



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

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Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: The Way of the Poet-King: An Edition and Translation of the
Earliest Surviving Work of Classical Kannada Literature

Institution: Unaffiliated

Project Director: Andrew Ollett

Grant Program: Scholarly Editions and Translations Program

Statement of Significance and Impact

The *Way of the Poet-King* is a work of poetics in Kannada, one of India's classical languages, composed at the court of the ninth-century king Amōghavarṣa. It is the earliest Kannada text to survive in manuscript form, and, at the same time, it is a work *about* Kannada: it theorizes the use of the “regional language,” Kannada, as a language of high literature, and shows in detail how all of the expressive resources of Sanskrit—including, most of all, Sanskrit's impressive repertoire of figures of speech—can be used in this newly-theorized vernacular. The *Way* has never been translated into English, and it is relatively untouched by secondary scholarship, whether in English or in Kannada. Partly this is because of the challenges of its language, and partly because of the subtleties of its content. Hence its coherent vision of a literary vernacular and its interventions in the history of Indian poetics have largely gone unappreciated. We offer the first English translation of the *Way*, with a detailed commentary, along with a new critical edition that makes substantial improvements on existing editions. Our translation will provide a foundation for future research, not only on the *Way* itself but also on the rich tradition of Kannada literature it inaugurates, as well as the wider field of South Indian vernacular literature. We also hope that our translation will reshape the study of Indian literature and poetics more generally by bringing Kannada into the picture as a major language of original thought. Finally, as one of the first explicit theorizations of the vernacular in India, the *Way* will be important to future comparative research on vernacular languages in the fields of literary history, cultural history, and linguistic anthropology.

The Way of the Poet King: An Edition and Translation of the Earliest Surviving Work of Classical Kannada Literature

Narrative

Substance and context

We propose to complete a new critical edition, and the first-ever complete English translation, of the *Way of the Poet-King*, a milestone in the history of Indian literature that has so far been completely inaccessible to all but the most specialized scholars of India's regional languages. The *Way of the Poet-King* (*Kavirājamārgaṇ*) was composed around the middle of the ninth century at the court of one of India's most storied kings, Amōghavarṣa, in what is now a dusty village in northern Karnataka. Amōghavarṣa exemplified the classical Indian ideal of the "poet-king" by fostering a vibrant intellectual and literary community. But whereas most of the output of Amōghavarṣa's court was written in Sanskrit and Prakrit, the premier languages of cultural production across most of southern Asia, the *Way* was different: it was written Kannada, the regional language of Karnataka. Indeed, the *Way* is the earliest Kannada text that survives in manuscript form, perhaps by a hundred years: although its precise role in the history of Kannada literature has yet to be worked out, it undoubtedly stands at the beginning of the tradition of courtly, "classical" poetry in Kannada. Moreover, it was also *about* Kannada, and specifically about how poets writing in Kannada might achieve the kind of greatness that had long been considered the exclusive purview of poets writing in Sanskrit and Kannada. With this goal in mind, the *Way* offered a comprehensive vision of Kannada as a literary vernacular that explained and demonstrated, in great detail, how to utilize the expressive resources of Sanskrit in this new

literary language.

The *Way*'s central framework, borrowed with significant alterations from earlier Sanskrit texts, was that of “figures” (*alaṃkāras*, literally “ornaments”), the specific features of both language and meaning that imparted beauty to a literary work. The first of three chapters is dedicated to a long and programmatic statement about literature in general and Kannada literature in particular, including a famous definition of Kannada by reference to geographical landmarks. It then includes guidelines for how to combine Sanskrit and Kannada words, a long discussion of literary faults, and an overview of the principles of grammar which applies to both Sanskrit and Kannada—ingeniously, we might add, given that these languages belong to completely different families and have completely different grammatical principles. The second chapter is devoted to “figures of language,” which includes meter, alliteration, something we might call “texture” (*guṇa*), as well as the notoriously difficult forms of “pattern poetry.” This chapter also introduces a number of grammatical licenses that poets may avail themselves of. The third chapter treats “figures of meaning,” which includes several dozen distinct figures such as simile (*upame*), metaphor (*rūpakam*), and so on.

