

Renegotiating ritual identities: Blurred boundaries between Pāñcarātra ritual communities in South India

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“In medieval India,” writes GRANOFF (2000: 399), “rituals often served as identifying markers that divided one religious community from another.” By adopting or rejecting a certain ritual or class of rituals, religious communities could define themselves in particular ways, and by placing limits on the authority to perform certain rituals or by introducing ideas of correct ritual performance, other communities could be differentiated and excluded (ibid.).² In medieval Tantric Śaiva traditions, as Alexis Sanderson has shown in a number of publications,³ strategies for inclusion and exclusion often materialised in the form of hierarchies, both of particular rituals and of the practitioners who were qualified to perform them. Tantric Vaiṣṇava traditions used similar classificatory methods. As Granoff goes on to explore, participation in the same rituals could, by the same token, effect a transcendence of sectarian boundaries or a blurring of distinctions between communities. In the event of different communities practising the same rituals, those committed to preserving sectarian boundaries were forced to maintain that the important distinctions lay elsewhere, for example in the supra-ritual identity of one community of practitioners or in the particular

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² My thanks to Angelika Malinar for drawing my attention to this article.

³ See especially SANDERSON 1995: 19–23, 78ff.

(i.e. different) mental attitude they adopt. The results of the present study may suggest, however, that such identity markers were less effective than ritual.

Numerous textual sources attest to the fact that in South India in the early centuries of the second millennium of the Common Era (CE) there were a number of distinct sub-traditions within the tradition of Tantric Vaiṣṇavism called “Pāñcarātra.”⁴ In the South Indian Pāñcarātra literature itself, the number of these sub-traditions is most commonly given as four, and these are usually named as the Āgamasiddhānta, the Mantrasiddhānta, the Tantrasiddhānta, and the Tantrāntarasiddhānta.⁵ We also find this fourfold division in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* (“Defence of the Pāñcarātra”) by the fourteenth-century Viśiṣṭādvaitavedānta author Veṅkaṭanātha, whom I shall refer to henceforth as Vedāntadeśika, the honorific by which he is now more commonly known.⁶ Of the published Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās at our disposal, none, as far as I am aware, affiliate themselves with the Tantrasiddhānta or the Tantrāntarasiddhānta, though in his *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* (pp. 30,18–31,6) Vedāntadeśika reports that the *Śrīkarasaṃhitā*, an apparently lost scriptural work, aligns itself with the latter. Several extant South Indian Pāñcarātra texts, or portions thereof, do however associate themselves with either the Āgamasiddhānta or the Mantrasiddhānta,⁷ and it appears, on the basis of these texts, as well as Yāmuna’s *Āgamaprāmāṇya*⁸ (“The Va-

⁴ In what follows, I refer to the tradition as “Pāñcarātra” unless I am referring to a particular text or passage which uses the earlier designation (“Pañcarātra”), since by the time of the composition of the (post-Yāmuna) South Indian Saṃhitās, which form the principal subject matter of this article, the former name, literally meaning “pertaining to” or “belonging to” the Pañcarātra and previously used to denote the followers of the tradition (see, e.g. Kumārila’s *Tantravārttika* on *sūtra* 1.3.4 and Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s NPP 87.22ff.), had become the standard name for the tradition itself.

⁵ For a discussion of these classifications and a list of the Pāñcarātra texts in which they appear, see RASTELLI 2006: 185–251 and LEACH 2014. The term *siddhānta*, ordinarily meaning an established conclusion or doctrine, is best understood here as, in RASTELLI’s (2006: 185) words, “eine Lehre und die damit verbundene Tradition, die sich vor allem auf die religiöse Praxis bezieht” (a teaching and the tradition bound to it, which refers above all to the religious practice). The Saṃhitās provide their own explanations of the term (see RASTELLI 2006: 185–186).

⁶ On the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, see LEACH 2012.

⁷ For instance, the PārS (e.g. at 19.522ff.) associates itself with the Āgamasiddhānta, while the PādS (1.1.86cd), the BhT (22.88, 24.17–50), the ŚrīprśS (16.31c–34), and the MārKS (1.26ab) associate themselves with the Mantrasiddhānta.

⁸ Although he does not name either the Āgamasiddhānta or the Mantrasiddhānta, Yāmuna clearly distinguishes between two (unnamed) Pañcarātra traditions: one

lidity of the Authoritative Texts [of the Pāñcarātra]”) and the aforementioned *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, that these were the two most prominent Pāñcarātra traditions in South India between roughly the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries.⁹ The textual evidence suggests that there were also two principal Pāñcarātra traditions in North India in earlier centuries.¹⁰

whose followers belong, by way of their family lineage, to the Vājasaneyya branch of the Yajurveda, who perform their life-cycle rites in accordance with the domestic ritual manuals of Kātyāyana and so on (*yad ete vaṃśaparamparayā vājasaneyasākhām adhīyānāḥ kātyāyanādigrhyoktamārgeṇa garbhādhānādisaṃskārān kurvate*, ĀP 169.5–6); and one whose followers have abandoned the religious duties of the triple Veda (“from the recitation of the Sāvitrī [*mantra*] onwards”) and who perform the 40 life-cycle rites enjoined only by the Ekāyana Śruti (*ye punaḥ sāvitry-anuvacanaprabhṛttrayādharmatyāgenaikāyanaśrutivihitān eva catvāriṃśat saṃskārān kurvate*, ĀP 169.7–8). As will become evident below, the latter group are clearly followers of what is elsewhere (most likely later) called the Āgasiddhānta. I provisionally accept YOUNG’s (2007: 237) estimate for the lifetime of Yāmuna as ca. 1050–1125 CE, with the *Āgamaprāmānya* being written “in the late eleventh or early twelfth century” (ibid.: 260).

⁹ It should be pointed out that these two traditions are not always called “Āgasiddhānta” and “Mantrasiddhānta.” For instance, in perhaps the earliest extant classification of the four aforementioned Pāñcarātra sub-traditions, contained in the PauṣS (38.293c–294c), the Āgasiddhānta is called simply “Siddhānta” (see RASTELLI 2006: 197). Meanwhile, in his NyP (p. 477), section 3.2, Vedāntadeśika calls the Mantrasiddhānta the “Divyasiddhānta,” and in his PRR (p. 30,18) he reports that the *Śrīkarasaṃhitā* calls the Āgasiddhānta the “Vedasiddhānta.”

¹⁰ See, for instance, Ratnākara’s *Haraviṇaya* (ca. 830 CE), which distinguishes (at 47.55–56) between the Ekāyanas and the followers of the teaching (*śāsana*) of Saṃkarṣaṇa, and Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s *Nareśvaraparīkṣāprakāśa* (ca. 950–1000 CE) which distinguishes between the Saṃhitāpāñcarātras and the Sāṅkarṣaṇapāñcarātras. Sanderson, who has drawn attention to both of these passages, thinks it very likely that these two works refer to the same groups – in other words, that the Saṃhitāpāñcarātras are the Ekāyanas (SANDERSON 2009: 108). The two groups differ from each other, according to Rāmakaṇṭha, in their views on the embodied self (*jīva*). On the one hand, the Sāṅkarṣaṇapāñcarātras say that consciousness is merely a product of (the mental faculties comprising) the “internal organ” (*antaḥkaraṇacaitanikāḥ*, NPP 87.22). On the other hand, the Saṃhitāpāñcarātras, along with the “knowers of the Upaniṣads” who subscribe to the theory of the transformation of the original cause, say the following: “Embodied selves are truly distinct [from the mental faculties comprising the internal organ], but they are non-pervasive (i.e., atomic), and they originate from the imperishable supreme cause, which is either the referent of the word *brahman* [for the knowers of the Upaniṣads] or is called Nārāyaṇa [for the Saṃhitāpāñcarātras]. Like a pot, for example, [originates from

In this article, I argue that the available textual sources convey important information concerning the relations between the Āgama and the Mantra Siddhāntas and the apparent blurring of certain distinctions between these two traditions in consequence of the circumstances in which Āgamasiddhāntins found themselves in South India in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. In the first part of the article, I briefly describe certain aspects of the socio-religious context within which the Āgamasiddhānta and its adherents, the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas, and the Mantrasiddhānta and its adherents, the Mantrasiddhāntins, existed in South India during the period in question. In the second part, I discuss the fact that by the end of this period, probably subsequent to the career of Vedāntadeśika, the Āgamasiddhānta appears to have ceased to exist as a separate tradition within the Pāñcarātra. Thereafter, I address several passages in scriptural works and in the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, which may provide clues as to why this happened and as to what became of the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas.

