

how criticism of the long-running practice of goat sacrifice among Mahasu worshippers in the Himalayas leads to an all-out negotiation of identity involving ritualists, animal rights activists, politicians, and even—through a divine oracle—the voice of the god himself. The resulting compromise, which allows *bali* to be carried out only on a limited basis, reaffirms the volume’s central thesis that denial of ritual is always ambivalent. Jürgen Schaflechner’s “Denial and Repetition: Towards a Solidification of Tradition” draws our attention to Pakistan, where a ban on blood sacrifices for the Hindu goddess Hinglaj Mātā at a shrine in Baluchistan has become a source of disagreement. On the one hand, some Hindu elites use the ban as a means to broadcast nonviolence as a marker of “Hinduness” (p. 162), especially as distinguished from Muslim practices of blood sacrifice; on the other hand, local Pakistani Hindu communities such as the Devipujaks insist that *bali* is central to their religious identities and fight to preserve it. Schaflechner draws on sociological theory to show how the denial of animal sacrifice, even as it remains unresolved, serves as a potent symbol for all sides—“nothing less than a fundamental question of identity” (p. 162).

Through this sustained examination of denial and the productive tensions it engenders, *The Ambivalence of Denial* makes a substantial contribution to ritual studies; moreover, the volume should be of interest to scholars of religious studies, anthropology, and philology who focus on ritual traditions in the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia, which are the regions covered in the book’s chapters. With its strong theoretical framing and insistence on ritual as “a universal mode of human action” (p. 7), the overall aim of the volume might have been better served by a more global selection—case studies from Europe, Africa, and the Americas are conspicuously absent here. Nevertheless, within this restricted purview, the topics, materials, methods, and time periods are quite diverse: we find everything from burial practices in texts and material culture in classical China, to coronation rites in modern-day Nepalese media and politics, to the history and reception of self-flagellation in Iran. Taken together, the various chapters make up a fascinating patchwork and, notwithstanding some differences in style and presentation, they all adhere to a rigorous scholarly standard. One unevenness should be noted, however: the editors’ explicit engagement with ritual theory is not evident in most chapters, which instead emphasize close readings, ethnographic observation, and granular analysis. In this regard, Ian Reader’s conclusion (“Afterword: On Denials, Inclusions, Exclusions and Ambivalence”) is welcome for the way it circles back and situates individual chapters within a broader theoretical terrain.

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The Paippalādasamhitā of the Atharvaveda: Kāṇḍas 6 and 7. A New Edition with Translation and Commentary. By ARLO GRIFFITHS. Groningen Oriental Studies, vol. 22. Groningen: EGBERT FORSTEN, 2009. Pp. lxxxvi + 540.

This extraordinary volume is a critical edition, translation, and extensive philological and exegetical commentary on kāṇḍas 6 and 7 of the Paippalādasamhitā. The kāṇḍas of this section of the Paippalādasamhitā (which I will follow Griffiths in abbreviating “PS”) are defined by the numbers of verses that are the norms for the hymns contained within them. Kāṇḍa 6 has a norm of nine verses per hymn; kāṇḍa 7 a norm of ten verses. However, as is the case in other such Atharvavedic kāṇḍas, these two contain many exceptions to these norms. In kāṇḍa 6, for example, the hymns that do not adhere to the norm outnumber those that do, and in all but one of these the hymns are longer than the norm. Griffiths occasionally considers why a hymn exceeds the norm, but this is not an issue to which he devotes particular attention—probably wisely, since it is often not possible to determine which verses might have been added or whether a hymn exceeding the norm might have been secondarily inserted in a kāṇḍa. Since the contents of these two kāṇḍas are more or less formally defined, their hymns are thematically varied. As we would expect, most accompanied rites for health, prosperity, protection against opposing or evil forces of various kinds, and other family and individual concerns. There are a few

exceptions, however, in hymns that appear to have been composed for the śrauta rites. In discussing the organization of the kāṇḍas, Griffiths points out the thematic connections between adjacent hymns, but frequently, especially in kāṇḍa 7, he explains the sequence of hymn through the repetition of words or phrases from one hymn to the next rather than through thematic continuity.

