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The mantra in six syllables of the Śivadharma and its place in the early history of Śaivism

Florinda de Simini

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Śivadharmāmṛta
Essays on the Śivadharma and its Network

UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI L'ORIENTALE
DIPARTIMENTO ASIA, AFRICA E MEDITERRANEO

THE ŚIVADHARMA PROJECT

Studies on the History of Śaivism
II

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Florinda De Simini & Csaba Kiss (eds)



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The mantra in six syllables of the Śivadharma and its place in the early history of Śaivism

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1. *The śivamantra of the Śivadharmottara**

Thus, this Dharma of Śiva has been taught to you in the first chapter in a concise form, without gaps, in due sequence; and what follows is an elaboration. (39) / Praise to those people who have taken refuge in Śiva, whose thoughts are always addressed to Śiva, day and night. (40) / The life of someone who has the couplet of syllables 'Śiva,' along with 'namaskāra' and so on, on the tip of their tongue, will be full of auspicious results. (41) / Someone who always recites this mantra, or listens to it very attentively, will, freed from all sins, rejoice in the world of Śiva (42).¹

* I wish to express my gratitude to Dominic Goodall, Kengo Harimoto, Csaba Kiss, Francesco Sferra, Raffaele Torella and Judit Törzsök for all the improvements they have suggested at various stages of this work. Research for this article was part of my work for the ERC Project SHIVADHARMA (803624).

¹ *Śivadharmaśāstra* 1.39–42 (N₈₂^k fol. 2r, ll. 5–6; N₅₇^p fol. 2r, ll. 5–6): *ity eṣa vaḥ samāsenā śivadharmaḥ kbhilaḥ kramāt | nirdiṣṭaḥ prathame dhyāye ṣeṣo 'sau ca pravi starāḥ || 39 || namas tebhyo manuṣyebhyo ye śivam śaraṇamgatāḥ | yeṣāṃ divā ca nātrau ca nityam śivagatā smṛtiḥ || 40 || namaskārādisamyuktam śiva ity akṣaram dvayam | jībhāgre vartate yasya saphalam tasya jīvitam || 41 || imam yaḥ paṭhate nityam śṛṇuyād vāpi bhāvitaḥ | sa muktaḥ sarvāpāpāis tu śivaloke mahiyate || 42 ||*

A methodological note on my practice of quoting from *Śivadharmaśāstra*'s chapters one and seven: in the absence of a critical edition, I decided to rely on a collation of two of the Nepalese manuscripts that are proving reliable in the editorial work on this

These verses conclude the first chapter of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, in which Nandikeśvara has started his exposition of the *śivadharma* to Sanatkumāra and other *ṛṣi*s in response to their request for an ‘easy,’ less expensive means to worship Śiva as opposed to the Vedic sacrifice, characterised as costly and not advantageous.² Śaiva devotees are here enjoined to recite the mantra formed by the word ‘Śiva,’ along with the *namaskāra* ‘and so on’; in light of what follows, both in this text and in the *Śivadharmottara*, we can easily identify this addition (*°ādi*) with the *omkāra* and with the dative ending *-āya*, and thus recognise a reference to the popular mantra *om namaḥ śivāya*. The *Śivadharmaśāstra* imparts more teachings on this mantra, which it calls the ‘mantra in six syllables’ (*ṣaḍakṣaramantra*), in chapter seven, dealing with the topic of *śivapūjā* primarily in the form of a *liṅga* cult, as is typical of this work. The onset of the chapter, stating that the *liṅgapūjā* is superior to Vedic sacrifices, refers to the beginning of chapter one.³ In this context, the mantra *om namaḥ śivāya* is presented as a ritualistic tool that augments the results of rituals, and eases the path towards emancipation since it removes all sins.⁴

and other Śivadharma texts. These passages are also attested, with variant readings, in the Southern branch of the tradition of this work, so we can be reasonably sure of their being a stable part of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*. However, not having myself transcribed these chapters in their entirety, for *śloka* numbers I rely on the current printed edition by Naraharinath (1998), which is rather faithful to the text transmitted in this manuscript. This means that a note of caution is needed when using these *śloka* numbers, since the critical edition could still result in a different numbering.

² For a comparative study of the information found in the initial and concluding passages of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, the *Śivadharmottara* and the *Śivopaniṣad*, see De Simini 2016a, 46ff, and De Simini 2016b, 263–268.

³ *Śivadharmaśāstra* 7.3–4 (N₈₂^K fol. 20v, ll. 4–5; N₅₇^P fol. 20v, ll. 4–5): *agnihotrās ca vedās ca yajñās ca bahudakṣiṇāḥ | śivaliṅgārcanasyaite koṭyaṁśenāpi no samāḥ || <3> || sadā yajati [em.; yajanti N₈₂^K, yajayanti N₅₇^P ac, yajanti N₅₇^P pc] yajñena sadā dānam prayacchati | sadā sa [N₈₂^K; sam° N₅₇^P] jñānadakṣas ca yaḥ sadārcayate śivam || <4> ||*; ‘Fire-oblations, Vedic prescriptions and sacrifices are very expensive, [but] these are not even worth the ten-millionth part of the worship of the *liṅga* of Śiva (3). / Someone who always worships Śiva, he always performs sacrifices, always gives donations, is always well-versed in scriptural knowledge (4).’

⁴ *Śivadharmaśāstra* 7.39–41 (N₈₂^K fol. 21v, ll. 4–6; N₅₇^P fol. 21v, ll. 4–5): *śivam iṣṭvā naraḥ so ’pi prayāti paramām gatim || <39> || ayaṁ vinaiva mantreṇa puṇyārāśiḥ prakīrtitāḥ | syād itam mantrasamyuktam puṇyam śataguṇādbhikam || <40> || tasmāt mantreṇa śarvāya snānam gandhājālādīkam [conj.; snānam gandhājālādbhikam N₅₇^P; snāgandhārcanādīkam N₈₂^K ac, with -na- added pc in margin] | kṣitīm gām āsvaratnaṁ ca vāstram hemaṁ [N₈₂^K; hema N₅₇^P] nivedayet || <41> || jñeyo namaḥ śivāyeti mantraḥ sarvārthasādhakāḥ | sarvamantṛādbhikāś [N₅₇^P; °ādbhikam N₈₂^K] cāyam omkāradyaḥ*

The *Śivadharmottara* gives an even higher relevance to the mantra in six syllables, as it deals with it rather extensively at the beginning of the work, and later highlights its role in the context of the main rituals and doctrines enjoined by the text. Chapter one dedicates stanzas 1.23–46 and 1.63–75 to describing the nature and functions of the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra*, interrupting its treatment only to introduce deliberations on the *śivaguru* and his commitment to converting the king to the Śivadharma (1.47–62); this passage turns out to give a rather transparent insight into the Śaiva strategy of converting the state’s elites in order to secure patronage (see De Simini 2016a, 68ff). The topics of the mantra and that of the authority of the teacher are not disconnected, since the *Śivadharmottara* presents the six-syllabled mantra as the direct command of Śiva (*vākyaṃ [...] śivātmakam*, 1.23d) and the source of the Śaiva scriptures. Only upon deriving his authority from a faithful reliance on Śiva’s command can a teacher claim that his teachings are worthy of

ṣaḍakṣaraḥ [N₅₇₅^p; °ādyam ṣaḍakṣaram N₅₈^k] || <42> ||; ‘Having worshipped Śiva, even a human being attains the supreme seat (39). / This person is known as extremely meritorious even if he did not use the mantra; such merits, when [the worship is performed] with the mantra, shall be a hundred times higher. (40) / Therefore, one should use the mantra when offering a bath with perfumed water and so on, land, a cow, a horse-jewel, garments, [and] gold to Śarva. (41) / The mantra *namaḥ śivāya* is known as accomplishing all goals, and this mantra, in six syllables with *om* at the beginning, is superior to all mantras (42).’

The two manuscripts I have consulted for the collation read *jñeyo* in *pāda* 42a, and thus the mantra that follows is simply *namaḥ śivāya*. Others, such as N₅₇^{ko} (fol. 24r12), read *jñeyom*, and, as a consequence, give at *pādas* 42ab the mantra *om namaḥ śivāya*. The two Cambridge manuscripts are divided on this point, with N₅₄^c (fol. 21v13) reading *jñeyo*, and N₅₅^c (fol. 20r13) *jñeyom*. However, the latter has been heavily corrected exactly in the folios transmitting this chapter, and, at a closer look, the *anusvāra* above the *akṣara -yo* turns out to be a later emendation. A plausible explanation is thus that *jñeyo* was the correct reading, but then some copyists or later scholars felt it was incoherent with the following reference to the six-syllabled mantra and corrected it on purpose. Such a small change could have even just happened automatically.

As it will become clearer in the following pages, the versions in five or six syllables are seen as two clearly distinct mantras, and the *Śivadharmottara* specifies that they have two separate domains. The *Śivadharmaśāstra* devotes some of the coming stanzas to the mantra *om* (*Śivadharmaśāstra* 7.43–49; see also *infra*), and finally enjoins the devotees to ‘always think of the mantra starting with *om*, because muttering *om namaḥ śivāya* one is freed from all sins’ (*Śivadharmaśāstra* 7.53, N₅₂^k fol. 22v, l. 2, N₅₇^p fol. 21r, ll. 2–3: *kṛtvauṃ namaḥ śivāyeti mucyate sarvapātakaibḥ | yasmāt tasmāt sadā mantram omkāṇḍyam anusmaret*). At the same time, just like the *Śivadharmottara*, the *Śivadharmaśāstra* acknowledges the use of the five-syllabled version, by conferring powers to the *namaskāra* itself.

the trust (*śraddhā*) of an audience of Śaiva devotees, including the political elites. The *Śivadharmottara* thus weaves the powers of the *śaḍakṣaramantra* together with the epistemological discourse on the source of the validity of the Śaiva scriptures, linking both to the human authority of the main actors on the public religious scene, namely the teacher and the king. No mention is made in this chapter of a ritual use of the mantra. Only towards the end (1.76–97) do we find some stanzas that are dedicated to a form of *līṅga*-worship performed ‘with six tools’ (*śaḍaṅgavidhi*), corresponding to six products of the cow, in which however the mantra plays no function. These stanzas actually seem rather unrelated to the preceding contents except for two points: the performer of this *līṅga*-worship ceremony, arguably more expensive for the use of orpiment in addition to the five traditional cow-products, might be the king; and the six *aṅgas* of this ritual recall the six syllables of the mantra in number, and both are presented as an original five-fold division (the *pañcagavya* and the *pañcākṣaramantra*) to which a sixth element (the orpiment and the *praṇava*) is added to make it more powerful.

Chapter two further develops the topic of the mantric nature of the *śivajñāna* by stressing the salvific and protective powers of its textual and material embodiments, with one specific text—the *Śāntyadhhyāya* of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*—being expressly evoked for its mantric function during the ritual of *vidyādāna* (De Simini 2016a, 118ff, and Bisschop 2018b). The *vidyādāna* was also the context of the first reference to the ritual use of the *śivamantra*, which I take here to correspond to the *śaḍakṣaramantra*, when the text enjoins the king to mutter such mantra during his participation in the public procession taking the manuscript of the Śaiva scriptures to the temple (*Śivadharmottara* 2.55; De Simini 2016a, 114). Here, again, the mantra is given a relevance in the public arena as a token of the king’s adherence to the Śaiva religion. Another reference to using the *śivamantra* for rituals is found in the prescriptions of the ritual ablutions of chapter eleven (*Śivadharmottara* 11.17). Parallel to these ritual usages, the mantra plays an important function also in meditation and yoga. Chapter three, for instance, lists the repetition (*japa*) of the *śivamantra* as one of the five *mahāyajñas*, the main ritual and spiritual practices of a Śaiva devotee.⁵ Such *japa* precedes the continuous meditation on Śiva, one of the

⁵ The five *mahāyajñas* are listed in *Śivadharmottara* 1.10: *karmayajñas tapoyajñāḥ svādhyāyo dhyānam eva ca | jñānayajñāś ca pañcaite mahāyajñāḥ prakīrtitāḥ || 10 ||*. See *Śivadharmottara* 3.13 for a definition of *svādhyāya* as the *japa*, i.e., the muttering, of the *śivamantra*: *svādhyāyaś ca japāḥ proktaḥ śivamantrasya sa tridhā | dhyānayajñāḥ samākhyātaḥ śivacintā mubur mubuh || 13 ||*. While in the verses quoted above the third *yajña* is called *svādhyāya*, later on (see for instance *Śivadharmottara* 3.59) the text

steps that will eventually lead the *yogin* to emancipation: in chapter ten, on the topic of *jñānayoga*, the practice of mantra-repetition is in fact one of the six yoga-ancillaries, immediately preceding *dhyāna* (*Śivadharmottara* 10.165–174). The topic of the *śaḍakṣaramantra* in the *Śivadharmottara* is thus tightly interrelated both with issues of authority, scriptural and political, and with the more doctrinal sphere of the religious and meditative practice culminating in the *jñānayoga*—that is to say that it permeates two of the major topics of the *Śivadharmottara*, roughly corresponding to the ‘mundane’ and the ‘ultramundane’ aspects of the (Śaiva) religion. All these topics were mentioned and briefly dealt with in the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, but their treatment is amplified in the *Śivadharmottara*, which thus fulfils its function of ‘going beyond’ its forerunner.

The next pages will be devoted to a study of the extensive presentation of the six-syllabled mantra found in chapter one of the *Śivadharmottara*, which I will place in the context of early Śaiva sources whenever the interpretation requires it. This is meant in the first place as a contribution towards the understanding of a teaching that was of prime importance for those who composed and read the *Śivadharmottara*, but also as an attempt to advance our knowledge of the doctrinal world in which such people must have acted. One key omission of this study concerns the important history of the reception of the *Śivadharmottara*’s teachings on the six-syllabled mantra in later Śaiva manuals and Purāṇas. Given the extent and implications of such history, this will form the subject of a separate study (De Simini forth.a). This impact on other texts adds to the reasons why understanding the teachings on the *śaḍakṣaramantra* in the *Śivadharmottara* can contribute a missing link in the history of the formation of Śaiva practices and doctrines.

2. Śiva in the mantra

The *Śivadharmottara* first introduces the six-syllabled mantra *om namaḥ śivāya* in typically eulogistic terms by defining it as a ‘means to accomplish everything’ (1.25), ‘the true seed of all mantras, like the seed of the *Ficus Religiosa*’ (1.26),⁶ and then moves on to a more analytical definition in stanzas 1.27–29. Here the text locates Śiva in the *praṇava*, and then connects

refers to it as *japayaājñā*. On the topic of the *Śivadharmottara*’s appropriation of the five *mahāyājñas* from the Brahmanical tradition, see De Simini forth.b.

