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Angela Wagner-Hohenberger

On the composition of parallel versions of the story "The appearance of the *liṅga*" (*liṅgodbhava*) in the Purāṇas

Abstract: Parallel versions of Purāṇic narratives have been analysed by using text-historical and text-critical methods as well as structural approaches. Less attention has been given to the narrative structures and the ways in which parallel versions are produced. In this regard a narratological approach provides a helpful addition to the other methods. The plot or fabula of the story "The appearance of the *liṅga*", which is retold several times in the Purāṇas, can be analysed as consisting of a common, stable set of fabula-elements, which is discernible in each version. Furthermore, the fabula-elements are composed of different text types, namely, doctrinal, prescriptive and liturgical. Differences in the versions can be detected in changes that occur not in all, but usually in only one or two fabula-elements. These differences between the versions are produced by changing events in the narrative as well as including different text types in individual fabula-elements. The combination of different text types is not necessarily an indicator that the narrative is composed of diverse textual layers, at different historical periods or by different authors. Rather, it is a characteristic feature of producing different versions of a narrative for different purposes and in various historical contexts. Furthermore, the combination of text types lends the narrative authority with respect to their doctrinal, normative or ritual content.

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Purāṇic literature plays an important role in the development of Hindu religious traditions not only with respect to the scope of topics covered in these texts, but also in their being ascribed a canonical status. In contrast to the four Vedas which are classified as *śruti* (texts which are "heard"), the Purāṇas, together with the two Sanskrit Epics and the Dharmaśāstras (texts on norms and customs), belong to the *smṛti*-literature (texts which are "remembered"). The texts denoted with the

Angela Wagner-Hohenberger: Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, Indian Studies, University of Zurich, Rämistrasse 66/68, 8001 Zürich, Switzerland. E-mail: angela.wagner@uzh.ch

generic terms *śruti* and *smṛti* form a "canon-fundus",[1] an inventory of authoritative texts. This means that although the normativity of these texts is generally accepted across the different Hindu traditions (*sampradāya*) only certain texts are regarded as canonical in the individual traditions.[2] Thus, different Purāṇas have a canonical status in different *sampradāya*s.[3] The Śivapurāṇa (ŚiP), for example, focuses on the god Śiva and is, therefore, of particular importance and authority in Śaiva traditions. The Purāṇas deal with a variety of topics such as the creation and destruction of the world, philosophical-theological doctrines, ritual practices etc.[4] In contrast to the systematic and often technical treatment of philosophical-theological doctrines or ritual procedures in the authoritative literature transmitted in the different religious communities, such tenets are formulated in the Purāṇas in a less technical manner, often by their being embedded in narratives. The deliberate use of narratives for this purpose is mirrored in the existence of parallel versions for some of these stories. In the following, the narrative structures used in producing such parallel versions will be analysed, and it will be asked how the text types used in the narration lend the texts authority. This shall be studied in greater detail for the two versions of the story "The appearance of the *liṅga*" (*liṅgodbhava*)[5], after delineating different approaches to parallel versions in Indological studies.

Generally speaking, Indological studies of parallel versions of narratives[6] have focussed either on the text-historical and text-critical relationships between the different versions and thus on the differences between them, or on the general structure and thus the common features of the versions independent from historical considerations.[7] The text-historical method aims at comparing the versions in order to chart their chronological relationship. The intention of this chronol-

1 Malinar 2011b: 168.

2 Malinar 2011a: 61.

3 The number of Purāṇas accepted as canonical is limited to eighteen major (*mahā*) and minor (*upa*) Purāṇas, although the actual number of transmitted Sanskrit, vernacular and local Purāṇas is considerably larger.

4 For further information about topics in the Purāṇas, see Bailey 2003, 2009.

5 The term "*liṅgodbhava*" can be found in the Purāṇas mostly in the colophons, as, for instance, in LiP 1.17 *liṅgodbhava,* BḍP 1.2.26 *liṅgotpattikathana,* VāP 1.55 *liṅgodbhavastava*.

6 The narratives in these studies were often referred to by generic Western expressions like "myth" and "legend". While these expressions give a general idea of what is related in the texts, they need to be used with caution and often require definition as they are not translations of terms which are used in the Purāṇas. Long has based his study on Lévis-Strauss' definition of myth. He has pointed out that the term "myth" does not fit properly the narratives in the Purāṇas" (Long 1976: 207). Frequently, Purāṇic narratives are called *kathā* or *kathana* which can be translated as "story" or "tale". *Kathā* can also mean "debate" e.g. in Nyāyasūtra 2.1–3.

