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Revealing Śiva’s superiority by retelling Viṣṇu’s deeds: Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the Skandapurāṇa

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Citation
Dokter-Mersch, S. (2021, April 15). *Revealing Śiva’s superiority by retelling Viṣṇu’s deeds: Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the Skandapurāṇa*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3160305

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Cover Page

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Author: Dokter-Mersch, S.
Title: Revealing Śiva's superiority by retelling Viṣṇu's deeds: Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the Skandapurāṇa
Issue Date: 2021-04-15

Revealing Śiva's Superiority by Retelling Viṣṇu's Deeds

Viṣṇu's Manifestation Myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*

Sanne Dokter-Mersch

Revealing Śiva's Superiority by Retelling Viṣṇu's Deeds
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Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van rector magnificus prof. dr. ir. H. Bijl,
volgens besluit van het college voor promoties
te verdedigen op donderdag 15 april 2021
klokke 11.15 uur

door

Sanne Dokter-Mersch
geboren te Vlaardingen
in 1989

Promotores:	Prof. dr. Peter C. Bisschop
	Prof. dr. Yuko Yokochi (Kyoto University)
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	Dr. Elizabeth A. Cecil (Florida State University)

Foreword

In the past five years, I have had the privilege to experience the versatility of research and to find some of the best mentors to teach and to guide me. It is now time to officially thank them for their support and time. First and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude to my *guru* for twelve years at Leiden University and promotor during my PhD trajectory, professor Peter Bisschop. From the second year of my Bachelor to the finalization of my dissertation, Peter has supported my love for Sanskrit and mythology and has introduced me into the world of Śaivism, with this dissertation as my final initiation. I would also like to thank my second promotor, professor Yuko Yokochi. I share with her my passion for manuscript research and the *Skandapurāṇa*. During my three-months stay at Kyoto University, she always found the time to work with me on my critical edition, which is just a tip of the iceberg of her contributions in the past few years.

In the context of the *Skandapurāṇa* project, I was fortunate enough to see up close the amount of work and in-depth research that precedes a critical edition. Each verse is read out loud, no error in the critical apparatus is left undiscussed, and every augmentless imperfect comes under close scrutiny. I would like to thank the team members and other participants of the yearly meetings in Leiden and Kyoto for their insights concerning my critical edition, in particular Diwakar Acharya, Hans Bakker, Kengo Harimoto, Judit Törzsök and Somdev Vasudeva. My colleagues in Leiden should certainly not be forgotten either. Lucas den Boer, Elizabeth Cecil and Nirajan Kafle, thank you for the reading sessions, academic ins and outs and of course, the coffee breaks.

And, last but not least, I would like to thank my loved ones: starting with my parents who from the start have supported me to do what I love, and concluding with the man I love, my husband Laurens. Thank you for keep trying to remember the Sanskrit names of Hindu gods, for pretending to be my husband during my fieldtrip in India, and for making the past few years the best of my life with Nelson and his sister as unquestionable highlights.

Sanne Dokter-Mersch
March 2021

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List of abbreviations

AgP	*Agnipurāṇa*
AŚ	*Arthaśāstra*
BḍP	*Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*
BhāP	*Bhāgavatapurāṇa*
BhG	*Bhagavadgītā*, see Van Buitenen 1981
BrP	*Brahmapurāṇa*, see Schreiner and Söhnen 1987
HV	*Harivaṃśa*
KāP	*Kālikāpurāṇa*
KS	*Kumārasambhava*
KūP	*Kūrmapurāṇa*
LiP	*Liṅgapurāṇa*
MaS	*Manusmṛti*, see Olivelle 2004
MBh	*Mahābhārata*
MkP	*Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*
MS	*Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*
MtP	*Matsyapurāṇa*
NsP	*Narasiṃhapurāṇa*
PBh	*Pañcārthabhāṣya*
PdP	*Padmapurāṇa*
PPL	*Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, see Kirfel 1927
PS	*Pāśupatasūtra*
Rām	*Rāmāyaṇa*
ṚV	*Ṛgveda*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
ŚiP	*Śivapurāṇa*
SkP	*Skandapurāṇa*, edition by Nag Publishers 1982
SP	*Skandapurāṇa*, critical edition
SP_{Bh}	*Skandapurāṇa*, edition by Bhaṭṭarāī 1988
SP_{S}	*Skandapurāṇa*, Nepalese (S) recension

TS	*Taittirīya Saṃhitā*
VāP	*Vāyupurāṇa*
VDh	*Viṣṇudharma*, see Grünendahl 1983—89
VDhP	*Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*
ViP	*Viṣṇupurāṇa*

śṛṇudhvaṃ munayaḥ sarve kārttikeyasya sambhavam |
brahmaṇyatvaṃ samāhātmyaṃ vīryaṃ ca tridaśādhikam ||
"Listen, all you sages, to Kārttikeya's [i.e. Skanda's] birth, his devotion to Brahmins, his greatness and his heroism that surpasses [even that of] the gods."
Skandapurāṇa 1.14

1 Introduction

In the opening verses of the *Skandapurāṇa*, the *sūta*, "the bard", announces that he will tell the story of Skanda's birth, piety, eminence and valour. Skanda is the son of the gods Śiva and Pārvatī, and his miraculous birth and heroic deeds are certainly worth telling. He becomes the leader of the divine army and kills one of the terrifying enemies of the gods, the evil Tāraka. Although the *sūta* introduces the composition as one about Skanda, he recounts many other stories along the way. It contains numerous narratives and other text portions—from theological tractates to devotional eulogies, from glorifications of places to a myth of creation. The *Skandapurāṇa* is far more than just the story of Skanda; it is a Purāṇa.

The literal meaning of the Sanskrit word *purāṇa* is "ancient" or "belonging to ancient times". It is an adjective that can be used as a reference to the antiquity of things. When a narrative, for example, is qualified as ancient, it is considered to contain authority, respect and a notion of truth. From the first centuries CE onwards, *purāṇa* is not only an adjective, but becomes the word for a literary genre, that of the Purāṇas[1]. A Purāṇa is a compendium of mythological narratives and related text units dealing with gods and their worship[2]. Some Purāṇas are centred around one god who is presented as the highest deity, the axis of the universe, whom everybody should worship. Others are of a more general character. Among the Purāṇas that have a theological basis, each Purāṇa has its own

[1] For studies on Purāṇas in general, see Hazra 1940, Winternitz 1927/1972, Rocher 1986 and Bailey 2018. Studies on individual Purāṇas can often be found in the introduction to an edition or translation of a Purāṇa, such as Horace Hayman Wilson's introduction to the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (1840) and Peter Schreiner and Renate Söhnen's introduction to the *Brahmapurāṇa* (1989). Some of these and other studies on Purāṇas as a genre will be discussed at the end of section 1.1.
[2] By text unit, I mean any text portion. Some tell a story, others explain doctrines, express eulogies, etcetera. Some examples of text units in Purāṇas will be given in passing below.

perspective on who the ultimate god is, as well as its own narratives and corresponding ideology, resulting in a unique piece of literature. Despite the possible doctrinal differences between individual Purāṇas, a Purāṇa is recognizable as a Purāṇa, not only by its name, but also by its content, style and structure. Purāṇas receive their unique character because of the combination of on the one hand, canonicity which prescribes certain parameters within which the Purāṇa composers operated[3], and on the other hand, fluidity which gave the composers freedom to modify the content according to their own time, place and context.

Being composed in the sixth to seventh century in North India, the *Skandapurāṇa* can be counted among the early Purāṇas. It has a strong affiliation with Śaivism; a religious ideology centring around Śiva and promoting devotion to him. The text presents, for example, a Śaiva universe in which the gods maintain the roles they are known for, such as Brahmā being the creator, Indra being the king of the gods and Skanda becoming the leader of the divine army. Śiva is on top of this universe, accompanied by his wife Pārvatī, assigning the gods their executive tasks. He is the force behind all existence and action. The *Skandapurāṇa* is the first known Purāṇa with such a strong Śaiva message across the entire text.

By comparison with both early and later Purāṇas, it is possible to trace some key Purāṇic features in the *Skandapurāṇa*. One of these is the central means by which the text's Śaiva ideology is proclaimed, *viz.* through the retelling of well-known narratives. This thesis is dedicated to three such retellings in particular. Each of them is concerned with a manifestation of god Viṣṇu, taken on by him to conquer evil: the Man-Lion

[3] Purāṇas are, in a sense, authorless texts, for they are not signed by anyone, nor claimed by one author. However, the Purāṇas are sometimes believed to be composed by the mythical sage Vyāsa, who also composed the *Mahābhārata* and divided the Vedas into four. At the same time, the texts must have been composed by actual people, whom I refer to as "the composers", even though we do not know who they were. I deliberately use the plural form here because Purāṇas were most likely composed by a group of people, instead of by one individual. It is not unthinkable that parts of the composition were assigned to different people and were then brought together into one composition. Purāṇas were furthermore not compiled in one breath. Instead, they grew over generations, possibly even centuries. Since some goals of my thesis concern the decisions made and aims intended by the composers of the *Skandapurāṇa*, I will return to a short discussion on who these people might have been in section 1.2.3. I choose to postpone this discussion because, in order to be able to hypothesize on the composers, we first need to know more about the text itself, identifying some key features of the *Skandapurāṇa*, as well as of the genre of Purāṇas.

(Narasiṃha), the Boar (Varāha) and the Dwarf (Vāmana). The stories of these manifestations were not new at the time of their appearance in the *Skandapurāṇa*. They are already known from texts from several centuries before the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*. This is, however, not a matter of plagiarism or lack of originality. One of the key characteristics of Purāṇa literature, even in its early stages, is to retell stories that were well-known, both by the Purāṇa's composers and its audience. In the case of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*, the audience would instantly recognize the main storyline of Viṣṇu conquering evil, but it was probably the first time that they heard that the manifestation in question refuses or is unable to make place for Viṣṇu again after it has executed its task. Hence a new problem arises; a problem that can only be solved by Śiva.

Since this thesis is about the retelling of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in an early Purāṇa, I start this introduction with the *Skandapurāṇa* composers' perspective on what constitutes a Purāṇa and how this matches definitions of the genre provided in secondary literature on Purāṇas (1.1). How do the *Skandapurāṇa* composers categorize the *Skandapurāṇa*; to which specific texts do they refer in the text itself and how do they relate to them; which other texts may be assumed to be known by the composers; and on the basis of these internal references and chronological considerations, to what extent do the various definitions of the genre found in Purāṇa studies match the situation of the *Skandapurāṇa*? After this, I will partially redefine the genre by concentrating on narratives, *viz.* through an analysis of the content of the *Skandapurāṇa* and a comparison with other early Purāṇas (1.2). Which narratives and other text units constitute the *Skandapurāṇa*; what is the role of retellings; what modifications are found in these retellings; and what can we say about the *Skandapurāṇa* composers themselves based on this information? Finally, I will turn to the topic of the main body of my thesis, Viṣṇu's manifestation myths. I will introduce the myths involved (1.3), the research questions related to them, and the methodologies used in my analysis (1.4).

1.1 Purāṇa according to the *Skandapurāṇa*

There are several indications that the *Skandapurāṇa* is regarded as a Purāṇa. This does not only follow from the name of the text, but also from the colophons at the end of each

chapter[4] and from one text-internal reference. This reference appears in what is at present the last chapter of the text, SP_{Bh} 183[5]. The passage enumerates several types of text units featuring in the text.

> SP_{Bh} 183.63—64:
> *evaṃ sanatkumāras tu pṛṣṭo vyāsena dhīmatā* |
> *munīndraḥ kathayāmāsa purāṇaṃ skandasambhavam* || *63* ||
> *sarvāgamasamāyuktaṃ manvantarajagatsthitim* |
> *śivayogodbhavaṃ dhyānaṃ sarvajñānārṇavaṃ mahat* || *64* ||
> "Thus asked by the wise Vyāsa, the great sage Sanatkumāra[6] told the Purāṇa about the birth of Skanda, furnished with all traditional doctrines, [which is also about] the preservation of the world in [this] Manvantara [i.e. a large timeframe, lit. "age of Manu"], meditation that originates from Śiva's *yoga* system; [it is] a great ocean of all knowledge."[7]

[4] The colophons in the manuscripts record the name and/ or the number of the chapter *skandapurāṇe*, "in the *Skandapurāṇa*".
[5] The abbreviation SP_{Bh} refers to the *editio princeps* of the *Skandapurāṇa* by Kṛṣṇaprasāda Bhaṭṭarāī, which counts 183 chapters. One of the manuscripts of the *Skandapurāṇa* consists of 183 chapters, but the others break off prematurely. The abbreviation SP refers to the Sanskrit text as it appears in one of the volumes of the critical edition. Five volumes have been published thus far, referred to as SP Vol. I, SP Vol. IIA, SP Vol. IIB, SP Vol. III and SP Vol. IV. The next volume, SP Vol. V, is under way and is used in this thesis as well. Including this publication, over half of the text is edited: up to and including chapter 112. SP_{Bh} is generally used for chapter 113 and further, with the exception of SP 167 which has been critically edited by Peter Bisschop (2006) and is used instead.
N.B. this *Skandapurāṇa* is not to be confused with another publication going under the name of '*Skandapurāṇa*', abbreviated here as SkP. This is a later collection of individual texts. In fact, "[t]he assumption […] that the printed *Skandapurāṇa* forms a single whole (even if parts may have been separately composed), is quite groundless" (SP Vol. I, 3—4). The collection is one of the most extensive Purāṇas, consisting of seven *khaṇḍas* ("books"). It consists of numerous Māhātmyas ("Glorifications"), including an extensive eulogy of the holy city of Vārāṇasī, which is the fourth book, called *Kāśīkhaṇḍa* (Rocher 1986, 228—37).
[6] The main interlocutors of the *Skandapurāṇa* are the sages Vyāsa and Sanatkumāra. Vyāsa asks questions and Sanatkumāra answers them, usually in the form of a story.
[7] I translate all Sanskrit passages, including epithets, into English. All translations are my own, unless stated otherwise.

The passage gives the impression that it is a summary of the text: it is a Purāṇa (63d), which consists of the story about Skanda's birth (63d), doctrinal and theological parts (64a, 64c), and narratives about the preservation of the world in the current era (64b).

The *Skandapurāṇa* composers were not only aware of the text's status as a Purāṇa, they also positioned the text in an epic and Purāṇic landscape. In the opening verses of the text, where the sages ask the *sūta* to tell the story of Skanda's birth, two other compositions are mentioned in the same breath, to which the story of Skanda is compared.

> SP 1.8—9, 11:
> *tam āsīnam apṛcchanta munayas tapasaidhitāḥ* |
> *brahmasattre purā sādho naimiśāraṇyavāsinām* || *8* ||
> *kathitaṃ bhāratākhyānaṃ purāṇaṃ ca paraṃ tvayā* |
> *tena naḥ pratibhāsi tvaṃ sākṣāt satyavatīsutaḥ* || *9* ||
> *[…] bhāratākhyānasadṛśaṃ purāṇād yad viśiṣyate* |
> *tat tvā pṛcchāma vai janma kārttikeyasya dhīmataḥ* || *11* ||
> "The sages, filled with *tapas* ["austerity"][8], asked the seated one [i.e. the *sūta*]: 'Oh wise one, earlier, during the *brahmasattra* [sacrifice], the story of the Bhāratas [i.e. the *Mahābhārata*] and another Purāṇa were told by you to [the sages] who live in the Naimiśa forest. Therefore, you appear to us like another son of Satyavatī [i.e. Vyāsa]. […] We ask you to tell [the story about] the birth of the wise Kārttikeya [i.e. Skanda], which is equal to the story of the Bhāratas and excels the Purāṇa."

Two compositions are mentioned here that have been narrated by "the Purāṇic bard" (*paurāṇikaṃ […] sūtaṃ*, SP 1.5ab) earlier (*purā*, SP 1.8c). The first is "the story of the Bhāratas" which refers to the *Mahābhārata*, one of the two famous Indian epics (the other being the *Rāmāyaṇa*). The *Mahābhārata* is a major work, covering numerous stories and

[8] For a short introduction into *tapas* in the sense of "asceticism", see note 31.

teachings, alongside its main narrative, composed over several centuries[9]. It is told by Ugraśravas to the sages, who have assembled in the Naimiṣa forest for Śaunaka's twelve-year *sattra*, "sacrifice" (MBh 1.1).

The other composition mentioned in SP 1 is "the Purāṇa". This text is not further specified, but since it is said to have been told by the same *sūta* as the one of the *Mahābhārata*, its storyteller should be Ugraśravas. I would like to argue that the *Harivaṃśa* is meant here[10]. In the opening verses of the *Harivaṃśa*, Śaunaka asks "the

[9] The main narrative of the *Mahābhārata* tells about the great war between two families, *viz.* the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas (both descendants of Bharata and thus occasionally referred to as "the Bhāratas"), its preamble and aftermath. It is interspersed with numerous mythological narratives, accounts of holy places, doctrinal recitals, of which the *Bhagavadgītā* is the most famous, and many other text units. It was probably composed in stages, starting as early as the third century BCE and lasting until roughly the third to fourth century CE, and even continuing afterwards. For an overview of alternative dates, see e.g. Brockington 1998, 130—58; for a brief summary of the *Mahābhārata*, see e.g. Smith 2009, xv—xvii; for a general introduction to the text, including references to other secondary literature, see e.g. Fitzgerald 2018. The *Mahābhārata* served as a literary example for many Purāṇa composers, who frequently drew upon the narratives told in the epic and sought connection with the epic tradition, for example, by starting with questions that were left unanswered in the *Mahābhārata* (Bailey 2018, "Definition of the Genre and Its Content" section, para. 7) and by having the same composer as the epic, Vyāsa (ibid, "Performance and Performers" section, para. 2).

[10] The *Harivaṃśa*, "the lineage of Hari [i.e. Viṣṇu]", is a collection of narratives, including the life story of one of Viṣṇu's manifestations called Kṛṣṇa, myths on creation and recreation and Vaiṣṇava mythology. It celebrates Viṣṇu in his manifestation as Kṛṣṇa as the highest god and is affiliated to a form of Vaiṣṇavism, a religious ideology centring around Viṣṇu and devotion to him. The oldest parts of the text were possibly composed between the mid-first to the mid-third centuries CE (Brodbeck 2019a, "Editions, Translations, and Textual History" section, para. 7), but the text has continued to grow in the centuries that follow. For an introduction to the *Harivaṃśa*, including a summary of parts of the text and references to other secondary literature, see Brodbeck 2019a.
The *Harivaṃśa* is at the junction of the transition from the epic to the Purāṇic period. On the one hand, it is called a *khila*, "a supplement", to the *Mahābhārata* in the summary of the books of the *Mahābhārata*: *harivaṃśas tataḥ parva purāṇaṃ khilasaṃjñitam*, "then [there is] the book [called] *Harivaṃśa*, the Purāṇa, known as a supplement" (MBh 1.2.69ab). It is therefore often categorized among the epics. I will, however, categorize it among the Purāṇas, based on some textual references, as well as on the style and content of the *Harivaṃśa*. The references to the *Harivaṃśa* as a Purāṇa are scarce. However, as I will argue in the main text, I interpret the *Skandapurāṇa* to refer to the *Harivaṃśa* by the name of 'Purāṇa' in SP 1. Second, two verses from the *Mahābhārata* possibly refer to it as a Purāṇa. The first is the verse quoted above and the other is MBh 1.1.204ab, which reads: *itihāsapurāṇābhyāṃ vedaṃ samupabṛmhayed*, "one should strengthen the Veda with both the epic and the Purāṇa". Based on the chronological order of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Harivaṃśa*, as well as on their close connection, I suggest that "the Purāṇa" stands for the *Harivaṃśa*—as, for instance, André Couture (2015c, 56) and Peter Schreiner (2015, 538) have done. Since the Sanskrit references are scarce, the parallels in style and content with other Purāṇas are even more convincing. First of all, the *Harivaṃśa* shares quite a number of verbatim parallels with other Purāṇas, collected by Willibald Kirfel (1927) as *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* (see below for more information on this text corpus). Second, other stories in the *Harivaṃśa* have a "Purāṇic"

sūta", who had told the great story of the Bhāratas (HV 1.1), to tell about the lineage of the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas (HV 1.5). Although he is not mentioned by name, Ugraśravas is generally considered as the *sūta* of the *Harivaṃśa* (see e.g. Couture 2015c in passim, Brodbeck 2019b, xxii), for it was he who had told the *Mahābhārata* during Śaunaka's sacrifice. Since Ugraśravas once told the *Mahābhārata*, followed by the *Harivaṃśa*, and since the *Mahābhārata* and the *Harivaṃśa* are intimately related in general (see note 10), I conclude that the composers of the *Skandapurāṇa* also presented them as a set in SP 1 and that the *Skandapurāṇa* was thus told by the same *sūta*: Ugraśravas[11].

The identification with the *Harivaṃśa* differs from the one cautiously suggested by the editors of SP Vol. I. The editors suggest that this Purāṇa is "possibly the same one" (SP Vol. I, 21) as an early version of the *Vāyupurāṇa* to which seems to be referred in SP 5[12]. This chapter tells how the sages reach the Naimiśa forest and start a sacrifice. Vāyu, the god called "Wind", visits them, and "the sages ask him about: the creation, dissolution and preservation of the world, genealogy (of the gods), world-periods and reigns of Manu [etcetera …]. He tells them all of it in the course of a thousand divine years" (ibid, 68, translation of SP 5.5ef—8). The editors of SP Vol. I have suggested that this passage refers to a part of the *Vāyupurāṇa* (ibid, 60 note 2)[13], which I find plausible as well. However, I do not think that this text is also meant in SP 1. Not only do these two chapters

character, as argued by André Couture in 'The Harivaṃśa and the Notion of Purāṇa'. Especially the myths about Viṣṇu taking on different forms to save the universe "are surely one of the main subjects dealt within the Purāṇas" (Couture 2015c, 58).

[11] Since the *Harivaṃśa* is told immediately after the *Mahābhārata*, we may assume that the location where this scene takes place is the Naimiṣa forest. The location of the *Mahābhārata*—and thus presumably that of the *Harivaṃśa*—also matches the description in the *Skandapurāṇa* (*brahmasattre purā […] naimiśāraṇyavāsinām*, SP 1.8cd). The place (Naimiṣa) and the occasion (a *sattra*) may, however, also be a conventional setting for the telling of epics and Purāṇas (see SP Vol. I, 60 note 2 and 67 note 23).

[12] The *Vāyupurāṇa* is one of the earliest Purāṇas, for which "the fifth century or the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. have generally been proposed as the date" (Rocher 1986, 245). The content is a combination of general Purāṇic material and some Śaiva ideology.

[13] The *Skandapurāṇa* seems to refer to the text portion of the *Vāyupurāṇa* that is shared with another Purāṇa, the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*. The two texts share a large number of topics and narratives verbatim that mainly concern the topics listed in SP 5 and can be categorized as "the five characteristics of Purāṇas" (*purāṇapañcalakṣaṇas*). The *Vāyupurāṇa* and the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* have both been extended with narratives that are only found in either of them. The parallels are generally considered older than the narratives that extended the individual Purāṇas. For an analysis of the shared text portion (for example, on whether they have once formed one text) and a concordance of the parallels, see Kirfel 1927, x—xix and Vielle 2005.

appear in different narrative frames (a dialogue between the sages and the *sūta* in SP 1 vs. a dialogue between Vyāsa and Sanatkumāra in SP 5) and thus in a different time period (SP 1 is the frame story and SP 5 is part of an actual narrative), the *Vāyupurāṇa* is not told by Ugraśravas, but by Ugraśravas' father Lomaharṣaṇa[14].

By mentioning the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Vāyupurāṇa*, the *Skandapurāṇa* is positioned in an epic and Purāṇic landscape and relates to each text differently. It should be equal to the *Mahābhārata*, from which a great ambition speaks, but the composers know their place: it should not excel the great epic. This is, however, stated about the *Harivaṃśa*, which is fitting, since the *Harivaṃśa* is a Vaiṣṇava text, mainly concerned with the family-related stories of Kṛṣṇa, while the *Skandapurāṇa* is a Śaiva text, dealing, among others, with the family-related stories of Skanda. It is, in other words, the very counterpart of the *Harivaṃśa*. The relationship with the *Vāyupurāṇa* is again different. As the editors of SP Vol. I already observed, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers seem to deliberately refer to the *Vāyupurāṇa*, so that they do not have to deal with the topics told by Vāyu—that is, the topics covered in the *Vāyupurāṇa* (SP Vol. I, 21). Even though in the end, the *Skandapurāṇa* does cover some of the topics, for instance by including a myth of creation[15], in general, the *Skandapurāṇa* supplements the *Vāyupurāṇa*, rather than that it excels it.

Since the *Skandapurāṇa* composers clearly place the text in an epic and Purāṇic context, we may assume that they were familiar with other texts present at the time of composition as well. This set of assumed known texts reaches beyond the epics and the Purāṇas.

- The oldest known Sanskrit texts are the Vedas, of which the earliest parts date back to 1500 BCE[16]. Since the Vedas were an intrinsic part of the Brahmin

[14] Lomaharṣaṇa told the *Vāyupurāṇa* to the sages (VāP 1.13), who at the time of the reign of king Asīmakṛṣṇa (VāP 1.10) were doing a *sattra* in Kurukṣetra, probably in the Naimiṣa forest (VāP 1.12; the sages are *naimiṣāraṇyagocarāḥ*, "whose abode is the Naimiṣa forest").
[15] I will discuss the *Skandapurāṇa* version of a myth of creation in section 1.2.1.
[16] The Vedas constitute a text corpus that is generally divided into four sections: the *Ṛgveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. They are mainly concerned with the invocation of gods and ritual formulas and also contain mythological material. For an overview study on the Vedas, including references to secondary literature, see e.g. Gonda 1975 and Proferes 2018. For a recent translation of the *Ṛgveda*, see Jamison and Brereton 2014.

society, constituting the basis of Sanskrit teaching and of the Sanskrit knowledge of the learned people, they must have been known by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers.

- The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the other major Sanskrit epic. Based on its widespread fame and its dating that starts in the mid-first millennium BCE and lasts a couple of centuries[17], the *Skandapurāṇa* composers must have known the central story of Rāma and other narratives in the epic[18]. There are some textual parallels between the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, including, for instance, SP 72, as Ben Staiger has shown in his dissertation on the Skanda myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* (Staiger 2017, 26ff.).
- The *Skandapurāṇa* composers probably knew the *Kumārasambhava* by the poet Kālidāsa, which relates the life story of Skanda. The *Kumārasambhava* was possibly composed in the fifth century CE and precedes, therefore, the *Skandapurāṇa*. It seems to have served as a basis for several portions of the *Skandapurāṇa* version of this narrative, as Amandine Wattelier-Bricout (2017) and Martine Kropman (Kropman 2019, 104ff.) have argued.
- Since the *Skandapurāṇa* composers were well-versed in other texts, we may assume them to have been familiar with other major early Purāṇas, even if there

[17] Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2018, "*Rāmāyaṇa* Scholarship, History, and Debates" section, para. 9. For the controversy on the dating of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, see, for example, ibid, para. 9—11 and Brockington 1998, 377—97).

[18] The central narrative of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as told by the legendary seer and poet Vālmīki, is about Rāma, one of Viṣṇu's manifestations, and his wife Sītā, who is abducted by Rāvaṇa, the evil king of the Rākṣasas. With an army of monkeys, Rāma goes to Laṅkā, the land of Rāvaṇa, to battle against his enemy. Rāma wins, takes Sītā back to his own kingdom and is consecrated as king. There are other major (local) *Rāmāyaṇas* (see Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2018 for references), but when I refer to "the *Rāmāyaṇa*", it is Vālmīki's Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa*.

are no direct parallels in the *Skandapurāṇa*. This applies to the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*[19] and parts of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*[20].

- With the knowledge of different Purāṇas comes also the knowledge of what is usually referred to as the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, "the Five Characteristics of Purāṇas". Many Purāṇas share verbatim parallels on five topics: creation (*sarga*), recreation (*pratisarga*), lineages (*vaṃśa*), Manvantaras (*manvantara*) and genealogies of dynasties (*vaṃśānucarita*). These parallels have been collected by Willibald Kirfel in *Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa: Versuch einer Textgeschichte* (1927)[21]. Kirfel's collection is based on fourteen different Purāṇas, from early Purāṇas such as the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Vāyupurāṇa* to relatively later ones such as the *Śivapurāṇa* and the *Garuḍapurāṇa*. It includes both mythological narratives and long lists of gods, kings, etcetera.

Since so many Purāṇas show such strong parallels on these five topics and since, as the name suggests, the topics are supposedly characteristic for Purāṇas, many studies on Purāṇas as a genre take the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* as one of the standard components of

[19] The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is a Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa, celebrating Viṣṇu as the highest god and promoting devotion to him. This ideology is expressed in eulogies to Viṣṇu, the many myths in which Viṣṇu is the main character, and book five which is entirely devoted to Krṣṇa. However, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* also includes content of a more general character, such as the second book that gives a description of the universe and the fourth book that describes the royal dynasties. Concerning the date of this Purāṇa, Rocher explains that it "is as contested as that of any other purāṇa" (Rocher 1986, 249), but several attempts have been made, ranging from 700 B.C. to 1045 CE. More recently, the middle of the first millennium CE seems to be most excepted (Eltschinger 2014, 57: fifth to beginning of sixth century; Schreiner 2013, 592: mid fourth century; and Vielle 2005, 546: sixth century).

[20] "The *Mārkaṇḍeya*˚ consists of 137 *adhyāyas*; the purāṇa proper is interrupted by the thirteen chapters (81—93) of the Devīmāhātmya ["Glorification of the Goddess"]" (Rocher 1986, 191). The *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* proper consists of three sections, each containing various narratives and "[d]iscussions of *karma*, rebirth, and *saṃsāra*" (ibid, 192). The third section, dealing with creation, genealogies, etcetera, is a conversation between Mārkaṇḍeya and his disciple, which could suggest that it is the oldest part of the Purāṇa (ibid, 192—93). It may date back to the third century CE or earlier, but the *Devīmāhātmya* is a later addition, perhaps even a few centuries (ibid, 195—96). In her PhD thesis, Yuko Yokochi has dated the *Devīmāhātmya* to the second half of the eighth century or possibly even early ninth century (Yokochi 2004, 21—23 note 42).

[21] Other similar works on verbatim parallels between Purāṇas are Pargiter 1913/1962 and Kirfel 1920/1954. Although at the start of Purāṇa research, it was thought that the parallels are proof for a common source, an "Ur-Purāṇa" (Rocher 1986, 41—43), already Kirfel is cautious with this conclusion (ibid, 43—44), and many other scholars have given alterative interpretations (for an example, see Narayana Rao's interpretation mentioned in the main text below).

the literary genre[22]. At the same time, already in the mid-nineteenth century, one of the first Purāṇa scholars, Horace Hayman Wilson, questioned the prevalence of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* topics in the introduction to his translation of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*. "Do they [i.e. the Purāṇas] conform to this description [of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇas*]? Not exactly in any one instance; to some of them it is utterly inapplicable; to others it only partially applies" (Wilson 1840, viii—ix). Alternative interpretations of the *purāṇapañcalakṣaṇas* have been suggested ever since. For instance, according to Velcheru Narayana Rao, they rather "order the events of the Purāṇa. They provide the listeners with a view of time and place in which the events narrated in Purāṇas occur" (Narayana Rao 1993, 89). They are, in other words, an "ideological frame" (ibid, 87). "Since the ideas of *pañcalakṣaṇa* are tacitly assumed in the Brahminic worldview, they do not even appear in every Purāṇa and do not constitute a sizeable length of the text even when they appear" (ibid, 87—88).

This final citation is particularly relevant for the study of the *Skandapurāṇa* and its composers. First of all, the idea that the themes, lists and narratives collected in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* are part of "the Brahminic worldview" and thus represent shared Purāṇic notions, supports my assumption that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers were aware of them and knew the content of this collection[23]. Second, the latter part of the statement applies to the *Skandapurāṇa* because, as shown above, it appears to deliberately distance itself from subjects like the creation and preservation of the universe, and genealogies of gods, sages and kings, which are *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*-type of topics *par excellence*. Although the *Skandapurāṇa* covers some of the themes, as will be shown in section 1.2, their treatment remains limited and is not presented in the systematic manner as found in other Purāṇas.

Since Purāṇas cannot be defined along the *purāṇapañcalakṣaṇas* alone, alternative definitions of the genre have been suggested by different scholars. One of the methods has been to classify Purāṇas along categories found in the texts themselves. One

[22] See, for example, Narayana Rao 2004, 99 and Bailey 2018, "Definition of the Genre and Its Content" section, para. 1 and "Content and Modes of Composition" section, para. 4—7.

[23] An additional reason to assume that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers knew the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* corpus is that those early Purāṇas that could be considered known by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers—the *Harivaṃśa*, *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, *Vāyupurāṇa* and *Viṣṇupurāṇa*—are four of the Purāṇas on which the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* collection is based.

of the better-known classifications is the division between *mahāpurāṇas* "greater Purāṇas", and *upapurāṇas*, "minor Purāṇas"[24]. Ludo Rocher, for instance, has examined this classification in his volume on Purāṇas in *A history of Indian literature*. Several Purāṇas provide a list of eighteen *mahāpurāṇas* with texts like the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, *Brahmapurāṇa* and *Vāmanapurāṇa*. There is, however, variation on which Purāṇas are included and which not, as well as uncertainty on the antiquity of lists like these (Rocher 1986, 30—34). The inclusion of Purāṇas such as the *Liṅgapurāṇa* and *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* strongly suggests that as a rule, the lists postdate at least the *Skandapurāṇa*. There is even more variation in and uncertainty about the *upapurāṇas*. They "are reputed to be later compositions, more sectarian, of local interest only" (ibid, 67)[25]. Although such classifications give a sense of the genre as a canon and how the genre is traditionally classified, the references are probably later than the *Skandapurāṇa* and are therefore less relevant for the present discussion on the *Skandapurāṇa* as belonging to the Purāṇic genre[26]. In order to reach a definition of Purāṇas that is also applicable to the *Skandapurāṇa*, how Purānas function and what unites them, a different approach is needed; one more focussed on their content.

I would like to highlight one article that meets this demand, *viz.* 'History and Primordium in Ancient Indian Historical Writing' by James L. Fitzgerald[27]. Fitzgerald

[24] This classification is occasionally expanded with other categories, such as *sthalapurāṇas*, "regional Purāṇas", and *jātipurāṇas*, "caste Purāṇas". For more information on these two, see Rocher 1986, 71—72.

[25] Well-known examples of *upapurāṇas* are the *Nīlamatapurāṇa* and the *Kālikāpurāṇa*. For a comprehensive work on the *upapurāṇas*, see Hazra 1958 and 1963; for the canonicity of the Purāṇas, their division into *mahāpurāṇas* and *upapurāṇas*, as well as their fluidity, see, for example, Smith 2016.

[26] Another classification, though with similar problems, is based on the text's religious affiliation. A threefold division has been suggested in several Purāṇas. Rocher mentions, for example, the *Padmapurāṇa* which makes a distinction between Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas (*sāttvika* Purāṇas), Purāṇas related to Brahmā (*rājasa* Purāṇas) and Śaiva Purāṇas (*tāmasa* Purāṇas, Rocher 1986, 21). Rocher wonders, however, "whether the sectarian divides between the purāṇas – and within Hinduism generally – have not been exaggerated" (ibid.) for two main reasons. First, some Purāṇas include a fourth or fifth category, such as "mixed" Purāṇas or those related to Sūrya or Agni. Second, Purāṇas do not just pay attention to the main god but to other gods as well (ibid, 21—22).

[27] An example of a study that specifically deals with how Purāṇas function is 'What Enables Canonical Literature to Function as "True"?' by McComas Taylor. Taylor investigates the methods by which Purāṇas are legitimized as true, by approaching the subject from within individual Purāṇas, seeking markers of truth claims. Purāṇas appear to have similar "internal textual strategies" that the Purāṇa author "adopted to instil a sense of authority and truthfulness into his

translates Purāṇa as a "primordial account of primordial things" (Fitzgerald 2014, 44), with the Purāṇa's primordiality conveying "the additional, critically important sense of *being the first instance of something that is still current*" (ibid, 49). The idea that primordial matters are connected to the present finds expression in the Purāṇa's view on

> "how and why the world is the way it is, how and why the typical things of our world began – cosmology and philosophy and its anthropomorphic cousin theology that in the *purāṇas* ordinarily takes the form of a "cosmological monotheism", in which the old polytheism of the Vedic religion finds its place in lower orders of creation derived from the unique Supreme Lord (conceived in different theological traditions as the Supreme Being Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, or Śiva, or as the Goddess, Devī)" (ibid, 50).

As a result of this monotheism, each Purāṇa is different.

> "Though some of the core elements of the oldest *purāṇas* share the same basic text, as Pargiter 1913 and Kirfel 1927 showed, details of the *purāṇa* cosmologies vary and the subsequent theologies, philosophies, and ethics they present are numerous and different from each other" (ibid, 51).

This combination of *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*-type of topics and theology has long been recognized and is indeed characteristic for Purāṇas, including the *Skandapurāṇa*. As, however, the summary-like verses of chapter 183 quoted above (SP_{Bh} 183.63—64) show, the *Skandapurāṇa* does not only deal with narratives about the preservation of the world in the current era—which can be characterized as *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*—and doctrinal

text" (Taylor 2008, 325). These include the text being told by Brahmā or mythical sages, whose lineages are continued to human authors; the text being performed in shared divine places of power, such as the Naimiṣa forest; and the promise of benefits of listening to the text and reciting and propagating it (ibid, 325—26).

and theological parts, but also—or rather, in the first place—with the birth story of Skanda. The latter, as I will show in the next section, stands for a third key feature of Purāṇas: telling new stories and retelling narratives that are known from other sources. These three components—*Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* topics, theology and (re)tellings—cover (the majority of) the content of the *Skandapurāṇa*, other early Purāṇas, as well as later Purāṇas, and can therefore be seen as characteristic for the genre. These correspondences in content may point to an early stage of a standardization of the genre. The following section addresses correspondences as well as differences in text units of the *Skandapurāṇa* compared to other early Purāṇas[28].

1.2 Tell and retell

The *Skandapurāṇa* first of all treats its *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* material differently. Instead of following other early Purāṇas in building on verbatim parallels, the composers seem to have deliberately referred to these topics in the above-cited passage from SP 5, as if to justify that they will not deal with them. The amount of *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* material is indeed scarce, but the *Skandapurāṇa* composers did not neglect the topics entirely. If, however, this type of material is recounted, it is always done in the text's own characteristic wording and style of writing. An example of this is the topic of creation, discussed in section 1.2.1.

The Purāṇas are not only characterized by narratives on creation, lists of lineages, etcetera. Already at an early stage of the genre, Purāṇas are used as vehicles for a theological message. Whereas the *Vāyupurāṇa* has only some theological parts that are

[28] For the present study, I focus on textual sources, primarily narratives from the epics and other Purāṇas. However, there are many other sources where narratives or narrative ideas may have originated. For example, some narratives have a provenance in other genres of literature. Nirajan Kafle has shown that the earliest version of the *Liṅgodbhava* myth (the myth of "the origin of the *liṅga*", the phallus-shaped icon representing Śiva) is found in the *Śivadharma*, predating the earliest versions in the Purāṇas (Kafle 2013). There are also cases where textual elements rather go back to an iconographic source. Yuko Yokochi has illustrated this process for the *Skandapurāṇa*. The way in which the text depicts the war goddess called Vindhyavāsinī, "she who lives in the Vindhya [mountains]", is remarkably similar to the iconography of the goddess in what Yokochi calls "the Vindhya subtype" of the Gupta type (Yokochi 2004, 127—41). We should furthermore allow for the possibility that a narrative does not come from a physical source, but from "the culture" in general. Narratives were told and retold in temples and at home, so local or even family-specific versions must have been omnipresent. Purāṇa composers may occasionally have used such versions rather than or in addition to versions from physical sources.

Śaiva in character[29], the majority of the *Harivaṃśa* eulogizes Kṛṣṇa as the highest deity, and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* does so with regard to Viṣṇu. The text's ideology is proclaimed by telling the most important myths about the god in question, praising him or her with eulogies (*stotras*) and teaching central doctrines[30].

Like the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, the *Skandapurāṇa* is used as a vehicle for the promotion of a theological message. The *Skandapurāṇa* proclaims a Śaiva ideology, in which Śiva is the supreme god who should be worshipped. He is often presented as a gracious and benevolent god, who grants fabulous boons to his devotees when they worship him, meditate on him or practice *tapas*, "asceticism"[31]. The ultimate reward for sole devotion to Śiva is *mokṣa*, "liberation" from the continuous cycle of rebirth. The text does not only promote Śiva worship, it also presents a Śaiva universe. Śiva is on top of this universe, overseeing, directing and designing all actions by the other gods. Although the other gods play an important role in the execution of great (cosmic) tasks, there is a clear hierarchy between the superior god Śiva and the other gods who are dependent on Śiva for receiving their tasks[32]. Śiva is generally accompanied by Pārvatī, living in their palace on the divine mountain called Mandara, and his Gaṇas. The Gaṇas "are Śiva's loyal assistants, accompanying him and the goddess wherever they go, and they perform all kinds of often destructive tasks for their master. Together they constitute Śiva's army, but some of them have a more individual character of their own" (Bisschop 2009, 749). The active participation of both the Gaṇas and the gods gives an impression of the text's view on Śiva's role in the universe: he generally remains at the background, being transcendent and designing plans which are then executed by others[33].

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[29] See SP Vol. I, 22 for correspondences between the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Vāyupurāṇa* on Śaiva topics.

[30] For the Vaiṣṇava ideology of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, including the centrality of eulogies, see Schreiner 2013, 621ff.

[31] "The Sanskrit word *tapas* is frequently translated as "austerity" or more broadly as "asceticism." The word itself derives from the Sanskrit verb *tap*-, "to heat," "to be hot." Accordingly *tapas* can refer to a variety of practices aimed at the generation of a kind of "heat" as well as to the heat so generated. [… T]he term eventually comes to mean a specifically "ascetic," often painful heat produced by the practice of austerities such as fasting" (Carpenter 2018, para. 1).

[32] I will examine the power dynamics between Śiva and the other gods in more detail in section 1.2.1.

[33] In 'Śiva and his Gaṇas. Techniques of Narrative Distancing in Purāṇic Stories', Phyllis Granoff has studied Śiva's reluctance on the basis of several myths, referring to it as ""narrative distancing." What I mean by this term is that the stories place Śiva at a distance from the action that occurs in

The text's Śaiva ideology and representation of a Śaiva universe is expressed in different text units. The most explicit statements of devotion to Śiva are eulogies to him. For example, SP 21.18—49 is a *stotra* by Nandin, in which he praises Śiva with some of his most famous epithets and characteristics, like *nīlakaṇṭhāya vai namaḥ*, "homage to Nīlakaṇṭha ["the one with the dark neck"]" (SP 21.18d), and *namas triśūlahastāya*, "homage to the one whose hand [holds] a trident" (SP 21.25a). The Śaiva ideology is also communicated through the numerous myths about Śiva and his wife Pārvatī[34] and specifically through Māhātmyas ("Glorifications") of Śaiva holy places. The long Māhātmya of Vārāṇasī (SP 26—31.14) is most illustrative, for it enumerates a range of Śaiva *tīrthas* ("bathing places") and *liṅgas* (phallus-shaped icons representing Śiva) in the holy city. The text units that describe the way to liberation also form part of this theological scheme and associate the *Skandapurāṇa* with a particular branch of Śaivism, *viz.* Pāśupata Śaivism[35]. For example, SP_{Bh} 174—81 explain how liberation can be attained by means of sole devotion to Śiva and the performance of Pāśupata practices, such as the *pāśupatayoga*, "the Pāśupata *yoga* system", and the *pāśupatavrata*, "the Pāśupata observance"[36]. The effectiveness of these practices is illustrated by various

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the story. In fact in most of the stories it is not Śiva at all who is the prime actor. Śiva acts by proxy; he summons a being, usually identified as one of his *gaṇas*, who does what needs to be done" (Granoff 2006, 79).

[34] The examples are abundant, like Śiva proposing to Pārvatī to marry him and their subsequent wedding (SP 12—13), as well as their union (*yoga*) leading to the conception of their son Skanda (SP 72).

[35] The Pāśupatas are a particular branch of ascetics within Śaivism. They worshipped Śiva, particularly in his form as Rudra or Rudra-Paśupati, they smeared themselves with ashes and lived at cremation grounds, where they also performed religious services for the laity. Some of the Pāśupata ascetics adhered to even more extreme practices, such as behaving like a bull and adopting unethical and unorthodox behaviour (Acharya 2011, 458). References to these and other unorthodox practices are found in one of the pivotal and earliest Pāśupata scriptures called *Pāśupatasūtra*. The commentary on this *sūtra*, the *Pañcārthabhāṣya* by Kauṇḍinya (ca. 4th century CE), is more moderate (ibid, 459). The final goal of Pāśupatas is liberation, presented as union (*yoga*) with Rudra.

[36] In this part of the text, *pāśupatayoga* generally refers to yogic practices, for example: "[a]fter one has adopted a sitting posture and withdrawn all limbs, one should become motionless and meditate, while one directs one's thought on the twenty-sixth reality" (Bakker 2014, 141, translation of SP_{Bh} 179.28). However, in the *Skandapurāṇa*, *yoga* also means "union", i.e. union with Śiva, which is more in line with the interpretation of the word in the *Pāśupatasūtra* (Bisschop 2006, 39). The *pāśupatavrata* is a vow one takes, "which contains mainly of a bath in ashes. A person who practises such an observance is designated a 'Pāśupata' (SP_{Bh} 180.23)" (ibid, 40). In sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, I will discuss the sorts of *pāśupatavrata* practised by Viṣṇu.

myths in other parts of the text, like the story of the sage Jaigīṣavya (SP 29.96—124), who received boons from Śiva by practising *tapas* and following the rules of the Pāśupatas[37]. Other devotees of Śiva also receive fabulous boons thanks to their devotion to Śiva[38].

Another element that is shared by both the *Skandapurāṇa* and other early Purāṇas and which, in my view, is one of the key characteristics of Purāṇas, is the combination of new and known material[39]. New narratives and text units are those that do not appear in textual sources that are earlier than or contemporary to the text in question[40]. The life story of Kṛṣṇa, for instance, is new when it is first told in the *Harivaṃśa*[41]. One of the major new narratives in the *Skandapurāṇa* is the Andhaka myth. It tells how Andhaka is born from the darkness created by Pārvatī, when she covers Śiva's eyes. Śiva gives the blind boy to Hiraṇyākṣa, an Asura[42], as a reward for his *tapas* (SP 73). Since Andhaka is raised

[37] "Bathing in ashes and anointed with ashes, Jaigīṣavya pleases (Deva ["God", i.e. Śiva]) by dancing, singing, muttering (his name) and by bellowing like a bull" (SP Vol. IIA, 235). The boons granted by Śiva include that "he will be a great yogin who, thanks to the miraculous power of the mystery of this holy field [i.e. Avimukta in Vārāṇasī], will attain the eightfold mastery in yoga. And he shall be a famous yoga teacher (*yogācārya*)" (ibid.).

[38] For example, in SP 34.62—122, the sage Upamanyu takes refuge with Śiva, practices *tapas* and meditates on Śiva because he desires milk, which his mother cannot give. Thanks to his devotion to Śiva and the practice of *tapas*, Śiva grants him an ocean of milk.

[39] It has been suggested "by a number of scholars that Purāṇas contain myths that are already known each time they are heard, mirroring well the traditional view that Purāṇas juxtapose new and old material continuously" (Bailey 2018, "Previous Scholarship on the Purāṇas" section, para. 10). One of these scholars is Greg Bailey himself in his study on the *Gaṇeśapurāṇa*, a relatively late Purāṇa (ca. fourteenth century (ibid, para. 12)), where he makes a distinction between "traditional", i.e. known material, and "non-traditional", i.e. new material (Bailey 1995, 155ff.).

[40] I am aware of the fact that the texts that are available to us today probably provide only a hint of the texts that once existed. Texts may have fallen into disuse or they may have gone lost because of the fragile material that was used for writing. This means that a narrative that is identified as "new" may, in fact, have had a precursor in a text presently unknown. If that is the case, the narrative should be qualified as a retelling instead. However, since it is impossible to know if and which texts may have existed—let alone their content—I focus on those texts that are available to us today.

[41] "Many of these Krishna stories were developed and expanded in later Hindu and Jain texts, but the *Harivamsha* contains what are probably the earliest surviving versions" (Brodbeck 2019b, xv).

[42] Asuras are the enemies of the gods. They can be categorized in different lineages, of which the Daityas and the Dānavas are the most prominent ones. The Daityas are the descendants of Kaśyapa and Diti; the Dānavas are the descendants of Kaśyapa and Danu. Since they are the enemies of the gods and follow the contrary *dharma*, "rules", of the Asuras (*viz. adharma*), *asura* is often translated as "demon". I do not use this translation because not all Asuras are purely evil. Some even practice *tapas* and worship god, in particular Śiva. I use the Sanskrit terms instead, making a distinction between Daityas and Dānavas (as their familiar lineages are well-defined in the epics and the Purāṇas), but applying "Asuras" to both Daityas and Dānavas.

among the Asuras, he becomes the enemy of the gods. After several journeys and battles, the story of Andhaka ends with Śiva defeating Andhaka and accepting him as his own son (SP 155—56). The editors of SP Vol. IV have argued that "[t]he *Skandapurāṇa* is the first Purāṇa to give a full account of the life story of Andhaka. We learn very little about Andhaka from the *Mahābhārata*, although the epithet 'Slayer of Darkness/Andhaka' (Andhakaghātin) occurs in some praise hymns to Śiva" (SP Vol. IV, 11)[43].

Many other stories in Purāṇas, on the other hand, are retellings: narratives that are known from earlier or contemporary textual sources[44]. There are countless examples; from the verbatim parallels of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* to more liberal retellings of (epic)

[43] The *Anuśāsanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* "does include a passage on the origin of Śiva's third eye (MBh 13.127.26—45) that is remarkably close to the episode of Devī's ["Goddess'", i.e. Pārvatī's] covering of Deva's ["God's", i.e. Śiva's] eyes told in the *Skandapurāṇa*" (SP Vol. IV, 11). However, the *Mahābhārata* passage is not connected with Andhaka, so the inclusion of the narrative element of covering the eyes into the Andhaka myth is an innovation in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

[44] This does not mean that I assume one "original" narrative to which a retelling can be retraced. Since narratives are often found in various sources and are not claimed by one particular composer, it is often impossible to know whether a given retelling goes back to one specific source, and if so, which one. I will come back to this topic in section 1.4, where I discuss the implications of this situation for the chapters to come. I furthermore do not wish to make a hierarchical distinction between a retelling and an earlier version or "the original". On the contrary, I would like to argue that the very fact that a narrative is retold signifies its importance in a particular time, place and context.

Similar connotations of the term "retelling" are not limited to narratives in the Purāṇas. In his well-known article on the numerous *Rāmāyaṇas* existing across time and place, A.K. Ramanujan therefore prefers "the word tellings to the usual terms versions or variants because the latter terms can and typically do imply that there is an invariant, an original or *Ur*-text" (Ramanujan 1991, 24—25). He wonders whether there is, at all, "a common core to the Rāma stories, except the most skeletal set of relations like that of Rāma, his brother, his wife, and the antagonist Rāvaṇa who abducts her?" In fact, in the case of the discussed "tellings" of the story of Rāma, "one [telling] is not necessarily all that like another. Like a collection of people with the same proper name, they make a class in name alone" (ibid, 44). This is where Ramanujan's article differs from my thesis and why I use the term "retellings", because at least the narratives that are at the centre of this thesis do share a common core which is more than "the most skeletal set of relations". Additionally, Ramanujan's study is on the *Rāmāyaṇa*, about which many people have a strong feeling about "an original", *viz.* Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, "the earliest and most prestigious of them all. But as we shall see, it is not always Vālmīki's narrative that is carried from one language to another" (ibid. 25). In the case of the narratives in my thesis, there is no such consensus on an original. Finally, Ramanujan makes a relevant remark on the importance of new tellings. He justly writes that each author makes "a crystallization, a new text with a unique texture and a fresh context. [… N]o text is original, yet no telling is a mere retelling—and the story has no closure, although it may be enclosed in a text" (ibid, 46). Likewise, I would like to add, no retelling is a mere retelling.

narratives[45]. The *Skandapurāṇa* contains many retellings that include both narratives with Śiva or his relatives playing the main part, like the birth of Skanda, and narratives in which other gods and figures take the lead. In the retellings of the *Skandapurāṇa*, verbatim parallels with other texts are hardly found. Rather, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers combined old and new elements, hence telling their own, new version. Since retellings appear in a new text, they may not immediately fit their context, such as the location of composition of the text, its time, its genre and its audience. Each context asks for different solutions. In my thesis, I will focus on two specific types of contexts to which retellings should be adjusted and innovated: that of ideology (Śaivization) and style of writing (dramatic visualization).

1.2.1 Śaivization

Whereas new narratives can be composed from the start in such a way that its characters and ideas fit the ideology of the text, this is not always the case with retellings. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, with its Śaiva affiliation, a new narrative like the Andhaka myth summarized above blends in naturally with the rest of the text, since it starts and ends with a prominent role for Śiva and Pārvatī. Some retellings of myths likewise readily match the Śiva-oriented parameters of the *Skandapurāṇa*, such as the life story of Skanda. However, in the case of myths that do not deal with Śiva or his relatives, nor with Śaiva themes, we can observe an attempt to make the retelling fit within the new, Śaiva context of the *Skandapurāṇa*. I refer to this process of changing a narrative (element) or introducing new narrative elements to make the retellings match a Śaiva context or teaching as "Śaivization".

Since this thesis concentrates on narratives in a Śaiva Purāṇa, all examples concern textual changes. However, Śaivization can be seen in other forms of religious expressions as well, such as iconography, rituals or places. As a phenomenon that centres around alterations and innovations in religion, it can be put against the background of the

[45] The study of the development of individual narratives has grown to a separate sub-field in epic and Purāṇic studies, with examples such as Rüping (1970), Stubbe-Diara (1995) and Mertens (1998).

theory of "Inklusivismus", formulated by Paul Hacker in 'Inklusivismus' (1983)[46]. According to Hacker, Indian thought can be characterized by its tendency towards inclusivism, which he defines as the declaration that a central notion of a different religious community is, in fact, identical to a central notion of one's own community[47]. In this way, one is "claiming for, and thus including in, one's own religion what really belongs to an alien sect" (Hacker 1995, 244)[48]. The "other" is often, explicitly or implicitly, considered subordinate or inferior[49]. Inclusivism is, according to Hacker, particularly a means of expression for those religions that are inferior or weaker and still in development, in order to prevail and to validate themselves. Among the Purāṇas, this is, according to Hacker, most notably the case in Śaiva Purāṇas[50].

Hacker's thesis that inclusivism is particularly a means for developing religious traditions has been taken up by Peter Bisschop in 'Inclusivism revisited. The worship of other gods in the *Sivadharmaśāstra*, the *Skandapurāṇa*, and the *Niśvāsamukha*'. Bisschop notices that Śaivism "appears comparatively late on the scene and as such, perhaps more than others, had to secure itself a position among the dominant religious traditions of the time" (Bisschop 2019, 511—12)[51]. The article revolves specifically around "the representation of the worship of other gods than Śiva in three early Śaiva texts: the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, the *Skandapurāṇa*, and the *Niśvāsamukha*. In varying degrees, the approaches towards other gods in these three texts may be regarded as inclusivist, in the sense that they recognise and teach the worship and existence of other gods but that they

[46] This article is a lecture originally given by Hacker in 1977, published posthumously in *Inklusivismus. Eine indische Denkform* by Gerhard Oberhammer (1983).
[47] "Inklusivismus bedeutet, daß man erklärt, eine zentrale Vorstellung einer fremden religiösen oder weltanschaulichen Gruppe sei identisch mit dieser oder jener zentralen Vorstellung der Gruppe, zu der man selber gehört" (Hacker 1983, 12).
[48] This citation comes from a lecture given by Hacker in 1970, published posthumously in *Philology and Confrontation. Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedānta* by Wilhelm Halbfass (1995).
[49] "Meistens gehört zum Inklusivismus ausgesprochen oder unausgesprochen die Behauptung, daß das Fremde, das mit dem Eigenen als identisch erklärt wird, in irgendeiner Weise ihm untergeordnet oder unterlegen sei" (Hacker 1983, 12).
[50] "Wie ich schon sagte, ist der Inklusivismus ein Mittel des Unterlegenen oder des noch Schwachen, des noch in Entwicklung Begriffenen, sich durchzusetzen, sich Geltung zu verschaffen. Die śivaitischen Purāṇen, die ich gesehen habe, machen das deutlich, in manchen Fällen sogar überdeutlich" (Hacker 1983, 17).
[51] For references to other secondary literature on inclusivist tendencies in Śaivism, see Bisschop 2019, 512.

do so from a hierarchical perspective, in which the true and ultimate master is Śiva and their power derives from him" (ibid, 512—13). One point on which Bisschop differs from Hacker, however, following a similar critique expressed by Albrecht Wezler in 'Bemerkungen zum Inklusivismus-Begriff Paul Hackers' (1983), concerns the implied dichotomy between Śaivism and "das Fremde" as presented by Hacker[52]. Bisschop finds that, in the three texts under study, only a few passages demonstrate signs of inclusivism of gods or figures that clearly stem from a different religious ideology[53]. The other cases expressing an inclusivist tendency rather concern deities that "in fact all form part of a well-established Brahmanical tradition, to which Śaivism aligns itself. The inclusivism encountered here is not a case of "claiming, what really belongs to an alien sect," but rather seem to reflect a more general Brahmanical perspective on what constitutes religion" (Bisschop 2019, 532)—and this includes gods like Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, regardless of the religious tradition's own ideology.

The type of retellings that I will deal with, *viz.* Viṣṇu's manifestation myths, may at first glance be considered to belong to Vaiṣṇavism and thus fall in the scope of Hacker's idea of "das Fremde". However, as I will show in chapter 2, the narratives are found across the epic and Purāṇic tradition, which rather points in the direction of belonging to a shared Brahmanical tradition. Nevertheless, processes of Śaivization are certainly observable

[52] "Bei näherer Betrachtung stellen sich aber alsbald Zweifel ein, und zwar zunächst einmal im Hinblick auf die Auseinandersetzung zwischen den hinduistischen Sekten, d. h. vor allem zwischen Śivaismus und Viṣṇuismus. Ist die Annahme, so wird man fragen, überhaupt berechtigt, daß die Mythenüberlieferungen beider zu irgendeinem frühen Zeitpunkt, 'ursprünglich', in dem Sinne strikt śivaitisch bzw. viṣṇuitisch waren, daß der Gott des konkurrierenden Glaubens in ihnen nicht nur keine Rolle spielte, sondern auch gar nicht vorkam? Muß nicht angesichts der letzlich vedischen Herkunft beider Traditionsströme vielmehr davon ausgegangen werden, daß die zentrale göttliche Gestalt des einen von Anfang an auch in dem anderen nicht nur vorkam, sondern auch eine gewisse, wenn auch nachgeordnete, Rolle spielte? Und, wenn letzteres richtig ist, kann man dann eigentlich von "Inklusivismus" im wörtlichen Sinne sprechen?" (Wezler 1983, 81—82).

[53] The relevant passages are found in the *Śivadharmaśāstra*. The passages are enumerations in which "we are taught […] that the gods acquired their position as god through worship of different types of *liṅga*s" (Bisschop 2019, 514). Whereas most deities are gods like Vāyu, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, some manuscripts added the Arhat, the most-revered figure in Jainism, and the Buddha, the most-revered figure in Buddhism (ibid, 516, 518 and 523—24). The fact that the Arhat and the Buddha are missing in some of the manuscripts "attests to the perceived boundaries of Brahmanical religion, which would not normally include the spiritual masters of the Buddhist and Jaina communities" (ibid, 518).

here, as well as in other retellings that may be considered "Brahmanical". There are different ways to Śaivize a narrative or narrative element.

For instance, a god can be replaced by Śiva, as exemplified by the Vṛtra myth. In this myth, Indra slays the gigantic cobra Vṛtra, who prevented the monsoon from coming[54]. The *Skandapurāṇa* version (SP 60.22—71) is based on the story in the *Udyogaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 5.9.1—10.41), as demonstrated by Yuko Yokochi in SP Vol. III, 14—15. On the one hand, the *Skandapurāṇa* follows the *Mahābhārata* in some key narrative elements. For example, Indra is unable to conquer Vṛtra by himself[55], but when he gets help, Indra kills the Asura with a weapon hidden in foam, that has been entered by Viṣṇu[56]. On the other hand, there is an important plot twist. Whereas in the *Mahābhārata* version, Viṣṇu designs the plan for Indra how to kill Vṛtra (MBh 5.10.12), in the *Skandapurāṇa*, it is Śiva who tells the gods how they can slay him (SP 60.64). The identification of the ultimate saviour has thus shifted from Viṣṇu to Śiva. This small but crucial change turns the myth into a new, Śaiva version. It is, as Yokochi has noted, a case of "Śaiva adaptations of popular myths" (ibid, 14)[57].

Another strategy with the same result of Śaivization is to add Śaiva elements. An example of this process is the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the myth of creation. Other early Purāṇas often share the same creation myth, as it forms part of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*'s section on *sarga*. Despite deviation in length of the myth and variations between individual text groups[58], there are several key narrative elements that are found throughout the Purāṇic corpus with verbatim parallels per text group. These include, for instance, the

[54] The story is told for the first time in the *Ṛgveda*, where ṚV 1.32 forms the core story, and is retold several times in the epics (e.g. MBh 5.9—18) and the Purāṇas (e.g. VDhP 1.24). For other Purāṇic references, see Klostermaier 1984, 33—39.
[55] MBh 5.9.45ff.; SP 60.24ff.
[56] MBh 5.10.36—38; SP 60.64.
[57] The *Mahābhārata* version (MBh 5.9—18) itself is a modified retelling of the *Ṛgveda* version of the myth (see Klostermaier 1984, 29—31 and Van Buitenen 1978, 159—66). Whereas in the *Ṛgveda*, Indra designs the plan on how to kill Vṛtra and executes it, in the *Mahābhārata*, Viṣṇu makes the plan and Indra executes it. Thanks to this change, the role of saviour shifts from Indra to Viṣṇu. The *Mahābhārata* version is a Vaiṣṇavized version of the *Ṛgveda* story. The tendency to add an extra layer like this continues in the Purāṇic versions, where Indra's "victory is ultimately credited to the intervention of Viṣṇu, Śiva, or Devī" (Klostermaier 1984, 33).
[58] Kirfel 1927 gathered texts into text groups that share verbatim parallels. Each text group has its own version of a narrative.

idea that Brahmā is born from the cosmic egg and becomes the creator god[59]. The *Skandapurāṇa* does not have such literal parallels with the other Purāṇas, but creates its own version, by both including elements that are known from other sources and giving its own explanation of how the universe is created. On the one hand, the cosmic egg and Brahmā as creator god also feature in the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the creation myth (SP 3—4). The myth starts with Brahmā being born from the cosmic egg (SP 3.4ab). He becomes "the lord of the offspring" (Prajāpati, SP 3.22) and brings forth all kinds of beings, who then start to produce offspring themselves (SP 4.19cd—21). On the other hand, although Brahmā retains the role of creator god and creates new beings, it is Śiva who assigns this task to him (SP 3.19—22). In this way, the creation myth fits into the larger scheme of the Śaiva universe as it is presented in the text: all the gods have executive tasks, usually the ones they are known for, but Śiva oversees the process and sets it in motion. He is the force behind the actions and tasks of the other gods. The creation myth exemplifies this perfectly, where a small, yet crucial plot twist—the addition of Śiva—makes Śiva the ultimate decision-maker, the mastermind behind the plan of creation. Although the retelling of the creation myth preserves some key elements, Śiva along with a Śaiva ideology is added as an extra, decisive layer[60].

[59] For instance, text group I as identified by Kirfel (*Agnipurāṇa*, *Brahmapurāṇa*, *Harivaṃśa* and *Śivapurāṇa Dharmasaṃhitā*) share the following two verses with only minor differences.
PPL *sarga* and *pratisarga* 1.12—13:
hiraṇyavarṇam abhavat tad aṇḍam udakeśayam |
tatra jajñe svayaṃ brahmā svayaṃbhūr iti naḥ śrutam || *12* ||
hiraṇyagarbho bhagavān uṣitvā parivatsaram |
tad aṇḍam akarod dvaidhaṃ divaṃ bhuvam athāpi ca || *13* ||
"There was a golden egg lying in the water, from which Brahmā himself was born, known by us as Svayaṃbhū. Having dwelled [there] for a year, lord Hiraṇyagarbha ["Golden Embryo", i.e. Brahmā] divided that egg into two: heaven and earth."

[60] In chapter 3, I will argue that it was important to combine key known narrative elements with new Śaiva components in order to meet different demands. The former enhanced the chance that the retelling would be accepted, and thanks to the latter, the retellings could become integrated and accommodated in the Śaiva ideology of the text. I choose to postpone a thorough discussion on the goal of integration and accommodation because I wish to base it on text-internal evidences for Viṣṇu's manifestation myths specifically. As a result, in the present section, I have limited myself to present Śaivization as a process of changing narrative (elements) and introducing new narrative elements in order to make the retellings match the text's Śaiva ideology.

1.2.2 Dramatic visualization

Not all modifications in the retellings of the *Skandapurāṇa* concern the text's ideology. Some adjustments rather involve the style of writing of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers, which can be characterized as rich, engaging and appealing. Although not all narratives receive the same amount of attention, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers almost always pay stylistic attention to the way they tell or retell narratives by including lively dialogues, humorous insider jokes and scenic descriptions that make it easier to envision the scene before one's eyes. The editors of SP Vol. I already noted the rich style of the *Skandapurāṇa*. "As readers who do not aspire to be literary critics, we find the SP to be written in the main in an enjoyable, often very lively, style; more so than most other Puranic works that we have read. In the dialogues there are not infrequent touches of humour" (SP Vol. I, 29). The comparison is made with other Purāṇas that can occasionally be dry and monotonous. Especially the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* material with its long lists of gods, Asuras and kings is not always particularly exciting from a storytelling point of view. The fact that precisely such lists are omitted in the *Skandapurāṇa* and that, at the same time, some of the content of lists like these find expression in narrative form suggests that the composers made an active effort to produce appealing narratives[61].

In the case of the retellings, where other versions are comparatively straightforward with limited attractive scenes, I refer to this technique as dramatic visualization, a term borrowed from David Pinault in his book *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*. Pinault defines

> "dramatic visualization as the representing of an object or character with an abundance of descriptive detail, or the mimetic rendering of gestures and dialogue in such a way as to make the given scene 'visual' or imaginatively present to an audience. I contrast 'dramatic visualization' with 'summary presentation,' where an author informs his audience of an object or event in abbreviated fashion without dramatizing the scene

[61] This will be argued in section 5.3.

> or encouraging the audience to form a visual picture of it" (Pinault 1992, 25—26)[62].

A similar distinction can be made for retellings where the *Skandapurāṇa* represents dramatic visualization and other texts only a summary presentation of the same narrative. The story of the seven Brahmins can illustrate this. This narrative has been studied by Yuko Yokochi in her article 'The story of the seven brahmans in the *Harivaṃśa*', where she shows that the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the story (SP 56.1—57.47) has a close parallel with the retelling of the main event in the *Harivaṃśa* (HV 16—19)[63]. The *Skandapurāṇa* "adapts and enlarges the main story of the HV to a considerable extent, omitting some episodes and adding new ones" (Yokochi 2000, 532). One of the new passages is a speech of the father of the Brahmins during their rebirth as hunters (SP 56.64—82). The father speaks emotionally to his sons, when they ask him permission to commit suicide before he and their mother have died. The father tells the story of his own previous life as a Brahmin, which is similar to their situation, and asks his sons not to commit suicide as long as their father and mother are still alive. The hunters do as they are asked. In the *Harivaṃśa*, the Brahmins' rebirth as hunters occupies only three verses that simply report that the seven hunters worshipped their parents and that when they died, the seven hunters committed suicide. The affectionate speech in the *Skandapurāṇa* can be

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[62] Pinault compares his distinction between dramatic visualization and summary presentation with the distinction that Wayne C. Booth made between "showing" and "telling" in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*: "when an author "shows" his audience something he renders it dramatically so as to give the "intensity of realistic illusion"; when he "tells" his audience about a thing he is using his authorial powers to summarize an event or render judgment on a character's behaviour, without, however, using descriptive detail to make the given event or character imaginatively present" (Pinault 1992, 26, referring to Booth 1961, 3—9, 40). The distinction between telling and showing is a well-developed subfield in narratology, dealt with by many other scholars in different ways. In 'Telling vs. Showing', Klauk and Köppe demonstrate that "current narratology shows a broad diversity of possible meanings of the telling vs. showing distinction" (Klauk and Köppe 2013/2014, "3 Aspects and History of the Concept" section, para. 7). They list seven different distinctions, each focussing on a particular narrative phenomenon (ibid, para. 8—14). For example, "the 'speed' of the narration, which can be comparatively fast (telling) or slow (showing), and which can convey more (showing) or less detailed (telling) information, is taken to be decisive" (ibid, para. 13).

[63] The narrative tells how seven Brahmins are reborn into lower beings because they are cursed for a sin that they committed: first as hunters, then as deer, next as *cakravākas* (i.e. birds) and finally as humans. However, due to their devotion to the forefathers, they "do not fall to the hells […]; instead, they suffer transmigration through low births […] and finally reach the ultimate perfection" (SP Vol. III, 17).

considered a dramatic visualization of the hunters' request and the brief account in the *Harivaṃśa* can be seen as a summary presentation of the same narrative element.

As this style of narrating events is characteristic for the *Skandapurāṇa*, there are many examples of dramatic visualization, including some cases where they can be placed next to a passage that can be rather characterized as summary presentation. In the chapters that follow, various other instances will be discussed. For example, in SP 71, an insider joke at the expense of the enemy of the gods creates a special relationship between the composers and the audience and shows that the composers expected the audience to know how the retelling (usually) proceeds[64]; and in SP 95, we encounter a scenic description of different layers of the netherworld where fabulous creatures like sea-monsters and mermen live[65].

Both examples make it easier for the audience to be absorbed in the story, which in itself can be seen as the function of dramatic visualization. Pinault, however, adds another reason why this narrative technique is employed. According to him, "dramatic visualization is reserved especially for scenes which form the heart of a given narrative. […] The effect of all this visualized detail is to slow the pace of narration; and we are not permitted any resolution till the last possible moment […]. Thus the technique of dramatic visualization enables the storyteller to heighten the tension in a scene and increase his audience's experience of pleasurable suspense" (Pinault 1992, 28). The wish for a similar suspense may have been the reason to include the father's speech in the story of the seven Brahmins, anticipating the big question whether the father will give the hunters permission to commit suicide. The speech builds up to the climax of that particular scene (as opposed to the entire narrative as Pinault suggested). Although considerations like this may be behind other instances of dramatic visualization in the *Skandapurāṇa* as well, I

[64] In SP 71.36cd, Hiraṇyakaśipu, the enemy of the gods, orders his subjects to bring Viṣṇu in his Man-Lion manifestation to him alive, so that "this lion-cub will be a pet for my wife" (*krīḍaṇaṃ siṃhapoto 'sau devyā mama bhaviṣyati*, SP 71.36cd). In section 2.1, I will show that this verse should be interpreted as an insider joke because the audience knows that Viṣṇu will kill Hiraṇyakaśipu.

[65] SP 99.11:
makarāṃś caiva śaṅkhāṃś ca tathaivāśvamukhān api |
tathā vai pakṣisaṃkāśān mānuṣān api cāparān || *11* ||
"[Viṣṇu in his Boar manifestation saw] sea-monsters, shells, [fish] with horse-heads, [fish] that resemble birds, human-like [fish] and other [fish types]."
I will discuss this passage in the introduction to chapter 2.

will also identify alternative and more specific motivations behind this technique in chapter 2. In the *Conclusions* (chapter 6), I will furthermore consider the importance of dramatic visualization of the retellings as a whole, in particular those that have been radically changed and do not belong to the Śaiva milieu.

1.2.3 "The" *Skandapurāṇa* composers

Having outlined the base content of the *Skandapurāṇa* and having explored some of its key features, it is time to address the question who the composers of the *Skandapurāṇa* might have been. For a start, the choice of the plural "composers" is deliberate. In his book *The World of the Skandapurāṇa*, Hans Bakker proposes a compositional situation in which an "editor-in-chief" was appointed to lead the project, while being "assisted by some editors who were assigned specific portions of the composition. The Pāśupata network was called in to assemble information about places sacred to the Māheśvara [i.e. Śaiva] community. Sometimes this resulted in new collaborators entering the group" (Bakker 2014, 16). I follow Bakker in assuming a group of composers, instead of just one person. This situation is furthermore suggested by the fact that the text was not composed in one breath. Instead, its composition probably took place in stages, covering approximately one century, ca. 550—650 CE, to reach its first complete recension (SP Vol. III, 57)[66].

Taking the content of the *Skandapurāṇa* into account, it is possible to say something about the literary knowledge and compositional skills of the composers. First of all, the references to a variety of other texts—from the Vedas to other Purāṇas—strongly suggest that we are dealing with learned people. Based on the fact that some of the key Purāṇic features also appear in the *Skandapurāṇa*, we may furthermore assume that they were aware of the topics, narratives and style of writing of the genre of Purāṇas. At the same time, the adjustments made regarding topics known from the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* for instance, show both their affiliation with a particular religious strand and their creativity. Narratives showing processes of Śaivization, but even more so

[66] For a possible scenario of the political and religious situation of the time of the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*, see Bakker 2014, 12—21. For a possible relative chronology of the narratives told in the text, see Kropman 2019. For an extensive review of the different stages of the composition in terms of redactions, see SP Vol. III, 33—66.

theological text units like the section on Pāśupata doctrine (SP_{Bh} 174—81), demonstrate that at least some of the composers were learned Pāśupata Śaivas, as Bakker has noted. "Whether they were ascetics, *ācāryas* ["teachers"], laymen devotees (*laukika*), or a mix, they belonged to a milieu of learned Māheśvaras" (Bakker 2014, 4). I would like to add another character trait of the composers, *viz.* that most of them were professional composers, skilled in epic-Purāṇic writing. The cases identified as dramatic visualization are just a hint of the compositional skills, narrative techniques and the rich epic-Purāṇic repertoire and language employed by the composers, as I will argue throughout this thesis. I will show that the identified compositional skills are not coincidences, but represent structural and deliberate decisions on the part of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers with a particular goal in mind. Even though the composers are anonymous about whom no biographical data are known, I will demonstrate that it is nevertheless possible to hypothesize on the intentions and aims of the composers on the basis of one specific set of retellings, *viz.* Viṣṇu's manifestation myths.

1.3 Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*

Among the retellings in the *Skandapurāṇa*, a relatively large amount is dedicated to Viṣṇu. He is the main character in at least six narratives, across 25 chapters[67]. In each of these myths, he fights against the enemies of the gods, the Asuras. The Asuras take control of the universe and the gods are conquered. Viṣṇu is the god tasked to solve this problem.

- In the Narasiṃha myth, Viṣṇu kills Hiraṇyakaśipu (SP 70—71)[68].
- In the Varāha myth, he slays Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 76.14—110.end).
- During the Amṛtamanthana war, Viṣṇu battles with Prahlāda (SP_{Bh} 115.1—116.3)[69].

[67] The following enumeration is based on a table created by Yuko Yokochi as accompaniment of a paper she presented at the World Sanskrit Conference in 2009 in Kyoto ('How to incorporate Vaiṣṇava myths into the Śaiva mythology').

[68] The Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana myths are summarized in short below. For extensive summaries, see *Appendix I: Summaries*.

[69] The Amṛtamanthana myth consists of three main narratives: the first (SP_{Bh} 113) concerns the churning (*manthana*) of the milk ocean for the sake of nectar (*amṛta*), the second (SP_{Bh} 114) tells about Śiva swallowing the poison that had arisen from the churning and becoming Nīlakaṇṭha, "the one with the dark neck", and the third (SP_{Bh} 115.1—116.3) is about Viṣṇu fighting with Prahlāda.

- In the Vāmana myth, Viṣṇu conquers Bali (SP_{Bh} 116.13cd—121.22).
- During the Tārakāmaya war, Viṣṇu kills Kālanemi (SP_{Bh} 122.1—122.13)[70].
- Viṣṇu fights once more with Prahlāda (SP_{Bh} 172)[71].

In the three myths where Viṣṇu fights against Prahlāda and Kālanemi, he attacks them in his own form. In the other three myths—Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana—he takes on a manifestation, i.e. a particular form other than his own, to conquer the Asuras[72]. These manifestation myths are known from various other sources. The Narasiṃha myth appears for the first time in the *Mahābhārata* and (parts of) the Varāha and Vāmana myths already find a predecessor in Vedic literature. The main plot of all three myths is, however, more or less the same from the early Purāṇic period onwards and can be summarized as follows.

Narasiṃha myth. Once upon a time, the king of the Daityas called Hiraṇyakaśipu practised severe *tapas*. Brahmā is so pleased with his *tapas*, that he grants him a boon. Hiraṇyakaśipu asks for immortality in a number of circumstances. For example, he shall not be killed by gods nor by human beings, not by day nor by night, not by weapons nor by arrows. Brahmā consents to this wish, and Hiraṇyakaśipu sets off to conquer the gods. He succeeds and becomes the ruler of the universe. With the enemy in power, the gods are in great distress and ask Brahmā for help. Brahmā advises them to go to Viṣṇu, who

[70] The Tārakāmaya war and its aftermath covers several chapters (SP_{Bh} 121.23—124.end) and consists of several storylines and different wars between the gods and the Asuras. For instance, SP_{Bh} 121.23—end tells how Rāma Jāmadagnya defeats the Saiṃhikeyas, the enemies of the gods; SP_{Bh} 122.1—13 recounts the story of Viṣṇu killing Kālanemi; and SP_{Bh} 123.1—29 takes up the storyline of Rāma Jāmadagnya, telling about another war, *viz.* between Rāma and the *kṣatriyas*, "warriors".

[71] Several stories or narrative elements known from other sources are brought together in SP_{Bh} 172. The frame story is a variation on how the flying mountains caused trouble, and how, as a result, their wings had to be cut (except for Mount Maināka's). Within this frame story, several events take place, including Viṣṇu fighting Prahlāda, and Prahlāda becoming a teacher in Sāṃkhya philosophy.

[72] I use the word "manifestation" for the form that a god takes on to fulfil a particular task. There are other words one might consider suitable as well. The most common alternative is the Sanskrit word *avatāra*, "descent", or the Sanskrit word *prādurbhāva*, "appearance", but none of these terms appear in the *Skandapurāṇa* with reference to Viṣṇu. The text rather speaks of "forms" or "bodies" of Viṣṇu (Sanskrit *rūpa* or *vapus*). However, in secondary literature, these terms are not used as designations for this type of myths of Viṣṇu, so I have settled for the English term "manifestation". For studies on the development of the terminology related to manifestations, see Hacker 1960b and Couture 2001; for studies on Viṣṇu's manifestations specifically, see, for example, Gonda 1954/1969, 124—46 and 154—63, and Couture 2009, 792—97.

will take up the form of a Man-Lion in order to escape the conditions of Hiraṇyakaśipu's immortality. Viṣṇu, having become half man, half lion, kills Hiraṇyakaśipu with his claw. Having completed his task, he returns the control over the triple world to Indra[73].

Varāha myth. There are two main variants of the Varāha myth. The first is a cosmogonic myth, in which it is told that the earth has sunk into the cosmic ocean, due to which the creation cannot start. Viṣṇu takes on the form of a Boar and dives into the water to save the earth. When he puts her back into her original place, all the creatures in the universe are created. In the second variant, Viṣṇu becomes a Boar in order to save the earth from the hands of Hiraṇyākṣa, the king of the Daityas and Hiraṇyakaśipu's brother. Viṣṇu kills Hiraṇyākṣa in battle. He places the earth back in her original place, and Indra becomes the ruler of the triple world again. This second variant is told in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

Vāmana myth. In the Vāmana myth, Bali, Hiraṇyakaśipu's great-grandson, is the new king of the Daityas and takes control of the universe. The gods are unhappy that the Asuras rule the universe and ask Viṣṇu to defeat the Daitya. Viṣṇu decides to help the gods, taking on the form of a dwarfish Brahmin in order to trick Bali. Vāmana visits Bali during Bali's royal horse sacrifice and asks him for a piece of land measuring three steps of his. As soon as the generous Bali consents to the request, Viṣṇu leaves his dwarfish body and returns to his own divine, all-encompassing form. Striding thrice with his colossal body, he covers the entire universe and regains supremacy over the universe. He returns the power to Indra and sends Bali back to the netherworld.

Although the main plot remains the same in most texts and Viṣṇu preserves key characteristics, some Purāṇa composers introduced major changes, as did the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. On the one hand, they followed the general storylines, *viz*. Viṣṇu becomes Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana in order to conquer Hiraṇyakaśipu, Hiraṇyākṣa and Bali respectively, and he is successful in executing these tasks. Viṣṇu thus preserves his role as conqueror of the Asuras, and his characteristic feature that he manifests himself in a particular form to combat evil. On the other hand, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers introduced some new, decisive plot twists. For example, the

[73] The triple world consists of the earth (*pṛthivī*), sky (*antarikṣa*) and heaven (*dyaus*). For this and other divisions of the universe, see González-Reimann 2009.

composers changed how they portrayed Viṣṇu—e.g. he is often dependent on the other gods—and they introduced Śiva into the myths, providing him with a key role at crucial moments. Most radical are the additional episodes in which Viṣṇu does not or cannot give up his manifestation, after the Asuras have been conquered. He continues to live on in his manifested form, which I will refer to as "Viṣṇu's afterlives"[74], and the episodes in which he does so as "the afterlife episodes". I hereby make a distinction with what precedes the afterlife episodes, which I will refer to as "the main story of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths". The latter runs up to and including the moment that Viṣṇu conquers the Asuras and rescues the universe.

The aim of my thesis is to study Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa* as retellings, illustrating how narratives are retold and reworked. The thesis will identify processes of Śaivization and dramatic visualization, as well as other modifications introduced by the composers of the text, including Viṣṇu's afterlives. Viṣṇu's afterlives of Narasiṃha and Varāha in the *Skandapurāṇa* have been discussed earlier by Phyllis Granoff in her article 'Saving the Saviour. Śiva and the Vaiṣṇava Avatāras in the Early Skandapurāṇa'. Granoff closely examines the representation of Viṣṇu and Śiva in the afterlife episodes and rightly notices that

> "Śiva's role in the demon-killing stories in the early *Skandapurāṇa* is largely passive and […] this means that the stories of killing demons did not originally belong to him. He is an intruder. There is no doubt, I think, that this is the case with Śiva's appearance in these stories of the Boar and Man-lion incarnations, which as Puranic myths are Vaiṣṇava stories. We see then, in this text, the gradual incursion of Śiva into demon-killing stories in a variety of unusual ways" (Granoff 2004, 131).

[74] Viṣṇu's afterlives are studied in chapter 4, and a summary of these episodes are given in *Appendix I: Summaries*.

As examples, Granoff mentions Śiva giving strength to Varāha and "more importantly, Śiva is said to lie behind all the demon-fighting incarnations through the boon he grants Viṣṇu [i.e. the boon of being the slayer of Daityas]. He may not directly kill demons, but his presence is indispensable: without his intervention none of the demon-killing exploits of the other gods would be possible" (ibid, 131—32). In sections 3.1 and 4.2.1, I will further explore these two methods of imparting a role on Śiva in the stories and reveal other such "unusual ways" to insert Śiva into the manifestation myths. However, where my thesis differs from Granoff's article is, first of all, the extent of the research. Granoff focusses on the afterlife episodes of the Narasiṃha and Varāha myth and thus excludes both the portrayal of Viṣṇu in the rest of the myths and (the ending of) the Vāmana myth, which has been changed significantly as well. My thesis, on the other hand, deals with all three manifestation myths, from beginning to end. Another important difference will become clear in section 4.1.4, where I will challenge one of Granoff's other conclusions related to the portrayal of Viṣṇu and the *Skandapurāṇa* composers' view on his animal manifestations. Based on a comparison with later Purāṇas with similar afterlife episodes, Granoff concludes "that for the story-teller, these animal incarnations [i.e. Narasiṃha and Varāha] are somehow not entirely divine; they border on the demonic and need to be 'saved' from themselves. It seems possible to go even further and see in the stories of the early *Skandapurāṇa* a discomfort with the very idea of incarnations, that is, of the birth of a god on earth, whether in an animal or in a human form" (ibid, 128)[75]. I do not agree to this "discomfort" and I will rather argue that these afterlives of Viṣṇu's manifestations serve a different goal, which is not so much concerned with Viṣṇu or his ability to manifest himself, but rather with the glorification of Śiva.

Another aim of the thesis is to study why Viṣṇu's manifestation myths are told in the *Skandapurāṇa*. After all, it seems at first glance remarkable that Viṣṇu receives so much attention in a Śaiva Purāṇa, in which he moreover is the hero of the story, conquering the Asuras. As Hans Bakker has shown in *The World of the Skandapurāṇa*,

[75] According to Granoff, this discomfort reflects one of the explanations in (early) Purāṇas why Viṣṇu must be born on earth, *viz.* "*as a result of a curse of a sage*. Viṣṇu has actually done something very wrong; he has killed the wife of the sage Bhṛgu. In retaliation, Bhṛgu curses him to be born again and again. The early *Skandapurāṇa* knows about this curse of Bhṛgu that caused Viṣṇu to be born on earth" (Granoff 2004, 128). For references in the *Skandapurāṇa* and other Purāṇas, see ibid, 128—29 and 128 note 33.

the worship of Viṣṇu was popular in the sixth to seventh century—the time of the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*—and Vaiṣṇava iconography, texts and temples must have been found everywhere. Flourishing under the Gupta court until the first decades of the sixth century, Vaiṣṇavism had received royal support not long before the *Skandapurāṇa* was composed, resulting in the establishment of numerous Vaiṣṇava temples and monuments (Bakker 2014, 35). At the same time, worship of Śiva was well-established too. From the second half of the sixth century onwards, Śaivism received substantial financial support from several new North Indian rulers, like the Aulikaras and the Maukharis. They worshipped Śiva and "played an important role in transmitting the Pāśupata movement to northern India" (ibid, 36). In the sixth century, the Pāśupatas "made good use of the patronage that fell to their lot. They set up religious centres (*sthāna*), temples (*āyatana*) and monasteries (*maṭhas*) in the country's most hallowed places, such as the Kapālasthāna in Kurukṣetra […] and Madhyameśvara, *circa* one kilometre north of the renowned cremation grounds of Avimukta of Vārāṇasī" (ibid, 13)[76]. This situation raises the question why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers dedicated so much attention to Viṣṇu in a Purāṇa that is distinctively Śaiva. According to Bakker, the large number of chapters dedicated to Viṣṇu's manifestation myths "seems to support the view that Vaisnavism was a major concern in early medieval Saivism" (ibid, 5). With this historical approach to the question why the myths made their appearance in the *Skandapurāṇa*, Bakker suggests that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers had to react to the strong presence of Vaiṣṇavism.