⁶ *Śivadharmottara* 1.25–26: *mantram sukhamukhoccāryam aśeṣārthaprasādhakam | prābaṃ namaḥ śivāyeti sarvajñāḥ sarvadehinām || 25 || sadbijam sarvavidyānām mantram ādyam śaḍakṣaram | atisūksmaṃ mahārtham ca jñeyam tad vaṭabijavat || 26 ||*.

the five syllables of the *pañcākṣaramantra*—corresponding to the words *namaḥ śivāya*, without *om*—to the five *brahmamantras*:

Having transcended the *guṇas* of the three gods, the omniscient, omnipotent lord, Śiva, who pervades everything, is established in the mantra of one syllable, that is *om* (27). / The [five] subtle *brahmamantras* starting with *īśāna*, corresponding each to one syllable, are in sequence established in the mantra *namaḥ śivāya*. (28) / Śiva, whose body is made of the five *brahmamantras*, himself resides in the subtle mantra of six syllables according to a signified-signifier relationship (*vācyavācakabhāva*), in agreement with his own nature. (29)

devatrayaguṇātītaḥ sarvajñāḥ sarvakṛt prabhuḥ | om ity ekākṣare mantrē sbitaḥ sarvagataś śivaḥ || 27 || *īśānādyāni sūkṣmāṇi brahmāṇy ekākṣarāṇi tu | mantrē namaḥ śivāyeti saṁsbitāni yathākramam || 28 ||* *mantrē ṣaḍākṣare sūkṣme pañcamantratanuḥ śivaḥ | vācyavācakabhāvena sbitaḥ sākṣāt svabhāvataḥ || 29 ||*

The *ṣaḍākṣaramantra* does not simply result from the combination of two mantras, the *praṇava* and the *pañcākṣara*, but each of its six syllables corresponds to a different mantra. The first element of this ensemble is the *praṇava*, in which Śiva is located as *devatrayaguṇātītaḥ* (1.27). Such expression recalls stanzas 7.43–49 of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, devoted exactly to the analysis of *om* as *ekākṣaramantra*. Here the three morae (*mātrās*) into which *om* is divided (a-u-m) are connected to a series of triads, following a model attested since early Upaniṣadic speculation, as shown for instance by the *Praśnopaniṣad* (chapter five) or the brief *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad*, and mentioned in early Dharmaśāstra (see *Manusmṛti* 2.74ff). Among the triads identified by the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, the most important one is exactly a *devatraya* composed of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra, corresponding to the three actions of creation, obfuscation and salvation of the universe, the three worlds and the three *guṇas*,⁷ to which we can also read a reference in the expression *devatrayaguṇātītaḥ*. In the context of *Śivadharmaśāstra* chapter seven, Śiva is conceived as the supreme cause (*paramakāraṇa*,

⁷ *Śivadharmaśāstra* 7.44cd–49 (N₈₂^K, fols 21r, 1.6–22v, 1.2; N₅₇^P, fols 21v, 1.6–21r, 1.1): *rudro brahmā hariś caiva mātrās tisraḥ prakīrtitaḥ || <44> || dakṣiṇe 'ṅge bhaved brahmā harir vāmāṅgasambhavaḥ | hrdayān nīrgato rudro brahmaviṣṇuprabodbakāḥ || <45> || jagatsṛṣṭīkaro brahmā viṣṇur lokavimobakāḥ | anugrahakaro nityam līno rudraḥ śivātmakāḥ || <46> || tribhir etair jagad vyāptaṁ kāraṇair ātmakarmabhiḥ | tisro mātrāḥ śivasyaitāḥ sarvalokaprapūjītāḥ || <47> || etā eva trayo lokās trayo devās trayo <'>gnayaḥ | trayo guṇās trivargas ca yac cānyad jagati sbitaṁ || <48> || ardhāmātrāt paro rudraḥ śivaḥ paramakāraṇaḥ | tasmād etat samutpannam jagataḥ kāraṇatrayam || <49> ||.*

Śivadharmaśāstra 7.49), surpassing everything in the form of the half-mora (*ardhamātrā*), the final nasalisation at the end of the mantra. The Śivadharmottara's description of Śiva as 'surpassing' or 'transcending' the *guṇas* of the three gods in the mantra *om*, meant to convey the superiority of this form of Śiva over the three gods who are worshipped in the constituents of the *praṇava*, is thus a direct reference to the Śivadharmaśāstra. However, the Śivadharmottara also suggests a different interpretation. Mentions of the mantra *om* occur again in chapter ten of the Śivadharmottara, on the topic of *jñānayoga* (see Śivadharmottara 10.85–94). Here the meditator is enjoined to visualise Śiva in the *om* placed in the middle of the pericarp of the lotus-throne that one is supposed to mentally build in one's heart as a support to meditation (Goodall 2011, 233–238, referring to Śivadharmottara 10.72–88). Following this, the Śivadharmottara mentions again a triad of gods corresponding to the three components of the *omkāra*, but this time the text presents two possible interpretations: that the three morae of *om* correspond to Skanda, the Goddess, and Maheśvara (*mātrās tisraḥ samākhyātāḥ skandagaurīmabeśvarāḥ*, 10.89ab; the printed edition and part of the manuscript tradition read °*devī*° instead of °*gaurī*°), or that they correspond to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara (*athavānyaparakāreṇa brahmaviṣṇumabeśvarāḥ*, 10.91ab), which is the same triad mentioned in the Śivadharmaśāstra, with the sole difference of Rudra being replaced by Maheśvara. That the Śivadharmottara might have seen the first option as preferable is hinted at by the connection between the first triad of gods and the *mātrās* of *om* that the text creates by associating each of them to the initial phoneme of the gods' names:⁸ 'From the phoneme "a" Skanda is perceived, because he is Agni's offspring;⁹ from the phoneme "u" the goddess Umā, and from the phoneme "m" Maheśvara.' The three morae thus enable

⁸ Śivadharmottara 10.90: *akārād agnigarbhatvāt kumārāḥ parigrhyate | ukārād apy umādevī makārāc ca mabeśvarāḥ || 90 ||*. The text quoted from chapter ten, here and elsewhere, is extracted from Goodall's forthcoming critical edition, which he kindly accepted to share with me.

⁹ The text refers here to the role of Agni in the birth of Skanda. Early sources associate Skanda with Agni, who is described as his father in the *Mahābhārata*'s *Āraṇyaka-parvan* (book three, chapters 213–214 of the critical edition; here the mother is said to be Svāhā, the daughter of Dakṣa). A kind of fatherly function is also reflected by some of the accounts that make Skanda the son of Rudra or Śiva, already found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s *Bālakāṇḍa* (chapters 35–36) and in the *Śalyaparvan* (book nine) of the *Mahābhārata* (chapters 45–46 in the critical edition); in these, Agni is variously assigned the function of entering Rudra/Śiva's semen or taking it and placing it into the Gaṅgā, which will then become the birthplace of Skanda. An overview of the accounts on the birth of Skanda in Sanskrit literature can be found in Clothey 1978, 49ff.

meditation on this triad of gods, with Śiva being evoked by the *ardhamātrā* (*Śivadharmottara* 10.91d).

In an article in this volume (see chapter four), Yokochi points out that both the triad mentioned in *Śivadharmasāstra* 7.44cd–49, and that hinted at by *Śivadharmottara* 1, possibly corresponding to that of 10.89, are mentioned in chapters five and twelve of the *Śivadharmottara* as five extra supra-mundane worlds added to the usual set of seven that forms the Brahmāṇḍa. As she remarks, ‘the addition of further upper five worlds or domains (of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Skanda, Umā and Śiva) or three (of Skanda, Umā and Śiva) above the Brahmāṇḍa, seems to be an entirely new invention in this work’ (p. 77). In this light, the idea of Śiva as ‘transcending’ the other gods also acquires a cosmological meaning, since it expresses the superiority of the Śivasthāna over the worlds presided over by the other deities, and which are ultimately also associated with the *mātrās* forming *om*.¹⁰

The second main component of the mantra in six syllables is the *pañcākṣara-mantra*, whose five syllables are associated, in stanzas 1.28–29, to the five *brahmamantras*, which are additionally described as the components of Śiva’s body. These are five mantras whose use is especially important for the Pāśupata tradition, and which are given at the end of each of the five chapters of the *Pāśupatasūtra*;¹¹ they correspond to different aspects of Śiva, but with time they came to be associated with the five faces of Sadāśiva. The *Śivadharmottara* expressly prescribes the chanting of the *brahmamantras* on the occasion of an installation ceremony (see the *pavitras* mentioned at 2.153), or of the performance of *prāyaścitta* (*pañcabrahma* in 11.78), thus attributing to these mantras the purificatory function by which they are also known in later Śaiva texts.¹² They are still in use in the Mantramārga, but they become less central than they were for the Pāśupatas, partly in favour of other, Tantric mantras.¹³

¹⁰ Note, however, that this is not an exact correspondence, since in the case of *om* we have a triad of *mātrās* being surpassed by a superior form of Śiva, which is therefore a fourth component, whereas in the case of the three corresponding ultramundane worlds we lack a fourth element.

¹¹ On discrepancies between these mantras in the Sūtrapāṭha and in Kauṇḍinya’s commentary *Pañcārthabhāṣya*, see Bisschop 2006b.

¹² See for instance the frequency with which the *brahmamantras*, above all the *aghoramantra*, are prescribed for expiation ceremonies in the *Prāyaścittasamuccaya*, a twelfth-century digest by Trilocanaśiva. The five *brahmamantras* are described as the five *pavitrāṇi* in the *Ratnaṭīkā*, one of the few extant works of the Pāśupata Pāñcārthika tradition (Oberhammer 1991, 209).

¹³ For more considerations of the *brahmamantras* in the Mantramārga, see Goodall 2013, TAK s.v. *pañca brahmāṇi*.

In an article in this volume (see chapter three), Goodall observes that at this point the *Śivadharmottara* alludes to the five syllables of the *pañcākṣaramantra* as the seed-syllable forms of the *brahmamantras* (see p. 63). While the earliest reference to the *brahmamantras* being used as seed-syllables can be found in the *Mūlasūtra* of the *Niśvāsa*, Goodall points out that this is not an indication that the *Śivadharmottara* should predate that occurrence, but rather of the *Śivadharmottara*'s knowledge of distinctively Mantramārgic doctrines. As we will see, more aspects of the mantra teachings of the *Śivadharmottara* seem to point towards contacts or at least a shared body of knowledge with Mantramārga Śaivism, while the text still remains anchored in the non-Tantric traditions. The homologisation of the mantra *namaḥ śivāya* with the five *brahmamantras* attested in *Śivadharmottara* 1.28 is a rather isolated case in the context of early Śaiva literature,¹⁴ also due to the association between this form of the five-syllabled mantra and non-Tantric circles. The growing popularity of the *pañcākṣaramantra* in Southern post-twelfth century Śaiva environments will lead to a parallel rise in the number of attestations connecting these two sets of five. Such occurrences, albeit not derived directly from the *Śivadharmottara*, are still part of a broader history of how its spread and reception—especially through the rewriting of the *Vāyavīyasamhitā*—might have played a role in the process of adoption of the *pañcākṣaramantra* among Vīraśaivas and later Śaivasiddhāntins.¹⁵

¹⁴ One possible exception, albeit not very early, is the *Dhyānaratnāvalī*, composed by Trilocanaśiva in the twelfth century: in two consecutive *pādas* (p. 99, stanza 68cd), the *Dhyānaratnāvalī* refers to Śiva both as 'reciting the five-syllabled [mantra]' (*pañcākṣarajapam*) and as 'having a great body [made] of the five [*brahmā*]mantras' (*pañcamantramahātānum*). This description resonates with stanza 1.28 of the *Śivadharmottara*. However, there is a substantial difference as to the type of five-syllabled mantra that these texts support, since the mantras in the *Dhyānaratnāvalī* are distinctively Tantric. Note that the expression *pañcamantramahātānu* can be traced in early Tantra such as the *Svacchandatantra* (10.1206), which also attests the use of *pañcamantrātman* (8.29), along with other similar compounds describing Śiva as having the five mantras as his body (see *infra* fn 18).

¹⁵ Note that it is in the light of the popularity of the *pañcākṣaramantra* in Southern Śaiva environments that we have to read the testimony of the *Matsyendrasamhitā*, a work that originated most likely in the Tāmīl South around the thirteenth century (Kiss 2021, 51ff). This is the sole attestation that I was able to locate in a Sanskrit text that details the method of dividing the syllables of *namaḥ śivāya* according to the *brahmamantras* by also giving the resulting mantras (Kiss 2021, 145). Here Kiss, whom I thank for pointing out this reference to me, notes that in the *Matsyendrasamhitā* the *pañcākṣara*, unlike other mantras, was not secret, and was used for daily purification rites; its main function was to confirm the belonging to the Śaiva tradition as opposed to the Vaiṣṇava

The use of the expression *pañcamantratanu* in 1.29, for which the manuscript tradition of the *Śivadharmottara* also attests the variant *pañcabrahmatanu*,¹⁶ recalls those attested in Tantric literature to describe Sadāśiva, whose subtle body is in fact thought to be made of the five *brahmamantras*: in such classification, each one of the *brahmamantras* is matched with a different body part of Sadāśiva, while also being connected to other pentads, such as Sadāśiva's faces (*pañca vaktrāṇi*), named after the *brahmamantras*, from which as many currents of scriptures or religious observance emerge (*pañca srotāṃsi*), or Śiva's five actions (*pañcakṛtya*).¹⁷ Under the influence

or Buddhist. The analysis of the *pañcākṣaramantra* is one of the points in which Kiss sees a possible influence from the Tamil Siddha and the Viraśaiva traditions—citing as examples texts such as the *Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi* by Śivayogin (fifteenth to sixteenth century) and the *Kriyāsāra* by Nilakaṇṭha (seventeenth century), without maintaining that the influence came exactly from these texts (Kiss 2021, 81ff), which would be impossible for chronological reasons.

The sequences of mantras derived from the *pañcākṣara* as attested in the *Matsyendrasambhitā* are two. In stanzas 2.38–40: *naṃ* corresponding to *iśānāyākāśātmane namaḥ*; *maṃ* corresponding to *tatpuruṣāyānūlātmane namaḥ*; *śiṃ* corresponding to *sadyojātāyānalātmane namaḥ*; *vāṃ* corresponding to *aghorāya jalātmane namaḥ*; *yaṃ* corresponding to *vāmadevāya pṛthivyātmane namaḥ*. In stanzas 2.40–41: *naṃ* corresponding to *iśānāyordhuvavaktrāya namaḥ*; *maṃ* corresponding to *tatpuruṣāya pūrvavaktrāya namaḥ*; *śiṃ* corresponding to *sadyojātāya dakṣiṇavaktrāya namaḥ*; *vāṃ* corresponding to *aghorāya paścimavaktrāya namaḥ*; *yaṃ* corresponding to *vāmadevāya vāmavaktrāya namaḥ*. These tables of correspondences can be found in Kiss 2021, 145; see ib., 190–191 for the text, and 391–392 for the translation.

¹⁶ The two readings are equally well supported in the manuscripts consulted for the edition: *pañcamantra*^o is attested in Nepalese manuscripts dated ninth to eleventh century such as N_{A12}^K, N₂₈^K, N₇₇^{Ko}, as well as in a twelfth-century one, N₁₅^O; the reading *pañcabrahma*^o finds support in the eleventh-century Cambridge manuscript N₅^C, as well as in the eleventh-century N₈₂^K and in the two Grantha manuscripts, while also being accepted in both Nepalese printed editions (Naraharinath 1998 and Śarmā and Jīanavālī 2018).

¹⁷ Among the pre-twelfth century Siddhāntatantras that describe Sadāśiva as *pañcamantratanu*, *pañcamantramayī*, or other similar expressions, see for instance *Mṛgendra*, VP 3.8 (*tadvapuḥ pañcabhir mantraiḥ pañcakṛtyopayogibhiḥ | iśatatpuruṣāghoravāmājair mastakādīkam || 8 ||*), also referring to the association between these five mantras (Īśa/Īśāna, Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Vāma/Vāmadeva, Aja/Sadyojāta) and the five actions of Śiva (*pañcakṛtya*), as well as five parts of his body; *Mataṅgapārameśvara*, VP 4.13–15ab (*yair vṛtaḥ parame vyomni nājate mantranāyakaḥ || 13 || tanus tasyopacāreṇa pañcamantramayī śivā | iśānamūrdhā pūmvaktro hy aghorahrdayaḥ prabhuḥ || 14 || ucyate vāmaguhyoktyā sadyomūrtiś ca śāsane*), singling out the different parts of the body associated to each mantra (respectively: the forehead, *mūrdhan*, the face, *vaktra*, the heart, *hrdaya*, the genitals, *guhya*, and the legs, *mūrti*). The notion of Sadāśiva's body made of the five *brahmamantras* is also attested in some non-Śaivasi-

of these later teachings, the rewriting of verse 1.27 of the *Śivadharmottara* in chapter thirty of the thirteenth-century *Haracaritacintāmaṇi* introduces the word *vaktrāṇi* at this point.¹⁸ We see that, starting with early Tantras, the *brahmamantras* are also worshipped as separate deities forming the inner circle (*garbhāvaraṇa*) of the main god, as for instance in the *Mataṅga*, which gives prescriptions both for their visualisation (KP 3.83-91) and sculptural representation (KP 14.1-6).¹⁹ Nothing like this seems to emerge from the *Śivadharmottara*: the text does not mention Sadāśiva, nor any association between the *brahmamantras* and specific body parts, faces, or independent deities and, as such, seems to reflect an early stage in the development of this doctrine. Goodall et al. (2015, 37) remark that the earliest layers of Śaiva Tantric literature, which are the Sūtras of the *Niśvāsataṭṭvasaṃhitā*, do not link the *brahmamantras* with the faces or body of a deity. It is first in the *Guhyasūtra* (chapter twelve), whose composition the authors date to the seventh century ca., later than the other three Sūtras, that the five *brahmamantras* are said to be the source of five currents of scriptures culminating with the Mantramārga, and that Śiva is called *pañcatanu* (Goodall et al. 2015, 38). Even though the *Guhyasūtra* does not speak expressly of ‘faces,’ it seems clear from the context that the sources of the currents are either faces or fully anthropomorphic forms of Śiva; at the same time, the use of *pañcatanu* might be an equivalent of *pañcamantratanu*. Alternatively, as Goodall points out, the expression *pañcatanu* could also

d dhānta Tantric texts, such as Abhinavagupta’s *Tantrāloka*, 15.203cd–204ab: *kramāt sadāśivād bhīṣaḥ pañcamantratanur yataḥ || 203 || īśanraḥhoravāmākhyasadyo ḍhobbedato diśaḥ |*. Here Abhinavagupta links the *brahmamantras* to the five faces of Sadāśiva, each associated with a different region of space (a more detailed discussion is in the verses that follow in *Tantrāloka* 15), but also adds a sixth one: this addition, featuring also in the *Śrikanṭhīyasamhitā*, has to be seen, in light of the *pañcasrotas* teaching, as a strategy to add a sixth stream of scriptures, teaching non-dual knowledge, which is superior to other faces (Hanneder 1998, 20). For more occurrences of the compound *pañcamantratanu* in Tantric literature, see also TAK s.v.

