In the present article I would like to share some preliminary and cautious observations concerning the way of the self-representation of a hardly known text called either Narasimhakalpa or Īśvarasamhitā II (ĪS II), which despite the absence from the traditional lists of the canonical texts of the tantric school of Vaiśṇava Pāñcarātra still claims that it is of its origin. My inspiration comes from the colophons of its introductory chapters suggesting that the text forms a part of a well-known samhitā of Pāñcarātra, i.e. Īśvarasamhitā, whereas, in the course of analyzing its content, not only the interlocutors who transmit and praise its revelation turn out to be not Vaiśṇavas but Śiva/Īśvara and his consort Pārvatī, but also the revelation itself differs from the one taught in Īśvarasamhitā. The methodological key to interpret that particular case seems to be the idea of a “locus of ascription,” com-

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1 I would like to thank the editor of this volume, Cezary Galewicz, for drawing my attention to the problem of a “locus of ascription” which, in fact, became a crucial issue for the present paper. I am also very grateful to Prof. Gerhard Oberhammer and Prof. Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz for their suggestions regarding several emendations as well as the general consultations concerning the text of Īśvarasamhitā/Narasimhakalpa and its interpretation.
mon mostly to tantric literature, where, apart from other specific features, for example, referring of different titles to the same work, there is also (much more frequently) a reverse tendency, in the words of Goudriaan speaking about Śaiva-śākta traditions, “a tendency in individual texts to present themselves as (sub)sections of more comprehensive traditions.”

Therefore, as he continues, “many relatively unimportant tracts of limited scope ascribe or allocate themselves to some Original Tantra in their colophons,” quite often regardless a real similarity of subject between a text ascribed and a “locus of ascription.” Nevertheless, the motivation behind establishing the connection with such scripture, existing or not, sometimes even acting in the terms of a “ghost-title” not existing in reality, is undoubtedly to canonize the text in question. Thus, adopting the idea of Goudriaan, the case I shall briefly analyze seems to be the case of a new tradition placing itself within the recognized field of Pāñcarātra through a strategy of “stretching” the existing tradition in contradistinction to extending classification lists by introducing new titles on them.

But is there indeed no similarity of subject between the two texts (Narasimhakalpa/ĪS II and Īśvarasamhitā)? How should an ascribed text be classified? Whose knowledge does it contain? Does it really belong to Pāñcarātra? And, last but not least, what is its own logic of belonging/classification?

The school of Pāñcarātra is classified as a tantric tradition due to the peculiarity of some elements, displayed within its vast literature with different intensity, for example, the necessity of initiation (dīkṣā), an optional choice between salvation from the circle of life (mokṣa) or experiencing worldly pleasures (bhoga) by means of magical powers (siddhi), a high position of female potency (śakti), ritualistic application of formulas (mantra), gestures (mudrā), special devices (maṇḍala,
yantra), etc.\(^5\) It focuses on Viṣṇu in his Nārāyana or Vāsudeva modes (contrary to Śaiva-śākta tantric tradition focusing on Śiva or his consort – Śakti). First traces of Pāñcarātra doctrine appear already in epics, i.e. in the Nārāyāṇiya section of Mahābhārata (Mbh), however, according to Sanderson,\(^6\) the form in which its oldest three texts called “three gems” (ratnatraya), namely Jayākhyasamhitā (JayS), Sātvatasamhitā (SātS) and Pauskarasamhitā, were preserved is a result of the reformation of Pāñcarātra ritual under the influence of Kashmirian Śaiva mantramārga and, therefore, they must have been composed close to the first half of the 9\(^{th}\) century in Kashmir. Most probably, because of the belief that they contain the most ancient knowledge, “three gems” (ratnatraya) are traditionally said to be the most authoritative texts of divine (divya) origin as opposed to the other two groups called (munibhasita) – “declared by sages” and “human” (pauruṣa/mānuṣa).\(^7\)

The younger samhitās were composed (or reworked) in the South of India, giving the basis for the order of worship in South-Indian Śrīvaiṣṇava temples. Also because of the mutual coexistence with South-Indian brahmanical circles, it took a more orthodox shape accepted by later teachers of Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. Among the younger stratum of Pāñcarātra literature one can enumerate the specific commentaries (vyākhyā) of the oldest “three gems” as well as other relatively important texts such as: Paramasamhitā, Ahirbudhnyasamhitā (AhS), Viṣṇusamhitā, etc. According to tradition there are 108, but in fact more than 200 texts, out of which only a few have been published

\(^5\) For the definition of Tantra see Padoux 1998; for the classical set of Tantric elements see Goudriaan 1979.

\(^6\) Sanderson 2001:38.

\(^7\) However, the concept of the threefold division of samhitās, though lacking the titles included into particular groups of texts, occurs already in SātS 22.52cd-58ab. A much more detailed account of three groups appears in much younger Pārameśvarasamhitā 10.334-386. The passages in question are treated in: Rastelli 2006: 99-125. For different types of classification of Pāñcarātra samhitās and their features in general see also: Czerniak-Drożdżowicz 2006/07.
and critically edited so far. The list including 108 titles one can find for example in *Pādmasamhitā*, however, the number differs depending on the particular text since registers usually mention *samhitās* which until that time had required some authority. Therefore, due to the constant mutual textual borrowings, it might appear that there was no rivalry between them.  

The discussed source of ascription, namely *Īśvarasamhitā*, is classified by Pāṇcarātra tradition as one of the specific commentaries/ explanations (*vyākhyā*) of “three gems:” it is said to be the *vyākhyā* of SātS, whereas the *vyākhyā* of JayS is *Pādmasamhitā* and the *vyākhyā* of Puṣkarasamhitā is *Pārameśvarasamhitā*. The Pāṇcarāтриka concept of mutual relations between a “basic” (*mūla*) text and its *vyākhyā* is relatively young since it must have came into existence after the time all these texts had been composed and broadly acclaimed. The idea appears for the first time in the additional chapter of JayS called *Adhikapāṭha* (JaySA) and dated, in contrast to the corpus of the text, as several centuries younger.  

In this connection JayS is presented as the “highest scripture/tantra.” So JaySA 1-8ab reads:

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8 Czerniak-Drożdżowicz 2006/07:8. However, there was rivalry between different sub-traditions of Pāṇcarātra (*siddhānta*) as well as between different groups of temple priests, see: Rastelli 2006:216-223 and 242-247.

9 The obvious reason to estimate the composition of the JaySA section as younger than the rest of JayS is the fact that it enumerates the titles of the so-called *vyākhyās* of “three gems,” among them the *vyākhyā* of JayS itself, i.e. *Pādmasamhitā*. Architectural details of Varadarāja Temple in Kāncīpuram mentioned within JaySA section, for example the *gopura* of the temple, allows us to date it for the 14th century, see: Rajan 1967:73, Rastelli 1999:52-53.

10 The passages of JaySA dealing with the relation between “three gems” and their so-called *vyākhyās* are treated also in: Rastelli 1999.

JaySA 1-15ab: *pañcarātrasya kṛṣnasasya vaktā nārāyaṇah svayam / iti sarvatra vikhyātām bhagavacchāṣtragauravam //1// sāttvataṃ pauskaram caiva jayākhyam tantram uttaram / ratnatrayam iti khyātam tad viśeṣa ihcyate //2// sāram sāttvataśāstrasya rahasyam prājñasammatam / ratnatrayam idam sākṣad bhagavadvaktraniḥṣṛtam //3// pravartitam tathaivedam
“Nārāyaṇa himself proclaimed the whole Pañcarātra - the value of Bhagavan’s teaching is known everywhere. Sāttvata, Pauṣkara and the highest tantra Jayākhyya are called “three gems.” Their characteristic is presented here. Those three gems (ratnatraya) are [regarded to be] the essence of the teaching of Sāttvata [clan], secret, approved by learned men [and] emerged directly from the mouth of Bhagavan in the accomplished form – not defective and not too broad. The other tantras [scriptures], were filled up [with content] after using the essence coming out from the mouth of Bhagavan by adding, removing or keeping [it] according to the rule of making the commentary (vyākhya) strong. Thus, their value depends on [the coexistence of] the basic text (mūla) and its vyākhya. Out of 108 tantras, Pārameśvarasamhitā has been caused to descend in the form of vyākhya in order to explain the meaning (vivṛtyartha) of Pauṣkarasamhitā, [in order to explain] the meaning of Sāttvata the highest tantra Īśvarasamhitā [has been caused to descend] and Pādma is said to be the commentary (vyākhyāna) of tantra Jayākhyā.

