**Abstract:** This article makes the case that Vīraśaivism emerged in direct textual continuity with the tantric traditions of the Śaiva Age. In academic practice up through the present day, the study of Śaivism, through Sanskrit sources, and bhakti Hinduism, through the vernacular, are generally treated as distinct disciplines and objects of study. As a result, Vīraśaivism has yet to be systematically approached through a philological analysis of its precursors from earlier Śaiva traditions. With this aim in mind, I begin by documenting for the first time that a thirteenth-century Sanskrit work of what I have called the Vīramāheśvara textual corpus, the Somanāthabhāṣya or Vīramāheśvaraśārādūdhābhāṣya, was most likely authored by Pālkurikē Mānīkā, best known for his vernacular Telugu Vīraśaiva literature. Second, I outline the indebtedness of the early Sanskrit Vīramāheśvara corpus to a popular work of early lay Śaivism, the Śivadharmaśāstra, with particular attention to the concepts of the jaṅgama and the ēśaliṅga. That the Vīramāheśvaras borrowed many of their formative concepts and practices directly from the Śivadharmaśāstra and other works of the Śaiva Age, I argue, belies the common assumption that Vīraśaivism originated as a social and religious revolution.

**Keywords:** Vīraśaiva; Līṅgāyat; Hinduism; Sanskrit; Telugu; Śaivism; South Asia; multilingualism

1. **Vīraśaivism, Tantra, and the Śaiva Age**

   By the mid-thirteenth century, Śaivism in the Deccan had already been irrevocably transformed by the decline of the Śaiva Age, as Alexis Sanderson has called it, the golden age of what we colloquially describe as “tantric Śaivism” (Sanderson 2009). Perhaps most remarkably, the Śaiva institutions that had previously dominated the region’s religious ecology were rapidly disappearing, particularly those of the Kālāmukha. Descending from the Lākula traditions, or what Alexis Sanderson has termed Atimārga II, the Kālāmukhas left behind precious few of the scriptures that must have originally distinguished their practice from competitors within the Atimārga and Mantramārga, and none in full recensions. Nevertheless, even before Alexis Sanderson and his students had revolutionized our narrative of medieval Śaivism over the past two to three decades, the Kālāmukhas were already known to have vanished abruptly, as their landholdings were systematically replaced by another Śaiva tradition rising to prominence in the region, the Vīraśaivas. As a field, we owe our original awareness of this phenomenon to the pathbreaking work of David Lorenzen, who in his monograph, The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects, compiled a voluminous array of inscriptive evidence to document how Kālāmukha māṭhas (monasteries) ceased to be patronized precisely as inscriptions increasingly attested to the presence of Vīraśaiva devotional figures at the same sites.1 Reflecting further on this state of affairs, however, Lorenzen later added an appendix to his work, claiming that Kālāmukha māṭhas were not merely displaced, but rather were overthrown by a veritable religious revolution. As Lorenzen writes:

1 (Lorenzen 1991; see also Shanthamurthy (2015). Although inscriptions in the Karnataka region often refer to the tradition with the spelling Kālāmukha, because the name is shown in textual citations to be originally synonymous with the Sanskrit asitavaktra (“black face”), I use the spelling Kālāmukha here throughout).
It can even be said the two [Kālamukha and Vīraśaiva] movements represent antipodes of Indian intellectual and religious tradition: the Brahmanic and the anti-Brahmanic, the scholastic and the devotional, Sanskrit learning and vernacular poetic inspiration, pan-Indian culture and regional culture, social and spiritual hierarchy and social and spiritual equality . . . Vīraśaivism represented not “a reformist schism of the Kālāmukha church” but rather its overthrow. (Lorenzen 1991, p. 242)

For Lorenzen, in essence, Vīraśaivism is the quintessential representative of the Bhakti Movement: a fundamentally anti-brahmin, anti-caste “movement”, a radical rupture of social protest, and a purely vernacular religion of the people. Lorenzen is not alone, of course, in attributing these features to Vīraśaivism. To the contrary, in the wake of A. K. Ramanujan’s celebrated Speaking of Śiva (Ramanujan 1973), the field of South Asian religions has naturalized his portrayal of Vīraśaivism as a social and religious revolution. Ramanujan, in turn, imported the perspectives of earlier intellectuals writing in Kannada who emploted Vīraśaivism quite explicitly as an Indian foil for the Protestant Reformation. But does this narrative accurately capture the influences that precipitated the emergence of Vīraśaivism?

If we depict Vīraśaivism as essentially a devotional (bhakti) revolution, for instance, we might be inclined to delineate the Śaivism after the Śaiva Age as something radically different from its predecessors, those traditions that fall under the category of “Śaiva tantra”. Indeed, most scholarly monographs and articles on Vīraśaivism scarcely mention the word “ tantra”, and historicize Vīraśaivism only in relation to other communities traditionally categorized as “bhakti”, as if an unbridgeable chasm separated the two. Likewise, even leading scholars of Śaiva philology flag the “movement of the non-brahmin Vīraśaisvas” (Sanderson 2012–2013, p. 83) as of interest to what we might call Tantric Studies only for its occasional borrowings from the Śaiva Siddhānta and the Trika of Kashmir.

Yet, if we read this antagonism back into the origins of Vīraśaivism as a moment of rupture, we risk putting forward a thesis that—as I would like to argue as explicitly as possible—is completely in contradiction with our textual evidence. To put matters even more plainly, based on philological evidence, Vīraśaivism did not originate as a revolution or reformation of tantric Śaivism, nor of Kālamukha traditions in particular. Indeed, a large part of the problem facing earlier generations of scholars was that adequate textual evidence had not yet come to our attention. Only a fraction of early Vīraśaiva literature has been studied to date, in part because we have restricted the source languages of our archive to the vernacular, exclusive of Sanskrit, and in part because we lacked sufficient knowledge of what had come before. Of course, print editions of such Vīraśaiva works in Sanskrit did exist, as Vīraśaiva monasteries published a substantial quantity of the tradition’s literary history in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For institutional reasons, however, scholars trained in early Kannada and Telugu literature have rarely consulted Sanskrit texts, and when they did so, they previously lacked sufficient knowledge of the pre-Vīraśaiva traditions of the Śaiva Age from the region to draw clear connections between the two. Likewise, and perhaps more crucially for the present audience, when Śaivism is studied from a philological perspective, vernacular literature is rarely consulted, and in this case,
as I will argue, the contemporary Telugu textual context is indispensable for historicizing the early Viraśaiva works in question.

In this article, I will make the case that Viraśaivism emerged in direct textual continuity with the “tantric” traditions of the Śaiva Age, especially the Atimārga II of the Kālamukhas, although in a number of cases early Viraśaivism was influenced by Mantramārga traditions as well. As an embryonic version of this article was originally presented at the Society for Tantric Studies Conference in 2019, I present evidence that specifically sheds new light on how we define and periodize what we call tantra, but a similar corrective must be taken in our broader narratives of Hindu and South Asian religious traditions as well. In an earlier article in the journal History of Religions (Fisher 2019), I introduced elements of my claim by delineating the canon of what I have called the Viraṃheśvara textual culture of Śrisailam. As I demonstrated in that publication, we have access to a rich body of early Viraśaiva didactic literature that I date to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, contemporary with our earliest vernacular evidence for Viraśaivism and heavily indebted to the textual canons of the Śaiva Age, most notably (but by no means limited to) the Śivadharmasastra. Whereas in that context I dealt with issues of historiography facing Religious Studies and South Asian Studies, my project here is primarily philological. Naturally, much work remains to be done in critically editing this textual corpus, and tracing parallels in the citations of many of the otherwise rarely attested early recensions of prior Śaiva scriptures. As a result, the evidence presented here will be extended in subsequent publications on the ritual practice and textual canons of the Viraṃheśvaras.

With such an aim in mind, I will reiterate in greater philological detail the case for dating the Viraṃheśvara corpus to around the thirteenth to early-fourteenth centuries, a significantly earlier date than that of the Sanskrit Viraśaiva works of Vijayanagara. The principle Sanskrit works in question are the Viraṃheśvaracārāsṛodhdhārabhāṣya, otherwise traditionally known as the Somanāthaḥbhāṣya, the authorship of which I will discuss below; the Śaivaratnakara of Jayotirinātha; and the Viraṃheśvaracārāsangraha of Nilaṅkanta Nāganātha. Each of these Viraṃheśvara texts, in turn, contains citations from earlier (some likely Kālamukha) Śaiva scriptures, which in many cases match quite closely, barring the usual accretion of textual variants. The contemporary Telugu corpus consists primarily of the Telugu works attributed to Pālkurikē Somanātha: namely, the Basacamāryan, Paṇḍitārādhyaçaritramu, and Caturvādasāramu. The Śivaśāstraçaritramu attributed to Mallikārjuna Paṇḍitārādhya merits consideration here as well, although most likely dates to a slightly earlier period (a twelfth century dating would be plausible).

First, by bringing these two bodies of textuality into dialogue, I present the evidence that the Sanskrit Somanāthaḥbhāṣya has been correctly attributed to the same Pālkurikē Somanātha who is responsible for the three Telugu works mentioned above. As a result, as both text–internal citational evidence and the attribution of authorship to Pālkurikē Somanātha are consistent with each other, we can assert with relatively strong confidence that the Somanāthaḥbhāṣya was composed in the thirteenth century at Śrisailam. The fact that the Sanskrit and Telugu works in question overlap so pervasively in tone and content, moreover, further allows us to reject the hypothesis, entrenched as it is, that early vernacular Viraśaivism arose in strict opposition to Sanskritic Śaivism. Second, I will conclude by outlining the principle points of continuity between the Viraṃheśvara corpus and the Śaivism of the Śaiva Age, demonstrating that on textual grounds early Viraśaivism was directly indebted to its predecessors in the Deccan, and did not constitute an “overthrow” of its legacy, nor a revolution of any kind. While the Viraṃheśvaras drew on a number of

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6 In addition, political controversies concerning the Lingāyat and Pañcācārya or Pañcapitha communities has obscured matters further, but that state of affairs cannot be adequately addressed in the present article. In a forthcoming article to be published in the new journal NESAR (New Explorations in South Asia Research), I will further disambiguate the Viraṃheśvara corpus of texts from the origins of the Pañcācārya or Pañcapitha paramparā some centuries later by tracing the roots of the latter to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

7 To clarify, what I refer to here as the Caturvādasāramu is the first portion of the work printed under this title, up through the subheading in the printed edition, “Śivanubhavasūtravrivaramu”. As I will discuss, I suspect that the second portion of this work, given its seeming indebtedness to the Anubhavasūtra of Māyādeva or similar material, along with the Anubhavasūtra, are more likely later accretions to Somanātha’s oeuvre.
distinct textual currents from the Śaiva Age, I focus here on their substantial inheritance from the Śivalohurmasāstra, with particular attention to the concept of the jāṅgama, the human devotee as moving śivalīṅga.

