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Abstract: Indian literary traditions, both religious and non-religious, have dealt with literature in a fluid way, repeating and reusing narrative motifs, stories and characters over and over again. In recognition of this, the current paper will focus on one particular textual tradition within Jainism of works titled Dharmaparīkṣā and will trace its circulation. This didactic narrative, designed to convince a Jain audience of the correctness of Jainism over other traditions, was first composed in the tenth century in Apabhramśa and is best known in its eleventh-century Sanskrit version by the Digambara author Amitagati. Tracing it from a tenth-century context into modernity, across both classical and vernacular languages, will demonstrate the popularity of this narrative genre within Jain circles. The paper will focus on the materiality of manuscripts, looking at language and form, place of preservation, affiliation of the authors and/or scribe, and patronage. Next to highlighting a previously underestimated category of texts, such a historical overview of a particular literary circulation will prove illuminating on broader levels: it will show networks of transmission within the Jain community, illustrate different types of mediation of one literary tradition, and overall, enrich our knowledge of Jain literary culture.

Keywords: Jainism; manuscripts; circulation; satire; narrative

The Jain Dharmaparīkṣā narrative, which stands out because of its explicit satirical character towards non-Jain traditions, has been popular from at least the tenth century until the nineteenth century. With a focus on the materiality of literary production, this paper seeks to establish the historical popularity of the Dharmaparīkṣā, as well as to strengthen the already-existing research on material literary culture of the Jains. In this regard, I argue that an examination of distribution patterns enables us to judge the popularity of a text. Further, with its method which looks not only at distribution patterns but also (preliminary) at other material indications of the text’s sociohistorical context (such as sect, caste, etc.), the paper aims to provide an example of how to assess in detail the practical use, relevance, and meaning of a text or textual tradition within South Asian literary history.

Within the field of Jain Studies, it is common knowledge that Jains have played an important role in the production and circulation of literary translations and reproductions (see e.g., Johnson 1993; Cort 1995; Wujastyk 2014). The huge amount of manuscripts in hundreds of libraries, for example, testify to a flourishing religious literary economy that engaged many individuals of different interests and stimulated, and was also stimulated by, a thriving intellectual community. Although within Jain Studies the enormous potential of what we can learn about Jainism and wider literary circulatory practices in South Asia is recognized, much of this potential is still to be exploited.
In fact, scholars of South Asia have recently renewed their attention to these issues, posing new research questions relating to the actors, practices, and spaces of literary production and circulation, the circuits of literary circulation, or the literary modes and languages of production and reproduction in India (see e.g., Colas and Gerschheimer 2009; Orsini and Sheikh 2014; de Bruijn and Busch 2014; Pauwels 2015; Orsini and Schofield 2015). Questions pertaining to the role of the Jains in that literary circulation, including their specificities and relation to wider Indian literary culture, remain all the more undisclosed.  

This paper wants to add to this path of research within a Jain literary context by viewing literary circulation from the perspective of one single textual tradition, by which I refer to different translations and retellings of one story produced over several centuries. It will attempt at depicting the spread of one frame story that goes by the title of Dharmaparīkṣā and will focus on the material aspects of its circulation.

In order to do this, I will first frame the main analysis by introducing the context of Jain manuscript culture, and identifying what is meant by the Dharmaparīkṣā textual tradition. Next, I will detail the multiple versions of Dharmaparīkṣā that exist in multiple languages, as such proving the Dharmaparīkṣā textual tradition to be a perfect illustration of how, in Indian literary history, circulation was ubiquitous and not hampered by linguistic boundaries, as well as a confirmation of the claim by de Bruijn and Busch (2014) that even within a religious community which has sometimes been identified with a particular language (e.g., Prakrit in Jainism), texts and genres were disseminated across sociolinguistic communities (p. 4). Moving on to the actual materiality of the Dharmaparīkṣā’s circulation, the paper will examine the number of manuscripts and map their locations in order to show how the Dharmaparīkṣā circulated across regional boundaries, suggesting a widespread fondness for this narrative. Thirdly, the paper will focus on the material aspects of some exemplary manuscripts. This will provide a first indication of the actors who used the Dharmaparīkṣā texts (namely both lay people and monks). Additionally, an examination of the colophons of the exemplary manuscripts discloses the use of the text, the networks between religious actors and the places that are connected through the Dharmaparīkṣā. The colophons further display how the Dharmaparīkṣā circulated across sectarian boundaries, as well as across time, as its manuscripts kept being produced until at least the end of the nineteenth century.

Wrapping up this detailed analysis, the conclusions of this paper will convince that the extent of a piece of literature cannot be fully assessed without probing its materiality.

1. Introducing Jain Manuscript Culture

As Pollock (2006) has stressed, the invention, diffusion, and conquest of manuscript culture, by which literary culture materialized, had a ‘historic’ impact on further literary developments in India (p. 77). An important impetus came from the medieval period onwards, when the Jains, as well as the Buddhists, started to establish libraries integrated in temple complexes in order to preserve their highly valued written tradition (Johnson 1993, p. 189). These Jain temple libraries, in contrast to Buddhist libraries that disappeared as Buddhism in India declined, remain active until today, making sure that the Jain manuscript collections now are considered among the richest collections in India (Wujastyk 2014, p. 10).

The manuscript libraries, called jñāna bhaṇḍāras, which Cort (1995) pointedly translates as ‘knowledge warehouses’ in his study of the manuscript libraries in Pāṭān (Gujarat), 2 were organizations that in a way mediated the relations between Jain laity and monks. While the libraries mostly served the interests of the mendicants, as it preserved the texts for the monks to use, it was the laity who was

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1 Most studies about Jain literary culture and literary circulation have been case-based and focused on aspects relating to its materialized form, namely manuscript culture (see e.g., Cort 1995; Johnson 1993; Balbir 2006; Kragh 2013; Balbir 2014, 2017). John Cort’s study of the practice of translation among seventeenth-century Digambara Jains in Agra (Cort 2015) opens up knowledge about Jain literary culture from the perspective of translation, a perspective that Ramanujan (1991) has pointed out to be ineludible for Indian literary culture.

2 I have chosen to transcribe Sanskrit terms fully according to the IAST (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration) and to transcribe names (of places, people, etc.) and titles as they would be pronounced in their current use, i.e., omitting unpronounced vocals (e.g., Pāṭān instead of Pāṭaṇa, and Kāśivīl instead of Kāśalivāla).
responsible for establishing and managing the libraries where manuscripts could be kept. As such, the names of Jain kings and rich merchants are known for the libraries they have built (e.g., king Kumārapāla in Pāṭaṇ; see Cort 1991, p. 78). The management of a bhāṇḍāra was in the hands of prominent lay members of the Jain congregation, or of a specialized mendicant who permanently resided in the monastery (a yātī, for Śvetāmbara communities, or a bhāṭṭāraka in Digambara Jainism).

Similarly, whereas Jain manuscripts would originally have been written down by mendicants who would compose works or copy texts during the monsoon season (Kāsīvalī 1967, p. 5), extant manuscripts, mostly dating at earliest from the tenth and eleventh century, show how actually the lay community had the greatest hand in manuscript production. The laity was expected to arrange the copying of the manuscripts for monks to use (Cort 1995, p. 78). Many manuscript colophons speak of a prominent lay person who patronized the copy and of a lay scribe, who sometimes copied independently or was hired by a patron. As such, Detige (2018) notes that in the Digambara tradition many manuscripts were copied by so-called pandītas, intellectual lay pupils of a bhāṭṭāraka who were often trained as ritual specialists. This use of the term is not to be confused with the Śvetāmbara title pāṇḍita, synonymous to pāṇīyās, where it refers to a rank of mendicants (Cort 1991, p. 664), or with the contemporary use of the term for well-educated lay intellectuals (Wiley 2009, p. 164; Flügel 2006, p. 341). In recent times, the focus in the organization of the Jain bhāṇḍāras has shifted towards the preservation of manuscripts. Increasingly more temple libraries have undertaken the cataloguing of their collection and sometimes have established a research center with the library. This brought with it the establishment of libraries such as Kobā Tīrth near Ahmedabad that comprises collections from several bhāṇḍāras in one temple-based library.

