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IDÉHISTORIA OCH RELIGION

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; *accomodatio*; Christianity in India; Marathi; Konkani; Goa; salvation; *mokṣa*; *mukti*.

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Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
1. Introduction	6
1.1. Aim	7
1.2. Method	8
1.3. Notes on translation and transliteration	9
1.4. Thomas Stephens' life and work	9
1.5. <i>Kristapurāṇa</i>	15
1.5.1. Introduction	15
1.5.2. Textual critique and extant versions	17
1.5.3. Text used in this study	19
1.6. Historical background	19
1.6.1. Early Christianity in India	19
1.6.2. The Portuguese in western India	21
1.6.3. Jesuit mission in Goa and South India	24
1.7. Theory	26
1.8. Earlier research	28
2. Salvation: establishing the concept	31
2.1. Hebrew, Greek and Latin terms	31
2.2. Christian soteriology	33
2.3. Marathi terms	36
2.4. The Hindu concept of <i>mokṣa/mukti</i>	38
3. Salvation in <i>Doutrina Christam em lingoa Bramana Canarim</i>	41
4. Salvation in <i>Kristapurāṇa</i>	45
4.1. Words for Salvation	45
4.2. The act of salvation	47

4.2.1.	<i>Rākhaṇe, vāṁcaṇe and trāhaṇe</i>	48
4.2.2.	<i>Tāraṇe</i>	50
4.2.3.	Relation between <i>tāraṇe</i> and <i>rākhaṇe</i>	51
4.2.4.	<i>Soḍaṇe, soḍavaṇe</i>	52
4.2.5.	<i>Uddhāraṇe</i>	53
4.2.6.	An unexpected word: <i>praṇāma</i>	54
4.3.	The blessed state	54
4.3.1.	<i>Mukti, mokṣa</i>	56
4.3.1.1.	Eternal joy	56
4.3.1.2.	Vision and light.....	57
4.3.1.3.	Spatiality	59
4.3.1.4.	Resurrection of the body	59
4.3.1.5.	God is his own mokṣa	61
4.3.2.	<i>Paramapada, paramagati</i>	62
4.3.3.	<i>Nirvāṇa</i>	62
4.3.4.	Heaven: <i>vaikunṭha</i> and <i>svarga</i>	65
4.3.5.	An unexpected word: <i>parama jivā</i>	69
4.4.	Other post-mortem destinies.....	70
4.5.	The threefold way to <i>mukti</i>	71
4.5.1.	<i>Jñāna</i> (knowledge).....	72
4.5.2.	<i>Bhakti</i> (devotion).....	73
4.5.3.	<i>Karma</i> (deeds)	75
4.6.	The sacraments as gates of <i>mukti</i>	77
4.6.1.	Baptism: <i>jñānasnāna</i>	77
4.6.2.	Eucharist.....	81
4.6.3.	Confession.....	84
4.7.	<i>Svadharmā</i> : ones own duty.....	85

4.8. The Saviour.....	87
4.8.1. Gives <i>mokṣa</i>	89
4.8.2. Conquers sin, death and the devil.....	89
4.8.3. Jesus' blood	92
4.8.4. Comes with light	93
4.8.5. Jesus' name	94
4.9. Mary.....	94
5. Strategies for dealing with Hindu connotations	96
6. Concluding remarks	113
Bibliography.....	116

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 enthralls 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 lingua 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

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

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 text⁷ 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 *ṣ* are both similar to the first sound in “she”, but *ś* is more dental and *ṣ* more retroflex.
4. The *anusvara*¹¹ is always indicated with *m̄*. It indicates [n], [m], a semivowel which lacks counterpart in English,¹² or nasalisation of the preceding vowel, depending on context.
5. *r̄* 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

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 to 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 *saṃsāra*.

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, Pound 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

¹³ J. Southwood, ‘Thomas Stephens, S. J., the First Englishman in India’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1924, p. 231.

¹⁴ Southwood, p. 232.

¹⁵ N. Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter. A Study of Inculturation in the Kristapurāṇa of Thomas Stephens, S.J. (1549-1616)*, Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakashan, 2003, p. 8; cf. D. Ferguson, ‘The Christian Puranna of Father Thomas Stephens S.J. Edited by Joseph L. Saldanha, B.A. Mangalore 1907’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 40, 1908, p. 926.

¹⁶ Falcao (ed. and trans.), *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa*, Khristu Jyoti Publications, 2009, p. 1671.

¹⁷ C. Veliath, ‘Thomas Stephens – a human monument of inculturation in India’, *Bulletin of the Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University*, no. 46, 2011, pp. 160-161.

¹⁸ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 8; Veliath, p. 161.

¹⁹ Ferguson, ‘The Christian Puranna of Father Thomas Stephens S.J.’, p. 926.

²⁰ Southwood, ‘Thomas Stephens, S. J., the First Englishman in India’, 1924, p. 233.

²¹ Veliath, ‘Thomas Stephens – a human monument of inculturation in India’, p. 162.

