

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (also known as *Pādmatantra*), a work of South Indian origin belonging to the Pāñcarātra. The latter is a Vaiṣṇava tantric religious tradition, the oldest known literary source for which is the *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (not later than the IV-V century A. D.)¹ and the earliest literary and epigraphic references to which date back to the VII century A. D.² The authoritative scriptures of the Pāñcarātra, the so-called *saṃhitā*-s, form a vast corpus of works which were composed over the course of several centuries.

The earliest texts originated in North India, where a Kashmirian Pāñcarātra was connected with and influenced by the Śaiva Mantramārga³. In a recent study, Sanderson argues that, during the early medieval period, within the competition among the different religious traditions for royal patronage, Vaiṣṇavism underwent a process of reformation by which, following the model of the flourishing Śaivism of the Mantramārga, the Vaiṣṇava-s provided themselves with a new tantric ritual system that found expression in the Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s⁴. With regard to “the text-flow between the texts of Śaivism and those of the Pāñcarātra”, Sanderson shows how the early scriptures known as the three jewels of the Pāñcarātra, namely the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (JS), *Sātvatasamhitā* (SS)

¹ See Schreiner (ed.) 1997: 1.

² See Colas 2005: 240.

³ For an outline of the history of this branch of Śaivism, see Sanderson 1988: 667ff.

⁴ See Sanderson 2009: 61.

and *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* (PauṣS), had been influenced by the ritual system of the Śaiva Siddhānta, and he suggests that these works were composed not before 850 A. D.⁵; as for the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (AS) and the *Lakṣmītantra* (LT), he suggests that, on account of their being indebted to the doctrines of the Trika, these *saṃhitā*-s, of South Indian origin, must postdate the *Pratyabhijñāṛdaya* of Kṣemarāja (1000-1050)⁶. Furthermore, according to Sanderson, this tradition of Śaiva-influenced Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s was “adapted in South India as the basis of texts such as the *Īśvarasaṃhitā* (ĪS), *Pādmasaṃhitā* (PādS) and *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (PārS), whose purpose, absent in the earlier *Samhitās*, was to provide scriptural authority for a Pāñcarātrika system of temple-worship.”⁷

In its spread to the South, the Pāñcarātra flourished, producing the corpus of scriptures which includes the majority of the extant *saṃhitā*-s. If the texts of northern origin are affected by the Śaiva influence, the texts belonging to the South Indian tradition of Pāñcarātra show peculiar characteristics, determined by the complex relationships of mutual influences between the Pāñcarātra and both the Vaiṣṇava Brahmanic orthodoxy and the philosophy of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta⁸. While the impact of the Brahmanic way of thinking and living resulted in a process of domestication of the “wild” features of the tantric rituals handed down in the *saṃhitā*-s, the *bhakti* spirituality characterizing the religiosity of the southern Pāñcarātra may be attributed to the influence of the Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy. The enduring importance of the southern Pāñcarātra is shown by the fact that its *saṃhitā*-s are the primary sources of the living tradition which establishes, up to the present time, the ritual followed in several South Indian Vaiṣṇava temples.

⁵ See Sanderson 2001: 38-39, note 50 and Sanderson 2009: 62, 66-69.

⁶ See Sanderson 2001: 35-38 and Sanderson 2009: 70.

⁷ Sanderson 2009: 61, note 64.

⁸ With regard to the influence of the learned Vaiṣṇava Brahmanic orthodoxy on the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta and on the religiosity of the Pāñcarātra of South Indian tradition, see Oberhammer 2007.

Presently, as research stands, an exhaustive history of the Pāñcarātra tradition remains to be written. Following the pioneering study by O. Schrader on the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (1916), S. Gupta's translation of the *Lakṣmī Tantra* (1972) and the publication of the *Descriptive Bibliography of the Printed Texts of the Pāñcarātrāgama* by H. D. Smith (1975, 1980), in the last decades several monographies and many articles have been published, enlarging and deepening scholarly knowledge of the Pāñcarātra textual tradition. The monographic studies which have appeared to date are: the works by M. Matsubara on the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (1994), by M. Rastelli on the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* (1999), by A. Bock-Raming on the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* and *Sātvatasamhitā* (SS) (2002), by M. Czerniac-Drożdżowicz on the *Paramasaṃhitā* (ParS) (2003) and by M. Rastelli on the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (2006). It is worth mentioning also the annotated translation of several chapters of the *Sātvatasamhitā* by H. Hikita (1990-1994)⁹. The scholarly work hitherto carried out has shown the importance of research on the Pāñcarātra sources for a better understanding of the history of the Vaiṣṇava religious traditions and philosophical schools in medieval India. The *saṃhitā*-s studied so far reveal great richness and variety in their respective theological and philosophical insights, teachings about the means of salvation and ritual systems, so that - as Rastelli has already remarked¹⁰ - the study of each of these works sheds light on certain features of the multifaceted Pāñcarātra phenomenon. This work, insofar as it is the first monographic study of the PādS, aims to contribute to the research work-in-progress in the field of the South Indian Sanskrit textual tradition of Pāñcarātra.

⁹ The full references to these works are given in the Bibliography. For the bibliographical details of Hikita's translation of the SS, see Rastelli 1999: 16. With regard to the articles, only those referred to or quoted in the present study are mentioned in the Bibliography; therefore the latter does not provide a complete list of the publications about Pāñcarātra.

¹⁰ See Rastelli 1999: 23-24.

Period of Composition of the Pādmasaṃhitā

The authoritativeness of the PādS among the *pāñcarātrin*-s has been strengthened by its being traditionally associated with the JS, one of the three jewels of the Pāñcarātra. As Smith has already remarked, up to the present time the PādS has been one of the most widely followed *saṃhitā*, a basic text in the training of the Pāñcarātra *arcaka*-s, as well as a guide for worship in several South Indian Vaiṣṇava temples¹¹.

As for the other anonymous works forming the corpus of the Pāñcarātra literature, it is difficult to establish a precise date of composition for the PādS. A tentative relative chronology may be inferred by means of a historical-philological approach, assessing the relationships and mutual influences between the PādS and other Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s, evaluating textual correspondences (i.e. parallel passages), comparable formulations and similar teachings. But, even if it is possible in this way to indicate a *terminus a quo* and a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the work, further problems arise with regard to the history of the text-transmission of the PādS; it is thus necessary to discuss the philological issues relating to the different layers of the text and the process of internal reworking, which so often characterizes the Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s.

The traditional association of the PādS with the JS is based on a passage of the *adhika pāṭha* (“additional text”)¹² of the first chapter of the JS, where the PādS is regarded as a comment, an explanation (*vyākhyāna*) of the JS. In this passage, the PārS is similarly linked

¹¹ See Smith 1975: 197.