The lively history of the living Jain manuscript tradition shows why research concerning the materiality of a text, by which I do not only mean paper and ink but also the places, people, and relations associated with that material text, is important. It is within this context that I will examine the manuscript circulation of the Dharmaparīkṣā tradition, which is delineated in the following section.

2. Identifying the Dharmaparīkṣā

The Dharmaparīkṣā, which translates as ‘Examination of Religion,’ is a narrative text that tries to examine and argue why the Jain tradition is ‘true’ (samyacī) and why other traditions, more precisely the dominant Brahmanical tradition, are not. More specifically, the text makes its argument within a frame structure using stories that refer to and satirically criticize Hindu Purānic and epic episodes. As such, the text should be understood within the tradition of Jain Purāṇas and Jain versions of the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa. Other than this, the Dharmaparīkṣā is often compared to the Dhūrtākhyāna (‘A Tale of Rogues’) because the works have a similar frame structure, common narrative motifs, and because both texts are satirical towards religion. Being a narrative text with a satirical undertone to

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3 Cort (1995) describes how, due to misuse of power by some yātīs, a reform movement arose around the turn of the twentieth century, instigated by the lay congregation to take over the organization of the bhāṇḍāras, so that now the institution of the yātī has largely disappeared (Cort 1995, pp. 80–81). In the Digambara tradition, only in the South of India some bhāṇḍāras are still under the control of a bhāṭṭāraka (e.g., the Śrī Jaina Maṭhā in Māḍabidri), as the bhāṭṭāraka institution has disappeared from the North of India. (see Balcerowicz 2015 and works by Detige).

4 Many things can be said about the complexities in translating the word dharma that I do not want to discuss here. I chose to translate it as ‘religion’ because the text is about weighing one religious tradition against others, in the sense that Jain authors understand their religion, namely as that which holds truth.

5 Note that the Buddhist tradition is also attacked, especially in Amitagati’s Dharmaparīkṣā (see De Jonckheere forthcoming).

6 The Jain versions of the pan-Indian purāṇic and epic narratives are clearly distinct from the better-known Hindu versions (where Vālmiki’s and Vyāsa’s renderings are considered as authoritative), and often explicitly criticize these Hindu versions (see e.g., De Clercq and Vekemans 2019). The critiques in the Dharmaparīkṣā point out similar ‘mistakes’ of the Hindu versions as the Jain purūṇas and epics.

7 The Dhūrtākhyāna is a satirical frame story, best known in the Prakrit version by Haribhadra, about five rogues who play a game of telling incredible stories, which they argue to be credible by referring to purūṇic stories.

For works referring to the Dharmaparīkṣā and the Dhūrtākhyāna together, see for example Osier (2005); Upadhye (1944); Krümpelmann (2000, p. 16); Warder (1992, p. 253).
criticize other religious traditions, the Dharmaparīkṣā was most likely meant to be heard or read by a Jain lay audience, with the purpose of directing them back on the correct Jain path and affirm the Jain path as the one true tradition.

Of the Dharmaparīkṣā, there exist several versions in several languages, written from at least the tenth century onwards by Digambara Jain authors. In a later period, some versions by Śvetāmbaras were also composed.

The main narrative of the Dharmaparīkṣā tells the story of two Vidyādhāras, humans with extraordinary powers (vidyās) such as the ability to fly, in search of the truth. One of them, Manovega, is a devoted Jain. He is concerned about his friend, the other Vidyādhara called Pavanavega, who has strayed from the right religious path and who is especially drawn towards the Brahmanical religion. In search of help to get his friend back on ‘the right track,’ Manovega goes to Ujjayini where he meets a Jain monk Jinamati. Hearing Manovega’s problem, Jinamati advises him to take his friend to Pāṭaliputra, a city dominated by Brahmins, portrayed as experts of the Hindu scriptures. There, Manovega engages in discussions with the Brahmins, each initiated by the narration of an incredible story he has invented about his life. From this point onwards, the narrative frame takes on a repetitive structure in which, for every few substories, the two Vidyādhāras take on a different disguise before entering the city of Pāṭaliputra. In this way, every time they enter Pāṭaliputra they play a different character to instigate the curiosity of the Brahmins living there. Noticing the two peculiar newcomers, the Brahmins approach them and ask them who they are, upon which Manovega answers with an incredible story from his life. When the Brahmins do not believe him, Manovega justifies his story by referring to parallel episodes from the Hindu epics and Purāṇas. In this way, he proves the inconsistency of Purāṇic Hinduism. After every such discussion the Vidyādhāras go outside of the city. There, Manovega explains to Pavanavega didactic passages from the Jain doctrine. In the end, Pavanavega is converted and accepts the vow of a Jain layman.

From this brief overview of the content of the Dharmaparīkṣā, it should be clear that this relatively understudied narrative is interesting to examine from the angle of literary circulation, since it tells us something about the way Jains saw their own place in society. More precisely, it informs us of a specific attitude of the Jains, throughout time and space, towards other traditions and their religious texts, namely an attitude of counteractive appropriation by means of satire. This attitude is not to be understood as remaining the same, but rather as repetitively revaluated because of the recurring need to refocus and reposition Jainism within historically changing socioreligious contexts of ideological battle.

3. Many Dharmaparīkṣās

As I have mentioned above, several texts have been written that tell this same story. With three exceptions, all of them are called Dharmaparīkṣā. The names of the exceptions are Manovegakathā, Manovegapavanavegakathānak (attested respectively in the Jaina Granthavalī and the Dela Upāśraya Bhaṇḍār: (Velankar 1944, p. 301)) and Manovegapavanavegacaupāṭī (kept in Jaisalmer:

An extensive study on the Dhūrtākhyāna including an edition (in Latin script) and German translation of Haribhadra’s Dhūttakkhaṇa was done by Krümpelmann (2000). Osier and Balbir (2004) published a translation of Haribhadra’s Dhūttakkhaṇa into French with an elaborate introduction. Osier (2005) argues that the satirical aspect of both texts makes them stand out because this is very uncommon and is considered improper for refuting other religions (p. 33). Lee Siegel, however, in his work Laughing Matters (1987), shows that there was a strong tradition of humour and satire within Indian literature, including what he calls religious satire (pp. 187–244).

8 The summary of the frame story given here is based on the version by Amitagati.

9 I regard the Dharmaparīkṣā much in the same way as Dundas (2008) interprets the Kathākṣaṇapraṇāna by Ānanda Sūri. Whereas the latter text would have “played a polemical role in an ideological battle within the Jain Community over the nature of orthodox Śvetāmbara Jainism and its place within socioreligious context of western India of its time, the Dharmaparīkṣā as a textual tradition would have played a role from the tenth century for Digambara Jainism and later also for Śvetāmbar Jainism.”
Jambuvijaya et al. 2000, p. 93). Most versions have never been studied, but we know of the existence of multiple works titled *Dharmapariksā* because their titles can be retrieved in many manuscript catalogues. By researching these catalogues and secondary sources, I could compile a list of 28 authors who have written a *Dharmapariksā*. These are: Amitagati, Daśaratha Nigantva, Devasena, Devavijaya, Hariṣena, Jinadāsa, Jinamāṇḍana, Lakṣmanaprasāda Tīvari, Mānavijaya, Manohara Lāla, Manohara Dāsa, Manovega, Nayavijaya, Padmasāgara, Pannalāla Caudhari, Pārśvakirti, Rāmacandra, Sahasoma Jī, Saubhāgyasāgara, Sumatiśīrṇa, Vṛttavilāsa, Yaśovijaya, Devendrakirti, Nayasa, Śrutakirti, Vādisingh, and Viśalakīrti.10

However, Indian literary works sometimes share the same title while not sharing the same content.11 Indeed, after scanning the texts of which I have been able to collect a manuscript, it appears that some of these authors do not tell the story of Manovega and Pavanavega. The *Dharmapariksā* by Yaśovijaya, for example, is a philosophical treatise and the texts by Jinamandana and Mānavijaya/Devavijaya12 seem to tell a different narrative.

