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Historiography has long weighed like a nightmare on the scholarly study of Indian philosophy. The early Hegelian approach to this study, which maintained that a history of philosophy necessarily entailed a philosophy of history, seemed to have been replaced for much of the twentieth century by a studied indifference to history in favor of the abstract, fine-grained analysis of concepts. At particularly uncharitable times, one gets the sense that it was easier to close our eyes to the embarrassment of universalizing narratives, as though they could be conjured away in imagination. But the old ghosts remained: an Orientalist teleology that deemed the original expressions of philosophical thought to be most worthy of study, and determined later developments to be symptoms of decay and degeneracy; periodizations of knowledge that reflected an author's own *Zeitgeist* more than developments internal to philosophical traditions themselves; and differing theories of what counted as philosophy proper based on often-unacknowledged assumptions of historical importance. It is not difficult to despair that any attempt to revisit the tragedy of periodization and historiography would result in more than farce.

Happily, recent work by scholars of Indian intellectual history has prompted renewed attention to the historical context and development of philosophical traditions. In particular, the project "Sanskrit Knowledge-Systems on the Eve of Colonialism" has provided a sophisticated, if incipient, account of the prolific intellectual output within Sanskrit traditions of learning in early modern India (ca. 1550-1750 CE). The relatively circumscribed nature of the study belies its wider implications for the study of Indian philosophy: first, by insisting on the centrality of

social and intellectual history to reconstructing ideas, and second, by reintroducing historical periodization as a necessary problem for scholars of global thought to engage.

In light of these developments, the present volume, Periodization and Historiography of Indian Philosophy, represents a welcome and impressively detailed reflection on the study of Indian philosophy and the historical development of Indian thought. Although not directly connected to the SKESC project, the overlap between the two demonstrates encouraging signs for the historical study of Indian philosophy. The volume brings together papers from the 2009 World Sanskrit Conference. The editors' preface explains that the inspiration for the workshop was a new edition of the German Indologist Erich Frauwallner's *Philosophie des Buddhismus* (vi). Infamous for his racist periodization of Indian philosophy, and his complicity with fascist political designs, Frauwallner represents not only a foil but also a warning for this collection, reminding authors and readers alike that acts of periodization and historiography are at once unavoidable and unsettling. For as Kathleen Davis and others have argued, these acts govern a politics of time that often occludes and reifies more than it reveals.<sup>1</sup>

Eli Franco's essay introduces five historical periodizations of Indian philosophy. First is Paul Deussen, who considered the greatest achievements of Indian thought to have occurred before the rise of classical philosophical schools—a judgment which influenced Indian intellectuals from Vivekananda to Radhakrishnan (3-5). Next is the work of Erich Frauwallner, whose periodization of Indian philosophy into Aryan and non-Aryan proves in Franco's account to be factually and morally contestable (7-9). Franco then discusses Walter Ruben, whose work periodized Indian thought along clearly Marxist lines (14-5). He proceeds to show how

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). Cf. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2002). See also Andrew Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Indian Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 18-20.

Madeleine Biardeau's account of Indian philosophy was influenced by the anthropologist Louis Dumont's ideas about the lack of the individual in caste society and the absence of historical consciousness in India (17).<sup>2</sup> Finally, Franco presents the extreme idealist work of John Plott and his colleagues, who attempted to correlate world history with the history of philosophy (22-3).

Acknowledging the indispensability of historicism—the fundamental act of situating thought in time—Franco offers his own periodization of Indian philosophy: a) the period up to Dignāga, b) the period between Dignāga and Udayana, and c) the Navya Nyāya period (24). In the end, Franco suggests that historicization and periodization are inevitable, as are methodological relativism and skepticism towards the act. Echoing Wilhelm Halbfass (and Gadamer before him), Franco concludes by calling for continued self-awareness and states that to deal with other cultures is “fundamentally a comparative and dialogical enterprise” (25). The appendix to the essay includes a useful list of four Japanese publications which contain different periodizations of Indian philosophy (26-31).

