

3 Manuscripts, Ritual, and the Medieval Literature on Dharma

One of the fields of Sanskrit literary production in which the topic of the gift of knowledge has received considerable attention is that of the Dharmaśāstra, literally ‘scholastic literature on Dharma’, which by the turn of the first millennium and throughout the late medieval era found its main vehicle of expression in works such as the commentaries and digests interpreting and collecting authoritative sources. The composition of more or less systematic expositions on the various aspects of Dharma attributed to the authority of great Vedic sages—such as the *Manusmṛti*, the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, or the *Bṛhaspatismṛti*—which characterized the nature of Dharmaśāstra production from the first millennium BCE onwards, had thus given way to the emergence of forms of ‘secondary literature’; in the case of the commentaries, the main scope of this secondary literature was that of commenting upon the primary sources on the knowledge of Dharma; in the case of the digests, that of selecting and arranging those sources thematically, while interspersing the texts with a few original glosses.⁵⁶¹ The digests, collectively referred to as Dharmānibandhas (‘composition’ or ‘digest’ on Dharma), are by far among the most informative sources for the study of ritual, customs, and legal procedures; they can be primarily likened to anthologies of quotations from texts that are considered authoritative on the vast subject of Dharma, namely those falling into the expansive category of ‘Smṛti’. These are the above-mentioned works on Dharmaśāstra, to which traditional and modern scholarship may sometimes apply the word Smṛti tout court, but also the epics and the Purāṇas, which had grown into a heterogeneous, ever expanding body of literature. The topics of interest for the digest-writers (*nibandhakāra*) and their audience were most disparate: the several categories of donations, the pilgrimages to holy sites (*tīrthas*),

⁵⁶¹ This development in the literary production in the field of Dharmaśāstra is described in Olivelle 2010, especially p. 37 onward. He would place the composition of the *Manusmṛti*, which marked an important change with respect to the preceding literature on Dharma that had been composed since earlier times (the Dharmasūtras), to the first or second century CE (p. 42); other Smṛtis, such as those of Yājñavalkya, Bṛhaspati, and Viṣṇu, represent a later stage in the history of this literary genre, dating most likely from the fifth century onward. The beginning of the ‘age of commentaries and digests’ can, on the other hand, be traced in the eighth to the tenth century (see Olivelle 2010, p. 52), when the first commentaries are composed; the earliest extant digests are later (twelfth century), although this does not necessarily mean that the genre postdates the commentaries, as will be amply illustrated below.

and the appropriate time and place for the prescribed rituals, just to mention a few. Among all the subjects that are relevant to a discussion on Dharma, gifting receives special attention, and the gift of knowledge is one of the categories of gifts in which the digest-authors regularly classify their sources on *dāna*.

In order to treat this and their many other subjects, medieval authors were faced with several heterogeneous ‘primary’ sources, conveying a large amount of information and sometimes displaying reciprocal and internal contradictions. This situation had already triggered a first attempt of systematization formalized in the composition of the commentaries on Dharmaśāstra starting from the eighth century. These commentaries, while commenting upon one specific work, made regular use of quotations from other authoritative texts in order to complete and reinforce the argumentation. The reliance on quoted sources then became imposing in some commentaries (like the commentary by Aparārka on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* of the twelfth century, for which see below), where the quoted text ultimately surpassed the proper commentarial sections in length and also acquired a certain thematic independence. This development was predominant in the digests which, in the second millennium, formed the most popular literary genre among the new compositions in the field of Dharmaśāstra.⁵⁶² However, the emergence of a commentarial tradition predates the earliest known digests on Dharma.⁵⁶³ Despite the fact that no conclusive statement can be made concerning the method for dating the emergence of the digests, it can nevertheless be argued that the appearance of the latter may be stylistically dependent on the existence of the former. A view that Kane proposed and Lingat followed took into consideration precisely this stylistic continuity between commentaries and Dharmanibandhas as a possible explanation for the emergence of the digests.⁵⁶⁴ In the opinion of Kane, later commentaries that made an increasing use of quotations ultimately stimulated the composition of independent digests, which therefore cannot be unequivocally distinguished from the commentaries.

562 A sign of the popularity of this genre is also its continuity throughout history, as the production of Dharmanibandhas extends to the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Some of the latest digests of law, like the ‘Remover of the Ocean of Litigations’ (*Vivādārṇavabhañjana*) or the ‘Ocean of the Settlement of Litigations’ (*Vivādabhaṅgārṇava*), both authored by Jagannātha Tarkapañcānana at the end of the eighteenth century, were compiled at the behest of the British rulers (see Derrett 1961, pp. 85–95).

563 The commentaries of Asahāya on the *Nāradaśmṛti*, as well as those of Bhāruci and Medhātithi on the *Manusmṛti*, and Viśvarūpa’s commentary on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, belong to the earliest surviving ones, and, according to Olivelle (2010, p. 52), can all be dated to the eighth to the tenth century.

564 For references, see Kane 1968, pp. 545–46; Lingat 1993, pp. 107–11.

According to this view, the twelfth-century commentary on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* attributed to Aparārka (see below) is a case of a ‘transitional’ work bridging the two genres of the commentary and the digest. Its commentarial style can be illustrated with one example of close thematic relation to this essay. Originally, the scripture that Aparārka comments upon devotes only a few stanzas to the topic of gifting, corresponding to *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.198–216. This topic had been crucial for the Purāṇas, which were composed both at the time of the Smṛti of Yājñavalkya—whose composition Olivelle would tentatively date to approximately the fifth century⁵⁶⁵—and in the centuries separating this Smṛti from the commentator Aparārka. The commentator cannot ignore this authoritative tradition, at least not completely, and therefore uses stanza 1.208 of the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, which praises the donation of healthy cows,⁵⁶⁶ as a chance not only to quote a selection of Purāṇic passages on the gift of different kinds of cows, after a brief prose commentary, but also to start a long section dealing with the ‘great gifts’ (*mahādānas*) and the ‘mountain gifts’ (*parvatadāna*), along with other minor types of donations. The commentary on stanza 1.208 eventually amounts to 63 pages in the current printed edition of the text,⁵⁶⁷ and it consists of quotations that mostly retain only a very shallow connection to the stanza itself. The base text thus seems to function as a mere suggestion, a starting point from which Aparārka moves on to deal with related topics on the basis of more recent authorities and some of his original remarks. The same is true for Aparārka’s treatment of *vidyādāna*, which he carries out by quoting different sources—the *Bṛhaspatismṛti*, the *Yamasṛti*, the *Bhaviṣyottarapurāṇa*, the *Matsyapurāṇa*, and the *Nandipurāṇa*⁵⁶⁸—in the commentary on *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.212, a stanza dealing with the gift of the *brahman* (*brahmadāna*), which broadly corresponds to the teaching of the Veda (see § 3.2); moreover, since the verses are followed by a section on the ‘gift of the *kalpas*’ (*kalpadāna*), the stanzas on *vidyādāna* are not the only digression that Aparārka inserts in the commentary on 1.212.⁵⁶⁹

When Aparārka composed his digest, most likely in the twelfth century (but see below for more details), the genre of the Dharma digest was already in existence, as some of the earliest and most significant works belonging to this literary

565 Olivelle 2010, p. 52.

566 *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.208 (*Aparārkaṭīkā*, vol. 1 p. 302): ‘Having in whatever manner donated a cow, be it a milk cow (*dhenu*) or a cow yielding no milk (*adhenu*), devoid of diseases and plagues, the donor will be magnified in Heaven’; *yathākathaṃcid datvā gāṃ dhenum vā ’dhenum eva vā | arogām aparikṣhām dātā svarge mahiyate ||* 208.

567 *Aparārkaṭīkā*, vol. 1, pp. 302–65.

568 *Aparārkaṭīkā*, vol. 1, pp. 389–403.

569 *Aparārkaṭīkā*, vol. 1, pp. 403–406.

genre illustrate; among these are the Dharmanibandhas dealing with *dāna*—and, consequently, with the gift of knowledge. They are renowned both for their exhaustiveness and for the influence they will exert on later literature. These are the ‘Section on Gifting’ (*Dānakāṇḍa*) of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*⁵⁷⁰ by Lakṣmīdhara, minister of the king Govindacandra of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty (ruled ca. 1109–1168 CE);⁵⁷¹ the ‘Ocean of Gifting’ (*Dānasāgara*),⁵⁷² an independent text solely devoted to gifting attributed to Ballālasena, a king of the Sena dynasty ruling over modern Bengal and western Bihar (ruled ca. 1158–79 CE);⁵⁷³ and the ‘Section on Gifting’ (*Dānakhaṇḍa*) of Hemādri’s *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*,⁵⁷⁴ minister under the Yādava kings Mānadeva (ruled ca. 1260–1270 CE) and Rāmacandra (ruled ca. 1271–1311 CE).⁵⁷⁵ Besides these earlier works, other texts that contribute to our understanding of Dharmaśāstra sources on the gift of knowledge are the *Dānavivekodyota* attributed to Madanasimphadeva, tentatively identified with a fifteenth-century Rajput king from the Delhi area;⁵⁷⁶ the *Dānakriyākaumudī* of Govindānanda, a Bengali author from the first half of the sixteenth century;⁵⁷⁷ and the ‘Ray of Gifting’ (*Dānamayūkha*) of Nilakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa’s *Bhagavantabhāskara*, a work named after Bhagavantadeva, a seventeenth-century ruler of the Rajput

570 This work is divided into 14 sections, which are called ‘Section on Students’ (*Brahmacārikāṇḍa*); ‘Section on the Householders’ (*Gṛhasthakāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Constant Rituals’ (*Niyatakālakāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Funerary Rites’ (*Śrāddhakāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Gifts’ (*Dānakāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Vows’ (*Vratākāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Worship’ (*Pūjākāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Sacred Places’ (*Tīrthakāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Installation Rituals’ (*Pratiṣṭhākāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Purification’ (*Śuddhikāṇḍa*); ‘Section on the Dharma of the King’ (*Rājadharmakāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Juridical Procedures’ (*Vyavahārakāṇḍa*); ‘Section on Appeasement Rituals’ (*Śāntikāṇḍa*) and the ‘Section on Liberation’ (*Mokṣakāṇḍa*). The *Dānakāṇḍa*, previously only edited by Aiyangar 1941, has recently been republished with an English translation by Brick 2014.

571 Evaluations of the historical data on the figure of Lakṣmīdhara and his patrons, which will also be partly discussed below, are given in Kane 1975, p. 685ff., Bakker & Isaacson 2004, pp. 66–75, and Brick 2014, pp. 6–8.

572 Unlike the *Dānakāṇḍa* and the *Dānakhaṇḍa*, the *Dānasāgara* is not part of a larger work; other ‘*sāgaras*’, however, are attributed to the same author, namely the ‘Ocean of Wonders’ (*Adbhutasāgara*), the ‘Ocean of Custom’ (*Ācārasāgara*), and the ‘Ocean of Installations’ (*Pratiṣṭhāsāgara*).

573 On Ballālasena, see Kane 1975, p. 730ff., and Majumdar 1971, pp. 228–30.

574 The *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* is divided into the ‘Section on Religious Observance’ (*Vratākhaṇḍa*); ‘Section on Gifts’ (*Dānakhaṇḍa*); ‘Section on the Remainings’ (*Parīṣeṣakhaṇḍa*); ‘Section on Sacred Places’ (*Tīrthakhaṇḍa*); and ‘Section on Liberation’ (*Mokṣakhaṇḍa*).

575 On the historical background against which Hemādri’s work has to be understood, see Kane 1975, p. 749ff., Schmiedchen 2014, p. 325ff. (on the Yādavas of Devagiri), and below.

576 Shastri 1905, p. XVIII, Kane 1948, pp. XI–XII, and Kane 1975, p. 806.

577 Chakravarti 1915, pp. 355–56 and Kane 1975, pp. 882–89

clan of the Seṅgara in the historical region of Bundelkhand.⁵⁷⁸ The special importance of the Dharmanibandhas lies in the fact that these works are proof of the state of knowledge and relevance given to a certain topic in the period of their composition, which in many cases can be assessed with a fair degree of certainty; moreover, chiefly being based on quotations from earlier texts, the digests on Dharma also contribute enormously to understanding the previous stages of the tradition, which the digest-authors present us as a pre-selected and arranged set of sources. Some of these, in spite of their importance in medieval times, are no longer extant in direct transmission, or have only survived in different recensions.⁵⁷⁹ Dharmanibandhas, therefore, prove to be an effective guide to reconstructing, investigating, and digging out information from a partly lost body of traditional literature that plays a fundamental role in depicting our view of the Indian medieval religious landscape.

The fact that the majority of the works that have to be considered for this study of the gift of knowledge were associated with leading political figures, and are also among the main compositions ever written on the topic of gifting in Indian societies,⁵⁸⁰ merits attention. The earliest works, to which we should also add Aparārka's commentary, are systematically accompanied by terse self-reflective statements by the authors who introduce their work and their patrons—or their ancestors, in the case of kings (see below)—in the prefatory verses of their works. Moreover, the status of the earliest works, those of Aparārka, Lakṣmīdhara, Ballālasena, and Hemādri, all dateable from the twelfth to the early fourteenth century, is particularly relevant for the assessment of the digests as a genre, and in order to understand their historical significance in the cultural milieu of late medieval India. This is due to the fact that, in spite of the existence of

578 Shastri 1913, p. 23, and Kane 1975, pp. 938–41.

579 Notable is the case of the *Nandipurāṇa*, on which the chapters on *vidyādāna* heavily rely (see chapter 2), and of which no manuscripts have survived. Some of the frequently quoted Dharmaśāstra works, like the *Bṛhaspatismṛti* and the *Yamasmṛti*, also share the same fate as the *Nandipurāṇa*, namely not being extant in manuscripts. In numerous other cases, like many of the quotations from the *Garuḍapurāṇa* that will be mentioned in the coming pages, we know of a work with that name, but these verses are no longer traceable in the text of the Purāṇas as we know it today. When it was not possible to trace the text back to the original sources, I have identified the stanzas by numbering them according to their position in the chapter on the gift of knowledge, and added to the number a siglum corresponding to the first three letters of the name of the digest-writer from whose work those verses are cited.

580 Note that I have excluded from this survey the 'Jewel Mine of Gifts' (*Dānaratnākara*) of the 'Jewel Mine of Smṛti' (*Smṛtiratnākara*) by the fourteenth-century author Caṇḍeśvara, as this portion of his work is still unpublished. On this author, see Kane 1975, pp. 763–75.

previous digests mentioned by Lakṣmīdhara and which have also partly survived,⁵⁸¹ the above-mentioned Dharmanibandhas are among the first specimens of this genre that are available to us in their entirety. As observed by Pollock—who also includes the commentary *Mitākṣarā* by Vijñāneśvara, written under the Western Cālukya king Vikramāditya VI (twelfth century),⁵⁸² and the *Parāśara* by Mādhava, minister during the early days of the Vijayanagara kingdom (fourteenth century)⁵⁸³—this ‘vast intellectual outpost’ was flourishing at a specific time in Indian history that ‘surely needs to be theorized in some way’.⁵⁸⁴

Brick, the author of the most recent edition of the *Dānakāṇḍa* of Lakṣmīdhara (2014), rightly cautions against the risk of assuming—based on the historical data yielded from the evidence of the surviving Dharmanibandhas—that the emergence of such digests was rooted in the political situation at the time of their composition.⁵⁸⁵ On this point he criticizes the interpretation of Pollock, who—focusing especially on the *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara, whom he calls the ‘first great nibandha’⁵⁸⁶—suggests that there may be a link between the emergence of the genre of the digests as a form of ‘totalizing conceptualizations of society’ and the military invasions of the Turkish rulers from Central Asia, which had shaken the political scene of northern India from the tenth century on, becoming more aggressive in the twelfth century.⁵⁸⁷ The path along which the Sultanate advanced, Pollock notes, follows that of the production of the Dharmanibandhas, since the

581 Lakṣmīdhara, in his introduction to the *Dānakāṇḍa* (stanzas 12–13), mentions the titles of a few preceding digests, which are the *Mahārṇava*, the *Kāmadhenu*, and the *Mālā*, while the *Parijāta* is referred to in the *Vyavahārakāṇḍa* (Aiyangar 1941, pp. 121–22). In a preceding article (see De Simini 2015, p. 602 fn. 2), I had stated that these digests are ‘now lost’; I now have to correct this view since, as Harunaga Isaacson has kindly pointed out to me, at least the *Kāmadhenu* has survived in a Nepalese manuscript published by Kouda 2015 and 2016.

582 For information on the commentary *Mitākṣarā* and its author, see Kane 1975, pp. 599–616.

583 The activity of Mādhavācārya, author of two prominent works on Dharmaśāstra, the *Parāśara* and the *Kālanirṇaya*, probably took place between 1340 and 1390 (see Kane 1975, pp. 778–92).

584 Pollock 1993, p. 98. To describe the florescence of this genre, he also refers to the now lost codes of Bhoja, king of Dhārā in the first half of the eleventh century.

585 For his arguments, see Brick 2014, pp. 14–15.

586 Pollock 1993, p. 105.

587 Pollock 1993, p. 106, thus maintains that the ‘totalizing conceptualizations of society’ brought about by the digest-writers ‘[...] became possible only by juxtaposition with alternative lifeworlds, and on the other hand, that they became necessary only at the moment when the total form of the society was for the first time believed, by the privileged theorists of society, to be threatened.’

places of origins of Lakṣmīdhara, Hemādri, and Mādhava correspond to the regions of the Doab, the town of Devagiri, and the Deccan, which were first outposts of the Sultanate in northern and central India. According to this view, it is the contrast with a cultural other, carrying different values and social structures, that made this grand work of defining power in accordance with the Dharma, as is reflected in the Dharmanibandhas, possible.

This analysis stresses the discontinuity and novelty of the Dharmanibandhas in the context of India's medieval politics. In response, Brick has called attention to diverse aspects that have been overlooked, and that would point at a more complex picture than the one depicted by Pollock. The existence of Dharmanibandhas that predate Lakṣmīdhara's, or that have been written in the same centuries, but in areas that had not come in contact with the foreign armies,⁵⁸⁸ is in and of itself a sufficient argument to dismantle the idea that there might have been a causal relationship between the clash with the military powers from Central Asia and the emergence of the digests as a 'new' literary genre, simply because the latter was ultimately already in existence. Brick, moreover, despite calling attention to Kane's view on the stylistic continuity existing between commentaries and digests, rejects it as 'unsuited' to explain the composition of digests as collections of quotations which are independent from a commented text.⁵⁸⁹ The straightforward association of commentaries with digests, in Brick's opinion, would be a questionable operation, since it misses a fundamental point—namely that digest-writers do not consider their work as exegetical; the fact that the commentarial sections of the earliest digests are very poor and mostly consist only of a few glosses proves this point. However, this observation, when referring to the earliest digests, cannot apply to the *Dānasāgara* of Ballālasena, who in some specific chapters adds extensive and more in-depth commentaries on the quoted texts (see § 3.1) in an attempt to make his sources the basis for actual ritual practice.

588 Rocher (2002, pp. 6–24) also suggests an early dating to the beginning of the twelfth century for the *Dāyabhāga* of Jīmūtavāhana, on the law of inheritance, while Kane (1968, pp. 510, 535, 537) points to earlier works like the *Ṣaṭtriṃśanmata*, the *Caturviṃśanmata*, or the *Smṛti-saṃgraha*, as antecedents of the Dharmanibandhas. Bhoja, king of Dhārā (ca. 1030 CE), also wrote a digest on Dharmaśāstra, namely the *Rājamārtanḍa*, only preserved in fragments (Kane 1975, p. 586). As for the Dharmanibandhas composed in areas that were untouched by the advance of the Muslim rulers, Brick (2014, p. 14) refers to the *Smṛticandrikā*, composed in South India between 1150 and 1225 CE (Kane 1962, pp. 721–23), as well as to the *Aparārkaṭikā*, on which more below.

589 On this, see Brick 2014, pp. 11–12.

In order to correctly identify the function that the chapters on the gift of knowledge might have had for digests on gifting and the audience to which these texts were addressed, we need to take into consideration a further relevant point that Brick makes with reference to the *Dānakāṇḍa* of Lakṣmīdhara, but which he applies to the Dharmanibandhas as a whole. He proposes that the composition of the Dharmanibandhas, as well as of commentaries that relied heavily on scriptural quotations, might have to be framed within a ‘crisis of scriptural authority’ that was increasingly felt from the beginning of the second millennium: at this time, the proliferation of Purāṇas, on the one hand, and the direct competition from other indigenous traditions, on the other, had become a crucial hermeneutical problem.⁵⁹⁰ Focusing his attention on the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, Brick argues that, in order to understand the appeal that a work like the one of Lakṣmīdhara, i.e. a ‘modestly annotated anthology’, might have had on its audience, one should take into account the Dharmaśāstric view of scriptures, which relied predominantly on the teachings of the Mīmāṃsā, as well as the condition of Dharmaśāstra and Smṛti literature in general on the verge of the new millennium.⁵⁹¹ By selecting specific sources on given topics, the digest-authors indicated to their readers which scriptures were to be considered trustworthy.

Before making further considerations on this last point at the end of this paragraph, it must be observed that Pollock’s argument concerning the necessity of evaluating the influence exerted by the political instability on the composition of the digests cannot be completely ruled out if one wants to achieve a broader understanding of the intellectual operation undertaken by the authors of the digests. Apart from the oversimplification that Brick points out and that undoubtedly hinders this argumentation, Pollock’s remarks on the new political conjuncture experienced by the authors of some key works in the history of the Dharmanibandhas are not suitable to account for the emergence of the genre as a whole. However, they help to understand these works in a historical perspective by posing the question as to why certain texts were produced in specific places; as Pollock asks,⁵⁹² ‘[...] why should an encyclopedic synthesis of an entire way of life be undertaken—precisely in that time and place?’ If one attentively considers the contexts of some of the digests produced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it would not be far-fetched also to regard them as the product of an age of crisis—a crisis that was certainly internal to the Brahmanical tradition, as Brick underlines, but that, given the stature of the people involved in the composition

⁵⁹⁰ Brick 2014, p. 19. This topic will be further discussed below.

⁵⁹¹ Brick 2014, p. 16.

⁵⁹² Pollock 1993, p. 105.

of the digests, also presupposes a political fracture. It is no surprise that Indian authors do not elaborate on the cultural and political contexts of their works; in spite of that, the digest-writers do apprise their readers of their bond with contemporary politics. An in-depth discussion of the impact that these works were meant to have (or did have) in the cultural world in which they were conceived would be speculative and premature at this point, as these imposing works have not been adequately studied yet, and since, in compliance with the Dharmaśāstra tradition, these texts are not exactly prescriptive—they are not the same as law codes or ritual manuals—but descriptive of an ideal, orthodox Brahminical worldview with which a society is required to comply. In spite of that, looking at the digests from the point of view of the political and historical contexts in which their authors worked, insofar as this is possible to reconstruct, and highlighting the crisis that they (and their patrons) had to face, may indeed contribute to assessing the nature of these works and the role attributed to the practices related in their texts within the broader scope of a systematization of Brahminical knowledge at that time and place in history.

In some cases, the digests' claimed impact on religious life can partly be measured through external evidence, as applied to Hemādri's gargantuan *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, in particular his section on gifting, the *Dānakhaṇḍa*, which includes a long chapter on *vidyādāna*. It is a known fact⁵⁹³ that the opening stanzas of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* identify Hemādri as the officer in charge of the administrative records (*śrīkaraṇaprabhu*, st. 13) of king Mahādeva (ruled ca. 1260–70 CE) of the later branch of the Yādava dynasty ruling from Devagīri, modern Daulatabad.⁵⁹⁴ Hemādri is also referred to as a minister of Rāmacandra (ruled ca. 1271–1311 CE), one of the last rulers of the imperial Yādavas, in a contemporary inscription from Thane, in West Maharashtra, dated to *śaka* 1194 (1272 CE).⁵⁹⁵

593 See, among others, Kane 1975, pp. 751–53, according to whom Hemādri was 'towering personality' of his times (p. 755).

594 The historical Yādavas, dated to the period from 850 to 1320 CE, can be divided into two main branches: an earlier family ruling from Sindinagara (850–1100 CE), and a later one from Devagiri (1100–1320 CE). As observed by Schmiedchen 2014, pp. 325–26, the activities of the early Yādavas are however attested in epigraphs only after the fall of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa in the beginning of the 11th century; there is also an interruption of some years between the attestations of these two family branches, whose mutual relationships are not clear.

595 Barnett 1915–16, EI 13.17. Hemādri is praised in ll. 39–41 (see p. 202 for the text and 205 for the translation). This grant, which is described in stanza 18 as the donation of the village Vaula to 32 Brahmins through the minister Acyutanāyaka, who administers the Konkan region, is discussed in Schmiedchen 2014, pp. 414–15.

However, both Mahādeva and Rāmacandra find little attestation in the inscriptions of their times, most of which were issued by minor feudatory rulers; the available documents attest their activity as sponsors of donations to Brahmins.⁵⁹⁶ Rāmacandra is also known from chronicle sources, as he—probably taking advantage of a power vacuum in the Gangetic plain between the death of the Mamluk sultan Balban in 1286 CE and the rise to power of the Khalji dynasty towards the end of the century—seized Varanasi for some years before being banished to the south by the second Khalji sultan Alā-ud-Dīn (ruled ca. 1296–1316 CE).⁵⁹⁷ After the latter had attacked Devagiri, Rāmacandra would become a tributary of Alā-ud-Dīn; according to sources, an attempt at escaping this duty in a moment of weakness for the Khalji dynasty resulted in the military defeat of the Yādavas in 1307 CE and the capture of Rāmacandra, who was allegedly brought to Delhi to meet the sultan and then restored to power in his kingdom as a tributary by the same sultan.

That an ideological connection was felt between Hemādri and this later phase of the history of the Yādavas is shown by the circumstance, as noted by Bhandarkar, that the manuscripts of Hemādri's *Vratākhaṇḍa* transmit paratexts containing different genealogies of the Yādavas attributed to Hemādri's authorship, which were not reproduced in the edition of the text.⁵⁹⁸ These genealogies are not always in mutual agreement, and some of them are incomplete; in spite of this, the testimony offered by these paratexts added to the manuscripts of a specific section of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* is historically relevant, since they claim that the early Yādavas and the later ones formed one family. This claim is only attested once elsewhere, in an inscription of Kṛṣṇa II, which is dated to śaka 1176 (1254–55 CE).⁵⁹⁹ Moreover, the work of Hemādri is referred to as an authority

596 This is discussed in Schmiedchen 2014, pp. 405–20. One example (Schmiedchen 2014, p. 410; see Koparkar 1957–58, EI 32.3) is that of a copperplate from the time of Mahādeva, from Kalegaon (Ahmadnagar district), documenting the concession of a village to 52 Brahmins divided into 22 *gotras* made by the king himself. The date of this document, according to the editor, corresponds to August 29, 1261 CE.

As observed by Schmiedchen (2014, p. 380), there are actually only a few documents left from the last phase of the epigraphic production of the Yādavas, up to the mid-thirteenth century; those on stone, mostly produced by vassals of the Yādavas, are attested in south Maharashtra and north Karnataka. From the second half of the thirteenth century onward, copperplates reappear yet, once again, are mostly issued by vassal families in north Karnataka (Schmiedchen 2014, pp. 390–91).

597 For this information on Rāmacandra and that of the next lines, I rely on Yazdani 1960, pp. 551–55.

598 Schmiedchen 2014, p. 326 fn. 5.

599 Schmiedchen 2014, p. 326; for the inscription, see Desai 1949–50, EI 28.49.

on gifting in more than one inscription.⁶⁰⁰ Different attestations date back to the time of Vijayanagara, such as the Porumāmiḷla Sanskrit inscription of Bhāskara Bhavadūra, dated to śaka 1291 (1369 CE).⁶⁰¹ In this text, which is not much later than the composition of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*, the king Bhāskara, son of Bukka I (1344–77 CE), cofounder of the Vijayanagara empire together with his brother Harihara I,⁶⁰² is remembered for having built a tank as a ‘gift of water’ (*jaladāna*) in accordance with the teachings of Hemādri (v. 22, l. 39), in the Andhra town of Porumāmiḷla:⁶⁰³ ‘Performing gifts in various ways in accordance with the procedure [taught by] Hemādri, having heard that the uppermost fruit is [the one conferred] on the occasion of the gift of water [...]’. Other records issued in the Vijayanagara kingdom are the Timmancherla Sanskrit inscription,⁶⁰⁴ undated, recording the donation of a village performed by Harihara—who, according to the editor, corresponds to Harihara II (1377–1404 CE)—in favour of the Brahmin Gopālarādhyā; the text declares that the monarch practiced gifting according to the ‘treatise of Hemādri’ (*hemādriśāstra*). In the same period, Hemādri is mentioned twice in a Sanskrit epigraph from Vanapalli (East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh) dated to February 6, 1380 CE,⁶⁰⁵ in which Vema, a local ruler of the Redḍi dynasty, is praised as one ‘who performed all the gifts [described by] Hemādri’ (pl. 1, l. 17 v. 9: *hemādrīdānāny akarod aśeṣāny* [...] ^[L18] *yas*); his son Anna Vema is likewise described as one ‘who was devoted to the gifts [described by] Hemādri’ (pl. 2, l. 23, v. 11: *hemādrīdānavratī*).⁶⁰⁶ A further inscription connected with the Redḍis and dated to 1413 CE defines Vema as ‘proficient in the gifts that have been taught according to Hemādri’s procedures’ (pl. 1, l. 16: *hemādrīkalpoditadānadakṣaḥ*).⁶⁰⁷

600 A list of examples is in Kane 1975, p. 755, and Talbot 2001, p. 270 fn. 4.

601 See Sukthankar 1917–18, EI 14.4. This document is also discussed in Kane 1975, p. 755.

602 For information on the emergence and development of the Vijayanagara kingdom, see Stein 2008.

603 Sukthankar 1917–18, EI 14.4, p. 102: *hemādrīkṛtimā[rge]ṇa kurvan dānāny anekasāḥ* [!]
jaladānaprasaṅgena śrutavān phalam uttamaṁ || 22.

604 See Shama Shastri 1939, SII 9.426 (ARE no. 386, 1920).

605 Hultzsch 1894–95, EI 3.10, p. 60. This document, also mentioned in Kane 1975, p. 755, records an *agrahāra* made by king Anna Vema to Immaḍi, of the Lohita *gotra*, minister and spiritual preceptor of the king.

606 Hultzsch 1894–95, EI 3.10, p. 61 (text) and p. 64 (translation).

607 Ramayya 1911–12, EI 11.33B, p. 325. The inscription records the grant of the Alapadu village to a Brahmin by Pedda Komati Vema as well as the distribution of incomes from this same village by the donee to other Brahmins.

In a study on temple patronage under the Kākatiya dynasty in Andhra, Talbot refers to these epigraphical mentions of Hemādri's works as a confirmation of the gap existing between the Dharmaśāstra and the information reflected in the epigraphs.⁶⁰⁸ As she points out, while prescriptive literary sources like the Dharmanibandhas continue to stress the importance of Brahmins as the best recipients for gifting, inscriptions show that temples, rather than single Brahmins, were chosen as beneficiaries of gifts. Most Brahmins still designated as recipients of donations were connected to temples in a subsidiary position. Also, concerning the donors, Talbot argues that epigraphs demonstrate the prominence of non-royal givers, both in Buddhist and Hindu institutions, while literary sources, on the other hand, emphasize royal donations. The references to the *Dānakhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* must therefore be primarily understood as endorsing the ideology expressed by this and analogous texts, rather than revealing a literal compliance with its teachings. There are, however, signs that at least some of the Dharmanibandhas—see the case of the *Dānasāgara* of Ballālasena illustrated in § 3.1—aimed at impacting the actual ritual practice.

The Konkan coast—where Aparārka, the author of the above-mentioned commentary on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, most likely lived approximately one century earlier than Hemādri—belongs to the same geopolitical area as the territory of the Yādavas, at the intersection between the northwest and the south, and was thus open to influences on both sides. Aparārka can be identified with a homonymous king of the Śilāhāras of north Konkan, and belongs to the earliest of the three branches of this family, which was already attested in the ninth century.⁶⁰⁹ In the fifth stanza of the introduction to his commentary-digest, Aparārka defines himself as an 'ornament of the family of Jīmūta' (*jīmūtānvayabhūṣaṇa*). This Jīmūta may correspond to Vidyādhara Jīmūtavāhana, son of Jīmūtakeṭu, the mythical founder of the Śilāhāras from whom all three branches of the family claim descent.⁶¹⁰ In the inscriptions of the Śilāhāras from north Konkan, the epithet 'offspring of the family of Jīmūtavāhana' (*jīmūtavāhanānvayaprasūta*) is attested; the first to use it is Aparājita, but it is then also attested for later kings, including both Aparārka/Aparāditya I (ruled ca. 1127–48 CE) and Aparārka /Aparāditya II

⁶⁰⁸ Talbot 2001, pp. 88–93.

⁶⁰⁹ There are three dynastic lines of Śilāhāras: those attested in north Konkan, those in south Konkan, and a line in Kolhapur, southwestern Maharashtra. For a period, the Śilāhāras were also vassals of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa, and always bore the vassal titles of *mahāsāmanta*, *mahāmaṇḍalika*, and *mahāmaṇḍaleśvara*, contrary to the Yādavas, which at a certain point in their history replaced them with imperial titles. All the territories of the Śilāhāras were eventually conquered by the Yādavas. For this and more information on the Śilāhāras, see Schmiedchen 2014, p. 211ff.

⁶¹⁰ Schmiedchen 2014, p. 216.

(ruled ca. 1170–97 CE).⁶¹¹ Most likely, one of the two must be identified with the author of the commentary on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*; as noted by Kane and Mirashi, however, our commentator is more likely to be Aparārka I, as the *Aparārkaṭīkā* is referred to and criticised in the *Smṛticandrikā*, composed around 1200 CE.⁶¹² The epigraphical documents of this family show that, until the eleventh century, inscriptions referring to north Konkan Śīlāhāras were dominated by copperplates, 60% of which are donations to Brahmins.⁶¹³ Stone inscriptions, mostly connected with grants made to temples, are attested from the year śaka 982 (1060–61 CE). Starting from the mid-twelfth century, these are the only surviving documents for these late rulers.⁶¹⁴ In most cases, these later stone inscriptions testify to both local and translocal support of Śaivism as well as to the influence of Śaiva teachers at court. One example is provided by the same Aparāditya II who, as attested by two stone inscriptions from the Bombay-Thane area, financed grants to the famous Somanātha temple on the Kathiawar coast of Gujarat, in the year śaka 1107 (1185–86 CE) and 1108 (1186–87 CE).⁶¹⁵ The Śīlāhāras already enjoyed connections with this temple, and it plays a symbolic role insofar as the chronicles alledge that it was destroyed and looted by the troops of Maḥmūd of Ghazni in 1025 CE.⁶¹⁶ The entire area, including the towns of Thaneshvar, Mathurā, and Kanauj, had been the target of these initial, aggressive campaigns at the onset of the eleventh century, and in the twelfth century became the battlefield for the expeditions of Quṭb al-Dīn Aibak, acting on the behest of the new sultan Muḥammad of Ghor. At the turn of the twelfth century, the defence of northern India fell to the responsibility of the Gāhaḍavālas of Kanauj, whose mention takes us a step further into our inquiry on the earlier digest-writers and the political context of their literary activity.