The following table (Table 1) shows the authors, with date and language, of *Dharmapariksās* that are confirmed to contain the story of Manovega and Pavanavega, and are thus a retelling or translation of an older text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Time of Composition</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Place</th>
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<td>Harisena</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>Svetāmbara</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>Svetāmbara29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 The references used are the catalogues listed in my bibliography, as well as the introductions to the editions of the texts by Harisena (Bhāskar 1990) and Amitagati (Śastra 1998); Upadhye (1942); Johrāpurkar (1958) and Caudhart (1998).

11 The *Dharmasamgraha*, for example, is both a famous work ascribed to the Buddhist author Nāgārjuna that glosses Buddhist technical terms, and a work by the Jain author Mānavijaya describing the duties of Jain laity and ascetics (Winternitz Maurice 1933, pp. 347, 594).

12 Hariṣena (Bhāskar 1990, p. iii) and the catalogue of Kobā Tirth refer to a *Dharmpariksā* text by Mānavijaya and Devavijaya separately, and I have collected both manuscripts tagged Devavijaya and Mānavijaya. However, these manuscripts contain the same text and are, in my reading, composed by Mānavijaya. This is why I refer here to one text using two names separated by a dash.
This chronological table testifies to the popularity of the text throughout several centuries, as it was told or written and retold or rewritten from the tenth century until at least the seventeenth century. The oldest version was written in Apabhramśa by Hariśena, who himself claims that he has based his Dharmaparīkṣā on a composition in gāthās by Jayarāma. A manuscript of this text has not yet been found and Hariśena’s account is the only one mention of it. The most widespread version

See (Johr¯apurkar 1958, p. 198).

Reference to P¯ar´ svak¯ırti as the author of a

See (Caudhar¯ı 1998, p. 275).

Because the Vikrama Sam. vat calendar and the Gregorian calendar do not start at the same time, it is impossible to translate the date into an exact corresponding date of the Gregorian calendar when only the year of composition is given. This issue is even more complex from the fact that there are two variants of the Vikrama Śaṃvat calendar (p¯urn. im¯anta and am¯anta) with different monthly schemes and thus starting at different times. It is for that reason that I give two possible dates of the Gregorian calendar, when I do not refer to a secondary source.

See (Caudhari 1998, p. 275).

Jerahat. should probably be located near Damoh in Madhya Pradesh (See the discussion in Jain 2002, pp. 86–91).

Hemacandra Jain Jñ¯an. Bhan. d. ¯ara P¯at.an. 1762) contain the same text and do not include the last sentence of the text:

This chronological table testifies to the popularity of the text throughout several centuries, as it was told or written and retold or rewritten from the tenth century until at least the seventeenth century. The oldest version was written in Apabhramśa by Hariśena, who himself claims that he has based his Dharmaparīkṣā on a composition in gāthās by Jayarāma. A manuscript of this text has not yet been found and Hariśena’s account is the only one mention of it. The most widespread version

See (K¯asliv¯al 1967, p. 311).

See (K¯asliv¯al 1950, prast¯avn¯a, p. 20).

Schubring (1944, pp. 433–34) gives “śaṃvat 1705 [1649]” as date of composition. This accords with verse ([19]83) of the manuscript he describes (Ms. or. fol. 2309): satateṃ sem paṇa uttaraṃ paṇasa dasami guru-vātra samyapana bhāguvā grahaṇa (da saj-jana hūtakalajj) However, I could not find this sentence in the manuscripts I have collected. Instead, manuscripts 618/1875–76 of BORI, 1433/1886–92 of BORI, G71 of the Jaina Sādhānta Bhavana in Arrah, and the manuscript from the Swarn Mandir in Gwalior (obtained through Tillo Detige) give the following sentence (or a variant thereof): vikrama-rājā kau bhaśayai sāta adhika suhajāra barasa tabai yaha sahasa-kr.ta (bhut kathā śukha sāra).

(Bh¯askar 1990, p. iii). This dating is presumptive as the text itself does not seem to render any date.

Reference to P¯ar´ svak¯ırti as the author of a Dharmaparīkṣā is found in (Bh¯askar 1990, p. iii; Velankar 1944, p. 190; Śastri 1998). The edition of Amitagati’s Dharmaparīkṣā (Śastri 1998) includes a Dharmaparīkṣākathā that is said to be composed by P¯arsvikārtti (the header reads p¯arsvikārttiaraṇitacit). However, in my opinion the text included in the edition is the text by Rāmacandra. Firstly, the text itself reads: iti śrīramacandraṃ muninī guruḥaśilinī khyalā dharmaparīkṣā sā kṛkṛtāriyam tabutiḥ (Śastri 1998, p. 378). “In this way the virtuous muni Śrī Rāmacandra has composed the famous Dharmaparīkṣā, then this composition [was made] (kṛtīr kṛtāt).” The sentence referring to P¯arsvakārtti comes only after the seemingly closing sentence of the text: iti dharmaparīkṣākathā samāptaḥ dharmaparīkṣā samāptaḥ bhavatu (bhāguvā grahaṇa) (p¯urn. im¯anta)[;] śukha bhavatu (bhāguvā grahaṇa) (p¯urn. im¯anta)[;] śukha bhavantu (bhāguvā grahaṇa) (p¯urn. im¯anta).

Moreover, manuscripts of the Dharmaparīkṣākathā ascribed to Rāmacandra (BORI 1270 of 1891–95; BORI 1268 of 1886–92; Hemacandra Jain Jñ¯an. Bhan. d. ¯ara P¯at.an. 1762) contain the same text and do not include the last sentence referring to P¯arsvakārtti, who would be the muni in whose possession the text (grantha) was (so for whom it was copied).

Padmasāgara, Dharmaparīkṣā, v. 1483:

tadāraje vijarayaṇayananyatayai śrīvācaśākraresarai dyotante bhucī dharmmaśāgaranahopādhyāyaśuddhvī dhīvai teṣāṃ śayakṣaṇe paṭkayaganaṃcandrāṅkite vātsare (1645); vikramasthitam rācito grahaṇye śānāndalaih (1483).

See (Jobrápurkar 1958, p. 198).

Because the Vikrama Śaṃvat calendar and the Gregorian calendar do not start at the same time, it is impossible to translate the date into an exact corresponding date of the Gregorian calendar when only the year of composition is given. This issue is even more complex from the fact that there are two variants of the Vikrama Śaṃvat calendar (p¯urn. im¯anta and am¯anta) with different monthly schemes and thus starting at different times. It is for that reason that I give two possible dates of the Gregorian calendar, when I do not refer to a secondary source.

See (Beddhari 1998, p. 275).

Biographical information about the author Śrutakṣīrti is taken from the prāasti of the Harivantsapratītus by the same author. Jerahat should probably be located near Damoh in Madhya Pradesh (See the discussion in Jain 2002, pp. 86–91).

Rao writes that, according to Devacandra’s Rājañirolli Katte, Vṛttavālīsa lived during the reign of the Hoysāla king Ballala (182, p. 4).

Upadhye and Rice ascribe Vṛttavālīsa to circa 1160 CE (Upadhye 1942, p. 592; Rice 1921, p. 37). Venkatasubbiah argues that he lived around 1345 CE (Venkatasubbiah 1931, p. 520). Rao follows Venkatasubbiah and writes that Vṛttavālīsa must have lived circa 1360 CE (1982, p. 3). I follow the argument of Rao and Venkatasubbiah.

