

IN QUEST OF THE ORIGINAL PAÑCATANTRA.  
A METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

The hypothesis of a lost *Ur-Pañcatantra* as the archetype of all *Pañcatantra* versions, both in and outside India, was formed by Benfey, who, however, did not have sufficient material at his disposal to corroborate his ideas satisfactorily. When Hertel, mindful of Benfey's hypothesis, lighted upon the manuscripts of the *Tantrākhyāyika*, he believed to have found the original *Pañcatantra*, a view he had to reconsider, but which remained the starting-point of all his research on the subject. In the introduction to his translation of the *Tantrākhyāyika*<sup>1</sup> he enunciates his notions of the interrelationship of the oldest extant *Pañcatantra* versions and their descentance from the original *Pañcatantra*. He considered the *Tantrākhyāyika* the most authentic version and therefore superior to the other versions. The genealogy made by Hertel was rejected by Edgerton, who subsequently proposed another genealogy and reconstructed the original *Pañcatantra* with the help of its oldest extant versions<sup>2</sup>. Both Hertel's and Edgerton's method is founded on textual criticism. Edgerton's reconstruction has been widely accepted by Indologists. The matter was raised again by Geib, who decides on originality by the interpretation of the *Pañcatantra*'s contents<sup>3</sup>. He bases his interpretation on Hertel's *Tantrākhyāyika*.

In this article I intend to discuss Geib's method and the value of its results for the question of the original *Pañcatantra*. Since Geib's results are affected by his rejection of Edgerton's method, genealogy

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1. JOHANNES HERTEL, *Tantrākhyāyika, Die älteste Fassung des Pañcatantra*, I, Einleitung, II, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen, Leipzig, 1909, repr. 1970. Text: JOHANNES HERTEL, *Tantrākhyāyika, Die älteste Fassung des Pañcatantra*, AKGWG, phil.-hist. Klasse, 1910 (NF 12), 2.

2. FRANKLIN EDGERTON, *The Panchatantra reconstructed*, I, Text and critical apparatus, II, Introduction and translation, American Oriental Series, 2, 3, New Haven, 1924.

3. RUPRECHT GEIB, *Zur Frage nach der Urfassung des Pañcatantra*, Freiburger Beiträge zur Indologie, 2, Wiesbaden, 1969.

and reconstructed text in favour of Hertel's, I will first reconsider briefly the methods of Edgerton and Hertel from a methodological point of view. I leave aside the justifiable question whether there is any point in reconstructing the original *Pañcatantra*, or in postulating its qualities and even its perfectness. Much research has been done on this subject, which has added substantially to our knowledge of the *Pañcatantra* and its significance for the study of narrative literature and for the understanding of ancient Indian society. It is a question, however, that should be kept in mind while going through the matter under discussion here.

The reconstruction of the original *Pañcatantra* presupposes a definite literary archetype, which has been consequently postulated by both Hertel and Edgerton, though with different arguments. Edgerton points to the structural and verbal similarities of the various versions<sup>4</sup>, whereas Hertel takes his arguments from extra-textual data<sup>5</sup>.

According to Hertel, the various versions of the *Pañcatantra* are not derived directly from the original, but through one or more archetypes. He takes it for granted that the *Tantrākhyāyika* comes closest to the original *Pañcatantra* and that it is far superior to the other versions<sup>6</sup>. The *Tantrākhyāyika* is therefore the standard with which he compares all other versions. Its imperfections and interpolations are explained by the supposition of an archetype t, intermediate between the original *Pañcatantra* and its descendants. The differences between the *Tantrākhyāyika* and the other versions are accounted for by an archetype K<sup>7</sup>.

Edgerton rejects Hertel's archetypes t and K<sup>8</sup>. He arranges the various versions in four groups, each group having its own secondary archetype, which descends directly from the original<sup>9</sup>. He holds the view that for the reconstruction of the original *Pañcatantra* all versions are equivalent, notwithstanding the fact that they are not all of the same quality<sup>10</sup>. With the help of five criteria<sup>11</sup> he determines which matter is authentic and thus reconstructs the text of the original *Pañcatantra*, which differs in many respects from the *Tantrākhyāyika*.

