

Māṭṛtantra texts of South India with special reference to the worship of Rurujit in Kerala and to three different communities associated with this worship

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Māṭṛtantras of South India

There exist a few hitherto unpublished South Indian texts that describe the rituals of the female deities collectively known as the Seven Mothers, and it is in these Māṭṛtantra texts that we see the deity Bhadrakālī emerging as the principal deity of the Tantric cult. In this tradition Bhadrakālī is worshipped, either on her own or as Cāmuṇḍā, as one of the Seven Mothers, accompanied by Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa.

We find in these texts the description of the regular worship to be performed in temples of Bhadrakālī, usually patronised by royal families and established for the sake of victory over their enemies, while in the northern Māṭṛtantra tradition we see the description of the worship as performed by individual initiates for their own purposes. Works that may, as we now know, be included in the southern Māṭṛtantra tradition are the two southern *Brahmayāmalas*, the *Māṭṛsadbhāva*, the *Śeṣasamuccaya* (chapters 7, 8, and 9) and certain other minor texts that deal with the installation of, and rituals related to, Bhadrakālī.

Two southern *Brahmayāmalas*

In his thesis on the *Brahmayāmala*, a pre-ninth-century Śaiva Tantric scripture, HATLEY (2007: 4–5) mentions five other later texts that bear the label “*Brahmayāmala*”¹ and belong to the Māṭṛtantra tradition. Among these

¹ See HATLEY 2007: 3–5: “(...) a South Indian text connected with the cult of Bhadrakālī, in which some traces of the older *BraYā* are discernable; another South Indian *Brahmayāmala* related to this of which only a few chapters survive; a short text preserved in a Bengali manuscript expounding a series of ritual diagrams (*cakras* or *yantras*), with no discernable relation to the older *BraYā*; a text of the cult of Tārā

five, two are from South India, the *Brahmayāmala* [*Brahmayāmala-māṭṛpratiṣṭhāntara*], available in the French Institute (ms. T. 522), and another *Brahmayāmala* [*Brahmayāmalapratīṣṭhāntara*] for which there is an incomplete manuscript available in the Trivandrum Manuscript Library (ms. T. 982). As SANDERSON (2014: 40–41) observes:

These [texts] claim to be part of the *Brahmayāmala* and indeed are derived from it to the extent that they share its core pantheon and a number of other formal features; but they differ from it radically in that they prescribe a regular cult of Cāmuṇḍā/Bhadrakālī and the Seven Mothers to be conducted before the fixed idols in temples by non-Brahmin priests of the *pāraśava* caste for the protection of the state and its subjects and the enhancement of royal power.²

We also see that the Bhadrakālī in these texts is attended by the same four goddesses, namely Raktā, Karālī, Caṇḍākṣī, and Mahocchiṣṭā, as Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī, the supreme goddess in the northern *Brahmayāmala*, though Mahocchuṣmā, the fourth, appears under the variant name Mahocchiṣṭā:

The one named Raktā should be installed in the eastern direction; Karālī should be installed in the south, Caṇḍākṣī should be installed in the west, [and] Mohocchiṣṭā should be installed in the north.³

And:

Raktā, Karālī, Caṇḍākṣī, [and] Mohocchiṣṭā [should be installed] separately.⁴

On the cult of Bhadrakālī and the worship that the southern *Brahmayāmala* texts introduce, SANDERSON (2007a: 277–278) further observes that it “is indeed fully Tantric, it is much more integrated into the civic dimension of

by this name transmitted in an untraced Bengali manuscript, a section of which has been published; and a *Brahmayāmala* preserved in a single, fragmentary Nepalese MS, which though eclectic, draws directly from the older *BraYā*.”

² See also SANDERSON 2007a: 277–278.

³ BY_{IFP}, p. 7, edition by SANDERSON 2007a: 277, n. 141: *raktākhyām vinyaset prācyām karālīm dakṣiṇe nyaset | caṇḍākṣīm paścime nyasya mahocchiṣṭottare nyaset |*.

⁴ BY_{IFP}, p. 89, edition by SANDERSON 2007a: 277, n. 141: *raktā karālī caṇḍākṣī mohocchiṣṭā prthak prthak |*.

religion than are the early North Indian Śākta traditions exemplified by the Trika and Kālīkula. [...] and the principal purpose of this worship is said to be to foster the victory of the monarch over his enemies, as in the Orissan cult of Bhadrakālī, and, more generally, to protect the kingdom from danger (*deśaśāntiḥ*, *rāṣṭraśāntiḥ*), such temple being, at least in main, royal foundations and recipients of royal patronage.” We also see that these southern Yāmala texts embedded the Tantric *mantras* from the Kālīkula.⁵

The *Brahmayāmala* (IFP, Pondicherry)

The incomplete southern text of the *Brahmayāmala*, available in the French Institute of Pondicherry, contains approximately 1,900 verses in *anuṣṭubh* metre in 49 chapters. This text has the format of a ritual manual (*paddhati*) and contains details of the installation of the Seven Mothers,⁶ the daily rituals performed for them, festivals, and special rituals such as the *māṭṛśānti* and the *kujavārabali*. Chapter 19 of the text gives a complete description of the animal sacrifice (*paśuyāga*) to be performed in a temple of the Seven Mothers. The forty-ninth and final chapter, on rules regarding impurity (*āśaucavidhi*), is incomplete. This transcript was prepared based on a manuscript available from Candraśekhara Gurukkal of Tirukkalukkunram. Though we have no information on the author of the text, it contains evidence that he was a Tamil speaker, whose native language occasionally left unintended traces on his composition.⁷

We also see that certain rituals and musical instruments described in the text are known in Tamil Nadu as well as in Kerala, which further confirms

⁵ For the details of the *mantras* that are imported, see SANDERSON 2007a: 278–279.

⁶ Their names are given, for example, in the following list: Cf. BY_{IFP}, p. 15: *brāhmī māheśvarī caiva kumārī vaiṣṇavī tathā | vārāhī caiva mātṛśāntiḥ bhadrakālī tathāiva ca ||*.

⁷ Cf. COX 2016: 249, n. 92. Cox gives the following evidence: “(e.g. epenthetic *ya-śrutis* [as in 6.25d: *tasmād yetāni varjayeṭ*] or hypercorrections [e.g. 5.12cd *tad-arthaṃ kaṇṭavistāraṃ tadārthaṃ bilam ucyate*, in both cases for correct *tadardhaṃ*]) see e.g. 6.5ab *āgneyayamayor madhye pitarasthānam uttamam*, ‘the best shrine to the **ancestors** is located in the south-southeast’ [thematization of Skt. *pitr* to *pitara*, cf. MTL *pitaraḥ*] 6.27a, *nallamallasamākīrṇam*, ‘[the village picked for a temple-site should be] filled with **good** wrestlers’ [*nalla-*, cf. Tamil *naṇmai*, adj. stem *nalla-*, ‘fine, good’] and 7.23cd: *śikhāyān tu śikhāṃ nyasya kavacaṃ tanamastake*, ‘placing the crest [*-mantra*] on the [Goddess’s] crest, [place] the armor [*-mantra*] on **her** head,’ understanding *tana-* to be a thematization influenced by the Tamil reflexive pronominal base *tan-*; the correct form and *sandhi* (**tanmastakam*) would break the metre.”

the southern origin of this text. For example, the text lists the musical instruments to be played during the installation of the trident (*śūla*), mentioning drums, namely the *karaṭī* and *timila*, as well as the *mātrghoṣa*, a particular voiced sound intoned by women, all of which is peculiar to the South:

[Making] auspicious proclamations (*svastivācakavākyam*), the sound of Vedic recitation (*brahmaghoṣam*), and [sounds of the instruments known as] *paṭaha*, *maddala*, *tāla*, *karaṭī*,⁸ *timilā*, and ululation (*mātrghoṣam*) along with [sounds of the] conch and *kāhala*.⁹

The text also mentions a particular dance, the *mudrāṇṛtta*, performed before the *bali* offering described in the *Mātrśāntipaṭala*, the chapter on the propitiatory rites for the Mother-goddess to avert evil or calamity,¹⁰ and another one by an oracle (*veliccapāḍ*)¹¹ before the *bali* offering known as *bhūtabali*, also performed in the Piṣārikāvu Temple of Kollam, Kerala.¹²

At the time of circumambulation, one should perform the dance involving *mudrās* (*mudrāṇṛtta*).¹³

⁸ I was unable to locate any references so far regarding the music instrument *karaṭī*. Though studies on the musical instruments of Kerala, such as the *Temple Musical Instruments of Kerala* (RAJAGOPALAN 2010), describe the instruments that are listed here, they remain silent on *karaṭī*.

⁹ BY_{IFP}, p. 159: *svastivācakavākyāṇ ca brahmaghoṣaṇ tathaiva ca | paṭahaṁ maddalaṁ tālaṁ karaṭītimilā tathā | śaṁkhakāhalasamāyuktaṁ mātrghoṣaṇ tathaiva ca |*. (*śaṁkhakāhalasamāyuktaṁ*] conj.; *śaṁkhakāhalasamāyuktaṁ* ms.)