Rocher 1991, 192, reports two occurrences of *pañcamantratanu* in the *Śivapurāṇa*: once in the *Kailāśasaṃhitā* (6.12.15), as an attribute of Sadāśiva, and once in the *Vāyavīyasamhitā* (7.2.12.9). The latter reference occurs in a chapter that is part of a larger borrowing from the *Śivadharmottara*, and therefore the occurrence of *pañcamantratanu* here can be traced back exactly to *Śivadharmottara* 1.29.

¹⁸ *Haracaritacintāmaṇi* 30.16: *om ity ekākṣare mantre sthītas sarvagataḥ śivaḥ | īśādyā api sūksmāṇi vaktrāṇy ekākṣarāṇi tu ||*. This verse is extracted from the critical edition in preparation by Judit Törzösk.

¹⁹ This and other references to the visualisation of the *brahmantra* deities can be found in Goodall et al. 2005, 153–158.

refer to the god as ‘having five bodies’ (2015, 38). A further step can be observed in the *Niśvāsamukha*, the self-claimed introductory book of the *Niśvāsātattvasamhitā* that was composed after (some of) the latter’s Sūtras, and thus might in fact have been redacted during the seventh century, just like the *Guhyasūtra* (Kafle 2020, 32; Goodall et al. 2015, 35). This text revolves around the teaching of the five currents (*srotas*, with a special relevance given to the *laukika*; see *infra*), which are different from those of the *Guhyasūtra*, but are emitted from the same five faces bearing the names of the five *brahmamantras* (Kafle 2020, 39ff).

The *Śivadbharmottara*’s mention of Śiva as *pañcamantratanu*, in the absence of any references to such mantras as part of Sadāśiva’s iconography, might align our text with developments immediately prior to the circa seventh-century layers of the *Niśvāsa* corpus.²⁰ At the same time, one could argue that the absence of the doctrines of the *pañca vaktrāṇi* or *pañca srotāṃsi* does not necessarily suggest that the *Śivadbharmottara* predates these layers of the *Niśvāsa*, but that it simply was not Śaivasiddhāntic, and thus did not reflect any innovations concerning the doctrines and iconography of this school, while still sharing general notions and terminology. As Bakker has observed with reference to early *liṅga* representations (2019 [2002], 492), the development of a five-faced image from a more archaic four-headed model might have come to pass under the influence of the adoption of the five *brahmamantras* into Śaiva cultic practice.²¹ The *Śivadbharmottara* neither mentions nor describes icons of Sadāśiva. Besides the description of Lakuliśvara in chapter two (De Simini 2016a, 170), the text gives a further description of Śiva in 10.107–111 (Goodall 2011, 236–237), in which he is described as four-faced and four-armed. It has been noted that the attributes he holds in his hands—the pomegranate and the rosary—came to be asso-

²⁰ When considering possible doctrinal connections between the *Śivadbharmottara*, the *Niśvāsamukha* and the *Guhyasūtra*, one cannot avoid mentioning that the *Śivadbharmasamgraha*, a later text that was included in multiple-text manuscripts along with the other Śivadharma works, has literal borrowings from the *Niśvāsamukha* (significantly, from the materials on the descriptions of the *laukika* and *vaidika* currents) in chapters five to nine, while its chapters ten and eleven are parallel to the *Guhyasūtra* (Kafle 2020, 101ff). Given that the direction of the borrowings went from the *Niśvāsa* to the *Śivadbharmasamgraha*, the composition of the latter can be assigned to a period following the seventh and preceding the eleventh century, when the text is attested in the first manuscripts, which also confirms the inner chronology of the Nepalese corpus that sees the *Śivadharmaśāstra* and the *Śivadbharmottara* as earlier works than the rest.

²¹ For a study of the progress from four-headed to five-headed representations in early Tantras, and the dynamics persisting in the worship of deities with four or five heads, see Törzsök 2013.

ciated to the iconography of Tatpuruṣa (Goodall 2011, 236), even though his association with the brilliancy of crystal (*śuddhasphaṭikasamkāsam*, 10.108a) and the tiger-skin (*dvīpicarmaṣṭībhānam*, 10.110a) are reminiscent of representations of Īśāna.²² Note that the visualisation of *brahmamantra* deities with four arms and four faces is prescribed in the already mentioned passage from *Mataṅga*, KP 3.83-91. Also, the *Śivadharmaśāstra* describes Śiva as four-headed, according to the more archaic, non-Śaivāsiddhāntic fashion (see *Śivadharmaśāstra* 6.4–5, in Bisschop 2018b, 66).

The correspondence between each syllable of the *namaḥ śivāya* part of the mantra and the five *brahmamantras*, and between the latter and Śiva's body, strengthens the idea that Śiva's essence is truly present in all of its components, just like he was said to be fully present in the *praṇava*. This makes the mantra *om namaḥ śivāya* the phonic embodiment of the real nature of Śiva. As remarked by Padoux (2011, 7), Tantric traditions have often stressed the identity in nature and form between god and the mantra by equaling such connection to the one that exists between the language and its object, a relationship that is expressed in terms of *vācya* ('expressible object') and *vācaka* ('means of expression').²³ The same notion and terminology is adopted in *Śivadharmottara* 1.29–30. In stanza 1.30, the *Śivadharmottara* specifies the terms of this relationship by stating that 'Śiva is [only] expressible, because he cannot be directly known; the mantra is considered his means of expression. Between those two, such a relationship of expressible object and means of expression is established without beginning.'²⁴ This teaching, which in *Śivadharmottara* 1.35 is described as being analogous to a relationship between *abbidbhāna* ('designator,' 'signifier') and *abbidbeya* ('object to be designated/signified'),²⁵ can have ritual implications in the use of mantras (see, for example, the use of *brahmamantras* during the *āvahana* to evoke the real presence of the god in the ritual). However, it also acquires epistemological value, as the *Śivadharmottara* roots it in the common belief that Śiva cannot be known through any valid means of correct knowledge (*aprameya*) but can only be expressed

²² One could see, in this regard, *Pañcāvaraṇastava* 47 and 82, by Aghoraśiva. The association with a crystal-like splendour is rather ubiquitous in the early Tantras describing the icon of Īśāna.

²³ For considerations on the *vācya-vācaka-bhāva* existing without beginning between Śiva and his mantras, connected to epistemological disquisitions, one can for instance see chapter six of the *Parākhyā*, on which more later.

²⁴ *Śivadharmottara* 1.30: *vācyaḥ śivo 'prameyatvān mantras tadvācakaḥ smṛtaḥ | vācya-vācaka-bhāvo 'yam anādīḥ samsthitas tayoh || 30 ||*.

²⁵ *Śivadharmottara* 1.35: *asyābbidbhānamantro 'yam abbidbeyaś ca sa smṛtaḥ | abbidbhānābbidbeyatvān mantrasiddhaḥ paraḥ śivaḥ || 35 ||*.

by his *vācaka*. The six-syllabled mantra is, therefore, an exact expression of his nature. As stanza 1.35cd states, ‘because of the relationship between signifier and object to be signified [that exists between the mantra and Śiva], the supreme Śiva is attained through the mantra’ (*abbidhānābbidheyatvān mantrasiddhaḥ paraḥ śivaḥ*). Śiva is thus not directly knowable, but expressible (*vācya*, *abbidheya*); as other parts of this chapter will explain, Śiva is also the omniscient and perfect author of this *vācya-vācaka/abbidhāna-abbidheya* relationship. As a consequence, his *vācaka*—a notion not just encompassing the mantra, but everything that forms part of his direct teaching (*vākya*)—can be considered a source of correct knowledge (*pramāṇa*; on this point, see *Śivadharmottara* 1.23, 1.27, 1.42–46, and *infra*).

The text does not present supporting arguments or contradicting views on such topics. However, in the more doctrinally loaded early Śaiva scriptures it is possible to follow in more detail those debates of which only echoes emerge in the *Śivadharmottara*. One such example is chapter six of the *Parākhyā*, an early Siddhāntic scripture,²⁶ which devotes this chapter to the nature of language and the mantras. In dealing with this topic, the *Parākhyā*’s *siddhāntin* openly criticises the *mīmāṃsaka* viewpoint²⁷ and expounds at length the thesis that the relationship between word and meaning is based on a convention (*saṅketa*) established by Śiva (6.17ff). This applies to language, as well as to mantras. In the conclusion of the section on the *saṅketa*, the text states that the connection between *vācya* and *vācaka* was thus created by Śiva so that mantras could produce their fruits; ‘And [so], since the fruit has Him as its agent, Śiva resides in the mantra (*mantrasthitah*)’ (*Parākhyā*, 6.58; Goodall 2004, 339). The idea of Śiva residing (*sthitah*) in the mantra, and of doing so in force of the *vācya**vācakabhāva*, is expressed quite literally in *Śivadharmottara* 1.29, though in the absence of all the philosophical underpinnings that this notion receives in chapter six of the *Parākhyā*. At this point the latter has to deal with an objection that tries to undermine the idea that the deity is the *vācya*, and that the fruits of the mantra derive from it rather than from the rituals for which it is used (6.59), followed by more objections concerning the alleged corporeal nature of the deity, and how this could be an obstacle to the god actually being present during rituals (6.65–66). The conclusion of the *Parākhyā*, which will be expounded in the replies to such objections, is that it is the god, resid-

²⁶ For a study, edition and translation of the surviving chapters of the *Parākhyā*, see Goodall 2004.

²⁷ Criticism against the Mīmāṃsā theories of knowledge and language are prominent in chapters three and six of the *Parākhyā*, but the school is taken as a main opponent in all the philosophical debates of the *Parākhyā*, as observed by Goodall 2004, xlix ff.

ing in the mantras (*mantrasaṁśraya*, 6.70) as a *vācya* distinct from a *vācaka* (a notion that had been clearly stated in 6.61–62), to be in fact responsible for the ritual action leading to the production of fruits: since the deity joins the performers to the fruit of their ritual action (*phalayoḥjīkā*, 6.74), she is thus the most important factor in the ritual (6.72–74).

The influence of these beliefs, epistemological in nature, also reverberates on the level of meditative practice. As pointed out in § 1, the *Śivadharmottara* prescribes the use of mantras not just as a ritual aid, but also as a step in the process of meditation that will lead to the one-ness with Śiva. The identity of Śiva and the mantra proclaimed in stanzas 1.27ff thus also qualifies as a presupposition for the efficaciousness of the mantra in the process of leading the soul of the practitioner to achieve the ultimate goal of Śaiva yoga, which is union with Śiva's nature. A similar notion concerning the relationship between the mantra and god can be seen even in a mainly non-sectarian early type of yoga, which is the one taught in the *Yogasūtra*. This text defines the *praṇava* as the *vācaka* of the Lord (*tasya vācakah praṇavaḥ*, *Yogasūtra* 1.27). The *Yogabhāṣya* commentary on this point questions exactly how the *vācya-vācaka* relationship has come about in this case, asking whether this happened artificially through a human convention (*saṅketa*), or if it has always existed, like that between a lamp and its light.²⁸ This passage becomes relevant to our discussion on the mantra of the *Śivadharmottara* in light of Oberhammer's observation (1991, 205–206) that such considerations, attested in the otherwise non-sectarian system of the *Yogasūtra*, seem to be a straightforward derivation from the yoga of the Pāśupatas. Stressing the importance of mantra-muttering in the Pāśupata yoga as taught in the *Ratnāṭikā*, but also in the early *Pañcārthabhāṣya* by Kauṇḍinya (fifth to sixth century) on the *Pāśupatasūtra*, Oberhammer brings attention to the role played in such types of meditation both by the five *brahmamantras*, mainly associated with a lower-level type of meditation, and by the *oṃkāra*. The latter is in fact the object to be meditated upon (*oṃkāram abhidhyāyita*, *Pāśupatasūtra* 5.24) in a higher type of meditation to which Kauṇḍinya refers as a 'more subtle worship' (*sūkṣmatarā upāsanā*, *Pañcārthabhāṣya* 5.23.10), in which the *praṇava* conveys the real presence of Maheśvara.

These considerations bring us to the context of Pāśupata Śaivism, which is not foreign to the authors of the *Śivadharmasāstra* and the *Śivadharmottara*: on the contrary, it seems to form one of the main religious backgrounds

²⁸ *Yogabhāṣya ad 1.27: vācya īśvaraḥ praṇavasya, kim asya saṅketakṛtaṃ vācya-vācakatvam atha pradīpaprakāśavad avasthitaṃ iti sthito 'sya vācyaṣya vācakena sambandhaḥ. saṅketas tu tam evārtham jvalayati.*

of the authors of our texts. As just observed, the *brahmamantras* were essential in the cultic and meditative practice of the Pāñcārthika Pāśupata doctrine taught in the *Pāśupatasūtra* and its commentary *Pañcārthabbāṣya*. These mantras were associated with the Vedas, too, as they are given in *Taittirīyāranyaka* 10.43–47, an association that could be one of the reasons for their waning centrality with the emergence of Tantric mantras. However, Bisschop has recently argued that, in spite of widespread scholarly consensus around the Vedic origin of the *brahmamantras*, Kauṇḍinya did not present nor perceive the *brahmamantras* as Vedic, but rather as part of an entirely new revelation (2018c, 3–4). According to such a view, this circumstance, alongside the shakiness of the transmission of the Vedic passages in which the *brahmamantras* are attested, which could in fact be later than the *Pāśupatasūtra*, suggests that the connection with Vedic literature might have emerged later on, and was not intended by the early Pāśupatas themselves.²⁹

The presentation of the mantra of the *Śivadbharmottara* as a combination of the *ekākṣaramantra* and the five *brahmamantras*, while revealing awareness of debates going on in yogic and Mantramārgic environments, at the same time places our text firmly against the early Śaiva tradition of Pāśupata Śaivism, whose mantras are epitomised in the *ṣaḍākṣaramantra* of the *Śivadbharmottara*. However, in doing so the *Śivadbharmottara* does not refer to the newness of the six-syllabled mantra as a way to promote its powers, but rather insists on its being tightly grounded both in the Śaiva revelation and in the Veda, as one of the following verses will unambiguously maintain.

