Mukti in Kristapurāṇa

How Thomas Stephens S.J. (1549-1619) conveys a Christian message of salvation in words with Hindu connotations

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Abstract
This thesis examines how the English Jesuit Father Thomas Stephens used a language full of Hindu connotations for conveying a Christian message in his Marathi epic *Kristapurāṇa*, written in Goa in the early years of the 17th century. Specifically it seeks to analyse (1) which words Stephens used for speaking about salvation, (2) which ideas about salvation he thereby conveyed, and (3) how he dealt with connotations of such words that are difficult to accommodate in a Christian worldview. Stephens’ strategies for handling such words is analysed by means of Saussure’s understanding of a language as a system of differences and a word as a *sign*, composed of a *signal* (sound pattern) and a *signification* (concept), where the relation between signal and signification is arbitrary. Stephens’ work is described as fearlessly adopting signals borrowed from Hinduism but sometimes altering the signification, thereby forming a sign which looks identical to that used in Hindu context, but with a signification that fits in a Christian worldview. The altering of important signs, such as *mukti/mokṣa*, leads to a reshaping of the language into a system where e.g. *mukti/mokṣa* significates salvation as liberation, but not from rebirth, and where *punarjanma* stands not for rebirth as a hindrance for liberation, but a new birth which liberates. In this way Stephens is found to present a message about salvation that in all essentials mirrors Catholic theology of his time, but giving it a distinctly Indian flavour.

*Keywords: Kristapurāṇa; Father Thomas Stephens; Doutrina Christam em Lingoa Bramana Canarim; mission; inculturation; accommodatio; Christianity in India; Marathi; Konkani; Goa; salvation; mokṣa; mukti.*
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1. Introduction

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth century was a period in which English culture flourished and produced many a true pearl that still enthral lovers of art across the world. The most famous among the literary geniuses writing under the custody of Queen Elisabeth was of course William Shakespeare. On the musical field the singer-songwriters of their time, composers and lutenists like John Dowland and Thomas Campion, wrote delicate songs about worldly and spiritual love alike. But although a golden age of English culture, Elizabethan England was not equally benevolent to all its children, which was a contributing factor behind the circumstances that made one of England’s literary masterminds a prominent person in the history of Marathi literature, although he remained as good as unknown in his homeland. The person in question is Thomas Stephens, also known as Father Stephens, born around 1549, who left England due to the persecutions against Catholics, entered the Jesuit Society in Rome in the 1570s and was sent as a missionary to the Portuguese colony of Goa in 1579, where he would stay and serve as a missionary priest until his death forty years later.

Although Thomas Stephens served a Church that, due to the Papal-Portuguese padroado agreement, was closely intermingled with the Portuguese colonial power – which was not less repressive against Hindus than the English Crown against Catholics – what is striking about Stephens is his openness and receptiveness for Indian languages and literature and his capacity to adopt all their richness for expressing the Christian faith. In European languages, apart from a few letters in English and Latin to family members and superiors back home in Europe, he authored a grammar in Portuguese of the local Goan language Konkani, which was the first printed grammar of any modern Indian language. In Indian languages he wrote *Doutrina Christam em lingoa Bramana Canarim*, a small catechism in Konkani,1 and *Kristapurāṇa*, a lengthy versified retelling of the Bible in Marathi.2 That Christian *purāṇa* is the subject of this thesis.

Generally speaking Thomas Stephens’ work is interesting as a sample of how one cognitive system can be translated or transposed into a new linguistic environment, specifically transposing a Christian message from European languages into Indian languages. Such an enterprise inevitably meets with a long row of dilemmas on a macro-level (which general strategy should be used) as well as on a micro level (which particular words and

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1 This little catechism is sometimes referred to as *Doutrina Cristã em língua Concani*. Spellings vary. In this thesis it will henceforward be referred to simply as *Doutrina Christam*.
2 Marathi and Konkani are closely related languages. Like Hindi, Gujarati and the other major North Indian languages they belong to the Indo-Aryan sub-group of the large Indo-European language family. Today Marathi is official language in the state of Maharashtra and Konkani in Goa.
phrases should be used). A major difficulty is how to assess and handle the connotations that certain words carry or lack. One strategy would have been to keep all the crucial terms from the original language (Latin or Portuguese) and transpose them into the new language (Marathi), thereby eliminating the problem of how to handle unwanted connotations of native words. On the other hand, this might bereave the message of much of its depth and richness, since Latin or Portuguese terms for Marathi-speakers lacked the connotations they had for Portuguese people. The opposite strategy would be to consequently replace even the most crucial terms with Indian words or phrases, thereby conveying a message rich in taste but at the risk that the new words might carry unwanted connotations that can alter the intended message. Stephens’ ideal seems to have been close to the latter of these contrasting strategies.

Especially in Kristapurāṇa, he accommodates so much of the style and vocabulary of the Hindu literature on which he modelled his work that he occasionally seems to balance on the edge of syncretism or some kind of gnostic Christianity. But he seems to manage to keep on “the safe side” from a Catholic point of view; his work is not a sample of syncretism but an attempt to translate or transpose a Christian message into a previously Hindu language. His consequence in using Indian words even for theologically very significant and intricate terms is striking.3

To give an example central for the aim of this thesis, Stephens did not use any hereditary Christian language term for salvation, but used a range of Marathi words with meanings such as liberation and salvation.4 Since these words were taken from a predominantly Hindu language, they carry connotations that are not always uncomplicated to accommodate in a Christian context. Two of the most central and most theologically charged of these terms are mukti and mokṣa. The meaning of these words is “liberation”, but, taken from a Hindu language system, they come along with a strong connotation of liberation from reincarnation, which in turn is a concept that is absent in Christianity and very badly reflects Christian views of what man needs to be liberated from.

1.1. Aim

The aim of this thesis is to describe and analyse how salvation is presented in Thomas Stephens’ Kristapurāṇa, especially in relation to corresponding themes in Hindu tradition and literature of which Stephens was arguably aware. I will give a description of the words and

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3 This holds true for the Marsden manuscript of Kristapurāṇa, which is the version I analyse in this thesis, and to a somewhat lesser extent for the other printed editions. In Doutrina Christam Stephens made quite extensive use of Portuguese and Latin words.

4 This is true even for Doutrina Christam.
concepts used for this purpose and analyse their mutual relations. Having identified the terminology Stephens used to speak about salvation, I will first present the message about liberation that he preaches and then analyse how he dealt with the, from a Christian point of view, problematic Hindu connotations of the words he used. The three questions listed below have served as lodestars during my research.

1. Which words are used in Thomas Stephens’s *Kristapurāṇa* when speaking about (final) salvation?
2. Which ideas about salvation are thereby conveyed?
3. How does *Kristapurāṇa* deal with Hindu connotations of these words and concepts, which are difficult or impossible to accommodate in a Christian worldview?

The first two of these questions will be treated in chapter 4; the third in chapter 5.

1.2. Method

The method I have used in this study began with the establishment of a semantic cluster that would help identifying passages about salvation in *Kristapurāṇa*. This included an analysis of words for salvation in Latin (the theological language *par excellence* in early modern Catholicism), Hebrew and Greek (the biblical languages) and an identification of which Marathi words Stephens used to express the same or similar ideas as express by their Latin, Hebrew and Greek counterparts.\(^5\) *Doutrina Christam*, the catechesis for children that Father Stephens wrote or translated into Konkani, served as an aid to understand which words and concepts Stephens treated as synonymous or otherwise connected.\(^6\) It thereafter continued with a close reading of the text\(^7\) and listing of relevant words used in *Kristapurāṇa* and analysis of passages where they occur.\(^8\) Thereafter *Kristapurāṇa*’s message has been analysed in relation to Hindu ideas and Catholic theology.\(^9\) Finally Stephens’ strategies for dealing with hard-to-accommodate connotations of words borrowed from Hindu contexts are analysed with the help of a theoretic vocabulary borrowed from Saussure’s structuralistic theory about language.\(^{10}\)

\(^5\) See chapter 2.
\(^6\) See chapter 3.
\(^7\) For limiting of the material and choice of edition, see chapter 1.3.3.
\(^8\) See chapter 4.1.
\(^9\) See chapter 4.
\(^{10}\) The theoretic framework of this study is presented in chapter 1.7. The analysis of Stephens’ strategies for dealing with problematic connotations is carried out in chapter 5.
1.3. Notes on translation and transliteration

English Bible quotations in this thesis are taken from the New International Version (NIV); Latin from the Vulgate.

All translations from Marathi and Konkani are my own, unless otherwise stated. Marathi and Sanskrit words are transliterated from the Devanagari script according to the following principles:

1. The vowels e and o are always long. Other vowels are short unless they have a line on top; then they are long.
2. t, d, n and l are dental; ṭ, ḍ, ṇ and ḷ are retroflex, i.e. pronounced with the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth.
3. ś and ṡ are both similar to the first sound in “she”, but ś is more dental and ṡ more retroflex.
4. The anusvara is always indicated with ō. It indicates [n], [m], a semivowel which lacks counterpart in English, or nasalisation of the preceding vowel, depending on context.
5. r in Sanskrit is a vocalised r; in Marathi its pronunciation is [ru].

The system is chosen because of its capacity to render the Devanagari without ambiguity. Konkani words in this thesis are rendered according to the same system as Stephens uses in *Doutrina Christam*, which is printed in Latin script. That system is explained in chapter 3.

As is often the case in old literature, the spelling in Kristapurāṇa and *Doutrina Christam* is not consequent; the same word is often spelled in a number of different ways. Therefore words are sometimes standardised in the exposition according to their Sanskrit or modern standard Marathi form, then using the system described above.

1.4. Thomas Stephens’ life and work

Thomas Stephens’ early years are unsatisfactorily documented, which makes it difficult to draw the picture in more than sketchy lines. Early Jesuit writers date his birth to 1549, but according to James Southwood it cannot have been earlier than 1550, since he was “elected

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11 The anusvara is a dot over a letter in the Devanagari script, used mainly to indicate various nasal sounds. In Marathi the nasalisation is not always pronounced. In *Kristapurāṇa* Stephens sometimes add or omit anusvaras at will, which may make the transliterated words seem odder than they are to a reader familiar with Marathi or Sanskrit.

12 This is for example the case in the Marathi pronunciation of saṁsāra.
on the Foundation of Winchester College in 1564 when he was thirteen years of age”.13 The name of his birthplace is variously spelled, but the place is probably Bushton in Wiltshire.14 If the above mentioned information is correct, Stephens studied at Winchester College and, according to some sources, later at New College in Oxford.15

In his twenties, Stephens got trouble due to his Catholic faith, which induced him to leave the country. In his own words he “fled from England”.16 Stephens’ interest for India was apparently awakened by his wealthy Catholic friend Thomas Pound, with whom he had travelled in England for two years. Pound had come across letters from Jesuits working in India, and his enthusiasm must have spilled over on Stephens. For various reasons, however, Pounde could not leave England, and therefore Stephens travelled to Rome alone, with the intention to join the Jesuits.17

According to Falcao and Veliath, Stephens entered the Society of Jesus in Rome in 1575,18 but according to Ferguson, it happened not until 1578.19 The differing dates in the sources available were acknowledged already by Southwood, who proposed that “the first is that on which the future missionary entered the Novitiate of St. Andrew, and the Second date that on which – after completing his probation – he was admitted as Scholasticus into one of the Colleges at Rome, where he would take the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.20

In 1579, during his second year of philosophical studies, Stephens was granted permission by the Jesuit General to join the mission in Portuguese India.21 Stephens left Rome for Lisbon without finishing his studies, and embarked from there on a ship to Portuguese Goa. The fleet of five vessels under the command of a João de Saldanha left Lisbon on the 4th April, 1579, and reached Goa 24th October the same year.22

A couple of weeks after his landing in Goa, Stephens wrote a letter to his father in England, dated 10th November 1579, wherein he describes his dangerous and troublesome journey and


14 Southwood, p. 232.


his encounter with the new land. Wether and how Stephens letters home stirred English interest in India I cannot assess, but for curiosity’s sake can be mentioned that in 1856 Philip Anderson, in his book *The English in Western India*, suggested that “Stephens’ advices were the strongest inducements which London merchants had been offered to embark in Indian speculation; and certainly they began from this period to fit out expeditions for the East.”

The year after his arrival in India, Stephens was ordained a priest. In a letter originally written in Latin to his brother who had sought refuge in France, dated 24th October, 1583, Stephens accounts for the circumstances leading to his ordination in the following way:

I, too, though tried by serious illness during the first year, recovered that very year. Not long after, owing to the vast harvest of souls and the extremely few labourers, I had to be advanced to Holy Orders.

According to the same letter he was then sent to the peninsula of Salcete in southern Goa to help the new Christians there. There were eleven churches in the place and the number of Christians on the increase, but in the part of Salcete nearest to the mainland, there were “but a handful of Christians” and “the pagans” were “all of a warlike character” and hostile towards the Portuguese as well as towards Christianity. Before describing various atrocities committed by natives – but also by the Lombard Fr. Peter Berno, who had “slain a cow upon the altar of the idol so as to clear the place of the superstitious people” and was therefore killed and mutilated by “the infidels” – Stephens mentions that “as in many other places subject to the Portuguese, the pagan temples have been destroyed”. Unfortunately the subsequent passage is missing, so that we cannot know which attitude Stephens expressed towards the destroying of Hindu temples, but the context gives the impression that he found it problematic. If nothing else it must have contributed to the inhabitants’ “great hatred for the Fathers”, and Stephens writes that “though we have fled from England and have not sought refuge in France, there has been no lack of dangers and troubles in India.”

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25 Southwood, p. 233.
that Stephens refers to is a massacre of five Jesuit fathers at Cuncolim in southern Salcete in 1583.\textsuperscript{32} The priests were buried by Thomas Stephens after he had retrieved their bodies from a well into which they had been thrown.\textsuperscript{33}

With his open mind and linguistic talent, Stephens soon developed a taste for the new country as well as its languages. In the already mentioned letter to his brother, he even mentions their similarity with the classical languages of Europe:

Many are the languages of these places. Their pronunciation is not disagreeable, and their structure is allied to Greek and Latin. The phrases and constructions are of a wonderful kind. The letter in the syllables have their value [\textit{sic!}], and are varied as many times as the consonants can be combined with the vowels and the mutes with the liquids.\textsuperscript{34}

According to Falcao, Stephens was proficient in Marathi, Konkani, Sanskrit, English and Portuguese,\textsuperscript{35} and although he does not seem to have written anything in Sanskrit, also Abbot claims that Stephens “must have known Sanskrit more or less”,\textsuperscript{36} probably because of the many Sanskrit words (although often Marathified) with which his Marathi is sprinkled.

On 6\textsuperscript{th} December 1601 Stephens wrote a letter to Fr. Claudius Aquaviva, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus in Rome.\textsuperscript{37} He begins the letter by stating that he is Rector of the college of Margão, the major town in Salcete, since six months. Most of the letter is a petition for more and better educated priests. Many of the churches in Salcete have “vicars who are not fit for their work or who have long been in need of a rest” and some are even without priest altogether. The local clerics could be of some help later, but are still so badly developed that they sometimes “do more harm than good”. Stephens writes that the “sad plight” of the Christian community stems from “ignorance and malice”; they do not even understand “the things necessary for their salvation”. Both these problems, however, could be remedied by sufficient and qualified residing pastors in all churches.\textsuperscript{38}

In the end of his 1601 letter to Aquaviva, Stephens lists four good things about the Christian community of Salcete. The first two of these are the population of Margão (“all Christian

\textsuperscript{33} Veliath, ‘Thomas Stephens – a human monument of inculturation in India’, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{34} Falcao \textit{Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa}, p.1676.
\textsuperscript{38} Falcao, \textit{Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa}, pp. 1678-1679.
Brahmins”) and the lively church of Madre de Deos in Majorda. The third thing is “a catechism which was composed in the vernacular and which the children learn by heart”. The catechism is written in question and answer form and “in confession it is seen that even a little knowledge of it is beneficial.”

The fourth thing that Stephens mentions as good about the Christian community of Salcete is “the little chapels which Fr. Provincial Nuno Rodrigues ordered to be erected in remote villages.” There children can study the catechism and people can stop to pray. With the help of these chapels, equipped with pictures of saints, an altar and a cross, “the memory of the idols which were formerly in each village [is] gradually being wiped out.”

The second of Stephens’ two extant letters to the Jesuit General Aquaviva in Rome, dated 5th December 1608, is more positive than the first one. Stephens’ earlier petitions seem to have been fruitful. Now, although there is no lack of tribulations, Christian life in Salcete is flourishing, and people are “advancing in the knowledge of their Creator through the teaching and care exercised by the Fathers in charge”, all of whom, “except two or three, have sufficient knowledge of the language.” The letter has the character of a motivational letter; Stephens tries to convince his superior not to let the setbacks that admittedly happen in Salcete make him give up the work of Christianizing that region or even just to give up some of the parishes.

Before ending his letter, Stephens mentions a thing of great interest related to the subject of this thesis. He writes that he has for many years “ardently desired” books to be printed in the local language and script, “as was done in Malabar, with great profit for the Church in those regions.” Here he is probably aiming at Father Heniquest, Tamil catechism and opus flos sanctorum, which were printed in Tamil types in 1578 and 1587 respectively. He writes that this has not been realised firstly because it takes so many moulds, and secondly because it cannot be accomplished without the help of the Provincial and other superiors, who are so overloaded that they “have no time to consider this project, much less to do something about it.” But Stephens knows a remedy for both these obstacles:

39 Falcao, Phâdar Thomas Sîphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, pp. 1681-1682.
40 Falcao, Phâdar Thomas Sîphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 1682.
41 Stephens’ letter to Aquaviva, dated 5 December1608, is published in English translation in: Falcao 2009, pp. 1683-1685.
42 Falcao, Phâdar Thomas Sîphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p.1683.
43 Falcao, Phâdar Thomas Sîphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 1684.
[...] the number of moulds can be reduced to two hundred. The second difficulty will also be removed if Your Paternity will deign to write to Father Provincial about this matter, strongly recommending him to take in hand this work which will prove to be for the greater glory of God and for the edification and benefit of the Christian community of this country.45

This wish was only partly fulfilled. Stephens’ own Kristapurāṇa in Marathi was printed in 1616, but in Roman script. His catechism, Doutrina Christam, written in Konkani, was printed posthumously in 1622, likewise in Roman script.46 It is a small cathechism in question-and-answer form, apparently meant for the instruction of children in basic Christian prayer, faith and practice. Its language is a Konkani that is to a considerable extent sprinkled with Portuguese and Latin words for religiously significant concepts. According to Cyril Veliath, Doutrina Christam is a translation made by Thomas Stephens of a work originally written in Portuguese by Marcos Jorge.47

According to Saldanha, Thomas Stephens spent most of his 40 years in India among the Brahmin Catholics of Salcete, after having been Minister of the Professed House at Goa and Rector of Salsette College for five years and temporary Socius to the Visitor.48 James Southwood largely confirms Saldanha’s picture – specifying that the college where he was Rector was situated in Margão, and that Stephens was also Spiritual Coadjutor – but remarks that “the various authorities differ as to the dates when these appointments were held.”49 Falcao adds to the picture that Stephens spent the year 1611 in Vasai fort (Bassein, Mumbai), where he was “Mestre da Lingoa” at Bassein College, a college of “11 Fathers, 13 Scholastics and lay brothers.”50

Stephens died in Goa in 1619.51 Apart from the Marathi Kristapurāṇa and the above mentioned Konkani catechism Doutrina Christam, he had by then also composed a grammar of the Konkani language, which was posthumously printed in Rachol in 1640 with the title Arte de Lingoa Canarim.52

45 Falcao, Phādar Thomas Sṭiphansktṛa Khristapurāṇa, p. 1685.
46 Falcao, Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter, p.11
1.5. **Kristapurāṇa**

1.5.1. Introduction

*Kristapurāṇa*, a biblical epic “in the style of classical Marāṭhī writers like Jñānadeva and Ekanātha”, is the only one of Stephens’ three books that was printed during his lifetime. It is a retelling in more than 10 000 verses of the biblical narrative in the form of a dialogue between a preacher, often called *guru*, and his audience. It consists of two parts, corresponding to the Old and New Testament, with a strong tendency to Christological readings throughout the work. Wide-ranging use is made of words firmly associated with Hinduism and particularly Vaiṣṇavism, and where no fitting Marathi word is found, a new made Sanskrit compound is preferred to a Portuguese or Latin loan word.

The metre used in *Kristapurāṇa* is the *ovī* metre, which is a relatively free Marathi metre with three rhymed lines followed by one shorter unrhymed. The length of the lines varies considerably, but usually the first three lines consist of three or more words and the forth one has only one or two or maximum three words. In terms of syllables, the number is normally nine and four or five for the rhymed and unrhymed lines respectively, but this is no absolute rule and the length of the lines varies considerably.

The same *ovī* metre was used several hundred years earlier by Mukunda and Jñānadeva, also known as Jñāneśvar, as well as by Father Stephens’s contemporary Ekanātha and his grandson Mukteśvara, only to give a few examples. All of these poets were largely writing in a Vaiṣṇava tradition, with the exception of Mukunda, who was “more nearly connected with orthodox Vedāntism”. The 13th century poet saint (*santa*) Jñāneśvar is widely but probably incorrectly considered as the founder of the Maharashtrian bhakti movement known as Vārkarī, whose main deity is a form of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa, called Viṭṭhal or Viṭṭhobā. Writing in this style, Stephens, according to S. G. Tulpule, “attains a literary height which does not compare so badly with that attained by the past-masters of Marāṭhī”. Veliath goes as far as claiming it to be “one of the greatest works of literature known in India.”

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54 E.g. I.24.83.
56 Master, p. 13.
58 Wilson, p. xxvii.
There is no complete consensus among scholars as to how the language of Kristapūrāṇa should be classified, although the strong tendency is to classify it as a kind of Marathi. According to Justin E. Abbot it is “the Marathi, learned of Brahman Pandits.” Falcao similarly calls it “Brāhmiṇa-Marāṭhā vernacular” or simply Marathi. Alfred Master says it is Marathi, but that some have wrongly claimed it to be Konkani, because of “some archaisms and loan-words from Kannada.” S.G. Tulpule writes that Kristapūrāṇa “is known as Koṅkaṇī Purāṇa among the Christians of Goa” but that its language is Marathi. Stephens himself writes in his prose foreword that he wrote it in Marathi, since that is the Indian language best suited for talking about divine things, but that he has left out difficult words of the old poets and added words from the simple language of the Brahmans, so that everybody will be able to understand. Already the possibility of a controversy about whether the language of Kristapūrāṇa is Marathi or Konkani gives an idea of the similarity of these two languages. They are mutually understandable to such an extent that some scholars have felt the need to point out that Konkani is not merely a Marathi dialect but an independent language. In Goa Marathi has served as literary language whereas Konkani has been the predominant vernacular.

Since Kristapūrāṇa claims to be a purāṇa, a few words should be said about the purāṇa genre, an extremely voluminous body of texts consisting largely of mythological material of uncertain origin and age. Though the purāṇas are usually thought of as Hindu texts in Sanskrit, there are also texts called purāṇas in both Jainism and Buddhism. Purāṇic literature consists of mahāpurāṇas, upapurāṇas and māhāmyas (which are actually a kind of sthalapurāṇas, i.e. text about holy places), caste purāṇas, and also purāṇas in various vernacular languages.

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63 Falcao, Kristapūrāṇa; A Christian-Hindu Encounter, p. 2.
64 Master, A Grammar of Old Marathi, p. vi.
65 Tulpule, Classical Marathi literature, p. 381.
66 Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 78. In Kristapūrāṇa itself similar things are said in I.1.121 and II.58.118, 120.
68 Rocher, p. 71.
69 Rocher, pp. 70-72
1.5.2. Textual critique and extant versions

According to one of its last verses, Kristapurāṇa was finished in the year 1614 after the birth of Christ.\textsuperscript{70} It was presumably printed in three editions in Roman script in Goa during the same century, namely 1616 and 1649 at Raitur and 1654 at Old Goa.\textsuperscript{71} Not a single copy of any of these printed editions is extant today,\textsuperscript{72} and Falcao suggests that the reason might be that they were “misplaced, burnt or confiscated” during the suppression of Indian languages in Goa by the Portuguese from 26th June 1684 onwards and the suppression of the Jesuit order between 1773 and 1810.\textsuperscript{73} The oldest printed edition available is Joseph L. Saldanha’s edition from 1907, also in Roman script. Saldanha based his edition on collected manuscripts,\textsuperscript{74} but did not specify which manuscripts he used.

In 1923, Justin E. Abbot wrote an article about a manuscript of Kristapurāṇa in Devanagari script, which had then been found in the William Marsden collection in London. Abbot estimated the manuscript to be “well over 200 years”.\textsuperscript{75} A hint of the age of the text (henceforth referred to as the Marsden version) is given in one of its own verses, where a Christian Brahmin complains over the small number of Christians in Hindustan, here referred to as an island:

\begin{quote}
Past seventeen hundred and twelve years, \hspace{2cm} geli satarāśe bārā varuše vari
In this [time] few people on this island \hspace{2cm} taya māji thoḍa loka yā dipāntari
Recognize in this life (mind?) \hspace{2cm} volakhi ghetāṁ yā jivhāṁri
The true Saviour. \hspace{2cm} satyevaṁta tārākāci\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

Here the Marsden version differs from Saldanha’s as well as the other printed versions (Drago and Bandelu), which all refer to the last “sixteen hundred years” instead of 1712 as in Marsden.\textsuperscript{77} This might be taken to indicate that Saldanha’s text reflects the original better on this point – since the original Kristapurāṇa was written around 1600 CE – while the different time specification in the Marsden version indicates that this version, or the version of which it is a copy, was written in 1712 CE.\textsuperscript{78} This also lends some support to Abbots estimation of the

\textsuperscript{70}II.58.119.
\textsuperscript{71} Falcao, Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{72} Tulpule, Classical Marāṭhī literature, p. 380; Falcao, Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{73} Falcao, Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{74} Ferguson, ‘The Christian Purana of Father Thomas Stephens S.J.’, p. 931.
\textsuperscript{76} II.40.141.
\textsuperscript{77} Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, pp. 1143, 1493.
\textsuperscript{78} Cf. Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 1493.
copy as “well over 200 years”. It should be noted, though, that temporal reference point of the actual verse is not the birth of Christ, but his crucifixion, 1712 years after that would rather mean 1745 CE. Admittedly it is little more than a feeling, but it seems more plausible that the number is nevertheless simply an insertion of the actual year according to common counting and hence really refers to the year 1712 CE.

Apart from being written in Devanagari, the Marsden version uses pure Marathi or Sanskrit words instead of Portuguese or Latin theological terms to a higher extent than Saldanha’s edition. An example with relevance for this thesis is baptism, which in the Marsden version is referred to with the Sanskrit compound jñānasnāna, mostly Marathified as jñāna nāna, whose literal meaning is “knowledge-bath”. In Saldanha’s edition baptism is referred to with the Portuguese loan word Bautismo. Saldanha’s edition also contains one whole chapter and several occasional verses that the Marsden version lacks.

The editions that were printed in the seventeenth century – if they really were printed – are not necessarily the same text as the one originally written by Father Stephens. In an already mentioned letter dated 5th December 1608 to Claudius Aquaviva, the general of the Society of Jesus in Rome, Stephens expressed his wish to print books in Devanagari script and complains over difficulties that had made this impossible. It is therefore not unprobable that Stephens first wrote a text in Devanagari script, which was later transliterated and printed in Roman script.

Kristapurāṇa is now extant in five printed editions. They are as follows:

Except these printed editions there is the manuscript in the Marsden collection in School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, and various manuscripts in libraries and archives in Goa. A list of existing manuscript is posted by Ivo Coelho at the collaborative website “Indian Christian Writings: A Bibliography”.  

1.5.3. Text used in this study

In this study I have chosen to analyse the Marsden version through Falcao’s printed edition from 2009. I have not been able to consult the original manuscript in London. In cases where other editions are considered, that will be unambiguously specified. Due to Kristapurāṇa’s considerable volume, the analysis will be concentrated to the second part, the Purāṇa Dusare, in which the stories of the New Testament are retold. Occasionally illustrating or particularly interesting passages from the first part, Purāṇa Pahile, will be taken into consideration, which will also be clearly indicated.

1.6. Historical background

1.6.1. Early Christianity in India

Christianity probably first reached the Indian subcontinent by the sea, with new Christian communities coming century after century. The first Jews may have come at the time of the Babylonian Captivity, as early as 580 BCE. The ancient Jewish and Christian communities in the subcontinent, as well as the earliest Muslim populations, were mainly concentrated in the south-western coastal area, in what is now Kerala.

