



Buddhist Cantos from Bucharest

I. Ion Pillat's *Visări budiste* (1912) as “readings from Burnouf” [*Asia in Europe II*]

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*Buddhist Cantos from Bucharest I. Ion Pillat's Visări budiste (1912) as “readings from Burnouf”
[Asia in Europe II]*

This contribution in three parts analyses for the first time Ion Pillat's Buddhist poetry of his debut volume (*Visări budiste* [Buddhist Reveries] from *Visări păgâne* [Pagan Reveries], Bucharest: «Minerva» – Institut de Arte Grafice și Editură, 1912) compared against plausible European and Asian religious and literary sources, contexts, and significance, in order to palliate the callous non-sense of some literary critics and the cultural prejudice inflicted by some scholars of religion. The five poems – *A Buddhist Prayer* (a title subsequently changed to *A Prayer to the Buddha*), *Samsara* [saṃsāra], *Towards Nirvana*, *Karman* and *A Hymn of Worship* – are illustrative of the wider topics and literary moves of an 'Asian Renaissance', and highlight the Buddhist legacy of Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852), a professor of the Collège de France who would become the founding father of modern Buddhist Studies worldwide and whose Magna Carta of Buddhism Studies would also have a Romanian echo, from Odobescu (who moreover frequented his classes) to Eminescu (who authored more and better Buddhist cantos) or Georgian (the first to critically edit Sanskrit texts) to young Pillat, a schoolboy, then student in Paris since 1905, to become the first translator into Romanian of another pupil of Sanskrit India in Paris and Harvard in the 1910-1914, T. S. Eliot.

Keywords: Ion Pillat | Asia in Europe | Buddhist writings in Pāli and Sanskrit | European literature | *karman* | *saṃsāra* | Romanian literature | T. S. Eliot.



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To my well-read friend Cosmin Ciotloș,
as a remembrance of the writing plans we contemplated
during that old and unexpected literary conversation
in a frozen airport

A musician of highest integrity, Artur Schnabel used to say in the 1930s¹: “Musicians are not the only ones who do harm to music”. Neither are literary critics the single ones who do harm to literature – nor are the scholars of religion the single ones who do harm to religion. One may be aware of musicians, literary critics, and scholars of religion rather being fair to or protecting music, literature, and religion from the harm inflicted by others, who are not: yet they may repeatedly be part of the harm done. The last two guilds intermingled, the cultural reception of Ion Pillat’s first book – as I propose to decode Schnabel’s *dictum* in this contribution – is a case in point in a global Asian Renaissance².

I. “Distracția viitoare a vreunui nenorocit, ce nu va avea ceva mai bun de făcut”.

Born in 1891 in Bucharest and moving to Paris in 1905, Ion Pillat³ was only just 18 years old when he first read classical Buddhist literature in best European translation. *Visări budiste*⁴ (*Buddhist Reveries*) is the title of a cycle of poems included, with remarkable Buddhist gusto, in his debut volume⁵ which, by an anticipated auto-irony for the future neo-classic, more traditionalist, Orthodox Christian-inspired poet, he called *Visări păgâne*, a lyrical *cum* virtuoso dreaming on Pagan scores.

The book was published in the poetry series of *Cărțile albe* (*The White Books*), which was started by the two young poets Ion Pillat and Horia Furtună (1888-1952) as a new means for their generation’s poetical endeavours. Being drawn to his rising symbolist star, they asked Alexandru Macedonski to offer a contribution, which he did after being back from Paris in 1912, publishing *Flori sacre* (*Sacred Flowers*), subsidised by Pillat himself, as he will do it with the same perfect instinct in 1916 for Bacovia’s *Plumb*. *Visări păgâne* was immediately followed by Horia Furtună’s *Scântei și rouă* (*Sparks and dew*). Not only Pillat’s debut, but all the first three volumes of the series are off-springs of Paris, or more generally of that germane European ambience throttled by the impending Grande Guerre, of which something certainly disappeared for ever in the midst of the new societies and urgencies of the war’s aftermath. Both Pillat and Furtună greatly admired Macedonski, then largely neglected or despised in Bucharest literary circles, and Pillat dedicated to Furtună, as to his *aîné*, a poem from his first collection (*Centaurii* [În urma unui *vis*]), the very one he was waiting for⁶.

The Buddhist poems are five: “Rugă budistă” (*A Buddhist Prayer*) (pp. 41-42, the single one published earlier⁷: *Convorbiri literare* 1912, dated there July 1911, but sketched earlier, a poem subsequently known from Pillat’s anthologies and posthumous editions as *Rugă lui Buddha*), “Samsāra” (sic, pp. 43-45, written in Paris in January 1912), “Spre Nirvāna” (*Towards | Thither Nirvana* [nirvāṇa]) (pp. 46-48), “Karman” (pp. 49-51, dated “Paris, 23 March 1912”, hence right before turning 19), and “Imn de închinăciune” (*A Hymn of Worship*) (pp. 52-53, dated Paris, 28 May 1912⁸). Note both Indic-titled poems are dedicated to relatives. The book also includes – and this may function as an ideal incentive – some “Lămuriri la visările budiste” [sic!] (‘Clarifications on the Buddhist reveries’, pp. 54-55⁹), an inviting title which, during the subsequent 107 years since its publication, would have warranted a paraphrase for the literary critic or for the scholar of religion, and may thus be considered an early enticement to the present essay. It is rather rare to have a poet vigilantly adding explanations to his poems immediately after the poems themselves. It is even rarer to see a poet who experiments Indic sources and tropes being the first and alas the single one who aptly commented upon his Buddhist-inspired literary production.

