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REVIEWS

ROSA MARIA CIMINO, *Leggende e fasti della corte dei "Grandi Re": dipinti murali di Udaipur, Rajasthan*, CESMEO, Torino, 2011, 292 p., 321 figures, 89 colour plates

Leggende e fasti della corte dei "Grandi Re" offers a cultural, chronological, iconographic and stylistic analysis of historic murals and decorations of prominent buildings in Udaipur (Rajasthan) and its nearby centres, whose development Cimino has documented in years of research in the field. The book comprises a total of 321 black and white figures and 89 colour plates, many of which were unpublished before. As the author rightly states in the Preface (p. 9), this work is important because it evidences the crucial problems of the constant "disappearance" of the murals or their renovation executed by covering them with "modern colours". It is, therefore, extremely urgent to study the richness of this tradition before it vanishes and to make the public and national authorities aware of the issues of conservation of the works for posterity.

The first chapter offers a contextual introduction to Udaipur including its history and its artistic and architectural heritage under the Sisodiyā dynasty from its early beginning up to the Independence of India, and to the most influential families of the court, such as the Shivrati, the Bagore and the Karjali, who lived in historic *havelīs* (traditional courtyard houses) around the City Palace. The author also provides a vivid description of the life at court through an analysis of specific areas of traditional palaces, such as the *zanānā* (women's quarter), the *mardānā* (men's quarter), the sitting room, the dining room and the bedroom, with their specific uses, types of furniture and

ornaments. The author also mentions the area of the City Palace named Chitaron ka Karkhana, the department in which the painters lived and worked.

Cimino conceptually divides the analysis of the murals into three parts: the first is devoted to the paintings and decorations of the City Palace and other royal mansions in Udaipur; the second concentrates on the murals in the *havelīs* of influential families and temples around town; and the third focuses on some major centres in the region of Mewar. The author first briefly introduces the technique of mural painting and identifies the earliest extant examples, dated to 1229, in the Samideshwara Temple in Chittor. These works represent human figures executed in a style popular in the northwest of India, usually employed in Jain manuscripts. More consistent evidence of mural painting is found at a later time, during the rule of Mahārāṇā Sangram Singh II (r. 1710-1734), who commissioned a cycle of painting at the Gol Mahal on the Jagmandir Island in Udaipur. Prominent decorations of this time are found in the Chini ki Chitra Shala in the City Palace, a pavilion covered with white and blue tiles from China and the Netherlands. An interest for exotic goods had developed after the visit of the Dutch Embassy in 1711, just a few years before the completion of the Chini ki Chitra Shala in 1723. After this visit, figures of westerners (*farāṅgī*) started to appear in the arts of Udaipur, like those in glass mosaic at the Kishan Vilas Saat Takan Chowk (figs. 59-60).

From the artistic point of view, the paintings of the time of Mahārāṇā Bhim Singh II (r. 1778-1828) are, according to Cimino (p. 99), more intriguing. The Chitram ki Burj, in the *mardānā* of the City Palace, is entirely covered with murals in the fresco *secco* technique and they glorify the ruler, representing him on numerous official occasions like the Gangaur festival (figs. 116-117), Holi (fig. 120), Dussera (fig. 121), Navaratri (figs. 122-126, plate 37), his own wedding (figs. 127-131), playing polo (fig. 132), and swimming in the pool of the Amar Vilas (fig. 137). These murals, stylistically and compositionally related to contextual portraits, as defined by Aitken (2010: 119-125), depict in their background familiar

places like the City Palace, always recognizable with its white walls. The Chitram ki Burj also presents notable big size portraits of Bhim Singh II with ladies (figs. 134-135) that are reminiscent of the style of the distinguished painter Chokha (p. 116) in the way in which they highlight the personality of the sitter. Other refined paintings of the time are large portraits of women in the Chitram ki Burj (fig. 136), in the *zanānā* apartments (figs. 139-149), and in the *pūjā* room of the *mardānā* (figs. 151-153). These display delicate faces and rich ornaments reminding viewers of Kishangarh painting for their depiction of elongated eyes and eyebrows, and of Deogarh painting for their profile and delicate curls around the ear.

