The Description of Sāgala (present-day Sialkot) in an Ancient Buddhist Text

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Abstract: An elaborate description of Sāgala as an ideal type of city is contained in the *Milindapañha*, "The Questions of King Milinda", namely in the introductory story of this Buddhist text. Although being highly stereotyped, the description offers valuable clues regarding the ideals of urban planning in the north of ancient Pakistan. This account, like the more general depictions of city life in the text, reveals the well-planned and cosmopolitan character of towns in the north of Pakistan in the last century BCE and the first centuries CE.

Keywords: Sāgala, Sialkot, *Milindapañha*, Buddhism

Introduction

The city of Sāgala (in Pāli) or Śākala (in Sanskrit) is referred to in a number of textual sources. Due to its location between the rivers Chenab and Ravi, most scholars agree to identify ancient Sāgala or Śākala with present-day Sialkot in Panjab, Pakistan (Law, 1969: 401-409; Sircar, 1971: 101, 113, 199, 203, 238f, 244).

An elaborate description of Sāgala as the ideal type of city is contained in the *Milindapañha*, "The Questions of King Milinda", a postcanonical or paracanonical Buddhist text of the Theravāda tradition in Pāli (von Hinüber, 1996: 82-86). It reports on a (fictitious) dialogue between the Indo-Greek king Menandros (in Pāli: Milinda) and a Buddhist monk named Nāgasena. The *Milindapañha* is still very popular among Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Myanmar (Rhys Davids, 1890: XI). The oldest dated manuscript of the *Milindapañha* was written in Thailand in the year 1495 CE, possibly having been copied from a manuscript in Sinhalese script (von Hinüber, 1987: 111-119). The *Milindapañha* is a heterogeneous text with different chronological layers. The work probably received its present form before 400 CE, as it was known to Buddhaghosa, the famous 5th-century Theravāda scholar, who quoted from its younger portions (Rhys Davids, 1890: XIV). Out of the seven chapters of the extant Pāli versions, the first three belong to the oldest layers of the text, being translated into Chinese in the 3rd/4th century. This shorter, original version was probably composed in the Gandhāra region and perhaps written in the Gāndhārī language (von Hinüber, 1996: 83), the Prākrit dialect of this area. A strong argument in favour of this localisation is the historic figure behind one of the two protagonists, who also appears in the title: Milinda alias Menandros, the famous Indo-Greek king who ruled over large parts of what is today Pakistan roughly between 165 and 130 BCE.

The reference to Menandros is important for the dating of the text, whose oldest parts cannot be earlier than the late 2nd century BCE and not much younger than the 1st century CE, when the memory of this Indo-Greek ruler may have been still fresh enough to make him the title character. According to Oskar von Hinüber (1996: 85), this portion "should have been composed between 100 BC and 200 AD". Interestingly enough, the text itself states that the encounter between Milinda and Nāgasena took place 500 years after the death of the Buddha.[1]

Description of the city of Sāgala

The description of the city of Sāgala is part of the introductory story of the *Milindapañha* in its present form. Sāgala is depicted as the town where king Milinda resided and where the dialogues between him and the Buddhist monk Nāgasena allegedly took place. It is said that Milinda had become "king in the city of Sāgala on the 'continent of the rose-apple [tree]'",[2] and that Sāgala "was a trading centre of the Indo-Greeks (Yonaka)".[3] Later in the text, the distance between Sāgala and Kashmir (in Pāli: Kasmīra) is given as 12 *yojana*s (Trenckner, 1928: 83).[4]

The description of Sāgala,[5] although highly stereotyped, offers valuable clues regarding the ideals of urban planning in the north of ancient Pakistan. The city is portrayed as: "adorned by rivers and hills; a spot in a delightful region of the earth; endowed with gardens, parks, groves, lakes, ponds; a lovely scenery of rivers, hills, and woods; planned by learned people; [due to] its adversaries and enemies being destroyed, free

