Article

Viṣṇu the Saviour: On the Festival of the Romantic Quarrel (prāṇayakalahotsava) in the Pāñcarātra saṃhitās

Ewa Dębicka-Borek

Department of Oriental Studies, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, 31-007 Kraków, Poland; debicka.debicka@uj.edu.pl

Abstract: Built on the theme of the lovers’ quarrel that eventually ends in reconciliation, the Festival of the Romantic Quarrel (prāṇayakalahotsava) displays a wide scope of meanings, so far discussed primarily in regard to its current reenactment in the South Indian Viṣṇu temples dedicated to Viṣṇu and his wife, Lakṣmī/Śrī. The paper explores the rare treatments of the festival found in the Pāñcarātra saṃhitās, namely the texts which serve as a prescriptive base for the ritual order in many of these temples. The analysis aims to demonstrate how the account of this particular festival might have served to channel ideas connected to a soteriological doctrine of self-surrender to Viṣṇu (prapatti), perhaps as a result of reinterpreting the teachings of the Pāñcarātra under the influence of the Śrīvaisnāva tradition.

Keywords: Pāñcarātra; prāṇayakala; Festival of Romantic Quarrel; Viṣṇu; gajendramoksā; prapatti; Śrīpraśnasamhitā; self-surrender

1. Introduction

The late Pāñcarātra saṃhitās, i.e., the texts which provide a prescriptive base for many of South Indian Viṣṇuva temples, incorporate a number of prescriptions for temple festivals (utsavas) aimed at periodical celebrations of Viṣṇu and his consort, Śrī/Lakṣmī. As Smith remarks, what such accounts often share is they present temple celebrations as “bio-fests”, i.e., as focused on honoring biographical or biological events in the life of the god. In other words, the festivals often translate mundane chores into a temple’s microcosm, either in regard to the routine of a human day, from getting up in the morning to retiring for the night, or in regard to events that are repeated, albeit not so much standardized, such as hunting, swinging on a swing, or quarreling (Smith 1982, p. 40).

The Festival of the Romantic Quarrel or the Quarrel in Love (prāṇayaka-kalaha-utsava), which I would like to discuss below, transfers human behavior to the divine couple by means of a motif of an argument between the lovers. This motif recurs in Sanskrit treatises on love (kāmaśāstras) and Sanskrit poetry in terms of the element of one’s mortal love-life. Conventionally, it is a jealous woman who starts the quarrel, and the quarrel ends in reconciliation. When ritualized on the premises of the South Indian Viṣṇuva temples, the quarrel takes place between Viṣṇu and his wife Lakṣmī/Śrī.

Only a couple of the Pāñcarātra saṃhitās include recommendations pertaining to the kalaha. The fullest treatment of this festival is found in the Śrīpraśnasamhitā (ŚrīprS), whose compiler, in addition to providing ritual practicalities, enriches the account with a narrative drawn on the well-known episode of Viṣṇu rescuing an elephant (gajendramoksā). As a result of certain adjustments to its plot, basically known in its version coming from the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, in a new context of the ŚrīprS, the narrative assumes the role of explaining the god’s reasons for leaving his spouse secretly in terms of his urge to protect his devotee. Although the ŚrīprS seems to be the only Pāñcarātra text which makes use of this narrative, we know that both the proponents of the Viṣṇu school of thought and their predecessors, the Tamil Ālvārs, happened to evoke it when they spoke about the
prapanna, i.e., the devotee who, while having troubles, takes refuge in god (Hopkins 2002, pp. 272–73). The same soteriological concept, i.e., prapatti/saranāgati, is discussed in the ŚrīprśS. My primary concern is therefore to explore how and why the notion of a quarrel, framed by temple festival’s prescriptions, might have been used by the compiler of the ŚrīprśS as a means to illustrate the doctrine of seeking refuge in god.

I begin my essay with a brief reiteration of crucial ideas concerning the notion of the pranāyakalaha in various Sanskrit textual traditions which predominantly contextualize it within the erotic sphere of human life. Next, I refer briefly to the modes of the present day reenactment of the pranāyakalaha festival in the South Indian Vaiṣṇava temples, chiefly based on the outcomes of research presented by Younger (1982) and Narayanan (1996) in regard to the Srirangam tradition. With its elaborate oral narratives, aimed at explaining the reason for the divine couple’s quarrel as caused by Viṣṇu’s secret romance, the Srirangam pattern of the kalaha—moulded locally over centuries under social and political influences and changing Śrīvaishnava concepts—puts the romantic aspect at the forefront. Nonetheless, it offers a range of readings, including those that seem to refer to the same conceptual core as the ŚrīprśS does.

In the final part of the paper, I discuss the ŚrīprśS kalaha passage in terms of a potent exemplification of the doctrine of prapatti, in which the erotic/romantic features of the couple’s argument are veiled by the notions related to Viṣṇu’s protective aspect. This poses a question about the traces of the influence of Viṣṇūṣūdra thought on ŚrīprśS teachings.

2. Instances of pranāyakalaha in Sanskrit Literary Traditions

A couple’s quarrel, by definition ending in reconciliation, has long been known to the authors of Sanskrit treatises and poems as an expression of an integral element of a (man’s) love-life. In this sense the lovers’ argument was perceived as providing the couple with particularly intense sensations during their first intimacy after an argument (Agrawala 1992, p. 651) and thus strengthening the relationship. As a matter of literary convention, it is usually a woman who loses her temper suspecting her beloved’s infidelity. To mitigate her anger, the man is advised not only to use appropriate words, but even to use specific gestures, for instance, to prostrate himself at her feet (Hara 2001, p. 181; Agrawala 1992, pp. 650–51). To the Sanskrit poets, the concept must have been exemplifying various shades of love to such an extent that they applied the term kalahāntaritā to refer to a certain type of a beloved (nātikā) “who has turned away from her lover after a violent quarrel [...] although he now speaks gently to her” (Lienhard 1984, p. 93). Quarreling as marked with eroticism has also been often linked with the spring season (vasanta), during which a quarrel was enjoyed by couples as an element of spring celebrations. As shown, for instance, in the Vītāmahādbhātan (14th cent.) from Kerala which refers to the vernal Festival of Love, in such cases the argument was meant to be mocked and performed in privacy, when the couple was alone (Vielle 2019). In turn, the Virāpaksasasantotsavacampū by Ahobala (14/15th cent.) depicts the kalaha in a manner that seems to blur the distinctions between a literary motif and ritual account. Its author, too, vividly relates the amorous quarrel within the frameworks of the Spring Festival, which in this case overlaps with the Great Festival (mahotsava) annually celebrated in Hampi. The context of the early Vijayanagara implies that the Spring Festival to which the kalaha belongs glorifies fertility and rebirth, but, when it comes to the notion of royal power, the symbolical revitalization of kingship as well. The protagonists of this kalaha—Śiva-Virāpaka, who throughout the text is homologized with a Vijayanagara king, and Pārvati—quarrel after the Hunt Festival which constitutes another part of the celebrations of spring. Pārvati blames Śiva—depicted both as a festive image and an active agent—for sporting with other ladies, among them Gaṅgā, during his trip to the forest (note the mythically connotated, aggressive, and erotic features of Śiva). The angry goddess does not let him into the ceremonial hall, but after a long exchange of arguments she calms down and the couple eventually reconciles. Śiva assumes the form of a half-man and half-woman (ardhanārīśvara), so that in the final scene he is worshipped together with Pārvati (Anderson 1994, pp. 247–49). Similarly, the Mahotsavavidhi by Aghorasiva
(12th cent.), a manual for a nine day long festival used in the South Indian Śaiva temples, recommends a kalaha performance on the day preceding the wedding of the god and the goddess, yet it does not provide any details (Davis 2010, pp. 132, 134).

