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All communications to the Journal should be send to:
Prof. Sergei Ignatov
e-mail: bie@nbu.bg
or e-mail: signatov@nbu.bg

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Some Parallels between the Opening of the Mouth Ritual and the Indian Prana Pratistha

Svetla Ilieva

“Once the eyes are opened by having their pupils chiseled in with a gold chisel, once the deity takes on the form of the idol and it becomes alive, it is no longer mine. It is full with divine power, and I can no longer even touch it. Then it is no longer the creation of man, but god only”

W. Dalrymple¹ – “Nine Lives”

With living culture and traditions, that have hardly changed for thousands of years, India provides the unique opportunity for tracing rituals, practiced for millennia. Through knowledge and faith preserved not only in writing, but in oral tradition, such comparison, in spite of the challenges it presents, stretches beyond the limited surviving sources of the ancient civilizations. The parallels between the Opening of the mouth ritual in Ancient Egypt and a similar ritual in Babylonia, has already been discussed², clearly proving the connections between the two practices, that could be due to influences, but most probably was a result of a common source. Blackman points out that, the ritual in Egypt is essentially Egyptian and is closely linked with all main Egyptian rites, so any similarities should be accredited either to common source or to influence coming from Egypt³. Baly goes further, dividing the Egyptian ritual into two sections – aboriginally African and Semitic, coming as a later influence of the “Solar rites”⁴.

¹ Dalrymple 2009, 179. Story 7 – “The Maker of Idols” – words, spoken by a Stpathy sculptor Srikananda Stpathy, in Swamimalai, Tamil Nadu, India.
² Blackman 1924.
³ ibid., 59.
⁴ Baly 1930, 183-184.
The Hindu ritual of Opening of the Eyes, generally called Prāna Pratistha, bears a lot of similarities with the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth⁵ (and respectively the Babylonian), too specific to be considered as accidental. They both include practices for ritual opening of the eyes and mouth of a statue or image, aiming to invoke the divine into it. And while the name of the Egyptian rite refers to its form (wpt-rˁ⁶), the main Indian terms are concerned with the meaning of the ritual and throw light on its purpose: in Sanskrit “prāṇa” (प्राण) is “breath”⁷, “the breath of life, vitality, life, vital air, principle of life”⁸ and “pratistha” (प्रतिष्ठ) means “to stand firm, be established”, but also “the consecration of an idol or image”⁹. Thus the name of the ritual is literally “establishing the breath of life” within the sacred image. The other term is “Murti Sthāpanā” – from “murti” (मूर्ति) – “an image, idol, a statue”¹⁰ and “sthāpanā” (स्थापना) – “placing, fixing, founding, establishing”¹¹ – that is “placing of the idol” into the temple. Others related concepts point to the ritual itself – Chaksunmilan (चक्षुन् मिलन) – the opening of the eyes¹², chaksun dāna – giving the eyesight. A similar rite, practiced by the Jains is called añjana śalākā, named after “a stick or pencil for the application of collyrium”¹³, referring to the use of a needle to mark a fine line on the pupils of the image and thereby ‘awaken’ it¹⁴.

The Hindu belief that “gods and spirits are peripatetic and have a potential for varied manifestations”¹⁵ is to great extent true for Ancient Egypt and it is a common base for the existence of such similar ritual concepts. And since, according to the Egyptian perceptions, man joins the realm of the gods after death, this statement is also true for the deceased and his Ba, that can move freely, making a lot of transformations. The Indian ritual is mainly performed for bringing life into statues of the gods¹⁶ (as is the Mesopotamian¹⁷), but it is

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⁵ For further details on the ritual see: Otto, 1960.
⁶ (WB L,300).
⁷ Though often translated as “breath” and “air” because of a lack of relevant word in English, prāṇa does not stand for physical breath. (For further reference see Hatha Yoga Pradipika = Yogi Svatmarama).
⁸ Apte , 1127.
⁹ ibid., 180-181.
¹⁰ ibid., 1282.
¹¹ ibid., 1721.
¹² Elgood 2000, 32.
¹³ Apte, 35.
¹⁴ Maniura, Shepherd 2006, 73.
¹⁵ Maniura, Shepherd 2006, 73.
¹⁶ Elgood 2000, 14.
¹⁷ It should be noted that the ritual in India shows great diversity. It is practiced by the followers of different religions – Hinduism and Jainism and even within one religion it varies because of different religious currents. Therefore, the ritual will be referred to as generally Indian rather than Hindu. There are even variations for the consecration of images of different gods.
not restricted to this use – Prāna Pratistha can also be done over newly made yantras\(^\text{18}\) and be prerequisite for consecration of Jain temples\(^\text{19}\). The Egyptian Opening of the Mouth has various attested uses. Although it is clear that the Opening of the Mouth was performed on god’s images (as well as scarabs, Apis bulls, ushebti figures, magical figures, even temples, as well as in connection with a new born god child)\(^\text{20}\), it must be considered that the majority of the preserved texts refer to the funerary ritual and the body/images (mummy, statue, or sarcophagus) of the deceased, dealing with his fate in the afterworld. The different contexts create some challenges for the comparison and though the common elements of the ritual can be studied, there are distinctions in the purpose and the expected result of its performance.

