

Peera Panarut, Manasicha Akepiyapornchai

# Sanskrit Prayers in a Theravada Kingdom: A Multilingual Siamese Grantha Manuscript from Munich

**Abstract:** This article explores the multilingual character of a Siamese Grantha manuscript preserved at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich (Cod. siam 99). The manuscript, presumably dated between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, is the only known Siamese Grantha manuscript that is kept in Germany. Manuscript Cod. siam 99 collects a variety of Sanskrit *mantras*, written in the South-Indian-derived Siamese Grantha, as its title *Wet Tang Tang* ('Various *mantras*') suggests. In addition, ritual instructions in Thai consistently accompany their Sanskrit counterparts throughout the manuscript; the multilingual dynamic between Sanskrit and Thai is, thus, a salient feature of this manuscript. The manuscript, therefore, deserves more scholarly attention, and its texts should be published in the future.

## 1 Introduction

The traditional writing culture of Thailand – the country that, until 1939, was known as Siam – has long been dominated by Theravada Buddhism, much like its neighbours in mainland South East Asia: Laos, Burma and Cambodia. Pali, an Indo-European language and the canonical idiom of Theravada Buddhism, was commonly used in various Buddhist manuscript cultures throughout this region, becoming the religious lingua franca of the Theravada world, or what Steven Collins calls the 'Pali *imaginaire*':<sup>1</sup> the trans-local and -temporal premodern world of Buddhism, which prospered amid the coexistence of diverse vernacular languages from different linguistic families.<sup>2</sup> The Khò script, which developed from the Old Khmer script in Thailand, has mainly been employed in the Siamese manuscript culture of central and southern Thailand for preserving

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<sup>1</sup> Collins 1998.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the Thai (the official language of modern Thailand), Tai Lan Na (from northern Thailand), Shan (from north-eastern Burma) and Lao languages from the Tai-Kadai (Kra-Dai) ethnolinguistic group; Burmese from Tibeto-Burman; and Khmer and Mon from the Austroasiatic group. See further in Goddard 2005.

religious texts, especially those written in Pali, and has, thus, been perceived as the sacred script of the Siamese Buddhist tradition.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the Thai script has been used for writing vernacular Thai from the early phase of Thai literacy in the thirteenth century to the present day.

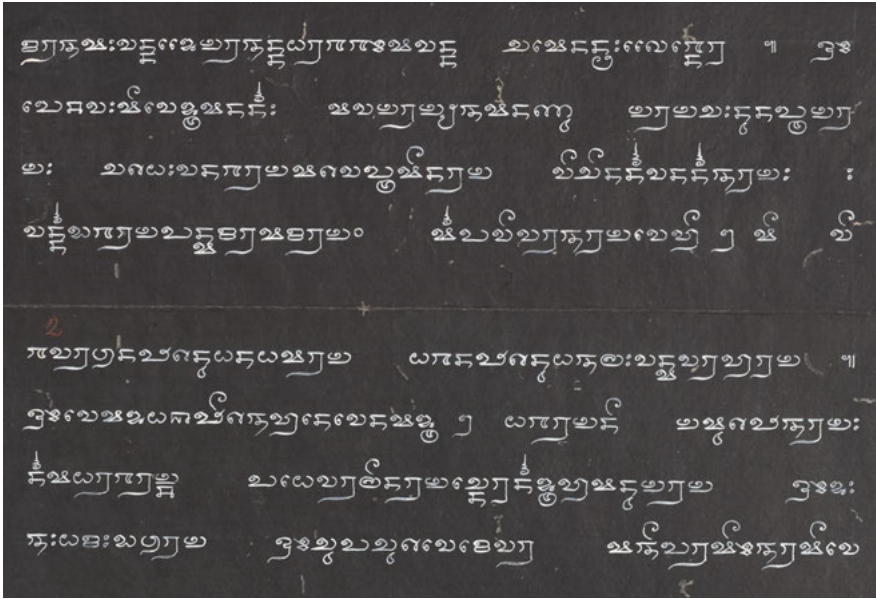
Despite the dominance of Theravada Buddhism, the Brahmanical tradition continued to be practiced in Thailand for many centuries. Brahmanical priests conducted a number of royal ceremonies and rituals alongside Buddhist monks in the Siamese royal court. These Brahmanical rituals aimed at establishing the sacred identity of the king and the hierarchy between the king and his subjects.<sup>4</sup> Sanskrit texts were, therefore, also uttered by Brahmanical priests in Siam. After the fall of the Siamese kingdom in Ayutthaya in 1767, the Brahmanical lineage descending from the Angkorian Khmer was believed to have ended. Therefore, after King Rama I founded Bangkok as the new capital of the later Siamese kingdom in 1782, Brahmanical priests from Nakhòn Si Thammarat (southern Thailand) were recruited to Bangkok to perform Brahmanical rituals at the royal court.<sup>5</sup> Due to their strong connection with the Brahmanical tradition in Tamil Nadu, priests from the south brought with them their specific script, originating from South Indian Grantha, most possibly Grantha Tamil, which has been widely used to write Sanskrit texts in Tamil Nadu. This Grantha script used among the Siamese Brahmanical priests is known in Thai as *chiang khruin* or *chiang phram* script, which is referred to here in English as Siamese Grantha. The latter script features shapes that obviously differ from those of the Thai and Khòrn scripts, and is, thus, to be considered a specific script used uniquely by the Brahmanical priests of Siam. The script was used to write ritual texts in Sanskrit, Tamil and Thai, forming a unique multilingual manuscript corpus in Siam.