611 Schmiedchen 2014, p. 223: besides Aparājita, the epithet is also used for Arikesarin, Cittarāja, Nāgārjuna, Mummuni, Anantadeva I, Aparāditya I, and Mallikārjuna, as well as for Aparāditya II.

612 Mirashi 1977, CII 6, p. LXXV.

613 Schmiedchen 2014, p. 288. Schmiedchen further observes that stone inscriptions have a stronger influence from the old Marathi language, as contents and form are less regulated than in the copperplates.

614 Schmiedchen 2014, p. 216, also observes that the stone inscriptions do not reproduce any genealogy, which means that this can only be reconstructed on the basis of the copperplates up to the eleventh century.

615 Schmiedchen 2014, pp. 289–92; for the inscriptions see Mirashi 1977, CII 6.32 and 6.33.

616 For an account of the expeditions of Maḥmūd of Ghazni in India, see Asher and Talbot 2006, chapter 2.

Lakṣmīdhara and Ballālasena are perhaps the digest-authors that are better known to scholars, as they were both active, though with different roles and perspectives, in the animated political sphere of the Gangetic plain in the twelfth century. Profiles of Lakṣmīdhara and his work, which stressed the connection of the digest-writer with the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty, specifically with his patron Govindacandra, have appeared since the first edition of the *Dānakāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtya-kalpataru*. Starting with the introduction to the same critical edition (Aiyangar 1941), which first makes a general assessment on the basis of the internal and external evidence from the text, the topic of Lakṣmīdhara and the political situation of his times has been treated by Kane (1975), then by Bakker and Isaacson (2004) in their learned reconstruction of the cultural history of Varanasi, and eventually by Brick (2014) in the introduction to his critical edition of the *Dānakāṇḍa*. The relevant data that can be extracted from the available information is that the context of Lakṣmīdhara's life and work seems to have been the vibrant town of Varanasi, a prosperous commercial centre by virtue of its strategic position in the Gangetic plain, which had progressively also become a sacred pilgrimage site thanks to the patronage of various lines of sovereigns.⁶¹⁷ As Bakker and Isaacson remark, Varanasi had become part of the kingdom of Kanauj in the third quarter of the sixth century, under the rulership of the Maukharis, and would remain so for the coming 400 years, although it was sometimes annexed by the rulers of Magadha.⁶¹⁸ Under the same kings, the town of Kanauj also became one of the main cultural centres of northern India, the control over which, alongside that of Varanasi, was a matter of great political power and prestige, not only for Indian monarchs. We know, for instance, that the sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazni sacked Kanauj in 1018 and 1019, during a period in which the Pāla king Mahipāla (977–1027 CE) controlled the Varanasi area, which thus, along with the easternmost regions of India, evolved into a bastion of Indian culture.⁶¹⁹ Having

617 See Bakker and Isaacson 2004, p. 19. At first, the area of Varanasi was important as a Buddhist centre; Bakker and Isaacson observe (2004, p. 20) that the town had been of no religious significance for Brahmins until the third century CE, when we have the first evidence of the presence of forms of Hindu religions in the area. The *Mahābhārata* still assigns only a minor role to Varanasi (Bakker and Isaacson 2004, p. 21).

618 Bakker and Isaacson 2004, p. 31. The political situation of northern India after the Maukharis assumed rulership created the right conditions for Hinduism to prosper: the increased production of religious literature, such as the *Skandapurāṇa*, is an example thereof (Bakker and Isaacson 2004, p. 33).

619 This is also testified by al-Bīrūnī, who speaks of an antagonism between Indians and Muslims that was also nourished by political and religious sources (Bakker and Isaacson 2004, p. 60 fn. 185).

resisted the attacks of Ibrāhīm of Ghazni, Candradeva Gāhaḍavāla (ruled ca. 1089–1103 CE) then seized power in Kanauj. He presented himself as a dutiful protector of Indian holy sites, including Varanasi.⁶²⁰ Lakṣmīdhara, who lived under the greatest of the Gāhaḍavāla kings, famously celebrates Govindacandra in the introduction to his *Brahmacārikāṇḍa* as the king of Kāśī (=Varanasi, st. 9), leader of a war campaign against the Pālas in Magadha (st. 4), and victorious over the Muslim sultans, the ‘valiant Hammīras’ (st. 7, *hammīravīra*).⁶²¹ In this tense and unstable political situation, under threat by the Mamluks in the West and the Pālas in the East, it would not be inappropriate to think that the work of Lakṣmīdhara, who boasted of being Govindacandra’s counselor,⁶²² was also conceived with a wider cultural ambition. This is confirmed if one looks, for instance, at his efforts in the *Tirthavivecanakāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru* to exalt the status of Varanasi, the capital and main centre of his kingdom.⁶²³ His words must therefore also be understood within that specific cultural context, which the *Kṛtyakalpataru* reflects and possibly aims at influencing.

620 Niyogi 1959, p. 45. The earliest inscription of Candradeva attests that, in the *vikrama* year 1148–49 (1089–90 CE), he had assumed the royal titles and was the protector of Kāśī (=Varanasi), Kuśika (=Kanauj), Uttarakośala (Ayodhyā), and Indrasthānīyaka (not identified); see Konow 1907–08, EI 9.47, discussed in Niyogi 1959, pp. 45–46 and Bakker and Isaacson 2004, p. 67 and fn. 211.

621 Govindacandra reconquered Kanauj and successfully protected his kingdom against the Yamīni Sultans (Niyogi 1959, pp. 77–78). The introductory stanzas of the *Dānakāṇḍa*, along with those of the other sections of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, are reproduced and translated in Aiyangar 1941, pp. 46–56. For parallels between the epithets that Lakṣmīdhara attributes to Govindacandra and references made to him in contemporary inscriptions, see Aiyangar 1941, p. 13, Bakker and Isaacson 2004, p. 70, and Brick 2014, pp. 6–7.

622 See the introductory stanza of the *Rājadharmakāṇḍa* (text and translation as in Aiyangar 1941, p. 56): ‘Lakṣmīdhara speaks of the Rājadharmā in the eleventh *kāṇḍa*, he whose mind is in meritorious acts, and thanks to whose miraculous great counsel, king Govindacandra was able to do all that, viz., the placing of the world on the righteous path, the placing of elephants in the house of men of qualities, and the placing of his won feet on the head of kings’; *nyāyavartmani yajjagadguṇavatā geheṣu yaddantino | rājñā mūrdhani yatpadavyaracayadgovindacandro nṛpa | tatsarvaṃ khalu yasya mantramahimā ’ścarya sa lakṣmīdharaḥ kāṇḍe śasati rājadharmācayānekādaśe puṇyadhī ||* 8.

623 Bakker and Isaacson (2004, p. 71) observe that the picture that Lakṣmīdhara gives of Varanasi, as a town in which there is a large proliferation of temples and shrines, seems to reflect the conditions of the town in his time, rather than at the time of the supposedly earlier sources on which his work is based. His major source on the contemporary Varanasi is the ‘second’ *Liṅga-purāṇa*, which counts up to 285 *liṅgas* in Varanasi; however, Bakker and Isaacson observe that this Purāṇa was unknown until Lakṣmīdhara’s time, and seems to reflect the contemporary situation so closely that they surmise this could have been composed around the twelfth century,

The same may be true for Ballālasena. During the reign of Vijayacandra Gāhaḍavāla (1155–69 CE), the Senas, a family whose origins are likely to reach back to the Deccan,⁶²⁴ had overcome the Pālas with king Ballālasena (ruled ca. 1158–1179 CE), who became ‘Lord of the Gauḍas’ (*gaudeśvara*).⁶²⁵ We have already mentioned the strong support that the Pālas offered to Buddhism, which thrived under these kings especially in its tantric forms, however coexisting with Śākta Śaivism. This is the cultural and religious landscape that Ballālasena, who declares his support to Śaivism in inscriptions,⁶²⁶ encountered upon his rise to power in 1162 CE. The new king of Gauḍa was not supportive of the success enjoyed by Tantrism under his reign, and unequivocally expresses this view in the *Dānasāgara*. In the introductory stanzas of his digest on gifting, he firstly celebrates his grandfather Hemāntasena (st. 3) and his father Vijayasena (st. 4), then his master Aniruddha, the source of Ballālasena’s knowledge (st. 6). Afterwards, the author programmatically declares which sources he has accepted in his digest, which ones he has rejected, and why he has done so.⁶²⁷ One of the reasons for his rejection of some sources that were (and would later be) used without problems by his colleagues is that he recognizes them as heterodox (*pāṣaṇḍa*). Notable is the case of the *Devīpurāṇa*, a Śākta Śaiva scripture that, as has been observed (see chapter 1 and 2), is often quoted on the topic of *dāna*, and very frequently on that of *vidyādāna*. The reason why the *Devīpurāṇa* ‘is not included in the group of the various Purāṇas and Upapurāṇas’ is that ‘it accepts the teachings of the heretics’, which, according to the same explanation provided by Ballālasena, is a reference to the tantric influence observable

maybe even at Lakṣmidhara’s behest, in order to reflect a fresh view of the town under the rulership of Govindacandra.

624 Majumdar 1971, p. 219.

625 A great help in reconstructing a chronology of the Senas comes from one of the Dharmanibandhas that is attributed to Ballālasena, namely the *Adbhutasāgara*. The initial stanzas of this work state that it was begun in śaka year 1089 (1169 CE), but remained unfinished and was then completed by Ballālasena’s son Lakṣmaṇasena (Majumdar 1971, p. 370). Other dates found in the text of the *Adbhutasāgara* are śaka year 1082 and 1090.

626 See the Naiḥāṭī copperplate (Banerji 1917–18, EI 14.10, and Majumdar 1929, p. 68ff.), in which Ballālasena is defined (l. 30), ‘Highest sovereign, supremely devoted to Māheśvara, supreme lord, paramount king’: *-parameśvaraparamamāheśvaraparamabhaṭṭārakamahārājādhirāja*⁹.

627 The list of the accepted sources is in stanzas 11–20 (pp. 2–3), while the rejected Purāṇas and the reasons for their rejection are expounded in stanzas 57–68 (pp. 6–7). I refer the reader to De Simini 2015, pp. 616–19, for a discussion and complete translation of the last passage.

in this and other rejected works.⁶²⁸ The work of Ballālasena is thus deeply informed by the need to establish a precise barrier between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, with direct consequences for his choice of sources and, as we will see below (§ 3.1), for the way in which he comments on the texts he has selected. However, Ballālasena also shows stylistical concerns, as he wants to restrict the number of sources quoted in order to avoid redundancy and promote synthesis.⁶²⁹ In these introductory verses, he also shows awareness of the uninterrupted growth of the Purāṇic corpus through the composition of new works disguised under the titles of older Purāṇas, or by adding new sections to earlier works, expressing a desire to discern the spurious from the authoritative sources. This recalls the notion of scriptural crisis that Brick, also on the basis of this passage, proposes as one of the motives prompting the composition of digests in late medieval times. Citing the example of the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosopher Vedānta Deśika, Brick highlights how the topic of the proliferation of Smṛti literature,

628 *Dānasāgara*, p. 7, st. 67: ‘The *Devīpurāṇa*, excluded from the group of the various Purāṇas and Upapurāṇas, has not been included (*nibaddha*) due to involvement in impure rituals, as I have noticed that it accepts the teachings of the heretics. (67)’; *tattatpurāṇopapurāṇasamkhyā-bahiṣkṛtaṃ kaśmalakarmayogāt | pāṣaṇḍaśāstrānumataṃ nirūpya devīpurāṇaṃ na nibaddham atra* || 67. This translation, as well as the following one referring to the same passage, is taken, with minor adjustments, from De Simini 2015, p. 618.

Ballālasena had already referred to heretical teachings in the two preceding stanzas, where he explains why he has rejected three sections attributed to the *Skandapurāṇa* (st. 62)—the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, the ‘other’ *Brahmapurāṇa* and *Agnipurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (st. 63), and the ‘other’ *Liṅgapurāṇa* (st. 64)—motivating his choice by stating (*Dānasāgara* 64cd–66), ‘[...] all these have been completely repudiated, since [they] have been regarded as a universal deceit [perpetrated by] impostors, heretics, and hypocrites [inspired by] Kāma and so on. [This consideration was made] due to [their] connection with initiations (*dikṣā*), installations (*pratiṣṭhā*), heretical reasonings, gemmology, false genealogies, [as well as] with [wrong] lexica, grammatical analyses, and so on, [and also] because they contain incongruous stories, wrong connections, and reciprocal contradictions. (64–66); *dikṣāpratiṣṭhāpāṣaṇḍayuktiratnapariḥṣaṇaiḥ* || 64 *mṛṣāvamśānucaritaiḥ koṣavyākaraṇādibhiḥ | asaṅgatakathābandhaparasparavirodhataḥ* || 65 *tan minaketanādīnām bhaṇḍapāṣaṇḍaliṅginām | lokavañcanam ālokyā sarvaṃ evāvadhiritam* || 66. The topics of initiation and installation unmistakably reveal the tantric nature of the rituals discussed in the sources that Ballālasena does not accept.

629 The author states (st. 68) that his selection of the sources was made ‘out of fear that [this] manuscript would have been too long’ (*granthavistarabhayād*). The Purāṇas that were explicitly rejected in the interest of conciseness are the ‘long *Liṅgapurāṇa*’—which may correspond to what is now known as the ‘first portion’ (*pūrvabhāga*) of the same Purāṇa—because the author thinks that the core of its teachings on the great gifts had been derived from the *Matsyapurāṇa* (st. 58); the *Viṣṇurahasya* (a Pāñcarātra text), and the *Śivarahasya*, possibly referring to the homonymous section attached to the *Skandapurāṇa*, which the author considers to be just ‘compendia’ (*samgraha*, st. 60).

and the need to distinguish authoritative sources from the many forgeries, was sincerely perceived as the basis of correct hermeneutics.⁶³⁰ This, combined with the predicament of the political scenario of North India and the Deccan, contributes to creating a demand for a new systematization of Dharma and its sources that could bring order to a shaken world. Following the account of the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* by Abū-Umar-i-Usmān, Lakṣmaṇasena (ruled ca. 1179–1205 CE), son of Ballālasena and co-author of the *Adbhutasāgara*, was eventually defeated by Muhammad Bakhtiyār Khilji, who occupied most of his country, thus marking the beginning of a new political era.⁶³¹

While I disagree with Brick when he maintains that the lack of extant manuscripts of many of the sources quoted in the digests is sufficient grounds for surmising that those manuscripts were also scarce at the time when Lakṣmīdhara and others composed their works,⁶³² I agree with his suggestion that competition with the tantric traditions and their sources might be one of the reasons why earlier digest-writers embraced their work of systematizing Brahminic knowledge—under the concrete threat that their worlds could soon crumble due to the impact of a cultural other. However, a further point that needs to be discussed, and which takes us back to the topic of the gift of knowledge, is Brick's observation that, in the eye of the digest-authors—whose scholastic background was mainly in Mīmāṃsā philosophy—scriptures could not possibly contradict each other, and thus they had to be interpreted in a way

630 Brick (2014, p. 18) quotes a passage from Vedānta Deśika's *Śatadūṣaṇī*, *Alepakamatabhaṅgavāda* 369, that reveals full awareness of the practice of forging new scriptures or corrupting those that already exist, and referring to them as sources of authority.

631 Majumdar 1971, pp. 234–36.

632 It is undeniable, as will become increasingly clear in the following pages, that the digest-writers often relied on the texts of their predecessors instead of going back to the original sources themselves. However, they presumably also did so in the case of the quotations from very well-known works that are abundantly represented in the manuscript transmission, such as the *Mahābhārata*. Therefore, it does not seem compelling to deduce that the list of works made by Brick on p. 17, collecting some of the texts that are frequently quoted by the digest-writers but of which no manuscripts have survived, could also have been scarcely represented in the manuscript tradition in the past, and that this paucity would have driven the digest-writers to compose their works in order to make them available (see Brick 2014, pp. 17–18). One alternative explanation could rather be that the transmission of these works was interrupted precisely because of the popularity of the Dharmanibandhas, which ultimately replaced the original texts of the Dharmasāstra; or that, as Bakker and Isaacson 2004 have argued in the case of the *Līṅgapurāṇa* quoted by Lakṣmīdhara, some sources quoted heavily by the authors of Dharmanibandhas, but non-existent prior to them, might actually have been composed following the *nibandhakāras'* instructions.

that would have disproved the incongruities that did in fact exist. I think that this notion not only influenced the original selection of the sources, but also the way in which they were used.⁶³³ Lakṣmīdhara and Hemādri's treatment of the gift of knowledge, as we will explain in § 3.1, shows an emblematic case. Despite quoting fewer texts than Hemādri, Lakṣmīdhara apparently had no problem with quoting in direct succession texts that can be seen as reciprocally contradictory. In the section on *vidyādāna*, which corresponds to chapter 12 of the *Dānakāṇḍa*, he juxtaposes the text of the *Devīpurāṇa*, a Śākta source rejected by Ballālasena, with that of the *Nandipurāṇa*. As highlighted in the preceding chapter, this source is aligned with Brahminical orthodoxy, and thus accepted in the *Dānasāgara*. Lakṣmīdhara, furthermore, quotes these texts together with the *Matsyapurāṇa*. The contradiction between these sources is particularly evident in the chapter on the gift of knowledge due to the 'lists of scriptures' that precede the accounts of the ritual, and further stress the divergences between these Purāṇas. Thanks to these lists of scriptures and established fields of learning (see § 3.1), the chapters on the gift of knowledge from the various Dharmanibandhas allow a sort of 'cross-analysis' of the digest-writers' notion of authoritative texts and 'canonicity'. The fact that the *Devīpurāṇa*, the *Nandipurāṇa*, and the *Matsyapurāṇa* propose different 'canons' of books to use in the ritual, as well as different ritual procedures, yet are quoted together in the same chapter, implies that Lakṣmīdhara, in compliance with the general tenets of Mimāṃsā mentioned above, did not regard them as contradictory. I think there is even room to surmise that quoting reciprocally contradictory sources in the same chapter (see also the many cases in Hemādri, § 3.1) may, in and of itself, be a way to resolve those contradictions. This is a strategy that suggests to scholars that those sources are, ultimately, reconcilable.

Seen from this perspective, the Dharmanibandhas are a manifesto of Brahmanical knowledge and scriptural authority and the banner of a culture that tried to reaffirm its relevance through the weight of its entire tradition. At the same time, they remain scholastic works that do not pursue a complete and

633 As for the selection of sources, Brick (2014, p. 16) states that the nature of Lakṣmīdhara's work is more exhaustive than selective. The size of his work is surely respectable, but by comparing Lakṣmīdhara and Hemādri's treatments of the same topics, one easily realizes that it is the latter who tends towards exhaustiveness by accumulating quotations from all possible sources on a topic; Lakṣmīdhara, on the other hand, emerges from the comparison as being more attentive in selecting his sources, rather ironically given the thousands of pages comprising his digest.

balanced treatment of the topics under investigation, but offer privileged access to the worldview of the authors and the communities they wrote for. In this context, the gift of knowledge acquires special relevance due to the cultural significance of this practice. However, while the digests cover a broad range of sources, some of them otherwise lost, at the same time they also exclude vital pieces of evidence. A striking example is that of the *Śivadharmottara*, which is never quoted on the topic of *vidyādāna* despite being the most relevant source on this subject. At the same time, most of the above mentioned digests include quotations from the *Devīpurāṇa*, whose chapter on *vidyādāna* shows substantial borrowings from the *Śivadharmottara*. The exclusion of the *Śivadharmottara* from the set of sources to quote on this subject automatically rules out, for Lakṣmīdhara as well as the works of his successors, the broader interpretation of the gift of knowledge given in the second part of the *Vidyādānādhyāya*, according to which all the material support given to ascetics and teachers would qualify as a *vidyādāna*. Therefore, apart from the cursory references made to this interpretation in the *Nandipurāṇa* (see § 2.1), the gift of knowledge is mainly encountered in its ‘primary’ sense here, namely that of a ritual donation of manuscripts. Ballālasena is an exception to this since, in his commentaries on the *Nandipurāṇa*, he also considers the notion of gift of knowledge as the fostering of teaching activities and recitation, seen as the aim of manuscript donation. With Hemādri, moreover, the identification of the gift of knowledge with an oral impartation of teachings acquires importance: he quotes at length from the *Harivaṃśa* on the matter of ritual recitation of the *Mahābhārata* and, in a more extensive way than the others, also tries to make sense of the so-called ‘gift of the Veda’ (*vedadāna*), which necessarily implies taking into more serious consideration a notion of the gift of knowledge that is not manuscript-related. Although there are scattered references to it in the works of Lakṣmīdhara and Ballālasena, this notion is only fully developed with Hemādri’s work. However, as proof of the strong material value that the notion of ‘donation’ has in these works, even the *vedadāna*, at a certain point, will encompass worship and donative procedures towards a material object, which Hemādri’s sources explicitly present as a substitutive practice for those who are not entitled to deal with the Vedic text (see § 3.2).

3.1 Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed: Law-Digests on the Gift of Manuscripts

Lakṣmīdhara deals with the gift of knowledge in chapter 12 of his *Dānakāṇḍa*, devoting a rather lengthy though little elaborate treatment to the topic. The structure of the chapter is in fact very simple, as the author does not divide the quoted texts into paragraphs, but simply juxtaposes them, interspersing some glosses throughout the text. In order to introduce the topic, Lakṣmīdhara quotes four stanzas, one from each of four sources, praising knowledge and the ‘gift of *brahman*’ (*brahmadāna*)⁶³⁴—a notion that, as we mentioned, will be further developed by Hemādri, and which corresponds, in short, to the teaching of the Veda (see § 3.2). These first stanzas make no express reference to manuscripts, nor to their donation or ritual use; only the last of the four introductory verses, attributed to the *Yamasmṛti*, contains what can be read as a hint in that direction, since it compares the donation of the earth (*prthivīdāna*) to the gift ‘of a treatise’ (*śāstra*) to Brahmins.⁶³⁵ On the topic of the donation of Vedic knowledge, Lakṣmīdhara further inserts two stanzas from the *Mahābhārata* between two major quotations from the *Devīpurāṇa* and the *Nandipurāṇa*. Again, the first of these couplets refers to the donation of the Veda by mentioning the ‘brāhmic’ (*brāhmī*) knowledge, which Lakṣmīdhara explains as a reference to the ‘contents of the Veda’ (*vedārtha*):⁶³⁶

634 See *Dānakāṇḍa*, 12.2 (= *Manusmṛti* 4.233): ‘The gift of the *brahman* is the best among all gifts, [such as the gifts of] water, food, cattle, land, clothes, sesame seeds, gold, and clarified butter’; *sarveṣām eva dānānām brahmadānam viśiṣyate | vāryannagaumahivāsastilakāñcanasarpīṣām ||* 233; and *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.3 (= *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.212): ‘Since the *brahman*, made of all *dharma*s, is superior to [other] gifts, by donating this [one] reaches the world of *Brahmā* without falling’; *sarvadharmamayam brahma pradānebhyo ’dhikam yataḥ | tad dadat samavāpnoti brahmalokam avicyutaḥ ||* 212. Both these stanzas are also quoted by Hemādri in his paragraph on the *vedadāna* (see *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 517), the *Manusmṛti* being misattributed to the *Ādityapurāṇa*. As for the stanza from the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, it is in the commentary upon it that Aparārka introduces his quotations on the gift of knowledge (see § 3.2).

635 *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.4 (= *Yamasmṛti*): ‘[The one] who would donate the earth, filled with all jewels, and [the one] who would donate a treatise to the Brahmins: both this [gift of the earth] and those [previously explained] are equivalent to this [gift of knowledge]’; *ya imāṃ prthivīm dadyāt sarvaratnopaśobhitām | dadyāc chāstram ca viprāṇām tac ca tāni ca tatsamam ||*. My translation is based on Lakṣmīdhara’s gloss *ad loc.* explaining the functions of the different demonstrative pronouns of the last *pāda*: *tac ca sarvaratnopaśobhitapṛthivīdānam | tāni pūrvoktāni dānāni | tadubhayaṃ vidyādānasamam*.

636 *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.59 (= *Mahābhārata* 13.68.5): *yo brūyāc cāpi śiṣyāya dharmyām brāhmīm sara-svatīm | pṛthivīgopradānābhyām sa tulyam phalam āsnute ||* 59 *brāhmī vedārthānugamā*. Note

One who relates to the student a knowledge (*sarasvatī*) that complies with Dharma, namely related to the Veda (*brāhmī*), enjoys a similar fruit [as the one obtained] from the donation of earth and cattle. (12) /—*Brāhmī* [means] ‘referring to the contents of the Veda’.

The second, contiguous quotation from the *Mahābhārata* praises those who impart the Veda on the ‘knowers of proper [behaviours]’ (*nyāyavid*).⁶³⁷ Lakṣmīdhara does not treat the topic of the gift of the Veda in a systematic way, limiting his references to the few initial quotations and to the two stanzas of the *Mahābhārata*, which however do not describe any specific procedures for it. The *nibandhakāra*’s understanding of the gift of knowledge therefore consists for the most part of the rituals and ceremonies focusing on manuscripts as reflected in the major sources on which chapter 12 of the *Dānakāṇḍa* is based. This consists of chapter 91 of the *Devīpurāṇa*, from which Lakṣmīdhara omits the purely eulogistic stanzas or those not directly connected to the ritual; following that, Lakṣmīdhara introduces the long quotation from the *Nandipurāṇa* that has been analyzed in chapter 2 of this work, as well as a selection of stanzas from chapter 53 of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, regarding the identification of the 18 Mahāpurāṇas and the rules for the ritual donation of each of them (see Table A for more details on the stanzas quoted from these Purāṇas). This chapter of the *Matsyapurāṇa* is the only source on the topic of the gifting of manuscripts to which all the *nibandhakāras* refer.⁶³⁸ In shorter or longer form, all the digest authors thus defer

that the preceding verse 13.68.4 establishes the equivalence between the gifts of cattle, earth, and *sarasvatī*: ‘Three gifts can be referred to by the same name and bestow a similar fruit: in this world, [the gift of] cattle, land, and knowledge bestow as fruit [the fulfillment] of all desires’; *tulyanāmāni deyaṇi trīṇi tulyaphalāni ca | sarvakāmaphalāniha gāvaḥ pṛthvi sarasvatī || 64*. The text refers here to the tradition according to which the word *go*, lit. ‘cow’, can have three meanings in Sanskrit: cow, land, and speech.

637 *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.60 (= *Mahābhārata* 13.74.19): ‘For even the one who, having learned the Vedas, teaches [them] to those who know proper [behaviours], he, who glorifies the work of [his] teacher, and is honoured in heaven’; *adhityāpi hi yo vedān nyāyavidbhyah prayacchati | gurukarmaprasaṁstā ca so ’pi sarge mahiyate || 12*.

638 Hazra 1940, pp. 39–40, makes a list of all the digest-authors drawing on this section of the *Matsyapurāṇa*. The following are among those that are not dealt with here: Narasiṃha Vājapeyin, author of the *Nityācārapradīpa*, who only quotes one verse from chapter 53; Caṇḍeśvara, in the *Kṛtyaratnākara*, and Jīmūtavāhana in the *Kālaviveka*, whose quotation from *Matsyapurāṇa* 53, however, is also limited to only one verse. A complete table of quotations from the *Matsyapurāṇa* in later works on Dharma can be found in Hazra 1940, pp. 279–89 (Appendix 1), while on p. 337 there is a list of verses attributed to the *Matsyapurāṇa* but which are no longer traceable in the text, within an Appendix on the ‘more important of the untraceable Purāṇic verses contained in the commentaries and Nibandhas’ (see Appendix 2, p. 336).

to the authority of chapter 53, which, according to Hazra, forms a single unit with the following chapters on vows and gifts (54–57, 61, 68, and 83–92);⁶³⁹ in the view of this scholar, this means that the above mentioned chapters belong to a contemporary layer within this rather composite Purāṇa.⁶⁴⁰ All the chapters belonging to this supposed layer are conceived as a response to the request that the

639 Hazra 1940, p. 38. The interlocutors of these chapters are Mahādeva and Nārada. According to Hazra, the remaining chapters interrupting the sequence 53–92, though concerning the same topics, prove to be later for the simple fact that they break the dialogue between Mahādeva and Nārada. However, this circumstance, which can certainly reveal a non-unitary process of composition, is not sufficient to account for a later date for the ‘inserted’ chapters. The only external *terminus ante quem* for these chapters, as admitted by the same Hazra (1940, p. 40), are the quotations from the twelfth-century Dharmānibandhas; he sets this *terminus* to the mid-tenth century, however, in order to justify the wide recognition that the text had reached by the beginning of the twelfth.

640 Hazra’s hypothesis on the formation of the *Matsyapurāṇa* is that this was originally a Vaiṣṇava work, and he would connect those chapters that he identifies as the earliest in the text with a Vaiṣṇava milieu (Hazra 1940, p. 51). On the other hand, in Hazra’s view, the ‘later chapters’ would rather have a ‘strictly Śaiva character’ (Hazra 1940, p. 46). A complete, and in many cases questionable, table summing up the ‘stratigraphy’ of all the *Matsyapurāṇa* chapters according to the reconstruction made by the Indian scholar (Hazra 1940, pp. 50–51) highlights that chapters 51–269 are collectively given a later dating, oscillating between the seventh and the twelfth century, while the first 50 and last three (corresponding to 271–73), along with a few exceptions from the first group, are believed to date back to the third to the fourth century. The *Matsyapurāṇa* is certainly a stratified text, but the criteria used by Hazra to identify the different layers are often rather untrustworthy. This is the case, for instance, of all the mentions of icons or *mantras* of Brahmā that he identifies and interprets as references to a cult of Brahmā that, ‘as scholars hold’, died out or ‘was thrown into the background’ in the seventh century (Hazra 1940, p. 40). This argument is also the basis for his dating of the chapters on the *mahādānas* (274–89), as they mention the worship of Brahmā images (Hazra 1940, pp. 44–45), or those on installations, namely 264–70 (Hazra 1940, p. 47). However, this reconstruction does not take into consideration the fact that the production of images of Brahmā is also attested in India at a later date (see the ninth- to tenth-century Cōla representation of Brahmā with his attendants, or the Western Cālukya *trimūrti* from Hampi, twelfth century; a collection of medieval representations of Brahmā from the Huntington archive can be found at this database: <<https://web.archive.org/web/20100630143439/http://huntington.wmc.ohio-state.edu/public/index.cfm?fuseaction=browseResults&IconographyID=1059>>. Last accessed: 12/1/2016). The *Matsyapurāṇa* has also been analyzed and used by Bakker and Isaacson 2004 with reference to its detailed description of Varanasi. The two scholars came to the conclusion that the *Vārāṇasīmāhātmya* of the *Skandapurāṇa*, whose composition Bakker would date to the second half of the sixth century (Bakker 2014, pp. 137–39), is older than that of the *Matsyapurāṇa* and the *Liṅgapurāṇa*, as shown by the analysis of the passages shared by these texts.

sages (*munis*) make to Sūta in 53.1:⁶⁴¹ ‘O Sūta, tell [us] at length the titles of the Purāṇas, in due sequence, as well as the whole set of rules on gifting, in a proper manner, starting from the beginning’. The donation of the Purāṇas is thus presented as the starting point for a subsection about gifting in general. Lakṣmīdhara skips this verse, as he does the entire mythological account on the origins of the Purāṇas contained in stanzas 53.5–10, which Hemādri by contrast quotes in full with reference to the gift of knowledge. The verses that Lakṣmīdhara selects from chapter 53 of the *Matsyapurāṇa* concern two main topics: a brief description of each of the 18 Mahāpurāṇas, identified by their titles and main distinguishing features, like the total number of stanzas, and/or one central topic of the work, as well as the name of the narrator; a quick outline of the rules for the donation of their manuscripts, in which the text highlights the correct time of year for this performance; the object that has to accompany the donation of the manuscript—presumably in the function of a fee (*dakṣiṇā*) for the Brahmins performing the ritual; and the reward that the donor will receive. For instance, the *Brahmapurāṇa*, the first Purāṇa in the list, is identified as the one taught by Brahmā to Marīci, and comprises 10,000 stanzas; the person who had it written down and donated it, along with a water-cow, on the full-moon day of the *vaiśākha* month (April–May), will be honoured in the world of Brahmā.⁶⁴² The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* has to be donated in the month of Pauṣa, together with a pot of *guḍa*, which will cause the sponsor to earn the fruit of an *agniṣṭoma*; this ‘big’ work (*bahu*, *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.203) is identified with one of 14,500 stanzas, mostly concerning with future events, in which Brahmā talks to Manu about the deeds of Āditya.⁶⁴³ All the practical pieces of information given in *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.11–

641 *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.1: *purāṇasamkhyām ācakṣva sūta vistaraśaḥ kramāt | dānadharmam aśeṣaṃ tu yathāvad anupūrvaśaḥ || 1.*

642 *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.185–86 (= *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.12cd–13): ‘[The Purāṇa] once told by Brahmā to Marīci, this is known as the *Brahmapurāṇa*, in 10,000 [stanzas]; (185) / And the one who, having written it down, would donate [it] along with a water-cow on the full-moon day of the [month] *vaiśākha*, he is honoured in the world of Brahmā. (186)’; *brahmaṇābhīhitam pūrvaṃ yāvanmātram marīcaye | brāhmaṇ tad daśasāhasraṃ purāṇaṃ parikīrtyate || 185 likhitvā tac ca yo dadyāj jaladhenusamanvitam | vaiśākhapaurṇamāsyāṃ sa brahmaloke mahīyate || 186.* Note that the text of the *Matsyapurāṇa* edition has *tridaśasāhasraṃ* (13,000) instead of *daśasāhasraṃ*, which is however given as a variant reading in the apparatus.