In his contribution to the volume, Shujun Motegi reconstructs the early history of Sāṃkhya thought. Prior to the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Śaṣṭitantra*, Sāṃkhya is articulated in the Mokṣadharmā section of the epic Mahābhārata. A famously inscrutable text embedded in the twelfth chapter,<sup>3</sup> the Mokṣadharmā has been previously recognized as crucial to the early history of Sāṃkhya (36). Motegi's careful reading of this section reveals conclusions that are appropriately tentative. The first stage demonstrates the development of a concept of twenty-four bodily elements (48). Second comes the concept of *prakṛti* as the ultimate material principle, which leads to arguments among Sāṃkhya thinkers about how to harmonize the plural elements

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<sup>2</sup> We may also point here to Biardeau's explicit attempts to write a structuralist history of Indian thought, which are in greater evidence in her writings on the epics and Hinduism in general. See Gérard Colas, “Histoire, Oralité, Structure. À propos d'un tournant dans l'oeuvre de Madeleine Biardeau,” *Journal Asiatique* 300.1 (2012): 17-32.

<sup>3</sup> Consider the *hapax legomenon* “*ātmaprāptāni*” in MBh 12.321.36c.

with a single principle (49). Finally, Motegi offers an original suggestion regarding the role of *ahaṃkāra* as one of the eight *prakṛtis*: namely, an erroneous cognition that leads inner self to transmigration (50).

The title of Phillip Maas' essay, "A Concise Historiography of Classical Yoga Philosophy", belies the voluminous account he provides in it. A passionate defense of the philological metric for the study of early yoga, Maas' essay demonstrates that both the *sūtra* and the *bhāṣya* of the Yoga system were originally transmitted as a single unit: the *Pātañjala Yoga Śāstra* (56). While most histories of Indian philosophy claim that the author of the *sūtra* and *bhāṣya* were different, both internal and external evidence suggest the opposite (57-66). Maas then recapitulates the history of the Indological study of Yoga (69-78), concluding with the hope that further studies will: a) develop the understanding that Yoga philosophy is more than simply the practical side of Sāṃkhya theory, by b) studying Yoga as a constitutive player in the intertextual world of classical Indian philosophical discourse, achievable only when c) historically reliable editions and scholarly annotated translations are prepared (79-80).

Parimal Patil's essay, "The Historical Rhythms of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Knowledge-System," builds on his contribution to a 2011 volume that engages critically with the work of Sheldon Pollock. In characteristically analytical fashion, Patil extracts from Pollock's work his implicit criteria for historical "newness" in Sanskrit knowledge-systems: first, the statistics of textual production and distribution of texts; second, attention to textual genres and text-internal understandings of intellectual contexts; and third, how specific arguments are symptomatic of larger historical realities (94). Patil challenges Pollock's periodization of the "early modern" (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> C.) as a unique and unprecedented period of intellectual newness, by demonstrating that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophical tradition fits the criteria above at different historical

moments—from Udayana in the 11<sup>th</sup> century to Gaṅgeśa and the Navya Nyāya from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (95-105). He then clarifies the difference between his and Pollock's thinking on what counts as historically significant. Philosophical arguments on inherited topics according to Pollock represent “redundancy, invariance, and historically insignificant differences” but for Patil they demonstrate “deep and sustained commitment to fundamental philosophical questions, astonishing attention to detail and variation in technique, and undeniable innovation” (109). According to this rubric, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinking continues to change through the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and remains both textually and intellectually productive well into colonial modernity (110-7).

In “The Transformations of Mīmāṃsā in the Larger Context of Indian Philosophical Discourse”, Lawrence McCrea concentrates on a single watershed moment in Mīmāṃsā history: the 7<sup>th</sup>-century development of the Bhāṭṭa and Prābhākara schools of Mīmāṃsā, and their collective canonization of Śabara's *Mīmāṃsāsūtrabhāṣya* as the discipline's foundational text (127-8). McCrea argues convincingly that Dignāga's epistemological revolution is the catalyst for changes in all Indian philosophical discourse: not only in conceptual terms, but in terms of reading, citational, and discursive practices (130). Precisely given the specifics of Dignāga's attack, Mīmāṃsā is forced into apologetics, and shifts into a more closely text-based, exegetical, and scholastic mode of argumentation (131). McCrea argues that rather than considering this moment as the “bifurcation of a formerly unitary field into two subschools,” we should understand that it is Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Prabhakāra who standardize the earlier tradition, in which each author had his own interpretation (132). He proceeds to demonstrate how their divergences in interpretation are tied up with how they choose to respond to Dignāga (133-140). Finally, he argues that in order to write a thorough history of the discipline, Mīmāṃsā topics cannot be studied in isolation from one another, some classed as purely philosophical and others