This article presents one particular manuscript to demonstrate the multilingual character of Siamese Grantha. It is the only Siamese Grantha manuscript to have found its way to Germany, and is now preserved at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library) in Munich under the inventory number Cod. siam 99 (Fig. 1). As the manuscript was digitised and made available online only in 2019, modern scholars have been less aware of it. It has scarcely been mentioned in any scholarly works from the twentieth century. However, manuscript Cod. siam 99 offers us a case study on the use of the Sanskrit and Thai languages within a single manuscript, a phenomenon that has not often been found in the Buddhist-dominated culture of Thailand, part of the 'Pali *imaginaire*'.

<sup>3</sup> Grabowsky 2011, 146; Santi Pakdeekham and Nawarat Pakdeekham 2018, 45.

<sup>4</sup> See more in Wales 1931.

<sup>5</sup> Kanjana Suwanwong 1996, 53.



**Fig. 1:** A Siamese Grantha manuscript from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, originally from Thailand, between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries; © Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fols 5<sup>r</sup>–6<sup>r</sup>.

## 2 Background of the Siamese Grantha manuscript corpus

Originating from South Indian Grantha, the Siamese Grantha script does not resemble the usual scripts of the Siamese, such as Thai and Khò̃m, and is, thus, unintelligible to normal Siamese readers. On the other hand, Siamese Grantha has embraced the use of certain elements of the Thai and Khò̃m scripts, for example, tone marks, numerals and the use of some Khò̃m consonants. As a result, the script created a restricted literacy accessible to the limited group of Siamese Brahmanical priests who were trained to read and write it. It is noteworthy that the Brahmanical priests of twenty-first-century Thailand still learn Siamese Grantha and perceive it as the sacred script of the Brahmanical tradition in the Thai context.

In contrast to the large number of Siamese Buddhist manuscripts from central and southern Thailand, Brahmanical manuscripts written in Siamese Grantha are very limited in number, with only seventeen manuscripts found so far.<sup>6</sup> All are *khòì* paper leporello manuscripts, which were employed to preserve secular and vernacular texts of the Siamese tradition. Most of them are now preserved either at the National Library of Thailand in Bangkok or the National Library of Thailand in Nakhòn Si Thammarat. Only one of these manuscripts, Cod. siam 99, has been preserved in Munich, Germany. However, there is also an unknown number of manuscripts in the possession of the Brahmanical temple of Bangkok, which has served as the main temple of the Brahmanical priests at the Siamese royal court since the early days of Bangkok. The manuscripts from the temple are not accessible to the public, except one manuscript on the allegiance oath (Thai: *Ongkan Chaeng Nam*), published in 1988.<sup>7</sup>

Owing to the small handful of manuscripts, the dating of the emergence of Siamese Grantha script is uncertain. The earliest extant manuscript can be dated from the mid-nineteenth century, while the latest dated Siamese Grantha manuscript is from 1919 CE, copied from an exemplar taken from Nakhòn Si Thammarat.<sup>8</sup> However, the date of 1693 CE is briefly mentioned in one damaged Siamese Grantha manuscript from the National Library in Nakhòn Si Thammarat.<sup>9</sup> Though the date is arguably more likely to refer to the composition of the text than the date of the manuscript's production, it indicates that Brahmanical rituals must have existed in southern Thailand at least since the late seventeenth century, supporting the scholars' suggestion that Siamese Grantha originated in southern Thailand before thriving at Bangkok's royal court.

Though the corpus available is rather small, it consists of different collections of ritual texts used and uttered by the Brahmanical priests on different occasions, covering priestly rituals, such as the daily purification rite, and those used in royal ceremonies, for example, the coronation and oath of allegiance ceremonies. Therefore, as an anthology of ritual texts, a Siamese Grantha manuscript often consists of multiple texts in Sanskrit, Thai and sometimes even Tamil.<sup>10</sup> The compilation of texts differs in each manuscript, suggesting different editorial processes and text selections by the compilers or editors, probably

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<sup>6</sup> See Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022, 131–133.

<sup>7</sup> See Wudhichai Kosolkajana 1988, 305–316.

<sup>8</sup> Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022, 128–130.

<sup>9</sup> Nakhòn Si Thammarat, National Library of Thailand, no. 461, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of Tamil texts from the Siamese Grantha manuscript corpus, see Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022, 137–140.

the Brahmanical priests. Sanskrit texts constitute the bulk of the Siamese Grantha corpus among the extant manuscripts, while Tamil texts appear in only three manuscripts of the corpus,<sup>11</sup> collected alongside Sanskrit and Thai texts. Due to the various languages of their ritual texts, Siamese Grantha manuscripts can be considered a unique multilingual corpus, in which three languages from three linguistic families appear together.

Siamese Grantha has never been a script widely learned and studied by modern scholars and students. Still, scholarly works on Siamese Grantha can be found from the early twentieth century onwards. P. Subrahmanya Shastri provides a survey (in Thai) on manuscripts and their texts,<sup>12</sup> while Quaritch Wales has discussed (in English) the use of the script in the context of royal ceremonies in Siam.<sup>13</sup> Both works are based on seven Siamese Grantha manuscripts. John Ralston Marr describes the forms and orthography of Siamese Grantha in writing Sanskrit and Tamil in his first article,<sup>14</sup> and investigates some Sanskrit and Tamil texts in the second one.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the forms and orthography in writing Thai are specifically elaborated in the works of Wudhichai Kosolkajana and Niyada Lausoonthorn.<sup>16</sup> Neelakanta Sarma has produced modern transliterations of Siamese Grantha manuscripts, provided with an introduction in French by Jean Filliozat,<sup>17</sup> through utilising facsimiles of the manuscripts kept at the National Library of Thailand in Bangkok. The twentieth-century scholars of Thai and Tamil studies mentioned above may not have known of the whereabouts of Cod. siam 99 from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, thus, it has never been properly studied in the previous scholarship on Siamese Grantha.

