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CONTENTS

PART ONE

Articles

PRADIP BHATTACHARYA

Revising the Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata: An Approach Through the Attempt to Strip Draupadī p. 11

MARCO FRANCESCHINI

Recasting Poetry: Words, Motifs and Scenes Borrowed from the Raghuvamśa and Reshaped in Buddhaghoṣa's Padyacūḍāmaṇi p. 43

MASSIMILIANO A. POLICHETTI

Understanding the Indo-Tibetan Sacred Music. An Introductory Note p. 67

NIELS SCHOUBBEN

'À la grecque comme à la grecque' – The Greek Kandahar Inscriptions as a Case Study in Indo-Greek Language Contact During the Hellenistic Period p. 79

VERONICA ARIEL VALENTI

Homo loquens e desiderio nel mondo vedico p. 119

VERONICA ARIEL VALENTI

RV X, 95, 1 e lo scambio amebeo primo p. 151

List of contributors p. 181

Reviews

PRADIP BHATTACHARYA, trans. from Sanskrit, *The Mahābhārata of Vyasa: The Complete Shantiparva Part 2: Mokshadharma*, Writers Workshop, Kolkata, 2016 (Indrajit Bandyopadhyay) p. 185

V. ADLURI and J. BAGCHEE, <i>Argument and Design – the Unity of the Mahābhārata</i> , Brill, Leiden, 2016 (Pradip Bhattacharya)..... p.	195
KEVIN MCGRATH, <i>Rāja Yudhiṣṭhira-Kingship in Epic Mahābhārata</i> , Orient Blackswan, Hyderabad, 2017 (Pradip Bhattacharya)..... p.	209
STEPHAN HILLYER LEVITT, <i>Collected Papers in Dravidian Studies</i> , Kaviri Pathippakam, Chennai, 2017 (Gabriella Olivero) p.	225
PRADIP BHATTACHARYA, <i>Narrative Art in the Mahābhārata: The Ādi Parva</i> , Dev Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2012 (Shekhar Sen)..... p.	231
Obituaries	235
 PART TWO	
A Selection of the Papers Presented at the Meeting of the Associazione Italiana di Studi Sanscriti (Rome, Università La Sapienza, 26 th -28 th October 2017).....p.	257
RAFFAELE TORELLA (A.I.S.S. President) Editorial	259
CHIARA LIVIO <i>Cosmic Pūjā Śivabhakti in Śrīkaṇṭhacarita V</i>	261
CINZIA PIERUCCINI <i>Hunting, Farming and Protecting Animals. Remarks on Migadāya and Mṛgavana</i> p.	285
PAOLA PISANO <i>Vīryaśulkāḥ Kanyāḥ: Aspects of Women's Dependence in the Mahābhārata and in Old Greek Sources</i> p.	305

MARGED FLAVIA TRUMPER	
<i>The Impact of the Arrival of Sound Technology on Hindustani Vocal Music and on the Role of Women in North Indian Art Music</i>	p. 321
MASSIMO VAI	
<i>Some Questions about Vedic Subordination</i>	p. 337

**A SELECTION OF THE PAPERS PRESENTED AT
THE MEETING OF THE ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA
DI STUDI SANSCRITI**

(Rome Sapienza 26th-28th October 2017)

edited by

Raffaele Torella, Marco Franceschini, Tiziana Pontillo,
Cinzia Pieruccini, Antonio Rigopoulos,
Francesco Sferra

Editorial

The *Associazione Italiana di Studi Sanscriti* (AISS) was established in the mid-1970s, founded by Oscar Botto, as the national counterpart of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies (IASS) founded in Paris in 1973. The first conference of the AISS was held in Turin on October 17, 1980, and from then onwards its meetings have been held fairly regularly every two years, each time at a different University where Sanskrit and South Asian studies are taught. The AISS has painstakingly published the proceedings of the conferences as well as summaries of the activities and research projects carried on in the main Italian Universities, thus documenting the developments of Sanskrit and South Asian studies in the last forty years. Recently, an official website of the AISS has been created which offers information on the activities of the *Associazione* and the principal Indological events taking place in Italy as well as abroad:

<http://www.associazioneitalianadistudisanscriti.org>.

The most recent conference of the AISS was held at the University of Rome Sapienza on October 26th-28th, and saw the participation of numerous Italian scholars working at Italian and foreign Universities, along with the participation of a few invited scholars from the Jagiellonian University of Cracow. The first day and part of the second were devoted to the presentation and brief discussion of thirteen papers freely investigating a wide variety of Indological topics. In the final seminar, titled “India and its encounter with the other” fourteen papers were presented and discussed. The articles comprised in this volume were selected by the AISS Board: R. Torella (President), M. Franceschini, T. Pontillo, C. Pieruccini, A. Rigopoulos, F. Sferra, and submitted to the standard process of double-blind peer review.

Raffaele Torella

CHIARA LIVIO

COSMIC PŪJĀ
ŚIVABHAKTI IN ŚRĪKAṆṬHACARITA V

Abstract

The *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* by Maṅkha (XII CE) can be considered as one of the last *mahākāvya* composed in a Hindu context in Kashmir – the reign of Jayasiṃha (1128-1155) – before the Muslim Sultanate. The author states from the very beginning that his *mahākāvya* is aimed at celebrating not his patron Jayasiṃha, but “that king whose court is Mount Kailāsa”, namely Śiva (ŚKC I 56). This and other *loci* have led the scholars to discuss about the metamorphosis of the *kavi*’s role within the court *entourage* and his ideological conflict with the king. So far, such observations have not considered the subject of the *praśasti* itself, Śiva, whose connection with the poet may be demonstrated by conclusive textual evidence: whilst the whole work is pervaded by the poet’s *bhakti*, it is in the v *sarga*, the *bhagavadvarṇana*, “description of the Lord”, that Maṅkha displays entirely his full devotion. Throughout this section, in fact, the veneration for Śiva assumes the features of a macrocosmic ritual: not only the human devotee, but also Indra, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and all the Hindu pantheon identify the god as *deus optimus maximus*. Maṅkha combines thereby elements of a daily *pūjā* with ritual actions of celestial devotees, creating the new image of a divine ceremony: what else is the *devadeva*

worth of, if not of an everlasting supreme offer, the one made by the gods?