643 *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.201–203 (= *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.31–33): ‘[That Purāṇa] having as its main subject the extolling of Āditya, in which the four-faced [Brahmā] explained to Manu, on the occasion of the events occurring during the *aghorakalpa*, the maintenance of the world and the features of a multitude of beings (201) / [In] 14,500 [stanzas] chiefly dealing with [events of] the future, this is here called the *Bhaviṣya*[*purāṇa*]. (202) / The one who will give in the [month of] *pauṣa*, especially on the full-moon day, this big [work] on the deeds of Āditya, chiefly dealing with

57, including those on the fees associate with the donation of each Purāṇa, are summed up in Table B. As far as the appropriate time for the donation of these manuscripts is concerned—a topic that was missing both from the *Devīpurāṇa* and from the *Nandipurāṇa*—the first 11 Purāṇas are associated with an equal number of lunar months: the first one is omitted (*caitra*, corresponding to March–April), while the others are listed in due order from *vaiśakha*, (April–May; see *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.186 = *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.13) to *phalguna* (February–March; see *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.208 = *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.38). The remaining Purāṇas refer to other fixed astrological events, such as equinoxes and solstices (the *Matsyapurāṇa* itself must be donated ‘during an equinox’, *viṣuve*, according to *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.222 = *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.52), or the transit of the sun across a constellation (see the case of the *Skandapurāṇa* in *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.214 = *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.44). The only Purāṇa whose donation is not set for a specific time is the *Garuḍapurāṇa* (*Dānakāṇḍa* 12.223–24 = *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.53–54). The *Matsyapurāṇa*, which never refers to these donations as a gift of knowledge, omits information concerning the recipients. One could, however, easily guess that these were supposed to be Brahmins, not only because this was a general feature of the gifting rituals according to the Dharmaśāstra, but also on the basis of the rule that a precious object has to accompany the donation of each manuscript, possibly functioning as a fee for those who, playing their role as recipients, enabled the performance of the ritual. The three main sources through which Lakṣmīdhara expounds the gift of knowledge—the *Devīpurāṇa*, the *Nandipurāṇa*, and the *Matsyapurāṇa*—are thus in a way completing each other: in spite of the contradictions that divide them, some pieces of information given by one—on the exact time for the donation of the Purāṇas, for instance, or on the rightful recipients and the correct way of copying a text—are not given by the others, and *vice versa*.

Only some decades after Lakṣmīdhara had completed his *Dānakāṇḍa*, another digest-writer followed in his footsteps. Ballālasena wrote the *Dānasāgara*, which was based on many of the same sources as the *Dānakāṇḍa*, in a different, though not geographically distant, political and cultural environment. The distinctive contexts in which the two works were conceived explains some of the

[events of] the future, along with a pot of *guḍa*, [this person] will get the fruit of an *agniśtoma* (203); *yatrādhikṛtya mātmyam ādityasya caturmukhaḥ | aghorakalpavṛttāntaprasaṅgena jagatsthitiṁ | manave kathayām āsa bhūtagrāmasya lakṣaṇam ||* 201 *caturdaśasahasrāṇi tathā pañcaśatāni ca | bhaviṣyacaritaprāyaṁ bhaviṣyaṁ tad ihocyate ||* 202 *tat pauṣe māsi yo dadyāt paurṇamāsyāṁ viśeṣataḥ | bhaviṣyacaritaprāyaṁ ādityacaritaṁ bahu | guḍakumbhasamāyuktam agniśtomaphalaṁ labhet ||* 203.

differences separating Ballālasena's work from that of his predecessor Lakṣmīdhara. The most evident divergence is in Ballālasena's rejection of the *Devīpurāṇa* from the range of sources on which his Dharmanibandha is based. The immediate result of this policy is that the only two major quotations on which Ballālasena relies in treating the topic of the gift of knowledge are the same *Matsyapurāṇa* and *Nandipurāṇa* stanzas that Lakṣmīdhara had already used.⁶⁴⁴ However, the outcome is not identical, thanks to the work of the author, who arranges and, above all, comments upon his sources in a way that highlights the different function that his Dharmanibandha was meant to have, at least in his intentions. First of all, Ballālasena divides the quotations on *vidyādāna* into two chapters: chapter 42, on the 'Study of the Gift of the Purāṇas [Addressed] to the Goddess Sarasvatī' (*sarasvatīdaivatapurāṇadānāvartaḥ*, pp. 463–71), solely based on *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.3–4 and 53.11–56, to which the author adds some stanzas from the *Kūmapurāṇa*; and chapter 43, the 'Study of the Gift of Knowledge [Addressed] to the god Brahmā' (*brahmadaivatavidyādānāvartaḥ*, pp. 472–91). The titles of both chapters highlight the name of the gods to whom the donation of manuscripts has to be addressed, a piece of information that was missing in Lakṣmīdhara's text. This is further clarified in the prose commentaries accompanying the quotations. Before examining the contents of this commentary, we should observe that chapter 43 is more sophisticated in its internal subdivision, as the author divides it into multiple paragraphs. The first one, the 'Eulogy of the Gift of Knowledge' (*vidyādānapraśaṃsā*, p. 472), is based on the same quotations from the Smṛtis on the 'gift of the *brahman*' as found in Lakṣmīdhara, to which the eulogistic *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.1–4 is added. Starting with the paragraph on the 'Inner Nature of the Gift of Knowledge [and] its Fruit' (*vidyādānasvarūpaṃ tatphalaṃ ca*, pp. 473–76), the author quotes the text of the 128 stanzas from the *Nandipurāṇa* used by Lakṣmīdhara, and does so by organizing its contents into 20 shorter thematic paragraphs (see Table A). This arrangement allows Ballālasena to index the text of the *Nandipurāṇa*, and thus makes it easier to consult for prospective readers and users.

That Ballālasena might be more focussed on the applicability of the teachings of the Purāṇas is not only hinted at by this structural detail, but also suggested by the commentaries that Ballālasena appends to both these chapters. In these commentaries, Ballālasena not only sums up the contents of the quotations in prose, but also explains the procedures taught in the sources by adding new information on their performance. This marks a big difference with the work of

⁶⁴⁴ See *Dānasāgara*, pp. 463–69 for the former, and pp. 474–88 for the latter.

Lakṣmīdhara and Hemādri, who only insert very short glosses in the text of their quotations, glosses that Hemādri in many cases merely pedantically copies from Lakṣmīdhara.⁶⁴⁵ By adding more extensive comments on the practical application of the instructions detailed in the sources, Ballālasena thus highlights the performative aspect of the Purāṇic texts, and to a certain extent tries to bridge the gap existing between literature on Dharma, a category comprising his digest on *dāna*, and the handbooks on ritual—i.e. between traditional literature and religious practice. As a consequence of the rejection of tantric teachings that Ballālasena had programmatically declared in the introduction of his work, the effort of anchoring the ritual practice to the text of the orthodox authorities thus had the dual purpose of attempting to influence the religious life of the audience of the *Dānasāgara*, while at the same time trying to ‘clean up’ the performance of rituals from the influence of Tantrism.

A good example of how these commentarial sections are planned is provided by the observations concluding chapter 42 (see pp. 469–71), on the ‘Gift of the Purāṇas [Addressed] to the Goddess Sarasvatī’, which also help us better understand the chapter’s title. Here Ballālasena outlines the procedures for donating the different Purāṇas, basing his instructions on the text of *Matsyapurāṇa* 53, but only gives detailed explanations for the *Brahmapurāṇa*, the first one in the list:⁶⁴⁶

Regarding this, having copied the 18 Purāṇas, the sponsor, on the full-moon day of the month of *vaiśakha*, having revered a Brahmin [who is] pure, able to read the Purāṇas, faithful, belonging to a good family, should give him the *Brahmapurāṇa*, which has been revered, along with the water-cow, according to the Purāṇic teaching.

‘Om, now I, whose wish is to obtain the excellent world of Brahmā, will give to you, who belong to such and such lineage, who teach such and such Veda in the such and such Vedic school, who take refuge in such and such god, this *Brahmapurāṇa* along with a water cow’. The recipient, having said ‘Svasti!’, having recited the *Sāvitrī*, having declared, ‘This Purāṇa belongs to the goddess Sarasvatī’, should read a praise of his preference, depending on his own Vedic school: ‘Therefore, now I should give you this gold as a fee in order to establish

⁶⁴⁵ For examples of literal borrowings in the commentarial sections of Lakṣmīdhara and Hemādri’s digests, see De Simini 2015, pp. 612–13.

⁶⁴⁶ *Dānasāgara*, p. 439: *atrāṣṭādaśapurāṇāni lekhyaitvā yajamāno vaiśakhapurnamāsyam śuciṃ purāṇapāṭhaśaktam śraddhālum kutumbinam brāhmaṇam abhyarcya tasmai purāṇoktadadhenusahitam brahmapurāṇam arcitam dadyāt | om adyāmukasagotrāyāmukavedāmukāśākhādhyāyine ’mukadevasarmaṇe tubhyam sotkarṣabrahmalokaprāptikāmo ’ham etajjadhenusahitam brahmapurāṇam dadāmi | pratigṛhītā svastīty uktvā sāvitṛṃ paṭhitvā purāṇam idam sarasvatīdaivatam ity uktvā yathāśākhām kāmastutiṃ paṭhet | tata om adya kṛtāitaddānapratīṣṭhārtham tubhyam aham dakṣiṇām idam kāñcanaṃ dadāmi | pratigrahītā svastīty uktvā purāṇam sprśet | evam aparapurāṇasaptadaśakadāneṣv api dakṣiṇādānam sarasvatīdaivatapurāṇasparśanam svīkaraṇam conneyam.*

this gift that has been performed'. The recipient, having said 'Svasti!', should touch the Purāṇa. Thus, also concerning the donation of the other 17 Purāṇas, the impartation of the fee has to be accompanied by the touching of the Purāṇa [which has been declared to] belong to the goddess Sarasvatī, and the appropriation has to be inferred by analogy.

The text concerning the donation of the other Purāṇas is shorter, possibly implying that these prescriptions can be applied to each Mahāpurāṇa. The basic information concerning the combination of time, fee, and book is coherent with the teachings of *Matsyapurāṇa* 53, while the procedure for the donation is much more detailed, and implies instructions that are not in the quoted text. Firstly, Ballālasena specifies the recipient of the gift, a detail that, as observed above, was missing from the *Matsyapurāṇa*. This is identified, rather unsurprisingly, with a Brahmin, who must be worshipped along with the manuscript before the donation takes place—information that was also absent from the text of the *Matsyapurāṇa*. The formulaic invocations that the sponsor and the recipient are supposed to pronounce while donating and receiving the manuscript are completely new. The use of impersonal expressions (*amuka*°, here translated with 'such and such'), which in the practice of the ritual is supposed to be replaced with the required information, emphasises that these are standardised expressions meant to be used in different ritual contexts and for different ritual agents. It follows from this that the Brahmin has to formally declare the manuscript as property belonging to the goddess Sarasvatī (hence the title of the whole section), and then touch the manuscript in order to mark his acquisition.

Similar invocations meant for the donors are also available in the comment that concludes chapter 43, whose main scriptural source is the *Nandipurāṇa*. The commentary on these stanzas tends to stay faithful to the Purāṇic text; at the two points describing the actual donation of the manuscript, however, Ballālasena inserts an important detail that helps to clarify the nature of the gift of knowledge in the understanding of the author and his audience, as here Ballālasena openly declares that the gift of the manuscript is aimed at its recitation and study. The first of such statements follows the description of the procession that carries the manuscript to the temple:⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁷ *Dānasāgara*, p. 489: *tatra ca taṃ devaṃ sampūjya tadagrataḥ pustakaṃ sthāpayitvā devāya nivedayet | tad yathā — oṃ adya puṇye 'hani śrīmadamukabhaṭṭārakāya matpitṛgatanandipurāṇoktāmukavidyādānaphalaprāptikāmo 'ham etadvidyādhyayanāsiddhyarthamatām vidyāṃ dadāni | tataḥ śivabhaktebhyo devāntarabhaktebhyaś ca yathecchasaṃkhyabrāhmaṇebhyo 'bhiṣṭakhyam suvarṇam dadyāt |*

[...] And there, having worshipped this god, having placed the manuscript in front of him, he should offer [it] to the god. Then, [he says] like that: ‘Om! now on an auspicious day, I, whose wish is to acquire such and such fruits of the gift of knowledge taught in the *Nandipurāṇa*, which have been addressed to my ancestors, shall give this knowledge to the venerable Brahmin such and such, with the aim of accomplishing the reading of this knowledge.’ Therefore, he should give the desired quantity of gold to the Śaiva devotees, and to the devotees of other deities, and to the desired number of Brahmins.

In Ballālasena’s interpretation, the recitation that follows the donation of the manuscript to the temple in the *Nandipurāṇa* is neither debatable nor unconnected with the donation of the manuscript, but represents its aim. For this reason, the devotee is also required to pay an additional fee to the Brahmins who will carry out the recitation. The author also very straightforwardly links these ritual procedures to the *Nandipurāṇa* by inserting the title of the work directly in the invocation uttered by the donor. A similar invocation, but in a rather different context, is repeated at the end of the paragraph. Here Ballālasena introduces information that is missing from the text of the *Nandipurāṇa*, but that is nonetheless coherent with it. The digest-author then prescribes a private version of the gift of the manuscripts, namely by envisaging the possibility that the donor, instead of donating to a temple, should go directly to a Brahmin’s house and honour him with various gifts. The list of items that one should provide to the teacher is given at the end; this list is consistent with the *Nandipurāṇa*, but expands on it, as donations addressed to teachers, from food to the instruments for writing and reading, here also qualify as a gift of knowledge:⁶⁴⁸

[...] According to one’s own means, having revered the teacher by means of many items like clothes, gold, and so on, at the desired time he should arrange the study of the desired knowledge. Then, [he says] like that: ‘Om! I, whose wish is to attain the fruit of the gift of such and such knowledge, as taught in the *Nandipurāṇa*, will arrange the study of such and such knowledge.’ Therefore, the preparation of the money and the arrangement of festivals and so on [should take place] as before. The one who is competent in the gift of knowledge, out of desire for the superhuman powers taught in the *Nandipurāṇa*, should donate to those versed in this and the other knowledge, according to his means, a covered basket and so on

648 *Dānasāgara*, p. 490: *yathāśakti bahubhir vastrakāñcanādibhir upādhyāyam abhyarcya yatheccakālam abhiṣṭavidyādhyāpanam saṅkalpayet | tad yathā — om nandipurāṇo-ktāmukavidyādānaphalaprapṭikāmo ’ham etad amukavidyādhyāpanam kārayiṣye | tato vṛttyupakalpanam utsvādikaraṇam ca pūrvavat | vidyādānaśaktas tu tattadvidyālikhanocitamasipātralekhanīnakharāñjanīpustakavāhanāya saṃpuṭādikam nandipurāṇoktaphalasiddhakāmanayā tattadvidyābhiyuktebhya yathāśakti dadyāt.*

for carrying ink-pots, pens, nail-scissors (*nakharañjanīs?*), suitable for writing this and the other knowledge, and manuscripts.

Prose paragraphs at the end of a section are a feature of many chapters of the *Dānasāgara*, specifically those dealing with the most relevant donations, such as the already mentioned ‘great gifts’ and ‘mountain gifts’,⁶⁴⁹ while chapters on some of the minor rites tend to lack any commentary.⁶⁵⁰ By commenting extensively on both chapters devoted to the gift of knowledge, the author, who does not classify the gift of knowledge among the main royal rites, nonetheless attributes great relevance to it. One may regard those instructions that diverge from the text of the scriptural authorities as being rooted in ritual practice, on which this Dharmanibandha seems to be particularly focused.

The *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* of Hemādri does not contain this sort of direct reference to the actual performance of the rites, but nonetheless has a prominent position when compared to both previous and later works. Even if we restrict our analysis solely to the topic under investigation, various reasons can account for Hemādri’s primacy. The first of these reasons is the richness and abundance of the selected materials, as is evident just by looking at the sheer number of pages devoted to the subject of the gift of knowledge (52 in the *Bibliotheca Indica* edition, almost double that of the *Dānasāgara* and the *Dānakāṇḍa*—28 and 25, in their respective editions) and at the summary of the quoted sources given in Table A. This long disquisition on the gift of knowledge actually forms one ‘chapter’ within a vast section of the *Dānakāṇḍa*, corresponding to the seventh *adhyāya* (pp. 397–563), which is devoted to the so-called ‘excellent gifts’ (*atidāna*). Not only does Hemādri use more previously unquoted sources on the gift of knowledge, such as the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and the *Saurapurāṇa*, he also notably expands on Lakṣmīdhara’s tendency to prefer completeness over consistency, thus quoting numerous texts that are originally not connected to the topic under the label of the gift of knowledge. This wider array of sources seems to fulfil two main requirements that Hemādri and his audience must have felt as lacking: the enrichment of the ritual procedures by including possibilities that the works of the other *nibandhakāras* had left out, and a more comprehensive definition of the notion of *vidyā*. This last point, which practically translates to a more precise

⁶⁴⁹ Most notable are the long sections, even divided into subparagraphs, concluding the chapter on the important royal rite of the *tulāpuruṣadāna* (*Dānasāgara*, pp. 80–94), or the one appended to the description of the *dhānyācaladāna* (*Dānasāgara*, pp. 191–201).

⁶⁵⁰ Examples are the *alaṅkṛtavṛṣadāna* or the *analaṅkṛtavṛṣadāna* (pp. 294–311), as well as other minor donations such as the *viṣṇudaivatabhakṣyadāna* (p. 376), the *somadaivatavalāṇadāna* (pp. 377–78) and others.

identification of the texts that can be donated during a gift of knowledge, is crucial to Hemādri's understanding of the 'hermeneutical' implications of the rituals focused on manuscripts and textual transmission. This is due to the fact that defining 'knowledge' means declaring which works can be regarded as established sources of knowledge and assessing the boundaries between scriptural orthodoxy and heterodoxy. If this is true for all sources on ritual in which manuscripts are worshipped in the same way as gods, the urge to ascertain the ritual focus of *vidyādāna* in the most exhaustive manner possible becomes even more compelling for Hemādri, to the degree that he, unlike the other digest-authors, widens the scope of his definitions by turning to texts that, though unrelated to the topic of manuscript worship, are in any case conducive to him finding better definitions for the objects of these procedures. Overlapping, sometimes even contradictory lists of Purāṇas and Dharmaśāstra works, as well as of Vedic texts and schools, enter the *Dānakhaṇḍa*'s chapters on *vidyādāna* even though their original sources did not prescribe or conceive any ritual uses for these texts.

Hemādri's digest differs from the work of his predecessors not only in the variety of the sources considered and the greater precision sought in his exposition, but also in the ways he chooses to arrange his textual materials; the *nibandhakāra* arranges the sources according to subtopics, at times even fragmenting the texts of his authorities. One of the consequences of this 'topic-driven' procedure in arranging the quoted sources is that Hemādri, for the first time, attempts to classify the gift of knowledge of the Purāṇic tradition into distinct basic subcategories—the gift of the Veda (*vedadāna*), the gift of Smṛti literature (*smṛtidāna*), and the gift of the Purāṇas (*purāṇadāna*)—based on the classification of the *deyas*, i.e. the appropriate object to donate, with which he tries to associate different ritual procedures. Still the outcome is not as systematic as it may sound. This is due to the simple reason that orderliness and consequentiality are not the key principles that informed the composition of Purāṇic texts, on which this section of the *Dānakhaṇḍa* still mostly relies, as the author comments only very scarcely on his sources. Nevertheless, the very effort of pursuing these aims reveals a need for clarity and exhaustiveness in the treatment of a topic that was arguably perceived as vital to the broader project of systematizing brahminical knowledge as undertaken by the composers of Dharma digests.

One can observe small yet telling examples of Hemādri's style of constructing his text already in the 'Eulogy of the Gift of Knowledge' (*vidyādānapraśaṃsā*), the first of the paragraphs into which Hemādri divides his exposition of *vidyādāna* (pp. 513–16). The contents of the quotations falling under this category are mostly eulogistic and simply centre on the superiority of the gift of knowledge over other

traditional gifts. The first sources used are short quotations from the *Nandipurāṇa*, the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, and the *Bṛhaspatismṛti*; Hemādri then introduces *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.1–4⁶⁵¹ and *Devīpurāṇa* 91.24–25,⁶⁵² further eulogies of the gift of knowledge. These however are immediately followed by *Devīpurāṇa* 91.13–16, *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.6cd–7, and *Nandipurāṇa*, *Dānakāṇḍa* 12.62–85^{Lak}, whose topic is no longer the simple eulogy of the gift of knowledge but rather, as amply discussed above (see § 2.5), that of the fields of knowledge to be donated. Thus these verses are all extracted from their contexts and grouped here into a paragraph actually concerning a slightly different topic than the one they originally address: the identification of the *vidyās*, not simply the praise of *vidyādāna*. However, the eulogistic element is not absent from the selected passages, inasmuch as they match the donation of certain texts with specific rewards to be obtained in the afterlife. Hemādri, by inserting these verses into a paragraph devoted to the praise of the gift of knowledge, mainly highlights these eulogistic aspects, while in the original sources as well as in Lakṣmīdhara's and Ballālasena's works, these stanzas represented the core section in the definition of the objects of a gift of knowledge. On the other hand, Hemādri postpones the task of definition to the relevant paragraphs. He nonetheless coherently keeps these stanzas from the *Devīpurāṇa*, the *Nandipurāṇa*, and the *Viṣṇudharmottara* together, placing them one after the other, pointing to their inner unity of contents. They are then followed by the last quotation of the paragraph, a few stanzas attributed to the *Varāhapurāṇa*, which again mention the titles of works that a devotee is exhorted to donate.

The contents of this set, which consists of sources that each list texts to donate and their matching rewards, might look—and in fact is—redundant. As observed with reference to Lakṣmīdhara, however, these sources only work well together if the focus is shifted to the (sometimes rather minute) differences which separate them and which contribute additional information to the broader picture. Considering the obvious limitations of a genre whose main expressive

⁶⁵¹ These and the following stanzas from *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303 are dealt with in § 2.5.

⁶⁵² *Dānakāṇḍa*, p. 513 (= *Devīpurāṇa* 91.24–25): 'By knowing the distinctions of [the different kinds of] knowledge, because of the discernment between good and evil, [people] find the realization of all desires; for knowledge is taught to be supreme. (24) / A gift [that is] better than the gift of knowledge does not exist even in the [whole] triple world; by donating which one reaches Śiva, who is the supreme cause. (25)'; *vidyāvivekabodhena śubhāśubhavicāraṇāt* ['vicāriṇaḥ DP] | *vindate sarvakāmāptim yasmād* [tasmād DP] *vidyā parā matā* [gatā DP] || 24 *vidyādānāt paraṃ dānaṃ trailokye 'pi na vidyate* [na bhūtaṃ na bhaviṣyati DP] | *yena dattena cāpnoti śivaṃ paramakāraṇam* || 25.

means are quotations, redundancy and pleonasms might be regarded as an unavoidable fault. Differences and analogies between the lists of manuscripts given in the *Devīpurāṇa* and the *Nandipurāṇa* have already been discussed (§ 2.5) and, in spite of some overlap, it is undoubtable that they convey different pieces of information. In this context, the *Viṣṇudharmottara* thus seems to play a mediating role between the two, as the quoted verses (3.303.6cd–7) refer both to Siddhānta scriptures, whose mention occurs in the preceding *Devīpurāṇa* quotation but is avoided by the *Nandipurāṇa*, and to the Smṛtis, which by contrast are mentioned by the *Nandipurāṇa* but not in the *Devīpurāṇa*.⁶⁵³ In the same manner as the *Devīpurāṇa* places the scriptures of the Siddhāntas on top of a ‘hierarchy’ of scriptures (*Devīpurāṇa* 91.13a), the *Viṣṇudharmottara* contemplates only the Siddhāntas as a means of attaining liberation. Hemādri has extracted these stanzas of the *Viṣṇudharmottara* from a longer passage on the ‘Fruits of the Gift of Knowledge’ (*vidyādānaphala*, corresponding to *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.1–15), whose *disiecta membra* are scattered throughout the whole chapter: the first part (*Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.1–4) is quoted just a few stanzas ahead, in the same paragraph as the eulogy of the gift of knowledge; a second portion (*Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.5–6ab), with the mention of several other ‘fields of learning’ to donate, is postponed and quoted in the section on the gift of the Vedas (*vedadāna*);⁶⁵⁴ while a further part, corresponding to *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.8–13, is cited at the very end of the chapter on the gift of knowledge (*Dānakhaṇḍa* p. 559). No mention is made of the parallel stanzas from *Agnipurāṇa* 2.211; more precisely, none of the *Agnipurāṇa* stanzas on *vidyādāna* is quoted by the digest-writers, who attribute to this Purāṇa only a brief citation on the gift of knowledge that is untraceable in the extant *Agnipurāṇa*.⁶⁵⁵

As for the function of the stanzas from the *Varāhapurāṇa*, which close the paragraph on the ‘Eulogy of the Gift of Knowledge’, it is also possible to assume

⁶⁵³ *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.6cd–7 (note that the same text has been quoted at § 2.5): ‘Thanks to the gifting of the Dharmaśāstras, one rejoices together with Dharma; (6) / Due to the gifting of the Siddhāntas, one attains liberation, without doubt; and having donated the other treatises, he is magnified in Heaven. (7)’; *dharmaśāstrapradānena dharmeṇa saha modate || 6 siddhāntānāṃ pradānena mokṣam āpnoty asaṃśayam* [vaidikam + DKh] | *śāstrāṇi dattvā cānyāni nara sarge* [nāke VDhU] *mahiyate || 7*.

⁶⁵⁴ The verses of the *Viṣṇudharmottara* are quoted in *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 518.

⁶⁵⁵ *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 527: ‘The king who donates Dharmaśāstras takes entirely that fruit that is completely [obtainable] from the gift of one thousand *kapila* cows [addressed] to the wise Brāhmins’; *kapilānāṃ sahasreṇa samyak dattena yat phalam | tad rājan sakalam labhed dharmāśāstrapradāyakaḥ ||*.

that they are quoted in this case because they mention works that are not expressly referred to in the foregoing texts; notable is the reference to the Śivadharmā, mentioned in the same line as the Veda and the Mīmāṃsā:⁶⁵⁶

Moreover, having donated the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, he is magnified in Heaven. Having donated a *Purāṇa*, a treatise on logic as well as one on metrics, (1_{Hem}) / The Veda, the treatises of Mīmāṃsā, and the *Śivadharmā*, o king, he becomes king of kings on the earth divided into seven land masses. (2_{Hem})

These few quotations thus serve the eulogistic purpose of exalting all the main branches of traditional literature, and presenting them as fit objects of donation for a gift of knowledge right at the beginning of the chapter. Hemādri does this by accumulating sources, each conveying a small piece of new information, and by dismembering and reconstructing texts; sometimes he does not even mind repeating the same quotation more than once, though in different contexts. This happens with the previously mentioned *Nandipurāṇa* quotation used in the paragraph on the ‘Eulogy of the Gift of Knowledge’, which Hemādri will then partly reuse for introducing the paragraph on the donation of the Dharmaśāstra, the second of the three categories into which he classifies the gift of knowledge (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 526–29). Here Hemādri constructs a new, coherent text by selecting and joining together stanzas from different parts of the *Nandipurāṇa*’s excerpt, as the parallel with Lakṣmīdhara’s quotation shows; however, at least two of these five stanzas (nos. 29_{Hem} and 33_{Hem}) are not available in the digest of Lakṣmīdhara, which indicates that Hemādri might still have had access to a more complete version of the *Nandipurāṇa*:⁶⁵⁷

The Revelation and Tradition are renowned as the two eyes of the sages; here the person who is deprived of one [of them] is known as one-eyed, one [who is] deprived of both is known as blind. (29_{Hem}) /—Moreover—A man, donating the Dharmaśāstra, is magnified in the vault of Heaven; a mortal will save [his] ancestors from hell for ten *manvantaras*. (30_{Hem}=12.74_{Lak}) / And the knowledge of the self, the Purāṇic lore, and the science of the

656 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 516–17: *Varāhapurāṇe: rāmāyaṇaṃ bhārataṃ ca datvā svarge mahīyate | purāṇaṃ tarkaśāstraṃ ca chandolakṣaṇaṃ eva ca ||* 1_{Hem} *vedaṃ mīmāṃsākāṃ datvā śivadharmāṃ ca vai nṛpa | saptadvīpaprthivyaṃ ca rājarājo bhaved dhi sa ||* 2_{Hem}.

657 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 526–27: *śrutiḥ smṛtiś ca viprāṇāṃ cakṣuṣī dve prakīrtite | kāṇas tatraikayā hino dvābhyāṃ andhaḥ prakīrtitaḥ ||* 29_{Hem} *tathā | dharmāśāstraṃ naro dattvā nākapṛṣṭhe mahīyate | daśa manvantarān martyas tārayen narakāt piṭṭh ||* 30_{Hem} = 12.74_{Lak} *ātmaavidyā ca paurāṇī dharmāśāstrātmikā ca yā | tisro vidyā imā mukhyāḥ sarvadānakriyāphale [em. sarva-dānakriyāphale ed.] ||* 31_{Hem}=12.80_{Lak} *dharmāśāstraṃ naro buddhvā yat kiṃcid dharmam āśrayet | tasya dharmāḥ śataguṇo dharmāśāstrapradasya ca ||* 32_{Hem} = 12.81_{Lak} *ataḥ sadā budhair jñeyam dharmāśāstraṃ vicakṣaṇaiḥ | na tasya puṇyasaṃkhyānaṃ brahmāpi gaditum kṣamaḥ ||* 33_{Hem}.

Dharmaśāstra: these are the three primary sciences, because [they bestow] the fruits of all acts of giving. (31_{Hem}=12.80_{Lak}) / A man, knowing the Dharmaśāstra, will rely on some Dharma;⁶⁵⁸ [but] the Dharma of a man who donates the Dharmaśāstra will be a hundred times better than his own. (32_{Hem}=12.81_{Lak}) / Therefore, wise scholars must always know the Dharmaśāstra, and not even Brahmā is able to tell the quantity of merits of the one [who donates it]. (33_{Hem})

The *nibandhakāra* takes the liberty of directly intervening in the text of his sources by changing their internal arrangement, or enriching and modifying their meaning by quoting them in different contexts than their original one. As observed above, several of the texts that Hemādri quotes are actually completely unrelated to the gift of knowledge, a case that is well exemplified by the sources that he further uses to treat the gift of the Dharmaśāstras. This paragraph has a very simple structure: between two eulogistic sections, placed at the beginning and at the end,⁶⁵⁹ Hemādri concatenates a few excerpts from Dharmaśāstra literature enumerating the titles (or authors) of the authoritative Dharmaśāstra

658 Here, the indefinite adjective ‘some’ translates the Sanskrit *yat kiṃcit*. This adjective is literally an accusative neuter, although the word to which it should be logically connected to, i.e. *dharmam*, is commonly used as masculine. Unless we want to restore the correct form *yam kamcit*, we can assume that either *yatkiṃcit* is used as a sort of fossilised form, or the Purāṇic author was simply wrong in the use of the gender. This stanza had already been quoted in *Nandipurāṇa* 23_{Hem} (=12.81_{Lak}, *Dānakhaṇḍa* p. 516), where the *yatkiṃcit* construction is left unaltered, while the masculine nominative *dharmāḥ śataguṇo* is given as *dharmam śataguṇam*, in an attempt to correct the contradiction between the two contiguous expressions.

659 The paragraph opens with one *śloka* from the *Nandipurāṇa* on the auspiciousness of the *śāstradāna*, followed by the *Yamasmyti* declaring the similarity between the *śāstradāna* and the gift of land endowed with all precious stones (*prthvī...sarvaratnopasobhitā*). While this last stanza is also quoted by Lakṣmīdhara, from whom Hemādri additionally borrows the short remark on the *prthvidāna* inserted at this point, the following four stanzas are absent from the text of the earlier *nibandhakāra*. Hemādri apparently attributes these to Yama, since there is no other heading after the short remark copied from Lakṣmīdhara, and they are again concerned with the eulogy of the *śāstra*, defined as ‘the revealer of the path to Heaven’ (*svargamārgaparakāśaka*) and, consequently, with the praise of its donation. It is at this point that Hemādri inserts the remark in which he identifies the *śāstradāna* with the donation of Dharmaśāstras, as mentioned above in the body of the text.

The quotation that closes the paragraph is attributed to the *Skandapurāṇa*. Again, it is a praise of the gift of the *Smṛtis* (this is the word used by the text), which will eventually bestow a permanent stay in the world of Brahmā. The fact that this passage is connected with the preceding stanzas—which all treat the topic of the authority of *Smṛtis*, with reference to the notion of *dharmamūlam*, literally the ‘root of Dharma’ in the first verse—is significant: ‘For *Smṛtis* are the root of Dharma [and] Dharma is the instrument of accomplishing all goals, therefore when the *Smṛtis* are donated, one gets the fruit of all gifts’; *smṛtayo dharmamūlam hi dharmāḥ sarvārthasādhanam | ataḥ smṛtiṣu dattāsu sarvadānaphalam labhet ||* (1_{Hem}).

works, but never refers to their donation. Here the *nibandhakāra* manages to give an account of some of the different views existing on the topic of the established sources on Dharmaśāstra, quoting from sources whose integral text is in many cases no longer extant. As is the case of the texts quoted in the section on the eulogy of the gift of knowledge, the lists of authors of Dharmaśāstra quoted in the *Dānakhaṇḍa*, despite some occasional cases of overlap, differ from each other. This is further indication of the approach chosen by Hemādri, who is concerned with offering a broader range of possibilities and quotes ample sources, despite the redundancy that this may create. The principle according to which these lists of authors have to be understood is that those who are mentioned in one source, but omitted in another, are still to be included within the scope of textual authorities accepted by Hemādri. The consequence is a revision and enlargement of the canon of 36 Dharmaśāstra works presented by some of the authorities that Hemādri also cites, such as the now lost works of Śaṅkha-Likhita⁶⁶⁰ and Paiṭhīnasi, who enumerate 36 ‘composers of Dharma’ (*dharmapraṇetṛ*) each as in the list below (overlapping names are underlined):⁶⁶¹

Śaṅkha-Likhita: Manu, Viṣṇu, Yama, Dakṣa, Aṅgirasā, Atri, Bṛhaspati, Uśana, Āpastamba, Vasiṣṭha, Kātyāyana, Parāśara, Vyāsa, Śaṅkhalikhita, Saṃvarta, Gautama, Śātātapa, Hārīta, Yājñavalkya, Pracetas, Budha, Devala, Soma, Prajāpati, Vṛddhaśātātapa, Paiṭhīnasi, Chāgaleya, Cyavana, Marīci, Vatsa, Pāraskara, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, Ātreya.

Paiṭhīnasi: Manu, Aṅgiras, Vyāsa, Gautama, Likhita, Yama, Vasiṣṭha, Dakṣa, Saṃvarta, Śātātapa, Parāśara, Viṣṇu, Āpastamba, Hārīta, Śaṅkha, Kātyāyana, Guru, Pracetas, Nārada, Yogin, Baudhāyana, the two Pitāmahas, Sumantu, Kāśyapa, Babhru, Paiṭhīnasi, Vyāghra, Satyavrata, Bharadvāja, Gārgya, Kārṣṇājini, Jāvālī, Jamadagni, Laugākṣi, Brahmasambhava.