When we compare the methods of Hertel and Edgerton, we cannot but conclude that the method of the latter is to be preferred. Hertel's method is founded upon his thesis that the *Tantrākhyāyika* is most faithful to the original *Pañcatantra*, independent from and superior to all other versions, a thesis that rests only on his own impressions and

4. EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, pp. 53-5.

5. HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, p. 19.

6. HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, p. 98.

7. The origination of the *Pañcatantra* versions according to Hertel is visualized by a genealogical table; see: HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, p. 40.

8. EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, pp. 92 ff.

9. For Edgerton's genealogy see: EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, p. 48.

10. EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, p. 16.

11. EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, pp. 55 ff.

that he does not and can not prove. Consequently, he is forced to interpret his material in favour of the *Tantrākhyāyika*, which means that he emphasizes differences, whereas Edgerton utilizes similarities. Edgerton's method is perhaps not indisputable, but its principles are clearly stated, so that his procedures and conclusions are verifiable. A certain amount of subjectivity is inevitable in matters of interpretation; its effects can be limited, though, by a careful choice of principles. Hertel's method suffers from a lack of such principles; thus his *Stammbaum* roots in the air, not in firm soil.

Now that we have reconsidered Hertel's and Edgerton's methods, we will touch on Geib's. The main purpose of the *Pañcatantra* is the teaching of *nīti*, a term which in connection with this book of fables is often translated as political wisdom. Geib has to be given credit for his exposition of the essential meaning of the term<sup>12</sup>, which I will try to recapitulate. According to Geib, *nīti* is the faculty to understand reality underlying appearance, which enables someone to act appropriately, and, consequentially, to deceive other people by disguising one's real intentions and to bend them to one's will by influencing their affects. The anti-thesis understanding — not understanding is the central theme of the *Tantrākhyāyika* and also determines its structure<sup>13</sup>. This theme, and not the textual tradition, which is the starting-point of Hertel and Edgerton, provides Geib with the criterion to decide on the authenticity of verses and fables.

Geib rejects Edgerton's method from a methodological point of view, by stating that it is a vicious circle: first Edgerton determines the genealogy of the various versions, then he determines the authenticity of their contents with the help of that genealogy<sup>14</sup>. A detail from an inserted story<sup>15</sup>, « Brahman and rogues », is the proof of his argument, which is corroborated by the interpretation of the contents of the story. They are as follows. A brahman walks down the road, with a goat on his shoulder, which he has planned to sacrifice. With the intention to filch it from him, some rogues come up to the brahman and make him believe that he does not carry a goat but a dog, which is an impure animal. The brahman goes home, leaving the goat behind. The *Tantrākhyāyika* reads: *evaṃ saṃpradhārya bhūmau niṣṣipyānavālokayanneva prāyāt prayāścittabhayāt*<sup>16</sup>; « Such were his thoughts; he dropped the goat and hurried away, without even looking back, from fear of an expiatory ceremony ». Edgerton's reconstructed text reads: *evaṃ saṃpradhārya chāgaṃ tyaktvā snātvā grhaṃ yayau*<sup>17</sup>; « So thin-

12. GEIB, *Urfassung*, pp. 21 ff.

13. GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 49.

14. GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 8.

15. III, 5. In this article references are to Edgerton's text and translation, unless stated otherwise. For a conspectus of the numbering of the stories in the various versions: EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, pp. 190-91.

16. HERTEL, *Tantr.*, text, p. 126, line 15; transl., p. 118.

17. EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, I, § 130; II, p. 373.

king he turned the goat loose, and bathed, and went home ». The feature that the brahman bathes, which complies with Edgerton's criteria for authenticity, is Geib's proof that Edgerton's method is a vicious circle. I must confine myself here to the observation that Geib's reproduction of Edgerton's method is a questionable simplification; in my opinion, his arguing and conclusion are unsound<sup>18</sup>. It is obvious, however, that this feature has not been selected arbitrarily by Geib; it appears to be crucial for his interpretation of the story. Let us therefore turn to the arguments which Geib takes from his interpretation.

The interpretation of narrative material has to meet at least one condition if it is meant to provide conclusive evidence: it has to be based on the text, or, to put it more specifically, on the author's own words. The author's choice of words is the expression of his point of view and as such fundamental for any interpretation. Besides, the understanding of a story's literary and cultural context will facilitate its interpretation and provide secondary information. This may seem a matter of course, but unfortunately, it is not, as I will demonstrate below.

