

# Bāṇa's literary representation of a South Indian Śaivite

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## Introductory remarks

Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* is an ornate prose composition with a fictional plot and fictional characters (a Kathā in terms of Sanskrit poetics) revolving around the love story between prince Candrāpīḍa and the celestially beautiful princess Kādambarī. Its composition was probably begun in the first half of the seventh century in Northern India under King Harṣavardhana's reign,<sup>1</sup> as can be assumed from the author's other prose work, the *Harṣacarita*. As tradition has it, Bāṇa did not complete the *Kādambarī* himself, and it was his son Bhūṣaṇabhaṭṭa who added the less-extensive, concluding "latter part" (*uttarabhāga*) to his father's larger "former part" (*pūrvabhāga*). Among a whole range of historical and cultural details, the novel contains a passage which deserves the attention of historians of both religion and literature because of its description of a certain South Indian Śaivite who lives in a North Indian temple of the goddess Caṇḍikā. The Sanskrit term used to denote the temple dweller is *dhārmika*, for which a satisfying translation is difficult to find.<sup>2</sup> As a preliminary working translation, I suggest

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<sup>1</sup> Harṣa is generally accepted to have ruled 606–647 CE; see, e.g., KULKE & ROTHERMUND 2010: 140. LIENHARD (1984: 248f.) states that Bāṇa probably "worked in the second half of King Harṣavardhana's reign," i.e. in the second quarter of the seventh century.

<sup>2</sup> This nominalised adjective literally indicates some kind of (habitual) relation to *dharma*, that is, to a (religious) law, custom, or virtue, or someone who is "characterised by *dharma*" in whatever sense of the word. See HALBFASS 1988: 310–333 on various notions of the term *dharma* and especially p. 328f. (§ 24) on orthodox Brahmanical interpretations of the term *dhārmika*.

the rendering “holy man,”<sup>3</sup> the limitations of which will be reconsidered towards the end of this paper.

### The Caṇḍikā temple episode

To start with, I quote from the first and still well-known English translation of the *Kādambarī* by RIDDING (1896: 172):

And on the way he [i.e., Candrāpīḍa] beheld in the forest a red flag, near which was a shrine of Durgā, guarded by an old Draviḍian hermit, who made his abode thereby.

Here, as in many other places of her translation, Ridding decided to give a “condensed” summary instead of an actual translation.<sup>4</sup> The original Sanskrit passage is really a lengthy and minutely descriptive composition that spans over several printed pages.<sup>5</sup> An English translation of it was available already in 1917,<sup>6</sup> and a translation of the complete *pūrvabhāga* was published in 1924,<sup>7</sup> followed by a number of partial and complete translations.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, despite the availability of editions, translations, and Sanskrit commentaries,<sup>9</sup> this passage is often omitted in summaries of the

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<sup>3</sup> Other renderings of *dhārmika* in this passage of the *Kādambarī* which have been brought forth are “hermit” (RIDDING 1896: 172), “asceet” (SCHARPÉ 1937: 361), “ascetic” (KALE 1924: 287, LAYNE 1991: 225, 228, HATLEY 2007: 73ff.), or “priest” (RAJAPPA 2010: 234, 236), each referring to a certain way of living or social-religious function, but neither of which is made explicit by the term or by the whole passage. SMITH (2009: 157) calls the *dhārmika* a “pseudo-saint,” which is quite to the point but takes too quickly a decision on the ambiguous nature of the figure. BAKKER (2014: 131) translates the term with “pious ones” in a Gupta inscription from the seventh century.

<sup>4</sup> Ridding’s abbreviations were all translated into Dutch by SCHARPÉ (1937); the description of the Caṇḍikā temple and the *dhārmika* is found in *ibid.*: 359–364.

<sup>5</sup> Nearly five full pages (p. 223, 9–228, 7) in the ed. PETERSON 1889 (henceforth K) and p. 392, 9–401, 6 in the ed. PARAB<sup>3</sup>1908, where the text is accompanied by a running commentary. For other editions, see n. 22–24 below.

<sup>6</sup> MEHTA & JOSHI 1917.

<sup>7</sup> KALE 1924. This was attached to Kale’s own edition in <sup>4</sup>1968 (<sup>1</sup>1896).

<sup>8</sup> Subsequent translations and substantial secondary literature up to the 1960s are listed in LIENHARD 1984: 253, n. 44. See also SCHARPÉ 1937: 108–127. The most recent complete English translation was prepared by LAYNE (1991).

<sup>9</sup> TRIPATHY 2007: 8–16 describes no less than 14 Sanskrit commentaries, three of

text<sup>10</sup> and failed to attract much attention by western scholars, with the notable exception of LORENZEN (1972: 17f.), TIEKEN (2001: 226f.), and the more detailed studies by HATLEY (2007: 73–82) and SMITH (2009).

The *Kādambarī* can be a demanding composition, especially in passages like those Ridding decided to abbreviate. The Caṇḍikā passage is no exception to this. The sheer unending syntactical suspense and semantic density of the passage presents considerable difficulties to the modern reader. For the largest part, it consists of a single sentence which, as mentioned, extends over several pages in the printed editions and which gives the subject of the description together with its predicate only at the very end of the syntactical construction, a common feature in Bāṇa's style.

Another reason for the omission may be that although a prose description of this kind can be appreciated for its stunning phrasing and poetical embellishments,<sup>11</sup> it hardly adds anything substantial to the plot development. The Caṇḍikā episode, too, has no further effect on the plot of the story.<sup>12</sup> Its omission nevertheless leads to a distortion of the bigger picture.<sup>13</sup> Among other things, it provides an occasion to display the author's skill in creating different sentiments (*rasa*), such as the comic one (*hāsya*) that is a rare feature in the *Kādambarī*.<sup>14</sup> It also serves to lighten the general mood of the narration, which at this stage is dominated by the hero's longing

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which had been unavailable to him or only known from references in other commentarial works.

<sup>10</sup> Thus, note that several of the summaries of the *Kādambarī* given in compendia of Sanskrit literature fail to even mention the episode (cf., e.g., LIENHARD 1984: 253–255). WARDER (1983: 43), in a comparatively short paragraph (§ 1728), does refer to the “mad pseudo ascetic,” but merely to diagnose “a certain shallowness of [Candrāpīḍa's] character, rather than a seriousness of his education.”

<sup>11</sup> In this regard, BRONNER's article on Subandhu's lengthy compounds (2014) and SHULMAN's remarks on Bāṇa's prose syntax (2014: 287–292) are both appreciative and enlightening.

<sup>12</sup> Given that the legend of Bāṇa's early death and his son Bhūṣaṇabhaṭṭa's completion of the *Kādambarī* is true, it is possible that the latter was unsure about what his father had in mind and how to deal with the *dhārmika* episode that may have originally been intended to influence the further development or conclusion of the main plot. The story of Bāṇa's untimely death, however, is seriously challenged by TIEKEN (2014).

<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the *dhārmika* episode was not even accepted to the appendix of Ridding's translation, “in which [abstracts of] a few passages, chiefly interesting as mentioning religious sects, are added” (RIDDING 1896: xxii).

<sup>14</sup> Another explicitly humorous passage of the *Kādambarī* is Candrāpīḍa's parody (*krīḍālāpa*) of the princess' talking birds' love quarrel (K: 194, 10–196, 3).

for his beloved. At this point, Candrāpīḍa, the son and successor of King Tārāpīḍa of Ujjayinī, is experiencing the pangs of separation after having fallen in love with the Gandharva princess Kādambarī – and vice versa.

But why ridicule an aged hermit for this purpose? The peculiar way this interlude distracts the reader from the main story gives rise to the suspicion that Bāṇa had a certain intention in doing so. We will return to this point below.

### Literary aspects

Before highlighting the major topics of the plot, I will briefly address Bāṇa's literary style together with his representation of the Śaiva believer and the latter's dwelling place.