²² Southwood, ‘Thomas Stephens, S. J., the First Englishman in India’. p. 233.

his encounter with the new land.²³ Whether 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."²⁴

The year after his arrival in India, Stephens was ordained a priest.²⁵ In a letter originally written in Latin to his brother who had sought refuge in France, dated 24th October, 1583,²⁶ 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.²⁷

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.²⁸ 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"²⁹ – Stephens mentions that "as in many other places subject to the Portuguese, the pagan temples have been destroyed".³⁰ 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."³¹ The happening

²³ Stephens' letter to his father is published in: Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, pp. 1657-1665; Southwood, pp. 234-239.

²⁴ P. Anderson, *The English in Western India*, London, Smith, Elder and Co., 1856, p. 7.

²⁵ Southwood, p. 233.

²⁶ Southwood, p. 239. Stephens' letter to his brother is published in English translation in: Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, pp. 1666-1677.

²⁷ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1668.

²⁸ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1668.

²⁹ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1670.

³⁰ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1668.

³¹ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1671.

that Stephens refers to is a massacre of five Jesuit fathers at Cuncolim in southern Salcete in 1583.³² The priests were buried by Thomas Stephens after he had retrieved their bodies from a well into which they had been thrown.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 [*sic!*], and are varied as many times as the consonants can be combined with the vowels and the mutes with the liquids.³⁴

According to Falcao, Stephens was proficient in Marathi, Konkani, Sanskrit, English and Portuguese,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”,³⁶ probably because of the many Sanskrit words (although often Marathified) with which his Marathi is sprinkled.

On 6th December 1601 Stephens wrote a letter to Fr. Claudius Aquaviva, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus in Rome.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.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

³² D.Ferguson, ‘The Christian Puranna of Father Thomas Stephens S.J. Edited by Joseph L. Saldanha, B.A. Mangalore 1907’, p. 928.

³³ Veliath, ‘Thomas Stephens – a human monument of inculturation in India’, p. 171.

³⁴ Falcao *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p.1676.

³⁵ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 7.

³⁶ Justin E. Abbot, ‘The “Arte de Lingoa Canari”, the “Doutrina Christam”, and the “Adi” and “Deva Puran” of Thomas Stevens’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1923, p. 164.

³⁷ Stephens’ letter to his Aquaviva, dated 6 December 1601, is published in English translation in: Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, pp. 1678-1682.

³⁸ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, 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.”³⁹

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.”⁴⁰

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.⁴¹ 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.”⁴² 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.⁴³

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 Henriques, Tamil catechism and *opus flos sanctorum*, which were printed in Tamil types in 1578 and 1587 respectively.⁴⁴ 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, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, pp. 1681-1682.

⁴⁰ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1682.

⁴¹ Stephens’ letter to Aquaviva, dated 5 December 1608, is published in English translation in: Falcao 2009, pp. 1683-1685.

⁴² Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p.1683.

⁴³ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1684.

⁴⁴ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. ix.

[...] 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 catechism 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 Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1685.

⁴⁶ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p.11

⁴⁷ Veliath, ‘Thomas Stephens – a human monument of inculturation in India’, p.164; cf. M. Saldanha, *Doutrina Cristã em Língua Concani por Tomás Estêvão, S. J. Impressa em Rachol (Goa) em 1622. Segunda edição, fac-similada, Com Introdução, Notas e Glossário por Mariano Saldanha*, Lisbon, Agência Geral das Colónias, 1945, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸ Ferguson, ‘The Christian Puranna of Father Thomas Stephens S.J. Edited by Joseph L. Saldanha, B.A. Mangalore, 1907’, p. 928.

⁴⁹ Southwood, ‘Thomas Stephens, S. J., the First Englishman in India’, p. 240.

⁵⁰ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 9, 10.

⁵¹ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 8.

⁵² 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”,⁵³ 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*,⁵⁴ 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 fourth 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.⁵⁵

The same *ovī* metre was used several hundred years earlier by Mukunda and Jñānadeva, also known as Jñāneśvar,⁵⁶ as well as by Father Stephens’s contemporary Ekanātha and his grandson Mukteśvara,⁵⁷ 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”⁵⁸. 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”.⁵⁹ Veliath goes as far as claiming it to be “one of the greatest works of literature known in India.”⁶⁰

⁵³ S.J. Tulpule, *Classical Marāṭhī literature: from the beginning to a. d. 1818*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1979, p. 380.

⁵⁴ E.g. I.24.83.

⁵⁵ A. Master, *A Grammar of Old Marathi*, Oxford, At The Clarendon Press, 1964, p. 13.

⁵⁶ Master, p. 13.

⁵⁷ Wilson, ‘Notes on the Constituent Elements, the Diffusion, and the Application of the Marāṭhī Language’, 1857, in J.T. Molesworth, *Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary*, Pune, Shubhada-Saraswat Prakashan, 1996, p. xxvii.

⁵⁸ Wilson, p. xxvii.

⁵⁹ Tulpule, *Classical Marāṭhī literature*, p. 382.

⁶⁰ Veliath, ‘Thomas Stephens – a human monument of inculturation in India’, p. 164.