In his Subhāsitaratnasamuhāra, Amitagati writes that he wrote during the reign of Rāja Muṇja, ruler of the Paramāra in the Mālava region (1954, p. 43). In the Pañcasa m. graha, supposedly the same Amitagati accounts that he wrote the work in the Mālava region (1954, p. 63). In the Prācasamgraha, supposedly the same Amitagati accounts that he wrote the work in the Mālava region (nowadays Masītākūr [nowadays Masīd Bilauda]) (1954, p. 70).

Amitagati, Dharmaparīkṣā, prāasti v.20:

samāntaraṇāṃ viṣkte sahasre saasaptatau vikramaḥparśītvasyai idaṃ niṣadhannyamataṃ samāptaḥ īnendrharmāṃ mārtyakāśāstrām (120).


From his comparison of Hariśena’s and Amitagati’s text, Upadhye (1942) hypothesizes that a Prakrīt text, possibly by Jayarāma, served as the independent basis for both versions.
was written in Sanskrit by Amitagati, whose composition seems to have served as the base for later versions (Manohardas explicitly refers to Amitagati’s text as his source). By the early modern period (ca. 1500–1800), Dharmaparikṣā texts were being composed in vernacular literary languages, as is indicated by the texts of Sumatikirti and Manohardas in Braj, Nemavijaya in Gujarati, and Daśaratha Nigotia in Rājasthāni. This shows, on the one hand, the rise in literary importance of these languages among the Jains, and on the other hand, the importance of the Dharmaparikṣā to be translated in vernacular languages. In the same period, we see that Sanskrit continues to be used as a literary language (in the versions of Saubhāgyasāgara, Padmasāgara, and Rāmacandra).

Through its translations and retellings, the story of the Dharmaparikṣā has been handed down over a certain period of time. For that reason, I speak of the Dharmaparīkṣā as a textual tradition. The tradition circulated not only through the words of several authors, but also through the production of multiple manuscripts. This material culture of manuscripts, that as handmade pieces all differ from each other, will now be the focus of the rest of this paper.

4. Many Dharmaparīkṣā Copies

A first indicator of the material circulation of a text or textual tradition would be the number of manuscripts that were produced of it. Today of course, the exact number of manuscripts that were ever produced is impossible to ascertain. One can only resort to the extant manuscripts, especially those that have been recorded in catalogues. Through the method of consulting all the catalogues I could retrieve, I have found 231 manuscripts titled Dharmaparikṣā. Of those manuscripts, twenty-one manuscripts are of a different type of text, as they contain the texts composed by Yaśovijaya, Jinamandana, and Mānavijaya/Devavijaya. Another forty-three manuscripts are unclear regarding their contents. This leaves 170 manuscripts which belong to the Dharmaparīkṣā-tradition that is defined by the frame story about Manovega and Pavanavega.

The distribution of the manuscripts according to ascribed authors shows a relatively greater importance of Amitagati’s text. With a presence of seventy-nine manuscripts (i.e., forty-six percent of the one hundred seventy manuscripts), Amitagati’s composition is confirmed to be the most popular version in material terms. The second most occurring author is Manohardas, with forty-six manuscripts.

Another indicator to estimate the importance and popularity of a textual tradition is its geographical spread. Geographical information is found most broadly in the manuscript catalogues (in addition to more local geographical references in the manuscripts themselves). In order to visualize the spread of the Dharmaparikṣā tradition, I have chosen to map the places where the manuscripts are stored today using three types of catalogues. The first type are catalogues of community-based manuscript libraries (the bhandārās) that, in addition to a list of manuscripts kept in the library, often contain extra details such as date of composition and state of the manuscript. The second type of catalogues list the collection of institute-based libraries (e.g., Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute: BORI). These catalogues contain similar details and are often more easily available through a wider spread publication. The last type are the “catalogues of catalogues” (e.g., Catalogus Catalogorum) that exist as general registers, reports (e.g., Peterson Reports) or databases (e.g., NAMAMI) of manuscripts referring to the places where manuscripts are kept.

Figure 1 visualizes the geographical spread of the extant manuscripts, pinning each location for which there is a catalogue entry of a Dharmaparikṣā manuscript.

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32 All catalogues I have consulted are listed in the bibliography of this article.
33 These include, e.g., The Handwritten list of the manuscripts at the Pārśvanātha Digambara Jaina Prācīna Jinālaya in Idar (retrieved in photographs), but also Kāśivāl’s Rājasthān ke jain śāstra bhandārom kī grantha sūcī in four volumes.
34 I have only included the manuscripts of Dharmaparikṣā texts of which I know for certain they contain the story of Manovega and Pavanavega, which is the ‘textual tradition’ I am studying.
Figure 1 visualizes the geographical spread of the extant manuscripts, pinning each location for which there is a catalogue entry of a Dharmaparīkṣā manuscript.34

Figure 1. Places of preservation of the Dharmaparīkṣā tradition.

The points on the map represent the places where Dharmaparīkṣā manuscripts are now housed and do not show where the manuscripts were produced or where they have been kept throughout the centuries. Moreover, as some catalogues or registers date from decades back, the points also do not guarantee that one would find a Dharmaparīkṣā manuscript at the pinpointed places today still. What the points on the map do represent are the places where, at a certain point in time, a manuscript of the Dharmaparīkṣā was kept. This indicates that, in that specific place, the manuscript was deemed valuable to be kept either for practical reasons (it was used), or for reasons of preservation (the text was considered ‘worthy’ to be preserved). The marks on the map are differentiated by color and form to indicate the type of library in which the manuscript has been attested. A purple dot indicates a smaller library traditionally attached to a Jain temple (jñāna bhanḍāra). An orange pentagon refers to the bigger Jain temple-libraries that have established themselves as quasi-research institutes and contain...
multiple manuscript collections, some of which were originally kept in bhandāras at other places. Green squares represent the manuscript institutes (e.g., BORI) that only house manuscripts collected from other collections (including private collections and traditional bhandāras) and were established solely for the purpose of research. The development of these institutes has nevertheless been crucial for manuscript preservation and progress in the study of literature.

The purple dots, representing the smaller libraries, are of most interest because they are most likely to contain manuscripts obtained through traditional networks and preserved for traditional reasons. The locations of the bigger Jain bhandāras (orange pentagons) are also elucidating with regard to geographical spread of the textual tradition, because the collections these organizations have gathered into one library originate from places with which the Jain organization has or had social connections.

Most of the locations pinpointed on the map keep more than one manuscript of Dharmaparīksā and often by the same author. As such, the map does not represent the total number of manuscripts. The Jain Vidyā Samsthān in Jaipur, which includes the former famous collection of the Amer Sāstra Bhandār, for example, holds, according to the catalogues, eight manuscripts of the Dharmaparīksā by Amitagati, two by Harisena, and three by Manohardās. However, it must be noted that when I visited in January 2017, I was shown three manuscripts by Harisena, three by Amitagati and none by Manohardās, indicating a discrepancy between the published catalogues and the present-day situation. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that some manuscripts got lost in the archives, might have suffered from decay due to the fragile character of manuscripts, might have been on loan, or simply because catalogues are not necessarily correct. The Jain Vidyā Samsthān is an example of the bigger libraries marked in orange. Over the years, these bhandāras have become large ‘temple-based research institutes’ devoted to the preservation of manuscripts coming from their own original collection, and also manuscripts collected from smaller bhandāras. The best example of such a library is the Hemacandra Jñān Bhandār in Pātañ, as it gathered a number of temple-based manuscript collections and is managed by a trust directed by Jain lay people. Other collecting manuscript libraries are attached to research institutes (like BORI) and University libraries (marked with green squares). The size of the marks (dots, pentagons, and squares) on the map are graduated according to the number of Dharmaparīksā manuscripts each library holds (the bigger the mark, the more manuscripts kept in that library, with a maximum of fourteen in one place). Notice that Jaipur has a cluster of libraries where many Dharmaparīksā manuscripts are kept, the most important libraries being the Jain Bāḍa Teraḥpanṭh Maṇḍir (see Kāslīvāl 1962, 1954) and the Amer Sāstra Bhandār at the Jain Vidyā Samsthān (see Kāslīvāl 1950).