After having been acquired by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich in 1978, manuscript Cod. siam 99 became one of the Asian manuscripts shown at an exhibition by the library between 16 November 1982 and 5 February 1983. Therefore, the exhibition book, *Buch im Orient*,<sup>18</sup> published in 1983, also includes a description of this manuscript by Alfons Dufey, who

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<sup>11</sup> Namely, Bangkok, National Library of Thailand, *Lilit* Subsection, no. 360; and Bangkok, National Library of Thailand, Royal Ceremonial Treatises Subsection, nos 667 and 668.

<sup>12</sup> P. Subrahmanya Shastri 1931.

<sup>13</sup> Wales 1931.

<sup>14</sup> Marr 1969.

<sup>15</sup> Marr 1972.

<sup>16</sup> Wudhichai Kosolkajana 1988; Niyada Lausoonthorn 1992.

<sup>17</sup> Filliozat 1972.

<sup>18</sup> Dachs 1983.

proposes the date of this manuscript to the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> This might be the only publication of the twentieth century that mentions this manuscript at all. While labelling the language of the manuscript as corrupted Sanskrit ('Korruptes Sanskrit'), Dufey, nonetheless, focuses his description on Brahmanical priests in Thailand and their culture rather than the content of this particular manuscript:

Vetatam 3. Leporello-Handschrift aus pappeartigem Papier. 80 Bl., 11,5 × 36,5 cm. Korruptes Sanskrit, weiße Grantha-Schrift auf schwarzem Grund. – Thailand, Ende 19. Jh. Cod. siam 99. Obwohl die offizielle Religion Thailands der Buddhismus ist, war das siamesische Hofzeremoniell schon seit jeher hinduistisch. Seit 1786, als König Cakri den Namen Rama I. annahm, knüpft das Herrscherhaus sogar an das hinduistische Epos Ramayanam an. Für die Staatszeremonien, soweit sie nicht rein buddhistischen Charakter tragen, leben seit Jahrhunderten eigene Brahmanen in der jeweiligen Regierungshauptstadt. Da diese überwiegend aus Südindien stammenden Priester keine Frauen mitbrachten, hat sich der Anteil indischen Blutes in ihren Adern stark verringert. Eine ähnliche Entwicklung haben auch die Sanskrit- und Tamilkenntnisse dieser Vishnu- bzw. Shiva-Anhänger durchgemacht. Immerhin tragen sie noch die lange Haartracht ihrer Kaste, eine Art Chignon, legen bei feierlichen Anlässen die Brahmanenschnur um und rezitieren religiöse indische Texte. Dazu lesen sie aus Handschriften wie der hier aufgelegten, deren sehr korruptes Vedisch in einem vom südindischen Tamil-Grantha abgeleiteten Alphabet geschrieben ist. Erstaunlicherweise haben sich aber die Bezeichnung für den musikalischen Akzent des Vedischen bei diesen Zaubersprüchen, Mantras, erhalten.

Vetatam 3. Leporello manuscript on *khòì* paper. 80 pages, 11.5 × 36.5 cm. Corrupted Sanskrit; white Grantha script on black background. – Thailand, late nineteenth century. Cod. siam 99. Although the official religion of Thailand is Buddhism, for a long time the Siamese court ceremonies were Hindu. Since 1786, when King Cakri took the name 'Rama I', the royal house has even connected itself with the Hindu epic Ramayana. Brahmanical priests have lived in the capital city for centuries for [conducting] state ceremonies, which do not bear a purely Buddhist character. Since these priests, most of whom came from South India, did not bring any wives with them, the proportion of Indian blood in their [descendants] veins has been greatly reduced. The Sanskrit and Tamil knowledge of these Vishnu and Shiva devotees has also developed in a similar way. After all, they still wear the long hairstyle of their caste, a kind of chignon; put on the Brahmanical threads on ceremonial occasions; and recite Indian religious texts. To do this, they read from manuscripts such as the one published here, whose very corrupt Vedic is written in an alphabet derived from the Grantha Tamil script of South India. Surprisingly, the indication of the chanting accent of the Vedic in these magic spells, *mantras*, has been preserved [through this script].<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Dufey 1983.

<sup>20</sup> Dufey 1983, 283 (our translation).

Barend J. Terwiel briefly mentioned this manuscript from Munich more recently in 2017, as one of the few Thai manuscripts preserved in Germany.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Manasicha Akepiyapornchai and Peera Panarut also include the manuscript Cod. siam 99 as one of the seventeen manuscripts in their updated overview of the extant Siamese Grantha corpus.<sup>22</sup> However, the manuscript and its text, a collection of Brahmanical formulas or *mantras* in the domain of the Pali *imaginaire*, deserve more elaboration.

### 3 Cod. siam 99: A Siamese Grantha manuscript from Munich

The manuscript in question, Cod. siam 99, is a blackened *khòl* paper leporello manuscript, the form that is commonly found in traditional Siamese manuscript culture. The writing is written in white ink on a black paper background. According to the handwritten catalogue of Oriental manuscripts at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,<sup>23</sup> the library acquired the manuscript in 1978<sup>24</sup> by purchasing it from Dr W. Burger of Hong Kong.<sup>25</sup> The catalogue provides a brief description as follows: ‘Leporello manuscript. 11.5 × 36.5 cm. 4 lines [per page]. White writing on black paper. So-called Grantha script. Text of the court Brahmanical priests. Vetatam3’<sup>26</sup> (see Fig. 2). The manuscript is in fine condition, except for the front cover, on which the title (in Grantha) is rather faded. However, it is identifiable as Thai written in Siamese Grantha, and reads *Wet Tang Tang* (‘Various *mantras*’).<sup>27</sup> Though the Thai word *wet* originates from Sanskrit *veda*, the title here also suggests that this manuscript collects the verses or *mantras* in general rather than any direct or precise citations of Vedic Sanskrit texts, compiling material from different sources into an anthology.

<sup>21</sup> Terwiel 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022.