By looking at Viṣṇu's manifestation myths within the Purāṇic genre, I would like to demonstrate that there can be more explanations than a religious one alone. The fact that Viṣṇu features as main character in no less than six extant narratives may be explained from a religious perspective as a reaction to Vaiṣṇavism. However, this does not explain why three of these should be manifestation myths, *viz.* the Narasiṃha, Varāha and

[76] Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism are not the only religious traditions at the time of the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*. The traditions centring around the Goddess (Devī) and goddesses, the Sun-God (Sūrya), the Buddha and the Jina had devoted followers, sanctuaries and a well-established iconography throughout North India. See, for example, Sanderson 2009 for an extensive study on the dominance of Śaivism in a diverse religious landscape; Bakker 2014, 4—12 for a short analysis on how these religious traditions feature in the *Skandapurāṇa*; and Yokochi 2004 for a study on goddess worship in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

Vāmana myth, nor does it explain why other manifestation myths are neglected. In other words, why is it that particularly the three manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana are told in the *Skandapurāṇa*? By the time of the *Skandapurāṇa*, Viṣṇu was famous for manifesting himself in order to conquer evil. The *Harivaṃśa* is for the greater part about Viṣṇu's manifestation as Kṛṣṇa, the *Rāmāyaṇa* about his manifestation as Rāma Dāśarathi, and the epics and the Purāṇas have extensive lists of manifestations, ranging from three, four and six in the *Mahābhārata*[77] to nine in the *Harivaṃśa*[78] for example. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers must have been aware of the variety of Viṣṇu's manifestations, but they presented only a limited number of these manifestations in the form of a narrative[79].

In fact, there are two retellings in the text where we would expect to find Viṣṇu manifesting himself, but where the figure in question is not identified with Viṣṇu. The first concerns Viṣṇu's manifestation as a Tortoise (Kūrma) in the context of the churning of the milk ocean: the Amṛtamanthana myth[80]. When the gods and the Asuras churn the milk ocean for the sake of *amṛta*, "nectar", with Vāsuki as a rope and Mount Mandara as a churning stick, the mountain is placed on the back of a Tortoise. At least from the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* onwards, the Tortoise is identified with Viṣṇu (ViP 1.9.86)[81]. The

[77] MBh 3.100.19—21 enumerates three manifestations: Varāha, Narasiṃha and Vāmana. The list is expanded twice in the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*: once with "a human [form]" (*mānuṣa*), i.e. Kṛṣṇa (MBh 12.337.36ab), and once with Kṛṣṇa, Rāma Jāmadagnya and Rāma Dāśarathi (MBh 12.326.71—92). For the development of such manifestation lists, including the expansion in the *Mahābhārata*, see Brinkhaus 1993. The *Mahābhārata* is also the place where the concept of Viṣṇu's manifestations is determined by Kṛṣṇa, *viz.* in the *Bhagavadgītā* (BhG 4.7—8).

[78] The *Harivaṃśa* gives several lists of manifestations and also recounts nine short manifestation myths in HV 31: Puṣkara ("Lotus"), Varāha, Narasiṃha, Vāmana, Dattātreya, Rāma Jāmadagnya, Rāma Dāśarathi, Kṛṣṇa and Kalki. For the various lists in this text, see Brinkhaus 2001.

[79] There are a few references to other manifestations of Viṣṇu that are not in the form of a narrative. Kṛṣṇa features three times in a comparison: once compared to Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 84.29) and twice in stock phrase-like comparisons that resemble each other a lot (SP 15.11 and SP_{Bh} 122.67 ≈ BrP 38.11 and LiP 1.101.44—45ab). Additionally, in the Varāha myth, Viṣṇu is praised by the gods with some of Viṣṇu's famous epithets, characteristics and manifestations, which will be discussed in section 3.5.

[80] For studies on the myth of the churning of the milk ocean, see Bedekar 1967, Couture 2007, Long 1976, Rüping 1970 and Stubbe-Diarra 1997.

[81] The *Harivaṃśa* is ambivalent regarding this manifestation. In most retellings of the Amṛtamanthana myth, Viṣṇu's manifestation as Kūrma is absent. However, in a manifestation list with one-verse descriptions of each manifestation, Viṣṇu is said to have taken on the form of a Tortoise during the churning for *amṛta* in order to carry Mount Mandara (HV 65.42).

Skandapurāṇa recounts the same myth (SP_{Bh} 113) and refers to the use of the same instruments as well: Vāsuki is caught by Viṣṇu to function as a rope and Mount Mandara is used as a churning stick, being placed on the back of a tortoise (Sanskrit *kacchapa*, instead of *kūrma*), called Akūpāra. However, this tortoise is not identified with Viṣṇu, who is mentioned separately and executes his own task (SP_{Bh} 113.22cd—25ab)[82].

The second is the manifestation of Rāma Jāmadagnya, also known as Paraśurāma, "Rāma with the axe"[83]. Already in one of the manifestation lists of the *Mahābhārata*, Paraśurāma is mentioned as one of the standard manifestations of Viṣṇu, and in the *Harivaṃśa*, for instance, it is told how he killed king Arjuna Kārtavīrya and the *kṣatriyas*, "warriors", twenty-one times[84]. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, Paraśurāma kills various groups: he destroys the *kṣatriyas* twenty-one times (SP_{Bh} 123.19—22), after having killed the Saiṃhikeyas earlier[85] (SP_{Bh} 121.53—54). There can be no doubt therefore that it is the same Rāma as the one we hear about in the *Harivaṃśa* for example. However, in the *Skandapurāṇa*, he is not a manifestation of Viṣṇu. In fact, Viṣṇu enters the stage separately in his own form[86].

To summarize, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers paid considerable attention to Viṣṇu in the text, but at the same time, they only concerned themselves with a selected number of manifestations and manifestation myths. Although the amount of attention to Viṣṇu in general may be explained from a religious, historical point of view—*viz.* the fact that the

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[82] SP_{Bh} 113.22cd—25ab:
prakṣipya tatra tat sarvaṃ tataḥ manthānam āvahan || *22* ||
mandaraṃ parvataśreṣṭham akūpārañ ca kacchapam |
tasya pṛṣṭhe ca manthānaṃ mandaraṃ parvateśvaram || *23* ||
kṛtvā viṣṇugṛhītaṃ te vāsukiṃ pragrahaṃ tathā |
yato mukhaṃ tato daityā yataḥ pucchaṃ tataḥ surāḥ || *24* ||
karṣantas taṃ tu manthānaṃ mathnanti bahulāḥ samāḥ |
"Having thrown everything there, they then fetched [Mount] Mandara, the best of mountains, as a churning stick, and the tortoise Akūpāra. Having made [Mount] Mandara, the lord of mountains, the churning-stick on his [i.e. Akūpāra's] back [and having made] Vāsuki, who was caught by Viṣṇu, the rope, all the Daityas and gods together churned the churning stick—the Daityas pulling the head [of Vāsuki] and the gods pulling [his] tail."

[83] For studies on Paraśurāma, see, for example, Gail 1977a, Goldman 1972 and Sathaye 2010.

[84] MBh 12.326.77 and HV 31.100cd—109.

[85] The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* is the only other text that speaks of Paraśurāma fighting with the Saiṃhikeyas (e.g. VDhP 1.36.18c: *saiṃhikeyabhayatrastāḥ*, the gods are "trembling out of fear for the Saiṃhikeyas"). In other texts, Rāma fights with the *kṣatriyas*.

[86] Rāma's fights are part of a larger narrative about the Tārakāmaya war and its aftermath.

worship of Viṣṇu was popular at the time of the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*—, the choice for the extensive retelling of the myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana is more difficult to explain from this perspective. Therefore, in my thesis, I take into consideration the literary tradition to which the *Skandapurāṇa* belongs. How popular were these myths in the epic and Purāṇic tradition? What role did the manifestation myths play in this literary tradition? Did they form an intrinsic part of it, similar to, for instance, a myth of creation? By looking at the narratives as part of a literary tradition, that is not exclusively religious, and by focussing on the *Skandapurāṇa* composers as professional storytellers who made deliberate decisions in their writing, I aim at finding new explanations why particularly Viṣṇu's manifestation myths as Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana are included in the *Skandapurāṇa*[87].

1.4 Research questions and methodology

In accordance with the aims of the thesis as set out above, the following research questions will be raised.

1. *Viṣṇu's manifestation myths as retellings.*
   Where does the *Skandapurāṇa* stand in the literary landscape of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths? How does it relate to other (re)tellings?

[87] By focussing on Viṣṇu's manifestation myths within a literary tradition and on the composers of the *Skandapurāṇa*, I am aware of the fact that my scope is limited. I have not, for example, taken into account that the manifestation myths may have had a local importance in the region where the *Skandapurāṇa* has supposedly been composed. Also, I only briefly touch upon a possible relation between the representation of the Boar manifestation in the *Skandapurāṇa* and its iconographical counterpart in section 2.2, but do not look into a possible significance of the iconography of Narasiṃha and Vāmana. The context in which the text is produced is, in other words, much broader than a religious, historical context and literary context, but I will limit myself to the latter. Furthermore, when speaking of the intentions and aims of the composers, a second party involved in the composition of a Purāṇa should at least be considered: the commissioning party of the text. After all, the composers were most probably just the executors of an idea ordered by a commissioning party, such as a king. However, these sponsors are as unknown to us as the text's composers. Therefore, I only consider the aims and ambitions of the composers, and base the conclusions related to these topics on the text-internal evidence as well as on a comparison with other (early) Purāṇas. After all, the composition of the Purāṇa was the domain of these professionals.

2. *Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the Skandapurāṇa.*
   Which narrative elements are preserved, which have been changed, and which have been newly added? What effect do these decisions have on the rest of the narrative? Why did the *Skandapurāṇa* composers make these decisions?
3. *Reasons for selection.*
   Why have Viṣṇu's manifestation myths been incorporated into the *Skandapurāṇa*?

These questions are addressed in five chapters. The first set of questions will be dealt with in chapter 2, called *Tales as old as time: Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the epics and the Purāṇas*. In this chapter, I give an overview of other early texts in which the three manifestation myths appear and how the *Skandapurāṇa* relates to them. For each myth, I present a case study of how a particular narrative element is implemented in the different texts in order to determine a possible relationship between the *Skandapurāṇa* and other texts. I finish this chapter with a comparison between the war between the gods and the Asuras in the Varāha myth of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the war between the gods and the Asuras in one version of the Vāmana myth of the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42B)[88] because they share some striking similarities that suggest a special relationship.

[88] The critical edition of the *Harivaṃśa* consists of two parts: one that the editor, Parashuram Lakshman Vaidya, reconstituted as the "Critical Text" (Vaidya 1969, see *Harivaṃśa* in the bibliography) and one that the editor called the "Appendices" (Vaidya 1971, see *Harivaṃśa* in the bibliography). The "Critical Text" contains stories that are found in the majority of the available manuscripts and at least in the "outermost manuscripts" (Vaidya 1969, xxiv; for a summary of this part of the text, see Brodbeck 2019b, xxviii—xxxiv). The stories that do not meet these requirements have been relegated to the "Appendices", and are considered by Vaidya to be later additions. Although this seems reasonable for the majority of the appendix, in some cases, the dating may actually not be so much later than the third or fourth century CE. Moreover, by calling a text unit "an appendix" and relegating it to "the appendices", the impression is given that it is less important than those text units in what is constituted as "the critical text". However, even if narratives in an appendix section are later additions, they were considered important enough to be included in the *Harivaṃśa* at some point in history, in a certain area, so they deserve our attention as well. To avoid a negative connotation as much as possible, I will refer to "the *Harivaṃśa*" in general, which can refer to both the "Critical Text" and the "Appendices". When a particular passage is meant, then I specify chapter numbers (e.g. HV 14—19) and, in the case of an appendix passage, the appendix number (e.g. HV App. 1 No. 42B). In this thesis, three appendix passages in the *Harivaṃśa* are of particular interest, *viz.* HV App. 1 No. 42—42B. They appear in all oldest manuscripts, except for one, and are thus well attested in the manuscript traditions of the *Harivaṃśa*. Their dating may therefore not be as late as their qualification as "appendices" might

At the basis of this and the following chapters lies the theory of intertextuality, a concept originally coined by Julia Kristeva in 'Word, Dialogue and Novel'. Engaging with Mikhail Bakhtin's idea on dialogism, Kristeva starts with "his conception of the 'literary word' as an *intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context" (Kristeva 1986, 36). She translates Bakhtin's idea on words to texts, stating that "each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read", and reaches the definition of intertextuality as: "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (ibid, 37). In other words, a text never stands on its own; its status is always defined on the one hand by both the writer and the addressee, and on the other by "an anterior or synchronic literary corpus" (ibid, 36—37)[89].

Intertextuality as the simplified idea that the writer of any text draws upon, alludes or refers to another text is omnipresent in the epics and the Purāṇas. The most explicit, and fairly unique, examples of this in the *Skandapurāṇa* are the references to the *Mahābhārata* and "the Purāṇa", i.e. the *Harivaṃśa*, in SP 1 and to an early version of the *Vāyupurāṇa* in SP 5 (see section 1.1). Such explicit references are not only relatively unique, this sort of allusions will not be the focus of this thesis. Instead of concentrating on the relationship between words (Bakhtin) or texts (Kristeva), I centralize narratives that belong "to both writing subject and addressee" and appear in "an anterior or synchronic literary corpus" (see note 89), *viz.* in the Purāṇas; and it is this literary genre that requires a customized model of intertextuality. The main reason for this is that just as Purāṇas are not claimed by one author (see note 3), narratives do not belong to one text either, which gives composers the opportunity to select narratives from different sources

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suggest. In fact, in an article on the development of the *Harivaṃśa*, Horst Brinkhaus has argued that HV App. 1 No. 42—42B were added in a relatively early phase. In the first developmental stage, the text may have constituted HV 1—114, in the second stage, the text was presumably extended with HV 115—18, and already in the third stage, with HV App. 1 No. 42—42B (Brinkhaus 2002, 173—74). Given the fact that HV App. 1 No. 42—42B are well attested and therefore possibly some of the earlier extensions, I consider them to predate the *Skandapurāṇa*.

[89] It should be noted that this paraphrasing is based on a quote by Kristeva, where she still uses Bakhtin's idea on words, but where, I think, her notions on text can be transposed: "The word's status is thus defined *horizontally* (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as *vertically* (the word in the text is oriented towards an anterior or synchronic literary corpus)" (Kristeva 1986, 36—37).

for the composition of a new Purāṇa. Some narratives are so popular that they are retold in almost each Purāṇa. As a consequence, it is often impossible to know which text functioned as the source of a retelling in the target text. Rather, the retelling may come from the epic-Purāṇic genre as a whole. In other words, the genre itself is "the source text"[90]. Such a specification of intertextuality has been suggested by Gérard Genette in *Palimpsests. Literature in the second degree*. He defines several levels of intertextuality, of which "architextuality" best applies to the situation of the Purāṇas: "By architextuality I mean the entire set of general or transcendent categories—types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres—from which emerges each singular text" (Genette 1982/1997, 1). Both the composers and the audience draw upon the epic-Purāṇic tradition in order to determine the differences between the new version and the ones they already know, and to draw conclusions about the message that the target text wishes to proclaim. Intertextuality applies to the *Skandapurāṇa* (the target text), for it retells a number of stories that are known from the epic-Purāṇic tradition ("the source text")[91].

Chapters 3 to 5 are dedicated to the second set of research questions. To answer these, I additionally make use of theories and methods in the field of narratology, by identifying narrative techniques that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers used in order to create

[90] The concept of intertextuality has been used in other Indological studies as well. In 'Intertextuality in the Purāṇas' (1999), Greg Bailey has addressed the same issue of a source text in the case of retellings in the Purāṇas. Even though the body of the article is concerned with the *Vāmanapurāṇa*, a relatively late Purāṇa, and I am concerned with the *Skandapurāṇa*, an early Purāṇa, some of Bailey's suggestions are in line with my approach to the concept. For example, Bailey noted that "[m]uch of what we find in a Purāṇa is repeated often in other Purāṇas, precisely because these Purāṇas draw their material from this very rich universe of anecdotal narratives. This being so it is misleading to trace developments of a given text from one Purāṇa to another and regard this as an intertextual exercise when the entire collection of Purāṇic recitations is the source – at least from an indigenous perspective, I presume – of versions of the same myth. That is, the tradition becomes the intertext for itself" (Bailey 1999, 181).

[91] I am aware of the fact that at the time of composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*, the Purāṇic genre was not as vast as it would become a few centuries later, and "the source text" therefore would, strictly speaking, only include those Purāṇas and "the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*" as listed in section 1.1. However, as I will show in the introduction to chapter 2, there are also cases of intertextuality for narrative elements that are found in multiple Purāṇas, of which the majority postdates the *Skandapurāṇa*. I will argue that in those cases, the fact that the narrative element is shared by so many (later) Purāṇas suggests that the component represents a common idea which might well have been present at an earlier stage of the genre but is not found in early Purāṇas.

their own version of the manifestation myths[92]. Since each chapter answers these questions related to a different topic in the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the myths, each chapter requires its own specific narratological approach.

In chapter 3, *Limits to the permissible: Viṣṇu in the Skandapurāṇa*, I consider the question how Viṣṇu is portrayed in the *Skandapurāṇa*. The composers seem to be continuously balancing between new, Śaiva elements and known, Vaiṣṇava elements that were fixed and could not be modified. As I argue in this chapter, this is a narrative technique in order to establish consistency on different narrative levels.

In chapter 4, *And they lived happily ever after… or not? A new ending for Viṣṇu's manifestation myths*, I study how the composers changed the ending of each manifestation myth and what consequences and goals these decisions have. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers seem to have been aware of the importance of the ending of narratives, for they have changed these parts most radically and used them to proclaim their most important Śaiva message. The narrative technique concerning the endings of narratives will be demonstrated in this chapter.

In chapter 5, *Royal succession and divine wars: the textual context of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths*, I explore in which textual contexts Viṣṇu's manifestation myths appear in the *Skandapurāṇa* and why the composers chose to place the myths in their respective textual contexts. While in the rest of the thesis, I study the three narratives as if they form a set and are told in one sequence[93], they are in fact separated by other

[92] There are several examples of Indological studies that likewise make use of theories and methods developed in the field of narratology. For instance, for one of his studies on the *Devīmāhātmya*, Raj Balkaran builds on Umberto Eco's principle of the model reader (Balkaran 2020, 19—21), and in an article on the oral performance of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, McComas Taylor uses speech act theory (Taylor 2015).

[93] I have adopted this approach for three reasons. First of all, the myths are the only manifestation myths of Viṣṇu told in narrative form in the *Skandapurāṇa*, as shown above. Second, all three myths have undergone similar changes, including new endings, which moreover display a gradual build-up to a climax in the Vāmana myth, as will be argued in chapter 4. Third, the three manifestations are Viṣṇu's oldest manifestations. According to several scholars, they form the "core" of Viṣṇu's interventions during crises. For example, Freda Matchett noticed that "the three forms […] are so often found together" (Matchett 2001, 90). André Couture is even more explicit, stating that "it must not be forgotten that the sequence, Varāha, Narasiṃha, and Vāmana, already appears in *Mahābhārata* (3.100.19–21) and could correspond to a basic nucleus" (Couture 2009, 792). In other words, the three manifestation myths have long formed a set on their own and can be treated as such.

narratives. In chapter 5, I take these gaps into consideration and study the direct textual context—i.e. narratives directly surrounding the manifestation myths—and the indirect textual context—i.e. narratives that cover a larger part of the text and share the same theme(s), sometimes with non-related narratives in between. I will show how the direct and indirect textual context are used as a narrative technique: the chosen context can either blend a narrative with the surrounding narratives, set it apart, or connect it with narratives that are not in the narrative's immediate surroundings. Each decision has its own consequences and these will be studied in this chapter.

In chapter 6, *Conclusions*, I bring the findings of chapters 2 to 5 together and present evidence for my hypothesis regarding the third question concerning the reasons why Viṣṇu's manifestation myths have been incorporated into the *Skandapurāṇa*.

After the *Bibliography* (chapter 7), there are three appendices. *Appendix I: Summaries* contains extensive summaries of each manifestation myth in the *Skandapurāṇa*, which the reader can consult when descriptions of scenes are described only briefly in the body chapters of the thesis. *Appendix II: Figures* contains some photographs of iconography referred to in the thesis. *Appendix III: Critical edition of chapters 108, 109 and 110 of the Skandapurāṇa* is a critical edition of SP 108—10, forming the final chapters of the Varāha myth, which I prepared during my PhD trajectory within the international *Skandapurāṇa* project. These chapters will be published in the forthcoming volume, SP Vol. V.

vārāhaṃ rūpam āsthāya na devatvaṃ na māṇuṣam |
na ca tiryakṣu taj jātaṃ naravārāham asti vai ||
"Having resorted to a boar-body, which is neither divine, nor human,
nor born among the animals; it is indeed [the form] of a Man-Boar."
Skandapurāṇa 97.11

2 Tales as old as time: Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the epics and the Purāṇas

The Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana myths were well-known by the time they were included in the *Skandapurāṇa*. The Varāha myth goes back to the Vedic period; the Vāmana myth has several Vedic elements; and the Narasiṃha myth has its first reference in the *Mahābhārata*. Although the Narasiṃha myth is relatively new, all three narratives were well-established in the literary world by the time of the early Purāṇas, and continued to enjoy great fame in the later Purāṇas. The storylines of the manifestation myths were continuously adapted from other texts and reinvented to form new retellings. Some retellings are direct borrowings, but composers generally changed the narrative to a certain extent. Some changes are subtle, others are more radical. There are also cases in which a particular element is the same, but used in a different (religious) context, appealing to the audience's knowledge about the narrative and its characters in order to allow for a new interpretation. Texts were constantly in contact with each other, as was the *Skandapurāṇa*.

In this chapter, I will explore the literary landscape in which the *Skandapurāṇa* is located and how the text relates to the different retellings of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths. Do the *Skandapurāṇa* retellings display a general epic-Purāṇic representation of the narratives or do they (also) share crucial elements with one or more other texts specifically? In other words, what kind of intertextuality is encountered in the study of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths?

Since intertextuality concerns the study of texts, I start by recapitulating from section 1.1 which texts the *Skandapurāṇa* composers had at their disposal to retell the manifestation myths. Although the oldest available texts are the Vedas and other Vedic

texts, like the Brāhmaṇas, the *Skandapurāṇa* shares most of its narrative choice, character features and language with the epics and the Purāṇas. The direct influence of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa* remains nevertheless limited because the epics only occasionally refer to the manifestations, without going into detail[94].

Concerning the availability of Purāṇas, the Purāṇic genre was still in an early phase at the time of the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*. Only a small number of Purāṇas was accessible to the composers, including a form of the *Harivaṃśa*, the *Vāyupurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*. In other words, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers could have used these Purāṇas as a source for Viṣṇu's manifestation myths. The influence of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* must have been nihil though, for it only briefly mentions the three manifestations[95]. The other three Purāṇas may, on the other hand, have played a role in the retelling of the manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Furthermore, assuming that the themes, lists and narratives collected in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* represent a shared Purāṇic notion on topics like creation and lineages, it is significant that this text corpus includes, to a greater or lesser extent, all three manifestation myths. Drawing on these texts would be the most straightforward form of intertextuality.

However, as mentioned in section 1.4, it is not always as easy as that, and a second type of intertextuality should be taken into consideration in the study of the Purāṇas. Purāṇas are fluid texts, from which individual narratives can be taken each time a new Purāṇa is composed. As a result, it is often difficult to identify one particular source, on which a retelling is based, and "the epic-Purāṇic genre" as a whole should then be considered as "the source text". Cases in which it can be helpful to take this possibility into account mainly concern narrative elements that are so widespread that it is not possible to determine from which text an element was adopted. For example, many texts share the way in which they describe Varāha's appearance. Each limb of his is connected with an external entity, usually elements that are used during a sacrifice. Since the

[94] The only exception is the Vāmana myth in the *Rāmāyaṇa* which is told in the form of a narrative.
[95] On the whole, the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* has only a few references to a limited number of Viṣṇu's manifestations, such as MkP 4.54—56 mentioning Varāha, Narasiṃha, Vāmana and Kṛṣṇa.

description is so widespread I consider it a case of intertextuality with the genre as the source text[96].

A third form of intertextuality is possible, when parallel ideas or narratives elements are not found within the same narrative in other sources, but in a different narrative. In the Varāha myth of the *Skandapurāṇa*, for example, Varāha travels through the ocean to the netherworld in order to fight with Hiraṇyākṣa and rescue the earth. This journey is described in an extensive and scenic way (SP 99.5cd—22). Varāha sees all kinds of fabulous fish and animals in the water (SP 99.10—13) and passes various underwater places: Hayaśiras, Mount Maināka, the city called Bhogavatī, the quarter-elephant (*diggaja*) called Parjanya, the city of Varuṇa (the god of the ocean), the area where the divine cow called Surabhī and the foam-drinkers live, and the cities of various Nāgas, i.e. mythical serpents (SP 99.14—22). A similar description is not found in other early versions of the myth and it can be considered a dramatic visualization of Varāha's dive to the netherworld, including abundant cosmographic information. However, I found a parallel itinerary in the *Mahābhārata*, in the story of Mātali, who travels to the Nāgaloka in his search for a suitable husband for his daughter (MBh 5.95—103). He passes various places, of which several correspond to the *Skandapurāṇa* passage: the city of Varuṇa (MBh 5.96), the world of the elephants, Hayaśiras (MBh 5.97), the abode of Surabhī and the foam-drinkers (MBh 5.100), and the city called Bhogavatī where the Nāgas live (MBh 5.101). Although the details differ, the parallels in the cosmographic notion of different worlds in the underwater realm and the parallels in some of the actual locations are remarkable.

The different forms of intertextuality show the complexity of studying this topic in the field of Purāṇas. Paying attention to each form—from direct intertextuality to intertextuality outside the narrative—will, however, help in understanding the choices that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers made in their version of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths and how they relate to other texts. I will study the development of one narrative element per manifestation myth and examine possible relationships between the *Skandapurāṇa* and other sources. For the Narasiṃha myth, I analyse the description of Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon (2.1); for the Varāha myth, I examine how the characterization of the Boar changed from

[96] Varāha's appearance will be studied in detail in section 2.2.

Yajñavarāha, “Sacrificial Boar”, to Naravarāha, “Man-Boar” (2.2); and for the Vāmana myth, I look at the scenes after Viṣṇu strode thrice (2.3). In the final section (2.4), I take a different approach. Instead of comparing the *Skandapurāṇa* with other relevant Purāṇas, I compare the *Skandapurāṇa* only with the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42B), for these two texts seem to have a special intertextual relationship. I have identified parallels between the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B on the level of the structure of the war between the gods and the Asuras in the Varāha myth and the war between the gods and the Asuras in the Vāmana myth respectively. Several factors complicate the definition of the precise relationship and will be studied in detail.

2.1 The Narasiṃha myth

The Narasiṃha myth[97] appears in textual form for the first time in the *Mahābhārata*[98]. The epic does not tell a complete story, but only refers to it stating that Hiraṇyakaśipu was killed by Narasiṃha (e.g. MBh 3.100.20)[99]. The *Vāyupurāṇa* and *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* are the first texts to tell a narrative, sharing largely the same text (PPL *vaṃśa* 2C.16—22)[100]. They include core elements, such as Hiraṇyakaśipu’s *tapas*, boon and death, but everything is told in a condensed manner. The *Harivaṃśa* (HV 31.31—67), the *Brahmapurāṇa* (BrP 213.43—79) and the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (VDhP 1.54) also share large sections[101]. The story is more elaborate in these texts; for instance,

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[97] Several studies have been done on the Narasiṃha myth, such as Vaidya 1942, Hacker 1960a, 25ff., Swain 1971, Soifer 1991, 73—99 and Saindon 2009, 66ff.

[98] In *The Myths of Narasiṁha and Vāmana*, Deborah A. Soifer has argued that, although there is no direct Vedic counterpart of Narasiṃha, the story of Indra fighting against the Asura Namuci in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB 12.7.3.1ff.) “must be considered as the prototype of that [Narasiṃha] myth” (Soifer 1992, 38). This is based on the fact that Hiraṇyakaśipu’s conditions to his immortality are similar to Namuci’s. For example, Namuci cannot be killed by a stick nor by a bow, not by the palm of the hand nor by a fist, not by something dry nor by something wet. For a comparative analysis, see ibid, 38—40.

[99] MBh 3.100.20:
ādidaityo mahāvīryo hiraṇyakaśipus tvayā |
nārasiṃhaṃ vapuḥ kṛtvā sūditaḥ puruṣottama || *20* ||
“The powerful, ancient Daitya Hiraṇyakaśipu was destroyed by thee, greatest of persons, in the form of a man-lion” (translation by Van Buitenen 1975, 420).
For an overview of references to Narasiṃha in the *Mahābhārata*, see Saindon 2009, 65—66.

[100] The *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* has extended the shared text portion with approximately twenty verses.

[101] The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* shares the same text with the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Brahmapurāṇa* until VDhP 1.54.34. After that, it has more extensive descriptions of Narasiṃha and of Narasiṃha’s battle with Hiraṇyakaśipu.

Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon is expanded, and a description of Narasiṃha is added. The *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42A), the *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* (PdP *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* 42) and the *Matsyapurāṇa* (MtP 161—63) have many parallels and show only minor differences. The Narasiṃha myth in these texts includes several new passages, such as a description of Hiraṇyakaśipu's garden and palace, Prahlāda's realization that Narasiṃha is Viṣṇu and a description of the Asuras and their weapons.

Whereas all these texts narrate more or less the same story, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (ViP 1.16—20) tells a different one. In this version, Hiraṇyakaśipu continuously harasses his son Prahlāda, but Prahlāda is able to endure these hardships because of his devotion to Viṣṇu. Hiraṇyakaśipu's death by Narasiṃha is described in just one verse. The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* version of the story is not so much about Narasiṃha, as about how devotion to Viṣṇu can rescue a devotee in times of crises[102].

The Narasiṃha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* shares its general storyline with most other sources (except for the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*), but the composers have added a number of new components and changed some narrative elements. A number of these new elements can be characterized as a dramatic visualization of the scene. For example, when the Asuras inform Hiraṇyakaśipu about this terrifying Man-Lion that has killed so many Asuras already, Hiraṇyakaśipu orders his subjects to catch the Lion and bring him alive, for "this lion-cub will be a pet for my wife" (*krīḍaṇaṃ siṃhapoto 'sau devyā mama bhaviṣyati*, SP 71.36cd). The audience obviously knows that the frightful Narasiṃha will kill Hiraṇyakaśipu, so the addition is an insider joke from the composers to the audience. Other new elements rather function as Śaivizations of narrative elements. For example, there is a new scene in which Viṣṇu asks the gods to enter his body for strength (SP 71.23cd—24) and an afterlife to Viṣṇu's manifestation as Narasiṃha is introduced in which Viṣṇu continues to live as a Man-Lion and needs the help of Śiva to put an end to this form (SP 71.48—end). The *Skandapurāṇa* is the first text to introduce Viṣṇu's dependency on the gods, as well as Narasiṃha's afterlife, as will be shown in the next two chapters.

[102] The list of retellings of the Narasiṃha myth is not exhaustive. I have limited the discussion to sets of texts that contain at least one text that probably predates the *Skandapurāṇa*. Purāṇas like the *Śivapurāṇa* (ŚiP *Śatarudrīyasaṃhitā* 10—12) and the *Liṅgapurāṇa* (LiP 1.95—96) are hence excluded, but will be discussed in chapter 4.

An example of how the *Skandapurāṇa* composers changed a basic narrative element in the Narasiṃha myth and how the text relates to other Purāṇas is Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon. The Narasiṃha myth generally starts with a scene in which Hiraṇyakaśipu practices *tapas*, and as a reward, Brahmā wants to grant him a boon. The requested boon is more or less the same in most Purāṇas (e.g. HV 31.41—45). "May neither gods, Asuras and Gandharvas, nor Yakṣas, serpents and Rākṣasas, nor human beings and Piśācas kill me, oh best of gods" (e.g. HV 31.41). "May there be no death for me by a weapon nor an arrow, not by a rock nor tree, not by something dry nor something wet nor by anything else" (e.g. HV 31.43). "May I become the sun, moon, wind, fire, ocean, sky, stars and the ten directions" (e.g. HV 31.44). In other words, Hiraṇyakaśipu wants to have near complete immortality and rule over the universe.

Variations on this theme usually concern small changes. For example, other sorts of beings may be unable to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu, or restrictions to time or place may be added[103]. However, a small group of texts adds a more substantial element to the boon, *viz.* a loophole: the one method by which Hiraṇyakaśipu *can* be slain.

After a list of conditions in the characteristic "neither… nor…" construction, the *Brahmapurāṇa* (BrP 213.55cd—56ab) and the *Harivaṃśa* (HV 31.43*466[104] and HV App. 1 No. 42A ll. 29—30)[105] supply an extra verse, in which Hiraṇyakaśipu specifies how he can be killed, *viz.* by a single slap of the hand (*pāṇiprahāreṇaikena*), thinking that no creature is able to do that. Since this is the only way Hiraṇyakaśipu can be killed, Madeleine Biardeau, in an article on Narasiṃha, has aptly called the loophole Hiraṇyakaśipu's "Achilles' heel" (Biardeau 1975, 39), his weak spot.

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[103] For example, the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* adds that Hiraṇyakaśipu shall not be killed on earth nor in the sky (*na bhūmau nāmbare*, BhāP 7.3.36c), the *Nṛsiṃhapurāṇa* adds time restrictions, "not during the day nor by night" (*na dine na ca naktaṃ*, NsP 40.9c), and the *Śivapurāṇa* adds "neither from above nor from below" (*naivorddhvato nāpy adhataḥ*, ŚiP *Rudrasaṃhitā* 5.43.17d).

[104] The passage is found in manuscripts N (except $Ś_1$), $T_{1,3—4}$ and $G_{1,3—5}$, so it is supported by almost all Northern and many Southern manuscripts. However, since it is not found in the outermost manuscripts—the Śārada and Malayālam manuscripts—, it has not been adopted in the main text of the critical edition, but has been qualified by the editor as star passage instead.

[105] HV App. 1 No. 42A ll. 29—30 (= HV 31.43*466.1—2 = BrP 213.55cd—56ab):
pāṇiprahāreṇaikena sabhṛtyabalavāhanam | 29 |
yo māṃ nāśayituṃ śaktaḥ sa me mṛtyur bhaviṣyati || 30 ||
"He who is able to destroy me, along with my servants, armies and chariots, with a single slap of the hand, he will be my death."

The *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* also includes a loophole, but frames it differently. When "Brahmā gave his consent to this boon containing a loophole" (*brahmānujajñe sāntaraṃ varam*, literally, "boon with an opening", BḌP 2.5.17d), he in fact gave his consent to the boon with the "neither… nor…" construction, as quoted above. The underlying idea is that Hiraṇyakaśipu can be killed in all other cases remaining[106].

The *Skandapurāṇa* has its own version of the boon, containing the following circumstances in which Hiraṇyakaśipu cannot be killed.

> SP 70.30—33:
> *bhagavan yadi tuṣṭo 'si vara eṣo 'stu me vibho* |
> *amaraḥ syām avadhyaś ca jarāhīno mahābalaḥ* || *30* ||
> *na śastreṇa na mantreṇa na rātrau na divā tathā* |
> *naivārdreṇa na śuṣkeṇa na puṃsā na ca yoṣitā* || *31* ||
> *abravīt sāntaraṃ brahmā sa cainaṃ samabhāṣata*[107] |
> *ataś ca yo 'nyathā mṛtyur bhaviṣyati sa me prabho* || *32* ||
> *evam astv iti taṃ procya brahmā suravarottamaḥ* |
> *jagāmātmapuraṃ kṣipraṃ śāntaḥ prītaḥ pitāmahaḥ* || *33* ||
> "30. [Hiraṇyakaśipu said:] 'Oh lord [i.e. Brahmā], if you are pleased [with me], let there be the following boon for me, oh master: may I be immortal and inviolable, free from old age and very powerful. 31. Not [to be killed] by a weapon nor by a *mantra* ["sacrificial formula"], not by night nor by day, not by

[106] Since this part of the boon is absent in the otherwise parallel version of the *Vāyupurāṇa*, it is probably a later addition, of which the dating is difficult to determine. If narratives or parts of narratives are shared by both the *Vāyupurāṇa* and the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, they can, in general, be considered to be early Purāṇic records. If, however, narratives or parts of narratives only appear in either the *Vāyupurāṇa* or the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, the dating is less clear. Some scholars have attempted to date the moment that the *Vāyupurāṇa* and the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* diverged. For example, Kirfel cautiously suggested the year 620 as "die Abspaltung des Textkerns Bḍ-Vā" ("the separation of the text core of the *Brahmāṇḍa-Vāyupurāṇa*", Kirfel 1927, XIX). By comparison, in *Studies in the Purāṇic records on Hindu rites and customs*, R.C. Hazra has suggested "that the separation took place after 325 A.D., and most probably not earlier than 400 A.D." (Hazra 1940, 18). As a rule, I consider the separated *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* to postdate the *Skandapurāṇa*.

[107] The wiggle indicates that the editors had some doubt whether the reading is correct, either because of limited manuscript evidence or because the meaning is not clear. I adopt these wiggles in my transliterations and translations for the sake of transparency about uncertainties.

> something wet nor by something dry, not by a man nor by a woman.' 32. Brahmā spoke [to Hiranyakaśipu] about a loophole (*sāntara*), and he [i.e. Hiranyakaśipu] said to him [i.e. Brahmā]: 'And [the kind of] death that is different from that will be mine, oh lord.' 33. Having said to him [i.e. Hiraṇyakaśipu] 'Let it be so', Brahmā, the greatest of gods, the grandfather, immediately went to his own city, being at ease and content."

The *Skandapurāṇa* list of conditions to Hiraṇyakaśipu's death contain some subtle changes. For instance, Hiraṇyakaśipu's request to be free from old age and very powerful is different from, yet comparable to, his request to become the sun, the moon, the wind etcetera, in other texts. Furthermore, the number of conditions under which Hiraṇyakaśipu cannot be killed is limited. Although four types of means to kill (weapon, *mantra*[108], something wet and something dry) and two moments of the day (night and day) are fairly restrictive, the fact that only two types of beings (men and women)[109] are mentioned leaves many options open; options that are in fact covered in other texts, which include creatures like supernatural beings, as well as human beings (*manuṣāḥ*), to which men and women can be counted. Since there are many restrictions in these other texts, only a few beings are able to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu. This results in the solution that Viṣṇu becomes a mythical being that is half human and half animal. In the case of the *Skandapurāṇa*, there

[108] Whereas most texts read *na śastreṇa na cāstreṇa*, "not by a weapon nor an arrow", the *Skandapurāṇa* is the only text that reads *na śastreṇa na mantreṇa*. Already at an early stage, Pāśupatas and other Śaiva groups attached great value to *mantras* in religious life. The Pāśupatas "meditated upon Śiva under five aspects with the help of the five brahmamantras, which are revealed in the fundamental *Pāśupatasūtra*: Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa, and Īśāna. These five aspects of god shaped much of Śaivism's later theology and iconography" (Bisschop 2009, 753). The choice for *mantra* therefore "fits the Śaiva context of the *Skandapurāṇa*", as the editors of this chapter of the *Skandapurāṇa* observe (SP Vol. IV, 39 note 70). In the case of Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon, *mantra* probably has to be understood as a "divine weapon" (*divyāstra*). As Sthaneshwar Timalsina has written on "The Power of *Mantras*", "*[m]antras* are often compared to weapons. *Mantras* that grant protection – identified as *sudarśanamantra* ("the disc *mantra* related to Viṣṇu), *aghoramantra* (Śiva's weapon), *pāśupatamantra* (Śiva's weapon), *nṛsiṃhamantra* (the *mantra* to invoke the man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu), and so on – and *mantras* given the mythological names for weapons, both highlight the paradigm of warfare" (Timalsina 2010, 406).
[109] I found no other texts that include this restriction, so it seems to be an innovation in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

is no need for Viṣṇu to become a Man-Lion specifically. As long as he is not a man or a woman, he should be able to conquer Hiraṇyakaśipu. Although we should not demand an exhaustive list, more restrictions would match the rest of the boon better, as well as Viṣṇu's solution to manifest himself as a Man-Lion. This could point to the loss of two *pādas*[110] during the transmission that would have contained more restrictions concerning the sorts of creatures that are unable to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu.

The possibility that something has gone wrong during the transmission of the text is also suggested by another component in the boon: its loophole. As indicated by the wiggle in SP 70.32ab, the reading of these two *pādas* is uncertain. I translate *pāda* 32a as "Brahmā spoke [to Hiraṇyakaśipu] about a loophole", which should be understood as Brahmā reminding the Daitya king that the boon should contain a loophole, if he wants the request to be honoured. What follows in 32cd, however, is not really a loophole. Rather, the loophole is already stated in verse 31, namely that he cannot be killed by certain weapons etcetera. The statement of 32cd that he *can* be killed in other circumstances is already implied in verse 31, so this statement is not the actual loophole[111]. This has been noticed by the editors of SP Vol. IV, proposing the possibility that *pādas* 32ab—those stating that the boon should contain a loophole—may have been originally placed before verse 31. This suggestion is based on a later passage in the Narasiṃha myth (SP Vol. IV, 39 note 72)[112]. In the next chapter, the gods go to Brahmā because they fear the power of Hiraṇyakaśipu. In SP 71.10—11, Brahmā reassures them that Hiraṇyakaśipu can be killed because he had earlier made the Daitya state a loophole.

SP 71.10—11:

tenāhaṃ prārthitaḥ pūrvaṃ sarvāvadhyatvam uttamam |
antaraṃ bhāṣitaś cāsau mayā saṃjñāvimohitaḥ || *10* ||
yadaivāntaram āhātha daityarājo vicetanaḥ |
tadaiva manasā toṣam aham āgāṃ mahābalāḥ || *11* ||

[110] A *pāda* (literally "foot") is a quarter of a verse.
[111] In fact, the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* implies precisely this by enumerating the cases in which Hiraṇyakaśipu cannot be killed.
[112] For other problems and possible solutions in this passage, see SP Vol. IV, 39 note 72.

> "Earlier, I [i.e. Brahmā] was requested by him [i.e. Hiraṇyakaśipu] for supreme inviolability from all [beings], but he, being confused in his consciousness, was addressed by me about a loophole. As soon as the foolish king of the Daityas had uttered the loophole, I reached satisfaction with my mind, oh very strong ones [i.e. gods]."

Comparing Brahmā's summary of the events with the actual boon-granting scene, it is possible to reconstruct an alternative order of the conversation in chapter 70. First, Hiraṇyakaśipu asks for immortality from all beings (SP 71.10ab/ SP 70.30), then Brahmā speaks to Hiraṇyakaśipu about a loophole, as if reminding him that the boon should include an intervening clause (SP 71.10cd/ SP 70.32a), then Hiraṇyakaśipu states a loophole (SP 71.11ab/ SP 70.31 and SP 70.32bcd), after which Brahmā consents to this boon (SP 71.11cd/ SP 70.33)[113]. In other words, the requested boon is complete immortality and the conditions under which Hiraṇyakaśipu can be killed are the loophole to the boon. As if thinking that he has mentioned enough weapons, time frames and beings, Hiraṇyakaśipu is comfortable enough to say that he will die in any other case.

As shown above, there are some Purāṇas that contain a loophole as well, which raises the question whether the loophole in the *Skandapurāṇa* is a case of intertextuality. Comparing this loophole with the one in the *Brahmapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa*, a similar arrogance is encountered. However, the arrogance in the latter two is more explicit, as Hiraṇyakaśipu specifies the only case in which he can be killed. He cannot believe that there is a creature that could slay him with one slap of the hand. Moreover, in particular the loophole itself differs significantly. Whereas the *Brahmapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa* state in which case Hiraṇyakaśipu *can* be killed, the *Skandapurāṇa* makes explicit in

[113] Based on this reconstruction, the order of SP 70.30—33 would be as follows:
bhagavan yadi tuṣṭo 'si vara eṣo 'stu me vibho | 30ab |
amaraḥ syām avadhyaś ca jarāhīno mahābalaḥ || 30cd ||
abravīt sāntaraṃ brahmā sa cainaṃ samabhāṣata | 32ab |
na śastreṇa na mantreṇa na rātrau na divā tathā | 31ab |
naivārdreṇa na śuṣkeṇa na puṃsā na ca yoṣitā || 31cd ||
ataś ca yo 'nyathā mṛtyur bhaviṣyati sa me prabho || 32cd ||
evam astv iti taṃ procya brahmā suravarottamaḥ | 33ab |
jagāmātmapuraṃ kṣipraṃ śāntaḥ prītaḥ pitāmahaḥ || 33cd ||

which cases he *cannot* be killed. Therefore, I do not consider it a case of intertextuality. The *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, on the other hand, also qualifies the conditions to the boon as its loophole[114], which might suggest a possible intertextual relationship. However, there is one important difference between the two texts. In the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, Hiraṇyakaśipu states the conditions himself and does not need Brahmā to encourage him to do so. Since Brahmā's role is relatively prominent in the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the boon, the argumentation for intertextuality weakens. Furthermore, there is in fact a stronger case for intertextuality with other instances of a boon with a loophole, *viz.* in the *Skandapurāṇa* itself.

The text speaks of four other boons that are likewise requested by Asuras and have a similar construction: the Asuras and Brahmā negotiate about the boon and come to the agreement on a loophole[115]. Maya's boon in the Tripura myth[116] (SP_{Bh} 168.11—17) is highlighted here because it does not only show strong agreements with Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon in the *Skandapurāṇa*, but also has a parallel with the *Mahābhārata* version of the narrative, where the main Asuras are the three sons of Tāraka (MBh 8.24.7—12). When Brahmā offers Maya or Tāraka's sons a boon, they first ask for immortality (SP_{Bh} 168.11—13ab and MBh 8.24.7). Brahmā replies that he cannot grant them this wish (SP_{Bh} 168.13cd, 14a and MBh 8.24.8a—d). The *Mahābhārata* provides a reason for Brahmā's rejection: there is no such thing as complete immortality for Asuras and they should be able to be reborn again (*nivartadhvam*, "you should be born again", MBh 8.24.8d)[117].

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[114] There are two other correspondences between the two texts. First, the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* does not include many restrictions either (Hiraṇyakaśipu cannot be killed by something wet nor something dry, not by day nor by night). Second, the restriction "not by day nor by night" is relatively uncommon, as it appears in only a few texts (HV 31.45*469a, MtP 161.13d, NsP 40.9c).

[115] These concern Andhaka's boon in the Andhaka myth (SP 74.44), Sunda and Nisunda's boon in the narrative leading to their death by Tilottamā (SP 60.77—79), Sumbha and Nisumbha's boon in the myth on their battle against the dark form of Pārvatī called Kauśikī (SP 62.57—61), and Maya's boon in the Tripura myth (SP_{Bh} 168.14).

[116] The Tripura myth revolves around the destruction of Tripura, "the Triple City", and the enemy of the gods called Maya. Due to a boon Maya receives from Brahmā, he can only be killed by the one who is able to destroy Tripura with just one arrow. When the Asuras have taken control over the entire cosmos, the gods are in distress. Śiva decides to help them, taking his bow, releasing one arrow and ruining Tripura at once. In this way, Maya and his fellow-Asuras are destroyed.

[117] A similar explanation is given by Brahmā in his conversation with Sumbha and Nisumbha in negotiating about their boon in the *Skandapurāṇa*.
SP 62.58:
avaśyaṃ yuvayor eṣyaṃ maraṇaṃ yena kenacit |

They should ask for another boon (SP_{Bh} 168.14bcd and MBh 8.24.8ef), which is qualified in the *Skandapurāṇa* as "containing a loophole" (*sāntaram*, SP_{Bh} 169.14b). Maya and Tāraka's sons then request that only the one who is able to destroy Tripura with one arrow, can kill them (SP_{Bh} 168.15—17ab and MBh 8.24.9—12cd), and Brahmā consents to this formulation (SP_{Bh} 168.17c—f and MBh 8.24.12ef).

The reconstructed boon of Hiraṇyakaśipu follows exactly the same pattern: first, the Asura asks for absolute immortality, then Brahmā replies that he cannot grant him this (because immortality is reserved for the gods) and that the Asura should supply a loophole, after which the Asura adds how he can be killed after all. Since the construction occurs several times in the *Skandapurāṇa*, as well as in the *Mahābhārata*, it appears to be an epic-Purāṇic narrative element that could be introduced into new retellings, even when it was not originally there in other tellings. It is, in other words, a case of intertextuality that is found in other narratives than the one under discussion.

2.2 The Varāha myth

The Varāha myth comes in two main variants. The oldest is a cosmogonic myth that is linked to the origin of the universe. It narrates how god manifests himself as Varāha in order to rescue the earth, when she has sunk into the cosmic ocean or to the netherworld, and brings her back to her original place. The oldest versions of this myth appear in texts

surebhyo 'nyatra daityendrāv amaratvaṃ na vidyate || *58* ||
"Inevitably, there will be death for the two of you, one way or another. Oh you two lords of Daityas, there is no immortality, other than for the gods."

from the Vedic period, like the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (TS 7.1.5.1—12)[118], where the god is identified with Prajāpati, instead of Viṣṇu[119].

The *Mahābhārata* marks the beginning of a Vaiṣṇavization of the myth[120]. There are several references to and stories about Viṣṇu becoming a Boar[121]. MBh 3.100.19, for instance, tells the general storyline of how Viṣṇu became a Boar to save the earth when she had sunk into the cosmic ocean[122]. The same core narrative elements continue in the Purāṇas, but are extended into actual narratives, and the actual recreation of creatures is added as a separate narrative[123]. Many Purāṇas share the same story and have been collected by Kirfel in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*[124]; some more elaborated than others. The *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, for example, has expanded an omnipresent eulogy to Viṣṇu, by providing it with a more extensive description of the Boar's appearance. Besides the retellings that

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[118] TS 7.1.5.1.1—12:
ắpo vấ idám ágre salilám āsīt | tásmin prajắpatir vāyúr bhūtvắcarat | sá imắm apaśyat | tắṃ varāhó bhūtvắharat | tắṃ viśvákarmā bhūtvắ vyàmārṭ | sắprathata | sắ pṛthivy àbhavat | tát pṛthivyái pṛthivitvám | tásyām aśrāmyat prajắpatiḥ | sá devắn asṛjata vásūn rudrắn ādityắn | té devắḥ prajắpatim abruvan | prá jāyāmahā íti |
"This was in the beginning the waters, the ocean. In it Prajāpati becoming the wind moved. He saw her, and becoming a boar he seized her. Her, becoming Viçvakarma, he wiped. She extended, she became the earth and hence the earth is called the earth (lit. 'the extended one'). In her Prajāpati made effort. He produced the gods, Vasus, Rudras, and Ādityas. The gods said to Prajāpati, 'Let us have offspring.'" (translation by Keith 1914/1967, 560).

[119] There is another Vedic story about a boar, called Emūṣa, who is closely related to Viṣṇu and Indra. For a short study on this myth, see Kuiper 1950, 18, Gonda 1954/1969, 137—39 and Gail 1977b, 128—29.

[120] The *Rāmāyaṇa*, on the other hand, identifies the Boar manifestation with Brahmā Svayaṃbhū, "the self-existent Brahmā" (Rām 2.102.2—3ab).

[121] See Brockington 1998, 280—81 and Prasad 1987 for relevant passages.

[122] MBh 3.100.19:
tvayā bhūmiḥ purā naṣṭā samudrāt puṣkarekṣaṇa |
vārāhaṃ rūpam āsthāya jagadarthe samuddhṛtā || 19 ||
"When of yore the earth was lost, lotus-eyed God, thou didst rescue it from the ocean, assuming the form of a boar, for the sake of the world" (translation by Van Buitenen 1975, 420).

[123] Thomas Kintaert has pointed out that the moment of creation has shifted in the course of time. Whereas in the Vedas, god manifests himself as a Boar before the creation of the universe has started (*prākṛtasarga*), in the epic-Purāṇic period, the Boar manifestation emerges at the beginning of a new time cycle (*pratisarga*). The era of the manifestation of the Boar is called Varāhakalpa (Kintaert 2011—12, 92).

[124] The Varāha myth appears in PPL *sarga* 3 in text group IIA (*Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa*, *Padmapurāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa*, *Varāhapurāṇa* and *Viṣṇupurāṇa*) and text group IIB (*Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Kūrmapurāṇā*, *Liṅgapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa*). In these Purāṇas, the creator god is identified with "Brahmā, who is called Nārāyaṇa" (*brahmā nārāyaṇākhyo*), which is another name of Viṣṇu.

have been collected in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, the cosmogonic Varāha myth also appears in various other sources, such as the *Harivaṃśa* (HV 31.21—30 and HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 1—488).

The second main variant of the Varāha myth comes into being in the epic and Purāṇic period. In this version, Viṣṇu becomes a Boar in order to put an end to Hiraṇyākṣa, the king of the Daityas, who has stolen the earth. This Asura-slaying version of the myth is in line with other early manifestations of Viṣṇu that fight with the Asuras[125]. The *Mahābhārata* alludes at least three times to this myth. In the first reference, Viṣṇu kills Hiraṇyākṣa, but he is not specified as a Boar (MBh 7.13.44)[126]. The second reference involves Viṣṇu in his Boar manifestation who slays the Asuras, but only one Daitya is mentioned by name, Naraka, whereas Hiraṇyākṣa remains absent (MBh 12.202)[127]. The third reference is in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section, where Viṣṇu announces that as Varāha, he will return the earth to her own place and will kill Hiraṇyākṣa (MBh 12.326.71—73ab)[128].

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[125] In an article on the Varāha myth, Horst Brinkhaus argues that the origin of the Asura-slaying Varāha myth must be sought in the manifestation lists of Viṣṇu (Brinkhaus 1992, 60—61). Already in the earliest fourfold manifestation list that consisted of Varāha, Narasiṃha, Vāmana and Kṛṣṇa, Varāha is the only manifestation that is not an Asura-slayer. When the manifestation lists grew to six-fold and eight-fold lists (for instance in the *Harivaṃśa*) composers felt the need to assimilate the cosmogonic Varāha to other Asura-slaying manifestations.

[126] MBh 7.13.44:
lakṣmaṇaḥ kṣatradevena vimardam akarod bhṛśam |
yathā viṣṇuḥ purā rājan hiraṇyākṣeṇa saṃyuge || *44* ||
"Lakṣmaṇa put up a horrific fight with Kṣatradeva, just like Viṣṇu, oh king, [put up a horrific fight] with Hiraṇyākṣa earlier in battle."

[127] MBh 12.202 is a myth about Viṣṇu in which he becomes a Boar in order to rescue the earth from the netherworld and to kill the Daityas. The Southern Kumbhakonam edition adds several verses, one of which reports that Hiraṇyākṣa has been slain by Viṣṇu as a Boar, but this is probably a later addition.

[128] MBh 12.326.71—73ab:
yathā sūryasya gaganād udayāstamayāv iha |
naṣṭau punar balāt kāla ānayaty amitadyutiḥ |
tathā balād ahaṃ pṛthvīṃ sarvabhūtahitāya vai || *71* ||
sattvair ākrāntasarvāṅgāṃ naṣṭāṃ sāgaramekhalām |
ānayiṣyāmi svaṃ sthānaṃ vārāhaṃ rūpam āsthitaḥ || *72* ||
hiraṇyākṣaṃ haniṣyāmi daiteyaṃ balagarvitam |
"Just as time, of infinite splendour, forcefully brings back again the rising and setting of the sun from the sky, when they have disappeared, just like that I [i.e. Viṣṇu], who have resorted to a boar-form, will forcefully bring the earth, whose entire body is covered with living beings, who is [completely] lost, whose girdle are the oceans, back to her own place for the sake of the welfare of all beings [and] I will kill Hiraṇyākṣa, the arrogant son of Diti."

This is the first *Mahābhārata* passage where all basic elements for the Asura-slaying version of the Varāha myth are brought together.

Another early reference to the battle between Viṣṇu as Varāha and Hiraṇyākṣa is in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. In a list of twelve wars between the gods and the Asuras, henceforth "*devāsura* wars" (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.71—85)[129], the third is the Vārāha war (the one "related to Varāha"), during which Hiraṇyākṣa was killed and the ocean split into two by Varāha (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.77)[130]. The splitting of the ocean seems to refer to Varāha's dive into the ocean in order to find Hiraṇyākṣa and rescue the earth.

The *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42) is, together with the *Skandapurāṇa*, the first text to narrate the Asura-slaying version in full. After the cosmogonic Varāha myth (HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 1—488), the text continues with the Asura-slaying version of the manifestation myth (HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 489—662). The narrative is set in the framework of the story of the flying mountains. When the flying mountains arrive in Hiraṇyākṣa's kingdom, they tell the Asuras that "the sovereignty has taken refuge with the gods" (*adhipatyaṃ surāśrayam*, HV App. 1 No. 42 l. 493b), which means that the gods are superior to the Asuras. This message infuriates Hiraṇyākṣa, and he starts a war against the gods. A fierce battle unfolds, and Hiraṇyākṣa and his Asura army win. To help the gods, Viṣṇu manifests himself as a Boar, "called Mount Varāha" (*varāhaḥ parvato nāma*, HV App. 1 No. 42 l. 564a)[131], and goes to Hiraṇyākṣa. Varāha wins the battle, beheading Hiraṇyākṣa with his weapon, the *cakra* ("discus"). Viṣṇu releases the gods and saves the earth from the Asuras, placing her back in her original place[132]. Since the flying

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[129] The passage is found in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa*, *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa*, *Padmapurāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa* and *Vāyupurāṇa*, and will be discussed in section 5.2.

[130] PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.77:
hiraṇyākṣo hato dvandve prativāde tu daivataiḥ |
daṃṣṭrayā tu varāheṇa samudras tu dvidhākṛtaḥ || *77* ||
"Hiraṇyākṣa was killed in a duel, during a dispute with the gods, and the ocean was split into two by the Boar with his fang."
For alternative readings, see section 5.2.

[131] By giving Varāha a name, he is distinguished from the cosmogonic Varāha of the first part of HV App. 1 No. 42, which instead is described as Yajñavarāha, "the Sacrificial Boar" (HV App. 1 No. 42 l. 179a). The distinction will be discussed below.

[132] It is not explicitly stated that the Asuras took the earth in captivity, but their intention is expressed twice. First, when the Asuras prepare for war, it is said that the Asuras were "intent upon stealing the earth" (*pṛthivīharaṇe ratāḥ*, HV App. 1 No. 42 l. 495b), and later, when the Asuras conquered the gods, Hiraṇyākṣa "thought the world to be his own ground" (*ātmasthaṃ manyate*

mountains were the reason for the *devāsura* war to start, Indra cuts their wings, except for Mount Maināka's.

At the time of the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*, both the cosmogonic and the Asura-slaying Varāha myth were thus well-known among Purāṇa composers. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers nevertheless gave preference to the Asura-slaying one[133]. The narrative centres around Hiraṇyākṣa, who gains power over the universe by defeating the gods, and Viṣṇu, who conquers the Asuras as Varāha[134]. The text only twice speaks of another Boar who can be identified with the cosmogonic Varāha. First, when Viṣṇu takes the form of a Boar, Madhusūdana ("the Slayer of Madhu", i.e. Viṣṇu)[135] is identified with Svayaṃbhū, "the self-existent one", who, in the form of a Boar had lifted the earth in the past (SP 98.20)[136]. The identification is reminiscent of the cosmogonic Varāha myth,

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jagat, HV App. 1 No. 42 l. 557b). The latter could also refer to the (non-personified) universe, of which Hiraṇyākṣa considers himself the owner now.

[133] Later Purāṇas, on the other hand, usually tell both myths. For example, the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* narrates the cosmogonic story in VDhP 1.3 and the Asura-slaying version in VDhP 1.53. The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (BhāP 3.13, 3.17—19) merges the two variants into one narrative with only one Boar. When the earth has sunk to Rasātala during the creation, there is no place for beings, mountains, etcetera to live. Viṣṇu manifests himself as a Boar to solve this problem and dives to the netherworld. As he lifts the earth with his fang, he meets a Daitya with a club and kills him (BhāP 3.13.32—33ab). Later, this Daitya appears to be Hiraṇyākṣa.

[134] The Asura-slaying version of the Varāha myth fits the *Skandapurāṇa* better than the cosmogonic one for a few reasons. First of all, the *Skandapurāṇa* has already dealt with the topic of creation in SP 3—4. Second, as will be shown in chapter 5, the war between Varāha and Hiraṇyākṣa is told in a sequence of *devāsura* wars. Third, it is Viṣṇu's task in the *Skandapurāṇa* to fight with the Asuras. During Viṣṇu's afterlife as Narasiṃha, Śiva granted Viṣṇu the boon of *daityaghna*, "slaying Daityas" (SP 70.72b). This boon is studied in detail in section 4.2.1.

[135] Viṣṇu's epithet *madhusūdana*, *madhuhan* or *madhughātin* is very common. It refers to the story in which Viṣṇu kills the Asura called Madhu and his fellow-Asura Kaiṭabha, who often appear as a duo. The epithet occurs ten times in the *Skandapurāṇa*, of which nine in the Varāha and Vāmana myth (SP 97.23d *madhukaiṭabhaghātine*, SP 98.20d *madhusūdanaḥ*, SP 99.20a *madhuhā*, SP 107.6b *madhusūdanam*, SP 108.17b *madhusūdanaḥ*, SP_{Bh} 116.37b *madhusūdanaḥ*, SP_{Bh} 116.65b *madhusūdanaḥ*, SP_{Bh} 116.133d *madhusūdanaṃ*, SP_{Bh} 117.9b *madhusūdanaḥ*); the only reference in another narrative is *madhunihan-* in SP_{Bh} 144.4, used in a comparison. Leaving the latter aside, the compositional range in which the epithet is used is very limited, which may point to the hand of a particular group of composers. The editors of SP Vol. IV have demonstrated that the descriptions of the *devāsura* wars recounted in SP 76—108 and SP_{Bh} 115—29 share various stylistic features that are not found in the rest of the text, such as the use of the epithet *śaktinandana*, "son of Śakti", for Vyāsa, particular similes, formulaic battle descriptions that are shared with the *Mahābhārata*, and particular stock phrases (SP Vol. IV, 18—23). The editors therefore conclude that this section could have been composed by the same group of composers. The use of *madhuhan* etcetera may serve as another piece of evidence for this hypothesis.

[136] SP 98.20:
purā svayaṃbhūr bhagavān uddhariṣyan mahīm imām |

where in the past, the Boar manifestation—either Viṣṇu or Brahmā/ Prajāpati—lifted the earth from below the surface so that creation could take place. The association with this version of the Varāha myth is even clearer in a comparison between Viṣṇu's Asura-slaying Varāha manifestation and another Boar (SP 108.15)[137]. When Varāha (Viṣṇu) carries the earth with his tusk from the netherworld, he is compared to Brahmā, "who had the form a Boar" (*varāharūpī*) "at the end of time" (*kālānte*). Even though the act of creation is again not specified and is not expected to take place at the end of time, Brahmā's manifestation as Varāha is unmistakably associated with the (re-)creation of the universe at the turn of an era.

The references have two functions. First, the composers hereby acknowledge the existence of the cosmogonic Boar in the past. Even though the Asura-slaying version of the myth must have been known by the time of the *Skandapurāṇa*, the cosmogonic version was, at least textually, still much more widespread. If the composers would ignore this Boar entirely, the Varāha myth may feel incomplete. The second function is to make a distinction between Viṣṇu Svayaṃbhū/ Brahmā as the cosmogonic Varāha and Viṣṇu as the Asura-slaying Varāha. To prevent any confusion about which version of the Varāha myth is told, the cosmogonic Varāha of the past is clearly distinguished from the Asura-slaying Varāha of the present.

The *Skandapurāṇa* composers introduced a second method to differentiate the Asura-slaying Boar from the cosmogonic one: their outer appearance is different. The cosmogonic Boar is usually described as Yajñavarāha, "Sacrificial Boar". Each limb of the Yajñavarāha is connected to an item that is used during a sacrifice, and most Purāṇas agree on the combinations. For example, the Boar's four feet are the four Vedas, his

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sa reje tena rūpeṇa dīptimān madhusūdanaḥ |
niśāyām auṣadhīdīpto himavān iva parvataḥ || *20* ||
"When the luminous slayer of Madhu carried the earth as lord Svayaṃbhū in the past, he shone forth in this [boar-]form, just like Mount Himavat when it is lit up at night because of the herbs [on it]."

[137] SP 108.15:
sa tāṃ sāgaramadhyena vahan bhāti mṛgeśvaraḥ |
varāharūpī kālānte brahmeva vasudhāṃ purā || *15* ||
"As the lord of animals [i.e. Viṣṇu as Varāha] was carrying her [i.e. the earth] in the middle of the ocean, he looked like Brahmā in the past, having the form of a Boar, [carrying] the earth at the end of time."

tongue is the sacrificial fire and his hair is the sacrificial grass[138]. At least until the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42, the cosmogonic Boar is described as Yajñavarāha, while the Asura-slaying Boar has a different appearance[139].

The Asura-slaying Varāha in the *Skandapurāṇa* has, just like the cosmogonic Yajñavarāha, his limbs connected to other entities (SP 98.2—18), including sacrificial elements. For example, the chants, the Vedas and the oblations are in his pores (SP 98.16)[140]. Since this principle idea is present in so many different Purāṇas, I consider it a case of intertextuality with the Purāṇic genre as "the source text". However, there are two substantial differences between the *Skandapurāṇa* and other texts. First, in the *Skandapurāṇa*, Varāha's limbs are not exclusively identified with sacrificial elements. Some limbs are identified with a god and others with an element on earth. For example, mother goddesses, local gods and other entities became his hairs (SP 98.17)[141], and "lightening became his tongue" (*jihvā tasyābhavad vidyut*, SP 98.8a)[142]. The second difference concerns Varāha's limbs which are not exclusively those of an animal.

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[138] PPL *sarga* 3.12$_1$ (text group IIB: *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa*):
sa vedapād yūpadaṃṣṭraḥ kratuvakṣāś citīmukhaḥ |
agnijihvī darbharomā brahmaśīrṣo mahātapāḥ || *12$_1$* ||
"His feet are the Vedas, his tusk is the sacrificial post, his chest is the offering*, his mouth is the pile of wood, his tongue is the sacrificial fire, his hair is the sacrificial grass, his glorious head is Brahmā."
* Most texts read *kratudantaś*, "his teeth are the offering".
This verse appears almost verbatim in HV 31.22, HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 165—66, VDhP 1.3.3, VDh 66.43 and MtP 248.67cd—68ab. For the equivalent of this verse in the Varāha myth in text group IIA, see PPL *sarga* 3.25. For all corresponding verses, see Agrawala 1963.

[139] This distinction fades in later Purāṇas . For example, in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, which combines the cosmogonic and Asura-slaying Varāha myth into one narrative, Varāha is glorified as the Sacrificial Boar, whose limbs are likewise connected with sacrificial elements (BhāP 3.13.35—47).

[140] SP 98.16:
tathā sarvāṇi chandāṃsi vedā iṣṭaya eva ca |
romakūpeṣu sarvāṇi tāni tasthuḥ pṛthakpṛthak || *16* ||
"Furthermore, all chants, the Vedas and the oblations were each separately in the pores of [his] skin."

[141] SP 98.17:
dānāni niyamāś caiva yamāḥ sarvāś ca mātaraḥ |
sthānābhimānino devāḥ paśavaḥ pakṣaṇaś ca ha |
sarve romāṇi tasyāsan varāhasya mahātmanaḥ || *17* ||
"Donations, observances and rules, as well as all mother goddesses and gods worshipped in [particular] areas, domestic animals and birds were all the hairs of this great Boar."
Compare, for example, HV 31.22c: *darbhalomā*, "[his] hair is the sacrificial grass".

[142] Compare, for example, HV 31.22c: *agnijihvo*, "[his] tongue is the sacrificial fire".

Although Varāha has fangs (SP 98.7ab)[143] and a tail (SP 98.13e)[144], he also has human body parts, like "four arms and feet" in total (*catvāro bāhupādāḥ*, SP 98.10cd)[145], "two hands" (*hastau*, SP 98.8f), "fingers" (*aṅgulyas*, SP 98.10a) and "toes" (*aṅgulyas tasya pādābhyāṃ*, literally "fingers for the two feet", SP 98.18a)[146]. In other words, in the *Skandapurāṇa*, the Boar is not a Yajñavarāha with his boar-limbs identified with sacrificial elements, but a Naravarāha, "Man-Boar", with both boar and human limbs that are identified with sacrificial elements, gods and natural elements.

The *Skandapurāṇa* is the first text to describe Viṣṇu's manifestation so explicitly as half boar, half human. As the text itself explains, this is the only way to kill Hiraṇyākṣa. In the beginning of SP 97, the gods go to Brahmā to ask him what they should do about Hiraṇyākṣa. Brahmā gives the following answer.

SP 97.8—12:
pūrvaṃ hi jāte tasmiṃs tu vāg uvācāśarīriṇī |
nāyaṃ vadhyo manuṣyasya na devasya kathaṃcana || *8* ||
nāpi tiryakṣu jātasya na bhūmau na ca tejasi |
nākāśe nāpi lokeṣu mahātmāyaṃ bhaviṣyati || *9* ||
sa eṣa devā daityeśo mahātmā dhārmikas tathā |
avadhyaḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ vadhyo duḥkhād bhaviṣyati || *10* ||
vārāhaṃ rūpam āsthāya na devatvaṃ na mānuṣam |
na ca tiryakṣu taj jātaṃ naravārāham asti vai || *11* ||
pātāle ca praviśyaiva nāsau bhūr nāpi khaṃ hi tat |
na tejo nāpi loko 'sau sarvato yuktam eva tat || *12* ||

[143] SP 98.7ab: *catvāry astrāṇi daṃṣṭrāś ca kṛtāni sumahānti vai*, "the very great four weapons are indeed made into [his] fangs".
[144] SP 98.13e: *aśvinau tasya lāṅgulaṃ*, "the two Aśvins are his tail".
[145] This substitutes Varāha's four feet that are identified with the four Vedas in other texts.
[146] Varāha also regularly fights with two hands and two feet, of which the following verse is just one example.
SP 101.29:
karābhyāṃ caraṇābhyāṃ ca daṃṣṭrābhiś ca vidārayan |
tanmuktaiḥ āyudhaiś caiva cicchedānyān rarāsa ca || *29* ||
"Tearing [some Asuras] to pieces with [his] two hands, two feet and fangs, he crushed others with the weapons that were released by them and he roared."

> "8. Indeed in the past, when he [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa] was born, a bodiless voice said: 'He cannot be killed by a man nor by a god, in any way, 9. nor by someone born among animals; neither on earth, nor in fire, nor in space, nor in the worlds. He will be a mighty being.' 10. Oh gods, this righteous lord of the Daityas cannot be slain by any being, [yet] he will be slain with difficulty, 11. after having resorted to a boar-form—which is neither divine, nor human, nor born among animals; it is indeed [the form] of a Man-Boar—12. and after having entered Pātāla [i.e. the netherworld]—which is neither the earth, nor the sky, nor fire, nor a world; [it is] indeed appropriate in all respects."

The prophecy about Hiraṇyākṣa's life and death immediately brings to mind Brahmā's boon to Hiraṇyākṣa's brother, Hiraṇyakaśipu (SP 70.30—33). Despite the differences between the two text passages—the cause of the Daitya's near immortality (destiny vs. *tapas*) and the conditions under which the respective Daitya cannot be killed (beings and places vs. weapons, time slots and beings)[147]—the structure of the reasoning with the "neither… nor…" construction and the outcome of a creature that is half human half animal are the same. Therefore, it seems very likely that the composers used Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon in the Narasiṃha myth as a model for Hiraṇyākṣa's prophecy in the Varāha myth[148]. The prophecy can be seen as an example of intertextuality with a different narrative than the one under discussion.

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[147] Each difference can be explained individually. First, the fact that Hiraṇyākṣa's conditions to death are destined at birth—instead of a reward for *tapas*—fits the broader context of the Varāha myth. In SP 73, Hiraṇyākṣa has already done severe *tapas* for the sake of a son. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers seem to have come up with a different cause for Hiraṇyākṣa's partial immortality in order to prevent doublings for the same character. Second, the limitations related to place seem to be rooted in the fact that in every version of the Asura-slaying Varāha myth, the place of Hiraṇyākṣa's death is the netherworld, so the condition fits the rest of the myth.

[148] In an article on Varāha, Adalbert J. Gail recognized a similar connection ("Anbindung" (Gail 1977b, 137)) between the Narasiṃha myth and the Varāha myth in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (VDhP 1.53), which is the only other text that also speaks of restrictions to Hiraṇyākṣa's death and introduces a Man-Boar as the solution (*nṛvarāho*, VDhP 1.53.14a). In the relevant text passage, the gods come to Viṣṇu to ask his help. Viṣṇu answers with the following consideration.
VDhP 1.53.13—14:
tiryaṅmanuṣyadevānām avadhyaḥ sa surāntakaḥ |

Although Narasiṃha may be the most direct predecessor of a Naravarāha, other manifestations may have played a role in the origin of a Man-Boar as well. The most famous Asura-slaying manifestations that were common by the time of the *Skandapurāṇa* were human or semi-human: Narasiṃha, Vāmana, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma Jāmadagnya and Rāma Dāśarathi. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers may have wanted to align the Asura-slayning Boar with other Asura-slaying manifestations of Viṣṇu by making Varāha semi-human[149].

Furthermore, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers and its audience must have been familiar with the numerous Naravarāhas in material art. In fact, in iconography, the anthropomorphic Varāha was both older and more common than its zoomorphic variant. At least from the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period (fifth to early sixth century) onwards, Varāha imagery was popular, in particular in Madhya Pradesh[150]. Most of the exemplars represent an anthropomorphic Varāha at the climactic moment of saving the earth from the ocean or the netherworld[151]. One of the primary examples of this iconographic type is the Varāha of Udayagiri Cave 5, Madhya Pradesh, from the early fifth century (see Figure 1 in *Appendix II: Figures*)[152]. The Boar has two arms and stands in a strong and heroic position

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brahmaṇo varadānena tasmāt tasya vadhepsayā || *13* ||
nṛvarāho bhaviṣyāmi na devo na ca mānuṣaḥ |
tiryagrūpo na caivāhaṃ+ ghātayiṣyāmi taṃ tataḥ* || *14* ||
"This slayer of the gods cannot be killed by an animal, man or god because of a boon given by Brahmā. Therefore, in order to kill him, I will become a Man-Boar, [which is] neither a god, nor a human being, nor the body of an animal, and then, I will kill him."
* I would like to thank Prof. Yuko Yokochi for suggesting to emend *tiryagrūpeṇa*, which is reported in the edition, to *tiryagrūpo na*.
+ The edition reads *cauvāhaṃ*, which is probably a typographical mistake for *caivāhaṃ*.
Cf. Magnone 1987, 37—38 for an alternative emendation: *tiryagrūpeṇa cordhvo 'haṃ*, "I, standing upright, together with an animal body".

[149] A similar alignment seems to have been (one of) the reason(s) to create an Asura-slaying Varāha in the first place, as argued by Brinkhaus 1992 (see note 125).

[150] I have adopted this time frame from Gail 1977b, who identified four phases in the development of the iconography of the Boar manifestation, based on iconographic features, such as the position of the earth, the number of arms of Varāha, and the absence or presence of Vaiṣṇava attributes. The four phases proposed by Gail are the Kuṣāṇa period (second to third century), the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period (fifth to early sixth century), the period of the dynasties of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Cāḷukyas and Pallavas (mid sixth to the ninth century, under the Narmadā river) and the period from the ninth century onwards.

[151] In Dokter-Mersch 2020, I show that most Varāha images have one or more Nāgas under the Boar's feet. Based on textual parallels, I argue that these mythical serpents sometimes represent the cosmic ocean and sometimes the netherworld, from which the earth is rescued.

[152] Various studies have been done on this panel, such as Mitra 1963, Williams 1982, 43—46 and Willis 2009, 41ff.

called *ālīḍha*[153]. The earth, personified as a woman, is dangling, as she holds on the Boar's tusk. Varāha is surrounded by numerous gods, watching how he rescues the earth.

From the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period onwards, sculptors also made zoomorphic boars. The Boar stands on his four bulky feet, and the earth is again personified as a woman, hanging on to the Boar's tusk. However, the earth plays a less significant role, because the image primarilly displays the Boar in his Yajñavarāha aspect instead of a particular narrative moment where the earth is one of the main figures, as is the case in the anthropomorphic images[154]. The fifth century zoomorphic Boar from Eran, Madhya Pradesh (see Figure 2 in *Appendix II: Figures*)[155], exemplifies this characterization, for the Boar's body is carved with numerous rows of gods and sages. Although the combination of gods and limbs cannot be led back to one particular textual description of the Yajñavarāha[156], the Varāha sculpture represents the same idea. Both the anthropomorphic and the zoomorphic Boar continue to be produced, but the anthropomorphic variant keeps on enjoying more fame, also by the time of the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*. The widespread presence of an iconographic Varāha as half man, half boar may have contributed to the creation of a textual Naravarāha as well.

Finally, there may even be one textual precursor of a Naravarāha in the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42). As mentioned above, HV App. 1 No. 42 recounts the cosmogonic Varāha myth first and then the Asura-slaying version. The composers created a few characteristic features for the second Boar to make a distinction between the two Boar manifestations. First, the Boar in the cosmogonic myth is described and referred to as Yajñavarāha (HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 165—79), whereas the Boar in the Asura-slaying myth

[153] One leg is stretched backwards and one leg is bent in front. This position is generally used for figures with bow and arrow, but can be applied more broadly to valiant figures expressing power, as is the case here.

[154] This has also been suggested by Haripriya Rangarajan in her study on Varāha images in Madhya Pradesh. In this article, she argues that the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic images of the Boar each depict a different aspect of Varāha: "the concepts of *sṛṣṭi* (creation) and *yajña* (sacrifice) are depicted on the zoomorphic images, the concept of *avatāra* (incarnation) is brought out in the anthropomorphic images of Varāha" (Rangarajan 1997, 103).

[155] The oldest surviving zoomorphic Boar is the Varāha from Rāmagiri (Maharasthra), which is ascribed to the first quarter of the fifth century (Bakker 1997, 138—39).

[156] Several scholars tried to identify the figures on the zoomorphic Boar, like Williams 1982, 129—30 and Becker 2010.

is called "Mount Varāha" (HV App. 1 No. 42 l. 564a). Second, typical features of the cosmogonic Varāha are not applied to the Asura-slaying Boar. For instance, the latter's limbs are not connected to sacrificial elements. If the composers had one and the same Varāha in mind, then they could have used the same terminology as well. Third, the Asura-slaying Varāha is said to hold two of Viṣṇu's attributes, the conch and the *cakra*, which is not said of the cosmogonic Boar. It gives the impression that this Boar is closer to Viṣṇu, the divine god in human form. He is even said to be "standing like a man" (*saṃsthitaṃ puruṣaṃ yathā*, HV App. 1 No. 42 l. 586b) and one "whose raised hands have a conch and a discus" (*śaṅkhacakrodyatakaraṃ*, HV App. 1 No. 42 l. 587a). The term Naravarāha is not used, but based on these descriptions, the composers may have had a Man-Boar in mind. The parallels with the Man-Boar of the *Skandapurāṇa* are nevertheless too scarce and uncertain to draw firm conclusions on a possible intertextual relationship between the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42 on this particular point.

There is, however, one clear parallel between the two texts, *viz.* that the composers of both texts gave the Asura-slaying Boar a different appearance than the cosmogonic one, of which the former is closer to the "human" Viṣṇu, in order to make a distinction between the two Varāhas. Although the audience may have been familiar with the Asura-slaying version of the Varāha myth and were aware of other Asura-slaying manifestations that are (semi-)human, they may still have expected to hear about the Varāha they knew, a Yajñavarāha. Besides giving the Varāha a different appearance, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers even created a narrative explanation of the (relatively) new appearance of Viṣṇu's manifestation as a Man-Boar, *viz.* Hiraṇyākṣa's near immortality, prohesized at birth. The structure and the outcome of this prophecy have such striking similarities with Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon in the Narasiṃha myth that it would not be surprising if the composers expected the audience to recognize them. Whereas the (relatively) new description of the Naravarāha may have initially caused confusion based on what is known from other retellings, the similarities with an external narrative may have created clarity and stability after all.

2.3 The Vāmana myth

Some of the core elements of the Vāmana myth have their roots in the Vedas[157]. Already in the *Ṛgveda*, it is told that Viṣṇu strode the universe three times for mankind (e.g. ṚV 6.49.13)[158], and that he helped Indra slaying the Asura Vṛtra by striding three times (e.g. ṚV 8.12.26—27)[159]. Viṣṇu's manifestation as a Dwarf appears for the first time in the Brāhmaṇas[160]. For example, in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (MS 3.7.9)[161], it is said that, after Viṣṇu had become a Dwarf, he came to an agreement with the Asuras that whatever he would cover in three steps, would be for the gods. He then strode on "this, that here and that there", i.e. the earth, sky and heaven. The only element of the core Vāmana story that is missing in this and other Brāhmaṇa accounts is Viṣṇu's opponent Bali.

Bali makes his entrance as Vāmana's enemy in the epics. Although the *Mahābhārata* only refers to the story, the references include the most essential narrative elements: Viṣṇu becomes a Dwarf in order to conquer Bali and to regain power over the

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[157] For studies on the three strides of Viṣṇu in the Vedas, see Macdonell 1895, Kuiper 1962, Gonda 1954/1969, 55ff., Tripathi 1968, 2ff., Rai 1970 and Soifer 1992, 15ff.

[158] ṚV 6.49.13:
yó rájāṃsi vimamé pā́rthivāni tríṣ cid víṣṇur mánave bādhitā́ya |
tásya te śármann upadadyámāne rāyā́ madema tanvā̀ tánā ca || 13 ||
"He who measured out the earthly realms three times exactly, for Manu, who was hard-pressed—Viṣṇu—in this shelter of yours (still) being offered might we rejoice with wealth, with life and lineage" (translation by Jamison and Brereton 2014, vol. 2: 843).

[159] ṚV 8.12.26—27:
yadā́ vṛtráṃ nadīvṛ́taṃ śávasā vajrinn ávadhīḥ |
ā́d ít te haryatā́ hárī vavakṣatuḥ || 26 ||
yadā́ te víṣṇur ójasā trī́ṇi padā́ vicakramé |
ā́d ít te haryatā́ hárī vavakṣatuḥ || 27 ||
"When, o mace-bearer, with your vast power you smashed Vṛtra who was blocking the rivers, just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong. When Viṣṇu strode his three steps by your might, just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong" (translation by Jamison and Brereton 2014, vol. 2: 1053).

[160] For references to Viṣṇu/ Vāmana in Brāhmaṇa literature, see Tripathi 1968, 27ff. and Gonda 1954/1969, 145ff.

[161] MS 3.7.9:
víṣṇuṃ vaí devā́ ānayan vāmanáṃ kṛtvā́ |
yā́vad ayáṃ trír vikrámate tā́d asmā́kam íti |
sá vā́ idám evā́gre vyàkramatāthedám áthādās |
tásmāt tríkapālo vaiṣṇaváḥ |
"[Die Götter wollten von den Dämonen ihr Reich zurück haben]. Sie machten Viṣṇu zu einem Zwerg und brachten ihn [zu den Dämonen]. "Was er dreimal ausschreitet, das ist unser [und der Rest soll euch gehören]." Er schritt zuerst eben dieses, dann dieses und dann jenes (=die Erde, Luftraum und Himmel). Deshalb besteht der Anteil Viṣṇu [am Soma-Opfer] aus drei Bechern [Soma]" (translation by Tripathi 1968, 35).

universe[162]. The *Rāmāyaṇa* gives one of the oldest full accounts of the myth (Rām 1.28). Versions of a similar length are found in the *Harivaṃśa* (HV 31.68—92) and in two text groups of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*[163]. The story is extended in another account of the myth in the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42B) as well as other Purāṇas, such as the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (VDhP 1.21 and VDhP 1.55) and the *Matsyapurāṇa* (MtP 244—46).

The *Skandapurāṇa* follows the main story of the Vāmana myth quite faithfully, making relatively small changes. An example of a minor adjustment concerns Vāmana's request. Vāmana usually asks for a humble piece of land covering three steps[164], but in the *Skandapurāṇa*, he asks for "a big house measuring three steps of mine" (*mahāgṛham | mama kramais tribhir yuktaṃ*, SP_{Bh} 116.61bc). The request has a humorous undertone in it because a house measuring three steps of a dwarf can hardly be "big". Additionally, assuming that the audience knew that Viṣṇu would leave his Vāmana form and become so big that he covers the entire universe, the adjective *mahā* may also allude to that moment, creating a special relation between the composers and the audience. Another subtle change concerns Viṣṇu's three steps: when Viṣṇu leaves his dwarfish form, he does not simply traverse earth, sky and heaven[165]. The first step is most innovative, as it is much richer than the one in other texts. It is usually simply qualified as "the earth", but it may be specified with a particular place on earth, as the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* did, according to which the first step is "on the top of Naubandha", i.e. the Himālaya

[162] For example, MBh 3.100.21:
avadhyaḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ baliś cāpi mahāsuraḥ |
vāmanaṃ vapur āśritya trailokyād bhraṃśitas tvayā || 21 ||
"The great Asura Bali, who was invulnerable to all beings, was thrown out of the three worlds by thee in the form of a dwarf" (translation by Van Buitenen 1975, 420).

[163] PPL *vaṃśa* 2A.142—45 (text group IA: *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa*) and PPL *manvantara* A.31—34 (text group III: *Kūrmapurāṇa* and *Viṣṇupurāṇa*).

