Csaba Kiss
csaba.kiss.email@gmail.com
(Department of Indo-European Studies,
ELTE University, Budapest)

On *yantra*s in Early Śaiva Tantras*

SUMMARY: The term *yantra* is used differently in early Śaiva *tantra*s from what we see later. In early texts, its range of meaning is wider, and it does not inevitably and typically involve objects with geometric patterns. After examining some passages from the *Brahmayāmala* and other mainly unpublished and/or untranslated Śaiva texts, this article makes an attempt at outlining the early history of the term. Initially, *yantra* seems to refer to special techniques, rituals, to attain religious goals. Later it appears to denote complex rituals of black magic involving fire-offerings with transgressive substances, using objects such as figurines embodying the targeted person, and employing mantra-inscribed materials such as birch-bark. The commonly known usage of the term *yantra* as a magical diagram with geometrical designs seems to have emerged only gradually.

KEYWORDS: *yantra*, magical rituals, Śaiva Tantra, *Brahmayāmalatantra*

Definitions

In secondary literature *yantra*s of the Śaiva (and Vaiṣṇava) tantric traditions are almost always treated as simple mobile diagrams or

designs, usually made up of linear patterns inscribed with mantras, drawn on such materials as birch-bark, copper plates and cloth. This type of *yantra* is what we gather from most of our texts and see as surviving images and objects. This interpretation of *yantra* is what studies drawing mainly on secondary sources give, and this is what the most up-to-date scholarly articles on *yantra*s substantiate, such as those found in Bühnemann 2003. Bühnemann gives an extensive bibliography and summarises previous scholarship (Bühnemann 2003: 4–6). She defines *yantra* as a "magic diagram" (Bühnemann 2003: 28) and characterises *yantra*s as small and mobile objects, implying that they are always drawings made up of lines and geometric patterns (Bühnemann 2003: 29). She also draws attention to the fact that in some texts a *yantra* can stand for "an instrument, machine, mechanical device or appliance (especially one used in warfare)" (ibid.),[1] that *yantra*s are also used in Āyurveda, and that the term may also designate alchemical apparatuses (Bühnemann 2003: 1).[2] In the same volume Brunner remarks (Brunner 2003: 162) that "the terms yantra and cakra are rarely encountered in the Siddhānta […] while they are frequent elsewhere", i.e. in other branches of Śaiva Tantra, such as the Bhairava and Kaula traditions.[3] Her definition and analysis of *yantra*s imply that they are linear representations, and she adds that "[t]he drawing is always completed with the inscription of letters, of *bīja*s, […] and of mantras [...]" (Brunner 2003: 163). She suggests that the terms *yantra* and *cakra* are sometimes used synonymously, and proposes the general term 'coercive diagram' for both (Brunner 2003: 164–165). According to Rastelli, "yantras consist *usually* of diagram-like drawings and mantras made present in them" (Rastelli 2003: 142, italics mine). As we can

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[1]   On *yantra*s as war-machines, see especially Brockington 1998: 178, 183, 407. On *yantra*s as war-machines, weapons, magical dolls and miraculous mechanical devices, see Raghavan 1952.

[2]   On *yantra*s as alchemical apparatuses, see also White 1996: 145, 250 etc.

[3]   On the basic classification of the corpus of Śaiva Tantra, see primarily Sanderson 1988: 664ff, 2001: 2ff and 2004: 229 n. 1.

see, these authors,[4] whose research on *yantra*s is unquestionably well-founded and well-evidenced, generally agree on *yantra*s being mobile, diagram-type objects used for worldly and magical purposes often including mantra-syllables written on them (and, rarely, drawn figures of deities). *Yantra*s may have various applications such as being "implements during a worship ritual" or "during a practitioner's *regular* Tantric worship of a deity", and can be used for desire-oriented rites (*kāmya*), often worn as amulets for protection (Bühnemann 2003: 32).[5]

Sanderson's remark quoted in Bühnemann (Bühnemann 2003: 162 n. 19, from Padoux 1986: 33) modifies the above consensus to some extent: "Kṣemarāja […] [in his commentary on *Netratantra* 20.59c] defines [...] [*yantra*] (in its more complex form) as a collection of mantras written in a particular pattern[6] ([...] *yantracakraṃ viśiṣṭasaṃniveśalikhito mantrasamūhaḥ*)*,* while in its most basic form it is simply a spell written on a piece of birch-bark (*bhūrjapatram*)...". Sanderson may imply that no drawing of geometric design is necessarily involved in these definitions.[7] In his more recent publications, Sanderson defines *yantra* as "a diagram on birch bark inscribed with

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[4]   And a reviewer: see Bolle 1989.

[5]   Note that Bühnemann uses texts that can be labelled as later ones as opposed to the earlier *tantra*s analysed below. Bühnemann summarises her research on *yantra*s in Bühnemann 2007: 566–573.

[6]   The same phrase is translated by Sanderson as 'a particular spatial arrangement' in Sanderson 2004: 290 n. 149, see below in n. 9.

[7]   Note that even though Sanderson is quoting Kṣemarāja's commentary (from the early part of the eleventh century, see Sanderson 2004: 239), and not the *Netratantra* itself (AD 700/800–850, see Sanderson 2004: 293), these definitions of *yantracakra* and *yantra* are still different from that of mantra-inscribed drawings with geometric patterns. At other places, Kṣemarāja uses such sources for *yantra* descriptions that are probably slightly later than the *Netratantra,* e.g. the *Kulārṇava* (see his comments on *Netratantra* 16.34), which may or may not be related to the text published under the same title. See more on the *Netratantra* below in the following pages.

the Mantra,"[8] and as "a Mantra-inscribed diagram written in various colours and with various inks on cloth, birchbark, the hides of various animals and the like," mostly with reference to the *Netratantra*.[9,10]

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[8]   Sanderson 2004: 244–245 (on *Netratantra* 6.35c–50): "A Yantra, that is to say a diagram on birch bark inscribed with the Mantra and the name of the beneficiary, is worshipped; a fire-sacrifice is performed; and the king is consecrated from a vase into which the Mantra has been infused. The ceremony is to destroy the pride of his enemies when he goes into battle, to free him from all illnesses, and to bestow on him the highest sovereignty."

[9]   Sanderson 2004: 290 n. 149 (explaining the term *khārkhoda*): "*Netroddyota* ad 19.132b: *khārkhodāḥ paraprayuktā yantrāḥ*; and ad 18.4b: *mṛtyūccātanādikṛd yantraṃ khārkhodaḥ*. A *yantram/yantraḥ* is a Mantra-inscribed diagram written in various colours and with various inks on cloth, birchbark, the hides of various animals and the like, wrapped up and then employed in various ways (by being worn as an amulet, by being buried in a cremation ground, and so on) for purposes such as warding off ills, harming an enemy, or forcing a person to submit to the user's will. Cf. Kṣemarāja's definition of a *yantracakram* as a series of Mantras written in a particular spatial arrangement (ad 20.59c): *yantracakram viśiṣṭasamniveśalikhito mantrasamūhaḥ*."

[10]   Sanderson 2007b: 264–265 n. 134: "The Sanskrit term *yantram* refers to a Mantra-inscribed diagram that may be engraved or written in various colours and with various inks on a strip of metal, cloth, birchbark, the hides of various animals and the like, wrapped up, and then employed in various ways, by being worn as an amulet, by being buried in a cremation ground, and so on, for purposes such as warding off ills, harming an enemy, or forcing a person to submit to the user's will. Cf. the definition in Nanjundayya and Iyer 1928–1936, vol. 2, p. 425: "Charms are written, engraved, on a small metal plate which is either rolled or enclosed in a small case which is fastened to a thread to be made fit for wearing. It is called a yantram (that which holds, restrains, or fastens). Yantrams are usually drawn on thin plates of gold, silver, copper led [*sic*] and sometimes on a piece of cadjan leaf, and the efficacy of the figures when drawn on a gold leaf will last for 100 years, while those on the less precious metals will last for a year or six months. Leaden plates are used when the yantrams are to be buried underground. The figures should possess the symbols of life: the eyes, tongue, eight cardinal points of the compass

Both of these more recent definitions may imply some sort of drawn patterns and are closer to the generally accepted definitions than to that of Kṣemarāja.

