

In case of emergency: Addressing rulers in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*

Francesco Bianchini¹

It is now generally accepted that one way in which Tantric communities sought to increase their influence and power was by creating bonds with royal courts. The present paper deals with a specific instance of this important issue, by investigating the Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātra *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (AhS), probably redacted in South India around the thirteenth century,² and its many strategies designed to address a courtly audience. Occasional comparisons with other scriptures will also be included in order to clarify the specific character of the AhS.

As already observed by a number of scholars, one of the prominent features of the present Saṃhitā is its great emphasis on the fulfilment of the ruler's desires and his special needs, particularly in times of danger and natural calamities.³ Perhaps partly because of this, we witness an absence of the dimension of calendrical rituals as well as of the many minor tasks court officiants would be normally expected to perform.

A second general observation regards the alleged militaristic dimension of the AhS. Very little can be found in the Saṃhitā which explicitly has to do with actual war scenarios, battle strategies, empowerment of the soldiers' weapons, and similar themes. Instead, it is the king who is at the

¹ I would like to thank Marion Rastelli of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, who shared with me the fruits of her extensive research on the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* while wholeheartedly supervising my MA thesis in 2015, on which this article is based. Sincere thanks also go to Karin Preisendanz of the University of Vienna for her help with the intricacies of textual criticism. Of course, I am indebted to the organisers Nina Mirnig, Vincent Eltschinger, and again Marion Rastelli for giving a student this wonderful opportunity. My special thanks go to Katharine Apostle for her help with the English language.

² See RASTELLI in this volume.

³ See in particular BEGLEY's informative study, which deals with the iconography of the multi-armed Sudarśana and also touches upon aspects of his worship as depicted in Pāñcarātra texts (1973: 65ff).

centre of attention and it is a certain ideal of kingship which eventually emerges. The work portrays an idealised ruler who, thanks to the power of Sudarśana, the personified discus of Viṣṇu, deployed by his priest, is perfectly capable of both conquering beyond limit and of protecting his territory against dangerous enemies. What the redactors of the work are advertising is precisely this ideal of empowered kingship, which is sometimes illustrated by means of stereotypical war or calamity scenarios⁴.

Regarding the editions used in this article, it should be noted that the transmission of the text remains uncertain at this point. For the philological choices of the author of this article, please consult the appendix, which attempts to outline the policies of and manuscripts used by the editors of the text and how these affect the readings.

Introductory remarks on the structure of the AhS

One of the main challenges of reading a work like the AhS is identifying the changes the text underwent in the course of time. A reliable critical edition is key to this process, yet how far back in history we can actually reach depends on the stemmatic relations of the witnesses.

How many revisions did the AhS undergo? How old are the current division into *adhyāyas* (chapters) and the praising stanzas at their beginning? For example, the *adhyāyas* at the end of the work could have easily been added to the main text at some later point. Unfortunately, much of this remains unclear at present (see appendix of this paper).

The portion of the text considered here is that between *adhyāyas* 16 to 50. The first significant mention of kings is found in *adhyāya* 16, where the teaching about *mantras* begins. The last circle of narratives ends with *adhyāya* 50, before the opening of an exegetical coda regarding various specific *mantras* which carries on until the end of the work.

Interestingly, sections dealing with closely related topics are found scattered throughout this portion of the work in a way that would appear random. Schrader had to group some of these sections together when summarising the contents of the work.⁵ This might be a drastic solution, but it is also practical. The materials found in this portion could be brought together

⁴ BEGLEY had already observed that the themes of conquest and protection mirror the distinction between Sudarśana's offensive and defensive weapons (cf. BEGLEY 1973: 79).

⁵ Cf. SCHRADER 1916: 118.

under the following thematic headings: *mantras*, *yantras*, rituals, narratives, divine weapons (*divya astras*) and *yoga*.⁶ One can see that the *adhyāyas* devoted to *mantras* contain a total of 269 stanzas (without counting the coda after *adhyāya* 50), those on *yantras* a total of 508, those devoted to specific rituals 435, those on narratives 694, those on divine weapons 308, and finally those on *yoga* 123. Obviously, this data is not very precise,⁷ but it can be used to point out the importance (at least in terms of space) given to narratives and descriptions of *yantras* in the AhS.

Again on royal officials and rulers

Rulers and members of the royal court occupy a prominent position and can be said to be the main target audience. Particularly relevant from the historical point of view is the role played by officials. Rastelli has identified and translated passages dealing with the royal official, often called *purohita* in the *Samhitā*, and his king.⁸ The main topics dealt with in such passages are: the superiority of the king, the qualities of the ideal official, the fact that he is necessary to the king, and that they ought to join forces for the welfare of the kingdom as well as for their own. References to the *Atharvaveda*, which is classically associated with the sphere of royal ritual, are also quite frequent.⁹ These aspects are skilfully linked to a theological background.

⁶ The correspondences are as follows: *mantras* AhS 16–19; *yantras* I AhS 20–27; rituals I AhS 28–29; *astras* I AhS 30; *yoga* AhS 31–32; narrative I AhS 33; *astras* II AhS 34–35; *yantras* II AhS 36–37; ritual II AhS 38–39; *astras* III AhS 40; narrative II AhS 41–45; ritual III AhS 46–47; narrative III AhS 48–50. See for details about this categorisation BIANCHINI 2015: 18–24.

⁷ Not only are the “labels” (like *yantras* etc.) somewhat arbitrary, but in a few cases they do not entirely correspond to full *adhyāyas*. For example, *adhyāyas* 42 to 46 constitute a good example for a section where the superstructure does not apply without difficulty. At the beginning of AhS 42, a long description of calamities arising in a kingdom because of an enemy’s attack by means of hostile magic (*abhi-cāra*) is not part of the main narrative occupying the rest of the *adhyāya*. The same applies to the description of the perfect court official in *adhyāya* 46, quite separate from the rest of the content (although still connected to the issue of ritual procedure). In fact, even *adhyāyas* could be subdivided into smaller units, and in rare cases such units would require special categories.

⁸ The passages translated by RASTELLI 2018 are AhS 16.10c–27; AhS 46.3–11; AhS 33.60c–66; and 33.74b–77b.