According to the tradition of the so called Thomas Christians of Kerala, the apostle Thomas himself came by sea from Arabia and landed on the Island of Malankara, worked in the area of Malabar (present day Kerala) for two periods interrupted by a period on the south Indian east coast and in China, finally left Malabar in 60 CE and was martyred in Mailapur, a present

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83 Naturally, since salvation in Christianity is so closely connected to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is the second part which deals most intensely with the topic. But also the first part frequently mentions salvation, much due to Stephens’ strong tendency to make Christological interpretations of Old Testament texts. Already in the very first chapter of the first part he gives a condensed preview of motifs which are then to be elaborated on throughout the entire work.
day suburb of Chennai, in 73 CE. The shrine on this place, known as St Thomas Mount, was believed to have healing powers many centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese.

The oldest external traditions, represented by the Acts of Thomas, a text written in the Aramaic dialect Syriac and traced back at least to third or fourth century Edessa, claim that the apostle came overland from northwest, to the court of an Indo-Bactrian or Indo-Parthian king called Gondopharau or Gondopharnes, and from there continued southwards. Findings of coins have shown that a king with that name actually ruled a kingdom within a bigger Indo-Bactrian or Indo-Parthian empire around the Indus valley between 19 and 55 CE, which gives some credibility to the Acts of Thomas.

Given the exchange that existed between India and the Greco-Roman world in the first century CE, there is a possibility that the apostle Thomas really came to India. In any case Christianity was established in southern India no later than the third century. The religious language of the Indian Christians was Syriac, the language used in the Acts of Thomas, which also became the liturgical and literary language of Assyrian, Babylonian, Chaldean and Persian Christians.

In the course of time the Christian population of Malabar was enriched by waves of immigrants, fleeing mainly from persecutions in the areas that came under Islamic rule from 632 CE and onwards. But already in 445 CE 72 families or about 400 people of East Syrian or Babylonian Jewish Christians settled in Malabar, probably after fleeing the Great Persian Persecution 340-401 CE.

The Indian Christians or Thomas Christians constituted a culturally indigenous community very much out of touch with the Greco-Roman world. Mostly regarded and behaving as a high caste group somewhere between Kshatriya and Vaishya, they were “Hindu in culture, Christian in faith, and Persian or Syrian (Orthodox) in doctrine, ecclesiology, and ritual”. In due time, the Thomas Christians divided into two endogamous wings with separate churches, the “Southists” and the “Northists”. The former, who were the descendants of the Babylonian
immigrants of 445 CE, claimed to be descendants of King David and thus of superior blood, while the latter claimed to be descendants of the first Christians of India, those converted by the apostle Thomas.\footnote{Frykenberg, p. 113.}

The Thomas Christians became so strong that they could form a minor kingdom in Malabar, centred at Mahadevapattanam and later Udayamperur, which remained until well after the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498, before they were, in their own eyes, betrayed by the Portuguese in their struggle to defend themselves against the Arabs and partly conquered by the Raja of Cochin.\footnote{Frykenberg, p. 114.} In the 16th century the Tomas Christians numbered between 80 000 and 200 000 persons. Until 1599 they were under the Syriac Patriarch of Chaldea, who was recognized by the Pope.\footnote{M. N. Pearson, \textit{The Portuguese in India}, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 119.}

Although Thomas Stephens is no authority on the subject of early Christianity in India, it is interesting to note that he touches upon the subject in \textit{Kristapurāṇa}. Obviously he wants to give the impression that there had previously been Christians in Goa as well. In one of the chapters, the narrating \textit{guru} says that people earlier became devotees of Christ (\textit{krīṣṭa bhaṅkta}), but then fell away due to their sinful nature (\textit{pāpā prakṛuti}).\footnote{II.40.131.} Confronted by an incredulous \textit{Christian} who has never heard any such stories nor seen anything similar in “our \textit{purāṇas}”,\footnote{II.40.171-172.} the \textit{guru} responds by referring to “our books” (\textit{āmacā graṅthī}) and “our \textit{purāṅikīs}”,\footnote{II.40.174.} namely Jerome,\footnote{II.40.175.} John of Damascus,\footnote{II.40.186.} and John Chrysostom.\footnote{II.40.191.}

1.6.2. The Portuguese in western India

India’s first major encounter with Roman Catholic Christianity took place in the beginning of the sixteenth century, soon after Vasco da Gama’s expedition to India in 1497-1499,\footnote{A. Henn, \textit{Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa: Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity}, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2014, p. 2.} and was strongly determined by the strong association of Roman Catholicism with the Portuguese colonial power. The Asian empire, built up by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, was a system of important ports most of all designed for giving Portugal a monopoly-like position in trading with spices and other goods within Asia as well as between Asia and Europe. The
largest territory and central point in this empire was little Goa, which was conquered and expanded in three stages.

Goa’s central part, Tiswadi, where the cities Old Goa and Panjim are situated, was conquered in 1510, except the city of Old Goa, which was conquered already in 1507. Together with the districts of Bardez to the north and Salcete to the south, both conquered in 1543, it constitutes the so called Old Conquests. The Old conquests were divided into two mission fields, the Franciscans taking care of the northern parts and the Jesuits of the southern. The New Conquests, which today constitute the biggest part of Goa and form a belt between the Old Conquests and the neighbour states Maharashtra and Karnataka, came under Portuguese control only in 1763 and 1788 through negotiation with the ruler of the Bijapur sultanate, one of the successor states of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar, which had gone under in 1632.

The Portuguese initially had a benevolent attitude towards the Thomas Christians, accepting that they had different customs but shared the same faith, but they became increasingly intolerant. After the 1599 Synod of Diamper in present day Kerala, attempts were made to purify the Thomas churches of heresy, remove there heretical books, and extinguish the Syriac language. The Thomas Christians in areas controlled by the Portuguese then had to accept both doctrines and practices that were alien to them, such as veneration of icons, confirmation separate from baptism, celibacy for priests, the doctrine of purgatory, and the restriction of wine from the lay people at the Eucharist.

Goa was declared a diocese in a papal bull in 1534. The first bishop arrived in 1538 and the cathedral was inaugurated in 1539. In 1560 it got its first archbishop, and in the same year the inquisition in Goa was launched. During the seventeenth century, the Catholic mission in Goa, as well as in the rest of India and Asia, was controlled by the Portuguese authorities as a consequence of the padroado system, a papal agreement that gave the Portuguese kings right and duty to deploy clerics and run the churches in their colonies. This of course limited the capacity of the Church to function as an independent force, balancing the Portuguese colonial power.

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107 Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, p. 3.
111 Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p. 117.
113 Koepping, 'India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar', p. 16.
Between 1540 and 1560, Portuguese-Catholic forces launched an iconoclastic campaign against Hindu culture, which resulted in the destruction or removal of all Hindu temples, shrines and images in Goa, and banning and suppression of public performance of Hindu rituals. In 1540 all temples in Old Goa were destroyed. The same was done 1573 in Bardez and 1584-1587 in Salecete. In this way the Old Conquests relatively quickly became a predominantly Catholic and culturally Portuguese area. The campaign against Hinduism also targeted its scriptures. Books written in the vernacular languages were collected and destroyed, as testified to by Goa’s first bishop of Goa, Fr. Joao de Albuquerque, in a letter dated November 28, 1548. During these iconoclasm, Brahmin guardians were often able to save the idols and install them outside Portuguese territory which resulted in many grand temples with old idols being built in the adjacent district of Ponda, in what was later to become the New Conquests.

Towards the end of the century, a milder attitude toward the local languages gained saying. The third Goan Council, held in 1585, ordered that a catechism be prepared first in Portuguese and then in the vernaculars. This new attitude facilitated the production of a rich Christian literature in Marathi and Konkani. S. G. Tulpule writes that this literature was meant to serve three purposes, namely:

1. presenting the Christian doctrine in a popular way mainly through accounts of the life and work of Christ and Christian saints;
2. providing manuals to serve as aids for the daily practice of the new faith;
3. weaning away the converts from their old faith by attacking and ridiculing the tenets of Hindu religion and the gods of the Hindu pantheon.

Thomas Stephens’ Kristapurāṇa mainly serves the first of these aims, whereas Doutrina Christam serves the second. Ridicule of Hindu religion is rare in Stephens’ works.

Several of the early Christian books to be printed in Goa were in the vernacular languages. Thus a side effect of the activities of the European missionaries was that Indian languages began to be standardized.

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114 Henn, Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa, p. 40.
115 Pearson, The Portuguese in India, p. 117.
116 Henn, Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa, p. 2.
117 Tulpule, Classical Marāṭhī literature, p. 379.
118 Pearson, The Portuguese in India, p. 117.
119 Tulpule, Classical Marāṭhī literature, p. 379.
120 Tulpule, p. 379.
121 Pearson, The Portuguese in India, p. 126.
1.6.3. Jesuit mission in Goa and South India

The most influential and arguably most creative of the missionaries in India were the Jesuits. The first Jesuit missionary to Goa was the Basque Francis Xavier, who came to Goa in 1542, only two years after the foundation of the Society of Jesus. With him began a dynamic and interesting period of Jesuit mission not only in India, but in all parts of Asia where the Portuguese had influence. Francis Xavier travelled widely and converted thousands of people in Travancore, Goa, on the Divar Island and other places. Often they were people belonging to the lowest and allegedly most polluted population groups.

The peninsula of Salcete in southern Goa was given to the Jesuits in 1560. It then had 80,000 inhabitants, out of which about a hundred were Christians. The vast majority were Hindus. During Stephens’ time in Salcete, its Christian population grew dramatically. When he arrived in 1579 the Christians numbered 8000, 14 years later they were 35,000, and when he died in 1619 the peninsula was almost entirely Catholic.

The Jesuits employed a missionary strategy known as *accomodatio*, which meant that elements of the local culture was used for presenting Christianity and that local Christians were allowed to continue some of their old practices, which were interpreted as social rather than religious, even after becoming Christians. One early example of this is the Goan Jagar night ritual, which was incorporated into the celebration of Catholic feasts after replacing its Hindu meanings with Catholic ones.

In Goa the most notable achievements of *accomodatio* were made in the field of literature, with Thomas Stephens as its undisputed master. *Kristapurāṇa*’s popularity among the locals inspired other Jesuit missionaries to write works in the same genre. Here I will mention only the two other most notable Christian *purāṇas* that were written in Goa. The first of these was written by the French Jesuit Etienne de La Croix (1579-1643), who entered the Society of Jesus in 1599 and came to India in 1602. The work was written in Marathi in the same metre as *Kristapurāṇa* and published 1634 in Goa with the Portuguese title *Discourso sobre a vida do Apostolo Sam Pedro*. De la Croix tells the story of the apostle Peter, whom he makes his mouthpiece for refuting and ridiculing Hinduism, and his work is much more confrontational than that of Thomas Stephens.

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122 Frykenberg, *Christianity in India*, p. 129.
124 Frykenberg, *Christianity in India*, p. 139.
The third notable Christian *purāṇa* written in Goa is a hagiography of St. Antonio of Padua, written by the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Saldanha (d. 1663), of which a first version was printed in Goa in 1655. It differs from the other two in that it was composed in prose in Konkani. It was re-edited in 1963 under the title *Sancto Antonichi Acharya* (“The Miracles of St. Antony”). A second version in the *ovī* metre was published sometime in the 17th century and re-edited in 1956 as *Sancto Antonichi Jivitvakatha* (“The Life of St. Antonio”).

If the Jesuits in Goa adopted the language and literary style of the Hindus, some of the Jesuits in South India sought to behave like or even become an Indians. The most notorious among these were the Italian Robert de Nobili, who settled in Madurai in 1606, achieved great mastery of Sanskrit and Tamil learning. He proudly declared that he was not a *parangi* – i.e. not a Portuguese – but a nobleman from Rome. He wore the sacred thread of the “twice-born” castes and an ochre robe, abstained from ritual pollution and had a strictly vegetarian diet.

The Jesuit scholarship in South India reached new heights with another Italian, Constanzo Giuseppe Beschi (1680–1747), an eminent Tamil scholar who produced epics, philosophical treatises, commentaries, dictionaries, grammars, translations, and tracts for Christians as well as non-Christians. Beschi dressed and behaved like an Indian prince. Before him marched attendants carrying a high standard of peacock feathers, usually symbolizing Sarasvatī, the Hindu goddess of wisdom and learning.

Obviously both de Nobili and Beschi were adherents of the “trickle down from the top”-theory of how to win converts by starting with the higher stanzas of the society, which was cherished by the Jesuits. Another example of this is that three Jesuit missions were sent to the Mughal emperor Akbar’s court, where they participated in debates between learned men of different religions in Fathepur Sikri.

The *accomodatio* method was never uncontroversial and the resistance against it grew stronger with the time. The strongest symbols of the controversy were Robert de Nobili and the so called Malabar Rites. De Nobili and his supporters claimed these to be social in nature and having nothing to do with religion, while his opponents claimed they were indeed religious and incompatible with Christianity. The dispute was initially settled in de Nobili’s favour by the Archbishop of Goa, the Bishop of Cranganore and prominent theologians in Goa in 1619. Pope Gregory XV confirmed in his Apostolic Letter of 1623 that Christian

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129 Frykenberg, *Christianity in India*, p. 139.
130 Frykenberg, pp. 139-140.
132 Frykenberg, *Christianity in India*, p. 88.
converts would be allowed to wear the Brahman thread, hair tuft, and sandal-paste marks, and perform regular baths, as long as these were not part of a pagan ritual. In spite of this, the issue remained contested throughout the 17th century.\textsuperscript{133}

In 1684 Viceroy Francisco de Tavora (1646-1710) decreed that henceforth all official church communication had to be in Portuguese and that Goans had to abandon their mother tongue.\textsuperscript{134} According to rumours this was because the Franciscans were too lazy to learn Konkani.\textsuperscript{135} The second part of the order decree had limited effect, and Portuguese only gradually became the language of high-caste Catholics. But it put an end to the production and use of Christian \textit{purāṇas} and it was used to prohibit folkloric practices like wedding songs in Konkani in the \textit{ovī} metre, which was and is associated with the traditional Hindu \textit{bhakti} literature of the area. In 1704 the apostolic legate Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon (1668-1710) issued a decree that practically prohibited all \textit{accomodatio} or adaptionist experiments in the missions in India and China.\textsuperscript{136}

The Goan Inquisition was abolished by the Portuguese statesman Pombal in 1774. It was revived three years later and lingered on until 1820.\textsuperscript{137}

\textbf{1.7. Theory}

When Stephens, in \textit{Kristapurāṇa}, conveys his Christian message in Marathi, he does so embracing that language and its literary conventions. \textit{Kristapurāṇa} is written in the \textit{ovī} metre, which was and is a common metre in Marathi \textit{bhakti} literature, and is full of idiomatic expressions like \textit{jñānasāgaru} (ocean of knowledge) and words referring to heaven (\textit{vaikuṁṭha}) and God as the King of Heaven (\textit{vaikuṁṭharājā} etc.) with deep Vaiṣṇava connotations. \textit{Vaikuṁṭha}, in Hindu usage, is the name of Viṣṇu’s heaven, and consequently \textit{vaikuṁṭharājā} (“King of \textit{vaikuṁṭha}”) is an epithet of Viṣṇu himself. In Stephens’s usage, though, the words refer to the God of Christianity and his heaven. Thus Stephens uses words familiar to the Marathi speaking Goans, but in a partly new way, altering their old meanings.

In theorizing what Stephens does, when he tells his Christian story in the Marathi idiom, Saussure’s linguistic theory is a useful starting point. Saussure describes a \textit{sign} as “the combination of a concept and a sound pattern.”\textsuperscript{138} Expressed in another way, a sign is not just a word as sound pattern or orthographic entity. Constitutional for a sign being a sign, is the

\textsuperscript{133} Henn, \textit{Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa}, pp. 72-73.
\textsuperscript{134} Henn, \textit{Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{135} Pearson, \textit{The Portuguese in India}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{136} Henn, \textit{Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{137} Pearson, \textit{The Portuguese in India}, p. 123.
relation between a word (the sound pattern) and the concept or idea it expresses or stands for. Thus Saussure recognized two constitutive parts of the sign, the concept and the sound pattern, and labelled them signification and signal respectively. Since “the link between idea and sound is intrinsically arbitrary”, any signification can be represented by any signal.

Applying this idea and terminology on Stephens’ usage of words heavily loaded with Hindu connotations, such as vaikuṁṭha and vaikuṁṭharājā, what he does can be described as keeping the signal but altering the signification. Vaikuṁṭharājā as signal is the same sound pattern as used by the Hindus for talking about Viṣṇu, but in Stephens’ usage its signification is not Viṣṇu, but the God of Christianity. Since a sign is the combination of signification and signal, i.e. of concept and sound pattern, altering the signification means altering the whole sign. Thus vaikuṁṭharājā of Kristapurāṇa is not the same sign as the identically pronounced and written vaikuṁṭharājā of a Vaiṣṇava discourse, since it does not stand for the same concept. Nevertheless the concept of Viṣṇu for Vaiṣṇavas and God for Christians are so similar that they can be said to hold analogous places in their respective linguistic systems, most notably as containing the concept of Supreme Being. Therefore it was possible and convenient for Stephens to let the signal vaikuṁṭharājā signify the Christian concept of God, thus forming a new “Christian” sign related to the old “Hindu” one but with a meaning that suited his message better.

In Saussure’s theory, a language is a system of differences, where the best definition of a sign is that it is what the other signs are not. A language “has the character of a system based entirely on the contrasts between its concrete units.” This means that changing the meaning of one sign has consequences for all other signs as well, since they are defined by their mutual differences, and hence for the whole linguistic system. In view of this, what Stephens does, can be described as entering a new linguistic system, and trying to reshape it to be better suited for expressing his Christian message. He does this by (1) changing the signification of certain signs, and (2), to a lesser extent, introducing new signs, mainly by using Portuguese loan words. Analysing more precisely how this is done is the aim this thesis.

Some of the authors that have written about Kristapurāṇa have had a tendency to uncritically praise Stephens for his readiness and proficiency for inculturation and draping the Christian message in an Indian shroud. Although there can be no doubt about Stephens’ will to inculturation, it must be recognized that he worked in the Portuguese colony of Goa, in a

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139 Saussure, p. 67.
140 Saussure, p. 111.
142 Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, p. 105
time when the Catholic mission was controlled by the Portuguese authorities as a consequence of the padroado system. As mentioned above, Portuguese-Catholic forces launched an iconoclastic campaign against Hindu culture between 1540 and 1560, which resulted in the destruction or removal of all Hindu temples, shrines and images in Goa, and banning and suppressing of public performance of Hindu rituals. Stephens arrived in Goa in 1579, about twenty years after this ferocious campaign.

If this historical context is not recognized, it is impossible to understand how Stephens’ linguistic and literary achievements actually worked. As I have argued, Stephens altered the signification of certain theologically important signs, thereby in a way trying to reshape the entire linguistic system to make it more suitable for his purpose of expressing a Christian message. This can be seen as a normal part of a struggle for appropriating a discourse through modifying how certain words are used and understood. In this case, however, this linguistic and discursive activity is accompanied by legal suppression and physical violence, with the aim of eradicating signs of Hinduism. Alexander Henn has recently drawn attention to the lack of insight among modern philologists commenting on Kristapurāṇa about the “violent circumstances of which its production was a part.” The situation was such that Stephens’ Kristapurāṇa and other Christian purāṇas replaced the Hindu purāṇas, rather than complementing them or struggling on equal terms with them for superiority in the discourse. Regardless of which attitudes and opinions Stephens actually held, his work functioned as a part of an enterprise in which ”hermeneutic and violence” were in a way ”two sides of the proverbial same coin.”

1.8. Earlier research

The most thorough analysis of Father Stephens’s Kristapurāṇa that has been written in recent time is Nelson Falcao’s dissertation, Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu encounter. A study of inculturation in the Kristapurāṇa of Thomas Stephens, S.J. (1549-1619), published in 2003 by Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand. Falcao analyses Kristapurāṇa as an example of inculturation and presents it as a “Christian-Hindu encounter” and a meeting between a “historical” (Christian) and an “archaic” (Hindu) worldview.

143 The padroado system is discussed in chapter 1.6.2 of this thesis.
144 Henn, Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa, p. 40.
146 Henn, Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa, p. 78.
147 Henn, Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa, p. 81.
148 Henn, Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa, p. 82.
149 Henn, Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa, p. 70.
Apart from this only two dissertations have been written with \textit{Kristapurāṇa} as their main theme. The first of these is Benedetta Quadra’s \textit{Il P. Tommaso Stephens, S.I. e il suo Purana Christiano} from Università di Studi in Rome, 1943 I have not been able to get access to this dissertation and according to Falcao it is “not traceable”.\textsuperscript{150}

The second is S. G. Malshe’s \textit{Śīphansacyā Kṛistapurāṇācā Bhāṣika āṇi Vāṅgamayīna Abhyāsa}, an unpublished dissertation from Mumbai University, 1961, written in Marathi. I have not been able to get access to it, but, according to Falcao, Malshe has compared \textit{Kristapurāṇa} with a number of Hindu texts and “compiled parallel ideas and usage of words and grammatical forms” in the actual texts.\textsuperscript{151}

Apart from these larger works, a number of articles and shorter texts have been written about \textit{Kristapurāṇa}. Alexander Henn has written the article “Jesuit Rhetorics. Translation Versus Conversation in Early-Modern Goa” (2011) and the book \textit{Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa. Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity} (2014), containing the chapter “Christian \textit{Purāṇas}: Hermeneutic, Similarity, and Violence”. Henn is critical to what he sees as uncritically positive attitudes among other scholars towards the \textit{accomodatio} missionary method of various early modern Jesuit missionaries. He argues within a broadly Foucauldian paradigm that hermeneutic and violence should be seen as two sides of the same coin when studying Jesuit mission in India and the Christian literature written in Marathi and Konkani in seventeenth century Goa.

Cyril Veliath’s article ”Thomas Stephens – A Human Monument of Inculturation in India” (2011) is a short overview over Stephens’ life, work and historical setting. The same is true of James Southwood’s ”Thomas Stephens, S. J., the First Englishman in India” (1924), which also includes Stephens’ letter to his father, dated 10 November 1579.

Suresh Amonkar in Mapusa, Goa, runs Amonkar School and is known for propagating the local language Konkani. I met him in July 2014 in his home in Mapusa. He is critical of Falcao’s work and claims that the latter lacks sufficient base for accrediting the Marsden version of \textit{Kristapurāṇa} greater originality than Saldanha’s edition. When I met him, he was working on a book in Konkani about \textit{Kristapurāṇa}.

Joseph L. Saldanha wrote a long preface to his edition of \textit{Kristapurāṇa} from 1907, describing Stephens’s life and transliteration method, discussing possible reasons why no printed copies from the seventeenth century are extant, etc. The year after that Donald Ferguson wrote an article in \textit{Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society}, which is basically a review


After discovering the manuscript of Kristapurāṇa in the Marsden collection, Justin E. Abbot wrote a couple of articles, arguing that this is the authentic version of Kristapurāṇa. Both were published in 1923 in Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London. Their informative titles are "The ‘Arte de Lingoa Canari’, the ‘Doutrina Christam’, and the ‘Adi’ and ‘Deva Puran’ of Thomas Stevens”, and "The Discovery of the Original Devanāgari Text of the Christian Purāna of Thomas Stevens”.

A more extensive list of articles and books about Kristapurāṇa and related topics, compiled by Ivo Coelho, can be found at the website “Indian Christian Writings: A Bibliography”.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Coelho, ‘Thomas Stephens, SJ (1549-1619), an updated bibliography’. 
2. Salvation: establishing the concept

2.1. Hebrew, Greek and Latin terms

This thesis is about how Stephens used Hindu loaded words to talk about that which, in the Catholic context from which he came, is denoted by the Latin word *salus* and its English derivate “salvation”. The theological language *par excellence* of the early modern Catholic Church was Latin. The meaning and usage of theologically significant Latin words is shaped by that of the Greek words which they represent and develop. The Biblical meaning and usage of these Greek words are in their turn shaped by the Hebrew words which they represent. Most of the authors of the New Testament wrote in Greek but had a Semitic mother tongue, and they elaborated on themes that Jesus had taught in Aramaic, or on Hebrew scriptural passages from the Old Testament. The correspondence between Hebrew and Greek religious terms was largely determined by the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. I will therefore give a short overview of the most significant Hebrew and Greek Biblical words for salvation, along with the words that stick tightly to them, and their Latin counterparts.

In the Septuagint *sōzō* (“to save”) and *sōtēría* (salvation”) are mostly used for words based on the Hebrew stem *yš**. Sometimes they are also used for other stems, but without basic shift of meaning. The verbs formed of the stem *ys* are used when a stronger being brings deliverance to one who is weaker or suppressed. The nouns formed of this stem, according to Gerhard Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, “comprehend a totality that includes both the deliverance and the ensuing state of salvation.”

The noun *yēshuw`ah*, formed of the stem *yš*>, means stands for different kinds of rescue and salvation, including such effected by military victory over hostile powers. This noun is of course the one found in the latinised name Jesus.

The Greek word for salvation, as already mentioned, is *sōtēria*. Related words are *sōzō* (“to save”), *sōtēr* (“saviour”) and *sōtērios* (“saving”). They are used in Greek literature in the following senses:

1. Human or divine salvation from serious peril, like illness or battle. People can be saved, as well as cities, castles ships etc. *Sōtēria* can also mean “safe return”.
2. Keeping alive by pardoning, protecting, keeping from want etc., and also for keeping wine, a beard, or preserving memory.
3. Keeping in good healthy. *Sōtēria* can also mean “well-being”.

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154 Cf. Kittel, p. 1132 f.
4. Preserving the inner being.

In religious usage all the above nuances occur besides meanings like salvation from death and thereby attaining a blissful life after this one, or salvation from eternal punishment.\textsuperscript{155}

The Catholic Encyclopedia gives “salvation” as the English equivalent for Greek \textit{soteria} and Hebrew \textit{yĕshuw’ah}.\textsuperscript{156} The Latin root word of “salvation” is \textit{salus}, which means “salvation” or “rescuing”,\textsuperscript{157} but also “health” and ”physical wellbeing”, “safety”, “means of deliverance”, and even “saviour”.\textsuperscript{158} The adjective \textit{salvus} means things like “safe”, “saved”, “unimpaired in health” and “surviving”.\textsuperscript{159} The corresponding verb, \textit{salvare}, similarly means “to heal”, “to rescue” or “to save”, and “to keep” or “to preserve”\textsuperscript{160}.

As seen from above, Latin \textit{salus} and Greek \textit{sōtēria}, together with the adjectives and verbs they belong with, have very similar meanings, in both languages bringing together salvation and rescuing with health and preserving. Thus they have in common with Hebrew \textit{yš} the tendency to let the same word (or group of words) relate to both an act or process that leads to something good, and the state it results in.\textsuperscript{161}

The Catholic Encyclopedia explicitly uses “salvation” as the English equivalent of Greek \textit{sōtēria} and Hebrew \textit{yĕshuw’ah}, and states:

Salvation has in Scriptural language the general meaning of liberation from straitened circumstances or from other evils, and of a translation into a state of freedom and security (…). As sin is the greatest evil, being the root and source of all evil, Sacred Scripture uses the word “salvation” mainly in the sense of liberation of the human race or of individual man from sin and its consequences.\textsuperscript{162}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{155} Kittel, p. 1132.
  \item \textsuperscript{160} \url{http://navigium.de}, (accessed 14 May 2015).
  \item \textsuperscript{161} This tendency is largely lacking in English, where “salvation” is rather exclusively referring to the act or process, not for the blessed state in which it results. The same holds true for Swedish “frälsning”, but not for German “Heil”, which has a range of meanings similar to that of \textit{salus} or \textit{sōtēria}.
  \item \textsuperscript{162} Maas, ‘Salvation’.
\end{itemize}
The tight bond between the ideas of salvation and liberation has been maintained in Catholic theology till our days. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church salvation is explained as liberation from the slavery of sin.\textsuperscript{163}

\textbf{2.2. Christian soteriology}

Preparing for the analysis of \textit{Kristapurāṇa} message, this chapter will give a non-exhaustive overview of relevant Christian ideas about salvation, from the time of the earliest Church till Stephens’ own days in the time after the Tridentine Council.