¹⁰ Cf. BY_{IFP}, pp. 75–83. This is an eight-day *bali* festival, and each festival day is dedicated to one Mother-goddess. Rice mixed with different substances is offered, and on the eighth day the animal sacrifice (*paśubali*) takes place. The text also mentions that other divinities should be invited during the festival: “May these [divinities], [namely] the Kūsmāṇḍas, Guhyakas, Nāgas, Siddhās, Yakṣās, Marudgaṇas, Vidyādhara, and Gandharvas come [to this] festival.” *kūsmāṇḍa-guhyakānāgāsiddhāyākṣāmarudgaṇaḥ | vidyādharāś ca gandharvā āgacchantu mahotsave ||* (*mahotsave*] conj.; *mahotsavam* ms.; IFP T. 522, p. 75).

¹¹ The *veliccapāḍ*, or oracle, is considered a representation of the deity in a temple. He is dressed in red with ornaments and garlands and carries hooked swords. Once in trance, accompanied by the beatings of drums, he dances and grants the devotees blessings and predictions.

¹² Though I am not sure of its practice in Tamil Nadu, in Kerala such dances are performed, namely, one by a Kuruppu and one by a *veliccapāḍ*. A *kurup* belongs to the *ambalavāsi* or “temple servants” group; see also CALDWELL 1999: 97.

¹³ BY_{IFP}, p. 78: *paribhramaṇaṇḍalāyāṁ mudrāṇṛttaṁ samācāret |*

The dance involving *mudrās* (*mudrāṇṛttam*) should be performed along with laughing and playing. Especially the dance involving *mudrās* should be performed with every effort.¹⁴

According to this *Brahmayāmala*, the priests who are eligible to perform the worship of the Seven Mothers must be non-Brahmins, termed *pāraśava*, who are the offspring of a Brahmin father and Śūdra mother:¹⁵

One born of a Brahmin man and a Śūdra woman in conformity of the rules is considered to be a *pāraśava*. [Should they] resort to Bhadrakālī for their livelihood, they are held to be [her] priests.¹⁶

As SANDERSON (2007a: 277) observes, the Śaiva character of this priest is also “expressed by the transformation of *pāraśavaḥ* into *pāraśaivaḥ* as the title of those who have been initiated and consecrated as officiants of this cult”:

At first the *pāraśavas* are invariably worshippers¹⁷ of the goddess. [Once] initiated, these *pāraśaivas* are particularly qualified for rituals.¹⁸

¹⁴ BY_{IFP}, p. 79: ***mudrāṇṛttam*** tu kartavyaṃ hāsanakṛḍānādibhiḥ | ***mudrāṇṛttam*** viśeṣeṇa kārayet sarvayatnataḥ | (*kṛḍānādibhiḥ*] conj; *kṛḍānādiśet* ms.).

¹⁵ In the Dharmasāstra texts, *pāraśava* is defined as the offspring of a Brahmin man and Śūdra mother: *yaṃ brāhmaṇs tu śūdrāyāṃ kāmād utpādayet sutam | sa pārayann eva śavas tasmāt pāraśavaḥ smṛtaḥ ||* (*Manusmṛti* 9.178), “When a Brahmin fathers a son by a Śūdra woman out of lust, tradition calls him a *pāraśava*, because while still able (*pārayan*) he is a corpse (*śava*)” (translation OLIVELLE 2005: 159). See also *Brahmayāmala* IFP, p. 88 (= SANDERSON 2007a: 277): *āḍau pāraśavāś caiva nityaṃ devyās tu pūjakāḥ | dīkṣitāḥ karmayogyās te pāraśaivā viśeṣataḥ ||*. *Vaikhānasadharmasūtra* (143.1–2) also mentions the *pāraśava* as the priests of Bhadrakālī. The *pāraśavas* are known as *uvaccaṇ* and defined as “Members of a caste of temple drummers and Pūjāris of Kālī” (*Tamil Lexicon* s.v. *uvaccaṇ*). See also PILLAY 1953: 220–248 and SHULMAN 1980: 219–220.

¹⁶ BY_{IFP}, p. 146, edition by SANDERSON 2007a: 277, n. 142: *śūdrāyāṃ vidhinā viprāj jātaḥ pāraśavo mataḥ | bhadrakālīm samāśritya jīveyuḥ pūjakāḥ smṛtāḥ |*.

¹⁷ Even though the term *pūjaka* denotes a “priest” here, in general it could also refer to a worshipper.

¹⁸ BY_{IFP}, p. 88, edition by SANDERSON 2007a: 277, n. 142: *āḍau pāraśavāś caiva nityaṃ devyās tu pūjakāḥ | dīkṣitāḥ karmayogyās te pāraśaivā viśeṣataḥ |*.

The establishment of a temple devoted to the Seven Mothers as well as the worship that is described in this manual is said to favour the victory of the monarch over his enemies (*śatrunāśa*) as well as to protect the kingdom from danger (*devaśānti*, *rāṣṭraśānti*):

Bhadrakālī [who is] Cāmuṇḍī always causes victory to prosper. [She] is proclaimed to have arisen from Śiva in the Kaliyuga for the destruction of enemies. Four embodiments [of her] are to be known. She invariably creates peace (*śāntikarī*). One should worship her four embodiments with all efforts. [They] restore peace to the nation; [through them] victory arises for kings, [it] destroys all sins, [brings about] peace, and is invariably the source of victory.¹⁹ One should worship the Mothers according to [the manner enjoined for] their four embodiments.²⁰

[It] is taught to be the cause for peace and prosperity of the nation [that comes about through] the installation [of Bhadrakālī].²¹

...

The fire offering for Devī, ending with [the pronouncement of] *svāhā*, increases the well-being of a city.²²

Unfortunately, we have been able to locate only a single transcript of this text in the French Institute Library and it is badly corrupted.

¹⁹ The translation of this sentence is uncertain as no grammatical agent is indicated.

²⁰ BY_{IFP}, p. 2, edition by SANDERSON 2007a: 278, n. 143: *bhadrakālī tu cāmuṇḍī sadā vijayavarddhinī | śatrunāśe śivodbhūtā kaliyuge prakīrtitā | catasro mūrtayo jñeyā sadā śāntikarī bhavet | tasyās sarvaprayatnena caturmūrtim prapūjayet | deśaśāntikarāś caiva nṛpāṇām vijayaṁ bhavet | sarvapāpaharaṁ śāntaṁ sadā vijayaṁ bhavam | caturmūrtividhānena mātṛpūjām ca kārayet |*

²¹ BY_{IFP}, p. 50, edition by SANDERSON 2007a: 278, n. 143: *pratiṣṭhāvidhinā proktaṁ rāṣṭraśāntyarthakāraṇam |*

²² BY_{IFP}, p. 50, edition by SANDERSON 2007a: 278, n. 143: *svāhāntaṁ devikāhomaṁ nagaraśāntivardhanam |*

The *Brahmayāmala* (ORI, Trivandrum)

The other incomplete southern *Brahmayāmala* text, available in the Trivandrum Manuscript Library, is in the form of a conversation between Brahmā and Īśvara:

[I] heard the Great Mother Tantra, an extremely long method.

...

Now I would like to listen to the method (*sādhanaṃ*) [that is the] essence of all [attainments], short in length, great in meaning, adorned with various [ritual] injunctions, called an “installation-scripture” (*pratiṣṭhāntantram*), a new settled account drawn from the Yāmala [scripture].²³

This work claims to teach the rituals based on the Yāmala corpus²⁴ and breaks off in its fifth chapter. While its first chapter introduces the worship of the Mothers, its second chapter enumerates the details of two types of installation, namely *ekabera* and *bahubera*, and the procedures for them. The third chapter provides the location and places where the Mothers are to be installed. The fourth chapter provides a detailed description of the eligibility of the worshipper, and the fifth describes the qualifications of a teacher (*ācāryalakṣaṇa*) and preliminary preparations for the initiation and then breaks off. The first four chapters end with a colophon which indicates that the text belongs to the *brahmayāmala-vidyāpīṭha*.²⁵

As mentioned above, the text describes two types of installation, namely the *ekabera* and *bahubera*. In the case of *ekabera*, *Bhadrakālī* alone is worshipped, while in case of the *bahubera* she is worshipped along with the Mothers:

The [installation of] Mothers are of two kinds: with numerous icons and with just one icon. Where Durgā alone is present, who is the

²³ BY_{Triv}, p. 1: *śrutaṃ māṭṛmahātantram ativistārasādhanaṃ | ... | idānīm śrotum icchāmi sāraṃ sarvasya sādhanam | alpaganthaṃ mahārthaṃ ca nānāvidhivibhūṣitam | pratiṣṭhāntantram ityākhyam yāmalānavanirṇayam |*.

