the king. It is more likely that fol. 41v was intended to illustrate one of the following passages on fol. 43r, where Sarasvatī tells queen Lilā the story of their former life as Vasistha and Arundhati: Seeing a king and his entourage passing while on the hunt, Vasistha is impressed and desires royal dignity for himself—a wish that ties him to the world and results in his rebirth as Padma. So the king seems not to be Vidūratha but the nameless king in the narration of the goddess. The brahman Leach referred to as “yogi” is perhaps meant to be the brahman Vasistha, even though the text says that he is watching the king and his hunting party from the top of a mountain.

Arnold’s and Leach’s identification of fol. 58v as Vidūratha fighting with the king of Sindh is right. Just two details of the illustration seem worth mentioning: The sun in the top left and the mountain are specially mentioned in the text. On fol. 58r we read, “Meanwhile, Her Majesty the Sun deigned to rise above the mountain Aday (fol. 58v) in a way as if she condescended just to behold this amazing battle.”³⁰

Fol. 95r belongs to the story of Lavana (Pers. Lawana), who, in order to bring an imaginative sacrifice to full effect, had to live for twelve years in hardship and misery—also in his imagination. The explanation of the Rishi

²⁹ Fol. 41r: va rakbiśāvan va brahmanān va dānayaṁ bar dar-i ṣarqi šaf-zada niṣasta-and va bar dar-i garbi rāghā-yi buzurg va hau̇nd qīsār-basta istāda-and va darwāza-i šāmāli az fil va sab va arāba pur-ast va darwāza-i ḡanūbi az zanān (fol. 41v) ṣāḥib-i ḫusn va hau̇nd-paṣkhar bar āmūda ast.
³⁰ Fol. 58r: va dar in miyān bažvat-i nayyir-i aʿẓam bar kuh-i Aday (58v) čunān šaraf-i ṫulūʿ fārmād ki guya ba-gibat-i tamāsā-yi in kāzār-i šaraf tażrif āwarda ast. — The honorific formula for the sun is part of the sun worship as is was practised in connection with the Din-i ilahi, see Franke 2005, p. 203.
Vasiṣṭha afterwards opened his eyes for the strange phenomenon of māya (Skr. “delusion”). The picture does not illustrate Lavana with a sacrifice to purify him after returning into his body—such a sacrifice is nowhere mentioned in the text. It rather depicts the big Rāgasū-gōg (Skt. Rājasūya-yajña) Lavana had carried out in his imagination. The contents of this illustration are described immediately before and on the folio itself: After his remarks on Lavana’s experiences, Vasiṣṭha explains to Rāma how those strange things could happen to the king:

Fol. 94v:
Be aware that the result of the works and deeds relates to the nafs (Pers. “soul”) not to body and limbs. In order that these words fix themselves in your heart, o you impeccable and pure one, listen to me: One from the grandsons of Harisćandra called Lavana soliloquized in strict seclusion in a lonely place, “My ancestor by the name of Harisćandra was a big king by whom the Rāgasū-gōg was carried out; and I, who belong to his offspring, want to execute this sacrifice in my heart.” (fol. 95r—above the illustration:) According to the instruction of the brahmans, King Lavana carried together the ingredients for the sacrifice in his imagination. At first he offered the prayer Rattawāgān, which means that sixteen brahmans have to be attendants of the sacrifice. (Fol. 95r below) After that, he venerated the Rishis and brought good news to all deities necessary for this [sacrifice].

