Introduction

A Web of Myth Cycles

The present volume of the *Skandapurāṇa*, covering chapters 70 to 95, introduces several important narrative lines that take the reader far beyond the 26 chapters edited here. Three new myth cycles are started, but only the first one is completed here. The following scheme shows their distribution across the text of the *Skandapurāṇa* as a whole:¹

SP 70–71: The Narasiṃha Cycle

SP 72: Start of the Skanda Cycle

SP 73–SP_{Bh} 112 & SP_{Bh} 130–157: The Andhaka Cycle

SP_{Bh} 163–165: Continuation of the Skanda Cycle

The myth of Viṣṇu's manifestation of the Man-Lion (Narasiṃha) forms the subject of the first two chapters (SP 70–71). After this, the cycle of Skanda's birth (SP 72) is started, only to be taken up again much later in the text (SP_{Bh} 163–165). Finally, SP 73 commences the lengthy and central Andhaka cycle, which takes up a large part of the *Skandapurāṇa*, running all the way up to SP_{Bh} 157, with the exception of chapters 113 to 129, which comprise a different narrative layer.²

This volume thus includes two elements that are central to the composition and redaction of the text as a whole: the birth of Skanda and the birth of Andhaka. In addition, it introduces a religious theme that will continue to be important in the following volumes, namely the integration of the Vaiṣṇava *avatāra* mythology within a Śaiva framework. Finally,

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- 1 We use the term 'cycle' in a loose sense to indicate a more or less complete narrative unit that centers around a main character or group of characters with a storyline that has a beginning and an end. Individual cycles may be included in other cycles. The above scheme does not take into account the various subnarratives included in the Andhaka cycle or other intricacies of the *Skandapurāṇa*'s overall structure. A detailed analysis of the structure of the various narrative layers in the text will be provided in Yokochi forthc.
 - 2 This layer includes stories of past and future wars between the Devas and Asuras.

running through all of this, there is the narrative thread of the war between the Asuras and the Devas. Hiranyākṣa's victory and rule over the earth, which forms the subject of the final chapter (SP 95), prepares the ground for more battles to come.

The centrality of much of the material to the composition of the *Skandapurāṇa* is borne out by the fact that several key episodes are referred to in the *Anukramaṇikā* ('table of topics') in SP 2. They are mentioned in three verses immediately following the listing of topics relating to the Vindhyavāsini cycle of SP III.³ The topics listed in the *Anukramaṇikā* and covered in the text of the present volume include the following:

- the birth of Andhaka (SP 2.15a → SP 73.69–80)
- the capture of the Earth (SP 2.15b → SP 95.8–15)
- the death of Hiranyakaśipu (SP 2.15d → SP 71.44–45)
- the coming of the gods and the mission of Agni (SP 2.16cd → SP 72.51–87)
- the granting of a boon to the gods (SP 2.17a → SP 72.88–102)
- the emission of the semen (SP 2.17b → SP 72.96–97)

The order listed in the *Anukramaṇikā* diverges from the one followed in the main text. This is probably due to the fact that the *Anukramaṇikā* combines several exploits of Viṣṇu against the Asuras, even though these are treated separately in the main text. The first three topics concern episodes connected with the Asuras, while the last three items relate to the birth of Skanda. Interspersed between these two themes, the *Anukramaṇikā* refers to two other episodes connected to Viṣṇu's exploits against the Asuras, namely the slaying of Hiranyākṣa and the checking of Bali.⁴

The text presented here follows naturally from the storyline with which the previous volume left off. In the final verse of SP III (SP 69.77) we were told that Śiva and Pārvatī returned to Mt. Mandara. In the opening verse of this volume (SP 70.1), Vyāsa asks Sanatkumāra what the couple did after returning to Mandara. Sanatkumāra tells him that they delighted in their divine residence there.

³ On the relation between the *Anukramaṇikā* and the Vindhyavāsini cycle, see SP III, 11–24.

⁴ SP 2.15cd–16ab: *hiranyākṣavadhaś caiva hiranyakaśīpos tathā || balisaṃnyamanam caiva devyāḥ samaya eva ca* |. The slaying of Hiranyākṣa is narrated in SP_{Bh} 107 and the checking of Bali in SP_{Bh} 116–117. The reference to Devī's observance (2.16b) is obscure.

The Narasiṃha Cycle

The Narasiṃha cycle commences with the arrival of Indra, Soma and Vāyu at the couple's residence on Mt. Mandara (SP 70.5). They request that Śiva do something about Viṣṇu's form as Narasiṃha, which he had taken on to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu. It turns out that, after killing the demon, Viṣṇu has not abandoned the Narasiṃha form and the gods are frightened of it. Śiva promises to help them. We are thus led into the narrative of Narasiṃha's manifestation in retrospect, as we hear about the outcome of events first. This provides the opportunity for Vyāsa to ask about Hiraṇyakaśipu and Narasiṃha. Sanatkumāra's answer starts from the beginning, with the birth of Hiraṇyakaśipu as the Daitya son of Kaśyapa.

After Hiraṇyakaśipu has been crowned king of the Daityas, he becomes desirous of taking over Indra's kingship of the Devas. He proceeds to Śrīparvata to practise *tapas*. There he is offered a boon by Brahmā and asks for invincibility, listing a series of conceivable circumstances under which he cannot be killed: neither by a weapon nor by a spell, neither during the day nor by night, etc. Brahmā is willing to offer this to him, but only if he states a loophole (*antara*), to which Hiraṇyakaśipu responds that he accepts any other kind of death there may be. While the series of conditions of Hiraṇyakaśipu's death is a well-known topos from other epic and Purāṇic sources, the emphasis on Brahmā's particular request to state a loophole is specific to the *Skandapurāṇa*.⁵

The remainder of chapter 70 contains a Māhātmya of Śrīparvata (SP 70.37–53). The place is described as a Pāśupata centre, where in the past Devī practised Pāśupata yoga. The hill, which has been identified with Śrīśaila in the Kurnool district of present-day Andhra Pradesh, is one of the southernmost places furnished with a Māhātmya in the text. It attests to its growing importance and recognition at the time of its composition.

When Hiraṇyakaśipu starts tormenting the gods, they go and complain to Brahmā (SP 71.4–7). He advises them to ask Viṣṇu to take on the body of Narasiṃha, for, Brahmā reminds them, he has made Hiraṇyakaśipu state a loophole earlier. Viṣṇu agrees to the plan, but he asks the gods to enter his body, because the demon is very strong. A lengthy description of Narasiṃha's entry into the park outside of Hiraṇyakaśipu's city and his fight with the Asura forces follows, culminating in Hiraṇyakaśipu's own arrival at the scene and his death at the hands of the Man-Lion. Narasiṃha kills him with a single slap of his fist and then tears open his chest. The gods regain their positions.

At this juncture in the story the starting point of the Narasiṃha cycle and the present narration converge, with Śiva's arrival in the form of a

5 It is worth noting that there is a similar request for stating a loophole in the stories of the Asuras Andhaka and Maya; see n. 72 on p. 39.

Śarabha, a magnificent creature with four legs on his back (SP 71.48–50). Narasiṃha realises that it is Śiva and that he cannot conquer him, so he starts a hymn of praise. Śiva allows him to return to his own form (*svayoni*), then tramples him with his feet. Śiva grants Viṣṇu the boon of being a slayer of Asuras.

There are several details worth noting about this version of what is usually known as the Narasiṃha *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. First of all, it is striking that the text does not once use the term *avatāra* to describe Viṣṇu's Man-Lion form. Instead we find the words *vapus* ('body'), *rūpa* ('form') and *yonī* ('form' or 'origin').⁶ This is quite likely intentional, for the same holds true also for the accounts of Viṣṇu's other manifestations in the *Skandapurāṇa*, such as Vāmana and Varāha. The *avatāra* terminology was well established at the time, but the text does not make use of it.⁷ Instead it continues the older brahmanical model of manifestation. Most significant, however, is its introduction of a new element to Viṣṇu's demon-slaying manifestations, namely the god's attachment to the form he has taken on to kill the demon. The *Skandapurāṇa* raises the critical question of what happens to Viṣṇu's demon-slaying manifestation after he has done the job.⁸ The Narasiṃha episode shows him to be attached to the new form and Śiva, as the supreme God, has to intervene to make him return to his original form. Viṣṇu is assigned the task of slaying demons, while Śiva creates the circumstances that allow him to resume his true form afterwards.⁹

All of this is reflective of a deep engagement with Vaiṣṇavism, the dominant brahmanical religious tradition at the time. First of all, the central concept of Viṣṇu as an *avatāra* is neglected. The text only deals with the

6 The precise meaning of *yonī* in this context is not made clear. It comes up towards the end of the story, where the text distinguishes between Viṣṇu's *ayonī* and his *svayonī*. The passage emphasises the distinction between his original form and his temporary manifestation.

7 For the development of the concept of *avatāra*, see Hacker 1960 and Brinkhaus 1993. Significantly, the only time the text refers to the concept of *avatāra* is in the Māhātmya about Śiva's descent as Lakulīśa at Kārohaṇa in SP_S 167.110–138. This part may belong to a different layer of the text.

