

The Death of Sanskrit*

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“Toutes les civilisations sont mortelles” (Paul Valéry)

In the age of Hindu identity politics (Hindutva) inaugurated in the 1990s by the ascendancy of the Indian People's Party (Bharatiya Janata Party) and its ideological auxiliary, the World Hindu Council (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), Indian cultural and religious nationalism has been promulgating ever more distorted images of India's past. Few things are as central to this revisionism as Sanskrit, the dominant culture language of precolonial southern Asia outside the Persianate order. Hindutva propagandists have sought to show, for example, that Sanskrit was indigenous to India, and they purport to decipher Indus Valley seals to prove its presence two millennia before it actually came into existence. In a farcical repetition of Romantic myths of primevality, Sanskrit is considered—according to the characteristic hyperbole of the VHP—the source and sole preserver of world culture. The state's anxiety both about Sanskrit's role in shaping the historical identity of the Hindu nation and about its contemporary vitality has manifested itself in substantial new funding for Sanskrit education, and in the declaration of 1999–2000 as the “Year of Sanskrit,” with plans for conversation camps, debate and essay competitions, drama festivals, and the like.¹

This anxiety has a longer and rather melancholy history in independent India, far antedating the rise of the BJP. Sanskrit was introduced into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India (1949) as a recognized language of the new State of India, ensuring it all the benefits accorded the other fourteen (now seventeen) spoken languages listed. This status largely meant funding for Sanskrit colleges and universities, and for a national organization to stimulate the study of the language. With few exceptions, however, the Sanskrit pedagogy and scholarship at these institutions have shown a precipitous decline from pre-Independence quality and standards, almost in inverse proportion to the amount of funding they receive. Sanskrit literature has fared no better. From the time of its founding in 1955, the Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Letters) has awarded prizes in Sanskrit literature as one of the twenty-two officially acknowledged literary languages. But the first five of these awards were given for

*I am grateful to Allison Busch and Lawrence McCrea, both of the University of Chicago, for their critical reading of this essay.

works in English or Hindi on Sanskrit culture, while the first literary text honored was a book of pattern poems (*citrakāvya*), an almost metaliterary genre entirely unintelligible without specialized training.

Such disparities between political inputs and cultural outcomes could be detailed across the board. What it all demonstrates—the Sanskrit periodicals and journals, feature films and daily newscasts on All-India Radio, school plays, prize poems, and the rest—may be too obvious to mention: that Sanskrit as a communicative medium in contemporary India is completely denaturalized. Its cultivation constitutes largely an exercise in nostalgia for those directly involved, and, for outsiders, a source of bemusement that such communication takes place at all. Government feeding tubes and oxygen tanks may try to preserve the language in a state of quasi-animation, but most observers would agree that, in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead.

Although we often speak of languages as being dead, the metaphor is misleading, suggesting biologicistic or evolutionary beliefs about cultural change that are deeply flawed.² The misconception carries a number of additional liabilities. Some might argue that as a learned language of intellectual discourse and belles lettres, Sanskrit had never been exactly alive in the first place. But the usual distinction in play here between living and dead languages is more than a little naive. It cannot accommodate the fact that all written languages are learned and learned, and therefore in some sense frozen in time (“dead”); or, conversely, that such languages often are as supple and dynamically changing (“alive”) as so-called natural ones. Yet the assumption that Sanskrit was never alive has discouraged the attempt to grasp its later history; after all, what is born dead has no later history. As a result, there exist no good accounts or theorizations of the end of the cultural order that for two millennia exerted a trans-regional influence across Asia—South, Southeast, Inner, and even East Asia—that was unparalleled until the rise of Americanism and global English. We have no clear understanding of whether, and if so, when, Sanskrit culture ceased to make history; whether, and if so, why, it proved incapable of preserving into the present the creative vitality it displayed in earlier epochs, and what this loss of effectivity might reveal about those factors within the wider world of society and polity that had kept it vital.

If better theories or histories or metaphors are unavailable for grasping the broad *Wirkungsgeschichte* of a cultural form like Sanskrit, this is all the more the case in trying to distinguish among its constituent parts, and their effects and histories. Consider the history of the Sanskrit knowledge-systems. The two centuries before European colonialism decisively established itself in the sub-continent around 1750 constitute one of the most innovative epochs of Sanskrit systematic thought (in language analysis, logic, hermeneutics, moral-legal philosophy, and the rest). Thinkers produced new formulations of old problems, in entirely new discursive idioms, in what were often new scholarly genres employing often a new historicist framework; some even called themselves (or,

more often, their enemies) “the new” scholars (*navya*). Concurrently with the spread of European power, however, this dynamism diminished so much that by 1800, the capacity of Sanskrit thought to make history had vanished. The production of moral-legal texts, for example, which was so extensive throughout the seventeenth century, ceased entirely, and in core disciplines like hermeneutics or literary theory no significant scholarship—that is, significant in the eyes of the tradition itself—was again to be written. How to account for this momentous rupture is a complex question, and one of great importance for history—the history of science, colonialism, modernity—and for social theory.³

The world of Sanskrit is broad and deep, and it would be unsurprising to find different domains following different historical rhythms and requiring different measures of vitality. Nor are these other domains less significant than the knowledge-systems. The communication of new imagination, for example, is hardly less valuable in itself than the communication of new information. In fact, a language’s capacity to function as a vehicle for such imagination is one crucial measure of its social energy. This is so in part because the text-genre that above all others embodies imagination and its associated expressivity—called *kāvya* in Sanskrit or “literature” in modern English (a coherent cultural phenomenon in precolonial South Asia, however much disrupted in western modernity)—is itself often an argument about how language is to be used, indeed, about how life is to be lived. If *kāvya* was important to the imaginative life of society and even the self-understanding of polity, as it demonstrably was, then its history must tell us something important about the life of the larger cultural formation it indexed.⁴

In the memorable year of 1857, a Gujarati poet, Dalpatrām Dahyabhai, was the first to speak of the death of Sanskrit:

All the feasts and great donations
King Bhoja gave the Brahmans
were obsequies he made on finding
the language of the gods had died.
Seated in state Bajirao performed
its after-death rite with great pomp.
And today, the best of kings across the land
observe its yearly memorial.⁵

The poet sensed that some important transformation had occurred at the beginning of the second millennium, which made the great literary courts of the age, such as Bhoja’s, the stuff of legend (which last things often become); that the cultivation of Sanskrit by eighteenth-century rulers like the Peshwas of Maharashtra was too little too late; that the Sanskrit cultural order of his own time was sheer nostalgic ceremony. This is a remarkable intuition of part of the story, but it is only part, and only intuition.

What follows here is a first attempt to understand something of the death of Sanskrit literary culture as a historical process. Four cases are especially instruc-

tive: The disappearance of Sanskrit literature in Kashmir, a premier center of literary creativity, after the thirteenth century; its diminished power in sixteenth-century Vijayanagara, the last great imperial formation of southern India; its short-lived moment of modernity at the Mughal court in mid-seventeenth-century Delhi; and its ghostly existence in Bengal on the eve of colonialism. Each case raises a different question: first, about the kind of political institutions and civic ethos required to sustain Sanskrit literary culture; second, whether and to what degree competition with vernacular cultures eventually affected it; third, what factors besides newness of style or even subjectivity would have been necessary for consolidating a Sanskrit modernity, and last, whether the social and spiritual nutrients that once gave life to this literary culture could have mutated into the toxins that killed it.

1. THE LADY VANISHES

One evening in about the year 1140, a literary gathering took place in a private home in Pravarapura (present-day Srinagar), in the Vale of Kashmir. The host was Alaṅkāra (also called Laṅkaka), an official of the Kashmir royal court and the older brother of the poet and lexicographer Maṅkha, in whose honor the event was arranged. Maṅkha was to give a reading of his recently completed courtly epic on the god Śiva, the *Śrīkaṅṭhacarita* (The Deeds of Śiva). It is in fact from the autobiographical narrative in the last chapter of this work that we learn about the literary evening. As the poet makes his way through the audience hall, he greets the various guests and briefly describes their accomplishments in the world of Sanskrit culture. And an extraordinary assembly it was.

Foremost among the scholars present was Ruyyaka, Maṅkha's teacher, whose *Alaṅkārasarvasva* (Compendium of Rhetorical Figures) had secured him a reputation as the greatest authority on tropology in the century since Mammaṭa wrote his famous textbook *Kāvya prakāśa* (Light on Literature [ca. 1050]). Kalhaṇa was there—Maṅkha calls him by his formal Sanskrit name Kalyāṇa—in the course of writing the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* (River of Kings), the most remarkable historical poem ever composed in the Sanskrit language. There were other men in the audience whose works have almost wholly been lost to history, but whose attainments as described by Maṅkha encapsulate the literary values of the age: men like Trailokya, “who was as accomplished in the dry complexities of systematic thought as he was bold in the craft of literature, and thus seemed the very reincarnation of Śrī Tutātita; Jinduka, who “bathed in the two streams of hermeneutical thought, and thereby washed off the pollution of the Kali age,” and who at the same time wrote “goodly verses” that would find a place in the poetic anthologies, as would those of Jalhaṇa, “a poet to rival Murāri and Rājaśekhara,” two great poets of the tenth century. And of course there was Alaṅkāra himself, whose own literary works “circulated widely in manuscript form” and made him the peer of Bāṇa, the literary prose master of the seventh century.⁶

Altogether more than thirty guests were in attendance: philosophers, theologians, architects, physicians, ambassadors, including one from the court of the Gāhaḍavālas of Kanauj, then at their zenith, and another from the Śīlāhāra court on the southwest coast. In short, this was an assembly that embodied all the intellectual force and expressive power and refined cosmopolitanism of Sanskrit literary culture at its most brilliant, a group of men who could look back ten centuries and more and see themselves as equals of the greatest literati of the past. It was, to be sure, a brilliance of the sort Kashmir had produced repeatedly for more than half a millennium, at least from the time of the celebrated poet Bhartṛmēṭha in the sixth century. What makes this particular generation of Sanskrit poets so noteworthy is that it turned out to be Kashmir's last.

Within fifty years the creative Sanskrit literary culture of Kashmir had disappeared. The production of literature in all of the major genres (courtly epic, drama, and the rest) ceased entirely, and the vast repertory of Sanskrit literary forms was reduced to the *stotra* (hymn). The generation of poets immediately following Maṅkha's is almost a complete blank, and we know of only one work from the entire following century and a half.⁷ As for new literary theory, which had been produced in almost every generation from 800 on—theory so innovative and powerful that it swept down from the mountains and took hold of all India by the end of the eleventh century, transforming the way everyone thought about literary meaning and readerly response—this was over. The last work to circulate outside of Kashmir was the *Alaṅkāraśāstra* (Mine of Tropes) of Śobhākarmitra, probably from the end of the twelfth century. When in the fifteenth century Sanskrit literary culture again manifested itself, it was a radically-altered formation, in respect to both what people wrote and how, historically, they regarded their work.

