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# A New Glimpse on Hypaethral *Yoginī* Temples of India

Caroline Riberaigua

The so-called *yoginī* temples, as hypaethral sanctuaries generally of circular shape, with a central structure inside usually holding a *mūrti* of Śiva, are an extremely rare type in the landscape of Indian religious architecture. Their originality is expressed both by their architectural features and their iconographical program which displays a great number of goddesses (between 42 and 81) identified as *yoginīs*. The first brief descriptions of their remains appear in the reports of *Archaeological Survey of India* and in scholarly reviews at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>1</sup> except for the Hirapur temple only discovered in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> A century later, they were examined through a more developed and contextualised analysis in the remarkable study by Vidya Dehejia on the topic of *yoginīs* in Hindu context (Dehejia 1986). Yet, although several studies have been dedicated to them since then, *yoginī* temples still raise many questions, beginning with the definition of the precise nature of these goddesses and of the cult performed in the temples.

Indeed, the term *yoginī* is related to a huge variety of very different concepts, according to the tantric tradition where it is mentioned.<sup>3</sup> The *yoginīs* could be human female tantric practitioners, flying witches with bird faces, hordes of fierce goddesses following Bhairava, sometimes on the battlefield, different kinds of hypostases of the Great Goddess, or *mantra*-goddesses.<sup>4</sup>

It is thus crucial to be extremely precise about the context to know which kind of *yoginīs* we are dealing with. For this reason, the following study will focus on a specific type of temple and will not treat groups of scattered goddesses which may be related to other contexts.

In the tantric texts dealing with circles of *yoginīs*, in a ritual concretely practised or in mental evocation through meditation, their modes of action are also extremely eclectic. In the *kaula* tradition, to which the temples are generally linked (Dehejia 1986, XI-XII, 35; Nagar 2005, 37; White 2003, 12; White 2009, 824-825), the *divya* gets his power from *yoginīs* by sexual intercourses and exchanges of fluids (Padoux 1994, 25, 27, 36; White 2003; Padoux 2010, 155-156). In other tantric traditions, illustrated in some Kashmiri texts *e.g.* the 20<sup>th</sup> *adhikāra* of the *Netra Tantra*, the *yoginīs* bestow the *mokṣa* to the *paśu*, being prisoner of the bounds of *saṃsāra*, by devouring him (Brunner 1974, 183-184). In some other traditions, the *yoginīs* are very dangerous entities who must be pacified through offerings and sacrifices.

We must also underline that the texts related to *yoginīs* never mention neither the construction of any stone temples nor the installation of images of the goddesses,<sup>5</sup> usually considered as dangerous.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, these temples may appear as a paradox.

In those circumstances, the first step to clarify their symbolic and ritual functions is to decipher the clues given by the characteristics of the temples themselves.

## LOCATION OF THE TEMPLES

The remaining hypaethral *yoginī* temples are all located in Oḍisha and Madhya Pradesh and datable around the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. They are always situated in the vicinity of important religious centres, under the patronage of ruling dynasties.

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The more ancient *yoginī* temple would be the one located in Khajurāho, the centre of the political power of the Candella kings in Bundelkhand.

There is another *yoginī* temple in Bundelkhand in Dudahi. Although this village is now totally abandoned, it used to be an important place for the Candella dynasty where several Jain and Hindu sanctuaries have been built and partly remain, as in Khajurāho.

The temple of Bheḍaghāt is located a few kilometres from Tripuri (modern Tewar), the ancient capital of the Chedi-Kalacuri dynasty.

The two temples situated in Oḍisha may be related to the Somavaṃśī, a dynasty from eastern Madhya Pradesh that had migrated in Oḍisha under the pressure of the Chedi expansion.

So, the first one is situated in western Oḍisha, in Rāñipur-Jhariāl, close to some older śaiva temples. The second one, the Hirapur temple, is located at only few kilometres from Bhubaneswar, an important Śaiva religious centre, which had then become the political centre of the Somavaṃśī power.

If we observe these temples and especially the quality of the remaining images, it appears obvious that they required a substantial investment. They cannot be simple village temples, nor can they be attributed to the will of any type of devotee. Their geographical and stylistic proximity with the main Hindu temples built by the kings or their family may let suppose that they have also benefited of their patronage, even though it is never ever claimed through any foundation inscription.

## ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURE OF THE TEMPLES AND REPARTITION OF THE SCULPTURES

Although the temples share the common feature of being roofless structures housing on their inner wall images of goddesses, each of them has actually a different configuration.

The oldest *yoginī* temple in Khajurāho has the specificity to be rectangular, and not round-shaped. The enclosure houses 64 shrines; the one in front of the entrance is bigger than the others and probably enshrined the main divinity. There are only three sculptures of goddesses remaining from this temple. They are now kept in the Khajurāho museum, the main one being an image of Mahiṣāsūramardinī named Hinghalāja in its inscription.

Only a few fragments of sculptures from the Dudahi temple are extant. The temple is a circular enclosure with 42 niches, an unusual number that nevertheless fits with some textual occurrences (Dehejia 1986, 51-52). There are evidences of the presence of a pavilion in the centre.

As for the Bheḍaghāt *yoginī* temple, there are two stages in the current state of the building, or even three if we consider its restoration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Banerji 1931, 68) during which the position of all the images have been mixed up.<sup>7</sup> The genuine 10<sup>th</sup> century stage, which interests us here, corresponds to the enclosure fitted with 81 niches on its inner wall. There are 73 sculptures remaining from this period, the other images now in the temple have been brought from other sites. Most of the *yoginīs* sculptures bear an inscription with their name. The temple probably had a central structure, which was covered by the Gaurī-Śankara temple built during the second stage, when the Chedi queen Alhanadevī transformed the temple in a *matha* for *paśupāta* ascetics in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Kielhorn 1894).

All the niches have the same dimensions and the hierarchy between images is not expressed by their size but by other characteristics, *e.g.* the number of arms.

Most of the sculptures have four arms, but three of the remaining seventy sculptures of *yoginīs* have eight arms. Two of them have twelve arms: the fiercely emaciated goddess named Caṇḍikā and the goddess



Figure 1: *Bheḍaghāt*. Yoginī temple, yoginī no. 13: *Sarvatomukhī*. © Caroline Riberaigua.



Figure 2: *Bheḍaghāt*. Yoginī temple, yoginī no. 9: *Nandinī*. © Sébastien Jean.

named *Sarvatomukhī* (*sic*) (Fig. 1). Lastly, two warrior goddesses, with a lion as *vāhana*, have eighteen arms: Śrī *Nandinī* (Fig. 2) and Śrī *Teramvarā* (Fig. 3) as *Mahiṣāsūramardinī* is named in the temple.

The three other 10<sup>th</sup> century sculptures represent male divinities: *Gaṇeśa* and two images of Śiva, one with at least twelve arms.

The temple of *Rāṇipur-Jhariāl* is a large circular enclosure with 65 niches on its inner wall, that is to say 64 niches for the *yoginīs* and a larger niche in the south, housing the main female deity. Today, only the lower part of this image remains, but it was still complete when Joseph Beglar visited the temple in 1870. He described it as a dancing goddess with 6 to 8 arms, pulling her mouth wide open with two of her hands, and holding a sword and an attribute that Beglar described as an hour-glass but which should rather be a *ḍāmaru* (Beglar 1882, 133).

In the centre of the *yoginī* circle, there is a little pavilion housing a big image of a dancing polycephalous *Bhairava*, attended by a small figure of *Gaṇeśa* (Fig. 4).

The *Hirapur* temple housed 81 images, 64 of which represent *yoginīs*. One of its specificity is to have niches on its outer wall housing 9 female semi-goddesses standing on severed heads (Fig. 5). There are also



Figure 3: *Bheḍaghāt*. *Yoginī* temple, *yoginī* no. 26: *Teraṃvarā*. © Sébastien Jean.



Figure 4: *Rāṇipur-Jhariāl*. *Yoginī* temple. Dancing multi-headed *mūrti* of Śiva with *Gaṇeśa*. © Caroline Riberaigua.

at the entrance two male *dvārapāla* and in the entrance corridor two skeletal male figures bearing a knife and a *kapāla*.

As for the 64 *yoginīs*, 60 of them are housed in the niches of the inner wall, 4 in the niches of the central pavilion (one of them is now missing). One of the goddesses is bigger than the other. She is placed in a larger shrine facing the entrance at east. She has eight arms and puts two fingers in her mouth, in a gesture similar to the one described for the main Goddess in *Rāṇipur-Jhariāl*.

