Crossing the Ocean of Story:

The Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās* in Literary Context

by

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Abstract

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What were the circumstances in eleventh-century Kashmir that inspired two poets, who were near contemporaries, to compose Sanskrit digests of the same source text? My thesis broaches this question through a rhetorical and aesthetic analysis of the prologues and epilogues of two *Bṛhatkathā* digests: Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (*Flower Collection from the Great Story*) and Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (*Ocean of Story-Rivers*). While scholars have generally viewed the preambles and postfaces of the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* as transparent statements of authorial intent, I take a literary approach to these introductory and concluding sections of text to locate their respective works within Kashmiri literary history at the turn of the first millennium.

Through an examination of the form, imagery, and structure of the Kashmiri-*Bṛhatkathā* prologues, I show that Kṣemendra's and Somadeva's versified digests present distinct literary projects that participate in contemporary conversations about genre and audience. I then turn to the *Kathāsaritsāgara's* dedication, or *praśasti*, and consider how this epilogue uses the conventions of the royal eulogy to create a regionally specific vision of Kashmiri polity. I conclude with a study of the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī's* epilogue, or *upasaṃhāra*, alongside the prologues and epilogues of Kṣemendra's other works. As counterpoint to the previous section, I propose that these elements of Kṣemendra's corpus offer alternative models of authorship and literary production that, when placed in dialogue with other local texts from the period, bring new imaginings of patronage and royal power into focus.

Contents

Abbreviations

I. Texts

AKL	*Avadānakalpalatā*
BhāM	*Bhāratamañjarī*
BKŚS	*Bṛhatkathāślokasaṃgraha*
BṛK	*Bṛhatkathā*
BṛKM	*Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*
Dhv	*Dhvanyāloka*
KādKS	*Kādambarīkathāsāra*
KāvM	*Kāvyamīmāṃsā*
KSS	*Kathāsaritsāgara*
Loc	*Locana*
MBh	*Mahābhārata*
NarMā	Narmamālā
PraC	*Prabhāvakacarita*
Rā	*Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*
RaghV	*Raghuvaṃśa*
RāMañ	*Rāmāyaṇamañjarī*
RT	*Rājataraṅgiṇī*
SaMā	*Samayamātṛka*
SarVed	*Sarvavedāntasiddhāntasārasaṃgraha*
ŚKC	*Śrīkaṇṭhacarita*
VDC	*Vikramāṅkadevacarita*
VyĀṣṭ	*Vyāsāṣṭakastotra*

II. Editions

KM	Kāvyamālā Series
NSP	Nirnaya Sagar Press

III. Other Abbreviations

bhū	*bhūmikā*
praś	*praśasti*
upa	*upasaṃhāra*

1 Introduction

1.1 Contextualizing the Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās*

During the eleventh-century CE, South Asia witnessed an event perhaps unprecedented in its literary history. Two Kashmiri poets living during the reign of the Lohara king Ananta composed Sanskrit abridgements of the same work, the legendary *Bṛhatkathā* (*Great Story*) of Guṇāḍhya. Kṣemendra, a prolific composer of verse epitomes, social satires, didactic works, and treatises on literary criticism, authored the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (*Flower Collection from the Great Story*) between the second and the third quarter of the eleventh century.[1] And between 1063 and 1081 CE, Somadeva composed the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (*Ocean of Story-Rivers*) for the Lohara queen Sūryavatī.[2] Although the two Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathā* digests differ in length and style, they possess remarkable similarities in structure and narrative content. The main narrative of both story collections relates the adventures of Naravāhanadatta,[3] the itinerant protagonist who, through a series of marriage alliances and the attainment of magical arts (*vidyā*), ultimately becomes universal ruler of the semi-divine beings, the *vidyādharas*. While various manifestations of this narrative appear in other extant works of the *Bṛhatkathā* tradition,[4] the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* share a unique framing narrative that sets them apart from these other texts.[5] This framing narrative bespeaks the *kathā's* divine origins, the descent of the *kathā* and its author-to-be to the mortal realm, and the *kathā's* composition into Paiśācī Prakrit by Guṇāḍhya.

Two nineteenth-century scholars have noted the striking correspondence between Kṣemendra's and Somadeva's literary projects. In his 1885 *Ueber das Zeitalter des Kaśmīrischen Dichters Somadeva*, Georg Bühler asserted that Kṣemendra and Somadeva were contemporaries and speculated upon their relationship: "Es ist jedenfalls ein merkwürdiges Zusammentreffen, dass zwei kaśmīrische Dichter um dieselbe Zeit das alte

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[1] Bühler, *Detailed Report of a Tour*, 46. For a discussion of the composition dates for the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and Kṣemendra's other *mañjarī* works, see n. 187 below.

[2] Ibid., *Ueber das Zeitalter*, 16.

[3] Naravāhanadatta in Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (hereafter cited as *KSS*) is Naravāhana in Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (hereafter cited as *BṛKM*).

[4] Along with the two Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās* (hereafter cited as *BṛK*), the extant *BṛK* corpus includes three other works: Saṅghadāsagaṇi's Old Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī *Vasudevahiṇḍi* (*Wanderings of Vasudeva*); Koṅkuveḷir's Tamil *Peruṅkatai* (*Great Story*); and Budhasvāmin's Sanskrit *Bṛhatkathāślokasaṃgraha* (*Verse Compendium of the Great Story*). For the *Vasudevahiṇḍi*, see Alsdorf, "Vasudevahiṇḍi, a Specimen of Archaic Jaina-Māhārārāṣṭrī" and Jain, *Vasudevahindi*. For the *Peruṅkatai*, see Aiyangār, "Bṛhat Kathā" and Vijayalakshmy, *Study of the Peruṅkatai*. See n. 31 below for references to Budhasvāmin's *Bṛhatkathāślokasaṃgraha* (hereafter cited as *BKŚS*). For the most comprehensive review of *BṛK* literature up to 1980, see Sternbach, *Aphorisms and Proverbs*, 1–49.

[5] The framing narrative, entitled "*Kathāpīṭha*" ("The Story's Plinth"), forms the first book of both works. For a synopsis of the *BṛKM* and the *KSS*, see Lacôte, *Essai sur Guṇāḍhya*, pt. 2, ch. 1. For a synopsis of the *BKŚS* and a comparison of the three Sanskrit-*BṛK* digests, see ibid., 149–95.

Buch Guṇāḍhyas aus dem Paiśāchī-Dialecte ins Sanskrit übersetzen. Es sieht beinahe so aus als ob sie Rivalen gewesen wären."[6] In the same year, Sylvain Lévi argued for more distant composition dates for the two works and observed Somadeva's disregard for his predecessor: "Il serait au moins étrange de voir un auteur reprendre à soixante-dix ans de distance l'ouvrage d'un autre, et le remanier sans même lui donner un souvenir, et toute une série de générations complices dissimuler ce plagiat."[7] Aside from these early estimations of the relationship between the two Kashmiri poets, little intellectual energy has been spent on understanding the two authors' projects and the literary milieu that supported these projects. Rather, the lion's share of scholarship has focused on dating and reconstructing source material; on identifying folkloric motifs; and, more recently, on reconstructing the cultural history of early medieval Kashmir through the story-world presented in the texts.

In his 1978 article, "Bṛhatkathā Studies: The Problem of an Ur-text," Donald Nelson considers the methods of research stated above: "Indeed, most interest in the narrative (*kathā-ākhyāyikā*) literature of ancient India has been concern for *micro-analysis* of particular stories from a comparativist point of view, seeking out recurring motifs, searching for underlying or universal features common to Hindu and Western 'folkloric' literature, and pursuing like questions."[8] Whether focused upon the study of the narratives' formal elements, on folkloric motifs, or on data for historical studies, these methods rely on material elements of the text. In contrast to approaches that rely on materials viewed in isolation, Nelson emphasizes the need to consider these materials in relation to the form of a given work—that is, to "the shaping cause of any given literary work—the principle which determines for its writer the necessities and opportunities he must consider in composing it."[9] Nelson rightly points out, "To deal with the materials of any given work *apart from* the particular form one perceives in that work can be misleading, for it assumes that those materials have the same meanings in themselves (outside the work) as they do formed *into* that particular work one is considering."[10]

While heeding this clarion call to consider materials in relation to the form of a given work, I extend this paradigm to beyond the narrative limits of the Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās*. For, in the study of the narratives themselves, in this case, the adventures of Naravāhanadatta and the intermediary stories that make up the body of the Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās*, Nelson's analysis also stops short of considering the form of the entire work. That is, his conception of the text excludes apparatus, such as the opening invocatory stanzas and the author's preamble to the work (*maṅgalācaraṇa*), the author's eulogy to the patron (*praśasti*), and other features that reside within the text but outside of the narrative proper. How do these elements participate in making meaning and producing aesthetic effect

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[6] Bühler, *Ueber das Zeitalter*, 16: "In any case, it is a remarkable coincidence that two Kashmiri poets translated the ancient book of Guṇāḍhya from Paiśācī into Sanskrit around the same time. It almost appears as if they had been rivals."

[7] Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, 415: "At the least, it would be strange to see an author take the work of another from seventy years earlier and rework it without even giving him recognition, and [to see] an entire series of generations complicit in concealing this plagiarism."

[8] Nelson, "Bṛhatkathā Studies," 669 (italics in the original).

[9] Ibid., 670.

[10] Ibid. (italics in the original).

within the two Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās*? And can theorizing the interface between the two works through their supporting apparatus help us to locate them within their broader literary contexts? This project endeavors to locate Kṣemendra's and Somadeva's works within Kashmiri literary culture. By examining the discursive features that introduce and that conclude the two digests, I propose that, despite claiming to abridge the same root text, the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* present distinct artistic visions whose differing aesthetic agenda and modes of discourse place them in conversation with other works from turn-of the-first-millennium Kashmir.

1.2 Background to the Project

Literary theorist Gérard Genette conceives of narrative elements, such as prefaces, afterwards, appendices, and colophons, as paratexts—"liminal devices and conventions."[11] These elements are spatially or temporally liminal in their locations at the beginnings, at the ends, and within the interstices of a work.[12] And they are conceptually liminal in their ability to ferry the reader or, more often the case in medieval South Asia, the listener from the outside world into the world of the text. In terms of function, paratext is "always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author, [and] constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*…."[13] Although Genette anchors his study of paratext in European manuscript traditions and in modern discourses of the printed text's relationship with a silent-reading audience, the paratext's commentarial function—its ability to direct an audience's experience of a work while articulating a particular ethos—also holds true for the performed manuscripts of eleventh-century Kashmir.

Along with literary theorists, such as Genette, contemporary scholars of premodern South Asia have begun to regard a work's paratext as the site for authorial discourse. In the publication of proceedings from the *śāstrārambha* (preamble to the intellectual treatise) panel at the Thirteenth World Sanskrit Conference, Christopher Minkowski highlights the function of a text's prefatory material within the Sanskrit intellectual tradition:

> For it is in his introduction that a Sanskrit intellectual may identify the distinctive arguments he will make in his work. It is also where he may position himself explicitly in relation to his interlocutors, past and present.
>
> The study of the *śāstrārambha* thus presents the possibility of recovering the meaning of an intellectual's action in writing a learned text in Sanskrit.[14]

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[11] Genette, *Paratexts*, 19.

[12] Although Genette's study brings several paratextual situations to the fore, I limit this project to what Genette's translator calls "authorial peritext," elements that are located within the physical text and that are composed by the attributed author of the work. For distinctions between peritext and epitext and between authorial and allographic paratext, refer to Genette, *Paratexts*, 4–10.

[13] Ibid., 2–3 (italics in the original).

[14] Minkowski, "Why Should We Read Mangala Verses?," 1.

Minkowski expresses for modern audiences what first-millennium authors of numerous intellectual treatises, or *śāstras*, ranging from philosophy to poetic theory, have addressed in their commentarial exegeses. These premodern intellectuals treat the preface as a site of discourse through the *anubandhacatuṣṭaya* (the four-fold criterion) stated at the onset of a *śāstra*. For instance, the early-medieval philosopher Śaṅkara defines the *anubandhacatuṣṭaya* in the introduction to the *Sarvavedāntasiddhāntasārasaṃgraha*:[15]

> *asya śāstrānusāritvād anubandhacatuṣṭayam* |
> *yad eva mūlaṃ śāstrasya nirdiṣṭaṃ tad ihocyate* ||*SarVed* 1.5||
> *adhikārī ca viṣayaḥ sambandhaś ca prayojanam* |
> *śāstrārambhaphalaṃ prāhur anubandhacatuṣṭayam* ||*SarVed* 1.6||
>
> Because this work is conformable to a *śāstra*, the four-fold criterion (*anubandha-catuṣṭaya*), which is considered the very root (*mūla*) of a *śāśtra*, is discussed here. [5] The qualified audience (*adhikāri*), the subject matter (*viṣaya*), the purpose of the text (*prayojana*), and the relevance of the subject matter to the purpose (*sambandha*)—people call these the *anubandhacatuṣṭaya*, whose fruit (*phala*) is the preamble to the *śāstra*. [6][16]

According to Śaṅkara's text, the *anubandhacatuṣṭaya* is the basis, or root (*mūla*), of the entire treatise. However, this root only becomes manifest as the fruit (*phala*) of the treatise in the form of its preamble (*śāstrārambha*). The botanical metaphor of root and fruit expresses, not only the importance of the preamble in terms of *śāstraic* exegesis, it also emphasizes the constitutive nature of the four-fold criterion to the *sāstra* itself.

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[15] Hereafter cited as *SarVed*. For Śaṅkara's full discussion of the text's four-fold criterion, see *SarVed* 1.4–15. For other primary-source examples of the four-fold criterion, see Annambhaṭṭa's commentary (*dīpikā*) to his *Tarkasaṅgraha* 1; Bhāskarakaṇṭha's commentary (*ṭīkā*) to *Mokṣopāya* (*Vairāgyaprakaraṇa*) 1.1.1; and Govindānanda's subcommentary, *Ratnaprabhā*, to Śaṅkara's *Śarīrakabhāṣya* of Bādarāyana's *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.1 (here, *phala* replaces *prayojana*).

Cf. Tubb's discussion of the opening topics in *alaṅkāraśāstra*. Tubb, "Philosophical Beginnings," 173ff. For a discussion of Nīlakaṇṭha's employment of the four-fold criterion in his *Mahābhārata* commentary, *Bhāratabhāvadīpā*, see Minkowski, "What Makes a Work 'Traditional'?," 240. For an attribution of the *anubandhacatuṣṭaya* framework to the school of Vedanta, see Jhaḷakīkar, *Nyāyakośa*, 2nd ed., s.v. *anubandhaḥ*: *viṣayaprayojanā'dhikārisaṃbandhā etac catuṣṭayam iti vedāntinaḥ*.

[16] All translations are my own. And they have been rendered for accuracy over elegance. Liberties taken to make a translation more idiomatically correct have been noted. However, I will make the following adjustments without note: making passive sentences active; replacing gerunds with other verbal forms or verbal phrases that indicate a similar causal/temporal connection; and replacing pronouns with their referents. Additions to the text have been placed in square brackets. Elisions to the text or explanatory terms have been placed in parentheses. To keep the spirit of kennings and epithets, I occasionally provide a literal translation of a term along with a more common English equivalent. For example, in *KSS* 1.1.1, I render *manobhuvā* ("by the mind-born one") as "by the mind-born God of Love."

I construe the genitive pronoun *asya* in *pāda* 5a with its neighbor *śāstrānusāritvāt* (literally, "because of the state of conforming to a *śāstra* of it"), rather than with *anubandhacatuṣṭayam* in *pāda* 5b.

While the sources above refer specifically to *śāstraic* interpretation, medieval scholars have also acknowledged the import of the preamble in poetic, or *kāvya*, works.[17] Daṇḍin's eighth-century *Kāvyādarśa* defines a *mahākāvya*, through its prefatory material:

> A *mahākāvya*, a major poem, is called a *sargabandha*, that which has an arrangement in [divisions called] *sargas*. Marking its introduction, there is a benediction, a respectful salutation, or also an indication of the plot.[18]

By attributing specific formal criteria to the introduction of a major literary genre, Daṇḍin acknowledges the preamble's discrete function within a literary work. Rudraṭa's ninth-century *Kāvyālaṅkāra* discusses the prefatory material of another literary genre, the narrative prose *kathā*:

> In a *mahākathā*, after paying homage with verses to chosen deities [and] teachers, [the poet,] by virtue of being the composer, should briefly mention himself and his own family.[19]

While the *kāvya* preamble is often overlooked as a purely literary convention, the examples above suggest that medieval thinkers demarcate the *kāvya*'s preface as a unique conceptual space that, while standing apart from the main body of the text, locates the entire work within a particular interpretive context. This project examines the paratextual elements most relevant to the Sanskrit literary tradition—the introduction and the conclusion. Following Genette, I use the terms "preface" and "prefatory" to refer to any material that introduces a text, whether it precedes or follows the main text.[20] While the first stanzas of a literary work conventionally comprise the work's preamble, concluding paratexts have found their way into published editions of Sanskrit works variously as their final stanza(s), as colophons, or as appended summaries (*upasaṃhāra*), afterwards, and eulogies (*praśasti*). The fluidity of South Asia's manuscript tradition leaves over a thousand years of opportunity for textual emendation and accommodation on the part of authors, commentators, scribes, manuscript

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[17] Rather than use the term *kāvya* in the restricted modern sense of versified poetry, I use it in the sense given in traditional theoretical treatises, such as Bhāmaha's *Kāvyālaṅkāra* 1.16ab: *śabdārthau sahitau kāvyaṃ gadyaṃ padyaṃ ca taddvividhā* "Sound and sense together is *kāvya*. Prose and verse are its two forms." Unless otherwise noted, I use the terms *kāvya* and "poetry" interchangeably and more in the sense of "literature."

[18] *Kāvyādarśa* 1.14:
sargabandho mahākāvyam ucyate tasya lakṣaṇam |
āśīr namaskriyā vastunirdeśo vāpi tanmukham ||

[19] Rudraṭa's *Kāvyālaṅkāra* 16.20:
ślokair mahākathāyām iṣṭān devān gurūn namaskṛtya |
saṃkṣepeṇa nijaṃ kulam abhidadhyāt svaṃ ca kartṛtayā ||
A.K. Warder defines the *mahākathā* ("great story") in Rudraṭa's stanza as a "full length novel, which in principle is equivalent in scope to an epic." Warder, *Indian Kāvya Literature*, 1:188. For thorough discussions of the prose *kathā* as a literary genre, see De, "Akhyayika and the Katha" and Warder, *Indian Kāvya Literature*, 1:187–199.

[20] Genette, *Paratexts*, 161. Thus, Genette considers the epilogue a type of preface.

owners, editors, and printers. But, because this project is based on published editions of texts, I circumscribe this study to the material as my sources' editors have presented it and leave a study of Kashmiri-*Bṛhatkathā* manuscripts, their titles, colophons, marginalia, and other paratextual elements for another time.

1.3 Past Scholarship: An Overview

Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* was the first of the *Bṛhatkathā* digests to reach a European audience.[21] In 1824, Horace Hayman Wilson published the first work devoted to this text in a series of articles that included an introduction and a free translation of the Kashmiri story collection.[22] This debut publication whetted Hermann Brockhaus's interest in the text and encouraged the University of Jena's professor to compile the *editio princeps* of the *KSS* between 1839 and 1866.[23] With no textual antecedent to the *KSS* available, both Wilson and Brockhaus expressed ambivalence over the framing narrative's account of an original Paiśācī composition attributed to Guṇāḍhya. For Wilson, Somadeva's claim of fidelity to an earlier Paiśācī work represented a rhetorical move on the part of the author, with "the fiction being part of his plan and well enough in keeping with the character of his work."[24] Whereas Wilson doubted the existence of a Paiśāci original, Brockhaus suggested that Somadeva had borrowed from several earlier sources rather than from a single, unified text: "Sein [Somadeva's] Verdienst beruht wohl hauptsächlich in der gleichmässigen stylistischen Redaction des früher unter mancherlei Formen in Prosa und Versen Zerstreuten."[25]

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[21] According to Norman Penzer's *BṛK* bibliography, the first publications in European scholarship to mention the "*Vrĭhat-Cat'há*" (i.e., *KSS*) were Francis Wilford's 1808 and 1809 journal articles (listed in Penzer under 1807), followed by the preface to Horace Hayman Wilson's 1819 Sanskrit-English dictionary. See, Penzer, *Ocean of Story*, 10:46; Wilford "Essay on the Sacred Isles," Essay 1, 269 and 270; Wilford, "Essay on the Sacred Isles," Essay 4, 117ff.; and Wilson, *Dictionary, Sanscrit and English*, xi.

[22] Wilson, "Hindu Fiction," pts. 1–5 in *Oriental Quarterly Magazine* and "Hindu Fiction," pt. 6 in *British and Foreign Review*. Reprinted in Rost, *Essays*, vols. 1–2.

[23] Brockhaus, *Katha Sarit Sagara*. Vol. 1 (1839) contains *KSS* bks. 1–5 with text in *devanāgari* script and a German translation. Vol. 2 (1862) and vol. 3 (1866) contain bks. 6–8 and 9–18 respectively with text in roman transliteration and without translation. The series title was amended from *Katha Sarit Sagara: Die Mährchensammlung des Sri Somadeva Bhatta aus Kaschmir* in vol. 1 to *Kathā Sarit Sāgara: Die Märchensammlung des Somadeva* in vols. 2 and 3.

For Brockhaus's acknowledgment of Wilson's influence, see Brockhaus, *Katha Sarit Sagara*, 1:vii. See, too, Rost, *Essays*, 1:x. For amendments to Brockhaus's edition, see Kern, "Remarks on Professor Brockhaus' Edition"; Tawney, *Kathā Sarit Sāgara*; Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, 87–91; and Raghavan, "Corrections and Emendations."

Brockhaus's edition was replaced by Durgāprasād's and Parab's 1889 edition, *Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadevabhatta*, published by Nirnaya Sagar Press (hereafter cited as NSP). NSP published a second edition in 1903, a third edition in 1915, which was revised by Vāsudev Lakṣmaṇ Śāstrī Paṇśīkar, and a fourth edition in 1930. Motilal Banarsidass published its first reprint of the NSP edition in 1970.

[24] Wilson, "Hindu Fiction," 1:159.

[25] Brockhaus, *Katha Sarit Sagara*, 1:viii: "His merit is mainly due to the stylistically even redaction of a number of earlier forms scattered in prose and verse [works]."

In 1871, Arthur Burnell announced his acquisition of a work "almost identical in matter with the Kathāsaritsāgara"—Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*.[26] With access to two Kashmiri texts that hearken back to a shared source, scholars commenced comparative research with a focus on dating and reconstructing an original *BṛK*. In this arena, Bühler made strides in establishing the composition dates and other historical contexts for the Kashmiri *BṛKs*,[27] while his contemporary Lévi turned his attention toward the newly available *BṛKM* to publish a study of Kṣemendra and a French translation of the *BṛKM's* first book (*lambaka*).[28] Shortly after the turn of the century, the Nirnaya Sagar Press published the *editio princeps* of Kṣemendra's digest under editors Śivadatta and Parab.[29] Aside from the work of Bühler, Lévi, and the editors of the Nirnaya Sagar Press edition, the *BṛKM* garnered little intellectual attention as a unified text. Rather, scholars considered individual story collections within the work—namely the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati* and the *Pañcatantra*—and the relationship of these well-known story collections to other existing versions.[30]

In 1893, Hara Prasād Shāstri announced his acquisition of a third Sanskrit *BṛK* digest found in a cache of Nepali manuscripts—the *Bṛhatkathāślokasaṃgraha* (*Verse Compilation of the Great Story*) of Budhasvāmin.[31] This third epitome, known as the Nepali *BṛK*, stimulated new interest in *BṛK* scholarship that culminated in 1908 when, in a stunning display of synchronicity, J.S. Speyer and Félix Lâcote both published monographs on the Sanskrit versions of the *BṛK*. While focusing on Somadeva's *KSS,* Speyer's *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, also seeks to date and reconstruct a *BṛK ur*-text through a philological analysis of both Kashmiri *BṛKs*.[32] Similarly, Lâcote introduces his *Essai sur Guṇāḍhya et la Bṛhatkathā* by stating, "Il a pour premier objet de retrouver, autant que faire se peut, à travers les trois versions, la Bṛhatkathā originelle."[33] In working toward this aim, Lâcote follows in the methodological footsteps of his teacher, Lévi, in producing a study that raises questions of literary transmission yet also considers the aesthetic, the philological, and the

[26] Burnell, "Sanskrit MSS. at Tanjore," 447. Unaware of Burnell's announcement, Bühler heralded his "recovery of the *Vrihatkathā* (i.e., *Bṛhatkathamañjarī*) of Kshemendra" the following year in "Vṛihatkathā of Kshemendra," 304. Cf. Weber, "Remarks," 57 and Bühler, **"**Dr. Bühler's Report," 304.

[27] See Bühler, "Vṛihatkathā of Kshemendra"; *Tour in Search*, 45–47; and *Ueber das Zeitalter*.

[28] Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1.

[29] Śivadatta and Kāśīnāth Pāṇḍuraṅg Parab, eds., *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī of Kṣemendra*, Kāvyamālā Series 69 (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1901). The second edition was published in 1931, and a reprint edition was issued in 1982 through Panini, New Delhi. For discussion and for textual emendations of the Kāvyamālā edition (hereafter cited as KM edition), see Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, 12–14 and 25–26.

[30] For partial translations and analyses of the *BṛKM's Vetālapañcaviṃśati*, see Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 2, 190–216; Emeneau, "An Interpolation in Some MSS"; and Emeneau, "Kṣemendra as Kavi." The last reference compares the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati* accounts in *BṛKM* 9.2.19–1221 and *KSS* 12.8–32. For the *Pañcatantra*, see von Mańkowski, *Der Auszug aus dem Pañcatantra*.