This book continues the work on the PS centered in Leiden and Berlin, drawing especially but not exclusively on manuscripts of the PS from Orissa. Griffiths has been central to this study of the PS, since between 1998 and 2000 he was able to collect five Orissa manuscripts of the PS. In preparation of the edition of kāṇḍa 6 Griffiths collated these five manuscripts and two others, one of which was available to him only in the apparatus of Dipak Bhattacharya's now complete edition of the PS. In his collation for kāṇḍa 7 he omitted two manuscripts that did not provide otherwise available readings in his collation for kāṇḍa 6. In addition to the Orissa manuscripts and Bhattacharya's edition, he also considers the evidence of the single known and very corrupt manuscript of the Kashmir PS, the well-known editions of the Śaunaka recension by Roth and Whitney and by S. P. Pandit, and verse and thematic parallels in other Vedic texts. Griffiths has dealt with the manuscript evidence and mass of other material with a sure hand in producing as trustworthy a critical edition as any might be.

The result of his editorial and commentarial efforts is a brilliant work of scholarship. That the book has over 500 pages devoted to forty-three hymns, none of which is especially long, is one measure of the attention to detail that Griffiths devoted to the text. Of course, individual decisions that Griffiths has made will be and should be debated. He is reluctant to emend the text presented by the PS manuscripts on the basis of non-Paippalāda parallels because he did not wish to risk rewriting that tradition only because other texts offered a simpler reading. But there are instances in which such emendations are very likely. In 6.1.6 he allows a verb *ā darśate* to stand, even though it requires an improbable interpretation of the syntax and even though in parallel pādas, the Ṛgveda and Śaunaka Atharvaveda give an easily interpreted *ā darśate*. Similarly, in 6.2.5 Griffiths accepts *mahā* with the manuscripts even though it involves an unlikely word order in this hemistich, rather than *mahat*, attested in the Śaunaka parallel. But both in these and in other doubtful cases, he acknowledges the problems, and his analysis of the issues permits readers themselves to consider the emendations. In discussing his editorial and exegetical choices, Griffiths draws not only on a deep knowledge of relevant scholarship but also on a network of scholars who have also studied the manuscript evidence and constituted text for the PS. In the end, though, this work reflects his own judicious voice.

Griffiths's edition of these kāṇḍas aspires to constitute the PS text belonging to the archetype of all Paippalāda manuscripts, both that from Kashmir and those from Orissa. Following and further supporting Michael Witzel's hypothesis, he dates this archetype to the last centuries of the first millennium and places it in western India. Again following Witzel, he also accepts that there once existed a hyperarchetype preceding the Orissa manuscripts in Proto-Bengali script and dating to around 1400. Because his edition seeks to reconstruct the Paippalāda archetype and not simply the Orissa hyperarchetype, Griffiths attends closely to the Kashmir manuscript even though the Orissa manuscripts provide far less corrupt texts than it does. Although it is more corrupt and often incomprehensible, Griffiths argues and demonstrates that the Kashmir manuscript occasionally provides a more plausible text than the Orissa manuscripts or that a more plausible text can occasionally be extracted from it. The text he produces is excellent, although his characterization of it is a bit tangled. On the one hand, he states (p. lii), "I strongly adhere to the conviction that idiosyncracies of the manuscripts ought, all things being equal, to be retained in the edited text." But then immediately he acknowledges that "All things, however, are in our situation very often not equal..." Even if that were not the case, it is difficult to understand what is gained by replicating the conventions of a hypothetical manuscript. For example, he follows the convention of manuscripts in abbreviating repeating pādas by three kuṇḍalas, three raised open rings. For the most part this practice poses no problem for his readers, but in 7.10.2–4 Griffiths writes fully the repeated pādas cde in verses 2 and 4, but gives kuṇḍalas in verse 3. That is what his manuscripts do, but I miss the point of reproducing manuscript conventions in the critical edition.