There is no complete consensus among scholars as to how the language of *Kristapurāṇa* 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.”⁶¹ Falcao similarly calls it “Brāhmiṇa-Marāṭhā vernacular”⁶² or simply Marathi.⁶³ Alfred Master says it is Marathi, but that some have wrongly claimed it to be Konkani, because of “some archaisms and loan-words from Kannaḍa”.⁶⁴ S.G. Tulpule writes that *Kristapurāṇa* “is known as Koṅkaṇī Purāṇa among the Christians of Goa” but that its language is Marathi.⁶⁵ 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 Brahmins, so that everybody will be able to understand.⁶⁶ Already the possibility of a controversy about whether the language of *Kristapurāṇa* 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 *Kristapurāṇa* 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 Jainism⁶⁷ and Buddhism⁶⁸. Purāṇic literature consists of *mahāpurāṇas*, *upapurāṇas* and *māhātmyas* (which are actually a kind of *sthalapurāṇas*, i.e. text about holy places), caste *purāṇas*, and also *purāṇas* in various vernacular languages.⁶⁹

⁶¹ Abbot, ‘The “Arte de Lingoa Canari”, the “Doutrina Christam”, and the “Adi” and “Deva Puran” of Thomas Stevens’, p.164.

⁶² Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa; A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 6.

⁶³ Falcao, , *Kristapurāṇa; A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 2.

⁶⁴ Master, *A Grammar of Old Marathi*, p. vi.

⁶⁵ Tulpule, *Classical Marāṭhī literature*, p. 381.

⁶⁶ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stūphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa*, p. 78. In *Kristapurāṇa* itself similar things are said in I.1.121 and II.58.118, 120.

⁶⁷ L. Rocher, *The purāṇas*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1986, p 77.

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.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.⁷¹ Not a single copy of any of these printed editions is extant today,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 1810.⁷³ The oldest printed edition available is Joseph L. Saldanha’s edition from 1907, also in Roman script. Saldanha based his edition on collected manuscripts,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”.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:

Past seventeen hundred and twelve years,	<i>geli satarāṣe bārā varuṣe vari</i>
In this [time] few people on this island	<i>taya māji thoḍa loka yā dipāmtari</i>
Recognize in this life (mind?)	<i>voḷakhi ghetām yā jivhāmri</i>
The true Saviour.	<i>satyevamta tārākāci</i> ⁷⁶

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.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.⁷⁸ This also lends some support to Abbots estimation of the

⁷⁰ II.58.119.

⁷¹ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 20.

⁷² Tulpule, *Classical Marāṭhī literature*, p. 380; Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 21.

⁷³ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 21.

⁷⁴ Ferguson, ‘The Christian Purāna of Father Thomas Stephens S.J.’, p. 931.

⁷⁵ Abbot, ‘The Discovery of the Original Devanāgarī Text of the Christian Purāna of Thomas Stevens’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London*, vol 2, no. 4, 1923, p. 679.

⁷⁶ II.40.141.

⁷⁷ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa*, pp. 1143, 1493.

⁷⁸ Cf. Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa*, p. 1493.

copy as “well over 200 years”.⁷⁹ 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 *Bautismu*. Saldanha’s edition also contains one whole chapter and several occasional verses that the Marsden version lacks.⁸⁰

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.⁸¹ 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:

1. Saldanha, Joseph L. (ed.), *The Christian Puranna of Father Thomas Stephens*, Mangalore, St. Aloysius’ College, 1907.
2. Bandelu, Shantaram (ed.), *Phā dara Śtīphansakṛta Kristapurāṇa: Paile va Dusare*, Pune, Prasad Prakashan, 1956.
3. Drago, Caridade (ed.), *Kristapurāṇa*, Mumbai, Popular Prakashan, 1996.
4. Falcao, Nelson (ed. and trans.), *Phā dar Thomas Śtīphansakṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, Bengaluru, Khrīstu Jyoti Publications, 2009. (Parallel edition with original text and translation in modern Marathi.)
5. Falcao, Nelson (ed. and transl.), *Father Thomas Stephens’ Kristapurana: Purana I & II*, Bengaluru, Khrīstu Jyoti Publications, 2012. (English translation.)

⁷⁹ Abbot, ‘The Discovery of the Original Devanāgarī Text of the Christian Purāna of Thomas Stevens’, p. 679.

⁸⁰ Abbot, ‘The Discovery of the Original Devanāgarī Text of the Christian Purāna of Thomas Stevens’, p. 680.

⁸¹ Falcao *Phā dar Thomas Śtīphansakṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, pp.1683-1685.

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”.⁸²

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.⁸³

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.⁸⁴

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

⁸² I. Coelho, ‘Thomas Stephens, SJ (1549-1619), an updated bibliography’, <http://indianchristianwritings.blogspot.se/2009/10/thomas-stephens-sj-1549-1619-updated.html>, 2009, (accessed 24 July 2015).

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.