We have thus, as in *Khajurāho*, a scheme where the main Goddess is included in the sixty-four *yoginīs*, whereas she is excluded in *Rāṇipur-Jhariāl*.

On the central pavilion, there are four *mūrtis* of Śiva-Bhairava.

## MALE GODS IN *YOGINĪ* TEMPLES

We must notice that all the *yoginī* temples hold one or several major images of Śiva-Bhairava.

In *Rāṇipur-Jhariāl*, in the centre of the circle of dancing *yoginīs*, there is the dancing figure of Bhairava with three faces, which is symbolically corresponding to four faces (the fourth one being supposed to exist at the back of the god, even if it is not figured). This polycephalous *mūrti* fits with several textual descriptions of Bhairava in association with the *yoginīs*.<sup>8</sup>

At Hirapur, the different images of Śiva have only one face, but as there are four images, there are still four faces of Bhairava in the centre of the *yoginī* circle.

It is impossible to determine exactly how many Śiva images were genuinely in Bheḍaghāt, but the fact is that Śiva is present.

Thus, we can conclude that all the attributions of these temples to purely *Śākta* sects, that is to say to doctrines considering exclusively the feminine principle as the highest form of the divine and excluding Śiva, are irrelevant.

The main divinity of these temples is Śiva-Bhairava, associated with a feminine consort, and the *yoginīs* are their *āvaraṇa-devatās*.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE *YOGINĪS*

As for the *yoginīs*, we can observe that, as well as in the texts where all the lists are different (Dehejia 1986, XI, 205-218), each temple displays a different set of goddesses, which of course can never be totally related to a specific text.

In Rāṇipur-Jhariāl, all the *yoginīs* are dancing around Bhairava. Several of them still have their attributes and their heads, fifteen of the fifty remaining heads being animal heads.

The attributes are quite repetitive. Most of the *yoginīs* are holding a trident and a *kapāla*. There is also a whole range of weapons: axes, maces, swords, bows and arrows, balanced by less violent attributes and gestures, such as rosaries, *abhaya* or *varada-mudrā*.

In contrast to what is generally described in the texts, it is not possible to identify among the goddesses a group of *mātrkās*.

If a model of emission from a main entity towards minor hypostases is suggested, it occurs straight from the great fierce Goddess to the 64 *yoginīs*, without any intermediate stage through the seven or eight *mātrkās*.

In the Hirapur temple, on the contrary to what we observe in Rāṇipur-Jhariāl, the *yoginīs* are all standing in a great variety of attitudes (Fig. 6). They are all really individualized in hairstyle, clothes, gestures, jewels and *vāhanas*. Fifteen of them have animal heads, among the anthropomorphic ones around fifteen have a fierce aspect, but the others have a smiling gracious face. Nevertheless, this gentle aspect may be counterbalanced by some creepy features or attributes. Once again, sacrificial objects and weapons are dominant among their attributes: bows and arrows, swords, *kapāla*, severed heads, animal skins.

Most of the *yoginīs* still have their *vāhanas*, each one being different, which induces the figuration of a great variety of animals, but also plants or objects.



Figure 5: Hirapur. Yoginī temple. Semi-goddess, locally called “Kātyāyanī”, of the outer wall. © Caroline Riberaigua.



Figure 6: Hirapur. *Yoginī* temple, three of the *yoginīs* (nos. 37, 38, 39) of the inner wall. © Caroline Riberaigua.

Here is a typology of these *vāhanas*:

- anthropomorphic male figures, mostly sacrificial: severed heads, male figures lying under the feet of goddesses.
- earthly animals, among which, besides usual *vāhanas* as the bull, we find animals seldom figured, such as the camel or the scorpion,
- birds,
- water animals, a category in which the Sanskrit literature uses to include the buffalo and the elephant (Moreau 2008, 146-147, 150-151; Houben 2009, 24). There are also different reptiles, amphibians, fishes and shellfishes.

Related to the water element, we observe also many aquatic plants including different varieties of lotuses and the representations of water streams.

Then, and more unusual, there are also many objects as pieces of furniture, drums or ewers.