Figure 1 clearly shows that the Dharmaparīksā textual tradition as a whole was widely spread across the subcontinent. In addition, Figures 2 and 3 below visualize the material spread of the texts by Amitagati and Manohardās, which are the two dominant versions in numerical terms. Both versions seem to have been well circulated. Amitagati’s Dharmaparīksā, next to having a numerical dominance, also has a distributional dominance. Manuscripts of his composition are found in both North and South India in smaller bhandāras, and his version is also preserved in more eastern parts of India in the Jain Siddhānt Bhavan in Arrah, a research institute of Jain affiliation. Manohardās’ Dharmaparīksā has been well spread across northern India. The most southern mark on the map points to BORI in Pune which holds manuscripts originally collected from other places. The relatively strong presence of the text by Manohardās in North India is presumably related to the language of the text, which is Braj Bhāṣā. Premodern Hindi (of which Braj can be seen as a contributing language) was used as a

35 Cort (1995) has described how the collection of the Hemacandra Jñān Bhandār in Pātañ was consolidated from several collections coming from places including Ahmedabad, Jaisalmer, Kacch, and Panjab because of impetuses like political choices and connections between laymen of different saṅghas. As such, the Hemacandra Jñān Bhandār is indicated by an orange pentagon.

36 It has to be noted that these bigger bhandāras are not all completely transparent as to which policies they follow in collecting manuscripts (e.g., questions have been raised among scholars of Jain studies about which practices Kobā Tīrth in Gujarat is applying).
literary medium from Gujarat to Bengal and from northern Hindustan to the Deccan.\footnote{For a discussion on Braj literature, I refer to the Introduction of (Busch 2011).} Manohardās’ text was thus part of this wide and flourishing literary culture due to its language, but presumably its aesthetical value also had an influence.

![Map of places of preservation of Manohardās’ Dharmaparīkṣā.](image1)

**Figure 2.** Places of preservation of Amitagatī’s Dharmaparīkṣā.

![Map of places of preservation of Manohardās’ Dharmaparīkṣā.](image2)

**Figure 3.** Places of preservation of Manohardās’ Dharmaparīkṣā.

The three maps together illustrate a relatively strong presence of manuscripts of the Dharmaparīkṣā in Western India, which is known to have a prominent Jain community. Interestingly, there seems to be no necessary division between Śvetāmbara and Digambara repositories with regards to the

\[\text{\footnotemark[37]}\]
Dharmaparîksâ, as manuscripts of Digambara versions such as that by Amitagati are well present in Śvetâmbara libraries (e.g., Hemacandra Jñān Bhaṇḍâr in Pāṭanâ). The textual tradition also made its way to the South where, next to manuscripts of Vṛttavilāsa’s Kannada version, Amitagati’s text is also preserved. The Dharmaparîksâ today is kept in both traditional Jain libraries as well as research institutes without affiliation (e.g., Government Oriental Manuscript Library in Madras).

The Dharmaparîksâ texts seem to have been well circulated and therefore liked by the Jain community who decided to copy a manuscript or have it copied. Although the number of manuscripts I have found is not overwhelming, it is still a significant number. Moreover, this number is definitely not a final count, as many libraries have not been catalogued and as many manuscripts are still kept in private collections.

5. A Few Dharmaparîksâ Manuscripts

After looking at the body of manuscripts of Dharmaparîksâ from a broad perspective, the next section will examine some manuscripts in detail, highlighting several aspects that are informative of Jain manuscript culture and disclose in-depth knowledge about the material culture of the Dharmaparîksâ. These aspects include the material form and visible properties of the manuscripts, as well as an analysis of the scribal colophons. I have consulted these manuscripts at the Jain Vidyā Samsthân in Jaipur, the jñāna bhaṇḍâra at Köbâ Tîrth, the Lâlbhâl Dalpatbhâl Institute of Indology in Ahmedabad, the Hemacandra Jñān Bhaṇḍâr in Pāṭanâ, and the BORI in Pune.38 One manuscript I have received through Tillo Dêtige from the Jain Svarn Mandir in Gwalior, and six manuscripts I was able to consult through the idjo.org website, which stores digitized manuscripts from the Jain Siddhânt Bhavan in Arrah. In total, I have consulted thirty-two manuscripts of Dharmaparîksâ texts.39

5.1. Material Form and Looks

All of the manuscripts I have collected were written on paper. This is related to the fact that the manuscripts I could access come from northern India, where most manuscripts are on paper. By contrast, in his edition of the ‘southern’ Dharmaparîksâ by Vṛttavilāsa (in Kannada), Rao attests that he used seven manuscripts in preparing the edition, six of which are palm leaf (Rao 1982, pp. 28–32). Some of the manuscripts I collected were in relatively bad shape, although most were still complete and readable. This suggests that the collections I consulted have been well preserved and taken care of by the community.

Between the manuscripts there is quite a variety in the attractiveness of the manuscript because of the style of writing, the decorations and ink colors, and the size of the manuscript.

The script of each of the manuscripts is Devanâgarî (although in different variants), which accords to the general fact that this is “the script used for the bulk of the north Indian manuscripts of the last thousand years” (Wujastyk 2014, p. 7).

A ‘typical’ Dharmaparîksâ manuscript is represented in Figure 4. The manuscript is rectangular and written in black ink with the verse numbers marked in a reddish overlay. The writing style is pretty readable, and there is an open space in the middle of the folio, witness of a time at which the binding of a manuscript was done through a hole in the middle. This is how many Jain manuscripts and classical Indian manuscripts in general look, although this particular example has somewhat more text on one folio than most.

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38 I thank these organizations for allowing me to consult the manuscripts and for providing copies of them.

39 Eleven of the manuscripts contained Amitâgati’s text, ten were of Manohardâs’ text, four contained Harihâna’s text, three manuscripts were of Râmâcandra’s text, two contained Padmasâgara’s text, one was of Saubhâgâsâgara’s text and one of Sumatikârti’s text.
Figure 4. Dharmaparikṣā by Amitagati, Kobā Tīrtha n. 1209240.

Overall, none of the collected Dharmaparikṣā manuscripts seem to stand out in form (which would have been the case, for example, if they had been written on a medium other than paper (for North Indian manuscripts) or would have included illustrations).

One manuscript, containing the Dharmaparikṣā by Harīṣena, seems to be more precious (see Figure 5). It is decorated with a citrapṛṣṭhikā, which is an illustrated opening (or closing) page (Balbir 2017, p. 62). The illustration is like most citrapṛṣṭhikās in red, a color viewed as auspicious (Balbir 2017, p. 62). The illustration is not the most complex, but it does add to the beauty of the manuscript. Its beauty is even more enhanced by the decorative red dots in the margins of the following folios and the decorations around the page numbers. These red ink decorations are not continued throughout the manuscript, which is a convention I have seen in several manuscripts. On the opening page of the same manuscript, we also find the name of ‘Muni Śrī Ratnamādi.’ Possibly this name refers to the muni the manuscript was given to. The decorations might then be seen as a way of making the gift more reverential. However, as there is no scribal colophon (puspikā) to this manuscript, this interpretation is hypothetical.

Figure 5. Dharmaparikṣā by Harīṣena, Jain Vidyā Saṃsthān n. 478.41

Another interesting-looking manuscript of the Dharmaparikṣā, this one by Manohardās from the Arrah Jain Siddhānt Bhavan (see Figure 6), has a completely different form. It is in ‘portrait’ format and has a less-polished handwriting, while still differentiating text and verse meter or number by using both black and red ink. Flicking through the different folios of the manuscript, it appears that the manuscript has not been written down by only one person. We can discern at least two different handwritings. Further, the manuscript is broken off at several points and only the first chapter of the text has been preserved. Overall, this manuscript looks somewhat messy and is not as well preserved as the other manuscripts I have collected.

