



Buddhaghosa as depicted in the Buddhaghosuppatti

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Buddhaghosa is unquestionably one of the best known figures of Theravāda Buddhism. He is attributed with compiling many of the commentaries (aṭṭhakathās) and composing the highly influential meditation text, the Visuddhimagga. However the way in which he is depicted in Pāli hagiographies has not been the subject of much research. This paper will analyse the Buddhaghosuppatti, or the “arising of Buddhaghosa”, thought to be composed in 15th century Burma by a monk named Mahāmaṅgala. Reference will also be made to an earlier account of Buddhaghosa’s life found in the second part of the Mahāvamsa, the Cūlavamsa. I wish to analyse how these texts portray Buddhaghosa’s character and will draw attention to the literary techniques employed to facilitate this portrayal. Consideration will be given to how the likely social structures within which Mahāmaṅgala lived may have influenced this text.