The apostolic fathers described salvation as immortality more than forgiveness of sins. Christ gives immortality through his death and resurrection. He is also our God and teacher who gives us knowledge about the true God and so liberates us from the darkness of idolatry. Sin is described as corruption, evil desire, and captivity under death, but also as delusion and ignorance. The aspect of guilt is not very prominent. The view of sin as delusion and captivity under death corresponds naturally to an idea of salvation as immortality and enlightenment.\textsuperscript{164}

Against the Gnostics – who denied the resurrection of the body and understood salvation as liberation from the material – Irenaeus (130-200)\textsuperscript{165} stressed that salvation means that creation is restored and that man is liberated with body and soul from Satan’s dominion. What was created as good in the beginning but corrupted through sin is restored and perfected through Christ.\textsuperscript{166}

Tertullian (ca 160-220)\textsuperscript{167} stresses Christ’s role as the teacher who preaches a new law to strengthen the will to follow God’s commands. Tertullian presents the relation between God and man in legal terms. God rewards and punishes according to merit, and gives salvation as a reward for merit. God’s grace is a power, which God gives to man, that takes away the corruptness by which human nature is affected from birth. This is the origin of the later dogma of original sin. God’s grace saves by making it possible for man to act righteously. Tertullian laid the base for the soteriology that would be predominant in the western medieval theology and later Roman Catholicism.\textsuperscript{168}

Athanasius (ca 296-373)\textsuperscript{169} had the intention to base his theology solely on the Scripture and dispose of philosophy altogether. Athanasius, in opposition to Arianism, stressed Jesus’
divinity, for only God can save. It is therefore necessary that Jesus is of one substance with the Father. It is the almighty creator who saves. In salvation the creation that is fallen in sin is restored to its original determination. Salvation includes the whole of creation but especially humankind, which is created in God’s image but has, because of sin, lost its participation in God and become subject to death and corruption. Salvation is brought about by God’s Son, the Logos, becoming human and restoring man to his likeness to God. This can only be done if also death and corruption are eliminated. God’s Son, the Logos, subjects himself to human conditions, carries our sin and suffers death. But since Christ is of one substance with God, these powers cannot defeat him and are therefore defeated themselves. Thereby he frees himself and all human nature from the fetters of sin and death. In salvation man is in a sense made divine – he becomes immortal and becomes anew the image of God.170

Nestorius (5th century), although he was declared a heretic, is relevant since the Thomas Christians of southern India belonged (and partly still do) to the part of Christianity that accepts his theology. Nestorius talked about Christ as one person, but had a tendency to keep his human and divine natures apart. He claimed that the divine Logos had united with the human Christ at the time of his birth, and was therefore blamed for denying that Christ’s divinity, which would make salvation impossible. The idea was that if Christ is not God, he cannot save man; if he is not true God and true man in one person, he cannot liberate man from sin and death.171

In Augustine’s theology (354-430)172 one of the central ideas is that the longing for the highest good, which is immanent in every human being, has been corrupted into a false love of the world. This love should be redirected towards its highest goal and reach satisfaction in the love of God.173 The idea about the misdirected love in need of redirection, its roots being in Plato’s philosophy and Neoplatonism, bears striking similarities to Hindu ideas about māyā and saṁsāra. Due to māyā man fails to see his real identity and gets caught up in worldly pleasures and worries, i.e. in saṁsāra. It is interesting to note that the word māyā in Marathi means both “illusion” and “love”, whereas saṁsāra refers to the world or worldly existence entailing death and rebirth (punarjanma), and also has the specific meaning “married life”.

According to Augustine salvation comes about through God’s grace and his descending to us in the incarnation of Christ. It is purely a matter of God’s grace.174 From the thesis of

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170 Hägglund, Teologins historia, pp. 61-62.
171 Hägglund, pp. 75-77, 113.
172 Schwarz Lausten, Kirkehistorie, p. 68.
173 Hägglund, Teologins historia, p. 103.
174 Hägglund, p. 113.
God’s grace as the only base for salvation, Augustine draws the conclusion that only those, who are predestined for salvation by God, can be saved.175

This radical and disturbing conclusion was avoided by John Cassian (d. 430/435), who claimed that man in himself carries the seed of goodness, which only has to be awakened by grace. Man has a free will and can choose to repel or accept God’s grace. Cassian accepts the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, meaning that man in himself is incapable to do the good, but teaches that man can choose to accept God’s grace, which enables a virtuous life. Since God want that everybody be saved, there can be no question of failing salvation due to divine predestination.176

Augustine and the early Scholastics understood grace as a healing of the nature that had been wounded by sin (gratia sanans).177 Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)178 added the new idea that grace is a supernatural gift which elevates human nature to a higher level (gratia élevans). God’s grace not only restores human nature, but also adds what is needed to reach the saving knowledge of God and final goal of seeing God. The justifying grace coincides with the love that God gives and which empowers man to perform deeds of merit. It is an inner power, which increases the natural capacity and gives supernatural virtues. Salvation is a gift of grace; no merit is needed for man to be justified, but it is necessary for keeping the gift of grace and reaching salvation (beatitudo).179

During the Scholastic period the Catholic doctrine about the seven sacraments was formulated. The sacraments were and are regarded as bearers of grace. Thomas Aquinas explained the sacraments as instrumental causes (causa instrumentalis) of grace, in other words physical means for bestowing of grace.180

According to the reformator Martin Luther (1483-1546)181 salvation is entirely dependent on God. A human being has no free will and cannot do anything to obtain salvation and eternal beatitude. He repudiated the scholastic idea that God’s grace and man’s free will cooperate for man’s salvation; it is entirely a work of grace. Grace is according to Luther not, as the Scholastics said, a quality that enables a virtuous life; it is God’s favour (favor Dei) or God’s love which works for man’s salvation. Luther, like Augustine, believed in

175 Hägglund, p. 121.
176 Hägglund, p. 123.
177 Hägglund, p. 169.
178 Schwarz Lausten, Kirkehistorie, p. 132.
179 Hägglund, pp. 169-170.
180 Hägglund, pp. 170-171.
181 Hägglund, p. 186.
predestination, a logical conclusion if there is no free will that can collaborate with God’s grace.\footnote{182}

The Lutheran reformation triggered a reaction within the Catholic Church. This reaction is known as the Counter-Reformation and its decisive event was the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Contrary to Luther the Council of Trent declared that the human will collaborates with God’s grace for attaining salvation, and that deeds are necessary to keep the attained justness and reach eternal life. The first cause of repentance is God’s calling grace, but the human will has to collaborate. In order not to lose the grace, man has to fulfil the Commands of God and the Precepts of the Church.\footnote{183} The Precepts of the Church are: (1) “You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation”, (2) “You shall confess your sins at least once a year”, (3) “You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season”, (4) “You shall keep holy the holy days of obligation”, (5) “You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence”, and the additional duty to provide for the material needs of the Church.\footnote{184}

A central component of Catholic teaching about salvation – besides eternal life and happiness in heaven – is the immediate knowledge or beholding face to face of God, known as the beatific vision.\footnote{185} This can be described as a sort of union with God; not, however, as identity with God, as in nondualistic variants of Hinduism.\footnote{186} The dogma of beatific vision is based especially on the following verse from 1 Corinthians: “Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”\footnote{187}

\section*{2.3. Marathi terms}

The connotation of liberation in the Catholic concept of salvation finds resonance in some of the most prominent words denoting what is usually regarded as the ultimate goal in Hinduism, namely mokṣa, according to Arvind Sharma “the quintessential concept of Hinduism.”\footnote{188}

Lance E. Nelson writes:

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnotetext{182} Cf. Hägglund, pp. 208-210.
\item \footnotetext{183} Hägglund, pp. 261-262.
\item \footnotetext{184} Catechism of the Catholic Church, § 2042, 2043.
\item \footnotetext{186} An example of such nondualistic Hinduism with relevance for this thesis is Jñānadeva’s philosophy and arguably the Vārkarī movement, even though it is a bhakti movement.
\item \footnotetext{187} 1 Corinthians 13:12.
\item \footnotetext{188} A. Sharma, Classical Hindu Thought: An Introduction, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 113.
\end{itemize}
In the Hindu tradition, the ultimate aim of religious striving – and indeed of human life in general – is most commonly termed *mokṣa*, meaning “freedom” or “liberation.” Although correspondences are of course far from exact, the idea occupies the place in Hindu thought that parallels concepts of perfection, salvation, redemption, freedom, and the like in other religious traditions.\(^{189}\)

Accepting *mokṣa* as the most natural Hindu counterpart for the Catholic concept of salvation as well as sharing its connotation of being liberation from something (although not necessarily from the same things), we can expect *mokṣa* to be fitting to serve as a centre in a semantic cluster suitable for expressing Catholic ideas about salvation in a previously predominantly Hindu language system. Not surprisingly, this has also turned out to be true in the case of *Kristapurāṇa*. If *mokṣa* is the centre of the cluster, the next layer consists of synonyms and words sharing important meanings and connotations with *mokṣa*, as well as words and compounds formed from or including these. An example in the case of *mokṣa* could be *mokṣabharita* (literally “full of *mokṣa*”).

A commonly used synonym for *mokṣa* is *mukti*. Both words are formed from the Sanskrit root *muc*\(^{\ast}\), meaning “to release” or “to set free”. Both the words carry the connotation of liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth (*punarjanma*, *saṁsāra*) and the suffering associated with this.\(^{190}\) But the meanings of these words are not limited to the act or process of liberation. Molesworth translates *mokṣa* as “act of freeing or freed state” and “[f]inal and eternal happiness”, and similarly includes “liberated state” among the meanings of *mukti*.\(^{191}\)

*Mukti* is in *Kristapurāṇa* found in the phrase *vaikuṁṭha mukti*,\(^{192}\) indicating that Father Stephens connected the two concepts, so that one implies the other. *Vaikuṁṭha*, used in the Hindu language system from which it is taken, is the name of Viṣṇu’s heaven. A more neutral word for heaven is *svarga*, which, as I have shown in the chapter about *Doutrina Cristam*, Stephens (in that work) used synonymously and alternately with *vaikuṁṭha*.\(^{193}\) It is therefore reasonable to include *vaikuṁṭha* and *svarga* in the semantic cluster to be defined. It is also

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\(^{190}\) Nelson, ‘Liberation (Mokṣa)’.


\(^{192}\) II.27.16.

clear that the concepts of mukti and svarga was closely connected for Stephens, since he says in *Doutrinā Christā* that mukti is enjoyed in svarga.  

Words with meanings closely related to that of mokṣa are the Marathi verb soḍavaṇe, meaning “to set free”, and words formed from it, and the adjective mokaḷī, meaning “free”.

Having stipulated mokṣa as the central concept, it is reasonable to include words with meanings like “redemption”, “rescuing”, “saving” etc. into the cluster. “Liberation from” almost carries within itself “redemption from” or “rescue from” as a partial meaning. This accepted, another group of words announces itself. First come tāraṇe and tāraka, meaning “rescue” and “rescuer” respectively. Further the verbs uddhāraṇe and vāṁcaṇe with similar meanings. The verb rākhaṇe means primarily “protect” but also has the meaning “rescue”. Rākhaṇe opens the door for its synonym trāhaṇe, an old Marathi word meaning “protect”.

In the semantic cluster should also be included words that are used as synonyms or near synonyms of mokṣa in Hindu contexts, such as “apavarga (cessation), nirvāṇa (extinction), duḥkhāṇta (the end of suffering), kaivalya (isolation), and siddhi (perfection).” In this group should also be included paramapada, meaning “highest abode”, and paramagati, translatable as “final destination” and used as another word for mokṣa. Similarly to vaikuṇṭha and svarga, these words refer more to the liberated state than to the act of liberation itself.

### 2.4. The Hindu concept of mokṣa/mukti

As a preparation for the analysis of how Stephens uses Marathi words to convey a Christian message about salvation, I will give an outline of how mokṣa is understood as a Hindu concept. Although this varies considerably between different philosophical schools and religious sects, it is generally agreed that mokṣa means liberation from the rounds of death and rebirth (punarbhava, punarjanma) in the mundane world (sāṁsāra), although there are quite different ideas about what the positive content of mokṣa is.

The idea of mokṣa as release from ordinary existence first appeared in the Upaniṣads. It is not found in the Vedas where the post-mortem goal is not mokṣa but svarga, a heavenly existence understood as something similar to this world but without defects.

The new idea of mokṣa developed along with the likewise Upaniṣadic concepts of karma and saṁsāra. The relation between the two is such that karma (“action”) binds the person...
in saṁsāra, which is unwanted since saṁsāra entails suffering.\textsuperscript{201} According to the karma doctrine all deeds, wether good or bad, have consequenses that must be lived through and therefore bind us in saṁsāra and preclude us from attaining mokṣa. These consequenses follow causally from the acts that generate them and are not to be understood in terms of reward or punishment.\textsuperscript{202} The reason behind karma, which binds a person in saṁsāra, is desire (kāmā) and ignorance (avidyā).\textsuperscript{203}

The reason for ignorance is known as māyā, which is often translated as “illusion” and understood as “deluding […] those on the spiritual path into mistaking what is provisionally or conventionally real with what is ultimately real.”\textsuperscript{204} In Marathi māyā also means “affection” or “love”, maybe reflecting the idea that also affection to earthly things and beloved persons can keep us away from the liberating vision of the ultimate reality. Apart from the Sanskrit word māyā, Marathi also has a homonymous Persion loanword meaning “[s]tock, substance, property.”\textsuperscript{205}

Since we are bound in saṁsāra by means of ignorance, the way to liberation from saṁsāra (i.e. mokṣa) logically goes through knowledge. In the way to mokṣa, besides searching knowledge (jñānayoga), also disinterested performance of one’s duty or dharma (karmayoga) and devotion to God (bhaktiyoga) have theire places, as the Bhagavadgītā teaches.\textsuperscript{206}

Within Hinduism there have been differing ideas about the mutual relations of these three paths. Worth mentioning here because of its influence on the Hindu literature and practice that forms the background for Stephen’s Kristapurāṇa is the Bhagavadgītā commentary Jñāneśvarī, which forms the intellectual base for much of the Vaiṣṇavaite bhakti in Marathi-speaking areas.\textsuperscript{207} In this work Jñānadeva prescribes performing actions “denouncing all attachment to their fruit and to bodily desire”\textsuperscript{208} as a prerequisite for mokṣa. But the real key

\textsuperscript{201} Nelson, ‘Liberation (Mokṣa)’.
\textsuperscript{203} Falcao Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter, pp. 142-143.
\textsuperscript{204} M. Gansten, Bhagavad-Gītā: visket och yoga, Stockholm, Norstedths Förlag AB, 2001, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{206} Molesworth, Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary, p. 647.
\textsuperscript{207} Tulpule, Classical Marāṭhī literature, p. 334.
to mokṣa is knowledge, and since Jñāneśvarī’s teaching is deeply non-dualistic, this means union with God: “Thus I am all that is […] A man [who knows this] is absorbed into union with Me.” This liberating knowledge, however, is attainable only through bhakti and imparted by God (Krṣṇa) himself: “Thou alone art able to impart knowledge of Thyself.”

Agents to whom the power of transmitting salvific knowledge is attributed in Hinduism include, apart from God himself as in the example above, gurus, i.e. spiritual teachers or masters, sages (ṛṣi), and certain texts.

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209 Jñāneśvar’s philosophy and the Vārkarī movement by which it is embraced are sometimes described as advaita-bhakti. See e.g. Tulpule 1979, p. 330 and Shenolkar & Deshpande 2012, p. 182. For a discussion on the topic of mukti in Jñāneśvarī see my paper “Who saves whom? Salvation in Jñāneśvarī.”


211 Lipner, ‘Saṃsāra’. 
3. Salvation in *Doutrina Christam em lingoa Bramana Canarim*

As a background for the analysis of how salvation is presented in *Kristapurāṇa* itself, this chapter will give a short analysis of how it is presented in Stephens’ little Konkani catechism, *Doutrina Christam*. As already mentioned, Konkani and Marathi are very similar, and the words that consider us here are almost identical in both languages. Whereas the Marsden version of *Kristapurāṇa*, which is the one that is analysed in this thesis, is written in Devanagari script, *Doutrina Christam* is written in Roman script, following spelling conventions that were used in Christian Konkani literature of the time. Slightly simplified, the most important spelling conventions are that (1) vowels are long except if cursive, then short, (2) t, d, n and l are dental if single, retroflex if double. In the following exposition, I will in relevant cases give the Konkani form of the words used in *Doutrina Christam* in brackets, then of course with the same spelling as is used therein. In the main text I will use the words in their Marathified form with the same transliteration system as used elsewhere in this thesis, except in a few cases, where I give the Konkani form within citation marks.

Early in *Doutrina Christam*, we are informed that the Christian is called Christian because of Jesus Christ, and that the name Jesus means tāraku (“IESU mhaṁnatā Taracu”). Jesus is the tāraku of saṁsāra, and he came from svarga. The Christian is parameśvara’s spiritual son (“Paramesparacho dharma putru”), and as such an heir of svarga (“suarguicho ddaizy”).

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, he saved (“soddalā”) us from our slavehood, since we were formerly slaves under Satan and our sins (“patacache”). In order to let us enjoy his grace/mercy (“crupa”) and the fruit of his death (“apulea marannacho phallu”), Jesus ordained the seven sacraments. For acquiring mukti, parameśvara’s grace/mercy (crupa) is necessary. God’s grace is received through the seven sacraments of the Holy Mother Church, namely Baptism (“Bautismo”), Confirmation (“Chrisma”), Communion, Confession, Extreme Uction, Ordination, and Matrimony.

On the day of justice (“maṇussubiyecchea diuassa”) Christ will judge everybody, both living and dead, to either never-ending recompense (“akhandditā uchita”) or never-ending

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213 Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 3.
214 Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 3.
218 Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 49.
219 Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 49.
punishment ("akhanda ni yada"). The dead will come alive again ("punnati ziu atat") with body and soul ("cuddi atmo saita"). If the body has endured hardships in the service of parameśvara together with its soul, it will also enjoy the fruit of its hardships together with its soul ("Taisenchi techi atmea sangati, castancho phallu bhogheaca"). And, analogously, if the body has failed to serve parameśvara, it will have to endure the fruit of that along with its soul. This stresses the Catholic belief in the resurrection of the body. The state of mukti is not a purely spiritual state, but one that includes the body. All good people will, with their body and soul ("appapulu cuddi atmo sahita"), live forever and enjoy the never-ending joy of mukti in svarga ("mugtichë nassaratë saru saqha suargu bhogunu").

As already indicated, the place most closely associated with mukti is svarga, referred to as the highest or most excellent place (suarga utama sthana), and the place where God the Father is. Svarga is also described as the place where the saints are already enjoying a blissful existence, and where man enjoys eternal mukti after having known, loved and served God in this saṁsāra.

Heaven is alternately, sometimes in the same paragraph, referred to as svarga and vaikuṁṭha, and earth as saṁsāra. In addition to these two worlds or domains there are three more worlds, namely (1) "yemanonda", meaning the pit of death, which is a place where the souls ("atme") of people who die in great sin ("maha patacantu melale") pass eternity in a never-ending fire ("aqhanddity agni"); together with Satan, (2) "Purgatorio", where the souls ("atme") of people who die in parameśvara’s grace/mercy, but without having done full penitence for their sins here in saṁsāra suffer, waiting to be allowed into vaikuṁṭha; and (3) "Limbo", where the souls ("atme") of small children who have died without being baptised ("Bautisma uinna") end up, since they cannot enter into svarga.

The person who prays the Lord’s Prayer prays that he shall enjoy the muktipada that parameśvara has created us for and asks for the things necessary for acquiring this. The second petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “may your kingdom come to us” (“tuzem raze amacă

220 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 28.
221 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 31.
222 Cf. Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 20.
223 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p.32.
224 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 9.
225 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 6.
226 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 18.
227 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 5.
228 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 25.
230 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 27.
231 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 10.
yeum”) is understood as a prayer for muktipada,232 and then the rest of the Lord’s Prayer is explained as a fivefold prayer about acquiring muktipada: (1) that God’s will may happen (“Paramesparachy qhossy zaũ”), (2) the prayer for nourishment (“pindapossanna”), bodily as well as spiritual (“atmeachy”), the latter meaning the holy sacrament (“santissimo sacramêto”) and God’s grace/mercy (“Deacrupal”), (3) the prayer for pardoning of sins (“patacâchê bhagassannê”), (4) the prayer not to fall into sin again, and (5) the prayer that God shall ward off all obstacles/temptations (“sarua uigna niuari”).233 Thus all these things are seen as part of the way to muktipada.

In order to walk the way of bhakti or devotion to God (“Deubhagticho margu”) that leads to obtaining muktipada, the Christian needs to know three things, namely (1) how to pray (“maqû”), (2) how to believe or more literally accept as true (“sate manû”), and (3) how to act (“caranîyanî ghalû”).234 The knowledge required for right prayer is the Lord’s Prayer, for right belief the Apostolic Creed and for right acting the ten commands of paramešvara and the Precepts of the holy Church, so that one can follow them, and the great sins (“maha patacam”), so that one can avoid them.235 However, it is not enough to know this; one also has to actually do pray, believe and act accordingly.236

The great sins are called so because they lead to the death of the soul (“atmo”), which means that one loses paramešvara’s grace/mercy (“crupa”), friendship, muktipada, the fruit of Christ’s death (“IESU Christachea marannacho phallu”) as well as the fruit of one’s own good deeds, and has to suffer the punishment of the pit of death (“yemacondichy”). However, this pitiable state can be resolved if one recognises one’s sin and sincerely regrets.237 More specifically, this happens through Baptism, and, for sins committed after Baptism, by Confession.238

Mukti is not to be acquired outside the Holy Catholic Church,239 and certainly not through local Hindu religious practices. The pupil is strongly admonished to leave the path of the pit of death (“yemacondda”) and what is referred to as Konkanhood (“cōcannapanna”), 240 and

232 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 10.
233 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 11.
234 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 5.
235 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 32. The Precepts of the Church, are enumerated on p.40 as (1) to hear the holy mass, (2) to make a complete confession once a year, (3) to receive the holy sacrament at Easter, (4) to fast on certain days, and (5) to give tenth and first fruit to paramešvara.
236 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 6.
237 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 46.
238 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 50.
239 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 30.
240 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 32.
accept only the one true parameśvara (“Yecchi Sateuanta Paramesparaca”).241 One has to leave all Konkanese gods (“Deua”) and angels (“devadutā”) and their rites and feas, religious masters (“achara”) and astrology (“zoissipana”).242

To sum up this chapter about how salvation is presented in Doutrina Christam, the following can be said:

(1) Jesus as Saviour is referred to with the epithet tāraku.
(2) Salvation is explained as a consequence of Jesus death on the cross, and the act of saving is referred to with the verb sodavañe. It is explained as liberating from slavery under Satan and sin.
(3) Salvation itself is referred to with the words mukti and muktipada. Although there is a tendency that mukti refers more to salvation or liberation itself and muktipada more to the resultant blissful state, this distinction is not consequently maintained.
(4) Mukti/muktipada is enjoyed in svarga/vaikuṁṭha, the later terms apparently being used as synonyms. It is an eternal state which includes the body.
(5) Mukti is acquired only by God’s grace (crupa), which is bestowed through the Sacraments of the Church. This means that mukti cannot be acquired outside the Church. The Church is exclusive insofar as it is incompatible with what is referred to as Konkanhood, which can be described as local non-Christian religious or magic practices.
(6) Although mukti is dependent on God’s grace, one has to know how to pray, believe and act (and actually do that), in order to acquire it.

241 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 33.
242 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p.35.
4. Salvation in *Kristapurāṇa*

4.1. Words for Salvation

Among the words specified in chapter 2.3, all except *apavarga, duḥkhānta*, and *kaivalya* are used in the second part of *Kristapurāṇa*, although not all in the strong sense of final salvation. A quick glance at the table below gives an introductory idea of which words Stephens chose for talking about salvation and what they mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic word</th>
<th>Used/not used</th>
<th>Approximate meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>mokṣa</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Salvation, liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mukti</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Salvation, liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>vaikūṇṭha</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Heaven, highest heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>svarga</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>soḍavane</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Set free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mokaḷi</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Used in the sense “free”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tārane</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Save</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tāraka</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Saviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>uddhāraṇe</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Save</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>vāṁcaṇe</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Used in the sense “to be healed”, “to be saved from death”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>rākhane</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Protect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>trāhaṇe</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Protect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>siddhi</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Used in senses like “fulfilment”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>paramapada</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Highest state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>paramagati</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Highest state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nirvāṇa</em></td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Used in senses like “death”, but also with positive connotations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>duḥkhānta</em></td>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>End of suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kaivalya</em></td>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>apavarga</em></td>
<td>Not used</td>
<td>Cessation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, all the words identified in chapter 2.3 except *duḥkhānta*, *kaivalya* and *apavarga* are used in the second part of *Kristapurāṇa*. The absence of the word *duḥkhānta*...
seems rather accidental. The text unambiguously conveys the message that mukti implies the end of all suffering, but without using the compound word duḥkhānta. For kaivalya and apavarga the reason for their absence is probably that their concepts are too far away from a Catholic understanding of what salvation is. Among the expected words that are used, some – like mukti and mokṣa – are at the core of Stephens’ terminology for salvation, whereas others are rather in the periphery. Siddhi is not used independently to denote salvation directly, but sometimes denotes fulfilment or attainment of something good, e.g. the fruits of virtue.243 Mokaḷī is used to denote anything that is free or open in any sense, ranging from loosened hair244 to the door of svarga, which is opened up by Eucharist.245 Further nirvāṇa is used a few times to speak about somebody’s death, in either positive or negative sense, which will be discussed below.

Concerning the words that are used for salvation, they are often found in various compounds. The resulting words can be subdivided in three groups:

1. Words for the process or act of salvation (nouns, verbs).
2. Words for the resultant blessed state (nouns, adjectives).
3. Words for the Saviour qua saviour (nouns).

The general meaning and usage of these words, their relation to Latin counterparts, and how they are used in Kristapurāṇa to convey ideas about salvation, will be discussed in the following chapters.

As touched upon in chapter 2.1 and 2.3, the distinction between the act or process of salvation and the state it results in does not have to be maintained as sharply as in English or Swedish. The Latin, Greek, and Hebrew words for salvation all have shades of meaning that fit in both categories. The same holds true for Marathi, which means that some of the words, most notably the central mokṣa and mukti, will have to be placed in both the first and the second category. The many epithets of the Saviour are usually derived from the nouns and verbs in the first two categories. Sometimes the same epithet is used for both Jesus and God the Father.246 This underlines Stephens’ inclination to stress Jesus’ divinity.

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243 E.g. II.36.54: “ḥmaṇīpe puṇyācēyā phalā sidhī āṁtarati/” (“Therefore they miss the attainment of the fruits of virtue”).
244 II.28.91; 52.18.
245 II.44.117: “tu muktipadācā dāravatā/mokaḷī kari svargācī yā vāṭhā/” (“You, the door to the state of mukti, open this way to heaven”).
4.2. The act of salvation

The words that Stephens uses for talking about the process or act of salvation are presented in the table below, along with corresponding epithets of the Saviour.\(^{247}\) Thereafter they are discussed in detail in the subsections of this chapter, except \textit{mokṣa} and \textit{mukti} which are discussed in chapter 4.3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act of salvation</th>
<th>Approximate meaning</th>
<th>Saviour(^{248})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textit{mokṣa}</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
<td>\textit{mokṣa rājā}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{mukti}</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
<td>\textit{muktīcā dātā, muktīcā rājā, muktīcā rājā cakravarti, rājāmuktīcā}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{tārane}</td>
<td>Save</td>
<td>\textit{tāraku, tāraku visvabhuvanāṁ, visvatāraku, visvatāraku paramesvaru, saṁsāra tāraka, ījrāyeli tāraku, deva tāraka, krīṣṭa tāraku}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{sodane}</td>
<td>Set free</td>
<td>\textit{sodavaṇārā}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{sodavane}</td>
<td>Set free</td>
<td>\textit{sodavaṇārā}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{soḍavaṇa}</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
<td>\textit{sodavaṇa}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{uddhārane}</td>
<td>Save</td>
<td>\textit{uddhāraṇe}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{rākhaṇe}</td>
<td>Protect</td>
<td>\textit{rākhaṇāīta}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{rakṣaṇa}</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>\textit{rakṣaṇārā, ījrāyelicā rakṣaṇa, rakṣagā, bhaktarakṣamaṇīṁ, krīṣṭu rakṣara}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{vāṁcane}</td>
<td>Be saved</td>
<td>\textit{vāṁcane}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{trāhaṇe}</td>
<td>Protect</td>
<td>\textit{trāhaṇe}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{praṇāma}</td>
<td>Salutation(^{249})</td>
<td>\textit{praṇāma}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{247}\) Some of these words are also used to denote the blessed state which is their goal.

\(^{248}\) Translations of the epithets of the Saviour are given in chapter 4.8.