The question whether the purpose of the Opening of the Mouth ritual performed upon different types of images is the same, has been a subject of different theories and discussions\(^\text{21}\). So is the discourse about the primary practice – whether it is the one performed over a statue or the mummy of the deceased\(^\text{22}\). This is however not a subject of the present work and the attention will be focused more on the common features of the Indian living rite and the surviving descriptions of the Egyptian practice. Whether the ultimate purpose is to provide the temple with a statue, perceived as a god or to ensure the passage of the deceased to the world of the gods and the receiving of offerings, as a part of the funerary ritual complex, the practice achieves the transformation of the unanimated substance into living image.

Before going into details about the specifics of the two rituals, an attempt to determine the first attested ceremonies in both cultures should be made. In Egypt, the Opening of the Mouth has already existed in the Old Kingdom and according to Assmann it’s part of the funerary liturgy in the Pyramid Texts\(^\text{23}\). Before being inscribed on the walls of the pyramids, these texts existed in other contexts\(^\text{24}\) (respectively the Opening of the Mouth Ritual as well).

In India the question seems to be more complicated – during the Vedic times no images were officially worshiped. Elgood includes the explanation of this phenomenon according to the early text of Vishnudharmottara Purana: “In the Satya, Treta and Dvapara ages (Yugas) people could see the gods with their eyes, but in the Kali Yuga they lost that power. To help them in the worship and meditation of the Supreme Being who is formless, images were made as intermediaries.” He points out that the focus of Vedic ritual was not the image of the gods but the reenactment

\(^{18}\) Baly 1930, 183.

\(^{19}\) An amulet, a mystical or astronomical diagram used as an amulet (Apte, 134).

\(^{20}\) Attested in Jain religion – for further information: Owen 2012, 44.

\(^{21}\) Finnestad 1978, Bjerke 1965.

\(^{22}\) Baly 1930, 178-179; Davies-Gardiner 1919, 58.

\(^{23}\) Assman 1990, 12, 18.

\(^{24}\) Explained in detail in Hays 2006, 19 ff.
of creation in the rite of sacrifice\textsuperscript{25}. At that time, the images were summoned by meditation and mind was the source of creation\textsuperscript{26}. The earliest reference to image worship dates from fifth century BC and the first sculpture is from first century BC\textsuperscript{27}. The worship of images is generally connected with the Tantric tradition, the term “Tantrism” being a subject of many discussions and even questioned as existing religious entity; It has either been regarded as the mere ritual and technical aspect of Hinduism or in much wider definition, including religion based on these Sanskrit texts an ample range of popular “magical” beliefs and practices such as Śākta and Hatha Yoga traditions\textsuperscript{28}. Lorenzen raises the question “Are all, or nearly all, of the Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions dedicated to female deities Tantric?”\textsuperscript{29} It’s noteworthy that fertile mother images existed since the upper Paleolithics and the Vedas preserve information about Śākti Tantrism and female divinities\textsuperscript{30}. In the context of this discourse, it seems that the question about the earliest use of the ritual remains open.

In the attempt to understand the relationship between the two rituals, it’s important first to determine their purpose and the essence of the entity inhibiting the image as a result of the ceremony. In India that could be Paramatma\textsuperscript{31}, jīva (jīvan)\textsuperscript{32} – the question loses its purpose in the consideration of the Hindu belief that these are all part of the supreme divine energy Brahman\textsuperscript{33}. For example, the present day idol makers in Tamil Nadu believe it’s the Jīva (jīvan)\textsuperscript{34}. And to illustrate the living tradition of Swaminarayan Sanstha: “First the prāna (life breath)