As RASTELLI (2006: 185ff.) has shown, the textual evidence indicates that, for at least part of the period between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries, the Āgamasiddhānta and the Mantrasiddhānta were in competition with each other for the control of Pāñcarātra temples and the right to perform rituals for fee-paying clients. An apparent outcome of this rivalry, which is recorded in several scriptural works as we will see below, was that Āgamasiddhāntin authors on occasion condemned or disparaged certain practices of the Mantrasiddhānta, at least partly, no doubt, as a means of asserting their own superiority over that tradition.¹¹ In a similar manner, Mantrasiddhāntins presented their own tradition as the superior one, and this involved claiming, for instance, that Āgamasiddhāntins do not belong

clay and will eventually dissolve back into it, so] the independent natures [of embodied selves] originate from and [will eventually] dissolve back into their own cause” (*pariṇativedāntavidyaḥ saṃhitāpāñcarātrās cāhuḥ satyaṃ bhinnā eva jīvātmānaḥ, te tu paramakāraṇād anaśvarād brahmapadavācyād avyāpakā eva ghaṭādivat svakāraṇalayaśvabhāvās cotpadyanta iti*, NPP 91.18ff.).

¹¹ In keeping with this attitude, *ekāyana* was understood by South Indian Ekāyanas of this period to mean “the only way.” See PārS 1.57c–58b (→ ĪS 1.19): *mokṣāyanāya vai panthā etadanyo na vidyate || tasmād ekāyanaṃ nāma pravadanti manīṣinaḥ* |. “There is no way other than this for going to liberation; therefore, the wise say that [this] is called Ekāyana (i.e. ‘the only way’).” Cf. the following excerpt from a version of the *Puruṣasūkta* contained in the Taittirīya recension of the Black Yajurveda and quoted by Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhāṣya* (on *sūtra* 2.2.35): *nānyaḥ panthā ayanāya vidyate* (excerpt from *Taittirīyāranyaka* 3.12.7).

to a Brahmanical kinship group (*gotra*)¹² and are not qualified to use Vedic *mantras*¹³ or to perform certain rites, including the investiture of God's icon with the sacred thread (*pavitṛāropaṇa*), the rites relating to the construction of temples (*karṣaṇādi*), and the installation of divine images therein (*pratiṣṭhā*).¹⁴ The *Pādmasaṃhitā*,¹⁵ a South Indian Pāñcarātra scriptural work which affiliates itself with the Mantrasiddhānta, declares that an Āgamasiddhāntin should ask a Brahmin who has been initiated into the Mantrasiddhānta to perform these latter rites on his behalf.¹⁶ The Āgamasiddhāntin author/s of the slightly later *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* counter several of these claims by enjoining adherents of the Āgamasiddhānta to perform precisely these actions.¹⁷ The discord between these two Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas during this period is conveyed well by the fact that in their texts the same reparative rites are prescribed for mixing ritual injunctions from separate Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas as for mixing ritual injunctions from separate ritual and doctrinal systems (*tantra*), whether the latter be Vaikhānasa or Pāsupata according to the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (19.520, 549). Indeed, the *Pādmasaṃhitā* (4.19.125ff.) explicitly states the equivalence between the mixing or confusing of Pāñcarātra sub-traditions (*siddhāntasaṅkara*) and the mixing or confusing of the Pāñcarātra with other religious systems (*tantrasaṅkara*).

At least in normative terms, then, the divide between Siddhāntas is radically more pronounced than the distinctions found in apparently earlier classifications of different types of Pāñcarātra devotees, such as the distinction between those “with desires” (*sakāma*) and those “without desires”

¹² See e.g. PādS 4.21.41ab.

¹³ See e.g. PādS 4.21.37c–39b; ŚrīprśS 16.31c–34.

¹⁴ See e.g. PādS 4.21.33–35b, 43–46.

¹⁵ As is the case with much of the anonymous Pāñcarātra literature, it is extremely difficult to establish the date of the composition of the *Pādmasaṃhitā*. RASTELLI (2003) argues that it can be determined only in relation to other Saṃhitās and places the bulk of its composition between that of the *Paramasaṃhitā*, from which it borrows, and that of the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*. Her suggestion that it is subsequent to the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* as well as to the lifetime of Rāmānuja would most likely place it towards the end of the twelfth century, or shortly thereafter.

¹⁶ PādS 4.21.45: *yāceta mantrasiddhānte dīkṣitaṃ viprasattamam | pūjārtham ātmano bimbapraṭiṣṭhākarṣaṇādiṣu* (corr., *karaṇādiṣu* ed.) ||. For a fuller discussion of this and aforementioned passages in the *Pādmasaṃhitā*, see RASTELLI 2006: 198–216.

¹⁷ For instance, the claim that Āgamasiddhāntins are not qualified to perform the rites involved in the construction of temples and the installation of images of God is countered at PārS 15.14c–20 (on which see RASTELLI 2006: 203).

(*akāma*, *niṣkāma*) which we find in the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* and the *Sātvata-saṃhitā*. Although the *Sātvatasamhitā* reports, for example, that devotees with desires and those without desires perform divergent rites on different days of the month during the yearlong vow (*vrata*) to worship the four differentiated forms of God (*vyūha*) (SS 7.37ff.), and that they recite the Heart Mantra with different endings (SS 19.84c–85) etc., there is no indication of any rivalry between these different types of worshippers, or indeed any sign that such worshippers organised themselves into groups. In fact, the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* even claims that once devotees with desires, or those who seek “enjoyments” (*bhoga*), are satiated by such pleasures, they practice “disengagement” (*nivṛtti*), which means that they renounce their desires.¹⁸ This implies, if we are to take it literally, that a worshipper may go from being *sakāma* to being *niṣkāma* purely according to his own inclinations. As we will see below, this is not the case with regard to membership of a Siddhānta.

According to scriptural testimony, as with the *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* worshippers, members of each of the four Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas could belong to any of the four social classes (*varṇa*).¹⁹ The four Siddhāntas are differentiated from each other in a variety of ways, including the different principal deity or deities worshipped and the different *mantras* used, though many of the accounts we have of these matters contain conflicting information, with “insider” and “outsider” descriptions of a particular Siddhānta only occasionally in agreement with one another.²⁰ One distinguishing feature between the Āgama and the Mantra Siddhāntas which is reported in several Mantrasiddhānta sources and does not appear to be contradicted by any Āgamasiddhānta account (see RASTELLI 2006: 193–195) is that the Āgamasiddhānta cannot be joined via a ritual of initiation (*dīkṣā*).²¹ Rather, there are a number of textual clues, including those found

¹⁸ PauṣS 19.51–52b: *pravṛttiś ca nivṛttiś ca karma ca itad dvidhā 'bjaja | jayanti bhogaikaratāḥ pravṛttena tu karmaṇā || paritṛptāś tu sambhogair nivṛttenācaranti ca |*. “And action, this is twofold, O Lotus-born: engagement with worldly activities and disengagement from worldly activities. Those intent upon enjoyments only, they acquire [those], to be sure, by means of engaged action. But those satiated by [such] enjoyments, they proceed with disengaged [action].”

¹⁹ See e.g. PādS 4.21.37–73b on the Āgama, Tantra, and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas, and 3.1.15c–17b and 4.2.61c–64 on the Mantrasiddhānta.

²⁰ In the cases of the Tantra and the Tantrāntara Siddhāntas, as already mentioned, we have no insider accounts.

²¹ See e.g. PādS 4.21.53 (→ BhT 24.25): *na dīkṣā naiva dehasya dahanādi-*

in several passages which I address below, which indicate that the Āgamasiddhānta is accessible only by birth.²² To my knowledge, the earliest reference to the idea that one is born an Ekāyana is found in the so-called *Samvitprakāśa* by the Kashmirian author Vāmanadatta. In the closing verses of each chapter (*prakaraṇa*) of this work, the author claims that he is a Brahmin “born into the Ekāyana.”²³

Another of the distinctions between the Āgamasiddhānta and the Mantrasiddhānta which appears to have been uncontroversial is the fact that in South India in this period the adherents of the former tradition claimed to base their teachings on a certain Ekāyanaveda, an apparently mythical ur-text which Āgamasiddhāntins declared both antecedent to and superior to the Vedas, for which reasons they call it the “original” or “principal” Veda (*mūlaveda*). In reality, this Ekāyanaveda, the earliest clear references to which occur only in the *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (in the form of *ekāyanaśruti*, ĀP 169.7, 170.4),²⁴ may have been represented by the three scriptural works which were, from around the fourteenth century (LEACH 2014), called the “three jewels” of the Pāñcarātra scriptural canon, namely the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*, and the *Sātvatasamhitā*. This much, at least, has been hinted at in the *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā*, one of the

viśodhanam | nāṅganyāsādi sakalaṃ neṣṭam ekāyanādhvani ||. “Neither initiation, nor indeed the purification of the body through [visualising it as] burning etc., nor the assignation etc. [of *mantras* to the various] parts of the body – none of this is desirable according to the way of the Ekāyanas.”