[164] According to many texts, Viṣṇu simply asks for "three steps", but some texts make explicit that Viṣṇu means a piece of land by this, such as the *Harivaṃśa* in HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 2815: *pratīccha dehi kiṃ bhūmiṃ kiṃmātrā bhoḥ padatrayam*, "[Bali said:] 'Accept [a gift].' [Vāmana said:] 'Give.' [Bali said:] 'What?' [Vāmana said:] 'Land.' [Bali said:] 'What size' [Vāmana said:] 'Three steps.'

[165] This is the case in, for example, the *Harivaṃśa*, which reports the three locations as *bhūmiṃ* ("earth", HV 31.89a), *nabhas* ("sky", HV 31.89c) and *param* ("the other [realm]", HV 31.90a). For the location of Viṣṇu's steps in other texts, see Rai 1970, 135—37.

(*naubandhaśikhare*, VDhP 1.55.42b[166]). The *Skandapurāṇa* is even more explicit, indicating the places where Viṣṇu's feet are placed to cover the entire earth: "[one] foot on [Mount] Udaya" (*pādam udaye*, SP_{Bh} 117.7a) and "the second [foot] on the lord of the rivers [i.e. the ocean]" (*dvitīyaṃ saritāṃ patau*, SP_{Bh} 117.7b). Mount Udaya is the Eastern mountain, from where the sun and the moon rise, and the ocean may be associated with the West, since Varuṇa, the god of the ocean, is also the god of the western cardinal direction. In this way, the horizontal extent of Viṣṇu's first step is identified: from the far East to the far West. Both examples are cases of dramatic visualization: basic narrative elements being presented in an appealing and scenic manner; in this case, with an insider joke and cosmographical details[167].

For the study of intertextuality in the Vāmana myth, the final scene of the main story—*viz.* after Viṣṇu has stridden three times and has returned the power over the universe to Indra—is particularly interesting. The length of this concluding part varies significantly, depending on the presence or absence of the following three components. First, according to most texts, Viṣṇu sends Bali to Pātāla to live there. The element is included already in one of the *Mahābhārata* references to the myth (*baliṃ caiva kariṣyāmi pātālatalavāsinam*, "and I [i.e. Viṣṇu] will make Bali live at the bottom of Pātāla", MBh 12.326.76ef) and continues to be adopted by a vast number of early and late Purāṇas. The second element concerns Viṣṇu's promise to Bali that he will become king in the next Manvantara, which means that Bali's exile to the netherworld is limited to a particular timeframe. This element is found throughout the Purāṇic corpus. In the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, for example, Viṣṇu promises Bali: "and in the second Manvantara, you will achieve great kingship" (*manvantare dvitīye ca mahendratvaṃ kariṣyasi*, VDhP 1.55.49ab). The third optional component is Viṣṇu's binding of Bali. This element is present already in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*niyamya balim ojasā*, "having bound Bali with energy", Rām 1.28.11b) and continues to appear in several Purāṇas. Early texts, such as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Vāyupurāṇa* and *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, do not explain why Bali is bound. Those later Purāṇas in which Viṣṇu is not always able to complete his third step

[166] The edition has a typographical error *naurbandhaśikare*.
[167] Retellings that simply report that Viṣṇu asked for three steps and crossed earth, sky and heaven can be considered a summary presentation of the events.

tend to make a connection between Bali's binding and Viṣṇu's unfinished final step. In one of the *Vāmanapurāṇa* retellings of the myth, for example, it is made explicit that Bali is in debt because Viṣṇu was unable to complete his strides[168].

The final scene in the *Skandapurāṇa* includes all three elements in an encounter between Brahmā and Bali.

> SP_{Bh} 117.16—20:
> *atha brahmā tadābhyetya samayaṃ pracakāra ha* |
> *vimucya pāśān deveśa imaṃ lokapitāmahaḥ* || *16* ||
> *bale tvayākhilaṃ rājyaṃ devānāṃ pratipāditam* |
> *satye tvaṃ samaye sthitvā mā rājyaṃ kāmayeḥ punaḥ* || *17* ||
> *yāvan manvantaram idam eṣa te samayaḥ śubhaḥ* |
> *paripālyaḥ sadā vatsa gaccha caiva yathāsukham* || *18* ||
> *idaṃ yajñaphalaṃ samyag avāpsyasi na saṃśayaḥ* |
> *yogaṃ ca matprasādena bhūya eva hy avāpsyasi* || *19* ||
> *saiva muktas tam āpṛcchya pātālaṃ saṃviveśa ha* |
> *devā api tataḥ prāpya svaṃ rājyaṃ mumudur bhṛśam* || *20* ||
> "16. Then Brahmā, the lord of the gods, having arrived at that moment, made an agreement [with Bali]. Having released [Bali's] ties, the lord of the gods, the grandfather of the world [said] to him [i.e. Bali]: 17. 'Oh Bali, the entire kingdom is given by you to the gods. Being fixed on [this] sincere agreement, you should not wish for the kingdom again. 18. As long as this Manvantara [lasts], this glorious agreement of yours is always to be followed, oh son, and now go as you like. 19. You will rightly obtain the fruit of a sacrifice; no doubt about it. And you will obtain power again by my grace.' 20. He [i.e. Bali], being released, having bid him [i.e. Brahmā] farewell,

[168] VāmP 65.35ab: *ṛṇād bhavati daityendra bandhanaṃ ghoradarśanam*, "because of debt, oh lord of Daityas, there is terrible binding".

entered Pātāla, and then the gods, having obtained their own kingdom [again], were very happy."

The first element that Bali is sent to Pātāla is reworked in Bali finally going back to Pātāla (SP_{Bh} 117.20b). The second element—the promise that Bali will reign again—is framed as a restriction for the current Manvantara (SP_{Bh} 117.17cd—18c). During this era, Bali should not go after the kingdom of the gods, implying that in the next era, he is free to attempt another conquest. The element of the binding of Bali is also present in the *Skandapurāṇa*, but the text only reports that Bali is released from his bonds (SP_{Bh} 117.16cd). Although it is not uncommon that the reason why Bali is bound is omitted, the binding itself is usually mentioned. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, the motif of the binding is absent, as well as why he should be released again[169].

In terms of intertextuality between the *Skandapurāṇa* and other sources, each element showcases intertextuality with the epic-Purāṇic genre as the source text. As shown above, Bali's exile is found in numerous texts, including one early reference in the *Mahābhārata*. It is impossible to point one particular source from where Purāṇic composers, including the *Skandapurāṇa*'s, would have taken this idea from. The second element appears in no less than seven retellings across six Purāṇas, according to Deborah A. Soifer in her book *The Myths of Narasiṁha and Vāmana*[170], to which the retelling in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* can be added as eighth. However, all these texts are

[169] This is probably not a deliberate choice, but rather the result of the loss of several *pādas*. This is also indicated by the preceding verses which concern the scene of Viṣṇu's three strides (SP_{Bh} 117.6—15). Although Viṣṇu's first step (the earth) and second step (the sky) are complete, the narration of his third step is not rounded off properly. During the third step, Viṣṇu passed Svarloka and Janaloka, and "[the striding] was not finished yet then" (*na samāptaṃ ca tat tataḥ*, SP_{Bh} 117.12d). "And while he was striding there, Daityas with weapons and arrows in their hands forcefully attacked [him]" (*tasya cotkramatas tatra daityaḥ śastrāstrapāṇayaḥ | abhyakramanta vegena*, SP_{Bh} 117.13abc). The description of Asuras attacking Viṣṇu continues in verses 14—15. Then, out of nothing, Brahmā arrives, and the text omits some crucial information. It, first of all, remains unknown how Viṣṇu's strides end. This information is always provided, even when a text tells that the third step was not completed. For example, the *Brahmapurāṇa* says that "there is no place for a third step here" (*tṛtīyasya padasyātra sthānaṃ nāsty*, BrP 73.49ab). Second, although we learn from Brahmā's speech that the kingdom has been returned to the gods (SP_{Bh} 117.17ab, 20cd), the actual return of power is not reported, which is, in fact, a fixed part of the story. Third, the binding of Bali is absent, which we would expect, since Bali is released from his ties.

[170] *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, *Brahmapurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa*, *Skandapurāṇa Prabhāsakhaṇḍa*, *Vāmanapurāṇā* and *Vāmanapurāṇa Saromāhātmya* (Soifer 1992, 142 note 45).

presumably later than the *Skandapurāṇa*. The only Purāṇa predating the *Skandapurāṇa* that has two variations on the theme is the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42B). The first variation comes immediately after Viṣṇu's strides: Viṣṇu promises Bali that he will reign over the Asuras as soon as he goes to the netherworld and stays there (*daityādhipatyaṃ ca sadā matprasādād avāpsyasi*, "you will always have sovereignty over the Daityas by my grace", HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 2937). This promise concerns the near future. The second variation comes at the very end of the myth, when Garuḍa releases Bali from his ties and tells him that he should live in the netherworld for one Gavyutī, i.e. a time indication of a very long period (HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 3037—38, see below). Since the element is found in many sources, even though most of these are later than the *Skandapurāṇa*, this could be a case of intertextuality with the Purāṇic genre as the source text. The same applies to the third element, the binding of Bali, which already appeared in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Even though this may be a similar case of intertextuality, there may even be a form of direct intertextuality because the dialogue in the *Skandapurāṇa* shows several striking similarities with a dialogue in the final scene of the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42B).

In the *Harivaṃśa* retelling, Viṣṇu first strides three times and then he kills all the Asuras (HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2909—2913). He conquers the triple world, returns the earth to Indra and gives the Pātāla called Sutala to Bali (2914—16). Viṣṇu grants Bali several boons, while at the same time setting rules to the boons to which Bali should adhere, otherwise he will be bound by *nāgapāśas*, "nooses that are Nāgas" (2922—40)[171]. Bali agrees and goes to Pātāla (2956—58), and Viṣṇu goes to heaven after dividing the kingdoms (2959—67). When Viṣṇu has gone to heaven, he binds Bali with *nāgapāśas* (2970—71)[172]. Then Nārada goes to Bali and gives him the key to liberation (2972—81)[173]. Bali does what Nārada told him (2982—3025) and as a result, Viṣṇu orders Garuḍa, his animal-vehicle, to set Bali free (3028—29). Garuḍa goes to Bali, and the Nāgas that

[171] For instance, Bali should not block Indra's power, he should remember Viṣṇu's command and honour the gods (HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2932—34).
[172] This implies that Bali broke (one of) the rules that came along with the boons received from Viṣṇu, but this is not made explicit.
[173] The method is the recitation of the *mokṣaviṃśaka*, "twenty verses on liberation". See Saindon 2009, 364 notes 22 and 23 for more information on this recitation.

kept Bali captive, immediately run away (3030—33). Garuḍa addresses Bali with a speech, which is remarkably similar to Brahmā's speech to Bali in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

> HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 3036—41:
> *dānavendra mahābāho viṣṇus tvām abravīt prabhuḥ | 3036 |*
> *mukto nivasa pātāle saputrajanabāndhavaḥ || 3037 ||*
> *itas tvayā*[174] *na gantavyaṃ gavyūtim api dānava | 3038 |*
> *samayaṃ yadi bhindyās tvaṃ mūrdhā te śatadhā vrajet || 3039 ||*
> *pakṣīndravacanaṃ śrutvā dānavendro 'bravīd idam | 3040 |*
> *sthito 'smi samaye tasya anantasya mahātmanaḥ || 3041 ||*
> "'Oh lord of the Dānavas, the very strong lord Viṣṇu said to you: 'Being released, you should live in Pātāla, together with your sons, people and friends. Hence it [i.e. Pātāla] should not be abandoned by you for exactly the time period of a Gavyūti, oh Dānava. If you break [this] agreement, your head will turn into a hundred pieces.'' Having heard the speech of the lord of the birds [i.e. Garuḍa], the lord of the Dānavas said this: 'I will stay true to the agreement with the glorious Ananta [i.e. Viṣṇu].'"

Garuḍa's speech in the *Harivaṃśa* has much in common with Brahmā's speech in the *Skandapurāṇa*. For a start, the very idea that Bali is released from his ties is relatively unique. The only other source I am aware of is the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, a later text, which tells that Viṣṇu releases Bali from his fetters at the request of Brahmā (BhāP 8.23.3cd)[175]. Moreover, the composition of the speeches also have some remarkable similarities. First, Bali is released (SP_{Bh} 117.16cd) or he is told that he will be released (HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 3037a). Then, some restrictions concerning his release are set: he should no longer go after the kingdom of the gods (SP_{Bh} 117.17d) or he should not leave Pātāla anymore (HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 3037—38a). All this should be adhered to within the current era (SP_{Bh}

[174] The critical edition reads *itasvayā*, which is probably a typo for *itas tvayā*.
[175] For other texts that include Bali's binding (without him being released), see Rai 1970, 137—39 and Hospital 1980, 275.

117.18 and HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 3038b). Finally, both texts speak of a *samaya*, "an agreement", between Bali and the god in question (SP_{Bh} 117.16b, 17c and HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 3039a, 3041a). As shown above, the idea that a promise is confined to a particular era and subject to certain rules is widespread among Purāṇas. However, such a promise in combination with Bali's release and the emphasis that an agreement has been reached is only found in the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa*[176].

The parallel word choice as well as the parallel composition of the speech are striking, and these are not the only correspondences between the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa* identified so far. In the study on the Varāha myth above, I have demonstrated two other correspondences: the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42 are the first available texts that provide a complete account of the Asura-slaying version of the Varāha myth, and both make a clear and conscious distinction between the cosmogonic Yajñavarāha and the Asura-slaying Varāha, who is closer to Viṣṇu and might even have been a Naravarāha in both texts. Bali's release from his ties can be added as another parallel between the two texts. However, in terms of intertextuality, the Vāmana case is different. Whereas the Varāha parallels are probably not an example of a direct intertextual relationship and can be explained in multiple (and possibly additional) ways, the release of Bali as part of an agreement between Bali and a god point to a case of direct intertextuality between the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B because the parallel is uniquely shared between the two. Finally, there is one more parallel that speaks for a relationship between these two texts. There are remarkable similarities between the *devāsura* war at the start of the Varāha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *devāsura* war at the start of the Vāmana myth in HV App. 1 No. 42B. In the next section, I discuss these parallels more closely.

2.4 The *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42B)

The corresponding passages concern SP 77.8—95.end and HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 47—2462. These large sections describe the *devāsura* war that leads to the Asuras' power over

[176] The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, on the other hand, combines a similar conversation between Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Bali with Bali's release, but it does not speak of a *samaya* (BhāP 8.22.31—36). This, however, might still be considered the only late parallel with the scene in the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa*.

the universe and Viṣṇu's subsequent intervention to manifest himself in order to resolve the cosmic disorder. The similarities between the two war narratives are striking, but at the same time, there are several factors that make it difficult to define the exact relationship between the two texts. Not only do the correspondences appear in different myths, there are also no verbatim parallels[177]. The similarity rather concerns the fact that each section includes almost the same narrative elements—*viz.* different stages in warfare—and that these components are predominantly structured in the same order.

The relevant chapters in the *Skandapurāṇa* include all steps taken by Hiraṇyākṣa in his battle against the gods: from the decision to take revenge against the gods for killing his brother Hiraṇyakaśipu[178], to a description of the conditions in the kingdom when Hiraṇyākṣa has taken full control over the universe[179]. The relevant section in HV App. 1 No. 42B describes all steps taken by Bali in his battle against the gods: from the moment that the Asuras encourage Bali to take the kingdom back from the gods[180], to Bali's

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[177] There are some verbatim parallels, but these are stock phrases that do not only appear in the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B, but also in the *Mahābhārata*. For example, "[t]he phrase *śaraiḥ saṃnataparvabhiḥ* ('with arrows with bent knots'), occurs three times in the chapters at issue [*viz.* SP 76—108 and SP_{Bh} 115—129], with variations […]. It is very popular in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but their concentration in the battle books of the *Mahābhārata* is conspicuous: 41 times in book 6, 32 times in book 7 and 16 times in book 8. It may be noteworthy that it also occurs five times in HV App. 1 No. 42B, which narrates a version of the Vāmana myth with lengthy battle scenes between the gods and the Asuras" (SP Vol. IV, 21—22). For other examples, see ibid, 21—23. The fact that the verbatim parallels are formulaic phrases makes them part of the "language" shared by the composers of these texts, instead of unique parallels. They are therefore not taken into account in the analysis.

[178] SP 77.12ab, 13:
rājyārthe sa hato devair nikṛtyā mūḍhamānasaiḥ |
[…]teṣāṃ kartum ahaṃ daṇḍaṃ śakto 'smy asuravidviṣām |
bhavatāṃ tatra bālānāṃ rakṣārthaṃ nodyamāmy aham || *13* ||
"He [i.e. "my dear brother Hiraṇyakaśipu" (SP 77.10a, c)] has been killed by the foolish gods through fraud, for the sake of his kingdom. I am able to punish these enemies of the Asuras by myself. [However, this means that] in that case, I cannot undertake the task of protecting you, [my] children."

[179] SP 95.25:
yajadhvaṃ dānavāḥ sarve viprān pūjayateti ca |
devaṃ ca śūlinaṃ sarve namasyata punaḥ punaḥ |
dharmam eva niṣevadhvam iti so 'jñāpayat tadā || *19* ||
"Then he [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa] ordered: 'Oh Dānavas, you should all perform sacrifices and honour the sages, you should all continuously pay homage to Deva ["God", i.e. Śiva], Śūlin ["the one with the trident"], and you should follow the *dharma*.'"

[180] HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 51—53:
pitāmahaṃ tu hatvā te suraiḥ suraniṣūdana | *51* |
hṛtaṃ tad eva trailokyaṃ śakraś caivābhiṣecitaḥ | *52* |

righteous reign when he has conquered the gods[181]. I have identified ten parallel narrative elements, each describing a step in the warfare.

	Narrative element	*Skandapurāṇa*	*Harivaṃśa*
1.	Decision to start the battle	SP 77.8—40	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 47—59
2.	The Asuras go to war	SP 77.41—end	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 60—486
3.	The gods go to war	SP 78	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 487—716
4.	General battle description	SP 79—83	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 717—32[182]
5.	The battle as a sacrifice	SP 84.1—7	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 822—74[183]
6.	"*Anukramaṇikā*" of individual duels[184]	SP 84.8—12	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 733—76

tat pitāmaharājyaṃ svaṃ pratyāhartum ihārhasi || *53* ||
"When your grand-father was killed by the gods [i.e. Hiraṇyakaśipu by Narasiṃha], oh slayer of the gods, this triple world was taken [by them], and Śakra [i.e. Indra] was consecrated [as king]. Please bring this kingdom of your own grandfather back here."

[181] HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2436—37, 2441:
abhāve sarvapāpānāṃ bhāve caiva tathā sthite | *2436* |
bhāve tapasi siddhānāṃ sarvatrāśramarakṣiṣu || *2437* ||
[…] abhiṣikto 'suraiḥ sarvair devarājye balis tadā || *2441* ||
"When all [sorts] of sins were absent and when there was fortitude instead, when there was *tapas* for the Siddhas ["Accomplished Ones", i.e. sages at a high stage of yogic realization], when hermitages everywhere were protected […], then Bali was consecrated in the kingdom of the gods by all the Asuras."

[182] The description in HV App. 1 No. 42B is significantly shorter than the one in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

[183] The order starts to diverge here. First, the battles are enumerated and announced in a kind of *anukramaṇikā*, "table of contents" (HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 733—76), then a series of bad omens is enumerated (777—821), next the battle is compared to a sacrifice (822—74) and a general description of the war is given (875—908), and finally the duels corresponding to the *anukramaṇikā* are told (909—2227, 2333—403).

[184] The following individual duels are announced in short sentences, which are a sort of "table of contents" (*anukramaṇikā*). The element will be studied further below, including examples.

7.	Individual duels, corresponding to the "*anukramaṇikā*"	SP 84.13—88.10[185]	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 909—2227, 2333—403[186]
8.	Agni interferes	SP 92[187]	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2228—319
9.	The Asuras win	SP 93.26—95.15	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2404—27
10.	Description of the post-war kingdom	SP 95.16—end	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2428—62

As can be seen from the above table, both texts dedicate a large section of the text to the *devāsura* war (almost twenty chapters in the *Skandapurāṇa* and over 2400 half-verses in HV App. 1 No. 42B), sharing ten narrative elements that are more or less in the same order. Some elements are standard for *devāsura* wars, but elements 6—8 are relatively unique, as will be argued below. I found only one other myth that includes two of these relatively unique elements: the Sumbha and Nisumbha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa*[188]. This

[185] After the description of the individual duels, the *Skandapurāṇa* adds a general battle description, with special attention to Vāyu and Soma (SP 88.11—91.end).

[186] The individual duels are "interrupted" by the next element, *viz.* Agni's intervention, so that the duel between Bali and Indra is postponed.

[187] After the Agni episode, the *Skandapurāṇa* continues with a short general battle description (SP 93.1—25).

[188] The Sumbha and Nisumbha myth tells the story of the Asura brothers Sumbha and Nisumbha (SP 62.50—66.end). They "are brought up by Mt. Vindhya and his wife. When they have grown up, they head the demons and defeat the gods in the war. Sumbha courts Kauśikī through the messenger Mūka and is challenged to defeat her in battle to gain her as his wife. After consulting other demons Sumbha decides to fight" (SP Vol. III, 9). This is where the corresponding war narrative starts. The *devāsura* war consists of the following narrative elements, provided with the numbers of the table in the main text. The asterisks indicate narrative elements that do not correspond with the Varāha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* and the Vāmana myth in HV App. 1 No. 42B. 1. Decision to start the battle (SP 63.45—end). 2. Asuras go to war (SP 64.1—11). * Evil omens (SP 64.12—14). * Asuras dare Kauśikī, and Kauśikī expands herself into different goddesses (SP 64.15—18). 3. Goddesses go to war (64.19—end). 4. General battle description (SP 65.1—23ab). 6. *Anukramaṇikā* of individual duels (SP 65.23cd—25). * General battle description (SP 65.26—29). 7. Individual duels corresponding to the *anukramaṇikā* (SP 65.30—81). * General battle description, including Kauśikī fighting Sumbha and Nisumbha (SP 65.82—66.30). 9. Kauśikī wins (SP 66.31—end). 10. Description of the post-war kingdom (SP 67.1—17). The fifth and the eighth narrative elements—the battle as a sacrifice and Agni's intervention—are absent.

narrative likewise incorporates an *anukramaṇikā* and corresponding duels in its war narrative, dealing with the battle between the Asuras and the goddesses led by Kauśikī. This section counts only four chapters, but covers eight of the ten identified steps in the warfare: from the moment that Sumbha decides to fight with Kauśikī (SP 63.45) to the goddesses' victory (SP 66.31—end). Despite the fairly significant overlap with the Varāha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* and the Vāmana myth in HV App. 1 No. 42B, there are considerably more correspondences between the war elements in the Varāha and Vāmana myth, so the Sumbha and Nisumbha myth will be dismissed from the analysis itself (2.4.1), but will be taken up again in section 2.4.2 to help explain the complexity of all parallels involved[189].

2.4.1 Analysis

The war narrative starts with elements 1—4 that are structured in the same way. Then there is some variation in the section with elements 5—8, either because the order of the narrative components is different (e.g. the fifth element) or a passage is added (e.g. the *Skandapurāṇa* adds an extra general battle description after the eighth element). Finally, the arrangement of elements 9—10 is the same. The overall structure is thus very similar in both texts, though not identical.

As far as the content of the individual narrative components is concerned, it is possible to make a division between those elements that appear in other war narratives and those that seem to be (almost) unique for the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B.

[189] Although the focus is on the Varāha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* and the Vāmana myth in HV App. 1 No. 42B, I will occasionally refer to other war narratives in the notes, including the Sumbha and Nisumbha myth. In order to show how unique elements 6—8 are and how common the others, I will refer to other stories that include a war narrative. After all, an extensive war narrative is by no means rare. The grandest of all is the war between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas in the *Mahābhārata*, covering several books of the epic. Additionally, book six of the *Rāmāyaṇa* called Yuddhakāṇḍa ("book of the battle") is concerned with the battle between Rāma and his monkey army on one side and Rāvaṇa and his Rākṣasa army on the other. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, there is another extensive war narrative, told in SP_{Bh} 130.31 to SP_{Bh} 154, which forms a part of the Andhaka myth. It describes different steps in the warfare between Śiva's Gaṇas (a class of divine beings that are Śiva's attendants in the *Skandapurāṇa*) and Andhaka *cum sui*: from the moment that Pārvatī sends her Gaṇas to fight against Andhaka and his army, to Andhaka's victory over the gods. Although all these narratives share elements with the *devāsura* wars in the Varāha and Vāmana myth, they do not share the exact same pattern, nor do they contain some of the more unique narrative elements that the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B have in common.

Standard components include elements 1—4 and 9, for war narratives usually include the decision and the reason to start a war by a certain king or people[190], scenes in which the competing parties approach each other[191], general descriptions of the fighting[192] and the announcement of the winner[193].

The fifth element concerns the concept of *yuddhayajña*, "the battle as a sacrifice", in which the main members of the battle are compared to essential parts of a sacrifice. The battle-sacrifice is known from the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 5.57.12—14, MBh 5.139.29—51 and MBh 12.99.15—25) and is not unknown in the rest of the epic-Purāṇic tradition. The *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B also share the concept, but not the actual combinations. For example, in the *Skandapurāṇa*, the Vasus are the *udgātṛ* priests for the gods, Prahlāda is the *udgātṛ* for the Asuras (SP 84.4b, 7a), and the Aśvins have the function of *śamitṛ*, "slaughterer" of the sacrificial animal (SP 84.5a). On the other hand,

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[190] As mentioned above, in the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B, the Asura kings decide to wage war against the gods, because of the death of their relative, a previous king of Daityas. By comparison, in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma determines to fight Rāvaṇa because Rāvaṇa abducted Rāma's wife Sītā, and he wants her back.

[191] Passages like this present, among other things, the preparations for war: putting on armour, preparing chariots, making noise with drums, etcetera. E.g. Hiraṇyākṣa's chariot is made ready in SP 77.58—65, and in HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 503—504, the gods mount tigers, elephants, Nāgas and bulls. A similar situation is described, for example, in the *Harivaṃśa* retelling of the Tārakāmaya *devāsura* war with Tāra and Maya as the principal figures on the side of the Asuras and Viṣṇu as the main figure on the side of the gods (HV 32—38). HV 33 describes the army of the Asuras, highlighting the chariots and ornaments of the principal Asuras, and HV 34 does the same from the perspective of the gods.

[192] General battle descriptions include the sounds and actions of a battlefield: clashing swords, shooting arrows, smashing each other's chariots, etcetera. E.g. SP 79.32 describes how "[a]nother cuts off the trunk of an advancing elephant, but he is hurled to the ground by the same elephant" (SP Vol. IV, 73), and HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 731—32 reports how hundreds of gods roar, while grabbing spears and trees that are set to fire. Similar descriptions are in the Yuddhakāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyāṇa* (see Goldman et al. 2009, 89ff. for examples of the rich style of the epic in its battle descriptions), and in the Tārakāmaya war of the *Harivaṃśa* (e.g. HV 37.20—36).

[193] In SP 93.33—95.7cd, Hiraṇyākṣa conquers the kingdom of the gods, by taking control of important places and appointing Asuras as the regents of these areas: first Amarāvatī, then the abodes of Varuṇa and Yama (i.e. Saṃyamana) and finally, Kubera's residence (i.e. Laṅkā). Hiraṇyākṣa himself rules over the earth and takes her in captivity (SP 95.7ef—15). In HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2404—2417, a bodiless voice tells Indra that Bali cannot be conquered in battle because of a boon he had received earlier, and in HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 2427, Bali indeed becomes *indra*, "king", of the entire universe. To compare, in the Andhaka war narrative in the *Skandapurāṇa*, the victory of the Asuras is announced by enumerating the casualties "in the battle with Andhaka" (*andhakena raṇe*, SP_{Bh} 154.39c, 40c, 41c, 42c, 43c, 46a and 47a), such as Viṣṇu, Pitāmaha (i.e. Brahmā), Ananta (i.e. Śeṣa) and Śatakratu (i.e. Indra, SP_{Bh} 154.39ab), as well as Gandharvas, Guhyakas, snakes, Garuḍas and Mahoragas ("great serpents", 43ab).

in HV App. 1 No. 42B, it is Maya who is the *udgātṛ* and Śambara the *śamitṛ* (HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 836, 860)[194]. Even though not all war narratives include a *yuddhayajña*, the concept is broadly supported in epic-Purāṇic literature and is therefore not unique for the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B.

However, the elements 6—8 are, to the best of my knowledge, uniquely shared by the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B. The sequence starts with a kind of *anukramaṇikā*, "table of contents" (the sixth element), of the upcoming duels between the gods and the Asuras (the seventh element). In short sentences, it is told which god fought with which Asura, as the following verses exemplify.

> SP 84.8c—f:
> *indraḥ samāsadad daityaṃ hiraṇyākṣaṃ mahābalam* |
> *vāyur abhyāyayau tūrṇaṃ vipracittiṃ mahābalaḥ* || *8* ||
> "Indra encountered the very strong Daitya Hiraṇyākṣa. The very strong Vāyu quickly approached Vipracitti."

> HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 733—34:
> *marutāṃ pañcamo yas tu sa bāṇenābhyayudhyata* | *733* |
> *mahābalaḥ suravaraḥ sāvitra iti yaṃ viduḥ* || *734* ||
> "He who is the fifth of the Maruts ["Wind Gods"], whom they knew as the very strong Sāvitra, the best of gods, fought with Bāṇa."

[194] There are only two structural parallels between the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B: the sacrifice is narrated from the perspective of one party of the battle, and the head of the army is the sacrificer, the most important position during a sacrifice. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, the battle-sacrifice is first narrated from the perspective of the gods, with Indra (together with the gods) as the sacrificer (SP 84.1cde), and then from the perspective of the Asuras, with Hiraṇyākṣa as the sacrificer (SP 84.6ab). In HV App. 1 No. 42B, the battle-sacrifice is only narrated from the perspective of the Asuras, with Bali as the sacrificer (HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 859). At the same time, MBh 5.139.29—51 and HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 822—74 are very similar, including some verbatim *pādas* (e.g. MBh 5.139.31ab ≈ HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 834, MBh 5.139.32ab = HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 832, and MBh 5.139.34cd ≈ HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 839). This may be a case of direct intertextuality.

All announced duels correspond exactly with the duels that are narrated subsequently. For instance, the battle between Indra and Hiraṇyākṣa is narrated in SP 84.13—end, the battle between Vāyu and Vipracitti in SP 85.1—10[195], and the battle between Sāvitra and Bāna in HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 909—935[196]. There is little interference of other figures, when

[195] The following table presents a complete overview of the duels in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

God vs. Asura	*Anukramaṇikā*	Duels
Indra vs. Hiraṇyākṣa	SP 84.8cd	SP 84.13—end
Vāyu vs. Vipracitti	SP 84.8ef	SP 85.1—10
Aṃśa vs. Śambara	SP 84.9a	SP 85.11—16
Bhaga vs. Vala	SP 84.9b	SP 85.17—28
Pūṣan vs. Virocana	SP 84.9c	SP 85.29—86.4
Mitra vs. Bali	SP 84.9d	SP 86.5—7
Varuṇa vs. Bāṇa	SP 84.10a	SP 86.8—16
Yama vs. Andhaka	SP 84.10b	SP 86.17—44
Jayanta vs. Ilvala	SP 84.10c	SP 86.45—end
Candramas vs. Maya	SP 84.10d	SP 87.1—10
Ahirbudhna vs. Rāhu	SP 84.11a	SP 87.11—17
Kāpālin vs. Śataketu	SP 84.11b	SP 87.18—25
Ajaikapād vs. Kālanemi	SP 84.11c	SP 87.26—38
Jvara vs. Kārtasvana	SP 84.11d	SP 87.39—end
Aryaman vs. Prahlāda	SP 84.12a	SP 88.1—5
Dhara vs. Anuhlāda	SP 84.12b	SP 88.6—8
Dhruva vs. Hrada	SP 84.12c	SP 88.9—10

[196] The following table presents a complete overview of the duels in HV App. 1 No. 42B.

God vs. Asura	*Anukramaṇikā*	Duels
Sāvitra vs. Bāṇa	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 733—34	HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 909—35
Dhruva vs. Bala	735—36	936—82
Dhara vs. Namuci	737—38	983—1030
Tvaṣṭṛ vs. Maya	739—40	1031—88
Vāyu vs. Puloman	741—42	1089—155
Pūṣan vs. Hayagrīva	743—44	1156—201
Bhaga vs. Śambara	745—46	1202—71
Soma vs. Śarabha and Śalabha	747—48	1272—338
Viṣvaksena vs. Virocana	749—50	1339—96
Aṃśa vs. Kujambha	751—52	1397—455
Hari (the Marut) vs. Asiloman	753—54	1456—529
Aśvin twins vs. Vṛtra	755—56	1530—81
Raṇāji vs. Ekacakra	757—58	1582—640
Mṛgavyādha vs. Bala	759—60	1641—86
Ajaikapād vs. Rāhu	761—62	1687—732
Dhaneśvara/ Dhūmrākṣa (the Rudra) vs. Keśin	763—64	1733—85

a duel is narrated. In the duel between the Rudra called Jvara and Kārtasvana (SP 87.39—end), for example, only these two figures feature in the battle, and the same goes for the duel between Dhruva and Bala (HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 936—83)[197]. Although descriptions of duels are in themselves not unique for war narratives, the fact that they follow the enumeration in the *anukramaṇikā* meticulously is only found in HV App. 1 No. 42B and the *Skandapurāṇa*—this includes the Sumbha and Nisumbha myth[198].

As far as the eighth element is concerned, Agni does not feature in a duel but he intervenes in the *devāsura* war. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, Agni sees that the gods have fled when all seventeen duels and some subsequent fights have taken place[199]. He intervenes by rushing to the Asuras (SP 92.1), but instead of hereby putting an end to the war, Agni instigates another series of battles, such as the thousand-year war called Āṭi-Baka (SP 92.16ff.). In HV App. 1 No. 42B, on the other hand, Agni sees that the gods are defeated after twenty out of twenty-one duels, and decides to help the gods (HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2228—319). As Agni is fighting, Prahrāda addresses Bali and urges him to fight against Indra and the other gods (HV App. 1 No. 42B ll. 2320—32). This marks the beginning of the final duel between Indra and Bali.

Niṣkumbha vs. Vṛṣaparvan	765—66	1786—832
Kāla vs. Prahrāda	767—68	1833—994
Kubera vs. Anuhrāda	769—70	1995—2142
Varuṇa vs. Vipracitti	771—72	2143—227
Śakra vs. Bali	773—74	2333—403

[197] There are only a few exceptions in the *Skandapurāṇa* of other gods or Asuras assisting the main fighter. One of these is at the end of the duel between Vāyu and Vipracitti (SP 85.1—10), where Hiraṇyākṣa steps in when Vipracitti loses power. Hiraṇyākṣa gives Vāyu the final blow. In HV App. 1 No. 42B, there are some exceptions as well. For instance, during the duel between Aṃśa and Kujamba, Kujambha also fights with other gods.

[198] SP 65.23cd—25 announces eight duels between the goddesses who had arisen from Kauśikī and the Asuras. For example, "Ṣaṣṭhī advances against Meghasvana, Mṛtyu against Kārtasvara" (SP Vol. III, 128). After some general battle descriptions, all eight duels are narrated in a few verses (SP 65.30—81). For instance, Ṣaṣṭhī's fight with Meghasvana is described in verses 30—33 and Mṛtyu's fight with Kārtasvara in verses 34—39. Although it is impossible to know whether such an *anukramaṇikā* with corresponding duels is indeed absent in other narratives and texts, I did not come across it in other parts of the *Skandapurāṇa*, nor in the epics, nor in other early Purāṇas. For example, in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, there are various descriptions of battles with one main figure (like the Rākṣasa called Dhūmrākṣa in Rām 6.42), but these duel-like fights are not announced in an *anukramaṇikā*.

[199] For example, the Asuras are challenged by Vāyu (SP 89.20—end) and Soma (SP 90—91).

Even though Agni acts differently, he has an interventionist role in both texts, putting, as it were, a halt to the all-encompassing *devāsura* war for a moment. It is remarkable that both texts reserve this special role for Agni, who, unlike other primary gods—Indra, Soma, Varuṇa, Vāyu and Yama—, does not fight in a duel against an Asura. I am not aware of a similar intervention by Agni in the epics[200] or in other early Purāṇas[201]. It seems therefore a unique parallel between the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B.

Finally, the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B both conclude the war narrative with a description of how each Asura king rules. They both rule according to law and the rules of a king, take care of their subjects, ensure that *dharma*, "righteousness", prevails, etcetera (see notes 179 and 181). In the case of HV App. 1 No. 42B, Bali's righteous ruling is an intrinsic part of the Vāmana myth. He is repeatedly described as *dharmic* and pious. Already at the beginning of the narrative, when he was consecrated as the king of the Asuras and the netherworld (and when Indra was still the king of the gods and the heavens), Bali is, for example, "having *dharma* as his highest priority at all times, speaking the truth [and] having his senses in check" (*dharmaparaṃ nityaṃ satyavākyaṃ jitendriyam*, HV App. 1 No. 42B l. 35). Further on in the story, Bali's good character is reflected in the way he rules over the entire universe. This characterization continues to be applied in other Purāṇas, including the *Skandapurāṇa*.

Hiraṇyākṣa, on the other hand, is not known for his honest and pious character, but in the *Skandapurāṇa*, these qualifications are attributed to him. Other good qualities,

[200] I found several references to the involvement of fire in the *Mahābhārata*, but none of these are in the eighteen-day war itself. For example, in MBh 1.215—25, a Brahmin who identifies himself with Fire (*pāvaka*) burns the Khāṇḍava Forest (Van Buitenen 1973, 412—31); and in MBh 1.124—38, Duryodhana has the Pāṇḍavas led to a highly inflammable house, made of lacquer, to burn them to death, but the Pāṇḍavas find a way to escape (ibid, 7 and 274—93). Agni's absence in the war may be due to the fact that the war is waged by people, instead of gods. One of the warriors is, however, an incarnation of Agni: Dhṛṣṭadyumna (MBh 1.57.91 and MBh 1.155). Dhṛṣṭadyumna becomes the general of the Pāṇḍava army and kills, for example, one of the generals of the Kaurava army, Droṇa (MBh 7.165.52cd). Even though this is a big success, Dhṛṣṭadyumna's action is in the midst of the vast war and cannot be considered a distinctive moment.

[201] For instance, in the Andhaka war narrative in the *Skandapurāṇa*, Agni does not play a role, nor in the Sumbha and Nisumbha myth in the same text. This may be due to the fact that these battles are not fought by the gods, but by Gaṇas and goddesses instead. In the Tārakāmaya war in the *Harivaṃśa*, on the other hand, there is a story about a fire, but this is not the god Agni, but a fire called Aurva. It is employed by the Asuras to counter an attack by Indra (HV 35).

at least from the perspective of the *Skandapurāṇa*, is that he is a devotee of Śiva[202] and knows, for example, the mandatory rites at the victory of a battle[203]. In other words, Hiraṇyākṣa is a good Śaiva king. The Asura-slaying Varāha myth in HV App. 1 No. 42 does not characterize Hiraṇyākṣa as a *dharmic* king, nor do later Purāṇas. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers probably added this new component because they believe that no matter what creature—god, human or Asura—every king should follow the *rājadharma*, "rules for a king", which includes taking care of one's subjects. The Varāha myth has several other parallels with routines of kings on earth as well. For example, the way in which Hiraṇyākṣa conquered the universe, *viz.* by taking over the most important places and assigning his own people to important ruling posts, resembles a king's *digvijaya*, "conquest of the directions". Even though Hiraṇyākṣa is an Asura, who should follow the *dharma* of the Asuras, he should also adhere to the *dharma* of a king[204].

2.4.2 Hypothesis

The parallels show both differences and similarities. On the one hand, the parallels appear in two different narratives, there are no verbatim parallels, and there is some variation in the narration of the identified narrative elements. On the other hand, the overlap of the narrative elements constituting the *devāsura* war, as well as the correspondences in structure nevertheless suggest some form of relationship between the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B. I would like to propose two possible explanations of this complex combination of differences and correspondences, and hence two possible relationships between the two texts.

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[202] For example, Hiraṇyākṣa practices *tapas* for the sake of a son, by meditating upon Śiva (SP 73.68); and as part of the festival to celebrate the Asuras' victory, Hiraṇyākṣa orders his subjects to worship Śiva and offer him various sorts of offerings and presents (SP 75.31a—d).

[203] For example, in SP 75.26, Hiraṇyākṣa orders that "Brahmins must be fed and everywhere Vedic recitations and proclamations of an auspicious day must be made" (SP Vol. IV, 63).

[204] Likewise, Asura priests have to navigate between the *dharma* of the Asuras and the *dharma* of their position, as Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty has shown in *The Origin of Evil in Hindu Mythology*. "In Vedic times, the demon priests follow their svadharma ["own *dharma*"] as priests rather than demons […]. Finally, in the bhakti myths, the demon priest acts either as priest (advising the demon devotee to worship the god) or demon (advising the demon devotee to try to destroy the god)" (O'Flaherty 1976/1988, 99).

A case of direct intertextuality would be most straightforward. This seems to be the situation for the final scene of the main story of the Vāmana myth in HV App. 1 No. 42B and in the *Skandapurāṇa*, as argued in section 2.3. The texts are, in other words, closely related to each other, and the *Skandapurāṇa* composers seem to have known the Vāmana myth in HV App. 1 No. 42B. If we would accept a similar relationship for the *devāsura* wars studied in section 2.4, then the differences should be understood as the *Skandapurāṇa* composers' tendency not to copy passages verbatim but to tell them in their own characteristic style.

Although this possibility cannot be ruled out, especially since there are more parallels between the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa*, there is a second option which fits the situation better. For this possibility, the Sumbha and Nisumbha myth should be brought into the discussion because this myth has the same complex situation of some significant differences, as well as similarities in structure. The differences concern the repetition of some of the narrative elements and the exclusion of two of the ten identified components: the *yuddhayajña* and Agni's intervention. The similarities, on the other hand, are found in the structuring of the war narrative and in the inclusion of two of the three (relatively) unique parallel components: the *anukramaṇikā* and the corresponding duels. With the presence of these two elements in the Sumbha and Nisumbha myth, the total number of myths that include them adds up to three. Not only that, the total number of groups of composers adds up to three as well. After all, based on the usage of particular formulaic phrases and other features, the editors of SP Vol. IV have argued that the part where the Varāha myth appears was probably composed by a different (group of) composers than the part of the *Skandapurāṇa* where the Sumbha and Nisumbha myth occurs, *viz.* in the Vindhyavāsinī cycle[205] (SP Vol. IV, 23, see note 135 for other arguments for this hypothesis). In other words, the relatively unique *anukramaṇikā* and the corresponding duels appear in three different narratives, composed by three different groups of people, at three different moments.

[205] I have adopted the terms "cycle" and "myth cycle" from the critical editions of the *Skandapurāṇa*, where it is used "in a loose sense to indicate a more or less complete narrative unit that centres around a main character or group of characters with a storyline that has a beginning and an end. Individual cycles may be included in other cycles" (SP Vol. IV, 3 note 1). The Vindhyavāsinī cycle covers SP 34.1—61 and SP 53—69 and narrates multiple myths. For an overview of the narratives included, see SP Vol. III, 5—9.

If we would, then, conjecture a case of direct intertextuality, we would have to assume a situation in which two war narratives are modelled after one, or that one narrative influenced the others. I find this scenario too speculative and propose an alternative situation, in which the three groups of composers belonged to the same literary milieu, drawing upon the same pool of narratives, using the same language, and employing the same compositional techniques. One of these compositional techniques may have included a format on how to describe a war narrative, including what kind of narrative elements could be used for a war description and the order that would be suitable for these individual components. The status of a format, readily available for Purāṇa composers, could explain why there are both similarities and differences between the three narratives. On the one hand, a format provides composers with guidelines—thus explaining the corresponding elements, such as war preparations, an *anukramaṇikā* and the announcement of the winner—as well as room for modifications—thus explaining the differences in the final decision on choice and order of narrative elements.

2.5 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to explore how the *Skandapurāṇa* relates to the epic-Purāṇic tradition that retells Viṣṇu's manifestation myths, for which I have referred to different forms of intertextuality. Looking at the general storyline, the *Skandapurāṇa* generally follows the majority of texts and hereby places itself in the midst of a vibrant epic-Purāṇic landscape. The Varāha myth forms an exception, since the *Skandapurāṇa* does not tell the cosmogonic version of the myth but its Asura-slaying version. Although the latter must have been known by other epic and Purāṇic composers, based on references to this event in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42) and the *Skandapurāṇa* are the first to tell the story in full.

The *Harivaṃśa* is furthermore the text with which the *Skandapurāṇa* shows the closest parallels, one of them possibly being a case of direct intertextuality. The *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B share some remarkable details in the final scene of the main story of the Vāmana myth. When Viṣṇu has stridden across the universe and has returned the kingdom to Indra, both texts tell that at some point, Bali is released from

his ties. Although the binding itself is present throughout the epic and Purāṇic corpus[206], I found Bali's liberation only in the *Skandapurāṇa*, HV App. 1 No. 42B and the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. Since the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is later than the other two texts, it is less relevant for the present study. The similarities between the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B, on the other hand, are all the more significant. There are some striking parallels in word choice and composition. This suggests a case of direct intertextuality, in which the final scene in the *Skandapurāṇa* seem to have been modelled on the one in HV App. 1 No. 42B.

The other parallel between the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B that has been discussed in detail concerns the *devāsura* war of the Varāha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *devāsura* war of the Vāmana myth in HV App. 1 No. 42B. Since these war narratives do not only show striking similarities in the order and choice of narrative elements, but also some undeniable differences, I have argued that this does not point to direct intertextuality. Rather, the composers of these texts belonged to the same literary milieu, having, among others, the same compositional techniques at their disposal; one of these being a format on how to compose and order a war narrative.

I have drawn a similar conclusion in the case of Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon in the Narasiṃha myth. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, the boon contains a loophole. Even though some other Purāṇas likewise include a loophole, none of these represent the same situation as the *Skandapurāṇa*. Instead, Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon shows close parallels with the boons of other Asuras in other narratives in both the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. This type of intertextuality with narratives other than the one in question shows that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers shared a stylistic repertoire with other epic-Purāṇic composers.

I have furthermore identified cases of intertextuality where the epic-Purāṇic genre must be considered as "the source text". Two narrative elements that show this kind of intertextuality appear in the final scene of the main story of the Vāmana myth, just before Bali is released from his ties. At this point in the story, the *Skandapurāṇa* recounts at least two widespread components. First, Bali is sent to Pātāla. This narrative component is

[206] Since Bali's binding is so widespread among the epics and the Purāṇas, I have argued that this is a form of intertextuality with the epic-Purāṇic genre as "the source text". More examples of this type of intertextuality are given below.

found in almost all retellings, from the epics to the late Purāṇas, and is therefore considered a case of intertextuality with the epic-Purāṇic genre as the source text. Second, Bali's exile to Pātāla is said to be limited to the current era. When the next era comes, he is free to attempt another conquest of the universe. This element is widespread in the Purāṇas, be it mainly in Purāṇas that postdate the *Skandapurāṇa*. The only other early text that includes this element is HV App. 1 No. 42B. I have argued that since the element is so widespread, it may have been known at the time of the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B already, which makes it another case of intertextuality with the Purāṇic genre as the source text.

Finally, the origin of the remarkable representation of the Boar manifestation in the *Skandapurāṇa* is more complex. On the one hand, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers followed other Purāṇas with regard to their description of the Boar's limbs, *viz.* each limb is connected to an external element. There is, in other words, intertextuality with the epic-Purāṇic genre as "the source text". The specification of Varāha's limbs in the *Skandapurāṇa*, as well as the elements connected to them, reveal, however, that we are not dealing with a Yajñavarāha, as in other Purāṇas, but with a Naravarāha. This qualification is relatively new in a textual context, and I have argued that the component has been modelled after the Narasiṃha myth because there are striking similarities between Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon and Viṣṇu's solution to become a Narasiṃha on the one hand, and Hiraṇyākṣa's prophecy at birth and Viṣṇu's solution to become a Naravarāha on the other. Besides this textual explanation, I also identified several other explanations for the origin of a Man-Boar. First of all, the Asura-slaying Naravarāha may be an attempt to align him with other Asura-slaying manifestations of Viṣṇu that are generally (semi-)human, instead of animals. Second, the most frequent iconographic representation of the Boar is anthropomorphic, and it seems but a small step to create a textual anthropomorphic Boar. Third, although HV App. 1 No. 42 does not explicitly call the Asura-slaying Varāha a Naravarāha, it makes a clear distinction between the Asura-slaying Varāha and the cosmogonic Yajñavarāha, just as the *Skandapurāṇa*.

To conclude, the *Skandapurāṇa* is positioned in the middle of a vast landscape of epics and Purāṇas that tell and retell Viṣṇu's manifestation myths. The composers of the text were certainly familiar with other texts and display a special relationship with the

Harivaṃśa (in particular HV App. 1 No. 42B). In the current chapter, I have focussed on parallels with other texts and the possible origins of certain narrative elements in order to determine the position of the *Skandapurāṇa* in the literary landscape of its time. In the next chapter, however, I will examine the retellings in full swing, taking into account not only the preservations in the *Skandapurāṇa* retellings of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths, but also the changes and innovations.

muktvainaṃ daityarājānaṃ cakreṇa vinisūdaya |
māheśvareṇa vaikuṇṭha tato mṛtyum avāpsyati ||
"Having let him go, you should kill the king of the Daityas
with Maheśvara's ["the Great Lord's", i.e. Śiva's] *cakra*,
oh Vaikuṇṭha, so that he will find death."
Skandapurāṇa 107.23

3 Limits to the permissible: Viṣṇu in the *Skandapurāṇa*

Viṣṇu the king. Viṣṇu the preserver. Viṣṇu the sage. Viṣṇu the sacrifice. Viṣṇu the saviour. These are just some of the numerous characterizations of Viṣṇu. In the manifestation myths, he is the saviour *in optima forma*. He rescues the earth, the universe and the gods from evil, and restores the cosmic order. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, he has this role as well and is successful in his task. This is, however, not the only characterization in the text. Viṣṇu's portrait is a complex combination of having great success and needing serious help. On the one hand, Viṣṇu is the great saviour who kills the king of the Daityas who has become too powerful and has taken control of the universe. He returns the power over the universe to Indra and is lauded for this great deed. On the other hand, to reach this point, he needs to be empowered by the gods in general and by Śiva in particular.

This is just one of the transformations that Viṣṇu has undergone in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Many of these changes maintain, however, a key element that Viṣṇu is known for, just as in the saviour example. It is, for instance, Viṣṇu's *cakra*, his standard attribute, that kills Hiraṇyākṣa. At the same time, we learn that the *cakra* is in fact Śiva's. And although Narasiṃha needs just one slap of his claw to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu, Śiva is not the least hurt by that very same claw when he is hit. Moreover, whereas the manifestation myths are entirely about Viṣṇu, he is also structurally presented as a devotee of Śiva. And when Viṣṇu is eulogized by the gods at the moment he assumes the form of Varāha, they use a remarkably large number of Śiva-related epithets. In other words, the *Skandapurāṇa* presents an intricate combination of known and new elements, a balance between Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva characteristics.

This combination can be explained with the help of a narrative technique that I call "narrative consistency", inspired by the narratological theory of "the unreliable narrator"[207]. What I mean by narrative consistency is that composers attempt to write a narrative that is in line with what is already told in the narrative itself, with the rest of the text (such as its ideology, its characterization of figures, and its ideal universe), with fixed knowledge (about the story itself and its main characters), and with literary conventions[208]. I have conceptualized these different types of consistency into a fourfold categorization, which has been adapted from an article on the unreliable narrator by Per Krogh Hansen, 'Reconsidering the unreliable narrator' (2007)[209]. Each category is employed in this

[207] The concept of "the unreliable narrator" was coined by Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. According to Booth, a narrator is "*reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), *unreliable* when he does not" (Booth 1961, 158—59). In other words, this definition entails the consistency between statements of the narrator (i.e. "the one who narrates as inscribed in a text. […] Distinct from the author or implied author" (McQuillan 2000, 325)) and statements or the discourse of the rest of the work. For an overview of scholarship on the (un)reliable narrator, see Shen 2011/2013.

[208] The subject and object of my research differs from those in the theory of the unreliable narrator. If I would study the narratologist's *narrator* and *narration* (i.e. that which is narrated by the narrator), then Sanatkumāra and that which he narrates to Vyāsa would be the subject. However, since I am interested in the narrative techniques and motives of the anonymous composers of the text, instead of the narration by a fictional narrator, I study the *composers* (*viz.* the *Skandapurāṇa* composers) and the *narrative* (*viz.* Viṣṇu's manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana).

Another deviation concerns what is put to the test. Instead of testing the *Skandapurāṇa* composers' *unreliability*, I rather test their *consistency* for reasons of objectivity. Whereas (un)reliability can be subjective (after all, who is reliable and who is not may be judged differently), consistency is verifiable with actual textual records within the text itself and other texts. Moreover, by examining the *consistency* of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers, instead of their *inconsistency*, I take a positive approach to the topic, assuming that the composers were not intentionally creating inconsistencies. In fact, it is not unlikely that during the composition of the text, an "editor-in-chief" (Bakker 2014, 16) was assigned to guarantee "the unity of literary style and the quality of the Sanskrit, but this could not prevent minor differences remaining. He also took great care that the arrangement of stories, the complex narrative structure of the text, remained consistent and logical" (ibid.).

[209] According to Hansen, a narrator can become unreliable on four different levels: intranarrational, internarrational, intertextual and extratextual (Hansen 2007, 241). A narrator is unreliable on the *intranarrational* level, when there are internal contradictions in his narration. A narrator is unreliable *internarrationally*, when his account is in contrast with an earlier version he narrated or with the account of another narrator (ibid, 241—42). Both levels of unreliability "rest on textually observable issues, which are manifested as conflict. They are therefore both to be considered as intratextual relations" (ibid, 242). The other two categories consider matters outside the text itself. There is *intertextual* unreliability when the narrator himself is described in such a way that the audience immediately becomes alerted whether the narrator is reliable or not, based on what they know from other texts about this character type. Expectation and knowledge about a typical (stereotyped) character are key in this sub-category (ibid, for a study on such "character-narrators",

chapter to explain why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers made certain choices in their portrayal of Viṣṇu in the manifestation myths.

1. There is *intranarrational* consistency, when Viṣṇu's depiction in a particular text passage is in line with his depiction elsewhere in the manifestation myth. Since we may expect the *Skandapurāṇa* composers to generally present a consistent image of Viṣṇu within one narrative, I will only deal with intranarrational consistency when it displays the hand of the composers and demonstrates their skills and ambitions, or when it contributes to understanding a new characterization.
2. *Internarrational* consistency arises when particular characterizations agree with those in other narratives or reflect the text's ideology. For example, there is internarrational consistency on the narrative level, when specific aspects of Viṣṇu's character are consistent with what is told elsewhere in the text; and there is internarrational consistency on the ideological level, when an alteration of Viṣṇu's character agrees with the Śaiva ideology of the *Skandapurāṇa*.
3. There is *intertextual* consistency when the *Skandapurāṇa* composers adopt features of Viṣṇu that are well-known from other texts and intrinsically linked to his personality. These features do not only cover Viṣṇu's characteristics or appearance, but also topics like his preferred weaponry and how he kills his main opponent[210].
4. When a narrative element cannot be found in the *Skandapurāṇa* itself (intranarrational or internarrational), nor in another retelling (intertextual), it may still be consistent on the *extratextual* level. "[E]xtratextual frames of

see Riggan 1981). Finally, a narrator is unreliable on the *extratextual* level, when his "values or knowledge in the textual world" do not correspond with the reader's (ibid, 243). Whether the narrator is reliable or not is not based on the text itself, but on factors transcending the text. It is often the case, Hansen concludes, that two or more types coincide in one text and that combinations are made (ibid, 243—44).

[210] This category supplements the study of intertextuality in chapter 2. Whereas the focus of chapter 2 was on the relationship between the *Skandapurāṇa* and other texts, the focus of this chapter is why intertextual consistency is important.

> reference", as Ansgar Nünning calls it in a study on the unreliable narrator (Nünning 1999, 66), include general world-knowledge, cultural codes and moral norms, but also literary conventions and conventions of literary genres (ibid, 67—68)[211].

To test the *Skandapurāṇa* composers' narrative consistency and to explain the choices for Viṣṇu's representation, I study five characteristics of Viṣṇu along this four-fold categorization. First, I examine the fact that Viṣṇu is the saviour, but at the same time needs the other gods to help him conquer the Asuras (3.1); then, I study the fact that Viṣṇu's primary weapon, the *cakra*, is, in fact, Śiva's *cakra* (3.2); thereafter, I focus on the fact that Viṣṇu's weapons are powerful enough to kill the Asura king, but do not triumph in a battle against Śiva or Śiva's attendants (3.3); then, I lay out the fact that Viṣṇu is a devotee of Śiva (3.4); and finally, I examine the fact that Viṣṇu is praised by the gods with a long eulogy including carefully selected epithets (3.5). In the conclusions (3.6), I will turn to the question what goal the different types of narrative consistency have, in particular the combinations of internarrational and intertextual consistency.

3.1 The saviour who needs to be saved

The first characterization of Viṣṇu concerns the Narasiṃha and Varāha myth. In these myths, the *Skandapurāṇa* presents a combination of factors. On the one hand, Viṣṇu helps the gods by defeating the Asuras, and on the other hand, he needs the gods to help him.

The first component of the combination is consistent on different levels. First of all, Viṣṇu's portrayal as the saviour, who triumphs over the Asuras, is known from other sources and is thus intertextually consistent. The fact that Narasiṃha and Varāha conquer the Asuras in general and Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa in particular is a fixed part of the storylines, and the fact that it is Viṣṇu who fights the Asuras and slays their king is

[211] I follow Hansen in applying Nünning's definition of extratextuality to this fourth category. It should be noted, however, that Nünning himself does not make a fourfold division. Instead, he distinguishes between "innertextual signals [of reliability… and] extratextual frames of reference in his or her [i.e. the reader's] attempt to gauge the narrator's potential degree of unreliability" (Nünning 1999, 66).

one of his standard characterizations[212]. This portrayal also fits the *Skandapurāṇa*, for in each myth where Viṣṇu has the leading part, he has the task of fighting the Asuras and he is successful in it[213]. It is, in other words, also consistent on the internarrational level if we look at the content of Viṣṇu's narratives in the *Skandapurāṇa*. It is furthermore consistent on the internarrational level if we take the text's ideology into account, for the characterization matches the Śaiva universe as it is presented in the *Skandapurāṇa*. In sections 1.2 and 1.2.1, I have shown that in this universe, the gods generally keep the role that they are known for and execute the great (cosmic) tasks that they also have in other texts. Just as Indra remains the king of the gods and Brahmā is the creator of the universe, Viṣṇu likewise maintains the role as saviour of the gods, being the true Asura-slayer[214].

The second component of the combination, *viz.* that Viṣṇu needs the gods to help him in return, is a new element, introduced by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. It is part of a larger idea that Viṣṇu is dependent on the other gods, which has far-reaching consequences: we are presented with a new image of Viṣṇu, one in which Viṣṇu needs the gods so badly that without their help, he would not even succeed in conquering the Asuras. Before I demonstrate how Viṣṇu's dependency fits in the *Skandapurāṇa* from an ideological level, I will first concretize how Viṣṇu's dependency is given shape in the narratives themselves. The sort of help that Viṣṇu receives in the main story of the Narasiṃha and Varāha myth can be divided into two groups, each having their own origins and interpretations[215].

The first type is found in the Varāha myth, where Viṣṇu physically needs to be revived several times during his battle with Hiraṇyākṣa. The first instance occurs immediately after Hiraṇyākṣa's very first attack on Varāha with bow and arrow (SP 105.24). When Varāha is hit by arrows, "he stood paralyzed" (*vistabdhaḥ samatiṣṭhata*, SP 105.25d). The gods come to the rescue, releasing him from the arrows by using special

[212] See sections 2.1 and 2.2 for references to Sanskrit texts that narrate the manifestation myths of Narasiṃha and Varāha.
[213] See section 1.3 for an overview of the myths in which Viṣṇu is the main character.
[214] This task is furthermore narratively explained in the afterlife of Narasiṃha, when Viṣṇu receives the boon of *daityaghna*, "slaying Daityas" (SP 70.72b). See section 4.2.1 for a study of this boon.
[215] In this chapter, I focus on Viṣṇu's dependency within the main story of the manifestation myths. The most extreme form of dependency is, however, found in the afterlives of Viṣṇu's manifestations, where Viṣṇu needs Śiva to leave his manifested form and become Viṣṇu again. This will be discussed in section 4.1.

mantras (SP 105.26—27)[216]. The other cases have a similar construction: when Varāha is bound by Nāgas, he is liberated by Garuḍa (SP 105.32)[217]; when he is struck by Hiraṇyākṣa's arrow, he is strengthened by the gods and the sages (SP 105.39—40)[218]; and when he is hit by *moha*, "stupefaction", he returns to his senses thanks to the gods using *mantras* (SP 106.25)[219].

In the fifth and final case where Viṣṇu is dependent on the other gods during the battle, it is Śiva himself who empowers Varāha (SP 107.2ff.). When Varāha falls on the ground because Hiraṇyākṣa's spear has hit him almost fatally (SP 107.2), Brahmā pays homage to Śiva and calls him to mind (*sasmāra*, 5d). Or perhaps rather he "remembers" (another meaning of the verb *smṛ*-) that earlier, Śiva had promised the gods and the sages, including Brahmā, that his own *tejas*, "energy", would enter Viṣṇu at the right moment,

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[216] SP 105.26—27:
taṃ stambhitaṃ tadā vyāsa dṛṣṭvā devā mahābalam |
viśalyakaraṇair mantrair viśalyam abhicakrire || *26* ||
sa viśalyas tadā devaiḥ kṛto mṛgapatir mahān |
punar vegaṃ mahat kṛtvā jagāma ditijaṃ prati || *27* ||
"Having seen him being paralyzed then, oh Vyāsa, the gods made the very powerful one free from arrow-heads through *mantras* that free someone from arrow-heads. Then the great lord of animals, being made free from arrow-heads by the gods, having made great speed again, went to the son of Diti [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa]."

[217] SP 105.32:
taṃ baddhaṃ vadhyamānaṃ ca patitaṃ nandivardhanam |
garutmān bhujagendrebhyaḥ kṣipram eva vyamocayat || *32* ||
"Garuḍa* immediately released Nandivardhana [Varāha]+, who was bound, beaten and had fallen down, from the lords of serpents [i.e. the Nāgas]."
* The fact that Garuḍa frees Varāha from the Nāgas fits Garuḍa's characterization as Viṣṇu's loyal assistant and as the enemy of serpents, because he loves to eat them (for references to both characterizations, see Gonda 1954/1969, 101—3).
+ For the usage of Nandivardhana as a name, see note 340.

[218] SP 105.39—40:
tatas te daivatāḥ sarve ṛṣayaś ca tapodhanāḥ |
tapasā svena taṃ devaṃ sarva evābhyapūrayan || *39* ||
tasya tv āpyāyamānasya ṛṣibhir daivataiś ca ha |
babhau rūpaṃ yugāntāgnikālamṛtyusamaprabham || *40* ||
"Then all the deities and the sages, rich in austerities, all of them, filled the god [i.e. Varāha] with their own *tapas*. And being strengthened by the sages and deities, [Varāha's] body shone like the fire at the end of a *yuga*, time and death."

[219] SP 106.25:
mohaḥ samāviśac caiva taṃ devaṃ nandivardhanam |
devair mantraprabhāvena naṣṭamohaḥ punaḥ kṛtaḥ || *25* ||
"And stupefaction entered god Nandivardhana [Varāha], [but] the stupefaction was again destroyed by the gods through the power of *mantras*."

so that Viṣṇu would quickly kill Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 98.30—31)[220]. When Brahmā invoked Śiva, the following event takes place.

> SP 107.6—7:
> *tato vitimiraṃ sarvam abhavat pūrvavac chubham* |
> *prakṛtisthaṃ jagac cābhūd varāhaś codatiṣṭhata* |
> *tejo māheśvaraṃ divyaṃ viveśa madhusūdanam* || *6* ||
> *so 'pyāyitatanus tena śūlaṃ niṣkṛṣya mādhavaḥ* |
> *sahasrānalasaṃkāśo babhūva sa mahābalaḥ* || *7* ||
> "Then everything became free from darkness and bright like before, the world reached its natural state, Varāha stood up and Maheśvara's ["the Great Lord's", i.e. Śiva's] divine *tejas* entered Madhusūdana ["the Slayer of Madhu", i.e. Viṣṇu]. Mādhava [i.e. Viṣṇu], whose body was strengthened by it [i.e. Śiva's *tejas*], having pulled out the spear, immediately became powerful like a thousand fires."

The strengthening is effective, for Viṣṇu is not harmed anymore after this intervention. However, Śiva's promise that as soon as his *tejas* would enter Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu would quickly kill Hiraṇyākṣa, does not come to fruition because the battle continues for many years to come and only then, Varāha kills Hiraṇyākṣa.

Viṣṇu's need for help during a battle is found in at least one other myth in the *Skandapurāṇa*. In the battle between Viṣṇu and Prahlāda in SP_{Bh} 172, Viṣṇu is unable to conquer Prahlāda, so he calls Śiva to mind and praises him. This gives him the strength to

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[220] SP 98.30—31:
uktaḥ praṇamya deveśo viṣṇum āpyāyaya prabho |
tejasā svena sarveśa yathā hanyāt suradviṣam || *30* ||
bhagavān uvāca |
tasmin kale sureśānaṃ śārvaṃ tejo 'vyayaṃ harim |
pravekṣyati tato daityaṃ kṣipram eva nihaṃsyati || *31* ||
"Deveśa ["the Lord of the Gods", i.e. Śiva], having bowed down, was spoken to [by the gods and the sages (SP 98.29cd)]: 'Oh lord, please strengthen Viṣṇu with your own *tejas*, oh lord of all, so that he shall kill the enemy of the gods.' The lord said: 'At the right moment, Śarva's [i.e. Śiva's, i.e. my] *tejas* will enter the lord of the gods, the imperishable Hari [i.e. Viṣṇu], then he will quickly kill the Daitya.'"

fight again (SP_{Bh} 172.39cd—45ab). There is, in other words, internarrational consistency for this particular narrative element.

The second type of Viṣṇu's dependency in the main story of the Narasiṃha and Varāha myth is expressed just before Viṣṇu assumes the form of Narasiṃha and Varāha. At that moment, he tells the gods that he cannot kill the king of the Daityas on his own and that he needs their help.

When, in the Narasiṃha myth, the gods go to Viṣṇu to ask him to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu (SP 71.19—21), Viṣṇu gives the following response (SP 71.23—26)[221]. He first promises the gods that everything will be fine, but admits, at the same time, that Hiraṇyakaśipu is extremely strong (SP 71.23). Therefore, the gods should enter his body, so that he becomes *sarvadevamaya*, "consisting of all the gods", and then he will kill Hiraṇyakaśipu (SP 71.24). The gods comply with Viṣṇu's request and enter his body (SP 71.25ab). Having made a powerful, awe-inspiring body of a Narasiṃha, Viṣṇu takes off to Hiraṇyakaśipu's city (SP 71.25cd—26).

The Varāha myth has a very similar construction. When the gods ask Viṣṇu to kill Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 97.30), the following scene is narrated (SP 97.35—39, SP 98.1)[222]. Viṣṇu

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[221] SP 71.23—26:
evam astu suraśreṣṭhāḥ sarvaṃ kartāsmi vo vacaḥ |
mahābalaḥ sa daityendro yato yuṣmān vadāmy aham || 23 ||
āviśantu bhavanto 'pi śarīraṃ mama suvratāḥ |
sarvadevamayo bhūtvā dṛptaṃ haṃsyāmi vo ripum || 24 ||
tato devās tadā sarve viviśur vaiṣṇavīṃ tanum |
sa cāpi balavān bhūtvā rūpaṃ kṛtvā bhayānakam || 25 ||
nārasiṃhaṃ mahātejā nakhadaṃṣṭrāvibhīṣaṇam |
jagāma vilasan viṣṇur hiraṇyakaśipoḥ puram || 26 ||
"23. 'Let it be so, oh best of gods; I will do everything you said. [However,] the king of Daityas is very strong, therefore, I tell you: 24. you all (*api*) should enter my body, oh very pious ones. Having become consisting of all the gods, I will kill this arrogant enemy of yours.' 25. As a result then, all the gods entered Viṣṇu's body. And he, being empowered, having made the terrifying body 26. of a Man-Lion, frightening because of [his] teeth and fangs, the very glorious Viṣṇu playfully went to the city of Hiraṇyakaśipu."

[222] SP 97.35—39, SP 98.1:
hataḥ sa daityo durbuddhir devadviḍ vighnakārakaḥ |
kriyatāṃ rūpaṃ abhyetya vārāhaṃ mā vicāryatām || 35 ||*
mahātmā sa ca daityendro balavān dhārmikaś ca ha |
na ca śakyo mayaikena hantuṃ satyaṃ bravīmi vaḥ || 36 ||
sarvadevamayaṃ rūpaṃ vārāhaṃ nandivardhanam |
tat samāsthāya hantāsmi daityendraṃ taṃ mahābalam || 37 ||
tena rūpeṇa sarveṣāṃ yuṣmākaṃ devasattamāḥ |
mahīṃ śakyaṃ punas tasmād ihānayitum ojasā || 38 ||

first tells the gods that they should kill the evil Daitya, after having created a boar-form (SP 97.35). The reason for Viṣṇu's request is that Hiraṇyākṣa is so powerful and virtuous that he cannot kill him on his own (SP 97.36). However, once Viṣṇu will consist of all the gods, being thus empowered, he will be able to kill the enemy of the gods (SP 97.37—39)[223]. The gods act accordingly and make Varāha's body (SP 98.1), by taking their

yuṣmadarthe tam adyāhaṃ dānavaṃ dharmapālinam |
vadhiṣyāmi yathā siṃhaṃ śarabhaḥ sumahābalaḥ || *39* ||
[…]atha te suraśārdūlās tasya rūpaṃ pracakrire |
viśvakarmāṇam ādāya brahmāṇaṃ lokakāraṇam |
saptalokamayaṃ tasya śarīraṃ cakrur īśvarāḥ || *1* ||
"35. 'After having obtained a boar-form, you should kill [lit. "you should make dead" (*hataḥ […] kriyatāṃ*)] the evil Daitya, the enemy of the gods, the creator of obstructions; do not hesitate. 36. This lord of Daityas is great, strong and virtuous, and it is not possible to kill [him] on my own, to tell you the truth. 37. Having assumed this boar-form, consisting of all the gods, increasing joy, I will kill the very strong lord of Daityas. 38, With this body and with the strength of all of you, oh best of gods, it will be possible to bring the earth back here from him/ it [i.e. Rasātala]. 39. For your sake, I will kill this Dānava, the protector of *dharma*, today, just like a very strong Śarabha [kills] a lion.'+ […] 98.1. Then the tiger-like gods made his [i.e. Viṣṇu's] body. Together with Brahmā, the creator of the world, as the architect, the lords [i.e. the gods] made his body, consisting of the seven worlds."
* The manuscript evidence for *rūpaṃ abhyetya* is poor, because none of the oldest Nepalese manuscripts, given the siglum S in the critical editions of the *Skandapurāṇa*, can be consulted for this passage due to the loss of several folios, and the R and A manuscripts give different readings. For a short discussion on the manuscript transmission and other possibilities for the passage, see SP Vol. V, forth. For an overview of the available manuscripts, divided into three recensions (Nepalese (S), Revākhaṇḍa (R) and Ambikākhaṇḍa (A)), their script, dating and location of production and preservation, see SP Vol. I, 31—38 and SP Vol. IIA, 10—12.
+ This is a beautiful comparison because Viṣṇu himself was defeated in the form of Narasiṃha by Śiva in the form of a Śarabha in the afterlife episode of the Narasiṃha myth (see section 4.1.1 for an analysis of Narasiṃha's afterlife as well as more information on the Śarabha).
[223] The fact that the gods' entering is a prerequisite to kill the king of the Daityas is supported by two statements uttered by Hiraṇyākṣa in the Varāha myth. First, in SP 104.54ab, Hiraṇyākṣa says that "out of fear for me, this Varāha is steered by all the gods" (*madbhayāt sa varāhaś ca sarvadevair adhiṣṭhitaḥ*). Then, in SP 106.15, he expresses his disdain again, by making the difference between Varāha and him explicit. Varāha had to resort to the gods (and is, therefore, considered weak) and Hiraṇyākṣa can rely on his own strength (and is, therefore, considered strong).
SP 106.15:
tvaṃ lokamayam āsthāya śarīraṃ tair adhiṣṭhitam |
sarvair āpyāyitaś caiva saṃyuge mām upāgataḥ |
ahaṃ tu svena tapasā balena ca samanvitaḥ || *15* ||
"You, having resorted to a body that consists of the world[s], being steered by them [i.e. the gods], and being strengthened by all of them, have approached me in battle; I, on the other hand, am furnished with my own *tapas* and power."

positions in his limbs (SP 98.2—19)[224]. The result is a powerful, awe-inspiring body, as becomes clear later in the story, when the Asuras Prahlāda (SP 100.54)[225] and Vipracitti (SP 104.40)[226] separately warn Hiraṇyākṣa about this unnatural Boar.

The passages do not only show great similarity in structure, but also in the implementation of the concept of *sarvadevamaya*. Whereas, as I will show below, the concept is widely known from other sources as a positive character trait of various entities—from Narasiṃha to Śiva's chariot—, the way in which it is used in the Narasiṃha and Varāha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* is new and unique. Namely, as I will also demonstrate below, in these passages, an exceptional connection is made between Narasiṃha and Varāha being *sarvadevamaya* (i.e. a sign of strength) and them being otherwise unable to kill their enemies (i.e. a sign of weakness).

First of all, there are many examples of *sarvadevamaya* in other texts, where the compound has a positive meaning. It is sometimes applied to gods, such as Viṣṇu[227] and Śiva[228], and sometimes to other entities, such as Śiva's chariot in the Tripura myth[229].

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[224] The gods' entering is described in SP 98.2—18, where each limb is connected to a god, natural element or sacrificial element, as shown in section 2.2.

[225] SP 100.54:
yādṛśaṃ tad varāhasya tasya rūpaṃ tvayā śrutam |
sarvadevamayaṃ rājan varāho 'prākṛto mataḥ || *54* ||
"In as much as this body of this Boar has been heard about by you [namely, as] consisting of all the gods, oh king, the Boar is considered unnatural."

[226] SP 104.40:
tasyāṅge munayaḥ sarve dṛśyante saha devataiḥ |
kṛtyā seti mataṃ me 'dya tava hetor vinirmitā || *40* ||
"All the sages, together with the deities, are seen in his limb[s]. Now I think: 'this is sorcery, created for your sake [i.e. for the sake of your destruction]'."

[227] For example, MBh 6.61.54—56 is an enumeration of Viṣṇu's body parts, which are identified with gods. His two feet are the goddess earth, his arms are the cardinal directions, his head is heaven (MBh 6.61.54ab), his ears are the two Aśvins, his tongue is the goddess Sarasvatī (MBh 6.61.56ab), etcetera.

[228] For instance, in the *Anuśāsanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, a eulogy of the 1008 names of Śiva (MBh 13.17.30—150ab) includes: *sahasramūrdhā devendraḥ sarvadevamayo guruḥ*, "the one having 1000 heads, the lord of the gods, the one consisting of all the gods, the master" (MBh 13.17.129ab). Since a *nāmastotra* is by definition an act of worship, *sarvadevamaya* should be interpreted as a venerable epithet (for a definition and overview of sources of *nāmastotras* and other eulogies, see Stainton 2010). In a hymn in the *Skandapurāṇa*, Śiva is also called *sarvadevamaya* (SP 28.54).

[229] For example, in the *Mahābhārata* version of the Tripura myth, the gods make a chariot for Śiva that he can use during the battle for Tripura (MBh 8.24.67—76). Each part of the chariot is a divine being or an element on earth. For instance, the sun and the moon become the chariot's two wheels (MBh 8.24.71ab) and the lords of Nāgas become its pole (MBh 8.24.72ab). Although the word

Even Narasiṃha's body occasionally consists of all the gods because the gods have taken their positions in his limbs. In one of the Narasimḥa retellings in the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42A ll. 199—214)[230], for example, it is said that when Prahlāda sees Narasiṃha, he warns Hiraṇyakaśipu that such a Man-Lion has never been seen before. Prahlāda says that "the gods, as well as the oceans and rivers reside in his [i.e. Narasiṃha's] body" (*asya devāḥ śarīrasthāḥ sāgarāḥ saritas tathā*, HV App. 1 No. 42A l. 207) and he enumerates a long list of other entities inhabiting Narasiṃha's body (HV App. 1 No. 42A ll. 208—214), like gods (such as Kubera and Paśupati), creatures (such as Gandharvas and Nāgas), natural phenomena (such as the Himavat and other mountains) and other items (such as sacrifices and desire). Although Narasiṃha is not literally qualified as *sarvadevamaya*, the concept is certainly there, as is its positive meaning. Since Prahlāda sees the entire universe residing in Narasiṃha's body, he tries to convince Hiraṇyakaśipu that the form is divine and terrifying, and will be the Daityas' destruction (HV App. 1 No. 42A ll. 205—6). In other words, the fact that Narasiṃha is made up of all the gods is a sign of strength and extraordinary power.

This positive connotation of *sarvadevamaya* also finds expression in the *Skandapurāṇa*. For example, in the story of how Vṛṣabha, "the Bull", became Śiva's vehicle, it is told that all the gods "took up their own positions and Śiva became the owner of the bull" (*jagmuḥ svāni kṣayāni sma devo 'pi vṛṣavān babhau*, SP 33.116cd). Each deity then resorted to a limb of Vṛṣabha (SP 33.117—28)[231]. The concluding verse describes the final positive result: Vṛṣabha became endowed with the highest supremacy and consisting of all the gods (SP 33.129)[232]. What is particularly interesting about this

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sarvadevamaya is not used here, the concept is the same. The *Skandapurāṇa* follows the *Mahābhārata* version of the Tripura myth closely and also includes a passage on the chariot's arrangement. Here, it is made explicit that the gods made a chariot that is *sarvadevamaya* (SP_{Bh} 169.19c, 27c) because the gods (such as Indra and Agni), the Vasus, the Rudras, the season, the months, etcetera are arranged in the chariot (SP_{Bh} 169.20—26).

[230] The *Matsyapurāṇa* and the *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* share the same passage almost verbatim (MtP 162.2—9 and PdP *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* 42.85—92).

[231] For instance, "Brahmā resorted to his head" (*brahmā mūrdhānam āśritaḥ*, SP 33.117d) and "Varuṇa [was] in his tongue" (*jihvāyāṃ tasya varuṇo*, SP 33.118a).

[232] SP 33.129:
evaṃ sa bhagavān devaḥ paramaiśvaryasaṃyutaḥ |
saurabheyo mahādevaḥ sarvadevamayo 'bhavat ||
"This is how this son of Surabhī became master, god, endowed with the highest supremacy, the great god, consisting of all the gods."

example is that there is a possible explanation why Vṛṣabha is entered by the gods. In the verses preceding the gods' entering (SP 33.114), Śiva created a Gaṇeśa (lit. "Lord of Gaṇas", an assistant of Śiva)[233] called Prabhākara and ordered him: "you must contain the Bull's impetuousity" (SP Vol. IIB, 64). Even though it is not explicitly stated how Prabhākara followed Śiva's command, the entering of the gods could be his solution to control Vṛṣabha[234]. What the Bull had too much, Narasiṃha and Varāha had too little: strength and power.

This brings us to the unique situation in the Narasiṃha and Varāha myth. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers reworked this well-known concept of *sarvadevamaya* as strictly a sign of strength into a characterization that has an additional sign of weakness of Viṣṇu. Without the gods' entering, Viṣṇu would not be able to complete his task. He is thus presented as dependent on the gods. Whereas the positive outcome of being *sarvadevamaya* is consistent on the intertextual (and internarrational) level, the "negative" reason to become *sarvadevamaya* is consistent on the intranarrational level. After all, the portrayal agrees with the rest of the *Skandapurāṇa* from the perspective of the content of various narratives. I have already shown other cases in which Viṣṇu needs the gods in general and Śiva in particular during battles (both in the battle between Varāha and Hiraṇyākṣa and in the battle between Viṣṇu and Prahlāda), and I will show Viṣṇu's dependency on Śiva during the afterlives of his manifestations in section 4.1.

With this new interpretation of *sarvadevamaya*, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers are not only consistent on the internarrational level from the perspective of the narratives, but also from the perspective of the ideology of the text. Viṣṇu's dependency gives expression to the text's belief that Śiva is the highest god and superior to everybody, including Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu may still be the heroic and successful Asura-slayer in the manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*, there are several moments in the story that he desperately needs the other gods. The examples given so far mainly concern Viṣṇu's dependency on the gods

[233] The Gaṇas, Gaṇeśas, Gaṇapas ("Protectors of Gaṇas") and Gaṇeśvaras ("Lords of Gaṇas") are classes of beings who are Śiva's attendants.
[234] Alternatively, there are some *pādas* lost, in which it is narrated how Prabhākara fulfilled Śiva's command. This could then also explain why the transition from Śiva's command to the gods' entering does not run smoothly (SP Vol. IIB, 19). However, according to the editors of this part of the text, "there is no trace in any of the MSS [i.e. manuscripts]" (ibid, 64 note 206) of a possible loss of *pādas*.

in general, and to a lesser degree on Śiva. However, Śiva's help in the battle between Varāha and Hiraṇyākṣa is just a tip of the iceberg of his role in the manifestation myths for the success of Viṣṇu, as will become clear in this and the next chapter.

3.2 From Viṣṇu's *cakra* to Maheśvara's *cakra*

The second characterization concerns Viṣṇu's weapon, the *cakra*, "discus". At least by the times of the *Mahābhārata*, the *cakra* is identified as one of Viṣṇu's weapons[235]. It is generally described as a fiery weapon[236], adorned with one thousand spokes[237]. It is also known to always return to its owner, as expressed in one of the origin stories of the *cakra* in the *Mahābhārata*. At the moment that Agni gives the *cakra* to Krṣṇa, he tells that it will return to his hand, every time he has thrown it at his enemies (MBh 1.216.24)[238].

The *cakra* is also the weapon that Varāha uses in his war against Hiraṇyākṣa. One of the first texts that incorporated this element is the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42).

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[235] In his book *Viṣṇu's Flaming Wheel*, Wayne Edison Begley argues that in the Vedas, the *cakra* belonged to Indra instead of Viṣṇu (Begley 1973, 8). Although not all provided references are convincing (such as ṚV 2.11.20cd, cf. the translation by Brereton and Jamison 2014, vol. 1: 415), ṚV 8.96.9 seems indeed to connect Indra not only with his *vajra*, "thunderbolt", but also with the *cakra*.
ṚV 8.96.9:
tigmám áyudham marútām ánīkaṃ kás ta indra práti vájraṃ dadharṣa |
anāyudhā́so ásurā adevā́ś cakréṇa tā́ṃ ápa vapa ṛjīṣin || *9* ||
"[Maruts:] "Sharp is the weapon, the vanguard of the Maruts. (And) who dares venture against your mace, Indra? The lords lacking gods are weapon-less. With your wheel [=discus?] scatter them, possessor of the silvery drink" (translation by Brereton and Jamison 2014, vol. 2: 1201; the additions in round and square brackets are the translators').

[236] For example, MBh 3.23.32:
rūpaṃ sudarśanasyāsīd ākāśe patatas tadā |
dvitīyasyeva sūryasya yugānte pariviṣyataḥ || *32* ||
"And the shape of Sudarśana [*cakra*] as it flew in the sky was that of the haloed sun at the end of the Eon" (translation by Van Buitenen 1975, 266).

[237] For example, HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 566—67:
ataś candrapratīkāśaṃ so 'gṛhṇāc chaṅkham uttamam | *566* |
sahasrāraṃ ca tac cakraṃ cakraparvatasaṃsthitam || *567* ||
"Then he [i.e. Varāha] took the great conch, which resembles the moon, and that *cakra*, which is thousand-spoked and resembles Mount Cakra."

[238] MBh 1.216.24:
kṣiptaṃ kṣiptaṃ raṇe caitat tvayā mādhava śatruṣu |
hatvāpratihataṃ saṃkhye pāṇim eṣyati te punaḥ || *24* ||
"Whenever thou hast hurled it in battle at thy foes, O Mādhava [i.e. Viṣṇu], and hast slain them with it unobstructed, it shall return to thy hand" (translation by Van Buitenen 1973, 417).

HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 599—602:

tato bhagavatā cakram āvidhyād ity asaṃnibham | 599 |
pātitaṃ dānavendrasya śirasy uttamatejasaḥ || 600 ||
tataḥ sthitasyaiva śiras tasya bhūmau papāta ha | 601 |
daityendrasyāśanihataṃ meruśṛṅgam ivottamam || 602 ||

"Then the incomparable *cakra* was thrown at the head of the lord of the Dānavas [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa], of great *tejas* ["lustre"], by the lord [i.e. Viṣṇu], thinking: 'may it pierce [Hiraṇyākṣa]'. Then the head of that lord of the Daityas standing [there] fell on the ground, like the highest top of [Mount] Meru struck by lightning."

The *cakra* is also Viṣṇu's weapon in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Viṣṇu uses the *cakra* in a fight against Kālanemi during the Tārakāmaya war (SP_{Bh} 122.3cd—5)[239], and to kill Hiraṇyākṣa as Varāha.