Introduction

The *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita*¹ is a *mahākāvya* in 25 *sargas* written by Maṅkha, one of the most celebrated *kavi* in the XII CE Kashmir.² His work had been composed between the years 1140 and 1144³ under the patronage of king Jayasiṃha (1128-1155), Lohara dynasty,⁴ and later commented by Jonarāja (Kashmir, XV CE).⁵

Not surprisingly for a poet indebted to the cultural, religious and philosophical inheritance of the previous Shaivite Kashmiri scholars – Maṅkha dedicates the poem to Śiva. The work is, in

¹ Maṅkha's main work was discovered by BÜHLER, G., in "Detailed report of a tour in search of Sanskrit Mss. made in Kaśmīr, Rajputana and Central India", in *Journal of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Bombay, 1877. The only available editions of the text of the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* (abbr. ŚKC) with the commentary by Jonarāja (abbr. J.) are: DURGAPRASADA, P., PARABA, K. P., "The *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkhaka, With the Commentary of Jonarāja", in *Kāvyaṃālā*, Vol. 3, Nirṇaya-Sāgara Press, Bombay, 1887; DURGAPRASADA, P., PARABA, K. P., "The *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkhaka, With the Commentary of Jonarāja", in *Kāvyaṃālā*, Vol. 3, Tukārām Jāvajī, Bombay, 1900 (2nd rev. ed.); MAṆKHAKA, *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita, With the Sanskrit Commentary of Jonarāja*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1953 (reprint of 2nd rev. ed.). The XXV canto was translated for the first time by KREYENBORG, E., *Der XXV Gesang des Śrīkaṇṭhacaritam. Ein Beitrag zur altindischen Literaturgeschichte*, Philos.-Diss., Münster, 1929, and it is based on the first ed. (1887). Studies on the text have been conducted by BHATT, B. N., *Śrīkaṇṭhacaritam – A Study*, M. S. University of Baroda Research Series-14, Baroda, 1973 and by MANDAL, B. C., *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita, A Mahākāvya of Maṅkhaka, Literary Study with an Analysis of Social, Political and Historical Data of Kashmir of the 12th Century A.D.*, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Calcutta, 1991. The most noteworthy translation of *sargas* I.56, II-III, XIV-XV and XXV has been published by SLAJE, W. *Bacchanal in Himmel und andere Proben aus Maṅkha*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2015. The ŚKC has not been fully translated yet.

² The Kashmiri historian Kalhana quotes his name in his *Rājataranginī* VIII.2422-2423 and 3354. See STEIN, A., *Kalhana's Rājataranginī, or Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir*, Vol. I-II, Archibald Constable and Co., Westminster, 1900.

³ See SLAJE, W., *op.cit.*, pp. 13-14.

⁴ STEIN, A., *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 104-106.

⁵ See SLAJE, W., *Kingship in Kaśmīr (AD 1148-1459): from the pen of Jonarāja, Court Paṇḍit to Sulṭān Zayn al-'Abidin*, Studia Indologica Universitatis Halensis, Halle an der Saale, 2014.

fact, a panegyric for the deity, named Śrīkaṇṭha – the “beautiful-throated” –, through the storytelling of his great deeds. Within the many myths regarding the god, the author selects more specifically the well-known episode of the cosmic battle between Śiva and the enemy cities of Tripura.⁶ Despite the presence of a specific plot, the actual narration of the main event – *i.e.* the battle and the subsequent defeat of the *asuras* by the gods – covers only a few *sargas*,⁷ while the other sections are mostly dedicated to other “descriptions”, *varṇanas*.⁸ This way of treating the mythological narration is not new to the ornate poems in Sanskrit and it is common to keep the plot in the background while analysing more diffusely other aspects of the matter – the description of the army or the gathering of the troops, for instance.⁹

Nevertheless, even if Maṅkha complies with these *mahākāvya* precepts closely, the ŚKC remains quite atypical: it is one of the few *kāvyas* holding information on the *kavi* – his life, family, beliefs and opinions (ŚKC I-III) – and describing a *sabhā*, the assembly of the poets gathered to assist the reading of the poem itself (ŚKC XXV). The poem, therefore, appears to be extremely interesting from a historical point of view,¹⁰ and it has attracted modern scholars’ attention also for the political implications some details might arise:¹¹ why does Maṅkha declare his loyalty to Śiva, and not to the king (ŚKC I 56)?¹² Is the *praśasti* of king Jayasiṃha being left aside deliberately?

⁶ The *Tripuradahana* story has been mentioned in *Brāhmaṇas*, in the *Karṇaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Purāṇas*. See BHATT, B. N., *op. cit.*, pp. 10-20 and MANDAL, B. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

⁷ The actual battle occurs in ŚKC XXIII-XXIV. See BHATT, B. N., *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

⁸ A complete index of the *varṇanas* is placed at the beginning of the three printed editions (see fn. 1).

⁹ ŚKC XVIII-XXI. See BHATT, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ See OBROCK, L. J., *Translation and History: The Development of a Kashmiri Textual Tradition from ca. 1000-1500*, South and Southeast Asian Studies UC Berkeley, 2015, pp. 78 ff.

¹¹ POLLOCK, S., “The Death of Sanskrit”, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 43, No. 2, Apr 2001, pp. 392-426; HANNEDER, J., “On The Death of Sanskrit”, in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. 45, Kluwer Academic Publishers, The Netherlands, 2002, pp. 293-310.

¹² POLLOCK, S., *op. cit.*, p. 399 and SLAJE, W., *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

Why does the *sabhā* take place at Alamkāra's house, Maṅkha's brother, and not at court, in front of the king? It really seems that the author is intentionally disrespectful towards Jayasiṃha and his leadership.¹³ Such questions are legitimate, considering the historical events occurred shortly thereafter – the decay of the Hindu kingship in Kashmir and the rise of the Muslim Sultanate.

However, the *kavi*'s intention is clearly to eulogize Śiva: therefore, it is also necessary to examine in depth the approaches and strategies adopted by the poet to celebrate the god himself to fully understand the poem. The present paper analyses them: firstly, by critically discussing some lines of the fifth canto, the ones which clearly deals with the establishment of a cosmic ritual as supreme act of devotion for Śiva; secondly, by trying to read the images in a non-poetic context, to better understand if they can relate to practices possibly in vogue at Maṅkha's times.

The *pūjā* ritual in the V *sarga*

Among all the twenty-five *sargas*, the V canto, the *Bhagavadvarṇana*, is the only one manifestly dedicated to the “description of the Holy”, Śiva, but it seems to be much more than just a mere representation of his appearance. All the 57 stanzas¹⁴ are indeed centred on the celebration of the god's majesty, but it is also a declaration of faith, which expresses itself even through the convolution of the images. Śiva, quoted by name only in the first line (ŚKC V 1: *devaḥ svayam*) and then mentioned again along the *sarga* through relative and demonstrative pronouns, is the *devadeva*, the one and only.

