

much of the experimentation, entertainment, networking and also spying took place. In the footsteps of Paula Findlen, Bertucci highlights the contribution of outstanding women of science to the ongoing debate. A strong paradox emerges from the author's account of eighteenth-century natural philosophy: an almost unbridgeable opposition between love for the truth and love for the marvellous.

In chapter five *Viaggio* takes an almost unexpected turn. Bertucci has thoroughly researched Nollet's travel notes in his *Journal du voyage de Piemont et d'Italie en 1749*. Large parts of the manuscript are devoted not to natural philosophy but to silk manufacturing. Apart from scientific enquiry, the Abbé appears to have had an unofficial reason for visiting Italy: industrial espionage. The report on the silkworm industry presented to the Académie would gain Nollet a professorship in physic at the Collège de Navarre in Paris. Bertucci states that these data remained hidden in Nollet's diary for centuries and are now published for the first time. In an academic world that seeks for novelty, the reader could easily be misled into thinking that the author is the first to refer to Nollet's mission. This is not exactly the case and unfortunately, in her extensive bibliography, Bertucci forgets to cite a 1993 article by Mary Agnes Burnistone Brazier (*J. Hist Neurosci.*, 2) where the silk affair is also briefly mentioned.

A metaphorical thread of silk or, as Bertucci states, a silk road, makes of this monograph a pleasurable whole. Given the sources and the chronological format chosen, the book could easily have become a geographically compartmentalized account of successive stages of six months' travel. Bertucci has magisterially avoided that pitfall. In the historical circumstances she presents, scientific and market laws are tightly intertwined. The author's wide-angled perspective makes a book that will surely engage an academic readership by its style and competence. The same style, the beautiful prose and the restricted recourse to analytical

views has certainly the potential to capture the imagination of a much wider an audience.

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Véronique Bouillier and Gilles Tarabout (eds), *Images du corps dans le monde hindou*, Paris, CNRS Editions, 2002, pp. 509, illus., €42.00 (paperback 2-271-06060-5).

Beautifully illustrated and organized with great strategy, this collection of essays is dedicated to the study of "the body as cultural object" (p. 9) in the Hindu world, from the disciplines of history, anthropology, and sociology. The essays provide a wide range of ideas about the body in a variety of contexts, and in its animate and, in the end, inanimate forms. In their introduction, Véronique Bouillier and Gilles Tarabout take great care to situate their collection within the growing bibliography of books dedicated to the study of the body in India. They include a useful overview of the body in the anthropological theories of Louis Dumont (in ideological terms) and of McKim Marriott (in transactive terms), and in doing so, point out that in both camps, the body is "relegated to the margins of analysis" (p. 23). They argue instead for an understanding of the body in its multiple contexts. They describe their book as one which, through its various approaches, will reveal "the reality (or the realities) of bodies" in Hindu India, demonstrated in "popular oral traditions, bodily practices, ritualized or not, in legal statutes" and so on, that will collectively show "continuities between traditional textual knowledge and observed practices", as well as disjunctures in such a way as to "avoid reductionism" (p. 25). As they write, "there is not just one unique body, nor is there just one way of talking about it" (p. 26).

The book is divided into four major segments, each consisting of four discrete articles, and ends with a coda on the body in death. The first segment, titled 'Logiques

descriptives', begins with an article by Francis Zimmermann, who identifies two phases in the study of Hindu bodies. He describes the first phase as the emergence of a "Hindu science, formulated at the birth—under the pen of Indian intellectuals themselves—of an indigenous orientalism of nationalist inspiration, which emerged in the public colonial space" (pp. 49–50). The second phase is characterized by "a new militant orientalism, forged in the West", by westerners infatuated "with Hindu spirituality and the political movement of the counter-culture" (pp. 50–1).

While Zimmermann writes of plurality and change in approaches to the study of the Hindu body, Dominik Wujastyk directs us to plural images of the body that can be found in the Hindu tradition itself. Michael Angot meanwhile discusses linguistic structures, especially noun-noun juxtapositions, and the making of meaning through mystical and ritual correspondence in early Sanskrit religious literature. The last article of this section is set in contemporary Kerala. Gilles Tarabout addresses the phenomenon of "double impurity"; in this case, that of an astrologer's body because of a birth in his family, and the resulting sympathetic pollution of the "body" of the local temple.

The second section, 'Univers esotériques', is opened by André Padoux with an essay titled 'Corps et cosmos', which discusses the *yoga's* body in history. Although largely descriptive, this article serves as a lucid, basic introduction for the other three in this segment and also stands in instructive contrast with Angot's preceding essay. David G White moves the conversation on to the specifics of textual description, his contribution being centred on a translation of the third chapter of a *haṭha-yoga* treatise, Goraksanātha's *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati*. Richard A Darmon's essay deals with the intimate specifics of actual tantric practice, including a survey of the valorization of semen in classical texts and on into the tantric textual corpus, in which is found an explicit association of ejaculation with death. Finally, White's

homologies between the human body and the macrocosm come alive in *Bāul* musical and poetic expression in France Bhattacharya's contribution.