The authorship of the *Way* is one of the oldest controversies in Kannada scholarship. Most contemporary scholars, however, follow the colophons of some manuscripts in attributing it to Śrīvijaya, who produced the work with the approval of Amōghavarṣa himself, whose name recurs throughout the text as an authority, and who is likely the *Poet-King* named in the title. We consider the text to have a composite authorial voice, having been “authored” by Śrīvijaya and “authorized” by Amōghavarṣa.¹ This makes it read as much like a royal edict as a work of

¹This is also the position presented by a short film about the *Way of the Poet-King* produced by the Central Institute

poetics. But the *Way* does not simply pronounce what the “rules of the game” of literature are. It represents a complex negotiation with existing norms and models of literature. The result is a new system of norms, a new “way,” that might have needed Amōghavarṣa’s authority to take shape but would eventually stand on its own terms.

The importance of the *Way of the Poet-King* lies principally in three areas: the history of Kannada literature, the history of vernacular literature more generally, and the history of Indian poetics. We will go through these three in turn, with special attention to the kinds of texts in each area that the *Way of the Poet-King* ought to be *read together with*, but isn’t because of the lack of suitable editions and translations.

Since the publication of the first edition of the *Way* by K. B. Pathak in 1898, scholars have recognized that the *Way* is, in some sense, where Kannada literature starts.² We say “in some sense” because there were certainly Kannada texts before the *Way*. Indeed, there is a relatively large corpus of Kannada inscriptions that dates between the fifth and the ninth centuries. Moreover, there is evidence that some narrative literature was composed in Kannada during this time, although all of it is now lost. Some of this evidence comes from the *Way* itself, which refers to these compositions as “Old Kannada” (*paḷagannaḍam*). The *Way* is the earliest Kannada work of which manuscripts survive. Thus its composition is what the medievalist Paul Zumthor would call a moment of “manifestation” for Kannada, when the tradition becomes visible to us in the present moment.³ But whereas in many traditions this moment of “manifestation” follows a period of “formation” that is all but invisible to us, in the case of

of Indian Languages in Mysore for its *Bhāṣā Mandākinī* program directed by Veerappa Maralawadi.

²See Narasimhacharya (1988: 1), Narasimhacharya (2015: 18–24), Ramachandran and Viveka Rai (2015: 35–40).

³Zumthor (1992 [1972]: 35).

Kannada, the *Way* represents a moment of “formation” as well: it reveals to us the deliberate and self-conscious formation of Kannada as a literary language at Amōghavarṣa’s court. The style of Kannada that it inaugurates took shape, more than a century later, in the “classics” of Kannada literature by the poets Pampa, Ranna, Ponna, and Janna. Pampa’s *Victory of Valiant Arjuna* (*Vikramārjunavijayaṃ*) and *History from the Beginning* (*Ādipurāṇaṃ*), for example, are natural “companion texts” to the *Way of the Poet-King*. The *Way*’s concern with articulating the systematic knowledge needed to compose literature would also be followed by a spate of philological works devoted to Kannada metrics, lexicography, poetics, and grammar. Thus, for example, Nāgavarman II’s *Analysis of Literature* (*Kāvyaśālōkaṇaṃ*, tenth century), Kēśirāja’s *Jewel-Mirror of Language* (*Śabdamaṇidarpaṇaṃ*, 1260), and Bhaṭṭākalaṅka Dēva’s *Teaching on the Kannada Language* (*Karṇāṭakaśabdānuśāsana*, 1604) are also “companion texts” to the *Way*, which overlap in part with the *Way*’s thematic concerns and silently draw from it as a source. In a word, the *Way of the Poet-King* had an enormous influence on the history of Kannada literature and its forms of knowledge that endures up to the present day, as a recent book by the poet K. V. Subbanna demonstrates.⁴

The conscious creation of a literary vernacular at Amōghavarṣa’s court has implications beyond the history of Kannada. As Sheldon Pollock has forcefully shown, it represents one of the opening salvos in a process of “vernacularization” that would radically transform cultural and political life throughout South Asia.⁵ In Pollock’s argument, Kannada instantiates a larger pattern in the realms where Sanskrit had been the dominant cultural and political language. At first,

⁴See Subbanna (2004).

⁵Pollock (2004; 2006: 330–379).

regional languages start to appear in inscriptions for mundane and “documentary” purposes, and subsequently they take on the “expressive” functions of Sanskrit. This shift is guided not by universalistic laws of culture, but by deliberate choices to “remake” the vernacular on the model of Sanskrit. In the case of Kannada, these choices are documented in the *Way of the Poet-King*. Pollock has compared these processes to the emergence of vernacular literature in medieval Europe, with compelling results for a transhistorical theory of vernacularization. The most important point about this theory is that vernaculars do not just happen; they need to be made. From this perspective, the companion texts of the *Way* include other inaugural statements of vernacular textuality in India, such as the fourteenth-century *Playful Ornament* (*Līlātilakam*) about Malayalam, or the thirteenth-century *Prakrit Pingala* in an early variety of Hindi. They also include, however, statements on vernacular textuality from elsewhere in the world, such as the *New Poetry* (*Poetria Nova*) by Geoffrey of Vinsauf (early thirteenth century), as well as Dante’s celebrated “On Vernacular Eloquence” (*De vulgari eloquentia*) and his *Convivio* (late thirteenth century).