3. *The mantra in the scriptures*

In stanza 1.36 the *Śivadbharmottara* marks the scriptural domains in which the six-syllabled mantra is attested, and contrasts it with the version of the same mantra in five syllables:

This mantra of six syllables is established in both places, in the Veda and in the Śaiva revelation, always with the aim of attaining liberation; among common people (*loke*), it is taught in five syllables. (1.36)

²⁹ Bisschop argues that one could even read the presence of the *brahmamantras* in the *Taittirīyāranyaka* as an influence of Pāśupata Śaivism on the Vedic tradition (2018c, 5). Concerning this passage from the *Taittirīyāranyaka*, Bakker also notes that in this occurrence the *brahmamantras* are not connected to the iconography of a deity, but Sāyaṇa, commenting upon this passage in the fourteenth century, makes a straightforward association with the *vaktras* of Śiva (*paramēśvara* in the commentary on stanza 43), attesting that the tradition received this passage as a reference to a by then well-known Śaivasiddhānta teaching (Bakker 2019 [2002], 492).

*vede śivāgame cāyam ubhayaatra ṣaḍakṣaraḥ | mantrāḥ sthitaḥ sadā muktyai
loke pañcākṣaraḥ smṛtaḥ || 1.36 ||*

This statement is followed by stanzas that pronounce the uselessness of resorting to multiple mantras, as well as of knowledge obtained from long treatises, for the person who has this mantra fixed in their heart—a reference to its use for meditation—and regularly engages in the repetition of the six-syllabled mantra, which is held to be the essence of all scriptures.³⁰ In *pāda* 1.36a, the *Śivadharmottara* mentions as the source of the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra* the two main branches of scriptural authority, the Veda and the ‘Śaiva revelation’; one could deduce that the *Śivadharmottara* associates itself to the latter notion of *śivāgama*—which is not further expanded, but solely linked to the transmission of the six-syllabled mantra—on account of its support for the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra*.

As for the claim that the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra* is attested in the Veda, we can take it partly at face value, and partly as ideological. What we do find in Vedic literature is the *pañcākṣaramantra* form *namaḥ śivāya*, which is notably attested in the ‘Hundred Rudras’ invocation (*Śatarudrīya*) of the Black Yajurveda.³¹ The difference between the two versions of this mantra is very subtle, as it only lies in the use of the *praṇava*, yet stanza 1.36 mentions both versions as distinct, and associates them to different domains. However, given that the *praṇava* is a distinctively Vedic mantra, one could take the statement of the *Śivadharmottara* as to mean that both ‘components’ of the six-syllabled mantra are truly Vedic.³² At the same time, one could read

³⁰ *Śivadharmottara* 1.37–38: *kiṃ tasya babubhir mantraiḥ śāstrair vā bahuvistaraiḥ | yasyaṃ namaḥ śivāyeti mantro ’yaṃ hr̥di samstbitaḥ || 37 || tenādhitam śrutam tena tena sarvam anuṣṭhitam | yenaṃ namaḥ śivāyeti mantrābhyāsaḥ sthirikṛtaḥ || 38 ||*

³¹ See *namaḥ śivāya ca śivatarāya ca* attested in *Taittirīyasambitā* 4.5.8.1, or *Maitrāyaṇīyasambitā* 2.9.7.

³² Note that the actual occurrence of the *pañcākṣaramantra* in the *Taittirīyasambitā*, along with the importance that this mantra indeed acquires in later practice, and the association of the Śivadharma with the Purāṇic genre (De Simini 2016a, 61–63), is likely to have prompted the rewording of this stanza in a short parallel to *Śivadharmottara* chapter one attested in *Agnipurāṇa* (3.326), which reads (stanza 8ab): *gītaḥ pañcākṣaro vede loke gītaḥ ṣaḍakṣaraḥ*. Here we see a complete inversion of what is stated in *Śivadharmottara* 1.36. The parallel is extended to other verses, part of a larger section titled *devālayamābhātmya*, so that we can indeed regard it as a reference to *Śivadharmottara* 1.36, rather than an independent composition. The text reads as follows (*Agnipurāṇa* 3.326.7cd–10): *skando namaḥ śivāyeti mantrāḥ sarvārthasādhakāḥ || 7 || gītaḥ pañcākṣaro vede loke gītaḥ ṣaḍakṣaraḥ | om ity ante sthitaḥ śambhur mudrārtham vātabhījavat || 8 || kramān namaḥ śivāyeti īśānādyaṇi vai vidub | ṣaḍakṣarasya sūtrasya bhāṣyavidyākadambakam || 9 || yad om namaḥ śivāyeti etāvat paramaṃ padam | ane-*

the association with the Veda, regardless of the mantra's literal attestation in the Vedic tradition, as a way to claim authority on the basis of its reliance on Vedic orthodoxy. Despite their claim of substituting the Vedic sacrifice with easier and cheaper means (*Śivadharmaśāstra* 1.3–4), which reverberates here also in the idea, expressed in mostly eulogistic terms, that the mantra is capable of replacing the entire scriptural traditions of the Veda, the Purāṇas and the *śāstra*,³³ the *Śivadharmaśāstra* and the *Śivadharmottara* are and will be perceived as orthodox texts,³⁴ as their willingness to create a public and social sphere for the Śaivas is mostly framed within the boundaries established by the Brahmanical tradition. More evidence of this is being provided by current research on the *Śivadharmaśāstra*'s revision of classical Dharmaśāstra (Bisschop, Kafle and Lubin 2021), or on the *Śivadharmottara*'s reception of the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Manusmṛti* (De Simini forth.b). It is thus in line with their general attitude towards the tradition to claim a Vedic origin for their mantra. Given the limited data available to us, it would be far-fetched to hypothesise that *Śivadharmottara* 1.36 is claiming a Vedic origin also for the *brahmamantras*, which were said to be the seed-syllables of the *namaḥ śivāya* part of the mantra.

Stanza 1.36 suggests an additional interpretation to the view expounded in the previous stanzas, which presented the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra* as a synthesis between the *praṇava* and the *brahmamantras*. Here, we are confronted with the idea that the five syllables *namaḥ śivāya*, without *om*, belong to a *laukika*, 'worldly,' sphere; on the other hand, its combination with the *praṇava* falls into the domain of higher forms of religious observance, the *vaidika* and the *śaiva*, which are conducive to emancipation. Therefore, the

na pūjayel liṅgam liṅge yasmāt stbītaḥ śivāḥ || 10 ||. All these verses are loosely parallel to stanzas of chapter one of the *Śivadharmottara*, following the ratio that each half stanza of the *Agnipurāṇa* (AP) corresponds to an entire stanza of the *Śivadharmottara* (ŚDhU): ŚDhU 1.25 = AP 3.326.7cd; ŚDhU 1.26 = AP 3.326.8cd; ŚDhU 1.28 = AP 3.326.9ab; ŚDhU 1.36 = AP 3.326.8ab; ŚDhU 1.39cd = AP 3.326.9cd; ŚDhU 1.40 = AP 3.326.10ab. Only *Agnipurāṇa* 3.326.10cd has no direct parallel in this chapter of the *Śivadharmottara*, which however deals with the topic of *liṅga* worship in its stanzas 1.76–94.

³³ *Śivadharmottara* 1.67: *purāṇaṃ bhārataṃ vedāḥ śāstrāṇi sumabānti ca | āyusaḥ kṣepanāḥ sarve dharmo 'po granthasamstbītaḥ* || 67 ||; 'The Purāṇas, the *Mahābhārata*, the Vedas and the very long treatises are all ways to consume [one's] life: little Dharma is established in [such extensive] books.'

³⁴ Note for instance that a 'Śivadharma' associated with Nandiśa/Nandikeśvara will become a stable element of the Purāṇic lists of Upapurāṇas, and that Aparārka's testimony in the twelfth century confirms that the *Śivadharma* and the *Viśvadharmā* were regarded as something akin to the epics and the Purāṇas (De Simini 2016a, 61–63).

three categories that we encounter in this stanza—the *veda*, the *śivāgama*, and the *loka*—do not (solely) refer to scriptural traditions, but also to ritual and doctrinal domains. As a matter of fact, if one reads the word *loke* in 1.36d as a reference to specific scriptures, these will have to be the Śaiva Purāṇas, because it should be texts in which the Śaiva *pañcākṣaramantra* is taught. But in this case, one should also accept that the *Śivadharmottara*, which associates itself to the *śivāgama* and the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra*, is here at the same time distancing itself from the Purāṇic tradition—of which it will be considered a part by later Purāṇas. This would not be impossible in the light of a hierarchical view of the Śaiva revelation that places the Śivadharma above the Śaiva Purāṇas, but neither the *Śivadharmaśāstra* nor the *Śivadharmottara* give any information about this. At the same time, both works deal with topics that perfectly resonate with those that the ca. seventh-century *Niśvāsamukha* mentions in its description of the *laukika* stream, such as donations, devotion, and *liṅga* worship.³⁵ Although such themes do not cover all the contents of the *Śivadharmottara*—the text, for instance, unlike the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, also gives relevance to teachings on yoga—the topics of the *Śivadharmottara* are fully in line with a *laukika* production and view-point, if we consider for instance the attention given to rules for moral behaviour (see, above all, chapters four, on *dāna*, and six, on the various types of sinful actions) and the punishment of sinners in hells, to which the long and detailed chapter seven is dedicated. What seems to distinguish the *Śivadharmottara* from a purely worldly perspective is that these contents are also balanced by teachings on the practice of the *jñānayoga*, taught in chapters three and ten, which is a practice conducive to liberation (among the many possible references, see *Śivadharmottara* 3.15d, stating *jñāna-dhyānaṃ vimuktidaṃ*). Thus, the role attributed to the mantra in the practice of *jñānayoga*, to which we referred in § 1, is coherent with the claim that the six-syllabled mantra expounded in the Śaiva scriptures leads to emancipation. At the same time, I do not think that this argument is sufficient to maintain that the *Śivadharmottara* regards itself as opposed to Śaiva *laukika* scriptures teaching the *pañcākṣaramantra*, but rather that *loke* in 1.36d has to be interpreted in the sense of *lokācāra*, and implies therefore a social rather than a scriptural distinction. To clarify this point, we may turn our attention to similar uses in other branches of early Śaiva literature.

The *Niśvāsamukha* inserts its definition of the *laukika* current within a more complex classification of five currents springing from the five faces

³⁵ For an account of the ‘worldly current’ described in the *Niśvāsamukha*, see Kafle 2020, 252–334.

of Śiva and encompassing the main categories of religious observance, as amply discussed in Kafle 2020, 39ff. This might look like an expanded view of the tradition compared to the one succinctly presented in stanza 1.36 of the *Śivadbarmottara*, since the *Niśvāsamukha* contrasts the mundane (*laukika*) and the Vedic (*vaidika*) currents with the philosophical teachings of Sāṅkhya and Yoga (those ‘related to the soul,’ *ādhyātmika*), and finally with two Śaiva streams, which in a hierarchical sequence are the Atimārga and ‘the one called mantra’ (*mantrākhyā*), i.e., the Mantramārga. While there is overlap in the use of some categories, their understanding is very different from that of the *Śivadbarmottara*. As Kafle remarks, the pentadic structure proposed by the *Niśvāsamukha*, also attested in later Tantras such as the *Svacchanda* or the *Mrgendra* (KP), was most likely fashioned after the triadic model offered in *Manusmṛti* 2.117 and *Viṣṇusmṛti* 30.43, with which the *Niśvāsamukha* also has a direct textual parallel (Kafle 2020, 48–49, 51). Such a model presents a tripartition of knowledge into a *laukika*, *vaidika*, and *ādhyātmika* type, and is attested among a series of instructions addressed to a twice born fit for Vedic learning.³⁶ The *laukika* type of knowledge is glossed in Medhātithi’s commentary *ad loc.* as the ‘teaching [based] on common usage’ (*lokācārasīkṣaṇa*). On the basis of the general influence of early Dharmasāstra emerging both from the *Śivadbarmottara* and from the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, it is not implausible to assume that this conceptual framework has perhaps influenced *Śivadbarmottara* 1.36. At the same time, one might want to ponder the level of knowledge that the authors of the *Śivadbarmottara* had of the five-fold division of the *Niśvāsamukha*, or vice-versa. According to current scholarly opinion, the two texts could be contemporary and therefore reflect similar views, albeit from different perspectives.

Furthermore, the binary opposition between a Śaiva and a worldly domain attested in *Śivadbarmottara* 1.36, in which the Vedic sphere is also evoked, is reminiscent of the use of the two categories of *śivadharma* and *lokadharma* in Medieval Tantric exegesis, such as we see it in the *Kiraṇavṛtti* (*ad* 6.12) and *Mataṅgavṛtti* (*ad* VP 4.49–50) by Rāmakaṅṭha II, or in the *Svacchandatantrōddyota* by Kṣemarāja (*ad* 4.83–85). Such texts unambiguously explain the two terms as referring to a lesser level of Śaiva revelation on one side (the *śivadharma*), and the *śruti* and *smṛti* on the other (the *lokadharma*), while they variously associate them with the religious practice of different groups of initiates. A highly relevant example is offered

³⁶ *Manusmṛti* 2.117: *laukikaṃ vaidikaṃ vāpi tatādhyātmikam eva vā | ādadīta yato jñānaṃ tam pūrvam abbivādayet ||*.

by Rāmakaṅṭha in his *Kiraṇavṛtti ad* 6.11–12 (translated and discussed in Goodall 1998, 373–378): here he comments upon a passage in which the Tantra enjoins that those among the *samaya* initiates who are incapable of performing post-initiatory rites should receive an initiation that would remove their obligation to perform these activities and liberate them at death. According to Rāmakaṅṭha, people such as women, the diseased, children, and the elderly, should be redirected to the practice taught in the *śivadharma* or the *lokadharmā*. Rāmakaṅṭha does not explain these terms further; Goodall (1998, 375 fn. 616) suggests a possible identification of the *śivadharma* with the texts of the Śivadharma corpus, and the *lokadharmā* with *śruti* and *smṛti*. The latter interpretation is based on the same words of the Kashmirian exegete in *Mataṅgavṛtti*, VP 4.49–50: here Rāmakaṅṭha maintains that those who could not benefit from the *anugraha* of the Lord can still perform his service ‘in the way prescribed in the *śruti* and so on, or in the way taught in the Śivadharma; *śrutyādivibitena*³⁷ *śivadharmoditena vā vidhinā īśvaropāsanaiva kāryeti pratīyate*.

The topics defining the *laukika* stream of the *Niśvāsamukha* also form part of the definition that Kṣemarāja gives for the *laukikadharmā* as opposed to the *śivadharma* in his commentary on a point of the *Svacchanda* dealing with a different topic than the *Kiraṇa* and the *Mataṅga* referred above, but which still reveals a common ground of doctrines and ideas.³⁸

³⁷ Corr. Goodall 1998, 375 fn. 615, based on a variant reading given in the apparatus; Bhatt 1977, 98, reads *śrutau vibitena*.

³⁸ The context of *Svacchandatantra* 4.83–85 is different from that of the occurrences in the commentaries on the *Kiraṇa* and the *Mataṅga*. However, when considered along with its *Uddyota*, one can see a common ground with the categorisation known to Rāmakaṅṭha: besides the identical denomination of the two categories, the definition of the *laukikadharmā* given by Kṣemarāja (the ‘conduct taught in the *śruti* and *smṛti*’, *śrutismṛtyācārah*) is ultimately the same as the one given in the *Mataṅgavṛtti*. The *Svacchandatantra* deals with a different topic, namely that of the two subdivisions of the *sādhakas*, the highest level of initiates after the *ācārya*. The first division is the *śivadharmin*, whose main characteristic is the dedication to the mantra practice as a means to purify his spiritual path and develop *siddhis* (*sādhako dvividhas tatra śivadharmy ekataḥ stbītaḥ | śivamantravīśuddhādhvā sādhyamantrantyojitaḥ || 83 || jñānavāms’ cābhiṣiktaś ca mantrārādhanaatparah | trividhāyās tu siddher vai so ’rārbaḥ śivasādhakaḥ || 84 ||*). The word *śivadharma* is glossed by Kṣemarāja with *śivasāstroktaśamācārah*, ‘a conduct corresponding to the one taught in Śaiva scriptures.’ The second type of *sādhaka* is the *lokadharmin*, here defined in a way that recalls the *laukika* stream of the *Niśvāsamukha*: ‘The second is the one who walks on the worldly path, who rejoices in accumulating merits through rituals, who performs rituals with the expectation of fruits, solely focused on what is auspicious

These three categories echo those used in *Śivadbharmottara* 1.36—*veda*, *śivāgama*, *loka*. However, like in the case of the *Niśvāsamukha*, the difference in their use is substantial: while in the context of medieval Tantric exegesis those three scriptural traditions are all seen as inferior to the Śaiva Tantric revelation, for which the notion of a hierarchy of Śaiva scriptures was an established teaching, the *Śivadbharmottara* places together the Śaiva revelation and the *śruti*, and opposes them to the *loka*. On the contrary, the notion of *lokadharmā* in the Tantric sources examined above subsumes both *śruti* and *smṛti* and is therefore not a plausible interpretation of *loka* in *Śivadbharmottara* 1.36.