The author of JaySA calls the three later texts of Pañcārātra vyākhya/vyākhyāna and therefore presents them as commentaries even though they do not have such a form.11 In fact, Pañcarātrika vyākhya should be perceived as independent, self-sufficient texts of the same

anyūnānadhitavataḥ / anyānyāni tu tantrāni bhagavanmukhanirgatam //4// sārām sampujjīvyaiva samāsavāyāsadhāranaĩḥ / vyākhyopabṛmhaṇanyāyād vyāpitāni tathā tathā //5// vyākhyāmūlanyayenaiaśām gauravaṃ sampratiṣṭhitam / tantra ‘py aṣṭottaraśate pārameśvarasamhitā //6// pauṣkarārthaṃvivṛtyarthā vyākhyārūpā ‘vatāritā / sāttvatasya vivṛtyartham īśvaram tantram uttamam //7// jayākhyasyāsyatantrasya vyākhyānam pādman ucyaśat /
structure as the oldest stratum of Pāñcarātra literature and, similarly, of unknown authorship. They draw, however, more or less richly from the elder, mostly revered, perfect and divine samhitās with the purpose of becoming more respected. There is also the difference in selection of subjects they deal with caused by the changes within the tradition itself: whereas the “bases” focus mostly on the doctrine, yoga and tantric ritual, the so-called vyākhyās and younger samhitās in general say a lot about temple order and in their attempt to be perceived as fitting the brahmanical environment of South India betray much fewer tantric features. Yet, due to traditional stressing the mutual connection of both texts, the “basic” text and its vyākhyā, only in pairs are they linked to three particular holy centers – Śrīraṅgaṁ, Hastiśaila (Kāncīpuram) and Nārāyaṇāṇḍri (Melkoṭe) – called again “gems” (JaySA 8cd-15ab). The fourth center mentioned – Veṅkatāḍri (Tirupati) – though considered to be the abode of God, is excluded from the schema, probably because of connections with another Vaiṣṇava sect, namely Vaikhānasa (JaySA 8cd-15ab): 12

“Among 108 self-manifested places on the earth, where Bhagavan appears himself, the most important ones are four divine abodes [called] gems: Śrīraṅgaṁ, Veṅkatāḍri, Hastiśaila and Nārāyaṇāṇḍri, the highest one. Apart from Veṅkatāḍri, in the rest of the abodes of the God of Gods [called] three gems, there are the tantras [called] “three gems.” The wise one should know that these three tantras present one doctrine based on the mutual structure of a “basic” text and its vyākhyā. Sattvata reigns

in Yadusailendra, Pauśkara in Śrīraṅga and Jayākhyya in Hastisaila. Pādmatantra is in use in Hastisaila, Pārameśvara in Śrīraṅga, Īśvara in Yādavādri. Śrīraṅga and Yādavādri differs from Hastisaila as a ruby and a cat’s eye gem from an excellent diamond.”

Some works of Pāncarātra do not only claim to be based on the older source as it is in the case of three vyākhyās (see: JaySA 6cd-8ab), but also borrow large portions one from another. Therefore, among the most specific features of Pāncarātra literature one can enumerate its high level of intertextuality, which leads to the conclusion that, as Czerniak-Drożdżowicz writes, “these authoritative texts, claiming to be revealed, were repeatedly subject to modifications and manipulations.” The reasons for such a policy might be different: “not only religious factors, but also changes in the social, political or even economical situation of the community of the tradition followers. There were influences both from inside the tradition, as well as from the outside. Inside new ideas appeared and the old ones were modified; outside there were pressures from other religious groups, from the king who was the protector of a particular religion and in accordance with his patronage a particular religion was growing, while others were diminishing.” From a perspective of such openness for textual modification also the cases of allocations/ascriptions

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13 A good example is Pārameśvarasamhitā, which apart from its close relationship to Pauśkarasamhitā, incorporates long passages from the other two “gems” as well as from Sanatkūmarasamhitā, Nāradīyadsamhitā and other texts. The index of passages incorporated into Pārameśvarasamhitā from several sources is presented in: Rastelli 2006: 555-578. See also Matsubara 1994 for the tables of interpolations between different samhitās, for example from Paramasamhitā into Viṣṇusamhitā, and Padmanabhan 2006: ixxxix-cxviii for the index presenting the borrowings from SātS, Īśvarasamhitā and Pādmasamhitā (kriyāpada) into Śrīprasnasamhitā.


of the less known texts, usually relatively young,\textsuperscript{16} to those acclaimed by P\=n\=car\=\=atra tradition and therefore of much greater authority are not surprising.

Apart from “classical” Ī\=s\=var\=a\=s\=a\=m\=h\=i\=t\=ā, in his \textit{Descriptive Catalogue of P\=n\=car\=\=atra Samh\=i\=t\=ās} (1975-1980), Daniel Smith, basing his research on a manuscript in \textit{grantha} script no. 7967 from the Oriental Institute of Baroda, characterizes the content of a rare and still unpublished work designated by him Ī\=s\=var\=a\=s\=a\=m\=h\=i\=t\=ā II. As he puts it: “This relatively short and apparently incomplete work of some 640 Šlok\=a\=s divided into 14 chapters may alternatively be called \textit{Nṛ\=si\=m\=h\=a\=k\=al\=p\=a}.” The colophons of Baroda manuscript offer according to him no consistency – the work being variously labelled Ī\=s\=var\=a\=s\=a\=m\=h\=i\=t\=ā\=yā\=m, P\=n\=ca\=r\=a\=tra, \textit{Nṛ\=si\=m\=h\=a\=k\=al\=p\=a}, \textit{Śrī\=s\=ud\=a\=r\=a\=s\=a\=n\=a\=n\=ṛ\=si\=m\=h\=a\=k\=al\=p\=a}.”\textsuperscript{17} The P\=n\=car\=\=atrika provenience of the document is confirmed, in his opinion, not only by colophons, but also by the typical hospitality to all classes as well as some internal references to the tradition.\textsuperscript{18} Smith designates the work “the second one,” since the text which is customarily classified as the proper Ī\=s\=var\=a\=s\=a\=m\=h\=i\=t\=ā of P\=n\=car\=\=atra school and hence “the first one,” has already been published\textsuperscript{19} and is regarded to be one of the canonical, relatively well-known and important text of the tradi-

\textsuperscript{16} Other interesting cases of two P\=n\=car\=\=atra texts (apocryphal and authentic), known under the same title are for example Bh\=ā\=rad\=va\=jas\=a\=m\=h\=i\=t\=ā (see: Oberhammer 2007, Smith 1975-1980) and Ag\=a\=s\=t\=y\=a\=s\=a\=m\=h\=i\=t\=ā (see: Smith 1975-1980).

\textsuperscript{17} Smith 1975-1980:87, Catalogus Catalogorum, vol. II, 1966:279, under the entry: “Ī\=s\=var\=a\=s\=a\=m\=h\=i\=t\=ā (Nṛ\=si\=m\=h\=a\=k\=al\=p\=a) Ī\=s\=v\=a\=r\=a-P\=ā\=r\=v\=a\=t\=i\=s\=a\=m\=v\=ā\=d\=a, P\=n\=ca\=r\=a\=tra.”

\textsuperscript{18} Smith 1975-1980:87.

\textsuperscript{19} So far three editions have been issued: by Sadvidya Pres, Mysore 1890 (telugu script); by Sudarsana Press, Canjeevaram 1923 (devanāgarī script) and by IGNCA, New Delhi 2009 (devanāgarī script). The latter one includes the translation of \textit{samhitā} and the Sanskrit text of its gloss written by Alaśīṅga Bhaṭṭa (19\textsuperscript{th} century) – both, translation and edition, were prepared by L. Thatachar and V. Varadachari.
Isvarasamhitā or Narasimhakalpa

... tion, especially, in agreement with JaySA, in the area of the present- 
day Melkote. He provides no details regarding the time of the composi-
tion of IS II, but Sadhu Parampurushdas and Sadhu Shrutiprakashdas propose to date it for the period after the collaboration of Pāncaratra with Viśistādvaita doctrine (however before the 15th century AD). Goudriaan mentions Nārasimhakalpa in the context of ritual handbooks which do not claim to be original tantras saying that it is a "presumably modern text of little renown."