Given how much Griffiths offers in this work, it feels churlish to ask for more. If there is a soft spot in this work—and let me say that it is not all that soft—it rests in the translations of the hymns. By and large, those translations provide the sense of the text, and they can do so engagingly. For example,

PS 7.10 praises the kuṣṭha plant, which offers healing and protection against malign forces. Griffiths's translation catches the playful seriousness of the poet's first direct address to the plant: 7.10.2 *trīṇi te kuṣṭha nāmāni, naḡhamāro *naghāriṣo *naghāyūso, na ghāyaṃ puruṣo riṣat | yasmai paribravīmi tvā, sāyaṃprātar atho divā* "Three names you have, o Kuṣṭha: By-no-means-death, By-no-means-harm, By-no-means-separation. By no means does this man get hurt, on whose behalf I speak [these stanzas] around you, in the evening, early in the morning, and by day." But occasionally translations become awkward partly because they represent the combining of detailed studies of each part of the verse, and their sense becomes accessible by working through the explanations in the commentary. For example, in a hymn addressing Indra, who here appears as an agricultural deity, the poet says, PS 6.15.3 *yas te sītābhagaḥ kṣetre, yā +rāddhir yac ca śīyate | atho yā niṣṭhā te kṣetre, tāṃ ta ādiṣi brahmanā*. Griffiths translates the verse "What fortune of produce you have in the field, what success, and what [wealth] falls [down], and also what growth you have in the field: that of yours I have taken by means of [this] spell." The translation expresses the general idea of the verse and Griffiths's comments amplify it, but readers might more easily parse the first half-verse with something such as, "What in the field is yours that is the share (of the grain) in the furrow—both what (represents) success and what falls by itself. . . ." Even with this modification, the verse is still not fully transparent, at least not to me, especially its pāda c, in which it is not clear exactly what plants are the "growth." Likewise, one of the virtues of his translations is that they generally follow the order of the pādas and thereby unfold the verses according to their composition. But sometimes clarity is lost and little gained by doing so. Rather than translating 7.8.10 *taṃ vayāṃsiva pakṣiṇa, ā viśantu patatṛiṇaḥ | śaptāraṃ śapathāḥ punaḥ* as "Let them (the curses), winged and pinioned like birds, enter him. [Let] the curses [enter] the curser again," the pieces of the verse are better fitted together: "Let the curses like birds, winged and feathered, again enter the one who curses."

But more often than not, difficulties in the translation result from the difficulties in the poetry itself, and no translation could fully keep pace with the text. An example is PS 6.10, perhaps the most complex hymn in these two kāṇḍas and, not coincidentally, a hymn likely composed for the high soma ritual. Griffiths entitles the hymn "At dawn: with a cow," a name that is less informative than it might be, but he immediately explains (p. 121) that the hymn "accompanies the gift of a cow by the ritual patron to his priests." He goes on to say that the cow represents the Sun, although it would be more accurate to say that the cow stands for the dawn and that the hymn thereby continues the Ṛgvedic representation of dawns as cows especially in the Vala myth. Less obviously, although again with parallels in the Ṛgveda, the cow may also represent this hymn or Vedic recitation generally. And of course and finally, sometimes a cow is just a cow, whether a patron's gift or not. Moreover, the cow may be simultaneously all these things—priestly gift, dawn, recitation, and cow. Consider 6.10.4 *prajāpatineṣītām ṛtviyāvatiṃ, ainām prajāyā ṛṣabhāḥ śrayante | vṛṣanyantīm vṛṣanaḥ saptanāmnīm, himkṛṇvanto abhi nudantu vāśītām*. Griffiths translates the verse, "The bulls lean against her, who is sent by the Lord of Offspring, bearing the mark of her fecundity, for offspring. Huffing, let the studs push forward the seven-named lustful cow in heat." In his comments on the verse, Griffiths rightly emphasizes the sexual imagery, although alternatives to "lean against" for *ā . . . śrayante* in pāda b and "push forward" for *abhi nudantu* in pāda d could more effectively betoken the sexual activity of a bull. Griffiths also considers the possibility that the bulls might represent the priests "trying to awaken the dawn with their singing and recitation" (p. 124). Whether or not their aim is to awaken the dawn, surely the bulls of the hymn are indeed both priests as well as actual bulls. This hymn is strongly marked by ritual reference, and here in this verse, the word *ṛtviyāvati-* describing the cow that the bulls cover can mean not only 'bearing the mark of fecundity'—or more felicitously, as Griffiths's comments also suggest, 'in her fertile season'—but also 'adhering to the ritual sequence'. And *himkṛṇvant-* describing the bulls means 'performing the ritual syllable "him"' more obviously than 'huffing' or 'snorting'. Much less surely, the "seven-named" cow might refer to the recitations belonging to the seven priests of the Ṛgvedic soma rite. The verse thus describes the sexual actions of cows (or of a cow rather) and bulls and matches these actions with the interaction of rites and priests. Throughout this hymn the poet similarly intertwines cosmological, ritual, and bovine acts. Here it would be impossible to pack all of this into a translation and its explanation depends on exegetical commentary.