8 A passage found in a large group of manuscripts of the *Harivaṃśa*, yet deferred to the appendix in the text of the Poona critical edition, is one of the few early Vaiṣṇava sources that also shows an awareness of this problem. It tells that the lord abandoned and installed his Narasiṃha body on the northern shore of the Kṣīroda ocean, before taking up his primeval form again: *tato nadatsu tūryeṣu nṛtyantiṣv apsaraḥsu ca | kṣīrodasyottaraṃ kūlaṃ jagāma prabhur īśvaraḥ || nārasimhaṃ tanuṃ tyaktvā sthāpayitvā ca tad vapuḥ | paurāṇaṃ rūpaṃ āsthāya yayau sa garuḍadhvajah ||* (HV App. 1 No. 42A ll. 578–581). See also n. 91 on p. 45.

9 See also Granoff 2004, who first drew attention to the *Skandapurāṇa*'s unease with the doctrine of Viṣṇu's *avatāras*, referring not only to the account of Narasiṃha but also to that of Varāha in the text.

main brahmanical model of manifestation, not with that of Kṛṣṇa, which was specific to the Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva cult and in which the *avatāra* concept was developed.¹⁰ In the *Skandapurāṇa* Viṣṇu is granted the boon of being a demon-killer, but only within the parameters set by Śiva's overlordship. Moreover, Viṣṇu cannot do the job himself; he needs all the gods to enter his body in order to be able to stand up against Hiranyakaśipu. While the notion that Viṣṇu is 'made up of all the gods' (*sarvadevamaya*) is well-established,¹¹ the *Skandapurāṇa* manipulates and frames it in such a way that it becomes a weakness rather than a strength of his personality. Finally, and most importantly, the dreadful form assumed by Viṣṇu is presented as deeply problematic, because in his attachment to it he is not able to leave it. The manifestation becomes a menace to the gods and it is Śiva alone who can provide relief for them. Śiva thus becomes the true saviour.

Start of the Skanda Cycle

The birth of Skanda has been on the reader's mind since the very first chapter, when Vyāsa asked Sanatkumāra how Kumāra could be the son of Rudra, of Vahni, of Gaṅgā, of Umā, of Svāhā, of Suparṇī, of the Mothers (Mātr̥s) and of the Kṛttikās (SP 1.26). It is only in SP 72 that Sanatkumāra comes to relate the events leading to Skanda's birth.

The scene returns to Mt. Mandara, where the flowers of all seasons start blooming simultaneously. This provides the perfect setting for Pārvatī to ask Śiva for a son. She adds, significantly, that it should be a son 'born from my own body' (SP 72.12a). This qualification will remain a guiding theme throughout the rest of the narrative. The *Skandapurāṇa* differs from other accounts, such as Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava* in particular, in that the story of the birth of Skanda does not start from the gods' request to Śiva for a son to conquer Tāraka, but from Pārvatī's expression of desire for a son of her own. As Yokochi has shown (SP III, 22–24), obtaining a son was one of the two goals of her *tapas*, along with gaining a fair complexion, as recounted in the Vindhyavāsini cycle; it connects the Skanda cycle with the Vindhyavāsini cycle.¹² It should also be observed that in the previous chapter the boon of being able to slay demons was granted to Viṣṇu, which would be incompatible with a birth story in which Skanda's existence is needed to slay the demon Tāraka. It is Pārvatī's own desire for a son that is the guiding principle of the narrative.

¹⁰ Cf. Matchett 2001.

¹¹ Cf. e.g. HV 30.17c, ViP 5.20.85b and VDh 1.21d.

¹² Cf. SP 72.16.

For their union (*yoga*) the couple retire to the golden peak of the Vindhya. Nandin is stationed at the entrance as a door guardian while Deva and Devī engage in union for a thousand divine years. Terrifying omens start to appear and the gods convene to discuss what is going on. They agree that it is due to the couple's union; they must prevent Devī from having a son born from her body. Agni is charged with introducing them to Deva. After a hymn of praise, Agni is allowed in by Nandin and hides in a jewelled pillar, from which he tells Deva that the gods are waiting outside. The gods praise Deva and they receive a boon. They request that no son be born from Devī's body. Agni offers to receive the seed from Deva and is granted a boon for this. When Deva returns, Devī gets angry with Nandin for letting Agni in, and hurls a water lily at him. The water lily, about to kill Nandin, is caught by Deva and rendered auspicious (*bhadra*). It becomes a pond called Bhadrotpala on top of the Vindhya. A brief Māhātmya of this sacred place follows (SP 72.114–116).

When Deva tells Devī that he has offered his seed in Agni, she curses the gods. They shall not beget sons with their wives, and Earth shall have many husbands but never a son. Devī becomes known as Kaiṭabhā on the golden peak of the Vindhya. A man who visits the sanctuary and the rock there becomes a Gaṇapa when he dies.

Then the gods arrive, pregnant and ashamed (SP 72.127). They tell Deva that they cannot bear the seed and that He should save them. Moreover they are afraid of Andhaka, who is practising *tapas*. Deva promises to kill Andhaka and tells them to go to the Śaravara grove in the centre of Meru. They go there and, splitting their bellies, the seed comes forth, turning everything into gold. When Devī hears that a son has been born she is satisfied.

This birth story is unique in several respects.¹³ First of all there is the opening scene on Mt. Mandara. It is Devī's request for a son born from her own body, rather than the gods' desire for a son to slay Tāraka, that forms the starting point of the narrative. The hiding of Agni in a pillar is also a unique motif, and the *Skandapurāṇa* appears to be the first text to introduce the motif of Agni as messenger of the gods. Also noteworthy are the small Māhātmyas relating to places and events on the golden peak of the Vindhya. This location for the couple's union is unique too; it is probably connected with the earlier Vindhyavāsini cycle of the text. Finally, the remarkable motif of the pregnancy of the gods is a rare feature, not found in any of the early epic accounts. The *Skandapurāṇa* thus makes a major intervention in the narrative tradition of the birth of

13 Mann 2012, 192–195, draws attention to certain similarities with accounts found in the *Āraṇyakaparvan* and the *Śalyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*; this concerns not so much SP 72 but SP_{Bh} 163, on which see below.

Skanda.

A problem arises when we try to connect the end of SP 72 with the start of SP_{Bh} 163, which is where the Skanda cycle continues. For here Vyāsa asks Sanatkumāra a number of questions, relating to Skanda's birth, that do not fit the present ending:

What did Vahni do when he received the seed of Śarva? How was Skanda born? At which location [was] the very splendid one [born]? And how was he consecrated as general by the best of the gods? And for what reason was he consecrated and at which spot, O master? And how was Tāraka slain by him at the front of the battle?¹⁴

In what follows, Agni continues to carry the seed, while, according to SP 72.135, the gods should have already given birth at Śaravara. Instead, SP_{Bh} 163.5–7 narrates that Agni is not able to bear the seed, and that he beseeches Gaṅgā to carry it for him. She receives the seed from Agni, becomes pregnant with it, and gives birth to the six-faced Skanda (SP_{Bh} 163.8–15). The two accounts of Skanda's birth are logically inconsistent. How can we account for this? The answer may well lie in the process of redaction, for there are strong indications that a large part of text was inserted here, in between the end of SP 72 and the start of SP_{Bh} 163. If one were to leave out the final part, where the gods return to Deva in a pregnant state (SP 72.127–140), the storyline continued in SP_{Bh} 163 would follow much more naturally.¹⁵

There is strong additional support for the hypothesis that there is a major insertion of text here, for it is precisely at this point that the Andhaka cycle artificially interferes with the Skanda cycle. In SP 72.130 the gods, out of the blue, tell Deva that the Asura Andhaka is performing excessive *tapas* and that it makes them afraid. Deva promises them that he will slay the son of Hiraṇyākṣa. There is no connection whatsoever between the gods' pregnancy at this moment and the slaying of Andhaka; the introduction of Andhaka makes a forced impression.

Start of the Andhaka Cycle

The Andhaka cycle proper starts with Vyāsa's questions about Andhaka at the beginning of SP 73. Sanatkumāra tells him that after Hiraṇyaka-

14 SP_{Bh} 163.1–3ab: *śārvaṃ tejaḥ samādāya vahniḥ kiṃ kṛtavāṃs tadā | kathaṃ skandaḥ samutpannas kasmin sthāne mahādyutiḥ || senāpatye kathaṃ cāsāv abhiṣiktaḥ surottamaiḥ | kimartham abhiṣiktaś ca kasmin deśe 'pi vā prabho || tāraś ca kathaṃ tena nihato raṇamūrdhani* |.

15 This view has been developed in an unpublished paper by Martine Kropman, 'The consecration of Kumāra. The role of Thanesar and king Harṣa in the composition of the Skandapurāṇa'.

śipu is killed by Narasiṃha, his younger brother Hiraṇyākṣa takes over as king of the Daityas. Since he does not have a son he starts practising *tapas*. He does so at a place called Śaṅkukarṇa, at the confluence of the Sindhu and the ocean (Sindhusāgara). We learn that Śaṅkukarṇa is the spot where in former times Deva practised *tapas* for the welfare of the world. When the gods tried to enter to see him, they were prevented by Deva's Gaṇapa Śaṅkukarṇa. The episode serves to introduce the place of Hiraṇyākṣa's *tapas* as a powerful Śaiva site; it concludes with a Māhātmya of Śaṅkukarṇa (SP 73.57–67).