¹³ POLLOCK, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 399-400.

¹⁴ The canto has never been translated before. It can be divided in two metrical parts, as follows: ŚKC V 1-47 (*vasantatilakā*); ŚKC V 48-57, various metres: 48 (*śārdūlavikrīḍita*), 49 (*mālinī*), 50 (*śārdūlavikrīḍita*), 51 (*mandākrāntā*), 52 (*śārdūlavikrīḍita*), 53 (*śikharinī*), 54 (*mandākrāntā*), 55 (*śārdūlavikrīḍita*), 56-57 (*sragdharā*).

Such literary device, not new neither to Mañkha¹⁵ nor to Indian classical poetry,¹⁶ while allowing the *kavi* to maintain an overall unity within the text, even in the diversity and complexity of the images employed, is keeping the audience locked on his beloved Śiva, the main subject of the section.

We notice, since the beginning, that the author satisfies well the *mahākāvya* prerequisites: showing an undoubtful and deep knowledge of Daṇḍin's rules,¹⁷ he presents the protagonist as a "skilful and noble hero"¹⁸ within the gods. In a non-poetic but religious perspective, Śiva is clearly the *deus optimus maximus*, the supreme lord. It is evident that Mañkha intends not only to display the god's distinctive traits through some references to iconography and mythology, but also to declare his own strong and personal devotion: considering his cultural and religious background,¹⁹ the deity is without any doubt the poet's object of *bhakti*. Such consideration is not just an assumption: both Mañkha in the text (ŚKC V 3 and 4) and Jonarāja in the commentary (comm. to ŚKC V 3, 4 and 11) use the word *bhakti* to explain the motive for the composition and for the actions described.

To strengthen the extraordinary role played by Śiva in the *sarga*, Mañkha has to introduce unique devotees: the god of the gods appears to be the core of a cosmic ritual, a divine *pūjā*, performed not by just some human beings, but exceptionally by the deities of the Hindu pantheon. This is the most peculiar feature of the *sarga*: each god occupies one or more lines, in which he – or she – is intent on a specific act of reverence, such

¹⁵ Mañkha applies the same structure also to other cantos. It is worth noticing particularly the IV *sarga*, which quote the subject *kailāsaḥ* only in the first line (ŚKC IV 1).

¹⁶ One of the best examples within the *mahākāvyas* is the *incipit* of Kalidāsa's *Kumārasaṃbhava*, which seems to be the inspiration for ŚKC IV. See SMITH, D. (trad.), *The birth of Kumara by Kālidāsa*, Clay Sanskrit Library, New York, 2005; BOCCALI, G., "La descrizione del Himālaya nel *Kumārasaṃbhava* (I, 1-17) di Kālidāsa", in *Indologica Taurinensia*, Vol. 37, Torino, 2011, pp. 75-106.

¹⁷ See RADDI ŚĀSTRĪ, R., POTDĀR, K. R., *Kāvyaḍarsa of Daṇḍin*, BORI, Poona, 1970.

¹⁸ See DANḌIN, *Kāvyaḍarśa* I.17.

¹⁹ For a detailed presentation of Mañkha's life and work see SLAJE, W., *op. cit.*, pp. 13-18.

as playing instruments, preparing lights, flowers, water and the like. The deities, forcing themselves to arrange a ceremony, lower themselves to a completely human status, boosting more Śiva's leading position. In fact, by mentioning these actions and materials either openly or implicitly, Mañkha is thinking of the earthly procedures and supplies, the *upacāras* or "sequence of services" required for the *pūjā* ceremony.

In the V *sarga*, the opening verses – the *incipit* (ŚKC V 1-4) – along with ŚKC V 6, 12 and 42 are the ones which illustrate more significantly the correlation between the grandiosity of Śiva and the *pūjā* ritual, although also other lines might be read as impregnated with underlying references to the cult of Śiva.

*vṛndārakādhipaśiroruhapārijāta-
sragbandhubhir madhukarair upavīṇitāṅghriḥ |
devaḥ svayaṃ jagadamugrahakelikāras
taṃ bālaśītakiraṇābharaṇo 'dhiśete || ŚKC V 1 ||*

“With His feet played as a *vīṇā* by the bees,
attracted by the coral-tree flowers' garlands
placed on the hair of the chief of the gods,
the God himself, adorned by the crescent Cold-rayed,
producing this pastime thanks to the grace for the
worlds,²⁰ sleeps upon it”

The grammatical subject of the line, the *devaḥ* Śiva, is not acting as the agent of the scene: the god must be venerated and thus he is playing a passive role, simply lying and sleeping on *taṃ*, the mount Kailāsa.²¹ On the contrary, the name of the active protagonist is expressed by the words *vṛndāraka adhipa*, the “chief of the gods”, Indra, who occupies symmetrically in the first hemistich the exact same *padas* of his counterpart Śiva.

²⁰ Or “creating this pastime [the playing and singing] as a grace for the worlds”. *kelau vīṇāgānam ucitam* J.

²¹ *taṃ [...] adhiśete [=] kailāsam āśrayati* J. The mount Kailāsa is the subject of the previous *sarga*. *taṃ* is seamlessly connecting the IV canto with the V one, continuing the so beloved game of pronouns-recalling.

Indra is depicted as wearing on his head a garland consisting of white *pārijāta* flowers,²² whose perfume attracts the *madhukaras*, the “honey-makers” (*i.e.* the bees). The latter, however, are not only imagined as flying around Indra’s wreath, but they are also described as involved in a musical performance before Śiva’s feet: his toes are charmingly “made resounding like a *vīṇā*”²³ by them buzzing. How the connection between the *madhukaras* on the head of the first god and the ones on the toes of the second can be explained? Only through the movement of bowing: Indra, bended, makes the bees on his forehead being close to Śiva’s feet as well. What a better declaration of inferiority if not from the contact between the purest part of the body, the head, and the most impure one, the feet? Evidence for the previous interpretation lays in the commentary, where Jonarāja notes down *indro’pi taṃ namati*, “even Indra is bowing before him [Śiva]”. It is obvious that the poet deploys such strategy to describe a relationship between the two gods: *indraḥ api*, even Indra, the most powerful of the gods, is bending before the magnificence of Śiva.²⁴

The other details of the stanza must not be ignored: the instrumental music of the *vīṇā*, the garland of *puspas* at the feet of the deity, and lastly the mountain Kailāsa, which serves as

²² The presence of these type of flowers fits well Indra’s iconography, since the *parijat* is one of the five trees of the *indraloka*.