¹² As stated by the editor of the JS, this text is not found in all the manuscripts of the JS; according to K. V. S. Rajan, it constitutes a later interpolation datable to the XIV century, whereas - as acknowledged by scholars - the date of composition of the JS is not later than the IX century (for further information and a discussion about the place of the *adhika pāṭha* in the JS, see Rastelli 1999: 25-27 and Rastelli 1999a: 52ff. For a discussion of the date of composition of the JS, according to the suggestions of K. V. S. Rajan, A. Sanderson and A. Bock-Raming, see Rastelli 2006: 50).

with the PauṣS and the ĪS with the SS¹³. But the import of this passage is rather limited. In fact - as observed by Rastelli¹⁴ - in spite of the assertion contained in the *adhika pāṭha*, the PādS, PārS and ĪS cannot be considered as commentaries of the JS, PauṣS and SS, respectively, in the strict sense; in the case of JS and PādS, it is only possible to speak of an influence of the former on the latter, limited to specific topics. Furthermore - as remarked by Rastelli¹⁵ - not only is there no explicit statement or evidence in the PādS corroborating its dependence on the JS, but on the contrary there is evidence against it. Firstly, in the PādS list of the five jewels of the Tantra-s - counting the *Pādma-*, *Sanatkumāra-*, *Parama-* *Padmodbhava-* and *Māhendra-saṃhitā-s* - the JS is not mentioned¹⁶; secondly, with regard to ritual and practical matters dealt with in the *yogapāda*, *kriyāpāda* and *caryāpāda*, the PādS proves to be independent from the JS; finally, the chief *mantra-s* taught in the two *saṃhitā-s* are different (namely, the *mūlamantra* [oṃ kṣīṃ kṣiḥ] in the JS and the *dvādaśākṣaramantra* [oṃ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya] in the PādS).

The results of the present study confirm that, while the JS is certainly to be considered as one of the sources which the author(s) of the PādS referred to, with regard to specific topics, yet it does not deserve a special or prominent place among the other sources of the PādS. Therefore the traditional association between the two *saṃhitā-s* is not justified from the point of view of textual criticism.

As far as the portions of the PādS discussed in this study are concerned, there are a number of Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā-s* which are to be considered, either as direct references on which the text of the PādS is based, or as sources which have inspired or influenced the

¹³ See JS, *adhika pāṭha*, 6-8b: *vyākhyāmūlanayenaiśāṃ gauravaṃ sampratiṣṭhitam tantrē'py aṣṭottaraśate pārameśvarasaṃhitā* || A6 *pauskarārthavivṛtyarthā vyākhyārūpāvatāritā sāttvatasya vivṛtyartham īśvaraṃ tantram uttamam* || A7 *jayākhyasyāsya tantrasya vyākhyānaṃ pādman ucyate* | A8ab

¹⁴ See Rastelli 1999: 25 and note 8.

¹⁵ See Rastelli 1999a: 55-56.

¹⁶ See PādS, *cp*, 33, 204-205b: *tantrāṅgaṃ caiva ratnāni pañcāhuḥ paramarṣayaḥ | pādman sanatkumāraṃ ca tathā paramasaṃhitā* || 33.204 *padmodbhavaṃ ca māhendraṃ kaṇva tantrāmṛtāni ca* | 33.205ab

author(s) of the PādS in formulating their teachings about several matters. These sources are: the ParS, AS, JS, SS, and LT¹⁷. By acknowledging the dates of composition of these works suggested by scholars - namely: not before 850 A. D. for JS and SS, before 1000 A. D. for ParS¹⁸ and after 1050 A. D. for AS and LT - the beginning of the XII century may be indicated as the earliest *terminus a quo* for the composition of the PādS, at least as far as the scrutinized portions of the work are concerned.

In Rastelli's monographic study of the PārS, in which the work is dated from 1100 to 1300 A. D.¹⁹, the author shows that the text was compiled by taking text-passages from several Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s, among which the PādS was included²⁰. On the basis of an examination of parallel passages dealing with the *pañcopaniṣad-mantra*, Rastelli argues that the PādS must be older than the PārS²¹. This is evidence that the PādS is at least earlier than the XIV century.

But a definite *terminus ante quem* is provided by Veṅkaṭanātha (1268-1369), who repeatedly quotes the PādS in his *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*²². The number of quotations, all taken from the *caryāpāda*, shows that by the time of Veṅkaṭanātha, the PādS was considered an important and authoritative source for the Pāñcarātra ritual system.

¹⁷ See the table of the sources of the PādS, below, p. 339.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the date of composition of the ParS, see Czerniak-Drożdżowicz 2003: 28.

¹⁹ See Rastelli 2006: 54.

²⁰ See *Ibidem*: 49. The passages of the PādS identified as sources of the PārS are indexed in *Ibidem*: 570-571.

²¹ See *Ibidem*: 59.

²² Examination of the text of the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* reveals that the PādS is quoted in many places. In the edition of the PRR published in 1996, the quotations from the PādS, for which Veṅkaṭanātha himself gives the precise references, are found on the following pages: p. 9: PādS, *cp*, 19, 111c-113b and PādS, *cp*, 19, 117ab; p. 10-11: PādS, *cp*, 19, 113c-128b; p. 13: PādS, *cp*, 19, 131-132; p. 50: PādS, *cp*, 13, 1-6b; p. 98: PādS, *cp*, 13, 12c-16b; p. 102: PādS, *cp*, 13, 16c-19; p. 110: PādS, *cp*, 13, 23-28b; p. 126: PādS, *cp*, 13, 4c-5b and PādS, *cp*, 13, 28-30; p. 129: PādS, *cp*, 13, 31-34b; p. 164: PādS, *cp*, 13, 72c-77. Further references to the PādS are found in the Index of quotations (pp. 190-225).

Therefore, the textual references mentioned so far lead to the conclusion that the PādS must have been composed in a period ranging from the beginning of the XII century to the second half of the XIII century A. D.

A further indication that the PādS does not belong to the group of the earlier *saṃhitā*-s is given by the structure of the text. The work is divided into four sections (*pāda*) devoted, respectively, to knowledge (*jñāna*), *yoga*, ritual (*kriyā*) and right conduct (*caryā*). Within the Pāñcarātra literature, at least among the printed texts, the PādS is the only work endowed with this fourfold division. Further exceptions are constituted by two late works, the *Bṛhadbrahmasaṃhitā* and the *Śāṅḍilyasaṃhitā*, both divided into four sections which, however, are not labelled²³. With regard to the *Śaivāgama*-s, Brunner²⁴ has shown that the division into four *pāda*-s is not a characteristic either of the majority of the extant texts, or of the older sources. Most *āgama*-s “consisted originally of a continuous series of *paṭalas*, arranged according to a logical sequence, but not distributed into four sections. They dealt mainly with rituals, but were interspersed with passages - eventually whole chapters - which gave the necessary information on doctrinal, yogic and disciplinary nature”²⁵. Brunner writes that it was only around the VIII century A. D. that texts presenting this quadripartition appeared, probably as works of learned *ācārya*-s, more concerned with speculative matters than the compilers of the older *āgama*-s²⁶. This is similar to the situation of the Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s: neither the majority of the extant texts, nor such earlier sources as the three jewels (JS, SS and PauṣS) present the four *pāda*-s which, on the contrary, constitute an exceptional and distinctive feature of some later works.