This recommencement occurred at the court of the Sultan Zain-ul-'ābidīn (r. 1420–70), who established civic peace after decades of anarchy and violence, while at the same time reinstating courtly patronage of Sanskrit learning. This represents a fascinating experiment in cross-cultural communication, which has yet to receive the scholarly attention it merits. Here I can only sketch what I believe to be new about the Sanskrit side of this experiment, and suggest how little it had in common with the kind of culture represented by the literati attending Alaṅkāra's soirée. The differences will become evident from a glance at the work of two representative figures from that court.

The first substantial literary production since the generation of the 1140s was the work of Jonarāja, the principal Sanskrit scholar at Zain's court. The fact that Jonarāja was commissioned by the Sultan's "minister of customary affairs" to produce a continuation of Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* (from the point where Kalhaṇa left off, with King Jayasiṃha, ca. 1150) is as much an indication of the three-centuries-long literary vacuum as of the character of the new cultural order. About the writing of poetic history, or any history, between Kalhaṇa's time and his own, Jonarāja tells us, "From [Kalhaṇa's] day to this no poet sought to

bring back to life the kings of the past with the elixir of his discourse. Perhaps it was because of the troubles in the land, or because, perhaps, of the evil fate of the kings themselves.” Jonarāja understood that a vast gulf—not just a historical gulf but a cultural one—separated him from Kalhaṇa. Although like its model this second *Rājataranṅiṇī* calls itself a literary work (“a tree of poetry in whose shade those travelers who are kings can cool the heat of the prideful ways of their forebears”), it is a bland chronicle, and has nothing of the aesthetic objectives of its prototype. Here for once the self-deprecation with which Sanskrit literary works conventionally begin, from Kālidāsa to Bāṇa and onward, finds some purchase: “What have these two in common, this shallow well of my literary talent and the wave-crested ocean of [Kalhaṇa’s] poem? . . . My work can succeed only by attaching itself to Kalhaṇa’s text. If it flows into a river even ditch water is eventually drunk.”⁸ The other works Jonarāja has left behind—commentaries on courtly epics and a few gnomic verses (*nīti*) preserved in a later anthology—serve only to substantiate the grounds for his humility, and, again, to measure the distance Sanskrit culture has traveled from its peak.⁹

The anthology just mentioned was in part the work of our second author, Śrīvara, the most interesting intellectual at the court of Zain-ul-‘ābidīn. Śrīvara was in fact Jonarāja’s student, and when “the Creator took him,” writes Śrīvara of his teacher, “as if in anger that the poet immortalized those whom He had made to be mortal” (vss. 5–7), the student continued the *Rājataranṅiṇī*, his narrative covering the period from 1459, the year of Jonarāja’s death, to 1486, presumably the year of his own. Even more than Jonarāja, Śrīvara eschews the label of poet: “Expect no literary excellence here, but read because of interest in the king’s deeds. The book is meant to memorialize him—let others write sweet poems. . . . The style here is that of a mere clerk. . . . Other men, more learned, may someday use it to make beautiful verse.” And in fact, it is an even barer chronicle than its predecessor.¹⁰

Even if unable to create serious original work himself, Śrīvara was seriously interested in literature. His anthology, the *Subhāṣitāvalī*, was likely a reworking of an older composition dating to the mid-twelfth century. We do not know the full extent of this earlier version, but Śrīvara’s recension testifies to a reasonably accomplished curatorial study of Sanskrit at the Sultan’s court, and, if the work is in fact wholly his labor, to the presence of a very substantial library: more than thirty-five hundred poems are included from all periods, with attributions to more than 350 poets. Although a number of poets are represented of whom we know nothing but the name given them here, and who therefore could have written during the three-hundred-year interval, the anthology offers nothing to prove that any literature of significance in Sanskrit was produced between the time of Mañkha and the fifteenth century—or indeed, in the fifteenth century itself.¹¹

The possibility exists that this picture of literary collapse is an artifact of our data: important creative texts may have disappeared, perhaps in one of the fires

that periodically engulfed the capital of Kashmir, or in the Mongol invasion of 1320, which, according to a sixteenth-century Persian chronicle, left the country in ruins. Texts may simply have eluded the notice of modern editors however carefully they may have combed the manuscript collections of Kashmir. But none of these possibilities seems very likely. Important Sanskrit literature, and especially literary theory, was always widely disseminated out of Kashmir, and nothing of this kind circulated after the twelfth century. Many important manuscripts did indeed survive into the late medieval period and beyond through recopying, but with the exceptions noted above, all of this literature dates from the twelfth century or earlier. Despite Kalhaṇa's own preoccupation with literary history, neither sequel to the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* mentions any Sanskrit works for the three-hundred-year interval or for their own periods.¹²

A kind of Sanskrit literary culture remained alive in Kashmir, but it conforms to the pattern we find increasingly often elsewhere: it is culture reduced to reinscription and restatement. In terms of new literary works, the great experiments in moral and aesthetic imagination that marked the previous fifteen hundred years of Sanskrit literature have entirely disappeared, and instead, creativity was confined within the narrow limits of hymnic verse. Indeed, Sanskrit literary writing of any sort from the period after Zain-ul-'ābidīn is rare.¹³ "Reinscription," that is, ancillary literary production—copying of manuscripts, composition of commentaries, and the like—was carried on without apparent break or decline, and testifies at every turn to the fact that the study of literary science had weakened to no discernible extent.¹⁴ What was lost was something more elusive but more central to the life of a culture: the ability to create new literature.

How was it possible that one of the most creative sites of Sanskrit literary culture anywhere in twelfth-century Asia simply collapsed within a generation or two, never to be revived in anything remotely approaching its former grandeur? It is probably imprudent even to consider a singular explanation for so dramatic a change, but a large part of any explanation is almost certain to lie in the transformation that occurred in the social-political sphere. What we might identify as the courtly-civic ethos of Kashmir came undone with accelerating intensity during the first centuries of the second millennium, and this ethos, it becomes clear, was crucial to sustaining the vitality of Sanskrit literary culture.

The events of the twelfth century are themselves to some degree prefigured a few centuries earlier. With the accession of the degenerate king Śaṅkaravarman in the late ninth century, followed in the mid-tenth century by Diddā, a deranged Khaśa princess, Sanskrit literary production appears to have been arrested for a generation. Scholarly work, however, continued to some degree, and the following three generations were a period of intense creativity, especially in literary theory, as seen in the work of such writers as Bhaṭṭanāyaka, Abhinavagupta, Kuntaka, and Mahimabhaṭṭa. In the twelfth century, by contrast, a decline set in from which there was to be no recovery, contingent on new

extremes of royal dissolution and criminality for which it is hard to find precedents. One cannot read the account in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* without feeling numbed by the stories of impiety, violence, and treachery. It was a century that began with the atrocities of King Harṣa, who, as Kalhaṇa tells it in a striking passage, “plundered from all temples the wonderful treasures which former kings had bestowed there. . . In order to defile the statues of gods he had excrements and urine poured over their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet, and hands had rotted away.”¹⁵ And things were only to get worse.

In such a world, shaken by unprecedented acts of royal depravity and irreligiosity, by the madness and suicide of kings, it would hardly be surprising if the court had ceased to command the sympathies of its subjects. It is as a direct consequence of this, one has to assume, that for poets like Maṅkha political power had not only become irrelevant to their lives life as creative artists and to the themes of their poetry, but an impediment. In the prologue to the poem he recited that evening in 1140, he writes: “All other poets have debased their language, that priceless treasure, by shamelessly putting it up for sale in those cheap shops—the royal courts. I, Maṅkha, however, am eulogist of the King whose court is Mount Kailāṣa [i.e., Śiva].” And before he begins his reading, an emissary from the Konkan says to him: “Your remarkable poetry, and yours alone, is free from stain: your verse is untouched by the evil of singing the praises of the unworthy [i.e., kings]; all poets, you excepted, have served only to teach men how to beg.” Royal power had become irrelevant not just to literature but to the literary culture of the time as well. Alaṅkāra’s group, meeting at his home, amounts to a kind of inchoate literary public sphere, made up of scholars, literati, and local and foreign men of affairs—but no king.¹⁶

The primary historical data available for studying the three centuries between the time of Kalhaṇa and Jonarāja amount to little more than Jonarāja’s chronicle itself, and he covers this period in about 140 verses.¹⁷ Yet this suffices to give us a picture of the near-total dissolution of orderly life in urban Kashmir. Transitions in power were more often than not marked by usurpation, insurrection, or civil war (the one exception perhaps being the reign of Rāmadeva, 1252–73). Each successive ruler is described as more imbecilic than his predecessor, and though most were able to maintain power for a decade or two, it is power alone that seems to have interested them. Jonarāja not only mentions no poets, but only rarely alludes to the kinds of civic initiatives (the construction of seminaries, for example) that crowd Kalhaṇa’s history of kings. This stunning disintegration of civic and cultural order in Kashmir was no doubt tied to longer-term tensions within the social order, including the resistance to central incorporation of warlords (known as *ḍāmaras*), but linked with what larger material processes we do not know. Social calm was restored only by Zainul-’ābidīn, who came to power a century after the establishment of Turkic rule in Kashmir, around 1320. In the preceding two centuries, during which “Hinduka” rule, to use Jonarāja’s idiom, continued and the presence of Turks in the

Valley was insignificant, the social-political sphere imploded, and took the creative Sanskrit literary culture with it.

In a passage that came to be attached (no later than 1588 and probably much earlier) to Jonarāja's continuation of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, the story is told of Zain-ul-'ābidīn's visit to the shrine of Śārādā, the venerated goddess of learning in Kashmir. For centuries this temple had represented the very omphalos of Sanskrit knowledge, but in the evil days of the Kali age, we are told, the goddess had hidden herself. No longer did the face of the image sweat, the arms shake, or the feet burn to the touch as in times past. And though the goddess's power had weakened, the Sultan, who had heard about her miraculous presence in the temple, had hopes of witnessing an epiphany. He came as the pious devotee he was, and begged to have some vision of the goddess in his sleep—not in her full form, of course, which the gods themselves cannot behold, but in the form she assumes out of compassion for her devotees. Śārādā, however, gave no sign of presence; indeed, far from granting the Sultan *darśan*, the goddess “made him smash to pieces her very own image.” “This no doubt occurred,” the text reads, “because of the presence of the barbarians (*mlecchas*). A king is held responsible for the transgressions of his underlings” and those of the Sultan had denigrated the image, though he himself, a man of compassion, truth, and wisdom, “had nothing to do with the Goddess's failure to appear.”¹⁸ The author of this passage might be uncertain about the larger context of cultural dissolution, citing the general evils of the Kali age; he might show himself ambivalent in ascribing blame to the new ruling lineage. But one thing he knew for certain: the Goddess of Sanskrit literature had long since left Kashmir.