⁹ Cf. RASTELLI 2018. Some of the main ideas are that the *sudarśanamāntra* originated from the *Atharvaveda* (AhS 20.21c–24b) and that a *saṃskāra* performed according to the

For example, the power of ritual action by means of *mantras* goes back to Viṣṇu's creative power (*kriyāśakti*), and Lakṣmī stands for the idea of "fortune" residing in the institutions represented by the king and the *brāhmaṇa*, and this is also described as the basis of the *kriyāśakti* itself.¹⁰

The beginning of *adhyāya* 16 is a remarkable example of how these motifs can be brought together in a literary fashion. In order to avoid repetitions, only part of the passage will be quoted here. The following example is a statement about the king's superiority:

The king is praised in revealed knowledge (*veda*) and systematised bodies of knowledge (*śāstra*) as a double *brāhmaṇa* (i.e., as worth twice as much as a *brāhmaṇa*). If one is hostile to him out of delusion, that fool is hostile to Hari [himself].¹¹

But a much more challenging passage that does not directly concern the officiant and therefore was not included by Rastelli can be found further on in the same context:

A ruler who is a universal sovereign is entitled to the first, a provincial governor to the second, and a district governor to the third [level of] creative energy (*kriyāśakti*), or a twice-born chief minister [too], provided he is in charge of the protection of many people. No single man is entitled to deploy it for [just] one other person.¹²

Atharvaveda can be substituted for the initiation ritual (AhS 20.47–48b).

¹⁰ Cf. AhS 16.12–16 on these topics.

¹¹ AhS 16.16: *dviguṇo brāhmaṇo rājā vedaśāstreṣu gīyate | yas tu taṁ dveṣṭi saṁmohāt sa hariṁ dveṣṭi durmatih ||* (16a *brāhmaṇo* [ed.] – *brahmaṇo* [A B C J]). It is interesting to notice that SCHRADER's (1916) remarks about stemma relations seem to apply quite well to the present situation. The accepted archetypal reading might be puzzling at first due to the series of three nominatives, and a copyist could be tempted to simplify the reading by shortening the ā of *brāhmaṇaḥ* in order to form an ablative, which could be easily constructed with *dviguṇa*. However, the reading with the nominative is perfectly acceptable. The corruption is found in mss. ABC, which according to SCHRADER (1916) are very close to each other and occupy lower positions in the (hypothetical) stemma (ms. J was added in the second edition, cf. AhS Ed²: vii).

¹² AhS 16.28–29: *cakravartī nṛpaḥ pūrvām dvitīyām maṇḍaleśvaraḥ | adhikuryāt kriyāśaktim tṛtīyām viṣayeśvaraḥ ||* 28 *mahāmātro dvijātir vā yo bahvī rakṣati prajāḥ | imām naiko naraḥ kuryād ekasmai mānavāya tu ||* 29 (28c *kriyāśaktim* [ed.] – *imām śaktim* [D]; 29c *imām naiko* [ed.] – *imām eko* [B C E F J]).

A few points deserve attention here. These stanzas illustrate the concept that rulers of varying power, who are arranged in a descending climax, hold a corresponding degree of entitlement to the *kriyāśakti*, which in the present context is related to the power of *mantras*. More importantly, the last verse sets the lower limit to this entitlement, apparently stating that no (ordinary) man can use this power for a single other person. If this was the case, then the whole passage would amount to limiting the context to the public dimension, in opposition to the private one. However, as many as five witnesses state exactly the contrary, reading *imām eko* instead of *imām naiko*. If we follow the reading *imām eko*, the passage amounts to stating that what is really not accepted is that one uses the *mantras* for oneself alone. However, other passages seem to support the idea that the people entitled (*adhikārin*) to use the *mantras* are really members of the court,¹³ and there would be little point in mentioning all the qualified people in the present passage (and even adding *yo bahvī rakṣati prajāḥ*) only to end up saying that after all anyone is entitled to it. Also, if Schrader was correct in taking *dvijāti* as an apposition to *mahāmātra* and not as a fourth entitled person in his paraphrase of the passage, then jumping directly to a common person would constitute a significant gap. Without direct access to the manuscripts and with significant stemmatic uncertainties, such matters are not easily settled. They also raise the question of how much consistency one can actually expect in a work of this kind.

In search for more specific, and possibly historically relevant, descriptions of not only kings but also officiants, the present author sought to examine whether a clear distinction was made in the AhS between two classes of royal priests, the more “humble” class of royal chaplains (court officiant *stricto sensu*) and the more prestigious one of the royal preceptors (*guru/rājaguru*). That such a dichotomy might indeed be relevant was instilled in the present author’s mind by Sanderson’s remarks in his important

Translating such terms as *maṇḍaleśvara*, *viṣayeśvara*, or *mahāmātra* with any precision is not an easy task, especially because their meaning changed according to time and place, as often explained in the corresponding entries in SIRCAR’s (1966) *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, on which the renderings here heavily rely.

¹³ Cf., for example: “This *mantra* and *yantra* are truly prescribed for kings. O Nārada, the collections of *mantras* serve all general purposes. If the earth-master’s ministers are engaged in their worship, they protect the king even in the presence of bad omens [indicating that his life is in danger].” (AhS 27.43–44: *ayaṃ mantraś ca ya-ntraṃ ca rājñām eva vidhīyate | sarvasādhāraṇārthāni mantrajātāni nārada || etadabhyarcanaparā mantriṇo yasya bhūpateḥ | abhirakṣanti rājānam ariṣṭamukhato 'pi te ||*).

study of the royal chaplain of the Śaiva scripture *Netratantra*, where the two figures are clearly distinguished.¹⁴ In this connection, let us consider the following passage from the AhS, while also remembering that Atharvavedic motifs play a prominent role in the work:

Such a court officiant (*purohita*) who is [himself] like a *guru* to kings is difficult to find. Such a one is verily capable of warding off the flood of misdeeds [and their consequences] for kings. Therefore, he alone is able to perform the rituals of protection of kings. He who has such a *guru* [by his side] shall become a sovereign king, one with a long life, one free of enemies and diseases, and a slayer of hostile heroes.

In his dominion there shall be no devastations such as droughts etc. If the king, in the absence of [such a capable] one, has a different (i.e., ordinary) *guru* or court officiant [at his side], that supporter of the earth shall get the opposite [result] (i.e., unfavourable things), there is no doubt about that.¹⁵

The first expression found is *gurukalpaḥ purohitaḥ*, “a court officiant (*purohita*) who is [himself] like a *guru*.” Ad 9c the officiant is simply called *guru* and ad 11b again the two are separated in *gurur vātha purohitaḥ*, “a *guru* or a court officiant.” What are the reasons for this ambivalence? Is one to understand that the officiant of Sudarśana’s cult is just like a *guru*, even if his Atharvavedic legacy makes him technically a *purohita*? Is a group of *purohitas* close to Atharvavedic circles trying to enhance their status by promoting Tantric worship of Sudarśana in the context of the royal court? These are the important issues at stake here, gleaming, as it were, through the terminological choices of the redactors. In an attempt to avoid speculation, the quest for further evidence was continued in a context which was more likely to shed light on such details – the context of the narratives.