\(^{249}\) Stephens uses \textit{praṇāma} in a very unusual way, which will be discussed in chapter 4.2.6.
4.2.1. Rākhaṇe, vāṁcaṇe and trāhaṇe

The verbs rākhaṇe, vāṁcaṇe and trāhaṇe are largely operating within the same field of meaning. Rākhaṇe has the primary meaning “[t]o keep, preserve, protect, guard; i.e. to hold in possession or in security from harm.” Vāṁcaṇe means “[t]o live, exist, subsist, continue in being”, but also “[t]o live out or through, to remain unaffected or undestroyed during or under the operation of destructive, dangerous, or injurious powers; to escape.” Rākhaṇe is transitive, whereas vāṁcaṇe is intransitive. Their mutual relation can be described so, that if God does rākhaṇe a human being, then that human being does vācane. Vāṁcaṇe is used only once in the second part of Kristapurāṇa with a sense relevant for us. It then corresponds to Latin salvus and is used about Jairos’ daughter who escapes from death and can continue to live when Jesus resuscitates her. Trāhaṇe, the third of these verbs, means “protect” and is in the second part of Kristapurāṇa invariablly used in the imperative formula trāhi trāhi. It can be regarded as a synonym of rākhaṇe, in all essentials sharing its shades of meaning.

Words related to rākhaṇe are used much more than vāṁcaṇe and trāhaṇe. One such word is the noun raksanārā, denoting an agent who does rākhaṇe, i.e. one who protects. When used in a sense translatable as “saviour”, it denotes one who saves by protecting or preserving. It lacks the strong connotation of ferrying over, which tāraku has (cf. chapter 4.2.2). Sometimes the form rakṣaṇa is used, a noun which means “[p]reserving, keeping, protecting”, or “person set to keep or guard”. This is used for example when infant Jesus in the manger is called “Israel’s rakṣaṇa”, reminiscent of consolationem Israhel, which old Symeon was waiting for in Luke 2:25.

Usage of rākhaṇe in Kristapurāṇa includes watching or guarding, protecting sheep or pigs, taking care of one’s ātmā, sparing people from being killed, and keeping God’s temple in a respectfull manner. It is also used for healing or release from illness and

250 Molesworth, Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary, p. 687.
251 Molesworth, p. 743.
254 II.9.68; 39.26; 56.12.
255 Feldhaus and Tulpule (p. 310) render the meaning of trāhaṇe as “rakṣaṇa karane”. In II.9.68 the words are brought together in the phrase “trāhi trāhi bhaktarakṣaṇaṁ” (“Save! Save! O Saviour-Jewel of the bhaktas!”)
256 Molesworth, Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary, p. 687.
257 II.8.2: “ifrāyelīcā rakṣaṇa”.
258 II.43.246; 45.16; 46.48; 48.52, 59, 149; 50.25; 52.12, 14, 35, 39; 58.35.
259 II.8.53; 36.10.
260 II.43.241.
261 II.12.18.
262 II.22.37.
physical suffering, like when blind men beg Jesus to rākhaṇe them so that they can see, or when Jesus saves or heals from possession and physical suffering.

The words rākhaṇe and vāmcane are often used together with words for faith. In the story about how Jesus heals the woman who suffers from bleeding, Jesus tells her that her faith (bhāvo) will save (rākhaṇe) her. Similarly, but using the intransitive vāmcane, Jesus tells a man called Jairos that his dying daughter will be saved if he believes, whereupon he raises her from death. In both these cases the Vulgate has forms of salus and NIV has “healed”.

The correspondence between rākhaṇe and salvus shows up again when Jesus says that who regards his life as good will lose it, but who regards life in saṁsāra as evil will save (rākhela) it. Also when Jesus is hanging on the cross, and people cheat him and tell him to rescue himself, forms of rākhaṇe correspond to forms of salvus and salvare in the Vulgate.

When the devil tempts Jesus, he tells him to throw himself out from the top of the temple and let angels save (rākhaṇe) him. Among the Bible passages that relate this incident, Luke 4:10 is the only one which has a comparable word, a form of conservare in the Vulgate.

In one passage Jesus says that whoever wants to save (rākhaṇe) his life (prāṇu) and leaves Jesus because of fear will lose it, and whoever leaves his life because of Jesus will get it. Here rākhaṇe corresponds to invenire in the Vulgate, meaning “to find” or “to win”.

When a Canaanite woman begs Jesus to help her, Kristapurāṇa’s rākhaṇe corresponds to a form of adiuvare in the Vulgate, meaning “to help”, including “to help medicly, relieve”.

In short, rākhaṇe is used for various kinds of protecting, preserving or rescuing, both physical and spiritual, but more often than not it refers to release from physical suffering or death. It has no strong connotation of release from bondage, like soḍavaṇe has (cf. chapter 4.2.4). It is used for rendering Latin salvus, but also for a number of other Latin words with meanings similar to that of rākhaṇe.

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263 II.26.68; 39.59.
264 II.23.106.
269 II.48.62, 64; Matthew 27:40, 42.
272 II.32.21; Matthew 15:25.
4.2.2. Tāraṇe

The verb tāraṇe means “[t]o deliver, save, preserve; to extricate from or carry through (danger, difficulty, distress).” It carries the connotation of bringing over safely to the other shore, which has to do with the fact that it is the causative variant of taraṇe, which can mean “[t]o float” or “[t]o be saved or extricated; to pass safely through”. Among its cognate words are words for “boat” and “ferryman” as well as tāraku, which is a noun used to denote one who “causes to pass over or through; viz. a deliverer, saviour, preserver.”

Stephens uses tāraṇe as an equivalent for Latin salvum facere. An example of this usage is when the angel tells Joseph to give Mary’s child the name Jesus, since he will save his people. In the same ovī, Stephens informs the reader or listener that Jesus’ name means tāraku. Since Jesus’ originally Hebrew name Yēshuw`ah means “saviour”, this shows that Stephens regarded tāraku as something like a Marathi default word for “saviour”, and as an explanation of Jesus’ name. As mentioned above also Doutrina Christam says that Jesus means tāraku (“IESU mhaṇnatā Taracu”). The same thing is expressly said in Kristapurāṇa, with a short explanation of why Jesus bears this name:

Jesus means Saviour (tāraku) of the three worlds.
For our sake dying on the pole,
He saved (tāraṇe) us. Therefore
He is truly the tāraku.

Thus the word tāraku is linked firstly to Hebrew yēshuw`ah and secondly to Jesus’ saving death on the cross. Its correspondence to Latin salvator is illustrated by the passage where an angel tells the shepherds that the Saviour has been born in Bethlehem. Here Stephens renders salvator as visvatāraku, “saviour of the world”. The added prefix visva- (“world”) stresses the universal character of the tāraku and his work.

When telling about Symeon, the old man in the temple who according to Luke 2:25 was waiting for Israel’s consolation (Vulgate: consolationem), Stephens takes greater liberties. In

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274 Molesworth, Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary, p. 376.
275 Molesworth, p. 368.
276 Molesworth, p. 376.
277 II.9.57, Matthew 1:21.
278 Cf. chapter 2.1.
280 Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 3.
281 II.48.37.
Kristapurāṇa the old man is waiting for Israel’s tāraku.283 The same holds true for the story about old Hanna in the temple, inspired by Luke 2:36-38. Stephens lets her say that infant Jesus is the visvataraku and the pratipālaku of Jerusalem.284 Here pratipālaku (“nourisher”, “supporter”, “protector”) seems to stand for Vulgate’s redemptio, which is a very free translation. Visvataraku does not correspond to any word in the Gospel text, but can be seen as an indication of how eager Stephen was to stress that Jesus is the Saviour of the world.

4.2.3. Relation between tāraṇe and rākhaṇe
In spite of their different etymological backgrounds, tāraṇe and rākhaṇe and the words formed from them are often used more or less interchangeably, which is nicely illustrated in the story about the twelve year old Jesus in the temple. Stephens there reproduces a controversy among the scribes about whether the Christ has yet been born or not.285 The words of the prophet form the background of the discussion:

The prophet has spoken in the purāṇa:
‘With power and great Glory he’ll come.’
So he said.

So said the Israeli prophet:
‘He, our righteous one (nitikartu),
Scribe and king,
Will come and save (tāraṇe) us.’

One of the scribes is sceptical, for how could it be that the unbelieving Romans hold sway over Israel if that rākhaṇāra (i.e. the one who does rākhaṇe, who protects) was already there, he who would tāraṇe them?288 Here the semantic similarity of the words formed from tāraṇe and rākhaṇe becomes clear. In the scribe’s opinion, the rākhaṇāra would tāraṇe the people from the Romans. Here the words refer to political and physical liberation with an aspect of justice, but not to a spiritual event that could compare with mokṣa. Later in the same replica, the scribe complains that great sins have piled up (maho pātacāmcyā rāsi jāliyā) on earth

283 II.11.44.
284 II.11.74.
285 II.16.3.
286 II.16.7.
287 II.16.8.
that the evil people of saṁsāra get no punishment, and that the earth (kṣīti) is full of people who engage in sinful deeds (pāpa karma).\textsuperscript{289} Further, if Jesus really were the Christ, why did he not rākhane the boys from King Herod’s infanticide?\textsuperscript{290} Taken together, these and other evidence seemed to prove that the saviour of the world (saṁsāratāra) had still not come.\textsuperscript{291} This sequence shows that the nouns rākhanāra and tāraka both can convey the idea of a person that saves from physical danger and political oppression, and who dispenses justice by punishing evil.

4.2.4. Soḍaṇe, soḍavaṇe

The verb soḍane has the general meaning “[t]o let loose or free generally; to loosen from bonds or bondage; to extricate or release from restraint, confinement, embarrassment, trouble, or evil of any kind.” Its causative variant soḍavaṇe, apart from the general meaning “[t]o cause to loosen or let go”, means “[t]o deliver, liberate, release; to extricate, set free, or sever (from restraint, confinement, or connection generally).” The related noun soḍavaṇa and the substantivized verb soḍavaṇe mean “[l]iberation, deliverance, release; setting free or the free state”, and can also refer to the “means of deliverance”.\textsuperscript{292}

Many of the occurrences of these words in Kristapurāṇa are in their more general sense, and thus relevant here mainly as illustration of their general shades of meaning. To give some examples, they are used when someone is freed from jail,\textsuperscript{293} about leaving somebody or something,\textsuperscript{294} unbinding a donkey\textsuperscript{295} or sandal laces,\textsuperscript{296} and about letting out a sigh.\textsuperscript{297}

Many times, though, these words take on a more spiritual meaning and often they are clearly used to speak about salvation, as when it is said that Jesus will soḍavaṇe the people in liṁbaloka. In cases when they have a clear Biblical counterpart, they often correspond to Latin redemptio. In Kristapurāṇa’s rendering of Benedictus,\textsuperscript{299} Zachariah says, in the verse corresponding to Luke 1:68, that Israel’s God redeemed (soḍavile) his people.\textsuperscript{300}

\textsuperscript{289} II.16.24-25.
\textsuperscript{290} II.16.33.
\textsuperscript{291} II.16.37. The word is actually spelled saṁsāraka in this verse, which must be a misspelling of saṁsāratāra.\textsuperscript{292} Molesworth, \textit{Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary}, p. 869. The threefold meaning of soḍavaṇa, encompassing liberation, the means of liberation, and liberty itself, illustrates the hesitancy of the Marathi language to conform to a strict categorisation where words are expected to fit into one and only one of these categories.\textsuperscript{293} II.30.38.
\textsuperscript{294} II.32.20; 48.131.
\textsuperscript{295} II.40.188; 42.141; 49.156.
\textsuperscript{296} II.40.13, 17.
\textsuperscript{297} II.18.81.
\textsuperscript{298} II.32.41, 43; 48.143; 49.148, 170.
\textsuperscript{300} II.6.77.
soḍavile (past tense soḍavaṇe) of corresponds to “fecit redemptionem” in the Vulgate. Similarly soḍavaṇe corresponds to a form of the verb redimere in the story about the Emmaus disciples that had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel.301

Often these words are used for liberation from bonds or bondage. For example soḍavaṇe is used when Jesus says in the Synagogue that he has been sent to “proclaim freedom for the prisoners”. 302 Here the word reflects either Latin remissio from Luke 4:19 or indulgentia from Isaiah 61:1 in the Vulgate, or both. Indulgentia has meanings like “favour, bounty”, 303 whereas remissio has meanings like “[t]he action of letting go […], release”. 304

In at least one case of direct correspondence between Kristapurāṇa and the Bible, soḍavaṇe corresponds to Vulgate’s liberare, namely when people around the cross cheat Jesus and say that God should rescue him from death on the cross if he is really God’s son. 305

To sum up, soḍavaṇe and related words are used in Kristapurāṇa for various kinds of rescue and liberation from bonds or perilous situations. These can range from trivial to lethal, from private to political, and from worldly to spiritual. When there is a direct Biblical counterpart, they correspond to Latin redemptio, remissio, indulgentia, or liberare.

4.2.5. Uddhāraṇe

The verb uddhāraṇe is used a few times in Kristapurāṇa albeit in the deviating spelling udhāraṇe, which may be a reflection of local pronunciation. According to Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary it means “[t]o rescue, deliver, save (from hell or perdition): to emancipate from a low form of existence, or to exempt from further migration.”306 Stephens uses the word in this sense, but without the aspect of “exempt from further migration”, which is an idea proper to Hinduism and other Indian religions but alien to Roman Catholic Christianity. The verb is used in verses saying that sinners are saved by Jesus’ name307 and that Jesus dies to save people.308 It is also used in an interesting verse about the healing and salvation of the whole world thanks to Jesus’ death on the cross:

[He] invaded hell (yema lokā), ghādi ghātale yema lokā

302 II.29.84, 89; Luke 4:18.
305 II.48.66, Matthew 27:43.
307 II.9.60: “pataki uddhārītī / yeṇe nāme” (“sinners are saved by this name”). N.b. the verb is here used intransitively.
308 II.44.52: “jana udhārāvyā” (“to save people”). Cf. II.40.125.
Broke all the roots of sin (dośa).

[He] saved the world (visvalokā)

And healed nature’s wound.

dośāci kaṁde moḍali sakaḷikā
udhārona visvalokā
sādhīlā ghāvo prakruticā

Nelson Falcao renders visvaloka as jagāṭīla loka (“the people of/in the world”) in his modern Marathi version.310 Such a translation is possible, since loka can mean both “people” and “world”, but the pairing of visvaloka with yema loka (“hell” or “world of death”) makes it more plausible that the intended meaning in this verse is “world”. This is also in accordance with other passages that speak about the salvation or recreation of the world.311

Finally the word is used in to names for purgatory, namely udharāyācā ṭhāī312 and udharāvyācī jāgā,313 both conveying the idea of a place (jāgā, ṭhāī) in which one can be bestowed with salvation or from which one can ascend to the realm of those who are saved.

4.2.6. An unexpected word: praṇāma

The noun praṇāma requires a comment. Its usual meaning is “[r]everential salutation, obeisance.”314 In Kristapurāṇa, however, it is used in a similar way as rakṣaṇa and tāraṇa. It is also used as if it meant “healed”, “sound” etc. For example Jesus says that praṇāmu has entered the house of Sakeus. Here praṇāmu corresponds to salus in the Vulgate.315 Interestingly this quite radical twist in the usage of the word corresponds with the spectre of meanings of the Latin word which it is used to translate. Salus comprises within itself meanings like “health”, “rescue”, “salvation”, and “salutation”,316 similarly to German “Heil”, as stated in chapter 2.1. It seems that Stephens has simply given himself the freedom to expand the meaning of the Marathi word in analogy with that of Latin salus.

4.3. The blessed state

The table below shows the words that Stephens uses to denote the blessed state that is the result of salvation, along with corresponding epithets of the Saviour. The usage of these words in the second part of Kristapurāṇa and the message about salvation thereby conveyed is the topic of the subsections of this chapter.

309 II.40.125.
310 Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p.1144.
311 Cf. II.43.185-199, 202. Cf. also Revelation 21:1, 5. The theme is further discussed in chapter 4.6.1 and chapter 5 below.
312 II.50.80.
313 II.37.112.
314 Molesworth, Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary, p. 536.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blessed state</th>
<th>Approximate meaning</th>
<th>Saviour[^117]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mokṣa</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>mokṣa rājā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokṣa sīḍhī</td>
<td>Attainment of freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokṣa bharita</td>
<td>Full of freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokṣa phaḷa</td>
<td>Fruit of freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokṣaprāptī</td>
<td>Attainment of freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokṣapada</td>
<td>State of freedom</td>
<td>mokṣapadācā rājā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokṣa āśramī</td>
<td>House of freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mukti</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>mukticā dātā, mukticā rājā, mukticā rājā cakravarti, rājāmukticā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muktipada</td>
<td>State of freedom</td>
<td>muktipadācā dātā, muktipadācā dātāru, muktipadācā ṭhāvo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muktivāṁta</td>
<td>Liberated, free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha mukti</td>
<td>Heaven-freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mukti bharita</td>
<td>Full of freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha</td>
<td>Heaven</td>
<td>vaikuṁṭharājā, vaikuṁṭhīcā rājā, vaikuṁṭharāyā, vaikuṁṭharavo, vaikuṁṭharāmāṁ, vaikuṁṭhapati, vaikuṁṭhanāṭha, vaikuṁṭhanāyekā, vaikuṁṭhasvāmī, vaikuṁṭhici māṇuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha sthāna</td>
<td>Heaven, place of heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭhanagara</td>
<td>Heaventown, city of heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭhīcā rāja</td>
<td>King of heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha svarga</td>
<td>Heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha vāasu</td>
<td>Residence in heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha vāsī</td>
<td>Resident of heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha dāīji</td>
<td>Inheritance of heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha loka</td>
<td>Heaven-world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha sukha</td>
<td>Joy of heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaikuṁṭha padā</td>
<td>State of heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^117]: Translations of the epithets of the Saviour are given in chapter 4.8.
4.3.1. Mukti, mokṣa

The meaning of mukti/mokṣa as a Hindu concept has been sufficiently discussed in chapters 2.3 and 2.4. This chapter will therefore be dedicated to discerning the Christian concept that Stephens tries to communicate by means of these words.

4.3.1.1. Eternal joy

The most significant characteristic of the blessed state of mukti seems to be its ineffable and eternal joy, as illustrated by the following two verses:

In that place the blessed bhaktas
In their souls are filled with happiness.
All joy of mukti without end
They enjoy.

That joy cannot be described,
Previously neither heard of nor seen,
And not imagined
By human mind.

| svarga       | Heaven               | svargīcā rāyā, svargīca nṛpavaru, svargīca ravo |
| svargā rājye | Kingdom of heaven    |
| svargīce rāja bhuvani | Kingdom of heaven |
| svargabhuvana | Heaven               |
| svargasthāna | Heavenland, place of heaven |
| svargaloka   | Heaven-world         |
| svarga mandira | House of heaven     |
| svarga vaikuṭha | Heaven       |
| parama pada  | Highest state        |
| parama gati  | Highest state        |

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318 II.43.232.
319 II.43.233.
Complete joy of course implies freedom from suffering, but in the state of mokṣa there is also no risk of losing the joy. After the last judgement Christ says to the happy ones who will be taken to vaikuṇṭha:

There is no taking the cross\(^{320}\) on ones shoulders
Or making atonement with one’s body.
Henceforth great troubles and hardships
Must not be bore.

All those hardships are now over
Now with me to the City of vaikuṇṭha
To enjoy the state of mokṣa in the city
Come with the angels!

I am your god and king
And you are my people.
Out of my hand my people
Nobody can wring.

4.3.1.2. Vision and light
Another characteristic of mukti is the vision (darśana) of God. In II.43.78-79 those who have not attained mokṣa blame themselves for not having done the little that would have been required from them to enjoy the state of mokṣa (mokṣapada) together with the good people, and they complain that they now cannot see Gods muktivaṁta face. Falcao renders muktivaṁta in modern Marathi as mukti deṇāre,\(^{324}\) “mukti-giving”. The word also means something like “full of mukti”, whatever the exact meaning of that expression might be. In any case this passage shows that mokṣa is, in one way or the other, associated with seeing God’s face.

The libereating power of Jesus’ darśana is also stressed when he speaks about mukti and mokṣa to the people of liṁbaloka, where he is between his death and resurrection. Liṁbaloka

\(^{320}\) Literally "pole".
\(^{322}\) II.43.211.
\(^{323}\) II.43.212.
\(^{324}\) Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stiphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p.1213.
is the word used in *Kristapurāṇa* for *limbus patrum* or the limbo of the patriarchs, according to Catholic theology the temporal dwelling place or state of the souls of the just who were excluded from the beatific vision until Christ’s glorious ascension to heaven. Stephens lets Jesus say to the people of *limbaloka*:

Now I draw you [away] from your sins  
And give you all my joy.  
Through my vision (darśana) I make  
You free (*muktivaṁta*).

Speaking thus,  
Showing his divinity,  
He spread and showed  
The light of *mokṣa*.

The *bhaktas* on whom the light fell immediately became *muktivaṁta*, and the present angels “obtained even greater joy of *mukti*” (*mukti sukha pāvaleti/ādhīka thora*) because of his *darśana*.

The same theme is found in II.43.165, where God’s *darśana*, i.e. the sight or seeing of God, is said to be *mukti bharita*, i.e. full of *mukti* (*paramesvarāce darśana / je mukti bharita pune pāvana*). The same verse says that those who go to eternal suffering instead of *mokṣa*, will never see God’s *darśana*.

The message is that those who do not get *mokṣa* do not see God, expressed either in terms of God’s face or God’s *darśana*. Qualifying God’s face and *darśana* with adjectives like *muktivaṁta* and *mukti bharita*, translatable as “*mukti*-giving” and “full of *mukti*” creates the feeling that seeing God is an essential component of *mukti*, that which effects *mukti* or even the essence of *mukti*. This is in concordance with official Catholic theology, where the

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325 P. Toner, ‘Limbo’, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910. Available from: New Advent, (accessed 25 June 2015). *Kristapurāṇa* presents *limbus patrum* as a place where the just who die before the time of Jesus Christ come, as in II.19.99 about circumcision contra baptism: “*to dāsāṁcā devo guptā/hā lekuravāṁsi yukta/to liba loki pāṭhavita/hā nevhe to vaikuṁṭhāṁ//*” (“That [i.e. circumcision] is a sacrament for servants; this [i.e.] baptism one befitting children. That one sends to *limbaloka*; this new one to *vaikuṁtha*.”)

326 II.50.71.
327 II.50.72.
328 II.50.63.
329 II.50.64.
330 II.43.165.
immediate knowledge of God, which is enjoyed by angelic spirits and souls of the just in heaven, is nown as the beatific vision.  

God’s darśan or the vision of God being such an important aspect of mokṣa, it is not surprisingly also associated with light. In a verse quoted above reference is made to the light of mokṣa and in the story about the Mount Tabor Jesus “became full of mokṣa” (mokṣa bharitu jālā) and his body was shining (śobhala).

4.3.1.3. Spatiality

Mukti is sometimes referred to in spatial terms, especially when used in compounds such as muktipada, as when Jesus tells the criminal hanging on the cross next to his own: “Today you will be with me in muktipada” (āji mājhe saṁve vartasi/muktipadi). The verse corresponds to Luke 23:43 and muktipadi obviously stands for Vulgate’s in paradiso, “in paradise”. Stephens says about the criminal that his “whole body was bound but his tongue was free” (sarvāga bāṁdhale paṇa mokaḷī/hoti jivhāṁ); he “confessed his sin” (karona dośācā ucāra) and so “reached the highest joy” (paramasukha pāvalā). The same thing is then described from the other perspective, telling what Jesus, the tāraka, does: He “removed the guilt and gave an eternal dwelling place in vaikuṇṭhasthāna” (kelā āparāda niraśana/didhale vaikuṇṭhasthāna/āḍaḷapada). From this it seems that muktipada refers to the same thing as vaikuṇṭhasthāna. A similar linking of mukti and vaikuṇṭha is made in a salutation to the wound in Jesus’ side, which is called “the threshold of vaikuṇṭha” (vaikuṇṭhicā dārivaṭhā) and “beautiful gate of mukti” (muktīcā dārā baravaṭā).

4.3.1.4. Resurrection of the body

Before John the Baptist is beheaded by Herod’s men, Stephens lets him hold a last monologue, which has no counterpart in the Bible. Here the Baptist speaks to God, saying that his death means svargagati, and that the killing of his body would mean that he was happily liberated (soḍavilyā) from his body. He ends his monologue with the following words:

331 Pace, ‘Beatific Vision’.
332 II.50.72.
334 II.48.94.
335 II.48.98.
336 II.48.99.
337 II.48.100.
338 II.48.102.
339 II.49.80.
340 II.30.48.
341 II.30.50.
My soul (ātmā) is in your hand.  
I have offered it, Lord of the Universe.  
Take it, and the mukti of your Christ,  
Let it reach.

Here John the Baptist seems to express the view that mukti implies liberation from the body, which goes together well with Hindu understandings of mukti, but neither with Catholic theology nor with the message of Kristapurāṇa at large. In accordance with Catholic theology Stephens regarded the life of the liberated souls in heaven as an embodied existence. Mokṣapada, the state of mokṣa or the liberated state, is not a purely spiritual existence but a state that includes both soul (ātmā) and body, as shown by the passages rendered below.

Before dying Jesus talks to his own body, saying that they now have to part, but only for a short period; “in three days I will make you full of mokṣa and resuscitate you” (ti divasi mokṣa bharita karina/jivavina tuteṁ). Then he commends his spirit (prāṇa) in God’s hand. Jesus’ spirit, alternately referred to as prāṇa and ātmā, seems to be mokṣa bharita all the time, since Jesus even in the time between his death and his resurrection is called “Lord full of mokṣa” (mokṣa bharita svāmī).

According to Kristapurāṇa, the first person Jesus meets after his resurrection is his mother Mary. He tells her that he is mokṣa bharita vajra śariri. Falcao’s modern Marathi version reads mokṣāne bharalele śarīra vajrāsārakhe āhe, i.e. “[my] body, full of mokṣa, is like diamond.” Another possibility, which I find more plausible, would be: “Full of mokṣa, with a body like diamond.” His resurrected body is immortal, visible and touchable, but can be made invisible anytime. In agreement with common Catholic teaching about the four

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342 II.30.53.
343 The third article of the Apostles’ Creed the believer professes: “I believe in […] the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.” Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, § 197.
344 II.48.181.
345 II.48.186.
346 II.50.46.
347 II.51.73.
348 II.51.62.
349 Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stiphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 1392.
350 The whole verse II.51.62 reads: “ātāṁ jivaṁta jālo āvadhāri/mokṣa barita vajra śarīra/hounayā tuja sāmori/āloṁ dekhā”.
351 II.51.63.
qualities of the risen body.\textsuperscript{352} Stephens says that it has the following four guṇas: (1) it is shining brighter than the sun, (2) it is undestroyable, (3) it is weightless (ābhāri), and (4) it is subtle (pāṭāla) and can go through stones and rocks.\textsuperscript{353} Then Jesus tells Mary that the same thing will happen to her and to all good people: they will rise from the dead and their bodies will be like his.\textsuperscript{354} Later Jesus again describes the resurrected body of a good person, now called muktivaṁti,\textsuperscript{355} just like his own resurrected body is described.\textsuperscript{356}

4.3.1.5. God is his own mokṣa

An interesting twist of the concept of mokṣa comes already in verse I.2.29, where we are informed that God does not need any created thing and that he is his own mokṣa.\textsuperscript{357} This statement indicates that Stephens wanted to convey an idea of mokṣa not only as an act or episode, but as a blissful state.

A biblical source of inspiration for this may be 1 Corinthians 13:12: “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” If mokṣa is conceived as a state of perfect knowledge and a face to face vision of God, then it is meaningful to speak about God as being his own mokṣa. It leads us to a conception of mokṣa as something like sharing God’s own state of being.

If mokṣa is understood as a blissful state including perfect knowledge, the statement about God being his own mokṣa also reminds of the words “jaya jaya svasaṁvedyā”\textsuperscript{358} (“Victory to that Self-known One”) addressed to Ganesā in the first ovī of Jñāneśvarī, the lengthy Marathi rendering of Bhagavadgītā written by the 13\textsuperscript{th} century poet saint Jñāneśvar. This is arguably the most prominent of all Vaiṣnava works written in Marathi, and arguably it or at least the ideas presented in it were available to Father Stephens.\textsuperscript{360} Inspired by the Marathi Vaiṣnavaite poets and with sufficient backing from the Bible and Christian tradition (notably

\textsuperscript{353} II.51.64-69.
\textsuperscript{354} II.51.73-74.
\textsuperscript{355} II.43.34. The word is actually spelled muktivati, i.e. without the anusvara, which I regard as a misspelling.
\textsuperscript{356} II.43.33-34. The body of the muktivaṁta is described as (1) more brilliant than the sun (suryāhoni tejiki), (2) more enduring than diamond (vajrāhoni ādiki hoti śāsvati), (3) faster than the wind (pavanāhoni pātāḷa), and (4) subtler than the sky (āṁtrāḷahoni pātāḷa).
\textsuperscript{357} I.2.29: “mhaṇonī tyācyā thaṁ/racllyā vastucē garja nāhīṁ/tyāsī bāhījē nalage kāhīṁ/apalā mokṣa apaṇaca//”
\textsuperscript{358} Jñāneśvarī I.1.
\textsuperscript{360} In Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter (pp. 13-14) Falcao presents a list of books that were then translated into Portuguese, in which Jñāneśvarī is included, and another list of works included in a compendium that may be in Stephens’s own handwriting, in which another work of Jñāneśvar is included.
the Catholic doctrine about the beatific vision) Father Stephens was able to think of God as the Self-known One and express this in the words: “He is his own \textit{mokṣa}.”

