A SURVEY OF BUDDHIST SOGDIAN STUDIES

David A. Utz

BIBLIOGRAPHIA PHILLOGICA BUDDHICA

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David A. Utz
(New York)

The study of Buddhist literary remains in the Sogdian language began in the early years of the present century with the discovery in Chinese Central Asia of manuscript fragments in the Sogdian language. Of particular importance for the discovery of Buddhist Sogdian materials were the explorations of P. Pelliot (Pelliot 1910), A. Stein (Stein 1933, 169-89), and S. Oldenburg (Rosenberg 1918, 817-8) near the oasis of Tun-huang and those of A. Grünwedel and A. von Le Coq in the Turfan depression (Grünwedel 1906 and v. Le Coq 1926). With the safe arrival of the manuscript materials discovered by these expeditions in the respective European scientific institutions, their philological investigation was begun by various scholars.

The first Buddhist Sogdian scholar was R. Gauthiot who, together with Pelliot (Pelliot 1911), began the investigation of the Sogdian material which Pelliot had brought back to the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. During the years 1911-2 he published a series of remarkable articles based on the results of his work, including editions of a Sogdian version of the Dirghamakhasutra (Gauthiot 1911-2B) and a Sogdian version of the Vessantara Jataka (Gauthiot 1912), the first editions of any Buddhist Sogdian texts. When Gauthiot was killed during the First World War, it was a major blow to the new field. However, two posthumous works appeared, representing major advances in the field (Gauthiot-Pel-
liot 1920-8 and Gauthiot-Benveniste 1914-29). The former is an edition of a Sogdian translation of the Chinese apocryphal *Sūtra of the Causes and Effects of Good and Evil (Actions)* (Fo shuo shan o yin kuo ching 佛說善惡因果經, T. 2881)* and includes facsimile reproductions of both the Sogdian and Chinese texts, transcription of the Sogdian text, translation and notes to the Sogdian and Chinese texts, and a glossary to the Sogdian text. The latter was the first grammatical description of the Sogdian language, based primarily on Buddhist Sogdian materials. Begun by Gauthiot before his death, it was completed by E. Benveniste, who later completed the publication of the Sogdian material in the Pelliot collection through a facsimile edition of all the manuscripts (except P4, published in facsimile in Gauthiot-Pelliot 1920-8) (Benveniste 1940A) and a text edition of all those texts not previously published by Gauthiot (Benveniste 1940B). The latter included descriptions of the manuscripts, transliterations, translations, a glossary, and notes. In addition, it incorporated a re-edition of the Sogdian *Dirgha-nakhasūtra* (originally published by Gauthiot) and some corrections to Gauthiot’s edition of the *Vessantara Jātaka*. This was followed in 1946 by a complete re-edition of the *Vessantara Jātaka* (Benveniste 1946) on the model of *Textes sogdiens* which included, as well, a new translation of the *Sūtra of Causes and Effects* together with corrections to *Textes sogdiens*. Finally, in 1970, D. N. MacKenzie produced a new edition of the *Sūtra of Causes and Effects* (MacKenzie 1970).

As interest in Buddhist Sogdian materials grew, and the

* T. stands for the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*. 
circle of scholars active in their investigation gradually expanded, a number of reviews and studies of the publications of the Pelliot material appeared. These included discussions of Gauthiot's edition of the Vessantara Jataka by H. Reichelt (Reichelt 1926, 239-45) and I. Gershevitch (Gershevitch 1942), discussions of his edition of the Sutra of Causes and Effects by Reichelt (Reichelt 1926, 245-50, 1928B, and 1929), by W. Lentz (Lentz 1927 and 1932), and by F. Rosenberg 1931), a long study of Benveniste's Textes sogdiens by W. B. Henning (Henning 1943-6B), and reviews of MacKenzie's re-edition of the Sutra of Causes and Effects by M. Schwartz (Schwartz 1971), by H. Humbach (Humbach 1972A and 1972B), by J. W. de Jong (de Jong 1973), and by W. Sundermann (Sundermann 1974) to which MacKenzie returned in the first appendix to Buddhist Sogdian Textes of the British Library (MacKenzie 1976, II, 153-8). Also, in the notes to Manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch, Henning has incorporated a substantial number of comments on all Buddhist Sogdian material published previous to 1936 (see also below) (Henning 1937, 51-105 passim).