²² However, see PādS 4.2154ab (→ BhT 24.26ab), which speaks of “those familiar with the threefold knowledge (i.e. the three Vedas)” (*traividya*) who have “entered into the Ekāyana.” As RASTELLI (2006: 195) points out, this must apply only to those *traividyas* who do not already belong to another Pāñcarātra Siddhānta, since at PādS 4.21.74–75b it is said that should a man abandon one Siddhānta and enter another, he is guilty of committing an offence (*kilbiṣin*).

²³ *Samvitprakāśa* 1.137c–138b reads: *ekāyane prasūtasya kaśmīreṣu dvijātmanah || kṛtir vāmanadattasya seyaṃ bhagavadāśrayā |*. “Depending on the Lord, this is a work of Vāmanadatta, a Brahmin born in Kashmir into the Ekāyana [lineage].” Cf. verses 2.61, 3.60, 4.98, and 5.52 from later chapters. On the title of the *Samvitprakāśa*, see SANDERSON 2009.

²⁴ There is, however, a possible allusion to the Ekāyanaveda in a North Indian work, namely Bhaṭṭa Jayanta’s *Āgamaḍambara* (composed between 883–902 CE). Here, the character known as Dhairyaśi refers to “the designation ‘Veda’ that people apply to the texts (*vacana*) of the Pāñcarātra” (see DEZSÖ 2005: 237). The earliest reference to an actual “Ekāyanaveda” may be that found in the PādS (4.1.3) or in the opening chapter of the PārS (1.32, 56).

later scriptural works which possibly postdates Vedāntadeśika,²⁵ as well as by the nineteenth-century Śrīvaiṣṇava scholar Alaṅgabhāṭṭa who, in his *Sātvatārthaprakāśikā*, a commentary on the *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, claims that these three works constitute the “*sūtras*” of the “original Veda.”²⁶

In contrast to the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas, Mantrasiddhāntins claimed to belong to a Vedic school which was widely recognised as such, namely the Vājasaneyasākhā. In his *Āgamaprāmāṇya*, Yāmuna distinguishes several times between the Ekāyana and the Vājasaneya or “Vājasaneyaka” schools (*śākhā*) and their respective followers within the Pāñcarātra,²⁷ while the later *Pādmasaṃhitā*, in its account of the origin of the Mantrasiddhānta (at 4.21.2ff.), places this tradition firmly within that of the White Yajurveda by claiming that the Mantrasiddhānta’s first initiates were 8,000 seers (*ṛṣi*) belonging to the Kāṇva and Mādhyandina recensions (i.e., of the *Vājasaneyisaṃhitā*).²⁸ Once they had been initiated, we are told, these seers were instructed to recite the “Kāṇvī” and “Mādhyandinī” recensions, and to accompany their performance of Vedic rituals such as *somayāga* with visualisation (*dhyāna*) and worship of Viṣṇu (*bhagavat*, PādS 4.21.9–11b). A few verses later, the author of this section of the *Pādmasaṃhitā* asserts that Mantrasiddhāntins “should meditate on” or “should visualise” (*dhyāyeyuḥ*) and honour Vāsudeva’s image (*bera*) with Vedic *mantras* (*trayīmantra*, PādS 4.21.28c–29). The *Pādmasaṃhitā* presents this amalgamation of Pāñcarātra Viṣṇu-worship and Vedic ritual as indicative of the Mantrasiddhānta, and a later scriptural work which borrows from the *Pādmasaṃhitā* and which affiliates itself with the same Siddhānta, namely the *Bhārgavatantra*, calls Mantrasiddhāntins “mixed” (*miśra*) as opposed to “pure” (*śuddha*) Vaiṣṇavas (the latter being the Āgamasiddhāntins), apparently for this reason.²⁹ Another important con-

²⁵ See ŚrīprśS 49.471c–473, wherein the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, *Sātvatasāṃhitā*, and *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* are presented as offering different versions of the Mūlaveda, tailored to suit the varying abilities of students. See also the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* section of the JS (1–12b), wherein the “three jewels” are presented as constituting a single teaching (*ekaśāstra*).

²⁶ SāPr on ĪS 1.64–67: *idaṃ sātvatapauṣkarajayākhyatantratrayaṃ mūlavedasya sūtrarūpam*.

²⁷ See ĀP 140.5–7, 141.8–10, and 169.5–8.

²⁸ See RASTELLI 2006: 229–230 for a brief synopsis of this passage.

²⁹ See BhT 24.17–18 and the discussion in RASTELLI 2006: 223. The mixed Vaiṣṇavas are described here as “learned in the three Vedas” (*traividya*), while the “pure” Vaiṣṇavas follow the Ekāyanaveda. COLAS (1990: 26) reports that the Vaikhānasa work *Kriyādhikāra*, which was composed around the time of Yāmuna

trast with the Āgamasiddhāntins, who consider their own tradition superior to the Veda, is that Mantrasiddhāntins or “Bhāgavatas,” as they are also called by the *Pādmasaṃhitā*,³⁰ claim that their tradition is “rooted in the Veda.” It is *vedamūla* rather than *mūlaveda*.³¹

In spite of their differences and the apparent enmity which led followers of both Siddhāntas to criticise and subordinate the other, several Pāñcarātra works enjoin coparticipation in temple rituals between Ekāyanas and other Pāñcarātrikas, including those who, like the Mantrasiddhāntins, are described as having expertise in the Vedas. For instance, in the final two chapters of the *Sātvatasamhitā*, which are likely a later addition to this text (LEACH 2012: 144–146), four Ekāyanas are named among the professional assistants to the officiating temple priest (*guru*) – they are called the “guardians of the image” (*mūrtipa*) – in a sequence of rites relating to the construction of a temple (SS 24.282–433) and the subsequent installation and worship of an image of Viṣṇu (SS 25.39–260b). These Ekāyanas, who are to be seated by the *guru* in the four cardinal directions (SS 24.310cd) at the fire sacrifice during the installation of the pots, are identified as Brahmins (*vipra*, e.g. SS 25.118d), and they receive instructions from the officiating priest together with the other professional assistants (SS 25.106ab), who are also identified as Brahmins and who are said to be experts in one or another of the four Vedas (e.g., SS 24.291a, 25.157ab). These latter assistants are evidently also Pāñcarātrikas, and indeed they are explicitly identified as such for they are called *bhagavanmaya* (“consisting of the Lord,” SS 24.288b, 326b), which is a common way of referring to Pāñcarātrikas both in the *Sātvatasamhitā* and in other scriptural works.³² It is notable that throughout the installation rites the Ekāyanas are instructed to recite not only Pāñcarātra *mantras* but also Vedic ones (e.g. at SS

(COLAS 2011), also divides the Pāñcarātra into *miśra* and *śuddha* sub-groups, and that according to the *Yajñādhikāra*, another Vaikhāṇasa work from the same period, the latter does not conform to Vedic norms (*vedamaryādā*).

³⁰ See e.g. PādS 4.21.14–15. It appears that in this period the label “Bhāgavata” was associated especially with Mantrasiddhāntins (see also PauṣS 38.41c–42). However, Ekāyanas also used the term in reference to their own tradition (e.g. PārS 1.77–78).

³¹ See e.g. PādS 1.1.91cd: “This Tantra is rooted in Śruti and is an authority like the Kalpasūtras” (*śrutimūlam idaṃ tantraṃ pramāṇaṃ kalpasūtravat*). This verse is also found in the ViṣS (8.5ab) as well as in the later MārKS (1.38ab) and ŚrīpurS (1.26cd).

³² See e.g. SS 6.74cd, 7.107c–109b, and 22.46. Elsewhere, see e.g. JS 16.7–9, 18.6 and PauṣS 27.207cd, 32.88–89.