In the following, I would like to make a small contribution to the research on *yantra*s by showing that in some early Śaiva *tantra*s the situation concerning *yantra*s seems to be somewhat different from what would be expected. The lack of drawn geometric patterns in some *yantra*s (as hinted at by Sanderson) and, what is more, the very broad semantic field of the term *yantra* in some early Śaiva *tantra*s, are unique features worth examining, primarily because they might give us a new tool to date (layers of) our texts.

*Yantra*s in the *Brahmayāmala*

In some chapters of the *Brahmayāmala* (BraYā), which is probably one of the earliest extant Śaiva Tantras,[11] the meaning of the term *yantra* seems to be different from the widely known one, and its interpretation seems to be less than straightforward.[12] BraYā *paṭala* forty-five,[13] a long chapter on the classification and basic rituals of practitioners, *sādhaka*s,[14] is slightly obscure on *yantra*s, and while it gives some details on drawing and fashioning of figurines, on mantras and rituals, it seems to be silent on geometrical patterns. It often alludes to instructions 'taught in *yantra*s' (*yantrokta*).[15] This probably means that details are to be found in other relevant sections/chapters on *yantra*s, and

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and the five cardinal points. When properly made and subjected to a routine of *pūjā*s by a magician (*mantravādi*)*,* it is supposed to possess occult powers. Each yantram is in honour of some particular deity, and when that deity is worshipped and the yantram is worn, the wearer's object is satisfied."

[11] On the BraYā, see Sanderson 1988: 672, 2009: 46 etc., Hatley 2007 and Kiss 2015 (forthcoming). The text is now dated to the seventh century, see Hatley 2007: 211–228 and Sanderson 2009: 51.

[12] I address this problem cursorily in Kiss 2015: 50 (forthcoming).

[13] Folios 194v to 212r.

[14] See Kiss 2015 (forthcoming).

[15] E.g. 45.319d, 322c, 324d, 325d, etc.

may lead us to BraYā *paṭala* five,[16] a major chapter on *yantra* rituals (*yantrakarman*). It is primarily the colophon of this chapter[17] that states that the main topic discussed here is *yantra* rituals. The first half-verse confirms this, in non-standard (*aiśa*)[18] Sanskrit: "Now I shall teach you the ultimate method of *yantra* rituals..." 5.2ab adds: "...[and I shall also teach you] the *vidyā*-mantras and fire-offerings [included] in *yantra* rituals, in due order."[19] After this, and an inconclusive mention of the word *yantra* when visualisation (*smaraṇa*) is praised over recitation, fire-offerings, *pūjā* and *yantra*s,[20] the text of this 140-verse-long chapter seems to avoid the term *yantra* in any sense that could be interpreted as 'a small magic diagram'. In contrast with this lack of explicit

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[16]   Folios 38v to 42v.

[17]   Colophon: *iti picumate dvādaśasāhasrake yantrakarmapañcama-paṭalaḥ.* ("Here ends the fifth chapter in the *Picumata*, the *Dvādaśasāhasraka*, called Yantra Rituals.") Note that a colophon like this, and possibly also the introductory verses, might theoretically be later than the main text of the chapter itself.

[18]   On *aiśa*, the typical, non-standard, non-Pāṇinian Sanskrit of some Śaiva *tantra*s, see Törzsök 1999: xxvi ff, Goudriaan & Schoterman 1988: 44–109, Goodall 1998:lxv ff, Hatley 2007: 234–235 and Kiss 2015: 73–87 (forthcoming). I do not correct such non-standard linguistic phenomena here that may not simply be scribal errors. Note that the non-standard and obscure language of the BraYā often makes the text difficult to interpret.

[19]   BraYā 5.1–2ab: *ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi yantrakarmavidhiḥ param / yena vijñātamātreṇa mantrī lokair na bādhyate // vidyā yantravidhāne tu homāṇi ca yathākramam.* ("Now I shall teach you the ultimate method of *yantra*-rituals, by merely knowing which the mantra master will cease to be harassed by people. [I shall also teach you] the *vidyā*-mantras and fire-offerings [included] in *yantra* rituals, in due order.")

[20]   BraYā 5.10cd–11ab: *na japeṇa na homeṇa na ca yantra na pūjayā / sarvadā smaraṇenaiva tena siddhir na saṃśayaḥ.* ("*Siddhi*s [arise] always only by visualization, no doubt, and not by recitation, fire-offerings, *yantra*s or *pūjā*.")

mention of *yantra*s as diagrams, the text mentions devices, machines, i.e. *yantra*s,[21] that the ongoing rituals can stop or paralyse:

> "He can put out a fire with a glance. Also, he can make such machines (*yantra*) as ships stop, no doubt about it. He can also incapacitate marital machinery (*saṃgrāmikāni yantrāṇi*) quickly with a glance, with his [magic] head-mark (*tilaka*) applied. The power of wind and fire machinery (*yantra*) dies by the ashes of Indra's fire [i.e. by the apllication of ashes of objects destroyed by lightning]."[22]

This passage is from a section (5.54–60) on *dṛṣṭy-apahāra* ('taking away one's sight')[23] and *stambhana* (paralysing), magical achievements whose chief instrument is the application of head-marks (*tilaka*) painted with ashes of people destroyed by lightning.[24] One wonders whether the repeated mention of the term *yantra* here could have influenced the colophon or the introductory verses.

Further instructions for rituals of magic in chapter five of the BraYā can be summarised as follows. Verses 5.3–8: some instructions on bone ornaments (*mudrā*). Only two of five are to be used

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[21]　On *yantra*s as war machines see Brockington 1998: 178, 183, 407 and Raghavan 1952.

[22]　BraYā 5.58–60ab: *agniṃ ca stambhayec caiva darśanā*[*c*] *caiva suvrate / nāvādīni ca yantrāṇi stambhayen nātra saṃśayaḥ // saṃgrāmikāni yantrāṇi-s-tathā stambhayate bhṛṣam // tilakena kṛtenaiva darśanā*[*n*] *nātra saṃśayaḥ // prāṇā vāyvagniyantrāṇāṃ mṛtaḥ śakrāgnibhasmanā.*

[23]　Cf. *Laghuśaṃvara*, end of chapter 10: *yasyicchati tasyaiva rūpaṃ karoti / vācam apaharati, śrotram apaharati, dṛṣṭim apaharati, ghrāṇam apaharati, jihvām apaharati / yasyecchati tasya rudhiram ākarṣayati stambhayati vā.* ("He can assume any form. He can take away one's speech, hearing, sight, sense of smell, taste. He can draw or freeze anybody's blood.")

[24]　*vajradagdhanarasyātha bhasmaṃ gṛhya varānane /* […] *tatas tu bhasmanā tena tilakaṃ kārayen manaḥ.* (Probably understand *kārayed ātmanaḥ.* Alternatively one could read *kāraye 'tmanaḥ*, where the loss of the optative ending *-t/d* and an irregular *sandhi* would be instances of two very common *aiśa* linguistic phenomena.) ("Oh Varānanā, he should collect the ashes of a man struck by lightning. [...] Then he should paint a head-mark for himself with those ashes.")

here, the skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) and the skull (*kapāla*).
Verses 5.9–23ab: although subjugation is hinted at in 5.12 (*vaśaṃ kur-
vanti mānuṣam*), this section teaches a preliminary fire-offering before
the practitioner can start the main rituals (*tataḥ karma samārabhet,*
5.23ab). The hairs of a jackal dipped into menstrual blood (*puṣpa*) are
to be used. Substances such as rags found on the road, hairs of a corpse,
and cow flesh are to be offered. A *maṇḍala* is to be constructed and
the offerings are to be made with the left hand. 5.23cd–30: the descrip-
tion of the main magical rituals begin here. Rituals such as *ākarṣaṇa*,
vidveṣaṇa and *uccāṭana* are touched upon, and transgressive sub-
stances such as menstrual blood are used again in these rituals, as well
as skulls. Apparently, all that is needed for the success of these magical
rituals is fire-offerings.[25] 5.29ab mentions *pratimā*s (statuettes, figures,
images) to be smeared with the previously listed substances and pun-
gent oil[26] in order to ruin the enemy. 5.31–47ab: the main elements
of the following rituals are an image/figurine (*pratikṛti*), probably of
the target of the ritual (*sādhya*), as well as drawn geometric patterns,
for the first time in this chapter except for the preliminary *maṇḍala*.[27]

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[25]   BraYā 5.23cd–25ab: *niṣṭhīvanaṃ dantakāṣṭhaṃ svadehodvartanaṃ
tathā / nāmnā madyāktahomena trailokyaṃ vaśam ānayet / dantadhāvanam
ādāya gokīṭarudhiraṃ tathā // tenāktaṃ homamayec cailaṃ trailokyaṃ
karṣayet kṣaṇāt...* ("Saliva, tooth-cleaning sticks, excreta of one's own
body: with fire offerings dipped in alcohol he will subjugate the three worlds.
With tooth-cleaning [sticks], the blood of a cow and of worms: he should make
fire offerings with cloth dipped in it [i.e. in blood]. He can attract the three
worlds in a moment...")

