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The Warrior Goddess in the Devīmāhātmya

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Chapter 3

The Warrior Goddess in the *Devīmāhātmya*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The *Devīmāhātmya* is one of the oldest Sanskrit texts to describe in detail the struggles between the Goddess and demons, and it was an epoch-making work in that it raised the position of goddess worship within orthodox Hinduism. Although there is insufficient material to fix the date and the locality of its composition, the general opinion is that it was composed in about the sixth century¹⁾ somewhere in north-western India.²⁾ This date and locality will be reconsidered in this chapter.

The *Devīmāhātmya* adopts the form of a frame story, universally found in Indian narratives, and has been incorporated into the account of the “*manu*-intervals” (*manvantara*), or cosmic cycles presided over by a semidivine figure known as a *manu*, in the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* as the tale of a former life of the eighth *manu* Sāvarṇi.³⁾ But at the same time it has also circulated widely as an independent work constituting a scripture of the Durgā cult, bearing names such as *Durgāsaptasatī* and *Caṇḍī* and generally having six additional “limbs” (*aṅga*), namely, the Kavaca, Argalā and Kīlaka, which precede the main text, and three “secrets” (*rahasya*), called the Prādhānika, Vaikṛtika and Mūrti, which succeed it.⁴⁾

There have already been published many studies that view the *Devīmāhātmya* as a precursor of Śāktism and situate it within the history of goddess worship,⁵⁾ but there are not all that many studies focussing exclusively on the *Devīmāhātmya* itself.⁶⁾ Among such studies, the two books by T.B. Coburn⁷⁾ have made an enormous contribution. Because of his special interest in the position of scriptures within religions, Coburn constantly questions the *functions* that the “scripture” known as the *Devīmāhātmya* has fulfilled within the Hindu tradition, and he emphasizes its *form* rather than its *content*. In his first book he deals with the circumstances surrounding the composition of our text, and having first taken note of the fact that it was written in Sanskrit, he points out similarities with the *Rgveda* on account of the importance attached to reciting and listening to the *Devīmāhātmya*, that is to say, the importance of its oral-aural tradition. Then, following the example of J. Gonda, he takes up the question of epithets, carefully examining the diverse epithets of the goddesses appearing in our text and tracing

their history in the Sanskrit traditions of the Vedas, etc., down to their incorporation into our text. Coburn regards the four hymns, which contain the majority of the Goddess's epithets and express the devotee's veneration of the Goddess with the greatest intensity, as constituting the devotional core of our text, and he accordingly also pays attention to the degree in which they resonate with the tradition of hymns dedicated to goddesses that goes back to the *R̥gveda*. In the second of his two books Coburn deals primarily with the question of how the *Devīmāhātmya* has been interpreted and applied in the Hindu tradition since its composition down to the present age, and through an investigation of the six *aṅgas* and some commentaries he examines in particular its functions as a *mantra*, as well as illustrating by means of three examples the multifarious ways in which the text is treated in contemporary India.

The present article owes much to Coburn's research, especially his first book, and I am in agreement with his view that the *Devīmāhātmya* has played an important role because of its functions. Nevertheless, it may be useful for a deeper appreciation of our text in the history of goddess worship to readdress the question of its content and moreover not from the perspective of Śaktism. Although it is beyond question that the religious purpose of the author(s) of our text was to establish a supreme goddess representing *śakti*, or energy,⁸⁾ *śakti* is too general a concept to explain sufficiently why the supreme Goddess in the *Devīmāhātmya* should have been depicted as a goddess engaged in combat with demons. Further, the Goddess's attributes that Coburn deduces from his study of the hymns, such as transcendence, immanence, and paradoxicality,⁹⁾ are universal qualities shared with other supreme divinities, which fail to clarify any motives peculiar to our text. Therefore, in order to probe the significance of the fact that the Goddess is a warrior goddess, the focus of my inquiries will be analysis of the myths rather than the hymns.

Among the three myths constituting the basis of the tripartite structure of the *Devīmāhātmya* (see Appendix), the first myth represents a recasting of a myth about Viṣṇu, already well-known in Sanskrit literature at the time of the composition of our text,¹⁰⁾ in which the focus has been shifted to the goddess Yoganidrā-Mahāmāyā, and, concerned as it is with cosmogony, it serves to draw our text into the mainstream traditions. Mahiṣāsuramardīnī, the goddess who kills the buffalo-demon in the second myth, was being worshipped popularly at the time, while the final myth about the slaying of Śumbha and Niśumbha¹¹⁾ pertains to Vindhyaśīnī, the goddess who dwells on the Vindhya mountains. The myths are thus arranged in such a way that their focus shifts from the universal to the particular, or from a pantheistic godhead to a regional goddess. The goddess who combats the demons is the supreme Goddess, called Caṇḍikā or Ambikā in the second and third myths,¹²⁾ and she is a warrior goddess who evolved on the basis of the above-mentioned Mahiṣāsuramardīnī and Vindhyaśīnī. However, attempts to integrate several goddesses in this manner did not begin with our text. In the following, we shall accordingly first examine similar moves to integrate goddesses prior to or

around the time of the composition of our text, then consider the goddesses Mahiṣāsuramardini and Vindhyavāsinī individually, focussing primarily on an analysis of the myths of the *Devīmāhātmya*, and lastly clarify by what process and to what purpose the Warrior Goddess of the *Devīmāhātmya* evolved.¹³⁾

2. THE AMALGAMATION OF GODDESSES

The demon-slaying Goddess, especially Mahiṣāsuramardini, is generally known as Durgā,¹⁴⁾ and a goddess Durgā appears at *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* 10.1 alongside Rudra, Gaṇeśa, Nandin, Skanda, Garuḍa, *brahman*, Viṣṇu, Nārasimha, Adītya and Agni in a series of variations on the Sāvitrī-gāyatrī *mantra* in which she is invoked as Durgā, Kātyāyanī and Kanyākumārī.¹⁵⁾ A series of *mantras* at TĀ 10.1.49–54, addressed to Agni-Jātavedas and asking for deliverance from dangers (*durga*, *durita* [neut.pl.]), also includes a verse seeking the protection of “the goddess Durgā, who has the colour of fire, flames with heat, belongs to Virocana (sun or fire), and delights in [granting] the fruits of actions.”¹⁶⁾ Here one can clearly discern the process whereby Durgā evolved from *durga* by being linked with Agni.¹⁷⁾

A hymn to Durgā, which includes the above verse, is found in the “supplement” (*khila*) on the Rātri-sūkta, the hymn to the goddess Night (RV 10.127). Among the fourteen verses of this *khila* (RVKh 4.2), verses 4.2.1–4 are dedicated to Rātri and verses 4.2.5–13 are dedicated to Durgā, with 4.2.12 being a quotation from TĀ 10.1.50 and 4.2.5d, 6d, 7d and 8d being drawn from TĀ 10.1.49 (= RV 1.99.1). 4.2.14ab, on the other hand, represents the *anukramaṇī* of RV 10.127 and gives Rātri as the deity, Kuśika-Saurabha and Bhāradvājīn as the sages, and *gāyatrī* as the metre of the Rātri-sūkta, while 4.2.14cd is a quotation from *Rg-Vidhāna* 4.6.1 encouraging the recitation of the Rātri-sūkta.¹⁸⁾ Here again Durgā is associated with Agni and, like Agni, is looked up to as a saviour from *durga* and *durita*. The term “having the colour of fire” (*agnivarnā* [4.2.8a]) is again used and, as in the quotation from TĀ 10.1.50, Durgā is described as flaming with heat like fire. On the other hand, according to the Rātri-sūkta and its *khila*, Rātri is black (*kṛṣṇā* [RVKh 4.2.3c]), represents the star-spangled night (RV 10.127.1–2), and is a goddess who protects people from the perils lurking in the dark of night.¹⁹⁾ Among the verses of RVKh 4.2, Scheftelowitz considers verses 1–4 to represent the first stratum and verses 5–14 to be secondary.²⁰⁾ It could be surmised that the reason for this structure lay in an attempt to integrate a pair of contrasting, and therefore complementary, goddesses, that is, a goddess resembling fire blazing with heat and a goddess of the darkness of night lit up by stars.

Vindhyavāsinī, on the other hand, plays an important role as an incarnation of Nidrā, the goddess Sleep, in the *Harivaṃśa* on the occasion of Kṛṣṇa’s birth. Viṣṇu first gives Nidrā instructions concerning the six offspring of Devakī destined to be killed by Kāṃsa and a seventh offspring called Saṅkarṣaṇa, and then gives her orders to the effect that when Viṣṇu himself is conceived, Nidrā is to enter the womb

of Nanda's wife Yaśodā so as to be born at the same time as Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, whereupon she is to exchange places with Kṛṣṇa (HV 47).²¹⁾ This plan is carried out in accordance with Viṣṇu's instructions, and after the infants have changed places (48.1–20), Kāṃsa seizes the infant Nidrā by the feet, swings her around and dashes her on a rock. But Nidrā resumes her form as a goddess, and as she ascends to heaven, she roars with laughter while drinking wine and disappears with the threat to tear Kāṃsa's body to pieces with her own hands when he dies and to drink his warm blood (48.21–36). Subsequently the seer Nārada informs Kāṃsa that it was not the child of Vāsudeva whom he killed, but the goddess of Mt. Vindhya, who had been born as the daughter of Yaśodā (65.35–60).

In this episode Nidrā-Vindhyavāsini is described in the following manner.²²⁾ Her skin is black in colour, her face resembles the moon, her breasts and buttocks are well-proportioned, her four hands hold a trident, sword, drinking cup and lotus, she wears a black undergarment and a yellow upper garment, and she has a necklace, earrings and crown, as well as armlets and a standard made from the tail feathers of peacocks. She will take a vow of celibacy (*kaumāram vratam*), be consecrated in heaven by Indra, becoming his sister, and will be known as Kauśikī.²³⁾ She will be accompanied by spirits (*bhūta*), will live on Mt. Vindhya surrounded by wild animals, and will kill Sumbha/Śumbha and Nisumbha/Niśumbha. She will be worshipped by thieves, will delight in offerings of flesh, will be offered sacrifices of domestic animals on every ninth lunar day, and will protect devotees from danger.

Kṛṣṇa's sister appears with the name Ekānamśā in HV 96.11–19. She is intended to be identical with Nidrā, because she is said to have been born at the same time as Kṛṣṇa in order to protect him (96.12ab and 14), which parallels the case of Nidrā in the episode discussed above. It is also said that Kṛṣṇa destroyed Kāṃsa and his company 'on her account' (96.12cd), which probably means that Kṛṣṇa avenged Kāṃsa's violence to her which is related in HV 48.28. On the other hand, she is said to have grown up in the abode of the Vṛṣṇis, worshipped and protected as if she were their daughter (96.13). Here there is an inconsistency between the two characters, Ekānamśā and Nidrā-Vindhyavāsini, which indicates that these goddesses were separate in origin. In HV 96.16–18, Ekānamśā is described as standing with Kṛṣṇa holding her left hand and Balarāma holding her right hand, which is similar to the icon of this triad which emerged at Mathurā in the Kuṣāṇa period.²⁴⁾ This shows that Ekānamśā is the character who was originally linked with Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, a hero-god of the Vṛṣṇis.²⁵⁾ Although the text does not specifically describe her colouring, the fact that Ekānamśā is an epithet of Kuhū, the personification of the new moon, at MBh 3. 208. 7–8 seems to indicate that she is dark in colour.²⁶⁾ If so, the dark complexion must have been an essential element associating Ekānamśā with Nidrā. From the evidence examined so far, it is probable that Nidrā-Vindhyavāsini was amalgamated with Ekānamśā in the *Harivaṃśa*, just as Viṣṇu was amalgamated with Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva in the same text.²⁷⁾

The description of Vindhyavāsini in the *Harivaṃśa* has influenced the Durgā-stava, contained in the *Virāṭaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*. After having spent twelve years in the forest, the Pāṇḍava brothers remove their weaponry on the outskirts of the town of Virāṭa in order to conceal their identity in preparation for spending the thirteenth year in Virāṭa; they hide their weaponry under a *samī* tree, and in order to keep people away from the tree, they tie a corpse to it, whereupon the eldest brother Yudhiṣṭhira prays to Durgā for her protection. This Durgā-stava is not included in the constituted text of the critical edition, but appears in Appendix I, No. 4, where seven different versions are given.²⁸⁾ Except for the longest version (G), which is thought to postdate the *Devīmāhātmya* since it attributes the slaying of Kaiṭabha to the goddess,²⁹⁾ it is, however, difficult to establish the dates of these different versions.³⁰⁾ Biardeau posits as a reason for the insertion of the Durgā-stava the symbolical relationship among the *samī* tree, weapons and the goddess who bestows victory detected in a variety of local rituals relating to the *viṣayādaśamī*, "the tenth day of victory," which follows the *Navarātri/Durgāpūjā*.³¹⁾ In the vulgate (D), the goddess is first described along the lines of the account in the *Harivaṃśa* as a sister of Kṛṣṇa born to Nanda and Yaśodā, who was then dashed on a rock, ascended to heaven, and caused the destruction of Kaṃsa; Yudhiṣṭhira then extols the goddess in words that directly reflect expressions used in the *Harivaṃśa*,³²⁾ and in reply the goddess appears and promises to protect the brothers. However, there is no mention of the slaying of Śumbha (Sumbha) and Niśumbha (Nisumbha), and instead the goddess is described as the slayer of Mahiṣāsura.³³⁾

In the *Bhīṣmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* another hymn to Durgā (Durgā-stotra) has been inserted immediately prior to the *Bhagavadgītā*, although it is again not included in the constituted text of the critical edition.³⁴⁾ Since it attributes the slaying of Kaiṭabha to the goddess,³⁵⁾ it is thought to date from after the composition of the *Devīmāhātmya*.