Finally, the *Way* is a work of poetics. The *Way*’s place in the history of Indian poetics is already secured by the well-known fact that it adapts much of its treatment of figures from an earlier Sanskrit work, the *Mirror of Literature* (*Kāvyaḍarśa*) by Daṇḍin (ca. 700). What is less widely known is that the *Way*, among its other “firsts,” is the earliest in a long series of works—in Sanskrit, Pali, Sinhala, Tibetan, and Tamil—that critically and creatively engage with Daṇḍin’s *Mirror*. Thus the *Way* is a crucial part of the reception history of the most influential work of poetics in Asia.⁶ And while it is *cliché* to say that adaptations always innovate upon their source

⁶This is the focus of a collaborative research project headed by Yigal Bronner at the Hebrew University, discussed

material, the *Way* makes a number of truly surprising and sometimes polemical changes, in addition to treating literary phenomena that are particular to Kannada. Some of these changes are meant to accommodate Kannada practice within a theory based on Sanskrit (see **sample 2**). Some of them, however, come out of the *Way*'s disagreement with the principles of the theory itself (see **sample 3**). The *Way*'s companion texts in this area are its own intertexts in the realm of Indian poetics and literary theory: Daṇḍin's *Mirror*, Bhāmaha's *Ornament of Literature* (*Kāvyālaṃkāra*), and Ānandavardhana's *Light on Suggestion* (*Dhvanyālōka*). The *Way* also served as a model for subsequent Kannada works in the field of poetics, including *Udayāditya's Ornament* (*Udayādityālaṃkāraṃ*, twelfth century) *Mādhava's Ornament* (*Mādhavālaṃkāraṃ*, fifteenth century).

Despite its importance in these three areas, the *Way of the Poet-King* is underserved by scholarship. There is no complete translation of the text into English, or, as far as we are aware, into any other language besides modern Kannada. The text has been edited multiple times, as discussed below (p. 12), but only one is based on a first-hand review of all of the manuscript evidence, and none of them thoroughly documents all of the variant readings. Nor do any of them appear to be based on a principled selection among variant readings. What's more, we strongly believe that one must understand the text in order to reliably edit it, and in several cases it is clear that the editor has followed an inferior reading simply because it occurred in his "best text." Parallel texts, such as Daṇḍin's *Mirror*, have not been systematically exploited for their critical value. There is thus scope for a new edition, based on a fresh collation of the manuscripts and a thorough appraisal of the *Way*'s Sanskrit sources. This edition will synthesize both all of the below (p. 14).

documentary evidence for the text, currently dispersed across three manuscripts located in two different Indian states, and about a half-dozen printed editions, as well as all of the scholarly discussion on the text, which is written in both English and Kannada.

There is not only scope, but in our view a serious scholarly need, for a complete English translation and study of the text. The programmatic passages of its first chapter have often been translated, usually loosely or intuitively; the nineteen verses selected and translated in Ramachandran and Viveka Rai's recent book are typical in this respect. We believe, however, that such translations are not only very partial, but also trivializing: to understand precisely what the *Way* accomplishes with each verse, one needs to understand the technical language that is developed over the course of the entire work, as we explain below (p. 18). Moreover, we believe that many verses of the *Way*, above all its examples, cannot be understood properly without a parallel Kannada text and explanatory annotations.

Presently, the *Way of the Poet-King* is accessible only to a handful of scholars. Our translation would open it up to a wide range of readers, but the audience we principally have in mind—the audience who needs the text the most—are scholars of premodern Indian literature. India was home to one of the largest and most productive literary cultures in the premodern world, but the variety and difficulty of its languages poses considerable practical challenges in studying it in its totality. The study of India's "classical vernaculars," including Kannada, Telugu, and Malayalam, is now recovering after a long period of neglect, but there is still a severe dearth of studies of even the most significant texts. We hope that our translation will not only allow scholars of other traditions to have a look inside the inaugural work of Kannada literature, but actually encourage these scholars to learn Kannada.