What on the contrary is run of the mill reading consists of meagre comments on ‘exoticism’ or the ‘Orient’, if not full neglect and silences¹⁰. Furthermore, and despite his excellent knowledge of and connection to contemporary French, German and American literatures, most early Pillat was never translated¹¹. Romanian authors of all varieties and for more than a century have misread precisely these five poems (not yet translated it seems), and more generally everything Asian in Pillat’s lyrics¹², from the first reviews of *Visări păgâne* up to the comments made very recently¹³. After all, someone should take seriously Pillat’s diffidently ironical advice of 1932 [1941/1942] and consider as perfect the counsel to become that forefelt *nenorocit*: “I propose for the pastime of some unfortunate [Rom. *nenorocit*] who will have nothing better to do the study of the influence my historical and geographical university education had upon the poems overloaded with allusions and proper names from my first volumes and especially from *Pagan Reveries*”¹⁴. It took exactly twenty (or exactly thirty?) years to see the author, instead of any critic, explaining his early verses, and the ambiguity of these reminiscences is considerable as in 1932/1941-1942 Pillat is most close to a conservative mode and did somehow prejudice to his youthful years. Were the critics thwarted by a perspective deemed inglorious? Their silence on this enticement would indicate it: yet ostensibly they might have missed the point. Inasmuch as Pillat has added: “citiri din Burnouf îmi ofereau temelia Visărilor budiste” –

“readings from Burnouf offered me the foundation of Buddhist Reveries”¹⁵. By providing this hint, he reread his twenty years old Paris manuscripts: we know since 1983 that, at the end of the fifth Buddhist poem, there was an out of the ordinary mention, to which only Pillat will return: “Inspirată de un text budist publicat de Burnouf” (“Inspired by a Buddhist text published by Burnouf”¹⁶). This very connection was precisely what I intended to offer back in 2005 in Paris¹⁷, as contrary to the ubiquitous silence of Pillat’s readers I do believe the circumstance is one of the rarest in properly collaborating with a long deceased author, in topics which unavoidably go well beyond what the author and any of his scholiasts might have thought.

II. “Readings from Burnouf¹⁸ offered me the foundation of «Buddhist Reveries»”¹⁹.

Why India? Why India in Europe then – and why, should one add, now? Romanian readers of all persuasions have hardly considered the unrivalled immensity and abundant influence of Indic South Asia on Europe, including on its Eastern variety. Living in what may be coined as the capital of Asian studies of the long 19th century²⁰, Pillat was fully exposed to the discovery, translation and refined study of Indic literatures: he was keen, persuaded as we are by his own poetry and recollections, to assimilate something properly from India’s irresistible magnitude. To paraphrase a contemporary grand scholar of Sanskrit²¹, “[i]n surveys to date, the [Indian] National Mission for Manuscripts has already counted more than five million manuscripts, and David Pingree, the renowned manuscriptologist and historian of mathematics²², estimated that extant manuscripts in Sanskrit number over thirty million – more than one hundred times those in Greek and Latin combined – constituting the largest cultural heritage that any civilization produced before the invention of the printing press”, and this, one should be aware of, in the most inclement climate for depositing writing. The Romanian response to such colossal outline is among the poorest in Europe, despite a nonsensically mysterious evaluation by poet *cum* philosopher Lucian Blaga, who believed (but adduced no proof) Romanian culture as the best European response to India²³.

Even Pillat’s own *Lămuriri* (to start with) would have requested a better treatment from a more careful reader. They contain two innovations of Modernist poetry: the self-annotation and the non-translated²⁴. Although less studied for modern Romanian literature, in Pillat both of them are furthermore Buddhist. It may not seem apparent, yet this practice – as unusual as it may seem in a modern book of poetry before the 1922 example of Eliot, who annotated his own *The Waste*

Land – evokes the difficulty in adopting Sanskrit or more generally Indic material in all Western languages right from the earliest days of translating from the Sanskrit, which included renderings in English, Latin, German and French. Around 1823-1824, this was the Franco-German debate on translating from the Sanskrit which involved August Wilhelm von Schlegel, Alexandre Langlois, Wilhelm von Humboldt²⁵ and the keen experts from the newly founded Société Asiatique in Paris, in 1822, and Royal Asiatic Society in London, in 1823, the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft would only be founded in the 1840s, incidentally after the death of the last of the three Schlegels²⁶. Shall one leave key and technical Sanskrit terms untranslated? If Pillat accompanied his poems with a sort of personal glossary, he actually accepted no textbook routine. These are clarifications made for the poems themselves, and the glossed vocabulary is perceptively genuine. It presents itself as a combination of rigour, good reading, apt perusal of sources²⁷, and helpful comments. It also includes verbatim renderings, less fortunate rephrasing, and some insecure transpositions due to inexperience.

