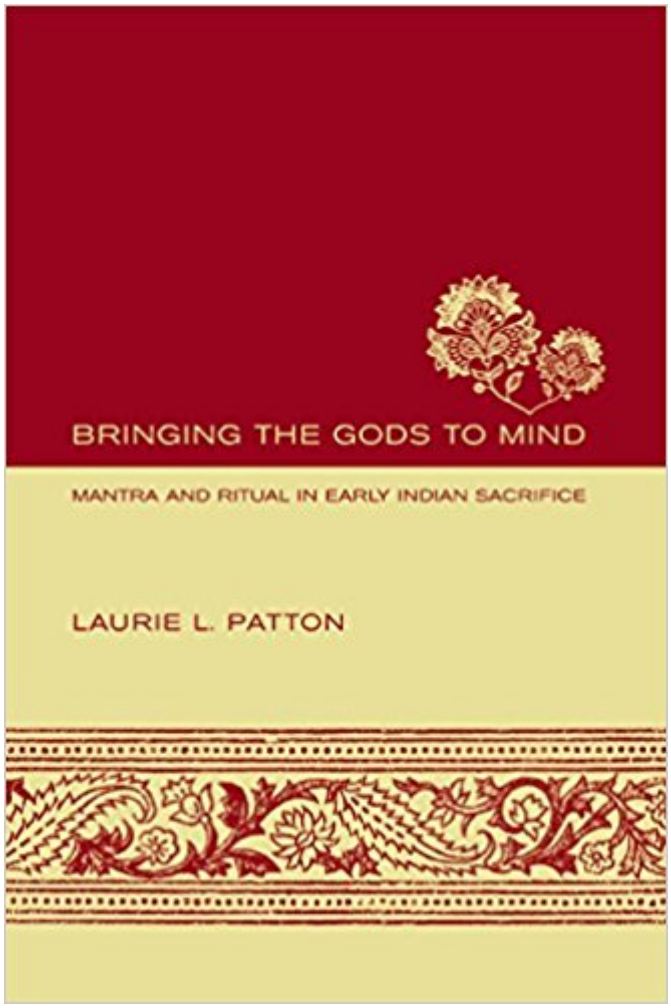
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Bringing The Gods To Mind: Mantra And Ritual In Early Indian Sacrifice



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Synopsis

This elegantly written book introduces a new perspective on Indic religious history by rethinking the role of mantra in Vedic ritual. In Bringing the Gods to Mind, Laurie Patton takes a new look at mantra as "performed poetry" and in five case studies draws a portrait of early Indian sacrifice that moves beyond the well-worn categories of "magic" and "magico-religious" thought in Vedic sacrifice. Treating Vedic mantra as a sophisticated form of artistic composition, she develops the idea of metonymy, or associational thought, as a major motivator for the use of mantra in sacrificial performance. Filling a long-standing gap in our understanding, her book provides a history of the Indian interpretive imagination and a study of the mental creativity and hermeneutic sophistication of Vedic religion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Patton does a remarkable job in opening the worlds of Vedic and Indological study. Enhanced by Patton’s flashes of beauty and humor, the book is sure to become a standard read." - Jeffrey J. Kripal, Rice University; "Bringing the Gods to Mind is extremely important to the field." - Whitney Sanford, Iowa State University"

"In her Bringing The Gods to Mind Laurie Patton employs a rich mixture of theoretical insights to tease out the functions and meanings of the Vedic mantras within their ritual settings. With a deep understanding of not only the Vedic texts but also the later Brahmanical ritual tradition, Patton throws new and fresh light on the socio-religious history of ancient India. This is a pathbreaking

study that will interest not only specialists in Indian religions but also scholars exploring the intersection between word and ritual, between speech and performance. A truly masterly tour-de-force."—Patrick Olivelle, author of The Asrama System and translator of the Upanisads, the Dharmasutras, and the Law Code of Manu"We have long needed a poetic scholar to read Vedic mantra. Laurie Patton has given us a erudite yet highly accessible volume combining her impeccable scholarship with refined aesthetic sensibilities, recreating the meaning of Vedic hymns in the changing contexts of their actual use. Her sensitive readings of texts makes the social contexts of Vedic ritual come to life. "—V.Narayana Rao, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Laurie Patton’s book fills a great need in interpretation of the Vedas and other Vedic scriptures. Interpretations of the Rg Veda and the other Vedas indeed exist in the groundbreaking writings of Sri Aurobindo, but the mantras of the Vedas are cryptic and there is always room for alternate interpretations. This book suffers from several drawbacks. The first is the underlying approach undertaken. The distinction Patton takes between a metaphor and a metonym is interesting, but ultimately inconsequential. As Patton indicates early in the book, the distinction between the two is hazy and subject to heated scholarly debate. She gives her interpretation of the difference, but fails to explain why it matters. Many passages state that Agni and/or Soma roars like a bull. Is there ultimately any relevance whether this is interpreted as a metaphor or a metonym? How, if any, is the meaning changed? Patton does not discuss this point, which is a critical issue since this is a book about how Vedic images are applied in the scriptures. Next, there is the actual discussion on the scholarly debate about metonym. It took more than one-half of the book. The other part concerned the actual "case studies," discussion of the various metaphors present in the Vedas. Then, there is an issue regarding the extent to which Patton made reference to the Vedic scriptures -- the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Srauta Sutras, etc. Patton made extensive reference of these documents and no one doubts the breadth of her scholarship. However, by making such expansive use of the extent Vedic writings, there is a superficiality which undercuts the effectiveness of her discussion. It would have been far better for Patton to have focused on one set of writings or one Veda -- especially, the Rg Veda, is a rich source of metaphor any simile -- rather than produce a discussion which appears to be the result of a shot-gun approach. This is not to say that there are no insights in her book. She has an excellent discussion of the metaphor -- excuse me, metonym, or do I mean metaphor? I’m not sure which one is correct; aww, it doesn’t really matter -- of food, which is much more involved than one would think. But rather than attempt a survey of the entire Vedic corpus to make her thesis -- which is a legitimate one -- Patton is better off concentrating on the Vedas alone,

or the Brahmanas alone, or the Vidhanas alone, instead of providing a superficial discussiions of the metaphors or metonym from all of them. It is impossible for anyone to accomplish what she sets out to do adequately in a two-hundred page book. I am giving her book four stars, and would have given it a lower rating, but for the excellent explanation of those metaphors which were actually discussed and bravely tackling the issue of Vedic interpretation.

OK my husband think it is amazing , it is recommend. so fast, receive it next day . Definitely a good purchase. I was looking for a replacement for my chef's product and this looks to be a really well made product. Its sharp, with a nice weight to it. Will definitely recommend to anyone looking for a good product at a reasonable price.

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