The syntactical complexity of the passage in question here is more a means to an end than an end in itself. As indicated above, one long sentence presents a detailed description of what is explicitly named only at the very end of the construction, namely the goddess of the temple and its inhabitant. By suspending the grammatical predicate and its direct object for as long as possible, Bāṇa creates a sustained tension as if to convey the hero's own awe and amazement at the moment of entering and beholding the temple area. In this sense, the syntactical construction mirrors or at least adds to the subject matter of the passage, and this effect is lost in all available translations of this and comparable passages.<sup>15</sup>

As a rule, descriptions of this kind are employed in the introduction of characters who play a major role in the plot. The obvious pattern is that the more important the character, the longer the description. A similar style is described by HUECKSTEDT (1985: 23): the longer a story (of which there may be several within a single narrative work), the longer the sentence that introduces it. The location and relationships of the protagonist may be included in the main clause or presented in a subordinate or independent clause. For example, a king is presented together with his resident city and his chief queen, while the exhaustive account of an eminent sage is replete with a description of his forest hermitage and his pupils. The same holds true for metrical literature, where a number of relative clauses can form what commentaries refer to as *kulaka*, i.e., stanzas "in which the government of noun and verb is carried throughout" (MONIER-WILLIAMS, s.v.).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> A similar interpretation is offered by SMITH 2009: 150f.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., *Meghadūta* 2.1–15, where at the very beginning of the *uttaramegha*

When we compare descriptive single-sentence constructions taken from the *Kādambarī*'s prose, it turns out that the Caṇḍikā temple receives a remarkable amount of attention by the author in terms of its length. In the edition prepared by PETERSON in 1883, nearly four pages (K: 224,13–228,7) make up a single syntactical sentence devoted to the description of the Caṇḍikā temple and its old resident. This sentence is one of the longest of its kind, comparable to those containing the descriptions of the heroine Kādambarī and her most intimate girlfriend, the ascetic girl Mahāśvetā (pp. 186,4–189,16 and 128,12–131,20 respectively), and surpassed only by that describing King Tārāpīḍa's residence (K: 86,19–92,5). Note that the elaboration of King Tārāpīḍa's residence (*rājakula*) is not presented at the first introduction of the king and his reign, but only on occasion of the celebration of the perfection of Candrāpīḍa's education. It extends over nearly five-and-a-half pages of the edition.<sup>17</sup>

At the beginning of the Caṇḍikā episode, the reader (or the audience) of the *Kādambarī* is therefore likely to expect another comprehensive story within this deeply nested narration, a “subplot” (*patākā*) or an “intervention” (*prakāṛī*) in terms of Indian poetics.<sup>18</sup> The extent of the embedded story and the significance of the Caṇḍikā episode can be presumed by the comparatively vast proportions of its descriptive opening. This also means an even longer delay on Candrāpīḍa's route to his father's residence and, more importantly, a prolongation of the lovers' separation. The starting

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the home of the Yakṣas in the Himālaya regions is described in a series of relative constructions (mostly using the pronoun *yatra*, but also *yasyām* in 2.5 and 12, and a compound *yad-* in 2.8). The *kulaka* is completed with the clause *tatrāgāraṃ ... asmadīyaṃ* (“there is the house of ours”) in 2.15.

<sup>17</sup> K 86,19–92,5. Further examples of long single-sentence descriptions are: King Śūdraka: half a page (p. 5,5–18) and again almost one-and-a-half pages (pp. 8,21–10,5); the Cāṇḍāla princess: more than one page, including a description of her attendants, an old *mātaṅga* and a young Cāṇḍāla boy (pp. 10,11–11,19); Mātaṅga, the Śabara chief: a little more than two pages (pp. 29,20–32,1); Jābāli: two pages (pp. 41,11–43,9); his *āśrama*: nearly two-and-a-half pages (pp. 38,15–40,21); Hārīta: roughly one-and-a-half pages (pp. 36,9–37,19); the city Ujjayinī (in Jābāli's account): two-and-a-half pages (pp. 50,1–52,10); Indrāyudha, Candrāpīḍa's horse: one-and-a-half pages (pp. 78,14–80,3); the Acchoda lake, where Mahāśvetā's hermitage is situated: one-and-a-half pages (pp. 122,16–124,5); an empty Śiva temple nearby (*śūlapāṇeh śūnyam siddhāyatanam*): one-and-a-half pages (pp. 126,13–128,3); and finally the forest on the way to the Caṇḍikā temple: a little more than one page (pp. 223,9–224,12).

<sup>18</sup> See WARDER <sup>2</sup>2009: 54f. (§ 122).

point of the main action (the “seed,” *bīja*) is at risk to lose its continuity (*bindu*, lit. “drop”) as the action falters due to another “obstacle” (*avamarśa*) or “pause” (*vimarśa*),<sup>19</sup> yielding no fruition of a happy ending.<sup>20</sup> The Caṇḍikā episode, however, is suddenly completed in only a fraction of the time it took to be introduced. The sinister temple site in the forest is turned into a rather casual setting of the prince’s sojourn. No new adventures unfold, neither assistance nor obstacles are presented to the hero, and no curses are spoken by the temple dweller. Superficially and in terms of narrative structure, the old Śaiva ascetic is deprived of all powers that would usually be expected from a devotee of the goddess.<sup>21</sup> He is represented as a hapless and grumpy old man, whose appearance and habits make him a mere object of ridicule rather than a source of awe.

The satirical depiction of the quirky Dravidian constitutes an amusing relief from the frightening atmosphere which has been created by the precursory description of the journey through the forest, the scary remains of a sacrifice in the temple, and the image of a fierce goddess. Expectations are built up and then surprisingly subverted. Like a snake that turns out to be a rope, the inhabitant of the dreadful Caṇḍikā temple turns out to be a mere laughing stock, and strained expectation dissolves into amusement.

The suspense begins with a lengthy description of the journey of the hero and his army through a sinister forest, which is difficult to traverse for its climbers, roots, and fallen trees, a place where outlaws have left secret signs of communication and where memorials have been erected at the horrifying sites of self-sacrifice (*vīrapuruṣaḡhātasthāna*). The forest description,<sup>22</sup> a masterly piece of literature in itself, concludes with the depiction of the red flag that spotlights the temple in the depths of the jungle and

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<sup>19</sup> On the “conjunctions” (*sandhi*), i.e. significant points in the development of the plot, and their applicability to any form of Kāvya literature, see WARDER <sup>2</sup>2009: 57–59 (§ 128–134) and 77 (§ 182).

<sup>20</sup> WARDER <sup>2</sup>2009: 55 (§ 123f.) and 73 (§ 175). Though LIENHARD stresses the fact that Sanskrit compositions were judged rather by details of phrasing (1984: 34–37) and descriptions (pp. 230–234) than by the structure and composition of the work as a whole, the latter criterion should not be neglected, despite the difficulty of keeping track of the plot and its characters (*ibid.*: 233).

<sup>21</sup> For numerous instances and various aspects of the connection between asceticism and power in ancient and modern Indian culture, see OLSON 2015.

<sup>22</sup> K 223,9–224,12; further editions used: PARAB <sup>3</sup>1908: 392,9–394,8; KANE 1911: 93,21–94,23; SASTRI <sup>5</sup>1982: 633,3–636,5. For a concordance of PETERSON’S with three more editions (not consulted by me), see SCHARPÉ 1937: 495.

serves as a thrilling preparation for the ornate description of the Caṇḍikā temple.

Thus, the sentiment of Candrāpīḍa's lovesickness gives way to another one, namely the fearful (*bhayānaka rasa*). This sentiment is further intensified by means of the description of the dreadful and hideous details of the Caṇḍikā temple area.<sup>23</sup> Finally, the unexpected use of the comic sentiment (*hāsya rasa*) is supposed to relieve the horror-laden atmosphere of the forest and temple passages by way of an innocuous conversation between the old temple dweller and the prince.<sup>24</sup>

The descriptions of the temple area and the Caṇḍikā image go beyond mere abundance in fanciful detail and poetic ornamentation. They are poetically ornamented with figurative expressions, like similes (*upamā*), metaphorical identification (*rūpaka*), and poetical ascriptions (*utprekṣā*), which intensify the sentiment and sometimes exaggerate the descriptions. Nevertheless, the subjects of the comparisons (*upameya*) always remain tangible, and even their objects (*upamāna*) as well as the ascriptions of the *utprekṣās* are never too far-fetched and go without the surreal and supernatural,<sup>25</sup> which maintains a realistic tenor to the passage. This realism, which Smith called "one of Bāṇa's trademarks,"<sup>26</sup> culminates in the description of the "holy man" who lives in the temple. Here, similes of every kind, including the *utprekṣā*, one of the author's most frequent figures of speech,<sup>27</sup> are quickly dismissed, that is, after the first three objects of description (the old man's protruding veins, his scars, and his hair).<sup>28</sup> The remaining part of the description covers nearly two pages<sup>29</sup> and consists of one long series of plain descriptive characterisations (*jāti* or *svabhāvokti*). Besides this, the figure of double entendre (*śleṣa*), which frequently features in other de-

<sup>23</sup> K 224,13–226,9; PARAB <sup>3</sup>1908: 394,8–398,1; KANE 1911: 94,24–96,14; SASTRI <sup>5</sup>1982: 636,6–642,3.

<sup>24</sup> K 226,9–228,7; PARAB <sup>3</sup>1908: 398,1–401,6; KANE 1911: 96,14–98,9; SASTRI <sup>5</sup>1982: 642,3–648,4.

<sup>25</sup> One single mythological allusion is found at the beginning of the description of the temple area (K 224,17), where the iron image of a buffalo (*lohamahiṣa*) features palm prints of red sandal (*raktacandanahastaka*) and hence looks "as though he had been gently patted by the God of Death's bloody hands" (*rudhirāruṇayamakaratalā-sphāḷita*, translation by LAYNE 1991: 223f.).