2. Dating the Vīramāheśvarā Corpus: Pālkurikē Somanātha and the Authorship of the Somanāthahāṭṣya

As I have argued at greater length in other venues (Fisher 2019), the tradition we now define as Viraśaivism, or Liṅgāyatism, was not a new religious movement founded by the poet-saint Basava in the twelfth century. Our earliest texts that mention Basava and his exploits—the Telugu (and Sanskrit) works of Pālkurikē Somanātha, and the Kannada Rāgalēgalu of Harihara—can only be dated as early as the thirteenth century, and moreover speak to a wider discursive world that pre-existed Basava himself, in which he merely participated as one historical agent among many. Indeed, both Harihara and Somanātha, from opposite sides of the Deccan, speak to a remarkably similar religious worldview, both depicting, for example, the historical saranās or Vīraśaiva saints as incarnations of Śiva’s celestial attendants, the Pramathagaṇaś. Inscriptional evidence confirms, moreover, that Vīramāheśvarā terminology was used prior to and far afield from the city of Kalyāṇa where Basava served as dāndanāyaka to Bijjala of the Kalachuris. In other words, we have no plausible historical grounds for situating a singular religious revolution in twelfth-century Kalyāṇa. Rather, the Vīraśaivas in residence there during Basava’s day were already part of a greater trans-Deccan network spanning from southern Maharashtra through coastal Andhra and, if we trust inscriptional evidence, likely penetrating further south into Tamil Nadu as well.

Nevertheless, although the Vīramāheśvarās may well have traversed an extensive geographical network by the thirteenth century, our surviving Sanskrit textual evidence from the period stems from one single location: the extended domain of the Śaiva pilgrimage site at Srisailam. While we might hypothesize that these texts circulated beyond their locale of composition, whether or not similar texts were composed elsewhere, we can assert with confidence that Srisailam was something of a discursive epicenter, so to speak, in which the thirteenth-century Vīramāheśvarās codified their doctrine and ritual practice. How, then, do we know that the texts I have identified above are Vīramāheśvara works composed at Srisailam at a relatively early date? First of all, as I have discussed in greater length in (Fisher 2019), the texts generally declare their location of composition and religious affiliation fairly explicitly. In the Śīvaratnākara, Jyotirnātha traces his family lineage’s origin to Saurashtra, apparently prior to the demolition of the Somanātha temple by Mahmud of Ghazni. He continues, in the same context, to describe the temple that he and his family had maintained after relocating to Srisailam. In the Vīramāheśvarācātra-saṅgraha, Nilakanṭha Nāganātha pays homage to Mallikārjuna, the form of Śiva at the temple at Srisailam, and proceeds to venerate a number of early Vīraśaiva figures writing in Sanskrit or south Indian vernaculars, none of whom can be dated, based on our evidence, after the thirteenth century. In both of these works, as well as in the Somanāthahāṭṣya, the words Vīramāheśvara and Vīraśaiva appear as terms of self-reference to the community in

8 In fact, by no means did all premodern Kannada Vīraśaiva texts view Basava as the central figure of the tradition. One key example is the Sūnyaśampādāṇa, which granted pride of place to Allama Prabhu. Likewise, the figures now known as the Paṇḍacāryas did appear in early modern Kannada texts as well. Nevertheless, the idea of Basava as the leader of an Indian Protestant Reformation—indeed, the Indian Martin Luther—had gained traction by the mid-twentieth century not only as a scholarly fashion but as itself a point of theological doctrine. This emergent tradition, which I have called Protestant Liṅgāyatism (Fisher 2019), needs to be understood within scholarship as itself a religious phenomenon. It is also crucial to note that the vacana or poetic utterances attributed to Basava and other early poet saints cannot be taken as reliable documentary evidence concerning the origins of Vīraśaivism. See Chandra Shobhi (2003) for a discussion of the later canonization of the vacana corpus during the Vijayanagara period, connected with the rise of what the author terms “Viraṅka” Vīraśaiva identity, as well as of the twentieth-century editorial history of the vacana.

9 On the Rāgalēgalu of Harihara, see Ben-Herut (2018).

10 Gil Ben-Herut, personal communication.

11 See also Ben-Herut (2015) on the transregional dimensions of Śaiva bhakti. In my forthcoming monograph, I examine the category of translation as a vehicle for understanding how regional Vīraśaivasms took root across the southern half of the subcontinent, as, for example, was the case in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.
question. All three are structured primarily as nibandhas (compendiums, or anthologies) of Sanskrit scriptural citations, while the Somanāthaśabdāṇga also elaborates on the verses cited with extended prose commentary. Incidentally, the Telugu works of Pālkurikē Somanātha also contain all of these features, incorporating the self-referential term “Viramāheśvara”, extended descriptions of the Śaiva institutions of thirteenth-century Srisailam, and, as we will see, lengthy anthologized passages of Sanskrit citations.

Who, then, is Pālkurikē Somanātha, and why would his dual authorship of works in Telugu and Sanskrit be so significant for our scholarly portrait of Vīraśaivism? Scholars of bhakti traditions of Hinduism will be intimately acquainted with Pālkurikē Somanātha for the hagiographies of the early Vīraśaiva saints or śaranās he crafts in his vernacular Telugu works. From the perspective of Telugu literary historians, Somanātha’s verse style stands in stark contrast to the school of high Telugu literature that more strictly emulated the idiom of Sanskrit kāvyā.12 In short, his writings are marshaled in support of a view that the vernacular in South Asia emerged from the popular religious sentiment of devotion, rather than from the elite courtly world of Sanskrit literature. Based on the portrait of Somanātha’s writings as vernacular hagiography, his works—like those of his near contemporary writing in Kannada, Harihara—have been read almost exclusively in dialogue with the lives of the Nāyanārs as recounted in the Tamil Pēriyapurāṇam. Indeed, such parallels do exist. But, as we will see, by reducing Pālkurikē Somanātha’s discursive context exclusively to the Pēriyapurāṇam, scholars to date have lost sight of the data that allows us to contextualize more precisely the Śaiva worldview from which he wrote.

Among works attributed to him, Somanātha is best known for the Basavapurāṇamu, which narrates not only the life story of Basava, as the name would suggest, but also numerous of his purported contemporaries. The Basavapurāṇamu has been adopted as a principle source for classroom teaching and scholarship on the Vīraśaiva tradition because it can be accessed easily by English speakers through the translation of Velcheru Narayana Rao and Gene Roghair. This Telugu epic in dvipada meter has often been upheld in scholarship as an example of purely vernacular, devotional narrative—disconnected, in other words, from anything remotely Sanskritic and from tantra as a category.13 Pālkurikē Somanātha is also generally accepted as having composed the Paṇḍitārādhya-caritramu, a second Telugu prabandha on the life of Mallikārjuna Paṇḍitārādhyā, to whom authorship of the Telugu-language Śrīvaṅga-devatāraśāmanu is attributed.14 Indeed, we can be fairly confident that the same author crafted both of these two Telugu works, and in fact, a third as well: Somanātha tells us explicitly at the outset of his Paṇḍitārādhya-caritramu that he had previously completed two Telugu works entitled the Basavapurāṇamu and the Caturvedāstāramu, or “Essence of the Four Vedas”. Speaking about himself in the second person, Pālkurikē Somanātha declares the following:

You admirably composed the Basacpurāṇa;
In the Basacpurāṇa narrative, you recounted as history (itihāsa)
The stories of the Gaṇas, those celebrated ancient devotees.
You composed the Caturvedāstāramu with the

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12 According to the canonical portrait of Telugu literary history, early Telugu literature was divided into a more elite and Sanskritized (mārga) register on one hand, and a more popular and accessible (dēsi) current on the other. See for instance (Rao and Roghair 1990, p. 5) for further detail. Pālkurikē Somanātha’s works, and Śaiva bhakti literature more broadly, are generally associated with the dēsi current, and are thus viewed as intrinsically anti-Sanskritic and as intended for popular audiences. Nevertheless, an important corrective has recently been raised by Jones (2018), who complicates this division by showing that Pālkurikē Somanātha was deeply acquainted with formal Telugu literary conventions and makes use of such literary devices in his Telugu works. As this article also hopes to make clear, Somanātha’s Telugu works, as well as other Telugu Śaiva works such as the Śrīvaṅga-devatāraśāmanu, are anything but anti-Sanskritic.

13 See Rao and Roghair (1990). For instance, “Somanātha’s rejection of Sanskritic, brahminic, literary conventions was complete” (p. 6). “Somanātha emphasized his opposition to the brahminic tradition by explicitly stating that he never associated with bhavis, non-Vīraśivas” (p. 7). On the second point, based on our combined intertextual evidence, such statements are not evidence of “opposition to the brahminic tradition”. Rather, Viramāheśvaras strictly avoided contact with non-Śaivas, considering them to be virtually untouchable. Caste, Sanskrit, and the Vedas are not at all under contention in such a statement.

14 Although Paṇḍitārādhyā is also accepted by the Paṇcācārya or Paṇcapāṇi parampara as one of the original five teachers (ācāryas), that later hagiographical portrait of Paṇḍitārādhyā is beyond the scope of this article.
best of heroic devotion (vīrābhakti) in accordance with the Vedas.\(^{15}\)

Although Somanātha has professed his own authorship here of the Caturvēdadāstāramu, its title might give some readers pause: the “Essence of the Four Vedas”, some might suspect, is the polar opposite, at least according to conventional wisdom, of what motivated Vīraśaivism as a religious “movement”. Yet, not only can we infer, pending further examination, that Pālkurikē Somanātha did author the Caturvēdadāstāramu, but we must acknowledge his self-professed motive in doing so: Somanātha authored this vernacular work of Śaiva doctrine, he tells us, to establish the orthodox Vaidika status of what he understands as vīrābhakti. Indeed, this sentiment accords precisely with the view articulated in the Basavapurāṇamu, where we read that devotion to Śiva is inculcated in the Vedas themselves: “O Basava, proclaim the devotion that has been derived from the essence of the Vedas and śāstras”.\(^{16}\)

Moreover, we have little reason to suspect that Somanātha’s genuflection to the Vedas was intended disingenuously, or as a means of coopting a textual authority he viewed as foreign to Śaivism. To the contrary, by the thirteenth century in the Andhra country, it would have been quite normative among Śaivas to interpret the Vedas as a quintessentially Śaiva scriptural corpus, in no way contradictory with the Āgamic and Ātmārgic literature of the Śaiva Age. For instance, the name of Somanātha’s “Caturvēdadāstāramu” was by no means unprecedented. Rather, it was likely intended to evoke the earlier Caturvedatātparyasāṅgraha of Haradatta, a garland of Sanskrit verses in the vasantatilaka meter intended to illustrate that Śiva is the essential meaning (tātparya) of the four Vedas, cited frequently in the Somanāthabhāṣya.\(^{17}\) Evidently, we cannot casually presume that the Vīraśaivism of Pālkurikē Somanātha intends in any manner to upend the authority of the Vedas as scripture.

Further, we would be remiss in presuming that for Somanātha the vernacular Telugu was in any way divorced from Sanskrit. Contrary to popular perception, his linguistic register is highly Sanskritized, even preserving the sort of lengthy Sanskrit compounds generally taken to be the purview of courtly Telugu literature. For example, to indicate his distaste for interacting with non-Śaivas, Somanātha describes himself in the Basavapurāṇamu with extended Sanskrit compounding as “avoiding contact such as dialogue with and respect for non-Śaivas” (bhavijanasanādaparāṇasamkhāṣanādhīnāmīdamsargadārāgūṇāṁ) and encapsulates his reverence for Vedic canons of textuality in phrases such as “in accordance with all the Vedas and Purāṇas, and the established doctrine of the secret of the stainless līṅga” (akalamkalingarahasāsiṣṭhānātakalavēdāpūrāṇasammatamātavina) (Basavapurāṇamu p. 7). Moreover, all of Somanātha’s vernacular works are interlaced with direct Sanskrit quotations from Vedic and Śaiva source material. Both the Pañḍitārādhāyacaritramu and Caturvēdadāstāramu are heavily inflected with long doctrinal digests of Sanskrit source material, as will be discussed below, but Sanskrit citations appear in the Basavapurāṇamu as well. Unfortunately, these quotations are not necessarily apparent to those reading Rao and Roghair’s translation, as the English rendering and footnotes may obscure the shift in language.\(^{18}\)

\(^{15}\) Pālkurikē Somanātha, Pañḍitārādhāyacaritramu, p. 3: basavapurāṇa mōpparanga raicićittivi, basavapurāṇa prabamdhambunamdu prathīta purātana bhaktaganānakathānambu itihāsaghatanam guṛcittivi, vara vīrābhakti savaidikambuganu virācićittivi saturvēdasāramana.

