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# A Renaissance Man in Memory: Appayya Dīkṣita Through the Ages

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**Abstract** This essay is a first attempt to trace the evolution of biographical accounts of Appayya Dīkṣita from the sixteenth century onward, with special attention to their continuities and changes. It explores what these rich materials teach us about Appayya Dīkṣita and his times, and what lessons they offer about the changing historical sensibilities in South India during the transition to the colonial and postcolonial eras. I tentatively identify two important junctures in the development of these materials: one that took place in the first generation to be born after his death, when the idea of him as an avatar of Śiva was introduced, and another at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, when many new stories about his encounters with his colleagues and students surfaced. The essay follows a set of themes and tensions that pertain to Appayya Dīkṣita's social and political affiliations, his sectarian agendas, and the geographic sphere of his activities. These themes and tensions are closely related and prove to be surprisingly resilient, despite the many changes that occurred during the five centuries of recollection that this essay sketches. This overall coherence, I argue, is integral to Appayya Dīkṣita's sociopolitical context and self-chosen identity.

**Keywords** Appayya Dīkṣita · Biography / hagiography · Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita · Śivānanda Yogī · Mannargudi Periyar · Śaivism / Vaiṣṇavism

Mention Appayya Dīkṣita's name to a South Indian with an interest in Sanskrit, and you are likely to be regaled with quite a few stories. Some of these you will hear for

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the first time, while others will be familiar, although they will always have a new twist. You are also likely to hear some verses ascribed either to Appayya Dīkṣita (hereafter Appayya) or to his patrons, admirers, and opponents, but again, the ascriptions will vary, and so will the verses themselves, sometimes in crucial ways. Scholarship on Appayya is replete with such anecdotes and couplets, and the materials are typically presented in an extremely confusing manner and with few reliable references. Given the sheer mass and great disarray of these materials, a “whirlpool of traditions,” as one scholar has put it, it may be a good idea to try to put them in order, at least to the extent possible.<sup>1</sup>

What follows is a first attempt to trace the biographical accounts of Appayya from the sixteenth century onward, with special attention to their continuities and changes. How did memories about him evolve over time? What is the relationship between the earliest extant accounts and those that appeared in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? What do these rich materials, which span nearly five centuries, teach us about Appayya and his times, and what lessons do they offer about the changing historical sensibilities in South India during the transition to the colonial and postcolonial eras? These are some of the questions that this essay raises and tries to answer. It should be stated at the outset that there are many relevant sources that remain to be identified and studied before a definite statement about Appayya’s remembrance can be generated. Nonetheless, I believe that even a brief survey of pivotal sources and of their surprisingly resilient concerns and tensions will prove useful, and I hope that my tentative sketch will lead to further work on the vast pool of traditions concerning one of India’s leading public intellectuals in the sixteenth century.

## 1 How Appayya Wanted to Be Remembered

People wrote about Appayya Dīkṣita already during his lifetime, and one of the first to do so was the great scholar himself. Appayya spoke of his affiliations, goals, and accomplishments in the preludes and epilogues to many of his works (and sometimes also in the text of his more personal poems), and he famously inscribed a résumé of his main achievements on the walls of the Kālakaṅtheśvara temple, which he erected in 1,582. Because several key components of the later accounts about him are traceable to these materials, I must begin my survey by asking what self-image Appayya was trying to project and how he hoped to be remembered. These are not easy questions, given the vast size of his extant corpus and the fact that his hopes and intentions are not directly accessible to us. Still, even a superficial look at his self-generated persona will reveal a highly consistent set of themes, as well as equally recurrent silences.

To begin with, Appayya repeatedly emphasized his ancestry as his most important social affiliation. Virtually all his written records, whether inscribed on palm leaves or in stone, contain incipits and colophons that celebrate his pedigree. He typically starts by extolling the famous Bharadvāja lineage and then moves to

<sup>1</sup> Mahalinga Sastri (1928, p. 226).

praise his father, Śrīraṅgarāja Adhvarin (also known as Śrīraṅgarāja Makhin or simply Śrīraṅgarāja), and occasionally also his grandfather, Āccān or Ācārya Dīkṣita.<sup>2</sup> There is, of course, nothing unusual in the fact that Appayya paid homage to his elders. What is significant, however, is that unlike many contemporary intellectuals, he affiliated himself neither with any sectarian institution (*maṭha*) nor with any scholarly lineage other than his ancestry.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, as far as I can see, all his references to a guru are to his father and grandfather.<sup>4</sup> Appayya mentioned his connections with the courts that supported him, but his associations with patrons of diverse sectarian loyalties seem ad hoc, and, with one exception, he abstained from eulogizing their lineages and achievements in detail and typically emphasized only one thing about them: their association with him.<sup>5</sup> In short, although later sources refer to Appayya as the leader of the Śaiva community or as allied primarily with this or that king, Appayya himself was a card-carrying member of only one party: his family.

This is not to say that he had no cultural heroes. In fact, he tied himself to several big names from the preceding centuries by composing commentaries on their works, and his portrayal of these intellectual influences, like that of his direct ancestors, suggests what it was about them that he viewed as admirable and worthy of emulation. It is interesting to note that one of his main lifelong inspirations was the great Śrīvaiṣṇava teacher Veṅkaṭanātha, better known as Vedānta Deśika. The very choice of Appayya, the Śaiva champion, to idolize a Vaiṣṇava theologian and leader indicates his unique intellectual and sectarian freedom, and indeed, this freedom was the one of Vedānta Deśika's traits that Appayya appreciated most. Vedānta

<sup>2</sup> There are different versions of his "letterhead," some more elaborate than others. A typical example of a colophon is "Written by Appayya Dīkṣita, son of Śrīraṅgarāja Adhvarin who is the kaustubha gem that emerged from the ocean that is the lineage of the sage Bharadvāja" (*ŚDMĀ*, p. 36.) A slightly more detailed version is found in the Kālakaṅtheśvara inscription: "Appayya Dīkṣita, a devotee of Śiva, is the famous son of Śrīraṅgarāja Makhin, who was his learned teacher and the performer of the *viśvajit* sacrifice as well as the *mahāvṛata* ritual for the attainment of heaven" (Government of Madras Public Department 1912, p. 89, item no. 71 of 1911; text given by Mahalinga Sastri 1929, p. 148). A much more elaborate version—a minipoem in praise of his father—is found in *Parimala*, p. 226 (see note 16 below for a portion of this praise).

<sup>3</sup> As already noted by Minkowski (2011, p. 218).

<sup>4</sup> On the basis of a reference in Nīlakaṅṭha's *NC* (and perhaps other unspecified sources) to Gururāmakavi, possibly a teacher of Appayya's younger brother Āccān, it was postulated that Appayya began his studies with him before receiving advanced education from his father (Ramesan 1972, p. 47), but I find no mention of him in Appayya's works. For the speculation that Appayya studied with Nṛsimha, whom Appayya also never mentions as a guru, see Gopalachariar (1909, p. vii) and Minkowski (2011, p. 224).

<sup>5</sup> On Appayya's patrons, see Mahalinga Sastri (1928). On their sectarian identities, see Ajay Rao in this issue. Appayya's reference to Cinnabomma in the Kālakaṅtheśvara inscription is typical in crediting this king's fame to his association with Appayya (*yena śrīcinnabommakṣitipabalabhidāḥ kīrtir avyāhatāsit*; Mahalinga Sastri 1929, p. 148). The one exception is in Appayya's commentary on the *Yādavābhūdya*, which he probably produced in his youth and which includes the elaborate pedigree and vita of his then patron, Timmarāja, in full *praśasti* style (*YĀB*, p. 1, verses 1–9). As far as I can see, the mature Appayya never produced such a *praśasti* again. The most elaborate example I have found is a three-verse praise of Cinnabomma in the *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā*, of which the middle verse's authenticity is doubtful. Here Appayya praises his main patron as an ocean of virtues, a king ruling over all eight directions, and a devotee of Śiva, and notes that the work was written at his behest (*ŚAMD*, pp. 1–2, verses 12–14).

Deśika is referred to by the sobriquet *sarvatantrasvatantra* in colophons of his works, a title that Appayya, in commenting on one of these works, takes the time to explicate:

A person who is a *sarvatantrasvatantra* is capable of picking any tenet from any of the disciplines—Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Prior Mīmāṃsā, Late Mīmāṃsā [Vedānta], Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, and so on—and either proving or disproving it at will.<sup>6</sup>

Vedānta Deśika was a polymath and a broadminded intellectual. But anyone who has read Appayya's own works will immediately recognize that in explaining Vedānta Deśika's sobriquet, Appayya was also, if not primarily, describing the scholarly versatility and virtuosity that he himself cultivated and the bold liberties he often took with the received truths of the various branches of learning he mastered.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, Appayya saw himself as a truly independent and all-around scholar who authored one hundred works, as he proudly notes in the Kālakaṅtheśvara inscription and elsewhere, in a variety of disciplines and genres.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, like Vedānta Deśika, whom Appayya praises with another well-known epithet, *kavitārkikasiṃha* (lion among poets and philosophers), Appayya's oeuvre includes poetry in addition to his scholarly output. This versatility is a trait that he also admires in his ancestors, whom he lauds as prolific scholars and poets. For example, he credits his father with complete mastery of all schools of thought (*akḥiladarśanapārahājah*) and calls his grandfather a "complete teacher," or a "teacher for every topic" (*aśeṣaguru*).<sup>9</sup> Appayya also took pride in his achievements as a teacher. Even before taking credit for the authorship of one hundred works, he mentions in the Kālakaṅtheśvara inscription two occasions in which he taught his works to no less than five hundred scholars: one at the temple on whose walls the inscription is found and the other in Vellore, under the auspices of Cinnabomma. The scholarly and pedagogical personae of Appayya—the Appayya 100 and Appayya 500, as I have called them elsewhere—were often combined in his writings, especially in works that were meant to reach out to diverse audiences and teach them a variety of lessons.<sup>10</sup>

Appayya's identity as a teacher and scholar is never disassociated from his pious persona as a man of ritual and spiritual achievements, and again, his praise for his ancestors here is instructive. For example, he describes his grandfather's very being as "immersed in the vast ocean of the rapture of nonduality."<sup>11</sup> As for ritual

<sup>6</sup> *YĀB*, p. 50: *sarveṣu tanreṣu siddhānteṣu nyāyavaiśeṣikapūrvottaramīmāṃsāsāṅkhyayogaśaiva-vaiṣṇavādiṣu svatantrasya svecchayā kaṃcid arthaṃ sthāpayitum dūṣayitum vā śaktasya*.

<sup>7</sup> It is, after all, hard to imagine Vedānta Deśika proving a Śaiva tenet or disproving a Vaiṣṇava one. By contrast, Appayya's scholarship embodied a "resolutely and unflinchingly critical attitude toward the received truths and well-trodden arguments" (McCrea 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Mahalinga Sastri (1929, p. 149). His remarkable prolificacy as the author of 104 works is also declared in some colophons, e.g., *NRM*, p. 432.