3. The pranayakalaha in Current Practice of South Indian Vaiṣṇava Temples

Before turning to the so far unstudied Pāñcarātra accounts of the pranayakalaha, let us first briefly reiterate what has been written so far in regard to its current reenactments in the Śrīvaishṇava temples. The festival is known in a number of temples in South India; however, the one most often evoked and studied is a variant of celebrations associated with the Rāṅganātha temple in Srirangam. The Srirangam tradition of the pranayakalaha offers a wide scope of interpretations, from both the perspectives of popular beliefs and the Śrīvaishṇava theology.

As we learn from Younger (1982), in Srirangam the kalahotsava is held in spring, within the larger frameworks of the ten day long paṅkuni festival. The paṅkuni festival has a long history: references to some forms of its celebrations appear in inscriptions from the 11th cent. onwards (Younger 1982, p. 623). As far as its present mode of celebration is concerned, in addition to the daily procession, the image of Viṣṇu, known as Nam Perumāl (‘Our Leader’) or Alakiya Maṇavālan (‘the Handsome Groom’), is taken on four longer trips in the four cardinal directions. On one of the levels of interpretation, by means of these trips, during which Viṣṇu comes into contact with various local communities—symbolized by the deities or the sites he visits—the storyline behind the paṅkuni festival reveals a bunch of religious and social issues connected to the Srirangam temple and its environment. It is god’s third trip, which due to its engagement with the motif of illicit love, triggers a scenario of quarrel between the god and his wife. According to local beliefs, early in the morning, the deity leaves the temple to secretly meet with the Cōla princess Kamaladevi in the city of Uraiyyur. When, after completing his last, fourth trip, the god returns home for good, his official wife, the goddess Raṅgaranyaki, closes the door in his face. After several unsuccessful attempts to enter her shrine, Viṣṇu realizes that she knows about his romance with the princess. Eventually the saint Nammāḻvār intervenes and persuades the goddess to let the god in. After reconciliation, the couple is properly married.

Whilst Younger does not particularly focus on the kalaha as a ritual/festival in itself, he shows it as an integral element of two intersecting motifs he perceives essential for the paṅkuni scenario: the wanderings of Viṣṇu and illicit love. These two motifs find their expression both in popular beliefs and Śrīvaishṇava thought. During his wanderings, Viṣṇu, though remaining transcendent, becomes easily accessible to his worshippers. On account of his affair, however, “the romantic or mystical longing of the heart for God is expressed in the two contrasting quests of the spontaneous, illicit love of the innocent princess and the more studied and demanding love of the formidable wife” (Younger 1982, p. 645). To put it differently, the engagement of the two women beloved by Viṣṇu in the narrative behind the festival foregrounds clearly the two soteriological paths available to a devotee, or, in Younger’s words, “the two essential dimensions of the soul’s appropriation of the divine life”: prapatti, i.e., the self-surrender, embodied by the princess, whose love for the god is “painful and uncertain” and marked by longing; and bhakti, i.e., devotion, embodied by the god’s legal wife, whose love “is strong and lasting” (Younger 1982, pp. 650–51).

Narayanan (1996, pp. 101–2) complements Younger’s observations by pointing that in view of Śrīvaishṇava theology, the crucial aspect of a quarrel between the god and his wife seems to be the establishment of Nammāḻvār’s role as a teacher. This is achieved by making him the one who reconciles the couple. Such an approach, as she continues, entails however that Viṣṇu and Śrī are inseparable: Nammāḻvār is able to re-unite them knowing that divine justice (Viṣṇu) and divine grace (Lakṣmi/Śrī) are mutually bound. In addition, Narayanan presents several other options for reading the symbolism of the kalaha. For instance, Śrī might be taken as representing a human being who should understand that the god cares about other humans as well. Alternatively, the story behind the festival reenactment may imply that as a human soul Śrī is reconciled with Viṣṇu due to the salvific
power of Nammālvār’s words. Lastly, Śrī’s jealousy caused by the unfidelity of her husband may point to certain local legends that were appropriated into the mainstream with the help of Śrī-related stories.

In terms of ritual practice, the quarrel is acted out by two parties. The respective groups—in the case of Srirangam, these are the special cantors called araiyars who embody the goddess and the priests who assume the role of the god—stand by the respective images and exchange arguments on behalf of the deities. While reenacting Śrī’s anger towards the god, the cantors sing and perform certain verses from the works of Ālvārs. Viṣṇu offers some excuses and presents his wife with flowers. Upon eventual reconciliation, achieved thanks to Nammālvār’s persuasion, the couple exchanges flower garlands (Narayanan 1996, p. 102).

The ritual pattern of the kalaha may of course locally differ in regard to certain elements. For instance, in the Alvar Tirunagari, it is performed on the ninth night of the Tiruvāyimal recitation during the Festival of Recitation (Narayanan 1996, pp. 107–8)7. In the Śrī Parthasarathi temple in Triplicane, the festival is performed on the ninth day of the brahmotsava. In the Celuvanārāyaṇa temple in Melkote, celebrations of the pranayakalaha conclude the ten day long brahmotsava (Narasaraja Bhattar 1998, p. 229). In turn, in Tirupati it is observed two months after the brahmotsava, which may point to its independent character (Ramesh 2000, p. 125).

To sum up, the kalaha festival which is currently held in the South Indian Viṣṇu temples may undoubtedly comprise several layers of meaning, and an important role in vesting it with many of them has been played by the ideas disseminated by the Śrīvaṣṭiṇa ācāryas. In the next section I shall demonstrate that its conceptual core, namely the expression of a certain model of the soul–god relationship, which is the self-surrender (prapatti), seems to be also present in the Pāṅcarātra ritual prescriptions despite being voiced by means of a different narrative.

4. Ritual Prescriptions on pranayakalahotsava in Pāṅcarātra samhitās

The Pāṅcarātra authors did not give much space to teachings concerning the pranayakalahotsava. The topic is dealt with in three samhitās—Viṣṇutilakasamhitā, Īśvarasamhitā (IS), and ŚrīprśŚ—out of which only the latter two are available to me8. The compositions of the IS and the ŚrīprśŚ most likely have approximate dates. The IS, dated not earlier than 13th–14th cent. (Matsubara 1996, pp. 28–31), is the source of some textual borrowings for the ŚrīprśŚ9.