\(^{16}\) (Rao and Roghair 1990, p. 62). Similar examples are abundant, and do not need to be cited here.

\(^{17}\) Haradatta’s work has often been (either erroneously or synonymously) titled by its editor and as a result, by subsequent scholarship, as the Śrutisākṣīnta, with the title Caturvedatātparyasāṅgraka attributed to a later commentary by Śivalingabāha. Somanātha, however, is consistent in referring to this text by the shorthand Tātparyasāṅgraha. The print edition of this work by P. A. Ramasamy with commentary is incomplete. See also IFP transcript no. 1059 for the root text. Somanātha’s lack of antipathy toward the Vedas also raises the question, of course, of his caste status prior to Śaiva initiation and his attitude toward non-Śaiva brahmin communities. While I will discuss this matter further in my forthcoming monograph, it is worth remarking for the moment that throughout the Somanāthabhāṣya, Somanātha refers to matters of ritual practice that he believes to be current in various śākhas.

\(^{18}\) See, for example, Basavapurāṇamu p. 10: mṛdumahattvamum gānāmini bōmku lanamgam badum “kavayah kim na paśyanti” yanata yanucum gukavula giṭunam bucci pēcī vinutiṁ puti daṅkathāvidha meṭu lanina. Rao and Roghair (1990) translate, p. 45, without indicating the direct quotation in the footnotes: “It is said that a poet can see everything. But that does not hold true if one is ignorant of Meḍa’s greatness. Thus I ignore all the bad poets and praise Basava with vigor. This is how the story goes”. The Sanskrit quotation kavayah kim na paśyanti is found in the Mahātasubhaśītasāṅgraha. On p. 57, although indicating the quotation in a footnote, they translate: “Śruti has commended it as all seeing”, leaving the casual reader unaware of the Sanskrit citation vīrābhakti caṅsūr uṭa.
Stylistically, in other words, all of Palkurikē Somanātha’s works give every indication of an authorial imagination well versed in the Sanskrit language. Yet, we can find even more conclusive evidence of shared authorship by directly comparing key passages from the Caturvedasāramu, Paṇḍitarādyagaracaritramu, and the Sanskrit Somanāthabhāṣya that contain direct and unmistakable parallels. In fact, despite linguistic differences, the texts harmonize to a remarkable degree, such that the overlap in content is far too significant to be explained by coincidence. To begin with a particularly striking example, let us examine the maṅgala verse of the Somanāthabhāṣya, which invokes Basava simultaneously as a human incarnation of Śiva’s bull, and leader of the Pramathagaṇas, Vṛṣabha or Nandikeśvara:

May Lord (ṛṣṭiḥ) Basava surpass all, venerable (piṣṭiḥ) for his fortitude and stainlessness,
The seed (bṛṣṭiḥ) of shining devotion, keeping the company (saṃtaḥ) of the Pramathagaṇas
Abiding (vartī) within an expansive lineage that removes the affliction (uṛtī) of the humble,
His limitless fame (kṛtī) established across the directions, incarnation (uṛtī) of the Lord of Bulls.¹⁹

In both halves of this benedictory verse, Somanātha employs a four-part rhyme scheme of a sort that is rarely encountered in Sanskrit literature but is not at all unexpected in Telugu dvīpada verse. In fact, not only do Palkurikē Somanātha’s Telugu works make ample use of this device throughout, but Somanātha is particularly fond of the second rhyming pattern, often making use of the very same rhyming words. To name a single example, the Paṇḍitarādyagaracaritramu also opens with an invocation of Basava, incarnation of Vṛṣabha, as the one “who had accumulated fame (kṛtī) and merit through the form (uṛtī) of the auspicious guru, dwelling (vartī) in bliss, pulsating (sphūrtī) with the end of scripture”. The content of the verses may differ, but the rhymes are unambiguous parallels. Moreover, the precise same rhyming words appear on multiple occasions in the Basavapurāṇamu as well.²⁰

With the evidence presented thus far, it may remain plausible to suggest that the Somanāthabhāṣya was simply invoking the literary fashions of the day, imitating either Palkurikē Somanātha directly or the broader conventions of early Telugu prosody. Nevertheless, the overlapping content is far more pervasive, including some particularly striking doctrinal passages reproduced in both the Sanskrit Somanāthabhāṣya and the Telugu Caturvedasāramu. For instance, both texts include an enumeration of a closely matched set of Upanisādic scriptures, which both texts refer to as “Śākhā Upaniṣads”, the property of different lineages (śākhā) of Vedic transmission.²¹ It is worth noting that the term śākhopaniṣad

¹⁹ Somanāthabhāṣya: jayatu basavaṁiḥā śhulaṁyanirmalyaptiḥ pṛamathagaṇasamāhāḥ prollasadbhaktibījāḥ | prahṛṣṭinamadārī:ḥ-sphāyadāṃnā-yavartī sthiradīgamakirtiḥ śṛṇvadhiṣṭāmārīḥ

²⁰ Paṇḍitarādyagaracaritramu, p. 1: śrīgurumūrti mārjitaṁ pun. yamādhyadīnām. gīrāsa-kat.ḥa-brahmabindurā, gīra-kat.ḥa-brahmabindurā

²¹ It is worth noting that the term śākhopaniṣad
itself is not especially common. By employing this term, Somanātha might be taken as revealing that for him, Vedic scripture was not an abstract canon but was embedded within a living sociology of distinct Vedic brahminical communities. Furthermore, both works supply identical proof texts for the incarnation of Vṛṣabha as Basava: “I will become your son, by the name of Nandin, not born from a human womb”.

Perhaps the most remarkable of these convergences is that the Somanāthabhāṣya and Caturvedasāramu provide a precisely identical Prakrit etymology of the name of Basava, which makes use of identical grammatical rules and examples from vernacular Telugu usage. Drawing on the Prakrit grammar of Vararuci, Somanātha makes the case that the name Basava can be derived systematically from the Sanskrit Vṛṣabha (“bull”), as rules of substitution render the letters b and v interchangeable (vrṣāsya bakārādeśo bhavati, vabhayor abheda iti; pavargatṛtyākṣaramu bakārāmam pukārāmpvulvanam), and the sibilants of various classes are notoriously collapsed into “sa” in Prakrit and several vernaculars (saṣoḥ sa iti sūtrāt sakārasya sakārādeśo bhavati; saṣoḥ sa yanu vyākaraṇasūtramunam). Hence, “vr.” can become “ba”, “sa” can become “sa”, and “bha” can become “va”, transforming the Sanskrit Vṛṣabha into Basava. Similarly, one may demonstrate Basava’s ontological connection with Śiva, by deriving in a similar manner the name Basava from the first three syllables of Śiva’s name as Paśupati, “lord of beasts” (paśūpa). Both texts proceed, then, to illustrate this phonetic transformation with identical examples, such as the Sanskrit word kūṭāra, meaning an axe, and the Telugu equivalent, guḍḍa, (kuṭṭhāra) udalāmāsarakadipadesu...; guḍḍālāmāsarakadipadesu... varusa guḍḍaliyam dāmaragodāli).

It is undeniable, at this point, that the Somanāthabhāṣya and Caturvedasāramu share some direct relation of dependence, but could one text have been written in direct imitation of the other? For multiple reasons, forgery seems implausible. For instance, the Somanāthabhāṣya makes no effort to stake out a reputation for itself through attribution to Pākuriṅkē Somanātha. In fact, the author’s name is mentioned nowhere in the text. Despite their substantial intertextuality, moreover, the two texts are not precise matches: that is, neither the Somanāthabhāṣya nor the Caturvedasāramu seems intended as a translation of the other. While concerned with several identical themes—for example, both deal with the obligatory Vīrāmāheśvara topics of sacred ash (vibhiṇī), rudrāśa beads, and the bearing of the personal linga—the structure of the texts is not identical. Moreover, while a substantial number of the Sanskrit citations in the Caturvedasāramu also appear in the Somanāthabhāṣya, an equitably substantial number do not, and vice versa. As a result, neither text would have been sufficient to provide the source material for the other.

If anything, Somanātha’s Panditārādhyaçaritramu overlaps even more pervasively with the contents of the Somanāthabhāṣya, even if the overlapping content is not so readily memorable. Structured as a garland of narratives of the lives of Mallikārjuna Panḍitārādhya and other saints, the Panḍitārādhyaçaritramu has, like the Basavpurāṇamu, been represented as a strictly vernacular and prototypically devotional bhakti literary work. While very little work has been done on the text within the Western academy, it is best known for its occasional polyglossic use of multiple vernaculars (Kannada, Marathi, and Tamil), and
secondarily for the chapter in which Pāṇḍītārādhya journeys to meet Bāsava, only to find that the latter has fled Kalyāṇa after the assassination of Bījala. Anything more than a surface level perusal of the text, however, makes clear that the author aimed to convey Vīraśaiva doctrine as much as narrative, and was as thoroughly acquainted with Sanskrit as with Telugu. For instance, in the first prakārana, we find several extended doctrinal discussions, structured as garlands of Sanskrit citations within a Telugu grammatical medium.

Many of these discussions, moreover, are structurally parallel to sections of the Somanāthabhāṣya, and the verse quotations often run in almost the same sequence in both texts. It is the “almost” here, again, that is key: in most cases, we find just enough variation between the two—a verse missing or an extra citation supplied here or there in either text, or different attributions of sources for the same citation—to be confident that one text could not have been simply copied from the other. The doctrinal digests in the Pāṇḍītārādhya-caritraṇa concern the “greatness” (Telugu: mahinna, Sanskrit: mahātmya) of sacred ash (vibhūti), rudrāśa beads, pādodaka, the worship of the līṅga (līṅgārcaṇa), the bearing of the līṅga, and prasāda, all of which are discussed in the Somanāthabhāṣya as well. The sum total of the evidence is abundant, and only a fraction can be published here for want of space. I have, however, exemplified this citational pattern below in Appendix A, with the original Telugu and Sanskrit of a parallel section from the Pāṇḍītārādhya-caritraṇa and the Somanāthabhāṣya.

What, then, do we make of these pervasive textual parallels in multiple languages? By far the most parsimonious solution—which I believe to be the strongest argument, based on the evidence—is quite simply that all of these works were composed by the same author. In order to confirm the plausibility of dating the Somanāthabhāṣya to the thirteenth century, however, we must further clarify that no textual material contained within the work precludes such a dating. The same, incidentally, must be ascertained for the Saivaratnakara of Jyotirmātha and the Vīraśaiva-caritraṇa of Nilakanṭha Nāgānatha, the other two works I associate with the early Vīraśaiva corpus. In short, none of the Sanskrit Vīraśaiva works cite any source texts that would prohibit dating the Somanāthabhāṣya and Saivaratnakara to the thirteenth century, and the Vīraśaiva-caritraṇa to the early fourteenth century. Among readily datable Sanskrit sources in the Somanāthabhāṣya, we find citations from the Somasambhupadhati of 1048/9 CE, the ca. eleventh-century Vāyavyasamhitā, and the mid twelfth-century Śūtaśamhitā. In the Saivaratnakara, we further find an intriguing mention of the fourfold typology of yoga, which Jason Birch has recently historicized to this time period. It is worth noting that none of the Vīraśaiva authors cite the Sanskrit Śrīśailakhaṇḍa, which Reddy (2014) has proposed to date to the thirteenth century on stylistic grounds. Also worthy of note is that while these works are intimately familiar with the Śaiva religious landscape at Srīśaila, none makes mention of Mallikārjuna’s consort as Bhramarāmbā, who seems to make her debut on the stage of Telugu literature around the turn of the fifteenth century.