SP 107.35, 40—41:

tad yugāntānalaprakhyaṃ kṣurāntaṃ sphoṭayan nabhaḥ |
jagāma dānavaṃ kṣipraṃ diśaḥ sarvā dahann iva || 35 ||
[...] tāḥ sarvās tat tadā cakraṃ mahad bhīmam anāśayat |
gatvā tasya śiraḥ kāyād unmamātha yathācalam || 40 ||
tat tena kṛttaṃ sumahac chiro 'gryaṃ
vyāttānanāgnipratimogranetram |
daṃṣṭrālam atyadbhutabhīmanādaṃ papāta meror iva śṛṅgam
uccam || 41 ||

[239] SP_{Bh} 122.3cd—5:
sa rathaṃ mahad āsthāya śatanalvordhvaketumat |
abhidudrāva vegena keśavaṃ prati dānavaḥ || 4 ||
tasyāpatata evātha cakram apratighaṃ mahat |
sasarja keśavo vyāsa sa tad vyaṣṭambhayat tadā || 5 ||
"Having mounted [his] big chariot, furnished with an erect flag [measuring] 100 *nalvas*, the Dānava [i.e. Kālanemi (SP_{Bh} 122.3c)] quickly rushed towards Keśava [i.e. Viṣṇu]. When he approached him, Keśava discharged the great, unobstructed *cakra*, oh Vyāsa, but he [i.e. Kālanemi] then stopped it."

> "The sharp-edged [*cakra*], resembling the fire at the end of an era, splitting the sky, quickly went to the Dānava, as if burning all directions. […] Then that big, terrifying *cakra* destroyed all these [magical spells sent by Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 107.38—39)]. Having gone to his [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa's] head, it cut [it] off from [his] body, just like a mountain. This very large, foremost head, being cut by him [i.e. Varāha]/ it [i.e. the *cakra*], with its mouth wide open and eyes fierce like fire, with tusks, with an extremely extraordinary and terrifying roar, fell, like the high top of [Mount] Meru."

The passage does not only contain one of the common characteristics of the *cakra* that it is fiery, it is also remarkably similar to the description of Hiraṇyākṣa's death in other texts, so we can speak of intertextual consistency. First of all, the very fact that Viṣṇu kills Hiraṇyākṣa with his *cakra*, beheading him, agrees with other texts[240]. Second, the comparison of Hiraṇyākṣa's head with the top of Mount Meru is also found in HV App. 1 No. 42.

The *Skandapurāṇa* composers, on the other hand, added a particular feature to the *cakra* that is not seen in the previous examples: the *cakra* comes from Śiva, as a bodiless voice told to Viṣṇu.

> SP 107.21—23:
> *śṛṇu deva varāhedaṃ śrutvā caiva samācara* |
> *aśakyo 'yaṃ tvayā hy evaṃ hantuṃ daityo mahābalaḥ* || *21* ||
> *abalo 'yaṃ kṛtaḥ krūro dhruvaṃ māheśvareṇa hi* |
> *tejasā paśya caivainam eṣa kālo 'sya vartate* || *22* ||
> *muktvainaṃ daityarājānaṃ cakreṇa vinisūdaya* |
> *māheśvareṇa vaikuṇṭha tato mṛtyum avāpsyati* || *23* ||

[240] Besides the *Harivaṃśa*, the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, for instance, also speaks of Hiraṇyākṣa being beheaded (VDhP 1.53.36).

> "Listen, oh god Varāha, and having listened to this, execute [it], for this very strong Daitya cannot be killed by you like this. Since this cruel one has certainly been made weak by Maheśvara's ["the Great Lord's", i.e. Śiva's] *tejas*—look at him—, his time has come. Having let him go, you should kill the king of the Daityas with Maheśvara's ["the Great Lord's", i.e. Śiva's] *cakra*, oh Vaikuṇṭha [i.e. Viṣṇu], so that he will find death."

In other words, the voice tells Varāha that if he keeps on fighting the way he does, he will not be able to kill Hiraṇyākṣa. The Daitya has already been weakened by Śiva's *tejas*[241], and now, Varāha should use Śiva's *cakra* to give him the final blow. Although it is not new that the *cakra* originally comes from another god than Viṣṇu himself, as the *Mahābhārata* example with Agni above has shown[242], it is new that this god is Śiva[243].

And this is not the only case in the *Skandapurāṇa* that Śiva is involved in Viṣṇu's *cakra*. In SP 68.10, it is said that after Viṣṇu had propitiated Śiva, Śiva granted boons to Viṣṇu. One of the boons is the Sudarśana *cakra* (SP 68.10—11ab)[244]. Later, in the Tārakāmaya myth, it is said that the *cakra* was made by Rudra, i.e. Śiva (SP_{Bh} 122.11)[245].

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[241] The voice's statement is not based on a well-definable event in the text, but seems to refer to the moment that Śiva's *tejas* enters Varāha in order to empower him (see section 3.1).

[242] Another example is the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, where the creational "architect" Viśvakarman granted the *cakra* to Viṣṇu (ViP 3.2.10—11ab).

[243] It is, however, found in later Śaiva Purāṇas, which according to Begley, is a sectarian development: "in certain other *Purāṇas* the creator of the discuss is said not to be Viśvakarman, but Śiva—suggesting overtones of a deep-seated sectarian rivalry between the two great deities of Hinduism" (Begley 1973, 20). The Purāṇas quoted by Begley are the *Padmapurāṇa* and the *Śivapurāṇa*, to which the *Liṅgapurāṇa* can be added as well (LiP 2.5.43).

[244] SP 68.10—11ab:
kasyacit tv atha kālasya svarṇākṣe hi mahātapāḥ |
yatra viṣṇur varāṃl lebhe devam ārādhya śaṃkaram |
cakraṃ sudarśanaṃ nāma dviṣatām antakopamam || *10* ||
ṛṣir āste mahābhāgaḥ śaradvān nāma gautamaḥ |
"And at some moment then, there was indeed a very pious and illustrious sage called Śaradvat Gautama [SP 68.11ab] in Svarnākṣa, where Viṣṇu, after having propitiated Deva ["God", i.e. Śiva], Śaṃkara, received boons [including] the *cakra* called Sudarśana, which is like death for [one's] enemies."

[245] SP_{Bh} 122.11:
sa tadā dyāṃ bhuvaṃ caiva vyāpya rūpeṇa sarvaśaḥ |

Each time the *cakra*, Viṣṇu's weapon *pur sang*, is mentioned, it is made explicit that it ultimately stems from Śiva. There is, in other words, internarrational consistency from the perspective of the narratives told in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

It is furthermore internarrationally consistent from the perspective of the Śaiva ideology of the text. In section 1.2.1, I identified several cases of Śaivizations in the text, where a narrative element is changed or a new component is introduced, so that the narrative matches the Śaiva teaching. One of the examples concerns Brahmā's task in the Śaiva universe as it is presented in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Even though Brahmā fullfils the same task as the one he has in other texts, this task of creation is assigned by Śiva. Brahmā is not the only example. In fact, it is Viṣṇu who officially obtains the task of Asura-slayer because Śiva granted him this as a boon in the afterlife episode of the Narasiṃha myth, as I will show in section 4.2.1. In the Śaiva universe of the *Skandapurāṇa*, the gods maintain their original roles, but Śiva assigns the tasks and actions to them. The result of this Śaivization is that Śiva is presented as being in full control of everything that happens in the universe. The same idea is behind the distribution of weapons. Although Viṣṇu remains associated and successful with his *cakra* in the *Skandapurāṇa*, this weapon is granted to him by Śiva. Thanks to this Śaivization, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers are able to give Śiva control over the *cakra*. With this subtle addition to Viṣṇu's *cakra*, Śiva becomes its agent, and, we may add, he becomes responsible and thus laudable for the great deeds performed with it[246]. Just as Śiva is the mastermind behind the tasks and actions of the gods, he is likewise the mastermind behind Viṣṇu's weapon *par excellence*. In other words, distribution becomes a form of taking control.

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cakraṃ tad abjaṃ sasmāra yat tad rudreṇa nirmitam || 11 ||
"Having completely pervaded heaven and earth with his body then, he [i.e. Viṣṇu] called to mind the water-born *cakra*, which was created by Rudra."

[246] Viṣṇu's *cakra* is not the only weapon that is associated with Śiva. The afterlife episode of the Varāha myth tells about the battle between Varāha and Skanda, when Viṣṇu did not give up his Boar manifestation. Towards the conclusion of the battle, Skanda uses the Saṃvartikā spear that makes Viṣṇu leave his boar-form. This spear is given to Skanda by Śiva, which makes Śiva its agent (SP 109.30, see section 4.1.2 for more information on this weapon).

3.3 "The Śarabha did not even budge"

The innovation that Viṣṇu's *cakra* comes from Śiva is not the only addition to the representation of Viṣṇu's weapons in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Another new component to his weapons features in the afterlife of Narasiṃha and Varāha, where it becomes clear that whereas the weapons proved successful against Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa respectively, they are not powerful enough in Viṣṇu's fights in his afterlives.

In the case of Narasiṃha, Viṣṇu continues to live in this manifested form, and the gods ask Śiva to do something about this (SP 70.11—14). Śiva assumes the form of a Śarabha, a mythical being[247], and approaches Narasiṃha (SP 71.48—50). As soon as Narasiṃha notices the Śarabha, he strikes him with the palm (*tala*) of his claw, the exact same weapon he used so effectively against Hiraṇyakaśipu, needing just one hit[248]. The situation is different when he fights against Śiva in the form of a Śarabha.

> SP 71.51—52:
> *atha siṃhas tadā dṛṣṭvā śarabhaṃ samupasthitam* |
> *krodhena mahatāviṣṭo talenainam atāḍayat* || *51* ||
> *sa hatas tena siṃhena śarabho naiva cukṣubhe* |
> *tataḥ śarabham āhatya vajradehaṃ mahābalam* |
> *ātmanaivāgamat kṛcchraṃ sparśāt tasya mahātmanaḥ* || *52* ||
> "Then the Lion, having seen the Śarabha standing nearby, being filled with great anger, struck him [i.e. the Śarabha] with the palm [of his claw]. The Śarabha, hit by the lion, did not even budge. Having struck the very strong Śarabha then, whose body was [hard] like diamond, he himself felt pain by the touch of the great-minded one."

[247] For more information on the Śarabha, see section 4.1.1.
[248] SP 71.44:
gṛhītvā sa tadā siṃho hiraṇyakaśipuṃ sakṛt |
talenāhatya taṃ prāṇair vyayojayata satvaram || *44* ||
"Then the Lion, having grabbed Hiraṇyakaśipu, having struck [him] with the palm [of his claw only] once, immediately took away his life."

Even though the same weapon is used, the Śarabha is not the least injured. The same word, *tala*, is used deliberately, for it perfectly contrasts the power of Viṣṇu's weapon against Hiraṇyakaśipu on the one hand, and its ineffectiveness against Śiva on the other[249].

The same situation occurs in the Varāha myth. As shown above, Varāha uses the *cakra* to cut off Hiraṇyākṣa's head (SP 107.40), and he uses it again in the afterlife episode. When Viṣṇu does not want to give up his boar-form, he eventually ends up in a fight with Skanda and one of Skanda's Gaṇapas (lit. "Protectors of Gaṇas") called Kokavaktra, throwing his *cakra* at Kokavaktra[250].

> SP 110.6—9:
> *tataś cakraṃ sahasrāraṃ yugāntāgnisamaprabham* |
> *śilāgrahaṇavyagrāya gaṇāya vyasṛjat prabhuḥ* || *6* ||
> *tad antakapratīkāśaṃ cakraṃ sarvasurāriham* |
> *viveśa na gaṇaṃ tūrṇaṃ tatas tad vyanivartata* || *7* ||
> *tan nivṛttaṃ punaś cakram akṛtvā kāryam ujjvalam* |
> *na jagrāha tadā viṣṇur avamene ca tat tadā* || *8* ||
> *tat tadānarcitaṃ tena cakraṃ dānavaghātinā* |
> *viṣṇunā prayayau kṣipraṃ svam eva bhavanaṃ prati* || *9* ||
> "6. Then the lord discharged the thousand-spoked *cakra*, which is like the fire at the end of a *yuga*, at the Gaṇa [i.e. Kokavaktra], who was focussed on catching a rock. 7. [However,] that *cakra*, resembling death, the slayer of the enemies of all the gods, did not quickly enter the Gaṇa, [but] it returned then. 8. Viṣṇu did not take up the blazing *cakra* again, which had returned, without doing its job, and disregarded it then instead. 9. Being disrespected by this Dānava-slaying Viṣṇu then, the *cakra* quickly went to its own abode."

[249] This difference has been noted by the editors of the *Skandapurāṇa*: "This contrasts with the earlier blow delivered to Hiraṇyakaśipu. While Narasiṃha was able to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu with a single blow (*talena*), this blow has no effect on the Śarabha" (SP Vol. IV, 44 note 90).
[250] The reason why Varāha ends up in this fight is that he is informed by Nārada that his son, Vṛka, having wrecked Skanda's palace garden, is kept in captivity and is being tortured by Skanda and his Gaṇapas. When Varāha wants to release his son, he encounters Skanda and his entourage.

Whereas Varāha's *cakra* instantly cut off Hiraṇyākṣa's head from his body, it does not even reach Kokavaktra. This is, I would argue, because Kokavaktra is the Gaṇapa of Skanda, who himself is the son of Śiva. He therefore falls within the realm of Śiva's company. There is an analogy with the Narasiṃha myth: Viṣṇu's weapon (claw or *cakra*) does its job in a fight against the Asuras, but it does not when it is used against Śiva or one of his attendants.

This contradiction in the afterlife episodes is, just as the afterlife episodes as a whole, an innovation in the *Skandapurāṇa*[251]. It shows once again a balance between what is known and what is new; a balance between elements with a Vaiṣṇava background and elements with a Śaiva background. On the one hand, the elements that Narasiṃha kills Hiraṇyakaśipu with his claw and that Varāha kills Hiraṇyākṣa with his *cakra* are known facts and fixed elements of the storyline. By being faithful to these components, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers are consistent on the intertextual plane. On the other hand, the inclusion of the contradiction in the afterlife episodes can be explained from the perspective of internarrational consistency on the ideological level. Śiva's indestructability (and that of his entourage by proxy) matches his superiority to anybody, including Viṣṇu who is otherwise a successful fighter. This new narrative element is, in other words, in line with the changes and innovations discussed in this chapter thus far that express a coherent Śaiva message of Śiva being the supreme god on top of the universe.

3.4 Viṣṇu as Śiva's devotee

Another noteworthy characteristic of Viṣṇu in the *Skandapurāṇa* is the fact that he is presented as a devotee of Śiva. This is done twice in the main story of the Varāha myth. First, Varāha pays respect to Rudra, i.e. Śiva, muttering the *rudramantra* (SP 98.50)[252],

[251] The idea that a weapon is unable to fulfil its task is not new. For example, Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava* contains a passage of all the weapons of the gods that were unable to kill the Asura called Tāraka. One of the unsuccessful gods with ditto weapon is Viṣṇu with his *cakra* (KS 2.49). The inclusion of this element in the *Kumārasambhava* is not prompted by ideology, but probably rather by the aspiration to embellish the narrative.

[252] SP 98.50:
tataḥ siddhir iti proktvā kṛtvā rudrāya vai namaḥ |
japañ jayāvahaṃ rudraṃ prayayau varuṇālayam || 50 ||

and later, he pays homage to Pināki̇n, "the one with the Pināka bow", i.e. Śiva (SP 107.26)[253]. The passages that showcase Viṣṇu as Śiva's devotee most explicitly are, however, in the afterlife episodes of the Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana myth.

When, in the afterlife of Narasiṃha, Narasiṃha hits the Śarabha without any effect, he realizes that it is Śiva. He bows down to Śiva and starts praising him with a long *stotra*, "hymn of praise" (SP 71.54—64). Some epithets refer to Viṣṇu and his relationship with Śiva specifically, such as *naranārāyaṇeśāya*, "[homage] to the master of Nara and Nārāyaṇa"[254] (SP 71.58c), and *yogadāya namo mahyaṃ tathaivaiśvaryadāya ca*, "homage to the one who grants union and supremacy to me"[255] (SP 71.63ab). A eulogy is by definition an act of worship, so it shows Viṣṇu's devotion to Śiva.

When Viṣṇu has taken on his own form again in the afterlife episode of the Varāha myth, he goes to Śiva's dwelling to see Śiva and praises him (SP 110.22—24). In this *stotra*, Viṣṇu puts emphasis on the theological notion that everything is dependent on Śiva and exists thanks to him, such as "oh god, you [will] always [be] the cause of creation and destruction" (*tvaṃ deva kāraṇaṃ nityaṃ saṃbhūteḥ pralayasya ca*, SP 110.22ab). Śiva is pleased with Viṣṇu's devotion and grants him a boon. Viṣṇu asks for a boon that is typically related to Pāśupata Śaivism: he wants to learn the *pāśupatavrata*. This suggests that Viṣṇu is entirely devoted to Śiva within a specific Pāśupata context[256].

The Pāśupata theme continues in the afterlife of Vāmana, where Viṣṇu, after having left his dwarfish body, praises Śiva for 1,006 years and six months (*varṣaiḥ ṣaḍbhis tu sahasreṇa […] māsaiḥ ṣaḍbhiś ca*, SP_{Bh} 121.14a—c). As a result, Śiva appears with his full entourage (Pārvatī, Nandin and the Gaṇas) and offers Viṣṇu a boon (SP_{Bh}

"Then, having said 'Success', having paid homage to Rudra, muttering the *rudra[mantra]*, which is the vehicle to victory, he [i.e. Viṣṇu] set out to Varuṇa's abode [i.e. the ocean]."

[253] SP 107.26:
bhagavān api dīpyantaṃ śriyā daityaṃ samīkṣya tam |
sasmāra tat tadā cakraṃ namaskṛtvā pināki̇ne || *26* ||
"And the lord [i.e. Viṣṇu], having seen the Daitya [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa], shining with lustre, remembered that *cakra* then, after paying homage to Pināki̇n ["the one with the Pināka bow", i.e. Śiva]."

[254] Nara and Nārāyaṇa are aspects of Viṣṇu in the form of two sages. By calling Śiva "the master of Nara and Nārāyaṇa", Narasiṃha acknowledges Śiva's superiority over himself.

[255] At the end of the afterlife episode of the Vāmana myth, Śiva grants Viṣṇu supremacy and union (SP_{Bh} 121.19d, 20cd). This passage will be discussed in section 4.2.3.

[256] This boon will be examined in section 4.2.2. For a short introduction to Pāśupata Śaivism, see note 35.

121.15). Viṣṇu wants to know how he will not be contaminated by sin or *tapas* (SP_{Bh} 121.16). Śiva tells him to perform the *mahāvrata*, "the great observance", which is qualified as a *pāśupatavrata* (SP_{Bh} 121.17). Viṣṇu practices it for twelve years (SP_{Bh} 121.18—19). This is one more clear instance in which Viṣṇu is presented as a devoted Pāśupata worshipper of Śiva[257].

It is not entirely new that Viṣṇu praises Śiva. As shown by John Brockington in his book *The Sanskrit Epics*, Kṛṣṇa worships Śiva in at least two stories in the *Mahābhārata*. The first story appears in the *Droṇaparvan*, in "the account of the killing of Jayadratha to avenge Abhimanyu's death" (Brockington 1998, 252). It enumerates various acts of worship towards Śiva by Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna (MBh 7.57). For example, when they visit Śiva, "they recite Vedic litanies to him (39—45); Śiva asks why they have come and is praised again (49—58) with litanies more specific to Rudra-Śiva" (ibid, 253); and later, they recite the *Śatarudriya*, one of the key *mantras* to Rudra (MBh 7.57.71). Another episode in which Kṛṣṇa is presented as Śiva's worshipper is in the *Anuśāsanaparvan* (MBh 13.14—18) within the framework of "Kṛṣṇa's worship of Śiva in order to get a son, Sāmba" (ibid, 254). According to Brockington, this account "may broadly be seen as a Śaiva equivalent of the *Nārāyaṇīya* [i.e. the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*]" (ibid.). One of Kṛṣṇa's most prominent acts of Śiva worship is his recitation of the *Śivasahasranāma*, "[the hymn of] the thousand names of Śiva", which takes up most of MBh 13.17.

Although these two examples predate the *Skandapurāṇa*, this characterization is not broadly supported. It can, in other words, not be seen as intertextual consistency. Rather, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers are consistent on the internarrational level. There are various passages besides those in the manifestation myths, in which Viṣṇu praises Śiva. Sometimes he worships Śiva by himself, as is the case in SP_{Bh} 172 during the fight between Viṣṇu and Prahlāda. When Viṣṇu realizes that he is unable to kill Prahlāda, "he called Mahādeva ["the Great God", i.e. Śiva] to mind and bowed down [to him] again and again" (*atha dhyātvā mahādevaṃ praṇamya ca punaḥ punaḥ*, SP_{Bh} 172.42cd). There are also instances in which Viṣṇu praises Śiva together with the other gods, as is explicitly stated in the following verse in a short Māhātmya on the holy place of Kedāra.

[257] This boon will be analyzed in section 4.2.3.

SP$_{Bh}$ 167.40:

brahmā śakras tathā viṣṇuḥ somo yakṣagaṇādhipaḥ |
arcayanti sthitaṃ tatra bhaktitaḥ parameśvaram || 40 ||

"Brahmā, Śakra [i.e. Indra], Viṣṇu, Soma and the lord of the Yakṣas and the Gaṇas [i.e. Kubera] praise Parameśvara ["the Highest Lord", i.e. Śiva] who is present there with devotion."

There are also countless examples of "the gods" in general praising Śiva, to which Viṣṇu should be counted[258]. Not only the gods are devoted to Śiva, sages, Asuras and people are as well[259]. In other words, in the Śaiva universe as it is presented in the *Skandapurāṇa*, everybody is a worshipper of Śiva[260]. The portrayal of Viṣṇu in the manifestation myths as Śiva's devotee fits this scheme perfectly. The fact that Viṣṇu receives a boon after each act of worship also contributes to one of the text's core messages that Śiva is a benevolent god and that worship to him is highly beneficial and can even lead to final liberation. As I have shown in section 1.2, the benefits of Śiva worship are expressed in the theological parts of the *Skandapurāṇa* that deal with the performance of Pāśupata practices, such as the *pāśupatayoga* and the *pāśupatavrata* (SP$_{Bh}$ 174—81), as well as in narratives on Śiva's devotees, such as the story of the sage Jaigīṣavya (SP 29.96—124). Viṣṇu's

[258] For instance, in SP 13, Viṣṇu and the other gods go to Pārvatī's *svayaṃvara* (the ceremony during which a woman chooses a husband). Indra arrives on his elephant called Airāvata, Viṣṇu arrives on Garuḍa, etcetera (SP 13.7—24). The gods hope to be chosen by Pārvatī as her husband and become angry, when Śiva in the form of a child is elected. As soon as Brahmā realizes that the boy is Śiva, he solicits Śiva to have mercy on the gods and urges the gods to resort to Śiva (SP 13.39—50). "The immobilized gods bow to Śarva [i.e. Śiva] in their hearts and he pardons them and restores them to their normal state. He assumes his highest form possessed of three eyes, the splendour of which makes the gods ask for a transcendent eye. This is given to them, whereupon they see the supreme god himself. They bow to him [(SP 13.51—55)]" (SP Vol. I, 87). Since Viṣṇu is explicitly stated to have arrived at the *svayaṃvara*, he must be one of the gods bowing down to Śiva.

[259] For example, the sage Upamanyu takes refuge with Śiva by practicing *tapas* (SP 34.69—72), and the Daitya Hiraṇyākṣa expresses his devotion to Śiva at several occasions, for instance when he boasts that he will offer Viṣṇu as an offering to Paśupati, i.e. Śiva (SP 100.60).

[260] One exception is king Kṣupa, who is a devotee of Viṣṇu. His story is told in SP 31.48—115, which deals with the enmity between Dadhīca, who is a Brahmin and a Śaiva, and Kṣupa, who is a *kṣatriya* and a Vaiṣṇava. The story "revolves around a dispute about the superiority of *brahman* over *kṣatra* and of Śiva over Viṣṇu. Dadhīca's victory proves the superiority of *brahman* and Śiva" (SP Vol. IIB, 5). The fact that Dadhīca is the winner is consistent with the overall message of the *Skandapurāṇa*.

devotion to Śiva and the subsequent boon-granting by Śiva are another confirmation of the efficacy of Śiva worship.

3.5 A Śaiva eulogy of Viṣṇu

Even though Śiva is generally the object of devotion, other gods are sometimes eulogized with a *stotra* as well. For example, in SP 32.113—7[261], Pārvatī is praised with a large number of epithets, from those concerning her marital status to Śiva (*mahādevapatnīṃ*, "the wife of Mahādeva ["the Great God", i.e. Śiva]", SP 32.113) to those related to her appearance (*viśālekṣaṇāṃ pītakauśeyavastrāṃ*, "the wide-eyed one who is dressed in yellow silk", SP 32.113). In SP 24.49—57, Nandin is praised by Viṣṇu. He is eulogized with epithets showing, for example, his devotion to Śiva (*rudrabhaktāya devāya*, "[homage] to the god who is a devotee of Rudra [i.e. Śiva]", SP 24.50c) and his familial relationship (*umāputrāya devāya*, "[homage] to the god who is the son of Umā [i.e. Pārvatī]", SP 24.52c). The fact that Pārvatī and Nandin are eulogized can be easily explained, for they belong to Śiva's entourage and are two key Śaiva figures.

Although this is not the case with Viṣṇu, he is nevertheless eulogized in a long *stotra* in the Varāha myth (SP 97.15—29cd). When the gods want to ask Viṣṇu to help them find a solution to the troublesome Hiraṇyākṣa, they first honour him with a *stotra*. Since the *Skandapurāṇa* is designed to promote worship to Śiva, a hymn to Viṣṇu may seem at first sight to be out of place from an ideological perspective. It is moreover the only *Viṣṇustotra* in the entire *Skandapurāṇa*. The eulogy is therefore not included for the sake of internarrational consistency on a narrative level. The eulogy is not consistent on the intertextual level either, for it is not a standard element in the Asura-slaying Varāha myth[262] (as opposed to the cosmogonic Varāha myth)[263]. If the *stotra* is not compliant with the rest of the text—neither on the ideological plane, nor on the narrative plane

[261] The hymn "is in the Daṇḍaka metre, a sort of rhythmic prose" (SP Vol. IIB, 48 note 130), resulting in long verses containing a large number of epithets and characteristics of Pārvatī.
[262] Sometimes this can be explained from the perspective of the narrative. For example, in HV App. 1 No. 42, Viṣṇu himself decides to intervene, and the gods do not play a role here (HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 562—63).
[263] For instance, in the cosmogonic Varāha myth in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, there are two hymns addressing Viṣṇu. The first is sung by the earth, asking Viṣṇu to lift her from the netherworld (ViP 1.4.12—24) and the second is sung by the sages, watching Varāha as he saves the earth (ViP 1.4.31—44).

(internarrational)—nor with other versions of the story (intertextual), the question raises why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers added it. The answer may partly lay in the extratextual sphere.

To recapitulate, forms of extratextual consistency are general world-knowledge, cultural codes and moral norms, but also literary conventions and conventions of literary genres. The inclusion of the *Viṣṇustotra* appears to be a literary convention for the context in which the eulogy appears: a request for help. When epic-Purāṇic composers wanted to describe a scene in which the gods approach another god for aid, they could follow a pattern of narrative elements. I will demonstrate this pattern on the basis of a comparison with another example from the *Skandapurāṇa*, the Tripura myth, in which Śiva conquers the Asuras by destroying the city of Tripura (SP_{Bh} 168—69).

1. The Asuras take control of the triple world. In the Varāha myth, this is done by Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 93—95) and in the Tripura myth, by Maya (SP_{Bh} 168.28—31).
2. The gods go to Brahmā for help (SP 97.1 and SP_{Bh} 168.32).
3. Brahmā tells the gods that the king of the Daityas cannot be killed in certain circumstances, as determined by birth in the case of Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 97.5), or as a result of a boon from Brahmā himself in the case of Maya (SP_{Bh} 168.33).
4. However, there is a solution and the gods should go to god X, who will help them. This is Viṣṇu in the Varāha myth (SP 97.6) and Śiva in the Tripura myth (SP_{Bh} 168.34).
5. The gods go to god X: Viṣṇu (SP 97.14) and Śiva (SP_{Bh} 168.35) respectively.
6. The gods praise god X and ask for help. In the Varāha myth, the gods sing a hymn of praise to Viṣṇu and ask him to kill Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 97.15—30). In the Tripura myth, the gods sing a hymn of praise to Śiva and ask him a favour (SP_{Bh} 168.36—51cd).
7. God X replies that he will help them and tells them the solution. Viṣṇu says he will kill Hiraṇyākṣa in the form of a Boar (SP 97.34—39) and Śiva says that he will kill Maya by destroying Tripura with one arrow (SP_{Bh} 169.14—15).

A praise of the god who is requested for help is a standard element of such narrative constructions, even when the god being praised would usually not be the object of worship according to the text's ideology. Looking at the *Viṣṇustotra* from this narratological perspective as a literary convention, the *stotra* is stylistically appropriate for this particular passage.

Even though there is extratextual consistency, the praise of the gods can also be implemented differently. For instance, the Narasiṃha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* shows the same pattern, but when the gods ask Viṣṇu for help and praise him, they do so without an actual *stotra*. It is simply stated that the gods were "praising Janardāna [i.e. Viṣṇu]" (*saṃstuvanto janardānam*, SP 71.18d). We may therefore assume an additional reason to include the *Viṣṇustotra* in the Varāha myth. This reason can be unveiled when we look at the content of the eulogy, for it can be shown that the epithets in the *stotra* have been carefully selected by the composers of the text.

Many epithets show the hand of the composers because they perfectly match the context of the eulogy, *viz.* an Asura-slaying manifestation myth in the *Skandapurāṇa*. In other words, the context is reflected in the choice of epithets. I have classified all 67 epithets in eight categories, some of which are analyzed in detail in the sections below.

1. Viṣṇu as warrior: *sarvaripughna-*[264], "slaying all enemies" (SP 97.15a), *dānavāntaka-*, "killer of Dānavas" (15b), *ajita- deva-*, "invincible god" (15c), *yama- deva-*, "god Yama" (17a), *jaya-*, "victory (17b), *śūra-*, "hero" (23c), *asurasūdin-*, "slayer of Asuras" (27b), *jaya-*, "victory" (28c)[265].
2. Viṣṇu as Brahmin: *nirdhūtarajas-*, "by whom dust is shaken off" (16a)[266], *dhāman- suvedhas-*, "pious abode" (16d), *yogin-*, "Yogin" (25c), *yajamāna-*,

[264] In this enumeration, I give the stem of the epithet, but in the text, the epithets are in the dative paring with *namaḥ*, "homage".
[265] The seven dotted epithets in SP 97.28cd—29cd do not survive in the oldest surviving recension because the folios of all three S manuscripts are lost for this part.
[266] I understand this epithet to mean a "pure", sinless person and associate it with a Brahmin.

"sacrificer" (25c)[267], *dānta-*, "restrained" (26c), *brahmasatpathadarśin-*, "showing the true path of *brahman*" (28b)[268].

3. Viṣṇu as deity: *sādhya- deva-*, "Sādhya god" (16c), *ādityaputra-*, "son of Aditi" (17c), *ādityānāṃ vara-*, "best of Ādityas"[269] (26b).
4. Viṣṇu's manifestations: *vāmanarūpa-*, "with the form of a Dwarf" (18c), *kṛṣṇadvaipāyana-*, "Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana" (18d), *rāma-*, "Rāma" (19a), *rāma-*, "Rāma" (19a)[270], *dattātreya-*, "Dattātreya" (19b), *narasiṃha-*, "Man-Lion" (19c), *dāmodara-*, "with a rope around the waist", i.e. Kṛṣṇa (20b), *kapilarūpa-*, "with the form of Kapila" (21a), *śaurin-*[271], "grandson of Śūra", i.e. Kṛṣṇa (26d), *vṛṣṇibandhu-*, "relative of the Vṛṣṇis", i.e. Kṛṣṇa (26d), *naṣṭadharmapravartin-*, "establishing *dharma*, when it has perished" (29b).
5. Mythological references[272]: *śakunihantṛ-*, "slayer of Śakuni" (20a), *nāgaśayyāpriya-*, "delighted in lying on a Nāga" (20d), *dhundhumāra-*, "killer of Dhundhu" (23c), *madhukaiṭabhaghātin-*, "slayer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha" (23d), *trivikramaviyatstha-*, "standing in the sky in three steps" (24c)[273], *puravighāta-*, "destroyer of the city" (25a), *bhṛgupatnīpramāthin-*, "destroyer of Bhṛgu's wife" (25d), *purāśvagrīvanāśa-*, "destroyer of Aśvagrīva in the past" (27a),

[267] I have considered grouping *yajamāna-* under the category of Viṣṇu as warrior because the *yajamāna* is the patron of a sacrifice, with the king being the *yajamāna* of the grandest of rituals, such as a horse sacrifice. However, since the context in which the *yajamāna* operates is a religious one, I have concluded that it matches the epithets of the category of Viṣṇu as Brahmin better.

[268] This reading is a conjecture of the editors of the text because of the poor manuscript transmission for this *pāda*.

[269] The Ādityas are a class of deities.

[270] In section 3.5.2, I specify the two Rāmas.

[271] The text reports *śauriṇe*, with the root *śaurin-*, but the regular form of Kṛṣṇa's epithet as "grandson of Śūra" is *śauri-*. However, such a shift of the ending *-i-* to *-in-* also appears elsewhere in the *Skandapurāṇa* (SP Vol. IV, 26).

[272] Some epithets apply to Viṣṇu and some to Kṛṣṇa.

[273] The four underscored epithets in SP 97.24cd—25ab are omitted by S_1, the only surviving S manuscript for this passage. Concerning this specific epithet, I have considered to classify *trivikramaviyatstha-* under the category of Viṣṇu's manifestations, referring to Vāmana. However, the category of mythological references fits the epithet better for three reasons. First, Vāmana is already mentioned with the epithet *vāmanarūpa-*. Second, *trivikramaviyatstha-* refers to a specific moment in the story of Vāmana. Third, Viṣṇu's three strides goes beyond the Vāmana myth. As shown in section 2.3, in the Vedas, the three strides are not associated with Viṣṇu's Dwarf manifestation but, among others, with his battle against Vṛtra together with Indra (ṚV 8.12.26—27).

saubhasālvavighātin-, "slayer of Saubha and Sālva" (27d), *padmanābha*-, "from whose navel a lotus [emerged]" (28a)[274].

6. Epithets related to Śiva or the *Skandapurāṇa*[275]: *salile tapyamāna*-, "practicing *tapas* on water" (20c), *jīmūtarūpa*-, "with the form of a cloud" (21c), *mahādevapriya*-, "dear to Mahādeva ["the Great God", i.e. Śiva]" (21d), *rudrārdharūpa*-, "whose body is half Rudra [i.e. Śiva]" (22a), *umārūpin*-, "with the form of Umā [i.e. Pārvatī]" (22b), *maheśvaragaṇa*-, "Gaṇa of Maheśvara ["the Great Lord, i.e. Śiva]" (22d), *śarva*-, "Śarva" (28c), *rudradattavara*-, "to whom boon(s) is/ are given by Rudra [i.e. Śiva]" (28d).
7. Physical features: *cakramudgarahasta*-, "having a *cakra* and hammer in his hand" (22c), *śrīvatsadhārin*-, "wearing the Śrīvatsa" (23b), *caturbhuja*-, "four-armed" (24a), *kṛṣṇa*-, "dark" (24a)[276], *ratnakaustubhadhārin*-, "wearing the Kaustubha jewel" (24b), *pītavastrasuvāsas*-, "well-dressed in yellow cloth" (24d), *gadākhadgogradhārin*-, "holding the fierce club and sword" (25b), *śārṅgadhanus*-, "with the Śārṅga bow" (27c), *śataḅāhu*-, "with a hundred arms" (29d).
8. Others[277]: *vaikuṇṭha- mahātman*-, "great Vaikuṇṭha" (15d), *satya*-, "truth" (16b), *naranārāyaṇa*-, "Nara and Nārāyaṇa" (17d), *sumati*-, "benevolent one" (18a), *viṣṇu*-, "Viṣṇu"[278] (18b), *dhātṛ*-, "supporter" (19d), *mahat- puruṣa*-, "great Man" (21b), *śivipiṣṭa*-, "bald-headed" (23a)[279], *vṛṣarūpa*-, "with the form of a bull"

[274] I have considered categorizing *padmanābha*- under Viṣṇu's manifestations as the equivalent of Viṣṇu's manifestation known as Pauṣkara, "the one related to the lotus". This manifestation is connected with the story in which Viṣṇu slays the two Asuras Madhu and Kaiṭabha (e.g. HV 31.14—20 and HV 42.14—33). However, since *padmanābha* is also used in other contexts than that of manifestations, I consider it to be a mythological reference. The doubling with *madhukaiṭabhaghātine*, "slayer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha" (SP 97.23d) is, however, undesirable.

[275] Some of these epithets can only be understood if the entire *Skandapurāṇa* is taken into account, which is done in section 3.5.3.

[276] I have considered categorizing *kṛṣṇa*- under Viṣṇu's manifestations as Kṛṣṇa, but since he is already represented three times—*dāmodara*- (SP 97.20b), *śaurin*- and *vṛṣṇibandhu*- (SP 97.26d)—I take *kṛṣṇa*- as an external feature.

[277] Either the epithets in this category have a more general character, or they are difficult to file under one of the other categories.

[278] Alternatively, *viṣṇu*- can be translated as "pervader".

[279] I have considered to classify *śivipiṣṭa*- under 'epithets related to Śiva or the *Skandapurāṇa*', because the *Skandapurāṇa* may be the first available text that gives a mythological explanation of the epithet. The text reports that during Pārvatī's *svayaṃvara*, Śiva immobilized various gods,

(26a)[280], *cekitāna-*, "intelligent" (26c), *sarveśvara-*, "lord of all" (29a), *puruṣa-vareṇya-*, "best Man" (29c).

I will not deal with each category individually. Instead, I choose those categories from which it is possible to recognize the hand of the composers. Categories 1, 4, 5 and 6 are particularly useful for this, so most epithets in these categories are discussed below[281]. Since the other categories are either limited in number (2 and 3) or contain general qualifications of Viṣṇu that show little innovation (7 and 8), they are left out of the discussion.

3.5.1 Viṣṇu as warrior and mythological references

Two of the eight categories include epithets that focus on Viṣṇu as an Asura-slayer, *viz.* Viṣṇu as warrior and the majority of mythological references. The former speaks for itself: they celebrate Viṣṇu in his heroic aspect with epithets such as *sarvaripughna-*, "slaying all enemies" (SP 97.15a), and *śūra-*, "hero" (SP 97.23c). Other epithets are less directly linked to this characterization, but are nevertheless related, like *yama- deva-*, "god Yama" (SP 97.17a). I understand the comparison with Yama, the god of death, as referring to Viṣṇu's role as slayer (of Asuras).

Most mythological references also qualify Viṣṇu as Asura-slayer. Nine out of the ten epithets in this category refer to stories in which Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa fights with the

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when they became angry with him in the form of a child (SP 13.32—38). Viṣṇu is one of them (SP 13.36), who "shakes his head in anger, but Śiva makes his hair fall out" (SP Vol. I, 86). There are two other references to this story in the form of epithets of Śiva, who is described as the cause of Viṣṇu's baldness: *kṛṣṇakeśāpahārin*, "the seizer of Kṛṣṇa's hair" (SP 14.9), and *śipiviṣṭakṛte viṣṇor*, "[homage] to him who made Viṣṇu bald" (SP 32.55, *śipiviṣṭa* is a variant of *śivipiṣṭa*). Because the latter two seem to refer to this particular story, Viṣṇu's epithet *śivipiṣṭa-* may too. At the same time, the epithet is already known from the *Ṛgveda* (ṚV 7.99.7b, ṚV 7.100.5a, 6b, 7b) and the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 12.330.6—8); both of which do not give an explanation of the epithet. Since it is apparently an old Vedic epithet, I categorize it under "others".

[280] I follow the editors of this chapter in their interpretation of the bull as Dharma (SP Vol. V, forth.). Elsewhere, the editors of the *Skandapurāṇa* already noted that "[t]he idea that Dharma is embodied in or personified by a bull is old (see e.g. MaS [*Manusmṛti*] 1.81: *catuṣpāt sakalo dharmaḥ* ["the entire Dharma has four feet"], and MaS 8.16: *vṛṣo hi bhagavān dharmas* ["for the bull is lord Dharma"]" (SP Vol. IIB, 65). For Viṣṇu's identification with Dharma, see Gonda 1954/1969, 171.

[281] Many epithets have been identified in SP Vol. V, forth., to which I occasionally refer, and which I expand where needed.

Asuras[282]. The main opponent is generally mentioned in the epithet, as the following cases exemplify.

- Śakuni in *śakunihantṛ-*, "slayer of Śakuni" (SP 97.20a). When Kṛṣṇa was still a baby, he killed the female bird (*śakunī*) called Pūtanā, "Stinking", after she had offered him her milk (HV 50.20—25)[283].
- Madhu and Kaiṭabha in *madhukaiṭabhaghātin-*, "slayer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha" (SP 97.23d). Viṣṇu killed the two Asuras Madhu and Kaiṭabha on his thighs, when they woke him from his cosmic sleep (MBh 3.194.6—end). The story is often connected to Viṣṇu's manifestation called Pauṣkara[284].
- Aśvagrīva ("Horse-necked") in *purāśvagrīvanāśa-*, "destroyer of Aśvagrīva in the past" (SP 97.27a). There are brief allusions to this story in the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 5.128.49)[285] and the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Rām 4.41.22)[286]. The *Agnipurāṇa* (AgP 1.2.16cd—17ab) and the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (BhāgP 8.24) connect the myth to Viṣṇu in his manifestation as a Fish (Matsya)[287].

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[282] The epithet of *nāgaśayyāpriya-*, "delighted in lying on a Nāga" (SP 97.20d), which refers to Viṣṇu sleeping on the cosmic ocean before a new era (e.g. ViP 1.2.60—66), is the only epithet that does not refer to a war myth.

[283] For a summary of this and other versions of the story (e.g. ViP 5.5.7—23), see Couture 2015b, 242—45.

[284] For other references to Madhu and Kaiṭabha, see for example, Bock 1987 and Couture 2009. On Pauṣkara, see note 274.

[285] MBh 5.128.49:
ekārṇave śayānena hatau tau madhukaiṭabhau |
janmāntaram upāgamya hayagrīvas tathā hataḥ || *49* ||
"When sleeping in the one vast ocean he slew Madhu and Kaiṭabha, and in another birth slew Hayagrīva*" (translation by Van Buitenen 1978, 427).
* *Haya-* in *hayagrīva-* is a synonym of *aśva-* in *aśvagrīva-*, both meaning "Horse-necked".

[286] Rām 4.41.22:
tatra pañcajanaṃ hatvā hayagrīvaṃ ca dānavam |
ājahāra tataś cakraṃ śaṅkhaṃ ca puruṣottamaḥ || *22* ||
"There [i.e. on Mount Cakravān (Rām 4.41.21)] Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being, killed Pañcajana and the *dānava* Hayagrīva and took that discus and a conch" (translation by Goldman and Lefeber 1984/2007, 148).

[287] According to Vettam Mani, in *Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*, the *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa* tells about a story of the Asura Aśvagrīva who can only be killed by someone with a horse neck. To circumvent this boon, Viṣṇu becomes Aśvagrīva himself and kills the Asura (Mani 1975, 183—84, 311).

Viṣṇu's Asura-slaying aspect does not only become clear from the vast number of epithets of both categories together, but also when they are contrasted with their "counterparts". First, the nine war-related mythological references outnumber the one reference that is not related to war. Second, the category of Viṣṇu as warrior can be set against the category of Viṣṇu as Brahmin, among which the former outnumbers the latter[288].

The emphasis on Viṣṇu's warrior aspect can be explained on two levels. First of all, it fits Viṣṇu's task as slayer of the Asuras in the *Skandapurāṇa* as a whole, so it creates internarrational consistency. It also specifically fits the context in which the eulogy takes place. After all, the gods approach Viṣṇu to ask him to put an end to Hiraṇyākṣa, so they invoke Viṣṇu in his warrior aspect. This intranarrational consistency shows that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers carefully selected epithets that particularly fit the Varāha myth.

3.5.2 Viṣṇu's manifestations

Another well-represented category is the one referring to Viṣṇu's manifestations. I have identified ten manifestations, besides the all-encompassing epithet *naṣṭadharmapravartin-*, "establishing *dharma*, when it has perished" (SP 97.29b). All ten manifestations are known from other early sources. In order to find out whether it is possible to know if the *Skandapurāṇa* follows a standard list of manifestations, I have made a survey of various early sources.

[288] Warriors and Brahmins have different duties in life and ditto qualifications and laws to adhere to. This difference can be observed in the Vāmana myth, where Viṣṇu says that he has adopted Brahminhood and no longer follows the *dharma* of the warriors. This theme will be discussed in section 4.1.3.

Manifestations[289]	*Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*	*Harivaṃśa*[290] and *Brahmapurāṇa*[291]	*Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* (BḍP, MtP, VāP)
Vāmana (SP 97.18c)	MBh 12.326.74—76, 12.337.36b[292]	HV 31.68—92, BrP 213.80—104	PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5C.73
Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana (SP 97.18d)[293]	MBh 12.334.9a—d	HV 31.147*479.1—4[294], HV App. 1 No.42B ll. 3014—15 (not in BrP)	PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5C.79
Rāma Jāmadagnya (SP 97.19a)[295]	MBh 12.326.77	HV 31.100cd—109, BrP 213.113—23	PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5C.77

[289] Because of the ample textual evidence of all manifestations quoted below, I do not agree with the designation "minor manifestations" for Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, Dattātreya and Kapila, as employed by several scholars. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, for instance, lists Kapila (Gopinatha Rao 1914, 247—48), Vyāsa, i.e. Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana (ibid, 250), and Dattātreya (ibid, 251—56) under the category of "minor avataras and manifestations of Vishnu" in his work on Hindu iconography. More recently, Knut A. Jacobsen (2008) also uses the term in his book on Kapila. This terminology does not do justice to the wide range of textual sources in which the manifestations appear, and it even has a negative connotation, for it suggests that these manifestations are less important than others.

[290] The *Harivaṃśa* has various manifestation lists (see Brinkhaus 2001), but I focus on the manifestations given in HV 31, which I only supplement with manifestations from other parts of the text, when they are not narrated here.

[291] One expects the manifestation list that is shared by the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Brahmapurāṇa* to be included in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, but I did not find it in Kirfel 1927.

[292] MBh 12.326.71—92 is a list of six manifestations of Viṣṇu, starting with Varāha. Vāmana is not mentioned explicitly, but the actions of Viṣṇu's Dwarf manifestation are described (MBh 12.326.74—76). MBh 12.337.36ab is a list of four manifestations, which also starts with Varāha.

[293] Kṛṣṇadvaipāyaṇa and Kapila are discussed below.

[294] Most manuscripts include these four half verses between the manifestation myths of Kṛṣṇa and Kalkin. Only manuscripts $Ś_1$, $G_{2,3}$ and $M_{1—3}$ do not have these verses, but since the editorial policy demands $Ś_1$ and $M_{1—3}$ to include a given verse in order to be adopted in the critical edition, the verses are categorized as a star passage. According to the editor of the *Harivaṃśa*, these star passages are later additions. Although this is generally true, the manuscript evidence shows that at some point Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana became a manifestation of Viṣṇu in the *Harivaṃśa*. In an article on Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, Marcelle Saindon tries to explain how this variation in the *Harivaṃśa* came into existence, by highlighting the two most significant developments of the manifestation in early Purāṇas. On the one hand, the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa* include Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana as one of Viṣṇu's manifestations. On the other hand, the *Brahmapurāṇa* does not include Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana. Since the *Brahmapurāṇa* borrows heavily from the *Harivaṃśa*, it is telling that it has not borrowed these star verses. Saindon proposes that at some moment, there were two coexisting *Harivaṃśa* versions: one without Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, from which the *Brahmapurāṇa* borrowed its list, and the other with Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, as suggested by the lists in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa* (Saindon 2004—05, 313—14).

[295] I identify the two Rāmas as Rāma Jāmadagnya and Rāma Dāśarathi for intertextual reasons. They both feature in numerous manifestation lists, including the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* and *Harivaṃśa* passages referred to in this table. For references to other texts, see Saindon 2004—05, 313. There

Rāma Dāśarathi (SP 97.19a)	MBh 12.326.78—81	HV 31.110—42, BrP 213.124—58	PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5C.78
Dattātreya (SP 97.19b)[296]	–	HV 31.93—100ab, BrP 213.105—12	PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5C.75
Narasiṃha (SP 97.19c)	MBh 12.326.73c—f, 12.337.36a	HV 31.31—67, BrP 213.43—79	PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5C.71cd—72
Kṛṣṇa (*dāmodara*-, SP 97.20b[297], *śaurin*- and *vṛṣṇibandhu*-, SP 97.26d[298])	MBh 12.326.82—92, MBh 12.337.36b	HV 31.143—47, BrP 213.159—63	PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5C.80 (not in MtP)[299]
Kapila (SP 97.21a)	MBh 12.326.64, referring to Kapila as the founder of Sāṃkhya	HV 10.48—49, BrP 8.55—56, referring to Kapila as the slayer of the sons of Sagara	PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 2B.55cd—57[300] (same text as HV and BrP; not in MtP), referring to Kapila as the slayer of the sons of Sagara

is a third Rāma, Balarāma, who is also one of Viṣṇu's manifestations. Balarāma seems to be meant in the Ambikākhaṇḍa recension of the *Skandapurāṇa*, for the A manuscripts read *nāgāya*, "[homage] to the Nāga", and Balarāma is often equated with the mythical serpent Śeṣa. For example, in the *Harivaṃśa*, Janameya wants to learn about Balarāma (called Baladeva here, HV 90.1b), "whom they know as the Nāga Ananta [i.e. Śeṣa]" (*anantaṃ yaṃ vidur nāgaṃ*, HV 90.3cd).

[296] Dattātreya is a complex figure with different roles and identities in different traditions. One of these is that he is a manifestation of Viṣṇu. According to the *Harivaṃśa* (HV 31.93—100), Viṣṇu was born as the Brahmin Dattātreya in order to bring back the cosmic order, by, among others, restoring the Vedas with their sacrifices and rituals, and the *dharma*. For an elaborate study on Dattātreya, see Rigopoulos 1998.

[297] For an analysis of Dāmodara as one of Kṛṣṇa's names, see Couture 2015a.

[298] Both epithets relate to Kṛṣṇa's genealogy. The epithet *śaurin*- is a patronimycum of Kṛṣṇa, referring to Kṛṣṇa's grandfather Śūra. The epithet *vṛṣṇibandhu*- refers to Kṛṣṇa, being the son of Vasudeva and therefore born in the Vṛṣṇi clan.

[299] The *Matsyapurāṇa* has the Buddha as the ninth manifestation instead.

[300] This manifestation is present in a different section of the *vaṃśānucarita* than the other manifestations. The verse appears in text group I: the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Brahmapurāṇa*, *Harivaṃśa*, *Śivapurāṇa Dharmasaṃhitā* and *Vāyupurāṇa*.

As the table shows, all manifestations are well-supported. Two of these, however, have a relatively limited distribution and appear in a different context than the other manifestations: Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana and Kapila.

According to various texts, Viṣṇu manifests himself as Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana to divide the Veda into four parts. He is also known as (Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana) Vyāsa or Vedavyāsa[301]. Among the texts shown in the table, only PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5C.79 lists Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana (where he is called Vedavyāsa) among other manifestations of Viṣṇu. The *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan*, on the other hand, only qualifies Vyāsa as a manifestation of Viṣṇu when it happens to mention Vyāsa, and not in a structured manifestation list. The references either speak of Vyāsa as born from (a part of) Nārāyaṇa, i.e. Viṣṇu[302], or equate him with Nārāyaṇa (MBh 12.334.9a—d)[303]. Even though the situation in the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* is different from the one in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, there is enough textual evidence that Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana has been one of Viṣṇu's manifestations from an early epic-Purāṇic period onwards.

Kapila is considered to be a manifestation of Viṣṇu throughout the epic and Purāṇic genre as well, but there are at least two different Kapilas that qualify as such. There is one Kapila who killed the sons of Sagara. This narrative is found in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 3.55cd—57), represented by a large number of texts (see note 300), including the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Brahmapurāṇa*[304]. There is a

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[301] Besides the surveyed texts, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is significant here as well because it features Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana in two manifestation lists. First, in ViP 3.2.54—end, Viṣṇu's functions in the four *yugas* are described. In the *Kṛtayuga*, Viṣṇu has the form of Kapila (ViP 3.2.56), in the *Tretāyuga*, the form of a king (ViP 3.2.57), in the *Dvāparayuga*, the form of Vedavyāsa (ViP 3.2.58), and at the end of the *Kaliyuga*, he has the form of Kalkin (ViP 3.2.59). Another passage, ViP 3.3.4—21, places Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana in a list of Viṣṇu's manifestations as different *vyāsas*, "compilers", of the Vedas, in different eras. Parāśara, one of the interlocutors of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, explains that "after having seen that the heroism, energy and power of the people have diminished" (*vīryaṃ tejo balaṃ cālpaṃ manuṣyāṇām avekṣya ca*, ViP 3.3.6ab), Viṣṇu "creates the portions of the Vedas" (*vedabhedān karoti saḥ*, ViP 3.3.6d). Parāśara then lists all the Veda-compilers (*vedavyāsā*, ViP 3.3.10a), concluding with the 28th, being Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana (ViP 3.3.19b).

[302] MBh 12.337.4, 14ff. and 55. For an overview of *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* passages with Vyāsa, see Grünendahl 1997, 238—39.

[303] MBh 12.334.9a—d:
kṛṣṇadvaipāyanaṃ vyāsaṃ viddhi nārāyaṇaṃ prabhum |
ko hy anyaḥ puruṣavyāghra mahābhāratakṛd bhavet |
"Know that Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vyāsa is lord Nārāyaṇa, for who else can be the creator of the *Mahābhārata*, oh tiger-like man?"

[304] The *Araṇyakaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* also refers to this story (MBh 3.45.25—27).

second Kapila, who is the founder of the Sāṃkhya system. One of the earliest attestations of this Kapila is in the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* (MBh 12.326.64)[305], where he is listed among other philosophical founders[306].

It is difficult to say which of the two Kapilas is referred to in the *Viṣṇustotra* of the *Skandapurāṇa*. In fact, both Kapilas appear elsewhere in the text, though never as manifestations of Viṣṇu[307]. In the eulogy, Kapila is nevertheless Viṣṇu's manifestation, just as Rāma Jāmadagnya is also a manifestation in the eulogy, but not in a narrative narrated elsewhere in the text[308]. Since both Kapilas are known in the *Skandapurāṇa*, the text itself does not provide a conclusive answer to the question which Kapila is meant in the *stotra*. However, based on the content of the myth in which the eulogy appears and on the comparison made with the other sources, I conclude that Kapila the slayer is more probable. After all, this Kapila fits the warrior-oriented content of the Varāha myth and the *Skandapurāṇa* corresponds exactly with the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* passage quoted in the table.

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[305] MBh 12.326.64:
vidyāsahāyavantaṃ mām ādityasthaṃ sanātanam |
kapilaṃ prāhur ācāryāḥ sāṃkhyaniścitaniścayāḥ || *64* ||
"The teachers who are convinced of the design of Sāṃkhya call me 'Kapila', endowed with wisdom, whose base is the Ādityas, the eternal one."

[306] See Oberlies 1997, 128ff. for a discussion of the manifestations in this passage and see Jacobsen 2008, 31ff. for an overview of Purāṇas that contain manifestation lists with Kapila.

[307] The myth of Kapila as the slayer of the 60,000 sons of Sagara is told in SP_{Bh} 126—27. It follows the *Mahābhārata* version of the myth (MBh 3.104—8) rather closely, where he is not a manifestation of Viṣṇu either. Kapila as the founder of Sāṃkhya features in SP_{Bh} 172, where Prahlāda becomes a Sāṃkhya teacher. When Prahlāda decides to dedicate his life to this philosophical system, he officially becomes a pupil, as stated in the following passage.
SP_{Bh} 172.59cd—60ab, 61cd—62ab:
sākṣād bhagavataḥ śiṣyaṃ kapilasyāsuriṃ munim || *59* ||
śiṣyatvenopasaṃgamya mokṣavidyām avāptavān |
[…] mokṣavidyāparārthajñaḥ sāṃkhyasiddhāntapāragaḥ || *61* ||
siddhaḥ pañcaśikhaḥ nāmnā so 'bhavad munisattama |
"Having publicly approached the sage Āsuri, the pupil of lord Kapila, in order to become [his] pupil, he [i.e. Prahlāda] reached knowledge [that shall lead to] liberation. […] Knowing the highest goal of knowledge [that shall lead to] liberation, mastering Sāṃkhya-Siddhānta, he became the Siddha ("Accomplished One") called 'Pañcaśikha', oh best of sages."
The *Skandapurāṇa* follows the classical line of Sāṃkhya leaders. Kapila is the founder, Āsuri is his first disciple and Pañcaśikha is Āsuri's pupil. See Bakker 2014, 8—9 for a short discussion on why the Sāṃkhya tradition is included in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

[308] In section 1.3, I have argued that in SP_{Bh} 121.23—124.end, Rāma Jāmadgnya is not a manifestation of Viṣṇu.

Since the *Skandapurāṇa* has the closest parallels with the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, represented by the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa* (and for a large part by the *Matsyapurāṇa*), it is tempting to assume that an early form of these Purāṇas was the source of inspiration for the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. However, as the table also shows, the epithets are well-distributed among the other texts too. The wide range of textual sources indicates the general popularity of these manifestations. Each time a new Purāṇa was composed, these manifestations were at the disposal of Purāṇic composers, ready to be included in manifestation lists. The adoption of such standard manifestations in the *Skandapurāṇa* eulogy can be understood as intertextually consistent because they are intrinsically linked to Viṣṇu.

The reason why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers included such a large set of manifestations is again probably related to the intranarrational level. Just as the eulogy is set in the context of slaying an Asura, it is also set in the context of Viṣṇu manifesting himself to re-establish the cosmic order. The large number of manifestations in the eulogy is in line with the topic of the Varāha myth and can be seen as a deliberate choice of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers.

3.5.3 Epithets related to Śiva and the *Skandapurāṇa*

Eight epithets can be grouped together because they have a link with Śiva, Pārvatī or the *Skandapurāṇa*. Some examples are given here to illustrate how these epithets can be interpreted and how they reveal the hand of the composers.

- The epithet *mahādevapriya-*, "dear to Mahādeva ["the Great God", i.e. Śiva]" (SP 97.21d), expresses Viṣṇu's devotion to Śiva[309], which is a theme throughout the *Skandapurāṇa*, as shown in section 3.4.
- The epithet *salile tapyamāna-*, "practicing *tapas* on water" (SP 97.20c), generally refers to Śiva[310]. For example, in a hymn of praise to Śiva in the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 7.5.49ff.), Śiva is invoked as *tapyamānāya salile*, and elsewhere in the

[309] The epithet *maheśvaragaṇa-*, "Gaṇa of Maheśvara ["the Great Lord", i.e. Śiva]" (SP 97.22d), also shows Viṣṇu's devotion to Śiva.
[310] Another epithet that usually involves Śiva is *śarva*, "Śarva" (SP 97.28c), for it is one of Śiva's names.

Skandapurāṇa, the epithet is likewise applied to Śiva (SP 14.16a and SP_{Bh} 122.36c). It goes back to the Sthāṇu myth, in which Śiva practices *tapas* in water (see for example MBh 10.17)[311]. The epithet is not known as Viṣṇu's, and I did not find a narrative in which Viṣṇu practices *tapas* on water. Instead, the composers may have intended Viṣṇu's "yogic sleep" (*yoganidrā*) on the cosmic ocean before a new era[312]. The following epithet, *nāgaśayyāpriya-* (SP 97.20d), should probably be connected to *salile tapyamāna-*, for they both involve water. Furthermore, the similarities between this epithet being used for Śiva in the context of the Sthāṇu myth and it being used for Viṣṇu in the context of his cosmic sleep may have also contributed to the transposition from Śiva to Viṣṇu: Śiva practices *tapas* before the (re)creation of the universe, and Viṣṇu lies on Śeṣa before creation; Śiva's *tapas* is done on water, and Viṣṇu lies on the water.

- The epithet *rudrārdharūpa-*, "whose body is half Rudra [i.e. Śiva]" (SP 97.22a), refers to Viṣṇu's body that is associated with Śiva in the form of Harihara. Harihara is a type of imagery where Śiva and Viṣṇu are combined into one icon, each forming one half[313]. This is a widespread iconographic phenomenon, which has been visualized textually in the *Skandapurāṇa* at the end of the Vāmana myth,

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311 When Śiva practices *tapas* in the water for a long time, Brahmā mentally creates a second creator, Dakṣa (MBh 10.17.11). Brahmā helps Dakṣa feeding all creatures. The population grows so fast that Śiva becomes angry and emerges from the water. He makes clear that in fact, all food has been produced through his *tapas*. After this speech, Śiva leaves and starts practicing *tapas* on a mountain (summary based on Shulman 1986, 103).

312 There are numerous examples of Viṣṇu's yogic sleep (see Couture 2015d). For instance, in the Varāha myth of HV App. 1 No. 42, Viṣṇu sleeps before the creation starts.
HV App. 1 No. 42 ll. 62—63:
tataḥ svapiti dharmātmā sarvalokapitāmahaḥ | 62 |
kim apy amitavikrānto yoganidrām upāgataḥ || 63 ||
"Then the righteous grandfather of all the worlds [i.e. Viṣṇu], of such immeasurable might, sleeps, having gone to a yogic sleep."

313 The epithet *umārūpin-*, "with the form of Umā [i.e. Pārvatī]" (SP 97.22b), has a similar compound construction and may be understood in the same sense. However, I am not aware of any narrative or image in which Viṣṇu merges with Pārvatī. Alternatively, Umā may be understood as the all-encompassing goddess, who represents all women. In that case, the epithet could refer to Viṣṇu's form as Mohinī, an enchanting woman who stole the *amṛta* back from the Asuras in the Amṛtamanthana myth. Another alternative has been suggested by the editors of this part of the *Skandapurāṇa* that *umā-* should rather be interpreted as "flax", a blue flower (SP Vol. V, forth.). *Umā-* then refers to Viṣṇu's blue skin: "with the colour (*rūpa*) of a flax". If Viṣṇu's colour is indeed meant, then the ambiguity with Umā as Śiva's wife must still have been intended, for the audience of the *Skandapurāṇa* would immediately associate *umā-* with Pārvatī.

where Śiva grants half of his body to Viṣṇu (SP_{Bh} 121.20), and Viṣṇu reaches *yoga*, "union", with Śiva[314].

- The epithet *jīmūtarūpa*-, "having the form of a cloud" (SP 97.21c), refers to a story in the *Skandapurāṇa*, in which Yajña, "Sacrifice", once had the form of a cloud (SP 31.38—46)[315]. It is common practice to identify Viṣṇu with the sacrifice (see Gonda 1954/1969, 77—80).

The epithets in this category display the hand of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers most clearly, in particular those referring to stories that are only known from the text itself, as well as those epithets that demonstrate Viṣṇu's devotion to Śiva. After all, these are new elements that are not found in texts prior to the *Skandapurāṇa*. By introducing these new designations, the composers integrate the *Viṣṇustotra* within the rest of the text, establishing internarrational consistency.

3.5.4 Which narrative consistency prevails?

I started this analysis of the gods' eulogy to Viṣṇu with a comparison with other requests for help. In this textual context, it is a literary convention that the gods praise the requested god. Even though the *Viṣṇustotra* can thus be explained as consistent on the extratextual level, there are also cases in which a similar request for help follows the same pattern, but without an actual *stotra*. It is then simply stated that the god in question is praised by the gods. This raises the question why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers did not opt for this second possibility.

To answer this question, I have taken the content of the eulogy into consideration. Most epithets appear to fall into well-definable categories that moreover fit the context of the eulogy. The many epithets that are related to Viṣṇu as warrior and as a deity who manifests himself fit the context of the *stotra* perfectly, since the eulogy appears in the context of the Varāha myth, which celebrates Viṣṇu as Asura-slayer and in his

[314] The iconography of Harihara and its textual representation is discussed in note 388.
[315] The epithet *rudradattavara*-, "whose body is half Rudra [i.e. Śiva]" (SP 97.22a), probably also refers to specific moments in a myth in the *Skandapurāṇa*. In SP 68.10, Śiva grants Viṣṇu various boons, including the Sudarśana *cakra*, and also in each afterlife episode of Viṣṇu's three manifestation myths, Śiva grants Viṣṇu a boon (see section 4.2).

manifestation of the Boar. Thanks to this intranarrational consistency, the eulogy is stylistically blent into the rest of the narrative. However, stylistic writing does not seem to have been the only concern of the composers. The epithets that are specifically related to the *Skandapurāṇa* and Śiva reveal an additional reason to include a *Viṣṇustotra*. Some of the epithets in this category make a unique connection with other narratives in the *Skandapurāṇa*, and others appeal for Viṣṇu's characterization in the *Skandapurāṇa* as Śiva's devotee. In this way, the *Viṣṇustotra* becomes a Śaiva variant of such a eulogy to Viṣṇu. With this new version, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers were able to take control of how Viṣṇu should be worshipped from a Śaiva perspective.

3.6 Conclusions

The way in which Viṣṇu is portrayed in the *Skandapurāṇa* is unprecedented. His character shows both Vaiṣṇava elements that are known from other sources and Śaiva elements that are innovations. To explain this new, composite image of Viṣṇu, a four-fold categorization of different narrative consistencies has been introduced. To prevent unnecessary repetition, a few examples of each type of consistency should suffice in order to demonstrate the composers' attempt to use different mechanisms of consistency.

- Intranarrational consistency can be observed in the choice of epithets for the *Viṣṇustotra* in the Varāha myth. By selecting a large number of epithets referring to Viṣṇu as an Asura-slaying warrior and his manifestations, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers create consistency with the rest of the Varāha myth being a story on Viṣṇu manifesting himself to conquer the Asuras.
- Internarrational consistency becomes particularly apparent in cases where Viṣṇu's characteristic traits have a Śaiva disposition. The idea that Viṣṇu's *cakra* stems from Śiva and does not work against Śiva's attendants can be understood from the text's ideology that Śiva is superior and the ultimate saviour. Such innovations reflect the *Skandapurāṇa*'s core principles found in the rest of the text.
- Intertextual consistency concerns those narrative elements and character traits that are known from other texts. The main storyline is, for a start, maintained in

the *Skandapurāṇa*. The same goes for some of Viṣṇu's key features, such as the *cakra* being one of his principle weapons.

- Extratextual consistency has been identified as one of the reasons to include a *Viṣṇustotra* in the *Skandapurāṇa*, as it appears to be a literary convention to add a praise to a request for help. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers actively engage with this literary standard, by narrating an extensive *stotra* to Viṣṇu.

The majority of the case studies show a combination of different levels of consistency. For example, the *Viṣṇustotra* displays all four levels. Its inclusion can be explained from an extratextual perspective, and its content displays intranarrational, internarrational and intertextual consistency. Most combinations of narrative consistency are, however, one of intertextual and internarrational consistency. These concern characteristics of Viṣṇu which are a mix of features that are known from other texts, mainly with a Vaiṣṇava background, and features that agree with the Śaiva ideology of the *Skandapurāṇa*. The reason why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers often chose this kind of characterizations can be explained with the help of a theory developed in the field of Greek and Latin literature, namely 'anchoring innovation'.

In the position paper 'Anchoring Innovation: A Classical Research Agenda'[316], Ineke Sluiter has defined anchoring innovation as follows (emphasis in italics mine).

> "*Innovations* may become *acceptable, understandable, and desirable* when relevant social groups can effectively *integrate and accommodate* them in their conceptual categories, values, beliefs and ambitions. This is the case when they can *connect what is perceived as new to what they consider familiar, known, already accepted*, when, that is, innovations are 'anchored'" (Sluiter 2016, 23).

[316] Anchoring Innovation is an NWO-funded project, studying innovations in Greek and Latin society. More information can be found in the position paper by Sluiter 2016 and on the project website https://www.ru.nl/oikos/anchoring-innovation/.

In other words, innovations of any kind—from new architectural constructions to new policies or new literary genres—should contain a familiar component in order to be accepted by the prospected users, voters or audience. The same applies to most of Viṣṇu's new characteristics in the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the manifestation myths. Viṣṇu's *new* features should contain elements that are *familiar, known, already accepted*, in order to become *acceptable*. In order to demonstrate that this process is present in the *Skandapurāṇa*, I will revisit some of the characteristics that I have identified as internarrational and intertextual consistency and as a combination of the two.

Viṣṇu's characteristics discussed in the category of internarrational consistency can be seen as what is *new*, the *innovations*. Many internarrational elements have a Śaiva nature and contribute to the text's ideology that Śiva is superior to all. This does not only *innovate* the myth, but it also contributes to the *integration and accommodation* of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Thanks to these innovations, the intrinsically Vaiṣṇava myths become integrated and accommodated in the Śaiva text. Hence, the words 'integrate' and 'accommodate' in Sluiter's definition is, at least in the case of the *Skandapurāṇa*, not limited to the audience's "conceptual categories, values, beliefs and ambitions", but can also be applied to the text of the innovators. In order to be accepted, the innovation should comply with the context in which the innovation takes place.

Integration and *accommodation* also takes place in the sense that the new Śaiva characteristics are integrated in and accommodated to the known Vaiṣṇava characteristics. Those features that fall under intertextual consistency are what is defined in the theory of anchoring innovation as *familiar, known, already accepted*. Innovations should be accommodated to known characteristics of Viṣṇu because they are already in the audience's *conceptual categories, values, beliefs and ambitions*. This means that innovations cannot be taken too far. For instance, if Brahmā, who is well-known as the god of creation, would be portrayed as the god of destruction, the composers might lose their credibility. After all, according to the general worldview of that time, Brahmā is the creator god and not the one who causes the end of the universe. Composers had to acknowledge certain general notions, including those related to Viṣṇu. Some of his features simply cannot be changed, such as the fixed narrative element that Viṣṇu is the one who conquers the king of the Daityas.

According to the theory of anchoring innovation, the goal of such combinations of the known and unknown is to *become acceptable, understandable, and desirable*. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers probably had a similar aim. Their version of the manifestation myths had to become accepted by their audience. Being accepted is crucial for retellings, in particular those that have been radically changed, because they do not yet belong to the established order. The greatest chance at acceptance is when there is a balance between the known and the unknown[317].

Whereas the *Skandapurāṇa* composers carefully weighted innovations and fixed knowledge for the main story of the manifestation myths, they took a different approach in their narration of the afterlives of Viṣṇu's manifestations. These afterlife episodes are unknown from earlier sources and replace Viṣṇu's heroism with strong Śaiva believes. How can we explain this alternative narrative approach?

[317] In chapter 6, the *Conclusions*, I will argue that a dramatic visualization of those retellings that have been changed radically from an ideological point of view can additionally contribute to their acceptance. Since the new, Śaiva retellings of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths did not belong to the established order yet, it seems important that they were told in an appealing, scenic and rich style of writing, instead of in a more static, straightforward summary presentation.

tubhyaṃ viṣṇo mayā dattaḥ puṇyo hy eṣa varaḥ śubhaḥ |
ayonau sajjamānasya svayonau pratipādanam ||
"Oh Viṣṇu, I have given you this auspicious and glorious boon:
the return to your own birth, when you cling to an unnatural birth."
Skandapurāṇa 71.68

4 And they lived happily ever after… or not? A new ending for Viṣṇu's manifestation myths

All three manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana revolve around the central problem that the cosmic order has been disturbed, because the king of the Daityas has taken over control of the universe, and the gods have lost their homes and power. The solution is provided by Viṣṇu, by manifesting himself as Man-Lion, Boar or Dwarf and conquering the Daitya king in question. The manifestation myths generally end here; that is, with Viṣṇu's heroic deed of conquering the king of the Daityas, returning the power over the universe to Indra, and, although not always stated explicitly, Viṣṇu leaving his manifested form and taking on his own divine body again[318].

In the *Skandapurāṇa*, on the other hand, the story does not end there. Viṣṇu continues to live in his manifestation, twice voluntarily, once against his will. This creates a new problem: as long as Viṣṇu does not return to his normal self, the cosmic order is not entirely restored. This new problem demands a new solution, provided by Śiva or one of his attendants. Since these new endings, containing an afterlife of Viṣṇu's manifestations, are the topic of this chapter, a summary of each of them is in place.

Narasiṃha myth. As soon as Narasiṃha kills Hiraṇyakaśipu, all remaining Daityas flee to Rasātala, Indra regains power, and the gods return to their own kingdoms (SP 71.47). Everything is back to normal, except for one thing: Viṣṇu does not give up his Narasiṃha form, so Indra goes to Śiva to ask him whether he can make Viṣṇu leave this body (SP 70.11—14). As a solution, Śiva becomes a Śarabha, a mythical being, and approaches Narasiṃha (SP 71.49—51). Narasiṃha attacks the Śarabha, but the latter does

[318] Although the Varāha myth is sometimes followed by a myth of creation (as demonstrated in section 2.2), the latter is a separate story that can be read individually.

not even flinch, which makes Viṣṇu realize that the Śarabha is Śiva and he starts praising him (SP 71.52—66). Śiva is pleased by this and tells Viṣṇu that he will always help Viṣṇu "to return to his own birth" (*svayonau pratipādanam*, SP 71.68). The Śarabha steps on Narasiṃha and reunites Viṣṇu with his divine body (SP 71.71). Before departure, Śiva gives Viṣṇu the boon of "slaying Daityas" (*daityaghnaṃ*, SP 71.72).

Varāha myth. When Varāha has beheaded Hiraṇyākṣa (SP 107.41) and has rescued the earth from Rasātala, carrying her back to her original place (SP 108.14—16), Varāha returns the power over the universe to Indra and promises that he will kill other Asura kings whenever needed (SP 108.17—18). The gods ask Varāha: "having resorted to your own form [again], please become like before" (*svāṃ mūrtim āsthāya yathā pūrvaṃ tathā bhava*, SP 108.19cd). Varāha replies that he wants to enjoy this boar-form a little longer but that he will become a god again after some time (SP 108.20—21). The gods return to their kingdoms, and Varāha holds a victory festival (SP 108.22—end). Meanwhile, Varāha and his wife Citralekhā get a son called Vṛka (SP 109.1). Vṛka goes out roaming around and arrives at Skanda's palace, where he wrecks the entire garden (SP 109.2—6). Since Skanda is at Mount Mandara to visit his father Śiva, he appoints one of his Gaṇapas, called Kokavaktra, to watch over the palace. Kokavaktra finds Vṛka and catches him (SP 109.21). As soon as Skanda returns, he orders Kokavaktra, on the advice of his father, not to release Varāha's son (SP 109.27—31). Nārada, the messenger of the gods, sees this and goes to Varāha to inform him about the situation (SP 109.34—38). When he finds out what is done to his son, Varāha gets furious and sets off to Skanda's palace (SP 109.39—end). When Varāha arrives, a big fight takes place between Varāha and Skanda with the help of Kokavaktra (SP 110.4—10). Skanda finally takes his Saṃvartikā spear, which he had received from Śiva during his visit earlier, and pierces Varāha's heart with it (SP 110.11—14). As a result of this hit, Varāha leaves his body and "stands with another body" (*dehenānyena tasthivān*, SP 110.15d), taking on his "old body" (*dehaṃ [...] paurāṇaṃ*, SP 110.16ab). Viṣṇu goes to Śiva (SP 110.16cd), who is pleased with Viṣṇu's devotion and achievements and wants to grant Viṣṇu a boon (SP 110.26). Viṣṇu asks Śiva to teach him and the gods the *pāśupatavrata*, "the Pāśupata observance", so that they become victorious in battle against the Asuras (SP 110.27—28).

Śiva consents to Viṣṇu's request and goes to Mount Meru to instruct the *vrata* (SP 110.29—end).

Vāmana myth. When Bali has returned to Pātāla, and the gods have regained their kingdoms thanks to Viṣṇu's trick to become Vāmana (SP_{Bh} 117.20), the gods praise Viṣṇu (SP_{Bh} 117.23—27). Because of this eulogy, Viṣṇu becomes exceedingly proud and therefore loses his highest *yoga*, "power" (SP_{Bh} 117.28—29), and a Pāpmā, "Sin", enters him (SP_{Bh} 117.30). Pāpmā turns Viṣṇu into a Dwarf again (SP_{Bh} 118.1). Since Viṣṇu is unable to kill enemies in this state, he should bathe in *tīrthas*, "holy bathing places", perform a horse sacrifice together with the gods and visit Śiva, who will purify him and release him from Pāpmā (SP_{Bh} 118.12—14). The gods take Viṣṇu on a pilgrimage (SP_{Bh} 118.15—119.105) and make him perform a horse sacrifice on the top of the Himavat (SP_{Bh} 119.106—7). Śiva arrives there and grants the gods a boon (SP_{Bh} 120.21). The gods ask Śiva to complete the sacrifice and to release Viṣṇu from sin (SP_{Bh} 121.4). Śiva consents to their wish: he concludes the sacrifice and splits Mount Himavat with his lance, so that streams of water start flowing that purify Viṣṇu, releasing him from Pāpmā (SP_{Bh} 121.5—7). The gods return to their homes, but Viṣṇu stays on the mountain to praise Śiva for 1,006 years and six months (SP_{Bh} 121.13—14). Śiva, being pleased with Viṣṇu's devotion, tells Viṣṇu to ask for a boon (SP_{Bh} 121.15). Viṣṇu wants to know how he will not be contaminated by sin or *tapas* (SP_{Bh} 121.16). Śiva tells Viṣṇu to perform the *mahāvrata*, "the great observance", which is qualified as a *pāśupatavrata* (SP_{Bh} 121.17). When Viṣṇu has performed the *mahāvrata* for twelve years, he obtains "supremacy" (*paramaiśvarya*), and Śiva gives half of his body to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu thus reaches union (*yoga*) with Śiva, and his body becomes "Viṣṇuśaṃkara" (SP_{Bh} 121.18—20).

Whereas each manifestation and each storyline demand a different approach[319], all three manifestation myths follow the same pattern for the two parts in which the afterlife episodes can be divided. The first part concerns the above-mentioned new problem that arises when Viṣṇu clings to his manifestation. The cosmic order is only truly restored when he has taken on his own form again. The solution is provided by Śiva or

[319] For example, whereas Viṣṇu simply continues to live as Narasiṃha and Varāha, this is not possible for his Vāmana manifestation. After all, it is a fixed part of the general storyline that Viṣṇu leaves his dwarfish body. Therefore, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers designed an alternative implementation of the new problem with Viṣṇu returning to his Vāmana manifestation.

one of his attendants by proxy, Skanda in this case. Śiva (or Skanda) makes him return to his original body or provides Viṣṇu and the gods the right solution how this can be effectuated. This new problem-solution pattern is in each manifestation myth implemented differently, adjusted to the requirements and characteristics of the manifestation in question. I start this chapter (4.1) by examining this pattern and exploring which choices are made per manifestation. I take a comparative approach by looking for the origins of particular narrative elements and the reasons to include them. Why, for instance, is a Śarabha chosen as the appropriate opponent of Narasiṃha; why does Skanda fight with Vṛka and Varāha instead of Śiva himself; and why should Viṣṇu be taken on a pilgrimage to expiate Pāpmā? It should not come as a surprise that across all these well-chosen opponents and practical solutions there is one consistent factor: Śiva is behind all solutions and he is the ultimate saviour here.

The second shared part of the afterlife episodes is the fact that Viṣṇu receives a boon from Śiva. First, he obtains the important cosmic task of being the slayer of the Daityas and then, he receives the *pāśupatavrata* twice, the highest teaching for Pāśupata Śaivas. How does this task fit Viṣṇu's character; and what does it mean that Viṣṇu performs the *vrata* twice, both in a practical sense (is there a difference between the two?) and in a theological sense? These questions are addressed in the second part of this chapter (4.2).

Besides these content-related questions, I will also address the question why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers changed particularly the endings so radically. Whereas changes and additions are common practice in the retelling of the manifestation myths, as demonstrated in the previous chapters, such radical innovations as the afterlife episodes show are unknown from earlier and contemporary retellings in the epics and the Purāṇas[320]. As I will argue in the introduction to section 4.1, based on the structure of the

[320] To the best of my knowledge, only three other later Purāṇas add an afterlife to Viṣṇu's manifestations. The *Śivapurāṇa* (ŚiP *Śatarudrīyasaṃhitā* 10—12) and the *Liṅgapurāṇa* (LiP 1.95—96) add an afterlife to Narasiṃha and allude to an afterlife of Varāha. The *Kālikāpurāṇa* (KāP 29—30) adds an afterlife to Varāha, within which Narasiṃha has an afterlife as well. Since these are the only Purāṇas with an additional episode, I give a summary of them, highlighting some details that are relevant in light of the *Skandapurāṇa*.
ŚiP *Śatarudrīyasaṃhitā* 10 and LiP 1.95: When Narasiṃha has killed Hiraṇyakaśipu, Viṣṇu does not return to his own body. He stays in his Man-Lion form, causes terror among the gods and is a real threat. Brahmā and the gods go to Śiva for help. Śiva promises the gods that he will take care

Narasiṃha myth, it is possible to see that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers put much emphasis on the story told in the afterlife episode. I will argue that the composers made the deliberate choice to convey this message at the very end of the narrative, because it is

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of Narasiṃha. ŚiP *Śatarudrīyasaṃhitā* 11 and LiP 1.96.1—59: Śiva calls Vīrabhadra to mind, who immediately appears before Śiva. Śiva orders Vīrabhadra to make Viṣṇu return to his original form. Vīrabhadra tries to convince Narasiṃha to give up his manifested form; for example, by reminding him of Śiva's glorious deeds and his attendants' victories. One of the arguments is that "the enemy of Tāraka" (*tārakāri*), i.e. Skanda, had slain Viṣṇu in his Varāha form (ŚiP *Śatarudrīyasaṃhitā* 11.50 and LiP 1.96.47cd—48ab). This is a clear reference to an afterlife of Varāha, which above all includes the same conclusion as Varāha's afterlife in the *Skandapurāṇa*. ŚiP *Śatarudrīyasaṃhitā* 12 and LiP 1.96.60—end: Vīrabhadra's speech only makes Narasiṃha even more angry, and Narasiṃha attacks him. Vīrabhadra leaves, and Śiva arrives in his turn, having become a Śarabha. By the sight of the Śarabha alone, Narasiṃha becomes weak, and the Śarabha starts a fight. Narasiṃha then praises Śiva and asks for mercy. The Śarabha does not listen and kills Narasiṃha. The gods go back to their abodes, and the universe and the distribution of power returns to normal.

The afterlife of Varāha in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* is an intricate story with many cross-references and (parts of) myths combined. KāP 29: Śiva tells Varāha that it is time to leave his boar-form because he has completed his task—returning the earth to her original position—and because it is a harmful body. Viṣṇu as Varāha promises to cast off his boar-form, and both Varāha and Śiva leave. However, Varāha continues to live in the mountains and starts a sexual relationship with the earth, who is in "the form of a boar" (*potrīrūpa*, KāP 29.26a). They get three sons: Suvṛtta, Kanaka and Ghora. The boys are wild animals and wreck the earth, but Varāha does not try to stop them. Nor does he show any sign of abandoning his manifested form. KāP 30: the gods take refuge with Nārāyaṇa (KāP 30.2d; apparently, the Boar manifestation is separate from Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa). They complain about Varāha and his three sons. Viṣṇu asks Śiva to make him abandon the boar-form because he is not able to do it on his own (KāP 30.32) and asks him to kill Varāha (*śaṃkaro hantu potriṇam*, "may Śaṃkara kill the boar", KāP 30.33d). To accomplish this, Śiva becomes a Śarabha (the form that in the *Skandapurāṇa* fights with Narasiṃha instead) and starts a battle with Varāha and his three sons. The entire world is destroyed, and the three sons and the Śarabha are on the verge of death. Brahmā goes to Varāha to beg him to leave this boar-form. Viṣṇu then assumes the form of a Fish to carry the seven sages and the Vedas, as they have sunk into the water along with the entire earth. Then Viṣṇu, called Varāha again (KāP 30.86c), sees the Śarabha still fighting with his sons. Varāha calls his earlier Narasiṃha form to mind. Narasiṃha arrives and gives his *tejas* to Varāha. The fight between the Śarabha and the boars continues with more boars joining the fight. In reaction to that, the Śarabha creates numerous Gaṇas. Varāha's party of boars is on the losing side, so Varāha decides that it is time to leave his Varāha body and at that moment, the Śarabha splits Narasiṃha into two. Nara arises from his human part, and Nārāyaṇa from his lion part (KāP 30.124—26). Viṣṇu, in the form of Varāha, asks the Śarabha to kill him as well (KāP 30.132). In his speech, he further announces to become Varāha (again) when the earth has sunk (again), and then, Śiva's son (*te sutaḥ*, "your son", KāP 30.139b), i.e. Skanda, will make Varāha leave his form, as soon as Varāha's job is done (KāP 30.138—39, N.B. this has again a parallel with the *Skandapurāṇa*). After this speech, the Śarabha kills Varāha and his three sons. Śiva's Gaṇas fight with Varāha's attendants and kill them all. KāP 31: each part of Varāha's body is cut, and the parts become various sacrifices and sacrificial elements.

It would go beyond the scope of this dissertation to study the possible influence of the *Skandapurāṇa* on the *Śivapurāṇa*, *Liṅgapurāṇa* and *Kālikāpurāṇa*; for this topic, see Granoff 2004.

the most defining part of a story. It is what lingers in the minds of the audience and what is remembered most vividly. If one changes the end of a narrative, one can essentially change the message of the entire story. Composers can therefore take most control of a narrative, when they put their most important message—i.e. the message they want the audience to remember—at the end. I call this "the principle of end weight". I adopted the term "end weight" from the field of grammar, where end weight refers to the principle that the new, heavier, longer and more important part of the sentence is placed at the end. This principle will be central in this chapter to identify the reason why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers changed the end in a much more radical fashion than the main story[321].

The principle of end weight, in particular the idea that one can take control of a narrative by taking control of its end, may additionally provide one of the reasons why the manifestation myths were incorporated into the *Skandapurāṇa* in the first place. This possibility is based on one of the few systematic studies on the importance of endings of narratives, by Timothy S. Miller in his doctoral thesis called *Closing the Book on Chaucer*[322]. Miller addresses the same questions on both the importance of endings and

[321] This is in addition to the theory of anchoring innovation. As explained in section 3.6, for the sake of acceptance, the content of a retelling should not be removed too far from what the audience knows. There is, in other words, a limitation to the amount and size of innovations, in particular, so it seems, in the main story of a narrative.