It is also difficult to date the composition of the published/proper Isvarasamhitā. According to Schrader and Gonda it is the oldest samhitā among those of Southern Indian origin, but it was not composed earlier than in the 10th century. Matsubara, in turn, claims that the text is much younger and dates it for the 14th century. In his opinion two variants of Isvarasamhitā were in existence, the older and the younger one, out of which the latter one is now available. Yet it seems that the older one, quoted by Yāmuna (10th century) in his Āgamarāmānya, is not the same as IS II. Additionally, making

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23 Gonda 1977: 54-55.
24 Matsubara 1994: 27-31. Matsubara notes that the thirteen lines of the text quoted under that title in Āgamarāmānya (to be found in: Narasimhachari 1976: 163) do not appear in the version which is published (Matsubara 1994: 28). He advances several arguments for the late origin of the available samhitā and thus to its incompatibility with the textual source of Yāmuna. Firstly, the description of the festival dedicated to Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇajanmutsava) similar to that of the 12th chapter of Īśvarasamhitā is to be found only in the late Śrīprasnasamhitā. Secondly, the details related to the life of Kṛṣṇa from Yādava clan which are presented in the 12th and 20th chapter of Īśvarasamhitā do not appear in the early texts. Another argument relates to numerous borrowings from Paramasamhitā (circa 10th century). Next, the text is neither mentioned by Veṅkatanātha (14th century), nor listed among the 108 samhitās enumerated in Viśvaksenasamhitā (14th century).
the case even more complicated, Indian scholars enumerate two other apparently distinct texts which competed for the same identity. Both the third (īS III) and fourth (īS IV) ones are, according to them, mentioned in works of such scholars as Veṅkatanātha, incomplete, preserved in manuscripts and written before the 13th century AD.25

However, the analysis of the initial chapters of ĪS II shows that it might be more reasonable to link it not with the declared source of allegation but with another text of Pāṅcarātra, i.e. AhS, that was composed under the influence of several traditions, for example, Kashmirian Śaivism and Viśiṣṭādvaita.26 Among the reasons to do so one can mention the particular mantra of Narasiṃha, venerated by both texts. In such circumstances one could ask what is, if any, the logic of the ascription to Īśvarasamhitā? Is it a case of allocation ignoring the correspondence of the contents of both texts?

Since the copy of ĪS II from Baroda, known to Smith and other authors, has been so far inaccessible to me, I used the draft version of a transcript into devanāgarī which had been prepared on the basis of a grantha MS (no. 4977) preserved in the Oriental Research Institute in Mysore.27 Both manuscripts, as I can presume from the summary given by Smith, share the same content. Yet, I limited myself to the first three chapters of the text and in this


26 AhS was most probably composed in Southern India. It postdates "three gems" of Pāṅcarātra and, most probably, Paramasamhitā, however, the earliest datable text that quotes AhS is the Prapannaparijāta of Vātsyya Varadaguru, who was born between 1190-1200, see Rastelli 2006:50-51. Sanderson claims that it postdates Pratyabhijñāḥdaya of Kashmirian Śaiva scholar Kṣemarāja who flourished 1000-1050, see Sanderson 2001:35-36.

27 I owe the transcript from grantha into devanāgarī to Dr. K.K.C. Lakshmi Narasimhan, who prepared it in Mahabalipuram, Tamilnadu, in February 2008. Also to him I owe the division of the text into verses which for the sake of easy reference I follow, although, due to the condition of the manuscript (on palm-leaves), there are some lacunas in the transcript.
connection only the most obvious errors in the passages I quote were corrected.28

ÍŚ II starts with questions posed by Pārvatī to Íśvara suggesting, already at the beginning, that the text deals with Śaiva transmission. Their conversation, in agreement with the features of tantric literature, creates the frame for the knowledge handed down. However, there is no doubt that despite the interlocutors, ÍŚ II displays originally Vaiṣṇava affiliation. Its proof might be for example a few references to the myth of the Narasiṃha killing demon Hiranyakaśipu and expressions highlighting the power of Viṣṇu in the first paṭāla:

“The son of Hiraṇya[kaśipu] was praising the God of Gods with this mantra //16cd// With the help of this mantra, indeed, Hari had been awakened completely and assuming the form of Narasiṃha killed the Lord of Daityas //17//”29

“ If anything, starting with grass and ending with the four-faced [Brahma], blossoms in the fourfold world due to the power of Viṣṇu,

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28 Therefore, the form in which I present them does not lay claim to be a critical edition. All corrections introduced by me were done on the basis of the transcript, not a manuscript. Otherwise it is marked with siglum referring to the initials of the person to whom I owe the suggestion; N – Narasimhan, O – Oberhammer. Emendations/conjunctions which were introduced by Narasimhan are additionally marked with MS, as they were introduced on the basis of the manuscript. Emendations proposed by me or others are marked with TR – “transcript.”

Further on, the part of the texts I introduce (Śrīmantrarājapadastotra) comes mostly from the e-text downloaded from: http://www.prapatti.com/slokas/sanskrit/mantraraajapadastotram.pdf (access 10.10.2009).

it will realize all kinds of desires due to the power of mighty Nara-
simha-mantra //25cd-26//”

There is also a reference to Vaiṣṇava paradise (vaisṇavam padam) in the second paṭala:

“Goddess! Formerly, in the Age of the Gods, the great sage Mārkandeya [due to this mantra] overcame his own death and obtained the abode of Vaiṣṇavas //18/”

And, in the third paṭala, one finds the information referring to Śrīsūkta, a hymn dedicated to Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu.

“He should imagine śakti-worship in a high place, within the pericarp of a lotus. The concentrated one, while reciting the Śrīsūkta, should worship accordingly in the eastern part the Goddess Śrī Lakṣmī, who appears as all auspiciousness/diagram sarvabhadra, holds a pair of lotuses in her hands, is adorned with a pearl-necklace //6-7//”

as well as to a worshipper of Viṣṇu (bhāgavata) being initiated with narasimhamantra. Designations used to describe the God, i.e. holding a bow (śārṅgin) and a discus (cakrin), also clearly refer to Viṣṇu.

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30 ĪS II, 1st paṭala: tṛṇādi (emend. N; traṅādi MS) caturāsyāntaṁ (emend.; caturāsyānta TR) bhūtagrāme caturvidhe //25// tasya viṣṇoh prabhāvena yadi kiṃcit prabuddhyate (emend.; prabuddhyate TR) / śrīn̄ṣimha-prabhāvena sarvakāmān vijeṣyati //26//.

31 ĪS II, 2nd paṭala: purā devayuge devi mārkandeyo mahāmuniḥ / jitavān ātmano mṛtyum labdhavān vaisṇavam padam//18//.

32 ĪS II, 3rd paṭala: karnikāyām mahatsthāne śaktipūjāṁ prakalpayet / aindrasthāne śriyam devīṁ sarvabhadrarūpīṇīṁ (emend. N; sarvabhadro-rūpīṇī MS) //6// padmayugmadharāṁ (emend. N; patmayugmadharam MS) lakṣmīṁ maktāhārivibhūṣanāṁ (emend. N; maktāhārivibhūṣanāṁ MS) / śrī-
sūktena vidhānena pūjayed tu samāhitaḥ //7//.
Finally, if one is śūdra by birth, his name obtained during initiation, should be vaisnava: 

“...the teacher should wash a suitable pupil whose face is pleased and then, he should wash [that] cleansed worshipper of Viṣṇu [once] again. //32// (...) He should recite all [mantras] one hundred and eight times, according to the rule. After the recitation and offering to the God of Gods holding a bow, he should offer flowers in both hands to the God holding a discus. //38-39ab// The initiation should be given by a Brahmin, especially the one that has undergone the initiation and sacraments himself and therefore is qualified for performing rituals. //39cd-40ab// kṣatriya should be called śāra, vaisya - bilvaka and śūdra - vaisnava. Such is the rule. //40cd-41ab//”

The content of ĪŚ II refers chiefly to the mantra of Narasimhā: its form and meaning, its seed-mantra, the initiation by means of that mantra (dīkṣā), the sage, meter and deity associated with additional mantras, fire offering, offering substances, volitional rites (kāmya) realized through its mastering and, finally, a consecration rite (abhiṣekā). Apparently, all these elements form together a fully fledged ceremony focused upon the mantra of Narasimhā. Strikingly, Pārvatī openly praises the unequalled power of that mantra, despite the fact that primarily the deity is associated with Vaiṣṇava tradition: 