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25 We can state conclusively that the Saivaratnakara postdates the Somanāthabhāṣya, because it incorporates its commentarial prose along with shared verse citations.

26 On the Somasambhupadhati or Kriyākānakramatva, authored by Somasambhu, pontiff of the Golāgī Matha, of present day Gurgi, located in Rewa District in Madhya Pradesh, see for instance Sanderson (2012–2013), p. 21. On the Vāyavyasamhitā, see Barois (2013). On the dating of the Śūtaśamhitā, see Cox (2016).

27 (Saivaratnakara 1.39: tanmantrayogahathogahalayāhogyoṣāṣṭrijayogavidhihataḥ paramārthavedi 1 bhūlokapavanasamāgatasyaṁbhumūtīḥ satkīrtipūrasaśipūrṇajagatkarandaḥ 1) Jason Birch (2019) has argued that the Amaraughaprabodha, which was a foundational source text for the fifteenth-century Hathiśudhindrā, should be understood as one of the earliest texts to teach a fourfold system of yoga. Drawing on the eleventh- to twelfth-century exchange of yogic ideas between Saivism and Buddhism, exemplified by the Amrtaśuddhi, the short recension of the Amaraughaprabodha likely predates the fourteenth-century Datttṛprapajñāśāstra. Other texts that mention the fourfold typology of yoga include the Marathi Vivekadarpana (Birch 2020) and Vivekasindhu, which are generally dated to the thirteenth century, and the fourteenth-century Śrīraṅghadharapadhati (Jason Birch, personal communication).

28 See Reddy (2014), p. 103. Somanātha does however cite a certain Śrīparvatanātīmāya.

29 One excellent example is Gaurana, author of the Navanāṭhatcaritraṇa, whose floruit Jamal Jones dates to the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries (Jones 2018). Gaurana’s mention of Bhramarāmbā (Jones 2020) is quite in keeping with the rise to power of the Bhīkṣāvṛti Matha, whose lineage never receives mention during the earlier Vīraśaiva period but is famously invoked by Śrīnātha (Rao and Shulman 2012, p. 15).
Some confusion may be generated by the fact that the Śaivaratnākara and Vīramāheśvarācārasaṅgraha cite a text by the name of Kriyāstāra (“Essence of Rituals”), a title that is most famously associated with a Vijayanagara-period (perhaps fifteenth- or sixteenth-century) ritual compendium hybridized with a Śaktiviṣṭijādvaita commentary on the Brahmāsūtras.30 Not only does the Kriyāstāra as cited by the Vīramāheśvaras, in contrast, contain no discernibly Vīraśāiva or Vedāntic content, but citations attributed to that name fail to match the Vijayanagara text.31 Succinctly, the Kriyāstāra in question is an entirely different work. In fact, none of the Vīramāheśvaras texts in question contain Śaktiviṣṭijādvaita content, and generally invoke the term Vedānta exclusively as a reference to the Upaniṣads. That these three works—the Somanāthabhāṣya, Śaivaratnākara, and Vīramāheśvarācārasaṅgraha—are an interconnected corpus of textuality, moreover, is underscored by the fact that they share a common repertoire of citational texts, a number of which are rarely cited under the same names in other domains of Sanskrit intellectual history, some to my knowledge never otherwise identified in any source to date.

Among the shared scriptural canon of the Vīramāheśvaras, the most foundational and frequently cited source texts include the Śivadharmaśāstra, Vātulatāntra, Śivarahasya, Liṅga Purāṇa, and, in the Śaivaratnākara and Vīramāheśvarācārasaṅgraha, the Vīramāheśvaras. It must be noted carefully that the recensions of the Vātulatāntra and Vīramāheśvaras are distinguished from Āgamic works considered here in the Vijayanagara period. Text names that are never mentioned within the Vīramāheśvaras corpus, but that are ubiquitous in Vijayanagara period compositions, include the Vātulottarā, Vātulāśuddhākhya, and Vīraγamotāra.32 In addition to these theologically significant works, Vīramāheśvaras authors share a pattern of citing a number of less widely circulating works, including: the Iśānasamhitā; the non-Vijayanagara Kriyāstāra; the Kriyātālaka; the Kalikākhaṇḍa (presumably of the Skanda Purāṇa); the Brahmacūḍā; the Bhīmāgama; the Mānavā Purāṇa; and the Liṅgasāra.33 Outside of the Vīramāheśvaras corpus, one of the texts’ closest discursive neighbors seems to be the Śrāvadātilaka, sharing a number of these sources.34 Although I cannot possibly document all of the voluminous points of textual overlap in this article, including numerous shared citations, suffice it to say that the interfertility between the Sanskrit Vīramāheśvara works is so strong as to be patently obvious when the works are subjected to a close comparative analysis.

I would caution, however, that there are a number of works attributed to Pālkurikē Somanātha that I have not included in this study, and in some cases, I currently harbor significant doubts that Somanātha could have composed them.35 Two of the latter are worth discussing more explicitly, because their content deviates significantly from the discursive norms across languages of the “Vīramāheśvara moment”. Most notable among

30 The term Śaktiviṣṭijādvaita, or “nondualism of Śiva as qualified by Śakti”, contrasts conceptually with the Śrīvaśīva use of the term Viṣṭijādvaita as the former intends a non-monistic brand of nondualism influenced by the Trika Śaivism of Kashmir.
31 As of yet, I have only identified one citation attributed to a Kriyāstāra in the Śaivaratnākara that corresponds to what we understand as the Vijayanagara period text by that name: vihūtār bhasītaṁ bhasma ksāram raksati ṛṣabham | bhavanti pañcabhir bhūsmaḥ | āśiṣvarya-kāraṇaṁ bhuṭṭār bhasmā sarvādbhārta-saṁā | bhasanād bhasītaṁ bhasma ksāranāt paramāpa-dām | (Kriyāstāra, vol. 2, p. 14; Śaivaratnākara 7.79–80). As bhasma is a ubiquitous topic across Saiva lineages, this parallel is not especially surprising. And in fact, this is a rather common citation, also appearing in the Bṛhadbhālapoṇiṣad and the Sādhyātvatīsākñāna. Both the Somanāthabhāṣya and the Kriyāstāra attribute it to the Jātalopaniṣad or Bṛhajñālalopaniṣad, which thus appears to be the source through which it entered Vīramāheśvara discourse. While several other citations are attributed by the Śaivaratnākara to a Kriyāstāra, these do not appear in the published edition.
32 Further textual work on the available manuscripts of these texts will be needed to determine if the early recensions survive in any form outside of the quotations in the Vīramāheśvara corpus. While these works have been redacted significantly over the centuries, we know little as of yet about how and when these transformations took place.
33 The Bhīmāgama may potentially be related to the Bhīmānasamhitā, although I know of no other citations under the name Bhīmāgama itself. The Somanāthabhāṣya does not cite the Liṅgaśūtra. The Somanāthabhāṣya is also distinctive in its citation of a Bāṣakalasamhitā and Bīlugarasamhitā. I have been able to confirm so far that the Padyatārāṇīcaritra (apparently not surviving). The Śrāvadātilaka is likely fairly close to the Vīramāheśvara corpus in date and region, as Alexis Sanderson has suggested that it was likely composed in Orissa (Sanderson 2007) around the twelfth century (Sanderson 2009).
34 The Śrāvadātilaka is likely fairly close to the Vīramāheśvara corpus in date and region, as Alexis Sanderson has suggested that it was likely composed in Orissa (Sanderson 2007) around the twelfth century (Sanderson 2009).
35 Other works attributed to Pālkurikē Somanātha that are not examined here include: Pataçaprakāraṇa, Nāmamālagadja, Aksaraṭākagadja, Aṣṭottarāśatranāmālagadja, Basacapāṭaka, Basacotāla, Trividhālokiṇīṣṭaka, Basacālīṭharaṇa, Vṛṣṇīṭipāṭāka, and a Rudrabhāṣya (apparently not surviving). The Somanāthabhāṣya does, interestingly, cite a certain Rudrabhāṣya, but authorship is not mentioned.
these is the Anubhavasāramu, a fourth major Telugu work often attributed to Pālkurikē Somanātha. The category of anubhava (experience) is already heavily thematized in Vīraśaiva circles by this time in the western Deccan, but is more typically invoked in early Marathi literature than in Telugu. Anubhava does not appear as a technical doctrinal term in the Somanāthabhāṣya, Śāivaratnaṅkara, or Vīramaheśvaracarāsāṅkraha. The work currently printed as the Caturvēdaśāramu, likewise, requires further explication. While I believe the beginning of this print edition to be the work by that name of Pālkurikē Somanātha, as I have argued above, the second half of this publication consists of a Telugu work structured as an elaboration of Māyīdeva’s Anubhavasātrā. We find numerous instances of terminology here, as in the Anubhavasātra, that is highly atypical of Vīramaheśvara thought: for example, caitanya, unmeṣa, terminology from Māyīdeva’s ontology, such as paramātmaliṅga, bhūvaliṅga, and so forth. Both works rely heavily on the saṅsthala system, which only begins to make a brief appearance by the time of the Vīramaheśvaracarāsāṅkraha.

This conclusion, then—that Pālkurikē Somanātha is the author of the Sanskrit Somanāthabhāṣya—bears significant ramifications for how we as scholars ought to historicize the genres of South Asian religious discourse and practice that we call bhakti and tantra. Indeed, beyond the scope of what can be covered in the present article, the Vīramaheśvaras shared with the Śaiva Age distinctive elements of its ritual culture, which are generally not comprised within our academic definitions of bhakti traditions. Such is the case, for instance, with formal tantric rituals of initiation; while this evidence will be discussed elsewhere, it is worth noting for the moment that in both the Basavepurūṇamu and Caturvēdaśāramu, Somanātha refers to Vīramaheśvara initiation as śāmbhavaṅkī. In this light, to accept the Somanāthabhāṣya as composed by the very same Pālkurikē Somanātha who authored the Telugu Basavepurūṇamu is to cast fundamental doubt on whether the vernacular of Telugu devotional literature ever existed in isolation from contemporary Sanskrit discourse. In turn, we need to acknowledge that, in the eastern Deccan especially, the tantric Śaivism of the Śaiva Age was not overthrown by Śaiva devotional movements. Rather, it exerted a formative influence on the emergence of the Śaiva communities we classify as bhakti traditions. While these points of continuity are too abundant to enumerate in the present article, I would like to continue by looking closely at one key element that the Vīramaheśvaras had inherited from their predecessors of the Śaiva Age: the role of the linga, both the personal iṣṭaliṅga and the jaṅgama, as living Śaiva devotee.