²³ For details about these two *saṃhitā*-s, see Smith 1975: 297ff and 417ff respectively.

With regard to the alleged, yet not historically proven, quadripartition of LT and *Viṣṇusaṃhitā*, see the remarks by Rastelli in TAK II 2004: 282.

²⁴ See Brunner 1986-92.

²⁵ *Ibidem*: 273.

²⁶ See *Ibidem*: 274.

Contents of the Pādmasaṃhitā

The contents of the PādS provide full and detailed information about every aspect of the religious life of the *pāñcarātrin*, including philosophical and theological doctrines, yogic and ritual practices and rules of right conduct²⁷.

The traditional story of the origin and transmission of the text of the PādS - i.e. the so-called “descent of the scripture” (*śāstrāvātāra*) - is related in the first chapter of the *jñānapāda* (*jp*), within a narrative framework which emphasizes the antiquity and authoritativeness of the work, presenting it as the quintessence of an original divine revelation²⁸. Accordingly, the teachings contained in the PādS were first revealed by Viṣṇu (Keśava) to Brahmā in 1,500,000 verses, then summarized and communicated by Brahmā to Kapila in 500,000 verses, then by Kapila to the serpent Padma in 100,000 verses and by Padma to Saṃvarta in 10,000 verses; because of Padma the work is called *Pādmasaṃhitā*. It is Saṃvarta himself who retraces the *śāstrāvātāra*, while he is speaking to the sage Kaṇva, whose hermitage provides the setting of the frame story of the work. Within the dialogue between Padma and Saṃvarta, the main dialogue occurs between Bhagavān and Brahmā, in which the former discloses to the latter the teachings contained in the PādS.

The first chapter of the *jp* touches also upon other matters of general interest, such as the origin and meaning of the name

²⁷ The PādS is a rather long work, its four sections containing respectively 12, 5, 32 and 33 chapters (*adhyaīya*) and counting respectively 628, 150, 3045 and 5432 verses (more than 9200 verses altogether).

A detailed summary of the contents of the PādS, section by section and chapter by chapter, is found in Smith 1975: 197-244. Since a comprehensive scrutiny of the whole text of the PādS is far beyond the scope of the present study, a brief outline of the main topics dealt with in the four sections of the work will suffice and suit the purpose of this introduction.

²⁸ For a discussion of the meaning of the stories of revelation, in traditional accounts of the text-transmission of authoritative scriptures, see Oberhammer 1994; in particular, with regard to the *śāstrāvātāra* of the PādS, see pp. 51ff.

Pāñcarātra²⁹, for which the PādS gives its own “etymology”. According to this, the Pāñcarātra was given its denomination because in its presence the other five systems (Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Buddhism, Jainism and Śaivism) appear as dark as the night (*rātrīyante*)³⁰. In this chapter an outline is traced of the different schools of Pāñcarātra, the *siddhānta*-s, a topic which is extensively discussed in another part of the work³¹. The chapter ends with a list of 108 Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s, which are regarded as canonical by the PādS.

The *jñānapāda* (“section of knowledge”) is the chief source for the philosophical and theological teachings of the PādS; it deals with the doctrine of God, the creation of the world of living beings, the origination and conditions of the individual souls, the causes of bondage, the means of salvation and the doctrine of liberation.

The last four chapters of this section provide a description of a purāṇic type of cosmology and cosmography, giving details about the Jambudvīpa, the sacred geography of India, the Nether and Upper Worlds and Vaikuṅṭha.

The *yogapāda* (*yp*) (“section of *yoga*”) constitutes a general introduction to the yogic aspects of the ritual practices taught in the PādS. It contains: an outline of the yogic disciplines, which follows the classical scheme of the eight “limbs” (*aṅga*) of *yoga*; a description of the subtle physiology and of the related psycho-physical practices of the *yogin*; a discussion of some meditative yogic-ritual practices.

The *kriyāpāda* (*kp*) (“section of ritual”) may be considered, independently, as a liturgical manual on temple building. It provides a systematic, complete and accurate description of the rituals accompanying every stage of the construction of the temples and the installation and consecration of the cult-images. It is addressed to

²⁹ For a discussion of the meaning of the term Pāñcarātra, see van Buitenen 1962 and van Buitenen 1971: 13-16; for a survey of the different explanations of the term, see Varadachari 1982: 119-131

³⁰ See PādS, *jp*, 1, 71c-72: [kaṇvaḥ] pañcarātrasamākhyāsau kathaṃ loke pravartate || 1.71cd [saṃvartaḥ] pañcetarāṇi śāstrāṇi rātrīyante mahānty api | tatsannidhau samākhyāsau tena loke pravartate || 1.72

³¹ See PādS, *cp*, 21.

the *ācārya* who, being an expert both in Pāñcarātra theology and worship and in the science of building, acts as religious supervisor of the building programme, validating the activities of the craftsmen by his ritual acts.

The following topics are discussed first: the qualifications of the *yajamāna*, who is the patron in the construction of a temple, and of the *ācārya*; the principles of town planning and the selection of the site suitable for the construction of a temple in a village; the preliminary activities such as ploughing and levelling the ground; the construction and consecration of the *bālabimba* - i.e. a miniature replica of the cult-image which will be placed in the main shrine of the temple - ensuring the presence of God during the building period. Subsequently, the rituals of the nascent temple are described: the ceremony of the first bricks, which is meant “to prepare the bricks liturgically for the vital role they are to play as the germinal seed and source of the entire future temple structure that grows from this spot”³²; the seed-vessel ceremony (*garbhanyāsa*), whereby the *ācārya* puts the “seed” of the future temple into the “womb” of the earth³³; the ceremony of the last bricks, which complements that of the first bricks.

The *kp* deals also with technical matters concerning: the different types of temples and their structural elements; the instructions for fashioning icons, detailing the materials to be employed, the iconometry, the construction of the frame-skeleton of the icon, the colours to be used. A comprehensive treatment of iconography provides full details about the representation of: the Lord in different postures, accompanied by His consorts and retinue, or mounted on His vehicle; the manifold divine figures, such as the 24 *mūrti*-s³⁴, the goddesses, the *avatāra*-s and the attendant deities.

³² Smith 1963: 65, note 60.

³³ Smith highlights the analogies between the rites for the nascent temple and the *saṃskāra* to be performed for an expected child (see Smith 1963: 79ff).

³⁴ The identity of the 24 *mūrti*-s and their place in the “pantheon” of the PādS are illustrated below, pp. 92-95.