Hemādri quotes these two lists in sequence; adding up all the non-overlapping names, we obtain a total of 53 authors of Dharma. Proof that the canon can indeed be flexible, and that the different lists of *dharmapraṇetṛ* do not invalidate each other, is that Hemādri additionally quotes two further variants of this list, which are introduced by a quotation taken from the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*:⁶⁶²

⁶⁶⁰ The text of this work has been reconstructed by Kane 1926.

⁶⁶¹ *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 527–28.

⁶⁶² *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 528: *bhaviṣyatpurāṇe śaṭṭriṃśadatiriktāḥ smṛtayaḥ santīti darśitam | aṣṭādaśapurāṇeṣu yāni vākyaṇi putraka | tāny ālocya mahābāho tathā smṛtyantareṣu ca* (2_{Hem}) ||

It has been shown in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* that the Smṛtis exceed 36 in number—O son, having considered those statements which are in the 18 Purāṇas and in other Smṛtis, o long-armed, (2_{Hem})// And having examined all together the statements of those which are the celebrated 36 Smṛtis of Manu and so on, in turn, in turn, I speak to you. (3_{Hem})

The reference to the ‘other Smṛtis’ made by this stanza of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* validates Hemādri’s inclusive approach, functioning as an introduction to the following quotations. The next quoted list is attributed to Manu, but unfortunately it is untraceable in the extant text of the *Manusmṛti*. The quoted verses moreover reflect a later stage in the scholarship on Dharma than the one to which the *Manusmṛti* refers, for the extant text of this Dharmaśāstra does not contain any lists of Dharmaśāstra authors, but only unsystematically mentions some of the acknowledged *dharmapraṇetṛ*, the ‘authors of [works on] Dharma’.⁶⁶³ This lack of information on other works, and the absence of a structured list, which will become a typical feature in later texts,⁶⁶⁴ is actually coherent with the early dating of the *Manusmṛti* (see above fn. 561). Although the names mentioned in these stanzas that the *Dānakhaṇḍa* attributes to Manu could in a way be considered ‘atemporal’, because they ultimately all go back to Vedic sages, some of the Dharmaśāstra works circulating under these names have been proven to be from much later than the extant *Manusmṛti*.⁶⁶⁵

manvādismṛtayo yāś ca śaṭtriṃśat parikīrtitāḥ | tāsāṃ vākyāni kramaśaḥ samālocya bravīmi te (3_{Hem}) ||.

663 See, for instance, the case of st. 3.16, in which Manu reports different opinions by other sages on the topic of marriage with a *śūdra* woman: ‘The one who marries a *śūdra* woman will decay, according to Atri and the son of Utathya; according to Śaunaka, [this happens] if there is the birth of offspring; according to Bhṛgu, if the offspring [comes] from her’; *śūdrāvedī pataty atrer utathyatanayasya ca | śaunakasya sutotpattyā tadapatyatatā bhṛgoḥ* || 16.

664 The *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, ascribable to a post-Manu period (Olivelle 2010, pp. 44–46), is the earliest text to present a compact enumeration of 20 Smṛti authors (*dharmasāstraprayojaka*) beginning with Manu (see *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.4–5). This will start the variegated tradition of fixing the names of the authors of the Smṛtis (*smṛtikāras*), as attested in later works (see Kane 1930, pp. 131–35). All the authors mentioned by Yājñavalkya are also included in the sources selected by Hemādri.

665 The *Devalasmṛti*, for instance, is considered a late Smṛti, composed in northwestern India (see Lariviere 2004, p. 622). The text alludes to *mleccha* incursions, which might be a reference to the Turkish invasions, enumerating the punishments for the kidnapping of women. To an earlier time, though still later than the *Manusmṛti*, it is possible to date several other works alluded to in the quotation made by Hemādri, like the *Bṛhaspatismṛti* or the *Viṣṇusmṛti*, both of which are ascribed by Olivelle to the ‘post-Manu composition of Dharmaśāstras’ (Olivelle 2010, pp. 43–44). They are tentatively dated to the ‘5th to 6th century’ (Olivelle 2010, p. 57) and to seventh century, respectively (Olivelle 2009).

The quoted text reads as follows:⁶⁶⁶

Manu said: ‘Viṣṇu, Parāśara, Dakṣa, Saṃvarta, Vyāsa, Hārīta, Śātātapa, and Vasiṣṭha, Yama, Apastamba, Gautama, (1_{Hem}) / Devala, Śaṅkha-Likhita; Bharadvāja, Uśanas, and Atri; Śaunaka and Yājñavalkya are the 18 authors of Smṛtis. (2_{Hem})’ Moreover: ‘The four collections (*saṃhitās*) of Bṛhgu and Nārada, as well as [those] of Bṛhaspati and Aṅgiras, are believed to belong to the treatise of Svayambhu (3_{Hem}).’

The question of whether these stanzas are a later addition to the *Manusmṛti* that was subsequently expunged, but were still available when Hemādri used it, or whether they belong to a now lost recension or—an equally possible hypothesis—whether Hemādri attributed some traditional stanzas he knew to the authority of Manu cannot be answered. Furthermore, the contents of these stanzas are merely pleonastic within the paragraph on the donation of Dharmaśāstra works, since all of the authors to whom this shorter list refers were already mentioned in the previous quotations. The last source quoted on this topic is a different case. It is the now lost *Aṅgirasasmṛti*, from which Hemādri quotes a passage reporting the names of 16 authors of the so-called Upasmṛtis, the ‘minor’ Smṛtis.⁶⁶⁷ The paragraph on the gift of Dharmaśāstras ends without any reference to the ritualistic norms that should regulate the donation of these manuscripts.

The same comprehensive look at the scriptural tradition and creative attitude towards authoritative texts, this time with a focus on ritual, is observed in the final category into which Hemādri divides the different types of gift of knowledge, namely the gift of the Purāṇas (*purāṇadāna*, *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 529–40), which additionally encompasses what Hemādri calls the ‘Gift of the Hearing of the Purāṇas’ (*purāṇaśravaṇadāna*, *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 540–43). As in the case of the preceding donations, this paragraph is also firstly devoted to the identification of the manuscripts that fall into this specific literary category; by contrast with the previous exposition, however, which lacked reference to any ritual procedures, this chapter and many of the sources on which it is based also focuses on ritual and donation.

⁶⁶⁶ *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 528: *āha manuḥ | viṣṇuḥ parāśaro dakṣaḥ saṃvartavyāsaḥārītā | śātātapo vasiṣṭhaś ca yamāpastambagautamāḥ || devalaḥ śaṅkhalikhitau bharadvājośanotrayaḥ | śaunako yājñavalkyaś ca daśāṣṭau smṛtikāriṇaḥ || tathā | bhārgavi nārāḍiyā ca bārhaspatyāṅgirasya api | svāyambhuvasya śāstrasya catasraḥ saṃhitā matāḥ ||*

⁶⁶⁷ *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 528–29. The names are: Jāvālī, Nāciketa, Skanda, Laugākṣi, Kaśyapa, Vyāsa, Sanatkumāra, Śatarju, Janaka, Vyāghra, Kātyāyana, Jātūkarnya, Kapiñjala, Baudhāyana, Kaṇāda, and Viśvāmītra.

According to Hemādri's interpretation, the category of the *purāṇadāna* is not only open to including the gifts of the 'Main Purāṇas' (Mahāpurāṇas) and 'Minor Purāṇas' (Upapurāṇas)—of which his sources provide numerous, sometimes divergent lists,⁶⁶⁸—but also the epics (Itihāsa). Two stanzas roughly corresponding to *Nāradyapurāṇa* 2.24.18 and 20–21ab introduce this topic by stating the importance of Purāṇas and Itihāsas at the top of a simple hierarchical arrangement of scriptures whose basis is the Veda:⁶⁶⁹

O goddess, the Vedas are strengthened (*pratiṣṭhitā*) by the Purāṇas, no doubt about it! The Veda is afraid of an ignorant person, [thinking]: 'This man will destroy me'. (18) / And in ancient times this [Veda] was made stable by Itihāsas and Purāṇas. For what is not seen in

668 For a general account of the Purāṇic lists of acknowledged 'canonical' Purāṇas, see Hazra 1940, pp. 1–7 and Rocher 1986, pp. 30–34.

669 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 529 (= *Nāradyapurāṇa* 2.24.18, 20–21ab): *vedāḥ pratiṣṭhitā devī purāṇair nātra saṃśayaḥ | bibhety alpaśrutād vedo mām ayaṃ pratarīṣyati || 18 itihāsapurāṇaiś ca kṛto 'yaṃ niścalaḥ purā | yan na dṛṣṭaṃ hi vedeṣu tad dṛṣṭaṃ smṛtibhiḥ khila || 20 ubhābhyāṃ yan na dṛṣṭaṃ hi tat purāṇeṣu gīyate | 21ab*.

The text of the *Nāradyapurāṇa* printed edition reads as follows: *vedāḥ pratiṣṭhitāḥ sarve purāṇeṣv eva sarvadā | bibhety alpaśrutād vedo mām ayaṃ praharīṣyati || 18 na vede grahasaṃcāro na śuddhiḥ kālābodhinī | tithivṛddhikṣayo vāpi parvagrahavinirṇayaḥ || 19 itihāsapurāṇaiś tu niścayo 'yaṃ kṛtaḥ purā | yan na dṛṣṭaṃ hi vedeṣu tat sarvaṃ lakṣyate smṛtau || 20 ubhāyor yan na dṛṣṭaṃ hi tat purāṇaiḥ pragīyate*. Besides a few small grammatical variants, the main difference from the verses quoted by Hemādri is the latter's omission of *Nāradyapurāṇa* 2.24.19, listing some topics which are not in the Vedas (but are treated in the Itihāsas and Purāṇas): the transit of planets (*grahasamcāra*), the purificatory rite related to [specific] times, the day of the full moon (*tithivṛddhi*) and the new moon (*tithikṣaya*), and the set of rules regarding planets during the *parvans* (*parvagrahavinirṇaya*).

Note that the line *bibhety alpaśrutād vedo mām ayaṃ pratarīṣyati*, 'The Veda is afraid of an ignorant person, [thinking]: 'This man will destroy me'' is very popular and has several attestations in Sanskrit literature, among which *Mahābhārata* 1.1.204. In this case, however, as pointed out by Mehendale 2001, p. 194, the meaning of the word Veda can be interpreted as denoting the *Mahābhārata* itself, which is immediately called the 'Veda of Kṛṣṇa' in the following line (*kārṣṇaṃ vedam, Mahābhārata* 1.1.205). According to Mehendale, the first part of the stanza, which is similar but not identical with *Nāradyapurāṇa* 2.24.18 as quoted by Hemādri (see *Mahābhārata* 1.1.204ab: *itihāsapurāṇābhyāṃ vedam samupabṛmḥayet*), must therefore be taken to mean that the *Mahābhārata* has been expanded by adding the narratives of the Purāṇas and the Itihāsa, rather than that the Veda has to be interpreted with the help of Itihāsas and Purāṇas, as is the traditional explanation. Also, following this interpretation, the second part of the stanza would mean that the Veda (*scil.* the *Mahābhārata*) is afraid of a man who could easily cross over it, namely who would read it quickly, without making the required additions. This interpretation rests on the choice of the reading *pratarīṣyati*, '[this] will cross' (*Mahābhārata* 1.1.204d) over *praharīṣyati* '[this] will destroy' (as in *Nāradyapurāṇa* 2.24.18d), both attested in the case of the *Mahābhārata* line.

the Veda, this is seen truly through the Smṛtis; (20) / What is not seen by means of both, this is in fact chanted in the Purāṇas.

The topic of these stanzas, according to which Purāṇas and Smṛtis are a reinforcement of the Veda, is very common in Indian philosophical thought. The question is, *in nuce* (but see § 3.2 for more details), the one discussed at length in Kumā-rila's *Tantravārttika*:⁶⁷⁰ Smṛtis and Purāṇas are considered to be entirely based on the Veda. They 'reinforce' the Veda, not in the sense that they are superior to it, but due to the belief that they have preserved information rooted in now lost Vedic passages. These stanzas from the *Nāradyapurāṇa* thus represent the perfect link connecting the treatment of *vedadāna* and *smṛtidāna*, with which Hemādri had just dealt, with that of the *purāṇadāna*. It also justifies the sequence in which the three sections are presented.

The topic of the relationship between the Purāṇas and the Veda is again the subject of the following stanzas, namely *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.3–12ab (omitted both by Lakṣmīdhara and Ballālasena), but this time from a mythological perspective. Here, the Purāṇic author reiterates the different phases in the creation of the branches of orthodox knowledge by Viṣṇu assuming his various aspects. According to this story, Brahmā initially only remembered one Purāṇa as the first of all treatises. The four Vedas were then spread from his mouths.⁶⁷¹ Subsequent steps in this process were the proclamation of the Vedāṅgas, the four Vedas, the Purāṇa, the very extensive [treatises on] logic (*nyāyavistaram*), Mīmāṃsā, and Dharmaśāstras, namely the 14 *vidyāsthānas*, by the god in the disguise of a Vedic deity (*vājin*).⁶⁷² In the end the god, this time assuming the aspect of a fish, had

670 See *Tantravārttika*, 1.3.1, *sūtra* 2. The passage is available in English translation in Jha 1983, vol. 1, pp. 113–16.

671 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 530 (= *Matsyapurāṇa*, 53.3–4): 'The Purāṇa has been remembered by Brahmā as the first of all *śāstras*, and subsequently the Vedās have been spread out of his [four] mouths. (3) / There was only one Purāṇa in this other *kalpa*, o sinless one, efficacious instrument for the *trivarga*, auspicious, extended for a thousand million [of verses]. (4)'; *purāṇam sarva-śāstrāṇāṃ prathamam brahmaṇā smṛtam | anantaraṇ ca vaktrebhyo vedās tasya vinirgatāḥ || 3 purāṇam ekam evāsid asmin kalpāntare 'nagha | trivargasādhanam puṇyam śatakoṭipravistaram || 4*. This story has a parallel at the beginning of the *Avantyakhaṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa*.

672 See *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.5–6ab: *nirdagdheṣu ca lokeṣu yājirūpeṇa vai mayā | aṅgāni caturo vedān purāṇam nyāyavistaram || 5 mīmāṃsādharmasāstraṃ [°śāstrāṇi DKh] ca parigrhya mayā kṛtam [parigrhyātmasātkṛtam DKh]*.

again revealed ‘all this’ to Brahmā, during the deluge at the beginning of the *kṛta-yuga*,⁶⁷³ giving rise to the ‘activation of all *śāstras* and the *Purāṇa*’.⁶⁷⁴ Having eventually assumed the aspect of Vyāsa, Viṣṇu revealed all 18 ‘canonical’ *Purāṇas* (*Matsyapurāṇa* 53.9–11) in the course of different eras (*yuga*).

The quotation from the *Matsyapurāṇa* ends here, exactly where the text starts enumerating the 18 *Purāṇas* together with the procedures for their donation, as announced in the first two stanzas of the chapter, which Hemādri had omitted here.⁶⁷⁵ However, instead of inserting the titles of the *Purāṇas* according to *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.12–57, as Lakṣmīdhara and Ballālasena do, Hemādri introduces some stanzas from the *Varāhapurāṇa*. In just a few verses, they list all the *Purāṇas* mentioned in the 40 stanzas of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, while avoiding all reference to ritual procedures.⁶⁷⁶ Hemādri’s choice thus seems to be compelled by the will to separate the verses on the identification of the canonical texts—which correspond exactly with the texts to donate—from those singling out procedural details, which will be dealt with later. This would explain why the quotation from

673 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 530 (= *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.6cd–7): ‘And again at the beginning of the *kalpa* all this has been told [by me], having the form of a fish in the ocean and having gone within the water; and after hearing them [from me], the four-faced god revealed [these teachings] to the *munis*’; *matsyārūpeṇa ca punar kalpādāv udakārṇave || 6 aśeṣam etat kathitam udakāntargatena ca | śrutvā jagāda ca munin prati devaś* [devaś em., devāṃś MP, vedas DKh] *caturmukhaḥ || 7*.

674 See *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.8ab: ‘There was the appearance of all *śāstras* and the *Purāṇas*’; *pravṛttiḥ sarvaśāstrāṇāṃ purāṇasyābhavat tataḥ*.

675 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 534 (= *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.1): ‘The seers said: ‘Proclaim the names of the *Purāṇas*, o *Sūta*, in detail [and] according to the right sequence; and [proclaim] the law of [their] donation entirely, in due order, according to the [different] components. (1)’; *ṛṣaya ūcuḥ | purāṇasaṃkhyāṃ ācakṣva sūta vistarataḥ kramāt | dānaṃ dharmam aśeṣaṇ ca yathāvad anupūrvaśaḥ || 1*.

676 *Varāhapurāṇa* 112.69cd–72: ‘The *Brahmapurāṇa*, the *Padmapurāṇa*, and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, the *Śivapurāṇa* and the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*; (69) / And then another one is the *Nārāḍapurāṇa*, and seventh is the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*. The eighth to be proclaimed is the *Agnipurāṇa*, and the ninth is the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*. (70) / Tenth [is] the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, and eleventh [is] the *Līṅgapurāṇa*. The *Varāhapurāṇa* has been proclaimed as twelfth, and the *Skandapurāṇa* as thirteenth. (71) / The fourteenth is the *Vāmanapurāṇa* and the *Kūmapurāṇa* the fifteenth. And [then] the *Matsyapurāṇa*, and the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, and the last one is the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*. (72)’; *brāhmaṇaṃ pādmaṇ vaiṣṇavaṇ ca śaivaṇ bhāgavataṇ tathā || 69 tathānyan nārāḍiyaṇ ca mārkaṇḍeyaṇ ca saptamaṇ | āgneyam aṣṭamaṇ proktaṇ bhaviṣyaṇ navamaṇ tathā || 70 daśamaṇ brahmavaivartaṇ laingam ekādaśaṇ tathā | vārāhaṇ dvādaśaṇ proktaṇ skāndaṇ caiva trayodaśaṇ || 71 caturdaśaṇ vāmanaṇ ca kaurmaṇ pañcadaśaṇ tathā | mātsyaṇ ca gāruḍaṇ caiva brahmāṇḍam antimaṇ tathā || 72*.

the *Matsyapurāṇa* is abruptly interrupted in favour of a simpler list of Mahāpurāṇas in exact correspondence with the ritual donations of the 18 Purāṇas. This passage is moved to the very end of the paragraph (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 564–69).

Hemādri quotes four slightly different lists of Mahāpurāṇas,⁶⁷⁷ while mentioning only one Purāṇic version of the Upapurāṇa lists (*Kūrmapurāṇa* 1.1.17–20).⁶⁷⁸ If we sum up the titles of the different Mahāpurāṇas enumerated by each of the quoted texts, the total number of accepted works amounts to 21 and consists of the following: *Brahmapurāṇa*, *Padmapurāṇa*, *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, *Śivapurāṇa*, *Vāyupurāṇa*, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, *Nārāḍīyapurāṇa*, *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, *Agnipurāṇa*, *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, *Līṅgapurāṇa*, *Varāhapurāṇa*, *Skandapurāṇa*, *Vāmanapurāṇa*, *Kūrmapurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa*, *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Kālikāpurāṇa*, and *Saurapurāṇa*.

The titles listed by the *Varāhapurāṇa* and the *Matsyapurāṇa* are very similar, so replacing the remaining stanzas of the *Matsyapurāṇa* with the *Varāhapurāṇa* quotation does not create any inconsistency. However, there is one difference, namely that the *Varāhapurāṇa* simply gives the name of the fourth Purāṇa as *śaiva*, the ‘Purāṇa of Śiva’ (*Śivapurāṇa*), while the *Matsyapurāṇa* mentions the *Vāyupurāṇa* in the same position (53.17cd–18). The omission of the *Vāyupurāṇa* from certain Mahāpurāṇa lists, and its replacement with the *Śivapurāṇa*, is indeed a known problem in the early canons of Purāṇas.⁶⁷⁹ As for the following lists of Purāṇic texts quoted by Hemādri, possibly as an attempt to reconcile the two variants,⁶⁸⁰ the *Kālikāpurāṇa* defines the ‘Purāṇa of Śiva’ as ‘the one proclaimed

⁶⁷⁷ The Mahāpurāṇa lists reported by Hemādri are: *Varāhapurāṇa* 112.69cd–72; *Kālikāpurāṇa*, untraceable in the extant text; *Saurapurāṇa* 1.9.3–14ab; and *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.11–57.

⁶⁷⁸ The Upapurāṇas accepted in *Kūrmapurāṇa* 1.1.17–20 are: *Ādyapurāṇa*, *Nārasimhapurāṇa*, *Skandapurāṇa*, *Śivadharmapurāṇa*, *Durvāśasoktapurāṇa*, *Nārāḍīyapurāṇa*, *Kāpilapurāṇa*, *Vāmanapurāṇa*, *Uśanaseritapurāṇa*, *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Varuṇapurāṇa*, *Kālikāpurāṇa*, *Māheśvarapurāṇa*, *Sāmbapurāṇa*, *Saurapurāṇa*, *Parāśaroktapurāṇa*, *Marīcipurāṇa*, and *Bhārgavapurāṇa*. Hazra (1939–40, pp. 41–43) points out that this list has also been quoted as the authority on the titles of the Upapurāṇas in other digests, such as the *Nityācārapradīpa* (p. 19), the *Viramitrodaya* (*Paribhāṣāprakāśa*, pp. 13–14), and Raghunanandana’s *Smṛtitattva* (vol. 1 pp. 792–93). These lists, although ascribed to the same text, are slightly different respectively. One of the main differences is the name of the third Upapurāṇa: Skānda in the *Kūrmapurāṇa*; Nandī in the *Nityācārapradīpa* (which quotes only verse 1.16, and then reports the titles of the works in a prose section); Vāyaviya in the *Kūrmapurāṇa*, quoted by the *Smṛtitattva*; and Nānda in the quotations of the *Viramitrodaya* and in the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*.

⁶⁷⁹ Rocher 1986, pp. 33–34.

⁶⁸⁰ An attempt to reconcile the two branches of the tradition was made by the *Avantyakhandā* of the *Skandapurāṇa*, 3.1.33–34, referred to in Rocher 1986, p. 33, where the text states that there is in fact only one work circulating under two different titles. The *Kūrmapurāṇa*, which Hemādri

by Vāyu' (*śaivaṃ yad vāyunā proktaṃ*), while the *Saurapurāṇa* unambiguously calls the fourth Purāṇa *Vāyupurāṇa*. The *Kālikāpurāṇa* and the *Saurapurāṇa* lists of Mahāpurāṇas otherwise roughly correspond to that of the *Varāhapurāṇa*, except for some small innovations introduced by these texts, which strived to introduce themselves into the Purāṇic canon.⁶⁸¹ Chapter 1.9 of the *Saurapurāṇa*, which Hemādri only quotes with reference to the list of the Mahāpurāṇas, also provides instructions on the donation of their manuscripts (see *Saurapurāṇa* 1.9.15–40), just like the *Matsyapurāṇa*. Hemādri keeps this portion out of his digest—with the exception of stanzas 1.9.15–17ab, which are placed after the *Matsyapurāṇa* quotation (see Table A)—and lets *Kūrmapurāṇa* 1.16–20 immediately follow *Saurapurāṇa* 1.9.3–14, which constitutes the sole enumeration of Upapurāṇas in the entire chapter.⁶⁸² The description of the donative procedures for the Purāṇas

quotes only as an authority on the Upapurāṇas, also contains an enumeration of 19 Mahāpurāṇas (*Kūrmapurāṇa* 1.1.13–15), where the *Vāyupurāṇa* is placed in eighteenth position; the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, although concluding the list as the nineteenth Purāṇa, is nonetheless said to be the eighteenth; this fact possibly shows that the mention of the *Vāyupurāṇa* is a secondary addition. See *Kūrmapurāṇa* 1.1.15: 'The *Kūrmapurāṇa*, the *Matsyapurāṇa*, the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, and, following, the *Vāyupurāṇa*. The eighteenth that is enumerated is called *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*'; *kaurmaṃ mātṣyaṃ gāruḍaṃ ca vāyaviyam anantaram | aṣṭādaśamsamuddiṣṭaṃ brahmāṇḍaṃ iti saṃjñitam || 15*. For the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* being considered *vāyuprokta*, 'proclaimed by Vāyu', see Vielle 2009.

681 The list of the *Kālikāpurāṇa* is certainly incomplete, because it enumerates only 14 Purāṇas, and mentions the *Garuḍapurāṇa* and the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* as the 'seventeenth' and 'eighteenth'. Besides the absence of some of the major Purāṇas, there are two remarkable differences from the *Varāhapurāṇa* list, namely that the *Kālikāpurāṇa* itself is inserted in fourth position, and the *Saura*[*purāṇa*] mentioned in sixth. These *Kālikāpurāṇa* verses containing the list of Mahāpurāṇas are also referred to by Hazra 1963, p. 240, who could not identify them in the extant *Kālikāpurāṇa* text. As for the *Saurapurāṇa* list quoted by Hemādri, corresponding to *Saurapurāṇa* 1.9.3–14ab, this contains the same titles as the *Varāhapurāṇa* and the *Matsyapurāṇa* (though opting for the *Vāyupurāṇa* rather than the *Śivapurāṇa*). Unlike the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, the *Saurapurāṇa* does not insert its text into the list of 18, but declares (*Saurapurāṇa* 1.13ab): 'This unsurpassed *Saurapurāṇa* is a supplementary section of the *Brahmapurāṇa*' (*idaṃ brahmapurāṇasya khilaṃ sauram anuttamam*).

682 However, note that Hemādri also attributes to the *Saurapurāṇa* some stanzas that are not traceable in the current edition of the text (see Table A). In one of these stanzas, he praises the donation of the 'treatises of the Śivadharmā': (*Saurapurāṇa* 2cd-3ab_{Hem}) 'The one who, with the intention of accruing religious merits, donates the treatises of the Śivadharmā and so on, he receives an endless fruit from the exposition of the Śivadharmā'; *śivadharmādiśāstrāṇi yaḥ prayacchati puṇyadhīḥ || 2_{Hem} so 'nantaphalam āpnoti śivadharmaprakāśanāt |*. Therefore, in the same way as in the sources examined in chapter 2, the teaching of the text seems to be the aim of its donation.

are therefore derived only from the usual *Matsyapurāṇa* 53,⁶⁸³ just as in Hemādri's predecessors Lakṣmīdhara and Ballālasena. The choice of avoiding *Saurapurāṇa* 1.17cd–40, whose style is similar to that of *Matsyapurāṇa* 53, is most likely driven by the need to avoid contradictions with what had traditionally been considered the main source on this topic. The account of the *Saurapurāṇa* does in fact convey different information from that of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, especially with reference to the times at which the donation of the various Purāṇas is prescribed; moreover, the mention of fees accompanying the donation of the manuscripts is absent from the prescriptions of the *Saurapurāṇa*. In some cases, the *Saurapurāṇa* distinguishes specific recipients in accordance with the Purāṇas to be donated, while the *Matsyapurāṇa* does not make any reference to the recipients. According to the instructions of the *Saurapurāṇa*, for instance, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* must be donated to an expert on the Vedas (1.9.19), the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* to a devotee of the Sun (1.9.20), the *Nāradaṭṭapurāṇa* (1.9.26) and the *Brahmaṇḍapurāṇa* (1.9.36) to a Śaiva, and the *Brahmavaivarta*[*purāṇa*] to a Vaiṣṇava devotee (1.9.27):⁶⁸⁴

683 Hemādri (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 533–34) first quotes *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.62–72 on the classification of the Purāṇas into bright (*sāttvika*), vigorous (*rājasa*), and obscure (*tāmasika*), and on the 'five distinctive characters' of Purāṇas (*pañcalakṣaṇa*). Immediately afterwards (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 534–39), the text continues by quoting *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.1–2 and 11–57 on the appropriate times and procedures for the gifting of each of the 18 Mahāpurāṇas.

684 *Saurapurāṇa* 1.16–40: yo dadyāc chivabhaktāya brāhmaṇāya tapasvine | yāni dānāni lokeṣu prasiddhāni dvijottamāḥ || 16 sarveṣāṃ phalam āpnoti caturdaśyāṃ na saṃśayaḥ | brāhmaṇaṃ purāṇaṃ prathamam dadāti śraddhayā 'nvitah || 17 sarvapāpavinirmukto brahmaloke mahīyate | pādmaṃ brahmāṇam uddīśya yo dadāti guror dīne || 18 dvijāya vedaviduṣe jyotiṣṭomaphalaṃ labhet | vaiṣṇavaṃ viṣṇum uddīśya dvādaśyāṃ prayataḥ śuciḥ || 19 anūcānāya yo dadyād vaiṣṇavaṃ padam āpmuyāt | dadāti sūryabhaktāya yas tu bhāgavataṃ dvijāḥ || 20 sarvapāpavinirmuktaḥ sarvarogavivarjitaḥ | jived varṣāśataṃ sāgram ante vaivarataṃ padam || 21 vaiśāke śuklapakṣasya tṛtīyā 'kṣayasamjñitā | tasyāṃ tithau saṃyatātmā brāhmaṇāyā 'hitāgnaye || 22 bhaviṣyākhyam purāṇam tu dadāti śraddhayānvitah | aśvamedhasya yajñasya phalam āpnoty anuttamam || 23 mārkaṇḍeyaṃ tu yo dadyāt saptabhyāṃ prayatātmavān | sūryalokam avāpnoti sarvapāpavivarjitaḥ || 24 āgneyam pratipadyaiva pradadyād āhitāgnaye | rājasūyasya yajñasya phalam bhavati śāśvataḥ || 25 dadāti nāradyam yaś caturdaśyāṃ samāhitaḥ | dvijāya śivabhaktāya śivaloke mahīyate || 26 yo dadyād brahmavaivartaṃ vaiṣṇavāya samāhitaḥ | brahmalokam avāpnoti punar āvṛttidurlabham || 27 kārtikasya caturdaśyāṃ śuklapakṣasya suvratāḥ | laiṅgaṃ dadyād dvijendrāya śivārcanaratāya vai || 28 sarvapāpavinirmuktaḥ sarvaiśvāryasamanvitaḥ | yāti māheśvaraṃ dhāma sarvalokopari sthitaḥ || 29 dvādaśyāṃ saṃyato bhūtvā brāhmaṇāya tapasvine | yo vai dadāti vārāham viṣṇuloke sa gacchati || 30 skāṇḍam śivacaturdaśyāṃ pradadyāc chivayogine | jñāni bhavati vepreindrā mahādevaprasādataḥ || 31 dvādaśyāṃ vā caturdaśyāṃ dadyād vāmanam uttamam | tasya devasya taṃ lokaṃ prāpnoty akṣayam uttamam || 32 dadyāt kaurmaṃ caturdaśyāṃ yogine prayatātmane | sarvadānasya yat puṇyam sarvayajñasya yat phalam || 33 prāpnoti tat phalam vidvān ante śaivam paraṃ padam | mātṣyam dadyād dvijendrāya

The one who would donate to a Brahmin ascetic devoted to Śiva those gifts that are well established in the world, o twice-borns, (16) / On the fourteenth [lunar day], he will without doubt gain the fruit of all [gifts]. Endowed with trust he will first give the [Purāṇa of] Brahmā: (17) / Freed from all sins he prospers in the world of Brahmā. The one who donates the [Purāṇa] of Padma on a Thursday, in the name of Brahmā, (18) / To a twice-born knower of the Vedas, he will take the fruit of a Jyotiṣṭoma. A pure, pious person (19) / Who, on the twelfth [lunar day], would give the [Purāṇa] of Viṣṇu in the name of Viṣṇu to a person very well versed in the Vedas, [he] will reach the seat of Viṣṇu. The one who would give the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* to a devotee of the Sun, o twice-borns, (20) / Freed from all sins and all ailments, he will live a hundred years, [his] whole life until the end in the seat of the Sun (21) / The third [lunar day] of the bright fortnight in the month of Vaiśakha is called 'unperishable'; on this lunar day a self-controlled person [who], endowed with trust, gives (st. 23) to a Brahmin holder of the perpetual fire (22) / The Purāṇa called *Bhaviṣya*, he gets the unsurpassed fruit of the Aśvamedha sacrifice (23) / Whereas a person with an active soul, who will donate the [Purāṇa] of Mārkaṇḍeya on the seventh [lunar day], reaches the world of the Sun, freed from all sins. (24) / Having acquired the [Purāṇa] of Agni, [one] should give [it] to a [Brahmin] holder of the perpetual fire: [in this way] the fruit of the Rājasūya sacrifice becomes eternal. (25) / The person with a concentrated mind who would donate the [Purāṇa] of Nārada on the fourteenth [lunar day] to a twice-born devotee of Śiva, [he] prospers in the world of Śiva. (26) / The person with a concentrated mind who will donate the *Brahmavaivarta*[*purāṇa*] to a Vaiṣṇava [devotee], [he] reaches the world of Brahmā, which is difficult to be obtained among the rebirths. (27) / On the fourteenth [lunar day] of the bright fortnight of the month Kārttika, o virtuous men, [one] should donate the [Purāṇa] of the Liṅga to the best of the twice-borns, one who enjoys the worship of Śiva (28) / Freed from all sins, endowed with power over everything, [he] goes to the seat of Maheśvara, placed above all worlds. (29) / One who gives the *Varāha*[*purāṇa*] on the twelfth [lunar day] to a Brahmin ascetic, being self-controlled, he goes to the world of Viṣṇu. (30) / One who would give the [Purāṇa] of Skanda to a *śivayogin* on the fourteenth [lunar day] dedicated to Śiva, [he] becomes a knowledgeable person, o Brahmins, favoured by Mahādeva. (31) / On the twelfth or on the fourteenth day [one] should give the unsurpassed *Vāmana*[*purāṇa*], [and he] reaches this imperishable, unsurpassed world of that god (32) / [If one] would donate the [Purāṇa] of Kūrma on the fourteenth [lunar day] to a Yogin who has an active soul, that merit [deriving] from all gifts, [he obtains] [that] fruit [deriving] from all sacrifices (lit. sing.). (33) / In the end, the sage obtains that fruit [which is] the seat of Śiva. And [if] a religious person would give the [Purāṇa] of Matsya to the best among the twice-borns during the summer solstice (34) / Freed from all sins he prospers in the world of Śiva. [If one] would give the [Purāṇa] of Garuḍa, in the name of Śiva, on the lunar day dedicated to Śiva,

prayataś cottarāyaṇe || 34 vimuktaḥ sarvapāpebhyaḥ śivaloke mahīyate | gāruḍaṁ śivam uddiśya dadyāc chivatithau dvijāḥ || 35 vājapeyasahasrasya phalam āpnoty anuttamam | pradadyāc chivabhaktāya brahmāṇḍam iti yat smṛtam || 36 śivasya purato bhaktiā saṁprāpte dakṣiṇāyaṇe | candrasya grahaṇe vā 'tha bhānor api ca suvratāḥ || 37 gaṇādhīpatyam āpnōti devadevasya śūliṇaḥ | evamuktaḥ purāṇānāṁ kramo dānena yat phalam || 38 proktaṁ samāsato viprāḥ sūryo yat svayam abravīt | yaḥ paṭhed imam adhyāyaṁ mahādevasya saṁnidhau || 39 sarvapāpavīnirmukto vājapeyaphalaṁ labhet || 40.

o twice-borns, (35) / [He] obtains the unsurpassed fruit of one thousand Vājapeya. [If one] would donate [the Purāṇa] which is known as *Brahmāṇḍa[purāṇa]* to a Śaiva devotee, (36) / With devotion towards Śiva, on the occasion of the winter solstice, as well as during an eclipse of moon or sun, o pious men, (37) / [He] obtains the sovereignty over the Gaṇas of the spear-holder god of the gods. Thus the series of the Purāṇas has been told, [and] the fruit which [is obtained] through the gift [of them], (38) / Which the Sun himself expounded, has been concisely taught, o Brahmins. The one who would read this chapter in the proximity of Mahādeva, (39) / Freed from all sins [he] will obtain the fruit of a Vājapeya. (40)

Hemādri's paragraph on the gift of the Purāṇas is closed by a sequence of short eulogistic quotations from the *Brahmapurāṇa* and the *Kūrmapurāṇa*, praising the gift of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which the digest-writer therefore also considers to be among the manuscripts to donate in a *purāṇadāna*. That the *Mahābhārata* was included in the category of the gift of the Purāṇas is further confirmed in the following paragraph on the *purāṇaśravaṇadāna*, literally 'Gift of the Hearing of the Purāṇas' (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 540–43), in which Hemādri quotes a long passage from the *Harivaṃśa*, a composite work recounting the life of Kṛṣṇa and several other topics, which was traditionally considered a supplement (*khila*) to the *Mahābhārata*.⁶⁸⁵ The ritual reading of the various sections of the *Mahābhārata* and the worship of their manuscripts are the subject of the verses that Hemādri quotes.