[26]   Resin? BraYā 5.29ab: *tīkṣṇatailena saṃmiśraṃ lepayet pratimāni
tu / yatra yatra sthitaḥ kuryāc chatror uccāṭanaṃ mahat.* ("He should anoint
the images with […] mixed with pungent oil. Wherever he performs this,
he will cause the enemy great panic.")

[27]   BraYā 5.31: *pratikṛtiṃ kārayen mantrī tato lekhyaṃ tu kārayet /
āgneyamaṇḍalaṃ likhya hrīṃśaktyā kauṇḍalāntake* [*kuṇḍal-*?]. ("The mantra
master should make a figurine/image. Then he should start drawing. He should
draw a Fire-*maṇḍala* (triangle) with the ʜʀĪṂ-*śakti* [syllable] at [...]")

*Āgneyamaṇḍala*s are mentioned here, which are probably triangles.[28] The target's name is combined with the *vidyā*-mantra. The name/image of the target is to be written/drawn (on birch bark?) with mantras and the resulting object is to be placed[?] in an (earthen) vessel and fire-offerings are to be performed.[29] 5.34–47ab give variants of this ritual. Now it is a *māhendramaṇḍala* (square), an *āgneyamaṇḍala* (triangle) and a *vāyavyamaṇḍala* (hexagon) to be drawn. The image/figurine ([*ā*]*kṛti*) should be worn on the chest. 5.47cd–53: the magical ritual of *adreśīkaraṇa*.[30] In the cremation ground, the *sādhaka* should perform pantheon-worship (*yāga*). He should use human skulls filled with fat as lamps.[31] Lampblack is to be applied to one's own eyes. This makes one invisible.[32] 5.54–60: in the magical ritual of *dṛṣṭyapahāra* (touched upon above) an ointment is to be made to paint a *tilaka* with from the ashes of a man struck by lightning. This takes away anyone's vision. The *sādhaka* can paralyse the wind, fire etc., and thus ships and other

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[28] The *āgneyamaṇḍala*s, *vāyumaṇḍala*s and *māhendramaṇḍala*s utilised in this chapter are probably triangles, (`circular'?) hexagons and squares. Cf. Kṣemarāja's commentary ad SvT 9.62: *āgneyamaṇḍalaṃ trikoṇaṃ tadbahir vāyumaṇḍalaṃ ṣaṭkoṇaṃ vartulam*; and *Hevajrasekaprakriyā* 23: *māhendramaṇḍalaṃ caturasram.*

[29] BraYā 5.32: *vidyāyā darbhitaṃ nāmaṃ hrīkārādyantagaṃ tathā / tatkṛtau prakṣiped bhūrje tāṃ kṛtiṃ tathā sampuṭo* [-*puṭām*?] // *sthāpayitvā śarāvābhyāṃ homāny etāni kārayet.*

[30] Understand *adṛśyakaraṇa* ('making one invisible').

[31] BraYā 5.48cd-50ab: *tatrāgrato praviṣṭas tu kapāle mānuṣe-s-tathā // dvābhyāṃ tu pādau saṃsthāpya kapāle dīpakaṃ tataḥ // vasayā dāpayitvā* [*dīp-*?] *tu kapālatritayaṃ tathā // teṣām upari vinyasya kapālādhomukhaṃ tathā.* (Tentative translation: "First, he should enter [the cremation ground], and place two human skulls on [his] feet/legs[?]. He should [place] lamp[s] in the skull[s] and[/lit by] fat. A third skull should be placed on them face down.")

[32] BraYā 5.53: *kapāle mānuṣe gṛhya vasayā kajjalaṃ niśi / adreśīkaraṇaṃ siddhaṃ yāvan netreṣu tiṣṭhati.* ("At night he should collect the lampblack from the human skull together with fat. Invisibility is guaranteed while it stays on one's eyes.")

machines, by a magical *tilaka* when performing the *stambhana* ritual
described here. 5.61–87ab: the rags of a man struck dead by lightning
used in this magical rite gives the *sādhaka* the *svacchandasiddhi*.[33]
He can assume any form. The passage mentions bird feathers to anoint
and worship deity images with.[34] Dust from the city gate or from
the target's feet is to be collected to draw an image with. The name of
the city or a person is to be written down.[35] A powder is to be collected
on birch-bark and a triangle is to be drawn into which the target's name
is written.[36] Preparing/cooking some edible mixture and its consump-
tion is repeatedly mentioned. 5.87ff: the figure of a man is to be drawn
and mantras and the target's name are to be written on birch-bark
with jackal's bile. The mantra-syllables produce the central mantra of
the BraYā's cult: CAṆḌĀ KĀPĀLINI SVĀHĀ. This ritual aims at the trans-
plantation of souls (*utkrānti* and *saṃkrānti*). 5.101–140: as a continu-
ation, this section gives instructions on how to enter others' bodies
(*paradehapraveśa*) and goes on describing the *siddhi*s these rituals
produce. As Hatley observes, "[a] human figure (*puruṣa*) is drawn
on birch-bark (*bhūrjapatra*) using bile of the jackal, upon which

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[33]　BraYā 5.61: *mānuṣasya śarīrastham karpaṭam vātha suvrate / bhasmīkṛtam
ca vajreṇa gṛhītavyam na saṃśayaḥ*. ("Oh Suvratā, the rags from a corpse that has
been turned into ashes by lightning should be collected, no doubt.")

[34]　BraYā 5.68ab: *krauñcasārasapakṣais tu tailābhyaktāś ca devatāḥ*.
("The deities are anointed with the feathers of curlews and cranes.");
5.73cd*: tato devyo 'tha sampūjya krauñcasārasapakṣajaiḥ*. ("Then, having
worshipped the goddesses with the feathers of curlews and cranes...")

[35]　BraYā 5.70: *nagaradvāre rajam gṛhya sādhyasya ca pade 'pi vā /
tayā pratikṛtim kṛtvā tayā nāmam vidarbhayet*; ("He should collect dust
at the city gate or from the target's feet. He should draw a figure with it and
join it with the name.") 5.72ab: *nagarasya tu nāmam syā' sādhyanāmātha vā
priye*. ("It is the name of a city or the name of the target, oh Priyā.")

[36]　BraYā 5.78cd–79ab: *etac cūrṇam tu saṃyojya bhūrje gṛhya varā-
nane // māhendramaṇḍalam likhya tanmadhye nāmam ālikhet*. ("He should
collect this powder on birch-bark, oh Varānanā. He should draw a square and
write the [target's] name in its centre.")

mantra-syllables (*bīja*) and the syllables of the target's (*sādhya*) name are installed."[37] A figurine of a jackal is also to be made out of clay.[38] The hide of a jackal serves as a blanket for the *sādhaka*.[39] The image of the target is to be perfumed.[40]

Although some passages of chapter five of the BraYā are still difficult to interpret, some general observations can be made on the *yantra*-descriptions it gives, providing that all of them are to be taken as individual rituals. They involve fire-offerings, some involve geometric patterns, transgressive and non-transgressive substances, ashes produced in inauspicious circumstances, images/figurines of the target, as well as some materials such as birch-bark to draw the target's figure, to write the target's name and to write mantra syllables on. These rituals aim at magical powers, mainly of black magic. What many of these descriptions seem to leave out, however, is geometric linear designs. Even when there are *maṇḍala*s, i.e. squares, triangles and hexagons mentioned, they seem marginal, and they do not seem to be inseparable parts of all the *yantra*-rituals given here. For instance the *adreśīkaraṇa* and *dṛṣṭyapahāra* rituals, as well as the *utkrānti*-type ones and the *svacchandasiddhi* seem to be devoid of any geometric patterns. In contrast, fire-rituals and drawn figures of the target or figures (e.g. of jackals) fashioned out of clay seem to be emphasised. To sum up: geometric patterns do appear but seem to be optional in the *yantra*-rituals of BraYā chapter five. Alternatively, one could say that the appearance of the term *yantra* in this chapter has no intrinsic connection with geometrical patterns or drawing.