\textsuperscript{25} Elgood 2000, 16.
\textsuperscript{26} ibid. p.17.
\textsuperscript{27} ibid. p.19.
\textsuperscript{31} The Supreme Soul (Apte, 1169).
\textsuperscript{32} The principle of life, the vital breath, life, soul (Apte, 739); personal soul enshrined in the human body and imparting to it life, motion and sensation (Rodriguez, H. 2003, p.49).
\textsuperscript{33} The idea of jīva and atman being one with Brahman is conceptualized in the non-dualistic philosophy of Shankara: “Brahman is Existence-Knowledge-Absolute, extremely Pure, Transcendental, Self-existing, Eternal, Indivisible-Bliss, not essentially different from the individual jeeva, and with no differences within or without.” (25); “…Hence the Atman itself is the supreme Brahman and nothing else.” (216).: Vivekachoodamani, see also n. (178), (200-201), (569) (= Sw.Chinmayananda 1989 (2016))
\textsuperscript{34} Dalrymple 2009, 198; In July, 2016 I had the chance to make personal interview with the chief sculptor at Poom Puhar art metal center workshop (Swamimalai, Tamil Nadu state), Mr. Elangovan and witness Prāna Pratistha Pūjā over a bronze statue of the elephant-headed Ganesh (Fig.6). Further in this article, the information from this interview will be referred to as Poom Puhar, Elangovan 2016.
enters the murti, followed by the jīva (soul). Lastly, the ten indriyas (senses) are infused into the murti.”\(^{35}\)

In Ancient Egypt, this process is well attested: the opening of the mouth allows the Ba to enter and exit the image.\(^{36}\) The ability of Ba to inhibit different images is manifested through the process \(\text{hprw}\) activated by the power \(\text{hk3w}\)\(^{37}\) (usually translated as magic). But at the same time, as thoroughly explained by T. Lekov, the image is connected with Ka, which can inhibit the effigy, and the deceased can accept his image as Ka and connect with it\(^{38}\). In search of the purpose of the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth ritual, the common interpretation of the authors is the concept of “animation” and transforming the status of the inanimate matter into “alive”\(^{39}\), with the outright purpose of bringing back the senses of a living person (in case of the funerary ritual)\(^{40}\). But being generally true, this definition causes interpretation problems in the case when the object is not anthropo- or theriomorphic. To avoid this, Finnestad uses more general definition: “to make the object operative, i.e. in a cultic sense”\(^{41}\). Or as Bjerke summarized it: “the most common interpretation of the ritual is the one that sees the aim of the ritual actions as the transformation of the statue (or mummy) in such a way that it can serve as a medium for cultic communication”\(^{42}\) Regardless of the precise definition, both rituals aim at bringing the image into live through the jīva or Ba\(^{43}\), endowing it with the senses of a living being. This also explains the common motifs for opening of the mouth and the eyes, activating the most important vital senses.

According to the Hindu tradition, there are precise rules that should be followed during the making of the idol, prior to invoking the vital energy into the image. The Silpasästras give very specific instructions about this process, providing detailed information on proportions, postures, iconography and colours. The making of idols is considered sacred itself. Before starting the work on an image, the craftsman undergoes ritual purification and performs some meditation practices. Through meditation, the artist is trying to receive an inner vision and it is considered that he is not creating something new, but expressing something that already exists.\(^{44}\) Till recently, only people from Vishawakarma cast were allowed to make im-

\(^{35}\) http://www.baps.org/cultureandheritage/Traditions/HinduPractices/MurtiPratishtha.aspx

\(^{36}\) Леков 2004, 155.

\(^{37}\) For the meaning of \(\text{xprw}\) and its connection with the movement of \(\text{Ba}\) see: Леков 2002, 9-15; Леков 2004, 60-66,134-135, 316, 427.

\(^{38}\) Леков 2004, 134.

\(^{39}\) Finnestad 1978, 120-121.

\(^{40}\) ibid., 120 n.13. Returning the senses and achieving integrity is a common motive and integral part of the transition of the deceased in the afterlife.

\(^{41}\) Finnestad 1978, 121.

\(^{42}\) Bjerke 1965, 213.

\(^{43}\) Both concepts represent the “soul” or individuality and at the same time being part of the supreme Divine.

\(^{44}\) Elgood 2000, 29-31.
Some parallels between the opening of the mouth ritual and ages of gods. According to the present Tamil Nadu bronze idol makers, no meat or alcohol should be consumed when god statue is being made. It is essential that during the crafting of the image, the sculptor should concentrate all his prayers on the deity, asking the divinity to take possession of the idol. Thus, the final ritual may be perceived as the culmination and closing of the whole process of creating a living god.