The name Śaṅkukarṇeśvara features in several early lists of Śaiva sites, including, in the *Skandapurāṇa*, SP 29.83b and SP_{Bh} 183.48d. Śaṅkukarṇa must have been a major centre of Śaivism at the time of the text's composition. Bakker (2014) has identified Śaṅkukarṇeśvara with the temple at Banbhore, referred to as Debāl in Arabic sources, in Sindh at the mouth of the Indus river. He concludes: 'Śaṅkukarṇeśvara, identified with the great temple in Debāl as described in the *Čāc-nāma*, may thus be one of the very few temples mentioned in the *Skandapurāṇa* of which we have a contemporaneous description.'¹⁶ The two places where the demon brothers practise *tapas*—Hiraṇyakaśipu at Śrīparvata and Hiraṇyākṣa at Śaṅkukarṇa—both lie outside the sphere of Madhyadeśa, which forms the focus of much of the rest of the narration of the text. The remote location of both these places is compatible with the topos of *tapas*, and also provides important clues to the geographical horizons of the authors of the text. These represent the boundaries of the *Skandapurāṇa*'s vision of civilisation.¹⁷ Moreover, the fact that these are the very two places where Śiva and Pārvatī performed *tapas* in the remote past lends an air of prestige to them and creates a connection across time and space.

After the Māhātmya of Śaṅkukarṇa, we are transported to Mt. Maināka for a scene that serves to explain the birth of Andhaka. Devī approaches Deva from behind and covers his eyes. Everything becomes dark and Deva materialises a third eye on his forehead. Out of the darkness Andhaka is born. Deva gives the blind boy as a son to Hiraṇyākṣa, who is practising *tapas* at Śaṅkukarṇa. Andhaka grows up in Hiraṇyākṣa's household but is depressed by his blindness and goes off to practise *tapas* himself, in order to gain eyesight. He does so at the ascetic grove of Kanakhala, in

16 Bakker 2014, 118. See also n. 133 on p. 55.

17 See also Bakker 2014, 2–3, who notes that what the Māhātmyas of these and other places lying at the periphery of the geographical heart of the text have in common is that 'they hardly, if at all, betray first-hand information about the topography. This differentiates them from, for instance, the Māhātmyas of Kurukṣetra, Bhadreśvara, or Vārāṇasī. The importance of these places is acknowledged and guaranteed by connecting them with Śaiva mythology, but the text does not bear witness to a direct acquaintance of the composers with the local situation.'

the Himalayan mountains (SP 74). After years of ascetic mortification, Brahmā appears. He grants him eyesight and another boon. Andhaka asks for immortality, but Brahmā is only willing to give him this if he states a loophole. Andhaka responds by asking that he may only be killed if he does not bow to Devī, the Mother of the World. The scene recalls the earlier episode of Hiraṇyakaśipu's *tapas*. The loophole is a connecting element linking the stories, and eventual deaths, of both demons.

The *Skandapurāṇa* is the first Purāṇa to give a full account of the life story of Andhaka. We learn very little about Andhaka from the *Mahābhārata*, although the epithet 'Slayer of Darkness/Andhaka' (Andhaka-gḥātin) occurs in some praise hymns to Śiva, and several similes hint at the killing of an Asura named Andhaka by Śiva.¹⁸ While the epic contains no account of the birth of Andhaka, the *Anuśāsanaparvan* does include a passage on the origin of Śiva's third eye (MBh 13.127.26–45) that is remarkably close to the episode of Devī's covering of Deva's eyes told in the *Skandapurāṇa*. It confirms our general impression of the closeness of some of the material included in our text with the *Anuśāsanaparvan*. The *Skandapurāṇa* is unique compared to most other sources recounting Andhaka's *tapas* in specifying its location at Kanakhala. This concern for topographical exactitude is characteristic of the text as a whole.

The War between the Asuras and the Devas

After Andhaka's successful practice of *tapas* and his return home, Hiraṇyākṣa organises a Kaumudī festival to celebrate his son's success (SP 75–76.13). Detailed descriptions of the celebrations are given, some of which are quoted in medieval Dharmanibandhas.¹⁹ When the celebrations are over, all the Asuras assemble to discuss the course of action (SP 76.14–77.75). Hiraṇyākṣa states his intention to avenge the killing of his brother Hiraṇyakaśipu all by himself. Following a heated discussion, in which the other Asuras insist that they also want to take part in the war with the gods, they prepare for battle.

When the Asura army sets out for Amarāvātī, dreadful omens start to appear. Brhaspati advises the gods on the course of action, and the gods start preparing for battle. They take up the 'falcon' array (*vyūha*),

18 See, e.g., MBh 7.57.50d, MBh 7.13.53, MBh 8.15.18. There are further references in passages excluded from the main text of the critical edition. See also Rām. 3.29.27, which contains a simile referring to the burning of Andhaka by Rudra. A lengthy account of Andhaka's killing is given in HV App.1 No. 29C, a passage that features in all manuscripts of the *Harivaṃśa* except for the three groups of manuscripts used by the editor as the standard of each version (Śāradā, Ñ1, and M1-3). This means that the text is not included in any of the early manuscripts of the three versions (northwestern, northeastern and southern).

19 See the section 'Dharmanibandha Citations of the Kaumudīmahotsava' below.

which is described in considerable detail. On their own side, the Asuras form a counter-array called the ‘crescent moon’, and the battle takes off. Extensive descriptions of the battle take up much of the second half of the volume, culminating in the flight of the gods (SP 79.14–93.25).

One can identify a general development in the unfolding of the Devāsura war. While initially it is a matter of all against all, as the battle continues, it turns into one-to-one fights. While the gods seem poised for victory initially, from SP 84 onwards the scales tip in favor of the Asuras. This chapter introduces the theme of the battle as a sacrifice (*yuddhayajña*) involving two opposing sacrificial parties. It also includes an enumeration of the individual Devāsura duels, which functions as a kind of Anukramaṇikā of the chapters that follow (SP 84.8–12 → SP 84–88).

The theme of a sacrificial battle derives from the *Mahābhārata*.²⁰ There are many other elements in the battle scenes that attest to the influence of the great epic, in particular its battle books. The epic war between heroes is transported onto a higher plain, with the Asuras and the Devas as protagonists, but the techniques of description remain essentially the same.²¹ The fact that the battle descriptions are largely informed by the *Mahābhārata*’s battle books also means that the reader should be cautious in taking them as evidence for how war was actually conducted in ancient India. They rather present a paradigm of warfare that follows the textual models of the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Mahābhārata*, although the extensive concern with the theme of war may well reflect the general circumstance of a continuing state of war between different rivaling kingdoms at the time. While the introduction of an Anukramaṇikā of individual duels finds no parallel in the *Mahābhārata*, there is a similar presentation of duels in a passage in the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App.1 No.42B ll.733–776). This features in a part of the *Harivaṃśa* excised from the main text of the critical edition, which—also in other respects—shows remarkable correspondences to the structure of the presentation of the Devāsura war. It attests to a shared narrative technique between the two texts.²²

The individual duels take up chapters 84 to 88, starting with Indra and Hiraṇyākṣa and ending with Dhruva and Hrada. After Hiraṇyākṣa captures Indra, Tvaṣṭṛ and Pūṣan and immobilises the weapons of the gods, Vāyu, Soma, Agni and Yama once again go on the counter-attack

20 For the *Mahābhārata*’s depiction of the central war as a sacrifice, see Feller Jatavalabhula 1999.

21 See pp. 21 ff.

22 These correspondences, relating roughly to SP 77–95 and HV App.1 No.42B, are being studied by Sanne Mersch in the context of her PhD project, ‘Counter-Narratives: Parallel Themes in Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Mythology’.

(SP 89–93). It is Andhaka who gives the gods the final blow, after which Hiranyākṣa orders the Asuras to take over the kingdom of the gods. Hiranyākṣa installs regents throughout the kingdom to occupy the former offices of the gods, consecrates Andhaka in Amarāvati and successfully rules the entire world himself (SP 94–95). In the process he takes the Earth to Rasātala and holds her captive under the Śaṅkha mountain. This will eventually form the reason for Viṣṇu's manifestation as Varāha (SP_{Bh} 97–110).

The description of Hiranyākṣa's takeover of the kingdom of the gods conforms to an ideal model of Arthaśāstric conquest. At each city the Asura army displays Hiranyākṣa's might and declares victory, while the citizens come out and receive them as the new rulers, offering Hiranyākṣa gifts of welcome. Hiranyākṣa installs an Asura in office, and the citizens are told to respect him as the new ruler in charge. Hiranyākṣa rules his newly acquired kingdom in accordance with the *dharma*, and his kingdom prospers as a result. The Asuras are not represented as wicked demons but as an opposing party that is just as well able to follow the *dharma*. In contrast to the attitude displayed in some other early Purāṇas, which tend to portray the Asuras as the embodiment of all evil,²³ the *Skandapurāṇa* here presents the Asuras in a much more favourable light. The Asuras are Śiva-worshippers and they follow and promote the *dharma*. It is ultimately their adherence to Śaivism that makes their rule successful.