<sup>26</sup> SMITH 2009: 160. On the realism in Bāṇa's metrical work, see TUBB 2014, who also attests a distinctive "boldness in the choice of subject matter" (p. 346).

<sup>27</sup> HUECKSTEDT 1985: 31.

<sup>28</sup> K 226,9–13.

<sup>29</sup> K 226,13–228,7.

scriptive parts of the *Kādambarī* as well as other prose works, is absent from the forest and the temple passages.<sup>30</sup>

Another stylistic device of the author is the careful use of colours. Notably, red is used to depict the temple scene, which abounds with offerings of animals, human heads, and the remains of bloody sacrifices. The intentional choice of the colour red is introduced by the depiction of the large, red flag that marks the transition from the forest to the temple passage. While this flag still belongs to the forest passage syntactically, physically it is already part of the temple. It is mounted “atop an old, red sandalwood” and “seemed wet with dabs of lac, like bloody chunks of fresh, moist flesh; the tree’s trunk was ornamented with red banners that were like lolling tongues, and with black fly-whisk streamers that appeared like matted hair or the limbs of freshly butchered animals.”<sup>31</sup> By mentioning the colour red and reddish items, the author refrains from conveying an atmosphere of auspiciousness and solemnity that would easily and naturally be expected. The sentiment thus evoked in terms of colour is the fearful one, and it prevails throughout this part of the narration. The narrator fancies that Candrāpīḍa “saw from afar the large, red flag that seemed to be searching here and there on the path for travellers who could serve as offerings (for Durgā).”<sup>32</sup> The colouring is carried on when Candrāpīḍa enters the temple area, where he finds “a line of black, iron mirror plates with reddish chowries”<sup>33</sup> right at the entrance (*dvāradeśa*) that is furnished with an iron gate. The temple area abounds with flower offerings of “red lotuses that resemble the eyes of jungle buffaloes, slain by *śabara* tribesmen,”<sup>34</sup> Agati and Palash flowers that are compared to the bloody claws of lions and tigers<sup>35</sup> (their resemblance is striking indeed), and “tufts of blood-red Kadambaka flow-

<sup>30</sup> Compare, e.g., the description of Tārāpīḍa’s court, especially towards the end. One of the paradigmatic works for *śleṣa* prose poetry is Subandhu’s *Vāsavadattā*, which notoriously abounds with all kinds of double entendre, also, e.g., in its descriptions of the Vindhya forests (ed. SHUKLA 1966: 13,18–17,7).

<sup>31</sup> Translation LAYNE 1991: 223.

<sup>32</sup> K 224,11f: *itas tataḥ pathikapuruṣopahāramārgam ivālokayantaṃ mahāntaṃ raktadhvaṃḥ dūrata eva dadarśa*. My translation is based on the one by LAYNE (1991: 223). The rhetorical figure here is that of an “ascription with regard to the action” (*kriyotprekṣā*), according to Sastri’s commentary *Candrakalā* (SASTRI<sup>5</sup> 1982: 636,24–26).

<sup>33</sup> *raktacāmarāvaliparikarāṃ kālāyasadarpaṇamaṇḍalamālām* (K 224,14f.).

<sup>34</sup> *kvacid raktotpalaiḥ śabaranipātītānāṃ vanamaḥiṣāṇām iva locanaiḥ* (K 224,19).

<sup>35</sup> *kvacid agastikuḍmalaiḥ kesariṇām iva karajaiḥ, kvacit kiṃśukakusumakuḍmalaiḥ śārdūlānām iva sarudhirair nakharaiḥ* (K 224,20f.).



ers that are hung to the limbs” of the *mūrti*.<sup>36</sup> These and further details<sup>37</sup> are beheld in the reddening light of the setting sun. The predominance of the colour red then ceases in the description of the “holy man,” in which references to the colour black prevail.

The colouring of a scene is a strongly suggestive literary device that does not necessarily impose a restriction on its realism. It features also in other passages in the *Kādambarī*, for instance in an earlier episode prior to the prince’s love story, in which Bāṇa conceives the figure of the beautiful Apsaras Mahāśvetā. She lives as a hermit in “an empty shrine of the blessed Trident-wielder,” i.e., Lord Śiva,<sup>38</sup> at the banks of the Acchoda lake on the foot of the Kailāsa mountain. The Apsaras’ complexion, her garment, and her modest jewellery are white, she plays an ivory *vīṇā*,<sup>39</sup> and carries a conch as an alms bowl.<sup>40</sup> The shrine on the banks of the Acchoda lake is also portrayed as all in white.<sup>41</sup> Hence she is called “the acme of whiteness.”<sup>42</sup> Here as well, a certain colour is strongly emphasised and not left to random choice. It is further in accord with the lunar lineage of the girl and clearly serves as an illustration of her divine and pure character.

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<sup>36</sup> *śoṇitatāmtrakadambastabakakṛtārcanaś (...)* *ivāṅgaiḥ* (K 225,19–21).

<sup>37</sup> K 225,19f. Further instances of the colour red are: blooming red Ashoka trees; *hastaka* marks of red sandal on the iron buffalo (see above, n. 25); red cocks; drops of elephant must-fluid taken for red pearls according to the poetic convention; reddened rags in the *garbhagrha*; red (but also blue and yellow) mirrors hung at the door panels; red rags at the feet of the *mūrti*; ornamental cords reddened with sandal; offerings of red Kadambaka flowers; Caṇḍikā’s lips which are red from betel offered by Śabara women; red flames of the resin (*guggula*) lamps; and red jewels on the heads of cobras (another poetic convention).

<sup>38</sup> *bhagavataḥ sūlapāṇeḥ śūnyam siddhāyatanam* (K 128,2f.). The ornate single-sentence description which is syntactically completed with this line runs from pp. 126,13–128,3.

<sup>39</sup> K 130,23–131,3.

<sup>40</sup> *śaṅkhamayena bhikṣākāpālena* (K 133,15).

<sup>41</sup> See K 128,12–131,20 for a portrayal of the outer appearance of the girl (in one single sentence extending over three and a half pages) and pp. 122,16–128,11 for the lake and the shrine where she lives (transl. LAYNE 1991: 125–136).

<sup>42</sup> LAYNE 1991: 133, translating *iyattām iva dhavalimnaḥ* (K 129,21f.). See also: “She seemed to have been made only out of the abstract quality of whiteness” (LAYNE 1991: 132, translating *dhavalagūṇenaiva kevalenotpāditām*, K 128,21).

### The Caṇḍikā temple and its main image

Candrāpīḍa and his army come across the temple in the forest on their way from the Kailāsa mountain, the residence of his beloved Kādambarī, to Ujjayinī, where he was summoned to by his father Tārāpīḍa. Progressively advancing towards the inner parts of the temple area, the narrator provides a detailed description of the site (*āyatana*) and its central image of the goddess Caṇḍikā.<sup>43</sup> The temple area is enclosed by an ivory fence (*dan-takapāṭa*), and its entrance (*dvāradeśa*) is framed by an iron archway. Ashoka trees flower in the courtyard (*aṅgaṇa*) that comprises an area referred to as *uddeśa*, possibly a forecourt. The inner courtyard (*ajira*)<sup>44</sup> leads to the entrance of a sanctuary (*garbhagrha*), which is furnished with two door panels (*kapāṭapaṭṭa*) and ivory bolts (*daṇḍārgala*). The image (*mūrti*) is seated on a throne (*pīṭha*), which is resting on an inner pedestal (*antaḥpiṇḍikā*). Facing the goddess from a separate rock platform (*śilāvedikā*) is an iron buffalo (*lohamahiṣa*). This is an image of the buffalo demon named Mahiṣa, which is more commonly depicted with the goddess stamping on him or piercing him with a trident.<sup>45</sup> Finally, there are also cobras that live in an empty sanctuary (*devakula*).

The fierce image of Caṇḍikā is covered in darkness, which makes it difficult to distinguish offered fruits from the heads of sacrificed children. Scattered at the feet of the image are the remains of sanguinary offerings or even self-sacrifices.<sup>46</sup> Among these are found tips of deer horns (*hariṇa-viṣāṇakoṭi*), cut out tongues (*jihvāccheda*), bloody eye-balls (*raktanayana*),

<sup>43</sup> K 224,13–226,9.

<sup>44</sup> The terminology of modern secondary literature on temple architecture in many instances differs from Bāṇa's choice of words (see, e.g., MEISTER & DHAKY 1991, HARDY 2007, LORENZETTI 2015). Hence, it remains unclear to me what exactly is denoted by *uddeśa* (K: 225,8) and *ajira* (K: 225,10).

<sup>45</sup> The story of Caṇḍī killing the buffalo demon Mahiṣa is known from the *Mahābhārata* and several Purāṇas (see STIETENCROON 1983, YOKOCHI 1999). The act of Caṇḍī's killing the demon with a kick of her left foot is told in *Skandapurāṇa* 68.12–23 (ed. YOKOCHI 2013: 341–343) and represents nearly the sole topic of Bāṇa's *Caṇḍīsataka* (ed. QUACKENBOS 1917: 243–362).