As far as the issue of the kalahotsava in the IS considered, I do not take into account the passage IS 12.24–40, which, in Smith’s opinion, treats the Festival of Quarrel in an alternative way, yet is “confusingly equated with vasantotsava” (Smith 1982, p. 48). According to me, the IS 12.24–40 belongs to a larger unit of recommendations which continues up to IS 12.62 and, as a whole, pertains to various rites connected to the Spring Festival (vasantotsava). In brief, the passage discerned by Smith begins with remarks on the jalakṛṣṭa/jalayuddha (play/sport with water), which, in its ultimate verse, seems to be equated with the vasantotsava, provided the latter takes one day only (kevalam jalayuddham tu kuryadh evahā utsave || IS 12.40cd ||; “But during the one-day-long [vasanta-] utsava one should perform only the battle with water”). The jalakṛṣṭa/vasantotsava is scheduled for the period of two vernal months called collectively Madhumādhava, (March/April–April/May), preferably in the light half of the lunar month (madhumādhamāvatrasu sukla-pakṣe viśeṣatāh || IS 12.24cd ||). Besides its one day variant, the vasantotsava itself may take three, five, seven, or nine days (IS 12.26). Within its frameworks, every day the god should be taken out in a procession. Before this happens, at midday, just after a bali offering, the god, in his processional image (yatramārtigata vibhu), along with Śrī and Puṣṭi, should be brought in a palanquin to a great pavilion (māndapa) and put on a seat made of grain, which is daubed with the powder (cārṇa) to the accompaniment of the Śrīsākta recitation.
(IS 12.32cd–34ab). When, eventually, the procession carrying the divine and his consorts reaches the streets, the festivities turn into a mocked battle (yuddhakr̥īḍa) carried out with the use of various substances which participants throw on each other. Such a battle is reenacted every day during the vasantotsava. The selection of substances to be used—such as perfumed powders, flowers, and liquids—depends on the day in which the battle takes place (IS 12.34cd–40). The joyful character of this mocked battle, devoid of any resentments between the Lord and his consort/s, but additionally engaging various strata (and genders) of the Vaisnavī society—from renouncers (yati) to various types of temple women (gāṇīkā, devadāsī) (IS 12.54–55)—complies much more with the atmosphere of various traditions of Spring celebrations described in Sanskrit literary sources (see e.g., Anderson 1994, pp. 37–40; Nugteren 2005, pp. 103–7) than with a couple-oriented verbal argument prescribed in the Pañcarātra passages dealing with the kalahotsava. This also seems to be suggested by the purposes of the variation in the festival treated in detail in IS 12, which is the play/sport with water (jalakr̥īḍa/jalayuddha). Sprinkling each other with water grants the devotees a state of absorption in Viṣṇu, but also brings pleasure to Varuṇa; in other words, it ensures rains and purifies the people (IS 12.56–58).

However, the romantic quarrel (pranayakalaha) is surely mentioned in the previous chapter of the IS, which recommends it to be held on the eighth night of brahmotsava/mahotsava. No ritual advice is given, nor any hints pertaining to the reason for the argument between the god and his spouse/s (IS 11.312–314ab):

At the eighth day’s night, preceded by mounting a swing (dōlarohaṇam),
he should have [god] mount a horse and engage in hunting (11.312),
[one should make him into] a play of protecting [a] devotee/s (bhaktasantrāṇālīṭa) on the brāhma[muhurtar?],12 and the purification of a city (nagarasodhanam) (11.313ab).
There should be a mutual amorous argument (pranayāḥ kalaha) between the god and two goddesses.
One should perform an act of their reconciliation and recite: “let it be forgiven” (313cd–314ab)13.

The sequence involving a ritual hunt (mrgayotsava) followed by a pranayakalaha was known to later Sanskrit authors, e.g., the already mentioned Vijayanagara poet Aho Baba, who depicted a hunting expedition of Śiva as the occasion for a romance and, thus, subsequently, the reason of the couple’s argument. It is however not entirely clear in the above verses of the IS whether the mentioned events are meant to be performed one by one as the elements of a wider ritual pattern or simply on the same night. Secondly, the Pañcarātra’s use of terms, such as bhaktasantrāṇālīṭa (a play of protecting a devotee/s) and Nagarasodhanam (purification of a city)14, is quite obscure to me, for I could not find any occurrence of these terms in other samhitas. According to the editors-cum-translators of the IS, M.A. Lakshmithathachar and Varadachari (2009, p. 605), all the enumerated activities in which the god should engage in after swinging on a swing (dōlarohana) succeed one another. In addition, M.A. Lakshmithathachar and V. Varadachari note that the play of protecting bhaktas refers in this case to the reenactment of the episode connected to the tradition of Tirumānkarā Āḻvār, in the light of which he, along with his comrades, robbed Viṣṇu on his way to the wedding. Having heard a mantra chanted in his ear by the god, Tirumānkarā gave up banditry and became Viṣṇu’s follower. The rite the editors refer to seems to be the Vedupari (Tamil. veṭupari—lit. hunter’s robbery). Its best known variant is linked to the Srirangam tradition, in which it is enacted as an element of the adhyāyanotsava, though many other South Indian temples of Viṣṇu include it in their festival calendar as well (L’Hernault and Reiniche 1999, pp. 73–74).15 In regard to the account of the IS, Lakshmithathachar and Varadachari further claim that the play of protecting bhakta/s is followed by the ceremony of “purification of the city”, which aims at inspecting the town by the god in order to gather the remaining dispersed thieves and bring them back to the lore of Vaishnavism.16 Unable to find any hints of the bhaktasantrāṇālīṭa in other Pañcarātra
samhitās, I alternatively propose to link it with another narrative on Viṣṇu’s power to save, namely with the already mentioned narrative on rescuing gajendra. The narrative does not occur in the IS but is adduced within the framework of the ŚrīprṣŚ’s treatment of the kalāha in the form of an episode which takes place before the quarrel between the god and the goddess starts. Considering that the IS and the ŚrīprṣŚ were composed most likely at a similar time, and the compiler of the latter might have known the content of the former, it seems plausible that the short formula of the bhaktasantrāvalī could have inspired him to reach for a popular motif centered on the god’s eagerness to protect his devotees. Alternatively, with a purpose to emphasize concepts which were pivotal for the teachings presented in the ŚrīprṣŚ, he just skillfully expressed what was also intended, yet not elaborated, by the IS’ compiler. Whether or not this presumption is correct, traces linking the concept of protecting devotees with the pranāyakalahotsava appear to be currently discernible in the temple practice of Melkote, i.e., the town to which the IS is traditionally linked. According to local beliefs pertaining to the kalahotsava, when accused by his wife of a secret romance, Viṣṇu excuses himself saying that he went out for the sake of his devotee (Narasaraja Bhattar 1998, p. 229).

This brings us to the account of the kalāha in the ŚrīprṣŚ. In contrast to the IS, the ŚrīprṣŚ does not mention any other grand festival which overlaps with the pranāyakalahā, and thus makes the impression of recommending it as an independent full-fledged event. According to this samhitā, the romantic quarrel should be celebrated in the springtime, in the period between the months of Makara (the latter half of January–the former half of February) and Māna (the latter half of March–the former half of April) (ŚrīprṣŚ 47.22cd–23).

The ŚrīprṣŚ’s treatment of the pranāyakalahā begins with Viṣṇu’s first-person account of his own deeds performed during his solo trip beyond the temple. Abiding by the structure of the samhitā, which, as implied by its title (Śrīprṣna = ‘questions [asked by] Śrī [to Viṣṇu]’), the narrative is built around Viṣṇu’s answers to his consort’s questions, as the god unfolds the story of his doings in front of the goddess. His report, overtly presented as a teaching about the festival, which is “a quarrel caused by love”, is introduced as a sort of reply (sometimes, as we shall see, interrupted by Laksmanī) to what he learned earlier about her “adventures in the previous eons” (ŚrīprṣŚ 47.1cd–2ab: jñātam adya mayā pūrvakalpaṃvatram tava priye ||47.1|| vadāmi hy utṣavaṃ bhadre pranāyāt kalahas tava | 47.2ab|).