Dharmanibandha Citations of the Kaumudīmahotsava

The text edited in the present volume includes a fairly long passage on the Kaumudī or Moonlight festivities (SP 75.12, SP 75.22–39, SP 76.1–2, SP 76.6), which is cited by at least three Dharmanibandha authors.²⁴ This provides a first and thus far unique occasion to examine how these authors used the text, and possibly to better evaluate the relationship of the citations and to see what they can tell us about the history of the *Skandapurāṇa*.²⁵ The first two authors, Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara, were pointed out already in SP I (pp. 7–8, 11–13), and one could consider adding Mitrāmīśra, author of the *Vīramitrodaya*. It is highly unlikely, however, that he had direct access to the *Skandapurāṇa*.²⁶ Mitrāmīśra

23 See, however, Doniger O'Flaherty (1976, 94–138) on the paradox of the good demon.

24 Not all authors cite the same verses, as is discussed below.

25 In the next volume we will have occasion to return to this subject, because parts of SP_{Bh} 111–112 are also quoted by Dharmanibandha authors.

26 Cf. also SP II A, 214–215, on the secondary nature of a portion of the *Skandapurāṇa*'s *Vārāṇasīmāhātmya*, quoted in Mitrāmīśra's *Tīrthaprakāśa*.

appears to have been active between 1610 and 1640, in or near Orccha.²⁷

For a start, the *Rājanītiprakāśa* of the *Vīramitrodaya* does not cite any passages that are not quoted also by Lakṣmīdhara or Caṇḍeśvara. Some minor differences aside, the citation in the *Vīramitrodaya* follows Lakṣmīdhara's citation and variants quite closely,²⁸ including the verses not cited by Caṇḍeśvara (SP 75.36–39) and some of the omissions (SP 75.12cd and SP 75.33). There are only three hemistichs (SP 75.26 and SP 75.30ab) that figure in Mitramiśra's text but are omitted by Lakṣmīdhara; they are however found in Caṇḍeśvara's citation. It is also possible that these six *pādas* were omitted only in the transmission of Lakṣmīdhara's text, but were still part of the *Kṛtyakalpataru* when Mitramiśra consulted it. Considering the rather overwhelming agreement between Lakṣmīdhara's and Mitramiśra's citations, and being aware of Lakṣmīdhara's importance and influence as an authority, it is most likely that Mitramiśra used Lakṣmīdhara's work to cite the *Skandapurāṇa*.

This leaves us with two first-hand citations by Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara, which do not include the same verses, although the core part of the description is shared by them. Caṇḍeśvara omits the last section of the text, which lists substances to be used for bathing Śiva's image and offerings to be given to it afterwards. By saying *ityādy abhidhāya*, however, he does refer to the list, which he apparently did not intend to cite in full, perhaps to remain concise.²⁹

Lakṣmīdhara's omissions are less obvious to explain. First, he omits SP 75.12 and SP 75.33, two verses that give the narrative context of the ritual description. It seems therefore likely that by adapting the Purāṇic passage to his prescriptive work, he discarded these narrative details, which did not serve his purpose. Secondly, he also omits SP 75.26, which explains what brahmins must do at the festivities. This verse is somewhat out of context in a series of prescriptions about decorations. In this case, however, Lakṣmīdhara's omission of the verse is less obviously explicable.

27 Dating according to Kane I, 440–6. He was the son of Paraśurāma-panḍita and grand-son of Haṃsa-panḍita, the latter of whom was a resident of Gopācala (Gwalior?), according to Mitramiśra's introductory verses. Mitramiśra lived during the reign of Vīrasimha, who ruled at Orccha from 1605 to 1627 and who traced his origins to Medinīmalla, king of Kāśī. See also Banerji 1999, 71. Kane I, 443, points out that the *Vīramitrodaya* was a work of high authority in the Benares School of Hindu Law.

28 This is true for the majority of the variants; it is also to be noted that some significant variants that cannot be explained by the mere corruption of *akṣaras*, such as the hemistich of SP 75.34cd and the variant *śārīram/dehe tu* in SP 75.32c, also agree in Lakṣmīdhara's and Mitramiśra's quotes. This confirms that Mitramiśra is likely to have used Lakṣmīdhara's text.

29 For various techniques and principles applied by the Nibandhakāras when quoting passages, see De Simini 2015.

Finally, his omission of SP 75.30ab may be due to the irregular syntax of the *Skandapurāṇa* (nominatives for accusatives), which Lakṣmīdhara may have wanted to eliminate. It also cannot be excluded that all of these verses were dropped in the transmission of Lakṣmīdhara's work.³⁰

In addition to omissions, there are other differences between the two citations. In general, Caṇḍeśvara's text seems to have been much better preserved than Lakṣmīdhara's, which has numerous corruptions of its own.³¹ Indeed, Caṇḍeśvara's citation has even helped us to reconstruct the text. In SP 75.23f, none of our manuscripts read *dattapaṅkā*,³² and Caṇḍeśvara's citation provides the appropriate reading from which the corruptions can easily be explained.³³

One tendency that the two Dharmanibandha authors share is that they try to eliminate the Asuric context of the original passage, namely by changing the Daitya women (SP 75.28f) into divine (*divya*) women (Lakṣmīdhara) or just into 'women' (*yoṣitaḥ*, Caṇḍeśvara). Similarly, the night-time celebrations, which are originally said to 'destroy the gods' in SP 75.22f (*suranāśinī*) since it is the demons who talk, come to be called 'destroyers of the demons' in both Lakṣmīdhara's and Caṇḍeśvara's versions. The same tendency can also be observed elsewhere, for instance in one of Lakṣmīdhara's citations given in SP II A.³⁴ One can

30 In that case, a scribe may have wished to eliminate the irregularity. To confirm this, one should make a critical edition of Lakṣmīdhara's work and evaluate the manuscript evidence in the light of this problem. Nevertheless, even then, no firm conclusion may be drawn concerning this particular quotation.

31 The lists of corruptions below exclude differences that appear to be explicable by the use of slightly different recensions of the *Skandapurāṇa* (i.e. SP 75.32c and SP 75.34cd). For corruptions in Lakṣmīdhara's text in the shared passages, see *vasobhiḥ saṃhataiḥ* for *vasobhir ahataiḥ* in SP 75.23c; *ca śitahsnātā* for *saśirahsnātā* in SP 75.23e; *sadāmpatya* for *dattapaṅkā* in SP 75.23f; *śayanāni* for *snapanāni* in SP 75.29d; *gr̥he* for *gr̥ha-* in SP 75.24d; *bhūpair* for *dhūpair* in SP 75.25d; *nṛtya-* for *nṛtta-* in SP 75.28d; *kṛśarāms tathā* for *ca rasāms tathā* in SP 75.30d; *māṃsapakvaṃ* for *māṃsaṃ pakvam* in SP 75.31b; *ca dvijottamāḥ* for *dvi-jasattamāḥ* in SP 75.31f; *daṇḍaṃ rājā* for *rājā daṇḍam* in SP 75.32d; and *sāntaḥ* for *snātaḥ* in SP 75.34a. Note that Mitramiśra appears to follow these secondary readings in most cases, so they probably had been produced by his time. In each of these 12 instances, Caṇḍeśvara's reading appears correct. Caṇḍeśvara has only four variations, which are found elsewhere than those of Lakṣmīdhara: *susamṣṛṣṭopalabdhābhī* for *susamṣṛṣṭopalīptābhī* in SP 75.23a; *udḍīyantām* for *uc-chriyantām* in SP 75.24c; *navamālāyutāni* for *vanamālākulāni* in SP 75.25f; and *pūjānte* for *pūjāṃ ca* in SP 75.29a, each in the same shared part.

32 Bhaṭṭarāi conjectured *dattabhuktā* to remedy the corrupt readings.

33 Note that in SP 75.31b, it is the testimony of all the Dharmanibandha authors that provides the solution to read *athāmakam* for the corrupt variants of our manuscripts, while Bhaṭṭarāi conjectured *anūpakam*.

34 SP 29.50a reads *grahaiḥ śukrapurogaiś ca*, which becomes *devaiḥ śakrapurogaiś ca* in Lakṣmīdhara's citation. Here, deities are preferred to planets.

easily understand that the authors felt it more appropriate to give their dharmic prescriptions a divine rather than a demonic context.³⁵

It has been observed several times that these two authors cite a recension of the *Skandapurāṇa* that is closer, at least in some important respects, to an ancestor of the R and A recensions than to the S recension, most importantly because they cite several passages present only in RA.³⁶ Furthermore, the readings of Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara, where both are available, are generally closer to each other than to RA.³⁷ From this, one can conclude that the two authors used essentially the same text. The citations of the Kaumudīmahotsava, however, suggest that concerning some minor points, the text cited by Lakṣmīdhara is sometimes slightly closer to the S recension than the one cited by Caṇḍeśvara. Two important variants must be taken into account here, in which the differences cannot be attributed to the mere corruption of the Dharmanibandha texts.

First, in SP 75.32cd, the S recension reads *śārīraṃ*, followed by Lakṣmīdhara, while RA read *dehe tu*, adopted by Caṇḍeśvara. Although the meaning is the same, the change cannot be attributed to the corruption of *akṣaras* or to an attempt to remedy a corruption.

The second case is less unambiguous. In SP 75.34cd Lakṣmīdhara again follows S, changing only the vocative of Vyāsa into *rudraṃ*, and the perfect (*snāpayām āsa*) into the optative (*snāpayīta* for *snāpayeta*), probably again to eliminate the contextual or narrative elements.³⁸ Thus, Lakṣmīdhara reads *divase divase rudraṃ snāpayīta* (for *snāpayeta*) *prayatnavān* ('every day he should bathe [the image of] Rudra, with care'), while S has *divase divase vyāsa snāpayām āsa yatnavān* ('every day he bathed [Śiva's image], O Vyāsa, with care').

