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JUST RELEASED

Mapping the Chronology of Bhakti: Milestones, Stepping Stones, and Stumbling Stones. Proceedings of a workshop held in honour of Paṇḍit R. Varadadesikan.

Edited by Valérie Gillet, Collection Indologie n° 124, Institut Français de Pondichéry / Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 2014, 381p.

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Starting around the sixth century of the common era, a new form of fervent religiosity seems to be discernible in the Tamil-speaking South that is often termed the “Bhakti movement”. The eleven essays gathered in this volume all deal with South Indian primary sources related to the various phenomena that can be grouped together under the head of “Bhakti”, which may be broadly defined as personal devotion between a devotee and his god. What characterised the early phase of this “movement”, which in subsequent centuries swept across the whole sub-continent and transformed popular religion in every place that it reached, was the emphasis placed upon the emotional aspect of the relation between the devotee and his chosen deity: the Tamil hymns regularly underline the message that salvation can be attained just through such devotion.

The chronology of the appearance, growth and development of this transformative movement is riddled with uncertainties, whether we consider literary or archaeological evidence. Each of the contributions to this volume addresses some aspect of the history of this movement in the South, and so, drawing on a wide range of disciplines — linguistics, philology, epigraphy, archaeology — they together contribute, each in its own way, to the mapping of the chronology of Bhakti. This volume is dedicated to our

esteemed colleague Paṇḍit R. Varadadesikan, a specialist of the Tamil sources of Vaiṣṇavism, who recently retired after dedicating forty-four years of his life to a career in the Pondicherry Centre of the EFEO working to further understanding of Tamil and Maṇipravāḷam literature.

Contents

Introductory Note (Valérie Gillet) -- *Biography and Bibliography of Paṇḍit R. Varadadesikan* (S.A.S Sarma) - *A Note on Time: Verikaṭanātha's conception of time* (Marcus Schmücker) -- *Metres in Tamil Bhakti Literature and the Problem of their (occasional)Description in Treatises (Studies in Tamil Metrics-2)* (Jean-Luc Chevillard) -- *Royal and Local Bhakti under the Pallavas* (Emmanuel Francis) - *Jivakacintāmaṇi's Contribution to Periyapurāṇam* (T.S. Gangadharan) -- *Tracking Traces of Gods: the site of Tirupparakuṇṇam* (Valérie Gillet) -- *The Sacred Landscape of Tamil Śaivism: Plotting Place in the Realm of Devotion* (Leslie C. Orr) -- *Life after Death: From Mortal Remains to Monuments* (K. Rajan) -- *The Edifice of Bhakti: towards an “archaeological” reading of Tēvāram and Periyapurāṇam* (Charlotte Schmid) -- *Vaiṣṇava Literature in Tamil* (R. Varadadesikan) -- *From Ancient Poetics to Applied Poetics: Continuance and Change in Tamil Bhakti Poetry (With special reference to Nammālvār'sakam poems)* (G. Vijayavenugopal) - *Nammālvār as a Master of tiṇṇaimayakkam—Transposition Techniques in the akam Songs of the Tiruvāymoḷi* (Eva Wilden) -- *Śrīvaiṣṇava Topoi: Constructing a South Indian Sect through Place* (Katherine Young)

About the Editor

Valérie GILLET is a member of the École française d'Extrême-Orient. Her research focuses on material mostly found in the religious monuments excavated or built on the territories of the two main early medieval South Indian dynasties, the Pallavas and the Pāṇḍyas. She also attempts to map the emergence and the development of the cult of the deity called Subrahmaṇya/Murugaṇ in the medieval Tamil-speaking South. Since 2007, she has been posted at the Pondicherry Centre of the EFEO, of which she became Head in 2011. She has published a study of the narrative iconography of the 8th century structural Pallava temples entitled *La création d'une iconographie śivaïte narrative: Incarnations du dieu dans les temples pallava construits*, as well as several articles on material from the Pallava period and sacred places related to Subrahmaṇya/Murugaṇ.