He writes twice ‘Baghavat’ instead of ‘Bhagavat’²⁸ and once ‘Brāhma’ (144, vs. thrice ‘Brahma’) instead of Brahṁā, but his ‘Çākya’, quite common for Śākya in French for a long time, is fairly better than a ‘Sakya’ of anthologies, reprints, and critically edited works. Pillat made other type of mistakes – why for instance the first equivalent of *karman* (excellently chosen instead of or before karma) is “mişcare”, move(ment), even if all the other explanations, no less than five²⁹, are delicately valid. One human’s *karman* (Pa. *kamma*), writes Pillat, “determines”, and the verb is aptly chosen, “the form and the kind of his successive lives” (“forma și felul vieților lui successive”), which is less clear: forma would have locate the *gati*, ‘destiny’, thus human (*manuṣya*), animal (*tiryāṅc*, cp. Rom. târătoare, or *tiryag-yoni*, from ‘animal matrices’), and other forms, while *felul*, more hazy, probably stands for Sk. (*a*)*kuśala-karman*, with Pa. (*a*)*kuśala*^o, ‘good’/‘wholesome’ or ‘not good’/‘unwholesome’, thus ‘bad’, reprehensible, eventually conducive to retrogressions within transmigration. What *karman* properly does, the poet believes it ‘brings reward’, “aduce drept răsplată”, răsplată including *plată* ‘pay(ment)’, which is a rather modern fiscal imposition, the Sanskrit/Pali technical term being very often *vipāka* ‘maturation’, ‘fruition’³⁰, as such the imagery rather vegetal – *karman* placing *bija*, ‘seeds’³¹.

Some *Buddhist Reveries* and Buddhist images are loosely titled, as is the case of the *Buddhist Prayer*³²: his intention is rather clear, but *praying* to the (nirvaned) Buddha has a distinct Christian overtone: faultily identifying the Buddha as (an)other, Asian saviour somehow modelled on Jesus Christ, whilst first looking at a Buddhist text or artifact, may take one minute or

decades indeed. To put it like old G. Ibrăileanu, “not everybody can feel the ideas of Buddhism” (“nu oricine poate să simtă ideile din budism”³³).

Would a foreign reader have read this in translation, he or she might have presumed a clear penchant of the author for geography in its Asian attire. Indeed, and not that expectedly, young Pillat enthusiastically took classes of Colonial Geography while in the Sorbonne, which corresponds to the wider taste of the colonial university of that time: “La Facultatea de litere din Paris [...] am urmat drept curs special Geografia Colonială care mă interesa îndeosebi”³⁴. His son described his room and working environment: among dozens of very dissimilar entities from all corners of Europe, it also integrated, by its “strange inner harmony”, Japanese paintings and “a collection of statuettes of the Buddha”, in all probability purchased in France³⁵.

Surely “readings from Burnouf” meant by the same token readings from Buddhist writings: the 1844 book itself came into being from Nepalese Sanskrit manuscripts freshly sent to Paris, is to be regarded especially as the most impressive synthesis work ever written from bundles of previously unread manuscripts, and contains some 40% of impeccable translation from the arduous Sanskrit into magnificent French, by no means inferior to that of his contemporaries Hugo, de Nerval, Balzac or Flaubert³⁶. As Oliver Freiberger fairly notes, “[w]hile Burnouf’s work has been superseded in some respects (but not in others), it remains highly instructive. The breadth and depth of Burnouf’s scholarship still humble students of Buddhism today”³⁷. He started to read the Buddhist Sanskrit of the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka-sūtra* “The Lotus Sūtra”, unprecedented reading for all non-Buddhist, but did not quite understand everything, so he planned some annotations as an *introduction to Le Lotus de la bonne Loi* (posthumously published in 1852) which eventually grew to become his magnificent 660-pages (in-4^o) *Histoire*, eminently readable even after 175 years.

Who read Burnouf, besides all Indologists and Buddhist scholars on three continents, the first reviews appearing in both India and Europe, and the first scholarly Buddhist publication by an American was, in 1847, a review article of Burnouf? Among some others, his readers³⁸ were Michelet, Quinet and Renan, Schelling and Schopenhauer, Emerson and Thoreau, Odobescu³⁹ and Eminescu (who directly borrowed a Buddhist verse), as well as both Nietzsche and Wagner, who moreover plan to set on music a Buddhist episode (“I found material in it for a dramatic poem, which has stayed in my mind ever since”, yet *Die Sieger* remained unfinished). Even much later, in 1976, Borges told the audience of Teatro Coliseo about the foundational books of Burnouf among “los primeros investigadores europeos”.