Although no such ancient Egyptian instructions are preserved, the Opening of the mouth ritual chapter dealing with the “sleeping Sem” appears to be connected with the making of a statue of the deceased (in spite that at this point the statue has already been crafted). An interesting parallel with the role of the Indian sculptor can be made: as Assman explains, the priest, acting as the son of the deceased, is “seeing the form of his father in a trance or in meditative concentration and capturing it in its outlines so that the artisans can render it in stone or wood”. He is not the one creating the image, but regardless of that he receives a vision and is addressed by the Hery-heb priest with the words “Hurry and see your father. The statue is now ready and it is to be recognized by the son as a portrait of his father”. The origin of the sleeping Sem is usually traced to Africa and he is usually described as a shaman practicing magical rites in the pre-dynastic period before the institutionalization of a more “ordered” religion. Though the parallel with the Indian statue craftsmanship and the sculpture can seem a little distant, it can throw some light on the meaning of the problematic scene of the sleeping priest. Obviously, in both cases it is necessary to search for divine assistance in order to create god’s image and distinguish it from the secular craft. More parallels with the Sem priest will be drawn in connection with the consecration ritual itself.

Further proof that the making of statues in Egypt was not considered to be an ordinary craft, comes from the verb designating the action of creating a divine image, which has been in use since the Early dynastic period: *ms* (give birth, hence fashion). There is still a discussion whether the term describes the making of the image or its consecration (i.e. the Opening of the Mouth), since the action is attributed to the king who wasn’t the one crafting the statues. The participation of the king is hardly an objection to the meaning “making of statues” since the Sem priest also does not create the statues, but instead of that he utters the words: “I have made my father. I have made a statue of my father”. So the concept can still refer to the crafting, although the king is only symbolically the artisan. As observed by Sir

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45 This tradition is not being observed strictly anymore (Poom Puhar, Elangovan 2016).
46 Poom Puhar, Elangovan 2016.
47 Dalrymple 2009, 197.
48 Baly 1930, 178.
50 Frazer as quoted in Baly 1930, 177, Baly 1930, p. 179.
52 Logan 1990, 62 – in connection with the jmy-wt fetish.
54 Budge 1909, 37.
A. Gardiner, vast importance has been attached to the creation of statues in the early dynasties, with the observation that “such events will have been regarded less as artistic achievements than as acts of piety”\(^{55}\). To conclude this line of thought, in Ancient Egypt and India (as well as in other cultures), the creation of the image played an important role for its transformation to divine, and as summarized by R. Rappaport: “the significance of works of art in ritual could lie either in the objects produced and then contemplated or manipulated, or in the act of making them, or both.”\(^{56}\)

According to the Indian scriptures, observing correct procedure in the ritual preparation is even more significant than the sculpture crafting. But Elgood points out that rather than following the prescriptions of the Agamas – the texts containing the correct performance of the consecration – the tradition is transferred orally and all the mantras are memorized\(^{57}\). First of all, it is important to establish who is authorized to perform the ritual. The main role belongs to the priests in the temple/tomb in both cultures. The description by the Swaminarayan Sanstha explains the requirement for the one performing \textit{prāna pratistha}\(^{58}\): “One in whose every organ Paramatma resides fully, that pure Mahapurush is eligible to perform \textit{prāna pratistha}, because it is only he who can invoke Paramatma within his heart into the murti.”\(^{59}\) Usually that is the priest, the one who performs the daily \textit{pujas}, in the case of Swaminarayan Sanstha only the high priests \textit{Mahapurush} or \textit{Satpurush} can perform the ritual. In the tradition of the present day idol makers in South India, the ritual takes place in the workshop, the master sculptor playing the role of the priest. But \textit{Prāna Pratistha} performed at the workshop is only the beginning – later, when the image reaches the temple, the proper ceremony and chanting is made by the priest and only then the divinity enters it\(^{60}\).

There is no sufficient information about the ritual performed over statues of gods in Ancient Egypt. Here again a reference to the verb \textit{ms} can be made – the Old Kingdom sources point to the king as executing this service\(^{61}\), the highest cult authority leading the process (whether it includes the creation only or the consequent consecration of the image). On the other hand, the Opening of the Mouth ritual as part of the funerary practices includes a lot of participants, several different priests playing different roles, three sculptors and “the son of the deceased” – probably sometimes the real son. The ritual, inscribed in TT 217 however provides different and unique information. The tomb belongs to the chief sculptor Apy and it