7 For methods used in Purāṇa research, see Rao 2004: 110–113 and Bailey 2010: 128–131.

ogy is to find the oldest and original version of the narrative and to trace changes in philosophical-theological and ritual ideas voiced in the texts. This approach has been followed since the pioneering study "Prahlāda" by P. Hacker.[8] Another way to examine such narratives is the structural method that aims at analysing the common literary as well as ideological structures underlying the parallel versions. In his study of the different versions of the story of "The Churning of the elixir of immortality" (*amṛtamanthana*), B. Long[9] follows Lévi-Strauss' view that "a universal logic of a nonrational sort [...] is shared by all mankind."[10] This universal logic, on the other hand, is embedded in myths. Thus, in all cultures, "myth" consists of the same elements.[11] He applies the latter's definition of myth and analyses to what extent the elements of "myth" are present in the different versions. Although he detects elements typical of a "myth" in the "*amṛtamanthana*" story, Long concludes that the story as a whole cannot be defined as a "myth" in the sense of Lévi-Strauss. Rather, the "*amṛtamanthana*" story is "a ritual in mythical form or rather a *mystic-ritual played out as a game*".[12] Long ascribes the absence of myth in this sense to the structure to the "Indian Mind" and sees it as being characteristic, therefore, of all Indian "myths". Another approach combines text-historical analysis with a study of the narrative structures by using methods from literary studies, in particular, narratology. In her study of the story of "King Parikṣit", A. Malinar[13] reconstructs the *fabula* which forms the common ground of the different versions by identifying the elements which logically and chronologically unfold the story. The fabula-elements lend the narrative its distinct profile as a story identifiable in its different versions. These show both structural similarities as well as ideological differences and in this way point to different historical contexts. This approach also allows us to determine which elements are needed in order to speak, for instance, of the story of "The Churning of the elixir of immortality".

1 The fabula-elements of the *liṅgodbhava* story

In the following analysis of the *liṅgodbhava* story, this latter approach shall be followed as well as enhanced by concentrating on the structure of and variations

8 Hacker 1960; see also Bailey 2003: 154–157.
9 Long 1976.
10 Long 1976: 174
11 Long 1976: 174.
12 Long 1976: 206 (Emphasis in the original).
13 Malinar 2005.

between the different fabula-elements. This story is of particular importance in Śaiva traditions, since the focus of each version is on one of the most significant manifestations of the god Śiva, his appearance in the form of the *liṅga*. The *liṅga*, the emblematic, aniconic form of Śiva became, around the beginning of the Common Era, a central object of worship in Śaivism, and to this day Śiva is worshipped in this form in many temples and holy places across the Indian subcontinent.[14] The ideas and practices connected to the *liṅga* have been mostly studied in respect to iconographical texts and ritual performances, but not to narratives. In secondary literature, the *liṅga* is usually understood as the phallus of Śiva, in which Śiva's creative power is manifested. However, in the different versions of the *liṅgodbhava* story, the *liṅga* is often interpreted as the aniconic form of Śiva, which symbolises the unmanifest (*avyakta*) state of being before creation of the world.

The *liṅgodbhava* story usually begins with a dispute between the two gods Brahmā and Viṣṇu, who both claim to be the creator of the world. Thereafter, a continually growing *liṅga* appears, surrounded by light and fire. Brahmā and Viṣṇu stop their dispute and try in vain to search for the top and the bottom of this huge *liṅga*, because they do not know its significance. Then Śiva appears to the two gods in an anthropomorphic form in/out of the aniconic *liṅga*, i.e. he gives a vision of himself (*darśana*). In the corporeal, manifest (*vyakta*) form as Mahādeva he teaches them different topics, in particular, his non-manifest, non-corporeal manifestation as the *liṅga*. After he instructs the two gods he disappears again.

In my study of the different versions[15] of the *liṅgodbhava* story I have identified the following six fabula-elements by means of which the fabula of the narrative unfolds:[16]

1. Dispute between Brahmā and Viṣṇu
2. Appearance of the *liṅga*
3. Unsuccessful search for the two ends of the *liṅga* by Brahmā and Viṣṇu
4. Appearance of Śiva in anthropomorphic form
5. Interaction of Śiva with Brahmā and Viṣṇu
6. Disappearance of Śiva

14 For an overview on the role and interpretation of the *liṅga* in Śaiva and other Hindu traditions, see Hohenberger 2013.

15 There are about 14 versions of the *liṅgodbhava* story in the Mahā- and Upapurāṇas which I currently analyse in detail in my PhD research project.

16 This is based on M. Bal's definition: "*A fabula is* a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors." Bal 2009: 5 (Emphasis in the original); for fabula-elements, see Malinar 2005.

The analysis of these six fabula-elements allows us to identify a set of common elements which lend the narrative a sequence of events and its distinct profile, while also allowing variations within each element. The production of parallel versions can thus be analysed as being the result of changes not in all, but only in one or more of the fabula-elements.[17] Another narrative device influencing the versions is the frame story which usually precedes the narration of the story. Each frame story explains why the *liṅgodbhava* story will be narrated and this interprets the purpose or intention of the story. More often than not the issues raised in the frame story are addressed in the particular version of the narrative. The parallel versions differ with respect to the way in which the fabula-elements are composed. One of the characteristic features is that they are often composed using different text types. In the following, the use and combination of different text types in narrating the fabula-elements shall be dealt with.