Note:

1. Artur Schnabel, *Walking Freely on Firm Ground. Letters to Mary Virginia Foreman, 1935-1951*, edited by Werner Grünzweig, Lynn Matheson, and Anicia Timberlake, preface by Werner Grünzweig, Akademie der Künste, Berlin – Artur Schnabel Archive, Hofheim, Wolke Verlag, 2014, p. 134 (letter of October 14, 1939, New York). The spiky observation comes for Schnabel (1882-1951) in antithesis with everything which “inevitably threatens the essence of music” – “my employer, music, who under all circumstances remains superior to his employees, [...] who pro- or demotes” (ibid., pp. 134-135). While edited, these love letters were quasi completely excised of love, letting the wandering pianist and composer only write his observations on music, nature, and the nightmares of social and political life during the crucial period which, even if from a totally different angle, will also be Ion Pillat’s last. The exigency Schnabel had in all things musical compares to that of some other grand characters of his generation, Enescu included (same years spent as a child in Leschetitzky’s Vienna), and may as such appear at times illegible nowadays. Moreover, on June 30, 1938, he already admitted to his lover Mary Virginia Foreman (1908-2012): “You know that I consider myself as a sort of fossil”.

2. Edgar Quinet’s 1840 formula was made famous by Raymond Schwab (1884-1956), *La Renaissance orientale*, préface de Louis Renou, Bibliothèque historique, Paris: Payot, 1950, translated by Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking as *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe’s Discovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, postscript by Edward S. Said, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. It was also present in Eastern Europe, as I argued in *Istoria imaginii și memoriei Asiei în cultura română*, teză de doctorat, Institutul de Istorie “N. Iorga”, Academia Română, București, 2003 and related contributions, including e.g. a lecture on “L’histoire des orientalismes de l’Est de l’Europe”, Assemblée générale de la Société Asiatique, Paris, 8 June 2006, cf. *Journal Asiatique* 294 (2006), no. 2, p. 503.

3. On the life and works of Ion Pillat (1891-1945) particularly helpful for this note, see Dinu Pillat, “Ion Pillat”, in his *Mozaic istorico-literar. Secolul XX* [1969, 1971, 1998], ediție îngrijită de Monica Pillat și George Ardeleanu, București: Humanitas, 2013, pp. 215-221.

4. The Romanian form *budist*, -ă, etc. instead of buddhist, -ă, -e is linguistically certainly wrong and historically moreover obsolete, but it does correspond then and now to the rather frequent forms used in other Romance languages those cultures were not in the forefront of reading Buddhist texts or, when they started, fused a haphazard variety of other European idioms-source: in Italian (*budismo*, var. *buddismo*, now largely reset to *buddhismo*) or in Spanish (*budismo*, still recurrent even in academic settings) as well as in Catalan (*budisme*, common) – and note the classic anomaly of French too: *bouddhiste* instead of *bouddhique*

still sounds aberrant and is quasi absent. Indic बुद्ध (never द da) is meant to represent the participle included in the name: *the Buddha* ‘the Awakened’ (*not* ‘enlightened’). The story of only transferring the Buddha’s name outside mid-Gangetic South Asia is too long and sophisticated to be abstracted here: it may nonetheless be of help to adduce, from testimonies of the 2nd-3rd centuries CE, the Greek rendering ΒΟΔΔΟ in some of King Kaniṣka’s Bactrian gold and copper coinage as well as arguably the first ‘Western’ rendering Βούττα as written by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis I*, xv.71.3-5. As some of its Romance cognates, the Romanian form is desperate. It goes beyond doctrinal polemics underlying the writing of Romanian *Isus vs. Iisus* for Jesus: ‘Buda’/‘budism’ disfigures nonfissionable Indic letters-syllables (of several early Indic languages and scripts) to obtain an indigenous word for ‘the Buddha’/‘Buddhism’ actually beyond (philological) recognition. Some tried to oppose it at an early date: note for instance Alexandru Odobescu in 1877 and Constantin Georgian in 1878 (see *infra*), or Vasile Găină’s *Buddhismul și Creștinismul. Studiu apologetic*, Cernăuț[i]: Societatea tipografică bucovineană – Editura autorului, 1906. Sharing the dishonor with a few other European languages, Romanian still owns alas no full Buddhist writing translated from an Indic original. To persist to write or to continue to overlook such unashamedly uncultured specimens would need a halt: competent authorities (or better: the benevolent reader) should note ‘budism’ and ‘Buda’ are fully flawed and hideous words. They should only be tolerated in quotations from before WWI (as here is indeed the case) and as candid witnesses of a very juvenile historical linguistics.