The original *Skandapurāṇa*, which was probably composed in the sixth or seventh century and has a strong inclination towards Śaiva beliefs, relates over several chapters (Chaps. 58, 60–67) Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsini, a manifestation of Pārvatī, kills the demon brothers Sumbha and Nisumbha with the aid of the Mother goddesses on Mt. Vindhya. After their destruction and her consecration in reward for this exploit, her slaying of Mahiṣāsura is also briefly related (68.10–23).³⁶⁾

The *Caṇḍīsataka* by Bāṇa, a court poet of Harṣavardhana (606–647 A.D.), is a poem extolling the goddess who killed Mahiṣāsura, and in three verses (25, 45, 54) the goddess of Mt. Vindhya is said to ascend to heaven after having been dashed on a rock by Kaṃsa and to roar with laughter as she threatens him. The description of the slaying of Mahiṣāsura in this poem shows no clear evidence of the influence of the *Devīmāhātmya*, and although the goddess is addressed by various names, in essence she represents Śiva's spouse Umā-Pārvatī.³⁷⁾

A comparison of the *Caṇḍīsataka*, the Durgā-stava of the *Mahābhārata*, and the relevant chapters of the original *Skandapurāṇa* with the *Devīmāhātmya* would

suggest that the association of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī with Vindhyavāsīnī within one and the same work cannot be considered to have been original with the *Devīmāhātmya*, and these works should all be regarded rather as different attempts at the amalgamation of these two goddesses from varying standpoints, with the resultant demon-slaying goddess being generally referred to chiefly as Durgā-Kātyāyanī, Kauśikī, Caṇḍī, Caṇḍikā or Ambikā.

However, these attempts at amalgamation were not restricted to the demon-slaying Goddess, and they may be placed within a broader movement to integrate several goddesses into one great goddess. The next text that we shall examine, belonging to the most recent stratum of the creation myth in the *Purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa*,³⁸⁾ illustrates one example of such moves.³⁹⁾ Brahman's wrath materialises into a person (*puruṣa*) with a figure half male and half female (*ardhanārīnaravapus*)⁴⁰⁾ shining like the sun and blazing with heat (*tejas*), who then divides into man and woman (67–68a). The man is Īśvara, and he further divides half his body into eleven equal parts and creates the host of Rudras (68b). Meanwhile, the right half of the woman's body is white and the left half is black, and she separates into a white woman (*śuklā*) and a black woman (*kṛṣṇā*) (69–71). There follows a long list of names of various goddesses (72–77), the recitation of which is then recommended (78–82). This list of names includes the goddess of Mt. Vindhya, the slayer of Mahiṣa, and a number of other names associated with the Goddess of the *Devīmāhātmya* and Vindhyavāsīnī in the *Harivaṃśa*.⁴¹⁾

In the above we have examined as background elements in the composition of our text developments that led towards the evolution of a warrior goddess and even a single great goddess. Next we will now consider the characteristics of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī and Vindhyavāsīnī as they are depicted in the *Devīmāhātmya*.

3. MAHIṢĀSŪRAMARDINĪ

The cult of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī may be traced through artistic representations back to about the first century. The iconographic tradition had already gone through a number of phases by the time that images clearly showing resemblance to our text began to appear in the eighth century. Many studies on the iconic types of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī have been published,⁴²⁾ but here we shall briefly survey the earlier iconographical changes as a prehistory of the *Devīmāhātmya*, relying chiefly on the studies by von Stietencron and von Mitterwallner.

Mathurā and nearby Sonkh have yielded large numbers of smallish rectangular stone reliefs and terracotta figurines of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī dating from the Kuṣāṇa period. In these representations, the buffalo is shown kicking its forelegs up diagonally from the lower right to the upper left, with upturned head, while the goddess, having either four or six arms, holds the buffalo around the neck with her lower left arm and presses down on the buffalo's back with her lower right hand; the goddess's remaining hands hold various weapons such as a sword, shield, *vajra*, and short-stemmed trident.⁴³⁾ By the late Kuṣāṇa period a lion appears on the left

in a stone relief, also from Mathurā,⁴⁴⁾ and in a terracotta plaque from Nagar (Rajasthan) the goddess places her left foot on the head of a lion crouching in the lower left corner, while her lower left arm, instead of encircling the buffalo's neck, is pulling its tongue from its mouth.⁴⁵⁾ This lion might derive from the goddess who rides on a lion, who is sometimes represented on Kuṣāṇa coins.⁴⁶⁾ This goddess with the legend *licchavayah* was engraved on the reverse side of coins struck by Candragupta I and his queen Kumāradevī and is looked upon as a symbol of the Licchavi princess Kumāradevī which guaranteed the legitimacy of the Gupta dynasty as Licchavis or *kṣatriyas*.⁴⁷⁾

Around the beginning of the fifth century, three reliefs of the goddess were executed in the caves at Udayagiri.⁴⁸⁾ In the oldest of these representations, a large panel on the north wall of the outer courtyard of Cave VI, and in the second relief on the outer wall of Cave XVII the goddess has twelve arms, with her first left hand pulling the buffalo's tongue, her first right hand pressing down on the buffalo's back, her second right hand grasping the buffalo's tail, and her fourth right hand piercing the buffalo's back with a long trident; her other hands hold a sword, shield, *vajra*, bow, arrow, and other attributes.⁴⁹⁾ The goddess's left leg is bent and rests on some object that is no longer identifiable because of weathering, although Barrett and von Mitterwallner, after comparison with the terracotta plaque from Nagar, speculate that it may be a lion.⁵⁰⁾

When compared with the above two reliefs, the other relief located on the facade of Cave VI shows some new developments. The wall on which it has been engraved bears a votive inscription, dated 401–402 A.D., by a feudatory king, a *mahārāja* of the Sanakānikas, of Candragupta II.⁵¹⁾ The goddess still has twelve arms, but the orientation of the buffalo has been reversed, and the goddess is depicted raising the buffalo by its hind leg with her front left hand as she pierces the buffalo's back with a trident held in her front right hand and strikes the buffalo on the head with her right foot.⁵²⁾ A fine example of this iconic type is to be seen in a *candraśālā* of a Śiva temple at Bhumara.⁵³⁾ Other early specimens ascribed to the fifth and the sixth centuries have been found at Mandhal and Nagardhan in Maharashtra, and at Devihal and Badami in Karnatak.⁵⁴⁾ These show a slight modification of this iconic type, in which the goddess holds the buffalo's tail instead of its hind leg. This iconic type appears to have been popular in North India, the Deccan, Orissa, Gujarat, and on the western coast during the fifth to the eighth centuries.⁵⁵⁾ Meanwhile, the older representation at Udayagiri evolved into those found at Ellora and Aihole, where the goddess seizes the buffalo by the mouth with her left hand and pins its back down with her right foot or right knee.⁵⁶⁾

In South India the same icon is represented in completely different ways. The oldest specimen is a fragment of a terracotta plaque found at Sannati, Karnataka, and ascribed to the third century A.D. It has the legs standing on the severed head of a buffalo accompanied by a *gaṇa* on the right side.⁵⁷⁾ This is clearly an example of an iconic type with a goddess standing or sitting on the severed head of a buffalo, which was popular under the Pallava, the Early Cālukya, and the Cōla dynasties

from the seventh century onwards.⁵⁸⁾ At Mahabalipuram several modifications of this type can be seen; the goddess is often accompanied by a lion and a stag and devotees who are about to cut off their own heads in order to offer them to the goddess are also depicted in some reliefs.⁵⁹⁾ These features prove that the goddess is Korṛavai, who is alluded to in a Tamil Epic, the *Cilappatikāram* (ca. fifth century), several times.⁶⁰⁾ The severed head of the buffalo seems to be derived from her myth and also from her ritual, in the course of which buffalos may be decapitated as sacrifices to the goddess.

Another iconic type under the Pallava and the Early Cālukya dynasties represents a battle scene between the goddess and the buffalo demon, who has generally a buffalo head on a human body.⁶¹⁾ This buffalo-headed human figure of the demon does not occur in the early iconic types from North India, which implies that this type can be considered as a scene preceding Korṛavai's final victory, as represented by her standing on the buffalo's severed head. The third type, the goddess's leaning or riding on a lion, is exclusive to the Pallavas. It is also related to Korṛavai, because she is associated with a stag. Further, devotees engaged in self-mortification are sometimes added in some reliefs, and this is another feature in her myth and icon.⁶²⁾

The type that the goddess is killing a demon with a buffalo head on a human body was the most popular in Orissa during an early period since about the seventh century, and a similar type except that the demon is anthropomorphic with buffalo horns was produced under the Early Cālukyas and in the Kailāsa Temple at Ellora in the eighth century.⁶³⁾

The depiction of a demon in human form emerging from the buffalo, similar in conception to the account in the *Devīmāhātmya*, appears in a small relief on the wall of the stairhead of Cave XV, the so-called Daśāvatāra Cave, at Ellora in the first half of the eighth century.⁶⁴⁾ A fine sculpture from Āvarā, Mandasaur District, MP, now preserved in the State Museum, Bhopal is another early example of this iconic type, ascribed to the eighth century.⁶⁵⁾ It then spread throughout almost all over India.⁶⁶⁾ In these depictions, the buffalo has been decapitated and an anthropomorphic demon brandishing a weapon issues forth from the headless trunk. This differs somewhat from the description in our text and is closer to the iconographical descriptions of the *Agnipurāṇa* and *Matsyapurāṇa*.⁶⁷⁾ The decapitation of the buffalo may reflect the South Indian tradition of Mahiṣasuramardini Korṛvai icon, in which the buffalo head is conspicuous whether it is severed or has not yet severed.

Let us now move on to an examination of the battle between the Goddess and Mahiṣa described in the *Devīmāhātmya*. What might be regarded as the focal point of the entire *Devīmāhātmya* is the scene at the start of Chapter 2, where the energy (*tejas*=*śakti*) emitted by the gods assumes the form of the warrior goddess Caṇḍikā-Ambikā, who is then presented with weapons and other attributes. We will consider this episode in relation to two points, namely, the fact that the goddess fills the three worlds with her heat and radiance⁶⁸⁾ and the fact that her portrayal

here is modelled on the image of a king.

The first point immediately calls to mind Durgā as described at TĀ 10.1.50 and RVKh 4.2, quoted earlier, and Parpola makes some intriguing comments on this manifestation of Maḥiṣāsūramardīnī. First, he compares a Harappan seal discovered in the Near East, which depicts a god with buffalo horns, surrounded by fish, and seated on two water buffalos, with a seal from Mohenjo-daro depicting a god fighting upright with two tigers.⁶⁹⁾ Then he compares a god having a sickle moon in front of his head and streams of water in his hands and sitting upon two bulls with a god standing on two lionesses and fighting snakes, both depicted on a bowl from Khafajeh.⁷⁰⁾ Finally, after examining a series of depictions from Elam of contests between lions and bulls in which each triumphs in turn,⁷¹⁾ Parpola suggests that the standing god, lion and tiger symbolize the rising (or young) sun, daytime and fire, while the seated god, bull and water buffalo symbolize the setting (or old) sun, nighttime and water. Further, he speculates that these two sets form opposite yet complementary pairs and that their struggles indicate the alternating succession of day and night or the cycle of a single day.⁷²⁾ In view of the fact that the *Navarātri/Durgāpūjā*, which entails the sacrifice of a buffalo, was held in autumn, he also applies this iconographical interpretation to Maḥiṣāsūramardīnī and considers the slaying of the buffalo by a goddess accompanied by a lion to represent a ritual and myth celebrating the birth of a new year in which the goddess, symbolizing the sun at the end of the rainy season (*viz.* fire, dawn of a new year), kills the buffalo symbolizing the rainy season (*viz.* water, nighttime of the year).⁷³⁾

Although Parpola's thesis, in which he uses a wealth of material to probe the origins of Durgā-Maḥiṣāsūramardīnī, the buffalo god and buffalo sacrifices in Harappan culture, which had in turn inherited them from Mesopotamia,⁷⁴⁾ has been criticized severely by late scholars, his linking of the struggle between the goddess and the buffalo to fire and water, day and night, light and darkness, and the changing of the seasons still has considerable appeal when viewed in light of the fact that the Warrior Goddess in the *Devīmāhātmya* is created in a form likened to the sun and fire. Although it is impossible to determine the validity of this symbolism, there is at least no question that the Maḥiṣāsūramardīnī myth was associated with religious rites, the existence of which is corroborated by the fact that many of the stone reliefs of this goddess from the Kuṣāṇa period have been unearthed from wells.⁷⁵⁾ If we take into account the symbolism suggested by Parpola, there is a strong possibility that these rites were seasonal rites celebrating the advent of the new year after the end of the monsoon and were antecedents of the autumn *mahāpūjā* alluded to at DM 12.11. It may be therefore be surmised that Maḥiṣāsūramardīnī as a symbol of the sun and fire in these early rites and Durgā, said in Vedic literature to save people from danger in the same way as the fire god, came to overlap, thereby forming one aspect of the Warrior Goddess in the *Devīmāhātmya*.

The second point alluded to above, namely, that the creation of the Goddess as an aggregate of the energy of the gods is modelled on the image of a king, has

already been noted by Coburn with reference to *Manusmṛti* 7.3–11.⁷⁶⁾ There it is stated that a king is created for the protection of the whole world from the eternal particles (*mātrā*) of Indra, Wind, Yama, Sun, Fire, Varuṇa, Moon and Kubera (*viz.* the gods of the eight directions) (7.3–5), that he is a deity (7.7–8), that he shines like the sun and burns like fire (7.6, 9), and that he assumes all manner of forms (7.10). Moreover, in his favour resides fortune, in his valour dwells victory, and in his anger abides death, and he is formed of the *tejas* of all (7.11).⁷⁷⁾ Elsewhere (*Manusmṛti* 9.303–310) the king's observances (*vrata*) are correlated to the functions of the above eight gods (with Earth being substituted for Kubera): for example, his *vrata* as Indra is to shower benefits on the kingdom just as Indra sends rain.⁷⁸⁾ This conferral of divine functions is described in our text in terms of the creation of the Goddess's physical parts from the gods' *tejas* and the bestowal by the gods of weapons and ornaments on the Goddess.⁷⁹⁾

The belief that a king was born of the gods and inherited their powers and functions is also widely attested in the *Mahābhārata*,⁸⁰⁾ and its prototype may be seen in the coronation of a king (*rājasūya*) described in the Vedas. In the course of the coronation rites, which lasted one year, offerings were made in the houses of eleven (or twelve) *ratnins* to Br̥haspati, Indra, Aditi, Bhaga, Nirṛti, Agni, Varuṇa, the Maruts, Savitr, the Aśvin twins, Pūṣan and Rudra, while further offerings were made to the eight gods (*devasū*) Agni, Soma, Savitr, Rudra, Br̥haspati, Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa, and in these oblations one may discern evidence of the belief that a king was regenerated through the integration of the functions of each god.⁸¹⁾ In addition, on the occasion of the king's consecration (*abhiṣeka*) the priests conferred on the newborn king by means of *mantras* the authority and splendour of Soma, Agni, Sun, Indra, Mitra-Varuṇa and the Maruts, and at his coronation it was proclaimed that by having been endowed with the functions of Savitr, Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa, he was identical with these gods.⁸²⁾

The birth of the Warrior Goddess in the *Devīmāhātmya* is thus homologous to a conception of kingship going back to the *rājasūya* of the Vedas in which the king was born from the gods. However, in the case of our text the gods in question, centred on the so-called *trimūrti* of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahman, number as many as twenty, and they are clearly indicative of a stage of development when the Hindu pantheon had fully evolved. The appearance of the Goddess, who, as was noted earlier, shines with *tejas* and is likened to the sun and fire, would also have been encompassed by this conception of kingship.⁸³⁾

Next, let us consider the transformation of Mahiṣa in the course of his struggles with the Goddess and the manner in which he dies. During the battle between the Goddess and Mahiṣa, the latter changes from a buffalo into a lion, a man armed with a sword, and an elephant, and lastly he resumes his buffalo form (DM 3.28–32). Parpola has shed some light on these transformations of Mahiṣa by suggesting similarities with the transformations of Prajāpati, the diversity of sacrificial animals, and the transformation of Indra.