34 ĪŚ II, 1st paṭala: bhagavan devadevaśa sarvakāraṇakāraṇa / sarvalokanamaskārya (emend.; sarvalokanamaskārya TR) sarvesām abha- yaprada //2// prasi[ddhave] hi (conj. O; prasi [...] hi TR) bhagavan prcchantyā mama nāṇyaka / śṛṇuṭīt (emend.; śṛṇuṭīt TR) bahavo mantrāḥ (emend.; mantrā
“Lord! God! God of Gods! The Cause of the cause of everything! You, who should be worshipped by all people! You, who protect everyone! Lord, listen [to me] when I am asking you about your opinion, o husband! There are many mantras effective for every purpose / [but] their power is incomparable to [the power] of narasimhamantra [so, tell me] what is the form and meaning of narasimhamantra? What is the order of the potencies of the seed-mantra? What is the order of initiation rules? What are the sage, metre and deity [of mantra] and how to apply [them] in ritual? How to apply mantra and mudrās properly? How the fire-ritual looks like, o God, and what is the characteristics of a pot? What are the ritual-substances, o God, and how the volitional rite looks like? How the consecration looks like? God! What is the characteristics of a pot? // Explain all that to me, o Asylum of world! //7-8ab//”

The structure of displayed elements profoundly fits the frame of tantric texts of a “Kalpa” type (as already the optional title of ĪŚ II suggests) containing the knowledge regarding magic and focusing

TR) sarvārthapratipādakāḥ (emend.; sarvārtthapratipādakāḥ TR) //3// teśān nṛsimhamantrasya prabhāvo (emend; prabhāvam TR) nopagamyate / kathan nṛsimhamantrasya rūpam artham (emend.; arttham TR) katham bhavet //4// bījaṃaktikramaṇ cātra kathan dīkṣāvidhikramam / ṛṣchanto ‘dhidaivaṇ (emend.; ṛṣichṣandodhidaivaṇ TR) ca vinyogah katham bhavet //5// katham mantrasya (emend. N; katham amantrasya MS) vinyāso (emend.; vinyāsah TR) mudrānāṇ ca yathāvidhi / agnikāryaṁ (emend.; agnikāryyaṁ TR) kathan deva katham (emend. katham TR) kumbhasya lakṣāṇam //6// homadrayaṁ katham (emend. N; katha MS) deva kāmyakarma (emend.; kāmyakarmma TR) katham bhavet / abhiṣekam kathan deva katham kumbhasya lakṣāṇam //7// etat sarvam samāsena brūhi me jagadāśraya./

35 The term “magic” will be used in accordance with the definition given by Goudriaan in the context of Tantric texts on magic: “The word “magic”(...) is understood as the performance of certain ritual acts - and the belief in the efficacy of such acts - with a view to making use of certain natural laws of cause and effect which are supposed to exist, in order to enforce some result(s) in the mundane sphere desired by the performer or his instructor. This
on the single deity and its worship. As Goudriaan writes, the following chapters of the texts of that type tend to contain: “announcement of a mantra, mention of a Rṣi, metre, deity and other particulars; a meditation stanza in Kāvya metre; the mantra itself, usually in prose, but communicated in śloka circumscription; direction for how to obtain mastery of the mantra; results to be obtained by the correct procedure.” Kalpas sometimes form only the chapters of bigger texts but quite often lead also a life of their own. The popularity of the tantric literature dealing with magic is reflected by their wide circulation, though, in words of Goudriaan, it is” mostly transmitted in a host of (usually small) manuscripts” and, when tantric texts include such topics they usually “hasten to declare that one should never execute it for one’s sake.” It seems that the works much more prone to present the accounts of magic rites are nevertheless Śaiva-śākta ones, whereas within Vaiṣṇava Pāncarātra literature such sections are to be found mostly in the oldest samhitās, among them, quite meaningfully, in SātS regarded to be the mūla text of Īśvarasamhitā being, as one can presume, the locus of ascription of ĪS II. The authors/editors of newer samhitās, including the above-mentioned Īśvarasamhitā, aspiring to be perceived as a part of the South Indian orthodox brahmanical circles, tend to avoid discussing such practices.

Judging from the content of the first three chapters of ĪS II, as well as information provided by Smith, we may conclude that

also includes exorcism or the compelling of benevolent gods and spirits (especially Yakṣas and Yakṣinīs); but it does not include what is commonly called “witchcraft:” the natural propensity to perform the acts commonly ascribed to witches such as attacking children, associating oneself with demons, acts of revelry, etc. (...)” See Goudriaan 1981:112.

39 The account of the practice of sādhaka striving for magical powers as well as their description one can also find in Vaiṣṇava JayS, see: Rastelli 2000.
Íśvara’s replies to the subsequent questions asked by Pārvatī cover indeed, one by one, the following chapters of ÍS II. However, the colophons to first three chapters of ÍS II read quite vaguely:

Chapter 1. *iti íśvarasamhitāvām*₄₀ nārasimhakalpe *prathamah*₄¹ *patalah*

Chapter 2. *iti śrīpañcārātre [íśvarasam]hitāvām*₄² śrīnārasimhakalpe dvitiyāh *patalah*

Chapter 3. *iti śrīpañcārātre íśvarasamhitāvān nṛsimhakalpe mantradīksāvidhāno nāma tṛtiyāḥ *patalah*

Customarily, most of the Pāñcarātra-*samhitās* as well as Śaiva-sākta āgamas or tantras fit their chapters with colophons where they declare affiliations and give other information specifying their content. Yet, on the basis of the copy from Mysore we can assume that through presenting itself as *Nārasimhakalpa [which is a part] of Íśvarasamhitā [belonging to] Pāncarātra* (with an exception of the first colophon, where the information regarding Pāñcarātra’s provenance is omitted and the third one, where the proper subject of the chapter, i.e. the initiation into the mantra, occurs) ÍS II clearly allocates itself to the better known and more respected *samhitā*. In that case it is also tempting to consider the *Śrīpañcārātra*-element as a “ghost-title”₄³ not existing in reality but nevertheless being the *locus of ascription*, though in that context it is definitely the reference to the tradition within which the text of ÍS II would like to be seen.

ÍS II and the published *Íśvarasamhitā* of Pāñcarātra vary in terms of their structure, content and interlocutors. In contradistinction to the purely magical character of ÍS II, *Íśvarasamhitā* is “a relatively long work, totaling almost 8200 ślokas (...), and the 25 medium-to-long chapters that come to us today [which] may be divided into three major sections – relating to nitya, naimittika and kāmya concerns – with a
fourth section appended expanding on certain details. The first section, i.e. chapters 2-9, deals with a daily routine (nitya) of a temple worship, the second one, i.e. chapters 10-15, deals with occasional (naimittika) festivals and the third one, i.e. chapters 16-19, 21-22, deals with optional activities (kāmya) like temple constructing, installation of icons, penitential undertakings, initiation. The last section (chapters 23-25) concerns six issues important for arcakas: maintenance of tradition, use of mantras and mudrās, objects of dhyāna, constructing of fire-pits (kunda) and rules regarding food-offerings. In regard to interlocutors, in the case of IS II these are, as was already mentioned, Īśvara/Śiva and Pārvatī, while in the case of the published samhitā – Nārada and sages (muni). Most significantly, there is no direct reference to narasimhakalpa in the published Īśvarasamhitā. In such a case is it possible to consider the allocation of work dealing with narasimhakalpa to that particular text in terms of deliberate attempt? And what is narasimhakalpa then?

As was mentioned before, in the context of tantric tradition “Kalpas” form a specific group of texts (or their chapters) dealing with magical rites. Sanderson puts it more precisely claiming that the terms kalpa or mantrakalpa are used in relation to “the manuscript of a text setting out the procedure for the propitiation of a mantra.” Such procedure basically comprises worshipping the mantra by an advanced tantric adept (sādhaka) who undertook the vow considering not only the constant repetition of the mantra he was before initiated with, but also departure to a remote place, food-restrictions, wearing specific garments, etc. As a result, the deity of the mantra appears in front of him having assumed a human form and bestows upon him magical powers (siddhi). Being so, the compound narasimhakalpa can be understood as

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44 Smith (1975-1980):66-67. The first chapter sets the framework for handing down the revelation and the 20th chapter contains the eulogy of the greatness of Melkote (Yādavācalamāhāmya), which breaks the inner logic of the text structure; Smith 1975-80:86.