The last part of the *kp* is devoted to the *pratiṣṭhā* ceremonies, that is to say, the rituals of installation and consecration, whereby the cult-images are permeated by the sacralizing power of the divine presence, thus becoming living manifestations of God, worthy of adoration and destined for ritual worship in the temple. The last chapter concerns the icons to be used for domestic worship.

The *caryāpāda* (*cp*) (“section of right conduct”) provides detailed information about various aspects of the religious life of the *pāñcarātrin*. The first chapter begins with a question about who is entitled to perform the worship of Bhagavān in the temples. It is claimed that only the learned *brāhmaṇa*-s are qualified to perform the worship for others (*parārthayajana*), i.e. temple worship, whereas the members of the other caste-groups are allowed to perform only the worship for themselves (*svārthayajana*). Later the text upholds traditional and conservative views about the system of castes and stages of life.

The second chapter is devoted to the description of the ceremony of initiation (*dīkṣā*), which, though open to men and women of all classes, follows specific rules if the candidates are women, *śūdra*-s or offspring of an *anuloma* marriage (in these cases, in the communication of the initiatory *mantra* [*mantropadeśa*] the *praṇava* is left out).

The *cp* deals extensively with every element of temple worship, namely: daily worship, from the ritual of self-purification (*ātmaśuddhi*) - whereby the *pūjaka* makes himself fit for worshipping God - to every step of the daily cult (*pūjā*), including oblations with fire (*homa*), processions and so on. Instructions are also given for: the construction of the *cakrābja-maṇḍala*, icon-bathing rites and festivals (*utsava*), which are classified as *nitya* (to be celebrated regularly), *naimittika* (enjoined on particular occasions) and *kāmya* (aimed at the attainment of particular benefits).

With regard to the behaviour of the devotee, directions are given for the daily religious obligations of the *pāñcarātrin* (*pañcakālavidhi*) - namely: *abhigamana* (“approaching” God), *upādāna* (“appropriating”, i.e. collecting the materials necessary for worship), *ijyā* (“sacri-

fiċe”), *svādhyāya* (“study”) and *yoga* - and for various kinds of vows (*vrata*) and expiatory rites (*prāyaścitta*).

Chapter 21 is devoted to the classification of the different schools of Pāñcarātra, namely: *mantra-siddhānta* (to which the PādS belongs), *āgama-siddhānta*, *tantra-siddhānta* and *tantrāntara-siddhānta*; details are given about the specific modes of worship pertaining to each *siddhānta* and about the qualifications of those who are entitled to follow each school.

After a chapter on the meanings and uses of the ritual hand gestures (*mudrā-s*), the last part of the *cp* (from chapter 23 onwards) is entirely concerned with the *mantra-s*. Beginning with the most important, the twelve-syllable *mantra*, up to those addressed to the various divine figures and to the ornaments of the Lord, their composition, repetition (*japa*), use and benefits are fully illustrated.

Aims and Chief Outcomes of This Study

The aim of this study is to elucidate and discuss the philosophical and theological teachings of the PādS, as well as the role of *yoga* in the religious life and ritual practice of the *pāñcarātrin*. Attention will thus be focused on the *jp* and *yp*, the sections of the work that are intended to provide the doctrinal and theoretical background for the *kp* and *cp*, which are instead chiefly concerned with ritual and practical matters. The limited scope of this study makes it necessary to bear in mind the issue of the relation between theory and practice, doctrine and ritual, “*jñāna* and *kriyā*” - according to the formulation of Brunner³⁵ - and, consequently, entails an assessment of the relation between the sections of the text dealing, respectively, with either one or the other of these two sides of the entire teaching of the PādS.

As is well known, the sections or chapters devoted to the doctrinal and theoretical matters occupy, in most cases, only a small

³⁵ For a discussion of this issue, with regard to the *Śaivāgama-s*, see Brunner 1992.

portion of the text of the Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s, their brevity testifying to the fact that speculative issues were not crucial to the authors or redactors of these works. As is the case for the majority of the literary sources belonging to the large and multifaceted “tantric phenomenon”, the Pāñcarātric scriptures deal chiefly with practical matters and are to be considered as ritual handbooks. This primacy of ritual over doctrine, which concerns both the weight accorded to the former as well as its greater antiquity, is seen also in the PādS.

However, even if doctrine may be regarded as the shadow cast by the solid, ritual body of the work, yet, just as for the giant in Goethe’s *Märchen* the vital force resided in his shadow, in the same way for the PādS the spiritual strength of its philosophical and theological teachings permeates the bulk of its practical instructions. In fact, the issues discussed in the *jp* and *yp*, concerning the concepts of God and the individual soul as well as the experience of the godhead by the devotee, provide the insight and knowledge necessary to understand the meaning of the rituals and to perform them properly. It is therefore a stimulating challenge, while dealing with a minor topic of the *saṃhitā*, to highlight those contents of religious belief, theological concepts and philosophical ideas which contribute to shaping the *weltanschauung* complementing the ritual system of the PādS, as well as to evaluate the impact of these contents on the spirituality given voice to in the *saṃhitā*.

The chief outcomes of the present research, with particular regard to the specific and original contributions of the PādS to the Pāñcarātra way of thinking, can be briefly outlined as follows.

In the field of theology³⁶, the suggested interpretation of the PādS concept of the threefold manifestation (*rūpa*) of the Supreme Being in the light of Yādavaprakāśa’s idea of the unfolding of *brahman* in its three *aṃśa*-s, throws light on the issue of how the PādS represents the One which becomes many, that is to say, how the Highest Principle transforms Itself in a manifoldness of deities and living beings. The Supreme Being, which is *brahman* theistically under-

³⁶ For an extensive discussion of the issues which are only briefly outlined here, see below, pp. 55ff.

stood as the Supreme Person (*puruṣottama*), unfolds in three forms (*rūpa*): at the divine level, He manifests Himself as the Supreme God Vāsudeva and, at the level of living beings, as spirit (*puruṣa*) and matter (*prakṛti*). By means of this threefold structure and by the concept of *rūpa*, the PādS represents the inner dynamics of the godhead, which is envisaged as a process of self-differentiation and progressive concretization. In this vision the concept of *rūpa* replaces, functionally, what in other Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s (such as the AS, the JS and the ParS) is expressed by the idea of *śakti*, or rather of the *śakti*-s fulfilling an active role in the process of creation.

This original concept of *rūpa* is complemented by the concept of *mūrti*. *Mūrti*-s are the manifold divine figures, which constitute the “pantheon” of the PādS, and which arise by a process of divine emanation as particular concretizations of the Highest Vāsudeva (*rūpa* of the Supreme Being). To these *mūrti*-s may be likened, *mutatis mutandis*, the manifold individual souls (*jīva*) coming into being as particular concretizations of the highest spiritual principle (the *puruṣa-rūpa* of the Supreme Being), as well as the entities (*tattva*) of the phenomenal world, evolving out of the primordial matter (the *prakṛti-rūpa* of the Supreme Being).

