Romanian Journal of Indian Studies

Editor-in-chief: Mihaela Gligor

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REVIEWS

Romanian Journal of Indian Studies

EDITORIAL

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India is seen as a country of immense diversity, of distinct hopes, of vast and disparate beliefs, of extraordinary customs and a genuine feast of opinions.

The cultural heritage of contemporary India combines the Islamic influences with the Hindu ones, as well as those pertaining to other traditions, and the outcome of the interaction among different religious communities can be fully seen in literature, music, painting, architecture and many other fields.

(Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize laureate).

India is a mixture of emotions, colours, feelings, music, happiness, sorrow, life and death, gods and people. India is an endless puzzle which each soul that meets its mystery tries to solve. India is infinite, just as untrammelled as the fascination that it produces in the others

India is an incredible rich culture, with a history of thousands of years. It saw the rise of various civilizations, religions, dynasties, human groups, cultures and arts. India has been presented and represented in many forms in literary discourses, arts

and heritage symbols. But the country is so vast that there always remains an area to be explored. Moreover, there are many new things to be interpreted and established. Any discussion on anything belonging to India and its culture is incomplete without interdisciplinary dialogue between various cultural aspects and elements.

Through its stories, India has always attracted people of distant places from archeologists, travelers, merchants, artists to scientists and academic researchers. Its rich diversity and its myths, legends, arts or music fascinated and allured many minds. The languages of India, from Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil, the regional languages from the ancient times, to Persian and Urdu from the medieval times and English from the modern period, were and still are fascinating for linguists and researchers.

The *Romanian Journal of Indian Studies* encourages interdisciplinary approaches in linguistics, literature and literary studies, Indian philosophy, history of religions, political philosophy, history of ideas, science, anthropology, sociology, education, communications theory and performing arts. One of its primary aims is the integration of the results of the several disciplines of the humanities so that its articles will have a synthetic character in order to acquaint the reader with the progress being made in the general area of Indian Studies.

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Vyākaraṇa *and the Mathurā Stele*

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Abstract: In a former life Śākyamuni received the investiture of future historical Buddha (*vyākaraṇa*), which made his *praṇidhāna* irreversible and caused in him a deep change of state, no longer that of a bodhisattva understood as a person aspiring to the *bodhi*, but rather that of a Buddha. This is the state of the *bodhisattva* in the inscribed Kuṣāṇa stele of Mathurā, some of which designate him as *buddha*, *tathāgata* or *samyaksambuddha*. This latter role is clearly highlighted, and the *bodhisattva* appears not only as an awakened being, as shown by the pipal tree under which he is seated, but as one who has taken the decision to teach. Several iconographical clues can be noticed, among which the *cakra* on the throne, on the palm of his right hand and on the soles of his feet. The *cakra* is the first of the seven jewels of the *cakravartin*, and in fact the Mathurā iconographies foreshadow Śākyamuni's future state as the only, true king of the world. This figural conception remained restricted to Mathurā, whereas in Gandhāra Śākyamuni's inherent nature of *cakravartin*, though present, was not as prominent.

Keywords: Buddhist icons, Kuṣāṇa Mathurā, *bodhisattva*, *vyākaraṇa*, *cakravartin*, iconography.

In a recent work I had the occasion to touch upon the vexed issue of the Buddhist stele from Mathurā dated in the era established by Kaniṣka I, where I discussed the interpretation proposed by Herbert Härtel (1985) in particular, also taking into consideration the contributions of Prudence R. Miyer (1986) and Harry Falk (2012).[1] If I now feel the need to discuss in more depth some of the issues I raised earlier, it is not so much for the desire to have an audience that a more widespread language allows but rather the wish to define with as much precision as possible the nature of the Kuṣāṇa icons.

A feature of these icons upon which the opinions of scholars agree is the intent to emphasise the regal nature of the Being portrayed. Not only is he seated on a throne, which is the rule, but, in many cases, on the lion throne, a paradigm of sovereignty as old as pharaonic Egypt, which then spread to the Near and Middle East until it reached India.[2] Conversely, the hindrance at interpreting the Mathurā stele lays in the fact that the inscriptions engraved on several thrones-pedestals define the Being portrayed as *bodhisattva*, whereas the iconographical evidence points to his identification as one whom we would

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[1] My contribution can be found in a volume on the art of India published in Japanese (Verardi 2020: 171-194).
[2] I will just refer the reader to the classical study of Monneret de Villard (1953), later taken up by other authors.

unhesitatingly call the Buddha Śākyamuni.[3] The constraint represented by a term, *bodhisattva*, which is severally repeated in the epigraphic record is understandably binding, and it is the reason why even those scholars who are well acquainted with the world of images have taken the epigraphic evidence as final: the figure portrayed cannot be Śākyamuni (to whom the term *bodhisattva* is not applicable), but an unspecified manifestation of the Buddha. In my own work recalled above, I suggested, without offering any further investigation into the matter, that in order to solve this riddle we should try to elucidate the meaning attributed to the word *bodhisattva* in the particular milieu of Kuṣāṇa Mathurā.

Icons – this was, and is, my starting point – are sources conveying information that cannot be ranked as secondary and, if anything, should warn us from drawing conclusions that are incompatible with them. They are the immediate referent of the faithful, who cannot be misled in regard to what they see, to the Being who represents the object of their devotion.[4] A religious iconography can be more or less penetrative, more or less filled with additional meanings in relation to circumstances of a religious, social or political nature, but cannot deny itself.

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[3] Wondering about this riddle of sort goes back to, at least, the times of J. Ph. Vogel, who could not make heads or tail of the inconsistency of the term *bodhisattva* attested to by the epigraphs (*cf. e.g.* Vogel 1914: 63-65). More recently, G. Schopen (1987: 118) has rightfully recognised that the Mathurā *bodhisattva*s "are iconographically *buddhas*", this being exactly the point.

[4] The interest of scholars has focused on the inscribed stele, but a number of them are anepigraphic; even in relation to the former it is probable that the majority of the faithful were unable to read the dedications, albeit they could count on the help of literate devotees or monks. Furthermore, the epigraphs were quickly covered by the items used for the *pujā* (oils, flowers, etc.). The impact of the Uṣṇīṣīn Buddhas on the devotees was visual; only for us moderns has this gone into the background.

Our first consideration is that the term *bodhisattva* applied to the "Uṣṇīṣin Buddhas"[5] is not univocal. The inscription on the early Uṣṇīṣin stela from Anyor (Fig. 1) attests to the fact that this is a *budhapratimā* donated by the Śākya lay brother Suṣa Hāruṣa, a foreigner established in Mathurā probably hailing from the North-West. The stela is damaged at the top but one can clearly see the branches of the pipal tree, which filled the entire nimbus surrounding the lost head of Gotama/Śākyamuni. It is undated, but Lüders (1961: §135, pp. 171-172) argues that it cannot be later than "the beginning of the Kuṣān rule", thus pertaining to the "Kaniṣka Phase", as recognised by R.C. Sharma (1984: 178).[6] The pedestal inscription of a well-preserved icon in a private collection returned to the attention of scholars by Harry Falk (2002-2003: 37-41; see here Fig. 2) attests that the monk Aśvadatta, in the year 20 of Kaniṣka, donated "a statue of the Tathāgata […] for the acceptance of the teachers of the Mahāsāṃghika order". The icon is in a very good state of preservation, and here are the pipal tree and the flying *deva*s, and, accompanying the Tathāgata, Vajrapāṇi and a *caurī*-bearer.[7] Falk has observed that the inscription accompanying the image is characterised by some linguistic peculiarities that seem "to indicate an

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[5] I follow Falk (2012), who has suggested using this term rather than "kapardin", although the latter has entered the literature.

[6] The doubts raised by J.H. Rhi, who questioned that "the figure represented in the Kapardin type [wa]s iconographically identifiable as the Buddha" on account of the dress he wears, considered by him not compatible with the monastic garment (Rhi 1994: 214), were not dispelled by this and other images where the pipal tree is given a central position. Rhi's observation is not out of place, but from what will be said here it should become clear that Gotama/Śākyamuni's garment is not in contrast with the role he plays at the very end of his path.

[7] On the throne-pedestal, however, in between the inscribed lines and in between the lions there are two small aedicoules (one of them has been erased), missing from the other stele known to us, which house a Buddha in *abhāyamudrā*. The reader can find the numerous other peculiarities of this icon in Falk's article.

origin outside Mathurā of the man who established the text". On the pedestal inscription of a once standing image dated to the year 14 of Kaniṣka, Saṃghilā, the donor, declares to have set up the image "for the veneration of the holy Pitāmaha, the Supremely Enlightened [*saṃmiyasaṃbuddha*],[8] the god [*deva*] who holds his own tenets, for the cessation of all misery" (Lüders 1961: §81, pp. 116-119). Pitāmaha (a name directly lifted from Brahmanism) is used here for the first time as a proper noun designating Śākyamuni Buddha.[9] As to the term *samyaksambuddha*, it reinforces, clarifying it, the term *buddha* in that it establishes a distinction between an Awakened Being who would not proceed to teaching (a *pratyekabuddha*) and an actually "fully and completely awakened Buddha" (see *e.g.* Griffith 1994: 62), who instead performs this action. The linguistic features of Saṃghilā's dedication are typical of the mid-Ganges valley and, says Lüders, "[i]t is not improbable that Saṃghilā [...] hailed from the east". Very little remains of the image, but it probably met the usual parameters. The devotees who came to the metropolis on the Yamunā from other regions did not hesitate, when they commissioned images of the Blessed One to the local sculptors and donated them, to call him with names (*buddha*, *tathāgata*, Pitāmaha) whose meaning leaves little room for doubts. Finally, the main image "with three standing figures and a defaced lion" of a stela from the Katra mound is called Śākyasiṃha in the epigraph (Lüders 1961: §3, pp. 32-33; *cf.* also Schopen 1987: 118) – an epithet which can neither refer to Gotama prior to his departure from Kapilavastu nor to his Renunciation period. The fact that the donors of images who did not use the term *bodhisattva* were, as it seems, mostly

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[8] As written in the inscription.

[9] For the epithet Pitāmaha given to the Buddha, see, besides Lüders, the observations made by Sahni (1927-1928), who first edited the inscription.

foreigners and, as can be inferred from the inscriptions, may not have had close ties with the local monastic elites, reinforces the idea that it is in second century Mathurā that we should try and find the reasons for that apparently disorienting use.

It should further be noted that, certainly earlier than the period we are concerned with, in several Pāli discourses there was the tendency to replace the term *bodhisatta* referred to Gotama with *bhagavant* or *buddha* even in relation to events of his life preceding the Awakening. The reader is referred to the examples brought by Anālayo (2010: 16, n. 3), in particular those from the *Padhāna Sutta*, where the terms *buddha* and *sambuddha* are used instead of *bodhisatta*.[10]

Some dedicatory inscriptions, after recording the setting up of a *bodhisattva*, mention "the worship of all Buddhas", who can only be the past Buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni, thus establishing an explicit link between them and the *bodhisattva* represented on the throne-pedestal. An undated epigraph on a stone slab points out that an image was set up "for the acceptance of the Samitiya teachers for the worship of all Buddhas [*sarvabudhapujā*]" (Lüders 1961: §80, pp. 115-116; Skilling 2016: 25-26). The dedicatory inscription of the monk Nāgadatta of the year 16 of Kaniṣka recording the installation of a seated *bodhisattva* image, states that it was meant "for the worship of all Buddhas" and "for the acceptance of the Mahāsaghiya teachers" (Lüders 1961: §157, pp. 191-192). A fragmentary inscription mentioning a donation to the Ālānaka monastery was equally made "for

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[10] Anālayo, who has analysed, in particular, the *Acchariyabbhutadhamma Sutta* (preserved in the *Majjhima Nikāya*), acknowledges significant changes in the bodhisattva conception in this and other texts: "Already at birth the bodhisattva is in possession of the supreme degree of perfection", and "the superiority associated with the status of the Buddha now becomes a birthright of the bodhisattva" (Anālayo 2010: 45-46). See below.

the acceptance of the Mahāsaghiyas for the worship of all Buddhas" (*ibid.*: §86, p. 121). A further example is provided by the *bodhisattva* image, kept in the Government Museum of Mathura, donated by one Senaka "for the worship of all Buddhas" (Falk 2012: 504-506). Not always is the school mentioned to which the donors belong: two kṣatriya brothers, residing in Mathurā, donated the image of a *bodhisattva* "in honour of all the Buddhas" that was installed in the Jetavana at Śrāvastī (Sahni 1908-1909). The mentioning of *buddha*s in connection with the donation of *bodhisattva* images is a further reason, as already said, to ask ourselves what was actually meant when the latter term was used, not least in view of the fact that the *bodhisattva*s do respond to an iconography which is that of the Buddha of the present *kalpa*.

A question that is seldom raised is the chaotic condition in which the sculptures of Mathurā have reached us because of uncontrolled excavations, accidental finds, loss of contexts and incomplete records. It is difficult to imagine what can ever be the percentage of iconographies connected to the Uṣṇīṣin stele and to standing images that are lost for us. Survived out of sheer luck is the fragment of a relief from Kankali Tila which, if the identification proposed by van Lohuizen-de Leeuw still holds, is an early depiction of an *uṣṇīṣin*, haloed Śākyamuni who, with his right hand raised and the shawl covering his left shoulder, stands on the right of the scene greeted by a king with retinue: the top hair knot covered by a cloth is very clearly visible on his shaven head (Fig. 3).[11] We have very little

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[11] van Lohuizen-de Leeuw easily disproved the identification of the relief as a Jain work proposed by the once omnipresent Alois Führer, who had found it. She also suggested that, should Kankali Tila not be the finding place of the fragment, it could come from nearby Bhutesar. She discussed the fragment at length (van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1949: 158 ff.; *cf.* also id. 1981: 391 and fig. 22), but only Takata (1967: pl. 48, fig. 56), Sharma

knowledge of what Gotama did during the long period of his ascetic life before crossing the Nerañjarā, but it is unlikely that he was ever revered by a king and even less likely that the event may have been visually recorded. The scene certainly refers to Śākyamuni, and this piece of evidence, too, should help us clarify how the Mathurā *bodhisattva*s were understood.

Stele with the seated *bodhisattva* often picture him under the pipal tree, as in the "Katra Buddha" (the cornerstone of the whole matter),[12] with the *deva*s flying above arguably rejoicing for the Awakening just attained. In some cases, as in the stela from Ramnagar of the year 32 of Kaniṣka (Fig. 4), the Awakening is further alluded to by the scene of worship paid to the Bodhi Tree depicted on the throne-pedestal. To the right of the *bodhisattva* we notice, once again, Vajrapāṇi, who, as we know especially from Gandhāra, appears as the companion of Gautama/Śākyamuni after his departure from Kapilavastu until he passes away in Kuśinagara. His presence (and, indeed, his nature) in these early representations has not found yet a satisfactory explanation, but it is difficult to think that in Mathurā he held a different role.[13] On the throne-pedestal of an inscribed stela kept in the Lucknow State Museum preserving only the lower part of the seated image, Indra

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(1984: fig. 70) and Miyer (1986: fig. 15) have mentioned it. The relief is kept in the State Museum in Lucknow (J.531).

[12] This famous stela is not reproduced here, and the reader is referred to Härtel (1983: fig. 2 on p. 655) and Sharma 1984: 179 and fig. 79); it can be found in many other publications and on the Internet.

[13] Regarding the "person holding a vajra" in the Ramnagar stela (Fig. 4), Härtel (1983: 668) recognised that "he can only be Vajrapāṇi".

and Brahmā turn their hands upwards, i.e. towards the lost image of the *bodhisattva*, in the clear intent to persuade him to preach (Fig. 5).[14]

The role of Śākyamuni as teacher, even though he is still in Gayā, is often evoked, or prefigured, by the *cakra* placed on a stand below the main image, and worshipped by devotees. The best example is offered by the stela of the year 4 of Kaniṣka donated by the monk Dharmanandin for his own *caityakuṭī*, now kept in the Kimbell Art Museum in Forth Worth, Texas (Fussman 1984: 6 and pl. 2; see here Fig. 6*a*), where the *cakra* is seen in profile (Fig. 6*b*). Mention can also be made of the stela from Jamalpur preserved in the Lucknow State Museum (Sharma 1984: 179 and fig. 84) on whose pedestal, inscribed with a dedication recording Kaniṣka's name, there is a *cakrastambha* seen from the front and honoured by eight devotees. What is sculpted on a throne-pedestal (something often overlooked by students), though not expressly identifying the image or the scene above does hold a close dialogue with it, and this dialogue should be grasped, it cannot be ignored. The *cakra* indicates the Teaching and is, therefore, one of the seven jewels with which the *cakravartin* is endowed. In the stela of the year 4 of Kaniṣka the *cakra*, shown in profile, consists of numerous spokes, thus mirroring the description that many texts make of the wheel of the *cakravartin*, which at the appropriate moment spontaneously manifests itself in front of him displaying a thousand spokes, as we read for example in the *Dīrgha-āgama* (*cf.* Anālayo 1917: 31): the arising of the wheel treasure heralds "the manifestation

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[14] van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, to whom the identification of the two figures is due, also explains why they are on the pedestal and not at the sides of the *bodhisattva* (the reason is the shape of the stela, a rather early one; van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1949: 174-175). On this stela, inscribed but with the date worn down, *cf.* also Sharma (1984: 180 and fig. 86) and Miyer (1986: 112), who has noted the presence of *cakra*s on the soles of the feet of the main image (on this, see below).

of the remaining six treasures, which together have the function of signalling that someone is a wheel-turning king" (*ibid*.: 30).

In many images, a *cakra* is depicted on the palm of the hand raised in *abhayamudrā*, as we see, once again, in the icon of the year 4 donated by Dharmanandin (Fig. 6*c*). Falk (2012: 493), relying on the *Avadānaśataka*, reports that the *cakra* on the palm of the right hand appears when the Buddha talks about the *cakravartirājya* and on the soles of his feet when he preaches on the different classes of beings. In the undated stela from Ahichhatra in the Indian Museum in Kolkata (Fig. 7), a *cakra* on the palm of the hand in *abhāyamudrā* is equally visible, something that we can also see on the right forearm that is the only surviving fragment of a statue of more than twice life-size in red-spotted sandstone kept in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (Figs. 8*a-b*). When the Mathurā icons were created, the Indian iconographical vocabulary included an extremely limited number of *mudrā*s. Besides the *abhāyamudrā*, only the *añjalimudrā* was in use, and it is reasonable to think that the semantic field of the former was wide-ranging. Positioning the *cakra* on the palm of the raised hand was obviously made on purpose, and in this case the *abhāyamudrā*, complemented by the *cakra*, denotes the Preaching. This implies the status of *samyaksambuddha* of Śākyamuni and, therefore, his ultimate role as *cakravartin*.

The fragment of the Ashmolean Museum indicates the existence of very large images of the Blessed One, and actually even larger ones did exist in Mathurā, as shown by the colossal head of the *uṣṇīṣin* type (57 cm. high) from the Chaubara mounds kept in the Government Museum in Mathura displaying a large, circular hole between the eyebrows where a precious stone − as first remarked by F. S. Growse (1882: 114), who found it − was originally set to show the *ūrṇā* (Fig. 9). Judging by its size, the head must have belonged to a

seated *bodhisattva*, and the presence of the *ūrṇā*, one of the main *lakṣaṇa*s, in the form of a gem set in the round cavity of the stone expressly made to receive it, recalls, on a much larger scale, the stela donated by Dharmanandin, where a small cavity between the eyebrows is equally present (Fig. 6*a*). A *cakra*, too, was probably depicted on the right hand, which could only be raised in *abhāyamudrā*:[15] in such a huge image, the ultimate role of the *bodhisattva/buddha* as *cakravartin* (in whose regard more will be said below) had to emerge with the utmost clarity.

In the mutilated icon from the now extinct mound of Girdharpur, portraying Gotama/Śākyamuni seated on a throne with a rampart lion on each side and a *cakrastambha* and devotees at the centre (Fig. 10*a*), a *cakra*, along with a *triratna*, is carved on each sole of the feet of the Blessed One (Fig. 10*b*), as is also the case of the Dharmanandin stela;[16] a *cakra* was arguably carved on the palm of his raised hand.[17] Sometimes the *triratna* acquires a central position on the thrones-pedestals, as in the mutilated image of the year 23 of Kaniṣka in the Government Museum of Mathura (Sharma 1984: 182 and fig. 91) and in the headless *bodhisattva* from the Palikhera mound of the year

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[15] According to Ahuja (2018: 188), the fragment of the Ashmolean Museum may have belonged to an image similar to the standing *bodhisattva* of the year 3 donated by the monk Bala. It is a reasonable hypothesis, but, given the existence of very large images that were certainly seated, we cannot be sure.

[16] These details are not visible in Fig. 6*a*.

[17] The presence of a *cakra* on the hand in *abhāyamudrā* and, along with a *triratna*, on the soles of the feet is a quite common occurrence in the images under study. Just to provide one more example, the reader can refer to the excellent photograph of a seated Buddha (mutilated at top) at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seated_Buddha_ in_Abhaya_Mudra_-_Kushan_Period_-_Gurgaon_-_ACCN_12-188_-_Government _Museum_-_Mathura_ 2013-02-23_4905.JPG

39 of Huviṣka in the Indian Museum in Kolkata (Fig. 11).[18] The *triratna* is the sign of a concluded mission, in that it indicates to the faithful the long-awaited, and now actual possibility to take the three refuges: the *Buddha*, the *dharma*, which only a *samyaksambuddha* can proclaim, and the *saṃgha*, which is the support of the Buddha's throne, being equally responsible of the very existence of the icons and of the expectations of the devotees.

In the Mathurā icons a relation is established between the two crucial events of the Awakening and the First Sermon, the former to be understood as a preliminary to the latter. The act of teaching establishes the Buddha as such, as revealer of Dharma, his decision to teach placing him in relation to the world and the historical dimension of the event. All Mathurā stele focus on these two events,[19] the second and most important one being alluded to by means of varied iconographical features. The throne, some iconographical details such as the *cakra* and, as we will see, the hair dress complete an iconography prompting the faithful to identify the image as that of Śākyamuni in the role of *buddha-cakravartin*.

In my previous attempt at interpreting these images, I also tried to show how even the large, standing *bodhisattva* statue of the year 3 created in Mathurā and donated by the monk Bala at Isipatana (Figs. 12*a*, 12*b*) is part of the same vision.[20] The *chatra* protecting the

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[18] The stela of the year 39 of Huviṣka is surprisingly near to the creations of the times of Kaniṣka, as remarked by Sharma (1984: 193).

[19] Many of these steles are reproduced in the articles of Härtel (1983) and Miyer (1986), as well as in R.C. Sharma's book (1984).

[20] I distance myself from Härtel, who, trying to establish a typology conveying a meaning, argued that the "kapardin reliefs" cannot be compared with the free-standing "Buddha figures" (1983: 653). By doing so, the intents and the very existence of one

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bodhisattva (so again says the inscription) displays the corolla of a lotus and *maṅgala*s pouring down, among which we recognise *śaṅkha*, *purṇaghāṭa*, the pair of golden *matsya*s, etc. D. R. Sahni, the best of the archaeologists who worked in the messy excavation of Sarnath, in his guidebook to the site museum specified that

> [o]n the outside of the rim of the umbrella, are small narrow holes cut at distances of 1′7″ from one another from which probably streamers, flower-garlands or other similar objects were suspended by the Buddhist votaries […] (Sahni 1914: 35).[21]

The regularity with which the holes are arranged shows that they were made before mounting the parasol on the stone post, and that they are part of the original design.

According to a living tradition preserved in Tibetan Buddhism, it was the gods, Brahmā and Śakra in the first place, who after Awakening offered the Buddha these auspicious objects (Beer 2003: 1-2). According to a well-established Indian custom, *maṅgala*s are offered to a person who is about to start a special undertaking, as for instance to a king starting for an expedition (see *e.g.* Kane 1930-1962, V: 621, 778) – to conquer the world, this being the case, as we will see below, of the

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and the same patron or of the patronage of one and the same religious group for both a stela and a standing image go lost, even though they are very often central to evaluate a set of iconographies. Härtel, for instance, listed Monk Bala's stela at Śrāvastī among the "Kapardin Buddhas" leaving aside Bala's other donations (*ibid.*: 656), and yet the term *bodhisattva*, decisive for him, is used in Bala's dedicatory inscriptions regardless of the position taken by the body of the Blessed One. The Mathurā images, seated or standing, have a large number of traits in common (the top hair knot, the *abhāyamudrā*, the dress, etc.). van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1949: 150) rightly recognised that "[t]he standing and seated figures from Mathurā belonging to this period correspond to a definite type […] from which as a rule they deviate only slightly".

[21] Sahni further notes that "[s]uch holes occur also in other umbrellas and the back-slabs of images both here and at Mathurā."

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Buddha in the role of the one and only *cakravartin* on earth. The *maṅgala*s depicted on the large parasol and the garlands hanging down from all around it evoke a crucial enterprise, that is, the decision of the *bodhisattva* to reveal the Dharma to the world: he has got up from his throne (of which the lion in heraldry position under his feet is a sign) keeping his right hand raised with the palm open, and has began his journey to Isipatana. And indeed, the *bodhisattva* of the year 3 *was* in Isipatana, and precisely placed in the *caṅkama*, the recreated path along which Śākyamuni was thought to have walked.[22] A statue almost three meters high (including the tenon by which it was fixed to the ground), not to mention the large parasol above it, was not transported to a great distance from the place of production without good reason, particularly so to the place associated for all Buddhists to the First Sermon. If the observations made above on the meaning of the *maṅgala*s depicted on the inner face of the parasol make any sense, the *bodhisattva*, whom we have seen seated under the pipal tree at Bodhgayā, is precisely at Isipatana that completes his path, performing the indeed great enterprise to become a *samyaksambuddha*.

How then can we more precisely identify the Being portrayed under the pipal tree and ready to teach? His destiny has been already determined from a very long time – since when, in a preceding life, he took the vow of becoming a Buddha and since when the Buddha of that remote aeon predicted him his future. Regarding the context that

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[22] The path along which the Buddha used to walk in meditation was present at all the main sites associated to his life after the Awakening as, in the first place, Bodhgayā. The nun Buddhamitrā, in the year 2 of Kaniṣka, dedicated a statue of an obviously standing *bodhisattva* in the *caṅkama* of the Ghoṣitārāma at Kauśāmbī (*cf.* below).

interests us, it is not important to know when this vision dates back to,[23] because in the second century AD it was well-established and the figure of the Buddha of the future, Maitreya, had already appeared, too.