¹⁴ Cf. SANDERSON 2004: 233.

¹⁵ AhS 46.8–11: *īdṛśo durlabho rājñām gurukalpaḥ purohitaḥ | īdṛśo hi kṣamo rājñām aghaughavinivāraṇe || 8 ataḥ sa eva rājñām hi rakṣāvidhim athārhati | evaṃvidho gurur yasya sa samrāḍ nṛpatir bhavet || 9 dīrghāyur nihsapatnaḥ syād arogaḥ paravīrahā | avagrahādya jāyante pīdās tadviṣaye na hi || 10 taṃ vinānyo bhaved rājño gurur vātha purohitaḥ | viparītaṃ bhavet tasya mahībhartur na saṃśayaḥ || 11* (8d *aghaughavinivāraṇe* [ed.] – *aghaughasya nivāraṇe* [A B E F]). The passage is translated in RASTELLI 2018.

Despite the fact that the content of the narratives is basically fictional, the present author was hoping to gain at least new insights into the functions of different classes of royal priests and to subsequently build a typology which could throw light on them as historical agents as well.

For example, one kind of officiant in the narratives is the one present at the royal court, who has direct access to the king and ministers (as is the first *purohita* mentioned in the story of Sunanda, AhS 48.64cff.). Some narratives depict another character, which appears to reside outside of the court, for instance in a hermitage (like Pulaha in the story of Viśāla, AhS 48.50ff.). This second character can be approached directly by the king or by the court officiant. The fact that the court officiant goes to him for help could imply that the latter is more powerful or more knowledgeable about the deity Sudarśana. One would therefore be tempted to separate the characters into the group of court officiants proper (i.e., rather humble “chaplains”) on the one hand and powerful sages (who are possibly also royal preceptors) on the other.

However, two problems arise: First of all, the narratives do not present sufficient details on the characters to clearly identify and separate the kind of services they could provide. Secondly, the terms used to address them are not clearly distinct. For example, in the story of King Viśāla (AhS 48.50ff.), the king himself goes to the hermitage of Pulaha, who thus seems to be absent from the court. Nevertheless, Pulaha is called a *purohita*, the same term commonly used in the narratives for the officiant present at the court.¹⁶ But in the story of Muktāpīḍa (AhS 48.9ff.), the officiant at the court is called both *purodhas* as well as *guru*, a term which we would expect to be linked to a sage or preceptor more than to an officiant.¹⁷ In the story of Sunanda (AhS 48.64ff.), the officiant present at the court, called *purodhas*, seeks the help of Kaṇva, who is performing asceticism on the banks of a river. Kaṇva is here called “[the officiant’s] own *guru*” (*sva-guru*), as could ideally be expected.¹⁸ Finally, in the story of Kuśadhvaṇja (AhS 45), the king himself approaches Yājñavalkya, who does not live in a forest but in his own palace (*mandira*). Yājñavalkya is called *guru* as well as *kulaguru* (family preceptor).¹⁹

Due to the paucity of descriptions concerning the functions of these characters and to the inconsistent use of their titles, it is very difficult to

¹⁶ Cf. AhS 48.58.

¹⁷ Cf. AhS 48.13–14.

¹⁸ Cf. AhS 48.80.

¹⁹ Cf. AhS 45.17.

clearly separate the two categories of officiants. After all, it is not unlikely that this difficulty is the result of a carefully conceived strategy on the part of the redactor(s) of the narratives, who wished to convey the idea of the respectability and relative independence of the cult's officiant.

This being the case, the only possible way to further investigate the court officiants of the AhS is to examine the actual ritual repertoire. This subject will be further discussed below in the section on notes on the ritual repertoire.

Getting the king's attention

Among the *adhyāyas* devoted to the topic of *yantra*,²⁰ *adhyāyas* 26–27 and 36–37 are particularly rich in descriptions of the benefits of *yantra* worship for rulers. Here motifs of expansion and protection of the kingdom, although virtually ubiquitous, are found side by side with many other possible attainments on the part of rulers. A key passage found in *adhyāya* 26 addresses these issues:

One desirous of a kingdom, one who has been deprived of it, or one conquered by [other] rulers, after having paid respect with large masses of wealth to the supreme *guru*, the giver of Sudarśana's *yantra*, considering [him] superior to all, should propitiate God Nārāyaṇa – who has large eyes like lotuses, is [of] a dark [complexion], clad in a yellow garment, adorned with all ornaments, and with four arms – following the rules given by the teacher.

He should have the supreme *yantra* constructed out of refined gold, with decorations of gems and coral and with all [the necessary] adornments. Just by doing this, he shall obtain a kingdom free of disorder. Having [properly] installed it, he should respectfully worship this [*yantra*] which bestows all accomplishments. Then he shall obtain the [whole] earth with its seven divisions and cities. Siddhas, Gandharvas, and Dānavas will be forever subdued. On earth he will rule over the entire kingdom of the three worlds. [The demons born of] the aggressive magic (*abhicāra*) of [his] enemies, having failed to take hold of him, frightened, will possess the performer [of the ritual]

²⁰ *yantras* could be tentatively described as diagrams that represent the deity and catalyse its powers. An overview of their use in the Pāñcarātra context can be found in RASTELLI 2003: 142–151.

(i.e., the enemy himself), like a river[’s fury] blocked by a mountain. Droughts will end and enemies will run away. In his kingdom there will be no dangers in the form of untimely deaths, wild animals, beasts of prey, thieves, illnesses, etc. and strength shall reside in his lineage.²¹

Right at the beginning, the text expresses the two main concerns of rulers in the AhS: the wish to either increase one’s power and dominion or to retain it, for example by protecting it from enemies. The next stanza clearly implies how instrumental the officiant is for the ruler’s success. This is followed by the actual worship, with the implication that it is the king who sponsors the construction of any solid substratum (an idea expressed by the causative *kārayet*).

After this come the actual benefits. Note how the theme of expansion comes first and is divided into two phases: the kings are first promised the conquest of the earth and subsequently even that of the complex of three worlds (*trailokya*). Then the description shifts to the theme of protection, which is related to hostile magic, enemy troops, and calamities. Finally, the expression *vidyate tatkule balam* (“strength shall reside in his lineage”) could be taken to include other benefits such as freedom from diseases, a long life, wealth, etc.