The *Harivaṃśa* is presumably an early work, dated by Vaidya to the fourth to the fifth century,⁶⁸⁶ whose earliest layers might well date back to the second or third century.⁶⁸⁷ It was critically edited, along with the 18 divisions (Parvans) of the

⁶⁸⁵ The *Harivaṃśa* calls itself a *khila*, but also a Purāṇa and a *mahākāvya*, 'long poem'; see for this Brockington 1998, p. 314. For a rather exhaustive introduction to the *Harivaṃśa*, the reader is referred to Brockington 1998, pp. 313–44. At p. 313, Brockington sums up some of the main views concerning the interpretation of the *Harivaṃśa* as a *khila*: among these, that of Couture (1996), who highlights that this definition has sometimes led scholars of the *Mahābhārata* to disregard the *Harivaṃśa* in the name of the supposed 'ancillary' nature of the latter; and that of Matchett (1996), arguing that the idea of a *khila* rather hints at the *Harivaṃśa* being conceived as a sort of completion of the *Mahābhārata*, an independent work instead of a secondary offshoot of the main epics.

⁶⁸⁶ Vaidya 1969, p. XVff.

⁶⁸⁷ See Brockington 1998, pp. 328–30, dealing with the issue of dating mainly on pp. 326–31. It is very often the case with the Sanskrit epic and Purāṇic literature that the process of composition extended over years and centuries, with the addition of several textual layers at different points in history, making the attempt at dating a work a particularly complex task.

Mahābhārata, relatively recently.⁶⁸⁸ It is relevant to refer to the critical edition of the *Harivaṃśa*, as the stanzas quoted by Hemādri on the ritual readings of the *Mahābhārata* and the fruits deriving from this activity are all located in the so-called ‘first appendix’ (*prathamam pariśiṣṭam*) to the critical edition (more precisely, text passage no. 40 of Appendix 1). This is where the editor, Vaidya, moved the textual passages that he expunged from the main text of the edition; the reason for this expunction was their being in disagreement with the criteria of authenticity previously established by the editors of the *Mahābhārata*.⁶⁸⁹ These expunged passages were thus supposed to be ‘inauthentic’ and ‘later’: in the words of the editor, the text of the *Harivaṃśa* had been ‘inflated’ by additions from at least the fourth century onwards.⁶⁹⁰ Besides the accordance of the three main branches of the manuscript tradition, another criterion used to expunge passages in the reconstruction of the earliest text is their absence from Kṣemendra’s *Bhāratamañjarī*, a summary of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Harivaṃśa* from eleventh-century Kashmir.⁶⁹¹

This is not the appropriate context to discuss the validity of such criteria or the notion of an ‘authentic’ earlier version as opposed to an ‘inauthentic’ later one; it should, however, be noted that the text of Appendix 1.40 fails to meet at least one of the norms proposed by Vaidya, because the text presented in the Appendix is in fact summed up in *Bhāratamañjarī* 19.1475–82,⁶⁹² a short section on the *parvapūjā*,

688 The two-volume edition of the *Harivaṃśa* was achieved by Vaidya 1969 and 1971. The volumes of the *Mahābhārata*’s first critical edition were published by Sukthankar, Bevalkar, and Vaidya between 1933 and 1959.

689 Vaidya remarks (1969, p. XXXV) that he has followed the same principles expounded by Sukthankar in his famous *Prolegomena* to the *Ādiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (Sukthankar 1933, pp. I–CX). As briefly restated by Vaidya (1969, p. XXXV–VI), these aim at reconstructing the oldest available text by classifying manuscripts of different recensions and versions according to age and script. A general division of scripts between northern, central, and southern provides a broad scheme for the subdivision into recensions. Vaidya thus establishes the text of the *Harivaṃśa* on the basis of the agreement between the two oldest manuscripts from the north (Ś1, an undated Śāradā manuscript that, according to Vaidya, could go back to a very early exemplar—see 1969, p. XVI, and N1, dated on the basis of palaeography ‘to the close of the 11th century, or to the first half of the 12th century A.D.’; Vaidya 1969, p. XVIII); and the ‘extreme southern version’. The editor identifies the latter with manuscript M1–3, in Malayālam script (Vaidya 1969, pp. XXIII–IV). The rest is relegated to the appendices; as noted by Brockington (1998, p. 320), this means that the appendices now contain approximately two-thirds of the text of the vulgate edition of the *Harivaṃśa* from the nineteenth century.

690 Vaidya 1969, p. XV.

691 Vaidya 1969, p. XV. There he also states that ‘[...] Kṣemendra makes no reference to episodes which I have excluded from the constituted text except the three Prādurbhāvas of Varāha, Nara-siṃha and Vāmana’.

692 See *Bhāratamañjarī*, pp. 836–37.

literally ‘Veneration of the Sections [of the *Mahābhārata*]’, whose unabridged text corresponds to that quoted extensively, though not in its entirety, by Hemādri. The topic of Appendix 1.40 of the *Harivaṃśa* is established in the first stanzas, which read:⁶⁹³

O Bhagavān, according to which procedure do wise people have to listen to the *Bhārata*? (1) / What is the fruit [of it] and which gods have to be worshipped here during the readings (*pāraṇa*)? (2) / And, o Bhagavān, what has to be donated in the end [of the reading] of each section [of the *Mahābhārata*]? (3) / And which kind of reciter is desirable for this purpose? Tell me this! (4)

By quoting stanzas on the topic of ritual reading, Hemādri thus extends his interpretation of the gift of knowledge also to include the practice of the public recitation of manuscripts. The title, which mentions the ‘Hearing of the Purāṇas’, is nonetheless deceptive, as the chapter of the *Harivaṃśa*, on which Hemādri entirely bases the paragraph, only mentions the *Mahābhārata*, but never the Purāṇas. The topic of verses 40 to 103 is that of the rewards obtainable through a sponsorship of the recitations, of which the text exhorts financing at least 10 in order to secure all the supramundane rewards listed from verse 81 to 99. Attention is devoted to the description of the professional reciter (*vācaka*, v. 40), endowed with standard features such as good moral and religious conduct (‘rejoicing in truth and rectitude, patient’, *satyārjavarato dāntaḥ*, v. 35; he is also ‘rich in faith’, *śraddhadhānaḥ*, v. 36, and ‘with his senses refrained’, *jitendriyaḥ*, v. 37), ritual purity (he is ‘pure’, *śuciḥ*, and ‘ritually purified’, *saṃskṛtaḥ*, in vv. 37–38), and knowledge (‘knower of all disciplines’, *sarvaśāstrajñāḥ*, v. 38). This brief portrayal is followed by the description of his reading performance and a brief reference to the text he has to read:⁶⁹⁴

Prompt and zealous, the reciter should read (v. 44) not in an indistinct way, with calm, powerfully, this [*Mahābhārata*] (41) / Whose letters and words are not disconnected, en-

693 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, vv. 1–2: *bhagavan kena vidhinā śrotavyaṃ bhārataṃ budhaiḥ* | 1 *phalaṃ kiṃ ke ca devās ca pūjyā vai pāraṇeṣv iha* || 2 *deyaṃ samāpte bhagavan kiṃ ca parvaṇi parvaṇi* | 3 *vācakaḥ kīḍṛśaś cātra eṣṭavyas tad bravihi me* || 4. Note that, for practical reasons, I maintain the same system of numeration adopted in the critical edition of the *Harivaṃśa*, where the editor has numbered the hemistichs, and not the verses.

694 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, vv. 41–48: *avilambamanāyas tam adrutaṃ dhīram ūrjitam* | 41 *asaṃsaktākṣarapadaṃ rasabhāvasamanvitam* || 42 *triṣaṣṭivarṇasaṃyuktam aṣṭasthānasa-* *manvitam* | 43 *vācayed vācakaḥ svasthaḥ svāsīnaḥ susamāhitaḥ* || 44 *nārāyaṇaṃ namaskṛtya na-* *raṃ caiva narottamaṃ* | 45 *devīm sarasvatīm caiva tato jayam udīrayet* || 46 *īdṛśād vācakād rājaṃ* *śrutvā bhārata bhārataṃ* | 47 *niyamasthaḥ śuciḥ śrotā śṛṇvan sa phalam aśnute* || 48.

dowed with [the correct] *rasas* and *bhāvas*, (42) / Provided with [all the correct] 63 phonemes [and] eight cases. (43) / [The scribe should read when he is] in good health conditions, comfortably seated, well focused. (44) / Having bowed to Nārāyaṇa and to Nara [and] Narottama, (45) / As well as to the goddess Sarasvatī, he should then shout ‘Victory!’ (46) / Having heard the *Bhārata* from such a reciter, o king Bhārata, (47) / A listener who is constant in determination, pure, he gets his fruit by listening. (48)

As in the *Nandipurāṇa* (see § 2.4), the *Harivaṃśa* recommends that the reciter read with expressiveness and competence, and to refer to a manuscript with correct orthography and grammar; the allusion to the gods to be worshipped, which are often found in the benedictory verses inscribed in the beginning of manuscripts of the *Mahābhārata*,⁶⁹⁵ gives this activity a proper religious context.

Hemādri starts his quotation of this *Harivaṃśa* chapter *in medias res*, namely from v. 103, postponing references to the preceding stanzas to the last part of his paragraph. The verses from which he starts quoting are those dealing with the gifts that one should give to Brahmins on the occasion of the ritual readings of the Parvans of the *Mahābhārata*. Once again, gifting procedures are thus at stake, but not in the form of a gift of manuscripts.⁶⁹⁶

After this I shall further explain, o Bhārata, those things that have to be donated / To the Brahmins when this and the other Parvan are read, o king. (1_{Hem}=103–104_{HV}) / Having at the beginning said ‘*svāsti*’ to the twice-borns, then the rite must be performed; once the Parvan has been concluded, he should please the twice-borns according to one’s own ability. (2_{Hem}=107–108_{HV}) / Then, at the beginning, having worshipped the reciter, provided with myrrh, one should feed sweet, utmost food, o king! (3_{Hem}=109–110_{HV}) / Afterwards, according to the rule, he should feed a devotee with a big portion of roots and fruits, milk with honey and ghee, o king, and should offer the *guḍaudāna* (boiled rice and coarse sugar), (4_{Hem}=111–112_{HV}) / Together with incenss, and cakes and sweets. (5_{abHem}=113_{HV})

The text quoted by Hemādri presents some remarkable differences with the one in *Harivaṃśa*’s critical edition. In the first place, Hemādri skips vv. 105–106, in which

⁶⁹⁵ I owe this information to Peter Bisschop.

⁶⁹⁶ *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 540–51 (= *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, vv. 103–104; 107–13): *ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi yāni deyāni bhārata | vācyamāne tu viprebhyo rājan parvaṇi parvaṇi ||* 1_{Hem} *svasti vācyā dvijān | vidhān Dkh | ādau tataḥ kāryaṃ pravarttate | samāpte parvaṇi tataḥ svaśaktiā tarpayed dvijān ||* 2_{Hem} *ādau tu vācakaṃ pūjya | bhārataśreṣṭha HV | rasagandhasamanvitam | gandhamālyārvitān dvijān HV | vidhivad bhojayed rājan madhupāyasamuttamam ||* 3_{Hem} *tato mūlaphalaprayāṇaṃ pāyasaṃ madhusarpiṣi | āstike bhojayed rājan dadyāc caiva guḍodanam ||* 4_{Hem} *atha dhūpaiś ca | apūpaiś caiva HV | pūpaiś ca modakaiś ca samanvitam |.*

the text specifies that the following activities have to be performed⁶⁹⁷ ‘having ascertained the birth-class and place of origin, the pureness and magnanimity, [...] the religion and occupation [...]’ presumably of the Brahmins that have to be worshipped at the end of the readings. Moreover, in *Harivamśa* v. 3_{Hem}, corresponding to *Harivamśa* App. 1.40, vv. 109–10, the mention of the twice-borns is replaced with a reference to the veneration of the reciter. The corresponding verses in the *Harivamśa* edition read: ⁶⁹⁸ ‘Then, at the beginning, o best among the Bhāratas, he should, according to procedures, feed sweet, utmost food to the twice-borns, revered with perfumes and garlands, o king!’. Hemādri’s rendition of this verse does not appear among the variant readings of the manuscript tradition of the text.

The verses that Hemādri quotes next (corresponding to *Harivamśa*, App. 1.40, vv. 114–136) list the different gifts that have to be offered on the occasion of the recitation of each of the Parvans of the *Mahābhārata*. It is at this point that the text makes reference to the worship of the manuscripts. Consistently with what we learn from the *Śivadharmottara* and other sources (see § 2.4), the performance of ritual recitations is not disconnected from the material dimension of the text, whose manuscript is not only regarded as instrumental to the performance, but also treated as a focus of worship and veneration. This must conclude the reading of each manuscript, as the text prescribes:⁶⁹⁹

Having concluded each text (*saṃhitā*), a pious man, well versed in the treatises, having brought [this manuscript], wrapped in a line-cloth and so on, to a beautiful place; (18_{Hem}=141–42_{HV}) / There, wearing a white cloth, being pure, well adorned, the pious man,

⁶⁹⁷ *Harivamśa*, App. 1.40, vv. 104–105: *jātiṃ deśaṃ ca sattvaṃ ca mātmyaṃ bharatarṣabha* || 104 *dharmaṃ vṛttiṃ ca vijñāya kṣatriyāṇāṃ narādhipa* || 105.

⁶⁹⁸ *Harivamśa*, App. 1.40, vv. 109–10: *ātau tu bharataśreṣṭha gandhamālyānvitān dvijān* | 109 *vidhivad bhojayed rājan madhupāyasamuttamam* || 110.

⁶⁹⁹ *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 542–43 (= *Harivamśa*, App. 1.40, vv. 141–155): *saṃāpya sarvāṃ* [sarvāḥ HV] *prayataḥ saṃhitāṃ* [saṃhitāḥ HV] *śāstrakovidāḥ* | *śubhe deśe niveśyātha kṣauma-vastrādisaṃvṛtam* [°saṃvṛtāḥ HV] || 18_{Hem} *śuklāmbaḍharas tatra* [sragvī HV] *śucir bhūtvā svalaṅkṛtaḥ* | *arcayet tu yathānyāyaṃ gandhamālyaiḥ pṛthak pṛthak* || 19_{Hem} *saṃhitāpustakān rāgāt prayataḥ susamāhitaḥ* | *bhakṣair bhojaiś* [māsaiś HV] *ca peyaiś ca kautukair* [kāmaīśca HV] *vividhaiḥ śubhaiḥ* || 20_{Hem} *hiraṇyaṃ ca suvarṇaṃ ca dakṣiṇāṃ tatra* [atha HV] *dāpayet* | *devatāḥ kirttayet sarvāṃ naranārāyaṇau tathā* || 21_{Hem} *tato gandhaiś ca mālyaiś ca svalaṅkṛtya dvijottamān* | *tarpayet vividhaiḥ kāmair dānair ratnādikaḥ* [dānaiś coccāvacaḥ HV] *tathā* || 22_{Hem} *bhuktavatsu ca vipreṣu* [dvijendreṣu HV] *yathāvat sampracārayet* [saṃpradāpayet HV] | *vācakaḥ bharataśreṣṭha bhojayitvā svalaṅkṛtam* || 23_{Hem} *brāhmaṇeṣu prassanneṣu* [tu tuṣṭeṣu HV] *prasannās tasya devatāḥ* [prasannā sarvadevatā HV] | *vācakaḥ parituṣṭe tu* [vācakaḥ parituṣṭāś ca HV] *śubhā prītir anuttamā* [śubhāṃ prītiṃ anuttamāṃ HV] || 24_{Hem} *tato vivaraṇaṃ kāryaṃ saṃhitānāṃ* [dvijānāṃ HV] *bharatavarṣabha* [c.m.] | 25ab_{Hem}.

with his mind very focused (see 20_{Hem}=145_{HV}), should worship according to rule, with perfumes and garlands, one by one (19_{Hem}=143–44_{HV}) / The manuscripts of the texts, with joy, food, entertainments, and drinks [and] various beautiful celebrations, (20_{Hem}=145–46_{HV}) / And at this point [he] should give precious metals and gold as a fee. [He] should honour all gods, as well as Nara and Nārāyaṇa. (21_{Hem}=147–48_{HV}) / Then having adorned the best among the twice-borns with perfumes and garlands, [he] should please [them] with various enjoyments and gifts, as well as jewels and so on. (22_{Hem}=149–50_{HV}) / And once the Brahmins have been satiated, [he] should dismiss [them] in the proper way, after feeding the well-adorned reciter, o best among the Bharatas. (23_{Hem}=151–52_{HV}) / If the Brahmins are favourable, the gods are favourable to him; but once the reciter is pleased, there is great, unsurpassed joy. (24_{Hem}=153–54_{HV}) / Then, o bull of the Bharatas, the explanation of the collections has to be performed. (25_{abHem}=155_{HV})

The worship of the manuscripts prescribed in this section of the *Harivaṃśa* thus follows the usual procedures, which envisage the offering of various stock items (incense and garlands in this case), then the payment of the fees and the offering of food and amusements to the Brahmins and the people attending the ritual. The reciter is mentioned again, this time as the recipient of food offerings, at *Harivaṃśa* 23_{Hem}=152_{HV}. However, he does not seem to be the only professional figure entitled to handle the manuscripts in the description of the *parvapūjā* of the *Harivaṃśa*, for in a verse that is not quoted by Hemādri (*Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, v. 100), and which is connected with the account of the rewards awaiting the sponsors of such ritual, the text also instructs the devotee that⁷⁰⁰ ‘Whatever [he] desires with his heart, it should be donated to the scribe.’ The latter is unfortunately an isolated reference, and the text does not specify the role of the scribe during these procedures; however, his mention seems to have a context similar to that of the *Nandipurāṇa*, where the manuscripts have been ritually produced before being recited. The materiality of the text is thus stressed even in the context of its oral fruition, not only because manuscripts have to be worshipped ‘one by one’ (*pr̥thak pr̥thak*, *Harivaṃśa* 19_{Hem}= App. 1.40, v. 144_{HV}) after the reading, but also because the mention of a professional scribe evokes his direct intervention in the text, which does not just play the role of an icon to worship, but is fully used in its semantic values. We can, however, gather more information on this point once we turn our attention to the text that Vaidya expunged from the appendices, and preserved in the thick critical apparatus appended to the text.

Vaidya marks the stanzas that are excluded from the edition with a double star because they were transmitted only in isolated manuscripts. Before venturing into their reading, it must be observed that the text known to Hemādri is in

700 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, v. 100: *lekhakasya tu dātavyaṃ manasā yad yad icchati* || 100.

fact closer to that of some of the expunged stanzas in the apparatus, at least in the case of the last verses that he quotes. Here the text of the *Dānakhaṇḍa* is identical or very close to that of passages 43**, 44**, and 47**, which are generally well attested in the manuscript tradition of the *Harivaṃśa*.⁷⁰¹ Following the mention of the scribe at *Harivaṃśa* App. 1.40, v. 100 and the prescription to donate to him, a Devanāgarī manuscript belonging to the K series inserts some stanzas reintroducing a topic that had been left out of this *Harivaṃśa* chapter, namely that of the gift of manuscripts:⁷⁰²

The manuscript of the *Harivaṃśa* has to be donated along with fees. (1) / One should donate a cover [for the manuscript] along with a cord, according to [one's own] power and nature, (2) / And in a beautiful small basket, as an infinite source of [positive] fruits. (3)

The text does not provide any further details on the recipients of this donation, although significantly it inserts this reference directly after the scribe is mentioned. These expunged verses, like most of the following ones referring to ritual procedures involving the use of manuscripts, are only attested in single manuscripts, and are thus likely to be either the outcome of scribal intervention or of textual contamination. The fact that more scribes, involved in the transmission of the text in different places and times, felt the need to integrate the prescriptions given by the *Harivaṃśa* with those known to them via tradition or through other

701 Passage 43**, consisting of three hemistichs, is transmitted in slightly different positions by manuscripts K1, K3, K4, Ñ2, V1, V3, B, D, T1, T2, G1, G3, G4, G5, M2, and M4; passage 44**, of only one hemistich, by Ś1, D6, G3, G4, K1, K3, K4, Ñ2, V1, V3, B, Dn, Ds, D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, T1, T2, G1, G3, G4, G5, M2, and M4; passage 47**, again consisting of one hemistich, replaces the very similar v. 154 (*vācakaḥ parituṣṭaś ca śubhāṃ prītiṃ anuttamām*) in manuscripts K1, K3, K4, Ñ2, V1, V3, B, D, T1, T2, G1, G3, G4, G5, M2, and M4 (for all these, see Vaidya 1971, p. 510). In order to get some orientation among all these sigla, we shall note that, according to the outline provided by the editor (Vaidya 1969, pp. X–XII), the siglum Ś is used to describe Śāradā manuscripts; K for denoting Devanāgarī manuscripts ‘allied’ with those in Śāradā; Ñ is the siglum used to denote manuscripts in so-called Newari script; V, those in Maithilī; and B, the Bengali ones. D is the siglum of the Devanāgarī manuscripts differing from K, while T, G, and M indicate the three main groups of what Vaidya calls the ‘Southern recension’, namely manuscripts in Telugu, Grantha, and Malayālam script. When the letter is accompanied by a number, it denotes a specific manuscript; when isolated, it describes all the manuscripts falling into that category. Dn and Ds stand for ‘Devanāgarī version of Nilakaṇṭha’ and ‘Devanāgarī version of Sūradāsa’ (Vaidya 1969, p. XI).

702 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40.17**, vv. 1–3: *pustakaṃ harivaṃśasya dātavyaṃ dakṣiṇāṇvitam | 1 veṣṭanaṃ rajjusaṃyuktaṃ dadyād vaibhavasārataḥ || 2 puṭike ca śubhe caiva phala-syānanyahetave | 3*. These lines are part of a five-verse passage transmitted in the Devanāgarī manuscript K2.

works—or other manuscripts of the same work—makes these supplemented stanzas significant evidence of the liveliness of such ritual instructions. Following the contents of these stanzas, one learns some technical features that speak to the reality of manuscript worship, reading, and donation within the ritual practice of Vaiṣṇava communities in the Middle Ages.

After line 139 of *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, which prescribes,⁷⁰³ ‘When the [reading of the] *Harivaṃśa* is concluded, one has to feed the twice-borns one thousand times’, we learn that, according to one manuscript whose variant reading is reproduced as ‘passage 38**’, the manuscript has to be donated along with gold, and that the reading and the donation of the manuscript will cause the sponsor to get a male offspring.⁷⁰⁴ A passage that has a slightly wider attestation (no. 39**) specifies that the recipient of the gift of the manuscript is the reciter himself, and additionally remarks on the apotropaic values of the *Harivaṃśa*:⁷⁰⁵

One should give one cow along with money to a Brahmin; (1) / As alternative, a poor person may also give half as much, o lord of the earth! (2) / At the end of each Parvan then, o wise man, (3) / One has to donate the manuscript to the reciter along with gold. (4) / [The one who] would listen, with a concentrated mind, to a stanza, or to a quarter of a stanza, or to a letter, o son of kings, Viṣṇu will protect him. (5–6)

That the reciter is considered the addressee of the final donation of the manuscript is also attested in 39A**. ⁷⁰⁶ The following passage 40**, again preserved in a single Devanāgarī manuscript, is inserted by this manuscript soon after stanza 143 (corresponding to *Dānakhaṇḍa* 19_{Hem}), namely following the prescription on carrying the manuscripts to a ‘beautiful place’ for their veneration. Passage 40**

703 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40.139: *harivaṃśasamāptau tu sahasraṃ bhojayed dvijān* | 139.

704 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40.38**, vv. 1–2: ‘One has to donate a manuscript along with gold in the form of money, (1) / And by listening [to the reading] and through the donation [of manuscripts] there will be the obtainment of sons, no doubt [about it]!’ (2); *niṣkamātrasuvarṇena pustakaṃ ca pradāpayet* | 1 *śravaṇena ca dānena putraprāptir na saṃśayaṃ* || 2. This stanza is only contained in the Devanāgarī manuscript D4.

705 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, 39**, vv. 1–6: *gām ekāṃ niṣkaśaṃyuktāṃ brāhmaṇāya nivedayet* | 1 *tadardhenāpi dātavyā daridreṇāpi pārthiva* || 2 *pratiparvasamāptau tu pustakaṃ vai vicakṣaṇaḥ* | 3 *suvarṇena ca saṃyuktaṃ vācakāya nivedayet* || 4 *ślokaṃ vā ślokapādaṃ vā akṣaraṃ vā nṛpātmaja* | 5 *śṛṇuyād ekacittas tu viṣṇudayito bhavet* || 6. These and the further verses belonging to passage 39** are inserted after *Harivaṃśa* App. 1.40, v. 139, by Dn, Ds, the vulgate editions and G (ed).

706 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, 39A**, v. 5: *pustakaṃ harivaṃśasya vācakāya pradāpayet* | 5. The 9 verses of 39A** are inserted by Ds2 after line 2 of 39**.

refers to the worship of the manuscript ‘with golden jewels and fine cloths’,⁷⁰⁷ then reports a prayer to be recited for the obtainment of sons (vv. 4–7), after which the worship of the manuscript is again prescribed along with its donation, which this time is addressed to the god Viṣṇu.⁷⁰⁸

The association with gods, and more specifically with icons of the gods, is dealt with more profusely in the following passage 41**, which in a further Devanāgarī manuscript is placed after *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40 v. 144, in a context still related to manuscript veneration. Here, the text prescribes building and installing statues of Nārāyaṇa and Nara, introducing the worship of the *Harivaṃśa* manuscript at the conclusion of this ceremony; the icons of the god and the manuscript are worshipped together and, eventually, the manuscript seems to be donated to a teacher:⁷⁰⁹

With 16 *karṣas* one should make an icon of Nārāyaṇa, (1) / With 10 *karṣas* of gold, [an image] of Nara, o ruler of men. (2) / Having abundantly decorated [them] with ornaments, one should perform the installation of both (3) / And practice the consecration by [recitation of] the *mahāpuruṣasūkta*. (4) / Having worshipped with fragrant garlands, preceded by the uttering of ‘svasti!’ (5) / He should make oblations with the 108 Vaiṣṇava *mantras* [and] with sesame seeds. (6) / At the end of the oblation one should worship the manuscript of the *Harivaṃśa* along with the icons, (7) / Being a pious man, [endowed] with faith and intelligence. (8) / He will make efforts to give [it] to the teacher along with all ornaments, together with an icon, accompanied by the pair [of statues?] magnificently decorated with colours. (9–10)

The phrasing of the last two verses does not make the understanding of this step particularly perspicuous: the text seems to suggest that the manuscript is donated ‘along with the icons’, a notion that would be redundantly restated in the following reference to the ‘magnificently decorated couple’. This interpretation

707 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, 40**, v. 1: *pustakaṃ prayataḥ pūjya svarṇaratnair dukūlakaiḥ* | 1. Passage 40**, of 15 total verses, is only transmitted in manuscript K2.

708 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, 40**, v. 8: *pradakṣiṇāṃ namaskāro harau pustakam eva* | 8 [c.m.].

709 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, 41**, vv. 1–10: *kuryāt ṣoḍaśabhiḥ karṣair mūrtiliṃ nārāyaṇasya tu* | 1 *narasya daśabhiḥ karṣaiḥ suvarṇasya narādhipa* | 2 *bhūṣaṇaiḥ samalaṃkṛtya pratiṣṭhāṃ kārayet tayoḥ* | 3 *mahāpuruṣasūktena hy abhiṣekaṃ tu kārayet* | 4 *pūjayitvā gandhamālyaiḥ svastivācanapūrvakam* | 5 *juhuyād vaiṣṇavair mantrair aṣṭottaraśataṃ tilaiḥ* | 6 *homānte mūrtisahitaṃ harivaṃśasya pustakam* | 7 *pūjayet prayato bhūtvā śraddadhānena cetasā* | 8 *sarvālaṃkāraṣaṃyuktaṃ mūrtiyuktaṃ savedanam* | 9 *citrapuṣṭadvayayutam ācāryāya nivedayet* | 10. This text is only preserved in manuscript Ds.

seems to be confirmed by passage 46**, which manuscript D3 inserts after line 153, apparently referring, though very briefly, to an analogous situation.⁷¹⁰

Regardless of the recipient—be it the scribe, the reciter, the teacher, or the god—all the instructions scattered throughout the different passages appended to Appendix 1.40 univocally indicate that, at the end of a public reading, a manuscript—possibly the one used for the recitation—has to be worshipped and donated. A reference to the worship of the manuscript before the reading starts, and not at its conclusion, is found in passage 49**,⁷¹¹ included by some manuscripts after v. 157.⁷¹² The pattern described by this set of sources is thus opposite to the one observed in the *Śivadharmottara* and in the *Nandipurāṇa*, where the texts first describe the donation and then the reading, implying that the two phases had to be conceived in this temporal sequence. In the case of the *Harivaṃśa*, the donation of the manuscript seems to be rather ancillary to its recitation, almost being conceived as one of the fees to be paid to the people involved in the performance (the reciter, the teacher), or as an offering to the god, rather than as an independent ritual.

Hemādri does not quote any of the *Harivaṃśa* verses concerning the donation of manuscripts: this means that he was either not aware of these additional stanzas, or chose to select only the verses dealing with recitation, as he had already dealt with the gifting of manuscripts at several other points in his work. The final verses that he quotes roughly correspond to *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40, vv. 21–37, on the gifts to donate during the performance of the recitation. The gift of the hearing of the Purāṇas ends the treatment of the three different categories into which the extensive digest of Hemādri classifies *vidyādāna*. With this paragraph, the digest-writer also concludes the section of his work that deals with the

710 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40.46**, vv. 1–2: ‘Having listened to this book, donations have to be made, as with the icon, during the Parvan, (1) / To the teacher with efforts. Then one has to [make efforts to] please a Brahmin. (2)’; *śrūtvā tat pustakaṃ deyaṃ pratimā parvaṇi tathā* | 1 *ācāryāya prayatnena toṣayed brāhmaṇaṃ tathā* || 2.

711 *Harivaṃśa*, App. 1.40.49**, vv. 3–8: ‘I will now explain everything to you: listen with a concentrated mind, o king! (3) / Having revered the Lord of the world, god, Nārāyaṇa, Hari, (4) / Vyāsa, son of Parāśara, as well as me and you, o protector of the world, (5) / One should first of all worship the manuscript with perfumed flowers and so on. (6) / A pure person, having bathed, whose soul is favourable having taken the manuscript with the right hand, (7) / After homaging with the right hand according to rule (8)’; *tathā vakṣyāmi te sarvaṃ śṛṇuṣvaikamaṇā nṛpa* | 3 *namaskṛtya jagannāthaṃ devaṃ nārāyaṇaṃ harim* || 4 *pārāśaryaṃ tathā vyāsaṃ māṃ ca tvāṃ ca jagatpate* | 5 *arcayet pustakaṃ pūrvaṃ gandhapuṣpādīnā saha* || 6 *snātvā śuciḥ prasannātmā sayenādāya pustakaṃ* | 7 *dakṣiṇena namaskṛtya kareṇa vidhinā naraḥ* || 8.

712 These are T1, T2, G1, G3, G4, G5, M2, M3, and M4; D6 adds it after the colophon (Vaidya 1971, p. 511).

definition of *vidyā*, the object of the ritual, while the next and final paragraph (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 544–63) will solely be devoted to worship. Hemādri, who had distinguished some specific ritual procedures, both in the case of the *vedadāna* (for which see § 3.2) and for the *purāṇadāna*, chooses to present the rules for the ‘Gifting Procedures that are Common to All Disciplines’ (*sarvaśāstrasādhāraṇadānavidhi*, p. 543) in the last paragraph. Hemādri thus considers the following rules to be valid for technical literature (*śāstra*), a category under which he has mainly included the *Dharmaśāstra* and for which he has so far failed to give specific ritual prescriptions. The sources he quotes, however, do not conceive of such a sharp distinction between literary genres, and prescribe their procedures for a broader body of Sanskrit literature. This paragraph is based on some of the well-known authorities on *vidyādāna* that we have examined in chapter 2: the long accounts from *Devīpurāṇa* 91 and the *Nandipurāṇa*, describing the copying, donation, and recitation of manuscripts (the longest quotations are at pp. 544–56), as well as the shorter descriptions attributed to the *Varāhapurāṇa* and the *Vahnipurāṇa* (see pp. 556–58). These descriptions, which in the works of Hemādri’s predecessors were the core of the definition of *vidyādāna*, now become only one of the many possibilities. It is noteworthy that Hemādri is the only one of the digest-writers to quote stanzas from the *Śivadharmottara*’s *Vidyādānādhyāya*, although he does so indirectly, since a quotation that he attributes to the *Skandapurāṇa* (see pp. 559–61) in this paragraph, in fact, contains numerous literal parallels with the early Śaiva text. These are some of the verses in which the *Śivadharmottara* describes the possible alternatives to the expensive ceremony in the first part of the chapter—when the donor is a poor man (*Śivadharmottara* 2.73), or a different object related to the manuscript is donated (*Śivadharmottara* 2.87–89, 2.105–106)—but also concerning the construction of a precious case for the manuscript and its veneration on the lion-throne (*Śivadharmottara* 2.109–14). The stanzas of the *Skandapurāṇa* quoted by Hemādri also mention the residence of the ascetics (*Śivadharmottara* 2.124) and the reading of the knowledge of Śiva in the ‘hall for the exposition of knowledge’ (*vidyāvyākhyānamaṇḍapa*, *Śivadharmottara* 2.174). The text of the *Vidyādānādhyāya*, or at least part of it, was therefore known to Hemādri in thirteenth-century Deccan, although clad in the new garment of some later accretions of the *Skandapurāṇa*. The end of this paragraph, with a quotation from the *Vahnipurāṇa*, also ends the long chapter on *vidyādāna*, whose conclusion, just as its starting point, is dedicated to the eulogy of the gift of knowledge and the restatement of its superiority. With the gift of knowledge, Hemādri also concludes his bulky exposition of the ‘Excellent Gifts’, leaving room for the depiction of the great gifts.