The author also analyses notable paintings and decorations executed in the nineteenth century, such as the panels and balcony of the Surya Prakash (fig. 68, plate 18), on the upper level galleries facing the Mor Chowk (Peacock Courtyard) in the *mardānā*, produced during the time of Swarup Singh (r. 1842-1861); the decorations of the Kanch ki Burj dating to the time of Shambhu Singh (r. 1861-1874), which aim at a “sensational” effect (p. 78) with their strong bright colours and surfaces covered with mirrors and red glass (fig. 69, plate 19); and finally the outstanding glass mosaic that represents peacocks in the Mor Chowk, produced at the time of Sajjan Singh (r. 1874-1884).

Cimino rightly observes (pp. 83-84) that the contact with western art and photography at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to a pictorial revolution in the arts of Mewar, with the assimilation of new styles and techniques. “European perspective” (p. 84) can be found in two paintings representing Fateh Singh (r. 1884-1930) on the occasion of two religious ceremonies (figs. 79-80), while shallow relief is used to depict figures in some wall decorations in the Surya Chaupad (fig. 81). Despite the change in technique, these works represent traditional themes like court scenes, hunting scenes, and the everyday life (figs. 82-86). It is also important to note that modern taste did not replace the traditional style, which can be seen in some outstanding 1930s

murals in the *zanānā* that derive from Nathdwara painting (figs. 98-101).

The author then proceeds with an analysis of the palaces of the nobles, which are grouped near a hill close to the City Palace of Udaipur and have intriguing histories intertwined with that of the royal family. These *havelīs* are lavishly painted with murals in different states of conservation and depict the usual repertoire of themes including women, animals, hunting scenes, court scenes and portraits of kings and nobles. Among them are the Bapna Havelī, the Shivrati Havelī, the Karjali Havelī, and other mansions. Notable is the Dhabhai Havelī near the Clock Tower of Udaipur, which counts more than 100 rooms inhabited today by more than 10 families. Most of the rooms are painted with the recurrent themes of women and portraits. Of particular interest is the *darbār* hall, decorated with nineteenth century prints representing western women (figs. 203-204). On its walls are niches containing European objects, images of gods, and dolls (fig. 205). These decorations and some of its painted portraits showing the *mahārāṇās* in frontal view (figs. 206, 219) demonstrate an interest of the inhabitants of the *havelī* in exotic objects and stylistic innovations. The current owner of the palace, Mr. Jodh Singhji, takes the author through the rooms of the *havelī* showing her the private apartments of the *zanānā* where, also today, women and children spend their time. He also narrates engaging stories about the past of the palace and its relationship with the royal family, and admits his preoccupation with the slow decline of the mansion and its murals, due to lack of interest of the new generations in their heritage.

Another prominent mansion in Udaipur is the Bagore Havelī built by Shri Amarchand Badwa when he was Prime Minister of the court between 1751 and 1778. It was subsequently enlarged and renovated by the last descendant of the Bagore family, Maharājā Shakti Singh, who built in 1878 a room above the three-arched gateway that overlooks the Gangaur Ghat on the Pichola Lake. The *havelī* was subsequently confiscated by Mahārāṇā Fateh Singh (r. 1884-1930), and after the Independence of India was transformed into the West Zone Cultural Centre. The *havelī* counts 138 rooms and it includes the

famous portal that leads to the Gangaur Ghat. During the festival of Gangaur, the rooms overlooking the lake were open to guests who could enjoy the dances and processions of women carrying images of goddess Gauri. The *havelī* is lavishly painted and decorated with mosaics (figs. 232, 234) similar to those of the Mor Chowk in the City Palace. One of the murals illustrates the Gangaur Festival (fig. 240, plate 73), an appropriate depiction for this place.