One should also notice how the deity and its worship are given great prominence. A deity like Sudarśana is already perfectly suitable in this context, yet the redactors felt the need to state this as clearly as possible:

²¹ AhS 26.82c–91b: *rājyārthī hṛtarājyo vā paribhūto ’thavā nṛpaiḥ* || 82 *saudarśanaśya yantrasya pradātāraṃ gurum param | sarvebhyo hy adhikaṃ matvā tam abhyarcya mahādhanaiḥ* || 83 *tato nārāyaṇaṃ devaṃ puṇḍarikāyatekṣaṇam | śyāmalaṃ pītavaśanaṃ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitam* || 84 *ārādhayec caturbāhum ācāryeṇoktavidhānataḥ | taptajāmbūnadamayam maṇividrumacitritam* || 85 *sarvālaṃkāraśamuktam kārayed yantram uttamam | etatkaraṇamātreṇa rājyam āpnoty anāmayaṃ* || 86 *pratiṣṭhāpyārcayed etat sādaraṃ sarvasiddhidam | tato bhūmim avāpnoti saptadvīpāṃ sapattanām* || 87 *vaśyā bhavanti satataṃ siddhagandharvadānavāḥ | trailokyarājyaṃ akhilaṃ pālayaty avanītale* || 88 *abhicārāḥ parakṛtāś cainam aprāpya bhīṣitāḥ | praviśanti prayoktāraṃ āpagevācalāhatā* || 89 *avagrahāś ca naśyanti śatravo vidravanti ca | apamṛtyumṛgavyālācorarogādibhir bhayaṃ* || 90 *na tasya rājye bhavati vidyate tatkule balam* | (89b *bhīṣitāḥ* [ed.] – *dīpitāḥ* [D, the first edition, adds a question mark to this reading (AhS Ed¹: 246)]). An English translation of a part of this passage can be found in RASTELLI 2003: 149.

“Without the propitiation of this deity [i.e., Sudarśana] there simply cannot be a king.”²²

Let us look at the alleged benefits more closely. Beginning with examples where promises of easy territorial expansion are prominent, the following passage found in the context of the *dhārakayantra*, “the *yantra* of the bearer [of the *sudarśanayantra*],”²³ deserves mention. One should keep in mind that this is neither the only nor the first passage found in the AhS which connects *yantras* with conquest, but merely an example.²⁴

The king shall obtain a kingdom, victory, wealth, a long life, and freedom from diseases. A king who regularly worships shall conquer this whole earth, with its seven divisions and her garment of seas.²⁵

Clearly, the central theme is that of the attainment of universal sovereignty (*cakravartitva*). But even if new territory and victory are mentioned at the beginning of what seems to be a reverse climax, other benefits of a personal nature also found their way into the list. A similar list is found in the context of the daily ritual, but there the ritual “bestows long life, freedom from diseases, victory, and territory” and also “gives wealth and grains” (*āyurārogyavijayabhūpradam dhanadhānyadam*, AhS 28.1). This points to the fact that the above is not a fixed formula but inflected according to the context. It would also appear that on certain occasions the choice of an order is influenced by stylistic criteria. These include not only the metre but alliterations²⁶ as well as poetic expressions, which can also be appreciated

²² AhS 36.46cd: *devam enam anārādhyā na kaścij jāyate nṛpaḥ* ||.

²³ RASTELLI explains the use of this kind of *yantra* as follows: “The power of the *saudarśanayantra* is considered to be so great that a human being cannot wear it without additionally having a *dhārakayantra*” (2003: 150f.).

²⁴ Cf., for example, AhS 25.24 as well as the following passage: “Therefore the king who worships this [*yantra*], being imbued with devotion, will very quickly obtain universal sovereignty over the earth. The king, his attendants, or ministers or others, wishing the benefit of the king, should all worship this supreme [*yantra*].” (AhS 36.24c–26b: *tasmād abhyarcayed etad yo rājā bhaktisaṃyutaḥ* || *so 'cireṇaiva kālena cakravartitvam āpmuyāt* | *rājā vā rājabhṛtyā vā mantriṇo vāthavā pare* || *rājñām hitaiṣiṇaḥ sarve pūjayeyur idaṃ param* ||).

²⁵ AhS 27.33c–34: *rājā rājyaṃ jayaṃ bhūtim āyur ārogyam āpmuyāt* || 33 *nityam arcayato rājñāḥ saptadvīpavatī mahī* | *samudravasanā caiṣā viśvā vaśyā bhaviṣyati* || 34 (33c *jayaṃ* [ed.] – *priyam* [A B C E F]; 34c *samudravasanā* [ed.] – *sasamudravanā* [A B C E F]).

²⁶ For example in the following passage, where one could notice the alliterative

in this passage itself: note the sequence *viśvā vaśyā bhaviṣyati* and the expression *samudravasanā*, “garment of seas,” preserved by D (a manuscript occupying a high position in the hypothetical stemma, although often imprecise) but changed in the other witnesses.²⁷

The term *cakravartin* was already found in the *adhyāya* 16 in the context of the important discussion about the officiant and the king. The theme receives further attention in the description of a specific ritual to aid the king’s conquest of all directions, including the upper and lower worlds and all the beings dwelling in them (AhS 29) as well as the story of Śrutakīrti (AhS 42).

While there can be no doubt that the theme of conquest receives much attention in the AhS, it also lacks practical connotations. More interesting in terms of relevant details is the theme of protection. As seen above, danger can come from enemy troops, black magic, and calamities. A remarkably vivid description, given that it is not found in one of the narratives but in the later section on *yantras*, tells of a difficult situation caused by enemy troops:

When kings are overpowered by enemies with an army (or: by strong enemies), when cities are burnt down and the king’s army is driven away, when people in various districts do not have access to food [and other goods] – if the kingdom is thus oppressed by the enemies’ army, O great sage, and if in this inadequate situation the king’s enemies are unimpeded, he should have a sixteen-armed Sudarśana constructed [and properly installed, for his power is] without obstacles.²⁸

The above description was used by Begley to illustrate how the sixteen-armed Sudarśana is closely connected to the theme of warfare.²⁹

beginning in *nīroga* and *niḥsapatna* (as well as in *rājā rājyam*): *anena kṛtakṛtyas tu rājā rājyam avāpnuyāt | nīrogo niḥsapatnaś ca dīrghāyus ca bhaviṣyati* || (AhS 27.39), “The king who has fulfilled his obligations by means of this shall attain kingdom and he shall be free of diseases, without enemies, and with a long life.”

²⁷ This might be further evidence for the existence of a common ancestor of ABC and EF, as proposed above.