First, as regards the transformations of Prajāpati, Parpola adduces the man

and woman born from the self-division of *ātman* (= *puruṣa*) at BĀU 1.4 and the sacrifice (*yajña*) and Vāc born of Prajāpati in the *Vādhūlasūtra* as examples of pairs that have as their prototype the twosome consisting of Prajāpati and Vāc, and he then goes on to describe how these pairs changed themselves into pairs of different animals and created the varieties of animals.⁸⁴⁾ However, these examples form part of creation myths, and it is difficult to relate them to the transformations of Mahiṣa in our text.⁸⁵⁾ Next, in connection with sacrificial animals, Parpola quotes from *Kālikā-purāṇa* 57.1–6 a list of sacrificial animals that delight the goddess Mahāmāyā, and he also cites lists of animals suitable and unsuitable for sacrifice (livestock and wild animals respectively) from works such as the *Śatapatha-Bṛāhmaṇa*, *Aitareya-Bṛāhmaṇa* and *Vādhūlasūtra*.⁸⁶⁾ It is true that the list from the *Kālikā-purāṇa* does include the lion and elephant, while man is included in both sets of lists. But Mahiṣa undergoes only three transformations, into a lion, elephant and armed man, and it is unwarranted to regard these as types of sacrificial animals. Thirdly, Parpola cites from the *Rgveda* and elsewhere examples of Indra's transformation into various forms by means of *māyā* and emphasizes the transformative powers of *māyā*, symbolized by water.⁸⁷⁾ Setting aside the question of whether or not the close connections between the buffalo and Indra to which he alludes⁸⁸⁾ can be linked to Mahiṣa, it is nevertheless conceivable that the *māyā* of a goddess who also bore the name of Mahāmāyā was conferred on her opponent Mahiṣa too and found expression in his powers of transformation.

Thus, Parpola's arguments are unacceptable except for the transformative of *māyā*. Lion and elephant are generally used as symbols of royal power in India, and in the passage discussed Mahiṣa's transforming into the lion and elephant could simply represent his royalty as a king of demons. His other transformation into a man armed with a sword seems to reflect his anthropomorphic form as a demon, which is manifested at the following scene of his death.

After Mahiṣa has resumed his buffalo form, the Goddess, quaffing wine, laughs at him and provokes him further (DM 3.33–36), and this reflects the figure of Vindhyaśinī drinking wine and threatening Kaṃsa at HV 48.33. The ensuing death of Mahiṣa is related in the following manner: the Goddess, after jumping up, rides and tramples on Mahiṣa, and strikes him at his neck with her lance; then, an anthropomorphic figure emerges halfly from the mouth of the buffalo and fights with the Goddess; finally the Goddess cuts off his head with her sword (3.37–39).⁸⁹⁾ I have already touched on resemblance between this account and an iconic type which emerges in the early eighth century. Verbal traditions and artistic traditions are independent, because they have been carried by different groups of people, at the same time, there must have been a certain degree of interplay between both the traditions. In the case of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, the textual sources ascribed to the sixth and seventh centuries, namely, Anantavarman's inscription,⁹⁰⁾ the original *Skandapurāṇa*, and Bāṇa's *Caṇḍīśataka*, describe the goddess's killing of Mahiṣa in the manner corresponding to an iconic type which flourished during the fifth to the eighth centuries.⁹¹⁾ Succeedingly a completely new type was innovated in the

artistic tradition around the early eighth century, and a similar innovation happened in the verbal tradition, namely, the account in the *Devīmāhātmya*.

Between them, however, there is a certain difference that our text does not describe the buffalo to be decapitated and an anthropomorphic demon comes forth, not from the buffalo's headless trunk as in the new iconic type, but from its mouth. At the end of the brief survey of several iconic types down to this new type, it has already been suggested that the decapitation of the buffalo of the new type may have been influenced by the southern iconic types, which possibly reflects myth and ritual of Mahiṣasuramardini-Korravai in South India. On the other hand, some features of the earliest iconic type in North India, representing the goddess's strangling of the buffalo with her arm and the buffalo's projecting of its tongue, suggest a different tradition of the method of the buffalo's sacrifice, in which it may have been garroted. Further, as regards the buffalo's tongue, von Stietencron has suggested the influence of an analogy between *jihvā* ("tongue") and *jīva* ("life").⁹² If this analogy were combined with the fact that life is sometimes represented as a human figure,⁹³ then the iconic type could have evolved into the account of Mahiṣa's death given in our text. From this argument, it is not unreasonable to say that the description of Mahiṣa's death in the *Devīmāhātmya* reflects the emergence of the new iconic type, but it is more adherent to the ritual or artistic tradition in North India.⁹⁴

As regards the slaying of Mahiṣa by Skanda described at MBh 3.221.52–66, I agree with von Stietencron, who, in view of "Die regionale Begrenzung der frühen Darstellungen der Göttin und das völlige Fehlen ebenso alter Skulpturen des im Mahābhārata geschilderten Types mit dem Kriegsgott als Büffeltöter," says that "das Epos versucht, den regional begrenzten, wahrscheinlich nicht-brahmanischen Kult einer kämpfenden Göttin der damals dominant männlichen hinduistischen Götterwelt anzugleichen, in dem es den Kriegsgott substituiert."⁹⁵ I shall therefore not deal with this episode here.

4. VINDHYAVĀSINĪ

We have already considered Vindhyavāsinī as she appears in the *Harivaṃśa*, and there is also a reference in Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika* (ca. fourth century) to a goddess who kills Śumbha and Niśumbha.⁹⁶ Besides, one of the Tamil Epics, *Maṇimekalai* (ca. fifth century), alludes to a guardian deity of Mt. Vindhya, the abode of Antari (i.e. Durgā), and calls her Vintā-kaṭikai. She is said to prey upon beings who fly over the Vindhya mountains, such as a female Vidyādhara in this epic.⁹⁷

In the *Devīmāhātmya*, the goddess who kills Śumbha and Niśumbha is the Warrior Goddess Caṇḍikā-Ambikā who has killed Mahiṣa, and although there is no mention of Mt. Vindhya in this context, in a reference to the Goddess's future manifestations it is stated that she will be born to Nanda and Yaśodā, dwell on Mt. Vindhya, and slay two demons also called Śumbha and Niśumbha (DM 11.37–38),

thus indicating that the *Devīmāhātmya* took over elements of Vindhyaśinī from the *Harivaṃśa*. In addition, at the start of this third myth the subject of the gods' praises is termed Viṣṇumāyā (5.6), a name which has obvious links with Viṣṇu's Yoganidrā or Mahāmāyā, the goddess appearing in the first myth, and here too one can detect echoes of the *Harivaṃśa*, where Nidrā is born as Vindhyaśinī.

Before examining the third myth, we shall deal with the first myth in brief. In the first myth a goddess who is called Viṣṇu's Yoganidrā or Mahāmāyā emerges from Viṣṇu in response to Brahman's eulogy, and helps Viṣṇu with slaying Madhu and Kaiṭabha by deluding these demons. Viṣṇu's slaying of Madhu and Kaiṭabha is a popular myth in Sanskrit literature, but usually no goddess appears in this myth. As regards this point, a version of this myth contained in the *Vāyupurāṇa* is noteworthy, because in it a goddess plays a role similar to Yoganidrā/Mahāmāyā in the first myth in the *Devīmāhātmya*. In the version in the *Vāyupurāṇa* (25.46–52), a maiden (*kanyā*) emerges from Viśvarūpa (*i.e.* Viṣṇu) in response to Brahman's prayer and deludes the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha. She calls herself Mohinī and Māyā—who-executes-Viṣṇu's-commands (25.48cd). Here we can clearly see the precedent of Viṣṇumāyā (*i.e.* Viṣṇu's Yoganidrā/Mahāmāyā) in the *Devīmāhātmya*. Brahman also gives her several secondary epithets: Mahāvyaḥṛti, Sāvitrī, and Ekānamśā.⁹⁸⁾

In the beginning of the third myth, the Goddess issues forth from Pārvatī. This emergence of Vindhyaśinī from Pārvatī is told as part of the myth relating to Skanda's birth in the *Matsyapurāṇa* 157.4–19 and the *Padmapurāṇa Srṣṭikhaṇḍa* 41.78–92, which contain identical passages.⁹⁹⁾ Prior to Vindhyaśinī's appearance, Rātri, following Brahman's orders, enters the womb of Menā, who has become pregnant with Pārvatī, and dyes the embryo black. Upon her birth with a dark skin, Pārvatī is ridiculed by her husband Śiva on account of the colour of her skin, and she goes to the Himalayas to practise austerities so as to acquire a fair skin. Having had her wish answered by Brahman, who is satisfied with her austerities, Pārvatī slips off her dark skin and assumes a bright golden form. At the same time, the black outer skin (*tvac*) that she has discarded, namely, Rātri, becomes the goddess Kauśikī, who betakes herself to Mt. Vindhya on a lion.¹⁰⁰⁾ Vindhyaśinī is here described as having three eyes, being black in colour, holding a bell, and wearing various ornaments and a yellow garment (or yellow garments).

The original *Skandapurāṇa* also contains the accounts of Pārvatī's austerities (34.1–61), Brahman's giving her a boon of the golden complexion (chaps. 53–55), Kauśikī's emergence from the dark outer skin (*kṛṣṇā-kośī*) which Pārvatī slips off and her settling on Mt. Vindhya (chap. 58). However, there is no explanation why Pārvatī is born with a dark skin, and Rātri does not appear in these accounts. Comparing the above two versions, we can discern that in Śaiva context Kauśikī-Vindhyaśinī is a secondary and dark-coloured manifestation of Pārvatī, who obtains a bright golden form as a result of separating the dark Kauśikī from herself, and that the myth centres on the derivation of the name 'Kauśikī' from the word *kośa* or *kośī* meaning an outer skin.¹⁰¹⁾ Rātri appearing in the *Matsyapurāṇa* is

probably a figure transposing Nidrā in the *Harivaṃśa* to the Śaiva context. In this respect the version in the *Matsyapurāṇa* is comparable to the account in the *Devīmāhātmya*, which evidently echoes the account of the *Harivaṃśa* as mentioned in the beginning of this section.

In the *Devīmāhātmya*, on the other hand, the emergent goddess Kauśikī (-Vindhyavāsini) is not a dark-coloured goddess, but the Warrior Goddess Caṇḍikā-Ambikā (-Maḥiṣāsūramardini), who appears as a fiery mass of energy, and consequently Pārvatī changes from the white-coloured Gaurī (4.36) to the black-coloured Kālīkā (5.41).

What was the purpose behind this reversal of the colours of Pārvatī and the emergent goddess? First, in the *Devīmāhātmya* Pārvatī serves as no more than a mere receptacle, and the reversal of colours indicates the Warrior Goddess's supremacy over Pārvatī.¹⁰² Secondly, by separating Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsini from the series of goddesses of night and darkness (Rātri/Nidrā-Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsini) and identifying her with the series of goddesses of light (Durgā-Kātyāyanī-Maḥiṣāsūramardini) an amalgamation of these two groups of goddesses resulted, in which the goddesses of light have precedence. This could be regarded as the *Devīmāhātmya*'s own way of resolving through amalgamation the relationship of opposition and complementarity between Durgā and Rātri at RVKh 4.2, and in general, between bright goddesses and dark goddesses.

Next, the motif of the proposal of marriage by Śumbha to the Goddess was to occupy an important position in later developments of the mythic corpus, but here I would merely suggest that it could be an expression of the celibacy of Vindhyavāsini alluded to in the *Harivaṃśa*.

We must now turn our attention to the Goddess's *śaktis*, namely, Kālī-Cāmuṇḍā, Śivadūtī, and the Seven Mothers. First, from the forehead of the Goddess, who has turned black in anger, there appears Kālī: she carries a sword, noose and skull-topped staff, wears a garland of human heads and a tiger skin, has emaciated skin, sunken and reddened eyes, a gaping mouth and lolling tongue, and emits loud roars (DM 7.5–7). Kālī is mentioned in the *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* 1.2.4 as the name of one of Agni's seven tongues, or flames, and she also appears in MBh 10.8.64–69 as the goddess of death,¹⁰³ but there are no hints there of the unusual appearance that she assumes in the *Devīmāhātmya*. The designation Cāmuṇḍā is more suited to this particular manifestation. Although it is stated in DM 7.25 that she will be called Cāmuṇḍā because she has killed the demons Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, it is more likely that the names of these two demons derived from the name Cāmuṇḍā.¹⁰⁴ The earliest solo representation of Cāmuṇḍā's unusual form is a terracotta from Ahicchatra (450–550),¹⁰⁵ and she appears as one of the Seven Mothers in the fifth-century cave at Badoh Pathari.¹⁰⁶

The Seven Mothers or *śaktis*, viz. Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Nārasimhī, and Aindrī, spring from the bodies of Brahman, Īśa (i.e. Śiva), Guha (i.e. Skanda), Viṣṇu and Indra at DM 8.12–13. Each of these goddesses is said to have the same form, ornaments and mount as her male counterpart (8.14).