²³ *upaviṇīta* is a denominative form from *vīṇā*, lit. “[the feet which are] made sounding like a *vīṇā* by the bees”.

²⁴ Such image is not unconventional, especially in Indian hymnal literature, the one incorporated into the *mahākāvya*s: some “stereotyped themes are used over and over again: in submission to the Almighty, the diadems of other gods touch the feet of mighty Śiva, or are compared to bees that swarm humming around Śiva’s lotus-feet” (LIENHARD, S., *A History of Classical Poetry: Sanskrit – Pali – Prakrit*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1984, pp. 130-131). References to the same image have been already found in ŚKC I 56, where the the *makaras* on Indra’s head – thus, his ornaments – are said to be kissing the dust at Śiva’s feet (See SLAJE, W., *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39). Moreover, it is possible to draw a parallel between ŚKC V 1 and Kālidāsa’s *Raghuvamśa* XII 29: the *pārijāta* flowers are in the latter case *kirīṭakoṭicyutā*, *i.e.* shaken on the *deva*’s head – Indra’s – while bending before Śiva, the *devadeva*, and thus falling on his feet (See ĀCHĀRYA, N. R., *The Kumārasambhava of Kālidāsa*, Nirnaya Sagara Press, Bombay, 1955 (14th ed.), p. 263 and DEVADHAR, C. R., *Works of Kālidāsa*, Vol. II, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 2004 (reprint), p. 188. I am grateful to Professor Franceschini for bringing this passage to my attention.

the god's *āsana*. It really seems that Mañkha is willing to set the preliminary arrangements for a *pūjā*, which intertwines both the human and the divine sides. In fact, on the one hand the *kavi* applies to a non-terrestrial occasion some completely earthly *upacāras*, the ones commonly used in daily ceremonies; on the other hand, the worshiper is a god, which elevates the ritual to a macrocosmic level.

The whole “divine devotee – human *upacāras*” dichotomy is not fully maintained in the second stanza, even if it does deal again with the ritual action of bowing. The agent, here, is different: not a god, but a “someone”, *kasya*, possibly an unknown male devotee. The complexity of the line, though, results not from the ambiguity of the nature of such worshiper, but from the presence of two other individuals: *yena*, *i.e.* Śiva, mentioned through the first of the many relative pronouns we encounter in the canto; *bhālapālī*, the actual grammatical subject of the line.

*yenāṅghripīṭhahaṭhasaṃtatavṛṣṭiniryat*²⁵
tiryakkiṇā jagati kasya na bhālapālī |
daivānadhītanavadivyaśubhākṣarālī-
nyāsecchayā nihitakākapadeva cakre || ŚKC V 2 ||

“For whom in the world has the Forehead Guardian,
that curved callus produced by the continuous,
obstinate rubbing
against the base of His pedestal,
not been made into an added *kākapada*
out of the desire of inserting a new,
celestial, and splendid
line of syllables, still unread by the Fate?”

²⁵ *vṛṣṭi* [=] *ghṛṣṭir gharṣaṇam* J. The manuscripts I have studied so far present: *trṣṭi* P□ (Pune, BORI, MS 197/1875-76, fol. 12v; l. 8); *ghṛṣṭi* P□ (Pune, BORI, MS 200/1875-76 fol. 30r; l. 2); *vṛṣṭa* J□ (Jammu, Rangunath Temple Library, MS 494 k, fol. 14r, l. 10); *ghṛṣṭi* J□^{text} (Jammu, Rangunath Temple Library, MS 753, fol. 52v, l. 12); *ghṛṣṭirgharṣaṇam* J□^{ṭikā} (Jammu, Rangunath Temple Library, MS 753, fol. 53r, l. 2); *ghṛṣṭi* L□ (London, India Office Library, MS IO 2548, fol. 18v, l. 1); *ghṛṣṭirgharṣaṇam* L□^{ṭikā} (London, India Office Library, MS IO 2033, fol. 30v, l. 1).

The real interpretative difficulty arises when analysing the actual subject, *bhāla-pālī*. On the one side, the commentator reads the compound as *bhāla-pālī*, meaning “the female protector (*pālī*) of the forehead (*bhāla*)”²⁶ and connected with *kiṇā*:²⁷ the goddess Bhālapālī is, indeed, the callus (*kiṇā*) which scars the devotee’s forehead. How is it formed? By ceaselessly hitting the basement of Śiva’s *mūrti* (*āṅghripīṭha*) with the head, while bending on it for devotion. On the other hand, Maṅkha also plays with the possibility of reading in the name of the goddess the word *ālī*, “line”, which is again linked to the shape of the callus.²⁸

The poet complicates the image much more: the *kiṇā-bhālapālī* is curved into the shape of a *kākapada*. Such compound, literally meaning “crow’s foot”, is diffusely used to indicate a v-shaped symbol which marks an omission in the text of the manuscripts: usually put by the scribe either on the left or the right margin of a defective line, it recalls the traces left by these birds on the ground. Maṅkha places such *kākapada* mark on the worshipper’s forehead, slipping through the idea that Śiva wishes to add here something previously missing.

The meaning of the image becomes clear only in the second half of the stanza: it is on the forehead that, for Indian beliefs, the Fate writes down the destiny of the human beings.²⁹ Declaring that there is “a line of syllables (or words) – new, divine and splendid – [still] unread by Daiva” on a prayer’s head amounts to saying that not even the Fate, the actual guardian of the forehead and supreme decision-maker, is able to read the non-written destiny that Śiva has planned for a devotee who shows such an extreme and fervent *bhakti*. It is the devotee himself who is

²⁶ *sā bhālapālī J.*

²⁷ I translated the compound as a *bahuvrīhi*.

²⁸ [...] *teṣām āliḥ pālī J.*

²⁹ KENT, E. F., “What’s Written on the Forehead Will Never Fail: Karma, Fate and Headwriting in Indian Folktales”, in *Asian Ethnology*, Vol. 68, No. 1, Nanzan University, 2009: 1-26, p.2: “The destiny so inscribed often takes the form of a set of verses indicating the most important features of a person’s life”.

acting like a scribe, instead: while repeatedly hitting Śiva's icon with his head – and thus adding on his forehead a scar which acts as a *kākapada* –, it is he who inserts on the manuscript of his life a new and positive destiny.