<sup>46</sup> Offerings of one's own blood, body parts, or head to a goddess are well attested in mediaeval Indian history (see DEZSŐ 2012: 82 for references to it in Kāvya literature, inscriptions, and reliefs). To Dezső's list we may here add the above-mentioned sites of self-sacrificers (*vīrapuruṣa*) from the forest passage. In the description of the Caṇḍikā temple passage, it is not always clear whether the offerings are human or animal sacrifices.

and skull bones (*muṇḍamaṇḍala*), all of which indicate “the violence of offerings” (*upahārahimsā*). Streams of blood run visibly through the inner courtyard. These offerings can be partially assigned to the frightening Śabara tribesmen who, as a literary topos, live and hunt in the Vindhya forests.<sup>47</sup> The offerings of the Śabarās are said to consist in flesh, and they worship the gods with the blood of animals.<sup>48</sup> The chief of a Śabara army is described as having his arms scarred from repeatedly offering his own blood to Caṇḍikā.<sup>49</sup> Throughout the *Kādambarī*, the Śabarās are described as a horribly violent tribe. Though this is not made explicit, they must cause considerable trouble to the pitiable temple dweller.

### The “holy man”

The “old Dravidian holy man” (*jaraddraṇḍadhārmika*) who lives in the temple is represented as a quirky old fellow regarded as an object of ridicule by the village people and by Candrāpīḍa’s convoy. Even his physical appearance is diametrically opposed to what one would expect from an honourable Brahmin sage presiding over an *āśrama* where pupils study the Veda and the forest deer peacefully drink from the freshly watered tree roots. One of these stereotypical, ideal sages is Jābāli, the Brahmin who narrates the main portion of the *Kādambarī* story to the parrot chick Vaiśampāyana that was saved by one of the *āśrama*’s pupils. However, the “holy man” from the Caṇḍikā temple passage is not one of those men equipped with learning, authority, and a divine eye. Quite the opposite is true of him: one of his eyes has lost sight due to the extensive use of some magical collyrium (*siddhāñjana*)<sup>50</sup> once given to him by a quack doctor (*kuvādi*). While the epic sages are notoriously radiant like the sun or shine like the moon, their skin white from the holy ashes, this “holy man’s” skin

<sup>47</sup> K 27,5–34,19. The tribe of the Śabara hunters also occurs, e.g., in the *Vāsava-dattā*, where they frighten the deer in the Vindhya forest witless (ed. SHUKLA 1966, p. 13,19–21).

<sup>48</sup> *paśurudhireṇa devatārcanam, māmsena balikarma*; K 32,9f.

<sup>49</sup> *caṇḍikārudhirabalipradānārtham asakṛnniśitaśastrollekhaṇiṣamitaśikhareṇa bhujayugalena*; K 30,11–13.

<sup>50</sup> The use of “a black pigment, often applied to the eyelashes” (TĀNTRIKĀBHIDHĀNAKOŚA I: 99 [s.v. *añjana*]) is said to bring about magical powers, like seeing hidden treasures or invisible things, even becoming invisible oneself. Magical collyrium is often referred to in narrative literature but also in Tantric works of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions. For references to the latter, see *ibid*.

is black. His body is covered by a web of veins, in the same way the trunk of a burnt tree is covered by all kinds of lizards,<sup>51</sup> whereas Jābālī's veins, which have also obtruded due to his severe asceticism, are compared to the creepers on the wish-fulfilling tree (*kalpataru*).<sup>52</sup>

It seems significant that the old man who lives in the temple is not given a proper name, since the name of every other significant character in the *Kādambarī* is usually given right when they are introduced to the story. While proper names hardly characterise real people, literary names are often significant and meaningful, revealing the origin, fate, or intentions of the named character.<sup>53</sup> This is common practice in fictional literature, and the *Kādambarī* is no exception. For example, Candrāpīḍa's name (“[he who wears] the moon as a chaplet [on his head]”) hints at his provenance from the moon god and relates him to his father Tārāpīḍa (“[he who wears] the stars as his chaplet”); the heroine's name Kādambarī alludes to the sweetly fragrant flowers of the evergreen Kadam tree; the background of Mahāśvetā's name, “the Great White,” was already mentioned above; the name of the sage Jābālī is borrowed from the famous sage of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (2.100–103); and so on. The Dravidian “holy man,” on the other hand, remains anonymous, and an important piece of information is thus withheld from the reader. The old man himself is not silent on private matters, for Candrāpīḍa manages to soothe the irascible old man and make him speak about personal matters, such as his origins and the reasons for his living in the temple:

With coaxing words and with a hundred sweet ones of conciliation, Candrāpīḍa somehow mollified him and, in order, asked his birth-place, caste, education, whether he had a wife and children, his

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<sup>51</sup> K 226,9f. The colour (*varṇa*) of the skin may be an allusion the social class (*varṇa*), as McComas Taylor's discourse analysis of *jāti* suggests (TAYLOR 2007). However, Taylor's thesis is severely criticised in MAAS 2013–2014. It may also allude to the quality of the soul according to the Sāṃkhya classification of pure (white), impure (black), and mixed (red) souls. On historical overinterpretations of this matter, see also ADLURI/BAGCHEE 2014: 187.

<sup>52</sup> K 42,17f. A passage a few lines before (*ibid.*: 42,12f.) mentions the protruding veins on Jābālī's neck (*kañthanāḍī*). Several instances of the topos of the gaunt ascetics' protruding veins are already attested in the *Mahābhārata* and in Buddhist literature (see OLSON 2015: 86).

<sup>53</sup> GABRIEL 2014: 168f.

wealth, his age, and the reason for his renouncing domestic life. And on being questioned, the ascetic told about himself.<sup>54</sup>

An account of their talk, however, is not given. The narrator is primarily interested in depicting the “holy man” as he appears to visitors. He is not concerned with the old man’s past life or the reasons for his devotion to Caṇḍikā. The “holy man’s” self-presentation is tersely outlined and merely serves to portray his boasting talkativeness. By the unlikelihood of its content it creates but another punchline of the passage:

The king’s son was very much amused by him as he continued to narrate his past heroism, handsomeness, and wealth.<sup>55</sup>

One more detail is worth addressing here, precisely because it is left unmentioned by Bāṇa: the “holy man’s” sacred thread (*yajñopavīta* or *brahmasūtra*). This is one of the items which Sanskrit authors would rarely fail to mention in a description of a major Ṛṣi, sage, or ascetic. For example, Jābāli and his pupils in the forest hermitage most certainly carry one;<sup>56</sup> even Kādambarī’s ascetic girlfriend Mahāśvetā, “who had taken the Pāśupata vow” (*pratipannapāśupatavratā*),<sup>57</sup> carries a *brahmasūtra*;<sup>58</sup> and Bhairavācārya, the royal officiant featured in the third chapter of Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita*, is also said to wear one.<sup>59</sup> Although the unorthodox and more transgressive Śaiva cults from no later than the seventh century exhibit great variety in this matter, ranging from a thread of human hair to no thread at all,<sup>60</sup> the latter case would be rather unusual. Thus, Bāṇa’s silence on the thread in the present case is likely to be intentional. This would im-

<sup>54</sup> K 228,12–15: *upasāntvanaiś ca katham api priyālāpaśātānunayaiḥ praśamam upanīya, kramena janmabhūmiḥ jātiḥ vidyāḥ ca kalatram apatyāni vibhavaḥ vayahpramāṇaḥ pravrajyāyāś ca kāraṇaḥ svayam eva prapraccha. pṛṣṭaś cāsāv avarṇayad ātmānam*. Translation based on LAYNE’s (1991: 228).

<sup>55</sup> K 228,15f.: *atītasvasāuryarūpavibhavavarṇanavācālena tena sutarām arajyata rājaputraḥ*. Translation based on LAYNE 1991: 228.

<sup>56</sup> K 42,13f. (Jābāli’s sacred thread), 37,2f. (Hārīta’s sacred thread) etc.

<sup>57</sup> K 131,20. The Pāśupata vow is known from the *Pāśupatasūtras*, a short scripture from the first or second century CE that prescribes an ascetic kind of worship of Śiva Paśupati (see ACHARYA 2011). Originally, the Pāśupata vow was restricted to Brahmin males, and Mahāśvetā appears to represent a later stage of the cult’s doctrine.

<sup>58</sup> K 130,18.

<sup>59</sup> Ed. FÜHRER 1909: 164, 16. On Bhairavācārya, see below, n. 74.