The subsequent passage (8.15–20) describes the forms and attributes of these seven goddesses, while 11.12–20 also gives an iconographic description of the seven, as well as of Śivadūtī and Cāmuṇḍā. Representations of a group of seven women can be seen already on some Harappan seals,¹⁰⁷ while works thought to represent a group of divine Mothers began to be produced during the Kuṣāṇa period. These early figures consist of rows of three to eight women of similar appearance, either standing or seated and usually flanked by *āyudhapuruṣas*. In some cases they hold children in their arms or have theriomorphic faces.¹⁰⁸ Images of the Seven Mothers with attributes or emblems paralleling their male counterpart emerged from the beginning of the fifth century.¹⁰⁹ Three panels of the Seven Mothers located in Udayagiri may be the earliest representations, two on the north wall of the courtyard of Cave VI and one on the north wall of the courtyard of Cave IV. Despite their nearly obliterated condition, some emblems can be recognized in two of the panels.¹¹⁰ Subsequently, probably within the second quarter of the fifth century, a panel of the Seven Mothers was executed at Badoh Pathari near Udayagiri. There the figure of Cāmuṇḍā is conspicuous by her peculiar features, although the other six images have few identifiable attributes.¹¹¹ Four images found from Baroli near Kota in eastern Rajasthan should be noted here, because these images, identified as Indrānī, Vaiṣṇavī, Kaumārī and Cāmuṇḍā, are shown with mounts and full attributes comparable to the description given in our text. Harper ascribes these images to the last half of the fifth century on their style.¹¹² From the sixth century onwards images of Seven or Eight Mothers, including Cāmuṇḍā and each possessing distinctive features, spread in many cave temples.¹¹³ Varāhamihira, who flourished in Ujjayinī in the first half of the sixth century, states in his *Brhatsamhitā* that the images of the Mothers should be given the features of the male deities corresponding to their own names (57.56ab), although their names and their total number are not mentioned.¹¹⁴ The names of the Seven Mothers are usually given as Brāhmānī (Brāhmī), Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī (Indrānī) and Cāmuṇḍā,¹¹⁵ but in the *Devīmāhātmya* Cāmuṇḍā is treated separately and Nārasimhī is added in her place.

Among epigraphical sources, the earliest references to the Mothers are found in two copper plates of a *mahārāja* Bhuluṇḍa of the Valkhās, which are at Bagh in a collection of copper plates, recording land grants by kings in the Gupta period. One of them records a land granted in the year 50 (349–350 A.D.) to the Mothers of Navataṭāka, whose image had been installed by the king himself.¹¹⁶ The other is a land grant in the year 56 (355–356 A.D.) to the shrine of the Mothers (*mātrsthānadevakula*) which had been established by the Pāśupatācārya Bhagavat Lokodadhi in the village of Pinchikanaka.¹¹⁷ Subsequently, the Gangdhar stone inscription of 423–424 A.D. refers to the establishment of a temple dedicated to the Mothers by Mayūrākṣaka, a counsellor of Viśvavarman of Mālava,¹¹⁸ while the Bihar stone inscription, which the brother-in-law of Kumāragupta probably caused to be engraved in the reign of Skandagupta, also alludes to the Mothers.¹¹⁹ It is further known that the kings of the Early Cālukya and Early Kadamba dynasties

worshipped the Mothers.¹²⁰⁾ The task of probing the prototypes of the Mothers and tracing their history in Sanskrit literature is fraught with difficulties, and I have neither the space nor the ability to do so here. Instead, I shall confine myself to noting that diverse groups of Mothers are mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*, some of six or seven members and others of indeterminate number, and that they represent both mothers who nurture infants and malevolent demonesses who bring illness to small children.¹²¹⁾

Among the struggles between the *śaktis* and demons in the *Devīmāhātmya*, that against the demon Raktabīja is the most notable. As is indicated by his name, meaning "he who has blood as his seed," Raktabīja fills the world with his doubles, which are born whenever a drop of blood falls on earth from his wounds (DM 8.40). Because this faculty of self-propagation is calqued on the demon Andhaka, as a prototype of the episode of Raktabīja we will examine the battle between Andhaka and Śiva (actually a fight between Andhaka and the Mothers) related in nearly the same words in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* 1.226 and the *Matsyapurāṇa* 179.¹²²⁾ In order to counter Andhaka, who reproduces himself from his own blood, Śiva creates a group of about two hundred Mothers, and Śuṣkarevatī, created by Viṣṇu, sucks up Andhaka's blood. The vanquished Andhaka takes refuge in Śiva and becomes his *ganeśa*. Meanwhile, Śiva finds that he is unable to control the famished Mothers, who begin devouring the three worlds. Asked for help by him, Nṛsiṃha creates four chief Mothers from parts of his body,¹²³⁾ each with eight attendant Mothers, to contend with them. Ultimately Nṛsiṃha succeeds in appeasing them. In the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* this is followed at 1.227 by a description of methods for alleviating illnesses caused when these Mothers take possession of people (*mātrdoṣaprasāmana*).¹²⁴⁾ This arrangement follows that of the *Mahābhārata*, where the Mothers are propitiated by Skanda in a passage hinting at a conflict with an older group of Mothers (3.219.14–23)¹²⁵⁾ and then, in instructions on "graspers" (*graha*), or the demons who take possession of people, it is described how these Mothers, as well as the children born from Skanda, afflict fetuses and children up to the age of sixteen (3.219.24–58).¹²⁶⁾ Therefore, the battle between Andhaka and the Mothers may be regarded as a myth that served as a preamble to the account of remedies for afflictions caused by the Mothers.¹²⁷⁾

In the *Devīmāhātmya* the account of this battle has been modified in several ways. First, the demon's name has been changed from Andhaka to Raktabīja, which gives more direct expression to his peculiar ability. Next, the central figure in the group of Mothers has changed from Śuṣkarevatī to Cāmuṇḍā. Śuṣkarevatī or Revatī was representative of the Mothers who afflicted infants.¹²⁸⁾ Cāmuṇḍā, on the other hand, is scarcely attested to in literature antedating our text, although she is mentioned as one of the large number of Mothers created by Śiva in the above-mentioned episode. Thirdly, there is a change in the number of Mothers. The group of about two hundred and fifty Mothers mentioned by name in this episode follows on from the indeterminate number of Mothers in the *Mahābhārata*,¹²⁹⁾ while the Seven Mothers of the *Devīmāhātmya*, each in the same form as their male

counterpart, might derive from the artistic representations of the Seven Mothers that began to be produced from the fifth century onwards, although Nārasimhī, who is substituted for Cāmuṇḍā in our text, may be a reflex of the Nṛsiṃha who appeased the Mothers in the above episode. That this “man-lion” incarnation of Viṣṇu was being worshipped around the fifth century is evident from the existence of two Nārasimha temples at Ramtek and images of him at Eran.¹³⁰ Finally, the most important modification pertains to the control of the Mothers. Śiva countered the chaos caused by the proliferation of Andhaka’s doubles from the latter’s blood with another chaos in the form of ravenous Mothers, but after Andhaka’s death he was forced to combat the remaining Mothers with another group of Mothers, and there was a danger that this could be repeated indefinitely. The situation is the same in the *Devīmāhātmya*, but the danger is eventually averted by having the supreme Goddess absorb all the *śaktis* into her own person (10.3–5),¹³¹ thereby clearly demonstrating the ascendancy of a goddess who preserves order in the world.

Towards the end of the *Devīmāhātmya* it is prophesied that, in addition to Vindhyavāsini, future manifestations of the Goddess in the form of Raktadantikā, Śatākṣi-Sākambharī-Durgā, Bhīmā and Bhrāmārī will kill other demons (11.38–51). These goddesses too each have their own history, but space does not allow me to deal with them here. It is to be surmised, however, that this enumeration of the Goddess’s incarnations served, along with the concept of *śaktis*, as an effective model whereby the Warrior Goddess of the *Devīmāhātmya* might absorb different regional goddesses.¹³²

5. THE EVOLUTION OF THE WARRIOR GODDESS

In the above we have considered Mahiṣāsūramardīnī and Vindhyavāsini individually, and now we will bring these two threads of our inquiry together and return to the question of why the Goddess in the *Devīmāhātmya* should have been depicted as a warrior goddess.

I have already touched on the likelihood that, in North India, initially Mahiṣāsūramardīnī would have been a goddess worshiped at least in the area around Mathura, who was linked to seasonal rites at the end of the monsoon as a symbol of the sun or fire comparable to Durgā-Kātyāyanī mentioned in the Vedic literature.¹³³ Later her cult gradually became popular, and a lion was added to artistic representations of her. Then three large relief panels, which mark a clear break with earlier, relatively small stone reliefs and terracotta figurines, were produced in the caves at Udayagiri, which had connections with Candragupta II.¹³⁴ Here we find the depiction of the actual use of weapons in slaying the buffalo, and the goddess’s arms have increased to twelve in number. This increase in the number of her arms may of course have been partly due to considerations of composition in dealing with a larger panel, but attention should be drawn to the fact that it resulted in an increase in the variety of weapons held by the goddess.

The season following the end of the monsoons was also the time of year when the king would set out on military campaigns, and when we take into account Biardeau's suggestion that a close relationship between weapons and the buffalo-slaying goddess in the rites of the *viṣayādaśamī* can be read into the insertion of the Durgā-stava in the *Mahābhārata*, it could be surmised that these panels at Udayagiri hint at a coupling of Maḥiṣāsūramardinī with kingship and the ritual purification of weapons prior to a military campaign.¹³⁵⁾

The worship of Vindhyavāsini spread in association with the Kṛṣṇa legends as another aspect of Kṛṣṇa's sister, Ekānāmā. It is also incorporated into the Vaiṣṇava myths through her minglement with Viṣṇu's sleep, Nidrā, who is identical with the personification of his deluding power called Māyā and Mohinī. In the Śaiva myths, on the other hand, she is characterised as a manifestaion of Pārvatī. In all the cases, the dark colouring of these goddesses would have incited their interweaving of one another.

The question is when did the amalgamation of Vindhyavāsini and Maḥiṣāsūramardinī, resulting in the Warrior Goddess, commence. The following two inscriptions may be useful in considering this question. One of them is an inscription of a *mahārāja* Gauri from Bhramaramātā Temple located in the border area between Rajasthan and Malwa, dated 491 A.D. It states that he built a temple for the goddess who rides a chariot drawn by a lion (or lions), tears a demon (or demons) with her lance, and assumes the form of the female half of Śiva's body.¹³⁶⁾ The goddess is identified with Pārvatī, but it is not clear whether her exploit of demon-slaying told in the inscription alludes to Maḥiṣāsura or other demons. In the original *Skandapurāṇa* Pārvatī endows Kauśikī with a big chariot drawn by lions, when she assigns Mt. Vindhya to Kauśikī as her abode.¹³⁷⁾ Because of this correspondence, the demon-slaying goddess praised in this inscription may not be Maḥiṣāsūramardinī, but Vindhyavāsini. Besides, Bhramaramātā, to whom the present temple is dedicated, is referred to under the name Bhrāmārī at DM 11.48c-50b as another demon-slaying goddess.¹³⁸⁾ In any case, the inscription seems to suggest that the amalgamation between a demon-slaying goddess and Pārvatī had already occurred. When we consider that this inscription is attributed to a *mahārāja* Gauri and the inscription on Udayagiri Cave VI to a *mahārāja* of the Sanakānikas, we may say that the worship of the Warrior Goddess was gradually developing among local kings in the fifth century.

The other notable inscription is a stele in the Nāgārjuni Hill in Bihar, which records that Anantavarvan of the Maukharis installed the image of Kātyāyanī in this cave on Mt. Vindhya. The first stanza praises the goddess's foot placed on the head of Maḥiṣāsura.¹³⁹⁾ The inscription is ascribed to the first half of the sixth century on the basis of paleographical comparison with other Maukhari inscriptions.¹⁴⁰⁾ It seems to be a clue that Durgā-Kātyāyanī, Maḥiṣāsūramardinī, and Vindhyavāsini had already been amalgamated into the Goddess in this period, and a member of a royal family worshipped her together with other deities.¹⁴¹⁾

The spread of this cult is attested by literary works. Mention has already been

made of Bāṇa's *Caṇḍīśataka*, and in the *Harṣacarita*, a biography of the king Harṣavardhana by the same author, the sacrifice of buffalos on the ninth lunar day is alluded to in a description of Mt. Vindhya.¹⁴²⁾ Further, in Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* it is mentioned that the goddess who killed a buffalo was worshipped by the Śabaras and was made offerings of blood and flesh.¹⁴³⁾ In Chapter 6 of Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita* it is told that the king of Suhma obtained children after propitiating Vindhyaśāsinī, who moved to the temple built for her in Suhma from Mt. Vindhya.¹⁴⁴⁾ In the same work, Chapter 8, which is said to be set against the historical background of the decline of the Gupta and the Vākāṭaka dynasties in the second half of the fifth century, describes a shrine dedicated to Vindhyaśāsinī in the vicinity of Māhiṣmatī, and the stratagem used by the hero Viśruta to make the people believe that the surviving children of the Vākāṭakas are children sent by the goddess.¹⁴⁵⁾ In Vākpati's *Gauḍavaha*, which describes Yaśovarman's nationwide conquests in the first half of the eighth century, Yaśovarman offers up a hymn of praise to the Goddess residing in a cave on Mt. Vindhya before setting out on an expedition to Magadha, and, along with references to the goddess similar to those in the *Kādambarī*, it is also mentioned that she is offered human sacrifices.¹⁴⁶⁾

Here we should reconsider the date and the locality of the composition of the *Devīmāhātmya*, collecting the materials used in this paper together. For the relationship with other texts, we indicated that the *Harivaṃśa*, the Madhu-Kaiṭabha myth in the *Vāyupurāṇa*, and the original *Skandapurāṇa* probably precede our text. In the *Matsyapurāṇa* the account of Kauśikī's emergence from Pārvatī and the one of the battle between Andhaka and the Mothers seem to have had influence over the accounts of our text, but there is no evidence that shows borrowings from one to the other. So it may be safe to say that the accounts in both the texts derived from common sources, which were more highly modified in our text than in the *Matsyapurāṇa*. As regards the battle between Andhaka and the Mothers, the *Matsyapurāṇa* probably borrows its account from the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*. So the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, at least a part of it, may antedate the *Matsyapurāṇa* and also the *Devīmāhātmya*. On the other hand, the *Matsyapurāṇa* has the description of Mahiṣāsūramardini's icon. In it a half verse, which describes her icon as imitating the forms of three gods (*viz.* Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Brahman),¹⁴⁷⁾ reminds us that the three godheads take main parts in creating the Goddess in our text (DM 2.8–10). Therefore, it is likely that the description of the icon in the *Matsyapurāṇa* was composed later than the *Devīmāhātmya*. But it does not contradict the above argument, because the text can contain older materials during the process of its gradual compilation. A new iconic type of Mahiṣāsūramardini roughly corresponding to the passage in our text and more closely to the iconographical description in the *Matsyapurāṇa* emerged in the early eighth century. The description in the *Matsyapurāṇa* was probably written after the new iconic type had been established, namely, about the ninth century. Our text precedes it, but it is not far earlier because it shares mythical sources with parts of the *Matsyapurāṇa*. As discussed in the second section, it is

most likely that our text was composed in the practically contemporary period with the emergence of the new iconic type. This dating is consistent with the evidence drawn from the comparison with other texts mentioned above, and the evidence of an inscription and manuscripts mentioned at Note 1.