<sup>9</sup> *ŚĀMD*, p. 1, verses 4–5.

<sup>10</sup> Bronner (2007, pp. 1–2, 15).

<sup>11</sup> *ŚĀMD*, p. 1, verse 4: *advaitacitsukhamahāmbudhimagnabhāvam*. For similar praise of his father, see *vimalādvayacitsukhamagnadhiyam* (*Parimala*, p. 226).

activities, Appayya lists several spectacular sacrifices performed by both ancestors, as well as others that he himself performed.<sup>12</sup> He also presented himself as a devout follower of Śiva (*śritacandramauliḥ*),<sup>13</sup> erected the aforementioned Kālakaṅtheśvara Śiva temple, and took special pride in the resurrection—but really, as Lawrence McCrea shows in this issue, the foundation—of a Śaiva Vedānta school that is akin to Vaiṣṇava Viśiṣṭādvaita. Occasionally the scholarly and pious personae of Appayya seem to be in contradiction. Speaking in his voice as an acclaimed author toward the end of his life, Appayya tells his readers that he has already achieved all there is to achieve in this world (*prāptam tat prāpaṇīyaṃ kila yad iha*).<sup>14</sup> But in his famous poetic surrender to Śiva in the *Ātmārpaṇastotra*, presumably also composed late in life, he laments: “Hell, I’m no good. I’ve wasted this life” (*ahaha jananaṃ vyarthayāmy eṣa pāpaḥ*).<sup>15</sup> However, we should not make too much of this apparent contradiction because both statements must be understood in the context of the speaker’s assumed roles of a proud, accomplished scholar and a humble devotee.

Far more interesting is the tension between Appayya’s identity as an ardent Śaiva polemicist and his role as an objective intellectual historian who positions himself above the fray and records, honestly and even sympathetically, the entire spectrum of sectarian positions. In his capacity as a Śaiva partisan, Appayya composed works that promote a Śaiva version of Vedānta (as in his *ŚĀMD*, whose composition and propagation are celebrated in the Kālakaṅtheśvara inscription), argue for Śiva’s supremacy in no uncertain terms (or attribute such arguments to Vālmiki and Vyāsa, as in his combative readings of the epics), and scathingly attack his Vaiṣṇava opponents, especially the followers of Madhva’s dualist school (an example is his *Slap in the Face of Madhva’s Doctrine*, or *Madhvatantramukhamardana*). But in his role as an unbiased observer he composed the *Synopsis of the Essence of the Four Schools* (*Caturmatasārasaṃgraha*), a massive doxography in which the tenets of each of the four Vedānta schools, including Madhva’s, receive a fair portrayal, and which opens with a salute to all Vedānta teachers, again including Madhva and Rāmānuja.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, as Ajay Rao shows in this issue, Appayya was extremely well read in Vaiṣṇava literature and had an impressive capacity for thinking and arguing as a Vaiṣṇava, as is apparent in his commentary on the *Yādavābhyudaya* of

<sup>12</sup> For his father’s sacrifices, see note 2 above.

<sup>13</sup> This is from the opening verse of the Kālakaṅtheśvara inscription (Mahalinga Sastri 1929, p. 148).

<sup>14</sup> *VR*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Translation by Bronner and Shulman (2009, pp. 156–157).

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of Appayya’s tolerance in these opening verses, see Mahalinga Sastri (1952, p. iii). Obviously, though, there were limits to his impartiality. To begin with, his sympathetic account was limited to schools within Vedānta orthodoxy and never extended to *nāstikas*. Here again, his praise for his father in the *Parimala* is instructive: “With a hundred utterly rigorous rationales he crushed and destroyed the Buddhist theory of transience and destruction” (*atikarkaśatarkaśatakaṣubhītakṣapitakṣapaṇakṣaṇabhaṅgapadam*; *Parimala* 1.1, 31, p. 226). Even within the Vedānta fold, his opposition to Madhva and his followers was fiercer than his critique of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas (see Sect. 4 below). In his doxography the very order of discussion—beginning with the dualist position, ending with the purely nondualist, and, in between, first discussing the Vaiṣṇava Vedānta and then the Śaiva—is an order of ascendancy.

his Śrīvaiṣṇava hero, Vedānta Deśika, or in his *Varadarājastava*, one of several moving praises that this ardent Śaiva composed in Viṣṇu's honor.<sup>17</sup>

There are two ready explanations for this duality. First, Appayya was heir to both Śaiva and Śrīvaiṣṇava communities—his paternal grandmother came from a celebrated Vaiṣṇava family, as he himself mentions, not without pride.<sup>18</sup> A second explanation may be sought in the political context of South India in the sixteenth century. As Ajay Rao points out in this issue, Appayya worked for both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava patrons, and there may have been some correlation between their sectarian leanings and the works he wrote with their support. It is hard to measure the exact influence of Appayya's family roots and political economy on his scholarly identity, but I believe that being squarely rooted in one camp was simply not an option for him, given his ideal of true independence: to pick any tenet from any school—Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism included—and either prove or disprove it at will. In this context it is interesting to compare Appayya's self-generated persona with what we find in contemporaneous external accounts. Consider, for example, a 1580 copper plate inscription in which Chevappa Nāyaka of Tanjore takes pride in the fact that under his auspices Vijayīndra, the dualist, Tātācārya, the leading Śrīvaiṣṇava of the day, and Appayya, “who alone ruled the kingdom of Śaiva nondualism” (*śaivādvaitaikasāmrājyaḥ*), operated together like the three sacrificial fires (*tretāgnayaḥ iva*), each propagating his own creed (*matam svam svam sthāpaya-antah*).<sup>19</sup> In this account Appayya is seen as occupying, indeed, presiding over, a well-defined angle within a local sectarian triangle. He and his two rivals constitute a coherent, complete system akin to that of the three Vedic fires, but for the system to work, each must be distinct from the others. Yet it is clear that although the Śaivādvaita position with which others have associated him was dear to his heart, Appayya himself resisted being totally confined by it, and that this tension is key to his public identity.

A related tension is that between Appayya's global scholarly outlook and his local position in South India. From his description of his grandfather we get a very clear notion of the all-India readership he eyed. Ācārya Dīkṣita's name, Appayya asserts, was known “as far as the slopes of Rāma's bridge [in the south] and up to the Himalaya [in the north]” (*āsetubandhataṭam ā ca tuṣāraśailād*).<sup>20</sup> But although many of Appayya Dīkṣita's own works address a global readership of the type with which he credits his grandfather,<sup>21</sup> the achievements he claims are all local: teaching in Vellore, a temple in his home village of Adayapalam, hymns to gods in South Indian temples, and a set of ritual activities, all presumably performed in the Tamil region. Appayya never claims to have traveled north or to have attracted

<sup>17</sup> For more on the *Varadarājastava*, see Bronner (2007, pp. 7–11) and Rao (2014).

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, *Parimala*, p. 370, where the father is described as the moon risen from the ocean that is the lineage of Vaikuṇṭhācārya (*vaikuṇṭhācāryavaṃśāmbudhihimakiraṇa*).

<sup>19</sup> Mysore Archeological Department (1918, pp. 55–56); the text is given in Krishnamurti Sarma (1939–1940, p. 661) and Sharma (1961, p. 171).

<sup>20</sup> *ŚĀMD*, p. 1, verse 4.

<sup>21</sup> On the quick global success of his textbook on poetics, the *Kuvalayānanda*, see Bronner (2004, pp. 47–48). On the local versus global question in Appayya's works, see Bronner (2011, pp. 51–55).

students and admirers from afar. Moreover, unlike his grandfather, who, according to later accounts, was associated with Kṛṣṇadevarāya, and unlike his opponents, such as the dualist Vyāsātīrtha, who was based in Vijayanagara, Appayya's patrons were never of imperial caliber.<sup>22</sup> Throughout his career he enjoyed the support of chiefs of limited political dominions, such as Cinnabomma of Vellore, whose bathing of Appayya in gold after the publication and public teaching of the *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā* is highlighted in the Kālakaṇṭheśvara inscription. It was only after the destruction of Vijayanagara that Appayya received support from an heir of this erstwhile empire, Veṅkaṭapati, who moved among minor outposts of the titular kingdom (primarily Penukonda and Chandragiri).<sup>23</sup>

Appayya may well have aspired to a more central status in Vijayanagara, and his peripheral position must be partly understood in the context of the rapid rise of Vaiṣṇavism in this empire's center during the sixteenth century. As has been shown elsewhere, a marked change in the sectarian and political status quo in the imperial capital led to a series of disputes over resources, temples, and the meaning of classical texts, in all of which the Śrīvaiṣṇavas and Madhva's followers gained ground from the Śaivas.<sup>24</sup> Despite appealing to an all-India audience, Appayya was embroiled in debates that were often local, even if, given the far-reaching social networks of the day, some of these local disputes reverberated in remote regions. This is clearly the immediate context of some of his polemical works, such as his appropriation of the epics or his attacks on Madhva's followers. Again, Appayya never wished to be encapsulated within this local system. He certainly did not see himself as contained in the tiny assembly of Chevappa Nāyaka in Tanjore, as the latter would lead us to believe, but his scholarly celebrity was clearly not isomorphic with his political stature, and his sphere of actual activity was entirely local.

## 2 Remembering Appayya: The First Generations

Appayya probably died at the close of the sixteenth century, and his followers immediately began to produce works praising him. Most of these works were written by his closest circle of supporters, his family. Appayya's descendants picked up where he left off and elaborated on the very aspects of the public persona that he had created. These elaborations, however, soon led to important innovations in his remembrance.

One of the earliest extended depictions of the late Appayya is from the *Yātrāprabandha* (*The Book of Travels*; hereafter *YP*), composed by Samarapuṅgava Dīkṣita, a nephew of Appayya, as a biography of his own elder brother, Sūryanārāyaṇa Dīkṣita. Written in a mixture of verse and prose (*campū*), the book

<sup>22</sup> On his grandfather's connections with Vijayanagara, see Sects. 2, 4, and 5 below. On Vyāsātīrtha, see Stoker (2012).

<sup>23</sup> Rama Sharma (1980, pp. 38–125).

<sup>24</sup> See Rao (2011, pp. 30–35); Stoker (2012, pp. 146–152); and Rao in this issue.

is structured around Sūryanārāyaṇa's upbringing and extensive pilgrimage. Sūryanārāyaṇa studied with Appayya, and the second chapter of the *YP* contains a long and loving depiction of Appayya as Sūryanārāyaṇa remembered him from his student days (*YP* 2.86–97, pp. 30–32). The image of Appayya that emerges from this passage is first and foremost that of the most eminent scholar of his time (*manīṣinām agragaṇyasya; sakalavipaścīdāvalidhuramdhara*, p. 31). Appayya's outstanding prolificacy is called to mind by comparisons with a rain cloud (2.96), the heavenly Ganges (2.89), and the vast ocean (while the many scribes standing before him are like boats for crossing it; 2.87). The notion of him as a complete and independent scholar is powerfully affirmed. Appayya, it is said, "crushed the pride of the guru of the gods with his mind, a jewel box containing unrivaled ornaments that are his flawless knowledge."<sup>25</sup> That mind, moreover, boldly reshaped the positions it examined: "With the contrivance of his reason he took pleasure in squeezing the sugarcane groves of the doctrines that he critically engaged, extracting from these a mass of pure elixir," and it was precisely this newly distilled essence, gushing in vast quantities, that made him so famous.<sup>26</sup> Finally, as Samarapuṅgava repeats time and again, this renown was without doubt universal: "The elephant that was his massive fame had the entire world as his playground" (2.94).