2. SANSKRIT IN THE CITY OF VICTORY AND KNOWLEDGE

Between the years 1340 and 1565, and in a variety of incarnations, a transregional political formation known as Vijayanagara held sway over much of India below the Vindhya mountains, from the Arabian sea to the borders of Orissa. Sanskrit culture in Vijayanagara, where literary production was continuous and abundant, stands in stark contrast to the contemporaneous world of Kashmir, and its fate was contingent on a far more complicated politics of literary language and far sharper competition among literary cultures. And although there is no better place to study this complex of issues in the state in which it existed before European modernity changed the rules of the game of language and power, it is one dimension of Vijayanagara that remains all but unstudied.¹⁹

Vijayanagara was a complexly multilingual empire, and the differential functions of both languages of state and languages of literature await careful analysis. Inscriptions were issued in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Sanskrit, according to a new pattern of distribution (the crystallizing vernacular language regions) and an old division of labor between Sanskrit and local language.²⁰ Literary production at the court during these three and one-half centuries was largely restricted to Telugu, Tamil, and Sanskrit. It is a striking fact that, though

ruled by men who belonged to Tulu- or Kannada-speaking lineages for much of this period, the Vijayanagara state seems to have done little to promote the production of courtly Kannada literature. Kṛṣṇadevarāya (r. 1509–29), the “Karnāṭa” king as he is consistently called (Karnāṭa being a Sanskritized form of Kannada), may have had at court a Kannada poet, Timmaṅṅakavi, but Timmaṅṅa’s one accomplishment was to complete Kumāravayāsa’s enormously popular Kannada *Bhārata* of the preceding century (and ineffectively at that, in the eyes of Kannada literary historians). The emperor himself used Telugu for his most important literary-political work, the *Āmuktamālyadā*. This is not to say that Kannada literary culture outside the court did not show considerable vitality during this period, at least when we consider the production of the poet-singers of the Mādhva religious order, such as Pūrandarādāsa and Kanakadāsa, and Śrīvaiṣṇava poets like Lakṣmīśa, author of one of the most popular Kannada literary works before the modern period, the *Jaimini Bhārat*. It is in fact the very vitality of that culture that makes the penury of courtly production so manifest.

The Sanskrit culture of Vijayanagara shows other paradoxes. Although much material remains unpublished, a preliminary analysis indicates an unmistakable and remarkable contrast between the exhaustion of Sanskrit literary creativity and the vitality of Sanskrit scholarship. The latter attained an almost industrialized magnitude and attained renown across India.²¹ And to the end, the cultivation of Sanskrit continued to be taken very seriously, especially as a state enterprise. Many of the governors responsible for the functioning of the empire had a cultural literacy far exceeding the mere scribal and accountancy skills ascribed to them by some modern scholars; they were men of considerable learning, if only reproductive and not original learning.²²

In the domain of literature, however, the Vijayanagara cultural world seems to have produced few if any Sanskrit works that continued to be read beyond the moment of their composition, that circulated to any extent beyond the place of their immediate creation and performance, that attracted a commentator, were excerpted in an anthology, or entered onto a school syllabus. Here, too, much may have been lost when the city was sacked in 1565, but the works of major court poets and personalities do survive.²³ And one question these works raise is how and why they survived at all. The truly vital literary energies of the time were clearly channeled into regional languages, especially Telugu and Kannada, whether cultivated at the court or the temple. Just contrast the reception history of Kumāravayāsa’s non-courtly Kannada *Bhārata* with the Sanskrit *Bhārata* of Divākara at Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s court. The former not only circulated widely in manuscript form (over 150 manuscripts from the mid-sixteenth century onward exist) but came to be recited all over the Kannada-speaking world; the latter lay unread and unrecopied in the palace library from the moment the ink on the palm leaves was dry.²⁴

A look at the early sixteenth-century court of Kṛṣṇadevarāya brings out an

important feature of the character of Sanskrit literary production in Vijayanagara. The titles of the king as attested in inscriptions indicate the kind of cultural image he cultivated: He is “Master Judge of [Sanskrit] Drama and Poetry,” “Cosmic Serpent of Literary Expertise,” and (with allusion to the Paramāra poet-king of 1000) “King Bhoja of All Art.”²⁵ The king’s officials evinced the same kind and degree of sophisticated learning found in the earlier period—almost invariably the second-order activity of reproduction.²⁶ New literary production, like the work of Divākara already mentioned, appears to have been not only less common but less significant.

Characteristic of Sanskrit literary production at Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s court is a drama written by the king himself, the “Marriage of Jāmbavatī (*Jāmbavatīpariṇaya*).²⁷ Performed before an audience praised for its literary sophistication (1.7) on the occasion of the spring festival of the god Virūpākṣa, “the protective jewel of the Karṇāṭa empire” (1.6+), and composed in a high style of courtly poetry that shows no sign of decay, the play deals with a brief episode from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (10.56). A magic gem, which “daily produced eight loads of gold” and warded off plague and pestilence, was given by the Sun to a kinsman of the divine Kṛṣṇa, who himself falls under suspicion when the jewel later disappears. To clear his name, Kṛṣṇa goes in quest of the stone, now in the possession of the Bear king Jāmbavān, who, on being defeated in battle, presents Kṛṣṇa with both the jewel and his daughter, Jāmbavatī.

There is nothing new, literarily, in the dramatic adaptation of this tale. The theme itself had been treated earlier (in the lost *Jāmbavatīvijaya*, by a poet whom the tradition honored with the name of the great grammarian Pāṇini). The narrative recalls the entire history of Sanskrit drama from *Abhijñānaśākuntala* onward from the very first act (where the king, out hunting, watches at a distance as the country girl Jāmbavatī is picking flowers), and like so many other examples is concerned almost exclusively with overcoming the obstacles to the lovers’ union—here, a divinely-sanctioned union of the earthly avatars of Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī. The idiom is one that a thousand years of poetry have made thoroughly predictable. Yet the work holds considerable interest both because of its association with the king and because of what it tells us about the social ontology of Sanskrit literature during this period. The fact that the play is written in Sanskrit (and as usual in Prakrit for the female roles) is not, as we might assume, because it deals with a religio-mythic motif, but on the contrary because it deals with the political narrative of the Vijayanagara empire. This may seem a paradoxical judgment, but both intrinsic and extrinsic considerations make it probable. The sacrality now commonly and often erroneously associated with Sanskrit had been neutralized centuries before Kṛṣṇadevarāya wrote his play. By the sixteenth century the regional languages were actually far more intrinsically marked as vehicles for religious expression. But there are also considerations specific to the world of Kṛṣṇadevarāya in support of this argument.

The *Marriage of Jāmbavatī* no doubt had a range of meanings for the royal

author and his audience, meanings to which we no longer have access. What we can recapture is the political moment of the 1510s, the period of the king's Orissa campaign. Soon after taking the throne the emperor commenced what is now regarded as one of the most brilliant military victories of sixteenth-century India, the defeat of the Gajapati kingdom that had been occupying rich domains in eastern India—forts commanding the important trade routes through Kondavidu and Penukonda that had been under Vijayanagara control since the time of Devarāya in the preceding century. In the aftermath of the campaign, a Vijayanagara court musician reported that as a result of his victory Kṛṣṇadevarāya acquired, along with the Gajapati's royal power, his daughter. The sobriquet "Fever to the Elephants of Gajapati" in addition to his main coronation title, "Incarnation of Kṛṣṇa," was engraved in the walls of the Virūpākṣa temple.²⁸

No doubt some resonance of all this contemporary activity would have been audible in the *Jāmbavatī* narrative (especially considering that ruling overlords were typically depicted as the heroes of the spring-festival plays performed at their courts).²⁹ Here the god Kṛṣṇa journeys in quest of a fabled gem, enters the domain of the Bear King "that no non-mortal could ever enter," and is engaged in combat by the King, who thereafter, wishing to make amends for what he called his transgression of fighting with Kṛṣṇa, is advised to present the god with the gem, his inexhaustible source of riches, and his daughter.³⁰

In its mytho-political representation of the king's person and its celebration of his historic conquest, the *Jāmbavatīpariṇaya* is typical of almost all the rest of Sanskrit literary production in the Vijayanagara world, for the hallmark of this literature is the prominence of the project of empire. The percentage of literary texts that can be classed as imperial documents is astonishing. Virtually all the plays left to us are state plays; all the long poems are poetic chronicles, accounts of royal victory or success (*caritas*, *vijayas*, or *abhyudayas*), detailing this campaign and that military victory. All these genres have a long history, to be sure, but in comparison with the previous thousand years of Sanskrit poetry, where historical referentiality was typically attenuated, the Vijayanagara aesthetic is profoundly historicist-political—and tied to the politics of its time.³¹ And perhaps this itself is the reason why none of these works, over the entire history of the existence of the empire, was able to reach, or perhaps even cared to reach, a readership beyond its immediate audience of participants in the historical moment. Such at least is the inference one may draw from the manuscript history of the works, the absence of commentators, the neglect from anthologists, the indifference of literary analysts.

In Vijayanagara it was not as a mode of elite expression that Sanskrit was dying. The bivalent interpretation of the very name of the city—it often appears as Vidyānagara (City of Knowledge) in Kannada inscriptions—directs our attention toward the cultivation of Sanskrit studies, which continued with undiminished vigor during the long existence of the empire. It was in some other dimension that Sanskrit was moribund: as a mode of personal expression, a ve-

hicle of human experience away from the imperial stage, a characteristic that had marked Sanskrit throughout its long history and from its very inception. The sphere of human experience that Sanskrit was now able or allowed to articulate had shrunk so palpably by the end of the Vijayanagara period that the only themes left were the concerns of empire, and then, when empire disappeared, only the concerns of heaven.³²

3. THE LAST SANSKRIT POET

In his work and in the course his life followed, Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja (Jagannātha king of scholars) (d. ca. 1670) marks a point of historic break in the history of Sanskrit literary culture, though it is no straightforward matter to grasp precisely what this break consists of or to explain its historical importance. Relative to most of the other Sanskrit poets who have attained something of canonical status, Jagannātha is very close to us in time, and yet we have almost as little concrete evidence about him as we have about the fourth-century master Kālidāsa. What we do know—about his actual movements through the subcontinent as a professional writer, for example—shows that the cosmopolitan space occupied by Sanskrit literature for much of the two preceding millennia persisted well into the seventeenth century, despite what are often represented as fundamental changes in the political environment with the coming of the Mughals in the previous century.³³ In the same way, Jagannātha's life as a court poet, and much of the work that he produced in that capacity, were no different from the lives and works of poets centuries earlier. His great literary treatise, *Rasagaṅgādhara* (The Gaṅgā-Bearer [Śiva] of Aesthetic Emotion), participates as a full and equal interlocutor in a millennium-long theoretical debate in Sanskrit on the nature of the literary, and shares virtually all the same assumptions, procedures, and goals.