With reference to Hertel and Winternitz, Geib states that the *Pañcatantra* hardly lets an opportunity slip to expose the sanctimonious debauches of especially Śivaite ascetics and brahmins<sup>19</sup>. The *Tantrākhyāyika*'s reading of the story would fit this tendency: the Śivaite brahman looks forward to the savoury meal the goat will make. Convinced by the rogues that his goat is a dog, he drops the animal and takes to his heels, to evade the unpleasant and painstaking expiatory ceremony. According to Geib, these are digs at the Śivaïtes; therefore it is probable that the reading of the *Tantrākhyāyika* is authentic. He corroborates this probability by a further consideration. The *Pañcatantra* was handed down by learned brahmins. Thus, it is probable that in the course of tradition anti-brahmanic tendencies were mitigated and altered, as must have happened in the other versions. It is most unlikely that in the course of tradition a dig at brahmins has crept in. Thus, the reading of the *Tantrākhyāyika* is also confirmed by the principle of the *lectio difficilior*. So far Geib.

Does the *Pañcatantra* indeed depict Śivaïte brahmins and ascetics as hypocrites and debauchees?

Brahmins and ascetics figure in the frame-story of book V and in six inserted stories: I, 3a; II, 1; III, 5; III, 7, III, 9; V, 1. The stories III, 7 and III, 9 can be left out of further consideration, since their characters do not meet any negative tendency. When we examine these stories we must conclude that none of the brahmins and mendicants is explicitly said to be a Śivaïte. The only explanation for Geib's contention I can think of is that Geib accepts Hertel's supposition that the author of

18. I will deal with this in my forthcoming contribution to *A history of Indian literature*, edited by J. Gonda, Wiesbaden, 1973...

19. GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 9.

the *Pañcatantra* was a Viṣṇuite devotee<sup>20</sup>, and consequently interprets digs at brahmans and ascetics as being of an anti-Śivaite nature.

Two stories answer the negative image claimed by Geib satisfactorily, those two in which figure mendicants.

In the story of the mendicant and the swindler<sup>21</sup> a mendicant who has collected a fortune by gifts from pious people, is robbed by a thief, who passed for his pupil. In the story of the mouse and the two mendicants<sup>22</sup>, one of the mendicants collects more food than he can eat and stores the remnants. The other one is named « Big-buttocks », a name possibly suggesting gluttony. When they find a hoard, they divide it between themselves. These three mendicants, indeed, do not live in the way one might expect of men who have renounced the world; accordingly, their greed is broadly hinted at by the narrator. Both stories show satirical touches; from his choice of words one may infer that the narrator exposes the mendicants intentionally.

The remaining stories (III, 5; V, 1; V, frame-story) do not belong to this category, in my opinion<sup>23</sup>. The negative qualities of the mendicants are habitual, not incidental, whereas the three brahmans fall victims of their credulity, rashness and fantasy by coincidence. In the story of the brahman who built air-castles<sup>24</sup>, for instance, a young brahman is in the possession of a jar full of grits. Once, when he lies upon his bed and muses on the material opportunities his grits will give him because of their high value, he breaks the jar by accident, which puts an end to his fancies. Geib's assertion that the brahman's study consists of hoarding grits, sleeping in the day-time and dreaming of his future<sup>25</sup>, is not supported by the texts<sup>26</sup> and certainly does not fit the story's cultural context. The young brahman is a student and as such in the second stage of his life. He gets meals in the house of a merchant; how often and on which occasions is not told<sup>27</sup>. When he does not take part in the meals, the merchant gives him some grits instead, which he does not eat, but saves in a jar. He dreams of his future: how he will sell the grits at a good price, how he will multiply

20. HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, p. 5. EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, p. 183, does not believe this.

21. I, 3a.

22. II, 1.

23. In contrast with: GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 117; HERTEL, *ZDMG*, 68, 1914, p. 75.

24. V, 1.

25. GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 117.

26. The young brahman is said to be a studious person; the *Tantrākhyāyika* reads: *vidyāprasaṅgena kālaṃ nayati sma*. In the introductory sentences of the story the narrator uses the present tense of the verb, with a durative aspect: ... *naityakam (bhojanam) vartate. sa yadā... na bhūṅkte, tadā... labhate. tam... sthāpayati*. Then he switches to the perfect tense: *kadācit... cintayāmāsa*, which points to the incidental, not to the habitual.