Instead of this line, Caṇḍeśvara has a line that can be found, in a practically identical form, only in RA: *sarvasyāyatanam gatvā svayam eva subhaktitaḥ*. The first word transmitted in R is *śarvasya*, which is certainly the intended reading given by Caṇḍeśvara too;³⁹ the sentence hence means 'Going to a temple of Śiva, he himself, with great devotion. . .' This reading is not problematic in R, for the text, after enumerating some sub-

35 One could also argue that these changes took place in the transmission of the Dharmanibandhas, but their great consistency across authors suggests they were intended by the authors themselves.

36 See SP I, 7 ff., 16.

37 See Törzsök 2004, 36–8, and Harimoto 2006, 36.

38 Lakṣmīdhara does not need the Purāṇa's vocative, which reminds the reader that the whole teaching is a conversation between Vyāsa and Sanatkumāra; he moreover prefers the use of the optative rather than narrative perfect for his prescriptive context.

39 The change between the dental and palatal sibilants being almost orthographic, especially in eastern India.

stances, gives the missing verb in SP 75.37d: *tryambakaṃ so 'bhyāṣecayat* ('he bathed Tryambaka'). It is however problematic in Caṇḍeśvara's reading, for he does not continue his citation until SP 75.37 and so there is no verb.

Looking at the A recension, it gives both the hemistich transmitted in S and probably read by Lakṣmīdhara before transforming it (*divase divase vyāsa snāpayām āsa yatnavān*), as well as a corrupt version of what R and Caṇḍeśvara read (*parvaṇy āyatanam gatvā svayam eva subhaktitaḥ*). There are several possible ways to explain this variation and distribution of variants, but a few elements are certain.

At this place, both Dharmanibandha citations are contiguous. If they had had both lines from an ancestor of the A recension, it is not particularly likely (though not inconceivable) that either of them would have omitted a line on purpose, without good reason, especially Caṇḍeśvara, who does not seem to have such a habit. On the one hand, there is nothing in the line starting *śarvasyāyatanam* that could prompt Lakṣmīdhara's rejection if he had an ancestor of A in front of him (unlike in the other passages examined), on the other hand, Caṇḍeśvara would probably not have eliminated a line that provided the much needed verb in the sentence if he had had some form of A.⁴⁰ If we accept that nothing was dropped by the Nibandhakāras or the transmitters in this case—which is not the only possible scenario—then Lakṣmīdhara agrees with S, while Caṇḍeśvara agrees with R.⁴¹

The evidence of SP 75.32cd and the variants in SP 75.34cd suggest that Lakṣmīdhara's text may at times be slightly closer to the S recension in some respects than to Caṇḍeśvara's, even if they used what was basically the same recension, an early ancestor of RA.⁴² Such a difference can be explained in many ways,⁴³ but it certainly does not imply a linear change

40 Moreover, as Caṇḍeśvara does not omit any verse up to this point, it seems rather unlikely that he should start right here. Let us also remark here that the A manuscripts in fact do not read *śarvasya*; therefore, if one assumes that Caṇḍeśvara read an ancestor of A, one must also assume, in addition to the purposeful dropping of a line by Caṇḍeśvara, that A read *śarvasya* at that point in the transmission. One can of course argue that something was dropped during the transmission of the Dharmanibandha texts themselves, but again, this is less likely, specifically in the case of Caṇḍeśvara, whose text appears to be better preserved.

41 It is very difficult to argue whether R's or A's version is primary, for R could have eliminated a line, or A could have been contaminated with an extra one. It does not, however, influence the fact that we have a similar distribution of readings as in SP 75.32cd. The agreement between R and Caṇḍeśvara's text may also confirm what Harimoto 2006, 30, has already observed, namely that in some cases Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara are closer to R in particular.

42 SP 75.12 also shows that Caṇḍeśvara agrees with RA; here, unfortunately, we do not have Lakṣmīdhara's citation for comparison.

43 Lakṣmīdhara's text of the *Skandapurāṇa* may have been one of the branches into

from S to Lakṣmīdhara, then to the R and A recensions, and finally to Caṇḍeśvara.

Therefore, we can conclude that the Kaumudīmahotsava passage as transmitted in Caṇḍeśvara's citation strongly confirms that Caṇḍeśvara had access to an ancestor of the R and A recensions (being possibly closer to R), and that Lakṣmīdhara's text, although he reads essentially the same recension as Caṇḍeśvara, occasionally may transmit variants that are closer to the S recension. The passage also shows that Caṇḍeśvara's text is probably better preserved, at least as far as one can judge from the printed editions of this passage, and that both authors seem to interfere with the text occasionally to adapt it to their own purposes.

Language and Style

Certain features of language and style that are characteristic of the chapters edited here may reveal something about the process of composition and redaction of the text. One particularly outstanding feature in this respect is the use of the epithet 'Son of Śakti' (Śaktinandana) to address Vyāsa. This epithet is attested 11 times, from SP 71.46b to SP_{Bh} 126.4b, after which it disappears, not to be used again. This distribution more or less covers the part that deals with Viṣṇu's manifestations and the various Devāsura wars,⁴⁴ but significantly the epithet does not feature in the Skanda cycle, started in SP 72. Its limited use may therefore be indicative of a different authorship of the part of the text dealing with Viṣṇu's manifestations. While there is no intrinsic connection between the meaning of the epithet and the specific content of the text, other features discussed below are more directly related to the subject matter.

The Use of Similes

The descriptions of the battles between the Devas and the Asuras are remarkably rich in detail and display the author's proficiency, as well as a real sense of joy, at the staging of the events. The speeches and debates are lively and full of effective rhetoric. Particularly noteworthy is the employment of unconventional and innovative similes in the depiction of battle scenes, many of which are pregnant with meaning.

which the ancestor of the R and A recensions developed, retaining some S-related readings, while Caṇḍeśvara perhaps had access to another branch of the transmission, which was closer to the R and A recensions as we have them; otherwise, there may have been regional variations or cross-contaminations in the transmission.

⁴⁴ SP 71.46b, SP 75.18d, SP 78.8b, SP 80.46d, SP_{Bh} 107.37d, SP_{Bh} 109.1b, SP_{Bh} 116.99d, SP_{Bh} 119.98b, SP_{Bh} 123.1b, SP_{Bh} 123.4b. See also n. 86 on p. 44.

One group of similes involves the reversal of identity of the Asuras and the Devas. A good example is SP 77.5, which relates how the enemies of the gods rise before Hiranyākṣa, shouting victory, ‘like the Vedas before Pitāmaha’ (*vedā iva pitāmaham*). Also noteworthy is SP 76.46, in which Hiranyākṣa rises ‘like Śakra’s banner at the [Indra] festival’ (*śakraketur ivotsave*). In SP 81.15, on the other hand, Indra cuts Hiranyākṣa’s mace to pieces, ‘like a Nāstika [shatters] matters of *dharma*’ (*dharmārthān iva nāstikah*). These similes deliberately play with the conventional identities of the opposing sides of the army.

Another group of similes likens the Asuras to various planets, sometimes with reference to very specific constellations. Chapter 77 in particular has a number of such astrological references: for example, SP 77.2, which refers to a constellation that occurs when Venus reaches the five asterisms of Maghā. This particular constellation is associated in astrological literature with destruction of the crops. Also remarkable is SP 77.69–72, which describes the Asura army setting out: Śukra goes in front of Hiranyākṣa ‘like Mercury [rising] before Venus’ (*tasyaivābhūd yathā budhah*); Andhaka goes on his right ‘like the Sun [which is right/south] of the world when it takes the southern course’ (*dakṣiṇāyanam āsādya yathā lokasya bhāskarah*); Vipracitti goes on his left ‘like Himavat, the supreme mountain, [standing left/north] of Bhāratavarṣa’ (*bhāratasyeva varṣasya himavān parvatottamah*); and all the other Dānavas go before and after him ‘like the planets [surrounding] the moon’ (*śaśāṅikasya yathā grahāḥ*).⁴⁵

Other similes are simply unique. In SP 85.26, Vala catches a mace called ‘the root of death’ (*kālamūla*) mid-flight, ‘like Nandin [who conquered] his own death’ (*nandī mr̥tyuṃ yathātmanah*). The simile refers to an important episode narrated earlier in the text (SP 30.39ff.). In SP 90.7, Hiranyākṣa’s charioteer carries his master away from the battlefield, ‘like the Nidhis [carrying away] Dhaneśa’ (*dhaneśaṃ nidhayo yathā*). The simile portrays the Nidhis, who are the personification of Kubera’s treasures, as carrying their master to safety. In a fanciful image in SP 92.7, describing how Agni burns the tongues of all the wailing Dānavas, the fire inside each mouth is compared to a ‘burning light in a cave’ (*guhāyāṃ dīpavat sthitah*). Other battle-scene similes involve images of the liberation and conquest of the senses. For example, in SP 80.42, Andhaka does not budge when he is struck on the head by Yama, ‘like a sage who has conquered his senses when he is touched by the objects of the senses’ (*jitendriyo munir yadvat spr̥ṣṭo viṣayagocaraiḥ*), while in SP 82.15, the heads of members of the army of the gods no longer move, ‘like those who are on the path of *mokṣa*’ (*yathā mokṣapathī sthitāḥ*).