as merely ritual-interpretive (141).<sup>4</sup>

In his essay on the history of Vedānta, titled “The Perils of Periodization”, Julius Lipner distinguishes “simple” and “evaluative” periodization—one which merely lists observed changes, and the other which assesses these changes based on value judgments (149). As an example, Lipner discusses Erich Frauwallner's racial typology of Indian philosophical traditions. He suggests that the typology is problematic “not because it is *racial* (read “cultural” here) but because it is *racist*” (151). But to what extent can one separate the descriptive and the evaluative functions of language, when they are located at the nexus of power and knowledge? One is reminded of the Orientalist/Anglicist divide: though each offered opposing evaluations of Indian traditions, they participated in the same imperial discourse of othering. Lipner's periodization of Vedānta then follows a rather standard account of the Sanskrit Vedānta tradition: from the *prasthāna-traya*, through to the medieval commentators of different schools, and on to Vedānta's modern reinterpreters (153-167). However, current scholarship on Advaita Vedānta in particular seeks to revise and expand this account, by including studies of Advaita's historical intersections with *bhakti* traditions, vernacular writings, Persian translations, and Śaiva and Śākta Tantra.<sup>5</sup> Michael Allen provides a useful frame for this work by drawing an analytical distinction between “classical” and “greater” Advaita Vedānta: the former determined by historiographies of Indian philosophy to consist of a received canon of Sanskrit philosophical works, and the latter expanded to include the popular dissemination of Advaita through teachings inspired by but

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Lawrence McCrea, “The Hierarchical Organization of Language in Mīmāṃsā Interpretive Theory,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28.5 (2000): 430.

<sup>5</sup> See Anand Venkatkrishnan, “Ritual, Reflection, and Religion: The Devas of Banaras”, *Journal of South Asian History and Culture*, forthcoming; Michael Allen, “*The Ocean of Inquiry: A Neglected Classic of Advaita Vedānta*”, Ph.D. diss, Harvard University, 2013; Shankar Nair, “Philosophy in Any Language: Interaction between Arabic, Sanskrit, and Persian Intellectual Cultures in Mughal South Asia”, Ph.D. diss, Harvard University, 2013; Elaine Fisher, “Just Like Kālidāsa!: The Śākta Intellectuals of Seventeenth-century South India.” *Journal of Hindu Studies* 5.2 (2012): 172-192.

outside that canon.<sup>6</sup> These examples of historically sensitive scholarship on Vedānta carry a great deal of promise for its future.

Vincent Eltschinger's monumental essay "Buddhist Esoterism and Epistemology" provides a sweeping account of the rise of both Buddhist Tantrism and the epistemological school, by situating them in relation to the sociopolitical, institutional, religious and philosophical challenges of the post-Gupta period (172). In Eltschinger's account, both traditions construed themselves in explicit opposition to specific representatives of the non-Buddhist environment: in the case of epistemology, against Brahmanical orthodoxy by means of philosophical argument, and in the case of Buddhist Tantrism, against Śaivism at the level of mythology (173). Part I reviews the sociopolitics of early medieval India. Eltschinger draws on now-canonical scholarship by Alexis Sanderson and others to demonstrate how the new infrastructure created the need for new roles for legitimizing power. Śaiva partisans appealed to monarchs by creating new classes of officiants, rites of initiation, and religio-political practices in the service of power. This forced other denominations to adapt these ceremonies in order to compete for patronage, providing the impetus for the "Tantrification" of Mahāyāna Buddhism. These Buddhists appropriated and inverted their rivals' repertoire by claiming the anteriority of their teachings and emphasizing the inferiority of Śaiva deities. They also began to substitute the normative opposition between Buddhist denominations with a dialectic between Buddhists and non-Buddhists (223-6).

In Part II, Eltschinger discusses how Buddhist epistemology and dialectics fundamentally answered polemical and apologetic needs. Philosophers like Dharmakīrti aimed to refute the philosophical justifications provided for doctrines which challenge and keep people away from the soteriological truth of Buddhism (241-2). Although epistemology had its origins in

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<sup>6</sup> Allen, "The Ocean of Inquiry", pp. 5-6.