[31] Śāstri, "On a New Find," 246. For published editions of the *BKŚS*, see Lacôte, *Bṛhat-kathā Ślokasaṃgraha*, vol. 1. For translations, see Lacôte, *Bṛhat-kathā Ślokasaṃgraha*, vol. 2; Mallinson, *Emperor of the Sorcerers*; and Sharma, *Bṛhatkathā-śloka-saṁgraha.* See, too, Agrawala, *Bṛihatkathāślokasaṃgraha: A Study* (Sanskrit text amended from Lacôte edition) and Maten, *Bṛhatkathāślokasaṃgraha: A Literary Study.*

[32] Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*.

[33] Lacôte, *Essai sur Guṇāḍhya*, 4: "Its primary objective is to recover, as much as possible, the original *Bṛhatkathā* through the three versions."

cultural in his conclusions. To date, Lâcote's 1908 monograph remains, a foundational study of the three Sanskrit-*Bṛhatkathā* digests.[34]

Toward the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a wave of *BṛK* scholarship surfaced in the realm of comparative literature and folkloric studies. This disciplinary turn marked a shift in method from analysis of the Kashmiri *BṛKs*' paratextual elements to a focused study of its narrative material. While first-wave scholars of the *BṛK* tradition, such as Wilson, had noted the *KSS's* literary value "as offering the oldest extant form of many of the tales which were once popular in Europe,"[35] it was not until Charles Tawney translated the entire *KSS* into English in 1880 that a serious study of folkloric motifs and cross-cultural literary themes began to take place.[36] The annotations in Tawney's translation not only provide textual emendations and alternative readings, they also explicate shared themes, motifs, and story structures found elsewhere in Eurasia and in other South Asian literary traditions. The move toward folklore and comparative studies is best exemplified by Maurice Bloomfield's work, which addresses many of the *KSS's* motifs in a series of articles published during the first quarter of the twentieth century.[37] This disciplinary move peaked, however, in 1924 with Norman Penzer's ten-volume edition of Tawney's *KSS* translation with newly published annotations and critical essays. In his introduction, Penzer both clarifies the aims of his project while giving voice to the intellectual zeitgeist of his time: "The extreme variety and importance of the work [the *KSS*], together with the recent strides made in the study of comparative folklore, religion and anthropology was the *raison d'être* of the edition."[38]

Although partial and full translations of the *KSS* continued to be published in both South Asian and European languages throughout the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries,[39] the Kashmiri *BṛKs* did not resurface as objects of scholarly analysis until the last quarter of the twentieth century.[40] In 1977, S. N. Prasad reintroduced the question of textual reconstruction in his *Studies in Guṇāḍhya*.[41] Prasad's work also opened the door to considering the *KSS's* narrative material as a source for cultural studies. This project was taken up in monographs by Nirmal Trikha and Aparna Chattopadhyay, which, though more

[34] See, too, Lacôte, "Une Version Nouvelle."

[35] Wilson, "Hindu Fiction," 2:159. Cf. Brockhaus, *Katha Sarit Sagara*, 1:vii.

[36] Tawney, *Kathā Sarit Sāgara*. While Tawney was the first to translate the entire *KSS* into a European language, the 1833 Sanskrit prose rendering of the *KSS* must be recognized as the first "translation" of the entire work. Jīvanānda Vidyāsāgara, *Gadyātmakaḥ Kathā-sarit-sāgaraḥ* (Calcutta: Sarasvati Press, 1833). Noted in Durgāprasād and Parab, *KSS*, 2; Penzer, *Ocean of* Story, 10:50; Prasad, *Studies in Guṇāḍhya*, 118 (s.v. Vidyasagara, P. J.); and Sternbach, *Aphorisms and Proverbs,* 26n1.

[37] For example, see Bloomfield, "Recurring Psychic Motifs"; "Entering Another's Body"; and "Dohada."

[38] Penzer, *Ocean of Story*, 1:viii.

[39] For a survey of *KSS* translations in South Asian and European languages, see Sternbach, *Aphorisms and Proverbs,* 26–29n1.

[40] Notable exceptions to this statement are the 1933 works of Emeneau, "An Interpolation in Some MSS." and "Kṣemendra as Kavi."

[41] For references to Prasad's other *BṛK*-related publications, including "The Kathāsaritsāgara and Indian Culture" (DPhil thesis, University of Allahabad), see Prasad, *Studies in Guṇāḍhya*, 124.

descriptive than critical in their method, have suggested ways of reading for the cultural contexts that might undergird the *KSS's* narrative material.[42]

In the past three decades, Somadeva's story collection has gained renewed scholarly interest. This interest is made evident by the publication of new translations of the entire 22,000-stanza work into German, Italian, French, and English.[43] Along with rendering new translations of the *KSS*, scholars, such as Ryūtarō Tsuchida, have begun to look comparatively at the paratextual structure of the Kashmiri *BṛKs* to better understand the historical and philological relationships between the two Kashmiri texts and other texts within the *BṛK* tradition.[44] While not the specific aim of their studies, Daud Ali and Whitney Cox have succeeded in bringing the *KSS* into broader conversations about literary culture, regional aesthetics, and historical expression in medieval Kashmir.[45]

The resurgence of interest in the *KSS* makes the lack of attention to the work's predecessor even more glaring. If translations and published editions of Sanskrit texts are a gauge of their current literary esteem, Kṣemendra's *BṛKM*, which, to my knowledge, has yet to be translated in full into any modern language, appears to have little value in the eyes of Sanskrit literary scholars. Studies, beginning with Burnell's, have assessed the *BṛKM* in the following manner: "The style is not so good. The tales are told in a very bald way, and shorter than in the K.S.S.; though here and there one finds long and tedious descriptive passages."[46] Even Kṣemendra's most vocal advocate Lévi admits, after singing the poet's praises, "Nous avons parlé jusqu'ici des qualités littéraires de Kshemendra; la Bṛihatkathā va nous obliger de parler de ses défauts."[47] Of all the *BṛKM's* critics, Penzer expresses the strongest though not the least representative sentiment: "As to Kshemendra, we should have lost little if he had not lived, or at any rate had not produced a version of the *Bṛihat-kathā*."[48]

While Kṣemendra's work has been demonized, modern critics praise Somadeva's work for showing comparative restraint in form. Speyer encapsulates this view in his 1908 monograph:

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[42] Trikha, *Faiths and Beliefs*. Chattopadhyay, *Studies in the Kathasaritsagara*. Chattopadhyay has also published a number of articles on the *KSS*. For references, see Sternbach, *Aphorisms and Proverbs*, 30–32n1ff. For a cultural history of Kashmir using Kṣemendra's works as source material, see Khosla, *Kṣemendra and His Times*. Khosla has produced a similar study using material from the broader *BṛK* tradition in *Bṛhatkatha and Its Contributions*.

[43] For instance, Mehlig, *Der Ozean der Erzählungsströme*; Baldissera et al, *L'Oceano dei Fiumi dei Racconti*; Balbir *Océan des Rivières de Contes*; and Mallinson, *Ocean of Rivers*. Unfortunately, only the first two volumes, *KSS lambakas* 1–6, of the anticipated seven-volume set of Mallinson's translation were brought to press before the Clay Sanskrit Library's publishing project ended in 2009. See, too, Arshia Satttar's translation of selected stories, *Tales from the Kathāsaritsāgara*.

[44] Tsuchida, "On the Narrative Structure" and "On the Textual Division."

[45] Ali, "Temporality, Narration and the Problem of History." Cox "Literary Register and Historical Consciousness." See, too, David Shulman's treatment of the Kashmiri *BṛK* framing narrative in "Axial Grammar," 382–391.

[46] Burnell, "Sanskrit MSS. at Tanjore," 447. For another representative comment, see Bühler, "Vṛihatkathā of Kshemendra," 305: "His [Kṣemendra's] style is not so flowing as Somadeva's and in his excessive eagerness for brevity, he sometimes becomes obscure."

[47] Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, 410: "Up to now, we have spoken of Kṣemendra's literary qualities; of the *Bṛhakathā*(*mañjarī*), we must speak of its faults."

[48] Penzer, *Ocean of Story*, 9:121.

> Somadeva…is with due right considered one of the most illustrious Indian poets. And for my part, I dare say that he is one of the few Indian literary geniuses who by their relative simplicity of language, their moderation in the employment of rhetorical requisites, their aiming at clearness and appropriateness of style, their knowledge of human nature and their art of arranging the plot of a tale, may stand out the judgment of European criticism according to the standard of Occidental taste.[49]

In assessing Somadeva's poetic skill, Speyer also voices a regionally and historically contingent standard for literature based on an alien set of aesthetic and cultural criteria. Rather than tease out the possible factors governing the creation of such a work, most scholars have similarly discounted Kṣemendra's telling as a degraded reduction of the traditional *BṛK* or otherwise speak of the two versified *kathā* digests interchangeably as offshoots of a Kashmiri recension of the *BṛK*.[50]

1.4 Navigating the Project: A Guide

Through a study of the prefatory material in Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara*, this project attempts to disentangle two works that have become conflated in modern scholarly discourse. While the prefatory material of the two Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās* forms the foundation of the project, I place it in conversation with a complex of Kashmiri works from the turn of the first millennium. These works span from Abhinanda's ninth-century *kathā* digest, the *Kādambarīkathāsāra*, to the early thirteenth-century commentary on Ruyyaka's *Alaṅkārasarvasva*, Jayaratha's *Vimarśiṇī.* Through a shared language of cultural and literary commonplaces, these works help to articulate a vision of place that the *BṛK* digests might simply gesture toward. Moreover, they serve the larger project of contextualizing the two texts within Kashmiri literary history.

I organize my discussion into three chapters that consider different paratextual features within the two texts, namely, the preamble in chapter 2 and the epilogue in chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 2 lays the foundation for my argument through a close analysis of the form, imagery, and rhetorical structure of the *BṛKM* and the *KSS* preambles. I begin by considering the works independently to suggest that, despite sharing narrative content and claiming to be digests of the same *kathā*, the preambles to Kṣemendra's and Somadeva's works present different artistic projects and literary concerns. By then placing the works together, I suggest that the differences in presentation reflect broader literary debates taking place in turn-of-the-millennium Kashmir. In order to clarify the terms of these debates, I read the Kashmiri *BṛKs* alongside the works of literary theorists from the period. By identifying the vocabulary of tropes and technical terms that these texts share in articulating

[49] Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, 2.

[50] Lacôte has formulated the widely held view that the *BṛKM* and the *KSS* are based on a Kashmiri recension of the *BṛK*. See Lacôte, *Essai sur Guṇāḍhya*, 134–43.

a new audience and ethos for their works, chapter 2 also provides the literary and theoretical background for the remaining chapters.

In chapter 3, I continue to pursue questions of literary reception and form, this time in the royal dedication, or *praśasti*, that serves as the *KSS's* epilogue. By focusing on the formal, metaphorical, and discursive elements in Somadeva's *praśasti* that conform to and depart from the conventions of the royal eulogy, I ask, what can this *praśasti* suggest about the twinning of polity and poetry in Kashmir during the time of its composition? While the *KSS praśasti* adopts the transregional conventions of the genre, the work redeploys these conventions to create a regionally specific vision of sacred and political space in the Kashmir Valley. Yet, while Somadeva's work employs the conventions of royal eulogy to offer a seamless vision of polity, a close reading of the *praśasti* reveals ideological tensions below the surface of the text, namely in the negotiation of a gendered polity. The conversation partners in this chapter consist of other turn-of-the-millennium works that articulate shared imaginings of Kashmiri polity and that extend these imaginings beyond the physical limits of the Valley.

Chapter 4 turns to the final section of the *BṛKM's upasaṃhāra*, which functions as the text's epilogue. While the previous two chapters revolve around one or both of my project's primary texts, this chapter begins with an analysis of the *BṛKM* as the entry point into a broader discussion of patronage in the production of Kṣemendra's textual corpus and beyond. The authorial account found in the *BṛKM's upasaṃhāra* follows the thematic architecture of a praise poem, but it brings to light new rubrics of authorship and literary production that depart from the conventional model of court patronage. Kṣemendra's other poetical epitomes similarly reflect this rubric within their prefatory spaces through new motifs and metonymical relationships. I conclude the chapter by pointing to these representations and how they materialize in eleventh- and twelfth-century works by other Kashmiri composers.

2 The *Kathā* Digest in Eleventh–Century Kashmir

2.1 The *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* Preamble: A Study in Form

Although the Kashmiri-*BṛK* narratives are similar in structure and content, the two works present themselves through their prefatory material in dramatically different ways.[51] Whereas Somadeva's twelve-stanza preamble presents the author's project and a *précis* of the work to follow, the five-stanza prelude to Kṣemendra's *BṛKM* lacks any direct statement of authorial intent to contextualize the work. Instead, it contains the conventional elements of a literary preamble. Beginning with an invocation for the work's auspicious beginning (*maṅgalācaraṇa*), the preamble continues with a respectful acknowledgement (*namaskaraṇa*) of great poets, praise for the good and censure for the bad (*sujanakhalastutinindā*), and a description of excellent poetry. Despite the apparent lack of metadiscursive signposts in Kṣemendra's preamble, its diction, imagery, and other rhetorical features point to the project's primary goal: to create a work of poetry.

While the *BṛKM's* preamble follows broadly established poetic conventions, its tropes and their strategic juxtapositions suggest that the work positions itself within a specific literary milieu. The preamble opens with a *maṅgalācaraṇa* in the form of a benediction (*āśīrvāda*) whose imagery places it within a larger tradition of poetic works:

> *umāpraṇāmasaṃkrāntacaraṇālaktakaḥ śaśī |*
> *saṃdhyāruṇa ivābhāti yasya pāyāt sa vaḥ śivaḥ* ||*BṛKM* 1.1.1||
>
> May Śiva's crescent moon protect you as it reflects [the red of] Umā's lac-dyed feet from his bowing down before her [and] glows like the tawny red of the twilight sky.[52]

The *āśīrvāda* invokes Śiva's protection for the audience by employing the literary trope of the dramatic hero (*nāyaka*) appeasing the jealous anger (*īṛṣyā*) of the female protagonist (*nāyikā*). By overlaying this literary framework onto the divine couple, Śiva and Umā, the work elicits the aestheticized emotion of erotic love (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*) in a form of love-in-separation (*vipralambha-śṛṅgāra*). South Asian poets have conceived of the divine couple through this literary-aesthetic framework and have used similar tropes to introduce their works as early as Hāla in the first-century anthology *Sattasaī*:

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[51] As noted above, the terms "preface" and "prefatory" refer to any material that introduces a text, whether it precedes or follows the main text. See n. 20 above.

[52] Literally, "May Śiva—whose moon, onto which the foot-lac is transferred from the bowing down before Umā, appears like the red of twilight—protect you."

pasuvaiṇo rosāruṇapaḍisāsaṃkaṃtagorimuhaaṃdaṃ |
gahiagghapaṃkaaṃ via saṃjhāsalilaṃjaliṃ ṇamaha || Sattasaī 1 ||[53]

Homage to the hands of Paśupati cupped in supplication and filled with water at the twilight offering—[cupped hands] in which the image of Gaurī's face-moon is reflected red with anger, like a [red] lotus presented as an offering.

In this Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit verse, Paśupati-Śiva's water-cupped hands, rather than the moon on his lowered forehead, express his conciliation. And Gaurī-Umā's reddened complexion, rather than her reddened feet, is reflected therein (*saṃkrānta-*/*saṃkanta-*) to mark her jealous anger. Govardhana of the Sena Court reimagines this trope in his twelfth-century work inspired by Hāla, the *Āryasaptaśatī*—this time incorporating the synecdoche used by Kṣemendra a century earlier:

praṇayakupitapriyāpadalākṣāsaṃdhyānubandhamadhurenduḥ |
tadvalayakanakanikaṣagrāvagrīvaḥ śivo jayati || Āryasaptaśatī 8 ||

His forehead-moon is honey-red by its contact at twilight with the red lac on the feet of his beloved, who is feigning anger. May Śiva, whose throat is the touchstone for the gold of her anklets, prevail!

The touchstone metaphor intensifies both the figural density of the verse and the physical proximity between the cosmic couple; Śiva has bowed so deeply that his neck, as metaphorical touchstone, scrapes the golden anklets encircling his beloved's feet, thereby testing the purity of the ornaments' metal. In each instance, this image of Śiva and Umā functions as the entry point of the work to follow, either as the introductory stanza, as in the cases of Hāla and Kṣemendra, or showcased elsewhere within the preamble, as in the case of Govardhana. By employing this transregional trope with its attendant *rasa* of *śṛṅgāra*, the *BṛKM* locates itself within the same literary milieu as the *kāvya* tradition discussed above.

While the poetic vocabulary of these tropes identifies Kṣemendra's work as a *kāvya* work within a transregional literary tradition, this language also gives voice to more regionally specific conceptions. Here, the interchange between god and goddess, through the synecdoche of forehead-moon and feet, metaphorically embodies the ultimate reality of Śiva-Śakti in Kashmiri Śaiva movements of the eleventh century. The stanza attempts to textualize this dynamic mediation between the two deities in their immanent forms through a series of linguistic and figural turns. *Umā* is the first utterance of the stanza, in fact, of the entire work. Yet she is grammatically subordinate as the final member of the relative compound qualifying Śiva's moon. And while Śiva's head touches Umā's feet with playful humility, his forehead moon alone is the locus of the benediction.

The *BṛKM*'s *namaskaraṇa* to poet-lords follows a similar linguistic and metaphorical logic as the *āśīrvāda* by juxtaposing the excellence of poet-lords

[53] Weber edition, *Das Saptaśatakam des Hāla.*

(*kavīśvarāṇāṃ…prakarṣaḥ*) and the Goddess of Poetic Speech (*sarasvatī-*) with the tutelary deity (*śivaḥ*) and his goddess consort (*umā-*):

> *sarasvatīvibhramadarpaṇānāṃ sūktāmṛtakṣīramahodadhīnām |*
> *sanmānasollāsasudhākarāṇāṃ kavīśvarāṇāṃ jayati prakarṣaḥ* ||*BṛKM* 1.1.2||
>
> Poet-lords are mirrors for Sarasvatī's alluring gestures, great milk oceans of the immortal nectar of eloquent speech, [and] sources of elixir (i.e., moons) that are the delight of good people's minds. May their excellence prevail![54]

As with *umā-* in the first stanza*, sarasvatī-* is the first utterance of the second stanza. And similarly, *sarasvatī-* initiates the compound's lexical chain while standing subordinate to the poet-lords (*kavīśvarāṇām*) that the compound qualifies. Rather than follow a conventional hierarchy of propitiation, where poets worship Sarasvatī as the divine embodiment of poetic speech, the poet-lords of the *BṛKM* preamble reflect the goddess's grace as mirrors for her amorous gestures (*sarasvatīvibhramadarpaṇānām*). Although "the excellence" (*prakarṣaḥ*) of poet-lords is the grammatical subject of the second stanza, the poet-lords themselves receive syntactic priority by populating three of the verse's four *pādas* with appositive compounds. By establishing a parallel between the patron deity with his literal consort and the poet with his figurative consort through form and syntax, the *BṛKM* preamble creates a poet-centered universe, where the poet is akin to the patron deity and where even the goddess Sarasvatī is reflected in his greatness.

While the first two stanzas establish an analogous relationship between the poet and the patron deity, the following stanzas delineate a space meant for an audience of literati. The preamble delimits this space by defining a moral dichotomy between the critic and the connoisseur of literature:

> *doṣālokananipuṇāḥ paruṣagiro durjanāś ca ghūkāś ca |*
> *darśanam api bhayajananaṃ yeṣām animeṣapiśunānām* ||*BṛKM* 1.1.3||
> *ojorañjanam eva varṇaracanāś citrā na kasya priyā |*
> *nānālaṃkṛtayaś ca kasya na manaḥsaṃtoṣam ātanvate |*
> *kāvye kiṃ tu satāṃ camatkṛtikṛtaḥ sūktiprabandhāḥ sphuṭaṃ |*
> *tīkṣṇāgrā jhaṭiti śrutipraṇayinaḥ kāntākaṭākṣā iva* || *BṛKM* 1.1.4||
>
> Wicked people and owls possess harsh voices [and]
> *doṣālokananipuṇāḥ*
> are skilled at spotting defects
> are skilled at seeing in the dark
> Even the sight
> *yeṣām animeṣapiśunānām*
> of those treacherous, unblinkingly vigilant people
> of those [owls] on account of whom crows are vigilant
> produces fear. [3][55]

[54] *kavīśvarāṇāṃ jayati prakarṣaḥ*: Literally, "May the excellence of poet-lords prevail."

> To whom is the delight of an elaborate style, abounding in compounds, and the diverse arrangement of syllables not dear? And to whom do various rhetorical ornaments not spread total satisfaction to the mind? Indeed, in *kāvya*, compositions of beautiful verses clearly create aesthetic wonder for good people. The best of clever [verses] (*tīkṣṇāgrā*) are immediately beloved by the ears (*śrutipraṇayinaḥ*), like a lovely woman's sidelong glances, whose pointed corners [of the eyes] (*tīkṣṇāgrā*) are immediately beloved by the ears (*śrutipraṇayinaḥ*). [4]

Kṣemendra's preamble censures the critic while praising the connoisseur. This moral-aesthetic dynamic manifests in the repeated association of "wicked people" with the faculty of sight. Like owls, they are unblinking (*animeṣapiśunānām*), and therefore vigilant, and skilled at seeing faults (*doṣālokananipuṇāḥ*). Moreover, the sight (*darśanam*) of these critics wreaks fear upon the beholder. The conceit here is that genuine appreciation of poetry, a recited act, requires the faculty of hearing and the inner discriminative faculty of the mind. Thus, the minds of the *cognoscenti*, who are generically branded as "the good" (*satām*), are moved to pleasure by poetic language through the sensory jurisdiction of the ears (*śrutipraṇayinaḥ*). The final simile pairs this inherent connection between good poetry and the discriminating ear of the literary connoisseur with the inherent connection between the eyes and the ears in a well-used trope for feminine beauty: eyes so long that their corners meet the ears in a sidelong glance.

Works as early as Bāṇa's seventh-century *Harṣacarita* have contrasted the sensitive ear of the literatus to the harsh remonstrations of the critic.[56] But, while drawing upon the aesthetic power of this older trope, the *BṛKM* preamble also participates in a more contemporary dialogue about the role of audience in literary production. In the ninth-century literary treatise, *Dhvanyāloka*, Kashmiri theorist Ānandavardhana asserts that poetic suggestion (*dhvani*) is the animating principle, or soul, of poetry (*kāvyātma*) and that the true nature of *dhvani* will be shown "to delight the minds of aesthetically sensitive listeners" (*sahṛdayamanaḥprītaye*).[57] The *Dhvanyāloka's Locana*, an eleventh-century commentary by Abhinavagupta, expounds upon this relationship between audience and poetic aim in the following prescription:

> Let bliss (*ānanda*), whose essence is delight (*nivṛti*), another word for aesthetic wonder (*camatkāra*), attain a fixed state in the minds of those perceiving the true nature of *dhvani*, [that is to say, in the minds] of those steadfast ones, by not being

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[55] Thanks to Professor Robert Goldman for pointing to the *samāsokti* (figure of compressed speech) in stanza 3, where *ghūkāḥ* are "owls" that share the qualities of wicked people and where *piśuna-* should be rendered bivalently as both "treacherous," to qualify wicked people, and as "crows," to extend the owl side of the *samāsokti*.

[56] *Harṣacarita* 1.4–6 (=*Harshacarita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa*, Kane edition). See, too, *Kādambarīkathāsāra of Abhinanda* 1.3–4 (hereafter cited as *KādKS*).

[57] *Dhvanyāloka* 1.1 (hereafter cited as *Dhv)*. For a comprehensive study of this ninth-century work, its eleventh-century commentary, and the debates taking place in their interim, see McCrea, *Teleology of Poetics*. I use McCrea's terms for *sahṛdaya* above.

occluded (*anunmīlyamāna*-) by others, who are struck down by [faults] beginning with error. The true nature of it (*dhvani*) is revealed to bring about this aim."[58]

Both the *Dhvanyāloka* and its *Locana*, create a binary between *sahṛdayas*, who are able to experience the delight of poetic suggestion, and those who cannot because they are obstructed by faults, i.e., critics. This moral-aesthetic dichotomy also appears in Namisādhu's eleventh-century commentary on Rudraṭa's ninth-century *Kāvyālaṅkāra.* This Kashmiri commentator expands upon the root text's discussion of prefatory material in the narrative prose *kathā* by noting that a *ca,*"and," in the root text signifies an aggregate (*cakāro samuccaye*) that indicates other preliminaries "beginning with the praise of good people and the censure of bad people" (*sujanakhalastutinindādikaṃ*).[59] Namisādhu's commentarial elaboration suggests that the *sujanakhalastutinindā*, which finds no mention here in the ninth-century *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, has become recognized as a poetic convention within the commentator's ambit of eleventh-century Kashmir.

Kṣemendra's preamble echoes the aesthetic priorities set forth by his Kashmiri contemporaries by celebrating poetry that "causes aesthetic wonder" (*camatkṛtikṛtaḥ*) for "the good" and by censuring those critics skilled at beholding faults (*doṣālokananipuṇāḥ)*. These resonances between the *śāstraic* texts and Kṣemendra's literary work achieve even greater amplitude when turning to the composer's intellectual lineage. For the *BṛKM*'s postface, or *upasaṃhāra* refers to no other than the *Locana's* author Abhinavagupta as Kṣemendra's teacher of literature. Through the treatment of audience and through a description of poetry, the *BṛKM* preface, like the Kashmiri theoretical treatises discussed above, introduces the work's audience as *sahṛdayas*, who, unlike the aforementioned critics, can appreciate well-crafted poetry. Moreover, the prefatory verses bring the work's project into sharper focus: through the emphasis on literary language and on the construction of charming poetry, Kṣemendra's preamble proposes that the work to follow is meant to delight the audience through its poetic expression.