Lavana’s visit in the outcaste village on fol. 101r is correctly described by LEACH. The question, whom he meets there, his mother-in-law and/or his former wife is answered by the text: it is indeed his mother-in-law who mourns her lost grandchildren and her daughter, who was separated from her by a hard fate:

Fol. 100r:
The king found the old woman full of grief and sorrow and ordered his servants to comfort her and restrain her from moaning and complaining anew. Then he asked, “O old woman, who are you? Why are you here and who are your daughter and her children?” The old woman began to speak weepingly, “In

33 LEACH 1995, p. 167.
this village named Pulkaš-tō, a moon-faced daughter was born to my husband, (fol. 100v) who had grown up under the Pulkaš, a sub-group of the Čandālān. This daughter, whom the stars promised a very good fortune, married the world-seizing and moon-faced king, who had come to this place, according to her fate. This daughter lived for a long time perfectly happy with that king. She had her share in the pleasures of life and gave birth to a daughter and two sons. After a long time, the sorrow of a drought occurred. For fear of that, the inhabitants of this village took to flight and were separated from each other. They went far away and left the goods of existence and dropped the money of life. Only we, some women, stayed alive in this empty village, only to suffer pain and grief. We moan and lament and in the end we remember and cry (fol. 101r) and moan again. Hearing the old woman's words, the king became like a painted picture for amazement and astonishment and looked towards his vazirs. Out of pity and friendliness he bestowed the honour of the favour of plentiful presents upon each of those (fol. 101v) mourners and distributed money and goods according to their respective rank and dignity [...] 34

Indeed, Lavana holds pearls or something similar in his hand and puts them in the bowl of a young woman who holds it respectfully with her shoulder scarf.

It was already Arnold, who thought that the illustration on fol. 125r shows Vasiṣṭha and Rama in front of a little hut. But since the whole conversation between Rāma and Vasiṣṭha takes place in the palace, there is no reason for the painter to depict the young prince as a visitor at the holy man’s hut. It rather illustrates Dāśūra (Pers. Dāshūra) who lives as an ascetic in the top of a Kadamba-tree. One day a goddess (fol. 120v) asks him for a son. He presents her with a flower (fol. 121r), and indeed, in due time, the goddess gives birth to a son. After twelve years she brings this boy to Dāśūra, so that he will teach him as his disciple (fol. 121v). As the son of a goddess, the

34 Fol. 100r: Wa rāgā pīra-zan-rā sōg-nāk wa dardmand yāfta parastār-rān-i ḫud-rā farkūd tā dīl-āsā kavād ḫud-rā az nauha gīrya wa nālīs bāz dāštand. pas az ān pursīd ki ayy pīra-zan tu kistī wa ināgā čīn mībāsī wa dūhtar wa dūhtar-zād-bā-yī tu ki bīhind. an pīra-zan gīrya kunān ba-gīftān dar āmad kī kā dar īn dīhī ki pulkašītār bā nām dārad sāhbar-i man (fol. 100v) marbī-yī pulkaiān kī nu’āst az čandālān mībūd ḫud-rā dūhtar-mah-rūy paydā šūdā. ān dūhtar az nihāyāt tālimandī wa bāht-wārī muwāfīq-i sar-nuwīt rāgā ālāngir wa māh-rūy-rā kī ināgā āmada bīd sāhbar yāyī. ān dūhtar tā dīr az ān rāgā kāmāndūz gāstā wa bahā-yī az ayyī wa ‘āsrat ba-gīftī yak dūhtar wa dū pisar zād. wa ba’ d az muddat-i madīd dar īn dīh mīhnat-i qabīt-bārān dar rasid. az bīm-i ān bānagī sākīnān-in īn dīh mutafārrīq gāstā tu ba-gūrēz nīhudand wa dūhtar-rafta raht-i hastī wa naqīd-i bāyāt firū-bīshīnd. bikrī-i mā čand zan darīn dīh-ī bāhr-yī dārī wa mīhnat zandā māndārān-im. wa mātām wa sīk dārīm wa ba-sar-i ān ḫud-rā bā-yād āwārda nāuha (fol. 101r) wa zārī mikhunān. rāgā az sānīdan-i subānān-i ān pīra-zan az rū-yī bābāt wa dīa’iqūb čīn naqī-dī taywīr gārdidu ba-gūmīt i ważīr-rān ba-dīd. wa az sīfāqat wa mīhrābān-i ba-hār kudām (fol. 101v) ān mātām-zadagān dar-hārd-i marhaba-yī har yak šaraf-i tilāfāt kārāmat dāstā az naqīd wa gīs ba bābūsī dār āwār [...]


boy is accompanied by a small retinue. This is obviously what the painter
imagined to be suitable to his rank. The tree in the background is probably
meant to be the above mentioned Kadamba-tree.