\(^{55}\) Gardiner 1945, 13, n2.
\(^{56}\) Rappaport 1999, 384-385.
\(^{57}\) Elgood 2000, 32; Poom Puhar 2016, Mr. Elangovan also explained that nowadays there is improvisation in the ritual performance, rather than following the scriptures.
\(^{58}\) according to The Vaihāyasi Samhita (9/28-84, 90) of the Panchatra Agam Shastras.
\(^{59}\) http://www.baps.org/cultureandheritage/Traditions/HinduPractices/MurtiPratishtha.aspx
\(^{60}\) Poom Puhar, Elangovan 2016.
contains two interesting details. The first is the painting of the sculptor’s workshop, picturing production of furniture and a coffin, obviously made for the tomb of Apy: one scene shows his son Any reading from the book of the Opening of the Mouth in front of a table, containing all the tools for the ritual. Another, which is not directly adjacent to the first, pictures an assistant holding a coffin in an attitude of a mourner, while the sculptor’s son performs the Opening of the Mouth (Fig.1). In one hand he holds a book of the service of the ritual and in the other – a tool with which he opens the mouth. These scenes raise the question of possible performing of the service in the workshop, since that is the only known reference to such practice. It could be suggested that, similar to the case in India, Apy, being a sculptor of Amon in the Place of Justice in Western Thebes and his son and respectively his successor, had the right to perform the ritual in the workshop before the proper ceremony. According to the scene and having in mind the parallel from India, possibly a brief practice took part in the workshop. It should be also pointed that three sculptors took part in the regular funerary sequence of the service, though their role is secondary and they do not replace the priest, but are only acting of sculptors. The second image, that suggests that Apy had some specific authorities, is showing him perform libations for the cult of Amenhotep I as a priest, dressed in a leopard skin, probably connected with his status of head sculptor. In any case it is clear, that sculptor’s role did not end with the creation of the image, but in some way he was involved in its consecration. In addition to these observations, it should be noted that in Babylonia, the craftsmen who made the statue, also participated in the ritual performance, though there is no data what exactly their role was. It seems that there are similar concepts, giving special role to the sculptor, who acts like a tool, connecting to the divine world in order to transfer the knowledge to his creation. The rich anthropological information from India can shed more light upon this aspect and reveal more about the significance of the craftsmen, not only for the making, but also the consecration of the image.

Regarding the place where *Prāṇa Pratistha* is performed, the practice varies according to the different traditions and purposes. Typically, it is made in the temple, where the whole ceremony may be more elaborate and last several days. (Rarely, it can be performed in private homes, where the service is much simpler) . The service is usually held in a special booth outside the temple, over an altar. As already discussed in the case of the Tamil Nadu sculptors, a brief ritual is made within the workshop, before the images are sent to their destinations, usually temples, already as “living gods”, though the main consecration is performed properly afterwards in the temple. In Egypt, during the Old Kingdom, the ritual was con-

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62 Davies 1927, 71, Plate XXXVI.
63 Budge 1909, 12, 37-43, 75-76.
64 Davies 1927, 40, Plate XXII, XXIII.
65 Blackman 1924, 50.
67 Poom Puhar, Elangovan 2016.
nected with the Mansion of Gold (hwt-nbw), that is the goldsmith’s workshop. According to Bjerke, “This circumstance seems to indicate that a statue, probably a royal statue, was the object of the ritual actions.” Unfortunately, there is no more information about this period. Obviously, the better preserved funerary ceremonies, were performed in and around the tomb. (As noted above, there was also some ceremony in the workshop, though it is not clear whether this was a regular practice.) In the vignette of the Book of the Opening of the Mouth in the tomb of Seti I, it is said that the statue should be put on a mound of sand in The House of Gold, which according to W. Budge is the sarcophagus or perhaps the front house of the tomb – thus identifying hwt-nb with pr-n-nb. However, Gardiner argues that there is no evidence for such assumption, it is hardly probable that the ceremony with all the priests took place in the inaccessible shaft. In the pyramid-temples of the kings, there were chambers where “statues were not only kept, but actually made” and that “The act of opening the mouth of statues is mentioned in close connection with the act of fashioning them in more than one ancient text.” Almost certainly, the god’s statues were consecrated in the temples – the Horus temple at Edfu provides interesting information about it, the ritual being done over relieves and even over the temple itself, which will be discussed separately.