5. Ion Pillat, *Visări budiste* [Buddhist Reveries], in his *Visări păgâne. Poezii 1910-1912* [Pagan Reveries. Poems 1910-1912], București: «Minerva» – Institut de Arte Grafice și Editură, 1912, pp. 39-55. Republished by the poet himself in *Poezii, 1906-1941*. Ediție definitivă îngrijită de autor, vol. I (1906-1918), București: Fundația regală pentru literatură și artă | M.O. Imprimeriile naționale, 1944. See then Ion Pillat, *Opere I: Poezii (1906-1918)*, ediție îngrijită, table chronologic, notă asupra ediției, note, tabele sinoptice, referințe critice și prefață de Cornelia Pillat [1921-2005], studiu introductiv de Adrian Anghelescu, București: Editura Eminescu, 1983, repr. București: DU Style, 2000. The poems are cited here as they were printed in 1912, knowing that the edition of Pillat’s complete poetical works of 1983 differs from his own of 1944 and is not free of mistakes and doubtful readings. See Z.[igu] Ornea, *Medalioane de istorie literară (1999-2001)*, ediție îngrijită de Tiberiu Avramescu, București: Hasefer, 2004, pp. 252-253, with an example right from *Visări budiste*.

6. As Horia Furtună has recalled their first meeting in Paris in fall 1910, in “Amintiri despre Ion Pillat” [Reminiscences on Ion Pillat], *Universul literar*, An LIV, Nr. 14-15 (*Număr închinat lui Ion Pillat*), Duminică 20 mai 1945, p. 4: “am simțit amândoi că viețile noastre s’au legat în cea mai frumoasă prietenie. Pillat mi-a făgăduit să-mi dedice

Centaurii; i-am răspuns că-i închin *Balada lunii*. Și ne-am despărțit pentru a ne revedea a doua zi”.

7. Dated “Paris, 23 February 1911” (so before turning 20), see Ion Pillat, *Opere I: Poezii (1906-1918)*, edition by Cornelia Pillat, București: Editura Eminescu, 1983, p. 376.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 377, where “1918” is a simple misprint.

9. Cornelia Pillat added: “socotite necesare de Ion Pillat” (‘deemed necessary’, op. cit., 1983, p. 377).

10. Next to nothing exists on this Pillat in languages and especially on cultural contexts other than Romanian. If this may prove valid for most of modern Romanian literary studies, one may detect an even greater amount of provincialism in publications which, while presumably written for other audiences, are definitely less informed than their historic-critical counterparts written in Romanian. Deprovincializing too may induce new forms of being provincial. This tendency may only be reversed with publications like e.g. Mircea Martin, Christian Moraru and Andrei Terian (eds.), *Romanian Literature as World Literature*, New York-London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018, which *ubi alia* signals promising reevaluations of Asian religious and literary tropes as present in Romanian literature.

11. For a more recent example, see Joachim Wittstock, “Der rumänische Dichter Ion Pillat. Bilanz seiner Gedichte in deutscher Übertragung. Eigene Versuche der Übersetzung”, *Germanistische Beiträge* [Sibiu] 30 (2016), pp. 213-229.

12. Gleanings from religious journeys across all Asia and several religions, Indic too, are present in other 1912 poems as well: “Prietenie Del Rio, ce buddha, ce rabbi [sic] | Veni-va să-mi întindă al amăgirii cort? | Fakir prin Benarșuri [!] am stat trei zile mort, | Scăldatu-m’am în Gange rugându-mă lui Brăhma [Brahmā], | Monah făr’ de prihană urcai pe Fuji-Yāma, | Și m’am jelit zadarnic lui Čākya [Śākya] ertător...” (*Năzuinți*, IV, p. 144). I left for other circumstances the clarifications on his Persian poetry and readings from especially Omar Khayyam and Hafiz, first translated into Romanian in 1894 by Constantin Georgian (in *OAI III*, forthcoming). *A Persian Miniature* from 1930 Pillat dedicates to Em[ano]il Riegler, whose manuscript is preserved and was more recently scanned by the Romanian National Library as Ms. 10009 (available at www.digitool.bibnat.ro), is perhaps the best extant manuscript of ‘Oriental’ Pillat publicly available.

13. For instance, “[o]piumul declanșează «extazele lui [Buddha] Sakya-Muni»” [“The opium triggers «the ecstasies of Sakya-Muni»” – a strict disgrace], misguidedly believes Andrei Oișteanu (*Narcotice în cultura română: istorie, religie și literatură*, ediția a III-a revăzută, adăugită și ilustrată, Iași-București: Polirom, 2014, p. 228) when commenting upon a later poem (*Opium*, first in *Revista idealistă* of 1916): Pillat’s verses (he did not cite: “Cu zei ce retrăiesc în bronz | Extazele lui Sakya-Muni”, “with gods which relive in bronze | the ecstasies of Sakya-Muni”, which represents a full contrast to the opium-eaters) say quite nothing of this sort – and how would have been that possible? after

all, Pillat had read Burnouf. To force them would entail impropriety.

14. “Propun distracției viitoare a vreunui nenorocit, ce nu va avea ceva mai bun de făcut, studiul influenței culturai mele universitare istorice și geografice asupra poeziilor supraîncărcate de aluziuni și de nume proprii din primele mele volume și mai ales din *Visări păgâne*”, in Ion Pillat, “Mărturisiri – note stenografice [Din seria de *Mărturisiri literare* făcute la Facultatea de litere București, în 1932]”, *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* 9 (1942), no. 2 (February), pp. 263-288 (here 277). The foreword to this – a rewriting too? – is dated December 1941.