Emphasis is also given to other familiar elements of Appayya's persona. Much attention is paid to his pedagogy and his charisma as a teacher (e.g., "I forever heard his mesmerizing voice from the edge of the podium, emerging, as it were, from a magician's mouth" [*śībikāgrasīmani vaitālikavadananiḥṣṛtā sarasvatī śaśvad evam aśrauṣam*], p. 31); his roles as a devotee (p. 31), sacrificer (2.93), and donor (p. 31) are mentioned; and there is a reference to his association with King Cinnabomma and to this king bathing him with gold (2.95). The tensions manifested in Appayya's own writings are also visible here. First, despite the emphasis on his extraordinary doctrinal independence, Appayya is described as intent on defending the Śaiva school (*nīlakaṇṭhamatanīrvahaṇotka*, 2.96); there is a brief and rather vague reference to polemical debates (read *vādavīnoda* for *vodavīnoda* on p. 31) with unnamed rival intellectuals (*ahitavibudha*); and one verse calls on the wrongheaded (*vimata*) to surrender to Appayya's feet as the crow surrendered to Rāma (2.92).<sup>27</sup> Second, the discrepancy between Appayya's global renown and the entirely local sphere of his activities and connections is further accentuated because whereas Sūryanārāyaṇa, the hero of the biography, traveled throughout India and eventually reached Banaras, no such claim is made about Appayya.

Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, Appayya's grandnephew and a famous author in his own right, also wrote extensively about Appayya in many of his poems, plays, and treatises. In many respects, Nīlakaṇṭha's portrayal of his granduncle is a direct continuation of Samarapuṅgava's efforts, and Nīlakaṇṭha even quotes the *YP*'s verse

<sup>25</sup> *YP*, p. 31: *anavadyavidyāvīṣeṣabhūṣaṇamañjūṣayā manīṣayāccarvad amaragurugarvam*.

<sup>26</sup> *YP*, 2.90: *vādimatapuṅdravāñīṣpīdananarmayuktiyantreṇa | bhuvī yaḥ śrjann ajrmbhayad avadātam khyātiphāṇītavrātam ||*.

<sup>27</sup> The rivals are never identified, but the comparison calls to mind Appayya's criticism of the Śrīvaiṣṇava practice of identifying episodes of surrender in the epic (Bronner 2011, p. 49).

that depicts Cinnabomma's bathing of Appayya in gold in the prologue of his *Nalacarita* (hereafter *NC*).<sup>28</sup> As we have come to expect, Nīlakaṇṭha praises Appayya's complete scholarship,<sup>29</sup> global renown as the foremost of scholars,<sup>30</sup> outstanding prolificacy,<sup>31</sup> unique pedagogical skills,<sup>32</sup> Śaiva works,<sup>33</sup> and devotion to Śiva.<sup>34</sup> A few new bits of family lore also come to light in these works, such as the fact that Appayya lived to the age of seventy-two<sup>35</sup> and an important first claim about the political clout of Appayya's grandfather Āccān, "at whose feet Emperor Kṛṣṇarāya bowed down."<sup>36</sup>

But where Nīlakaṇṭha dramatically differs from what both Appayya and Samarapuṅgava have said is in presenting his granduncle, possibly for the first time, as Śiva incarnate. Whereas in earlier accounts Appayya is presented as a mere mortal, albeit an extraordinary one and hence occasionally comparable to Śiva,<sup>37</sup> Nīlakaṇṭha claims that he is God in no uncertain terms. For example, in the opening of his *Nīlakaṇṭhavijayacampū* (*Black-Neck's Victory*, composed in 1637; hereafter *NVC*) he says that Śiva took on the body of Appayya just as Viṣṇu will one day appear as Kalkin, and that the occasion for this incarnation was that

there are those who have breached the scriptural levees  
by imagining into being a foundation rock  
made of bits and pieces of quotes, some attested, some not.  
Thus they thickened the darkness of this Dark Age.<sup>38</sup>

Here Nīlakaṇṭha explicitly ties the notion of Appayya as an avatar of Śiva to his commentary on Śrīkaṇṭha (Appayya is called *śrīkaṇṭhavidyāguruḥ*) and his sectarian polemics, and the heretics he alludes to may well have been the followers of Madhva, whom Appayya accused of fabricating scriptural passages.<sup>39</sup> Elsewhere Nīlakaṇṭha praises Appayya as the eighth form of Śiva (*mūrtir harasyāṣṭamī*), which

<sup>28</sup> *NC* 1.7.

<sup>29</sup> E.g., his mastery of the sixty-four arts (*ŚLĀR* 6).

<sup>30</sup> "I know him." / "I read every letter in his books." / "I was his student." See how scholars promote themselves (*yaṁ vidma iti yadgranthān abhyāsyāmo 'khilān iti | yasya śiṣyāḥ sma iti ca ślāghante svam vipaścitaḥ || GĀV* 1.45).

<sup>31</sup> The number of 100 or 104 books is given in *NC*, act 1, before verse 6; *ŚLĀR* 1.6; and *GĀV* 1.44.

<sup>32</sup> *GĀV* 1.41 states that his words made Śiva's supreme essence, which even the treatises could not fully capture, accessible even to schoolboys.

<sup>33</sup> In particular the *Śivārkamaṇīdīpikā*, already mentioned in the Kālakaṇṭheśvara inscription. See *GĀV* 1.42; *NC*, act 1, verse 6 and the following prose.

<sup>34</sup> *GĀV* 1.39 (*śrīkaṇṭhacaranāśaktaḥ*), 1.47. See also the implied reference to Appayya's collective surrender of himself and his family to Śiva (which Appayya recorded in his *Ātmārpanastuti* 1.15) in *ĀSS* 43; cf. Bronner (2007, p. 14) and Bronner and Shulman (2009, p. lxvi).

<sup>35</sup> *ŚLĀR* 1.6.

<sup>36</sup> *NC*, act 1, before verse 6.

<sup>37</sup> *YP* 1.86: *śivākalpakalpam*.

<sup>38</sup> *NVC* 1.3: *līḍhālīḍhapurāṇāsūktīśakalāvaṣṭambhasambhāvanāparyastaśrutisetubhiḥ katipayaiḥ nīte kalau sāndratām | śrīkaṇṭho 'vatatāra yasya vapuṣā kalkyātmanevācyutah śrīmān appayadīkṣitasya jayati śrīkaṇṭhavidyāguruḥ ||*

<sup>39</sup> Mesquita (2000, pp. 9, 21, 30–33).

unlike the earth, the wind, and the planets, does not move or go astray (playing on the meanings of the root *bhram*).<sup>40</sup> Finally, consider a verse where Nīlakaṇṭha states that the god whose crown is the crescent moon, and whom the Ganges once bathed, now again descended to earth in Appayya's body and, indeed, was again bathed in *gāṅgeya*, literally "Ganges water."<sup>41</sup>

This last verse is significant if the second bathing is taken as proof that Appayya visited Banaras.<sup>42</sup> I think, however, that *gāṅgeya* is used here in the sense of "gold," yet another reference to Cinnabomma's famous showering of Appayya. This reading rescues the verse from an inelegant repetition and is consistent with contemporary accounts; no evidence has so far surfaced to show that Appayya's seventeenth-century descendants knew of a pilgrimage to Banaras.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, if my reading of the verse is correct, it is a further expression of the tension between Appayya's global acclaim as a scholar, spiritual leader, and even God incarnate and his strictly South Indian sphere of activities with its local "Ganges water."<sup>44</sup>

The deification of Appayya likewise heightens the other tension in his identity: the comparison of Appayya as avatar to Kalkin suggests that its goal was a doomsday-like elimination of the wrongheaded, but their identity is kept intentionally vague. Instead, the main sphere of achievement of this incarnation of Śiva is in producing scholarship that is not necessarily sectarian in nature. This duality in Appayya's identity is again highlighted by a comparison to roughly contemporaneous rival accounts, where he is strictly confined to his role as anti-Vaiṣṇava polemicist. For example, toward the end of Anantācārya's *Prapannāmṛta*, a work that narrates the life of the Śrīvaiṣṇava teacher Mahācārya and was presumably written in the seventeenth century, we are told that Mahācārya confronted Appayya, a "wise and preeminent expert on Śaiva scholarship" (*śaivaśāstravidām śreṣṭho dhīman*) but an "enemy of God" (*bhagavaddveṣī*). Appayya is said here to have resided in Chidambaram, debating and defeating his rivals (*jūtārāṭiḥ*), until Mahācārya produced his *Fierce Wind* (*Pracaṇḍamāruta*), which completely extinguished Appayya's *Lamp of Nondualism* (*Advaitadīpikā*).<sup>45</sup>

Before I conclude my discussion of Nīlakaṇṭha, it is worth mentioning that there is a widespread tradition that he was Appayya's direct student, and that at the age of twelve he received blessings and several cherished personal items from the dying guru. One would think that if Nīlakaṇṭha had had a personal connection with the famous master, he would have proudly mentioned and depicted it in a manner

<sup>40</sup> ŚOM 1.52: *sā tv ekā nirastabhramā*.

<sup>41</sup> GĀV 1.43: *gaṅgayā yaḥ purā snāto devaś candrārḍhaśekharah | gāṅgevena punaḥ sasnau so 'vatīrya yadātmanā ||*.

<sup>42</sup> Kuppaswami Sastri (1902, p. 4).

<sup>43</sup> This is also the understanding of Mahalinga Sastri (1929, p. 147) and Subramania Sastriar (1933, p. 12).

<sup>44</sup> As for his political clout, Nīlakaṇṭha does say that Appayya had all the kings of the earth under his influence (*akhilarājakamauliviśrāntaśāsanah*, NC, act 1, before verse 3), but Cinnabomma is the only king mentioned by name.

<sup>45</sup> PRĀM, p. 320. The *Advaitadīpikā* is actually a work by Nṛsimhāśrama, a predecessor of Appayya (Minkowski 2011, p. 207). For the possible context of the Chidambaram temple dispute, see Ajay Rao in this issue.

similar to the one in which Samarapuṅgava portrayed Sūryanārāyaṇa's studentship with Appayya. But there is no such mention in any of Nīlakaṅṭha's extant works, where references to his ancestor's views are confined to his books.<sup>46</sup> This silence is compounded by the fact that Nīlakaṅṭha acknowledges a long list of teachers and preceptors in his various works.<sup>47</sup> Instead of praising him as his teacher, Nīlakaṅṭha consistently traces his ancestry to Appayya, from him to his younger brother, Āccān II, and from him to his father and himself,<sup>48</sup> a trend that his own descendants adopted.<sup>49</sup> Thus there is good reason to believe that Nīlakaṅṭha did not study with or even meet his granduncle, and that this story is a much later tradition.<sup>50</sup> In short, Nīlakaṅṭha's vast corpus, which is replete with praises others sang of Appayya,<sup>51</sup> seems to reflect the memories of a generation that was already once removed, a distance that was perhaps necessary to view him as a divinity.