<sup>60</sup> See *Brahmayāmalatantra* 21.1–123.

ply that the author denies this “holy man” a proper socio-religious status, because it would seem inappropriate for a such a “pseudo-saint,” to use Smith’s pungent rendering here, or perhaps a Dravidian.<sup>61</sup> In any case, the literary ruse of disregarding the sacred thread adds to the general picture of the temple dweller as a worshipper of the powerful goddess but also as someone who himself lacks every trace of power and authority, an amusing but eventually insignificant character. It also adds to the ambiguous identity of the nameless, old man whose social status and proper function in the temple remains undiscussed.

The ways in which the “holy man” is represented does not command anyone’s respect. On the contrary, by mentioning neither his name nor his *varṇa*, the description shows signs of irreverence and is thoroughly amusing or at best piteous. Amusement is not merely the modern reader’s impression, for upon sight of the old man Candrāpīḍa has to “laugh for quite a while” (*sucīram jahāsa*). He visibly smiles despite his pangs of separation from Kādambarī<sup>62</sup> and although he is depicted as a rather serene character in other parts of the story.<sup>63</sup> Eventually, however, he restrains himself and has his army stop making fun (*upahasant*) of the poor fellow.<sup>64</sup> The occasional lay temple visitors also have fun (*viḍambana*) with him. During the

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<sup>61</sup> According to Medhātithi’s *Manubhāṣya* and Kumāriḷa’s *Tantravārttikā*, adherents of the Śaiva Mantramārga were to be considered outside the Veda (SANDERSON 2015: 160f.). According to *Manusmṛti* and other sources (see HALBFASS 1988: 176, n. 13), *draviḍas* and *daradas* (from the Afghan region) as well as *pahlavas* (Persians) etc. are not entitled to wear the sacred thread, since they are excluded from the *varṇa* system. The *Skandapurāṇa* and many other sources, on the other hand, list *draviḍas* as a fivefold group of Brahmins (*pañcadraviḍa*, as opposed to the group of *pañcagaḍa*) that is said to be found south of the Vindhya mountains and to comprise *draviḍas* as a sub-group (DESHPANDE 2010).

<sup>62</sup> K 228, 10f.

<sup>63</sup> For example, he is described as “very steadfast by nature” (*atidhīraprakṛti*, K 80,5), even when the astonishing horse Indrāyudha is first shown to him.

<sup>64</sup> K 228, 11f. (with a minor variation in the eds. SASTRI<sup>5</sup>1982 and PARAB<sup>3</sup>1908). Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.52 lists six particular kinds of laughter in order of increasing intensity. The case of Candrāpīḍa would be *hasita*, the second variety and the second last intensive: “the full but silent smile in which the teeth show, the eyes seem to grin, and the cheeks are full with pleasure” (SIEGEL 1989: 46). It is apt for refined persons. The soldiers’ laughter would be *upahasita*, the fourth and a rather crude form of laughter according to Bharata’s list.

spring festivals, for instance, they are said to marry him to an old servant (*vṛddhadāsī*), whom they carry around on a broken bedstead.<sup>65</sup>

What exactly is so amusing about the “holy man”? And what is the reason for his tragicomical lack of authority? As explained above, he is presented as quite the opposite of what would be expected from a secluded hermit, a severe ascetic, or a powerful officiant. The old man thus represents anything but an idealised and normative character. By twisting and inverting the ideal and in order to ease the sinister sentiment of the whole intervention (*prakāri*), Bāṇa makes him the laughing stock of temple visitors, including Candrāpīḍa. In fact, several aspects of his appearance, behaviour, and skills are likely to arouse laughter.

First of all, in Bāṇa’s audience his physical appearance is destined to arouse amusement rather than respect. He has a hunchback and a crooked neck. His dark body is speckled with wounds and blisters, and he has protruding teeth. One of his arms is shrivelled from inadvertently and severely beating himself with a brick (*iṣṭakāprahāra*), and the fingers of one of his hands are contracted from another mistake. Monkeys have wounded his nose, a bear has scratched his head, and so on.

Secondly, he appears quite clumsy, which is the cause of much of his pitiable condition. His head, for instance, is injured from bilva fruits (*śrīphala*) falling from the trees.<sup>66</sup> Travellers and temple visitors shudder when he plays the *vīṇā*, which is accompanied by his shaking head and him humming like a mosquito.

Finally, he has a tendency to exaggerate what he undertakes. Whether it is simple prostrations at the feet of the goddess, medical treatments, magical rites, the use of elixirs (*rasāyana*) – in the end it causes him more harm than benefit. For example, he has a callus (*arbuda*) on his black forehead, resulting from the prostrations to the feet of Ambikā, the Mother-goddess;<sup>67</sup> the incessant use of a certain pungent ointment (*kaṭukavarti*)

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<sup>65</sup> K 227,21f.

<sup>66</sup> The fruits of the Bael tree (*Aegle marmelos* Correa) are common in the worship of Śiva. The edible, round fruits of about 1–2 inches in diameter have a woody shell (SAHNI 1998: 49f.). Hence, a falling fruit is likely to hurt if it hits one’s head. In contrast to this mishap, it is said of more accomplished hermits that branches from the trees bow down to offer their fruits, or that the trees’ fruits fall directly into the alms bowls of the *tapasvins*, as, e.g., in the case of Mahāśvetā (K 134,2–4) or of an eminent Pāśupata *ācārya* in Kouhala’s verse narration *Lilāvai* (v. 211–214).

<sup>67</sup> The callus is possibly an allusion to hypocrisy. In Śyāmilaka’s satirical play (*bhāṇa*) *Padatāḍitaka* (p. 26), one hypocrite, the aged “pimp” (*viṭa*) called Dayita-

increases his blindness (*timira*), and he also suffers from night blindness (*rātryandhatā*),<sup>68</sup> and although “improperly prepared elixirs have caused him periodic fevers,”<sup>69</sup> instead of a prolongation of his life span, he is said to have “developed a morbid inclination towards mineralogy.”<sup>70</sup> Hence one might suspect creeping poisoning induced by the improper use of elixirs and substances as a possible cause for his grotesque behaviour.<sup>71</sup>

Whatever the exact cause may be, the “holy man” appears like an “officiant with inauspicious signs” (*ācārya aśubhalakṣaṇa*). A list of such characteristics can be found, for instance, in the Śaiva Tantric scripture *Svacchandatantra*,<sup>72</sup> which defines the type of officiants that should be preferred and those that should be rejected. If this is applied to our Caṇḍikā devotee, we find that more than half of the items in the list can easily be related to him either positively or negatively. For instance, an officiant who is inclined to wrath (*krodhana*, v. 1.16a) or who has protruding teeth (*dantura*, 1.16.c), both of which is said of the old man,<sup>73</sup> should be avoided, whereas one who is polite (*dākṣiṇyaśmyuta*, 1.14d) or “whose whole body is adorned” (*sarvāvayavabhūṣita*, v. 1.13b), neither of which is said of the temple dweller, should be sought out. In my understanding of this *Kādambarī* passage, Bāṇa has created an amusingly exaggerated and condensed portrait of a follower of the Śaiva *dharma* who displays a great number of possible characteristics of a “officiant with inauspicious signs.” Indeed, neither disciples nor devotees are mentioned, and neither Candrāpīḍa asks for the “holy man’s” advice, nor does the latter ask for the help of the prince.

The religious tradition that underlies Bāṇa’s depiction of the old temple dweller was examined by Shaman Hatley, who identified it as that of the

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viṣṇu, is said to “have his forehead and knees hard with triple calluses (...) due to his worship of gods” (*devārcanāt ... kiṅatrayakaṭhoralalāṭajānuḥ*).

<sup>68</sup> K 226,16f. and 227, 16 respectively.

<sup>69</sup> K 226,19f.: *asamyakkṛtarasāyanānītākālajvara*.

<sup>70</sup> K 227,1f.: *saṃjātadhātuvādavāyū*. In the Āyurvedic medical sense of the term, *vāyu* denotes a “morbid affection of the windy humour” (as it is translated in APTE’s Sanskrit dictionaries) that manifests itself in different kinds of mental disturbance. Accordingly, it is glossed in the commentaries with *vātavyādhi* (“affection of the wind element”), *vikriyā* (“seizure, disease”), and similar expressions.

<sup>71</sup> In a note on Kṣemendra’s *Kalāvīlāsa* 8.11–12, VASUDEVA (2005: 367) links serious “behavioural oddities” of goldsmiths to their frequent use of mercury and alkaline salts.

<sup>72</sup> *Svacchandatantra* 1.13cd–18ab. I thank Somdev Vasudeva for this reference.

<sup>73</sup> K 227,10 and 228,1 (*krodha*); also *ibid.*: 227,9f. (*atiroṣaṇatā*) and p. 228,10 (*kupita*).



Bhairavatantras.<sup>74</sup> These scriptures of early Tantric Śaivism elaborate on many of the magical and power-seeking practices that are adopted by Bāṇa's "holy man." Where are these scriptures to be placed within the history of Śaiva traditions?