The illustration on fol. 166r is located within the story of Uddālaka,
although it belongs to the preceding story of the brahman Gāḍhi. He prac-
tised severe ascetism by standing for eight months up to his throat in a lotus
pond.35 Finally, Viṣṇu (Pers. Bīṣṇu) appeared to him and told him to come
out of the tank:

161v, line 7–11:
He [i.e. Gāḍhi] left this country and betook himself like a lion to a cave in the
mountains. To Viṣṇu’s satisfaction, he was occupied with ascetism for half a
year and didn’t eat anything except for a small quantity. In so doing he brought
his ascetism to perfection. Viṣṇu was delighted by him and benevolent. He
became like a pleasant raincloud and repaired to that cave.36

In the background of this illustration the entrance of the cave is visible. At
some distance in front of it, Gāḍhi and Viṣṇu are sitting. Although the god
does not look like a raincloud, he is discernible by his crown as a divine
being.37

The story of king Suraghū and the wise Māṇḍapā (Skt. Māṇḍavya) sur-
rounds the picture on fol. 178v.38 Nevertheless, the two men depicted do not
seem to be Suraghū and Māṇḍapā, as Arnold and Leach supposed, because
they meet at the royal court. Instead, the illustration precedes the relating
text on fol. 180r (line 4–5) and shows the hermit Parnāḍa visited by Suraghū.
Parnāḍa, who sits in the door of his hut, is described to be “originally the
ruler of Persia” (fol. 179v, 1–2). Once his name was “Parigha” but since he
lived only from leaves he was named “Parnāda”, which means in Sanskrit
“leaf-eater” (Pers. bārg-bhūr). The fact that the leaves of the hut have been
painted so distinctly was perhaps meant as an allusion to this name.

The leaves of a hut are also noteworthy in relation to the illustration on
fol. 194r. There the interpretation of Arnold and Leach were absolutely
right. It might just be added that the painter has kept strictly to the text,

35 Gāḍhi was not standing in a river, cp. fol. 156v, line 11 and 12 and the illustration on
fol. 157b.
37 Cf. J. Seville: Workshop and Patron in Mughal India. The Freer Rāmāyaṇa and
Other Illustrated Manuscripts of ‘Abd al-Rāhīm. Zürich 1999 (Artibus Asiae Supplemen-
tum XLII), p. 83.
the story of Vīṭahavya (Pers. Bitahabyā), where it is mentioned that his hut was covered with banana-leaves.\footnote{Fol. 194r, line 2: hāna ki az barg-i kila pūšda būdand.}

The "heavenly musician", as Arnold calls the figure on fol. 218v (fig. 2), illustrates a longer excursion on a theme not included in the Sanskrit-text. The Persian version of Farbūli was obviously intended to make Muslim readers acquainted with the religious and cultural peculiarities of Hinduism. That is why the translator considered it necessary to insert longer explanations. This present picture is the only case where such an excursion was illustrated.

It shows the Rishi Agastya (Pers. Agasta rakhīṣar), who is famous for his hymns in the Rig-Veda and ranks high among the Indian musicians. Farmūli describes him as the "patron of the sītāna-yi bhīl" (fol. 217v, line 12). The comments concerning the Rishi Agastya start on fol. 217v line 10 and end on fol. 219r line 10. They include an aetiological story of the Vindhya-mountains: After the gods complained to Mahādeva (Pers. Mahādeva) about the Vindhya-mountains rising higher and higher, Mahādeva ordered Agastya to go there and stop the mountains from growing any further. The Rishi betook himself to the Vindhya-mountains and asked them to lower themselves to their original height in order to open the way southward. Indeed, the mountains let themselves down respectfully before the holy man and obeyed his order to remain in this position until his coming back. But since Agastya never returned, the Vindhya-mountains remained in this height.
Hence, the illustration on fol. 218v does not show an unknown musician at the mountain Meru, as Arnold and Leach supposed, but the Rishi Agastya in the Vindhya-mountains that look as if they are lowering themselves before the holy man. His relation to music is indicated by the Vina he carries on his left shoulder.