The tradition of the seven past Buddhas has Vipassī as initiator of the chain of the Buddhas. He is the first of the Buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni also at Bharhut (early first century BC), where, apparently, only six past Buddhas are acknowledged, not represented in human form but associated, each of them, to a particular tree (Lüders 1963: 82-86 and pls. XVII, XXXIII). The guiding text regarding the seven past Buddhas is the *Mahāvadāna Sutta*, always scrutinised by scholars, from Windisch (1908) to Gombrich (1993). It is Śākyamuni who in the Jetavana, recalling the distant past, gives us the details. Vipassī's disciples were Khaṇḍa and Tissa (as his, now, are Sāriputta and Mogallāna); his personal attendant was the monk Asoka, the correlative to Ānanda (*Mahāvadāna Sutta*: I.9, p. 200; 1.16, p. 202). Vipassī was born a kṣatriya in the capital town of Bandhumati from King Bandhumā and Queen Bandhumatī (*ibid.*: I.12, p. 201; 1.16, p. 202), while Śākyamuni's parents are Śuddhodana and Māyā and their capital town is Kapilavatthu. Vipassī descended from the Tuṣita heaven and entered his mother's womb protected by four *deva*s who declared that "'[l]et no man, no non-human being, no thing whatever harm this Bodhisatta or this Bodhisatta's mother!' That is the rule" (*ibid.*: 1.17, p. 203). And a whole string of "rules" actually follows, which include the destiny of Vipassī's mother, who, like Queen Māyā would do, died seven days after childbirth (*ibid.*: 1.22, p. 204). The six past Buddhas in-between did partake an analogous path and circumstances. Then we

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[23] Gombrich (1993: 152) specifies that the older parts of the Canon have very little to say about the former Buddhas, although no passage clearly indicates that the Buddha thought himself unique.

see Vipassī having the Four Encounters (*ibid.*: 2.2-14; pp. 207-210), experiencing the *vipassanā* way to enlightenment (*ibid.*: 2.21, p. 212) and then, as a fully-enlightened Buddha, hesitating whether to remain inactive or teach the Dhamma (*ibid.*: 3.1-2, p. 213). It was the Great Brahmā who convinced him to teach, so that eventually he "vanished there and then from the root of that tree of enlightenment" reappearing in the Deer Park of Khema (*ibid.*: 3.8, p. 215), a precedent of the Park of Isipatana, where he started preaching. Vipassī's "vanishing", also attributable to the Buddhas who would follow him through time, may be alluded to in the Mathurā stele on whose throne-pedestals the *cakra* is represented.

Vipassī's itinerary and destiny is the model of the path that all the future Buddhas would follow. It is Śākyamuni who, according to the same *sutta* (*ibid.*: 3.33; pp. 220-221),

> recalls their births, their names, their clan, their life-span, their twin-disciples, their assemblies of disciples: "These Blessed Lords were born thus, were called thus, thus was their clan, thus was their morality, their Dhamma, their wisdom, their dwelling, thus was their liberation."[24]

The best known story regarding the future Buddha Śākyamuni's vow (*praṇidhāna*) and the prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) addressed to him by the Buddha of that aeon is that of the young Brahman Megha and of Dīpaṃkara, the first of the line of the twenty-

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[24] Long ago Ernst Windisch (1908: 96) summed up the whole question reporting that Gotama Buddha mentions the names and circumstances of the six past Buddhas (Vipassī, Sikhī, Vessabhū, Kakusandho, Koṇāganamo, Kassapo), of each specifying the duration of life, the species of the tree under which he attained the highest knowledge, the names of his two main disciples, the number of his followers, the name of the *upaṭṭhāka*s personally serving him, the name of his father and mother and the royal town that had been his native place.

five Buddhas. This story is of some interest to us because in second-century Gandhāra (that is, when also our icons were produced) the episode of Dīpaṃkara and Megha (the future Buddha Śākyamuni) was very popular.[25] In the account given in the *Mahāvastu*, which Gandharan representations seem to follow very closely,[26] Megha says, referring to Dīpaṃkara:

> It has taken a long time for the All-seeing One to appear in the world. It takes a long time for Tathāgatas to be born. After a long time, too, my vow will be fulfilled, and I shall become a Buddha. Of this I have no doubt (*Mahāvastu*: I, 237; p. 193).

Dīpaṃkara's *vyākaraṇa* follows Megha's *praṇidhāna*:

> Young Megha, in an incalculable *kalpa* hence you will become a Buddha. When you are a Śākyan in Kapilavastu, the abode of seers, then will you realise your vow (*ibid.*: I, 243; p. 198).

In the *Buddhavaṃsa* (IIA, 62-70), Dīpaṃkara predicts Sumedha's future name, Gotama, and those of his parents, his departure from Kapilavastu, his reaching the Nerañjarā, as well as the names of his chief disciples, of his attendant Ānanda and of his lay women attendants.

When an individual receives the investiture of future historical Buddha, the *vyākaraṇa*, an ontological metanoia takes place thanks to

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[25] I limit myself to referring the reader to nos. 127-131 of the catalogue of Vladimir Zwalf (1996, I: 134-138; related photographs in vol. II) and to Taddei (2003), who has examined the story of Megha and Dīpaṃkara in relation to the Offering of Dust and to the light symbolism.

[26] *Cf.* the episode of the flowers that Megha bought and threw in the air (along with those of the young girl Prakṛti) to honour the Buddha, which "remained fixed as a bright veil covering the circle of Dīpaṃkara's head" (*Mahāvastu*: I, 238; p. 193).

which the causes of his condition of future Buddha become present in the present. From this moment onwards he is no longer a bodhisattva understood as an individual who is just aspiring to the *bodhi*; his state is, rather, not different from that of a Buddha: his path, in fact, is already settled, step after step, in that the *vyākaraṇa* puts an unmovable seal on the *praṇidhāna*. Scholars, understandably, have tried to shed a light on the conflict between the *pratītyasamutpāda* concept, according to which things are conditioned but not wholly determined, and pre-determinism, but their aim has mainly been to reach back to the early Buddhist conception of causality (*cf. e.g.* Anālayo 2016: 108-109). R. Gombrich has opportunely specified that if the eventuality of a clash between cosmological prediction and the free will of a Buddha is not taken in any consideration in the texts, nor apparently in Buddhist minds, it is "because they simply do not meet; they belong to different spheres of discourse" (Gombrich 1993: 150). In our case, we have to place ourselves in a second-century context and from the point of view of donors and devotees vis-à-vis the icon: no matter how learned the former, the contradiction must have been, if ever posed, very blurred.

We are within a religious vision characteristic or, in this, not in contrast with that of the Sarvāstivādins, in whose causal-temporal model the future already exists in the present, and the past is still comprised in the future, given the assumption that all *dharma*s continue to exist in all three periods (*trikāla*) of past, present and future. Miyer (1986: 136) has touched on this point en passant when, mentioning the doctrine of the three time periods, recalled that the Sarvāstivādins were "deeply concerned" with questions regarding the Bodhisattva career, also mentioning the inscriptions on the umbrella staff of the standing *bodhisattva* installed by Bala in the Kosaṃbakuṭī at Śrāvastī declared to be "the property of the teachers of the school of the Sarvāstivādins"

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(Bloch 1905-1906: 181; Lüders 1912: nos. 918, 919).[27] We can get an idea, albeit partial, of their active presence in Mathurā and in the connected Buddhist centres starting from the donor Naṃdā, a kṣatrapa devotee, who in an unspecified year dedicated the image of a seated *bodhisattva* "for the acceptance of the Śāvastidhiyas" (Lüders 1961: §2, pp. 31-32).[28] Regarding Bala, his companion monk was Puṣyabuddhi, as from the main inscription pertaining to the *bodhisattva* of the year 3 (id. 1912: nos. 918, 919; Sahni 1914). From this very inscription we know that a distinguished member of Bala's circle was the nun Buddhamitrā, whereas the significant costs for the execution and transportation from Mathurā of the three elements forming the whole of the image were arguably borne by the kṣatrapas Vanaṣpara and Kharapallāna. Buddhamitrā seems to have had an independent, influential career, since we find her mentioned as sole donor of the standing *bodhisattva*, created in Mathurā, that she had set up the year before, in Kaniṣka's year 2, at Kauśāmbī (Chandra 1970: 61-62 and fig. 85; *cf.* also Sharma 1986: 183-184 and fig. 93) and, much later, by her niece Dhanavatī, also a nun, in a stela of which only the lowest, inscribed part is preserved, which she and her parents would donate in the year 33 of Huviṣka (Bloch 1905-1906: 181-182). It can be worth mentioning that the relationship between the Sarvāstivādins and Kaniṣka, to whom the convocation of the fourth Buddhist Council in Kashmir presided over by Vāsumitra, is attributed (according to a non-unanimous tradition), would have been particularly strong. The Sarvāstivādins had developed the theory of the two bodies, the Buddha's *rūpakāya*, whose nature is impure, and his *dharmakāya*. The

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[27] The Bodhisattva image is kept in the Indian Museum in Kolkata, whereas the umbrella is preserved in the Lucknow State Museum.
[28] Only the lowest part of the stela, found near the Katra mound, has survived, and the state of the scrappy inscription is poor.

solemn aspect of the Being represented in the Mathurā images excludes the first option, all the more so because in the Sarvāstivāda theory of the three *asaṃkhyeyakalpa*s, Gotama acquires the status of *ārya* under the Tree, immediately before attaining the *bodhi* (*cf*. Lamotte 1988: 626-627): if this is the case, the presence of the pipal tree in some of the Uṣṇīṣin icons would be, by itself, a revealing iconographical detail.

For all the existing differences, the other Buddhist schools and the associated donors shared the same iconographical models and, therefore, the premises on which the latter were based. Judging from the epigraphic record, the most numerous donors of Uṣṇīṣin Buddhas in Mathurā were adherents of the Mahāsāṃghika order. In their case, doctrinal tenets and the images donated seem to meet effortlessly. In the Docetist vision of the Mahāsāṃghikas, Gotama/Śākyamuni was a perfect, undefiled Being, his birth purely apparitional, his existence supra-mundane, and he was endowed of all the perfections and omniscience from his birth and not from his Awakening (*cf. e.g.* Dutt 1978: 72; Lamotte 1988: 623-624). The Mathurā icons do match this vision, and the Mahāsāṃghika stela of the year 20 of Kaniṣka, where the Being represented is called *tathāgata* (Fig. 2), speaks by itself. As to the term *bodhisattva* used by the majority of the adherents of this school, we may add that if for them the Buddhas were *lokottara*, bodhisattvas, too, were not average beings and were considered supra-mundane: at birth, they even did not pass through the embryonic stages, and were considered free to choose whichever destiny suited them (Dutt 1978: 77; Lamotte 1988: 627)[29] – the destiny of *samyaksambuddha* in our case.

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[29] Not all the Mahāsāṃghikas shared this view, which seems to have been developed by the northern sub-schools that included the Lokottaravādins. *Cf.* Nattier and Prebish (1977: 257-259).

Regarding the Sāṃmitīyas, branched out, according to one of the available sources, from the the Sarvāstivādins (Lamotte 1988: 526; but see on p. 532), it is the idea of a self transcending the *dharma*s, the *pudgala*, that suggests contemplation and worship addressed to Gotama / Śākyamuni.[30] Mention must also be made of the Dharmaguptakas, whose presence is attested to by a *bodhisattva* image of the year 17 of Kaniṣka donated by Nāgapiyā, wife of the goldsmith Dharmakasa, in her own *caityakuṭī* (Lüders 1961: §150, pp. 187-188).[31] The Dharmaguptakas, equally branched out of the Sarvāstivādins (Lamotte 1988: 526, 532), compiled a *bodhisattvapiṭaka* of their own (*ibidem*: 531); well-rooted in Gandhāra, as the recent discoveries of early manuscripts has proved, they would have played a minor role in the heart of the subcontinent.[32] For them, the Buddha was the supreme and peerless being, to the point of not being included in the *saṃgha* (*ibidem*: 634), which thing brings us not too far from the position vis-à-vis the Being depicted in our icons of the schools mentioned above.

These considerations refer to a context where putting together the iconographical data, nowadays circumscribed in time and space with remarkable precision, and doctrinal views and subtleties, which by contrast are often not attributable to a well defined historical period and

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[30] Here is the text of the inscription as translated by Skilling (2016: 26): "[This] bodhisatva [is dedicated] by Dharmaka together with his mother and father, together with his preceptor, together with his male pupils and together with his female pupils, at the Śirivihāra for the acceptance of the Samitiya teachers for the glorification of all Buddhas".

[31] The date is not certain (*cf.* Härtel 1985: 656). This image is interesting because the joyful devotees sculpted on the throne-pedestal (two males, two women and two children) are likely to belong to two family groups strictly related to each other. See the stela in Sharma (1984: 181-182; fig. 90) and in Härtel (1985: fig. 5 on p. 660).

[32] For Lamotte, who seems to have not known the existence of at least this inscription (published by Vogel in 1914: 65), they would have played an unobtrusive role in India (Lamotte 1981: 539).

geographical area, is forcedly sketchy. Focusing, as we do, on the cult of images, it should also be remembered, with Skilling (whom I follow freely adapting concepts and words), that in a holistic vision the Buddhist orders or schools were not much different from each other and should also be considered as dynamic systems of thought and behaviour rather than as static dogmatic systems viewed, each of them, from a central point of orthodoxy (*cf.* Skilling 2016: 1; *cf.* also Lamotte 1988: 518-523). If due attention were paid to iconographies – the Uṣṇīṣin Buddhas in our case – one would easily verify the judiciousness of Skilling's words, and give the proper weight to questions that, viewed from our perspective, texts (or our position in relation to them) tend sometimes to magnify.

In the *Mahāvadāna Sutta* the epithet attributed to Vipassī is constantly *bodhisatta* until when he poses himself the question whether he should teach, that is, *after* Awakening. We then read of "the Blessed Lord, the Arahant, the fully-enlightened Buddha Vipassī" (*Mahāvadāna Sutta* 3.1; p. 213). At the same time, we come across an apparently baffling point, which we have touched in passing: Vipassī as a young prince appears as being already endowed with the thirty-two marks of the *mahāpuruṣa*, thereby before finding himself at the crucial crossroads when he had to decide whether carrying out a household life and become "a wheel-turning righteous monarch of the law" or going forth into homelessness and "become an Arahant, a fully-enlightened Buddha" (*ibidem*: 1.33, p. 206). Thus when he decided for the latter alternative he was a person already provided with the *lakṣaṇa*s, which are the expression of the moral virtues of a Buddha, making him an exceptional, extraordinarily beautiful Being, different from anybody else. If we scrutinise the iconographies with attention and try to profit

from the texts, a reasoned interpretation of the term *bodhisattva* used for the Uṣṇīṣin Buddhas not only leads us to interpret the person represented as an ontological projection of Gotama as an Awakened Being, but to consider him a *samyaksambuddha* (bearing in mind what ensues from this), as explicitly recalled to us by the words of the donor Saṃghilā in the year 14 of Kaniṣka, mentioned above.

The attainment of the Awakening is a strictly personal experience, deprived of narrative elements, thus lending itself to an iconic representation obtained with an extreme economy of means, which later episodes of the life of the Blessed One, even the Teaching, would not equal. In Gayā even his closest disciples left Gotama, who attained the Awakening at dawn after passing the night – a symbol of silence and solitude – completely alone. The Mathurā icons where the pipal tree is depicted are epiphanies observing which the devotees developed the aspiration to become like the Buddha:[33] this process of

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[33] Once the Renaissance, even in its most sincerely religious aspects, let enter in sculpture and painting cognitive issues of a different nature, we are unable even to look at a Raphael's Madonna for what she actually was. To understand the point we have to resort to the words of Pavel Florenskij, who upheld that at the basis of an icon there is "the *authentic* perception of an *authentic* supra-mundane spiritual experience" (Florenskij 1981: 71). The artist of the Renaissance – Florenskij further argued – already conceives the conditionality of every being, the necessity of stressing that the ontological intelligibility of things has turned into their sensible phenomenology (p. 114). Naturally the great physicist, mathematician, as well as philosopher and theologian, was discussing the fundamentals of the icons of the Eastern Churches. (Florenskij discussed this subject matter on several occasions, as in a study, dating back to the years 1919-1920, devoted to the reversed perspective; *cf.* Florenskij 2002).

With regard to Mathurā, it is not very likely that the iconography of the Uṣṇīṣin Buddhas was chosen by "the artists of Mathura" (Härtel 1985: 678) outside a precise, binding input. The *rūpakara*s were admired and honoured to the point of being cited in the inscriptions as was the Śivamitra mentioned by the two kṣatriya brothers who donated a bodhisattva image in the Jetavana (Sahni 1908-1909; *cf.* also Sharma 1986: 180); talented as the *rūpakara*s might have been, they could not "conceive" icons without the precise directives of the donors – learned monks and nuns or devotees strictly related to the former.

identification could not occur with the Śākyamuni of Isipatana, too far beyond their expectations. The stage of development of the iconographies (the *dharmacakramudrā* had not yet been introduced) made in any case difficult, in Mathurā, a condensed representation of that scene, which, with the available means, could only be alluded to.[34] Conversely, the icons where the role of Śākyamuni as *cakravartin* is more emphasised, as in the Dharmanandin's stela (Fig. 6*a*), not to mention those of colossal size (Fig. 9), had to raise in the donors and devotees a deep sense of wonder and, at the same time, reassurance: their true sovereign was there, in front of them.[35] This function of presence and guarantee assured by the Buddha as *cakravartin* proposed by the images of Mathurā was, however, also the cause of the limited period of time during which they were produced.

Throughout the periods of reign of Kaniṣka and Huviṣka, when the Uṣṇīṣin icons were created, the figure of Maitreya became

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[34] After the introduction of the *dharmacakramudrā*, narrative needs started losing importance or were minimised. The scene at Isipatana, frequently represented in Gandhāra, is less pregnant than just a Gandharan meditating (that is, awakened) Buddha precisely because of the presence of bystanders (however, we also find Śākyamuni alone turning the *cakra* with his right hand, awkwardly at times).

[35] I have recalled above (note 20) that van Lohuizen-de Leeuw rightly observed that all the images of the Blessed One produced in Mathurā during the concerned period correspond to a well-defined type "from which as a rule they deviate only slightly". These deviations, however, do exist (I am speaking of iconographical, not stylistic deviations), but the inevitable focus on the *bodhisattva*/*buddha* question has prevented, beyond a wholesale evaluation of the icon (a remarkable exception is Harry Falk; see below), a careful analysis of the features that characterise them and of the differences that distinguish them one from the other (the presence or absence of the pipal tree, the presence of the *cakra* or the Bodhi Tree on the pedestals, etc.). In the absence of a catalogue raisonné comprehensive of the fragments plausibly kept in the storehouses of museums (thrones, parts of nimbuses, parts of the body of the main image, etc.), I am not in the position to evaluate, also in quantitative terms, these "deviations".

increasingly popular, though mainly in Gandhāra. As a future Buddha, Maitreya is subject to follow the path laid ahead of him by the *praṇidhāna* that he made as a person who lived in the past and by the *vyākaraṇa* that a Buddha – in this case Śākyamuni – foretold him, either in the presence of monks or in the Tuṣita Heaven.[36] Texts and scholarly literature on Maitreya are aplenty, and here I will just refer to Lamotte (1988: 699-710). According to the numerous *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*s, Maitreya will be born by king Śaṅkha of Ketumatī (corresponding to Vārāṇasī), and after withdrawing into the forest, will attain the supreme knowledge; from then on, he will be called Maitreya *samyaksambuddha*. That very day, the seven jewels of king Śaṅkha will disappear (*ibidem*: 701). This, we realise, explains Maitreya's regal attire, which denotes him as the only, real *cakravartin* of the future *kalpa*. Maitreya, like all the Buddhas who have preceded him, will proceed to teach, and even though, in principle, he is a bodhisattva, he is seen as a *samyaksambuddha* because this is what the *lakṣaṇa*s show, this is the role he has chosen for himself, this – as shown by the clothes he wears – is what leads him towards his destiny of *cakravartin*.

This is, in fact, the way we should interpret the legend *mētrago boudo* on the Kaniṣka's copper tetradrachms first read by John Cribb (1980; see here Fig. 13), who has returned to the subject on several occasions after acquiring an increasing number of evidences (id. 1984, 1985; 1999-2000). In order to explain the term *buddha* conferred on these coins to Maitreya, whom we would call *bodhisattva* (as his first predecessor Vipassī),[37] we are faced with a specular difficulty with respect to that encountered in the Mathurā sculptures, where images

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[36] As recalled also by Kim (1997: 18) in his comprehensive volume on the iconography of Maitreya.

[37] *Māvadāna Sutta* (3.1 ff.; pp. 213 ff.).

showing a person whom we would call a Buddha are labelled as being of *bodhisattva*s. In the latter case, the majority of donors followed the tradition handed down in texts such as the *Mahāvadāna Sutta*, whereas the iconographies depict a *samyaksambuddha*, as Maitreya appears to be on Kaniṣka's coins, where the ontological metanoia caused by the *vyākaraṇa* that makes possible Maitreya's condition of future historical Buddha to become present in the present is perfectly clear, allowing us to explain, hopefully, the duality *bodhisattva/buddha*.[38]

Regarding the emphasis laid on kingship in our icons, we can avoid discussing their relationship with Kuṣāṇa imperial ideology, and rather recall the significance that kingship has in Buddhism remaining within the perimeter of the present discussion. When Maitreya descends on earth from the Tuṣita Heaven, the seven jewels of the king of Ketumatī will vanish and, with them, the earthly *cakravartin*: the only king on earth remains Maitreya.[39] The same is true for all the Buddhas, including Śākyamuni, who in Mathurā seats on the lion throne as the sole, actual king of the present *kalpa*. A *samyaksambuddha* cannot fail to fulfil the function of unique and true *cakravartin*: the long-awaited events of the Awakening and the Preaching have occurred, and the earthly king vanishes when the real one appears. This is, I think, a further reason for reconsidering the identity of the "Katra Buddha" and of the other icons produced during the reigns of Kaniṣka and Huviṣka – a means to affirm the centrality of the religion.

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[38] Carter (1998: 216), though conceding the "needs of further study", has tried to explain the term *Buddha* referred to Maitreya maintaining that "[p]ossibly the popular Buddhism of that time was not concerned with correctness in iconographical terminology". It can be doubted, however, that popular Buddhism had anything to do with the minting of coins or, for that matter, with the iconography of the Awakened One on inscribed or uninscribed stele.

[39] On the prediction of the advent of Maitreya, see Anālayo (2014).

The *kaparda*, or, rather (as shown by Falk 2012: 495-497), the top hair knot on the head entirely covered by a thin cloth tightly placed so as to create a buffer zone between the skull and the headgear,[40] shows that Śākyamuni is ready to wear the warrior headdress of a kṣatriya, the one pertaining to the *cakravartin*. This is a detail that completes the regal iconography already indicated by the throne and by the aptly selected *lakṣaṇa*s depicted on some parts of Śākyamuni's body.[41] Our difficulty in grasping the meaning of the iconographical model of the Blessed One created in Mathurā lies in the fact that it had no developments, remaining limited in time and space: hence the difficulties in understanding its formation and actual significance. Differently than in Mathurā, in Gandhāra the efforts to create the image of Śākyamuni did not focus on his role as *cakravartin*, which is present (the throne, for instance, is always there), but not so central, allowing the created images to be received by a very large parterre and in various ways, ultimately succeeding in having a more effective and lasting outcome. Nonetheless, the worship of the turban is frequently represented in Gandharan art, and may find an explanation in the perspective that we have tried to clarify, and more distinctly so when the turban is depicted on an empty throne surmounted by a large *chatra*, a symbol of high position and power (Fig. 14). The turban cannot be that of Siddhārtha, who explicitly renounced to succeed to his father

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[40] Understandably unbeknownst to H. Falk, M. Spagnoli (1962: 131-134) had reached the same conclusion bringing as an example the famous stucco lunette from Hadda representing Siddhārtha leaving the bridal bed (in the Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet in Paris), where Kanthaka hands the prince the turban supporting device, surmounted by a plaque.

[41] Later iconographies, in order to stress this function, would show Śākyamuni as Bejewelled or Crowned Buddha.

Suddhodana; the throne and the turban can only be, in an unusual aniconical representation, those of the *buddha-cakravartin*.

Some questions remain open, though not, I think, with regard to the Uṣṇīṣin icons. Through the succession of past Buddhas, Buddhism sought legitimacy in the difficult Indian context, resorting to the authority that the past confers. The past, however, is bottomless, and even Dīpaṃkara, in certain contexts, is given predecessors. The Theravāda tradition developed the belief in twenty-eight Buddhas (twenty-nine when Maitreya is included), three of which, Taṅhaṃkara, Medhaṃkara and Saraṇaṃkhara, recorded in the *Buddhavaṃsa* (XXVII, 1) and summoned up to this day in prayers and litanies (Ānandajoti Bhikku 214: 190), antedate Dīpaṃkara. It seems justifiable to try and understand what lies in this potentially endless chain of Buddhas. Towards the end of his reign, "perhaps in its final year" (Cribb 1999-2000: 162; *cf.* also p. 159), that is, in AD 150 or 151, we find Śākyamuni represented on the reverse of coins issued by Kaniṣka. Some copper coins show him standing in *abhāyamudrā*, his head encircled by the nimbus, with the legend *sakamano boudo* (Cribb 1985: 60-62; figs. 9, B1c, and 10-12). The specification "*sakamano*" is presumably due to the fact that also Maitreya, equally defined *boudo*, appears, as we have seen, on other Kaniṣka coins issued in the same period: distinguishing between the Buddha of the present *kalpa* and the Buddha of the future became necessary (*ibidem*: 63).[42]

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[42] The reader is also referred to Cribb's other papers, particularly to Cribb (1999-2000). Härtel (1983: 659-662) has given much weight to the fact that the name Śākyamuni started to be mentioned only in a stela dated to the year 45: this would show a change in the nature of the Mathurā icons, also because after the year 51 freestanding images of "Śākyamuni", not corresponding to the "Kapardin type", were produced. I think, however, that the term *bodhisattva* (in the sense that I have tried to clarify) was very

A few gold coins of Kaniṣka, which include a well-known gold stater (*ibidem*: 59-60, Group A; fig. 9; see here Fig. 15), displays on the reverse the standing Buddha with his head encircled by a nimbus and his body enclosed within a mandorla (on the obverse, the emperor is shown performing a *homa* rite). An iconographical detail that draws our attention is the *dharmacakra* depicted on the Buddha's hand in *abhāyamudrā* because it declares him to be a *samyaksambuddha*, and therefore a *cakravartin*. Rare as these images may be, they throw a light on the quasi-divine nature attributed to the Buddha, or, rather, on the Buddha-principle, in that the mandorla ("almond"), besides enclosing a sacred space, represents what is essential hidden by what is accessory, the shell (*cf. e.g.* Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1986, II: 58). It is not relevant here to hunt for the origin of this symbol and the route it followed to be eventually adopted into the official iconography of a Kuṣāṇa emperor[43] as to evaluate whether this iconography makes sense in relation to what we have been discussing so far. In these coins the Buddha appears as an epiphany capable to recur over time, whenever the Dharma needs to be proclaimed again. A Buddha is a special Being, but is not a god, and his life is destined to dissolve. However, he is in the unique position to pass the baton to another person

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often used until the early part of Huviṣka's reign just because it did not lend itself to misunderstandings: by *bodhisattva*, only the (future) Buddha Śākyāmuni could be meant. Specifying his name became, if not necessary, opportune, when other Buddhas appeared on the scene: certainly Maitreya, an inscribed image of which, seated on the lion throne (only the lower part of the stela has survived), goes back to the year 29 of Huviṣka (*cf.* Kim 1992: 53 and fig. 14; earlier images of Maitreya from Mathurā do not have iconographical centrality, or are standing, like the well-known statue from Ahichhatra; *ibid.*: figs. 1-7, 12-13, 15-18, 20-21). By that time, Buddha images of the rising Mahāyāna also appeared, as shown by the well-known inscription on a pedestal from Govindnagar, dated to the year 26 of Huviṣka, recording the *pratimā* of Amitābha (Schopen 1987).