Up to this point, the *BṛKM's* preamble has addressed both the audience and the purport, or *prayojana*, of the work. However, it has made no mention of its *viṣaya*, that is, the scope of the work to follow. In fact, the opening stanzas make no mention of the

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[58] *Locana* (hereafter cited as *Loc*) to *Dhv* 1, pp. 35–37 in Kashi Sanskrit Series edition:
dhvaneḥ svarūpaṃ lakṣayatāṃ sambandhini manasi ānando nirvṛtyātmā camatkārāparaparyāyaḥ, pratiṣṭhāṃ parair viparyāsādyapahatair anunmīlyamānatvena sthemānaṃ labhatām iti prayojanaṃ sampādayituṃ tatsvarūpaṃ prakāśayata iti saṅgatiḥ.
This statement elaborates upon the *vṛtti's* gloss of *tatsvarūpam*, "the true nature of it," from *Dhv* 1.1: *tasya hi dhvaneḥ svarūpam*, "for 'the true nature of it' being of *dhvani*." *Dhv*, *vṛtti* to 1.1, p. 35.

[59] Namisādhu's commentary on Rudraṭa's *Kāvyālaṅkāra* 16.20, p. 170, lines 2–3.

In the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (6.333), Viśvanātha (c.14th) follows Namisādhu's elaboration of the prose *kathā* in his discussion of the same genre: *ādau padyair namaskāraḥ khalāder vṛttakīrtanam* "In the beginning [of the work] there is a respectful salutation [and] the mention of the conduct of bad people and others with verses." The same theorist adds this elaboration to his discussion of *mahākāvya*:
ādau namaskriyāśīr vā vastunirdeśa eva vā |
kvacin nindā khalādīnāṃ satāṃ ca guṇakīrtanam ||*Sāhityadarpaṇa* 6.319||
"In the beginning of [the work] there is a respectful salutation, a benediction or also an indication of the plot. Sometimes there is the censure of bad people, etc. and the praise of the virtues of the good."

Bṛhatkathā or of its author at all. Instead, the preamble's final stanza alludes to the text's subject matter more generally as a *kathā* in the sense of a traditional narrative:[60]

> *evaṃ kila purāṇeṣu sarvāgamavidhāyiṣu |*
> *viśvaśāsanaśālinyāṃ śrutau ca śrūyate kathā* ||*BṛKM* 1.1.5||
>
> In this way, it has been said that *kathā* is heard in the ancient texts (*purāṇeṣu*), which ordain all traditional doctrine, and in the received sacred texts (*śrutau*), which possess every teaching.

The adverb *evam* forms the tenuous link between the previous stanzas and this final stanza to suggest that the *kathā*, found in the *śruti* and early *smṛti* literature, is charming "in the same way" (*evam*) that the type of poetry discussed in the earlier stanzas is charming to literary connoisseurs. The preface moves precipitously from the figural language of literary expression in the previous stanzas to the workaday language associated with *śāstraic* exposition in this final stanza. The particle *kila*, indicating reported information, locates the *viṣaya*, the *kathā*, in the distant past, as does the placement of *kathā* in the oldest strata of the Sanskrit textual tradition—in the *vedas* and in works of *itihāsa-purāṇa*. While this stanza aligns the *kathā* with older literary traditions to highlight the *transmission* of ancient narrative material, the previous stanzas focus on the *creation* of new forms of poetic expression. Herein lies the essence of the project; in order to delight the minds of the well-eared connoisseur, Kṣemendra relates the *BṛK* through a self-consciously poetic register. Thus, the *BṛKM* preamble introduces the work to follow as a work of *kāvya* that, while created from *kathā* in the form of traditional narrative accounts, has been fundamentally transformed through the alchemy of poetic expression.

2.2 The *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*: Beyond the Preamble

In concert with the *BṛKM's* opening stanzas, its concluding stanzas identify the work as a poetic project. Whereas the preamble does so through its rhetorical elements, the afterward, or the final section of the *upasaṃhāra*, does through its presentation of the *BṛKM* author.[61] The concluding section of the *BṛKM*'s *upasaṃhāra* describes the work's author

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[60] In this context, *kathā* has the general sense of a narrated account rather than the formal literary sense of a narrative prose poem.

[61] Hereafter, I refer to this concluding section (*BṛKM* 19.27–41) as the *upasaṃhāra* and to the two preceding subsections by the names provided in their respective colophons: *anukramaṇikā* (*BṛKM* 1–21) and *lambakasaṃgraha* (*BṛKM* 22–26). The KM edition refers to this final section of the *upasaṃhāra* in the *viṣayānukramaṇikā* ("work's table of contents" p. 5) as the *granthasamāptiḥ* ("text's conclusion"). However, this title doesn not appear in either the running head or the colophon of the section itself.

For an insightful study of the *BṛKM's upasaṃhāra* that assesses larger questions of textual transmission in the Kashmiri-*BṛK* tradition, see Tsuchida, "Narrative Structure of the Kashmiri Versions."

after acknowledging the generosity and religious devotion of the author's father, Prakāśendra (*BṛKM* 19.31–35):[62]

> *kṣemendranāmā tanayas tasya vidvatsu viśrutaḥ |*
> *prayātaḥ kavigoṣṭhīṣu nāmagrahaṇayogyatām ||BṛKM* 19.36||
> *śrutvābhinavaguptākhyāt sāhityaṃ bodhavāridheḥ |*
> *ācāryaśekharamaṇir*[63] *vidyāvivṛtikāriṇaḥ ||BṛKM* 19.37||
>
> He [Prakāśendra] had a son named Kṣemendra, who was well known among intellectuals. He became worthy of mentioning by name in poet-assemblies [36] after having learned literature from the ocean of knowledge named Abhinavagupta, the crest jewel of teachers, expounder of *vidyā* [and] author of the *Vidyāvivṛti*. [37][64]

The preceding stanzas highlight Kṣemendra's intellectual prowess by describing himself as "well known among intellectuals" (*vidvatsu viśrutaḥ*), and they assert his skill as a poet by noting his praiseworthy position in assemblies of poets (*kavigoṣṭhiṣu*). By emphasizing his place in literary circles, the text echoes the preamble's emphasis on connoisseurship and also suggests that Kṣemendra's work is open for review among his peers. This emphasis on the *sahṛdaya* comes into sharper focus with the *upasaṃhāra's* mention of Kṣemendra's literature guru Abhinavagupta, whose crucial role in foregrounding the *sahṛdaya* in poetic theory, has been discussed above. By locating Kṣemendra within an established lineage (*paraṃpara*) of intellectuals, the *upasaṃhāra* further validates his credentials as a poet.

While such details might seem like nothing more than *de rigueur* depictions of the author as a respected composer hailing from an established line of intellectuals, the varied representations of Kṣemendra in the prefatory material of his other works suggest that these depictions function within the specific context and genre conventions of each respective text. The *Avadānakalpalatā*, an epitome of Buddhist birth stories composed later in

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[62] In *BṛKM* 19.31 of the KM edition, Kṣemendra's father is called Prakaṇḍa (*kāśmīrako guṇādhāraprakaṇḍaś cābhido 'bhavat*). While the editors do not cite the manuscripts used for the *BṛKM* edition, other works by Kṣemendra in the KM series refer to Kṣemendra's father as Prakāśendra, thus suggesting a false reading in the *BṛKM*. See, *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī*, appendix, 3 (hereafter cited as *RāMañ*) and *Bhāratamañjarī*, *Vyāsāṣṭakastotra* 1 (hereafter cited respectively as *BhāM* and *VyĀṣṭ*).

Lévi makes a similar observation about Bühler's 1872 reading: "Le nom de Caṇḍa, que lui donne Bühler (*Ind Antiq.*) n'est qu'une fausse lecture corrigée par tous les autres manuscrits." Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, 401n. Cf. Bühler, "Vṛihatkathā of Kshemendra," 307n†. Bühler's transcription of Fol. 249b/92b reads, *kāśmīrako guṇādhāraprakaś*chaṇḍā *'bhidobhavat* (emphasis in the original).

[63] The *BṛKM* edition wrongly has "*ācāryaśekharamaṇiḥ*" in the nominative case. Cf. *BhāM*, *VyĀṣṭ* 8, (=*BṛKM* 19.37), which reads *ācāryaśekharamaṇeḥ* in the ablative case to agree with *abhinavaguptākhyāt*.

[64] *vidyāvivṛtikāriṇaḥ*: Literally, "the maker of exposition." I leave *vidyā* untranslated to retain the multivalence of the Sanskrit term as knowledge, learning, and the sciences, i.e., the *śāstras.* Although most translators of *BṛKM* 19.37d render this compound as "[Abhinavagupta,] the author of the *Vidyāvivṛti* (i.e., the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-bṛhatī-vimarṣinī,* also known as the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarṣinī*)," Dattaray makes a strong case for the term *vidyāvivṛtikāriṇaḥ* to be taken more generally as the expounder of various branches of learning. For a translation history of the term and the author's argument, see Dattaray, *Critical Survey*, 35–41. Since these two readings are not mutually exclusive, I offer them both above.

Alternatively, *BṛKM* 19.37 could be translated as part of the relative clause in the following stanza.

Kṣemendra's career, provides a clear example of the prefatory material's context-sensitive nature. Rather than enlist Abhinavagupta as literature guru, the *Avadānakalpalatā* preamble, or *bhūmikā*, composed by Kṣemendra's son Somendra, praises a Vīryabhadra as Kṣemendra's teacher of Buddhist doctrine.[65] While the *Avadānakalpalatā* names a teacher of Buddhism as a religious endorsement for a non-Buddhist author working with Buddhist narrative material, the *BṛKM* and Kṣemendra's other digests of epic works, or *mañjarīs*, foreground the author's literary qualifications. The concluding section of the *BṛKM upasaṃhāra* with its laudatory statements about the author and mention of Abhinavagupta appears nearly verbatim in the printed edition of Kṣemendra's digest of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāratamañjarī*.[66] The concluding stanza of the *BhāM* further proclaims, "Kṣemendra has attained the state of *kavi* today" (*prāptaḥ...kṣemendro 'dya kavīndratām*).[67] The *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī's* afterward similarly elevates the author as "his [Prakāśendra's] son, Kṣemendra, who attained elevation among good people and received honor from the wise."[68]

Why would the composer place more emphasis on his literary merits in the three *mañjarīs* than in his other compositions? While the prefaces of Kṣemendra's other works acknowledge the efficacy of their respective texts, they lack the self-aggrandizing stance found in the *mañjarī* literature. Lévi posits that the versified epitomes of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the *Bṛhatkathā* were composed during the earliest stage of the author's career: "Les mañjarīs seraient ses premiers exercices poétiques, écrits moins pour s'assurer l'estime des connaisseurs que pour se romper la main au maniement du vers. Ce seraient des œuvres de jeunesse, presque d'écolier."[69] Referring to *Kavikaṇṭhābharaṇa* 1.17, a stanza from one of Kṣemendra's later literary treatises, Lévi suggests that Kṣemendra composed the *mañjarīs* in line with guidelines that he himself had set forth for the talented, young poet: *vācāṃ camatkāravidhāyinīnāṃ navārthacarcāsu ruciṃ vidadhyāt*. Lévi understands this half-stanza as a prescription for the aspiring poet "de remanier et de retravailler les poèmes qui ont excité les cris d'admiration (camatkāra) du monde."[70] More generally the line suggests that "[the novice] should delight in retelling with new purpose language that brings about aesthetic wonder." Whether Kṣemendra's prescription refers to the reworking of traditional narratives, such as the epics, in particular or of poetic language in general, Lévi offers a plausible context for the self-aggrandizing stance in the *mañjarīs* of an inexperienced poet attempting his earliest compositions. Moreover, this specific quality of the *mañjarī* literature reinforces the context-sensitive—in this case, genre-sensitive—nature of the prefatory material in Kṣemendra's works.

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[65] *Avadānakalpalatā* (hereafter cited as *AKL*), *bhūmikā* 12.

[66] *BhāM*, *VyĀṣṭ* 8–9. In fact, the account of Prakāśendra and Kṣemendra's teachers in *BhāM*, *VyĀṣṭ* 1–9 is near verbatim with the *BṛKM* 19.31–38ab.

[67] *BhāM*, app. 5cd.

[68] *RāMañ*, app. 5: *vidvajjanaparyāptaparyāptasvajanotsavaḥ | ... kṣemendras tatsuto ....||*

[69] Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, 420: "The *mañjarīs* would be his first poetic exercises, composed less for ensuring the esteem of connoisseurs than for 'breaking in the hand' in the handling of verse. These would be the works of a youth, hardly more than a schoolboy."

[70] Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, 420: "to rewrite and to modify poems that have excited cries of admiration from the world."

2.3 The *Kathāsaritsāgara* Preamble: Highlighting Transmission

Whereas Kṣemendra's prefatory material highlights the transubstantiation of the *BṛK* into a work of *kāvya* to be relished by a conversant audience, Somadeva's foregrounds the *BṛK* as the authoritative source for the digested work. Scholars have generally viewed the *KSS* preamble as a statement of authorial intent and, thus, have used it to assess the relationship between the Kashmiri *BṛKs* and Guṇāḍhya's no longer extant work.[71] Rather than take a literal reading of the *KSS* preamble*,* I consider the rhetorical devices that the work employs to represent the *KSS* composer as redactor over poet. In doing so, I suggest that Somadeva's stance as a faithful redactor arises from a larger dialogue from this period about the requirements of a burgeoning genre of literature that both the *BṛKM* and the *KSS* participate in—the versified epitome of the prose *kathā*.

For Kṣemendra, the *BṛK* is a traditional narrative, or a *kathā*, to be reconceived of through the formal tools of *kāvya*. However, Somadeva takes a stance that is more in line with earlier traditions, such as the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition, where redactors claim to faithfully transmit ancient knowledge through narrative. The *maṅgalācaraṇa* of Somadeva's preamble sketches a hierarchy of propitiation that cascades from the all-encompassing munificence of the patron deity to the more circumscribed spheres of the tutelary deities, and then from divinity to mortal:

> *śriyaṃ diśatu vaḥ śambhoḥ śyāmaḥ kaṇṭho manobhuvā |*
> *aṅkasthapārvatīdṛṣṭipāsair iva viveṣṭitaḥ* ||*KSS* 1.1.1||
> *saṃdhyānṛttotsave tārāḥ kareṇoddhūya vighnajit |*
> *sītkārasīkarair anyāḥ kalpayann iva pātu vaḥ* ||*KSS* 1.1.2||
> *praṇamya vācaṃ niḥśeṣapadārthadyotadīpikām |*
> *bṛhatkathāyāḥ sārasya saṃgrahaṃ racayāmy aham* ||*KSS* 1.1.3||[72]
>
> Let Śambhu's dark throat, ensnared by the mind-born God of Love, as if [ensnared] by the noose-gazes of Pārvatī, who is seated on [Śambhu's] lap—grant you prosperity. [1] Let the Conqueror of Obstacles—[who] having strewn stars with his trunk in the merriment of the twilight dance, [then] as if forming other [stars] with water sprays from his trumpeting with pleasure—protect you. [2][73] Having bowed in reverence to Speech, the lamp shining forth all word-meaning, I compose a compendium of the essence of the *Bṛhatkathā*. [3]

Like Kṣemendra's, Somadeva's *āśīrvāda* elicits the parents of the universe in love play—here, through the synecdoche of Siva's throat encircled by the noose of Pārvatī's gazes. From patron deity as god and consort, the dedication turns to Gaṇeśa, as conqueror of

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[71] For instance, see Lacôte, *Essai sur Guṇāḍhya*, 123 and Prasad, *Studies in Guṇāḍhya*, 97.

[72] All *KSS* references are to the 2008 reprint of *Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadevabhatta*, ed. Durgāprasād and Kāśīnāth Pāṇḍuraṅg Parab (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1903).

[73] *sītkārasīkaraiḥ*: Literally, "with the water sprays making the sound '*sīt.*' [from pleasure *or* from spurting water]." I take the liberty of rendering *sītkāra* as "trumpeting with pleasure."

obstacles, before paying homage to Sarasvatī as Vāc, the divine embodiment of speech. Only once all the appropriate deities have been acknowledged in a traditionally prescribed order does the preamble address the composer of the work. As in Kṣemendra's preamble, the trope of illumination marks the relationship between Sarasvatī and the composer. But, whereas Kṣemendra's goddess is depicted as a reflection in the excellence of great poets, Somadeva's Vāc is, in effect, the lamp that bivalently shines forth both word-meaning *and* all nameable things (*padārtha*). This depiction of Vāc brings the composer into relief as the recipient, rather than as the conduit, of the goddess's knowledge. Through this hierarchy of propitiation, Somadeva sets up an ordered universe where each entity, whether divine or mortal, occupies its designated place.

Only once the proper channels of propitiation have been cleared does the preamble introduce the *KSS* composer. In first-person voice, the composer announces the work's *viṣaya* and *prayojana*: "to compose a compendium of the *Bṛhatkathā*."[74] The stanzas that follow the *maṅgalācaraṇa* and a six-stanza *anukramaṇikā* elaborate upon the author's method of digesting the original work:[75]

> *yathā mūlaṃ tathaivaitan na manāg apy atikramaḥ*
> *granthavistarasaṃkṣepamātraṃ bhāṣā ca bhidyate* ||*KSS* 1.1.10||
> *aucityānvayarakṣā ca yathāśakti vidhīyate* |
> *kathārasāvighātena kāvyāṃśasya ca yojanā* || *KSS* 1.1.11||
> *vaidagdhyakhyātilobhāya mama naivāyam udyamaḥ* |
> *kiṃ tu nānākathājālasmṛtisaukāryasiddhaye* ||*KSS* 1.1.12||[76]
>
> It is just as the source. There is not even a slight violation. And only for the purpose of abridging the extensive length of the [source] composition has the language been altered. [10] And to the best of [my] ability, propriety (*aucitya*) and logical order (*anvaya*) have been maintained. And a constitutive share of *kāvya* (*kāvyāṃśa*) has been harnessed without obstructing the aesthetic flavor of *kathā* (*kathārasa*-). [11][77]

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[74] *KSS* 1.3cd.

[75] Stanzas 1.1.10–12 are the most quoted lines of the *KSS's* 22,000 stanzas. See Lacôte, *Essai sur Guṇāḍhya*, 123–8 for a survey and evaluation of the following translations: Brockhaus, *Kathā Sarit Sāgara*, vol. 1; Wilson, "Hindu Fiction," pt. 6, 109; Hall, Introduction to *Vāsavadattā*, 23; Tawney, *Kathā Sarit Sāgara*; Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, 421 and pt. 2, 219-220; von Mańkowski, *Der Auszug aus dem Pañcatantra*, vii-ix; Peterson, Introduction to *Kādambarī*, 3rd ed.; and Speyer, "Het Zoogenaamde Groote Verhaal," 126. Lacôte's own translation and analysis follow on pp. 128–30.

In his assessment, Lacôte gives special attention to some of the more ambiguous terms in the text, namely *bhāṣā*, *aucityānvayarakṣā*, and *pādas* cd of *KSS* 1.1.11: *kathārasāvighātena kāvyāṃśasya ca yojanā.* See also, Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, 9 and 22–23 and Sternbach, *Aphorisms and Proverbs*, 22–24; and Tsuchida, "On the Narrative Structure," 468–70—especially for *KSS* 1.1.11.

[76] Brockhaus's edition reads *granthavistarasaṃkṣepamātrabhāṣā ca vidyate* (*KSS* 1.10cd), *yathāśakty abhidhīyate* (*KSS* 1.11ab), and *kiṃtu* (*KSS* 1.12c).

[77] *-rakṣā...vidhīyate.* Literally, "the maintenance has been effected." I take *vidhīyate* distributively to govern *pādas* 11ab and 11cd, and I render *yojanā* (*vidhīyate*) as a verbal phrase, "has been harnessed." I take *aucitya* in the technical sense as "literary propriety" and *anvaya* in the sense of "logical order" rather than "syntax."

> My effort has not at all been out of greed for fame from [my] skill. But rather, it is to facilitate recalling [the source text] through a net of diverse stories. [12][78]

Whereas the *BṛKM* claims to delight with verses made to create aesthetic wonder (*camatkṛtikṛtaḥ*) for the worthy audience, the *KSS* aspires to make the source text easier to recall while maintaining fidelity to it. The two adverbial compounds *yathāmūlam*, "just as the source," and *yathāśakti*, "to the best of [my] ability,"[79] delimit the preamble's method and announce that any change requires qualification by the composer of the epitome. Both the emphatic *na manāg api*, "not even a little," and the term *atikrama*, "violation," reflect the work's concern to preserve its source. Moreover, the composer limits any change of *bhāṣā*, "language," only to what is necessary to abridge the extensive length of the original composition (*granthavistarasaṃkṣepamātram*). While words of change are tinged with a negative valence, the language for maintaining the original work—terms such as *rakṣā,* "protection," and the verb *vi+dhā,* "to preserve"—are infused with more positive connotations. Somadeva most clearly outlines his literary project by employing the technical terminology of epitome literature. Terms such as *sāra*, "essence," *saṃgraha*, "epitome,"and *saṃkṣepa*, "abridgement"[80]—terms that are notably absent in the *BṛKM's* prefatory material[81]—are woven into the *KSS* preamble to foreground the work as a digest.

Despite emphasizing the preamble's overarching claim of fidelity to the original text, I do not suggest that Somadeva intends to write a rote digest while Kṣemendra aspires to write a *mahākāvya.* While sparing in his use of poetic devices, Somadeva has an affinity with locative constructions, action-packed compounds, and participial phrases that require the linguistic attention and aesthetic appreciation of the work's audience. While the *KSS* is mainly composed in straightforward *anuṣṭubh śloka*, over three-and-a-half percent of the work is composed in more sophisticated meters.[82] As Speyer notes, "Somadeva was a skilled metrician. He handles the most various metres with facility and does not seem to have had great trouble to harmonize his elocution with the severe exigencies of the different kinds of versified style. As a rule he writes with the same fluidity and lucidity, whether he uses the ordinary anuṣṭhubh śloka or composes śikhariṇī and śārdūlavikrīḍita."[83]

More significantly, the concerns expressed in the final stanzas of the *KSS* preamble belie the composer's literary sensibility. In rehearsing the points that Somadeva finds pertinent to his project, he expresses his primary concerns in terms of literary propriety,

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[78] *-saukāryasiddhaye*. Literally, "for the establishment of ease."

[79] *yathāśakti*: Literally, "according to ability."

[80] *KSS* 1.3, 1.3, and 1.10 respectively.

[81] While the term *mañjarī*, "bouquet," is often given to epitome works and can thus be considered part of the lexical register of the epitome, it is unclear when the title *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* became attached to Kṣemendra's work. It is clear from the earliest European reports that not all of the manuscripts of this work were entitled *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*. None of the manuscripts noted in Burnell, "Sanskrit MSS. at Tanjore" or in Bühler, "On the Vṛihatkathā of Kshemendra" have the title in their colophons. Rather Bühler's manuscript calls the work the "*vṛhatkathā*." Ibid., 304. Bühler corrects this oversight in his 1877 publication *Detailed Report of a Tour*, 45. See, too, Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 2, 181–82.

[82] Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, 178.

[83] Ibid., 174. For a compilation of the non-*śloka* meters employed in *KSS*, see Speyer's, "Metorum Conspectus," Ibid., 175–78.

poetic expression, and the maintenance of the work's aesthetic effects. While avowing fidelity to the source text, the preamble admits to a purposeful departure when it states, "a constitutive share of *kāvya* (*kāvyāṃśa*) has been harnessed without obstructing the aesthetic flavor of *kathā* (*kathārasa*-)" (*kathārasāvighātena kāvyāṃśasya ca yojanā* [*vidhīyate*], *KSS* 1.1.11). Scholars have deliberated over the term *kāvyāṃśa* in this half-line of Somadeva's preamble and have rendered the compound variously as, for instance, 1) a piece of poetry, in the technical sense of an independent work of poetry (Brockhaus); 2) portions of a poem, in the sense of the parts of a poem that comprise the whole (Lévi, Tawney, Sternbach); 3) a part of a poem, in the sense of an individual section of a poem versus the entire poem (von Mańkowski); 4) a trace or small quantity of poetry that infuses an entire work (Speyer); or 5) an element of poetry added to a particular section of a work (Lacôte).[84] Given the aesthetic movements leading up to eleventh century, I propose that *kāvyāṃśa* should be rendered in the technical sense used by the literary theorists of medieval Kashmir.

The term *kāvyāṃśā* appears in the theoretical debates taking place in eleventh- and twelfth-century Kashmir over Ānandavardhana's *dhvani* theory. Both Abhinavagupta's *Locana* and Ruyyaka's twelfth-century *Alaṅkārasarvasva* cite a no longer extant work by fellow Kashmiri Bhaṭṭanāyaka that rejects *dhvani* as the soul of poetry: "Indeed, if *dhvani* were another operation, whose nature is suggestion, though proven distinct, it would be a constituent of poetry (*kāvyāṃśatvam*), not its [entire] form."[85] In refuting Bhaṭṭanāyaka's claim Jayaratha's early thirteenth-century commentary to the *Alaṅkārasarvasva* differentiates what is *kāvyāṃśa*, a constituent of *kāvya*, from what is *kāvyātma*, the soul of *kāvya*: "This [Bhaṭṭanāyaka's conception of *dhvani*] is the state of *kāvya* as constituent. Therefore, it is in no way the state of *kāvya* as soul" (*kāvyāṃśatvam iti na punaḥ kāvyātmatvam*).[86] While the relationship between *dhvani* and *kāvya* is not the main issue at stake for Somadeva, the *KSS* preamble employs the term *kāvyāṃśa* to model a similar conceptual dichotomy. In this case, the work to follow, though conceived with literary propriety and the formal tools of *kāvya*, is not meant to have *kāvya* as its animating force. By juxtaposing *kāvyāṃśa* instead with *kathārasa*, the aesthetic essence of *kathā*, the *KSS* preamble delimits a relationship between poetic expression and narrative transmission that is unique to the genre of the versified *kathā* digest. For Somadeva's project, poetic expression, though a constituent element of the versified *kathā* digest, is secondary to maintaining the aesthetic flavor of the narrative.

This relationship between *kathā* and *kāvya* finds voice in the *KSS* preamble's stated *prayojana*: "to facilitate recalling [the source text] through a net of diverse stories" (*nānākathājālasmṛtisaukāryasiddhaye*).[87] According to the preamble, the text is meant to entertain an audience wishing for an easier means of digesting ancient stories that have

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[84] See n. 75 above.