27. The meals do not necessarily have to take place in a ritual or religious setting; after all, *naityaka*, as a substantive, in the sense of offerings occurs only in the *Mahābhārata*.

his money by trading and farming, how he will build a house, marry a beautiful girl and beget a son. All these things are quite normal for a young man who will, one day, enter the next stage of his life, that of a *grhapati*, a head of a family. Taken up with his fancies, the young brahman breaks the jar, by accident. People laugh at him, not because of his greed, as is suggested by Hertel, but, more probably, because of the funny sight provided by the young man who is bestrewn with grits<sup>28</sup>. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether this story is a real *nīti*-story. Geib's interpretation is clever, but rather sophisticated. In my opinion, the story would better range with Somadeva's «fools' stories»<sup>29</sup>. As for the other stories, credulity and rashness are not necessarily defects of character, but may be inappropriate reactions to certain circumstances. They are not exclusive for brahmans, but are found with numerous other people. There is no indication in the texts that the narrator is exposing these brahmans; the three stories have no satirical touches. Neither the brahman in story III, 5, nor the one in the frame-story of book V acts as a *nītivīd*, an adept in *nīti*, but that is exactly the reason why they figure in the *Pañcatantra*. Virtues which are typical for brahmans are to be found in the sphere of *dharma*, Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara*, for instance, abounds in them. Greed is by no means uncommon with people; in narrative literature it is often found with merchants. In the case of mendicants and ascetics, however, who as a group are generally respected, it is more serious: it interferes with their credibility and deservedly provokes criticism.

Let us return to the story of the brahman and the rogues, which was the starting-point of our inquiries into the supposed anti-brahmanic and anti-Śivaite tendencies of the *Pañcatantra*. The assertion that the brahman looks forward to a meal does not rest on the readings of the texts. Remains the question: why does the brahman hurry away? Is he eager to bathe, contaminated as he feels by the contact with the impure dog, or is he such a wretched creature that he wants to escape from the obligation of a purification ceremony? The brahman considers that the majority, in his case the rogues who outweigh him in number, is right, and that he might even carry a *rākṣasa* on his shoulder, able to assume any form at will. The conclusion of the story has already been discussed in its two readings<sup>30</sup>. Geib's assertion that the reading of the *Tantrākhyāyika*<sup>31</sup> is a *lectio difficilior* and is therefore to be preferred, shows an improper use of the term and is unfounded from the point of view

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28. This interpretation seems most probable to me, but does not rest on the reading of the texts.

29. In the tenth book of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*.

30. See for the various readings of the independent versions EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, I, p. 317.

31. Hertel is of the opinion that the words *prayaścittabhayāt* are suspect and explains the brahman's hurry from his fear that he might be devoured by the *rākṣasa*; see HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, p. 118 n. 7.

of textual criticism. Edgerton's reading does not offend against grammatical rules, nor does it against the plain sense of the passage. The difference between the two readings is a matter of contents; the narration of the *Tantrākhyāyika* gives more details. A comparison of the various versions, however, will show that this is often the case. What could be the motivation of the brahman's fear? I would suggest the following interpretation: the brahman drops the goat and goes away, fearing the ceremony which would be inevitable if he would verify the real nature of the animal by looking at it again. If wretchedness would be the real motivation of his fear, consequently the passage has to be regarded as a dig at brahmans. At the same time it provides an argument for the hypothesis that the author of the *Tantrākhyāyika* has adapted his text to his own purposes, since its reading, which has been discussed above, can be seen as an intentional alteration. Such a theory requires a renewed comparison of all the *Pañcatantra*-versions; its *a priori* plausibility, however, depends on the acceptance of either Hertel's or Edgerton's method. Only three stories<sup>32</sup> would provide the arguments for the maintaining of Geib's assertion that the *Pañcatantra* shows anti-brahmanic tendencies, which is insufficient. So far, we cannot but conclude that Geib has failed to prove that Edgerton's method is unsound.