²⁴ BY_{Triv}, p. 26: *yāmaloktavidhānena nityam ātmārcanam smṛtam. See also: sarvayāmalatantrajño nityam pūjārataḥ śuciḥ* (BY_{Triv}, p. 2–3, p. 28); *evaṃ tu yāmalācāryaḥ khatāḥ karmasiddhaye* (BY_{Triv}, p. 2–3, p. 28).

²⁵ For example: *iti brahmayāmale sapādalakṣe vidyāpīṭhāvātārite pratiṣṭhāntre ekāśītiavidhānāṅge prathamodhyāyaḥ* (BY_{Triv} p. 2–3).

goddess keeping the highest position (*kūṭasthā*) [and] being not manifested through the Mother-powers, she is known as Bhadrakālī.

[...]

Where Bhadrakālī is [alone], this is known as the single-icon [type].²⁶

She is alone in the single-icon [installation] (*ekabere*); [and she] is known as Bhadrakālī. Alternatively, [she is known] everywhere as “Mothers” when sevenfold in a multiple-icon [installation].²⁷

The single-icon [installation] is praised for victory over and destruction of enemies. The multiple-icon type is declared for peace and prosperity.

Similar to the IFP *Brahmayāmala*, this text too authorises the *pāraśava* to perform the temple rituals of Bhadrakālī:

[One who has] undergone the sequence of the “initiation [into the cult of] the Mothers” (*mātrdīkṣā*) and [one who has the knowledge] of the tradition of worship of the four [forms of the goddess] is called a priest (*pūjakaḥ*) among the *pāraśavas*. Such people are recommended for [the performance of] all rites, and they live from the worship of the Mothers.²⁸

Though presently we have no knowledge of the existence of any other manuscripts of these two southern *Brahmayāmala* texts, a study of the manuscripts presently available to us clearly demonstrates their southern origin, which is further supported by the correlation of the iconography of

²⁶ BY_{Triv}, p. 3: *bahuberaikabereti ucyante mātaro dvidhā | kūṭasthā yā bhaved devī avyaktā mātrśaktibhiḥ | durgā bhavati yatraiva bhadrakālī tu viśrutā | [...] yatraiva bhadrakālī syād ekaberaṃ iti smṛtam |*

²⁷ BY_{Triv}, p. 3: *kevalā caikabere tu bhadrakālīti viśrutā | saptadhā bahubere vā mātaraś ceti sarvataḥ | jayārthaṃ śatrunāśārthaṃ ekaberaṃ praśamsitam | śānti-puṣṭīkarārthaṃ tu bahuberaṃ udāhṛtam |*. Cf. SANDERSON 2007a: 278: “When Bhadrakālī is isolated (*kūṭasthā*, *ekabera*), the cult is for victory and the destruction of enemies. When she is worshipped together with the Mothers (*bahubera*) the cult’s purpose is the quelling of dangers and the restoration of well-being.”

²⁸ BY_{Triv}, p. 27: *mātrdīkṣākramopetaṃ caturyāgavidhāgamam | pūjakaś tv iti vikhyātaṃ saṃjñā (sic) pāraśātmanām | praśastāḥ sarvakāryāṇām mātrpūjopajīvakaḥ |*

the goddess described in these manuscripts with the surviving South Indian images of Bhadrakālī.

We also noticed that these two southern *Brahmayāmalas* prescribe the installation and worship of the Mothers for the monarch's victory over his enemies (*śatrunāśa*) and the protection of his kingdom from danger, which indeed must have encouraged monarchs to establish temples devoted to the Mothers. Among these temples, the Kolārammā Temple in the Noḷambavāḍi of Karnataka merits special attention, since here we find two Tamil inscriptions containing indications of rituals to be performed in the temple that are discussed in the *Brahmayāmala* text of Pondicherry.

The Kolārammā Temple of Kōlār and the southern *Brahmayāmala* texts

The Kolārammā Temple must have been in existence at least from the time of the Colas, as can be seen from its inscriptions dating from 1030 CE. Among the several Tamil inscriptions found in the Kolārammā Temple, two inscriptions (*Epigraphia Carnatica* 10, KI 108 and 106d) are dated²⁹ in the second regnal year of Kō-Rājakesaravarma (alias Rājendracoladeva), the Cola king Kulottuṅga I (1071/1072 CE). These give the provisions for the funding of the Kolārammā Temple of the goddess, detailing the yearly allowances for the staff, including a teacher of grammar and of “Yāmala,” the offerings for the deities, and the various ceremonies.³⁰ As we see in the inscription, there is a teacher appointed to teach the Yāmala texts. This constitutes evidence that the Yāmala texts were known in this area and encourages us to assume that the southern Yāmala text that we now know might have been composed in this area. Moreover, as SANDERSON (2007a: 277, n. 140) observes,³¹ this detailed inscription accords precisely with the texts of the southern *Brahmayāmala*. We find in it details of the temple ceremonies that were performed in the Kolārammā Temple, including the special rituals, such as the *kujavārabali* (BY_{IFP} pp. 100–102), *mātrśānti* (BY_{IFP} pp. 75–83), and *yoginīyogeśvarapūjā*. Also the offering of an alcoholic drink (*matiyapāna*) and of a goat during the *kujavārabali*, both spe-

²⁹ In fact, only the first one is dated, but the second seems to be a continuation of the first.

³⁰ See also SANDERSON 2014: 41 and 2007a: 277.

³¹ See also COX 2016.

cific to the Yāmala text preserved in Pondicherry, are some of the rituals mentioned by the inscription.

The Mātṛtantra texts that are produced in Kerala

Though we are only aware of two southern *Brahmayāmala* texts – one in Pondicherry and the other one in Kerala, both incomplete – there are texts produced in Kerala that treat the worship of the Mothers and are based on the southern Yāmala texts we have discussed, especially the *Mātṛsadbhāva* and the three chapters of the *Śeṣasamuccaya*. Of these two, the *Mātṛsadbhāva* merits special attention, since it is a ritual manual entirely devoted to the worship of the Mothers.

The *Mātṛsadbhāva*

The *Mātṛsadbhāva*,³² a Kerala text, is, as described by its author, a summary of the rituals found in the various Yāmala texts. It provides a detailed South Indian tradition of temple-based Yāmala worship and presents a complete and properly organised account of the cult of Mothers.

Having offered obeisance to my *guru*, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, and the Kṣetrapāla, I shall declare this Tantra under the name Mātṛsadbhāva. I have examined the Yāmalas and will now, as far as I am able, make a summary of their essentials for the benefit of mankind. Even Brahmā is not able to understand these [texts] that have come forth in various forms from the lotus that is the mouth of Śiva. How much less can such as I?³³

³² There are two palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Mātṛsadbhāva* in Malayalam script bearing the nos. 1017-A and 1017-B as well as a transcript in Devanāgarī script bearing no. T. 792 (copy of ms. 1017A?) in the Trivandrum Manuscripts Library. There is a paper manuscript (ms. MT 5126) in Grantha script in the Government Oriental Manuscript Library in Chennai. See also *New Catalogus Catalogorum*, vol. XX (DASH 2011: 59).

³³ MSBh_{Triv}, p. 1: *praṇamya ca guruṃ vighnaṃ durgāṃ ca kṣetrapālakam | mātṛsadbhāvanāmnā ca tantraṃ etat pravakṣyate | yāmalāni samālocya svasāmarthyānurūpataḥ | jagaddhitāya cāsmābhiḥ kriyate sārasaṃgrahaḥ | tānīśvara-mukhāmbhojasamudgīrṇāny anekadhā | brahmaṇāpi na śakyāni jñātuṃ kimuta mādrśaiḥ* |, translation SANDERSON 2014: 51.

The author of the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* also informs us that there is no text that provides a complete and properly organised account of the cult of the Mothers:

Siva did not teach [all] the rituals for the worship of the Mothers in those Tantras in one [place]. The reason for this I do not know. Therefore †...† I shall teach them in summarised form in their proper order.³⁴

Like other Paddhati texts of Kerala,³⁵ the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* follows the tradition of arranging the chapters beginning with the qualifications of the *ācārya* and concluding with the *jīrṇoddhāra*, the removal of a cult-image that is old and used.³⁶ However, the manuscripts we now have of the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* breaks off while describing the *jīrṇoddhāra*.