We expect that the *Way*, in our edition and translation, will have a significant impact on the three areas above. First, it should open up new avenues of research in the history of Kannada literature. One overarching question in this area is just what kind of influence the *Way* had over subsequent literary production. In some respects, classical Kannada follows the norms laid out by the *Way*; in other respects, it doesn't. This pattern raises the general question of the relation between literary theory and literary practice.⁷ Second, vernacularity has mostly been studied in the context of medieval Europe, but there is growing interest in conceiving of it, and historicizing it, as a global phenomenon.⁸ The "from-above" quality of the *Way of the Poet-King*, and its patent association with an imperial court, offer an alternative perspective to the "from-below" narratives of vernacular literature that once dominated the field. Moreover, the *Way* represents a constellation of language, culture, and power which both aestheticist and functionalist approaches fail to account for, in our view, but which may be elucidated by comparative research. Finally, we hope that the *Way* will reframe "Sanskrit poetics" as "Indian poetics." That is, we believe its presentation and its innovation warrant its inclusion not only in the *reception* history of an Indian poetics that is mostly written in Sanskrit, but also in the history proper of an Indian poetics that extends over multiple linguistic traditions.

⁷Discussed by Pollock (2004).

⁸See, for example, Cohen (2011).

Bibliographic Essay

B.L. Rice discovered a manuscript of the *Way of the Poet-King* in 1883, and with Rice's support, K. B. Pathak published the *editio princeps* of the *Way* in 1898 in the *Bibliotheca Carnatica* series. The turn of the century was a high-water mark for Kannada philology. Missionaries such as E.P. Rice (B.L. Rice's brother) and Ferdinand Kittel joined Indian scholars such as Pathak and R. Narasimhacharya, and British civil servants such as B. L. Rice and J.P. Fleet, in producing dozens of editions, lexicons, literary histories, and studies. Thus Pathak's edition was released to a learned and disputatious audience, and generated a level of engagement and controversy that Kannada scholarship has not seen since.⁹

Pathak's edition is the basis for all subsequent editorial work on the *Way*. He did not work directly from palm-leaf manuscripts, but availed himself of transcripts. We have identified the three palm-leaf manuscripts that were the originals of his transcripts: ms. K125 (complete) and K110 (incomplete), both held at the Kuvempu Institute of Kannada Studies at the University of Mysore, and ms. K1250 (incomplete), held at the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library at Madras University.¹⁰ No further palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Way* have since come to light. Our preliminary work supports Pathak's conclusion that the text of K1250 is superior, but a thorough recension of the manuscripts remains to be done. Pathak's edition reports only a selection of the variant readings, and omits larger-level variation, such as differences in the ordering of verses,

⁹See, for example, the detailed back-and-forth between Fleet (1904*a, b*) and Pathak (1905).

¹⁰This manuscript appears on the G.O.M.L. handlist for the Kannada Mackenzie manuscripts. These manuscripts collected by Colonel Colin Mackenzie, the first surveyor general of India, have had a long and complicated circulation history. The collection was sold to the British Government upon Mackenzie's death after which the vernacular language texts were sent back to India to the Oriental Research Institute in Mysore. Part of the collection was then sent to the G.O.M.L. in Madras, and the other part was deposited in the manuscript library at the Kuvempu Institute of Kannada Studies, University of Mysore.

without comment.

The text was once again edited in 1930 by A. Venkata Rao and H. Sesha Aiyangar for the Madras University Kanarese series. M. V. Seetharamaiah published his edition in 1968 and revised it in 1975; it has since been reprinted many times. Seetharamaiah's edition has a selection of variant readings in an appendix, but besides being very selective, unfortunately there appear to be a number of mistakes as well. The text was edited once again by K. Krishnamurthy, the renowned scholar of Sanskrit poetics, in 1983. His edition, which also includes a translation in modern Kannada, has the most exhaustive list of variant readings. The most recent edition is that of T. V. Venkatachalashastry, the world's leading authority of premodern Kannada literature, published in 2011. As noted above, no complete English translations have been published. R. V. S. Sundaram has recently published a modern Kannada translation of the *Way* that we have not yet been able to consult.

Around the time of its discovery, scholars used the *Way* to speak about the relationship between Sanskrit and Kannada as languages and as literary traditions. By this time, the traditional view that made Sanskrit a "mother" to all of the regional languages of India had been replaced by the model proffered by historical linguistics, wherein Sanskrit and Kannada belonged to two mutually-distinct language families, namely, Indo-European and Dravidian. The *Way* encouraged scholars to think of Sanskrit, once again, as a "foster-mother" to Kannada, and by the 1920s this relationship had become common sense.¹¹ At the same time, however, Kannada was increasingly drawn into the ideology of nationalism, and in particular, the ethnicized and politically salient view of "language families" that pitted Aryan and Dravidian culture against

¹¹Rice (1921: 10).

each other.¹² This framework, although now seen as quaint and perhaps *völkisch*, continues to influence the way in which students and scholars learn, and learn about, the Kannada language.