The circular or *cakra* structure of the temple suggests a *maṇḍala* and we may assume that the evocation of the different natural elements (animate and inanimate; anthropomorphic; flying, swimming, walking animals, wild and domesticated; plants; mineral and objects among which musical instruments evoking the sounds) refers to a cosmologic scheme, the temple being conceived as a microcosm.

Several of the *vāhanas* and the goddesses represented in Hirapur are really unique or specific to the area.

Among them, there is the goddess standing on a crab (Fig. 7), which is a really unique representation of this animal in Indian temples. Yet, the crab, in Oḍisha, is generally associated with the Chilika Lake, still well known for the fishing of this crustacean. To this lake is associated a specific Goddess, Kalijai, patron of fishermen and sailors, a crucial activity in that coastal area. On the other hand, there is no trace of a significant group of *mātrkās* in Hirapur either.

The configuration of the *yoginīs* is totally different in Bheḍaghāt, starting with their number. Here, all the goddesses are seated, most of them in *lalitāsana* and some of them in *padmāsana*. Most of their attributes are lost but, as in the other temples, the remaining ones are mainly favour-gestures, sacrificial objects or weapons and we can observe that the main goddesses are clearly warrior goddesses (Fig. 2, Fig. 3)

A specificity of Bheḍaghāt, which seems to be common with Khajurāho, is that the names of the goddesses are inscribed,<sup>9</sup> but these names do not fit with any *nāmāvalī* of the literature.

These inscribed names raise questions. Indeed, in traditional temples, there is usually no inscription to identify the deity and precise which form of Śiva or Viṣṇu is figured. These names suggest that the identification of the goddesses was perhaps not really clear even for the 10<sup>th</sup> century devotees, and underline that those names might be credited with a specific power, maybe as *mantras*. Placed around the circle as it is evocated in the literature for some *yantra*, they let suppose that the temple may have been conceived as a huge *yantra* or a monumental tool for meditation.

Contrary to what we observed in the *yoginī* temples in Oḍisha, a set of *Mātrkā* can be clearly identified in the temple of Bheḍaghāt.

The division of the goddesses in different groups is also underlined by the typology of their *vāhanas*, which are extremely redundant: there are several anthropomorphic male figures lying under the feet of goddesses, eight bulls, four elephants, six lions, seven horses.

There are nevertheless two figures with extremely unusual *vāhanas*: the *yantra ṣaṭkoṇa*, which usually symbolize the union of Śiva and Śaktī as the source of the Universe. This symbol is associated with the goddess Sarvatomukhī (Fig. 8), the one whose faces are in all the directions, which implies a cosmic symbolism. The *yantra* contains the syllabe *hrīm*, a *mūla-mantra* associated to a major manifestation of the Great Goddess.



Figure 7: Hirapur. Yoginī temple, yoginī no. 33 standing on a crab. © Caroline Riberaigua.



The other unexpected feature is a scene of devotion to a quite naturalistic *yoni* (Fig. 9). This is the unique scene with sexual connotation that can be found in *yoginī* temples. There is a connection to *Kāma* in the name of the deity, Śrī *Kāmadā*, but no evocation of a rite involving any sexual intercourse. The devotees are meditating on the *yoni*, kneeling, the hands joined in *añjali*.

There are many small scenes and little characters beside the *vāhanas* of *Bheḍaghāt*. Most of them show kneeling devotees, but there are also musicians, representations of gruesome emaciated ascetics holding a *kapāla* and goddesses holding swords, severed hands or *kapāla*.

## GENERAL ANALYSIS

The dominant thematic of the whole iconography is thus marked by a mixture of devotion and blood sacrifice and never really by eroticism.

This is a common feature of all the *yoginī* temples. If we observe the secondary entities represented in *Hirapur*, such as the semi-goddesses standing on severed heads on the outer wall (Fig. 6), or the emaciated male figures holding *kapāla* at the entrance of the sanctum, it appears clearly that the sacrificial and macabre iconography remains dominant. We may notice that many of the severed heads are unexpectedly quite smiling, a fact which can be explained by some textual traditions in which being sacrificed by the *yoginīs* is a bliss for the *paśu*, who can immediately reach the *mokṣa*, as for example in the *Netra Tantra* (Brunner 1974, 183-184).