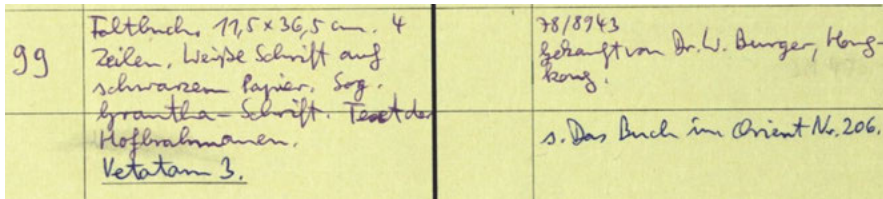
<sup>23</sup> Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 2008.

<sup>24</sup> The catalogue indicates that the entries from Cod. siam 91 to Cod. siam 99 were acquired in 1978.

<sup>25</sup> Noted in the catalogue as ‘Gekauft von Dr. W. Burger, Hongkong’.

<sup>26</sup> Originally in German: ‘Faltbuch. 11,5 × 36, 5 cm. 4 Zeilen. Weiße Schrift auf schwarzem Papier. Sog. Grantha-Schrift. Text der Hofbrahmanen. Vetatam3’.

<sup>27</sup> Thai เวตตางง. As the writing is faded, the title could easily have been read and misread as ‘Vetatam3’, which does not make proper sense in the Thai language, as recorded in the catalogue.



**Fig. 2:** Information on Cod. siam 99 as registered in the catalogue of Oriental manuscripts at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 2008.

Even though the writings inside the manuscript appear undamaged, the copying process seems incomplete. The entire verso side has been left blank, while what is written on the recto side does not seem to have reached its proper end. The text runs from the beginning of the manuscript to fol. 73<sup>r</sup>, and then the running text, seemingly unfinished, is interrupted by a few blank pages (fols 76<sup>r</sup>–81<sup>r</sup>). The writing continues on fol. 82<sup>r</sup> and ends on fol. 86<sup>r</sup>. The latter part (fols 82<sup>r</sup>–86<sup>r</sup>) preserves the related ritual texts and was undoubtedly written by the same hand. Nonetheless, it does not seamlessly continue from the previous part. The manuscript is undated, but is probably from the period between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, in which Siamese Grantha manuscripts were still produced by the Siamese Brahmanical priests.<sup>28</sup> No scribal colophon has been found. Therefore, we unfortunately do not have any further information on its scribe, compiler or editor, apart from the presupposition that Siamese Grantha has been used only by Siamese Brahmanical priests.

The entirety of manuscript Cod. siam 99 is written in Siamese Grantha script. Nevertheless, this single script is employed for writing two languages here: Sanskrit and Thai. The manuscript is comprised of various sets of Sanskrit *mantras*. It is unclear whether all the *mantras* collected in this manuscript were used together in the same series of rituals, but the different *mantras* must have been collected in Cod. siam 99 for the practical purpose of performing rituals, as each of them is often interrupted by short ritual instructions in vernacular Thai, telling the priests how to conduct the rituals. The use of two languages in this manuscript and their relationship will be discussed further below.

<sup>28</sup> See more in P. Subrahmanya Shastri 1931.



## 4 Sanskrit texts in Cod. siam 99

Approximately half of this manuscript is parallel to Sarma's transliteration of the section he labels *Ācāryapūjā Devarūpa Śrī Umā Śrī Nārāyaṇa Śrī Mahāvighneśvara*.<sup>29</sup> Although the title includes various Hindu deities, such as Umā and Nārāyaṇa, the texts based on Sarma's transliteration seem to be devoted mainly to Śiva. This is also the case of manuscript Cod. siam 99. It should be noted that a great deal of the Sanskrit in this manuscript is unintelligible. The structure of the entire manuscript, especially the parts that are intelligible, is as follows:<sup>30</sup>

**Table 1:** The structure and texts in the manuscript Cod. siam 99.

	Text	Folio no. (recto)
1	Prayer to Śiva and Umā	4–9
2	Prayer to the different directions	10
3	The eightfold praise poem to Śiva ( <i>stotrāṣṭaka</i> ) and	11–20
4	Praise of the five-syllable <i>mantra</i> ( <i>śivapañcākṣarastotra</i> )	
5	Self-purification ( <i>ātmaśuddhi</i> )	20–23
6	Prayer to Īśvara and Śiva	23–27
7	Prayer to Vighnanāyaka (Śiva's son)	27–29
8	Offerings	29–39
9	Worship of the teachers ( <i>ācāryapūjā</i> )	39–53
10	Prayer to destroy faults	53–67
11	Prayer to Umā (incomplete)	68
12	Prayer to the <i>Śiva liṅga</i> (?)	68–71
13	Unintelligible parts	71–84
14	A poem from Bāṇa's <i>Harṣacarita</i>	84–85
15	Prayer to Kailāsa	85–86

As we can see, the Sanskrit texts could be categorized differently, namely by genre, if we were to look at them through the lens of the Sanskrit literary paradigm. Most of the Sanskrit texts have no label attached to them. Nevertheless,

<sup>29</sup> Sarma 1972, 137–163.