While *rūpa* is certainly a keyword in the theology of the PādS, the notion of *mūrti* shows itself to be a crucial, versatile and multi-valent one. In fact, *mūrti*-s are not only the divine figures arising in the course of the process of *sṛṣṭi*; the *mūrti*-s appear as mental images endowed with corporeal features, which can be visualized and adored by the meditating devotees; moreover, *mūrti*-s are the particular concretizations of the godhead in the form of *mantra*-s, the powerful entities whose phonic, linguistic nature enables human beings to handle them, in order to bring God near to His devotees and to actualize His presence for the purpose of meditation and worship; finally, the *mūrti*-s descend into the *arcā*-s, the cult-images consecrated for temple worship.

What is impressive in this vision of the PādS is that the categories of *rūpa* and *mūrti* come to subsume and include every element of reality: as a result of the self-differentiation and transformation of

the three *rūpa*-s of the Supreme Being into the manifoldness of the *mūrti*-s, every divine being, every soul, every entity and living being of the phenomenal world are regarded as concrete manifestations, at various levels of particularization, of the One Supreme God.

Another original and noteworthy element of the teachings of the PādS concerns the ritual practice of yogic suicide, which can be performed by the *sādhaka* who, by taking advantage of a specific *siddhi*, puts an end to his own life in order to hasten his final emancipation³⁷. The yogic suicide, which is reported in the Śaiva milieu and is explicitly mentioned in the Śaiva texts (such as, for instance, the *Malinīvijayottaratantra*), is traceable also in the JS, where, however, the suicide is somehow masked by a yogic-meditative practice to be performed at the occurrence of natural death. What is remarkable in the PādS is that, although the idea of suicide is not emphasized and its practice is not recommended - as is done instead in the Śaiva sources - yet the purpose of the yogic practice resulting in freeing the soul of the *sādhaka* from his mortal body is certainly not concealed; nonetheless the text manages to smooth over the idea of suicide, by dealing with it in the context of the possible use of one of the *siddhi*-s acquired by mastering the twelve-syllable *mantra*. Within the “domestication” of this tantric ritual, the PādS reassesses also the idea of *siddhi*; in fact, whereas the *siddhi*-s are generally considered as extraordinary powers to be used for the achievement of worldly aims, in this case a particular *siddhi* becomes a means to abandon the world and hasten the attainment of liberation.

Methodological Issues

To elucidate the teachings of the PādS, on which the present research focuses, it is best to let the text speak for itself and, by interpreting it, whenever formulations of the *jp* and *yp* are scanty, or ideas are suggested only by means of metaphors, possible lacunas may be

³⁷ For a detailed discussion of this topic, see below, pp. 281ff.

filled in by referring to relevant passages taken either from the ritual sections of the work, or from other sources. The comparative study of parallel passages taken from other Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s proves to be very fruitful. In fact, the extant state of the text of the PādS is the result of the work of several authors who, over the course of time, contributed to its redaction. In doing so, they referred to the sources at their disposal in order to express or clarify their views on particular topics; yet, sometimes these authors have simply included textual elements or ideas available in the tradition, without bothering too much about their mutual connection and the inner consistency of the whole³⁸. The compositional method adopted in the PādS, as is the case for other Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s, is best described as a complex work-in-progress in which the older portions of the work have been continuously enriched and modified by additions, quotations or borrowings of ideas from various sources, often, but not always, belonging to the Pāñcarātra tradition.

An analytical reading of the text of the PādS allows the different layers to be distinguished (i.e. the historically successive stages of composition of the work attributable to different authors), and aids discovery of possible interpolations resulting from the work of one and the same author who, in contributing to the redaction of the *saṃhitā*, may have inserted actual quotations or at least ideas deriving from other sources. Besides this analytical approach, it is also important, in order to achieve a synthetic overview of the work as it stands, to acknowledge the fact that the *saṃhitā*, in its extant state, also testifies to attempts at harmonization, by means of a continuous process of adjustments, of its heterogeneous components into a consistent shape. This twofold reading allows an appreciation of: the historical development of the text as expressed in the sequence of its different layers; the relevance of the new contributions by certain authors; the necessity of systematization, which is fulfilled also by the fourfold structure of the work, that appropriately encompasses the manifold elements of the tradition.

³⁸ See, for instance, the discussion of the problems concerning the text and structure of the *yp* and its inner inconsistencies (below, pp. 186-188).

The work of the author(s) who aimed at giving homogeneity and consistency to the whole *saṃhitā* is testified by the correspondences, which are retraced in the present study, among teachings expounded in the different sections of the work. To cite just one representative case, the scrutiny of passages taken from all four *pāda*-s highlights the recurrence of the notion of *mūrti* in its different meanings: in the creation theory expounded in the *jp*, *mūrti*-s are the divine figures arising in the course of the process of *śṛṣṭi*; in the meditative practices illustrated in the *yp*, these *mūrti*-s appear as the devotee's mental images; in the *pratiṣṭhā* ceremonies enjoined in the *kp*, the same *mūrti*-s pervade the cult-images; finally, in the instructions about the use of the *mantra*-s given in the *cp* these same *mūrti*-s are considered in their phonic manifestations.

The contribution of speculatively- and scholarly-oriented author(s), well acquainted with the sources of the Pāñcarātra literature circulating in their days, as well as conversant with other religious and philosophical traditions and open to the influence of ideas coming from all of these, is recognizable in the theological and philosophical teachings of the PādS. In fact, the concepts related to God and the individual soul expounded in the *jp*, may be shown to be influenced, not only by the corresponding teachings of other Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s (namely, the AS, the JS and, above all, the ParS), but also by the Vaiṣṇava Brahmanic orthodoxy and Vedānta tradition, particularly by the ideas of Rāmānuja's teacher Yādavaprakāśa. The attention to traditions other than the Pāñcarātra is evident also in the discussion of liberation occurring in the *jp*, where the idea of liberation advocated by the PādS is compared with other concepts of salvation, such as those appertaining to the Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy, or to monistic *advaita* Vedānta. In accordance with their concept of the individual soul, the author(s) of the PādS claim that final emancipation consists in the union (*sāyujya*) between *jīva* and *paramātman*, where *sāyujya* implies both ultimate non-difference and non-separation between the liberated souls and God³⁹.

³⁹ See PādS, *jp*, 8, 28c-34, discussed below, pp. 154-157.