In harmony with the above, in BraYā 45.369–370ab, the word *yantra* seems to refer to magical rituals in general. After a list of various

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[37] See this observation by Shaman Hatley and more details on this section in the BraYā in *Tāntrikābhidhāna* 3 at entry *parakāyapraveśa*.

[38] *tābhir eva mṛdābhis tu śṛgālasyākṛtis tathā / kārayet sādhako devi nātra kārya vicāraṇāt.*

[39]   *śṛgālacarmam āvṛtya ātmanaś ca samantataḥ.*

[40] *dhūpayet pratimāṃ tena ātmānaṃ mantravigraham.*

ṣaṭkarman-type magical procedures, the text states that "these *yantra*s will definitely work."[41] This may suggest that the magical procedures themselves are the *yantra*s. An even clearer indication that the term *yantra* can be used in the BraYā in a very wide sense is found in BraYā 4.803–804ab. Here various kinds of seeds are taught to be auspicious for making rosaries (*akṣasūtra*)[42] from for various purposes: "Putranjiva Roxburghii and lotus seeds are used [for rosaries] in all *yantra*s (*sarvayantreṣu*). Both are used in various kinds of installation ritual (*vinyāsa*). They bestow all *siddhi*s. In subjugation etc. *yantra* rituals (*vaśyādiyantrakarmeṣu*), coral is praised."[43] This passage suggests that rosaries can be integral parts of a *yantra,* which thus should probably carry a meaning wider than just a geometric drawing used in a ritual. Likewise, the word *yantra* is probably used as a synonym of 'magical ritual' in BraYā 4.828–830ab. Here a list of magical rituals is given (*vaśya, ākarṣaṇa, stambha*[*na*] etc.), and the text states that in these cases one should move the beads of the rosary (*karṣaṇa*) with the index-finger.[44] One item on this list is *jayayantra,* which then

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[41] BraYā 45.369–370ab (all names of rituals should probably be in the nominative): *śāntikaṃ puṣṭikaṃ caiva mṛtyuñjayavidhis tathā / kopapraśamane* [em. ; *koṣa°* Cod.] *caiva tathā nigaḍabhañjane / yantrāny etāni sidhyante vidhinānena* [eme. ; *°ānyena* Cod.] *nānyathā.* For interpreting the locatives as nominatives, see the parallel BraYā 45.414cd–415: *śāntikaṃ pauṣṭikaṃ caiva mṛtyuñjayavidhis tathā // kopaḥ prasanenaiva nigaḍa-bhañjanam eva ca / yantrāny etāni sidhyanti kalpayāgena mantriṇām.*

[42] That this section is on *akṣasūtra*s is clear from BraYā 4.793ab: *adhunā sampravakṣyāmi akṣasūtrasya lakṣaṇam.* ("Now I shall teach you the characteristics of the rosary.")

[43] BraYā 4.803–804ab: *putraṃjīvakapadmākṣo sarvayantreṣu yojitau / vinyāsabhedavinyastau sarvasiddhipradāyakau // vaśyādiyantrakarmeṣu prabālākhyaṃ praśasyate.*

[44] BraYā 4.828–830ab: *vaśyākarṣaṇapiṇḍāhve stambhe nigaḍa-bhañjane / śāntike puṣṭike caiva mṛtyuñjayavidhau-s-tathā // melake jayayantre ca nijasainyasya rakṣaṇe / kopaḥ-prasamanai caiva kṣudrakarmeṣu yat subhaṃ // tarjanyāyāḥ prakartavyam akṣasūtrasya karṣaṇam.*

does probably not designate merely a magical drawing but should be, similarly to the other items, a complex magical ritual ("magical ritual for victory"). Note that the list starts with *vaśya*, similarly to the list referred to as *vaśyādiyantrakarman*s ("*yantra* rituals beginning with subjugation") in the passage quoted above on *akṣasūtra*s. This confirms that the whole list in 4.828–830ab is a list of *yantra*[-ritual]s.

'*Yantrārūḍha*'

The short seventh chapter of the BraYā[45] describes the goddesses' forms when "they are mounted on *yantra*s (*yantrārūḍha*)."[46] Does this contradict any claim that *yantra*s have a wider range of meaning in the early chapters of the BraYā than just small mantra-inscribed geometric diagrams?[47] Should the goddesses be drawn/installed on geometric mantra-designs? The chapter in question avoids any reference to drawing. These descriptions seem to refer to visualisation, which of course does not exclude the possibility of *yantra*s having (visualized) geometric patterns. The text starts with a slightly obscure statement: *ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi svadhyānaṃ devatāni tu / rūpalakṣaṇakarmaṃ ca sādhakānāṃ hitāya vai.* This was probably meant to say the following: "And now I shall teach you the visualisation (-*dhyāna*) of all goddesses (*devatāni* for pl. gen.) one by one (*sva-*) as well as their forms/colours (*rūpa*) and attributes (*lakṣaṇa*) and rituals (*karmaṃ* for *karma*) for the benefit of *sādhaka*s." The following passages are then indeed

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[45] Folios 47r to 47v.

[46] BraYā 7.11ab: *etā devyaḥ samākhyātā(ṃ) yantrārūḍhā[ḥ] svarūpakaiḥ / karmakāle manuṣyeṣu yojitavyās tu sādhakaiḥ.* ("This is how the Devīs are taught when mounted on *yantra*s in their natural forms. They are to be connected to people by the *sādhaka*s at the time of ritual.")

[47] On "early chapters of the BraYā", see Hatley 2007: 206–211, especially 210–211: "As a working hypothesis, I would suggest that the core of the old text consists of much or most of *BraYā* I–XLIC, to which, in the next stage, material from chapters L–LXXXIII was incorporated. The final stage of redaction is probably represented by the *Uttara-* and *Uttarottaratantra*s, chapters LXXIV–CI."

about visualisation (*dhyāna*) rather than drawing.[48] But in this case, how can *yantrārūḍha* be interpreted? Should the deity be visualized in/ on an actual or visualized *yantra*?

The phrase *yantrārūḍha* occurs in a number of texts. Its most well-known occurrence is *Bhagavadgītā* (BhG) 18.61: the Lord makes all living beings move/wander (in *saṃsāra*) as if they were (helplessly) attached to a *yantra*.[49] This is interpreted by some commentators as a simile: living being are like puppets moved by a puppeteer.[50] In *Kubjikāmatatantra* (KMT) 15.33, in a similar verse, the phrase that qualified the object in the BhG now qualifies the subject (*śivaḥ... yantrārūḍhas*): Śiva makes the whole world wander when he is on a *yantra*.[51] Heilijgers-Seelen (1994: 111 n. 58) points out the similarity between the BhG and the KMT passages, and remarks that two MSS of the KMT, and the MS of the *Laghvikāmnāya,* which is probably "closer to the (oral) original of the Kubjikāmatatantra"[52] reads *yantrārūḍhaṃ,* which then agrees with the object (*jagat sarvaṃ*). I propose that *yantrārūḍhaṃ* might be the 'original' reading and that the verse means: "He, Śiva, the highest Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings. He makes the whole world go round by his magic (*māyā*) as if people were (helplessly) attached to a machine/were puppets."[53]

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[48] See visualization (*dhyāna*) mentioned also in e.g. BraYā 7.7cd–7.8ab: *indīvarakarā devyā dhyātavyā*[*ḥ*] *siddhikarmaṇi // jvālāmālā*[*ḥ*] *karālinyā dhyātavyā*[*ś*] *cchedane tathā.*

[49] BhG 18.61: *īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ hṛddeśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati* / *bhrāmayan sarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā.* Quoted in Kṣemarāja's commentary ad SvT 12.82 and Kṣemarāja's commentary ad *Netratantra* 22.25.