One of the reasons that accounts for Hemādri's relevance among the authors of Dharmanibandhas is the influence that his work had on later writers. This is particularly evident in the *Dānavivekoddya* attributed to Madanasimhadeva, as well as, albeit to a lesser extent, in the much shorter essays that Govindānanda and Nilakaṇṭha dedicate to the topic of the gift of knowledge. Their dependence on Hemādri's text can be measured by taking into consideration two parameters: one is the choice of the sources that they quote, while the other is the application of the same taxonomic categories used by Hemādri. As far as the first factor is concerned, and limiting our observations to the sections on the gift of knowledge, these later Dharmanibandhas reveal the tendency of only quoting sources that were already available in Hemādri's text, with just few, yet sometimes significant, exceptions. Furthermore, Hemādri's categorization of the gift of knowledge is still entirely valid for these later works. This raises the question as to whether these later authors had actually gone back to the texts of the sources they quoted, or if they had just borrowed them from Hemādri's digest; a question that is all the more pertinent when it concerns textual passages belonging to now lost works.

The *Dānavivekoddya* of Madanasimhadeva is a good example of the impact of the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* on later literature. The structure that Madanasimhadeva gives to his discussion of the gift of knowledge is overall very close to that adopted by Hemādri, starting from the opening paragraph on the 'Fruits of the Gift of Knowledge' (*vidyādānaphalāni*; see *Dānavivekoddya*, vol. 3, pp. 157–60), which is parallel to Hemādri's 'Eulogy of the Gift of Knowledge' (*vidyādānapraśamsā*). In this first paragraph, Madanasimhadeva in fact only quotes sources that had already been used by Hemādri in the corresponding section, turning to the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, the short *Bṛhaspatismṛti* passage, and the longer paragraph from the *Nandipurāṇa* regarding the several fields of learning (see Table A). The author of the *Dānavivekoddya*, however, significantly avoids the *Devīpurāṇa*, ending this paragraph with the few *Varāhapurāṇa* stanzas praising the donation of Vedas, Vedāṅgas, Vedānta, Mīmāṃsā, Dharmaśāstra, and the Śivadharmas, as Hemādri did in the conclusion of his paragraph on the 'Eulogy of the Gift of Knowledge'.⁷¹³

Parallel to Hemādri's *Dānakhaṇḍa*, the *Dānavivekoddya* structures the subject matter into three main categories, which are the 'Gift of the Veda' (*vedadāna*, *Dānavivekoddya*, vol. 3, pp. 161–63), the 'Gift of the Smṛti' (*smṛtidāna*, *Dānavivekoddya*, vol. 3 pp. 164–65), and the 'Gift of the Purāṇas' (*purāṇadāna*, *Dānavivekoddya*, vol. 3, pp. 172–81). Unlike Hemādri, however, Madanasimhadeva tries to

⁷¹³ *Dānakhaṇḍa* p. 517. Madanasimhadeva does not mention the *Varāhapurāṇa* as the source of these verses, apparently embedding them into the *Nandipurāṇa* quotation.

better distribute the quoted texts between paragraphs defining the various gift categories, and those centred on ritual procedures. This is carried out with the use of captions highlighting, for each of the three categories of scriptures, the shift of the focus to ritual.⁷¹⁴ Moreover, the digest-writer adds a further section on the ‘Gifting Procedures of the Śaiva Treatises and So On’ (*śivaśāstrādidānavidhi*; *Dānavivekoddhyota* vol. 3, 186–188), which is mainly based on the long *Nandipurāṇa* quotation from the *Dānakhaṇḍa*’s ‘Gifting Procedures That Are Common to All Treatises’ (*sarvaśāstrasādhāraṇadānavidhi*). Hemādri’s paragraph on the ‘Gift of the Hearing of the Purāṇas’ (*purāṇaśravaṇadāna*) is called, more coherently, ‘Procedures for the Hearing of the [Mahā]bhārata’ (*bhārataśravaṇavidhi*; *Dānavivekoddhyota*, pp. 182–85). In this section, the *Dānavivekoddhyota* relies entirely on the same quotations from the *Harivaṃśa* found in Hemādri’s *Dānakhaṇḍa* (pp. 540–43), also respecting Hemādri’s arrangement of the stanzas, which did not correspond to that of the original text. This can be regarded as another strong hint that Hemādri’s text, not the *Harivaṃśa* itself, was the direct source for this quotation. The differences between the works of Hemādri and Madanasimhadeva thus mainly concern some details of the general structure, as well as the internal arrangement of the quoted texts, though only in certain cases, which however do not imply any difference in the interpretation of the contents.⁷¹⁵ Madanasimhadeva’s choice of expunging certain texts from the range of his sources is more relevant, significantly the *Devipurāṇa* and the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, two Purāṇas that Hemādri also extensively used in some cases. However, this exclusion, which for Ballālasena was motivated by a programmatic rejection of the tantric influences contained therein (see above), is less strict in the case of the *Dānavivekoddhyota*, as the digest does quote from the *Devipurāṇa*: therefore, the exclusion of the stanzas on *vidyādāna* seems to be less likely dictated by a cultural choice than by reasons of brevity. At the end of the chapter on the *śivaśāstrādidānavidhi*, for instance, the author mentions the *Devipurāṇa* in a small remark attached to the *Nandipurāṇa* passage on the description of the gift of knowledge ceremony, followed by the actual quotations of a few stanzas from *Devipurāṇa*’s chapter 91.

⁷¹⁴ For instance, the chapter on the procedures for the *smṛtidāna* is followed by another one, titled ‘Now the Procedures for the Donation of These [Fields of Knowledge]’ (*athaitāsāṃ dānavidhiḥ*, *Dānavivekoddhyota* vol. 3, pp. 166–68), where the author cites from the *Nandipurāṇa* and the *Varāhapurāṇa*; it is however only at the end of this second paragraph that the author considers the treatment of the *smṛtidāna* as being completed, as its ending caption reads ‘thus the gift of the Smṛti [is concluded]’ (*iti smṛtidānaṃ*).

⁷¹⁵ The discussion of the *purāṇadāna*, for instance, is mainly based on *Saurapurāṇa* 1.9.3–14ab and *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.11–53, quoted in this sequence, with the *Saurapurāṇa* text split into three quotations, one of which (corresponding to *Saurapurāṇa* 1.12cd–14ab) is misattributed to the *Vāmanapurāṇa* (see *Dānavivekoddhyota* vol. 3, p. 178).

The latest Dharma digests to take into consideration, namely the *Dānakriyākaumudī* by Govindānanda (sixteenth century) and the *Dānamayūkha* by Nilakaṇṭha (seventeenth century), offer very terse accounts of the procedures of manuscript worship and donation, quoting only a limited number of sources in comparison with the previous generations of authors, and not always arranging the subject matter in different subsections according to topic. These later works are nonetheless endowed with a few original traits, adding elements that are totally new to the discourse on *vidyādāna*. This is certainly true of the work of Govindānanda. In structuring his chapter on the gift of manuscripts (*pustakadāna*), Govindānanda, while partly quoting from some of the same texts used by earlier authors,⁷¹⁶ also relies on the authority of a Pāñcarātra work, a class of texts that had never been previously quoted on this topic. He reports some stanzas attributed to the *Hayaśiṣapāñcarātra*,⁷¹⁷ in which the donation of Pāñcarātra literature is equated with that of Purāṇas, Itihāsas, and Dharmasāstras:⁷¹⁸

He who will donate a Pāñcarātra to the best among twice-borns, after having [it] transcribed, thanks to the merits bestowed by the gift of knowledge he dissolves into Vāsudeva [at the end of his life]. (1_{Gov}) / He who will donate a Purāṇa to a Brahmin, after having [it] transcribed, thanks to the merits bestowed by the gift of knowledge he dissolves into Vāsudeva [at the end of his life]. (2_{Gov}) / He who will donate the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhārata* to the best among twice-borns, having obtained the merit bestowed by the gift of knowledge, he is absorbed into Viṣṇu. (3_{Gov}) / He who will donate the collections of texts on Dharma to the best among twice-borns, after having transcribed them, he will obtain all the

716 The chapter opens with a eulogistic portion from the *Nandipurāṇa*, corresponding to the final section of the text quoted by Lakṣmīdhara (see Table A). The following quotations are from the *Harivaṃśa*—but from a different part than the one quoted by Hemādri—and the *Matsyapurāṇa*, of which Govindānanda quotes the usual chapter 53.

717 See *Dānakriyākaumudī*, pp. 68–69. Only the first part of this Pāñcarātra has been published (see Dasgupta & Dutta, 1976), however these verses are not available there. According to Dutta 1971, p. 18ff., this passage corresponds to *San̥karṣaṇakāṇḍa*, chapter 31. Long portions of the *Hayaśiṣapāñcarātra* have been subsumed into the *Agnipurāṇa*, including the section on the installation of the manuscripts (see § 4.2). However, these do not correspond to the the verses quoted by Govindānanda.

718 *Dānakriyākaumudī*, p. 69: *yo dadyāl lekḥayitvā tu pañcarātraṃ dvijottame | sa vidyādānapuṇyena vāsudeve layaṃ vrajet ||* 1_{Gov} *purāṇaṃ lekḥayitvā tu yo dadyād brāhmaṇe naraḥ | sa vidyādānapuṇyena vāsudeve layaṃ vrajet ||* 2_{Gov} *rāmāyaṇaṃ bhārataṃ ca yo dadyād dvijapūṇave | sa vidyādānaṃ puṇyaṃ prāpya viṣṇau praliyate ||* 3_{Gov} *yo dharmasaṃhitāṃ dadyāl lekḥayitvā dvijottame | sa vidyādānaṃ puṇyaṃ samagraṃ prāpnuyān naraḥ ||* 4_{Gov} *vedāṅgān lekḥayitvā tu yo dadyād brāhmaṇarṣabhe | sa svargalokam āpnoti yāvad āhūtasamplavam ||* 5_{Gov} *dharmārthakāmamokṣāṇāṃ yā vidyā siddhaye matā | tāṃ lekḥya brāhmaṇe datvā svargam āpnoty asaṃśayam ||* 6_{Gov} *ākāśasya yathā nāntaḥ [nāntaḥ em; nāntaṃ ed.] siddhair apy upalakṣyate | evaṃ vidyāpradānasya nāntaḥ sarvaguṇātmakam ||* 7_{Gov}.

merit produced by the gift of knowledge. (4_{Gov}) / He who will donate the *Vedāṅgas* to an eminent Brāhmin, after having transcribed [them], he reaches the heavenly world until the dissolution of creatures. (5_{Gov}) / Having transcribed that knowledge which is held to produce the perfection of Dharma, wealth, desire, and emancipation, and having donated [it] to a Brahmin, [one] reaches Heaven without doubt. (6_{Gov}) / Just as the end of space is not perceived even by the *siddhas*, in the same way there is no end to the gifting of knowledge; [this] is endowed with all qualities. (7_{Gov})

Govindānanda's choice of quoting a text from the Pāñcarātra tradition acquires additional meaning if read in the light of the other texts quoted immediately afterwards. Taken as a whole, the sources that Govindānanda selects in the chapter on the *pustakadāna* seem to account for a preference for Vaiṣṇava sources. These are a small array of verses from chapter 1 of the *Harivaṃśa*⁷¹⁹ and *Matsyapurāṇa* 53. However, from these the author only selects the stanzas that describe the donation of three Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas, namely the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (*Matsyapurāṇa* 53.17), the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (*Matsyapurāṇa* 53.20–22), and the *Matsyapurāṇa* itself (*Matsyapurāṇa* 53.52). The quotation concluding the chapter is attributed to the *Kāśikhaṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa*, a later *sthālapurāṇa* (Purāṇas centred on the eulogization of one site) focused on the eulogy of Varanasi (Kāśi);⁷²⁰ these verses do not generally address the gift of manuscripts, but more specifically the gift of the *Kāśikhaṇḍa*, while also making reference to the gifts of all other Purāṇas:⁷²¹

719 *Dānakriyākaumudī*, p. 69 (= *Harivaṃśa* 1.6–7): ‘The merit that, in this world, [derives] from one hundred Aśvamedhas and four hundred thousand sacrifices, will be infinite from the gift of the *Harivaṃśa*; and [this] is sung by the great Ṛṣi Vyāsa. (6) / The fruit that is experienced through the Vājapeya and [obtained] from the Rājasūya, and the different [fruit obtained] through the [gift] of chariots and elephants, this is taken [giving the manuscript of the *Harivaṃśa*], [according to] the evidence of Vyāsa's word and the work sung by the great Ṛṣi Vālmiki. (7)'; *śatāśvamedhasya yad atra puṇyaṃ catuḥsahasrasya śatakratoś ca | bhaved anantaṃ harivaṃśadānāt prakīrtitaṃ vyāsamaharṣiṇā ca || 6 yad vājapeyena tu rājasūyād dṛṣṭaṃ phalaṃ hastirathena cānyaṭ tal labhyate vyāsavacaḥ pramāṇaṃ gītaṃ ca vālmikimaharṣiṇā ca || 7*.

This passage is less explicit in associating the gift of the *Harivaṃśa* with the gift of a manuscript. However, after a few stanzas the text states: ‘The one who gives the manuscript of the *Harivaṃśa* to a learned Brahmin, together with a fee, will enjoy the fruit of the Aśvamedha. The great Ṛṣi has spoken only the truth (13)'; *yo dadāti harivaṃśapustakaṃ brāhmaṇāya viduṣe sadakṣiṇaṃ | so 'śvamedhaphalabhāg bhaven naraḥ satyaṃ eva kathitaṃ maharṣiṇā || 13*.

720 On the *Kāśikhaṇḍa* see Smith 2007, dating the text to the eleventh century (p. 106).

721 *Dānakriyākaumudī*, p. 71: *skandapurāṇe, kāśikhaṇḍadāne | ya etat pustakaṃ ramyaṃ lekha-yitvā samarpayet | akhilāṇi purāṇāni tena dattāni nānyathā || 1_{Gov} atrākhyānāni yāvanti ślokā yāvanta eva hi | tathā padāni yāvanti varṇā yāvanta eva hi || 2_{Gov} yāvanty api ca patrāṇi yāvatyāḥ patrapaṇikṭayāḥ | guṇasūtrāṇi yāvanti yāvantaḥ paṭatantavaḥ || citrarūpāṇi yāvanti ramyapustakasampuṭe | tāvadyugasahasrāṇi dātā svarge mahīyate || 3_{Gov}*.

In the *Skandapurāṇa*, on the gift of the *Kāśikhaṇḍa*: ‘He who, having transcribed this beautiful manuscript, would donate [it], by him all *Purāṇas* are donated, not otherwise. (1_{Gov})/ As many stories [are] in this [manuscript], as many stanzas, and also as many words, as many syllables, (2_{Gov})/ And also as many leaves, as many lines in a leaf, as many good threads, as many threads in the cloths, (3_{Gov}) / As many variegated pictures [are] on the manuscript’s cover, so many *yugas* the donor will be honoured in Heaven. (4_{Gov})

The different quotations in the text of the *Dānakriyākaumudī* are separated from each other by short prose commentaries in which the digest-author paraphrases the contents of the sources, adding information that seems more likely to have been borrowed from Ballālasena’s much longer remarks, rather than being an original production of Govindānanda. As observed in § 1.2, these remarks are reproduced in manuscripts on the *pustakadāna*: once, independently from the text of the quotations (NGMCP E 78–1), and another time (NGMCP E 132–37), along with the sources quoted by Govindānanda. In these short prose paragraphs the author simply reproduces with few variations the contents of the quotations, which then end with a formulaic reference mentioning the title of the manuscript to be donated, the goddess Sarasvatī, and the obligation to accompany each donation with a fee.⁷²² Thus, his approach is distinguished by the fact that, instead of generically prescribing the worship and donation of all the established categories of authoritative texts, Govindānanda prefers to concentrate on some specific works, such as the Vaiṣṇava *Purāṇas* or the *Kāśikhaṇḍa*. By doing so, he demonstrates an attitude that resembles Hemādri’s pursuit of exhaustive definitions. Only the quotation from the *Hayaśīrṣapāñcarātra* actually mentions the donation of different classes of scriptures, giving the highest relevance to the Pāñcarātra. The introductory and concluding sentences added by the author further highlight that the texts he quotes are intended solely with reference to the gifting of their own manuscripts. It has already been observed with reference to the *Kāśikhaṇḍa*

⁷²² We could take as an example the remarks closing the quotation from the *Harivaṃśa* (*Dānakriyākaumudī*, p. 69). Note that the language of these lines is very essential as they, like the other short paragraphs appended to the quoted texts, are composed of long compounds, and omit the use of the verb: ‘One who wants to obtain the fruit of one hundred Aśvamedha sacrifices, the infinite fruits produced by 400,000 rituals, the worldly fruits of the Vājapeya and Rājasūya sacrifices, and the same fruits produced by the gift of an elephant chariot, should donate this manuscript of the *Harivaṃśa*, endowed with a garment, having been worshipped, belonging to the goddess Sarasvatī, and so on. [Then] the fee. [This is] the end of what concerns this manuscript; śatāśvamedhayajñaphalacatuṣṣahasraśatakratujanyānantaphalavājapeyarājasūyayajñadr̥ṣṭaphalahastirathadānajanaphalasanaphalaprap̥tikāma idaṃ harivaṃśapustakaṃ savastram arcitaṃ sarasvatīdaivatam ityādi dakṣiṇā tatpustakasparśāntam. One of the variations inserted by Govindānanda which is not in the text of his source is the reference to the ‘fruits of 400,000 rituals’.

stanzas that, when Govindānanda introduces the quotations, he not only specifies the title of the source, but also briefly outlines their topic: ‘In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, having undertaken the [treatment of] the gift of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*’; ‘In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, on the gift of the *Śrībhāgavata*[*purāṇa*]’; and ‘In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, on the gift of this [same] manuscript’ are the three captions introducing as many quotations from the *Matsyapurāṇa*.⁷²³

The *Dānamayūkha* of Nilakaṇṭha is perhaps the least original source on the topic of the gift of knowledge. Its only innovation is the style adopted by the author, who opts for a greater use of prose passages in which he abridges the contents of his textual sources without directly quoting them. Here, the gift of knowledge is classified into three categories: these are the usual *purāṇadāna* (*Dānamayūkha*, pp. 241–43), the *vedadāna* (*Dānamayūkha*, p. 243), and a more generic gift of manuscripts (*pustakadāna*; *Dānamayūkha*, p. 244.). In the first category, Nilakaṇṭha includes the 18 Mahāpurāṇas and Upapurāṇas, epics, Mīmāṃsā, Dharmaśāstra, logic, and the *Śivadharmā*, in accordance with *Varāhapurāṇa* 112.69cd–72, which is the only textual authority that he quotes in his support. As has been observed above, the list of Mahāpurāṇas given by the *Varāhapurāṇa* differs from that of the *Matsyapurāṇa* insofar as the fourth Purāṇa is identified with the *Śivapurāṇa* by the *Varāhapurāṇa*, and with the *Vāyupurāṇa* by the *Matsyapurāṇa*. Nilakaṇṭha does not seem to regard this as a contradiction, for he uses the *Matsyapurāṇa* as a reference text in the construction of a short prose commentary on the stanzas of the *Varāhapurāṇa*. In this commentary, the *nibandhakāra* reproduces a selection of the procedures for the donation of Purāṇas found in *Matsyapurāṇa* 53, concluding the section by declaring,⁷²⁴ ‘The source of this is in the *Matsyapurāṇa*’. In this commentary, Nilakaṇṭha provides a very succinct summary of the contents of chapter 53 of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, while nonetheless adding some discrepancies: besides the mention of the *Śivapurāṇa*, which is in fact missing in the *Matsyapurāṇa*⁷²⁵—and Nilakaṇṭha observes at this point that his sources are in fact divergent⁷²⁶—some other incongruities are apparent in the attribution of the fees accompanying the donation of the different

⁷²³ *Dānakriyākaumudī*, p. 70: *matysapurāṇe viṣṇupurāṇadānam upakramya; matsyapurāṇe śrībhāgavatadāne; matsyapurāṇe tatpustakadāne*.

⁷²⁴ *Dānamayūkha*, p. 242: *etanmūlaṃ mātṣye*.

⁷²⁵ Nilakaṇṭha’s rendition of *Matsyapurāṇa* 53.18–19 is: ‘[One has to donate the *Śivapurāṇa*], together with a sugar-cow, during the full moon of the month of *śravaṇa*. The fruit is the world of Śiva’; *śaivaṃ guḍadhenusahitaṃ śrāvāṇyāṃ phalaṃ śivalokaḥ*.

⁷²⁶ Nilakaṇṭha is aware that the mention of the *Śivapurāṇa* is not completely unproblematic, and he in fact notes, immediately following the statement in which he acknowledges the *Matsya-*

Purāṇas, as well as in the appropriate time for such donations. It is still in this prose paragraph that the author mentions the donation of the Upapurāṇas, without alluding to any authorities on the topic;⁷²⁷ then, the two stanzas that Hemādri ascribes to the *Varāhapurāṇa* (see *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 516–17), on the donation of the Itihāsas and other texts, are quoted without attribution, alongside a hemistich on the donation of the Dharmaśāstras that all other digest-writers attribute to the *Nandipurāṇa*.⁷²⁸ The following section on the *vedadāna* is limited to a selection from the same *Garuḍapurāṇa* stanzas quoted by Hemādri in the *Dānakhaṇḍa*, (pp. 523–24; but see below § 3.2) on the ways to worship the four Vedic collections. The paragraph concludes with *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.212 on the *brahmadāna* (see § 3.2).

The fact that the author concludes the chapter with a short section on the ‘gift of manuscripts’, in which some general norms about the veneration of manuscripts are given,⁷²⁹ suggests that not all of the preceding types of donations were understood as taking place in the form of a gift of manuscripts. This is specified by Nilakaṇṭha in the sentence that closes the chapter, in which he states that:⁷³⁰

purāṇa as the source of his information, that (*Dānamayūkha*, p. 242): ‘Somewhere instead of [the Purāṇa] of Śiva, [the Purāṇa] of Vāyu is mentioned’; *kvacic chaivasthāne vāyaviyagrahaṇam*.

727 Nilakaṇṭha simply states, ‘The Upapurāṇas are other than these. The fruit for the gifting of them is knowledge [and] the world of Viṣṇu, or the favour of Viṣṇu in every situation;’ *etaḍanyāny upapurāṇāni | taddāne phalaṃ vidyā viṣṇulokaḥ | sarvatra viṣṇuprītir vā* (*Dānamayūkha*, p. 242).

728 *Dānakhaṇḍa* 12.74ab_{NP}: ‘A person, having donated the *Dharmaśāstra*, is magnified in paradise’; *dharmaśāstraṃ naro datvā svargaloke mahīyate*.

729 These are taken from the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*. The text quoted on this point reads: ‘In the *Bhaviṣya*[*purāṇa*]: ‘And [one] should bestow a manuscript, covered with a double cloth, to the reciter who knows the true nature of the *śāstras*, whose speech is pleasant’. Moreover: ‘The fruit that is [gained] directly through the donation of one thousand gifts of a brown cow, the one who donates [even] only one manuscript will get this fruit. / O descendent of Pṛthi, who is able to describe that fruit that [one] obtains having given the Purāṇas, the [*Māha*]bhārata, as well as the *Rāmāyaṇa*?’ And according to another Purāṇa, having placed this [manuscript] on a lectern made of gold, silver, ivory, wood and so on, tied on both sides, having worshipped [it], it has to be donated. Thus ends the gift of manuscripts’; *bhaviṣye, śāstrasadbhāvaviduṣe vācake ca priyaṃvade | vastrayugme saṃvītaṃ pustakaṃ pratipādāyati iti ||* 1_{NI} *tathā, kapilādānasahasreṇa samyag dattena yat phalaṃ | tat phalaṃ samavāpnotu pustakaikapradānataḥ ||* 2_{NI} *purāṇaṃ bhārataṃ vāpi rāmāyaṇam athā’pi vā | datvā yat phalaṃ āpnoti pārtha tat kena varṇyate iti ||* 3_{NI} *tac ca hemarūpyagajadantakāṣṭhādīkṛte ’nyonnyasaṃśliṣṭe yantre nyasya sampūjya deyam iti purāṇāntare || iti pustakadānam ||*

The last statement must probably refer to *Devīpurāṇa* 91.45–46.

730 *Dānamayūkha*, p. 244: *evaṃ trividhaṃ vidyādānaṃ — pustakadānaṃ, pratimādānaṃ adhyāpanaṃ ceti ||*

The gift of knowledge is thus of three kinds: the gift of manuscripts, the gift of icons, and the impartation of teachings.

This simple statement enables an assessment of how the idea of the gift of knowledge had changed in the course of about ten centuries, from its attestation in the *Śivadharmottara*, where it corresponds either to a gift of manuscripts or to material aid offered to teachers and ascetics, to this seventeenth-century definition given by Nilakaṇṭha, who, like the earlier digest-writers, may associate the gift of knowledge with the teaching activities themselves. However, the word *adhyāpāna* ('teaching'), though used in a general sense here, can evoke the specific teaching activity that is the traditional recitation of Vedic texts, which the *nibandhakāras* from Hemādri onward will denote as a 'Gift of the Veda' (*vedadāna*). This gifting category, as surprising as it may sound, is however also at stake when Nilakaṇṭha refers to the 'gift of the icons' (*pratimādāna*) as one of the three types of donations that concur with the definition of the gift of knowledge. The gift of the Veda has so far only received cursory attention. However, it is indeed the most intricate question to solve for our digest-writers, as in traditional Indian culture this is the oral text par excellence, its transmission being the main prerogative of a single caste. To understand how this concept was harmonized with the medieval practice of the ritual donation of manuscripts, and tentatively subsumed under the notion of gift of knowledge, while at the same time making more sense of Nilakaṇṭha's inclusive definition of *vidyādāna*, we need to take a step back, and turn our attention again to the text of Hemādri.

3.2 'Vedam non sunt libri',*or: How To Give What You Cannot Have

The relationship between the Dharmaśāstra—and, in general, all the works falling into the category of Smṛti—and the texts of the revelation (Śruti), namely the Veda and Vedic literature, is a central hermeneutical issue in the debate on scriptural authority, to which both Indian authors and their modern interpreters have justly devoted considerable attention. If it is true that, in an attempt to define the boundaries of orthodoxy and find legitimation for the uninterrupted composition of new texts claiming the status of scriptures, 'virtually all Brahmanical learning

* A Sancto Bartholomaeo 1792, p. 50. I thank Carmela Mastrangelo for helping me trace the correct source of this quotation, which I knew only from *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 1921, p. 160.

in classical and medieval India comes to view itself in one way or another as genetically linked to the Veda', ⁷³¹ which gives rise to the notion of *vedamūlatva* ('the condition of being rooted in the Veda'), a core problem emerges for the exegetes of the Smṛti, which can be epitomized by this question: if these scriptures derive their authority from their reliance on the Veda, then why is it not possible to detect a corresponding Vedic passage for each of the rituals and the prescriptions contained in the many different Purāṇas, Dharmasāstra, and so on? The classical argument proposed by the Mīmāṃsakas in order to overcome this impasse is that of the 'inferred Śruti' (*anumītaśruti*), according to which practices and teachings not supported by the Veda, but regarded as authoritative in the traditional scriptures and in the customary usage of true Brahmins, lead to inferring the existence of now lost Vedic passages in which these were rooted. ⁷³² It is according to this hermeneutical strategy that the treatise of Yājñavalkya can state that ⁷³³ 'Revelation, tradition, and the behavior of the Brahmins, as well as what is dear to one's

731 Pollock 1990, p. 332.

732 Arguments leading to the emergence of the concept of *anumitasmṛti* in the hermeneutical speculation of the early Mīmāṃsā are analyzed in Kataoka 2013, who examines them in the broader context of the philosophical debate between Mīmāṃsaka and Buddhist thinkers. The key notion in order to understand the core of the question lies in the belief that Vedic injunctions are the only source of Dharma, and that the authors of the Smṛti derive their knowledge of Dharma from their direct experience (*pratyakṣa*) of the text of the Śruti (see *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.4 and the Śābara commentary *ad loc.*). It would therefore be impossible to surmise that there are cases in which the Smṛti is independent from the Śruti; when there seems to be no parallels or correspondences, both Śābara and Kumārila argue that these are cases of *pralīnaśruti*, namely cases in which the relevant Śruti passage has been forgotten, though its existence is still inferable on the basis of the Smṛti (Kataoka 2013, pp. 251–52). An alternative argument, brought up by Kumārila to justify the inferred loss of parts of the Śruti, is that of the *anupalabdhi* ('non-perception') of still extant passages: since the Vedic branches are scattered and people entitled to (and charged with) the transmission of the Veda are careless, we do not know the Veda in its entirety (see *Tantravārttika* ad 1.3.2). As observed by Kataoka (2013, especially pp. 239–40 and 262), the exegetical strategy of the lost scripture is not a prerogative of the Mīmāṃsaka, since it is also attested in Buddhist texts, which, however, considered Buddhist Sūtras and not the Veda to be the source of scriptural authority; at the same time, and with regard to this point, Mīmāṃsaka authors need to defend themselves against the possible attacks of their Buddhist opponents, as one may argue that, by analogy, Buddhists or anybody else may claim that their teachings are also based on lost Vedic passages (see *Tantravārttika* ad 1.3.1). In replying to this, Kumārila has to resort to the notion of the established practice of the Brahminical tradition: one is allowed to postulate the existence of a lost Vedic passage, provided only that otherwise there would be no possible explanation (*anyathānupapatti*) for the practice of the orthodox Brahmins (Kataoka 2013, p. 251).

733 *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti* 1.7: *śrutismṛtisadācārāḥ svasya ca priyam ātmanaḥ | samyaksāṅkalpajāḥ kāmō dharmamūlam idaṃ smṛtam || 7.*

own self [and] the desire originating from right intentions: this is traditionally held as rooted in Dharma'. The reliance on the Veda and Vedic literature is thus the core principle on which all other acknowledged sources for the knowledge of the Dharma have to depend in order to legitimize their authority, even when the connection might not appear that straightforward.

This is why medieval digest-writers, when faced with the option of including the Veda among the texts to be donated in the context of a gift of knowledge, create a separate category for it, requiring different ritual procedures; on the other hand, in spite of the limited expressive means at their disposal, they identify a Vedic antecedent that justifies the practice of the Purāṇic gift of knowledge. The reasons why a special category of the gift of knowledge had to be created for the Veda are linked to the peculiar status of the Vedic text and its transmission: the text, in fact, has traditionally been handed down by means of sophisticated pedagogical techniques based on oral recitation, which however have been supported by manuscript transmission since relatively early times.⁷³⁴ Much has been said on the ideological implications connected with the supposedly exclusive orality of the transmission of the Vedic texts, and how this might not entirely have corresponded to reality. It is of no concern here to investigate this vast topic, which has aroused the interest of modern scholars since their first encounters with Indian traditional cultures.⁷³⁵ What is relevant is that, to the mind of Hemādri and his colleagues, 'Vedas are not manuscripts', even though they eventually became such, and as a consequence the usual ritual activities required for a gift of knowledge would not suit the nature of the Vedic text. This drives Hemādri to elaborate a distinct new section on the Purāṇic notion of the gift of the Veda (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 517–25) that, consistently with the idea of the primacy of the Veda over other scriptures, precedes the sections on the gift of the Dharmaśāstras and the Purāṇas. Lakṣmīdhara had only dealt with the topic in passing by quoting the few stanzas on the 'gift of the *brahman*' (*brahmadāna*) with which

⁷³⁴ On the transmission of the Vedic text, see Houben 2009, which provides further bibliography on the topic. Case studies on how traditional Vedic learning is still carried out in modern times are examined in Subrahmaniam 1974, Fuller 2001 and Knipe 2015. As Bronkhorst notes (2002, p. 800 fn. 8), Renou points out some passages that seem to suggest that the Veda existed in written form since early times (Renou 1960, p. 4).

⁷³⁵ It suffices here to mention the famous remarks made by Friedrich Max Müller in his 1878 lecture, 'The Ancient Literature of India' (see Müller 1901), where he recounts what he himself predicts that his audience could perceive as a 'fairy-tale', namely, 'These men, and I know it as a fact, know the whole Rig-Veda by heart, just as their ancestors did, three or four thousand years ago; and though they have MSS., and though they now have a printed text, they do not learn their sacred lore from them' (Müller 1901, p. 160).

Hemādri will start his longer disquisition. At the same time, although the procedures established for a gift of the Veda are respectful of the ‘oral status’ that the Brahminical tradition attributes to these texts, the element of worship, which constitutes an important feature of medieval rituals of donation, is not even entirely removed from this gifting category. The developments of ritual practice were often independent from theory and ideology, and the privileged status of the Veda did not prevent its being subsumed into the varied world of Purāṇic mythology and the all-pervading domain of medieval devotion, which ended up assigning a material form to the four collections of Vedic hymns (*saṃhitās*), and turning this ‘body’ into one of the numerous substrata of worship.

At first, the solution adopted by the digest-writers in order to elude the problem posed by the irreducibility of the Vedic text to the written word was to include the traditional oral recitation and teaching of the Vedas under the category of the gift of the Veda. This does not happen without contradiction, since a long tradition of prescriptive literature had already codified Vedic recitation as part of the set of obligatory rites that Brahmin householders were bound to perform daily. Thus, a first notion for the digest-writers to engage with is that of the so-called gift of the *brahman* (*brahmadāna*), which Lakṣmīdhara evokes at the beginning and in the middle of his chapter on the gift of knowledge, and which Hemādri uses to open the paragraph on the gift of the Veda. Both authors quote from the *Manusmṛti*, the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, and the *Mahābhārata*,⁷³⁶ which mention the gift of the *brahman* and the ‘gift of Sarasvatī’ (*sarasvatīdāna*), while Hemādri also adds *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303, which is the first of the quoted sources to explicitly mention a *vedadāna* instead. This would suggest that the gift of the *brahman* and the gift of the Veda are regarded as synonyms. Our sources devote relatively little attention to clarifying the notion of the gift of the *brahman* but, in spite of that, this category is particularly significant to explaining the historical development of the gift of knowledge, as the digest-writers seem to use it as a *trait d’union* between Vedic and Purāṇic ritual.