⁸⁴ R. E. Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 28, 31.

day suburb of Chennai, in 73 CE.⁸⁵ The shrine on this place, known as St Thomas Mount, was believed to have healing powers many centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese.⁸⁶

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 Gondopharus or Gondopharnes, and from there continued southwards.⁸⁷ Finds 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*.⁸⁸

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.⁸⁹ In any case Christianity was established in southern India no later than the third century.⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹

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.⁹² 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.⁹³

The Indian Christians or Thomas Christians constituted a culturally indigenous community very much out of touch with the Greco-Roman world.⁹⁴ Mostly regarded and behaving as a high caste group somewhere between Kshatriya and Vaishya,⁹⁵ they were “Hindu in culture, Christian in faith, and Persian or Syrian (Orthodox) in doctrine, ecclesiology, and ritual”.⁹⁶ 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

⁸⁵ Frykenberg, p. 99.

⁸⁶ Frykenberg, p. 102.

⁸⁷ Frykenberg, p. 93.

⁸⁸ Frykenberg, pp. 98-99.

⁸⁹ Frykenberg, p. 103.

⁹⁰ Frykenberg, p. 115.

⁹¹ Frykenberg, p. 104.

⁹² Frykenberg, p. 111.

⁹³ Frykenberg, pp. 107-108.

⁹⁴ Frykenberg, p. 110.

⁹⁵ Frykenberg, p. 113.

⁹⁶ Frykenberg, p. 112.

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.⁹⁷

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.⁹⁸ 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.⁹⁹

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 *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 *guru* says that people earlier became devotees of Christ (*krista bhakta*), but then fell away due to their sinful nature (*pāpā prakṛuti*).¹⁰⁰ Confronted by an incredulous *Christian* who has never heard any such stories nor seen anything similar in “our *purāṇas*”,¹⁰¹ the *guru* responds by referring to “our books” (*āmacā grāṁthī*) and “our *purāṇiks*”,¹⁰² namely Jerome,¹⁰³ John of Damascus,¹⁰⁴ and John Chrysostom.¹⁰⁵

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 1497-1499,¹⁰⁶ 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

⁹⁷ Frykenberg, p. 113.

⁹⁸ Frykenberg, p. 114.

⁹⁹ M. N. Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 119.

¹⁰⁰ II.40.131.

¹⁰¹ II.40.171-172.

¹⁰² II.40.174.

¹⁰³ II.40.175.

¹⁰⁴ II.40.186.

¹⁰⁵ II.40.191.

¹⁰⁶ A. Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa: Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity*, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2014, p. 2.

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 1510,¹⁰⁷ except the city of Old Goa, which was conquered already in 1507.¹⁰⁸ 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 1632.¹⁰⁹

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 their 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.¹¹⁰

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,¹¹¹ and in the same year the inquisition in Goa was launched.¹¹² 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.¹¹³ This of course limited the capacity of the Church to function as an independent force, balancing the Portuguese colonial power.

¹⁰⁷ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ E. Koepping, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, in Pahn, P. C. (ed.), *Christianities in Asia*, Singapore, Blackwell Publishing, 2011, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁰ Koepping, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, pp. 16-17.

¹¹¹ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p. 117.

¹¹² Tulpule, *Classical Marāṭhī literature*, p. 379.

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.¹¹⁴ In 1540 all temples in Old Goa were destroyed. The same was done 1573 in Bardez and 1584-1587 in Salcete.¹¹⁵ In this way the Old Conquests relatively quickly became a predominantly Catholic and culturally Portuguese area.¹¹⁶ 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, 1548.¹¹⁷ During these iconoclasms, 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.¹¹⁸

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.¹¹⁹ 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.¹²⁰

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.¹²¹

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.¹²² 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.¹²³ Often they were people belonging to the lowest and allegedly most polluted population groups.¹²⁴

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.¹²⁵

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.¹²⁶

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 *Discurso 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.¹²⁷

¹²² Frykenberg, *Christianity in India*, p. 129.

¹²³ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p. 118.

¹²⁴ Frykenberg, *Christianity in India*, p. 139.

¹²⁵ Veliath, 'Thomas Stephens – a human monument of inculturation in India', pp. 169-170.

¹²⁶ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, pp. 7-8.

¹²⁷ Tulpule, *Classical Marāṭhī literature*, p. 382.

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”).¹²⁸

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.¹²⁹

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.¹³⁰

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.¹³¹ 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.¹³²

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

¹²⁸ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, p. 69.

¹²⁹ Frykenberg, *Christianity in India*, p. 139.

¹³⁰ Frykenberg, pp. 139-140.

¹³¹ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p. 124.

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.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.¹³⁴ According to rumours this was because the Franciscans were too lazy to learn Konkani.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 *purāṇas* and it was used to prohibit folkloric practices like wedding songs in Konkani in the *ovī* metre, which was and is associated with the traditional Hindu *bhakti* literature of the area. In 1704 the apostolic legate Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon (1668-1710) issued a decree that practically prohibited all *accomodatio* or adaptationist experiments in the missions in India and China.¹³⁶

The Goan Inquisition was abolished by the Portuguese statesman Pombal in 1774. It was revived three years later and lingered on until 1820.¹³⁷

1.7. Theory

When Stephens, in *Kristapurāṇa*, conveys his Christian message in Marathi, he does so embracing that language and its literary conventions. *Kristapurāṇa* is written in the *ovī* metre, which was and is a common metre in Marathi *bhakti* literature, and is full of idiomatic expressions like *jñānasāgaru* (ocean of knowledge) and words referring to heaven (*vaikumṭha*) and God as the King of Heaven (*vaikumṭharājā* etc.) with deep Vaiṣṇava connotations. *Vaikumṭha*, in Hindu usage, is the name of Viṣṇu's heaven, and consequensely *vaikumṭharājā* ("King of *vaikumṭha*") 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 *sign* as "the combination of a concept and a sound pattern."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

¹³³ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, pp. 72-73.