Thus, these facts, and especially the absence of any erotic figuration, raise many questions on the usual attribution of these temples to the *kaula* tantric school, and especially the *yoginīkaula* as conceived in the *Kaulajñāna-Nirṇaya* attributed to *Matsyendranātha*, in which the sexual rites are really important. We can add that these rites have been figured in other types of temples in the same period, as for example in the temple of the tantric boar-headed goddess *Vārāhī*, in *Caurāsī*, *Oḍisha*. This



Figure 8: *Bhedaghāt*. *Yoginī* temple. Detail of the *yoginī* no. 13 *Sarvatomukhī*: the yantra *ṣaṭkoṇa*. © Caroline Riberaigua.



Figure 9: *Bhedaghāt*. *Yoginī* temple, *yoginī* no. 4: *Kāmadā*. © Sébastien Jean.

*śākta* temple, built during the 10<sup>th</sup> century, is contemporaneous to the hypaethral *yoginī* temples. It does not bear any Śiva figure, and is mainly dominated by female figures underlining a conception of the divine principle as essentially feminine.

On the walls of the main sanctum, in the place usually dedicated to the *āvaraṇa-devatās*, there are erotic scenes which have been analyzed as the sequences of a specific *kaula* ritual (Donaldson 2002, 865-866). Besides, even if they do not show such a developed pattern, many of the temples dedicated to Śiva or to a specific goddess in Oḍisha and Madhya Pradesh have depictions of *maithuna*.

Yet, there is nothing of that kind in any *yoginī* temple.

Another specificity worth noticing is the evocation in the temples of specific territories or places.

We have mentioned the goddess with a crab who may be linked to Kalijai in Hirapur (Fig. 7). Another interesting characteristic of this temple is the predominance of features (plants, animals, and water streams) attached to the water element which makes sense in the specific context of this area where the economy is based on the exploitation of water resources and maritime exchanges.

We find another entity related to water in Bheḍaghāt (Fig. 10), in one of the goddesses standing on *amakara*. She is not Gaṅgā, though this one is also represented elsewhere, with the traditional *makara* as *vāhana* too.

According to Cunningham, the name inscribed on the base of this second river goddess, Ṛkṣinī, refers to the Nārmadā River (Cunningham 1879, 67), very close to the temple. We can then assume that she may be symbolic of this specific territory.

Let's finally notice that, according to Devangana Desai, the name inscribed on the Mahiṣāsūramardinī figure of the Khajurāho *yoginī* temple, Hiṅghalāja, may be linked with a specific *śāktapīṭha* (Desai 2013), which may confirm the identification of some of the deities with specific places or territories.

The integration of these specific *grāma* or *tīrtha-devatās* may explain the heterogeneity of the goddesses in the different temples.

This fact can also be connected to certain traditions, kept alive until recently, which associate the *yoginīs* with the protection of the territory of the king, and in which the *yoginīs* are invoked to obtain victory in war.<sup>10</sup>

Last but not least, let's notice that one of the epithets of Bhairava is Kṣetrapāla, the keeper of the territory (Ladrech 2010, 24).

## CONCLUSION

All these elements lead us to reconsider the sectarian attribution of the *yoginī* temples.



Figure 10: Bheḍaghāt. *Yoginī* temple, *yoginī* no. 3: Ṛkṣinī.

© Sébastien Jean.

The total absence of references to any sexual ritual, with exchange of fluids and the so-called kiss of the *yoginī*, may imply that the *kaula* attribution is perhaps not the most relevant, at least for the Oḍisha *yoginī* temples. Although, in the current state of knowledge on tantric literature, there is no text that exactly fits with the temples, some features such as the figuration of the sacrifice of a *paśu*, smiling in his death, the link with the power of the king, the conception of the goddesses as dangerous warrior entities, and the multi-headed figure of Bhairava, can be compared to the conception of the *yoginī* cult in some Kashmiri śaiva traditions, expressed by texts as the *Netra Tantra*.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, at this stage of the research, we cannot take a categorical position on a specific tantric tradition to which these temples might belong. Further investigations will be necessary to clarify the meaning of some specific symbols in Bheḍaghāt and to explore the hypothesis that the Bheḍaghāt and Oḍisha temples may draw their inspiration from different traditions.