The doctrine of liberation of the PādS constitutes a paradigmatic case of those contradictions masked by superficial agreement which, according to Brunner, so often occur in Tantric texts⁴⁰. In fact, the concept of *mukti* as *sāyujya* advocated in the *jp* could be considered as complemented and elucidated by the notion of a fourfold liberation - consisting of *sāyujya*, *sārūpya*, *sāmīpya* and *sālokya* - expounded in the *cp*⁴¹, if the states of *sālokya*, *sāmīpya* and *sārūpya* were regarded as the diverse and successive stages leading to the full experience of the union (*sāyujya*) between *jīva* and *paramātman*. However, a closer scrutiny of the relevant passage of the *cp* and of the source on which it is based (a passage of the *SS*) shows that, actually, *sālokya* etc. indicate the diverse states experienced by different kinds of liberated souls, according to their social status in their previous worldly existence. Hence, such a hierarchical idea of liberation, strongly marked by Brahmanic thinking, testified to in the *cp*, does not necessarily correspond to, or agree with, the concept of *mukti* as *sāyujya* which is expounded in the *jp*. This shows how, even with regard to the doctrinal teachings, which ought to be ascribed to the contribution of the more speculatively-minded redactors of the PādS, the ideal of homogeneity and consistency is far from being fulfilled.

Further evidence of divergences between teachings dealing with the same topics and expounded in different sections of the work is provided by the refined *yoga*-permeated rituals, whose foundations are laid in the *yp* and whose methods and practice are detailed in the *kp* and *cp*. In this regard, the situation of the extant text of the PādS raises several problems. In fact, even when the existence of general correspondences allows acknowledgement that passages taken from the *yp* and the *cp* respectively are dealing with the same ritual, the presence of discrepancies suggests that the passages in question are not to be ascribed to one and the same author.

For instance, the illustration of the employment of the yogic discipline of the *dhāraṇā* in ritual practice, which is given in chapter 4

⁴⁰ See Brunner 1992: 15.

⁴¹ See PādS, *cp*, 24, 87c-92, 105-109, discussed below, pp. 163-177.

of the *yp*, may be shown to refer to the ritual of self-purification (*ātmaśuddhi*) described in chapter 3 of the *cp*⁴². However, a different authorship of the relevant passages of the two sections of the work has to be assumed, on account of discrepancies which can be explained by the insertion, in the passage of the *yp*, of elements of the ritual of *ātmaśuddhi* as it is detailed in the JS, elements which are not traceable in the description of the ritual given in the *cp*.

Another example of a ritual whose variations, in the different sections of the work dealing with it, are traceable to the influence of diverse reference-sources, is provided by the ritual practice of yogic suicide. A meditative practice illustrated at the end of the *yp* is to be considered as related to yogic suicide, whose ritual practice is described in chapter 24 of the *cp*. In their respective accounts of this last ritual, the *yp* and the *cp* set forth different procedures by which the *yogin* manages to free himself of his mortal body; this variance can be explained by the fact that the relevant passages of the two sections of the work are based on different textual sources, namely, the SS and the JS respectively⁴³. This evidence of the influence of different textual sources suggests that here - as in the above mentioned case concerning the *ātmaśuddhi* - the passages of *yp* and *cp* resulted from the work of different hands. But the specific situation of the text of the PādS is further complicated by the fact that, a comparison of the details of yogic suicide given in the *yp* and *cp* with the teaching related to the same ritual contained in the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* (a Śaiva *Tantra* of the Trika), shows that what appeared to be different methods of departure of the soul from the mortal body - taught in the *yp* and *cp* of the PādS respectively - prove to be simply different steps of one and the same ritual, as it is taught in the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*⁴⁴.

These few instances highlight the problems faced in attempting

⁴² See PādS, *yp*, 4, 13c-24 and PādS, *cp*, 3, 21-81, discussed below, pp. 251-267.

⁴³ See the passages: PādS, *yp*, 5, 24c-28 based on SS, 17, 451c-456 and PādS, *cp*, 24, 96c-105b based on JS, 33, 37c-43 and 57-59, discussed below, pp. 281-290 and pp. 290-298 respectively.

⁴⁴ See below, pp. 298-303.

to reconstruct the manner of composition of the PādS and to assess the relations of its four *pāda*-s to each other and of the teachings expounded therein.

Remarks Regarding the Composition of the Work

The introductory verses of the *kp* provide, indirectly, a first clue to reconstructing the manner of composition of the *saṃhitā*, especially with regard to the relation among its *pāda*-s. There, one reads: “[Brahmā:] O Bhagavān, Lord of the chiefs of the gods, holding the conch shell, the wheel and the club, knowledge and *yoga*, both granting liberation as a fruit, have been entirely heard. [1] O God, non-learned people do not have any right to these two. [2ab] Be pleased to teach, for the non-learned men [who are] devotees and also wishful for a way [of salvation], that straight means by which [one] attains the reward of liberation as well as the other [reward], heaven and so on. [2c-3] This and the other one should be spoken about if there is favour towards me. O Madhusūdana, please explain what is the way of worshipping you. [4] [Śrī Bhagavān:] As far as my abode is concerned, after having built it with wood, metal, stone and so on, proceeding properly, following every injunction, according to the way established by the authoritative texts, [5] worship me, o you having the lotus as a seat, according to the rule hereafter expounded. Hence listen to the injunctions related to ritual (*kriyā*), beginning with the act of dragging and ending with the ceremonies of consecration. [6] I shall speak about the prescribed rites through which I become soon pleased. Those men who are proficient in the sciences, who have learnt by hearing the authoritative texts, these adore me, being wholly devoted to knowledge and *yoga*. [7-8ab] [But] also for the other, non-learned devotees, [who are] endowed with many perfections and who establish me in [my] abode, success is speedily produced. [8c-9b] Knowledge and *yoga*: only this is cause of liberation; [9cd] but after having established me in [my] abode, man reaches heaven. Success [is gained] not only for the one who propiti-

ates [me], after having settled me in [my] abode, [10] [but] also for those who are dwelling near [my] abode. Therefore, o Brahmā, with all his soul man should establish me in [my] abode. [11]⁴⁵.

Tackling the problem of who is eligible to receive the teachings contained in the different sections of the work, the text makes a distinction between two categories of devotees: on the one hand, there are those who have the right and qualification (*adhikāra*) to gain access to the teachings concerning *jñāna* and *yoga*, which provide them with a means of liberation; on the other hand, there are the “non-learned devotees” (*ajñānin bhakta*, as in verse 2c), who are not entitled to the whole knowledge of the tradition, but are longing for and deserving a way of salvation. The path suitable for these *ajñānin bhakta*-s has to be a straight one (*ṛju*), where the adjective *ṛju* conveys the idea of a direct, short way, easier than the path of *jñāna* and *yoga*, that is to say, a means within the reach of any devotee. This straight means - which grants both rewards, heaven and eventually liberation - consists in instituting temples and worshipping God therein.