24.333, 25.53–54b, 113d–115b, 253–257b),³³ and that they are enjoined to recite the latter together with the specialists in the relevant Veda from among the other Pāñcarātrikas. This prescription for the Ekāyanas to recite Vedic *mantras* is, of course, at odds with the aforementioned claim in the *Pādmasaṃhitā* that Ekāyanas are not permitted to use Vedic *mantras*. Chapter 42 of the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* presents a similar scenario to that given in the *Sātvatasāṃhitā*. Here it is said, for instance, that during the offering of whole grain barley (*sākṣata*) and sesame seeds into the sacrificial fire, which forms part of the sequence of rites in establishing the foundations of a temple, the Ekāyana Brahmins (*vipra*) are to be seated in the cardinal directions (*prāgādau*) and the Pāñcarātrikas with expertise in the Vedas are to be seated in the ordinal directions (“from northeast to northwest,” *īśād vāyupathāvadhi*) (PauṣS 42.31–32).³⁴

These sections of the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* and the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* are written in the optative mood, and should accordingly be interpreted as offering prescriptive rather than descriptive accounts of the rituals in question. However, as far as I am aware, there is little reason to doubt that these rituals were performed approximately according to instruction, albeit via the mediation of the officiating priest or preceptor who is the addressee of the injunctions.³⁵ The *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, which postdates the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, informs us that (at the time of its composition, probably in the thirteenth or fourteenth century) Hari is worshipped according to the dictates of the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* in Yādavācala (Melkote or Melukote in modern-day Karnataka) and the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* in Śrīraṅgam, and the slightly later *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* section of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* corroborates these claims.³⁶ It is also noteworthy that the majority of these sections of the *Sātvatasāṃhitā* and the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* were incorporated into one or both

³³ These are listed by HIKITA 2005.

³⁴ See also PauṣS 42.122c–126, where the Ekāyana Brahmins are seated together with the experts in the Sāmaveda “on the west side facing east” (*prāṇmukhaṃ paścime bhāge*) of the sacrificial hall (*yāgāgāra*).

³⁵ The bulk of the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās have the function of manuals which are intended to guide the preceptor (usually *ācārya* or *guru*, less commonly *deśika*) through the officiation of rituals. As far as the other participants in the ritual are concerned, it is the preceptor rather than the text which acts as the guide. See LEACH 2012: 21–24.

³⁶ See ĪS 1.67: *etattantratrāyoktena vidhinā yādavācale | śrīraṅge hastiśaile ca kramāt sampūjyate hariḥ ||*; and the Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ of the JS 12c–13b: *sāttvataṃ yaduśailendre śrīraṅge pauṣkaram tathā || hastiśaile jayākhyam ca sāmrajyam adhi-tiṣṭhati |*. Yaduśaile is another name for Yādavācala or Melkote.

of the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* and the *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, and that these texts were also used in, respectively, Śrīraṅgam and Melkote.³⁷ Moreover, although the epigraphical record from Śrīraṅgam is silent on the issue, the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* provides testimony that a community of Ekāyanas was active in Śrīraṅgam, and participated in temple rituals there, at around the same time that Rāmānuja supposedly held the position of temple manager (*śrīkārya*) at the Raṅganāthasvāmin Temple (RASTELLI 2006: 243–244).³⁸ Neither Rāmānuja nor his predecessor Yāmuna, who himself includes the Ekāyanas among the Pāñcarātrika Bhāgavatas defended by him in the *Āgama-prāmānya*, were themselves Ekāyanas. Such considerations further indicate that there existed, at the least, a degree of cooperation between Ekāyanas and other Pāñcarātrikas who, like Yāmuna (see NEEVEL 1977: 35–36), performed or supported the performance of a combination (or “mixing”) of Pāñcarātra and Vedic rituals. This cooperative ethos also extended to the production of scriptural texts, with Āgamasiddhāntin authors borrowing from works composed by Mantrasiddhāntins and vice versa.³⁹

As well as textual borrowings, there are also signs of mutual influence between the two Siddhāntas, especially with regard to the classification of Pāñcarātra scriptures (LEACH 2014). Presumably the Ekāyana claim that the Ekāyanaveda is unauthored (or, literally, that it does “not derive from a [human or divine] person,” *apauruṣeya*) is an instance of the Ekāyanas

³⁷ For the parts of chapters 24–25 of the SS incorporated into the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, see RASTELLI 2006: 577–578; for the parts incorporated into the *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, see LEACH 2012: 143, n. 241. Chapter 42 of the Pauṣ also contains parallel verses with the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* (see RASTELLI 2006: 574) and the *Īśvarasaṃhitā* in Melkote (Yādevādri) is attested in the *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* of the JS 13c–14b: *pādmatantram hastiśaile śrīraṅge pārameśvaram || īśvaram yādevādrau ca kāryakāri pracāryate* |. The *Adhikaḥ Pāṭhaḥ* is datable to the fourteenth century (SOUNDARA RAJAN 1981: 27). In addition, the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* contains, in its tenth chapter (vv. 108ff.), a panegyric to the Raṅganāthasvāmin Temple in Śrīraṅgam, while ĪS 20.118ff. is written in praise of Melkote (Yādevācala or Yādevagiri).

³⁸ This is further corroborated by the later *Kōyiloḷuku* (see HARI RAO 1961: 45ff.), the Tamil “chronicle” or “record” of the Raṅganāthasvāmin temple, though this is, in itself, hardly a reliable source (ORR 1995).

³⁹ For instance, the Āgamasiddhāntin *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* borrows from the Mantrasiddhāntin *Pādmasaṃhitā* (see RASTELLI 2006: 570–571). On Mantrasiddhāntin authors borrowing from Āgamasiddhāntins, see LEACH 2014.

having been influenced by the ideas of thinkers, such as Yāmuna, who were rooted in the tradition of Vedānta and venerated the Veda alongside the Pāñcarātra ritual texts.⁴⁰ However, in general the Ekāyanaveda is presented in contradistinction to the Veda. For example, in contrast to the exoteric Vedas which enjoin the worship of multiple deities for various mundane and heavenly rewards, the Ekāyanaveda is said by Ekāyanas to belong to a secret tradition (*rahasyāmnāya*) whose members worship only Vāsudeva, especially in his fourfold form (*cāturātmya*), and who pursue a single goal, namely liberation (*mokṣa*) from the realm of rebirth.⁴¹ On account of their monotheism and their pursuit of liberation to the exclusion of all other goals, the South Indian Ekāyanas often called themselves “Ekāntins,” after the paradigmatic liberation-seeking worshippers of Nārāyaṇa as depicted in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata*.⁴²

Monotheism and the pursuit of liberation alone are also, according to Ekāyanas, the principal characteristics which set the adherents of the Āgasiddhānta apart from those of the other Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas, though Mantrasiddhāntin authors disputed this by claiming that their own tradition also worships Vāsudeva alone and pursues liberation to the exclusion of all other rewards.⁴³ According to the Ekāyanas, not only does their monotheism and their recognition of liberation as the single goal set them apart from other Pāñcarātrikas, these characteristics also mark them out as superior.

This attitude is exemplified in several passages in the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*. Modern scholars have commonly assigned a relatively early date and a North Indian provenance to this work, but as I have argued elsewhere (LEACH 2012), there are numerous indications that significant portions of the extant *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* were composed and added to the text in South India. At least some of these interpolations appear to have been authored by Ekāyanas (*ibid.*). Among such passages, we encounter several descriptions both of the Ekāyanas and of other Pāñcarātrikas. While the former are variously presented as Ekāntins (e.g., PauṣS 36.261a), as devotees without

⁴⁰ See Yāmuna’s claim that the authorlessness (*apauruṣeyatva*) of the Ekāyana recension (*ekāyanaśākhā*) is “treated at length” in the *Kāśmīrāgamaprāmāṇya* (ĀP 170.7–9). For the Ekāyana claim that the Ekāyanaveda is unauthored, see e.g. PārS 19.523–525b (→ ĪS 21.561b–563) and ŚrīprS 2.38–41.

⁴¹ See e.g. PārS 1.16c–19b, 32c–34, 74c–75; 10.145–146.

⁴² On the figure of the Ekāntin in the *Nārāyaṇīya* and in later Pāñcarātra literature, see LEACH 2012: 177ff.