from oppression; possessing diverse, manifold, and strong watch towers and fortifications, excellent and outstanding town gates and doorways; its palace being surrounded by deep moats and white walls; possessing well-laid-out streets, crossroads, squares, marketplaces; its shops being filled with many kinds of excellent, well-displayed goods; richly adorned by hundreds of diverse alms halls; decorated with hundreds of thousands of excellent buildings resembling the peaks of the Himālaya; crowded with elephant troops, cavalry, chariot troops, and infantry; frequented by groups of beautiful men and women; densely populated; housing numerous *kṣatriya*s, *brāhmaṇa*s, *vaiśya*s, and śūdras;[6] resounding with the salutations for ascetics (*samaṇa*) and priests (*brāhmaṇa*);[7] inhabited by great scholarly men of different [fields]; endowed with shops offering Kāsi, Koṭumbara, and various other textiles; odoriferous through shops [selling] well-displayed, exquisite, and assorted flowers and perfumes; filled with desirable great jewels; frequented by groups of elegant merchants who run well-displayed shops in all quarters; filled with money, silver, gold, brass, and stoneware; an abode of shining treasures; possessing abundant wealth, corn, riches, commodities, full warehouses and granaries, many foods and drinks, different eatable, edible, lickable, and drinkable delicacies".

The ideal city

Like several other Buddhist texts, the *Milindapañha*, contains a number of references to urban life in general. As Buddhism received its support predominantly from city dwellers, this interest in the urban milieu can be hardly surprising. Besides the account on Sāgala, however, there is only one more passage referring to urban life at length. This is the description of the planning of a kind of model town (*dhamma-nagara*) by a city architect (*nagara-vaḍḍhaki*). The phrases used in this passage, which belongs to the later layers of the text,[8] are very similar to those in the report on Sāgala in the introductory story. But what distinguishes this later passage on the ideal city from the earlier one on Sāgala is an extensive list of people who would come to live there. Some hundred groups of potential residents are enumerated, and despite its being highly idealised, this inventory gives a good impression of the social fabric of towns in the north of Pakistan (and in the

northwest of India) in the last century BCE and the first centuries CE.

The 'catalogue' begins with the four *varṇa*s of the Brahmanical model of social hierarchy (in Buddhist sequence), i.e. *khaṭṭiya*s, *brāhmaṇa*s, *vessa*s, and *sudda*s, and with the four divisions of a traditional army, i.e. elephant [troops], cavalry, chariot [troops], and infantry, which were also mentioned in the description of Sāgala.[9] These are followed by other military subgroups, from bowmen, swordsmen, and standard bearers up to cooks and barbers.[10] Large numbers of specialised handicrafts are also itemised,[11] e.g. different kinds of smiths, namely those working with gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, brass, and iron,[12] and traders of different foodstuffs, namely sellers of leaves, fruits, roots, [boiled] rice, cakes, fish, meat, and strong drinks.[13] These are followed by some groups of artists, who had usually not a high rank in society, namely actors, dancers, acrobats, magicians, bards, and wrestlers.[14] Then some other lower professions are also itemised: cremators and cleaners[15] as well as the Venas (or Veṇas) and Nisādas (in Sanskrit: Niṣāda), two of the so-called mixed *varṇa*s of the Brahmanical system (Monier-Williams, 1899: 561, 1014). These are followed by three female designations: *gaṇikā*, 'courtesan', *lāsikā*, 'dancing girl', and *kumbhadāsi* (in Sanskrit: *kumbhadāsī*), 'harlot'.[16]

Eventually, the list is completed by the enumeration of altogether 18 categories of strangers, named after their respective ethnicity or their place of origin: the Indo-Scythians (Saka),[17] the Indo-Greeks (here: Yavana),[18] the Chinese (Cīna),[19] and the Vilātas,[20] the people from Ujjeni (Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, India),[21] from Bharukaccha (Bharuch in Gujarat, India),[22] from Kāsi (i.e. the region of Benares in Uttar Pradesh, India),[23] from Kosala (also in Uttar Pradesh),[24] and from the west coast (i.e. the Konkan region in Maharashtra, India),[25] from Magadha (i.e. Bihar, India),[26] from Sāketa (in present-day Uttar Pradesh),[27] from Suraṭṭha (i.e. Kathiawar in Gujarat),[28] from Paṭheyya,[29] from Koṭumbara[30] and Madhurā (Mathurā in Uttar Pradesh),[31] from Alasanda,[32] from Kasmīra,[33] and from Gandhāra.[34] This detailed enumeration of strangers is perhaps the most interesting part of the whole list of potential inhabitants of the model town, as it reveals a great openness to non-natives and thus also to foreign

influence in the cities of north Pakistan in the last century BCE and the first centuries CE.