The investigation of the Buddhist Sogdian material from Tun-huang discovered by A. Stein and S. Oldenburg began almost as soon as that of the Pelliot material. The first manuscript fragments in the Stein collection to be published were five folios included by Gauthiot in his edition of the Vessantara Jataka (Gauthiot 1912, 171-3, 182-6, 437-45, 463-6), a fragment of the Mrīrutaṇḍaḥāraṇi in Brāhmī characters together with an interlinear transcription in Sogdian script, published by Gauthiot together with L. de La Vallée Poussin (de La Vallée Poussin-Gauthiot 1912), and a Sogdian version
of the *Padmācintāmatanidhāranīsūtra*, published by F. W. K. Müller (Müller 1926). During the same period Rosenberg published two Buddhist Sogdian fragments from the Oldenburg collection, one from an unidentified *jātaka* or *avādana*, and the other from the *Śukasūtra* (Rosenberg 1918-20). Most of the remaining material in the Stein collection was published by Reichelt (with the assistance of O. Hansen) in the period 1928-31 (including descriptions of the manuscripts, transliterations of the texts, and translations)(Reichelt 1928A and 1931). This was reviewed by Rosenberg (Rosenberg 1929 and 1932) and followed, beginning in 1928, by two series of articles, one by Benveniste (Benveniste 1928, 1933A, 1933B, and 1938), and the other by F. Weller (Weller 1935, 1936, 1937, and 1936-8). The articles by Benveniste included, in addition to revisions of the editions of various Stein fragments, the edition of four additional Stein fragments (Kao. 70-3), possibly from a Buddhist *jātaka* or *avādana* (Benveniste 1928), a translation by P. Demiéville of the passage from the Chinese *Buddhādhyānasamādhisāgarasūtra*, parallel to the fragmentary Sogdian version published by Reichelt (Reichelt 1928A, 33-56)(Benveniste 1933A, 195-213), and the probable identification (by Demiéville) of the Sogdian *Dhūta*-text (Reichelt 1928A, 15-32) as a Sogdian version of the Chinese apocryphal *sūtra*, *Fo weih weng p'u sa shuo t'ou t'o ching* 佛爲心王菩薩說投陀經 (T. 2886)(a fragmentary part of which survives in the Chinese Tun-huang material, although it does not correspond to the surviving Sogdian section)(Benveniste 1933A, 239-41). In the four studies by Weller, the fragmentary Sogdian versions of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra* (Reichelt 1928A, 1-13), the *Vajra-
chedikā (Reichelt 1931, 71-5), and the Buddhadyānasamādhi-
sāgarasūtra (Reichelt 1928A, 33-56) were compared in detail
with their Chinese prototypes. Finally, in 1976, there ap-
peared a revised edition of the major Buddhist Sogdian texts
In addition to including revised transliterations and trans-
lations of the Sogdian texts, MacKenzie has provided a glos-
sary, notes, photographic reproductions of the manuscripts
(reproduced for the first time), and a special glossary of
Buddhist terms in Sogdian, originally published separately
(MacKenzie 1971). The notes include text and translation of
the Chinese prototypes, when these exist (although no trans-
lation accompanies the Chinese text to the Padmaprintamāqi-
dhāraṇīsūtra or the Buddhadyānasamādhisāgarasūtra). In the
same year N. Sims-Williams published most of the remaining
Sogdian fragments of the Stein collection (Sims-Williams
1976). Although many of these fragments had been published
previously, some eighteen were published for the first time.
Of the fragments, 2a, 7-10a (10a previously unpublished)
and perhaps 11, 19 (previously unpublished) and 24-5 are
Buddhist.