Prāṇa Pratistha starts with placing the statue looking to East. On the other hand according to the Opening of the Mouth instructions, the statue should be placed facing South, over a mound of sand. Though the two practices disagree about direction, both in the Indian and Babylonian rituals the image is oriented to the sunrise. This orientation can be explained by the fact, that both are performed during the night, till sunrise, the time considered by the Hindus to be most auspicious. According to some Tamil Nadu traditional sculptors: “the idol’s eyes must be carved open between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. when there is no sound or disturbance which might upset the deity” – the most auspicious time of the day according to the Hindu tradition. The workshops also consult the Hindu calendar and almanac panchāṅgam in order to determine the proper date for the specific deity, whose statue is being consecrated. Though generally the time of the performance in Egypt is not specified, according to Assmann, the Opening of the Mouth Ritual was part of a nocturnal liturgy, starting in the even-

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68 WB II, 238.
69 Bjerke 1965, 206.
70 Budge 1909, 9.
71 Davies-Gardiner 1919, 58 n.1.
72 Blackman – Fairman 1946, 75-91.
73 ibid., 53; Budge 1909, 9.
74 Blackman 1924, 49
75 Babylonia: Blackman 1924, 49, India: Maniura – Shepherd 2006, 73; Dalrymple 2009, 197
76 Dalrymple 2009, 197.
77 Poom Puhar, Elangovan 2016: The practice is never performed on inauspicious dates (such as Rahu Kalam or Emakandam).
An interesting detail is that the altar, where the ceremony of Prāṇa Pratisthā was performed, was first sprinkled with sand and then covered with grass, revealing similar purifying properties of the sand.

Both rituals begin, subsequently contain and conclude with a lot of cleansing rites and libations, performed over the images with different purifying substances (Fig. 2, 3). As tempting as it is to consider this as a parallel, it must be noted, that the purification and fumigation is always preliminary and part of the rituals of both cultures together with food offerings. In case of consecration, to prepare the image through purification is a must and such practices are not limited to India and Egypt. It should be noted that both Opening of the Mouth and Prāṇa Pratisthā resemble to a great extent and even are part of the daily temple ritual and pūjā, thus having purely Egyptian and respectively Hindu character. According to the chief sculptor at Poom Puhar art center, the brief practice performed at the workshop is actually pūjā called Prāṇa Pratisthā; and Blackman-Fairman express the view “that the Opening of the Mouth and the daily temple-liturgy are, apart from a number of ceremonies essentially peculiar to the former, practically identical rites.”

Generally, Prana Pratisthā begins with reciting the Dhyana mantra, containing the “iconographic descriptions and the definition of the power of the specific deity.” The whole ritual includes bathing of the deity, a pūjā service and chanting of Sanscrit mantras. A ceremony called “Nyasa” (lit. “touching”) or nyasvidhi is performed, which invokes different deities in the limbs and parts of the body through touching them with a golden needle. “This is followed by the mantras of Pratishtha and those of the Adhivasana and Pranapratishtha which are responsible for the infusing of life in the image.” There is no direct parallel to the touching and invoking the deities in the Opening of the Mouth ritual. But the concept of invoking different gods is well attested Egyptian concept. The words, pronounced after the touching with wr-hkā ensure the protection of gods, through transferring their vital powers, the “fluids of life” in a similar way. According to Budge, by the touch of the ram headed instrument, symbolizing Khnum, the deceased received a new body and divine nature. The invoking of different gods, is practiced in Egypt at least since the Old Kingdom. For example, in Coffin Texts 761 as well as Book of Dead 42, after listing the parts of the body inhabited by gods, the deceased concludes: “there is no member of mine devoid of a god”.

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78 Assmann 1990, 12. It can be assumed that, similar to Prāṇa Pratisthā, there were proper dates for performance, connected with the festivals of the gods, though there is no proof for that.
79 Elgood 2000, 32.
80 Blackman – Fairman 1946, 86. The authors even accept the possibility, that a shortened version of the Opening of the Mouth was part of the temple liturgy, though there are no allusions to any such ceremonies in Abydos or Karnak.
81 Elgood 2000, 32.
82 ibid., 32.
83 Budge 1909, 72-73.
84 Faulkner 2010, 62.
The culmination of the Prāna Pratistha is when the eyes are chiseled open through a golden chisel. In the workshop, the eyes are chiseled open with a regular chisel (Fig.4), because during the moulding, a coating has been intentionally left over them. Afterwards they are covered with sandalwood paste, which has auspicious qualities, or a layer of ghee and honey\textsuperscript{85}. An alternative way of giving eyesight, installing the jīva soul and activating the sense organs and vital energies is through touching the heart of Durga image with a flower and pronouncing the appropriate bija mantras as part of the Durga pūjā. \textsuperscript{86} A unique moment for the conclusion of the right is that the placing of the mirror in front of the newly “awakened” deity: the first thing it will see is an image of him or herself\textsuperscript{87} (fig.5). Looking at the mirror, the artisan removes the layer of ghee and honey from the previous stage of purification. This is known as the Netra-anāvaran rite. The mirror is used because once the murti’s eyes are opened, it’s first immensely powerful drashti (vision) should not fall on a human being\textsuperscript{88}.