Interestingly enough, the list starts with 'foreigners' in the narrower sense of the word, i.e. with ethnic groups who had migrated from areas outside the subcontinent or from its borderlands: the Sakas, Yavanas, Cīnas and Vilātas. The rest of the list comprises migrants (and merchants) from the subcontinent, but is not systematic in terms of their geographical arrangement. Mathurā on the river Yamunā in present-day Uttar Pradesh was an important commercial hub and a point of intersection for the trade routes from Taxila in the northwest, Ujjayinī / Ujjeni towards the south, and Pāṭaliputra / -putta in the east. People from the famous trading centre of Ujjeni are explicitly mentioned in the text, together with those from the well-known port of Bharukaccha in Gujarat, which served as a major link of the land routes with the maritime trade. Merchants from the west coasts of Konkan (Aparānta / Aparanta) and Kathiawar (Surāṣṭra / Suraṭṭha) are listed as well. Besides, there are also references to potential inhabitants from the eastern edge of the land routes, i.e. from the Gangetic Plains: (1) from the region of Benares (Kāsi), (2) from the area around Ayodhyā (Kosala), north of Benares, and (3) from the area around Pāṭaliputra / -putta (Magadha), east of Benares. These were three of the altogether sixteen kingdoms (*janapada*) of the Buddha's lifetime, i.e. of the early Buddhist period, which are frequently referred to in Buddhist texts and associated with Buddha-related events. Benares is also characterised as a centre of textile production. At the end of the list, strangers from the northwest of the subcontinent are enumerated, namely those from Gandhāra and Kasmīra. Another hub for textile production – Koṭumbara – has been identified by Przyluski with the country of the ancient Udumbaras, i.e. the region around present-day Pathankot in the eastern Panjab (Przyluski, 1960: 1-33).

Although the list of strangers is included in the description of a non-specific model town, the geographical information would be also suitable for a depiction of Sāgala: The *Milindapañha* itself records that Yavanas lived there; and after Milinda's rule, this area was part of a Saka kingdom. Sāgala must have been in close cultural contact with neighbouring areas in Panjab, with Kashmir, and with the Gandhāra region. Besides, it was situated

on the long-distance trade route to Mathurā and other towns further east and south. Not all places mentioned in the list were part of his kingdom, but some scholars believe that Menandros conquered large parts of Northern India and perhaps even reached Pāṭaliputra / -putta, where the Śuṅga dynasty ruled (Kulke / Rothermund, 2004: 75; Wojtilla, 2000: 495-504). The 1st-century Greek text *Periplus Maris Erythraei* claims that coins of Menandros were still to be found in Barygaza (Casson, 1989: § 47), ancient Bharukaccha, some 1,300 km to the south of Sāgala. Whereas this information has been taken for granted by many authors (Marshall, 1951: 765; Tarn, 1966: 149; Kulke / Rothermund, 2004: 75), some doubts regarding the credibility of this statement have been raised recently, as no significant finds of coins of Menandros are reported from Bharuch (Holt, 2012: 159).

Trading Partners

Three of the places where potential inhabitants of the model town might come from are also mentioned in another passage of the *Milindapañha*.[35] The text alludes that a rich shipowner (*nāvika*) may sail to certain coasts and harbours, such as Vaṅga, Takkola, Cīna,[36] Sovīra, Suraṭṭha, Alasanda, Kolapaṭṭana, and Suvaṇṇabhūmi. Vaṅga is an ancient name of Bengal (Monier-Williams, 1899: 912; Sircar, 1971: 131-148). Takkola was an emporium on the Malay Peninsula, on the west coast of the Isthmus of Kra (Coedès, 1968: 39), a land neck in present-day Thailand.[37] Sovīra (in Sanskrit: Sauvīra) has been located by Eggermont (1975: 148) in the Lasbela region, including the coastal stretches between the Hab and Hingol rivers, in Pakistan's Baluchistan.[38] Kolapaṭṭana has been identified by Rhys Davids (1890: XLIV) with a port at the Coromandel Coast in the southeastern part of India. For Gunawardana (1987: 54-89), it appeared much more plausible to identify it with Jambukolapaṭṭana, located in the Jaffna Peninsula of Sri Lanka. The location of Suvaṇṇabhūmi ('land of gold') has been a highly debated topic. It appears that Suvaṇṇabhūmi was a rather general term for the region to the east of the subcontinent. It was probably first used by merchants from the Indian subcontinent to refer to the coastal areas of Southeast Asia from Lower Burma to Sumatra (Revire, 2011: 79f.).