[43] The reader can find a survey on the origin of the mandorla in Todorova (2016). Carter (1998: 223-226), examining the Buddha image on Kaniṣka's gold stater, considers the mandorla as underlining the luminous-body symbolism.

who will walk the same path, and so forth. What resists within the shell is the postulate of the potential eternity of this process: a Buddha, either of the past, of the present, or of the future, is present over time.[44]

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Giovanni Verardi, now retired, has been Professor of Art and Archaeology of India and Central Asia at the Università "L'Orientale" of Naples, Italy. He carried out excavations in Afghanistan (Ghazni), Nepal (in Kathmandu and at the Aśokan site of Gotihawa) and China (Luoyang). He has been also contributing in the field of Indian history and art history.

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[44] In Verardi (2020: 171-194) I have briefly touched upon the descending function of the bodhisattva, a theme that would require, from a religious-historical perspective, a specific study within the more general phenomenon of divine descents on earth.

FIGURES

Fig. 1 - Stela representing Gotama/Śākyamuni from Anyor.
Government Museum, Mathura.

Fig. 2 - Stela with the seated *tathāgata*
donated in the year 14 of Kaniṣka.
Private Collection.
(From Falk 2002-2003: 37, fig. 6).

Fig. 3 - Relief from Kankali Tila showing Śākyamuni greeted by a king.
State Museum, Lucknow.
(From Takata 1967: pl. 48, fig. 56).

Fig. 4 - Stela with the seated *bodhisattva* of the year 32 of Kaniṣka
from Ramnagar. National Museum, New Delhi.
(From Miyer 1986: Fig. 7).

Fig. 5 - Lower part of stela showing Indra and Brahmā.
State Museum, Lucknow.
(From Verardi, 2020, fig. 10).

Fig. 6a - Stela donated by
Dharmanandin
in the year 4 of Kaniṣka.
Courtesy Kimbell Art Museum,
Forth Worth, Texas.

Fig. 6*b* - Detail of Dharmanandin's stela
with *cakrastambha.*

Fig. 6*c* - Detail of Dharmanandin's
stela showing right arm in
abhāyamudrā with *cakra* exhibited
on the palm of the hand.

Fig. 7 - Stela representing Gotama/Śākyamuni from Ahichhatra.
Indian Museum, Kolkata.
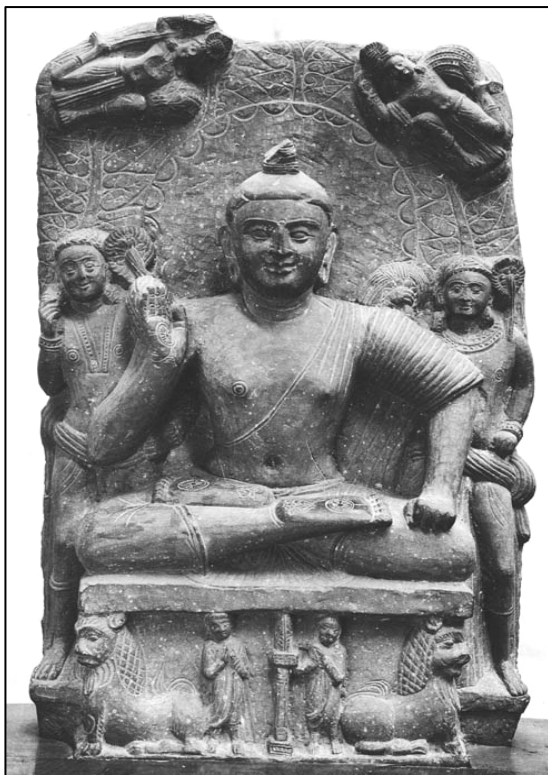
Figs. 8*a-b* - Right arm in *abhāyamudrā* of a huge statue of an Uṣṇīṣīn Buddha and detail of hand exhibiting *cakra*. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
(From Ahuja 2018: 188).

Fig. 9 - Head of colossal statue of an Uṣṇīṣīn Buddha. Government Museum, Mathura.

Fig. 10*a* - Stela representing Gotama/Śākyamuni from Girdharpur.
Government Museum, Mathura.
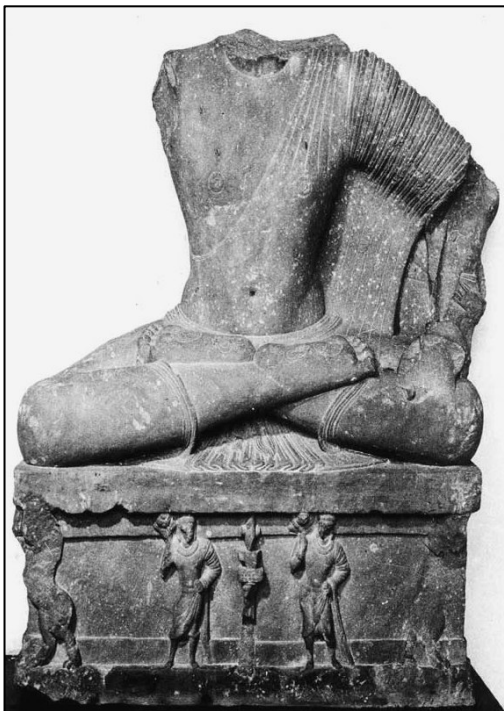
Fig. 10*b* - Detail of preceding.

Fig. 11 - *Bodhisattva* seated on lion throne with *triratna* and devotees
dated to the year 39 of Huviṣka from Palikhera.
Indian Museum, Kolkata.
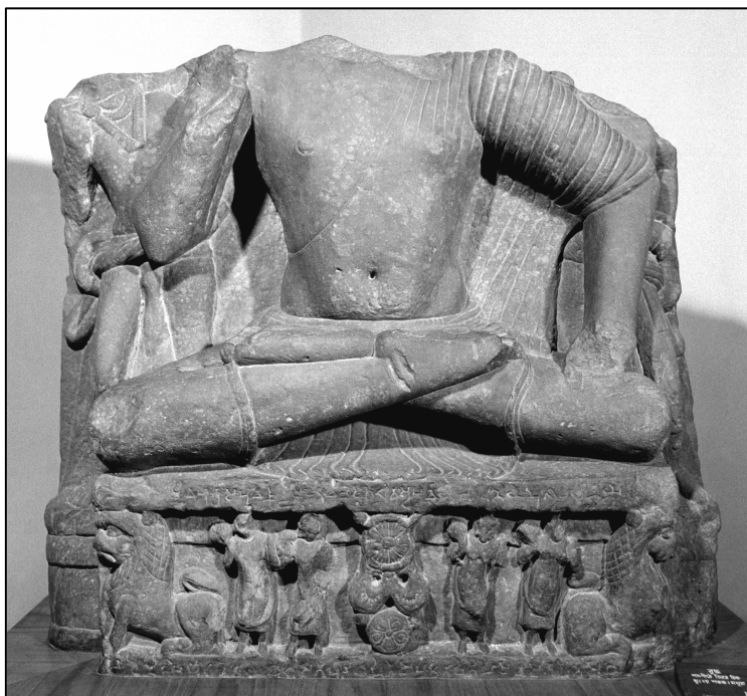
Fig. 12*a* - Standing *bodhisattva* of the year 3 of Kaniṣka. Sarnath Museum.
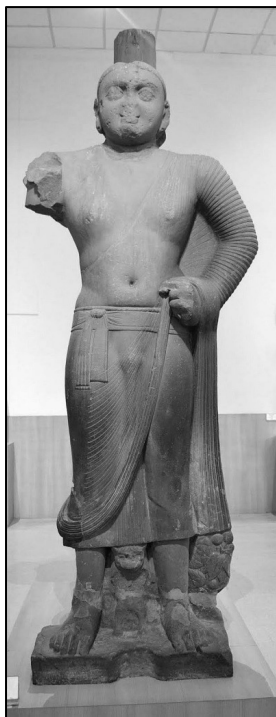
Fig. 12*b* - *Chatra* decorated with *maṅgalas* pertaining to the *bodhisattva* of the year 3 of Kaniṣka. Sarnath Museum.

Fig. 13 - *Buddha* Maitreya on the reverse of Kaniṣka's copper coins.
Re-arranged from Cribb (1984: 234, fig. 30.3).
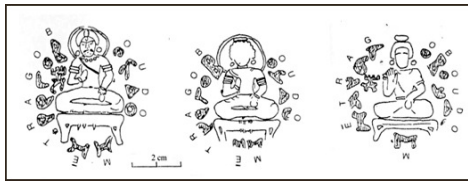
Fig. 14 - Throne the of *buddha-cakravartin*. Peshawar Museum.
From Lyons and Ingholt (1957: no. 50).

Fig. 15 - Gold stater of Kaniṣka showing the Buddha on reverse.

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The Chariot allegory in the *Phaedrus* of Plato, the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, and the *Milindapañho*

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Abstract: This paper links three traditions, i.e., ancient Greek, Hindu and Buddhist, through the renowned chariot allegory. The paper's main purpose is to show that this is not a coincidence but part of a common cultural heritage, i.e., the Indo-European, where the chariot and the horse were important in more ways than one. In the process of uncovering the common Indo-European legacy, the paper looks into certain shared but latent leitmotifs such as the Dumezilian trifunctional hypothesis, cultural beliefs, moral values, spiritual views and metaphysical ideas. The paper also points out the similarities and differences in the three chariot allegories.

Keywords: Indo-European, chariot allegory, horse, right, *Phaedrus*, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, *Milindapañho*, trifunctional hypothesis, Seleucid dynasty.

Short Introduction

The Indo-Europeans are the most important and the most widespread ethno-linguistic peoples in the world. Five out of the seven most prominent and widely spoken languages are of Indo-European origin. These are: English, French, Spanish, Russian and Hindi.

From their Ur-Heimat in Ukraine[1], these peoples spread, starting 3000 BCE, westwards towards Europe, and eastwards towards Iran and the northern portion of the Indian subcontinent. Thus, overtime, they claimed a vast turf from Iceland in the West to northern India in the East, right across the Eurasian landmass. This vast territorial conquest is said to have happened on account of the mastery of the horse and the chariot by the Indo-Europeans[2]. On account of this, both the horse and the chariot have been deified and idolized in ancient Indo-European culture. Horses became both animals of sport and religious sacrifice. Chariots yoked to horses were symbols of divinity, prestige, power, dominion and heroism.

In the current paper, we are dealing with two important and ancient Indo-European cultures, i.e., ancient Greece and India. The word for horse in both Greek and Sanskrit are almost direct cognates, i.e., *hippos* (ἵππος) and *aśvas*. Horse-yoked chariots are mentioned quite profusely in both Homer's *Iliad* as well as in the *Ṛgveda* and other later Sanskrit literature.

We are not concerned here with either the religious or sportive aspects of the chariot and horses in both these ancient Indo-European cultures. Here, we are concerned with how that imagery continued to be maintained and referred to in the wisdom ages of these ancient cultures. Plato uses the charioteer and horses imagery to explain his spiritual psychology in the *Phaedrus*, and the Upaniṣadic metaphysicians use the chariot, charioteer and horses imagery to explain their spiritual views in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, and finally, Buddhism, the latest among the three, uses the chariot to explain its 'no soul' (*anattā*) spiritual psychology in the *Milindapañho*.

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[1] Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, Thames and Hudson, 1991, pp. 182-185.
[2] Vide, Anthony, *Horse, Wheel and Language*, Princeton University Press, 2007.

The Charioteer and the two horses allegory in the Phaedrus

Plato (428-348 BCE) in his work *Phaedrus*, composed around 370 BCE, creates a dialog between his teacher Socrates (470-399 BCE) and Socrates' favorite disciple Phaedrus (444-393 BCE) on many matters. In one part of the dialog (*Phaedrus*, 246a-254e), Socrates teaches Phaedrus about the triple nature of the soul (*psyche*, ψυχή) by means of the chariot allegory.

According to this allegory, the charioteer represents the intellectual and rational aspect of the soul who tries to control his two horses, one on the right side which is white in color and dark-eyed representing the good; and the other on the left side which is black in color and red-eyed representing the bad. Below is the description of the triple soul in Plato's own words[3]:

> As I said at the beginning of this tale, I divided each soul into three: two horses and a charioteer; and one of the horses was good and the other bad: the division may remain, but I have not yet explained in what the goodness or badness of either consists, and to that I'll proceed. The right-hand horse is upright and cleanly made; he has a lofty neck and an aquiline nose; his color is white and his eyes dark; he is a lover of honor, modesty and temperance; and the follower of true glory; he needs no touch of the whip, but is guided by word and admonition only. The other is a crooked lumbering animal, put together anyhow; he has a short thick neck; he is flat-faced and of a dark color; with grey eyes and blood-red complexion; the mate of insolence and pride; shag-eared and deaf, hardly yielding to whip and spur. Now, when the charioteer beholds the vision of love, and has his

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[3] All the direct quotes from the *Phaedrus* are from the translations of Oxford scholar Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893 CE).

whole soul warmed through sense, and is full of prickings and ticklings of desire, the obedient steed, then as always under the government of shame, refrains from leaping on the beloved; but the other heedless of the pricks and the blows of the whip, plunges and runs away, giving all manner of trouble to his companion and the charioteer, whom he forces to approach the beloved and to remember the joys of love. They at first indignantly oppose him and will not be urged on to do terrible and unlawful deeds; but at last when he persists in plaguing them, they yield and agree to do as he bids them. (*Phaedru*s, 253d-254b)

It is quite clear from the above narrative of Plato that the charioteer and the white horse are on one side, i.e., the side of the rational and the virtuous aspects of the soul; and the black horse is alone on the other side, i.e., the side of the emotional and baser instincts of the soul. In the end, (it seems) the bad horse wins out as is the case most of the time. However, this choice towards the bad has its consequences.

Whereas the attachment of non-lover (of Truth) which is alloyed with worldly prudence and has worldly and niggardly ways of doling out benefits, will breed in your soul those vulgar qualities which the populace applaud, will send you bowling round the earth during a period of nine thousand years, and leave you a fool in the world below. (*Phaedrus*, 256e-257a)

However, if the white horse and the charioteer have their way, then the one that beholds the Truth will enter the heavenly mansions, hosted by the gods in a celestial banquet.

They see many blessed sights in the inner heaven, and there are many ways to and fro, along with the blessed gods are passing, everyone doing his own work; he may follow who will and can, for jealousy has no place in the celestial choir. But when they go to the banquet and festival, they then move up steep to the vault of heaven. (*Phaedrus*, 247a-247b)

But for one who comprehends the Highest Truth, there is a heaven above the heavens.

But in the Heaven which is above the heavens […] there abides the very being with which true knowledge is concerned; the colorless, formless, intangible essence visible only to the mind, the pilot of the soul. (*Phaedrus*, 247c-247d)

But for those who have had only glimpses of the Truth, there are nine intermediate states, and who are reincarnated to better conditions in the course of time expressed through a complex Platonic formula (of what seems to be) a highly ethically based calculus of metempsychosis.

But when she (the soul) is unable to follow, and fails to behold the Truth, and through some ill-hap, sinks beneath the load of forgetfulness and vice, and her wings fall from her, and she drops to the ground, then the law ordains that this soul shall at her first birth pass, not into any other animal, but only into man; and the soul which has seen most of the Truth shall come to the birth as a philosopher, or artist, or some musical and loving nature; and that which has seen the Truth in the second degree, shall be some righteous king or warrior chief; the soul which of the third class shall be a politician, or economist, or trader; the fourth shall be a lover of gymnastic toils, or

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a physician; the fifth shall lead the life of a prophet or hierophant; to the sixth the character of poet or some other imitative artist will be assigned; to the seventh the life of an artist or husbandman; to the eighth that of a sophist or demagogue; to the ninth that of a tyrant – all these are states of probation, in which he who does righteously improves, and he who does unrighteously, deteriorates his lot. Ten thousand years must elapse before the soul of each can return to the place from whence she came, for she cannot grow her wings in less; only the soul of a philosopher guileless and true, or the soul of a lover, who is not devoid of philosophy, may acquire wings in the third of the recurring period of a thousand years; he is distinguished from the ordinary good man who gains wings in three thousand years: and they who choose this life three times in succession have wings given them, and go away at the end of three thousand years. But the others receive judgment when they have completed their first life, and after the judgment they go, some of them to the houses of correction which are under the earth and are punished; others to some place in heaven whither they are lightly borne by justice, and there they live in a manner worthy of the life which they led here when in the form of men. And at the end of the first thousand years the good souls and also the evil souls both come to draw lots and choose their second life, and they may take any which they please. The soul of a man may pass into the life of a beast, or from the beast return again into the man. But the soul which has never seen the Truth will not pass into the human form. (*Phaedrus*, 248c-249b)

The Chariot allegory in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* belongs to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. It was composed about 800 BCE and is considered a middle era Upaniṣad in the group of the 11 most important and authoritative of the Upaniṣads.

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* is divided into two chapters, each of which is divided into three sections. The allegory of the chariot is found in the third section of the first chapter. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, the chariot allegory is complete in every sense of the term. What I mean by that is that the allegory does not ignore any aspect of the chariot. The chariot, the charioteer, the passenger, the horses and the reins are all accounted for, and each has been assigned a metaphorical role.

The chariot is analogous to the human body. The five horses to the five sense-organs. The reins are analogous to the mind which coordinates the information of the five senses and keeps them in check ethically and promotes them in a spiritual direction. The charioteer is the intellect which controls both the mind and the senses through its keen method of discernment. The passenger is analogous to the soul which is guided by the intellect. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*[4] from I:3:3 to I:3:11 narrates the above analogy as follows:

> Know the Self as the lord of the chariot and the body as, verily, the chariot, know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as, verily, the reins. The senses, they say, are the horses, the objects of sense the paths (they range over), (the self) associated with the body, the senses and the mind – wise men declare – is the enjoyer. (I:3:3-4)

In this work, much like the *Phaderus*, the soul (self) is considered uncreated and immortal. Here too, the doctrine of an ethically-based metempsychosis is upheld, though the calculus is slightly different. Firstly, in the Upaniṣadic view, the soul is impartite. There can be no such thing as a soul with three aspects as in the

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[4] Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1978, pp. 623-624.

Phaedrus. Secondly, the eternal soul has been beginninglessly caught up in a cycle of births and deaths due to primal ignorance to which it is attached. This primal ignorance creates within the soul material and worldly desires which in turn impels and compels the soul to perform selfish good and bad actions (karma). Based on the ethical law of cause and effect (Law of Karma), the soul accrues merits and sins. Since one lifetime is not enough to experience the karmic consequences of one's selfish deeds, hence rebirth is necessitated. Thus, this cycle seems to endlessly go on. So, in order to get itself redeemed from this vicious cycle of births and deaths, the soul needs to get enlightened, and then start performing selfless good deeds which alone bear no karmic efficacy. And then, finally upon death, the soul is forever redeemed from this cycle. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*[5] I:3:7-8 succinctly puts this view:

> He, however, who has no understanding, who has no control over his mind (and is) ever impure reaches not that goal but comes back into mundane life. He, however, who has understanding and has control over his mind and (is) ever pure, reaches that goal from which he is not born again. (I:3:7-8)

The Chariot allegory in the Milindapañho

The *Milindapañho*, composed around 100 BCE, is a paracanonical Buddhist text. It is a record of a question-answer style dialog between the Buddhist monk Nāgasena and the Bactrian Greek satrap Menander-I (165-130 BCE; *aka* Milinda) about many aspects of Buddhist doctrine and practice.

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[5] *Ibid*., p. 624.

Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE) invaded India in 326 BCE. Despite his victory at the Battle of Jhelum in 326 BCE, he voluntarily retreated as his soldiers were not keen on moving further. Afghanistan, which included Bactria, was a part of Alexander's vast empire. Just before Alexander died in Babylon (Iraq) in 323 BCE, he divided his empire among his commanders. Afghanistan came under the domain of Seleucus-I (358-281 BCE). The Seleucid Empire's Bactrian satrap during the latter-half of the 2nd century BCE was Menander-I. This satrap had come under the influence of Buddhism and had become a convert to that faith. In order to have his doubts cleared about certain matters of Buddhist doctrine and practice, he sent for Buddhist monastics to come and clarify to him at his capital Sāgala (modern Sialkot, Pakistan). The monk Nāgasena was sent to Sāgala and there, in a Greek *dialogos* (διάλογος) style debate, he clarified many matters of Buddhist doctrine and practice to Menander-I (Pali: Milinda). The outcome of this interlocution became the *Milindapañho*.

The *Milindapañho* is paracanonical in that it regarded as canonical only by Burmese Buddhists. The Sri Lankan, Thai and other Southeast Asian Buddhists do not accept it as fully canonical, but only paracanonical. It is, today, the 18th book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the Burmese Pali Canon. In the Mahāyāna world, a shorter version of the text exists as part of the Chinese Tripiṭaka canon.

Unlike the *Phaedrus* where the charioteer and the horses are important, and the chariot is ignored, and in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* version where the chariot, charioteer, horses are all included and important, the *Milindapañho* ignores the charioteer and the horses and focuses completely on the chariot in its allegory.

The Buddhist monk Nāgasena uses the chariot allegory to elucidate the Buddhist doctrine of non-substantialism. According to

Buddhism (in direct contrast to Hindu substantialism), there are no substances of any kind, i.e., material, mental or spiritual. There is no substantial matter, mind nor soul. This, then begs the question as to what then is the human being? The body and mind both seem to be fictional entities. The Buddhist answer is that the body is made up of a number of fleeting momentary material atoms, and the so-called soul is nothing more than a set of five aggregates (*pañcakhandhas*) made up of matter (*rūpa*), perceptions (*saññā*), feelings (*vedanā*), aptitudes (*saṅkhāra*) and ideas (*viññāna*), also fleeting and momentary, but brought together in a certain way in each person based on that individual's karmic history. In that sense, the 'person' or the 'individual' exists, but not as a substantial being. Everything is in a state of becoming, on account of momentariness. There is no being. Rebirth is explained in terms of the flame being transmitted from one lamp to the next. The river analogy and the candle-flame analogy are brought in support of the doctrine of perpetual flux (*kṣaṇabhaṅgavāda*). The cessation of this flux in the case of each individual is salvation (*nibbāna*).

It is in this context, the *Milindapañho*[6] text gives the chariot allegory:

> Monk Nāgasena: "Your Majesty, how did you come here, by foot, or in a chariot?"
> Milinda: "In a chariot, Venerable Sir."
> Monk Nāgasena: "Then, Your Majesty, explain what that is? Is it the axle, the wheels or the chassis, or the reins, or the yoke that is the chariot? Is it all of these combined, or is it something apart from them?"

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[6] Pesala Bhikkhu, *The Debate of King Milinda*, Inward Path, Penang, Malaysia, 2001, pp. 33-34.

Milinda: "It is none of these things, Venerable Sir."

Monk Nāgasena: "Then, Your Majesty, this chariot is an empty sound. You spoke falsely when you said that you came here in a chariot."

Milinda: "Venerable Sir, I have spoken the truth. It is because it has all these parts that it comes under the term chariot."

Monk Nāgasena: "Very good, Your Majesty, has rightly grasped the meaning. Even so it is because of the thirty-two kinds of organic matter in a human body and the five aggregates of being that I come under the term Nāgasena."

Thus, does monk Nāgasena convince satrap Milinda that there are no substantial entities?

Conclusion

It is quite clear that all three of the aforementioned traditions use the chariot allegory, in part or in full, to enunciate their own respective religio-philosophical positions. The first is Greek, the middle one Indian, and the last Indo-Greek. The chariot allegory of the *Phaedrus* and the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* are closer in their thinking, in that, in both, the charioteer is the intellectual discerning factor. The chariot itself has no place in the *Phaedrus* version, whereas the chariot is reckoned to be analogous to the body in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* version. In the *Milindapañho*, the chariot is the central focus of the entire allegory. Neither the horses, nor the charioteer figure in its analysis and scheme of things. The charioteer is implied only by way of a reflexive reference when the human persona of the monk Nāgasena is dissected into the five aggregates.

Also, the Indo-European element is quite clear in all three. The chariot and horses which form an important aspect of the collective

cultural unconscious of all the Indo-European peoples (whether intellectually-oriented or not), has had a direct bearing in all three cases. In the case of the *Phaedrus*, many other Indo-European aspects become apparent. One such motif is the number three and its single-digit multiples, i.e., six and nine. In the *Phaedrus*, firstly, it is the tripartite soul (two horses and the charioteer). Next, are the nine intermediate states that the soul may incarnate into? Then, the number three appears again when Socrates says that the philosopher:

> is distinguished from the ordinary good man who gains wings in three thousand years: and they who choose this life three times in succession have wings given them, and go away at the end of three thousand years. (*Phaedrus*, 249a).