[322] Most studies on endings deal with the definition of "end" (e.g. McQuillan 2000, 318), the importance that a story has an end (e.g. Kermode 1967/2000), or the formal devices on how to end a story, such as formulae, morals, prayers or deviating meter (e.g. Zeelander 2011). An exception to these works, besides Miller 2014, is *Closure in the Novel* by Marianna Torgovnick. She acknowledges the importance of the end by stating that "an ending is the single place where an author most pressingly desires to make his point—whether those points are aesthetic, moral, social, political, epistemological, or even the determination not to make any point at all" (Torgovnick 1981, 19). One of the reasons for this, she argues, is the fact that "[i]n long works of fiction, […] it is difficult to recall *all* of a work after a completed reading, but climatic moments, dramatic scenes, and beginnings and endings remain in the memory and decisively shape our sense of a novel as a whole" (ibid, 3—4). This confirms my assumption that the end is remembered most vividly. Nevertheless, this work by Torgovnick will be not used otherwise because it deals with new novels that are not based on earlier versions. This differs from my comparative approach to retellings.
Within the field of Indology, the issue seems to be little raised as well, with the exception of A.K. Ramanujan. In his article on the many tellings of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, he notes various differences, including the fact that "there are two endings to the story. […] Each of these two endings gives the whole work a different cast. The first one celebrates the return of the royal exiles and rounds out the tale with reunion, coronation, and peace. In the second one, their happiness is brief, and they are separated again, making separation of loved ones (*vipralambha*) the central mood of the whole work. […] With each ending, different effects of the story are highlighted, and the whole telling

the importance of changing endings on the basis of a comparative study of the works of Chaucer. The works of Chaucer do not always have an ending, and this void was occasionally filled by later authors. Miller notices that "[t]his study [on endings] will confirm our intuitive but rarely theoretically-articulated sense that the ending stands as the primary site of control in narrative, or rather the locus of attempts to control a given narrative, the place where competing voices and discourses struggle to regulate the reception and future use of the text" (Miller 2014, 9). Since the ending is the place of control, Miller continues, this also means that "[t]o change an ending will change what the text means in a given time and place; to reinterpret an ending can have the same effect" (ibid, 10). This was done, for example, by Scottish authors who "completed" those works of Chaucer that had no ending. Miller calls the result of this completion "a "Scotticization" of the Chaucer tradition effected through rewritings of the poet's endings. […] Through the mediation of the endings, Chaucer becomes the property of the Scots" (ibid, 46). By adding Scottish endings to Chaucer's works, the Scots try to claim the works as their own.

This study on Chaucer does not only confirm my assumption that the endings are the most defining parts of a narrative and that changing those narrative parts can have a great effect, it may also shed a light on why Viṣṇu's manifestation myths were incorporated by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. If Chaucer's works became the property of the Scots through Scotticization of the works in general and their endings in particular, could it be the case that Viṣṇu's manifestation myths likewise became the property of the Śaivas through Śaivization of the myths in general and their endings in particular? In order to be able to answer this question, it is important to know what the core message of the afterlife episodes is, what the role of Śiva is exactly, and whether we can qualify the endings as a process of Śaivization. The answers to these questions will be presented in the final part of this chapter (4.3).

alters its poetic stance" (Ramanujan 1991, 39—40). Ramanujan's conclusion that the ending can have an effect on the telling as a whole fits my argument expressed in the main text. However, unfortunately, Ramanujan does not investigate the effect and the role of endings further or in a more systematic manner and continues instead with how the beginnings of the various tellings of the *Rāmāyaṇa* can set the tone for the rest of the text (see note 323).

4.1 An additional problem and solution

The Narasiṃha myth is the first of the three manifestation myths that introduces an afterlife of Viṣṇu's manifestation. The audience does not know yet that the text will present a new, alternative account of the manifestation myths. Since the *Skandapurāṇa* is the first text with an afterlife episode, this may even be the first time the audience hears about an afterlife of Viṣṇu's manifestations at all. The Narasiṃha myth seems to have been used to determine three constants that feature in all three manifestation myths, either by setting them straight right at the beginning of the narrative or by presenting it as a given all along. First, the Narasiṃha myth introduces the new problem and stresses its importance by introducing the afterlife episode before the main story. Second, it includes the underlying solution that was present all along. Third, of all three manifestation myths, the Narasiṃha myth puts Śiva most clearly forward as the problem solver. Since these constants are applicable to all three myths, they are surveyed here first, before each individual manifestation myth is examined further.

The Narasiṃha myth immediately introduces the first constant, *viz.* that a new problem has arisen, by starting with an announcement of the afterlife episode before the myth itself has even begun. This "foreshadowing", as it is called in narratology, is a narrative technique to let the audience know what significant future event can be expected[323]. This announcement can be therefore considered as what the story will essentially be about.

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[323] "Foreshadowing: A technique whereby a significant event in the future is hinted at in advance" (McQuillan 2000, 318). Foreshadowing is a common technique in epic and Purāṇic literature. When foreshadowing is used in different retellings of the same narrative, it is occasionally possible to determine the main differences between those different versions right at the beginning of the story. This has been shown by A.K. Ramanujan in the case of some of the tellings of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. For example, Vālmīki opens with a frame story in which a hunter kills "one of a happy pair of lovebirds. The female circles its dead mate and cries over it. [… T]he incident of the death of a bird and the separation of loved ones becomes a leitmotif for this telling of the Rāma story" (Ramanujan 1991, 40). This start can be contrasted with the beginning of the Tamil telling of the *Rāmāyaṇa* by Kampan. "It describes the waters as they are gathered by clouds from the seas and come down in rain and flow as floods of the Sarayū river down to Ayodhya, the capital of Rāma's kingdom. Through it, Kampan introduces all his themes and emphases, even his characters, his concern with fertility themes (implicit in Vālmīki), the whole dynasty of Rāma's ancestors, and his vision of *bhakti* through the *Rāmāyaṇa*" (ibid, 43). In other words, "the opening sections of each major work set into motion the harmonics of the whole poem, presaging themes and a pattern of images" (ibid, 40). The difference between the beginnings of the examples provided by Ramanujan

The foreshadowing is done in the form of a request from Indra, Śaśāṅka ("Moon") and Vāyu to Śiva, with Indra asking the following[324].

> SP 70.11—14:
> *hiraṇyakaśipuṃ hantum asurendraṃ mahābalam* |
> *yac cakāra vapur viṣṇur nārasiṃhaṃ bhayānakam* || *11* ||
> *taṃ hatvāpi sa daityendraṃ viṣṇuḥ parabalārdanaḥ* |
> *tad rūpaṃ naiva saṃtyajya svaṃ veṣam akarod vibho* || *12* ||
> *tena rūpeṇa deveśa krūreṇāpi piśitepsunā* |
> *na vayaṃ nirvṛtā bhūtvā trāsāt tiṣṭhāma śaṃkara* || *13* ||
> *sa yathā siṃharūpaṃ taṃ parityajati mādhavaḥ* |
> *prasādaṃ nas tathā kartum arhasi tvaṃ surottama* || *14* ||
> "11. In order to kill the very strong Hiraṇyakaśipu, the lord of the Asuras, Viṣṇu made that terrifying body of a Man-Lion. 12. However, having killed the lord of the Daityas, Viṣṇu, the destroyer of the army of the enemies, did not give up this body and did not take on his own form, oh lord. 13. Because of that cruel body, which longs for meat, we are not at ease because of fear, oh Śaṃkara [i.e. Śiva]. 14. Please do us a favour, oh best of gods, so that Mādhava [i.e. Viṣṇu] will leave his lion-form."

The fact that the afterlife is introduced right at the beginning of the narrative suggests that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers added much value to it: this future event is so new and important that it should be made clear immediately. Two problems are central in this future event. First, specific for Narasiṃha, he forms a threat to the universe. He is *piśitepsuna*, "longing for meat", which suggests that he devours all kinds of living creatures, even though this is not made explicit anywhere in the rest of the narrative. This

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and the start of the Narasiṃha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* is that the former introduce recurrent themes across the entire work and the latter announces one specific future event.

[324] The other two gods make a request for themselves. Vāyu does not want to be "bodiless" anymore (*aśarīro*, SP 70.16c), and Śiva instantly makes him "corporeal" (*mūrtimān*, SP 70.17d). Then Śaśāṅka wishes to become "free from consumption" (*yakṣmahīnaḥ*, SP 70.18e), and Śiva promises that he will become free from consumption, as soon as Śaśāṅka has done *tapas* (SP 70.19).

specific problem and its solution is discussed below in section 4.1.1. The second problem is the very fact that Viṣṇu does not give up his manifested form. From a theological perspective, this is a problem because it means that if Viṣṇu does not give up his form, he is unable to manifest himself again in other times of crisis in another form. Already in the first occurrences of Viṣṇu's ability to manifest himself, like in the *Bhagavadgītā* of the *Mahābhārata* (the oft-quoted "definition" of Viṣṇu's manifestations)[325], Viṣṇu's manifestations are presented as a continuous process. This implies that Viṣṇu gives up his manifested form before he takes on another one. This is also a few times suggested in the *Skandapurāṇa* itself. First of all, the very fact that Indra makes explicit that Viṣṇu became Narasiṃha to combat Hiraṇyakaśipu, but did not give up his form after his success, suggests that he considers this a problem (SP 70.12). Second, the connection between Viṣṇu's completed task and the fact that he should return to his own form again is reiterated later by Śiva twice; first, in the form of a simple statement (SP 71.70)[326] and then, in the form of a boon, which suggests that the problem *and* its solution were present all along. This brings us to the second constant, namely that it has long been destined that Śiva will rescue Viṣṇu from his manifestation if he clings to it.

Just before Śiva releases Viṣṇu from his Man-Lion form, he addresses Viṣṇu as follows.

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[325] BhG 4.7—8:
yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata |
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṃ sṛjāmy aham || *7* ||
paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṃ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām |
dharmasaṃsthāpanārthāya saṃbhavāmi yuge yuge || *8* ||
"For whenever the Law languishes, Bhārata, and lawlessness flourishes, I create myself. I take on existence from eon to eon, for the rescue of the good and the destruction of the evil, in order to reestablish the Law" (translation by Van Buitenen 1981, 87).

[326] SP 71.70:
kṛtaṃ kāryaṃ tvayā sarvaṃ hiraṇyakaśipur hataḥ |
ehi gaccha śubhāṃ yonim ātmanaḥ paramādbhutām || *70* ||
"The entire task has been accomplished by you: Hiraṇyakaśipu is slain. Come on, go to your own glorious and perfectly wonderful base."

SP 71.68—69:

tubhyaṃ viṣṇo mayā dattaḥ puṇyo hy eṣa varaḥ śubhaḥ |
ayonau sajjamānasya svayonau pratipādanam || *68* ||
sa tvaṃ viṣṇur mahātejā matto labdhavaraḥ sadā |
velāyāṃ tvaṃ samudrasya tiryagyonim asūta yaḥ || *69* ||

"Oh Viṣṇu, I have given you this auspicious and glorious boon: the return to your own birth, when you cling to an unnatural birth. You, who brought an animal form into being at the shore of the ocean [*viz.* that of a Man-Lion][327], are the glorious Viṣṇu who has always received boons from me."

It had always been Śiva's intention to help Viṣṇu whenever he would be stuck to a manifested form because this promise was given as a boon sometime in the past (note the usage of the past participle *dattaḥ*). Since Viṣṇu is now clinging to his Man-Lion form, Śiva is there to help him return to his own body again.

Besides Śiva's role in the form of this promise, Śiva also turns out to be the one who actually solves this new additional problem himself by making Viṣṇu return to his own form again—the third constant. In fact, in the Narasiṃha myth, Śiva is most prominently and most actively responsible for this, so that, one may add, there is no doubt about his involvement in the other two manifestation myths either. This has already been articulated in the preamble to the Narasiṃha myth, when, after Indra's request for help, Śiva promises that he will take care of it (SP 70.15c—f)[328]. In this way, Śiva's role as ultimate saviour is immediately clear. The way in which he saves Viṣṇu is, however, different for each manifestation.

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[327] The idea that Narasiṃha is born at the ocean shore also appears in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*: *sāgarasya ca velāyām ucchritas tapaso vibhuḥ*, "at the shore of the ocean, the lord had arisen through *tapas*" (BḍP 2.5.27cd). According to the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42A), on the other hand, Viṣṇu left his Narasiṃha form at the Northern shore of the Kṣīroda ocean (HV App. 1 No. 42A ll. 579—81).

[328] SP 70.15c—f:
siṃharūpaṃ yathā śakra viṣṇus tyakṣyati bhīṣaṇam |
kariṣyāmi tathā śakra vyetu te mānaso jvaraḥ || *15* ||
"Oh Śakra [i.e. Indra], I will do that thing so that Viṣṇu will abandon his frightful lion-form. Oh Śakra [i.e. Indra], your mind's distress should go."

4.1.1 Narasiṃha vs. Śarabha

The Narasiṃha story as we know it from other sources ends in SP 71.46—47. These verses report that when Hiraṇyakaśipu has been killed, the remaining Asuras flee to Rasātala, Indra regains his kingdom in heaven, and the gods get their homes back. However, Viṣṇu does not give up his Narasiṃha form. The text does not give a reason for this, nor what trouble he causes exactly. Instead, when the main story has ended, the scene directly moves to Śiva's intervention (SP 71.48—50, see below). There are nevertheless two hints that Narasiṃha forms a threat to the universe because he is a cruel being. First, as mentioned above, the gods are afraid of this "cruel and meat loving" (*krūreṇāpi piśitepsunā*, SP 70.13b) Man-Lion. There seems to be nothing harmless about Narasiṃha. Second, Narasiṃha's cruelty is also observable in the way in which he kills Hiraṇyakaśipu. The killing is more brutal than necessary, as can be read from the following death scene.

> SP 71.44—45:
> *gṛhītvā sa tadā siṃho hiraṇyakaśipuṃ sakṛt* |
> *talenāhatya taṃ prāṇair vyayojayata satvaram* || *44* ||
> *siṃhanādaṃ mahat kṛtvā nakhair vajramayair vibhuḥ* |
> *uro bibheda daityasya mahāśailopamaṃ hariḥ* || *45* ||
> "Then the Lion, having grabbed Hiraṇyakaśipu, having struck [him] with the palm [of his claw only] once, immediately took away his life. Having made a loud lion-sound, lord Hari [i.e. Viṣṇu] tore open the Daitya's chest, which was like a big mountain, with his nails, hard as diamond."

The actual kill is done by just one slap of his claw, so Narasiṃha could have left it by that, but he tears Hiraṇyakaśipu's chest open. This suggests that the Man-Lion shows no mercy and one wonders what other harm he could do to other creatures. There is no doubt about it: Viṣṇu must leave his Narasiṃha form[329].

[329] With this conclusion, I hold a different position than Phyllis Granoff in her article on the afterlives of Narasiṃha and Varāha, 'Saving the Saviour: Śiva and the Vaiṣṇava Avatāras in the

Śiva's solution to this problem is to become a Śarabha (SP 71.48—50)[330]: "a very strong [creature] with four feet on its back and sharp teeth" (*caturbhiḥ pṛṣṭhajaiḥ pādais tīkṣṇadaṃṣṭro mahābalaḥ*, SP 71.50ab). With this description, the *Skandapurāṇa* follows the popular image of a Śarabha as a ferocious, mythical beast that particularly kills lions. According to Walter Slaje, in an article on the Śarabha, this characterization starts in the *Mahābhārata* (Slaje 2017, 342—43). For example, in a conversation between Bandin and Aṣṭāvakra, a list of entities that are known for a specific number is given. The Śarabha is, among other creatures, characterized by the number eight: *tathāṣṭapādaḥ śarabhaḥ siṃhaghātī*, "and the eight-legged, lion-slaying Śarabha" (MBh 3.134.14b). According to Slaje, this is the only occurrence of the adjective *siṃhaghātī* in the entire Sanskrit corpus (leaving Sanskrit commentaries aside), and he argues that it may be built on another verse on Śarabhas, *viz.* MBh 12.117.34[331] (ibid, 343). In "The Story of the Ungrateful Dog" (Fitzgerald 2004, 457), various animal duos that are known to combat each other are

Early Skandapurāṇa'. According to Granoff, "[t]he Man-lion, as awesome as it may be, is described here as a playful lion cub. […] Śiva's purpose in becoming the Śarabha is made explicit: it is not to put a stop to an *avatāra* that has gone wild, but to help Viṣṇu return to his own divine birth (the term *yoni* is used), from an undesirable, animal birth and to give him a special boon" (Granoff 2004, 123). In other words, "the objection to the Man-lion in the early *Skandapurāṇa* is more to his form than to anything that he does" (ibid, 124). I would like to argue, however, that both problems are the case.

[330] SP 71.48—50:
athāgatya tato devaḥ śūlapāṇir vṛṣadhvajaḥ |
surair vijñāpito vyāsa yat te kathitavān aham || *48* ||
viṣṇos tyājayituṃ rūpaṃ siṃham adbhutakarmaṇaḥ |
śarabhaḥ sa tadā bhūtvā himavacchikharopamaḥ || *49* ||
caturbhiḥ pṛṣṭhajaiḥ pādais tīkṣṇadaṃṣṭro mahābalaḥ |
narasiṃhasamīpaṃ tu gatvāgarjat samāhitaḥ || *50* ||
"Next, having arrived then, Deva ["God", i.e. Śiva], the one whose hand [holds] a trident, Vṛṣadhvaja ["Bull-Bannered one"], being informed by the gods about what I had told you, oh Vyāsa, having then become a Śarabha, equal to the top of the Himavat, very strong, with four feet on its back and sharp teeth, in order to make Viṣṇu, whose deeds are miraculous, leave his lion-form, having come near Narasiṃha, he roared in a composed manner*."
* For this translation and a note on *samāhitaḥ*, see SP Vol. IV, 44 note 89.

[331] MBh 12.117.34:
aṣṭapād urdhvacaraṇaḥ śarabho vanagocaraḥ |
taṃ siṃhaṃ hantum āgacchan munes tasya niveśanam || *34* ||
"[D]enizen of the forest, an eight-legged *śarabha* (with some of its feet directed upwards) […] came to the seer's dwelling to kill the lion" (translation by Fitzgerald 2004, 461).
For Slaje's discussion of this passage, see Slaje 2017, 343—44.

enumerated. One of the duos is the Śarabha and the lion, of whom the Śarabha approaches the lion to kill him.

The choice to make Śiva a Śarabha as the opponent of the Lion is thus intertextually supported. It is also in line with the rest of the text, for there are various comparisons in which Śarabhas fight against lions and win. For example, in the *devāsura* war in the Varāha myth, the Asuras say that they are not afraid of the gods, just like Śarabhas are not afraid of lions (SP 77.35cd)[332], and elsewhere in the same battle, Hiraṇyākṣa is said to grasp the earth, just like a tiger catches a female deer, the king of Śarabhas catches a lioness, etcetera (SP 95.10—11)[333]. This standard combination of Śarabha versus lion (both in the *Skandapurāṇa* and outside) may well have contributed to the idea that Śiva becomes a Śarabha to fight Narasiṃha[334].

Despite the Śarabha's violent characterization[335], Śiva in the form of this mythical creature does not fight with Narasiṃha. As soon as Narasiṃha notices that the Śarabha is not the least hurt by the slap of his claw, and he himself is hurt instead (SP 71.51—52, see section 3.3), he realizes that the creature is Śiva and starts praising him (SP 71.55—66). There is no need for Śiva to fight.

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[332] SP 77.35cd: *kathaṃ bibhema teṣāṃ vai siṃhānāṃ śarabhā iva*, "why should we be afraid of them [i.e. the gods], similarly [why should] Śarabhas [be afraid] of lions?"

[333] SP 95.10—11:
tāṃ mṛgīm iva śārdūlo bhujaṃgīm iva pakṣirāṭ |
śārdūlīṃ siṃha iva ca siṃhīṃ śarabharāḍ iva || 10 ||
haṃsīṃ kāka iva kṣudro mayūrīṃ madgurāḍ iva |
tathā tāṃ sa diteḥ putro jagrāha ruṣitānanaḥ || 11 ||
"Just like a tiger [catches] a female deer, the king of birds [catches] a female snake, a lion [catches] a tigress, the king of Śarabhas [catches] a lioness, a vile crow [catches] a female goose, [and] the king of diver-birds [catches] a female peacock, just like that the angry-faced son of Diti [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa] caught her [i.e. the earth]."
Other comparisons with a Śarabha and a lion are found in SP 89.48cd, SP 98.24b, SP 104.6b and SP_{Bh} 148.42b. There are also a few comparisons that include Śarabhas fighting with elephants (e.g. SP 90.24b and SP_{Bh} 135.4d).

[334] Granoff has furthermore shown that it is not uncommon for Śiva to take the form of an animal (Granoff 2004, 125). For example, in a eulogy on Śiva, he is referred to as *sṛgālarūpa*, "having the form of a jackal" (MBh 13.17.44c), *mṛgarūpa*, "having the form of a deer" (MBh 13.17.45c) and *siṃhaśārdūlarūpa*, "having the form of a lion and a tiger" (MBh 13.17.47c). In the *Skandapurāṇa*, Śiva also occasionally takes on the form of an animal. For instance, in SP 29.48, he takes on the form a jackal (*jambuka*) in order to kill those Asuras that thanks to a boon can only be killed by jackals; and in SP 60.57—58, Śiva appears before Pārvatī as a deer (*mṛga*).

[335] Śarabha is also the name of an Asura. In the *Mahābhārata*, for example, Śarabha is born in the lineage of Danu, (MBh 1.59.26a), and both in the *Harivaṃśa* (e.g. HV 31.72c) and in the *Skandapurāṇa* (e.g. SP 76.26d), Śarabha is listed among the Asuras.

The actual return to Viṣṇu's own body also runs peacefully. The Śarabha merely steps on Narasiṃha with his feet.

> SP 71.71:
> *tatas tam ākramat pādaiḥ siṃhaṃ śarabhasattamaḥ* |
> *ayojayac ca dehena punar divyena keśavam* || *71* ||
> "Then the best of Śarabhas stepped with his feet on the Lion and united Keśava [i.e. Viṣṇu] with his divine body again."

The brevity of the description of the actual return shows that the method is of little concern here. What is more important is who solves the problem that Viṣṇu was still a Narasiṃha. Śiva's role in solving this problem comes to the fore with the causative *ayojayat*, "he caused to unite". The verb form shows both Śiva's active role in solving the problem and Viṣṇu's dependency on Śiva to be saved.

4.1.2 Varāha vs. Skanda

The same problem arises in the Varāha myth when Viṣṇu does not want to give up his boar-form. The difference with the Narasiṃha myth is that the text provides a reason why Viṣṇu does not want to leave his Varāha manifestation. In answer to the gods' request to return to his own form (SP 108.19)[336], Varāha says:

> SP 108.20—21:
> *iyaṃ mūrtir mayā devāḥ prāptā paramavarcasā* |
> *na cānayā ratiḥ kācit prāptā me sadṛśī bhuvi* || *20* ||
> *so 'haṃ kaṃcid vihṛtyeha kālaṃ mūrtyānayā sukham* |
> *bhaviṣyāmi punar devaḥ satyam etad bravīmi vaḥ* || *21* ||

[336] SP 108.19:
tatas tam ṛṣayaḥ sarve devatāś ca savāsavāḥ |
ūcuḥ svāṃ mūrtim āsthāya yathā pūrvaṃ tathā bhava || *19* ||
"Then all the sages and gods, including Vāsava [i.e. Indra] said: 'having resorted to your own body, please become just like before.'"

> "Oh gods, I, of ultimate energy, have obtained this body, but I have not [yet] received any proper form of pleasure with it on earth. Having roamed around happily for some time with this body, I will become a god again; I tell you the truth."

Viṣṇu does not want to give up his form because he has not been able to fully enjoy it yet[337]. The gods seem to accept this because "they all went to their abodes" (*jagmuḥ sthānāni sarvaśaḥ*, SP 109.22b), and Varāha enjoys being a boar to the fullest, entertaining himself with Apsarases in the form of female boars[338] and celebrating his victory with a festival (SP 108.23—end). Citralekhā was probably one of the Apsarases, for she becomes his wife, and the two of them beget a son called Vṛka (SP 109.1)[339]. It is Vṛka who eventually leads to Varāha's destruction. When Vṛka arrives at Skanda's palace after a walk, he wrecks the garden and is punished for this by Skanda, by keeping him hostage. Varāha hears about this from Nārada and goes to Skanda. Varāha starts a fight with Skanda to save Vṛka, but, in fact, this very battle leads to Viṣṇu's liberation from his boar-form.

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[337] A similar idea is found in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* version of Varāha's afterlife (see note 320).

[338] SP 108.24:
tasya tatropatiṣṭhanta mṛgyo bhūtvā sahasraśaḥ |
vaidikyo 'psarasaḥ śubhrās tābhiḥ saha rarāma saḥ || *24* ||
"Thousands of beautiful Vedic Apsarases, having become female boars, served him there, and he enjoyed himself with them."

[339] SP 109.1:
tasya kālena mahatā ramataḥ śaktinandana |
bhāryāyāṃ citralekhāyāṃ vṛko nāmābhavat sutaḥ || *1* ||
"When he had enjoyed [his Varāha form] for a long time, oh son of Śakti [i.e. Vyāsa], a son called Vṛka was born from [his] wife Citralekhā."
Both Citralekhā and Vṛka are known from other sources, but neither of them is related to the Varāha myth. Citralekhā is known, for example, from the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Brahmapurāṇa* (ViP 5.32 and BrP 205), but she is not Varāha's wife. Vṛka, on the other hand, is occassionally mentioned as Viṣṇu's son (e.g. ViP 5.32.4a and BrP 205.4a), but not as Varāha's son specifically. Instead, according to these texts, Varāha's wife is the earth, and the two get a son called Naraka (ViP 5.29 and BrP 202, see Gonda 1954/1969, 141—43 for a study on Naraka).

SP 110.13—16:

tām āpatantīṃ vegena bhagavān nandivardhanaḥ |
jaghānāstrair bahuvidhair nādayan siṃharāḍ iva || *13* ||
tāni sā bhasmasāt kṛtvā śaktiḥ saṃvartikā śubhā |
viveśa hṛdayaṃ tasya kāminīva dṛḍhaṃ priyā || *14* ||
sa tayā bhinnahṛdayo yogena parameṇa ha |
yogīva dehaṃ saṃtyajya dehenānyena tasthivān || *15* ||
so 'nyad dehaṃ samāsthāya paurāṇaṃ surasattamaḥ |
devaiḥ sarvaiḥ parivṛto jagāma bhavamandiram || *16* ||

"13. The lord, Nandivardhana [Varāha][340], attacked [the spear (SP 110.12d)] that was quickly approaching, with many different arrows, roaring like the king of the lions. 14. Having reduced them [i.e. the arrows] to ashes, the beautiful Saṃvartikā spear entered his heart, like a beloved female lover resolutely [enters the heart]. 15. He, whose heart was broken by it, having abandoned his body through supreme *yoga* like a Yogin, stood there with another body. 16. Having assumed another body, [his] old one, the best of gods [i.e. Viṣṇu], surrounded by all the gods, went to Bhava's [i.e. Śiva's] abode."

[340] The epithet *nandivardhana*, "increasing joy", occurs 22 times in the *Skandapurāṇa*, which all except for one appear in the Varāha myth. It is applied twenty times to Varāha himself (from SP 97.37 until SP 110.13b) and once to Varāha's victory festival that is celebrated after Hiraṇyākṣa's defeat (SP 108.33). The only other occurrence of the epithet outside the Varāha myth is in SP 112.80, where it refers to the Aśoka tree that is adopted by Pārvatī. The distribution of the word is thus very limited and may point to the hand of a particular group of composers. The epithet's application to Varāha is unique for the *Skandapurāṇa* and its grammatical usage is uncommon as well. It generally goes with a genitive, indicating for whom someone increases joy, or *nandivardhana* is compounded with the one for whom joy is increased. For example, *gopānāṃ nandivardhana*, "oh [Kṛṣṇa], increasing joy for the cowherds" (HV 56.27b), and *kaikeyīnandivardhanaḥ […] bharato*, "Bharata, increasing joy for Kaikeyī", i.e. "Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī" (Rām 6.116.1b—c). In the *Skandapurāṇa*, on the other hand, the epithet stands on its own. The editors of SP Vol. V, forth., therefore, understand Nandivardhana as a personal name of Varāha, which I follow in the case of *nandivardhana* qualifying Varāha himself. For a possible historical understanding of the name, see SP Vol. V, forth.

Whereas in the afterlife episode of the Narasiṃha myth, Śiva released Viṣṇu from his Man-Lion form, in the present episode, Śiva's son Skanda releases Viṣnu. The choice for Skanda fits, however, the context of the myth. First of all, the initial conflict in the afterlife episode was between the sons of the two main gods: Skanda being the son of Śiva and Vṛka being the son of Varāha[341]. The "son" theme moreover fits how the Andhaka myth cycle in which the Varāha myth is embedded originally started, *viz.* with the story of Andhaka, the son of Śiva and Pārvatī, who was handed over to Hiraṇyākṣa as his son[342].

Choosing Skanda—or to be more precise, *not* choosing Śiva—also matches the rest of the *Skandapurāṇa*. Śiva usually stays behind the curtains and only designs the plans that are executed by the other gods thereafter[343]. This is also the position allotted to Śiva in the afterlife episode of the Varāha myth because Skanda's spear is in fact given by Śiva, as reported earlier in the same episode. When Vṛka arrived at Skanda's palace, Skanda was not present because he had gone to Mount Mandara (*kumāro mandaraṃ yātah*, "Kumāra [i.e. Skanda] has gone to [Mount] Mandara, SP 109.12a), where he visited his father. Skanda reports the following back to Kokavaktra.

SP 109.29—30:
ukto gataś cāham adya sthāṇunā paramātmanā |
mā kṣamethā varāhasya tanuṃ tvāṃ so hvayed yudhi || *29* ||
iyaṃ ca mama tenādya śaktir dattātibhāsvarā |
saṃvartiketi vikhyātā sarvāstrabalanāśanī || *30* ||

[341] It may be furthermore relevant that there is at least one short *Mahābhārata* episode that tells about a contest of power between Skanda and Viṣṇu. In the *Śāntiparvan* (MBh 12.314.7cd—17), Skanda plants his spear in a mountain and challenges the gods to pull it out or to shake it (9—10ab). The gods are troubled by this, and Viṣṇu thinks about "the right thing to do" (*sukṛtaṃ kāryaṃ*, 11e). He shakes the spear with one hand, and as a result, the earth starts to tremble (12—13). Then Prahlāda, Hiraṇyakaśipu's son, tries to pull it out, but the spear does not move at all, and Prahlāda falls on the ground (16—17). Although this is not a clash of arms, the story does represent a contest of power. According to Richard D. Mann, in his study on Skanda, "[t]his short narrative from the Śāntiparvan may allude to an early sectarian rivalry" (Mann 2012, 15 note 1).

[342] The Varāha myth is part of a larger myth cycle, the Andhaka cycle. The Andhaka cycle runs from SP 73 until SP_{Bh} 157. Its main narrative concerns the Andhaka myth, but it includes several other myths and myth cycles, such as the Narasiṃha and Varāha myth. For an integration of the different myths and myth cycles within the Andhaka cycle, see SP Vol. V, forth.

[343] Śiva's active role in the Narasiṃha myth is therefore rather the exception than the rule.

> "I, who had gone today, was spoken to by Sthāṇu [i.e. Śiva], the highest soul: 'Do not show mercy with the body of Varāha, should he challenge you in battle'. And this spear, exceedingly shining, called Saṃvartikā ["Destroying"], demolishing the power of all weapons, was given to me by him."

Skanda received the Saṃvartikā spear[344], which ultimately causes Viṣṇu to return to his own body again, from Śiva. In light of Viṣṇu's *cakra* in the *Skandapurāṇa*, I have argued in section 3.2 that when a weapon is given by Śiva to someone else, Śiva becomes its agent. Even though the *cakra* is intrinsically linked to Viṣṇu and the spear to Skanda[345], Śiva takes control over the weapons by distributing them to the respective gods. In the case of the afterlife episode of the Varāha myth, the Saṃvartikā spear is the only weapon in the battle with Varāha that is truly successful and it is the only weapon that Skanda has to employ against Varāha[346]. Since this weapon is given by Śiva, Śiva once again becomes the mastermind behind the plan and ultimately saves Viṣṇu from holding on to his manifestation.

4.1.3 Vāmana on a pilgrimage

In the Narasiṃha and Varāha myth, Viṣṇu continues to live in his manifested form. However, this narrative layout is not possible for the Vāmana myth because it is a fixed part of the main story that Viṣṇu leaves his dwarfish body. In order to nevertheless create an afterlife for Viṣṇu in this myth that moreover has the same parameters as the other manifestation myths, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers had to design a different storyline.

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[344] The name Saṃvartikā comes from the adjective *saṃvartaka*. It often appears in combination with words meaning "fire" (*anala*, *agni*, *vahni*, etcetera), in which case it denotes the all-destroying fire at the end of an era. The connotation with final destruction fits the situation in the *Skandapurāṇa*, for Skanda's spear puts an end to Viṣṇu's Boar manifestation.

[345] Already in the *Mahābhārata*, Skanda's primary weapon is the spear; for example, in MBh 3.214.22d: *śaktiṃ cānyena pāṇinā*, "and with [his] other hand a spear".

[346] The spear is the final weapon that is used in the battle. Varāha starts with a rock (SP 110.4—5) and then uses his *cakra* (SP 110.6—9). Whereas his *cakra* killed Hiraṇyākṣa immediately, it is now easily averted by Kokavaktra. As a last resort, Varāha hits Skanda with a tree (SP 110.10—11ab). Infuriated by this, Skanda takes his Saṃvartikā spear that enters Varāha's heart (SP 110.11cd—14). Skanda thus only needs one weapon and one attempt to defeat Varāha.

When the main story has finished in SP_{Bh} 117.20 with Bali returning to Pātāla and the gods having their kingdom back, Vyāsa asks Sanatkumāra: "what was lord Viṣṇu like, after he had given up his own mighty *dharma*?" (*kīdṛk sa bhagavān viṣṇus tyaktvā svaṃ dharmam ūrjitam*, SP_{Bh} 117.21ab). Sanatkumāra replies that when Viṣṇu became big enough to conquer the triple world back, the gods were happy and praised Viṣṇu (SP_{Bh} 117.22cd—27). As a result of that praise, Viṣṇu becomes excessively proud of himself.

SP_{Bh} 117.28—118.1:
tasyaivaṃ stūyamānasya tridaśaiḥ śārṅgadhanvanaḥ |
abhūt tuṣṭis tadātyarthaṃ bahumānas tathātmani || *28* ||
tato 'bhimānatas tasya sa yogaḥ paramo mune |
abhraśyata yathā vahniḥ salilena samukṣitaḥ || *29* ||
tatas tadantaraṃ labdhvā pāpmā sā hy āsurī mune |
prahṛṣṭā saṃprahasyaiva-m[347] *āviveśa janārdanam* || *30* ||
sa tayā pāpmayā vyāsa āviṣṭo viṣṇur avyayaḥ |
na babhau dīptimāṃs tatra santaḥ prāpyeva dāruṇam || *31* ||
sanatkumāra uvāca |
tathā sa pāpmayā vyāsa āsuryā saṃgatas tadā |
tad eva rūpaṃ saṃprāpto vāmanaṃ devasattamaḥ || *118.1* ||
"28. When he, who has the Śārṅga bow [i.e. Viṣṇu], was praised like that by the gods, satisfaction as well as great pride of himself arose exceedingly. 29. Because he was [so] proud, [his] highest power (*yoga*) disappeared, oh sage, just like fire [vanishes] when it is sprinkled by water. 30. Having found his weak spot (*tadantaraṃ*), oh sage, having broken into laughter, the delighted Asuric[348] Pāpmā ["Sin"] entered Janārdana [i.e.

[347] I diverge from the emendation done by Bhaṭṭarāī in his edition, *saṃprahṛṣyainam*, "being delighted with him", because it is redundant together with *prahṛṣṭā*, both referring to Pāpmā. Instead, I follow the majority of the manuscripts here (S_1 reads *samprahasyevam*; S_2, S_3, and R read *samprahasyaivam*; the A manuscripts omitted this verse) and take *-m* as a hiatus breaking *-m* between final *-a* of *eva* and initial *ā-* of *āviveśa*.
[348] "Asuric" here means that Pāpmā comes from the Asuras. This is made explicit in SP_{Bh} 118.11cd: *sāsurān saṃparityajya keśavaṃ saṃviveśa ha*, "having left the Asuras, she entered Keśava [i.e.

> Viṣṇu]. 31. The imperishable Viṣṇu, being entered by this Pāpmā, did not shine brightly [anymore] there, just like good people, when they suffered a harsh fate. 118.1. Sanatkumāra said: Being entered by the Asuric Pāpmā like that, oh Vyāsa, the best of gods [i.e. Viṣṇu] then attained that same Vāmana body [again]."

As a result of the gods' praise, Viṣṇu becomes so excessively proud of himself that a personification of sin (Pāpmā) enters him, who turns him into Vāmana again[349]. The notion that pride is a sinful act is known from numerous other sources. According to the *Arthaśāstra*, for example, there are six sins that should be avoided: "lust, anger, greed, pride, madness and overjoy" (*kāmakrodhalobhamānamadaharṣa*, AŚ 1.6.1). In an article on sins and vices in Sanskrit sources, H.W. Bodewitz remarked that these sins "are not purely ethical, but are bad qualities which have to be avoided by a king […] who wants to be successful" (Bodewitz 2007, 322). The relationship between the six sins and kings, the highest ranking among the class of *kṣatriyas*, "warriors", may have been intended in the Vāmana myth of the *Skandapurāṇa*, since in this narrative, Viṣṇu pretends to be a Brahmin, but in fact he is a *kṣatriya*[350].

Viṣṇu]". A similar idea can be found in the *Bhagavadgītā* below, where it is stated that sins, including pride (Sanskrit *darpa* and *atimāna*; cf. *bahumāna* and *abhimāna* in the *Skandapurāṇa*), belong to the Asuras.
BhG 16.4:
dambho darpo 'timānaś ca krodhaḥ pāruṣyam eva ca |
ajñānaṃ cābhijātasya pārtha saṃpadam āsurīm || 4 ||
"Deceit, pride, too much self-esteem, irascibility, harshness, and ignorance are of him who is born to the demonic complement, Pārtha" (translation by Van Buitenen 1981, 133).
On evil created by Asuras, including *āsura pāpman*, see O'Flaherty 1976/1988, 70ff.

[349] Concepts are often personified as (female) entities. For example, in Rām 7.77.10, brahminicide is personified as Brahmahatyā.

[350] There are some additional indications elsewhere in the three manifestation myths that Viṣṇu is more than just any *kṣatriya*, but a king. In the current section and in section 4.2.3, it is noted that Viṣṇu performs a horse sacrifice, which is a royal ritual and as such the preserve of kings. In section 4.2.1, I will demonstrate that Viṣṇu's official task as Asura-slayer fits Viṣṇu's characterization as protector of the universe and king. In section 4.2.2, I will argue that the *pāśupatavrata* performed by Viṣṇu in the afterlife episode of the Varāha myth is specifically targeted at kings who wished to be initiated in Śaivism.

The text repeatedly emphasizes that Viṣṇu has abandoned his own *dharma* of the *kṣatriyas* and adopted the *dharma* of the Brahmins instead in order to be allowed to come begging at Bali's horse sacrifice and to accept gifts from him. For example, during a dialogue between Vāmana and Bali (see *Appendix I: Summaries* for more details), Bali becomes aware that Viṣṇu is disguised as a dwarfish Brahmin, having abandoned the *dharma* of the *kṣatriyas* (SP_{Bh} 116.57)[351].

In the afterlife episode of the Vāmana myth, the theme is once again referred to, when the sages report what Brahmā has advised them on how Viṣṇu can be released from Pāpmā. They first recapitulate what happened.

> SP_{Bh} 118.9—11:
> *yad anena parityajya svadharmaṃ devabandhunā |*
> *pratigrahaḥ kṛto rājyaṃ vaikuṇṭhena mahātmanā || 10 ||*
> *tataḥ pāpmāsurāṇāṃ yā sarvaprāṇibhayaṃkarī |*
> *sāsurān saṃparityajya keśavaṃ saṃviveśa ha || 11 ||*
> "Since, after abandoning his own *dharma*, the kingdom was accepted as a gift by that friend of the gods, the great Vaikuṇṭha [i.e. Viṣṇu], consequently, the Pāpmā of the Asuras, who frightens every living being, having left the Asuras, entered Keśava [i.e. Viṣṇu]."

The sages' speech contains two messages. First, the sages confirm that Viṣṇu had abandoned his own *dharma*, i.e. the *dharma* of the *kṣatriyas*, and had accepted the kingdom as a gift. So far, this is in accordance with Brahmā's announcement at the beginning of the narrative (*taṃ gatvā viprarūpeṇa viṣṇur eṣa prayācatu*, "having gone to him [i.e. Bali], this Viṣṇu should beg [from him]", SP_{Bh} 116.21cd) and it corresponds to the fixed general storyline. However, the second element appears to be the sages'

[351] SP_{Bh} 116.57:
bhavān viṣṇur viprarūpī chadmanā māṃ prayācase |
kṣatradharmaṃ samutsṛjya kārpaṇyaṃ ca prabhāṣase || 57 ||
"You are Viṣṇu in the form of a Brahmin. You are begging me [for something] under a disguise. Having abandoned the *dharma* of the warriors, you speak of poverty."

interpretation of what happened next: Pāpmā has entered Viṣṇu, since (*yad*, SP_{Bh} 118.9a) Viṣṇu left his *dharma* and accepted the kingdom is a gift. *Pratigraha* "acceptance of gifts", is a privilege of Brahmins and it is not allowed for *kṣatriyas*, as is, for instance, made clear in the *Arthaśāstra* (AŚ 1.3.5—6)[352] and the *Manusmṛti* (MaS 1.88—89)[353]. This did not seem to have been an issue for the gods. After all, the acceptance of the kingdom as a gift was done through the disguise of a dwarfish Brahmin; in other words, as long as Viṣṇu was in his Vāmana manifestation, *pratigraha* must have been allowed. The sages, on the other hand, seem to hold a stricter position: the disguise should not be a reason to transgress the prohibition of *pratigraha*, for Viṣṇu was still was a *kṣatriya* at that moment. According to the sages at least, this violation of *dharma* is a sin, and Viṣṇu is therefore entered by Pāpmā.

The result of Pāpmā's entry into Viṣṇu is that he becomes a Dwarf again and hence, the same problem arises as in the other two manifestation myths: Viṣṇu remains stuck to his manifestation[354]. However, the sages know a way out after consulting Brahmā.

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[352] AŚ 1.3.5—6:
svadharmo brāhmaṇasya adhyayanam adhyāpanaṃ yajanaṃ yājanaṃ dānaṃ pratigrahaś ca || 5 ||
kṣatriyasyādhyayanaṃ yajanaṃ dānaṃ śastrājīvo bhūtarakṣaṇaṃ ca || 6 ||
"The specific Law of a Brāhmaṇa consists of studying, teaching, offering sacrifices, officiating at sacrifices, giving gifts, and receiving gifts. That of a Kṣatriya consists of studying, offering sacrifices, giving gifts, obtaining a livelihood through the use of weapons, and protecting creatures" (translation by Olivelle 2013, 67).

[353] MaS 1.88—89:
adhyāpanam adhyayanaṃ yajanaṃ yājanaṃ tathā |
dānaṃ pratigrahaṃ caiva brāhmaṇānām akalpayat || 88 ||
prajānāṃ rakṣaṇaṃ dānam ijyādhyayanam eva ca |
viṣayeṣv aprasaktiṃ ca kṣatriyasya samādiśat || 89 ||
"To Brahmins, he assigned reciting and teaching the Veda, offering and officiating at sacrifices, and receiving and giving gifts. To the Kṣatriya, he allotted protecting the subjects, giving gifts, offering sacrifices, reciting the Veda, and avoiding attachment to sensory objects" (translation by Olivelle 2004, 91).
See also MaS 10.74—80ab, which is an elaboration of the duties of the Brahmins and *kṣatriyas*.

[354] When Viṣnu in the *Kūrmapurāṇa* (KūP 1.16.59) and the *Skandapurāṇa Māheśvarakhaṇḍa (*SkP *Māheśvarakhaṇḍa* 1.19.18ef and 36ef) has stridden the entire universe, he also becomes a dwarf or a boy again (*baṭu* in the *Skandapurāṇa Māheśvarakhaṇḍa*). Although it remains unclear why this happens, there is no doubt that it is Viṣṇu's own choice to become small again, and it is not a punishment for a sin, nor is it a preamble to an afterlife episode. The situation is therefore different from the one in the *Skandapurāṇa* studied here.

SP_{Bh} 118.13—14:

sa eṣa yadi manyadhvaṃ tīrtheṣu susamāhitaḥ |
snātvāśvamedhena punar yajatāṃ daivataiḥ saha || *13* ||
tataḥ pinākinaṃ dṛṣṭvā tena pūtaś ca sarvaśaḥ |
bhavitā pāpmayā mukta evam āha pitāmahaḥ || *14* ||

"If you agree, he [i.e. Viṣṇu] should perform a horse sacrifice together with the gods, after having bathed in holy bathing places with great attention. Then, after having seen Pinākin ["the one with the Pināka bow", i.e. Śiva], being entirely purified by him [i.e. Śiva], he will be released from Pāpmā. This is what Brahmā said."

The gods take the advice at heart and start their expedition. The gods' contribution appears to be essential, for they make sure that Viṣṇu completes all prerequisite steps. They take Viṣṇu on a pilgrimage along various holy bathing places, *tīrthas*, and make him bathe in each of them (from SP_{Bh} 118.15). Some places are specified by name (Suṣumnā, Kṛmilā and Kṛtyā), and a story is told about each of them. The final bathing place is remarkably enough not mentioned by name (*tām āgamya tato*, "having arrived at that [place]", SP_{Bh} 119.105a)[355].

[355] Each story is summarized in *Appendix I: Summaries*. I have discussed the stories in a paper at the Eighth Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas (Dokter-Mersch 2017). In this paper, I argue that these stories stand out from the rest of the *Skandapurāṇa* in general and the Vāmana myth in particular because they have various specific features in common that deviate from the rest of the text. 1) The narrative frame structure is different. In addition to the common dialogue structure between Vyāsa and Sanatkumāra which primarily contains narratives told in the third person, the stories also show a more colloquial conversational style, in which the first person is used. This is, for example, found in the story that I refer to as the Conversation between Indra and the Parrot (SP_{Bh} 118.31—end). 2) The main characters and the content of the stories are not inherent to the primarily Śaiva framework of the *Skandapurāṇa*. The stories do not deal with Śiva, nor with Śaiva topics, such as *pāśupatayoga*. Instead, they deal with the gods and the sages in general and Indra in particular and with the more general subjects of *dharma* and *karman*, often infused with a moral teaching. 3) Each story has a parallel in the *Mahābhārata* and at least one additional text, mainly Buddhist Pāli Jātakas. I found a parallel of the Story of the Stealing of the Lotus (SP_{Bh} 118.21—30) in MBh 13.96, Jātaka 488 "*Bisajātaka*" and Jātakamālā 19 "*Bisajātaka*". The Conversation between Indra and the Parrot (SP_{Bh} 118.31—end) is found in MBh 13.5 and in two Jātakas telling the same story: number 429 "*Mahāsuvajātaka*" and 430 "*Cūḷasuvajātaka*". The Story of the Hunter and the Snake (SP_{Bh} 119.2—48) has a parallel with MBh 13.1 and Jātaka 354 "*Uragajātaka*". The Story of the Seven Brahmins and Yātudhānī (SP_{Bh}

It is a classical pilgrimage, *tīrthayātrā*, involving bathing as a means for expiating sin, just as it is known from other sources and actual practices[356]. Viṣṇu is dependent on the gods to help him[357] because he is possessed by evil and possibly also because of his size. This matches his dependency in the other manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa* as demonstrated in section 3.1. The description of the gods taking Viṣṇu on a pilgrimage may be understood as to represent the way in which priests would have taken kings on a pilgrimage. The possibility that Viṣṇu represents a king here is furthermore supported by Viṣṇu's next task. He is instructed to perform a horse sacrifice (SP_{Bh} 119.106)[358], which

119.51—104) is found in MBh 13.94—95, the *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* (PdP *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* 19.225—end) and the *Skandapurāṇa Nāgarakhaṇḍa* (SkP *Nāgarakhaṇḍa* 32). 4) The transitions between the stories display some inconsistencies. Whereas the *Skandapurāṇa* is generally well-composed with little ungrammatical discrepancies, the *tīrthayātrā* is conspicuous on this point. Based on these shared features, I have argued that these individual stories form a coherent whole and have been written by a different (group of) composer(s), and may even have been added later to the Vāmana myth. The composers tried to blend the stories with the outer frame, but were only partly successful. If we would leave out the stories between the problematic transitions, the text is smooth, but the pilgrimage would consist of only one *tīrtha*, *viz.* Suṣumnā. This is therefore the bathing place where Viṣṇu took his final (and only) bath (*tām* in SP_{Bh} 119.105a). Earlier in the myth, Suṣumnā is richly described (SP_{Bh} 118.16—19). For example, it is "resounding with delighted birds" (*prahṛṣṭāṇḍajanāditām*, SP_{Bh} 118.16d), its surroundings have "sand [resembling] fine gold" (*sūkṣmakāñcanavālukām*, SP_{Bh} 118.17d), and it even has a Viṣṇu temple (*śrīniketananiketanām*, "a temple for him whose temple is Śrī [i.e. Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu's wife]", SP_{Bh} 118.19d). It makes it the perfect place for Viṣṇu to take his final (and only) bath.

[356] In *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition*, Knut A. Jacobsen notes that "[m]any pilgrimage places are associated with water and taking sacred baths is a key ritual. The purification of *pāpa* ["sin"] by using water combines the physical experience of the cleansing property of water with the salvific property of sacred water" (Jacobsen 2013, 82). This notion appears at various occasions in the *Mahābhārata* (see for example, Vassilkov 2002 and Jacobsen 2013, 51) and continues in the Purāṇas.

[357] Viṣṇu's passiveness and the gods' active role in deciding in what Viṣṇu should do during the pilgrimage are expressed at different occassions. At the start of the pilgrimage, for example, it is stated that the gods "did a pilgrimage after having taken the imperishable Viṣṇu [with them]" (*tīrthayātrām akurvan taṃ gṛhītvā viṣṇum avyayam*, SP_{Bh} 118.15cd); and later during the pilgrimage, the gods "made Viṣṇu bathe in the *tīrtha* that is honoured by groups of sages" (*viṣṇuṃ taṃ snāpayāṃ* cakrus tīrthe ṛṣigaṇārcite*, SP_{Bh} 119.105cd).

* Bhaṭṭarāī reads *snapayāṃ*, but all manuscripts read *snāpayāṃ*.

[358] SP_{Bh} 119.106:

tatas te himavacchailaṃ samāgamya mudānvitāḥ |
ayājayan tadā viṣṇum aśvamedhena suvratāḥ || 106 ||

"Having gone to the top of the Himavat then, those virtuous ones [i.e. the gods and sages], filled with joy, made Viṣṇu perform a horse sacrifice."

Later in the same narrative, Viṣṇu performs another horse sacrifice (SP_{Bh} 121.14a: *aśvamedhaṃ tadā yaṣṭvā*, "having then performed a horse sacrifice").

is a ritual that, like the *rājasūya* sacrifice, is reserved for kings (see e.g. Steiner 2010, 370).

Since the gods fulfilled all requirements—take Viṣṇu on a pilgrimage and make him perform a horse sacrifice—Śiva arrives.

> SP_{Bh} 119.107:
> *tasmin yajati deveśas tryambakaḥ sagaṇeśvaraḥ* |
> *yajñaṃ prati mudā yukta ājagāma vihāyasā* || *107* ||
> "As he [i.e. Viṣṇu] was sacrificing, the lord of the gods, Tryambaka ["Three-Eyed One", i.e. Śiva], together with the Gaṇeśvaras ["Lords of Gaṇas"], filled with joy, went to the sacrifice through the sky."

The gods ask Śiva to complete the sacrifice, release Viṣṇu from sin and give all the gods their strength back (SP_{Bh} 121.4)[359]. Śiva consents to the gods' wishes.

> SP_{Bh} 121.5—8:
> *teṣāṃ tad vacanaṃ śrutvā bhagavān hṛṣitānanaḥ* |
> *samāpya yajñaṃ śūlena giriṃ taṃ samadārayat* || *5* ||
> *tasmād bhedāt tato hy āpaḥ sudhāśaṅkhendupāṇḍarāḥ* |
> *niḥsṛtās tatra te viṣṇuṃ snāpayāṃ*[360] *cakrire tadā* || *6* ||
> *tasyātha snātamātrasya śarīrād abhiniḥsṛtā* |
> *pāpmāsurī mahāghorā vikṛtā vikṛtānanā* || *7* ||
> *devān abhidrutā hantuṃ niruddhā devabandhunā* |
> — — — — — — — —[361] || *8* ||

[359] SP_{Bh} 121.4:
samāpyatām ayaṃ yajñaḥ pāpmanā mucyatāṃ hariḥ |
svām ūrjāṃ pratipadyantāṃ devāḥ sarve savāsavāḥ || *4* ||
"This sacrifice should be completed, Hari [i.e. Viṣṇu] should be released from [his] sin, [and] all the gods, including Vāsava [i.e. Indra], should get [their] own strength back."

[360] Bhaṭṭarāī reads *snapayāṃ*, but all manuscripts read *snāpayāṃ*.

[361] Bhaṭṭarāī suggests the loss of two *pādas*. Perhaps even more *pādas* have gone lost during the transmission, because not only a main verb is missing, Viṣṇu leaving his dwarfish body is not made explicit either. The latter is, however, at least implied by Pāpmā leaving Viṣṇu's body.

> "Having heard that speech of theirs, the lord with the smiling face [i.e. Śiva], having completed the sacrifice, split the mountain with his trident. From that breaking then, streams of water emerged that were white as plaster, conch-shells and the moon. Thereupon, they [i.e. the gods] made Viṣṇu bathe there. As soon as he bathed, the Asuric, very terrifying, disfigured Pāpmā with her disfigured face, who had come out of his body, who was about to attack the gods to kill [them, but] was stopped by the friend of the gods [i.e. Śiva]…"

The pilgrimage and the horse sacrifice have led to the climactic moment where Śiva purifies Viṣṇu with water from the Himavat. Even though it is not made explicit, we expect that with Pāpmā leaving Viṣṇu's body, Viṣṇu left his Vāmana form and reunited with his former body (see note 361). Śiva's role in this process has once more proven vital. As the highest god of all, he finalized the pilgrimage and the horse sacrifice, and thereby effectuated Viṣṇu's purification, causing Viṣṇu to return to his divine self. Only through the intervention of Śiva, the cosmic order is truly restored. Śiva has once again accommodated with his age-old promise of "the return to your own birth, when you cling to an unnatural birth" (*ayonau sajjamānasya svayonau pratipādanam*, SP 71.68cd).

4.1.4 Viṣṇu's problem or Śiva's solution?

The shared structure in the first part of Viṣṇu's afterlife episodes is the additional problem-solution structure. Although each problem is implemented differently and has different consequences, the general problem is that Viṣṇu holds on to his manifested form. This is a radical innovation in the *Skandapurāṇa* and has been noticed and made a central topic by Phyllis Granoff in her article on the afterlives of Narasiṃha and Varāha, 'Saving the Saviour: Śiva and the Vaiṣṇava Avatāras in the Early Skandapurāṇa' (2004). As already mentioned in section 1.3, Granoff argues that the afterlife episodes of these two manifestations show that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers felt uncomfortable with animal

manifestations, and possibly even with the concept of manifestations in general[362]. From the perspective of the content of the narratives, I agree with the first statement, *viz.* that the text shows a discomfort towards Narasiṃha and Varāha, because they form a danger to the universe. They are wild, and at times even brutal, and need to be annihilated. However, I would like to challenge the second statement for two reasons.

To start, the central problem in the afterlife episodes is not that Viṣṇu manifests himself in the first place, but rather that he remains in his manifested form, either wanted or unwanted. The fact that Viṣṇu manifests himself is, from the perspective of the storyline, the only way to conquer Hiraṇyakaśipu, Hiraṇyākṣa and Bali, and the *Skandapurāṇa* composers knew that very well. Viṣṇu manifesting himself is not only a fixed part of the general storyline that cannot be changed, it is also intrinsically connected to Viṣṇu's character. If the composers would tamper with the basic storyline or with some of Viṣṇu's core features, the chance that the audience would accept the retellings would decrease, as shown in chapter 3. Since the *Skandapurāṇa* composers seem to be aware which elements could be changed and which not, it seems implausible that they would want to challenge Viṣṇu's ability to manifest himself.

In addition to that, elsewhere in the *Skandapurāṇa*, Śiva also manifests himself on earth. In a narrative about the holy place of Kārohaṇa (SP_S 167.110—38)[363], Śiva descends to earth four times in the form of a human manifestation, each in a different era[364]. If the *Skandapurāṇa* composers had a problem with the very concept of manifestations, they would not project it on Śiva.

The central message of the afterlife episodes, I argue instead, is not the problem but the solution, *viz*. Śiva saves Viṣṇu from being stuck to his manifested form. Already

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[362] "[F]or the story-teller, these animal incarnations are somehow not entirely divine; they border on the demonic and need to be 'saved' from themselves. It seems possible to go even further and see in the stories of the early *Skandapurāṇa* a discomfort with the very idea of incarnations, that is, of the birth of a god on earth, whether in an animal or in a human form" (Granoff 2004, 128).

[363] The siglum SP_S refers to the Nepalese manuscripts and is used here, because the S recension differs greatly from the RA recension, see Bisschop 2006, 5ff.

[364] In the Kṛta *yuga*, having become Bhārabhūti, Śiva took away the burden of Brahmins and threw it into the Narmadā river (SP_S 167.115a—d). In the Tretā *yuga*, having become Diṇḍimuṇḍa, Śiva cut off heads (SP_S 167.116ab). In the Dvāpara *yuga*, having become Āṣāḍhi, Śiva favoured through dancing (SP 167.116cd). In the Kali *yuga*, having made a body with white limbs, Śiva favoured the world through various deeds. For example, he teaches the Pāśupata doctrine to four disciples (SP_S 167.124—30).

in the Narasiṃha myth, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers make clear that it has always been Śiva's intention to help Viṣṇu when he clings to an unnatural birth. In this and the following two manifestation myths, this is indeed what he does. He sometimes actively makes Viṣṇu return to his own body, and he sometimes remains more at the background, rather facilitating the return. Whether active or passive, Śiva becomes the ultimate saviour. Since each manifestation myth conveys this same message, which is much more important than Viṣṇu's own problem from the perspective of the ideology of the *Skandapurāṇa* as a whole, I conclude that this is the key message that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers wanted to convey with this part of the afterlife episodes.

4.2 Śiva's boons to Viṣṇu

Śiva continues to play an important role in the last scenes of the afterlife episodes. In the second shared part, Viṣṇu realizes that it was Śiva who released him from his manifested form, starts praising Śiva and receives a boon from the benevolent god. Although the boon is different in each manifestation myth, the element unites the three manifestation myths. Not only because each narrative finishes with this component, but also because, as will become clear, the boons become more religious, and hence grander from the ideological perspective of the *Skandapurāṇa*.

4.2.1 Slayer of Daityas

Immediately after Śiva has re-joined Viṣṇu with his own body after his Narasiṃha manifestation (SP 71.71), he grants him the following boon.

> SP 71.72:
> *viṣṇave 'tha varaṃ dattvā daityaghnaṃ sa vṛṣadhvajaḥ |*
> *prakṛtistho bhavety uktvā tatraivāntaradhīyata || 72 ||*
> "Then, Vṛṣadhvaja ["Bull-Bannered One", i.e. Śiva], having given Viṣṇu the boon of slaying Daityas, [and] having said, 'you should stay in your natural form', disappeared from that place."

By granting Viṣṇu "the boon of slaying Daityas", Śiva gives Viṣṇu a specific task in the Śaiva cosmos. The *Skandapurāṇa* presents a Śaiva universe in which the gods generally maintain the tasks which they are known for. The same holds true for Viṣṇu's task as the destroyer of the enemy of the gods, for this is in line with texts as old as the Vedas, in which Viṣṇu already functions as protector and king of the universe. Viṣṇu's primary tasks have been explored by Jan Gonda, for example, in *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*.

> "There is a striking parallelism between the special emphasis laid already in Vedic texts upon Visnu's protecting activities and his intimate relations with kingship, the first function of which is to protect the world and its inhabitants and to defend the dharma, to punish the wicked. Viṣṇu indeed is a protector"[365] (Gonda 1954/1969, 164)[366]

Viṣṇu's role in the *Skandapurāṇa* to slay the Daityas, the enemies of the gods, conforms with this notion that Viṣṇu, as a king, should protect the world and its inhabitants. The most important difference with other texts is, however, just as in the case of Brahmā, that Śiva assigns the task to Viṣṇu. This makes Śiva once again the ultimate decision-maker and makes Śiva in control of and accountable (and thus laudable) for all actions in the universe.

[365] Gonda gives several Vedic examples, such as TS 3.1.10.3, ŚB 1.3.4.16, and several examples from the *Mahābhārata*: "Mbh. 2,24,34; 3,249,26 where he is stated to look after the celestials; 8,45,34 where he protects all creatures; 12,48,70 etc." (Gonda 1954/1969, 164).

[366] In the chapter called 'Mythology' in *Hinduism in India*, Greg Bailey connects Viṣṇu's task as king and protector to Viṣṇu's manifestations specifically. "A Viṣṇu cycle of myths is more difficult to locate than a Śiva cycle, in part because Viṣṇu as a deity is often reflected in the activities of his avatāras and there has always been a tendency to see his role in mythology as a palimpsest of their activities. One principal theme in his mythological persona, emerging even from the early Vedas, is his primary association with kingship and the protection of the Earth, especially through the preservation of *dharma* understood as cosmic and class "law." Such activities become very highly profiled in the two Sanskrit epics and the Purāṇas, especially where Viṣṇu and his wife Lakṣmī are seen as models of a functioning king and queen" (Bailey 2017, 96).

4.2.2 Pāśupata initiation

When Viṣṇu has left his Varāha form, he goes to Śiva's abode and starts praising Śiva (SP 110.16—24). Śiva is pleased with Viṣṇu's "devotion and the effort [he made] for the task of the gods" (*bhaktyā […] devakāryodyamena*, SP 110.26ab), so he tells Viṣṇu that he can choose a boon (SP 110.25—26). Viṣṇu asks the following.

> SP 110.27—28:
> *yadi tuṣṭo 'si no deva yadi deyo varaś ca naḥ* |
> *tataḥ pāśupataṃ divyaṃ vratam ādeṣṭum arhasi* || *27* ||
> *yad āśritya vayaṃ sarve saśakrāḥ sārvakāmikam* |
> *yuddhe jeṣyāma daiteyān duḥkhaśokavivarjitāḥ* || *28* ||
> "If you are pleased with us, oh Deva ["God", i.e. Śiva], and a boon should be given to us, then please teach the divine *pāśupatavrata*, so that, after having taken refuge to [that vow], which fulfils all desires, we all, together with Śakra [i.e. Indra], will be victorious in battle against the Daityas, being free from suffering and pain."

In other words, Viṣṇu wants Śiva to teach him and the gods the *pāśupatavrata*, so that they will conquer the Daityas in battle. Śiva promises to teach them the *vrata*.

> SP 110.29:
> *ahaṃ vaḥ kathayiṣyāmi guhyam etat sanātanam* |
> *vrataṃ pāśupataṃ divyaṃ yena kāmān avāpsyatha* || *29* ||
> "I will tell you this secret, eternal, divine *pāśupatavrata*, through which you will obtain [all] desires."

Śiva goes to Mount Sumeru to teach the *vrata* (SP 110.30—end), but the reader does not get to hear the actual teaching.

Despite the limited information provided about the *vrata*, it is clear that the *vrata* is the Pāśupata observance and is requested by Viṣṇu with a particular goal in mind, *viz.*

to conquer the Asuras. This goal is different from what is known about the observance from other instances of the *pāśupatavrata* in other parts of the *Skandapurāṇa* and from one of the foundational texts for Pāśupata Śaivas, the *Pāśupatasūtra*, and its fourth-century commentary by Kauṇḍinya called *Pañcārthabhāṣya*. There, we learn that one of the key customs is to bathe in ashes in order to reach union with Śiva, as proclaimed in the *Skandapurāṇa* (SP_{Bh} 180.17b—d)[367] and the *Pāśupatasūtra* (PS 1.2 and PS 5.32)[368]. For Pāśupatas, reaching union with Śiva is the highest goal in life and essentially means to reach liberation (*mokṣa*), to escape from the continuous cycle of rebirth. The observance was, in other words, directed to Pāśupata *ascetics*, because liberation is the goal in life of ascetics in particular[369].

This goal is very different from the worldly goal expressed by Viṣṇu. He wants to take the Pāśupata observance in order to conquer the Asuras instead. The goal is not only different, it also fits a different class of people, *viz.* the *kṣatriyas*—i.e. kings, warriors, etcetera—, precisely the class to which Viṣṇu belongs in the Varāha myth and other *devāsura* war myths. The *kṣatriya*-related goal of this *pāśupatavrata* therefore suits Viṣṇu's cosmic role as "slayer of the Daityas" granted after his Narasiṃha manifestation. In fact, if Viṣṇu would have intended the ascetics' goal of *mokṣa*, then this would not only mismatch Viṣṇu's warriorhood and kingship, it would also cause a problem with the *devāsura* wars that are still to come in which Viṣṇu plays an important, fighting role (these wars include the battle in the Vāmana myth). If Viṣṇu would observe the *vrata* of the Pāśupata ascetics, as, for instance, prescribed in the *Pāśupatasūtra*, then Viṣṇu would have to give up his life as a *kṣatriya* and become an ascetic. Consequently, he would not be able to fulfil his task as Asura-slayer[370].

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[367] SP_{Bh} 174—81 is a theological section of the *Skandapurāṇa* that includes the practice and goal of the Pāśupata observance. For example, SP_{Bh} 180.17b—d reads: *yaḥ snānaṃ bhasmanā caret | bhasmanā śivayogena mucyate pāśabandhanāt,* "he who performs [the practice of] bathing with ashes, he will be liberated from the binding of fetters, through ash and union with Śiva".

[368] PS 1.2: *bhasmanā triṣavaṇaṃ snāyīta*, "at dawn, noon and sunset, one should bathe using ashes".
PS 5.32: *labhate rudrasāyujyaṃ*, "one obtains union with Rudra [i.e. Śiva]".

[369] See, for example, Acharya 2011, 459: "[i]n the *pañcārtha* system, all initiates were ascetics, and all practice was aimed ultimately at liberation".

[370] I would like to thank Prof. Yuko Yokochi for this observation. She remarked that, taking the Vāmana myth into account, it is not possible that Viṣṇu takes on the life of a Pāśupata ascetic.

Based on these differences in task and goal in life, I suggest that we may be dealing with a different kind of vow; one to officially become a Pāśupata devotee through initiation, while remaining a *kṣatriya* and observing the rules of the warriors[371]. This may reflect the medieval practice of initiation of kings into Śaivism. In 'The Śaiva Age', Alexis Sanderson shows that from the seventh century, there is epigraphical evidence for granting the king "Śaiva initiation (*śivamaṇḍaladīkṣā*)" (Sanderson 2009, 254). Whereas the initiated Śaiva usually has to adhere to severe rules, "early in the development of the Mantramārga, the Śaivas, no doubt in order to extend their recruitment and hence their influence, admitted a category of initiates who in consideration of the fact that they were incapable of taking on these onerous duties were exonerated from doing so" (ibid.). Initiated kings generally adopted an initiation name, and names ending in *-gaṇa* were reserved for *kṣatriyas* (ibid, 291 note 695). At the time of the *Skandapurāṇa*, Śaiva initiation was thus not exclusively for ascetics, but kings from the *kṣatriya* class were also able to be officially initiated as Śaivas[372]. The *pāśupatavrata* performed by Viṣṇu, with the *kṣatriya*-related goal, could be an allusion to this royal practice. In that case, Viṣṇu, being a king, becomes a Pāśupata Śaiva and at the same time, obeys his obligations as *kṣatriya* in general and as protector and Asura-slayer in particular[373].

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[371] Instead of becoming a Pāśupata ascetic, who has to follow the rules of an ascetic.

[372] I should stress that Sanderson's examples come from a different strand of Śaivism than the one followed in the *Skandapurāṇa*. At the time of the *Skandapurāṇa*, Śaivism was divided into two main branches: the Atimārga and the Mantramārga. The Pāśupatas belonged to the former and focussed primarily on the attainment of liberation. The Mantramārga type of Śaivism was the tantric branch, which "promised not only liberation but also, for those initiates consecrated to office, the ability to accomplish supernatural effects (*siddhiḥ*)" (Sanderson 2014, 4). Sanderson furthermore gives several examples, starting from the tenth century, of kings seeking initiation for the sake of victory over one's enemies (ibid, 258—59). The *Skandapurāṇa*, with its focus on Pāśupata Śaivism, belonged to the Atimārga branch, whereas the examples provided by Sanderson 2009 belonged to the Mantramārga branch. To project practices of the Mantramārga onto those of the Atimārga may be problematic, but the correspondences with Viṣṇu's *kṣatriya*-related goal of the *pāśupatavrata* are nevertheless remarkable. In addition, Hans Bakker noted similar initiatory names ending in *-gaṇa* for kings associated with Pāśupata Śaivism. In *The World of the Skandapurāṇa*, Bakker mentions a sixth century Pāśupata king from Ujjain, whose name "Śaṃkaragaṇa may itself have been a Śaiva initiation name ending in *gaṇa*" (Bakker 2014, 205). This may point to a practice of the initiation of kings into Paśupata Śaivism.

[373] It should be noted that Viṣṇu performs the *pāśupatavrata* together with the gods. It is unlikely that this particular royal type of observance also applies to them, since they have no special relationship with kingship. From the perspective of the storyline, this does not present a problem though, because the *Skandapurāṇa* composers were not so much concerned with the other gods, but rather with Viṣṇu, and to him, the parallel with Śaiva kings applies. Cf. Sanderson 2009 gives

4.2.3 Final liberation

The *pāśupatavrata* appears once more in the afterlife episode of the Vāmana myth. When Viṣṇu is freed from Pāpmā, he realizes that this was brought about by Śiva and he goes to Śivakūṭa to perform a horse sacrifice and worship Śiva for 1,006 years and six months (SP_{Bh} 121.13cd—14). From his performance of the horse sacrifice, we can tell that Viṣṇu is still a king. However, after Śiva offers Viṣṇu a boon because of his devotion to him (SP_{Bh} 121.15), Viṣṇu's wish and religious activities indicate his ambition to become a Pāśupata ascetic and to renounce his worldly life. Each step in the process of becoming an ascetic shows close parallels with the teaching in the Pāśupata section of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Pāśupatasūtra*, both of which target Pāśupata ascetics, as shown above. Each step is discussed below, starting with the boon that Viṣṇu asks for.

> SP_{Bh} 121.16[374]:
> *bhagavan pāpmanā*[375] *vāpi tapasā vāpi lokapa* |
> *lepo*[376] *na me yathā syād vai tan mamācakṣva kālahan* || *16* ||

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an example from the *Bṛhatkālottara* in which the Śaiva teacher also initiated "the horses, elephants, chariots, and soldiers of the army […] "in order to remove all obstacles and to ensure victory in battle"" (Sanderson 2009, 259). Although it is tempting to consider the gods as similar participants in the battle and thus suitable for initiation, the *Bṛhatkālotara* is not only several centuries later than the *Skandapurāṇa* ("some time after the 9th century and before the 12th" (Sanderson 2018, "Śaivism" section, para. 19)), it belongs to the Mantramārga type of Śaivism (*viz.* the Saiddhāntika Śaiva tradition (ibid.), hence posing the same problems as indicated in note 372.

[374] The manuscripts show some variation for verses SP_{Bh} 121.16 until SP_{Bh} 121.19 (quoted below), and Bhaṭṭarāī has introduced several emendations. The most significant variants are given in the notes below.

[375] *Pāpmanā* is the reading of S_1, R and the A manuscripts and is thus well-supported. Since the afterlife is about sin, *pāpmanā* suits the context of the myth. The combination of *pāpman-*/ *pāpa-* and *lepa-*/ *lip-* (see *pāda* c) is furthermore well-attested in the *Mahābhārata* (e.g. MBh 1.7.4 and MBh 12.185.16), so it is a common phrase. On the other hand, S_2 and S_3 read *karmaṇā*, "by action". I do not follow this reading, not only because its manuscript support is limited, its combination with *lepa-*/ *lip-* is less common as well (cf. MBh 5.43.1). Furthermore, *karmaṇā* matches *tapasā* better because both are actions, so I consider *karmaṇā* to be the *lectio facilior*, and hence as secondary. Even though *tapasā* is found in all the manuscripts, I have not found it combined with *lepa-*/ *lip-* elsewhere. It may have been included here because it fits Viṣṇu's ambition to become a Pāśupata ascetic, as I argue in the current section.

[376] I follow the reading of the S manuscripts for *lepo*; cf. the R manuscript reads *niya-* (i.e. *niyamena* with the following two syllables), while the A manuscripts have *lopo*, which is also Bhaṭṭarāī's reading. The parallels with the Pāśupata section of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Pāśupatasūtra* discussed in the main text, which have the verb *lip-*, furthermore support the reading *lepo*.

> "Oh lord, oh protector of the world, oh slayer of time, tell me
> how there may be no contamination by sin or *tapas* for me."

Viṣṇu asks Śiva to instruct him in a teaching (implied by *tat*), thanks to which he will not be contaminated by sin or by *tapas*. The verse has a close parallel with both the Pāśupata section of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Pāśupatasūtra*. In the former, it is first stated that the Yogin "may not be contaminated by actions that are bound by ignorance" (*na lipyeta karmabhir mohabandhanais*, SP_{Bh} 179.17ab), and then that "the Yogin is not contaminated by sins either" (*yogī tathā pāpair na lipyate*, SP_{Bh} 179.19ab). In the latter, it is reported that "the accomplished Yogin is not contaminated by action, nor by sin" (*siddhayogī na lipyate karmaṇā pātakena vā*, PS 5.20)[377]. Viṣṇu's request not to be contaminated thus shows close parallels to the teaching of these doctrinal passages.

Similar parallels show up in the means to realize non-contamination as ordered by Śiva in the next verse: "perform the *mahāvrata*" (*cara mahāvratam*, SP_{Bh} 121.17d). This observance is further explained in the following verses, where we learn that Viṣṇu indeed performs the *vrata*.

> SP_{Bh} 121.18—19:
> *pañcārthaṃ kṛtarakṣaṃ taṃ*[378] *sarvadharmāvahaṃ śubham* |
> *yogaṃ yantraṃ vrataṃ caiva paramaiśvaryasādhanam* || *18* ||
> *yat tat pāśupataṃ divyaṃ vidhānaṃ sārvakāmikam* |
> *tac cīrtvā dvādaśa samāḥ paramaiśvaryam āptavān* || *19* ||

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[377] The concept of Siddhas, "Accomplished Ones", will be taken up again below.

[378] This *pāda* has been conjectured by Bhaṭṭarāī into *sa cātha kṛtarakṣas taṃ*, "and then he [i.e. Viṣṇu], by whom a *rakṣa* [i.e. protection ritual] was done, [having performed (*cīrtvā*, SP_{Bh} 121.19c)] it [i.e. the *vrata*]". Even though this is a good verse, it is possible to stay closer to the readings in the manuscripts. S_1 reads *sa̲ñcārtha kṛtarakṣa̲nta̲n* (underscored syllables are uncertain), S_2 reads *pañcārthaṃ kṛtarakṣantaṃ*, and S_3 reads *pañcārtham kṛtarakṣantaṃ*. R reads *yat pāpaṃ harate nityaṃ*, and the A manuscripts read *yaṃ{A_4: paṃ°}cānukṛta pūrvaṃ vai*. The readings of R and A are corrupt, but nevertheless support a reading *pañcā°* because *pa* and *ya* look very similar and can be easily misread.
I have furthermore decided to divide *kṛtarakṣantaṃ* into *kṛtarakṣaṃ taṃ*. The change from *-n-* to *-ṃ* is merely orthographical and does not influence the case. The reading *taṃ* could refer to *vrataṃ*. The correct case would be *tat* (neutral, instead of masculine), which under the influence of the endings in *-aṃ* might have become *taṃ*. Confusion of *tat* and *taṃ* is common in the *Skandapurāṇa* (see SP Vol. IV, 26).

> "Having performed for twelve years that divine, wish-fulfilling Pāśupata practice (*vidhāna*, 19b), which is [known as] *pañcārtha*[379], which protects, which is the vehicle of all *dharmas*, glorious, which is the [ultimate] *yoga* ["practice"], [ultimate] *yantra* ["instrument"] and [ultimate] *vrata* ["observance"][380] and leads to supremacy, he [i.e. Viṣṇu] obtained supremacy."

In light of the Varāha myth earlier, it is most striking that the *mahāvrata* is also qualified as "*pāśupata*". Having already performed a *pāśupatavrata* together with the gods in order to be victorious against the Asuras, Viṣṇu now performs another *pāśupatavrata*. This time, he performs it alone and with the ascetic goal of non-contamination. The qualifications of the *vrata* as well as its results again have parallels with the Pāśupata section of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Pāśupatasūtra*.

To start with the *mahāvrata* itself, elsewhere in the *Skandapurāṇa* (SP_{Bh} 180.10—11), it is qualified as "the totality of practices [related to] ashes"[381] (*bhasmasādhanamātraṃ*, SP_{Bh} 180.10c), and "by abiding to it, [its practitioners] are released" (*sevanād yasya mucyante*, SP_{Bh} 180.11c). This is reminiscent of the *Pāśupatasūtra*'s description of the *pāśupatavrata*. The *Pāśupatasūtra* prescribes practices involving ashes, including bathing (PS 1.2, see note 368), sleeping (PS 1.3, *bhasmani śayīta*, "one should sleep in ashes"), and bathing again (PS 1.4, *anusnānam*). These are

[379] This refers to the five categories in the Pāśupata teaching as defined by Kauṇḍinya in the *Pañcārthabhāṣya*: "(1) Kārya: effect (= worldly existence); (2) Kāraṇa: cause (= God); (3) Yoga: union (with God); (4) Vidhi: prescribed regimen (= ritual praxis); (5) Duḥkhānta: end of suffering (= the goal)" (Bisschop 2014, 28). The Pāśupata practice described here thus belongs to the *pañcārtha* system.

[380] I understand the three nouns to refer to the main object of the sentence, in the sense that the Pāśupata practice is "the best of all *yogas*, the best of all *yantras* and the best of all *vratas*".

[381] Hans Bakker has translated this *pāda* differently in *The World of the Skandapurāṇa*, *viz.* that it "merely consists of taking baths in ashes" (Bakker 2014, 153). However, in the following verses, various practices with ashes, including their beneficial results, are enumerated. For example, "by just grasping ashes, there is the release of all bondages" (*bhasmagrahaṇamātrāt tu sarvabandhapramocanam*, SP_{Bh} 180.14ab). Additionally, the *Pāśupatavrata* also mentions more practices than just bathing, as shown below.

all done for the sake of liberation, which is understood as complete union with Śiva (PS 5.32, see note 368)[382].

The result of Viṣṇu's performance of the *mahāvrata* has a further parallel with the two discussed text portions, *viz.* he attains *paramaiśvarya* (SP_{Bh} 121.19d). This state is often described as involving "the eight qualities"[383], such as being very small or very big[384], and is obtained by the Siddhas, "Accomplished Ones". The *Pāñcārthabhāṣya*, Kauṇḍinya's commentary on the *Pāśupatasūtra*, glosses the word *siddha* in *siddhayogī* in PS 5.20 quoted above as someone who has reached supremacy[385]. And the Pāśupata section of the *Skandapurāṇa* refers several times to *paramaiśvarya*, of which SP_{Bh} 180.8 is a suitable example here, for it places the attainment of supremacy between the practice of the *pāśupatavrata* and final liberation[386], exactly corresponding to the moment of Viṣṇu's attainment of *paramaiśvarya* in the Vāmana myth. After having reached *paramaiśvarya*, Viṣṇu namely reaches final liberation, as can be deduced from the following verse.

> SP_{Bh} 121.20:
> *tasya devaḥ svayaṃ śūlī tuṣṭaḥ prekṣya tathāvidham* |
> *śarīrārdhaṃ dadau tasmai tad abhūd viṣṇuśaṃkaram* || *20* ||
> "Deva ["God", i.e. Śiva] himself, Śūlin ["the one with the trident"], being pleased with him [i.e. Viṣṇu], having watched [him] in that state [i.e. having obtained *paramaiśvarya*], gave

[382] For a possible connection between the *mahāvrata* and the Kāpālikas, another Śaiva group, see Bakker 2014, 153.
[383] For example, the *Skandapurāṇa* speaks of *aṣṭagunam aiśvaryaṃ*, "eightfold supremacy" (SP 29.116c and SP_{Bh} 114.67c).
[384] The complete list is: *aṇiman* ("minuteness"), *mahiman* ("bigness"), *laghiman* ("lightness"), *gariman* ("heaviness"), *prāpti* ("obtaining [everything one wants]"), *prākāmya* ("irresistible will"), *īśitva* ("superiority") and *vaśitva* ("subduing to one's own will"). For references to the "eightfold supremacy" in other sources, see SP Vol IIA, 198—99.
[385] For example, PBh 5.20:6 reads *siddho nāma darśanādyaiśvaryaṃ prāptaḥ*, "he who has reached supremacy, such as clairvoyance, is called Siddha".
[386] SP_{Bh} 180.8:
vrataṃ pāśupataṃ prāpya ṣaḍmāsāj jñānam āpnute |
yogaiśvaryaṃ mahad vyāsa yad avāpya vimucyate || *8* ||
"Having received the *pāśupatavrata*, one obtains knowledge after six months [and] having obtained great supremacy in *yoga*, one is released."

half of his body to him. [As a result] that (*tad*) [body of Viṣṇu] became Viṣṇuśaṃkara [i.e. Viṣṇu-Śiva][387]."

As stated above, according to Pāśupata Śaivism, final liberation has the form of union with Śiva (see PS 5.32). The penultimate verse of the Vāmana myth represents this highest goal of the Pāśupata ascetics through Śiva giving half of his body to Viṣṇu[388]. The result is that Viṣṇu's body becomes a combination of Śiva and Viṣṇu, a merged entity that should be worshipped, according to the *phalaśruti*, "reward for listening [to the narrative]", in SP_{Bh} 121.21[389]. Viṣṇu's final liberation is, in other words, the climactic

[387] *Pāda* d is elliptical because it is not clear what *tad* refers to. The most straightforward answer would be Viṣṇu, referred to earlier with *tasya* and *tasmai*, but this does not agree with the neuter form *tad*. One option, therefore, is to supply a neuter word, among which a word like *rūpa* or *śarīra*, "body", fits the context best. From a theological perspective, it cannot refer to Śiva's body because Śiva is not subject to change: he will always remain the ultimate lord Śiva. Instead, I understand it as Viṣṇu's body that becomes a combination of himself and Śiva. Alternatively—or perhaps additionally—a separate form arose, *viz.* a merged entity that consists of both gods, representing the concept of Harihara (see note 388), which should be worshipped as stated in SP_{Bh} 121.21c (see main text below and note 389).

[388] The image sketched here also suggests the concept of Harihara. Harihara is a combination of Viṣṇu (Hari) and Śiva (Hara), each forming one half of the body (see Figure 3 in *Appendix II: Figures*). The composite icon becomes popular in material art from the Gupta period (Agrawala 1970, 348). From the viewer's point of view, Śiva is usually on the left, recognizable by his trident (*triśūla*), his matted hair (*jāṭamakuṭa*) and the *abhayamudrā* (the hand gesture not to fear) and Viṣṇu on the right, recognizable by his *cakra*, crown (*kirīṭamūkuṭa*) and conch. Harihara is often seen as the primary example of syncretism, where the gods are worshipped on an equal level and are considered to solve sectarian rivalry and complement each other. For example, according to the *Skandapurāṇa Nāgarakhaṇḍa* 247.8—13, Brahmā tells the gods that once upon a time, Śiva put a halt to a sectarian battle between Śaiva devotees and Vaiṣṇava devotees by making a form that is half Śiva and half Viṣṇu and was called Harihara (Adiceam 1966, 84). It should be noted, however, that it is Śiva who creates the form, so there is still a hierarchy between the two gods. The idea that the two gods complement each other is found in various Sanskrit sources on art, which describe Śiva as *ugra*, the "terrible" aspect of the god, and Viṣṇu as *śītala*, the "gentle" aspect of the god (ibid, 84—85). However, not all instances of Harihara are an example of non-sectarian syncretism. For example, in Cambodia, as studied by Paul A. Lavy, Śaiva kings used Harihara images to expand their political control, where Viṣṇu was the deity of the royals. "These northern [Śaiva] rulers consequently employed an icon that represented the union of both deities and the concurrent conceptions of authority represented by each, in order to symbolise and legitimise their own territorial and political aspirations" (Lavy 2003, 23). According to Lavy, this mechanism was used more often by Śaivas than by Vaiṣṇavas, both in Cambodia and in India (ibid, 39).

[389] SP_{Bh} 121.21:
ya imaṃ śṛṇuyān martyaḥ sadā parvasu parvasu |
arcayec chivaviṣṇuṃ ca sa gacchet paramāṃ gatim || *21* ||
"The man who always listens to this [story], chapter by chapter, and worships Śivaviṣṇu, he would go to the highest state."

state of his adherence to the ideal path of the Pāśupata ascetic, which starts with complete devotion to Śiva (SP_{Bh} 121.14), continues with the attainment of *aiśvarya* (SP_{Bh} 121.19d) and concludes with union with Śiva, which is granted by Śiva himself (SP_{Bh} 121.20).

4.2.4 From *kṣatriya* to Viṣṇuśaṃkara

We can observe that the boons gain a more religious character as the text progresses. In the Narasiṃha myth, Viṣṇu receives the boon to be the slayer of Daityas. This boon does not have a religious character, but rather gives Viṣṇu a specific, active task in the Śaiva universe. The boon fits Viṣṇu's characterization both in the *Skandapurāṇa* and in other sources as protector of the universe and king. Since Śiva grants him this task, Śiva remains in control.