As we can see, Mañkha is slowly laying the foundations for the description of a complex *pūjā* ritual: although what attracts the attention first is Śiva's incredible power of control over both human and god devotees, the keywords for a proper reading of the situation are two: the compound *aṅghri-pīṭha*, which highlights the physical presence of a statue (possibly a *śivaliṅga*), and the word *bhāla*, the forehead, which carries once again the idea of a devotional downward motion.

The image of a bowing worshiper seems to be the common thread of the *incipit*, and it occurs again in the next line. Moreover, the opening word of the third stanza, *i.e.* *bhakti*, clarifies the main topic of this section, namely the “devotion” towards Śiva. The devotee is again a deity: Viṣṇu takes Indra's place in performing the *pūjā*. The action, explicitly presented in the first hemistich with the expressions “kissing the earth” and “bowed in devotion”, places the emphasis on Śiva's feet. In this case, the “Enemy of the Demons” is offering to Śiva's *caraṇas* the thunders and the clouds flocking around his head, while scattering apart on the soil the flowers of the garland he is carrying on his chest.

*bhaktyā natena purato 'vanicumbimūrdhnā
puṣpotkaraṃ vikiratā vanamālayeva |
daityāriṇā caraṇayoḥ kacameghavidyud-
oghair adāyīṣata yasya balipradīpāḥ || ŚKC V 3 ||*

“Bowling to Him for devotion,
with his head kissing the soil in front of him,
as if scattering apart sprinkles of blossoms
with the garland of the *vanamālā*³⁰

³⁰ *vanamālā* lit. garland of wood and wild flowers to be worn on the chest, said to be also Viṣṇu's prayer beads.

with the streams of flashing thunders
 from the clouds on his head
 lanterns for the oblation were offered at Śiva's feet
 by the Enemy of the Demons"

Three elements associated to the human ritualistic practice are well described here: *dhūma*, the smoke of the burning incense (*dhūpa*); *dīpas*, the lamps for the *pūjā*; *mālā*, the garland, whose blossoms are scattered all over the soil. It would have easily been the description of an earthly ceremony, if it weren't for the true nature of the materials involved: Viṣṇu uses the stormy clouds on his head to produce the smoke of the incense, and their thunders as lights for the *pūjā*.

Jonarāja does not explain in his commentary whether the clouds have the function of *dhūma* or not, but we can assume the correlation between 'grey clouds - water bearers' and 'smoke of the incense' on the basis of another stanza which contains the exact same simile.³¹

The pattern of a god offering its own naturalistic attributes to perform a ceremony for Śiva becomes increasingly more precise as the text continues. In fact, right at the opening of the fourth line, the word *pūjā* appears. Along with *bhakti*, it makes obvious what was only supposed before: the *kavi* is consciously describing an ongoing ritual, the one performed by the deities, and he is openly claiming this through his lexical choices.

pūjāsu bhaktirabhasātirasādhirūḍhas
tāmyann aśeṣakusumaprakaravyayena |
yasmai cikīrṣati punar druhiṇo 'pi nūnam
abhyarcanaṃ nijanivāsasaroruhena || ŚKC V 4 ||

"At the peak of the extreme emotion"³²

³¹ *dhūpadhūmam abhivyañjan bhairāṇavapayonmucām | dattadīpālikāḥ śrīṅgaprajvalattapanopalaiḥ || ŚKC IV 38. navameghair hetubhir dhupadhūmam iva prakāṣayan J.*

³² Jonarāja does not comment the word *atirasa*, which can be therefore read both as *atirasa*, "extreme emotion", and *atirasā*, "very succulent", the name for a plant. In the

born for the ardour of his devotion during the *pūjās*,
exhausted for the expense of a heap of entire flowers,
even now, again, Druhiṇa wishes to perform for Śiva
the worship with the lotus, his own abode”

The protagonist of the stanza, Brahmā-Druhiṇa, supports Indra and Viṣṇu in the worship of Śiva: even the three most important gods of the Hindu pantheon lower themselves to the roles of devotees. Moreover, not only has Brahmā already offered heaps of *aśeṣakuṣuma*, but also, he desires to perform again a *pūjā*, although exhausted. Two details make the image even more powerful. The first one is the use of the prefix *ati* to intensify the word *rasa*: the “emotion” is qualified as “extraordinary”, either because it consists in Brahmā’s one, a divine devotee, or because of the exceptional nature of Śiva, the object of devotion. The second one is the kind of *puṣpa* Brahmā wishes to offer again: the *saroruh*, the lotus which is traditionally thought as Brahmā’s *āsana*.

After having dealt with images specifically related to the *pūjā* ceremony, Mañkha introduces in ŚKC V 6 a new image. The *kavi* deals here with the rite of the *parisamūhana*,³³ according to Jonarāja “the action of a [devotee’s] wet hand which makes a circular movement from left to right [along the perimeter of] a fire”.³⁴ During such sacrifice, also “a heap of *kuśa* grass [is] scattered all around [the fire]”³⁵ and “an oblation (*āhuti*) is offered in the fire”.³⁶

second case, the most sensible translation would be “mounted on the *atirasā* because of an excess of *bhakti*”. I chose to follow the first interpretation for two reasons: firstly, *atirasa* fits well with the co-text, which presents the words *rabhasa* “ardour” and *bhakti* “devotion”, which point to Brahmā’s deep involvement into the *pūjā*; secondly, the compounds indicating the flowers are placed at the end in both the hemistiches, unlike *atirasā*. However, Mañkha might have intended the actions of climbing up on a plant different from the lotus as a consequence: certainly, Brahmā cannot abide on his *saroruh* while offering it to Śiva.

³³ See BHATT, B. N., *op. cit.*, p. 102.