Crucial for Hertel's theory, which Geib means to support, are the archetypes t and K. I will confine myself to some observations on the stories that play an important part in the argumentation for or against K.

To start with, the story<sup>33</sup>, « Husked for husked sesame », which tells about mother Śāṇḍilī who tries to barter sesame for sesame<sup>34</sup>. Her own sesame was spoiled by the contact with a dog, so that she could not prepare a meal for brahmans with it. The story is inserted in the story « Mouse and two mendicants »<sup>35</sup>, in which the mouse Hiranya, one of the characters of the frame-story, overhears it. It is told by one of these hypocrite debauchees, whom we have met before, the mendicant « Big-buttocks », and who relates what has befallen to him on his wanderings. From the point of view of a good story-teller, the story is defective in all the Indian versions. A good story has a plot and, preferably, a denouement, in which the main characters play their part. This story lacks the denouement; the part of one of its characters remains obscure. The characters are: mother Śāṇḍilī, a *nītivīd*, who,

32. I, 3a; II, and III, 5, the last one only in its *Tantrākhyāyika*-version. The story about the cat, the partridge and the hare is no positive evidence for the so-called anti-ascetic tendencies of the *Pañcatantra*, as Winternitz asserts (WZKM, 25, 1911, pp. 59 ff.).

33. II, 2.

34. See HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, pp. 28 ff.; EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, pp. 106 ff.; GEIB, *Urfassung*, pp. 157 ff.

35. II, 1.

with false pretensions, tries to barter (in some versions personally, in other versions by means of her husband's pupil) her polluted sesame; the intended victim of her trick (a neighbour's wife, or someone at the market); the person who sees through Śāṇḍilī's offer (a husband, a son, a passer-by), and who is also a *nītivīd*. So far, so good; each character plays the part it is due to, and the barter is off<sup>36</sup>. The mendicant, the very man who has overheard mother Śāṇḍilī's plan and is present at the spot where the barter takes place, remains in the dark. Instead of confirming the right supposition that there is something behind it all, which, moreover, would provide the story with a denouement, he keeps silent<sup>37</sup>. When we presume that the *Ur-Pañcatantra* was « perfect », the present form of the story supports the hypothesis of one or more defective intermediary archetypes. As an attempt to interweave two stories, possibly with the intention to make it more vivid by introducing an eye-witness, it is not very successful.

A noteworthy feature of the story is the narrative verse « Not for nothing does mother Śāṇḍilī... »<sup>38</sup>. In the majority of cases a narrative verse contains a proverb, which is relevant for the frame-story, together with a reference to a story, e.g.: « Always be thrifty, but do not be too thrifty. Because he was too thrifty, the jackal was killed by the bow ». Moreover, such a verse is recited by the narrator, when he introduces a story he intends to insert and later when he resumes his main narrative. In the *Tantrākhyāyika* and in Edgerton's reconstructed text it is recited by the narrator (the mendicant) at the introduction, and again by the *nītivīd* who supposes that there is something behind Śāṇḍilī's offer; at the resumption of the main story it is omitted. In my opinion, this verse is not a real narrative verse; it is to be put in the mouth of either the *nītivīd* or the mendicant when he speaks up, like in the Syriac translation. It is, or at least should be, an integral part of the story, but at the same time it is used, for some reason, as a narrative verse<sup>39</sup>.

In contrast with the mendicant in story II, 2, whose presence is virtually redundant, the mendicant in the story « Three self-caused accidents »<sup>40</sup>, has a clear function. When the unfortunate barber, who has been falsely accused by his wife of having mutilated her nose, is led to the place of execution, the mendicant, who knows the ins and

36. With regard to the question whether mother Śāṇḍilī trades husked for unhusked sesame, or husked for husked, the arguments resting on textual criticism should prevail, since the victim is gullible anyhow.

37. Only in the Syriac translation the mendicant exposes mother Śāṇḍilī; see HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, p. 29.

38. II, vs. 27; *Tantr.*, II, vs. 45. A narrative verse is a verse containing a reference to a story and serving both its introduction and its purport. I prefer this term to the rather burdened term *ākhyāna*-verse, which reminds of Oldenberg's theories.

39. The Jātaka's abound in narrative verses of the type that I would call irregular, at least in comparison with the majority of the narrative verses in the *Pañcatantra*.