\textbf{4.3.2. Paramapada, paramagati}

Paramapada and paramagati, both translatable as “the highest state”, are used a couple of times each in the second part of \textit{Kristapurāṇa}. Mary, through the fruit of whose womb (i.e. Jesus) human beings will reach \textit{mukti},\textsuperscript{362} is referred to as the maternal home (\textit{māhera}) of paramagati,\textsuperscript{363} since Jesus came to earth (\textit{kṣiti}) to give paramagati to human beings.\textsuperscript{364} In another verse \textit{Kristapurāṇa} admonishes the reader not only to hear but also to follow the words of the Lord in order to reach \textit{paramapada}.\textsuperscript{365} Although the occurrences are few, they seem to indicate that Stephens uses \textit{paramapada} and \textit{paramagati} as synonyms of \textit{mukti} and \textit{mokṣa}.

The other verse in the second part of \textit{Kristapurāṇa} where \textit{paramapada} is mentioned, is when Mary speaks to the city of Bethlehem about the unborn Jesus in her womb, saying: “If you recognize this commander, you will quickly reach \textit{parama pada}.”\textsuperscript{366} Here seems not to use the term in its theologically specified sense, where it is synonymous with \textit{mukti} and \textit{mokṣa}. Rather it is there used in the more general sense “the highest state” or “excellent state”.

\textbf{4.3.3. Nirvāṇa}

The word \textit{nirvāṇa} occurs three times in the second part of \textit{Kristapurāṇa}, but not obviously as denoting ultimate salvation. Rather it is used in a sense similar to “passing away” or “death”, although once or twice with a positive ring. One of the occurrences is in the \textit{ovī} that renders Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane, shortly before he was arrested. The Bible passage that this \textit{ovī} reflects is the second third of Matthew 26:39: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.”\textsuperscript{367} According to \textit{Kristapurāṇa}, Jesus prays with the following words:

\begin{quote}
\textit{mhaṇe mājhā vaikuṁthicā tātā}
\textit{yā maraṇa pāṭrā atā}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{361} II.2.29: “\textit{apalā mokṣa apanaca}”.
\textsuperscript{362} II.2.167.
\textsuperscript{363} II.2.165.
\textsuperscript{364} II.6.17.
\textsuperscript{365} II.29.14: ”\textit{svāmīyāṁ śabda aikijē/aikona baraveṁ sāṁbhāṁlije/titukyā kelyāṁ pāvije/parama pade/}” (“Hear the words of the lord; hear and follow them well. Doing that reach the highest state.”) The editions of Saldanha, Drago and Bandelu have \textit{daiva} instead of \textit{pade}, thus making the last phrase “highest destiny”.
\textsuperscript{366} II.7.35: ”\textit{jari yā daḻapatite volakhisi/tari tvarita pāvije/parama pada/}”. Cf. Mika 5:2.
\textsuperscript{367} Matthew 26:39.
Although it is perfectly clear which Bible passage these lines are meant to reflect, their translation is not self-evident. Falcao, in his modern Marathi translation, treats pātra as a form of putra ("son"). But long ā for Sanskrit u is not a normal variant, although it could be explained as a slip of the pen. Further he seems to treat nirvāṇa as meaning "avoidable", and translates the hole verse into modern Marathi as something like this: “He said: My Heavenly Father, now if you want to avoid the death of your son, then avoid it!”

This translation is problematic. To begin with, it is more plausible to suppose that pātra is simply the word pātra, meaning “cup”. Apart from being a much more normal way of spelling, it is actually what the corresponding Bible verse says. Secondly, the word nirvāṇa has many meanings, but neither Molesworth nor Feldhaus/Tulpule include something like “avoidable” among them.

Feldhaus and Tulpule’s A Dictionary of Old Marathi lists the meanings “the end” and “a bitter end; an ultimate test”. In the compound nirvāṇapāpī, which they translate as “extremely sinful”, nirvāṇa- functions as an intensifying prefix. Molesworth complements with translations like “[e]xtremity or bitter distress”, “[d]eath”, and the religiophilosophical meaning “emancipation from matter and reunion with the Deity.” It can also be used as an adjective with corresponding meanings.

Given that nirvāṇa has this range of meanings and pātra means “cup”, the most plausible translation of II.44.185 is as follows:

[He] said: My Heavenly Father,
[Is] this cup of death now
The bitter end (nirvāṇa), still
Ward it off, o Father!

Then, in the next ovī, Jesus says that things should not happen according to his will, but according to his Father’s will. Summing up, Stephens’ intention in this passage must have

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368 II.44.185.
370 Feldhaus and Tulpule, A Dictionary of Old Marathi, p. 386.
been to use nirvāṇa for “bitter end” or something similar, in any case he does not use it in a sense similar to “salvation”.

The second occurrence of the word nirvāṇa comes when people mockingly tell the crucified Jesus to step down from the cross. Stephens says that Jesus stayed on the cross in order to “make the way easy” (to sopā mārga karāvayā), and ward off his Father’s anger toward us sinners. In Saldanha’s version the way that Jesus makes easy is explicitly said to be vaikuṁṭhapamithu, “the way of/to vaikuṁṭha”. The Marsden version has vaikuṁṭhapati instead of vaikuṁṭhapamithu, thus stressing that Jesus hangs on the pole (siḻuvā) as “Lord of vaikuṁṭha”. Both alternatives make sense and are grammatically possible. Christ’s death having such an effect, the devil (devacārā) wanted to hinder it, but with all strength he and human beings managed to mobilize, they could not make Jesus step down from the cross and “break his goodness” (sattva moḍāvayā). Interestingly, their aim is presented as “to break your [Jesus’] nirvāṇa” (tujhe nirvāṇa moḍāvayatem). It seems clear that nirvāṇa here refers to Jesus’ death in some sense, although the exact connotations are difficult to estimate. To some extent it seems to have positive connotations, since it is connected with Jesus’ goodness or sattva.

The death of the bandit, who was crucified next to Jesus and promised to be taken to vaikuṁṭha that same day, is the third and last event where the word nirvāṇa is used:

Blessed, blessed, great is your nirvāṇa; dhanye dhanye thora tujhe nirvāṇa
Well you did your thievery, cāṅgale kele taskarpaṇa
Broke into the kingdom of svarga svargī rājyāsi khāṁna
You did! ghātale tuvāṁ

The stream of the nectar (āmṛta) of life, jīvitvāci āmṛtajhāri
Which sprang forth on the pole, ji pragatāli siḻavyāvari
You will first of all ti tuja sakamīlām puḍārī
Nicely enjoy. lābhali baravi

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372 II.48.71.
373 II.48.72.
375 II.48.75.
376 II.48.75
377 II.48.104.
378 II.48.105.
In this refreshing passage *nirvāṇa* has a decidedly positive ring. Like in the other occurrences its meaning is “death”, but here it is a death which implies beatitude and communion with God.

4.3.4. **Heaven: vaikuṇṭha and svarga**

Both *svarga* and *vaikuṇṭha* are used extensively in *Kristapurāṇa*, as independent words as well as in numerous compounds. *Svarga* is translatable as “sky” or “heaven”, whereas the meaning of *vaikuṇṭha* is limited to the religious “heaven”. More specifically *vaikuṇṭha* is a name of Viṣṇu’s paradise in Hindu mythology. *Svarga* can be used to refer to Indra’s heaven, but is not restricted to that use.379

In *Kristapurāṇa* both *svarga*380 and *vaikuṇṭha*381 are used as equivalents for Latin *caelum/caelus*. *Caelum/caelus* is also rendered with various compounds, such as *svargasthāna* (“place/land of heaven”)382 and *svargamaṇḍira* (“house of heaven”).383 Similarly *regnum caelorum*, “Kingdom of Heaven”, is rendered alternately *svarga rājya*384 (sometimes *svargīce rāje*)385 and *vaikuṇṭhicā rāja*.386 As noted above, the usage in *Doutrina Christam* gives the impression that the words *svarga* and *vaikuṇṭha* are synonymous, and the same seems often to be the case in *Kristapurāṇa*. For example Jesus’ ascension to heaven is referred to as his ascending to *svarga*387 and *vaikuṇṭha*388 alike, and once both words are juxtaposed, saying that he ascended “into *svarga vaikuṇṭha*” (*svargī vaikuṭhā bhītari*).389 Still there is indicament that the terms are not entirely synonymous. For example Stephens tells us that Jesus ascended through ten *svargas* and then, with them all under his feet, reached *vaikuṇṭha dvāra*, “the gate of vaikuṇṭha”,390 which had been closed for human beings since Adam committed his sin (*dośa*).391 The impression that *vaikuṇṭha* is higher than *svarga* is further strengthened in II.58.52, where Jesus is exhorted to establish his throne “above all

382 II.36.16, Matthew 19:21.
384 II.32.80, Matthew 16:19; II.32.80, Matthew 16:19; Matthew 13:44, II.29.58.
385 Matthew 13:45, II.29.60.
386 II.42.45.
387 II.57.43.
388 II.57.54.
389 II.58.2. Another example of such synonymous usage is that Jesus after his ascension to heaven is said to sit on the right hand of the Father in *svarga loka* (*svarga lokāṁ gelyā upari*) in II.57.44, whereas the same in II.58.83 is placed in *vaikuṇṭhanagara* (*gelā caḍona vaikuṁṭhanagarā*). Likewise the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is sent from *svarga* (II.44.166; 57.26).
390 II.58.25.
391 II.58.26.
svargas in the holy vaikuṁṭha”. To sum up, vaikuṁṭha and svara are often treated as synonyms, and when a distinction is made between them vaikuṁṭha is a name for what we could call the highest heaven or the highest realm of svara. Stephens’ occasional giving vaikuṁṭha pre-eminence over svara is in accordance with Vaïṣṇavaite terminology, where vaikuṁṭha, understood as Viṣṇu’s heaven, is placed above all other worlds or loka.

When telling about Jesus’ ascension to heaven after his resurrection, Stephens stages a paraphrase of Psalm 24 in front of the gate of vaikuṁṭha. Psalm 24:7 reads as follows:

Lift up your heads, you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

In Stephens’ version Jesus is not called “King of glory”, but “King of mukti” and “King of mokṣapada”:

They say: Listen, kings,  
Open your gates,  
And, O Gates, give place  
For the invincible Soul!

The King and Emperor of mukti  
Has come to enter, they say.  
Then those guards ask:  
Who is that King of mukti?

The answer they get is:

This very Lord of angels, the life of the world,  
King of mokṣapada!

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392 II.58.52: “sakaḷa svargā varute/pavitra vaikuṁṭhāteṁ”.
394 II.58.31.
395 II.58.32.
396 II.58.37.
Thereafter Jesus enters the house of mokṣa (mokṣa āśramī) in great joy or possibly laughter (thora hasem) together with the blessed bhaktas (bhāgyevamē bhaktāṃsamaṅgamī). The gate through which he enters being the gate of vaikuṇṭha, it seems clear that what is here referred to as the house of mokṣa is vaikuṇṭha.

Upon entering vaikuṇṭha Jesus meets his Father and, among other things, asks him to grant their servants or bhaktas the places that have been prepared for them since the creation of saṁsāra, according to their respective merits (puṇya):

And for these your and my servants,  
Since the creation of saṁsāra for them  
The places kept here  
Prepared,  
āṇī yā tujheyā māṁjhayā sevakāte  
saṁsāra racīlā lāguna tayānte  
je stānne ṭhevili yethe  
sidha karona

Those places for your bhaktas,  
After merits to them all  
Give, to those searching refuge by you,  
[And] establish, O Father.  
ti stāṁne tujhayā bhaktāṁsiṁ  
puṇyā sārikhi tayā sakaḷāṁsi  
deunayā tujhiyā śaraṇāṅgatāṁsi  
sthāpīgā bāpā

In vaikuṇṭha people thus get different positions according to their deeds and different merits or virtues. But this stratification does not give raise to any suffering, since everybody considers his own lot as good as that of anyone else. There is no reason for jelousy, since all the places are incomparable, as stated in a passage describing how the archangel Michael gives the bhaktas their respective seats in the city of vaikuṇṭha (vaikuṇṭha nagari):

Seeing according to their merits,  
Putting them on their own places,  
Seating (them) on incomparable seats  
In mokṣapada.  
tyātyā puṇeyā sārikho pāḥāṭāṁ  
tyāsi āpulā stāni ṭheṅvatā  
anupamāṁ baisikārāvari baisavita  
mokṣapadi

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397 II.58.42.  
398 II.58.72.  
399 II.58.73.  
400 Cf. II.43.226.  
401 II.43.227.  
402 Cf. II.58.104.  
403 II.58.105.
The quoted ovī is also an example of how mokṣapada is described in spatial terms, as if it were a place rather than a state. Likewise existence in vaikuṁṭha is described in perhaps surprisingly physical terms. The Father and the Son embrace each other, and God (probably the Father) embraces the saints and religious prominent(sāṁtamahānta). At the same time it surpasses the conditions of normal physical existence. Life in vaikuṁṭha is eternal, and the joy that one enjoys in mokṣapada is be beyond everything that eyes could see or ears could hear, and even beyond what human mind can think.

In accordance with Catholic doctrine, Kristapurāṇa lets the reader understand that the soul is immortal whereas the body is raised only at the final resurrection at the last day. In II.58.97 the bhaktas ask Jesus when he will resuscitate (vivavīsi) their bodies (kuḍi), so that the bodies can enjoy in the city of vaikuṁṭha the fruit of the hardships they endured with them in saṁsāra. Admittedly the bhaktas say about themselves that they are in svarga loka, but the episode comes after Jesus has entered through the gate of vaikuṁṭha together with the bhaktas, been seeted on the right hand of the Father, whose throne is vaikuṁṭha and who keeps his feet on the earth, and immediately after the Father has embraced the patriarchs, prophets and other bhaktas (yerāṁ bhaktāṁsim). It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the occasionally made distinction between vaikuṁṭha and svarga is not maintained in this passage. Jesus gives them a lengthy answer that I will render in total:

> Jesus said: When human beings die, yeju mhaṇe manuśa jādi marati
> Then the souls (ātmās) that are good, tadi ātmeṁ je barave āhāti
> They on their respective days come to svarga; te āpāpule divasim svargā yeti
> The bodies do not come along. kuḍi na yeti savem

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404 II.58.75.
405 II.58.93.
406 II.32.13; 34.34, 36.
407 II.58.107.
408 II.58.108.
410 Bhakta is usually translated “devotee”, which is a somewhat unsatisfying translation. A bhakta is a person who performs bhakti, a subject which is treated in chapters 2.4 and 4.5.2.
411 II.58.97. vivavīsi should probably be jīvavīsi.
412 II.58.98.
413 II.58.97.
414 II.58.42
415 II.58.83.
417 II.58.94.
418 II.58.99.
One day all bodies 
Will attain what is given, \(^{419}\) 
Will rise and come alive, 
All human beings.

At that time all bodies rise, 
Enjoy the fruit of (their) hardships. 
At one (and the same) time they attain the joy 
In vaikuṁṭha.

The conclusion that svarga in this passage refers to the same as vaikuṁṭha is further supported by passage in an earlier chapter about the Last Judgement, which, talking about the same bodiless souls in heaven and the resurrection of the body on the last day, says that the souls are in vaikumtha, not using the word svarga as in the passage quoted above. The crucial verse reads:

Then the ātmās of the bhaktas in vaikuṁṭha, 
Which were without body, 
They, with body and ātmā, 
Will sit on their respective places.

In other words the souls of the dead do not have to wait for the resurrection of the body. They can live happily in vaikuṁṭha until they are joined by their bodies at the end of time. \(^{423}\)

4.3.5. An unexpected word: parama jivā

The compound parama jivā occurs once in a bitter remark about Judas, who is blamed not only for being a traitor, but also for being a bad businessman. He “sold the parama jivā and kept eternal death” (parama jivā vikonayāṁ/ākhaṁḍa mṛtye ṭēvilā). \(^{424}\) Parama jivā can be translated as “supreme life” or “supreme soul”, which makes the sentence a subtle pun: Judas sold Jesus Christ, who is the Supreme Being, God in human form. At the same time he sold or

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\(^{419}\) An alternative translation would be: “as fixed will come”, thus referring to dina (“day”) in the previous line.  
\(^{420}\) II.58.100.  
\(^{421}\) II.58.101.  
\(^{422}\) II.43.229.  
\(^{423}\) Cf. II.58.102.  
\(^{424}\) II.45.62.
lost the supreme life that would have been his in heaven and in its place eternal death (ākhamḍa mṛtye) fell upon his lot.

### 4.4. Other post-mortem destinies

Although the subject of this thesis is salvation, I will dedicate this chapter to Kristapurāṇa’s version of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus,\(^\text{425}\) which gives interesting information of how Stephens imagined and presented the different options for life after death. In this parable some people have fallen short of the joy of vaikuṇṭha\(^\text{426}\) and are caught in the conceptual opposite of mokṣa, namely āḍaḻabaṃdi or eternal bondage.\(^\text{427}\) In the story they understand that Lazarus, whose death they had considered unholy (apavitra),\(^\text{428}\) had become a muktice vāṁṭekāra, approximately “one who walks the way of mukti,”\(^\text{429}\) whereas for them the sun of righteousness (dharmaniticā surya) is covered.\(^\text{430}\)

A wise (jñāṁni) listener objects to the narrator’s too bodily descriptions of life after death, when according to him “our souls are formless without body” (amhaṁce ātme nirākārā/kuḍi vegaḷe).\(^\text{431}\) The narrator gives him right, but says that formless (nirākāra) things must be explained as if they had form, since otherwise people do not understand.\(^\text{432}\)

Lazarus had suffered a lot in saṁsāra and was therefore not taken to purgatory, but he could also not come directly to svargasthāna, since nobody could enter svarga before Jesus’ death. Therefore his ātmā was taken by angels (devaduteṁ) to liṁbaloka,\(^\text{433}\) i.e. limbus patrum or the limbo of the patriarchs. The phrase Stephens uses here for purgatory, udharāvyācī jāgā, can be translated as “place of deliverance” or “the place of ascending to heaven.”\(^\text{434}\) Falcao in his modern Marathi version has pāpakṣālanacī jāgā,\(^\text{435}\) “place of washing away sins”, which is also a possible translation. These three possible translations show how suitable the phrase is as name of the place where, according to Catholic doctrine, those who “die in God’s Grace and friendship […] undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”\(^\text{436}\)

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\(^{426}\) II.37.41.

\(^{427}\) II.37.58.

\(^{428}\) II.37.65.

\(^{429}\) II.37.66.

\(^{430}\) II.37.37.

\(^{431}\) II.37.107.

\(^{432}\) II.37.110.

\(^{433}\) II.37.112-114.

\(^{434}\) Cf. II.50.80 where the synonymous phrase ”udharāyācā ṭhā” is used.

\(^{435}\) Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 1103.

\(^{436}\) Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994, § 1030.
The chapter about the rich man and the poor Lazarus gives some interesting information about Stephens’ understanding of hell (yemapuri). For example gluttons and liars have to bear suffering related to their tongues.\(^{437}\) Stephens also concludes from the Bible story (Luke 16:23) that the people of yemapuri can see the people of svarga and vice versa.\(^{438}\) It should be noted that Stephens here makes himself guilty of incoherence. No sooner has he informed us that Lazarus was taken to liṁbaloka and not to svarga, before he concludes, from the fact that Luke 16:23 says that the rich man could see Lazarus and Abraham, that the people of yemapuri can see the people of svarga. The coherent conclusion would obviously be that the people of yemapuri can see the people of liṁbaloka. Furthermore he has just consented that souls (ātmā) after death are nirākāra and that his speech of them in bodily terms should be understood figuratively.\(^{439}\) This fits better with the people of liṁbaloka, since there are quite unambiguous passages in other places in Kristapurāṇa that tell about the embodied existence in svarga. Probably liṁbaloka is also what Stephens actually means, although here using the word svarga. His usage of this word for referring to what he elsewhere calls liṁbaloka probably has to do with the fact that one of the Bible passages that has been used in Catholic tradition to defend the idea of limbus patrum, Matthew 8:11, speaks about a banquet “with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” (“in regno caelorum” in the Vulgate).\(^{440}\) Understanding this Bible passage as speaking about limbus patrum has seemingly led to a certain amount of conceptual confusion.

### 4.5. The threefold way to mukti

We have already seen in the chapter about salvation in Doutrina Christam how Stephens presented right prayer, right belief and right action as conditions for salvation.\(^{441}\) A prima facie this threefold way seems to correspond (in reverse order) to the threefold yoga of karma (deeds), jñāna (knowledge) and bhakti (devotion) which Kṛṣṇa explains in the Bhagavadgītā.\(^{442}\) Similarly the muktipāṁta or way to muki which Stephens presents in Kristapurāṇa willingly lends itself to a presentation in terms of these same three categories. In this chapter they will be presented in the order jñāna, bhakti, karma.

\(^{437}\) II.37.118.
\(^{438}\) II.37.119, 121.
\(^{439}\) II.37.107-110.
\(^{440}\) Cf. Toner, ‘Limbo’.
\(^{441}\) Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 5.
4.5.1. **Jñāna (knowledge)**

In *Kristapurāṇa* knowledge is linked with faith and both are linked with salvation. Answering the question why Jesus does not save (*tārane*) everybody,\(^{443}\) it says that he does not give *mokṣa* by force to those who do not believe.\(^{444}\) Only believers reach *mokṣa*:

> To unbelieving people the Lord gives not the inheritance of *svarga*, know this! Except believers nobody reaches *mokṣa*.

Faith and knowledge are related since both have to do with truth. Having knowledge means being aware of the truth; having faith means accepting something as true.\(^{446}\) If one accepts God’s words as true (*satye māṁṇileṇa*), says *Kristapurāṇa*, one is *muktivanta*.\(^{447}\)

At the end of Jesus’ genealogy, it is said that Jesus had no fleshly descendants, but countless spiritual children (*dharma putra*),\(^{448}\) who have an eternal inheritance (*sadaiva dāīja*) in the kingdom of *svarga*.\(^{449}\) Interestingly, this heritage seems to be dependent on knowledge.

> As many good jñāni, so many children of Christ, and they get the eternal inheritance of the Kingdom of *svarga*.

Therefore what to do? Everybody should become a wise/knower (*jñāni*). Know that thereby they will become spiritual children (*dharma putra*).

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\(^{443}\) II.23.55.

\(^{444}\) II.23.55.

\(^{445}\) II.32.38.

\(^{446}\) A common phrase for “believe” in *Kristapurāṇa* is *satye māṁṇileṇa*, literally “accept as true”.

\(^{447}\) II.29.25.

\(^{448}\) II.17.86-87.

\(^{449}\) II.17.89.

\(^{450}\) II.17.90.
But knowledge (jñāna) is of no avail if it does not go hand in hand with innocence (niskapaṭapaṇa). The one is not sufficient without the other.\textsuperscript{451}

Jesus, the Saviour, is referred to as the Ocean of Knowledge (jñāna sāgaru).\textsuperscript{452} People were astonished over Jesus’ knowledge, but how can one ask how the receptacle of wisdom (jñānamatice nidhāna) can have so much wisdom (jñāna)? It is like asking whence the āmṛuta of the source of āmṛuta comes!\textsuperscript{453} Jesus’ wisdom also spills over to his devotees, so that the one who praises him is given of the wisdom, of which Jesus is full.\textsuperscript{454} This reminds of the words of Proverbs 9:10: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” By connecting wisdom and praise, jñāna and bhakti, this leads us over to the next chapter about bhakti as the way to mukti.

4.5.2. Bhakti (devotion)

Stephens returns several times in chapter II.40 to Jesus’ words that if he is lifted up, he will draw all men unto him. He identifies this being lifted up with the crucifixion\textsuperscript{455} and writes:

\begin{verbatim}
To himself he led all,            āpaṇā ṭhāī sarva nele
Brought the people of the earth;  prthväçe loku āṇīle
All castes\textsuperscript{456} came  te sakaḷiṁhi jāte jāleṁ
On the way to mukti.            mukti paṁthiṁ\textsuperscript{457}
\end{verbatim}

Confronted by a Brahmin who is not impressed by the meagre number of people Christ has drawn unto himself in Hindustan,\textsuperscript{458} the narrator explains that this does not mean that everybody will do Christ’s bhakti and be taken to vaikuṁṭha, but only that those who are chosen (vecuna kāḍile) will.\textsuperscript{459} In this context Stephens connects bhakti, which is elsewhere referred to as the way to mukti,\textsuperscript{460} with knowledge, or rather the other way around; he connects absence of bhakti with incapability to see clearly. People who are not bhaktas, i.e.
ābhaktajana, cover their eyes due to their guilt (āparādhe karona) and do not see the way of bhakti (bhaktīpaṁthu). On the other hand people who do bhakti will have eternal life:

Those human beings who, on this earth
Performing the bhakti of parameśvara,
In the end go to permanent life,
Know that they are blessed!

je kavaṇa manuṣa he kṣiti
karona paramesvarāci bhakti
aṇṭi āḍaḷa jīvitvāci jāti
te sadaiva jāṇāve.

God has given man a free will, and sometimes people act contrary to Gods will. Therefore, says Stephens, the Jewish people would not accept the truth (satye nāhi māṁnileṁ), no matter how many miracles they saw even after hearing the śāstra of muktipaṁtha. And if they do not accept the truth, i.e. believe, they also do not do bhakti and hence they do not get mukti:

Forcefully vaikuṇṭhapati
Does not give anybody attainment of svarga;
Without bhakti
Nobody gets mukti.

baḷotkāre vaikuṇṭhapati
kavanāṁ nedi svarga prāpti
bhaktiviṇe mukti
na joḍe kavaṇāṁ.

Apart from indicating that mukti means attainment of svarga (svarga prāpti), this verse states that the way to mukti with necessity goes through bhakti, through devotion. In the following verses Stephens says that God, who created you without your collaboration, does not save (tāraṇe) you without your own collaboration. We are therefore admonished to leave our own wishes aside and do Gods will (saṁtoṣa); then “you will be saved (taraṇe) over the ocean of this world, reaching the other shore” (bhava sīdhu tarijem/ṭhākije pailapāṁra).

Here Stephens obviously speaks about the same thing in many ways. First we note that bhakti is the way to mukti, the muktipaṁtha. Secondly mukti and svarga prāpti (“attainment of heaven”) seem to be the same thing, namely the state of being saved, which is also referred to as “the other shore” (pailapāṁra). Salvation is referred to with the verbs tāraṇe and the

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461 Falcao (Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrisṭapurāṇa, p. 1148), treats this word as a miswriting for muktipaṁthu, thus making the connection between incapability to see clearly and the absence of mukti even clearer.
462 II.40.157.
463 II.58.109.
464 II.31.31-32.
465 II.31.33.
466 II.31.34.
467 II.31.35.
468 II.31.36.
intransitive variant *taraṇe*.\(^{469}\) Playing with the maritime connotation of these verbs, the saved person is alternately referred to as being the subject of God’s rescuing action (*taraṇe*) and as getting safely over (*taraṇe*) to the other shore, which stands for *mukti*. This may be taken as a reflection of the statement that God saves only those who collaborate.

### 4.5.3. *Karma* (deeds)

Sometimes *Kristapurāṇa* plainly says that good deeds are necessary for salvation, like in the following line: “According to one’s own deeds, one reaches *vaikuṇṭha* or the city of death (*yemapuri*)” (*āpule karāṇa pāvati/vaikuṇṭhi kiṁ yemapuri*).\(^{470}\) But often these statements are modified in some way. Only a couple of verses after the cited line, the deeds are put in relation to faith in the following way:

Faith is the root of all virtue/merit.\(^{471}\)

Therefore who has no faith,

How will he get the fruit of virtue/merit

Without faith?

\[ bhāvo sakāla puṇāce muṇa \]
\[ mhaṇauna bhāvo nāhi jayā kevala \]
\[ tayāsi kaiçe puṇe phaḷa \]
\[ bhāveṁviṇṇa^{472} \]

So although one reaches *vaikuṇṭha* or *yemapuri* according to one’s deed, the underlying reason in reality is one’s faith or lack of faith. For the nonbelievers the prospective is bad:

Believers and barbarians

And other believers …

\[ bhāvarthā āṇi mīlachā jana \]
\[ āṇi yera bhāvarthī^{473} \]

Obviously these lines in the Marsden version are close to nonsense. Saldanha’s, Drago’s and Bandelu’s editions all render the verse in another way, giving the meaning “Hindus, bad people and other nonbelievers”,\(^{474}\) which is much more confrontational but at least makes sense in view of the following verses, rendered here:

They will come before the throne of Christ,

See his lotus-face.