3. Before the Vīramaheśvaras: Antecedents from the Śivadharmasāstra

Centuries before the coalescence of the Vīramaheśvara tradition around the thirteenth century, numerous Śaiva lineages had already carved out an institutional domain at Srisailam. These religious networks spanned not only the central mountain peak, on which the Mallikārjuna Temple is located, but also the wilderness terrain in which it is embedded. Indeed, well before the rise of the Vīramaheśvaras, numerous religious communities, Śaiva and otherwise, had established monasteries throughout the extended sacred geography of the “auspicious mountain”. In the thirteenth century, for instance, Srisailam was home to the regional branch of the Golaki Maṭha of the Śaiva Siddhāntins, who held a dominant share in the transregional pilgrimage site, negotiating periodic alliances with the Kalachūri, Cōḷa, and Kākatiya kingdoms (Inden et al. 2000). The eastern Deccan, especially around Srisailam, was also well known for housing Kālamukha lineages of the Simha Parisad, who

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36 Although insufficient work has as of yet been done on Māyīdeva, he appears to be the author both of the Anubhavasātra and Viśeṣārthopakāśikā, based on similar identificatory information at the outset of both works. While he may indeed have lived fairly early in Vīraśaiva history (ca. thirteenth/fourteenth century?), his writings are highly characteristic of a western Deccani Vīraśaiva context rather than of the Srisailam Vīramaheśvaras.

37 See Rao and Roighair (1990), p. 271, and Caturvēdaśāramu, p. 3. What precisely Somanātha might mean by śāmbhavaṅkī is not entirely clear. In the Caturvēdaśāramu, Somanātha glosses the practice with the citation “vratam etac chāmbhavam”. This passage, drawn from the Kāḷāṇgurudrapanisad, is also cited by the Somanāthabhāṣya, and is usually interpreted as referring to the practice of bearing the tripūraṇa.

38 For more information about the earlier transregional Golaki Maṭhas of the Śaiva Siddhānta, see Sanderson (2012–2013) and Sears (2014). On the Golaki Maṭha in Andhra, see Talbot (1987).
appear often in the inscriptive record. Śākta transmissions of the Kāli Krama and the Paścinānāyā were also in evidence.\textsuperscript{39} Beyond the Śaiva and Śākta-Śaiva fold, Srīsailam also fostered a shared Buddhist-Śaiva transmission of yogic practices; indeed, some of our richest understudied textual resources for the early development of Haṭha Yoga are in the vernacular languages of the Deccan, especially Marathi and Telugu.\textsuperscript{40} Given the intense interest it generated across Śaiva communities, it is no surprise that Srīsailam was the site at which the surviving Sanskrit Vīramāhēśvara canon was first articulated. To the contrary, it is precisely the legacy of the Śaiva Age that made Vīraśāivism as we know it possible.

In the preceding discussion, space has only permitted us to scratch the surface of the textual canons that Pālkurikē Somānātha adapted in composing his Sanskrit and Telugu oeuvre. For example, he evidently felt no qualms about supplying material from the Śaiva Siddhānta where convenient.\textsuperscript{41} Other texts cited by Somānātha, as we have seen, seem to have circulated within a more limited domain, possibly only within the extended coastal region of Andhra and through Orissa. Yet, Somānātha also inherits a far deeper legacy than his more temporally proximate Śaiva sources, such as the Somaśambhupaddhati or Sītāsaṃhitā. Most notably, we find a number of citations in the Somanāṭhabhāṣya from the Śivadharmaśāstra, perhaps the single most authoritative source for lay Śaiva samāja conducting dating back to the sixth or early seventh century (see for example Bisschop (2018) on the dating of the Śivadharmaśāstra). Indeed, many of those features of Vīraśāivism that scholars have viewed as “revolutionary” and “vernacular”, including caste blindness among initiates, emotional or affective bhakti, reciting the stories of Śaiva saints, and the worship of the jaṅgama, or Vīraśaiva saint, as a moving liṅga, were not at all new to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, but can be directly traced back to the Śivadharmaśāstra itself.\textsuperscript{42} Other features of the Śivadharma, although less well known within the academic study of bhakti traditions, were equally foundational to the Vīramāheśvaras, including the belief that Śaiva saints were not at all natural or material (prākṛta) human beings but were rather incarnations of Śiva’s gana on earth.\textsuperscript{43} The original Śivadharma was couched in the form of a conversation between the sage Sanat Kumarā and Nandikeśvara, the latter of whom, equated with the bull gana Vṛṣabha, was later understood to be incarnated as Basava himself. We also find, throughout the Śivadharma, frequent usage of the term śivayogin (Kan. śivayogi) as a religious identity marker, which as Gil Ben-Herut has shown was employed abundantly within early Vīraśaiva literature in Kannada.

Succinctly, the Śivadharma was no minor influence on the Vīramāheśvaras. By now, that Śivadharmaśāstra citations appear within the Vīramāheśvara corpus is somewhat of an established fact rather than a new finding; I have already discussed this myself, for example, in Fisher (2019). Concerning the history of the Śivadharma, research has been well underway for some years aimed at producing a critical edition of the text itself and tracing the outsized influence of the scripture on the history of popular Śaivism. One particularly noteworthy example, in the present context, is the ongoing work of Florinda De Simini on the transmission of the Śivadharma and Śivadhrumottara within vernacular currents of south Indian discourse. It may well be the case that the abundant Śivadharma citations preserved in the Somanāṭhabhāṣya can be of use in reconstructing the earlier history of what has often proved to be an unruly and heterogenous textual transmission. As this work is being conducted elsewhere, my project is not primarily to address the textual history of the Śivadharma itself. My project is, however, both in the present article and within my

\textsuperscript{39} See, for instance, Dyczkowski (2009), p. 108.

\textsuperscript{40} See, for instance, Jones (2018) on Gaurana’s Telugu Navanāthacaritramu, and Mallinson (2019) on early vernacular texts that dialogue with Sanskrit sources on Haṭha Yoga.

\textsuperscript{41} While this matter will have to be discussed in future publications, a crucial example is the fact that Vīramāheśvaras drew on initiation rituals outside of the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition, despite the fact that a Saiddhāntika model was available to them in the Somaśambhupaddhati.

\textsuperscript{42} See below for some further discussion. These issues are also discussed in greater detail in my forthcoming book manuscript.

\textsuperscript{43} The goal of becoming a gana in early Śaivism, specifically in the Nepalese recension of the Skanda Purāṇa, was discussed, for instance, by Yuko Yokochi (Yokochi 2018) in her talk at the 17th World Sanskrit Conference (7/11/18), “Mahaganapatir bhavet: Gana-hood as a religious goal in early Shaivism”. Aside from the features mentioned in this paragraph, we also find some evidence that the practice of the ritual worship (pūjā) of scriptural texts (sīsāna), explicitly discussed within the Śivadharma, may have continued under the Vīramāheśvaras (see De Simini (2016) for further discussion)
larger book project, to clarify something that has to date escaped scholarship on the history of Vīraśaivism. Specifically, on historical and philological grounds, we can demonstrate conclusively that early Vīraśaivism—including the Somanāthaḥbhaṣya in particular—was constituted directly from the scriptural and cultural heritage of the Śaiva Age, not least among which is the Śivadharma. To make this case requires that I document, as I have begun to do in this article and in Fisher (2019), the distinctive religious sensibilities that early Vīraśaivas directly inherited from the Śivadharma and other earlier Śaiva sources.

In all likelihood, the Vīramaheśvara exegetes, and their predecessors, possessed far more than a casual acquaintance with the text of the Śivadharmaśāstra. Indeed, the Somanāthaḥbhaṣya incorporates textual extracts from the Śivadharma significantly in excess of the verses attributed by name to that text in our available manuscripts. For instance, in one passage variously described as “Vīramaheśvaramahātmya” or “Vīraśaivacāra”, a significant portion of the anuṣṭubh passage consists of silent borrowings from the Śivadharma. This was not, then, simply a matter of searching for an authoritative proof-text readily at hand. Moreover, the fact that the Vīraśaivas were thinking systematically with the Śivadharma is illustrated by the fact that we can observe what seems to be textual drift, possibly deliberate, in the verses of the Śivadharma themselves. While further manuscript work is needed to confirm this point, we meet with some intriguing Śivadharma citations in both the Somanāthaḥbhaṣya and the Saiva Ratnakara that speak either to deliberate redaction of the text or spurious attributions. These verses, moreover, do not appear in the most widely attested recensions of the Śivadharma.  

One should always bear the nirmālya out of devotion; one should not bear it out of greed.

It is called nirmālya because it is stainless (nirmala). One with an impure body should not bear it.

One should bear the nirmālya on the head, and one should also consume the naivedya. Having drunk the prasāda water, one obtains gaṇa-hood.

Both of these two verses concern the subject of nirmālya, the leftover offerings of food, flower garlands, etc. from the worship of Śiva. By the thirteenth century, nirmālya had become a topic of contention within Śaiva discourse across lineages, with the Śaiva Siddhānta even taking deliberate pains to declare Śiva’s nirmālya as impure, requiring the ritual intervention of shrines to Caṇḍeśvara to purify its contamination. Nevertheless, following in the spirit of the earlier precedent set by the Pāṣupatas, the Vīramaheśvaras took a strong stance on the matter by not only declaring nirmālya as inherently pure, but requiring that initiates offer all food to their personal śivalīṅga, without the ritual of shrines to Caṇḍeśvara. For instance, the text we now associate with the most common recension of the Śivadharma does not provide any scriptural support for this practice. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the redactors of the Vīramaheśvara canon would wish the Śivadharma to speak more forcefully in support of their position on the matter—and this is precisely what we find in the texts. In a similar vein, it is worth noting one additional verse attributed to the Śivadharma by both the Somanāthaḥbhaṣya and the Saiva Ratnakara, but this time with one crucial variant. The Somanāthaḥbhaṣya reads: “One must not go to a place in which Śiva is not, where there are none of Śiva’s people (nāsti māheśvaro janah)”.

44 Further manuscript work on the Saiva Ratnakara will be necessary here, as well as on the Śivadharma itself. While I do not have access to all of the variants compiled by The Śivadharma Project, these verses do not appear in the published recension, Purusapatimānam of Naranarimath, or in IFP transcript no. 72, copied from Adyar ms. no. 75425. I have not located these first two verses cited in any texts besides the Somanāthaḥbhaṣya and the Saiva Ratnakara.

45 The Somanāthaḥbhaṣya preserves these two verses, not accidentally, which I have translated above: nirmālyaṁ dhārayen nityaṁ bhaktyaṁ lohbhāṁ na dhārayet || nirmalatvā ca nirmālyaṁ maladehī na dhārayet || nirmālyaṁ dhārayen mūrdhī naivedyam caḥ bhakṣayat || atatrasādokāṁ pitvā gānapatyāṁ avāpnyayāt ||. The Saiva Ratnakara also preserves both of these verses, the first as vs. 16.91 with the following variations: nirmalatvā ca nirmālyaṁ maladehī na dhārayet || dhāraye ca chivaṁ nirmālyaṁ bhaktyaṁ lohbhāṁ na dhārayet || and the second as vs. 16.124, with the following variations: nirmalatvā ca nirmālyaṁ maladehī na dhārayet || dhāraye ca chivaṁ nirmālyaṁ bhaktyaṁ lohbhāṁ na dhārayet ||

46 For further detail, see for example Goodall (2009).

47 The Somanāthaḥbhaṣya reads: yasmin kṣetre śivo nāsti nāsti māheśvaro janah || tac ca sthānam na ganāvyaṁ.
Śaivaratnakara, on the other hand, preserves this variant: “One must not go to a place in which Śiva is not, where there are no Vīramāhesvaras” (vīramāhesvaro janah).48 The fact that the phrase “nāsti māheśvarah” appears to have been replaced in the Śaivaratnakara by “vīramāhesvarah”, a less desirable reading, suggests that the verse was modified either intentionally, or through textual drift within the community, to employ the community’s term of self-reference, Vīramāhesvara. We do not, to clarify, have any evidence that the term Vīramāhesvara was employed in the original Śivadharma.49

It is abundantly clear, then, that the Somanāthābhyāga and the Vīramāhesvara corpus were substantially indebted to the Śivadharma, and that they invoked—and possibly redacted—the Śivadharma to underpin the authority of their fledgling Śaiva community. What may be less well established, by this point, is the fact that Somanātha was no pioneer in his invocation of the Śivadharmaśāstra within the thirteenth-century Vīramāhesvara community. Rather, the Śivadharmaśāstra was already foundational to the incipient ethos of the Viraśaivas, or Vīramāhesvaras, even before the community was known by either of those names. Rather, we can illustrate the continuous influence of the Śivadharmaśāstra on the emergent Viraśaiva community by looking more closely at a predecessor to Pālkurikē Somanātha’s works, namely, the Telugu Śivatattvasāramu of Mallikārjuna Paṇḍitārādhyā. As of yet remarkably understudied for its contributions to Viraśaiva thought, the Śivatattvasāramu is, like Somanātha’s Telugu works, internally bilingual, even preserving direct citations from the Śivadharmaśāstra embedded in its Telugu verses. These citations, as well as paraphrased content, allow us to isolate certain elements of the Śivadharma’s worldview that were already prominent in the proto-Vīramāhesvara community before the time of Pālkurikē Somanātha.