Another important Indo-European element is that the right-side horse is analogous to all that is moral and good. In short, the right (directional) side is the right (moral) side. Pythagoras upheld the view that temples should be entered into from the right side and exited from the left[7]. In ancient Rome, when the *Equus October* took place on the ides of October, in the chariot race, the right-side horse was sacrificed to the god Mars[8]. Also, in ancient Rome, a guest entered a host's house by putting the right foot first across the entrance threshold[9]. The Latin word for left is *sinistram* which eventually morphed into the word 'sinister' in English meaning 'evil'. It is the old Indo-European idea that the left-side was evil as in the case of the left-side bad horse enunciated in the *Phaedrus*. Further, the Hindus and Buddhists

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[7] Taylor, *Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras*, J.M. Watkins: London, 1818, p. 83.
[8] Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, Thames and Hudson, 1991, p. 136.
[9] Ogle, "The House-Door in Greek and Roman Religion and Folklore", *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 1911, p. 254f.

circumambulate their respective shrines and temples in a clockwise manner wherein the right-side of the adherent is always kept towards the shrine. And this circumambulation is done three times. Last but not least, the first three intermediate states of rebirth mentioned by Socrates, i.e., philosopher, warrior chief and trader (*Phaedrus*, 248d), fits in perfectly with the trifunctional Indo-European hypothesis advocated by Sorbonne scholar Dumézil (1898-1986 CE). The Hindu caste (*varṇa*) system of the three upper castes, i.e., priest (brahmin), warrior (*kṣatriya*) and trader (*vaiśya*), which are Vedic, and hence, Indo-European, reinforces this idea further.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* version, there are a total of nine entities in the chariot allegory. These are: chariot (body), passenger (soul), charioteer (intellect), reins (mind), five horses (five senses). And here, three are the spiritual (soul) and psychical (intellect and mind) aspects of the individual.

Also, at this juncture, I'd like to take the opportunity to point out that the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* chariot allegory that the Hindus (especially of the modern times) like to apply to the chariot imagery of the *Bhagavadgītā*. I must say that it is a forced and fudged analogy. It just will not work when closely looked at. Why? This is because of one major obstacle, i.e. the intellect. Let us carefully look at the application of the analogy and see where it goes wrong. The five horses are indeed the five senses in both, so too the reins being the mind; so also the body being the chariot, and also the soul being the chariot passenger which is Arjuna in the case of the *Bhagavadgītā* situation. However, the last, the only remaining item, the obstacle comes across, making the allegory ill-fitting to the *Bhagavadgītā* case. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, the charioteer is the intellect, but in the case of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the charioteer who is Kṛṣṇa, the Incarnation of God, is reckoned to be wholly spiritual,

cannot be equated with the intellect (*buddhi*). The intellect, according to the Sāṅkhya-Yoga and the Vedānta traditions, is material (*prākṛta*), and not spiritual (*adhyātmika*). Kṛṣṇa is God (*paramātman*), not the intellect (*buddhi*). So, it just does not work.

Further, the Hindu philosophical tradition will just not accept a tripartite soul which the *Phaedrus* upholds. The soul in the Hindu philosophical systems can either be infinite (*vibhu*) or infinitesimal (*aṇu*). In other words, it has to be impartite (*anavayava*). The logic is that anything that has parts cannot be eternal (*nitya*). Somehow the integrity and unity of the soul will be compromised which definitely jeopardizes its eternity (*nityatva*) as well. This is precisely the Hindu criticism of the Jaina view of the soul which upholds the view that the dimension of the soul is coextensive with the body it tenants in a given lifetime. That same criticism would hold well here against the *Phaedrus*' view of the soul, especially when it also upholds the eternity of the soul just as the Jaina view does.

Furthermore, the "colorless, formless, intangible essence" (*Phaedrus*, 247d) that Socrates speaks of, reminds one of the formless (*nirākāra*), attributeless (*nirguṇa*) Absolute (*Brahman*) of Upaniṣadic metaphysics.

In the *Milindapañho* version, three of the five aggregates are spiritual (*saṅkhāra*) and mental (*vedanā* and *viññāna*). Also, in the Buddhist tradition, the number three is very important. Some of these are: the *tisarana* (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), *tilakkana* (anicca, dukkha, anattā), the *Tipiṭaka* (Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma), *trikāya* (Dharmakāya, Saṃbhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya) etc.

In both Hinduism and Buddhism, like in the ethically based philosophy of the *Phaedrus*, selfless good deeds help one attain a higher state of spiritual perfection. Actually, this is the purpose behind

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the 'no-soul' (*anattā*) theory of Buddhism. As long as there is a notion of a permanent self, the soul can never be truly selfless in its actions. Hence, the spiritual psychology of Buddhism is intimately tied to its ethically-based soteriology.

Thus, all three allegories are deeply tied to their Indo-European roots that have been expressed in these widely separated, but historically and ethnically related, texts and traditions.

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Akaṉāṉūṟu.
Podia for Myths and Legends[*]

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Abstract: The *Akaṉāṉūṟu*, listed under the Caṅkam classical anthology, *Eṭṭuttōkai*, is a logical preamble to the *Puṟaṉāṉūṟu*. *Akam* (domestic environ) and *Puṟam* (beyond the home, exterior *aṟam*, righteous war) are keywords in Tamil literary tradition. In a work dealing with domestic behavior, evidences relating to myths and legends may be expected. Specialists in art history are naturally interested in myths. I have tried to show how *akam* is interlaced with pan-Indian mythologies adumbrated in the *itihāsa*s and *purāṇa*s, while retelling autochthonous cultures, and integrating the southern and the northern of the "Indian Asia", *cf. Tamiḻ-iṉppap pā* […] *vaṭa-moḻip-paṟṟālar* "bliss offering Tamil poems, the lovers of the northern language (Sanskrit)" (PT 1.4). This is emotional integration. I guess *mahākavi*-Kāḷidāsa knew Tamil if Poykai Āḻvār was an expert in the *Veda*s (TI, 33 *maṟai* "Veda", *antiyāḷ* "Gāyatrī").

Keywords: *Akaṉāṉūṟu*; myths; legends; Caṅkam; Tamil *bhakti* literature.

Certain problems in Indian visual art and proto-historic heritages (e.g. the Indic tablets) are dissolvable with reference to Tamil thoughts, which mean such roots are in Drāviḍian sources. Kamil V. Zvelebil (1981), D. Shulman (1980), Dennis Hudson (1980), Friedhelm Hardy (1983) and other western scholars (the pioneers John R. Marr and George L. Hart) worked in the realm of myth-related themes. They were not professional art historians, and rarely reflected on visual art. Sometime round the 1980s, Indian Art was viewed as though it stems from Sanskrit. None thought of Tamil as if it is a taboo. Adamantine chains viewing Indian art as a reflection or offshoot of Sanskritic culture, myths and legends, and literary reverberations bound the hands of Sanskrit-oriented historians, mostly the brāhmaṇical scholarship in Tamilnāḍu. Even Tamil knowing Sanskrit-based scholars (e.g. C. Sivaramamūrti 1974, K.V. Soundararajan 1986) did not recognize Tamil due their inherent Sanskrit bias. K.R. Srinivasan 1972 ('aṟuvarkkiḷaiyanaṅkai' in [Cilampu] *Cilappatikāram* and Nappiṉṉai in the art of Māmallapuram) and R. Champakalakshmi 1981 (on 'Nālāyiram') were exceptions to point out the Tamil elements in Indian art. Nearly fifty doctoral dissertations (down to 2006) have come out from the Department of Sculpture & Art History of the Tamil University and all these works[1] throw a flood of light on Tamil sources, particularly Caṅkam, and the hymns of the Āḻvārs and the Nāyaṉmār. Several hundreds of Tamil *bhakti* hymns are accessible in English format. Our scholars went to Caṅkam literature if needed. Classical Tamil is an enigma to experts in Tamil language and literature as are

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[1] Śrī B.L. Bansal of the Sharada Publishing House, Delhi, has published nearly fifteen of these doctoral dissertations of the Tamil University. Let me dedicate this work to B.L. Bansal.

the *Veda* and *Vedāṅga*s in spite of the efforts of eminent philologists (e.g. Kamil V. Zvelebil, Jeroslav Vacek), and could not be comprehended if not properly guided. The present article is risky for me because I am not trained in classical Caṅkam literature. For art history, the basic sources are myths and legends that date from the not-yet-deciphered Indic script, maybe the proto-Tamil (Heras 1953, Parpola 2000). The *itihāsa*s, the Tamil classical works, *purāṇa*s, *kāvya*s, *bhakti* hymns, and other secular poems; including the *vāstu-* and *śilpa- śāstra*s (e.g. *Rūpamaṇḍana* - north) and (*Śilparatna* - south) are the basic sources for art history.

Myth and Legend

A simple definition of myth is "a traditional story that describes the early history of a people or explains a natural event". It is widely considered "false belief". It may also be an imaginary person or thing. Legend is a traditional story current in living (Tamil), or unspoken (Sanskrit) societies for a long time, which may not be definitely true. It also denotes a very famous person; e.g., Kṛṣṇa or Rāma is legendary in Indian tradition. It could be employed in the sense of an inscription, caption, or list explaining symbols used in an illustration (*cf.* Waite & Hawker 2009: 531, 609); e.g. write Koṟṟavai/Mahiṣamardinī and illustrate it with a specimen from Pallava art supported by a literary idiom in the *Cilappatikāram* or *Devīmāhātmyam*. Legend is quasi-historical (e.g. the Napoleonic legends or stories of Vikramāditya, identified with Candragupta II c. 380-415 CE)[2]. Myth is proto-historical

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[2] Some scholars try to link Alexander and Sikkadaṉ, with Skanda and Paraṅkuṉṟam *cf.* Sikandar Lodi. Their logical derivation is Skanda worship is rooted in Alexander legends (c. 4th century BCE) and Islamic Sikkandan (dated in 14th century CE). This is neither myth nor legend but trump.

the veracity of which could not be proved in the absence of corroborative evidences such as archaeology. Myths are "purāṇic" and legends are "itihāsic". Mahiṣamardinī standing on the head of a buffalo-head is "purāṇic". The tours de force of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are legendary. Both the heroes were "black", *māl*/*karuppu* or *kṛṣṇa* possibly rooted in proto-Drāviḍian culture[3].

Sanskritists would say *itihāsa* is "history", legendary or traditional: *dharmārthakāmamokṣāṇā-mupadeśa samanvitaṃ*/ *pūrvavṛttaṃ kathāyuktam-itihāsaṃ pracakṣate* (telling antiquarian annals in the form of fables pregnant with meaning in order how *dharma-artha-kāma-moksa* is experienced in the righteous way, e.g. the Buddhist *Piṭaka*s or *Jātaka*s). [Tiru]-Vaḷḷuvar talks of *aṟam-poruḷ-iṉpam*/*dharma-artha-kāma* omitting *mokṣa* (*cf. Ciṟiya-* and *Periya Tirumaṭal* Rajarajan et al. 2017: IV, 2232-86 talking of northern and Tamil traditions). *Itihāsa* is heroic [hi]story such as the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*. *Itihāsa* is historical evidence of living traditions embodied in the *purāṇa*s. *Itihāsa-nibandhanaṃ* is traditional composition in literary form of what was in oral circulation for a long time (*cf.* Apte 2012: 94); *orukālattil* "once upon a time", long ago nobody knows how long ago. *Purāṇa* means "ancient", "belonging to olden times" (*pura* "formerly", "of yore"; *purā śakrasupasthāya*, *purāsarasi mānase yasya yātaṃ vayaḥ*). By implication it peeps into the past anticipating what is to take place in future; it is historical "fore-sight" and "far-sight", analogically Matsya to Kalki. *Purāṇam* is a past event, ancient or legendary history. *Purāṇa*s are sacred works, totally eighteen *mahā-purāṇa*s attributed to

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[3] Rev. Heras 1953 finds Māl in the Indic culture. B.B. Lal says a horse-bone is found in an Indic layer but F.R. Allchin would demands more bone. Horse or donkey skeletal artifact is not the bone of contention; today the genes are under question.

sage Vyāsa, author of the *Mahābhārata*. The five *purāṇa* characteristic features, *pañca-lakṣaṇaṃ*s are *sargaśca pratisargaśca vaṃśo manvantaraṇica vaṃśānucaritaṃ caiva purāṇaṃ pañcalakṣaṇam* (proto-history dealing with family, clan, race, chivalry, war for peace (UNESCO's dictum), and their annals from the most primeval times). *Purātana* means "primeval". Purātanaḥ and Purāṇa-Puruṣa (VSN-498, Rajarajan & Jeyapriya 2018: 127) are epithets of Viṣṇu (Apte 2012: 342). Another category of literature is *kāvyam*, simply meaning a poem, and *mahākāvyam* is an epic; *Meghadūtaṃ nama kāvyam*. *Kāvya* has its own *lakṣaṇa*s that include the *navarasa*s (*cf.* Dodamani 2008); in which heroism, love, chivalry, mirth and misery play a dominant part. *Śākuntala* of Kālidāsa and *Madhurāvijayam* of Gaṅgādevī are *mahākāvya*s. Śākuntala is derived from *itihāsa* and deals with the annals of *amara-nāyaka*s "immortal heroes" (it is after Bharata of this immortal epic that India is called Bharata-*varṣa*, Paratan̲ was Kōvalan̲'s name in previous birth); and *Madhurāvijayam* is poetically inspired history. In all these works, the underlining Indian philosophy is *dharma* (love all) and *śānti* (peace in the Milky Way). No Indian philosopher or poet preaches war. Consolidating the basic tenets of *itihāsa*, *purāṇa* and *kāvya* it may add War-*Pur̲am* and Peace-*Akam* (Lev Tolstoy) was the ideal heritage of the ancient Tamils. I may add "war" stands for the terrorism and carnage, and "peace" the United Nations dedicated to serve people.

Invocations in Eṭṭuttokai

The eight integrated groups of poems under the *Eṭṭuttokai* begin with *Kaṭavuḷvāl̲ttu* "invoking the Muse". An examination of author's name and the related myth may serve to point out their chronological framework.

Text	Author	Invoked God
Aiṅkuṟunūṟu	Peruntēvaṉār of 'Pāratam'	Viṣṇu
Kuṟuntokai	-ditto-	Murukaṉ
Naṟṟiṇai	-ditto-	Tikiriyōṉ/Viṣṇu
Akaṉāṉūṟu	-ditto-	Kaṇicciyōṉ-Śiva
Kalittokai	Nallantuvaṉār	Koṉraiyaṉ-Śiva
Patiṟṟuppattu	Anonymous	Āṭiya-āṭalaṉ-Śiva[4]
Puṟaṉāṉūṟu	Peruntēvaṉār of 'Pāratam'	Piṟainutal-vaṇṇaṉ-Śiva
Paripāṭal	Anonymous	[Tiru]Māal

Peruntēvaṉār was perhaps a Vaiṣṇava and others Śaiva or Murukaṉ-*aṭiyār*. The *Paripāṭal* is an ethnocentric literature reflecting on Maturai (the metropolis), Vaiyai (the River), Cevvēḷ-Murukaṉ, his abodes and Viṣṇu, his *divyadeśa*s. A few of the Viṣṇu-*sthala*s, e.g. Iruntaiyūr, Kuṉram and Kuḷavāy (*Paripāṭal-tiraṭṭu* 1) evade identification vis-à-vis the Āḻvārs' list.

The invocations are considered later medieval interpolations (maybe 12th-13th centuries). The later medieval origin of "invocations" is obvious because no collection under *Akaṉāṉūṟu*[5] or *Puṟaṉāṉūṟu* could have been dedicated to a particular God. Vēntaṉ/Indra and

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[4] 'Āṭiya-Āṭalaṉ' is interesting, clear pointer of Nāṭarāja but at that time of *Akaṉāṉūṟu* 'Āṭavallāṉ' was perhaps unknown.

[5] Each hymn deals with a particular *tiṇai* such as *kuṟiṅci*/Cēyōṉ-Murukaṉ (v. 2 by Kapilar), *mullai*/Māyōṉ-Viṣṇu (v. 3 by Kuṟuṅkuṭi Marutaṉār), *marutam*/Vēntaṉ-Indra (v. 6 by Paraṇar), *neytal*/Varuṇaṉ (v. 10 by Ammūvaṉār) and *pālai*/Koṟṟavai (v. 2 by Iḷaṅkīraṉār). When the divinities are five, how to invoke Kaṇicciyōṉ-Śiva when he is not the God of a particular *tiṇai*? Māṇikkavācakar (8th century CE) solves the riddle because Śiva is "Lord of all countries", *eṉṉāṭṭavarkkum iṟai* (*cf. aruntiṟar-kaṭavuḷ* Akam. 90). This would suggest the 'Akam' is not an isolated island or "dream land".

Varuṇaṉ/Varuṇa are disregarded in the invocations, which suggests "the Eight Anthologies" belong an archaic genre of Indian culture. By about the time of the later medieval commentators, *urai-āciriyar*, the presiding gods of *Akam* (internal, domestic) and *Puṟam* (external, war, battlefield *cf.* Hart & Heifetz 1999) were Śiva, which epithet fails to appear in Caṅkam lore. The association of an anthology with a particular God is a pointer of its mystic link with myths and legends because these poems deal not only deal with *kuṟiñci*-Murukaṉ but also *neytal*-Varuṇaṉ and *pālai*-Koṟṟavai.

Authors of "Akam-400" in the Mythic context

The 400 poems of Akam are considered works are 144 poets and 3 anonymous. Several names of these authors are pointers of their mythic connection. That is to say, the names may be explained in the context of pan-Indian *itihāsa*s and *purāṇa*s[6]:

Aṇṭarmakaṉ-kuruvaḻutiyar	(Poems 150, 228)
'Aṇṭarmakaṉ' Aṇḍaputra "Son of the Cosmos[7]"	
Atiyaṉ-viṇṇattaṉār	(Poem 301)
'Viṇṇattaṉār' *cf. viṇṇōr/deva*s "gods", "celestials"	
Peruntēvaṉār/Iḷantēvaṉār	(Poems 51, 58)
'Tēvaṉār' *deva* "God[8]"	

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[6] Based on Cuppiramaṇiyaṉ, *Caṅka Ilakkiyam*, pp. 208-10; *cf.* 'Cenmoḻit-Tamil' of the Tamil University. The latter work includes the *Tolkāppiyam*, *Patiṉeṉkīḻkaṇakku* and the 'Twin Epics'.

[7] *Aṇṭam/aṇḍa* (also means "shepherds" *Kuṟuntokai* 117, 210) acquires greater significance in the *bhakti* hymns. Viṣṇu (*Aṇṭattāy* "Thou, the Cosmic Lord" *Tiruvāymoḻi* 6.9.5) or Śiva is viewed Viśvarūpa "Lord of the Milky Way" ('Aṇṭaṉ' *Tēvāram* 4.67.2); an idea that is rooted in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, 'Aṇṭarmakaḷir' (Akam. 59). Could 'Aṇṭattāy' be Bhūdevī? See Siegel (1978: 206).

[8] Also *amarar*, 'muppattu mūvaramarar' (PAV 20, Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 94-95).

Āmūrk Kavutamaṉ Cātēvaṉār (Poem 159)

'Kavutamaṉ'/'Cātēvaṉ' Gautama[9]/Sahadeva[10]

Iruṅkōṉ Ollaiyāṉ Ceṅkaṇṇaṉār (Poem 279)

'Ceṅkaṇṇaṉ' Ceṅkaṇ "Crimson-eyes (Viṣṇu)" (Kaṇṇaṉ/Kṛṣṇa)

Maturai/Īḻattuppūtaṉtēvaṉār (Poem 88, 231, 307)

'Īḻattup-pūtaṉ-tēvaṉār' Īḻam/Laṅkā, *pūtam*/*bhūta*, *tēvaṉār*/*deva* Bhūtadeva,
<div style="text-align:center">cf. Pūtattāḻvār</div>

Pēyaṉār (Poem 234)

Cf. Pēyāḻvār[11], Pēy (femme Kārikkālammaiyār)

Okkūr Mācāttaṉ/ Mācāttiyār (Poems 214, 16)

'Mācāttaṉ' Mahāśāsta/Mahāśāstā[12], Cātti femme

Cellūr…Perumpūtaṅkoṟṟaṉār (Poem 250)

'Perumpūtam' Mahābhūta (redundant in *Cilappatikāram*)

Pūtañcāttaṉār (Poem 50)

'Pūtam-Cāttaṉ' Bhūta-śāsta

Ulōccaṉār (femme?[*]) (Poems 20, 100, 190, 200, 210,
300, 330, 400)

[*] 'Rājīvalocana' is an epithet of Devī (LSN-308) "eyes lotus-like",
tāmaraik-kaṇ of Kaṇṇaṉ (MOLI 2.7.8, *paṅkayak-kaṇ* PAV 14)

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[9] Gautama was the son of sage Gotama and the husband of Ahalyā, seduced by Indra. Gautama is also the author of a *dharmaśāstra* (Dowson 1998: 111). The Buddha was of Gautama-[*gotra*], Gotama in Pāli (6th century BCE).

[10] Sahadeva was fifth among the *pañca*-Pāṇḍavas, fourth Nakula, the twin, born due to the divine spirit, the Aśvins (Dowson 1998: 272-73).

[11] See *kāval-pūtam* and *pēy* in *Cilappatikāram* (5.67) and *Manīmēkalai* (6.135, 140).

[12] *Cf.* Pācaṇṭa-cāttaṉ in *Cilappatikāram* (9.15), Cāttaṉ of Piṭavūr (Puṟam. 395). Śāsta is supposed to be 'Sātavāhana' (identified with 'Nūṟṟuvarkaṇṇar'), a God, and dynasty that ruled South India, dated early centuries CE.

'Uloccaṉa' *Locana* ("eye", viewing, sight - Apte 2012: 484); *su-locana* fine-eyed, deer (ibidem 607); *su* means "good", "excellent" (*su-akṣa* "having good eyes", *cf.* Kaṇṇaki, Mināṣī, *kaṇ = akṣa*)

Uṟaiyūr-maruttuvaṉ Tāmōtaraṉār (Poems 133, 257)
Tāmōtaraṉ/Damodhara[13], Maruttuvaṉ, *cf.* Śiva-Vaidhyanātha (SSN-956, Rajarajan 2012, Rajarajan & Jeyapriya 2018: 212, *mahā*-Liṅga of Deogarh in Bengal Dowson 1998: 178, presiding God of Tiṭṭakuṭi, *cf.* Fig. 3)

Kaṭiyalūr Uruttiraṅkaṇṇaṉār (Poem 167)
Uruttiraṉ-[kaṇṇaṉār] Rudra, Rudrākṣa[14]
Kapilar (Poems 2, 12, 382 - totally eighteen)
Kapilaṉ Kapila, Vedic sage[15]
tol-Kapilar (Poem 282) *purāṇa*-Kapila, primeval Kapilaḻ
Kāṭṭūrk… Kaṇṇaṉār (Poem 85)
Cēntaṉ Kaṇṇaṉār (Poem 350) Kaṇṇaṉ, Kaṇha/Kṛṣṇa[16]

Not all divinities associated with names of the authors in invocations appear in the vocabulary of Akam-400; e.g. Kapilaṉ or *tol*-Kapilaṉ (primeval Kapila).

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[13] Yaśodā had tied the troublesome boy with *dāma* "rope". Damodhara-12 is one among the Dvādaśa "Twelve" and Caturviṃśati "Twenty-four" Mūrti forms of Viṣṇu (Jeyapriya 2015: 95-100).

[14] Rudra means "one with weeping eyes"; *rud* (*rediti, rudita, rurudiṣati*) "to cry" or "weep", "shed tears" (Apte 2012: 470); "Tears of Kaṇṇaki". Kaṇṇaki if transcribed in Sanskrit is Rudrāṇī or Rudrākṣī (*aki* means "fire", *ahiḥ* "snake" or "cloud" and *akṣa* "eye").

[15] He was a celebrated *ṛṣi* of the Ṛg Vedic times (c. 1750 BCE); founder of the Sāṅkhya philosophy.

[16] Kaṇha means "to be glad" and "to be proud" (Apte 2012: 130); Tamil Kaṇṇaṉ means "dear to the eyes"; *cf.* Kaṇ āvāṉ eṉṟum (MOLI 1.8.3), *Kaṇṇaṉ kaṇ allatu illai ōr kaṇṇē* (ibidem 2.2.1).

When compared with the *Paripāṭal*, the *Kalittokai*, the *Narriṇai* and the "Twin Epics", the itihāsic and purāṇic motifs in Akam are meager. It seems legends and myths native to the land, autochthonous, predominate the scene what may be imported (that is "extra-national" or "interacting", *cf.* Zoller 2016) Āryan elements[17]. It is also reasonable to hypothesize that the Drāviḍian and Āryan had inextricably mixed by about 1500-500 BCE; e.g. the legends centering round Agastya (author of several *Ṛg*-vedic hymns, Dowson 1978: 4-5) and Paraśurāma (mythical founder of Kēraḷa). Therefore, in some cases the native and alien elements are inextricably interwoven[18]. The data collected for the present article fall under two heads: 1. Indigenous, 2. Interacting.

The intermingling categories may have to be sorted out; e.g. Tamil: "Vēlaṉ/Kumaraṉ/Kantaṉ" and Sanskrit: "Śaktidhara / Kumāra / Skanda". Philologically, Murukaṉ has no equal in Sanskrit, Sundaraḥ is Viṣṇu (VSN-791), Sundara-Śiva, and Cuntari-Devī. Korravai is an exclusive genre of the Tamil Goddess missing in Sanskritic annals such as the *Devīmāhātmyam* (*c*. 5th century CE) and *Kālīkā Purāṇa*. Durgā is Korravai by convention.

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[17] The word, "Āriya/ṉ/r" (racial or linguistic?) appears rarely in Akam. 386, 396, 398. The cited Akam poems suggest they are more close to racial.

[18] A case for cultural panorama of the Tamil "Twin Epics" datable during *c*. 500 BCE to 200 CE is under consideration. Rev. Caldwell dates Agastya (Akattiyaṉ < *akam*) during the 6th-7th century BCE (Dowson 1998: 8).

I

References to commentaries of later medieval (*urai-āciriyar*) or modern scholars (e.g. U.Vē.Cā. [Cāmināta Aiyar]) are rare in for the present study. Two methods are advocated in India to investigate a theme (I recommend the first),

1. Exposure to the primary sources; the plus point is, availing maximum use of virgin data; we have not consulted any translation herein;
2. Read secondary sources, and then go to primary; the flaw is to be carried away by ideas already circulated (e.g. if you read U.Vē. Cā's commentary first, you are influenced by Aṭiyārkkunallār c. 12th century) missing Iḷaṅkō.

Generic terms

Several notations and ideas denoting "god", "divinities", "celestials" and their functions are discernible: *tē*, *tēvaṉ*, *teyvam*, *tēvu*, *katavuḷ*, *deva* (Italiano *dio*, *dea*) is common. Tamil specific terms are *puttēlir*, *imaiyavar*, *vāṉavar*, *umpar* and *aṇaṅku*.