The text deals with the following topics:

Those learned in Tantras teach the following as the order [of the topics]: qualities of the teacher, purification of the ground, the sequence of [rites making up] the incubation †...†, the manner of performing the worship of the site (*vāstuyāga*), then the characteristics of temples, the placing of the [first] brick, thereafter the placing of consecration-deposits (*garbhādhānam*), the characteristics of images, then the rules for initiation, the rules for the planting of [prognosticatory] germinated seeds, *bali*, and the worship in that place itself, the steeping of the idols in water and the cleaning of them, and also the sequence of [rites making up] the incubation of the idols, the depositing of precious stones, the characteristics of an installation, the rules for worship, bathing, and the sequence for [the performance of] festivals, the procession for the bath at a sacred site, then the bathing and the removal [and replacement] of worn idols.³⁷

³⁴ MSBh_{Triv} p. 1–2, edition by SANDERSON 2007a: 278, n. 143: *naikatra teṣu samproktāḥ kriyās tantreṣu śambhunā | māṭṛyāgaṃ samuddiśya na jānīmo 'tra kāraṇam | ta-smād †āpajya tāḥ kartuṃ kriyā lokeṣu naiṣṭikāḥ† | anukrameṇa vakṣyante saṃgrahena yathāvidhi |*.

³⁵ Such as the *Śaivāgamanibandhana* and the *Prayogamañjarī*.

³⁶ MSBh_{Triv}, p. 2: *ācāryalakṣaṇāḍyan tu jīrṇoddhārāvasānakam | anukramam iti prāhur asmin tantre vicakṣaṇāḥ |*. “The sequence [of topics] in this Tantra, the experts say, begins with the qualities of a teacher and ends with the replacement of a worn-out [idol].”

³⁷ MSBh_{Triv} p. 2, edition by SANDERSON 2014: 51, n. 191: *ācāryalakṣaṇaṇ caiva*

The above-mentioned topics are discussed in 28 chapters; the final chapter is the one on the *jīrṇoddhāra* and is, as mentioned, incomplete. Nevertheless perhaps not much has been lost, since the above summary of topics provided by the author clearly shows that we are missing only a part of the final chapter on the *jīrṇoddhāra*.

The *Māṭṛsadbhāva* in its fifth chapter provides a detailed description of the installation of the Mothers as well as of Bhadrakālī and mentions that the installation procedures are prescribed according to the *Brahmayāmala*:

Now, [I] will succinctly describe the *ekavīrī* icon as taught by the Supreme Lord in the *Brahmayāmala*.³⁸

Among the other topics discussed in the text, the procedure for initiation is provided in chapter 6. Like the other Kerala texts, the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* indicates the importance of initiation as a qualification for performing an installation:

[The *ācārya*] should perform an initiation (*dīkṣām*) with due efforts for the authority to use *mantras*, [to perform] the installation of images of gods, especially for the removal [and replacement] of worn [idols].³⁹

Chapter 18 provides a detailed account of the *pūjā* of the Mothers, separately giving the details of the deities surrounding (*āvaraṇa*) the Seven Mothers, Gaṇeśa and Vīrabhadra. Chapter 19 narrates the installation of the trident and goes on to give the details of the war fought between goddesses and Ruru.

*prthivyās ca viśodhanam | adhivāsakraman †tāsā† ++++++ | vastuyāgavidhānañ
ca tataḥ prāsādalakṣaṇam | ādhānam iṣṭakāyās ca garbhādhānam anantaram |
pratimālakṣaṇaṇ caiva dīkṣākālpam ataḥ param | bījāropaṇakālpañ ca baliṃ tatrai-
va pūjanā | jalādhivāsaṃ bimbānān teṣāñ caiva viśodhanam | adhivāsakramaṃ
tāsāṃ pratimānāṃ tathaiva ca | ratnanyāsavidhānañ ca pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇaṃ tathā |
arcanāya vidhānañ ca snapanam cotsavakramam | tīrthābhiṣekagamaṇaṃ snapanāñ
cāpy anantaram | jīrṇoddhārañ ca tantrajñāḥ prāhur evam anukramam |.*

³⁸ MSBh_{Triv}, p. 26: *athaikavīrīm pratimāṃ pravakṣyāmi samāsataḥ | brahmayā-
malatantreṣu yathoktaṃ parameṣṭhinā |.*

³⁹ MSBh_{Triv}, p. 45: *devabimbapratīṣṭhāyāṃ jīrṇoddhāre viśeṣataḥ | mantrādhikā-
re ca tathā dīkṣāṃ kuryāt prayatnataḥ |.*

As Sanderson observes “the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* differs primarily not only in its lucid and generally correct Sanskrit but also in its extensive expurgation of most of the strongly Kāpālika elements of this tradition while in spite of this recalling the tradition’s roots in Atimārga III, by, for example, describing the officiant as ‘one who has mastered the *Somasiddhānta*.’”⁴⁰ We also see that this text “relates the myth of the conquest of the Daitya enemies of the gods by Cāmuṇḍā/Karṇamoṭī and the other Mothers at Koṭivarṣa in the far north of Bengal, that of the origin of that site’s sacred Pool of the Trident (*Śūlakunḍa*) and the drinking of its water, the granting of the boon to the Mothers as the reward for their victory that those who worship them with devotion will attain whatever *siddhi* they desire and salvation at death, and the presence there with the Mothers of Śiva as Hetukeśvara.”⁴¹ We also see the reference to Koṭivarṣa in the ritual process that is described in the *Māṭṛsadbhāva*, such as in the context of the ablutions (*abhiṣeka*) of the deity to be performed on the fourth day after its installation, where the text prescribes to install pots filled with water that represent the sacred sites including the Koṭivarṣa.

Even though in its ritual prescriptions we do not find the name of Ruru-jit (“conqueror of Ruru”) as the primary deity, the text does speak of the Dānava Ruru (or Rurutva) being defeated by the goddess and as beneath her foot, pieced by her trident.⁴²

Certain rituals prescribed in the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* seem to be similar to those that are performed in the Bhadrakālī temples in Kerala, for example, the *bali* offerings in the Piṣārikāvu and in the Kodungallur Temple. *Kāvutīṇḍal*, a famous public ritual unique to the Kodungallur Temple, which we will discuss shortly, may carry an echo of the propitiatory oblations prescribed in the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* that are offered in the nearby village of a temple (*grāmabali*).⁴³

This text must have been composed before the fifteenth century since it is referred to as the principal authority for the worship of Rurujit-Cāmuṇḍā and the Mothers by Śaṅkaran Nampūtiri, commentator of the *Śeṣa-samuccaya*, another ritual manual which we will discuss below.

⁴⁰ SANDERSON 2014: 51.

⁴¹ SANDERSON 2014: 51–52; see also MSBh_{Triv} p. 138–149. For a detailed description of the myth of the conquest of the Daitya enemies of the gods by Cāmuṇḍā/Karṇamoṭī, see SK_{KB} 171.78–137.

⁴² Cf. MSBh_{Triv}, pp. 28–29.

⁴³ Cf. MSBh_{Triv}, p. 178.

The *Śeṣasamuccaya*

Among the southern texts based on the *Brahmayāmala*, the *Śeṣasamuccaya* attributed to Śaṅkara⁴⁴ occupies a prominent place. It is in the *Śeṣasamuccaya* that Bhadrakālī in the form of Rurujit seems to have been introduced as a principal deity, while in its source, the *Māṭṛsadbhāva*, as we have discussed, she is not mentioned as the principal deity.

The *Śeṣasamuccaya* provides rituals pertaining to deities such as Brahmā, Āditya, Kubera, Śrīkṛṣṇa, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī, Gaurī, Jyeṣṭhā, Bhadrakālī, the Māṭṛs, Kṣetrapāla, Bṛhaspati, and Indra as well as other lords of the quarters:

Let these pleased deities --- such as Brahmā, Arka, Vaiśravaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Sarasvatī, Śrī, Gaurī, Jyeṣṭhā, also Kālī [and] the Mothers, Kṣetrādhīpa, then such forms as Rurujit and Girīśa, [and] also Indra and the other [guardian deities of directions] --- bestow upon me, who bows down [before them], what I desire.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ While some of the historians of Kerala, such as RĀJARĀJAVARMA (1997: III.486–487), attribute the authorship of the *Śeṣasamuccaya* to one Kṛṣṇaśarma, pupil of Cennas Narayanan Namputiri, others such as PARAMESWARA IYER (1990: II.73–74), NARAYANA PILLAI (1951: iii–v), and MADHAVAN (n.d.: 26) confirm that Śaṅkara, son of the author of the Kerala ritual manual, the *Tantrasamuccaya*, is the author of the *Śeṣasamuccaya*.