The Śivatattvasāramu is a Telugu Śaiva verse work of which only 489 verses are currently thought to survive. What do we know, first of all, about Paṇḍitārādhyā, purported author of the Śivatattvasāramu? Aside from being the subject about whom Pālkurikē Somanātha wrote the Paṇḍitārādhyacaritramu, the name Paṇḍitārādhyā appears rather prolifically in the inscriptive record from the twelfth century onward. All things considered, Paṇḍitārādhyā can be presumed, to the best of our evidence, to have been a historical personage and perhaps a late contemporary of Basava. Remembered as a native of Draksharama near Guntur in East Godavari District, Paṇḍitārādhyā appears based on inscriptions to have been active in the Srisailam region in the late twelfth century.50 We know little for sure about what Paṇḍitārādhyā’s doctrinal affiliation may have been, although Somanātha describes him as having studied under a certain Kōṭipalli Ārādhyaśiva. As for his authorship of the Śivatattvasāramu, although we have no other substantial works attributed to him to compare, the author of the Śivatattvasāramu names himself as “Mallikārjuna Paṇḍita” within the text itself.51 As scholars of Telugu literature have noted for some time, we also find a few direct citations of the Śivatattvasāramu within the Paṇḍitārādhyacaritramu, making it plausible to believe that the person Somanātha revered in this text was indeed the author of the Śivatattvasāramu (Lalitamba 1975, p. 40, fln. 25).

A fair amount of ink has been spilled by scholars of Telugu literature questioning whether Paṇḍitārādhyā was in fact a “Viraśaiva”, as the Śivatattvasāramu nowhere mentions

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48 The Śaivaratnakara (17.40) reads: yatra kṣetre śivo nāsti vīramāhesvaro janah | tatra sāhānaṃ na kartavyam. This is a Telugu Śaiva verse work of which only 489 verses are currently thought to survive. What do we know, first of all, about Paṇḍitārādhyā, purported author of the Śivatattvasāramu? Aside from being the subject about whom Pālkurikē Somanātha wrote the Paṇḍitārādhyacaritramu, the name Paṇḍitārādhyā appears rather prolifically in the inscriptive record from the twelfth century onward. All things considered, Paṇḍitārādhyā can be presumed, to the best of our evidence, to have been a historical personage and perhaps a late contemporary of Basava. Remembered as a native of Draksharama near Guntur in East Godavari District, Paṇḍitārādhyā appears based on inscriptions to have been active in the Srisailam region in the late twelfth century. We know little for sure about what Paṇḍitārādhyā’s doctrinal affiliation may have been, although Somanātha describes him as having studied under a certain Kōṭipalli Ārādhyaśiva. As for his authorship of the Śivatattvasāramu, although we have no other substantial works attributed to him to compare, the author of the Śivatattvasāramu names himself as “Mallikārjuna Paṇḍita” within the text itself. As scholars of Telugu literature have noted for some time, we also find a few direct citations of the Śivatattvasāramu within the Paṇḍitārādhyacaritramu, making it plausible to believe that the person Somanātha revered in this text was indeed the author of the Śivatattvasāramu (Lalitamba 1975, p. 40, fln. 25).

49 As for instance, an inscription on a stone slab found in Sangameswaram, ten miles from Alampur, records a gift of land to Mallikārjuna Paṇḍita by Karnāṭa Gōkarnāḍeva, dated to 1187–1188 CE. Hyderabad Archaeological Series (HAS) vol. 19, p. 71 (Mn. 34). Another intriguing series of inscriptions speaks in the voice of a certain Vibhūți Gaurya, self-described as servant in the household of Paṇḍitārādhyā of Srisailam: śrıgiri-śrıgiriśa-śrıparādhyā-gṛhastadāsa. SII XX No. 357, written in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Nāgarī scripts; HAS vol. 19, p. 92 (Mn. 44); cited as ARE (Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy) 25 of 1993–1994. ARE 4 and 6 of 1993–1994; written in Telugu and Sanskrit (Nāgarī), with characters dated to the thirteenth century. See also HAS vol. 3, p. 12. We also find mention of a land grant to two of Paṇḍitārādhyā’s sons by the Kōṭapati king Ganaṇati (r. 1199–1262); HAS vol. 13, pt. II, p. 4 (No. 1).

50 For other short works attributed to Paṇḍitārādhyā, see Venkata Rau, ed., Śivatattvasāramu, p. 33. The author of the Śivatattvasāramu names himself in vs. 387: śrdevi mallikārjuna, paṇḍitāma dana nṝṇḍukamatiṃ prathamulalaṅ ne, nṛṇḍokā niyājñānati, nṝṇḍamgam gāṃtu nanikūruṇḍudu rudrā.
the names Vīraśaiva, Vīramāheśvara, or Lingāyat. Unfortunately, most of these debates have fixated on the question of whether or not the Śivatattvasāstramu prescribes the bearing of the īṣṭaliṅga, as the term itself, and the related prāṇaliṅga, are also nowhere mentioned.  

Although these two later concerns did become integral to Pālkurikē Somanātha’s theology, the fixation on these two points within Telugu language scholarship has obscured the substantial doctrinal homologies between the Śivatattvasāstramu and Pālkurikē Somanātha’s works. The Śivatattvasāstramu contains, for instance, a lengthy section in praise of Śiva’s Pramāṇaṁ.ās, associating them as later Vīramāheśvara authors do with the narrative of the destruction of Daksā’s sacrifice. Bhakti as a religious value is celebrated at great length; indeed, we even find references to a number of the Śaiva saints whose stories Somanātha would later narrate in the Bāsavapurāṇamu and Paṇḍītārādhyaacaritramu. The Śivatattvasāstramu is equally insistent that caste distinctions must be totally prohibited among Śaiva initiates. Moreover, we even find noticeably proto-Vīraśaiva language, such as an invocation of the term jaṅgama. In short, the substantial points of overlap all have roots in the popular lay theology of the Śivadharma.

In the surviving portion of the Śivatattvasāstramu, there are seven verses with direct—although deliberately fragmentary—quotations from the Śivadharmasūtra, making it the most frequently cited Sanskrit work within the Telugu text. I have reproduced below in Appendix B all seven of these citations. Indeed, in some cases, knowledge of the original Sanskrit from the Śivadharma allows us to emend textual corruptions in the Telugu that the editors appear not to have noted. One Śivadharmamu verse, for instance, that appears to loom particularly large in Mallikārjuna Paṇḍītārādhya’s imagination is the famous comparison between a dog cooker (śvapacyaḥ) and a caturvedī brahmin, which asserts that commensality must be respected between Śaiva devotees, regardless of their caste origin: “Neither a Caturvedī nor a dog cooker who is my devotee is more dear to me. He may be given to, and taken from, and is to be worshipped as I am myself.”  

The Śivadharmamu verse apparently warrants enough attention that Paṇḍītārādhya weaves portions of this Sanskrit citation through a series of three verses in Telugu. In the process, Paṇḍītārādhya reveals that he is well aware of the lengthy history of anti-caste rhetoric within the Śaiva corpus; the necessity of erasing caste distinction among Śaiva initiates, for him, is clearly no “revolution”, but rather an established point of doctrine.

To the best of our knowledge, then, it appears that Śivadharma vs. 1.36 conveys a fairly unambiguous literal meaning that was greeted favorably, and not undermined, by its interpretive communities. In other cases, what certain terms may have meant to an ideal reader of the Śivadharma in the sixth century is far less clear, and we would be wise to pause before reading back their Vīraśaiva meaning, iconic as it may be today, into the original scripture itself. For instance, Paṇḍītārādhya dwells over an extended series of Telugu verses on the concept of the jaṅgama, or “moving” śivaliṅga, which by the time of the nascent Vīraśaiva traditions unambiguously refers to a human devotee of Śiva, or Śaiva saint. One such Telugu verse in this passage, however, cites directly from the Śivadharma, while simultaneously paraphrasing the textual context of the citation. As Paṇḍītārādhya writes:

The sentence “liṅgas are said to be twofold”
States that if one does not worship the jaṅgama liṅga
As prescribed, having undertaken ritual,
Pūjās and good deeds become fruitless.

The Śivadharmamu verse cited reads as follows:

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52 For a review of the Telugu literature discussing Paṇḍītārādhya’s religious identity, see Lalitamba (1975), Chp. 4.
53 The discussion of the Pramāṇaṁ.ās and the destruction of Daksā’s sacrifice by Vīrabhadra spans the verses of the Śivatattvasāstramu between vs. 300 and 388.
54 IFP Transcript 72, vs. 1.36: na me priyaḥ caturvedi madbhaktaḥ śvapaco ‘pi vā | tasmāi deyaṁ tato grāhyam sa sampūyo yathā hy aham ||
55 Śivatattvasāstramu vs. 156: kriyagōna jaṅgamaṁ.āgamaṁ | niyātiṁ būjimapamāṇiṁ nishpalamu sa | kriyālunum bhululu “liṅga | dvayaṁ samākhyätam” anina vākyamu mṛyoṇu. I have emended “samākhyätam” in the Telugu to “samākhyätam” as is expected by Sanskrit grammar and metrics.
Liṅgas are said to be twofold (liṅgadvayam samākhyaṭām): the moving and non-moving.

The moving is known as “conviction” (pratīti). The non-moving is in the case of [liṅgas] made of earth and so forth.\(^\text{56}\)

In this Telugu verse, Panḍitārādyya’s point seems to revolve not much around the verse that is actually cited as much as around another slightly subsequent Śivadharma verse, which states that the fixed (sthāvara) liṅga is useless without the moving (jaṅgama) liṅga: “Through disrespect of the jaṅgama, the sthāvara becomes fruitless. Therefore, the wise one should never disrespect the pair of liṅgas”.\(^\text{57}\) We may assume, then, that Panḍitārādyya intends to invoke for his readers not simply the verse cited, but the wider discursive context of the twofold typology of liṅgas as discussed in the Śivadharma. As with all of his partial citations, the meaning of the Śivadharma verses cannot be coherently read without background knowledge simply from the elliptical Sanskrit provided. In this respect, Panḍitārādyya’s multilingual idiom appears to have been a foundational influence on Somanātha’s Telugu works, which also weave partial Sanskrit quotations directly into the Telugu grammar of his dvipadas. Thus, succinctly, the Śivatattvasāramu reveals a discursive world in which the Śivadharma was quite well known to his intended audience. He intends, evidently, not to teach something his audience has never encountered before, but to evoke a scriptural canon they can instantly recall even from the mention of a few key words. If the Śivadharma was, then, not new for Pālkurikē Somanātha’s audience, it was likely not a novel source of inspiration in Panḍitārādyya’s generation either.