²⁸ AhS 37.4–6: *parair abhibhave prāpte rājñāṃ balasamanvitaiḥ | nagareṣu pradagdheṣu rājñāṃ vidrāvite bale || 4 uparuddheṣu bhogeṣu tattadviṣayavāsinām | pīḍyamāne parabalair itthaṃ rāṣṭre mahāmune || 5 sthitāv anupapannāyām rājño ’vyucchinnavairiṇaḥ | kārayet ṣoḍaśabhujam sudarśanam avāritam || 6 (4c pradagdheṣu [ed.] – prabhinneṣu [A B E F]; 4d rājñāṃ [ed.] – rājye [D]; 4d bale [ed.] – balaiḥ [D]).*

²⁹ Cf. BEGLEY 1973: 73.

A remarkable passage is found outside the *adhyāyas* on *yantras*, in chapter 42, which is mostly devoted to a single narrative. However, the opening of the *adhyāya* is not part of such a narrative. The passage is a good example of how calamities and war may be associated with black magic.

An abnormal modification (*vikṛti*) caused by an aggressive ritual (*abhicāra*) against kings, occurring at an improper time, dreadful and all-reaching, is characterised by these signs:

Horses, elephants, and ministers suddenly perish; the king himself suffers from a serious illness which has seized [his] body; terrifying thunderbolts strike his dominion; the earth produces less grains and multitudes of cows fall dead; his dominion suffers from droughts again and again; the earth-master's queens are seized by serious illness; snakes and ants appear in the palace, at the main gate, and in the pavilion (*maṇḍapa*); meteors fall violently with dreadful sounds; ministers fight with each other out of greediness; a terrifying rainbow shines in the night, even if there are no clouds; great danger because of fire arises here and there in the city; frightful jackals enter the innermost of the temple unimpededly and howl loudly during the [morning and evening] twilights, when the sky is lit up; enemies proud of their strength besiege the king's [capital] city; [the king] is so deluded that he himself forgets what is to be done and not done; in a dream he sees himself with a shaven head and clad in a dark blue garment, travelling towards the southern direction on a cart pulled by a donkey;³⁰ from such and other signs he should understand that the enemy is performing an aggressive ritual.

If the hostile spirit (*krtyā*) born of the enemy's aggressive ritual takes possession of the king, the latter would die on the spot, simply after having seen her, there is no doubt about that. [The king's] sons, ministers, chief queen as well as the city itself – the hostile spirit, clad in a garland of flames, destroys everything in just a second.³¹

³⁰ All these images are notoriously negative, especially the southward journey, i.e., to Yama's region.

³¹ AhS 42.15–26: *lakṣyate lakṣaṇair etair nṛpāṇām ābhicārikī | vikṛtiḥ prastutākāle dāruṇā sarvagocarā || 15 akāṇḍa eva naśyanti vājivāraṇamantriṇaḥ | tīvrāmayaparītāṅgaḥ pīḍyate nṛpatiḥ svayam || 16 patanty aśanayas tasya viṣaye ghoradarśanāḥ | alpasasyā vasumatī vinaśyanti gavāṃ gaṇāḥ || 17 bhavanti tasya viṣaye punaḥ punar avagrahāḥ | tīvrāmayagrhitās ca mahiṣyas tasya bhūpateḥ || 18 prabhavanti*

Once again, as expressed in the following lines, it is the worship of Sudarśana which will save the kingdom and the members of the royal court. Descriptions of bad omens or calamities are a common topos in literature of this kind. They are also found in the second part (*khaṇḍa*) of the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*³² as well as in the *Netratantra*.³³ The passage presented above amounts to the statement that calamities can be caused and/or manipulated through ritual action. In the narratives too, kings normally protect themselves against powerful demons,³⁴ and this contributes to the idea that the AhS is not really concerned with actual politics (or warfare) but rather with giving kings a means of dealing with the unexpected as well as the inexplicable.

As previously mentioned, benefits of a more personal kind are also promised to rulers. One could interpret some of them, such as freedom from diseases or attainment of a long life, as an extension of the theme of protection. Other benefits, such as attainment of wealth, can be connected with a different theme, that of the fulfilment of desires, which receives considerable attention, since a whole complex ritual is devoted to it (the *mahābhiṣeka* ritual of *adhyāya* 39, see below).

ahivalmīkāḥ prāsāde dvāri maṇḍape | nipatanti maholkāś ca bhṛśaṃ bhūmasvanā-nvitāḥ || 19 mantriṇāś ca virudhyante matsareṇa parasparam | rajanyāṃ rājate bhūmam aindraṃ dhanur anabhrajam || 20 itas tato vahnibhayaṃ nagare jāyate bhṛśam | praviśya garbhahavanaṃ kroṣṭāraś cānivāritāḥ || 21 kroṣanti saṃdhyayor bhūmā dīptāyāṃ diśi visvaram | rundhanti nagaram rājñāḥ śatravo baladarpitāḥ || 22 kṛtyākṛtyaṃ na jñāti svayaṃ staimityam āsthitaḥ | svapne 'pi paśyaty ātmānaṃ muṇḍitaṃ nīlavāsasam || 23 rathena gardabhayujā vrajantaṃ dakṣiṇāṃ diśam | ityā-dilingair jānīyād abhicāraṃ sapatnajaṃ || 24 parābhicārajā kṛtyā rājānaṃ praviśed yadi | tāṃ drṣṭvā kṣipram evāsau vinaśyati na saṃśayaḥ || 25 putrāṃś ca mantriṇāś cāpi mahiṣiṃ nagaram tathā | jvālāmālāvīlā kṛtyā sarvaṃ nāśayati kṣaṇāt || 26 (19a prabhavanty ahi [ed.] – prabhavanty api [A B E F]; 20c rājate [ed.] – jāyate [D]; 20d anabhrajam [ed.] – anabhrakam [A B E F]; 23b āsthitaḥ [ed.] – āśritaḥ [A B E F]).

³² Cf. *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, *khaṇḍa* 2, *adhyāya* 136ff. The description is quite detailed and explicitly refers to kings, speaking of how their safety as well as that of their kingdoms might be at risk in the presence of certain bad omens. As could be expected, much space is devoted to unusual natural phenomena. There is also a section on interpreting animal behaviour (cf. 2.143). As in the AhS, there are also references to a decline in people's ability to behave according to social standards and regulations (cf. 2.144).

³³ Cf. SANDERSON 2004: 262.

³⁴ Cf., for example, the story of Indra (AhS 43–44) and that of Citraśekhara (AhS 49). For summaries of the stories, cf. SCHRADER 1916: 132ff. and RASTELLI in this volume.