45 See also SP 75.3–4 and SP 75.9. As observed by Sharma 1988, 40, with reference to the *Mahābhārata*, ‘[t]he planets, in general, symbolise terror and war’.

Finally, there are passages that consist of strings of similes (e.g. SP 78.37–39, SP 88.31–33, SP 90.24–26, SP 95.10–11 and SP 95.16–18). All of this speaks of the great care taken by the author to stage the battle scenes with the help of lively and imaginative similes. While there are also similes that show the deep influence of the battle books of the *Mahābhārata*, many of them are in a category of their own and bear an original stamp.

Formulaic Phrases in the Battle Descriptions

In addition to the remarkable use of similes, the descriptions of the battles between Hiraṇyākṣa's army and the army of the gods have many stock phrases that are peculiar to this part of the text (SP 76–SP_{Bh} 108). While some of them are also found in later chapters that deal with Devāsura wars (SP_{Bh} 115–129), they do not occur in other major battle scenes, such as those between the goddesses and the Asuras in the Vindhyavāsini cycle (SP III), between the Gaṇas and the Asuras in the Andhaka cycle (SP_{Bh} 130–156) and between Skanda and Tāraka (SP_{Bh} 165). They are also very rare or lacking in the epics. In short, these stock phrases evince the stylistic coherence and particularity of this part of the text.⁴⁶

A first example is *rathenāmbudanādīnā* ('on a chariot resounding like a cloud'), which is found altogether six times in the present volume (SP 77.69b, SP 81.21b, SP 85.17b, SP 87.7d, SP 87.19b and SP 91.23d), as well as in SP_{Bh} 115.6c.⁴⁷ A phrase of two pādas in length, *teṣāṃ teṣāṃ ca saṃgrāmaḥ sughoraḥ samapadyata* ('a very terrible battle took place between them'), occurs three times in the relevant chapters (SP 81.20ab, SP 89.4ab and SP 89.48ab), and elsewhere with slight variations, but each time within the chapters that describe the Devāsura wars.⁴⁸ The battle cry *grhṇa grhṇeti* ('seize, seize!') is also used four times in the chapters at issue (SP 80.46b, SP 87.22b, SP 89.3e and SP 89.43d) and once elsewhere (SP_{Bh} 115.29c). The unique simile *citrapaṭṭārpita* ('painted on a picture'), possibly influenced by Kālidāsa, occurs four times in the battle scenes in this volume (SP 80.33d, SP 82.14f, SP 90.30d and SP 90.35d; see n. 222 on p. 78). Another pāda-length stock phrase, *yugāntāmbudavan nadan* ('re-

46 The following observations are restricted to the battle descriptions. In the Prolegomena the editors of SP I have provided a provisional overview of stock phrases in the *Skandapurāṇa* in general, in comparison to those used in the epics (SP I, 29–31). Shared phraseology between the epics and some early Purāṇas has also been referred to here and there in the footnotes of individual volumes of the critical edition.

47 SP_{Bh} 115.6c has °*nādena* instead of °*nādinā*. The phrase *gajenāmbudavarcaśā* ('on an elephant resplendent like a cloud') in 89.56b may be regarded as a variant.

48 E.g., the variants *samavartata* for *samapadyata* at SP_{Bh} 129.4ab and *tumulaḥ* for *sughoraḥ* at SP_{Bh} 115.29c.

sounding like a cloud at the end of a Yuga'), occurs three times (SP 86.58d, SP 93.11b and SP_{Bh} 103.7d), as do the variations *yugāntāmbudavat ... nādaṃ* (SP 91.25cd) and *yugāntāmbudanisvanaḥ* (SP 79.3d). The image of fallen warriors groaning with pain, comparable to the crying of sinners in hells—which occurs three times with slightly different wordings (SP 80.5cd, SP 81.34cd and SP 85.6cd)—is also characteristic of the present chapters. The phrase *tasyāpatata eva* (*evāśu* or *evātha*, once *evāṃśaḥ*) occurs six times in this part (SP 80.24a, SP 81.15a, SP 82.3a, SP 89.59a, SP 91.24a and SP_{Bh} 105.21a) and twice elsewhere (SP_{Bh} 115.228a and SP_{Bh} 122.5a). It is also used in the *Mahābhārata*, but only twice (MBh 7.163.2a and MBh 14.83.20a).

A pattern found in even *pādas*, in which two verbs in the perfect are combined with *ca* (X *ca* Y *ca*), also deserves attention. The first verb (X) may vary, but most frequent is the use of *rarāsa* as the second verb (Y) in the *Skandapurāṇa* (eight times in the relevant battle chapters and once elsewhere), or *nanāda* (five times in total). The pattern also occurs in the epics, but here *nanāda* is most common for the second verb,⁴⁹ while *rarāsa* is never used.

The Influence of the Battle Books of the Mahābhārata

In the battle descriptions of the chapters mentioned above (SP 76–SP_{Bh} 108, SP_{Bh} 115–129), some of the specific formulae are shared in particular with the battle books (6–9) of the *Mahābhārata*.⁵⁰

The phrase *śaraiḥ saṃnataparvabhiḥ* ('with arrows with bent knots'), occurs three times in the chapters at issue, with variations (e.g. *bhallaiḥ*, *śītaiḥ* and *bāṇaiḥ* for *śaraiḥ*, as well as the accusative plural for instrumental plural). It is very popular in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but their concentration in the battle books of the *Mahābhārata* is conspicuous: 41 times in book 6, 32 times in book 7 and 16 times in book 8.⁵¹ It may be noteworthy that it also occurs five times in HV App.1 No.42B, which narrates a version of the Vāmana myth with lengthy battle scenes

49 This occurs seven times in the MBh, four times in the Rām., and twice in HV App.1 No.42B.

50 Here we only single out formulae that are uniquely shared between the above-mentioned chapters and MBh 6–9. There are also formulae shared between the battle books of the *Mahābhārata* and battle descriptions in other chapters of the *Skandapurāṇa*. These require further study. For the moment we also have to neglect the star passages in the Poona edition of the *Mahābhārata*.

51 Brockington points out that the battle descriptions tend to be formulaic, and as such the battle books of the *Mahābhārata* contain many formulae; he refers to this phrase as one example (Brockington 1998, 107f.) A similar phrase, the singular *śareṇānataparvaṇā*, which occurs twice in the relevant chapters in the *Skandapurāṇa*, is also frequently used in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but not in the battle books of the *Mahābhārata*.

between the gods and the Asuras. Another stock phrase is *tad adbhutam ivābhavat*, which is found four times in this volume (SP 80.20d, SP 81.13d, SP 86.10d and SP 87.35d); it occurs throughout the *Mahābhārata*, but is especially common in books 6 (17 times) and 7 (27 times). The epithet *praharatām varah* ('best of the attackers') at the end of an even pāda occurs seven times in the relevant chapters (SP 80.25b, SP 81.32b, SP 82.3b, SP 82.8b, SP 87.32b, SP 87.40b and SP 90.2b) and twice elsewhere (SP 73.41b and SP_{Bh} 121.45b). The phrase is popular in the *Mahābhārata*, but it is not limited to the battle books.⁵²

The phrase *abhidudrāva vegena* ('he attacked with speed') in odd pādas occurs three times in this volume (SP 73.41c, SP 81.14c and SP 91.23c) and twice in another Devāsura war (SP_{Bh} 121.46c and SP_{Bh} 122.4c). This pāda only occurs in the battle books in the *Mahābhārata*,⁵³ but it is also found in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and twice in HV App. 1 No. 42B.⁵⁴ A bow drawn in a full circle is another popular image in both the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, expressed by a compound *maṇḍalikṛtakārmuka* or *maṇḍalikṛta* qualifying a noun for a bow or a weapon, e.g. *dhanus*, *āyudha*. The image is encountered four times in the Devāsura battle scenes in the *Skandapurāṇa* (SP 81.41a, SP 85.2b, SP 85.4b and SP_{Bh} 121.50a), eight times in the *Mahābhārata*, of which seven in books 6 to 8 and once in the *Harivaṃśa* (HV App. 1 No. 42B). The number of attestations in the *Mahābhārata* is not very high, but the exact wording of SP 81.41a (= SP_{Bh} 121.50a) occurs twice in book 6 and once in book 7. Another shared expression is *tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti cābravīt* ('and he said: "stand still!"'), occurring five times in the chapters at issue (SP 80.34d, SP 87.19d, SP 89.58d, SP 92.3d and SP 93.11d) and once elsewhere (SP 33.87d). It is also found with various other words for *cābravīt*, but the phrase with *cābravīt* is the most common. In the battle books of the *Mahābhārata*, we find the same formula ten times in book 6, nine times in book 7 and five times in book 8. In this case, too, it is the most common formula, although there are variations for *cābravīt*.

The verb $\sqrt{nī}$ with the accusative *yamasādanam* at the end of an even pāda, meaning 'to bring somebody to Yama's abode', i.e. 'to kill somebody', is another popular formula. It occurs altogether eight times in the chapters at issue and three times in other chapters (SP_{Bh} 115.22d, SP_{Bh} 119.21d and SP_{Bh} 154.10b). The same formula is found eight times in book 6, four times in book 7 and once or twice in some of the other

52 Its frequency in books 1 (five times) and 3 (six times) is striking. The total number of occurrences in the battle books is nine (twice in book 6, four in book 7 and three in book 8). Brockington refers to this phrase, including a variant *śreṣṭhaḥ* for *varah*, as an example of intermediate frequency (Brockington 1998, 114).