Generally speaking, the text types employed in the fabula-elements can be classified as doctrinal, prescriptive and liturgical.[18] Each of these classifications comprises different categories and forms of speech in Sanskrit literature, which are sometimes referred to in the different versions of the *liṅgodbhava* story as well. The "doctrinal" texts comprise authoritative instructions and teachings (*ukti*, *anuśāsana*, *upadeśa* etc.), the "prescriptive" texts formulate standard rules and regulations (*vidhi*), e.g. the rules for ritual worship (*pūjāvidhi*), and as "liturgical" texts are understood hymns and eulogies (*stava*, *stuti*, *stotra*) as well as ritual formulas (*mantra*). These latter texts mostly consist either of appellations of the adored deity (*nāmastotra*s; litany of names) or praising depictions of the iconography of a deity.

17 In his study on conflict resolution in Hindu mythology G. Bailey deals with a narrative (which resembles the *liṅgodbhava* story, but is not identified as such) in connection with certain motifs that are used for depicting and resolving conflicts between gods: "conflict between two gods of the *trimūrti*, the third god intervenes, stops the conflict and reconciles the fighting gods to himself and each other. These few events combine with recurrent motifs in [...] Purāṇic mythology to structure the narrative and give meaning to the myth in its entirety." (Bailey 1991: 263). Bailey traces these motifs in different stories, including non-Śaiva versions of an unnamed myth.

18 Even though "doctrinal", "prescriptive" and "liturgical" are generic Western classifications, they describe differences in the texts which are also documented and referred to in the Purāṇas themselves (see below).

2 The composition of fabula-elements in Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa and Śivapurāṇa

In the following I shall analyse how the different text types are used in the fabula-elements of two versions of the *liṅgodbhava* story, namely, in Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa (BḍP) and in Śivapurāṇa (ŚiP).[19] The BḍP-version 1.2.26 seems to be the oldest version of the *liṅgodbhava* story, and is dated between the 4th and 6th century CE.[20] This version consists of only one chapter with 67 verses. The ŚiP-version 1.5–10 is much younger, approximately 8–10th century CE[21], and is composed of six chapters (5–10) comprising 197 verses. The purpose of the narration of the story is interpreted differently in the two Purāṇas as indicated in the frame stories. In the BḍP-version, the wise men, the so-called Ṛṣis, ask the all-knowing bard (*sūta*) Romaharṣaṇa about Śiva's greatness (*māhātmya*). In the ŚiP-version, the Ṛṣis want to know why Śiva is worshipped in two forms, *liṅga* (aniconic form) and *bera*[22] (iconic form), while the other gods[23] are revered only in the form of *bera*. Each time, the Sūta addresses these queries by narrating the *liṅgodbhava* story.[24]

The different purposes have repercussions for the way in which the fabula-elements are shaped in the two Purāṇas. This becomes obvious with respect to the fourth and fifth fabula-element ("Appearance of Śiva in anthropomorphic form" and "Interaction of Śiva with Brahmā and Viṣṇu") which are quite differently composed in the two versions.

19 The BḍP and ŚiP are selected because they clearly illustrate the usage of the different text types.

20 Rocher 1986: 157.

21 Rocher 1986: 223–228.

22 *Bera* is an idol of Śiva.

23 It is not explained who the "other gods" are (*śivānyadeva*, ŚiP 1.5.17–18).

24 In BḍP 1.2.26, the Sūta answers the question of Śiva's greatness by narrating how the gods, beginning with Indra, once approached Viṣṇu who pronounced to them the greatness (*māhātmya*) of Śiva. Viṣṇu started to tell the *liṅgodbhava* story and is, therefore, the narrator of the *liṅgodbhava* story.

In ŚiP 1.5–10, the Sūta answers the question about the two forms of Śiva by referring to the conversation between Nandikeśvara and Sanatkumāra. The latter asked the same question about the two forms and the former answered it by reporting the *liṅgodbhava* story. Nandikeśvara, therefore, is the narrator of the version of the *liṅgodbhava* story in ŚiP 1.5–10.

3 The fourth and fifth fabula-element in BḌP and in ŚiP

The fourth fabula-element "Appearance of Śiva in anthropomorphic form" in BḌP consists of 26.5 verses.[25] When Brahmā and Viṣṇu are not able to find the two ends of the *liṅga*, they sing a hymn (*stava*) to Śiva. This *stava* mainly consists of iconographical depictions, and specifies the beginning of the appearance of Śiva in the aniconic form of the unmanifest (*avyakta, 21*) *liṅga* and ends in the anthropomorphic and manifest (*vyakta, 51*) form of Śiva as Mahādeva.[26] The fifth fabula-element "Interaction of Śiva with Brahmā and Viṣṇu" consists of five verses.[27] Śiva as Mahādeva finally explains to Brahmā and Viṣṇu that they were created by him. They ask him that they should be endowed with eternal *bhakti* (love, devotion) towards Śiva, whereupon he bestows them this wish and instructs them to create mankind. Then Śiva becomes invisible again.

