

BEYOND INFLUENCE:
A REFLECTION ON THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH
ON THE *MILINDAPAÑHA* WITH A COMPARISON OF THE TEXT
TO THE *KITAB AL KHAZARI**

by

OLGA KUBICA

Things are not what they appear to be: nor are they otherwise.
(Buddhist proverb from *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*)

ABSTRACT: This paper presents a reflection on the history of research on the *Milindapañha* with a comparison of the text to the medieval dialogue *Kitab al Khazari*. The comparison of these two independent texts is intended to demonstrate the problem of searching for a cross-cultural influence on the basis of similarity of phenomena.

THE *MILINDAPAÑHA* AS IT IS

The *Milindapañha* (*The Questions of King Milinda*) is a Buddhist text. The preserved Pāli version of the text comes from Sri Lanka¹. It is not canonical, because it is not included in the Sinhalese Pāli Theravāda canon². But still it is very popular in Sri Lanka. The oldest manuscript of this Pāli text is dated to AD 1495³. But the text was also known in India in ancient times, as may be inferred from four mentions of *The Questions of King Milinda* made by a Buddhist scholar, Buddhaghōṣa, around the beginning of the 5th century AD.

* The project “The Eastern Mediterranean from the 4th century BC until Late Antiquity” has been realized within the International PhD Projects Programme of the Foundation for Polish Science, co-financed by the European Union, Regional Development Fund within the frameworks of Measure 1.2 “Strengthening the Human Potential within the Science Sector” of the Operational Programme Innovative Economy.

¹ Edited by TRENCKNER 1880.

² But some scholars define it as paracanonical, because it is included in the Burmese edition of the Pāli Theravāda canon as a part of the *Khuddaka Nikaya*.

³ VON HINÜBER 1987.