If the conclusion that the *Devīmāhātmya* was composed around the early eighth century is accepted, it will become difficult to fix the locality of the composition, because the images of Mahiṣāsura-mardīnī had been flourished nearly all over India at that time, so that the archaeological materials are not very useful for the object. However, the texts which had some influence upon our text, that is, the *Harivaṃśa*, the *Vāyupurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, the original *Skandapurāṇa*, and the *Matsyapurāṇa*, are all composed in North India: in all probabilities. Moreover, comparison made in the second section between the relevant passage in our text and the iconic types of Mahiṣāsura-mardīnī, typical in North and South India respectively, seems to indicate that our text has inherited the northern tradition of her cult. Therefore, it will be safe to say that our text was also composed in North India in the least.

In North India the cult of the Warrior Goddess was becoming popular among local chieftains in the fifth century, and during the sixth to the eighth centuries, its status was gradually elevating towards the culmination that she was considered to be a protectress of royal families. With the upsurge in the popularity of the cult, there should have arisen a demand to give verbal expression to the cult in Sanskrit. At last, around the early eighth century, our text was probably composed in order to fulfill such a demand. The intent of the author(s) of the *Devīmāhātmya* may be discerned in two instances of recasting in the third myth. The first is the assimilation of the goddess of darkness by the goddess of light in the scene where the Warrior Goddess emerges from Pārvatī, while the second is the assimilation of the goddesses of disorder by the goddess of order in the battle with Raktabīja. These two events coincide with the two characteristics of the Goddess as portrayed in the creation of the Warrior Goddess from the gods' *tejas*, namely, the fact that she is a goddess of fire and light and the fact that she is modelled on a king. In addition, the representation of the Goddess as a mass of energy comparable to the sun overlaps with the image of a king. Consequently, the Warrior Goddess of the *Devīmāhātmya*, who slays demons and preserves order in the world, may be regarded in essence as a likeness or symbol of a king.

Finally, we will examine the frame story. Three male characters in the frame story (*viz.* Medhas, Suratha, and Samādhi) represent each of the three upper classes (*varṇa*) and, as a whole, the world of the "twice-born" (*dvija*), which concerns the author(s) of our text. Among this three some Suratha, a representative of the warrior class (*kṣatriya*), is the central figure, because he plays a role that fits our text into the context of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*. In the beginning of the story he loses his kingdom and at the end, as a reward of his devotion to the Goddess, she promises him that he shall recover his kingdom in this life and become the eighth *maṇu*, namely, the lord of the *maṇu*-interval succeeding ours, in his next life (DM

13. 13c–15b).¹⁴⁸ The message seems to be clear: by following Suratha's example and taking refuge in the Goddess, terrestrial kings can gain the Goddess's protection, share in her power (*śakti*), and attain their sovereignty in the coming ages. This is the message the *Devīmāhātmya* conveys, and it is not a bold conjecture that this message would have been welcome among kings and would-be kings at the time of its composition.

In this way the *Devīmāhātmya* succeeded in establishing the Warrior Goddess as an accessory to the royal power in Sanskrit literature and, simultaneously, in the mainstream of Hinduism. Further, we may say that it was far more successful than could have been foreseen by its author(s), as has been proved by its powerful and far-reaching influence on later Hinduism.

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NOTES

- 1) See ROCHER 1986: 195. The inscription found in the old temple dedicated to Dadhimatī Mātā (about 24 miles north-west of Nagor in Jodhpur District) could be the *terminus ad quem* of its composition, because it cites a verse from the *Devīmāhātmya* (11.9) as follows: *sarvamaṅgalāmaṅgalye śīve sa[rvā]rthasādhake/ araṇye trāṁmvake gauri [nā]rāyaṇi namo stu te//* (Corrected reading: *sarvamaṅgalamaṅgalye śīve sa[rvā]rthasādhike/ śaraṇye tryambake gauri [nā]rāyaṇi namo stu te//*) (EI 11: 299–304). Mirashi ascribes its date to 812–813 A.D., if the year is current, or 813–14 A.D., if the year is expired (MIRASHI 1964). However, it is also possible that the cited verse circulated independently at that time. The same verse, except for its readings *śaradhaye* for *śaraṇye*, *māmgalye* for *maṅgalye* and *gaurī* for *gauri*, occurs at the end of a peculiar version of the Śrī-sūkta (RVKh 2.6.30) in the Pañcāmṛtādyabhiṣeka-sūkta (SCHEFTELOWITZ 1906: 72–79; COBURN 1984: 63 n.204, 258–264). The oldest dated manuscript of the *Devīmāhātmya* which has come down to us is dated NS 229 = 1109 A.D. (Mss. No. 1077 jha of Shastri's Catalogue of the Durbar Library, Nepal, NGMPP Reel Nr. A1157/11). Shastri cited a manuscript dated NS 118 = 998 A.D. (Mss. No. 1534 ca, NGMPP Reel Nr. A1157/12), but this is actually dated NS 518 = 1398 A.D. See SHASTRI 1905: liv, 64. Three wooden boards with the illustrations of a goddess destroying demons, including one which also depicts two devotees, are preserved in the British Library. These must have been the cover of palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Devīmāhātmya* and are ascribed to the eleventh century.

- 2) As noted by COBURN (1984: 241 n.101) and discussed below in this paper, early archaeological material probably indicates north-western India as the centre of the goddess worship relating to our text. But, the relevance of the archaeological material to the locality of the text needs to be reconsidered together with the date of the composition of our text. Pargiter suggests that the *Devīmāhātmya*, as well as the whole of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, originated in western India, probably at Mahismati (PARGITER 1904: vii-xiii).
- 3) The *Devīmāhātmya* corresponds to Chaps. 81–93 of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* in the Bibliotheca Indica edition and to Chaps. 78–90 in the Venkaṭeśvara edition.
- 4) There exist numerous manuscripts and editions of the *Devīmāhātmya* with and without commentaries and also many translations and adaptations into both Indic and non-Indic languages; see ROCHER 1986: 195 n.264; COBURN 1984: 51f, 335f; 1991: 236. Verse numbers are not necessarily uniform, the number of verses varies, and there are also variant readings, but these differences are not so great as to affect the content. In the present instance I have used the *Durgāsaptasatī saptatikā-saṃvalitā* (ed. by Harikṛṣṇaśarma; Bombay: Venkaṭeśvara Press, 1916 [rep. 1988]). That '*Devīmāhātmya*' is the original title is clear from several old manuscripts including the two referred to at Note 1.
- 5) COBURN 1984: 1f, 53–58.
- 6) ROCHER 1986: 193 n.264. See also KINSLEY 1978.
- 7) COBURN 1984, 1991.; the latter includes an English translation.
- 8) In the *Devīmāhātmya* the Goddess is explained in terms of the three feminine concepts of *māyā*, *prkr̥ti* and *śakti*; see COBURN 1982: 154–163; KINSLEY 1978: 498f; 1986: 104f. On the history of these three terms, see COBURN 1984: 125–127, 146–153, 180–186; PINTCHMAN 1994. These three concepts first appear simultaneously in the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad* as a female principle representing a counterpart to the supreme god (1.3, 9; 4.1, 5, 9, 10; 6.8).
- 9) COBURN 1984: 303–306.
- 10) See BOCK 1987.
- 11) These two demons are usually called Śumbha and Niśumbha in the published texts of the *Devīmāhātmya* and other Purāṇas. However, the oldest dated manuscript of the *Devīmāhātmya* preserved in Nepal (see Note 1) and another manuscript in the possession of Sam Fogg (London) read Sumbha and Nisumbha instead of Śumbha and Niśumbha constantly, although both manuscripts are incomplete. The latter, an undated manuscript, which I was fortunately able to read from photographs taken by Dr. H. Isaacson, may not have been written much later than the oldest dated one. Further, the oldest manuscript of the original *Skandapurāṇa*, dated 810 A.D., which is preserved in Nepal, also reads Śumbha and Niśumbha constantly. 'Śumbha' probably derives from the root 'subh' meaning 'to smother' (see under the subject of *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoirischen*). On the grounds of the above-mentioned evidence of old manuscripts and the derivation of the word, I will take Śumbha and Niśumbha as the original names of these demons.
- 12) The names Caṇḍikā and Ambikā could derive from *caṇḍā* and *ambā* respectively, and they are probably designations close to common nouns that indicate the Goddess's terrifying aspect and her aspect as a mother and a fertility goddess. See COBURN 1984: 94–106; HAZRA 1982; KINSLEY 1978: 497.
- 13) The name by which the demon-slaying Goddess is most commonly referred to in the living tradition and by modern scholars is 'Durgā,' but although it occurs in the

Devīmāhātmya and in most of the early texts used in this paper, Durgā was originally no more than one of the goddesses who was being amalgamated into the Goddess in the period prior to and contemporary with the composition of our text. Hence, in order to avoid the confusion between a goddess Durgā and the Goddess Durgā, I have chosen to call the latter 'the Warrior Goddess.' 'The Warrior Goddess' is used in almost the same meaning as 'the demon-slaying Goddess,' but it is intended to have wider connotations with the people of the warrior class, especially kings, as shall be discussed in this chapter.

- 14) On the history of this epithet, see COBURN 1984: 115–121; DIVAKARAN 1984.
- 15) VARENNE 1960: 30–33. I follow the reading of the Ātharvaṇa manuscripts; the Āndhra and Drāviḍa manuscripts have the masculine form.
- 16) TĀ 10.1.50: *tām agnivarṇām tapasā jvalantīm vairocanīm karmaphaleṣu juṣṭām durgām devīm saraṇam aham prapadye sutarasi tarase namaḥll*. See VARENNE 1960: 50f.
- 17) MUIR 1967: 427f.
- 18) SCHEFTELOWITZ 1906: 110–112; Coburn 1984: 264–267.
- 19) See RAGHAVAN 1978. The Rātri-sūkta (RV 10.127), together with the Devī-sūkta (RV 10.125), is often incorporated into versions of the *Devīmāhātmya* accompanied by the six *aṅgas*, and they came to be regarded as important *mantras* of the Goddess (COBURN 1991: 100, 183–185).
- 20) SCHEFTELOWITZ 1906: 110f.
- 21) A hymn to the goddess, called Āryā-stava (App.I.8), is inserted after 47.54; see COBURN 1984: 278–281.
- 22) HV 47.39–56; 48.27–36; 65.51–57.
- 23) HV 47.47cd: "Through the lineage of Kuśika you will become Kauśikī" (*kuśikasya tu gotreṇa kauśikī tvam bhaviṣyasi*). In view of the fact that in the *anukramaṇī* of the aforementioned Rātri-sūkta Kuśika is given as the name of the sage of the hymn, it is possible that, just as Durgā had the lineage name of Kātyāyanī (<Kātya), so did Rātri have the lineage name of Kauśikī (<Kuśika). It is probably because Nidrā was a goddess interchangeable with Rātri in contexts relating to Viṣṇu that she is here called Kauśikī and linked to Indra, who also bears the name of Kauśika.
- 24) See SRINIVASAN 1981: 130, Fig. 1–3; GHOSH 1936. Srinivasan cites the other image of the triad from Gayā (130f, Fig. 4–6). *Bṛhatsamhitā* 57.37–39 prescribes the icon of this triad.
- 25) See SRINIVASAN 1981.
- 26) See SRINIVASAN 1981: 132; GOSH 1936. A female figure whose name indicates her dark complexion appears as Kṛṣṇa's elder sister, Añjanadevī, in the prose of the *Ghatajātaka* and as his cowherd wife, Piṇṇai (Skt. name Nīlā), in the Tamil material (HUDSON 1982).
- 27) Vaudeville in her paper (1982) assesses the importance of the role of goddess worship in the Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla cult, alluding to the early textual sources examined here. But in the process of her argument she seems to presuppose the concept of the Great Goddess called Durgā, and hardly differentiates between several individual goddesses, such as Ekānamśā and Vindhyavāsini, from whom the concept of the Goddess had been evolving.
- 28) Except for the manuscript T₂, which is close to the north Indian manuscripts (RAGHU VIRA 1936: xxii), these versions all occur in Devanāgarī manuscripts. Among the seven versions (A–G), D is the vulgate, A and B are fragmentary, C and E are similar in content but only about half the length of D, from which they differ considerably, and F and G are enlarged versions of D.
- 29) G line 21: *kaiṭabhamardini*.