[50] E.g. Viśvanātha: *yathā sūtrasañcārādiyantram ārūḍhāni kṛtrimāṇi pāñcālikārūpāṇi sarvabhūtāni*; Baladeva: *yathā sūtradhāro dāruyantrā-rūḍhāni kṛtrimāṇi bhūtāni bhrāmayati tadvat.*

[51] KMT 15.33: *sa śivaḥ sarvasattvānāṃ hṛdisthaḥ parameśvaraḥ* / *bhrāmayeta jagat sarvaṃ yantrārūḍhas tu māyayā.*

[52] Heilijgers-Seelen 1994: 6, quoting Schoterman.

[53] The critical edition of the KMT "is based mainly on ten manuscripts, the oldest of which are from the first half of the 12th century A.D." (Heilijgers-Seelen 1994: 4). By the 12th century, when *yantra*s with diagrams

The same corruption, probably brought about by the redactors'/copy-
ists' familiarity with *yantra*-diagrams, may have entered the MSS
of the *Matsyendrasaṃhitā* (MaSaṃ), a 13th-century Śaiva yoga text.
In MaSaṃ 22.19, "Śiva on a *yantra*" is said to make the whole world
go round by his magic until he is united with Śakti.[54] This makes even
less sense than the version in the KMT, and by applying an emenda-
tion of the above type (*viśvaṃ yantrārūḍhaṃ*), the verse yields perfect
sense: until Śiva is united with Śakti (in a yogic sense), he will make
the whole world go round by his magic as if the world were attached
to a machine/were a helpless puppet. In fact, the *Yogasārasaṃgraha*,
a text that contains a great number of verses that are parallel with
the MaSaṃ, has *yantrārūḍhaṃ* in the same verse.[55] In BraYā chapter
eight, the same change from accusative to nominative may have taken
place. In BraYā 8.17, a chapter on *samādhiyojana* and *yantra*s (see
below), the goddesses attract humans (*karṣayanti... mānavān*) in magi-
cal rituals (*trāsane kampane...*) when mounted on *yantra*s.[56] By emend-
ing the text,[57] a slightly more convincing meaning emerges: the god-
desses attract humans as if humans were just helpless puppets.[58]

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were well-known parts of tantric practice, a small corruption like this could
easily have creeped into the text. Compare *Lakṣmītantra* 30.57: *dhāryate
bhrāmyate caiva yantrārūḍham idaṃ param / nābhikandasthitenaiva
sahasrāreṇa neminā.* ("This whole world is held and moved [around as if]
mounted on a machine with a thousand-spoked felly at the bulb of the navel.")

[54]   MaSaṃ 22.19: *yāvan na saktyā saṃyogaṃ prāpnoti parameśvaraḥ /
tāvad bhramayate viśvaṃ yantrārūḍhas tu māyayā* (f. 40v).

[55]   Line 4424 in the electronic version at muktabodha.org, accessed on 6
May 2014.

[56]   BraYā 8.17: *trāsane kampane caiva bhayabhede tathaiva ca / karṣayanti
mahābhāgā yantrārūḍhās tu mānavān.* ("In the Frightening, Trembling and Break
of Fear [rituals], the fortunate ones attract humans when mounted on *yantra*s.")

[57]   Emend *yantrārūḍhās* to *yantrārūḍhān,* or *yantrārūḍhāṃs,* or to *aiśa*
pl. acc. *yantrārūḍhāṃ.*

[58]   Note also that *-st-* ligatures in the old Nepalese MS of the BraYā (such
as in *yantrārūḍhās-tu*) may perhaps be interpreted as unusual *-mt-* ligatures,

Thus, some of the above occurrences of the term *yantrārūḍha* may not refer to *yantra*s as magical diagrams at all. Nevertheless, the situation in BraYā chapter eight in general, and the situation concerning the term *yantrārūḍha* in chapter seven in particular, could be different and it seems that *yantra* in chapter seven could only be interpreted correctly in the context of the closely connected chapter 8, in which phrases similar to *yantrārūḍha,* such as *yantrayukta,* occur. BraYā chapter 8 seems partly to be dealing with magical *yantra*s (rituals?),[59] this time focusing on visualization, and the end of this chapter is still ambiguous: it may or may not refer to *yantra*s as mantric or geometric designs.[60] Visualization here involves the target being imagined as being terrified and naked in the middle of a group of goddesses and his body as being pierced by flag-staffs.[61] The goddesses should perhaps be visualized as arranged in patterns,[62] and this might well be what is meant

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which then supports the emendation to *yantrārūḍhām*. See more on this possibility of *-mt-* ligatures in the old Nepali MS of the BraYā in Kiss 2015: 77.

[59]　BraYā 8.1 (f. 43v): *athātaḥ sampravakṣyāmi karmasiddhividhānataḥ / samādhiyojanaṃ caiva yantrāṇi ca pṛthak pṛthak.* ("Now I shall teach you the application of *samādhi* and the *yantra*s one by one, with reference to the rituals and [resulting] *siddhi*s.")

[60]　BraYā 8.39: *dehalītalanirviṣṭā yantrārūḍhās tu yojayet / roṣaṇe karṣaṇe caiva preṣaṇe cāvalokane* [corr. *cāvalokaṇe* Cod.] / *yantrayuktā*[ḥ] *prasidhyanti bhairavasya vaco yathā.* ("[The goddesses] should be employed as being on the threshold, mounted on *yantra*s. In [rituals of] Anger, Attraction, Sending Away, and Glance, they succeed as attached to *yantra*s. This is Bhairava's teaching.")

[61]　8.24cd–25ab: *tāsāṃ madhyagatāṃ sādhyaṃ dhvajair āhatadehajam* [*-kam*?] // *udvignaṃ nagnam udbhrāntaṃ calamānaṃ vicintayet.* ("He should visualize the target as being in the centre of [the circle of] them, his body as pierced by flag-staffs, frightened, naked, agitated, trembling.")

[62]　BraYā 32cd–34ab: *dhvāṅkṣarūpyāṃ nyased devyo avadhūtatanusthitaḥ* // *āgneye nairite caiva pavane īśagocare / sādhyamadhyagataṃ caiva vidiśāṃ kiṅkarī nyaset* // *tatrārūḍhā*[ḥ] *smared devyo dūtyas caiva mahādhipe.* ("He should install the goddesses as having crow-forms, while his body is covered with the mantras of Avadhūtā. At the SE, SW, NW, and NE intermediate points

by *yantra* in this chapter, and *yantrayuktā* in 8.39c may simply mean something along the line of 'arranged in *yantra*-patterns,' although evidence is weak in this case.

Before switching from the BraYā's *yantra*s to other texts, the following may be added. That *yantra*s in the BraYā are complex rituals rather than mantra-inscribed geometric designs are also hinted at in BraYā 20.22 in the context of regulations for fire-pits (*kuṇḍa*). In some magical rituals including the *jayayantra*, a pentagonal fire-pit is prescribed.[63] This suggests that fire-offerings are integral parts of a *yantra*, and that a *yantra* should be the magical process itself. In contrast with this, in BraYā 51 ('*yantrādhikāra*'), which probably belongs to a slightly later textual layer than the first half of the text (the first '*ṣaṭka*'),[64] *yantra*s emerge as technical terms for drawn diagrams[65] with mantras and geometric designs, in the fashion that is seen in later *tantra*s.[66] Chapter 68 lists inks, materials and pens which can

of the compass, he should install the Kiṅkarīs as being in the target[?]. He should visualize the goddesses and the Dūtīs, oh Mahādhipā, as mounted there.")

[63] BraYā 20.22 (f. 97v): *bhāgyasambhavike caiva nijasainyasya rakṣaṇe / pañcakoṇaṃ samākhyātaṃ jayayantre tathaiva ca*. ("In the Luck-producing [ritual], in the Protecion of One's Own Army, as well as in the Victory Yantra, the pentagonal fire-pit is recommended.")