He is true God: this they will know

\[ te kristācā sihāmsanā puḍāṁ hoti \]
\[ tayācē mukhakamaḷa drīṣti dekhati \]
\[ to satyevata devo aise jāṇati \]

\(^{469}\) Cf. II.44.115.
\(^{470}\) II.43.176.
\(^{471}\) The word for virtue or merit is *puṇe*, a form of *puṇya*.
\(^{472}\) II.43.180.
\(^{473}\) II.43.177.
\(^{474}\) Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrisṭapurāṇa*, p.1226.
In vain.  

And they will speak in vain,  
But they will not be called.  
By themselves they fall into the pit of death,  
Since they do not have faith.  

What Stephens says, seems to be this: You are judged according to your deeds, but since your deeds are but a mirror of your faith, you are actually judged according to your faith. This looks like a reflection of James 2:

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? […] In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. […] You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.  

[…] As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.  

Verses that speak about mukti often also speak about mercy (krpā) or compassion (karunā), thus indicating a close connection between mukti and God’s mercy and compassion. For example Christ is called “compassioner and giver of mukti” (karunākara/mukticā dātā), and it is said that vaikuṇṭhanātha was born among animals in order to save us (āṁhāṁ sodavāvayā) and give us the “richness of his mercy” (apuliye krupeci saṁpati). In this way Stephens often implicitly shows the connection between salvation and mercy by referring to the same occasion alternately in terms of salvation and mercy.
4.6. The sacraments as gates of mukti

The sacraments\(^{480}\) can be regarded as a part of the karma aspect of the way to mukti – as particular deeds one has to perform in order to be saved – but they are also channels through which God bestows his saving grace on those who search him. Due to this double significance of the sacraments they will be treated separately in this chapter. The discourse will be restricted to those three of the sacraments that Kristapurāṇa most directly links to salvation, namely baptism, Eucharist and confession.

4.6.1. Baptism: jñānasnāna\(^{481}\)

When he speaks about baptism, Stephens uses all his creativity. In lack of a fitting Marathi word and unwilling to use the Portuguese “Bautismo” which he used in Doutrina Christam, he forms the compound jñānasnāna, “knowledge bath”.\(^{482}\) This term must be understood in relation to the numerous epithets beginning with jñāna- that Jesus is bestowed with throughout the work. The bath (snāna) becomes a knowledge bath (jñānasnāna) only through the contact with Jesus, who is the ocean of knowledge (jñānasāgaru, jñānasindhu) and source of holy water (pavitra pāṇī).\(^{483}\) So when Jesus insists that John the Baptist shall baptise him, he says simply: “Give me snāna (‘bath’)”.\(^{484}\) When he was baptised with the baptism (snāna) of John the Baptist, he hallowed the water (made it pavitra pāvana); since then sins (pātakā) are washed away in the baptism which is henceforth called jñānasnāna.\(^{485}\) This jñānasnāna is compulsory; no matter how virtuous and pious a person is, he must not forsake jñānasnāna.\(^{486}\)

Jñānasnāna is the door to the other sacraments (yerā devadravyaca darvaṭhā), whereby the doors of svarga, which were closed since the sin of Adam (ādāvācyā dośāpāsona), now open up.\(^{487}\) In jñānasnāna the wounds of original sin (ādi dośāṁce khata) as well as our own sins (pātaka) are taken away.\(^{488}\) It turns the baptised into Gods spiritual son (devācā dharma kumaru) and gives him the inheritance of vaikuṁṭha.\(^{489}\)

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\(^{480}\) The seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church are baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance or confession, the anointing of the sick, holy orders, and matrimony (Catechism of the Catholic Church, § 1210, 1424; cf. Stephens, Doutrina Christam, p. 49).

\(^{481}\) The word is written in a number of ways in Kristapurāṇa, as is evident from the quotations in this chapter. In translations as well as in the exposition of this thesis it is standardized in its Sanskrit form jñānasnāna.

\(^{482}\) This is true about the Marsden version. Saldanha’s version has “Bautismo” for baptism.

\(^{483}\) II.19.59.


\(^{485}\) II.19.71.

\(^{486}\) II.19.73

\(^{487}\) II.19.92.

\(^{488}\) II.19.93-94.

\(^{489}\) II.19.95.
Stephens compares *jñānasnāna* to the pool of Bethesda, which is described in John 5. The water of Bethesda made the body sound (*praṁṇāmī*); the water of *jñānasnāna* makes the soul (*ātmā*) sound (*praṇāmu*). But unlike the water of Bethesda, which heals only one person every year, the water of *jñānasnāna* is sufficient to make the whole world sound (*praṇāma*).

In the Great Commission, in the Bible found in Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus tells his disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” In *Kristapurāṇa*’s version of the same command, it is notable that the reference to Baptism is made without the usual term *jñānasnāna*:

Therefore I tell you,  
Go to all the earth,  
My *sāstra* to everybody  
(You) tell!  

Father and Son  
And Holy Spirit,  
Pronouncing his name,  
Wash [away] the guilt!

Kristapurāṇa now stresses the importance of faith and the necessary connection between baptism and faith, this time using the term *jñānasnāna*:

Those who accept the truth and take *jñānasnāna*,  
They set out for the state of *mokṣa*,  
And those who do not accept the truth,  
They fall into the city of death.

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490 II.26.83-84.
491 For a thorough discussion of Stephens’ use of the word *sāstra* and related terms, see Falcao 2003, p. 71-89.
492 II.56.15.
493 II.56.16.
494 II.56.18.
This verse accords with a passage in the subsequent chapter, saying that those who are given *jñānasnāna* and believe (*visvāsa dhariti*) go to the city of *vaikuṁṭha* (*vaikuṁṭhanagari*), whereas those who persist in unbelief (*āvisvāsa karitī*) go to the city of death (*yemapuri*). But faith and Baptism alone do not lead to *mokṣa*. II.56.28 says that faith and baptism alone do not save (*tārane*) anybody. One also has to follow God’s commands:

Hearing the *śāstra* and accepting its truth,  
And taking *jñānasnāna*,  
Still in the end to save (*tārane*),  
It does not suffice for anybody.

First hear the *śāstra* and accept its truth,  
Then take *jñānasnāna*,  
Thirdly please God,  
Keeping his commands.

In II.43.184 a Brahman (*vīpra*) asks what will happen to small children who die without having received *jñānasnāna*. The answer comes with some delay after a discourse on God’s recreation of “earth, sea and heaven” (*śṛṣṭi sāgara āṇī āṁtrāḷa*). Stephens says that the answer is not given in the Bible (*pavitra purāṁṇa pustakeṁ*), but that the question is nevertheless possible to answer:

But they have done no sins in *saṁsāra*;  
Therefore they do not fall into *yemapuri*,  
And they do not go to the city of *vaikuṁṭha*,  
Since they do not have God’s mercy.

Therefore the scribes say,  
Those children, the Lord of *vaikuṁṭha*  
This *saṁsāra* to them in the end  
Will give, so they say.

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495 II.57.41.  
496 II.56.28.  
498 II.43.189.  
499 II.43.200.  
500 II.43.201.
This being an answer to the question about children who die without having received the *jñānasnāna*, we can conclude that Stephens regarded *jñānasnāna* as a channel for God's mercy (*devakrupā*) and a condition for entrance into *vaikuṇṭha*, an idea biblically based in John 3:5, where Jesus tells Nikodemus that whoever is not born through water and spirit cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Further the quoted verses let us understand that sin (*pātaka*), so to speak, is the entrance ticket to hell, here labelled *yemapuri* (city of death). The unbaptized children cannot reach *vaikuṇṭha* since they do not enjoy the mercy of God (*devakrupā*) channelized through *jñānasnāna*, but they also do not fall into *yemapuri*, since they have conducted no sin (*pātaka*). This is a conclusion that lacks clear biblical foundation, but which is in agreement with the post-Tridentine Catholic teaching that those who die unbaptized and hence subject to original sin, but without personal guilt, are punished with the lack of the beatific vision but do not suffer any sensible pain. This state or place is usually referred to as limbo, which is also the term that is used in *Doutrina Christam*, or in Latin *limbus infantium*. Without using the word “limbo”, the actual passage in *Kristapurāṇa* says that the unbaptized children will be given the recreated *samsāra*, reflecting the fact that some Catholic theologians have identified the children's limbo with the recreated earth referred to in 2 Peter 3:13.

Although never endorsed as a doctrine of faith, limbo was the common Catholic teaching until the middle of the twentieth century. In the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, however, it is not mentioned, and in 2007 pope Benedict XVI gave his approval to a document stating that there are “serious theological and liturgical grounds for hope that unbaptised infants who die will be saved and enjoy the Beatific Vision.”

The rebranding of baptism as *jñānasnāna* goes hand in hand with an abundance of epithets for Jesus containing the word *jñāna* (“knowledge”):

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504 Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 27. In *Kristapurāṇa* we find the Marathified version *limbaloka*, which is used for *limbus patrum*, the temporal state of the just prior to Christ’s glorious ascension to heaven.
505 II.43.202.
506 Toner, ‘Limbo’.
The epithets of Jesus including the word *jñāna* do not lack a biblical base, although some of them, like *jñāna sāgaru* (“ocean of knowledge”) might seem quite fresh and new due to their distinctly Indian flavour. In 1 Corinthians 1:24 Christ is called “God’s wisdom” and in Colossians 2:3 it is written that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. In this case Stephens highlights a theme that does exist but is not so prominent in the Bible itself. Against this background Nelson Falcao explains the relabeling of baptism as *ṣanāna* by baptism being an “immersion or dipping in Christ the Jñāna or the Knowledge”,509 which makes the term seem quite natural once it is accepted that Christ is *jñāna sāgaru*, the ocean of knowledge.

Through creating and applying the new word *ṣanāna* for baptism, Stephens shows his creativity and readiness to connect to important Hindu ideas even when conveying a Christian message. Although the word *ṣanāna* leads the thoughts in new ways, it does not lack foundation in the Christian tradition. For example Justin, in his *Apologia* from the first century CE, informs his readers that baptism is also called enlightenment, since those who have taken part of the preceding instruction “are enlightened in their understanding”.510

### 4.6.2. Eucharist

The Eucharist is likened to a pearl that a man gives his wife before a long jorney. *Kristapurāṇa* says that when the time drew near for Jesus to leave *saṁsāra* for *vaikuṇṭha*

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510 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 1216.
nagara ("city of vaikuṇṭha"), Jesus wanted to leave something for the consolation of human beings until his return,\footnote{II.44.16-17.} just like a man gives his wife a pearl (mukta) or jewel before he goes abroad, to show his love and help her remember him.\footnote{II.44.98-100. Here a short form mukta is used for "pearl" instead of the usual muktaphaḷa. Interestingly mukta is also an adjective related to mukti, meaning "liberated, free". This strengthens the associative bond between the concepts of Eucharist and mukti.} Finding nothing precious enough to show his love Jesus decided to give himself.\footnote{II.44.102-103.} He then founded the Eucharist, the "holy mystery of the excellent prasāda" (pavitra gupta saparsādāṁcā)\footnote{II.44.114. Saparsāda is a vulgarized form of Sanskrit suprasāda, su- being a Sanskrit prefix corresponding to Greek eu-. Cf. Molesworth, Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary, "su".} which helps human beings to reach the other shore:

This the food of angels, \( hā bodavyācā grāsu \)
Destruction of great sin, \( māhāpāṁtakācā nāsu \)
Through which man crosses (tare) \( jeṇe tare manuṣu \)
The ocean of this world. \( bhavasāgarī\)

After this imaginative passage follows a salutation to the personified Eucharist, which is praised as the door to the state of mukti. Given the preceding verse, where the Eucharist makes man cross (taraṇe) the ocean of this world, it once again imprints on the mind of the reader or listener the image of the way to mukti as a crossing of an ocean and strengthens the associative link between the concepts of mukti and svarga and the verb taraṇe:

Hail the Holy Meal, \( jayā namo pavitra bhojanā \)
The holy blood and flesh of Christ, \( krīṣṭa raktā māṁśa pāvana \)
Through which is always remembered \( jeṇa smaranē sadāṁ hoye maraṇa \)
His death! \( jyācayā mṛtyāyāce\)

You are the door to the state of mukti, \( tu muktipadačā dāravathā \)
[You] open the way to svarga, \( mokaḷi kari svargīci yā vāthā \)
Annihilate our hardship, \( nīvārōna āmacā draṣṭā \)
And give us peace. \( svasta karisi\)\footnote{II.44.116.}
You fill the ātmā\(^{518}\) with grace,
Give the saṁskāra\(^{519}\) of mukti,
Reveal the sign of the love
Of God.

\(ātmāṁ krup e na bharisi\)
mukticā saṁskāra desi
\(śneho kuṇa pragaṭavis\)
paramesvarāci\(^{520}\)

Jesus has come into the world with food, and whoever accepts that food will attain an enduring place (āḍaḷapada) in vaikuṇṭha loka. This food, the Eucharist, is Jesus’ blood and flesh, and whoever eats and drinks this will get everlasting life (ākhaṁḍita āḍaḷa jiṇeṁ).\(^{521}\)

In his version of the parable of the prodigal son, Stephens explains that the father in the parable is God (parameśvara),\(^{522}\) who takes care of and protects us.\(^{523}\) God has given us big riches, namely the following three guṇas or qualities (triguna): (1) jñānabudhi to recognize our Lord God and Creator, (2) santoše (“joy”, “satisfaction” etc.) to love him, and (3) āṭhavaṇa (“memory”) to remember him.\(^{524}\) Stephens stresses that these guṇas are good gifts from God, and interprets the prodigal son’s leaving home as losing them and becoming vice or defect (avaguna),\(^{525}\) thereby falling short of the fruit (phaḷa sidhi) of virtue (puṇya).\(^{526}\)

Obviously Stephens uses the concept of guṇa to speak about the Catholic idea of God’s grace as empowering man to serve and believe in God and thereby receive the gift of salvation.

The story goes on and the prodigal son returns home and apologizes to his father. His father forgives and gives him new clothes:

That is, the lost robe of knowledge
He gives him back upon returning,
Puts a ring on the hand
Of the sinner.

\(mhanīpe sāṁḍavaleṁ jñānavastra\)
te puṇati paratoniyāṁ deta
\(kari mudrikā joḍavita\)
tyā pāpiyāteṁ\(^{527}\)

\(^{518}\) Falcao treats ātmāṁ as a mistake for āṁhāṁ (“to us”), which gives the following meaning: “You fill us with grace” (cf. Falcao, Phādar Thomas Sūphanskrīta Khrisṭapurāṇa, p. 1252).
\(^{519}\) Saṁskāra is roughly translatable as “rite”. Here the word finds resonance in the 16 saṁskāras performed at certain significant stages of life among Hindus as a sort of passage rites. It can also refer to an effect or imprint of an action – in this case it can mean that Eucharist gives an imprint of mukti.
\(^{520}\) II.44.118.
\(^{521}\) II.32.13-15.
\(^{522}\) II.36.32.
\(^{523}\) II.36.33. More literally he “does our support and protection”, the word for protection being rākhaṇāṁ.
\(^{524}\) II.36.34-36. Triguna is an established concept in Hindu thought, originating in Sāṁkhya philosophy and playing a significant role in Bhagavadgītā. In Hinduism the three guṇas are sattva (goodness, constructive, harmonious), rajas (passion, active, confused), and tāmas (darkness, destructive, chaotic). In contrast to these guṇas, which can be ordered on a line from light and perfection to confusion and chaos, Stephens’ three guṇas are all genuinely good.
\(^{525}\) II.36.52.
\(^{526}\) II.36.54.
\(^{527}\) II.36.81.
That is, whose divine form 
Was destroyed due to guilt, 
Him God restores/puts forward 
Like before.

It is interesting to note that the new robe, which the father gives his lost and refound son, is the robe of knowledge, the jñānavastra. This indicates that Stephens associates sin and going astray in saṁsāra with ignorance.

The meal, which the father arranges after the homecoming of his son, is interpreted as the Eucharist. This meal is a sign of repentence from sin/guilt (prāchita dośāceṁ). It is given to us to eat again and again and when people receive it, they “through Gods grace live in bhakti (devakrupestava dekhona/varte bhaktivari).”

4.6.3. Confession

Confession is not given the same prominence as baptism and Eucharist, but nevertheless deserves mentioning in this context. According to Kristapurāṇa Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to all priests (ācāri). What they forgive in saṁsāra is also forgiven in svarga. In this way he made it easier for the people, since confessing to a human priest is less scaring than confessing directly to God. Therefore the believers are admonished to throw their heap of sins at the feat of the priest and get the light to set out on the way of mukti:

At the feat of the priest
Throw the heap of sin 
And to set out on the way of mukti
Take light.

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528 II.36.82.
529 II.36.84/85 SDB.
530 II.36.85.
531 II.36.86.
532 II.36.84.
533 II.54.51.
534 II.54.52.
535 II.54.56.
536 II.54.58.
Thus Stephens presents confession as a point of returning to the way of mukti and, interestingly, tries to make the readers and listeners feel confessing sins to a human priest is less annoying than confessing them directly to God.

4.7. Svadharma: ones own duty

Before leaving the topic of the way to mukti, the concept of svadharma must be discussed. In verse I.36.136 of Khristapurāṇa, Father Stephens says that Jesus came into the world to give salvation (mukti pada) to those who follow their own svadharma.537 Nelson Falcao understands this term as “one’s own religion” and writes that Stephens is “open to Mokṣa through Sva-dharma; but all Mokṣa is through and in Jeju Krīstu” and in that matter “his theology is ahead of his times.”538 However, “one’s own religion” is not the only possible meaning of svadharma, and I would suggest “one’s own duty” as a more probable translation in this case.539 That would mean that Stephens acknowledges that Jesus came into the world to give salvation to those who follow their duty. This also goes better together with the recurrent references to false and foreign gods, e.g. in verses I.26.67-68, where God warns King Solomon that, if he or the people worship false gods,540 then God will burn Solomon’s city along with the temple into ashes and destroy the kingdom,541 or I.18.44, where the people is admonished not to worship foreign Gods.542

Analysing the actual verse (I.36.136) about svadharma further, we find that it does not actually say that someone shall obtain “Mokṣa through Sva-dharma”, but that Jesus came into the world in order to give (dyāvyā) salvation to those who those who live in that way. However slight this difference might seem, it results in a weaker statement about the role of svadharma than saying that mokṣa is obtained through it.

Truly, though, Stephens does emphasize the value of the natural moral in a number of places, e.g. in a chapter about the ten commands, where he says thus about the law given by God on Mount Sinai: “That instruction is not new. It is the law of the nature. When he created

537 I.36.136: “apulā svadharma calīlyaṁteṁ/muktī pada dyāvyā thaṁteṁ/sarva sukha pāvāvyā janantēṁ/samsārīṁ ālā//”
539 Molesworth (Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary) gives the following lengthy definition of svadharma, in which “one’s own religion” is not even mentioned: “Own, proper, or peculiar duty, office, or business; as giving alms is the svadharma of a householder; administering justice, the svadharma of a king; praying &c. that of a Brāhman; fighting, that of a Kshatriya; the proper business, work, function, or action of an intelligent creature in general. 2 The proper, native, or inherent quality; the property, peculiarity, or own nature or constitution: also any natural quality or property.”
540 I.26.67: “kuḍaṁ devāṁteṁ jarī bhaṁjatī”
541 I.26.68.
542 I.18.44: ”paradevācī bhanjanā na karī”
the heart of man, God wrote it there.”

I.e., there is no opposition between natural moral and revealed law, and basically the law that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai is also written on the hearts of the Hindus. Stephens emphasizes the importance of following ones svadharma, but not to the point of claiming that one can obtain mokṣa through that. The state of muktī (mukti paddle) is given by Jesus to those who follow their svadharma; it is not obtained through following one’s svadharma.

Falcao claims, that “Stephens is telling the converts to drop the small village gods (grāmin devatā) and to keep to One God, […] to avoid idol worship and to keep to monotheism” but that he “does not mean to speak against the bigger names of God, namely Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva (Mahesh) and the others.” He writes that this is obvious from the fact that Stephens “accepts the whole of the Vaiṣṇavaite tradition and attributes names like Vaikunṭhanātha, Vaikunṭharāṇā, Vaikunṭharāyā, Vaikunṭhanāyaka, Vaikunṭharājā and others for God the Father and the Son of God.” However, Stephens’ use of these names, with clear associations to Viṣṇu, points towards the conclusion that he did not accept the Vaiṣṇavaite tradition in its fullness, but only some aspects of it. By giving the God of the Christian religion attributes like “king of vaikuṁṭha” (vaikuṁṭharāyā, -rājā) but not calling him by the proper name Viṣṇu, he implicitly says that it is God (the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) who is king of vaikuṁṭha, and not Viṣṇu.

It may be true that Stephens avoids speaking against “the bigger names of God” because of his tactfulness or belief that such speech would hurt the feelings of people and create unnecessary obstacles for communicating the Christian message. It is also true, that the scope of what would have been possible for Stephens to write was limited by the censure to which he was subject. This, of course, leaves us the possibility to believe that Stephens himself would not find it problematic to use names like Viṣṇu for God, but abstained from it out of a consideration about what was possible to achieve given the political situation. But there are no

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543 I.18.3: “te upadeś nave nhaveti/te āhe prakrutīcī nītī/manuṣyāce hru daīṃ rākhīle hātī/deveṃ racītāṃ tīyesī///”

544 I.36.136.

545 The idea of Jesus’ exclusivity is expressed in II.29.131: “jo maja hona māye bāpāsi/barave dekhe manānsi/to mājhayā āṁtaḥkarṇāsi/navade jāṇāṁ//” (“Who loves [literally “regards as good”] his mother and father more than me, know that he is not dear to my heart”, cf. Matthew 10:37). The formulation is interesting because of the contrast to a story of the Marathi Vaiṣṇavaite Vārkari movement. In a story explaining the gods name – viṭ means “brick” in Marathi – we are told how the god Viṭṭhal came to Pandharpur eager to meet a man called Puṇḍalik, since he had heard how great devotion he showed to his parents. Puṇḍalik was so busy serving his parents that he did not have time for the god. Instead he threw a brick to him and asked him to stand on it and wait. But since his devotion to his parents took all his time Viṭṭhal has now stood and waited on the brick for 28 yugas. This story is referred to in some of Tukārāma’s songs, e.g. no. 2323 and 2551 in Sārtha Śrītukārāmācī Gāthā, or the Viṭṭhal āratī included in the same volume (Kundur 1999, p.2037).


strong indications in the text that Stephens does not include the gods (or concepts of gods) denoted by the “bigger names of God” in the category of false gods.\footnote{It might be opposed that the very omission of such names is a hint in itself, but that is a weak argument since Kristapurāṇa does not mention names of minor Hindu deities either.}

One clue to Stephens’s real attitude to the major Hindu deities may be found in I.20.21. Here Father Stephens lets God tell Moses to destroy the “thrones, idols and liṅgas”\footnote{\textit{1.20.21: “siṁhayāsanī patamā liṅga”}.} of that country. This is probably a rendering of Exodus 34:13: “Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles.” By using the word liṅga, which is so closely associated with the major Hindu god Śiva, Stephens in a way seems to apply the conflict between Israeli monotheism and Canaanite idolatry on the situation in his contemporary Goa, where a Christian community had to find its place in a predominantly Hindu surrounding. This is one of the relatively few examples in Kristapurāṇa of what could be called “confrontational inculturation”, in which a foreign conflict is expressed in indigenous terms. In this case Śiva worship is implicitly equalled with Canaanite idolatry. This is done without mentioning the name of Śiva, which would have been more aggressive, but the point must have become clear for the audience through the sheer mention of liṅga.

It seems, then, that Falcao’s opinion that Stephens “does not mean to speak against the bigger names of God”\footnote{Falcao, \textit{Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter}, p. 202.} is resting on a shaky foundation. He does not speak against the name itself because it is not necessary. By using one of the strongest symbols of Śiva, he is speaking against the worship of that deity without using his name.\footnote{There remains a possibility that Stephens’ attitudes towards Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava are not the same. Maybe he is more positive or less negative towards the latter, as indicated by his greater use of Vaiṣṇava terminology.}

\section*{4.8. The Saviour}

\textit{Kristapurāṇa} abounds with different epithets of Jesus, used for drawing attention to different aspects of his being and work. The table below provides a list of such epithets used in the second part of \textit{Kristapurāṇa} and stressing Jesus’ role as saviour in different ways. Many of the epithets are used for God as a whole as well as for Jesus Christ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epithets of the Saviour</th>
<th>Approximate meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mokṣa rājā</td>
<td>King of mokṣa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokṣapadācā rājā</td>
<td>King of the state of mokṣa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muktīcā rājā, rājāmuktīcā</td>
<td>King of muki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muktīcā rājā cakravarti</td>
<td>King and emporor of mukti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roughly these epithets can be divided into epithets of Jesus as king of heaven, king and giver of mukti/mokṣa, and saviour/liberator/protector. Instead of analysing these epithets in detail,

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the subsections of this chapter will describe and analyse how Kristapurāṇa, using these and other words, describes Jesus role as saviour.

4.8.1. Gives mokṣa

To begin it is very clear that Jesus is the one who bestows mokṣa on human beings, as shown for example by the following verse about the good people at the time of the last judgment:

The good people rejoice;  
This is our Saviour (tāraka), they say,  
Remove our hardships and give, they say,  
The fruit of mokṣa.  

baraveṁ loka ānaṁda kariti  
yāji āmacā tārakā mhanati  
kaṣta nivāruna deīgā mhaṅati  
mokṣa phaḷā成立

The words tāraka and mokṣa are often mentioned in the same breath. When telling about how the risen Jesus met the apostle Thomas and let him touch his wounds, Stephens calls Jesus visvatāraka and mokṣa bharitu (“full of mokṣa”) in the very same line. In another place he is called tāraka and “King of mokṣa” (mokṣarājā).

4.8.2. Conquers sin, death and the devil

When Stephens describes Jesus’ mission in concentrated form, he describes it as a threefold one, comprising victory over sin, death and the devil:

To conquer sin (pātaka), death, and the devil,  
The Saviour (rakṣaṇāṁra)  
Lord Christ, Gods Son,  
Came into saṁsāra  
pātaka mṛtya ānī devacāra  
jināvayā lāgoni rakṣaṇāṁra  
krīṣṭa svāmī deva kumara  
saṁsāri ālā

After his death but before his resurrection, Jesus speaks to the people in liṁbaloka:

Then the Lord said with words of āmṛta:  
God, by his grace/mercy,  
Has pardoned your sins  
tevha svāmī mhaṅe āmṛta vacani  
deve āpule karuṅa karōni  
tumace pātake bakasōna

553 II.43.47.  
554 E.g. II.58.113-114.  
555 II.54.81.  
556 II.50.54.  
557 II.20.1.  
558 A possible translation of āmṛta vacani is ”sweet words” which is how Falcao treats it by rendering it goḍa śabdā in his modern Marathi translation (Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrisṭapurāṇa, p. 1682).
And made heaps of merit (*punya*)

%559  kelya punye rási

God gave me, one from your race,
To you as Saviour (*tāraka*),
All your stains of guilt
To clear away.

%560  deve tumacā vamśicā yeku
tumhāński mī didhalā tāraku
samagra tumācā dośācā kalāmku
peṭdāvyü

The conquering of sin is not reserved for the *tāraka* aspect of the Saviour. Jesus as *rakṣanāru* also has this role. For example it is said that the *rakṣaṇāra* extinguishes Peter’s guilt (*dośā parihāra*) of having denied Jesus. However, the protecting and consoling aspect of the word is very much at work here, as shown by the subsequent two very beautifoul *ovīs* about when Jesus after his resurrection met and talked with Peter:

Rāyenātha saw God’s Son
The words of the Cowherd consoled
[his] mind.
Then while [his] face was laughing,
[His] eyes were shedding tears.