“the propitiation of [the mantra] of Narasimha.” And, indeed, in the case of ĪŚ II, as Smith claims, the extreme prayogic tendency is the most striking facet of the work. The mantra of Narasimha enables enemies to be overcome, diseases cured and even “Evil-Eye” averted.46

References to mundane aims (bhukti) realized by means of this mantra appear already in the first chapter, where Īśvara explains to Pārvatī the meaning and innumerable powers of the mantra of Narasimha.47

“O Beloved!, fair-one!, listen [to me as] you ask properly //8cd// I will explain everything for a good sake of the world. That mantra is an essence of the eternal essence, the cause of everything. //9// It is regarded to be the very best among all mantras of Gods, a merit removing all sins, well-known in the three worlds. //10// It brings pleasure and victory to everyone in the world, bestows prosperity and merit, as well as the fruit of mundane enjoyment and liberation. //11// It destroys all enemies, brings supreme peace to everyone, comprises the whole knowledge, rules the whole revelation. //12// It is an antidote for all great sins of all people, provides power over others, Goddess!, it contains all miracles, [it is] auspicious. //13// [That] divine, efficacious [mantra] grants grace and enjoyment, destroys the sorrow of a worshipper. It is


fit for four varṇas and alike for four āśramas. //14// I would not be able to explain it in detail within 100 years, [so], beautiful one!, listen about the power of narasimhamantra in short. //15//

It seems that, although their names are not explicitly expressed, among them we can trace those belonging to the realm of black magic, such as killing of the enemies or ruling over others, but also those less cruel, for example providing peace, victory and prosperity. As we read further on, the one who worships God with that mantra fulfils his own desires.

The term narasimhakalpa appears also within the mainstream Pāñcarātra literature, but, significantly enough, a section under that title (extended in its initial part with the word vaibhāviya referring to Narasimha as one of vibhavas) dealing in detail with the ritual cluster focused on the mantra of Narasimha leading to acquisition of magical powers can be probably found exclusively in the 17th chapter of SātS, which is thought to be the traditional base (mūla) of the proper Īśvarasamhitā. The latter one, even though acts as vyākhyā of SātS, does not refer to narasimhakalpa at all. Yet, taking into consideration the close relation of the mūla text and its vyākhyā proclaimed in JaySA, it becomes reasonable to assume that SātS might be a possible link between both texts, the ascribed one and the source of ascription, and it may explain the attempt of the redactor of the latter one to present it particularly as a part of Īśvarasamhitā of Pāñcarātra.

The function and aim of narasimhakalpa as presented in two chapters of SātS (SātS 16 establishes the pattern of initiatory system of SātS which is closely connected with narasimhakalpa, whereas SātS

\[48\] The classical set of magical powers embraces six acts (saṅkarman): śāntī (pacification), vaśīkaraṇa (subjection), stambhāna (immobilization), vidveṣana (dissension), uccāṭana (eradication) and māraṇa (liquidation). For different classifications of six acts see: Goudriaan 1978.

\[49\] ĪS II, 2nd paṭala: evam itthām viditvāsaḥ harer ārādhanaḥ narāḥ / kāroti sarvān kāmān so labhate nātra sāmsayah//15// – Knowing that, man worships God and realizes all desires – there is no doubt about this. //15//
17 contains the account of *narasimhakalpa*\(^5\) is not as clear as in the terms of IS II. Without going into details, SâtS 17 describes (according to colophon) *vaibhāviyanarasimhakalpa*, i.e. “a rite of propitiation of the Narasimha in a vibhava form,” in the course of which “magical powers” (*siddhi*) of various kinds are bestowed on adepts initiated with the help of that mantra and, then, engaged in mastering it. It is the only portion of the text, though quite substantial, where the information regarding the way of mastering the Narasimha-mantra is to be found. The chapter contains several sections constituting the fully fledged practice following somehow in its last part the established order of “magical” *kalpas* but extended significantly at the beginning by the account of the initiation with the *narasimhamantra*. Firstly occurs the detailed description of a preliminary practice of ācārya, who in order to confer the initiation assumes the body of Narasimha. It is followed by the section concerning the details of the initiation by means of the mantra of Narasimha (*narasimhadīksā*). A large portion regarding the specific rules of behaviour (*samaya, ācāra*) to obey by adepts already initiated into that mantra constitutes the next element. Finally, the last section of the chapter continues with the account of an actual worship of Narasimha in a form of mantra by a sādhaka who, in consequence of *narasimhadīksā*, obtains the authority to master it in order to realize his mundane aims with the help of magical powers (*siddhi*). Yet, it seems that the last *siddhi* he may obtain leads him finally toward liberation (*mokṣa*). In fact, the magical powers the sādhaka strives for might be divided into two groups: the one concerning typical *siddhis* of old tantric type, though rather mild ones: pacification (*sānti/sāntika*) (SâtS 17.157-181ab); prosperity (*puṣṭi*) (SêtS 17.181cd-198); welfare (*āpyāyana*) (SâtS 199-235), protection from known and unknown diseases (*rakṣā*) (SâtS 17.236-333ab), and its variant called *samdhārinīrakṣā*, which keeps people in health (SâtS 7.333cd-357), the other concerning four powers corresponding to four

goals of human life: dharma (SātS 17. 357cd-387ab); artha (SātS 17. 387cd-439ab); kāma (SātS 17. 439cd-447) and mokṣa (SātS.447-456).

The function of worshipping Narasimha in his mantric body in the context of SātS is clarified in SātS 16, where not only a schema establishing the order of subsequent initiations (dīkṣā) of SātS (1. narasimhadīkṣā, 2. the three proper dīkṣās of SātS) is presented but also the statements explaining the function of both practices, narasimhadīkṣā and narasimhakalpa, occur.51 Basically, the former one points to the purification of the adepts from the sins gathered during previous lives (SātS 16.25cd-26:52 “Wise one! After conferring the [initiation] of Narasimha in order to destroy the sins gathered during many previous births of the people who have been already purified, he should duly confer the [proper] initiation.”), being additionally preceded by a cleansing ritual of brahmakūrca, which is a type of an atonement practice (prāyścitta). These people seem to come from outside the Vaiṣṇava tradition or, at least, not fulfil religious norms.

They are characterized in the following way (SātS 16.23-25ab):53

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51 According to SātS 16.35-39b, the mantra of any other vibhava deity might be selected, but if we take into consideration that (1) Īśvarasamhitā II teaches particularly about the propitiation of the narasimhamantra and (2) in the context of SātS the propitiation of the Narasimha serves most probably as a practice introducing even strangers into the lore of Pāñcarātra (see: SātS 16.23-26 and the discussion regarding the liminal character of Narasimha presented further on in the article), the choice of Narasimha for the sake of (1) achieving magical powers and (2) purifying/converting rite seems to be convincing.

52 SātS 16.25[cd]-26: evaṃ samśuddhadoṣānāṃ bahujanmārjitasya ca //25// kalmaṣasya vighatārtham nārasimhīṃ mahāmate / kṛtvā vai sāmpratam dīkṣāṃ dadyād vai //26//.

“Even if earlier one behaved badly, ate everything, was a murderer [or] an agnostic (nāstika), he should trustfully seek refuge in the first of Gods. You should know that thanks to the great Ātman, such a person becomes sinless. So what about the man, who is engaged in religious austerities, devoted to that order, desists from sins and stays in a shadow of bhakti?”

Quite surprisingly, in the context of ŚatS the actual worshipping of Narasimha in the form of mantra (narasimhakalpa) most probably points to the novitiate time when the adepts already initiated with that mantra are kept under the observation before they undertake the regular initiation (ŚatS 16.27-29ab): 54

“Having observed the external and internal adoration of the mantra of the God in a form of a vibhava [carried out] correctly for four, eight or twelve months depending on the strength of character [of an adept] and having previously recognized the grace of the God towards those expecting the future, [the teacher] should immediately confer the initiation called vibhava, vyūha [or] suksma.”

Also Alaśīṅgabhaṭṭa (19th century) in his commentary on ŚatS entitled Śatvatatantrabhāṣya, while referring to the relevant passage concerning narasimhadīkṣā, clearly states that its only function is to remove the sins committed during the previous births. Then, as he says, comes the observation period, when the teacher should make the adept propitiate Narasimha in his mantric form (tena nṛsimhārādhanaṁ ca kārayet). After that he is allowed to be initiated regularly. 55

54 ŚatS 16.27-29ab: ārādhanaṁ hi tasyaiva vaibhaviyasya vai vibhoḥ / sabāhyābahyantarām caiva samyaṁmāsacatuṣṭayam //27// māsāṣṭakam vatsaraṁ vā buddhāvabalam purā / jñātvā bhavyāsatvānāṁ ca pra-sādam pārameśvaram //28// vibhavyavyūhāṣūkṣmākhyāṁ dīksām kuryād anantaram /.