According to a model developed by Alexis Sanderson,<sup>75</sup> early Śaivism that was followed not by laymen but by initiate ascetics had developed into two major branches by the fifth century: the Atimārga, the "Path Beyond," i.e., beyond the orthodox Brahmanical system and therefore considered non-Vedic and antinomian, and the Mantramārga, or the "Path of Mantras." The Atimārga was centred on the worship of Śiva, and the main goal of its ascetic adherents was liberation from rebirth, especially so in the earlier developments that are known as the Pāśupata and Lākula traditions. This tradition was open only for initiated Brahmin males. A later development of the "Path Beyond" was widely known as the tradition of the Kāpālikas, ascetic devotees of Śiva "with the skull" (*kapālin*), that is, the skull of the beheaded god Brahmā. One of the more noticeable ascetic features of Kāpālika practice was the imitation of their god's external appearance by means of their characteristic use of skull cups in rituals and as begging bowls as well as their performance of cremation grounds practices. Initiation into the Kāpālika cult was possible also for women and non-Brahmins. Out of the Atimārga then emerged the Mantramārga, which also transgressed the Vedic, Brahmanical socio-religious order and developed a number of new ritual technologies aimed at accomplishing supernatural powers (*siddhi*).<sup>76</sup> The Mantramārga includes various branches, from the more orthodox to the more transgressive. Some of these, including the Bhairavatantras discussed here, centre on the worship of Śiva in his manifes-

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<sup>74</sup> HATLEY 2007: 73–82. The cult of Bhairavācārya in the *Harṣacarita* is also identified as belonging to the Bhairavatantras. See also SMITH 2009, who compares the *draviḍadhārmika* to Bhairavācārya. The latter officiated in the South and performed important rituals for King Puṣyabhūti, a probably fictive ancestor of Harṣa. He displays an "ostensible contrast" to the *dhārmika* (SMITH 2009: 156), since he has by far more power, authority, and success. See also BAKKER 2007: 4 on Bhairavācārya and BAKKER 2014: 78–80 on Puṣyabhūti.

<sup>75</sup> SANDERSON 2006: 145–158 and 2009: 45–53, which improve on parts of the systematisation presented in SANDERSON 1988. For scriptural sources of the several Śaiva traditions, see SANDERSON 2014.

<sup>76</sup> HATLEY (2007: 74–76) refers to scriptures like the Bhairavatantras, the *Brahmayāmalatantra*, and Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* that are connected with these and other Tantric elements. On subdivisions of the Mantramārga, see HATLEY 2007: 7f. and SANDERSON 2004: 229.

tation as skull-bearing Bhairava (“the Dreadful”) as well as his female consort, variously called Durgā, Aghoreśvarī, Cāṇḍī, and similar names indicating the goddess’ fierceness and wrath. Another branch within the Śaiva initiatory systems is an even more esoteric “path,” the Kulamārga, which centred on various hierarchical “clans” (*kula*) of female divinities and spirits (*yoginīs*) and permeated much of the Mantramārgic Bhairava cult.<sup>77</sup>

The Caṇḍikā passage in the *Kādambarī* appears to most prominently allude to the Mantramārgic Bhairavatantras. First of all, the “holy man” who lives in the temple is depicted as a devotee of the fierce goddess called Caṇḍikā, Durgā, or Ambikā, “good mother.” Among his possessions is a “hymn to Durgā recorded on a small tablet (or ribbon),”<sup>78</sup> and “with his prayers he importunes Durgā for the boon of sovereignty over South India.”<sup>79</sup>

An interesting passage in terms of identifying the religious traditions associated with the “holy man” refers to a manuscript in his possession, namely “a written record of the doctrine of Śiva Mahākāla<sup>80</sup> based on the teaching of an aged (and eminent) Pāśupata.”<sup>81</sup> This passage features the term *mahāpāśupata* (lit. “eminent Pāśupata”), a term that appears in various literary and epigraphical sources. However, it has not yet been clearly established which group of Atimārgic practitioners this refers to, and it may have been a more widely-used term. Nevertheless, if we accept this reading here,<sup>82</sup> it could refer to a kind of practitioner closer to the more Kāpālika-type of Śaivism within the Bhairavatantra branch. That this is indeed the case is strengthened by the fact that the *Brahmayāmalatantra*, a Śaiva Tantra from the sixth to seventh centuries, contains a chapter with the same title as the manuscript of our “holy man,” namely “the doctrine of Śiva

<sup>77</sup> SANDERSON 1988: 668–672 and 679f.

<sup>78</sup> K 226,22: *paṭṭikālikhitadurgāstotreṇa*. See TĀNTRIKĀBHIDHĀNAKOŚA III s.v. *paṭa* and *paṭṭa* (pp. 371–373). The size of the writing surface suggests a rather short hymn (*stotra*).

<sup>79</sup> K 226,20f.: *dakṣiṇāpathādhirājyavaraprārthanākadarthitadurgeṇa*.

<sup>80</sup> Śiva Mahākāla and the goddess Caṇḍikā are also linked in Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita* (HATLEY 2007: 80f.).

<sup>81</sup> K 226,23–227, 1: *jīrṇamahāpāśupatopadeśalikhitamahākālamatena*.

<sup>82</sup> The eds. by PARAB and SASTRI omit the honorific *mahā* and read *jīrṇapāśupatopadeśa-*. LORENZEN (1972: 18f.) discusses the expression *mahāpāśupata* in the *Kādambarī* and other works of Sanskrit literature as a technical term denoting either Pāśupatas who practiced the “great observance” (*mahāvratā*), i.e. Kāpālikas, or Śaivas following the Kālamukha doctrines. BAKKER (2014: 150), drawing on a passage from the earliest part of the Niśvāsattva corpus (ca. 6<sup>th</sup> c.), identifies the Mahāpāśupatas exclusively with the Kāpālikas.

Mahākāla.”<sup>83</sup> This dual association with the Atimārgic Kāpālika branch as well as the Mantramārgic Bhairavatantras is appropriate, since, for instance, the *Brahmayāmalatantra* itself comprises Kāpālika doctrines of the Atimārga and several characteristics of the Mantramārga.<sup>84</sup> Sectarian borders generally were somewhat fluid during this period, both in etic as well as in emic accounts of the time.<sup>85</sup> For example, it is noted that the Kāpālikas were the most transgressive group of the Atimārga branch of Śaivism but also part of the Mantramārga. Their striking appearance soon made them stock characters in stage plays and works of narrative literature.<sup>86</sup>

Bāṇa’s “holy man” is also said to “know a thousand wonder-tales of the mountain Śrīparvata,”<sup>87</sup> a pilgrimage site located in today’s Andhra Pradesh. In literary sources, the earliest of which are Bāṇa’s *Kādambārī* and Bhavabhūti’s stage play *Mālatīmādhava* (eighth century), this site is frequently mentioned in connection with Kāpālikas.<sup>88</sup>

Apart from this, the “holy man” is also said to be a collector of palm-leaf booklets<sup>89</sup> “which contain magical formulas from scoundrel manuals.”<sup>90</sup> These manuals (*tantra*) and formulas (*mantra*) are not connected with a certain Śaiva tradition, but they represent another attempt by the old man to acquire supernatural powers and add to his general dubiousness. The old man’s worship thus seems to be motivated at least in part by

<sup>83</sup> HATLEY 2007: 78 and 80f.; see also KISS 2015: 24 and 26.

<sup>84</sup> SANDERSON 2014 : 39f.

<sup>85</sup> SANDERSON (2015: 49) describes the case of permeable borders of tradition in the Kālī cult that “remained both Kaula in its self-definition and firmly Kāpālika in its practice.”

<sup>86</sup> A large number of Sanskrit and Prakrit works of fiction from the seventh and later centuries that feature Kāpālika characters are introduced and discussed in LORENZEN 1972: 48–71. The earliest literary description of a Kāpālika ascetic is probably the description of a young woman in the Prakrit anthology *Gāhāsattasāī*, the stanzas of which were collected during the first centuries CE (see LORENZEN 1972: 13 and TÖRZSÖK 2011: 355).

<sup>87</sup> K 227,3f.: *śrīparvatāścaryavārtāśahasrābhijñena*.

<sup>88</sup> See LORENZEN 1972: 18–20 and 50–52 respectively. The connection between this site and various Śaiva cults, most prominently that of the Kāpālikas, is also evident in inscriptions and other non-fictional works, like the early biographies of Śaṅkara (ibid.: p. 31f.) and the twelfth-century chronicle *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* (ibid.: 66).

<sup>89</sup> For codicologists it may be worth mentioning that these palm-leaf manuscripts (*tālapatra-...-pustikā*) are “written with smoked red lac” (*dhūmaraktālaktakākṣara*).