⁴³ See e.g. PādS 4.21.11c–12, 25 and the discussion in RASTELLI 2006: 230.

desires (*akāma*, PauṣS 31.203cd), as those who do not desire the fruits of worship (*aphalārthin*, PauṣS 31.286ab), and as those who worship no other God (*ananyayājīn*, PauṣS 27.710c), other Pāñcarātrikas are presented as “mixed worshippers” (or worshippers that mix together their rituals, *vyāmiśrayājīn*, e.g. PauṣS 36.79) who desire mundane and heavenly rewards, and who worship gods other than Viṣṇu, including his subordinate deities (*gaṇa*), as a means to achieving these.⁴⁴ Such worshippers, we are told in the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*, attain lesser rewards than the Ekāyanas: “[Rituals] such as the sacrifice are known to grant only meagre fruits to worshippers with desires, even if they grant heaven.”⁴⁵ The worshippers without desires, meanwhile, are granted the world of Acyuta (*acyutaloka*, PauṣS 31.203cd) and are united in the supreme self (PauṣS 31.227cd). Earlier in the same chapter, we are told that the approach to worship characteristic of the “mixed worshippers” is forbidden by God: “The omniscient abiding in the heart does not permit [worship that is performed with] desire. One who grants heaven to his devotees even when it is not asked for – what is it that is not given by him? Therefore, one should abandon requests!”⁴⁶ The following passage from the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* articulates what appears to be a representative Ekāyana attitude:

Knowing thus [i.e., that Puruṣottama is the “inner ruler” (*antaryāmin*) of all gods], one should certainly never perform mixed devotion. (259) Indeed one who desires the supreme goal must avoid [that] with every effort. Those Brahmins that are called Ekāyanas are truly devotees of Acyuta. (260) They who worship Viṣṇu as a duty [that is] without fruit, worshipping no other [God], are Ekāntins who [will] exist in their true state after death. (261) [In other words,] at death they attain the state of Vāsudeva, O Lotus-born! And the oth-

⁴⁴ The term “mixed worshipper” is not directly explained in either the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* or the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*. However, the latter text refers to the Vedas as the “mixed *dharma*” (*miśradharma*), apparently on account of the fact that they refer to deities (*deva*) other than Vāsudeva (PārS 1.45–52) and are concerned with the fulfilment of various desires (*kāma*), i.e., rather than being concerned only with liberation (PārS 1.78–89).

⁴⁵ PauṣS 31.202c–203a: *kratuvat svalpaphaladāḥ svargadā yady api smṛtāḥ || sakāmānām... ||*. See also PauṣS 41.98–99.

⁴⁶ PauṣS 31.149c–150: *kāṅkṣitaṃ nānujānāti sarvajñaḥ hṛdaye sthitaḥ || aprārthito 'pi svargaṃ tu bhaktānāṃ yo dadāti ca | kim adeyaṃ hi tasyāsti tasmād abhyarthanāṃ tyajet ||*.

ers are mixed worshippers – they are, however, considered to be false devotees. (262) Those Brahmins are [easily] recognised on account of their worshipping the subordinate deities in various different ways.⁴⁷

In the remainder of this article, I address the apparent disappearance of the Āgamasiddhānta as a separate tradition within the Pāñcarātra by focusing on several textual passages from the Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās and from Vedāntadeśika's *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, which may partly explain the manner of this disappearance and provide us with clues as to why it happened. In an earlier article (LEACH 2014), I have given a fuller account of the reasons we have for supposing that the Āgamasiddhānta ceased to exist as a distinct tradition within the Pāñcarātra, and in the following I begin with a summary of that account.

As is demonstrated in a number of works including the *Āgama-prāmānya*, the *Pādmasaṃhitā*, and the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, the idea of the Ekāyanaveda and the name “Ekāyana” were, for a certain period of time, probably during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, indubitably linked with one Pāñcarātra tradition in particular, namely that which called itself, according to certain sources, the Āgamasiddhānta. However, in several of the later scriptural works, we find the term *ekāyana* being used by non-Āgamasiddhānta authors to refer to the Pāñcarātra and its adherents in general. Among such works we can count the *Śrīpraśnasaṃhitā* (e.g. at 2.38ff. and 16.20, 31c–34) and the *Śrīpuruṣottamasāṃhitā* (1.12) (LEACH 2014). This apparent extension of the semantic scope of the term *ekāyana*, which can be found already in a passage in the PādS (4.13.66c–72b) and which probably represents, rather, a *reversion* to an older use of the term, coincides with an increasing tendency among the later Saṃhitās to present the Pāñcarātra as a single, integrated system with an extensive scriptural canon. In the majority of these later works, no mention is made of the distinct Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas (ibid.). As mentioned above, Ekāyana Pāñcarātrikas appear to have been responsible for the authorship of the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, and for parts of the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* and the *Sāt-*

⁴⁷ PauṣS 36.259c–263b: *jñātvaivaṃ bhaktisāṅkaryam na kuryād evam eva hi || 259 varjanīyam prayatnena ya icched uttamām gatim | viprā ekāyanāṅkhyā ye te bhaktās tattvato 'cyute || 260 ekāntinaḥ sutattvasthā dehāntān nānyayājinaḥ | kartavyatvena ye viṣṇuṃ saṃyajanti phalaṃ vinā || 261 prāpnuvanti ca dehānte vāsudevavtvaṃ abjaja | vyāmiśrayājinaś cānye bhaktābhāsā tu te smṛtāḥ || 262 pariññeyā tu te viprā nānāmārgagaṇārcanāt |*

vatasaṃhitā. Judging by the extant Pāñcarātra scriptural corpus, the Āgamasiddhānta was not nearly as textually prolific as the Mantrasiddhānta, and we can assume on the basis of their relatively small literary output and the fact that we have little evidence for their existence outside of Śrīraṅgam that the Ekāyanas very probably represented a minority within the South Indian Pāñcarātra. While there is good reason to believe that a community of Ekāyanas still existed in Śrīraṅgam in the fourteenth century, when Vedāntadeśika authored the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, there is no obvious indication that any of the Saṃhitās which probably postdate Vedāntadeśika were authored by Ekāyanas (ibid., LEACH 2012). Thus, it appears that the culture of rivalry between the Āgamasiddhānta and the Mantrasiddhānta subsided and was replaced by one in which non-Āgamasiddhānta Pāñcarātrikas represented the Pāñcarātra as a single and cohesive system.

In an effort to determine why such changes may have taken place, I will begin by addressing several short passages from the *Paṣṭakarasamhitā* which I believe to have been authored by Ekāyanas:

Listen! I will explain the foundation provided by fruits, roots, and [other] foods, for those who desire the fruits [of worship, *phalārthin*]. In the three worlds there is no gift better than the gift of food. (143) It immediately gives pleasure [and] is appetising and restorative to beings. Even at the stage of preparation [and] dressing the tastiness of food is well-known! (144) [All] living beings come into being from food. From that everything is founded, and by one who has dedicated that, by him everything is founded. (145) As long as he lives in this world [and] in the heavenly world called Brahma[loka], he [who dedicates food] may live without sickness and pain. (146) By means of [donating] food, he reaches lasting prosperity, with sons, wives, and wealth. He receives the greatest, supreme honour from eminent persons. (147) The gods, seers, and perfected beings always consider carefully the highest welfare for him, together with increased longevity. (148) Thus, being joyful and well-nourished, he is ever-satisfied. Enjoying numerous pleasures, at death he goes to the abode of Nārāyaṇa (149) by means of moon-like chariots made by the gods. Abiding in all worlds, beginning with heaven, for many hundreds of Kalpas, (150) in the course of time he comes here again, to a supremely auspicious place. Achieving a birth in a respectable family, the most excellent birth, (151) he is born with handsome form, eloquent, devoted to learning and knowledge.

Evermore beloved, he is revered by all, even his enemies. (152) Possessed of good character, might, constancy, and strength, a donor is always best among Brahmins, intent upon the welfare of beings. (153) [He is] an Ekāntin, a knower of *dharma*, wholly devoted to Nārāyaṇa. Thoroughly enjoying the group of three (i.e. the three *puruṣārthas*), possessed of the desired qualities, (154) repeatedly performing meritorious actions of endless qualities through [numerous] lifetimes, knowledge is reached, by which he advances to the supreme abode.⁴⁸

There is little doubt that this passage has been inserted into the *Pauṣkarasamhitā*, for the redactor responsible has made no effort to disguise the fact – the next verses follow on from those which precede this excerpt.⁴⁹ My reason for proposing that this passage has been authored by a self-identifying Ekāyana is that the donor (*dātṛ*) is promised a rebirth as an Ekāntin (I suggest that *Ekāntin* is to be understood synonymously with *Ekāyana* here, as it is elsewhere in this text),⁵⁰ a reward which is hardly likely to have been offered by a non-Ekāyana Pāñcarātrika, for whom the initiation rite (*dīkṣā*) establishes the candidate's eligibility to be liberated