The localisation of Alasanda is also very

doubtful. This town was probably one of the cities named 'Alexandria' after Alexander the Great. In the *Milindapañha*, it is mentioned in several passages, inter alia in connection with the birth place of king Milinda, where it is called an island (*dīpa*; in Sanskrit: *dvīpa*).[39] Rhys Davids (Rhys Davids, 1890: XXIII) identified it with 'Alexandria on the Indus', i.e. in Pakistan,[40] whereas Horner (1963: 114) in her translation of the *Milindapañha* pointed to 'Alexandria on the Caucasus' (i.e. on the Hindukush), in Afghanistan.[41] If all occurrences of 'Alasanda' in the text refer to the same place, its location near Kabul seems to be highly unlikely, as this would contradict its being described as a port. For this and other reasons, Sylvain Lévi (1936: 121-133) has favoured an identification of Alasanda with 'Alexandria in Egypt'.[42] Tarn (1966: 420f), on the other hand, has argued that only in the passage describing the maritime trade, Alasanda means 'Alexandria in Egypt'. In all other passages it should be taken as 'Alexandria on the Caucasus'. However, there is still one more option, namely to identify Alasanda in all four passages with 'Alexandria on the mouth of the Indus', in Pakistan.[43]

In the same way as in the inventory of potential inhabitants of a newly founded city, the list of coastal stretches and specific ports also does not show any sign of systematic geographic approach.[44] After the sequence Vaṅga (Bengal) – Takkola (on the Malay Peninsula) – Cīna (probably southeastern China), the enumeration returns to the subcontinent mentioning Sovīra (the coast of Baluchistan) and Suraṭṭha (the peninsula of Kathiawar). This is followed by Alasanda (either Alexandria in Egypt or Alexandria on the mouth of the Indus), Kolapaṭṭana (a harbour either in South India or in the north of Sri Lanka), and Suvaṇṇabhūmi (coastal stretches in Southeast Asia again).

Despite all our difficulties in identifying the toponyms, the list of destinatons for commercial sailors in the *Milindapañha* illustrates that the merchants of the landlocked cities in the north of ancient Pakistan, situated at least 1,300 km off the seashore, were not only well connected via land routes with other regions of the subcontinent and beyond, but were also well informed about the potential of maritime trade in South and Southeast Asia and probably towards the west, too. The long-

distance trade with the Roman Empire started during the rule of the Indo-Greeks and the Indo-Scythians in ancient Pakistan, but reached its climax under the Kuṣāṇas, who ruled over the northwestern and northern parts of the subcontinent in the first centuries CE. And this was exactly the period when the *Milindapañha* received its final shape.

Conclusion

The description of Sāgala (present-day Sialkot), like the more general depictions of city life in the *Milindapañha*, reveals the well-planned, multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of towns in the north of Pakistan in the last century BCE and the first centuries CE. The cosmopolitan outlook of the cities was not only due to foreign invasion and long-distance trade. It was also linked to the influence of Buddhism. This impact is reflected in the *Milindapañha* in a passage promulgating that the place of residence, and implicitly the place of origin, of a person is irrelevant for his prospective attainment of *nibbāṇa* (in Sanskrit: *nirvāṇa*). The ultimate goal of Buddhism can be attained regardless of the fact whether one is among the Sakas or Yavanas, in Cīna or Vilāta, in Alasanda, in Nikumba,[45] in Kāsi or Kosala, in Kasmīra or in Gandhāra or elswhere.[46] This statement shows that the Buddhist approach was rather different from the Brahmanical tendency of compartmentalisation against strangers and foreigners.

Notes

1   Trenckner, 1928, 3, line 22. In the *Milindapañha*, this is put into the form of a prophecy by the Buddha. According to Bechert (1991-1997), the date of the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha was around 380 CE.

2   Trenckner, 1928, 3, lines 26f.: *jambudīpe sāgalanagare milindo nāma rājā ahosi*. Jambudīpa (in Sanskrit: Jambudvīpa), 'continent of the rose-apple', is the old name for the Indian subcontinent.

3   Trenckner, 1928, 1, lines 13f.: *yonakānaṃ nānāpuṭabhedanaṃ sāgalan nāma nagaraṃ*. The Yonakas were Indo-Greeks.

4   In secondary literature, the length of one

yojana is usually specified as ranging between 10 and 15 km, which would make the distance from Sākala to Kasmīra anything between 120 and 180 km. The linear distance between Sialkot and Srinagar, for instance, amounts to some 180 km. In the introductory story of the *Milindapañha*, the distance from an (unidentified) hermitage named Vattaniya to Pāṭaliputta (Patna in Bihar) is given as 100 *yojana*s; cf. Trenckner, 1928, 16, line 25.