As mentioned above, Viṣṇu’s account draws on a popular narrative telling how Viṣṇu rescued the king of the elephants (gajendra) from a crocodile. In his article on a Telugu adaptation of the gajendramokṣa episode by Bommera Potana (15th cent.), Shulman (1993, p. 127) notes that this narrative owes its popularity to a version transmitted in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa 8.2–4, in which it is told by Śuka to Parikṣit. Saying that this particular purāṇa, composed in Sanskrit in South India circa the 9th cent., has been significantly permeated with Tamil Ālvārs’ “emotional” bhakti, Shulman refers to the influential opinion of Friedhelm Hardy (1983, pp. 488–89). This hypothesis has been however recently questioned by Edwin Bryant. Taking into consideration the iconographical evidence gathered by Dennis Hudson (1995) in the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāl temple in Kanchipuram, i.e., the sequence of panels following certain episodes found in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa17, Bryant (2002, p. 61f.) proposes to take the 8th cent. as an upper limit the date of the text’s composition, i.e., the time when the temple was completed. If so, as he argues, it is likely that the Bhāgavatapurāṇa might have attained its final form by the Gupta period, the North might have been the locus of its composition, and these might have been Ālvārs who were influenced by the text and not vice versa. On the other hand, Patton Burchett (2019, pp. 76–83) reasons that emotional bhakti associated with the Bhāgavatapurāṇa might have been earlier expressed in the Śivadharma, the Śaiva text which was most likely composed in North India (6th–7th cent.)18.

Possibly the earliest visual representations of the gajendramokṣa motif are the scenes carved on the pillar from Mathura (early 5th cent.) and the Gupta panel from Deogarh (early 6th cent.) (Shulman 1993, p. 127). On the other hand, in its localized variations, the narrative contributed to various legends connected to certain South Indian temples dedicated to Viṣṇu. For instance, the alternative name of the Varadarāja Perumāl temple in
Kanchipuram, i.e., Hastigiri/Hastiśaila/Hastipura—recorded in various sources as early as the 11th cent.—is connected to legends that say it is built on a hill that represents the abode of the elephant (Sanskr. hastin) Gajendra saved by Varadarāja (Raman 1975, pp. 6–9)\(^1\). In terms of literary production, this is already Tirumānḵai Āḻvār, who recalls the motif of Gajendra in one of his compositions devoted to Lord Raṅganātha to express his protectiveness towards his devotees (Chari 2009, p. 139). In the same context, the episode was often evoked, for instance, by Vedānta Deśīka (13–14th cent.), one of the famous Śrīvaiṣṇava teachers and exponents of the Viśiṣṭadvaita thought. Vedānta Deśīka refers to it both in his poems (Hopkins 2002, p. 190) and the treatise on the defense of the Pāñcarātra, i.e., Śrīpañcarātraraksī\(^2\).

In the case of the Śrīprāśī, the gajendramokṣa episode can be incorporated smoothly into the teachings on the kalaha. Contrary to its rather elaborate and poetically valued Bhāgavatapurāṇa variant\(^3\), the narrative put by the Śrīprāśī compiler into Viṣṇu’s mouth is condensed, encapsulated within a few verses and rather dull. Structurally, the episode is followed by a short remark of the goddess on the purpose of the kalaha festival, and, again fashioned as Viṣṇu’s lines, an account of ritual practicalities. The consistency of this teaching owes to the narrative persuasiveness of the gajendramokṣa episode when it comes to providing a motif which might have made Viṣṇu forget to inform his consort that he was leaving the temple. Another reason is the recurrent reference to Viṣṇu’s protectiveness which appears throughout the passage notwithstanding its narrative and ritualistic character\(^4\).

Viṣṇu’s account begins with a recalling of a mythical setting of his secret trip’s destination. For example, in the case of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa\(^5\), the landscape he depicts is discerned by the Trikūṭa mountain situated in the middle of the Śvetadvīpa, on the Ocean of Milk\(^6\) (Śrīprāśī 47.2cd–3ab). Nearby the mountain, there is a beautifully situated pond, which is cooled by the gusts of a fragrant, light wind, and, crucially for the narrative, inhabited by a great crocodile (makara) (Śrīprāśī 47.2cd–7). The descriptive character of the passage becomes more dynamic when Viṣṇu turns to the appearance of a herd of elephants led by their king (gajendra). The animal approaches the pond to quench his thirst. When gajendra plunges his trunk in the water, a crocodile gets hold of his foot. In distress, the elephant recites a sort of prayer (Śrīprāśī 47.10–11ab), the addressee of which is unnamed\(^7\).

Out of all gods, it is only him, Viṣṇu, who at once, without even informing his wife, comes to Gajendra’s rescue (Śrīprāśī 47.10–11ab), the addressee of which is unnamed\(^8\):

\[
\text{[...]} \quad \text{O Goddess! The leader of a herd of intoxicated elephants and elephant-females,}\\
\text{afflicted by heat and disturbed by [his] condition (dharmārtta)\(^9\),}\\
\text{swiftly came to this pond to drink water. (47.7cd–8)}\\
\text{Having drawn cold water with the tip of his trunk, he was drinking}\\
\text{when a crocodile caught his foot (47.9)\(^{10}\).}\\
\text{Unable to release himself from him, he cried loudly in this way:}\\
\text{“Bow to the majesty, the root, the cause of universe, in whom this world is merged,}\\
\text{of which he is the support, of which he is the cause!” (47.10–11ab)}\\
\text{He lamented thus [but] in spite of that gods such as Śiva did not come (47.11cd)\(^{11}\)}\\
\text{Therefore, after ascending Garuḍa swiftly, regardless of you, indeed,}\\
\text{and approaching him, cutting off with a disk the head of the cruel crocodile,}\\
\text{I saved the noble elephant (47.12–13ab).}\\
\text{I killed the most excellent crocodile and set free the elephant (47.13cd)}\\
\text{Released from a curse, they both gained divinity, and bowed to me (47.14ab).}
\]
Having granted the two of them the residence in the same heaven with me (matsālokya),

I returned to Vaikunṭha (47.14cd).  

