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Overview of the Volume

The ten articles collected in this volume address the theme of violence in Indian culture as represented in visual and textual sources that fall chronologically between the Vedic and contemporary periods. They thus continue the theme of the first issue of this year's "Cracow Indological Studies", which focused on various manifestations of violence in textual sources of the Vedic period. Both volumes are the collective outcome of the project, *Shades of Violence. Aggression and Domination in Indian Culture*, supported by the Strategic Programme Excellence Initiative at the Jagiellonian University (EI.JU), which was already featured in the Introduction to the previous issue.

In her article, *Adding Insult to Injury: Whipping Stories from the Mahābhārata*, **Danielle Feller** shows how the motif of using whip on humans can figuratively express insult and dehumanization but also rivalry between the two highest classes of the orthodox Hindu society, that is the *kṣatriya*s and the brahmins. To this end, Feller meticulously analyses instances of narrative evidence attesting to goading and whipping found in the epic, starting with several tales that involve metaphorical whipping, for instance, with words, and eventually the literal, concerning helpless animals and humans. The author aptly demonstrates that in view of the epics and Law books the act of

whipping is usually equated with a low birth for cruelty is seen as a feature of lower class's occupations, and "normal" only when performed on horses and other draft-animals animals by charioteers to speed them up. Therefore, when a human is whipped, s/he needs to be first likened to an animal, i.e. dehumanized.

In turn, **Naresh Keerthi** and **Elena Mucciarelli**, in their contribution, *Split in bhakti, United in bhakti: Violence as Devotion in the Jaimini Cycle of Tales*, approach the theme of violence from the perspective of its interplay between the ritual and the concept of devotion (*bhakti*). Taking a late mediaeval Sanskrit text, Jaimini's *Book of the Horse Sacrifice* (*Jaiminīya Āśvamēdhikaparvan*), and its Kannada variant, the *Jaiminibhārata* of Lakṣmīśa (ca. 1500 CE) as the point of reference, the authors launch the idea of violence as a mode of *bhakti* devotion in the Vaiṣṇava tradition. Their careful analysis of the episode of the Mayūradhvaja with a focus on three readings of *bhakti*-related narratives—*bhakti* as cooking, *bhakti* as division, and *bhakti* as indivisibility—contributes both to the understanding of *bhakti* as operating on many seemingly contradictory levels, and to historicizing the emergence of violence in the Vaiṣṇava religious discurse.

Violence and aggression are further examined under the multifaceted lens of different literary and cultural landscapes by **Ilona Kędzia-Warych** in her article, *Cruel Substances: On "Binding" and "Killing" in the Tamil Siddha Alchemical Texts*. The contribution focusses on the notion of "cruelty" of physical substances in the Tamil medico-alchemical tradition of the Siddhars. The research into the concept of *kaṭumai* is conducted through the analysis of carefully selected passages from the textual corpus ascribable to the Siddhar Yākōpu Rāmatēvar (approximately 17th–18th centuries CE). Kędzia-Warych illustrates how some examples from Yākōpu's production recurrently insist on alchemical preparations performed on various material substances the names of which seems to allude to violent and aggressive actions, as "binding" (*kaṭṭutal*) and "killing" (*kollutal*). The scholar exhaustively proceeds in her analysis on the characters of such alchemical performances, additionally addressing the issue of non-human material agency connected to the frame of material ecocriticism.

Drawing on recent studies by Tiziana Pontillo on the traces of the *vrātya* culture in the *Mahābhārata*'s narratives on the two old-generation heroes, Bhīṣma and Droṇa, **Frank Köhler** in his article entitled, *Kṛpa: A Neglected Brahmin Warrior*, looks into the epic's textual material concerning another master of martial arts who fights on Duryodhana's side for wealth, namely Kṛpa, suggesting their affinity. For the sake of showing that the figure of Kṛpa should be perceived as one more embodiment of a culture in which social status is acquired as a result of competition and thus bound to warriorship, Köhler not only attempts to find various commonalities between the three, but also takes into account a narrative model proposed by Mangels (1994) to explain the narrative function of Kṛpa's character in the epics.

The paper, *Shattering the Crown of the God: Violence as a Formative and Legitimising Element in the Pāṇḍya Dynastic Narrative*, authored by **David Pierdominici Leão**, revolves around the motif of clash between a Pāṇḍya ruler and Indra in its various manifestations, as attested by the 5th-century Tamil *Cilapattikāram*, the 13th-century *Tiruviḷaiyāṭaṟpurāṇam*, and the Sanskrit rendering of the latter, the 14th/15th-century *Hālāsyamāhātmya* as well as the late Paṇḍya copperplates issued during the Teṅkāśi dynastic period (14th–18th century CE). The author examines the motif as a political tool used by the dynasty in a gradual attempt to project their royal status onto the wider Sanskrit cosmopolis, and makes special reference to the aggressiveness of the legend of the king and Indra, and its implications for shaping the Pāṇḍya identity.