In contrast to this, the fourth fabula-element in ŚiP consists of only one verse. It is stated briefly that Śiva steps out of the fire-*liṅga* and assumes a form.[28] The fifth fabula-element, however, comprises about 133.5 verses which are organised into four chapters.[29] This fabula-element contains new and additional narrative material of considerable length. This is due to a variation of fabula-element 3 in which Brahmā has claimed to have found the upper end of the *liṅga*. Brahmā not only tells a lie, but he also has a false witness – a *ketakī* flower (bot. *Pandanus fascicularis*) – who makes a false statement in order to support Brahmā's claim. Śiva then appears in order to punish Brahmā for his lie. At the end of chapter 7, which belongs to fabula-element 5, Viṣṇu realises that everything (the dispute, the appearance of the *liṅga*, the search in vain) has happened because of Śiva's divine play (*keli*, 30). In order to reward Viṣṇu's truthfulness as a sign of his superior knowledge over Brahmā as well as his recognition of Śiva's supremacy, Śiva grants him pilgrimage sites, temples and an equal status (*svasāmya, 33*) to himself.

In chapter 8, Śiva creates Bhairava[30] out of the space between his eyebrows, and Bhairava punishes Brahmā by cutting off his fifth head. When Viṣṇu begs for mercy for Brahmā, Śiva spares Brahmā's life, but rules that there will be no pil-

25 BḌP 1.2.26.30–56ab.

26 This mirrors the different stages of creation based on the cosmological categories of Sāṃkhya-philosophy. For further references to Sāṃkhya-philosophy, see Larson 1979.

27 BḌP 1.2.26.56cd–61ab.

28 *vidhiṃ prahartuṃ śaṭham agniliṅgataḥ sa īśvaras tatra babhūva sākṛtiḥ* / ŚiP 1.7.29ab.

29 ŚiP 1.7.29–1.10.39ab.

30 Bhairava, the "Horrific", is a form of Śiva, see White 2009.

grimage sites and temples for him. In response to this ruling, Brahmā sings a hymn of praise (*stava*), in which he praises Śiva as the giver of boons (*varada*, 10). As a reward, Śiva ordains that Brahmā becomes the presiding deity in all domestic and public sacrifices. If a sacrifice is held without paying respect to Brahmā it will be useless. Thereafter, Śiva punishes the *ketakī* flower by ruling that it cannot be used in flower offerings in the ritual worship of Śiva. The *ketakī* flower also sings a hymn of praise (*stava*), in which it asks Śiva for forgiveness and emphasises that seeing him in this form leads to truth. Śiva grants the *ketakī* the boon of being worn by his followers.

In Chapter 9, Brahmā and Viṣṇu install Śiva along with his family on a throne, worship him and present him offerings. Śiva is very pleased and starts to instruct Brahmā and Viṣṇu about different topics. In particular, Śiva explains that only he is the cosmic sovereign (*īśvara*), because he is worshipped in two forms – *liṅga* and *bera* – and grants salvation (*mukti*). A part of this long paragraph of instruction is called by Śiva himself the "teaching of the preceptor" (*gurūkti*, 35). This part is to be understood as a direct divine instruction similar to the Bhagavadgītā.[31] In this way, the text is accorded an authority for the followers of Śiva because the teachings it contains have been received from the god himself.

The text of formal instruction continues in chapter 10, where Brahmā and Viṣṇu finally receive the ritual formula (*mantra*, 25) called *oṃkāra*.[32] By practising this *mantra*, the knowledge of Śiva can be obtained (*jñāna, 15*), and with the root of the *mantra* (*mantrakanda*, 24) well-being and salvation (*bhogo mokṣaś ca*, 24) can be obtained. Śiva, being in the position of a *guru* (preceptor), gives this *mantra* to his *śiṣya*s (pupils) Brahmā and Viṣṇu. This can be understood as an initiation (*dīkṣā*) of the two gods by their *guru*. After Brahmā and Viṣṇu receive the *mantra* they sing a *stava* in which they repeat all the important aspects of Śiva's teachings. Śiva emphasises the importance of the *liṅga* in contrast to his anthropomorphic form as *bera*, and he finally becomes invisible.

The fourth fabula-element "Appearance of Śiva in anthropomorphic form" in ŚiP is evidently much shorter and less significant than in BḍP, while the fifth fabula-element "Interaction of Śiva with Brahmā and Viṣṇu" in ŚiP is not only longer, but also more complex than in BḍP. This is also true for the way in which the different text types are included in the narrative.

31 For an analysis of the Bhagavadgītā and the role of *darśana*, see Malinar 2007: 99, 224.
32 The *oṃkāra mantra* is also known as *mūla mantra*, *mantra kandana*, *praṇava*, and *oṃ*.