Aṇaṅku is redundant. It denotes a divinity (Akam. 72, *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* 174 *tuṟai* "port", *Naṟṟiṇai* 155 *kaṭal* "ocean", *Puṟanāṉūṟu* 52, 151, 247, 362); male, female or neuter *ṣaṇḍaḥ* (*cf.* Brahman or Puruṣa in the *Puruṣasūktam*), human or a natural element. *Tākkaṇaṅku* (Akam. 7, *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* 23) is one that attacks; prefixed with the phrase, *mūppuṭai mutupati* (primeval lord); *cf. aṇaṅku-oruttal* "admonishing divinity" (Akam. 381). It might suggest *aṇaṅku* is an archaic divinity equated with several natural forces (*jaṅgama* and *sthāvara*), organisms (*mṛga* and *manuṣayaḥ*), and divinities and demons (Zvelebil 1979, Rajam 1986).

"Murukaṉ" Murukaṉ-ār-aṇaṅku (Akam. 98); *pacalai-noy* (love-sickness) is attack of Vēlaṉ (*Narriṇai* 322); "Snake": *araviṉ-aṇaṅku* (Akam. 108); Ādiśeṣa, *aṇaṅkuṭai arutalai-āyiram* (*Paripāṭal-tiraṭṭu* 1.79); "Sky": *vāṉattu-aṇaṅku-arum-kaṭavuḷ* (Akam. 16); "Venue" or "site" (later *kṣetra* or *sthala* and *divyadeśa*): *aṇaṅku-irra-ivvūr* (ibidem 20); origin of *sthala-māhātmya*s; "City": *aṇaṅkuṭai-nakar* (ibidem 99); e.g. Maturāpati in Cilampu. (22. 157) and Campāpati in *Maṇimēkalai* (3. 54); "Tall hill" or "chain of hills", "stone", the Imayam-Himālayas: *aṇaṅkuṭai-neṭuvarai* (Akam. 22), *aṇaṅkuṭai-nēṭuṅkōṭu* (ibidem 272); *aṇaṅkuṭai-varai* (ibidem 372); *aṇaṅkiṉ-neṭum-peruṅkuṉram* (ibidem 378); *aṇaṅku-ākiya-pēr-imayak-kal* (Cilampu. 29. 1, 17-18); "Evening twilight": *antil-aṇaṅkuṭaip paṇittuṟai* (Akam. 240), *sāyaṅkāla-sandhyā*; "Doorway": *cf.* Dvāravāsinī, *aṇaṅkuṭai-uyarnilai* (Akam. 338); "Lamp": *aṇaṅkuṭai…tirumaṇi-viḷakku* (ibidem 266); e.g. *Dīpa*-Lakṣmī or Pāvai-*viḷakki* (*Mullaippāṭṭu* l. 85) in Indian art and donations for *nontā-viḷakku* (*nantā-viḷakku* in *Paṭṭiṉappālai* ll. 47-48) in inscriptions (ARE 1905, no. 461); "Primeval Water" *aṇaṅkuṭai-munnīr* (Akam. 207), "Divine damsels": *cūrara makaḷiriṉ niṉra nī marru yāraiyō em aṇaṅkiyōy …* (Akam. 32; also *Kalittokai* 49, 52); *irai-makaḷir* "vestal"? (Akam. 97); "Maiden": *aṇaṅkiyōḷ* (ibidem 322, 372); "Anklet": *aṇaṅkuṭaic-cilampu* (ibidem 198); "Chastity": *aṇaṅkuṟu-karpu* (ibidem 73); "Chest or shoulder": *mārpu-aṇaṅkiya* (ibidem 22), *aṇaṅkuṭai-nilai-perra-taṭameṉ-tōḷē* (ibidem 295), *peruntōḷ*? "broad shoulder" (ibidem 319); "Breast"/*stana*: *aṇaṅkuṭai-vaṉamulai* (ibidem 177), *vaṉamulai* (*Narriṇai* 9); Pattini; *cf.* *Narriṇai*[19], see below Māayōḷ (*cf.* Shastri 1999: pl. XLVII,

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[19] See *oumulai-arutta-tirumāvuṇṇi* (*Narriṇai* 216); *kaṭavuḷ*-Pattini (*Patirruppattu* 4th Ten, *Patikam* l. 4). Is 'Kollippāvai' adumbrated in the *Narriṇai* (185, 192, 201) the forerunner of Iḷaṅkō's Pattini. The *Narriṇai* 216 identifies the Goddess with

Dhawalikar 2004: pl. LIII); "Ghoul" *Pēey* (Akam. 265, *Naṟṟiṇai* 319); *pēy*, *aṇaṅku* and *kaḷvar* are the same (*Maturaikkāñci* ll. 631-642, *cf.* Cuppiramaṇiyaṉ 2006: 599); "bed or cot" *aṇaṅku ayar viyaṉkaḷam poliya paiyat tūṅkutal purintaṉar* (Akam. 382); *amaḷi* (*Kuṟuntokai* 30).

Aṇaṅkiya (Akam. 22), *aṇaṅkiyōy* (ibidem 32), *aṇaṅki* (ibidem 317) are employed in the context of "possessions by a divinity"; *cf.* Cāliṉi (stands for Arundhadī, symbol of conjugal fidelity) is possessed by the Goddess, Koṟṟavai (Figs. 1-3), *teyvamuṟṟu*, and pronounces oracles. It also denotes *āriṭar* "sufferings" (*Kalittokai* 19), *aravu* "fear" (Puṟam. 211), *nōy/pacalai* "disease, lovesickness" (*Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* 28, 53) and so on. The divine melody is: *aṇaṅkum aṇaṅkum pōlum aṇaṅki* (*Naṟṟiṇai* 376). S|he demands sacrifices, *paliperūvum-aṇaṅku* (*Kalittokai* 52). I would consider *aṇaṅku* a harmless, threatening divinity, harmless to the peacemakers and "(in) apprehension (how like a God)" of devils. The classical saying is *aṇaṅkum pēyum āruyir uṇṇā* "*aṇaṅku* and *pēy* do not devour dear lives" (*cf.* Subrahmanian 1990: 29-30).

The *pakti-ilakkiyam* (Tamil devotional literature) has something to say on *aṇaṅku* (VIRU 96, MOLI 1.6.3-4, 4.6.6-7). It is a "divinity", auspicious or wrathful; exclusively neither male nor female, sacred woman; animate or inanimate (e.g. *kantu* "pillar"; *aṇaṅkum-palapala* "divinities are many-many" (VIRU 96); *cīraṇaṅku* "auspicious divinity" (PTM 2.10.10); fear, misery, *duḥkha* "sorrow" (*Paripāṭal* 1.1-2, 40). *Vāraṇaṅku* is "breasts tied by bands" (PTM 2.10.10). The headless trunk of Rāvaṇa stood erect and danced possessed by *aṇaṅku* (ibidem 9.8.5). All human beings are *aṇaṅku*,

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'Vēṅkaikai-kaṭavuḷ', elaborated in Rajarajan (2020a) elaborating Parpola (2000: cover plate).

aṅkam aṇaṅkē (MOLI 1.6.3, Subrahmanian 1990: 29-30) "(human) body" that is possessed by divinity (*cf.* Cāliṉi in 'Vēṭṭuvavari', Cilampu. 12.7-9, 50). 'Cīraṇaṅku' is Lakṣmī (MOLI 2.7.2), also Bhūdevī (PTML 7), Sītā (ibidem 51), Umā (ibidem 66), the lovesick maiden Parāṅkuśanāyikā (MOLI 4.6.6-7 unfulfilled love makes her furious resorting to violence e.g. 'Vāsavadattā'-Udayana in Subandhus's play CTM 66, PTM 2.7.9), *aṇaṅkāya-cōti* "Light is *aṇaṅku*" (ibidem 3.2.8), the thousand or five hoods of Śeṣa (*Paripāṭal* 1.43, 2.1-2, *Paripāṭal-tiraṭṭu*1.79), *nēmi/cakra* (*Paripāṭal* 13.6), and so on. *Aṇaṅkaṉ* is Śiva (*Tēvāram* 5.80.8), Ardhanārīśvara, Murukaṉ and Manmatha (PCA I, 163, Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 126). She is a dancing divinity, *aṇaṅku-āṭum*, *āṭutal* (MOLI 4.6.2, 5-6, 8-9). The PCA (I, 163-64) adds "divine girl, woman, ghoul, bacchanalian festival, sorrow, fear, love-sickness, murder, form, beauty, desire, doubt, young one of *yāḷi* or lion, *caṇḍāḷa*" and all. We may say *aṇaṅku* was the primeval folk Ultimate Reality that may be the all-encompassing Brahman (Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 105-106).

Gods, celestials, demons

'Kaṭavuḷ' (Akam. 13, 270) is "god" in general. It is the same as *aṇaṅku*: *aṇaṅku aruṅ kaṭavuḷ* (ibidem 16). Images [*pratima*] of gods were *kaṭavuḷ eḻutiya pāvai* "icon full of the presence of divinity" (ibidem 62); *vāṉkōṭṭuk-kaṭavuḷ* "God of the tall hill" (ibidem 348). God's burden is to protect people, *kaṭavuḷ-kāppa* (ibidem 372). The ethos of *kaṭavuḷ* is, *nīrakam paṉikkum añcuvaru kaṭuntiṟal/ pēricai naviram mēey uṟaiyum/ kāri uṇṭik kaṭavuḷatu iyaṟkaiyum* (*Malaipaṭukaṭām* ll. 81-83) "The worlds surrounded by the oceans are frightened by the heroism of the Lord (Śiva-*mahādeva*) stationed in the

Naviram hill (supposed to be close to Aṇṇāmalai) who consumes the deadliest poison [*hālahāla*]" (based on U.Vē.Cā.) - God comes to the help of the righteous by extricating terrorism in whichever form it appears, and 'Korona' today.

'Teyvam' (Akam. 110, 'tēvu' *Tiruvāymoḻi* 2.2.2-3, Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 1364) is a generic term for "god"; the *vēmpu* tree was an abode of divinity: *teyvam cērnta…vēmpu* (Akam. 309). 'Iṟai' is "divinity" (Akam. 33), *vaṇaṅku iṟai* "adorable god"; *iṟai* (ibidem 59); *iṟaivaṉ* "God" (ibidem 250). 'Vāṉavaṉ' (Akam. 33) denotes a "celestial", *cf.* Vaṉavarampaṉ[20] (Akam. 48), the Cēralātaṉ or as for the matter any "king", the Mūvēntar were equals of gods (*devarāja* cult); Rājarājeśvaram (later Bṛhadīśvara "Lord of the Cosmos") at Tañcāvūr, Rājarāja is an epithet of Śiva in the SSN-981. Rājarāja I was *devarāja*, equal to Śiva-Tripurāntaka, *cf.* images installed on the *vimāna* of the temple located strategically to aim at the enemies of the Cōḻas such as the western Calukyas of Kalyāṇi (Mevissen 1994: 483-95). 'Cūr' (Akam. 98), denotes a god, *suraḥ* (*Patiṟṟuppattu* 7th Ten, v. 67) as well as demon, *asuraḥ*-Surapadma (ibidem 2nd Ten, v. 11); should it be *acūr* in Tamil?, *cf.* 'Ahura'-Mazda in Iranian myths.

'Neṭunilai' (Akam. 39, 59), *neṭunilai naṭukal nāṭpali* "the tall memorial stone" that is offered all-day sacrifices, *nityapūjā* (Akam. 289). 'Kantam', *kantukak-kaṭavuḷ* was "Divinity of the Pillar or Sacred Post, *aṭavuṭ pōkiya naruntāṭ kantam* (Akam. 307). The divinity was stationed on a tall pillar: *kantuṭaip potiyil parunilai neṭuntūṇ* (*Paṭṭiṉappālai* ll. 249-50, Grassato 1987: fig. 1). The Lord is hill of coral, gold or diamond; 'Pavaḷakkuṉṟu' (*Tēvāram* 4.26.1),

[20] Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan says 'Vāṉavarampaṉ' (*vāṉavar-aṉpaṉ*) and 'Imaiyavarampaṉ' (*imaiyavar-aṉpaṉ*) are equals of 'Devānāmpriya' (dear to the gods) of the Aśokan inscriptions (3rd century BCE, see Mookerji 1972: Annexure).

'Cemponmāmalai' (ibidem 4.104.7), 'Pavaḷattūṉ' (ibidem 4.44.1), 'Vayirattūṉ' (ibidem 6.254.1-7) and so on.

'Naṭukal' (Akam. 35, 289, 343, 365) was a "Hero" or memorial stone (*cf.* Buddhist *stūpa*s, supposed to encase the mortal remains of the Buddha) and considered a god, *kaṭavuḷ* (*cf. kaṭavuḷ nilaiya kal* "divinity residing in stone" *Patiṟṟuppattu* 4th Ten, v. 43; 'teyvam-eḻutiya…pāvai' *Naṟṟiṇai* 185). It was decorated with garments and garlands (ibidem 67), and offered periodical sacrifices, *pali/bali*. The stones were inscribed with a legend regarding its origin, *eḻuttuṭai naṭukal* (ibidem 53)[21]. The worship of *naṭukal* (*naṭṭa-kal* "planted stone") is described in the *Malaipaṭukaṭām* (ll. 384-393); see note 21 regarding the 'Naṭukaṟkātai' in 'Cilampu'.

'Maiden' *aṇaṅkucāl-arivai* (Akam. 114); *cf. peṇṇaṇaṅku* "maid", "maiden Goddess"; in *bhakti* hymns and *ulā* literature known as *maṅkai*, *maṭantai*, *arivai*, *terivai*, *pēriḷampeṉ* and so on, *cf.* also *maṅkala-maṭantai*, *nitya-sumaṅgali* (denoting *devadāsi*s) and so on. *Pāvai*, *kōtai*, *mātu*, *maṭantai*, *maṅkai*, *peṇ*, *pētai* and *kōtai* are listed in order in MOLI (4.2.1-11). *Perumutu-peṇṭir* and *maṅkaiyar* play a leading role in *Mullaippāṭṭu* (*ll*. 11, 47). The *śāstra*s would stipulate a particular age for Devī at each one of these stages, e.g. Kumari is "spinster" an immature girl at 8-9 years, the *kuladevatā* in clan circle (elaborated in Jeyapriya 2009, 2018, Parthiban 2019, 2019a: chap. III).

Murukaṉ

The long lance of Murukaṉ cut asunder the demon, Cūr (Surapadma). The fiery Lord is stationed in his hilly abode at

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[21] It is doubtful whether the title-name for the chapters; *kātai* in the *Cilappatikāram* was coined by Iḷaṅkō, e.g. 28 'Naṭukaṟkātai'.

Paraṅkuṉṟam; *cūr maruṅku aṟutta cuṭarilai neṭuvēl/ ciṉam miku murukaṉ taṉ paraṅkuṉṟa[m]* (Akam. 59); *cf.* 'Neṭuvēl' (Akam. 120). The Lord is Vēlaṉ/Śaktidhara, who is *muruku* "beauty" (ibidem. 232, 292). Logically, Murukaṉ is *aṉaṅku* (see Samuel & Thiagarajan 2009 for more articles on the Caṅkam register). Murukaṉ in Tamil tradition is the God of Beauty. The legends centering on the war with demons and his love affair evolved in course of time in the Sanskritic *Kumārasaṃbhava*, *Skanda Purāṇa*, and Tamil *Kanta Purāṇam* of Kacciyappa-*civācāriyār* (14th century CE). These myths (*cf.* Zvelebil 1977, Shulman 1979) with the exception of Vaḷḷi are rooted in the *Mahābhārata*. Vaḷḷi was a typical Tamil *kuṟatti* if not a *kaḷḷacci* or *kavuṇṭacci* (*acci* is rooted in *ācci* < *āttā* < *ammā*); I say this because the cult of Murukaṉ is vigorous in the Koṅku region (Kalidos 1989a: Annexure). The *Murukāṟṟuppaṭai* lists the six cult centers at Kuṉṟam-1, Alaivāy-2, Āviṉaṉkuṭi-3, Ērakam-4, Kuṉṟutorāṭal-5 and [Paḻamutir]-Cōlai-6. Besides, the Lord is omnipresent where hills and dales abound.

Āṭṭaṉatti and Ātimanti

It is an autochthonous legend of the love of a male dancer, Āṭṭaṉ-atti, a Cēralātaṉ prince king married to a Cōḻa princess, Āti-manti, comparable to Antony and Cleopatra, and Helen and Paris. He was a skilled dancer, an expert in the *Nāṭṭiyanaṉṉūl* (*cf. Cilappatikāram* 3. 40). During a Water Festival, 'Nīrviḻā', when fresh flood arrives in the Kāviri, the hero plunged into the river for water sport. He was lost in floods, finally recovered and united with his love.

Ātimanti (peeress, "primeval monkey", also Sun, Sūrya TL V, 3067) was the daughter of Vaṉavarampaṉ Cēralātaṉ (Akam 45, see note 20). Ātimanti and Kāviri appear in Akam 76. 'Āṭṭaṉ-atti' (*āṭṭaṉ*

"dancer", root of Kūttaṉ and Āṭavallāṉ; *āṭu* "dance") was found missing during water-sport. The poems add none knows whether the sea gulped him or the floods hide, lo! 'Ātimanti' is very sad (Akam. 236): āṭṭaṉ attiyaik kāṇīrō eṉa/ nāṭṭiṉ nāṭṭiṉ ūriṉ ūriṉ/ kaṭalkoṇ ṭaṉṟu eṉa puṉal oḷit taṉu eṉa/ kaluḻnta kaṇṇaḷ kātalar keṭutta/ ātimanti pōla. The princess is called 'Manti' ("female-monkey" *Naṟṟiṇai* 22, 57, 95, 151). The skilful dancer 'Atti' ("fig" tree, Ficus glomerata) plunged into the River Kāviri to hide himself (ibidem 396). The dancer was recovered from floods and reunited with his love. The myth of Āṭṭaṉ and Manti is indeed legendary as they disappear from the pages of literature, never seen again.

II

The myths and legends are much more elaborate in the *Paripāṭal* and *Cilappatikāram* when compared with the 'Akam'. We shall examine a few more cases of philological interaction.

Kōvalaṉ (Akam. 74, 293): Recalls minding Kaṇṇaṉ/Kṛṣṇa or Kōvalaṉ/Gopala who plays the *veṇu* "flute", known as Veṇugopāla: *kovalar ūtum valvāyc ciṟukuḻal*. Kōvalaṉ/Kōvalar-Kōvintaṉ is Veṇugopāla (MOLI 9.8.6, PTM 4.7.7, 9.2.5, Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 637, Ragunath 2014: pl. 118), a popular theme in Indian art through the ages, particularly the Rājasthāni miniatures. Kōvalaṉ-Gopāla is a good case for interaction of Tamil-Sanskrit; *kō* "emperor, king, father, leader, mountain, cow, heaven, earth" (TL II, 1169) and *go* ("cow", the earth, speech, words, Sarasvatī, mother [Apte 1990: 436-39]; cattle, kine, "rays of light", the moon, and so on [Monier-Williams 2005: 363-67]). Philosophically, the king is the protector of cows *pacu* (Śaiva Siddhānta *paśu* = *jīvātma*).

The 'Nālāyiram' offers ample clues (Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 637); *kōvalan̲* (TIII 42, CAN 59, AMA 10, TM 3.3.8, 3.4.4, 3.6.1, 4.3.4, 5.4.11, NT 4.8, PTA 74; MOLI 4.2.5, 7.6.4-5, 10.1.6, 10.9.7, PTM 1.8.1, 10.1.7, 10.5.6). Kōvalan̲ means king, *cf. kāvalan̲*; *kōvalar* "cowboy", *gopa*. Naiḍu (2012: X, 17) says Kōvalan̲ is refined Gopāla. They are blameless and harmless ('kur̲r̲amon̲r̲illāta kōvalar' PAV 16), friends of the righteous unfriended, e.g. the Pāṇḍavas and enemies of wicked, Kauravas; denotes the Lord's function of *rājya-paripālanaṃ* (Periyavāccān̲ Piḷḷai on NT 4.8), i.e. Rāma-*rājya* "righteous government"; *iḷaṅ-kōvalar* "cowherd lads" (Āṇṭāḷ's beautiful word *ciṭṭār* NT 6.4 denoting butterflies or *ciṭṭukkuruvi* "small bird" TL II, 1019), Kr̥ṣṇa and his impish mates (TM 3.6.7). Kōvalan̲ (Kr̥ṣṇa) plays flute and grazes kine in the wild (elaborated in Kalidos, 2020), *kan̲r̲u mēyttu viḷaiyāṭum kōvalan̲*, Gopāla-Kr̥ṣṇa (NT 4.8). *Kōvalar*-Kōvintan̲ is *yādava*-Govinda (PTM 9.9.1); *kōvalar-kūttan̲* (ibidem 9.5.8) "dance-master of the cowherds", mischief of the cowboy, *ceṣṭita* (Periyavāccān̲ Piḷḷai on PTM 9.5.8). *Kōvalar-maṭap-pāvai* "girl of the cowherds" is Nappin̲n̲ai (VIRU 3). *Kōvalar-paṭṭam* (TM 3.8.7) denotes the regal status (king) of the cowherds. A germ-cell in the 'Akam' acquires a macro-format in the *bhakti* literature, which is due to interaction with the *Harivaṃśa* in the *Mahābhārta*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the folk literature elaborated in Friedhelm Hardy (1983).

Kalappaiyar (Akam. 301) or Nāñcilār is a hint at Baladeva, *cf. vaḷai-nāñcil oru-kul̲ai oruvan̲* "He who holds the curved ploughshare and wears single ear-pendant" and *vaḷan̲i vaḷaināñcil* (*Paripāṭal* 1, 15; Pur̲am. 19). *Nāñcil* also denotes a *paṭai/āyudha* "weapon" (ibidem. 20). Popular in Tamil classical lore, the Lord appears in the art of the Pallavas. Jeyapriya-Rajarajan (2004: 293) has reported the temple for

'veḷḷai-nākar' (the white-snake, Balabhadra, an incarnation of Ādiśeṣa) in Pukār (Cilampu. 9.10). The Lord's weapon was *kalappai/hala*, also attributed to Vārāhī.

Kaṇṇaḷ (Akam. 54, 236) is an endearing term denoting a "lady-love" (ambrosia for the lover); *cf. kaṇṇaḷ eṉ aṇaṅku* (ibiden 366) is *kātali*. Kaṇṇal is *amutu* "ambrosia" (Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 515-16). Is she the forerunner of the 19th-20th century poet, Pārati/Bhāratiyār's "Kaṇṇammā"? She is graced with lovely eyes, *cf.* Kaṇṇaṉ (MOLI 5.2.7, 9.1.10 in Rajarajan et al. 2017: II, 622, 638, for copious concordance see Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 516-18). Kaṇṇāttā (Mother Eye|s) is a folk Goddess.

Neṭumāl (Akam. 9): Viṣṇu in ancient Tamil tradition was Māl (the Black, Rajarajan et al. 2017b: fig. 115), or Neṭumāl (Tall Black, denoting Trivikrama) and Tirumāl (Auspicious Black). These epithets are redundant in the *Paripāṭal* and the hymns of the Āḻvārs (Rajarajan et al. 2017a: 713-15, 962, 1391-92, see PTM 4.9, Rajarajan et al. 2017: III, 987-88). Ceṅkaṇ-Neṭiyōṉ appears elsewhere (Cilampu. 11.51); note *Ceṅkaṇ* (Akam. 92, 101), *ceṅkaṇ* means "crimson eyes" (mien or body blue-black and eyes red; *cf.* TI 16, 19, MOLI 5.8.7, 6.8.5), denotes men in general, *ceṅkaṇ-āṭavar* (Akam. 239). Minor chiefs and kings took the name 'Neṭiyōṉ' (Puram. 114), *cf.* 'Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ (Puram. 18-19, 23-26, 72, 76-79, 371, 372), 'Neṭuvēḷātaṉ' (Puram. 338), 'Neṭuvēḷāvi'

(Akam. 1, 61 notes Kaḷvar-kōmāṉ "chief robber" Pulli of Vēṅkaṭam) and 'Neṭuvēḷātaṉ' (Puram. 338).

Māayōy (Akam. 42, 62; *cf.* 'Māal' Akam. 59, *Paripāṭal* 3; 'Tirumā' in Akam. 93; Māayoḷ in Akam. 62, 86, 93, 304) is with a slender body who assures prosperity for the lands and to activate ploughshares: *taḻir ēr mēṉi māayōye/ nāṭu varamkūra nāñcil tuñca*. If only the plough is (see 'Kalappaiyār' above) active agriculture

flourishes in a country, *cf.* Avvaiyār[22] saying: *varappuyara* "let the bund rise (in agricultural fields)", if the bund raises water increases, and if water increases harvest is bumper.

I consider Māayōḷ the feminine of Māayōy/Māl/Māyaṉ, *cf.* Śiva-Śivā, Viṣṇu-Vaiṣṇavī. It is likely to be a metaphor for the Pattiṉi Goddess (see note 19)? Do we get at the hue of Kaṇṇaki in Iḷaṅkō; colour combination is an important factor in the iconography of gods and goddesses (*cf.* Santhana-Lakshmi-Parthiban 2014: 78-81). Iḷaṅkō views Kaṇṇaki as *mācaru-poṉ* "molten-gold" (light yellow), *valampuri-muttu* "right-warped pearl" (white-black mix), *karumpu* "sugarcane" (red-black), and *tēṉ* "honey" (orange-yellow mix) and so on (Cilampu. 2.73-74). The colours of these properties are yellow, black-white or white, black, and reddish-yellow. Interestingly, the colours of the Indian goddesses are brought under these categories (black, white/red and yellow) in *śāstra*s (ibidem). I am of the view Kaṇṇaki was black-white mix that we call *mā*[*l*]-*niram*, black of South India. Among pearls, one is *karu-muttu*. Iḷaṅkō possibly notes the *karumuttu*, 'Kariyāṉ', the Black (PTA 68). Kaṇṇaki was later equated with Umā or Mīnākṣī through Kaṇṇaki > Taṭātakai (*cf.* Rajarajan & Jeyapriya 2013). Mīnākṣī or *kālā*-Kālī is black, otherwise, the interchangeable blue or green. Māyōḷ may be 'she' of Māy-āyaṉ (Māyaṉ), Mālavarkku-*iḷaiyāḷ cf.* Padmanābha-*sahodarī* (LSN-280). From *Akanāṉūṟu* via *Naṟṟiṇai* to *Cilappatikāram*, it is a tempest-bound voyage to reach the LSN, see also *Saundaryalaharī* of Ādi Śaṅkara says Umā shares her half with Śiva as Ardhanārī. Śiva is part of Śakti.

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[22] The she-maestro is a later innovation and not the one famous in Caṅkam anthologies. The poem under note appears under 'Taṉippāṭal' that are normally anonymous.