At the same time, however, Jagannātha marks a palpable historical endpoint in a number of important ways. If, like countless Sanskrit poets before him in quest of patronage, Jagannātha moved with ease across India, from region to region and court to court—from Andhra to Jaipur to Delhi and from Udaipur to Assam, in a kind of vast “circumambulation of the quarters”—he was the last to do so. No later Sanskrit literary works achieved the transregional spread of his collection of lyrics, the *Bhāminīvilāsa* (Ways of a Lovely Lady) and of his *Rasagaṅgādhara*. His literary criticism is usually and rightly regarded as the last significant contribution to the long conversation; thereafter (with the exception of a new theological aesthetic that was crystallizing in Bengal, and which Jagannātha—in this the classicist—impatiently rejects), all is more or less sheer reproduction.³⁴ His panegyrics to the kings of Udaipur and Delhi and Assam may be largely indistinguishable from centuries of such productions; indeed, the three texts really constitute a single work with interchangeable parts, in the best Sanskrit tradition of the universalizability of the qualities of overlordship.³⁵ Yet one senses in his lyrics and even in his scholarly works some

very new sensibility, which, without stretching for the fashionable phrase, might fairly be called a modern subjectivity. And finally, in the stories that have gathered around his life, he was made the representative of the profound historical change that marked the new social realities of India and made the late-medieval period late: for he is described as a Brahman belonging to a family hailing from a bastion of Vedic orthodoxy and tradition (Veṅgināḍu in Andhra Pradesh), who fell in love with a Muslim woman, and met his death—in despair or repentance or defiance we do not know, but a kind of romantic agony seems present in any case—by drowning in the holy Gaṅgā at Varanasi.

Something very old died when Jagannātha died, and also something very new.

Part of what was new, and that to a degree actually did outlive Jagannātha's epoch, has to do with developments internal to the intellectual history of Sanskrit. By the seventeenth century the latest literati had begun to identify and distinguish themselves or others as “new” intellectuals (*navya*, *navīna*, *arvāc*, etc.) in a broad range of fields, including the classical *trivium* of language philosophy, hermeneutics, and logic.³⁶ The “new logicians” or “new grammarians” demonstrated discursive innovations that were substantial—the terminology, style, and modes of analysis underwent a radical transformation across these and other disciplines—though their conceptual breaks remain to be clearly spelled out, and at first view seem for the most part modest or subtle or questions of detail rather than structure. At the same time, new and largely unprecedented intellectual projects were undertaken or first achieved wide success. Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita (fl. 1620), for example, building on the mid-sixteenth-century *Prakriyākaumudī*, completely restructured the foundational grammar of Pāṇini and thereby effectively ended its primacy for many lower-level pedagogical purposes. Another Maharashtrian Brahman living in Varanasi in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Nīlakaṅṭha Caturdhara, edited a new and influential version of the *Mahābhārata*, producing at the same time an innovative commentary on the work. The rise of Maratha (and later Peshwa) power certainly underwrote some of this activity. The relationship between Śivājī, the “neo-Hindu” king of Maharashtra, and the “new” scholar Gāgā Bhaṭṭa, who performed a re-invented coronation ritual for the king in 1674, is well known.³⁷

The world had thus changed in terms of intellectual orientation no less than in sociality and polity, though it may not always be easy for us to demonstrate the quality of the transformations in Sanskrit scholarship with any real precision, for as I have said, they are often subtle. No overt “Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns” separated the *navyas* and the *prācyas*. And yet some kind of line was being drawn that separated the present from the past. Something of the character of the new socio-political milieu of traditional Sanskrit intellectuals, as well as a sharper sense of their intellectual orientation, is suggested by the careers of two literati—Siddhicandra, a Jain monk-scholar at the courts of Akbar and Jahangīr, and Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī, the leading pandit of Varanasi

in the mid-seventeenth century. We shall be able to measure, too, with respect to both milieu and orientation, just how different from both was Jagannātha.

The Jain scholar Siddhicandra (ca. 1587–1666) belonged to the first generation of Sanskrit literati to enjoy the patronage of the Mughal court. His quite distinctive character emerges from an autobiography he has left us, a text that is included—this itself discloses something of the man’s sense of self—as the last chapter in the biography of Bhānucandra, his teacher.³⁸ Although having taken Jain renunciation as a youngster, Siddhicandra likewise became, through the offices of his teacher, his own intellectual accomplishments, and—by his own admission—his arresting physical beauty, an intimate of two of the most powerful men of the early modern world for more than almost three decades.

In the intellectual environment in which Siddhi came of age the ruling elites themselves were the first to challenge traditionalism. Abu-l Fazl, the leading intellectual of the day and an intimate of Siddhicandra’s teacher, wrote against restrictions on “the exercise of inquiry”; he denounced the tradition that came “as a deposit under Divine sanction” and that reproached with impiety anyone who dared contest it. For Akbar himself, man was in the first instance the disciple of his own reason.³⁹ This was clearly, thus, a milieu open to the reception of new ideas. A large amount of Sanskrit learning was being translated into Persian, and Mughal courtiers themselves occasionally learned something of Sanskrit literature: Khān-i-Khānān Abdur Rahīm (1557–1630), Akbar’s *vakīl* and thus the highest official in the Mughal administration, experimented not only with poetry in the local vernacular but even, if modestly, in Sanskrit.⁴⁰ A reverse flow is observable, too; a whole new world of literature and culture was made available to those Sanskrit intellectuals who learned Persian.

This was the world of Siddhicandra, from a very early age. At Akbar’s request he learned Persian as a young man, and often read aloud before the illiterate emperor, and combined this new knowledge with an impressive command of traditional Sanskrit learning. Yet it is astonishing how narrow Siddhi’s vision remained. His scholarly work—commentaries on Sanskrit literature and *śāstra*, anthologies of Sanskrit and of Prakrit verse, a textbook on letter-writing styles—could easily have been written in the year 1100 instead of 1600. Suggestive here is his *Kāvya prakāśakhaṇḍana*, a critique of Mammaṭa’s eleventh-century treatise on literature. Here Siddhi clearly numbers himself among the new scholars, a term he repeatedly invokes, yet in intellectual content it is a newness long familiar. His critique at the very start of the book challenges every point in Mammaṭa’s understanding of poetry, but only by re-asserting old positions, not establishing new ones.⁴¹

What was it then that scholars like Siddhi thought made them new intellectuals? They certainly strove for ever greater precision and sophistication of definition and analysis (in imitation, in fact, of the New Logic), but these matters of style were far more striking than any substantive innovation. On the question of the definition of poetry, Siddhi tells us, for the navy scholar what is de-

cisive is not “faultless” or “affectively-charged” usage, or language “whose animating factor is aesthetic pleasure”—all the older definitions—but something more abstract, “an indivisible property, further unanalyzable,” of beauty.⁴² Beyond such innovations in analytic idiom, however, what may be most importantly new here is the self-proclaimed newness itself, and its intimation that the past is somehow passed, even if it will not go completely away.

A similar, paradoxical combination of something very new in style subserving something very old in substance is found in the one work that makes Siddhicandra worth remembering, his autobiography. Whereas the literary presentation of self here is new and striking (not least in its conflicted psychosexual character), the self is explicitly celebrated for the traditionality of the moral vision it steadfastly maintains. Nowhere does this come into sharper focus than in the dramatic core of the text, Siddhi’s debate with Jahangīr and Nūr Mahal, where the Mughal emperor and empresses dispute his commitment to sexual abstinence and try to convince him to marry. It is something rare if not unprecedented in Sanskrit literature for a writer to fashion a self so vividly present in its self-possession and self-confidence as Siddhicandra does here. The author puts himself in debate with the king and queen of Al-Hind, and on the matter of his own sexuality, of all things (which he has taken care throughout the text to render especially potent). When they repeatedly demand he renounce celibacy and marry, he remains “immovably resolute in his own *dharma*,” even as the courtiers bewail the “mad obstinacy” that will lead to his exile (4.306–14). It seems especially suggestive of the nature of Sanskrit literary culture at this moment that all the innovation—the narrative and literary and discursive novelty—should be in service of the oldest of Jain monastic ideals.

That a radical alteration in social environment can fail to produce a commensurate transformation of cultural vision is even more patent in the life of Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī (ca. 1600–75). When François Bernier traveled through north India in the 1650s and 1660s, he came into the employ of a Mughal courtier, Dānishmand Khān, whom he served not only as physician but as translator into Persian of the most recent French scientific and philosophical work, including the writings of Descartes, which the courtier is said to have read “with avidity.” Dānishmand Khān, sharing the ecumenical vision of the Emperor Shāh Jahān’s son, Dārā Shikoh, likewise “took into his service” Dārā’s chief Sanskrit scholar, “one of the most celebrated pandits in all the *Indies*,” who later was to be Bernier’s constant companion over a period of three years. This Indian intellectual was Kavīndra, a Maharashtrian renunciant who thirty years earlier had won celebrity by persuading Shāh Jahān to rescind the *jizya* tax on pilgrims traveling to Varanasi and Prayag.⁴³ The success of the petition elicited poems of praise from leading Sanskrit intellectuals and poets, which were subsequently collected—probably the first festschrift in Sanskrit—under the title *Kavīndracandrodayahī* (The Moonrise of Kavīndra).⁴⁴

Kavīndra’s own literary production, however, like the very conventional

praise-poems in his honor, shows little of the intellectual ferment that the place (the “Athens of India,” as Bernier called it) or the person (the “Chief of the pandits” for Bernier, “Treasury of All Knowledge” according to his Mughal title) or the times and conversations (on Descartes) might lead us to expect. His Sanskrit work was entirely glossarial and hymnal; his more significant literary-historical contribution was rather to Hindi. Kavīndra remains best known today for the library he was able to assemble, no doubt thanks to a pension from the Mughal emperor. This was the most celebrated of its time and place (Bernier himself remarks on it) and eventually numbered more than two thousand manuscripts, most of which seem to have been copied specifically for Kavīndra’s collection.⁴⁵

What Sanskrit learning in the seventeenth century prepared one best to do, one might infer from the lives and works of Siddhicandra and Kavīndra, was to resist all other learning.