After decades in which the only scholarship on the *Way* was written in Kannada, Sheldon Pollock reintroduced the scholarly world to the text by making it “Exhibit A” in his arguments about vernacularization beginning in 1998.¹³ Partly in response to Pollock’s work, and partly due to increasing attention to South Indian literature and history inspired by David Shulman’s work on Tamil and Telugu, a new research agenda has emerged regarding the precise nature of vernacularization in South India, and the interconnected history of the regional vernaculars.

History of the project and its productivity

Starting around 2012, Yigal Bronner of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem began to organize a collaborative research project devoted to the impact of Sanskrit poetics, and in particular Daṇḍin’s *Mirror of Literature*, on a staggering number of literary traditions throughout Asia. Since it is the earliest text known to us that engages directly with the *Mirror of Literature*, the *Way of the Poet-King* was a central focus of this project from its inception. The first formal meeting of this project was at the Madison South Asia conference in 2012, where Sarah Pierce Taylor served as a discussant on the *Way*. This first meeting brought together a limited group of scholars who work on Daṇḍin’s reception in Sri Lanka, South India, and Tibet. The next phase of the project was a three-month intensive workshop at the Israel Institute of Advanced Study in Jerusalem during the fall of 2015. During this period, a core group of scholars met weekly to read

¹²See, for example, Mugali (1975: 8): “At this juncture Sanskrit came to Kannada like a beacon-light of Aryan culture and lighted its path. It had a developed vocabulary, ready at hand to meet the demands of religions, philosophy, science and myth.”

¹³See Pollock (1998; 2006).

Daṇḍin's *Mirror* and its adaptations in Sinhala, Kannada, Tamil, and Tibetan. Sarah Pierce Taylor and H.V. Nagaraja Rao guided the group through selections of the *Way*. Andrew Ollett was invited to participate as a specialist of Prakrit. This three-month period culminated in a conference in December 2015, which included a larger group of scholars who spoke about Daṇḍin's reception in the Bay of Bengal, Burma, China, Mongolia, Tibet, South East Asia, South India, and Sri Lanka. The collaborators in this project are now preparing their contributions to a book, edited by Bronner, called *A Lasting Vision: Dandin's Mirror in the World of Asian Letters*. Ollett, Pierce Taylor, and Gil Ben-Herut have jointly written the chapter on Kannada and the *Way of the Poet-King* for this book, which is still in production.

In working together on this chapter, we, the collaborators on this project, have found it useful to read or re-read the relevant sections of the *Way of the Poet-King*. But as our readings progressed, we learned that all of its sections were relevant. The most urgent desideratum for the study of Daṇḍin's reception in Karnataka, as well as for the study of early Kannada literature in general, was a book-length translation and study of the *Way*. We also discovered that the *Way of the Poet-King* requires its readers be completely fluent in Sanskrit as well as Kannada, and that while such readers are very rare today, together the two of us almost add up to one of "the members of the court of king Nṛpatuṅga." Ollett brings a knowledge of Sanskrit and its poetics, including the *Way's* major sources, and Pierce Taylor brings a close familiarity with Kannada and its various stylistic modes. In the process, we have both learned an immense amount from each other and from the *Way*, and our complementary strengths have shown us with much greater clarity what the *Way's* central concerns were and how it adapted and revised its sources to meet those concerns.

So far, we have translated 100 of the *Way*'s 544 verses, and expect to complete the first chapter—another 50 verses—before the proposed start of the project in October 2017. We plan to finish our edition and translation and all of the accompanying materials during the year between October 2017 and October 2018. We anticipate that any work remaining to be done after the end of the project will be related to the work's publication, and will not require NEH support.

Collaborators

The principal collaborators are Andrew Ollett and Sarah Pierce Taylor. Ollett will be the project director, and Pierce Taylor the co-project director. Ollett is currently a postdoctoral researcher at Harvard University's Society of Fellows, and Pierce Taylor is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Religious Studies at Oberlin College. Some explanation is required for why we are applying as unaffiliated researchers rather than through our institutions. First, both of us have temporary appointments: Ollett's will expire before the project is scheduled to end, and Pierce Taylor's will expire before it even begins. Second, neither of us has the institutional support to receive federal grants from our respective institutions. As a Junior Fellow, Ollett is allowed to be a principal investigator on federal grants, but because of his lack of affiliation with a school or department at Harvard, there is nobody who could administer the grant in the event that it is awarded.