³⁴ [...] *pāthaḥ prṣanti jalakañāstaiḥ parīsamūhanaṃ jalārdreṇa pāñināgneḥ pradakṣiṇī karaṇam J.*

³⁵ [...] *kuśastarā vahnēṣ caturdikṣu vikīryamāṇā darbhāstair vyāpte J.*

³⁶ [...] *cāgnāv āhutiḥ dīyate J.*

*krodhottamāṅgadhutilolakirīṭṣasindhu-
pāthapṛṣatparisamūhanasiktadikke |
ruddhāntike bhrukuṭipakṣmakuśastaraughair
yo manmathāhutim adatta vilocanāgnau || ŚKC V 6 ||*

“*In the fire of his eye, almost closed,
sprinkled all around by the parisamūhana
of the water drops of the Diadem-River,
shaken and agitated on his head out of anger,
with the scattered heaps of kuśa grass,
his eyelashes at the contraction of the brows,
There he was offering the oblation Manmatha*”

It is not clear if Maṅkha is placing this *upacāras* within a *pūjā* context or into a completely unrelated sacrifice, but what is certain is that even such ritual can be easily read as twofold. In fact, thanks to a quadruple *rūpaka*,³⁷ the human acts co-exist with divine performers, as follows:

1. *kirīṭa sindhu* [...] *parisamūhana*, “The *parisamūhana* [...] [of his] diadem-river”.
The worshipper, the Gaṅgā, occupies the upper part of the god’s matted hair like an ornament (*kirīṭa*). She is sprinkling her own waterdrops around Śiva’s third eye – on his forehead – because shaken by the god sudden movements.
2. *vilocana-agni*, “the fire of his eye”.
The circular inflamed cavity of Śiva’s third eye is the place for the oblations.
3. *pakṣma-kuśastara*, “the *kuśa* grass of his eyelashes”.
The eyelashes resemble in shape the blades of such sacrificial grass.
4. *manmatha-āhuti*, “the oblation [consisting of] Manmatha”.
Kāma is what it is being offered as oblation in the fire during the sacrifice.

³⁷ See GEROW, E., *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*, Mouton, The Hague, 1971, pp. 239 ff.

At a first sight, it seems that Mañkha is willing to narrate the mythological episode of the annihilation of God Kāma by the enraged Śiva. However, at the same time, we can notice that all the elements can be easily connected to an erotic scene as well: the sweat on the forehead, the trembling of the head, the contraction of the brows, the eyes half-closed, and finally, as an oblation, Manmatha, the god of love who “shakes the mind”. Maybe this is the reason why Jonarāja reads within the lines the compound *tripurasundarīnām* to qualify the word *krodha*: he links “rage” not with Śiva but with “the women of Tripura” angry because of love.³⁸ Quoting the women of the *āsuras* here is out of context, and we believe in a much simpler explanation: the god is depicted while performing a solemn sacrifice which has Kāma’s death as its effect.

Another line in which the god is celebrated as the active protagonist of a cosmic ritual is ŚKC V 12.

*siddhāṃ cireṇa vidhisūdahaṭhaprayatnāt
samrakṣitām atha mukundapurogavena |
yaḥ kevalo ’vagirate nikhilām salīlam
lokatrayīrasavatīm pralayotsaveṣu || ŚKC V 12 ||*

“Śiva alone, in the excitement
during the symposium that is
the destruction of the universe
playfully swallows down
the whole sacrificial food of the three worlds,
prepared slowly by the obstinate care
of the cook, the worshipper,
then checked by his executive chef, Mukunda”

The god Śiva, *yaḥ*, is presented while swallowing the *trilokas* – heaven, earth, and underworld – at the end of the *kalpa*. Again, the *kavi* intertwines the everyday ceremony with a divine one by

³⁸ It is likely that Jonarāja is involving here the *tripurasundarīs* in the light of the following lines, which has got these women as subject. See *vaktrāṇi* [...] *purakuraṅgadṛśām* (ŚKC V 7) and *tripurasundarīṅām mukhāni* J.

the means of a *rūpaka*, *i.e. lokatrayī-rasavatīm*: “the *rasavatī* (food offering, meal) of the three worlds”. Commonly arranged for the god and piled before his statue during the *pūjā*, such celestial food is here prepared by two worshippers: the “executive chef” or *purogava*³⁹ Viṣṇu-Mukunda, along with the *sūda*, his “sous-chef”.⁴⁰ In such macrocosmic perspective, the *rasavatī*, usually consisting of rice boiled with butter or milk, is now identified with the three worlds.

The image becomes much more vivid if we consider all its three interpretative levels at once: not only the ritualistic and the mythological ones (preparation, offering and consumption of the sacrificial food – annihilation of the three worlds at the end of the *kalpa*), but also the narrative aspect of the plot hidden between the lines, *i.e.* the tearing down of the Tripura cities along with the *triloka*’s ones.

The description of another type of sacrificial food offering occurs later in the *sarga*, where Maṅkha is being demonstrated as a master in the knowledge of the daily *pūjā* prescriptions, but also to be well acquainted with some customs related to more ancient traditions.

*yasmin vinirmitavati prasabhaṃ prakopād
atyugranigrahanavānubhavopadeśam |
udghoṣyate kratuṣu yājñīkatantravidbhir
adyāpi piṣṭacarubhājanam abjabandhuḥ || ŚKC V 42 ||*

“Having Śiva established – violently because of anger –
the prescription of a new custom
through his extremely fierce punishment,
even now, during the ceremonies,
the Moon’s Companion
is invoked as vessel for the mashed *caru*
by the experts of the sacrificial rules”

³⁹ *purogava* [=] *sūdādhyaḥsa* J. *i.e.* the director-superintendent of the kitchen.

⁴⁰ Is the sous-chef Brahmā, the one who creates the world after coming out of Viṣṇu’s lotus-navel? Such interpretation is not certain and Jonarāja does not mention the name of Brahmā in the commentary.

This line is particularly fascinating because of its intended lack of clarity: the expressions “new custom” (*navānubhava*), “fierce punishment” (*atyugranigraha*) and “mashed sacrificial food” (*piṣṭacarū*) are placed together with reference to a ceremony not better described in the text.

Jonarāja’s commentary gives us some useful hints for the comprehension of this stanza: first, the word *arka*, “Sun” as a comment to the subject *abjabandhu*, the “Companion of the Moon”; second, two related compounds, *danta-bhaṅga* “fracture of the teeth”, and *unmūlita-danta* “uprooted teeth”, both referred to the condition of the Sun itself and to his punishment.

Who is the Sun, and why is he toothless?

The episode of the “uprooting of the teeth” is present in the story of the god Pūṣan:⁴¹ Rudra-Śiva, being angry because uninvited at a sacrifice performed by the other gods, attacks the assembly while it is still gathered around the altar. The cruellest fate happens to be Pūṣan’s one: he is violently deprived of his teeth. Even though there are various versions of the same myth,⁴² which roots back to the *Ṛgveda* at its early stage,⁴³ three are the main common features:

1. The episode takes place in the context of a cosmic sacrifice.
2. In every narration, Pūṣan is an *āditya* – thus belonging to the solar dynasty.
This must explain Mankha’s *abjabandhu* and the word *arka* in the commentary to qualify the protagonist of the stanza.
3. The “plucking out” of the teeth causes Pūṣan’s inability to eat solid food.

⁴¹ See KRAMISH, S., “Pūṣan”, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 81, No. 2, Apr-Jun 1961, pp. 104-122.