By the expression “non-learned devotees” the text seems to indicate the patrons in the construction of temples, i.e. the *yajamāna*-s,

⁴⁵ PādS, *kp*, 1, 1-11: [*brahmā*] *bhagavan devadeveśa śaikhacakraḡadādharā | jñānayogau ca kārtsnyena nirvāṇaphaladau śrutau || 1.1 tayor aviduṣāṃ deva nādhikārah kadācana | ajñānināṃ ca bhaktānāṃ gatiṃ cāpīcchatāṃ nṛṇāṃ || 1.2 yenopāyena nirvāṇaphalaṃ svargādi catarat | bhavaty upāyaṃ tam ṛjum upadeṣtuṃ tvam arhasi || 1.3 idam anyac ca vaktavyaṃ yadi mayy asty anugrahaḡ | tvad arcane ko'bhyupāyah kathyatāṃ madhusūdana || 1.4 [śṛībhagavān] kṛtvā pratividhiṃ samyag dāruḡlohaśīlādibhiḡ | tat sthāpayitvā matsthāne sāstradrṣṭena vartmanā || 1.5 yajasva māṃ vakṣyamāṇavidhinā kamalāsana | karṣaṇādi pratiṣṭhāntaṃ kriyāvidhim ataḡ śṛṇu || 1.6 vakṣyāmi yena vidhinā prasīdāmy acirād aham | adhūtino ye vidyāsu sāstrāṇi śrutapūrviṇaḡ || 1.7 te māṃ bhajante puruṣāḡ jñānayogaparāyanāḡ | anyeṣāṃ apy aviduṣāṃ bhaktānāṃ bahusaṃpadāṃ || 1.8 jāyate siddhir acirāt sthāne sthāpayatāṃ ca māṃ | jñānaṃ yogaś ca yad idaṃ kevalaṃ muktikāraṇaṃ || 1.9 sthāpayitvā tu māṃ sthāne puruṣaḡ *satvam (em. ba svargam) aśnute | yo māṃ saṃsthāpya sadane samārādhayati svayaṃ || 1.10 na tasya kevalaṃ siddhiḡ sthānābhyarṇajuṣāṃ api | tasmāt sarvātmanā brahman sthāne māṃ sthāpayet pumāṃ || 1.11.*

who are actually mentioned later on in this passage⁴⁶. The identification of the *ajñānin bhakta*-s with the *yajamāna*-s is supported by the depiction of the latter which is given in a passage of the ParS. Actually, the dialogue between Brahmā and Bhagavān, which opens the *kp* of the PādS, recalls a similar dialogue, in a similar context, occurring at the beginning of chapter 18 of the ParS, which deals with the ceremonies of installation and consecration of cult-images in temples. In the ParS, Brahmā asks: “[There are] men who [are] richly furnished with money and grain, devoid of knowledge, full of devotion [and] very powerful: what shall be the course of worldly existence for them? [1] In fact they are not capable of worshipping the supreme God with ritual acts, with the mind [or] with words [of praise], therefore tell [me what is] most suitable for them? [2]” The Lord answers: “For people [who are] lacking in knowledge, devoted and also wealthy, the best [thing to be] done is success [obtained] by establishing the God of gods [in a temple]. [3]”⁴⁷. Thus, in the ParS too the wealthy people who ought to patronize the construction of temples are depicted as “devoid of knowledge but full of devotion”, that is to say, as “non-learned devotees”.

⁴⁶ See PādS, *kp*, 1, 15c-17b: “Know the *yajamāna* as endowed with all [these] qualities: [he should be] full of faith, a believer, a devotee, richly furnished with money and grain, having great power, virtuous, clever, correct in conduct, without avarice, a *brāhman*, a *kṣatriya*, a *vaiśya*, or a *śūdra* and also the offspring of an *anuloma* marriage. [15c-17b]” *śraddhāvān āstiko bhakto dhanadhānyasamṛddhimān* || 1.15cd *mahotsāhaḥ śucir dakṣaḥ kṛtajño lobhavarjitaḥ | brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriyo vaiśyaḥ śūdro vāpy anulomajaḥ* || 1.16 *jānīhi yajamānaṃ taṃ sarvaiḥ samuditaṃ gunaiḥ* | 1.17ab

⁴⁷ ParS, 18, 1-3: [*brahmā*] *ye narā dhanadhānyena samṛddhā jñānavarjitāḥ | bhaktimanto mahotsāhāḥ kiṃ teṣāṃ saṃsṛtir bhavet* || 18.1 *na hi te paramaṃ devaṃ karmaṇā manasā girā | śaktāḥ pūjayituṃ tasmāt brūhi teṣāṃ mahad hitam* || 18.2 [*paramaḥ*] *puṃsām akṛtavidyānām bhaktānām dhaninām tathā | sthāpanād devadevasya vihitaṃ siddhir uttamam* || 18.3.

Comparing this passage with the above quoted PādS, *kp*, 1, 15c-17b, it is possible to recognize some similar expressions used in the two *saṃhitā*-s to describe the *yajamāna*: *dhanadhānyasamṛddhimān* (PādS, *kp*, 1, 15d) corresponds to *dhanadhānyena samṛddhā* (ParS, 18, 1a), *bhaktaḥ* (PādS, *kp*, 1, 15c) to *bhaktimantaḥ* (ParS, 18, 1c) and *mahotsāhaḥ* (PādS, *kp*, 1, 16a) to *mahotsāhāḥ* (ParS, 18, 1c).

But the label of *ajñānin bhakta*-s, indicating those for the benefit of whom are intended the teachings contained in the *kp* of the PādS, applies to a group of devotees much larger than that formed by the restricted category of the *yajamāna*-s. In fact, in the passage of the *kp* quoted above it is stated that the benefits resulting out of the meritorious deed of establishing the abode of God are obtained not only by the patron, but are extended also to all those who are living near the temple. This is due to the beneficial influence of the temple over the area surrounding it, as well as to the benedictory power of the god, whose presence in the sanctuary is actualized by the ceremonies of consecration⁴⁸. Moreover, once the temple is finished and functioning, public worship will grant its fruits for all members of the Pāñcarātra community, that is to say for all those who can pay homage to the cult-images, attend processions, festivals and all the ritual acts of public worship to which every devotee is allowed to assist.

Therefore, this averred categorization of the devotees into *jñānin* and *ajñānin* should not be taken too literally: in the first place, because the benefits granted by temple life are extended to all devotees, the non-learned, as well as the learned ones; in the second place, because, in spite of the statement that the teachings expounded in the *kp* are meant to provide a means of salvation for the *ajñānin bhakta*-s, these teachings are actually addressed to the ritual specialists, who indeed are learned people. Finally, one cannot properly speak of non-learned devotees, because a certain knowledge of the doctrines of the tradition and acquaintance with the yogic practices are necessary for every *pāñcarātrin*⁴⁹, for the accomplishment of the daily religious obligations (*pañcakālavidhi*), which include the study of the scriptures and the practice of *yoga*⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of this topic, see below, pp. 168-173.

⁴⁹ As Brunner remarks with regard to the Śaiva-s: “no initiated Śaiva can perform his ritual without the knowledge of the categories involved; and this ritual would have no fruit without a strict discipline, and a certain practice of *yoga*.” (Brunner 1986-92: 269).