Rāma 'Velpōr Irāmaṉ' of the *arumaṟai* (sacred Scripture, the *Veda*s) is associated with an emporium and coastal city of the primeval family of Kavuriyar (the Pāṇḍya); *cf.* 'Kavara' is Nāyaka family of South India, Vīra Pāṇṭiya Kaṭṭabommaṉ (Kalidos 1976: 272-76). To quote: veṉpōr kavuriyar tolmutu kōṭi (Dhanuṣkoṭi?)/ muḷaṅkuirum pauvam iraṅkum muṉtuṟai/ velpōr Irāmaṉ arumaṟai… (Akam. 70). Dāśarathi-Rāma is said to have arrived at Rāmeśvaram/Dhanuṣkoṭi to erect a causeway (the Setu) to Laṅkā. The *sthalapurāṇa* of *divyadeśa*-Pullāṇi would associate Rāma with *darbha-śayana* on the site meditating a war with Laṅkā. Besides, three more places are linked with Setu in classical Tamil literature and purāṇic annals. They are Kumari, Vētāraṉyam (Ādisetu) and Viṭantai (Ardhasetu), close to Māmallapuram. Pullāṇi and Viṭantai are *tivviyatēcam* of the Āḻvārs.

Tiru (Akam. 13): Means "auspiciousness" and denotes Śrī in the context of Viṣṇuism. Tirumaru/Śrīvatsa (TII 21, MOLI 5.2.8, 5.5.2) is a mole on the chest of Viṣṇu. 'Akam' 13 says 'Tiru' occupies the chest of the southerner, Pāṇḍya: tiruvīḻ mārpiṉ teṉṉavaṉ "Auspiciousness (Tiru/Śrī *cf.* "Svastiśrī" or "Tirumakaḷpōla" in Cōḻa inscriptions, e.g. ARE 1900, no. 129) resides in the chest of king of south, the Pāṇḍya)".

Ardhanārī: Two great divinities merged in one form, *iruperum teyvattu uru uṭaṉ iyainta* (Akam. 360); *cf.* Cilampu. (12. *Uraippāṭṭumaṭai* 7); or Harihara, *cf.* Ari-Araṉ (Akam. 8); in Badāmī Cave III Ardhanārī and Harihara are juxtaposed, *mātorupāl mālorupāl makiḻkiṉṟa* (*Tēvāram* 2.203.1).

Sun: The Sun God is invoked in several poems (*cf.* Cilampu. 1, ll. 1, 4). These invocations may pertain to the sun as a planet [*graha*] or the Sun considered the God Sūrya: *pakalcey palkatirp parutiam celvaṉ*/

akalvāy vānattu āḷi pōḻnteṉa (Akam. 229). *Ñāyiru* "Sun" is of the *cuṭarkeḻu-maṇṭilam* "solar system" (ibidem 378); hint at Navagrahas? *cf.* *Katir-maṇṭilam* (ibidem 381). He is Lord of the morning (*pūrvā-sandhyā*) who ordains the worlds: *ulakam paṭaitta kālai talaiva* (*Narriṇai* 337), the *kaṭuṅkatir-ñāyiru* (ibid. 338). The *Malaipaṭukaṭām* (ll. 84-85) finds the Lord driving away darkness and the ushering in light ('Korona' to *Corona* 'Makuṭa'): *pāyiruḷ nīṅkap pakalceyyā eḻutaru/ nāyiru aṉṉa avaṉ vacaiyil cirappum*.

Sacrifices, Rituals and Offerings

Vēḷvi: Means *yajñas* (Akam. 13), considered Vedic sacrifices; e.g. Palyākacālai-Mutukuṭumip-Peruvaḻuti (*Puranāṉūru* 6, 9, 12, 15, 64) was performer of several sacrifices.

Pali: "Offerings" (Akam. 22), *nāṭ-pali* is "daily offerings" (ibidem 289), *nityapūjā* in āgamic terms.

Viḻavu: *Uḷḷi-viḻā* is a festival with folk dance performance in the Koṅku region, especially Karūr (Cuppiramaṇiyaṉ 2006: 308); *cf.* *Cilappatikāram* (10. 22) *nīraṇi viḻavinum neṭuntēr viḻviṉum* "abhiṣeka and *rathotsava*" in the Jain context. *Intira-viḻā* is noted in *Aiṅkurunūru* (62, see details in Cilampu. and *Maṇimēkalai*).

Āṭal: "Dance", *vaṉaṅku irai makaḷir ayarttaṉar āṭum* "women perform dances to propitiate the gods" (Akam. 334); perform the *tuṇaṅkai* dance (ibidem 336); *viṟali*s performed dances during festivities (ibidem 352).

Viḻavuk-kaḷam: Field for festivals, usually it is the meeting place of villagers near a temple; *cf.* *āṭukaḷam* "action/dance field" (Akam. 364). It was also known *potu* "common place" or *potiyil*, and

maṉram (ibidem 377), *mutukāṟ-potiyil* "primeval field" (ibidem 373) and *mutir-potiyil* (ibidem 377).

Vēṅkaṭam is a place name (Akam. 27, 265, 393); *cf.* 'Mōriyar' (infra). It was the principality of a chieftain called Pulli, the *kaḷvar-kōmāṉ* (chief among robbers) where water was pouring all the time and festivals took place; *cf.* 'Cilampu' (11.41-51) *vīṅku nīr aruvi Vēṅkaṭam* where Ceṅkaṇ-Neṭiyōṉ stands. Vēṅkaṭattu *umpar* were "celestials of Vēṅkaṭam" (Akam. 211, 213, *Narriṇai* 62) and the Toṇṭaiyar (Akam. 213), early Pallavas linked with the foundation of the temple. The rudiments of a temple at Vēṅkaṭam may be found in the 'Akam', later celebrated in the hymns of the Āḻvārs (TI 37-40, TII 45-46, 53-54, MOLI 6.10.1-11, Kalidos 2016). Pulli of Vēṅkaṭam was dignified chieftain, *perumakaṉ pulli viyaṉtalai nalnāṭṭu Vēṅkaṭam* (Akam. 83). Vēṅkaṭam was a range (*Vēṅkaṭa-neṭuvarai* Akam. 85), part of the Eastern Ghats. Toṇṭaimāṉ-Iḷantiraiyaṉ (hero of *Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai*) was founder of the temple at Vēṅkaṭam (Aiyangar 1940: I, 196, Viraraghavacharya 1977: 91, Ramesh 2000, Ramesan 2009: 14-16). However, the cited *āṟṟuppaṭai* talks of the glories of Veḥkā (*cf.* U.Vē.Cā.) and Kāñci.

Iruṅkuṉram is Māliruñcōlai "Abode of Māl, the Black" (Akam. 288); also 'Neṭuṅkuṉram' (*Paripāṭal* 15.4, 14), the Paraṅkuṉram (*Tēvāram* 1.110.1-11, 7.2.1-11). Kuṉram or *peruṅkal* (*cf. peruṅkal-*Nāṭaṉ Pēkaṉ) was the abode of gods, particularly Murukaṉ and Viṣṇu, besides the stone or rock was the *aṇaṅku*, living examples are Āṉai-*malai* for Nṛsiṃha and Murukaṉ and Aṇṇā-*malai* for Śiva.

Toward Conclusion

Right now, it is evident all the 400 in the Akam, branded "bardic corpus" ("bardic"/folk/*deśi* and "heroic"/classical/*mārga* are after one's sense of aesthetics) could not be dated during a short range of time (100 BCE to 250 CE). The poems seem to date since the time of Aśoka Maurya coming down to 200 CE (Ilakkuvanār [1994: 9] date for *Tolkāppiyam* is *c.* 1000 BCE). Poems 2,381 in 33,000 lines (102 anonymous poems) by 473 poets (Basham 1971: 462-78) were contribution of the ancient Tamils to the heritage of world literature. Is it logical to compress such a vast material during 350 years (*cf.* 3700+ hymns c. 14,800 lines of the twelve Ālvārs dated during 300 years)?

The classical Caṅkam literature may have to be schemarized based on logic, intuition and scientific scrutiny. If the *Old Testament* in prose, including the *Bible*[23] in about 900 pages could be dated round 1000 BCE, and the epics of Homer c. 600 BCE should we date Tamil classicism during the early centuries CE? That trade in classical spices gets back to the time of King Solomon. Milton's "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (*Paradise Lost*, Book I, 16) is of the time of later Tudors and early Stuarts. Age cannot whither the classicism of aesthetic languages. Milton and Tulsīdās (Hindi *Rāmacaritamās*) were cotemporaries.

The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, proto-historic Dinosaurs, put together are the longest written literature ever attempted on earth by two poets[24]. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* put together may not be the equals

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[23] I am not trained in Trinity studies. I may suggest the works of Mathew, Mark et all may be dated round the 3rd century CE; *cf.* the *Gītā* and *Harivaṃśa* (dated c. 200 BCE to 200 CE) in the *Mahābhārata*.

[24] The *Mahābhārata* is in c. 100,000 *śloka*s (1.8 million words) and the *Rāmāyaṇa* c. 25,000 *śloka*s. The *Mahābhārata* alone is ten times bigger than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

of "heroic (*puṟam*)"[25]and "chivalrous (*akam*)" quantitatively, let me keep in abbey aesthetics or quality[26]. "Eden and Creation Floods" is dated in c. 2000 BCE ('Bible' 1994: 886), *cf.* the Indic culture is dated in c. 2500 BCE.

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put together. The two Greek epics are not equals of Dante's Tuscan *Divine Comedy* and Lev Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

[25] The *Akaṉāṉūṟu* (15, 79, 90, 107, 196, 205, 215, 251, 253, 281, 375) notifies the exploits of the confederation of Mūvēntar and minor chiefs on the Imaiyam/Himālayas (215), Āriyar (398), Mōriyar/Mauryas (68, 281) et alii. The Hāthigumpha Inscription of Khāravela of Kaliṅga notes the Tamil confederacy (EI, XX, 71-89).

[26] The melody of the Holy Bible in Hebrew or King James' version is lost in Sanskrit-mix-Tamil translation.

Figures
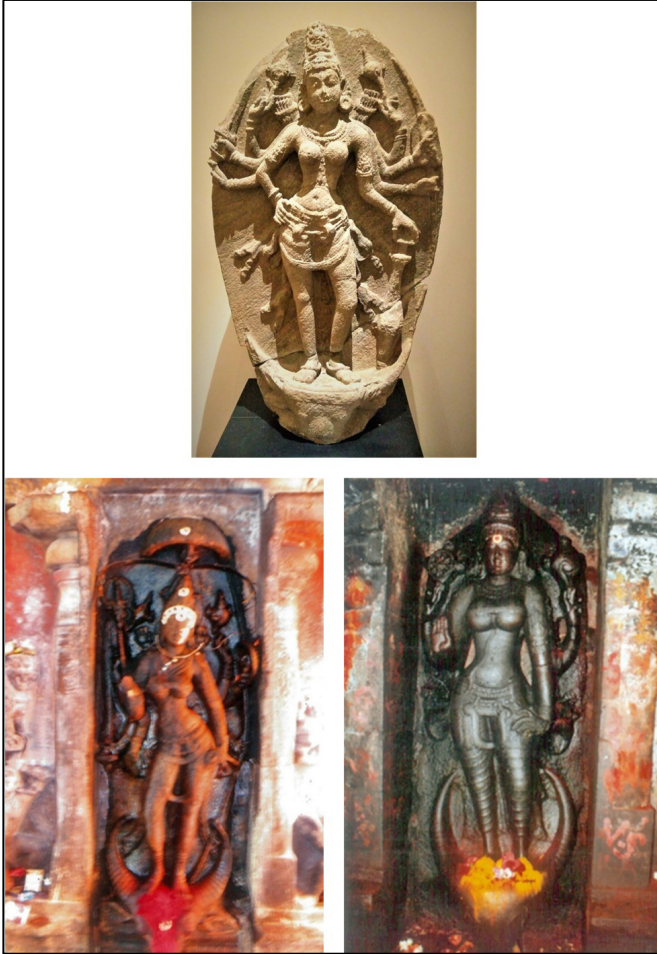
1. Ko__rr__avai, Colombo Museum (photo by Rajarajan)
2. Ko__rr__avai, Early Cōḻa Temple, Puḷḷamaṅkai (photo by Parthiban)
3. Ko__rr__avai, Vaidhyanātha Temple, Tiṭṭakuṭi (photo by Ragunath)

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Going Global with a Local Subaltern

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Abstract: The notion of the Subaltern has come to have deep roots in understanding postcolonial history. Established by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, it has come to define the essence of global cultural relations, as we perceive them today. However, the origin of this theory could not have been less regional, with a starting point in Calcutta in the first half of the 20th century. The way in which it describes the relations of power between India and the British Empire gives place to a global understanding of a dominant culture took control of subjects in minority. This paper is going to seek to expose the roots of the notion of Subalterns, not refraining from touching upon disparities between genders, nations, and traditions.

Keywords: culture, subculture, globalism, regionalism, free speech, silencing history, representing marginalia.

Introduction

This research begins from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's Subaltern theory, elaborated in works such as *Can the Subaltern Speak*, *Other Asias* or *In Other Worlds*. The approach is from a post-colonialist and post-structuralist point, in which the geographical peripheries of cultural and economic power are followed in their current development.

The author observed relations of power between pairs of entities, in which she identified a dominant Subject and an obedient Subaltern. These abstract notions stand for any examples that may fit the picture, be it countries, customs, or individuals per se. The Subject is that which we all primarily refer to as an example and that which we constantly talk about. Such as having a canon to refer to when talking about art, so can there be a primary focus when debating subjects. The Western world, mainly understood as Western European countries and the United States of America, is at the core of debates about history, economy, practices, and lifestyles. All that which is placed outside of this center is viewed as a margin[1], subjugated to the will of the center. Thus, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak observes the dominated as being the Subaltern and the dominant as being the Subject. These two terms can be adapted to any sort of balances of power between different entities.

However, my main focus is to seek the origin of this pair of terms. In her essay *Can the Subaltern speak* the scholar analyzes philosophies, theories and ideas of global views, from Deleuze's theory[2] about oppressed groups of people, to Ranajit Guha's classification[3] of society's levels of dominion, only to come down to one core example: the suicide of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri. In this paper, let us firstly discuss the end remarks and move up to the theory that changed a global perspective.

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[1] Piotr Piotrowski, "Nationalizing Modernism: Exhibitions of Hungarian and Czechoslovakian Avant-garde in Warsaw", in *Art Beyond Borders: Artistic Exchange in Communist Europe (1945-1989)*, edited by Jérôme Bazin, Pascal Dubourg Glatigny and Piotr Piotrowski, Central European University Press, Leipzig, 2016, pp. 216-217.

[2] Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power", in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, Selected Essays and Interviews,* edited by Donald F. Bouchard, Cornell University Press, New York, 1980, pp. 205-217.

[3] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography", *Nepantla: Views from South*, Duke University Press, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2000, pp. 9-32.

Interpreting sati

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is in the habit of telling local stories, stripping them away of their fantasy and drawing out her own interpretation of the facts. Another example could be found in the interpretation of the story of "Draupadi" by Mahasweta Devi[4]. One such story is the case of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, a teenage girl involved in the insurgency movement against British colonialism. Due to the fact, that she could not perform the act of killing a key figure for the movement, as she was tasked to, she committed suicide. The facts are plain. However, the interpretation it got started the author's quest for giving the Subaltern a voice, giving the young Indian woman a voice. The act of suicide was coined as being out of love and the girl was considered the public opinion at the time to have been a *sati*[5]. However, the author was vexed by the fact that the girl chose to take her own life precisely when she was menstruating, as opposed to the commonly accepted habit of specifically not menstruating when performing the act.

The interpretation of what a *sati* is stands at the core of this. A woman taking her own life due to the death of her husband was either seen as a voluntary act of devotion, courage, and purity towards the marriage, or it was vilified as a manipulation of religious practice and it received the widow received the name of *sati*[6]. The tradition of becoming a *sati*, or *suttee* was tied to the act of self-immolation, on the

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[4] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds, Essays in Cultural Politics,* Routledge, New York, eBook, 2012, pp. 179-198.

[5] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak", in *Reflections on the History of an Idea, Can the Subaltern speak*, edited by Rosalind C. Morris, Columbia University Press E-Book, 2010*,* p. 1457.

[6] Barnali Sarkar, "Murderous Ritual versus Devotional Custom: The Rhetoric and Ritual of Sati and Women's Subjectivity in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*", *Humanities,* No. 3, 27 June 2014, pp. 238-298.

husband's pyre at the funeral ritual[7]. However, some scarce cases of the 20th century showed fluctuations in the rite. When praised as a heroic gesture, the *sati* was perceived as holy, thus, needing to show purity on all levels, specifically through the representation of her own body. A suicide committed due to illegitimate love or even pregnancy would have been an entirely different case. Nonetheless, the British occupation would legally simply mark any cases of female suicide under the name of *sati*, with no deep consideration of the facts.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak ponders on attributing roles for the actants of the facts, identifying the women deemed as *sati* as the Subalterns of a bigger Subject, that of imperialist power, as it so happens to be, one predominantly male and Aryan and involving only those of the educated cast of Indian society. The imperialist power deemed the act of widows committing suicide as illegal in the 19th century; however, the public perception of admiring such an act of "courage"[8] prevailed. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak mentions the association with a "reward"[9]; the act of suicide is viewed as a solution to maintain a widow's honor and thus it continued to be praised, though silently. The author argues that when a Subject takes on the task of telling the Subalterns' stories, it in fact, strips away authorship and it offers a personal interpretation of the events that occurred. This is a means of silencing one's view and giving voice to an interpretation. The only way through which a story could be whole, is by giving the involved characters the voice to state their own take. Surprisingly, the silencing of voices is usually done by others in position of power, by fellow-participants. Silencing women is usually done by women and

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[7] Nehaluddin Ahmad, "Sati Tradition – Widow Burning in India: A Socio-legal Examination", *Web Journal of Current Legal Issue*, Issue 29, 2009.
[8] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern speak", *op. cit*, p. 1256.
[9] *Ibidem*, p. 1282.

silencing Subalterns is done by other Subalterns. "I am pointing, rather, at her silencing by her own more emancipated granddaughters: a new mainstream."[10]

Furthermore, the outsiders that write about facts in which they themselves were not involved are deepening the process by silencing history. It is important for those who study silencing of histories that they acknowledge their own role in muting others, instead of always finding "scape goats"[11].

This idea of silencing is coined in the very title of her essay, "Can the Subaltern speak?" When one, that was not given the chance to say a personal opinion, finally gets to do so, would one be able to fulfill that? I am of the opinion, that the author's way of arguing ideas, shows the contrary. Even when offered the chance of free speech or free will, it is still the social environment the one that shapes a person's words and deeds, which might not be exerted out of authorship, but out of the desire to belong and be accepted in a particular social system. This is what is argued as being the case of *sati*. Social pressure, traditions, public perception are strong enough to shape decisions even regarding one's own life and it is not necessarily one's own free will. Thus, an act into which one is coerced, cannot be deemed out of free will. This is where critics' role comes in: to scrutinize such events and to try to find the underlying causes of events, without easily succumbing to appearances.

Bhubaneswari Bhaduri's case lingered in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's view due to its abnormalities: menstruation, the girl being an unmarried, not pregnant teenager, the act not being that of self-immolation, but that of hanging. When investigating the case later in

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[10] *Ibidem*, p. 1490.
[11] *Ibidem*, p. 1494.

life, a goodbye letter written by the teenage girl shed light on the true motivation of the deed.

> The displacing gesture - waiting for menstruation - is at first a reversal of the interdict against a menstruating widow's right to immolate herself; the unclean widow must wait, publicly, until the cleansing bath of the fourth day, when she is no longer menstruating, in order to claim her dubious privilege. […] Bhubaneswari Bhaduri's suicide is an unemphatic, ad hoc, subaltern rewriting of the social text of sati […].[12]

The scholar identifies the power of the female body, used as a vessel to transmit a direct message in an encoded way. "It is as if she attempted to 'speak' across death, by rendering her body graphematic."[13] In order, to decipher it, the details of the case study must be collected and analyzed, finding the hidden meaning behind gestures that seemed out of place.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that Bhubaneswari Bhaduri was financially and politically not a Subaltern, as she belonged to a richer, elite family in Calcutta. Nonetheless, she was a Subaltern when it came to her gender, women in India being the ones with an unheard voice, always manipulated into succumbing to a patriarchal society and obeying to a male-oriented order of events.

Applying the Subaltern theory globally

Several issues arise from the story: 1. What a Subaltern may be; 2. How would a Subaltern be able to stop the silencing of history

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[12] *Ibidem*, p. 1457.
[13] *Ibidem*, p. 505.

and voice a personal opinion; 3. How this could be applied to the study of culture and history throughout the world.

First of all, in postcolonial studies, the Subaltern is seen as the Oppressed, the Other[14] from the margins, who might or might not have a voice to express autonomy. It is always placed in an antithesis with a Subject, one that attracts the main focus and dictates how the Subaltern should be viewed. Identifying who is a Subaltern and who is the Subject is tricky. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak herself ponders on whether Bhubaneswari Bhaduri should be named as such. Naming an individual or a group as being the Other raises the issue of the validity of the claim. Even when having a valid argument, it still can be considered by the regionals as being dismissive and disdainful.

The purpose of any such analysis should be that of empowerment and not that of scorn. Identifying one as being a Subaltern should not have the attribute of establishing a superior-inferior hierarchy, but should simply point out the shift of Subject, from one that has already dominated history to the one that was barely mentioned and one who almost never talked about oneself. When reaching the core of a Subaltern, it should not be the perspective of an "indigenous elite" that is voiced, but that of the many from the margins, the ones less privileged.

Secondly, the means through which silencing could be halted are various, but all of them stem from freedom of speech. Regional studies should be conducted, placing the core of the research on individuals that were yet unheard or who never considered the idea of stating their own ideas in public. Researchers who voice their sole convictions based on studying the voiceless do not give justice to the

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[14] Term used by Piotr Piotrowski, in *In the Shadows of Yalta, The Avant-garde in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989,* Reaktion Books, London, 2009, pp. 68-70.

process of stopping the silencing of history, but deepen it. Even when those many from the margin of a discourse seem unwilling to state opinions, the only way of stopping the singular view of already-established cannons is to question the rule of a central perspective by showcasing the disparities of the regional. When comparing, the differences and similarities would be the ones to complete a bigger picture, without showing a right and wrong history of the winners and losers or, of the ally and enemy.

Recent historical, cultural, and social theories and analyses are increasingly seeking to uncover the realities behind the exotic, making topics less know on the global scale become more well-known. Thus, we can know what indigenous people experienced when being succumbed to an invading culture and we may have the chance to preserve the remains of ancestral culture through social customs, rituals, traditions, language, writing systems, or visual and musical arts. One point to mention would be the need of developing self-awareness amongst Subalterns when establishing autonomous history. Simply letting one express idea does not imply that a Subaltern can authentically voice personal opinions, especially as the public eye can sway statements and further the silencing of truths through alterations.

Last of all, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak offered hints on how this theory could be applied globally when talking about the periphery of Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe from the history of the world. I think that the theory has the structure to be applied globally to any example of a Subaltern-Subject relationship between any national or regional entities. We could talk about Catalunia and Scotland being identified as unique marks of culture, but still as parts of a bigger entity. Allowing local customs and language to be displayed, taught, and broadcast is a way of allowing these Subalterns the freedom of voicing

their own histories. In the same manner, there are examples of indigenous cultures showcasing their uniqueness, such as Hawaii locals displaying their authentic customs, not the commercialized *hula* dance, or Romanians showing their local history instead of a fantasized story of Dracula. The theory of Subalterns is the basis of understanding what a central view displayed about a culture and how much of that needs to be altered, in order to have a more authentic take. Accepting that all views have a non-objective perspective to them, helps us in keeping a reserve towards taking ideas for granted and being armed with a critical opinion can help us distinguish a closer stand towards the reality of events.

Conclusion

The application of this theory in a global manner is astounding. It identifies the struggles of political powers, even when it comes to writing history. It talks about how the Third World is understood and how terminology has been created to describe everything from the perspective of a Western monopoly. The first step in giving the coined periphery a voice, is by letting regional researchers tell and analyze local stories, just how Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak did when she pondered on, whether or not the subaltern could speak.

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She published articles in magazines and journals on topics concerning contemporary art in Romania, museum exhibition mediated by information technology, site specific art and visual marks of gender in art. She presented studies on Romanian art identities at international conferences. She joined the 2019-2020 travelling research seminars on Gender Politics and the Art of European Socialist States, supported by the Getty Foundation.

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The "Slave of God" from Southern India.
Origin, Development and Decay of Devadasi System

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Motto:
A devadasi is a servant of god,
but wife of the whole town.

Abstract: In this paper, I tried to make a presentation about the origin, growth and decline of the institution of temple girls. Devadasis were women who were dedicated to the particular temple deity or any specific symbol. A devadasi was considered *nitya sumangali*, a woman eternally free from the adversity of widowhood as she was married to God and married forever. She was married to a deity or god, but that did not mean that she had to live her life without the normal pleasures of sex and childbearing. In medieval times, she was a respected member of the society. These devadasis were performed ritualistic and non-ritualistic performances until 17th century, when devadasis were moving away from the temples into the secular spaces. Now they were no longer confined to the temples and by 18th century, the distinction between the devadasi and the prostitute becomes blurred. The bibliography to which I had access clearly shows a transformation of the role of the system in Hindu society, a role that I tried to capture in the following pages.

Keywords: servant, dance, Hindu temple, social status, sources.

Introduction

Approaching such a vast and so unknown subject has its origin in my admiration for the culture and civilization of India. *Bharata* is a mixture of colors, passion, faith, where each answer leads to a different question. India has a long history that cannot be reproduced in a few pages. Every event, every idea, every area can still be explored. Cultural heritage is a mixture of local traditions and foreign influences, among so many religious beliefs, all these elements being represented in architecture, painting, literature, music and other fields.

Due to the people who managed to visit this unknown territory, we can create at most an overview of it, but we can not fully know it. India has been and will remain a mystery and what we can do is try to enter the Indian world and explore the enigmatic territory.

The devadasi system is a socio-cultural practice that has a long history in India. The Sanskrit term *devadasi* translates as "servant of the God." They have different names, depending on the literature used and the area where the girls dedicated to the temple made their presence felt. In medieval literature they appear as *sanulu*, *sana, sampradayamuvuru, gadisanulu*, and in contemporary literature we find them under the nicknames of "servant of the God", *maharis* in Orissa or *prostitutes*, *devaradiyar* in Tamil Nadu, *sanis* in Andhra Pradesh, *basavis* or *jogatis* in Kannada (fig. 1).