Viṣṇu fulfils his task with success in the Varāha myth. At the end of this narrative, Viṣṇu receives another boon, this time with a religious character: the teaching of the *pāśupatavrata*. Being one of the most important teachings in Pāśupata Śaivism, the *pāśupatavrata* is usually directed to those who wish to become Pāśupata ascetics. However, Viṣṇu does not want to become an ascetic, but specifies the goal he envisions with his initiation, *viz.* he wants to be victorious in battle against the Daityas together with the gods. This matches his character as active *kṣatriya* in general and Asura-slayer in particular, but it does not, at first glance, match the goal of the *pāśupatavrata*. I have argued that the *pāśupatavrata* with Viṣṇu's *kṣatriya*-related goal might have a parallel with Śaiva initiations of kings. At the time of the *Skandapurāṇa*, it was possible for kings to become official Pāśupata initiates, while at the same time adhering to the rules of a king. In this way, kings could both participate in religious (non-violent) activities and participate in worldly (violent) activities. In the same way, king Viṣṇu could both become an official devotee of Śiva and continue his task as Asura-slayer.

This task is once again fulfilled in the Vāmana myth, and his devotion to Śiva reaches its zenith. After performing another *pāśupatavrata*, *viz.* the *mahāvrata* with the sole intention on becoming a Pāśupata ascetic, Viṣṇu attains supremacy. After worshipping Śiva for another 1,006 years and six months, he is granted the highest reward according to Pāśupata Śaivas: union with Śiva. In various Pāśupata texts, including its foundational *Pāśupatasūtra*, union with Śiva means final liberation, *mokṣa*, the goal of

every Pāśupata ascetic. While in the Varāha myth, Viṣṇu was still a *kṣatriya*, performing a royal type of *pāśupatavrata* with the *kṣatriya*-related goal of victory over the Asuras, in the Vāmana myth, he becomes a Pāśupata ascetic, by performing the *pāśupatavrata* with the ascetic goal of union with Śiva. Viṣṇu even reaches this state of final liberation[390].

To summarize, just as each manifestation myth in this set of three narratives demanded a different interpretation of the new additional problem-solution structure in which Viṣṇu did not give up his manifested form, each manifestation myth also speaks of a different boon from Śiva to Viṣṇu. The boons get more religious with the absolute climax in the Vāmana myth. There is, however, one consistent factor to which all boons can be led back: devotion to Śiva. Śiva and devotion to him are once again at the centre of Viṣṇu's afterlife episodes. In the final part of this chapter, I will explore which objectives the afterlife episodes might serve and return to the principle of end weight.

4.3 Conclusions

As demonstrated in chapters 2 and 3, the composers made several changes to the core myths of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths. Some of these can be explained from the perspective of Śaivization, where typical Vaiṣṇava elements gain a Śaiva character. This is often done in a subtle manner. I have argued that this combination of known Vaiṣṇava features and new Śaiva additions increases the chance that the retold myths will be accepted by the audience. If the story would differ too much from the one the audience knew from other sources, they could find it difficult to believe the new version. This explains, for example, why the general storyline is kept intact, with the original problem-

[390] It should be noted that Viṣṇu's liberation forms a potential problem for the narratives that follow, in which Viṣṇu is again one of the (main) participants in a *devāsura* war. In fact, immediately after the Vāmana myth, the Tārakāmaya war is told, in which Viṣṇu kills Kālanemi. There is no doubt that Viṣṇu is back in his Asura-slayer role, which does not agree with his state as liberated soul. This forms precisely the problem that we were able to solve in the Varāha myth by assuming a Śaiva initiation of king Viṣṇu, but it is impossible to circumvent the problem here from the perspective of the narratives. Perhaps it is possible to explain this from the perspective of the composition instead. Even though the three manifestation myths are not told immediately after one another, there are several characteristics that make them appear as one set of narratives, a trinity. They show the same structure and similar adjustments like a new portrayal of Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu living an afterlife and receiving increasingly religious boons. The three manifestation myths build up to the climax of liberation in the Vāmana myth, and this section is therefore, in a way, concluded. What follows might still be connected on other thematic levels (as I will demonstrate in chapter 5), but Viṣṇu's manifestations end here.

solution structure of a Daitya king who has become too powerful and taken over control (problem) and Viṣṇu who manifests himself and conquers the king of the Daityas (solution). Each main story is well-balanced, with Viṣṇu as the saviour of the universe, and—one may add—with Śiva remaining absent from the narrative.

However, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers introduced entirely new endings for each manifestation, leaving any balance between Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva elements aside. This results in three rich afterlife episodes that follow the same structure, yet aligned with the demands and specifics of the manifestation myth in question, and introducing the god who was absent in the manifestation myths so far: Śiva.

As demonstrated in this chapter, the afterlife episodes can be divided into two parts. The first is the introduction of an additional problem and solution. A new problem arises when Viṣṇu does not or cannot free himself from his manifested form. As Narasiṃha, he forms a threat to living creatures; as Varāha, he gets a troublesome son; and as Vāmana, he is unable to protect the universe from evil. The cosmic order is, in other words, still not entirely restored. This critical situation is solved by Śiva, who makes Viṣṇu return to his former body. Even when Śiva is not actively involved in releasing Viṣṇu from his manifested form, as is the case in the Varāha myth where Skanda puts an end to Varāha with a spear that he had received from Śiva, it is clear that Śiva is the mastermind behind every solution.

From that moment, Śiva does not leave the stage, which brings me to the second part. As soon as Viṣṇu realizes that Śiva has released him from his manifestation, he starts praising Śiva. As a reward for Viṣṇu's devotion, Śiva grants Viṣṇu a boon. He first officially becomes the slayer of Daityas, then he is taught a royal type of *pāśupatavrata* and finally, he is taught the *mahāvrata* of the Pāśupatas. I have argued that the boons gain a more religious character as the text progresses. The reward for devotion to Śiva becomes bigger and bigger, resulting in the highest goal in the life of the Pāśupata ascetic: liberation in the form of union with Śiva.

Both parts shift the focus from Viṣṇu to Śiva. I would like to argue that it is a deliberate choice of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers to introduce this major change specifically at the end of the manifestation myths because it is the most defining part of a narrative, following the principle of end weight. Besides the what Miller called "intuitive

but rarely theoretically-articulated sense that the ending stands as the primary site of control in narrative" (Miller 2014, 9), the importance of the concluding afterlife episodes can also be observed from the structure of the Narasiṃha myth. This narrative starts with an announcement of the afterlife, which functions as a foreshadowing to this important future event; an event in which Śiva is presented as the ultimate saviour and sole devotion to him as the right means to liberation. This is the message that will linger in the minds of the audience and will be remembered most vividly.

To conclude, what effect does this strong Śaiva message have on the endings and on the manifestation myths as a whole? Can we speak of a Śaiva appropriation of the myths[391]? The endings with the new Śaiva message can be seen first of all as reflecting a Śaivization of the endings. The myth turns from a narrative ending with the heroic deed of Viṣṇu into a narrative ending with Śiva saving Viṣṇu and granting him fabulous (Śaiva) boons. This effectuates a Śaivization of the entire myth, precisely because the endings are such a defining part of a narrative. By making the right changes at the right places in the myths, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers took control of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths.

Whether the composers wanted to appropriate the myths is difficult to say because it is a fine line between integration and accommodation on the one hand, and appropriation on the other. On the one hand, the first two processes aim at incorporating Viṣṇu and his myths in such a way that they establish a connection with the audience, by reaching agreement with their theological and mythological expectations of the *Skandapurāṇa*. This, as I have argued in section 3.6, was probably attempted by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. Appropriation, on the other hand, has a different goal. It aims at making Viṣṇu and his myths Śaiva property, claiming them and disjoining them from the predominantly Vaiṣṇava culture where they came from. It is hard to believe that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers would have thought that after the composition of their text, Viṣṇu and his manifestation myths exclusively belonged to the Śaiva community, being disjoined from the Vaiṣṇava tradition. Rather, the composers would have wanted to tell *their* version of the story, which is characterized by a Śaiva ideology but does not ignore its underlying

[391] Comparable to how Miller has shown that Chaucer's works became Scottish property through Scotticization of the endings (see the introduction to the current chapter).

roots; and this is, in fact, what I have argued with the help of integration and accommodation in section 3.6.

At the same time, it is important to note that Viṣṇu holds a different position from the other gods in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Brahmā, for example, although his task as creator god underwent a similar Śaivization—*viz*. Śiva granted it to him—and although he is also presented as Śiva's devotee just like almost all figures in the *Skandapurāṇa*, as shown in section 3.4, he remains relatively independent. Viṣṇu, on the other hand, does not only undergo a Śaivization of his task as protector of the universe and he is not just presented as a devotee of Śiva, but his dependency on Śiva to fulfil his tasks in the Śaiva cosmos is continuously emphasized in various narratives, and he is even presented as the ideal Pāśupata Śaiva, who attains liberation through sole devotion to Śiva. It is the most effective means to incorporate Viṣṇu into the Śaiva universe and Śaivism at large.

devāsurāṇāṃ yad vṛttaṃ bhaviṣyaṃ kathitaṃ śubhāḥ |
tad vayaṃ śrotum icchāmo yadi vo 'nugrahe matiḥ ||

"We wish to hear that which was told about the future affairs of the gods and the Asuras, oh glorious ones, if you would like [to do us] a favour."

Skandapurāṇa 112.112

5 Royal succession and divine wars: the textual context of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths

The three manifestation myths of Viṣṇu come across as one unit. They present a coherent new image of Viṣṇu being dependent on Śiva, introduce an afterlife that has the same problem-solution structure and add a boon that becomes more religious as the text progresses. However, the manifestation myths are not told in one sequence. The Narasiṃha myth is told in SP 70—71 and the Varāha myth in SP 76.14—110.end. In between, the Skanda myth is introduced (SP 72) and the Andhaka myth starts with the birth of Andhaka (SP 73ff.)[392]. There is also a large gap between the Varāha myth and the Vāmana myth, because the latter only starts in SP_{Bh} 116.13cd. In between, there is a section on the teaching of *vratas* by Pārvatī (SP 111.1—112.72), the Andhaka myth continues (SP 112.73—end), and several narratives on wars between the gods and the Asuras are told (SP_{Bh} 113ff.). Each manifestation myth is thus surrounded by other narratives and has its own textual context[393].

Since the three manifestation myths are so closely connected thematically, it would make sense to tell them in one sequence, in particular for the sake of highlighting the increase of Śiva's boons to Viṣṇu. This raises the question why the present situation is different. Is it a deliberate choice of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers to separate the myths? If so, what are their objectives? How do the manifestation myths fit into their textual context? These questions will be addressed in this chapter.

[392] Both myths continue later in the text: the Skanda myth continues in SP_{Bh} 163—65 and the Andhaka myth in SP 112.73—end and SP_{Bh} 130—57.

[393] I make a distinction between the *textual* context, which concerns the narratives surrounding the myth in question and the *context of the text as a whole*, which addresses adjustments in the manifestation myths that align them with the Śaiva ideology of the *Skandapurāṇa*.

As I have shown in the previous chapters, the manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa* are full of innovations and alterations that have a well-definable rationale behind them, whether ideological or tradition-driven, are structurally employed and follow a repeated pattern. The choices can therefore often be seen as deliberate choices of the composers[394]. We may assume that this is also the case with the position of the manifestation myths in the text. In a forthcoming article on the content, composition and narrative structure of the *Skandapurāṇa*, Yuko Yokochi (forth.) gives examples of narratives whose place in the text seems illogical at first glance—from the perspective of chronology for instance—but can be explained nonetheless. One of the examples is the myth in which Pārvatī adopts an Aśoka tree (SP_{Bh} 158—62) because she is *aputrā*, "without a son" (SP_{Bh} 162.69a). The story is told immediately after the Andhaka cycle, in which Skanda, the son of Śiva and Pārvatī, in fact already featured (for example, in the afterlife episode of the Varāha myth)[395]. From a chronological point of view, it is therefore not possible that Pārvatī is *aputrā*. However, according to Yokochi, this chronological inconsistency can be explained as the continuation of a shared theme: "it continued the motif of the adoption of a son, which motif also concluded the Andhaka Cycle when Śiva adopted Andhaka and Umā too accepted him as her son (SP 157). The Aśoka tree episode is also appropriate in this place since it foreshadows the birth of Skanda as told in SP 163" (Yokochi, forth.). The decision to place the Aśoka tree narrative in this particular place can be hence explained from its textual context, which deals with the adoption and the birth of a son.

Similarly, we may expect the *Skandapurāṇa* composers to have had their reasons to separate Viṣṇu's manifestation myths, which from the perspective of their unifying

[394] In chapter 3, I have demonstrated that the composers followed various layers of consistency to compose a coherent, trustworthy and acceptable retelling of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths. The study in chapter 4 has shown that the composers placed the most significant message at the end of the narratives. By looking for narrative techniques and choices of style and structure in the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the manifestation myths, it is possible to unveil some of the intentions and ideas of the anonymous composers.

[395] As mentioned in note 205, I generally use the term "(myth) cycle" in the same way as the editors of the *Skandapurāṇa* do, *viz.* "in a loose sense to indicate a more or less complete narrative unit" (SP Vol. IV, 3 note 1). However, in the present chapter, there are cases in which stricter criteria to define the textual context of the manifestation myths are needed. Therefore, I try to refer to a specific narrative as much as possible, instead of a complete myth cycle. In this particular case, it is nevertheless relevant to mention the Andhaka *cycle*, instead of the Andhaka *myth* (which happens to end in SP_{Bh} 157 as well), because the argument involves the Varāha myth which is part of the Andhaka cycle according to the editors' definition of the term.

themes seems illogical at first sight. In order to understand the rationale behind this decision, I will investigate "the immediate context" of these myths, a term borrowed from Tamar Alexander-Frizer in *The Pious Sinner* (1991)[396]. I make a distinction between the *direct* immediate context and the *relative* immediate context[397]. The *direct* immediate context concerns the narratives that directly precede and follow the manifestation myth under discussion. To decide which narratives belong to the direct immediate context, I look for shared content that connects the narratives. The example of the Aśoka tree episode above (SP_{Bh} 158—62) is linked in its direct immediate context to SP_{Bh} 157 with the adoption of Andhaka and, to a lesser degree, to SP 163 with the birth of Skanda, because each involves the adoption and birth of a son. The direct immediate context of the manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa* are discussed in section 5.1, along with the shared themes that connect them.

The *relative* immediate context concerns narratives that are told relatively close to the manifestation myth under discussion. It is likewise determined on the basis of shared topics. The main difference with the direct context, however, is that the relative context could consist of narratives that do not directly precede or follow the narrative in question. I will examine which narratives belong to the relative immediate context of the

[396] In *The Pious Sinner*, Alexander-Frizer studies different versions of Jewish narratives in the *Book of the Pietists*. Since there is little known about the method of transmission of this text, "in studying the stories one can draw only limited conclusions about the social context of the telling as an event or the audience's reactions. Hence context will be treated in a way that differs somewhat from the foregoing [i.e. context as "the specific and social situation in which that particular item is actually employed" (Alexander-Frizer 1991, 30)], and two aspects germane to the present study will be discussed: the *immediate context* (the micro-context), which is the location of a given story with respect to the passages preceding and following it; and the *wider context* (or macro-context), which is the story's significance in the ethical and theological doctrine of German-Jewish Pietism [i.e. the religious strand promoted in the *Book of the Pietists*]" (ibid, 31). In the case of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*, the immediate context concerns the narratives preceding and following the manifestation myths—not necessarily *directly* preceding and following them—and the wider context concerns the religious ideology of the *Skandapurāṇa* as a whole, studied in the previous chapters (e.g. in chapter 3 in relation to the internarrational consistency of the composers).

[397] Alexander-Frizer does not make this differentiation, but she applies both subtypes indiscriminately. For example, in her study on "The Tale of the Pious Sinner", she shows that the tale, told in paragraph 80, is "a continuation of discussions in paragraphs 76, 77, 78 and 79" (Alexander-Frizer 1991, 102), which would be a case of *direct* immediate context in my wording. In her study on "The Blood Test" Tale, however, she notices a shared topic between paragraphs in the *relative* immediate context, namely paragraphs 281, 286, 289, 290 and 291, which is the tale itself (ibid, 52).

manifestation myths and the themes that link them in section 5.2. It will become clear that the manifestation myths, despite the gaps between them, are closely connected to each other, based on their relative immediate context.

In section 5.3, I will return to the question what the composers' intentions may have been to separate the three manifestation myths. I will approach this question from two angles. First, I will explore how the chosen situation contributes to the compositional unity of this part of the *Skandapurāṇa*. Then, I will examine whether the findings can tell us something about the ambitions of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers for the text as a whole, focussing particularly on the reasons why the composers did not only tell the manifestation myths, but addressed larger topics instead.

5.1 Direct immediate context

The direct immediate context of the manifestation myths is determined by the fact whether the narrative(s) preceding and/ or following the manifestation myth share the same topic. The topic can be easily recognizable, when the main characters of the main story are the same, as well as the setting of the main story (for example, the heavens or the netherworld) and its subject. When the main characters do not agree, and there is not a clearly shared subject, the narrative could still be connected on a thematic level. The Aśoka tree episode mentioned above is an example of the second situation. This episode deals with Pārvatī as the main character, it is set in a heavenly realm, and the subject is the acquirement and adoption of a son. It is through this final theme that the narrative can be connected most clearly with its preceding narrative, the Andhaka myth. The latter features Andhaka and the Asuras, among whom he is brought up, as the main characters, and Śiva and Pārvatī only appear later as his adopting parents. The setting in which the myth takes place is both heaven and the netherworld. Furthermore, the most prevalent topic of the main story is the battle between Andhaka and the Asuras on one side and Śiva's Gaṇas on the other side. However, there is one more underlying theme in the myth, *viz.* the adoption of a son. It is this topic that connects the Andhaka myth with the Aśoka tree episode[398].

[398] As mentioned above, the acquirement of a son furthermore connects the Aśoka tree episode with the following narrative on Skanda's birth. In this case, the setting is the same as well, *viz.* the heavenly realms, and although the main character in the latter is primarily Skanda, Śiva and Pārvatī also play an important role.

In order to identify a shared topic, one might look for linking verses that refer to the mutual topic. This is frequently used as a compositional technique to make the transitions between narratives smoother and to unify a section. It is important to make a distinction between verses that connect narratives on the level of the *main topic* and those that make a bridge with *less central story elements* that the narratives have in common. Examples of the first are, for instance, studied by Horst Brinkhaus in the context of the *Harivaṃśa*. In his article '*Āścaryakarman* and *prādurbhāvas* in the *Harivaṃśa*' (2001), Brinkhaus shows that each list of Viṣṇu's manifestations and deeds, appearing in the *Harivaṃśa*, has a different aim, from which the composers' intentions can be deduced. For example, HV 31 forms one set of Viṣṇu's nine manifestation myths that includes both human and animal manifestations. The sequence is clearly introduced[399] and concluded[400] by reiterating the main topic of this chapter, *viz.* Viṣṇu's *prādurbhāvas* ("manifestations"). Each myth is furthermore connected through a linking verse, emphasizing the shared subject[401]. I would identify such a section as constituting one coherent direct immediate context. In his article, Brinkhaus tries to find a reason for the inclusion of the section on Viṣṇu's *prādurbhāvas*. At the time when this enumeration was added to the *Harivaṃśa*, the text was primarily concerned with lists dealing with either human or animal manifestations and did not contain lists that combined the two types of manifestations. According to Brinkhaus, the composers wanted to fill this void, by adding a comprehensive list of Viṣṇu's

[399] HV 31.13:
hitārthaṃ suramartyānāṃ lokānāṃ prabhavāya ca |
bahuśaḥ sarvabhūtātmā prādurbhavati kāryataḥ |
prādurbhāvāṃś ca vakṣyāmi puṇyān devaguṇair yutān || *13* ||
"For the sake of the welfare of gods and men, as well as for the sake of the control over the worlds, [Viṣṇu] whose essence [consists of] all beings, manifests himself many times according to his duties. Now I will tell about these auspicious manifestations, which are filled with divine qualities."
[400] Viṣṇu's manifestations of the past are concluded in HV 31.148ab: *ete lokahitārthāya prādurbhāvā mahātmanaḥ*, "these are the manifestations of the noble one for the sake of the world".
[401] Almost each myth is connected with the previous one by a connecting sentence. The myths are either connected through the word *bhūyaḥ*, "furthermore", or by a sentence referring back to the previous manifestation and announcing the next. For example, the Narasiṃha myth starts by referring to the previous myth about Varāha.
HV 31.31:
vārāha eṣa kathito nārasiṃham ataḥ śṛṇu |
yatra bhūtvā mṛgendreṇa hiraṇyakaśipur hataḥ || *31* ||
"This Varāha [manifestation] has been told; now listen to [the manifestation] of Narasiṃha, in which Hiraṇyakaśipu is killed by the lord of animals [i.e. Narasiṃha]."

manifestations that "are indiscriminately described as being on one and the same level, i.e. as being theologically equivalent, be they non-human or human" (Brinkhaus 2001, 36).

The second type of linking techniques has been studied by Yokochi (forth.). She identifies different 'narrative layers', "based on two criteria: 1) a sequence of events, and 2) the main character(s) of these events" (Yokochi, forth.). In other words, a narrative layer consists of narratives that follow the same timeline and the same figures. The timeline also often takes place in the same place, but this is not taken into consideration in the article. This approach results in a division into several layers, of which layer A is the main layer, where "Śiva is the principle character, since the ultimate aim of the composition of the SP, as we understand it, is to show that this world is his universe" (ibid.)[402]. The timeline, place and main characters are occasionally stressed by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers with the help of linking verses. The shared elements of time, place and main characters are taken up at the beginning of the following narrative; for instance, in the form of a question of Vyāsa to Sanatkumāra about what Śiva did when he had returned home to Mount Mandara. Although verses like this provide insight into the timeline of the narrative and its main characters, they do not necessarily provide information on the *main topic* of the narrative—which, conversely, the linking verses in the *Harivaṃśa* examples do. Since in the present chapter, I focus on the content of the individual narratives and look for a relationship between narratives on the level of main topics, rather than on the level of narrative layers, I make a distinction between linking verses related to the main topic and linking verses related to the timeline and main characters. The latter are not of concern here.

5.1.1 The Narasiṃha myth

The Narasiṃha myth (SP 70—71) is preceded by a Māhātmya on the holy place of Gaurīśikhara (SP 69). The Māhātmya ends with the statement that Śiva and Pārvatī

[402] Yokochi continues: "Since Śiva is absolute, however, he keeps a distance and cannot act as the leader who propels the story. In the first part of the narrative (SP 3—8), it is Brahmā who propels the story" (Yokochi, forth.). This is why it happens that there are narratives in layer A in which Śiva does not play an active role.

returned to Mount Mandara, after Śiva had blessed Gaurīśikhara (SP 69.77)[403]. The Narasiṃha myth continues this final event in the form of a question from Vyāsa to Sanatkumāra: what did Śiva do when he returned to Mount Mandara with Pārvatī (SP 70.1)[404]? Sanatkumāra answers that Śiva and Pārvatī roamed around on the mountain (SP 70.2)[405], when Indra, Śaśāṅka and Vāyu came by to make some requests (SP 70.3—20). The elements that connect the end of the Māhātmya with the start of the Narasiṃha myth are the main character (Śiva), the time (when he returned) and the place (Mount Mandara). The elements link the two narratives on the level of timeline and main characters, so the myths may be placed in the same narrative layer. However, the linking verses do not connect the two narratives on the level of the main topic. In order to know whether there is a shared main topic, we have to take the full stories into account.

To start with the Gaurīśikhara Māhātmya, this constitutes the final chapter of "Pārvatī's myth"[406] (SP 34.1—61 and SP 53—69). The myth starts with a scene in which Śiva repeatedly calls Pārvatī *kṛṣṇā*, "the dark one". Pārvatī is saddened by this and wants to cast off her dark complexion and obtain a fair complexion instead, and—she adds—she also wants a son (SP 34.11—12)[407]. Śiva wants to give her these boons immediately,

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[403] SP 69.77:
evaṃ nagendraṃ sa tadānugṛhya munīndra sārdhaṃ girirājaputryā |
devaiḥ sasiddhair anugamyamānaḥ śarvaḥ punar mandaram ājagāma || *77* ||
"Having thus favoured the lord of mountains [i.e. Gaurīśikhara] then, oh master of sages, Śarva [i.e. Śiva] went back to [Mount] Mandara together with the daughter of the king of the mountains [i.e. Pārvatī], accompanied by gods and Siddhas ["Accomplished Ones"]."
[404] SP 70.1:
vyāsa uvāca |
sa gatvā mandaraṃ bhūyo giriputryā saha prabhuḥ |
yac cakāra mahādevas tan me brūhi mahāmune || *1* ||
"Vyāsa said: Having gone to [Mount] Mandara again together with the daughter of the mountains [i.e. Pārvatī], what did lord Mahādeva ["the Great God", i.e. Śiva] do? Tell me that, oh great sage."
[405] SP 70.2:
mandaraṃ girim āgatya pārvatyā sahito haraḥ |
reme hiraṇmaye divye sarvaratnavibhūṣite || *2* ||
"Having reached Mount Mandara, Hara [i.e. Śiva] roamed around together with Pārvatī on the golden, divine [mountain], which is adorned with all kinds of jewels."
[406] I borrow the name of this myth from SP Vol. III, 5. The myth forms a part of the Vindhyavāsinī cycle that furthermore consists of "the Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī myth with a prologue and a supplement" in SP 60.14—21, SP 60.72—132 and SP 61—68 (ibid, 6), and "[o]ther episodes" in SP 56—57, SP 60.1—13 and SP 60.22—71 (ibid, 7).
[407] SP 34.11—12:
yadā yadā vadasi māṃ kṛṣṇeti vadatāṃ vara |
tadā tadā me hṛdayaṃ vidīryata iva prabho || *11* ||

but Pārvatī wishes to practice *tapas* to earn them. With Śiva's permission, she goes to a peak in the Himālayas to practice *tapas* (SP 34.1—61). After a while, Śiva gives Brahmā his consent to stop Pārvatī's *tapas* and to grant her the boons of a fair complexion and a son. Brahmā does accordingly (SP 53—55). Pārvatī becomes *gaurī*, "the white one", and her embodied dark complexion is sent to the Vindhya mountains to live there (SP 58). When Pārvatī has returned home (SP 59), she takes Śiva back to the peak where she became *gaurī*, and Śiva calls it "Gaurīśīkhara" (SP 69)[408]. In short, Pārvatī's myth centres around Pārvatī, the *tapas* she performed and the boons she received.

The Narasiṃha myth, on the other hand, is concerned with the deeds of Viṣṇu's manifestation as Man-Lion and how Śiva releases him from this form. At first glance, the two narratives seem unrelated because the main characters are different and the topics of the main stories also seem unconnected. There seems to be, therefore, no reason to place the Narasiṃha myth in this particular direct immediate context. However, both Pārvatī's myth and the afterlife episode of the Narasiṃha myth, which I have identified in chapter 4 as the most important part of the myth, revolve around a major, positive change of the body. Pārvatī casts off her dark complexion and becomes *gaurī*, and Viṣṇu casts off his Man-Lion form and becomes a god again. This shared underlying theme could be the reason why the Narasiṃha myth was placed at this particular position in the text.

Although it is possible to find an underlying shared theme with the narrative preceding the Narasiṃha myth, this is not the case with the narrative following it, which is concerned with the birth of Skanda. The Narasiṃha myth ends in SP 71.73, where it is stated that Śiva "went back to his own abode" (*dhāma svākyaṃ […] jagāma*, SP 71.73d), which is Mount Mandara. In the next chapter, SP 72, the Skanda myth starts with Vyāsa's question what Śiva did after he had removed Viṣṇu from his Lion form and had gone to Mount Mandara (SP 72.1—2). This is again a compositional technique to make the

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etadartham ahaṃ pādau praṇamya tava śaṃkara |
vijñāpayāmi sarveśa gauravarṇam anuttamam |
vijñāpayāmi putraś ca yathā mama bhaved iti || *12* ||
"Every time you call me 'dark', oh best of speakers, it is as if my heart breaks, oh lord. For that reason, I, having bowed down to your feet, oh Śaṃkara [i.e. Śiva], request an unsurpassed white complexion, oh lord of all, and I request that I will have a son."

[408] The summary of the main narrative of the Vindhyavāsinī cycle is based on SP Vol. III, 7—9, where one can also find a summary of the intermediate narratives.

transition between two unrelated narratives smoother, continuing the timeline and main character(s). It shows that the two narratives should be placed in the same narrative layer. However, it does not tell us anything about a shared main topic. The Skanda myth (SP 72, SP_{Bh} 163—65) is concerned with the conception and pregnancy of Skanda, his consecration as the leader of the divine army and his slaying of Tāraka. Neither the main character, nor the main topic of the Narasiṃha myth and the Skanda myth are thus related. Even underlying themes, such as a change of the body or the acquisition of a son, are not found. The Narasiṃha myth is therefore not related to the narrative that follows it, and its direct immediate context ends there. It should be noted, however, that the Skanda myth does in fact take up Pārvatī's myth again. After all, one should recall that Pārvatī had two objectives with her *tapas* (SP 34.11—12): the first was to obtain a fair complexion, which is realized in the same narrative in SP 58.7[409], and the second was to obtain a son, which is effectuated only in the Skanda myth starting in SP 72[410]. Both the Narasiṃha myth with the underlying theme of "change of the body" and the Skanda myth with the promise of a son are thus connected to Pārvatī's myth, but the Narasiṃha myth is not related to the Skanda myth.

5.1.2 The Varāha myth

In the previous chapters, I focussed on the Varāha myth from the moment that the gods ask Brahmā for help to counter Hiraṇyākṣa, and that Viṣṇu becomes a Boar to solve this problem (SP 96ff.). However, the reason for Varāha to come into being starts already in SP 76.14, when Hiraṇyākṣa decides to challenge the gods for battle as revenge for killing his elder brother Hiraṇyakaśipu.

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[409] SP 58.7:
vigāhamānā vyajahat kṛṣṇāṃ kośīṃ tadānaghā |
sā vireje tayā muktā kalevendor ghanātyaye || 7 ||
"Plunging [into the pond created by her tears of joy (SP 58.4—5)], the sinless one then cast off her dark skin. Being released from it, she shone like the digit of the moon in autumn."

[410] Yokochi has studied Pārvatī's wish for a son in SP Vol. III and argued that in fact, "the primary object of her *tapas* is to obtain a son. In the beginning of chapter 72, where the main story resumes after the end of the Vindhyavāsinī Cycle, it is told that Pārvatī asked Śiva to realize her wish to bear a son comparable to him and that Śiva consented to this, referring to the fact that she had once wished for a son before going to practise *tapas* (72.17), precisely as related in 34.12ef. Hereafter, Śiva and Pārvatī embark on a project to give birth to Skanda, which starts the myth cycle of Skanda" (SP Vol. III, 23—24).

As the fact that the Varāha myth does not start at the beginning of a new chapter already suggests, the myth is hardly discernible from the one preceding it: the Andhaka myth. Right at the beginning of the Andhaka myth in SP 73, the connection between the two narratives becomes clear, *viz.* their main characters are closely related to each other. The Andhaka myth starts with Vyāsa's question to Sanatkumāra who the father of Andhaka is and how Andhaka was killed (SP 73.1)[411]. Sanatkumāra's answers start as follows.

> SP 73.3—4:
> *kaśyapasya sutau dityāṃ daityau tau saṃbabhūvatuḥ* |
> *hiraṇyakaśipur jyeṣṭho hiraṇyākṣas tato 'nujaḥ* |
> *jyeṣṭhas tatrābhavad rājā hiraṇyakaśipus tadā* || *3* ||
> *tasmin vinihate vīre narasiṃhena dhīmatā* |
> *hiraṇyākṣo 'bhavad rājā sarvadaityanamaskṛtaḥ* |
> *aputraḥ sa tapas tepe putrahetor iti śrutiḥ* || *4* ||
> "Two sons were born from Kaśyapa and Diti: Hiraṇyakaśipu was the elder and Hiraṇyākṣa the younger. The eldest among them, Hiraṇyakaśipu, became king then. When that hero [i.e. Hiraṇyakaśipu] was killed by the wise Narasiṃha, Hiraṇyākṣa became king, being honoured by all the Daityas. It is heard that he, being childless, practiced *tapas* for the sake of a son."

These introductory verses both look back to a previous narrative and pave the way for the following one. By referring back to Hiraṇyakaśipu and his killing by Narasiṃha, the Andhaka myth is linked with the Narasiṃha myth, even though the start of the Skanda myth is told between them. This is a logical connection because the two Daityas are brothers, which was also already mentioned in the Narasiṃha myth in a similar verse (SP

[411] SP 73.1:
vyāsa uvāca |
andhako kasya putro 'sau kiṃvīryaḥ kiṃparākramaḥ |
kathaṃ ca nihataḥ saṃkhye sarvam etad vadasva me || *1* ||
"Vyāsa said: Whose son is this Andhaka, how powerful is he, how strong is he and how was he killed in battle? Tell me all that."

70.22)[412], and Hiraṇyākṣa succeeds his elder brother when he died. In this way, the lineage of the Daityas is continued[413].

Family ties are also the means to connect the Andhaka myth with the next narrative, the Varāha myth. It is immediately made explicit that Andhaka and Hiraṇyākṣa are father and son, and this automatically lays the foundations for telling the story of Hiraṇyākṣa later. It is, however, also clear that at this point of the text, we are still in the Andhaka myth because the main concern of the first few chapters is Andhaka. They recount how Andhaka came into being through Hiraṇyākṣa's *tapas*, why he was born blind, how he received eyesight through *tapas* and how Hiraṇyākṣa celebrated Andhaka's successful *tapas* with a Kaumudī festival[414] (SP 73.4ef—76.13).

Directly after the description of the festival, the Varāha myth is told in one breath, starting with the entry of the Asuras into Hiraṇyākṣa's palace (SP 76.14—15)[415]. In SP 76.42ef, it becomes clear that they entered the palace "for the sake of revenge on the gods" (*surāṇāṃ viprakārārthaṃ*). The council for war, the battle itself, Hiraṇyākṣa's victory and

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[412] SP 70.22:
ditir nāmābhavat patnī kaśyapasya prajāpateḥ |
dakṣasya duhitā vyāsa sā jajñe tanayadvayam |
hiraṇyakaśipuṃ jyeṣṭhaṃ hiraṇyākṣaṃ kanīyasam || *22* ||
"Prajāpati Kaśyapa had a wife called Diti. She was the daughter of Dakṣa, oh Vyāsa, [and] gave birth to* two sons: Hiraṇyakaśipu was the elder, Hiraṇyākṣa the younger."
* I follow the editors of this part of the *Skandapurāṇa* in understanding the perfect *jajñe* with a causative meaning (SP Vol. IV, 38 note 67).
The mentioning of Hiraṇyākṣa has a compositional function of foreshadowing to the Varāha myth, which will be demonstrated in section 5.3.

[413] The link with the Daityas' succession will become a central element in the study of the relative immediate context in section 5.2.

[414] "The Kaumudī festival, as its name indicates, celebrates the light of the full moon [for *kaumudī* means "moon light"]. It is associated with royalty" (SP Vol. IV, 62 note 153). For secondary literature on the festival's date on the ritual calendar, see ibid. The rituals and customs performed at Hiraṇyākṣa's festival are provided in the synopsis of SP Vol. IV (ibid, 63—64).

[415] SP 76.14—15:
evaṃ samabhavad vyāsa bahucitras tadotsavaḥ |
dānavānāṃ tadā prītisaukhyaviśrambhavardhanaḥ || *14* ||
tasminn uparate bhūyaḥ pūrvavat saṃpratiṣṭhite |
prakṛtisthe jane vyāsa dānavās te samāgatāḥ |
viviśur bhīmasaṃhrādāḥ sabhāṃ divyāṃ manoramām || *15* ||
"Thus the lovely festival took place then, which increases joy, happiness and intimacy among the Dānavas, oh Vyāsa. When it stopped and everyone was established in their own form like before again, the Dānavas, having assembled, entered the divine and beautiful assembly hall with terrifying noises."

finally Viṣṇu's intervention as Varāha follow logically hereafter. The direct immediate context of the Varāha myth therefore includes the Andhaka myth, which starts in SP 73, and the connection between the two narratives is the familial relationship between Hiraṇyākṣa and Andhaka as the main topic.

When the Varāha myth reaches its conclusion in SP 110, Śiva goes to Mount Sumeru to teach the *pāśupatavrata* to Viṣṇu (SP 110.31)[416]. In the next narrative (SP 111.1—112.72), Pārvatī teaches the Mother Goddesses various *vratas*, "religious practices". It starts with Vyāsa's question what Pārvatī did when Śiva had gone to heaven to teach the *pāśupatavrata* (SP 111.1)[417]. It is the same compositional technique of linking the elements of timeline and main character as identified in the transition from the Narasiṃha myth to the Skanda myth: what happened at the moment that Śiva (main character) was teaching the *pāśupatavrata* (time) at Mount Sumeru, a divine mountain in heaven (place)? Although these elements link the Varāha myth and the section on *vratas* in the framework of timeline and main character, and thus place them in the same narrative layer[418], the narratives are unrelated concerning other factors. The main topics are different (the lineage of the Daityas and the war between the gods and the Asuras vs. *vratas*), as well as the main characters related to these topics (Viṣṇu and the Asuras in general and Hiraṇyākṣa in particular vs. Pārvatī). The direct immediate context of the Varāha myth is thus limited to the Andhaka myth preceding it and does not include the section on *vratas* following it.

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[416] SP 110.31:
atha himagiritulyacārumūrtiṃ vṛṣabhavaraṃ bhagavāṃs tadābhirūḍhaḥ |
suragaṇasahitaḥ prabhuḥ sumeruṃ vratam upadeṣṭumanā jagāma śarvaḥ || 31 ||
"Next lord Śarva [i.e. Śiva], the master, having mounted the best of bulls then, whose form is as beautiful as Mount Himavat, went to [Mount] Sumeru to teach the *vrata*, being accompanied by gods and Gaṇas."

[417] SP 111.1:
vyāsa uvāca |
gate divaṃ mahādeve vratam ādeṣṭum uttamam |
ekākinī mahādevī kiṃ cakre tadanantaram || 1 ||
"Vyāsa said: When Mahādeva ["the Great God", i.e. Śiva] went to heaven to teach the highest *vrata*, what did Mahādevī ["the Great Goddess", i.e. Pārvatī] do in the meantime, while she was alone?"

[418] We even see a link between the topic of the final verse of the Varāha myth and the topic of the next episode: they both involve the teaching of *vratas*. However, since Śiva's teaching of the *pāśupatavrata* is just one small element of the Varāha myth, it is not an argument to connect the myth with the next episode.

5.1.3 The Vāmana myth

The Vāmana myth essentially deals with how Viṣṇu as a Dwarf defeats Bali, the king of the Daityas, during a (peaceful) battle between the gods (represented by Viṣṇu) and the Asuras (represented by Bali). The myth preceding it (SP_{Bh} 116.1—13ab) tells how Bali's father Virocana, the king of the Daityas, is killed by Indra during the *devāsura* war called Āṭībaka. The two myths are unmistakably related to each other because they share two main topics: a *devāsura* war and the succession of Daitya kings. The succession is stressed by the first verse of the Vāmana myth that links the two narratives, stating that when Virocana died, Bali was consecrated as the king of the Daityas (SP_{Bh} 116.13cd—14ab)[419]. The Āṭībaka myth is therefore the Vāmana myth's direct immediate context. And, in fact, the direct immediate context reaches further back until SP_{Bh} 113, which marks the start of a series of *devāsura* wars and is already announced in the Andhaka myth, in the concluding verses of SP 112.

At the end of this chapter, it is told that Andhaka arrives in a forest and sees seven sages assembled there. He overhears their conversation with three other sages: Dhātṛ, Vidhātṛ and Kṛtānta. The seven sages ask the other three to tell them the following.

> SP 112.112—15:
> *devāsurāṇāṃ yad vṛttaṃ bhaviṣyaṃ kathitaṃ śubhāḥ* |
> *tad vayaṃ śrotum icchāmo yadi vo 'nugrahe matiḥ* || *112* ||
> *kiṃ ca vijñāpitā devī yuṣmābhiḥ surasattamāḥ* |
> *kathayadhvaṃ ca tat sarvaṃ yady anugrāhyatā hi naḥ* || *113* ||
> *teṣāṃ tad vacanaṃ śrutvā trayas te devasattamāḥ* |
> *tvam ācakṣva kṛtānteti vākyam ūcur mahābalāḥ* || *114* ||
> *tataḥ sa teṣāṃ bahucitrakāraṇaṃ yathābhaviṣyaṃ kathayāṃ cakāra* |

[419] SP_{Bh} 116.13cd—14ab:
hate virocane brahmā baliṃ teṣāṃ mahāsuram || *13* ||
abhyaṣecayad indratve sa ca rājā babhūva ha |
"When Virocana was killed, Brahmā consecrated the great Asura Bali into kingship, and he [i.e. Bali] became king."

surāsurāṇāṃ jayatāṃ ca kāraṇaṃ purā vidhātrā vihitaṃ yathārthavat || 115 ||

"112. 'If you would like [to do us] a favour, we wish to hear that which was told about the future affairs of the gods and the Asuras, oh glorious ones. 113. If we are entitled to be favoured, may you also tell everything about what Devī ["Goddess", i.e. Pārvatī] was told by you, oh best of deities'[420]. 114. Having heard that speech of theirs, the three very strong, best of deities said this speech: 'You should tell, oh Kṛtānta.' 115. To them [i.e. the sages], he [i.e. Kṛtānta] then started telling about the details of the future affairs (*yathābhaviṣyaṃ*) that have various, wonderful causes (*bahucitrakāraṇaṃ*), as well as about the reason for the victories of the gods and the Asuras [respectively], precisely as it was determined by Vidhātṛ [i.e. Brahmā] before[421]."

The stories about "the future affairs" that follow from SP_{Bh} 113 to SP_{Bh} 129 involve seven different *devāsura* wars.

1. The Amṛtamanthana war myth (SP_{Bh} 113—15) contains several storylines.
    a. SP_{Bh} 113. The gods and the Asuras churn nectar from the milk ocean. The Asuras steal the nectar, but it is taken back by Viṣṇu in the form of an enchanting woman (*mohinī*).
    b. SP_{Bh} 114. Śiva swallows the poison that arose from the churning and becomes Nīlalohita, "the one with the dark neck".
    c. SP_{Bh} 115. Prahlāda, Hiraṇyakaśipu's son, is defeated by Viṣṇu in battle.

[420] The editors of SP Vol. V, forth. note that this request is not followed up.
[421] Brahmā is meant here and not the sage Vidhātṛ, because in the passage preceding these verses, it is told that the three sages were instructed by Brahmā to tell the Prajāpati Kaśyapa "what happens between the Devas ["Gods"] and Asuras, about their mutual friendship, the production of the Amṛta, and the rule of their kingdom" (SP Vol. V, forth.).

2. In the Āṭībaka war myth (SP_{Bh} 116.1—13ab), Virocana, Prahlāda's son, is killed by "the lord of the gods" (*devendrena*, SP_{Bh} 116.3d), i.e. Indra.
3. The Vāmana war myth (SP_{Bh} 116.13cd—121.22) contains two storylines.
    a. SP_{Bh} 116.13cd—117.20. Bali, Virocana's son, is defeated by Viṣṇu in the form of a Dwarf.
    b. SP_{Bh} 117.21—121.22. Viṣṇu becomes a Dwarf again and is rescued from this form by Śiva.
4. The Tārakāmaya war myth (SP_{Bh} 121.23—124.end) contains several storylines.
    a. SP_{Bh} 121.23—end. The Asuras seek refuge with Tāraka and Maya, two Dānavas. They start a war against the gods, but Rāma Jāmadagnya intervenes by killing the Saiṃhikeyas.
    b. SP_{Bh} 122.1—16. As Rāma Jāmadagnya leaves the battle ground, the Tārakāmaya war continues with Viṣṇu killing Kālanemi, and Tāraka and Maya retreating to Pātāla. Sanatkumāra announces the next *devāsura* war called Dhvaja (SP_{Bh} 122.16).
    c. SP_{Bh} 122.17—124.end. Vyāsa wants to hear about the Dhvaja war (SP_{Bh} 122.17), but he also wants to know what Rāma Jāmadagnya did after killing the Saiṃhikeyas (SP_{Bh} 122.18). Sanatkumāra first answers the second question, by telling a relatively long story on Rāma, including him destroying the *kṣatriyas* twenty-one times (SP_{Bh} 123.19—22).
5. The Dhvaja war myth (SP_{Bh} 125—28) contains several storylines.
    a. SP_{Bh} 125. The Dānava called Vipracitti is killed by Indra with his thunderbolt.
    b. SP_{Bh} 126—28. Vyāsa wants to know more about the place called Bhastrāpada, where Vipracitti practiced *tapas*, and Sanatkumāra tells about it.
6. In the Hālāhala war myth (SP_{Bh} 129.1—18), a bad Gaṇa called Hālāhala starts a war against the gods, but the gods kill all Asuras.
7. In the Andhakāraka war myth (SP_{Bh} 129.19—end), a Dānava called Devatāntaka, "the Slayer of Deities", together with the Asuras, harasses the gods with *māyā*,

"sorcery". Apsarases are sent to stop them by tricking them. The trick works because the Asuras start fighting each other and kill one another.

The Vāmana myth is embedded in this series of *devāsura* wars. It concludes the wars with the successive Daitya kings—because from the Tārakāmaya war, the main Asura is a Dānava—but the series of battles continues to SP_{Bh} 129. Both elements—the succession of the Daitya kings and the series of *devāsura* wars—are stressed by means of linking verses. For example, the Āṭībaka war myth starts by referring back to the Amṛtamanthana war, after which Prahlāda "the lord of Asuras handed the kingship over to [his] son Virocana" (*putre virocane rājyaṃ pradadāv asureśvaraḥ*, SP_{Bh} 116.2cd)[422]. When the succession of the Daitya kings ceases, the narratives only refer to the shared topic of *devāsura* wars. For instance, in the transition from the Tārakāmaya war to the Dhvaja war, the linking verse speaks of "another" war (*paraṃ*, SP_{Bh} 125.1a)[423].

The Andhakāraka myth does not only conclude this section in SP_{Bh} 129, but also the direct immediate context of the Vāmana myth because the next chapter, SP_{Bh} 130, takes up the Andhaka myth again. Instead of referring back to the stories just told, Vyāsa somewhat abruptly asks how Andhaka was killed by Śiva (SP_{Bh} 130.1)[424], and Sanatkumāra continues the story about Andhaka, starting with a boon that Andhaka had acquired earlier. This marks the continuation of a narrative that is unrelated to the

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[422] SP_{Bh} 116.1—2:
evaṃ tad abhavad vyāsa amṛtasyāvamanthanam |
yuddhaṃ ca sumahāghoraṃ prahlādena sahaiva tu || *1* ||
sa tu kālena mahatā kṛtvā yuddhaśatāny uta |
putre virocane rājyaṃ pradadāv asureśvaraḥ || *2* ||
"In this way, the churning of the nectar and the very horrible battle with Prahlāda took place, oh Vyāsa. And after a long time, he [i.e. Prahlāda], the lord of the Asuras, having fought hundreds of battles, handed the kingship over to [his] son Virocana."

[423] SP_{Bh} 125.1:
ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi dhvajasaṃgrāmam ūrjitam |
devānām asurāṇāṃ ca prāṇayogavināśanam || *1* ||
"Next I will tell about another great war between the gods and the Asuras [called] Dhvaja, which destroys [any] connection with life."

[424] SP_{Bh} 130.1:
vyāsa uvāca |
andhako sa kathaṃ daityo hareṇa vinipātitaḥ |
yasya trailokyam akhilaṃ bhayāt sarvaṃ vaśe sthitam || *1* ||
"Vyāsa said: How was this Daitya Andhaka destroyed by Hara [i.e. Śiva], in whose power the entire triple world has fallen out of fear?"

devāsura wars that had been recounted just now. The direct immediate context of the Vāmana myth as one of the *devāsura* wars therefore starts in SP_{Bh} 113 and ends in SP_{Bh} 129.

5.1.4 Differences between the three myths

The manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana have their own direct immediate context. The Narasiṃha myth can be connected with Pārvatī's myth in which Pārvatī becomes *gaurī*. Even though the myths are concerned with different main characters and different main topics, there is one shared theme, which in fact can explain why the Narasiṃha myth is placed there: in both myths, the transformation of the body of the main character is central. By the grace of Śiva, Pārvatī casts off her previous black complexion and obtains a white complexion, and Viṣṇu casts off his Man-Lion manifestation and obtains his own divine form thanks to Śiva. Both myths revolve around a major change of the body, which connects the two. There is no such shared theme or main topic with the start of the Skanda myth that follows the Narasiṃha myth in SP 72, so the direct immediate context of the Narasiṃha myth does not continue in the next narrative.

The Andhaka myth forms the direct immediate context of the Varāha myth for two reasons. First of all, the start of the Varāha myth is almost indiscernible from the Andhaka myth, since the description of the Kaumudī festival dedicated to Andhaka seamlessly flows into the announcement that the Asuras go to war for revenge on the gods for killing Hiraṇyakaśipu. Second, at the beginning of the Andhaka myth in SP 73, the familial relationship between Hiraṇyākṣa and Andhaka is made explicit: they are father and son. This is such a strong connection that it creates the direct immediate context. The direct immediate context does not, however, continue after the Varāha myth. In SP 111, the text shifts to Pārvatī teaching the Mother Goddesses on *vratas*. This is a new topic, with ditto main characters, and there is no underlying shared theme with the Varāha myth.

Finally, the Vāmana myth appears in a series of *devāsura* wars in SP_{Bh} 113—29. Being the third in this sequence, the narratives preceding and following the Vāmana myth are its direct immediate context, and the shared topic is *devāsura* wars. The Vāmana myth furthermore particularly relates to the previous two *devāsura* wars on the basis of the

succession of the Daityas, which starts with Prahlāda in the Amṛtamanthana myth, is continued with Virocana in the Āṭībaka myth and concluded with Bali in the Vāmana myth. Both main topics often occur in the first verses of the next narrative that function as linking verses.

The present study has shown that each manifestation myth has its own direct immediate context. However, the Varāha and Vāmana myth are connected to each other if we take their entire direct immediate context into consideration. They are both related to the Andhaka myth: the Varāha myth because it is told directly after the start of the Andhaka myth, and the Vāmana myth because the series of the *devāsura* wars is overheard by Andhaka. The Narasiṃha myth, on the other hand, is not linked to the Andhaka myth and is, as such, most disconnected from the other manifestation myths in terms of the direct immediate context[425].

5.2 Relative immediate context

Although the manifestation myths have their own direct immediate context, in the present section, I will demonstrate that they do belong to the same relative immediate context. This is based on several factors that connect these and other myths told in SP 70—71, SP 74.16—110 and SP_{Bh} 113—29 on a stylistic, referential and thematic level: the use of unique epithets and stock phrases, references back and forth, and shared underlying themes. Some of the first two connecting factors have been studied in other publications, and will be summarized in the following lists; the third factor I will explore below.

First of all, the language used in this text portion has some characteristic features in common.

- As shown by the editors of the *Skandapurāṇa*, it is only in this part of the *Skandapurāṇa* (SP 71.46b—SP_{Bh} 126.4b) that Vyāsa is called *śaktinandana*, "son of Śakti"[426] (SP Vol. IV, 18).

[425] After addressing the relative immediate context of the three manifestation myths, I will turn to question why the Narasiṃha myth is disconnected from the other manifestation myths in section 5.3.
[426] For references, see SP Vol. IV, 18 note 44.

- The editors also demonstrate that several stock phrases used for the battle descriptions in SP 76—108 and SP_{Bh} 115—29 only appear there and not, for instance, in battle scenes of the Skanda cycle, nor in the description of the battle between Andhaka and Śiva's Gaṇas (SP Vol. IV, 23).

Second, in the *devāsura* war myths in SP_{Bh} 113—29, there are several references to earlier kings and wars that do not fall into this section.

- In the Amṛtamanthana myth, the Daityas address Viṣṇu who has just stolen the *amṛta* back from the Asuras, referring to his earlier actions against Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa (SP_{Bh} 115.4)[427].
- In the Vāmana myth, Bali is said to be much greater than Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa (SP_{Bh} 116.75)[428].
- A few verses later in the same myth, a connection is made with four of Bali's predecessors: Hiraṇyakaśipu, Hiraṇyākṣa, Andhaka and Prahlāda, omitting only Virocana (SP_{Bh} 116.86—87ab)[429].

[427] SP_{Bh} 115.4:
tvayā nikṛtyā nihato hiraṇyakaśipuḥ purā |
hiraṇyākṣaś ca daityendro 'mṛtaṃ cedam apāhṛtam || *4* ||
"Earlier, Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa, the lord of Daityas, were killed by you with deceit, and [now] this *amṛta* was stolen [by you]."
[428] SP_{Bh} 116.75:
hiraṇyakaśipū rājā hiraṇyākṣaś ca dānavaḥ |
tava rājñaḥ kalāṃ putra nārhataḥ ṣoḍaśīm api* || *75* ||
"King Hiraṇyakaśipu and the Dānava Hiraṇyākṣa are not worthy even a sixteenth portion of you as a king, oh son."
* Bhaṭṭarāī reads *nārdhataḥ*, which I consider a typo of *nārhataḥ*.
[429] SP_{Bh} 116.86—87ab:
hiraṇyakaśipū rājā nātyantaṃ sukham āptavān |
hiraṇyākṣas tathā caiva andhakaś caiva tatsutaḥ || *86* ||
bhavān pitāmaho 'smākaṃ tathā krūreṇa karmaṇā |
"King Hiraṇyakaśipu did not obtain infinite bliss, nor [did] Hiraṇyākṣa, nor his son Andhaka, nor you [i.e. Prahlāda], our grandfather, because of bad deed[s]."

Besides these references in the Amṛtamanthana and Vāmana myth, most references to an earlier narrative appear in the Varāha myth that recalls events of the Narasiṃha myth[430].

- Yokochi, forth. points out that the story of Hiraṇyākṣa presupposes a story of his elder brother, because he succeeds Hiraṇyakaśipu, and this is explicitly mentioned at the beginning of the Andhaka myth (SP 73.4a—d, quoted in section 5.1.2).
- Yokochi, forth. also notices that the motive of revenge is a recurring theme in the Varāha myth. Hiraṇyākṣa wants to avenge the gods for killing his brother[431].
- Other textual references to the Narasiṃha myth in the Varāha myth are the following.
    - Hiraṇyākṣa repeatedly states that Hiraṇyakaśipu was killed by the gods (e.g. SP 81.5ab)[432], as do his fellow Asuras (SP 77.20)[433].
    - The gods refer to Hiraṇyakaśipu's death by Narasiṃha (SP 97.44cd)[434].

[430] Similar references also appear in the SP_{Bh} 172, where, among other events, Viṣṇu fights with Prahlāda. This has been shown by Martine Kropman in her article 'The consecration of Kumāra. The role of Thanesar and King Harṣa in the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*' on the composition and growth of the *Skandapurāṇa*. In the section on "internal coherence and interrelation" in the text, she connects "the stories of Hiraṇyakaśipu, Hiraṇyākṣa, Andhaka and Prahlāda" (Kropman 2019, 113). In the latter, all four Daityas are mentioned in one breath (SP_{Bh} 172.49cd—51), and Kropman argues that this does not only confirm "the association between the mentioned *asuras* in the minds of the composers [but also,] it puts up a divide between these and the other important asuras in the SP: primarily Tāraka, Sumbha, Nisumbha and Mahiṣāsura – all of whom are part of the main story" (ibid.). Although this reference can be considered a connecting factor with Narasiṃha etcetera, I do not take SP_{Bh} 172 into consideration because it is not in the vicinity (i.e. relative immediate context) of the manifestation myths.

[431] There are several references to Hiraṇyākṣa's wish to take revenge on Viṣṇu for slaying his brother, including the following verse.
SP 78.19:
hiraṇyākṣas tu daityendro hiraṇyakaśipor varaḥ |
sa nūnaṃ bhrātur anvicchan hatasya pratikāritām || *19* ||
"And Hiraṇyākṣa, the great lord of Daityas, now sought revenge for the killing of his brother Hiraṇyakaśipu."

[432] SP 81.5ab: *te yūyaṃ nyāyam utsṛjya hatvā me bhrātaraṃ punaḥ*, "having abandoned the law, you killed my brother then".

[433] SP 77.20:
hiraṇyakaśipū rājā bhrātā no jyeṣṭha uttamaḥ |
so 'pi śakto 'ham ity eva ekākī devatair hataḥ || *20* ||
"King Hiraṇyakaśipu, our great elder brother, also thought 'I can [do it] alone' [but] he was killed by the gods."

[434] SP 97.44cd: *hataḥ sa daityo narasiṃharūpiṇā yathā purā tasya gurur mahābalaḥ*, "the Daitya [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa] is [considered] dead, just like his mighty elder brother [was killed] by the one with the Narasiṃha form before".

- Viṣṇu boasts that he has killed Hiraṇyakaśipu in the form of a Man-Lion (SP 106.9ab)[435].

Besides these linguistic features and references on the level of individual verses[436], there are two topics that contribute to the unity of the Narasiṃha, Varāha and *devāsura* war myths on a thematic level. First of all, the first five myths in this section meticulously follow the succession of the Daitya kings according to their lineage. Second, all myths deal with *devāsura* wars. Both topics are discussed next.

The Narasiṃha, Varāha, Amṛtamanthana, Āṭībaka and Vāmana myth follow the chronological succession of the Daitya kings. The same order is found in the *vaṃśa* section of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, and the *Skandapurāṇa* composers seem to have followed this standard list[437].

- Hiraṇyakaśipu is the eldest son of Diti and Kaśyapa[438].
- Hiraṇyākṣa succeeds his brother Hiraṇyakaśipu[439].

[435] SP 106.9ab: *hato 'sau narasiṃhena mayā daityaḥ pratāpavān*, "that mighty Daitya [i.e. Hiraṇyakaśipu] was killed by me as Narasiṃha".
[436] Based on these textual and stylistic similarities, it has been recently proposed by Kropman (2019) and Yokochi (forth.) that this section was composed by the same group of composers. According to Kropman, the Narasiṃha myth and the Andhaka cycle as a whole are probably later additions than, for example, the Skanda cycle. Yokochi makes a further distinction and argues that the Andhaka myth is earlier than the Narasiṃha, Varāha and *devāsura* war myths, of which at least the Narasiṃha and Varāha myths were written by the same group of composers. In personal communication, she added that probably most of the *devāsura* war myths (SP_{Bh} 113—29) were written by that same group as well.
[437] The relevant verses are PPL *vaṃśa* 2.66, 68—69a, 70a and 70b (text group I: *Agnipurāṇa*, *Brahmapurāṇa*, *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *Harivaṃśa*, *Śivapurāṇa Dharmasaṃhitā* and *Viṣṇupurāṇa*) and PPL *vaṃśa* 2C.3, 26—27a, 31_2a and 35ab (text group IA: *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa*).
[438] SP 70.22—23ab (Narasiṃha myth), see note 412.
[439] SP 73.3—4cd (Andhaka myth), see section 5.1.2.

- Prahlāda is the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu[440]. He seems to succeed Andhaka, Hiraṇyākṣa's son, but this is not explicitly mentioned[441]. It is, however, clear that

[440] SP_{Bh} 113.2 (Amṛtamanthana myth):
bhaviṣyaty asurāṇāṃ tu hiraṇyakaśipoḥ sutaḥ |
indro mahābalo vidvān prahlādo 'surapuṃgavaḥ || 2 ||
"The son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, the mighty and wise Prahlāda, the bull among Asuras, will become the king of the Asuras."

[441] As Yokochi 2009 shows, Andhaka is a relatively new figure in the Purāṇic corpus. He does not appear in the list of descendants of Kaśyapa and Diti in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. Instead, according to some texts, Hiraṇyākṣa has four sons and according to others, five (see PPL *vaṃśa* 2.72—73ab for text group I (*Agnipurāṇa*, *Brahmapurāṇa*, *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *Harivaṃśa*, *Śivapurāṇa Dharmasaṃhitā* and *Viṣṇupurāṇa*) and PPL *vaṃśa* 2C.23—24ab for text group IA (*Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa*)). The *Skandapurāṇa* replaces the four or five sons of Hiraṇyākṣa by one son, Andhaka.
Since Andhaka is new in the lineage of the Daityas and since the Andhaka myth is probably earlier than the section under discussion here, I exclude him from this enumeration, but a few words on the line of succession is in place here, in order to know who succeeded Hiraṇyākṣa: his own son Andhaka or the son of his brother, Prahlāda. Despite Andhaka's major role in the *Skandapurāṇa*, it is nowhere made explicit that he becomes the king of the Daityas. There are only a few hints that suggest that he succeeds his father Hiraṇyākṣa and becomes king *before* Prahlāda. He seems to be already king when he reaches the forest, overhearing the sages' conversation at the end of SP 112. This can be deduced from the following references and compositional decisions. 1) The Amṛtamanthana myth (with Prahlāda as the main character) starts with Sanatkumāra's summary of the story, including the introduction of Prahlāda as the king of the Asuras, and Sanatkumāra uses the future tense for him (SP_{Bh} 113.2, see note 440). The use of the future tense shows that Prahlāda did not succeed his uncle Hiraṇyākṣa, but someone else must have. Although it is not made explicit that this was Andhaka, we may assume that he was next in line after Hiraṇyākṣa's death. 2) If we take the order of the stories in the *Skandapurāṇa* into account, then Andhaka is the logical next king after Hiraṇyākṣa because first the Andhaka myth is partly told and later the Amṛtamanthana myth. In fact, Andhaka himself overhears the Amṛtamanthana myth in the forest. 3) In SP_{Bh} 130.2ab, which is the continuation of the Andhaka myth, it is broadly stated that "in the beginning, there was a king of the Daityas called Andhaka, the enemy of the triple world" (*andhako nāma daityendra ādau trailokyakaṇṭakaḥ*). Although *daityendra* can also have the more general meaning of "supreme Daitya", the chapter continues with similar references to Andhaka as king. 4) Namely, further on in SP_{Bh} 130, it is Prahlāda himself who addresses Andhaka as *dānavendra*, "oh king of the Dānavas" (SP_{Bh} 130.8a), *dānavānām adhipate*, "oh overlord of the Dānavas" (SP_{Bh} 130.12c) and *dānaveśvara*, "oh lord of the Dānavas" (SP_{Bh} 130.13b). The fact that precisely Prahlāda uses this terminology is significant because it makes him explicitly *not* the king of the Daityas. 5) Finally, in SP_{Bh} 172, Prahlāda is king the Daityas (e.g. SP_{Bh} 172.24a: *daityarājena*, "by the king of the Daityas"), and his power is compared to the power of previous kings, as the following verse shows.
SP_{Bh} 172.50cd—51ab:
hiraṇyakaśipur nāsīd rājā tatsadṛśo mahān || 50 ||
nāndhako na hiraṇyākṣaḥ prahlādasadṛśo bale |
"In terms of power, Prahlāda is not like the great king Hiraṇyakaśipu, Andhaka and Hiraṇyākṣa."
It is not made explicit that Andhaka is also a previous king, but since he is mentioned in one breath with Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa, who are definitely previous kings by that time, Andhaka can be understood as such as well.

he will become the king of the Daityas some time in the future, as stated in SP_{Bh} 113.2 (see note 440)[442].

- Prahlāda, being defeated, hands kingship over to his son Virocana[443].
- Finally, Bali succeeds his father Virocana when the latter was killed[444].

By including Hiraṇyakaśipu into this list, the lineage of Kaśyapa and Diti's offspring until Bali becomes complete. Based on this lineage of the Daityas, the Narasiṃha myth fits thematically in the relative immediate context of the Varāha, Amṛtamanthana, Āṭībaka and Vāmana myth.

The relative immediate context can be further expanded with the Tārakāmaya, Dhvaja, Hālāhala and Andhakāraka myth based on the fact that all nine narratives, from Narasiṃha to Andhakāraka, deal with *devāsura* wars. Just as the lineage of the Daityas was known from the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* and was probably followed by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers, all nine battles would have been known from a list of twelve

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[442] Since Andhaka is a relatively new character, the succession differs here from other Purāṇic sources. Usually, Prahlāda succeeds Hiraṇyakaśipu and/ or Hiraṇyākṣa because he is the eldest son of the eldest son. For example, in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, Prahlāda succeeds his father Hiraṇyakaśipu, after he was killed by Narasiṃha.
ViP 1.20.32:
pitary uparatiṃ nīte narasiṃhasvarūpiṇā |
viṣṇunā so 'pi daityānāṃ maitreyābhūt patis tataḥ || 31 ||
"When [Prahlāda's] father was led to death by Viṣṇu in the form of Narasiṃha, he [i.e. Prahlāda] became the lord of the Daityas then, oh Maitreya."
Cf. SP_{Bh} 172.2—4cd:
purā siṃhavapuḥ kṛtvā viṣṇunā paramaujasā |
daityadānavanāthe tu hiraṇyakaśipau hate || 2 ||
prahrādas tatsuto daityo viṣṇuṃ prati cukopa ha |
hate pitari sa śrīmān mahādaityapatīśvaraḥ || 3 ||
bahūny abdasahasrāṇi cakārograṃ mahātapaḥ |
"Earlier, when Hiraṇyakaśipu, the lord of the Daityas and the Dānavas, was killed by the powerful Viṣṇu after he had made the body of a Lion, the Daitya Prahrāda [= Prahlāda], who is his [i.e. Hiraṇyakaśipu's] son, got angry with Viṣṇu. When his father was killed, the glorious great overlord of the Daityas performed severe great *tapas* for many thousands of years."
The connection that is made between Hiraṇyakaśipu and Prahlāda in the *Skandapurāṇa* is similar to the connection made in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*. The verses seem to suggest that the two events follow each other directly and perhaps even that Prahlāda became king of the Daityas, when Hiraṇyakaśipu was killed. However, at least Hiraṇyākṣa became the king of the Asuras first and possibly Andhaka as well.
[443] SP_{Bh} 116.2 (Āṭībaka myth), see note 422.
[444] SP_{Bh} 116.13cd—14ab (Vāmana myth), see note 419.

devāsura wars of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.71—85)[445] and may have served as a model for the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. The *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* section starts with an enumeration of the names of the battles (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.72cd—75) and continues with short descriptions of their main event (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.76—85). The enumeration below lists the twelve wars with their base storylines, as collected by Kirfel in the main text of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. There are, however, variations among the Purāṇas, some of which I share in the notes, while the rest can be found in Kirfel 1927, 489—91.

1. Nārasiṃha war: Hiraṇyakaśipu is killed by Narasiṃha.
2. Vāmana war: Bali is bound by Vāmana who traversed the triple world.
3. Vārāha war: Hiraṇyākṣa is killed in a dispute with the gods and the ocean is split into two by Varāha with his tusk[446].
4. Amṛtamanthana war: Prahlāda is conquered.
5. Tārakāmaya war: Virocana is killed by Indra[447].
6. Āḍīvaka war: Jambha is killed by Viṣṇu, being possessed by Indra[448].
7. Traipura war: all Dānavas are killed in the city of Tripura by Tryambaka, "Three-eyed One", i.e. Śiva.

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[445] The passage is represented by the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa*, *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa*, *Padmapurāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa* and *Vāyupurāṇa*.

[446] There is some variation for this second event, and the reading given by Kirfel only appears in the *Matsyapurāṇa*.

- The *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* reads: *daṃṣṭrayā tu varāheṇa sa daityas tu dvidhākṛtaḥ*, "and that Daitya [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa] was split into two by Varāha with his tusk". Hiraṇyākṣa is thus the object of the splitting.
- The *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* and the *Padmapurāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa* read: *daṃṣṭrayā tu varāheṇa samudrastho dvidhākṛtaḥ*, "and he, standing in the ocean, [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa] was split into two by Varāha with his tusk". Hiraṇyākṣa is again the object.
- The *Vāyupurāṇa* reads: *daṃṣṭrāyāṃ tu varāheṇa samudrād bhūr yadā kṛtā*, "when the earth was obtained from the ocean by Varāha on his tusk". The *Vāyupurāṇa* thus reports two deeds of Varāha.

[447] N.B. although the Purāṇas agree on this event in the list, when the Tārakāmaya war is told in narrative form (e.g. in HV 32—38) or when it appears in other lists (e.g. HV 30.17), the main event rather concerns Viṣṇu killing Kālanemi, instead of Indra killing Virocana.

[448] In the short enumeration of the battles, all Purāṇas mention the Āḍīvaka war as sixth (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.74a), but in the description of the wars that follows, only the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa* provide further information on it (79c—f)—with the *Vāyupurāṇa* eliminating the name of the Asura.

8. Andhakāra/ Andhakārika (BḍP and VāP)/ Andhaka (MtP)/ Andhakavadha (PdP *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* and PdP *Uttarakhaṇḍa*) war: Asuras are killed by gods, men and forefathers.

From the ninth *devāsura* war onwards, the Purāṇas vary significantly. Although the majority agrees on the names of the wars provided in the enumeration of the twelve wars (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.74d—75ab), there are a number of differences in their descriptions (PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.83—85). In the following, I only give a general overview of the present information.

9. Dhvaja war: most texts agree on the storyline that Vipracitti was killed by Indra.
10. Vārtra war: based on the name, we may assume that during this war, Vṛtra was killed by Indra together with Viṣṇu. However, in the description section, the name of the war "Vārtra" is often omitted[449] and the killing of Vṛtra is instead connected to either the Hālāhala war (11th)[450] or the Kolāhala war (12th)[451].
11. Hālāhala war: during this war, either Vṛtra was killed by Indra and Viṣṇu (see Vārtra war) or the Asuras were conquered by Vṛṣan[452] or the entire war is omitted[453].
12. Kolāhala war: during this war, the Asuras including Śaṇḍā and Marka were conquered either by Vṛṣan[454] or by Raji[455].

[449] The name of the war is omitted in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and the *Vāyupurāṇa*. The latter has the additional problem that it only speaks about Dānavas being killed by Indra together with Viṣṇu and does not mention Vṛtra by name either.
[450] This is the case in the *Matsyapurāṇa*.
[451] This is the case in the *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* and the *Padmapurāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa*.
[452] This is the case in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*.
[453] The war is omitted in the *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa*, the *Padmapurāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa* and the *Vāyupurāṇa*.
[454] This is the case in the *Matsyapurāṇa*, the *Padmapurāṇa Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa* (which mentions the Kolāhala war twice) and the *Padmapurāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa* (which mentions the Kolāhala war twice).
[455] This is the case in the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* and the *Vāyupurāṇa*.

Nine out of twelve wars of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* list are told in the *Skandapurāṇa* relatively close to each other (Narasiṃha, Varāha and the *devāsura* war myths)[456]. According to Yokochi (2009 and forth.), the *Skandapurāṇa* composers may have used this twelve-fold list as a source of inspiration for the *devāsura* war section (SP_{Bh} 113—29). Since the Nārasiṃha and Vārāha war are also part of this twelve-fold list, I take all nine myths to be thematically linked by the topic of *devāsura* wars and to belong to the same relative immediate context.

Besides some variation in the main characters of the stories and the names of some of the battles, there is one difference between the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* in particular that should be highlighted: the order of the battles[457]. On the one hand, the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* almost follows the succession of the Daityas, with Bali in the Vāmana myth as the only exception[458]. On the other hand, the *Skandapurāṇa*'s order is entirely determined by the lineage of the Daityas for the first five myths. As a result, the Vārāha and Vāmana wars become second and fifth. Moreover, since in the *Skandapurāṇa*, Virocana (Prahlāda's son and Bali's father) is the main Asura in the Āṭībaka war, this story takes the place of the Tārakāmaya war in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*[459].

To conclude, if we take the relative immediate context into consideration, then the topic of *devāsura* wars is one of the unifying themes. It runs from the Narasiṃha myth,

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[456] Yokochi 2009 notes that the *Skandapurāṇa* also recounts the myth about Indra against Vṛtra ("the Vārtra war", SP 60.22—71), as well as the myth about Śiva defeating the Asuras by destroying Tripura ("the Traipura war", SP_{Bh} 168—70). The only battle that is missing in the *Skandapurāṇa* then is the Kolāhala war.

[457] The order of the *Skandapurāṇa* is 1. Nārasiṃha, 2. Vārāha, 3. Amṛtamanthana, 4. Āṭībaka, 5. Vāmana, 6. Tārakāmaya, 7. Dhvaja, 8. Hālāhala, 9. Andhakāraka.
The order of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* of the same nine wars is 1. Nārasiṃha, 2. Vāmana, 3. Vārāha, 4. Amṛtamanthana, 5. Tārakāmaya, 6. Āḍīvaka, […] 7. Andhakāra, 8. Dhvaja, […] 9. Hālāhala.

[458] The fact that the Vāmana war comes second in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* may be explained from the perspective of the composition of this section. Horst Brinkhaus has argued in 'Beobachtungen zur Frühgeschichte der Prādurbhāva-Lehre: Der Eber-mythos' that PPL *vaṃśānucarita* 5B.71—85 is an elaboration of the preceding verses (67—70) which only deal with Narasiṃha and Vāmana (Brinkhaus 1992, 63). The Vāmana war thus maintained its original place.

[459] The *Skandapurāṇa* version of the Tārakāmaya war is a collection of various smaller battles with various victims. Although the Saiṃhikeyas, Kālanemi and the *kṣatriyas* are the main opponents of the gods, in a summary at the end of the story (SP_{Bh} 122.14—16), Virocana is mentioned as one of the Asuras that have been slain in this battle as well. Since Virocana was already killed in the Āṭībaka war, there seems to be some confusion here.

via the Varāha myth to the *devāsura* war section. In this way, the three manifestation myths are connected to each other on a thematic level.

5.3 Conclusions

In this and the previous chapters, I have demonstrated that the three manifestation myths are connected to each other on different levels. First of all, the stories themselves have certain characteristics that connect them, such as a new portrayal of a Viṣṇu who is dependent on the other gods, a new structure with an afterlife episode attached to the story with a key role for Śiva, and the fact that Viṣṇu receives a boon from Śiva which becomes more religious as the text progresses. Second, the Varāha and Vāmana myth are connected because of their respective direct immediate contexts. They are both linked to the Andhaka myth: the Varāha myth flows out of it within one chapter, and the Vāmana myth features in a section that has been announced in the Andhaka myth. Third, some of the linguistic features in the three myths, as well as in the other *devāsura* wars surrounding the Vāmana myth (from the Amṛtamanthana myth up to the Andhakāraka myth), are unique for this part of the text. Fourth, there are several references in each manifestation myth that cite other manifestations or Daitya kings. The Narasiṃha myth already mentions Hiraṇyākṣa, the Varāha myth has many references to events in the Narasiṃha myth, and the Vāmana myth mentions most of Bali's predecessors. Fifth, the Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana myth are connected thematically by the shared topics of the lineage of the Daityas and the *devāsura* wars. As a result, the relative immediate context runs from the Narasiṃha myth, via the Varāha myth, to the *devāsura* wars in which the Vāmana myth is included.

Despite these connections, neither the three manifestation myths, nor their direct immediate contexts follow each other directly. They are separated by non-related narratives. Why did the *Skandapurāṇa* composers adopt this structure? Let us start with the separation of the three manifestation myths themselves. The reason to postpone the Vāmana myth after the Varāha myth is the most straightforward: the lineage of the Daityas from Hiraṇyākṣa until Bali demands at least the stories of Prahlāda (Bali's grandfather) and Virocana (Bali's father) to be told in between.

If we would extend this line to the Narasiṃha myth and the Varāha myth, we would all the more expect the Narasiṃha myth to precede the Varāha myth (more)

directly, since Hiraṇyakaśipu becomes the first king of the Daityas and is succeeded by Hiraṇyākṣa[460]. However, they are separated by the start of the Skanda myth and the start of the Andhaka myth. The "interruption" of the latter would not really form a problem because the main characters and the setting of the Narasiṃha, Andhaka and Varāha myth are all related. The start of the Skanda myth, however, does not seem logical at first glance, so we expect it to have been a deliberate choice of the composers to disassociate the Narasiṃha myth. The reason for this may be found in the construction of the narratives surrounding the Narasiṃha myth.

As I have shown in section 5.1, the Narasiṃha myth is preceded by Pārvatī's myth, in which Pārvatī expresses two wishes: a fair complexion and a son (SP 34.12ef—13). Whereas the former is fulfilled in the same narrative (SP 55), the latter is only realized in the Skanda myth (SP 72). Although some narratives between SP 55 and SP 72 might be secondary, most of the chapters are probably written by the same group of composers, as argued by Yokochi, forth., so the gap must have been there from the beginning of the composition. However, since the coming of a son is already announced in a different narrative, the birth of Skanda does not come as a surprise and the announcement unifies this part of the text. To put it more broadly, by introducing themes in one narrative that are picked up only later by other narrative(s), it is possible to unify the text. I would like to argue that the same holds true for the themes that are for the first time dropped in the Narasiṃha myth and are picked up later in the Varāha myth and in the *devāsura* war section, *viz.* the lineage of the Daitya kings and the series of *devāsura* wars—in other words, the topics of the relative immediate context. This compositional technique effectuates a unification of the composition.

The connecting themes of the lineage of the Daityas and the *devāsura* wars do not only help in understanding why the three manifestation myths are separated from each other, but also why the *Skandapurāṇa* composers did not just tell these myths. To demonstrate this, let me clarify what the situation would be if there would be a "Viṣṇu's Manifestation Cycle" that would only recount the Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana myth.

[460] Moreover, taking into account the timeline and main characters, that determine the narrative layer, the Narasiṃha myth (SP 70—71) could have easily switched places with the start of the Skanda myth (SP 72) which now follows the Narasiṃha myth.

In that case, the audience would hear about Viṣṇu's famous and fabulous deeds, including the necessary Śaiva additions, such as Viṣṇu's dependency, Śiva's help in returning him to his former body and Śiva's grace in granting Viṣṇu fabulous boons. These Śaiva aspects would stand out more prominently, especially since the set of three myths ends with Viṣṇu's union with Śiva, i.e. final liberation. "Viṣṇu's Manifestation Cycle" would have certainly contributed to the promotion of the Śaiva ideology of the text and would have fit in a strictly doctrinal work.

However, the actual situation tells a different story. The *Skandapurāṇa* is not just a doctrinal work; it is much more than that. As Hans Bakker states in *The World of the Skandapurāṇa*, the text

> "had no particular sectarian agenda, but aimed to provide all the Māheśvaras of its age, in particular the uninitiated laity (*laukikas*), with an exoteric, mythological account of the cosmos as created and governed by Mahādeva ["the Great God", i.e. Śiva]. What counted more than sectarian partisanship was staunch Śaiva faith and a sound knowledge of Sanskrit and the Epic and Puranic traditions" (Bakker 2014, 151).

The incorporation of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths into the *Skandapurāṇa* in general and into the framework of Daitya kings and *devāsura* wars in particular supports this assumption. I would even take one step further, because we can specify the intended end result of this undertaking: the composition of a *Purāṇa*. After all, as the study in section 5.2 has shown, the myths are not only separated from each other, they are also embedded into a larger framework of Daitya kings and *devāsura* wars which have been likely modelled after the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. As I have demonstrated in section 1.2, the *Skandapurāṇa* does not contain much *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* material, but it does not neglect it either. The text includes such material in its own wording and style of writing. The myth of creation is an example of Śaivization of *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* material, and the elaboration on the Daitya kings and *devāsura* wars is an example of dramatic visualization of *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* material, which itself can be classified as a

summary presentation. Instead of simply copying the long lists of the lineage of the Daityas as reported in the *vaṃśa* section of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* and that of the *devāsura* wars as reported in the *vaṃśānucarita* section of the same text corpus—as so many other Purāṇa composers have done—the *Skandapurāṇa* composers used them as a basis for narrating more complex and rich myths. By recognizing the shared themes of these narratives, one learns about the lineage of the Daityas and a series of *devāsura* wars in an attractive way, through the powerful force of narrative. The study of the immediate context of the narratives shows that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers did not aim at composing a strictly doctrinal work, but had greater ambitions: they aspired to create a convincing Purāṇa that covered a wide range of topics, in their own vivid and elegant way of storytelling with, needless to say, the necessary alterations to convey a Śaiva message.

ya imaṃ śṛṇuyān martyaḥ sadā parvasu parvasu |
arcayec chivaviṣṇuṃ ca sa gacchet paramāṃ gatim ||
"The man who always listens to this [story], chapter by chapter,
and worships Śivaviṣṇu, he would go to the highest state."
Skandapurāṇa 121.21

6 Conclusions

With some of their roots in the Vedas, their firm embedment in the *Mahābhārata* and their ever-growing popularity in the Purāṇas, Viṣṇu's manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana are famous narratives. We hear about Viṣṇu in the star role of saviour of the universe. Fighting with the Asuras, rescuing the earth and traversing the cosmos; nothing is impossible for Viṣṇu… until the *Skandapurāṇa*. How does Viṣṇu's heroism fit in this Śaiva Purāṇa which glorifies Śiva as the supreme god, presents a Śaiva universe and speaks of Pāśupata ascetic practices? Why did the *Skandapurāṇa* composers dedicate so many chapters and so much attention and effort in retelling Viṣṇu's manifestation myths? These questions have been central in this dissertation. I have examined Viṣṇu's manifestation myths from different angles—from a study of the sources in which the narratives appear, to a survey of the alterations, preservations and innovations in the *Skandapurāṇa*. In this chapter, I will bring the observations together and reflect on the research questions as formulated in section 1.4.

The first set of questions concerns Viṣṇu's manifestation myths as retellings: *where does the Skandapurāṇa stand in the literary landscape of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths? How does it relate to other (re)tellings?* Whether the myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana formed a part of a section on creation or were included in an overview of Viṣṇu's animal and human manifestations, they were widely spread across the epic-Purāṇic genre. The *Skandapurāṇa* finds itself in the middle of a vibrant epic and Purāṇic landscape with its retellings, showing, per manifestation myth, a different relationship with other texts.

In the case of the Narasiṃha myth, the majority of texts focusses on the battle between Narasiṃha and Hiraṇyakaśipu (see section 2.1). A notable Vaiṣṇava exception

to this storyline is the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, which only briefly mentions Hiraṇyakaśipu's death by Narasiṃha. It otherwise deals with the distorted relationship between Hiraṇyakaśipu and his son Prahlāda, exemplifying the merits of devotion to Viṣṇu. The retelling in the *Skandapurāṇa* understandably rather connects to the other texts.

There are two main variants of the Varāha myth: the cosmogonic story leading to the (re)creation of the universe and the Asura-slaying story revolving around the battle between Varāha and Hiraṇyākṣa (see section 2.2). Although the cosmogonic version is much more popular in early Purāṇas, the Asura-slaying one is also already referred to in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. The *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42) are the first texts to recount it in full, making a clear distinction between this and the cosmogonic story. In the case of the Varāha myth, the *Skandapurāṇa* therefore relates particularly to HV App. 1 No. 42. As demonstrated in section 2.4, the Varāha myth in the *Skandapurāṇa* also shows strong connections with one of the retellings of the Vāmana myth in the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42B). The *Skandapurāṇa* description of the *devāsura* war leading to Hiraṇyākṣa's take-over of the universe has significant parallels with the description of the *devāsura* war leading to Bali's take-over of the universe in HV App. 1 No. 42B.

The general storyline of the Vāmana myth is largely the same by the time of the epics and the Purāṇas (see section 2.3) and is followed by the *Skandapurāṇa* as well. It is only towards the end of the narrative that a special relationship can be observed. In the final scene of the main story, the *Skandapurāṇa* and HV App. 1 No. 42B share elements that do not occur in other early Purāṇas and appear to be unique to the two texts.

With regard to the general storyline of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths, we can conclude that the *Skandapurāṇa* engages with a large and vibrant epic-Purāṇic community, as it is generally consistent with the majority of available texts. Additionally, it has a special relationship with two narratives in the *Harivaṃśa*, the Asura-slaying version of the Varāha myth in HV App. 1 No. 42 and the Vāmana myth in HV App. 1 No. 42B. Whereas the correspondences in the final scene of the Vāmana myth seem to point to a case of direct intertextuality (see section 2.3), the parallels in the descriptions of the *devāsura* wars rather point to a situation in which the composers of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa* (at least HV App. 1 No. 42B) belonged to the same literary milieu, drawing

upon the same pool of narratives, using the same language and employing the same compositional techniques (see section 2.4).

A similar conclusion of a shared stylistic repertoire has been drawn for the way in which the *Skandapurāṇa* composers described Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon in the Narasiṃha myth and for the inclusion of a eulogy to Viṣṇu. Both case studies extend the "literary milieu" of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers with at least the *Mahābhārata*. As I have shown in section 2.1, Hiraṇyakaśipu's boon in the *Skandapurāṇa* includes a loophole. The *Skandapurāṇa* is not the only text doing so, but it has implemented it differently. First, Hiraṇyakaśipu asks for complete immortality. Then, Brahmā says he should add a loophole, which is adhered to by Hiraṇyakaśipu. He makes the circumstances in which he cannot be killed explicit—thus keeping him mortal in the remaining cases. The same structure is found in several other narratives in the *Skandapurāṇa*, where an Asura first requests complete immortality, Brahmā then replies that Asuras cannot be immortal because this status is reserved for the gods, and the Asura finally adds a loophole to the boon, elucidating under which circumstance(s) he can be killed. This type of boons is not unique to the *Skandapurāṇa*, but also appears in the *Mahābhārata*. I have argued that this is a compositional technique that can be used by epic and Purāṇic composers, whenever the narrative demands a boon for an Asura.

The same explanation is more or less applicable to the inclusion of an otherwise unexpected hymn of praise to Viṣṇu in the Varāha myth (see section 3.5). The *Viṣṇustotra* is unexpected because it is not just the only one in the *Skandapurāṇa*—which otherwise only contains hymns to Śiva or one of his closest relatives or attendants—but there is also no *Viṣṇustotra* in the Asura-slaying version of the Varāha myth in other texts. In other words, the inclusion cannot be explained from the perspective of internarrational or intertextual consistency, to use the terminology of chapter 3. I have suggested a case of extratextual consistency instead, whereby the *stotra* can be explained from the context in which the scene appears, *viz.* a request for help. In several narratives of the *Skandapurāṇa*, a request for help consists of different steps: from sketching the problem at hand, to the requested god offering help and providing the gods with the solution. One of the intermediary steps is to praise the requested god. Since this structure is found in various narratives, both in the *Skandapurāṇa* and at least in the *Mahābhārata*, it appears to be part

of an epic and Purāṇic repertoire of narrative elements, used by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers as well.