One last short annotation refers to the illustration on fol. 262v. It is part of the story of a man who accidentally found the wish-fulfilling gem. In contrast to the Sanskrit text, where this man belongs to the mountain tribe of the “Kirata”, he is a miserly merchant in Farmuli’s translation. This merchant is not looking after the jewels of a broken bracelet, as mentioned in the catalogues of Arnold and Leach, but after the shards of a small clay pot (Pers. baqqa’i riza) he had lost there. After searching in scrubs and high grass for three days and three nights, he accidentally finds the precious jewel known to fulfill every wish.

Conclusion

In her catalog entry, Linda Leach states,

This copy of the Yog Vasishth can be linked to Prince Salim by at least four definite pieces of evidence. First, he himself has written in it at a later date implying his connection with production [sic]. Second, the translator Farmuli speaks of Salim rather than Akbar as his patron. Third, one of the few artist inscriptions that remains in the volume refers to a painter calling himself by the honorific title ‘Abd al-Salim, who was thus unlikely to be working for anyone but the prince. Forth, several miniaturists of the volume are the same ones employed upon the Beatty Raj Kunwar manuscript (2.42–92) whose inscription definitely establishes that it was produced at Allahabad for Salim. Since the Yog Vasishth is dated to the year 1602, this manuscript must also have been commissioned in the prince’s eastern capital where he remained from 1600 until 1603.

The first two arguments do not bear a close examination. In fact, Salim’s autograph reveals that he does not claim to be the patron of the Chester Beatty manuscript. He just mentions that he “translated” the book Yogavasiṣṭha. Moreover, an analysis of the diverse translations of the Yogavasiṣṭha showed that the present version by Farmuli was not made for Salim but for Akbar, because in his preface (from fol. 1v to 3v) the translator mentions three times Akbar’s name with eulogies usual for patrons. He does not once refer to Salim. A translation for the prince, made by Nizām ad-Dīn Pānīpātī probably around 1598, differs considerably from Farmuli’s rendering. So

40 Pers. baqqa’i az tā’ifa-yi baysa – a merchant from the community of the Vaisya.
obviously, Ḡāhāṅgīr inserted his marginal note just to point out that he also ordered a Persian Yogaṅvāsīṣṭha; he does not say that the present translation is his. Hence, neither of the two arguments provide evidence of Salim being the patron of the Chester Beatty Gōg Bāṉīṣṭha.

Nevertheless, an analysis of the illustrations was in the end not indicative of a production for Akbar: On the basis of scribal notes below the illustrations, Linda Leach has identified seven painters41: Haribans (fol. 58v), Kesu (fol. 63r; 128v), Imam Quli (fol. 73r; 264v)42, Khem Karan (fol. 145r), Bishndas (fol. 249r), Hariyā (fol. 262v) and ‘Abd as-Salim (fol. 282r; 286v). From stylistical analyses, Leach concluded further that two unknown painters must have participated, whom she calls “painter A” and “painter B”. Moreover, she compared the illustrations of the Gōg Bāṉīṣṭha with those of another manuscript, the Rāḵ Kunwar from the year 1603/1604.43 This Rāḵ Kunwar contains no written evidence of its painters, but its place of execution, Allahabad, is distinctly mentioned in the colophon. The comparison revealed that five painters of the Gōg Bāṉīṣṭha (Bisndās, Haribans, Kesu, ‘Abd as-Salim, Hariyā) as well as painter A and painter B have also worked on the Rāḵ Kunwar.44 Besides, the names of Hariyā and ‘Abd as-Salim occur again in an Anuwar-i Subaylī (British Library Add. 18 579), whose illustrations were likewise made for Salim/Ḡāhāṅgīr between 1604 and 1610.45 From the participation of the Gōg Bāṉīṣṭha-painters in two other illustrated manuscripts from Allahabad, Linda Leach inferred that our Chester Beatty Yogaṅvāsīṣṭha must have been produced for Salim as well.