The Śrīprṣṣ merely mentions that after killing the crocodile, the god releases both the elephant and the crocodile from a curse that turned them into animals (47.14ab). The Bhāgavatapurāṇa explains, however, that the crocodile was previously a Gandharva named Huhu who was cursed by the sage Devala, and Gajendra was the Pandya king Indradyumna, who offended the sage Agastya by not honoring him as he was immersed in worshipping Viṣṇu (Shulman 1993, p. 133). Whereas according to the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, as a result of being released from a curse, the crocodile comes back to his world, and the elephant is freed from the fetters of ignorance and joins Viṣṇu’s retinue (Shulman 1993, pp. 133–34), the Śrīprṣṣ slightly modifies the end of the story. The two, the crocodile and the elephant, are released from the curse, and, moreover, they both gain divinity and are granted sālokya, i.e., the residence in heaven with Viṣṇu. In addition, the rest of Viṣṇu’s account constitutes a sort of creative sequel to the episode, by means of which the motif of a quarrel between him and his consort (kalaha) can be interlaced into the Śrīprṣṣ’ teaching. Continuing in the narrative mode, Viṣṇu reminds the goddess that she was not willing to listen to his explanation concerning the reason why he suddenly disappeared until the two approached her to confirm his words. Viṣṇu continues his account up to the moment of reconciliation with his spouse (Śrīprṣṣ 47.15–18ab):

Then I was kept off, indeed, by you at the door (47.15ab).
When I explained the reason, O Dear One, and you did not listen to [my] words, then these two came, saluted respectfully to your feet, and told [you] about the event at the pond. Then you settled for my words (47.15cd–16cd).  
Thus, O Beloved, I rest with you on the coils of the snake (47.17ab).
The festival related to this [event] (tadutsavam), O You-with-the-best-hips, should be performed especially with regard to my image (arca)
[in the form just described, i.e., Viṣṇu and Śrī resting on the coils of the snake?]  
I tell you, O Lotus-eyed, its manner (47.17cd–8ab).

The remaining verses, as announced in the last line of Viṣṇu’s part, provide ritual recommendations concerning the kalaha reenactment. Before they are given, Laksṃī interrupts her husband with a remark on the festival’s purpose (Śrīprṣṣ 47.18cd–22ab):

This, verily, festival should be performed then, O You who are kind to worshippers!, (47.18cd)
wherever there are devotees who are unable to serve [you], O Hari.
To whom it is forbidden to enter [your] abode to see [you], o Lord of the World, because of an order and illnesses, after ascending, in the form of an image, the palanquin, o God, Keśava, show [them] yourself, the bliss that destroys all sins, to fulfill the desire of devotees standing along every street (47.19–21).
Release those who are pressed by seizing/crocodile of sansāra like [you released] the elephant-king! (47.22ab)

The goddess frames the purpose of the festival as providing the devotees with a chance to approach a god whom otherwise they would not have a chance to come face-to-face with. Basically this is a common aim of the utsava, to be perceived as events during which
an image of the god is processually taken outside the temple. Noteworthy in these lines is, however, the way Lakṣmī plays with Viṣṇu’s account when she incites him to release his devotees from the grāha of samāsāra (note the double meaning of grāha: ‘seizing’ or ‘crocodile’) as he did in the case of Gajendra. The evoking of the gajendramokṣa episode again creates, in a way, the impression that what matters the most from the Śrīprś’s point of view is not the amorous quarrel between Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, but what happened before, namely the act proving Viṣṇu’s protective power.

The subsequent ritual instructions, embedded in the lines of the Venerable One (Bha-gavān), seem to confirm such supposition. After customary rituals and then the transferal of the god from a fixed image to a festival one, the Śrīprś recommends taking him in a palanquin to a maṇḍapa which is far from the temple. This should happen at the end of the day. The lack of remarks on any tumult that should accompany this event indicates that this phase of the celebrations reflects Viṣṇu’s secret outing which Lakṣmī was not informed about. Next, after a rest, the god should be brought back from the maṇḍapa to the goddess’s shrine, this time with the accompaniment of music, dancers, etc. However, here the angry Lakṣmī refuses to let Viṣṇu enter the shrine. Eventually, the couple is reconciled thanks to mediation from a priest, who, on behalf of the god, recites lines justifying his secret trip. In accordance with the background of the festival sketched by the means of the gajendramokṣa narrative, the priest evokes Viṣṇu’s urge to protect his devotee:

Conducting the daily rituals, etc., before dawn,
he should enter the temple and complete the daily pūjā inside. (47.24).

“O Venerable One! Lotus-eyed! The one who is ready for protecting devotees!
for your [and] Lakṣmī’s favor, due to love of you two, O Hari,
today I wish to perform kalahotsava, O Mādhava!
For this sake you shall approach the movable image, O Ocean of Compassion!
(47.25–26)"³⁴.
–after requesting thus, having invited the Lord of Lakṣmī from the fixed [image]
to the movable one used in ritual,
having worshipped [him] with arghya etc., one should offer food consisting of beans etc. (47.27)
Having placed him in the palanquin, one should carry [him] along the streets
in order,
but, when the eventide comes, to some place far from the abode (47.28)³⁵.
After placing him in a maṇḍapa to ease Hari’s fatigue,
offering arghya etc. and presenting food afterwards,
placing him in a palanquin and decorating Lord Hari with perfumes, etc.,
with accompaniment of instrumental music of vīna, etc., and frequent dances,
he, with chewed betel on his lips, and served by groups of temple-women,
should be led to the abode, but the Goddess should deny him [an entrance]
(47.29–31)³⁶.
In this way, having denied him [on behalf of the Goddess] three or four times, a guru [on behalf the God] should request thus:
“O Lakṣmī, the Venerable One went outside today with a desire of protecting his devotee;
you should not think otherwise, O Lotus-born!” (47. 32–33ab)
One should perform weaving of lamps in front of the God and Goddess (47.33cd)³⁷.
After performing a night pūja, one should take the two of them to bed (47.34ab). After worshipping them with objects expedient for the bed, waking Mādhava up in the morning, transferring [god’s] potency to the fixed [image], the guru should then ask (47.34cd–35ab):

“O Lord of Lakṣmī, destroyer of the pain of the elephant, today was your festival of love.

If any disrespect was made, let it be forgiven, O Treasure of Mercy!”

After requesting thus the Lord of Lakṣmī, one should perform pūja (47.35cd–36).

As we can see, all requests to be uttered by the priest responsible for carrying out the kalahotsava (47.25–26, 47.32cd–33ab, 47.35cd–36ab), whether addressed to the god or, on the god ‘s behalf, to the goddess, underline the protective aspect of Viṣnū. While requesting the god to approach the festal image, the priest calls him “ready for protecting devotees” (bhaktarākṣanādikṣita). In the next statement, addressed to Lakṣmī who is upset at her husband, the priest on behalf of the Lord justifies his disappearance with the desire to protect his devotees (bhaktarākṣanakāmāya). Finally, when the priest customarily asks the god to forgive any involuntary disrespect towards him, he addresses Viṣṇu with the epithet “destroyer of the pain of the elephant,” (gajārtihara). The latter is an obvious allusion to the gajendramokṣa episode, and in a way conceptually binds together the content of the whole teaching on the kalaha: from the well-known narrative on rescuing gajendra placed in Viṣṇu’s mouth, through its sequel by means of which its message might have been adjusted to the frameworks of a festival centered on the quarrel, and, last but not least, to the ritual prescriptions for the quarrel enactment.

Now, let us summarize the questions which may arise in connection to what was said above. Does the ŚrīprṣisŚ teach at all about the kalahotsava as centered on the divine couple’s quarrel? Why is the concept of Viṣṇu the rescuer of Gajendra so emphasized here? What makes these two issues conceptually interrelated? Moreover, last but not least, can the account of the pranayakalaha shed some light on the features of the ŚrīprṣisŚ against the backdrop of other Pāñcarātra samhitās and, in this connection, the milieu of its compilation?