Terms such as *dancer* or *prostitute* are known in the sources, but the presence of dancers in the temple appears later. Hirth and Rockhill mention that in India the dancers are called devadasi or *ramjani*. Indian historian Anand Sadashiv Altekar argues that the custom of associating dancers with temples is not known in *Jātaka* literature, nor is it

mentioned by Greek writers, and *Arthasastra* speaks about *ganika*s, but not of their association with the institutions of society.

Sources

The main sources of this subject are inscriptions, monuments and literary sources. Inscriptions found in southern India, engraved on the walls of temples, were used for this study. The languages used are Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Sanskrit. The specialists translated them, and most of them are recorded in the volumes *South Indian Inscriptions* and *Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam Inscriptions*. Vincent Smith notices that there are a lot of inscriptions of different sizes left. We have 9,000 records just from the Chola period. By 1970, the Kerala Archaeological Department had searched about 6,000 inscriptions in southern Travancore territory.

Monuments, as source, are represented by the sculptures and paintings found in the temples, with the help of which we can discover the evolution of the main arts. We can give as an example the bronze statue found at Mohenjo-Daro, in present-day Pakistan, and the bust found in the Tirukkampaliyur temple, Tamil Nadu, which shows the importance of the art of dance since ancient times. The sculptures that represent dancers bring to light the steps of classical dance. Dancer paintings can be found in the Kailasanatha temple in Kanchi or in the temples of Thanjavur. Art critics liken them to devadasi, so we can get an overview of the evolution of dance.

Agamas, a collection of scriptures of several Hindu devotional schools, bring direct information about the system in the medieval period, being a significant source for events in southern India in the 5th-6th centuries. *Puranas* are traditionally transmitted and there are 18

Sanskrit works. Many glorify the importance of singing and dancing and recommend the dedication of girls to divine service.

Medieval travelers' diaries, missionary letters, and official notes form a foreign source. Huan Tsang, who visited India between 627-643, leaves us notes about the dancers in the Sun Temple in Multan. Marco Polo provides details about the dedication process, and a contemporary of his, Wassaf, says the state collected taxes from devadasi, and the money was used to import horses.

Domingo Paes, a Portuguese chronicler of the 16th century, left us details about the dancers who accompanied the idol with a human body and an elephant's head (Ganesha). He says that every man born in the upper caste can visit these girls without censorship; they lived in the best houses in the city and were allowed to sit and even chew betel in front of the king's wife.

The first European mention of the term devadasi appeared in *Lettres ediffiantes et curieuses* (1713) in which a Jesuit missionary mentioned a divine slave, and *A Concise Dictionary on Hindu Religion* says that devadasi were celestial dancers, not prostitutes. William Ward, a baptist missionary, referring to the Jagannath Temple in Puri, states the presence of a large number of infamous women who are employed in the temples. They live in separate houses, but when they are in the temples they receive visits from different men and are even guilty of criminal acts with these men.

In a book on religious thought and life in India, linguist Monier-Williams describes devadasi as being married to the God and having no other duty than to dance before Him. They are generally considered beings that follow models of godliness. He pointed out that today they are still called devadasi, but are rather slaves for the Brahmins passions from the temples where they belonged. He was

surprised to see the number of jewels of a devadasi woman, especially in southern India. He mentioned that this leads to a profitable trade, carried out by devadasi, in the name of religion.

Jules Bloch, a French linguist interested in Indian languages, talks about a Prakrit inscription dating back to the time of Emperor Ashoka, discovered in a cave: "The young Devadinna, the painter, loved Sutanuka, the slave of the God".

A lot of information is available in some articles or reports published in books or specialist magazines. These represent the secondary bibliography of the subject, which analyzes the system from a historical, sociological or anthropological point of view.

Historian A. K. Prasad has a work that comprises informations on the temples dedication system, focusing on the ancient Indian devadasi system. The temple was an important social and economic institution. In the north, the system did not impose itself as an institution, with a small number of inscriptions. He claims that the number of dedicated women has increased and has expanded so much that it is considered a sub-caste. Its study is based on inscriptions, with 285 inscriptions examined in Tamula, Kanada or Telugu.

Pratibha Desai in her study *Exploitation of scheduled castle. Women in the name of religion: A Devadasi cult* brings significant information about the 20th century devadasi system from Chinchali. Most women who devote themselves to the temples, of course, more to prostitution, leaving the lower castles, and, according to the attached tables, are between 21-30 years old. In conclusion, Desai says the system is a bad one, which contributes to the denigration of society and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

Tarachand debated the religious and moral causes of the increase of the number of prostitutes and say that one cause of this is the devadasi

system. The information provided shows that the profession has become a way of life for those who practice it. The author analyzes the devadasi system in WADA. Dedicated women in this area believe that the system should not be abolished, but protected. Abdul Razak, a Turkish ambassador from Persia, described prostitution in India as a major source of income for the Kingdom, and from the income earned by the dancing girls, the entire police maintenance was payed.

Lakshmi Vishwanathan (2008) writes a book entitled *Women of pride: The Devadasi Heritage*. Devadasi is a community of women who devoted their life to God's service, had special significance in southern India. They created the sacred dance in the temple called *sadir*, which in modern times is known as *bharatanatyam*. A tradition that has been monopolized by them, has now acquired a global reputation, and is practiced by members of other communities. The author is a renowned *bharatanatyam* dancer who has provided an interesting view of the history of Devadasi's life, highlighting their importance in the societies and temples of southern India and in the major institutions of religion, economy and policy.

Sociological research is about analyzing the role of the devadasi in society. This is a very responsible approach, as it involves field research, the results of which must be analyzed objectively. Shankar sociologist is conducting a study of the devadasi system in the village of Yellampura, showing that the devadasi came from the lower casts. B. B. Sahoo in his article "Revival of the devadasi custom" talks about the desire to revive the system in the 20th century. The Jagannath temple administration has formally recruited women to serve as a *maharis* of God. There were certain requirements to live in the temples, the woman had to be vegetarian, not married, be trained in the art of dancing and singing, and be adopted from an early age by a devilor.

Not many women were offered because they were advised not to go along this path.

An important contribution came from anthropologists like Marglin or Saskia Kersenboom, who support the purity of girls attached to the temples, calling them *nityasumangali*. They consider the girls attached to the temples as the God's reply on the earth. Marglin claims that they had no sexual relations with pilgrims. They were allowed to see them only at ceremonies or on the street.

Origin and duties

There are several variants of the origin of the system. A popular story tells that Renuka, the wife of Jamadagni, who was the father of the warrior Parushurama, went to the river in order to bring water. There, she saw a *gandharva* couple bathing in a love game. Astonished by the man's beauty, she violated her marital vows, which led to the rupture of the vessel. When her husband caught her in the act of adultery, he ordered his son to behead his mother. Parushurama listened to his father, who, satisfied, gave him the chance at three requests. Thus, Parushurama brought his mother back. But Renuka's beheaded head could not be recovered. Therefore, a woman from a lower caste was attached to the body of Renuka (Yellamma), giving birth to the cult of Yellamma. A large number of young girls were dedicated to the goddess Yellamma (fig. 2). So this is how the story of a sustainable system began.

The earliest mention in Indian literature of the association of girls with the temple is found in the lyrical poem *Meghaduta*, from the 4th century AD, which belongs to Kalidasa, where is mentioned a dancer from the Mahavala temple in Ujjain. There is no mention in Vedic Sanskrit literature, but one of the *Sangam* writings, *Pattinapallal*,

dating from 200-300 BC, left us an important reference of the *captive woman*, in charge of divine services and referring to *kuttiyar* (dancer) and *parattaiyar* (prostitute). The term *atiyar* (slave, maid) probably indicates the idea of the *king's slave*. It seems that they evolved into devadasi from Tamil Nadu. *Kamikagama*, one of the five *Agamas*, elaborates the role of *rudra-ganikar* in temple rituals. *Perunkadal*, a work from the 7th-9th centuries, calls them *makalin* (girls of the temple) and refers to their role in the temple.

Alain Danielou, the translator of *Kamasutra*, says that the Dravidian society had dancers, musicians, who were not attached to the temples. He describes their art as profane, the dancers in the temple being associated with those courtesans present at the palace of the kings. The term devadasi began to be used during the Chola Empire, 9th-11th centuries, although it was written that it became an institution as early as 700 AD, being a reproduction of the practice observed at kings who hired courtiers at the palace (*ganikas*), a method used by the kings to expose their status. When their position became controversial and people outside the community wanted the rebirth of the dance form of devadasi, the term began to be used in bibliography of the 20th century.

An attempt was made to establish a period of emergence of the system, relating it to the existence of a similar practice in other parts of the world:

> In India, the practice was born and developed in the early medieval period, but in countries like Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece the system flourished a few centuries ago. In Egypt, the temples of Isis and Osiris were full of dancers. In Corinth, Greece, hundreds of women have been associated with the temple of Aphrodite. The custom was predominant in Babylon, Cyprus and other countries. In Sumer, beautiful women were attested in every temple.

They were dedicated throw a ceremony in which she was married to a god, becoming a wife and servant. They received a *tali*, a necklace, the marital sign of women in southern India. Transforming a girl into a devadasi consists in three steps. The first step, initiation, was the worship of the bells on the wrist, worn by the dancers, followed by marriage, after which the feminine power (*sakti*) merged with the power of the deity. The last step is dedication, in which the girl is marked with the sign of the trident (*trisula*) on the right arm up, this ritual was considered a last test of the purity of the girl. If the accepted request belonged to an undeserved girl, she would have suffered a lot until she recovered. After the ritual, the girl first practices *kumbhadipa* (waving the lamp).

The ritual process of initiating the girls was public. These women were connected with the divinity of the temple through a ceremony, similar to that of a Hindu wedding. We have a description of the ceremony:

> Traditionally, the youngest devadasi goes through a ceremony of devotion to the divinity of the local temple, which resembles, in its ritual structure, the marriage ceremony of the upper Tamil caste. Following this ceremony, she was set aside by her sisters due to the fact that she was not allowed to marry a mortal. However, she was not prevented from living a normal life, which involved economic activities, intercourse and childbirth. The same rituals that marked her incorporation into the services of the temple prepared her rigorously and emotionally for the practice of classical dance.

In order to legitimize the system, were held elaborate ceremonies, in which participated kings, nobles and wealthy people. The ceremony was held inside the temple and had a religious official,

and through this act, the community, the king, the priest, became part of the system, giving legitimacy to the practice.

Dedication usually occurs before the girl reaches puberty and requires the girl to become sexually available to members of the community. Traditionally, these girls are believed to serve society as ordained by the goddess. In other words, "devadasi are courtesans in the court of God." Due to her sacred condition, a devadasi cannot be married to a mortal, but becomes the property of a deity who accepts her willingly. Because the dance performed in the temple was a votive offering, the dancers had rigid training rules, which usually began at the age of 5-7.

The women had different names, depending on how they were accepted into the system. *Datta* was the one who gave herself, *vikrita*, the one who sold herself, *bhritya* offered herself as a temple servant for the prosperity of the family, *bhakta*, the one who joined the temple out of devotion, *hrita*, removed and given to the temple, *alanka*, the one trained in profession and given to the temple of kings and nobles, *rudragamika*, one who receives regular salary from the temple and is employed to sing and dance.

Devadasi had the honor of helping to manage the temples, wash the ritual vessels and decorate the altars. But the main duties were singing, dancing and waving the lamp. The fluttering method consists of a triple rotation of the clock and a sweeping gesture from head to toe, symbolizing the removal of evil. Devadasi performed the ritual at least twice a day, a ceremony in which they offered prayers, incense, light and food to the God (royal offering-*rajapacara*).

They are said to have made the dance known, the theory being based on their role during the religious ceremony and festivals. They

also accompanied the God during a procession that meant taking the deity out of the temple.

The factors that contributed to the emergence and development of the system are poverty, religious and superstitious beliefs, but also the caste system. Circumstances influenced the parents to give their daughters to the temples. The parents were too poor to bear a girl's dowry. At the temple they received a sum of money, which was offered by the rulers and other influential people of the time. Devadasi, belonging to an inferior caste, were the only ones who learned to read, write and were given the opportunity to take girls under protection to guide them to this way of life.

Among the reasons mentioned above, we can include the fact that the entry into the devadasi system was hereditary. Those who were at the temple for this reason were known as *sampradaya sanulu*. Sometimes the desire to get rid of widowhood was another reason. Being married to a God, therefore to an immortal, they did not receive the status of widows. But what happens when she has a boy? Then this boy will have the same fate, remaining in the temple and performing various tasks or becoming a *nattuvan*. The difference is that the boy was not forever tied to the temple, getting married could leave, but unfortunately, we do not have much information about the lives of these boys born by devadasi.

The dedication of the girls was a substitute for human sacrifice, they were offered to receive the blessing for the whole community. The Indian people believed that this ensured the fertility of the land and the growth of the population. In a family at least one girl is given to the temple, in the name of religion, dedicating herself to the prosperity of the family. It is said that if a girl has tangled hair (*jat*) she must be offered to the temple, regardless of the caste she comes from. For

example, in 1047 AD, Bicabbarasi, a girl from a higher caste was given to the temple. In an inscription from 1390 AD, appears the order of King Achyura Raya, who demanded that his own daughter become a devadasi.

Development

Dedicated women during medieval period were admired and protected by wealthy people. They were the ones who owned the secrets of the dance. Being devadasi meant having a certain social status, and at the same time, it guaranteed her a carefree life from an economic point of view. Purity and beauty attracted the eyes of kings, wealthy people, and medieval travelers. Devadasi were among the most sophisticated and arranged women, wearing gold necklaces with diamonds, pearls, rubies, bracelets on their hands or feet and many other jewelry. Some even owned servants, reaching wealth through gifts received from admirers.

Medieval inscriptions offer two categories of devadasi women, in terms of how gifts are distributed: the gift of a devadasi to the temple (inscription from 1081, devadasi gives 32 cows and a bull to the Brahmapurishwara temple) and gifts given to devadasi. These are important sources in terms of the remuneration (*manya*) or allowances (*jivita*) that devadasi received from kings, Brahmins, temple or people.

They made big donations to the temples, as evidenced by the inscriptions found in southern India, engraved on the walls of the temples. The inscriptions referring to the devadasi system record donations of land, lamps, cows, sheep, jewelry, ornaments given to the temples by the devadasi, but also contains names of the devadasi. They also record details of economic and religious status in society. For example, Rajaraja I's inscriptions reveal details about the artists' pay

and the socio-religious status they held. The Rajareshvara Temple in Thanjavur had 400 dancers and many other musicians and drummers, and the Pudariyar Temple in Kolar had 20 dancers.

Some women in the temple used their resources for charitable activities. In general, donations involved the provision of land, money, animals, etc. An epigraph from 1533 AD recorded the deposit of 330 *narpanam* (gold coin) in the temple treasury as an offering to God, which was invested to improve the tanks and canals in the temple village and to increase production. A devadasi also gave a gift for the maintenance of the lamps in the temple. Remuneration for the services of an outcast was provided by offering a house, land, food, tax exemption or remission or certain rights. Some received land without taxes or land in exchange for the service provided. The kings and the temple authorities even granted them villages.

A number of records recorded the sale of land and houses to them. The area where the devadasi lived was called *cheri* or *madaivilakam* and the land was located around the temple. Employees received their reward in the field, money or food. The assembly (ur) of Palkalam entrusted the endowed land to Arayanichchingan, *uvaichchan* (drummer) who lives in the village, for the temple service. A recording from the village of Kunrakkudi in Thennari refers to the offering of a garden and a house to dancers in exchange for service to the Kasivisvanathasami temple in Thenkasi.

In the medieval period there is an increase in the number of devadasi. Among the causes are the emergence of the Bhakti movement and the increase of the number of temples (especially in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh) (fig. 3), reaching that the prestige of devadasi women is directly proportional to the grandeur of the temples. Most scholars say that the Bhakti movement has given women and members

of the Sudra and untouchable communities an inclusive path to spiritual salvation. The medieval period, especially the years when the Chola kings ruled, meant the development of the system:

> Devadasi created a connection between the temple and the king's court. Trained in the arts, she was considered a jewel for the temple and courtyard. The tradition continued in the 18th and 19th centuries, but lost its vigor over time.

Decay

The degeneration of the system occurred under the rule of the Mughals, who turned the system into a popular form of entertainment. The invaders of West Asia gained their first victory in India at the beginning of the second millennium AD. The destruction of the temples by the invaders began at the northwestern borders and spread throughout the country. Successive Muslim invasions and weak political authority must have led to the moral degradation of devadasi women. Ala-ud-din Khilji could not tolerate women in the temple being prostitutes. Therefore, he ordered the forced marriage of women in the temple. As in the case of the Muslim raid, the robbery in South India destroyed the institution of the temple and accelerated the degradation of the devadasi system.

Once the British took over the temple income system, the devadasi did not continue to work in the temples. The transition to modernity marked the transformation of many devadasi into prostitutes.

The temple became a place of injustice, a violation of human rights, "in this respect, young girls were dedicated to temples and were fed under unhealthy notions of religion and taught to look at prostitution as a duty of caste and dharma". In an anthropological study,

one of the women confessed to the author that when she was dedicated to the temple, she was not aware of the consequences, being at an early age. Women given to the goddess Yellamma reported skin diseases, fever, death in the family and other health problems.

Gandhi, in *Young India*, on September 22, 1917, states:

> As I was talking to them and understanding the hidden meaning of this thing, my whole soul arose against the system in its entirely. In calling them devadasis we insult God himself under the sacred name of religion and we commit a double crime in that we use these sisters of ours to serve our lust and take in the same breadth, foul as it is, the name of God.

The desire to outlaw this custom was born out of contact with the outside world as a result of British rule. But the road to the outlawing of the system has not been easy, as steps have been taken since the beginning of the twentieth century. The movement against the system gained momentum in the second half of the century. During this period, many reformers described women dedicated to the temple as prostitutes. Since 1912, Dadabhai, Madhakar and Madge, members of the Central Legislative Assembly, have introduced three requests to the Assembly to stop the system. Dadabhai succeeded in introducing the *Protection of Women and Girls Bill* in order to ban the dedication of underage girls to the temple. The Government of India wanted to know the opinion of the local governments, which did not give a satisfactory answer. In September 1913, Reginald Craddock introduced *The Indian Criminal Law and Procedure Amendment Bill* on behalf of the government, which contains provisions to prevent the dedication of girls under the age of 16. But, following the break caused by the First World War, the act was not implemented. A 1924 document, which

was to provide protection for girls under the age of 18, passed unanimously, stating that public opinion was silent on the adoption of such a measure.

As British domination followed a policy of non-involvement in religious matters, it was reluctant to implement the legislation because it focused more on the abusive character of the system. Despite the danger of continued dedication, there were a number of reasons that helped to delay illegality. Among those reasons is the inability to ban the adoption of girls by devadasi, which were later turned into prostitution. The devadasi who adopted girls to follow their destiny could not be legally pursued, because the system was accepted by the Hindu law and the civil court. In an annual report in 1926, a local policeman exposed his inability to stop the practice because the custom is related to the Hindu religion.

The need for legislation on the adoption of girls by devadasi has been revealed by reformers such as Muthulakshmi Reddi. She talked about how girls were being put into mind the need for training to become devadasi from an age they were not acting independantly. Dr. Reddi tried to introduce the Devadasi Act, despite opposition from the conservative Hindus, who saw the document as an offense to religion and considered the system a way to preserve the values of the main arts.

Muthulakshmi Reddi fought a continuous fight to stop the minority dedication, which ended in 1947. Thus, the independence movement has not only marked an exit from foreign domination, but also a key legislative change in the process of modernizing the territory. The law, adopted on 9 October 1947, was called the *Madras Devadasi Act*. The law was passed under the Madras Presidency and gave to the girls from the temple the legal right to marry, and the dedication of girls became illegal.

Conclusion

In the relationship between man and God, sacred and profane, temple and society, devadasi has always played a role that cannot be challenged. From the art of dancing to the practice of prostitution it was just a step, the fate of girls being decided by the social changes and the mentalities with which the Indians have come into contact.

As I showed in this paper, the devadasi system has played significant roles from a social, cultural and religious point of view.

Devadasi are and will remain an important part of Indian social and cultural life. Their long history outlines a story that never seems to end. Despite the struggle against the system, its mark on Indian society persists, and girls continuing to be just the "wife of the whole town".

About the Author:

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Figures

Fig.1 South India map

Fig. 2 Story of goddess Yellamma
(Source: https://eryncarter.com/who-is-the-goddess-yellamma/)

Fig. 3 Map of the most important temples
(Source: https://www.prokerala.com/maps/india/india-temples-map.html)

Devadasi dancing

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REVIEWS

Hilda-Hedvig Varga, *Saṃskāra, rituri de trecere în Hinduism. De la închipuire la dezrobire – parcursul ritualistic al omului într-o cheie filosofică* [*Saṃskāra. Passage Rituals in Hinduism. From Delusion to Emancipation – the Human Ritualistic Conduct, from a Philosophical Perspective*]**, Lumen Publishing, Iași, 2020, 375 pp., ISBN: 978-973-166-561-0.**

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From the very beginning we should bear in mind that we deal with a book written by an author during her 20s, the work being her PhD thesis. Therefore, it has all the qualities and the shortcomings specific to a very young researcher: a lot of (or, rather, too much) enthusiasm and confidence, topics too broad to be covered with reasonable rigour, very assertive standpoints in controversial matters.

Such a book has been long due in Romanian culture which shows increasingly interest towards India but still lacks even basic introductions to some of its main cultural aspects. Hilda Varga's book fills such a gap. Hindu passage rituals are frequently encountered in most Indian cultural products, including in those consumed at large these days, such as the movies. Nevertheless, in most cases, at least in Romania, they go without being properly understood. Hilda Varga's

book comes as a most welcome "interpretation assistant", which can be used both by people having scientific interests towards India and by the simple enthusiasts of Indian movies, dance or music.

The book properly starts dealing with Hindu rituals only around page 120, its first part aiming to be rather a theoretical and conceptual introduction to the main topic. Pages 131-136 attempt a classification and an account of the Hindu passage rituals, as they were considered by classical or contemporary authors. Unfortunately, the discussion is not very clear; some of the authors called on are mythical personages, such as Aṅgiras or Vyāsa, to whom many works are ascribed in Hindu tradition, so any reference to them needs further clarification. The scriptural sources of the entire paper are briefly discussed also at pages 126-127 but without these passages being more enlightening since only the names of some classical authors are given (Āpastamba, Āśvalāyana, Gobhila and so on). No classical work is mentioned, except for the very general label of "*Gṛhyasūtra*". Nevertheless, pages 134-135 make it clear that the chosen classification, according to which the following discussion will deploy, is that of Vyāsa, most probably exposed in *Vyāsa-Smṛti*. Vyāsa operated a division in 16 of the Hindu passage rituals, widely accepted by the exegesis of Dharma-Śāstra.

The rituals discussed by Chapters III, IV, V are: the pre-natal rituals (*Garbhālambana / Garbhādhāna* – the insemination rites, *Puṃsavana* – the prayers for the birth of a son, *Sīmantonnayana* – splitting of the hair); birth and early childhood rituals (*Jātaka* – birth rituals; *Nāmakaraṇa* – naming; *Niṣkramaṇa* – the first exit; *Annaprāśana* – the first solid meal; *Cūḍākaraṇa* – the first haircut; *Karṇavedha* – the piercing of the ears); education related and initiatory rites (*Vidyārambha* – the initiation in writing and knowledge; *Upanayana* – the religious initiation; *Vedārambha* – the beginning of

the Vedic studies; *Keśānta / Godāna* – the first shaving of the face; *Samāvartana / Snāna* – the completion of the discipleship).

In respect of the first types of rituals, discussed in chapters III-V, the approach is quite systemic and rigouros. First, the author investigates how the event or stage of life under discussion was considered in the earliest sources of Indian literature, namely the Vedas. Most of the rituals have at least a dim origin in the Vedas and Hilda Varga discusses and even gives long excerpts from the relevant Vedic passages. She quotes a lot from the Vedas, thus rendering a valuable service to Romanian culture, which still has only very few translations from archaic Indian literature. Moreover, there are also lengthy quotations from the *Brāhmaṇas*, *The Laws of Manu*, *Gṛhya-Sūtra*-s, several *Smṛti*-s and *Upaniṣads*. Though Hilda Varga has some fair knowledge of Sanskrit, she didn't attempt a translation from the original, but from English, generally from the classical renderings of Griffiths (in case of the *Vedas*), G. Bühler (for *The Laws of Manu*), Julius Eggeling (for *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*), Oldenberg (in case of *Gṛhya-Sūtras*), Olivelle (for some of the *Upaniṣads*). But, considering her age and the fact that, as required by the academic standards of a PhD, she had to complete this work within a period of 3-4 years, her prudent choice is understandable. After identifying the Vedic traces of each ritual, she moves further to the later period of the *Upaniṣads*, *Gṛhya-Sūtras*, until the more recent texts from the Dharma-Śāstra. It is interesting that she paid attention also to the controversial ritualistic elements found in the older *Upaniṣads*, texts which rather tend to deny the existential value of the rite. Quite a lengthy discussion (pp. 179-210) is dedicated to the practices related to religious initiation (*Upanayana*); the author doesn't deal only with the ritual itself but also

analyzes its philosophical background (pp. 180-182), its evolution along time (pp. 182-187).

The task of investigating the scriptural origin and evolution of all the Hindu passage rituals is, obviously, an overwhelming one, especially for a very young researcher. Hilda Varga couldn't manage this all by herself, through a direct study of the sources themselves. She availed a lot of the existing secondary literature, but in original ways, mixing her own reflections with the information taken from other exegetical works and with quotations from Sanskrit literature. In fact, her writing style is very clear, catchy and it shows a lot of passion and personal involvement. The major shortcoming of this part of the book is that she exceedingly relied on a single author, Rajbali Pandey, whose book *Hindu Saṃskāras. Socio-Religious Study of the Hindu Sacraments* is, by far, the most referred source of information. Most of the quotations from classical literature are also identified through Pandey's work, thus Hilda Varga being maybe too much indebted to this author.

Chapter VI deals with marriage ceremonies (*Vivāha*) and the author approaches these rituals in a quite different way than she did in the previous three chapters and will do in the following one. The chapter is divided into three main parts: the prenuptial rites, the wedding itself and the postnuptial rituals, each part being, at its turn, split into more sections. This structure makes the exposition very clear and easy to follow. After discussing the origins of Hindu marriage, the types of marriage, as distinguished by *Smṛti* literature, Hilda Varga proceeds to a quite lengthy exposition (pp. 237-293) of the marriage rituals. The presentation is really interesting even for someone familiar with Indian culture since it sheds light on the very complex ceremonial that consecrates the formation of a couple in Hindu tradition.