4 Analysis of the two fabula-elements in BḍP and in ŚiP

In BḍP, the fourth fabula-element contains only a liturgical text, a *stava*[33] (hymn), which is, however, quite long and complex.[34] The term *stava* is documented in the text as well as the generic set phrase "*namas*" (obedience) which is mostly used in hymns.[35] In the fifth fabula-element, Śiva explains to the two gods their origin (56cd–58), grants them the boon of *bhakti* (59–61ab), and instructs them briefly as to their cosmological tasks (61ab).[36] This fabula-element consists, on the one hand, of a doctrinal text of the type of *ukti* in which Śiva clarifies their origin, and on the other hand, a prescriptive text of the type of *vidhi* in which Śiva grants a boon and presents certain duties. Thereafter follows the sixth fabula-element "disappearance of Śiva" (61cd).

In contrast to the BḍP the fourth fabula-element in ŚiP is very short, while the fifth is a very much enlarged version of that found in BḍP. This enlargement is due to the inclusion of the didactic and prescriptive texts and because of the changes made in the third fabula-element "Unsuccessful search for the two ends of the *liṅga* by Brahmā and Viṣṇu". This fabula-element (3) takes a new turn because Brahmā wants to assert his superiority over Viṣṇu by telling a lie for which he summons a false witness. This results in the introduction of two new protagonists – Bhairava and the *ketakī* flower – and in additional narrative material in fabula-element 5. Not only is the fifth fabula element more extensive but also the use of the various text types is different. The episode of Śiva rewarding Viṣṇu with an equal status to himself for being honest[37] is to be understood as an ordinance (*vidhi*) and is therefore defined as the text type *vidhi*. Subsequently,

33 S*tuti* and *stava* are synonyms for *stotra,* for which Stainton suggests the following definition: "As a simple working definition, therefore, we can say that Stotras are usually short poems, almost always in verse, that directly and indirectly praise and appeal to a deity (or some other religious addressee such as a pilgrimage site; → *tīrtha* and *tīrthayātrā*) and are considered efficacious in obtaining religious or material benefits when recited or sung. They are often devotional and personal (frequently using first- and second-person pronouns), but not necessarily so. It is worth emphasizing, however, that there is no strict delineation of what counts as a Stotra or not, either in traditional Sanskrit scholarship or in modern writings by Hindus and non-Hindus alike." (Stainton 2010: 193).

34 BḍP 1.2.26.32–50.

35 BḍP 1.2.26.65.

36 The fifth fabula-element (BḍP 1.2.26.51–61) starts with a narrative passage in which Viṣṇu as the narrator describes Śiva's iconography and how Śiva roared with laughter as soon as he became visible.

37 ŚiP 1.7.31–32.

Bhairava appears, as he is about to carry out Śiva's command (*ājñapa*, 8.2) to cut off Brahmā's fifth head. Viṣṇu begging Śiva to spare Brahmā[38] follows the pattern of asking for a boon which provides much of the structure of this part of the narrative, and is applied then to the *ketakī* flower as well: 1. Śiva punishes (*vidhi*), 2. The punished one sings a hymn (*stava*), 3. Śiva bestows a boon on the punished one (*vidhi*). All this can be interpreted as serving the overall purpose of this version of the *liṅgodbhava* story, namely, to explain the differences between the cults of Brahmā and Viṣṇu, on the one hand, and Śiva, on the other. There follows the answer to the question asked in the frame story about the reason for Śiva being worshipped in two forms, i.e. *liṅga* and *bera*. Firstly, a description of Brahmā and Viṣṇu worshipping Śiva is given. This description explains the manner in which Śiva is worshipped, and is therefore to be understood as a prescription for the performance of the ceremonial worship (*pūjyā*, ŚiP 1.9.9) of Śiva, which can be used as a manual for Śiva-worship.[39] Secondly, there is Śiva's instruction and long "speech of the preceptor" (*gurūkti*), which contains philosophical-theological as well as ritual explanations of the *liṅga* and its worship. This passage consists of a doctrinal text (*ukti*[40]), as can be also seen in its being referred to as *gurūkti*.[41] After the explanation, Śiva in the role of *guru* (preceptor) gives a *mantra* (ritual formula) to his two *śiṣya*s (pupils), Brahmā and Viṣṇu. This act can be understood as a description of the initiation (*dīkṣā*)[42] of the pupil as a *guru*.[43] This description is composed of the text type *vidhi*. Afterwards Brahmā and Viṣṇu praise Śiva with a *namas*-hymn (*stava*),[44] which can be seen as a grateful reaction to their being given the *mantra* and instructed through the *gurūkti*. At the end of the fifth fabula-element, Śiva reacts to the hymn by once again briefly instructing Brahmā and Viṣṇu, about the *oṃkāramantra* and his two forms.[45] That this is an instruction can be seen in the use of the verb "to teach" (*śās*, 10.39) for describing Śiva's speech. Thus, the answer to the question in the frame story is given by using all three text types: doctrinal, prescriptive and liturgical: 1. Description of Śiva-worship (*pūjāvidhi*), 2. Speech of Śiva as preceptor (*gurūkti*), 3. Description of initiation (*dīkṣāvidhi*), 4. Brahmā and Viṣṇu praise

38 ŚiP 1.8.6–8.
39 ŚiP 1.9.1–8, *pūjayām āsatuḥ pūjyaṃ* ŚiP 1.9.2
40 ŚiP 1.9.9–34.
41 ŚiP 1.9.35–46, 1.10.1–24.
42 The most important thing, which all *dīkṣā*s have in common, is that the *bhakta* receives a *mantra* or *mantra*s from the *guru*. Malinar 2009: 181.
43 ŚiP 1.10.25–27. The term *dīkṣā* is not used in the text.
44 ŚiP 1.10.28–31.
45 ŚiP 1.10.32–39ab.