55 Śatvatatantrabhāṣya on ŚatS 16. 25[cd]-29[ab]: pūrvoktabrahmakūrcādiprayāscittānāṁ iha janmani sampāditadoṣamātrasāmakatvāt prāg bahuwanmārjitaḍaśamanārtham nṛsimhamantraḍākṣāṁ api dattvā
He said: having initiated [him] with the help of nṛṣimhamantra in order to destroy sins gathered during many previous births, since in the case of atonements such as brahmakūrca only sins committed during present life have been removed, he should make [the adept] propitiate Narasimha by the means of that mantra. Having recognized in him the grace of the God in a form of purified mind, etc., he should initiate him with the help of mantras of para, vyūha and vibhava [forms of God].

While removing fetters is not surprising in the context of initiation (dikṣā), since apart from bestowing knowledge it is the most important function of the tantric initiation granting liberation, stressed mostly within Śaiva literature but proclaimed also for example by Vaiṣṇava Lakṣmītantra,⁵⁶ from the point of view of SātS the aim of the practice seems to be modified. Since the initiation with the help of the mantra of Narasimha should be followed by the process of mastering that mantra, perceived from the perspective of the redactor of SātS 16 as the time of trial, and then, by the next initiations, we can presume that both practices, narásimhadikṣā and narásimhakalpa, act in that context as the complex process of purifying/converting the adepts and preparing them to join the regular ceremony of initiation. Therefore, regardless the typically siddhi-oriented character of the ritual

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⁵⁶ See the locus classicus of the Kiranāgama 6.19: anekabhavikāṁ karma dagdhāṁ bijam ivānubhiḥ / bhavisyad api samruddham yenedam tad dhi bhogataḥ // – “The mantras burn the karma of one’s many former lives and prevent any future karma. [But] that [karma] by means of which [one lives] this [present life is destroyed only] by [its fruition into] experience;” Sander son (1993: 287). Compare the definition of the Lakṣmītantra 41.5cd-6ab: yad dyati kleśakarmādāṇī ksayaty akhilāṁ padam //5// kṣapayitvā malaṁ sarvam dadāti ca paraṁ padam //.
dedicated to Narasimha, another function appears to be superimposed onto it in SātS 16-17.

On the other hand, in comparison to ĪŚ II there are not only totally different procedures of the initiation into the mantra of Narasimha (described in the 3rd chapter of ĪŚ II and SātS 17) being the prerequisite of the practice focused on worshipping it, but also the mantra itself differs. In the case of SātS 17 the mantra of Narasimha consists of 12 syllables and goes as follows: om nama narasimhāya bhagavate.57 However, according to the second chapter of ĪŚ II the mantra of Narasimha is: ugrām vīrām mahaviṣṇum jvalantam sarvatomukham / nṛsimham bhīṣaṇaṁ bhadram mṛtyumṛtyunam namāmi aham. It is described as starting with the letter “u” and ending with the letter “ha,” containing 32 syllables, 11 words (pada) [and] being composed in anuṣṭubh (metre).58 One can extract the respective words (pada) of the mantra from the section of the text structurally resembling a hymn (stotra).59 Each verse of the hymn contains exactly one pada of the mantra:60

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57 The process of extraction the mantra of Narasimha along with its aṅgamantras is described in: SātS 17. 4[cd]-12.

58 ĪŚ II, 2nd paṭala: ukārādihakārāntam dvātrimsadvarṇasamyutam / ekādaśapadārūḍham nṛsimhānuṣṭu[bh]am (conj. N; nṛsimhonuṣṭu[...]am MS) manum //2//

59 The stotra, as an independent unit, is popular even nowadays under the title Śrīmantrarāja padastotra (“Hymn [praising] venerated words of the King of mantras”). The published version of stotra-text has been unavailable to me so far, but an e-text, found on: http://www.srihayagrivan.org/html/ebook042.htm (access 1.11.2011) came into my possession. An almost identical version, edited by Sunder Kidambi, one can find on http://www.prapatti.com/slokas/sanskrit/mantraraajapadastotram.pdf (access 10.10.2009) and this is the one I used mostly as the source of reference due to the poor condition of that passage in the manuscript and therefore in the transcript.

60 Since it occurred that in the transcript of the 2nd paṭala of ĪŚ II the lines 8-9 are missing (the whole stotra in the transcript covers the verses 4-12, so the lines in question would be 11-12), in the present phase of my research
“I bow to the terrible (ugra) Viṣṇu with round, wide open eyes, who has been consecrated to destroy enemies and whose roar terrifies the world.

I bow to the hero (vīra) who with his claws tore to pieces the son of

I used the above mentioned e-text. However, its last verse does not occur in the transcript available to me. It reads: śaṅkarenādarāt proktam padānām tattvanirṇayam / trisandhyam ya paṭhet tasya śrīrvidyāyuś ca vardhate //12// “The one, who recites thrice a day the ascertainment of truth (tattva) of words taught respectfully by Śaṅkara, will enjoy the increase of prosperity, knowledge and long life.” The term “Śaṅkara” clearly refers to Śiva, who, in that case, being the author of the stotra, must be perceived as an ardent follower of Narasimha.” So far I cannot explain why that verse does not appear in the manuscript/transcript. Moreover, readings of the lines 5-6 of the e-text and corresponding lines 8-9 of transcript are slightly different, though it does not affect significantly the meaning: the version of the transcript I put into square brackets. The consecutive words of mantra are in bold font.

Diti along with his army, even though everyone thought that he is immortal.
I bow to the great Viṣṇu (mahāviṣṇu) whose feet rest on hells, whose head fills three worlds, and whose arms embrace the eight cardinal points.
I bow to the shining one (jvalanta), with whose splendour in due order lightning, sun, moon, stars, fire, etc. shine.
I bow to the peaceful one, facing in all directions (sarvatomukha), who always and everywhere knows everything, though he is free from all senses. [I bow today to the one, who faces in all directions, who always and everywhere knows everything, though he is free from all senses].
I bow to the mighty Narasiṃha (nṛsimha), half-man and half-lion, having great teeth and seated on a splendid seat. [ I bow to the mighty Narasiṃha, half-man and half-lion, having matted mane and great teeth].
I bow to the terrifying one (bhīṣaṇa) - recollecting [his] name destroys frightened demons, vampires, rakṣasas and diseases, etc.
I bow to the auspicious one (bhadra), pleased by auspicious Śrī - having resorted to him, everyone obtains complete auspiciousness.
I bow to the destroyer of death (mṛtyumṛtyu), who having appeared in a proper time, destroys death and kills the groups of enemies of his devotees.
I bow (namāmi) to him who fulfils all desires. Having offered him homage and oneself, a man becomes free from sorrow.
I bow, having thought: “By nature, every soul is a servant of the Highest Spirit, so I (aham) am also your servant.”