Not only were manuscript remains of Buddhist Sogdian lit-

erature found by various European expeditions in the Tun-
huang oasis, but a considerable quantity of such material
was recovered from the Turfan depression by the German Tur-
fan expeditions sent out by the Museum für Völkerkunde, Ber-
lin. The investigation of the Turfan manuscripts was eventu-
ally entrusted to the Orientalische Kommission created in
1912 within the Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissen-
schaften (Meyer 1923 and Grapow 1950) under whose auspices
the interpretation and publication of the material in various Middle Iranian languages experienced various ups and downs (Lentz 1956 and Boyce 1960). The specifically Buddhist Sogdian material became one of the spheres of activity of F. W. K. Müller, who produced editions of four texts, included in his posthumous publication of various Buddhist and Christian Sogdian fragments (Müller-Lentz 1934). In 1936 Benveniste published a discussion of Müller's editions (Benveniste 1936, 207-27). After Müller's death, work on the Buddhist Sogdian fragments was continued by O. Hansen. Although Hansen published information concerning the progress of his work (Orientalische Kommission 1939, 1940, 1941, and 1942, and Hansen 1968), only one other Buddhist Sogdian text in this collection has ever been published; and, between 1942 and 1974 no work was done. The only other text to be edited was published by Henning in 1940 (Henning 1940), seven lines of which were also published by Hansen the same year (Hansen 1940, 139-41). Early in 1974 the present writer began to investigate the considerable quantity of this material which still remains unpublished and was able to identify and edit a Sogdian version (totaling 78 lines) of the Mahāyānist Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra (Utz 1976).

Intermittently, various publications appeared reflecting progress in the study of the paleography and grammar of Buddhist Sogdian texts. The study of the Sogdian/Uigur script in which the texts are invariably written began with an article by Gauthiot on the Sogdian alphabet (Gauthiot 1911a), and with his study of the Sogdian transcription of the Nīlakaṇṭhadrāpanī discussed above (de La Vallée Poussin-Gauthiot 1912, 630-45). This was followed by some remarks of Rosenberg on the ambiguities occasioned by the defective nature
of the script (Rosenberg 1931, 632–4), and, most recently, by two articles of Sims-Williams clarifying certain other ambiguities (Sims-Williams 1972 and 1975). A general discussion of the script and its development within the context of Aramaic scripts in Iran and Central Asia has been provided by Henning (Henning 1958). At the present time there is not any specific grammatical description of the Sogdian language of the Buddhist translation literature. Although the early grammar of Gauthiot-Benveniste (see above) was based primarily on Buddhist materials, it is, by now, obsolete. The more recent grammatical work of Gershevitch (Gershevitch 1945 and 1961), although compiled primarily on the basis of Manichean material, incorporates a substantial quantity of Buddhist material and is, therefore, useful for Buddhist texts.

The Buddhist Sogdian literature is a translation literature which reflects the Chinese Buddhist literature from which it was predominately translated. Although two Buddhist Sogdian texts are known from their colophons to have been translated from languages other than Chinese (Henning 1940, 61 and MacKenzie 1976, I, 10), almost all the texts which have been identified as one or another specific Buddhist text reflect the Chinese version(s) of the particular text to the point that various peculiarities of terminology and idiom of the Chinese version(s) are reflected directly in the Sogdian translation. Indeed, the Sogdian Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra is hardly even intelligible unless the assumption is made that it is a virtually literal character for character translation of a Chinese version (MacKenzie 1976, II, 13–27). And the translator of the Sūtra of Causes and Effects
has rendered several of the more obscure lexical items of this text simply by transcribing the Chinese words into Sogdian script (MacKenzie 1970, 42-77 passim). Even the "Sūtra of the condemnation of intoxicating drink," which, according to its colophon, was translated from an Indian text (MacKenzie 1976, I, 10), reflects so many features of expression peculiar to the texts clearly translated from Chinese that its most recent editor has assumed in his edition of the text that it was also translated from a Chinese original and that the term "Indian" in the colophon has been used subconsciously or to lend an air of authority to the sūtra (MacKenzie 1976, I, 7). It is not known with certainty when the various Buddhist Sogdian texts were translated. In only one case is the date (A.D. 728) of translation known (for the text of the "Sūtra of the condemnation of intoxicating drink") (MacKenzie 1976, II, 8). From this it may be reasonable to suspect that the majority of this translation literature dates from the main period of T'ang dynasty domination in Central Asia (last half of the 7th century and first half of the 8th century).