The author also analyses some prominent places near Udaipur. These include Gogunda, where little remains of the mural paintings in the palace, and Baghpura, whose palace displays paintings of women, foreigners, and erotic scenes. The pilgrimage town of Nathdwara (pp. 190-204), famous for its Shri Nathji temple, is also an influential art center for its *pichvāī* paintings and murals found in its mansions and temples. As Cimino explains, some of the murals are not in good state of conservation and other are not accessible to the public, such as those in the Shri Nathji temple and in the neighbouring house of the *purohit* (fig. 271). Of particular importance for this study is the temple known as Mahua Wala Akhada, decorated with remarkable murals representing Shri Nathji with rulers and priests. Among them are the portraits of Mahārāṇā Bhim Singh II (r. 1778-1828) and Goswami Damodarji II (fig. 279), an influential priest of the temple and a patron of the arts. Mahārāṇā Bhim Singh II can be found in other illustrations (figs. 283-284), indicating significant connections between the court of Udaipur and Nathdwara.

The temple of Eklingji, 20 km away from Udaipur, houses the tutelary deity of the Sisodiyās, a four-faced black *līṅga*. In the complex, which includes 108 shrines, stands the house of the *purohit*, which still retains some refined murals. Among them is a representation of a religious function in which the *mahārāṇā*, identified by Cimino as Jagat Singh II (r. 1734-1751), is seen in the interior of the temple with two priests next to the *līṅga* (figs. 293-296, plate 82). In the courtyard, stands his retinue of nobles and servants with horses and the royal elephant. This mural is reminiscent of contextual portraits from Udaipur for its faithful depiction of the temple's architecture.

The Palace of Deogarh, built in 1670 in the *ṭhikānā* of Deogarh, became a prominent centre for painting under Rāvāt Raghodas (r. 1776-1786) and Rāvāt Gokuldas II (r. 1786-1821), who favoured the production of murals and miniature painting, inviting artists from the court of Udaipur. The arts of Deogarh flourished under the influence of two distinguished painters, Bakhta (also Bagta) and Chokha, whose works introduced great stylistic innovations that became influential for generations to come (p. 213). Chokha in particular added an extraordinary character to his painting with his personal style and his depiction of sensual women with elongated eyes (figs. 308-310).

The painting traditions of Udaipur and Mewar have been for a long time an important area of investigation and numerous books have been published on this topic, although most have focused specifically on court miniature painting (Topsfield 2001). Cimino's monograph does not overlap on previous studies but adds to them in a number of ways: with the inclusion of unpublished materials; with a meticulous analysis of style, chronology, and state of conservation of the murals; with personal observations and stories recounted by the inhabitants of *havelīs*; and with the use of primary sources like the *Vīr Vinod*. The book, therefore, constitutes a valuable scholarly source for anyone interested in the pictorial traditions of Rajasthan. It also represents a significant source that documents paintings in danger of disappearance due to neglect, and will hopefully stimulate more research and interest in their history and preservation.

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Isabella Nardi

JOANNA JUREWICZ, *Fire and Cognition in the Ṛgveda*,
Warszawa: Elipsa 2010, 485 p. (ISBN 978-83-7151-893-5)

1. The title of this book might create the impression that it represents a mere inquiry into the imagery of fire as a concrete counterpart of Cognition in the Ṛgvedic *saṃhitā* and as a consequence, readers might expect a long survey of occurrences with some literary and speculative comments but no more. By contrast, this work unequivocally aims at going beyond this strictly philological level of research, which however has been accurately carried out, in order to “concentrate on the metaphysical role of Agni” as a piece of evidence for the ancient “beginnings of abstract and general thought” in India and more generally in the ancient pre-Socratic world.

Actually, Joanna Jurewicz has long accustomed us to reading Vedic texts and specifically Vedic metaphors through the glasses supplied by cognitive linguistics. This almost seems to have been a crucial planned project of hers, as explicitly suggested, e.g., in her article “*Back to the roots. Metaphor in the Ṛgveda and examples in the philosophical sūtras*”, published in *Cracow Indological Studies* IV-V (2002-2003, pp. 287-301), where she programmatically wrote: “What we need is the appropriate method of investigation of the Ṛgvedic metaphor. In my opinion the method of cognitive linguistics, especially as practised by George Lakoff serves this purpose best” (p. 287).