[85] *Vimarśiṇī* to *Alaṅkārasarvasva* 4, p. 9 (KM edition) / *Loc* 1, p. 39:
dhvanir nāmāparo yo 'pi vyāpāro vyañjanātmakaḥ |
tasya siddhe 'pi bhede syāt kāvyāṃśatvaṃ na rūpitā ||
For a discussion of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's position vis-à-vis Ānandavardhana's and Abhinavagupta's, see McCrea, *Teleology of Poetics*, 382–92.

[86] *Vimarśiṇī* to *Alaṅkārasarvasva* 4, p. 9.

[87] *KSS* 1.1.12. See, too, n. 78 above.

previously been narrated *in extenso*. The *kathājāla-* in the compound refers to both a collection of stories and to a figurative net made of stories. In the latter sense, it evokes the metaphor cum title of Somadeva's work, *Ocean of Story-Rivers* (*kathāsaritsāgara*), given in the final stanza of the work's *praśasti.*[88] Somadeva's digest of the *Bṛhatkathā* is the casting net in which to catch the essence of Guṇāḍhya's lengthier work. In order to achieve this goal, the preamble allows for two textual transformations: to alter the language in order to digest the expanse of the earlier composition (*granthavistara-*) and to harness a constitutive share of *kāvya* (*kāvyāṃśa*) without obstructing the aesthetic essence of *kathā* (*kathārasa*).

While noting the priority of narrative expression in the *KSS*, I do not suggest that the work is only concerned with maintaining *kathārasa*. Instead, I offer that, for Somadeva, the poetic effect has already been conceived of in the source text. The *KSS* frame brings this view into sharper focus by marking a shift in the narrative ontology of the story's author, Guṇāḍhya, after he has composed the *Great Story.* Due to losing a bet during his sojourn as Sātavāhana's royal minister, Guṇāḍhya swears off the three literary languages,[89] takes leave of his post, and settles in the Vindhyā forest, where he hears the *Bṛhatkathā* from the cursed *yakṣa* turned *piśāca* demon, Kāṇabhūti. After Guṇādhya has transcribed the entire *kathā,* the text refers to him for the first time as a "great poet" (*mahākavi*).[90] Moreover, his two students become "the two students of the *kathā* poet" (*tau tatkathākaveḥ śiśyau*) and the manuscript that they present to Sātavāhana for review becomes a "book of poetry" (*kāvyapustakam*).[91] In sharp contrast to the transformation that takes place in the *KSS*, the *BṛKM* framing narrative makes no reference to Guṇāḍhya as *kavi* or to the *kathā* as a *kāvya.*[92] For Kṣemendra's work, the *kathā* remains a *kathā* throughout the framing narrative. This slippage between the two accounts reinforces the rhetorical stances set forth in the *BṛKM's* and the *KSS's* preambles. For Kṣemendra's work, the inception of poetic expression begins with his composition, while for Somadeva's this expression originates in the source text.

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[88] *KSS*, *praśasti* 13.

[89] Somadeva's Guṇāḍhya gives up "Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the local language" (*saṃskṛtaṃ prākṛtaṃ tadvad deśabhāṣā*) as the "triad of languages" (*bhāṣātrayam*). *KSS* 1.6.148. On the other hand, Kṣemendra's Guṇāḍhya gives up Apabhraṃśa, Sanskrit, and Prakrit. Thus, he declares, "I, by whom all (*api*) three [scholarly] languages were abandoned, took recourse to Paiśāci, which is not Apabhraṃśa, Sanskrit, or Prakrit" (*...tyaktabhāṣātrayo 'py aham | paiśācim anapabhraṃśasaṃskṛtaprākṛtāṃ śritaḥ* ||). *BṛKM* 1.3.51.

See, Pollock's assessment of the role of Paiśācī contra the three literary languages in the *BṛKM*, *Language of the Gods*, 96–97.

[90] *KSS* 1.8.3: *tām ātmaśonitaiḥ | ...lilekha sa mahākaviḥ* "The great poet wrote that [*Great Story*] with his own blood." He is again called a *mahākavi* in *KSS* 1.8.8d.

[91] *KSS* 1.8.36b; *KSS* 1.8.13d. See, too, *KSS* 1.8.10c for reference to the story as a *kāvya.*

[92] For references to the *Great Story* as a *kathā* in the *BṛKM* framing narrative, see *BṛKM* 3.1.85a, 94d, 95d, and 97c. Cf. *bṛhatkathā* at *BṛKM* 3.1.89b, 93b.

2.4 Composers in Conversation

The literary concerns discussed above find precedence in the preamble of another Kashmiri versified *kathā* digest, Abhinanda's ninth-century *Kādambarīkathāsāra*. Luther Obrock has shown how Abhinanda's digest strategically reworks Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* through a "translational" logic, and, in doing so, gives voice to a new literary genre governed by this logic.[93] Following Obrock, Whitney Cox theorizes a register of Kashmiri *ślokakathā* and maps out its linguistic elements and its literary evolution in turn-of-the-millennium Kashmir.[94] In this discussion, I look at a specific genre within the constellation of texts theorized by the above scholars: the versified *kathā* digest.[95] However, I suggest that the metaphorical vocabulary employed by both the *KSS* and the *Kādambarīkathāsāra* expresses a narrative ethos that is common to this larger body of Kashmiri texts. Using imagery similar to the *KSS's* to set forth its *prayojana*, the preamble to Abhinanda's work illustrates the relationship between the source text and the digest:

> *kāvyavistarasaṃdhānakhelālasasadhiyaḥ prati |*
> *tena kādambarīsindhoḥ kathāmātraṃ samuddhṛtam* ||*KādKS* 1.13||[96]
>
> From the ocean of *Kādambarī*, I have drawn out the *kathā* alone
> For those whose intellects are weary from its mingling with the expanse of *kāvya.*

Both the *KSS* and the *Kādambarīkathāsāra* employ the ocean metaphor to express the transformation from source text to digest. For Abhinanda, Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* is an ocean in which *kathā* mingles with an expanse of *kāvya* (*kāvyavistara*). In order to relieve those who are exhausted from the outpourings of poetic form, the composer extracts the narrative element alone (*kathāmātram*).[97] Similarly, but by means of different technology, Somadeva makes the expanse of the source composition (*granthavistara-*)—a veritable ocean—more accessible with a casting net of diverse stories. In both cases, the metaphorical landscape of

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[93] Obrock, "Abhinanda's *Kādambarīkathāsāra*." Obrock has set the stage for discussing Abhinanda's *Kādambarīkathāsāra* and the importance of this text in shaping a new style of Kashmiri *kathā.*

[94] Cox, "Literary Register and Historical Consciousness," see especially 132–46.

[95] Here I use the term "genre" in the sense of a work's function rather than its structure and style. In the latter sense, traditional theorists deem the *KādKS* a *mahākāvya*. For references and discussion, see Obrock, "Abhinanda's *Kādambarīkathāsāra*," 109, especially nn8–9. However in the former sense, both of these works present themselves as epitomes of earlier prose *kathās.* I qualify this statement with "present themselves" because we have no extant source text for the *BṛK* digests. But what is important to this discussion is how the Kashmiri *BṛKs* position themselves in terms of a source text, not whether one existed. Nevertheless, many scholars agree with Warder, who estimates, "The effective beginning of the novel [read, narrative prose *kathā*]...as far as we now know, was the *Bṛhatkathā* ('Great Story') of Guṇāḍhya who is revered as a great *kavi*, one of the early pioneers, by many later *kāvya* writers." *Indian Kavya Literature*, 1:191. See, too, vol. 2, ch. 14: "The Novel c. 100: Guṇāḍhya." See especially p. 116: "It [the *BṛK*] was apparently the first great novel produced by a *kavi*, and probably the greatest Indian novel."

[96] For Obrock's reading of this stanza, see "Abhinanda's *Kādambarīkathāsāra*," 117–8.

[97] Cox renders this term as, "the narrative raw material." Cox, "Literary Register and Historical Consciousness," 139.

the preambles speaks to an earlier tradition of ornate poetry represented by prose narrative *kathā* works, namely Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* and—at least in the literary imagination—Guṇāḍhya's 700,000 stanza *Bṛhatkathā*.[98] Whereas these source works prioritize the amplification of poetic expression over the narrative event, Abhinanda's and Somadeva's *kathā* digests address an audience in need of a different literary paradigm.

While the preambles to Somadeva's and Abhinanda's works reflect a similar literary vision, this discussion suggests that Kṣemendra's work professes other concerns. Several scholars have read Somadeva's work as a critique of Kṣemendra's earlier *BṛK* digest. Lévi first suggests this intertextual discourse when he considers the composition date of the two works:

> Le silence de Somadeva ne prouve rien pour ou contre la date de la Vṛihatkathāmañjarī; il nous semble même retrouver au début du Kathāsaritsāgara une critique directe, ou plutôt une sort de réplique adressée à Ksemendra. La Mañjarī (I, 2–5) débute par un éloge pompeux de l'œuvre. Le passage correspondant du Kathāsaritsāgara expose également la théorie de Somadeva, mais celle-là aussi simple, aussi modeste que l'autre était ambitieuse et déclamatoire. Pourquoi se défendre ainsi de toutes prétentions littéraires au début d'une œuvre qui semble les exclure par sa nature même ? L'imprévu autant que la netteté de cette déclaration laissent à croire qu'un autre avant Somadeva avait, dans un besogne analogue, montré moins de goût que lui, et voulu faire de l'art hors de propos….Il semble donc naturel de croire qu'en écrivant ces vers Somadeva pensait à son précursor.[99]

Similarly, Ludwik Sternbach alludes to this textual acknowledgment by praising Somadeva's "simplicity of language which suits the story-telling greatly" and by noting that "*Aucitya*, as explained in Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā* played a major role in Somadeva's literary style."[100] Cox makes explicit what Sternbach alludes to above: "It is hard not to hear this as poets' infighting, not only in Somadeva's aspersions cast upon his unnamed too-clever predecessor, but especially in his pointed desire to preserve his source's

[98] See *KSS* 1.8.2 and *BṛKM* 1.3.84. Cf. *KSS* 1.8.20 and *BṛKM* 1.3.93. On the *BṛK* as a prose *kathā*, see n. 95 above.

[99] Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 2, 220: "Somadeva's silence (about Kṣemendra's *BṛKM*) proves nothing for or against the date of the *BṛKM*; it even seems to me that there is a direct critique at the beginning of the *KSS*, or rather a sort of response addressed to Kṣemendra. The *BṛKM* 1.2–5 begins with a pompous praise to the work. The corresponding passage in the *KSS* similarly reveals Somadeva's theory, as well, but here, as simple, as modest, as the other was ambitious and declamatory. Why defend himself in this way from all literary pretensions at the beginning of a work that seems to exclude these by its nature anyway? The unexpectedness as far as the sharpness of this declaration leaves one to believe that, in a similar task, another before Somadeva had shown less tact than him and wanted to make inopportune art. It is just this pretense that characterizes, how we had regarded, the *BṛKM*….It seems therefore natural to believe that in writing these verses Somadeva had thought about his predecessor."

[100] Sternbach, *Aphorisms and Proverbs*, 19.

aucitya or 'propriety'—Kṣemendra had, after all, elevated the concept to a keyword for his poetics in the *Aucityavicāracarcā* (*Debates on Propriety*)."[101]

While my analysis of the two works reinforces this hypothesis, I propose that the main accusation of the later work does not pertain to stylistic impropriety alone. Rather, it pertains to the broader dialogue about the relationship between *kāvya* and *kathā* in the versified *kathā* digest. Both authors participate in this conversation, which my discussion above suggests has moorings in the earlier Kashmiri work, the *Kādambarīkathāsāra*. Somadeva's preamble acknowledges this debate through the formula of *kathārasa* and *kāvyāṃśa*. For Somadeva's preamble, maintaining the essence of the narrative supersedes creating poetic effect, whereas, for Kṣemendra's, the narrative acts as a vehicle for poetic amplification.

While the rhetorical stances set forth by the respective authors of the Kashmiri *BṛKs* might not be new,[102] the composers exploit these established tropes to introduce a relatively new genre of literature: the versified digest of the extensive *kathā*.[103] Herein lies the fundamental difference between the two works, the respective authors' conceptions of the relationship between *kāvya* and *kathā* and how this relationship should play out in the genre of versified digest. Thus, I propose that, while Somadeva's prefatory matter does critique the *BṛKM's* style and rhetorical stance, more importantly, it creates a textual space for exploration and contest for the younger composer to champion a relationship between *kāvya* and *kathā* that differs from his predecessor's. And the divergent views of this relationship presented by the two composers reflect a range of what it means to be literary at the turn of the first millennium.

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[101] Cox, "Literary Register and Historical Consciousness," 144.

[102] The stance of the self-effacing poet, who is unfit to either write about a noble subject or to continue the work of an esteemed predecessor, appears most notably in the preamble to Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṃśa* (hereafter cited as *RaghV*). Here, the poet first compares his attempt to chronicle the exalted Raghu lineage with that of "one desiring, out of delusion, to cross an ocean that is difficult to traverse by means of a raft" (*titīrṣur dustaraṃ mohād uḍupena...sāgaram*). *RaghV* 1.2cd. He then employs the simile of being "like a dwarf whose arms are reaching up, through greed, for fruit accessible only to tall people" (*prāṃśulabhye phale lobhād udbāhur iva vāmanaḥ*). *RaghV* 1.3cd. The poet finally justifies his project in the following manner:

> *atha vā kṛtavāgdvāre vaṃśe 'smin pūrvasūribhiḥ |*
> *maṇau vajrasamutkīrṇe sūtrasyevāsti me gatiḥ* ||*RaghV* 1.4||

"Or rather, I shall find entrance into this race, to which the door of description has already been opened by poets of yore, as does a thread find ingress into a gem previously pierced by a diamond-pin."

In *KSS* 1.1.12, Somadeva expresses a sentiment similar to Kālidāsa's, albeit in a less ornamented manner. Less ambitious than Kālidāsa, who uses this self-effacing rhetoric to reach the ranks of poet, Somadeva is happy to facilitate the audience in not getting lost in an ocean of narrative.

[103] Here, I conjecture that Kṣemendra's *RāMañ* and *BhāM* are *kathā* digests, in the sense of epitomes of ancient narratives (*kathās*) in *śloka* meter, while *KādKS* and the Kashmiri *BṛKs* are *kathā* digests in the sense of epitomes in *śloka* meter of works belonging to the *kathā* genre, the prose narrative, systematized in *alaṅkāraśāstra*. In light of this discussion, I suggest that the title *Bṛhatkathā* could plausibly be rendered as the "Great Prose *Kathā*" (with "great" being in the sense of both excellent *and* extensive).

3 Praise of the Patron in Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara*

3.1 The Milk-Ocean Dynasty of the Wish-Fulfilling Loharas

In the previous chapter, I proposed that, despite belonging to the same genre of the versified digest of the prose *kathā*, Kṣemendra's *BṛKM* and Somadeva's *KSS* gesture toward different literary projects. Kṣemendra's project claims to transform an earlier narrative into a work of ornate poetry using the formal tools available to the *kavi* at the turn of the first millennium, while Somadeva's project emphasizes the transmission of an earlier narrative through a faithful digest. These two modes function as rhetorical stances rather than as transparent statements of authorial intent, and they reflect broader conversations about the relationship between poetic expression and narration in a burgeoning literary genre. The following chapter focuses upon Somadeva's *praśasti* to better understand the aesthetics that might govern its production. Scholars, beginning with Wilson, have primarily used the *KSS praśasti* to contextualize Somadeva's work historically and to corroborate the dynastic chronicles found in Kalhaṇa's twelfth-century *Rājataraṅgiṇī*.[104] Using this historical framework as a point of departure, I will consider the ways that Somadeva's *praśasti* creates a particular imagining of Kashmir and its rulers through its poetic mapping of a sacro-political geography.

In his influential study of the relationship between language and political power in premodern South Asia, Sheldon Pollock discusses the mechanics of literary patronage: "The court was the source of both patronage and the glory (*yaśas*) conferred by the approbation of the learned—the former being pragmatically what kept the poet writing, the latter being what ultimately made writing worthwhile, at least for most poets."[105] With its royal dedication and panegyric, the *KSS's* thirteen-stanza eulogy, or *praśasti*,[106] locates the work within this system of court patronage discussed by Pollock. Dedicated to Sūryavatī, the chief queen of Lohara king Ananta, the *praśasti* pans across from its praise of Sūryavatī's family by marriage—her father in-law Saṅgrāma-rāja (*KSS*, *praś* 1) and her husband Ananta (*KSS*, *praś* 2–4)—before eulogizing the queen herself (*KSS*, *praś* 4–8).[107] The *praśasti* then turns to the heirs to the dynastic throne: the queen's son Kalaśa and her grandson Harṣadeva (*KSS*, *praś* 9–10). The final stanzas provide cursory mention of the composer and his rationale for composing the work (*KSS*, *praś* 11–13).

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[104] Wilson, "Hindu Fiction," 159.

[105] Pollock, *Language of the Gods,* 184.

[106] The *KSS praśasti* is titled *granthakartuḥ praśasti* in the NSP edition (hereafter cited as *KSS*, *praś*).

[107] Sūryavatī also appears in Bilhaṇa's *Vikramāṅkadevacarita* 18.40–46ff. (*Vikramānkadevacharita* in Bühler edition, hereafter cited as *VDC*) and Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 7.152–480 (hereafter cited as *RT*). In the *RT*, she is usually called Sūryamatī. She is referred to as Subhaṭā throughout in *VDC* and once in *RT*; see, *VDC* 18.40 and *RT* 7.180.

When discussing the Lohara dynasty, I refer specifically to the dynasty founded by Saṅgrāma-rāja that is discussed in the seventh *taraṅga* of *RT* and in the eighteenth *sarga* of *VDC*. Stein refers to this dynasty as the first Lohara dynasty (1003–1100 CE). Stein, *RT*, 1:106–117.

Somadeva's *praśasti* abounds in conventional tropes of kingship, where kings are likened to their divine and semi-divine counterparts, such as Ananta to Viṣṇu (*KSS*, *praś* 3) and Harṣadeva to Agastya (*KSS*, *praś* 9), and their power is expressed metonymically through images such as the well-utilized trope of the king's footstool being touched by the crest jewels of his subdued enemies (*KSS*, *praś* 2). However, rather than consisting of a random list of conventional tropes, Somadeva's eulogy to his patron offers a cohesive document of royal polity through its thematic program and narrative movement. The thematic program of the *praśasti* centers on the epic-*purāṇic* account of the gods and the demons churning nectar from the milk-ocean.[108] The outset of the eulogy introduces the dedicatory patron's grandfather-in-law Saṅgrāma-rāja as the "Pārijāta tree [churned] from the ocean of the family of the excellent Sātavāhana, [the legendary progenitor of the line]" (*śrīsātavāhanakulāmbudhipārijātaḥ*).[109] The metaphor of ruler as the wish-fulfilling tree produced from the milk-ocean repeats throughout the *praśasti.* Saṅgrāma-rāja's son, Ananta is next called the "wish-fulfilling tree of that [family]" (*tatkulakalpavṛkṣaḥ*), and, while Sūryavatī does not receive this appellation herself, the *maṭhas* that she erects are likened to both wish-fulfilling trees (*kalpavṛkṣair iva*) and to the milk-ocean itself as the jewel-producing ocean (*abdhir iva ratnabhṛtair*).[110]

The *praśasti's* thematic program highlights the benevolent aspect of Lohara kingship through the wish-fulfilling tree and milk-ocean metaphors. However, the *praśasti* also employs the epic-*purāṇic* account to make literary the destructive aspects of kingship. This is shown most explicitly in the *praśasti's* account of Ananta subduing a neighboring enemy:

> *dvārāgrasīmani ca yasya nikṛttakaṇṭhaḥ kṣiptvodaraṃ narapater luṭhati sma mūrdhā | sevāgato jitamahāharicakracārukirtiśraveṇa paritoṣam ivaitya rāhuḥ ||KSS*, *praś* 3||
>
> After casting off the torso, the king's head, which was severed at the neck, rolled to the threshold of Ananta's door—as if Rāhu had come to pay homage after becoming delighted on account of hearing of the resplendent fame by which great Hari's disc had been surpassed.[111]

In this evocative passage, Ananta beheads an enemy king, who is about to enter the metonymical front gate of his palace (*dvārāgrasīmani*), i.e., the boundary into the kingdom of Kashmir. Both Bilhaṇa's *Vikramāṅkadevacarita* and Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* refer to the beheading of a Darad king during Ananta's rule.[112] In the compacted economy of Somadeva's and Bilhaṇa's works, Ananta beheads the Darad himself. But in Kalhaṇa's lengthier narration, Ananta's foremost general Rudrapāla beheads the Darad ruler Acalamaṅgala and subsequently presents his head to the king. While eliding details of the

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[108] For examples of this well-known account, see *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇā* 1.44.14–26 (hereafter cited as *Rā*) and the *Mahābhārata* 1.15–17 (hereafter cited as *MBh*). All references are to the critical editions.

[109] *KSS*, *praś* 1. For Sātavāhana as a Lohara ancestor, see, for instance, *RT* 6.367 and 7.1283.

[110] Respectively, in *KSS*, *praś* 2, 6, and 6.

[111] *udaram*: Literally, "belly." As synecdoche for the body from the neck down, I replace with "torso." *paritoṣam...etya*: Literally, "having come to delight."

[112] See *VDC* 18.34 and *RT* 7.167–76, especially *RT* 7.174–76.

account provided in the other two works, Somadeva's preamble conflates political space, where Ananta subdues the Darad, who is about to enter the Kashmir *maṇḍala*, with mythical space, where Viṣṇu beheads Rāhu, who is about to drink the nectar of immortality just churned from the milk-ocean. The *praśasti* then makes the comparison even denser by elevating the mortal king over the god through eulogy. Rather than stop at comparing Ananta to Viṣṇu, the simile transgresses the boundary between tenor and vehicle by having Rāhu step out of the mythic account to pay homage directly to Ananta for having surpassed even Viṣṇu-Hari's disc with his fame. Through the thematic program of the milk-ocean account, the *praśasti* emphasizes two apparently contrasting yet necessary qualities of medieval kingship—unbounded munificence and ruthless force. In his discussion of twelfth-century literary culture in the Sena court, Jesse Knutson calls this juxtaposition of "disparate or potentially mutually exclusive virtues [that] fall into an apparently natural apposition" the " 'Janus virtue' trope."[113] As shown in the *KSS praśasti*, the "Janus virtue trope" also functions as an aesthetic feature of polity in medieval Kashmir.

3.2 Breaking Ground in the *Maṇḍala*: Mapping Political and Sacred Space

Through the trope of the churning of the milk-ocean, the *KSS praśasti* depicts a dialectic of kingship that would have been well understood by its medieval South Asian audience of literati. Along with creating a vision of polity, where present time and mythical time conflate, the *praśasti* provides a diachronic vision through a metaphorical narrative of civilization in the Kashmir Valley. While Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* locates the Lohara dynasty within a longer succession of kings in the region, the *KSS praśasti* employs the rhetoric of beginnings by envisaging the Loharas as the original settlers of Kashmir. Thus Saṅgrāma-rāja, the first historical Lohara ruler, is described as "one who, having descended, transformed the Kashmir *maṇḍala* into the heavenly garden Nandana" (*yenāvatīrya…kaśmīramaṇḍalam anīyata nandanatvam*).[114] The gerund of the verb "to cross down" (*ava+tṝ*) is significant here in its prevalent association with the gods (*avatāras*), who cross down to the mortal realm from their divine posts to save the world from inimical forces. Through this metaphorical conception of Kashmir being founded and cultivated at the onset of Lohara rule, the *KSS praśasti* offers a "political cosmogony" that further legitimates Lohara kingship.

If, according to the logic of the garden metaphor, Saṅgrāma-rāja populates the land and creates arable living space, then his successor Ananta secures the kingdom by subduing neighboring polities. Hence, he is represented as the one "whose footstool was made into the touchstone for the masses of rubies on the diadems of all the kings bowing down in homage" (*namadaśeṣamahīśamaulimāṇikyakāyanikaṣīkṛtapādapīṭhaḥ*).[115] The next stanza follows with the cautionary tale of kings who don't submit, who, as discussed above, become like Rāhu at the hands of Viṣṇu. The *praśasti* continues with the deeds of the work's

[113] Knutson, "Political Poetic of the Sena Court," 373 passim.
[114] *KSS*, *praś* 1. Literally, "by whom…the Kashmir *maṇḍala* was led to the state of Nandana."
[115] *KSS*, *praś* 2.

dedicatory patron, Sūryavatī, who builds upon the symbolic work of the previous two figures by advancing the *maṇḍala's* development through the establishment of intellectual and religious institutions in the form of *maṭhas*, *mandiras*, and religious donations.[116] More than poetic hyperbole, this movement from father to son to daughter-in-law marks a larger civilizing project by mapping onto progressive stages of cultural development: from cultivation of land, to political order through conquest, and then to the development of social institutions.

While eulogizing the patron's family, the *praśasti* plots the political geography of Kashmir, where the physical *maṇḍala* of the valley is transformed through Lohara rule into the political *maṇḍala*, the kingdom of Kashmir. The *praśasti* highlights this transformation of the physical environment through kingship and renders it sacred through metaphor. Not only does Saṅgrāma-rāja bestow the *maṇḍala* with the qualities of Indra's heavenly garden Nandana, Sūryavatī erects numerous temples that are compared to the Himālayas, the home of the gods, in their proximity to the revered Vitastā River:[117]

> *yannirmitāny amalatoyavahadvitastāvistīrṇatīrabhuvi saudhasudhāsitāni |*
> *vyomāpagāparigatāntahimādriśṛṅgabhaṅgiṃ bhajanti sutarāṃ suramandirāṇi*
> ||*KSS, praś* 7||
>
> Constructed by her [Sūryavatī] on the broad banks of the Vitastā, which conveys untainted water, temples made white (lit. whitewashed) with stucco assume, to a higher degree, the appearance of Himādri's peak, whose acme is encircled by the heavenly river.[118]

While eulogizing Sūryavatī's religious donations, the stanza also maps a sacred and political geography upon the physical geography of Kashmir, where the land itself, transformed through kingship, takes on the qualities of the sacred Himālaya. The *KSS praśasti* uses a palette of conventional tropes to create this poetic vision. But rather than being governed by stylistic conventions alone, the *praśasti* offers—through these conventions—a unified aesthetic vision of Kashmir at the turn of the millennium.