As a matter of fact, five of the seven painters mentioned by name in the Gōg Bāṉīṣṭha are known as Akbar’s artists.46 Khem Karan47 even contributed a painting to an Akbar-nāma that was made after the Gōg Bāṉīṣṭha and thus he was still or again in Akbar’s service at this time. As far as we

45 J. V. S. Wilkinson: The Lights of Canopus. Anwār i Suḥailī. London 1929, plate XV and XX and plate XXXII. Wilkinson wrote on p. 16: “[…] the artist of numbers XV and XX, whose name I cannot decipher with certainty; perhaps it is ‘Hariyā’, who may be the same as Hari, one of Akbar’s artists.”
46 Leach 1995, pp. 1100, 1104 and 1106.
know, only the names of Hariyā and ‘Abd as-Salim do never occur in connection with Akbar, but this does not necessarily mean that they could not have worked for him. Either they were just not mentioned, like many other painters in the imperial studios, or, with regard to ‘Abd as-Salim, he perhaps bore another name at that time. And since the Rāg Kunwar and the Anwār-i Subhayli postdate the Ğog Bāishiṭha, it is easily conceivable that the painters went to Salim only after they illustrated the Yogavāśiṣṭha for Akbar.48

Hence, the four arguments put forward by Leach do not prove a production of the manuscript for Salim. But admittedly, there is another reason why it can not be ascribed to Akbar readily: A Diwān of Amīr Hasan Dihlawī, completed in Allahabad already in July 1602, contains solid arguments for a production of the Ğog Bāishiṭha unter Salim’s patronage. In his examination of this Diwān, John Seyller found out that the painters ‘Abd as-Salim, Haribans, Bişndás and Imām Quli among others must have had a hand in the illustrations.49 Hence, these painters had been in Salims employment already before the the Ğog Bāishiṭha was finished in December 1602.

Since the translation of the Chester Beatty Yogavāśiṣṭha was done for Akbar, it is hard to imagine that the prince ordered this version – instead of his own – to be illustrated in his ateliers. If he really would have done so, one would expect at least a hint to this unusual act in Gahāngīr’s note or an indication in the manuscript, but there is nothing of the sort.50 On the other hand, the participation of certain painters, for example ‘Abd as-Salim, Haribans and Bişndas, provides evidence of a manufacture in Allahabad. As a result, an attribution to Salim is as problematic as an attribution to Akbar. For a proper classification of the Ğog Bāishiṭha, neither the arguments based on the text nor those resting on its illustrations may be disregarded. Perhaps, future studies of this manuscript will offer a solution. For the time being, the inconsistency between a translation for Akbar and illustrations for Salim remains unsolved.

48 Cf. Milo Beach who wrote, “during the years of rebellion, he [i.e. prince Salim; HF] would certainly have been unable to patronize painters still in his father’s employ.” M. C. Beach: The Grand Mogul. Imperial Painting in India 1600–1660. Williamstown, Massachusetts 1978, p. 24.


50 There is, on the contrary, a Persian note on top of folio 1r which ascribes the manuscript to Akbar: “Ğog Bāisiṭh from among the books of Akbar bātisāh; illustrated imperial work (muṣawwar-kār) in nastālīq-script, very pleasing with sententious explanations.” But since the note was penned by an anonymous writer at unknown time, it is not really an argument for Akbar’s patronage. Cf. Seyller 1997, p. 300; the third line is not mentioned there. The following dates in Seyller’s list belong to other inscriptions on the same folio.