⁴⁸ PauṣS 41.143–155: *phalamūlānnapraṭiṣṭhāṃ śṛṇu vakṣye phalārthināṃ | nānna-dānāt paraṃ dānaṃ triṣu lokeṣu vidyate || 143 sadyahpratikaraṃ hr̥dyaṃ prāṇadaṃ prāṇināṃ api | utpattāv api saṃskāre rasam annasya kīrtitam || 144 annād bhavanti bhūtāni tasmāt sarvaṃ praṭiṣṭhitam | tac ca praṭiṣṭhitam yena tena sarvaṃ praṭiṣṭhitam || 145 ātmanā saha loka 'smīn svarloke brahmasamjñite | yāvaj jīvaṃ ca nīrogo vased duḥkhavivarjitaḥ || 146 putradāradhanair annair vṛddhiṃ yāti kṣaṇāt kṣaṇam | prāp-noti paramāṃ pūjāṃ utkr̥ṣṭebhyo mahattarām || 147 devatā r̥ṣayaḥ siddhās tasya saṃcintayanti ca | nityam eva parāṃ vṛddhiṃ āyusaḥ saha connatām || 148 hr̥ṣṭaḥ puṣṭas tato bhūtvā tṛpto bhavati sarvadā | bhuktvā bhogān suvipulān ante nārāyaṇālayam || 149 yāti candrapratikāśair vimānair devanirmिताiḥ | svargādaḥ sarvaloke tu sthītvā kalpaśatān bahūn || 150 kālāt punar ihāyāti deśe sarvottame śubhe | satām kule samāsādyā janma jāyuttamaṃ mahat || 151 jāyate rūpavān vāgmī vidyājñānaparāyaṇaḥ | dviśatām api sarveṣāṃ pūjyaḥ priyatarāḥ sadā || 152 śīlavān śauryasampanno dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ | dvijadevaparō nityaṃ dātā bhūtaḥ rataḥ || 153 ekāntī dharmavettā vai nārāyaṇaparāyaṇaḥ | trivargam akhilaṃ bhuktvā yathā-bhīmatalakṣaṇaḥ || 154 *janmabhyas (corr., janmābhyas ed.) taṃ śubhaṃ karma kṛtvānantagaṇaṃ punaḥ | jñānam āśādyate yena prayāti paramaṃ padam || 155.*

⁴⁹ The preceding section (PauṣS 41.98–142) is concerned with the establishment (*praṭiṣṭhāpana*) of the stepwell (*vāpī*), vertical well (*kūpa*), tank (*taṭāka*), and pleasure garden (*ārāma*), and the following verse (PauṣS 41.156) returns to this theme.

⁵⁰ See e.g. PauṣS 32.72cd. See also 36.261, translated above, and LEACH 2012: 147–150.

from rebirth and to join Viṣṇu in his “supreme abode.”⁵¹ The idea expressed here which is especially relevant to the present discussion – that one can ensure one’s future as an Ekāyana by making a donation to the temple – represents a radically different conception of the Ekāyanas from those which we ordinarily encounter. The fact that these verses are addressed to worshippers who desire fruits (*phalārthin*) only serves to emphasise the dramatic nature of this shift in attitude, for elsewhere in the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*, as we have seen, such worshippers are openly censured. Here, they are presented with the opportunity to become worshippers who do *not* desire fruits (*aphalārthin*), as the Ekāntins (PauṣS 31.286) or Ekāyanas (PauṣS 36.260–261) are elsewhere characterised. Only then may they achieve the highest reward.

Elsewhere in the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* we find similar expressions of the same idea. For instance, in a passage concerned with the festival centred around the investiture of God’s icon with the sacred thread (*pavitṛāropaṇa*), it is said that a man who makes donations of cattle, land, and gold (*gobhūsuvarṇa*) on a daily basis (*pratyaha*) for as long as he lives will attain the fruit of these donations “during a maximum lifespan” (*paramāyūṣi*) and will then journey to heaven (*dīva*) “by means of moon-like carriages” (*yānaiś candrapratīkāśaiḥ*) (PauṣS 30.174c–177). Born again into an auspicious family, he will become devoted to Nārāyaṇa in thought, word, and deed (*karmaṇā manasā vācā nārāyaṇaparo bhavet*, PauṣS 30.180cd), will live a long life free of sickness and sorrow (*vyādhiśokavinirmukta*), with sons and wives etc. (*putradārādika*), and will then go to White Island (*śvetadvīpa*), where he will achieve identification with the supreme Brahma (*paraṃ brahmatvam āyāti*) (PauṣS 30.178c–184b). Although there is no explicitly “Ekāyana” terminology employed in these verses, they are likely to have been authored by an Ekāyana (or “Ekāntin”) for the same reasons I have put forward with regard to the passage concerning the donation of food to the temple: a worshipper who desires the “fruits” of his worship cannot attain liberation in this lifetime. The best he can hope for, soteriologically speaking, is an auspicious rebirth as one who is completely devoted (“in thought, word, and deed”) to Nārāyaṇa.⁵² Only then is he an Ekāntin who may go to White Island.

⁵¹ See e.g. PādS 4.21.15, LT 41.5c–6, ŚrīprśS 16.18c–19.

⁵² Cf. PārS 13.114c–115, where rebirth as an Ekāyana is promised as the reward for the performance of one’s ritual duties (see RASTELLI 2006: 194–195).

In another passage of the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* which conveys the same idea, the identity of the author is more explicit. This passage is a continuation of the passage quoted earlier (PauṣS 36.259c-263b), wherein mixed worshippers are condemned as “false devotees” (*bhaktābhāsāḥ*) and the Ekāyanas are named as the true devotees of Acyuta. Having censured the “mixed worshipper” (*vyāmiśrayājīn*) in this way, however, the author of these verses goes on to assert that provided he (the mixed worshipper) has undergone initiation and is completely devoted to Nārāyaṇa, to ceremonial rites such as *mantra*-repetition (*japa*), and the offering of gifts into the sacrificial fire (*homa*) as well as to singing the praises of God (*stuti*), “even he, indeed, can attain the world of Viṣṇu at death and, after obtaining a superior rebirth, he may become, from [the time of his] childhood, O best among the twice-born, a Tanmaya, well-versed in the rituals pertaining to the Lord and having him as his chief object. And not aiming at the fruit [of his worship], even in times of distress, after abandoning the body [at death], he does not achieve a rebirth in this world.”⁵³ What does it mean to become a Tanmaya in this instance? The term *tanmaya* is used quite commonly in Pāñcarātra texts to denote a meditative state in which there is a perceived identity between the meditating person and the object of their visualisation (see RASTELLI 2009), but in several works it is also used to refer to a particular group of Pāñcarātrikas, namely the Ekāyanas. For instance, in the aforementioned section of the *Sātvatasamhitā* which details a sequence of rites relating to the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) and worship of a divine image in a temple, the four Ekāyanas who are named among the professional assistants to the officiating temple priest are referred to as Tanmayas (SS 25.132a).⁵⁴ Additionally, in the *Pādmasamhitā* the Tanmayas are instructed to recite *mantras* belonging to the Ekāyana “school” or recension (*śākhā*) in contrast to “the most excellent knowers of *mantras*” who recite from the four Vedas.⁵⁵ In this passage in the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*, then, after contrasting the Ekāyanas and the “mixed worshippers,” and condemning the latter, the author is declaring that an initiated mixed worshipper who is completely devoted to Nārāyaṇa and to performing his ritu-

⁵³ PauṣS 36.265–267b: *dehānte vaiṣṇavaṃ lokam prāpnuyāt punar eva hi | janma cāsādyā cotkrṣtam ābālyād dvijasattama || bhagavatkarmaniṣṇātas tatparas tanmayo bhavet | nābhisandhāya ca phalam āpatkālagato 'pi vai || tyaktvā deham punar janma nāpnuyād iha... |*.

⁵⁴ Cf. the parallel references in the PārS (15.378a) and the ĪS (18.255a).

⁵⁵ PādS 4.11.242c–243b: *dikṣu vedāṃś ca caturaḥ paṭheyur mantravittamāḥ || vidikṣv ekāyanāṃ śākhāṃ tanmayāḥ sumukhās tathā |*.

al duties can be reborn as an Ekāyana and can in that way achieve liberation from future rebirths.

These passages in the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*, which promise rebirth as an Ekāyana to those who make donations to the temple and to mixed worshippers who are completely devoted to worshipping Nārāyaṇa, show that, despite their professed ideals, Ekāyanas were active in advertising their ritual expertise, both to prospective patrons and to other Pāñcarātrikas. The verses concerned with the endowment of food (PauṣS 41.143–155) may be addressed specifically to royal patrons, since their description of a superior rebirth includes references to typically Kṣatriya qualities such as valour (*śaurya*), steadfastness or resolve (*dhṛti*), and strength or energy (*utsāha*)⁵⁶ as well as a reference to “enemies” (*dviṣat*).