In fact, Metaphor has been a central topic within Cognitive Linguistics since its origin in the 1970s, partly as an historical consequence of the dominant role played by George Lakoff (and some of his colleagues, who at that time were defining the field of Cognitive Linguistics itself), whose major contributions focused precisely on the metaphor. As is well known their theory is based on a preliminary distinction between basic conceptual metaphors and particular linguistic expressions of these conceptual metaphors and mainly on the analysis of metaphors into source- and target-domains. The term ‘source domain’ refers to the conceptual area from which a metaphor is drawn, while the ‘target domain’ is the subject to which the

metaphor is applied. Each metaphor is additionally examined as having a set of correspondences between categories in the source domain and those in the target domain, which Lakoff and Turner describe as a source-to-target ‘mapping’.

Accordingly, the role played in the present work by cognitive linguistics, whose “fundamental assumption is that abstract thinking is motivated by experience and is conceptualised in concrete terms referring to everyday life”, precisely consists in allowing the Author to get rid of “the need to accept that the R̥gvedic ideas about gods and nature were anthropomorphic in the sense that the poets were unable to go beyond the frames of concrete imagery”.

2. A fresh interpretation of R̥V 10.129, i.e., the well-known *Nāsadīya* Hymn, seems to be proposed by Jurewicz as a pivotal basis of almost all her book. Indeed, this hymn is considered as “a repository of earlier R̥gVedic thought about creation”, which urges “the learned recipient to evoke the context of the earlier *maṇḍalas*”. A piece of evidence for this assumption is the occurrence of some formulas, designated as “formulaic expressions” (even though in most cases they are unique), which trigger “conventionalised mental operations and activate concepts stored in the long-term memory of the linguistic community”. The whole process of creation is divided into eight stages depicted in the verses of this hymn, each including one or more of these supposed formulaic expressions.

For instance, the very first verse of the hymn depicts the precreative state as “a state of the inability to organise reality and describe it”, i.e. a world where no manifestation is recognizable, and the Creator and Creation cannot be discerned. In this context the expression *nāśad āsīn nō śād āsīt tadānīm* is precisely classified by the Author as a formula evoking earlier concepts of the primeval lack of cognitive ability. In the second verse the expression “was breathing breathlessly” (*ānīd avātām*) is emphasized as a contradiction in terms and self-evidently, as a fact which is inconsistent with everyday life experiences. Therefore *That One* (*tād ēkam*) attains the most perfect realisation of freedom through this violation of everyday limits

and the word *svadhā́* is then used to qualify its activity. It is thus *That One*, “internally contradictory and free”, which actually starts cognising something.

The earlier cosmogonies involving the general domain of Water might have been alluded to by means of the formulaic expression “*apraketám salilám sárvam ā idám*”, employed to express the primeval form of the world in the third verse, while the formula “darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning” (*táma āsīt támasā gūḷhám ágre*) evokes a vague domain integrating the precreative state and the initial creative stages. *Tucchyénābhvāpīhitam* is segmented in two ways, namely including the word *ābhū́* in the sense of “that which is about to be”, and *ābhū́* “that which is not, that which is empty, void”. The contradiction between opposites would thus change from the coexistence of the previous stanza to this simultaneous potentiality of *That One* which divides itself in the void, and what is about to be. In fact this latter part of reality which does not yet exist at this creative stage finally comes into being “thanks to the power of heat” (*tápasās [...]* *mahinā́*), whose image evokes the concept of light and the current possibility of cognising which is strictly connected to it. Unfortunately this formidable transition from a binomial nature to a sort of *śleṣa* (a *śliṣṭam bhinnapadaprāyam* according to Dandin’s classification) relies on the mere supposition that the second meaning of *ābhū́* as ‘void’ actually dates back to such a high chronology (cf. the contribution by Daniele Maggi, *Sul “vuoto” in Ṛgvedasamhitā* X.129.3c. In: “Studi Linguistici in onore di Roberto Gusmani”, Alessandria 2006, vol. 2, pp. 1011-22, and bibliography quoted there). The only (double) RV occurrence which has been compared is indeed RV X.27.1; 4 (see p. 68 in the book under review here).