⁴² See DONIGER, W., *Ascetism and eroticism in the mythology of Śiva*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, p. 116. Pūṣan is related both with the episode of the incest of Brahmā and with the one of Dakṣa’s sacrifice.

⁴³ See KRAMISH, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

A special offering should be served to him, boiled and soft: a sort of gruel (*karambha*,⁴⁴ *piṣṭa-caru*⁴⁵) must be prepared by the devotees due to the god's impairment. Such duty is seen thus as "new practice", *navānubhava*, not applied to the other deities but to Pūṣan alone.

If we have a look at the text of the *Mahābhārata*,⁴⁶ one of the many sources for Pūṣan's story, we might notice that Maṅkha's word choice is not accidental: the cosmic ritual is described with the word *yajña*, term employed here also by Maṅkha (*yājñika*). Moreover, in the *Mahābhārata* the god assumes function of a supply for the ritual, and in Maṅkha's text too the god Pūṣan becomes the inflamed vessel for the oblations (*bhājana*). Neither in the epic nor in the ŚKC it is specified whether Pūṣan's mouth resembles a cup on account of its toothless circularity or not. In any case, the whole cause-effect relationship – between the enraged Śiva and the mutilated Pūṣan – leads to a completely unexpected consequence, the new type of offering.

***Pūjā* and *kāvya upacāras*: a comparison**

The lines translated and analysed above have been selected among the others because of their specific images related to the *pūjā* ceremony and its *upacāras*. In the rest of the *sarga* as well there are hints which made me believe that Maṅkha's intention is to follow a specific pattern. I could not avoid considering the text in its entirety and, in this case, a study of the lines as *muktakas* is extremely misleading: the author must have had in mind a uniform plan, since even from the beginning we can recognize such intra-textual references. For instance, the first line is not only related to the last one of the previous canto – by

⁴⁴ See KRAMISH, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 104, 118-119.

⁴⁵ See BHATT, B. N., *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁴⁶ *Mahābhārata* X 18 1-26.

the means of the pronoun *tam*, as seen before⁴⁷ –, but it is also connected to the following stanzas both in a grammatical and in a poetic perspective. Despite the relative pronouns' help in maintaining the text stylistically consistent, yet it is only by means of the poetic contents that the sense of an overall unity is evoked. The images dealing with the divine devotees performing a human ritual are indeed a constant in the *sarga*, and it is impossible that Mañkha is juxtaposing such themes only accidentally: the *kavi*, an erudite and skilful literate, must have employed everything in his power to ensure the effectiveness of his *mahākāvya*, as well as its cohesiveness.

Which begs the question: since we stated that a ritual, in both its human and cosmic aspect, is here described, to which extent does the poet satisfy the description of its performance? Before answering, it is essential to distinguish between traditional *upacāras*, the ones practiced also nowadays in the temples, and what we might call “*kāvya-upacāras*”, the ones described in the ŚKC text and poetically revisited by the *kavi* for the sake of art.

Since anthropological or literary studies regarding such ceremony in medieval Kashmir have not been conducted yet – and they are generally difficult to pursue for the wide variety of local traditions – I relied on Bühnemann's and Einoo's works on *pūjā*⁴⁸ to trace and list the *upacāras* Mañkha might hide behind the complex structure of his composition. Even though they do not specifically deal with the Valley, they are, so far, the best starting point to catalogue the most common steps of such ceremony.

Both Bühnemann and Einoo identify sixteen standard *upacāras*, together called *ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā*, whose performance (*prayoga*) can be summarized, in order, as follows: 1. invocation of the god (*āvāhana*); 2. offering of a seat (*āsana*); 3. offering of water for washing the feet (*pādya*); 4. offering of water for the respectful reception of a guest (*arghya*); 5. offering of water for sipping (*ācamanīya*); 6. water for the bath

⁴⁷ ŚKC V 1.

⁴⁸ See BÜHNEMANN, G., *Pūjā, A Study in Smarta Ritual*, Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, Vienna, 1988 and EINO, S., “The Formation of the Pūjā Ceremony”, in *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*, Vol. 20, 1996, pp. 73-87.

of the *liṅga* – if Śiva – (*snāna* or *mahāsnāna*); 7. offering of clothes and garments (*vastra*); 8. offering of the sacred thread (*upavīta* or *yajñopavīta*); 9. offering of sandalwood paste or unguents for smearing on the idol (*gandha* and *anulepana*); 10. offering of flowers and leaves (*puṣpa*); 11. offering of incense (*dhūpa* or *dhūpaka*); 12. offering of lamps (*dīpa* or *dīpaka*); 13. offerings of food (*naivedya* or *nivedana*); 14. offering of mouth perfume (*mukha-vāsa*); 15. recitation of hymns (*stotra*) and prostration before the deity (*praśama*); 16. circumambulation around the statue of the god (*pradakṣiṇā*) and dismissal of it (*visarjana*).⁴⁹

The previous list is meant to be a guideline to our interpretation of the *V sarga*, particularly in the parts related to the Śiva-*pūjā*, aiming firstly to a better understanding of the internal structure of the canto, and secondly to a redefinition of the section as non-accidental but consistent. In our case, however, a certain level of abstraction and standardization is necessary to refer to the holy services. As a matter of fact, two factors must be considered:

1. The *pūjā* and the materials employed are not always explicitly mentioned in the *sarga*, but they are mostly implied in the non-primary meanings of the lines. Therefore, it is anything but simple to distinguish simple poetic images from actual descriptions of *upacāras*.
2. As a *kāvya* composition, the text is not prescriptive, thus it is meant to celebrate Śiva rather than to instruct the devotees.⁵⁰ Therefore, we must not demand a linear and step-by-step order in the description of the ritualistic practices.

⁴⁹ See BÜHNEMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-17 and EINO, S., *op. cit.*, p.73.