Śiva (*stava*), 5. Śiva teaches them a last time (*ukti*), which is followed by Śiva's disappearance (sixth fabula-element).

The following overview summarises the distribution of the different text types in the fourth and fifth fabula-element of the *liṅgodbhava* story in BḍP 1.2.26 and in ŚiP 1.8–10.

BḍP 1.2.26

1. Dispute
2. Appearance of the liṅga
3. Unsuccessful search for the two ends of the liṅga
4. Appearance of Śiva in anthropomorphic form
Liturgical — *stava* (hymn)
5. Interaction of Śiva with Brahmā and Viṣṇu
Doctrinal — *ukti* (speech)
Prescriptive — *vidhi* (boon)
6. Disappearance of Śiva

ŚiP 1.8–10

1. Dispute
2. Appearance of the liṅga
3. Unsuccessful search for the two ends of the liṅga → variation: Brahmā lies to Viṣṇu
4. Appearance of Śiva in anthropomorphic form
5. Interaction of Śiva with Brahmā and Viṣṇu

Result of variation in (3): lie, subsequent punishment and favour

Chapter 7.31–32
Prescriptive — *vidhi* (ordinance)

Chapter 8
Prescriptive — *vidhi* (begging for favour)
Prescriptive — *vidhi* (punishment)
Liturgical — *stava* (hymn)
Prescriptive — *vidhi* (boon)
Prescriptive — *vidhi* (punishment)
Liturgical — *stava* (hymn)
Prescriptive — *vidhi* (boon)

Chapter 9
Prescriptive — *pūjāvidhi* (worship)
Doctrinal passage — *ukti* (speech)

Chapter 10
Doctrinal passage — *gurūkti* (speech of the preceptor)
Prescriptive — *dīkṣāvidhi* (initiation)
Liturgical — *stava* (hymn)
Prescriptive — *ukti* (speech)

6. Disappearance of Śiva

This analysis of the versions of the story "The appearance of the *liṅga*" (*liṅgodbhava*) in the Purāṇas has shown, firstly, that they can be identified as versions of the same story because they share the same fabula-elements, and secondly, that the variations concern the fabula-elements in different ways. Differences between the versions can be detected in changes within a fabula-element. These can either consist of narrative changes (e.g. Brahmā lying to Viṣṇu) or by including different types of texts in the narrative, namely, doctrinal, prescriptive and liturgical. The combination of different text types in a narrative does not necessarily indicate its being composed of diverse textual layers, or at different historical periods, or by different authors. Rather, as I hope to have demonstrated, the combination of different text types can be seen as a characteristic feature of production of different versions of the same story. Furthermore, the combination of the different text types results in lending the narrative authority with respect to its doctrinal, normative or ritual content. This means that the narrative becomes an authoritative source for specific philosophical-theological, iconographical and ritual contents. The main function of the narrative is the establishment of a plot as a referential framework of meaning, in which philosophical-theological teachings and instructions about ritual procedures are embedded. The framework consists of a narrative which follows a fabula which consists of a distinct as well as a common set of fabula-elements. The different versions of a narrative have the same fabula-elements. These vary in the different versions depending on the purpose of narration, which is usually delineated in the frame story. The fabula-elements contain text types, but the variety and quantity of the text types differ in each version – that is why the narrative content of the fabula-elements may allow significant changes, but can still be read as the same story.

As has been demonstrated by the analysis of the fourth and fifth fabula-element of the *liṅgodbhava* story in BḍP and ŚiP, these text types used for composing the fabula-elements are not chosen arbitrarily, but result from the intention declared in the frame story.

In BḍP, the fourth fabula-element "*darśana*" with its liturgical text (*stava*), answers the opening question of the Ṛṣis in the frame story about the *māhātmya* (glory) of Śiva. Accordingly, the intention and content of the *liṅgodbhava* story is the glory of Śiva. The term *māhātmya*, which can be translated as "glory" or "greatness", is also a term for a text genre. Bailey explains this genre in the Purāṇas in the following: "[*Māhātmya*] can best be paraphrased as the exaltation of the greatness of a particular place, ritual or implement charged with religious power."[46] If