5   Trenckner, 1928, 1, line 13 − 2, line 15. But it is doubtful whether this description belonged to the original introductory story. According to some scholars, the original *Milindapañha* started from line 23 on page 2, i.e. after the description of Sāgala; cf. von Hinüber, 1996, 85.

6   These are the four *varṇa*s of Brahmanism in the (modified) sequence usually found in Buddhist texts, i.e. beginning with the *kṣatriya varṇa* (in Pāli: *khattiya*) instead of the *brāhmaṇa varṇa*.

7   The term *samaṇa* (in Sanskrit: *śramaṇa*) denotes ascetic adherents of anti-Brahmanical doctrines, in particular Buddhist and Jaina monks; cf. Monier-Williams, 1899, 1096.

8   Trenckner, 1928, 330, line 17 − 331, line 23. According to von Hinüber (1996, 85), this passage belongs to the third part of the *Milindapañha*.

9   For the four *varṇa*s, see above, fn. 6. The four divisions of the army are paraphrased as *gaja-haya-ratha-patti* (Trenckner, 1928, 2, line 3) in the account on Sāgala, and as *hatthāroha*, *assāroha*, *rathika*, and *pattika* in the description of the model town (Trenckner, 1928, 331, line 3).

10 Trenckner, 1928, 331, lines 3-6: *dhanuggahā tharuggahā celakā … āḷārikā sudā kappakā nahāpakā*.

11 Trenckner, 1928, 331, lines 6-14. They were apparently producing for military as well as for civilian demand.

12 Trenckner, 1928, 331, lines 7f.: *suvaṇṇakārā sajjhakārā sīsakārā tipukārā lohakārā vaṭṭakārā ayakārā*.

13 Trenckner, 1928, 331, lines 12-14. The sellers of strong drinks are called *majjika*, which is derived from *majja* (in Sanskrit: *madya*), 'intoxicant, intoxicating drink, wine, spirits'; cf. Rhys Davids / Stede, 1924, part 6, 138.

14 Trenckner, 1928, 331, line 14: *naṭakā naccakā laṅghakā indajālikā vetālikā mallā*.

15 Trenckner, 1928, 331, line 15: *chavaḍāhakā pupphachaḍḍakā*, lit. 'corpse burners [and] flower removers'.

16 Monier-Williams, 1899, 293, 343, 899. Literally, *kumbhadāsī* means 'female slave of the pot'.

17 For 'Śaka' in Sanskrit, see Monier-Williams, 1899, 1045. See also Sircar 1971, 199f.

18 Monier-Williams 1899, 848. Particularly in the older portions of the *Milindapañha*, and with reference to king Milinda and his entourage, the Pāli term 'Yonaka' occurs; cf. Trenckner, 1928, 1, 4, 19-21, 23, 27f., 68, 87. The Sanskritised term 'Yavana' is, however used in the younger portions, and here always in the compound word 'Saka-Yavana'; Trenckner 1928, 327f., 331. See also Sircar, 1971, 196-200.

19 This term also occurs in other contexts; cf. Trenckner, 1928, 121, 327f., 331, 359. According to some scholars, 'Cīna' refers to the Tibetans, not to the Chinese; cf. Dikshit / Dikshit, 2014, 206. But this interpretation does not match with its use in the *Milindapañha*, where Cīna also refers to a kingdom situated at the sea coast; see below, fn. 36.

20 In the *Milindapañha*, the term only occurs in the compound 'Cīna-Vilāta'; cf. Trenckner, 1928, 327f., 331. Rhys Davids leaves 'Vilāta' untranslated (Rhys Davids, 1894, 211) or translates it as 'Tartary' (ibid., 204). For Vilāta < Cilāta < Kirāta, a term for some Himālayan tribes, see Singh, 2008, 119 f.

21 For Ujjayinī, see Monier-Williams, 1899, 174. In Greek sources, it was called Ozene; cf. Casson, 1989, § 48.

22 For the Sanskritised version of this place name, i.e. Bhṛgukaccha, see Monier-Williams, 1899, 765. In Greek sources, the

town was called Barygaza; cf. Casson, 1989, §§ 14, 21, 27, 31f., 36, 40-45, 47f., 50-52, 56f., 64.

23 For the country of Kāśi in Sanskrit, see Monier-Williams, 1899, 280. In the description of the city of Sāgala, Kāsi is referred to, together with Koṭumbara, as a centre of textile production; cf. Trenckner, 1928, 2, line 7. It also appears in other passages, namely in the compound word 'Kāsi-Kosala'; cf. Trenckner, 1928, 327f., 331.