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[116] *KSS*, *praś* 6–8.

[117] Here, I follow Alexander von Rospatt's critical discussion of how the mapping of Buddhist India's sacred geography through text and physical sites becomes a means of relocating and making sacred space in the Kathmandu Valley. See von Rospatt, "Sacred Origins."

[118] The Vistastā, or Jhelum River, is also known as the Ganges in Kashmir. For a discussion of Kashmir as a miniature version of a pan-Indian mythic topos, see Slaje, "Kashmir Minimundus," 9–26.

I render the relative pronoun *yat* in *yan-nirmitāni* (by whom) as the correlative "by her." *suramandirāṇi*: Literally, "abodes of the gods."

3.3 Of Kings and Brahman Scholars: Local and Transregional Imaginings

The elements of Somadeva's *praśasti* discussed thus far draw upon a pan-Indian aesthetic of kingship. However, the work also gestures toward a more recent imagining of righteous polity that becomes rooted in literary representations of Kashmir. Brahman priests have played an integral part in South Asian kingship as conveyors of sacred traditional knowledge and as administrators of ritual. They have also supported the political edifice as royal advisors. But the *KSS praśasti* brings to the fore a relationship between kings and brahmans that goes beyond these depictions by associating Lohara rule with succor for the brahman intellectual. In Saṅgrāma-rāja's "crossing down," he is "sought by multitudes of learned ones" (*vividhair vibudhaiḥ śritena*).[119] And during Ananta's reign, the *maṭhas* established by Sūryavatī are frequented by hundreds of brahmans born in various lands (*nānādeśasamudbhūtavipraśatasevyaiḥ*).[120] Evoking the epic-*purāṇic* account of the winged mountains of yore seeking refuge in the ocean from the wing-cutting Indra, fearful earth-bearing kings (*bhītibhṛtām bhūbhṛtām*) are then likened to fearful earth-bearing mountains (*bhītibhṛtām bhūbhṛtām*) that find refuge in Kashmir's *maṭhas*, which resemble jewel-producing oceans.[121] These depictions of a king's retinue of intellectuals, of expatriate brahmans flocking to Kashmir's state-funded educational institutions, and of foreign kings seeking political asylum within these places of learning trace the prominent role of knowledge production in the *KSS praśasti*'s conception of kingship.

The relationship between kings and the *émigré* intellectual finds voice in a local twelfth-century work. Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* depicts eighth-century ruler Jayāpīḍa's attempts to reinvigorate Kashmir's intellectual culture after a period of political strife has eradicated much of it:[122]

> *utpattibhūmau deśe 'smin dūradūratirohitā |*
> *kaśyapena vitasteva tena vidyāvatāritā* ||*RT* 4.486||
> ….

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[119] *KSS*, *praś* 1.

[120] *KSS*, *praś* 5.

[121] *KSS*, *praś* 5cd: *abdhibhir iva ratnabhṛtair bhītibhṛtām bhūbhṛtām api śaraṇyaiḥ (....mathapravaraiḥ).* This is an epic-*purāṇic* reference to a time when mountains had wings. Disturbed by their constant flight, Indra goes on a rampage cutting off mountains' wings. Only one mountain, Maināka, is able to escape Indra's wrath by hiding in the ocean. *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa* 5.1.79–118 appears to be the earliest extant literary source of this account. See Goldman and Goldman, *Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki*, 5:314n80. This account is made famous in Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava* 1.20 and Mallinātha's commentary, *Sañjīvinī*. See, too, Hopkins, "Mythological Aspects of Trees and Mountains," 358–59.

[122] Yigal Bronner analyzes the fourteen-stanza passage (*RT* 4.486–99) from which the following stanzas come in his 2013 essay, "Conqueror to Connoisseur." In his close reading of the passage, Bronner argues that, by showcasing Jayāpīḍa's scholarly pursuits, Kalhaṇa attempts to historicize Kashmir's rise as a foremost intellectual center. Unfortunately, I came across this thought-provoking article in the final stages of writing and, therefore, was unable to engage more deeply with its content. See Bronner, "Conqueror to Connoisseur," 167–75. See, too, nn. 130 and 140 below.

For Jayāpīḍa's date, see Stein, *RT*, 1:94.

deśāntarād āgamayya vyācakṣāṇān kṣamāpatiḥ |
prāvartayata vicchinnaṃ mahābhāṣyaṃ svamaṇḍale ||*RT* 4.488||
….
samagrahīt tathā rājā so 'nviṣya nikhilān budhān |
vidvaddurbhikṣam abhavad yathānyanṛpamaṇḍale ||*RT* 4.493||

Knowledge, which had disappeared far far away, was made to reappear by him [Jayāpīḍa] in [his] land, the place of her [earthly] birth, like the river Vitastā by Kaśyapa. [486] [123]

….

Having gathered scholars from other regions, the king, lord of the earth, reinstated in his own *maṇḍala* the *Mahābhāṣya* tradition, which had been interrupted. [488]

….

The king, having sought all the intellectuals, assembled [them] in such a way that there was a dearth of scholars in the *maṇḍalas* of other kings. [493]

In these stanzas, Kalhaṇa's twelfth-century work highlights the role that institutional support of the intellectual plays in proper governance. While the earlier *KSS praśasti* gestures toward a rubric of political power defined, in part, by the accumulation of intellectual resources, the Kashmiri chronicle makes it explicit. In Kalhaṇa's account, a robust polity expresses itself through intellectual cosmopolitanism and through a strong grammatical tradition, here, represented by Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya.*

In his insightful reading of the Kashmiri *BṛK*'s framing narrative, David Shulman articulates the metonymical work that grammatical treatises do in premodern South Asia: "Linguistics, that is, in the form of rival, mutually exclusive linguistic theories, assumes the role of touchstone and loadstone, legitimating and rationalizing struggles among competing communities....The kind of passionate, often fatal engagement that, in other civilizations, tends to base itself on theological or philosophical premises begins, in India, with arguments over rival grammars."[124] While the grammatical treatise as a linguistic meter for sovereignty does not figure into the *KSS praśasti*, the shared framing narrative of the Kashmiri *BṛKs* recognizes the symbolic capital of grammar in two pivotal episodes. The first episode provides a backstory to the creation of a new grammatical tradition.[125] Pāṇini, a dull brahman student, propitiates Śiva, to attain knowledge of a new grammar that renders the

[123] *avatāritā*: Literally, "made to descend." This stanza refers to an account from the *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, where sage Kaśyapa causes the Vitastā to return to Kashmir after the river disappears "from fear of defilement by the touch of sinful men." Stein, *RT*, 2:412. According to the *purāṇic* account, the Vitastā is a riverine manifestation of Pārvatī that had originally arisen from the underworld at Kaśyapa's behest. In this context, the compound *utpattibhūmau* is more accurately translated as "in the place of her arising *or* earthly birth," rather than "in the place of her birth." For the *Nīlamatapurāṇa* account, see Stein, *RT*, 2:411–2.

[124] Shulman, "Axial Grammar," 382. For a nuanced reading of the Kashmiri-*BṛK* framing narrative, consult Shulman's work, ibid., 382–91.

[125] See *BṛKM* 1.2.71–74, 111; *KSS* 1.4.20–27, 87–88. The *KSS* expresses the emblematic nature of grammar in the following half-stanza: "He (Pāṇini) attained a new grammar, the source of all knowledge" (*sarvavidyāmukhaṃ tena prāptaṃ vyākaraṇaṃ navam*). *KSS* 1.4.22. See, too, *KSS* 1.6.144, where the narrator refers to *vyākaraṇam* again as *sarvavidyāmukhaṃ*.

current school of Aindra grammar obsolete. After losing a competition with Pāṇini, the story's current narrator, Vararuci (also known as Kātyāyana), propitiates Śiva and subsequently receives the same grammatical knowledge as his brahman rival. The second episode takes place in king Sātavāhana's court, where *BṛK* author Guṇāḍhya serves as a royal advisor.[126] After Sātavāhana's chief queen mocks the king for not knowing Sanskrit, a competition ensues between Guṇāḍhya and fellow minister Śarvavarman over who can teach the aggrieved king Sanskrit more quickly. Ultimately, Śarvavarman wins the bet by teaching Sātavāhana Sanskrit in six months—a feat only made possible by propitiating Śiva's son Kārttikeya and obtaining a grammar even more efficacious than Pāṇini's. Whereas the first episode expresses the inherent connection between brahmanical authority and grammatical knowledge, the second episode points to the status that linguistic correctness grants rulers.

The references above instantiate in literary form what Pollock has theorized as the relationship between political power and linguistic production, in this case, through grammatical treatises.[127] As argued by Pollock, this relationship and the concomitant phenomenon of "grammar envy" among kingdoms manifests across South Asia during the turn of the millennium CE.[128] However, unlike representations of kingdoms of other poet-kings, such as Bhoja of Malwa, Kashmir holds a distinguished seat in both the regional and pan-Indian imagination as the abode of Śāradā, the goddess of speech, wisdom, and learning herself.[129] And, as the patron goddess of the *maṇḍala*, her blessings bestow wisdom upon all of Kashmir's inhabitants.[130] The representation of Kashmir as an intellectual center appears in other twelfth-century literary works, such as Maṅkha's *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita*,[131] where even the *maṇḍala's* children, graced by Śāradā, desire knowledge of the *śāstras*:

> *kaṭākṣite śāradayā dayāmṛtadravārdradṛṣṭyā śrutiśaṣkulīpadam |*
> *na śāstrabhogānaśanavratakriyāsahiṣṇu bālā api yatra bibhrati* ||*ŚKC* 3.19||
>
> Where [i.e., in the *maṇḍala* of Kashmir], when glanced at sidelong by Śāradā, whose eyes are wet with streams of compassion-nectar, even children have ear canals that cannot tolerate performing the vow of fasting from the pleasure of the *śāstras*.

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[126] See *BṛKM* 1.3.35–51—here, the king is called Śātavāhana; *KSS* 1.6.108–1.7.24.

The Kashmiri *BṛK's* framing narrative nods strongly toward various grammatical traditions through its choice of names and references to grammatical treatises and their authors. The first episode above refers to the rise of Pāṇini's authoritative *Aṣṭādhyāyī* tradition (c. 6th–5th BCE—Scharfe, *Grammatical Literature*, 88), which superseded Aindra grammar. And the second episode refers to the creation of Śarvavarman's new and more accessible grammar, the *Kātantra* (See Scharfe, ibid.,162–3). Shulman identifies the *KSS's* Vararuci/Kātyāyana, his teacher Vyāḍi, and others with their namesakes in the grammatical tradition in "Axial Grammar." See especially 383n33, 384, 384n34, 385, 385n35, and 387n36.

[127] Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, Chapter 4.

[128] Ibid., 177.

[129] Cited texts refer to the Goddess of Learning, Poetry, Speech, and Wisdom as Sarasvatī, Bhāratī, Śāradā, or Vāc. I refer to her generally throughout the text as the goddess of any one or more of her spheres of jurisdiction.

[130] Bronner also observes this in "Conqueror and Connoisseur," 69 and 172.

[131] Hereafter cited as *ŚKC*.

Maṅkha's commentator, Jonarāja, makes the stanza explicit by noting, "The meaning [of the stanza] is that there is the attainment of knowledge without any effort because of Śāradā's grace" (*śāradāprasādād ayatnenaiva vidyāprāptir ity arthaḥ*).[132] In the *Vikaramāṅkadevacarita*, expatriate Kashmiri Bilhaṇa depicts other unlikely agents of learning to show the extent of the intellectual flourishing that takes place in his homeland:

> *brūmaḥ sārasvatakulabhuvaḥ kiṃ nidheḥ kautukānāṃ |*
> *tasyānekādbhutaguṇakathākarṇāmṛtasya |*
> *yatra strīṇām api kim aparaṃ janmabhāṣāvad eva |*
> *pratyāvāsaṃ vilasati vacaḥ saṃskṛtaṃ prākṛtaṃ ca ||VDC* 18.6||[133]
>
> What can we say about the ocean of marvels existing in the abode of Sarasvatī,
> [The ocean] whose *amṛta* for the ears are stories with many wondrous qualities?[134]
> Where, speech, in Sanskrit and Prakrit, resounds in every household
> As if the mother tongue of even women, what to say of others?

Through poetic hyperbole, the two stanzas support a shared literary vision of the region where the Goddess of Wisdom's blessings are so far-reaching that they even grace groups outside of the privileged realm of brahmanical learning.

This imagining of Kashmir as an intellectual center finds voice in the work of composers from other regions as well. The *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* of Rājaśekhara, a tenth-century work from Kannauj, describes the Kashmiri manner of intonation (*kāku*) during recitation:[135]

> *śāradāyāḥ prasādena kāśmīraḥ sukavir janaḥ |*
> *karṇe guḍūcīgaṇḍūṣas teṣāṃ pāṭhakramaḥ kim u ||KāvM, adhyāya* 7||[136]
>
> Through Śāradā's grace, the people of Kashmir are good poets. But their recitation style is [bitter like] a mouthful of Moonseed [medicine] to the ear.[137]

While Rājaśekhara does not have high regard for the Kashmiri recitation style, he acknowledges the special grace that the works discussed above also attribute to the Goddess of Speech, Wisdom, and Learning upon the Kashmir Valley. Perhaps Kashmir's reputation as an intellectual center to those outside of its environs is most clearly seen in Prabhācandra's fourteenth-century story collection, the *Prabhāvakacarita*.[138] In one account

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[132] Commentary to *ŚKC* 3.19, p. 34 of KM edition.

[133] See also, *VDC* 18.4, 5, 7, 8, and 16. See especially 18.21, where Bilhaṇa describes as the ornament of Kashmir *vaiśvaikabandhoḥ | sphūrtiḥ kīrtiḥ param anupamā sāpi vidyāmaṭhasya* "the incomparable, emanating fame of the institutions of knowledge (i.e., colleges), which are the sole relative of all."

[134] *anekādbhutaguṇa-*: Literally, "[in which] the qualities of wonder are many."

[135] Hereafter cited as *KāvM.*

[136] *KāvM*, *adhyāya* 7, p. 85 in Śarma edition.

[137] *Guḍūcī* is the medicinal plant, Cocculus cordifolius (Apte, s.v. *guḍucī*), also known as Tinospora cordifolius from the Moonseed (Menispermaceae) family. The plant's *āyurvedic* properties are bitter (*tikta*) and astringent (*kaṣāya*). Upadhyay et al, "*Tinospora cordifolia*," 112–3.

[138] *Prabhāvaka Charita* in Siṅghi Jaina Series edition (hereafter cited as *PraC*).

from the collection, king Siddharāja asks the famed Gujarati intellectual Hemacandra (c. 12th) to compose a new grammatical treatise for his court. In order to accomplish this task, Hemacandra requests an envoy to Kashmir:

> *paraṃ vyākaraṇāny aṣṭau vartante pustakāni ca |*
> *teṣāṃ śrībhāratīdevīkośa evāstitā dhruvam ||PraC* 22.86||
> *ānāyayatu kāśmīradeśāt tāni svamānuṣaiḥ |*
> *mahārājo yathā samyak śabdaśāstraṃ pratanyate ||PraC* 22.87||
> *iti tasyoktim ākarṇya tatkṣaṇād eva bhūpatiḥ |*
> *pradhānapuruṣān praiṣīd vāgdevīdeśamadhyataḥ ||PraC* 22.88||
>
> "Elsewhere, there are eight grammatical treatises. They are certainly in the temple of Śrī Bhāratī. [86] Let the great king have his men bring them from the land of Kashmir, so that a grammatical treatise is properly brought about." [87] Having heard his [Hemacandra's] request, the king immediately dispatched his chief officials from his midst to the land of the Goddess of Speech. [88][139]

For Hemacandra to compose a new grammar, he requires authorization from a larger intellectual tradition, whose source resides in the distant kingdom of Kashmir. Thus his ambassadors must make an intellectual pilgrimage to the home of the Goddess of Speech.[140] In Prabhācandra's account, the goddess is aware of Hemacandra's devotion to her and freely bestows the eight manuscripts upon the king's emissaries. But, while this episode legitimates Hemacandra's grammar-making project, it more importantly represents Kashmir as the land and the physical embodiment of the Goddess of Speech (*vāgdevīdeśa)* through whose jurisdiction alone the westerner Hemacandra can attain complete knowledge of the grammatical tradition and elaborate upon it in a new treatise for the Gujarati Cālukya court.

3.4 Fit for a Queen: Gendered Negotiations in Eulogy

In the section above, I have suggested rhetorical ways that the *KSS praśasti* maps onto Kashmir a sacred and a political geography that is coterminous in origin with the beginning of Lohara rule. This view of polity incorporates not only the pan-Indian aesthetics of kingship, it also defines itself regionally through its institutional support of intellectuals. I have pointed to these elements to emphasize that the *KSS praśasti* serves as a unified document with a particular vision of kingship rather than merely as a descriptive eulogy to a dedicatory patron. So, while performing aesthetic work in terms of the text, the *praśasti* also functions within the larger discourse of the *praśasti* genre.

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[139] *vāgdevīdeśamadhyataḥ*: Literally, "from the midst of the region of the Goddess of Speech." For a more complete account of this episode, see Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, 181 and 588–90.

[140] For references to Śrīharṣa's quest to Kashmir for Sarasvatī's literary *prasāda*, see Bronner, "Conqueror and Connoisseur," 172n29.

Where Somadeva's *praśasti* departs from the conventional understanding of the genre, however, is that the work is dedicated, not to a king, but to a queen. Sūryavatī, the text's dedicatory patron, is the queen of reigning Lohara king Ananta and the mother of Kalaśa, the successor to the throne. That she plays a part in the political imagining of Kashmir is clear through acknowledgement of her civic deeds in Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* and Bilhaṇa's *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, where she is also represented as an extremely pious and generous religious patron.[141] While inscriptional records documenting women donors are not uncommon in medieval South Asia,[142] eulogizing a queen in the *praśasti* of a literary work is rare and perhaps unprecedented in any first-millennium Sanskrit work from North India. Thus, the *KSS praśasti*, in its poetic negotiation of a female patron, provides new areas for investigation into representations of medieval polity.

The *KSS praśasti's* lead-up to the queen follows a similar progression as in dedications to kings, where the introductory verses praise the deeds of the patron's predecessors before focusing on the deeds of the work's patron. As the wife of a reigning king, the dedication follows the husband's family line. But, while Sūryavatī is flanked by grandfather, husband, son, and grandson, the *praśasti* distinguishes her from her male cadre through a number of interrelated, structural dichotomies within the text. And in doing so, the *KSS praśasti* presents Kashmir as not only a sacralized political space but also as a gendered political space.

In the structural logic of the *praśasti*, the stanzas that precede the patron queen's introduction serve to elevate her, albeit indirectly. Yet, it is not until the fourth stanza that the *praśasti* transitions in subject matter from Ananta to Sūryavatī:

> *so 'tha trigartādhipates tanūjāṃ rājendur indor vahati sma devīm |*
> *tamo 'pahāṃ sūryavatīṃ prajānāṃ vibhātasaṃdhyām iva viśvavandyām*
> ||*KSS*, *praś* 4||
>
> Then that moon-king married Sūryavatī, the daughter of Indu (the moon), the overlord of Trigarta.[143] Removing darkness for
> *prajānām*
> *living things*
> *her subjects*
> *her offspring*,
> the queen is like the dawn shining forth, deserving praise by all.[144]

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[141] See n. 107 above.

[142] See, for example, Orr, *Donors, Devotees, and Daughters of God* and Willis, "Female Patronage in Indian Buddhism."

[143] Trigarta is in the vicinity of modern-day Kāngra, and at the time of Kalhaṇa's *RT*, it was considered part of the kingdom of Jālandhara. See, Stein, *RT*, 1:80–81n100 (translation) and 1:279n150.

The play on sun and moon imagery has to do with the names of Sūryavatī, "one possessing sun," and her father, Inducandra, "moon of moons." See *RT* 7.150: *jālandharādhipasyenducandrasya* "of the overlord of Jālandhara, Inducandra." See, too *VDC* 18.40.

[144] *vibhātasaṃdhyām*: This compound could also mean matudinal *saṃdhyā,* i.e., dawn versus the twilight *saṃdhyā*, dusk.

To herald the transition from the Lohara kings in the previous stanzas to the queen-to-be, the metrical program shifts from the *vasantatilakā* meter employed thus far to *upajāti*.[145] Through a shift in meter, this stanza functions as the liminal textual space where a female patron is negotiated within a paradigm conventionally applied to male patrons. This negotiation however takes place through the topoi of traditional female rites of passage: marriage and childbirth.

The metaphorical equivalence of the two kings to moons, juxtaposed with the queen, who, like the dawn, possesses the sun (*sūryavatī*), highlights the politics of the marriage transaction: from daughter to wife, Sūryavatī goes from being the daughter of the moon-king (literally, daughter of Indu, the king of Trigarta. *trigartādhipates tanūjām indoḥ*) to the wife of a moon-king (*rājenduḥ*). The first mention of the queen places her within the context of marriage, and the second mention conflates, through its multivalence, her role as "the remover of darkness of living things/of her subjects/of her offspring" (*tamo 'pahāṃ sūryavatīṃ prajānām*). This play upon the semantic ambiguity of *prajā* also arises when eulogizing kings.[146] However, as I will discuss below, when referring to female patrons, a different set of cultural conceptions needs to be considered to read these blurred spaces between political and reproductive power.

While the metaphorical landscape of this stanza changes focus, now exploiting the binary of celestial bodies, it nevertheless follows the continuity of the larger thematic program of the eulogy. The previous stanza has invoked the churning of the ocean account with Ananta likened to Viṣṇu and his beheaded opponent to Rāhu. It would not be lost on the audience that the epic-*purāṇic* account also provides a mythical context for both the solar and lunar eclipses. In the account, Viṣṇu beheads Rāhu after the Sun and Moon disclose Rāhu's attempt to steal the much sought-after *amṛta*. As retribution upon its informants, the bodiless demon regularly attempts to devour the two celestial bodies.[147] Sūryavatī's appearance as the "remover of darkness" becomes all the more potent as a thematic echo of this mythical play between darkness and light.

The *praśasti* also exploits the gendered imagery of male as heaven and female as earth, a conception that appears as early as the *Ṛgveda* with the sky god, Dyaus, and the earth goddess, Pṛthivī.[148] In the *praśasti*, these binaries distinguish the female patron metaphorically from her male counterparts. Saṅgrāma-rāja and Ananta are likened to divinities—Saṅgrāma-rāja to an *avatāra* recreating Nandana in the Kashmir *maṇḍala* and Ananta to Hari in his destruction of Rāhu. And both rulers are described as heavenly wish-

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[145] While most of the *praśasti* is rendered in *vasantatilakā* meter, the stanzas introducing Sūryavatī are in *upajāti* (*KSS*, *praś* 4) and *gīti* (*KSS*, *praś* 5–6). As per convention, the final stanza of the poem departs from the regular meter. In this case, the final stanza is in *āryā* (*KSS*, *praś* 13).

[146] Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this play appears in *RaghV* 1.24, where the Raghu king Dilīpa is depicted as the father of his subjects:

prajānāṃ vinayādhānād rakṣaṇād bharaṇād api |
sa pitā pitaras tāsāṃ kevalaṃ janmahetavaḥ ||

"From bringing about their good conduct, from their protection, and from the fostering of [his] subjects (*prajānām*), he was their father. Their [birth] fathers were only the cause of their births."

[147] *MBh* 1.17.4–8 provides a concise rendering of the entire account.

[148] For example, see *Ṛgveda* 1.160, 1.185, and 6.70 in Aufrecht edition, *Die Hymnen des Rigveda*.

fulfilling trees, *kalpavṛkṣas*. On the other hand, after three and a half stanzas noting Sūryavatī's establishment of educational institutions and temples and her donations to brahmans (*KSS*, *praś* 5–7), the *praśasti* sums up her munificence, not with the wish-fulfilling tree imagery, but with references to the earth—*viśvaṃbharā*—the bearer of all things:

> *dattair asaṃkhyamaṇihemamahāgrahārakṛṣṇājinadraviṇaparvatagosahasraiḥ |*
> *viśvaṃbharā…na ca nāpi bhṛ…viśvaṃ sadā bhagavatī kila yā bibharti ||KSS*, *praś* 8||
>
> With donations, countless jewels, gold, extensive land grants to brahmans, black antelope hides, mountains of moveable property, and thousands of cows, it is said that, the blessed lady, [a veritable] earth, supporter of all (*viśvaṃbharā*), constantly supports all (*viṣvam…bibharti*), though neither...nor....[149]

Despite the missing text, Sūryavatī's association with the earth is clear from the repetition of the two members of the compound, *viśvam* and *bibharti*, in the stanza's final *pāda*. This word play echoes the *viśva* from the queen's description as praised by all (*viśvavandyām*) from four stanzas earlier.[150] While Sūryavatī is conceived of as the earth in her munificence, her productions, the *maṭhas,* take on figurative form as *kalpadrumas* and are compared to a more fundamental source of wealth, the jewel-producing ocean.

Gendered representations, such as the association between women and the earth, are certainly not new in Sanskrit literature. But as a woman, a royal figure, and a dedicatory patron, representations of Sūryavatī become a site of negotiation, where one role overshadows or converges upon another. After describing the queen's civic accomplishments, the eulogy notes her "reproductive" accomplishment of bearing a successor to the throne, who in turn fathers the next heir. While these stanzas provide individual moments of praise for Kalaśa and Harṣa-deva as heirs apparent, the grammar of the eulogy prioritizes their relationship to the patron. For, rather than form independent syntactic units, the stanzas introducing the queen's offspring are rendered as relative clauses that qualify the correlative subject—the queen. This grammatical subordination contrasts with the depictions of Samgrāma-rāja and Ananta, which are structured in the earlier stanzas within discrete grammatical units.