<sup>30</sup> The structure and identification of each text is based on Sarma's transliteration.

they usually refer to a particular Hindu deity or more than one deity at a time, and can, thus, be understood as prayers or devotional and expressive statements dedicated to a deity, especially Śiva in this context.<sup>31</sup> It is also probable that these prayers had been circulated in mainland India and even South East Asia by the time they were incorporated into this collection. Interestingly, one text evidently identifies itself as a praise poem (*stotra*): the eightfold praise poem (*stotrāṣṭaka*). Furthermore, there is one poem from the *Harṣacarita*, the biography of King Harṣa, by the important Sanskrit poet Bāṇa (seventh century).<sup>32</sup>

Despite the differences in genre, it can be argued that these texts all have the same function as *mantras*. It is difficult to determine precisely what a *mantra* is, as it is so culturally specific; still, it may be loosely defined as a formula that is used in a certain ritual practice or action and has innate efficacy regardless of its linguistic meaning.<sup>33</sup> Some of the texts in the manuscript have a form that is obviously mantric, especially those that include *oṃ* at the beginning or *svāhā* at the end. Examples are *Oṃ pañcākṣarāya siddhiḥ jaya*<sup>34</sup> ('*Oṃ* to the five-syllable [*mantra* of Śiva]. May there be success. Triumph!')<sup>35</sup> and *Hari oṃ namaḥ śivāya* ('*Hari oṃ*, honour to Śiva')<sup>36</sup> and *Oṃ namo nirṛtidiśāya [...] svāhā* ('*Oṃ*, honour to the south-west direction [...] *svāhā*').<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, it is less common in India for a poem like that of Bāṇa to be used as a *mantra*. In any case, the ritual instructions in Thai that surround these Sanskrit texts also serve to contextualize them, indicating that they function as *mantras* that accompany various ritual practices.<sup>38</sup> Importantly, the title on the front cover of this manuscript, *Wet Tang Tang*, also suggests that it is a collection of various *wet* or Brahmanical *mantras*. The words *wet* (or *veda* in Sanskrit) and *mon* (*mantra* in Sanskrit) are usually paired in the compound *wet-mon* (เวทมนตร์) to refer to sacred formulas in Brahmanical culture in contemporary Thai.<sup>39</sup> In this manuscript, however, the word *wet* alone is used to refer to a *mantra*. Although the Sanskrit word *veda*, which became *wet* in Thai, usually indicates the most authoritative scriptural corpus in Brahmanical orthodoxy, it could be argued that

31 For more on prayers, see Stainton 2019, 159–196.

32 For more information on Bāṇa and his works, see Bronner, Shulman and Tubb 2014.

33 See Alper 1989 for other definitions of *mantra*.

34 Cod. siam 99, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

35 All of the translations of the Sanskrit texts are Manasicha Akepiyapornchai's unless indicated otherwise.

36 Cod. siam 99, fol. 38<sup>r</sup>.

37 Cod. siam 99, fol. 10<sup>r</sup>.

38 See the next section on Thai instructions.

39 See McGovern 2022, 259.

once it entered the Thai context, its lexical scope was broadened to Brahmanical *mantras* in general, both Vedic and non-Vedic.

*Mantras* dedicated to Śiva form the majority of the Sanskrit texts. They are often marked by opening passages that mention the names of Śiva: exemplarily, the first statement is for Śiva and his consort, Umā, *namas tubhyam umāsvāmibhyām* ('Honour to Umā and the Husband [Śiva]').<sup>40</sup> In some cases, they are also accompanied by closing statements dedicated to Śiva, such as *hara rudrarūpa mahādeva śambho* ('O, the destroyer, the one with the form of Rudra, the great god, the benevolent one'), which occurs twelve times at the end of each set of mostly unintelligible *mantras*.<sup>41</sup> We also find a declaration of the result (*phalaśruti*) of reciting this set of *mantras*, namely, that it may save one from going to hell, which is Yama's abode: *idaṃ puṇyaṃ yaḥ paṭhet śivasamnidhau yamalokam ayaṃ naiti* ('the one who recites this in the presence of Śiva does not reach the abode of Yama').<sup>42</sup> Further *mantras* to Śiva can be identified through his various paradigmatic attributes and epithets in the text, most evidently, 'the three-eyed one', 'the destroyer of the three cities', 'the one with the blue neck', and so on. This can be seen, for example, in the passage, *Oṃ namaḥ satataṃ bhagavad-viśvaviśveśvarāya tryambakāya tripurāntakāya trikamalanayanāya [...] nīlakaṇṭhāya sarveśvarāya sadāśivāya śivamahādevāya namaḥ* ('Oṃ, honour to the great god, Śiva, the lord of the universe, the three-eyed one, destroyer of the three cities [...] the one with the blue neck, the lord of all, the eternal Śiva').<sup>43</sup>

In addition to Śiva, some of the Sanskrit *mantras* are meant for other, minor deities. This latter includes Śiva's son, Vighnanāyaka or Vighneśvara, as in the line, *mahādevāya ḍamaruśivaputrāya namo namaḥ* ('Honour to the great god, the son of Śiva who has the sacred drum').<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, all the *mantras* in the self-purification ritual (*ātmaśuddhi*) relate solely to Viṣṇu except the first one, which is the beginning of the *Gāyatrī mantra*: *Oṃ bhūr bhuvah svaḥ* ('Oṃ, o earth, space and heaven').<sup>45</sup> The *mantras* in this ritual context are paired with the different body parts that should be purified. The first *mantra*, the *Gāyatrī*, is to be recited when one plunges into the water three times. While washing the hands, one should recite, *Oṃ padmanābhāya namaḥ* ('Oṃ, honour to the lotus-

<sup>40</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> Cod. siam 99, fols 12<sup>r</sup>–18<sup>r</sup>. Sarma 1972, 149 identifies this text as the *Śivaparādhakṣamāpa-nastotra*, but the two texts are far from identical.