⁴⁵ ŚS 1.1: *brahmārkavaiśravaṇakṛṣṇasarasvatīśrīgauryagrajā dadatu kāly api mātaro me | kṣetrādhīpo 'tha rurujid giriśādirūpānīndrādayo 'pi namate 'bhimatam prasannāḥ* |. The identification of the deities follows the commentary, see Vimarsinī ad ŚS, p. 1: *kās tā devatā ityāha --- brahmārkavaiśravaṇakṛṣṇasarasvatīśrīgauryagrajāḥ, brahmā prasiddhah, arkah sūryah, vaiśravaṇas sa eva, kṛṣṇo gośālasthaḥ kṛṣṇah, sarasvatīśrīgauryah prasiddhāḥ, agrajā jyeṣṭhā, kālī bhadrakālī, mātaro vīrabhadraṇapatisahitāḥ prasiddhā eva, kṣetrādhīpah kṣetrapālāḥ, apiśabdaḥ samuccayārthaḥ. atha rurujid giriśādirūpāṇi. rurujid iti rurunāmno daityasya hantrī bhadrakālī, giriśaḥ śivah, ādiśabdena tatradyā mātaraḥ kṣetrapālāś ca tadrūpāṇi daivatāni. indrādayaḥ svaprādhānyena sthāpanīyā lokapālāḥ. apiśabdo 'trāpi samuccayārthaḥ. atra brahmādikṣetrapālāntānām tantrāṇi ṣaḍbhiḥ paṭalair abhidhāya saptamādipaṭalair rurujidādinām tantrāṇi vakṣyāmīti madhyasthasyāthaśabdasyārthaḥ*. “[The text] tells us which deities these are – *brahmārkavaiśravaṇakṛṣṇasarasvatīśrīgauryagrajā*: Brahmā is the well-known [deity of that name]; Arka is the sun; Vaiśravaṇa is himself [Kubera]; Kṛṣṇa is the Dark One who resides in a cow-pen; Sarasvatī, Śrī, and Gaurī are the well-known [deities of those names]; Agrajā is Jyeṣṭhā; Kālī is Bhadrakālī; the Mothers are the well-known [Seven Goddesses], along with Vīrabhadra and Gaṇapati; Kṣetrādhīpa is [Bhairava as] the protector of

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of the *Śeṣasamuccaya* are devoted to distinctive rituals of the rare cult of the goddess Rurujit. The principal authority used by the author of the *Śeṣasamuccaya* to describe the rituals of Rurujit is the *Māṭṛsadbhāva*, as is indicated by Śaṅkaran in his commentary on the *Śeṣasamuccaya*:

Explaining the ritual procedure taught in such scriptures as the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* in order to show how Śiva, Ekabērī [Bhadra-kālī/Cāmuṇḍā], the Mothers, and the Kṣetrapāla are to be installed simultaneously in a single temple (...).⁴⁶

Some scholars⁴⁷ claim that the ritual procedures followed for the worship of Rurujit (*rurujiḍvidhāna*) embodies the Kashmirian concepts of Kālasaṃkarṣiṇī and the Mahārtha (Krama) tradition of Kālī worship. But a detailed study of the *rurujiḍvidhāna* in the *Śeṣasamuccaya* makes it clear that there are no traces of Kālasaṃkarṣiṇī and the Mahārtha in the *Śeṣasamuccaya*.⁴⁸

Other texts on *rurujiḍvidhāna*

The *Rurujiḍvidhānapūjāpaddhati*, a prose text in Sanskrit available in the Government Oriental Manuscript Library (GOML), Chennai (ms. R 3365),

the sacred site; the word *api* is used in the sense of addition (*samuccayārthaḥ*); then (*atha*) such forms as Rurujit and Giriśa. Rurujit is the conqueror of the demon called Ruru, i.e., Bhadrakālī; Giriśa is Śiva; the expression ‘and others’ (*ādiśabdena*) denotes the Mothers that are there, as well as Kṣetrapāla and other divinities that have such forms; Indra and others (*indrādayaḥ*) are the protectors of the eight directions, to be installed in accordance with their [respective direction of] dominance; here too the word *api* is used as [a conjunction] expressing addition. The word *atha* placed in the middle expresses the [following] idea: ‘here, having spoken about the teachings relating to the deities beginning with Brahmā and going up to Kṣetrapāla in six *paṭalas*, I will speak about the teachings of Rurujit and others from the seventh onwards.’”

⁴⁶ Vimarśiṇī ad ŚS 7.1: *śivaikaverīmāṭṛkṣetrapālānām yaugapadyenaikāsmiṇ āyatane sthāpanapradarśanārthaṃ māṭṛsadbhāvādyāgamoktakriyākramaṃ vadan* (...), translation SANDERSON 2014: 51, n. 193.

⁴⁷ Cf. VAMANAN (n.d.), Introduction to *Śeṣasamuccaya*_{TV} (p. 7), and JAYA-SHANKAR 2001: 28.

⁴⁸ See also SARMA 2009: 335.

might be a prose version of the chapters on Rurujit of the *Śeṣasamuccaya*, but a close study of the text will be required to ascertain this.

There is also a ritual manual in Malayalam that was recently published by the Tantravidyāpīṭha of Kerala, a prose version of the chapters on Rurujit from the *Śeṣasamuccaya*, entitled *Rurujidvidhānavuṃ bahuberavidhānavuṃ*, “Regulations for the worship of Rurujit and also [that of Rurujit] with many idols.” It is also worth mentioning here that the Shripuram Tantra Research Center, Trichur District, Kerala, is working on a detailed ritual manual on Rurujit, which is expected to be published soon.

Apart from these texts, there are several minor ones that describe the installation of and rituals pertaining to Bhadrakālī. Though these works might not have been based on the southern *Brahmayāmala* texts, in these ritual manuals we see a continuity of the *Brahmayāmala* tradition.

Worship of Rurujit

As we have seen, it is in the *Śeṣasamuccaya* that Bhadrakālī in the form of Rurujit seems to have been introduced as a principal deity, while in its source, the *Māṭṛsadbhāva*, she is not mentioned as the principal deity. But the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* describes how Dānava Ruru, or Rurutvaḥ, was defeated by the goddess and lies under her foot pieced by her trident:

Having this form, the Mother of the Universe (*jagaddhātṛī*), after felling the demon Ruru and piercing his heart with the trident, fixed her gaze on his face. [...] As if touching the demon with the tip of her left foot.⁴⁹

Seeing the [other] demons slain, the Ruru (*rurutvaḥ*) puffed up with pride over his strength (*baladarpitaḥ*), turned his face to her and fought fiercely. [...] This great demon Ruru (*rurutvaḥ*) pierced the earth and went below.⁵⁰

The *Śeṣasamuccaya* in its seventh chapter prescribes how the temple of Rurujit should be constructed:

⁴⁹ MSBh_{Triv} p. 28: *evamrūpā jagaddhātṛī nipātya rurudānavam | bhittvā śūlena hrdayam mukhe tasyārpitekṣaṇā | [...] vāmapādāgrabhāgena sprśantīm iva dānavam |*

⁵⁰ MSBh_{Triv} p. 143: *asurān ghātītān dṛṣtvā rurutvo baladarpitaḥ | tasyās tv abhimukho bhūtvā yodhayām āsa dāruṇam | [...] rurutvo 'sau mahādaityo bhūmiṃ bhitvā hy adho gataḥ |*

Here, [in the worship of Rurujit], an independent [temple of] Śiva (*smarajit*) will face east; in front [of him] to the south Cāmuṇḍā, separate (*bhinnā*), will be facing the west. Alternatively, [Cāmuṇḍā] will face east (*namuciripudigāsyā*)⁵¹ without accompanying deities (*niraṅgā*). To the south of Lord [Śiva] or to that of [Cāmuṇḍā], there may be [Seven] Mothers facing north, along with accompanying deities. Alternatively, she may be placed, according to this system (*iha*), to the east of the [Seven Mothers], together with attendants (*sāṅgā*), or all the [Seven] Mothers [together with Cāmuṇḍā] may be placed separately to the south-east [of Śiva].⁵²

In the temples that are devoted to Rurujit, such as the Kodungallur Temple in the Trichur District and the Kollam Piṣārikāvu in the Calicut District of Kerala, we see a slightly different arrangement: Śiva is installed facing east; on the southern side facing north or east is Rurujit; on the eastern side of Rurujit facing north are the Seven Mothers, Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa; and on the north-eastern corner, Kṣetrapāla. In some temples Rurujit is also installed along with the Mothers.

The seventh chapter of the *Śeṣasamuccaya* discusses in detail the consecration rituals that pertain to a temple for Rurujit, and its eighth chapter describes at length the daily rituals that are to be performed. This chapter includes the visualisation of Rurujit.⁵³

⁵¹ See *Vimarsinī* ad ŚS 7.2: *athavā tatraiva namuciripudigāsyā pūrvābhimukhā niraṅgā syāt*.

⁵² *Śeṣasamuccaya* 7.2: *syāt prāgāsyāḥ svatantraḥ smarajid iha puro dakṣiṇe paścimāsyā | cāmuṇḍā syāc ca bhinnā namuciripudigāsyā niraṅgaiva vātha | devasyāsyās tu vā yāmyadiśi śasidigāsyā jananyo 'pi sāṅgās | tatprāk sā vaha sāṅgānaladiśi nikhilā mātaro vaha bhinnāḥ* |. In comparison, in the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* (MSBh_{Triv} p. 55) we see three types of installations prescribed for Bhadrakālī, namely, *sāṅga* (Bhadrakālī facing north), *niraṅga* (Bhadrakālī facing east), and *bhinnā* (Bhadrakālī facing west). The *Śeṣasamuccaya* prescribes two additional options, namely, the north facing Bhadrakālī together with the Seven Mothers and Bhadrakālī together with the Mothers placed in the southeast of Śiva.