### 3 Remembering Appayya after Nīlakaṅṭha

The descendants of Appayya and of his siblings became a large and thriving scholarly clan. Many of them were associated with courts and intellectual networks throughout India and produced works in a variety of fields and genres. This vast library has hardly been touched, and it would take years to study and describe it in detail. Nonetheless, it is clear that Appayya plays a prominent role in this corpus, and it would appear, at least on the basis of the few samples that follow, that his seventeenth- and eighteenth-century successors were familiar with his self-generated image and with the accounts of Samarapuṅgava and of Nīlakaṅṭha.

An early example is Appayya Dīkṣita III, a younger brother of Nīlakaṅṭha who was adopted and raised by his uncle, Appayya II, and whose scholarly activity took place in the second half of the seventeenth century with support from another Cinnabomma, a king subservient to Cokkanātha Nāyaka of Madurai (r. 1659–1682). Appayya III composed works on Mīmāṃsā, a Prakrit grammar, a stage play, and possibly also a musical poem on his patron.<sup>52</sup> Three aspects of his treatment of Appayya merit mention. First, his colophons are closely modeled on those of his famous ancestor: they portray Appayya as the kaustubha gem of his clan and highlight his achievements as a Śaiva pedagogue (“the teacher who established the

<sup>46</sup> Thus in a work called *Saubhagyacandrātapa*, Nīlakaṅṭha refers repeatedly to Appayya's views, but always apropos of his texts, in references such as *ata evāsmaddīkṣitaiḥ śivārcanacandrikāyām uktam; asmatpītāmahacaranair apy eṣa eva pakṣo likhītaḥ śivārcanacandrikāyām*; and *asmajjyeṣṭhacaranāś ca saubhāgyapaddhatyām eva pakṣam aṅgīkṛtavantaḥ*. I am grateful to Elaine Fisher for collecting these quotes from the work's still unpublished manuscript.

<sup>47</sup> For a list of the teachers he mentions, see Unni (1995, pp. 15–19).

<sup>48</sup> See *GĀV* 1.48; *NC*, act 1, after verse 8; and many of Nīlakaṅṭha's colophons.

<sup>49</sup> E.g., his younger brother Atirātra Yājñin, quoted by Filliozat (1967, p. 351).

<sup>50</sup> As far as I can see, the story first surfaces in Śivānanda Yogi's late nineteenth-century works: his account of Nīlakaṅṭha's life, quoted in Filliozat (1967, p. 349), and his *ŚADV*, discussed in Sect. 5 below.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, *NC* 1.6–8 for quotes of Bālakavi, Samarapuṅgava, and Gururāmakavi.

<sup>52</sup> Raghavan (1941–1942, p. 1). For more on Appayya III and his Banaras connections, see Bronner forthcoming.

school of Śrīkaṅṭha”) and an author of 104 books.<sup>53</sup> Second, in a stanza that opens several of his works, Appayya III further extols his predecessor’s uniqueness as a teacher of all systems of knowledge and as a writer whose works tested one’s erudition: if you understood them, you were a true scholar; if not, you were not (*appayyadīkṣitendrān aśeṣavidyāgurūn ahaṃ vande | yatkr̥tibodhābodhau vidvadavidvadvibhājakopādhi ||*).<sup>54</sup> Finally, Appayya III was one of the first to defend his ancestor directly against the criticism that his works had begun to draw. He was most likely the author of the *Citramūmāṃsādoṣadhikkāra*,<sup>55</sup> whose title indicates that it was meant to refute those who found fault with Appayya’s magnum opus on poetics (the *Citramūmāṃsā*), and one of his aims in the *Tantrasiddhāntadīpikā* was “to criticize the views of Navya Mīmāṃsakas who criticized the views of Appayya,”<sup>56</sup> which was also the goal of his *Durūhaśikṣā* (*Schooling the Obstinate*).

A similar profile is found in Gaṅgādhara Vājapeyin, a grandson of Śamarapuṅgava who was supported at the turn of the eighteenth century by King Śāhaji of Tanjore (r. 1684–1710). He was another scholar who wrote in a variety of disciplines (historical poetry, literary theory, and a somewhat unusual survey of heterodox doctrines, the *Avaidikadarśanasamgraha*); he, too, found new ways of extolling Appayya’s uniqueness as a pedagogue (“a speck of dust from his lotus feet makes even the guru of the gods paltry”) and as a prolific author, without forgetting that he was an avatar of Śiva. He also produced secondary scholarship on Appayya, in this case a commentary on his *Kuvalayānanda*, the *Rasikarañjana*.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, consider Veṅkaṭasubrahmaṇya Adhvarin, a descendant who was active in the second part of the eighteenth century in the court of the Maharaja of Travancore, in whose honor he composed a play in 1785.<sup>58</sup> As was customary, he used the conventional prologue of the play—a dialogue between the director and a sidekick—to provide his pedigree and résumé, and it is clear that his main source of pride was his ancestry. The director carefully traces the playwright’s lineage back to Appayya, from whom he was five generations removed, and also names plays that other descendants have composed. Appayya is described here as Śiva in human guise (*śambhor appayadīkṣitākhyānṛvapucchanasya*) and as the author of more than one hundred works, with which he single-handedly cleared (*samīkartuḥ*) the good paths (*satpathān*) that were riddled with a hundred harsh thorns in the form of the wrongheaded schools (*durmatatīvrakaṅṭhakaśatāviddhān*).<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *Tantrasiddhāntadīpikā*, quoted by Aiyaswami Sastri (1929, p. 248n5): *śrīkaṅṭhamatapratiśṭhāpanācāryacaturadhikaśataprabandhanirmāṇadhurandhara ...*

<sup>54</sup> *Tantrasiddhāntadīpikā*, quoted by Aiyaswami Sastri (1929, p. 247); *Atideśalakṣaṇapunarākṣepa*, quoted by Raghavan (1941–1942, p. 2).

<sup>55</sup> Raghavan (1941–1942, p. 1).

<sup>56</sup> Aiyaswami Sastri (1929, p. 249).

<sup>57</sup> See Gopalachariar (1909, p. x) and Raghavan (1952, p. 36). The quote is from *KUĀ*, p. 1. For more on this author and his life in Banaras, see Bronner forthcoming.

<sup>58</sup> For more, see *VLK*, pp. ii–iii; Kunjunni Raja (1980, pp. 176–177).

<sup>59</sup> *VLK* 1.7.

Clearly, here as elsewhere, the purpose of describing Appayya is partly to gain prestige. That this was becoming more difficult, now that nearly two centuries had passed since his death, is thematized in the prologue itself, where, in response to the playwright's family tree, the sidekick asks: "Is he separated from Appayya Guru by four [generations]?" (*kim appayyaguroś caturvyavahitah; VLK*, p. 5, after 1.8). In response, the director laughingly points out that Appayya's splendor (*tejah*) lives on and that he continues to please the learned through his works; he compares this constant presence to sunlight that continues to shine through a row of mirrors (*talādarśakramāt*; 1.9). The implication is, I believe, that Appayya's descendants are his continued presence in the world, and the director actually argues that they, too, are aspects (*aṃśa*) of Śiva, for how else can one explain their glory (*vaṃśyā ime 'py aṃśā eva kuto 'nyathaiśu mahimaitāvān abhijñāyatām*; 1.7)?

Obviously, far more research is needed on the memory of Appayya in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. Nonetheless, the few samples I have examined suggest a direct line of commemoration and a stable image of him in his family circles. Appayya's descendants continued to look at him with admiration, took pride in being born in his line, and described his erudition, pedagogy, and Śaiva polemics in glowing words. Some of them also studied his corpus and composed secondary literature about it, and despite the continued praise of Appayya's pro-Śaiva agenda and identity as Śiva, it is clear that at the very least, it was not only his sectarian polemics that received steady attention.

#### 4 Mannargudi Periyar's *Appayyadīkṣitendravamśābhāraṇa*

The earliest extant biographies of Appayya are two works that were written in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first is by Brahmasri Raju Sastrigal (1815–1903), also known as Tyāgarājādhvarin and Mannargudi Periyar, "the Great Man from Mannargudi," a small town in the Tanjore area where he spent his adult life. A descendant of Appayya, Mannargudi Periyar consciously tried to emulate his famed ancestor by mastering all branches of Sanskrit knowledge and by dedicating his life to teaching, writing, performing sacrifices, and engaging Vaiṣṇava scholars in debate. Following the example of his predecessors, he composed commentaries on some of Appayya's works in which he defended him from hostile rejoinders. He also wrote at least one account of Appayya's life, the *Appayyadīkṣitendravamśābhāraṇa* (hereafter *ADVĀ*). Mannargudi Periyar's great-grandson, Y. Mahalinga Sastri, our main source of information about his great-grandfather,<sup>60</sup> had the *ADVĀ*'s manuscript, which he shared with a handful of biographers and researchers. Y. Mahalinga Sastri's son, M. Rangarajan, appended it to a posthumous collection of his father's unpublished works. I am grateful to Mr. Rangarajan for providing me with a copy of this book and with additional information about his family.

The *ADVĀ* is not, strictly speaking, a biography that narrates Appayya's life from beginning to end. Rather, it is a short essay on Appayya's greatness, wherein

<sup>60</sup> See, in particular, Mahalinga Sastri (1951).

biographical information is also provided. It is a highly erudite piece that provides running commentary on a large number of verses (by Appayya, his contemporaries, his descendants, and the author himself) and often digresses to discussions of fine points in grammar and ritual. Indeed, the work is based on a thorough study of Appayya's corpus and related sources, and it is clear that, like his predecessors, Mannargudi Periyar saw Appayya first and foremost as a unique scholar. This is perhaps most apparent in the author's approach to the question of Appayya's divinity. Throughout the first quarter of the *ADVĀ*, no mention is made of its hero's divine identity; instead, the work is meant to "commemorate a great person of old" (*prāktanasaṭpuruṣānusr̥tibhavasukṛtam*; p. 154). Later in the work, however, Mannargudi Periyar notes that Appayya was an aspect (*aṃśa*) of Śiva, a claim he supports with textual references, primarily to the vast and versatile corpus of Appayya himself.<sup>61</sup> "No mere human," he says, "even if endowed with powers and mantras thanks to devotion to this or that god, could have produced so many texts that are so learned and so profound in so many disciplines."<sup>62</sup> He goes on to mention renowned scholars in the triad of Sanskrit's traditional sciences—Gaṅgeśa and Gadādhara in logic, Pārthasārathi and Khaṇḍadeva in Mīmāṃsā, and Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita in grammar—as counterexamples because each of them, he argues, although versed in fields other than his own, wrote and rose to prominence in one primary discipline.<sup>63</sup> Appayya, by contrast, composed in every possible discipline, including poetics, grammar, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta in its four branches (dualism, qualified dualism, Śaiva Vedānta, and nondualism), and hymns to a variety of gods. It is this superhuman scholarly virtuosity, Mannargudi Periyar believes, that firmly establishes his divinity.