Hemādri’s paragraph on the gift of the Veda opens with *Manusmṛti* 4.233, which extols the gift of the *brahman* as the most superior of all gifts, superior to the donation of essential goods such as food, water, and cattle, as already observed with reference to its occurrence in Lakṣmīdhara’s *Dānakāṇḍa*.⁷³⁷ In com-

⁷³⁶ *Manusmṛti* 4.233, *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.212, and *Mahābhārata* 13.68.5 and 13.74.19, all quoted by Hemādri, p. 517. Note that the caption in this text attributes the *Manusmṛti* stanza to the *Ādityapurāṇa*.

⁷³⁷ *Dānakāṇḍa*, p. 517 (= *Manusmṛti* 4.233): ‘The gift of the *brahman* is the best among all gifts, such as [the gifts of] water, food, cattle, land, clothes, sesame seeds, gold, and clarified butter’;

menting upon this stanza, Medhātithi, the author of the earliest extant commentary on the *Manusmṛti*, possibly originating from Kashmir and active between the eighth and tenth century,⁷³⁸ states that the gift of the *brahman* is tantamount to two activities, namely the study and the teaching of the Veda (*brahmadānaṃ vedādhyayanavyākhyane*). Hemādri, as Lakṣmīdhara before him, simply rests on Medhātithi's interpretation by adding a brief gloss: *brahmadānaṃ vedadānam*. Therefore, the idea of *dāna* is used here to recall an act of transmitting and receiving teachings in a ritualized context, as was the one in which the teaching and learning of the Vedic text was supposed to happen. The *Manusmṛti* had already referred to a 'donor of the *brahman*' (*brahmadāḥ*) in stanza 4.232, which is not quoted by the digest-writers. Here Manu states:⁷³⁹ 'The donor of a chariot or a bed [obtains] a wife, the donor of protection [obtains] power; the donor of grains [obtains] eternal happiness, the donor of the *brahman* [obtains] equality with Brahmā'. The commentary of Medhātithi on this point is slightly different than the one that he will give for the following stanza. While identifying the *brahman* with the Veda ('*Brahman* [means] Veda'), he defines the activity of donating it by using some additional terms:⁷⁴⁰ 'its donor is the one who teaches and explains [it]'. The action nouns which Medhātithi uses in commenting on 4.232, deriving from the verbal roots *adhyāpaya* and *vyākhyā* respectively, thus denote the 'impartation' and 'exegesis' of the Vedic text; on the other hand, the two actions defining the gift of the *brahman* in the commentary on 4.233 are *adhyayana*, 'studying', and again *vyākhyā*. The latter can be interpreted as meaning 'teaching' when matched with *adhyayana*, 'studying', but when it is associated with the causative root *adhyāpaya*, 'teaching' (literally, 'to make learn'), as in the commentary on 4.232, one has to attribute to *vyākhyā* the slightly different sense of 'explaining'—meaning not a mechanical mnemonic teaching, but a proper exegesis. Excluding any corruptions from the text, we may conclude that Medhātithi defines the gift of the *brahman* through three distinct though related notions, namely teaching

sarveṣāṃ eva dānānāṃ brahmadānaṃ viśiṣyate | vāryannagaumahivāsastilakāñcanasarpīṣāṃ || 233.

738 Olivelle 2010, pp. 52–53. Medhātithi's commentary is the most extensive among the extant commentaries on the *Manusmṛti*; from references internal to his work, we deduce that he was certainly later than Bhāruci, another relatively early commentator on the *Manusmṛti*, whose surviving commentary is however limited only to chapters 6–12.

739 *Manusmṛti* 4.232: *yānaśayyāprado bhāryām aiśvaryam abhayapradāḥ | dhānyadaḥ śāśvataṃ saukhyaṃ brahmado brahmasārṣitām || 232.*

740 *Manusmṛtibhāṣya* ad 4.232: *brahma vedaḥ tad dadāti yo 'dhyāpayati vyākhyāti ca*. Kullūka similarly comments: '*brahman* means the Veda; [its] donor is the one who teaches and the one who explains [it]'; *brahma vedas tatprado vedasyādhyāpakō vyākhyātā ca*.

and learning (*adhyāpana* and *adhyayana*), both implying the recitation of the text, and explanation (*vyākhyā*), which can be read as a hint at the exegetical tradition of the Vedic text, namely the one represented by the Mimāṃsā schools. Further mentions of these activities throughout the text and its commentary provide more insight that allow for enriching and delimiting this definition.

This idea of a gift of the *brahman* that also corresponds to Vedic recitation, though understood in a ‘pedagogic’ sense, recalls a notion that has already been mentioned with reference to the gift of knowledge of the *Śivadharmottara* (see § 1.2), namely the doctrine of the ‘five great sacrifices’ (*pañcamahāyajña*) and, more specifically, the ‘sacrifice of the *brahman*’ (*brahmayajña*). This doctrine is expounded in chapter 3 of the *Manusmṛti* where, according to stanza 3.70⁷⁴¹ (which rests on an earlier Vedic tradition), the sacrifice of the *brahman* is said to be tantamount to the *adhyāpana*, namely the recitation of the Vedic text that corresponds to its teaching.⁷⁴² The notion thus seems to overlap, at least partially, with that of the gift of the *brahman*, as confirmed by Medhātithi’s commentary on *Manusmṛti* 3.70:⁷⁴³

With the word ‘teaching’ (*adhyāpana*) is also meant the study (*adhyayana*) [of the Veda], because here [the author] will say: ‘The continuous repetition [of the Veda] (*japa*) is the oblation without fire’.⁷⁴⁴ And the continuous repetition does not require students. And it is commonly known from the Revelation that ‘[one is born owing] the personal recitation of the Veda (*svādhyāya*) [as debt] to the Vedic seers (*ṛṣis*)’. So [it is stated] in the Vedic text

741 Note that the stanza is 3.60 in the *Manubhāṣya* edition. From this point on, I will give a double reference for the numeration of the stanzas of the *Manusmṛti*: the first corresponding to the position in the printed edition of Medhātithi’s commentary and, in brackets, their actual numbering in the current *Manusmṛti* edition.

742 *Manusmṛti* 3.70: ‘The teaching [of the Vedas] is the sacrifice of the *brahman*, while the sacrifice of the ancestors is [their] satiation. The oblation [into fire] is meant for the gods, the food-offering for the living beings, the sacrifice of the men is the worship of uninvited guests’; *adhyāpanaṃ brahmayajñaḥ pitṛyajñas tu tarpaṇam | homo daivo balir bhauto nṛyajño ’tithipūjanam ||* 70.

Note that ‘five great sacrifices’ are also frequently mentioned in epigraphs, though they may not correspond to those that are so called in the Dharmaśāstra. On this, see Willis 2009.

743 *Manusmṛtibhāṣya* ad 3.70 (=3.60): *adhyāpanaśabdenādhyayanam api grhyate tena japo huta ity atra vakṣyati | na ca japo ’pi śiṣyānapekṣate | sāmānyena ca śrutaṃ svādhyāyena ṛṣibhya ity ṛṇāvedanaśrutau | ata ubhe adhyāpanādhyayane yathāśaṃbhavaṃ brahmayajñaḥ*.

744 This sentence is quoted from *Manusmṛti* 3.74 (=3.64). In the commentary on this verse, Medhātithi explains that the word *japa*, ‘muttering [of prayers]’, here intended in the sense of ‘recitation’, has to be intended as a synonym of Vedic study, both when the latter coincides with listening to the teachings and when the Vedic study corresponds to the mental recitation of the Vedic text (see *Manusmṛtibhāṣya*, p. 239).

teaching about debts.⁷⁴⁵ Therefore, both the teaching and the study [are], in accordance to the possibilities [of each person], a sacrifice of the *brahman*.

Surely, the idea of the gift of the *brahman* is echoed by references to the activities of teaching and studying the Veda through recitation, so that we can conclude that the gift and the sacrifice of the *brahman*, if not completely identical notions, are however overlapping for at least three-quarters of the elements concurring with their definitions. Medhātithi makes no mention here of the exegetical activity he will evoke in the definition of the gift of the *brahman* given in the commentary on stanza 4.232, while introducing here, with the help of a famous passage from the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, a further notion that the commentator uses as a synonym of ‘study’ (*adhyayana*) and ‘continuous repetition’ (*japa*), namely that of ‘personal recitation’ (*svādhyāya*). That this is also included in the definition of ‘sacrifice of the *brahman*’ is made clear at another point in Medhātithi’s commentary, on 3.70 (=3.60), where he raises an objection to his own definition, asking:⁷⁴⁶

[...] How is it possible that the personal recitation of the Veda is a sacrifice? For in this [recitation of the Veda] the deities are not offered a sacrifice, nor are they taught [to be present]. [Here] the syllables of the Veda are merely pronounced, with no intention of expressing their meanings. And it has been stated, ‘Some [authorities] say that during the constant repetition of the Veda (*āmnāyaśabdābhyāse*) [words] are meaningless’.⁷⁴⁷

The objector thus points out the identification between the sacrifice of the *brahman* and the personal recitation of the Veda (*svādhyāya*), in which no recipient or pedagogic purpose is involved (it is ‘independent from students’, as Medhātithi had said in the previous portion of the commentary on this stanza); stressing this equivalence, the hypothetical adversary wonders whether, under these premises, the sacrifice of the *brahman* can indeed still be considered a sacrifice, namely a ritual activity, given the absence of deities in this process. Medhātithi’s reply to this objection will be that both the word ‘sacrifice’ and the word ‘great’ in the expression ‘five great sacrifices’ do not have to be interpreted literally but,

⁷⁴⁵ There are several passages from Vedic literature in which three (or four) debts are listed, such as *Taittirīyasaṃhitā* 6.3.10.5, or *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 1.7.2.1–7. I was, however, unable to identify a literal parallel to this quotation reported by Medhātithi. The *Manusmṛti* deals with this topic at 6.35 onwards.

⁷⁴⁶ *Manusmṛtibhāṣya* ad 3.70 (=3.60): *nanu ca svādhyāyaḥ katham yajñāḥ | na hi tatra devatā ijjante nāpi śrūyante | kevalaṃ vedākṣarāṇy avivakṣitārthāny uccāryante | uktaṃ cāmnāyaśabdābhyāse kecid āhur anarthakāṇīti*.

⁷⁴⁷ This is a quotation with only one minor difference, from Bārṭṭhari’s *Vākyapadīya* 2.407ab: *āmnāyaśabdān abhyāse kecid āhur anarthakān*.

rather, have to be intended in a figurative meaning with eulogistic purposes; they are, technically speaking, *arthavāda*.⁷⁴⁸

To summarize, the *Manusmṛiti*, reflecting an early stage in the tradition, knows of the notions of sacrifice of the *brahman* and the gift of the *brahman*; in the context of the gift of knowledge, the post-twelfth century digest-writers, whose expressive tools do not allow them to make explicit all the complexity of this development, only mention the gift of the *brahman*, and understand it as a synonym of the gift of the Veda. Thanks to Medhātithi's commentary, which preceded the digests, we are aware that medieval exegesis associated three notions with the gift of the *brahman*, *scil.* of the Veda, namely its teaching (*adhyāpana*) and studying (*adhyayana*), which are both implemented through recitation, and its exegesis (*vyākhyā*). At the same time, Medhātithi associates the teaching and the study of the Veda with another form of Vedic recitation, the 'personal recitation' (*svādhyāya*), and these three form the definition of sacrifice of the *brahman*, one of the five early ritual practices of the lay householder which are already prescribed in Vedic literature. This connection with the sacrifice of the *brahman* is significant insofar as it facilitates reconnecting the gift of knowledge, of which we only find attestations in medieval Purāṇic sources, with a purely Vedic practice, via the association of both the gift of knowledge and the sacrifice of the *brahman* with the gift of the *brahman*. In this way the digest-writers act consistently with the hermeneutical principle evoked at the beginning of this paragraph, namely that the Purāṇas, and thus their teachings, derive their authority from the Veda. The gift of the *brahman* and its understanding according to the medieval commentarial tradition indicate that the Vedic roots of the Purāṇic gift of knowledge can be found in the sacrifice of the *brahman*.

In the most complete study dedicated to the topic of the personal recitation of the Veda, Malamoud (1977) stresses the exact correspondence between the latter and the sacrifice of the *brahman* in Vedic literature, basing his deductions primarily on two passages from the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* and the *Taittirīyāraṇyaka* on the teaching of the five great sacrifices, both giving great relevance to the sacrifice of *brahman*.⁷⁴⁹ As observed by Malamoud, the peculiarity of the latter lies in the perfect identity that it presupposes between ritual substance (*dravya*) and the deity involved (*devatā*): since this sacrifice corresponds to a personal recitation

⁷⁴⁸ *Manusmṛtibhāṣya* ad 3.70 (=3.60): *satyam | stutyām yajñasabdo bhāktah mahacchabdaś ca*.

⁷⁴⁹ These are *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 9.5.6 and *Taittirīyāraṇyaka* 2.10. As observed by Malamoud (1977, p. 12), the eulogy of the *brahmayajña* in the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* shows that all the proper ritual observances connected to it are ultimately considered vain, as the truly important action of the *brahmayajña* consists of the self-recitation of the Veda.

of the Veda, which was not intended for pedagogic purposes but as one of the daily obligatory rites that the householder performs in order to repay his innate debt towards the Veda itself, the *brahmayajña*, i.e. the ‘offering to the Veda’, coincides with its recitation, not with a material oblation to honour a deity or divinized being.⁷⁵⁰ The objection raised in Medhātithi’s commentary regarded exactly this point, questioning whether a *yajña* could really exclude the involvement of the gods. When Medhātithi specifies that this notion of ‘sacrifice’ only serves eulogistic purposes, he is rejecting any attempts at subsuming the sacrifice of the *brahman* under the domain of worship.⁷⁵¹ Malamoud observes that Vedic literature maintains a clear distinction between the personal recitation of the Veda and the pedagogic recitation aimed at teaching and learning the text, specifying that⁷⁵² ‘C’est la récitation-personnelle du Veda qui est le signe constant de l’appartenance à l’orthodoxie brahmanique, que l’on se place au cœur du système ou bien à sa périphérie, que l’on choisisse le *mārga* de la vie dans le monde ou celui qui doit aboutir à la délivrance’. According to this interpretation, it is only with the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*, which never considers the sacrifice of the *brahman* in its speculation, and which has a strong influence on the commentarial tradition on *Dharmaśāstra*, that the personal recitation is somehow detached from the sacrifice of the *brahman* by stressing the function played by the recitation in the transmission of the Vedic text within a given Vedic school (*śākhā*): the solitary recitation (*adhyayana*) is meant to impress in the memory the text that is always taught through recitation (*adhyāpana*).⁷⁵³ Hence the understanding of the pair of terms

⁷⁵⁰ Malamoud 1977, p. 16, not only underlines the uniqueness of this aspect in comparison with the *mahāyajñas*, but also with the other sacrifices in general.

⁷⁵¹ *Manusmṛti* 3.71 (= *Manusmṛtibhāṣya* 3.81) is a similar case, where the text literally prescribes that ‘One should honour the seers through the self-recitation [of the Veda]’; *svādhyāyenārcayeta rṣin*. Again, in commenting on it, Medhātithi explains this statement as a eulogistic expression (*stutivacana*). The centrality of the *svādhyāya* remains unaltered for the authors of *Dharmaśāstras*, as shown by the injunctions of *Manusmṛti* 11.59, classifying the neglect of the *svādhyāya* (which the commentator Kullūka glosses here with *brahmayajña*) as a terrible sin for the *gṛhastha*, such as the killing of a cow, or the abandonment of parents and teachers; for it corresponds to the *brahmojjhatā* (*Manusmṛti* 11.56), the forgetting of the Veda, which is in turn a form of *vedanindā*, the denigration of the *Śruti* by means of false doctrines (see Malamoud 1977, p. 23).

⁷⁵² Malamoud 1977, p. 40; he further observes that both self-recitation and didactic recitation are constant features of the different styles of Brahmanical observance according to *Taittirīyopaniṣad* 1.9.

⁷⁵³ Malamoud 1977, pp. 45–46, notes that in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* tradition the word *svādhyāya*, and consequently the injunction *tasmāt svādhyāyo ’dhyetavyaḥ*, acquires a new different meaning: *svādhyāya* is used to refer to the Vedic text of one’s own (*sva°*) Vedic school (*śākhā*), while

adhyayana and *adhyāpana* as ‘studying’ and ‘teaching’ in post-Vedic literature, such as the commentary of Medhātithi, and the identification of these pedagogic recitations with the sacrifice of the *brahman*, which almost becomes a synonym of the gift of the *brahman*, a notion that closely hints at the transmission of teachings by the same idea of gifting. This does not imply that the meaning of *svādhyāya* as a personal sacrifice dissolves in favour of its being conceived in a ‘school-based’ sense: the ambiguity underlying the understanding of this notion in medieval texts is shown by the same commentary of Medhātithi, in which the sacrifice of the *brahman* is at times connected to the study and teaching of the Veda, but also superimposed on the personal recitation, and at the same time called a ‘perpetual sacrifice of the *brahman*’ (*brahmasattra*, *Manusmṛti* 2.105ff.).

The gift of the *brahman*, which presupposes this bifurcation pointed out by Malamoud, qualifies thus as a more recent version of the Vedic sacrifice of the *brahman*, in which the category of *dāna* amplifies not only the pedagogic but also the devotional aspects. This becomes evident once we return to the work of the digest-writers, and in particular if we shift our attention to a more modern text than the *Smṛti* of Manu, namely the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, whose testimony is used by medieval authors to seal the connection between the gift of the *brahman* and the gift of knowledge.

Immediately following *Manusmṛti* 4.233, Hemādri quotes *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.212, which is a source that had already been used by Lakṣmīdhara. This functions as a sort of expansion on the *Manusmṛti* quotation, since it connects the *brahmadāna* with the reward of the world of Brahmā, and exalts the superiority of this gift that is ‘made of all *dharmas*’.⁷⁵⁴ As already observed, it is in the commentary on this stanza that Aparārka, the twelfth-century commentator on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, discusses the topic of the gift of knowledge by means of quotations from Purāṇic sources, thus confirming that the medieval tradition saw a connection between the *brahmadāna* and the *vidyādāna*. Regarding this, Aparārka understands the gift of the *brahman*, consistently with the Dharmaśāstric tradition, as a synonym of the teaching of the Veda.⁷⁵⁵ The transition to the

the verb *adhi* in the middle form is used with the nuance of ‘learning’ rather than just ‘reciting’; the corresponding injunction thus means ‘it is necessary to learn the texts of your own *śākhā*’.

⁷⁵⁴ *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 517 (= *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.212): ‘Since the *brahman*, made of all *dharmas*, is superior to [other] gifts, donating this [one] reaches the world of Brahmā without falling’; *sarva-dharmamayam brahma pradānebhyo ’dhikaṃ yataḥ | tad dadat samavāpnoti brahmalokam avicyutaḥ ||* 212.

⁷⁵⁵ Aparārka comments upon this stanza as follows (*Aparārkaṭīkā* vol. 1, p. 389): ‘*Brahman* [means] the Veda; teaching this, [one] reaches without falling, [which means] without being deviated, the world of Brahmā. Here [is] the reason: [this is] superior to the other gifts inasmuch as

gift of knowledge in his commentary on *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti* 1.212 is mediated by two quotations from the *Bhṛaspatismṛti* and the *Yamaśmṛti* praising the gift of knowledge, and by a very simple connective sentence where Aparārka states:⁷⁵⁶ ‘Because we happen to be talking about the gift of the *brahman*, the procedure for the gift of other fields of study is also explained’. At this point, Aparārka inserts a series of Purāṇic stanzas on the gift of knowledge, from the already examined *Bhaviṣyottara-purāṇa*, *Matsya-purāṇa*, and *Nandipurāṇa*, all of which, as we have had multiple opportunities to observe, deal with the gift of knowledge in the form of a gift of manuscripts. This testifies *de facto* that, for the interpretive medieval tradition, it was not problematic to link the gift of the *brahman* of the earlier Śmṛtis with the Purāṇic ritual of the gift of knowledge, and that the traditional teaching of the Veda, which is rooted in the five great sacrifices of Vedic literature, is now considered a branch of the same tree to which the various procedures for the gift of manuscripts belong. Moreover, by inserting the quotations on the gift of knowledge in the commentary upon a stanza of Yājñavalkya, Aparārka creates an exegetical connection between the traditional teaching of the Veda and the gift of manuscripts.

Also, the Śmṛti of Yājñavalkya deals with the topic of the five great sacrifices, which are called *mahāmakha* instead of *mahāyajña* here, and does so from verse 1.100 onward. In this section the author resorts to the concept of *japayajña*, the ‘sacrifice of the continuous repetition’, arguably used as a synonym of sacrifice of the *brahman*, which, in turn, is explained as a personal recitation of the Veda (*svādhyāya*).⁷⁵⁷ However, these old notions are enriched by differences that are

the *brahman* is made of all religious duties (*dharma*s). The affix *-maya-* [is used] to denote abundance (*prācūrya*), like in the statements: ‘the towns of Magadha are made of [i.e. abound with] rice’, ‘the sacrifice is made of [i.e. abounds with] food offerings’; or to denote non-differentiation (*abheda*), like in the statement: ‘the Brahman is made of [i.e. is non-differentiated from] bliss’. And here ‘non-difference’ is because of a metaphorical designation of the non-differentiation between means of knowledge (*scil.* the Veda) and object of knowledge (*scil.* the religious duties); *brahma vedas tad adhyāpayan brahmalokam avicyuto ‘napabhraṣṭaḥ prāpnoti | atra hetuḥ brahmaṇaḥ sarvadharmamayatvenānyebhyaḥ pradeyebhyo ‘dhikam | prācūrye mayatpratrayaḥ | yathā śālimayā magadhāḥ | annamayo yajña iti | abhede vā yathā — ānandamayaṁ brahmeti | abhedaś cātra pramāṇaprameyayor abhedopacāreṇa*. Note that the two sentences that Aparārka quotes as examples have their source in Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 5.4.21–22.

756 *Aparārkaṭīkā*, vol. 1 p. 389: *brahmadānaprasaṅgena vidyāntaradānavidhir ucyate*.

757 For the equivalence of these terms with reference to the *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti* see Malamoud 1977, pp. 19–20; the stanza of the *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti* defining the Five Great Sacrifices reads (1.102): *balikarmasvadhāhomasvādhyāyātithisatkriyāḥ | bhūtapitramarabrahmamanuṣyāṇāṁ mahāmakhaḥ || 102*.

the product of a new cultural climate, as Yājñavalkya prescribes that:⁷⁵⁸

In order to obtain perfection in the sacrifice of continuous recitation, one should recite as much as possible the [three] Vedas, the Atharvan, and the Purāṇas along with the Itihāsas, as well as the knowledge of the self (101).

Yājñavalkya's work thus bolsters the Veda with the literary works of the Smṛti composed in the late antiquity and early Middle Ages as a 'fifth Veda' in the practice of the personal recitation. This association undermines the exclusivity of the Veda at its very basis. A similar feature can be observed in a Purāṇic source, namely the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, which associates the gift of the *brahman* with the donation of Smṛti texts, specifying that the latter happens in the form of the donation of manuscripts. Hemādri does quote from this work with reference to the gift of the Veda, but not these specific stanzas, in which the gift of the *brahman* and the donation of manuscripts are associated to the point that it turns out difficult to distinguish between the two:⁷⁵⁹

The donor of the *brahman* reaches the world of Brahmā, which is difficult to obtain [even] for the gods. And having commissioned the copying [to somebody], or having copied himself the treatises teaching the contents of the Veda and the Dharmaśāstras, he will reach the world of Brahmā. Since Īśvara, in the past, emanated the universe, which is rooted in these [Vedas], (14–15) / For this reason the collection of the contents of the Veda has to be carried out with all efforts. The one who, having copied the Itihāsas and the Purāṇas, donates them, (16) / He obtains a similar merit to that obtained through the gift of Brahman, multiplied by two.

While Aparārka does not expressly state the equivalence of *brahmadāna* and *vidyādāna* (or *vidyāntaradāna*, the 'gift of other fields of study', as he calls it), the *Garuḍapurāṇa* makes the distinction between the two slightly more nebulous. That this Purāṇa considers them to be two different categories is made clear in the last lines, prescribing that the copying and donation of Itihāsas and Purāṇas might bestow a fruit that is even superior to that of the gift of the *brahman*. Therefore, the latter lost its primacy according to the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, while the gift of the *brahman* has become potentially inferior to a ritual category

⁷⁵⁸ Yājñavalkyasmṛti 1.101: *vedātharvapurāṇāni setihāsāni śaktitaḥ | japayajñārthasiddhyartham vidyām cā 'dhyātmikī jayet* || 101.

⁷⁵⁹ *Garuḍapurāṇa* 1.98.14–17ab: *brahmadātā brahmalokaṃ prāpnoti suradurlabham | vedārthayajñāśāstrāni dharmāśāstrāni caiva hi || 14 mūlyenāpi likhitvāpi brahmalokaṃ avāpnuyāt | etanmūlaṃ jagad yasmād asṛjat pūrvam īśvaraḥ || 15 tasmāt sarvaprayatnena kāryo vedārthasaṃgrahaḥ | itihāsapurāṇaṃ vā likhitvā yaḥ prayacchati || 16 brahmadānasamaṃ puṇyaṃ prāpnoti dviguṇonnatim.*

that seemed to have been modelled after it. The *brahmadāna* is associated with the world of Brahmā, but at the same time an equal fruit is said to be bestowed by copying and donating the treatises (1.98.14–15). These verses seem to regard the two procedures of Vedic teaching and manuscript donation as almost being in a form of competition with each other, a competition that, though not rejecting the importance of the *brahmadāna*, hints at the primacy of the ritual gift performed by committing the texts to writing and donating their manuscripts—hence, of the gift of knowledge.

The contrast between the two kinds of donation is highlighted by the reference to the ‘treatises teaching the contents of the Vedas’ (*vedārthayajñasāstrāṇi*), which unlike the Veda itself must be transmitted in written form along with the Dharmaśāstra. The compound *vedārthayajñasāstrāṇi* is reminiscent of the *Manusmṛti*’s ‘sacrifice of the *brahman*’ mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. However, closer parallels are more likely to be found in later literature. A well-known passage from *Bhagavadgītā*’s chapter four, for instance, which reinterprets the traditional teaching of the Dharmaśāstra, lists different kinds of yogic practices called ‘sacrifices’, *yajñas*. Among these, the text also mentions a *svādhyāyajñanayajña* (*Bhagavadgītā* 4.28).⁷⁶⁰ Commentaries on the *Bhagavadgītā* agree in explaining this compound as a ‘sacrifice’, a ‘religious practice’ consisting of the mnemonic study of the Veda (*svādhyāya*) and knowledge of their meaning. This second part implies the teaching of Vedic exegesis, as explained, among others, by the philosopher Bhāskara, a Vedāntin supporter of the ‘monism with dualism’ (*bhedābhedavādin*) in his comment on this stanza in the *Bhagavadāśayānusaraṇabhāṣya*:⁷⁶¹

The sacrifice of studying corresponds to the mnemonic recitation of the Veda. The sacrifice of knowledge corresponds to the knowledge of the contents of the Veda (*vedārthajñānaṃ*). Those who have [this] as [their] sacrifice [are called in the text] *jñānayaajñāḥ*. The ascetics, [which means] those who made efforts, who explain the [teachings] of the [*Pūrva*]*mīmāṃsā*, of the *Śārīraka*[*mīmāṃsā*], and so on, have taken firm vows, which means that their vows are unbroken.

⁷⁶⁰ Note that in the text this is a *bahuvrīhi* compound referring to the *yatayaḥ*. *Bhagavadgītā* 4.28: ‘[Some] perform their religious practice [by donating] objects, [some] through askesis, and some through *yoga*; and those who perform the religious practice of studying and teaching are ascetics who have taken firm vows’; *dravyayajñās tapoyajñā yogayajñās tathāpare* | *svādhyāyajñānayaajñās ca yatayaḥ saṃśītavratāḥ* || 28.

⁷⁶¹ *Bhagavadāśayānusaraṇabhāṣya*, p. 127: *svādhyāyayajño vedābhyāsaḥ* | *jñānayaajño vedārthajñānaṃ yajño yeṣāṃ te jñānayaajñāḥ* | *mīmāṃsāsārīrakādīvyākhyātāro yatayo yatnavantaḥ saṃśītavratā akhaṇḍitavratāḥ* || 28.

In the words of Bhāskara, the ‘sacrifice’ of the ‘knowledge of the meaning of the Veda’ therefore corresponds to the two major divisions of Mīmāṃsā philosophy, both of which were considered exegeses of the contents of the Veda (*vedārtha*). The *Garuḍapurāṇa* inserts the compound *vedārthayajña* within a brief eulogy of the Veda and the study of its contents, which could be considered indication that, also in the interpretation given by the Purāṇic author, this compound is meant to refer to the treatises of the Mīmāṃsā tradition. At any rate, these verses from the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, along with the greater attention that medieval authors on Dharmaśāstra devote to the gift of knowledge as compared to its earlier Vedic version that is the *brahmadāna*/*brahmayajña*, suggest that the Purāṇic gift of knowledge competes with the practice that the digest-writers seem to claim as its antecedent. The two main consequences of this are the celebration of non-Vedic literature as equally authoritative, and a shift in the focus from oral recitation to written transmission. On this topic, we should observe that the *Mahābhārata* stanzas quoted by the digest-writers on the ‘gift of *sarasvatī*’, intended as a synonym of *brahmadāna*, are echoed in the *Agnipurāṇa*, a later, composite Purāṇa that, as already observed, has very rarely been quoted by the digest-writers on the topic of the gift of knowledge, in spite of devoting more than one chapter to the topic (for more details see also § 4.2). Specifically on the topic of the donation of the Veda, the *Agnipurāṇa* mentions it in a few lines that are very close to *Mahābhārata* 13.68.4; these however are followed by stanzas generically praising the gift of knowledge and the donation of manuscripts, in which the donation of the Veda and other Vedic literature is again mentioned without being distinguished from the other texts and fields of learning included in the broader category of *vidyādāna*:⁷⁶²

762 *Agnipurāṇa* 2.211.51cd–62: *trīṇi tulyaphalāniha gāvaḥ pṛthvī sarasvatī || 51 brāhmīm sarasvatīm dattvā nirmalo brahmalokabhāk | saptadvīpamahīdaḥ sa brahmayajñānam dadāti yaḥ || 52 abhayaṁ sarvabhūtebhyo yo dadyāt sarvabhāṇ naraḥ | purāṇaṁ bhārataṁ vāpi rāmāyaṇam athāpi vā || 53 likhitvā pustakaṁ dattvā bhuktimuktim avāpnuyāt | vedaśāstraṁ nṛtyagitaṁ yo dhyāpayati nākabhāk || 54 vittaṁ dadyād upādhyāye chātrāṇāṁ bhojanādikam | kim adattaṁ bhavet tena dharmakāmādidarśinā || 55 vājapeyasahasasya samyag dattasya yat phalaṁ | tat phalaṁ sarvaṁ āpnoti vidyādānān na saṁśayaḥ || 56 śivālaye viṣṇugṛhe sūryasya bhavane tathā | sarvadānapradaḥ sa syāt pustakaṁ vācayet tu yaḥ || 57 trailokye caturo varṇās catvāraś cāśramāḥ pṛthak | brahmādyā devatāḥ sarvā vidyādāne pratiṣṭhitāḥ || 58 vidyā kāmādughā dhenur vidyā cakṣur anuttamaṁ | upavedapradānena gandharvaiḥ saha modate || 59 vedāṅgānām ca dānena svargalokaṁ avāpnuyāt | dharmasāstrapradānena dharmeṇa saha modate || 60 siddhāntānām pradānena mokṣam āpnoty asaṁśayaṁ | vidyādānam avāpnoti pradānāt pustakasya tu || 61 śāstrāṇi ca purāṇāni dattvā sarvaṁ avāpnuyāt | śiṣyāṁś ca śikṣayed yas tu puṇḍarikaphalaṁ labhet || 62.*

Three [gifts] bestow equal fruits in this world: [the gifts of] cattle, land, and knowledge. (51) / A pure man, having donated the knowledge of the *brahman* [becomes] an inhabitant of the world of Brahṁā; the one who donates the knowledge of the *brahman*, he [is equal to] one who donates the earth [consisting of] seven continents. (52). / The man who would provide safety for all beings, he gets his share in everything. Having copied a Purāṇa or the *Mahābhārata*, as well as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, [and] having donated the manuscript, [he] will obtain pleasures and the emancipation from *saṃsāra*. [The one] who teaches the treatises of the Veda, and [the art] of dancing and singing, will attain the heavenly world. (53–54) / [One] should give to the teacher a recompense [like] food for [his] pupils and so on. What would not be donated by one who knows Dharma, *kāma*, etc.? (55) / The fruit coming from a thousand Vājapeya sacrifices that have been rightly offered, this fruit [one] obtains in its entirety from the gift of knowledge, no doubt about it! (56) / He who would read a manuscript in the temple of Śiva, in the house of Viṣṇu as well as in that of the Sun, would be [the equivalent of] a donor of all gifts. (57) / In the three worlds, the four castes and the four stages of life, one by one, [and] all deities beginning with Brahṁā, are fixed in the gift of knowledge. (58) / Knowledge is the cow that yields [all] desires, knowledge is the unsurpassed eye. Through the gift of Upavedas [one] rejoices with the Gandharvas; (59) / And due to the gift of the Vedāṅgas one reaches the world of Indra. Through the gift of the Dharmaśāstra one rejoices with Dharma. (60) / Due to the gifting of the Siddhānta [Scriptures], [one] attains liberation, without doubt. One [can] achieve a gift of knowledge through the gift of a manuscript. (61) / And donating treatises and Purāṇas [one] will obtain [the fruit of a gift of knowledge] in its entirety, and one who teaches pupils will obtain the fruit of a *puṇḍarīka* sacrifice. (62)

Again, it is as if the boundaries between the impartation of the Vedic knowledge and the donation of manuscripts of other works had been diluted at a certain point: the ‘treatises on the Vedas’, probably the same as the *vedārthayajña-śāstrāṇi* of *Garuḍapurāṇa* 1.98.14, permit reaching Heaven in a similar way as the teaching of the arts of singing and dancing do.