15. I. Pillat, “Mărturisiri”, p. 277. The fuller passage read: “Catrenele lui Omar Khaiyam [sic] traduse în engleză de Fitzgerald, împreună cu impresiile vii ale călătoriei recente pe Bosfor (Constantinopolul feeriei arabe și persane, pe care o puteai trăi atunci aieva), formau substratul oriental al *Visărilor păgâne*. Operele lui Lafcadio Hearn (Kokoro, Unknown Japan) și citiri din Burnouf îmi ofereau temelia *Visărilor budiste* și ciclului *Din Samisen* al aceluiași volum”.

16. In *Opere I: Poezii (1906-1918)*, 1983, p. 377.

17. As I was fortunate enough to discuss Pillat’s readings from Burnouf in the same ancient edifice of the Sorbonne where he studied (*Histoire des études indiennes en Europe occidentale et orientale [18e-19e siècles]. Quatre conférences à l’École Pratique des Hautes Études*, Paris, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Historiques et Philologiques, 2005, p. 215 n. 250).

18. Alas not (as in Dinu Pillat, *Itinerarii istorico-literare*, ediție de George Muntean, Bucharest: Minerva, 1978, p. 11, then in Dinu Pillat, *Mozaic istorico-literar. Secolul XX [1969, 1971, 1998]*, ediție îngrijită de Monica Pillat și George Ardeleanu, București: Humanitas, 2013, p. 216) “Bournouf”.

19. From the works of Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852) mandatory also for Romanian literary critics and historians of culture, foremost is *Introduction à l’histoire du buddhisme indien*, Tome Premier, Paris: Imprimerie Royale, MDCCCXLIV, now also available as *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, translated by Katia Buffetrille and Donald S. Lopez jr., Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2010. Pillat might have read a “deuxième édition, rigoureusement conforme à l’édition originale et précédée d’une notice de M. Barthélemy-Saint Hilaire sur les travaux de M. Eugène Burnouf”, Bibliothèque orientale, publiée sous la direction d’un comité scientifique international. Chefs-d’Œuvres littéraires de l’Inde, de la Perse, de l’Égypte et de la Chine, tome troisième, Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie, MDCCCLXXVI. On Burnouf’s Buddhist work, see Akira Yuyama, *Eugène Burnouf. The Background to his Research into the Lotus Sutra*, Tokyo: International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, 2000, with my review in *Archaeus. Studies in the History of Religions* 4 (2000), fasc. 4, pp. 275-279; Donald S. Lopez Jr., “Burnouf and the Birth of Buddhist Studies”, *The Eastern Buddhist* n.s. 43 (2012), pp. 35-44 as well as Jonathan A.

Silk, “A Missed Opportunity. Review article of Eugène Burnouf 2010”, *History of Religions* 51 (2012), no. 3, pp. 262-272. My previous study of Eugène Burnouf’s works as well as unpublished manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France also includes “Eugène Burnouf, l’inconnu: les inédits du Fonds Burnouf à la Bibliothèque Nationale”, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Historiques et Philologiques, at the invitation of Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat, directeur d’études, membre de l’Institut, Paris, 4 April 2004, cf. *Livret-Annuaire de l’EPHE* 19 (2003-2004), p. 408; “L’époque d’Eugène Burnouf: la découverte du bouddhisme (1822-1852)”, Société Ernest Renan. Association française d’histoire des religions, École Normale Supérieure, Paris, 19 March 2005; and “Eugène Burnouf, élève et successeur”, International conference *Antoine-Léonard de Chézy et les débuts des études sanskrites en Europe, 1800-1850*, celebrating the bicentenary of the Chair of Sanskrit of the Collège de France, Paris, Collège de France | Bibliothèque nationale de France, 9-10 June 2015.

20. As I proposed in *Histoire des études indiennes en Europe occidentale et orientale (18e-19e siècles)*, Paris, 2005.

21. Peter M. Scharf, “Providing Access to Manuscripts in the Digital Age”, in Justin Thomas McDaniel and Lynn Ransom (eds.), *From Mulberry Leaves to Silk Scrolls. New Approaches to the Study of Asian Manuscript Traditions*, Lawrence J. Schoenberg Studies in Manuscript Culture vol. 1, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015, pp. 231-271 (here 233, italics mine).

22. David Edwin Pingree (1933-2005), of Brown University (Providence, RI), incidentally a friend of Arion Roșu, to whose Festschrift I edited in 2004 only illness prevented him to contribute a Sanskrit text left unstudied since then.