Now, the fact that the term jaṅgama predates the advent of Vīraśaivism proper is, in and of itself, not a new finding. In fact, David Lorenzen has already discussed this in his landmark study of the Kālamukhas, noting where the term jaṅgama appears in our inscriptive record as associated with Kālamukha institutions. The Śivadharma verses that mention this term, however, are ambiguous: is a “moving” liṅga a human saint, or a portable miniature śivaliṅga? Within the Vīramāheśvara context, for instance, the related word, caraliṅga (“moving liṅga”) retained the separate meaning of a portable śivaliṅga, since we are provided with detailed measurements of its allowable dimensions (Fisher 2019, pp. 32–33.). As of yet, we know relatively little about which interpretation of the term jaṅgama or jaṅgamaliṅga would have been most current in distinct pre-Vīraśaiva historical and discursive contexts. Indeed, the original Śivadharma verse itself does not precisely inspire confidence that jaṅgama was originally, in all cases, intended to mean a moving saint, as “pratīti”, the term used in the definition of the “moving liṅga” (caram pratītiśvabhaktaḥ), does not conventionally have that meaning. Nevertheless, in the spirit of Lorenzen’s inscriptive evidence, the testimony of the Śivadharmavivarana, a rare commentary in the tradition, also suggests that the concept of the jaṅgama was a decidedly pre-Vīraśaiva development: “Intending to articulate that the Māheśvaras also are to be respected like Śiva himself, [the text] points out that they, also, are considered liṅgas”.\(^\text{58}\)

But what, then, does the term jaṅgama mean for Panḍitārādyya? While he does not definitively state his position in the Śivatattvasāramu, the nearby context of the Telugu verse cited above suggests that the term jaṅgama did refer to a Śiva devotee, as the verse appears immediately after a discussion of the puja of the Śivabhaktas themselves:

> Without having worshipped the Śivabhaktas,
> Having performed many crores of puja to Śiva
> Is useless. To worship the Śivabhaktas

\(^{56}\) IFP Transcript 72, vs. 3.56–57: liṅgadvayam samākhyaṭām caraṃ cācaram eva ca || caraṃ pratītiśvabhaktaḥ acaram pārthivādīṣu ||

\(^{57}\) IFP Transcript 72, vs. 3.59: jaṅgamasyavāmānena sthāvaraṃ nispalam bhavet || tasām liṅgadvayam prājūḥ nāvamanayeta panditaḥ || Naraharinātha, Paśupatimatam vs. 3.58: jaṅgamasyapāmānena sthāvaro nispalo bhavet || tasām liṅgadvayam prājūḥ nāvamanayeta jātucit ||

\(^{58}\) Śivadharmavivarana on vs. 3.56: śīvānam māheśvaranām api sammānaṃvān vivakṣaṇaṃ, teṣām liṅgavat iti diṣāti || On how one ought to interpret the potentially obscure term pratīti, the Śivadharmavivarana writes as a commentary on vs. 3.57: pratītiśvabhaktaḥ pratyakṣasiddhitam śivapratīnām laukikavṛṣṭigocaratayā vartamānāt || For more on the Śivadharmavivarana, see for instance Schwartz (2021), chp. 3.
Is to perform crores of pūjās to Śiva, O Rudra.59

Thus, the Śivatattvavāstramu provides evidence that the jangama had already acquired its conventional meaning as a human saint, and moreover, the text understood this meaning to be associated with the interpretive traditions of the Śivadharma. A further intriguing example occurs in a citation preserved in Jyotirmāthā’s Saivaratnakāra, where we meet with a variant reading for this very same Śivadharma verse. As Jyotirmāthā cites: “There are said to be two types of liṅgas: the moving and non-moving. The non-moving is made of earth and so forth. The moving is known as the guest (atithi)”. Although we cannot as of yet be certain if the verse was already modified in Jyotirmāthā’s text at the time of composition, this seemingly minor variant is doing significant interpretive work: while the original verse may also refer to a portable śivaliṅga, the Saivaratnakāra restricts possible interpretations with the word “guest” (atithi) to provide an impeccable scriptural precedent for the worship of the human jangama.60 Whether further manuscript research locates this shift at the text’s inception or in later textual drift, this Śivadharma verse provides an intriguing snapshot of textual redaction in process. It does suggest, in either case, that early Vīraśaiva exegetes were uncomfortable with the ambiguity in the original Śivadharma, and saw that text as the ideal authenticator of Vīraśaivism’s new approaches to Śaiva praxis.

According to our textual evidence, then, the jangama as moving liṅga was one of many concepts the Vīramāheśvara tradition shares with the Śaiva Age interpretive tradition of the Śivadharma. Should we conclude, then, that the Śivadharma was the sole proximate source for the entree of these doctrinal elements into Vīraśaivism? As it turns out, textual evidence from further south in the Tamil country complicates matters a bit further. An epigraph preserved from the reign of Kulottunga Cōla explicitly mentions the patronage of a group known as Vīramāheśvaras.61 This reference, however, contains little contextual information as to what sort of religious practice these “Vīramāheśvas” may have advocated. We do, however, possess an external source for this evidence, brief as it is, from a Śaiva doxography that seems likely to date back to the Cōla period in question. A circa seventeenth-century Tamil work, a commentary on the Nānāvaranavilakkaṁ by Vēljiyampalavān, preserves an extensive Sanskrit citation from a work entitled Sarvasiddhāntaviveka,62 in which we meet with a description of a group of Mahāvratins who espouse a form of practice reminiscent of early Vīraśaivism. According to the Sarvasiddhāntaviveka, these Mahāvratins appear to advocate the bearing of the personal liṅga (liṅgadhāraṇa) as a central religious practice, and insist that the liṅga must be borne on the body only above the navel, the Srisailam Vīramāheśvaras attribute just such a restriction to the Vātulatantra, a text that the Tamil commentator Vēljiyampalavān describes as a “Mahāvrataratana”64. But moreover, and crucially for the present instance, the Sarvasiddhāntaviveka also links the practice of liṅgadhāraṇa explicitly with devotion to jangamas. As the verses in question pair the term

59 Śivatattvavāstramu vs. 155: śivabhaktulam būjimapa | śivapujalu gōṭiṣvihulam jēṣina vṛtha yā | śivabhaktulam būjimpūṭa | śivapujālam gōṭiṣvihulam jēṣya rudrā 1 1

Jyotirmāthā cites from the Śivadharma (19.4): liṅgadvayaṁ samākhyātam caram cācaram eva ca | caram cātithiṣvihkhyātam acaram pārthivādikam 1 1 IFP Transcript no. 72, vs. 3.56–57: liṅgadvayaṁ samākhyātam caram cācaram eva ca | caram pratṛtiṣvihkhyātam acaram pārthivātmatmakam 1 1 Naraharinathas, Pasupatinatam, Śivadharmaśatra vs. 3.56: liṅgadvayaṁ samākhyātam sacācaram eva ca | caram prāneti ṽihkhyātam acaram pārthivādīsu 1 1 Although I have no further information about the prevalence of this variant, the appearance of the term “prāṣṭa” in Naraharinatha’s text is quite interesting, as Vīramāheśvaras commonly referred to the īṣṭalīṅga granted upon initiation with the term “prāṣṭāṅga.”

60 See ARE 111 of 1893, published in Epigraphia Indica vol. 6, p. 276.

61 The text of the Sarvasiddhāntaviveka, as preserved by Vēljiyampalavān, is reconstructed in Nagaswamy (2006), Art and Religion of the Bhairavas. Nagaswamy dates the Sarvasiddhāntaviveka to the eleventh century, as the author of the text describes himself as a disciple of the author of the Rāṇataktorpaṇaḥ. See Nagaswamy (2006) p. 24. The Nānāvaranavilakkaṁ is a text of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta lineage, authored by Nāṇacampantamūrtikāl of the Tarumapuram Aṭṭām. Other elements of Vēljiyampalavān’s knowledge of Vīraśaivism prove quite informative as to what textual knowledge had been imported into Tamil discourse by the seventeenth century. For instance, he adds a Tamil work entitled the Navāṭikālaiḥ, which, based on the summary of Nagaswamy (p. 30), is clearly highly indebted to the Anubhavas¯utra of Māyīdeva. Further research is needed on this matter.

62 On the bearing of the liṅga above the waist, the Somānathabhaṣya preserves the following verse attributed to the Vātulatantra: nābher adho liṅgadhārī pāṃpanā ’pi sa ucaya | nābhyūḍhīṃ liṅgadhārī ca saubhāgyāḥ jānavardhanah 1 1 The Saivaratnakāra (14.27) also preserves this verse, attributed to “another text” (granthāntare). I have discussed similar textual passages from the Vīramāheśvara corpus in Fisher (2019) to underscore the centrality of liṅgadhārāṇa to Vīramāheśvara praxis.

63 See Nagaswamy, Art and Religion of the Bhairavas, p. 29, as well as fn. 66 p. 38.
jaṅgama directly with the term guru, clearly a human figure, it appears that the “moving linga” quite clearly depicted the human Śaiva devotee for this audience:

He always bears the linga on his own head, or his shoulders,

Or on other places above the navel, such as the heart, etc., according to the śāstra.

Liberation [derives] from bearing the linga; how much more so from the worship of men?

As with devotion to Śiva, so with devotion to the guru and the jaṅgamas.

Even so, devotion to the jaṅgama is called the “particular” (viśeṣa).

Those who are intent on the daily rituals and so forth stated in the śāstra known as the Great Vow (mahāvrata)

Set forth for liberation in a single lifetime. Thus, here [on earth], they are “those of the Great Vow”.  

In other words, given this contextualizing information, it would appear overly facile simply to conclude that the theology of the jaṅgama was inherited by early Vīraśaivas directly from the raw text of the Śivadharmaśāstra without any textual or institutional intermediaries. As we have seen, the early interpretive context for these Śivadharma verses does attest to the fact that the jaṅgama was previously understood in the Vīraśaiva sense as a human saint. Moreover, while at this time the evidence available to us is fragmentary, the Vīraśaiva understanding of the term jaṅgama can also be traced through at least one intermediary discursive context in circa twelfth-century Tamil region, in which other practices favored by the Srisailam Vīramēsvaras, such as lingadhāranā, seem to already be associated with each other. Yet the term lingadhāranā, central as it had become even to early Vīraśaivism, is not attested in the Śivadharma itself as a component of lay Śaiva practice, nor are the names later attributed to the miniature linga borne on the body.

The āṭaliṅga, or personal aniconic image of Śiva, is today quite renowned as a definitive marker of Vīraśaiva religiosity: initiates are generally obligated to wear around their necks a miniature śivaliṅga imparted to them upon initiation, and for which they traditionally perform daily pūjā, enshrined in the base that is the palm of the hand (karabhajīpta). The Srisailam Vīramēsvaras frequently invoke the concept of the āṭaliṅga, most frequently referred to as the prāṇaliṅga or sveṣṭaliṅga. While the Vīramēsvara terms for such a personal linga do not appear in the Śivadharma nor its successors, they do appear in other sources that were directly known to the Somanathabhāsya, including the Somasambhupaddhati. Likewise, preserved within Vīramēsvara texts, these terms appear in non-Saiddhāntika ritual procedures, such as initiation (dīksā), which may originally derive from a Kālamukha, or perhaps a similar Mahāvratin lineage of transmission. This discrepancy underscores the fact that other foundational Vīraśaiva ritual elements cannot be traced to the Śivadharma, and must be excavated elsewhere within the sources cited by Somanātha and his successors.