Pierce Taylor has spent her entire academic career studying premodern Kannada literature. Her doctoral training was at the University of Pennsylvania, but she has spent several years in Karnataka learning the language through the American Institute of Indian Studies Kannada program. During her dissertation research, she read with some of the leading lights of Kannada scholarship including R.V.S. Sundaram, E.N. Tharanatha, and T.V. Venkatachala Sastry.

As part of learning Old Kannada, she began reading *The Way of the Poet-King* in 2011 and has continued to engage with the text at conferences and workshops. Her dissertation, *Aesthetics of Sovereignty*, focuses on Jain Sanskrit and Kannada writings from ninth- and tenth-century Kannada-speaking region. While not an explicitly Jain text, the *Way* is central to the narrative of Jain engagement with the Kannada language in the ways that it reflects the broader Jain literary milieu in which it was produced. Pierce Taylor’s current monograph project *Writing Out of Existence: Religion, Literature, and the Emergence of a Regional Language* more explicitly takes up the relationship between Jainism and the cultivation of Kannada language and literature.

Ollett’s work has focused on literary languages in premodern India, and especially on the “division of labor” between Sanskrit and Prakrit. Kannada grammar played a small role in his dissertation project, *Language of the Snakes*, as one of the traditions that took up the concepts and categories of Prakrit. Before he began reading the *Way of the Poet-King* with Pierce Taylor, in connection with the project discussed below, he was one of the many people who knew it only from Sheldon Pollock’s work. He has also spent several years involved with digital humanities projects in Indian studies, including [SARIT](#) and [PANDIT](#), and works comfortably with TEI and affiliated technologies (XSLT, XQuery, and web-based platforms such as eXist-DB).

Methods

Our methods comprise our approaches to editing the text, translating the text, presenting our edition and translation, and the role of the introduction and explanatory notes.

We initially had no plans of editing the *Way of the Poet-King*. When we began translating the text, we used two editions, Seetharamaiah’s and Krishnamurthy’s. As our interest in the text

grew, however, we started to work from digital photographs of the palm-leaf manuscripts that we took over the summer of 2016. This has convinced us of the need for a new edition that presents all of the manuscript evidence. Now, for every section of the *Way* we translate, we review all of the manuscript evidence available to us, all previous editions, and parallel texts in order to reconstitute the text if need be. The category of “parallel texts” includes both the *Way*’s sources, including Daṇḍin’s *Mirror* and Bhāmaha’s *Ornament*, as well as texts that used the *Way* as a source, including Nāgavarman II’s *Analysis of Literature*. Given the narrow manuscript basis of the *Way*, we have found these parallels to be essential in both recovering original readings (e.g., *vana* “forests” with Daṇḍin against the nearly-meaningless *vara* “excellent” of the manuscripts in 1.110) and understanding the issues that the *Way* addresses. The narrow manuscript basis also means that we can transcribe and collate the witnesses by hand. Previous editions, save for Venkatarao and Aiyangar’s “best-text” edition, were largely eclectic. We are not inclined to this approach, but we cannot commit to an editorial approach until we have completed our recension of the witnesses.

Regarding our translation, our principal aims are clarity and consistency. We tried, at one point, to retain in translation two characteristic features of the *Way*’s Kannada style: the tendency for words to exceed metrical boundaries, and the presence of second-syllable alliteration. We now generally aim to translate the *Way*’s four-line *kanda* verses into four or five balanced lines of prose, as in some of our favorite translations from Sanskrit, but running the syntactic units over line boundaries in the spirit of Kannada.¹⁴ The *Way*’s language is singular and often difficult. Not only because it is, by its own admission, an experimental work that forces together Sanskrit and

¹⁴See, for example, Patrick Olivelle’s *Life of the Buddha* in the Clay Sanskrit Library.

Kannada, which have very different syntactic patterns. It also uses Sanskrit vocabulary in a way that at first seems fatuous, but is, upon closer reflection, very deliberate. We have thus been paying close attention to the *Way*'s "technical terminology" as well as its "quasi-technical terminology," which is just as systematic, and striving for clear and consistent translations for both sets: "run-on alliteration" for the technical term *khaṇḍaprāsa*, for example, or "tradition" for the quasi-technical term *āgama*. We have also noted important but specialized features of the *Way*'s language (the consistent use of Sanskrit adjectives as attributes rather than predicates, and the use of Kannada verbal nouns as adjectives) that we will discuss in our introduction.