40 I express my gratitude towards the Śrī Kailāsāgarsūrī Jñānmandir for providing this digitized manuscript.
41 Own picture.
This manuscript is a guṭakā manuscript, a sort of notebook into which people copied texts of various lengths and subjects for their personal study or recitation.\textsuperscript{43} Its very existence is the sure sign that there are other similar manuscripts of Dharmaparīkṣā texts. This type of materiality shows how the Dharmaparīkṣā text, in this case the text by Manohardas, played a direct role in the religious practice of Jain laity. It also gives a sense of the practical use of texts written by laymen (as Manohardas was) for lay communities. As it contains two different handwritings, it suggests the text changed hands between members of the community, which is not uncommon for guṭakā manuscripts. The different handwritings testify to the multiple interests in the material text and in the text by Manohardas, that became a space of living religious practice shaped by the community.

5.2. Manuscript Colophons

Jain manuscripts have the overall reputation of often providing informative colophons (Balbir 2017, p. 64).\textsuperscript{44} Some of the manuscripts I have consulted indeed include a scribal colophon, called a puspiṇīkā, but not all manuscripts have this and they are not equally informative. In its most elaborate form, the scribal colophon would give a date (year, month, day) of copying, a place, a ruler at that place, the copyist, and a patron and his family (in that order). Some colophons also refer to the lineage of bhāṭṭarakaṇ and acārya (ascetic ranks within Digambara Jainism) of the gaṇča or gaṇa of the person (often a muni) for whom the manuscript was meant, and sometimes even a price of the manuscript.

Faithful to this reputation, the colophons of the manuscripts I have collected (twenty of the thirty-two manuscripts include a puspiṇīkā or colophon) give information about the practices and social networks related to Dharmaparīkṣā material texts by including these aspects that will now be discussed point by point, with references to examples of puspiṇīkās.

\textsuperscript{42} Accessed through idjo.org.
\textsuperscript{43} Tyler Williams’ dissertation on the history of writing in Hindi (Williams 2014) is very insightful on the characteristics of guṭakā manuscripts and what their materiality could tell about the social context and use of the texts they contain.
\textsuperscript{44} In the Indian context, there are two types of colophons, namely, the praṣasti, including information about the author, and the puspiṇīkā or scribal colophon, containing information about the specific manuscript copy. As the paper talks about the material circulation of manuscripts, the discussion will only pertain to scribal colophons.
5.2.1. Date of Copying

The detailed colophons will first enable us to assess the circulation of the different versions of the Dharmapariksā in time. Manuscript colophons usually render dates in the following way, exemplified here by the colophon of manuscript 617/1875–76 of BORI that contains the Dharmaparikṣā by Hariśena: ‘In VS 1595 (=1539 CE) on Tuesday the fifth day of the dark fortnight of the Pausadha month, during the fifteenth lunar constellation [. . .]’. In fact, the addition of the lunar constellation in this colophon is not uncommon in Indian manuscripts, but does not appear in any of the other consulted manuscripts. This manuscript is the oldest manuscript I have consulted.

In contrast, of the consulted manuscripts, the one copied the latest dates from VS 1909 (=1852 CE). It contains the text by Manoharā and is kept in Gwalior. Most dated manuscripts contain Amitagati’s text and these date from VS 1599, VS 1607, VS 1624, VS 1666, VS 1681, VS 1698, VS 1766, VS 1776, VS 1870.

It should be noted that the dates represented by the collected manuscripts furnish only one restricted perspective on the history of the transmission of Dharmapariksā manuscripts because they come from specific libraries that have their own specific history, as they were established at a specific time, knew their heydays in specific periods, or might have experienced certain difficulties at other moments.

Including also the information retrieved from manuscript catalogues, then the oldest manuscript, containing Amitagati’s version, dates from VS 1537 (=1480/81 CE) and is kept in Ajmer (Śrī Di. Jain Paṃcayat Maṃdira, p. 140, n. 1672.142), while the latest manuscript dates from VS 1960, containing Manoharā’s text and kept in Gwalior (Singh 2012, p. 231, n. 353). Another relatively late manuscript of Amitagati’s Dharmapariksā is dated VS 1939, housed in Jaipur (Kśālivāl 1962, p. 353, n. 3650). This indicates that Amitagati’s text continued to be copied and remained circulating until very recent times.

5.2.2. Places

Secondly, concerning the assessment of the spatial spread of our textual tradition, manuscript colophons can refer to two types of places. The place most mentioned is the place where the manuscript was copied. Sometimes a manuscript refers also (or only) to the place where the patron comes from. These geographical references have great potential as they would disclose a network of locations that is both religious and economic, linking temples, lay followers, and professional scribes. Unfortunately, as these places were often very small localities that nowadays do not exist anymore or have changed their names, it is often very hard to geographically locate them and would require more historical topographical studies.

An example of such an ‘unknown’ place is found in manuscript 1076/1884–87 at BORI of the Dharmapariksā by Amitagati: ‘In VS 1624 on Sunday the eleventh day of the Jeśṭavādi in the place

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45 As explained in footnote 22, it is difficult to give an exact corresponding year of the Gregorian calendar of the Vikrama Samvat date. Here, I have followed the amanta variant of the calendar which was mostly used in Gujarat where the manuscript was copied (āmojavā). 46 

46 Sanskrit (VS 1595) verse pauṣadha māse kṛṣṇa pakṣe 5 paṃcama tīthau vu mangalavāre maḥā nakṣatre-cīt-kūlaṇāma jyō tātra kasaṃpānojaṇo tāvarī rājḍhibhīrāja kamlia-saṅkārova karnāma caṇḍa-raśṭya-pravartantīna || śrīmāla-saṅgha bhaṭṭarāka śrī padmaśaṇḍi tat-paṭṭe śubhacandra tat-paṭṭe bha. jñācananda tat-paṭṭe bha. prabha-candra maṛ. śrī raukarki tat-śiṣya maṇḍgalācārya śrī bhucanakērti tad-dēṇyē khamelaladānavaṇḷa ajāmera gotre yam sūji tat-patreh tehu bhūṛyā chājītāyug purtra chītara bhūṛyā rājā īṣī dharmanākāra-sākṣhīṣaḥ jñānācārya karma kṣayaṃ nimittam likhiṣā || muni devaṇandī yogra ṛtavajjana śubham abhavat||

I have chosen to render the scribal colophon fully when it occurs for the first time in this paper and to write in bold what is translated in this specific section of the paper. In the transcription of the colophons, I have split the words to make them clearer, but I have not corrected any scribal errors. As such, they may contain ‘mistakes’ against proper Sanskrit language.

47 For the date of this manuscript, copied in Gwalior, I have followed the pārṇīntanta variant of the calendar as it was commonly used in northern India (although not in Gujarat).

48 It is not surprising that the oldest manuscript is dated four centuries later than the text was composed, as paper manuscripts dated before 1500 are rare, and all dated manuscripts attested in the catalogues are on paper.
Vṛndāvati during the reign of Rāvasūryaṇa [ ... ]49 Klatt’s Jaina-Onomasticon (Klatt 2016), an enormous compilation of references to Jain authors, texts, and other names taken from textual, bibliographical, and epigraphic sources, has just an entry for Vṛndāvati-nagara (p. 795), and the name is similar to the well-known Vṛṇḍāvan, but further there seems to be no information on this locality that would be linked to the mentioned ruler (Rāvasūryaṇa).