However, as I have shown in section 3.5 as well, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers could have settled for a simple phrase like "the gods praised Viṣṇu", as they did in the Narasiṃha myth. Since they included a complete *stotra*, I have given an additional reason for its inclusion that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers took the chance to provide the audience with a Śaiva version of a *Viṣṇustotra*. The epithets in the hymn can be categorized in different groups: from general qualifications, such as physical features, to epithets that stress the contents of the Varāha myth, such as epithets referring to Asura-slaying stories and Viṣṇu's manifestations. One category particularly stands out, *viz.* the one including epithets that are related to the *Skandapurāṇa* and Śiva. By incorporating epithets like *mahādevapriyāya*, "dear to Mahādeva ["the Great God", i.e. Śiva]", and *maheśvaragaṇāya*, "Gaṇa of Maheśvara ["the Great Lord", i.e. Śiva]", the *Skandapurāṇa* composers were able to take control of how Viṣṇu should be worshipped from a Śaiva perspective.

From the above considerations, we can conclude that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers do not only relate to the epic-Purāṇic corpus in following the general storyline of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths, but also in sharing an epic-Purāṇic style of writing. They must have been aware of the literary environment they worked in, adopting popular narratives, mainstream storylines and a typical epic-Purāṇic language and style.

However, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers did not just follow other texts in retelling Viṣṇu's manifestation myths. In fact, while the general storyline may have been maintained, the *Skandapurāṇa* retellings are unlike any other. This is because an intricate combination of preservations, alterations and innovations is made, which brings me to the second set of research questions that are concerned with Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*: *which narrative elements are preserved, which have been changed, and which have been newly added? What effect do these decisions have on the rest of the narrative? Why did the Skandapurāṇa composers make these decisions?*

For a start, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers preserved several key narrative elements in the main story[461]. The most important preservation for the recognisability and the credibility of the manifestation myths is the fact that Viṣṇu remains the one who rescues the universe from the perils of the king of the Daityas. Viṣṇu is the warrior *pur sang*, the Asura-slayer who ensures the cosmic order, and this characterization is continued in the *Skandapurāṇa* (see section 3.1). Another fixed element that is followed in the *Skandapurāṇa* concerns Viṣṇu's weapons and their effectivity against the Asuras: Narasiṃha kills Hiraṇyakaśipu with just one slap of his claw and Varāha decapitates Hiraṇyākṣa by throwing his *cakra* only once (see section 3.3). The *cakra* is, besides Varāha's weapon, also Viṣṇu's weapon in other battles. At least since the *Mahābhārata*, Viṣṇu uses it against all sorts of enemies in various contexts. This intrinsic feature is upheld in the *Skandapurāṇa* (see section 3.2). The manifestations of Narasiṃha and Varāha show another preservation: they are described as *sarvadevamaya*, "consisting of all the gods". Many sources narrate how the gods enter Narasiṃha and Varāha, by taking their positions in the limbs of the manifestations. It gives the manifestations strength and inspires awe. The same result is present in the *Skandapurāṇa*. The *Skandapurāṇa* description of Varāha's body has a further parallel with other texts, for it includes the characteristic feature that the Boar's limbs are connected with external entities (see sections 2.2 and 3.1).

In addition to these preservations, there is a large number of alterations and innovations. They can be roughly divided into two categories, each describing a different process: Śaivization and dramatic visualization.

In section 1.2.1, I have defined Śaivization as a "process of changing a narrative (element) or introducing new narrative elements to make the retellings match a Śaiva context or teaching". Most of the alterations and innovations of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths fall under this category. The process of Śaivization is particularly discernable in the new portrayal of Viṣṇu as (i) a Śaiva devotee, (ii) who is dependent on the other gods in general and on Śiva in particular.

[461] In this part of the *Conclusions*, I focus on the preservations in the main story, as opposed to the afterlife episodes, because the former part has a counterpart in other texts and the latter does not. Even though within the afterlife episodes, the composers made use of known elements—e.g. the fact that Narasiṃha fights against a Śarabha represents a classical fighting duo of lions and Śarabhas (see section 4.1.1)—these are left out of the present discussion because the afterlife episodes as a whole are innovations.

Viṣṇu's devotion to Śiva occurs only twice in the main story of the Varāha myth (see section 3.4), but it is omnipresent in the three afterlife episodes. First, when Viṣṇu as Narasiṃha sees that his attack on Śiva as a Śarabha has no effect, he realizes that it is Śiva standing in front of him, and he immediately starts praising Śiva with a hymn of praise. This act of worship reveals Viṣṇu's devotion to Śiva (see section 4.1.1). Second, as soon as Viṣṇu has left his boar-form thanks to Skanda, Viṣṇu goes to Śiva to honour him. Śiva is pleased with Viṣṇu's devotion and the effort he made for the gods, so he offers Viṣṇu a boon. Viṣṇu requests Śiva to teach him and the gods the *pāśupatavrata*, "the Pāśupata observance", the most important vow in Pāśupata Śaivism. Performing a royal type of the *pāśupatavrata* makes Viṣṇu, the king, an official Pāśupata; another confirmation of his loyalty and devotion to Śiva (see section 4.2.2). Third, Viṣṇu's devotion reaches its climax in the afterlife episode of the Vāmana myth. When Viṣṇu is released from Pāpmā, "Sin", he worships Śiva for 1,006 years and six months. As a result, Śiva yet again grants Viṣṇu a boon. Viṣṇu asks Śiva to tell him a teaching so that he will not be contaminated by sin or *tapas*. Śiva teaches him the *mahāvrata*, "the great observance", which is qualified as a *pāśupatavrata*. By accepting this observance, Viṣṇu gives up his worldly life and becomes a Pāśupata ascetic. Having performed the *vrata*, he obtains supremacy and eventually reaches union with Śiva. Viṣṇu's trajectory is the paragon of the ideal Pāśupata path: from the utmost devotion, via the attainment of supremacy, to the highest goal in the life of a Pāśupata ascetic, liberation (see section 4.2.3).

The second telling example of Śaivization of Viṣnu's manifestation myths is the fact that Viṣṇu is made dependent on the other gods, in particular Śiva, to fulfil his tasks and to observe his role as Asura-slayer in the future. By introducing this new character trait, the composers were able to maintain the key narrative elements as presented under the preservations above (such as Viṣṇu being the saviour in the manifestation myths), while at the same time making Śiva in control of Viṣṇu's deeds. This creates a new power dynamic that is found at various occasions across all three narratives.

First, in the afterlife episode of the Narasiṃha myth, Śiva gives Viṣṇu the boon of *daityaghna*, "slaying Daityas". Through this boon, he appoints Viṣṇu the task of protecting the universe by fighting the Asuras. This form of Śaivization is found throughout the text. Brahmā, for example, becomes the creator of the universe because

Śiva granted him this role. In other words, although the gods maintain the roles and tasks that they are known for in other texts and execute these successfully, it is Śiva who designates them. This makes him in full control of the Śaiva universe as it is envisioned in the *Skandapurāṇa* (see section 4.2.1). Viṣṇu's dependency is furthermore explicitly expressed in the Varāha myth. In section 3.1, I have indicated five occasions at which Varāha is so severely hurt that he needs the help of the gods, the sages and Śiva to get back on his feet and resume the fight against Hiraṇyākṣa. Third, Viṣṇu's dependency is intricately incorporated into the otherwise purely positive qualification of *sarvadevamaya*. Viṣṇu becomes *sarvadevamaya*—and therefore strong and awe-inspiring—because he actually needs the strength of the other gods. After admitting that he does not stand a chance against Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa without the gods, Viṣṇu asks the gods to enter his body (see section 3.1)[462].

Śiva does not only take control of Viṣṇu's task and success, but also of his weapons. In fact, Viṣṇu's *cakra*, his standard attribute, has undergone the same process of Śaivization as Viṣṇu's task as Asura-slayer: the *cakra* is repeatedly framed either as given by Śiva or belonging to Śiva. Since Śiva distributes Viṣṇu's primary weapon, he becomes its underlying agent and as a consequence, he takes ownership of the laudable deed that is accomplished with it, such as killing Hiraṇyākṣa (see section 3.2). Another case of Śaivization of Viṣṇu's weapons is found in the afterlives of Narasiṃha and Varāha. Whereas Narasiṃha's claw and Varāha's *cakra* were successful in the battles against Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa, they have no effect on Śiva as a Śarabha, nor on Śiva's son Skanda and Skanda's Gaṇapa Kokavaktra. The ineffectiveness of Viṣṇu's weapons against Śiva *cum sui* contributes to the all-encompassing message that Śiva is superior (see section 3.3).

[462] Varāha's body has undergone a second change. In most texts, the Boar is a Yajñavarāha, "Sacrificial Boar", whose limbs are only those of a boar and connected to sacrificial elements (for example, he has four feet that represent the four Vedas). In the *Skandapurāṇa*, on the other hand, the Boar is a Naravarāha, "Man-Boar", whose limbs are both that of a boar (e.g. a tail) and that of a human (e.g. two hands and feet in total) and are connected to sacrificial elements, gods and natural elements. In section 2.2, I have argued that thanks to this change, a clear distinction is made between the more traditional cosmogonic Boar and the relatively new Asura-slaying Boar, who is intended in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

Finally, Viṣṇu's dependency and Śiva's control are expressively exposed at the moment when Viṣṇu needs Śiva to make him return to his old body because he is stuck to his manifested form. In the Narasiṃha myth, it is Śiva himself who actively makes Viṣṇu leave his Narasiṃha form as a Śarabha, by stepping on Narasiṃha (see section 4.1.1). In the same myth, it is made explicit that Śiva had once promised Viṣṇu that he would always make him return to his old form whenever he is stuck to a manifestation (see section 4.1). This promise is once more acceded in the Varāha myth, where Śiva is again responsible for Viṣṇu's return to his own form, but in a more passive role. In this myth, Viṣṇu is saved from his boar-form by Skanda who threw his Saṃvartikā spear at Varāha. Although the actual return is thus effectuated by Skanda, the spear was given to him by his father Śiva before. In this way, Śiva becomes the mastermind behind the plan and takes ownership of the result (see section 4.1.2)[463]. In the Vāmana myth, the gods and the sages take Viṣṇu on a pilgrimage and make him perform a horse sacrifice in order to expiate Sin. Although the necessary prerequisites are done by the gods, Śiva completes the sacrifice and actually purifies Viṣṇu (see section 4.1.3). Whether active or passive, Śiva becomes the ultimate saviour in each manifestation myth.

To summarize, Viṣṇu's manifestation myths display a combination of on the one hand, narrative elements that are well-known from other sources and on the other hand, new Śaiva characterizations. Each have their own function and are deliberately employed by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers (see section 3.6). First of all, the reason why so many elements are preserved, especially in the main story, is to make them "acceptable, understandable, and desirable"[464]. If the composers would have eliminated key narrative elements, the retellings might not have found connection with the audience and might not have been accepted. Since the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the manifestation myths were markedly different from what the audience was familiar with and did not belong to the established order, acceptance was crucial.

At the same time, since the retellings appear in the *Skandapurāṇa*, there are also ideological expectations to be met when narratives are retold, *viz.* the retellings should

[463] Skanda's primary weapon, the spear, hence underwent the same process of Śaivization as Viṣṇu's *cakra*.
[464] The terminology comes from the theory of Anchoring Innovation, applied in section 3.6.

match the Śaiva ideology of the text as a whole. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers accommodated in this demand through the introduction of a large number of Śaivizations, creating a new portrayal of Viṣṇu as a Śaiva devotee, who is dependent on the other gods in general and on Śiva in particular. Each characteristic can be understood from the perspective of the Śaiva universe as it is presented in the *Skandapurāṇa*. First, in the Śaiva universe, everybody is devoted to Śiva. As I have shown in section 3.4, there are countless examples of gods, sages, Asuras and people who worship Śiva. From Brahmā to Hiraṇyākṣa, everybody is a devotee of Śiva, and Viṣṇu is no exception. Second, Śiva governs all creatures and actions, and everything can be led back to him. Although he generally remains at the background and does not take an active part in grand endeavours like the creation of the universe, he is the one who decides which god should execute which task and who provides that god with the necessary means (like essential weapons). In this way, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers were able to give Śiva full control of everything that happens in the universe. In other words, distribution becomes a form of taking control.

By changing Viṣṇu's character and manifestation myths with these processes of Śaivization, they are blended into the Śaiva ideology of the text. Viṣṇu nevertheless received a different treatment from, for example, Brahmā. As I have argued in section 4.3, unlike Brahmā, Viṣṇu is not just one of the many devotees of Śiva, nor is he simply governed by Śiva because he received the task of Asura-slayer. On the contrary, Viṣṇu is presented as the ideal Pāśupata Śaiva who even reaches liberation through sole devotion to Śiva, and he is completely dependent on Śiva in fulfilling his task, now and in the future. This new portrayal of Viṣṇu is structurally and repeatedly advocated throughout the three manifestation myths and in particular at the end, the most defining part of a narrative. In this way, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers were able to "integrate and accommodate"[465] Viṣṇu and his manifestation myths in the Śaiva universe and Śaivism at large.

Not all changes and innovations can be ascribed to Śaivization. Some changes rather concern the style of writing of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. One of the most notable stylistic features in the case of retellings is "dramatic visualization" as opposed to

[465] The terminology again comes from the theory of Anchoring Innovation, applied in sections 3.6 and 4.3.

"a summary presentation" of the same narrative element (see section 1.2.2). Whereas the *Skandapurāṇa* composers made an effort to narrate Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in a rich, engaging and appealing way, thanks to which it is easier for the audience to visualize scenes before their eyes, other early versions of the manifestation myths can be simple, without much attention for details. Dramatic visualization comes in different forms, such as vivid dialogues, insider jokes and meticulous cosmographic information. The Narasiṃha myth has a comic scene in which Hiraṇyakaśipu wants to have the Man-Lion as a pet for his wife, but the audience obviously knows that the frightful Narasiṃha will kill Hiraṇyakaśipu (see section 2.1); the Varāha myth has rich and scenic descriptions, such as Varāha's dive to the netherworld, showing the composers' cosmographic knowledge (see the introduction to chapter 2); and Viṣṇu's first stride after leaving his Vāmana form is elaborated with a description of the horizontal extent of the step (from the far East to the far West), which makes it easier for the audience to visualize the scene (see section 2.3). Humorous, emotional and scenic descriptions like these are found throughout the *Skandapurāṇa* and can be considered characteristic features of the style of writing of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers.

Another form of dramatic visualization is seen in the composers' way of reworking themes that are known from the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. In section 5.2, I have explored this phenomenon in detail in the context of the relative immediate context of the manifestation myths. This textual context ranges roughly from SP 70 to SP_{Bh} 129, with some interruptions of non-related narratives. The myths that are told in this section are held together by two shared topics: the lineage of the Daityas and a series of *devāsura* wars. The order of the first five *devāsura* wars is dominated by the lineage of the Daityas, as it is known from the *vaṃśa* section in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. The *devāsura* wars continue with four additional war myths, and all nine are known from the *vaṃśānucarita* section of the same text corpus. The *Skandapurāṇa* composers seem to have modelled the narratives after the information of the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. The way in which the information is presented, however, is very different. Whereas the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* simply lists the names of the Daityas and the *devāsura* wars, the *Skandapurāṇa* tells extensive narratives about them. In other words, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers made use of the basic information provided in other Purāṇic material and processed it into vivid and

appealing narratives. It is the most noticeable form of dramatic visualization, where sheer lists become extensive myths.

Although it is possible to identify such forms of dramatic visualization, it is difficult to determine to what extent dramatic visualization is a deliberate choice of the composers. In other words, is dramatic visualization an active process or should it rather be understood as merely reflecting the composers' compositional style (that is to say, is this simply how they wrote)? On the one hand, the *Skandapurāṇa* is full of appealing narratives with entertaining conversations, humorous scenes and cosmographic descriptions. This might point to the second possibility. On the other hand, since the *Skandapurāṇa* tells a radically new, Śaiva version of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths that was still to be accepted by the audience, it seems crucial to present an appealing and convincing retelling. It is not unthinkable that acceptance becomes easier when the retelling is entertaining and rich. This rather suggests that dramatic visualization was a deliberate technique that the composers used.

To conclude, thanks to the preservations, alterations and innovations, the retellings are recognizable (preservations) and appealing (dramatic visualization), which enhances the chance at being accepted by the audience. The retellings show, at the same time, radically new Śaiva innovations (Śaivization), the objective of which was to integrate and accommodate Viṣṇu and his manifestation myths in the Śaiva universe and ideology as presented in the text. Since these findings are structurally and repeatedly employed throughout the manifestation myths, and in some cases throughout the entire text, the decisions can be considered deliberate choices on the part of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. By looking for structural findings, such as compositional techniques and style of writing, it is my contention that it is possible to speak about the aims and intentions of the composers. In the final part of this chapter, I consider which aims and intentions the composers may have had to incorporate Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the first place. This brings me to the third and final research question: *why have Viṣṇu's manifestation myths been incorporated into the Skandapurāṇa?* The answer to this question is, as I will argue below, twofold: (i) the *Skandapurāṇa* composers' goal with the text as a whole was to compose a comprehensive Purāṇa, and (ii) Viṣṇu's manifestation myths formed an intrinsic part of the genre of Purāṇas.

In section 5.3, I have presented arguments for the first component of the statement. My discussion on the relative immediate context has shown that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers embedded Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in two overarching *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* themes. However, based on the three narratives' shared structure and ditto alterations and innovations, a hypothetical "Viṣṇu's Manifestation Cycle" would not have been out of place either. In that case, the narratives' strong Śaiva message would have stood out more prominently and attracted the attention, in particular Viṣṇu's religious growth—from his praise of Śiva with a eulogy in the Narasiṃha afterlife episode, to his practice of the *mahāvrata* with final liberation as a result in the Vāmana afterlife episode. A separate myth cycle would have supported the Śaiva ideology of the text. The fact that the composers chose differently suggests that they did not aim at composing a strictly doctrinal work. Instead, the text is a combination of theological notions, *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* narratives and themes, and other well-known epic and Purāṇic myths and concepts; in other words, what constitutes a Purāṇa. I have therefore argued that the *Skandapurāṇa* composers wanted to compose a comprehensive Purāṇa that touches upon topics and narratives with both a Śaiva character and a more general Purāṇic nature.

Viṣṇu's manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana neatly fit this aim because two aspects of a Purāṇa, as identified in section 1.2, come together in the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the manifestation myths. I have identified three features of a Purāṇa: 1. a Purāṇa consists of topics and narratives that are known from the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*; 2. those Purāṇas that centre around a particular god contain theological text units corresponding to the religious strand in question; and 3. Purāṇas tell new narratives and retell known ones.

Given the great popularity of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths in the Purāṇas, they qualify as well-known narratives that are retold in different contexts; in other words, they are "retellings" (the third feature). The Varāha myth, for example, is often told within the framework of creation (e.g. in PPL *sarga* 3), but it is also recounted in the context of Viṣṇu's human and animal manifestations (e.g. HV 31) and in combination with the

Asura-slaying version of the myth (HV App. 1 No. 42)[466]. Based on their omnipresence in both early and later Purāṇas, I consider them to form an intrinsic part of the Purāṇic genre. If the *Skandapurāṇa* composers aimed at composing a comprehensive Purāṇa that addresses essential narratives and topics, then Viṣṇu's manifestation myths, being well-known Purāṇic myths, would well have been deemed indispensable.

The three manifestation myths can be furthermore used to convey a theological message (the second feature). Since even the most basic retellings of the narratives celebrate Viṣṇu's great deeds, the most straightforward religious affiliation of the myths is with Vaiṣṇavism. Some Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas have expanded this ideological character of the narratives by including eulogies to Viṣṇu or by reworking them more radically, as is done, for example, by the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* with the Narasiṃha myth. This retelling has become a story of devotion to Viṣṇu by centring around Viṣṇu's devotee Prahlāda, instead of Viṣṇu's manifestation as Man-Lion. However, the manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana have proven to be a suitable vehicle for the promotion of a Śaiva message as well. By sketching a new, Śaiva portrayal of Viṣṇu, one in which he is completely dependent on Śiva and in which he is an ideal Pāśupata devotee, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers found a way to integrate Viṣṇu into the Śaiva fold. In this way, Viṣṇu's manifestation myths have become the perfect means to proclaim Pāśupata Śaivism and to present an ideal Śaiva universe, in which everything and everyone is devoted to Śiva, even Viṣṇu.

However, theoretically, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers could have chosen any manifestation myth of Viṣṇu to give him a new, Śaiva portrayal like the one described above. Why did they specifically select the manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana? This can be explained from two perspectives. First, the three manifestation myths match their relative immediate context by being part of a standard list of twelve *devāsura* wars, as reported in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*. Since the majority of this list is followed by the *Skandapurāṇa* composers, the three manifestation myths were a logical choice. Second, taking in particular the afterlives into account, the three narratives were

[466] Since Viṣṇu's manifestation myths appear in various Purāṇic contexts, and not just in a context that could be qualified as "*Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*", I consider them to fall under the third feature as identified in section 1.2, instead of the first feature.

especially suited to convey a Śaiva message. As argued in section 4.1, a problem arises when Viṣṇu continues to live on in his manifestation. From an ideological perspective, a manifestation should always be temporary, which means that when Viṣṇu has fulfilled his task, he should return to his own form again. This idea is problematized in the *Skandapurāṇa* by adding an afterlife to Viṣṇu's manifestations. In the afterlife episodes, manifestation-specific problems are introduced: Narasiṃha and Varāha form a threat to the universe because of their violent character, and Vāmana is unable to fight the Asuras because of his size. They are only able to fight those Asuras for which they were designed in the first place. As a consequence, Viṣṇu's task in the *Skandapurāṇa* as the slayer of Asuras, protector of the universe, is in peril. It is, in other words, crucial that Viṣṇu abandons these manifestations. By putting forward Śiva as the one who releases Viṣṇu from his precarious state, Śiva does not only become the saviour of Viṣṇu, but of the entire universe.

By comparison, other manifestations would not have been as suitable for this Śaiva message. The pool to choose from is first of all limited to Asura-slaying manifestations, given Viṣṇu's role in the *Skandapurāṇa*. The only options remaining then are human manifestations, such as Kṛṣṇa, Rāma Dāśarathi and Rāma Jāmadagnya. If Viṣṇu would continue to live in one of these manifestations—in other words, if the composers would have designed an afterlife for them—then there would still be the problem that the premise that a manifestation should be temporary is violated. However, the manifestations would at least be able to continue to fulfil their task as *kṣatriyas*. In fact, the *Harivaṃśa* is full of successive stories of Kṛṣṇa fighting with different groups of enemies, and so is the composite narrative of Rāma Jāmadagnya in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Staying in a human *kṣatriya* manifestation would therefore not be a threat for humankind, nor for the fulfilment of Viṣṇu's task as Asura-slayer. Since the latter problems do arise in the case of a continuation of Viṣṇu's manifestation as Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana, the myths involving these three forms were a more appropriate vehicle to convey a Śaiva message in which Śiva becomes the ultimate saviour, and this seems to have been an additional reason to incorporate them in the *Skandapurāṇa*.

There are, to conclude, different reasons for the incorporation of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana. First, together with nine other

devāsura wars, their battles constitute a standard list of twelve *devāsura* wars, of which eleven are transformed into actual myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Second, by introducing an afterlife of these manifestations, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers were able to design a new ending to the myths in which an additional problem presents itself and Śiva is put forward as the great saviour. Third, the manifestation myths served the aim of the composers to create a new Purāṇa. Since Viṣṇu's manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana formed an intrinsic part of the Purāṇic genre, they had to be included in the *Skandapurāṇa* as well. However, in order to be properly integrated and accommodated in the Śaiva ideology of the text, Viṣṇu and his manifestation myths had to undergo major adjustments. The end result was a rich set of engaging and convincing narratives, permeated with Śaiva elements, and hence perfectly matching the aims of the composition as a whole: a comprehensive, appealing and compelling Purāṇa, retelling key Purāṇic material, immersed with Śaiva ideology. Who would have thought to hear about so many gods, learn about so many different topics and discover such a complex universe, after the opening announcement of the *Skandapurāṇa* (SP 1.14)[467] that the *sūta* ("the bard") would tell the story of Skanda's birth, his devotion to Brahmins, his greatness and his heroism?

[467] SP 1.14:
śṛṇudhvaṃ munayaḥ sarve kārttikeyasya sambhavam |
brahmaṇyatvaṃ samāhātmyaṃ vīryaṃ ca tridaśādhikam ||
"Listen, all you sages, to Kārttikeya's [i.e. Skanda's] birth, his devotion to Brahmins, his greatness and his heroism that surpasses [even that of] the gods."

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ŚiP *The Śivamahāpurāṇam.* Delhi: Nag Publishers. 1986, 2 vols.

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SkP *The Skandamahāpurāṇam.* Delhi: Nag Publishers. 1982, 3 vols. (Original work published 1910 by Venkatesvara Press, Bombay)

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Appendix I: Summaries

I.1 The Narasiṃha myth

(SP 70.1—20) Vyāsa wants to know from Sanatkumāra what Śiva did after he had gone to Mount Mandara with Pārvatī. Sanatkumāra replies that Śiva and Pārvatī enjoy themselves in their palace, when the gods Indra, Śaśāṅka ("Moon") and Vāyu ("Wind") arrive. They have three requests for Śiva. The first concerns Viṣṇu, who, after he has killed the Daitya Hiraṇyakaśipu in the form of a Narasiṃha ("Man-Lion"), does not give up this terrifying body. Indra asks Śiva to make Viṣṇu return to his original form and Śiva promises he will do so. The second request concerns Vāyu himself. He does not want to be bodiless any longer, and Śiva immediately provides him with a large body. The third inquiry concerns Śaśāṅka himself. Due to a curse, he has a body that is subject to consumption and he asks Śiva to release him from this state. Śiva answers that if Śaśāṅka performs *tapas*, "asceticism", he will be free from consumption. After this promise, the gods return home.

(SP 70.21—37) Inspired by the gods' first request, Vyāsa wants to know how Hiraṇyakaśipu was killed by Narasiṃha. Sanatkumāra starts to relate the story of Narasiṃha. Kaśyapa and Diti had two sons: Hiraṇyakaśipu, the elder, and Hiraṇyākṣa, the younger. Once upon a time, Hiraṇyakaśipu was consecrated by Brahmā as the king of the Daityas, Vipracitti as the king of the Dānavas and Indra as the king of the gods. At a certain moment, Hiraṇyakaśipu decides that he wants to conquer the triple world (i.e. netherworld, earth and heaven) and sets off to Śrīparvata to practice severe *tapas* for two thousand divine years. Brahmā is so pleased with Hiraṇyakaśipu's *tapas* that he offers him a boon. Hiraṇyakaśipu asks for immortality, inviolability, freedom from old age, and strength; not to be killed by a weapon, *mantra* ("sacrificial formula"), not by night nor by day, not by something wet nor something dry, not by a man nor by a woman. Having heard his request, Brahmā tells Hiraṇyakaśipu he should add a loophole. Hiraṇyakaśipu answers that in any other case, he shall die. Brahmā consents to this boon and leaves. Hiraṇyakaśipu immediately takes over the triple world.

(SP 70.38—end) Vyāsa wants to know more about Śrīparvata and Sanatkumāra narrates the Māhātmya ("Glorification") of this extraordinary place.

(SP 71.1—47) As Hiraṇyakaśipu rules over the triple world, the gods are unhappy and seek refuge with Brahmā. Brahmā explains that he made Hiraṇyakaśipu state a loophole, so there is a solution to the problem. They should go to Viṣṇu, who will take up the form of a Man-Lion and kill Hiraṇyakaśipu by striking him with one hit. The gods do accordingly and ask Viṣṇu to help them. Viṣṇu is willing to do so, but he needs the gods to enter his body to stand a chance against Hiraṇyakaśipu. The gods enter his body, and Viṣṇu takes on a terrifying Man-Lion form and goes to Hiraṇyakaśipu's city. He slays all the guards attacking him. The Daityas that manage to escape inform Hiraṇyakaśipu about Narasiṃha. The king of Daityas orders some of his subjects to bring the Lion alive, for it shall be a nice pet for his queen. The Daityas set off, but upon seeing the terrifying Man-Lion, they immediately return to Hiraṇyakaśipu. Then the king himself takes his chariot and rushes to Narasiṃha. During a fierce fight, Narasiṃha eventually hits him with a single slap of his claw, kills Hiraṇyakaśipu at once and tears Hiraṇyakaśipu's chest open with his nails. All remaining Asuras flee to the netherworld, called Rasātala, Indra regains power over the heavens, and the gods return to their kingdoms.

(SP 71.48—end) Śiva, being informed by the three gods that Viṣṇu did not give up his Narasiṃha form, takes on the form of a Śarabha (i.e. a fierce, mythical animal) and goes to Narasiṃha. Narasiṃha starts a fight with the Śarabha, but as soon as he realizes that the Śarabha does not even flinch when he is hit, Narasiṃha recognizes that it is Śiva and starts praising him. Śiva is pleased with Viṣṇu's praise and tells him that earlier he had given Viṣṇu the boon that he will always make Viṣṇu return to his own body, whenever needed. Therefore, Śiva, still in the form of a Śarabha, tramples Narasiṃha with his feet and joins Viṣṇu with his previous divine body. Śiva then grants Viṣṇu the boon that he will be a slayer of Daityas. Śiva disappears and Viṣṇu returns to his own abode.

I.2 The Varāha myth

I.2.1 What preceded

(SP 73) After Hiraṇyakaśipu has been killed by Viṣṇu as Narasiṃha, his brother Hiraṇyākṣa takes up the throne as king of the Daityas. Desiring a son, he practises severe *tapas* and as a result, he receives Andhaka as a son, who is born from the darkness (*andhas*) created by Devī and Śiva. (SP 74) Being unhappy with his blindness, Andhaka

starts practicing *tapas*. As a reward, Brahmā does not only grant him eyesight but also a boon. Andhaka wants to be unable to be killed, except when he does not bow down to Pārvatī, and is granted this wish. (SP 75.1—76.13) Hiraṇyākṣa organizes a Kaumudī festival and a Devarātri festival to celebrate Andhaka's successful *tapas*.

I.2.2 The Varāha myth

(SP 76.14—end) After the Kaumudī festival, all Daityas and Dānavas come together in the assembly hall, (SP 77) and Hiraṇyākṣa addresses them: he wants to kill the slayer of his brother. The Asuras agree, offer to help and prepare for battle. (SP 78) When the gods hear about the Asuras approaching, they also prepare for battle. (SP 79—92) A great war between the gods and Asuras takes place for countless years. (SP 93) After this long fight, Hiraṇyākṣa finally conquers the abodes of the gods, starting with Amarāvatī, (SP 94) then the abode of Varuṇa and Yama (SP 95) and finally Laṅkā. Hiraṇyākṣa proceeds to the earth and forces her to accept him as his husband. He takes her to Rasātala, where he binds her, guarded by thousands of Nāgas (i.e. mythical serpents).

(SP 96) As Hiraṇyākṣa rules over the triple world, the gods start to weaken. Brahmā notices the poor condition of the gods and decides to help them. He gives them power and tells them to be patient, for Hiraṇyākṣa's power will perish and then Viṣṇu will kill him. The gods are not appeased though and ask Brahmā where they should live, now that their kingdoms have been stolen. Brahmā replies that they should take their abodes in the subjects of Hiraṇyākṣa. In this way, they will be strengthened. The gods do as they are told. This enrages Hiraṇyākṣa, and he destroys everything on earth.

(SP 97) The gods suffer a lot seeing the earth being tormented like that, so they visit Brahmā again. He assures them not to be afraid because Hiraṇyākṣa's time has come. They should all go to Viṣṇu and ask him for help. Brahmā explains that at Hiraṇyākṣa's birth, it was prophesized that Hiraṇyākṣa cannot be killed by a man, a god or an animal, not on earth, in fire, space or the worlds, so Viṣṇu will kill him as a Naravarāha, "Man-Boar", in Pātāla, "the netherworld". The gods are pleased to hear this and go to Viṣṇu and praise him. After this long eulogy, Viṣṇu tells the gods that he will take up a boar-form, but that he also needs them to enter his body, because he is unable to conquer the Daitya by himself.

(SP 98) The gods prepare the boar-body for Viṣṇu. Each of Varāha's limbs becomes inhabited by the gods, as well as natural and sacrificial elements. The sages illuminate Viṣṇu's *tejas*, "energy", with their own *tejas*, so that Viṣṇu becomes strong and confident that he will kill Hiraṇyākṣa. Brahmā, on the other hand, warns Viṣṇu that this Daitya is not like Hiraṇyakaśipu. Therefore, the gods request Śiva to strengthen Viṣṇu with his *tejas* as well. Śiva promises that Viṣṇu will immediately kill Hiraṇyākṣa when his *tejas* enters him. After this promise, Brahmā does a protection ritual, and Viṣṇu as Varāha takes off.

(SP 99) He enters the ocean and sees a variety of fabulous fish. He does a *pradakṣiṇa*, "circumambulation", around Hayaśiras, passes various places—Maināka, Bhogavatī, the cities of Varuṇa, Surabhī, Kaṅka, Vāsuki, Takṣaka and Śeṣa—and finally, he reaches Rasātala, where Hiraṇyākṣa lives.

(SP 100) At that moment, terrifying omens appear. Hiraṇyākṣa recognizes them and knows that the gods have resorted to something yet unknown and that they will start a war. Prahlāda, Hiraṇyakaśipu's son, warns his uncle Hiraṇyākṣa: he has seen in a dream that someone with the body of a human and a boar defeats Hiraṇyākṣa. His advice is to behave properly, so that this shall not happen. Hiraṇyākṣa answers that he knows that he will lose his kingdom, for he too had a dream. However, in his dream, he did not see a Man-Boar, but Śiva, telling him to return his royal insignia to Indra. The dream ended with Śiva offering Hiraṇyākṣa to always live near him. The Daityas that are present there respond that dreams are not true, so they will fight against the gods, without Hiraṇyākṣa. However, Hiraṇyākṣa replies that when death is ordained by Śiva, it will come: there is no way of escaping it, so he might as well go into battle himself. The discussion is interrupted by a Dānava rushing into the assembly hall announcing that at the sea shore, he saw a Boar, whose limbs are inhabited by gods and sages, and that he is coming to the city. According to Prahlāda, there is no doubt that this is not an ordinary Boar, but the bearer of the discus and the plough, i.e. Viṣṇu. Hiraṇyākṣa wants to take revenge with the slayer of his brother. He sends out an army of Daityas and Dānavas to inquire who this Boar is exactly.

(SP 101) The Asuras rush to Varāha and attack him. The Boar wants to know why they are assaulting him, for he is just a harmless boar. The Daityas ask him why he has come here and where he is going. Varāha replies that he is just roaming around and that

his wife has been taken by someone else. The Daityas are not convinced: this is not a place to roam around, so they will kill him and bring him to their king. Varāha replies that he has done nothing wrong. If they are after his meat though, they might as well try to kill him, but Varāha is convinced that they will not succeed. The Asuras and Varāha start to fight.

(SP 102) Only one Asura survives and goes to Hiraṇyākṣa. He explains that the Boar is too strong to be conquered. Those Asuras that had stayed behind in the palace say they will fight anyway, but Hiraṇyākṣa should not go into war with them. The king consents and commands for battle. At that moment, Varāha reaches Hiraṇyākṣa's city, called Aśmakapura. The fighting immediately begins.

(SP 103) Varāha tells the Asuras that since he is an animal, they should fight him without weapons and one by one; only then, it will be a fair fight. Although Andhaka agrees, Prahlāda says that animals are always killed by weapons, so it is in fact a fair fight. They should all, Prahlāda continues, kill this animal who is actually the wicked Viṣṇu trying to deceive them. The Asuras attack Varāha and they all fight.

(SP 104) After a long battle, Varāha throws the Dānava called Vipracitti towards the city, who crashes on Hiraṇyākṣa's palace. Hiraṇyākṣa asks who threw him. Vipracitti tells him that this Boar is unequalled and remains unharmed by their weapons. The Boar must be using sorcery and cannot be conquered. However, Hiraṇyākṣa sees the arrival of the Boar as a challenge and thinks himself victorious, so he prepares for battle.

(SP 105) Hiraṇyākṣa sets off being surrounded by Daityas and Dānavas. As they reach Varāha, Hiraṇyākṣa starts the fight. He pierces Varāha with his arrows, and Varāha falls unconscious on the ground. The gods revive him through *mantras*, but Varāha is caught again and is tied by Nāgas. This time, Garuḍa, Viṣṇu's vehicle and assistant, rescues Varāha. Once more, Varāha is attacked heavily by Hiraṇyākṣa's arrow, but he is strengthened by the gods, filling him with their *tapas*, "austerity". (SP 106) The battle continues. Having used various weapons, Hiraṇyākṣa finally resorts to his spear and hurls it at the Boar. (SP 107) Varāha does not see the spear coming and falls on the ground being pierced by it. At that moment, Brahmā recalls Śiva's consent to help Viṣṇu. Śiva's divine *tejas* enters Varāha and strengthens him. The Boar gets up again and removes the spear from his body. With the weapon, he attacks Hiraṇyākṣa in the heart, but Hiraṇyākṣa

manages to cut out the spear and takes a sword instead to attack the Boar again, and the fight continues for many years. Finally, the time comes that Hiraṇyākṣa weakens. At that moment, a bodiless voice speaks to Varāha, saying that it is impossible to kill the Daitya king if he keeps on fighting like this. Instead, Varāha should take the "Māheśvara *cakra*", "Śiva's discus", in order to slay him. He does so and the *cakra* cuts off Hiraṇyākṣa's head. The king of Daityas is dead.

(SP 108) The gods rejoice, *dharma* is restored, everything returns to its original state and the *cakra* disappears. Then Viṣṇu remembers that the earth is still kept hostage and starts looking for her. He finds her bound by Nāgas and drives them away. He lifts her from the water, as she hangs on to the sprout of his fang, and he puts her back into her own place. Varāha gives the triple world back to Indra. The gods and sages ask Viṣṇu to return to his original form. He says that he will do so, but not until he has enjoyed this boar-form a little longer on earth. While the gods return to their homes, Varāha starts roaming around, enjoys himself with other boars, deer and Apsarases in the form of female boars, and celebrates his victory with a festival.

(SP 109) After a long time, Varāha's wife Citralekhā gives birth to their son Vṛka. Vṛka is always roaming around on earth and one day, he reaches Skanda's abode in the Himālaya. He uproots trees and wrecks the entire palace garden. Skanda is away at that moment, visiting his father Śiva. Because of the sound of Vṛka roaring and the sound of trees breaking, one of Skanda's Gaṇapas (lit. "Protectors of Gaṇas", i.e. Skanda's attendants), called Kokavaktra, comes to size up the situation. He asks Vṛka who he is and, despite of the damage Vṛka caused, Kokavaktra does not punish him because he is impressed by his power and body. Kokavaktra will even tell Skanda not to be angry with the little boar. Vṛka, however, replies that he is not afraid of anyone and throws a tree at Kokavaktra. They fight for some time, but Kokavaktra manages to tie Vṛka down. When Skanda comes home, Kokavaktra explains what happened. Skanda replies that he cannot set Vṛka free without punishment because Śiva would think him to be weak. All of Skanda's Gaṇapas then go to the boar to torture him. Nārada observes the situation and goes to Varāha to tell him about it. This infuriates Varāha, and he sets out to help his son. (SP 110) When he arrives, he finds Skanda playing with Vṛka and immediately starts fighting Skanda. Varāha uses his *cakra*, but to no avail. Skanda takes his Saṃvartikā

spear, which he has received from Śiva when he visited him, and throws it at Varāha. The spear destroys all arrows that are discharged at him and pierces Varāha's heart. Thanks to this shot, Viṣṇu returns to his old body. He goes to Śiva's abode to praise Śiva. Śiva is pleased with his devotion and grants him a boon. Viṣṇu asks him to teach the *pāśupatavrata*, "the Pāśupata observance", so that he and the gods will be invincible in battle against the Daityas. Śiva consents and takes off to Mount Sumeru to teach the *vrata*.

I.3 The Vāmana myth

I.3.1 What preceded

(SP_{Bh} 113 and 115.1—116.3) When Viṣṇu has slain Hiraṇyākṣa as Varāha, new wars between the gods and Asuras are fought. First, the Amṛtamanthana war takes place, in which Prahlāda, Hiraṇyakaśipu's son, is conquered, (SP_{Bh} 116.4—13ab) and then the Āṭībaka war, in which Virocana, Prahlāda's son, is killed.

I.3.2 The Vāmana myth

(SP_{Bh} 116.13cd—28) When Virocana is killed, his son Bali is consecrated by Brahmā as king. Bali conquers the triple world. As Bali rules, the gods are unhappy, so Brahmā approaches them and prophesizes that, even though Bali is righteous, well-disposed to Brahmins, immortal and someone who has obtained a boon earlier, Viṣṇu will conquer the Daitya. Viṣṇu shall beg Bali for three steps on earth in the form of a dwarfish Brahmin. As soon as Bali grants him this gift, Viṣṇu will cover the entire world with one step, he will make his second step in the sky, and Brahmā will give him the third step. This is how the gods will regain their kingdom. The gods agree to Brahmā's idea and go to Viṣṇu, telling him that he should go to Bali immediately, since he is being consecrated in a horse sacrifice at this very moment, and tomorrow morning the concluding ritual bath will take place. Viṣṇu agrees to the plan.

(SP_{Bh} 116.29—45) Meanwhile, Nārada, the messenger of the gods, goes to Bali to warn him that Viṣṇu will approach him in the form of a Brahmin and will ask him for three strides in order to win back the kingdom. Bali should not consent to his wish, for he will otherwise lose his kingdom. Bali does not follow Nārada's advise though and explains that he should always give to whoever begs. Puzzled by Bali's reply, Nārada leaves.

(SP_{Bh} 116.46—92) When a day has passed, during the night, Viṣṇu goes to Bali in the form of Vāmana, a dwarfish Brahmin. He finds Bali busy donating all kinds of goods to Brahmins. Vāmana approaches Bali to ask him for something as well. Bali recognizes Viṣṇu, who has abandoned the *dharma*, "rules", of the *kṣatriyas*, "the warriors", to whom Viṣṇu actually belongs, and has disguised himself as Brahmin. Still, he will give whatever he desires, if it can be given. Vāmana admits that he is indeed Viṣṇu, but that he has no desire for the kingdom anymore. Instead, he asks for a house, measuring three steps of his. At this moment, Śukra, one of the attending Asuras, steps in and warns Bali not to give it. Bali does not listen to him either and grants Vāmana the house. As Bali pours water into Vāmana's hand, by way of making the gift official, Prahlāda and other Asuras still try to prevent Bali from giving the three strides. Prahlāda explains that Asuras should always adhere to *adharma*, "non-righteousness", such as cheating and stealing sacrifices, not to *dharma*, "righteousness". According to Prahlāda, Bali should follow his forefathers' example and fight against the gods. But again, Bali does not listen to the warning. In order to show that it is better to disobey the deeds of one's forefathers if these are bad, he tells the story of the sage Vāmadeva and Aśvatarī, (SP_{Bh} 116.93—127) in which three generations of kings perform bad deeds and are therefore killed. It is only when the fourth king in line decides to diverge from the cruel deeds of his predecessors that his life is spared and gets great rewards.

(SP_{Bh} 116.128—117.20) Taking this story as an example, Bali continues pouring water into Vāmana's hand. At that moment, Viṣṇu takes up an enormous body, with which he starts striding his three steps, while resorting to the power of Rudra and Brahmā. With his first stride, he covers the entire earth from the far East to the far West. With his second stride, he covers the sky. And to make his third stride, he raises his foot passing the heavens called Svarloka and Janaloka, and the step is not completed yet. As Viṣṇu is striding, Asuras attack him. Then Brahmā comes to an agreement with Bali, who is bound by Nāgas, that he should give the kingdom back to Viṣṇu[468]. Bali does accordingly and enters Pātāla, "the netherworld".

[468] In section 2.3, I argue that several verses may have been lost during the transmission of the text. As a result, the text does not explain how the third step finishes, nor how and why Bali is bound.

(SP_{Bh} 117.21—118.1) Vyāsa wants to know what happened when the triple world was conquered back. Sanatkumāra replies that the gods praise Viṣṇu for his great deed. Because of this praise, Viṣṇu becomes so proud of himself that his highest *yoga*, "power", disappears, and Pāpmā, "Sin", coming from the Asuras, enters him, and he becomes a Dwarf again.

(SP_{Bh} 118.2—20) The gods do not understand what just happened, so the sages arrive to explain after having consulted Brahmā. They say that since Viṣṇu had abandoned his own *dharma* of the *kṣatriyas* and accepted the kingdom as a gift, he is entered by Pāpmā. Therefore, the gods and the sages should all make Viṣṇu bathe in *tīrthas*, "bathing places", and make him perform a horse sacrifice. Then they will see Śiva, who will purify Viṣṇu, and Viṣṇu will be released from Pāpmā. Having overheard the plan, the gods and sages start the pilgrimage with Viṣṇu. They first encounter the beautiful place of Suṣumnā, which has many lotuses, all kinds of gems and a Viṣṇu temple. (SP_{Bh} 118.21—30) In Suṣumnā, Indra steals a lotus from the sage Agastya. (SP_{Bh} 118.31—end) As they proceed, they meet a parrot in a dead tree. Indra tests the parrot's loyalty to the tree by offering him several boons. The parrot stands the test, and as a reward, Indra revives the tree. (SP_{Bh} 119.1—50) In Kṛmilā, they see a female Brahmin called Gautamī, whose son died because of a snake bite. A hunter catches the snake. However, since Gautamī learns from the gods of death that one dies because of one's own *dharma*, she asks the hunter to release the snake. Thanks to this generous deed, her son is revived. (SP_{Bh} 119.51—104) In Kṛtyā, the story of Tṛṇabindu is told, in which seven Brahmins are tormented by king Tṛṇabindu for not performing a sacrifice for him. The king sends an evil spirit to them, but thanks to a trick by Indra, disguising himself as a wandering mendicant, Indra is able to kill the spirit. After killing her, Indra steals lotuses from the gods and sages, but returns them when the gods ask him to do so.

(SP_{Bh} 119.105—end) When the gods and sages have bathed Viṣṇu at the *tīrtha*[469], they go to the top of the Himavat and make Viṣṇu perform a horse sacrifice, where Śiva appears. (SP_{Bh} 120.1—19) Vyāsa wants to know where Śiva went, when he saw the

[469] In note 355, I argue that in the text as it is transmitted to us today, the last *tīrtha* is not mentioned by name, but that in an earlier stage of the transmission of the text, the place was probably Suṣumnā.

sacrifice. Sanatkumāra replies that Śiva and Pārvatī went to the cremation grounds in Ujjayinī, where a jackal and a vulture try to trick the family of a deceased boy to leave him behind, so that they can eat him. But then Śiva appears and offers the family a boon. The family wants the boy to be revived. Śiva does not only revive the boy, but makes him a Ganeśa, "Lord of Gaṇas", and creates a temple at that place.

(SP_{Bh} 120.20—121.end) Having done this, Śiva goes to the top of the Himavat and tells the gods that they should request a boon. They ask Śiva to complete the sacrifice, release Viṣṇu from sin and give the gods their strength back. Śiva completes the sacrifice and splits the mountain into two with his trident. Because of this splitting, streams of water break out that purify Viṣṇu, and Pāpmā leaves his body. Śiva tells her that the gods should no longer be tormented by her, that this place will be her much-honoured abode and that it will be more meritorious than all other *tīrthas*, destroying all sins and rescuing the seven previous and future generations. This *tīrtha* will be known as Saṃdhyā. Having heard Śiva's speech, the gods make a temple there and go back to heaven. Viṣṇu goes to Śivakūṭa, performing a horse sacrifice and worshipping Śiva for 1,006 years and six months. This pleases Śiva, so he approaches Viṣṇu with his entire entourage and offers Viṣṇu a boon. Viṣṇu asks him to tell him how he will not be contaminated by sin or *tapas*. Śiva replies that Viṣṇu should perform the *mahāvrata*, "the great observance". When Viṣṇu has performed this *pāśupatavrata* for twelve divine years, he obtains supremacy. Thereafter, Śiva gives half of his body to Viṣṇu, and Viṣṇu reaches union with Śiva, becoming Viṣṇuśaṃkara.

Appendix II: Figures

Figure 1: Varāha. Udayagiri Cave 5, early fifth century CE (Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh, India)[470]

[470] All photographs are my own.

Figure 2: Varāha. Eran, late fifth century CE (Eran, Madhya Pradesh, India)

Figure 3: Harihara. Madhya Pradesh, seventh century CE, presently kept at National Museum (New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, India)

Appendix III: Critical edition of chapters 108, 109 and 110 of the *Skandapurāṇa*

The following chapters will be published in SP Vol. V, forth. The ‘Symbols and Abbreviations in the Apparatus’ and the ‘Sigla of the Manuscripts Used’ preceding the chapters are extracted from this volume.

Symbols and Abbreviations in the Apparatus

⟨ ⟩ In the layer of apparatus recording lacunae, these brackets enclose references (by *pāda* letter and raised syllable number) to illegible or lost syllables in the Nepalese manuscripts.
In the registers with variants, they enclose syllables of a manuscript reading that have been cancelled.

( ) In the layer of apparatus recording lacunae, these parentheses enclose references (by *pāda* letter and raised syllable number) to poorly legible syllables in the Nepalese manuscripts.
In the registers with variants, they are used in reporting a manuscript reading to enclose syllables that are uncertain. They are also used after a siglum to enclose comments in English.
In the main, lowest register, only when a lemma is long, they are used to enclose the siglum of a manuscript that supports the lemma except for minor differences. The minor differences in the manuscript reading are recorded separately in a layer of apparatus devoted to the readings of the recension to which it belongs.

→ Used within the layer of apparatus recording lacunae to indicate that a lacuna extends beyond the verse boundary.

+ + Enclose syllables of a manuscript reading that have been added (usually in the margin, occasionally between lines).

{ } Enclose variants of individual manuscripts reported within a larger variant of the group to save space (cf. SP I, 52).

• Used to separate different lemmas within the same *pāda*.

␣ Represents a gap left open by a scribe.

. . . Used to represent illegible or lost syllables in a manuscript reading when the illegible or lost portion extends beyond the lemma.

± Used only in the layer of apparatus devoted to the readings of the *Ambikākhaṇḍa* recension, to indicate that trivial individual variants within a larger variant have been suppressed.

◡ – ⏑ Used to represent illegible or lost syllables that should be assumed to be metrically light, heavy or indifferent.

∗ After a siglum, denotes the second occurrence of a line that is repeated.

conj.	conjecture	em.	emendation
ac	before correction	pc	after correction
f.	folio	col.	colophon
r	recto	v	verso
om.	omit(s)	i.m.	in the margin
sec.	second	m.c.	metri causa

Sigla of the Manuscripts Used

S_1 National Archives, Kathmandu, MS 2–229. Rotographs preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, as MS Max Müller, Rotogr. 34. Described in Shastri 1905, 141–146; Gambier Parry 1930, 22–25 (No. 22); *Bṛhatsūcīpatram* vol. 8, 278; Bhaṭṭarāī 1988, *prastāvanā* p. 37. Microfilmed by the NGMPP on reel No. B 11/4. Palm leaf, early Nepalese 'Licchavi' script. Bhaṭṭarāī's siglum *kha*. This manuscript is dated 234 (AD 810/811). For further description see SP I, 32.

S_2 National Archives, Kathmandu, MS 1–831. Described in *Bṛhatsūcīpatram* vol. 8, 292; Bhaṭṭarāī 1988, *prastāvanā* p. 36. Microfilmed by the NGMPP on reel B 12/3. Palm leaf, early Nepalese 'Licchavi' script. Bhaṭṭarāī's siglum *ka*. Undated. For further description see SP I, 33.

S_3 Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Sansk. a. 14 (R). Palm leaf, early Nepalese 'Licchavi' script. This manuscript was acquired by the Bodleian Library in 1992; it is not listed in any printed catalogue, and was not used by Bhaṭṭarāī. Undated. For further description see SP I, 33f.

R Asiatic Society, Calcutta, MS G–3909. Paper, an early Bengali script. Described in Shastri 1928, 568–572. Dated Śaka 1604 (AD 1682). Not used by Bhaṭṭarāī. For further description see SP I, 34f.

A_2 India Office Library MS 662–663. Described in Eggeling 1899, 1321b–1323a. Paper, Devanāgarī script. Not used by Bhaṭṭarāī. See SP I, 35. On the occasional spare use of this manuscript, see SP III, 61.

A_3 Asiatic Society, Calcutta, MS G–972. Described in Mitra 1882, 117–121; Shastri 1928, 579 (see also the Preface p. clxxviii); Bhaṭṭarāī 1988, *prastāvanā* p. 37. Paper, Devanāgarī script. This is the only A manuscript used (or mentioned) by Bhaṭṭarāī (his siglum *gha*). See SP I, 35.

A_4 Sanskrit College, Varanasi, MS 14311. Paper, Devanāgarī script. Described in *The Pandit* vol. 4, supplement (February 1, 1870), p. l; Catalogue of the Sanskrit College Library n.d., 237; 1957, 10. Not used by Bhaṭṭarāī. See SP I, 35.

A_7 Dhakka University Library, MS 3376. Paper, an early Bengali script. Mentioned in the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* I, 362. Not used by Bhaṭṭarāī. See SP II A, 10f.

A We use this siglum to denote the above-mentioned *Ambikākhaṇḍa* manuscripts as a group, or a reading unanimously shared by them all. See SP III, 62f.

अष्टोत्तरशतो ऽध्यायः।

सनत्कुमार उवाच।
तस्मिन्विनिहते दैत्ये सुराः सर्वे ऽभितुष्टुवुः।
ऋषयश्च तपोयुक्ताः पुष्पवृष्ट्यश्च पेतिरे॥ १॥
देवदुन्दुभयो नेदुरदृश्याः सुमहास्वनाः।
भूतानां चाभवच्छर्म प्रकृतिस्थं जगद्बभौ॥ २॥
जगामादृश्यतां चक्रं ततः स्वस्था बभुः सुराः।
ऋषयश्चैव लोकाश्च दैत्यं च ददृशुर्हतम्॥ ३॥
असुरापि हि ते सर्वे पुरद्वाराणि सर्वशः।
पिधाय यत्नात्संनद्धाः प्राकारेष्ववतस्थिरे॥ ४॥
ते भीता मुक्तकेशाश्च रजोध्वस्ता भयार्दिताः।
जीवितं संपरीप्सन्तः स्थिताः प्राकारगास्तदा॥ ५॥

1c °श्च] (°स्ते) R **1d** °वृष्ट्यश्च पेतिरे] °वृष्टिः पपात च R **2b** °रदृश्याः सु°] °रदृश्याश्च R **2c** °वच्छर्म] °वत् कान्तिः R **3b** स्वस्था] सुस्था R **4a** असुरापि हि] असुराश्चापि R **4b** पुरद्वाराणि] दुदूवुश्चैव R^{pc}, ⌣(द्व)⌣⌣(स्थ) R^{ac} **4c** °त्संनद्धाः] °द्वान्नद्धाः R **4d** °ष्ववतस्थिरे] °षु रणात्ततः R (unmetrical) **5c** संपरीप्सन्तः] परिलप्स्यन्तः R **5d** °गास्तदा] °संस्थिताः R

1d °वृष्ट्यश्च पेतिरे] °वृष्टिं पपातिरे **A** **2b** °महास्वनाः] A_7, °महात्मना A_3A_4 **2c** °नां चाभवच्छर्म] °नामभवच्चर्म **A** **3b** स्वस्था] सुस्था **A** **3d** दैत्यं च] तं दैत्यं **A** **4a** असुरापि हि] असुरा अपि **A** **4c** पिधाय] $A_3A_7^{pc}$, विधाय A_4, ⟨वि⟩पिधाय A_7 • यत्नात्] यत्ताः A_3, यत्ता A_4A_7 **4d** प्राकारेष्ववतस्थिरे] A_7, प्रविकारेष्ववस्थिरे A_3A_4 **5a** भीता] A_4A_7, भिता A_3 **5b** रजो°] A_7, राजा° A_3A_4 **5c** संपरीप्सन्तः] स्वं परीप्सन्तः **A** **5d** स्थिताः प्राकारगास्तदा] प्राकारांत{°रान्तः° A_7}स्थितास्तदा **A**±

Manuscripts available for this chapter: S_1 photos 4.7a (f. 165^v), 4.8b (f. 166^r) and 4.9a (f. 166^v); S_2 exposures 115b–116b (f. 150^r–151^r); S_3 f. 165^v–166^v; R f. 181^v–182^r; A_3 f. 108^v–109^r; A_4 f. 152^v–153^v; A_7 f. 153^v–154^v.
3(b^3–b^4) S_1 **4**⟨a^1–a^2⟩(c^1) S_1 **5**(a^7) S_1

1b सुराः] S_1^{pc}**RA**Bh, सुरा $S_1^{ac}S_2S_3$ **1c** °युक्ताः] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}$**RA**Bh, युक्ता $S_1^{ac}S_2^{ac}S_3$ **1d** पुष्पवृष्ट्यश्च] $S_2^{pc}S_3$Bh, पुष्पवृष्ट्याश्च S_1, प्रष्पवृष्ट्यश्च S_2^{ac} • पेतिरे] S_2S_3Bh, येदिरे S_1^{pc}, पेदिरे S_1^{ac} **2c** °नां चाभवच्छ°] S_2S_3Bh, °नाश्च भवच्छ° S_1 **2d** जगद्ब°] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, जगाद्ब° S_3 **3ab** जगामादृश्यतां चक्रं ततः] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, जगाम दृश्यता चक्र तत+:+ S_3 **3b** बभुः] S_2S_3**RA**, °भवन् S_1Bh • सुराः] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$**RA**Bh, स्वराः S_3^{ac} **3d** च] $S_1S_2S_3$R, तं Bh (conj.) • ददृशुर्] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, ददृशु S_3 (unmetrical) **4a** असुरापि हि] S_2S_3, ⌣⌣रापि हि S_1, असुरा अपि Bh • ते स°] S_1**RA**Bh, तेस्स° S_2^{pc}, तैस्स° S_2^{ac}, तै स° S_3 **4b** पुर°] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**AB**h, पुरा° S_1^{ac} **4c** पिधाय] $S_1^{ac}S_2^{pc}S_3^{pc}$RA$_3$A$_7^{pc}$Bh, (वा)धाय S_1^{pc}, पि(था)य $S_2^{ac}S_3^{ac}$ • यत्नात्संनद्धाः] $S_2^{pc}S_3^{pc}$Bh, यत्ना+:+ सन्नद्धाः S_1, यत्नात्सन्नद्धा $S_2^{ac}S_3^{ac}$ **4d** प्राकारेष्व°] $S_2^{pc}S_3A_7$, प्राकारेस्व° S_1, प्राकारे(स्व°) S_2^{ac}, प्राकरेष्व Bh (typo) **5a** भीता] S_1RA$_4$A$_7$Bh, भीत° S_2S_3 **5b** रजो°] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RA$_7$Bh, राजो° S_1^{ac} • भयार्दिताः] $S_1S_2^{pc}$**RA**Bh, भयार्द्दिता $S_2^{ac}S_3^{pc}$, भयार्दिता S_3^{ac} **5c** जीवितं] S_1S_2R**A**Bh, जीवित S_3 (unmetrical) • संपरीप्सन्तः] $S_1S_2^{pc}$Bh, सम्परीप्सन्त S_2^{ac}, सपरीप्सन्त S_3 **5d** स्थिताः] $S_1S_2^{pc}$RBh, स्थिता $S_2^{ac}S_3$ • °स्तदा] $S_2S_3A_3A_7^{pc}$Bh, °स्तथा S_1

भगवानपि दीप्तार्चिर्हविषेद्ध इवानलः।
भीषयानो ऽसुरान्सर्वान्पृथिवीमन्वचिन्वत॥ ६॥
स बहिः सर्वतो ऽन्विष्य उत्पाट्य च महीरुहान्।
प्रणष्टामिव गां गोपः समन्तादन्वचिन्वत॥ ७॥
पर्वतान्स तदोत्पाट्य देवोद्यानान्यचूर्णयत्।
आरामान्स तडागानि बभञ्ज च ररास च॥ ८॥
ततो दक्षिणतो गत्वा मुहूर्तं देवसत्तमः।
शङ्खं पर्वतमासाद्य ननर्द जलदो यथा॥ ९॥
असुरापि हि ते भीताः प्राकारान्तरसंस्थिताः।
अवेक्षन्त मृगेन्द्रं तं धावन्तं सर्वतोदिशः॥ १०॥
सो ऽपि देवस्तदा शङ्खमुत्पाट्य नगमुत्तमम्।
अपश्यत्पृथिवीं बद्धां रक्ष्यमाणां च दानवैः॥ ११॥
सागराम्भसि विक्षिप्य शङ्खं तं पर्वतोत्तमम्।
अवधीद्दानवान्सर्वान्मेदिन्या ये ऽभिरक्षिणः॥ १२॥

6b °र्हविषेद्ध इवानलः] °र्हविषेवो{°व R^{ac}}ज्वलानलः R **6d** °चिन्वत] °चिन्तत R **7c** गां गो-पः] गाङ्गेय R **7d** °चिन्वत] °चिन्तत R **8c** तडागानि] तडागांश्च R **9a** ततो] त्रतो R^{pc}, ऽतो R^{ac} **9c** शङ्खं] शङ्ख° R **10a** असुरापि हि] असुराश्चापि R **10b** °संस्थिताः] °मास्थिताः R

6a दीप्तार्चिर्] A_3A_7, दीप्तार्चि A_4 **6b** °षेद्ध] A_3A_4, °षे(त्म) A_7 • इवानलः] विरोचनः A_3A_4 A_7^{ac}, विवाचलः A_7^{pc} **6d** °मन्वचिन्वत] °मनुचिन्तत A_3A_7, °मनुचिन्तत् A_4 (unmetrical) **7a** स बहिः सर्वतो ऽन्विष्य] सर्वतोत्क्षिप्य वेगेन **A** **7c** प्रणष्टामिव] प्रणष्टानि च **A** • गोपः] गौद्यः A_3, गौघः A_4A_7 **7d** °दन्वचिन्वत] °दनुचिन्तयत् **A** **8b** देवोद्यानान्य°] देवो{°व° A_4} द्वाराण्य° **A** **8c** आरामान्] अवसान् **A** **8d** ररास] ननाद **A** **9c** शङ्खं] $A_3A_7^{ac}$, शखं A_4, शङ्ख° A_7^{pc} **10a** असुरापि हि] असुरा अपि **A** **10b** °संस्थिताः] °मास्थिताः{°तः $A_4A_7^{ac}$} **A** **10c** अवेक्ष-न्त] अवेक्षत **A** **11b** नगमुत्तमम्] नगसत्तमं **A** **11d** रक्ष्यमाणं] रक्षमाणं **A** **12b** पर्वतोत्तमम्] स मृगोत्तमं{°मः A_7^{pc}} **A**

6(d^3–d^8) S_2 **7**(a^8, b^6) S_1, (a^1–a^3) S_2, (b^8) S_3 **8**(d^1–d^7)⟨d^8⟩ S_1 **9**(d^8) S_2 **10**⟨b^1–b^3⟩ S_2 **11**(d^6–d^8) S_1

6a दीप्तार्चिर्] $S_1^{pc}S_2RA_3A_7Bh$, दीपार्चिर् S_1^{ac}, दीप्तार्चि S_3 **6b** °षेद्ध] $S_2S_3A_3A_4Bh$, °षाक्त S_1 **6d** °चिन्वत] S_1Bh, (°चिन्वतः) S_2, °चिन्वतः S_3 **7b** उत्पाट्य] S_1S_2RABh, उत्पाट्या S_3 • महीरुहान्] S_1S_2RABh, महीरु(जा)न् S_3^{pc}, महीरुहं S_3^{ac} **7c** प्रणष्टामि°] S_2RBh, प्रनष्टा इ° S_1, प्रनष्टामि° S_3 • गां गोपः] $S_2^{pc}Bh$, गाङ्गोपाः S_1, गां गोप $S_2^{ac}S_3^{pc}$, गा गोप S_3^{ac} **7d** °द-न्वचिन्वत] $S_1S_2^{pc}Bh$, °दन्वचिन्वतः $S_2^{ac}S_3^{ac}$, °दंन्वचिंन्वतः S_3^{pc} **8a** तदो°] S_2S_3RABh, ततो° S_1 **8b** देवो°] $S_2S_3RA_3A_7$, दैत्यो° S_1Bh • °चूर्णयत्] $S_1S_2^{pc}RABh$, °चूर्ण्यम् S_2^{ac}, °चू-र्ण्यं S_3 **8c** आरामान्] S_2RBh, आरामः S_1, आरामं S_3 **9a** ततो] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}ABh$, भतो S_3^{ac} **9c** शङ्खं] $S_1^{pc}S_2A_3A_7^{ac}Bh$, शङ्ख° $S_1^{ac}S_3$ **9d** ननर्द] S_1S_2RABh, ननर्दा S_3 **10a** असुरापि हि] $S_1S_2S_3$, असुरा ह्यपि Bh (conj.) • भीताः] $S_1S_2^{pc}RABh$, भीता $S_2^{ac}S_3$ **10b** °संस्थिताः] S_1 S_2Bh, °सस्थिता+:+ S_3 **10c** अवेक्षन्त] S_1R, अवैक्षन्त S_2S_3Bh • मृगेन्द्रं तं] S_2RABh, मृगे नूनं S_1, मृगेन्द्रन्त S_3 **11a** देवस्त°] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3RABh$, देव त° S_2^{ac} • शङ्ख°] S_1S_3RABh, संख° S_2 **11b** नगमुत्तमम्] $S_1S_2^{pc}RBh$, नगसत्तमः $S_2^{ac}S_3$ **11c** पृथिवीं बद्धां] S_3RABh, पृथिवी बद्धा S_1 (anusvāras possibly lost), पृथिवीद्यद्धां S_2 **11d** रक्ष्यमाणां च] S_2RBh, रक्ष्यमाणञ्च S_1, रक्ष्यमाणा च S_3 **12b** शङ्खं तं] S_1RABh, सङ्खन्तं S_2, शङ्खन्त S_3 **12c** अवधीद्] S_1S_2RABh, अवधी S_3

ततो विद्राव्य नागेन्द्रान्प्रगृह्य पृथिवीं बलात्।
जगाम दैत्यान्संदृश्य रत्नान्यादाय सर्वशः॥ १३॥
स तां दंष्ट्राङ्कुरे लग्नां वहन्भाति मृगेश्वरः।
विषाणलग्नां लम्बन्तीं मृणालीं गजराडिव॥ १४॥
स तां सागरमध्येन वहन्भाति मृगेश्वरः।
वराहरूपी कालान्ते ब्रह्मेव वसुधां पुरा॥ १५॥
स सागरं तमुत्तीर्य भगवान्नन्दिवर्धनः।
स्वे स्थाने स्थापयामास महीं तां पुनरेव हि॥ १६॥
ततः शक्राय लोकांस्त्रीनदात्स मधुसूदनः।
उवाच राजा त्वं नो ऽद्य मित्रं चाहं तवानघ॥ १७॥
ये ऽन्ये ऽपि ते ऽरयः केचिद्भविष्यन्त्यसुरेश्वराः।
तेषामपि वधं घोरं करिष्यामि न संशयः॥ १८॥
ततस्तमृषयः सर्वे देवताश्च सवासवाः।
ऊचुः स्वां मूर्तिमास्थाय यथा पूर्वं तथा भव॥ १९॥

13c °न्संदृश्य] °न् संकृत्त्य R **13d** रत्नान्यादाय] वक्त्रेणादाय R^{pc}, वक्त्राण्यादाय R^{ac} **14d** मृणालीं] मृगाणां R **15c** °रूपी] °रूपः R **16a** तमुत्तीर्य] समुत्तीर्य R **17ab** ततः शक्राय लोकांस्त्रीनदात्स] स शक्राय ददौ लोकांस्त्रींस्तदा R **18ab**] अन्ये ऽपि ते ऽरयो यत्र भविष्यन्ति सुरेश्वर R **19b** °श्च] R^{ac}, °श्चैव R^{pc} (unmetrical) **19c** ऊचुः स्वां मूर्ति°] ऊचुस्तां वृत्ति° R

13a विद्राव्य नागेन्द्रान्] विद्रावनागेंद्र{°गेन्द्रान् A_7} **A** **13c** °न्संदृश्य] °न्संहृत्य **A** **14ab** लग्नां वहन्भाति] कृत्वा मेदिनीं तां **A** **14c** °लग्नां लम्बन्तीं] °लग्न{°ग्ना° A_7^{pc}}कमुन्वन्तीं **A** (unmetrical) **14d** मृणालीं] मृगाणां **A** **15b** वहन्भाति] A_7^{pc}, वहंताति A_3, वहताति A_4, वह(न्ना)ति A_7^{ac} **16a** सागरं तमु°] सागरान्तमु° **A** **16b** भगवान्] A_3A_7, भगवा A_4 **16c** स्वे] A_3A_7, स्व° A_4 **17ab** °स्त्रीनदात्] A_7, °स्त्रीं नादात् A_3A_4 **17c** उवाच] सुरेश **A** • त्वं नो ऽद्य] A_7, त्वान्नाद्य A_3A_4 **17d** मित्रं] A_3A_7, मित्रं A_4 **18a** ऽन्ये ऽपि ते] पि ते प्य°{प° A_3} **A** **18b** °सुरेश्वराः] A_3A_7, °सुरेश्वराः A_4 **19d** भव] A_4, भवः A_3, भव+त्+ A_7

13(a^5) S_1 **15**(d^7) S_1 **17**(b^1–b^2) S_1

13ab नागेन्द्रान्] S_1RA_7Bh, नागेन्द्राम् S_2S_3 **13c** °न्संदृश्य] S_1S_2, °न्सदृश्य S_3, °न् संधृष्य Bh (conj.) **13d** रत्नान्या°] $S_2S_3^{pc}$**A**, रत्नाभ्या° S_1, रनान्या° S_3^{ac}, रत्नान्य° Bh (typo) **14a** तां दंष्ट्राङ्कुरे] **RA**Bh, तान्दंष्ट्रान्तरे S_1, तान्दंष्ट्राङ्कुरा° S_2, तां द्रष्टांकुरा° S_3 **14ab** लग्नां वहन्] S_2RBh, लग्नो बहद् S_1, लग्नां वहद् S_3 **14c** लम्बन्तीं] S_1S_3RBh, लम्बन्ती S_2 **14d** मृणालीं] S_1S_3Bh, मृंणालीङ् S_2 **15b** वहन्भा°] $S_2RA_7^{pc}$Bh, वहङ्गा° S_1, वह भा° S_3 **15d** ब्रह्मेव] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, ब्रह्मे थ S_3 **16b** भगवान्] $S_1S_2RA_3A_7$Bh, भगवा S_3 **16c** स्वे] $S_1S_2S_3RA_3A_7$, स्व° Bh (em.?) **17ab** °स्त्रीनदात्] $S_1S_2^{ac}S_3A_7$Bh, °स्त्रीन्नदात् S_2^{pc} **17c** राजा] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, राज S_3 **17d** मित्रं चा°] $S_1RA_3A_7$Bh, मित्रश्चा° S_2S_3 • °वानघ] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**RA**Bh, °वानघः S_1^{ac} **18a** ये] S_2S_3**A**Bh, य S_1 **18b** °न्त्यसुरेश्वराः] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}S_3A_3A_7$Bh, °न्त्यसुरेश्वसुरेश्वराः S_1^{ac} (unmetrical), °न्ति सुरेश्वराः S_2^{ac} **19c** मूर्ति°] S_1S_2**A**Bh, मूत्ति° S_3

वराह उवाच।
इयं मूर्तिर्मया देवाः प्राप्ता परमवर्चसः।
न चानया रतिः काचित्प्राप्ता मे सदृशी भुवि॥ २०॥
सो ऽहं कंचिद्विहृत्येह कालं मूर्त्यानया सुखम्।
भविष्यामि पुनर्देवः सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि वः॥ २१॥
सनत्कुमार उवाच।
तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा सर्वे देवाः सवासवाः।
प्रदक्षिणमुपावृत्य जग्मुः स्थानानि सर्वशः॥ २२॥
गतेषु देवसंघेषु भगवान्नन्दिवर्धनः।
विजहार सुखं तत्र हत्वा दानवपुंगवम्॥ २३॥
तस्य तत्रोपतिष्ठन्त मृग्यो भूत्वा सहस्रशः।
वैदिक्यो ऽप्सरसः शुभ्रास्ताभिः सह रराम सः॥ २४॥
स ताभिर्विचरन्देवो महात्मा नन्दिवर्धनः।
रेमे मत्तो महानागो यथारण्ये करेणुभिः॥ २५॥

20a इयं मूर्तिर्] इमां मूर्त्तिं R **20b** प्राप्ता] प्राप्ताः R **21a** कंचिद्विहृत्येह] किञ्चिद्विकृत्याहं R **23a** °संघेषु] °संहेषु R **23d** °पुंगवम्] °सत्तमम् R **24ab** °तिष्ठन्त मृग्यो] °विष्टन्तम्वशा R **24cd**] देविक्यो ऽप्सरसो रम्याः स्त्रीभिः सह रराम ह R

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20 वराह उवाच] om. **A** **20a** इयं] इमां $A_3A_4A_7^{ac}$, इयां A_7^{pc} • मूर्तिर्] A_7, मूर्त्तिं A_3, मूर्त्ति A_4 **20b** प्राप्ता] A_3^{ac}, प्राप्ताः $A_3^{pc}A_4A_7$ **20c** चानया रतिः काचित्] चालयावतिसरित् **A** **20d** सदृशी] सदृशं **A** **21ab**] सो हं क्वचिद्वितत्येह को न मृत्योवया सुखं **A**± **21c** पुनर्] A_4A_7, पुन A_3 (unmetrical) **22b** देवाः] A_3A_7, देवा A_4 **23c–25b**] om. A_7^{ac}, A_7^{pc} written i.m. **24ab** °तिष्ठन्त मृग्यो] °तिष्ठन्ति मृगा{°गो A_7^{pc}} **A** **24d** सः] $A_4A_7^{pc}$, ह A_3 **25a** °र्विचरन्] °र्विहरन् **A** **25b** महात्मा नन्दि°] महानन्दिवि° **A** • After this A_7^{pc} adds श्रीरामः

20(b^2) S_1, (a^2) S_2 **23**(c^6–c^8)⟨d^1⟩(d^2–d^3) S_1 **24**(a^3, c^4) S_1 **25**⟨d^3⟩(d^4) S_2

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20 वराह उवाच] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RBh, om. S_1^{ac} **20a** इयं] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}$Bh, इमे $S_1^{ac}S_2^{ac}S_3$ • मूर्तिर्] S_1A_7 Bh, मूर्त्तिं S_2S_3 • देवाः] $S_1S_2^{pc}$**RA**Bh, देवा $S_2^{ac}S_3$ **20b** प्राप्ता] $S_2S_3A_3^{ac}$Bh, प्रा(प्ता)ः S_1 • °वर्चसः] $S_1S_2S_3$**RA**, °वर्च्चसा Bh (em.) **20c** रतिः] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RBh, रति S_1^{ac} (unmetrical) **20d** °त्प्राप्ता] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**RA**Bh, °त्प्राप्त S_1^{ac} • सदृशी] S_2S_3RBh, सदृशा S_1 **21a** कंचिद्] S_2S_3Bh, किञ्चिद् S_1 **21b** कालं मूर्त्या°] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$RBh, काल मूत्या° S_3^{ac} **21c** पुनर्देवः] $S_1RA_4A_7$Bh, पुनर्द्देवा+:+ S_2, पुन देवः S_3^{pc} (unmetrical), पुन देवा S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) **22b** देवाः] $S_2S_3RA_3A_7$Bh, देवा S_1 **23b** भगवान्] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, भगवा S_3 **24a** तत्रो°] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**RA**Bh, ऽत्रो° S_1^{ac} • °तिष्ठन्त] $S_1^{ac}S_2^{ac}S_3$Bh, °तिष्ठन्तः S_1^{pc}, °तिष्ठन्तो S_2^{pc} **24cd** शुभ्रास्ताभिः] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$**A** Bh, शुभास्ताभि S_3^{ac} **24d** सः] $S_1A_4A_7^{pc}$Bh, च S_2S_3 **25a** ताभिर्वि°] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, ताभि वि° S_3

स सिंह इव सिंहीभिः शार्दूल इव चोन्नदन्।
रराम सागरानूपे ऐरावत इवापरः॥ २६॥
रममाणस्य सिद्धाश्च ऋषयश्च तपोधनाः।
पुष्पाणां रुचिरा वृष्टीः पातयन्ति वियत्स्थिताः॥ २७॥
तुष्टुवुश्चापरे नित्यं चक्रुश्चैनं प्रदक्षिणम्।
देवदुन्दुभयो नित्यं सर्व एव न्यवादयन्॥ २८॥
नृत्यन्त्यप्सरसश्चापि वराहस्याग्रतस्तदा।
वादयन्ति च गन्धर्वा गायन्ति च महात्मनः॥ २९॥
रमयन्तो वराहं तं देवाश्चेन्द्रपुरोगमाः।
यक्षाः पुण्यजना ये च तथा देवजनाश्च ये॥ ३०॥
यातुधानाश्च ये केचिद्ब्रह्मधानाश्च सर्वशः।
मनुष्याः पशवश्चैव ऋषयश्चैव सर्वशः॥ ३१॥

26b चोन्नदन्] चोद्वहन् R **26c** सागरानूपे] सागराम्भःस्थ R **27a** रममाणस्य] रममाणाश्च R **27c** पुष्पाणां रुचिरा वृष्टीः] ऋष्याणां रुचिरां वृष्टिं R **28a** °श्चापरे] °श्चाप्सरो R **28b** °श्चैनं] °श्चैव R **28d** एव न्यवादयन्] एवाभ्यनादयन् R **29b** °स्याग्रतस्त°] °स्यायतस्त° R **29c** च] om. R (unmetrical) **30a** रमयन्तो] शमयन्तो R **30d** देव°] पुण्य° R **31a** केचिद्] केचि R **31b** सर्वशः] चापरे R

26b चोन्नदन्] A_4A_7, चोन्नदम् A_3 **26c–28d**] om. **A** **29a** नृत्यन्त्य°] A_7^{pc}, नृत्यंश्चा°{°चा° A_4} $A_3A_4A_7^{ac}$ • °श्चापि] °स्तत्र **A** **30a** रमयन्तो] नमयन्तो A_3A_4, नामयन्तो A_7 **30d** °जनाश्च] °गणाश्च **A** **31a** यातु°] A_4, जातु° A_3, (जा)तु° A_7 **31b** °द्ब्रह्म°] °त् ब्रह्मा° **A**

26(d^3, d^7–d^8) S_1, (b^7) S_3 **27**(b^4, d^4) S_1, (c^2, d^5–d^7) S_2 **28**(a^4)⟨a^6⟩(a^7–a^8)⟨b^1⟩(c^4) S_1 **29**(c^4, c^8) S_1 **30**(a^4–a^6, c^1, d^3–d^4, d^8) S_2 **31**(d^1)⟨d^2⟩(d^3) S_1^{pc}, (c^7, d^2–d^3) S_2

26a सिंह] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, सिंहा S_3 • सिंहीभिः] $S_1^{pc}S_2$**RA**Bh, सिंहाभि S_1^{ac}, सिंहीभि S_3 **26b** चोन्नदन्] $S_1^{pc}S_2A_4A_7$, चोन्नदम् S_1^{ac}, चोनदन् S_3^{pc}, चोदन S_3^{ac}, चोन्नदनन् Bh (typo, unmetrical) **26c** रराम] S_2S_3RBh, ररांम S_1 **26cd** सागरानूपे] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$Bh, साग–रूपे S_1^{ac} **27a** रममाणस्य] S_2S_3Bh, रममाणश्च S_1 • सिद्धाश्च] $S_2S_3^{pc}$RBh, सिद्धश्च $S_1S_3^{ac}$ **27c** वृष्टीः] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}$Bh, वृष्टी $S_1^{ac}S_2^{ac}S_3$ **27d** वियत्स्थिताः] S_2^{pc}RBh, वियस्थिताः S_1, (वियत्स्थि)ता S_2^{ac}, वियस्थिता S_3 **28a** तुष्टुवुश्चा°] S_1S_2R, तुष्टुवु चा° S_3, तष्टुवुश्चा° Bh (typo) **28b** °श्चैनं] S_2S_3Bh, °श्चैन S_1^{pc} (tops lost), °श्चैव S_1^{ac} (tops lost) **28d** सर्व] S_2S_3RBh, सव S_1 • एव न्यवादयन्] em., एव न्यवादयत् S_1, एवानुवादयन् S_2S_3, एवान्ववादयन् Bh (em.?) **29a** नृत्यन्त्य°] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3RA_7^{pc}$Bh, नित्यन्त्य° S_1^{ac} • °सश्चापि] S_1R, °सश्चास्य S_2^{pc}Bh, °साश्चास्य $S_2^{ac}S_3$ **29b** °स्याग्रतस्तदा] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**A**Bh, °स्याग्रस्तदा S_1^{ac} (unmetrical) **29c** वादयन्ति च] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}S_3$**A**Bh, वादय(न्ति) S_1^{ac} (unmetrical), वदयन्ति च S_2^{ac} **30a** रमयन्तो] S_3Bh (em.), रामयन्तो S_1, रंमय(न्तो) S_2 **30c** यक्षाः] S_2**RA**Bh, यक्षा S_1, यक्षः S_3 • °जना] $S_1S_2S_3$**RA**, °जनना Bh (typo, unmetrical) **31b** °धानाश्च] S_2S_3**RA**Bh, °दानाश्च S_1 **31cd**] om. S_1^{ac}, S_1^{pc} written i.m. **31c** मनुष्याः] **RA**Bh, मनुष्या $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$ • °श्चैव] S_2S_3**RA**Bh, °श्चेव S_1^{pc}

राजन्याः क्षत्रियाः सर्वे निकायाश्चैव सर्वशः।
तत्राजग्मुर्निरीक्षन्तो वराहस्योत्सवं शुभम्।
बह्वाश्चर्यसमाकीर्णं बह्वालक्ष्यं सदैव च॥ ३२॥
एवं तस्याभवद्व्यास वराहस्य महात्मनः।
उत्सवः सुमहान्दिव्यः प्रत्यहं नन्दिवर्धनः॥ ३३॥
तस्योत्सवो ऽसौ ऋषिसंघजुष्टः सदा सुरैः सिद्धजनैश्च जुष्टः।
गन्धर्वयक्षोरगराक्षसैश्च विद्याधरैश्चैव सहाप्सरोभिः॥ ३४॥

इति स्कन्दपुराणे ऽष्टोत्तरशतो ऽध्यायः॥ १०८॥

32ab] om. R **32cd**] तत्रा⟨गत्य⟩ निरीक्षन्ते देवाराधनमुत्तमम् R (unmetrical) **32f** बह्वालक्ष्यं] बहुलक्षं R **33a** एवं] एतत् R **33d** नन्दिवर्धनः] कालरूपिणः R **34a** ऋषिसंघ॰] ऋषिसंह॰ R **34d** ॰श्चैव सहा॰] ॰श्चापि सदा॰ R **Col.** इति स्कन्दपुराणे रेवाखण्डे ऽध्यायः R

32b निकायाश्चै॰] नियाकाश्चै॰ **A** **32c** ॰जग्मुर्] A_3A_7, ॰जग्मु A_4 **32ef**] वद्धाचार्यसमाकीर्ण{॰र्णं A_4} वद्धालक्ष{॰क्ष्यं A_7} सदैव च **A** **33c** सु॰] A_4, स A_3A_7 • ॰न्दिव्यः] ॰न्देवाः **A** **34a** ऽसौ ऋषि॰] सावृषि॰ **A** **34b** सदा सुरैः] सुरासुरैः **A** • सिद्ध॰] $A_3A_4^{ac}$, सिद्धि॰ A_4^{pc} A_7 **34c** गन्धर्वयक्षोरग॰] गन्धर्वो{॰र्वा A_3}रग॰ **A** (unmetrical) **34d** सहा॰] A_3, महा॰ A_4A_7 **Col.** इति{इति श्री॰ A_4A_7} स्कन्दपुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायामम्बिकाखण्डे वराहोत्सवो नाम सप्तोत्तरशतं **A**±

32$(f^1–f^2)\langle f^3\rangle$ S_1, $\langle d^3\rangle(d^4)$ S_3 **34**(d^{12}) S_1, (d^{11}) S_3

32a राजन्याः] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$**A**Bh, राजन्या S_3^{ac} • क्षत्रियाः] $S_1S_2^{pc}$**A**Bh, क्षत्रिया $S_2^{ac}S_3$ **32c** तत्राजग्मुर्] $S_1S_2A_3A_7$Bh, तत्र जग्मु S_3 • ॰रीक्षन्तो] S_1S_3**A**Bh, ॰रीक्ष्यन्तो S_2 **32d** ॰स्योत्सवं शुभम्] **A**Bh, ॰स्योत्तमं शुभम् S_1, ॰स्योत्सवश्शुभं S_2^{pc}, ॰स्योत्सवश्शुभः S_2^{ac}, (॰स्यो)त्सव शुभः S_3 **32e** ॰समाकीर्णं] S_2RA_4Bh, ॰समाकीर्ण्ण॰ S_1 (anusvāra possibly lost), ॰समाकीर्ण्ण॰ S_3^{pc}, ॰समाकीर्ण॰ S_3^{ac} **33a** ॰स्याभवद्व्या॰] S_1S_3R**A**Bh, ॰स्याद्भवद्व्या॰ S_2 **33c** उत्सवः] S_1S_2R**A**Bh, उत्सव S_3 • ॰महान्दिव्यः] $S_1S_2^{pc}$RBh, ॰महान्दिव्य S_2^{ac}, ॰महादिव्यं S_3 **34a** तस्योत्सवो] $S_1S_2S_3$R**A**, तस्योत्सोवो Bh (typo, unmetrical) • ऽसौ] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RBh, om. S_1^{ac} (unmetrical) • ॰जुष्टः] $S_1^{pc}S_2$R**A**Bh, ॰जुष्ट $S_1^{ac}S_3$ (unmetrical) **34b**] S_1^{pc}RBh (जुष्टम् corrected to जुष्टः in S_1^{pc}), गन्धर्वयक्षोरगराक्षसैश्च S_1^{ac} (cf. 34c), सदा सुरै सिद्धजनैश्च जुष्टो{युष्ट S_2^{ac}} S_2, सदा सुरै सिद्धजनैश्च जुष्ट S_3 **34c** ॰राक्षसैश्च] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$R**A**Bh, ॰राक्षसाश्च S_1^{ac} **34d** ॰धरैश्चै॰] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3$**A**Bh, ॰धराश्चै॰ S_2^{ac} • सहाप्सरोभिः] $S_2S_3A_3$Bh, सहाप्सरोभि(रि)ति S_1 (इति part of col.) **Col.** ⊙॥ स्कन्दपुराणे वराहोत्सवे आध्याय १६ ≍ (in letter numerals) ⋯ S_1, स्कन्दपुराणे +नन्दिवराहा(ह्वेती) नाम+ अष्टोत्तरशतो ध्यायः॥ S_2, ⊙॥ स्कन्दपुराणे नामाध्यायः ११० (in letter numerals)॥ ⊙ S_3, इति स्कन्दपुराणे वराहोत्सवे अष्टोत्तरशतो ध्यायः Bh