<sup>90</sup> K 226,22f.: *kuhakatantramantra* (ed. SASTRI omits *-mantra*). On this line, see HATLEY 2007: 78, n. 144. A variety of more serious books are used in Jābālī’s forest hermitage, where they are read out loud (*vācyamānavividhapustaka*, p. 40,5).

worldly intentions rather than by soteriological aims. This assumption is supported by a number of other traits, like his pursuit of supernatural powers (*vibhava*) and accomplishments (*sādhana*) for which he resorts to mineralogy, elixirs, ointments, and magical formulas (*mantra*).

Furthermore, certain rituals for the worship of the female goddesses, also called Mothers (*mātr*), require female partners (*dūtī*).<sup>91</sup> This may be alluded to when it is said that the old man throws magical powder (*cūrṇa*) at old mendicant women (*jaratpravrajitā*) who happen to stay in the temple in order to make them submissive (*vaśīkaraṇa*),<sup>92</sup> for his celibacy is said to be merely compulsory.<sup>93</sup>

It is these dubious practices that reflect considerable discredit on the “holy man’s” more sincere spiritual gains like his “unwavering self-identification with Śiva,” a line that seems predestined to cause trouble in the course of textual transmission.<sup>94</sup> In the sense of “meditative identification” this is an element found in Tantric Śaivism and bears clear soteriological connotations.<sup>95</sup> However, a more general, and rather primary, meaning of the phrase would be “pride of being a devotee of Śiva.”<sup>96</sup> It is likely possible that Bāṇa intended both meanings as a pun (*śleṣa*). This would make the “holy man” appear liberated and haughty at the same time; or rather, if one of the two possible interpretations was to be stressed while still retaining an idea of the other, it would create the ambiguity of presenting him either as an imitator (with only little cause for his pride) or as possibly dangerous (an odd person that may really be a powerful ascetic).

<sup>91</sup> SANDERSON 1988: 680.

<sup>92</sup> HATLEY (2007: 74) prefers to link this line exclusively to the Bhairavatantras for its reference to the ritual use of powders.

<sup>93</sup> K 227,8f. He has adopted “the celibacy of horses” (*turagabrahmacarya*), known as such because a stud is chaste only in the absence of mares (see the Sanskrit commentaries in PARAB <sup>3</sup>1908: 399,33f. and SASTRI <sup>5</sup>1982: 645,23–25, and KANE’s notes on p. 234). It is also said that the old man madly longs for heavenly maidens (*vakṣakanyakā*) but fails to successfully attract one (K 227,2f.).

<sup>94</sup> I follow the reading *avimuktaśaivābhīmānena* in the eds. by KANE (1911: 97,9f.), KALE (<sup>4</sup>1968: 339,5), and SASTRI (<sup>5</sup>1982: 645,3) (including the editors’ commentaries). K 227,5 and PARAB <sup>3</sup>1908: 399,6f. read *avamukta-*, i.e., “loosened, let go” instead of “unwavering.”

<sup>95</sup> HATLEY’s (2007: 75) interpretation of *śaivābhīmāna* as a technical term.

<sup>96</sup> This interpretation was accepted in the notes by KANE (1911: 234) and is in accord with a gloss by Bhānucandra (*aḥam eva śaivo nānyaḥ*) and a similar one in the *Candrakalā* commentary (*śaivo ’ham ity avalepah*).

Historically noteworthy is Bāṇa's reference to strings of the so-called *rudrākṣa*-beads, the dried seeds of the tree in the genus *Elaeocarpus*, which is widely used even today. As we are told, the "holy man's" "tuft of his hair hangs down to his ears, looking like a string of Rudra beads."<sup>97</sup> This is one of the earliest pieces of textual evidence for the use of *rudrākṣamālās*.<sup>98</sup> A variety of rosaries or strings of various materials are mentioned in the *Kādambarī*. The Brahmin sage Jābāli and his pupils are said to have strings made from ordinary *rudrākṣa*-beads,<sup>99</sup> but they also have some made from jewels,<sup>100</sup> which are known since no later than Kālidāsa's time.<sup>101</sup> Hārīta, Jābāli's most eminent pupil, has one "hanging down from his right ear."<sup>102</sup> Many more such strings are mentioned in the *Kādambarī*, some of which are also used by female ascetics.<sup>103</sup> Note again that the "holy man" does not wear any such string of beads.

<sup>97</sup> K 226,12: *karnāvataṃsasamsthāpitayā ca cūḍayā rudrākṣamālikām iva dadhānena*. According to normative sources, *rudrākṣa*-strings are to be worn on the wrist, chest, or head, not on the ear (see, e.g., *Śivadharmasāstra* 11.19; see also TĀNTRIKĀBHIDHĀNAKOŚA I, p. 79f., s.v. *akṣamālā*). However, in the *Kādambarī* another string is mentioned hanging from the ear of a most eminent ascetic (see below, n. 103).

<sup>98</sup> According to Dominic Goodall in a personal communication, November 2013.

<sup>99</sup> Jābāli has one of these (*rudrākṣavalaya*, K 43,5f.), and many of his pupils in the *āśrama* count the beads of their strings (*gaṇanā rudrākṣavalayeṣu*, p. 41,4f.) that have been strung together there (*grathyamānākṣamāla*, p. 40,9f.).

<sup>100</sup> Jābāli is said to have one "made from pieces of pure crystal" (*amala-sphaṭikaśakalaghaṭitam akṣavalayam*, K 42,15f.). Puṇḍarīka holds one in his hand and counts its beads (*sphaṭikākṣamālikām kareṇa kalayantam*, K 140,1), and Mahāśvetā will find and wear it later (K 145,20–146, 1).

<sup>101</sup> *Kumārasambhava* 6.6 describes the mythological seven Ṛṣis as wearing "rosaries made of gems" (*ratnākṣasūtra*, transl. SMITH). Māgha's *Śiśupālavadhā* 1.9 mentions "strings of clear crystal beads" (*acchasphaṭikākṣamālā*) in the description of God Nārada.

<sup>102</sup> K 36,18f.: *sphāṭikenākṣavalayena dakṣiṇāśravaṇavilambinā*.

<sup>103</sup> The Pāśupata girls (*pāśupatavratadhāriṇī*) that live with Kādambarī are also busy with "turning their rosaries" (*akṣamālāparivartana*, K 208,19f.), and even a lotus pond (*kamalīnī*) in Jābāli's *āśrama* is metaphorically said to be adorned by "circles of honey bees (resembling) rosaries" (*madhukaramaṇḍalākṣavalaya*, K 48,7). Bāṇa's preference for *valaya* (instead of *mālā* or *mālikā*) may be explained by his characteristic predilection for short syllables (see HUECKSTEDT 1985: 139–148).

### Social aspects

While the prince probably is a rare person to talk to, the “holy man” certainly does not live in isolation. Daily life in his temple is animated by monkeys, black antelopes, goats, rats, cobras, cocks, and crows,<sup>104</sup> but also by travellers, mendicants, village folk, and Śabara tribals. The old temple dweller however is unable and sometimes unwilling to fulfil any of their needs. Every once in a while, he is wrestled down by a passersby (*adhvaga*) after unsuccessfully attempting to drive him away from the temple, which is also the reason for his crooked spine. He has the habit of scolding locals (*janapada*) for no reason, and his bad temper often results in blows and wounded limbs. He throws mustard seeds (*siddhārthaka*) that were made ritually effective by the invocation of magical formulas (*abhi-mantrita*) towards those possessed by night fiends (*piśāca*). He does not succeed with the exorcism, however, and a slap in the face is what he earns instead.<sup>105</sup> This together with the above-mentioned old, mendicant women and the remains of the offerings made by the tribesmen indicates that the temple is far from being inaccessible. In fact, the Caṇḍikā temple is easily reached by all kinds of folk, and even children come to the temple and play their pranks on the old Dravidian. It is worth noting that there is no mention of any initiatory community, pupils, or temple employees.<sup>106</sup>

The “holy man’s” social contacts are neither restricted to the Caṇḍikā temple nor to followers of the Śaiva faith. For example, the above-mentioned quack who gifted him the magical ointment (*siddhāñjana*) and an ill-educated Buddhist mendicant (*duḥśikṣitaśramaṇa*, if we accept this reading) who recommended to him a mark on the forehead (*tilaka*) to pro-

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<sup>104</sup> These largely ill-reputed animals make up the satirical counterpart of the elephants and lions that are said to live in perfect harmony in Jābāli’s *āśrama* (K 38,15–40,21). This is also where the orphaned parrot chick Vaiśampāyana was raised, which plays a major part in the nested narration of the *Kādambarī*.

<sup>105</sup> K 227,4f. In the second chapter (*ucchvāsa*) of his *Harṣacarita*, Bāṇa states that “mustard seeds were strewn on his head” (*śikhāsaktasiddhārthaka*, FÜHRER 1909: 91,8f.) as a blessing at the moment he set out for his journey to the royal court. In another passage of the work (at the end of the third *ucchvāsa*), mustard is mentioned in connection with the Mahākālahṛdaya ritual. In this ritual, the eminent Śaiva officiant Bhairavācārya uses black sesame seeds (*kṛṣṇatila*, FÜHRER 1909: 164,9) besides mustard seeds, the latter of which are said to have protective power (*rakṣāsarṣapa*, FÜHRER 1909: 164,2).