¹³⁴ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, p. 73.

¹³⁵ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p. 123.

¹³⁶ Henn, *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa*, p. 73.

¹³⁷ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p. 123.

¹³⁸ F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris, London, Duckworth, 1983, p. 67.

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.¹³⁹ Since “the link between idea and sound is intrinsically arbitrary”,¹⁴⁰ 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 *vaikunṭha* and *vaikunṭharājā*, what he does can be described as keeping the signal but altering the signification. *Vaikunṭharājā* 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 *vaikunṭharājā* of *Kristapurāṇa* is not the same sign as the identically pronounced and written *vaikunṭharājā* 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 *vaikunṭharājā* 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.¹⁴¹ A language “has the character of a system based entirely on the contrasts between its concrete units.”¹⁴² 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 of 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

¹³⁹ Saussure, p. 67.

¹⁴⁰ Saussure, p. 111.

¹⁴¹ J. Culler, *Literaturtheorie. Eine kurze Einführung*, trans. Andreas Mahler, Stuttgart, Reclam, 2002, p. 84.

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.¹⁴³ 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.¹⁴⁴ Stephens arrived in Goa in 1579,¹⁴⁵ 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."¹⁴⁶ The situation was such that Stephens' *Kristapurāṇa* and other Christian *purāṇas* replaced the Hindu *purāṇas*,¹⁴⁷ 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."¹⁴⁸

1.8. Earlier research

The most thorough analysis of Father Stephens's *Kristapurāṇa* that has been written in recent time¹⁴⁹ 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.

¹⁴⁵ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 9.

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 *Kristapurāṇa* as their main theme. The first of these is Benedetta Quadra's *Il P. Tommaso Stephens, S.I. e il suo Purana Cristiano* 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".¹⁵⁰

The second is S. G. Malshe's *Ṣṭīphansacyā Krīstapurāṇācā 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 *Kristapurāṇa* with a number of Hindu texts and "compiled parallel ideas and usage of words and grammatical forms" in the actual texts.¹⁵¹

Apart from these larger works, a number of articles and shorter texts have been written about *Kristapurāṇa*. Alexander Henn has written the article "Jesuit Rhetorics. Translation Versus Conversation in Early-Modern Goa" (2011) and the book *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa. Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity* (2014), containing the chapter "Christian *Purāṇas*: Hermeneutic, Similarity, and Violence". Henn is critical to what he sees as uncritically positive attitudes among other scholars towards the *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 *Kristapurāṇa* greater originality than Saldanha's edition. When I met him, he was working on a book in Konkani about *Kristapurāṇa*.

Joseph L. Saldanha wrote a long preface to his edition of *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 *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, which is basically a review

¹⁵⁰ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 215.

¹⁵¹ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 14.

of Saldanha's edition. The title of the article is "*The Christian Puranna of Father Thomas Stephens, S.J.* Edited By Joseph L. Saldanha, B.A. Mangalore, 1907".

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 Devanāgarī 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 *sōtēria* (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 *yš** 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.”¹⁵³

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.¹⁵⁴ 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”.

¹⁵³ G. Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 1985, p. 1132.

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.¹⁵⁵

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

As seen from above, Latin *salus* and Greek *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 *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.¹⁶¹

The Catholic Encyclopedia explicitly uses “salvation” as the English equivalent of Greek *sōtēria* and Hebrew *yěshuw`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.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ Kittel, p. 1132.

¹⁵⁶ Maas, ‘Salvation’, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911. Available from: New Advent, (accessed 18 March 2015).

¹⁵⁷ A.W. Ahlberg, N. Lundquist, and G. Sörbom, *Norstedts Latinsk-Svenska Ordbok*, Riga, Norstedts, 2004, p.785.

¹⁵⁸ P.G.W. Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, vol. 2, London, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 1684.

¹⁵⁹ Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1685.

¹⁶⁰ <http://navigium.de>, (accessed 14 May 2015).

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 *salus* or *sōtēria*.

¹⁶² Maas, ‘Salvation’.

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.¹⁶³

2.2. Christian soteriology

Preparing for the analysis of *Kristapurāṇas* 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.¹⁶⁴

Against the Gnostics – who denied the resurrection of the body and understood salvation as liberation from the material – Irenaeus (130-200)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.¹⁶⁶

Tertullian (ca 160-220)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.¹⁶⁸

Athanasius (ca 296-373)¹⁶⁹ had the intention to base his theology solely on the Scripture and dispose of philosophy altogether. Athanasius, in opposition to Arianism, stressed Jesus'

¹⁶³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 601.