- 30) Raghu Vira, states that the vulgate (D) is “a comparatively recent addition” but judging from its contents, it may be either prior to or not very much later than the *Devīmāhātmya*.
- 31) BIAUDEAU 1981. On the *vijayādaśamī*, see KANE 1974: 188–194.
- 32) The correspondences with the verses of the *Harivaṃśa* are as follows (*Harivaṃśa*/Durgā-stava [line number]): 47.39/ D17–18, F19–20; 47.40a/ F21a; 47.40cd/ D19; 47.41/ F23–24; 47.42–43/ D21–24, F25–28; 47.44ab/ D26; 47.44cd/ DFG14; 47.45cd/ D27, F30, G32; 47.48ab/ D33, F36, G38; 47.50d/ D35b; 47.51a/ D35a; 47.51b/ D34a, F37b, G39b; 47.52/ D37–38, F40–41, G42–43; 47.53/ D40–41, F43–44, G45–46; 47.54–55/ D44–47, F47–49, G49–52; 48.30–31/ DFG12–13.
- 33) B line 7, G line 30: *mahiṣāsura darpaḥnīm*; D line 29, F line 32: *mahiṣāsura nāśinī*; G line 34: *mahiṣāsura ghātini*.
- 34) MBh VI App.I.1. It is included in the majority of what Belvarkar has designated “the group of late north Indian manuscripts” (1947: xviii–xx, xxx, cvi–cx, cxxvi).
- 35) Line 17: *Kaiṭabhanāśini*.
- 36) The original *Skandapurāṇa* is a newly discovered text with no division of *Khaṇḍas*. The *editio princeps* of this text by Kṛṣṇa Prasāda Bhaṭṭarāi was published at Kathmandu in 1988. The new critical edition is under preparation at the Institute of Indian Studies, University of Groningen. See ADRIAENSEN, BAKKER, and ISAACSON 1994, and Prolegomena of the first volume of the new edition. The text and translation of 68.10–23 are cited in my other paper (YOKOCHI 1999; see also BAKKER 1997: 130f).
- 37) The *Bālacarita*, one of the Trivandrum Plays attributed to Bhāsa, is often referred to as one of the early textual sources in this context. In the second act of this play, the goddess Kāṭyāyanī (Kātyāyanī?) plays a role similar to Nidrā at the scene of Kṛṣṇa’s birth in the *Harivaṃśa*, and she says that she was born into Vasudeva’s family in order to destroy Kamsa’s house, after having killed Śumbha, Niśumbha and Mahiṣa (verse 20). However, whether these plays were composed by a legendary poet Bhāsa preceding Kālidāsa or of a later and anonymous origin in South India is a question in controversy. I am in favour of the latter and, therefore, the *Bālacarita* is not the object of examination in this context. From the latter’s standpoint there is also a controversy about date and place of their composition. See KAMIMURA 1988, which ascribes these plays to the eleventh century on the evidence found in *Alaṃkāraśāstras*. See also TIEKEN 1993, which gives us a good survey and a bibliography of controversy about the Trivandrum Plays.
- 38) KIRFEL 1927: xxviii–xxxiii.
- 39) *Ibid.*: 108–110 (Abschnitt I, Textgruppe IIB, Kap.6.67–82). This section derives from the *Vāyupurāṇa* and *Liṅgapurāṇa*, but because the account given in the latter is clearly Śaivite in content, whereas the former would appear to embody older elements, in the following summary I have followed the *Vāyupurāṇa*.
- 40) The androgynous *puruṣa* appearing in creation myths may be traced back to the myth recorded at BĀU 1.4.1–4, according to which *ātman*, having assumed the form of *puruṣa*, divided himself into man and woman in order to create other creatures.
- 41) *durgā, kātyāyanī, caṇḍī, kauśikī, bhūtanāyikā, bahirdhvajā, śuladharā, brahmacārīnī, indrabhāginī* (LiṅgaP: *upendrabhāginī*), *simhāvahinī, mahiṣamardinī* (LiṅgaP: *mahāmahiṣamardinī*), *śumbhādidaityahantri* (VāyuP: *daityahantri*), *vindhyānilayā, gaṇanāyika*, etc.
- 42) Because of the large number of studies dealing with individual works, I shall mention only those that trace iconographical changes. General studies: BANERJEA 1956: 497–500,

- SESHADRI 1963, VON STIETENCROON 1983; studies covering the Kuṣāṇa to Gupta periods: VON MITTERWALLNER 1976, AGRAWALA (R.C.) 1958; and studies on the Calukya and Pallava dynasties: KALIDOS 1989, TARTAKOV and VIDYA DEHEJIA 1984–85.
- 43) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 128, Abb.1; VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: 196–199, Figs. 1, 2; AGRAWALA (R.C.) 1958: 123f; VIENNOT 1956: 368–372, Fig. 1; HARTELL 1973: 11, 14, Figs. 12, 15; 1993: 122f, 131–134, 245, 250; HARLE 1970: 147f, 153, Figs. 1, 6. Similar terracotta figurines or stone reliefs include those from Haryana (HANDA 1991: 192f, Figs. 1–4), from Ahicchatra (AGRAWALA [V.S.] 1947–48: 133f, Pl.XLVII.120, 122), one from Bhīṭa (MARSHALL 1911–12: 81, Pl.XXXI.13), and one from Ramgarh (BERKSON 1978: 228f, Fig. 8).
- 44) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 128; VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: 199, 205, Fig. 3. Another stone relief from Ramgarh depicts a lion on the proper right side of the goddess (BERKSON 1978: 230f, Fig. 9).
- 45) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 128; VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: 200–203; AGRAWALA (R.C.) 1958: 124–127, Figs. 1, 2; 1955: 37–39; 1955–56. Agrawala places this figure between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D., whereas Viennot (1956) and von Mitterwallner (*ibid.*: 205) date it to around the fourth century on account of its iconographical features. Although Agrawala's Fig. 2 is only a fragment, the buffalo in the lower left faces towards the upper right.
- 46) ALTEKAR 1957: 31–32, 37–38, Pl.I.6–7; see also BANERJEA 1956: 134f; VON STIETENCROON 1983: 128.
- 47) Altekar 1957: 27–28, 32–35, Pl.I.8–13. The lion-slayer type of coins of Candragupta II and Kumāragupta also bears the goddess seated on a lion on the reverse side (ALTEKAR 1957: 105–121, 185–190, Pls.VI.1–VII.10, XII.1–10).
- 48) The relative chronology of the three reliefs accepted here follows von MITTERWALLNER. For the dating of the caves at Udayagiri, see WILLIAMS 1982: 40–49, 86–89.
- 49) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 128; VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: 199–202, 206f, Figs. 4, 5.
- 50) BARRETT 1975: 64; VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: 202.
- 51) FLEET 1963: 21–25. There seems to be no reason not to apply the date of this inscription to the reliefs on the facade of Cave VI, although Viennot (1971–72: 72–73) suggests the date of the late seventh century for the relief in question and Barrett (1975: 64, 66) suggests the same late date for all three Mahiṣāsūramardīnī reliefs. Cf. WILLIAMS 1982: 42.
- 52) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 130f; VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: 201, Fig. 6. The identification of the attributes held in her remaining hands is a subject of controversy; see HARLE 1970, 1971–72.
- 53) BANERJI 1924: 13, Pl.XIV.b; VON STIETENCROON 1983: 131. For the Śiva temple Williams suggests a date around 520–530 A.D. (WILLIAMS 1982: 117–122).
- 54) BAKKER 1997: 130–133, Pl.XXIXa; SUNDARA 1990: Pl.XXV.a,d; VON STIETENCROON 1983: 131, Abb.10; KALIDOS 1989: Fig. 7.
- 55) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 130f., Abb.8–13; VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: Figs. 6–8; SESHADRI 1963: plates 4–7A, 9, 10B, 11A; SUNDARA 1990; VIENNOT 1971–72; BARRETT 1975; YOKOCHI 1999.
- 56) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 128, Abb.5–7; KALIDOS 1989: Figs. 10, 11, 13. At Ellora there are also instances in which the goddess only places her foot on the buffalo's back (KALIDOS 1989: Figs. 12, 14). Sometimes the lion is shown biting the buffalo in the hindquarters.
- 57) TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984–85: 324f, Fig. 27.

- 58) TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 322f, 328-331, Figs. 23-26, 41-45; KALIDOS 1989: 20-23, Figs. 15-21; VON STIETENCROON 1983: 133f, Abb.18f; SESHADRI 1963: 15-18, Pls. 18-25. That one of the earliest example of this type is a colossal image from Besnagar, Vidiśā, MP, ascribed to the fifth century, is problematic, but Tartakov and Dehejia persuasively criticise the claim that this solitary piece demonstrates the North Indian origin of this type (1984-85: 323f, 341, Fig. 28; cf. SESHADRI 1963: 15, Pl.17). Another elegant sculpture of this type is found from Sambor Prei Kuk in Cambodia and ascribed to the first half of the seventh century (JESSUP and ZEPHIR 1997: 168f [Cat. No. 18; No. 15 in the Japanese Catalogue]), which seems to support the argument that this type had already been popular in South India before the seventh century.
- 59) SRINIVASAN 1964: 148, 171f, Pl.XLIII, LIVB; TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 328-330, 332f, Figs. 41, 43, 45, 50-56. Similar modifications are also seen on some of the Early Cōla images (HARLE 1963: Figs. 1-3). See also KALIDOS 1989: Fig. 20 and TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 333, Figs. 34, 47.
- 60) *Cilappatikāram*, Canto XII. See HARLE 1963; TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 329f; KALIDOS 1989: 21f.
- 61) TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 325-328, Figs. 1-6, 29-32, 39f.; KALIDOS 1989: 18f, Figs. 4f; VON STIETENCROON 1983: 131f, Abb.14; SESHADRI 1963: 19, Pl.26. One of the earliest and marvelous example of this type is the relief on the northern wall of the Mahiśāsuramardinī *maṇḍapa* at Mahabalipuram, which is said to be the source of the relief of this type in the Kailāsa Temple at Ellora, though the demon is anthropomorphic except for his buffalo horns in the latter (BURGESS 1883: 28f, Pl.IV, Fig. 7; TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 287f, Fig.7; SESHADRI 1963: 20, Pl.27A).
- 62) TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 331f, Figs. 46-49; KALIDOS 1989: 16-18, Figs. 1-3.
- 63) DONALDSON 1985: 1063-65, Figs. 3155-58, 3163-80; TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 320-22, Figs. 19-22, 35; VON STIETENCROON 1983: 133, Abb.15f; SESHADRI 1963: 20f, Pls. 27B-31.
- 64) VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: 208. On the west side of the *maṇḍapa* of the cave there is a long, but much damaged inscription. It lists the kings of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas down to Dantidurga (ca. 725-755 A.D.), and seemingly refers to his visit to Ellora. See BURGESS 1883: 87-89. About the dating of the cave and the inscription, Burgess says that "the inscription may be taken as proving that it was finished, or at least in an advanced condition, when Dantidurga visited Elurā in the middle of the eighth century; and it is not improbable that he had constructed it" (*ibid.*: 25f.). An example of the same iconic type is also seen in a niche of the Kailāsa Temple, Ellora, the construction of which commenced in the reign of Dantidurga (*ibid.*: 26, 29; TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984-85: 320, Fig. 36).
- 65) MISRA 1985: Pl.26.
- 66) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 134-136, Abb.20-27; SESHADRI 1963: 21-25, Pls. 32-40; AGRAWALA [R.C.] 1958: 130; DIVAKARAN 1984: 287, Pls.254-256.
- 67) AgniP 50.1-6b; MatsyaP 260.55c-66b; *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* II.1, pp. 79f, 88f; Rao 1914: App.C, *Pratimālakṣaṇa*, p. 109f. See de MALLMANN 1963: 143-147; von STIETENCROON 1983: 135.
- 68) DM 2.10-12, 36cd. At 2.23ab the sun puts his own rays into all the pores of the Goddess's skin.
- 69) Parpola 1984: 177, 190, Figs. 23.2, 40.
- 70) *Ibid.*: 186f., Figs. 23.28-30.
- 71) *Ibid.*: 178, Fig. 23.6

- 72) PARPOLA 1984: 177f; 1985: 20f. Especially on the relationship between buffalo and bull on the one hand and night and water on the other, see PARPOLA 1984: 181f, 190; 1985: 27f, Figs. 10–12.
- 73) PARPOLA 1984: 185f; 1985: 69. VON STIETENCROON (1983: 121f) regards the buffalo as a symbol of ignorance, stupidity and darkness.
- 74) PARPOLA 1984: 178–184; 1985: 38; 1994: 246–256. On traces of this in Vedic literature, see PARPOLA 1988: 256–260; 1992: 295.
- 75) VIENNOT 1956: 368; VON MITTERWALLNER 1976: 197. Härtel (1973: 9–11, 15; 1993: 64–67) mentions the remains of a temple at Sonkh dedicated to a mother goddess and dating from the Kuṣāṇa period, and on the basis of relics unearthed from the same stratum he points to the predominance of the Durgā-Mahiṣāsūramardīnī cult.
- 76) COBURN 1982: 159f; 1984: 229f; 1992: 25f.
- 77) See GONDA 1966: 25–31.
- 78) See *ibid.*: 31.
- 79) DM 2.13–17, 19–30. The correspondence between the gods and the parts of the Goddess's body, her weapons and her ornaments are as follows: Śiva—face, lance; Viṣṇu—arms, discus; Yama—hair, staff, sword, shield; Soma—breasts; Indra—waist, bell from his elephant Airāvata, *vajra*; Varuṇa—legs and thighs, conch, noose; Earth—hips; Brahman—feet, water-jar; Agni—three eyes, spear; Sun—toes, rays from her pores; Kubera—nose, drinking cup; Prajāpati—teeth, rosary; Vāyu—ears, bow, quivers and arrows; Twilight and Dusk—eyebrows; Vasus—hands, fingers; Sea of Milk—pearl necklace, two unaging garments, heavenly crest-gem, earrings, half-moon ornament, bracelets, armlets, anklets, neck ornament, bejewelled rings; Viśvakarman—axe, various weapons, impenetrable armour; Ocean—garlands and lotuses on her head and breast; Himālaya—lion, jewels; Śeṣa—bejewelled serpent-necklace.
- 80) E.g., MBh 12.168.41–47 mentions the five gods Fire, Sun, Death, Yama and Vaiśravaṇa (= Kubera), while MBh 12.137.99–102 mentions seven divinities consisting of father, mother, teacher, protector, fire, Vaiśravaṇa and Yama. See GONDA 1966: 24–33; HARA 1969: 19. Hara (*ibid.*: 17–20) sees a reflection of this concept of kingship in the title *devānām priya*—("favourite or son of the gods") held by Aśoka and other kings.
- 81) HEESTERMAN 1957: 52, 69f, 74; GONDA 1966: 39–42, 83; HARA 1969: 18.
- 82) HEESTERMAN 1957: 115, 118, 141f, 150; see also GONDA 1966: 47–54, 81f. There are minor differences in the lists of gods depending upon the school.
- 83) E.g., *Manusmṛti* 7.6, 9.11, etc. See GONDA 1966: 14, 35f, 81.
- 84) PARPOLA 1992: 286f.
- 85) According to Parpola (1985: 38f, 65; 1992: 281–284), Vāc corresponds to Durgā in the Vedas, while Prajāpati corresponds to *puruṣa*, who is both the sacrifice and the sacrificial animal, and is also linked to the buffalo-god through his identification with Varuṇa. In other words, the dyad of Prajāpati and Vāc also represents the dyad of Durgā and the buffalo.
- 86) PARPOLA 1992: 289–292.
- 87) *Ibid.*: 297f; see GOUDRIAAN 1978: 3–15.
- 88) On the sacrifice of buffalos to Indra, see PARPOLA 1992: 293f, and on the assumption of a buffalo form by Indra, see *ibid.*: 298.
- 89) DM 3.37–39: *evam uktvā samutpatya sārūḍhā taṁ mahāsūram/pādenākramya kaṇṭhe ca śūlenainam atādayatat ataḥ so 'pi padākrāntas tayā nijamukhāt tataḥ/ardhanīṣkrānta evāti devyā vīryena samvṛtaḥ ardhaniṣkrānta evāsau yuddhyamāno mahāsūrah/tayā mahāsinā devyā śīrasā chittvā nipātītaḥ*. VON STIETENCROON (1983: 134) sees

representations of the scene described at DM 3.37 in figures of the goddess at Ellora and Aihole, where she is shown grasping the buffalo's mouth with her left hand and pinning down its back with her foot or knee.