Promising benefits and illustrating them by means of narratives³⁵ can thus be seen as the main strategy, but the redactors of the work resorted to other strategies as well. One of these is threatening the court with disaster in case Sudarśana's worship is not conducted properly.³⁶

Having had constructed [an image of] Sudarśana with such various aspects, [but] not having installed [the image properly], the kings and ministers will at once lose [all their] wealth and be defeated by [their] enemies. Because of the absence of worship, they will [eventually] be banished from the kingdom and persecuted.³⁷

Other strategies include mentioning kings of the past, usually known from the epics, who apparently would have immensely profited from the worship of Sudarśana,³⁸ or explaining that the method of worship of the AhS is the perfect one for the current degenerated age.³⁹

Notes on the ritual repertoire

So far, the main focus of this papers has been on the *adhyāyas* on *yantra* worship. Now we move on to those concerned with specific rituals, where we find the same basic thematic patterns of offence/defence followed by the fulfilment of desires (*kāmya*).

Besides the ritual of initiation (*dīkṣā*, AhS 20) and the daily ritual (*ārādhana*, AhS 28), which are quite clearly connected to a courtly context,⁴⁰ the repertoire of the AhS includes: a ritual to aid the conquest in all

³⁵ For further considerations on the functions of narratives in the AhS, see RASTELLI's contribution in this volume.

³⁶ Cf. also AhS 37.18.

³⁷ AhS 37.50–51: *evaṃ bahuvīdhai rūpair upetaṃ taṃ sudarśanam | kṛtvā taṃ apratiṣṭhāpya rājāno mantriṇo 'pi vā || 50 vīnaṣṭasaṃpadaḥ sadyaḥ paribhūtās ca śatrubhiḥ | arcanābhāvato rājyād bhraṣṭās ciraṃ upadrutāḥ || 51.*

³⁸ Cf., for example, AhS 47.9ff. The identification of the kings of the narratives with those found in the epic is a central issue in RASTELLI's contribution in this volume.

³⁹ Cf. the beginning of *adhyāya* 25.

⁴⁰ In the case of the *dīkṣā* ritual description, the courtly dimension is inferred from a passage at the end of the chapter: "The practice is to be performed for the protection of the three worlds, for the sake of the [welfare of the] earth, for the sake of the kingdom, the king, or a royal officer. [It should be done] only for [their] good, never for evil [purposes]." (AhS 20.50b–51: *trailokyasyātha rakṣāyai bhuvaś cakrasya vā kṛte || 50 rāṣṭrasya vātha rājño vā rājamātrasya vā kṛte | bhāvāyaiva*

directions, including the heavens (*digvijaya*, AhS 29), a ritual to cure various illnesses (*roganivṛtti*, AhS 38), one to fulfil all desires (*mahābhīṣeka*, AhS 39), and a pacificatory ritual (*śānti*, AhS 47). The aims attached to these rituals in the corresponding *adhyāyas* are generally quite straightforward.⁴¹ The description of the pacificatory ritual's aims includes both the theme of protection as well as that of conquest.

Is there anything we can say about this repertoire of rituals? The method adopted here follows the one used by Sanderson in his study of the Śaiva officiant of the *Netratantra*. He compared the repertoire outlined in that work with a list of the *purohita*'s duties from the *Atharvavedaparīṣiṣṭa* (3.1.10), which, in his rendering, include:

(1) Rituals to ward off dangers and ills of every kind from the king and his kingdom (*śāntikaṃ karma*), some of them simple rites to protect the king's person to be performed at various times every day, others much more elaborate ceremonies to be performed periodically, (2) rituals to restore his health and vigour (*pauṣṭikaṃ karma*), (3) rituals to harm his enemies (*ābhicārikaṃ karma*), (4) the regular and occasional rituals (*nityaṃ karma* and *naimittikaṃ karma*) required of the king, (5) reparatory rites

vidhiḥ kāryo naivābhāvāya karhicit || 51). In the case of the daily ritual this is slightly less explicit. Notice, however, that its benefit include victory, gaining territory, and dealing with enemies (AhS 28.1–2).

⁴¹ The description of the pacificatory ritual's aims includes both the theme of protection as well as that of conquest. It also attempts to appear more convincing by listing the names of "rulers of old" who had performed the ritual: "[This rite] should be employed by utterly glorious sovereigns of various births – [for this rite] removes all the three kinds of sorrow which begin with the one relating to oneself; causes the destruction of all afflictions; has auspicious marks; destroys all enemies; pacifies (i.e., removes unwanted consequences of ritual mistakes etc.); is the cause of great triumph; kills the demons; brings about prosperities; subdues all, O sage; bestows the longest of lives; is meritorious; [and] was performed by ancient kings. Ambarīṣa, Śuka, Alarka, Māndhātṛ, Purūravas, King Uparicara, Dhundhu, Śibi, and Śrutakīrtana – those kings of old attained universal sovereignty after performing this. They became free of diseases and free of enemies. Their fame was widely spread and blameless." (47.5c–10b: *mahārājair mahābhāgaiḥ prayojyaṃ vyastajātibhiḥ* || 5 *ādhyātmikādiduḥkhānāṃ trayāṇāṃ api nāśanam* | *ādhīnāṃ cāpy aśeṣānāṃ nāśanam śubhalakṣaṇam* || 6 *sarvārināśanam śāntam mahāvijayakāraṇam* | *raṁśohanaṃ puṣṭikaram sarvavaśyakaram mune* || 7 *paramāyuhpradam puṇyam pūrvair nṛpatibhiḥ kṛtam* | *ambarīṣaḥ śuko 'larko māndhātṛ ca purūravāḥ* || 8 *rājoparicarao dhundhuḥ śibiś ca śrutakīrtanaḥ* | *kṛtvaitac cakravartitvaṃ purā prāpur amī nṛpāḥ* || 9 *nirāmayā niḥsapatnā vistūrṇāmalakīrtayaḥ* |).

(*prāyaścittīyaṃ karma*), and (6) postmortuary rites (*aurdhvadehikaṃ karma*) in case the king or any other member of the royal family dies.⁴²

A mere glimpse at the passage above is sufficient to notice that many ritual duties of the traditional Atharvavedic officiant are not part of the repertoire of the AhS. Annual festivals are not considered, and rituals including minor personal services are poorly represented.⁴³ The procedure for curing various illnesses (AhS 38) could be seen as an exception. Interestingly, postmortuary and reparatory rituals are also not covered by the AhS.⁴⁴ In other words, it would appear that much of what makes up the daily routine of a courtly officiant is not dealt with in the AhS, whereas special or extraordinary situations and needs receive most of the attention.