Another colophon, of n. 475 in the Jaina Vidyā Śaṃsthān containing Amitagatti’s Dharmaparīkṣā, attests to sahādārā-madhyaya.50 One could guess that this place-name refers to Śāhādarā, which was one of the suburbs of Shāhjahanābād (old Delhi) and was sacked in the disorder of the mid-eighteenth century (Blake 1991, p. 58). This might fit because the same manuscript also refers to the ruling of Mulakاغir, who would have been a ruler of Delhi around the time the manuscript was copied.51 As the manuscript is nowadays kept in the collection of the Jain Vidyā Śaṃsthān in Jaipur, it seems that this particular manuscript traveled (at least) from Delhi to Jaipur. It might have travelled with a muni who came from Delhi to Jaipur, or with an educated lay person who possibly had some trade business between the two cities. It is also possible that the manuscript evidences the migration of Jains from formerly Mughal regions (including Delhi) to Jaipur encouraged by Sawai Jai Singh II, who established Jaipur as a flourishing city that attracted Jain merchants as well as Jain scribal elites (see Roy 1978, pp. 55–58, 180–91). Nevertheless, there existed linkages through the religious community between the two cities that are materialized in the manuscript.

A last example of a reference to a place in a colophon comes from the puspikā of manuscript n. 211 in the Svarn Mandir in Gwalior: ‘It was written down in Campābāga.’52 The place Campābāga can be located with more certainty when combined with the information found in the catalogue describing the manuscript. The catalogue refers to the place of copying as Campābāga, Laśkara. This place is easy to locate because Laśkara is the neighbourhood in Gwalior where the manuscript actually is kept today in the Digambara Svarn Mandir. So, it seems that this particular manuscript has not travelled since its production.

Although it is hard to ascertain the place of copying for many manuscripts, the manuscripts of which the place of copying is known attest to a varied spatial spread in which manuscripts not rarely moved from one place to the other as Jains moved. At the same time, the fact that the manuscripts moved along with the Jains gives a sense of their function and value.

5.2.3. Scribes

A next step in this attempt to retrace the history of Dharmaparīkṣā manuscript circulation focuses on targeting its audience, by establishing the identity of the scribe, of the patron, and of the recipient of the selected manuscripts. Firstly, some of the collected manuscripts render the name of the scribe of the manuscript. These names are often included at the utter end of the colophon, or sometimes before the selected manuscripts. Firstly, some of the collected manuscripts render the name of the scribe of the manuscript. Secondly, some of the collected manuscripts render the name of the scribe of the manuscript. These names are often included at the utter end of the colophon, or sometimes before the selected manuscripts.

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śrīmūlasamghe balātākāraghe sarasvatīgacche śrī kūṣṭākumādacāragānvahe bhaṭṭāraka śrī padmanāmdevavīs
tatpāt bhāṣāsubhācamdradevatās tatpātē [ . . . ] Khandelavālā pāpāti gotre sām mēha tasya bhātyā mānakaś
tayoh putra sā gagā [ . . . ]. ‘Jyoti śrī Gaṇeṣa Buḍivālā undertook the writing in 1341 verses [. . . ].’

Other names of scribes I found in the colophons are pandita Govardhana, Toḍahāla, Rāmacandra,
pustaka-pandita Rāmacandra, paṁṣ. (pandita) Haritilaka Gaṇi, and pandita Dayārāma. The names and
adjoining titles of these copyists suggest that most of them are lay people. The title pandita are here,
except for Haritilaka, to be understood in the Diṃgarbha sense of the title, namely, as lay followers
of bhaṭṭārakas (see above). Pandita Dayārāma appears as copyist in several colophons in Kāśīvīlā’s
Prāśasti Sangrahā (1950) and would have been the scribe of dozens and dozens more manuscripts
throughout Rajasthan (Detige 2018, p. 289). Pandita Haritilaka Gaṇi is the exception in this row as he
holds two titles, pandita referring to the rank that comes after munī (i.e., the initial rank of a mendicant),
and gaṇi the rank that more or less coincides with pandita. The fact that he holds these two titles at the
same time was not uncommon (Cort 1991, p. 664).

In manuscript n. 475 in the Jain Vidyā Śaṃsthān of Amitagati’s Dharmaparīkṣā in Jaipur reference,
we find the colophon: samvat 1733 kārtika sudā 2 dine uṣkra-vāre śrī pātasāḥa mulakagārā rājye sahādarā-madhye
śa. parasarārāma tat putra bānaṇālāsāla tatputra nirmaladāsā likhiṭāvita lekhaṇa śvetāmbara rāmacaṇḍena
likhyatam. This colophon is interesting because the scribe is here explicitly said to be Śvetāmbara. This
explicit affiliatory reference, in my opinion, suggests some kind of contrast. Either it could point to
the fact that Rāmacandra had a different affiliation than the patron (Nirmaladāsā), who might have
been Diṃgarbha. Another possibility is that the scribe was aware of the divergence between his own
affiliation and that of the Diṃgarbha author Amitagati and wanted to make this explicit. Interestingly,
although professional scribes did not necessarily have affiliatory connections to a patron or a text
and, moreover, there were literary crossovers between Diṃgarbha and Śvetāmbara Jains, this case
illustrates that a difference in religious identity was still perceived as important enough to make it
explicit.54

5.2.4. Patronage

Secondly, the colophons of the Dharmaparīkṣā manuscripts testify that the copying of some
manuscripts was sponsored by lay patrons. In many cases, the name of the patron is given together
with his whole family. This is a common way of rendering in Jain manuscripts. In the abovementioned
manuscript 617/1875–76 of BORI, for example, we find after the date is given (see above): ‘[ . . . ] In
the tradition of Mangalācārya Śrī Bhuvanakūrti, in the Ajamera Gotra in the Khandelavālā family
mantrin55 Sūṭ, his son Ṭehu who has a wife Chājī, their son Chīṭra who has a wife Rājā, has ordered
dharmaparīkṣā [. . . ] to be copied.’56

This type of family genealogy found in manuscripts could serve as an interesting source for family
histories of Jains when comparing multiple colophons. This specific colophon, on its own, tells us that
the Dharmaparīkṣā was appreciated and most likely used within the Ajamera Gotra of the Diṃgarbha
Mālāsāṅgha Balātākāragaṇa Nāgaurāṣākha. Other manuscripts I have consulted give the names of Lāḷājī
Singh, Dūṃgarāsi Gāṃgāvāla, Nirmaladāsā, Sādhvī Sulekhhā, Shaḥ Nālai, Pāpādiṃvāla Khandelavāla,
Śaḥa Gopaḷa Lausa Khandelavāla, and Osavāla as patrons of the manuscript.

53 The authorship of different Dharmaparīkṣās shows how the originally Diṃgarbha story was taken up by Śvetāmbara authors.
54 Mrinal Joshi (Joshi 2009) has examined the position of women in Gujarāti Jain communitities through inscriptions from the
second millennium.
55 I take māṃ for yam, the former being “a syllable prefixed to names of the male members of the family [which] stands for
mantrin, [suggesting] that they were, for several generations, something like political advisors or persons close to the ruling
power (unspecified, though)” (Balbir 2017, p. 68).
56 [. . . ] śrī ratnakūrti tat-sūṣaṇa mahālācārya śrī bhuvanakūrti tad-āṃṣaṇe khandelavālanvaye ajamerā gotre yam. sūṭa tat-putre tehu
bhāṛāg caṛī tayoh putra chīṭra bhāṛāg rājā iti Dharmaparīkṣā-sāktathan jñānāvāraṇa karmakṣaṇa nimittan likhiṭā [ muni decanandī
gṛ cider amāya śubhām abharavai].
It is interesting to notice that women could also patronize the copy of a text. Sādhi Śulekha was a lay woman who patronized the copying of the text by Amitagati (manuscript n. 476 in the Jain Vidyā Samsthan). It shows that women had considerable power within the religious realm of life.