These and other related issues will be discussed at greater length in other contexts, but suffice it to say for the present moment, an excavation of the Śaiva Age precurrents of Vīraśaivism cannot be limited to the Śivadharma. While I hope to expand upon these findings in future publications, the following points should, I hope, be clear from the present article: (1) early Vīramēsvara texts such as the Somanāṭabhāṣya drew substantially upon the textual resources of the Śaiva Age and their religious systems of value, including, but not limited to, the Śivadharmaśāstra, and (2) the recovery of the history of this inheritance is best approached by bringing both Sanskrit and vernacular textual evidence into dialogue.

As cited from the Sarvasiddhāntaviveka, reconstructed in Naḡaswamy, Art and Religion of the Bhairavas, p. s-12, vs. 116–119: lingadhāri sadā svasya māstake kandhare ṭhāvā || nābher úrdvam yathāsāstram śāhāṇeṣu hṛdayādyuṣu || lingasya dhāranam muktiḥ kim punah pujāyā nṛṇām || yathā śive tathā bhaktir guru vaj jaṅgameṣu ca || tathāpi jaṅgame bhaktir viśeṣa iti kathāyate || mahāvratasya śrāddhakārakārmādātparāh || ekena jāmanā muktīṁ prāyāntaḥ mahāvratāḥ || By the word “particular” (viśeṣaḥ), the Sarvasiddhāntaśāstra would appear to suggest that the worship of the jaṅgama is a higher or more exclusive form of practice reserved for a particular tier of initiates.
In the thirteenth century, after all, Śaivism was not exclusively entextualized in Sanskrit, and bhakti was not exclusively expressed in the vernacular.

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**Appendix A**

Example of Parallels in the *Somanāthabhāṣya* and *Paṇḍitārādhyaśacaritramu*

Matching citations will be indicated in bold below.

Citations of a series of visualization verses. Note that these extracts appear in distinct sections in the two texts: specifically, in the “Vibhūtimāhātya” of the *Somanāthabhāṣya*, and in the “Rudrākṣamahimā” (Skt. Rudrākṣamahimā) section of the *Paṇḍitārādhyaśacaritramu*.

*Somanāthabhāṣya:*66

| Sthānas | Sthānas |
|---------|---------|
| rudrākṣavalayāḥ | ābhūṣanāḥ |
| śubhro jāṭājūtavirajitaḥ | sarvajātaśāntaladāhārini |
| bhasmāvaliptasarvāṅgah | aksamālāṛpitakarā kamanḍalukarāṇvitaḥ |
| kṛṣṇinopavitāṅgah ādōṣ puṇyakirtanah | tripūṇḍrāviliyuktaṅgī |
| āsevate mahādevaḥ yoginām hṛdayālayam | rgyajuh sāmārṇ apeva sevate smāmaheśvaran |
| īti tatraiva praṇavavyāvarṇanam | tathāiva gāyatrivyāvarṇanam |
| rudrākṣabhūṣanāḥ sarvajātaśāntaladāhārini | śubhāni tiryagṛakṣābhīr uddhūlitasarvagātraḥ |
| aksamālāṛpitakarā kamanḍalukarāṇvitaḥ | rudrākṣamālavimalaś ca bibhran tādṛgyādhivaḥ śiśyagānaṁ muniṁdriḥ |
| tripūṇḍrāviliyuktaṅgī | īti tatraiva vedavyāsamunivāvarṇanam |
| aksamālāṛpitakarā kamanḍalukarāṇvitaḥ | sanśtiyāmānaṁ dīptāṅgair devār muniṅgaṁ tathā |
| rgyajuh sāmārṇ apeva sevate smāmaheśvaran | dhṛtātripūṇḍrako divyai rudrākṣaiś ca vibhūṣitaḥ |
| tathāiva gāyatrivyāvarṇanam | śuśubhe satataṁ viṣṇur bhasmadigdhatanūruḥ |
| śuśubhe satataṁ viṣṇur bhasmadigdhatanūruḥ | tripūṇḍrāṅkitasarvāṅgo jaṭāmaṇḍalamanḍitaḥ |
| īti tatraiva viṣṇupvyāvarṇanam | īti tatraiva viṣṇupvyāvarṇanam |
| īti tatraiva viṣṇupvyāvarṇanam | īti yādīśrutīrthīṣhāṣaṃgamapurāṇavacanodīrātāpadhhasatātripūṇḍrahīṁsaḥ ca ye |
| īti yādīśrutīrthīṣhāṣaṃgamapurāṇavacanodīrātāpadhhasatātripūṇḍrahīṁsaḥ ca ye | saṃti te na darśanāya na saṃbhāṣyaḥ |

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66 This occurs around pp. 12–13 of the printed book.
Panḍitārādhya-caritramu.\textsuperscript{67}

... yīṭlu
marīyum burāṇāgama śruti smṛtu-lu-nāra lēka cēppu rudrākṣa kalpa-mula-n adīgāka bhūti rudrākṣamul dālcī vadalaka śivum gōlpuvārala vinunḍu acaḷita-prīṭi brahmāṃḍapurāṇa vacanambu “rudrākṣa-valaṭa” yanamgaṁ bratī “jatājūṭa-viṟaṇa” yana, vi-ratīṁ “dripuṇḍṛēna viṟaṇa” yana, ma-līna mē “bhamavalīpta-sarvāṃga” yanaṁgaṁnoppiṁ brāṇavavṛavarnaṁbhu vōgaḍāṁga “rudrākṣabhuṣaṇa” yanamgaṁ daga “jatāmanḍadāhāriṇi” yanamgaṁ darīṁ “akṣamālārpa-ta” yanangā neī “gamandalu karānti” yanangā nūruṁ “dripuṇḍrāvaliyuktaṁgi” yanangā gūri “ṛgyauṣmāmahōṣeṇa” yanangā nila “sēvate sma mahēsvaram” anaṅga nālaruṁ dā gāyatrīvṛvārṇanamubhu ratiṁ “dripuṇḍṛēna viṟaṇa” yanaṁga vratayukti “rudrākṣavalayā” yanamgaṁ sōgasi “subhūṁ jatājūṭa” yanamga\textsuperscript{68} vāgaṅmaṁ naṇi gratuṣvavāsravaṁbhu sarīṁ “dripuṇḍrōdbhāsī sarvāṃga” yana na mari yanḍa “rudrākṣamaṁḍanair” anaṅga vaḍi vāyaṅvāsāvarṇiṁśatāla saḍisana nidīyuṁ dā samidabhidhāna dēvaṭavṛvāsāvanaṁvṛtī yanangām dā vēṃḍīyuṁ burāṇatatalalōṁ dēlpū sarīṁ “dripuṇḍrōmkita-sarvāṃga” yana na mari yanḍa “rudrākṣamaṁḍanair” anaṅga nadiṅga mōḍala “suddhāṭmā” yanangā nadē vāṣadēvāṭavṛvāvarṇanaṁbhu divīṁ “tripuṇḍrakō divyair” anaṅga navirālāprītī “rudrākṣāś ca” anaṅga dudi “śuṣubhē satatō viṣṇu” anaṅga nanī ṣyā “bhamsaṇigdham” anaṅga nav viṣṇu vyāvarṇanamu yajurvyāvarṇanaṁbhu saivādulaṁdītiṁ saṁgaṁāi marīyum pōlaṁga “subhratipuṇḍrāṇi” yanangā līla “raḵṣābhīr uddhūḷita” yanangā

\textsuperscript{67} Panḍitārādhya-caritramu, pp. 11–12.

\textsuperscript{68} This citation appears identical to the one above, but I have only noted the parallel once.
manasiḍī “rūdrākṣamālā” yanu va- 
caṇamu “rūdrāṃś ca pañcabrahma” yanaiṃ da-
gili “yathavāśiraśśikkhē” yanunivi mō-
dalaṃ dudaṃ bēnaṅga raudramula maṇṭramula 
velayuṃ “bāmīcākṣaṛīṃmīdīṃ” anāṃga 
nōlaya śaḍaśaśiṇyuenu jāpiśicicunu 
nīṭaṅ “būjyēt paramēśavarm” anāṅga 
sphūṭabhakti nīśvarupājśiṇinirutum 
ḍanāṅga nāvyāsuni vyāvarṇanāṃbu 
munu gāśīkākhaṃḍaṃnaṃ jēppu maṇīyu 
bhuvinoppa “rūdrākṣabhūṣanā” yanaṅga 
navuṅ “ḍripumdrālamaṃktāṃgāś ca” yanaṅgaṃ 
bōrīn “aṅkāṃalāvibhūṣitā” yanāṃga 
narudugā svāyambhuvādi manuvula 
vyāvarṇanamu sēppuṅ gāvuna niṭṭu 
lāvidhi viśṇu . . .

Appendix B

Citations from the Śivadharmaśāstra in the Śivatattvāsāramu of Mallikārjuna Paṇḍitārā-
dhya:

Vs. 114, parallel to Śivadharma 1.36 
bhaktiya mukti tērūvu vi 
dhyuksamug “na mē ya priya catuṛvedā” “ma 
dbhaktas ca śucī” yanu nā 
sūkti pradhānammugāṃ baśūttamula kajā 69

Vs. 115, parallel to Śivadharma 1.36 
kūnunadi bhaktuni cētana 
dhana matanika yiccunadiyu “tasmai dēyāṃ” 
baniyunu “tasmād grāhyāṃ” 
baniyunu gala daniri vēdabhaktividhiṇul’

Vs. 116, parallel to Śivadharma 1.36 
katha lētiki “sa ca pūjyō 
yathā hyāham” manina vidhiyathārthamugā ma-
nmathamardana, ni bhaktulaṃ 
brathitaṃbuga nīva käṅga bhāviṃtu śivā

Vs. 156, parallel to Śivadharma 3.56 
kriyagōṇa jaṃgamaliṃgagamu 
niyatiṃ būṭjīmparaṅḍēni nīṣpalamulu sa-

69 As noted above, the Sanskrit citation preserved in the printed editions has been corrupted from the following: na me priyaḥ catuṛvedi madbhaktah śvapo ‘pi vā.
tkriyalunu bůjalu “limğa-
dvayaṃ samākhyātaṃ” anina vākyamu mṛoṣyun

Vs. 181, parallel to Śivadharma 1.28
praṇutiṃpa “na me bhaktāḥ
pranaśyaṃti” yanaṃgaṃ daginapalukanakūṃ dagan
ganānātha bhaktacintā
mani raksiṃpa♭ev yapāramahimādharā\(^{70}\)

Vs. 203, parallel to Śivadharma 11.28
anaghulaṃ gēvalabhaktulaṃ
nauṣaṭkīṃ ganī “sudūram api gantavyam”
mana darśincināṃ jālādē
gōnakōṇi śivum āju vēra kōrāṅga nēlā

Vs. 210, parallel to Śivadharma 3.55
sphutaśivatāṃtriṃkūm dapagata
kuṭilātmakumūḍa dharīyimcu gōtramam ēllaṃ
baṭugati “rajuḥ kūpād
ghatan yatathā” yanina sūkṣti gārāṇa maṇuṭan

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\(^{70}\) The edition of Venkatavaru preserves a singular reading in the Sanskrit (na me bhaktāḥ pranaśyaṭi) while the 1922 Chennai edition preserves the plural (na me bhaktāḥ pranaśyaṭi).
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