The set of tools for the Opening of the Mouth ritual is much more complicated and involves various instruments – a number of adzes and chisels, a psś-kf knife, angle, saw, a finger shaped object etc\textsuperscript{89}. According to Schiaparelli, there was no precisely established order of the use of those tools and the texts are in complete disagreement about it, but they were all described with the collective term $msh^c$-$bi\tilde{z}$ ($mshtjw$). The chisel is the instrument having direct parallels with the Indian ceremony. In the tomb of Amenemhet, it was used together with the finger-shaped instrument by the “beloved son”, the $mdt\tilde{r}$ ($mdt\tilde{t}$) was made of $\text{bronze}$, had green blade and red handle, and the finger was golden\textsuperscript{90} or also made of $bi\tilde{z}$\textsuperscript{91}. And while this instrument is only used in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony\textsuperscript{92}, the other chisel connected with the ritual was also used for working with stone and wood – $\text{wood}$ ($md\tilde{t}$ (?))\textsuperscript{93}. It may be suggested that the symbolic use of the chisel is actually an allusion to a primary use for the finishing of the statue, as in Prāna Pratistha. Moreover, as already noted, the work of the sculptors has been considered as sacred and was tightly connected with the ritual since Old Kingdom, which is supported by the term “mansion of gold”. If that is the case, the symbolic use of the chisel may be additional proof that the workshops were the places where the ceremony or at least part of it was originally held, and

\textsuperscript{85} Poom Puhar, Elangovan 2016: the opening and coating is also applied to the third eye, between the eyebrows (even though the eye is not visible).
\textsuperscript{86} Rodriguez 2003, 49.
\textsuperscript{87} There is a similar practice in the Jain Tradition: The monk looks at the image in a mirror while reciting a mantra (spell) calling on the Jina’s omniscience to illuminate the cosmos (Maniura, Shepherd 2006, 73.)
\textsuperscript{88} http://www.baps.org/cultureandheritage/Traditions/HinduPractices/MurtiPratishtha.aspx
\textsuperscript{89} Blackman 1915, 28; Schiaparelli 1882, 109.
\textsuperscript{90} Davies – Gardiner 1919, 59.
\textsuperscript{91} Wainwright 1932, 7.
\textsuperscript{92} Faulkner 1988, 124; WB II, p.189.
\textsuperscript{93} WBII, p.188.
that the finishing of the statues and chiseling of the eyes and mouth was connected with the ritual. The Babylonian rite also points to this direction – parts of it took place in the house of the craftsman, the sculptors participated in the ceremony together with their tools and an axe was used for the symbolic opening of the mouth.94

One post-rite practice deserves special attention: in Ancient Egypt there are occurrences of secondary performance of the Opening of the Mouth for special occasions, such as festivals, which aim at allowing the statue to receive offerings during the celebrations. Obviously there was a need to renew the vitality, though the secondary ritual seems to have been shorter95. Gardiner also points to a rapid renewal of the ceremony, practiced sometimes in the subsequent funerary cult96. The search of the similar concept in India did not reveal any relevant ritual. Still, it is believed that the jīva does not stay forever in a sculpture and the images have a defined lifespan. The period depends on the faithful worship and can last for 850 years, but if stolen or "abused" (as is considered the case with statues in museums), the deity would leave the statue forever.97 In addition to this, during specific festivals, such as the Durgā pūjā, the Goddess may be invoked into places where she is not normally present and where she will be worshipped only during a festival98. Similar is the practice with the temporary yantras that are made with coloured powders only for the specific worship or festival and do not last after it. A parallel can be drawn to the similar the concept of Ba coming in and out of the statue99.

According to the Jain tradition, a temple does not become active before the main image of the Jina has been consecrated (the Jain ceremony for the opening of the eyes being Ārījana Šalākā). In Ellora caves, there is a proof that the construction of the main hall was interrupted so that the Jina image can be completed. The ritual made over an image in order to “bring life to temple” has been attested in Medieval Jain texts.100 Similar was the situation in the Egyptian temples, as proved by the texts from the Horus temple at Edfu101. But apart from performing it over the statues and relieves, subsequently the “Mouth of the temple” itself was opened.102 It can be assumed that this use of the ritual is secondary, the Opening of the Mouth becoming a synonym of the general consecration of a temple, moreover no earlier texts point to such use.