5.2.5. Recipient of a Manuscripts

Thirdly, only a couple of the Dharmaparikṣa manuscripts I have consulted mention the person receiving the manuscript. Two manuscripts attest that they were given to a monk, which is in accordance with the expected duty of the laity to support the monastic community by providing manuscripts (Cort 1995, p. 78). One manuscript of Hariśeṇa’s Dhammaparikṣa was given to muni Devanandi: muni devanamdi yogya dātavyam ‘it will be given to muni Devanandi’ (see above for the complete colophon of BORI 617/1875–76), another was meant for muni Guṇacandra (n. 472 in the Jain Vidyā Samsthan). One manuscript of Amitagati’s Dharmaparikṣa (BORI 1076/1884–87) seems to have been given to a lay person named Rāyamarshall. This, however, remains uncertain because the name Rāyamarshall is preceded by a first name or title that is illegible and that I have taken as prakṣa (see above).

The recipient of a manuscript does not always have to be a third person. Manuscript Kh-125 from the Jain Siddhānt Bhavan in Arrah containing Amitagati’s Dharmaparikṣa, for example, reads: ‘In 1691 VS on the sixth day of the dark fortnight of the month Pausa, pustaka-pandit Śrī Rāmacandra has copied it for his own reading.’ This illustrates how the Dharmaparikṣa could both serve as an honorable gift for a monk and be used by a lay individual, possibly for his entertainment or to practice his religious commitment.

5.2.6. Other Information

Lastly, I would like to mention two more interesting aspects we can find in the puspiṇḍas. Several manuscripts give the lineage of bhāṭṭārakas and ācāryas to which the patrons or copyist of the manuscript (for example, in case one had copied the manuscript for his own purpose) are affiliated. These lineages not only reveal the evolution of the different bhāṭṭāraka seats, it also tells about the sects (gacchas) and traditions or branches (āṃśītya or sākhā) in which this specific text circulated. In comparison to other texts, such approach might reveal whether certain genres or textual traditions were more popular in certain gacchas. As there is only a limited number of the consulted manuscripts of Dharmaparikṣa that refer to a specific gaccha, such claims are difficult to make within this article. However, one manuscript of Rāmacandra’s text (a Digambara author) mentions that it was copied within the Āgama Gaccha (BORI 1270/1891–95), which is a Śvetāmbara branch. This, again, illustrates that Śvetāmbara audiences were interested in Digambara literature, in this case, in a Digambara abbreviated narrative (the text has only thirty-three folios, whereas manuscripts of Amitagati’s text mostly have over one hundred folios), hypothetically suggesting the usefulness of Rāmacandra’s text.

A last interesting aspect we find in the materiality of the manuscript colophons is the appearance of a handwriting different from the rest of the manuscript for the second part of the puspiṇḍa or for

57 Sādhi is here the equivalent of the contemporary name Śah. Her lay status is clear from the complete colophon: sanvat 1599 paska būdi 5 śaḍakāśṭhābhaddavre śrī mālasamgho balākāraṇe sarvasatīgacche kundakundākārāṅṇaye bhāṭṭāraka śrī ādīnamandiravāc tat-pāṭhe bhāṭṭāraka śrī śubhacandra-devesāc tat-pāṭhe bhāṭṭāraka śrī jñana-mandiravāc tat-āśāyāme mithyātāmandrānuta-sūrācchā parinā-sādhaṅktika-mandalācāraṇya śrī āśāyāmādindavāc tāc-chiṣṇa vaddajina-keśari-cāritra-pātra parasam-tapnavi-mandalācāryal śrī dharmākṣārīdevībhāṣā tasmānānne sakala-śaṅka-samavaita sampradāya cāraṇ ahū bhāvyā śādheī laḍo putra 6 prathama putra paṃ. itnā bhāryā [. . . ] dīṣṭīḷaḥ putrāḥ putraṃ. gāhgho ṭīṭṛa-putra paṃ. dīhi bhāryā śādheī sākhā caturtha-putra vūr paṃ. panca-puṭra paṃ. dāse saṣṭha-putra kharuṇ saṃttaranā mahāṅe śādheī sākhā caturtha-putra paṃ.

58 An especially interesting colophon of the manuscript BORI 617/1875–76, which is a Śvetāmbara branch. This, again, illustrates that Śvetāmbara audiences were interested in Digambara literature, in this case, in a Digambara abbreviated narrative (the text has only thirty-three folios, whereas manuscripts of Amitagati’s text mostly have over one hundred folios), hypothetically suggesting the usefulness of Rāmacandra’s text.

59 The manuscripts with such references were copied within the Delhi-Jaipur Śākhā and the Nāgaūr Śākhā of the Digambara Sarasvatī Gaccha (the texts by Amitagati and Hariśeṇa), and the Nāndītāgaccha of the Digambara Kṣetra Sangha (the text by Amitagati).

60 Considering the content and function of the Dharmaparikṣa narrative, an abbreviated version of the story might sometimes have been preferred for use in sermons or for one’s own reading, in contrast to the lengthy version by Amitagati. Another possibility is that the shorter text gave ‘quick access’ to the content of Amitagati’s authoritative version.
the whole puspika. This is the case in several of the abovementioned examples. To repeat just one, in manuscript BORI 1076/1884–87 (see Figure 7), one part of the colophon including the date, place, and scribe of the copy is written in one handwriting, while a second part including the monastic lineage, family of the patron, and the recipient is in another handwriting. The second handwriting is probably a later addition, added to the manuscript to put on paper the patronage of this manuscript by the Khandelavala Papanivala family, or added when the manuscript (that already existed before) was given to Rayamallah.

![Figure 7. Dharmaparśa by Amitagati, BORI 1076/1884–87.](image)

This type of evidence shows how the Dharmaparśa texts (by Amitagati, but also by Hariśena and Manohardas) very literally changed hands.

6. Conclusions

The initial observation of multiple versions of Dharmaparśa, as well as the considerable number of manuscripts located in geographically diffuse places on the subcontinent, has shown how the Dharmaparśa circulated across linguistic and regional boundaries. This indicates the circulation and broader transmission of a specific taste of literature, namely a taste for narrative and satirical literature. As such, this article confirms the preference for narrative literature within the Jain community, as highlighted, for example, by Kragh (2013), but adds a definite feel for satire within this preference. Early modern Jain audiences indeed seem to have been fond of this text that is dedicated to laughing at Brahmins.

The focus on the material aspects and the scribal colophons of some exemplary manuscripts taught us that the Dharmaparśa had several interested parties. Sometimes it was used by lay people for their own reading or study, sometimes it was gifted to a muni by lay patrons who outsourced the copying of a manuscript to professional scribes. Moreover, the circulation of the material text was not limited to one affiliation within the Jain community, one manuscript could circulate across sectarian boundaries.

My analysis of the material culture of the Dharmaparśa reinforces previous studies on Jain manuscript culture (such as Cort 1995; Kragh 2013; Balbir 2017) from the perspective of one textual tradition. It shows that Jain manuscripts of the Dharmaparśa served as ‘meeting places’ between literary interested actors of the religious community. These ‘meeting places’ should not be regarded as fixed. They were both mobile, as they travelled from one geographical place to the other, as well as mobilizing, as they incited people to travel enhancing their socioreligious networks. From this, it is manifest that the material literary circulation of a satirical narrative, which the Dharmaparśa is, was unlimited by boundaries and supported by the broader Jain community.

These conclusions from a material point of view raise new questions with regards to the circulation of the Dharmaparśa in its different versions, and also with regards to the circulation of similar
narratives. In relation to the latter, it would be interesting to look at, for example, the materiality of the Dvārtākhyāṇa tradition, in comparison to the Dharmaparīkṣā tradition, by investigating whether manuscripts of the Dvārtākhyāṇa tradition were as widely spread, kept in the same places, or circulated within the same affiliatory groups. This would disclose further the popularity of repertoires, genres, and styles within the Jain community.

Research along the line of the different versions of Dharmaparīkṣā will lead to further insight into existing or non-existing sectarian divisions, historical contexts of religious conflict, and perceptions of language in India.

Finally, with its method that acknowledges the importance of material culture to the study of literature, this paper hopes to inspire further examinations of the material culture of specific literary texts or traditions, issuing an evaluation of their specific role with regards to popularity, religious authority, or economy.

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