As we can read further on in ĪŚ II, the mantra of Narasiṃha in anuṣṭubh is known to and venerated by followers of Tantra as well as orthodox knowers of Vedas.⁶¹

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⁶¹ ĪŚ II, 2nd paṭala: evam ekādaśapadaṁ puṣpavat grastāṁ (emend.; gra-sitaṁ TR)purā / sarvadevatasmāṁśiṁśaṁ (emend.; sarvan devatam sāṁśiṁśaṁ TR) sarvaśaktisamanvitaṁ //16// vedeṣu vaidikair eva vedyate vedapāragaiḥ / tantreṣu tāntrikair eva vedyate tatra kovidaiḥ //17//.
“Thus, [the word “Narasimha”] surrounded by eleven *padas* like a flower, endowed with all deities, possessing all powers / is explained by Vaidikas skilled in *Vedas* in Vedic scriptures and by Tantrikas learnt in tantric scriptures. //16-17//”

In fact, the mantra of Narasimha embracing 32 syllables comes from *Nṛsimhatāpanīyopaniṣad* which belongs to *Atharvaveda* tradition and consists of two parts: *Nṛsimhapūrvatāpanīya* and *Nṛsimhottararatāpanīya*.\(^{62}\) It occurs in the former one, II. 3.5. According to Deussen,\(^ {63}\) that symbolical book belonged to a pretty exclusive sect, and therefore of limited spread, focused upon Viṣṇu in the form of Narasimha, manifesting some ascetic inclinations. As he says, “the first half of *upaniṣad* teaches the worship of Viṣṇu through a sacred formula composed in *anuṣṭubh* metre whereby, however, the worship aims more at the formula than at the god and it plays a similar role (...) than the role played by (...) the holy sound Om in so many Ātharvaṇa Upaniṣads. As in the Om-sound, similarly, in the Narasimha formula also the whole Veda is comprised; it is the Mantrarāja, the “king of formulas” which was of service in the world-creation (...).” Many philosophical suggestions are interspersed within the second part so in the words of Deussen\(^ {64}\) “to unfold this deeper content for those, who were receptive to it, and to whom the *Pūrvatāpanīya* served only as a preliminary stage, is the aim of the *Nṛsimha-uttara-tāpanīya-upaniṣad*.\(^ {65}\)

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\(^{62}\) According to Goudriaan, the same mantra appears in some Balinese manuscripts where it is sometimes additionally recommended to meditate on oneself as Narasimha who slavens the demon Hiranyakasipu. See Goudriaan 1978:127.

\(^{63}\) Deussen 1980:809-810.

\(^{64}\) *Ibidem*:835.

\(^{65}\) Tripathi 1978. According to Tripathi, *mantrarāja* is optionally used during Navakalevara ritual in the Jagannātha temple in Puri, when periodical renewal of its wooden images takes place. In the context of Orissa it is also mentioned by Sanderson in his article on Atharvavedins in Tantric Territory in
The same “king-mantra” (mantrarāja) is recognized also within canonical literature of Pāṇcarātra, however it is promulgated neither by SātS nor Īśvarasamhitā, but by AhS. Its three consecutive chapters (AhS 54-56) are completely devoted to the explanation of the subtle (sūkṣma) and gross (sthūla) aspect of its respective words. According to AhS, the mantra of Narasimha in anuṣṭubh meter is suitable for aspirants of any of five major schools of thought, including Śaiva Pāṣupatas.⁶⁶ It is regarded to be the highest knowledge (param jñānam) by all of them:⁶⁷

“This great formula of Narasimha makes all miracles come true and the pleasures of heaven, intermediate region and earth happen. /
It prevents from the calamities of three kinds like these related to the soul, etc. \((\text{adhyātmikādi})\), as well as destroys Rakṣasas, Daityas and Dānavas. O great sage, it is [regarded to be] the highest knowledge by the adherents of Sāmkhya doctrine, a ladder to the world by self controlled yogins, the only path by noble Sāttvatas, the property by the adherents of Vedānta and the doctrine by Pāṣupatas."

The gross nature of the following words constituting the \textit{anuṣṭubh} mantra is elaborated upon in AhS 54. 8-16, whereas the explanation of its subtle nature is continued until the end of chapter 56. The gross nature of mantra is common to the followers of all orders. The subtle one is presented in two sections. The first one explains the secret meaning of words in their \textit{sūkṣma} aspect as common to all (AhS 54. 17-40ab), while the second one does it as specified according to the sectarian view. So the view of Sāmkhya doctrine is covered in AhS 54. 40cd-55, the view of Yoga in AhS 55.1-8ab, the view of Pāṣupata in AhS 55.8cd-14, the view of Vedānta is said to be explained earlier (AhS 55.15ab),\textsuperscript{68} and two ways of explanation according to Sāttvatas (Pāñcarātras) are covered in AhS 55.15-33ab and AhS 55.34cd-55.53, which continues until the end of AhS 56. The latter one, being the highest one, concerns the explanation of the respective letters of the mantra and associates them with respective \textit{vibhava} deities.

It is also AhS in light of which the occurrence of such interlocutors as Īśvara/Śiva and Pārvatī becomes less astonishing in the context of a Vaiṣṇava text as ĪŚ II presents itself choosing for the locus of ascription \textit{Īśvarasamhitā} of Pāñcarātra school (though indeed originally it seems to transmit Vaiṣṇava tradition). AhS, regardless of the obvious affiliation to Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātra, takes its name from Ahirbudhnya, the aspect of Śiva who hands down its revelation in the course of a dialogue with other sages, which probably might be explained by the attempt to present its system of knowledge as interesting even for Śaivas. The introductory statement of the first chapter of

\textsuperscript{68} The editor says that „before“ (\textit{pūrva}) refers to AhS 55.17-40ab, so we can presume that it is shared with the explanation common to all orders.
Ís II, saying: “Having approached duly the God of Gods, the ruler of the World who is seated on top of the Kailāśa mountain, Pārvatī said,”69 apparently refers to myths connected with the same God. The doubts are resolved by a clear division of roles introduced probably by an editor/scribe: Pārvatī/Devī and Īśvara. However, it might be significant that the God is not addressed within at least initial parts of the text literally with his proper name (Śiva), but in a general way (īśvara). Thus, such a method obviously creates some confusion in terms of the sectarian affiliation of the text and opens possibility, regardless of its actual content, to classify it within both traditions, either Vaiśṇava or Śaiva. However, it is possible that in the case of Ís II the names of interlocutors were introduced or superimposed in the process of reworking, because, as Smith points out,70 there are some cases in Baroda manuscript where the results of unsuccessful correction are visible: Pārvatī is addressed “O holy sage!” Moreover, apart from single terms attributing the parts of the dialogue, the sentence establishing the interlocutors appears just at the beginning of the first chapter, which is usually prone to being reworked. What motives might be behind such superimposition? Primarily, the fact that one of the interlocutors in Ís II is designated with the term īśvara is a factor excusing the text’s aspiration to be perceived as Īśvarasamhitā. For many Pāñcarātra samhitās (as well as Śaiva-āgamas) take their titles after the God revealing the text himself, called by one of his many names referring to his various modes, or with the help of adjectives describing his majesty and power.71 So we have Viśnusamhitā called after Viṣṇu, Paramasamhitā called after the Highest One (Parama),

69 Ís II, 1st paṭala: kailāśaśikharāsīnān devadevān jagatpatim / vinayenopasāṅgatyā pārvatī vākyam abravīd //1//.
70 Smith 1975-80:87.
71 However, it happens that samhitās are called after the supreme goddess (Lakṣmī), who is a promulgator of the text (i.e. Lakṣmītantra) or in a descriptive way (i.e. Jñānāṃṛtasārāsamhitā; “The Essence of the Immortal Knowledge”).
Isvarasamhita or Narasimhakalpa

Pārameśvarasamhitā called after the Highest God (Paramēśvara) or Íśvarasamhitā referring to God (Íśvara). Yet, in the context of tantric texts it is also important how and to whom a particular knowledge is communicated. According to Goudriaan\(^72\) two stages of communication of verbal tradition can be distinguished: in the case of Saiva-śākta tradition the first one is inaugurated by Śiva himself, though he may act in one of his manifestations, whose first recipient is usually (with the exception of some early texts) his spouse – Devī/Śakti or one of her manifestation.\(^73\) The second stage starts when because of Devī’s indiscretion the knowledge moves from the divine space to the human one. In that situation the recipients are usually sages (ṛṣi) or divine emanations who just transmit the knowledge, but never reveal it.\(^74\) However, as Goudriaan continues, with time passing the chain of following intermediaries shortens and enlightening Devī is sufficient. If so, the replacement of interlocutors from a sage to Devī might be explained not merely by the fact that Śiva is supposed to teach his consort but also by the attempt to present the secret knowledge he transmits as purely divine and original. Additionally, handing down the doctrine of Vaiṣṇavas within the “artificial” frame of a dialogue between the Śaiva couple most probably might be excused, similarly to the pattern of Ahirbudhnyasamhitā, by an attempt to show that even Śaiva gods are prone to spreading vaiṣṇava revelation and, what is more, are impressed by it. Such an effect has been obtained by putting into

\(^72\) Goudriaan 1981:4-5.

\(^73\) There are also texts presenting the knowledge transmitted by Śiva as too difficult to comprehend even by Pārvatī. See: Galewicz 2010 (unpublished paper) on addressing a divine consort in quasi tantric text Yāmalāṭakatantra: “Oddly enough when Śiva agrees to share his knowledge with her he makes it his point to remain transcendent vis a vis his teaching, so he explicitly puts it in the language spoken by somebody else, in words other than his own, already spoken out in another time in a different situation: since his own words – as he points to her – would remain beyond her comprehension.”

the mouth of Pārvatī a sentence admitting that the mantra of Narasimha has no equal among other mantras.  