⁵⁰ Normative texts are already existing and widespread. See BÜHNEMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-19.

traditional <i>upacāras</i>	<i>kāvya-upacāra</i>		
<i>ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā</i> + additions (*)	ŚKC V		
	yes/no	line	keywords
1. <i>āvāhana</i>			
2. <i>āsana</i>	x	1, 2	<i>taṃ</i> (Kailāsa); <i>aṅghripīṭha</i>
3. <i>pādya</i>			
4. <i>arghya</i>			
5. <i>acamanīya</i>			
6. <i>snāna</i> or <i>mahāsnāna</i>	x	6	<i>sikta</i> ; <i>pāthapṛṣat</i>
7. <i>vastra</i>			
8. <i>upavīta</i> or <i>yajñopavīta</i>			
9. <i>gandha</i> and <i>anulepana</i>	x	1	
10. <i>puṣpa</i>	x	1,3,4	<i>pārijātasraj</i> ; <i>vanamālā</i> ; <i>puṣpotkara</i> ; <i>atirasā</i> (?); <i>saroruh</i> ; <i>aśeṣakusuma</i>
11. <i>dhūpa</i> or <i>dhūpaka</i>	x	3	<i>megha</i> ;
12. <i>dīpa</i> or <i>dīpaka</i>	x	3	<i>vidyut</i> ; <i>balipradīpa</i> ;
13. <i>naivedya</i> or <i>nivedana</i>	x	12	<i>sūda</i> ; <i>purogava</i> ; <i>rasavatī</i> ; <i>piṣṭacarū</i>
14. <i>mukha-vāsa</i>			
15. <i>stotra</i> and <i>praśama</i>			
16. <i>pradakṣiṇā</i> and <i>visarjana</i>			
* <i>pariṣeka</i>	x	6	<i>parisamūhana</i> ;
* <i>namaskāra</i>	x	1, 2, 3	<i>haṭhasamtatagrṣṭi</i> ; <i>nata</i> ; <i>avanicumbimūrdhan</i> ; <i>carāṇa</i>
* <i>kuśa</i> grass	x	6	<i>kuśastara</i>
* <i>bali</i>	x	6	<i>manmathāhuti</i>
* music	x	1	<i>upavīṇita</i>

* objects	x	42	<i>bhājana</i>
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Table 1: Depicts cross-references between the standard ritual and the one of the ŚKC

As the Table 1 pinpoints, most of the services normally employed in the human *pūjā* are also introduced by the poet. Moreover, as seen before, the *kavi* himself uses in the text the keywords *pūjā* and *bhakti*, which dispel the doubts of the type of ceremony he intends to describe.

However, despite the image of the establishment of a *pūjā* being very clear, in some lines we come across a terminology which seems to lead to different and more ancient types of rituals, such as the fire oblations in a *yajña*. As Lidova writes, “*yajña* held pride of place as a solemn rite in the Vedic time, while *pūjā* became widespread in the post-Vedic era to become the central ritual of Hinduism”.⁵¹ Why then Mañkha, a twelfth-century author, is mentioning sacrificial practises related to Vedic times within the description of the performance of a *pūjā*? We can solve the case of *yajña*, i.e. “sacrifice”, in ŚKC V 42, with the following two considerations. First, Mañkha is narrating a specific mythological episode, which deals with an open-air sacrifice at the end of a *kalpa* performed by the gods.⁵² In other words, by using the same terminology of the epics and the Purāṇas, its antecedents, he is providing the audience with a correlation between the cosmic aspect of the ancient ritual and the one of the ŚKC. Second, even though “in *pūjā* rituals, the sacrifice of flowers, incense, food, and water was usually offered without fire as intermediary”,⁵³ Mañkha might have added it for the sake of producing more effective images: since he is celebrating Śiva, whose third eye is said to be inflamed, it would

⁵¹ See LIDOVA, N., “The Changes in Indian Ritualism, *Yajña* versus *Pūjā*”, in HIMANSHU, P.R. (ed.), *Archaeology and text: the temple in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, p. 205. For other continuities, see EINO, S., *op.cit.*, and EINO, S., “The formation of Hindu Ritual”, in EINO, S., TAKASHIMA, J. (ed.), *From material to deity: Indian rituals of consecration*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 8-9.

⁵² ŚKC V 42.

⁵³ See LIDOVA, N., *op. cit.*, p. 211.

have been strange not to mention the fire, one of the most characteristic elements of the god's iconography. After all, the Vedic "havir-yajña type [of ritual] – varieties of *agnihotra*, which was based on simple fire sacrifice [...] was incorporated totally unchanged in the ritual system of the *pūjā* to make one of the stages of the ritual".⁵⁴ Despite such considerations, this is certainly Mañkha's smart way to embed his incomparable erudition into the *mahākāvya*.

Apart from the *upacāras* listed in the Table 1, many more are the details related to the *pūjā* ceremony that we can only assume by the context, without them being openly presented by the poet. For instance, in the case of "bowing" as act of *namaskāra* (ŚKC V 1-2-3) it is just the overall image resulting at the end that unveils the correct interpretation. Such strategy of leaving "unexpressed" the true meaning, subject therefore to the audience's various readings, is typical of *kāvya* and it is indeed Mañkha's forte. In his work, the images are complex not only because of their prescribed elaborate structure – the words must fit the metrics, they must be both innovative, and yet freshly astonishing – but also because the poet himself is reticent on what he really wants to express as profound and non-immediate meaning. As a matter of fact, sometimes not even the commentator Jonarāja is able to explain the unusual depictions or the fancy terms Mañkha chooses to use, and a modern reader must interpret the text without the help of the glosses.

Conclusions

Does Mañkha derive his knowledge – and thus his poetic descriptions – from rituals performed in Kashmir at his time? It is difficult to answer exhaustively to such question, since at present we are lacking a full translation of the text and its commentary: the ŚKC requires further studies, and it would be premature to make assumptions without a complete knowledge

⁵⁴ See LIDOVA, N., *op. cit.*, p. 217.

of all the intra-textual references.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, as far as I could understand from my preliminary translation of the *V sarga*, the primary aim of the *kavi* is here very clear: even if he does not intend to instruct the audience on “how to make a *pūjā*”, it is indeed the religious practice the basis of all the images described. I believe that Maṅkha was familiar with the procedures adopted in the temples, and the sacrifice was widespread at the time of the poet⁵⁶ – it would have been surprising otherwise. However, what strikes the modern reader is not the actual rite, but the strategy adopted by the poet to create his unique ritual, poetic and timeless: by combining acts and materials of a traditionally human *pūjā* with extraordinary figures, the divine devotees. In my opinion, such a way of presenting a common scene – familiar to the audience, yet in a non-chronological order and in a completely transcendent context – must not be read as the poet’s lack of accuracy, but, in the *kāvya* perspective, as artistic license, which makes room for the *kavi*’s impressive creativity.

⁵⁵ The work of Bhatt (BHATT, B. N., *op. cit.*) is the first attempt of a complete study on the text, which is undoubtedly valuable for its historical, social and religious data, but it does not present a translation of the text.

⁵⁶ See BHATT, B. N., *op. cit.*, pp. 100-103.