Mannargudi Periyar drives the point home by quoting the praise heaped on Appayya's extraordinary erudition. Toward the end of the *ADVĀ*, he cites a tradition he heard from "the elders," according to which talk of the young Appayya's greatness spread far and wide. Sārvabhauma Kavi, a famous Vijayanagara court poet who authored political biographies of its kings,<sup>64</sup> kept hearing (*śrāvam śrāvam*) of him and, although a northerner, traveled all the way south to see for himself the twenty-year-old prodigy. "Tell me, son," he asked when he arrived, "in what field have you accumulated knowledge?" (*vatsa kasyāṃ vidyāyāṃ tava paricaya iti*; p. 183). In response, Appayya claimed no knowledge whatever: "I am not read in the scriptures / nor versed in any science. / All I have is voluminous love / for the man with a sliver of the moon for a crest, / the Crusher of Citadels" (*nāham adhīte vede na ca paṭhīte yatra kutrācī chāstre | kiṃ tu darenduvataṃsini purahiṃsini pumsī bhūyasi bhaktiḥ ||*; *ibid.*). As Mannargudi Periyar explains, this seemingly modest reply actually showcases Appayya's poetic skill and mastery of grammar's

<sup>61</sup> Also cited is a prophecy from the *Śivarahasya*, understood as applying to the birth of Appayya as an *aṃśa* of Śiva (*ADVĀ*, p. 166).

<sup>62</sup> *ADVĀ*, p. 167: *na hi bhagavadāṃśaṃ vinā sādharāṇajanaiḥ tattaddevatopāstimantrasiddhyādimadbhir api nānāśāstreṣu nānāprabandhāḥ vidvattamopādeyāḥ sārataṃ śakyāḥ kartum.*

<sup>63</sup> *ADVĀ*, p. 167: *gaṅgeśopādhyāyatārkikaśiromaṇigadādharaṇprabhṛtibhis tārkikaiḥ pārthasārathi-khaṇḍadevaprabhṛtibhir mīmāṃsakaiḥ bhaṭṭojidīkṣitaprabhṛtibhis śābdikaiḥ ca tattacchāstramātre parākramāc chāstrāntarapariçaye saty api taiḥ tatra granthākaraṇāt.*

<sup>64</sup> For the identification of Sārvabhauma, see Ramesan (1972, p. 129).

most obscure rules, so that in response, Sārvabhauma praises him precisely for his unrivaled erudition (p. 184; I will return to his praise shortly).

Similar praise fills the pages of the *ADVĀ*, and much of it comes directly from texts I have already discussed. Mannargudi Periyar quotes from Samarapuṅgava's *YP* and from Nīlakaṇṭha's various works. Another corpus he repeatedly invokes is the incipits of Appayya's works, and here Mannargudi Periyar convincingly shows that his dedications to a guru are to his father, Raṅgarāja (pp. 156–161), lending support to my above conclusions. In all of this we see a strong continuity between the *ADVĀ* and the materials that Mannargudi Periyar's family had produced during the previous centuries, even as he innovatively combines Appayya's image as a scholar with the notion of him as Śīva.

Occasionally, however, the *ADVĀ* offers new information that is not based directly on any known text and indeed is flagged as oral history, as in the case of Appayya's encounter with Sārvabhauma Kavi, as mentioned above. Two such interesting stories feature Appayya's grandfather, Ācārya. First, Mannargudi Periyar fleshes out the tale behind Ācārya's strange sobriquet *vakṣasthala* (chest). This tradition harks back to Appayya's *Citramīmāṃsā*, which cites the following example of the trope of doubt:

*kāṃcit kāñcanagaurāṅgīm vīkṣya sākṣād iva śriyam |*  
*varadaḥ saṃśayāpanno vakṣasthalam avekṣate ||*  
 Seeing this extraordinary woman,  
 a veritable Lakṣmī with glowing golden limbs,  
 Varada, suddenly in doubt,  
 peeked at his own chest.

Varada, Viṣṇu's manifestation in Kanchipuram, is so impressed by the divine, Lakṣmī-like looks of some woman that he is suddenly thrown into doubt: did his consort leave her regular place on his chest? Just to be on the safe side, he takes a quick peek. The verse, Appayya explains, "was composed by my great ancestor, Chest Ācārya, on the occasion of Varadarāja's spring festival" (*asmatkulakūṣṭha-vakṣasthalācāryaviracite varadarājājasantotsave*).<sup>65</sup> Already in Appayya's time, then, the grandfather's sobriquet was connected to this verse, but the context and identity of the woman in question remained obscure. Mannargudi Periyar explains that according to oral tradition, Ācārya sang the verse to Kṛṣṇadevarāya in praise of his queen when the royal couple attended the Varadarāja festival, and the pleased emperor granted him this sobriquet and many gifts (p. 155).

A second, more elaborate story also features Ācārya and Kṛṣṇadevarāya and explains Appayya's Vaiṣṇava pedigree. According to this tradition, when the celebrated Ācārya was about thirty and presumably already married, he camped with his retinue near a Vaiṣṇava village. Some young girls came out to flirt with the visitors, only to return home at dusk. One girl, however, lingered behind. "What are you doing here, all alone?" asked Ācārya. "Your friends have all gone home." "I'm not alone, sir," she answered, shyly but assertively, "I'm with you." Ācārya initially reminded her that she was a Vaiṣṇava and he a devout Śaiva, but she insisted that

<sup>65</sup> *CM*, p. 272. It is also possible that *Varadarājājasantotsava* is a name of a work by Ācārya.

there was nothing in the books to preclude their union. Ācārya then obtained Śiva's approval and took off with the girl without even notifying her father. He did, however, send word to Kṛṣṇadevarāya, "his disciple" (*kṛṣṇarāje svabhakte mahīpāle iy[m]am artham nivedya*; p. 162). As soon as the king received the news, he fell at the couple's feet and had their wedding performed. But he also immediately realized the controversial nature of the affair and prepared to deal with Vaiṣṇava opposition (*virodhinah*). He instructed his men to admit anyone protesting the marriage into his personal chambers in Kanchipuram. Soon an angry delegation, comprising the girl's father and other relatives, arrived and was ushered in. They complained that the girl was already promised to an elderly relative, not particularly handsome or bright but capable of helping the parents out of a financial tight spot. In response, the king explained that money was not an issue. Indeed, the family was extremely lucky to end up with a son-in-law like Ācārya—young, bright, and handsome—and with a profit a thousand times larger than originally bargained for. Realizing his good luck, the father gave the couple his blessing and asked only that their firstborn son be given his name. Ācārya agreed, and his son was accordingly named Śrīraṅgarāja (pp. 162–163).

We can read these fascinating stories as further commenting on the changing political landscape in late Vijayanagara and on Appayya's position as a result. Taken together, they suggest that his Śaiva family had strong ties with the ruling dynasty during the grandfather's generation, but that a rift occurred during the transition to the next generation, when tensions with the Vaiṣṇavas flared. The text insists that Kṛṣṇadevarāya managed the crisis deftly, but the fact is that we hear nothing more about ties with the court at the time of Appayya, whose political affiliations are all confined to the Tamil country. Interestingly, Mannargudi Periyar also openly discusses Appayya's nuanced position vis-à-vis the Vaiṣṇavas. He mentions Appayya's appreciation for his Vaiṣṇava origins (pp. 161–162), his Viṣṇu hymnaries (p. 167), and even his ability to enter a Vaiṣṇava mind-set when explaining their positions (p. 180). He then raises the question of Appayya's distinct approach to his rivals: why he dedicated works to refuting Madhva's doctrine (even as he reproduced it faithfully elsewhere) but wrote no such attacks on Rāmānuja's.<sup>66</sup> The intriguing answer is that Appayya, despite his ultimately nondualist affiliation, was closely associated with a Śaiva "qualified nondualism," and he could not uproot Rāmānuja's Vaiṣṇava version of this qualified nondualism because the Śaiva formulation, as found in Śrīkaṅṭha's text, *is its root*.<sup>67</sup> In short, the author is keenly aware of Appayya's complex stance toward Vaiṣṇavism in general and Rāmānuja's school in particular and sets out to explain it.

That said, there are also indications in the *ADVĀ* that this stance—like the Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava marriage that led to Appayya's birth—combined the different sectarian strands in a way that was not completely peaceful or uncontested, and that Appayya

<sup>66</sup> *ADVĀ*, p. 182: *nanu madhvatantavat rāmānujamatasya dhvaṃsanam kuto na kṛtam*. Note, however, that some believe that Appayya did author a text attacking Rāmānuja, the *Rāmānujaśṛṅgabaṅga* (Mahalinga Sastri 1952, p. ii).

<sup>67</sup> *ADVĀ*, p. 182: *śrīkaṅṭhācāryasūktir eva rāmānujabhāṣyasya mūlam*. He then goes on to contradict arguments for the opposite chronology, according to which Rāmānuja preceded and influenced Śrīkaṅṭha (pp. 182–183).

had tense dealings with his rivals. One indication is the distinction that the text seems to make between Rāmānuja's tenets, for which the *ADVĀ* and its heroes have ample respect, and representatives of the Śrīvaiṣṇava community in Appayya's time (such as Śrīraṅgarāja's mother's family), whom it characterizes as greedy and petty minded. Another indication is Sārvabhauma Kavi's praise of Appayya, already mentioned above:

*baddhaspardhānyavidvatpramukhamukhapuṭīmudraṇnidramedhā-  
śilpin tvām appayayajvan kathaya katham iva drogdhum alpe pragalbhāḥ |  
krīḍācañcaccapeṭāhatakaraṭīghaṭākumbhakūṭādhirūḍha-  
praudhāṭopāya mūḍhāḥ kim u mrgapataye rohitā drohitārah ||* (pp. 168, 184)

Your artisan mind never sleeps;  
it shapes corks to seal the mouths  
of jealousy-fueled rival scholars.  
Tell me, Appayya Yajvan,  
how can the petty be so bold as to challenge you?  
With one playful stroke the lion kills the elephant,  
and, standing astride its crest,  
roars with pride. Can the deer be so stupid  
as to dare the king of the beasts?

Sārvabhauma portrays a highly combative atmosphere, and, together with its framing narrative, the verse highlights the discrepancy between Appayya's lionlike academic stature and his peripheral position. Remember that the court poet traveled from the center to the province to convey this message, and that Appayya's first reaction to his visitor's questions was to identify himself as a devout Śaiva. This episode can thus be read to imply that Appayya's (sectarian?) rivals were situated at the imperial center, and that their presence there was, perhaps, related to the fact that he was not.