Like sometimes on earth
The rays of the sun are covered
And from the clouds is dripping
What was held in the clouds,

So Rāyenātha sobbed while laughing
And laughed while sobbing.
His unparalleled love

%559  II.50.66.
%560  Because of the peculiar word order of the two first lines, they have been translation as a whole and not as strictly individual lines.
%561  II.50.67.
%562  II.53.14.
%563  Rāyenātha is the name used for Peter. It is a compound of *rāyā*, “king”, and *nātha*, which means “lord” or “master” and is often attached to names of religious authorities.
%564  **govaḷā** means cowherd and is an often used epithet for Jesus in *Kristapurāṇa*. It reflects the biblical concept of the good shepherd (cf. John 10:11), but also gives associations to Kṛṣṇa. Falcao seems to carry coals to Newcastle when translating the word into modern Marathi as *goḍa*, “sweet”, something like: “With sweet words he consoled his mind” (*goḍa śabdāṁta* etc.) (Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 1411).
%565  II.53.15.
%566  II.53.16.
Is impossible to describe. \(sāṁgatāṁ naye^{567}\)

As shown by this example of Stephens’ beautiful poetry, the *rakṣaṇāraṁ* annihilates guilt and (thereby) consoles and gives new joy.

As we have seen, the Saviour also conquers the devil. In chapter 29 Jesus drives out a devil (*māru*) from a possessed man.\(^568\) This is presented as four miracles in one: he drove out the ghoast (*bhuta*), gave eyes to the blind, voice to the dumb and ears to the deaf.\(^569\) Again this is done by Jesus as *rakṣaṇāra*,\(^570\) and again the act has a soft aspect. The *rakṣaṇāra* conquers the devil by doing peoples’ *raksana*, by preserving and protecting them from Satan’s sway.

Before his resurrection Jesus recapitulates what is done and what remains. He has now conquered sin (*pātaka*) and the devil (*māṁru*); now remains only the third enemy, death (*mṛtye*).\(^571\) He will now take on his body (*māṁjhi kuḍi kāдонi gheīna*), make it “full of mokṣa” (*mokṣa bharita*) and immortal (*āmari*), and “come alive and rise” (*uṭhaṁvina/jitu honi*).\(^572\) Jesus’ resurrection is likened to several episodes in the Old Testament: Joseph coming out of jail (*baṁdi*) to become regent of Egypt,\(^573\) David killing Goliath,\(^574\) and Simson liberating himself from prison (*suṭhikā keli āpule*).\(^575\) The idea that Jesus himself is the agent, who brings about his own resurrection, which is common Catholic teaching with biblical foundation,\(^576\) is stressed even more in the last of these similes, the one about the lion of Juda:

Like, when the lion sleeps in the cave, \(jaisā siheṁ pauḍatāṁ pokhari\)

Nobody comes to wake him up; \(kavaṇa jāgavāvayā naye sāmori\)

He himself \(toci āpaisā āpule pari\)

Rises. \(uṭhona jāye^{577}\)

Likewise know that the lion of Juda dynasty \(taisā to judāṁ vaṁsicā sihe jāṁṇa\)

From his grave himself came alive, \(āpulā gumaṭāṁtuni jīyālā apaṇa\)

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\(^{567}\) II.53.17.  
\(^{568}\) II.29.4.  
\(^{569}\) II.29.5-6.  
\(^{570}\) II.29.2.  
\(^{571}\) II.51.7.  
\(^{572}\) II.51.8.  
\(^{573}\) II.51.27.  
\(^{574}\) II.51.28.  
\(^{575}\) II.51.30.  
\(^{577}\) II.51.32.
Nobody woke him up,
He rose himself.
tayāsi jāgavilā nāmhi kavana
to uṭhalā āpaisā\textsuperscript{578}

Jesus as rakṣaṇāra also resuscitated Lazarus, so to speak preserving him from death and thereby at the same time consoling his grieving sisters and coming with light:

When the sun shines in the east
The silhouettes of mirage disintegrate;
So when the Saviour (rakṣaṇāṁra) came
Mary’s suffering was taken away.

When the sun shines in the east
The silhouettes of mirage disintegrate;
So when the Saviour (rakṣaṇāṁra) came
Mary’s suffering was taken away.

\textit{purve bibalā dinakaru}
nāse mṛgaḻalācā ākāru
\textit{taisā pātalā rakṣaṇāṁru}
dukha phītale mariyece\textsuperscript{579}

4.8.3. Jesus’ blood

Jesus’ blood is praised for being the prize of our salvation\textsuperscript{580} and likened to \textit{amṛta},\textsuperscript{581} in a couple of \textit{ovīs} that have to be read together to be grammatically coherent:

\begin{align*}
\text{Now you all who are thirsty} & \quad \text{ātāṁ tumhi truśāṁkrāṁta sakaḷāṁ} \\
\text{Come and drink the amṛta-water,} & \quad \text{cālā prāśāvyā āmṛta jalā} \\
\text{Drink the clean water,} & \quad \text{karā pīvāna pāṇī nirmaṇā} \\
\text{Isaiah wrote thus,} & \quad \text{ījāi līle jaisēm}\textsuperscript{583} \\
\text{The immortalness of the tāraka’s source,} & \quad \text{āmṛtpaṇa tārakāce jharice} \\
\text{And kheer, take for free,} & \quad \text{āṇī khīra ṭhevā pukāce} \\
\text{Thereby the flaw of sin} & \quad \text{teṇe khata dosāce} \\
\text{Is annihilated.} & \quad \text{bhamgona jāye}\textsuperscript{585}
\end{align*}

Nelson Falcao seems to have failed to recognize that one and the same sentence continues from the first to the second of these two \textit{ovīs}. His modern Marathi translation of the first two lines of the second \textit{ovī} has the following meaning: “Take the amṛta-like water of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{578} II.51.33.
\item \textsuperscript{579} II.38.26.
\item \textsuperscript{580} II.48.23: “jayā namo rakta tārakājana saṇavaṇece mole āmolikā” (“Hail the blood of the Saviour, the priceless price of the people’s salvation!”).\textsuperscript{581}
\item \textit{Amṛta} in Hindu mythology is an elixir of life similar to nectar and ambrosia in antique mythology.\textsuperscript{582}
\item Cf. Isaiah 55:1.\textsuperscript{583}
\item II.48.24.
\item I have attempted a translation that follows the wordorder of the Marathi as closely as possible. A freer and more understandable translation would be: “Take the immortality and kheer from the Saviour’s source for free.”\textsuperscript{584}
\item II.48.25.
\end{itemize}
Saviour’s source and come in! This translation can hardly be correct. Firstly there is nothing in the lines that means “come in”. Admittedly, at a first glance there seems to be nothing that means “for free” either, but it seems very probable that the word *pukāce* is a variant or misspelling of *phukaṭace*, “for free”. Stephens’ Marathi often lacks aspiration where modern Marathi has it (here *pu* for *phu*). That *pukāce* is a variant of *phukaṭace* and thus means “for free” is also supported by Isaiah 55:1, the Bible verse upon which these both *ovēs* are apparently based:

Come, all you who are thirsty,  
   come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
   come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
   without money and without cost.587

The second problem in Falcao’s translation is that he treats –*paṇa* as a misspelling for *pāṇī* (“water”). But –*paṇa* as such is a suffix with the same function as the English suffix “-ness”, which makes it much more probable that the intended meaning is simply immortalness or immortality. On the other hand, given that *amṛtapaṇa* and kheer588 stand for Isaiah’s wine and milk, then the translation “amṛta-like water” would seem more plausible than the mere spelling of the word suggests. In any case the choice of translation in this case does not carry too much importance, since *amṛta* inevitably makes one think about both immortality and something drinkable.

The passage shows that the blood of Christ is the prize to pay off the debt of mankind’s sins. The effect of this paying off by Jesus blood is immortalness, *amṛtapaṇa*, and therefore it is duly referred to as *amṛta* or āmṛta jaḷa (“amṛta-water”). As we have seen, part of the threefold mission of the Saviour is to conquer death; the weapon by which he does this is his own blood.

### 4.8.4. Comes with light

As *mukti* is associated with light, so the Saviour comes with light; this is a prominent theme in *Kristapurāṇa*. For example the people of *liṁbaloka* ask when the *tāraku*, who brings the

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586 Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stōphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa*, p. 1328. Falcao’s modern Marathi translation is as follows: “tāraṇahārācyā jharyāce amṛtāsārakhe pāṇī ghyā āṇi āta yā”.

587 Isaiah 55:1.

588 Kheer is an Indian sweet dish based on milk.
stubborn worldly people (*saṁsārika janāṁ muḍāsiṁ*) into the light (*ujeḍāsiṁ*) will come also to them,⁵⁸⁹ and beg him to take their travail away (*phedi śramu*), liberate them from their prison (*baṇḍoḍi soḍuniyāṁ*)⁵⁹⁰, and open the doors of *svargasthāna* for them.⁵⁹¹ Another example is the *ovī* corresponding to Luke 1:69-70, the part of Benedictus where Zachariah talks about the horn of salvation ("*cornu salutis*" in the Vulgate), *Kristapurāṇa* puts it slightly differently. Here, instead of a horn of salvation, the reference is to the Saviour (*tāraku*) himself, who is like a pillar of light (*divyestambhu*).⁵⁹²

### 4.8.5. Jesus’ name

In accordance with Indian tradition *Kristapurāṇa* puts much effort into praising Jesus’ name, which is also not at all alien to Christian and biblical tradition. Since God the Father was pleased with Jesus, it says, he “was given the name that is greater than all other names”.⁵⁹³

Through Jesus’ name sinners are delivered (*udhāriti*),⁵⁹⁴ and there is no other name under heaven (*svarga*), that can save (*tāraṇe*) human beings.⁵⁹⁵ It gives sight to the blind, makes deaf hear and lame walk; it gives speech to the dumb, life to the dead and breaks the lordship and pride of the devil (*mārū*).⁵⁹⁶ In short, Jesus’ name does the same as Jesus the *rakṣanārā* does. Jesus’ name also makes the curtain of ignorance (*ājñāna*) fall, and should always be kept in our heart.⁵⁹⁷

### 4.9. Mary

As the mother of Jesus she has brought forth a river of *amṛta*, in which sins are washed away. When Mary has become pregnant with Jesus, she invites the angels to come into her womb, saying:

Now the virgin’s womb  
Is like the City of *vaikuṁṭha*.

The virgin’s body  
Became God’s temple.

The idea seems to be that the king makes the kingdom. Since Mary was pregnant with Jesus, the king of *vaikuṁṭha*, her womb was like *vaikuṁṭha*.

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604 II.1.18.  
605 II.1.21.  
606 II.5.77.  
607 II.5.78.
5. Strategies for dealing with Hindu connotations

The aim of this chapter is to analyse how Stephens handles the fact that the words he uses to speak about salvation have strong Hindu connotations which are sometimes straightaway impossible to harmonize with Catholic theology. Before showing with examples from the text how Stephens handles this, I will try to give an outline of the strategies he uses. Reading this chapter it is useful to keep in mind the terminology borrowed from Saussure, which I introduced in chapter 1.7, and the discussion about Hindu conceptualisations of mokṣa in chapter 2.4.

Stephens’ general literary attitude can be described as fearless, creative and constructive. His strategies can be conveniently analysed as consisting of the following three components:

1. He fearlessly employs numerous words with strong Hindu connotations for expressing Christian ideas. Sometimes he even seems to prefer such words to more neutral alternatives.
2. He creatively uses these words in new ways, to express partly new but related ideas. When the Hindu connotations clash with his Christian message, he does not choose confrontation. Instead of mentioning the Hindu signification of the word and reputing it, he ignores it and puts all his effort on creating and implementing a new, Christian signification.
3. He constructively creates new words out of Sanskrit/Marathi components. Doing this he relates to Hindu concepts and ideas but at the same time takes precaution to stay within the Catholic theological fold.

The central concept is of course mukti/mokṣa. As just noted, one of Stephens’ main strategies seems to be to use words charged with Hindu meaning similarly to how they are used in Hinduism, but altering their meaning – he keeps the signal but slightly changes its signification. In the case of mukti/mokṣa this is largely done indirectly, by altering the signification of words that are closely tied to mukti/mokṣa, denoting factors that help or hinder a person from reaching it. The chapter will therefore begin with an analysis of how such related words are treated and end with the central wordpair mukti/mokṣa.

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608 In short Saussure speaks about words as signs, a sign consisting of the two constituents signal and signification, i.e. sound pattern and concept. The relation between signal and signification is arbitrary.
609 For detecting these components I owe gratefulness to Nelson Falcão and his Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter.
Hindu *mukti* is conceived as liberation from *saṁsāra*, which is also largely the case in Kristapurāṇa. In Kristapurāṇa *saṁsāra* is not evil as such, since God has created everything in *svarga* and *saṁsāra* well, but it contains distractions that can threat higher values. Such distractions are vain joy and *māyā*. Stupid people find the joys of *saṁsāra* (*saṁsārasukha*) sweet; in their pride (*garva*) they do not see the future suffering (*dukha*). Therefore people from Adam onwards ignore God and consequently fall into the pit of death (*yemakuṁḍi*). It is not possible to serve two Lords at the same time; you cannot embrace both *saṁsāra* and God (*devā*).

*Saṁsāra* is also associated with darkness, contrasting with the light of *svarga* and of Jesus himself. Reflecting *Magnificat* (Luke 1:68-79) and other biblical passages, Kristapurāṇa frequently compares the birth of Christ to a sunrise and says that Jesus is the “sun of righteousness” (*nitidharmācā dinakaru*) that will shine on *saṁsāra* and clear away the darkness of the earth (*prthvī*).

Although *saṁsāra* as God’s creation is not altogether evil, its negative aspects are sometimes heavily stressed. For example it is treated along with both sin and devil when stated that Jesus has conquered the devil (*devacāra*), *saṁsāra*, and sin (*pātaka*). Further it is said that whoever regards his life as good (*barave*) will lose it, but who regards life in *saṁsāra* as evil (*vokhaṭe*) will save (*rākhela*) it. Here Kristapurāṇa is more explicitly negative towards life in the world than the corresponding Bible passage, which talks about losing one’s life for Christ’s sake and thereby saving it, but says nothing about considering it bad or evil as such.

Although *saṁsāra* is full of things that can lead us astray, it is also the place where God’s Son takes manhood and suffers for the salvation of mankind. Thereby *saṁsāra* becomes the place where man can be given *mukti* and from which he can be taken to *svarga/vaikuṁṭha*. For example Kristapurāṇa says that Jesus Christ came into *saṁsāra* in order to annihilate our
sins (pātakā) and give us residence in vaikuṅṭha (vaikuṅṭhavāsu),621 and that he taught śāstra and thereby showed the way to vaikuṅṭha (vaikuṅṭhapaimithu).622 Like Jesus came to saṁsāra to save its people from the consequences of sin, so also saṁsāra itself is an object of salvation. After having been baptized by John the Baptist in Jordan, Jesus ascends from the river like the sun in springtime,623 and he is carrying with him the entire saṁsāra, which had been drowned in the deep river of sin (pāpa).624 God loved saṁsāra and gave it his only son, it is again stated in a passage reminiscent of John 3:16.625 In the following ovīs both saṁsāra and its inhabitants are helped by God’s son:

Therefore, to take saṁsāra   tayā pāsuna saṁsāru
To the other shore (pailapāru)   ṭhākāvayā pailapāru
God sent his own son:   deveṁ āpulā kuṁmaru
Know this.   pāṭhavilā jānāṁ626

Those who truly believe in him,   je tayāteṁ māṁniti satyeṁ
Their life will not perish.   tayā prānanāṁsu nā hota
eternally living    te ākhaṁḍita jīvitva
They will enjoy.   bhoguṁ jāti627

In a later chapter Stephens describes how the creation will be made new and liberated from all illness etc. after the last judgement.628

In Hindu usage the concept saṁśāra inevitably implies that of punarjanma (literally “rebirth”), in popular literature about Hinduism often referred to as reincarnation. This is alien to Christianity and the word is also very rarely used in Kristapurāṇa. However, the word in itself (but not the concept) reminds of the biblical idea of being “born again”, expounded by Jesus in his conversation with Nikodemus in John 3. Stephens draws on this idea and motives from John 3 in the eighth chapter of Kristapurāṇa, but without using the word punarjanma. Instead he speaks about a navā janma (“new birth”) in this saṁśāra through the grace (krupā)

621 II.14.93.
622 II.14.97. This śāstra is of course the Bible and/or Jesus’ teaching. For a thorough discussion of Stephens’ use of the word śāstra, along with other words he uses for these things, see Falcao, Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter, pp. 71-89.
623 II.19.67.
624 II.19.37: “āṇī jo pāpācā dohātu / saṁsāra budālā hotā / to āpulā save varutāṁ / sāṁḍilā teṇeṁ //”.
625 II.22.62.
626 II.22.63.
627 II.22.64.

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of the Holy Spirit. Kristapurāṇa differs slightly from John 3:5, where the new birth comes through “water and the Spirit”, without mention of faith. In Stephens’ version it comes through the bath of knowledge (jñānasnāna), i.e. baptism, and firm faith (druḍamanabhāva). But contrary to the Hindu concept of punarjanma, where every new birth is a birth in saṁsāra and by implication means deprivation of mukti, this Christian navā janma is a death out of saṁsāra and a birth into the state of mukti. Expressed with the terminology of Kristapurāṇa, those who are born with this navā janma through jñānasnāna and faith will not get the inheritance of saṁsāra; instead they will get the supreme heritage of svarga, and endlessly enjoy the happiness (sukhaprāpti) of vaikuṁṭha in the company of angels. In a later chapter Jesus similarly says that “whoever does not take new birth (navā janma) through water and Holy Spirit will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (svarga rājaśāni)”. So far Stephens’ strategy for punarjanma could be described partly as a reluctance to use the word at all. This goes together well with his general non-confrontational attitude. Instead of identifying and criticizing heterodox ideas he puts his energy on expounding and adorning the Catholic faith. But this is not the whole picture. Although largely ignoring the word punarjanma, he introduces the new word navā janma and gives it an almost contrary meaning. Described with the terminology borrowed from Saussure he introduces a similar signal and provides it with an opposite signification. The Hindu punarjanma signifies continued confinement in saṁsāra, but the Christian navā janma signifies liberation from saṁsāra and so to speak the gate of mukti.

When the word punarjanma is finally used in II.43.28, it is not in the usual Hindu sense of the word, but as denoting the resurrection of the body at the time of the last judgement. This punarjanma is described as a resurrection to great joy for the virtuous (puṇārthī), but for evil people to yemakoṁda (“the pit of death”). Thus the signification that Stephens

629 II.8.40.
630 In the Marsden version (according to Falcao’s edition) the word is actually jñānaschāna, “the place of knowledge”, which I (like Falcao in Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 683), regard as an error in writing.
631 II.8.41.
632 Cf. Romans 6:3-14; Galatians 2:19-20..
633 II.8.42.
634 II.8.43.
635 II.22.59: “jo kavana udake kanroni/āṇī spirita śāṁtā karunī/navā janma nā ghe svargā rajastāni/na righe hoī”. Cf. Mark 16:16: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”
636 Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p.1495.
637 II.43.29.
638 II.43.36.
gives to the signal *punarjanma* is, although not the direct opposite, clearly different from the usual Hindu one.

Now what Stephens does can be described as ignoring the Hindu concept expressed by the signal *punarjanma*, introducing a similar signal (*navā janma*) and giving it an opposite signification, and finally altering the whole sign *punarjanma* by introducing it with a signification that is different from the one current in Hindu contexts but applicable in a Christian story.

One more thing should be said about Stephens’ strategy for *punarjanma*, namely how he uses the word *yerajhāra*, which literally means “coming and going” and in modern Marathi denotes a wearisome or unprofitable trip.⁶³⁹ But at least in Old Marathi it could also mean “cycle of birth and death”.⁶⁴⁰ When *yerajhāra* is used in this last sense, *yerajhāra* and the Hindu concept of *punarjanma* imply the valence of each other, even if they are not directly synonymous. If there is no *punarjanma* there is no point in talking about one cycle of birth and death, and to say that there are cycles of birth and death is the same as affirming the existence of *punarjanma*. Stephens employs the word *yerajhāra* in a passage about what will happen after the last judgement. Then, he writes:

In these four elements⁶⁴¹  
No more *yerajhāra*,  
Nature being created  
Cannot come to an end.  

(yā caubhutāṁca ťhāī  
puṇaṭi yerajhāra nāṁhi  
prakṛti nivṛtti upajona kāṁhi  
houṁ na śake⁶⁴²)

How shall *yerajhāra* be understood here? It could mean just “wearisome coming and going” or trouble in general, but the pairing of “place of four elements” and *yerajhāra* in the first part of the *ovī* with “nature” and “death and birth” in the second makes it look like a parallelism in the manner of the biblical book of Psalms, thus raising the suspicion that it actually says the same thing two times. If this is the case *yerajhāra* here means “cycle of birth and death”.

According to Nelson Falcao *yerajhāra* is used in this way in the actual *ovī*, to negate the idea of *punarjanma* without using that word. It might be objected that it is odd in a Christian

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⁶⁴¹ The four elements are earth, water, air and fire.

⁶⁴² II.43.193. Falcao translates this *ovī* slightly differently. His modern Marathi version reads: “ya cāra mahābhutāṁta tithe sārahke jāne-yene nasela. prakṛti, nivṛtti, janma, maraṇa kāhī tithe nasela.” In English this would be: “In these four elements there will be no constant going and coming. In prakṛti and nivṛtti there will be neither birth nor death. No prakṛti, nivṛtti, birth or death will be there.”
context to say that there is no *punarjanma* specifically after the last judgment, as if there were *punarjanma* before it, but Falcao explains it as stating both heaven and hell are eternal; once arriving in heaven or hell there is no risk nor possibility to die from that existence and be reborn elsewhere.\(^{643}\) If this interpretation is correct *prakṛti* (“nature”) here refers to persons and not to creation as a whole.

I think, however, that Falcao’s interpretation is slightly mistaken. No doubt *Kristapurāṇa* says that the pleasures of heaven and pains of hell are eternal, but not in this *ovī*. Here the context is about what will happen with *creation* after the last judgement. Stephens tells that God playfully (*liḷāmāṁtreṁ*) will make heaven and earth new.\(^{644}\) Then he says that in the four elements (*caubhutāṁ bhītari*) everything will be calm.\(^{645}\) Immediately thereafter comes our actual *ovī*, saying that there will be no more *yerajhāra*. Both the formulations in the *ovī* and the context in which it occurs make it more plausible that it talks about the new creation as such, the realm of four elements, and not about particular beings. If this is the case, it is not *punarjanma* but a similar Hindu idea that is dismissed here: that the world as a whole is subject to similar cycles of birth, death and rebirth as the human being bound in *sāṁsāra*.\(^{646}\)

It is notorious that Stephens in this context chooses *liḷāmāṁtreṁ* (“playfully”) to describe how God makes heaven and earth new. The first part of the word, in its standard Sanskrit form pronounced *līlā*, in Hindu usage stands for the playfull activity of the divine, then often used in compounds like *rāmalīlā* and *kṛṣṇalīlā*. But in Hindu cosmology *līlā* also stands specifically for “the ‘cosmic play’ of the divine in the periodic creation and dissolution of the universe, and in the unending perpetuation of the cycle of the two.”\(^{647}\) If I am right in assuming that Stephens’ intention with *ovī* II.43.193 is to deny of the idea of this perpetually cyclical periodic creation and dissolution of the universe, rather than the idea of *punarjanma* on a personal level, then the employment of the word *liḷāmāṁtreṁ* is an excellent example of how Stephens fearlessly goes very far in employing words with Hindu connotation to express related but more or less differing Christian ideas. In this case he takes a word that is associated with the periodic creation and dissolution of the universe in Hindu cosmology, and uses it to express the Christian idea of a singular recreation of the universe, only a few verses before he states that there will be no more creation and dissolution of the same. In a word he

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\(^{644}\) II.43.189: “*maga śṛuṣṭi sāgara ṣṇī amitrāla/āṇī yeka āgni maṃdaļa/sarasāvila te sakala/liḷamāṁtreṁ//*”. Cf. Revelation 21:1.

\(^{645}\) II.43.192: “*aiseyā caubhuṭāṁ bhītari/svasta hoī la sakaḷa//*”.


\(^{647}\) Schweig, “Līlā”.
finds a related sign from Hindu tradition, in this case līlā, keeps the signal but adopts its signification to fit the Christian story better, and so slightly alters the whole sign.

Insofar as mukti in Hindu conception is hindered by ignorance and entails clear sight of the ultimate reality, a major factor that binds a person in saṁsāra is māyā. Stephens’ usage of māyā is similar to Hindu usage. Often he uses it in the phrases saṁsāra māyā and saṁsārācī māyā ("the māyā of saṁsāra"). Māyā is described as an obstacle for doing God’s work, and as a mirage (māyā mṛgajaḷa) in which Judas drowned, his mind being filled with selfishness, wickedness, pride and rage. In the case of Judas, whose crime consisted in betraying his master Jesus for thirty silver coins, both the Sanskrit meaning “illusion” and the Persian “property” resonate in the phrase māyā mṛgajaḷa. Stephens strengthens the feeling that māyā is a hindrance for attaining mukti by means of the formulation that he “drowned” (buḍālā) in it, thereby indicating that the path that māyā leads us on goes downwards, in the opposite direction to that of the ascending muktipantha that leads to vaikuṇṭha above all svargas, and that it makes you stick down there. Further he lets us understand that māyā leads away from svarga by associating Judas drowning in māyā with his mind being filled with selfishness (svārtha), wickedness (duṣṭācāru), pride (garva) and rage (krodha), vices that are direct opposites of virtues characteristic of heavenly existence. Notably pride is the opposite of humbleness (linatva), without which Kristapurāṇa says you cannot enter into svarga.

Māyā being presented as a mirage that leads in the wrong direction, it is not surprising that choosing the right path is associated with leaving māyā or māyā being destroyed. The disciples who enjoyed Jesus’ darśana on mount Tabor forgot saṁsāra māyā, and the Samarian woman left all saṁsāra maye and became a bhaktiṇī instead of a pātakīṇī after meeting Jesus. Similarly Matthew immediately forgot all worldly things (saṁsārika) and followed Jesus when he called. So Stephens lets Jesus before ascending to heaven say to his disciples that the Holy Spirit (ispثيرa sāṁta) will enter into their minds (citi) to show

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648 Cf. II.27.13; 33.41; 57.28.
649 Cf. II.20.80.
650 Cf. II.27.13.
651 II.44.20-21: "to judu mani anikramadali/māyā mrgajaḷi buḍāḷa/thora citavaṇe/jiva dhāvoṁ dāhi diśā// svārtha āṇī duṣṭācāru/garva āṇī krodha thora/jālā tyā mani saṁcāra/cyāri megha jaiseṁ//".
652 Cf. Matthew 26:15.
653 II.34.16: "tumhi linatva dharona sariri/jale yāviṇa bāḷakāci pari/tumhā svaṁcāra/cyāri megha jaiseṁ/".
654 II.33.40-41.
655 II.23.39.
656 II.23.46.
657 II.25.100.
658 II.57.26.
them the true (satye) path and, destroying saṁsāra māyā, lead them away from the wrong way (ādamāṁrga).  

It is interesting that the way that the Holy Spirit shows is described precisely with the adjective satye, “true”, and not with any other adjective meaning “right” or “good”. In this way Stephens affirms the understanding, borrowed from Hindu usage, of māyā as something illusory that hinders us from attaining salvific knowledge of the truth, satya.

Interesting is also Stephens’ choice to denote the way associated with māyā as āḍamāṁrga. Falcao renders the same word as cukicē mārga, i.e. “the mistaken/wrong way”, which it of course is. Its general meanings in modern Marathi are “bypath” and “wrong way”. However the prefix āḍa- means both “off the main track or course, out of the way” and things like “[a]cross, athwart, against, in the way, (indicating intervention, obstruction, restraint &c.)”. Perhaps Stephens purposely used the possible association to obstruction with the word ādamāṁrga to maintain the idea of māyā as something that obstructs us from reaching the goal.

Māyā’s power to lead astray is further shown by Satan’s reaction when he finds that his temptations do not have any effect on Jesus and tries to find out the reason for this. Maybe, he thinks, Jesus has no saṁsārāci māyā at all. Here māyā may stand for “illusion” as well as “affection”. It has the power to bind a person in saṁsāra by affective attachment to the world (saṁsāra), dimming his sight and hindering the vision of God and the way to mukti. But Jesus, whose ātmā is always muktivaṁta (“free”, “in the state of mukti”), is not affected by māyā’s binding and obscuring power. Just like the always muktivaṁta Jesus Christ is free from māyā, the same holds true for all liberated souls. Before his ascension, Jesus depicts his “Fathers house” as a place where there is no doubt, toil, worry or māyā.

To sum up, māyā in Kristapurāṇā stands in opposition to mukti. It is associated with saṁsāra and tries to bind us in the same. The liberated soul is not affected by it and where there is mukti, notably in svarga/vaikuṁṭha, there is no māyā. This is logical since mukti includes clear sight and is forever. Hence there is no room for anything that dims the sight or leads astray, the two main characteristics of māyā.