23. As I was able since 1997 to discuss them in other settings, there are certainly several thousand titles of some worth corresponding to the last two centuries, but the older unpublished bibliographies mentioned only a part: Zoe Bașta, *Lucrări despre India editate în România*, bibliografie nepublicată: 54 titluri de cărți în limba română, editate între anii 1897-1965, București: Biblioteca Centrală de Stat, 1966; Elena Varone, Nicolae Răduică, Zoe Bașta, *India, bibliografie nepublicată*, 91 titluri de cărți și articole din periodice în limba română, editate între anii 1897-1966, București: Biblioteca Centrală de Stat, 1968; *India: bibliografie nepublicată*, 324 titluri de cărți și articole din periodice în limbile română, franceză și engleză, editate între anii 1834-1971, București: Biblioteca Centrală de Stat, 1972; Maria Popescu, *Cultura indiană în România: bibliografie nepublicată*, 210 titluri de cărți și articole din periodice în limbile română, franceză, engleză, germană și italiană, editate între anii 1875-1986, București: Biblioteca Centrală de Stat, 1976, as indicated by Biblioteca Națională a României. *Bibliografii nepublicate, 1957-2009*. Lucrare realizată pe baza arhivei Biroului Referințe bibliografice, București: Biblioteca Națională a României, 2009, 390 pp.

<http://www.bibnat.ro/dyn-doc/bibliografii-nepublicate.pdf>

24. I am following here Jason Harding, “Making Strange’: Non-Translation in The Waste Land”, in Jason Harding and John Nash (eds.), *Modernism and Non-Translation*, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 117-136.

25. For the German context, see e.g. Douglas McGetchin, Peter K. J. Park, Damodar SarDesai (eds.), *Sanskrit and ‘Orientalism’. Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750-1958*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2004.

26. Against the colonial domination of English in Asian studies, August Wilhelm von Schlegel said everything, and not even in his native language, while replying to James Mackintosh in 1832: “En lisant avec attention le *Prospectus*, je me trouve d’abord arrêté par un doute. Les langues dans lesquelles doivent être écrits les livres, dont on demande des traductions, y sont énumérées, et je me réserve quelques remarques sur cette énumération. Mais il n’est dit nulle part en quelle langue ces livres doivent être traduits. Cependant le mot traduction, pris isolément et sans aucune épithète qui le détermine plus spécialement, ne signifie pas le transport d’un texte quelconque dans la langue anglaise. Les savans étrangers demanderont donc naturellement, si le Comité se propose de ne point admettre au concours des traductions faites dans quelque autre langue européenne, par exemple en latin [as used for instance in his own translation from the Sanskrit, in 1823 the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as *Thespesion melos*, or in the letters of Creuzer to Rémusat, 1826-1830] ou en français ? Je présume que l’allemand est exclu de prime abord”, see A. W. de Schlegel, *Réflexions sur l’étude des langues asiatiques adressées à Sir James Mackintosh, suivies d’une lettre à M. Horace Hayman Wilson* [et d’un appendice, A-F], Bonn: Ed. Weber | Paris: N. Maze, 1832, xii-208 p. (here 6).

27. For a short overview of Eastern European Indian, Buddhist and comparative studies around 1900, see E. Ciurtin, “Eastern Europe”, in Gregory D. Alles (ed.), *Religious Studies: A Global View*, London-New York: Routledge, 2007 [2008], repr. 2010, pp. 50-74.

28. In the critical edition (op. cit., 1983, pp. 61 and 377), both mistaken ‘Baghavat’ are alas preserved.

29. *Lămuriri*, p. 54: “faptă; faptă omenească săvârșită, – privită ca bună ori rea. Aduce drept răsplătă plăcere sau chin făptuitorului în viața aceasta sau într’o viață viitoare. Karmanul unui om determină forma și felul vieților lui successive în decursul evoluției lumii (Sa[m]sāra)”.

30. For a fuller discussion following a breakthrough by Jens Schlieter, see my “Karma accounts: supplementary thoughts on Theravāda, Madhyamaka, theosophy, and Protestant Buddhism”, *Religion* 43 (2013), no. 4, pp. 487-498 and “Karma Accounts Anew: Rejoinder to Religion 43.4 (2013)”, *Archaeus. Studies in the History of Religions* 19-20 (2015-2016), pp. 291-294.

31. To say something about the very contemporaneous and all-pervading cohesion of Indic public culture on such cardinal concepts: the India’s Supreme Court judge

Rohinton Fali Nariman spoke on November 16, 2019 on “Reincarnation and a Comparative Religious Perspective” in a reputed venue in New Delhi, as anonymously reported, “Karma tends to explain everything: justice Nariman”, *The Times of India*, 16 November 2019.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/karma-tends-to-explain-everything-justice-nariman/articleshow/72091029.cms>.

32. Better, however, than the title of his next volume, *Eternități de-o clipă (Instant eternities, 1914)*, which appears to be fully un-poetic with its collegiate oxymoron.

33. G.[arabet] Ibrăileanu, *Opere*, vol. 9, ediție îngrijită de Al. Piru și Rodica Rotaru, București: Minerva, 1980, p. 471.

34. Ion Pillat, “Mărturisiri”, op. cit., 1942, p. 276. “Colonial Geography” meant of course mostly Asian and African geography, the coined name of the class expressing colonial arrogance in full.