¹⁶⁴ B. Hägglund, *Teologins historia*, 4th edn., Lund, LiberLäromedel, 1975, p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ P. Halldorf, *21 kyrkofäder*, Göteborg, Cordia, 2000, p. 37.

¹⁶⁶ Hägglund, *Teologins historia*, pp. 29-32.

¹⁶⁷ M. Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkehistorie. Grundtraek af Vestens kirkehistorie fra begyndelsen til nutiden*, Fredriksberg, Forlaget Anis, 1997, p. 52.

¹⁶⁸ Hägglund, *Teologins historia*, p. 40.

¹⁶⁹ Schwarz Lausten, *Kirkehistorie*, p. 66.

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 *samsāra*. Due to *māyā* man fails to see his real identity and gets caught up in worldly pleasures and worries, i.e. in *samsāra*. It is interesting to note that the word *māyā* in Marathi means both "illusion" and "love", whereas *samsāra* 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

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 elevans*). 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.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.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.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.¹⁸⁵ This can be described as a sort of union with God; not, however, as identity with God, as in nondualistic variants of Hinduism.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."¹⁸⁷

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."¹⁸⁸ Lance E. Nelson writes:

¹⁸² Cf. Hägglund, pp. 208-210.

¹⁸³ Hägglund, pp. 261-262.

¹⁸⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 2042, 2043.

¹⁸⁵ Hontheim, 'Heaven', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7 New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1907 ; E. Pace, 'Beatific Vision', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1907. Both available from: New Advent (accessed respectively 24 July and 29 June 2015).

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.

¹⁸⁷ I Corinthians 13:12.

¹⁸⁸ A. Sharma, *Classical Hindu Thought: An Introduction*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 113.

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**, meaning “to release” or “to set free”. Both the words carry the connotation of liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth (*punarjanma*, *saṃsāra*) 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 *vaikunṭha mukti*,¹⁹² indicating that Father Stephens connected the two concepts, so that one implies the other. *Vaikunṭha*, 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 Christam*, Stephens (in that work) used synonymously and alternately with *vaikunṭha*.¹⁹³ It is therefore reasonable to include *vaikunṭha* and *svarga* in the semantic cluster to be defined. It is also

¹⁸⁹ L. E. Nelson, ‘Liberation (Mokṣa)’, in Jacobsen, Knut A., Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar and Vasudha Narayanan (eds.), *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Available from: Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Gothenburg University Library, (accessed 10 February 2015).

¹⁹⁰ Nelson, ‘Liberation (Mokṣa)’.

¹⁹¹ Molesworth, *Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary*, p. 655.

¹⁹² II.27.16.

¹⁹³ T. Stephens, *Doutrina Christam em Lingoa Bramana Canarim*, Rachol, Goa, 1622. p. 25. Facsimile in: Saldanha, Mariano, *Doutrina Cristã em Lingua Concani pr Tomás Estêvão, S. J. Impressa em Rachol (Goa) em 1622. Segunda edição, fac-similada, Com Introdução, Notas e Glossário*, Lisbon, Agência Geral das Colónias, 1945, pp. 55-190.

clear that the concepts of *mukti* and *svarga* was closely connected for Stephens, since he says in *Doutrinã Christã* that *mukti* is enjoyed in *svarga*.¹⁹⁴

Words with meanings closely related to that of *mokṣa* are the Marathi verb *soḍavane*, 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 *tāraḱa*, meaning “rescue” and “rescuer” respectively. Further the verbs *uddhāraṇe* and *vāmcane* with similar meanings. The verb *rākhane* means primarily “protect” but also has the meaning “rescue”. *Rākhane* opens the door for its synonym *trāhane*, 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), *duḱkhānta* (the end of suffering), *kaivalya* (isolation), and *siddhi* (perfection).”¹⁹⁵ In this group should also be included *paramapada*, meaning “highest abode”,¹⁹⁶ and *paramagati*, translatable as “final destination” and used as another word for *mokṣa*. Similarly to *vaikunṭha* 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*¹⁹⁷

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 (*saṁsāra*), although there are quite different ideas about what the positive content of *mokṣa* is.¹⁹⁸

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.¹⁹⁹

The new idea of *mokṣa* developed along with the likewise Upaniṣadic concepts of *karma* and *saṁsāra*.²⁰⁰ The relation between the two is such that *karma* (“action”) binds the person

¹⁹⁴ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 5.

¹⁹⁵ Nelson, “Liberation (Mokṣa)”.

¹⁹⁶ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 198.

¹⁹⁷ *Mokṣa* and *mukti* are used synonymously and interchangeably throughout the whole thesis.

¹⁹⁸ Nelson, “Liberation (Mokṣa)”.

