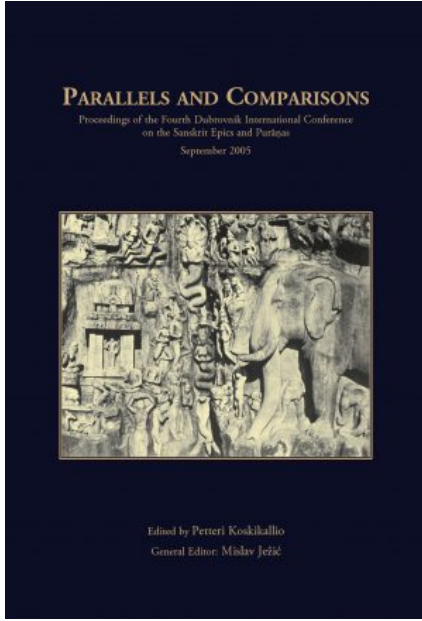


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Parallels and Comparisons (Proceedings of the Fourth Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Puranas, September 2005)



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About the Book

The first nine articles look for parallels and comparisons between Sanskrit epic texts and Vedic or Upaniṣadic texts, or even the Greek epic tradition, or between different layers and passages of the Sanskrit epics. They explore individual expressions and concepts, particular themes, text passages in context, text history or literary history.

The next group of five articles look for parallels and comparisons in different Purāṇic and epic texts, within the framework of an interrelated tradition of Purāṇic texts, again sometimes even reaching beyond the boundaries of the Indian tradition.

The last six articles discuss parallels between the Purāṇic and Tantric texts, between Hindu and Buddhist texts, between Hindu and Jaina texts, and finally between Sanskrit literary themes and modern themes in vernacular languages.

The first nine articles in this volume are concerned with epic texts. Tokunaga looks for parallels to the itihāsas in the MBh in the literary tradition from the Vedas to the darśanas. In the article on the Triṣṭubh Hymn in the Bhagavadgītā the parallels are located in the metrical Upaniṣads, Kaṭha and Śvetāśvatara, and between passages in different adhyāyas of the Gītā. Von Simson compares different passages on Balarāma to extrapolate implications for his mythological character, and even looks for parallels to texts in archaeology, art and iconography. In Allen's article, the parallels to the MBh are found in Greek literature, namely, in the Odyssey. Vassilkov in his single-epithet study looks for parallels between different passages in the MBh. Bowles looks for parallels in the composition of the Śāntiparvan. Brodbeck finds them in the life careers of several members of the Bhāradvāja clan, which can be reduced to a model. Sellmer traces nouns from one semantic field through different passages of the MBh. Feller, in the only article in this volume concerned with the Rāmāyaṇa, looks for inherent parallels in the Rāmāyaṇa and external parallels in Vedic mythical models. On all those levels, the parallels found focus the researchers' attention on comparisons, correspondences and differences, thus honing our understanding of individual expressions, particular themes, or the text passages in themselves, in their context, in the text history or literary history, or even between different literary

traditions, such as the Indian and the Greek traditions.

In the next group which consists of five articles, parallels were sought in different Purāṇic and epic texts, within the framework of an interrelated tradition of Purāṇic texts, and sometimes even beyond the boundaries of the Indian tradition. Viethsen's discussion on the relative chronology of textual passages dealing with the reasons for Kṛṣṇa's incarnation is based on a comparison of the MBh and its khila, and, in the background, of the Indian and Greek traditions. Magnone studies an important notion as it occurs in various Purāṇic texts in various religious contexts. Valpey compares the Bhāgavatapurāṇa with the MBh to show how it pretends to present itself as a definitive (devotional) commentary on the great epic. Barois follows different versions of two stories about the Śaivite sage Upamanyu through a wide range of Purāṇic texts and a passage from the thirteenth parvan of the MBh. Finally, Brinkhaus surveys four Nepalese Māhātmyas, three Hindu and one Buddhist, and from their mutual intertextual relationship and their relationship to the pan-Indian Purāṇas extrapolates the process of their Purāṇization.

The last six articles could be again considered a group because they discuss parallels between Purāṇic and Tantric texts, between Hindu and Buddhist texts, between Hindu and Jaina texts, and finally between Sanskrit literary themes and modern themes in vernacular languages. In this last group of articles, parallels and comparisons are examined in different traditions, religions or epochs. Serbaeva Saraogi, when looking for corresponding Yoginī-related passages in the Purāṇas and Tantras, does not study the influence of the Purāṇas on the Tantras, but rather the largely ignored influence of the Tantras on the Purāṇas. Söhnen-Thieme scrupulously weighs the probabilities of intertextual relationships between the Buddhist Jātaka stories and the tales included in the MBh and formulates some general principles, and yet warning that each case of parallelism must be studied separately. At the end of her article, in addition to the study of literary and religious contexts, Gönc Moaçanin raises – thanks to some remarks by Y. Vassilkov – the question of the relatively positive relationship of the Jātaka tradition towards the tradition of the Rāmāyaṇa, which is geographically close to it, and the relatively critical and, in part, ignorant relationship towards the tradition of the MBh, which originates from the western parts of India – introducing thereby a hint for the study of the political contexts of our texts. De Clercq compares Jaina versions of the Kṛṇacarita with the “orthodox” version of the MBh, Harivaṃśa and Bhāgavatapurāṇa. Couture compares three Jaina versions of Kṛṣṇa's childhood with the respective passages in the Harivaṃśa. Since in the case of the Jaina Purāṇas the direction of influence is not as questionable as in the case of Hindu-Buddhist parallels, both can devote their whole attention to the strategies of adaptation of the Hindu stories to the Jaina doctrines. Using one example, Dejenne shows how surprisingly

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