नवोत्तरशतो ऽध्यायः।

सनत्कुमार उवाच।
तस्य कालेन महता रमतः शक्तिनन्दन।
भार्यायां चित्रलेखायां वृको नामाभवत्सुतः॥ १॥
स वृको बलवान्नित्यं विचरन्पृथिवीमिमाम्।
नर्दमानो ऽवधील्लोके भूतानि शतशो महान्॥ २॥
अथाससाद शैलेन्द्रं हिमवन्तं महागिरिम्।
गौरीकूटसमीपे च कार्त्तिकेयालयं शुभम्॥ ३॥
तमजानंस्तदाभ्येत्य बलेनाविनयेन च।
नादयानो द्रुमाञ्छुभ्रान्रत्नहेमविभूषितान्।
सर्वर्तुपुष्पफलदान्सर्वकामप्रदानपि॥ ४॥

2a वृको] एको R **3d** °यालयं] °यवनं R^{pc}, °यनवं R^{ac} **4b** च] ह R **4c** नादयानो] भञ्जयानो R **4cd** °ञ्छुभ्रान्रत्न°] °न्भग्नान्वने R

1b रमतः] रमता **A** • शक्ति°] शक्र° **A** **2d** शतशो महान्] तत्रसुस्तदा **A** • After this **A** adds 2 pādas reading तेन शब्देन लोकेशाः कल्पिताः शतशो भवन्। ± **3c** गौरी°] गिरि° **A** **4a** तमजानंस्त°] अवजानंस्तस्त° A_3 (unmetrical), अवजालंस्त° A_4, अवजानंस्त° A_7 **4c** नादयानो द्रुमाञ्छु°] नादयान् गन्धमान् शु° A_3, नादयेनां धमान् शु° A_4, नादयाना क्रमान् शु° A_7 **4d** °न्रत्नहेम°] °न्हेमरत्न° **A**

Manuscripts available for this chapter: S_1 photos 4.9a (f. 166^v), 4.10a (f. 167^r), 4.9b (f. 167^v) and 4.10b (f. 168^r); S_2 exposures 116b–117b (f. 151^r–152^r); S_3 f. 166^v–168^r; R f. 182^r–183^v; A_3 f. 109^r–110^r; A_4 f. 153^v–155^r; A_7 f. 154^v–156^r.
4(e^5) S_1

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1 सनत्कुमार उवाच] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RABh (सन उ in $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$), om. S_1^{ac} **1b** शक्ति°] S_1S_2RBh, शक्कि° S_3 • °नन्दन] RABh, °नन्दनः $S_1S_2S_3$ **1c** भार्यायां] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RABh, भार्य(यः) S_1^{ac} • चित्र°] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RABh, ि– त्र° S_1^{ac} **1d** °माभवत्सुतः] $S_2^{pc}S_3^{pc}$RABh, °मभवत्सुतः $S_2^{ac}S_3^{ac}$, °माभवं शु⟨भः⟩+तः+ S_1 **2a** बलवान्] S_1S_2RABh, बलवा S_3 **2c** ऽवधील्लोके] $S_1^{pc}S_2$RABh, वधी लोके $S_1^{ac}S_3$ **2d** भूतानि] S_2S_3RABh, भूत्वाभि° S_1 **3b** हिमवन्तं] S_1S_2RABh, हिमवन्त S_3 • °गिरिम्] S_2S_3RABh, गिरिन् S_1 **3d** कार्त्तिकेयालयं] $S_2^{pc}S_3$ABh, कार्त्तिकेयाल S_1 (unmetrical, insertion mark after ल; akṣara i.m. possibly lost), कार्त्तिक(स्या)लयं S_2^{ac} **4a** °मजानंस्त°] $S_1S_2^{pc}$RBh, °मजानांस्त° S_2^{ac}, °मजानस्त° S_3 • °दाभ्येत्य] S_2S_3RABh, °दाभेत्य S_1 **4b** °नाविनयेन] S_2S_3RABh, °नाविजयेन S_1 **4c** नादयानो] $S_1^{ac}S_2S_3$Bh, नोदयानो S_1^{pc} **4cd** द्रुमाञ्छुभ्रान्रत्न°] S_1Bh, द्रुमान्छुभ्रान्र{°त्र° S_2^{pc}}त्न S_2, द्रुमाच्छुभ्रा रत्न° S_3 **4d** °भूषितान्] RABh, °भूषिताम् $S_1S_2S_3$ **4e** °पुष्पफलदान्] S_2RABh, °क(फ)लां पुष्पां S_1, °पुष्पफलदा S_3

शिलामणिमयाञ्छुभ्राञ्छातकुम्भमयाञ्छुभान्।
हरितालमयांश्चान्यांस्तथा मानःशिलाचलान्।
उत्पाट्योत्पाट्य वेगेन बभञ्ज रुषितो यथा॥ ५॥
स गर्जमानः सततं गजो मत्त इवापरः।
बभञ्ज तद्वनं शुभ्रं कार्त्तिकेयस्य धीमतः॥ ६॥
तस्य गर्जितशब्देन वनभङ्गस्वनेन च।
स्कन्दस्य गणपः शूरो निर्जगाम निशामयन्॥ ७॥
कोकवक्त्र इति ख्यातो दृढं स्कन्दस्य वल्लभः।
महात्मा बलसंपन्नो गत्वा वृकमवैक्षत॥ ८॥
स तं दृष्ट्वा महाकायं तरुणं प्रियदर्शनम्।
जीमूतमिव नर्दन्तं किंचित्प्रकुपिताननम्।
उवाच वचनं हृष्टः कोकवक्त्रो हसन्निव॥ ९॥

5d मानःशिलाचलान्] मणिमयाञ्छुभान् R **6b** गजो मत्त] गजोत्तम R **7c** गणपः] तु गणः R **7d** निशामयन्] महावनम् R **8a** कोक॰] काक॰ R **9e** हृष्टः] वीरः R **9f** कोक॰] काक॰ R

5a ॰मणि॰] ॰मान॰ A_3A_4, मनि॰ A_7 **5ab** ॰ञ्छात॰] A_3A_4, ॰न् सात॰ A_7 **5d** मानःशिलाचलान्] मनःशिलामयान् **A** **6a** गर्जमानः] सज्ज{॰र्ज्ज॰ A_7}मानः **A** **6b** गजो मत्त] A_4A_7, गजमत्त A_3 **6c** तद्वनं] A_3A_7, तद्वलं A_4 **7b** वन॰] वचन॰ A_3 (unmetrical), बल॰ A_4A_7 **8a** कोकवक्त्र] काकवल्क A_3A_4, काकेव(ल्क) A_7^{pc}, काकेव(क्त्र) A_7^{ac} **8b** वल्लभः] A_3A_7, ववल्लभः A_4 (unmetrical) **8d** वृक॰] मृग॰ **A** **9a** तं दृष्ट्वा] दृष्ट्वा तं **A** **9d** ॰ताननम्] ॰तानन॰ **A** **9e** वचनं] A_3A_7, वनं A_4 (unmetrical) **9f** कोकवक्त्रो] काकवल्को A_3A_4, काकव(ल्को) A_7^{pc}, काकव(क्त्रो) A_7^{ac}

6(a^1–a^3) S_1 **8**(c^6, d^7–d^8) S_1 **9**(c^4, e^7–e^8) S_1

5ab ॰मयाञ्छुभ्राञ्छात॰] RA_3A_4, ॰मया शुभ्राः शात॰ S_1, ॰मया शुभ्रा सात S_2S_3, ॰मयाः शुभ्राः शात॰ Bh (em.?) **5b** ॰मयाञ्छुभान्] **RA**, ॰मयास्तथा S_1Bh, ॰मया शुभा S_2S_3 **5cd** ॰मयांश्चान्यांस्त॰] S_1**RA**, मयाश्चान्यास्त॰ S_2Bh, मयाश्चान्या त॰ S_3 **5d** मानः॰] S_2S_3Bh, मानं॰ S_1 • ॰शिलाचलान्] em., ॰शिलाबलान् S_1, ॰शिलाचला S_2, ॰शिलातला S_3, ॰शिलोपालान् Bh (typo, em.?) **5e** ॰त्योत्पाट्य] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**RA**Bh, ॰त्योत्प S_1^{ac} (unmetrical) **5f** बभञ्ज] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3$**RA**Bh, ब⟨ञ्ज⟩+भ+ञ्ज S_2 • रुषितो] S_2S_3**RA**, रूषितो S_1Bh **6b** गजो मत्त] $S_3^{pc}A_4A_7$Bh (em.), गजोत्तम S_1, गजोन्मत्त S_2, गजोत्तमत्त S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) **6c** तद्वनं] $S_1RA_3A_7$Bh, सौ द्वं ततः S_2^{pc} (unmetrical), द्वं ˘नं S_2^{ac}, द्वनं S_3 (unmetrical) • शुभ्रं] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, शुभ्र S_3 **6d** कार्त्तिकेयस्य] $S_1S_2S_3$**RA**, कार्तिकेस्य Bh (typo, unmetrical) **7a** तस्य] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3$**RA**Bh, तस्या S_2^{ac} **7b** च] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, व S_3 **7c** गणपः] S_2S_3**A**Bh, स गणः S_1 **7d** निशामयन्] S_1**A**, स मन्दिरं $S_2S_3^{ac}$, स मन्दिरात् S_3^{pc}Bh (em.) **8a** ख्यातो] $S_1S_2S_3$**RA**, ख्यतो Bh (typo, unmetrical) **8b** दृढं] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, दृढ S_3 • वल्लभः] $S_2S_3^{pc}RA_3A_7$Bh, बल्लभः S_1, वलभः S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) **8c** ॰संपन्नो] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, ॰संपनो S_3 (unmetrical) **9c** जीमूतमिव] S_2**RA**Bh, जामूत(मे)व S_1^{pc} (tops lost), जामूत(मि)व S_1^{ac} (tops lost), जीमूत्तमिव S_3 • नर्दन्तं] S_2^{pc}**RA**Bh, नर्द्दन्त S_1 (tops lost), नर्द्दन्तो) S_2^{ac}, नर्द्दन्तो S_3 **9d** ॰ताननम्] S_1RBh, ॰तानन॰ S_2S_3 **9e** वचनं हृष्टः] $S_1A_3A_7$Bh, वचनन्दृष्ट S_2, वचन दृष्ट S_3

कस्य त्वमिह संप्राप्तो बालो देवगृहं शुभम्।
न जानीषे किमेतच्च स्कन्दस्य सुमहात्मनः॥ १०॥
वेश्म देवैः सगन्धर्वैः सयक्षोरगपन्नगैः।
कृतं दयितमत्यर्थं गणेशैश्चापि पूजितम्॥ ११॥
कुमारो मन्दरं यातः सर्वैः सह गणेश्वरैः।
रक्षार्थं मामिह स्थाप्य वारयामि ततो हि ते॥ १२॥
तुष्टो ऽस्मि तव रूपेण बलेन वपुषा तथा।
उपारमस्व तेन त्वां ब्रवीमि सुमहाबल।
अहं करिष्ये यज्ञग्नं तथैव पुनरेव हि॥ १३॥
वक्ष्ये देवं च तं सम्यत्क्कदर्थं सूकरेश्वर।
यथा न कुप्यते तुभ्यं प्रवरं त्वां करोति च॥ १४॥
सनत्कुमार उवाच।
तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा वृकः संरक्तलोचनः।
उवाच कोकवदनमिदं मृगपतिस्तदा॥ १५॥

10a कस्य त्व॰] वध्यत्व॰ R **10d** सु॰] तु R **11a** देवैः सगन्धर्वैः] सदेवैर्गन्धर्वैः R **12a** मन्दरं] मन्दिरं R **13e** यज्ञग्नं] यज्ञङ्गं R **14ab**] रक्षो देवं गुहं सम्यगुदखिद्यकरेश्वरम् R^{ac}, वक्ष्यं देवगृहं सम्यग्वदस्वाद्य मृगेश्वर R^{pc} (i.m.) **14d** प्रवरं त्वां करोति] प्रवरस्तत्करोतु R^{pc}, प्रवरं तत्करोति R^{ac} **15a**] Before this R adds 18a–d. **15c** कोक॰] काक॰ R **15d** ॰पति॰] ॰सुत॰ R

10c जानीषे] A_3, जानीमे A_4, जानीसे A_7 **11a** वेश्म] A_3A_4, वैश्म A_7 • सगन्धर्वैः] A_3A_7, सगंधर्वै A_4 **11c** दयितम॰] च दिवम॰ **A** **12b** सर्वैः सह गणेश्वरैः] ससर्वैर्गणपेश्वरैः **A** **12c** रक्षार्थं] A_3A_7, रक्षार्थ A_4 **13c** उपारमस्व] A_7, उमावमसु A_3A_4 **13d** ॰बल] ॰बलः **A** **14a** च तं] गुहं **A** **14ab** ॰त्क्कदर्थं] A_7, ॰क् तदर्थं A_3A_4 • सूकरे॰] शूकरे॰ A_3A_4, शुकरे॰ A_7 **14c** यथा] तथा **A** • कुप्यते] क्रुध्यते A_3A_7, कृध्यते A_4 **14d** प्रवरं त्वां] प्रसादस्ते **A** **15–17**] om. **A**

13⟨c^1⟩(c^2–c^4, c^8) S_2 **15**(d^8) S_2

10a त्वमिह] S_2S_3RABh, त्वयिह S_1 **10c** ॰मेतच्च] S_1S_2RA, ॰मेत च S_3 (unmetrical), ॰मेतत्त्वं Bh (conj.) **11a** वेश्म देवैः] A_3A_4Bh, वेश्म दैवै+:+ S_1, वेश्मन्दैवैस् S_2, वेश्मं देवै S_3 • ॰गन्धर्वैः] $S_1S_2A_3A_7$Bh, ॰गन्धर्वै S_3 **11b** ॰पन्नगैः] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$RA, ॰पनगैः S_3^{ac} (unmetrical), ॰किन्नरैः Bh (conj.) **11cd** ॰मत्यर्थं गणेशैश्चापि] S_1RA, ॰⟨मत्य⟩मत्यर्थङ्गणैश्चापि सु॰ S_2, ॰मत्यर्थं गणैश्चापि सु॰ S_3, ॰मत्यर्थं गणैश्चापि सु॰ Bh **12ab**] S_3 writes this over the two pādas cancelled, possibly 14cd. **12b** सर्वैः] S_1S_2RBh, सर्वै S_3^{pc} **12c** रक्षार्थं] $S_1S_2RA_3A_7$Bh, रक्षार्थ S_3 • स्थाप्य] S_2S_3RABh, प्रास्तो S_1 **12d** वारयामि] S_1RABh, वरयामि S_2S_3 • हि] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3$RABh, ह S_2^{ac} **13a** ऽस्मि] S_1RABh, स्मिन् S_2S_3 **13b** वपुषा] S_1RABh, पुरुषा S_2S_3 **13c** त्वां] S_2RABh, त्वा S_1S_3 **13d** ॰बल] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}$RBh, ॰बलः $S_1^{ac}S_2^{ac}S_3$ **13f** तथैव] S_1S_2RABh, तथेव S_3 **14ab** सम्यत्क्कदर्थं] S_2A_7Bh, संम्यक्तवार्थं S_1 (॰म्यक्तवा॰ retraced), सम्यङ्कदर्थं S_3^{pc}, सम्यत्क्कदर्थं S_3^{ac} • सूकरेश्वर] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}$, सूकरेश्वरः $S_1^{ac}S_2^{ac}S_3$, शूकरेश्वर Bh **14c** तुभ्यं] S_1S_2RABh, तुभ्य S_3 **14d** प्रवरं त्वां] S_3^{pc}, प्रवरं त्वा $S_1S_3^{ac}$, प्रवरन्तं S_2, प्रसादं ते Bh (em.) **15d** ॰स्तदा] S_3RBh (conj.?), ॰स्तथा S_1, ॰स्त(था) S_2

न बिभेमि कुमारस्य तव वा पापचेतसः।
बले मम कुमारो ऽसौ न तुल्यः सगणेश्वरः॥ १६॥
यद्वो बलं च दर्पं च तत्कुरुध्वमशङ्किताः।
नामावशेषमेतद्वः कर्ताहं वनमन्तशः॥ १७॥
सनत्कुमार उवाच।
ततः स वृक्षमुत्पाट्य हैमं वैडूर्यपल्लवम्।
कोकवक्त्राय चिक्षेप ननाद च यथा वृषः॥ १८॥
ततः प्रहस्य कोकास्यस्तमेवोद्गृह्य पादपम्।
वृकं तं तेन संक्रुद्धः शिरस्यभिजघान ह॥ १९॥
स तेन सुप्रहारेण भ्रमित्वा मण्डलं वृकः।
पपात भूमौ निःसंज्ञो यथा शक्रध्वजो महान्॥ २०॥
ततस्तं पतितं दृष्ट्वा कोकास्यः प्रहसंस्तदा।
बबन्ध पाशैर्बहुभिर्वेश्म चैव प्रवेशयत्॥ २१॥
तं बद्धं पतितं दृष्ट्वा सहायास्तस्य ते मृगाः।
प्रद्रुताः सहसा सर्वे भयार्ता जीवितैषिणः॥ २२॥

16b वा पाप॰] वाक्पाप॰ R **16c** बले मम] बलेन मे R **17a** यद्वो] यत्ते R **17b** तत्कुरुध्वमशङ्किताः] तत् कुरु त्वमशङ्कितः R **17c** नामावशेषमेतद्वः] न मे वेगसमं तद्वः R **17d** वनमन्तशः] बलवत्तरः R **18a–d**] R has this before 15a and repeats it here. **18a** ततः स वृक्षमु॰] R*, स तु वृक्षं समु॰ R **18b** हैमं वैडूर्य॰] हेमवैदूर्य्य॰ RR* **18c** कोक॰] काक॰ RR* **19a** कोकास्य॰] काकास्य॰ R **19b** ॰वोद्गृह्य] ॰वोद्धृत्य R **19c** तं] स R **20d** यथा] य यथा R (unmetrical) **21b** कोकास्यः] काकास्यः R **21d** चैव] तच्च R **22a** तं बद्धं पतितं] पतितं संयतं R

18b हैमं वैडूर्य॰] हेमवैदूर्य॰ A_3A_7, हेमवैडूर्य॰ A_4 **18c** कोकवक्त्राय] काकवल्काय A_3A_4, काकवक्त्राय A_7 **19ab** कोकास्यस्त॰] काकस्य त्व॰ A_3A_4, काकास्यस्त॰ A_7 **19b** ॰मेवोद्गृह्य] ॰मेव गृह्य **A** (unmetrical) • पादपम्] पावकः $A_3A_4A_7^{ac}$?, पा(ह्नव)ः A_7^{pc} **19c** वृकं तं तेन संक्रुद्धः] आचयं{क्ष A_4}तं तेन शूरः A_3A_4, आयान्तं शूकरः तेन A_7^{pc}, आयन्तं तेन च शूरः A_7^{ac} **20c** निःसंज्ञो] निःशंको A_3, निशंको A_4, निःसङ्गो A_7 **21b** कोकास्यः] काकस्य $A_3A_4A_7^{ac}$, काकास्यः A_7^{pc} • ॰संस्तदा] ॰सन्निव **A** **22b** ॰स्तस्य ते] A_3A_4, ॰स्तप्यते A_7

16(a^6–a^8) S_2 **18**(d^6) S_1 **19**(b^1) S_1 **22**(d^3) S_1

17a दर्पं च] $S_1S_2S_3R$, दर्पञ्च Bh (em.) **17d** ॰मन्तशः] $S_2^{ac}S_3$, ॰मुत्तमम् S_1^{pc}, ॰मुत्तमः $S_1^{ac}S_2^{pc}$, ॰मन्ततः Bh (conj.?) **18a** ततः] $S_1S_2R^*ABh$, तत S_3 (unmetrical) **18b** हैमं] S_2Bh, हेमं S_1S_3 • वैडूर्यपल्लवम्] $S_1S_2A_4$, वैडूर्यपलवं S_3 (unmetrical), वैदूर्यपल्लवम् Bh **18c** चिक्षेप] $S_2S_3RR^*ABh$, विक्षेप S_1 **18d** वृषः] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3RR^*ABh$, वृष S_1^{ac} **19ab** कोकास्यस्त॰] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3^{pc}Bh$, कोकास्य (त)॰ S_1^{ac}, कोकस्यस्त॰ S_3^{ac} **19c** संक्रुद्धः] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3RBh$, संक्रुद्ध S_1^{ac} **20b** वृकः] S_1RA, मृगः S_2S_3Bh **20c** निःसंज्ञो] S_1S_2RBh, निसज्ञो S_3 **20d** यथा] S_2S_3RABh, य वा S_1 **21a** पतितं] S_1S_2RABh, पतित S_3 (unmetrical) **21b** कोकास्यः] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}Bh$, कोकास्य $S_1^{ac}S_2^{ac}S_3$ • प्रहसंस्त॰] S_1S_2RBh, प्रहसस्त॰ S_3 **21cd** पाशैर्बहुभिर्वेश्म चै॰] $RABh$, पाशैर्बहुभिर्वेश्मश्चै॰ S_1, पाशैर्बहुभिर्वेश्मश्चै॰ S_2, पाशै बहुभि वेश्मं चै॰ S_3 **22a** तं बद्धं] S_1S_2ABh, तम्बद्ध S_3 **22c** प्रद्रुताः] $S_1^{pc}RA$, प्रद्रुता $S_1^{ac}S_2S_3Bh$ (typo?) **22d** भयार्ता] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3RABh$, भया(ती) S_1^{ac}

अथागात्तेन कालेन गणपैर्बहुभिर्वृतः।
कार्त्तिकेयो मयूरेण कूजमानेन सानुगः॥ २३॥
तस्य तत्कथयामास कोकवक्त्रो गणेश्वरः।
वृकं च दर्शयामास पाशैर्बद्धं महाबलम्॥ २४॥
कोकवक्त्र उवाच।
भगवन्वराहरूपस्य सुतः श्रीमान्वृकः किल।
हिरण्याक्षो हतो येन दानवो देवकण्टकः॥ २५॥
बभञ्जायं सुदुष्टात्मा सहितो ऽन्यैर्वनं तव।
ततः पाशैर्मया बद्धः क्रियतामस्य यत्परम्॥ २६॥
स्कन्द उवाच।
नायं शक्यो मयाद्येह मोक्तुं मृगकुलाधमः।
मुक्ते वक्तव्यता लोके भविष्यति न संशयः॥ २७॥
देवो मां वक्ष्यते व्यक्तं स्कन्दो भीतो न संशयः।
यो मुमोच सुतं तस्य वराहस्य कृतागसम्॥ २८॥

23a अथागात्तेन] तथागात्तत्र R **23d** कूजमानेन सानुगः] कूजता पितृमन्दिरात् R **24b** कोक°] काक° R **25** कोकवक्त्र] ककास्य R **25a** °वन्वराह°] °वन् काम° R **26a** बभञ्जायं सु°] बभञ्ज एष R **27a** °याद्येह] °या ह्येव R **27b** °कुलाधमः] °कुलाधमम् R **28a** व्यक्तं] नित्यं R **28c** यो] यन् R **28d** कृतागसम्] कृताशनम् R

24b कोकवक्त्रो] काकवल्को A_3A_4, काकवक्त्रो A_7 **24d** °बलम्] °बलः **A** **25** कोकवक्त्र उवाच] काकवल्क{°क्त्र A_7} उवाच A_3A_7, काकवल्कौवाच A_4 **25a** भगवन्] A_3A_4 (hypermetrical), भवन् A_7 **25b** सुतः] तस्य **A** • किल] सुतः **A** **25d** दानवो] दैत्यपो A_3A_7, दैत्ययो A_4 **26a** सु°] स **A** **26b** °वंनं] A_3, °र्बलं A_4A_7 **26c** बद्धः] A_3A_7, बद्ध A_4 **26d** यत्परम्] A_3A_4, तत्परं A_7 **27a** °याद्येह] °या त्वेह **A** **27b** मृग°] स्यात्तु **A** **27c** मुक्ते वक्तव्यता] मुक्तेन{°व A_4} तु व्यथा A_3A_4, मुक्ते वक्तव्य⟨त⟩था A_7 **28a** देवो मां] देवानां $A_3A_7^{ac}$, देवा मां $A_4A_7^{pc}$ • वक्ष्यते व्यक्तं] व{र° A_4}क्षते नूनं **A** **28c** यो] यत् **A** • सुतं] A_7, युतं A_3A_4 **28d** कृतागसम्] A_7?, कृतागमं A_3A_4

24(d^2–d^3) S_1 **27**(b^8) S_1

23a कालेन] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**RA**Bh, कालैन S_1^{ac} **23b** गणपैर्] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, गणेपै S_3 **24d** पाशैर्] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, पाशै S_3 **25a** भगवन्] $S_1S_3RA_3A_4$Bh (hypermetrical except R), भगवान् S_2 (hypermetrical) **25b** सुतः] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RBh, सुत S_1^{ac} • किल] S_2S_3RBh, किलः S_1 **25d** °कण्टकः] S_2S_3**RA**Bh, °कण्टः S_1 (unmetrical) **26a** बभञ्जायं] $S_1^{pc}S_2$**A**Bh, बभञ्जयं S_1^{ac}, बभंजयं S_3 • °दुष्टात्मा] S_2S_3**RA**Bh, °दृष्टात्मा S_1 **26b** ऽन्यैर्वनं तव] $S_2^{pc}S_3RA_3$Bh, न्दैर्वनन्तव S_1, न्यैर्वनन्ततः S_2^{ac} **26c** पाशैर्] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, पाशै S_3 • बद्धः] $S_1S_2^{pc}RA_3A_7$Bh, बद्ध S_2^{ac} S_3 **26d** °तामस्य] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**RA**Bh, °तां मस्य S_1^{ac} **27c** वक्तव्यता] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$RBh, वक्तव्यतां S_3^{ac} **27d** संशयः] $S_1S_2S_3$**RA**, संशय Bh (typo) **28a** मां] $S_2S_3RA_4A_7^{pc}$Bh, मा S_1 • वक्ष्यते] S_2S_3RBh, लक्ष्यते S_1 **28d** कृतागसम्] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3A_7$?Bh, कृतागमम् S_1^{ac}

उक्तो गतश्चाहमद्य स्थाणुना परमात्मना।
मा क्षमेथा वराहस्य तनुं त्वां सो ऽह्वयेद्युधि॥ २९॥
इयं च मम तेनाद्य शक्तिर्दत्तातिभास्वरा।
संवर्तिकेति विख्याता सर्वास्त्रबलनाशनी॥ ३०॥
सो ऽयं दुरात्मा दुर्वृत्तः सर्वलोकप्रबाधकः।
गृह्यतां बध्यतां चैव क्षिप्रमाविष्कृतं बलात्॥ ३१॥
सनत्कुमार उवाच।
तत एनं बहिः सर्वे स्कन्दस्य गणनायकाः।
बद्ध्वा बहुविधैः पाशैर्यातयन्त सहस्रशः॥ ३२॥
स यात्यमानो दुःखार्तो विललाप यथा नरः।
निरयस्थो दुराचारः कर्मभिः स्वैः सुपाशितः॥ ३३॥
तं यात्यमानं संदृश्य नारदः सुमहातपाः।
गत्वा न्यवेदयत्तस्य वराहस्यामितात्मनः॥ ३४॥

29a उक्तो] उक्का R • गतश्चा°] गतस्त्वा° R **29c** मा क्षमेथा] मोक्षसेथा R **29d** तनुं] यदि R • ऽह्वयेद्] ऽवयेद् R **30b** °र्दत्तातिभास्वरा] °र्दुर्गा{ ऽ ऽ R^{ac}}भिभासुरा R **30d** °नाशनी] °नाशिनी R **31b** सर्व°] सुर° R **31d** °माविष्कृतं] °माकृष्यतां R **32–38**] om. R^{ac}, R^{pc} written i.m. **32cd** °शैर्यातयन्त] °शैः पातयन्तः R^{pc} **33a** यात्यमानो] पात्यमानो R^{pc} **33d** °पाशितः] °पूरितः R^{pc} **34a** यात्यमानं] पात्यमानं R^{pc} **34d** °स्यामितात्मनः] °स्य महात्मनः R^{pc}

29a °श्चाहमद्य°] °श्च हेमश्च **A** **29c** मा क्षमेथा] मोक्षयेथा A_3A_4, मोक्षमेथा A_7 **29d** तनुं त्वां सो ऽह्वयेद्युधि] युधे हिंसा ह्व{ह° A_4}येद्यदि **A** **30b** °र्दत्तातिभास्वरा] °र्दत्ता हि भासुरा **A** **30c** संवर्तिकेति] संवर्त्तकेति **A** **30d** °नाशनी] °नाशिनी **A** **31b** °प्रबाधकः] A_7^{pc}, °प्रधारकः A_3A_4, प्रधाक ऽः A_7^{ac} **31c** बध्यतां] युध्यतां **A** **31d** °माविष्कृतं] °माकृष्यतां **A** **32b** °नायकाः] A_3A_7, °नायकः A_4 **32c** बद्ध्वा] बद्धा **A** **32d** °र्यातयन्त] °र्घातयन्तः **A** **33a** यात्यमानो] मार्यमानो{°णो A_4} **A** • दुःखार्तो] A_4A_7, दुखार्त्तो A_3 **33cd–34**] om. **A**

29(c^3, d^3) S_1 **32**(d^4) S_1 **33**(c^5) S_2, (c^7–c^8, d^2) S_3

29c क्षमेथा] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3Bh$, क्षयेथा S_1^{ac} **29d** तनुं त्वां सो] S_3, तनु(त्का) सो S_1^{pc}, तनु – सो S_1^{ac}, तनुं त्वसो S_2^{pc}, तनुं त्वा सो S_2^{ac}, तनुं त्वासौ Bh (em.) • °द्युधि] $S_1S_2S_3R$, °द्यदि Bh **30a** इयं च] S_2S_3RABh, इमञ्च S_1 **30b** शक्तिर्] S_1S_2RABh, शक्ति S_3 • °भास्वरा] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}Bh$, (°दा)स्वरा S_3^{ac} **30c** संवर्तिकेति] S_2S_3RBh, संवर्त्तकेति S_1 **31a** सो] S_2S_3RABh, यो S_1 • दुरात्मा] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3RABh$, दुरात्म S_1^{ac} **31b** °लोक°] S_1S_2RABh, °लोकक° S_3 (unmetrical) **31c** °तां बध्यतां] S_1S_2R, °ताम्बद्धता S_3, °तां वध्यतां Bh **31d** °माविष्कृतं] S_2Bh, °माविष्कृतां S_1, °माविष्कृत S_3 (unmetrical) **32a** बहिः] $S_1S_2R^{pc}ABh$, बहि S_3 (unmetrical) **32b** °नायकाः] $S_2S_3R^{pc}A_3A_7Bh$, °नायका S_1 **32cd** पाशैर्यातयन्त स°] S_1Bh, पाशैर्यातन्तस्स° S_2, पाशै यातयन्त स° S_3 **33a** दुःखार्तो] $S_1S_2R^{pc}A_4A_7Bh$, दुःखार्त्तो S_3 **33d** स्वैः] $S_1S_2R^{pc}Bh$, स्वै S_3 • °पाशितः] S_2S_3Bh, °पातितः S_1 **34a** यात्यमानं] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3Bh$, यात्यमानां S_2^{ac} **34b** °महातपाः] $S_1S_2^{pc}R^{pc}Bh$, °महातपा $S_2^{ac}S_3$ **34c** न्यवेदयत्] $S_2S_3R^{pc}Bh$, निवेदयत् S_1

एष पुत्रो वृकस्तुभ्यं बद्धः पाशैरनेकशः।
यात्यते कार्त्तिकेयस्य किंकरैर्दुष्कृती यथा॥ ३५॥
न नाम तव देवस्य लोकार्थायोद्यतस्य च।
करोति संनतिं स्कन्दो बालभावान्निरानमः॥ ३६॥
अथवा स्वबलं स्कन्दो मन्यते बलवत्तरम्।
त्वत्तो ऽत्मनस्ततः पुत्रं तव पाशैर्बबन्ध ह॥ ३७॥
तद्यावदेव तं नासौ प्रमापयति देवप।
तावदेव भवान्गत्वा विमोचयतु माचिरम्॥ ३८॥
सनत्कुमार उवाच।
नारदस्य वचः श्रुत्वा वराहो नन्दिवर्धनः।
जीमूत इव कालान्ते ननाद रुषिताननः॥ ३९॥
तस्य क्रोधात्तदा वह्निर्नेत्राभ्यामतिदीप्तिमान्।
निश्चक्राम जगत्सर्वं संहरन्निव तेजसा॥ ४०॥

35c यात्यते] पात्यते R^{pc} **36b** लोकार्थायोद्यतस्य] लोकस्याप्युद्यतस्य R^{pc} **36c** करोति] अकरोत् R^{pc} **36d** °न्निरानमः] °न्निरामयः R^{pc} **37ab**] om. R^{pc} **37cd** त्वत्तो ऽत्मनस्ततः पुत्रं तव] दुरात्मानं तव सुतं येन R^{pc} **38a** °देव] °देवं R^{pc} **38d** विमोचयतु] विलम्बयतु R^{pc} **39c** कालान्ते] कल्पान्ते R **40b** °नेंत्राभ्याम°] °र्गत्वा तान° R

35a Before this **A** adds नारद उवाच। • वृकस्तु°] A_3A_4, वृकोस्तु° A_7 **35b** °रनेकशः] °रनेकधा **A** **35c** यात्यते] आद्यते **A** **35d** किंकरैर्] A_7, किंकरैर A_3, किंकरै A_4 **36a** नाम] A_7, नाय A_3, नाप A_4 **36b** लोका°] कोका° **A** **36c** करोति] अकरोत् **A** • संनतिं] सयति A_3, सपति A_4, सयतिं A_7 **36d** °न्निरानमः] °न्निरात्मवान् **A** **37a** अथवा स्वबलं] अथास्य भुवनं **A** **37cd** ऽत्मनस्ततः पुत्रं तव] न्यूनं तव सुतं येन **A** **38ab**] तस्मादन{तस्मा+त्+दलं A_7}वरश्चासौ न नाशयति देवयः{°पः A_7} **A** **38c** °न्गत्वा] °न्स त्वान् स त्वा A_3 (unmetrical), °न्स त्वा A_4A_7 **38d** विमोचयतु] A_7, तं विमोचय A_3A_4 **39c** कालान्ते] घर्मान्ते **A**

36(d^1–d^5) S_2 **38**(d^2) S_1, (a^8) S_2 **39**(c^1) S_1

35a वृकस्तु°] $S_1S_2R^{pc}A_3A_4Bh$, वृक तु° S_3 **35b** बद्धः] $S_2S_3^{pc}R^{pc}ABh$, बन्धः S_1, बद्ध S_3^{ac} **35d** किंकरैर्] $S_1S_2R^{pc}A_7Bh$, किङ्करै S_3 **36b** लोकार्थायो°] S_2S_3Bh, लोकार्थीयो° S_1 • च] $S_2S_3R^{pc}ABh$, ह S_1 **36c** संनतिं] $S_1R^{pc}Bh$, सन्नति S_2, सन्ततिं S_3^{pc}, सन्नति S_3^{ac} **36d** °न्निरानमः] $S_2S_3^{pc}$, °न्निरामनः S_1, निरानमः S_3^{ac}, °ञ्च रोषतः Bh (conj.) **37a** स्वबलं] S_1S_3, स्वबल S_2, स्वमलं Bh (conj.) **37b** बलवत्तरम्] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3ABh$, बलत्तरम् S_2^{ac} (unmetrical) **37c** त्वत्तो] S_2S_3ABh, तत्वो S_1 **37cd** पुत्रं तव] S_1Bh, पुत्रस्तव S_2, पुत्रस्तव S_3^{pc}, पुत्रस्तंव S_3^{ac} **37d** पाशैर्] $S_1S_2R^{pc}ABh$, पाशै S_3 **38a** तं नासौ] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}R^{pc}Bh$, तनासौ S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) **38b** देवप] $S_2^{ac}S_3R^{pc}Bh$, देवपः $S_1S_2^{pc}$ **38d** विमोचयतु] $S_2S_3A_7Bh$, वि(मो)चयितु S_1 **38d** °चिरम्] S_1S_3RABh, °चिरन् S_2 **39c** जीमूत] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3RABh$, जीत S_2^{ac} (unmetrical) • कालान्ते] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3Bh$, कान्त S_1^{ac} (unmetrical) **39d** ननाद] S_2S_3RABh, ननार⟨दः⟩ S_1 • रुषिता°] $S_1S_2S_3RA$, रूषिता° Bh (conj.?) **40a** वह्निर्] S_1S_2RABh, वह्नि S_3 **40b** °दीप्तिमान्] S_2S_3RABh, °दीप्तवान् S_1 **40d** संहरन्नि°] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3^{pc}RABh$, संहर(न्ति) S_1^{ac}, संहरनि° S_3^{ac} (unmetrical)

उत्थाय चासनाद्देवः सहसैवानिरीक्षणः।
प्रतस्थे शिखरं दिव्यं गौर्या मृगपतिः स्वयम्॥ ४१॥
स कम्पयन्महीं सर्वां स्तूयमानो महात्मभिः।
उत्पातान्भयदान्पश्यञ्जगामाविनिवारितः॥ ४२॥
गच्छतस्तस्य देवस्य पन्थानं भुजगो ऽच्छिनत्।
दंष्ट्रा च वृक्षमापात्य पपात धरणीतले॥ ४३॥
रुधिरं चास्रवद्वक्त्राद्धृदयं च प्रवेपत।
भयं चास्याभवत्तत्र वेगो येनाभिहन्यते॥ ४४॥
वायवः प्रतिलोमाश्च उरसा चापतद्भुवि।
स्वेदश्चास्य प्रियं स्मृत्वा तदात्यर्थमजायत॥ ४५॥
एतांश्चान्यांश्च बहुश उत्पातान्भयसूचकान्।
अनादृत्य मृगेन्द्रो ऽसौ जगामैव महाबलः॥ ४६॥

41a °नाद्देवः] °नात् क्रूरः R **41b** सहसैवानि°] सहसैव नि° R **41c** प्रतस्थे शिखरं] प्रतापण्णिखरं R **41d** गौर्या] गर्जन् R **42a** स कम्पयन्महीं सर्वां] अरद्धयन्निव महीं R **42d** °माविनि°] °मासनि° R **43c** °मापात्य] °मासाद्य R **44b** °द्धृदयं च प्रवेपत] °द्धाजायत्तस्य वेपथुः R **44c** °त्तत्र] °त्तस्य R **45b** उरसा चापतद्भु°] रजसो चापतन्भु° R^{pc}, रजसा चापतद्भु° R^{ac} **45cd**] om. R^{pc}, स्नेहश्चास्य प्रियं श्रुत्वा तदाकृन्नमहाय च R^{ac} **46a** बहुश] बहुधा R **46c** अनादृत्य] अनाहतो R **46d** °मैव] °मैवं R

41a °द्देवः] °देव **A** **41b** सहसैवानिरी°] सहसा दुर्निरी° **A** **42c** °न्भयदान्] °न् शतशः **A** **42d** °माविनि°] A_3A_7, °म विनि° A_4 **43c** °मापात्य] °मासाद्य **A** **44a** °द्वक्त्राद्धृ°] $A_3A_7^{pc}$, °द्वक्त्रा हृ° $A_4A_7^{ac}$ **44b** प्रवेपत] प्रवेपते A_3A_7, प्रवेयते A_4 **44d** येनाभि°] येन वि° **A** **45b** उरसा चापतद्भु°] तव सापपतत् भु° A_3A_4, तव+ ⌣ +पपतत् भु° A_7 **45c** स्वेदश्चा°] स्नेहश्चा° A_3A_7, स्नेहंश्चा° A_4 **45d** °दात्यर्थ°] A_7, °दात्यथ° A_3A_4 **46b** °तान्भयसूचकान्] °तानद्भुतान् स्वकान् A_3A_4, °तान् भूतलांशुकान् A_7 **46c** अनादृत्य] अनाहत्य **A**

41(a^7–a^8) S_1 **42**(b^8) S_1 **43**(a^6, b^1–c^1, d^6–d^8) S_1 **46**(d^6) S_1

41a चासनाद्देवः] $S_1S_2^{pc}$Bh, चासनाद्देव S_2^{ac}, वासनादेव S_3 **41b** सहसैवानिरी°] S_1, सहसैवान्निरी° S_2, सहसैवांनिरी° S_3, सहसैवोन्निरी°Bh (em.) **41d** गौर्या] S_1**A**Bh, गोय्या S_2S_3 • °पतिः] S_2^{pc}**RA**Bh, °पतिं S_1, °पति $S_2^{ac}S_3$ **42a** कम्पय°] S_2S_3**A**Bh, कम्प° S_1 (unmetrical) • °न्महीं सर्वां] S_1S_2**A**Bh, °न्मही सर्वा S_3 **42cd** °न्भयदान्पश्यञ्ज°] R, °म्भयदा⟨– ⌣ ⟩+पश्य+ञ्ज° S_1, °नुत्थितान्पश्यन्ज° S_2, °नुच्छितान्पश्य ज° S_3^{pc}, °नुच्छतान्पश्य ज° S_3^{ac}, °नुत्थितान् पश्यन् ज° Bh **42d** °माविनि°] $S_1A_3A_7$Bh, °म विनि° S_2S_3 **43a** गच्छतस्त°] S_2RABh, गच्छन्ते त° S_1, गच्छत+त+ S_3 **43b** पन्थानं] S_3RABh, (पन्थाना) S_1 (anusvāra possibly lost), पन्थानां S_2 • ऽच्छिनत्] S_2S_3RABh, (च्छिता)न् S_1 (tops lost) **43c** दंष्ट्रा] S_1S_2RABh, द्रंष्टा S_3 • °मापात्य] S_2S_3, °मापत्य S_1(retraced)Bh **44ab** चास्रवद्वक्त्राद्धृ°] $S_1A_3A_7^{pc}$Bh, वास्रवद्वक्त्राद्धृ° S_2, चास्रवद्वक्त्रा हृ° S_3 **44b** च प्रवेपत] Bh (em.?), चाप्रवेपत S_1^{pc}, चाप्रवेपतः S_1^{ac}, च प्रवेपतः S_2S_3 **44c** भयं] S_1S_2RABh, भय S_3 **44d** येना°] S_2S_3RBh, येता° S_1 **45a** °लोमाश्च] S_2S_3RABh, °लोमाच्च S_1 **45c** स्वेदश्चा°] conj., स्वेहश्चा° S_1, स्नेहश्चा° S_2Bh, स्वेह चा° S_3^{pc}?, स्नेह चा° S_3^{ac}? • प्रियं] S_3R^{ac}**A**, प्रियां S_1S_2Bh **45d** तदा°] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3R^{ac}$ABh, त –ा° S_2^{ac} • °मजायत] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}S_3$**A**Bh, °मजायतः S_1^{ac}, °मजा⟨त⟩+य+त S_2 **46a** °श्चान्यांश्च] $S_1S_2S_3$RA, °श्चान्यान् सु° Bh (conj.) **46b** उत्पातान्] $S_1^{pc}S_2$RABh, उत्पाताम् S_1^{ac}, उत्पाता S_3 • °सूचकान्] S_1RBh, °सूचकाम् S_2, °सूचकां S_3 **46c** मृगेन्द्रो] S_1S_2RABh, मृगेद्रो S_3 **46d** जगामैव] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$ABh, ⌣गामैव S_1^{ac}

तं प्रस्थितमभिप्रेक्ष्य निमित्तानि च सुव्रत।
पूजां सज्जामकुर्वन्त देवलोके दिवौकसः॥ ४७॥
स सिद्धसंघैरनुगम्यमानो यक्षैश्च गन्धर्वमहोरगैश्च।
रक्षोगणैश्चारणकिंनरैश्च जगाम गौरीशिखरं महात्मा॥ ४८॥

इति स्कन्दपुराणे नवोत्तरशतो ऽध्यायः॥ १०९॥

47c सज्जा॰] सर्वा॰ R^{pc}, संज्ञा॰ R^{ac} **48c** रक्षोगणैश्चारण॰] विद्याधरैश्चोरग॰ R **Col.** इति स्कन्दपुराणे रेवाखण्डे ऽध्यायः R

47c सज्जामकुर्वन्त] च समकुर्वस्तु A_3A_4, च समकुर्वन्त A_7 **47d** देव॰] तदा **A** **48c** ॰णैश्चार-णकिन्नरैश्च] ॰णैः किन्नरचारणैश्च **A** **48d** महात्मा] महाबलः **A** **Col.** इति{इति श्री॰ A_4, ओं॥ इति श्री॰ A_7}स्कन्दपुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायामम्बिकाखण्डे वराहप्रयाणो नाम शतमष्टोत्तरं **A**

47$(b^7)\langle b^8\rangle$ S_2

47b निमित्तानि] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, निमितानि S_3 • सुव्रत] **RA**Bh, सुव्रत S_1, सु(व्र)ऽ S_2, सुव्रतः S_3 **47c** सज्जा॰] S_1S_2Bh, सजा॰ S_3 • ॰मकुर्वन्त] $S_1S_2S_3RA_7$, ॰मकुर्वन्ते Bh (em.) **47d** देवलोके] $S_1S_2S_3$R, देलवोके Bh (typo) **48c** रक्षो॰] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$**A**Bh, रक्षोय॰ S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) • ॰किंनरैश्च] S_1S_2RBh, ॰किनरैश्च S_3 (unmetrical) **48d** महात्मा] S_2S_3RBh, महात्मा इति S_1 (इति part of col.) **Col.** ⊙ ॥ स्कन्दपुराणे वृकबन्धे आध्याय १६३ (in letter numerals)॥ ⊙ S_1, स्कन्दपुराणे नवोत्तरशतो ध्यायः॥ S_2, ⊙ ॥ स्कन्दपुराणे नामाध्यायः १११ (in letter numerals)॥ S_3, इति स्कन्दपुराणे वृकबन्धो नाम नवोत्तरशतो ध्यायः Bh

दशोत्तरशतो ऽध्यायः।

सनत्कुमार उवाच।
विनिर्गम्य कुमारो ऽपि रम्यात्स्वभवनात्तदा।
रराम गणपैः सार्धं क्रीडनैर्बहुभिः शुभैः॥ १॥
आनयामास तं चापि वराहस्य सुतं प्रभुः।
वृकं विमुच्य पाशैश्च उत्ससर्ज हसन्विभुः॥ २॥
उत्सृष्टं धावमानं च पुनर्जग्राह वेगितम्।
पुनरेवोत्सृजच्चैनं जग्राह च पुनः पुनः।
एवं रराम तेनासौ वराहो ऽभ्यागमच्च तम्॥ ३॥
शिलां गृहीत्वा महतीं संक्रुद्धो ऽन्तकसंनिभः।
चिक्षेप कार्त्तिकेयाय नादयञ्जलदो यथा॥ ४॥
तामापतन्तीं बहुधा नदन्तीं विहायसा मृत्युसमानरूपाम्।
जग्राह वेगेन महातिवेगां कोकामुखः प्रज्वलितामिवोल्काम्॥ ५॥

1b °भवनात्] °भुवनात् R **1d** क्रीडनैर्] क्रीडन्तं R **2c** पाशैश्च] पाशैस्तु R **3a** धावमानं च] नादमानञ्च R **3b** वेगितम्] वेगितः R **3c** °वोत्सृजच्चै°] °वोत्सृजच्चै° R **3f** ऽभ्यागमच्च तम्] ऽथागमद्भृतम् R^{pc}, थागम(द्ध)तम् R^{ac} **4d** नादयञ्ज°] ननाद ज° R **5b** मृत्यु°] गृह्य R **5cd** वेगेन महतीवेगां कोकामुखः] वेगान्महतो ऽतिवेगां लोको{°का° R^{ac}}न्मुख° R

1b रम्यात्] A_3A_4, रम्यां+त्+ A_7 **1c** गणपैः] स गणैः **A** **1d** क्रीडनैर्] A_3A_7, क्रीडनैःर् A_4 **2b** प्रभुः] A_7, प्रभुं A_3A_4 **2d** हसन्विभुः] हसन्निव **A** **3b** वेगितम्] वेगिनं **A** **3c** °वोत्सृजच्चै°] °वासृजच्चै° **A** **4c** कार्त्तिकेयाय] A_3A_7, कात्तिकेयाय A_4 **5a** नदन्तीं] A_4A_7, नदंती A_3 **5c** °वेगां] °वेगं **A** **5d** कोकामुखः] A_4, कोकामुख A_3A_7 • °वोल्काम्] A_7^{ac}, °वोक्षां A_3A_4, °वो–ां A_7^{pc}

Manuscripts available for this chapter: S_1 photos 4.10b (f. 168^r), 4.11a (f. 168^v); S_2 exposures 117b–118b (f. 152^r–153^r); S_3 f. 168^r–168^v; R f. 183^v–184^r; A_3 f. 110^r–110^v; A_4 f. 155^r–156^r; A_7 f. 156^r–157^r.
3(f^8) S_2

1a विनिर्गम्य] S_1RABh, विनिगम्य S_2S_3 **1b** रम्यात्] $S_1^{pc}S_2RA_3A_4Bh$, रम्यत् S_1^{ac}, रम्या S_3 **1c** गणपैः सा°] S_1RBh, गणवैस्सा° S_2, गणवै सा° S_3 **1d** क्रीडनैर्] $S_2A_3A_7Bh$, क्रीडतैर् S_1, क्रीडनै S_3 **2a** तं चा°] S_1RABh, तच्चा° S_2, त चा° S_3 (unmetrical) **2b** वराहस्य] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3$RABh, वहाहस्य S_2^{ac} **2cd** पाशैश्च उ°] S_1A, पाशैश्चरु° S_2S_3, पाशेभ्य उ° Bh (conj.) **2d** °सन्विभुः] S_2S_3RBh, °सं प्रभुः S_1 **3a** धावमानं च] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$ABh, वावमानञ्च S_1^{ac} **3b** पुनर्] S_1S_2RABh, पुन S_3 • वेगितम्] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3Bh$, वे(ति)तम् S_1^{ac} **3c** °वोत्सृजच्चैनं] S_2Bh, °वोत्सृजच्चैव S_1, °वोत्सृज चैन S_3 (unmetrical) **3d** जग्राह] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3$RABh, ज(वा)ह S_2^{ac} • पुनः पुनः] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$RABh, पुन पुनः S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) **3f** वराहो] S_1S_2RABh, वराहे S_3 • ऽभ्यागमच्च तम्] S_2ABh, भ्यागतन्धतम् S_1, भ्यागम च तं S_3 (unmetrical) **4a** शिलां] S_1S_2RABh, शिला S_3 • महतीं] S_1S_2RABh, महती S_3 **4b** संक्रुद्धो] S_1S_2RABh, सक्रुद्धो S_3 **4c** कार्त्तिकेयाय] $S_2S_3RA_3A_7Bh$, कार्त्तिकेयञ्च S_1 **5a** तामा°] S_1RABh, तमा° S_2S_3 **5a** बहुधा] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$RABh, बहु(वा) S_1^{ac} • नदन्तीं] $S_2S_3RA_4A_7Bh$, नदन्ती S_1 **5b** °रूपाम्] S_1S_2RABh, °रूपा S_3 **5d** °ज्वलितामि°] RABh, °ज्वलितां मि° S_1, °ज्वलितानि° S_2S_3 • °वोल्काम्] $S_2S_3RA_7^{ac}Bh$, °वोल्कान् S_1

ततश्चक्रं सहस्रारं युगान्ताग्निसमप्रभम्।
शिलाग्रहणव्यग्राय गणाय व्यसृजत्प्रभुः॥ ६॥
तदन्तकप्रतीकाशं चक्रं सर्वसुरारिहम्।
विवेश न गणं तूर्णं ततस्तद्व्यनिवर्तत॥ ७॥
तन्निवृत्तं पुनश्चक्रमकृत्वा कार्यमुज्ज्वलम्।
न जग्राह तदा विष्णुरवमेने च तत्तदा॥ ८॥
तत्तदानर्चितं तेन चक्रं दानवघातिना।
विष्णुना प्रययौ क्षिप्रं स्वमेव भवनं प्रति॥ ९॥
तस्मिंश्चक्रे तदा याते भगवान्नन्दिवर्धनः।
वृक्षमुत्पाट्य वेगेन कुमारमभिजघ्निवान्॥ १०॥
अगण्य तं प्रहारं तु भगवाननलात्मजः।
शक्तिं संवर्तिकां क्रोधाच्चिक्षेप च ननाद च॥ ११॥

7a तद॰] तम॰ R **7cd**] व्यानदत्स गणः शम्भोस्तत एत न्यवर्त्तत R **9a** तत्तदा॰] तन्तदा॰ R **9b** ॰घातिना] ॰घातिनम् R **9c** क्षिप्रं] विप्र R **9d** भवनं] भुवनं R **11a** अगण्य तं] अपश्यत्तं R

6a सहस्रारं] सहस्राक्षं **A** **6d** गणाय व्य॰] गणपाया॰ **A** **7a** तद॰] तम॰ **A** **7cd**] न विवेश गणं शम्भोस्ततो गत्वा निवर्त्तत{॰तः A_3} **A** **8a** पुनश्च॰] तत्र च॰**A** **8cd** विष्णुरवमेने] विष्णु वधमेने A_3A_4, विष्णुर्वव{॰धं A_7^{ac}}मेने A_7 **9a** तत्तदानर्चितं तेन] तत्तदानिश्चितं तेन A_3, तत्तंदाश्चितं तेन A_4 (unmetrical), तत्तदानश्चितस्तेन A_7 **9b** ॰घातिना] ॰घातिनं **A** **10a** याते] A_7, जाते A_3A_4 **10d** ॰जघ्निवान्] A_7^{pc}, ॰जग्मिवान् $A_3A_4A_7^{ac}$ **11a** अगण्य] A_3A_7, आगत्य A_4 **11b** ॰ननलात्मजः] ॰न् शैलजात्मजः **A** **11cd** क्रोधाच्चि॰] A_3A_7, क्रोधात् वि॰ A_4

6(c^1–c^6) S_2 **7**⟨a^1–a^3⟩(a^4) S_1 **9**(d^8) S_1

6a ततश्चक्रं] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$**RA**Bh, ⟨तश्चश्च⟩ततश्चक्रं S_3 • सहस्रारं] S_1S_2RBh, सहसार S_3 (unmetrical) **6c** शिलाग्रहणव्यग्राय] S_2S_3**RA**, शिलाग्रहणदक्षाय S_1^{pc}, शिलाग्रहणः ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ S_1^{ac}, विनायकस्याव्यग्राय Bh (conj.?) **6d** व्यसृजत॰] S_1S_2RBh, च्यसृज॰ S_3 **7a** तद॰] em. Bh, तम॰ S_2S_3 **7b** ॰सुरारिहम्] **RA**Bh, ॰सुरारिणुत् S_1, ॰सुरारिघम् S_2, ॰सुरारिघं S_3 **7c** न] conj., स॰ $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$ Bh, सस॰ S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) **7cd** गणं तूर्णं] em., ॰गणन्तुर्ण्णन् S_1, ॰गणस्तूर्ण्णन् S_2, ॰गणस्तूर्ण्ण S_3, ॰गणस्तूर्णं Bh **7d** ॰द्व्यनिवर्तत] S_2S_3, ॰द्व्यतिवर्त्तत⟨ः⟩ S_1, ॰द्विन्यवर्तत Bh (em.?) **8a** तन्निवृत्तं] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3^{pc}$**RA**Bh, त(न्ना)वृतं S_2^{ac}, तनिवृत्तं S_3^{ac} **8ab** ॰श्चक्रम॰] RBh (em.?), ॰श्चक्रम्म॰ S_1, ॰श्चक्रं म॰ S_2S_3 **9b** चक्रं] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, चक्र S_3 **9d** स्वमे॰] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3$**RA**Bh, स्वयमे॰ S_1^{ac} (unmetrical) • भवनं प्रति] S_1S_3**A**Bh, भवम्प्रम्प्रति S_2 (unmetrical) **10b** भगवान्] S_1S_2 S_3^{pc}**RA**Bh, भगवा S_3^{ac} **11a** अगण्य] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3A_3A_7$Bh, अरण्य S_1^{ac} • तं] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, त S_3 **11c** शक्तिं] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, शक्ति S_3 • संवर्तिकां] **RA**Bh, सम्वर्षिकां S_1, सम्वर्त्तकां S_2, सम्वर्त्तकं S_3 **11cd** क्रोधाच्चि॰] $S_1S_2RA_3A_7$Bh, क्रोधा चि॰ S_3

सा दहन्तीव तेजांसि नदन्ती बहुधा तदा।
हन्तुं वराहं प्रययौ शक्तिर्विद्युदिवाशुगा॥ १२॥
तामापतन्तीं वेगेन भगवान्नन्दिवर्धनः।
जघानास्त्रैर्बहुविधैर्नादयन्सिंहराडिव॥ १३॥
तानि सा भस्मसात्कृत्वा शक्तिः संवर्तिका शुभा।
विवेश हृदयं तस्य कामिनीव दृढं प्रिया॥ १४॥
स तया भिन्नहृदयो योगेन परमेण ह।
योगीव देहं संत्यज्य देहेनान्येन तस्थिवान्॥ १५॥
सो ऽन्यद्देहं समास्थाय पौराणं सुरसत्तमः।
देवैः सर्वैः परिवृतो जगाम भवमन्दिरम्॥ १६॥
तत्रापश्यन्महादेवं जटामुकुटधारिणम्।
चन्द्रलेखांशुजालौघनिरस्ततिमिरोत्करम्॥ १७॥

12a सा दहन्ती॰] सादयन्ती॰ R **14a** तानि सा] तमस्त्रं R^{pc}, अनिशं R^{ac} **15a** तया] तय R **15d** तस्थिवान्] भक्तिमान् R **16a** ऽन्यद्देहं] ऽन्यं देहं R **16b** पौराणं] यौवनं R **17d** ॰निरस्त॰] ॰निभं सु॰ R

12a सा दहन्तीव] सादयंति च A_3A_4, सा दहन्ती च A_7 **13a** ॰मापतन्तीं] A_3A_7, ॰मापतंति A_4 **14b** संवर्तिका] A_3A_4, शम्वर्त्तिकां A_7 **14d** दृढं प्रिया] दृढप्रियं A_3A_7, दृढं प्रियं A_4 **15c** देहं] A_3A_7, देह A_4 **15d** देहेना॰] A_3, देहिना॰ A_4A_7 • तस्थिवान्] संस्थितः **A** **16a** सो ऽन्य-द्देहं] योग्यदेहं **A** **16b** पौराणं] पौराणां **A** • सुरसत्तमः] सुरसत्तम **A** **16c** परिवृतो] A_3A_7, परिवृतै A_4

12$(b^1–b^6)\langle b^7–d^1\rangle(d^2–d^4)$ S_1 **15**$(a^1–a^8)\langle b^1–c^1\rangle$ S_1 **16**(b^8) S_1 **17**(d^4) S_1, $\langle c^8–d^2\rangle(d^3–d^4)$ S_3

12a दहन्ती॰] $S_2S_3A_7Bh$, दहन्ति S_1 **12c** हन्तुं] S_2**RA**Bh, हन्तु S_3 **12d** शक्तिर्विद्युदि॰] **RA**, ⌣(क्तिवद्यु)दि॰ S_1 (upper part lost), शक्तिर्दिव इ॰ S_2^{pc} (sec. hand), शक्ति(र्विद्यु)दि ⌣ S_2^{ac}, शक्तिर्विद्युदि॰ S_3, शक्तिर्दिव्य इ॰ Bh (conj.?) • ॰वाशुगा] **RA**, ॰वाशुभा S_1 (tops lost), ॰वाशुगः S_2S_3Bh **13a** तामापतन्तीं] $S_1S_2RA_3A_7$, तमापतन्ती S_3, तामापमन्तीं Bh (typo) **13b** भगवान्] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, भगवा S_3 **13c** ॰नास्त्रैर्] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, ॰नास्त्रै S_3 **13cd** ॰विधैर्नादयन्] S_2^{pc}**RA** Bh, ॰विधैर्न्नादयं S_1, ॰विधैर्न्नादय S_2^{ac}, ॰विधै नादयन् S_3 **14a** तानि सा] S_1S_3**A**Bh, तानिस्सा S_2 • भस्मसात्] S_2^{pc}**RA**Bh, भस्मसा $S_1S_2^{ac}S_3$ **14b** शक्तिः] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, शक्ति S_3 • संवर्तिका] $S_2S_3RA_3A_4Bh$, संवर्त्तका S_1 **14d** दृढं] RA_4Bh (em.), दृढ॰ $S_1S_2S_3$ (anusvāra possibly lost in S_1) **15a** भिन्न॰] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$**RA**Bh, भिन॰ S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) **15c** देहं] $S_1S_2RA_3A_7Bh$, देह S_3 • संत्यज्य] S_2S_3**RA**, सन्त्यत्का S_1, तं त्यत्का Bh (conj.) **16a** ऽन्यद्देहं] S_2^{pc}Bh, न्यदेहं $S_1S_2^{ac}S_3$ **16c** देवैः स॰] S_1**RA**Bh, देवैस्स॰ S_2, देवै स॰ S_3 • परिवृतो] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}RA_3A_7Bh$, परिवृ S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) **17a** ॰देवं] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, ॰देव S_3 **17b** ॰मुकुट॰] S_2**RA**Bh, ॰मकुट॰ S_1S_3 **17c** ॰लेखांशुजालौघ॰] S_2**RA**Bh, ॰लेखाशुञ्जालौघ॰ S_1^{pc}, लेखाञ्जलौघञ्च S_1^{ac}, ॰लेखाङ्शुजलौ ⌣ S_3 **17d** ॰निरस्ततिमिरोत्करम्] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}$**A**Bh, निरस्तमिरोत्करम् S_1^{ac} (unmetrical), ॰निरस्ति(भि)मिरोत्करं S_2^{ac}, ⌣ ⌣(स्तति)मिरोत्कर S_3 (upper parts of स्तति lost, anusvāra possibly lost)

भद्रपीठे समासीनं काञ्चने मणिभूषणे।
भ्राजमानं श्रियात्यर्थं पार्वत्या पार्श्वसंस्थया॥ १८॥
गणैश्च विविधाकारैर्बहुभिः कामरूपिभिः।
नृत्तगीतप्रियैर्नित्यं समन्तात्परिवारितम्॥ १९॥
तं दृष्ट्वा शंकरं विष्णुः प्रसन्नेनान्तरात्मना।
तुष्टाव विविधैः स्तोत्रैरिदं चोवाच सुस्वरम्॥ २०॥
वाराहं रूपमास्थाय त्वत्तेजोबृंहितेन मे।
रणे विक्रम्य भगवन्हिरण्याक्षो निषूदितः॥ २१॥
त्वं देव कारणं नित्यं संभूतेः प्रलयस्य च।
त्वया सर्वमिदं व्याप्तं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना॥ २२॥
त्वत्प्रसादेन देवेश ब्रह्माहं शक्र एव च।
पूज्याः स्म लोके सततं तथैवान्ये दिवौकसः॥ २३॥
त्वयि प्रीते महादेव सर्वे प्रीता वयं प्रभो।
त्वयि क्रुद्धे च नाशो नो भविता नात्र संशयः॥ २४॥

18b °भूषणे] °भूषिते R **18d** पार्वत्या पार्श्वसंस्थया] पार्वत्याः पार्श्वसंश्रयं R **19ab** °रैर्बहुभिः काम°] °रैः कुर्वद्भिः सम° R **19c** नृत्त°] नृत्य° R **20b** प्रसन्नेना°] प्रशक्तेना° R **21a** वाराहं] वराह° R **21b** त्वत्तेजोबृंहितेन मे] मया त्वत्तेजसा विभो R **21d** निषूदितः] निसूदितः R **22b** संभूतेः] संभूतः R **22d** °मूर्तिना] °मूर्त्तिमान् R **23c** पूज्याः स्म] पूज्याश्च R **24c** नो] मे R

18a भद्रपीठे] A_3A_7, मद्रपीठे A_4 **18b** °भूषणे] °भूषिते **A** **19c** नृत्त°] नृत्य° **A** **20a** तं दृष्ट्वा शंकरं विष्णुः] त{तं° A_7}तश्च शंकरं दृष्ट्वा **A** **20d** सुस्वरम्] A_3A_7, सस्वरं A_4 **21a** वाराहं] A_3A_4, वराहं A_7 **21b** त्वत्तेजोबृंहितेन मे] मया त्वत्तेजसा विभो **A** **21c** भगवन्] A_3A_7, भगवान् A_4 **21d** हिरण्याक्षो निषूदितः] दैत्यो यं विनिसूदितः **A** **22b** संभूतेः] संभूते **A** **23c–24b**] om. **A**

18(b^6–b^7) S_1 **22**(b^6–b^7) S_2 **23**(d^7) S_1, (d^6)⟨d^7⟩(d^8) S_2 **24**(c^5) S_1, (b^2, c^5) S_2

18a भद्रपीठे] $S_1RA_3A_7Bh$, चन्द्रपीठे S_2S_3 • समासीनं] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3RABh$, समासीनां S_2^{ac} **18b** काञ्चने] S_2S_3RABh, काञ्चनैर् S_1 • °भूषणे] $S_1S_2S_3$, °मूषणे Bh (typo) **18c** °यात्यर्थं] S_1S_2RABh, °यात्यर्थ S_3 **18d** पार्श्व°] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}RABh$, पार्श्व° S_3^{ac} • °संस्थया] S_2S_3ABh, संस्थिया S_1 **19b** °बंहुभिः] S_1S_3ABh, °बंहुभि S_2 (visarga possibly lost) • °रूपिभिः] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3RABh$, °रूपभिः S_2^{ac} **19c** °प्रियैर्] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}RABh$, °प्रयैर् S_3^{ac} **20a** तं दृष्ट्वा] S_1S_3RBh, तन्दृष्ट्वा S_2 **20b** प्रसन्नेनान्तरा°] $S_2^{pc}S_3^{pc}RABh$, प्रसन्नेनान्तारा° S_1 (unmetrical), प्रसन्नेनन्तरा° S_2^{ac}, प्रसनेनान्तरा° S_3^{ac} **20c** तुष्टाव] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3RABh$, तुष्टा S_1^{ac} (unmetrical) **20cd** स्तोत्रै°] S_1S_2RABh, स्तोस्त्रै° S_3 **20d** सुस्वरम्] $S_1S_2RA_3A_7Bh$, सुस्वर S_3 **21a** वाराहं] $S_2S_3A_3A_4Bh$, वराहं S_1 **21b** °बृंहितेन] S_2S_3Bh, °बृंहितेन S_1 **21c** भगवन्] $S_1RA_3A_7Bh$, भगवान् S_2, भगवां S_3 **21d** निषूदितः] $S_2^{pc}S_3Bh$, निसूदितः S_1, निषू(भि)तः S_2^{ac} **22b** संभूतेः] S_2Bh, संभूते S_1, संभुतेः S_3 **23b** ब्रह्माहं] $S_2^{pc}S_3RABh$, ब्रह्माणं S_1, ब्र(ह्वा)हं S_2^{ac} • शक्र ए°] S_2S_3RABh, शक्रमे° S_1 **23c** पूज्याः स्म] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}Bh$, पूज्याम $S_1^{ac}S_2^{ac}S_3$ **23d** दिवौकसः] $S_1^{pc}S_3RBh$, दिवौ(क)सैः S_1^{ac}, दि(वौ)+ ◡ +(स)ः S_2 **24b** प्रीता] $S_1^{pc}S_2S_3RBh$, प्रीत S_1^{ac} **24c** च] S_1S_3RA, (व) S_2, वि° Bh (conj.)

स्तुवन्तमेवं भगवान्विष्णुं चन्द्रार्धशेखरः।
सहस्रसूर्यतेजस्कः प्रीतः प्रोवाच शंकरः॥ २५॥
भक्त्या तुष्टोऽस्मि ते विष्णो देवकार्योद्यमेन च।
वरं वरय भद्रं ते यस्ते मनसि वर्तते॥ २६॥
विष्णुरुवाच।
यदि तुष्टोऽसि नो देव यदि देयो वरश्च नः।
ततः पाशुपतं दिव्यं व्रतमादेष्टुमर्हसि॥ २७॥
यदाश्रित्य वयं सर्वे सशक्राः सर्वकामिकम्।
युद्धे जेष्याम दैतेयान्दुःखशोकविवर्जिताः॥ २८॥
देव उवाच।
अहं वः कथयिष्यामि गुह्यमेतत्सनातनम्।
व्रतं पाशुपतं दिव्यं येन कामानवाप्स्यथ॥ २९॥
इत्युक्त्वा देवदेवेशो देवानां हितकाम्यया।
ययौ दिवमथामन्त्र्य देवीं गिरिवरात्मजाम्॥ ३०॥

25b °न्विष्णुं च°] °न् विष्णुश्च R^{pc}, °न् विष्णु च R^{ac} • °शेखरः] °शेखरं R **25c** सहस्र°] सह° R (unmetrical) **25cd** °तेजस्कः प्रीतः] °तेजस्कं विष्णुं R **26d** यस्ते] यत्ते R **27a** नो देव] देवेश R **28c** जेष्याम] जेष्यामि R **28d** °विवर्जिताः] °विवर्जितः R^{pc}, °विवर्जितां R^{ac} **29** देव] देवदेव R **29d** कामानवाप्स्यथ] सम्मानमाप्स्यथ R **30c** °मथामन्त्र्य] °मुपामन्त्र्य R **30d** देवीं] देवान् R

25c °तेजस्कः] °तेजाक्षः **A** **25d** प्रीतः] A_3A_7, प्रीत A_4 **26d** यस्ते] यत्ते **A** **27a** तुष्टोऽसि] A_3, तुष्टोस्मि A_4, तुसि A_7 (unmetrical) **27c** ततः] तदा **A** **27d–29c**] om. **A** **29d** °नवाप्स्यथ] $A_3A_7^{pc}$, °नवाप्सथ $A_4A_7^{ac}$ **30c** °मथामन्त्र्य] °मुपामन्त्र्य **A**

25(b^2, b^6, c^2) S_2 **29**(d^7) S_1 **30**(c^8, d^3, d^5–d^8) S_1

25ab °मेवं भगवान्विष्णुं च°] S_2^{pc}**A**Bh, °मेव भगवां विष्णुञ्च° S_1, °मेवम्भ(वतां) वि(ष्णुं) च° S_2^{ac}, °मेव भवतां विष्णु च° S_3 **25b** °शेखरः] $S_1^{pc}S_2^{pc}$**A**Bh, (°ख)खरः S_1^{ac}, (°शे)खरन् S_2^{ac}, °शेखरम् S_3 **25d** प्रीतः] $S_1^{pc}S_2A_3A_7$Bh, प्रीत $S_1^{ac}S_3$ • शंकरः] $S_1S_2^{pc}$**RA**Bh, शंकरम् S_2^{ac}, शंकरं S_3 **26b** °कार्योद्यमेन] $S_1S_2^{pc}S_3$**RA**Bh, °कार्योद्यमेव S_2^{ac} **27** विष्णुरुवाच] S_2S_3**RA**Bh (विष्णुरु in S_2S_3), विष्णु उ S_1 **27b** वरञ्च] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, वरस्व S_3 **27c** ततः पाशुपतं] S_1R, यत्तत्पाप-हरन् S_2^{pc} (ह i.m., sec.hand), यत्तत्पाप(त)न् S_2^{ac} (unmetrical), यत्तत्पाशुपतन् S_3, यत्तत् पापहरं Bh **27d** व्रत°] S_2S_3RBh, ब्रत° S_1 **28a** यदा°] S_2S_3RBh, यथा° S_1 **28b** °शक्राः] S_1S_2RBh, °शक्रा S_3 • सर्व°] S_2S_3R, सार्व° S_1Bh **28c** दैतेयान्] $S_1S_3^{pc}$RBh, दैत्येयां S_2, तैतेयां S_3^{ac} **28d** °विवर्जिताः] S_1Bh, °विवर्जिता S_2S_3 **29** देव] S_1, देवदेव S_2Bh, देवदे S_3 **29a** अहं वः कथयिष्यामि] R, हन्त वः कथयिष्यामि S_1Bh, अहन्तव〈:〉 कयिष्यामि S_2, हन्त वः कयिष्यामि S_3 (unmetrical) **29b** °त्सनातनम्] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$RBh, °त्सनातन S_3^{ac} **29c** व्रतं] S_2S_3RBh, ब्रतम् S_1 **29d** कामानवाप्स्यथ] $S_2S_3A_3A_7^{pc}$Bh, कामामवा(प्स्य)थः S_1 **30c** ययौ] S_1S_2**RA**Bh, ययो S_3

अथ हिमगिरितुल्यचारुमूर्तिं वृषभवरं भगवांस्तदाभिरूढः।
सुरगणसहितः प्रभुः सुमेरुं व्रतमुपदेष्टुमना जगाम शर्वः॥ ३१॥

इति स्कन्दपुराणे दशोत्तरशतो ऽध्यायः॥ ११०॥

31a °तुल्य°] °तुल्यं R (unmetrical) **31b** °दाभिरूढः] °दाधिरूढः R **31d** शर्वः] सर्वम् R **Col.** इति स्कन्दपुराणे रेवाखण्डे +दशोत्तरशतो+ ऽध्यायः R

31a °तुल्यचारुमूर्तिं] °तुल्यचारुमूर्त्ति°{°र्त्तिर् A_7} A_3A_7, °तुल्यश्चारुर्त्तिं A_4 (unmetrical) **31b** °दाभिरूढः] °दाधिरू{°रु° A_7(unmetrical)}ढः **A** **31d**] व्रतसुरमुपदेष्टुं जगाम सर्वशः A_3 (unmetrical), व्रतमुपदेष्टु{°ष्टुं A_7} जगाम सर्वशः A_4A_7 (unmetrical) **Col.** इति{इति श्री° A_4} स्कन्दपुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायामम्बिकाखण्डे नवोत्तरशतं **A**

31(a^3–b^1)⟨b^6⟩(b^9, c^{10}, d^6) S_1

31a हिमगिरितुल्य°] S_2S_3RA**B**h, (गिरिहिमतुल्ये) S_1 • °मूर्तिं] S_2RBh, (°मर्त्तिर्) S_1 (vowel ऊ possibly lost), °मूर्तिं S_3 **31b** भगवांस्तदाभि°] S_2, + ˘ +गवांस्तदाभि° S_1, भगवान्सदाभि° S_3, भगवांस्तदाधि° Bh **31c** °सहितः] S_2RA**B**h, °महितः S_1, °सहितं S_3 • प्रभुः] S_1S_2RA**B**h, प्रभु S_3 (unmetrical) **31d** व्रत°] S_2S_3RA**B**h, व्रत° S_1 • जगाम] $S_1S_2S_3^{pc}$RA**B**h, जगम S_3^{ac} (unmetrical) • शर्वः] S_3Bh, शर्व इति S_1 (इति part of col.), सर्वः S_2 **Col.** ⊙ ॥ स्कन्दपुराणे वराहरूपसंहारे आध्याय १६४ (in letter numerals)॥ ⊙ S_1, स्कन्दपुराणे दशोत्तरशतो ध्यायः॥ S_2, ⊙ ॥ स्कन्दपुराणे नामाध्यायः ११२ (in letter numerals)॥ ⊙ S_3, इति स्कन्दपुराणे हिरण्याक्षवधे वराहसंहारे देवदेवस्य देवलोकगमनं नाम दशोत्तरशतो ध्यायः Bh

Summary

Revealing Śiva's Superiority by Retelling Viṣṇu's Deeds
Viṣṇu's Manifestation Myths in the *Skandapurāṇa*

This thesis deals with a Sanskrit text called *Skandapurāṇa*, composed in the sixth to seventh century. It is related to Śaivism and belongs to the literary genre of Purāṇas. Although the *Skandapurāṇa* can be counted among the early Purāṇas, it exhibits several features that are found in early as well as later Purāṇas: i) themes and narratives from the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, ii) theological text units, and iii) a combination of new stories and retellings that are known from other sources. This thesis focusses on the latter category, *viz.* the well-known myths of Viṣṇu taking on a manifestation to conquer the king of the Daityas, the enemies of the gods. It centres around the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the manifestation myths of Narasiṃha ("Man-Lion"), Varāha ("Boar") and Vāmana ("Dwarf"). From the *Mahābhārata* onwards, the general storyline of these manifestation myths remains *mutatis mutandis* the same and is incorporated in numerous Purāṇas. It includes the heroic moment that Viṣṇu conquers the Daityas and restores the cosmic order. At first glance, this climax of Viṣṇu saving the universe does not seem to match the Śaiva ideology of the *Skandapurāṇa*, which centres around Śiva and devotion to Śiva. This raises the question how the myths are retold and why they have been incorporated in the first place.

Compared to the many other retellings of the myths—demonstrating their fame in the epic-Purāṇic period—the *Skandapurāṇa* composers created their own, new version. On the one hand, they preserved several key narrative elements, as well as key characteristics of Viṣṇu. These components are known and recognizable from other sources and are incorporated for the sake of the acceptance of the retellings. On the other hand, the *Skandapurāṇa* composers also made considerable alterations and innovations. Whereas the changes remain fairly moderate in the main story of the manifestation myths, the composers added entirely new endings to the myths, hereby taking control of the narratives as a whole. The new endings are the most noticeable form of a "Śaivization" of Viṣṇu's manifestation myths: a process whereby a narrative (element) is changed or new

narrative elements are introduced to make the retellings match the Śaiva ideology of the text. The text presents a renewed portrayal of Viṣṇu as being completely dependent on Śiva and his ideal devotee. By inserting Śiva's superiority and grace, Viṣṇu and his manifestation myths become integrated and accommodated in the Śaiva ideology of the *Skandapurāṇa*. Another type of change concerns the style of writing of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers. The entire composition is full of scenic descriptions, insider jokes and emotional speeches. In the case of retellings, including Viṣṇu's manifestation myths, we can speak of "dramatic visualization": retellings are written in a rich, engaging and appealing way, thanks to which it is easier for the audience to visualize the story before their eyes. Dramatic visualization goes even further, when the *Skandapurāṇa* composers use long lists on Daitya lineages and battles collected in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* as a basis for crafting more complex and rich myths.

All three factors—the various preservations, the cases of Śaivization and a dramatic visualization of *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* themes—match the aim of the *Skandapurāṇa* composers with the text as a whole: the composition of a comprehensive and appealing Śaiva Purāṇa. Since Viṣṇu's manifestation myths were an intrinsic part of this literary genre, they were incorporated as well, even when they do not seem to fit the rest of the text at first glance. The solution was to compose them in an engaging and appealing style and to insert Śiva and devotion to him as essential components in the story. Through carefully selected compositional and ideological decisions, Viṣṇu and his manifestation myths of Narasiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana proved to be the perfect vehicle for the Śaiva message that the composers sought to convey with this new Śaiva Purāṇa.

Samenvatting

Verkondiging van Śiva's Superioriteit door Hervertelling van Viṣṇu's Daden
Viṣṇu's Manifestatiemythen in het *Skandapurāṇa*

In deze dissertatie staat het *Skandapurāṇa* centraal; een Sanskriet tekst dat is opgesteld in de zesde tot zevende eeuw. Het is verbonden aan het Śivaïsme en behoort tot het literaire genre genaamd Purāṇa. Hoewel het *Skandapurāṇa* gerekend kan worden tot de vroege Purāṇas bevat het enkele kenmerken die zowel in vroege als latere Purāṇas terug te vinden zijn: i) thema's en narratieven uit het *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*, ii) theologische teksteenheden, en iii) een combinatie van nieuwe verhalen en hervertellingen die bekend zijn uit andere bronnen. Deze dissertatie richt zich op de laatste categorie, te weten, de welbekende mythen waarin Viṣṇu een manifestatie aanneemt om de koning van de Daityas, de vijanden van de goden, te overwinnen. Centraal staat de *Skandapurāṇa* versie van de volgende manifestatiemythen: Narasiṃha ("Mens-Leeuw"), Varāha ("Zwijn") en Vāmana ("Dwerg"). De basisverhaallijn van deze manifestatiemythen blijft vanaf het *Mahābhārata* min of meer ongewijzigd en wordt als zodanig opgenomen in vele Purāṇas. Een van de standaard narratieve onderdelen is het heroïsche moment waarop Viṣṇu de Daityas overwint en de kosmische orde herstelt. Op het eerste gezicht lijkt deze climax waarin Viṣṇu het universum redt niet te rijmen met de Śivaïtische ideologie van het *Skandapurāṇa*, dat voornamelijk draait om Śiva en de verering van Śiva. Dit roept ten minste twee vragen op: hoe zijn de mythen herverteld en waarom zijn zij ze opgenomen?

In vergelijking met de vele andere hervertellingen van de mythen—hetgeen hun populariteit in de episch-Purāṇische periode aantoont—hebben de *Skandapurāṇa* auteurs hun eigen, nieuwe versie gemaakt. Enerzijds houden zij enkele cruciale narratieve elementen en karaktereigenschappen van Viṣṇu in stand. Deze componenten zijn bekend en herkenbaar vanuit andere bronnen en zijn opgenomen ten behoeve van de acceptatie van de hervertellingen. Anderzijds hebben de *Skandapurāṇa* auteurs significante wijzigingen en vernieuwingen doorgevoerd. Alhoewel deze nog relatief gematigd zijn in het basisverhaal van de manifestatiemythen, hebben de auteurs een compleet nieuw einde geschreven voor elk verhaal, waarmee ze controle nemen over de narratieven als geheel.

Met name in dit gedeelte van de narratieven presenteren de auteurs een hernieuwde portrettering van Viṣṇu als volledig afhankelijk van Śiva en diens ideale vereerder. De nieuwe einden zijn de opvallendste vorm van een "Śivaïtisering" van Viṣṇu's manifestatiemythen: een proces waarbij een narratief (element) wordt veranderd of nieuwe narratieve elementen worden geïntroduceerd zodat de hervertellingen passen binnen de Śivaïtische ideologie van de tekst. Door Śiva's superioriteit en genade toe te voegen worden Viṣṇu en zijn manifestatiemythen geïntegreerd in de Śivaïtische ideologie van het *Skandapurāṇa* en krijgen ze een plaats hierin. Een ander type wijzigingen betreft de schrijfstijl van de auteurs. De gehele compositie bestaat uit beeldende beschrijvingen, humoristische vooruitwijzingen en emotionele speeches. Wanneer dit type stilistische kenmerken wordt gevonden in hervertellingen kan men spreken van "beeldende presentatie": hertellingen worden op een inhoudelijk rijke, boeiende en beeldende manier geschreven, waardoor het makkelijker wordt voor het publiek om het verhaal te visualiseren. Deze vorm van vertellen bereikt een hoogtepunt wanneer de *Skandapurāṇa* auteurs genealogische lijsten van Daityas en opsommingen van oorlogen uit het *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* gebruiken als basis voor complexere en rijke mythen.

Alle drie de factoren—het behoud van elementen, de wijzigingen en innovaties die gelden als "Śivaïtisering" en een "beeldende presentatie" van *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* thema's—zijn in lijn met het doel van de *Skandapurāṇa* auteurs met de tekst als geheel: het samenstellen van een alomvattende en beeldende Śivaïtische Purāṇa. Aangezien Viṣṇu's manifestatiemythen een intrinsiek onderdeel vormden van dit literaire genre, werden ook zij opgenomen, ook al lijken ze op het eerste gezicht niet overeen te komen met de ideologie van de rest van de tekst. Dit werd vervolgens opgelost door ze op een beeldende en aantrekkelijke manier te vertellen en door Śiva en diens verering toe te voegen als cruciale onderdelen van de verhaallijn. Door middel van kritisch geselecteerde narratologische en ideologische keuzes bleken Viṣṇu en zijn manifestatiemythen van Narasiṃha, Varāha en Vāmana het perfecte vehikel voor de Śivaïtische boodschap die de auteurs wilden overbrengen met dit nieuwe Śivaïtische Purāṇa.

Curriculum Vitae

Sanne Dokter-Mersch, born in Vlaardingen, the Netherlands, in 1989, started a Bachelor in 'Comparative Indo-European Linguistics' in 2007 at Leiden University. During her Bachelor, she took classes in linguistics and various languages, and took elective courses on world religions, as well as a minor 'Law, Culture and Development'. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in 2011, after finishing her Bachelor thesis titled 'Vedisch *karóti* in de Atharvaveda' ('Vedic *karóti* in the Atharvaveda'). Being introduced to the language of Sanskrit and the religions and cultures of South Asia, Dokter-Mersch continued with a Research Master 'Area Studies: Asian Studies' in 2011 at Leiden University. She specialized in Sanskrit, Hinduism and manuscript research. During the first semester of the academic year of 2012—2013, she successfully finished multiple classes in Indology at Universität Hamburg, for which she received various grants. In August 2013, she graduated cum laude, after finishing her Master thesis titled 'Travelling through time and space with the *Kapālamocanamāhātmya* in the *Vāyupurāṇa*'. After gaining work experience outside the academic sector, Dokter-Mersch started her PhD in January 2016 within the NWO-funded project 'From Universe of Viṣṇu to Universe of Śiva', instigated by professor Peter C. Bisschop. During her PhD, she specialized in early Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Purāṇa literature and philology, and contributed papers to several international conferences, including the World Sanskrit Conference. As a team member of the *Skandapurāṇa* project, she edited three chapters of the *Skandapurāṇa*, which will be published in the forthcoming volume of the critical edition of the text.