## 5 Śivānanda Yogī's Śrīmadappayyadīkṣitendravijaya

Śivānanda Yogī (d. 1898), whose given name was Śeṣa Dīkṣita, and who hailed from Kaḍayam in the Tinnevely District, was another descendant of Appayya. He, too, composed literature on Appayya's works, including a now published commentary on the *Ātmārpaṇastotra*, and he collected accounts from his relatives to write what is perhaps the first full biography of his famous ancestor.<sup>68</sup> The edition I have was published posthumously, and the exact date of composition is unknown.

<sup>68</sup> Śivānanda concludes his work with an oblique reference to prior sources, although he mentions none by name and never refers to any: "All-knowing poets depicted his numerous deeds in many works. Presented here is what my mind took to be the gist of this, and what it regards as both poem and guru" (*bhūrīṇi tasya caritāni parāvarajñā granthādhikair akavayan kavayaś caturdhā | tatsārabhūtam idam ity avayan sudhūr me kāvyam guruṃ ca bahumānayatīti manye ||*; *ŚADV* 28.271). It is not entirely clear whether the adverb *caturdhā*, which I did not translate, refers to four different biographies that served as his sources or to "four different versions of ... [the same work.] all of which were written by the same Śivānandayati at different times" (Mahalinga Sastri 1929, p. 141).

The *Śrīmadappayyadīkṣitendravijaya* (hereafter *ŚADV*) is written in a mixture of verse and prose and shifts between ornate Sanskrit and a more spoken, idiosyncratic register. It is divided into twenty-eight chapters or episodes of varying length. The opening chapters briefly describe Appayya's grandfather and father (chapters 1–2), birth (3), and upbringing (4), and the last consists of a detailed narration of his death, surrounded by his sons, and his passing of the torch to Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, here presented as his self-chosen successor (28). These chapters contain a great deal of new information, but this novelty pales in comparison with the main plotline they bookend. The bulk of the *ŚADV* is dedicated to depicting Appayya's personal confrontation with his nemesis, the Śrīvaiṣṇava leader Tātācārya. This conflict is placed in Vellore, at the court of Cinnabomma. Tātācārya is officially this king's guru, but in reality he is the kingdom's real power broker, manipulating the puppet monarch at will. Still, awed by Appayya's various miraculous feats and spiritual achievements, Cinnabomma invites him to Vellore (chapters 6–8). Tātācārya tries to harm and even eliminate Appayya in a series of hostile encounters, some clandestine and others public and direct. For example, he tries to poison Appayya (chapter 12), plots his assassination by forging a royal decree with the help of the king's stolen signet ring (17), hires thieves to steal Appayya's personal lingam (24), maligns him and his kin in the king's ears (13, 15–16, 18, 23), and engages him and his students in hostile debates (13–14). Eventually, Tātācārya's actions lead to his dramatic demise (24), at which point Appayya's career nears its end; he spends his later years writing and pilgrimaging (26–27), after which he is ready to depart from the world.

The Appayya of the *ŚADV* differs from those of previous accounts in several crucial ways. To begin with, his divinity is central to every aspect of his life story, which now takes the form of a full-fledged Śiva avatar. His birth is the appearance on earth of a new and indescribable form of this god (*bhagavadaparamūrtiḥ kācid āvirbabhūva*; 3.20) ordained by Śiva in Chidambaram (2.14–17), and his dramatic, midverse, yogic death consists of his merging back with this deity in Chidambaram (28.267). Between his supernatural appearance and disappearance Appayya primarily performs miracles and displays divine omniscience. Moreover, his divinity is a publicly recognized fact, at least as far as most characters in the work are concerned. For example, after miraculously delivering sacrificial animals unharmed to heaven in front of an amazed crowd, he is revered in public in no uncertain terms by poets like Bhautika:

Although the word of the Veda has no referent,  
 Śiva, an ocean of mercy, came down to this world  
 as the referent of the word “Appayya,” while his entourage,  
 the moon and the Ganges, came along, disguised  
 as your regal parasol and your yak-tail fan.<sup>69</sup>

It is not only others who recognize Appayya's divinity. He, too, publicly identifies himself as God. For example, when he knowingly accepts an offering of poisoned

<sup>69</sup> *ŚADV* 6.48: *āmnāyavāg aviṣayo 'pi kṛpāmburāśir appayyaśabdaviṣayo 'vatatāra śambhuḥ | tacchatracāmaramukhacchalatas sudhāṃśugaṅgādayas tam abhitaḥ kim u saṃvibhānti ||*

water in a Viṣṇu temple, the result of Tātācārya's plot, he declares to all who are present:

I am not a poet, nor a sage, nor even the son of some god.  
 I am none other than Śīva, the Ultimate Ātman.  
 I have a history of nectar and poison intake.  
 This is nothing for me.<sup>70</sup>

Of course, not all the characters in the work act as if they are aware of Appayya's divinity, certainly not the Śrīvaiṣṇavas who expect the poison to work.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, Appayya himself does not always betray an explicit consciousness of his divinity, although this should not surprise us: such fluctuations in awareness appear in every story featuring a man-god from the *Rāmāyaṇa* onward.

Appayya's divinity is not only a recognized social reality but also the main logic of the *ŚADV*'s plot. His mission as an avatar is to defeat the heretical views of Madhva and Tātācārya, both of whom rose to prominence in Vijayanagara after the death of Kṛṣṇadevarāya (1.9–12). Although Madhva is initially presented as more agnostic—he abhors the rituals (*savāsahiṣṇuḥ*) and is ignorant of the meaning of the scriptures (*aśrutavedabhāvo*; 1.12)—it is the enmity between Appayya and Tātācārya that dominates the work. Appayya's main tool in this rivalry is awe-inspiring miracles. I have already referred to his delivery of a herd of unharmed sacrificial animals to heaven in front of a stunned crowd (chapter 5). In addition, he instantly cures the town of Vellore of a terrible epidemic that is brought about by Tātācārya's looting of the court (10), purifies a defiled Śīva temple and cures lepers with his mantras (11), summons a pillar of fire to his palm to prove a point in a debate (12), proves impervious to the aforementioned poison (13), and, finally, brings down a lightning bolt that strikes his nemesis (24). Closely connected to his wondrous deeds are his spiritual trances. These include his yogic vision of Maṅikavācakar, the great Śaīva saint, who gives him his blessing (7), and a memorable *samādhi* master class (22).

Appayya's radically new persona entails, among other things, that scholarship, his main claim to fame in all earlier accounts, including his own, receives hardly any attention in the *ŚADV*. The bulk of Appayya's time is spent fighting with Tātācārya in Cinnabomma's court, where no scholarly activity is reported. Scholarship, likewise, is not the first item on his agenda even after Tātācārya's death, when he turns to missionary activities—teaching his students to recite the name of Śīva with the rudrākṣa rosary in hand and sending them to spread this practice. It is only after taking care of all other duties, toward the end of his life, that Appayya dedicates a mere six years to composing his 104 works (about a quarter of which the *ŚADV* lists in chapter 25), which “clarify the meaning of the *śāstras*” and place him on the global intellectual radar.

<sup>70</sup> *ŚADV* 12.88: *na kavir na munir na devayoniḥ paramātmā śīva eva kevalo 'ham | amṛtaṃ viṣam apy anekam anyan mad [?] abhūd eva janāḥ kiyan mamaitat ||*.

<sup>71</sup> There is an interesting conversation among the *tāntrikas* at the temple where Appayya is poisoned: some believe that he will die as a result of his acts against Tātācārya; others say that knowing his time has come, he “came to Hari”; and still others believe that he does not deserve to die. None, however, recognize him as God (*ŚADV* 12.90).

There are ready explanations for some of the *ŚADV*'s breathtaking innovations. It has been demonstrated that South Asian hagiographies often underscore the divinity of their heroes, portray their personal triumph (*vijaya*, as in the *ŚADV*'s title), replace polemics with actual confrontations that involve outmiracling the rival, and reduce scholarship to a mere footnote.<sup>72</sup> Other innovations, such as a sudden emphasis on personal faith and the notion that Appayya's Vaiṣṇava opponents attack Vedic ritual, are better understood in the context of certain nineteenth-century anxieties articulated in the debate between Christian missionaries and Hindu reformists. Finally, the fact that Śivānanda places late Vijayanagara in Vellore—he views Cinnabomma and Tanjore's Nṛṣiṃha as Kṛṣṇadevarāya's pair of successors (*ŚADV* 1.9, 5.30)—seems related to unfamiliarity with Vijayanagara's history before its excavation in the twentieth century. Such changes are only to be expected from a work written centuries after the events it depicts, in an entirely new context, and with radically new concerns.

In fact, it is surprising that several important themes from earlier accounts are still manifest in the *ŚADV*, even if in a new context or guise. An example is the centrality of Appayya's family, to the exclusion of other affiliations. In the *ŚADV*, too, Appayya spends his time primarily among his kin, and most of the names provided—with the exception of the nemesis he defeats, his two patrons, and the

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, Granoff (1984, 1985, 1986, 1989a, 1989b) and Bader (2000). In portraying these confrontations, Śivānanda may have built on hints and narrative bits from several personal hymns attributed to Appayya. For example, his description of Appayya's fever attacks in *ŚADV* 18 echoes the *Apītakucāmbāstava*, a hymn printed in Ramesan (1972, pp. 152–153), where the speaker begs the goddess to cure him of fever. However, the attribution of the relevant hymns is dubious, and it is possible that some of these works were actually written to correspond to Śivānanda's rendition rather than the other way around. A case in point is the *Nigrahāṣṭaka*. As printed in Ramesan (1972, pp. 147–148), this short work, composed in rather inelegant Sanskrit, is suspiciously structured along the lines of Śivānanda's plot in the *ŚADV*. In verse 1, the speaker sets out to confront a rival and calls on Śiva to ensure that this enemy will be the victim of the same calamity he plotted against him. The following verses provide a few details about the enemy's scheme to harm the Śaivas and further pursue an eye-for-an-eye agenda: the speaker prays for the permanent departure from the world (*nirasanam ito lokāt*) of the enemy who plotted to exile the Śaivas from the country (*nirasanam ito deśāt*, 5), and he prays that punishment be visited on the forehead (where life is inscribed) and on the throat (where the life breath is stored) of the same enemy who could not tolerate the Śaiva sectarian marks of white ashes (on the forehead) and rudrākṣa beads (on the throat; 7). Most important, the short hymn culminates in the same verse that serves as the climax of Śivānanda's account of Appayya's final confrontation with Tātācārya, wherein Appayya calls for the immediate death of his nemesis: "If Śiva, Husband of Umā, is the All-Creator, / if the Scriptures and the Purāṇas are all true, / and if the sect that wears the rudrākṣa beads has any power, / why should this enemy of ours not die here and now?" (verse 8 = *ŚADV* 24.231). In the *ŚADV*, a lightning bolt falls suddenly and dramatically on Tātācārya's head immediately after this verse. Note that the *Nigrahāṣṭaka* as printed by Ramesan appears to be a rather different work from its namesake in the Adyar manuscript collection. I have so far not been able to examine the manuscript, but three of its verses (which display an equally combative tone and equally inelegant language) appear in the Adyar collection's descriptive catalog. But none of them appear in Ramesan's version, at the very least indicating a rather problematic transmission of this eight-verse work (Parameswara Aithal 1968, pp. 156–157). The manuscript's colophon, moreover, explicitly ties the work to Appayya's defeat of Tātācārya: "thus ends the *Nigrahāṣṭaka*, composed by the best of Dīkṣitas, with evil-minded Tātā as its object"; *iti dīkṣitavaryakṛtadurmatitāviṣayakanigrahāṣṭakam sampūrṇam*. This is a clear departure from Appayya's signature lines as discussed in note 2 above. Although more research on the *Nigrahāṣṭaka* and other such works is called for, it seems to me that this hymn, which differs from the style and character of the supposed composer, builds on the later tradition of Appayya's outmiracling of Tātācārya and thus belongs to a much later period.