One possible explanation for this could be that the intention of the redactors is really to portray an officiant of quite a high standing, essential to a ruler in truly difficult situations.

Another missing element in the AhS is the practical side of warfare. Annual ceremonies celebrating military power, worship of weapons or horses, battle strategies – none of this is dealt with. The only hint at a dimension which goes beyond those of courtly rituals or literary fancy is the idea that *yantras* or divine weapons could be of actual help in difficult situations if one meditates on them. Explicit evidence for this is difficult to find outside of the narratives proper.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, a couple of passages in the AhS are very interesting in this regard, and their very existence points at a much wider background of the practice of magic for practical military purpose.⁴⁶ Again, both the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and the *Netratantra* are quite explicit about this dimension.⁴⁷

⁴² SANDERSON 2005: 239.

⁴³ It is interesting to note that calendrical rituals and even minor services of the *purohita* figure prominently both in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and the *Netratantra* (cf. SANDERSON 2004: 256.).

⁴⁴ Reparatory rituals are not entirely absent from Pāñcarātra scriptures addressing kings. *Samhitās* which include this kind of procedures are mentioned in CZERNIAK-DROŻDZOWICZ 2003: 142ff.

⁴⁵ Cf., for instance, the story of Sumati (48.64ff.), where the “soporific” weapon (*prāsvapana*) and the “fiery” one (*āgneya*) are deployed by the king in order to win the battle.

⁴⁶ Cf., for example, this interesting statement: “He who remembers this at the time when fear comes about or in battle or during a debate has victory in his hand. One should not doubt this.” (AhS 26.80: *bhayāgame ca saṃgrāme vāde vā yaḥ smared idam | vijayas tasya hastastho nātra kāryā vicāraṇā ||*). Also relevant is a variant reading found in a passage about divine weapons. While the edition reads *eṣāṃ*

Another source which deserves mention is the *Sāmrājyalakṣmīpūṭhikā* (SLP), a manual for royal ritual from ca. the sixteenth century in which Lakṣmī is given special prominence. This South Indian work presents various similarities with the AhS. More specifically, the militaristic idioms are very close to those found in the AhS, comprising both conquest as well as protection of the state against enemies or natural disasters as benefits arising from ritual worship.⁴⁸ Yet the SLP goes further since it addresses a more pragmatic dimension as well, in the sense that it devotes a number of sections to regular rituals and festivals, some of which are particularly charged with warfare-related imaginary.⁴⁹ Remarkably, it includes descriptions of fortresses, horses, and weapons, potentially opening a window on realia as well.⁵⁰

Despite their similarities, the SLP as a whole seems to be the outcome of a different agenda, one not only concerned with marketing a cult but with setting guidelines for the court's daily life as well. The AhS aims instead at illustrating the notion of empowerment as such.

Final remarks

The AhS is quite an extraordinary source of information about the strategies set in place by a certain community to captivate the attention of rulers. In the present case, the efficacy of ritual as a means of dealing with emergency situations is brought into focus. The ritual repertoire as well as the

darśanamātreṇa vinaśyanty arisainikāḥ ||, “Merely at their (i.e., of the divine weapons) sight, the hostile soldiers will perish” (AhS 40.7cd), ABE and F read *eteṣāṃ dhyānamātreṇa*, “by the mere concentration on these,” which makes the idea of a deliberate deployment of their power more explicit.

⁴⁷ Cf. SANDERSON 2004: 248 and 255ff.

⁴⁸ I am grateful to Somadeva Vasudeva and Péter-Dániel Szántó for pointing this out to me. The presence of such idioms is virtually found throughout the work. Particularly striking is the fact that enemies are placed at the top of a long list of threats found in chapter 10. For a statement concerning control over the entire earth, one could turn to SLP 29.30. The work also knows of the need to counter hostile magic (cf. 30.23).

⁴⁹ Particularly striking in this regard are the chapters on Vijayaśaṁī (108) and Kumārīpūjā (110).

⁵⁰ The final chapters of the work (starting with 128) are rich in such descriptions and convey a more detailed picture of ritualised warfare at the court. The section on fortresses starts with chapter 31, whereas mention of the worship of weapons can be found embedded in the description of various rituals and festivals, as for example ad SLP 105.10.

descriptions of its benefits seem to be the outcome of a well-conceived agenda. Once established inside the court, royal officiants expert in the cult outlined in the AhS would certainly enjoy an elevated status and command the fear and respect of those around them.

The important question of the actual historical impact of the cult could not be addressed in the preceding pages. The reader is reminded that some important references to epigraphical sources are given in Begley's study quoted above. Nevertheless, a narrower focus on scriptural materials can potentially still have significant impact on our understanding of the larger context. We had a glimpse at this every time we dealt with variant readings or raised a question about the history of the text's formation. Moreover, even a brief look at other texts which deal with rituals at the royal court had significant impact on the way we interrogate a work like the AhS.

Appendix: remarks on the Adyar Library edition of the AhS⁵¹

The second edition of the AhS (a critical revision by V. Krishnamacharya) includes neither details regarding the stemma of the considered witnesses nor information about the policies adopted in the composition of the apparatus. Only a reduced description of the individual manuscripts is provided.

The first edition, however, includes a manuscript description in Sanskrit which addresses the issue of the relation of some of the witnesses and also gives estimations of their dates. These approximate (*-deśīya*) estimations were dropped in the new edition.⁵²

The apparatus of both editions is a negative one, which enhances the chances of committing mistakes while recording the variants.⁵³ Distinctions between omissions and actual loss of the substratum (entire leaves or pages) seem to follow (in the second edition) the nomenclature of "omission" /

⁵¹ General remarks about Schrader's difficulties in supervising the editorial work during the years of the First World War are found in the introductory lines to both editions.

⁵² However, the adjective "old" figures in the descriptions of A, C, and D.

⁵³ Obviously, a siglum could be easily omitted. It is the knowledge of the stemma which helps detect the possibility of such mistakes. Unfortunately, in the case of the AhS the relations between the manuscripts are far from clear. An easily detectable mistake is made instead when a siglum is assigned contemporarily to two different readings, as it has happened with B ad AhS Ed²: 319.

“gap.”⁵⁴ A case of transposition is also clearly recorded.⁵⁵ Concerning localised damage of the substratum, the only (possible) indication was found once in the first edition, when the editor adds to what could be a missing *akṣara* of a variant *atra granthalopah sambhāvyate*, or “here damage of the manuscript is likely.”⁵⁶ The first edition also adds a number of question marks in cases where the readings are considered ambiguous. This and the preceding features would now usually be indicated by different sets of brackets. However, the second edition does not include any of these potentially useful indications. It might therefore be advisable to cross-check with the first edition, when confronted with a puzzling variant reported in the apparatus, in order to see whether the first editor found the manuscript easily legible at that given point.