[64] BraYā 51.6 (f. 219r): *ṣaṭke tu prathamaṃ* [-*e*?] *deva khyātaṃ karmasahasrakaṃ / khecarīṇāñ ca sarvvāsā bhūcarīṇāñ ca sādhanaṃ.* ("Oh God, in the first Ṣaṭka, a thousand rituals have been taught, as well as the mastery over all the Khecarīs and Bhūcarīs.") See also n. 47.

[65] BraYā 51.17cd–18 (f. 219v): *śmaśānakarppaṭe bhūrjje likhed yantraṃ yathā śṛṇu / varggātītaṃ caturthena yuktaṃ tejvyavasthitaḥ / tena saṃpuṭitaṃ nāmaṃ niyojyan tu dalāṣṭake.* ("He should draw/write the *yantra* on rags from the cremation ground or birch-bark. Listen how it should be done. [The syllable] beyond the classes of the alphabet [KṢA, see Kṣemarāja's commentary ad SvT 2.52] should be joined with the fourth [letter, ī] on the fire[-syllable, RA] [i.e. KṢRĪM]. He should enclose the [target's] name between [two of] this [syllable] on an eight-petalled [lotus].")

[66] See also BraYā 102.30ab (f. 358r): *likhitaṃ tiṣṭhate yantra gṛhe deśe mahātmane.* ("*Yantra*s are drawn in homes and in [outdoor?] places, oh

be used for *yantra*s, and this can be in harmony with any *yantra*-teachings in the better-known sense of the word. These signs may confirm that the BraYā is a multi-layered text with chapters from different periods of time.

Yantra in the *Pāśupatasūtra*

Occurences of the term *yantra* in Śaiva texts that are probably earlier than the BraYā include the Atimārgic[67] *Pāśupatasūtra* (PS) 4.9:[68] *asanmāno hi yantrāṇāṃ sarveṣām uttamaḥ smṛtaḥ.* If the alternative reading in the *sūtrapāṭha* (*jantūnāṃ* for *yantrāṇāṃ*)[69] is ignored, as it is in Kauṇḍinya's commentary, the line can be interpreted thus: "For dishonour[70] is taught to be the best of *yantra*s." Kauṇḍinya comments: "*Yantra*s are [rituals] such as *agniṣṭoma*, [observances] such as a month's fast. They bring purity and prosperity to the householder and others."[71] Kauṇḍinya adds that *yantra*s are called thus because they are either *karman*s (rituals) and such (*yantraṃ karmādayaḥ,* the reading of the edition)[72] or because they are 'restrictions' (*yantraṃ maryādā,* Minoru Hara's emendation in Hara 1966: 357).[73] The latter

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Mahātmanā." [Note the *aiśa* stem form *yantra* and the vocative *mahātmane.*])

   [67] See n. 3.

   [68] Or 4.7, see Bisschop 2006.

   [69] See Bisschop 2006.

   [70] The Pāśupatas were required to fake madness and thus receive abuse from ordinary people. "By this means the Pāśupata provoked an exchange in which his demerits passed to his detractors and their merits to him." (Sanderson 1988: 665.)

   [71] *Pāśupatasūtra* p. 100: *yantrāṇi agniṣṭomādīni māsopavāsādīni ca gṛhasthādīnāṃ śuddhivṛddhikarāṇi.*

   [72] *Pāśupatasūtra* p. 100.

   [73] 'Restriction' is Hara's translation, Hara 1966: 357 n. 1. Note also *Atharvaveda* 6.81, which mentions *yantṛ, maryāda,* and probably an amulet/ring/bracelet: *yantā́si yáchase hástāv ápa rákṣāṃsi sedhasi / prajā́ṃ dhánaṃ ca gṛhṇānáḥ parihastó abhūd ayám // párihasta ví dhāraya yóniṃ gárbhāya dhā́tave / máryāde putrám ā́ dhehi táṃ tvám ā́ gamayāgame // yám*

is supported by Kauṇḍinya's next remark: "Since lay persons are without *yantra*s, they have no limits/restrictions (*amaryādāvasthāḥ*): that is why [the text says] *yantra*s."[74] What is relevant for us now is that *yantra*s in the PS are probably rituals, observances, restrictions or rules that are auspicious for the practitioner, and they are far from being simple diagrams. This might mark a very early phase of the history of the term *yantra.* In the PS, the term might have originally been connected with transgressiveness: it hints at fake madness and dishonour.[75]

Other Śaiva texts

In the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā* (5–6th century),[76] arguably the earliest extant Śaiva *tantra*,[77] and in the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* and the *Mālinī-vijayottaratantra*, the term *yantra* is rarely used and the contexts in which it is used seem inconclusive. In the *Svacchandatantra* (SvT)*,* magical procedures that resemble the *yantra*-rituals of both the BraYā and of later texts appear, but the term *yantra* is used only when

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parihastám ábibhar áditiḥ putrakāmyā̀ / tváṣṭā tám asyā ā̀ badhnād yáthā putráṃ jánād. ("Thou art a grasper [*yantā̀*]*,* holding fast both hands: drivest fiends away. A holder both of progeny and riches hath this Ring [*parihasto*] become. / Prepare accordingly, O Ring [*parihasta*], the mother for the infant's birth. On the right way bring forth the boy. Make him come hither. I am here. The Amulet [*parihastam*] which Aditi wore when desirous of a son, Tvashtar hath bound upon this dame and said, Be mother of a boy." transl. by Ralph T.H. Griffith.)

[74] *Pāśupatasūtra* p. 100: *yasmād ayantrā laukikā amaryādāvasthā bhavantīty ato yantrāṇi.*

[75] It is also worth mentioning that Kauṇḍinya's commentary uses a similar term, *yantraṇa,* in the sense of 'intentness, mindfulness, discipline, withdrawal of the senses'. See Minoru Hara's translation of Kauṇḍinya's commentary ad PS 3.12 and 5.21 (Hara 1966).

[76] See Goodall 2007 and 2015: 32 (forthcoming).

[77] See Goodall 2015: 13 (forthcoming).

referring to devices or machines, e.g. *ikṣuyantra* (sugar-mill, 10.52d)[78]
and *ghaṭayantra* (water-mill, 11.82d).[79] Kṣemarāja in his commentary
on the SvT applies the term *yantra* when referring to magical practices
in the SvT with or without geometric patterns. One instance where
he does label that did not necessarily involve drawings originally
as *yantra*s is SvT 9.62–64ab:

> *evaṃ parivārasthabhairavāṣṭakādyantasthakapālīśavidyārājāśrayeṇa*
> *rakṣāvidhānena mṛtyujayam uktvā, prasaṅgāt karmāntarasiddhim api*
> *yantrakrameṇādiśati devaḥ /*
>
> > *śikhyāhvena tu deveśi sādhyanāma vidarbhayet /*
> > *analārṇam adhaś cordhve sādhyārṇeṣu niyojayet* //SvT 9.62//

[Translation:] Having thus taught the Mṛtyujaya [ritual] in the form of a protec-
tion ritual involving Kapālīśa, the king of *vidyā*s [i.e. the Navātman mantra],[80]
who dwells among the eight Bhairavas and their retinues etc., the God inciden-
tally teaches the magical powers of yet another ritual through a *yantra* procedure:
O Deveśi, he should tie together [in writing] the target's name with the [mantra]
called Śikhin. He should bind the syllable of Fire [RA] underneath and above
the syllables of the target['s name] //SvT 9.62//

> *śikhyāhvena śikhivāhanamantreṇa pūrvoktena / vidarbhayed iti 'abhidheyaṃ*
> *bhavet pūrvaṃ tato mantraḥ sakṛd bhavet' iti śāstrāntaroktasthityānuvinya*
> *stamantraṃ kuryāt, analārṇaṃ rephaḥ, tad ekaikatra sādhyanāmākṣaraṃ*
> *ūrdhvādho niyojayet / itthaṃ vidarbhitam etad āgneyamaṇḍalāntastha-vāyu-*
> *maṇḍalasaṃsthitaṃ kuryāt, āgneyamaṇḍalaṃ trikoṇaṃ tadbahir vāyu-*
> *maṇḍalaṃ ṣaṭkoṇaṃ vartulam. //9.62// etac ca yasya likhyate:*
>
> > *tasya vai jāyate dāhaḥ...*

[Translation:] By "called Śikhin" the aforementioned Śikhivāhana
mantra[81] is meant. "tie together": following the instructions of another

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[78]   It is actually a machine to torment people in hell, as Kṣemarāja
explains: *yatra ikṣuvaj janāḥ pīḍyante.*

[79]   *ghaṭayantram araghaṭṭaḥ*, as Kṣemarāja explains.