As a matter of fact, the reference to the practice of lesser Śaiva devotees, which the Tantric traditions associated to both categories of *śivadharma* and *lokadharmā*, is reflected in the interpretation that the reception of the *Śivadbharmottara* gives while explaining *loke* in *Śivadbharmottara* 1.36d. The anonymous Sanskrit commentary on the *Śivadbharmottara* transmitted in a single, partly damaged palm-leaf manuscript in Malayalam script from the Trivandrum Manuscript Library (no. 12766), now being studied in the framework of the Śivadharma Project by S.A.S. Sarma, offers a few insights in this regard. Unfortunately, its consultation on this point is made more difficult by the almost entire loss of the right sector of the folio (fol. 119) immediately following the second string-hole, resulting in the loss of ca. fifteen *akṣaras* per line. In spite of this, we can reconstruct a few coherent pieces of information about the commentator's views on stanza 1.36. The topic of the stanza is given as the 'difference in the mantra's own form on the basis of the categories of eligible users' (fol. 119v, line 4: *athādbhikāribhedena mantrasya svarūpavaiśamyam*). Before the gap in line five, we read that *loke* is understood as 'a devotee of Parameśvara who is deprived of the meaning of the Veda and the Śaiva scriptures' (*loke vedaśivāgamayoḥ tātparyarabite parameśvarabhakte jane*).³⁹

On this point we can also resort to the testimony of the *Civatarumōttaram*, the sixteenth-century translation of the *Śivadbharmottara* authored by Maṛaiñāṇa Campantar of Chidambaram, better preserved and more un-

and avoiding what is inauspicious (85); *dvitīyo lokamārgastha iṣṭāpūrtavidbau rataḥ | karmakṛt phalam ākāṅkṣan śubhaikastho 'śubhojjbitaḥ || 85 ||*. The word *lokamārgaḥ* is explained by Kṣemarāja's commentary *ad loc.* as the 'conduct taught in the *śruti* and *smṛti*' (*śrutismṛtyācāraḥ*), implying the practice of rituals and not the propitiation through mantras (*mantrārādhana*).

³⁹ After *jane* one can only read the beginning of a *-ya*, and then the manuscript is broken; this circumstance hinders our full understanding of this point.

ambiguous. This text states in stanza 1.21 (which I quote from the ongoing translation by Rajarethinam and Goodall):⁴⁰

To women and good people among Śūdras one may teach the five syllables, avoiding the letter *om*.

In this and previous stanzas dealing with the topic of the mantra, the *Civatarumōttaram* had placed a higher emphasis on the ‘one-syllable mantra’ *om*, ‘containing all the six syllables’ (*āreḷuttinaiyum uṭaittē*, 1.20), rather than on the *ṣaḍcākṣara* properly meant. The text of *Civatarumōttaram* 1.21 that precedes the *pādas* quoted above states that those who recite the *praṇava* would become masters of all knowledge, ‘beginning with the Veda.’⁴¹ The Tamil text thus makes no reference to a mantra found ‘in the Veda,’ as the *Śivadharmottara* phrases it, but more clearly links the use of the *praṇava* with the mastering of Vedic knowledge. As in many other cases, especially those outside the realm of rituals, Maṛaiñāṇa does not translate literally, but reinterprets the text. However, in the *pādas* cited above, the Tamil text maintains the notion of a hierarchy between two mantras in which the *pañcākṣara* occupies a lower position, just as in *Śivadharmottara* 1.36. Such a lower position is, for our sixteenth-century author, the domain of women and ‘good *śūdras*,’ the *sacchūdra* being a category of *śūdras* who had accepted some of the restrictions of Brahmanical life, and which became of special relevance in the Tamil-speaking South, where they even gave rise to monastic lineages within the local Śaivasiddhānta tradition (Sanderson 2009, 284–286). Maṛaiñāṇa Campantar’s view is confirmed by the commentator Maṛaiñāṇa Tesikar.⁴²

The idea of excluding women and *śūdras* from access to Vedic studies and the practice of Vedic mantras reflected in the Tamil translation is certainly not an innovation of our authors but firmly grounded in classical Dharmaśāstric

⁴⁰ *Civatarumōttaram* 1.21: *ōmeṇṇum patamoḷit tañceḷuttu mātar̥k | koḷun̄kuṭaiya cūttirarkku muraikka lāmē || 21 ||*.

⁴¹ *Civatarumōttaram* 1.21: *ōmeṇṇum patamataṇai yuraittār tāmē yōtinarkaḷ vēṭā-tiyu raikaḷellā*.

⁴² I thank Margherita Trento for her help in consulting the commentary on this stanza. Maṛaiñāṇa Tecikar mainly confirms the contents of *Civatarumōttaram* 1.21, only adding the notion that the women who are allowed to use the *pañcākṣara* are those who belong to the four *varṇas* (translation by Trento): ‘Therefore, both the women belonging to the four castes, beginning with the Brahmins, and the pure *śūdras*, might recite the five-syllable mantra, which exonerates from *om* (*piraṇavam*), which is the root of the Vedas (*vētamātā*); *ātalār pārppār mutaliya nāluvaṇṇattuṇ mātaruṇ cārcūttirarum anta vētamātāvākiya piraṇavattai niḱki niṇṇa aṇceḷuttaiyumuṇ yuccarikkalām*.

tradition. The *Manusmṛti*, for instance, expressly limits the practice of *saṃskāras* through the recitation of Vedic mantras to twice-born males, and asserts that women should have the same rituals practiced without the use of such mantras.⁴³ Moreover, the mantra *om*, to which the *Manusmṛti* dedicates verses 2.74–84, is praised by this text as the mantra that inaugurates and concludes each session of Vedic recitation, and which prevents the Vedic texts to slip away from memory.⁴⁴ Its recitation, tied to Vedic learning, is thus restricted to the above-mentioned twice-born males. Furthermore, verses 2.85–87 of the *Manusmṛti* are devoted to the praise of the act of muttering the mantra, a practice labelled *japayajña*. As we previously observed (see fn. 5), this category is known in the *Śivadharmottara* as one of the five *mahāyajñas* in chapter three, but also as one of the *aṅgas* of yoga in chapter ten. Here the text dedicates a whole section to the *japayajña* (10.165–174), in which *pādas* from this portion of the *Manusmṛti* are literally paralleled.

At this point, it seems plausible that restrictions to women and *sūdras* in the access to Vedic mantras, as enjoined in chapter two of the *Manusmṛti*, were what the authors of the *Śivadharmottara* had in mind when they taught a version of their mantra without *om*. The *loka* of 1.36d thus refers to those who were exempt from Vedic initiation, a category that also includes some of those people who, in the Tantric traditions, would be excluded from the performance of post-initiatory rites, as per the testimony of Rāmakaṇṭha cited above, and directed to the *śivadharmā* and *lokadharmā* instead. It still remains unclear whether this tripartite category of *śivāgama*, *veda*, and *loka*, perhaps inspired from *laukika*, *vaidika*, and *ādhyātmika* of *Manusmṛti* 2.117, could indeed in turn have inspired Rāmakaṇṭha, or the tradition that he reflected, in those two passages of his exegetical works, exactly on points in which he discussed the topic of the *adbhikārin*—where the access under scrutiny was not to Vedic mantras but to Tantric rites.

The reception of the *Śivadharmottara* in the Tamil tradition had thus made the connection with the Dharmaśāstra more explicit, besides ground-

⁴³ See *Manusmṛti* 2.16: *nīṣekādīśmaśānānto mantrair yasyodito vidbiḥ | tasya śāstre 'dhikāro 'smiñ jñeyo nānyasya kasyacit || 16 ||* as well as 2.66–67: *amantrikā tu kārye-yaṃ strīṇām āvṛdaśeṣataḥ | saṃskārārtham śarīrasya yathākālam yathākramam || 66 || vaivāhiko vidbiḥ strīṇām saṃskāro vaidikaḥ smṛtaḥ | patisevā gurau vāso gṛhārtbo 'gni-parikrīyā || 67 ||*. In the latter example, besides prohibiting the use of mantras for women during the performance of the *saṃskāras*, Manu maintains that marriage is for women the equivalent of Vedic initiation.

⁴⁴ See *Manusmṛti* 2.74–75: *brahmaṇaḥ praṇavam kuryād ādāv ante ca sarvadā | svavatyaṇomkṛtam pūrvam parastāc ca viśṛiyate || 74 || prākkūlān paryupāsinaḥ pavitrais naiva pāvitaḥ | prāṇāyāmais tribbiḥ pūtas tata omkāram arbati || 75 ||*.

ing it into the local context through the mention of the *sacchūdras*. However, the topic of the access of women and *śūdras* to Vedic knowledge and mantras, including the use of *om*, had also acquired relevance in later scriptural traditions such as the Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātra and the Śrīvaiṣṇava literature in Tamil, Sanskrit and Maṇḍipravāla (see Young 2002), so that we can regard the less ambiguous remarks by Maṛaiñāna not just as an attempt to make the Dharmasāstric background of this teaching more explicit, but also as a way to participate in a current debate. To cite an example from the Śaiva fold, we might refer to Śivāgrayogin, a contemporary of Maṛaiñāna from the nearby centre of Thanjavur,⁴⁵ who in his *Kriyādīpikā* offers more detailed information on the social background of the use of the *pañcākṣaramantra*. In this work, also relying on the authority of the *Siddhāntabodha*, Śivāgrayogin divides the *pañcākṣaramantra* into six different categories.⁴⁶ The six-syllabled mantra *om namaḥ śivāya* is in fact called *tārapañcākṣara* (*tāra* being a synonym of *praṇava*) and considered an extension of the five-syllabled mantra; it is only imparted to those who belong to the first three *varṇas*. For the *śūdras*, according to Śivāgrayogin and the *Siddhāntabodha*, the mantra is *om hām haum śivāya namaḥ*, and is called *prasādapañcākṣara*.⁴⁷ The simple five-syllabled mantra *namaḥ śivāya* is here called *sthūlapañcākṣara*, and is for those who have received the ‘ordinary initiation’ (*sāmānyadīkṣā*).⁴⁸ In conclusion, Śivāgrayogin, who knew the *Śivadharmottara* and quoted from it in his commentary on the *Civañāpacittiyār* of Arulṅandi,⁴⁹ confirms a social distinction between the users of the six-syllabled and the five-syllabled mantra, although he adds more categories and details that are ultimately not coherent with the simpler distinction made by Maṛaiñāna.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ The activity of Śivāgrayogīndra Jñānaśivācārya can be placed in the second half of the sixteenth century, coinciding with the rulership of the Vijayanagara emperor Sadāśivarāya (crowned in 1543) and of Cinna Cevappa, Nāyaka of Thanjavur from 1532 until 1563 (Sanderson 2014, 87, fn. 354).

⁴⁶ A description of such categories can also be found in Brunner-Lachaux 1963, xxxii.

⁴⁷ See the *Siddhāntabodha* quoted by Śivāgrayogin (*Kriyādīpikā* p. 97, verses not numbered): *tatrom namaḥ śivāyeti tārapañcākṣaram bhavet | om hām haum śivāya namaḥ iti prasādapañcākṣaram || [...] tārapañcākṣaram tatra trivarṇānām vidhīyate || śūdrāḥ prasādamantrēna saṃjaped bhuktimuktidam |*

⁴⁸ *Siddhāntabodha* in *Kriyādīpikā*, p. 97, verses not numbered: *namaḥ śivāyeti sthūlapañcākṣaram iti smṛtam | [...] sāmānyadīkṣāyuktānām sthūlapañcākṣaram smṛtam ||*

⁴⁹ I owe this information to Krishnaswamy Nachimuthu, to whom I express my gratitude. For more information on this point, see his article in this volume.

⁵⁰ Three further categories that are listed in the source quoted and commented upon by Śivāgrayogin are the ‘mixed’ (*miśrapañcākṣara*), also called ‘gross and subtle’ (*sthūla-sūkṣmapañcākṣara*), which is *namaḥ śivāya śivāya namaḥ*; the ‘subtle’ (*sūkṣmapañcākṣara*),

Turning again to chapter one of Maṛaiñāna's work, it is also relevant to observe that in the immediately preceding stanza he clearly associates meditation on the five-syllabled mantra to the attainment of 'two fruits' (*irupayanum*, 1.20), which can be identified as fruition and liberation, and would thus point to the *pañcākṣaramantra* also having an emancipatory function. This questions the interpretation of *pāda* c of *Śivadbharmottara* 1.36, where the scope of the mantra—in my interpretation, of the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra*—is said to always be liberation (*sadā muktyai*). In this regard, also the anonymous Sanskrit commentary seems to reflect a different view, even though its full reconstruction is hindered by the already mentioned gap in line five. What we can deduce from the remaining *akṣaras* of the line is that *sadā* could mean, for the commentator, 'both when it is used in six syllables and when it is used in five syllables.'⁵¹ A note of caution is needed, because we cannot read any further than this on the line. From what is readable, the commentator seems to understand *pāda* c as asserting that the mantra always retains its emancipatory power, regardless of which one of the two forms is used. On the other hand, in my interpretation *pāda* c is syntactically connected to *pādas* ab, providing a past participle (*sthitab*) that goes with the locatives *vede śivāgame*. I think that this interpretation is still maintainable even in view of the commentator's brief (and lacunose) remarks; at the same time, reading *pāda* c along with the previous two does not completely rule out the possibility that the *pañcākṣaramantra* has liberating powers, too, which would be in line not only with the more inclusive attitude of the *Śivadharma* towards the members of all *varṇas* (see on this Bisschop, Kafle and Lubin 2021), but also with the later success of the version of the mantra in five syllables. This success, particularly evident in Southern Śaiva environments, probably lay behind the choice of the commentary and the Tamil translation to make the expression concerning the emancipatory powers of the *pañcākṣaramantra* less ambiguous. This brings us to the nec-

corresponding to *śivāya namaḥ*, and the 'pure' (*śuddhapañcākṣara*), i.e., *śivo 'ham asmi*. See *Kriyādīpikā*, p. 97, verses not numbered: *namaś śivāya śivāya namaḥ ity etat sthūlasūksmakam || sūksmaṃ namo 'ntam ity uktaṃ śuddhapañcākṣaram yathā || [...]* *śivo 'ham asmi siddhānte vedānte so 'ham asmi tu* |. Among these, the mixed is said to confer the accomplishment of *bboga* and *mokṣa* for those without *varṇa*-status (*avarṇin*), the subtle is for the *yogin* and the *jñānin*, and the pure one for the renunciants, who are beyond *varṇas* and *āśramas* (*atīvarṇāśrama*); see *Kriyādīpikā*, p. 98 (verses not numbered): *bbogamokṣaprasiddhyartham miśraṃ proktam avarṇinām | yoginām jñāninām tatra sūksmapañcākṣaram smṛtam || atīvarṇāśramānām tu śuddhapañcākṣaram smṛtam* |.

⁵¹ Fol. 119v, l. 5: *ṣaḍakṣaraprayogavelāyām* [em.; °*velām* cod.] *pañcākṣaraprayogavelāyāñ cāyam* [em.; *cālayam* cod.] *mantra mukhyaḥ (•) sarve...*

essary caveats that we need to keep in mind when using these texts to shed light on the Sanskrit source, namely that, being significantly later than the *Śivadharmottara*, they reflect an agenda meant for the communities around the centres of their composition—in the light of which their authors do not hesitate to force or distort the interpretation of the Sanskrit text. As amply discussed in an article by Trento in this volume, the *Civatarumōttaram* and its Tamil commentary must primarily be studied against the background of sixteenth-century Chidambaram and the authors' efforts to adapt the *Śivadharmottara* to a neo-Śaivasiddhānta environment.