As seen in other eulogies and dynastic chronicles, the royal genealogy documents the patriline. And, for the most part, mothers are elided from these genealogies. This silence within the text creates a sort of narrative parthenogenesis, where king begets the next king

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[149] The NSP edition marks the following elisions in the text to show where the manuscripts consulted were illegible: *viśvaṃbharā…na ca nāpi bhṛ…*(*KSS*, *praś* 8c). In order to preserve the *vasantatilakā* meter employed in the *pādas* 8abd, there are two options for reconstructing the *pāda*: 1) *viśvaṃbharā ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ _ na ca nāpi bhṛ* _ or 2) *viśvaṃbharā ⏑ na ca nāpi bhṛ* _ ⏑ _ _. Given the feminine singular subject of the relative clause beginning with *yā* in *pāda* 8d, it seems likely that *viśvaṃbharā* and another four-syllable word would agree with *yā*, as in option 1. A single syllable word following *viśvaṃbharā* and preceded by *na ca nāpi*, as in option 2 seems unlikely.

[150] *KSS, praś* 4d.

and, as seen in Kṣemendra's personal genealogy, father begets poet.[151] In the *KSS praśasti*, this elision is not possible due to the biological sex of the patron. And due to the exigencies of the *praśasti* form, there is a generic expectation to eulogize successive heirs, as well as consecrated kings. Rather than removing the mother through elision, the "patrilineal prerogative" manifests through the *praśasti's* thematic program. Both Sūryavatī's offspring, her son and grandson, are described through word play that invites multiple layers of meaning into the compacted interstices of the versified form. Kalaśa, like his great-grandfather Saṅgrāma-rāja, is compared to an *avatāra*, an embodiment of Śiva (*śivāvatāra*).[152] Harṣa-deva, as Kalaśa's son is depicted through semantic play on his father's name *kalaśa*, literally, a "pot":

> *urvībhṛto namayituṃ nikhilān udagrān*
> *pātuṃ kṣamaś ca jaladhīn api sapta dhīraḥ |*
> *sṛṣṭaḥ surair abhinavaḥ kalaśodbhavo yaḥ*
> *śrīharṣadeva iti nṛpavaraḥ sa yasyāḥ* ||*KSS*, *praś* 10||
>
> She [Sūryavatī] had the best of kings [as a grandson], the eminent lord Harṣa.
> Created by the gods, he was
> *abhinavaḥ kalaśodbhavo*
> a youth, born from Kalaśa
> a new [Agastya, the] pot-born one.[153]
> That skillful one was able to make
> *urvībhṛto…nikhilān udagrān*
> all the haughty earth-bearing kings
> all the high earth-bearing mountains
> bow down and [was able]
> *pātum...ca jaladhīn api sapta*
> to protect even the seven lakes
> to drink even the seven oceans. [154]

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[151] See, for example, *BṛKM* 19.36.

[152] Kalaśa's likeness to an *avatāra* of Śiva stands on one *pakṣa* of the bivalent verse, *KSS*, *praś* 9:
kṣāmaṇḍalaikatilako 'py analīkalagno | yasyā ghanāmṛtamayo guṇibāndhavo'pi |
vidveṣiparṣadaśivo'pi śivāvatāraḥ | śrīmān sutaḥ kalaśadeva iti kṣitīśaḥ ||*KSS*, *praś* 9||
"Her blessed son, the lord of the earth, is called Kalaśa-deva. Though not attached to the forehead/*to untruth*, he is the forehead mark/*the ornament* on the circle of the earth. Though friend of those possessing good qualities/*the three guṇas (i.e., qualities)* he is completely filled with the nectar of immortality. Though the embodiment of good fortune/*of Śiva*, he is misfortune in the presence of his enemies."

[153] During his passage to southern India, sage Agastya is known for thwarting universal destruction twice—once by causing the Vindhya Mountain to bow down, thereby stopping the mountain from a growing spree that threatened to blot out the sun, and once by drinking the entire ocean to rout out the Kalakeya demons, who were hiding in its marine depths. See, for example, *MBh* 3.101–3.

[154] I suggest this tentative interpretation of *jaladhīn api sapta* as referring to seven lakes in Kashmir and its environs and, by metonymy, to the entire Kashmir *maṇḍala*. This translational move maintains the bitextual impulse of *pādas* a and c, where one *pakṣa* refers to prince Harṣa, while the other *pakṣa* refers to sage Agastya. Although I have not found a specific reference to "seven lakes" in literature from or about medieval Kashmir, lakes are prevalent in both the region's physical geography and cultural imagination. Slaje discusses

Both Kalaśa and Harṣa-deva, like the Lohara kings before them, are depicted as divinely created, the former as an embodiment of Śiva (*śivāvatāra*) and the latter as created by the gods (*sṛṣṭaḥ suraiḥ*). While these associations give metaphorical voice to early South Asian discourses of divine kingship, they also strengthen a discourse that diverts reproductive power away from its agents. The reference to Harṣa-deva as the second Agastya, one of many sages in the vedic and epic-*purāṇic* narratives born from a pot as a surrogate uterus, further reinforces this discourse.[155] These tropes of divinely created kings and pot-born sages point to the conflicts that beset fitting a female patron into the structure of a genre conceived for male patrons. Whereas the aesthetics of polity discussed above allow the king contrasting qualities in apposition, this example suggests that the structure and the available tropes of the *praśasti* genre do not allow for such ideological flexibility in representing a queen. In negotiating a female patron the text has foregrounded her political agency, while eliding her reproductive agency. Thus, Sūryavatī protects her subjects (*prajā*) and generates civic institutions through her political power, but her reproductive agency has been expunged by patrilineal prerogative from the text.

several important Kashmiri lakes in "Kashmir Minimundus" and notes the analogy of oceans to Bharatavarṣa with lakes to Kashmir in the following passage about Volur Lake: "The name of a village on its shore, Samudra-Koṭa, the numerous descriptions of its surging waves causing many a shipwreck, and the legend of the town Sandhimatī submerged in it...favours the assumption that the Volur Lake would have been considered an ocean and could have been known under the name of *samudra* ('ocean')...." Slaje, "Kashmir Minimundus," 14–24 (for references to Kashmiri lakes) and 24n111 (for quotation).

[155] For references and discussion of the pot-born sage in Sanskrit literature, especially in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, see S. Goldman, "Textual Surgeries."

4 The *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*: Text in the World

4.1 Genealogies and Thematic Centers: The Logic of Endings

Whereas the *KSS* appendix eulogizes a dedicatory patron, the concluding section of Kṣemendra's *upasaṃhāra* provides biographical details about the composer and the circumstances leading to the work's production.[156] Though the two epilogues differ in content, they both function to locate their texts within a larger social context. If Somadeva's *praśasti* represents the *KSS* as a work of courtly literature, Kṣemendra's *upasaṃhāra*, with its absence of a dedicatory patron, suggests other artistic priorities. Through a systematic reading of the *BṛKM upasaṃhāra* in dialogue with both the prefatory material of the *KSS praśasti* and Kṣemendra's larger corpus of literary and theoretical works, I propose that Kṣemendra's works offer an alternative paradigm for literary production forgrounded by new conceptions of the author and attitudes toward patronage.

Despite differences in content, the postfaces of the two Kashmiri *BṛKs* conform to a similar narrative structure. These similarities appear in the introductory genealogies and in the thematic organization of both of their epilogues. As discussed in the previous chapter, the *KSS praśasti* opens with a genealogy of the first Lohara dynasty, beginning with its founder, Saṅgrāma-rāja. Naravāhana's tale and the intermediary stories that make up the narrative proper end in the eighteenth *lambaka*, creating a clean structural break between the *kathā* and the appended *praśasti*. However, the *praśasti* gestures back toward the *kathā* through a repetition of names. One Sātavāhana appears in the *KSS's* opening frame as the patron of Guṇāḍhya's great *kathā,* and another Sātavāhana opens the *praśasti*, as the historical founder of the Lohara dynasty. Both Sātavāhanas play important roles in their respective spheres. Within the *kathā*, Guṇāḍhya and his two students deem Sātavāhana the only patron worthy of receiving the *Great Story*—despite the king's recent acquisition of Sanskrit knowledge and, by metonymy, aesthetic appreciation.[157] Within the *praśasti*, Sātavāhana stands at the vanguard, genealogically, as representative of all the Lohara ancestors, and syntactically, as the first utterance of the *praśasti's* first stanza.[158] The name

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[156] Unless otherwise noted, I will refer to the final section of *BṛKM* 19 (vv. 27–41) as the *upasaṃhāra.* For a section breakdown of the entire *upasaṃhāra*, refer to n. 61 above.

[157] Thus, Guṇāḍhya's students declare,

> *tatkāvyasyārpaṇasthānam ekaḥ śrīsātavāhanaḥ |*
> *rasiko hi vahet kāvyaṃ puṣpāmodam ivānilaḥ* || *KSS* 1.8.10||

"The eminent Sātavāhana is the sole repository for entrusting this *kāvya*, for a *rasika* should carry the poem, like the wind the fragrance of a flower." The Motilal reprint edition reads *śrīsātavāhanaḥ* in *pāda* b as *śrīsātavāhataḥ*

[158] Saṅgrāma-rāja is described as "the Pārijāta tree from the ocean of the family of the excellent Sātavāhana" (*śrīsātavāhanakulāmbudhipārijātaḥ*) *KSS*, *praś* 1.

Of the eight Lohara progenitors listed in Kalhaṇa's *RT*, Sātavāhana appears most frequently in the chronicle to represent the entire lineage. See *RT* 7.1282–1285, where the founding generations of the Lohara dynasty are listed as Bharadvāja, Nara, Naravāhana, Phulla, Sātavāhana, Canda, Candurāja, and Siṃharāja. For mention of Sātavāhana as a patronymic for the entire Lohara line, see *RT* 6.367, 7.1283, and 7.1732.

of the royal patron within the *kathā* echoing beyond the *kathā's* limits into the royal eulogy bridges the boundary between the two and creates unity in terms of both narrative and ideological priority within the overall work.

While Somadeva's *praśasti* begins with a royal genealogy of the Loharas and their metaphorical settlement of Kashmir, Kṣemendra's *upasaṃhāra* begins with another type of genealogy, the textual genealogy of the *BṛKM*. Kṣemendra's text transitions fluidly from the *lambakasaṃgraha* to the *upasaṃhāra* with a stanza summarizing the *kathā's* translation history:

> *seyaṃ haramukhodgīrṇā kathānugrahakāriṇī |*
> *piśācavāci patitā saṃjātā vighnadāyinī ||BṛKM* 19.29||
> *ataḥ sukhaniṣevyāsau kṛtā saṃskṛtayā girā |*
> *samāṃ bhuvam ivānītā gaṅgā śvabhrāvalambinī ||BṛKM* 19.30||
>
> Brought forth from Hara's mouth, this favor-producing *kathā* descended [and] was produced in the language of *piśācas*, causing [its audience] difficulty. [29] On account of this, it was made through the Sanskrit language to be enjoyed with ease (*sukhaniṣevyā*), like the Ganges, descending into a chasm when brought down to the level earth [was to be frequented with ease (*sukhaniṣevyā*)]. [30][159]

From Śiva, the tale travels to the mortal realm, where it is related by Guṇāḍhya in Paiśācī, a non-literary register of Prakrit, and later into Sanskrit verse. Immediately following this *précis*, the *BṛKM upasaṃhāra* introduces Kṣemendra's father Prakāśendra, who, like the Lohara rulers in the *KSS*, is likened to a wish-fulfilling tree.[160] Through the structural proximity of the final stanzas of the narrative with the author's own biographical account, the epilogue fluidly extends the transmission as it appears in the narrative proper to include the composer of the digested work. Thus, Kṣemendra becomes the next teller in a textual genealogy that hails from, not only Guṇādhya, but from Śiva himself.

Whether highlighting royal lineages or textual transmission, these introductory genealogies serve as points of entry into the appended works. Along with these genealogies, the two epilogues contain thematic centers around which their narratives revolve. Somadeva's *praśasti* locates its thematic center along the axis of its sacro-political geography. In this center, political and sacred geography intersect in the shoreline

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[159] *-avalambinī*: Literally, "hanging down *or* resting upon." The conceit is that the *kathā*, which was inaccessible due to its composition in Paiśācī, was made accessible when translated into Sanskrit. Similarly, the Ganges, when located in her original abode, i.e., in heaven, was inaccessible to mortals due to her location. However, once the river descended to earth, she became easily accessible, because, rather than falling upon level earth where her waters would have dissipated, the heavenly river descended into a chasm, where her waters were contained and accessible in the form of waterways. A secondary sense might be that the Ganges's torrents were so powerful when descending to earth that they rent the earth, causing the chasm into which they fell.

[160] *BṛKM* 19.31: *nānārthijanasaṃkalpapūraṇe kalpapādapaḥ*. "He was a wish-fulfilling tree in fulfilling the wishes of the many people who ask." Cf. *pārijāta*(*druma*) (*KSS*, *praś* 1), *kalpavṛkṣa* (*KSS*, *praś* 2), *kalpadruma* (*KSS*, *praś* 6).

architecture of whitewashed temples along the Vitastā River.[161] Kṣemendra's *upasaṃhāra* also locates its center in Kashmir. But rather than being populated by civic and religious institutions, the *BṛKM*'s *upasaṃhāra* is peopled with the composer's acquaintances, namely brahman intellectuals. Although smaller and more social in scale, the world of the *BṛKM upasaṃhāra* is also envisaged as the pan-Indian sacred universe. And, in the *upasaṃhāra's* metaphorical cosmography, Kṣemendra's father, whose "total attainments were exalted and auspicious like Mount Meru's," stands, like Mount Meru, as its *axis mundi*.[162]

Despite their differing functions—the *KSS praśasti* as a dedication to a royal patron and the *BṛKM upasaṃhāra* as an authorial account—the epilogues share similar thematic concerns that are best expressed through the characterizations of their respective protagonists. The *BṛKM upasaṃhāra* details Prakāśendra's generosity as a religious donor and his fervent devotion to Śiva:

> *sūryagrahe tribhir lakṣair dattvā kṛṣṇājinatrayam |*
> *alpaprado 'smīty abhavat sa lajjāntakaṃdharaḥ ||BṛKM* 19.33||
> *svayaṃbhūnilaye śrīmān yaḥ pratiṣṭhāpya devatāḥ |*
> *dattvā koṭicaturbhāgaṃ devadvijamaṭhādiṣu || BṛKM* 19.34||
> *pūjayitvā svayaṃ śambhum prasarabāṣpanirbharaḥ |*
> *gāḍhaṃ dorbhyāṃ samāliṅgya yas tatraiva vyapadyata ||BṛKM* 19.35||
>
> After donating three black antelope hides with [the amount of] three *lakṣas* during the solar eclipse [rite], he said, "I am one who gives little." He was a rain-cloud filled with modesty. [33] That munificent one had [images of] the deities erected in the abode of Svayaṃbhū [and] gave a *koṭi* and a quarter with respect to the gods, twice-borns, colleges, and the like. [34] Having worshipped [the image of] Śambhu himself, with a great torrent of tears, he embraced [the image] tightly with both arms [and] died there on the spot. [35][163]

Similar to Prakāśendra in charitable giving, Sūryavatī of the *KSS praśasti* has *maṭhas* and *mandiras* erected. And she supports brahmans with "countless jewels, gold, extensive land grants, black antelope hides, mountains of moveable property, and thousands of cows."[164] Although not death-inducing, Sūryavatī's formidable devotion motivates the *KSS praśasti's* composer to dedicate the work to her:

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[161] *KSS*, *praś* 7.

[162] *BṛKM* 19.32ab: *yasya meror ivodārakakalyāṇapūrṇasaṃpadaḥ*.

[163] I have rendered most of the gerunds in *BṛKM* 19.34–35 as finite verbs and have elided the correlative pronoun *yaḥ*.

[164] *KSS*, *praś* 8ab: *asaṃkhyamaṇihemamahāgrahārakṛṣṇājinadraviṇaparvatagosahasraiḥ*. For the entire stanza, see p. 39 above.

tasyāḥ sadaiva giriśārcanahomakarmanānāpradānavidhibaddhasamudyamāyāḥ |
śāstreṣu nityavihitaśravaṇaśramāyā devyāḥ kṣaṇaṃ kimapi cittavinodahetoḥ
||*KSS*, *praś* 11||

Her efforts are perpetually bound through worship, *homa* oblations, rituals, various donations, and precepts to the One Who Sleeps on the Mountain. [This *saṃgraha* has been composed] in order to give that queen momentary diversion from her constant exertion in listening to what is enjoined in the *śāstras*.[165]

The structural similarities and shared vocabulary of these two documents suggest that they operate within a similar rubric. But, while the *KSS praśasti* works within the well-known conventions of the royal eulogy, the *BṛKM's upasaṃhāra*, though adhering to similar conventions, points to a different mode of textual expression and production.

4.2 Kṣemendra as Polymath: A Prefatorial Survey

The absence of reference to a patron in many of Kṣemendra's works, coupled with frequent depictions of Kṣemendra's father's wealth, has led some scholars to conclude that Kṣemendra came from a wealthy family and did not need a patron to support the production of his work.[166] However, such a reading suggests that the poet-patron relationship is based solely on economic exchange without considering other contingent factors, such as status, value, and social obligation. In the following section, I survey the prefatory material from Kṣemendra's other works to see if the silence regarding a dedicatory patron takes place throughout his corpus. While the intent of this exercise is not to identify a patron for the *BṛKM* or any other text, a survey of the prefatory material from Kṣemendra's other works might shed light on the priority of patronage in the composer's overall literary vision.

As the attributed author of nineteen extant works of varying genres, Kṣemendra has received the title of "polymath" by modern scholars.[167] Sūryakānta divides Kṣemendra's works into four categories: five poetical epitomes, eight didactic poems, three treatises on

[165] The stanza construes grammatically with *KSS*, *praś* 12d: *vihitaḥ...saṃgraho 'yam* "this compendium was decreed [for the purpose of the momentary diversion of her....]." I have rendered the stanza as an independent clause. *giriśārcanahomakarmanānāpradānavidhibaddha-*:The acts from *homa* to *vidhi* could also be subsumed under *arcana* as "bound through *homa* oblations, rituals, various donations, and precepts to the worship (*arcana*) of the One Who Sleeps on the Mountain." *KSS*, *praś* 11cd: Literally, "for the momentary diversion of the queen whose exertion...."

[166] See, for example, Shāstrī, *Deśopadeśa and Narmamālā*, 22 and Khosla, *Kṣemendra and His Times*, 8.

[167] It is surprising to see a study of Kṣemendra that does not refer to the composer by the term "polymath." For a few of many examples, see Sūryakānta, *Kṣemendra Studies*, 1; Sternbach, *Unknown Verses Attributed to Kṣemendra*, 1; Dattaray, *Critical Survey*, 6. Cf. Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, 406, where he describes Kṣemendra as "un des plus polygraphes parmi les polygraphes."

poetics and metrics, and three miscellaneous works.[168] In terms of the five poetical epitomes, the three *mañjarīs*, the *Bhāratamañjarī*, the *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī*, and the *BṛKM* can be further distinguished from the *Avadānakalpalatā* and the *Daśāvatāracarita* on the bases of dating and scope. Whereas the former three works are, by consensus, considered Kṣemendra's earliest, the latter works' dates indicate that they were composed toward the end of Kṣemendra's career. Moreover, the *mañjarīs* form a discrete triad by digesting the works accorded by mainstream brahmanical culture as the epic source texts for later literary tradition.[169]

Of the nineteen works attributed to Kṣemendra, seven mention a royal personage from the time of the work's composition, while twelve do not. Broken down by category, the following works do not include references to historical kings in their prefatory material: the three *mañjarīs*, the three miscellaneous works, and six of the eight didactic works.[170] In contrast, the following seven do make royal mention: the three poetical treatises (*Kavikaṇṭhābharaṇa*, *Aucityavicāracarcā*, *Suvṛttatilaka*), the two later poetical epitomes (*Avadānakalpalatā*, *Daśāvatāracarita*), and two of the eight didactic works (*Samayamātṛkā***,** *Narmamālā*). Six of these seven works name a ruling king to mark the period of a work's composition.[171] Ananta is noted as the reigning king in five of these cases and Ananta's son Kalaśa in the sixth. These examples where the ruler is mentioned as a date marker range

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[168] Sūryakānta, *Ksemendra Studies*, 16. Ludwik Sternbach separates Kṣemendra's didactic works from his satirical and didactic works, thus creating five categories. Anomalously, he considers the poetical treatise, *Kavikaṇṭhābharaṇa*, part of Kṣemendra's didactic works. Sternbach, *Subhasita, Gnomic and Didactic Literature*, 76.

For surveys of Kṣemendra's works, see Shāstri, *Deśopadeśa and Narmamālā*, 25; Sūryakānta, *Kṣemendra Studies*, 16–25; and Khosla, *Kṣemendra and His Time*s, 12–89. For chronologies of Kṣemendra's works, see Shāstri, *Deśopadeśa and Narmamālā*, 25 and Sūryakānta, *Kṣemendra Studies*, 26–28.

Although Dattaray entitles his 1974 monograph *A Critical Survey of the Life and Works of Kṣemendra*, it is more of a critical survey of Kṣemendra's life as gleaned from his works and other Kashmiri sources. Of the secondary scholarship on Kṣemendra consulted for this project, Dattaray's work alone critically grapples with the important question of royal patronage. Dattaray, *Critical Survey*, Chapters 6 and 7.

[169] While a survey of Sanskrit works that consider Guṇāḍhya among the authors of the Sanskrit epics is beyond the scope of this project, consider Govardhana's estimation of the *Bṛhatkathā*'s author:

śrīrāmāyaṇabhāratabṛhatkathānāṃ kavīn namaskurmaḥ |
trisrotā iva sarasā sarasvatī sphurati yair bhinnā ||Āryāsaptaśatī 34||

"We pay homage to the poets of the glorious *Rāmāyaṇa*, [*Mahā*]*bhārata*, and *Bṛhatkathā*, by whom the *rasa*-filled goddess/*the water-filled river* Sarasvatī, is divided like the three streams of the Ganges." For references to other mentions of Guṇāḍhya and the *BṛK* in the Sanskrit literary tradition, see Hall, *Vāsavadattā*, 22–24n* and Sternbach, *Aphorisms and Proverbs,* 7–10.

[170] The following twelve works do not refer to a king in their prefatory material: three of the poetical epitomes (all three *mañjarīs: BṛKM*, *BhāM*, *RāMañ*), six of the eight didactic works (*Kalāvilāsa*, *Cārucaryā*, *Sevyasevakopadeśa*, *Darpadalana*, *Deśopadeśa*, *Caturvargasaṃgraha*), and the three miscellaneous works (*VyĀṣṭ*, *Lokaprakāśa*, and *Nītikalpataru*). My primary-source research includes seventeen of Kṣemendra's nineteen works (i.e., all texts except for the *Lokaprakāśa* and the *Nītikalpataru*). For assessment of the *Lokaprakāśa* and the *Nītikalpataru*, I rely on Dattaray's findings, which confirm that only seven of Kṣemendra's nineteen works mention a ruling king (Dattaray, *Critical Survey*, 70).

Some scholars consider the Sanskrit dictionary *Lokaprakāśa* the work of a later author. For a summary of this debate, see Sūryakānta, *Kṣemendra Studies*, 25.

[171] *Samayamātṛkā*, *Kavikaṇṭhābharaṇa*, *Aucityavicāracarcā, Suvṛttatilaka*, *AKL, and Daśāvatāracarita* refer to the king as a marker for the composition date.

from brief references to elaborate statements of acclaim. The *Daśāvatāracarita* (1066 CE), the only work to name Kalaśa as king, provides the most cursory date marker: "This praise of Acyuta was composed in the forty-first year in the month of Kārt[t]ika during the reign of the lord Kalaśa in Kashmir."[172] In this unadorned stanza, reference to Kalaśa serves unequivocally as a temporal marker for the work's composition. While Kṣemendra's *Aucityavicāracarcā* (1059 CE) and Somendra's preamble, or *bhūmikā*,[173] to his father's *Avadānakalpalatā* (1052 CE) offer *pādas* of praise to Ananta, both prefaces emphasize that they were written for purposes outside the ambit of royal dedication. The former is dedicated to an Udayasiṃha in memory of his deceased father Ratnasiṃha.[174] And the latter work, though composed "when the powerful earth-lord Ananta ruled the world" (*tasmin kṣoṇipatiparivṛḍhe śāsati kṣmām anante*), was completed to commemorate the Buddha "in the twenty-seventh year in the bright half of Vaiśākha...on the great occasion of the Jina's birthday" (*saṃvatsare saptaviṃśe vaiśākhasya sitodaye | ...jinajanmamahotsave*).[175] Of all the works that note Ananta's reign to indicate the composition date, the didactic satire the *Samayamātṛka* offers the most explicit eulogy to Ananta. While the *upasaṃhāra* describes the king's virtue and valor in two full stanzas,[176] the final two *pādas* of the encomium locate the praise in the context of the composition: "This *subhāṣita*, capable of the protection of those on the side of good, was composed by Kṣemendra during the rise of the lasting empire of that spotless ruler of the earth, Ananta."[177] Here, too, despite more sustained praise, the reference ends with the standard locative-case formula used in the other examples, suggesting that these stanzas function to date the work rather than to dedicate it.

Out of the seven works that make any reference to Kashmiri rulers, Kṣemendra's didactic satire the *Narmamālā* is the sole text that foregrounds a king, not as a marker for the text's composition date, but as part of the work's narrative context. The *Narmamālā's*

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[172] *Daśāvatāracarita*, app. 5:
ekādhike 'bde vihitas catvāriṃśe sakārtike |
rājye kalaśabhartuḥ kaśmīreṣv acyutastavaḥ ||

[173] Hereafter cited as *bhū*.