5. Viṣṇu the Savior, Gajendra the Saved, Lakṣmī the Mediator?

A concept which seems pivotal for solving the above poised questions is the doctrine of prapatti/saranāgati (“seeking refuge in Viṣṇu” or “self-surrender to Viṣṇu”). The doctrine has been taught both in the Pāñcarātra samhitās and the Viśiṣṭādvaite Vedānta corpus as another path, besides bhakti (devotion), to liberation. Traditionally the main proponent of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta school of thought is the South Indian theologian, Rāmānuja (11th/12th cent.) After Rāmānuja’s death it developed into the religious tradition called Śrīvaisnava, which, besides the teachings of Rāmānuja and his pupils, embraced the Sanskrit Vedic and smṛti texts, spiritual hymns of Tamil Āḻvārs and, as the ritual basis, the scriptures of the Pāñcarātra. The term “Śrī” in the name of this tradition denotes its particular attitude towards Śrī/Lakṣmī—in contrast to other Vaiṣṇava religious communities, Śrīvaisnāvas consider her as inseparable from Viṣṇu and indispensable in the process of prapatti. This concept remains fundamental although it has been interpreted in many ways due to a dispute in the 13th/14th cent. that the Śrīvaisnāvas entered into which led to a split into two schools, the so-called Vāṭakalai (Northern, favoring Sanskrit, following the lineage of Vedānta Deśika) and Tenkalai (Southern, favoring Tamil, following the lineage of Piḷḷai Lokācārya). Whereas for the former Śrī is equal with Viṣṇu and therefore she can save devotees herself, the latter claimed that she supports the devotees in the process of surrender, but she is not equal with the god (Narayanan 1996, p. 90).

The dispute between the Vāṭakalai and the Tenkalai involved several other issues, among them the question of the relationship between bhakti and prapatti (the Vāṭakalai consider them alternative means to liberation, the Tenkalai favour prapatti), or whether
a soul should undertake any effort to be saved (according to the Vaṭakalais it should, according to the Teṅkalais it should not) (Mumme 1988).

The conditions of the emergence of the doctrine of prapatti are still not clear. The notion might have occurred either as the result of influences of orthodox Vaśiṣṭhavaita on the Pāṇcarātra and on Viśiṣṭādvaita thinkers (Oberhammer 2007), or as the result of mutual influences between the latter two; in any case, a significant role was played by the spirituality of Tamil Āḻvār (e.g., Gupta 1986; Mumme 2007; Raman 2007). In accordance with the Pāṇcarātra and Viśiṣṭādvaita textual traditions, the belief in Viṣṇu’s commitment to protect his devotees constitutes one of the methods/aspects advised for the act of self-surrender. As I shall discuss below, in the case of the ŚrīprṣS, this thought is complementarily expressed in the teaching on prapatti (ŚrīprṣS 53; here it is called the bharanyāsa) and in the treatment of the pranāyakalaha in which it is figuratively rendered through the re-use of the gajendra-mokṣa episode. Both teachings, for instance, intersect when it comes to the need to request the god for protection. Yet, considering that the ŚrīprṣS’ account of the pranāyakalaha actually involves three parties—Gajendra who is saved, Viṣṇu the savior, and Laksmi—an issue I shall also address is how the ŚrīprṣS defines the role of the goddess in the context of the quarrel, and whether in this context it corresponds with her role as hinted in the lines on prapatti in the ŚrīprṣS 53. A picture of Laksmi/Srī who according to the Śrīvaiṣṇavas permanently accompanies Viṣṇu differs from her portrayal in some of the Pāṇcarātra samhitās, in which she is treated as the God’s potency (śakti), or, for instance, in the Lakṣmittantra (LT), in which she is the supreme being (Narayanan 1996, p. 90). This point is therefore important because particular features of Laksmi/Srī—mentioned in the ŚrīprṣS 53 but also, as I propose, metaphorically channeled by means of prescriptions on the kalaha—may shed some additional light on the circumstances of the compilation of the ŚrīprṣS. We already know that, as it was compiled after the 13th cent. in South India, the ŚrīprṣS reveals certain traces of influence from the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta. As Rastelli (2007, pp. 310–11) pointed out, such influence is for instance visible in the ŚrīprṣS’ treatment of the five obligations of a devotee (pañca kāla), which involves the teaching on the relationship between the god and the individual soul expressed as the relationship between the owner of the remnant (śesin) and the remnant (śesa), which is the relationship particular to the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta thought.

The two earliest Pāṇcarātra samhitās which offer concise recommendations pertaining to prapatti are the LT (12th–13th cent; Gupta 1972) and the Ahirbudhyānasamhitā (AhS) (between 11th and 13th cent; Rastelli 2018, p. 423). They both refer to the doctrine by means of parallel passages that present it as six-folded (sadhvīdha), that is, comprising six mental methods/aspects by means of which the devotee may take refuge in/surrender to the god. These are: ānukālīṣyasamkalpa (the will to do what is pleasing); prāttikālīṣyasavarjanam (avoidance of what is displeasing); rāksīṣyatīviśvāso (faith that he [god] will protect); gopītrīvavaranam (asking for protection); ātmānikṣepa (self-surrender), kārpanyam (helplessness). These passages are also quoted in the terms of authority when the doctrine of prapatti is debated in the Śrīvaiṣṇava Sanskrit and Manpirāvala literature (Oberhammer 2007; Mumme 2007).

The same lines on the six-folded prapatti occur in the ŚrīprṣS 53.18cd–19, which, we can safely state, was later than the LT and the AhS. Out of the two, it must have been the Lakṣmittantra which served as the source of quotations for the compiler of the ŚrīprṣS. Besides the passage that defines the six aspects of prapatti, the ŚrīprṣS 53 includes a number of other lines which elucidate the doctrine, being either identical with the verses of LT 17 or slightly modified. Often, but not always, these modifications are simply the result of the need to adjust the teaching to the structure of the ŚrīprṣS (e.g., the names of interlocutors). There are also, however, slight conceptual differences between the LT and the ŚrīprṣS. Let us firstly focus on the parallel verses which pertain to the two aspects of prapatti that concern god’s will to protect: rāksīṣyatīviśvāso (faith that he [god] will protect) and gopītrīvavaranam (asking for protection).
In the ŚrīpṛṣŚ, all the six methods/aspects of prapatti are explained by the Lord to Śrī. In regard to rakṣāśrayattī viśeṣato (faith that he [god] will protect) and goptrtevaaraṇam (asking for protection)—corresponding with LT 17.70–73—he says (ŚrīpṛṣŚ 53.26cd–29):

> Because of capability, being easy to be approached because of being constantly joined with compassion,
> because of the relation between the Master and the thing to be mastered—even if it is not the first time—there is a firm thought: “[he] will protect us who ask”
> which is ‘faith’, O Goddess, that destroys all evil deeds (53.26cd–28ab).

Even [if he is] compassionate, capable of manifesting [himself], the Lord of living beings,

> he may not protect if unrequested—therefore there is the idea that one must request him:
> “Be the protector”. So it shall be ‘asking for protection’ (53.28cd–29)⁴⁴

And after a couple of lines (ŚrīpṛṣŚ 53.34–35) (corresponding with LT 17.78cd–79):

> Out of the faith ‘he will protect’ [shall arise mental] fashioning of a method of protecting,
> namely ‘asking for protection’, that is proclaiming one’s own wish (53.34).