<sup>42</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 18<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> Cod. siam 99, fols 23<sup>r</sup>–24<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 29<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> Cod. siam 99, fols 20<sup>r</sup>–23<sup>r</sup>.

navelled one’);<sup>46</sup> for the arms, *Oṃ mādḥavāya narāya namaḥ* (‘*Oṃ*, honour to the primeval one, Mādḥva’);<sup>47</sup> for the body, *Oṃ narāya namaḥ* (‘*Oṃ*, honour to the primeval one’);<sup>48</sup> and for the head, *Oṃ keśavanarāya namaḥ* (‘*Oṃ*, honour to the primeval one, Keśava’).<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, we find a more extensive list of the deities, along with non-divine elements, such as mountains, continents, oceans, aeons and scriptures, in the section that corresponds to the one Sarma identifies as *Ācāryapūjā*.<sup>50</sup>

*Oṃ*, may there be success; *oṃ*, honour to the good one; *om*, honour to the god, the god of gods and demons; honour to the great lord, whose wife is Umā, who is superior to all kinds of goodness, the fruit of the four classes, the powerful god, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, the young one who is invincible on the battlefield [...] earth, water, fire, wind, space; the sun, the moon, Indra, the four guardians of the directions, the carrier of the vase of wealth, the mountains that are the middle one, Kailāsa, Meru and Himalaya, along with the continents, the four oceans, the four aeons, the four Vedas, the four kinds of grease.<sup>51</sup>

Note that these elements and their numbers reflect common tropes usually found in Sanskrit literature in mainland India. There are other elements, for example, the seven (*sapta*) rivers (*nadī*), continents (*dvīpa*), oceans (*samudra*), kings (*rāja*) and sages (*ṛṣi*), followed by the ten guardians of the directions (*daśalokapāla*) and thirty-three deities (*trayastrīṃśaddevatā*). We then have the names of the mythologically well-known snakes or *nāgas*, such as Takṣaka, Ānanta and Vāsuki. Unfortunately, the rest is unintelligible. Importantly, this is not the only place we find reference to forces other than the deities. There is another set of *mantras* at the beginning of the manuscript devoted to the eight directions, such as the east (*pūrva*), south-east (*āgneya*), south (*dakṣiṇa*), south-west (*nirṛti*) and north-west (*vāyavya*). However, the other directions, namely, the north, north-east and west, cannot be definitively identified.<sup>52</sup>

The two most distinctive texts in this manuscript are the one that is about the destruction of faults and the poem of Bāṇa. The first set can be found immediately after the *Ācāryapūjā* section, and runs until the interruption in the man-

<sup>46</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Sarma 1972, 138–142; Cod. siam 99, fols 39<sup>r</sup>–50<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> This translation is based on the text in Sarma 1972, 138.

<sup>52</sup> Cod. siam 99, fols 9<sup>r</sup>–10<sup>r</sup>.

uscript.<sup>53</sup> This set usually begins with ‘all’ (*sarva*) and ends with ‘for the destruction of faults’ (*doṣavināśāya*), as in ‘for the destruction of all karmic faults’ (*sarvakarmadoṣavināśāya*). It claims that the recitation or ritual in each context has the aim of destroying various kinds of faults: for example, those related to different astrological aspects, namely, the conjunction of qualities based on the position of the moon when one is born (*gaṇa*), the conjunction of the planets (*saṃgati*) and the zodiac sign (*rāśi*).<sup>54</sup> The other set merely constitutes a popular poem from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa. As noted above, this poem stands out in this manuscript of ritual instructions and *mantras*, yet, it seems to have the same mantric function as other Sanskrit texts. It should be noted that this poem particularly was collected in Bhagadatta Jalhana’s thirteenth-century *Sūktimuktāvali*, edited by Krishnamacharya.<sup>55</sup> Based on this, one could argue that this poem circulated outside of the *Harṣacarita* and attained its status as part of a collection of well-known passages before it was incorporated into this Siamese ritual corpus. In any case, it is devoted to Śiva as the cosmic pillar and describes him in the universal city:

Homage to him,  
beautiful with the chowrie  
of the crescent moon  
kissing his high head,  
to the one Pillar  
put in place at the founding of the city  
that is the universe –  
to Śambhu.<sup>56</sup>

As has been mentioned above, this manuscript shares some of the Sanskrit texts found in Sarma’s transliteration. The texts in this manuscript also present a similarly high degree of corruption and incompleteness when compared to those recorded by Sarma, to the extent that it is arguably the most corrupted of the Siamese Grantha manuscripts we have explored so far.<sup>57</sup> The textual corruption makes it quite difficult to identify some of the texts precisely and understand what they convey, even for those with a good knowledge of Sanskrit, like Sarma. Thus, we still do not know the sources of the various Sanskrit texts aside from those already identified. Given their unintelligibility, these Sanskrit texts

<sup>53</sup> Cod. siam 99, fols 51<sup>r</sup>–67<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 64<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Krishnamacharya 1938.

<sup>56</sup> Bronner, Shulman and Tubb 2014, 27. See the same source for more analysis of the verses.

<sup>57</sup> Sarma 1972, 137.

are not just variations or representatives of what we find in South East Asia, which, in some cases, differ only slightly from Sanskrit texts in mainland India.

Moreover, it seems unlikely that the Brahmanical priests understood the meaning of these texts. They are, as has been stated previously, meant to be used as *mantras* in a ritual or rituals, and the recitation is, thus, more important than comprehension. However, contrary to the general practice of Sanskrit recitation in mainland India, which prioritizes precise and invariant pronunciation, the pronunciation of the texts in this manuscript deviates greatly from the Sanskrit pronunciation, and seems to align more with Thai and Pali. We have suggested in the overview of Siamese Grantha manuscripts that the alignment of the Sanskrit pronunciation with the Thai and Pali ones could contribute to textual corruption,<sup>58</sup> which might be the case in this particular manuscript. In addition to corruption, some of the texts and the manuscript itself are also incomplete, suggesting that they might not have been recorded or handed down properly.

## 5 Ceremonial instructions in Thai: Text or paratext?

The Siamese Grantha script was commonly employed to write texts in the Thai language. Ritual poetry texts in Thai, such as *Ongkan Chaeng Nam* and *The Collection of Old Elephant Treatises*, have been preserved as the main texts of several Siamese Grantha manuscripts from the corpus. However, the paratexts of the manuscripts often appear in vernacular Thai, though written in Siamese Grantha, as in the case of the front cover title of the manuscript Cod. siam 99, *Wet Tang Tang* ('Various *mantras*'). The vernacular Thai here seems to be the language the scribes used to communicate with their readers, while the main texts of a Siamese Grantha manuscript can appear in foreign languages, such as Sanskrit and sometimes Tamil. Apart from scribal paratexts, such as cover titles, ritual instructions in Thai also accompany the Sanskrit texts in many cases, including Cod. siam 99.