40. I, 3.



outs of the case, interferes and thus saves his life. Hertel has rightly observed that by the testimony of the mendicant the story belongs to the sphere of *dharma*: « virtue » triumphs over cunning<sup>41</sup>. This observation does not necessarily imply that the story is therefore an interpolation; on the contrary, it answers the tendency of the *Pañcatantra* very well, as Geib shows. The fact that the story in this form finally teaches *dharma* supports the hypothesis that *nīti* is not the sole subject of the *Pañcatantra*, that the author also has other aims in mind<sup>42</sup>. The narrative verse is irregular. It is recited by the narrator at the introduction of the inserted story and the resumption of the main story. It is also recited by the mendicant, who is one of the characters of the inserted story, and that three times, one time at the conclusion of the story of the rams and the jackal, a second time at the conclusion of the episode in which he was robbed by his pupil. The third time he recites it in the situation in which it is appropriate: in the king's court, when he testifies to the barber's innocence. When the repeated use of the verse is an artifice to combine three originally independent stories, as Geib says<sup>43</sup>, the author has done badly, having reduced the first two stories to mere episodes. There is reason, again, to suppose that the archetype of all the extant versions was defective.

Geib has chosen to found his interpretation on the *Tantrākhyāyika*, a text, I admit, sometimes to be preferred to Edgerton's reconstruction. He also endorses Hertel's view of the *Tantrākhyāyika*'s superiority to the other versions, though he does not explicitly state this. Consequently he is forced to prove, like Hertel, an unprovable thesis, which affects the value of his arguments. His attempts to support Hertel's archetypes t and K expose the limitation of his method. He can test the correspondence of the inserted stories with the purport of the frame-stories, the teaching of *nīti*, but he can never prove that a particular story was part of the original *Pañcatantra*. The fact that an inserted story is a *nīti*-story, and therefore in Geib's opinion authentic, does not prove that it has not been interpolated. Only when we presume that the original *Pañcatantra* was perfect in terms of style and contents, that it was founded on a well-planned scheme, that its sole aim was to teach *nīti*, that the *Tantrākhyāyika* is superior to the other versions, that the authors of the extant versions are mere emendators of corrupted texts, of inferior abilities, only then Geib's arguments are decisive proof. As it is now, his method can be applied to any collection of framed tales. His arguments in support of K<sup>44</sup> will illustrate my observations.

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41. HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, p. 130. Compare moreover the parrot's story, part of the third *vetāla*-story, in Somadeva's version.

42. Compare HARRY FALK, *Quellen des Pañcatantra*, Wiesbaden, 1978.

43. GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 100.

44. GEIB, *Urfassung*, pp. 157 ff.

Geib advances nine cases in favour of Hertel's archetype K, including the story about mother Śāṇḍilī on which I have already made some remarks.

Dharmabuddhi and Duṣṭabuddhi<sup>45</sup> have buried a treasure at the foot of a hollow tree. Duṣṭabuddhi digs it up in secret and thereupon accuses Dharmabuddhi of the theft. The tree, in which Duṣṭabuddhi's father hides in order to voice the tree-divinity, confirms the accusation in the presence of the king's judges. According to Edgerton's reconstructed text, Dharmabuddhi supposes that there is something behind it all. He climbs the tree, has a look inside and sets fire to it. Out comes the father, half burnt. Then the king's judges perceive the truth. In the *Tantrākhyāyika*, Dharmabuddhi pretends to be guilty, when the tree has spoken. Before he can hand over the treasure, he says, he has to drive out the cobra that guards it. Hertel motivates the authenticity of the pretended confession by stating that, as the accused, Dharmabuddhi is not free to act unless he confesses<sup>46</sup>. Edgerton refutes this argument by denying the existence of such a legal principle in ancient Hindu law and considers the passage to be secondary<sup>47</sup>. I disagree with Edgerton when he says that the passage in the *Tantrākhyāyika* sounds very bizarre and badly constructed. In both versions the story is good, but in the *Tantrākhyāyika* the narration is more explicit, though the passage is not really necessary for the plot of the story. In both versions Dharmabuddhi acts as a *nūtid*: he understands that something is the matter and acts accordingly. I disagree therefore with Geib's contention that in Edgerton's reconstructed text the intelligence required to understand the situation is replaced by mere physical ability<sup>48</sup>.