None of these comments should detract from the accomplishment of this work. It is the result of unusually thorough scholarship and sets a high standard that few will meet or even aspire to meet. The emergence of the Paippalādasamhitā in reliable editions over the past couple of decades is one of the most signal developments in Vedic studies, and this edition may well turn out to be the most fully realized product of this scholarship.

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A Critical Edition and an Annotated Translation of the Akanānūru (Part I—Kaḷḷiriyānainirai), vol. I: *Introduction, Invocation–50*; vol. II: *51–120*; vol. III: *Old Commentary on Kaḷḷiriyānainirai KV–90; Word Index of Akanānūru KV–120*. By EVA WILDEN. Collection Indologie, vol. 134.1–3. Critical Texts of Caṅkam Literature, vol. 4.1–3. NETamil Series, vol. 1.1–3. Pondichéry: ÉCOLE FRANÇAISE D'EXTRÊME-ORIENT and INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE PONDICHÉRY, 2018. Pp. cl + 323, 324–787, 470.

These three volumes are the latest installments in Eva Wilden's massive project of constructing critical editions for all of the *caṅkam* Tamil anthologies. The three volumes contain a critical edition and translation of the first 120 poems of the text in question, the *Akanānūru*, the "Four Hundred on *Akam*," the poetry of the "interior"; namely, that of the inner lives of men and women in love, accompanied by the voices and feelings of friends, mothers, rivals, bards, and passersby. The *Akanānūru* is one of the canonical eight anthologies in Old Tamil, and as Wilden notes, "it probably belongs in significant parts, to the oldest stock" (p. iii). The poems range in length from thirteen to thirty-three lines and are divided into three books, the *Kaḷḷiriyānainirai* ("Row of Bull Elephants," poems 1–20), the *Maṇimīṭaipavaḷam* ("Coral Interspersed with Gems," poems 121–300), and finally the *Nittilakōvai* ("String of Pearls," poems 301–400). The present three volumes are solely devoted to the *Kaḷḷiriyānainirai*, with future volumes to follow to accommodate the remaining two books.

Wilden has "chosen to reconstruct the early editing procedures and keep alive both strands" of transmission. She refers here to U. Vē. Irā. Irākavaiyaṅkāṛ's work on his own retrieval and reassemblage of the text from "two different defective transmission strands." Both strands "go back to palmleaf manuscripts as ancient as we can find them in the South" (p. i). The *caṅkam* corpus as a whole can be dated to the first three centuries of the Common Era (p. vi). Wilden provides good notes here on the bardic "repertoire of formulae" (p. vi) and supplies her readers with the basics on *caṅkam* literary convention. While otherwise treading over well-trodden ground, she has insightful things to say about the tradition's "speakers" and "listeners" from a literary-historical point of view. She writes, "Their situations of speech and their modes of social interaction become more complex in the course of time until they reach a stage of conventionalisation into a complete series with the early medieval poetics, which give a frame of a love-story for the *kōvai* genre, a form of poetry still *en vogue* until the nineteenth century" (p. xi).

The poems of the *Akanānūru* are notoriously difficult. As Wilden notes, "its style is dense, its language obscure" (p. iii). The text is also unique in its organization. It is divided into decads, which follow a specific *tiṇai* sequence as specified in the colophon (*tiṇai* is the system of the five landscapes, devised to evoke modes of reciprocal love in *caṅkam* poetry). In the *Akanānūru*, all of the odd-numbered poems are *pālai*, those of the wasteland, which treat themes of estrangement, discomfort, separation, and elopement. The poems ending in "2" and "8" are *kuḷiṅci*, those of clandestine love before marriage, usually set at night in the hills or under the cover of millet fields. The poems ending in "4" are *mullai*, set in fragrant forests in the rainy season, treating themes related to patient waiting after marriage, most usually as the wife, accompanied by her girlfriend, awaits the return of her husband from the *pācaṇai*, or "war camp," where he is in service to his king. The poems ending in "6" are *marutam*, set in cultivated riverine tracts and largely concerned with infidelity and sometime voiced by the *parattai*, the wife's rival. Finally, the poems ending in "0" are *neytal* and are composed on themes