[80]   Kṣemarāja ad SvT 9.53: *vidyārājaṃ navātmamantram.*

[81]   Probably HRŪM. See SvT 1.77: *sānto bindur adho hy agniḥ*
ṣaṣṭhayuktas tu kīrtītaḥ / śikhivāhanasaṃjñas tu jñātavyo 'sau varānane.

śāstra on the position [of the mantras], which says that "the name is first, then the mantra should come immediately", he should install the mantra after [the target's name]. The "syllable of Fire" is RA. He should bind that [RA] above and under each syllable of the target's name. Being tied together thus, [the target's name] should be placed in a Wind-*maṇḍala* that is inside a Fire-*maṇḍala*. The Fire-*maṇḍala* is a triangle, the Wind-*maṇḍala* outside it is a circular[?] hexagon //9.62// [He] for whom it is written...

He will catch fire...

vāyvādhmātāgnidīpitatvād agnivarṇamadhyagatākṣaratvāt
śikhivāhanavidarbhitatvāc ca //
kiṃ śikhivāhanavidarbhitamātram eva nāmāgneyamaṇḍalāntaḥ kriyate /
na tanmātram eva kiṃ tu

...phaṭkārādyantarodhitam /

[Translation:] Because he will be consumed by fire fed by the wind, and because of the syllables [of the target's name] being enclosed by fire-syllables, and because they are joined with the Śikhivāhana mantra. Should the name be joined merely with the Śikhivāhana inside the Fire-*maṇḍala*? Not only [with that], but

[his name should be] locked within [two] PHAṬ-syllables.

phaṭkārāntaśikhivāhanabījavidarbhitam iti vyākhyānam asat, tathā
vākyārthasyābhāvāt // etallekhanānantaraṃ ca mantranāthaṃ pūjayitvā,
etaccakramadhyagatam eva
jvalantaṃ cintayet sādhyaṃ dinānāṃ saptakaṃ yadi //9.63//
takṣaṇāj jāyate dāho bhairavasya vaco yathā /

Kṣemarāja's commentary: *sāntaḥ h, tasyādho 'gniḥ r, ṣaṣṭhaḥ ūkāraḥ, bindunādādyupalakṣaṇaparaḥ.* ("[The syllable] after SA, a *bindu,* the Fire[-syllable] below it with the sixth [letter]: this is how it is taught. Oh Varānanā, this is to be known as the Śikhivāhana [mantra]. [Comm.:] [The syllable] after SA is H, below it the Fire[-syllable] is RA, the sixth is Ū, for which the *bindunāda* etc. is implied.")

> [Translation:] The interpretation "joined with the Śikhivāhana seed-mantra, which is inside [two] PHAṬ-syllable" is wrong because in this way the sentence is meaningless. Immediately after the writing he should worship the Lord of mantras. [He should visualize the target] as being in this very *cakra*:

>> If he visualizes the target for seven days as being on fire, //9.63//
>> the burning will start immediately. This is how Bhairava taught it.

In these passages, Kṣemarāja treats the SvT's verses as of an independent ritual and not of one connected to the previous one, which requires a 32-petalled *cakra*/lotus to be drawn.[82] He may or may not be right in this, but his addition that the target's name and the mantras should be placed inside geometric patterns might be more than what the SvT's redactor[s] intended. And note both that the SvT itself does not label this kind of practices as *yantra*s and that Kṣemarāja may be using the word *cakra* to refer to the mantra-syllables under and above, as well as before and after the target's name. This is in harmony with his definition of *yantracakra* cited above: *yantracakraṃ viśiṣṭasaṃniveśalikhito mantrasamūhaḥ* ("a collection of mantras written in a particular pattern"). It may also be significant that Kṣemarāja labels the above cited ritual as *yantrakrama* ('*yantra* procedure'), perhaps suggesting that a *yantra* can be a ritual rather than merely an object.

   Similarly to the above cited SvT verses, *Tantrasadbhāva* 14.69–76ab describe a *yantra* without mentioning any geometric designs:

athānyat sampravakṣyāmi vidyā caiva yathoddhṛtā /
oṃ cāmuṇḍe khukhaḍhiḍhaḍhaṃ niśācāri
KHAKHAPIÑCCHAM VĀRIṆI VICCE SVĀHĀ /
kevalaṃ mūlam ālikhya lāñchitaṃ tilakena tu //
punar eva mahāvīra śikharaṃ dakṣiṇaṃ nyaset /
vāmaṃ ca śikharaṃ nyasya padasyānte vyavasthitāḥ //
punar eva nyaset sādhyaṃ bhūyo mantraṃ samālikhet /
punaḥ paścāl likhen mantrī sādhyaṃ ca tadanantaram //
anyonyagranthitā bījā-d-bhūrjapatre samālikhet /

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[82] SvT 9.50cd: *dvātriṃśadarasaṃyuktaṃ cakram ālikhya bhāmini.* ("Oh Bhāminī, he should draw a 32-spoked *cakra*.")

āvṛtya bhūrjapatre [-aṃ?] tu hṛdisthaṃ kārayed budhaḥ //
adhasyāt kārayet sādhyaṃ sādhakaṃ copari sthitam /
chardirājyākṛtiṃ kṛtvā rocanāyā samālikhet //
mṛṇmaye pātrake caiva sthāpya yatnena saṃpuṭe /
chardirājyā punaś caiva paścān nicchidra kārayet //
prayatnena mahāyogī jalamadhye nidhāpayet /
yadi kruddho bhaven mantrī tatkṣaṇād vaśam ānayet /
eṣa devi mahāyantraḥ kulamārgagato bhuvi //

[Tentative translation:] And now I shall teach you another *vidyā*-mantra as it should be extracted: OṂ CĀMUṆḌE KHUKHAḌHIḌHAḌHAṂ NIŚĀCĀRI KHA-KHAPIÑCCHAṂ VĀRIṆI VICCE SVĀHĀ. He should write down only the root[-mantra, i.e. probably OṂ CĀMUṆḌE] and he should decorate it with a *tilaka*[-mark]. Then the great hero should place the right-side *śikhara* [ŚA][83] and the left-side one [VA] after the word. Then he should place down the target['s name] and write down the mantra again. Then again the mantra master should write the target['s name] immediately after it. He should write down the seed-mantras tied together on birch-bark. The wise one should fold the birch-bark, and keep it on his chest [as an amulet]. The target should be below, the *sādhaka* above[?]: [this is how] he should fashion figure[s] with *chardirāji*[?][84] and draw with yellow pigment. Then he should put it into a clay pot, into a bowl. Again, he should fill in the holes with *chardirāji*. The great yogi should place it in water carefully. Whenever the practitioner gets angry, the target will be subjugated. This is [famous] on earth as the Great Yantra of the Kula Path.

Although not all details are clear to me at this point, it seems that this passage resembles some of the BraYā's *yantra*s in the following

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[83]   Cf. *Tantrasadbhāva* 3.112: *rasamadhyagatas tadvad akṣarau dvau śubhātmakau / śikharau tu smṛtau bhadre vāmadakṣiṇagau śubhau*. "Similarly, the two auspicious syllables between RA and SA [in the alphabet, RALA-VA-ŚA-ṢASA] are called Śikharas, O Bhadrā. These two auspicious ones go on the left and right." These two *akṣara*s would give us *vaśa* left to right, which would be typical in subjugation rituals: *vaśaṃkuru/vaśīkuru* ("Be subjugated!"). The passage above seems to require the practitioner to write down these two syllables the other way round: ŚAVA ("corpse"), which may or may not be what was intended.

[84]   For the obscure '*chardirāji/yā*' cf. BraYā 5.69cd (and 5.77ab): *chardirājīkṛto lepaḥ trailokyaṃ-mukhabandhanam.* ("An ointment made from *chardirājī* takes the three world's breath away.")

characteristics: it teaches very little or no linear geometric patterns, it requires the *sādhaka* to draw/make an image/figurine of the target, to make an amulet, it involves mantras and rituals, and the whole process is labelled as *yantra.* Indeed, even when geometric designs are prescribed for a *yantra* in a relatively early Śaiva text, it may seem, as I have suggested above, that the term *yantra* denotes the whole process, the ritual itself, rather than an object.