Hilda Varga's style of writing makes the exposition easy to follow, even pleasant. A strange and not praiseworthy aspect is that she hardly gives any source for the abundance of data conveyed by these pages. There are some scattered footnotes but most of them only give details on various aspects of the ceremonial practices under discussion. There are entire sub-chapters that lack even a single reference. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that the described rituals rather represent the Hindu marriage customs of nowadays, and not those prescribed by scriptural traditions, as in the previous three chapters. Here, the approach seems more cultural or anthropological than exegetical. Since there is no mention about any particular area of India where these practices would be encountered, we are left with the supposition that they are the most widely spread wedding customs and rituals from India. There are some scanty discussions about their varieties (for example, at page 263, the author mentions the Southern practice of *Kāśī Yātrā* - the pilgrimage to Benares/Vārāṇasī, the sacred town of India, with which the groom-to-be is tempted in order to determine whether he is more fit for domestic or religious life) but these are also quite vague, with no reference given.

Chapter VII deals with the funerary rituals and the approach is similar to the one from chapters III-V. It starts with a philosophical introduction on Hindu eschatology (pp. 296-305), containing long quotations from the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, translated from the English version of Rajendalala Mitra. Somehow, the philosophical introduction aims to be an exposition on the doctrine of the "soul" (*ātman*) but the discussion misses some important points, like the one that, at least in Advaita Vedānta, *ātman* is not an individual entity and thus it cannot be said to be the "soul" of a person, the entity which dies and reincarnates through *Pitṛyāna*. Moreover, in the discussion, the author refers to three

schools of thought – Vedānta, Sāṃkhya and Mīmāṃsā, though their views on individual condition are quite different.

In fact, this is the major shortcoming of the book, which emerges very clearly in its first 120 introductory pages. Hilda Varga is a very smart author but, specifically for her young age, she is too ambitious, tries to cover many adjacent topics, discusses various subjects not only according to Mīmāṃsā, the school that gives the philosophical frame of her paper, but also taking the standpoint of other Hindu systems of thought. She expands too much some marginal aspects, goes into secondary topics, and refers to many schools of thought. She doesn't seem to master very well all the topics and standpoints she indulges in; considering her age, there is nothing to blame in her limited acquaintance with so many philosophical systems and subjects but still we are entitled to rebuke Hilda Varga for introducing all these in her paper.

Moreover, there is no clear structure of the introductory exposition, no sequence of reasoning. Related topics are not properly gathered together; the presentation rather intermingles the discussed issues. The result is a bit messy and, occasionally, flawed by imprecision. For example, after a general discussion of the Hindu orthodox (*āstika*) schools (pp. 66-73), it follows an exposition on epistemological matters (pp. 74-81), which relies mostly on Sāṃkhya sources, thus expressing this point of view. Moreover, the discussion skips two *Pramāṇas*: *Arthāpatti* (implication) and *Anupalabdhi* (non-perception). Mīmāṃsā is discussed only after this brief epistemological excursus, which interrupts the presentation of the Hindu systems of thought. The discussion on Mīmāṃsā lacks any chronological approach and even the two major branches of the school, the one of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and the one of Prabhākara are only mentioned by name, along

with some short presentations and stories about the two founding authors. There is no discussion on Mīmāṃsā metaphysics, cosmology, anthropology or ethics / soteriology.

Pages 86-88 contain an interesting discussion on the existence and role of God in Mīmāṃsā tradition, concluding that its theology is a kind of Apatheism, which, without negating the existence of a Divinity, also doesn't give it much importance, in respect of human life and goals. The next 12 pages are also welcome since they deal with the Epistemology of Mīmāṃsā. Unfortunately, these are the only parts of the paper which specifically deal with Mīmāṃsā. Though it has a very long introductory part, which was supposed to contain the philosophical background of the main discussion, the paper still lacks a proper presentation of the Vedic *Weltanschauung*, which represents the frame of the entire theory of rituals. The rituals themselves are quite well presented but their anthropological and even cosmological role is left out of discussion. There is a passage dealing with the concept of "*dharma*" in Mīmāṃsā (pp. 103-106) but the exposition is quite unclear and skips the Vedic roots and antecedents of this concept. There is a presentation of the Vedic literature (pp. 42-48) but no presentation of the Mīmāṃsā literature or of the ritualistic scriptures that have a long and vast tradition in India.

Hilda Varga wanted to say everything in her book, so she introduced some thorough and well written theoretical discussions in her Introduction. She dealt with the principles of Hermeneutics (Schleiermacher's – pp. 24-30; Gadamer's – pp. 30-35), with Boas' theory of culture (pp. 36-39), with Staal's theory about the meaningless of ritual (pp. 110-111 and pp. 55-57, but here, without explicitly mentioning Staal's name); the presentations are clear but their role in the paper is doubtful. Moreover, the author doesn't give any explanation regarding why she has chosen only some specific authors when dealing with a

theoretical and methodological issue of her paper. Alternate views on the same issue are not presented, not even by the name of their exponents.

The general impression of the Introduction is of being overcrowded with information; some parts are well written, some are too general (for example, the explanation of some basic concepts, such as "sacred", "religion" – pp. 48-50), some are too obvious for a PhD thesis (such as the difference between the terms "*Brahmā*", "*Brahman*", "*Brāhmaṇa*", to which a separate short section is allotted). The coherence of these parts, the argument they are supposed to construct is, unfortunately, not clear. The most unfortunate chapter is the VIII-th, dealing with the present days relevance of the passage rituals. Leaving aside the fact that such a topic would require a separate PhD thesis, Hilda Varga's brief analysis is based on the responses given by a very limited number of interviewed persons (25 only, all residents of towns). The questionnaire is well constructed but the extremely low number of respondents denies any relevance to the entire discussion.

Overall, we can say that Hilda Varga is a smart and promising young researcher but which needs more scientific discipline, more manageable topics (in fact, I would say that Hindu passage rituals are a subject much too broad for a PhD thesis), more philosophical rigour and lucidity, and less ambition.

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Ovidiu Cristian Nedu, researcher at Paul Păltănea History Museum of Galați and associate lecturer at Bucharest University, has been interested in Indian Idealist systems (Advaita Vedānta and Yogācāra Buddhism). At present, he attempts a different approach to these religious traditions, analyzing them from a psychological and humanist perspective.

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Bidisha Banerjee, *Superhuman River. Stories of the Ganga*, Aleph Book Company, New Delhi, 2020, 226 pp., ISBN: 978-81-943657-6-1.

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In India, all the rivers are sacred. Especially for the Hindus, who worship them and perform numerous rituals on their shores. Ganga is considered the most sacred river of India. Books, songs, dances and rituals are dedicated to Mother Ganga.

A wonderful and very interesting book about its powers just appeared: *Superhuman River. Stories of the Ganga*, by Bidisha Banerjee. She has been fascinated with the Ganga ever since she pretended, as a child, that the Kolkata municipal bathwater was Gangajal. As a researcher, Bidisha Banerjee explored the Ganges for 10 years, from its sources to its outflow into the sea. The result is a remarkable writing, a convincing and fresh perspective on all aspects of this extraordinary river.

"In 2009, I heard that the Ganga was going to dry up by 2035 [...] this claim hit me like a bucket of cold water. I was studying in the US, and was fortunate enough to be able to return to India and travel along the majestic river. I witnessed a solar eclipse from the river at Varanasi and trekked up to Gaumukh, where its waters begin. By January 2010, it turned out that - even though the effects of global warming are causing the Himalayan glaciers that feed the Ganga to melt - the 2035 figure was an overstatement and the Ganga, at least in

our lifetime, will not run out of water," Banerjee, who has been trained in environmental science and climate change policy, explains with much feeling in the Introduction of this necessary book (p. xiii).

Worshiped like a Goddess, Ganga is one of the most important rivers of the world. From its origins in Himalaya, Ganges flows east for 2525 kms, through 5 Indian states, before emerging into the Gulf of Bengal, close to Bangladesh border, where at the confluence of Brahmaputra and Meghna river, the greatest mangrove system of the world is born: The Sundarbans Delta.

But Ganga is more than a river. It is the triumph of Indian engineering, "declared as India's national river in 2009" (p. xvi). It is also "a sanctuary for smooth-coated otters and the critically endangered blind dolphins". "The Dalit fisherfolk know it as the mother of Toofani Baba, their stormy guardian. Tha Jains know it as the former home of the forgotten port city of Champa, where their spiritual teacher, Mahavira, liked to wander. The Muslims know the river as the place where tazia is immersed on Muharram to celebrate the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson. [...] The Sufis know it as the locality where Murshidabadis still celebrate. [...] The Sikhs know the river as the backdrop to hallowed gurdwaras. [...] The Buddhists know the river as the methapor through which the Buddha illustrated many of his teaching" (p. xvi).

The Hindu Gods were born and immersed in its holy waters, for ages. For example, the Bengali Durga Puja, that celebrates the mighty goddess Durga, ends with a procession that brings together people from India (particularly popular in the Indian states of West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Tripura, and Odisha) and Bangladesh, living on the shores of Ganges. On the last day, the sculpture-idols are carried out in immersion processions across Bengal, following which they are

ritually immersed into rivers or other waterbodies. This ceremony continues a couple of days after the last day of puja. The old ritual of immersing the Durga into the river attracted the attention of colonial era travelers to the Bengal region from Europe, such as Garcin de Tassy and Emma Roberts. And still attracts people every year. "A Vedic hymn suggests that a land without the Ganga is like a sky without the sun" (p. xviii).

Religious or not, five hundred million people are supported by Ganges abundance. From its springs to its outflows, the river gives life and safety to those who live along its course. Its waters have given birth to hundreds of cities, including the holy city of Varanasi, the favorite city of Lord Shiva, one of the oldest cities in the world, inhabited continuously for thousands of years.

Described in legends as a sacred river that produces gold, the Ganges is today one of the most polluted rivers in the world. More than a billion liters of waste flow into the river every day. River dolphins, once present in large numbers in the waters of the Ganges, are endangered and almost impossible to see today. Bidisha Banerjee studied the river and its writings, both literary and religious, as well as scientific. "I had to see for myself. So I bought a seat on a train heading from Kolkata to Dhaka, approximately 320 kilometers away. [...] The twelve-hour train journey between India and Bangladesh takes about five hours longer than it should because both countries subject passengers to a series of customs checks. As I waited, the compartment door swung open, revealing a vast river swirling below" (pp. 134-135).

About this river, Bidisha Banerjee knows a lot of things: "I knew that British East India Company had sailed into Calcutta, my birth-city, via the Ganga. [...] I knew that Bengal got its name – Vanga, Vangal, Bangal, Bengal – from the Ganga. I knew what it was like to

bathe in the Ganga at Varanasi –India's holiest city – during a total solar eclipse. I knew that the Ganga had received the ashes of my great-great-grandmother and millions of others" (p. 135).

For Hindus, the Ganges is the living threshold between human and superhuman, from a mythical point of view. Hindu deities bathe in the Ganges, and funeral ceremonies take place on its shores, the holy city of Varanasi being the place of "crossing beyond." Religious, cultural, historical, mythological, ecological, scientific or political aspects are taken into account and all, together, make up the image of a constantly moving river, a sacred and economic space alike. The Ganges is part of the Indian ethos and one of the oldest and most well-known stories in the world. "In this book I have presented these various approaches as having a sacred reciprocity: our identities can span the gamut from our inner lives to our social lives yet there is a life beyond that, the life where we touch and are touched by the spirit and landscape" (p. xxiii).

For all those interested in the history of India, this book is mandatory, as it tells the history of the river that shapped the life of the subcontinent. *Superhuman River* is the version retold by Bidisha Banerjee with a real writing talent. It is a book that takes us to the beginnings of the great stories of humanity and it is not at all surprising to learn from it that some people continue to worship the spirit of the Ganges.

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Lizzie Collingham, *Curry. A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors,* Vintage Books, London, 2006, 318 pp., ISBN: 9780099437864.

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Although nowadays the word *curry* is used as a generic term in order to describe seasoning spices or sautéed dishes from Asia, in general, and India, in particular, its origins are actually South Indian ("karil" in Kannadan and Malayalam, "kari" in Tamil). However, according to Hobson-Jobson, a 19th century glossary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words and phrases, the word "curry" may not have Indian origins at all, but rather a medieval European and Western Asian one to indicate dishes containing of saffron and sandalwood.

Lizzie Collingham's book, *Curry. A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors*, is about much more than just curry and its history. The author follows, in a chronological way, the impact that different invaders had on Indian cuisine, starting with the Great Mughals, the arrival of Vasco da Gama on the shores of Calicut and the opening of the sea routes to the Indies until the establishment of East India Company and the input of British gastronomy. At the same time, the book traces some of the pathways by which various meats, fruits, spices or different types of rice came together at particular moments in history in order to produce the famous Indian dishes that we know today (for example, *biryani*, *vindaloo*, *chicken tikka*, etc.)

The Indian subcontinent has accommodated a great variety of immigrants, all of whom brought with them their own cuisines. The curries which we eat today are the product of India's long history and each one of the recipes presented in the book tells the tale of the different people who prepared and ate the dish.

Maritime trade and the thirst for spices as an instrument of power, on one side, and the Mughals' desire to expand their kingdom towards the South, on the other side, were the main events which had a lasting impact on India's culinary culture. The book tells the story of how central Asian, Persian and European styles of cookery and ingredients were brought to the subcontinent. There, over the following centuries, they interacted with local Indian food in order to produce the Indian dishes that we can find nowadays in every kitchen or restaurant.

One of the most interesting chapters of the book is the one which traces the origins of the popular dish called *biryani*, from the simple Persian *pilau* brought from the kitchen of the Shah of Persia to the royal kitchens of the Mughals where it underwent a long transformation along with the spices of that time.

Food has always played an important role in Islam. One of the earliest Muslim cookery books from Baghdad described food as "the noblest and most consequential of the six pleasures" (the other ones were drinking, clothes, sex, scent and sound). Meat was the central element of a Muslim's diet. More than just a dish, it was a symbol of masculinity, strength and valour. Indian epics portray meat in the same manner, as a symbol of virility and power. For example, in Mahabharata the gods sit down to gargantuan meals of roast meat and even Ayurvedic medical thought regarded meat as the prime form of sustenance.

However, the growing influence of Buddhism and Jainism, both founded in the fifth century B.C., promoted vegetarianism as a

way of showing compassion. Therefore, meat-eating started to be associated with lower castes and it was considered as something sinful and degrading. This way, by the time Babur conquered India, vegetarianism had become more than a choice, and it was a powerful statement of one's position in Indian society. Brahmans condemned meat because they thought that it heightens the passions and it encourages the animal side of human nature, whilst the lower caste communities were still consuming meat.

Unlike Islam which regarded food as a pleasure and described how, according to Koran, one of the activities the pious could look forward to in Paradise would be eating and drinking with relish, Hinduism described eating as a medico-moral activity. Unlike political power, religious power was predicated on the principles of purity symbolised by vegetarianism.

While the new Muslim invaders were giving in to excesses and extravagances, especially in what concerns food, Indians were trying to keep their bodies in balance with the environment by adjusting their diet to the climate, the season and their occupation. Food, apart from being an essential nutrient, was an integral part of man's relationship with the gods: "When he ate, what he ate and who he ate with was thus a significant statement of a Hindu's position in the natural, moral, familial and social order."

Although the West associates Indian food with chilli pepper, this was not part of the Indian cuisine until the arrival of Portuguese at the beginning of the 15th century. The Portuguese influence on Indian cuisine was not necessarily a process of synthesis but rather a result of the forced mass conversions that the local Hindu community had to undergo under their rule. Portuguese cooking was meat-based and it was imposed on the local people. Religion played an important role in Portuguese lifestyle as

well. The wheat bread was of a great religious significance to 16th century Europeans. It was the only ingredient with which it was permitted to celebrate Mass and as yeast was mostly unavailable, the Goan cooks started to use toddy in order to ferment the dough.

As meat was such an important dish for Portuguese rulers, they persuaded the locals to eat it and cook it as well. This way, one of the most famous of all Goan dishes today is *vindaloo*, a Goan adaptation of the Portuguese dish *carne de vinho e alhos*, or meat cooked in wine, vinegar and garlic.

Another key-ingredient often used in Indian recipes is chilli. Brought from the New World, which Columb thought to be the Indies, chilli peppers became a central ingredient in Goan cuisine and later on, in almost every Indian dish. Along with it, Portuguese brought to India papayas, custard apples, guavas and pineapples.

After the Portuguese rule, Dutch and British took advantage of their increasing power over the lucrative East India Company. The mixture of Mughal and British habits which characterised the lives of East India merchants was evident at their dining tables as well and meat remained one of the central ingredients: "nothing may be wanting to please the curiosity of every palate at the times of eating; an English, a Portuguese and an Indian cook, are all entertained to dress the meat in different ways for the gratification of every stomach."

Southern India has an even longer history of outsiders bringing in culinary influences. For example, the author mentions the Syrian Christians who settled near Madras in the 1st century A.D. and who are said to have brought along with them the recipe for stew. Along the western coast, the Arab traders intermarried with Indian population and showed their wives how to make seafood *pilaus*. The same way, Jewish settlers combined their liking for rice and nuts with pickled mangoes

and smoked tamarind and brought their Middle Eastern tastes to Southern India.

Lizzie Collingham takes the reader further inland, in the area of India known as the Deccan, the epicenter of *kebabs* coated in spicy yogurt and Mughlai *biryanis*, "flavoured with the southern taste of curry leaves and chillis, tamarind and coconut". During the 18th century, the Mughal emperors gradually lost their power over their kingdoms. Therefore, their imperial kitchens ceased to act as engines of culinary change and places for gastronomical inventions. The new centers of innovation were now in the South, in places like Hyderabad, for example.

The last chapters of the book are centered on the curry dishes that used to be present every day in the kitchens of the British rulers and workers at the English East India Company. Curry and rice were the main characters on the dining tables of the British. Anglo-Indian dining tables were always full with bowls of curries and roasted meats. Indian referred to their dishes by specific names like *rogan josh*, *dopiazza* or *quarama*, but the British lumped all these together under the heading of "curry".

However, Collingham mentions that, although curry was a concept imposed on India's food culture, they were aware of the regional differences in the cookery of the subcontinent. Therefore, they recognised three different types of curry: the Bengal, the Madras and the Bombay one. As a famous writer described in his cookery book on "Curries and how to prepare them": "The Bengal artist is greatest in fish and vegetable curries, Bombay boasts of its peculiar gifts in fish and its popedoms and Ceylon curries were usually piquant with chillies and made with coconut milk."

Unlike the spread of the Mughlai cuisine which was rather limited and did not incorporate the culinary styles of many Indian regions, the British adopted recipes, ingredients, techniques and garnishes from all over the subcontinent and combined them in a coherent repertoire of dishes. When the East India Company was abolished in 1858 and India was brought under the administration of the Crown, the returning Anglo-Indians were not willing to give up their acquired taste for spices and the flavours of the East. Therefore, Indian curries travelled across the world to the kitchens of the retired officials, the so-called *nabobs*. There, they underwent further processes, until they became the British curries of today.

Melding historical fact with modern anecdotes, Lizzie Collingham's book is similar to a typical Mughlai dinner, where the reader is offered, one after another, intriguing nuggets of information, well-researched historical facts and delicious insights into the daily lives and royal kitchens of the different characters that played an important role in the Indian history.

About the Author:

After having completed a B.A. in Anthropology and Comparative literature with a thesis on Shiva and Kali, **Cătălina-Ioana Pavel** went on to study Arabic and Hindi at the University of Bucharest. She is now enrolled as a M.A. student at CeMIS (Center for Modern Indian Studies), Göttingen University, Germany. She is mostly interested in the history of Malabar region, spice routes and anything related to the Islamic history in India.

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Premchand – The Complete Short Stories (4 volume set), Ed.
M. Asaduddin, Penguin Random House, New Delhi, 2017, 3264 pp.,
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Reading, for pleasure that is, is an activity revered by some and
condemned, still, by many. Both supporters and opponents, each hold
their personal, subjective, reasons for having chosen one of the paths.
Reading in a foreign language is, however, a much more fulfilling
pursuit on more than one level. Reading in a language different than
one's mother-tongue already implies that the reader has successfully
conquered the first obstacles of language learning: our reader possesses
the basic set of necessary tools in order to transform the experience into
a pleasurable and useful one – vocabulary items, knowledge of the
mechanisms of the target language, previous exposure to the spoken
language, familiarity with a new alphabet very different from one's
own etc.

Besides these essential instruments, reading in a foreign
language opens the gates to a completely new and fascinating universe,
previously unknown and unattainable (unless, of course, there is a
translation available. Reading a translation is never as genuine an
immersion, but one has to settle for the second-best solution, as no one
can learn all living languages): cultural patterns and traditions,
mannerisms of the members of a certain community, insights into the
mentality and approach to life, culminating with the revealing of the
identity of the people. All this information is never isolated; on the

contrary, it is part of well-oiled socio-cultural machinery called *society,* which is characterized by specific social, cultural, historical, economic etc. events during a certain timeframe. Cultural and historical references are difficult to grasp in one's own tradition as well, because, often, one does not deal with contemporary occurrences, let alone understanding a text with the background of an unfamiliar culture, whose development one has never explored before.

It is, therefore, ideal not to ignore the matrix that lies hidden between the lines and leave things veiled by one's own listlessness. Such is the case of the extensive four-volume *Premchand – The Complete Short Stories*, coordinated by Professor M. Asaduddin, a monumental undertaking and a labour of love. It leaves nothing to chance or to the imagination of a profane reader, but carves a frame meant to complete the otherwise fragmentary first meeting with the Indian author. A translation, the work comprises all colours and nuances of the author, encompassing a variety of topics, from caste tensions and religious issues, village life and its hurdles to be overcome, to examples of the oppressed, tales of sacrifice and anguish.

In order to better comprehend the outstanding achievement of both editor and translators, we must first get a glimpse of Premchand's landmark contribution to Hindi-language Indian literature. Premchand's name is never left unmentioned in any list or paper concerning Indian literature, thanks to his realism and honesty in his works. Although the debate whether he is a greater novelist than a short story writer shall never cease, we are here concerned with the plurality of attitudes and behaviour towards fellow human beings and life in its entirety as presented in these novellas. Premchand is very much connected to his times, always attentive to his environment, his themes encompassing events of current socio-political relevance. His short stories, much more

appealing for the public for their conciseness and accessibility, represent a window into the soul of the people on Indian soil, who roamed the earth close to a century ago. In short, Premchand is one of a kind and quite unrepeatable and part of that uniqueness is *language itself*. He expresses his train of thought in a simple, honest, authentic manner that caters to the sensibilities of the common man. He not only recounts their stories, but becomes one of them and walks in their shoes and on their paths, his idiomatic phrases and culture-specific terms being the ingredients that bring his world to life. No doubt that this aspect must have been the most difficult to tackle in adapting his writing into English, part of his frankness and local colour being lost in translation.

Having translated into English the entire corpus of short stories available to mankind, the whole team has contributed to the everlasting legacy of Premchand. We are convinced that the author would have been content to know that his writings have reached a country such as Romania, where, unfortunately, the study of Hindi literature is virtually non-existent. Faint attempts have been made many decades ago, but always translating from English or some other European language and never from the original Hindi/Urdu (*Un pumn de grâu*[1], Romanian edition, the single one that we know of).

As for ourselves, having studied Hindi formally, there is a stinging shortcoming of these volumes that we cannot neglect: the choice of making it solely a translation and not a bilingual edition. This shortcoming saddens us deeply since there is a problem related to the

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[1] In English, *A Handful of Wheat*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1969, translation, preface, notes by Agop Bezerian; translated from the English edition *A Handful of Wheat and Other Stories* by Prem Chand, People's Publishing House, LTD, New Delhi, 1955.

original works, that we shall discuss at once, which could have been addressed at long last.

Even though we may be aware of the year (even the place) of publication for most – if not all! – of the short stories, the issue of the original language in which they were written lingers to date. Namely, a work that is now available in Hindi may actually be a translation of an original Urdu or vice versa. Since none of the cultures – neither the Hindi, nor the Urdu – can claim full ownership of Premchand's legacy, who has written in both languages over his entire lifespan, it seems that the uncertainty of the unaltered versions has only deepened, having no intention of leaving soon.

We have previously mentioned about the immense disadvantage of not having a bilingual edition; one is disheartened when one tries to commit to a parallel reading of the Hindi version and the English translation only to discover that there are missing sentences, or, on the contrary, additions, when comparing the two texts. Regrettably, this issue cannot be addressed until a standard corpus is established, containing the best and most complete version of each story (of both the Hindi version and its Urdu counterpart, when accessible), ideally, containing footnotes with explanations with regard to differences, nothing less than a *critical edition.* Therefore, until the original is not united with its mirroring, there cannot be an accurate portrayal of the stories. Then again, that is not to belittle by any means the tremendous work accomplished and the undeniable achievement of every person involved, which must have been an intense and lengthy process, but simply a personal (still) unfulfilled wish of having a *standardised* – free of spelling mistakes and what not – *original* next to a translation that can reach far and beyond, as the English language is much more widely known and understood than Hindi.

To conclude, this collection of Premchand's short stories is unmatched in its number of texts translated, in its extensive and enlightening introduction, a very useful glossary for culture-specific terms, and the care to emphasize the history of each writing in the "Notes" section. It deserves utmost praise and appreciation for the sheer amplitude of the work thus completed, for the love and effort of each and every participant in this wondrous adventure and for their ultimate victory in securing Premchand's legacy and enforcing, yet again, its everlastingness. Anyone should be proud to own such books, could tastefully display them in their personal library and speak about them and their contents whenever the opportunity may arise.

About the author:

After having completed a B.A. in *Philology*, with the major in English and the minor in Hindi, **Hilda-Hedvig Varga** went on to finish her Master's in *Religious Studies*, both at the University of Bucharest. Next, she successfully completed her doctoral studies, holding a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Bucharest, with a thesis on *Hindu rites of passage*. Her interests mainly focus on Hindi language and literature, Hindu philosophy, cultural, social and mythological events that shape the destiny and mentality of a nation.

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The *Romanian Journal of Indian Studies* invites researchers and academics to contribute to the fifth issue (2021).

Contributions are welcomed in the form of studies or book reviews. The materials will be accompanied by an *Abstract* (10 lines) – except for book reviews – a list of up to ten *Keywords*, and by the author's bio-note.

The language in which materials will be published is English. The deadline for the submission of the papers is 1 September 2021.

Materials, as well as general inquiries, can be sent via e-mail at mihaela.gligor@ubbcluj.ro.

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