4. The scriptures in the mantra

While stanza 1.36 explains the connection between the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra* and the Śaiva scriptural tradition in terms of attestation—the six-syllabled mantra is attested or revealed in the *śivāgama*—this idea is balanced by a symmetrical statement at the beginning of the mantra-section, in which the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra* was presented as the source and essence of Śaiva scriptures. After an introductory section giving the topics of all the chapters of the *Śivadharmottara*, chapter one started off its exposition with a celebration of *śraddhā*, exalted as the essence of the Śaiva teachings and the only means to attain Śiva (*Śivadharmottara* 1.18-22).⁵² In stanza 1.23, the use of the particle *attha* marks a change of topics, with the text moving to teaching about the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra* presented as a form of the *śivavākya*—here *vākyaṃ* [...] *śivātmakam* (1.23d), literally the 'speech permeated by Śiva' or, less literally, 'belonging to Śiva,' an expression meaning his teachings and commands:

Thus, all the Śaiva precepts (*śivadharma*) are known as consisting of faith, and Śiva shall be attained with faith, worshipped and meditated upon with faith. (22) / Now, the speech consisting of a few syllables, [but] rich in meaning, of finest essence, conferring liberation, established by [Śiva's] command, beyond doubt: this [speech] belongs to Śiva. (23)

*evaṃ śraddhāmayāḥ sarve śivadharmāḥ prakīrtitāḥ | śivaś ca śraddhaya
gamyah pūjyo dbyeyas ca śraddhaya || 22 || athālpākṣaram arthādhyam
mahāsāraṃ vimuktidaṃ | ājñāsiddham asandigdham vākyaṃ etac chivāt-
makam || 23 ||*

⁵² For a discussion of this topic in the *Śivadharmottara* and other parallel sources, such as the *Haracaritacintāmaṇi* and the *Devīpurāṇa*, both containing rewritings of chapter one, see De Simini 2016a, 66ff. Note above all that the *Haracaritacintāmaṇi* parallel reverses the line of thought followed by the *Śivadharmottara*, for which *śraddhā* in Śiva and the *śivadharmas* is a requirement that precedes the demonstration that Śiva's speech is a *pramāṇa* (De Simini 2016a, 68 fn. 196).

The two topics of *śraddhā* and the mantra are ultimately linked by the view that the latter is encompassed in the notion of *śivavākya*, an expression translated above as ‘speech,’ but that is in fact equivalent to the ‘teachings’ imparted directly by Śiva. Such teachings are authoritative on account of Śiva’s perfection, and are as such worthy of *śraddhā* (1.45–46). Note that the expression *śivātmaka*, with reference to teachings that belong to Śiva, and thus have him both as an author and an object, also occurs in stanza 1.41, in which the text opposes a *vidhivākyaṃ* [...] *śaivam* to an *arthavādaḥ śivātmakaḥ* (see *infra* for discussion); chapter two of the *Śivadharmottara*, in the first verse, defines the knowledge to be taught and donated as *jñānaṃ śivātmakam*; in the end of chapter twelve of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, the title of the work is given as *dharmasāstram śivātmakam* (12.102 in the current edition). The elements of the definition of *śivavākya* in stanza 1.23 resonate with the description of the mantra: it is *alpākṣara*, ‘consisting of a few syllables,’ *mahāsāra*, ‘of finest essence,’ as well as *vimuktidaṃ*, ‘conferring liberation,’ an idea that stanza 1.36 associates with the *ṣaḍakṣaramantra* transmitted in the Veda and the *śivāgama*. The notion of *śivavākya* is not limited to the mantra, in spite of the prominence it is given in this chapter, but covers the teachings that have originally been uttered by Śiva’s mouth(s), as is deducible from stanzas 1.39–46:

All the Śaiva scriptures that exist, as well as [those disciplines] that are the ‘fields of knowledge’ (*vidyāsthānas*), these together are the exposition (*bhāṣyaṃ*) of the *sūtra* that is the six-syllabled [mantra]. (39) / As extensive as this Śaiva knowledge, as extensive as the supreme abode [of Śiva] is the teaching of Śiva (*śivavākya*) [condensed] in six syllables, i.e., *om namaḥ śivāya*. (40) / This is a prescriptive statement (*vidhivākya*) of Śiva, not a secondary expression (*arthavāda*) regarding Śiva; how could he, who bestows his grace on the world, speak the untruth? (41) / Given that he is omniscient and perfectly full, for what reason would Śiva, who is appeased, devoid of all defects, give an erroneous teaching? (42) / The omniscient will teach something as it is in reality, with qualities and defects on the basis of its true nature, including the [desired] fruit and merit. (43) / If one is affected by defilements such as attachment, ignorance and so on, [this person] will speak the untruth. But these [defilements] do not exist in Īśvara: how could he say anything other [than the truth]? (44) / That pure teaching that has been composed by the omniscient Śiva, in whom no defilements have arisen, is no doubt a means of correct knowledge (*pramāṇa*). (45) / Therefore, a learned person should trust the teachings (*vākyaṇī*) of Īśvara. Someone who has no faith in them in matters of meritorious and sinful actions will have a lower rebirth. (46)

śivajñānāni yāvanti vidyāsthānāni yāni ca | ṣaḍakṣarasya sūtrasya tāni bhāṣyaṃ samāsataḥ || 39 || etāvat tac chivajñānam etāvat tat paraṃ padam | yad om namaḥ śivāyeti śivavākyaṃ ṣaḍakṣaram || 40 || vidhivākyaṃ idaṃ śaivam

nārthavadatḥ śivātmakāḥ | lokānugrabhakartā yaḥ sa mṛṣārtham katham vadet ||
 41 || *sarvajñāparipūrṇatvād anyathā kena hetunā | brūyād vākyaṃ śivaḥ śāntaḥ*
sarvadoṣavivarjitaḥ || 42 || *yad yathāvasthitaṃ vastu guṇadoṣaiḥ svabhāvataḥ*
| yāvat pbalam ca puṇyam ca sarvajñaḥ tat tathā vadet || 43 || *rāgājñānādibhir*
doṣair grastatvād anṛtam vadet | te ceśvare na vidyante brūyāt sa katham anyathā
 || 44 || *ajātāśeṣadoṣeṇa sarvajñeṇa śivena yat | pranītam amalāṃ vākyaṃ tat*
pramāṇam na saṃśayaḥ || 45 || *tasmād īśvaravākyaṇi śraddheyāni vipascitā |*
yathārtham puṇyapāpeṣu tadāśraddho vrajed adbhāḥ || 46 ||

The direct teachings of Śiva expressed in his scriptures, along with all the ‘fields of knowledge’—a traditional notion in Dharmasāstra literature that corresponds to the fourteen established areas of Brahmanical learning (see *Yājñavalkya-smṛti* 1.3)—are thus all condensed in the brief six-syllabled mantra, which is a *śivavākya*, a direct teaching/speech of Śiva. The idea that scriptures are the exposition, like a commentary on the *sūtra* that is the six-syllabled mantra, is a comparison that was already attested in the *Śivadharmasāstra*, where the *śaḍakṣaramantra* is called a *śivasūtra*, and the *bhāṣya* on it is said to have been composed by Svayambhū.⁵³ Note that in the *Śivadharmasāstra* there is no reference to the *vidyāsthānas*, and the only texts considered a commentary on the mantra are the Śaiva scriptures. Further arguments brought forth by the *Śivadharmottara* in these stanzas are that a *vākya* can be considered a means of correct knowledge as long as its speaker is deprived of defilements, and Śiva is the sole speaker in whom there are no defilements, as he is omniscient and perfectly full of all good qualities. The reason that prompts him to teach is his *anugraha*, the favour that he manifests to human beings through his salvific teachings. His *vākya*—note that stanza 1.46 uses the word in the plural, referring to its manifold manifestations—is thus worthy of faith on account of the perfection and omniscience of its speaker.⁵⁴ For the same reasons, stanza 1.41 specifies

⁵³ *Śivadharmasāstra* 7.59–60ab (N^K₈₂, fol. 22r, ll. 5-6; N^P₅₇, fol. 21v 1.5): *sadbijam* [N^K₈₂; sa° N^P₅₇] *sarvavidyānām ādyaṃ brahma* [N^K₈₂; brahmā N^P₅₇] *parātparam* [N^K₈₂; parāparam N^P₅₇] *| sarvārthasādhakam mantram śivasūtram śaḍakṣaram ||* 59 || *bhāṣyam aśyaiva sūtra-sya sarvajñeṇa svayambhuvā* |. Note that in *pāda* 60b manuscript N^{Ko}₇₇ reads *sarvajñānāni aṃśunā*, as reported by Bisschop 2018a, 404 fn. 29. This recalls the term *śivajñānāni* that the *Śivadharmottara* uses in apposition to *bhāṣyam* (1.39a). Possibly under the influence of the latter, the IFP transcript T. 72 reads this *pāda* as *śivajñānāni śambhunā*.

⁵⁴ Note that this line of thought is very close to early Buddhist speculations on the notion of the Buddha as *pramāṇabhūta*, a definition given by Dignāga in the *maṅgala* verse of his *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and then commented upon by himself and others such as Dharmakīrti. Here, too, although in a non-theistic context, the Buddha’s teaching is considered authoritative mainly on account of the perfection of the Buddha’s compas-

that the *vākya* of Śiva is a ‘prescription’ (*vidhi*), not a ‘secondary expression’ (*arthavāda*), using categories of Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics that by that time had become standard in discussions on scriptural authority. This means that the teachings of Śiva, condensed in the mantra and expressed in his scriptures, have an injunctive value, they are not just for eulogistic purposes, but an order not to be doubted (see *ājñāsiddha* in 1.23c).

The notion of Śiva as a source of correct knowledge, perfectly in line with the general consensus of theistic traditions, is also connected to the idea expressed in the previous verses (see § 2) about Śiva as the meaning (*vācya*, *abhidheya*) of the mantra (*vācaka*, *abhidhāna*), which is a form of his speech, on the basis of a beginningless relationship existing between words and meanings. For once there is an irrefutable correspondence between the language and its object, then the teachings that express such object, as they furthermore convey the direct speech of Śiva, become a perfect reflection of his nature, and therefore cannot be false. As the Kashmirian author Abhinavagupta sums up in his treatment of purity in chapter four of the *Tantrāloka* (4.234–35): ‘God, who is perfectly full of unlimited consciousness and manifoldness, has taken the form of scriptures (*śāstrātmanā sthito*); [therefore,] nowhere can falsity be admitted. (234) / Just like Īśvara, on account of his will, wished to take the form of reality, in the same way he wished to take the form of designator of the own nature of such reality (*tatsvarūpābhidhānena*); [as such] he is established (235).’⁵⁵ In his commentary on these verses, Jayaratha interprets the compound in *pāda* 235a (*bhāvarūpeṇa*) as a reference to the *vācya*, which is the totality of knowers and knowledgeable objects, and the one in *pāda* 235c (*tatsvarūpābhidhānena*) as referring to the *vācaka* which are the scriptures of Śiva. Therefore, he concludes that Īśvara ‘is established as taking the form of the scriptures, which are the “signifier” part (*vācaka*).’⁵⁶

These verses quoted from the *Tantrāloka* occur within a discussion in which Abhinavagupta resorts exactly to the categories of *codanā* (a synonym of *vidhi*, see *Tantrāloka* 4.228–230) and *arthavāda* (*Tantrāloka*

sion towards all beings, which is the reason that prompts him to teach, and his perfect accomplishment of his own spiritual aims (Rogers 1988).

⁵⁵ *Tantrāloka* 4.234–235: *anavacchinnavijñānavaiśvarūpyasunirbharah | śāstrātmanā sthito devo mitkhyātvaṃ kvāpi nārhati || 234 || icchāvān bhāvarūpeṇa yathā tiṣṭhāsaur īśvaraḥ | tatsvarūpābhidhānena tiṣṭhāsuh sa tathā sthitaḥ || 235 ||*

⁵⁶ *Tantrālokaviveka* ad 4.235: *yathā kbalu paramesvaraḥ svechāmāhātmyād vācya-tmapramātrprameyādibhāvarūpeṇa sthātum icchuḥ san, tathā vācya-tmaviśvarūpatayā sthitaḥ; tathāśabdasyāvṛtyā tathā tadvad eva tasya pramātrprameyātmano vācyaḥ viśvasya yat svam anyāpoḍhaṃ rūpaṃ tasyābhidhānena vācakatayā sthātum icchuḥ san, tathā vācakatāśāstrarūpatayā sthita ity arthaḥ || 235 ||*

4.232) in order to support the statements of the *Mālinīvijayottara* passage that he discusses (*Mālinīvijayottara* 18.74–81) which, as it is the word of the Lord, must be considered ‘a prescription told by Śiva’ (*eṣā codanaiva śivoditā* 4.229). Again, Jayaratha’s commentary gives hints that allow us to place the *Śivadharmottara*’s discussion within the general context that is reflected in this part of Abhinavagupta’s work. For in commenting upon *Tantrāloka* 4.232cd, in which Abhinavagupta had asserted that ‘concerning the speech of Maheśvara there can be no doubt that it is *arthavāda* and so on’ (*nārthavādādīśankā ca vākye māheśvare bhavet* || 232), Jayaratha quotes a verse from a supporting scripture, which he does not identify nor was I able to identify otherwise: *pādas* ab of this anonymous quotation—*vidhivākyam idaṃ tantraṃ nārthavādaḥ kadācana*—are very close to *Śivadharmottara* 1.41ab—*vidhivākyam idaṃ śaivaṃ nārthavādaḥ śivātmakaḥ*.⁵⁷

In conclusion, Śiva, as the only perfect speaker, has pronounced his salvific speech for the benefit of all living beings,⁵⁸ and the mantra is taught as the essence, but also as part of the scriptural teachings that have descended directly from him—thus conveying all the benefits attributed to Śiva’s speech. However, the ‘speech of Śiva’ is not the only type of *vākya* mentioned in this chapter of the *Śivadharmottara*, for in the immediately following stanza 1.24 the text speaks of a *gāṇeśvaraṃ vākyam*:

The teaching connected [to the attainment of] various powers, divine, pleasing the mind of people, whose meanings are well ascertained, profound, is traditionally held as coming from the Lord of the Gaṇas. (24)

*nānāsiddhīyutaṃ divyaṃ lokacittānurañjakam | suniścītārthagambhīraṃ
vākyam gāṇeśvaraṃ smṛtam || 24 ||*

The difference drawn here between the *śivavākya* and the *gāṇeśvaravākya* is thus that between a set of teachings conferring liberation (*mukti*) and a further set that delivers *bhukti*, reflecting a duality of salvific paths that is

⁵⁷ The entire stanza quoted by Jayaratha *ad Tantrāloka* 4.232 reads as follows: *vidhivākyam idaṃ tantraṃ nārthavādaḥ kadācana | jhagiti pratyavāyeṣu satkriyāṇāṃ phaleṣv api* ||. During a reading of chapter thirty of the *Haracaritacintāmaṇi*, composed by Jayadratha in thirteenth-century Kashmir, Judit Törzsök noticed that *pādas* 30.4ab of the *Haracaritacintāmaṇi*, parallel to *Śivadharmottara* 1.41ab, are also close to the *pādas* quoted in this passage of the *Tantrāloka*viveka, as they read: *vidhivākyam idaṃ śaivaṃ nārthavādaḥ kadācana*.

⁵⁸ *Śivadharmottara* 1.25: *mantraṃ sukhamukhoccāryam aśeṣārthaprasādhakam | prābhaṃ namaḥ śivāyeti sarvajñāḥ sarvadehinām* ||; ‘For the sake of all embodied beings, the Omniscient told a *mantra* that can be chanted easily by the mouth, which accomplishes all goals, namely *om namaḥ śivāya*.’

attested in the *Śivadbharmottara* and that is central to the same definition of the Śaiva traditions. The *Śivadbharmottara* does not elaborate further on the topic; nevertheless, it is relevant to recall here that in the introductory verses to chapter one, Skanda had just been mentioned as the expounder of the *Śivadbharmottara*, having heard its teachings directly from Śiva. Therefore, we could connect the *śiva*- and the *gāṇeśvara*-type of speech to the first and second level in the transmission of the scripture: the first is Śiva, the author of the *śivavākya*, and then comes a divine expounder.