Yet Jagannātha also participated in the new world of intellectual and social experiment and ecumenicism in which both Kavīndrācārya and Siddhicandra moved, and with far different results. He brought a newness to both his literary oeuvre and personal relationships of a sort that neither Siddhi nor Kavīndra evinced in their life or work. Jagannātha also attended the court of Shāh Jahān; like Kavīndra he was a client of Dārā Shikoh, but also of the courtier Āsaf Khān (for whom he wrote the *Āsafvilāsa*, fragmentarily preserved). But his response to this new social-cultural milieu was far different from theirs. Indeed, something in this time and place marked Jagannātha as no one else in the Sanskrit world was marked. For one thing, there are intimations in his poetry of a new interaction between Sanskrit and vernacular-language writing. Some of his poetry, such as the following verse in the *Rasagāṅgādhara*,

Her eyes are not just white and black but made of nectar and poison.
Why else, when they fall on a man, would he feel so strong and so weak?

is probably indebted to earlier texts in Old Hindi; one poem in the *Bhāmīnīvilāsa* is almost certainly derived from a text of Bihārīlāl, a celebrated poet of the previous generation.⁴⁶ What such parallels above all indicate, unfortunately, is how very little information we have, even for a period as relatively late as the end of the seventeenth century, about the real interactions between cosmopolitan and vernacular courtly poets. Little is known about their familiarity with each others’ works; about what it signified (to them or their audiences) to adapt vernacular verse into Sanskrit, or Sanskrit verse into the vernacular—an activity of which there is substantial evidence, but perhaps none more interesting than the Hindi adaptations of Rahīm—and above all, what it was that conditioned a poet’s choice to write in one of these languages as opposed to the other.⁴⁷

The Mughal court is likely also to have conditioned Jagannātha’s social modernity, but in a way far different from Siddhicandra’s, whose autobiogra-

phy could almost be seen an indirect comment on the poet's life. It has long been the subject of scholarly debate whether or not the poet had a relationship with a Muslim woman. A seventeenth-century history of the Puṣṭimārga lineage (the Vaiṣṇava religious community into which Jagannātha was born) introduced into evidence some twenty-five years ago but ignored since, would, if authentic, certainly corroborate the story of his marriage "to the daughter of a Muslim lord" and his subsequent "liberation" by grace of the Gaṅgā.⁴⁸ But in truth, it is in cases such as these that the naive dichotomy that some scholars draw between poetic image and historical fact needs to be undone; poetic images are, in a non-trivial sense, historical facts. Our interest is thus not so much in the life-truth of Jagannātha but, if it may be put this way, in the far more important life-truth of Sanskrit culture in the seventeenth century. And part of this truth is the historical fact of a literary representation linking the greatest Sanskrit poet of the age with a Muslim woman. There is, in actuality, nothing to show that the verses about her that are attached to the oeuvre of Jagannātha are not the poet's own.⁴⁹ But the crucial point is that they were attached to his oeuvre in the first place, and to no one else's—and that they are verses of a sort written by no one before or after him:

Dressed in a dress as red as a rose,
Lavaṅgī with those breasts that rise
as she places the water-jug on her head,
goes off and takes along in the jug
all the feeling in all the men's hearts.

.....
That Muslim girl has a body soft as butter
and if I could get her to lie by my side
the hard floor would be good enough for me
and all the comforts of paradise redundant.⁵⁰

What is new in Jagannātha's poetry may in some degree have resulted from a new conversation with Indo-Persian poets made possible by his social location, a conversation to which he responded in ways far different from Siddhicandra (Jagannātha is also popularly credited with knowledge of Persian). Our knowledge of the social interactions of Sanskrit and Persian poets is even more rudimentary than in the case of Sanskrit and vernacular poets; most *dīvāns* of Indo-Persian poets working at the time of Jagannātha lie unpublished and unread. It seems very likely, however, that the Lavaṅgī verses appropriate, and cleverly invert, the Persian lyric motif of the *mahbūb*, the ever-unattainable beloved whose unattainability is typically exaggerated by ethnic difference, Christian, Greek, Armenian, or, in Indo-Persian poetry, Hindu.⁵¹

In addition to a new willingness to draw on other literary traditions in order to reanimate Sanskrit poetry, a new personal tone may be heard everywhere in Jagannātha's work. This is as true of his scholarship as of his poetry. It is found, for example, in his denunciation of a grammatical treatise, which enraged him

by the criticisms it leveled against his teacher; or in his critique of a literary theorist, whose sandals he vowed to carry on his head if his refutation failed⁵²; or in his own literary theory. Although the evidentiary approach of literary analysis since at least the eighth century had required the citation of existing literature to illustrate one's argument and not (as formerly) of poems created ad hoc, Jagannātha insists on composing his own examples in the *Rasagaṅgādhara*: "I have used for illustrations in this book new poems that I composed myself. I have taken nothing from anyone else. Does the musk deer, who has the power to create rare fragrance, even think of bothering with the scent of flowers?"⁵³ The most important of Jagannātha's literary works to have survived, the *Bhāminivilāsa*, appears to be a compendium of the verses written as illustrations for the *Rasagaṅgādhara*, but collected by Jagannātha in a separate volume in order to preserve them as his own work. This is how he ends the book:

Compared to the verse of Paṇḍitarāja
how sweet are grapes or sugarcane,
milk or honey or the drink
of immortality itself?

He mastered the holy books, and honored the rules of Brahman conduct.
As young man he lived under the care of the emperor of Delhi.
Later he renounced his home and now serves god in Madhupur.
Everything Paṇḍitarāja did he did like no one else in the world.

Afraid some whoreson bastard
would steal them if he could
I made this little jewel-box
for these, my jewels of poetry.⁵⁴

Sanskrit poets in the past had of course recorded their names, projected distinctive selves, and spoken in individual voices. But, aside from stretches of admittedly conventional poetry, there is still something new in what Jagannātha is doing. No one had ever before made literature out of the death of his child:

You didn't care how much your parents would worry,
you betrayed the affection of your family. My little son,
you were always so good, why did you run away
to the other world?⁵⁵

No one had ever written, as in one of the sections of Jagannātha's "Little Jewel Box," a verse-sequence on the death of his wife (*Karuṇavilāsa*, The Ways of Pity). Again, much is conventional here; most of the tropes are time-tested. But Jagannātha speaks *in propria persona*, with a personal sorrow to which no poet in Sanskrit had ever before given voice:

All pleasures have forgotten me
even the learning I acquired
with so much grief
has turned its back.
The only thing that won't leave my mind,

like an immanent god,
is that large-eyed woman.

.....

Your beauty was like the food of gods to me
and in my mind transformed into poetry.

Without it now, most perfect of women,
what kind of poet can I ever be?⁵⁶

Yet, literature is no less complicated than life, and there are complications to the naive picture of Jagannātha looking into his heart and writing. For one thing, these verses may also be appropriating Indo-Persian convention, this time from the *marsiya* tradition of lament (though it is true, the first secular Persian *marsiya* in India comes with Ghalib in the nineteenth century). Less speculative, and far more perplexing, is the fact that what in the pages of the *Bhāminīvilāsa* seem to be direct expressions of a husband's grief—indeed, grief for the woman he must have sacrificed much to marry, his Lavaṅgī—are sometimes analyzed in the *Rasagaṅgādhara* in an attitude of clinical detachment or, more oddly still, uncertainty, thus undermining the autobiographical inference and sometimes our very grasp of the poem's meaning. When discussing the first poem cited above, for example, Jagannātha offers two possible dramatic subtexts: “This may be spoken by someone absent from home, perhaps a young man who has fallen in love with the beautiful daughter of his teacher while in school, or someone else thinking back on an illicit sexual relationship he has had.” Has he forgotten the terrible death of his beloved that prompted him to write the verse in the first place? On another poem found in the *Karuṇāvilāsa* Jagannātha leaves open whether “it is the aesthetic emotion of frustrated love or that of grief. . . that is suggested in the last instance.” But the latter, he says, is unlikely: “Poets generally do not depict death as a dominant theme, since it is considered to be inauspicious.”⁵⁷

It is not quite clear what we are to make of such discontinuities between Jagannātha's poetry and theory. Are we to assume that he has committed the very inauspicious act of writing not just a few verses but a whole sequence—the central section of his one collection of lyrics—on the death of his wife; or that he is asking us not to think of these poems as expressions of his true self; or that he has actually forgotten that the verses on the death of his wife are verses on the death of his wife? None of these solutions is attractive, and we are left with something of a puzzle. One way out might be brute philology. The *Bhāminīvilāsa*, like the vast majority of Sanskrit literary texts, has never been critically edited; we might know better what Jagannātha meant if we knew just what he had written. But although it is true that the number of verses in most of the chapters fluctuates wildly, this is not the case for the *Karuṇāvilāsa*, whose stability suggests something of its special character.⁵⁸ Are we therefore to imagine a different species of “whoreson bastard”—a stupid editor sometime after Jagannātha's death—who abused the poet's work, not by taking verses away

but by putting them in, without bothering to read what the poet had written about them in the *Rasagaṅgādhara*, and acting therefore in the mistaken belief that they shared certain themes?⁵⁹

Yet, for an account of the fate of Sanskrit literary culture the overriding concern here seems to me this: that in the middle of the seventeenth century, it was perfectly reasonable, in the eyes of the culture that copied and recopied and circulated Jagannātha's texts, for the greatest Sanskrit literary critic and poet of the age to have composed a sequence of moving verses on the death of his wife, and for this wife to have been a Muslim. Whether he married her or not, the age demanded that he should have done so; whether he wrote the verses or not, someone did, and for the first time in Sanskrit. And from all this, a certain kind of newness was born—and died. There was to be no second Jagannātha.

4. UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE RAJ

When the British began to assemble the instruments of colonial control in earnest, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, education was among the first areas to which they turned their attention. Important surveys of indigenous institutions were conducted in the Bengal and Madras Presidencies, the former by William Adam in the 1830s (following up on an earlier, preliminary survey by William Ward), the latter by Sir Thomas Munro in 1822.⁶⁰ In themselves these are quite remarkable documents of colonial inquiry and scrutiny, but for the historian of Sanskrit culture they have the added value of providing some measure of the heartbeat of Sanskrit literary learning, at the very point when a modernity of a very different kind from that represented by Jagannātha was about to work its transformations in South Asian culture.