Still, there is one more argument for excusing the superimposition of Śaiva interlocutors in the context of the text allocating itself to Vaiṣṇava tradition and, in fact, preaching it. It is the character of Narasimha that enables the redactor to rework the text in that particular way. The deity, being a link between two streams of Hinduism, gives a chance to introduce the content of Vaiṣṇava text into the mouth of Śiva and his consort.

According to the most popular myths, Narasimha, nowadays most popular in the region of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, slaughtered demon Hiranyakasipu in order to save his son Prahlāda, a dedicated follower of Viṣṇu. As it was possible only in the in-between situation, meaning neither man nor animal could kill the demon, neither during the day nor at night, neither within a house nor outside, neither with a weapon nor with a hand, etc., therefore Viṣṇu appeared in a form of Narasimha, half man and half lion, at dusk, on a threshold and dismembered him with his claws keeping the demon on his own lap. Resembling an ambivalent Śiva in his ferocious Bhairava form, Narasimha started to be perceived as a terrible (ugra) aspect of Viṣṇu. As a result of that analogy, the theological debates between supporters of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism were usually held within his myth. These discussions were carried out either within late Śaiva modification of that myth, or quite contrary, within its strongly antiśaiva Vaiṣṇava versions. In the case of the latter, there are some Narasimha myths which turned into, as Eschmann calls it, a kind of antiśivaite propaganda. According to them, demon Hiranyakasipu was the follower of Śiva who was finally killed by Viṣṇu. However, there are also Śaiva mutations of the former

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75 It might be supported by the fact that in the e-text of Śrīmantrarāja-padastotra it is openly stated in the 12th verse that it is Śiva who proclaims it, admitting that he is a devotee of Narasimha, see note 60.

76 Eschmann 1978: 104.
type, where it is not Viṣṇu, but Śiva, who saves the world from demons assuming the form of Śarabha, called alternatively Vīrabhadra, a monster being half bird and half lion. So, according to these myths, having killed Hiranyakaśipu, Narasimha boasted of his omnipotence and became dangerous to the world. Śiva, assuming the form of Vīrabhadra, defeated him, making him at the same time a part of his own body and declaring that in this way Viṣṇu became included in the body of Śiva. According to Eschmann, it is not only the theological demonstration of Śiva’s superiority but also the validation of Narasimha worship within Śaivism. However, the similarity between Śiva and Narasimha has also an iconographic dimension. Eschmann lists two parallels of that type. Firstly, it is the way of depicting Śiva as emerging from a liṅga, usually represented by a large column, which resembles the scene when Narasimha emerges from a pillar. Secondly, there are direct borrowings from Narasimha iconography into Śaivism. For example, the form of Bhairava is an obvious imitation of a Man-Lion, directly taken into Śaivism, as both of them are said to have emerged in the same way from a pillar. What is more, the application of the representation of Narasimha into the form of Bhairava plays, in Eschmann’s opinion, an important role within the concept of Hinduization and, hence, the origin of Jagannātha deity of Puri. On the other hand, in the case of Andhra Pradesh, especially in the Kurnool District, Narasimha is predominantly associated with a popular pattern spread within the folk religion: the god falls in love with a local girl and takes her as the second wife, combining in that way both worlds: recognized by orthodox

77 Śaiva versions of Narasimha myth can be found for example in: Śivapurāṇa 2, Rudrasamhitā 5, Yuddhakhanda 43; Śivapurāṇa 3, Satarudrasamhitā 10-12; Skandapurāṇa, Prabhāsakhaṇḍa 2, Vastrāpathamāhātmya 18.; Liṅgapurāṇa 1. 95-96. See: Jena 2000.
79 Eschmann 1978:104.
80 Ibidem:105.
82 Eschmann 1978.
and folk traditions. In the area of Ahobilam, Narasimha’s first wife is thus Lakṣmī while the second one is Ceṅcū-Łakṣmī, the daughter of a Ceṅcū tribe chief. As Sontheimer writes, although Narasimha has been considered as avatāra of Viṣṇu and worshipped within Vaiṣṇava stream quite early, there was also a tribal deity, originating in a forest and visualized as an animal, the lion, which was called Narasimha and finally identified with the incarnation of Viṣṇu.

The other aspect of Narasimha is Sudarśana, the personification of Viṣṇu’s discus, which is strongly extolled within the whole AhS and, on the other hand, mentioned in one of the colophons of the manuscript of ĪŚ II from Baroda. Significantly, he displays some connections with Śiva. Being a deification of Viṣṇus’s discus, Sudarśana is customarily associated with Viṣṇu and identified with the solar symbol, but there are at least a few myths explaining its origin. According to one of them (Mhbb 1.225.23), so called discus (cakra) was given by Agni to Kṛṣṇa. Another version says (Mhbb 13.14.74) that it was created by Śiva and then offered by him to Kṛṣṇa. Śiva appears also in a myth according to which the discus owes its name to himself, because he was the only one able to look at it (prefix su – “good,” darśana – derivative √dṛś – “to look at”). However, Gonda links its significance with the Vedic tradition according to which derivatives of “su-√dṛś” relate to the sun, fire, lightening, auspicious Soma and gods Mitra nad Varuṇa. Sudarśana-Narasimha gained the greatest popularity in Southern India. Basically, he is depicted in two ways: either he is shown as the anthropomorphic image of Narasimha on the reverse of the image of Sudarśana as deification of Viṣṇu’s discus, or as Narasimha in the center of a discus (cakra), where he sits holding four discuses in his four hands. In the case of Pāncarātra, only late samhitās provide information on the identification of Narasimha.

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83 Sontheimer 1985:146-147.
84 Ibidem:145.
and Sudarśana. The most important deities on the saundarśanayantra which is described in AhS (and also is based on it Pārameśvarasamhitā) are Sudarśana, to whom the text is devoted, and Narasimha.\(^{87}\)

Another text contributing to the understanding of the process of identification of these two is Vihagendrasamhitā (15\(^{th}\) century).\(^{88}\) The protective function of both Narasimha and Sudarśana is probably the reason of such identification. In spite of his terrifying appearance, Sudarśana-Narasimha bestows his followers with peace and removes their fear.

It is too early to draw definite conclusions regarding the meaning and place of Narasimhakalpa/Īsvarasamhitā II within Pāncarātra, yet, even at the initial level of research it turns out that it ascribes itself to Īsvarasamhitā which is definitely more recognized by the tradition. There are some hints allowing us to speculate about the inner logic of belonging to that particular samhitā. The most probable one seems to be the appearance of the ritual-cluster leading to the acquisition of magical powers (kalpa) and dedicated to Narasimha in the 17\(^{th}\) chapter of SātS regarded to be the traditional base (mūla) of Īsvarasamhitā. Nevertheless, the mantra of Narasimha extolled in the IS II is different from that promulgated by SātS, but identical with the one known to another text of Pāncarātra, namely AhS. If so, we can presume that at least two levels of Narasimha-oriented cults within Pāncarātra might be traceable, among which the one found in IS II, representing probably the later phase of its development, displays considerable, though probably imposed, hospitality for Śaivas. The explanation of the textual modifications within IS II, especially through superimposition of interlocutors, and then allocation to renowned samhitā, might be therefore not only, taking into consideration the idea of locus of ascription, the wish to enhance the existence of the less known work within

\(^{87}\) Rastelli 2007:148, footnote 140. The sudarśanayantra is used especially by kings in order to secure their kingship.

\(^{88}\) However, Starza points out that despite the presence of the cult of Sudarśana-Narasimha in literature, his earliest representation found in South India dates back to the 16\(^{th}\) or 17\(^{th}\) century. See: Starza 1993:69.
the recognized canon without extending it, but also, quite contrary,
the wish to consolidate and strengthen the Pāñcarātra tradition by rep-
resenting its knowledge as attractive and valuable even for religious
opponents. It was possible with the help of the religiously ambivalent
character of Narasimha being the focus-point of the kalpa practice,
so it appears that some markers of sectarian identity (names of god-
heads, recognizable narrative structures) happened to be reappropri-
ated by rival traditions into their knowledge systems in order to serve
the aim of extending the realm of appeal to adherents of their rivals.

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