poets who sing his praise—are of his relatives. Indeed, here too, no teacher of Appayya is mentioned other than his father, despite a newly disclosed piece of information that the father died when he was nine (4.28). Likewise, no students are mentioned other than Appayya's progeny, and the only one named is Nīlakaṇṭha, portrayed for the first time as his self-chosen successor. Similarly, neither colleagues nor rival scholars are mentioned or named, except for the anonymous northerners who invite Appayya to Banaras (more on them below). The only seeming exception is Ratnakheṭa Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita, a famous Deccani scholar.<sup>73</sup> Three chapters of the *ŚADV* are dedicated to a subplot featuring Ratnakheṭa, providing a respite from Appayya's ongoing struggles with Tātācārya. They tell of an astrological error Ratnakheṭa made, the way in which the Goddess nonetheless proved him right, his mastery of all knowledge systems, his sense of being the world's most eminent scholar, and another encounter with the Goddess, who tells him that Appayya alone is truly omniscient. She then directs Ratnakheṭa to travel south and offer his daughter to him. When Ratnakheṭa arrives, Appayya proves his all-knowing reputation by agreeing to marry his daughter even without being asked (chapters 19–21). Thus, even though Appayya is portrayed as an avatar sent to lead the Śaivas against the Vaiṣṇavas, he is still affiliated almost exclusively with his kin, so much so that to be truly associated with him, one has to marry into the family.

Another recurring theme is Appayya's purely local context. The *ŚADV* consistently portrays Appayya as playing the local political game, maneuvering between the Vellore and Tanjore courts. For example, once word about the miracle of the sacrificial animals is out, King Nṛsiṃha of Tanjore wishes to attend the conclusion of the ritual. He sends Appayya a letter and many gifts and inquires whether he may come. Appayya replies that Nṛsiṃha is most welcome to join him, noting that Cinnabomma, now under the control of his Vaiṣṇava advisers, is no longer in the picture (6.45–46). Nṛsiṃha is delighted to be the presiding king. "It is my good fortune," he thinks, "that King Bomma, although wise and prosperous, has been deceived, due to the ripening of his past misdeeds, by ... Tātācārya and others."<sup>74</sup> Not much later Appayya readily accepts an invitation from a remorseful Cinnabomma to return to Vellore. The local nature of Appayya's politics in the *ŚADV* contrasts starkly with the way the text depicts the reach of Appayya's scholarship, which, despite being composed late in life, almost as an afterthought, travels far and wide. An indication is an episode from the end of the work, where several northern (*gauḍa*) scholars correspond with Appayya by letter. Appayya composes commentaries on the *Nakṣatravādāvali* [*sic*] and other texts to satisfy them (prose after 24.242), and they invite him to Banaras. Saying that he has passed his life like an actor entertaining kings and that it is time he also enjoys himself (*ātmasukhānubhūtyai*), Appayya accepts the invitation.<sup>75</sup>

The inclusion of this visit is a marked departure from the geographical scope of the bulk of the *ŚADV* itself, as well as of all previous accounts of Appayya, which

<sup>73</sup> For a recent discussion of Ratnakheṭa and one of his works, see Shulman (2012, pp. 232–265).

<sup>74</sup> *ŚADV*, p. 15, after 6.46: *asmadbhāgyavaśād eva ... tātācāryamukhair vañcitas sañcitāghavipākena śrīmān dhīmān api bommanpaḥ*.

<sup>75</sup> *ŚADV* 26.248, echoing Nīlakaṇṭha's *Śāntivilāsa* 8 (Bronner and Shulman 2009, pp. 192–193).

are dominated by activities that are strictly local. But conspicuously, the text has almost nothing to report about the visit. The Banaras episode does not fill even two verses, and these verses are devoid of detail and dwarfed by a lengthier description of Appayya's farewell tour of Vellore, Chidambaram, Aruṅācala, Tirupati, Kaveri, and other pilgrimage sites in the Tamil country.<sup>76</sup> Thus, even when Appayya is supposed to be more than a thousand miles away from his homeland, the details the text supplies are all from the landscape in which he is firmly rooted. In fact, Appayya himself makes a comment to that effect in his initial rejection of the invitation. "Judging by where my practice is fruitful," he says, "home is a veritable Banaras" (*bhāvanā yadi bhavet phaladātrī māmakaṃ bhavanam eva hi kāśī*; 2.247). My impression is that this episode is not based on a concrete and detailed account and serves primarily to fill a void in the received Appayya tradition; it thus is an exception that proves the rule.

Finally, it is interesting to see that regardless of its information about Vijayanagara, the *ŚADV* retains the sense that a rift occurred between its later monarchs and Appayya's family. According to the text, Appayya's grandfather was the chief spiritual adviser (*guruvara*) to Kṛṣṇadevarāya (1.6), and in the next generation Cinnabomma, Kṛṣṇadevarāya's presumed successor, was likewise ruled by Raṅgarāja's advice (1.10). But then Raṅgarāja resigned his position (*viratiṃ prapadya hitvā nrpaṃ*) to pursue his quest for a son (1.11). This led to the immediate rise to power of the Vaiṣṇavas, a dominance that even the later reunion of Cinnabomma and Appayya could not easily undo; the king remained under Tātācārya's influence even after Appayya's installment in his hereditary position of *guruvara* (6.73). The text is full of examples of Tātācārya's continued grip on power despite the repeated foiling of his schemes. Indeed, the king himself admits that the people consider Tātācārya the real king (9.72). He still mourns Tātācārya, whose death after stealing Appayya's personal lingam is compared with Śīsupāla's death after his hundredth deathworthy offense against Viṣṇu (chapter 24, after verse 234). In short, the *ŚADV* is clearly aware of a growing Vaiṣṇava influence in late Vijayanagara at the expense of Appayya, his family, and their Śaiva cause.

## 6 Remembering Appayya in the Twentieth Century

Around the turn of the twentieth century there was a surge of new materials about Appayya in a range of novel outlets and genres, including learned introductions to printed editions of Sanskrit works by Appayya, his kin, and his interlocutors; articles in scholarly journals; entries in encyclopedias and catalogs; books that narrate his life story; family trees; and even artistic representations. Given the vastness of these materials, all I can hope to achieve in this section is to highlight some of their dominant patterns.

First, many of the new publications represent the expertise of a rising group of scholars who combined traditional Sanskrit education with European philology.

<sup>76</sup> *ŚADV*, p. 85. Compare verses 26.249–250, which merely mention his reaching, performing rituals in, and being honored in Banaras.

These scholars were busy charting Appayya's familial, intellectual, and social lineages from incipits, colophons, and other sources. As we have seen, this practice is by no means new, and the new scholars made extensive use of earlier accounts, but they were also informed by archeology, including surveys of inscriptional records, and the editing and publishing of hitherto little-known texts. This work was also characterized by an unprecedented focus on chronology; earlier accounts never put dates on Appayya's activities, although Śivānanda's *ŚADV* did provide his horoscope, on the basis of which a birth date in 1553 was now calculated. Other dates, too, were suggested, usually placing Appayya's lifetime between the third quarter of the sixteenth century and the middle of the seventeenth. Here the contribution of Y. Mahalinga Sastri, Mannargudi Periyar's great-grandson and an important scholar and writer, is unique. In a pair of essays from the late 1920s, Mahalinga Sastri demonstrated quite decisively that Appayya's dates were 1520–1593 (an estimate he based on firm inscriptional evidence about his patrons), and that the horoscope provided by Śivānanda was suspect at best.<sup>77</sup>

Second, we find in the twentieth century a plethora of new Appayya episodes that seem to appear out of thin air. These include colorful reports about his supposed encounters with two of India's other leading intellectuals in early modernity, Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita and Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja, both of whom were mostly based in Banaras. Some accounts place the meeting with Bhaṭṭoji on Appayya's home turf, when Bhaṭṭoji visited the south, while others situate it in Banaras, also home to a dramatic encounter with Jagannātha.<sup>78</sup> These stories are typically attributed to an unspecified tradition, although some invoke misattributed texts and sources that are yet to be produced, at least in the form quoted.<sup>79</sup> It is important to stress that none of these traditions surfaced in any of the earlier materials I have been able to examine.

A third, related trend is the cumulative nature of the new publications, which retain all the materials I have so far surveyed. The result is a host of works with an almost fixed table of contents: discussions of Appayya's ancestors and dates, combining modern research with his alleged horoscope; surveys of his colophons and incipits that are mostly based on earlier accounts but also note texts not studied earlier; information about Appayya's contemporaries from existing as well as unspecified sources, including his supposed encounters with Jagannātha and Bhaṭṭoji; a discussion of his ties with his patrons, consisting of both inscriptional

<sup>77</sup> Mahalinga Sastri (1928, 1929).

<sup>78</sup> See Deshpande in this issue; Bronner and Tubb (2008, pp. 87–88); Bronner forthcoming.