Abhidharma, it was, for most of the first half of the first millennium CE, concerned with intersectarian polemics. Abhidharma exegesis virtually ignored the non-Buddhist environment, largely because it developed in a climate of social, economic, and political consensus with the support of powerful imperial states and wealthy tradesmen and guilds. But in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhists could no longer afford to be insular. They now had to present themselves as Buddhists united against a common enemy, exhibiting a supersectarian self-consciousness completely absent in Abhidharma. Buddhist epistemology met the challenge of Brahmanical expansion through philosophical argument; Buddhist esoterism did so by adapting and appropriating Śaiva ritual practices to become appealing to powerful elites (260-2).

Anne Clavel's essay revisits the periodization of Śvetāmbara and Digambara Jain philosophical history by attending to the conceptual division between āgamic and logical texts—that is, between intellectual activity primarily composed of commentaries which explore ideas conveyed by scripture and independent writings which deal with philosophical issues from a logical and epistemological point of view (275). Clavel questions the chronology based on this division which suggests that logicians flourished among the Digambaras earlier than the Śvetāmbaras (276). Instead she suggests that these are two different intellectual attitudes that could exist in the same author in a single text; authors of logical texts respected canonical teachings and sought to reconcile new concepts with authority of canon (287-8). Moreover, early Digambara logicians adopted certain theories of knowledge from Śvetāmbara commentaries on scripture, and vice versa (297-8). This explicit cross-fertilization bolsters the broader argument that divergences between the two communities have more to do with orthopraxy than orthodoxy (299-301).

In “The Contribution of Nondual Śaivism of Kashmir to the Debate on *Jīvanmukti*”, Lyne



Bansat-Boudon shows that although much of the scholarship on *jīvanmukti* is skewed toward Advaita Vedānta and its Vedic heritage, the concept of (and term for) living liberation existed in Śaiva nondualist scriptural sources from at least the 8<sup>th</sup> century onward. Bansat-Boudon attributes Śaiva nondualism's willingness to stake out its own unique doctrinal position regarding liberation, while still maintaining elements of Sāṃkhya and Advaita, to the strategy of hierarchical universalism which nondualist traditions generally adopt—that is, affirming their own universality by subsuming other doctrines (321-2). Therefore, Bansat-Boudon suggests, we might speak of periodizations in Indian thought according to transitions rather than ruptures (322). Although this essay does not engage with significant prior scholarship on the relationship of Kashmir Śaivism to other writings on living liberation,<sup>7</sup> it remains an original contribution to the field.

Alexis Pinchard provides a sophisticated account of the relationship between ontology and epistemology in the history of the *sphoṭa* doctrine. In the philosophical tradition of Indian grammarians, Pinchard suggests, the Kantian disjunction between ontology and epistemology simply may not apply (332-9). Rather, in the history of *sphoṭa*, this dichotomy “stands inside ontology: at the beginning, *sphoṭa* was a certain kind of being, but thereafter this concept furnished a pattern for the whole of being” (339). Claus Oetke offers theoretical reflections on the act of classification and periodization, contending that “important things are almost inevitably lost if a tradition of thought is accounted for *only* under the aspect of historical development” (352). According to Oetke, theoretically consistent periodization requires historical information that we are not likely to possess, making the task of situating philosophical thought against social-historical developments a dim prospect (353-4). Oetke instead prefers to

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<sup>7</sup> See Andrew Fort, *Jīvanmukti in Transformation: Embodied Liberation in Advaita and Neo-Vedānta* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998); Walter Slaje, “On Changing Others' Ideas: Vidyāraṇya and the Yogavāsīṣṭha,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 41.2 (1998): 103-124.

focus on “‘internal’ properties of philosophical teachings as classificatory criteria” (354). The intellectual historian may object here that what is “internal” to a text or a tradition is always bound up in its material and social history, and therefore that these are indispensable to meaning and understanding.

Johannes Bronkhorst adds a brief concluding essay on the importance of the Buddhism-Brahmanism dichotomy in the history of Indian philosophy. This dichotomy coincides with a number of others: between realist and non-realist ontologies, between Vedic culture and that of Greater Magadha, and between those who did or did not accept karma and rebirth (358-361). The decline of ontological creativity in the classical schools, and the non-realist turn in Brahmanical philosophies (as seen in the rise of Advaita Vedānta) around the middle of the first millennium, raises significant questions as to the socio-political conditions of these philosophical shifts (362).

Overall this volume serves as an excellent reference for students interested both in studying change within individual Indian philosophical traditions, and in understanding the general theoretical and methodological problems that face historians of philosophy.

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