As we know from the incipit and conclusion of the *Śivadbharmottara*, the transmission of the teachings does not end with Skanda, as he furthermore teaches it to the *muni* Agasti, who abridges it into the twelve-chapter composition that we now know as the *Śivadbharmottara*; the *Śivadbharmasāstra* had given a slightly more complex account of its transmission, that goes from Śiva to Nandikeśvara, to Sanatkumāra, and finally reaches the *muni* Candrātreyā.⁵⁹ The traditional disclosure of the teachings thus happens in three steps, although the number of transmitters may vary: Śiva, his divine attendants, and the *munis*, responsible for the origination, transmission and composition of these scriptural texts. From these considerations it looks like a natural conclusion to connect stanzas 1.22–23 to 1.63–66, in which the *Śivadbharmottara* describes exactly the *vākya* ‘pronounced by the best of *munis*’ (*bhāṣitam ... munivaraiḥ*). In this case, the text focuses on distinguishing a ‘badly spoken’ (*durbhāṣita*) teaching, which is taught by false teachers and leads to hell, from the teaching that is transmitted by the best of the *munis*, which is conducive to heaven and liberation (*svargāpavarga*). These are the same two goals that the text associated with the teaching of Śiva, conferring liberation (1.23), and that of Skanda, connected to enjoyments (1.24):

That very auspicious teaching that has been uttered by the best of *munis*, [whose senses are] appeased, with the aim of attaining heaven and liberation, shall be known as ‘well spoken.’ (63) / The teaching that is permeated by attachment, hatred, falsity, rage, lust, and craving, since it is the cause of going to hell, is called ‘badly spoken.’ (64) / What is the use of that teaching inspired by ignorance and attachment, which is the cause of the defilements of transmigration, even though it is in Sanskrit, and is elegant and charming? (65) / The teaching that, after hearing it, generates merit and the destruction of attachment and so on, even though its form is not elegant, this has to be known as extremely auspicious. (66)

⁵⁹ These topics, and the relevant passages, are discussed in De Simini 2016b, 263–268, also with reference to the account given by the *Śivopaniṣad*.

*svargāpavargasiddhīartham bhāṣitam yat suśobhanam | vākyaṃ munivarīḥ
 śāntais tad vijñeyam subhāṣitam || 63 || rāgadveṣānrtakrodhākāmatrṣṇānusārī
 yat | vākyaṃ nirayabhetuvāt tad durbhāṣitam ucyate || 64 || saṃskṛtenāpi kiṃ
 tena mṛdunā lalītena ca | avidyārāgavākyaena saṃsārakleśabhetunā || 65 || yac
 cbrutvā jāyate puṇyam rāgādīnām ca saṃkṣayaḥ | virūpam api tad vākyaṃ
 vijñeyam atisobhanam || 66 ||*

These stanzas on the speech of the *munis* follow the section on the requirement that the Śaiva teacher should convert the king to the Śivadharma (1.47–62), which was in turn preceded by the considerations on the *śivavākya* and its reliability as a *pramāṇa*. The teacher in stanza 1.47 is called a *śivavākya* *pravaktṛ*, an expression that links the first level in the transmission of the teachings with the final phase, the one in which these will be circulated among human recipients. With *munis* and teachers we leave the domain of Śiva’s infallibility and enter the field of fallaciousness, as defilements might affect the transmitters and reverberate in their teachings (1.64). The *Śivadharmottara* warns that more wariness is required at this point. Such preoccupation with wrong teachers affecting the transmission of texts occurs in other chapters of the *Śivadharmottara*, such as chapter two and six; particularly in chapter two, we find comparable statements concerning the use of the Sanskrit language, as the text prescribes here that the teaching should not necessarily take place in Sanskrit, but in any language that may be needed to aid communication with the students (on this point, see De Simini 2016a, especially 83ff, 159, 342). Through these statements, the *Śivadharmottara* thus claims that the languages used for teachings must be as exoteric as the teachings themselves. Following this line of thought, stanzas 1.65–66 warn against the criterion of formal elegance as a way to assess the validity of the ‘speech of the *munis*,’ a notion that includes the actual texts of the scriptures circulating among devotees. Written in a rather grammatical Sanskrit, belonging to the same register adopted in the epics and the early Purāṇas, the *Śivadharmottara* thus demands wariness of teachers who might conceal their false learning behind eruditeness and eloquence, as their speech is apt to convey fruition and emancipation only on the basis of their moral pureness.

Under the influence of this passage from chapter one of the *Śivadharmottara*, transmitted by the text itself or one of its extended parallels, such as the one in *Vāyavīyasamhitā* 2.12,⁶⁰ stanzas 1.65–66 made their way into

⁶⁰ Here I refer to the chapters of the *Vāyavīyasamhitā* as numbered in Barois 2012. In chapter 2.12, *Śivadharmottara* 1.65–66 correspond to verses 31cd–33ab. A more extended study of the reception of the *Śivadharma* in the *Vāyavīyasamhitā* is the topic of De Simini forth.a.

the *Niśvāsakārikā* transmitted in the Southern transcripts from the Institut Français de Pondichéry (IFP).⁶¹ Some of the topics of this chapter, which corresponds to the thirty-fourth in the transcript that I used, echo those of *Śivadharmottara*'s chapter one: chapter thirty-four of the *Niśvāsakārikā* is opened by a consideration of the goddess on 'the *ācārya*, who knows the Śaiva scriptures and all the Śaiva knowledge [originating] from Śiva, entirely, being free from worldly logic. Indifferent to secular knowledge, he only rejoices in the scriptures of Śiva. By your grace, I wish to hear by what means the Lord [is] the supreme object expressed (*vācya*) by those [scriptures], o great Lord.'⁶²

We recognise here several elements of the *Śivadharmottara*'s treatment of the topic of the six-syllabled mantra and the speech of Śiva. In the *Niśvāsakārikā* this question will open a disquisition which also encompasses linguistic speculations influenced by Śaivasiddhānta theology. At this point we find a parallel to *Śivadharmottara* chapter one, concerning *Niśvāsakārikā* 34.16cd–17ab, which is parallel to *Śivadharmottara* 1.18.⁶³ This is followed by a paragraph on the 'eight types of words,' a topic also dealt with in *Svacchandatantra* 11, until, at stanza 34.31, the goddess demands to hear about the *śabdārthasambandha*, which will be explained by Īśvara both in terms of a *kārya-kāraṇa* and in those of a *vācya-vācaka* relationship. It is in this context that the *Niśvāsakārikā* inserts the following stanzas:⁶⁴

An expression deprived of meaning that is commonly used must be known as an ungrammatical word, be it in Sanskrit or in Prakrit. Yet scholars know

⁶¹ The *Niśvāsakārikā* is still unpublished and is so far only known through South Indian manuscripts. I could verify that the text that I quote as 'chapter thirty-four' is attested in two paper transcripts of the IFP: T. 17a (pp. 286–301), where it is chapter thirty-four and from which I have transcribed the stanzas in the following footnotes, and T. 127, copied from a manuscript of the Government Oriental Manuscript Library of Chennai, in which the same text is distributed between chapters thirty-two (pp. 295–298) and thirty-four (pp. 309–319). A further paper transcript reporting the *Niśvāsakārikā* is T. 150, but it does not contain the text of this chapter. For considerations on an early dating to the seventh century of at least parts of the *Niśvāsakārikā*, see Goodall et al. 2015, 23ff.

⁶² *Niśvāsakārikā* 34.1–3ab (T. 17, p. 286): *ācāryaḥ śivatantraṃ tu śivajñānaṃ śivasya ca | veti sarvaṃ aśeṣaṇa lokabhetuvivarjitaḥ || 1 || virakto laukike śāstre śivajñānākarāgavān | teṣāṃ ca uttaraṃ vācyaṃ yenopāyena īśvaram || 2 || tad abam śrotum icchāmi tvatprasādād mabeśvara |*

⁶³ Compare *Niśvāsakārikā* 34.16–17ab (T. 17, p. 289): *sūkṣmāt sūkṣmataro devī divyaḥ śiva iti smṛtaḥ | śrutimātranasād yeṣāṃ pradbhānapuruṣeśvarān || 16 || na śabdenātra grhyante na kareṇa na cakṣuṣā |*; with *Śivadharmottara* 1.18: *śrutimātrarasāḥ sūkṣmāḥ pradbhānapuruṣeśvarāḥ | śraddhāmātreṇa grhyante na kareṇa na cakṣuṣā || 18 ||*

⁶⁴ *Niśvāsakārikā* 34.40cd–44ab: *yad arthabhināṃ loke 'smiṇ vacanaṃ sampravartate || 40 || apaśabdās tu taj jñeyam saṃskṛta prakṛto'pi vā | gamakās caiva śabdās tu*

[and] describe ungrammatical words which are transmitted in the Āgamas and other [scriptures] as meaningful words pronounced by ṛṣīs and gods. What is the use of this teaching inspired by ignorance and appetites, which is the cause of the defilements of transmigration, even though it is in Sanskrit, and is elegant and charming? The teaching that, after hearing it, generates merit and the destruction of sins and so on, even though it is corrupted, this has to be known as extremely auspicious.

The stanzas of the *Śivadharmottara* are taken literally, with the sole difference of *vinaṣtam api* in *Niśvāsakārikā* 34.44a instead of *virūpam api* in *Śivadharmottara* 1.66c, which does not imply any significant changes in meaning. However, a variation is introduced by the transposition of these stanzas into the context of the *Niśvāsakārikā*, where they are used in support of the claim that in the scriptures ṛṣīs and gods may have used ungrammatical expressions that would be considered meaningless in common language, but that are meaningful if uttered by divine and semi-divine authors. The linguistic arguments of the *Śivadharmottara* in chapters one and two do not aim to support the use of ungrammatical language, which is more justifiable in an initiatic context, but rather to maintain that the choice of the teaching language is dictated by the necessity to adapt to different audiences and ease the transmission of such teachings (and, thus, of their salvific functions). The *Niśvāsakārikā* shares the claim of the *Śivadharmottara* that it is not the beauty of the language that makes scriptures authoritative, but rather the efficaciousness of the teachings, and thus the morality of their authors and transmitters.

The broader context for the teachings on the *śaḍakṣaramantra* in chapter one of the *Śivadharmottara* is thus that of a tripartite classification of the ‘authoritative speech’—*śaiva*, *gāṇeśvara*, and *munibhāṣita*—which reflects different stages of knowledge transmission. These elements also constitute the basic steps of the so-called ‘descent of scriptures’ (*tantrāvatāra*) of which we find countless examples in Purāṇic and Tantric literature of all traditions. The earliest in Śaiva Tantras is the *śivatantrōtpatti* described in the *Uttarasūtra* of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, in which the *śāstra* or *śivatantra* is said to emerge from Śiva in the form of pure sound (*nāda*); then Sadāśiva communicates it in linguistic form to the gods, from whom it will then reach humankind in various redactions (*Uttarasūtra* 1.22cd-25). More complex ones appear also in early texts, such as the circa seventh-century *Brahmayāmala*, in which the

ṛṣidaivatabhāṣitāḥ || 41 || *āgamādyapaśabdāni varṇayanti vidur budhāḥ* | *saṃskṛtenā-pi kiṃ tena mṛdunā lalitenā ca* || 42 || *avidyārāgavākyena saṃsārakleśabetunā* | *yac chrutvā jāyate puṇyam pāpādīnāṃ pariṅkṣayaḥ* || 43 || *vinaṣtam api tad vākyam vijñeyam atisobhanam* |.

tantrāvatāra is interwoven with a cosmogenesis, and with a classification of scriptures into three ‘streams’ stemming directly from the level of the primeval knowledge (Hatley 2018, 167ff and 383–420).

The *Śivadharmottara* does not articulate this topic following the scheme of a descent of scriptures—this is a connection that the reader can do by linking these contents to those of chapter one and twelve of the *Śivadharmasāstra* and the *Śivadharmottara*—but rather the ratio of the different domains of authoritativeness of the *vākya*s, starting with the source of all authority that corresponds to Śiva’s command, embodied by the mantra. This observation leads one to wonder whether such taxonomy does not also reveal a basic classification of scriptural authority. Sparse examples throughout Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Tantric literature make it possible to at least consider this hypothesis plausible. For instance, the *Caryāpāda* of the *Mṛgendra*, moving through miscellaneous teachings concerning the Śaiva community—such as those about the *vratins* and *avratins* (CP 1.3–21), or the four categories of Śaiva initiates—devotes some verses to the duties of the *ācāryas* (CP 1.23ff), covering among other things the impartation of initiation to people converted from other sects (CP 1.27–28), and the teaching (*vyākhyāna*) of the scriptures (CP 1.30–33). At this point, the *Mṛgendra* prescribes that, ‘in order to account for the validity [of the scripture],’ the teacher should also declare the divisions and names of the ‘currents’ (*srotas*) and the ‘sub-currents’ (*anusrotas*).⁶⁵ The text then moves on to teach about the five currents (*pañca srotāmsi*), ‘the earliest and most comprehensive’ among the classifications of Śaivasiddhānta scriptures (Sanderson 2014, 32).⁶⁶ Corresponding to the five currents are eight fur-

⁶⁵ *Mṛgendra*, CP 1.34ab: *sroto brūyad anusroto bbedān samkhyānam eva ca*.

⁶⁶ In this classification, the foremost *srotas*, associated with the Iṣāna-face of Sadāśiva, corresponds to the twenty-eight Śaivasiddhānta scriptures ‘starting with the Kāmika,’ while the remaining four collect different classes of scriptures, which are considered inferior to the Siddhāntatantras. While the twenty-eight Śaivasiddhānta scriptures ‘starting with the Kāmika’ are listed later on according to the division into the *śivabbedā* and the *rudrabbedā* (CP 1.42cd–47ab), *Mṛgendra*, CP 1.35–36ab, does not list all the titles of texts belonging to the other four groups, but only the first of each group, which are: the southern current, to which scriptures ‘starting with the *Asitāṅga*’ (i.e., the Bhairavatantras) belong; the northern current, comprising the scriptures ‘headed by the *Sanmoha*’ (i.e., the Vāmatantras); the eastern current, which includes the group of scriptures ‘starting with the *Trotala*’ (i.e., the Gāruḍatantras); and the western, with texts concerning Caṇḍeśvara, such as the *Caṇḍāsiddhānta* (i.e., the Bhūtantrantras): *srotāmsi kāmikādy ūrdhvam asitāṅgādi dakṣiṇam | sammohādya uttaram prācyam trolalādi suvistaram || 35 || āpyam caṇḍāsiddhāntādi caṇḍanātibaparigraham |*. Other sources on the topic, among which the very detailed Śrīkaṅṭhī–*Srotobbedā*, are collected in Sand-

ther currents that the commentator Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha calls *anusrotas*, ‘sub-currents,’ using a definition that the *Mṛgendra* had given in CP 1.34a but which is not repeated here, where the *mūla*-text refers to these simply as *srotas*. Among these further currents, we encounter definitions that loosely recall the exposition of *Śivadharmottara* 1.23–24 and 1.63–66:⁶⁷

The knowledgeable know of eight currents: the one of Śiva, the one of the Mantrēśvaras, the one of the Gaṇas, the one of the gods, and the one of the *ṛṣis*, as well as the one related to the *gubhyakas*, (36) / to the families of *yoginīs* and *siddhas*. These follow the main currents. The teacher should proclaim them along with their subdivisions. (37) / The current of Śiva is the primeval Tantra, established by [his] command, without doubts; After that [knowledge] was learned by the Lords, the Gaṇas, the gods and the *munis*, by his will, (38) / it was composed in their own words, [and] it obtained the names of its [authors].