Sanskrit learning was very much alive, in a sense to be made more precise below, when Adam conducted his census in Bengal. In his "Third Report," for example, which contains figures for five districts in the Bengal Presidency, we find 353 Sanskrit schools (one teacher per school) enrolling 2555 students. Almost without exception these students were Brahmans. By contrast, of the 899 students studying Persian at Muslim schools in Burdwan district, for example, half were non-Muslim and about a third of these were Brahmans. (Vernacular-medium schools, in Bengal at least, appear to have focused on the study of accountancy.) The vast majority of Sanskrit students were engaged in the study of grammar, logic, or law. Other subjects, among them literature, figure far less prominently.⁶¹ The literature curriculum, if we may combine syllabi from the different schools, was fully classical, containing works from the fourth through the twelfth centuries, and only one work from more or less contemporary Bengal.⁶²

This is not to imply that no Sanskrit literature was being written in Bengal in the 1830s, far from it. Adam provides information on numerous new works. Yet one is hard-pressed to find a single text (judging from the descriptions given by Adam but no doubt supplied by the authors themselves) that situated itself

anywhere close to the world of early colonialism and its radically-transforming cultural sphere, or marked any kind of departure whatever from the style and substance of the works taught in the schools. We may contrast this literary atrophy with the continuing vitality of the tradition of logic, for example, where a work like Viśvanātha Tarkapañcānana's *Siddhāntamuktāvalī* (Compendium of Principles) from the mid-seventeenth century could undertake to reorganize received wisdom (though not overturn it) and quickly find a place in the philosophical syllabus over much of the subcontinent. The distribution of scholarly works demonstrates unequivocally that as late as the early eighteenth century, in the disciplines where Sanskrit intellectuals continued to maintain control, old networks of vast circulation and readership were as yet intact.⁶³ That literary texts were no longer inserted into this distributive network—and they were not—must be due to the fact they did not merit insertion in the eyes of Sanskrit readers themselves.⁶⁴

The state of literary culture that may be observed in the syllabi of schools and in the output of writers in nineteenth-century rural Bengal is no mere function of changes in the material base of Sanskrit learning, such as occurred with the dissolution of the great *zamīndārī* estates and the interruption of traditional patronage to pandits, though that certainly played some role.⁶⁵ It is something repeated everywhere throughout the Sanskrit cultural world, in courtly environments as well as in the countryside. Consider the Maratha court of Tanjore in the early eighteenth century. This was an extraordinarily interesting literary-cultural site, with respect to its growing convergence with a new world economy and world culture (traders and missionaries from Europe were common), its vernacular-language literary production (including a new genre of multilingual operetta, one example of which made its way to Europe and became the “Magic Flute”), and indeed, Sanskrit scholarly accomplishments (it was here that Ḍhunḍi Vyāsa, for example, composed his remarkable treatise on the moral problems of the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* as well as a valuable commentary on the great Sanskrit drama, the *Mudrārākṣasa*). But how did the Sanskrit literary imagination react to all this? It simply did not.⁶⁶

What has been said of the state of Sanskrit literary vitality found at Tanjore could be said of the Sanskritizing courts—almost of a revivalist sort—of Jai Singh II in early-eighteenth-century Jaipur, or of Krishnaraja Wodeyar of Mysore at the beginning of the nineteenth.⁶⁷ In Mysore, Sanskrit literary production was voluminous, but, so far as can be determined by such criteria as circulation or influence, not a single work escaped the confines of the palace. In Jaipur, no Sanskrit work achieved anything like the success of the vernacular poetry of Bihārīlāl, chief poet at the court of Jai Singh's father. In the south as in the north, at dates that vary according to different regions and cultural formations, Sanskrit writers had ceased to make literature that made history.

In terms of both the subjects considered acceptable and the audience it was prepared to address, Sanskrit had chosen to make itself irrelevant to the new

world. This was true even in the extra-literary domain. The struggles against Christian missionizing, for example, that preoccupied pamphleteers in early-nineteenth-century Calcutta, took place almost exclusively in Bengali. Sanskrit intellectuals seemed able to respond, or were interested in responding, only to a challenge made on their own terrain—that is, in Sanskrit. The case of the professor of Sanskrit at the recently-founded Calcutta Sanskrit College (1825), Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar, is emblematic: When he had something satirical, contemporary, critical to say, as in his anti-colonial pamphlets, he said it, not in Sanskrit, but in Bengali.⁶⁸

Sanskrit literature could hardly be said to be alive if it had ceased to function as the vehicle for living thought, thought that supplemented and not simply duplicated reality. Perhaps those who are not inheritors of a two-thousand-year-long tradition cannot possibly know its weight—the weight of all the generations of the dead who remain contemporary and exigent, as they no doubt were to the nineteenth-century Burdwan schoolmasters surveyed by Adam, who aspired to create a literary-cultural realm in which the fourth-century master Kālidāsa would have found himself perfectly at home. Certainly there is no point in criticizing such men, as Adam did, for “wasting their learning and their powers in weaving complicated alliterations, recompounding absurd and vicious fictions, and revolving in perpetual circles of metaphysical abstractions never ending still beginning.” The love and care of language (“complicated alliterations”), the vast and enchanting Borgesian library of narratives (“absurd fictions”), the profound reflections on human destiny (“metaphysical abstractions”) are central values marking Sanskrit literature from its beginning, and a source of incomparable pleasure and sustenance to those with the cultural training to appreciate them. The point is to try to understand when and why this repertory became a practice of repetition and not renewal; when and why what had always been another absolutely central value of the tradition—the ability to make literary newness, or as a tenth-century writer put it, “the capacity continually to reimagine the world”—was lost to Sanskrit forever.⁶⁹

5. CONCLUSIONS

It is no straightforward matter to configure these four moments of Sanskrit literary culture into a single, plausible historical narrative; the entire process is too diverse and complex to be reduced to a unitary plot. There can be no doubt about the fact that profoundly debilitating changes did take place: in Kashmir after the thirteenth century, Sanskrit literature ceased almost entirely to be produced; in Vijayanagara, not a single Sanskrit literary work entered into trans-regional circulation, an achievement that signaled excellence in earlier periods; in seventeenth-century Delhi, remarkable innovations found no continuation, leaving nineteenth-century Sanskrit literary culture utterly unable to perpetuate itself into modernity. If no single storyline can accommodate this diversity of phenomena, we may still try to think in more general terms about how a great

tradition can die. It may be useful to consider briefly how other comparable literary cultures came to an end, for if all of such cultures are mortal, as Paul Valéry perceived, there are different ways of dying.⁷⁰

The culture of Old Greek literature, it has been argued, was terminated by a single political act, the closing of the Academy by Justinian in 529; what followed in the Byzantine period was an entirely different cultural formation, one that in any case was itself destroyed with the fall of Constantinople in 1453.⁷¹ The history of Latin literary culture presents an entirely different case, although how we are to understand this history remains a very open question. No systematic and theoretically interesting account exists of Latin's transregional demise, and the consequences of this demise for literary and political culture of the early-modern period. When this period begins, let us say around the second half of the fifteenth century, Latin literature was actually at its apogee in much of Humanist Europe, despite some three to four centuries of vernacularization. Over the next three centuries, while important vernacular poets from Petrarch to Ronsard to Samuel Johnson continued to write poetry in Latin, they did so with a dramatically diminishing and ever more nostalgic commitment to the language.⁷² The cultural status of this literature remains still insufficiently conceptualized by intellectual and cultural historians, and its actual history has not been sufficiently differentiated from that of scientific discourse. Among scholars, Latin commanded almost total allegiance well into the modern period (Gauss's *Disquisitiones Arithmeticae* appeared in 1801), though again, its status over against the emergent vernaculars would be increasingly challenged: in England, for example, first by Bacon's *Advancement* (1605), and in France by Descartes' *Discours* (1637).

The later history of Latin shows striking commonalities with Sanskrit. Both died slowly, and earliest as a vehicle of literary expression, while much longer retaining significance for learned discourse with its universalist claims. Both were subject to periodic renewals or forced rebirths, sometimes in connection with a politics of translocal aspiration (Carolingian, Ottonian, Humanist; fifteenth-century Kashmir under Zain-ul-'ābidīn, eighteenth-century Maharashtra under the Peshwas; the Wodeyar court of early-nineteenth-century Mysore).⁷³ At the same time, paradoxically (this is certainly true for India, at least), both came to be ever more exclusively associated with narrow forms of religion and priestcraft, despite centuries of a secular aesthetic. Yet the differences between the two are equally instructive.

For one thing, Sanskrit literary culture was never affected by communicative incompetence, which began to enfeeble Latin from at least the ninth century. The process of vernacularization in India, in so many ways comparable to the European case, was nowhere a consequence of growing Sanskrit ignorance; the intellectuals who promoted the transformation, certainly in its most consequential phases, were themselves learned in Sanskrit. The demographics and sociology of the new literacy that promoted vernacularization in Europe (a new

middle class ignorant of Latin and demanding a demotic literature) have no parallel in India, where those who could read vernacular poetry could always read Sanskrit. More important, although there was in fact a politics to the process in India, too, nowhere do we find, as in early modern France, an overt state project to make the vernacular national.⁷⁴

The specific conditions for the death of Sanskrit have therefore to be located in South Asian historical experience, and they are certain to be multifarious and sometimes elusive. One causal account, however, for all the currency it enjoys in the contemporary climate, can be dismissed at once: that which traces the decline of Sanskrit culture to the coming of Muslim power. The evidence adduced here shows this to be historically untenable. It was not “alien rule unsympathetic to *kāvya*” and a “desperate struggle with barbarous invaders” that sapped the strength of Sanskrit literature. In fact, it was often the barbarous invader who sought to revive Sanskrit.⁷⁵ As the Gujarati poet Dalpatrām perceived in 1857, what destroyed Sanskrit literary culture was a set of much longer-term cultural, social, and political changes.

One of these was the internal debilitation of the political institutions that had previously underwritten Sanskrit, pre-eminently the court. Another was heightened competition among a new range of languages seeking literary-cultural dignity. These factors did not work everywhere with the same force. A precipitous decline in Sanskrit creativity occurred in Kashmir, where vernacular literary production in Kashmiri—the popularity of mystical poets like Lallādevī (fl. 1400) notwithstanding—never produced the intense competition with the literary vernacular that Sanskrit encountered elsewhere (in Kannada country, for instance, and later, in the Hindi heartland). Instead, what had eroded dramatically was what I called the *civic ethos* embodied in the court. This ethos, while periodically assaulted in earlier periods (with concomitant interruptions in literary production), had more or less fully succumbed by the thirteenth century, long before the consolidation of Turkish power in the Valley. In Vijayanagara, by contrast, while the courtly structure of Sanskrit literary culture remained fully intact, its content became increasingly subservient to imperial projects, and so predictable and hollow. Those at court who had anything literarily important to say said it in Telugu or (outside the court) in Kannada or Tamil; those who did not, continued to write in Sanskrit, and remain unread.

In the north, too, where political change had been most pronounced, competence in Sanskrit remained undiminished during the late-medieval/early modern period. There, scholarly families reproduced themselves without discontinuity—until, that is, writers made the decision to abandon Sanskrit in favor of the increasingly attractive vernacular. Among the latter were writers such as Keśavdās, who, unlike his father and brother, self-consciously chose to become a vernacular poet. And it is Keśavdās, Bihārīlāl, and others like them whom we recall from this place and time, and not a single Sanskrit writer. For reasons that in each case demand careful historical analysis, it had everywhere become more

important—aesthetically, socially, and even politically more urgent—to speak locally rather than globally. During the course of this vernacular millennium, as I have called it, Sanskrit, the idiom of a cosmopolitan literature, gradually died, in part because cosmopolitan talk made less and less sense in an increasingly regionalized world.⁷⁶

In addition to the weakening of the political framework that had traditionally sustained Sanskrit, and the growing dominance of vernacular cultural consciousness, the failure of what appear to be new forms of sociality to achieve institutional embodiment or to attain clear conceptualization may have played a role.⁷⁷ Whether the institutions necessary to sustain a potentially modern Sanskrit culture did not exist, or whether such a culture failed to arise and consolidate the social forms available is a question needing far more systematic research; no doubt the two are dialectically related phenomena. Certain modest gestures toward collective action may be significant. The production of the commemoration volume for Kavīndrācārya around 1650 points toward networks among traditional literati across north India and their apparently growing recognition of shared interests. The same holds true, a century later, of the collective Sanskrit petitions to Warren Hastings protesting abuses of pilgrims by the *paṇḍās* of Varanasi, and two generations later, the petitions on the part of eight hundred pandits in the Bombay Presidency to colonial officials administering the patronage fund continued from the Peshwas.⁷⁸ The structures for collective action these initiatives presuppose, however, were never institutionalized, and they prompted the enunciation of no larger cultural or intellectual enterprise. They were activated, it seems, only for narrow and transitory goals.