- 90) This inscription will be dealt in the fourth section in this paper.
- 91) See YOKOCHI 1999. The newer relief in Cave VI at Udayagiri is the earliest example.
- 92) STIETENCROON 1983: 129, 133. Cf. MITTERWALINER 1976: 206.
- 93) At MBh 3.281.16–17, for example, Yama extracts a thumb-sized person (= *prāṇa*) from the body of the fallen Satyavat.
- 94) A relief-panel of a battle scene between the goddess and the buffalo demon on the northern wall of the Mahiṣāsūramardini *maṇḍapa* at Mahabalipuram (SRINIVASAN 1964: 154, Pl.XLVIIa; see Note 61) is sometimes considered to be modelled on our text. The resemblance is on two points: first, the *gaṇas*' fight accompanying the goddess reminds the description told in DM 2.51c–53b; secondly, the southern wall of the same *maṇḍapa* contains a panel of Viṣṇu reclining on the serpent Śeṣa (Anantaśāyī), which represents the myth of Viṣṇu's slaying of Madhu and Kaiṭabha (SRINIVASAN 1964: 155, Pl.XLVIII), and our text also relates a version of the same myth in 1.47–78 preceding the Mahiṣāsūramardini myth. Against the first point, a retinue of *gaṇas* also accompanies the goddess on the reliefs of the Korṇavai type (the goddess standing or sitting on a severed buffalo head) in the Varāha and Ādivarāha *maṇḍapas*, the Draupadī *ratha* and the Durgā Rock on the shore (SRINIVASAN 1964: Pl.XLVIII, LIVB; TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984–85: 328–330, 333, Figs. 41, 43, 45, 54–56), so that the description of the *Devīmāhātmya* is not required to explain the inclusion of *gaṇas* into the battle scene in question. Besides, the panel depicts a female combatant, who does not appear in our text. The second point is more significant and should be examined carefully. In this respect Srinivasan maintains that “The choice of this particular form of Viṣṇu in preference to others, to be sculptured in association with Mahiṣāsūramardini in this cave-temple, would appear to be deliberate and significant. Both of them are certainly after the *Dēvī-mahātmya* [sic] tradition, which narrates in the first and second chapters the *yōga-nidrā* of Viṣṇu and the story of the slaying of Mahisha by Dēvī, and further suggests that the feminine form on top shown as if flying away would, therefore, be the personification of contemplative sleep (*yōganidrā*)” (SRINIVASAN 1964: 155). However, his latter suggestion is improbable, because the feminine figure is one of a flying couple, which is inconsistent with the story in our text. For the combination of Mahiṣāsūramardini with Anantaśāyī, the Shore Temple at the same site also contains one: an image of Anantaśāyī installed in the intermediate shrine and a relief of Mahiṣāsūramardini in the chest of an image of a crouching lion in the courtyard. The goddess sits on the severed head of a buffalo and a stag damaged above the neck sits on the left side of the lion (TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984–85: 322f, Figs. 50–53). It is obvious from these characteristics that the goddess can be called Korṇavai. A pair of female attendants are also sculpted on both flanks of the lion image, which is comparable to a similar pair in the Durgā Rock and also a female combatant in the panel in question. Thus, the Mahiṣāsūramardini *maṇḍapa* is not a single case of the choice of Anantaśāyī, “in preference of others” (viz. Trivikrama and Varāha in the Varāha and Ādivarāha *maṇḍapas*), in association with Mahiṣāsūramardini. Therefore, we can say that the iconographical programme of the Mahiṣāsūramardini *maṇḍapa* does not demand a model of the *Devīmāhātmya* by necessity. Rather, the above argument has revealed that some features are shared between the two iconic types, the types of a battle scene and of Korṇavai, at Mahabalipuram. This may reinforce the possibility that the iconic type

representing a battle scene was also associated with the cult of Mahiṣāsūramardini-Korravai of South Indian origin.

- 95) VON STIETENCROON 1983: 129f. Cf. COBURN 1984: 223–226. MBh 7.141.15 and 9.45.65 also allude to the episode of Skanda's killing of Mahiṣa.
- 96) *Mr̥cchakaṭika* VI.27: *abhaam tua deu haro viṇhū brahmā ravī a cando al hattūṇa sattuvakkham sumbhaṇisumbhe jadhā devill*. The *Mr̥cchakaṭika* is a play set in Ujjayinī and thought to be based on the *Br̥hatkathā*.
- 97) *Maṇimekalā* 1993: 193. I thank Dr. Takanobu Takahashi for his help in checking the Tamil verse. It is indefinit in this verse whether Vintā-kaṭikai is an epithet of Vidhyavāsini and whether she is identified with Durgā.
- 98) The published text reads Anekāṃśā instead of Ekānaṃśā (51cd *ekānaṃśāt tu yasmāt tvam anekāṃśā bhaviṣyasi*), but it is probably a misreading of *ekānaṃśā*, because a goddess named Anekāṃśā is not known. We have already pointed out that Ekānaṃśā can be identified with Nidrā, who executes Viṣṇu's commands, in the *Harivaṃśa*, so that Ekānaṃśā is not strange as an epithet in this context. The *Mahābhārata* relates in the myth of the churning of the ocean that Viṣṇu assumes a female figure, resorting to his deluding power (*māyām āsthito mohinīm*), and regains the elixir from the infatuated demons (MBh 1. 16. 39–40; see RÜPING 1970: 10, 31f). So we can assume that the Viṣṇu's female or evolved into the separate goddess who personifies his deluding power as told in the above passage in the *Vāyupurāṇa*. This assumption is more reasonable than Bock's suggestion that the Madhu-Kaiṭabha myth in the *Vāyupurāṇa* presupposes a version of the same myth in the *Kūrmapurāṇa* and is modified under the influence of the account of the *Devīmāhātmya* (Bock 1987: 88 note 34).
- 99) For a comparison of these sections and the *Devīmāhātmya*, see YOKOCHI 1989. SkandaP 1.2.29.36–53ab contains parallel passages.
- 100) MatsyaP 158.15–16; PadmaP SṛṣṭiKh 41.113–114. The goddess is also called Ekānaṃśā (MatyaP 158.16b).
- 101) This derivation of the name is not explained explicitly in the *Matsyapurāṇa*, while DM 5.40 mentions it clearly as follows: *śarīrakośād yat tasyāḥ pārvatya niḥsṛtāmbikāl kauṣikīti samasteṣu tato lokeṣu gīyatell*. The original *Skandapurāṇa* says that *tasyām koṣyām samabhavat kauṣikī lokaviśrutā* (58.8ab). Cf. Note 23.
- 102) YOKOCHI 1989: 33f.
- 103) COBURN 1984: 108–113.
- 104) *Ibid.*: 134–136. The same interpretation applies to another goddess's appellation Śivadūti, explained as meaning "she who has Śiva as a messenger (8.27)," and in view of the fact that she emerges together with hundreds of yelping jackals (8.22), it is to be surmised that she was originally a goddess with jackals (*śivā*) as messengers (*ibid.*: 137f). *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* II.1.p. 88 prescribes a jackal-faced goddess as her icon. Cāmuṇḍā presents the Goddess with Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa as *mahāpaśu* (7.23ab), and this calls to mind human sacrifices.
- 105) AGRAWALA (V.S.) 1947–48: 132f, Pl.XLVII.118, 118a.
- 106) AGRAWALA (R.C.) 1971: Fig. 15; MISRA 1989: 17; HARPER 1989: 79, Fig. 39. On the prescription of the iconography of Cāmuṇḍā, see Mallmann 1963: 153f and the materials referred to at Note 115.
- 107) PARPOLA 1985: 120f, Figs. 33, 34; HARPER 1989: 3–13, Figs. 1, 2; PANIKKAR 1997: 11–18.
- 108) AGRAWALA (R.C.) 1971: 81, Figs. 7–8; MISRA 1989: 13–16, Pls.2–6; TIWARI 1986: 104f; HARPER 1989: 62–70, Figs. 7–14; BAUTZE 1987; PANIKKAR 1997: Pls. 4–17.

- 109) The one exception may be a group of five stone images, probably a part of the Seven Mothers, housed in the Bāghbhairava Temple at Kirtipur in Nepal, in which the four goddesses can be identified as Vārāhī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī and Brahmāṇī. Under the assumption that a fourth century date can be assigned to these images, Harper suggests that identifiable representations of the Seven Mothers may have existed already in the fourth century in India, but they may not have been preserved because they were made of some ephemeral substance such as clay (HARPER 1989: 74–75; PAL 1974: 129, Fig. 215). Harper's study, which deals comprehensively with the development of the iconography of the Seven Mothers, is focussed on the period between the fifth and the seventh century, as well as its precedents and antecedents. However, her references to epigraphical and literary sources are sometimes incorrect or dubious. The recently published study by Panikkar (1997) also covers a wide range and is valuable, but it follows Harper's incorrect statement in the inscriptions of Udayagiri.
- 110) HARPER 1989: 75–79, Figs. 16–30; PANIKKAR 1997: 75f. The date of the inscription on the facade of the Cave VI could be applied to these panels (see Note 51).
- 111) AGRAWALA (R.C.) 1971: 84f., Figs. 11–15; Harper 1989: 79–81, Figs. 31–39; PANIKKAR 1997: 76f, Pls. 21–23. On the right of the panel there is a weathered inscription paleographically ascribed to the fifth century. According to R.C. Agrawala it refers to the reign of a *mahārāja* Jayatsena and the divine Mothers.
- 112) HARPER 1989: 81–83, Figs. 40–44. Besides, Harper adduces a set of the Mothers' icons from Besnagar (Vidiśā) datable to the first half of the fifth century, none of which have any identifiable features, and two icons from the Muṇḍeśvarī Hill (Shahabad District, Bihar) ascribed to the late fifth or early sixth century (HARPER 1989: 84–85, Figs. 45–49). For the set from Besnagar, see also AGRAWALA (R.C.) 1971: 88f, Figs. 19–24 and PANIKKAR 1997: 77f, Pls. 24–26. For the images from Muṇḍeśvarī Panikkar proposes a date later than mid-sixth century (Panikkar 1997: 90, Pl. 53).
- 113) MISRA 1989: 18–20; TIWARI 1986: 106–108; HARPER 1989: 101–149.
- 114) Utpala's commentary enumerates the following names of the Mothers: Brāhmī, Vaiṣṇavī, Raudrī, Kaumārī, Aindrī, Yāmī, Vāruṇī, Kauberī, Nārasimhī, Vārāhī, Vaināyaki. *Bṛhatsamhitā* 59.19 also alludes to the Mothers in the section dealing with the rites for enshrining divine images.
- 115) AgniP 50.18–23b prescribes the iconography of the Seven Mothers under the names: Brāhmī, Śāṃkarī, Kaumārī, Lakṣmī, Vārāhī, Aindrī, Cāmuṇḍā, while MatsyaP 261.24–38b prescribes it under the names: Brāhmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Indrāṇī, Yogeśvarī or Cāmuṇḍā or Kālikā. See MALLMANN 1963: 150–152; RAO 1914: 379, App.C *Pratimālakṣaṇa*, pp. 143–154; *Caturvargacintāmani* II.1.1.pp. 82–84; HARPER 1989: 124–126.
- 116) RAMESH and TEWARI 1990: 4–6, Pl. II.
- 117) *Ibid.*: 21–23, Pl. X.
- 118) FLEET 1963: 72–78.
- 119) FLEET 1963: 47–52.
- 120) FLEET 1877, 78, 84; BANERJEA 1956: 503–505; TIWARI 1986: 102f; HARPER 1989: 88–89, 121; PANIKKAR 1997: 62.
- 121) See TIWARI 1986: 95–175; COBURN 1984: 313–330; KINSLEY 1986: 151–160; 1978: 494–497; HARPER 1989: 53–59; PANIKKAR 1997: 31–53.
- 122) I have dealt with this episode elsewhere (YOKOCHI 1991). The PadmaP SrṣṭiKh 43.1–97 contains several passages identical to MatsyaP 179, but these passages are intertwined with an account of the battle between Andhaka and the sun-god, which partly

corresponds to SkandaP 5.1.36. It is interesting to note that this battle between Andhaka and Śiva or the Mothers is set in the Mahākālavana in Avanti at MatsyaP 179.5–6ab, and MatsyaP 179.87–89 states that the *tīrtha*, named Kṛtaśauca, was established there as a result of this episode, hinting at a temple endowed with an androgynous Śiva image accompanied by the images of the Seven Mothers. The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* and the *Padmapurāṇa*, however, do not include either of the corresponding passages.