## NOTES

1. Khajurāho: Cunningham 1871, 416-418 and Cunningham 1885, 57. Bheḍaghāt: Cunningham 1879, 60-78. Rāṇipur-Jhariāl: Beglar 1882, 128-137. Dudahi: Mukherji 1899.
2. Mahapatra 1953.
3. In some cases, different concepts may be related to the term “*yoginī*” in a single text, as for example in the *Kulārṇava Tantra* (Dehejia 1986, 32) or in the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* (Törzsök 2013, 136-137).
4. For further details on the textual contexts where the different concepts pertaining to *yoginīs* are developed, see: Mallmann 1963, 171-173; Dehejia 1986, 11-38; Hatley 2012, 107-119; Hatley 2013.
5. In a recent article, Shaman Hatley compiled the different textual descriptions that may pertain to the *yoginī* temple images (Hatley 2014). The *Brahmayāmala*, one of the earliest *Bhairavatantras*, gives iconometric prescriptions for *yoginīs*. Nevertheless, there are only six of them and their description occurs in the special context of a *maṇḍala* containing other types of goddesses which form a total of eighteen entities (Hatley 2007, 9), thus the description does not fit with the configuration of the hypaethral *yoginī* temples. The unpublished fifteenth chapter of the *Ṣaṣṭhasahasraṃhita* describes sixty-four goddesses in the purpose of meditation, but they have to be worshipped in a non-iconic *maṇḍala*. More interestingly, this text mentions that after defeating his enemies, the king should erect on the battlefield an apparently temporary shrine to Śikhāsvacchandabhairava and the sixty-four *yoginīs*. It raises the question of a connection between such temporary shrines in the special context of the battle, and sustainable stone temples.
6. The potential danger posed by the *yoginīs* may be the most pertaining feature of their description in the different textual traditions. In the second chapter of *Netra Tantra*, they are cited among the evils causing the suffering of creatures, along with *bhūtas*, diseases and death (Brunner 1974, 132-133). As Pārvatī asked the reason of their existence, the reply of Śiva concerning the *yoginīs* is given in the 20th chapter, where he explains that the *yoginīs* act under his orders and that their victims, offered to him in sacrifice, are blessed in this way (Brunner 1974, 183-184). In the *Jayadrathayāmala*, *yoginīs* are the attendants of Kālasakarṣiṇī, as minor but dangerous goddesses haunting the cremation grounds (Padoux 1994, 55). Even though, in some texts, they can almost be tamed by the *sādhaka*, they may suddenly bitterly punish him to death if he shows any weakness (Brahmayāmala Tantra XIV, Hatley 2007: 15-16, note 44); or if he breaks any rules of the ritual (Dehejia 1986, 34).
7. This fact appears clearly through a comparison of the depiction of the order of *yoginīs* by Cunningham (Cunningham 1879, 63-65) with the layout of the sculptures that can be observed nowadays (Dehejia 1986, 198-199; Sharma 1978, 49-157). Pictures taken before the restauration show that the enclosure have been largely rebuilt, some part of the wall and the niches being almost totally destroyed (Banerji 1931, pl. XXXI-XXXII).
8. Törzsök, in her article dedicated to the polycephalous aspects of Bhairava and of the goddesses (Törzsök 2013) notes that several texts depict Bhairava with a fifth head, but underlines that the phenomenon is a later development of a four-headed prototype, in the purpose of an assimilation of Bhairava to Sadāśiva. In some cases, the texts,

borrowing more ancient descriptions of the four-headed god, have some inconsistencies such as the addition of the fifth head but no change in the number of eyes. This five-headed aspect does not appear in the temples, which may have two different explanations. One possibility would be that the scheme of the temple would have been built around a four-headed deity, as mentioned in earliest versions of the *Tantras*. The second possibility would be that the fifth zenithal head may symbolically exist even if it is not physically figured.

9. Detailed list: Dehejia 1986, 198-199; detailed list with the description of the sculptures: Sharma 1978, 49-157
10. Indeed, this is the interpretation given to Cunningham by the local Brahmins during his visit of the Khajurāho *Yoginī* temple at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Cunningham 1871, 417). It is also relevant in the context of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṃhita*, which prescribes that the victorious king should erect a shrine to Bhairava and the *yoginīs* on the battlefield (Hatley 2014, 216).
11. Regarding the link between the *Netra Tantra* and kingship, Sanderson has underlined that this text is dedicated to a specific category of tantric officiants, who replace the former royal chaplain in the performance of the rites of protection for the king and his family (Sanderson 2004; Sanderson 2007, 386).

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