We work from Microsoft Word documents in preparing our text and translation, but in view of its eventual publication in print and digital form, we will be preparing all of our materials in TEI format as well. As noted above, we are capable of following best practices in this respect.

The presentation of the text and translation will be slightly different in the print and digital publications. Both will include the constituted text, in both Kannada script and in Roman transliteration, as well as the translation on the facing page or column, and both will contain a critical apparatus of significant variants. This excludes orthographic variants, such as the use of *l* for *ḷ*, or *r* for *ṛ*, and metrically-insignificant doubled consonants. The digital publication, however, will also include our transcripts and images of each manuscript, and it will offer orthographic variants in the critical apparatus in addition to the variants we have selected as "significant." The inclusion of a transliterated text is absolutely necessary to reach a scholarly audience that does not know the Kannada script. But because almost all research on Kannada for the past hundred years has taken place in Kannada, there are no widely-accepted standards for presenting Kannada in transliteration. We have adopted a transliteration scheme based on ISO 15919, although readers

familiar with that standard will notice that we continue to use *m̐* for *anusvāra*. For clarity, we represent the loss of a vowel before another vowel with an apostrophe, and mark the juncture between words in a compound with a dash, but only in the transliterated text. In the Kannada-script text, the general lack of alignment between syllable, word, and metrical boundaries tends to produce a run-on effect that effectively mirrors the breathless quality of the verses when they are recited.

We aim for our translation to be clear on its own, but we include annotation at the level of the text, the section, and the verse. At the level of the text, we will provide a detailed introduction that explains the historical context of the *Way of the Poet-King*, its structure and arguments, its sources, its position in Kannada literature, its language, metrical forms, and style, the history of scholarship, and an introduction to our own edition and translation. For each section within the *Way*, we will have an explanatory headnote that summarizes its argument in the most straightforward terms possible. Finally, each verse may have annotations that motivate our editorial decisions, explain difficult or important terms, reflect on the *Way*'s use of its sources, and draw attention to similar discussions in later texts. These verse-level annotations may be printed as footnotes or endnotes, or they may be included in the main body of the translation, as we have done in the samples. Finally, we will also include comprehensive indices of words (English and Kannada), topics, and names.

Work plan

We plan to devote at least 50% of our time to this project for one full year, from October 2017 to October 2018. Without outside support, and in the midst of other commitments, we have been

meeting approximately once a week during term time for two hours to work through our translation. Since January 2016, we have translated about 20% of the *Way*. We have also photographed some, but not all, of the manuscripts of the text during research trips to India over the summer of 2016. During the funded project, we will photograph and transcribe the remaining manuscripts, complete our edition and translation of the text, write our introduction and annotations, and provide for the publication and dissemination of the finished product.

At the beginning of the first six-month period (October 2017–March 2018), we will meet in Chicago for three weeks to work on our translation in person and establish a rhythm for the following six months. Subsequently we will meet over Skype twice a week. Each of us prepares our translations independently of the other, and during our meetings we discuss them and produce a single translation that we agree upon. So far, we have been addressing textual issues only as they reveal themselves, but during the funded project we will be able to reconstitute the text from its original documentary sources: we will each take responsibility for transcribing portions of manuscripts, and check each other’s transcriptions at every meeting. Besides discussing the *Way of the Poet-King*, we will discuss relevant texts in the Sanskrit and Kannada traditions of poetics. After our meetings, we will prepare the portions we’ve discussed for publication, including the text, translation, and annotations. Given our insistence on digital publication, this implies preparing each of these components as TEI documents. If we succeed in translating about fifteen verses a week, on average, we will be nearly finished with a first draft by the end of the first six months.

At the beginning of the second six-month period (April 2018–October 2018), we will both travel to Mysore for three weeks to once again work on our translation in person, as well as to

consult manuscript materials that we did not photograph on earlier trips, and to consult with some of the world's greatest living experts of Kannada literature, including E. N. Tharanatha and T. V. Venkatachalashastry. After this trip, we will continue meeting regularly over Skype to discuss the new manuscript material and adjust our edition, if necessary. We will also begin to revise the draft of our edition and translation. Toward the end of this six-month period, we will once again meet in person for three weeks, this time in Boston, and the primary goal of that meeting will be to write the introduction, which we expect will be fifty pages. We expect that we will also be in negotiations with a publisher during these last months of the project, and may have to revise our work on the basis of reader's reports. Our goal will be to deliver the work to the publisher soon after the completion of the grant. For the digital publication of the work, we may also hire an XML developer, depending on how complicated the rendition of our TEI source documents into HTML will be.