The style adopted by the digest-writers is not fit for expressing complex connections and levels of interaction, but one could argue that the internal disposition of the quotations, according to which those on the *vedadāna* (or *brahmadāna*) normally precede texts on the Purāṇic types of donation, not only highlight the role of the Veda as the root of Dharma but also hint at a sort of chronological development. Hemādri, for instance, still praising the donation of Vedic (here called ‘brāhmic’) knowledge, places the two stanzas from the *Mahābhārata* that Lakṣmidhara had also quoted after the two quotations on the gift of the *brahman*. The following quotations from the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, associating the *vedadāna* with the gift of Upavedas and Vedāṅgas, deal with the traditional teaching of the Veda— although the gift of the Veda is said to be

more important as it bestows ‘the fruit of all sacrifices’;⁷⁶³ those from the *Garuḍapurāṇa* praise the excellence of the *brahmavidyā* over all other branches of knowledge; and those from the *Devīpurāṇa*, chapter 107, are taken from the most important single source quoted on the topic of the gift of the Veda.⁷⁶⁴

The quotations from chapter 107 of the *Devīpurāṇa* raise a different subject, which is that of the procedures for the actual worship of the Veda: this is where the text abandons the subject of Vedic recitation and re-enters the field of the Purāṇic ritual. Hemādri seems to follow a sort of chronological and conceptual development when, after stating the equivalence between the gift of the Veda and the gift (and, thus, the sacrifice) of the *brahman*, he inserts two text passages (from the *Devīpurāṇa* and the *Garuḍapurāṇa*) that introduce the Vedic text into the domain of medieval devotion. Consistently with the basic principle of the orality of the Vedic text, however, the focus of worship cannot be a manuscript, but rather the iconic representations of the four collections of Vedic hymns.

The long excerpt from *Devīpurāṇa* 107, which is the core of Hemādri’s treatment of *vedadāna*, mentions the scriptures and schools of the Vedic tradition, as well as the different brāhmaṇical lineages (*gotras*) and tutelary deities (*adhidevatās*) corresponding to the four Vedas.⁷⁶⁵ In his typical style, Hemādri uses

763 *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.303.5–6ab: ‘From the gift of the Veda a man attains the fruit of all sacrifices; through the donation of the Upavedas he rejoices together with the Gandharvas, (5) / And thanks to the gift of the Vedāṅgas he will reach Indra’s heaven’; *vedadānād avāpnōti sarvayajña-phalaṃ naraḥ | upavedapradānena gandharvair saha modate ||* 59 *vedāṅgānāṃ ca dānena śakralokam avāpnuyāt*.

764 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 518–23. However, the first hemistich is surely detectable in chapter 96 (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 518 = *Devīpurāṇa* 96.3ab): ‘For the twice-borns only the Veda is the supreme instrument for reaching Heaven’; *veda eva dvijātināṃ sādhanam śreyasaḥ param*. The stanzas extracted from chapter 107 are arranged by Hemādri as follows: 11–9–10; 12–24; 28–31ab; 32; 34–40ab; 41–55a; 56; 58.

765 The title appended to this chapter by the Devanāgarī printed edition of the *Devīpurāṇa* is exactly ‘The Detailed Explanation of the Vedic Schools Referring to the Orthodox Tradition of the Origin of the Vedas’ (*vedotpattismaraṇīyacaraṇavyūha*^o, *Devīpurāṇa*, p. 392). The text starts by describing the Veda as originated by the *gayatrīmantra* (*Devīpurāṇa* 107.9–11), then lists the internal divisions of the *R̥gveda* and the *Yajurveda* (*Devīpurāṇa* 107.12–24). The next topics are the six ancillary works (*aṅga*) of, the Veda, the six minor subdivisions (*upāṅga*), and the 18 appendices (*pariśiṣṭa*), according to *Devīpurāṇa* 107.23–28. The text then at *Devīpurāṇa* 107.29–31 lists the names of the Brahmin families connected with the Vedic schools (*kaṭha*) and the five divisions of Vedic seers (*ṛṣis*, *Devīpurāṇa* 107.35–36). The divisions of the *Sāmaveda* and the *Atharvaveda* are then dealt with (*Devīpurāṇa* 107.39–45), followed by the names of the Upavedas (*Devīpurāṇa* 107.46–47ab), and a list matching each of the four *saṃhitā* with a *gotra* and a tutelary deity (*adhidevatā*) in *Devīpurāṇa* 107.47cd–49.

this text for giving a clear and exhaustive definition of the object of the gift; it should be noted that, as in the case of the texts quoted in the section on the gift of the Dharmaśāstra, the expression *vedadāna* never occurs in the chapter of the *Devīpurāṇa* that he uses precisely to illustrate the gift of the Veda, nor does the text mention anything comparable to a gifting ritual. Once again, therefore, the digest-writer encourages the reader to read these verses through the lens of a topic that was not included in the original source, and to interpret it in the context of the more general category of the gift of knowledge. However, this chapter of the *Devīpurāṇa* is not completely devoid of ritualistic elements, because starting with stanza 107.50 it gives an account of the icons of the four collections of Vedic hymns, and prescribes their worship. These stanzas, with which Hemādri ends his quotation from *Devīpurāṇa* 107, are worth being quoted in full here, as they account for an important development in the traditional understanding of the Vedic text, which is personified and, as such, transported into the ritual arena. At the same time, this passage from the *Devīpurāṇa* accounts for a substantial transformation in the gift of the Veda: if in the first sources quoted by Hemādri this corresponded to the gift of *brahman*, and thus to the recitation—both the personal recitation and the teaching—of the Veda, now the introduction of a material element fills the vacant gap caused by the absence of the usual worship focus, namely the manuscript:⁷⁶⁶

766 The following passage presents the interpreter with some dubious points; for this reason, I have chosen to reconstruct the text not only relying on a comparison between the two available printed editions (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 522–23 = *Devīpurāṇa* 107.50–56), but also on the basis of a collation with the manuscript of the *Devīpurāṇa* (Asiatic Society, G4566D), whose pictures have been kindly made available to me by Bihani Sarkar and Yuko Yokochi. The metre of the lines—if they are composed in a metre at all—is moreover unclear. For this reason, I have not divided the text, neither the original Sanskrit nor the English translation, with slashes or double *daṇḍas* demarcating the stanzas: ^[1.9] *ṛgvedañ padmapatrākṣaḥ pralambajāṭharāḥ śuciḥ | bhaktagrīvaḥ* [su-vibhaktagrīvaḥ Cod.] *kuñcitateśaśmaśruḥ pramāṇenāpi vitastipañca* [vitastī || pañca DKh] *rājatamauktikajo 'tha* [sa rājate mauktikavaro 'tha DP sa rājato mauktijotha Cod.] *pūjyo varaprado bhaktiyute* [bhaktiyuto Dkh] *dvijā^[1.10]ya | yajurvedañ piṅgalākṣaḥ kṛṣṇasamadyasthūlagalakapolas* [kṛṣṇasamadyaḥ sthūlagalaḥ kapolas DP kṛṣṇasamadyaḥ sthūlagalakapolas Cod.] *tāmṛyavatavarṇaḥ* [tāmṛyattavarṇaḥ DP] *kṛṣṇacaraṇaḥ pradeśāt* [prasāden DKh] *ṣaḍdirghatvena* [padadirghatvena DKh] *citre liṅge 'thavā pūjyaḥ* [pūjya Cod.] *sarvakāmān avāpnuyāt | sāmavedo* [sāmavedi Dkh] *nityaṃ sragvī suvratāḥ śuciḥ śucivāsā* [śucivāsāḥ DP Cod.] *kṣa^[1.11]mi dāntāś ca mahādāṇḍi* [dāntāścarma ca daṇḍi DP] *kāñcananayanaḥ* [kācaraanayana DKh] | *ādityavarṇo varṇena ṣaḍaratnimātras* [ṣaḍratnamātras tathā DP ṣaḍratnimātraḥ Cod.] *tāmre vātha* [tāmre 'thā DP Cod.] *mañindre va* [coniec.; mañi devaḥ DKh mañi indrākhye DP maṇa indrākhye Cod.] *pūjitaḥ* [pūjayan DP Cod.] *śubhado bhavet | atharvavedas tikṣṇadaṇḍaḥ* [em.; tikṣṇadaṇḍaḥ Dkh tikṣṇaścaṇḍaḥ DP Cod.] *kāmarūpi* [kṣāmarūpo DP kṣāmarūporūpi ? Cod.] *viśvātmā viśvakṛd* [virakta Dkh] *ūrdhvajvālāḥ* [krūra ūrdhva jvālāvān DP, Cod.] | *kṣudra^[1.12]karmā śāstrakṛti sthāyī* [ca

The *Ṛgveda* has eyes shaped like a lotus leaf,⁷⁶⁷ a pendulous belly; [he] is pure, his neck is curved, his hair and beard are twisted. His measure is five *vitastis*, is made of silver and pearls; or rather, [he] has to be worshipped as a bestower of boons to a devout twice-born. The *Yajurveda* has yellowish eyes, a thin waist, thick neck and cheeks, his colour is based on red copper, has black feet, has a length of six *pradeśas*; or rather he has to be worshipped as a painted *liṅga*. [Doing so], one will satisfy all his desires. The *Sāmaveda* always wears a garland, is a pious observant, pure, clothed in pure garments, indulgent, and made of ivory, bearing a big staff, the pupils of the eye made of gold. [He] is of the colour of the sun, measuring six *aratnis* in length; or, rather, [is made] of copper or of diamond. Once worshipped, he will bestow auspicious rewards. The *Atharvaveda* has a sharp staff, a slender figure, is the creator of all things, being made of all things, has [his] flames raised; [he is] one who acts vilely. He is the author of treatises; he is tin standing position†. He has the colour of blue water-lilies. He is happy with his own wife, not desiring the wives of others; or, rather, [he] consists of rubies. The one who would worship it fulfills all his desires, as well as the Atharvan prescriptions.

The Vedas are thus worshipped through substitutive objects slightly recalling each collection of hymns. In the same manner as gods can be worshipped in the manuscripts of the texts that are attributed to them, so the Vedas are venerated through their icons, thus creating a correlation between manuscripts and images that informs many aspects of the Indian rituals of manuscripts. The *Devīpurāṇa* does not clarify whether there is any connection between the teaching of the Vedic texts and their veneration in the form of icons, as opposed to the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, which Hemādri quotes immediately after. Unlike chapter 107 of the *Devīpurāṇa*, the following stanzas of the *Garuḍapurāṇa* have also been quoted by later digest-writers, such as Madanasimhadeva and Govindānanda (see Table A), but they are untraceable in the available printed editions of the *Purāṇa*. In the very first verse of this quotation, the author announces his intention to describe⁷⁶⁸ ‘the procedure of gifting that is considered the supreme secret’, thus announcing straight from the beginning its intentions of dealing with a donative ceremony. Moreover, this quotation from the *Garuḍapurāṇa* seems to start exactly where *Devīpurāṇa* 107 ends, as the second

śāstra kṛtonnāmī DP, ms] *nilotpala-varṇo varṇena svadāratuṣṭaḥ* | *parastrīṣv avaśaḥ* [parastrī-yārthaś ca DP Cod.] *padmarāge vātha* [sauvarṇa padmarāge vā rūdrākhye DP Cod.] *prapūjayet* | *sarvakāmān avāpnoti atharvavihitāni ca*.

767 The same character is attributed to the representation of the *Ṛgveda* by the *Śrīvidyāṃbavatāntra* in a section on *pūjā* (see the expression *ṛgvedaḥ padmapatrākṣo*, p. 270 st. 1).

768 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 523 (= *Garuḍapurāṇa* 9_{Hem}): ‘Now I will explain the procedure of gifting, considered the supreme secret, having performed which a man does not creep into the dreadful hells (9_{Hem})’; *atha dānavidhiṃ vakṣye rahasyaṃ paramam matam* | *yaṃ vidhāya naro ghorān nīrayān nopasarpati* || 9_{Hem}.

stanza quoted by Hemādri with attribution to the *Garuḍapurāṇa* prescribes the proper arrangement of the images of the Vedas, then exhorts their veneration through the offering of clothes and various items:⁷⁶⁹

Having properly arranged the images of the Vedas, made of gold, possessing the characteristics explained above, embellished with purified, numerous precious stones; having arranged [them] according to the sequence beginning with the *Ṛgveda* [...] (10_{Hem}) /—The characteristics of the *Ṛgveda* and so on have been expounded in the section about the gift of jar of the five elements. — Clothes have to be donated [...] /

Hemādri briefly comments upon these lines by making a cursory reference to the *mahābhūtaghaṭadāna*, the gift of the jar to the five elements, where the features of the Vedas would be described. This is one of the 16 great gifts with which Hemādri, like all the contemporary *nibandha*-authors of treatises on gifting do, addresses the beginning of his text. The chapter on the *mahābhūtaghaṭadāna*,⁷⁷⁰ which is entirely based on the *Matsyapurāṇa*—which is the main source concerning the topic of the great gifts—does present a brief description of the Vedas in which these are again regarded as divine icons. In order to perform the gift of the jar, one should first have a golden jar filled with milk and butter (*Matsyapurāṇa* 289.3), and then place inside it the icons of the gods, which are Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, all sitting on lotuses, Varāha carrying the Earth, Varuṇa, Agni, Vāyu and Vināyaka on their mounts, and Kāma (*Matsyapurāṇa* 289.5–7ab). Furthermore,⁷⁷¹

[One] should place in the middle of the jar these [icons] along with the five Vedas. (7) / [In the hand] of the *Ṛgveda* there will be a rosary, [in that] of the *Yajurveda* a lotus-flower, the *Sāmaveda* will have a *viṇā*. [One] should place a flute on the right side. (8) / Moreover, in the hand of the *Atharvaveda* there will be the *Sruc*, *Sruva*, and the lotus. The *Purāṇaveda* [is represented] as a boon-granter, having a rosary and a water-gourd. (9)

This description is much simpler than the one given by the *Devīpurāṇa*, being limited to assigning an emblem to each of the Vedas, also including the ‘*Purāṇaveda*’, the single Purāṇa symbolizing the entire Purāṇic tradition. The

769 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 523 (*Garuḍapurāṇa* 10_{Hem}-11abc_{Hem}): *āmnāyarūpāṇi vidhāya samyak haimāni pūrvoditalakṣaṇāni | viśuddhanānāmaṇibhūṣitāni* [em.; viśuddhamānā° ed.] *ṛgādivedakramato niveśya || 10 ṛgvedādīlakṣaṇaṃ mahābhūtaghaṭadāne darśitaṃ | vāsāṃsi deyaṇi* [...] | 770 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 343–45.

771 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, pp. 343–44 (= *Matsyapurāṇa* 289.7cd–9): *vinayed ghaṭamadhye tāt dapañcakasaṃyutāt || 7 ṛgvedasyākṣasūtraṃ syād [tu DKh] yajurvedasya pañkajam | sāmavedasya viṇā syād veṇuṃ [viṇāṃ DKh] dakṣiṇato nyaset || 8 atharvavedasya punaḥ sruksruvau kamalaṃ kare | purāṇavedo varadaḥ sākṣasūtrakamaṇḍalūḥ || 9.*

description of the ritual donation is rather brief: after arranging some items around the jar and invoking the Lord of All Beings (*sarvabhūteśa*, *Matsyapurāṇa* 289.13), the sponsor should then give this precious vase away. These verses further attest to the practice of the worship of the Vedas in the form of icons, which the *Matsyapurāṇa* actually refers to at other points in its long account of the great gifts, and which are all quoted by Hemādri: in the more complex gift of the Brahṁā's egg (*brahmāṇḍadāna*),⁷⁷² the text prescribes that, after wrapping the egg in silk cloth, one should then install various deities around it, including the Vedas in the western direction (*Matsyapurāṇa* 276.9). At the same time, icons of the four Vedas, together with those of the 12 Ādityas, are installed in the fourth out of eight rings of which the 'Universal Wheel' consists, as related by the *Matsyapurāṇa* in the description of the gift of the universal wheel (*viśvacakradāna*).⁷⁷³ However, the only proper descriptions of such icons are those of *Devīpurāṇa* 107 and of *Matsya-purāṇa* 289. Hemādri refers the reader to the latter twice, once in a commentary appended to the mention of the icons of the Veda in the context of the *brahmāṇḍadāna*, and another time with reference to the *Garuḍapurāṇa* stanzas on the *vedadāna*. It is rather curious that he does so in this case, since he quotes the text of the *Garuḍapurāṇa* immediately after the description of the four Vedas given in the *Devīpurāṇa*.

Having provided an account of the worship procedures and of the *mantras* that have to be addressed to these images,⁷⁷⁴ the *Garuḍapurāṇa* prescribes that these are to be donated to Brahmins, one to each of them, accompanied by three

⁷⁷² Hemādri's short commentary at *Matsyapurāṇa* 276.9 reads (*Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 236): 'The icons of the Vedas will be dealt with regarding the Jar of the Elements'; *vedamūrtayo bhūtaghaṭe vakṣyante*.

⁷⁷³ *Matsyapurāṇa* 285.9, quoted in *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 329.

⁷⁷⁴ *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 524 (= *Garuḍapurāṇa* 14–17_{Hem}): 'O Ṛgveda, whose eyes have the form of a lotus-leaf, protect, protect, throw away the inauspicious! I have taken refuge in you, give me an unprecedented good! (14_{Hem})/ O Yajurveda, adoration be to you! [You are] fully devoted to the protection of the world. By your grace, may all [sorts of] protection be with me always! (15_{Hem}) / O Sāmaveda, long-armed one, for you [are] directly the god born below the axe: having your bright face been favourable to me, please be propitious to me! (16_{Hem}) / O Atharvan, since the fortune and misfortune of all beings depend on you, procure appeasement, o lord of the gods, give the desired prosperity (17_{Hem})'; *ṛgveda padmapatrākṣa rakṣa rakṣa kṣipāśubham | śaraṇam tvām prayanno 'smi dehi me hitam adbhutam || 14_{Hem} yajurveda namas te 'stu lokatrāṇaparāyaṇaḥ | tvatprasādena me kṣemāḥ nikhilāḥ santu santatam || 15_{Hem} sāmaveda mahābāho tvam hi sākṣād adhokṣajāḥ | prasādasumukho bhūtvā kṛpayānuḡrḥāṇa mām || 16_{Hem} atharvān sarvabhūtānām tvadāyatte hitāhite | śāntim kuruṣva deveśa puṣṭim iṣṭām prayacchata || 17_{Hem}*.

palas of gold.⁷⁷⁵ This prescription allows the reintroduction of a proper ritualistic *dāna* among the procedures for the *vedadāna* so far described. The text eventually observes:⁷⁷⁶

But this procedure for the gift of the Veda is for one who has not studied the Veda (20_{Hem}) / Because for the one who is always devoted to [its] study [the gift happens] in the form of an impartation of teachings to a student.

The veneration of the Vedas in the form of icons and their donation, an aspect that was missing from the account of the *Devīpurāṇa*, is thus considered an ‘easier’ alternative for their study, and a means to perform the *vedadāna* even for those who are not entitled to learn the Veda. This does not mean that the text in any way diminishes the value of Vedic recitation, as attested in the immediately following stanzas:⁷⁷⁷

One who is himself pure, having taken a bath in the morning, with his senses refrained, (14_{Hem}) / Holding *kuśa* grass in his hands, he should teach those pure Brāhmins who are also like that, leaving aside those who do not perform Vedic recitation, also excluding inferior men from his teachings. (15_{Hem}) / In this way, the one who gives even only one Vedic verse according to the procedure, gives the earth full of the three types of wealth, no doubt about it! (16_{Hem}) /— Moreover: —As many Vedic chants [are sung] and [as many] auspicious Vedic vows [have been taken], so many the one who is pervaded by devotion will receive by means of a *vedadāna*. (17_{Hem}) / The one who, by giving a livelihood to the teacher, enables [him] to teach [other] people: what has not been donated by him of the things that are taught [to belong to the fields of] Dharma, enjoyment and material wealth? (18_{Hem})

775 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 524 (= *Garuḍapurāṇa* 18_{Hem}): *iti samprārcya deveśān viprebhyaḥ pratipādayet | pradadyād ekam ekasmin suvarṇatripalānvitam* || 18_{Hem}.

776 *Dānakhaṇḍa*, p. 524 (= *Garuḍapurāṇa* 20cd-21ab_{Hem}): *anadhītavato vedān vedadānavidhis tv ayam* || 20_{Hem} *sadādhyāpanayuktasya* [em.; *sadādhyayana*° ed.] *śiṣyādhyāpakam eva hi* |.

In order to make sense of the compound *śiṣyādhyāpakam*, literally ‘teaching a student’, we have to understand the term *vedadāna* also in the second half stanza, referring to it *śiṣyādhyāpakam* as a *bahuvrīhi* compound. The text of the *Dānamayūkha*, also quoting this stanza, presents here the variant *vedādhyāyanam*, which must be most likely rejected as secondary (see *Dānamayūkha*, p. 243).

777 *Dānakhaṇḍa* pp. 524–25 (= *Garuḍapurāṇa* 14cd–18_{Hem}): *svayaṃ śuciḥ śucin viprān prātaḥ snāto jitendriyaḥ* || 14_{Hem} *darbhān ādāya pāṇau tu pāṭhayet tāms tathāvidhān | anadhyāyān pariharān nicān āśrāvayann api* || 15_{Hem} *evaṃ vidhānato yas tu ṛcam ekāṃ prayacchati | trivitta-pūrṇaprthivī tena dattā na saṃśayaḥ* || 16_{Hem} *tathā | yāvanti vedagītāni punyavedavratāni ca | tāvanti vedadānenā prāpnuyād bhaktibhāvitaḥ* || 17_{Hem} *upādhyāsyas ya vṛttiṃ datvā ’dhyāpayate janam | kiṃ na dattaṃ bhavet tena dharmakāmārthadarśitam* || 18_{Hem}.

These stanzas are used to open the description of the gift of the Veda in the *Dānavivekoddya* of Madanasimhadeva, as the inversion of the order of the verses highlights the primacy of Vedic recitation before accounting for its alternative procedures.⁷⁷⁸ However, the *Devīpurāṇa* and the *Garuḍapurāṇa* quoted by our digest-writers are not the only sources attesting this form of Vedic cult, as this also occurs in other Purāṇic texts, and has survived in contemporary religious practice, although the attestations of this practice are admittedly rare. For example, in a 1997 article Piano recounts his encounter with a temple dedicated to the Vedas (Shri Veda Mandir) in the town of Ujjain, in which the four Vedas are worshipped in the form of icons—whose features however do not correspond to the description that we have just read in the *Devīpurāṇa*—accompanied by a female figure.⁷⁷⁹ Larios (2011) wrote about another such temple, called Shri Guru Gangeshwar Ved Mandir, which is located in the outskirts of Nashik, in Maharashtra: this is a modern construction of the early seventies and it does not enshrine the idols of the four Vedas in human or animal form but, rather ironically if one thinks of the ideology of orality that has surrounded the Vedic

778 The author of the *Dānavivekoddya* only quotes stanzas of the *Garuḍapurāṇa* that are found in Hemādri's text, but completely rearranges the order of the stanzas (see Table A). The three groups of stanzas are divided by *tathā*, which marks an omission between part 1 and 2, and by a short prose commentary inserted between group 2 and part 3. These stylistic expedients, which highlight the interventions of the digest-writer, also reveal the faithfulness with which the author was supposed to approach his sources. Even small omissions had to be marked: the omitted stanza is *Garuḍapurāṇa* 17_{Hem}, and only contains a praise of the *vidyādāna*, but its omission is nevertheless noted. The stanzas on the description of the four images of the Vedas and their worship are then quoted immediately after a brief remark by the author, who calls these procedures a *pratimādāna*, 'gift of icons' (*athaitāsāṃ pratimādānāni tatraiva*). As observed in the text, this might be exactly the reason why the digest-writer opts for a different arrangement of the stanzas: since this form of *vedadāna* is secondary to the oral teaching of the Veda, the *nibandhakāra* takes the liberty of rearranging the succession of the topics accordingly.

779 Piano 1997, pp. 329–31. The female figure is on the left and is interpreted by Piano as representing a pupil. These icons, unlike those described by the *Devīpurāṇa*, have theriomorphic faces: the *Rgveda* has the head of a donkey, the *Sāmaveda* that of a horse, the *Yajurveda* has a goat face, and the *Atharvaveda* has the face of a monkey. Piano, who also identifies other contemporary representations of the Vedas with these same features, identifies a sole textual reference to this theriomorphic iconography in a description of the Vedas that Hemādri attributes to a *Viśvakarmaśāstra* in *Vratākhaṇḍa* vol. 1, p. 104.

text for millennia, as ‘a two meter-tall representation of the *vedas* bound in contemporary style and crafted in white Italian marble’.⁷⁸⁰ More precisely, what this huge marble manuscript represents is the ‘*Bhagavān Ved*’, a collection of the Vedic *mantras* from the four collections of hymns compiled by Guru Gangeshwar Maharaj, a popular Indian saint of the twentieth century, who inspired this and other temples; the *gāyatrīmantra*, as well as *Ṛgveda* 1.1.9, are carved in golden characters on the surface of this book, which is regularly worshipped along with other icons of the temple.⁷⁸¹

Furthermore, Piano lists several examples from Purāṇic literature providing instances of the personification of the Vedas, especially from the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, which prescribes that images of the Vedas should be part of the iconography of Hayagrīva, but which also at times presents the four Vedas as divine animals, or as gods themselves.⁷⁸² The *Viṣṇudharmottara* introduces the icons of the Vedas into ritual practice when it prescribes that the cult of Vibhū (Brahmā) is practiced by placing him in the pericarp of an eight-leaved lotus, and then positioning the four Vedas on four of its leaves: the *Ṛgveda* in the east, the *Yajurveda* in the south, the *Sāmaveda* in the west and the *Atharvaveda* in the north.⁷⁸³ That the *Viṣṇudharmottara* is aware of the existence of anthropomorphic icons of the four Vedas, which are furthermore connected with the cult of Brahmā, is not entirely surprising, since the *Viṣṇudharmottara* is a Kashmiri

780 Larios 2011, p. 235. Besides the marble book, enshrined in the central vault, statues of Rāma are also installed in the temple, accompanied by Sita, Hanumān, and Lakṣmaṇa, and the *vyotirliṅga* Tryambakeśvara, along with Gaṇeśa and Nandī.

781 Larios 2011, pp. 234–35. A picture of the marble book enshrined in this temple can be seen on the webpage: <<http://nashiktourism.in/tourist-places/guru-gangeshwar-vedmandir/>> (last accessed: 24/11/2015).

782 An outline of these occurrences is in Piano 1997, pp. 331–37. I have relied here on Piano’s survey both for the references to the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and for the identification of the next passages from the *Skandapurāṇa*; note however that Piano has not included into his inquiry of the Purāṇic tradition the two passages from the *Devīpurāṇa* and the *Garuḍapurāṇa* examined above. The relevant stanzas in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* for the occurrences noted in the text are: *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.80.4–5 (description of Hayagrīva’s iconography; on this, see also Rao 1914, vol. 1.1, p. 261); *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.56.9, in which the Vedas are depicted as four parrots pulling the cart of Agni; *Matsyapurāṇa* 133.31, where the Vedas are four horses pulling the cart of Śiva who is heading to the destruction of Tripura; and *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.73.42–43, in which the four Vedas take on the aspect of as many gods: the *Ṛgveda* is Brahmā, the *Yajurveda* Indra, the *Sāmaveda* is Viṣṇu, and the *Atharvaveda* Śambhu.

783 *Viṣṇudharmottara* 3.126.7: *ṛgvedaṃ pūrvapatre tu yajurvedaṃ tu dakṣiṇe | paścime sāmavedaṃ tu uttare ’tharvaṇaṃ tathā ||* 7.

text:⁷⁸⁴ a further Kashmiri text, the *Netratantra*, also describes images of the four Vedas, which in this case are depicted as flanking Brahmā (see *Netratantra* 13.33–34), thus providing a unique textual attestation for an iconographic model that has also been identified in actual bronze images from Kashmir.⁷⁸⁵

The *Viṣṇudharmottara* does not provide any description of the icons, which are rather described profusely in the account of a similar ritual given in the *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa*. The description contained in these verses does show parallels with the other two Purāṇic descriptions identified so far, in particular with that of chapter 107 of the *Devīpurāṇa*, albeit only for a few features. As in the case of the examples from the *Devīpurāṇa* or the *Garuḍapurāṇa* quoted by Hemādri, the *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* does not present the cult of the Vedas as ancillary to other ritual procedures, as the *Matsyapurāṇa* did, but the representations of the Vedic collections are regarded as the main focus of worship:⁷⁸⁶

On the top of eight leaves then [one] should place the Vedas and the treatises; in this regard, he should place the Vedas in the cardinal directions and the treatises in the intermediate points (51). / In the east one should place the *Ṛgveda*, bearing a rosary and a garland, white, short, with a pendulous belly, benevolent, with lotus-shaped eyes, white-dressed. (52) / In the southern direction he should place the *Yajurveda*, with a middle-sized body, a thin waist, yellowish eyes, and a thick neck, yellow, [wearing] red clothes (54) / Holding a rosary in the left hand and a *vajra* in the right one. And in the west [he should place] the *Sāmaveda*, tall, as bright as the sun, (55) / Holding a rosary in the right and in the left hand a conch, with a golden cloth, bright eyes, trained in singing. (56) / In the northern direction he should place the Atharvan, with a white body, a blue vest,

784 For evidence of the Kashmirian provenance of the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, see Sanderson 2004, p. 275.

785 Sanderson 2004, pp. 289–90, remarks that the presence of the four Vedas as an element of Brahmā's iconography is a detail found in no other Śaiva authority known to him. He furthermore lists four Kashmirian images of Brahmā accompanied by four small figures that can be identified with the Vedas (see Sanderson 2004, p. 290 fn. 147, as well as Pal 1975, pl. 3 for image one, and Siudmak 1993, p. 638 and 640–42, for images three and four. See also Siudmak 2013, pp. 398–99, pl. 183, and pp. 403–404).

786 *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* 27.9.51–57: *dalāgreṣv aṣṭasu tato vedāñ chāstrāṇi ca nyaset | tatra vedān nyased dikṣu śāstrāṇi tu vidikṣu saḥ || 52 pūrve nyaset tu ṛgvedam akṣamālādharam | kharvaṃ lambodaram saumyaṃ padmanetraṃ sitāmbaram || 53 yāmye nyased yajurvedam madhyamāṅgaṃ kṛśodharam | piṅgākṣaṃ sthūlakaṇṭhaṃ ca pītaṃ cāruṇāvāsasam || 54 akṣarajaṃ kare vāme dakṣe vajraṃ ca bibhrataṃ | paścime sāmavedaṃ ca prāṃśum ādityavarcasam || 55 dakṣe 'kṣamālāṃ vāme ca dhṛtavantaṃ kare daram | svarṇavastraṃ viśālākṣaṃ vinyased gāyanodyatam || 56 atharvāṇaṃ nyaset saumye sitāṅgaṃ nilāvāsasam | vāme 'kṣasūtraṃ dakṣe ca khaṭvāṅgaṃ bibhrataṃ kare | vahnyojasaṃ ca tāmṛākṣaṃ vayasā sthaviṛaṃ tathā || 57.*

holding in the left hand a rosary and in the right a *khaṭvāṅga*, and as vigorous as the fire, with copper-coloured eyes, an old man in age. (57)

This chapter of the *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* is entirely devoted to the installation and worship of icons of the gods, mostly by placing their images on drawings representing lotus-flowers. Therefore, the Vedas are also among the gods whose images have to be installed and venerated; moreover, in the following stanzas, the *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* prescribes the worship of four of the main branches of Sanskrit knowledge, the same that the many sources on *vidyādāna* analyzed above exhorted to be worshipped in the form of ritually produced and lavishly adorned manuscripts. This time, their material embodiments have long beards and carry several different attributes in their hands:⁷⁸⁷

And in the southeast quarter one should place the Dharmaśāstra, sitting on a lotus-flower and dressed in white, carrying strings of pearls and a balance from the two forearms. (58) / He should place Sāṃkhya, with long beard and nails, having a prominent navel, in the southwestern direction, holding in both hands a rosary, and a white stick. (59) / Then in the northwestern direction he should place Yoga, gold-coloured, with a thin waist, with the two hands placed on the thighs, [turning] his eyes at the tip of his own nose. (60) / Further, in the northeast he should place the Pañcarātra, white, wearing a garland of forest-flowers, and holding a rosary and a plough in his two hands. (61) / For these four a multitude of white, thin clothes have to be realized, as well as imperishable, of the extent of a lotus-leaf. (62) / In the intermediate spaces between the summits one should place the great seers, along with their wives, reciting the Vedas, according to the sequence starting from east, southeast, and so on (63).

These stanzas describe a situation that is similar and complementary to that envisaged by the sources on *vidyādāna*: there, manuscripts are produced, decorated, and worshipped in the same way as icons of the gods; the texts that these manuscripts transmit, along with the manuscripts themselves, are empowered through ritual—they, like gods, partake both in the mundane and in the ultramundane level of existence, bestow material and immaterial benefits,

⁷⁸⁷ *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* 27.9.58–63: *agnikoṇe dharmasāstraṃ nyasec ca kamalāsanam | śvetaṃ ca bibhrataṃ dorbhyāṃ muktāmālāṃ tathātulām || 58 dīrghakeśanakhāṃ sām̐khyāṃ nair̐ṛte tulindalaṃ nyaset | japamālāṃ ca daṇḍaṃ ca karābhyāṃ bibhrataṃ sitam || 59 nyased vāyau tato yogaṃ svar̐ṇavar̐ṇaṃ kṛ̐ṣṇodaram | ūrunyastakaradvandvaṃ svanāsāgrakṛ̐ṭekṣaṇam || 60 pañcarātraṃ tatheśāne dhavalāṃ vanamālīnam | nyaset karābhyāṃ dadhatam akṣamālāṃ ca lāṅgalam || 61 eṣāṃ catur̐ṇāṃ vāsāṃśi śvetasūkṣmaghanāni ca | kartavyāni tathākṣiṇi padmapatrāyatāni ca || 62 agrāṇāṃ antarāleṣu mahar̐ṣiś ca sayoṣitaḥ | vinyaset paṭhato vedān pūrvāgneyādyanukramāt || 63.*

and are ultimately believed to contribute to save humanity from the beginning-less ocean of *saṃsāra*. Here, the cult of knowledge takes a new, though not unexpected shape, as the texts have finally become those divine icons. In a way, this brief passage from the *Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa* seems to reflect the culmination of a process of sacralization and ritualization of knowledge in the form of its material embodiments.

The overlapping between the notion of manuscripts and that of icons, between the domain of writing culture and that of visual culture, which has always characterized the use of manuscripts in rituals since its inception, is brought to full completion by the texts of the Purāṇic tradition, as the above mentioned cases show. However, this process reaches its peak with the bloom of the literature on the tantric rituals of installation, where the manuscripts are no longer objects to give, but to protect, install, and worship as tangible tokens of the gods' immanence.