The following list (1) those Sogdian texts which can be identified with a particular extant Chinese Buddhist text (together with the corresponding Chinese passages), and (2) those for which an extant parallel text is not yet known, but for which some specific identity can be provided. In addition, there are (1) other published Buddhist texts of indeterminate identity and (2) unpublished texts (in the German Turfan collection):
(I)


(13) *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamaśūtra* (T. 665, vol. 16, 426a7-27)  
(Müller-Lentz 1934, 539-44)

(14) *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (T. 374, vol. 12, 585b6-c4)(Müller-Lentz 1934, 550-5)

(15) *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (II)(T. 374, vol. 12, 437b22-c)  
(Utz 1976)

(I)

(1) The *Dhūta*-text (= a lost portion of the extant text *Fo wei hein wang p’u sa shuo t’ou t’o ching* (T. 2886, vol. 85))(MacKenzie 1976, I, 33-51)

(2) *Avalokiteśvarasrāyanāśṭakasūtra* (independent recension)(Benveniste 1940B, 105-17 and Sims-Williams 1976, 51-3)

(3) *Śūkasūtra* (Rosenberg 1920)

(4) *Sañjñādharmasūtra* (?)(*ṃ'r’kh pōkth č? puś(l’k’)) (Henning 1940)

(5) "The *Śūtra* of the condemnation of meat and intoxicating drink"(P2)(Benveniste 1940B, 3-58)

(6) "The *Śūtra* of the condemnation of intoxicating drink"  
(MacKenzie 1976, I, 7-11)

(7) *Jātaka* or *Avadāna* concerning two brothers of differing qualities (cf. *Kalyāṇāṇkara* and *Pāpanākara*)(Rosenberg 1918, Reichelt 1928A, 57-9, and Sims-Williams 1976, 45, and (perhaps) 53)

(8) *Prasenajit*-text (conversation of the Buddha with the king Prasenajit concerning the *akravartin*)(Müller-
(9) Nīlakaṇṭhadhāraṇī (Sogdian transcription of Sanskrit text) (de La Vallée Poussin-Gauthiot 1912)

(10) Prajñāpāramitāḥṛdayasūtra / Pañcavinśatikāprajñāpāramitāḥṛdayadhāraṇī (P16) (Sogdian transcription of a corrupt Sanskrit text) (Benveniste 1940B, 142-3)

(11) P18 (Sogdian transcriptions of Sanskrit dhāraṇīs) (Benveniste 1940B, 148-9)
There remain two particular facets of the Buddhist Sogdian literature which merit some further discussion. One is the choice of texts to be translated into Sogdian and the other is the non-identity of certain Sogdian texts with any of the extant Chinese versions of the particular Buddhist text which the respective Sogdian text presumably represents.

The Buddhist texts which were translated into Sogdian are naturally a reflection of the contemporaneous literature of the Chinese Buddhist community. It is of note that the body of apocryphal sūtra literature peculiar to Chinese Buddhist literature is well-represented among those Sogdian texts which have been identified with a specific Chinese prototype (see above I.4 and II.1). Indeed, the extent to which this translation literature was influenced by the particular interests and preoccupations of the Chinese Buddhists is illustrated by the inclusion among the extant texts of a Sogdian translation of the Chinese text *Po shuo shao o yin kuo ching* (see above I.4). This text, with its detailed exposition of the workings of karman as the agent determining the fates of all living creatures, cannot help but strike the reader as a reply to the Confucian viewpoint of a heavenly mandate (*t'ien ming* 天命). Indeed, the opening lines (1-63) seem to plainly reflect a passage in the *Shih-i-lun* 釋疑論 of Tai An-kung 戴安公 (Ch'en 1952, 179) and to indicate that an authoritative reply to its viewpoint is presented by this sūtra. One can only wonder how much interest the Sogdian Buddhist community could have possibly had in one of the major Chinese intellectual controversies, one peculiar to the environment in which the Chinese Buddhist community developed.
The second facet mentioned above is one of the most vexing as well as fascinating aspects of the Buddhist Sogdian material. Its existence raises some serious questions concerning the development of the Chinese Tripitaka (see above). A couple of examples will illustrate its nature.