The project and significance of the self-described “new intellectuals” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also await detailed analysis, but some first impressions are likely to be sustained by further research.⁷⁹ What these scholars produced was a newness of style without a newness of substance. The former is not meaningless and needs careful assessment and appreciation. But, remarkably, the new and widespread sense of discontinuity never stimulated its own self-analysis. No idiom was developed in which to articulate a new relationship to the past, let alone a critique; no new forms of knowledge—no new theory of religious identity, for example, let alone of the political—were produced in which the changed conditions of political and religious life could be conceptualized. And with very few exceptions (which suggest what was in fact possible), there was no sustained creation of new literature—no Sanskrit novels, personal poetry, essays—giving voice to the new subjectivity. Instead, what the data from early nineteenth-century Bengal—which are paralleled everywhere—demonstrate is that the mental and social spheres of Sanskrit literary production grew ever more constricted, and the personal and this-worldly, and eventually even the presentist-political, evaporated, until only the dry sediment of religious hymnology remained.

No doubt, additional factors conditioned this profound transformation, something more difficult to characterize having to do with the peculiar status of Sanskrit intellectuals in a world growing increasingly unfamiliar to them. As I have argued elsewhere, they may have been led to reaffirm the old cosmopolitanism, by way of ever more sophisticated refinements in ever smaller domains of knowledge, in a much-changed cultural order where no other option made sense: neither that of the vernacular intellectual, which was a possible choice (as Kabir and others had earlier shown), nor that of the national intellectual, which as of yet was not. At all events, the fact remains that well before the consolidation of colonialism, before even the establishment of the Islamic political order, the mastery of tradition had become an end in itself for Sanskrit literary culture, and reproduction, rather than revitalization, the overriding concern. As the realm of the literary narrowed to the smallest compass of life-concerns, so Sanskrit literature seemed to seek the smallest possible audience. However complex the social processes at work may have been, the field of Sanskrit literary production increasingly seemed to belong to those who had an “interest in disinterestedness,” as Bourdieu might put it; the moves they made seem the familiar moves in the game of elite distinction that inverts the normal principles of cultural economies and social orders: the game where to lose is to win. In the field of power of the time, the production of Sanskrit literature had become a paradoxical form of life where prestige and exclusivity were both vital and terminal.

NOTES

1. The VHP assessment is cited in Bhattacharji 1990; see also Goldman 1996 and Ramaswamy 1999. A recent review of Hindutva fantasy (and fraud) about indigenous Sanskrit is found in Witzel and Farmer 2000. The “Year of Sanskrit” runs for “Yugābda 5101,” the year of the Kaliyuga dating system now apparently in use by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (“Times of India,” Bombay ed., December 10, 1999).
2. Fracchia and Lewontin 1999.
3. See Pollock 2000 and 2001. These questions form the substance of an international research project now being organized at the University of Chicago.
4. I explore the relationship between literary culture and polity both in the Sanskrit and vernacular worlds in Pollock 1996 and 1998b, and in my book in progress, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit and Power, 300–1500*.
5. From “Farbas Vilāsa” (recounting a literary gathering organized by Alexander Kinlok-Forbes in 1852), published in *Buddhiprakāś* (1857). I thank Sitanshu Yashaschandra for bringing this poem to my attention.
6. *Srikanṭhacarita* 25.26–30; 78–80; 65; 71–72; 73–75; 46. “Tutātita” is Kumārila, the seventh-century philosopher, to whom literary works (not extant) are ascribed. His system of thought is one of the “two streams”; the other is that of Prabhākara.
7. The generation after Mañkha produced the last two courtly epics: Jayānaka’s *Prthvīrājaviyaya* (on Prthvīrāja III; cf. Pollock 1993), written probably in Ajmer ca. 1190; and the *Haracaritacintāmani* of Jayaratha (ca. 1200), which more closely resembles a *māhātmya*. The one work in the next 150 years is the *Stutikusumāñjali* of Jagad-dhara (principally known as a grammarian, *Stutikusumāñjali* p. 34); it dates to 1350–1400.

8. The citations are, in order, vss. 11, 6, 8 (cf. 12–26), 13, 26.
9. Jonarāja's glosses include those on the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* and the *Prthvīrājavijaya* (published) and on the *Kirātārjunīya* (unpublished).
10. Śrīvara *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* 1.1.9–12; 3.6. Śrīvara's second work is the *Kathākautukam* (Curious Tales), a translation/adaptation ("in the deathless language of Sanskrit," by a "master of the language of the Yavanas," as he styles himself) of Abd-ur-Rahman Jāmī's *Yūsuf o Zulekhā* (Herat, 1484). Here again we hear his *cri de coeur* of cultural rupture: "Not a single great poet is left to teach the men of today, who have so little talent for poetry themselves" (1.12). The work has remained unstudied since Schmidt 1893, 1898.
11. A date before 1160 has been proposed for the original (De 1927). Śrīvara includes verses composed by Jonarāja, and several dozen hymns from Jagaddhara. Living contemporaries are represented as well, such as Śrībaka, mentioned in Śrīvara's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* 1.7.37–38 as a eulogist of the Sultan's. His poems in the anthology suggest a courtier writing ephemera.
12. When Śrīvara speaks of literary production among his contemporaries, it is "deśa" (regional) literature, which refers to *Persian*, not Kashmiri (cf. 1.4.37–39). On the *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, see Habib and Nizami 1993 [1970]:737.
13. Only two texts are known to me: the *Īśvaraśataka* (One Hundred Hymns to God) of Avatāra (fl. 1600), a *śleṣa* or punning poem entirely lacking the argument or aesthetic of the best older examples (cf. Bronner 1999); and the unpublished *Anandakāvya* of Ananda (ca. 1650), a *pratilomakāvya*, or text readable both left to right and right to left.
14. Representative is Rājānaka Ratnakaṇṭha of the mid-seventeenth century (grandson of the Avatāra just mentioned). His careful transcriptions preserved a number of works for posterity, especially from the generation of the 1140s (including the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, see Stein 1900:45ff., with corrections required by Kölver 1971:13ff.). His considerable learning is manifest in his commentary on the ninth-century *Yudhiṣṭhira-vijaya* of the Kerala poet Vāsudeva.
15. See *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* 7.1090–92 (trans. Stein). On the earlier interruption, which produced only the poetry of Abhinanda, son of the logician Jayanta, see Ingalls et al. 1990:28ff.; on the scholarship of the epoch, especially the important work of Mukulabhaṭṭa, McCrea 1998:306–66.
16. See *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* 1.56; 25.5, 8, 9, 112 (this despite the fact that Maṅkha was a court official under King Jayasiṃha; see 3.66 and *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* 8.3354). Such sentiments were not unprecedented; cf. *Vikramānkadevacarita* 18.92 (ca. 1075).
17. He claims only to offer a sketch for greater writers to fill in (vs. 17), but this has not happened. Modern historiography is thin and tendentious. Modest exceptions are Habib and Nizami 1993 [1970] and Khan 1994.
18. Pp. 147–48, and vs. 1070–71. The passage does not appear in the Śāradā recension, but probably derives from contemporaneous historical materials (ed. Kaul 1967:16). See also p. 146 on the "ascendancy given to the Hindukas" under the Sultan. On the earlier period of unrest under Sūhabaṭṭa and Sultan Sikandar (r. 1389–1413), cf. Khan 1994, esp. p. 8.
19. The exhaustive bibliography of Rajasekhara (1985b:2:9–65) lists not a single entry relevant to these questions.
20. On these two phenomena, see Pollock 1998a and 1996:209 ff.
21. The brothers Sāyaṇa and Mādhava, ministers of Harihara I (1336–56) and Bukka (r. 1356–77), are best known for their vast commentary on all four Vedas, the first such totalizing exegesis in Indian history. But Sāyaṇa also wrote on literary criticism (the *Alaṅkārasudhānidhi*, cf. Sarasvati 1968); his poetry anthology, *Subhāṣitasudhānidhi*, was published by Krishnamoorthy in 1968.

22. Typical is Salūva Goppa Tippa Bhūpāla, governor under Devarāya II, who commented on the literary treatise of Vāmana, and wrote serious works on music and dance (contrast Stein 1989:124).

23. From the court of Devarāya II (r. 1424–46). Aruṇagirinātha Ḍiṇḍima's *Rāmābhyudaya*; from that of Kṛṣṇadevarāya, the *Bhāratāmṛta* of Divākara (the *Nārāyaṇaśataka* of Divākara's brother, Vidyākara, was no courtly production, despite the editor's claim); from that of Acyutadevarāya (r. 1530–42) the *Acyutarāyābhyudaya* of Rājanātha Ḍiṇḍima, and poems from the royal women, starting with Gaṅgādevī's *Madhurāvijaya* at the court of Bukka. (On the Ḍiṇḍima family, see Aiyangar 1941, 1942.)

24. Madras R no. 3717 (chapters 1–20); R no. 3002 (21–39), and a portion preserved in Calcutta (RASB Sanskrit Catalogue vol. 7, no. 5181) are all modern transcripts from a single palm leaf ms. On Divākara, see Raghavan 1947.

25. *Kāvyaṇāṭakamarmajñā* (cf. *Epigraphia Indica* 1:365.15), *kavitāpravīṇyaphaṇśā*, and *sakalakalābhoja* (all found in the *Jāmbavatīpariṇaya* discussed below).

26. His chief minister, Sāluva Timmappa, is known for a commentary on the *Campū Bhārata* of Ananta. The literary activities of one of his foremost court literati, Lolla Laksmīdharadeśika (like Divākara an immigrant from Orissa), consists almost exclusively of commentaries.

27. Some works attributed to the king are those of his court poets (the *Rasamañjarī*, for example, is Divākara's, as per the colophon of *Bhāratāmṛtam* 21). But he is called the author in the play itself (1.9), and there seems no reason to doubt it.

28. See Nilakanta Sastri and Venkataramanaya 1946:II:143 vs. 6 on the acquisition of the princess; Rajasekhara 1985a:110 on the king's new *biruḍa*. The *Rāyavācakamu* (ca. 1600) further corroborates the mytho-historical parallel (Wagoner 1993:146, 156; Ayyangar 1919:116).

29. Earlier examples include the *Karṇasundarī* of Bilhaṇa (ca. 1080), the *Lalitavi-graharāja* of Somadeva (1153), and the *Pārijātamañjarī* of Madana (1215).

30. *Jāmbavatīpariṇaya* Act 5, prologue [109], vs. 8ff., and vs. 42.