In another chapter of the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā*, Pauṣkara asks God for a clarification as to the status of mixed worship, while pointing out that this has been repeatedly prohibited thus far.⁵⁷ God replies:

This is true, O wise one, just as you have urged. But when this other type of ritual (i.e. “mixed worship”) is performed, then there is no fault for those who are qualified, (48) since for them Acyuta is assuredly superior to all. [Therefore], because they are subordinate to him, there is indeed no fault in worshipping other gods, (49) just as in one’s everyday life [there is no fault] in paying honour to a retinue (*gaṇa*) of servants (or “ministers,” *bhṛtya*), or to one’s brothers, or to one’s lawful wives.⁵⁸

What can we deduce from these verses? First of all, they were evidently composed after those portions of the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* which forbid the practice of mixed worship, for they refer directly to these prohibitions. Since the parts of the *Pauṣkarasaṃhitā* which forbid mixed worship were

⁵⁶ See e.g. *Arthaśāstra* 6.1.3–5, where *utsāha* is listed among the exemplary qualities of a king (*svāmin*), and *śaurya* is named as one of its attributes (*guṇa*); and *Mahābhārata* 6.40.43 (*Bhagavadgītā* 18.43), wherein the duty of the Kṣatriya (*kṣat-rakarma*) is said to involve *śaurya* and *dhṛti*.

⁵⁷ PauṣS 38.47ab: “O God, being a mixed worshipper is repeatedly prohibited” (*deva vyāmiśrayājītvam pratiṣiddham punaḥ punaḥ*).

⁵⁸ PauṣS 38.48–50c: *satyam etan mahābuddhe yathā sañcoditam tvayā | kin tu kriyāntare prāpte na doṣas tv adhikāriṇām || 48 yasmāt sarvaparatvam hi teṣām asty acyutam prati | tadāśritatvād devānām anyeṣāṃ pūjanāt tu vai || 49 na doṣo hi yathā loke bhrātṛbhṛtyagaṇasya ca | mānanād dharmapatnīnām... || 50.*

most likely authored by Ekāyanas, who called themselves Ekāntins and proclaimed themselves superior to mixed worshippers partly on account of their monotheism, we must assume either that a.) these verses were authored by a Pāñcarātrika who was himself a mixed worshipper as opposed to an Ekāyana, or that b.) they were authored by an Ekāyana, and therefore provide evidence that some Ekāyanas, at least, changed their attitude towards “mixed worship” and adopted an attitude which is close to what GRANOFF (2000) has called “ritual eclecticism.”⁵⁹ I propose that the second explanation is more likely to be the correct one, for the passage in which these verses are found, concerned with the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) of the image of God (*bhagavadbimba*) in a temple, is almost certainly the work of an Ekāyana. This is evident from the fact that the principal ordinance (*mukhyakalpa*, Pauṣ 38.41b) for the installation is assigned to knowers of the five times who are “exclusive” devotees (*ananyāḥ*, Pauṣ 38.31a), who are devoted to the four Vyūhas and who “also perform the renunciation of [the fruits of] ritual” (*karmanām api saṁnyāsaṁ kurvanti*, Pauṣ 38.32), while the secondary or “substitutive” ordinance (*anukalpa*) is to be performed by initiated twice-born Bhāgavatas who are “established in the *dharma* of the triple Veda” (*trayīdharmasthitaiḥ*, Pauṣ 38.41c–42). The former group clearly denotes the Ekāyanas, while the “initiated twice-born Bhāgavatas” designates the Pāñcarātrikas who are elsewhere referred to as “mixed worshippers.”

We also encounter an indication that some Ekāyanas may have changed their attitude towards “mixed worship” in the *Pārameśvarasaṁhitā*:

After worshipping Vāstu (or “Vāstviśa,” i.e., Vāstupuruṣa, the guardian deity of the temple), Kṣetreśa, Garuḍa, Dvārśrī (also known as Dvāralakṣmī), Caṇḍa, and Pracāṇḍa with *arghya* and so on, one should then worship the temple gods in the temple, in the pavilion at [each of] the four [entrance-]gates, and in the other [places]. (125c–126) Then, at the three gates [one should worship] Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ, and also Jaya and Vijaya, and Bhadra and Subhadra, and the Lord of the Gaṇas (Ganeśvara, i.e. Viṣvaksena). (127) Worship [performed] by a man [who is] an Ekāntin which is directed towards the subordinate class of deities which forms God’s retinue,⁶⁰ begin-

⁵⁹ GRANOFF (2000: 401) defines “ritual eclecticism” thus: “The group of insiders explicitly acknowledges that others have rituals, and then enjoins or permits the practice of those rituals along with the rituals specific to the group itself.”

⁶⁰ I take *aṅga* here in the sense of “God’s retinue” following Alāśingabhaṭṭa, who

ning with the gatekeepers and ending with Viṣvaksena, assuredly causes distress to men who have little understanding. (128–129b) [But] not worshipping them, even if [this is done only] by the pupils [of the priest], causes obstacles to what is being accomplished.⁶¹ (129cd) Therefore, worship with [one's] thought [directed upon] the [deities who are the] servants of God is enjoined in order to elicit their compassion, though [it should be done] without devotion and trust. (130) They (the subordinate deities), mentally visualising the supreme good in the heart, humbly receive with their mind[s] that which has fallen from the hands [of worshippers], even if it is given without respect. (131) Since they are all made of Acyuta, their minds are surrendered to his mind. Thus, from the worship of these [subordinate deities] by an Ekāntin *guru*, (132) strife will be cast out, since they are the servants of Hari.⁶²

It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this passage, the bulk of which is also found in the *Īśvarasamhitā*.⁶³ Indeed, we cannot even be certain that “Ekāntin” here is to be understood as meaning “Ekāyana.” However, there are good reasons for believing this to be the case. First of all, there are other places in the *Pārameśvarasamhitā* where the term *ekāntin* is used to refer to the Ekāyanas. Indeed, these include the only uses of the term *ekāntin* which occur in the *Pārameśvarasamhitā* prior to the above passage. Both instances belong to the first chapter, where the Ekāyanaveda

glosses *āṅgabhāvam* with *bhagavatparivāratām* in his commentary on the same verse in the ĪS. See *Sātvatārthaprakāśikā* on ĪS 4.2.

⁶¹ Again, I follow Alaṅkāra here in taking *api* together with *śiṣyāṇām* rather than with *prakṛtasya*, which would be, grammatically speaking, the more orthodox reading. See *Sātvatārthaprakāśikā* on ĪS 4.4cd.

⁶² PārS 6.125c–133b: *vāstukṣetreśagaruḍadvārśrīcaṇḍapracāṇḍakān* || 125 *abhyarcyārghyādibhir devān prāsādasthāṁś ca pūjayet* | *prāsāde 'tha caturdvāre maṇḍape cetareṣu ca* || 126 *dvāratraye 'tha dhātāraṁ vidhātāraṁ jayaṁ tathā* | *viḥayaṁ cāpi bhadraṁ ca subhadraṁ ca gaṇeśvaram* || 127 *yad āṅgabhāvam abhyeti dvārsthādyam devatāgaṇam* | *viṣvaksenāvasānaṁ ca narāṇām alpamedhasām* || 128 *janitor ekāntinas tad vai cittakhedakṛd arcanam* | *viḥnakṛt prakṛtasyāpi śiṣyāṇām tadanarcanam* || 129 *atas tadanukampārtham devabhṛtyadhiyārcanam* | *bhaktiśraddhojjhitam caiva vihitam tv evam eva hi* || 130 *te tatpāṇicyutam* (corr. *tatprāṇicyutam*, cf. ĪS 4.5c) *prahvā dattam apy avahelayā* | *grhṇanti manasā śreyah param dhyātvā dhiyā hr̥di* || 131 *yataḥ sarve 'cyutamayās taccittārpitamānasāḥ* | *etāvad arcanāt teṣāṁ guror ekāntinas tu vai* || 132 *syād virodhanirāśas tu yato bhr̥tyas tu te hareḥ* |.

⁶³ PārS 6.125c–126b → ĪS 3.101; PārS 6.128–133b → ĪS 4.2c–7.

is called the *dharma* of the Ekāntins (*ekāntidharma*, PārS 1.60) and the *dharma* of the Lord (*bhagavaddharma*) which is followed by Ekāntins (*ekāntibhir anuṣṭhitāḥ*, PārS 1.85cd).⁶⁴ Secondly, it is very difficult to make sense of this passage if we take *ekāntin* in its alternative or, shall we say, its *primary* sense, which is merely descriptive, for then we are left with an account of a man or a *guru* who is described as being “devoted to one [God]” (*ekāntin*) in the same passage that he is described as worshipping multiple deities. Such a man is evidently not an *ekāntin* in the literal sense of the term, which supports my proposal that we take *ekāntin* here not in its literal sense, but in the only other sense which is authorised by its use in the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, namely as a proper noun which is an alternative name for “Ekāyana.”