There is an unpublished fragment in the German Turfan collection (Tia = 10402) which can be shown to be from another Sogdian Bhaïgajyaguruvaidûryaprabharâja text. A careful comparison of this fragment with the other extant fragmentary Sogdian text (see above I.6) and the four extant Chinese texts in this category (T. 449, 450, 451, and 1331, chp. 12) indicates that, although the fragment corresponds generally with the text represented by the other Sogdian text and its Chinese prototype, it does not correspond exactly, but would seem to represent a shorter and less expansive recension of the same text. It is quite possible that it represents a Sogdian translation of the Chinese text of Hui-chien 慧簡, the first (A.D. 457) independent translation of this text into Chinese (Pelliot 1903, 33-4), which is no longer extant. However, it is of note that the Chinese Tripitaka presently contains no text which corresponds exactly to it.

Another similar situation is presented by the unpublished Turfan fragments TiiT = 14734-40 which all bear the title bâ'ym'y pr'tny' wyd'y = Vajraprajñâhûstra. This text should represent a Sogdian translation of a text such as Chin kâng pan jo liùn 金刚般若論 (T. 1510) whose Chinese title corresponds exactly to the Sogdian title as it appears on the fragment. However, Professor R. E. Emmerick has informed me (in a letter dated 21.12.76) that he investigated this theory and that the two texts do not correspond.
Having described in some detail the history of Buddhist Sogdian studies and the contents and characteristic aspects of the material which constitutes its subject, it would perhaps be useful to offer at this point some remarks concerning the directions in which it might further proceed. Undoubtedly, the most pressing desideratum is the publication of the considerable quantity of manuscript material in the German Turfan collection which remains unpublished (and to some of which allusion was made above). Moreover, an effort should be made to identify as many of the texts as possible with the specific Buddhist texts from which they are translated. In addition to the various items listed above under II, there are several texts of considerable length in the Pelliot collection (especially P9) which have never been identified with the Buddhist texts from which they are translated (Benveniste 194OB, 118-29, 137-41, 145-7, and 151-2).

Even in cases where such identifications cannot be made, an effort should be made to find parallel passages which correspond as closely as possible and supply some philological control for the proper interpretation of the Sogdian text. Having collected as much of this information as possible, a careful scrutiny should be made of the various texts as reflections of their prototypes for the compilation of an accurate description of the Buddhist Sogdian translation language, and, in turn, a grammatical description of Buddhist Sogdian. Such a grammatical description should emphasize the narrower scope of a translation language to render Chinese Buddhist literature into Sogdian and not the wider scope of the relation of Buddhist Sogdian to other Sogdian material. The progress in this direction begun by Weller
(Weller 1935, 1936, 1936-8, and 1937) has been continued by MacKenzie (MacKenzie 1971).

Some remarks should now be made concerning the important ramification of the study of the Sogdian Buddhist community and their literature for various subjects of wider scope. First of all, the degree to which the literature of the Buddhist Sogdians reflects the contemporaneous literature, interests, and pre-occupations of the Chinese Buddhist community has been discussed above. Consequently, it is only natural to view the Buddhist Sogdian literary remains as a mirror of some characteristic aspects of Chinese Buddhist literature in this period. In particular, although a substantial number of Buddhist Sogdian texts have been identified with specific Chinese texts, the existence of a large number of texts not so identified is indicative of the unsettled condition of the Chinese canon in this period. In effect, every Sogdian text which must go without a specific textual identification must receive an explanatory note in any comprehensive study of the history and development of the Chinese Tripitaka. Such a study must provide some explanation of what these texts are, from whence they have come into existence, and what their exact relation to the Chinese canon, if any, may be.