In the fourth stanza we discover that the desire (*kā́ma*) of *That One* is directed towards the heated part. Then *That One* creates those who will cognise this object: these are the poets described in the second hemistich. They can be understood as a manifestation of the subjective power of *That One* within creation. Moreover, Jurewicz explains that it is *That One* who acts upon itself within the poets, as they focus upon their hearts:

in this way, through its manifested aspects, *That One* divides itself into the subject and object of cognition. The description activates the general domain of Procreation by use of *rétas* (semen), with *kā́ma* as “sexual desire” and *bá́ndhu* as “kinship with mother”. Here the sentence “desire firstly came upon that which was the first semen of thought/ mind” (*kā́mas tá́d ágre sá́m avartatá́dhi má́naso ré́taḥ práthamám yád á́sīt*) is classified as a formulaic expression. In the following stanza, the poet’s cognitive process is presented in the more concrete shape of a sunrise, by means of the supposed formulaic expression *tiraścī́no ví́tato raśmír eṣā́m*. The R̥gvedic conceptualisation of the Earth and the Sky in terms of a woman and a man might have been recalled here: from their coitus, i.e. from the night, the Sun originates as their child. Gods are presumed to be the next subjective manifestation of *That One* and possibly the actual recipient of the hymn is himself requested to repeat the creative activity of *That One* (and of the first poet).

Lastly in the seventh stanza, the composer of the hymn wonders about the object of his cognition, which Jurewicz proposes to interpret as a *brahmodya*, which in the former hemistich formulates a question about the source and nature of creation and in the latter it singles out who should answer, i.e. the poet who takes part in the competition referred to as *asyá́dhyakṣaḥ paramé vyòman* ‘its eye-witness in the highest heaven’. With this regard Jurewicz (quoting the interpretation by Thompson 1997 of the RV 1.164.34-5) proposes that *brahmán* does not necessarily hint at priesthood as such, but rather at the man who solves the riddle. *That One* who can repeat its creative activity thus manifests itself in a particular human being. In this way, the answer to the questions addressed in the last two stanzas can be given every time by an actual human being realising a particular cognitive act.

3. As shown in the analysis of this hymn, Jurewicz believes that the role of the source domains referring to the experience of everyday life is to make abstract concepts easier to be understood and allow the recipient to see the sequence of events and the nature of the process. Accordingly, the scenario of

expansion of the Indo-Aryan speakers into the Punjab is an important defining event in Jurewicz's reconstruction of Vedic metaphorical speculation. The protagonists long for some goods, which are possessed by enemies and as a consequence are substantially inaccessible, since they are hindered by various kinds of enclosures and obstacles. Enemies are thus associated with the darkness where goods seem to be hidden and excluded both from their possession and from their real cognition itself. As a third step of this cursory thought-association series, the "lack of cognition" as well as the "lack of speech and lack of rituals and rules" is mapped onto the enemies themselves, so that they are conceived as sub-human beings. Nevertheless they are also praised as superhuman beings, because they are the owners of the goods which are longed for. The conquest of the foreign land which as a source-domain corresponds to the image of the enclosure which is broken, of the hidden treasure which is discovered and of its guardian who is killed, has as its target domain the creative and cognitive act, which is performed by a man who has to arrange an unknown space according to his specific life experiences (and rules).

The identification of Agni with *That One* of the *Nāsadīya* Hymn is of course a fundamental aspect of Jurewicz's interpretation. The creative activity can be conceived in terms of the procreation of fire, but at the same time Agni can be conceived in the sense of a human being (a poet). The recipient can also see the creation of the poets as the result of cosmic transformations understood in terms of the general domains of Procreation: he is expected to integrate the concepts of *That One* and Agni with both input spaces of the production of fire and human behaviour. He will see "the manifestation of *That One* as the self-ignition of fire and as the birth of the poet", his growth and his conquest of cognition.