53 The distribution is: 12 times in book 6, three times in 7, twice in 8 and four times in 9.

54 See Brockington 1998, 110.

books of the *Mahābhārata*.⁵⁵ The influence of the battle books of the *Mahābhārata* may also be noticed in the use of names of weapons. A sort of small arrow called *kṣudraka*, which is mentioned in SP 86.8b, is not a well-known weapon, but it features four times in book 6, five times in book 7 and once in book 8 of the *Mahābhārata*.

Besides the relative frequency of occurrences of formulae, some more peculiar, idiomatic phrases also attest to the influence of the battle books of the *Mahābhārata* on the battle chapters of the *Skandapurāṇa*. An example is SP 86.23d: *sudṛṣṭaṃ kriyatām jagat* ('Give a good look to the world (before you die)!'). This phrase occurs, with *lokaḥ* for *jagat* (*sudṛṣṭaḥ kriyatām lokaḥ*), in MBh 6.104.47cd, MBh 7.28.13c and MBh 7.45.15a.⁵⁶ Another striking example is SP 87.13f: *mṛtyur ivāntakaḥ* ('like Death, the ender'). The apposition of Mṛtyu and Antaka may seem strange because both are names of Death, but the same expression is attested, in either the nominative or accusative, four times in book 7 of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 7.15.38d, MBh 7.61.31d, MBh 7.66.40b and MBh 7.114.86d), once in book 9 (MBh 9.16.6b) and once in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Rām. 6.73.15d).

A Different Authorship?

To conclude, the battle descriptions of the *Skandapurāṇa* contain several formulaic expressions whose attestations are more or less restricted to the part concerned with Hiraṇyākṣa's battles with the gods (SP 76–SP_{Bh} 108), as well as some of the Devāsura battles (SP_{Bh} 115–129). This fact suggests that the battle descriptions of those chapters were composed by the same author, and that this author was different from the one(s) responsible for the battle descriptions in the other chapters, such as the Vindhyavāsinī cycle and the Skanda cycle. The former was well acquainted with formulae in the battle descriptions of the *Mahābhārata*, and made frequent use of them, but also invented unique formulaic phrases and similes of his own, as discussed above. The frequent use of the unique epithet Śaktinandana in reference to Vyāsa, which is restricted to the very same part of text, supports the view of a different authorship. We hope to return to this question in greater detail in the next volume, also in relation to the position of these chapters within the larger composition of the text.

55 The occurrence of the phrase with *anayat* or *anayan* is restricted to the battle books except for one attestation in book 10 (cf. Brockington 1998, 110). The use of the accusative *yamakṣayam* for *yamasādanam* is also very common in the *Mahābhārata*, in particular in books 6 to 8. In the *Skandapurāṇa*, however, it is used only once, at SP 85.13b.

56 Other instances are *sudṛṣṭā kriyatām lanikā* in Rām. 6.31.61c and *sudṛṣṭaḥ kriyatām eṣa . . . janaḥ* at Mṛcchakaṭikā 4.24ab.

Editorial Policy

In editing the text published here we have followed the aims and methods of the critical edition of the *Skandapurāṇa* as set out in the previous volumes. Readers new to the text are referred to the relevant sections of the prolegomena and introductions.⁵⁷ The presentation of the critical apparatus likewise follows the model set by SP I.⁵⁸ The lists of symbols and abbreviations and of sigla used in the apparatus are printed before the Sanskrit text for easy reference.

Manuscript Condition

Two features of the manuscript condition of the text contained in this volume should be pointed out. First, 30 folios are lost in S_2 after f. 117. This loss covers the text from the beginning of chapter 77 (SP 77.1c) to the middle of chapter 105 of the next volume. As a consequence, Bhaṭṭarāī, the editor of the first edition, could only consult manuscripts S_1 and A_3 . This has resulted in the indication of loss of many *akṣaras* in his edition in cases where folios of S_1 are also lost or damaged. In our new edition, however, we have been able to retrieve the lost passages from S_3 , a manuscript that probably shared an exemplar with S_2 and is nearly complete for this part of the text.⁵⁹ The recovery of SP 94.7–18d is especially noteworthy. Because the text missing in S_1 due to the loss of one folio happens to overlap with text missing in the A recension (probably due to the loss of a folio in its hyparchetype), SP 94.7–18d is preserved only in S_3 , except for 7ab, which is also preserved in R (the text of about one folio is lost after 7c in R). The retrieved text contains an intriguing conversation between the sages and Hiraṇyākṣa, which reveals the dharmic/ethical character of Hiraṇyākṣa's rule in the SP.

The second point worth noting is a change of scribe in S_1 from f. 145 onwards (from SP 91.4a²). In contrast to the scribe of the previous part, the new scribe, who continues until the end of the text, distinguishes between the characters *va* and *ba*. These two characters are clearly distinguished

57 See in particular SP I, 38–54, and SP II A, 9–14, for a description of the aims and methods of the edition, and SP II B, 16–21, and SP III, 33–66, for more detailed discussions of the relationships between the different manuscripts and recensions, in addition to our editorial policies in this respect.

58 See SP I, Prolegomena, 54–54, for a description of the principal conventions. In addition, readers are referred to SP III, 73–76, for an updated and extended list of orthographical variants not reported in the apparatus of SP II B, SP III and the present volume.

59 The importance of S_3 in this respect has already been demonstrated in SP I, in which S_3 is the only manuscript of the S recension that retains a large part of chapters 17 to 21 (SP I, p. 34).

in old epigraphical records in North India and Nepal, such as the Gupta and Licchavi inscriptions, but their distinction becomes blurred later.⁶⁰ In Nepalese manuscripts from the eighth century and later, those distinguishing between *va* and *ba* are very rare. It is not sufficient, however, to argue on this basis that *S*₁ is older than *S*₂, which is likewise ascribed to the ninth century. Rather, this may have depended on the writing conventions of the scribe, or of a workshop of manufacturing manuscripts in Nepal between the eighth and the twelfth centuries.

Grammatical and Syntactical Anomalies

As in previous volumes, the text edited here displays a number of grammatical and syntactical anomalies, deviating from standard Sanskrit. In comparison to the text of the *editio princeps*, this is much more common in our edition. This is because Bhaṭṭarā often selected the more grammatically ‘correct’ reading or emended the text accordingly, while we consider this Purāṇic Sanskrit to be an original feature of the composition of the text. The list below draws attention to some noteworthy examples. The instances listed here may be collated with others already mentioned in SP I: 27–29, SP IIB: 21–23 and SP III: 67–73, as well as the individual cases discussed in the philological commentaries of SP IIA and Bisschop 2006.

1. Sandhi

Double sandhi is very common and so its many occurrences are not listed here. It also appears within a compound, e.g. *karapādaśīropalā* (a *bahuvrīhi* qualifying *nadī*; °*śīras*+*upalā* → °*śīropalā*) 88.15b.

– *-a+e-* becomes *-e-*: *caraṇenetya* 76.3a; *rathenetya* 80.35a; *neti* 87.47b.

– *-as* becomes *-o* before a voiceless consonant at the end of an odd pāda: °*viṣṭo tale*° 71.51cd; *vo tato* 73.15cd; *bhūyo pucche* 93.17ab.

– pronoun *saḥ* for *sa* before a voiceless consonant (m.c.): *saḥ patito* 71.43a.

– *r-* at the beginning of a word treated as *ri-*: *pitaro ṛṣayas* 94.11d; *ahaṃ ṛṣi*° 94.27b.

2. Nouns, pronouns and adjectives

– °*rājan-* at the end of a compound: *daityarājñō* 71.19b; *deva-rājānam* 86.4c; *daityarājānam* 89.23b.

⁶⁰ The distinction is reintroduced again much later, around the 19th century. For example, in some of the manuscripts of the A recension of the SP ascribed to the 19th or 20th century, the two letters are distinguished, but not consistently.