⁵³ According to the *Brahmayāmala* (BY_{IFP} p. 28), Bhadrakālī is visualised as having several hands that hold respectively a skull, a trident, a staff with a skull at the top (*khaḍvāṅga*), a shield, a bell, a sacred drum (*ḍamaru*), and a noose. AJITHAN (2015: 11) points out that the Mūsads (cf. p. 546 below) of the Vaḷayanāḍu temple visualise Bhadrakālī as it is described in the *Bhadrakālīmantravidhiprakaraṇa* (SANDERSON 2007a: 266–268) of the Paippalādins, holding [on the right] a trident, an elephant-goad, an arrow, and a sword and [on the left] a vessel filled with blood, a

May she always protect you, [she] who stands on [the corpse of] Śiva, who is radiant with a diadem on her head that coruscates with a fragment of the emblem that is the moon, who holds in her lotus-hands a noose and hook, a trident and a skull, who is decorated with a garland of fresh heads, who has three eyes, who wears red unguents and clothes, who is bright with all [manner of] ornaments, [and] who is dark in colour, [namely] Śivā [= Bhadrakālī].⁵⁴

The *Śeṣasamuccaya* also gives another option for the visualisation as an alternative to the above, and we find the same visualisation in the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* (MSBh_{Triv}, pp. 26-27):

I venerate Mahābhairavi, who at once wove a garland with the blood-dripping skins of the heads of demons who had come to battle [with her] and carefully (*sādaram*) arranges it as an upper garment, and who holds in her hands a shield, a skull, a snake, a great bell, the head of the Asura (*śubhaṃkārīkā*), a skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), a trident (*triśikhā*), and a sword (*anasi*).⁵⁵

This is the form we mostly see in Rurujit temples in Kerala. In this form, she uses her hands, smeared with the demon's blood, to put on the garland made of the heads of demons, which then resembles her upper garment; she holds in her hands a shield (*kheḍa*), a skull (*kapāla*), a snake (*pannaga*), a bell (*mahāghaṇṭā*), the head of the Asura (*śubhaṃkārīkā*), a staff with a skull at the top (*khaḍvāṅga*), a trident (*triśikhā*), and a sword (*anasi*).

In its eighth chapter, the *Śeṣasamuccaya* introduces the *samayavidyā* for the recitation once all the *nyāsas* – the emplacement of the *mantras* on the

noose, a bow, and a shield.

⁵⁴ ŚS 8.50: *śambhusthā śaśalakṣmakhaṇḍavilasat koṭīracūḍojjvalā | bibhrāṇā kārāṇakajair guṇasṛṇī śūlaṃ kapālaṃ tathā | muṇḍasrakparimaṇḍitā trinayanā raktāṅgarāgāmśukā | sarvālankaraṇojjvalā śitinibhā vaḥ pātu nityaṃ śivā |*. The Vimarśinī on ŚS 8.50 reads thus: *śambhusthā śambhurūpapretāsanasthā guṇasṛṇī pāśam ankuṣaṃ ca muṇḍasrakparimaṇḍitā uttamāṅgarūpābhiḥ mālābhiḥ parito maṇḍitā śitinibhā śyāmavarṇā*.

⁵⁵ ŚS 8.51: *sadyaḥ saṅkarasaṃgatāsurasīraḥśreṇībhir āsrolbaṇair | ābadhya srajam uttarīyaṃ anayā sambibhratīm sādaram | dorbhiḥ kheṭakapālapannagama-hāghaṇṭāśubhaṃkārīkā | khaṭvāṅgatriśikhānasim ca dadhatīm vande mahābhairavīm |*. The Vimarśinī on ŚS 8.51 reads thus: *sadyaḥ saṅgareti. sadya eva yuddhāya saṃgatātānāṃ asurāṇāṃ śironivahaiḥ rudhiradigdhaiḥ srajam ābadhyānayaḥ sādaram uttarīyaṃ bibhratīm*.

body – are completed and also for certain other occasions, though the *mantra* described seems to be incomplete.⁵⁶ In the ninth chapter of the *Śeṣasamuccaya*, we find a detailed description of the festivals that are to be conducted in the temple of Rurujit.

Even though offerings of meat are prescribed in the rituals by the *Śeṣasamuccaya*, in practice only symbolic meat is offered. For example, while giving the details of the rice to be offered to the Mothers, the text mentions *māṃsaudana* for Vārāhī, which the Malayalam commentator of the *Śeṣasamuccaya* explains as an offering representing the meat (*māṃsa*): “For Vārāhī, rice mixed with meat - [rice] mixed with sweet pudding (*vatsan*) that represents the meat [...],”⁵⁷ meaning a rice cake mixed with jaggery.

Kerala temple priests

The Nampūtiri Brahmins are mostly found in Kerala temples as the officiating priests for the daily rituals as well as the *tantris* or chief-priests, who are in control of the performance of special rituals such as festivals, consecrations, etc.⁵⁸ Even though these Nampūtiris also perform rituals in the Bhadrakālī temples, in certain selected temples of Rurujit, we find members of a non-Nampūtiri communities as priests. It may be worth noting here that according to the southern *Brahmayāmala* texts the priests of a Bhadrakālī temple must be non-Brahmins, known as *pāraśava*.⁵⁹

Even though the Kerala Mātṛtantra texts, the *Mātṛsadbhāva* or *Śeṣasamuccaya*, do not mention non-Brahmin priests carrying out the worship of Bhadrakālī or Rurujit, we see that there are three particular non-Nampūtiri communities that are involved in the worship of Rurujit.

⁵⁶ Cf. AJITHAN 2015: 15. For a detailed discussion on the *samayavidyā*, see SANDERSON 2007b: 307–308, n. 247.

⁵⁷ ŚSTV p. 247: *vārāhikku māṃsodanam-māṃsa pratinidhiyāya 'vatsaniṭṭat [...]*.

⁵⁸ While the early ritual manuals of Kerala, such as the *Śaivāgamanibandhana* and the *Prayogamañjarī*, insist that a Tantric initiation be undergone if a priest is to be qualified to perform temple rituals and also prescribe the initiation (*dīkṣā*), the latter ritual manuals, such as the *Tantrasamuccaya*, minimise the initiation (*dīkṣā*) rituals, prescribing merely an instruction of the principal (*mūla*) *mantra* (*mantropa-deśa*). For a detailed discussion on this topic, see SARMA 2010.

⁵⁹ See n. 15 above.

The three different communities associated with the worship of Rurujit

There are thirteen⁶⁰ known temples in Kerala devoted to Rurujit. Among these, in certain selected temples members belonging to three specific communities perform rituals. While the priests of the Kollam Piṣārikāvu and Vaḷayanāṭukāvu in the Calicut District are of a Mūssad community, the priests of the Māṭāyikāvu in the Kannur District and Mannampurattukāvu in Nilesvaram are of a Piṭāra community. In the famous Kodungallur Temple in the Trichur District of Kerala, the Aṭikaḷ are entitled to perform the rituals. It is to be noted here that these three groups of communities are considered as *pāraśavas* and nowadays often referred to as degraded Brahmins.

The Mūssads

It is believed that a group of Vaiśyas who moved from South Kerala during the period of Mārtāṇḍavarma of the Travancore Kingdom (1706–1758) reached Kollam in the Koyilandi area of North Kerala and installed the Piṣārikāvu Temple devoted to Rurujit. At present, there are eight Vaiśya families who administer this temple. It is said that Vaiśyas initially performed rituals here, but they appointed a Nampūtiri Brahmin for an improved performance of the rituals. Thus, the rituals that had been performed by the Vaiśyas underwent some changes, and especially the offering of liquor and meat was abandoned. Yet, the rituals performed by the Nampūtiri Brahmin made the goddess fiercer and more powerful, and it became difficult for the devotees to bear this. Hence, the Vaiśyas decided to replace the Nampūtiri priest, and they engaged the Mūssad community to perform the temple rituals of the Piṣārikāvu.

The Mūssads are also the priests in the Vaḷayanāṭukāvu⁶¹ in Calicut District. These two temples feature the installation of Rurujit as prescribed in the *Śeṣasamuccaya* ritual manual. The Mūssads who perform rituals in these temples also perform a public ritual known as *śākteyapūjā* in their homes for the benefit of devotees, where they sacrifice a chicken and offer it to the deity along with liquor.⁶²

⁶⁰ GIRISHKUMAR (2012: 3) mentions 13 temples of Rurujit in Kerala. However, other scholars list even more temples, for instance, BHAT (2013: 18) provides a list of 15 temples, and in a recent paper AJITHAN (2015: 2–3) gives a list of 16 such temples.

⁶¹ For a detailed study of the rituals in this temple, see AJITHAN 2015: 5–9.