[174] *Aucityavicāracarcā*, p. 160. These stanzas are unnumbered in the KM edition. Among the seventeen works of Kṣemendra's directly consulted, this is the only one explicitly dedicated to a patron.

[175] *AKL*, *bhū* 16–17. When discussing the ascribed composition date for this work, I refer to *AKL*, *bhū* 15–16, not the colophon in vol. 2 of the Vaidya edition. The colophon states that the manuscript was inscribed "in the kingdom of eminent king Anantamalla" (*rājye śrīmadanantamallanṛpateḥ*)," i.e., Anantamalla, thirteenth-century ruler of the Nepalese Malla dynasty. Vaidya notes that only the Nepalese manuscripts of vol. 2 contain this colophon, which must then refer to the manuscript's inscription, rather than the composition, date. Vaidya, *AKL*, 2:586n1.

[176] *Samayamātṛkā*, *upasaṃhāra* 3–4 (hereafter cited as *SaMā*, *upa*).

[177] *SaMā*, *upa* 4:
tasyānantamahīpater virajasaḥ prājyādhirājyodaye |
kṣemendreṇa subhāṣitaṃ kṛtam idaṃ satpakṣarakṣākṣamam ||
An earlier stanza provides the specific date of composition:
saṃvatsare paṇcaviṃśe pauṣaśuklādivāsare |
śrīmatāṃ bhūtirakṣāyai racito 'yaṃ smitotsavaḥ ||SaMā, *upa* 2||
"This occasion for a smile was composed for the protection of the prosperity of the those possessing wealth/*of the well-being of those possessing excellence* (*śrīmatāṃ bhūtirakṣāyai*) in the twenty-fifth year at the beginning of the bright half of the lunar month of Pauṣa."

opening *jayastuti* bivalently praises Śiva while censuring the official scribe (*kāyastha*).[178] It then locates the story to follow in Kashmir before speaking of the *maṇḍala's* polity:

> *asti....* | *....kaśmīramaṇḍalam* ||*NarMā* 1.2||
> *yasmin prājyabhujastambhastambhitāhitavikramaḥ* |
> *trivikrama iva śrīmān ananto balijin nṛpaḥ* || *NarMā* 1.3||
>
> There is a kingdom [called] Kashmir [2]
> Where there is a glorious king Ananta,
> *balijit*
> *the conqueror of taxes,*
> who, like Trivikrama,[179]
> *balijit*
> *the conqueror of Bali*,
> restrained his enemies' valor with his far-reaching arms. [3]

While the stanza eulogizes Ananta, the form *asti* that introduces the narrative signals to the audience that the work has shifted registers into "narrative time." As in the epics, *purāṇas*, and other earlier story-telling traditions, the opening *asti* marks the beginning of the narrative proper and locates the story in the unspecified past.[180] The work only refers to Ananta in this opening passage, which suggests that, here too, the king is mentioned to provide a temporal context—this time within the narrative proper, rather than in the prefatory material.

In the spectrum of Kṣemendra's works discussed above, the prefatory material presents little concern for kings—or queens. Nowhere in the works surveyed is there a section of text that resembles a royal eulogy. And where kings appear they generally function instrumentally to mark the date of composition. As Dattaray has noted,

> although both Kṣemendra and his son, Somendra, have devoted several complimentary verses to King Ananta, neither of them has said anything even indirectly to indicate that the king was a patron of poets or that Kṣemendra was a protégé of him....It is indeed a fact that the writing of eulogies was but a conventional practice with ancient Indian poets in general who delighted in using

[178] *Narmamālā* hereafter cited as *NarMā.* On the reversal of the *nindāstuti*, the figure of speech "praise in the form of blame," to *stutinindā*, "blame in the form of praise," see Baldiserra, *Narmamālā*, xvi. See, too Gomez, "Upside Down Is Right Side Up."

[179] Kṣemendra refers to the vedic and epic-*purāṇic* accounts of Trivikrama, Viṣṇu's dwarf *avatāra*, who defeated the demon Bali. See, for example, *Rā* 1.28.2–12. For other references, see R. Goldman, *Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki*, 1:342n2.

[180] For this use of the third person present form of the root √*as* "in the beginning of tales and the like," see Speyer, "Sanskrit Syntax," 234, §311.2. Notably, Speyer cites this employment of *asti* in *KSS* 1.27, where Śiva begins narrating the work's tale to Pārvatī. See, too, Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader* (s.v. √1*as*).

> hyperbolic language in honour of kings and principalities especially of those ruling over the land of their birth and activity.[181]

Here I emphasize that, while the absence of eulogy does not preclude the work from being dedicated to a king, it does suggest that the poet does *not* choose to present the work as such—that the work's priorities lie elsewhere.

What Kṣemendra's prefatory material does highlight is the intended audience for the respective work. This audience most often consists of fellow literati, who are addressed generically in the prefatory material as the "learned" (*vidvas*) or as "worthy people" (*sajjana*). For instance, Kṣemendra ends his didactic work *Sevyasevakopadeśa* with the following reverential address to his audience:

> *vidvajjanārādhanatatpareṇa saṃtoṣasevārasanirbhareṇa |*
> *kṣemendranāmnā sudhiyāṃ sadaiva sukhāya sevāvasaraḥ kṛto 'yam*
> ||*Sevyasevakopadeśa* 61||
>
> This [work], which is an opportunity to be in the service of learned people for the purpose of their everlasting happiness, was made by this one with the name Kṣemendra, who abounds in the *rasa* of contentment and service [and] whose highest aim is to gratify intelligent people.

While dedicatory statements such as the example above abound in Sanskrit works of all literary genres, Kṣemendra foregrounds them in his work through the use of unconventional imagery and expression. A passage from the didactic satire, the *Darpadalana*, reflects an impulse to go beyond conventional or formulaic description:

> *kṣemendraḥ suhṛdāṃ prītyā darpadoṣacikitsakaḥ |*
> *svāsthyāya kurute yatnaṃ madhuraiḥ sūktibheṣajaiḥ* ||*Darpadalana* 1.3||
>
> On account of his affection toward friends, Kṣemendra, who wishes to cure the disease of overweening pride, labors for their health through sweet verse-remedies.

The composer further breaks from convention by acknowledging his own students. For instance, the preamble of the *Suvṛttatilaka*, a treatise on metrics, follows its salutation to the gods and ancient gurus with the following stanza:

[181] Dattaray, *Critical Survey*, 78.

kṣemendreṇa suśiṣyāṇāṃ sarasvatyāḥ prasādhanam |
suvṛttatilakaṃ varṇaruciraṃ kriyate mukhe ||*Suvṛttatilaka* 1.4||

For his good students, Kṣemendra made
suvṛttatilakaṃ varṇaruciraṃ
the *Ornament of Beautiful Meter*, which is charming in arrangement,
the beautifully rounded forehead mark, which is lovely in color,
sarasvatyāḥ prasādhanam...mukhe
the embellishment of speech on the lips
the decoration on the face of Sarasvatī.[182]

The examples offered above underscore the priority of audience over patron in a constellation of Kṣemendra's works. Rather than presenting his works as offerings to kings, the prefatory material of Kṣemendra's textual corpus highlights the composer's devotion to an audience of literati.

4.3 Circumstances of Production in Kṣemendra's Work

Rather than by kings, Kṣemendra's prefatorial spaces are inhabited by government officials, brahmans, teachers, pupils, kith, and kin. These figures have found their way into Kṣemendra's composite biography in lists such as the following:

> His teachers were Abhinavagupta, the author of the *Vidyāvivṛti*, with whom he studied rhetoric, Gaṅgaka and Somapāda. His other teachers, friends and pupils were: Rāmayaśas, a Brāhmaṇa at whose request he wrote the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*, the *Bhāratamañjarī* and the *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī*; his father's friends and pupils were: Nakka and Sajjanānanda (at the request of the latter he wrote his *Avadānakalpalatā*); Vīryabhadra, an authority of Buddhistic texts; Sūryaśrī, the scribe of the *Avadānakalpalatā*; Ratnasiṃha, his friend and his father Udayasiṃha; Lakṣmaṇāditya, his pupil; and Devadhara, probably also his teacher.[183]

Scholars have assessed the historical importance of these figures within the context of eleventh-century Kashmir by identifying them with figures discussed in Kalhaṇa's magisterial *RT*. For instance, Sūryakānta gives the following assessment of Nakka, a figure mentioned in Somendra's introduction to his father's *Avadānakalpalatā*:[184] "We can find no

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[182] *mukhe*: Literally, "on the mouth." See, too *Caturvargasaṃgraha* 1.2:
upadeśāya śiṣyāṇāṃ saṃtoṣāya manīṣiṇām |
kṣemendreṇa nijaślokaiḥ kriyate vargasaṃgrahaḥ ||
"This *précis* of the four aims [of life] was composed by Kṣemendra through his own *ślokas* for the instruction of students [and] for the contentment of the intelligent."

[183] Sternbach, *Unknown Verses Attributed to Kṣemendra*, 1. For an alternative reading of *vidyāvivṛti*, see n. 64 above. For a discussion of *sajjanānanda* in *AKL*, refer to n. 191 below.

[184] *AKL*, *bhū* 6.

person of that name in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. He may, therefore, have been only one of the admirers of Kṣemendra, though a person of no great significance in the history of Kashmir."[185] Is Kṣemendra then using his works' paratextual spaces as contemporary writers would to acknowledge colleagues and supportive family members? While commonplace in modern textual production, this mode of dedication seems unlikely for eleventh-century Kashmir. Instead of crediting Kṣemendra for displaying this "modern" sensibility in the creation of these texts, I suggest that these personages may play more pertinent roles in the production of these works.

Again, I emphasize the context-sensitive nature of Kṣemendra's prefatorial material. While Kṣemendra rarely provides a royal frame for his work, he often provides accounts of how a work came to be composed. For instance, the appendices of the three *mañjarīs* offer narratives of their works' "circumstances of production." The *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī's* postface hints at the work's inception in its appended epilogue:

> *āmodayanti sarasāny atikomalāni vipreṇa rāmayaśasā praṇayārthitāni |*
> *yenāniśaṃ praṇayabhūṣaṇatāṃ janasya nītāni kāvyakusumāny asitāni tāni*
> ||*RāMañ*, app. 8||
>
> Solicited with affectionate by the brahman Rāmayaśas, these charming, unfading, [and] *rasa*-filled poetry-flowers, which were crafted into the constantly beloved ornament of the people, continually bring delight.[186]

The "constantly beloved ornament" in the stanza refers to a metaphorical garland or bouquet made of Kṣemendra's "poetry-flowers," the verses of the *mañjarī*, that Rāmayaśas crafts into an ornament with his solicitation. The final stanzas of the *BṛKM upasaṃhāra* provide a more detailed account of Rāmayaśas's role in bringing the *BṛK* digest about:

> *kadācid eva vipreṇa sa dvādaśyām upoṣitaḥ |*
> *prārthito rāmayaśasā sarasaḥ svacchacetasā* ||*BṛKM* 19.39||
> *kathām etām anudhyāyan dineṣu vipulekṣaṇaḥ |*
> *vidadhe vibudhānandasudhāsyandataraṅgiṇīm* ||*BṛKM* 19.40||
> *sa śrīdevadharākhyasya dvijarājyapadasthite |*
> *sarvajñasyājñayā cakre kathām etām vinodinīm* ||*BṛKM* 19.41||

[185] Sūryakānta, *Kṣemendra Studies*, 13.

[186] *praṇayabhūṣaṇatāṃ....nītāni*: Literally, "led to the state of an ornament of affection." *asitāni*: Literally, "not-white," i.e., "black." Because of an earlier reference in *RāMañ*, app. 7 to the same stanzas (*uktāni*) as "white like the moon" (*candradhavalāni*), I render *asitāni* as "unfading" in the sense of not being white [with age].

> Once while fasting during the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight (*dvādaśyām*),[187] that man [Kṣemendra] endowed with *rasa* was solicited by the clear-minded brahman Rāmayaśas. [39] With concentration, the one with foresight (*vipulekṣaṇa*) composed, in a matter of days, this *kathā*—a flowing river of nectar that is bliss for the wise. [40][188] He crafted this entertaining story by the order of the all-knowing one named Śrīdevadhara, when he [Devadhara] was stationed in the office of royal brahman. [41]

This passage highlights the inspired nature of the author in its narrative of production. As in the *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī*, Rāmayaśas requests that Kṣemendra compose the work. But in the *BṛKM* narrative, the production of the work also receives authorization through the administration of a court official, the royal brahman Devadhara. Rāmayaśas approaches Kṣemendra, while the poet is in a liminal state from fasting during a lunar ritual. Subsequently, Kṣemendra composes the work in a state of meditative focus (*anudhyāyan*) and only in a matter of days (*dineṣu*). Both the author's mental state and his ability to produce over seven thousand stanzas within a few days indicate that he has attained an exalted and inspired state while composing the work. Together, Kṣemendra's elevated state, his entreaty by Rāmayaśas, and his order from Devadhara offer a vision of literary production involving multiple stages of mediation.

Rāmayaśas and the trope of the inspired poet also appear in the *Bhāratamañjarī*. As in the *BṛKM's upasaṃhāra*, the *Vyāsāṣṭakastotra* appended to the *Mahābhārata* digest provides a detailed account of the work's circumstances of production:

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[187] Many scholars date the *BṛKM* to 1037 CE. See, for example, von Mańkowski, *Der Auszug aus dem Pañcatantra*, iv; Sūryakānta, *Kṣemendra Studies*, 6–7, including 6n1; Sternbach, *Unknown Verses Attributed to Kṣemendra*, 10; and ibid., *Aphorisms and Proverbs*, 37–38. Cf. Sternbach, *Unknown Verses Attributed to Kṣemendra*, 1, which provides 1039 CE as the *BṛKM* composition date. Some, such as Sūryakānta, have rendered the *dvādaśyām* in the stanza above as "in the twelfth year" and have understood this to mean in the twelfth year of the *saptarṣi* era. As shown by Bühler (*Detailed Report of a Tour*, 59–60), the beginning of the *saptarṣi*, or *laukika*, calendar used in Kashmir corresponds to 3076 BCE. Lanman (*Sanskrit Reader*, 332n3) adds that the thousands and hundreds places, which equal 4000, are usually omitted from this date. Hence, scholars have read the *BṛKM's dvādaśyām* as "in year 4012 of the *saptarṣi* era," i.e., 1037 CE.

This well-accepted translation is untenable given that the stanza narrates Kṣemendra undertaking a religious rite. Thus, the temporal marker should indicate the lunar ritual calendar, not the year according to the popular calendar. For a corresponding usage, see Maṅkha's *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* 3.72a cited below on p. 80. Other works by Kṣemendra that refer to regnal years use terms such as *samvatsare* and *abde* and usually indicate the month according to the lunar phase, i.e., waxing or waning gibbous. For examples of this usage, refer to n. 172 and n. 177 above. Along with this misreading of *dvādaśyām*, others, such as von Mańkowski, follow Lévi's claim that the *BhāM* was also composed in the 12th year "de l'ère cachemirienne," i.e., 1037 CE. Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, 400 and pt. 2, 218. Lévi does not provide a citation for the *BhāM's* composition date, and I have not yet found textual corroboration for the date in the *BhāM's* published edition. Perhaps *Bhāratamañjarī* is a misprint of *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*.

[188] *dineṣu*: Literally, "in [more than two] days." In this account, the adverbial phrase suggests that Kṣemendra composed the *BṛKM*, a work of over seven thousand stanzas, in a very short time, i.e., in a matter of days, rather than weeks, months, or years.

kadācid brahmaṇenaitya sa rāmayaśasārthitaḥ |
saṃkṣiptāṃ bhāratakathāṃ kuruṣvetyāryacetasā ||BhāM, *VyĀṣṭ* 10||
sa tam ūce karomy aham eva prāg etac carita[ṃ] mama |
hṛṣṭaḥ satyavatīsūnuḥ svapne jñānanidhir dadau || BhāM, *VyĀṣṭ* 11||

Once, having come, he [Kṣemendra] was solicited by the noble-minded brahman Rāmayaśas with the words, "Compose a distilled *kathā* of the Bhāratas." [10] He said to him [Rāmayaśas], "I alone will do [it]. In a dream, the ocean of knowledge, the delighted son of Satyavatī revealed their deeds to me directly." [11][189]

Both the *Bhāratamañjarī* and the *BṛKM* episodes open with the indefinite temporal marker "once" *kadācit* and introduce Rāmayaśas as the brahman who entreats Kṣemendra. Whereas the *BṛKM* episode has Kṣemendra in a state of ritual purity, the *BhāM* situates him in another liminal state, the dream state. The inspired nature of the interaction manifests through the traditional author of the *Mahābhārata*, Vyāsa himself, appearing to the poet in a dream.[190] As in the *BṛKM* account, the production of this text involves multiple levels of entreaty and authorization—this time through Rāmayaśas and the poet of the source text, Vyāsa.

The *mañjarīs* are not the only works to include Rāmayaśas in their narratives of production. Somendra's *bhūmikā* to his father's *Avadānakalpalatā,* also discusses this brahman and his relationship with the author of the digest:

yasya rāmayaśāḥ sarvaprabandhaprerako dvijaḥ |
prayātaḥ sajjanānandaḥ puṇyaḥ prathamadūtatām ||5||
taṃ kadācit sukhāśīnaṃ suhṛdaguṇavatām varaḥ |
saugataḥ khyātasukṛto nakkanāmā samabhyadhāt ||6||

Setting all of his [Kṣemendra's] literary compositions in motion, the virtuous brahman Rāmayaśas, a joy to good people, became the primary go-between. [5][191] One day, the best of friendly and meritorious people, a Buddhist named Nakka, whose good deeds are celebrated, addressed him [Kṣemendra], who was sitting at ease. [6]

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[189] *etac carita[ṃ] mama...dadau*: Literally, "gave the deeds to me."

[190] *BhāM*, *VyĀṣṭ* 11–12.

[191] *sarvaprabandhaprerakaḥ*: Note the causative, literally causing to impel. *prayātaḥ...prathamadūtatām*: Literally, "went to the state of primary go-between."

I take *sajjanānanda* as a *bahuvrīhi* compound qualifying Rāmayaśas. It is usually rendered as a proper name (for instance, see Vaidya, *Avadānakalpalatā*, ix), but, if this were the case, Rāmayaśas, who is introduced in the first half of the stanza 5ab would neither have a finite verb nor a participle to grammatically complete his description. This would be a stylistic anomaly for Somendra, who introduces each figure with an entire stanza, and the more prominent ones with more than one stanza. Cf. Kṣemendra (*AKL*, *bhū* 4), Rāmayaśas (*AKL*, *bhū* 5), Nakka (*AKL*, *bhū* 6), Vīryabhadra (*AKL*, *bhū* 12), Somendra (*AKL*, *bhū* 14), Sūryaśrī (*AKL*, *bhū* 15). For further support for rendering *sajjanānanda* as a qualifier for Rāmayaśas rather than as a proper name, see Dattaray, *Critical Survey*, 104–7.

Somendra's introduction claims that Rāmayaśas has brought about all of his father's literary compositions (*sarvaprabandhaprerakaḥ*). While the description of this brahman as the solicitor (*arthin*) or the impeller (*preraka*) of Kṣemendra's prefatorial has been understood informally, its repeated mention across texts and the depiction of Rāmayaśas in the *AKL* as a primary go-between (*prathamadūta*-) strongly suggest that he plays a more formal role in the production of Kṣemendra's work.[192]

The *AKL* presents a poet, who is doubly authorized to compose the work. For, not only is he motivated by others, he is also preternaturally inspired. The dream motif taken up by Kṣemendra in the *Bhāratamañjarī* reappears in the *AKL*. As part of this motif, a supra-mortal figure, who is integrally related to the work to be composed, grants the poet the authority to pursue the composition. In this case, the Buddha himself motivates Kṣemendra in a dream.[193] First, human agents set Kṣemendra's work into motion: Rāmayaśas, as the impeller (*preraka*) of all his compositions and then Nakka, as Buddhist proponent, who seeks the poet's talent.[194] Ultimately, he is again impelled (*prerita*), this time by the Buddha, a non-human agent. The repetition of the verb *pra+ir* "to impel" lexically reinforces this motif of the sought-after poet in Kṣemendra's "narrative biography."

The figure Rāmayaśas plays a major role in the composition of all four of these poetical epitomes. Rāmayaśas acts in some ways like a "literary agent," a procurer of sorts. In the *BṛKM*, Devadhara, a government official, however, ultimately authorizes the text. Likewise in the *AKL*, where, despite Rāmayaśas instigating all of Kṣemendra's works, the Buddhist Nakka approaches the poet with the specific task of recomposing the *avadānas*. In the same way that reference to the Buddhist *ācārya* Vīryabhadra as Kṣemendra's teacher of Buddhism gives a non-Buddhist the authority to compose a work on the *avadānas*,[195] so too does mention of Nakka as a Buddhist agent who entreats Kṣemendra to write the work. While these narrative moments of production might not depict an on-the-ground reality, they do highlight a mode of literary production that prioritizes a work's authorization on multiple registers.

These narrative accounts follow earlier models of textual authority. In the framing narrative of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa,* Brahmā endows Vālmīki with the gift of poetry (*śloka*). Brahmā approaches the sage while he is in a purified state from having taken a ritual bath. Not only does the god impel the sage to compose the deeds of Rāma he also gives him

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[192] Dattaray has made a similar observation in *Critical Survey*, 103–4.

[193] *AKL*, *bhū* 10–11:

ity uktas tena vinayāt tāṃ kathāṃ kartum udyataḥ |
avadānatrayaṃ kṛtvā virarāmātidairdhyataḥ ||AKL, *bhū* 10||
tataḥ svapne bhagavatā jinena preritaḥ svayam |
so 'grahīt punar udyogam avadānārthasaṃgrahe ||AKL, *bhū* 11||

"Addressed by him, he [Kṣemendra], on account of politeness (*vinayāt*) endeavored to compose the narrative [requested by Nakka]. Having composed three *avadānas* he stopped due to their excessive length. [10] Then impelled by the blessed Jina in a dream, he again took on the endeavor in digesting the meaning of the *avadānas*. [11]"

[194] *AKL*, *bhū* 4–6.

[195] *AKL*, *bhū* 12.

divine sight to perceive all the events to be narrated.[196] As seen by the *Rāmāyaṇa* precedent, Kṣemendra's works follow a rubric that is well entrenched in the cultural memory of medieval South Asia. However, in Kṣemendra's collection of works, this rubric takes on new significance in the composition of an epitome, where textual authorization requires yet another level of mediation—between the source text and the digested work.

4.4 Beyond the Eleventh: Shared Visions in Twelfth-Century Kashmir

The model suggested in Kṣemendra's prefatory material proposes a system of literary exchange, where works are requested and their production mediated on many levels, including the level of creative inspiration. Moreover, it suggests that, at least in the literary imagination of medieval Kashmir, communities of literati functioned outside of the direct purview of the court and under different rubrics of exchange and prestige. This alternative model of patronage for Kashmiri literati also finds voice in Maṅkha's twelfth-century *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* (*Deeds of the Beautiful-Throated One*).[197] As a *mahākāvya*, the work belongs to a different genre than the earlier works of Kṣemendra and Somadeva. However, its prefatorial elements similarly function to provide an outermost frame for the narrative body. While *sargas* four to twenty-four of the twenty-five-*sarga mahākāvya* comprise the main narrative account, the first three *sargas* act as an extended preamble. The first *sarga* pays homage to Śiva and other deities (*namaskāravarṇana*), the second describes connoisseurs and critics under the generic label of good and bad people (*sujanadurjanavarṇana*), and the third details Kashmir, the current king Jayasiṃha, and the author's family (*deśavaṃśādivarṇana*).[198] The twenty-fifth *sarga* functions as the work's epilogue, describing the author and the poets and scholars of his time (*granthakartṛkavikālīnakavipaṇḍitādivarṇana*).[199]

The final *sarga* also provides the performative context for Maṅkha's poem. After Maṅkha has composed the work, he enters his brother's assembly hall to present it to a group of literati. Maṅkha speaks of his intent to share his newly composed work there:

> *madagrajanmanaḥ śrīmallaṅkakasya sabhāgṛham |*
> *te 'dhyāsate ca visrabdhāḥ sārasā iva mānasam ||ŚKC* 25.15||
> *tataḥ sāphalyadīkṣāyai svapariśramavipruṣām |*
> *tad evāsya prabandhasya neṣyāmi nikaṣāśmatām ||ŚKC* 25.16||

[196] *Rā* 1.2.19–33.

[197] *śrīkaṇṭha*: This is an epithet for Śiva, but it could also be a play on the "beautiful throat," i.e., "voice," of the poet, i.e., Maṅkha. For a synopsis of *ŚKC*, see Mandal, *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita, a Mahākāvya of Maṅkhaka*, 22–41.

[198] The terms provided in parentheses are from the colophons in the NSP edition reprinted by Motilal Banarsidass. I have elided the term *varṇana* "description" from my translation above.

[199] Mandal has also noted this structural element of the text in *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita, a Mahākāvya of Maṅkhaka*, 25 and 41 app.

> And [with confidence,] they [the guests] settle into the assembly hall of my eldest brother, the eminent Laṅkaka, just as *sārasa* cranes alight on Lake Mānasa with confidence. [15] Then, for the successful initiation of the word-droplets of my efforts, I will make that very place [the assembly hall] the touchstone for [my] poem. [16][200]

Maṅkha debuts his composition at the house of his brother Laṅkaka, or Alaṅkāra, a minister to king Jayasiṃha.[201] While members of the royal court, diplomats, government officials, among others, attend Alaṅkāra's salon, the king is clearly not in attendance.[202] But, rather than seek royal approval, Maṅkha seeks validation through the gathering of like-minded literati, with his brother's literary salon as the testing ground.