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VIENT DE PARAÎTRE

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Aux alentours du VI^e siècle de notre ère, une nouvelle forme de ferveur religieuse apparaît dans le pays tamoul, généralement qualifiée de “mouvement de Bhakti”. Les onze essais rassemblés dans ce volume se consacrent tous à des sources primaires sud-indiennes reliées aux divers phénomènes de Bhakti, communément définie comme une dévotion personnelle entre un dévot et son dieu. La phase la plus ancienne de ce “mouvement”, qui, au cours des siècles suivants se répandit dans tout le sous-continent indien et transforma profondément la religion populaire, fut caractérisée par l'emphase mise sur la relation entre le dévot et sa divinité d'élection : les hymnes tamouls soulignent souvent les pouvoirs salvateurs d'une telle dévotion.

La chronologie des débuts et du développement de ce mouvement demeure encore incertaine, que l'on considère les corpus littéraires ou archéologiques. Chaque contribution à ce volume étudie l'un des aspects de l'histoire de ce mouvement, à travers diverses disciplines telles que la linguistique, la philologie, l'épigraphie, l'archéologie, toutes contribuant partiellement à l'établissement d'une chronologie de la Bhakti. Ce volume est dédié au Paṇḍit R. Varadadesikan, spécialiste de littérature

tamoule viṣṇuïte, parti à la retraite récemment après avoir dédié une carrière de 44 ans à l'exploration

des textes de la littérature tamoule et maṇiprāvaḷam au Centre EFE de Pondichéry.

Table des matières

Introductory Note (Valérie Gillet) -- *Biography and Bibliography of Paṇḍit R. Varadadesikan* (S.A.S Sarma) - *A Note on Time: Verikaṇātha's conception of time* (Marcus Schmücker) -- *Metres in Tamil Bhakti Literature and the Problem of their (occasional) Description in Treatises (Studies in Tamil Metrics-2)* (Jean-Luc Chevillard) -- *Royal and Local Bhakti under the Pallavas* (Emmanuel Francis) - *Jīvakacintāmaṇi's Contribution to Periyapurāṇam* (T.S. Gangadharan) -- *Tracking Traces of Gods: the site of Tirupparikuṇṇam* (Valérie Gillet) -- *The Sacred Landscape of Tamil Śaivism: Plotting Place in the Realm of Devotion* (Leslie C. Orr) -- *Life after Death: From Mortal Remains to Monuments* (K. Rajan) -- *The Edifice of Bhakti: towards an “archaeological” reading of Tēvāram and Periyapurāṇam* (Charlotte Schmid) -- *Vaiṣṇava Literature in Tamil* (R. Varadadesikan) -- *From Ancient Poetics to Applied Poetics: Continuance and Change in Tamil Bhakti Poetry (With special reference to Nammālvār'sakam poems)* (G. Vijayavenugopal) - *Nammālvār as a Master of tiṇṇaimayakkam—Transposition Techniques in the akam Songs of the Tiruvāymoḷi* (Eva Wilden) -- *Śrīvaiṣṇava Topoi: Constructing a South Indian Sect through Place* (Katherine Young)

A propos de l'éditeur scientifique

Valérie GILLET est membre de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient. Ses recherches se concentrent sur le matériel retrouvé dans les monuments religieux excavés ou construits sur les territoires des deux dynasties majeures de l'époque médiévale sud-indienne, les Pallavas et les Pāṇḍyas. Elle tente également de définir l'émergence et le développement du culte de la célèbre divinité Subrahmaṇya/Murugaṇ au Tamil Nadu. Depuis 2007, elle est postée au Centre EFE de Pondichéry, duquel elle est Responsable depuis 2011. Elle a publié une étude de l'iconographie narrative des temples *pallava* du VIII^e siècle intitulée *La création d'une iconographie śivaïte narrative: Incarnations du dieu dans les temples pallava construits*, ainsi que plusieurs articles qui étudient du matériel de l'époque *pallava* et des sites sacrés dédiés à Subrahmaṇya/Murugaṇ.

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