⁶² According to AJITHAN (2015: 5), the system of worship of “Mūssad-s is a blend

The Piṭāras

This community is well-known as worshippers of Bhadrakālī, and the Mātāyikāvu Temple of Kannur District, where they perform worship, is one of the more famous temples of Kerala. It is interesting to note that in Tamil Nadu the fierce goddess is known as Piṭāri.

The Aṭikaḷ

The Aṭikaḷ⁶³ are a small community and the following is their orally transmitted origin myth: One day, while they were accompanying the great philosopher Śaṅkara, the latter drank liquor to test the fidelity of his followers. They thought if the *ācārya* could drink, they could too, and so they drank the liquor. Śaṅkara then entered a foundry and drank molten metal. After this he challenged them, saying, “Now, see if you can do all that I can do.” They apologised to him and were degraded to slaves (*aṭiyāl*).

The priests at Kodungallur come from a family at Pallipuram, more than 50 miles north-east of Kodungallur. According to custom, only the men alone, without their womenfolk, are allowed to come to Kodungallur, and men from Aṭikaḷ families marry girls of the local Nayar (non-Brahmin) families and settle in Kodungallur.

There is also a story behind the settlement of the Aṭikaḷ around the Kodungallur Temple. It is said that there were 101 houses of Nampūtiri Brahmins in the vicinity of the Kodungallur Temple. Once, a poor Brahmin

of Krama systems of Kashmir and South Indian Brahmayāmala traditions. What is to be noted here is that there seems to be two dimensions, i.e. inner and outer, with regard to the worship of Müssad-s. The inner dimension consists of worship of their cultic deities viz., Śrīvidyā, Kālasaṅkarṣiṇī and Parā. The outer realm consists of worship of Bhadrakālī or Caṇḍakapālīnī and Mātṛs along with Vīrabhadra and Gaṇapati.” However, in order to relate the ritual systems that are followed by Müssads to the Krama system, the textual materials that are used by Müssads would need to be studied, which I have not yet located. SANDERSON (2007a: 277–278) observes that it is only certain Tantric *mantras* of Kālīkula that are embedded in the southern *Brahmayāmala* texts.

⁶³ INDUCHUDAN (1969: 118) observes thus on the Aṭikaḷ: “They are a very small community in Kerala. In the division of castes they come as a sub-division of what are called Antaralas, with Dvijas or twice-born, i.e. Brahmins and Kshatriyas coming first. They are presumed to be degraded Brahmins, the degradation being the result of service of meat and liquor or their substitutes in the temples. They officiate as priests in some shrines.”

approached these houses at night for food, and he was sent from house to house until finally those living next to the temple suggested he should go and beg at the doors of the adjacent house, that being the abode of the goddess. Unaware that it was a temple, the poor Brahmin asked for alms. While the goddess provided him with food, she was angry with the Nampūtiri Brahmins who refused to offer the Brahmin food, and so she burned all the Nampūtiri houses there. Even today there are no houses of Nampūtiri Brahmins near the temple. Since there were no Nampūtiri Brahmins left to perform the temple rituals, the king of that time brought the Aṭikaḷ from Pallipuram, north-east of Kodungallur. At present, the Aṭikaḷ have the right to perform rituals in the Kodungallur Temple, but they appoint Nampūtiri Brahmins for the regular services⁶⁴ of the temple rituals. The Aṭikaḷ themselves perform specific rituals only during the festival.

Kodungallur Temple of Rurujit and particular private and public rituals that take place in this temple

It is said that the Cēra King Ceṅkuṭṭuvan,⁶⁵ after listening to the story of Kaṇṇaki, established a temple in his capital to commemorate her martyrdom. It is also considered that Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ, the younger brother of Ceṅkuṭṭuvan, authored the *Cilappatikāram* at a place close to Kodungallur town. According to some scholars, when that area was later inhabited by Buddhist monks, it became a Buddhist temple but then returned to the Hindus during the period of Sāmutiris,⁶⁶ the rulers of the medieval kingdom of Kozhikode.

The Kodungallur Temple exhibits some very specific structural features. A long hall built from granite and divided into three chambers is found on the inside of the inner complex. Its central chamber is the sanctum sanctorum in which Bhadrakālī in the form of Rurujit is installed facing the northern entrance. In the western chamber, the Seven Mothers along with Vīrabhadra and Gaṇapati are installed facing north. The most eastern chamber is very small, without doors or windows, and known as a secret

⁶⁴ INDUCHUDAN (1969: 287) observes the following: “Nambudiris had practically no hold in the Kodungallur temple. ... The Atikal who manages the whole affairs and the Nambudiri priest only acts on his behalf. A Nambudiri priest, as soon as he comes to Kodungallur, should take technical instructions from the Atikal on the nature of rituals. ... The Nambudiri has only what is called general practices as his own.”

⁶⁵ Cf. INDUCHUDAN 1969: 16–17; see also MENON 1924: IV.331–332.

⁶⁶ Cf. INDUCHUDAN 1969: 165–175.

chamber in which a *śrīcakra* is installed. It is believed that this *śrīcakra* was installed by Śaṅkara himself. This chamber has a subterranean passage that leads towards the east and opens to the ground after about 100 yards. There is also a separate sanctum for Śiva, who faces east, and one for Kṣetrapāla. The structure of a temple described in the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* and *Śeṣasamuccaya* for Bhadrakālī along with the Seven Mothers closely corresponds to the structure of the Kodungallur Temple, with the exception of its particular secret chamber.

The idol of Bhadrakālī in a sitting posture in the Kodungallur Temple is made of jackfruit tree wood, about six feet high, and has eight hands, holding on the right side (top to bottom) a trident, a skull staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), a sword, and the severed head of Dāruka and on the left a snake, an anklet, a shield, and a bell. Her left ear features an elephant earring and the right one a lion earring.

The festival rituals in this temple too are unique and complicated. It is not only the structure that accords well with the southern *Brahmayāmala* texts, especially the *Māṭṛsadbhāva*, but also certain rituals that are performed in this temple and form part of its unique character. Among these, a secret ritual known as *tr̥ccandanapoṭicārttal*, or “smearing the idol with holy sandal powder,” and a public ritual known as *kāvutīṇṭal*, or “polluting the Kāvu or temple,” are considered of special importance.

In the course of the *tr̥ccandanapoṭicārttal* ritual, or “the smearing the sandal paste,”⁶⁷ everyone is sent out of the inner temple complex while three senior members of the Aṭikaḷ community, belonging to three families, enter the sanctum and perform rituals that run for several hours. The details of these are unknown, and according to the tradition only those who perform the ritual know how it is to be done. The details of the ritual will be passed on to a new member only when required. This means when the representative of one family dies, his place will be taken by the next member of the family, and it is only then that this newcomer will learn the ritual. It is obviously believed⁶⁸ that the Goddess was wounded after the war and required special medication, so the “smearing the sandal paste” is considered a treatment of the wounds.

⁶⁷ For a detailed description of this ritual, see INDUCHUDAN 1969: 105–106, GENTES 1992: 303, TARABOUR 1986: 374–377.

⁶⁸ This fact was also mentioned to me by a senior member of one of the three families who participate in the Kodungallur temple rituals and whom I was able to meet in November 2014.

This ritual is followed by the *kāvutīṇṭal* ritual, or “the polluting of the temple,” in which thousands of members of several communities participate, including lower castes but no Brahmins. It is worthy of note that cocks are sacrificed for almost a week prior to this ritual, and there are symbolic offerings of cocks following the *kāvutīṇṭal* ritual as well. As soon as the ritual of “smearing the sandal paste” is completed, everyone within the inner precincts leaves, and the doors all around are locked. The *valiya* or “senior” royal member of Kodungallur then mounts the eastern portico of the temple and spreads out a green coloured umbrella. The moment the green umbrella is spread, the crowd, consisting of the oracle (*veliccappād*) who carries swords and the devotees who carry small sticks, runs around the temple and pollutes it by touching it. In the meanwhile, the devotees dance and sing obscene songs, known as *bharanipāṭṭu*.⁶⁹ These are a set of songs, some of which have an explicit sexual content while others praise every aspect of the Goddess, especially her sexuality. This is followed by purification rituals before the regular daily rituals begins. In this *kāvutīṇṭal* ritual, we see that the communities that include the higher royal family members as well as lower castes⁷⁰ are involved.

Even though it may not be easy to explain why such a ritual is performed,⁷¹ we see an echo of the above-mentioned practices during the *bali* offering that is described in the *Māṭṛsadbhāva*. During this *bali* procession, the devotees are asked to carry small sticks and the men are asked to partic-

⁶⁹ For a detailed discussion on this ritual, see INDUCHUDAN 1969: 128–142, TARABOUR 1986: 374–376, GENTES 1992, and RADHAKRISHNAN 2013.