4. Indeed, the Child of the Waters (*apāṁ nāpāt*) is the "philosophical model" which really gives a full account of the contradictory and autonomous essence of Fire, as the almost perfect image of self-transformation which Cognition has to be. This is mainly elaborated in ṚV 2.35 and is also involved in

some single stanzas of the tenth *maṇḍala*. It basically relies on the idea of the light which arises from darkness. The waters which are the symbol of darkness are the mothers of Fire which manifests itself as the Sun in the morning. It is depicted as a calf milked by waters which are cows, although it is also incestuously a bull conceiving the embryo in the waters (cows), i.e. he is a husband of the waters. In turn, the image of a bull activates the common metaphorical identification with the rain-cloud. The recipient is thus expected to simultaneously visualize both Agni's cosmic movements, i.e. upwards, typical of sunrise, and viceversa downwards, occurring when it rains. Agni is a free agent who goes beyond cosmic and social rules. The already emphasized term *svadhā* which seems to hint at the Somic beverage but literally denotes "own will, self-determination" consistently constitutes the food of Agni (RV 1.144.2).

Another strictly connected topic is the identity of Agni with Varuṇa (RV 7.88.2) and other gods and in this regard the analysis of hymn RV 10.124 advanced by Jurewicz is very interesting. She aims to show that the hymn can be understood as cognitive transformations of Agni who acts through Varuṇa, Indra and other gods in his manifested forms. The Author proposes her interpretation as the dialogue between a sacrificer who summons Agni and Agni who responds to his appeal. Nevertheless, Jurewicz stresses the fact that R̥gvedic poets either failed in their attempt to fully identify other gods with Agni or did not want to carry it out completely and, as an historical consequence, the gods preserved their independence to a large extent. Eventually, the only R̥gvedic concept of a god which became metaphysically productive was the concept of Agni conceived as an internally contradictory reality.

To sum up, the whole complexity of metaphors reconstructed by Jurewicz around this concept of Fire by means of the patterns and terminology supplied by cognitive linguistics is really convincing and extremely helpful. We only wonder why the Author, even though her object of inquiry is a literary text, seems to strictly adhere to Lakoff's theory, instead of paying more attention to the specificity of literary metaphors, as has

recently seemed to be suggested by the explosion of interest in cognitive approaches to literature over the past few years. Note e.g. the thoroughly literary exemplification (based on Tennyson's work) of metaphor taxonomy advanced by Gerard Steen, *Three kinds of Metaphor in Discourse* (in: *Metaphor and Discourse*, edited by A. Musolff-Jörg Zinken. New York 2009, pp. 25-39).

Additionally, as far as the historical perspective is concerned, the reconstruction of the supposed link between the Ṛgvedic concept of heat and fire and, on the other hand, the upaniṣadic concept of *ātman* and Buddha's *praṭīyasamutpāda*, is really intriguing. The Author already explained her historical reconstruction in some thought-provoking articles, such as *The Fiery Self. The Ṛgvedic roots of the Upaniṣadic concept of ātman*, in: *Teaching on India in Central and Eastern Europe. Contributions to the 1st Central & Eastern European Indological Conference on Regional Cooperation (Warsaw, 15-17 September 2005)*, edited by Danuta Stasik and Anna Trynkowska, Warszawa 2007, pp. 123-37, and *Playing with fire: the praṭīyasamutpāda from the perspective of Vedic thought*, in: *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 26 (2000), pp. 77-103. According to this interpretation, it should deal with a diachronically regular development of the original idea, i.e. a sort of unorthodox response to older Vedic cosmogonies. Of course according to an alternative hypothesis, the Ṛgvedic speculative horizon, imagery included, could instead depend on a brāhmaṇic reform which might have been the outcome of a clash between two distinct branches of the immigrant Indo-Āryan population (supposed on the basis of Parpola's 1983 two-wave theory), reconsidered in the light of the late-Vedic fresco recently painted by Bronkhorst 2007 and of the relevant criticisms arising especially from his innovative relative and absolute chronologies (see, e.g., Witzel 2009). As a consequence, the continuity that Jurewicz highlighted here and explained according to a well known pattern of historical interpretation inaugurated by Richard Gombrich, *How Buddhism Began*, London 1964, should be interpreted in a quite

different way, more specifically as a trace of the one of the two supposed distinct traditions.

Whatever the historical reconstruction pattern adopted, the whole comparison which points out the relevant *anvaya*- and *vyatireka*- details analysed here and elsewhere by Joanna Jurewicz is a precious work which must henceforth become an essential starting point for every serious analysis of metaphors from a diachronic perspective.

Moreno Dore and Tiziana Pontillo