The third section begins with Gérard Colas's documentation of the few remaining *araiyar* families of traditional singers and actors, who recite and enact significant portions of the *Divyaprabandham*, a medieval Tamil text. Colas provides an engaging overview of the body's place in Vaisnava practice in South India. Sarasvati Joshi directs our attention to women's "self-regard, for their powers, their bodies, [and] in their relationships with their husbands and in-laws" (p. 315). Josiane Racine then documents bodily practices related to the god Murukan in the environs of Pondicherry. Turning to the world of Bollywood films, Emmanuel Grimaud describes the body of the actor as it is thrust in the midst of "multidimensional negotiations" (p. 371) that hinge on many factors of film production, such as certain types of close-up shots and dance.

The book's final segment, titled 'Constructions sociales', begins with Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky's essay, in which she identifies three levels of stigma associated with the bodies of various castes of leatherworkers: dress, odour, and skin colour. She analyses the leatherworker's body in its mythological contexts. Véronique Bouillier then defines the body as "the medium where punishment is inscribed" (p. 424) and as an "object of the law" (p. 425). She focuses on an 1853 Nepali book of statutes, the *Muluki Ain*, which lists fines imposed for the crime of assaulting someone with chillies in various orifices of the body—the more intimate the orifice, the steeper the fine. Also on aspects of law, Livia Sorrentino-Holden's article is devoted to Indian marriage law, which has been "in a state of constant evolution since Independence" due to tensions between reformers and orthodox requirements (p. 435).

Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella return us to Kerala, where they collected data on questions of "nature and nurture" in an administrative unit in that state's most

important rice-growing region. Their analyses, which emphasize fluidity and interdependence in local ideas about identity, heredity, and personhood, are based on two terms that refer to the qualities of “what is stable and what changes in a person, *janiccu guṇam*—innate or natural qualities, considered to be ‘fixed’—and *samsa guṇam*—changing or worldly qualities, which are fluid and flexible” (p. 470). The volume ends, appropriately enough, with Gilles Grévin’s empirical study of cremation in India and Nepal. Carefully measuring the changing temperatures of the burning bier throughout the process of combustion, he ponders the problem of “the absent body” in the archaeological record.

Read as a whole, these essays interconnect to give the reader an excellent sense of what embodiment means in the Hindu world. We also gain an almost overwhelming sense of the body’s changing history, as well as history’s implications for the body. This volume has great potential as a basic teaching text—I can imagine its becoming a classic, in fact—and I urge the editors to investigate the possibility of publishing an English version, if one is not already in the works.

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Irving L Finkel and, Markham J Geller (eds), *Disease in Babylonia*, Cuneiform Monographs, vol. 36, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2007, pp. viii, 226, €90.00, \$122.00 (hardback 978-90-04-12401-1).

The study of Babylonian medicine has seen rapid development over the last decades and is enjoying increasing attention from a widening circle of scholars, even to the extent that there is now a specialized journal devoted to the subject (*Le Journal des Médecines Cunéiformes*). This development is very much to be welcomed, for the material is rich and of great interest but, due to its limited accessibility, has only partially been exploited. As this volume testifies, the renewed attention

is partly the result of new decipherings and interpretations of the surviving cuneiform texts, but also of more general methodological developments in the discipline of medical history giving rise to new questions being asked about the material—as is reflected here, for example, in the attention given to social and cultural aspects of health care in the ancient Near East, different types of healers, etc.

The volume arose from a conference held in the Wellcome Institute in London in December 1996, although it contains only a selection of the papers presented on that occasion. Regrettably, the long delay in publication has meant that some papers are no longer up to date, although the editors insist that in spite of this the papers in this volume make significant contributions to the study of ancient Babylonian medicine. That is certainly true, for many of the chapters discuss hitherto unpublished material or cover otherwise new territory; and, taken together, they present a fascinating picture of an ancient civilisation’s reactions to disease, its methods of diagnosis and classification, the role of belief in demons, apotropaic ritual and witchcraft in its understanding and treatment of diseases, and its distinctions between different types of healers.

Of the thirteen contributions, only a few can be singled out here. Marten Stol offers a wide-ranging survey of accounts of fever in Babylonia, the vocabulary in which they are referred to (“fire”, “sun-heat”, etc.), their typology, the descriptions of the (other) symptoms that accompany them and the treatments advocated. Nils Heeßel provides an illuminating study of the importance of the *naming* of diseases in the Babylonian texts—amounting to a kind of “managing” or “controlling”—their association with “the hands of the gods” or indeed with specific gods and their attribution to divine wrath. Mark Geller discusses intriguing similarities in humoral and colour schemes—for example, the notion of bile as a pathological entity—between Assyrian and Greek Hippocratic texts about bodily fluids and parts; and J V Kinnier Wilson and E H Reynolds