⁵⁰ The daily religious obligations of the *pāñcarātrin* are described in chapter 13

These considerations lead to the conclusion that the significance of the introductory passage of the *kp* consists not so much in its explicit statements about *jñānin-* and *ajñānin- bhakta-*s, as in the fact that it reveals the need to establish the right place of the *kp* in the *saṃhitā* and, implicitly, to justify the fact that such a large portion of the work is devoted to the teachings concerning temple building, consecration of cult-images, iconography and so forth. Actually, the importance attached to what constitutes the material precondition for temple worship is so great that - unlike other, earlier *saṃhitā-*s⁵¹ - a whole section of the PādS deals exclusively with these topics.

This uncommon feature of the work may be explained by the historical circumstances in which the text of the PādS took its extant form: in the context of the rivalry between the followers of the Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa traditions for control over the Vaiṣṇava temples in South India, it became imperative to have a solid scriptural authority for the Pāñcarātra system of temple worship, which included every aspect of the ritual activities related to the temples, beginning with their foundation. In fact, the rules according to which a temple was built and its cult-images were consecrated determined the ritual to be successively followed in that temple. Therefore, in order to establish their own ritual system in a given temple, the *pāñcarātrin-*s needed to supervise the whole building programme and to codify the latter precisely. This need was fully met by the systematic treatment of the subject provided by the PādS, the *kp* of which can itself be considered as a representative and complete liturgical manual on temple building, complementing the exhaustive information about temple worship given in the *cp*.

But the ritual performed by *ācārya* and *arcaka-*s in the temples

of the *cp*. The study of the traditional scriptures (*svādhyāya*) is treated in verses 66c-72b, the practice of *yoga* in verses 75-77.

⁵¹ To quote just a few examples: the JS devotes only one chapter, the 20th, to the installation and consecration of cult-images; in the SS, chapter 24 deals with temple construction and fashioning of icons and chapter 25 gives a description of the *pratiṣṭhā* ceremonies; in the ParS, chapters 18 and 19 deal with the installation and consecration of temple icons and chapter 23 is devoted to iconography.

for the benefit of the community of devotees, or rather for the well-being of the whole country, that is to say the so-called “worship for others” (*parārthayajana*), was neither the oldest nor the only form of worship taught in the tantric scriptures. Accordingly, while the importance of the *kp* testifies to the fact that temple worship was a crucial concern for the author(s) of the PādS, nonetheless, the introductory passage of the *kp* gives voice also to the outlook of the performers of private worship, the so-called “worship for oneself” (*ātmārthayajana*). In fact, in the learned devotees who, while worshipping God, resort to those forms of knowledge and *yoga*⁵² which provide them with a means of emancipation⁵³, one may recognize the *sādhaka*-s, who worship God with the *yoga*-permeated ritual that requires the mastering of a *mantra*; this form of worship is aimed at the *sādhaka*’s own benefit, which may be either the obtainment of various *siddhi*-s or the attainment of liberation.

Historically, the “worship for oneself” represented the chief concern of the older tantric texts which were produced in the *sādhaka*’s circles, whereas the “worship for others” became a major topic in the later texts which elaborated a ritual system pertaining to the *ācārya*-s. However, these two forms of worship coexisted and influenced each other in the tantric scriptures⁵⁴. A discussion of the complex structural and historical connection between *ātmārthayajana* and *parārthayajana* in the PādS would certainly be beyond the scope of the present study. However, these issues should be borne in mind

⁵² See PādS, *kp*, 1, 7c-8b: “those men who are proficient in the sciences, who have learnt by hearing the authoritative texts, these adore me, being wholly devoted to knowledge and *yoga*.” *adhūtinō ye vidyāsu śāstrāṇi śrutapūrviṇaḥ* || 1.7cd *te māṃ bhajante puruṣāḥ jñānayogaparāyaṇāḥ* || 1.8ab.

⁵³ See PādS, *kp*, 1, 9cd: “knowledge and *yoga*: only this is cause of liberation.” *jñānaṃ yogaś ca yad idaṃ kevalaṃ muktikāraṇam* || 1.9cd.

⁵⁴ For a detailed description of the daily “worship for oneself” and “worship for others” performed by the temple priests, according to the PārS, see Rastelli 2006: 69-80. Regarding the importance of temple ritual in the PārS, as well as in the later Pāñcarātra *samhitā*-s, in the historical context of medieval South Indian kingdoms, see *Ibidem*: 91-98.

For a discussion of this topic in the Śaiva tradition, see Brunner 1990.

in evaluating the passage of the *kp* which, besides the intention of its author to establish the right allocation for the teachings contained in each section of the *saṃhitā*, provides a clue to understanding the way in which the work reached its extant state.

One may thus put forward the following hypothesis which, far from providing a final conclusion about the history of the text-transmission of the work, rather indicates the research still to be done. The *cp*, which by itself covers the essential matters of interest of a *saṃhitā* - namely, initiation, religious obligations of the devotee, temple worship, use of the *mantra*-s etc. - may be regarded as the oldest ritual core of the PādS. To this original core was added the *kp*, probably at a later date, as is suggested by the following considerations. The length, accuracy and systematic character of the *kp* bears no comparison with the treatment of the same topics to be found in other, earlier Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*-s, so that - as already remarked - the *kp* is shown to be a comprehensive and independent treatise on the rituals connected with temple building. This treatise was annexed to the PādS with a view to complement the information on temple worship given in the *cp* and, at the same time, to enhance the relevance of all that concerned temple life within the teachings handed down in the *saṃhitā*. The reasons for this substantial addition to the earlier core of the work, formed by the *cp*, should be sought in the historical circumstances in which the PādS took its extant form. Hence further research is obviously needed: on the one hand it should be ascertained how the “worship for others” acquired its increasing importance in the religious life of the *pāñcarātrin*-s, thereby heightening the prestige of those entitled to perform the *parārthayajana*; on the other hand the relationships between the Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa traditions within the frame of the socio-religious life of medieval South India should be investigated.

Finally, the *jp* and *yp* may be ascribed to the contribution of some speculatively- and scholarly-oriented author(s), who intended to provide the already well established Pāñcarātric system of temple worship with a theological and a yogic-meditative background. Although some of the contents of these sections of the work, particularly

those of the *yp*, were certainly drawn from an ancient background of knowledge derived from the experiences of the *sādhaka-s*, these two *pāda-s* as such seem to constitute the latest portions of the *saṁhitā*. This is proved also by the already remarked discrepancies and attempts at harmonization between teachings expounded in these and in the ritual sections, respectively. To the hand of one of these later redactors of the *saṁhitā* may be attributed the introductory passage of the *kp*, which aims at assigning this section to its proper place within the whole work. Thus, the distribution of the contents of the *saṁhitā* in the four *pāda-s* met the requirement of these later and systematically-minded author(s) to provide a comprehensive work that discussed, within a well ordered structure, all the main concerns of the Pāñcarātra tradition.