Even all-knowing Universal spirit, even [if] always compassionate,

> expects a request for protection due to the maintenance of the order of samsāstra (53.35)⁴⁵.

The notion which recurs in these two passages is the need to ask the god for protection. As pointed out by Mumme, the same verses are reused, throughout the LT, in the works of Vedānta Deśika and the Vatakalai school. What they emphasize is that salvation through self-surrender requires some effort from the devotee which means requesting the god for protection. This idea, even if only signified in the LT, later on became one of the most characteristic to the Vatakalaiś (Mumme 2007, p. 119). In the context of the ŚrīpṛṣŚ, the meaning of these lines is in addition perfectly illustrated by the gajendramokṣa narrative, regardless of its embedding in the teaching on the kalaha: Gajendra the elephant recites a sort of prayer in the moment of distress, or, the other way round, Viṣṇu urgently rushes to save the elephant when he asks for help.

The question is, what made the ŚrīpṛṣŚ compiler introduce the gajendramokṣa episode into the text by means of the kalaha account? It seems to me that he might have applied such a strategy because the theme of a couple’s quarrel gives an opportunity to allegorically voice two issues. On the one hand, it smoothly allows to emphasize the god’s will to protect for the motif itself entails an occasion to justify a husband’s [allegedly] improper behavior, i.e., leaving his wife without a notice. On the other, it facilitates articulating Lākṣmī’s position on the matter of the excuse. Therefore, on the whole, when transferred from a mortal dimension to divine, these two elements seem to convey the doctrine of self-surrender, including the role of Lākṣmī in the process of seeking refuge in Viṣṇu.

As mentioned above, for Narayanan (1996, p. 103), who examines the various meanings of the Srirangam kalaha festival from the perspective of the Śrīvaśnava theology, one of its fundamental aspects is to express the inseparableness of Viṣṇu and Lākṣmī (emphasized, as mentioned before, already in the name of the community). Despite the quarrel and the couple’s temporal uncoupling, Viṣṇu and Lākṣmī’s reunion is inevitable for it is actually determined by the unbreakable connection between them. Certain lines in the ŚrīpṛṣŚ seem to point to the same idea of the couple’s constant bond. In the ŚrīpṛṣŚ 2.13–14, the Venerable One (Bhagavān) addresses Śrī with words:

> O Lotus-hued One! In the three worlds nothing may be hidden by me from you, O Beloved!
You stay with me in [all] incarnations etc., O You, who observes religious vows!

Or, when it is like that, what could be hidden by me [from you], O Queen of the World!

You know all about me, O Goddess, [but] as if ignorant, O Dear, you ask me, O Lovely-faced, desiring the welfare of the World (12.13–14).

By means of saying that Viśṇu cannot hide anything from Śrī, Śrī knows everything about Viśṇu, and he remains by him in all his incarnations, the ŚrīprŚS shows the goddess as his perpetual companion. This pertains also to the teaching on prapatti, in which, as Smith has already noticed, “she is seen as an intercessory figure between the devotee and the Lord” (Smith 1975–1980, p. 449). Differently than in the AhŚ and LT, the ŚrīprŚS compiler opens the teaching on prapatti with words, addressed by the Venerable One (Bhagavān) to Śrī, which is similar to the Śrīvais.n. ava's concept of the indispensability of Śrī's presence while seeking salvation on the path of self-surrender: “Having recited this mantra, one should seek refuge in me with you” (mantram etam sanuccārya tvayā mäṃ saranām vrajet | ŚrīprŚS 53.17cd | 1). Viśṇu comes back to this idea in the ŚrīprŚS 53.59cd: “one should seek refuge in me with you…”: saha tvayā mäṃ saranām vrajed… | ŚrīprŚS 53.59cd | 1. In the ŚrīprŚS 53.47ab he says that one should first seek refuge in the goddess and then in him: tvatpravakṣaṃ mäṃ saranām vrajed… | ŚrīprŚS 53.47ab | 1.

In light of the passages that pertain to Laks.mā's specific features, the narrative “sequel” to the gajendramoksā episode provided by the compiler of the ŚrīprŚS with the aim of accommodating it to the pattern of the kalaha festival appears to assume yet another layer of meaning. As we remember, before the couple eventually reconciles, the two, elephant and crocodile, who, thanks to Viśṇu's intervention, were released from the curse and regained their true bodies, approach Laksāmi to excuse Viśṇu's disappearance. It is only after Laksāmi agrees to receive them and listen to their version of the story that the episode is complete. Her role as a mediator in the narrative on the kalaha in ŚrīprŚS 47 appears to resonate with her role in the teaching on prapatti given in the ŚrīprŚS 53, which in both cases are ascribed to her as the result of the reinterpretations of the “source text”: the Laksāmittantra and the popular narrative on rescuing Gajendra.

6. Conclusions

Judging from the estimated dates of composition of the samhitās which mention the pranāyakalāhotsava, the festival might have become important rather late, i.e., in the post-Rāmānuja period, but not earlier than the 13th cent47. If the mention in the ĪŚ does not contribute much to the understanding of its function as it is actually restricted to providing the time of the event, the account of the ŚrīprŚS, along with the narrative behind the festival and the detailed practicalities, situates its meanings in the context of the doctrine of prapatti. As I attempted to show, this is achieved through accommodation of the popular myth about saving the king of elephants (gajendramoksā) by putting its retelling into Viśṇu’s mouth so that he can justify his undisclosed trip outside the temple. As a result, instead of focusing on the notion of a lover’s quarrel, which underlies the concept of the pranāyaka kalaha festivities, the teaching of the ŚrīprŚS draws attention to the protective aspect of Viśṇu, emphasized both in the narrative and the ritualistic part of the account. By expressing in its adapted version Viśṇu’s will to protect his devotees—provided they request such protection and, eventually, approach his wife, Śrī—the narrative skillfully illustrates the doctrine of prapatti as complementary to what was taught in the ŚrīprŚS 53. In addition, the doctrine as presented by the ŚrīprŚS’ compiler brings to mind its understanding by the Viśistādvaita’s proponent Vedānta Deśīka (13th/14th cent.) and what later became the Vatākalai school of the Śrīvaisṇava tradition48. According to Mumme, the roots of the theological dispute which led to the split into the Vatākalai and the Tenkalai schools should be traced to circles of teachers (ācārya) in the 13th cent. linked to Kanchi and Srirangam, respectively (Mumme 1988), which from a historical point of view might explain the potential infiltration of the ŚrīprŚS by these ideas. All in all, the ŚrīprŚS’ interpretation of the kalaha could be an
outcome of the process in which, as Carman puts it, “the Tantric dimension of Pañcarātra was minimized or reinterpreted in the ongoing development of Śrīvaishnavism” (Carman 2007, p. 68), the traces of which have been already noticed in the Śrīprasād in reference to other ritual prescriptions that are clearly influenced by Viśistadvaita thought. However, the focus on the protective aspect of Viṣṇu does not make the concept behind the Śrīprasād’s prescriptions for the kalāha much different from the perception of its current reenactment in Srirangam, the traditional centre of the Tenkai tradition, which is saturated with love themes common to the works of Alvaśar: eventually both reveal meanings connected to the models of salvation and the inseparableness of Viṣṇu and Śrī.