<sup>79</sup> The *Tantrasiddhāntatīpikā*, whose author thanks Appayya as a teacher, has been wrongly ascribed to Bhaṭṭoji. As Aiyaswami Sastri (1929) has shown decisively, it was written by Appayya III. Venkataraman (1901, p. 264) has made a series of claims, among them, first, that Jagannātha makes personal comments about Appayya and Bhaṭṭoji in the *Śabdakaustubhasāṅgotejana* and *Śāsisenā*; but the putative passages that show this are unknown to any scholars other than Venkataraman. Second, Venkataraman claims that Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's commentary on the *Kāvya prakāśa* describes a heated confrontation between Bhaṭṭoji and Jagannātha, but this passage of Nāgeśa's commentary, too, is unknown. Third, he claims that Balakavi reports a meeting between Appayya and both Banarsi scholars in his work, the *Ratnaketūdaya*. The *Ratnaketūdaya* does exist in manuscript form, but I so far have not been able to examine it. It should be mentioned that in none of Bhaṭṭoji's known works does he identify Appayya as a guru. I discuss these rich and fascinating materials in Bronner forthcoming.

materials and the miracles reported in the *ŚADV*; and lists of his works, of which some are known and documented, but others are only rumored.<sup>80</sup>

Fourth is the incorporation of Appayya into a modern Hindu pantheon, especially by the Śāṅkarācārya Maṭh in Kanchipuram. Here I will mention a mural of Appayya handing books to Nīlakaṇṭha, found on the Rāmeśvara Śrīśāṅkara Mandapam near the eastern gate of the Rāmeśvara temple. Appayya and Nīlakaṇṭha are portrayed in the company of other pairs of teachers and disciples, including Rāmānand and Kabīr, Raidās and Mīrābaī, Vidyāraṇya and the pair of Bukka and Harihara, and Rāmdās and Śivāji. According to a locally sold booklet, the design is based on a vision that the reigning Śāṅkarācārya had, and is intended to teach visitors about the tenets and history of the Hindu religion.<sup>81</sup> The Kanchipuram Śāṅkarācārya headquarters has also supported publications about Appayya and for many years hosted N. Ramakrishna Dikshitar, a descendant of Appayya, as a senior scholar.<sup>82</sup>

Finally, one should note the broadening of the discussion about Appayya in terms of the languages involved—now including Tamil and English, alongside Sanskrit—and the participants, who are no longer limited to Appayya's family circle. That said, descendants of Appayya still continue to play a key role in studying and remembering their ancestor. Organizations such as the Appayya Dikshita Foundation in Chennai, dedicated to commemorating him, and the Srimad Appayya Dikshitendra Granthavali Prakasana Samithi in Hyderabad, whose mission is to print his complete corpus, exist largely thanks to the ongoing efforts of Appayya's descendants.

## 7 Concluding Remarks

As is only to be expected with memories that were half a millennium in the making, a good deal of change took place in Appayya's evolving story. Countless elements were forgotten, and many others were added. The names of Appayya's students, the nature of his relations with fellow intellectuals, numerous life episodes, and the complete list of his works are among the items in the "lost" column. The first generation after Appayya's death added a crucial new feature, the depiction of him as an avatar. Another crucial juncture in remembering Appayya arises at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, when a great deal of new information suddenly surfaces: that Appayya struggled throughout his life with Tātācārya; that Nīlakaṇṭha was Appayya's student and self-chosen successor; and that Appayya made a trip to Banaras, and there encountered Bhaṭṭoji and Jagannātha.

My identification of this second historical juncture is admittedly tentative, based as it is on a partial set of sources. It is possible, after all, that Śivānanda Yogī drew his materials from works unknown to us, that is, from a parallel tradition, from

<sup>80</sup> Examples include Subramania Sastriar (1933, in Sanskrit), Ramesan (1972, in English), and even Mahalinga Sastri's complete biography (published posthumously in Tamil in 2002).

<sup>81</sup> I am grateful to Anna Seastrand for this information.

<sup>82</sup> I interviewed N. Ramakrishna Dikshitar in his Kanchipuram home in September 2007.

which the twentieth-century materials could also have been derived. But although far more research is called for, there are factors that militate against the likelihood of such a tradition. First, there is the complete silence until around 1900 about what the texts we do have would have been happy to report: Nīlakaṇṭha would have proudly brandished his tutelage had he been Appayya's student; he and other early descendants would have been eager to mention Appayya's trip to Banaras and his influence on Bhaṭṭoji had they been aware of them; and Bhaṭṭoji, in turn, would have normally saluted Appayya had he been his student, or had he written works at his request, as some traditions insist. Second is the continuous line connecting virtually all the materials we have examined: Samarapuṅgava quotes Appayya's inscription; Nīlakaṇṭha cites Samarapuṅgava; and later descendants all the way down to and including Mannargudi Periyar in the second half of the nineteenth century are familiar with this core set of texts, which they expand and embellish. All this suggests that the *ŚADV* and the accounts of the twentieth century mark a sudden departure from an otherwise stable tradition. Indeed, a comparison of the two junctures I have identified offers a similar insight. After all, the logic inherent in the avatar mytheme, a logic of saving the world from threats, does not sit comfortably with a career dedicated to academic work. But, as we have seen, all writers up to and including Mannargudi Periyar sought to minimize this conflict by downplaying Appayya's sectarian rivalries with unnamed opponents and by linking his superhuman scholarship to his divine mission. It is only with Śivānanda's *ŚADV* that the mission of ridding the world of rival sects finds full scope and is allowed to dominate the story at the expense of Appayya's erudition.

But even when they depart from the earlier pattern, reflect modern sensibilities, and use new media, all traditions about Appayya retain a surprisingly durable set of themes and tensions, and it will be useful to conclude this essay by listing them briefly. First, there is the uniqueness of Appayya's scholarship. Generations of writers sought new ways of setting him apart from other intellectuals, and even the *ŚADV*, with its markedly nonacademic focus, could not ignore his genius, prolificacy, and the scholarly recognition he won. The emphasis on Appayya's scholarly independence that disappears in the *ŚADV* returns as a central theme even in works that were influenced by it (e.g., Rājakōpāla Cāstirikaḥ 1982). Second, virtually all of the accounts that I have reviewed reaffirm the centrality of Appayya's family as his primary social affiliation, not just by what they say but also by the identity of their composers. It is no coincidence that all the commemorative sources available to us up to the very end of the nineteenth century are by Appayya's descendants, and that generations of family members have studied his work, have written secondary scholarship on it, and have been the dominant force in his commemoration. If Appayya was a card-carrying member of his family, its members, in turn, proudly continued to display his badge. Third is the disassociation between Appayya and the centers of power in Vijayanagara. His own writings hint at this only in the most indirect manner, but later texts amplify this remove both by emphasizing his hereditary position with Vijayanagara's ruling family and by hinting at or describing some rift or falling-out, usually taking place in the time of his father, Raṅgarāja. Fourth is the tension between Appayya's global renown and the highly local sphere of activity to which he is confined in most accounts. As I

have argued, even when Appayya finally reaches Banaras, at the end of the nineteenth century, his visit does not entirely ease this tension. It may well be that this tension is related to the posthumous appearance of stories of his encounters with other leading early modern intellectuals.<sup>83</sup> Finally, there is the tension between Appayya's persona as an ardent Śaiva polemicist and his role as an independent intellectual historian who positions himself above the sectarian fray. Most sources I have examined kept this duality alive, and the two main nineteenth-century texts I have looked at, the *ADVĀ* and the *ŚADV*, each gave prominence to one pole without eliminating the other altogether.

All these themes are closely related. For example, praising (and studying) Appayya's rich corpus became almost a family trade for his descendants. His lack of extrafamilial institutional affiliations goes hand in hand with his scholarly independence and his resistance to being confined in his Śaiva role. It also is consistent with his remove from the court and his local sphere of activities in the periphery at a time of a great Vaiṣṇava ascendancy in the imperial center. This overall coherence is partly integral to Appayya's sociopolitical context and self-chosen identity, even when so much was forgotten and added during the long centuries in which people tried to make sense of the events and works in the life of this extraordinary man.

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## Abbreviations

- ADVĀ *Śrīmadappayyadīkṣitendravaṃśābharāṇa* of Tyāgarājādhvarin. In Mahalinga Sastri 2002:154–185.
- ĀSS *Ānandasāgarastava* of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita Ed. with a commentary by H. V. Nagaraja Rao. Mysore: Sudharmā Prakāśanam, 1999.
- CM *Citramīmāṃsā* of Appayya Dīkṣita with the *Sudhā* commentary of Dharānanda. Ed. Jagadīśa Chandra Mīśra. Kashi Sanskrit Series 207. Varanasi: Chowkhamba, 1971.
- GĀV *Gaṅgāvātāraṇa* of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita. Ed. Bhavadatta Śāstri, Paṇḍit Śivadatta, and Kāśīnāth Pāṇḍurang Parab with introduction by T. S. Kuppaswami Sastri. Kāvyaṃālā 76. Bombay: Nirmaya Sagara Press, 1902.
- KUĀ *Kuṅṭlavānanda* of Appayya Dīkṣita with the *Rasikarañjana* commentary of Gaṅgādhara. Ed. R. Halasyanatha Sastri. Kumbhakonam: Sree Vidya Press, 1892.

<sup>83</sup> See Bronner forthcoming.

- NC *Nalacarita* of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita. Ed. Syamadasa Sastri. Varanasi: Chaukhambha, 1987.
- NRM *Nyāyarakṣamaṇi* of Appayya Dīkṣita. Ed. S. R. Krishnamurthi Sastri, N. Ramakrishna Sastri, and P. Sri Ramachandrudu. Hyderabad: Srimad Appayya Deekshithendra Granthavali Prakasana Samithi, 1971.
- NVC *Nīlakaṇṭhavijayacampū* of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita. Ed. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, S. Kuppuswami Sastri, and N. Raghunathan. Madras: Sanskrit Education Society, 1972.
- Parimala The *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya* with the *Bhāmātī*, *Kalpataru*, and *Parimala* commentaries. Ed. M. Anantakrisna Sastri and Bhargav Sastri Sastracarya. Bombay: Nirnaya Sagara Press, 1938.
- PRĀM *Prapannāmṛta* of Anantācārya. Ed. Swami Rāmanārāyaṇācārya. Varanasi: Somani Trust, 1966.
- ŚADV *Śrīmadappayyadīkṣitendravijaya* of Śivānanda Yogī. Ed. Gaṇapati Śāstri. Madras: Dixon Press, 1921.
- ŚĀMD *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* of Śrīkaṇṭhācārya with the *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā* commentary of Appayya Dīkṣita. Ed. R. Halasyanatha Sastri. 2 vols. Bombay: Nirnaya Sagara Press, 1908. Reprint, Delhi: NAG Publishers, 1986.
- ŚDMĀ *Śāstradīpikā* of Pārthasārathimīśra with the *Mayūkhāvalī* commentary of Appayya Dīkṣita. Ed. P. Subrahmanya Sastri. Srirangam: Vani Vilas Press, 1939.
- ŚLĀR *Śivalīlārṇava* of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita. Srirangam: Vani Vilas Press, 1911.
- ŚOM *Śivotkarṣamañjarī* of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita. In *Filliozat* 1967:101–158.
- VLK *Vasulakṣmīkalyāṇam* of Venkaṭasubrahmaṇya Adhvarin. Ed. K. Raghavan Pillai. Trivandrum Sanskrit Series 224. Trivandrum: Oriental Research Institute and Manuscript Library, University of Kerala, 1968.
- VR *Vīdhirasāyana* of Appayya Dīkṣita. Ed. P. S. Ramachandrudu. Srimad Appayya Dikshithendra Granthavali Series 8. Hyderabad: Srimad Appayya Dikshithendra Granthavali Prakasana Samithi, 2007.
- YĀB *Yādavābhyudaya* of Vedānta Deśika with the commentary of Appayya Dīkṣita. Ed. U. T. Viraraghavacharya. Madras: Ubhaya Vedanta Grantha Mala, 1969.
- YP *Yātrāprabandha* of Samarapuṅgava Dīkṣita. Ed. Kedarnātha. Kāvyaṃālā 90. Bombay: Nirnaya Sagara Press, 1936.

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