While variants of the *srotas*-teaching are attested in other sources, as we observed throughout this article, the teaching on the *anusrotas* belongs exclusively to the *Mṛgendra*. Neither the text nor the commentary identify specific scriptures as part of this taxonomy, which classifies different types of knowledge originating from Śiva on the basis of their transmitters. They are secondary with respect to the five *srotas*, as is acknowledged by the text and also elucidated by the commentator.⁶⁸ In the conclusion to the section on the *anusrotas*, the *Mṛgendra* informs us that, given this criterion of classification, their own internal subdivisions (*bbedas*) are countless.⁶⁹ In commenting upon 39b, Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha lists the names of these classes of compositions besides the primeval knowledge of Śiva as *māntreśvara*,

erson 2014, 32–34 and footnotes. On the topic of the classification of Śaiva scriptures into *srotas*, I refer the reader to Hanneder 1998.

⁶⁷ *Mṛgendra*, CP 1.36cd–39ab: *śaivaṃ māntreśvaraṃ gāṇaṃ divyaṃ āraṃ ca gauhyakam || yoginīsiddhakaulam ca srotāṃsy aṣṭau vidur budbāḥ | pratisroto ’nuyāyīni tāni brūyād vibhāgaśaḥ || 37 || śaivaṃ prāktantranirmānam ājñāsiddham asaṃśayam | tad tśānair gaṇair devair munibhiś ca tadicchayā || 38 || vijñāya sambhṛtaṃ svoktā tādākhyam samupāgatam |*

⁶⁸ In commenting upon verse 37, Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha explains that these subcurrents are ‘placed’ in each of the main *srotas*—namely that the subdivision according to spreaders and composers is possible for every one of the five branches of Śaiva scriptures. See *Mṛgendravṛtti* ad CP 1.36cd–37: ‘Those starting with the *śaiva* are “the eight currents;” “following the main currents” [means] conforming to the main currents. The meaning is that these are placed within every current, such as the “upper,” as secondary currents; *śaivādīni aṣṭau srotāṃsi pratisroto ’nuyāyīni pratisroto ’nuvidhāyīnīyitāni etāni ekaikasmīn ūrdhvādau srotasy anusrotastvena sthītānīy arthaḥ |*

⁶⁹ *Mṛgendra*, CP 1.42ab: *vādidbedaprabbinnatvāt teṣāṃ saṃkhyā na vidyate.*

gāṇeśvara, *divya*, and *ārṣa*. The *śaiva*, *gāṇeśvara* and *munibhāṣita* types of *vākya* of the *Śivadbharmottara* seem thus to find some correspondence in this part of the *anusrotas* classification; moreover, the use of the clause *ājñāsiddham asaṃśayam* in *Mrgendra*, CP 1.38b to describe the *śaiva* knowledge—the word *jñāna* being supplied by the commentator—is analogous to *ājñāsiddham asandigdham* of *Śivadbharmottara* 1.23c, describing the *śaiva* category, and thus the mantra in six syllables. Note that the *Mrgendra* hints at a hierarchical distinction between the first five types, which were associated with the five main *srotas*, and the remaining three, arguably held at a lower level. It is undeniable that the *Mrgendra* teachings on the *anusrotas* are of minor importance against the background of the Śaiva theories of scriptural revelation, and this assonance with the *Śivadbharmottara*'s teaching on the *vākyas* may therefore remain in the realm of speculations. However, we cannot avoid mentioning here a similar classification, comparable both to the *Śivadbharmottara* and to the paragraph of the *Mrgendra* that we just examined, that is attested in the scriptures of the Pāñcarātra tradition, where it plays a bigger role than the *anusrotas* of the *Mrgendra*. We see it for instance in chapter twenty-two of the *Sātvatasamhitā*, one of the early scriptures of the Pāñcarātra. Analogously to the *Mrgendra*, this chapter of the *Sātvatasamhitā* contains instructions on the behaviours of the four groups of initiates, which include references to modes of teaching and learning in an initiatic context. After discussing the characteristics of the *sādhaka* (22.41–47), the *Sātvatasamhitā* moves on to deal with those of the teachers. While their first requirement is the knowledge of mantras, the teacher is further directed to be knowledgeable in the 'mixing of scriptures' (*sāṅkaryam āgamānām*, 22.52a)⁷⁰ on the basis of the types of authoritative speech (*vākyaavaśāt*, 22.52b). While the context is similar to the one outlined in the *Caryāpāda* of the *Mrgendra*, the terminology and classification of the *vākyas* emerging from the *Sātvatasamhitā* is akin to the one of the *Śivadbharmottara*, as the following stanzas show:⁷¹

In this regard, there are three types of authoritative teachings: divine, uttered by the *munis*, (52) / and human. O you with lotus-eyes, understand the distinction among these: the one that is rich in meaning, without

⁷⁰ For this notion in the Pāñcarātra tradition, see Rastelli 2006, 101.

⁷¹ *Sātvatasamhitā* 22.52cd–59ab: *tatra vai trivīdham vākyaṃ divyaṃ ca munibhāṣitam* || 52 || *pauruṣaṃ cāravindākṣa tadbbadam avadhārāya* | *yadarthāḍḍhyaṃ asandigdham svaccham alpāḥṣaram sthiram* || 53 || *tat pārameśvaram vākyaṃ ājñāsiddham ca mokṣadam* | *praśamsakam vai siddhinām sampravartakam apy attha* || 54 || *sarveṣāṃ rañjakaṃ guḍhanīśayīkaraṇakṣamam* [em. following Venkṭaṇātha's *Pāñcarātrarakṣā; guḍham* ed.] | *munivā-*

doubts, clear, consisting of a few syllables, stable, (53) / this is the teaching of Parameśvara, established by [his] command and conferring liberation. Praising as well as generating powers, (54) / attractive to everyone, apt for clarifying obscure matters: know the teaching of the *munis* to be like this, conferring results suitable to the four lifegoals. (55) / Meaningless, lacking logical connections, poor in content, verbose, not accomplishing the foremost teachings (*scil.*: of the god and the *munis*): this is a human teaching, (56) / and [it] has to be abandoned, as a source for useless powers conducive to hell. That teaching that supports well established notions, has a fitting meaning [and] is [therefore] different [from other human teachings], (57) / even if it is human it has to be accepted like a teaching coming from the *munis*. That scripture that originates from teachings that are thus fit to be accepted, o great-minded one, (58) / know that its doctrines lead to the right path, [and] that it is entirely an injunctive teaching.

The three *vākya*s described in the *Sātvata* do not completely overlap with those of chapter one of the *Śivadharmottara*, but there certainly is ground for comparison: the first two, the ‘divine’ and the one ‘uttered by the *munis*,’ are connected to the two goals of liberation and enjoyment, just like the *śaiva* and the *gāṇeśvara* types of the *Śivadharmottara*, which in turn knows of a third *vākya* associated with the *munis*. The ‘human’ *vākya* described by the *Sātvata* does not seem to have a wordily correspondence in the *Śivadharmottara* at first; one can nevertheless detect a resemblance to the *durbhāṣita* kind of teaching mentioned in the Śaiva text (1.64–65). Furthermore, literal correspondences exist in the definitions of the *śaiva/divya* teachings (see *Sātvatasamhitā* 22.53–54, parallel to *Śivadharmottara* 1.23) which are also partly shared with the *Mrgendra*.

The *Sātvatasamhitā* introduces these teachings as an excursus on the necessity for the teacher to be able to distinguish scriptures on the basis of the *vākya*. Later Pāñcarātra scriptures such as the *Pārameśvarasamhitā* (dateable 1100–1300 according to Rastelli 2006, 54) have used these categories attested in the *Sātvatasamhitā* as the basis for the classification of Pāñcarātra scriptures into three groups, namely the *divyāsāstra*, the *munibhāṣitāsāstra* and the *pauruṣāsāstra*. This is attested above all in *Pārameśvarasamhitā* 10.336–345 and *Īśvarasamhitā* 1.54–63. As observed by Leach (2014, 118), and as already partly remarked by Schrader (1916, 22–24), the passage

*kyam tu tad viddhi caturvargaphalapradam || 55 || anarbhakam asambaddham alpārtham śabdaḍambaram | anirvābhakam ādyokter vākyaṃ tat pauruṣam smṛtam || 56 || beyam cānarbhāsiddhinām ākaram narakāvaham | prasiddhārthānuvādam yat samgatārtham vilakṣaṇam || 57 || api cet pauruṣam vākyaṃ grāhyaṃ tan munivākyaivat | evam ādeyavākya-
ttha āgamo yo mahāmate || 58 || sanmārgadarśanaṃ kṛtsnaṃ vidhivādam ca viddhi tam |.*

of the *Pārameśvarasambitā* and its parallel in the *Īśvarasambitā* are the first attestations that the tradition confers a higher status to the so-called ‘three jewels’ of the Pāñcarātra, i.e., the *Sātvatasambitā*, the *Paṣṅkarasambitā*, and the *Jayākhyasambitā*, which are grouped together in the *divyāsāstra* category, namely the scriptures proclaimed directly by god and in accordance with the Veda. Moreover, such interpretation is also maintained by Venkaṭanātha (1270–1369) in his *Pāñcarātrarakṣā*, where he quotes in its support exactly the afore-mentioned passage from the *Sātvatasambitā*. Writing about Venkaṭanātha’s use of this passage, Cox (2016b, 106ff) links it with the concerns afflicting the Pāñcarātra textual composers, and the interpretive tradition that has in Venkaṭanātha its foremost representative, towards interpolations and the corruption of scriptures. The fear for ‘false teachers,’ and thus of the corruption of the teachings, played a role also in the *Śivadharmottara*’s criticism towards the *durbhāṣita* scriptures and the corrupt teachers who were responsible for their composition, in this chapter and, above all, in chapter two. In both places, the text concludes their disquisitions on the topic by threatening those bad teachers with hell, a menace that the *Sātvatasambitā* similarly addresses to the ‘human’ teachings that did not comply with divine command.

5. The six-syllabled mantra beyond the *Śivadharmā*

A high level of complexity lies behind the treatment that the *Śivadharmottara* devotes to its chief mantra, and its understanding has several implications on our knowledge of how this early Śaiva work mediated with the Dharmaśāstra and the Vedic tradition on one side and other early forms of Śaivism on the other. The following eleven chapters of the *Śivadharmottara* will showcase the powers of their mantra from multiple angles, but above all by turning it into a liberating tool thanks to its association to the practice of the *jñānayoga*.

The impact of the mantra in six syllables does not end with the *Śivadharmāśāstra* and the *Śivadharmottara* but reverberates in scriptures and practices of Śaiva believers up to modern times. Given the general character of this rather ubiquitous mantra and its non-sectarian nature, assessing the role that the *Śivadharmā* might have played in spreading its use can be an intricate question to unfold; nevertheless, some recent attempts and the solid testimony of textual sources suggest a few directions that are worth taking.

In the first place, a recent study by Bisschop (2018a) has brought forth the hypothesis that the six-syllabled mantra of *Śivadharmāśāstra* chapter seven might have influenced the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* in fashioning the notion of the *śaḍakṣarī vidyā*, which corresponds to the mantra *om maṇipadme hūṃ*, one of the most popular in Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially in the Tibetan re-

gion. This hypothesis rests on the possibility of tracing connections between this Buddhist Sūtra and early Śaiva environments, which has been the topic of early scholarship and has been discussed most recently by Eltschinger (2014, 81–85). As highlighted by the latter, the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* regards Maheśvara as the most important Brahmanical deity of the Kaliyuga, produced from Avalokiteśvara’s forehead in a prophecy-style description that echoes, among others, the Vedic *Puruṣasūkta*. In the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*’s envisioning of the Kaliyuga as a period that will see the prevalence of the devotees of Maheśvara and, thus, of practices such as the *liṅga*-cult, Bisschop (2015) had recognised a previously unidentified Śaiva quotation as corresponding to *Śivadharmaśāstra* 3.17. This could be a hint that the authors of the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* knew the text of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, which makes it plausible that they were also aware of its teachings on the six-syllabled mantra.

The assumption of a Śaiva influence for the Buddhist mantra in six syllables had already been made by Studholme in his study of the origin of the mantra *oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ* (2002). Here, he compared the characterisation of the *ṣaḍakṣarī vidyā* of the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* with that of the mantra *namaḥ śivāya* and *oṃ namaḥ śivāya* in Śaiva sources, arguing for similarities that, according to him, could prove a Śaiva derivation for the Buddhist doctrine on the mantra in six syllables. However, failing to historicise his sources, the Śaiva texts that Studholme quotes in support of this hypothesis—mainly the *Brahmottarakāṇḍha* of the *Skandapurāṇa* (Venkateśvara Press edition), the *Vāyavīyasambhitā* of the *Śivapurāṇa*, and a related passage in the *Liṅgapurāṇa*—turn out to be demonstrably later than the first mention of the *ṣaḍakṣarī vidyā* occurring in a manuscript of the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*. Such mention is already available in the Gilgit manuscript G1 dateable on palaeographical grounds to the early seventh century (Mette 1997, 9).

Future research may or may not be able to add more to our knowledge of the actual link, if any, between the early *Śivadharma* texts and the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* regarding the doctrine of the mantra in six syllables. At the same time, the Śaiva passages examined by Studholme highlight a tendency that was also noticed by Rocher 1991, and has surfaced several times in the present article, i.e., that some of the Purāṇic passages most often cited to illustrate the topic of the Śaiva mantras in five and six syllables are derived from the *Vāyavīyasambhitā* and the *Liṅgapurāṇa*, which in turn rely heavily on the testimony of chapter one of the *Śivadharmottara*.

This circumstance points out that a viable path to study the impact of the mantra teachings of the *Śivadharmottara* beyond the *Śivadharma* passes once again through the rich reception history of our text, which allows us to reconstruct the process of adaptation and conservation that carries the *Śivadharmottara* from the earliest phases of the history of Śaivism into modernity.

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Abbreviations

EFEQ	=	École française d'Extrême-Orient
CII	=	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum CII vol. III = see Bhandarkar 1981 CII vol. V = see Mirashi 1963
CDIAL	=	Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages, see Turner 1962–1966
EI	=	Epigraphia Indica
IFP	=	Institut français de Pondichéry
GOML	=	Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai
MS[S]	=	manuscript[s]
NAK	=	National Archives, Kathmandu
NGMPP	=	The Nepalese-German Manuscript Preservation Project
SI	=	Select Inscriptions, see Sircar 1942 and 1983
SP ₃	=	<i>Skandapurāṇa</i> Adhyāya 167, S recension, see Bisschop 2006a
TAK	=	<i>Tāntrikābbhidhānakosā</i>

Manuscripts and their sigla

Śivadharma corpus

N ₀₂ ^C	Cambridge University Library MS Add. 2102. Palm-leaf, available online: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01694-00001/1
N ₄₅ ^C	Cambridge University Library MS Add. 1645. Palm-leaf, available online: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01645/1
N ₉₄ ^C	Cambridge University Library MS Add. 1694. Palm-leaf, available online: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-02102/1
N ₀₇ ^K	NAK 1–1075, NGMPP B 7/3. Palm-leaf

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- N₁₁^K NAK 5-738, NGMPP A 11/3. Palm-leaf
N_{A12}^K NAK 5-892, NGMPP A 12/3. Palm-leaf
N₂₈^K NAK 6-7, NGMPP A 1028/4. Palm-leaf
N₈₂^K NAK 3-393, NGMPP A 1082/3. Palm-leaf
N₅₂^{Ko} Asiatic Society Kolkata MS G 3852, cat. no. 4085. Palm-leaf
N₅₆^{Ko} Asiatic Society Kolkata MS G 4076, cat. no. 4083. Palm-leaf
N₇₇^{Ko} Asiatic Society, Kolkata G 4077/1. Palm-leaf, dated to [Nepāla] Saṃvat 156 (1035/36 CE)
N₁₅^O Bodleian Library, Oxford, Sansk a 15. Palm-leaf
N₅₇^P Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS. Skt. 57-B 23
IFP T. 32 & 514 Paper transcripts in Devanāgarī

Haracaritacintāmaṇi

- B Manuscript No. 757, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des manuscrits orientaux, Paris. Kashmirian Devanāgarī on paper.
D Manuscript No. 599, Oriental Research Library, Śrīnagar. Kashmirian Devanāgarī on paper.
L Manuscript No. 7042, Library of the India Office, London. Śāradā on paper.
S Manuscript No. 1510, Oriental Research Library, Śrīnagar. Śāradā on paper.

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