46 Bailey 1995: 23.

māhātmya refers here to the text genre then it can be concluded that the *liṅgodbhava* story is defined here as a *māhātmya* in which a *stava* is included. The long *stava* comprehensively describes not only the nature of Śiva, but also his different iconographic manifestations and can, therefore, be understood to depict the iconography of Śiva which is used for representations of the god in temples. As is often the case, iconography is an important element of the genre *stava*.[47] The *stava* can be used for different ritual purposes, such as worshipping an icon of Śiva, or as a means to visualising Śiva during meditation. The latter is described in the narrative when Brahmā and Viṣṇu visualise (*dhyāna*, 30) Śiva. Thus, the two gods serve as a model for Śiva-followers (*bhaktas*). The *stava* as a ritual instrument is, consequently, not dependent on the narrative because it defines and exemplifies the *māhātmya* of Śiva, which can be recited by Śiva followers, e.g. during a *liṅga* worship in a temple. The text type *stava* may thus be used independently for liturgical or meditative purposes. Yet, it gains an additional level of meaning by its being embedded in the *liṅgodbhava* story, since the latter explains the significance of the *liṅga* as well as Śiva's superiority over Viṣṇu and Brahmā. Conversely, the *liṅgodbhava* story also works without a *stava* (see ŚiP version), since it is a fully fledged narrative whose plot follows a distinct fabula.

The following two text types – *ukti* and *vidhi* – in the fifth fabula-element, "Interaction of Śiva with Brahmā and Viṣṇu" in BḍP report very succinctly the origin of Brahmā and Viṣṇu, their cosmological tasks and their boon. In contrast to the liturgical text type *stava*, they are dependent on the narrative, because they make sense only in connection with the narrative plot, which indicates that they form an element of the narrative. Instead of the use of the text type *stava* in the fourth fabula-element "Appearance of Śiva in anthropomorphic form", the narrator, Viṣṇu, could have described it simply as: Śiva transformed himself from unmanifest to manifest. But in this way this very important sequence of the *liṅgodbhava* story, which stresses Śiva's supremacy over the other two gods, would not get highlighted. Thus, not only the content of the *stava*, that is the description of the *māhātmya* of Śiva, but also the text type *stava* as a means for worshipping and visualising Śiva gives authority to the *liṅgodbhava* story in the BḍP.

In the ŚiP-version of the *liṅgodbhava* story, the focus is not on the fourth fabula-element, but on the fifth. This is also mirrored by the use of the different text types as in the case, for instance, in the combination of the text types *vidhi-stava-vidhi*: Śiva is administering a softer punishment, i.e. Brahmā gets no pilgrimage sites, this is a rule (*vidhi*), to which Brahmā reacts with a *stava* which pleases Śiva, who in return grants a favour to Brahmā by assigning to him an

47 See Bhagavadgītā and Nārāyaṇīya.

important role in Vedic ritual. This is a rule (*vidhi*) too. Subsequently, this combination *vidhi-stava-vidhi* is repeated when Śiva punishes the *ketakī* flower, that it will not be used in flower offerings. To this prescription (*vidhi*), the *ketakī* flower reacts with a *stava* and gets in return a favor from Śiva. He ordains that the flower will be worn by Śiva's followers. This repeated sequence of the combined text types serves as an instruction for Śiva *bhakta*s. Then, the two short *stava*s of Brahmā and the *ketakī* flower have the intention to make Śiva gracious. In contrast to the long and important *stava* in BḍP, these two *stava*s are actually dependent on the narrative, since they are used in combination with the text type *vidhi*. But a closer look shows that Brahmā's *stava* contains glorifications of Śiva's nature, while the *stava* of the *ketakī* flower consists of mostly remorseful words about her misconduct. I conclude that Brahmā's *stava* is comparable to the *stava* in BḍP, since it praises Śiva in his nature and can, consequently, also be used as a means for worshipping Śiva. The *stava* of the *ketakī* flower on the other hand, which is a request for forgiveness, is dependent on the narrative because it contains personal wishes and regrets which respond to the specific punishment of Śiva and is, thus, not applicable to ritual worship e.g. daily worship. In chapter ten, a further combination of text types follows: *ukti-vidhi-stava*. After Śiva has taught about different topics, he initiates, as a *guru*, his two *śiṣya*s. The two pupils sing a short *stava* which is a reaction to the teachings (*ukti*) of Śiva and to the subsequent manual (*vidhi*) which describes the initiation (*dīkṣā*). The content of the *stava* refers to the two forms of Śiva, which were also elucidated by Śiva. Finally, Śiva responds to the *stava* with a short *ukti*. Consequently, the *stava* about the two forms of Śiva can be perfectly recited when Śiva is worshipped in these two forms in e.g. a temple. In this way, this *stava* can be understood as a text which can be used independently from the narrative. Furthermore, there is a difference in the way the *stava* is used in both versions: In BḍP, the *stava* is used for the vision of Śiva and in ŚiP, the *stava* is used for atonement and for being initiated by Śiva, but the intention is the same in both versions: Śiva becomes gracious thanks to the *stava*. However, the boons which Śiva bestows out of his graciousness differs. In BḍP Śiva grants the two gods loyalty and affection (*bhakti*) towards him, and in ŚiP he grants the two gods a boon with respect to their status in ritual worship and the *ketakī* flower a boon for being a characteristic feature of Śiva-followers, i.e only these followers wear the *ketakī* flower.