Finally, the roles of the Buddhist Sogdian community in three particular historical processes merit further investigation. One such process was the interaction of the Buddhist community with the Manicheans and the introduction of some Buddhist concepts, motifs, and terms into the Manichean literature of Central Asia and China. The subject of Buddhist-Manichean interaction in Central Asia in the sphere of tech-
nical terminology was explored by Gauthiot in an article of 1911 (Gauthiot 1911b). Subsequently, no systematic study of this subject has appeared. Of particular interest in this regard is the Manichean Chinese material both as an example of Buddhist influence on Manichean literature and as a reflection of Central Asian Iranian Manichean literature (see most recently Forte 1973, which includes extensive bibliographical information, and, for the Manichean Chinese literature as a reflection of its Central Asian background, Haloun-Henning 1952). The role which the Buddhist Sogdian community may have had in this process, particularly in providing the necessary terminology to express the Buddhist concepts and motifs introduced, would be worth investigation. A second process was the diffusion of various stories and story motifs through Central Asia. The activities of the Sogdians in this sphere are well-documented by various Sogdian tales, a selection of which were published by Henning (Henning 1943-6A). Considering the intimate contact of the Buddhist Sogdian community with the Chinese Buddhists, it is only natural to expect them to have become familiar with and to have assimilated a certain amount of literature of the pien-wên 變文 variety (for a brief description of which see Ch'en 1964, 287-9), the character of which bears some resemblance to the extant Sogdian stories. Consequently, the Buddhist Sogdians may have formed a link in the diffusion of this sort of literature through Central Asia. The third process was the transmission of various Buddhist concepts and motifs to the Near East. A case in point is the story of Bīluṇhar and Budaśaf, of which three Manichean Persian verse fragments survive (Henning 1962, 91-8). If one
supposes that the Iranian Manichean community in Central Asia (which was primarily composed of Sogdians) was instrumental in the transmission of the story to the Near East, it is only natural to suspect that the Buddhist Sogdians may have been the context from which the story developed, as they would have been the primary community of Buddhists with which the Manichean Sogdians would have had contacts.
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List of Abbreviations for Periodicals

AM  Asia Maior
AO  Acta Orientalia (Leiden-Copenhagen)
BEFEO Bulletin de l'école française d'Extrême-Orient
BSo(A)S Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies
CAJ  Central Asiatic Journal
CRAI  Comptes-rendus des séances de l'académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres
HJAS  Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies
IF  Indogermanische Forschungen
IIJ  Indo-Iranian Journal
Izvestiia AN Izvestiia Akademii Nauk SSSR
JA  Journal Asiatique
JPAW  Jahrbuch der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
JRAS  Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
Mon. Ser.  Monumenta Serica
MSL  Mélanges de la société linguistique de Paris
MSS  Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft
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<td>SPAW</td>
<td>Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</td>
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<td>TP</td>
<td>T'oung pao</td>
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<td>ZII</td>
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DAVID ANTHONY UTZ (1947-)

Studied Art History and Archaeology at the University of Missouri, Columbia; Iranian Philology at Harvard University and the University of Hamburg: B.A. (Missouri 1968), M.A. (Harvard 1973), and Ph.D. (Harvard 1976). Teaching Assistant in Classical Armenian at Harvard University (Summer 1972); Research Assistant in Iranian Studies at the University of Hamburg (1973-75); Assistant Editor of the *Encyclopaedia Persica* (1976-); Visiting Scholar in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, New York (1976-78); Visiting Research Fellow at the Reiyukai Library, Tokyo (1978).

ERRATA AND ADDENDA

page 3, lines 8-9: and by F. Rosenberg 1931), should read: and by F. Rosenberg (Rosenberg 1931),


page 4, line 28: four should read: five

page 4, line 29: after Sogdian versions of, insert: the Īrghanakha-ṣūtra (Gauthiot 1911-23),

page 10, line 15: [? powj(k')] should read: [? pwst][k']

page 11, line 5: tānāmadhāranaṇī should read: tānāmadhāraṇī

page 13, line 4: (see above) should read: (see below)

page 15, line 1: Weller 1935, should read: Weller 1935A, 1935B,

page 15, line 4: ramifications should read: ramifications

page 23, line 14: Schwartz, W. should read: Schwartz, M.

page 23, lines 37-8: after Weber 1975, insert as an additional bibliographical entry:


page 24, lines 1-2: Weller should read: Weller and Weller, F. should 1935 1935B

read: ------------.

page 24, line 14: Asia Maior should read: Asia Major

page 24, line 20: scéances should read: séances

page 25, line 4: pao should read: Pao