A description of the stemma can be found in Schrader’s “Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā”:

Unfortunately, as can be seen from a few common omissions and errors, all of these MSS. go back to one already corrupted original. Still, on the whole the Saṃhitā is well preserved. The two oldest and best MSS. are those called E and D. The former is a Grantha MS. from Kalale in Mysore, the latter a MS. written in the Malayālam character and belonging to H.H. the Mahārāja of Travancore. E is more accurate than D. From E descend the four Melkote MSS. F to H, all of them written in Grantha characters and so completely identical that the common symbol F could be used for them. From D (or a similar MS.) descend C, A and B (in this order); C being the Adyar Library paper MS. in Grantha characters (with large omissions), A the Adyar Library palm-leaf MS. in Grantha characters, and B the Telugu MS. belonging to the Mysore Government. The badly damaged Tanjore MS. described in Burnell’s catalogue could not be borrowed and was, on inspection, found to be not worth taking into account.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Cf., for example, AhS Ed²: 296 and 345. The apparatus reports the loss of folios of ms. C, which is correctly described as “incomplete” in the manuscript description.

⁵⁵ Cf. AhS Ed²: 89.

⁵⁶ Cf. AhS Ed¹: 153.

⁵⁷ SCHRADER 1916: 94.

These remarks are very important but are also somewhat ambiguous. Based on the evidence adduced in the apparatus, it would seem that the relations between the witnesses are indeed rather complex.

Sometimes, when confronted with one isolated and puzzling variant, it is possible to assume a mistake in the recording of that variant. If a feature appears more than once, the possibility of its being genuine increases.⁵⁸

Without having the possibility to consult the manuscripts themselves, it is safer to focus on relations which are well-attested in the apparatus, such as certain repeating patterns in the lacunae of the various witnesses.

For example, as many as 25 of D's omissions and additions (which run throughout the work and which do not seem to be related to a loss of the substratum) are not found in either A, B, or C.⁵⁹ Also, ABC share as many as nine omissions with EF,⁶⁰ where D seems to read the proper text. One of these omissions is found in the *adhyāya* 28. In the middle of the description of the daily ritual, ABCEF end abruptly only to begin again 49 stanzas later, which means that D is the only extant witness for a significant part of the *adhyāya*. Although one cannot reach conclusions without a thorough assessment of the original documents, it seems prudent to keep these aspects in mind for a critical reading of the AhS.

Another aspect regards the use of sigla to refer to more than one manuscript. SCHRADER (1916) writes: "[...] the four Melkote MSS. F to H, all of them written in Grantha characters and so completely identical that the common symbol F could be used for them." The four manuscripts are actually F, G, H, and I, with I being coupled with H in the manuscript description of both editions. As far as evident to the present author, manuscripts H and I are never found in the apparatus, probably because the siglum F, which appears regularly in the work, was indeed used to indicate them. However, on a few occasions G is actually found in the apparatus of both editions. G appears to be mentioned only at the beginning of the first volume and to always follow F.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the siglum F is found alone for other variants on the very same pages. Again, one would be tempted to have a look at the originals.

⁵⁸ For instance, when only A and E omit a text portion (AhS Ed²: 567) or even supply the same text (AhS Ed²: 569).

⁵⁹ Cf. AhS Ed²: 5, 29, 35, 71, 91, 117, 121, 127, 146, 149, 152, 156, 159 (twice), 168, 195, 210, 251, 252, 263, 265, 273, 278, 324, and 381.

⁶⁰ Cf. AhS Ed²: 124, 149, 194, 198, 205, 255, 258, 322, 587.

⁶¹ Cf., for example, AhS Ed²: 34, 36, and 47.

In the preceding pages the text was reported as found in the second edition. The apparatus was added for increased transparency (including also the ways in which variants are reported in the first edition) along with tentative discussions on particularly relevant variant readings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Literature

Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa

The Pariśiṣṭas of the Atharvaveda. Ed. George Melville Bolling and Julius von Negelein. Vol. 1, 3 parts. Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1909-1910.

Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā (AhS)

Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā of the Pāñcarātrāgama. 2 vols. Ed. M.D. Ramanujacharya under the Supervision of F.O. Schrader. Revised by V. Krishnamacharya. Adyar: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1916, ²1986 (first repr.).

Netratātra

The Netra Tantram, with Commentary by Kṣemarāja. Ed. Madhusudan Kaul Shāstrī. 2 vols. Bombay: Tatva Vivechaka Press 1926, 1939.

Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa

Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa. Ed. Kṣemarāja Kṛṣṇadāsa. Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1985 (first ed. 1912).

Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā (SLP)

Samrajya Lakshmi Pithika (The Emperor's Manual). Ed. Vasudeva Sastri and K.S. Subrahmanya Sastri. Tanjore: Sarasvathi Mahal Library, 1952.

Secondary Literature

BEGLEY, W.E. 1973. *Viṣṇu's Flaming Wheel: The Iconography of the Sudarśana-Cakra*. New York: New York University Press.

BIANCHINI, F. 2015. *A King's Best Weapon. Sudarśana's Worship at the Royal Court According to the Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*. MA thesis, University of Vienna (http://othes.univie.ac.at/38142/1/2015-06-22_0846884.pdf, accessed March 15, 2018).

BOCK-RAMING, A. 2002. *Untersuchungen zur Gottesvorstellung in der älteren Anonymliteratur des Pāñcarātra*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

- CZERNIAK-DROŹDŹOWICZ, M. 2003. *Pāñcarātra Scripture in the Process of Change. A Study of the Paramasaṃhitā*. Vienna: De Nobili Research Library.
- MATSUBARA, M. 1994. *Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās & Early Vaiṣṇava Theology With A Translation and Critical Notes from Chapters on Theology in the Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- RASTELLI, M. 2003. Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Pāñcarātra Tradition. In: G. Bühnemann (ed.), *Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Hindu Traditions*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, pp. 119–152.
2018. Considerations about Traditions Influential in the Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā. *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 72(2), pp. 421–443.
- SANDERSON, A. 2004. Religion and the State: Śaiva Officials in the Territory of the King's Brahmanical Chaplain. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47, pp. 229–300.
- SCHRADER, F.O. 1916. *Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā*. Madras: Adyar Library.
- SIRCAR, D.C. 1966. *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.