The passage appears to indicate that Ekāntins or Ekāyanas were being criticised in some quarters for worshipping the subordinate members of Viṣṇu’s entourage, such as Viṣvakṣena, the gatekeepers to the temple, and other temple deities.⁶⁵ Presumably, if such criticism genuinely existed, it was based on the notion that worshipping these deities compromised the Ekāyanas’ commitment to monotheism and, by extension (since the subordinate deities cannot grant liberation), to liberation as the exclusive goal to be sought. It is to be noted that in his *Āgamaprāmāṇya*, Yāmuna also makes the point that the subordinate deities are, like the lord of Viṣṇu’s retinue (Viṣvakṣena), “dependent upon Viṣṇu.”⁶⁶ However, Yāmuna does not make this point in response to a specific criticism of the practice of worshipping Viṣṇu’s subordinate deities. Indeed, there is no indication in the *Āgamaprāmāṇya* that the Pāñcarātra’s traditionalist opponents included this practice among the litany of those which earned their opprobrium. If the criticism of the Ekāyana worship of Viṣṇu’s entourage was not coming from traditionalist outsiders, then from where was it coming? This is a difficult question to answer, but we should not discount the possibility that it came from other Ekāyanas, perhaps those who were less flexible or less willing to adapt to the changing circumstances in which they found themselves. The author’s strategy in the above passage appears to be to legitimate the Ekāyana worship of the subordinate deities by providing scriptur-

⁶⁴ See also the first use of the term *ekāntin* which occurs after the quoted passage from the sixth chapter of the *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*. Here, at PārS 10.285–289, the names *ekāntin* and *ekāyana* are used interchangeably.

⁶⁵ On the mythical plane Caṇḍa, Pracāṇḍa, Dhātṛ, Vidhātṛ, Jaya, Vijaya, Bhadra, and Subhadra are the gatekeepers of Vaikuṇṭha, Viṣṇu’s heaven.

⁶⁶ ĀP 168.6–7: *devatāgaṇaḥ || guṇabhūtaḥ śruto viṣṇor viṣṇupāriṣadeśavat |*.

al authority for it, but he also attempts to minimise the “distress” that this may cause by emphasising that this worship is, and should be, performed without devotion, trust, and respect,⁶⁷ and that, in any case, the subordinate deities are “made of Acyuta,” and so any charge of abandoning monotheism is inapplicable.

Finally, I turn to Vedāntadeśika’s *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, most likely composed in Śrīraṅgam during the early decades of the fourteenth century (HARI RAO 1976: 116–117). After quoting the PādS (4.19.131–132) to the effect that a Brahmin who is initiated into one Tantra or Siddhānta should not perform rites prescribed by another, Vedāntadeśika goes on to qualify this statement: “Having said this, it is also said, however, that there is authority in the lower Tantras for those following a higher Tantra.”⁶⁸ He then quotes, without attribution, a passage which claims that there is an ascending order of Pāñcarātra initiates, beginning with those who belong to the Tantrāntarasiddhānta and culminating in those who follow the Āgasasiddhānta, and that all initiates are qualified to perform the rites not only of their own Siddhānta but also, as far as possible, of those Siddhāntas which are lower than their own. Thus, since the Āgasasiddhānta is at the top of the hierarchy, its followers are always entitled to worship God in accordance with the other three Siddhāntas, a Mantrasiddhāntin is additionally qualified for the Tantra and Tantrāntara Siddhāntas, and a Tantrasiddhāntin is also eligible for the Tantrāntarasiddhānta. A Tantrāntarasiddhāntin is qualified only for his own Siddhānta and must worship in his own home.⁶⁹ Vedāntadeśika reports that it is also said here (i.e. in the same unnamed text) that members of each Siddhānta have the authority to worship in temples (*sthāna*) which have been established by a Siddhānta “inferior” (*apakṛṣṭa*) to their own,⁷⁰ which would mean that Āgasasiddhāntins are entitled to worship in any Pāñcarātra temple.

⁶⁷ There are echoes here of a process which GRANOFF (2000: 409) describes as an “acknowledgement that rituals cross sectarian boundaries and that some explanation for this that preserves those boundaries is required.” In this case, a boundary is preserved by the instruction that the subordinate deities should be worshipped “without devotion, trust, and respect.”

⁶⁸ PRR 13.9: *ity uktvā punar apy uparyupari tantrasthitānām adho ’dhas tantrādhikāritvam uktam.*

⁶⁹ PRR 13.10–14.2.

⁷⁰ PRR 14.3–4: *atrāpy utkrṣṭasiddhāntasthitenāpy apakṛṣṭasiddhāntasthāneṣu tattatsiddhāntaprakāreṇaiva pūjanīyatvam uktam.*

According to Vedāntadeśika's anonymous source, therefore, members of the Āgamasiddhānta have the authority to perform all rites which are enjoined in the Mantrasiddhānta, the implication being that they can execute this entitlement without being guilty of "mixing Siddhāntas," which is forbidden by both traditions as Vedāntadeśika elsewhere acknowledges.⁷¹ He then quotes again the same anonymous text which reinforces this idea: "If they are qualified for the principal [ordinance, then] they are qualified for the secondary ordinance."⁷² An initiate who is qualified for the Āgamasiddhānta is qualified also for the Mantrasiddhānta, and therefore for acts of "mixed worship" undertaken by that tradition's adherents. Here, it may be useful to ask whether this anonymous source might reflect and give legitimacy to what was actually taking place – in other words, whether Āgamasiddhāntins were, in fact, aligning themselves with the more dominant, Veda-congruent Pāñcarātra traditions. When read in tandem with the aforementioned scriptural passages which indicate that some Ekāyanas were changing their attitude towards, and participating in, acts of "mixed worship," we are perhaps in a reasonably good position to give a provisionally affirmative answer to this question. Certainly, this could help to explain the apparent disappearance of the Āgamasiddhānta, not only as a named Pāñcarātra tradition but also as a strand within the Pāñcarātra whose representatives claimed the superiority of their own tradition over that of the Veda.

The period of mutual animosity between the Āgamasiddhānta and the Mantrasiddhānta, which was probably current for a period during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, did not last long, and the main reason for this appears to have been that the Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas could not compete effectively with their more orthodox rivals.⁷³ This was, no doubt, primarily due to the fact that they could not claim affiliation with a recognised Vedic school (*śākhā*), and in the Śrīvaiṣṇava-influenced conservative religious environment of South India at this time were therefore less attractive than the Mantrasiddhāntins in the eyes of prospective patrons. Howev-

⁷¹ See e.g. PRR 9.6ff., where Vedāntadeśika reports that the *Caryāpāda* (the fourth section) of the *Pādmasaṃhitā* explains in detail the "offence" (*doṣa*) involved in the mixing of Siddhāntas and Tantras (*siddhāntasaṃkara* and *tantrasaṃkara*); and PRR 18.15–19.5, which quotes the PārS (19.545–548b) on the prohibition of the "mixing of Siddhāntas" (*siddhāntasaṃkara*).

⁷² PRR 14.6: *mukhyādhikāriṇaḥ santi yadi gauṇādhikāriṇaḥ*.

⁷³ By "orthodox" here, I am referring to the way in which Mantrasiddhāntins position themselves with regard to the Veda. For them, the latter remains, at least nominally, the highest textual authority.

er, another cause of the inability of Āgamasiddhāntins to compete effectively with their rivals may well have been self-inflicted, for in a commercially competitive environment wherein the ritual expertise of professional priests would have been shaped to a large degree by the needs of their clients, the Ekāyanas had given themselves a distinct disadvantage. For they could not promise these clients, as reward for loyalty and generous support, the attainment of liberation at death. The best they could offer them, soteriologically speaking, was rebirth as an Ekāyana.

An apparent consequence of the greater resources available to the Mantrasiddhānta in their efforts to attract patronage was that some members of the Āgamasiddhānta began to incorporate into their repertoire the same ritual practices that their Mantrasiddhāntin rivals engaged in – practices that their own tradition (i.e. the Āgamasiddhānta) had previously condemned. These included rituals granting rewards to those desirous of the “fruits” of worship (*phalārthin*) as well as acts of “mixed worship” such as the worship of Viṣṇu’s subordinate deities for rewards other than liberation from rebirth. The PārS (6.125c–133b, and the parallel passage in the *Īśvarasamhitā*) appears to contain a small clue that some Āgamasiddhāntins or Ekāyanas continued to condemn such practices after others belonging to their tradition had begun to engage in them. But we hear little of these protests, and, if indeed they existed, they seem to have been otherwise excluded from the textual record. Rather, several sources attest to the fact that the religious identities of these two Pāñcarātra Siddhāntas began to merge, or rather that the need to draw distinctions between them disappeared, which is why in the later scriptural literature, including works roughly coeval with and succeeding Vedāntadeśika, we increasingly see the Pāñcarātra presented as a single homogeneous tradition with, for example, a single scriptural canon.

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