The story about the onion-thief and the one about the blue jackal<sup>49</sup> meet Geib's criterion for authenticity. The former is only found in the *Tantrākhyāyika*, the latter moreover in the *textus simplicior* and Pūrṇabhadra, which are both contaminated with the *Tantrākhyāyika*. Geib states that the independent disappearance of these authentic stories from the other versions is highly improbable and considers it consequently a proof in favour of the archetype K<sup>50</sup>.

With respect to the fable about the lion and the hare<sup>51</sup>, Geib is right when he says that the narration of the *Tantrākhyāyika* is more refined than that of the other versions.

In the story about the iron-eating mice<sup>52</sup>, a merchant's son leaves his home-town, to try his luck abroad. Before going, he deposits an

45. Story I, 13; *Tantr.*, I, 15.

46. HERTEL, *Tantr.*, I, p. 94.

47. EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, II, p. 97.

48. GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 168.

49. *Tantr.*, IV, 1 and I, 8.

50. GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 168.

51. I, 6.

52. I, 15; *Tantr.*, I, 17.

iron balance with another merchant. On his return, that merchant pretends the balance to be eaten by mice. In the *Tantrākhyāyika* the merchant is said to have no relatives; in the other versions he is poor. The absence of relatives motivates the depositing of the balance with another merchant, the poverty of the merchant his voyage abroad. Though I agree with Geib that the reading of the *Tantrākhyāyika* is more appropriate, I find his contention that the readings of the other version<sup>53</sup> are to be considered a *lectio facilior* questionable<sup>54</sup>. To conclude my observations on this story, I may draw the attention to the irregular narrative verse, which is taken from the story itself.

Two cases advanced by Geib concern verses only occurring in the *Tantrākhyāyika*.

Remains the story about the deer's former captivity<sup>55</sup>. This story is not a fable *in sensu stricto*. It is a story in which one of the characters is the deer that also figures in the frame-story. Whatever its function may be, it is not inserted for didactic reasons. It is an account of the deer's former adventures. It is not introduced by a narrative verse, it lacks a purport and it is interrupted by the arrival of the turtle, another character in the frame-story. Only one episode is concerned with *nīti*: a noble man saves the deer from the crowd and points out the truth to the ignorant prince. The beginning of this story, the various versions of which are examined by Geib in detail<sup>56</sup>, is only found in the *Tantrākhyāyika*. Geib's observations endorse the hypothesis of an intermediary archetype between the original *Pañcatantra* and its extant versions.

In my opinion, all the cases discussed above can support the hypothesis of the *Tantrākhyāyika*'s being adapted. As proof in favour of the archetype K Geib's arguments do not appear to be really convincing.

Geib's method, valuable though it is not only for the study of the *Pañcatantra* but also for that of ancient Indian narrative literature in general, does not suffice for its aim. With its help Geib can examine the extent to which the *Pañcatantra*'s contents answer its main theme and its purport. Such a compliance, however, does not exclude the interference of an interpolator, so that Geib cannot prove whether a story or a verse belonged to the original. Moreover, his interpretation lacks explicite criteria. It is to be regretted that he founded his research only on Hertel's *Tantrākhyāyika*, without implicating in a positive way the other versions. Although the main theme of the *Pañcatantra* is *nīti*, it also has touches of *dharma*, which Geib has failed to expose. The hypothesis of one or more intermediary archetypes is plausible and accounts for the defective stories, some unusual insertions and the irregular narrative verses, which neither Edgerton nor Hertel have

53. Compare EDGERTON, *Panch. reconstr.*, I, pp. 170 ff.

54. GEIB, *Urfassung*, p. 171.

55. II, 4; *Tantr.*, II, 5.

56. GEIB, *Urfassung*, pp. 106 ff.

pointed out. I agree with Geib that Edgerton is principally not able to deal with intermediary archetypes; on the other hand, both Hertel's and Geib's arguments in favour of them are insufficient. In my opinion, a comparison of the extant versions of the *Pañcatantra* from a narratological point of view is worthwhile, especially in terms of perspective and narrative technique. The quest of the original *Pañcatantra* has not yet come to an end.

*Utrecht.*