Ritual instructions in Thai consistently accompany each *mantra* from the beginning to the unfinished end of Cod. siam 99. Even when some longer Sanskrit texts run to more than ten folded pages, Thai instructions still appear at the end of each part. Although the written texts are interrupted by blank pages

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<sup>58</sup> Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022, 136.

(fols 76<sup>r</sup>–81<sup>r</sup>), the writing that resumes on fols 82<sup>r</sup>–86<sup>r</sup> also bears Sanskrit *mantras*, along with the corresponding Thai instructions. These brief instructions, forming a significant feature of this manuscript, inform readers not only of the purpose and context of each *mantra*, but also what to do while uttering these *mantras* in the actual rituals. Furthermore, the instructions also mark the end of each *mantra* before the following ones begin, thereby assuming a structural function and helping readers to navigate through the Sanskrit text. Interestingly, the instructional texts of this manuscript, despite being written in Thai, appear only in Siamese Grantha script throughout the manuscript. Thus, unless the average reader reads Siamese Grantha, they would not be able to recognise the Thai texts or distinguish them from the Sanskrit texts at all. This may be considered a way to prevent the average reader from making sense of passages written in the common vernacular language.

Sometimes the name of the specific ritual is also mentioned in the instruction; for example, a Thai instruction text from page 13<sup>r</sup> reads อนาราทธนาครปรจมนเอนษะ แลวจงธมาตมาสต (‘These verses are for inviting teachers over [our] heads. [After that,] then conduct the Attama Sut [ritual]’).<sup>59</sup> This short passage explains that the previous Sanskrit *mantras* were used to invite and pay homage to teachers; it then names the ritual to be further performed as Attama Sut (Sanskrit *ātmaśuddhi* ‘self-purification’), a purification ritual for Brahmanical priests. Correspondingly, other Thai instructions found in this manuscript explicitly state the purpose of the Sanskrit *mantras*, namely, to which god they were recited. The instructions พระคาถาสามบตันสงนามพระอสนแล (‘These three verses are for consecrating [the statue of] God Śiva with water’)<sup>60</sup> and อนนสงนามพรวคเนกวมนายแล ฯ (‘These verses are for consecrating [the statues of] God Ganesha’)<sup>61</sup> were found, for example. These Thai instructions are essential for traditional readers to recognise the purpose of each individual Sanskrit text.

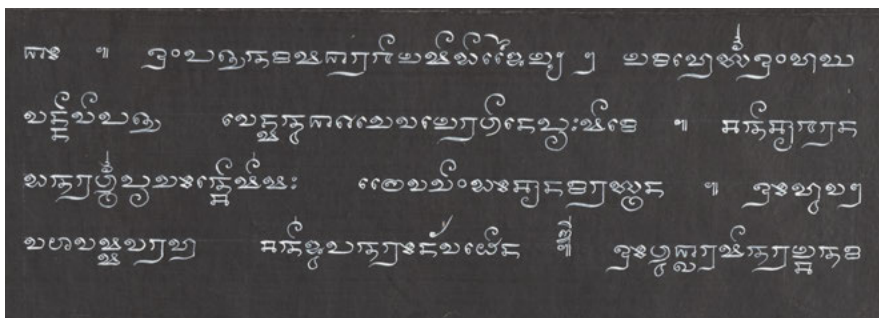
Furthermore, a number of Thai instructions also inform readers on how to perform the ritual when reciting the related Sanskrit *mantras*. The manuscript (Cod. siam 99, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>), for example, begins with the reverential verse *namata-sa-va ulaśvāmyeṇaṃ* (Sanskrit: *namas tubhyam umāśvāmibhyām*), followed by an instruction in Thai: ๓ ท (‘three times’), marking how many times the prayer

<sup>59</sup> The passage can be rendered in modern Thai orthography as อนนาราทธนาครปรจมาตนาพรจนาพเนนศรชะ แลวจงทาธมาตมาสตร; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

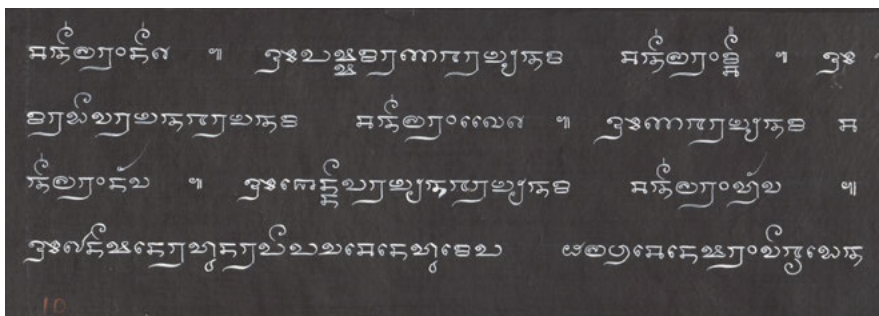
<sup>60</sup> In modern Thai orthography: พระคาถาสามบตันสงนามพระอศรแล ฯ; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fol. 27<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> In modern Thai orthography: อนนสงนามพรวณเนศรวณนายแล ฯ; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fol. 29<sup>r</sup>.

should be uttered. Then the instruction continues: กราบเบญจนจายคปรตตามเพศแลววานมษกาน ('Prostrate in the manner of five parts, according to the tradition, and then utter the reverencing verses'),<sup>62</sup> telling readers which gestures should be performed in the ritual. The most obvious case of Thai instructions describing how to conduct the ritual is found in the text of the self-purification ritual, in which Brahmanical priests purify each part of the body while uttering the *mantras*. The Sanskrit *mantras* in this part are short, followed by the Thai instructions marking which part of the body the priests have to wash for purification (see Fig. 3).<sup>63</sup>



a



b

**Figs 3a–b:** The text of the Attama Sut (*ātmaśuddhi*) purification from Cod. siam 99 (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fols 20'–21').