Pollock has acknowledged the social configuration in this episode of *ŚKC* as "a kind of inchoate literary public sphere," which he attributes to "royal power having become irrelevant not just to literature but to the literary culture of the time as well."[203] The gathering described in detail by the composer in the twenty-fifth *sarga* adheres less to a royal *sabhā* and more to the social milieu of the *goṣṭhī* described in Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*, where a *goṣṭhī* can take place "in the residence of other [nāgarakas]" and "among men of equal learning, intellect, talent, wealth, and age" (*anyatamasyodavasite vā samānavidyābuddhiśīlavittavayasā*).[204] In his important work on courtly culture in medieval South Asia, Daud Ali refers to Vātsyāyana's conception of the *goṣṭhī* and observes its locations both within and outside of the court:

> The later Gupta king Ādityasena, for example, is described in his Aphsad stone inscription as 'laughing in a charming manner at the gatherings (*goṣṭhī*) of his beloved servants (*vallabhabhṛtya*)'. The *bhāṇa* monologue plays, on the other hand, depict *goṣṭhīs* as composed chiefly of urbane men. The connections of such circles with royal courts, however, were never far....[205]

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[200] *tad eva...neṣyāmi nikaṣāśmatām*: Literally, "I will lead that very place to the state of touchstone." Jonarāja's commentary to *ŚKC* 25.16 (p. 338 of NSP reprint edition) is useful here: *asya prabandhasya suvarṇasthānīyasya tad eva sabhāgṛhaṃ parīkṣopalatvaṃ neṣyāmi. ta eva santo matkāvyaṃ parīkṣantām ity arthaḥ.* "Regarding that composition, which represents gold, I will lead that very place, i.e., the assembly hall, to a state of touchstone (literally, stone for a test) for only those worthy people [mentioned in the previous stanza as *te*], who are assessing my poem. This is the meaning."

[201] Alaṅkāra is alternatively called Laṅkaka throughout the *ŚKC*. Cf. 25.39. The editorial footnote to the stanza (p. 341) explains, *alaṅkāra iti laṅkakasyaiva nāmantaram*. "The word "Alaṅkāra" is simply another name for Laṅkaka." The editorial footnote also refers to *RT* 8.2658 for reference to Alaṅkāra's governmental post. However, in the Stein edition of *RT*, Alaṅkāra's posts are mentioned elsewhere at 8.2423, 2557, and 3354 (where Maṅkha is also mentioned). For other references to Maṅkha's eldest brother as Alaṅkāra, see *ŚKC* 3.56 and 25.61.

[202] See *ŚKC* 25.22–132.

[203] Pollock, "Death of Sanskrit," 399.

[204] *Kāmasūtra* 1.4.34. Cited in Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life*, 65.

[205] Ali, ibid. See pp. 65–66 (in Ali) for further discussion. See, too, Pollock's reading of the "oral-performative dimension" in the final chapter of *ŚKC*. Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, 85–86.

By offering alternative performative contexts for literary production—contexts that are distinct from yet interrelated to the world of the court—both Kṣemendra's and Maṅkha's works imagine a *goṣṭhī* akin to Ali's latter conception. The instantiation of this courtly model in social spaces outside of the court suggests that a "portable courtly culture" exists in medieval Kashmir, a portable courtly culture that is made regionally specific through narrative strategies, such as the "circumstances of production" found in these eleventh- and twelfth-century works.

Maṅkha's prefatorial material shares other features with Kṣemendra's postlude in terms of narrative circumstances of production. For instance, both works employ the trope of fathers dying out of religious devotion. Maṅkha, however, describes the event in more detail:

> *atidrutaṃ tasya yiyāsato divaṃ navāraṇasvāmini bhaktir udyayau* ||*ŚKC* 3.68cd||
> *tataḥ sa kale śivarātripāvane manāg iva kliṣṭaśarīrasauṣṭhavaḥ |*
> *daśām agāt tīrthapathopapattimatkuśāgraśayyāsukhasuptikāsakhīm* ||*ŚKC* 3.69||
> *līlāmuktamanuṣyavigrahamayagranthigrahaḥ śārṅgiṇas |*
> *tīrthe so 'tha tithau vahatvavanibhṛtputrīpater abhyagāt |*
> *vāmārdhadhvajarājadaṇḍajapatitrastāparārdhaskhalat- |*
> *kelīkaṅkaṇadandaśūkabahulotphālāvacūlaṃ vapuḥ* ||*ŚKC* 3.70||
>
> When he [Maṅkha's father] desired to go quickly to heaven, new devotion in [Śiva as] Raṇasvāmin arose. [68bcd][206] Then, at the time during which there were purificatory rites for Śivarātri, he, who had ease in the body as if hardly suffering,[207] went to that state, which was a companion of peaceful sleep, on a bed of *kuśa* grass tips, which seemed to appear on the way to the sacred site. [69][208] Then on the lunar day [of Śivarātri][209] at the sacred site of Śārṅgin, the lord on account of whom the daughter of the mountain had a marriage ceremony,[210] the one whose grasp on the knot composed of the mortal body was released with ease obtained a body which had a banner crest on which, because of the lord of birds [i.e., Garuḍa] ruling over the left-half, there was much moving about by the snakes, who had the form of toy bangles, skittering to the other half from fear. [70][211]

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[206] I follow Jonarāja in taking the *navā*, "new," with *bhakti* "devotion," despite the lack of a word break before *raṇa*. *ŚKC*, commentary to 3.68, p. 43.

[207] *manāg iva kliṣṭaśarīrasauṣṭhavaḥ*: Literally, "he whose ease of the body suffered as if a little."

[208] *-upapattimat*: Literally, "like the appearing" of it. I follow Jonarāja, who glosses *–upapattimat-* with *upapannā* (*yā...śayyā*). *ŚKC*, commentary to 3.39, p. 46.

[209] The verse says "on that tithi" (*tithau*), which from the context we need to understand as "on the 14th day of the dark half of the month," i.e., "on Śivarātri."

[210] Jonarāja elides *vahatu-* in his gloss of *vahatvavanibhṛtputrīpateḥ*. Instead, he breaks down the compound as "of the lord of the daughter of the mountain": *avanibhṛd dhimādris tasya putrī gaurī tatpatiḥ śivaḥ* "the mountain, [that is to say,] Himādri, his daughter is Gaurī, her lord is Śiva." *ŚKC* 3.70, p. 46.

[211] The poet playfully suggests that the snakes, afraid of Garuḍa, have actually leapt to the other half of the banner, thus creating the representative halves of the crest on Harihara's banner.

Like Kṣemendra's father, Maṅkha's father, Viśvavarta, dies in an act of religious devotion, the former while embracing an image of Śiva as Śambhu and the latter in the temple of Śiva as Raṇasvāmin.[212] Through the description of a banner crest bearing Viṣṇu's mount Garuḍa on one side and snakes, which are associated with Śiva, on the other, this dense metaphor envisions Maṅkha's just-deceased father in the form of Harihara (half-Viṣṇu and half-Śiva).

The similarities in biographical presentation between Kṣemendra's epitomes and Maṅkha's *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* become more apparent in the events following the death of Maṅkha's father:

> *ekādaśyāṃ vrataniyamavān ekadā tatkanīyān*
> *ekākī san bhavanavalabhīṃ maṅkhakaḥ so 'dhiśiśye* ||*ŚKC* 3.72ab||
> ....
> *svapne tatra dadarśa sa svapitaraṃ dehaṃ vahantaṃ milat-*
> *tāpicchacchadaketakacchavivapuṣkhāṇḍadvayīkalpitam |*
> *ekārdhena vamantam agracaraṇadvāreṇa maṇḍākinīm*
> *anyārdhena ca bibhrataṃ paṭuraṭadvīciṃ jaṭāvartmani* ||*ŚKC* 3.73||
>
> Once on the eleventh day of the fortnight, observing the vow [of fasting], Maṅkhaka,[213] the youngest of those [brothers], being alone, went to sleep on the upper level of the house. [72ab]....There in a dream he saw his father bearing a body that was composed of two sections of [different] bodies that had the color of Ketaka flowers joined with the bark of Tamāla trees, with one half gushing the Maṇḍākinī through its toes and with the other half conveying [the Maṇḍākinī] whose torrents are crashing intensely on the path of his matted locks. [73][214]

In Maṅkha's dream, his father appears once more in the form of Harihara, but this time through the image of two trees, whose leaves and bark contrast in color as do the iconographical representations of Hari, as dark like the bark of the Tamāla, and Hara, as light like the Ketaka flower. On account of this dream, Maṅkha becomes inspired to dedicate a poem to Śiva. The temporal reference, "at one time" (*ekadā*), locating the event at an uncertain point in the past, functions similarly to the "at some time" (*kadācit*), used in three of Kṣemendra's accounts.[215] Both temporal markers place the works' origins into the same narrative past as the *kathās* themselves. Even more analogously, both works depict

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[212] *BṛKM* 19.35. For translation, see p. 44 above. See, too, *BhāM*, *VyĀṣṭ* 6.

[213] Maṅkha is also referred to as Maṅkhaka.

[214] In *ŚKC* 3.73, Maṅkha's father is again described in the form of Harihara. The second image (3.73cd) refers to the *purāṇic* account of the Ganges's descent to earth. In this account, Viṣṇu as Vāmana the dwarf *avatāra* pierces the universe with his big toe, whereby the Ganges flows through the puncture to earth, her waters being sanctified by their contact with Viṣṇu's feet during their descent. See, for example, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 5.17.1. The better known account of Śiva conveying the Ganges to earth for Bhagīratha can be found in *Rā* 1.43. For comprehensive references to this account, beginning with the birth of Sagara's 60,000 sons, see R. Goldman, *Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki*, 1:355, opening note to *sarga* 37.

[215] See *BṛKM* 19.39; *BhāM*, *VyĀṣṭ* 10; and *AKL*, *bhū* 6. Ali theorizes this temporal framing in *kathā* literature. Ali, "Temporality, Narration and the Problem of History," 243–6.

their poets observing lunar rites, *ekādaśyām* for Maṅkha and *dvādaśyām* for Kṣemendra. Though not explicit in the stanza, the *ŚKC* commentator clarifies that Maṅkha undertakes a vow of fasting.[216] In other words, like Kṣemendra during his narrative moments of production, the twelfth-century poet also becomes inspired while in a liminal state of purification brought about through the performance of ritual. The inspired dream motif as authorization takes on another level of mediation in Maṅkha's account, as it is his recently deceased father returned in the divine form of Harihara, who urges his son to worship Śiva. The combination of these parallel elements—the production of a work without a royal dedicatory patron, the fervent devotion of a father leading to his death, the liminal state of an author when he receives some preternaturally inspired authorization—together suggest a particular aesthetic of authorship worthy of being replicated and transformed from the eleventh to the twelfth century in Kashmir.

Thus far, I have highlighted shared narrative strategies employed by the authors in their works. I have also suggested that the works represent themselves, not as works for royal consumption, but rather as products of (or at least endorsements for) a "portable courtly culture." While these two claims might seem unrelated, I suggest that the former is predicated upon the latter. Rather than seeking validation through a king, the works seek authorization within the text through other channels, such as through peers, through transcendent states, and through divine interventions.

Maṅkha's presentation of a Kashmiri literary milieu expands upon the themes introduced in Kṣemendra's earlier works. In the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita*, Maṅkha as narrator demarcates a literary circle outside the ambit of the royal court. Not only does he use narrative strategies to represent a literary social space that is physically outside of the court, he also does so through formal poetic elements. For example, the poet suggests an underlying tension between polity and poetry through varied representations of the Goddess of Poetic Speech. Maṅkha, who has dedicated his work to Śiva, says the following about poets who eulogize kings:

> *dhik tān kṛtaplutir yeṣāṃ bhāraty adhi sarasvati |*
> *svaṃ dūṣayati matteva nṛpacāṭukapāṃsubhiḥ* ||*ŚKC* 25.8||
>
> Shame on them, because of whom, Bhāratī, is made to dive into the Sarasvat. As if intoxicated, she sullies herself with the dust of praise to kings.[217]

The stanza accuses poets who demean the Goddess of Speech by praising kings, suggesting that such contact demeans the goddess. Tejakaṇṭha, a guest at Alaṃkāra's literary gathering

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[216] *ŚKC*, commentary for 3.72, p. 44: *ekādaśyāṃ vratasyopavāsasya niyamo vidyate yasya saḥ.*

[217] Although *sarasvati* could translate as "into a pond," I follow Jonarāja, who takes this locative to mean "in Sarasvatī...being the goddess or the river" *sarasvatyām...sarasvatī nadī ca*. *ŚKC* commentary to 25.8, p. 336. Jonarāja makes no mention of Maṅkha's unconventional use of the masculine *sarasvat* in the verse. Instead, he replaces it throughout his gloss with the conventional feminine *sarasvatī*. While *cāṭuka* generally means "pleasing words," Jonarāja glosses *nṛpacāṭuka-* with *rājastuti*, "praise of kings," throughout the text.

shares a similar view, which he encapsulates when asking Maṅkha to compose a royal eulogy:

> *nṛpacāṭukapāpmebhyas tad itthaṃ tava yady api |*
> *sarasvatī bibhety eva dadhatī śuddhasaṃskriyām ||ŚKC* 25.116||
> *tathāpi māṃ guṇanidhe bhaja kṣmāpacaṭūktibhiḥ |*
> *pañcaṣābhiḥ paṭhitvā yāḥ sabhāsūdriktatām iyāt ||ŚKC* 25.117||
>
> Even if they are yours as such,[218] Sarasvatī, performing purificatory rites, greatly fears the taint of kind words to kings. [116] Nevertheless, O Storehouse of Excellence, grant me favor through five or six verses of praise to kings, which after having been recited, this one [Tejakaṇṭha] shall go to a state of abundance among the members of the *sabhā.* [117]

In the view of the two speakers, Maṇkha and Tejakaṇṭha, kings are not worthy of poetic praise, and any effort to bestow it upon them causes Sarasvatī to become impure. In this dissonant relationship between the king and Sarasvatī, the goddess of poetic speech can be seen as the metonymic expression of the composer of poetic speech, the poet himself.

Lawrence McCrea discusses representations of another goddess, Śrī, within Bilhaṇa's *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*. In this account of the poet's patron, Cālukya king Vikrama VI, Śrī is depicted as a violent, even demonic, goddess, whose proximity to kings is the cause of their thirst for violence. In citing passages from Bilhaṇa's work McCrea states,

> this intensely negative attitude toward Śrī, and, more specifically, the view that it is really she who causes all the bloodshed kings are led to, is not confined to Vikramāditya's own remorseful laments. It pops up frequently in the mouths of other characters, and in that of the poet speaking in his own voice, and becomes something of a leitmotif throughout the poem.[219]

Similarly, the vexed relationship between the king and Sarasvatī becomes a leitmotif in *ŚKC.* In McCrea's assessment of the blood-thirsty depiction of Śrī, he suggests, "Bilhaṇa seeks consistently to portray royal power itself as a dark, destructive and morally erosive force."[220] McCrea's reading is a fruitful interpretive model for the depiction of Sarasvatī in the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita*. While Maṅkha's portrayal of Sarasvatī does not reflect as negative an attitude toward kingship as Bilhaṇa's portrayal of Śrī, it does regard the relationship between poets and kings with world-weary cynicism.

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[218] The *itthaṃ* refers to Tejakaṇṭha's longer address to Maṅka beginning at *ŚKC* 25.112.

[219] McCrea, "Poetry beyond Good and Evil," 516. For discussion and analysis of negative representations of Vāc in the vedic context, see S. Goldman, "Speaking Gender," 72–76.

[220] McCrea, ibid., 517.

This disjunction between royal power and poetry takes place during the twelfth-century, a time of decline in Kashmiri history, which Pollock describes as "contingent on new extremes of royal dissolution and criminality for which it is hard to find precedents."[221] Although Kṣemendra's work is attributed to the prior century, the ambivalence toward royal patronage expressed in his corpus of works and the vision of a portable courtly culture shared by the eleventh- and twelfth-century authors suggest that this royal dissolution, while perhaps unprecedented, had taken root earlier than Maṅkha's time. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī's* account corroborates this view. In discussing Kalhaṇa's depiction of king Harṣa, McCrea marks the eleventh-century as "the dawn of a period when intrafamilial struggle and civil war become endemic in the kingdom, beginning with an armed conflict between Harṣa's grandfather Ananta and his father Kalaśa."[222]

Although Kṣemendra's caustic satires and didactic poems certainly lay bare corruption on multiple levels of Kashmiri society, the prefatorial material of the *BṛKM* is silent in terms of such statements of kingship. However, what the prefatorial material elides slips through into the *BṛKM* framing narrative. Of the two Kashmiri *BṛKs*, Somadeva's telling differs from Kṣemendra's in its depiction of Sātavāhana, the story's royal patron. These varying representations are significant in the two works, for, despite divergences in terms of style, size, and minor detail the opening frames of the two works offer a relatively consistent narrative.[223] In the culminating episode of the frame, Guṇāḍhya composes the 700,000-stanza *Bṛhatkathā* in his own blood, while Kāṇabhūti recites the tale to him in Paiśācī Prakrit, one of the languages that Guṇāḍhya has not sworn off.

When it is time to find a patron-publisher for the work, Guṇāḍhya sends his two students to present the composition to his old employer Sātavāhana. In Kṣemendra's account the king is "drunk with pride from wealth *or* from the Goddess of Wealth, (*lakṣmīmadonmattaḥ*)" and rejects the work because it is composed in a non-literary register and inscribed in blood. Employing the figure of speech, which sets down another general meaning to qualify a specific situation (*arthāntaranyāsa*), the frame's narrator comments on Sātavāhana's rejection:

> *...kā vā vastusāravicāraṇā* ||*BṛKM* 1.3.87||
> *buddhyā tyajanty anāsādya mūrkhāś cācarvaṇakṣamāḥ |*
> *śrotāro nāprasiddheṣu rājatāṃ kva subhāṣitām* ||*BṛKM* 1.3.88||[224]

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[221] Pollock, "Death of Sanskrit," 398–9.

[222] McCrea, "Śāntarasa in the Rājataraṅgiṇī," 194.

[223] I discuss another case of slippage between the two framing narratives on p. 35 above.

[224] The corresponding stanzas in Lévi's edition of the *BṛKM's* first *lambaka* read as follows:

> *...ko vā vastusāravicāradhīḥ* ||1.8.4bc||
> *budhās tyajanty anāsādya mūrkhāś cārcarvaṇakṣamāḥ |*
> *śrotāro nāprasiddheṣu rājate kva subhāṣitam* ||1.8.5||

"What possible (*kā* + *u*) intelligence about the reflection of the essence of things is there? Not having attained [it], the wise give up, and fools are not capable of relishing. For those not listening, where will a *subhāṣita* shine among uncelebrated works?" Lévi, "La Bṛihatkathāmañjarī," pt. 1, p. 450.

> What possible reflection on the essence of matters is there? [87] Not having attained through intellect and incapable of relishing, fools give up. For those not listening, where is there a brilliant *subhāṣitā* among uncelebrated [works]?" [88]

While not blaspheming the king directly, the *arthāntaranyāsa* stanza condemns all, who are incapable of appreciating good literature. The narrative continues with the "extremely angry" (*mahākopaḥ*) poet offering the story page by page without interruption into the fire.[225] While the depictions above present Guṇāḍhya as rightfully indignant and Sātavāhana as an arrogant individual, who is unable to relish a good composition, Somadeva's depiction of the same episode offers a more sympathetic view of the king. The *KSS* inserts an *arthāntaranyāsa* verse at the same point in the narrative that the *BṛKM* does, after Guṇāḍhya's students inform their guru that Sātavāhana has rejected his manuscript:

> *guṇāḍhyo 'pi tad ākārṇya sadyaḥ khedavaśo 'bhavat |*
> *tattvajñena kṛtāvajñaḥ ko nāmāntar na tapyate* ||1.8.17||
>
> Hearing this [news], Guṇāḍhya immediately became overcome with depression. Disrespected by one who knows the true state of things, who indeed doesn't burn up inside?

Unlike the *BṛKM's* Guṇāḍhya, the *KSS's* defers to Sātavāhana as the literary authority and becomes melancholy, rather than angry, over the king's rejection of his work. The location of these two stanzas and their shared rhetorical features highlight a reflexive modification in the later work, one that a work dedicated to a royal patron might be sensitive to fitting into the larger intent of the work. In terms of the earlier work, perhaps what is not said in the prefatorial material instead finds voice in the frame, thus suggesting a more porous boundary between text and paratext.

[225] *mahākopaḥ*: Literally, "he in whom anger was great." *BṛKM* 1.90ab.

5 Conclusions

A Return to the Beginning

To conclude, I return to the questions that opened this discussion in chapter 1: How do the materials that precede and succeed the main narratives of Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* participate in making meaning and producing aesthetic effect within the two Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās*? And can theorizing the interface between Kṣemendra's and Somadeva's works through their supporting apparatus help us to locate the works within their broader literary contexts? In an effort to differentiate two texts that have been swallowed whole under the rubric of *Bṛhatkathā* "retellings," I have argued that the *BṛKM* and the *KSS* reflect distinct artistic projects that participate in broader conversations taking place at the turn of the first millennium. In other words, I propose that, as works of a burgeoning genre of literature—the versified *kathā* digest—and as works within a larger network of literary and *śāstraic* texts, the Kashmiri *Bṛhatkathās* make fruitful objects of study, not only for what they indicate about their predecessor texts, but also for what they articulate about the literary cultures of eleventh-century Kashmir.

Kāvyāṃśa, Kathārasa: Poetry as Constituent, Story as Essence

In chapter 2, I systematically examine the preambles of Kṣemendra's and Somadeva's works to define the two author's distinct literary projects. Though lacking any direct statement of authorial intent, Kṣemendra's preamble positions the *BṛKM* within a self-reflexively literary milieu. The introduction to his work gestures toward this milieu by employing the aesthetic capital of conventional tropes; by establishing a poet-centered work for an audience of literati through metaphorical parallels and linguistic juxtapositions within the text; and by foregrounding *kāvya* and its producers, while setting *kathā* in the background, through shifts in literary register. The *BṛKM's upasaṃhāra* along with the prefatory material from Kṣemendra's other *mañjarīs* reinforce the discursive work of the *BṛKM* preamble by emphasizing the composer's *curriculum vitae* and his aspirations as a poet-intellectual. Thus, they highlight the context-sensitive nature of these documents.

Somadeva's preamble presents itself as a digest of the *Bṛhatkathā* by adopting models of propitiation from earlier narrative traditions and by highlighting, through diction and allusion, the *KSS's* role as a versified epitome of the source *kathā*. Following other scholars, I view the statement of authorial intent presented in the *KSS* preamble as a response to Kṣemendra's earlier work. However, rather than understand it as a criticism of the earlier work's style alone, I propose that this stance articulates a broader literary conversation about the relationship between poetic form and narrative expression. Somadeva's preamble encapsulates this conversation by placing the technical term *kāvyāṃśa*, poetry as constituent element, in apposition to *kathārasa*, narrative as aesthetic

essence. This dialogues expresses a shift, not only in literary form, but also in the epistemology of storytelling itself.

Political Cosmogony, (Trans-)Regional Imagining, and Patrilineal Prerogative

In chapter 3, I challenge a reading of the *KSS praśasti* that sees the text as an assemblage of poetic conventions. Instead, I contend that, despite using the conventional transregional tropes and imagery of the royal eulogy, the *KSS praśasti* employs these elements to create a coherent vision of polity in eleventh-century Kashmir. Through the epic-*purāṇic* account of the churning of the milk-ocean, the *praśasti* narrates a political cosmogony that maps the sacred space of the mythic account onto the physical and political geography of the Kashmir Valley. While the *praśasti* employs these transregional tropes to highlight the qualities of righteous rule, it also draws upon a more regionally specific imagining of Kashmir as both haven for the expatriate intellectual and the wellspring of the Goddess of Wisdom herself. I bring these imaginings of Kashmiri polity into sharper focus by drawing upon other works from the period ranging from Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* to Rājaśekhara's *Kāvyamīmāṃsā.*

Through the method of inquiry discussed above, I suggest that the preambles and epilogues to the Kashmiri *BṛKs* do not use literary language in an arbitrary or stereotyped manner. Instead, these documents self-reflexively exploit the symbolic capital of traditional modes of expression. And, by redeploying these forms, they express contemporary and regional concerns. Consequently, the silences and slippages within these materials point to areas of contest and negotiation taking place at the level of the text. Such is the case for the *KSS praśasti* as it adapts a traditionally male-focused genre to acknowledge a queen as royal patron. Here, ideologies of gender and sexuality come up against the patrilineal prerogative inherent in ideologies of political power through the interface of the praise poem.

Toward a Portable Courtly Culture

In chapter 4, I revisit my argument from chapter 2, which proposes that the prefatory material in Kṣemendra's *BṛKM* positions the work as a *kāvya* intended for an audience of literati. By considering the *BṛKM upasaṃhāra* alongside the prefatory material from Kṣemendra's broader textual corpus, I extend this argument to propose that Kṣemendra's works prioritize, at least rhetorically, the approval of a cultured audience of peers over the patronage of a king. By considering the structural similarities between Somadeva's *praśasti* and the authorial account that comprises Kṣemendra's *upasaṃhāra*, I suggest that, where Somadeva places royal dedication, Kṣemendra offers an alternative vision of patronage through an account of a work's "circumstances of production." These circumstances of production outline a multi-stage process of textual authorization that begins with the liminal state of the author at the moment of creative inspiration and proceeds with solicitations and

endorsements by brahmans, gurus, court officials, and even figures from the supramortal realm.

These narrative circumstances of production do not trace the formal mechanics of literary patronage. Nor do they offer on-the-ground realities for eleventh-century Kashmir. However, they elicit a certain imagining of authorship and literary production that continues beyond the eleventh-century. Maṅkha's twelfth-century *mahākāvya*, the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* issues the model established in Kṣemendra's works. However, it more clearly situates this model within a milieu of intellectuals who, despite having ties with a royal court and despite following a courtly ethos, stand outside the ambit of the court in terms of literary production and consumption. Maṅkha's presentation of a "portable courtly culture" articulates and expands upon the themes introduced in Kṣemendra's earlier works. Moreover it clarifies, through new imaginings of kings and their erstwhile divine consorts, a growing dissonance between poets and kings.

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