The two subsequent contributions are linked through emphasis placed on the artwork and its iconography in South Asia, specifically representations of the aggressive or fierce manifestations of the divinity.

Mythological narratives centred on violent motifs are the focus of **Cinzia Pieruccini**'s article, titled *Vīrabhadra, the Dreadful Destroyer of Sacrifices: Representations in Plaques from South India*. The paper, devoted to Vīrabhadra, one of the terrific aspects of Śiva, opens with a detailed analysis of the narratives about the god as expounded in several purāṇic sources (such as the *Śiva-*, *Liṅga-*, and *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*s); as evidenced by Pieruccini, these textual testimonies describe

the god as an immense, fierce, and invicible being. The scholar then traces the development of the cult of Vīrabhadra in the South during the Vijayanagara era, and its dissemination by the influential Śaiva sect of the Vīraśaivas. The diffusion of the god's cult in the South is testified to by the increasing production of metal plaques depicting Vīrabhadra, such as those preserved in the Accademia Ambrosiana in Milan, which constitute the main focal point of Pieruccini's artistic analysis.

Another iconographic investigation is represented by the article of **Chiara Policardi**, titled *The Goddess on the Lion: Animal Symbolism in the Representations of the Female Warrior Deity in Kuṣāṇa and Early Gupta India*. This research paper is centred on the association between the warrior goddess and her *vāhana*, the lion, during the earliest centuries of CE. As in Policardi's contention, certain specific influence in the representation of the divine female figure—not directly identifiable with Durgā in any early Kuṣāṇa evidence—may be traced to the Hellenistic goddess Nanā, who had incorporated aspects of an even more ancient divinity, the Mesopotamic Inanna-Ištar, associated with the lion. The contribution suggestively focusses on the goddess' symbolical association with the feline through an analysis of early iconographic and textual testimonies, which, as evidenced by the author, may furnish insights into the representational development of this warrior deity, an early connection between developing Hinduism and local cults, and the interrelation between the representation of this gooddess and the Kuṣāṇa and early Gupta royal ideology.

A further region-based perspective connected to violent traits, but belonging to a completely different literary and preformatory realm, is represented by the research paper authored by **Chettiarthodi Rajendran** and titled *Celebrating Violence: Some Stage Practises in Kerala's Classical Theatre*. In his article, Rajendran focuses on the depiction and practical performance of violence and death in the extant tradition of the temple-theatre of Kerala, namely the Kūṭiyāṭṭam. He frames his exposition through a minute analysis of the debated issue concerning the representation of such cruel and violent aspects according to the Classical Indian theatrical tradition, represented by the rules of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The paper focusses on several issues concerning the stage

depictions of horror-evoking scenes, including marginal detour into other classical performative traditions of Kerala such as Kathakaḷi. The author analyses theatrical performance through the lens of semiotics, placing emphasis on the practical aspects underlying stage performance such as costume, colour scheme, tonal features and acting modalities.

Yet another contribution, **Lidia Sudyka**'s *Landscape of the Battlefield: The Case of Varadāmbikāpariṇaya-Campū by Tirumalāmbā*, deals with the unique features of the depiction of the battlefield as found in the work of Tirumalāmbā, poetess at the court of Acyutadevarāya, king of the Tuluva dynasty of the Vijayanagara Empire in the first half of the 16th century. As Sudyka hypothesises, the scenes of the battle between Acyuta's father, Narasa Nāyaka, and the Chola king described by Tirumalāmbā in her *campū* are most likely another deliberate element aimed at advancing imperial politics and legitimising Acyuta's power, activities in which she was involved through her compositions. As a poetess probably could not have witnessed the battle, so she resorts to poetic tropes and stylistic devices most familiar to her. Sudyka shows, however, that in addition to the conventional images used by Tirumalāmbā to convey the atmosphere of the battlefield, the bloodiness of some of them is remarkable due to the juxtaposition of images, associated with peaceful family life and courtly scenes, with vignettes evoking exceptional cruelty.

The subject of **Aleksandra Turek**'s article titled, *Rajput Vocabulary of Violence*, is an analysis of selected terms found in Rajput-related textual sources, like those composed in the literary style of the Marwari language, commonly known as Dingal. As pointed out by the author, unpacking the less obvious meaning of keywords such as *vair*, *bāroṭiyā*, *dacoity* and *bhomiyāvat* is essential for identifying and understanding various cultural patterns of collective violence associated with the Rajputs, both on and off the battlefield, cultural patterns which often differ from the stereotypical perceptions produced and disseminated during the colonial era.

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