94 Blackman 1924, 50.
95 Finnestad 1978, 125-127.
96 Davies-Gardiner 1919, 61.
97 Dalrymple 2015 (2009), 198.
98 Rodríguez 2003, 50.
99 Леков 2004, 155.
100 Owen 2012, 44.
101 Blackman – Fairman 1946, 75-91.
102 ibid., 85, with the suggestion, that through the ritual, the inanimate objects depicted became “actual equivalents of what they represented.”
Prāna Pratistha may be considered as a ritual that fits to the term defined by Turner and further developed by Rappaport as “communitas”. According to R. Rappaport, taking part in it encourages alteration of consciousness from the rationality towards “numinous” states, can probably be applied to consecration rituals generally. Indians believe that during the consecration, the devotees start to feel the increasing presence of the deity, expressed in trance, goose flesh, uttering of moans and even the feeling of being possessed. There are no such indications for the Egyptian ritual that, whether in tombs of temples, had much more restricted access. But change in the state of consciousness is well attested in the so called Sem sleep episode.

After performing Prana Pratistha, the statue is no longer treated as a murti, but as a deity, invoked within the murti. It is no longer a piece of art and even the sculptor does not look at it as his creation, but as a living god. But, as already noted, the ritual is performed also for consecration of abstract images embodying the divine. The question about the transformation happening to the image in Ancient Egypt seems to be more complicated, especially when the ritual is part of the funerary practices. Unfortunately, there are no surviving texts explaining in details the ritual performed over statues. As already pointed, it is performed over different objects, but to continue the thread given in the beginning – the purpose and respectively the result is quite similar, because the same concepts were applied. As Finnestad pointed: “the statue is transformed from a lifeless substance to a “cultic body” ”.

The reason behind the similarities between the Egyptian and Babylonian ritual is difficult to be determined, but still – logical and to some extent traceable. This is not the case with India, considering the spatial and temporal distance and the limited connections between the two cultures. Therefore, any possibility of common source or intercultural connections will not be discussed here. It is well established that analogues concepts can be expressed in common way, yet the similarities between the two rituals go beyond this reason. Since the preserved Egyptian sources are often restricted to excerpts, inscribed on the walls of tombs, and were copied from originals which unfortunately have not survived, there are a lot of obscurities and often the true meaning behind the actions can hardly be identified. The comparison with similar rituals, still practiced today, may throw some light upon the deeper concepts or at least give ideas for possible explanations.

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103 On the subject see Rappaport 1999, 219, 380.
104 Rodriguez 2003, 45.
107 Dalrymple 2009, 179.
The review of the two rituals unravels many analogous patterns and suggests even more common ideas and features. There are similar points beyond doubt and discussion, starting with the form of the practice – opening of the mouth and eyes with a chisel, continuing with the importance of the crafting of the images, the close connection with the daily ritual, the use for consecration of a temple, and spreading to the essence: awakening the senses and bringing the image to life through invoking jīva/Ba into it. In addition, the comparison with Prāṇa Pratistha may offer some possible interpretations for the Egyptian ceremony. Among these are the idea, that the symbolical use of the chisel was preceded by real chiselling of the eyes and the assumption that there was a brief ceremony in the workshop, before the real one in the tomb (temple). Although all these assumptions are just in the theoretical field, the parallels drawn between the two rituals show that there are a lot of comparable concepts with potential for future research.

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Fig. 1. (Davies, Nina de Garis, 1915. *The Tomb of Amenemhet* (No. 82). The Theban Tombs Series. London, Pl. XXXVI)

Fig. 2. *Prāna Pratistha* Pūjā over a bronze statue of the elephant-headed Ganesh, Poom Puhar art metal center workshop (Swamimalai, Tamil Nadu state) (2016)
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Fig. 4. *Prâna Pratistha* over a bronze statue of the elephant-headed Ganesh, Poom Puhar art metal center workshop (Swamimalai, Tamil Nadu state). Opening of the eyes with a chisel. (2016)
Fig. 5. Prāṇa Pratistha over a bronze statue of the elephant-headed Ganesh, Poom Puhar art metal center workshop (Swamimalai, Tamil Nadu state). Showing the newly awakened image to the deity in the mirror (2016)

Fig. 6. Prāṇa Pratistha over a bronze statue of the elephant-headed Ganesh, Poom Puhar art metal center workshop (Swamimalai, Tamil Nadu state). Final procedure over the consecrated statue. (2016)