¹⁹⁹ Nelson, ‘Liberation (Mokṣa)’.

in *saṃsāra*, which is unwanted since *saṃsāra* entails suffering.²⁰¹ According to the *karma* doctrine all deeds, wether good or bad, have consequences that must be lived through and therefore bind us in *saṃsāra* and preclude us from attaining *mokṣa*. These consequences follow causally from the acts that generate them and are not to be understood in terms of reward or punishment.²⁰² The reason behind *karma*, which binds a person in *saṃsāra*, is desire (*kāmā*) and ignorance (*avidyā*).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.”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 Persian loanword meaning “[s]tock, substance, property.”²⁰⁵

Since we are bound in *saṃsāra* by means of ignorance, the way to liberation from *saṃsāra* (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 their places, as the *Bhagavadgītā* teaches.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.²⁰⁷ In this work Jñānadeva prescribes performing actions “denouncing all attachment to their fruit and to bodily desire”²⁰⁸ as a prerequisite for *mokṣa*. But the real key

²⁰⁰ Nelson, ‘Liberation (Mokṣa)’.

²⁰¹ J. Lipner, ‘Saṃsāra’, in Jacobsen, Knut A., Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar and Vasudha Narayanan (eds.), *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Available from: Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Gothenburg University Library, (accessed 24 March 2015).

²⁰² Falcao *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, pp. 142-143.

²⁰³ M. Gansten, *Bhagavad-Gītā: vishet och yoga*, Stockholm, Norstedths Förlag AB, 2001, p. 17.

²⁰⁴ T. Forsthoefel, ‘Māyā’, in Jacobsen, Knut A., Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar and Vasudha Narayanan (eds.), *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Available from: Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Gothenburg University Library, (accessed 25 June 2015).

²⁰⁵ Molesworth, *Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary*, p. 647.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Gansten, *Bhagavad-Gītā: vishet och yoga*, pp. 17, 19-21.

²⁰⁷ Tulpule, *Classical Marāṭhī literature*, p. 334.

²⁰⁸ *Jñāneśvarī* XVIII.174, in Lambert, H. M. (ed.), *Jñāneśvarī [Bhāvārthadīpikā]. Translated from the Marāṭhī by V. G. Pradhān. Edited and with an Introduction by H. M. Lambert. Volume II*, London George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1969.

to *mokṣa* is knowledge, and since *Jñāneśvarī*'s teaching is deeply non-dualistic,²⁰⁹ 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 (Kṛṣṇa) himself: "Thou alone art able to impart knowledge of Thyself."²¹⁰

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.²¹¹

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 Shenolikar & Deshpande 2012, p. 182. For a discussion on the topic of *mukti* in *Jñāneśvarī* see my paper "Who saves whom? Salvation in *Jñāneśvarī*."

²¹⁰ *Jñāneśvarī* XI.685; X.163, in Lambert (ed.), *Jñāneśvarī [Bhāvārthadīpikā]*. Translated from the Marāthi by V. G. Pradhān. Edited and with an Introduction by H. M. Lambert. Volume II, London George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1969.

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,²¹² and that the name Jesus means *tāra*ku (“IESU mhannatā Taracu”).²¹³ Jesus is the *tāra*ku of *samsāra*, and he came from *svarga*.²¹⁴ The Christian is *parameśvara*'s spiritual son (“Paramesparacho dharma putru”), and as such an heir of *svarga* (“suarguicho ddaizy”).²¹⁵

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, he saved (“soddaile”) us from our slavehood, since we were formerly slaves under Satan and our sins (“patacache”).²¹⁶ In order to let us enjoy his grace/mercy (“crupa”) and the fruit of his death (“apulea marannacho phallu”), Jesus ordained the seven sacraments.²¹⁷ For acquiring *mukti*, *parameśvara*'s grace/mercy (crupa) is necessary.²¹⁸ God's grace is received through the seven sacraments of the Holy Mother Church, namely Baptism (“Bautismo”), Confirmation (“Chrisma”), Communion, Confession, Extreme Unction, Ordination, and Matrimony.²¹⁹

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

²¹² Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 2.

²¹³ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 3.

²¹⁴ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 3.

²¹⁵ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 2.

²¹⁶ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, pp. 3, 4, 23.

²¹⁷ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 50.

²¹⁸ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 49.

²¹⁹ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 49.

punishment (“*akhandditi yadala*”).²²⁰ The dead will come alive again (“*punnaty ziuãta zaty*”) with body and soul (“*cuddi atmo saita*”). If the body has endured hardships in the service of *paramesvara* together with its soul, it will also enjoy the fruit of its hardships together with its soul (“*taissenchy teachi atmea sangati, casttancho phallu bhogũcheaca*”). And, analogously, if the body has failed to serve *paramesvara*, it will have to endure the fruit of that along with its soul.²²¹ This stresses the Catholic belief in the resurrection of the body.²²² 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 (“*appapuly cuddi atmo sahita*”), live forever and enjoy the never-ending joy of *mukti* in *svarga* (“*muglichẽ nassaratalẽ sarua suqha suarguĩ bhogunu*”).²²³

As already indicated, the place most closely associated with *mukti* is *svarga*, referred to as the highest or most excellent place (*suargu utama sthana*),²²⁴ and the place where God the Father is.²²⁵ *Svarga* is also described as the place where the saints are already enjoying a blissful existence,²²⁶ and where man enjoys eternal *mukti* after having known, loved and served God in this *samsãra*.²²⁷