- °*path(in)*- at the end of a compound: *mokṣapathi* (sg.loc.) 82.15f.
- plural nominative for plural accusative: °*bhrātaraś* 79.10c; *prakṛtayaś* 93.34d.
- plural accusative for plural nominative: *śuno* for *śvāno* 88.18b.
- singular accusative for singular nominative: *divam* for *dyaus* 92.17b.
- adjective used in the meaning of an abstract noun: *cūrṇam* for *cūrṇatvam* 71.41d and 43d; *daityagṇam* for *daityagṇatvam* 71.72b.
- change of usual gender: *jyotiś* (masc., or lack of concord in gender) 72.72c (*jyotiḥ sūkṣmataro*); *yogam* (nom.sg.) for *yogaḥ* 73.37a (cf. SP 53.43c); *vasanān* (*vasanāṃścā*° masc.acc.pl.; em. from S₂) for *vasanāni* (*vasanānya*° RA) 76.5a; *gṛhān* (masc.acc.pl.) for *gṛhāni* 95.23d.
- *tam* for *tad* (neut.acc.sg.) 81.12a; 85.32b (*tam* is used for *tad* as neut.nom.sg. in all manuscripts in 85.31a, which we have emended to *tad*).
- *devata* as a masculine noun, which is used throughout the whole text (see SP III, p. 68).
- *svasām* for *svasāram* 81.13b and 87.13d.
- *sadam* (acc.sg.) for *sadaḥ* 88.21d.
- *mūrdhnan-* for *mūrdhan-*: *mūrdhnabhīr* 72.82c; °*mūrdhnā* (nom.sg.) 76.34a, 90.18a; *mūrdhnany* (loc.sg.) 83.1b (S₁), 89.39d.
- shift of ending -i- to -in-: *padātinaḥ* for *padātīn* (acc.pl.) 89.54b.
- *vṛḍita-* for *vr̥ḍita-* 73.54a.
- *pratyahas* for *pratyaham* as an adverb 74.10d (cf. SP_{Bh} 159.17d, *pratyahaḥ* in S₁S₃).
- *vadanya-* for *vadānya-* 77.11a (*vadanya-* is constantly used in the S recension).
- *ayasmaya-* for *ayomaya-* 80.11b (cf. Aṣṭādhyāyī 1.4.20: *ayas-mayādīni chandasi*; *ayasmaya-* is also common in the MBh and HV).
- *uracchada-* for *uraśchada-* 83.18a.
- *sragmin-* for *sragvin-* 75.23e (*sragmin-* is constantly used in the S recension; see SP III, 71).
- *yoga-* in the meaning of *yogin-* 90.25a (*yoga-* used for *yauga-*?).
- rare vocabulary: *talabha-* 79.23b (n. 195 on p. 73); *kikhara-* 80.53a; *kaṅkaṭi-* (probably same meaning as *kaṅkaṭa-*) 83.18a; *pārakya-* for

parakīya- 83.27d; *hastin-* in the meaning of ‘an arm’ 79.18b; various names of musical instruments in 77.54–56, 78.73–74ab, 88.12abcd and 93.3abcd (n. 171 on p. 67, n. 190 on p. 71 and n. 312 on p. 98); *kiṃkara-* as the name of a weapon 86.37a, 89.14b, 93.10c (n. 270 on p. 87); *jarjara-* as the name of an animal or bird 88.18b.

– addition of extra *sa-* in compound: *devāḥ sendrapurogamāḥ* 73.24b (*sa-* in *sendra-* may have been added to avoid hiatus).

3. Irregular *taddhita* formation

– *gāṇāpatya-* for *gāṇapatya-* 70.51d (n. 79 on p. 41).

– *taddhita* without *vṛddhi* of the first syllable: *vahneya-* for *vāhneya-* 72.73a; *parameśvarī-* for *pārameśvarī-* 73.18f.

– *taddhita -in* with *vṛddhi* of the first syllable: *pāriveṣin-* 80.15b, 81.39b.

4. Verbal forms, flexions and derivatives

– thematic instead of athematic present class: *agrḥṇat* (3rd sg., IX → I) 72.111d; *pratyagrḥṇanta* 83.14c; *grḥṇa* 80.46b, 87.22b, 88.20b, 89.3e, 43d, 90.8c, 8d; *akurvanta* (3rd pl., XIII → I) 75.33f, 78.1c, 3d, 4d (*praty-*), 75c, 79.2c, 92.20a (*pra-*, augmentless); *akurvata* (3rd sg.) 79.8b; *kurvanti* 83.30d; *ādadhāt* (3rd sg., III → I) 78.61d, 87.3d (with *sam-*); *adadat* (3rd sg., III → I) 84.16c; *avabandhata* (3rd sg. augmentless imperfect, IX → I) 80.48d; *mardamāno* (present participle, IX → I) 84.34e; *samāhanat* (II → I) 80.42d, 84.14b; *abhyahanat* (II → I) 86.43f; *vyahanat* 71.32d; *vyahanan* (3rd pl.) 92.20d; *ahanat* 93.14b; *anvaśāsata* (3rd sg., II → I) 95.7f.

– fourth class for sixth class: *mucyato* 82.17c (gen.sg. of present participle; since the word is used in an active meaning here, this cannot be a passive present participle with *parasmaipada* ending).

– secondary ending for primary ending in indicative present: *mṛgayata* (2nd pl.) 70.10d; *naśyāma* 73.14f; *anucarāma* (m.c.) 73.35b; *bibhema* 77.35c; *palāyata* 82.28c; *vipalāyata* 82.34f; *yāta* 89.32d.

– future imperative (or secondary ending for primary ending): *kṣaṃsyāma* (m.c.) 72.36d; *nāśayīṣyāma* 73.31d; *haṃsyāma* (m.c.) 77.23d; *jeṣyāma* (m.c.) 79.6d.

– primary ending for secondary ending: *prapaśyatha* (imperative, 2nd pl.) 72.94c (n. 116 on p. 51; cf. GES 6.2.1).

– irregular future: *nayīṣyāmi* for *neṣyāmi* 83.23c, 86.22b (cf. GES 8.4 (a)).

- *jajñe* (3rd sg. of $\sqrt{\text{jan}}$) in causative sense with acc. 70.22d.
- *parasmaipada* for *ātmanepada*: *saṃjajñur* (*saṃ- $\sqrt{\text{jan}}$*) 78.5c; *modanti* 79.36c; *ramanti* 88.17b; *mā tvarīḥ* (*iṣ-* aorist injunctive of $\sqrt{\text{tvar}}$) 83.28d (n. 236 on p. 81).
- *parasmaipada* ending for passive present participle: *mathyataḥ* (gen.sg.) 79.3b; *vikṛṣyatām* (gen.pl.) 79.19a; *vimucyatām* 79.19b; *bhidyatām* 79.19d; *dahyatām* 92.12b.
- irregular form of *ātmanepada* present participle: *codayāna-* 81.2b; *acintayāna-* 84.17c; *bhrāmāyāna-* 84.34f, 87.34b; *chādayāna-* 85.5a; *pātayāna-* 85.16b; *vārayāna-* 87.9c.
- optative for imperfect: *nivedayet* 72.29d; *bhojayet* 75.38d (n. 156 on p. 63).
- augmentless imperfect: *bhavat* 73.72f; *avaghoṣayat* (m.c.) 75.20d (with *saṃ-*), 80.38d; *avaghoṣayan* (m.c.) 93.33d; *avekṣanta* 77.15c; *pravādyanta* 79.15b; *ardayat* 80.9d, 87.1b, 90.36d, 93.9d; *avabandhata* (m.c.) 80.48d; *avapūrayat* (m.c.) 81.28d, 83.13f; *preṣayat* 83.25f; *samutsrjāt* 86.17d; *prajñāyata* 92.17d; *prakurvanta* 92.20a; *prapadyanta* 93.23d; *prayacchanta* 94.12b.
- augmentless aorist: *bhūt* 92.21a (conj.).
- irregular placement of augment: *aprārthayat* 72.98d and 73.83c; *apreṣayan* 75.18a; *apreṣayat* 94.2f (or augmentless *preṣayat*); *abhyavīkṣata* 86.12b.
- strong stem for weak stem: *bibhema* for *bibhīmas* 77.35c (secondary ending used for primary ending); *sasarjūr* for *sasṛjūr* (m.c.) 89.13c; *utsasarjūs* for *utsasṛjūs* (m.c.) 89.30b; *mamardur* for *mamṛdur* 79.16c.
- *-anta-* for *-at-* in present participle: *jvalantam* (neut.nom.sg.) 72.110b; *vrajantam* (neut.nom.sg.) 77.73b; *āpatantam*, *nadantam*, *samabhāsayantam* (*sama-* for *saṃ-*), *samudgirantam* and *unmathantam* (all in neut.nom.sg.) 85.31; *niṣṭananta°* (in compound) 88.14c.
- *-atī-* for *-antī-*: *gacchatyā* (fem.inst.sg.) for *gacchantyā* 72.16a; *patatyāḥ* (fem.nom.pl.) for *patantyaḥ* 86.15c.
- *sphuṭann iva* (*sphuṭan* in neut.nom.sg.) 72.110d (present participle with *iva* seems to be used as an idiomatic phrase; cf. *smayann iva* in fem.nom.sg. in SP 63.35b and 67.19b, for which see SP III, p. 71).
- *prapālīna-* (past participle of *pra- $\sqrt{\text{palāy}}$*) 71.33b and 82.25e (n. 83 on p. 43; cf. s.v. BHSD).

- *jñāpta-* for *jñapta-*: *samājñāpta-* 70.8a; *vijñāpta-* 70.19a.
- *sādhayanti*: this verb is used in the sense of ‘shouting Sādhu Sādhu’, as if it is a denominative verb derived from *sādhū*, in 79.35c and 83.26c.
- Absolutive I for II: *prasādayitvā* for *prasādyā* 77.18c; *saṁbhittvā* for *saṁbhidyā* 72.133a; *saṁmohayitvā* for *saṁmohyā* 91.27c.
- Absolutive II for I: *a-drśya* for *a-drṣṭvā* 85.16a (see GES 9.7.2 (b): *-ya* added to verbs with the negative prefix *a(n)-*); *varjya* for *varjitvā* (or *varjam*) 94.21d.
- *saṁstambhya* for *saṁstabhya* 87.37c.

5. Lack of concord between subject and verb

- singular subject with dual verb: *savahniś candramās tathā ... ciccchedatur* 91.24 (the subject in the nominative singular corresponds to the verb in the dual, but the actual subject is dual, Fire and Moon).
- plural subject with singular verb: *ete sarve ... abhidudruve* 81.18cd; *abhūt koṭyo viṁśaty eva* 78.51ab.