<sup>62</sup> In modern Thai orthography: กราบเบญจนจายคปรตตามเพศแลววานมษการ; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> For the Sanskrit *mantras* and translation, see the previous section.



The text of these two folded pages (fols 20<sup>r</sup>–21<sup>r</sup>) reads:

*kam* | *ompancanamaṣakāriyaṣidhijaiyya* (× 2) ‘Om to the five-syllabled [*mantra* of Śiva]. May there be success. Triumph!’ (× 2) *yamaheśra ombhagha vattivipanca vetṣanukancevayogitepraḥṣime* [this part is unintelligible] | อนอาราตธนาครปรจมนเอนษษะ แลวจงธมอาตมาสต ‘These verses are for inviting teachers over [our] heads. [After that,] then conduct the Attama Sut [ritual].’ | *ombhuva* (× 2) *vaśavaṣṣavāha* ‘Om, o earth, space, and heaven.’ (× 2) อนชบนามตวตวเสต ๓ท ‘This [verse] is for rinsing the body with water three times.’ *omgukkhāṣināyanam* [unintelligible part] อนलगตน ‘This is for washing the feet.’ | *ompaṣṣamānarāyyanam* ‘Om honour to the lotus-navelled One.’ อนलगมอ ‘This is for washing the hands.’ | *ommādhivāyanarāyanam* ‘Om honour to Mādhva.’ อนलगเสน ‘This is for washing the arms.’ | *omnarāyyanam* ‘Om honour to Nara.’ อนलगตว ‘This is for washing bodies.’ | *omkottapāyanarāyyanam* ‘Om honour to Keśava.’ อนलगหว ‘This is for washing heads.’ |

The question of whether these Thai ritual instructions should be considered part of the main text of the manuscript or its paratext might be answered differently depending on the perspective. If we follow what the manuscript title, *Wet Tang Tang* (‘Various *mantras*’) suggests, then the main text should cover the Sanskrit *mantras*, which are the only parts recited in the actual rituals. The instructional texts, on the other hand, are not supposed to be uttered at all, but give the readers further details concerning the rituals (i.e. the purpose of *mantras*, the gestures for performing the rituals). Nevertheless, these instructional texts were probably not composed by the scribe of this particular manuscript, given the fact that instructions for the same ritual texts sometimes appear in multiple manuscripts, as in the case of Attama Sut (*ātmaśuddhi*). The Sanskrit *mantras* and their Thai instructions as found in Cod. siam 99 correspond closely to the *ātmaśuddhi* preserved in a Siamese Grantha manuscript from Nakhōn Si Thammarat, suggesting that the Thai instructions might have been transmitted along with the Sanskrit ritual texts. The use of Siamese Grantha in Cod. siam 99 also allows these Thai instructions to assimilate visually to the Sanskrit texts by means of the same writing. In addition, these Thai instructions may have been necessary for Brahmanical priests in Thailand, who did not use Sanskrit in their everyday lives outside ritual contexts. From this perspective, these Thai instructions may also be considered part of the main text and should not be missing from the manuscript, although they might not originally have been conceived for their Sanskrit counterparts, but added later in order to assist readers, or in this case ritual practitioners, with practical details of the rituals.

Regardless of whether the Thai instructional texts of manuscript Cod. siam 99 fall under the category of main text or that of paratexts, these Thai instructions are undeniably a significant part of the manuscript, interacting with their corre-

sponding Sanskrit texts, and, thus, should not be overlooked by any traditional reader when reading this manuscript.

## 6 Concluding remarks

Although the Theravada culture of Siam has been dominated by Thai and Pali, Sanskrit and the Brahmanical tradition are still part of its cultural profile. This is evident in manuscript Cod. siam 99, in which Thai and Sanskrit coexist, performing different but closely related functions. In this manuscript, the Thai texts play a role as ritual instructions, while the Sanskrit texts constitute the majority and serve as *mantras*. The two languages create multilingual dynamics in a single-script artefact, and represent the multicultural identity of this Siamese Grantha corpus, which is situated between the Pali *imaginaire*, in the Theravada world of the Thai-speaking kingdom, and the Sanskrit-language Brahmanical culture of India. The manuscript Cod. siam 99 should, therefore, be considered a significant manuscript due to its multilingual character, despite the fact that it has long been excluded from scholarship on the Siamese Grantha manuscript corpus. This article merely serves as a preliminary study of this particular manuscript and its multilingual dynamic, aiming to be a first step towards its further investigation and the future publication of its contents.

Although the Sanskrit texts of manuscript Cod. siam 99 could potentially come from mainland India, they differ and are detached from the standard or widely known literary corpus of Sanskrit. The corruption evident in these texts also suggests that they had lost contact with the Sanskrit corpus in mainland India and were handed down and circulated solely in the Pali *imaginaire* of Thailand long enough to attain this level of unintelligibility, especially in terms of pronunciation. However, the corruption indicates that these texts had assimilated to the Siamese Theravada domain, in which Thai and Pali were linguistically predominant. Being accompanied by the Thai instructions, the Sanskrit texts, as collected and preserved in Cod. siam 99, also attained a new life, distinct and independent from the Sanskrit corpus of India. They are not merely Sanskrit texts but part of Siamese Brahmanical rituals in Thailand. Importantly, their function as *mantras* still resonates with Sanskrit verses in the Indian or even South Asian context. Thus, the Sanskrit *mantras* in a Siamese Grantha manuscript such as Cod. siam 99 represent the persistence of Indian influence in the Theravada kingdom of Thailand as much as Siamese Brahmanical culture.

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