<sup>106</sup> For literature on maintenance workers in ancient Indian temples, see LORENZETTI 2015: 138, n. 159.

mote his powers<sup>107</sup> could have been encountered not only in the Caṇḍikā temple but virtually anywhere. In any case, the old man himself is known to have visited other holy places (*āyatana*) to lay down and fast at the feet of the images installed there (*pratiśayita* or *pratiśayana*).<sup>108</sup> However, all this was in vain and he was left unrewarded by the goddess, which is just another instance of his blatant lack of success in all his undertakings.

The peculiar and ambiguous character of the fellow living in the Caṇḍikā temple fails to meet the expectations of a proper holy man. An idea of the ambiguity, perhaps even irony, in Bāṇa's use of the term *dhārmika* can perhaps best be conveyed by the use of quotation marks, as it has been done throughout this paper. To speak of a "holy man," that is, the so-called "holy man," in the Caṇḍikā episode contradicts neither the meaning of the word *dhārmika* nor the old man's behaviour. At the same time, it is less judgemental than "pseudo-saint" and conveys more of a good-humoured wink.

### Geography

After leaving the temple and the "holy man" at the very end of the forest interlude, it takes Candrāpīḍa "but a few days" (*alpair evāhobhiḥ*) to reach Ujjayinī.<sup>109</sup> He rides his horse Indrāyudha ("Indra's weapon"), which he

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<sup>107</sup> There are various readings of this line, including differences in how the mark was obtained: either from an "ill-educated (Buddhist) mendicant" (*duḥśikṣitaśramaṇa-*, eds. SASTRI<sup>5</sup>1982: 664,2 and KANE 1911: 97,1f., including the commentary *Candrakalā* in the former [p. 644,13f.] and KANE's notes [p. 232f.] in the latter edition) or after "listening to an ill-educated one" (*duḥśikṣitaśravaṇa-*, eds. PARAB<sup>3</sup>1908: 399,1, including Bhānucandra's commentary, p. 399,12 and K 226,21). There may be a joke in the phrase *duḥśikṣitaśramaṇādiṣṭatila-* ("a mark on the forehead recommended by an ill-educated [Buddhist] mendicant"), which lies in the juxtaposition of the mark on the forehead and the Buddhist mendicant (*śramaṇa*, most likely understood as a disparaging term to denote a Buddhist monk in Bāṇa's time). For forehead marks are particularly uncommon with Buddhist traditions. The reading *śravaṇa* might have been motivated by the need to resolve this apparent incongruity.

<sup>108</sup> The former reading *pratiśayita* is accepted by PETERSON (K 227,22). In the preceding description of the temple area, Bāṇa fancies (by way of an *utprekṣā*) that black antelopes seem as if they had adopted the same practice of "importuning" (*pratiśayita*, K 226,6f.; likewise SASTRI<sup>5</sup>1982: 642,1). PARAB<sup>3</sup>1908: 397,9 reads *pratiśayana*, which is glossed with *pratitalpa* by Bhānucandra (p. 397,33); SASTRI comments his reading with *kṛtapratiśayana* (p. 642,9).

<sup>109</sup> K 229,12–14.

received as a gift from the King of Persia (*pārasīkādhīpati*) and which had magically emerged from the sea.<sup>110</sup> This is the same horse he rode all the way from Kailāsa, far more than a thousand kilometres covering mountains, river fords, and woodlands. While it is futile to calculate the distances a fictitious character can travel on a supernatural horse, we may assume that the army accompanying Candrāpīḍa without supernatural mounts will have kept with its commander's pace in more mundane dimensions. Given the storytelling is plausible and consistent, the Caṇḍikā temple should thus be located somewhere in or near the ancient region of Malwa, on the route from the (Trans-)Himalayan mountains, i.e., north of Ujjayinī.

This city is well-known from a great number of works of Sanskrit literature and plays a central role in the history of early Śaivism. According to Kauṇḍinya's commentary on the *Pāśupatasūtras*,<sup>111</sup> God (*bhagavat*) descended to Kāyāvatarāṇa (or Kārohaṇa, today's Karvan, Gujarat) in the form of a Brahmin and walked northeast to Ujjayinī (today's Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, about 380 kilometres on modern roads). There he initiated his only pupil Kuśika. According to the original *Skandapurāṇa*, which was also in existence in Bāṇa's time,<sup>112</sup> Śiva alias Lakulīśa descended to earth in Kārohaṇa, and after granting yogic perfection to a Brahmin called Somaśarman he went to Ujjayinī and initiated Kauśika. After that, Lākulin went north and initiated Gārgya and Mitra in Jāmbumārga and Mathurā respectively as well as a fourth pupil in Kānyakubja. All four were taught the *pañcārtha* doctrine by Śiva/Lākulin.<sup>113</sup>

The temple of Śiva Mahākāla in Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* is said to be near Ujjayinī and somewhere on the way north to Daśapura (today's Mandasor) in the Malwa region.<sup>114</sup> These and other examples that predate the

<sup>110</sup> K 78,2–4. The horse's former "abode in the sea" (*udadhinivāsa*) is mentioned on p. 79,3f., its "roaming in the ocean" (*jalanidhisamcaraṇa*) on p. 79,8.

<sup>111</sup> Kauṇḍinya's *Pañcārthabhāṣya* ad *Pāśupatasūtra* 1.1 (3,15–4,12); see also BAKKER 2000: 14 and BISSCHOP 2006: 45.

<sup>112</sup> The earliest manuscript of the *Skandapurāṇa* is dated 810 CE (see YOKOCHI 2013: 3). Text-critical evidence, however, points to a date of its first redaction around 600 CE (BAKKER 2014: 3f.), possibly in the period between 570 to 620 CE (ibid.: 137).

<sup>113</sup> BISSCHOP 2006: 44–50, BAKKER 2007: 1–3. Besides the accounts from the *Skandapurāṇa*, evidence for the Pāśupata history in Mathurā is also well attested from a pillar inscription dated 360 CE (see BHANDARKAR 1931–32 and BISSCHOP 2006: 45f.).

<sup>114</sup> *Meghadūta* 1.36–39. Ujjayinī, alias Viśālā, is mentioned in vv. 1.28 and 31, the ancient city Daśapura in v. 1.50. On the air route from one city to the other is



composition of the *Kādambarī* demonstrate that the Caṇḍikā temple is situated in one of the historical centres of early Śaivism, and Bāṇa's placing it there is certainly not purely fictional.

### Imperial history and humour

Imperial history suggests an alternative approach to the interpretation of the Caṇḍikā passage. In consideration of the historical situation of the author and his patron King Harṣa, the unflattering depiction – to say the least – of the “holy man” and his temple might be in debt to Harṣa's temporary defeat by Pulakeśin II, the well-known ruler from the South Indian Cālukya dynasty, in the year 630 CE.<sup>115</sup> Since the Caṇḍikā temple should be located somewhere north of the Narmadā river and within the reign of Harṣa, Bāṇa possibly ridiculed the temple dweller in order to level criticism against South Indian traditions which were gaining foothold in the north. He did this by deconstructing, as it were, the southerner's Tantric cults by denying it seriousness and power, and he did this with good sense of humour. Despite the political conflicts, the representation of the temple and the Dravidian shows no obvious traits of hostility or malice. Finally, it ends on a jovial and conciliatory note. In fact, Candrāpīḍa does not leave without leaving plenty of riches, thus fulfilling a desire of the old “holy man.”

### Closing remarks on poetic license

One final word on the fictional character of the *Kādambarī* may be in place here. It is not despite but exactly because the *Kādambarī* is a fictional work of literature that some of its descriptive passages can be so remarkably naturalistic. In the episode of the “holy man” (as in many other passages), Bāṇa makes use of poetic license not in order to fantasise in the sense of purely diverting from real-world phenomena, but, on the contrary, to represent these phenomena more vividly and in a more concentrated form than this would be possible in non-fictional accounts. The ambiguity of the religious life of the “holy man,” his eclectic use of rites and practices, the utter

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situated the temple of Mahākāla, also called Śūlin (v. 1.37), Caṇḍīśvara (1.36), and Paśupati (1.39), the husband of Bhavānī (ibid.).

<sup>115</sup> This connection was suggested to me by Csaba Dezső. The complex situation of Harṣa's military conflicts with many other dynasties throughout the Indian subcontinent is tentatively reconstructed in BAKKER 2014: 104–113. Compare KULKE & ROTHERMUND 2010: 141; SASTRI 1999: 134f.

lack of success in all his efforts, and his relieving but also tragic lack of power have sprung from the author's lively imagination as much as from his rare observation skills and an outstanding literary talent.

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