24 For the country of Kosala, see Monier-Williams, 1899, 314.

25 For Pāli *aparanta* / Sanskrit *aparānta*, literally 'the western extremity' (Monier-Williams, 1899, 50), as a designation used to refer to the Konkan coast, see Sircar, 1971, 189, 227; Olivelle, 2013, 461.

26 For the country of Magadha, see Monier-Williams, 1899, 772. Its capital was Pāṭaliputta; see above, fn. 4.

27 Sāketa was a city in the country of Kosala; see above, fn. 24. The town is sometimes identified with Ayodhyā; cf. Monier-Williams, 1899, 1197.

28 Horner, 1964, 172, fn. 12. For the region of Surāṣṭra, see Monier-Williams, 1899, 1232. In Greek sources, it was called Syrastrene; cf. Casson, 1989, §§ 41, 44.

29 This place has not been identified.

30 See above, fn. 23. For a possible identification of Koṭumbara with the country of the ancient Udumbaras, i.e. the region around present-day Pathankot in the Indian Panjab, some 100 km to the east of Sialkot, see Przyluski, 1960, 1-33.

31 For the city of Mathurā in Sanskrit, see Monier-Williams, 1899, 777.

32 Alasanda was probably one of the cities named 'Alexandria' after Alexander the Great. It is also mentioned in other passages of the *Milindapañha*, cf. Trenckner, 1928, 82, 327f., 359. See also Sircar 1971, 230-233.

33 Kasmīra (in Sanskrit: Kaśmīra; cf. Monier-Williams, 1899, 265) is also mentioned

in other passages of the *Milindapañha*; cf. Trenckner, 1928, 82f., 327f. For the distance Sāgala – Kasmīra, see above, fn. 4.

34 The Gandhāra region is also mentioned in another passage of the *Milindapañha*; cf. Trenckner, 1928, 327f.

35 These are Cīna, Suraṭṭha, and Alasanda. See above, fn. 19, 28, 32.

36 This enumeration of 'Cīna' amongst several (sea) ports is my major argument against an interpretation of its rendering as 'Tibet' or 'Tibetans'. Another passage of the *Milindapañha* also draws a direct link between the king of China (*cīnarāja*) in the land of China (*cīnavisaya*; Sanskrit: *cīnaviṣaya*) and the ocean (*mahāsamudda*; Sanskrit: *mahāsamudra*); cf. Trenckner, 1928, 121.

37 'Takkola' is the Sanskrit name of a plant, i.e. Pimenta acris; cf. Monier-Williams, 1899, 431.

38 For another, now outdated, interpretation, see Sircar, 1971, 113.

39 Trenckner, 1928, 82. See also Sircar, 1971, 230-233.

40 This place may be identified with present-day Uch in Panjab; cf. Eggermont, 1993, 108.

41 Both identifications, however, do not seem to match the details given for the distance between Sāgala and Alasanda (i.e. 200 *yojana*s); cf. Trenckner, 1928, 82. See also above, fn. 4.

42 One of Lévi's arguments was the distance between Sāgala and Alasanda given in the Chinese text of the *Milindapañha*. The Pāli version has 200 *yojana*s, which would amount to some 2,000 or 3,000 km; see above, fn. 4. The Chinese text gives the distance as 2,000 *yojana*s, which looks more suitable for such a distant locality as 'Alexandria in Egypt'. However, 2,000 *yojana*s would amount to some 20,000 to 30,000 km, whereas the linear distance between Sialkot and Alexandria in Egypt is some 5,000 km. 'Alakanda', the Sanskrit equivalent for Pāli 'Alasanda', also occurs in a famous passage on corals in the *Kauṭilīya*

Arthaśāstra (2.11.42). In the interpretation of this passage, Scharfe (1993, 276-278) and Olivelle (2013, 461, 531) followed Sylvain Lévi in identifying this toponym with 'Alexandria in Egypt'.

43 This seems to be what Sircar (1971, 233) had in mind. The distance from Sialkot to the mouth of the Indus amounts to some 1,300 km and would thus not be the equivalent of, but come closest to, the 200 *yojana*s given in the Pāli text.

44 Sarkar (1981, 306) has even called these lists "a jumbling up of toponyms without any geographical order".

45 The toponym 'Nikumba' is not known from any other source.

46 Trenckner, 1928, 327f.

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