In *Jayadrathayāmala* 1.20.43ab, a *yantra*-description, which includes, among other things, instructions to draw eight-petalled lotuses, ends thus: "...this *yantra* should be performed/done by the wise for three days."[85] Although this is again inconclusive, it suggests a wider range of meanings for the term *yantra* than just a drawn magical diagram/amulet.[86]

The *Netratantra* (NT),[87] on which some of Sanderson's definitions are based,[88] probably marks a new phase in the usage of the term *yantra.* Here magical diagrams with geometric designs, and ones to be worn around the neck, are sometimes referred to as *yantra*s,[89] and the terms *cakra* and *yantra* are probably used synonymously. Brunner has already brought up the possibility that *cakra* can be a synonym for *yantra*, but

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[85] *Jayadrathayāmala* 1.20.43ab: *tasmād dinatrayaṃ kāryaṃ yantram etad vipaścitā.*

[86] Note also the masculine gender of *yantraḥ* here.

[87] Dated to AD 700/800–850 in Sanderson 2004: 293.

[88] He refers to NT chapters six (Sanderson 2004: 244–245 cited in n. 8 above), seventeen ("The Yantra taught in the 17th [chapter of the NT] will bestow victory on kings who are under attack from beyond their borders and should be used at all times to protect the king's wives, his sons, brahmins and others." Sanderson 2004: 246), and nineteen (Sanderson 2004: 290 n. 149 cited in n. 9 above).

[89] E.g. NT 6.7cd (*yantrāṇi mohanādīni mantrarāṭ kurute bhṛśam*) may refer to a description of geometric designs in NT 6.28-34 (labelled *cakra*), and NT 19.208–211ab mention *yantra*s as objects worn around the neck (*likhitair yantrayogair vā pūjitaiḥ suprayatnataḥ / veṣṭitaiḥ kaṇṭhasaṃlagnaiḥ sūtrakair vāsitādikaiḥ* ("With drawings/written [mantras] used in *yantra*s, which are worshipped zealously, wrapped up and worn around the neck using thread, perfumed etc."))

her doubts about it are also very revealing.[90] There might be a tendency in the NT to use the word *yantra* mostly for such magic(al diagrams) that control or hurt others, or at least for the ones that are somewhat dangerous or transgressive. In this respect, it is notable that the *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava* (NṢA, alias *Vāmakeśvarīmata*), a text that "clings to the edge of the Śaiva canon,"[91] and is abundant in magic and magical diagrams, mentions the term *yantra* only twice, while the commentator Jayaratha (13th century, see Sanderson 2007a: 418–419) repeatedly[92] uses it for magical rituals and diagrams labelled by the NṢA as *cakra*s. One of the two occurrences of *yantra* in the NṢA refers to a device (a trench?) to protect or hold back somebody.[93] The other (*yantravarṇapuṭīkṛtam*, 2.36b) is inconclusive ("enclosed between magical syllables"?). *Yantra* does not seem to have been a significant term for the author(s) of the NṢA.

Conclusions

Dating Śaiva tantric texts is notoriously difficult,[94] thus to outline the early history of the term *yantra* is a challenging task, but at the same

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[90] "Just as those other machines bearing the same name, the ritual yantra is first an ingenious instrument. [...] Finally, cakra is frequently used as a synonym for yantra, though we cannot always tell if this practice is due to a lack of rigour in the vocabulary or to a change of perspective. In those cases, the author may be talking of cakra to refer to the mass of the divinities that are present, or to their configuration, while using the word yantra to refer to the use of the object. But more research than what I was able to do would be necessary to arrive at a convincing conclusion on this point." (Brunner 2003: 163.)

[91] Sanderson 1988: 689.

[92] E.g. *yantraprayogam āha* (ad NṢA 2.55), and *evaṃ māntraṃ prayogam uktvā yāntram api āha* (ad NṢA 2.7) vs. *cakrayogena* in NṢA 2.33c.

[93] NṢA 2.26: *ākṛṣṭahṛdayāṃ naṣṭadhairyām uttīrṇajīvitām / vapraprāk āraniviḍanadīyantrasurakṣitām* [*ānayen nārīm*]. ("[He should attract a woman by magic] as if her heart were drawn, as if her firmness were gone, as if her life were saved from imprisonment behind a river *yantra* thick as a rampart.")

[94] See e.g. Sanderson 2013: 213.

time it could help us dating the texts. All in all, some general tendencies can perhaps be observed and outlined in a preliminary fashion. I can see these major phases in the history of *yantra*s:

1. In passages that have nothing to do with magic or magical diagrams (even in those incorporated in chapters on magical *yantra*s), a *yantra* is usually a machine, a device, an apparatus, a bolt etc.

2. In the pre-tantric *Pāśupatasūtra* as explained by Kauṇḍinya, a *yantra* is a ritual, observance or restriction. In the *Pāśupatasūtra* itself it might imply some transgressiveness (dishonour, fake madness).

3. In early scriptures of the Siddhānta, magical *yantra*s are seldom mentioned, as Brunner has already observed (Brunner 2003: 162).

4. In some early Śaiva *tantra*s, such as the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā* and the Trika *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* and *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, the term *yantra* does not seem to be present in any significant form. In the *Svacchandatantra*, the term is not used to label a magical ritual or object, either.

5. In early chapters of the *Brahmayāmala*, and in some passages of the *Tantrasadbhāva*, a *yantra* seems to be a term for a complex magical procedure, usually of the black and transgressive, or at least dangerous, type, not necessarily involving any geometric designs but usually involving transgressive substances, fire-offerings, the use of rosaries, and images or figurines of the target.

6. *Yantra* emerges as a term for magical diagrams with geometric designs and for amulets in the *Netratantra*, possibly as a synonym (or counterpart?) of *cakra.*

7. In some later texts such as the *Kubjikāmatatantra,* which draws extensively on the Trika and is thus later than it,[95] and the *Matsyendrasaṃhitā* (13th century), while *yantra*-diagrams with

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[95]   Sanderson 2002: 1.

drawn patterns may appear, the phrase *yantrārūḍha* may have been misinterpreted by redactors/copyists who supposed that a *yantra* is usually a magic diagram.

8. Even for Kṣemarāja in the early part of the 11th century, a *yantra* (*cakra*) can simply be interpreted as "mantras in a particular pattern", perhaps without any drawing. Nevertheless, he tends to add geometrical patterns to descriptions of mantric arrangements, perhaps to "update" them.[96]

9. Later probably this latter usage of the term, which treats *yantra*s as mantra-inscribed magical objects, prevails.

The question of early *yantra*s is obviously in need of much more research. Nevertheless, the examination of the usage of the term *yantra* in *tantra*s may give us another tool to date our texts, a fundamental process to get to know more about the religious history of mediaeval India.

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[96] And he himself sometimes cites texts in which a *yantra* is clearly an object with drawn geometrical patterns, e.g. ad NT 16.34: *kakārapuṭayor madhye yasya nāma samullikhet / tadbāhye vahnibhavanaṃ rephāṣṭakavibhūṣitam // likhitvā sthāpayed yantraṃ kapālobhayasaṃpuṭe [...] ityādiyantrayuktyā ca śrīkulārṇavoktayā...*

Brahmayāmala. NGMPP microfilm reel no. A 42/6; NAK 3-370. Palm-leaf, 358 folios. Dated (Sunday (*ādityadina*), the 8th of Māgha, waxing fortnight, Nepal *saṃvat* 172 = Sunday, 12 January, 1052 AD.) Scribe: Jayākarajīva, a resident of the Paśupatinātha temple area of Kathmandu. For further details on this and the other MSS, see Hatley 2007:287. I made extensive use of Shaman Hatley's superb transcript of the *Brahmayāmala*, for which I am very grateful.

Jayadrathayāmala. I used Olga Serbaeva's transcript of the NGMPP MS No. 5-4650, reel no. B 122/7, which she kindly shared with me.

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