⁷⁰ According to RADHAKRISHNAN (2013: 205–206), “the [*kāvutīṇṭal*] festival features Nairs and members from the royal family, it is largely a festival that is celebrated by the lower castes. The main castes that participate are the Vannans, the Mannans, the Pulayas and the Thiyas.”

⁷¹ Some observe that this ritual was performed to get rid of the Buddhist nuns who had taken control of the temple once upon a time. RADHAKRISHNAN (2013: 208) notes “the [Kodungallur] temple could have been a Buddhist shrine to begin with. ... Buddhists in Kerala did not build too many stupas or other structures. They choose to conduct several of their meetings in the open air, in small groves, or *kavus*. The Kodungallur temple is also known as the Sri Kurumba Kavu. The *kavu teendal* ceremony at the *Bharani* then may have originated as a brahminical move to usurp the Buddhist shrine.” RADHAKRISHNAN (2013: 208) also points to observations of SADASIVAN (2000) and GENTES (1992), and he states that “they believed the Hindus in the area [Kodungallur] threw meat and alcohol into the Buddhist monasteries to desecrate the sacred space of Buddhist shrines and also harassed the Buddhist monks and nuns by hurling sexually explicit abuses at them.”

ipate well-dressed and ornamented, resembling the practice that is presently followed in the contexts of the *kāvutīṇṭal* ritual in the Kodungallur Temple:

Prominent men who are vigilant should be placed in front, [each] holding a bamboo stick that is straight, long, light and firm, and also at the sides, for protection, especially during the *bali* offering. Outside of them on all sides (*paritaḥ*) guards should process (*gaccheyuḥ*) while playing about (*krīḍantaḥ*); [these should be] youth who are fearless and strong, specially dressed, well-trained, with swords in their hands.⁷²

The text further instructs to send away Brahmins, women, and children during the *bali* offering, and it also prescribes ways to behave while participating in the procession:

Brahmins as well as women and especially the children should be removed [from that area] since they would be conducive to faults (*doṣa*). [...]

Along with the great noise of the crowd (*janaśabdena*) and the mixed sound produced by the instruments [and also] with different auspicious materials, [the crowd] while playing and waving (the arms) and gaping †...†⁷³

A more detailed study of the rituals that are performed in the Kodungallur Temple will be necessary in the future to compare these with the rituals that are prescribed in the southern Māṭṛtantra texts.

Can a Brahmin perform *bali*? Ritual beyond ritual manuals

We have seen that according to the southern *Brahmayāmala* texts, the priests of the Bhadrakālī temple must be non-Brahmins. But now let us turn

⁷² MSBh_{Triv} p. 178: *pradhānapuruṣāṇ agre kalpayed apramādinah | veṇu-daṇḍamrjuṃ dīrghaṃ pragrhya ca laghuṃ dṛḍhaṃ | pārśvadvaye ca rakṣārthaṃ balidāne viśeṣataḥ | tadbāhye rakṣakās tatra yuvāno bhayavarjitāḥ | alankṛtā viśeṣeṇa khaḍgahastās suśikṣitāḥ | gaccheyuḥ paritas tatra krīḍanto balasamyutāḥ |*

⁷³ MSBh_{Triv} p. 178: *brāhmaṇānān tathā strīṇāṃ śiśūnāṇ ca viśeṣataḥ | niṣkṛtiṃ kārayet teṣāṃ yathā doṣānurūpataḥ |* and MSBh_{Triv} p. 180: *mahatā janaśabdena †kṣvelā†sphaṇanajrmbhitaiḥ | nānātūryavimiśrais ca nānāśobhāsamanvitam |*

to a public ritual conducted in a Durgā temple that differs from what is taught in ritual manuals, a case in which the *bali* offering is performed by a Brahmin.

There is a temple of Durgā situated in the fort area of Trivandrum, Kerala, close to the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmī Temple. This temple is patronised by the Travancore royal family and is unique with respect to several features when compared to other Kerala temples. It neither has a flag-mast nor does it host any annual temple festival. While the daily rituals are performed by a Nampūtiri Brahmin according to the Kerala ritual manual *Tantra-samuccaya*, the right to hold the position of the chief priest (or *tantri*) rests with a Tamil Brahmin family who claims it as a hereditary right. It is worth noting that the fort area of Trivandrum is inhabited by several Tamil Brahmin families, most of whom have migrated from the Tirunelveli and Nagerkovil areas, which were once part of the Travancore kingdom.

A three-day public ritual is conducted in this temple every year during the month of *māgha* (February–March), and the rituals are organised and performed by Tamil Brahmins who have settled around the fort area. Our main interest here is the *bali* offering that takes place on the third day of this ritual sequence. In this ritual, at night a group of Tamil Brahmins sings songs in Tamil in praise of Bhadrakālī. The one designated to perform the *bali* ritual becomes possessed, receives the sword from the temple, and leaves the temple in a procession together with drum players to walk around a 15-kilometer radius of the temple and make *bali* offerings in eight directions, with the principal *bali* being offered in a cremation ground. Early the next day, the procession reaches the pond of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmī Temple, takes an auspicious bath (*maṅgalasnāna*), and then returns to the temple. While we have previously seen that the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* states to send away the Brahmins from the area of *bali* offerings, here a *bali* is offered by a Brahmin and takes place in a cremation ground.

**The ritual that goes beyond communities:
Āttukāl Poṅgāla, a ritual that takes place in a
Bhadrakālī Temple in Trivandrum**

In Trivandrum, the capital city of Kerala, there is a temple of Bhadrakālī, known there as Attukal Amma (Mother). In this temple, the Goddess in the form of Bhadrakālī, the primary deity, is installed facing north and Śiva facing west. This temple is well-known today, although it might not have a long history. During its annual festival on the ninth day of the month

māgha, more than four million women of several communities and classes line the streets with pots to cook porridge as their offering. This offering in the form of a public ritual is known as *poṅgāla*.⁷⁴ While the daily rituals of the temple are conducted either by Nampūtiri Brahmins or by Karnataka Tulu Brahmins, its special rituals are conducted by the *tantri*, or chief priest, associated with the Cennas Nampūtiri family, the family of the author of the Kerala ritual manual, the *Tantrasamuccaya*. In the temples of Kerala, where Brahmins are the officiating priests, usually the cooked food prepared outside the temple complex is not used for offerings. But in this temple, on the day of *poṅgāla* women prepare the offering themselves and it is offered to the deity. It is worth noting that every woman belonging to any community may participate in this offering. In this *poṅgāla* ritual, in the late morning the chief priest (*tantri*) lights the stove in the temple kitchen, while the *melsānti*, the priest who conducts the daily rituals, lights a stove that the temple administration keeps outside the temple, and then the fire from this stove is used to light the stoves that are kept ready around the seven-kilometre radius of the temple where the women prepare the offering. In the early evening, the temple priests go around the temple and offer the porridge that has been cooked and kept ready by the female devotees. Even though it is also performed in several other temples in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the *poṅgāla* ritual is unique to Attukal since it involves the participation of a great number of devotees and thus acts as an example of a public ritual for which no community eligibility is prescribed.

Conclusion

While Alexis Sanderson, Shaman Hatley, and Csaba Kiss have brought to our knowledge the *Brahmayāmala* tradition of the North through their editions and studies, its southern tradition is still little known and hardly studied. As we have seen, the southern *Brahmayāmala* texts, too, could be considered part of the *Brahmayāmala* corpus.

While the southern *Brahmayāmala* text (IFP, Pondicherry) proposes that non-Brahmin priests perform the worship of Bhadrakālī, the *Māṭṛsadbhāva*, which uses the southern *Brahmayāmala* materials as its source, does not mention non-Brahmins as priests and prohibits the participation of Brahmins in certain rituals. We see that in Kerala, especially in the temples of Rurujit, non-Brahmins as well as Nampūtiri Brahmins perform the worship,

⁷⁴ For a detailed study on the *poṅgāla* ritual, see JENETT 1999 and 2005.

both claiming to follow the *Śeṣasamuccaya* manual for the Rurujit rituals. It is sad to note, however, that in most of the temples the rituals for Rurujit are not followed as prescribed by the *Śeṣasamuccaya*. The *Māṭṛsadbhāva* as well as the *Śeṣasamuccaya* mention the offering of meat, but when the rituals are performed by Brahmins, only a substitute is offered. When the rituals are performed by non-Brahmins, meat is offered.

Even though the author of the *Māṭṛsadbhāva* mentions that he used Yāmala materials for his work, it seems as though he adopted them in a way that would fit in with the Kerala temple ritual system, turning a non-Brahmanical ritual into a Brahmanical one, and this adaptation was then followed by the later authors of ritual manuals of Kerala, such as the *Śeṣasamuccaya*.

The two rituals that we discussed above, that is, a *bali* ritual performed by a Brahmin and the *poṅgāla* ritual that is performed in the Trivandrum Attukal Temple without any community bar, clearly demonstrates that these rituals do not strictly follow the ritual manuals but are adapted and modified according to necessity.

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