The *vidhi*, as just exemplified, establishes Viṣṇu's prominent position in Hindu ritual and Brahmā's more restricted one with regard to Vedic ritual. Hence, the prescriptive text type of *vidhi*, which is used in a sense as an aetiology, gives the *liṅgodbhava* story authority in establishing the positions of the two gods Brahmā and Viṣṇu in ritual. These prescriptions (*vidhi*) with regard to the two

gods and also to the *ketakī* flower[48], are still in place today. Thus, the *vidhi* in the *liṅgodbhava* story not only mirrors some actual ritual practice, but also lends authority to it.

The doctrinal text of the *gurūkti* in ŚiP serves similar purposes. Śiva as a preceptor (*guru*) gives a speech (*ukti*) about different topics in connection to his two forms: *liṅga* and *bera*. After Śiva finishes his speech with the *oṃkāramantra*, the *dīkṣāvidhi*, having the function of a manual, follows. Thus, the theoretical elucidations in the *gurūkti* turn into what can be described as a *dīkṣāvidhi*. This also serves as a guide for potential Śaiva *bhakta*s in that they are instructed to follow the speech of the preceptor[49], obtain initiation, and become members of a Śaiva community (*sampradāya*). The narrative explains further that even very important Hindu gods like Brahmā and Viṣṇu were initiated by the god Śiva as the cosmic sovereign (*īśvara*). After the *dīkṣā*, a *stava* of Brahmā and Viṣṇu is included. As a reaction to the *stava*, which repeats the principle points of Śiva's teachings, an *ukti* follows. In this *ukti* Śiva gives further details of the *oṃkāramantra* and of the *liṅga*. He ordains that the *oṃkāramantra* is to be recited while worshipping the *liṅga*. The *liṅga*, which is superior to a *bera*, leads to salvation. The *gurūkti* in ŚiP is a text of divine revelation because Śiva comes into the world and takes a body in order to declare his teachings. While the opening question in the frame story about the two forms of Śiva is for the purpose of narrating the *liṅgodbhava* story, it is the *gurūkti* which responds to this question and also contains practical advice. Indeed, the opening question could be responded to directly, without the narrative, but then this text would not be the divine revelation of Śiva, since there would not be any occasion for Śiva to explain his teachings. Therefore, the occasion for the *gurūkti* needs to be narrated, and is thus dependent on a narrative. In BḍP, the appearance of Śiva is the occasion for reciting a liturgical text, a *stava*, which at the same time responds to the opening question about the *māhātmya* (glory) of Śiva. While a *stava* is not dependent on the narrative, it obtains additional levels of meaning when being embedded in it (see above).

48 There is one exception in Śaiva ritual: During the *śivarātrī* ("night which belongs to Śiva") feast, every three hours a flower donation is used for the *liṅga*-worship. Among these flowers are also *ketakī* flowers (Underhill 1990: 94). In the ŚiP this exception is not mentioned.

49 That the preceptor (*guru*) in the ritual has the same status as the deity is already stated in the Taittirīya-Upaniṣad 1.11.2. See Steinmann 1986: 78.

5 Final remarks

The differences in the composition of the versions of the *liṅgodbhava* story in BḍP and in ŚiP not only point to the different purposes for which the story can be used, but also to its different historical contexts. The ŚiP is in all probability not only a later, but also a more elaborate version of the story. Still, these elaborations do not concern all fabula-elements in the same way. The changes are the result of the complexity of the doctrinal and liturgical issue to which the *liṅgodbhava* story responds, namely, the different types of icons of Śiva. This points to advanced doctrinal debates and a new level of controversy and interpretation between followers of Śiva and Viṣṇu and worshippers of Brahmā, which cannot be analysed further in the context of this paper. The *liṅgodbhava* story as a narrative is authoritative because it is retold several times in the Purāṇas, where it is embedded in different contexts in order to explain various and new aspects of Śiva, as well as Śaiva doctrines and practices.

The function of all the various versions of the *liṅgodbhava* story is not only to entertain the listeners, but also to instruct them about philosophical-theological tenets and the ritual practice of Śaivism. The special feature of these narrative versions is that they are not only narrative texts which exemplify the uniqueness of Śiva, but they are also authoritative with respect to their doctrinal, prescriptive and liturgical contents.

The combination of narratological tools with a text-historical approach in approaching parallel versions allows us to analyse both the distinctiveness of the story based on a common fabula with the same fabula-elements, as well as the differences between them which result not only from the various purposes for which the story is narrated, but also from variations in the composition of the individual fabula-elements. The use of different types of texts in these elements can be seen as one of the mechanisms which are in play when producing different versions and does not necessarily indicate (but also does not exclude) textual history or multiple authorship. In any case, the interplay of fabula and fabula-elements is an important feature of parallel versions in the Purāṇas as it lends a story stability and distinctness, which allows for the inclusion of different contents and themes in order to deal with the various purposes which become the occasion and the reason for narrating a story in different ways.

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