35. Dinu Pillat, *Itinerarii istorico-literare*, ediție de George Muntean, Bucharest: Minerva, 1978, p. 20.

36. To give a hint on how functions the robust verve of Burnouf’s scholarly French, the following passage appears as classical, as it represents the historical breakthrough Burnouf made and also the configuration of the troubles any implied reader needed to overcome for generations after: “Ai-je besoin de rappeler que, pour quelques personnes, toutes les questions relatives au Bouddhisme étaient déjà décidées, quand on n’avait pas encore lu une seule ligne des livres que j’analyserai tout à l’heure, quand l’existence de ces livres n’était pas même soupçonnée de qui que ce fût ? Pour les uns, le Bouddhisme était un vénérable culte né dans l’Asie centrale, et dont l’origine se perdait dans la nuit des temps ; pour les autres, c’était une misérable contrefaçon du Nestorianisme ; on avait fait de Buddha un Nègre, parce qu’il avait les cheveux crépus ; un Mongol, parce qu’il avait les yeux obliques ; un Scythe, parce qu’il se nommait Çākya. On en avait même fait une planète ; et je ne sais pas si quelques savants ne se plaisent pas encore aujourd’hui à retrouver ce sage paisible sous les traits du belliqueux Odin” (1844, pp. 69-70 | 2010, pp. 112-113: “Do I need to recall that, for some people, all the questions related to Buddhism were already decided, when no one had read a single line of the books I shall analyze shortly, when the existence of these books was not even suspected by anyone? For some, Buddhism was a venerable cult born in Central Asia, and whose origin was lost in the mists of time; for others it was a miserable counterfeit of Nestorianism; the Buddha has been made a Negro, because he had frizzy hair; a Mongol, because he had slanted eyes; a Scythe, because he was called Śākya. He has even been made a planet; and I do not know whether some scholars do not still delight today in recognizing this peaceful sage in the traits of the bellicose Odin”.)

37. Cf. his review from *Religious Studies Review* 37 (2011), no. 4, p. 304.

38. Nevertheless, I was not able to trace any East European

correspondent of him in N[ouvelles] A[cquisitions] F[rançaises] 10596. *Correspondance d'Allemagne, Belgique, Danemark, Italie, Russie et Suisse*, 528 f. | NAF 10597. *Correspondance d'Angleterre*, 419 f. | NAF 10598. *Correspondance d'Inde*, 240 f. Division des Manuscrits occidentaux, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

39. On Odobescu's own catalogue of books including Burnouf and dozens of English, French and German Asian scholars, see *OAI*, 2017, pp. 153-155.

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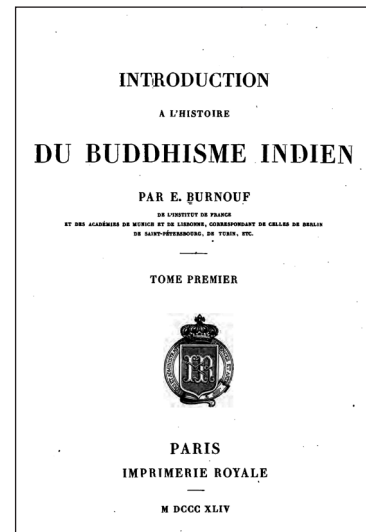
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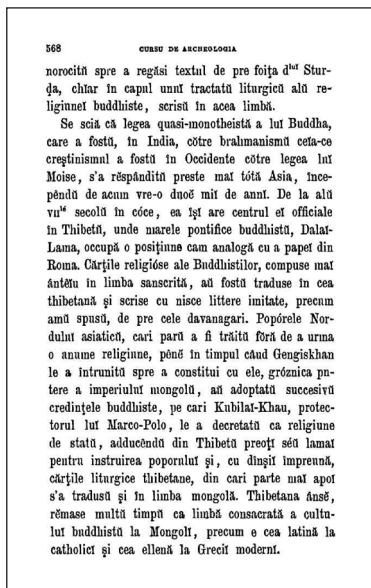
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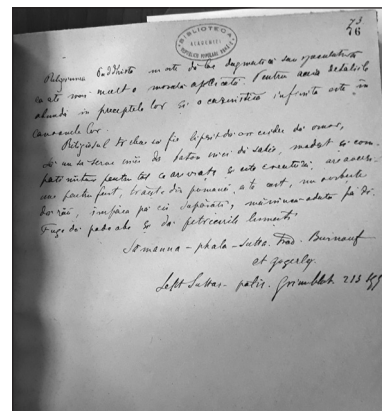
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Front page of the first history of Buddhism outside Asia: Eugène Burnouf's 1844 book, written directly from a seven years reading of hundreds of Sanskrit manuscripts never opened before outside Asia.



A 1877 page by Al. Odobescu reading *buddhism*: he discusses the single Tibetan *prajñāpāramitā* text discovered in Romania (lectures of 1874-1875 published as *Istoria archeologiei. Studiu introductiv la această știință. Prelegeri ținute la Facultatea de Litere din București*, Bucuresci: Socecă și C^{nia}, 1877).



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