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**Notes**

1. See also a purely descriptive treatment of the performance of the kalāha in Srirangam by Hari Rao (1967, pp. 149–50; cf. Jagannathan 1994, pp. 200–2) in reference to the cycle of festivals which are held there annually.

2. On the semantical analysis of such compounds as pranaya-kalāha (‘quarrelling in love’), pranaya-kopa (‘anger in love’), etc. based on a number of excerpts from Sanskrit poems, see (Hara 2001, pp. 180–84).

3. The latter pose, alongside the pose of a man touching his ears in front of a woman, was in turn successfully used by Indian visual artists to portray a man apologizing to his wrathful beloved after an argument (Agrawala 1992).

4. On dating the text see (Sudyka 2019, pp. 276–77).

5. The poetic account of this episode, including the eventual marriage of Viṣṇu with the princess, was given by Uttamanambi Tirumalacarya in his 15th cent. Lakṣmiśrī.Viṣṇu’s visit to Uraiyr as a part of the pankuṇi festivities is also mentioned in some Vijayanganaga inscriptions from the site (Younger 1982, pp. 623–24). Noteworthy, the theme of a love-triangle between the god, his legal wife, and his mistress, happened to be used, both in Sanskrit and local traditions, to transmit ideological messages aimed at reconciliation of various religious and social realms, provided that the legal wife, whether initially jealous or not, accepted the mistress (and thus symbolically her whole community) as a co-spouse. Another instance of such a usage of this motif can be the drama Vāsantikāpārīṇa ascribed to the 7th pontiff of the Ahobilam matha (16th cent.), in which a local girl, Vāsantikā, surrenders to Viṣṇu-Narasimha (shown both as the god and the king) and becomes his second consort (see Dębicka-Borek 2016).

6. Younger remarks that in popular imagination, princess Kamaladevi happens to be substituted with other local “symbols” of self-surrender to the god, such as Āntal, a Muslim princess or a loversick girl known from the poems of Nammālvār (Younger 1982, pp. 645–46).

7. Narayanan mentions also Tirumokkur and Tirumaliruncolai, but remarks that celebrations are rather brief (Narayanan 1996, pp. 107–8).

8. Smith (1982, p. 42) mentions that the Viṣṇutīlakasamhīta contains a short and undetailed passage on the subject, therefore I hope that the lack of references to it does not significantly affect the outcomes of my research.

9. See a list of parallel verses in Padmanabhan (2006, pp. cxii–cxxxviii). However, the Śrīprasād most often draws on the Pādmāsamhīta (see the list of parallel verses in Padmanabhan 2006, pp. lxxxix–cxxx).

10. IS 12.34cd–40: tadā devasya devoṣya ca yuddhakrīḍāṃ ca kārayet || 12.34 || prathame gandhayuddhaṃ tu dvitiye puspayuddhaṇakam || tṛtiye cūrṇayuddhaṇaṃ ca caturte tailayuddhaṇakam || 12.35 || paścāme kṣṛayuddhaṃ sṛṣṭa śaṭṭhe kārpūrakurkuṣumaṇaḥ || nārīkelajalir yuddhaṃ saṃcāreṣu || 12.36 || gandhāmabhāṣaṭṭhe yuddhaṃ navame jalayuddhaṇakam || gelūḍiṇamadhyāśyaṇaḥ bhaktair bhūgvatraṇaḥ saha || 12.37 || gāṇikādevaśādhinibhiḥ kārṇoṃ yuddhaṃ vinodatāḥ || yuddhakrīḍāṃ tu kṛtyavaiṃ devam antaḥ pravāṣayet || 12.38 || saptāhāṃ utsave kuryāt cūrṇayuddhādiḥsaṃpaṭkām || paścāhām utsave kuryāt kṣṛayuddhādiḥpaṭakām || 12.39 || tryagottave nālikelarasayuddhādiḥkam bhavit || 12.40 || kevalam jalayuddhaṃ tu kuryād ekaḥ utsave || 12.41 ||∼“Then he should make god and goddesses play a battle (34cd). On the first [day of the 9-day-long festival] there should be a fight with perfumes, on the second [day] a fight with flowers, on the third [day] a fight with the powder, on the fourth [day] a battle with seasamum oil, on the fifth
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In Kannada, nagaraśālā means ‘inspection of a town; searching a town’ (Kittel 1968–71). I owe this remark to one of the peer-reviewers.

The panels include the depiction of the gajendramokṣa episode (Hudson 2008, pp. 152–56).

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Raman understands the term Hastigiri as a Sanskritisation of Atittiyūr, the original name of the place, deriving from the atti tree (Ficus Glomerata, Skt. udumbara) (Raman 1975, p. 5f.).

In the Pāṭicātārakaraśa 87.17–89.7, Vedānta Deśika evokes the gajendramokṣa episode in the context of meditation which should be

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On setting the scene in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa’s version see (Shulman 1993, p. 129).

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[day] a battle with milk, on the sixth [day] he should conduct a battle with camphor and saffron, on the seventh [day] with coconut-water, on the eighth [day] a battle with fragrant water, on the ninth [day] a battle with water (35–37ab). The battle should be performed with joy, from the temple up to the centre of a village, with devotees of the Venerable One (Bhagavān), temple-women (gāṇikā) and temple-dancers (devadāsi). (37cd–38ab). Having performed the play of the battle, one should lead the god inside [the temple] (38cd). During the 7-day-long festival, one should perform 7-folded [battle] starting with the powder

citrā, during the 5-day-long festival one should perform 5-folded battle starting with milk, during the 3-day-long festival there should be a [three-folded] battle starting with coconut-juice. But during the 1-day-long festival (utsava) one should perform only the

battle with water (jalayuddha) (39–40).”.

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I propose to take it as nyayāḥḥ, assuming that the verb is i and a prefix -ni.

In the Śrīprāssā, the prayer in the form of a stotra is significantly longer, but also without a specified addressee; see (Shulman 1993, pp. 130–31).

As one of the peer-reviewers pointed out, a better reading would be ghārṇārtā (suffering from heat), however the printed edition does not provide such a variant.

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As one of the peer-reviewers pointed out, a better reading would be ghārṇārtā (suffering from heat), however the printed edition does not provide such a variant.
Carman’s words constitute a polemics with Gupta, according to whom the ŚrīprṣsŚ actually represents the ultimate phase in the development of the Pāñcarātra. In this context it may be of some importance that the ŚrīprṣsŚ is believed to be canonical in Kumbhakonam (see, however, a sceptical opinion of Raghavan 2006), where the Sāṅgāpāṇi temple belongs to Vatakalais (I thank Marzena Czerniak-Drozdzowicz for this remark).

Carman’s words constitute a polemics with Gupta, according to whom the ŚrīprṣsŚ actually represents the ultimate phase in the development of the Pāñcarātra. Namely the phase when the Pāñcarātra school has been totally accommodated to the Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

As she suggests, this is for instance seen in the replacement of the figure of śīhāka (“a seeker of mundane pleasures”) by a figure of prapanna (“surrender-of-the self”), which happened in result of the spread of a new doctrine of prapatti (Gupta 1983, pp. 85, 88–89).

References

Primary Sources


ĪS = (Lakshmīthathachar and Varadachari 2009).


ŚrīprṣsŚ = (Padmanabhan 2006).

Secondary Sources