659 II.57.28: “to tumhāṁ citi praveśonayāṁ/neīla satye pathe cālaunayā/nirasona saṁsāra māyā/ādamāṁrga”.
660 Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 1447.
661 Prabhudesai and Margaj, Navneet Marathi-English Dictionary, p. 57.
662 Molesworth, Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary, p. 15.
663 II.20.80.
664 Cf. II.33.58: “kristu garbhī ālā to dina dharona/tyācā ātmāṁ tethe lāgona nitye hotāṁ muktivaṁta//” (“From the day Christ came into the womb/his soul from then on/always was muktivaṁta.”)
666 II.57.38.
Besides māyā the chief factor binding a person in saṁsāra and delaying mukti in Hinduism is karma. In Kristapurāṇa karma is most of the time presented as something bad, which is taken away by Jesus. However karma is not entirely synonymous with unambiguously negative words for sin, such as pāpa and pātaka, which is clear from the statement that “the sin or virtue done, all karma [one has] performed, will all become known” at the last judgement. Here karma seems to be used in the general sense of “action”, including both good and bad deeds. More typically though, the word is used in a clearly negative way, often in compounds like karmadośa (“karma-guilt”), pāpa karma and ākarma (“misdeed”).

Karma in Kristapurāṇa is most of the time a binding force, just like its Hindu namesake, but its power is broken by Jesus. When one embraces Jesus’ feet, it is said, the bonds of ākarma fall off. Jesus came into saṁsāra to pay/take off the load of people’s karma, and died to pay off the debt (ruṇa) of karmadośa. It is also stressed that he is the lord and creator of the world who takes human body to pay/take away ādi puruṣāceṁ karma (“the karma of the first man”). This phrase of course refers to the sin of Adam, the original sin.

An interesting association with Hindu ideas arises when it is said that pāpa karma is destroyed by Jesus’ light, just as darkness is destroyed by the rays of the sun. This formulation reminisces of that in Bhagavadgītā 4.37, where it is the fire of jñāna that reduces karma to ashes. The similarity seems even more striking when we consider the numerous epithets of Jesus like jñāna dipu (“light of knowledge”) and jñānasāgaru (“ocean of knowledge”) and the rebranding of baptism as jñānasnāna (“knowledge-bath”). If Jesus’ light is the light of jñāna dipu, then is it not the light of jñāna which destroys pāpa karma? And if pāpa karma is destroyed by jñāna dipu, should it then not be considered as basically a product of ignorance?

This chain of thought is carried far by Nelson Falcao who claims that original sin and karma are each according to Stephens “in its respective faith-world connected with the cause of original disorder (avidyā)”. Leaving aside the doubtful proposition that avidya (ignorance)

667 II.43.80: “je pāpa athavā puṇe kele/je je karma ācarale/te hoīla ṭhāuke”. Cf. II.43.72.
668 II.31.91: “phīṭela ākarma baṁdhana/krista cariṇī voḷagatā//”.
669 II.1.40: “karma tumaceṁ vojeṁ phaḍāvayā/saṁsārā ālā svāmī//”. Cf. II.1.9 and II.21.13 where similar things are said about bhavakarma.
670 II.53.50: “karmasośace ghyāvayā ruṇa/tayāsi hoīla maraṇa//”.
671 II.8.64: “visvakartā svāmī yāneṁ/manuśa deho kele pairaṇa/ādi puruṣāceṁ karma darśana/phēḍāvayā//”. Cf. Genesis 3.
672 Bhagavadgītā  4.37: “yathāidhāṁsi samiddhā/‘gnir/bhasma-sāt kurute ‘rjuna/jñānāgniṁ sarva-karmāṁ/‘bhasma-sāt kurute tathā//”.
is connected with the cause of original disorder in Christianity, it is also questionable to what extent it is in Stephens’ work. Falcao’s chain of argument is built on a couple of questionable translations, like “āvidyā anđhakāra (darkness of sin)” and, in the other direction, “cause-of-all-Pāpa (avidyā)”677. Concerning the phrase āvidyā anđhakāra, its meaning is not “darkness of sin” but “darkness of ignorance”.678 Avidyā means “ignorance” and pāpa is usually translated as “sin”. Therefore equalling “cause-of-all- Pāpa” with avidyā is not a translation, but an interpretation, serving Falcao’s thesis that Father Stephens says that avidyā is the basic problem of humanity. No doubt Father Stephens does give avidyā a prominent position among the main problems of this world, which can be read as an accepting of or influence from certain Hindu ideas, but this tendency is exaggerated by Nelson Falcao.

Falcao formulates his interpretation of Stephens’ view of karma so: “The Karma of Saṃsāra is nothing else but the inability to recognize the inter-dependence of individuals as part of the Ultimate Reality.”679 And consequently about mukti:

Jeju Swāmī gave them back their Satva-Kṛpā by opening the gates of heaven and giving them Mukti or the perfect ability to see their inter-relatedness and inter-dependence with the comprehensive Reality. [...] Through his Perfect Light of Knowledge, he gave them back the ability to comprehend that they were mutually reliant on one another and each was only a piece of the total mosaic of Reality.680

Unfortunately Falcao’s conclusion that karma and mukti in Kristapurāṇa have to do with lack and gain of “ability to see [one’s] inter-relatedness and inter-dependence with the comprehensive Reality” is not backed by robust references to the text. Rather Stephens uses karma in the sense “deed” and often specifically for bad deeds or sin.681

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676 Identifying ignorance with the “cause of original disorder” in the Christian “faith-world” is a problematic position not least because it seems to lack base in the biblical narrative. The Genesis story rather stresses the breaking of a divine command not to eat from the tree of knowledge (Gen 2:16-17) as the origin of worldly disorder.


678 Molesworths Marathi-English Dictionary gives the following definition of avidyā: “Erroneous apprehension through the illusiveness of the material world; admission of these unrealities as real; error or ignorance as opp. to knowledge.”


681 In II.12 Stephens presents a chain of thought reminiscent of the Hindu idea of the inevitability of bearing the consequences of one’s karma, but without mentioning the word itself. The passage comes between the infanticide in Bethlehem, ordered by King Herod, and his painful and humiliating death. It is said that paramesvara is not late to destroy sinners (pāpī) and that he does not need to take avatāru in saṁsāra for this to be brought about. Their sins (pātake) and misdeeds (dukruta) trouble their hearts all the time, constantly eating
However Kristapurāṇa actually does reproduce the Hindu bond between the concepts of jñāna and mukti when it re-brands baptism as jñānasnāna and says that it gives the “san-skāra of mukti”. Another such passage is the story about the prodigal son, who upon returning home after his disastrous debaucheries is given a jñānavastra, a robe of knowledge, by his father. The importance of knowledge is also confirmed by the verses like the already cited II.56.29, where the three things necessary for salvation are listed:

First hear the śāstra and accept its truth,  
Then take jñānasnāna,  
Thirdly please God,  
Keeping his commands. 

In I.5.154 a similar list is presented as the only way to vaikuṇṭhasthāna:

Accept the truth of one paramēśvara,  
Take jñānasnāna on your head,  
Serve Gods Son  
Uncessantly. 

Knowledge is present in two ways in these both lists of requirements for salvation. Firstly it is implied by the phrase satye māṁnije (“accept the truth”), secondly it is part of the compound jñānasnāna for baptism.

To begin with the phrase satye māṁnije; to accept the truth of a true thing is, if not exactly the same, very much akin to knowing it. This accepted we could say that a kind of jñāna is necessary for salvation. But what kind of jñāna? It is the knowledge that there is only one God (paramēśvara) and the knowledge about the truth of the śāstra, i.e. the biblical
teaching. The message of the śāstra is the same thing as Stephens seeks to convey in a new way in Kristapurāṇa, as he expresses towards the end of its last chapter:

Now praise the Lord,  
By whose grace the work of turning the story of śāstra  
Into a complete purāṇa  
Was fulfilled.691

ātāṁ karitoṁ svāmiyāce stavana  
jyāce na krpe śāstra kathamna  
pruṇa honi sampurṇa  
pātale sīdhī692

One verse ahead he explains the purpose of Kristapurāṇa and introduces the concept of jñāna and explains what kind of knowledge he is talking about.

Through it become very wise.693  
That disquisition is given in the purāṇa;  
The proper way to vaikuṇṭha  
Has it shown.

teṇe hoije paramajñāṁni  
to prabamāḍha dāvīlā purāṇastāṁ  
vaikuṇṭhicā nija pāṁthu dāuna  
kelā pragaṭa694

He who annihilated the guilt of saṁsāra,  
The ferry over the ocean of this world,  
Through whom you reach the other shore,  
He is the one695 Saviour of the world.

jo saṁsāra dośāṁcā saṁvāḥāṁra  
bhavasāgaricā tāru  
jeṇ̄ṇeṁ pāvije pailapāru  
to yeku vaivatārakā696

He is the king of mokṣa and lord of vaikuṇṭha,  
In whose hand God the Father  
Has given all power  
Over life and death,

to mokṣarājā vaikuṇṭhapati  
didhalise sarva prāptī  
jivātvā mṛtyāci 697

Without doing whose bhakti  
By no means one gets mukti698  
The story and learning of that Lord Jesus  
I have narrated.

jyāci na karitāṁ bhakti  
sarvathā na mīḷe mukti  
tyā yeju svāmiyāṁcī kathā vitpati  
niropiṇī myāṁ699

690 For a thorough discussion of Stephens’ use of the word śāstra and other words for these things, see Falcao, Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter, pp. 71-89.
691 The word order of the translation differs a lot from the original due to difficulties to convey the meaning otherwise.
692 II.58.110.
693 Paramajñāṁni may also be translated as “knower of the highest truth” or “excellent knower”.
694 II.58.112.
695 The very usage of the numeral yeku (“one”) accentuates the singularity of the thing denoted. Thus “one and only” is probably a translation that better reflects the intended meaning.
696 II.58.113.
698 Falcao’s modern Marathi translation of the second line reads as follows: “saṁpūrṇa mukti miḷata nāṁ” (“complete mukti is not attained”). That translation seems to better reflect the intuitive understanding of the phrase by Marathi speakers. Nevertheless I think my translation better reflects Stephens’ intended meaning.
699 II.58.115.
The salvific knowledge Stephens talks about is the knowledge one gets through hearing the message of the Bible (the śāstra) and by implication Kristapurāṇa, which shows the way to vaikunṭha. This is no esoteric knowledge that is hard to understand or that makes one see this world (saṁsāra) as unreal in any reasonable sense. What Stephens mentions in this passage is the knowledge about Jesus Christ the Saviour, the mokṣarājā and vaikunṭhapati. In Dōtrīna Christam the doctrinal knowledge deemed necessary is little more than the Apostolic Creed, which can probably be regarded as a concentration of the same biblical message that Stephens seeks to narrate in a more artful manner in Kristapurāṇa. And, which is important, the story about Jesus is narrated because doing his bhakti is necessary for getting mukti. So the aim of the knowledge is to enable us to do the bhakti, which is the real path to mukti.

Now let us consider the use of jñānasnāna for baptism. As we have seen it is presented as a prerequisite for and something like a door to mokṣa.700 We have already seen the connection between baptism as jñānasnāna and Christ the Saviour as ocean of knowledge (jñāna sāgaru, jñāna simdhu)701, which makes it natural to regard baptism as an immersion in Christ. We have also seen that thought of Jesus as wisdom or treasury of wisdom and knowledge are based in the Bible,702 although Kristapurāṇa stresses the idea more and shows a greater abundance of epithets expressing it.

It seems that Stephens preaches two kinds of salvific knowledge. The first is the Christian faith, expressed in the Bible (śāstra) and now also in Kristapurāṇa, which particularly contains the knowledge about the Jesus Christ, the visvatāraku (“saviour of the world”).703 This is no esoteric or difficult knowledge. In contrary it is simple and easy to get.704

The other salvific knowledge is the Saviour Jesus Christ himself. He is at the same time the object of the salvific knowledge or faith, and the personification of it. As such he is also the ocean705 in which the sins are washed away in baptism, jñānasnāna. Thus in addition to the more mainstream Catholic ideas that Stephens expresses about Jesus as saviour throughout Kristapurāṇa, the pieces he gives form a picture of Jesus as saviour qua knowledge, as jñāna.

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700 Cf. II.56.18: “je satyeṁ mānu jñāna nāṁna gheti/te mokṣapadāte ṭhākiti/” (“Those who accept the truth and take jñānasnāna, they set out for the state of mokṣa”).

701 Cf. II.27.1, 41; 40.86.

702 Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:24; Colossians 2:3.

703 Cf. II.58.112ff., where the one who acquires this knowledge is called paramajñānī.

704 In Stephens’ Marathi prose foreword to Kristapurāṇa (Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 75-80) he writes that he wrote it in Marathi, since it is the Indian language best suited for talking about divine things, but that he has left out some difficult words of the old poets and mixed in some words from the simple language of the Brahmins, so that everybody will be able to understand (Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 78).

705 jñāna sāgaru, jñāna simdhu: cf. II.27.1, 41; 40.86.
Interestingly the salvific contact with this jñāna is given in the physical act of ritual immersion in water representing Jesus as jñāna. It is important to note here the linking of jñānasūna with faith, where faith is often expressed as “accepting as true” (satye mānaṇe). Thus the first kind of salvific jñāna is a prerequisite for the second; the simple and non-esoteric faith opens the door to jñānasūna, in which the believer is immersed in the divine wisdom. This immersion in Christ as jñāna sāgaru opens the door to mokṣa and vaikuṇṭha, and by implication to God’s darśana or the beatific vision of God’s face. So although not stressing the idea explicitly, Stephens gives the reader all that is necessary to read his work as containing the common Hindu teaching about jñāna as the way to clear vision and mukti, of course hand in hand with bhakti and to some extent karma. As with other heavily Hindu loaded terms, however, he gives the sign a new twist, this time by letting jñāna signify on the one hand the same simple faith as was presented in Doutrina Christam, on the other hand the divine person Jesus Christ. The knowledge that gives us the clear vision of God’s face is not a mental state or epistemic achievements – that knowledge is God himself, who by his grace bestows on us the beatific vision of his face.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is no uncommon thought in Hinduism that salvific knowledge can be mediated by a spiritual master, a guru, who is sometimes revered even as God. Although Stephens does not elaborate this theme very much, he does touch upon it. Indeed he begins the whole work in a very typical manner with a salutation to God, the Mother of God, and the guru. Much later it tells that little John the Baptist feels the urge to leave his parents to live in the wilderness during the time when the Holy Family was exiled in Egypt. His father Zachariah tries to convince him to stay at home, pointing to the dangers and hardships of the forest life, but little John is adamant. By Jesus’ grace (krupā) he will be able to face all difficulties; he, who called him already in his mother’s womb, will protect

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706 E.g. I.5.154; II.56.18, 29.
707 Cf. II.56.18.
708 Cf. II.57.41.
709 Cf. II.43.78-79.
710 Cf. the first lines of Jñānadeva’s Amṛtānubhava, where the poet writes about his own brother and guru: “I take refuge in the God/Who is revealed in the person of/The glorious Nivrittinath. […] I honor the divine Wisdom/In the form of the Guru […] Though one, He appears as Shiva and Shakti” (S. Abhayananda, Jnaneshvar: the life and works of the celebrated thirteenth century Indian mystic-poet, Delhi, Sri Satguru Publications 1994, p. 13). Given this kind of attitude towards gurus, Judas use of the word in II.44.33 stresses the subversive character of his betrayal: “for thirty [coins] I sell my guru” (“tisā pāsoni vikaṇīṁ / karitoṁ guruye”).
711 Falcao, Phādar Thomas Stiphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, p. 3: “śrī sarveśvar prasāmaṇa/śrī devamātā prasāmaṇa/śrī guru prasāmaṇa”.
712 Kristapurāṇa contains detailed stories about the childhood of Jesus and John the Baptist, topics on which the Bible is remarkably silent.
(rākhaṇe) him. The word here used for “guidance” is sārathī, which also means “charioteer” and as such is a word associated with Kṛṣṇa as Arjuna’s charioteer. Little John the Baptist keeps on admonishing his father about Jesus, saying that if one meditates on or keeps Jesus in mind (dhyātāṁ citi), then all obstacles or dangers (vighne) are taken away, and by remembering (smarane) him all fear is annihilated. Before leaving his parents to live in the wilderness, John the Baptists declares that he is the servant of Jesus’ feet and that Jesus alone is enough for him. He then pronounces the following words:

I, to worship my guru [Jesus],
Sit down in asceticism and meditation
To cross (tarāvayā) the rough sea
Of worldly bonds.

mī ārādhāvayā guru
baisato tapa dhyāna karu
tarāvayā dṛṛghaṭa [dur-?] sāgaru
bhava baṁdhācā

This ovī would fit well in a Hindu context, connecting worship of the guru with release from worldly bondage and rescuing oneself or being rescued over to the other shore. In this case Stephens accepts the Hindu concept quite straight away: the guru as divine mediator of salvific insight, including the idea the disciple can attain that insight through meditation on the guru in his absence. The difference is that Stephens attributes these properties of the guru exclusively to Jesus, whereas they in Hindu contexts can be attributed to many gurus. He uses the word also for other spiritual teachers, like the narrator of Kristapurāṇa, but in those cases the guru only the mediator of the salvific knowledge in the sense that he conveys the message, the faith, which opens the door to jñāna snāna and immersion in the divine jñānasāgaru, i.e. in Jesus Christ himself.

Stephens’ teaching about mukti/mokṣa has been thoroughly analysed in previous chapters and we have seen that he is doctrinally staying within the range of Catholic theology even though expressing it with Hindu loaded words. Such words are invariably introduced, as Falcao puts it, “very spontaneously, without much ado and without any explanation”.

Without commenting on Hindu usages of the words Stephens sets out to tell the story he

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713 II.13.25.
715 II.13.27.
716 II.14.55.
717 In Marathi Hindu tradition Ekanātha and Bahiṇābāī are examples of religious poets (saṁta) who got instructions from guris (Jhānadeva and Tukārāma respectively) without or before meeting them physically.
718 Cf. I.24.83.
wants to tell and preach the message he wants to preach. In this process he uses the words in a similar – one might say analogous – way to how they are use in Hinduism. By consequently using Hindu loaded words in a partly new way, he manages (partly thanks to the length of the work) to reshape the concepts denoted by them – to alter the signification though keeping the sign – without (more than very occasionally) openly confront Hindu ideas. That this was Stephens’ conscious strategy – albeit of course not conceptualised with Saussurian terms – is supported by a passage in his own Marathi prose foreword, stating that:

[…] how much difference there is between their šāstra and ours will be known to everybody: as much difference as between light and darkness, truth and falsity, vaikunthā and yemakoñda, parameśvara and the devil. Everybody will see that there is such a difference between our šāstra and other šāstras. Therefore in this our purāṇa we have not taken pains to show that their šāstra is false and our true. Light is automatically visible for everybody. The šātra of the Christian is beautiful in itself, is its own decoration, and by itself shows that only it is good – just by being read and heard.²²⁰

Thus convinced of the excellence and splendour of the biblical story and message and the falsity of Hindu šāstra, Stephens felt no need to talk about the latter.

We are now in a position to sum up this analysis. By large Stephens agrees with Hindu conceptions of mukti as liberation from saṁsāra, māyā and karma, as well as the belief that the way to mukti goes through karma, bhakti and jñāna. The difference is brought about mainly by (1) adding or stressing factors differently, and (2) altering the signification of the just mentioned signs.

It would not be wrong to say that Kristapurāṇa’s mukti is liberation from saṁsāra, māyā and karma, but the statement has to be qualified a bit. Firstly it is liberation from a saṁsāra without punarjanma. Having altered the signification of saṁsāra in this (quite dramatic) way, mukti no longer means liberation from endless cycles of death and rebirth. Secondly it is indeed liberation from māyā, a concept which Stephens never explains, which makes the exact meaning of this proposition dependent on the contents of related concepts. Thirdly it is liberation from bad karma; not from karma in general. Although compounds like pāpakarma

²²⁰ Falcao, Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa, pp. 78-79. “[…] teyāe āṇī āmaṁ śāstrābhātūri kevaḍem aṁtara ujjvādā vā aṁdhrārāśi, satyā vā laṭkāśi, vaikunthā vā yemakoñḍāśi, parameśvarā vā devacārāśi āhe. yetukem āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āṇī aṁtara ujjvādā śāstrābhātūri kevaḍem aṁtara ujjvādā vā aṁdhrārāśi, satyā vā laṭkāśi, vaikunthā vā yemakoñḍāśi, parameśvarā vā devacārāśi āhe. yetukem āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce āṇī āmaṁce Ćāśāprāṇa’s mukti is liberation from saṁsāra, māyā and karma, but the statement has to be qualified a bit. Firstly it is liberation from a saṁsāra without punarjanma. Having altered the signification of saṁsāra in this (quite dramatic) way, mukti no longer means liberation from endless cycles of death and rebirth. Secondly it is indeed liberation from māyā, a concept which Stephens never explains, which makes the exact meaning of this proposition dependent on the contents of related concepts. Thirdly it is liberation from bad karma; not from karma in general. Although compounds like pāpakarma
and ādī puruśāce karma are sometimes used, more common expressions are pāpa and pātaka, roughly translatable as “sin”. Consequently with the stripping of punarjanma from saṁsāra, karma has lost the aspect of something that binds to continued rebirths in saṁsāra. Instead the word is used to signify deeds in general, which can be either good or bad and ultimately lead to either vaikuṁṭha or yemakoṁḍa, although deeds alone does not entitle one to a place in vaikuṁṭha. More true to the spirit of Kristapurāṇa would be to describe its mukti as liberation from sin (pāpa, pātaka), death (mṛtyu) and the devil (devacāra), which are being conquered by the Saviour (tāraka, raksanāra) Jesus Christ.721

Concerning the way to mukti in Kristapurāṇa, the muktipaṁtha, it can conveniently be analysed along the lines of karma, bhakti and jñāna, as common in Hindu treatises like Bhagavadgītā and Jñāneśvarī. Kristapurāṇa as well as these Hindu texts give more prominence to bhakti and jñāna, whereas karma in the sense “good deeds” has more of a preparatory role; it is a prerequisite for mukti rather than its effective cause. Bhakti in Kristapurāṇa signifies specifically devotion to God parameśvara and Jesus Christ (who is parameśvara); it thus has a narrower signification than it generally has in Hindu contexts. Stephens’ treatment of jñāna is most interesting, since he has to avoid formulating a gnostic soteriology.722 He does this by establishing a conception of Jesus Christ as jñānasāgaru (“ocean of knowledge”) and Baptism as jñāna snāna (“knowledge-bath”). In this way he can maintain that mukti comes through jñāna without being a Gnostic, since jñāna now signifies the person Jesus Christ.

This analysis is not complete without a few words about words for the positive content of mukti. According to Kristapurāṇa mukti is enjoyed in vaikuṁṭha. Vaikuṁṭha is among Vaiṣṇavaite Hindus conceptualised as the highest heaven, the heaven of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being, who has epithets like vaikuṁṭhanātha and vaikuṁṭharājā. These words, leaving out the name Viṣṇu, are adopted by Stephens for speaking about heaven and God. Instead the words vaikuṁṭhanātha and vaikuṁṭharājā are used to signify the Supreme Being according to Christianity, i.e. the triune God, whereas the concept of vaikuṁṭha is emptied of specifically Hindu content and filled with significations that make it harmonize with Catholic ideas about heaven.

721 E.g. II.20.1.
722 Even if Stephens himself might have wanted to formulate a gnostic soteriology – which I do not believe – he had to avoid it lest his work should be stopped by the inquisition.
6. Concluding remarks

We have seen how Thomas Stephens in his *Kristapurāṇa* conveys a Christian message about salvation with the help of a Marathi vocabulary centered on the synonymous words *mukti* and *mokṣa*. *Kristapurāṇa*’s message about salvation cannot be described as synchretic – it is a mirror of the Catholic theology of its time, but with a fresh taste due to its fearless use of words and accents taken over from Hindu traditions. Such words come along with a range of connotations that presuppose a Hindu worldview but are hard or impossible to accommodate in a Christian worldview. We have further seen how Stephens readily adopts such words and accommodates them in his Christian message through a process in which he modifies the concepts expressed by the words in question, which I have described with a terminology borrowed from Saussure: he keeps the *signal* but alters its *signification*, thereby in fact altering the whole *sign*. Saussure’s linguistic theory, being a structuralistic one, helps us to see that such altering of individual signs affects the whole linguistic system, since one sign is defined by its relation to all other signs in the system. Specifically we have for example seen how Stephens’ dispensation of the aspect of *punarjanma* (“rebirth, reincarnation”) from the concept expressed by the word *saṁsāra* has effects on *mukti/mokṣa* and all other words used to express the same or almost the same idea comprising liberation from *saṁsāra* – since they no longer signify liberation from *punarjanma* – and also on *māyā*, which signifies something that binds in *saṁsāra* – since this no longer implies binding by means of *punarjanma*. Similarly Stephens adopts *vaikuṁṭha* for signifying the highest heaven, the place where *mukti* is enjoyed, and epithets like *vaikuṁṭharājā* (“king of *vaikuṁṭha*”) but not the proper name Viṣṇu for signifying Jesus or the triune God of Christianity. Thereby he moulds a linguistic system where the sign *vaikuṁṭharājā* does not signify Viṣṇu, as it does in the Hindu system from where it is taken, but Jesus, and where “king of *vaikuṁṭha*” is part of the signification of the name “Jesus” and not of “Viṣṇu”.

Almost never does Stephens directly mention or criticize the Hindu ideas usually expressed with the words he adopts. Instead he relies on the beauty of the message and the power of positive implementation of new significations for old signals, a strategy consequently maintained throughout the massive more than 10 000 verses of *Kristapurāṇa*. The extent to which such an enterprise really affects the way people use the language and the associations certain words trigger in them of course depends not only on the skill of the author – which in Stephens’ case must be regarded as high – but also on how much sway this new way of using the language holds in people life. If people live exclusively in one linguistic system, it
naturally determines their thoughts and conceptions more than if they for example move in and out of two or more such systems were the **vocabulary** (the set of signals) is almost identical whereas the **concepts** that important words are used to express (their significations) differ.

It cannot and should not be denied that Stephens in a way was a brick in a Portuguese-Catholic joint enterprise where colonialization and mission went hand in hand. But it should also not be overlooked that Stephens in a remarkable way formed a countercurrent to the colonial system that suppressed indigenous languages, literature and other cultural customs. Stephens was genuinely fascinated by the local languages, which is clear from remarks in his 1581 letter to his brother as well as in passages of *Kristapurāṇa* where he praises the Marathi language, first and foremost this famous passage, through which I first encountered Father Stephens and his Christian **purāṇa**: 

Like a gem among stones
Or a blue diamond among jewels,
So among languages the spotless
Language Marathi.

Like the jasmine blossom among flowers
Or musk among perfumes,
So among languages the graceful
Marathi.

Among birds the peacock,
Among trees the Whishing-tree,
Among languages great honour
Befalls Marathi.

Among stars the seven signs,
Among the seven days Sun and Moon,\(^{723}\)
So among the languages of this land
The idiom of Marathi

\(^{723}\) I.e. Sunday and Monday. In Marathi the days are named after celestial bodies, just like in French.

\(^{724}\) II.1.22-25. This section is absent from the Marsden version but included in Saldanha’s, Drago’s and Bandelu’s editions.
So speaks one who loves the language. And considering the way Stephens modelled his work on earlier works of Hindu poets and indeed excelled in the genre, it is hard to believe that he did not also appreciate the ideomatic style of Hindu devotional Marathi literature. Unfortunately Stephens’ and others’ soft mission with genuine respect for local culture could not match the power of political hardliners with little but contempt for the indigenous. It was effectively stopped by political and ecclesiastical decrees in 1684 and 1704 that prohibited use of vernacular languages and cultural adaptionalist approaches in mission. This obviously meant that Kristapurāṇa got out of favour and exercised less impact on Goanese Christians (and Hindus) than it might otherwise have done.

Studies of how, where and by whom Thomas Stephens’ Kristapurāṇa has actually been used would be a valuable contribution for understanding the history of Christianity and Christian literature among speakers of Marathi and Konkani and dialects thereof, which would help us understand the background of later Christian purāṇas and songs in these languages. There is also need of a solid textual critique of Kristapurāṇa. Hopefully such studies could answer questions about (1) the form and content of Thomas Stephens’ original manuscript, (2) the form and content of the three editions printed in Goa in the 17th century, and (3) the form and content of manuscripts that have been used in Goa and among Marathi/Konkani speakers elsewhere.
Bibliography


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