- 123) Vāgīśvarī or Vāgīśī from his tongue, Māyā from his heart, Bhagamālīnī (MatsyaP: Bhavamālīnī) from his male organ, and Kālī or Revatī from his bones.
- 124) The subsequent chapters (VdhP 1.228–232) relate a Skanda myth in the same way; Skanda's birth, the battle between a group of *grahas* (the demons who take possession of people) created by Indra and another group of them created by Skanda, their appeasement by Skanda, and finally, at 1.231–232, a medical description of illnesses caused by them and their remedies.
- 125) It is not clear what exactly is meant by the two groups of Mothers. The preceding parts mention three groups of Mothers. The first group is constituted of the Mothers who were urged to attack Skanda by Indra, but took refuge in Skanda, and the embodied anger of the Mothers, called the daughter of the sea of blood (MBh 3.215.16–22). The second is called the group of the daughters who were born together with a group of boys from a wound of Skanda caused by a blow from Indra and assigned by Skanda to the Mothers of the world, who includes the Seven Mothers called *śiśumātr̥s*: Kākī, Harimā, Rudrā, Br̥hali, Āryā, Palālā, and Mitrā (3.217.1–14). The Pleiades (*kṛttikā*), that is, the six wives of the seven sages, are the components of the third group mentioned as Mothers by Skanda (3.219.1–11). In the passage in question the old group possibly means the first one, while the new group indicates the second. Both groups seem to be included in the following instructions on *grahas*.
- 126) The Mothers and the children are grouped together and called *skandagraha*. Another group of *grahas* who takes possession of adults is also mentioned in this instructions. The latter group nearly corresponds to the group of *grahas* created by Indra in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (see Note 124).
- 127) The appearance of Nṛsiṃha can be explained from this viewpoint. In the Viṣṇupañjara-stotra given at VdhP 1.195–196 prayers are offered up to Nṛsiṃha for appeasement of *grahas* in particular. In addition, at AgniP 300.9cd a *mantra* named “the man-lion of the underworld” is mentioned as having the power to pacify such demons (*Pātālanārasīmḥādya* [-*dyah*] *caṇḍīmantrā grahārdanāḥ*).
- 128) In the above-mentioned instructions on *grahas* Revatī is said to be one of the Mothers who take possession of young children (MBh 3.219.28). Likewise in the *Suśrutasaṃhitā Uttaratāntra* 27 and 31 she is mentioned as one of nine *grahas* that afflict infants and in the *Aṣṭāṅgahr̥daya Uttaraśthāna* 3 as one of eleven such *grahas*. In addition, one of the four chief goddesses created by Nṛsiṃha in the above episode is also called Śuṣkarevatī, who is referred to as both Revatī and Kālī.
- 129) The list of goddesses' names in this episode includes Cāmuṇḍā, Śivadūti or Śivā and Dūti (Śivadūti?), and all the other Mothers appearing in our text. Tiwari (1986: 176–181) compares this enumeration with the Mothers listed at MBh 9.45.1–51.
- 130) BAKKER 1990: 67, n.41. About the Narasiṃha temples at Ramtek, see BAKKER 1997: 140–142. Pl.XXXIII.
- 131) DM 10.3–5: *ekaivāhaṃ jagaty atra dvitīyā kā mamāparāl paśyaitā duṣṭa mayy eva viśantyo madvibhūtayahll tataḥ samastās tā devyo brahmāṇīpramukhā layaml tasyā*

- devyās tanau jagmur ekaivāsīt tadāmbikāll ahaṃ vibhūtyā bahubhir iha rūpair yadāsthītā tat saṃhṛtaṃ mayaikaiva tiṣṭhāmy ājau sthiro bhavall.* In these passages the term *vibhūti* is used instead of *śakti*, both with the meaning of manifestations of the Goddess's power (i.e. the secondary goddesses or *śaktis*) in the plural form and with the meaning of her power manifesting these secondary goddesses in the singular form. We can find a similar use of *vibhūti* in Chapter 10 of the *Bhagavadgītā*, both in the singular (10.7, 8, 40) and the plural form (10.16, 19, 40).
- 132) Coburn (1991: 27) suggests that the conception of Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavadgītā* as periodically incarnate for the sake of redeeming the world served as a model of this enumeration of the Goddess's future incarnations.
- 133) We cannot neglect the possibility that a different complex of myth and ritual of Mahiṣāsura-mardini-Korr̥vai flourished in South India since an early period. However, evidence known up to now is insufficient to clarify the relationship between the northern and the southern traditions of Mahiṣāsura-mardini cult. See also TARTAKOV and DEHEJIA 1984–85: 340.
- 134) See von STIETENCROON 1983: 129. The inscription on Cave VII says that Candragupta II in person visited Udayagiri with his minister Śāba Virasena, who ordered the excavation of Cave VII (FLEET 1963: 34–36).
- 135) On the connections between the ceremony for the lustration of arms (*nīrājana*) and kingship, see GONDA 1966: 71–74. According to the article by S. Einoo included in the present volume, older texts among the Purāṇas that describe a autumnal rite dedicated to the goddess, such as the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa*, show evidence of the amalgamation of rites for goddess worship and rites for the purification of weapons.
- 136) EI 30: 120–127. The corrected reading of the first two stanzas is as follows: *devī jayaty asuradāraṇatīkṣṇasūlā prodgīrṇaratnamakuṭām śucalapravāhāl śimhograyuktaratham āsthitacaṇḍavegā bhrūbhāṅga-drṣṭivipātāniviṣṭarośāl bhūyo pi sà jayati yā śaśīsekharasya dehārdham udvahati bhaktatayā harasya yā bhaktavatsalatayā prabibharti lokān māteva svākyasutapremavivṛddhasnehāll.*
- 137) SP 58.22: *simhayuktaṃ mahaddivyaṃ ratham ādityavaracasaml sasarija sapatākam ca kiṅkintījāla-maṇḍitaṃ vindhyaṃ girivaraṃ cāsyā nīvāsāya samadīsatll.*
- 138) According to D.C. Sircar, the present temple is a new building constructed on the ruins of an old temple (EI 30:123). But it is not unlikely that the old temple was also dedicated to the same goddess, Bhramaramātā. Sircar's suggestion that the name of the poet, Bhramarasoma, who composed the stanzas of the inscription, has come to be associated with that of the goddess of the present temple seems to be improbable, because Bhramarasoma is not the dedicator of the original temple, but merely the composer of the stanzas.
- 139) FLEET 1963: 226–228, pl.XXXIB. The first stanza runs as follows: *unnidrasya saroruhasya sakalām ākṣipyā śobhām rucā sāvajñam mahiṣāsurasya śīrasi nyastah kvaṇannūpuraḥl devyā vaḥ sthirabhaktivādasadrṣīm yuñjan phalenārthitām dīśyād acchanakhānsujala-jatīlāḥ pādaḥ padam sampadāṃll.*
- 140) THAPLYAL 1985.
- 141) The other two inscription of Anantavarman in caves of the Nagarjuni Hill and the neighbouring Barbar Hill record the installation of the image of Kṛṣṇa and the one of Bhūtapati (i.e. Śiva) and Devī (i.e. Pārvatī) respectively (FLEET 1963: 221–226, Pl.XXXB, XXXIA). A fine image of Mahiṣāsura-mardini is discovered at Nagardhan, which is identified with the Vākāṭaka capital, Nandhivardhana, and ascribed to the first half of the fifth century together with the images of Gaṇeśa and Viṣṇu's head found in

the vicinity (BAKKER 1997: 84f, 128–133). This image probably indicates that in the fifth century Maḥiṣāsūramardinī had already been an object of devotion of the Vākātakas. Moreover, a set of Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, and Maḥiṣāsūramardinī is also seen at Udayagiri Cave VI and Bakker suggests that a similar idea may have underlied both cases (*ibid.*: 84f).

- 142) *Harṣacarita*, p. 126.
- 143) *Kādambarī*, pp. 40, 65f, 68–70, 456–463.
- 144) *Daśakumāracarita*, p. 207.
- 145) *Daśakumāracarita*, pp. 273–277. Spink (1983: 260–281) identifies this Visruta with Mahārāja Subandhu, who is referred to as king of Māhiṣmatī in an inscription dating from 486 A.D. His argument that historical events are directly reflected in the *Daśakumāracarita* is not convincing because the work is intended to be a fantastic romance. However, we could guess in the least that the author Daṇḍin knew some shrine of Vindhyavāsini around Māhiṣmatī and utilized it effectively in his work.
- 146) *Gauḍavaha*, vv.285–338 (pp. 84–100). Although Yaśovarman's conquests described in the *Gauḍavaha* is known to be fantastic, a part of it relating to his victory over the king of Magadha possibly reflects the historical and geographical fact.
- 147) MatsyaP 260.56ab: *trayāṇām api devānām anukārānukārīṇīm*
- 148) The Goddess gives a *vaṁśya* Samādhi the boon of the knowledge leading to the final perfection (DM 13. 15c–16b). One may wonder if this boon is superior to the given Suratha. In the frame story, however, Samādhi is no more than the figure in need in order to perfect the world of the twice-born, so that we should not attach great importance to his boon.

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APPENDIX: THE COMPOSITION AND CONTENT OF THE *DEVĪMĀHĀTMYA*

Part 1 (Chap. 1)

1 First half of frame story (1.1–46)

During the reign of the second *manu* Svārociṣa, King Suratha, who has been defeated by his enemies and divested of his sovereignty by his ministers, and the merchant Samādhi, who has been dispossessed of his wealth by relatives, visit the sage Medhas and ask him why they are unable to sever their attachment to what they have lost. Medhas explains that Viṣṇu's Yoganidrā (or Mahāmāyā) has created the world and is deluding its denizens, and in response to the king's request he begins to describe various forms that the Goddess assumes in this world.

2 Slaying of Madhu and Kaiṭabha (1.47–78)

When the world was once submerged in water at the end of an aeon, the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha, born from the earwax of Viṣṇu, who was asleep on a couch formed by his serpent Śeṣa, attacked Brahman, who was seated on a lotus sprung from Viṣṇu's navel. (1.47–53)

Brahman extols Yoganidrā. (1.54–67)

Yoganidrā emerges from Viṣṇu's body and Viṣṇu awakes. (1.68–71)

Viṣṇu fights with the demons who, having been deluded by the Goddess, offer to grant Viṣṇu a boon. Viṣṇu demands their death and decapitates them on his thighs with his discus. (1.72–78)

Part 2 (Chaps. 2–4)

3 Slaying of Mahiṣāsura (2–4)

The gods, having been defeated by the demon-king Mahiṣa, ask Śiva and Viṣṇu for protection. (2.1–7)

Angered by what they hear, Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahman, as well as the other gods, emit a radiant energy (*tejas*) from their bodies, and this coalesces to take the form of a woman

whose limbs and other physical attributes are composed of the *tejas* of the various gods. (2.8–18)

The gods offer this Goddess gifts of weapons, ornaments and a mount. She utters a loud cry, causing the three worlds to tremble. (2.19–34ab)

Accompanied by her lion-mount and her army (*gaṇa*) born from her breath, the Goddess engages in battle with the demon forces. (2.34cd–68)

The Goddess kills the generals of the demon forces. (3.1–19)

Mahiṣa vanquishes her forces and attacks her. During their combat Mahiṣa transforms himself from his natural form as a buffalo into a lion, an armed man, an elephant, and back into a buffalo. (3.20–32)

The Goddess, after having imbibed wine and roared with laughter, tramples on Mahiṣa and decapitates him as he emerges in human form from the buffalo's mouth. (3.33–41)

The gods praise the Goddess. (4.1–26)

The Goddess grants the gods their wishes. (4.27–36)

Part 3 (Chaps. 5–13)

4 Slaying of Sumbha and Nisumbha (5–12)

The gods, having been defeated by Sumbha and Nisumbha, remember the Goddess. (5.1–5)

They betake themselves to the Himālayas, where they sing the praises of the Goddess. (5.6–36)

The Goddess reappears from the body (*śarīra-kośa*) of Pārvatī, who turns black, and takes the name Kauśikī. (5.37–41)

Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa inform Sumbha of the Goddess's beauty. (5.42–53)

Sumbha dispatches the messenger Sugrīva to ask her to marry him, and she replies that she has promised to marry only him who defeats her in battle. (5.54–76)

The Goddess reduces the demon general Dhūmrālocana to ashes with a menacing sound (*humkāra*), while her lion-mount overcomes the demon forces. Sumbha orders Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa to take the field. (6)

As Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa make ready to attack the Goddess, Kālī emerges from the forehead of the Goddess, whose face has turned black in anger. (7.1–7)

Kālī vanquishes the demon forces, beheads Caṇḍa and kills Muṇḍa. Kālī presents the Goddess with Caṇḍa's head and Muṇḍa and becomes known as Cāmuṇḍā. (7.8–25)

As the demon forces attack the goddesses, seven *śaktis* spring forth from the bodies of Brahman, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Indra and Skanda, each in the form of one of the gods or one of the two incarnations of Viṣṇu (Boar and Man-lion), and the Goddess's own *śakti* emerges from her body; the latter is known as Śivadūtī because she dispatches Śiva as a messenger (*dūtī*) to the demons. (8.1–27)

After defeating the demon forces, the goddesses fight with Raktabīja, who can reproduce himself from his own blood when wounded and fills the world with his doubles. But Kālī sucks up his blood, and the Goddess then kills him. (8.28–62)

The Goddess engages in combat with Sumbha and Nisumbha and pierces Nisumbha through the heart with a lance, whereupon another figure springs forth from Nisumbha's heart, but he too is beheaded by the Goddess. The *śaktis* and lion-mount vanquish the demon forces. (9)

The *śaktis* are absorbed into the Goddess's body. (10.1–5)

The Goddess kills Sumbha in single combat. (10.6–28)

The gods praise the Goddess. (11.1–34)

She fulfills the gods' wishes and predicts the appearance of future manifestations of herself that will kill different demons. (11.35–51)

She describes the merits to be gained from reciting and hearing these tales and then disappears. (12.1–32)

Medhas describes the greatness of the Goddess. (12.33–38)

5 Second half of frame story (13)

Suratha and Samādhi practise austerities, make offerings sprinkled with their own blood to an image of the Goddess, and devote themselves to her. (13.1–9ab)

After three years the Goddess appears, restoring to Suratha his kingdom and predicting his rebirth as the *manu* Sāvarṇi and granting Samādhi the knowledge that leads to liberation. (13.9cd–17)