Final product and dissemination

We believe that, at this transitional moment for academic publishing, the “book and e-book” model works well for the dissemination of scholarship, especially in areas where the scholarly conversation spans the dollar economy and the rupee economy. This model results in a physical book, published by a university press and sold for a reasonable price, as well as an open-access electronic publication, usually distributed a year or two after the printed book. We have experience with this model at Harvard University Press (home of the Murty Classical Library of India) and the University of California Press (one of the publishers of the South Asia Across the Disciplines series), and we have seen it implemented successfully in other major presses (e.g, the

University of Wisconsin Press and Brill). Another model, not necessarily exclusive of the first, is to find different distributors for the book in the Western and Indian markets. There are, however, compelling practical reasons to publish the work open-access under the first model, even beyond our general commitment to free and open scholarship.

One reason is that digital editions are not subject to the same limitations as printed editions. Digital editions can present not only the constituted text and a critical apparatus, but all of the materials that went into the preparation of the text, including images of the manuscripts and complete transcriptions, in order to allow interested readers to better understand the editors' decisions. Our digital publication will be web-based, and it will include all of the materials in the printed publication as well as these supplementary materials. All of our materials—text, translation, annotations, and transcriptions—will be prepared in TEI format. This will allow us to output these materials in any format, be it camera-ready PDF (through LaTeX) or HTML. It will also allow us to make use of automatic collation tools in the web-based publication: the same TEI-to-HTML tool that allows readers to view each individual transcriptions will also allow them to compare transcriptions with each other, and with our constituted text.¹⁵ Another advantage of the web-based edition is that it will be extensively hyperlinked, allowing readers to navigate the text easily, and integrated with comprehensive word-indices of both the text and the translation. Readers will have access to information about the occurrences of a given word, or the details of a bibliographic reference, without having to turn a page. By distributing the digital version under a Creative Commons license, which we will insist upon, we will also allow for our edition, or

¹⁵Charles Li of the University of Cambridge has developed similar tools for a reedition of part of Bhartṛhari's *On Word and Sentence (Vākyapadīya)*, using *diff*, JavaScript, and XSLT.

derivatives thereof, to be uploaded into the major repositories of digital texts in the field of South Asian studies, such as [GRETIL](#) and [SARIT](#).

The technical challenges of producing a web-based edition are relatively minor. It requires consistency, perhaps to a greater degree than printed editions, and it requires familiarity with TEI and methods of publishing TEI on the web, which one of the collaborators has extensive experience with. The administrative challenges, so to speak, are more significant. We will first need to work out a suitable arrangement for digital publication with our primary publisher, which will allow us to prepare the digital publication ourselves rather than through the publisher's approved vendors. We will also need to arrange for the long-term hosting and preservation of the digital publication, either on the publisher's servers or through the libraries or digital humanities divisions of one of the universities we are affiliated with. Finally, we must seek the permission to digitally publish images of the three palm-leaf manuscripts on which our edition is based from the institutions where they are kept. We anticipate that this will be straightforward in the case of the G.O.M.L. in Chennai, which already has an ongoing digitization program, but less so in the case of the Kuvempu Institute in Mysore. Making these arrangements will be one of the goals of our trip to Mysore halfway through the project.

At this stage, we have discussed publication options for the *Way of the Poet-King* with series editors, but we have not yet submitted any proposals. Our preferred venue at the moment is the *South Asia Research* series of Oxford University Press, edited by Martha Selby, from whom we have a letter of interest (see appendix). This series includes some of the best editions and translations of Indian texts produced in recent years, such as Patrick Olivelle's *Manu's Code of Law* (2005). Oxford also has the benefit of distribution in India, although an increasing number

of publishers do high-quality Indian imprints of academic books originally published elsewhere (one example is Primus Books in Delhi, the Indian distributor for some books in the *South Asia Across the Disciplines* series). The Murty Classical Library of India might seem to be a natural choice, but the relatively technical content of the *Way*, and the limitations that the MCLI imposes on transliteration, textual notes, and explanatory notes, make it less than ideal for our project. Other possibilities include the *Collection Indologie* series, jointly published by the École française d'extrême-orient and the Institut français de Pondichéry, and the *Philological Encounters* monograph series recently launched by Brill. Given the typographical challenges of producing high-quality editions, we understand that the production costs for such a volume may be high, but we will insist that the printed book is sold for \$75 or less.