31. Compare, for example, the growth of historicist referentiality in the genre of the spring-festival play, from Kālidāsa's *Mālvikāgnimitra* (fourth century) to King Harsa's *Ratnāvalī* (seventh century) to the plays mentioned above, n. 29.

32. A short love poem (six verses) unique among the works of Kṛṣṇadevarāya's reign is attributed to the wife he acquired by conquest and later forsook, Tukkā, daughter of Gajapati Pratāparudra of Orissa (see Ayyangar 1919:143–44; *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Volume*, p. 18). The fact that it is in Sanskrit is its most interesting feature.

33. A celebrated teacher in Varanasi in the early 1600s had students from Draviḍa, Gurjara, Kānyakubja, Paścimadeśa, Mālava, Braja, Mithilā, Himalaya foothills, Karṇāṭa, Utkala, Konkana, Gauḍa, Andhra, Mathurā, Kāmarupa (*Gāḍhivamśānucarita* of Śankara Bhaṭṭa, ca. 1650, cited in Shastri 1912:9).

34. De 1960:2.252; Gerow 1977:287. Jagannātha cleaves to the past in rejecting one great innovation of the age, the theorization of *bhaktirasa*, the aesthetic sentiment of devotion (*Alaṅkāraustuba* of Kavikarṇapūra, fl. 1575), see *Rasaṅgādhara* pp. 55–56.

35. *Jaḡadābharāṇa*, *Prāṇābharāṇa*, and verses in *Rasaṅgādhara* in praise of Shāh Jahān (cf. see Sharma 1958:v).

36. For a detailed account, see Pollock 2001.

37. On Nīlakaṇṭha see Gode 1942, and Minkowski, forthcoming. For Gāgābhaṭṭa's role in Śivājī's coronation see Bendrey 1960. Gāgā's place in seventeenth-century intellectual history is discussed in Pollock 2001.

38. *Bhānucandracarita* 4.69ff. Bhānucandra himself received honors from Akbar (cf. *Kāvya prakāśakhaṇḍana* vs. 2), and taught Abu-l-Fazl the *Ṣaḍḍarśanasamuccaya* and

other works for his review of Hindu culture in the *Ain* (Desai's ed. of *Bhānucandracarita*, p. 28). Siddhicandra himself is mentioned nowhere either in Akbar's memoirs or Jahangīr's.

39. Abu-l Fazl is cited in Vanina 1995:223, Akbar (from the *Ain*) in Desai's ed. of *Bhānucandracarita*, p. 2.

40. We find both pure Sanskrit (the *Rahīmkāvya*) and hybrid (the Sanskrit-Hindi *Madanāṣṭaka*); see Naik 1966. Persian translations are discussed in Ernst, forthcoming.

41. His arguments against Mammaṭa go back at least to the mid-twelfth-century (cf. *Nātyadarpaṇa* [ed. Baroda], pp. 159–60). See *Bhānucandracarita* 4.87–90, 102–4 for Siddhi's Sanskrit education.

42. The last term (*akhaṇḍopādhiḥ*) echoes, or is echoed by, Jagannātha (*Rasagaṅgādhara* p. 8, as Parikh also notes, p. 9), though Jagannātha employs the term in reference to insight (*pratibhā*), the cause, not the definition, of literature. That Siddhicandra saw himself as a new intellectual is clear from his discussion of *rasa*, pp. 16 ff. (see also pp. 59 ff.).

43. Gode was first to identify Kavīndra with Bernier's pandit (Gode 1954; cf. also 1945:xlvi–lvii).

44. Of the sixty-nine names mentioned, only a few are known. A second collection was made of poems in Brajbhāṣā (Divakar 1966).

45. His commentaries on *Daśakumāracarita* and *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* have both been printed; for his still-unpublished *Kavīndrakalpadruma* see IOL Sanskrit Ms. 5:1499. Also probably his is *Jagadvijayachandas*, a sequence of rhyming epithets in praise of Jahangīr (ed. Kunhan Raja 1945:xxix–xxxiii). His Hindi works are *Jīānasāra* (cf. Gode 1945:xlvi and references; ed. Rahurkar 1969), and the *Kavīndrakalpalatīkā*, “bhāṣākavitāni” in honor of Shāh Jahān and Dārā Shikoh (ed. 1958; cf. Raghavan 1953). For his library, see Ananta Krishna Sastry 1921; note that Jagannātha's works, some adorned with canonizing commentary, are included (*Bhāminīvilāsasaṭīkā*, no. 1908, *Gaṅgālaharī* 1912, *Rasagaṅgādhara*, 1950).

46. Compare *Rasagaṅgādhara*, p. 365 (= Sharma 1958:vs. 76) and *Bihārī-ratnākara* Appendix 2, vs. 123; *Rasagaṅgādhara* p. 258 (= Sharma 1958:62 vs. 127), and *Satsāī* no. 490. Cf. also Mathuranath Shastri, *Rasagaṅgādhara*, p. 28.

47. On Rahīm's adaptations see Chaudhuri 1954:12–18.

48. The *Sampradāyikalpadruma* (*saṃvat* 1729 = AD 1673) was composed by the self-described grandnephew of Jagannātha (the ms. has been removed from Kankroli to Baroda, and is now inaccessible to me). The passage (reproduced in Athavale 1968:418) reads: *sāhasutā gāhi gaṅgāsoṃ mukti laī jhaṭapaṭ* [“he married the daughter of a Sāha (Shah, Muslim), and found release in the Gaṅgā straightway”].

49. So Sharma (1958:viii). The traditional view holds the poems to be “the production of his enemies” (Ramaswamy Sastri 1942:21).

50. Ed. Sharma 1958:190, vss. 584, 585.

51. Compare the verse on a Hindu boy by Khusrau (1253–1325): “My face becomes yellow because of a Hindu beloved / O pain! He is unaware of my condition. / I said, ‘Remove the weariness of my desire with your lips.’ / He smiled and said, ‘nāhī, nāhī’” (trans. Sunil Sharma). I owe the suggestion of a *mahbūb* parallel to Muzaffar Alam and Shamsur Rahman Faruqi.

52. The former is the attack on Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita's *Praudhāmanoramā* (“The Sophisticated and Charming [Commentary]”), which he titled, vulgarly, *Praudhāmanoramākumardana*, “Fondling the Tits of the ‘Sophisticated and Charming [Commentary]’.” The latter is found in his *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana* (prologue vs. 3).

53. *Rasaṅgādhara* intro. vs. 6. There are admittedly precedents in work no doubt known to Jagannātha (the *Pratāparudrayaśobhūṣaṇa*, for example, or the *Ujvalanīlamanī*).

54. *Bhāminīvilāsa*: *Śāntivilāsa* vss. 27, 31, 33.

55. *Rasaṅgādhara* p. 42.

56. Ed. Sharma 1958:69–70, vss. 3, 10.

57. The poem is *Dayitasya guṇān anusmaratī* (ed. Sharma 1958:71, vs. 18); see the discussion in *Rasaṅgādhara* p. 109.

58. For Part 1, mss. offer anywhere between 100 and 130 vss.; Part 2, 101–184; Part 4, 31–46. Those for the *Karuṇavilāsa* show no significant variation (Sternbach 1974:57 n. 292, Sastri 1942:66).

59. The *Bhāminīvilāsa* goes unmentioned in the *Rasaṅgādhara* (Sastri 1942:26, 64–5) and thus was probably the poet's last (*contra* Nāgeṣa on *Rasaṅgādhara* vs. 6).

60. Munro's report was never published in full; Arbuthnot 1855 gives a precis.

61. In the hierarchy of social esteem *śābdikas*, "philologists or teachers of general literature," as Adam calls them, were at the bottom, *naiyāyikas* or logicians at the top (Basu 1941:173).

62. See Basu 1941:257, 260, 266, 272; 183 and 177. The exception is the *Padān-kadūta* of *Kṛṣṇanātha Sārvabhauma* (court of Raghunātha Rāya of Nadia, 1723). A similar situation prevailed in the Panjab in the 1870s (Leitner 1971 [1882]:79–86; the most recent text is the twelfth-century *Naiṣadīyacarita*).

63. This is true even of texts on rhetoric as late as the eighteenth century. Manuscripts of Cirañjīva's *Kāvyaṅgādhara* (written in Dhaka in 1703), for example, are found across north India.

64. Consider Adam's catalogue of literary works of the most prolific Sanskrit writer in Bengal, Raghunandana Goswami (Basu 1941:264–65).

65. For Maharashtra, see also Parulekar 1953, vol. 1:3–88, esp. 71, for pandits' anxieties about the continuation of emoluments from the time of the Peshwas.

66. On the new dance-drama (*kuruvāñci*), see Peterson 1998. Among Sanskrit literary works (cf. Raghavan 1952:41 ff.), only Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita's *Patañjalīcaritam* and *Śṛṅgāraṅgādhara* stand out, but constitute no historic break.

67. Jai Singh II (r. 1700–43), if modernizing in astronomy and city planning, adhered to an archaic Brahmanical culture in his personal and political life (cf. Horstmann 1994:87, 91).

68. The anti-Hindu Sanskrit tract, *Mataparīkṣā* (Examination of Views), written by the missionary John Muir in 1839, is examined in Young 1981. On Vidyasagar, see Hatcher 1996.

69. The verse is attributed to Bhaṭṭa Tauta (fl. 950; cited by Ruyyaka on *Kāvyaṅgādhara* 1.1); cf. also *Yaśastīlakacampū* vs. 25.

70. Not everyone agrees with Valéry, to be sure. Braudel believed it is more often a question of "sinking into sleep" than dying; that civilizational roots "survive many a rupture" (1980:209–10). This requires a definition of "civilization," however, that renders the concept useless for history.

71. Fuhrmann 1983, and Dagron 1969.

72. See, generally, Longosch 1990, and more specifically, Ijsewijn and Sacré 1993.

73. Even the utopian proposals to make Latin the language of Europe (being no one's mother tongue, it would disadvantage no one, Ijsewijn and Sacré 1993:54) are paralleled in post-Independence debates on the national language (Ramaswamy 1999).

74. Pollock 1998a. A superb brief account of the French case is Fumaroli 1992.

75. Warder 1972:8, 217, where he adds, "In the darkest days [*kāvya*] kept the Indian

tradition alive. It handed on the best ideals and inspired the struggle to expel tyrannical invaders.”

76. Pollock 1998a. On Keśavdās (at the court of Indrajit of Orcha, fl. 1600), see McGregor, forthcoming. I have learned much about Keśavdās from reading Allison Busch’s University of Chicago dissertation in progress, “The Courtly Vernacular: The Transformation of Braj Literary Culture, 1590–1675.”

77. That modernity is as much a function of institutions as of sensibilities is an insight I owe to conversations with Sudipta Kaviraj.

78. Sen and Mishra 1951; Parulekar 1953:1:25–8 (I thank Veena Naregal for the latter reference).

79. See further in Pollock 2001.

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