Heaven is alternately, sometimes in the same paragraph, referred to as *svarga* and *vaikumãtha*, and earth as *samsãra*.²²⁸ In addition to these two worlds or domains there are three more worlds, namely (1) “*yemacondda*”, 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 agnĩtu*”) together with Satan, (2) “*Purgatorio*”, where the souls (“*atme*”) of people who die in *paramesvara*’s grace/mercy, but without having done full penitence for their sins here in *samsãra* suffer, waiting to be allowed into *vaikumãtha*,²²⁹ 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*.²³⁰

The person who prays the Lord’s Prayer prays that he shall enjoy the *muktipada* that *paramesvara* has created us for and asks for the things necessary for acquiring this.²³¹ The second petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “*may your kingdom come to us*” (“*tuzem raze amacã*

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.

²²⁹ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 26.

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 (“*pinddapossanna*”), bodily as well as spiritual (“*atmeachy*”), the latter meaning the holy sacrament (“*santissimo sacramẽto*”) and God’s grace/mercy (“*Deuacrupa*”), (3) the prayer for pardoning of sins (“*patacãchẽ bhagassannẽ*”), (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 (“*Deuabhagticho margu*”) that leads to obtaining *muktipada*, the Christian needs to know three things, namely (1) how to pray (“*magũ*”), (2) how to believe or more literally accept as true (“*sate manũ*”), and (3) how to act (“*caranniyani ghalũ*”).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 *parameśvara* 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 *parameśvara*’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 (“*yemaconddichy*”). 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 Konkanhhood (“*cõcannapanna*”),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 *parameśvara*.

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* (“Yecachi Sateuanta Paramesparaca”).²⁴¹ One has to leave all Konkaneese gods (“Deua”) and angels (“devadutā”) and their rites and feasts, religious masters (“achara”) and astrology (“zoissipanna”).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 *tāra*ku.
- (2) Salvation is explained as a consequence of Jesus death on the cross, and the act of saving is referred to with the verb *soḍavaṇe*. 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/vaikumṭha*, 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 Konkaneese, 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.

Basic word	Used/not used	Approximate meaning
<i>mokṣa</i>	Used	Salvation, liberation
<i>mukti</i>	Used	Salvation, liberation
<i>vaikunṭha</i>	Used	Heaven, highest heaven
<i>svarga</i>	Used	Heaven
<i>soḍavaṇe</i>	Used	Set free
<i>mokaḷī</i>	Used	Used in the sense “free”.
<i>tāraṇe</i>	Used	Save
<i>tāraka</i>	Used	Saviour
<i>uddhāraṇe</i>	Used	Save
<i>vāṃcaṇe</i>	Used	Used in the sense “to be healed”, “to be saved from death”.
<i>rākhāṇe</i>	Used	Protect
<i>trāhāṇe</i>	Used	Protect
<i>siddhi</i>	Used	Used in senses like “fulfilment”.
<i>paramapada</i>	Used	Highest state
<i>paramagati</i>	Used	Highest state
<i>nirvāṇa</i>	Used	Used in senses like “death”, but also with positive connotations.
<i>duḥkhānta</i>	Not used	End of suffering
<i>kaivalya</i>	Not used	Isolation
<i>apavarga</i>	Not used	Cessation

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.

²⁴³ E.g. II.36.54: ”*hmaṇīpe puṇyāceyā phaḷā sidhī amtarati*” (“Therefore they miss the attainment of the fruits of virtue”).

²⁴⁴ II.28.91; 52.18.

²⁴⁵ II.44.117: “*tu muktīpadācā dāravāṭhā/mokaḷī kari svargīci yā vāṭhā*” (“You, the door to the state of *mukti*, open this way to heaven”).

²⁴⁶ Cf. Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 198.

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 *mokṣa* and *mukti* which are discussed in chapter 4.3.1.

Act of salvation	Approximate meaning	Saviour ²⁴⁸
<i>mokṣa</i>	Liberation	<i>mokṣa rājā</i>
<i>mukti</i>	Liberation	<i>muktīcā dātā, muktīcā rājā,</i> <i>muktīcā rājā cakravartī,</i> <i>rājāmuktīcā</i>
<i>tāraṇe</i>	Save	<i>tāraku, tāraku</i> <i>visvabhuvanām, visvatāraku,</i> <i>visvatāraku paramesvaru,</i> <i>saṃsāra tāraka, ījṛāyeli</i> <i>tāraku, deva tāraka, krista</i> <i>tāraku</i>
<i>soḍaṇe</i>	Set free	
<i>soḍavaṇe</i>	Set free	<i>soḍavaṇārā</i>
<i>soḍavaṇa</i>	Liberation	
<i>uddhāraṇe</i>	Save	
<i>rākhaṇe</i>	Protect	<i>rākhaṇāīta</i>
<i>rakṣaṇa</i>	Protection	<i>rakṣaṇārā, ījṛāyelicā</i> <i>rakṣaṇa, rakṣagā,</i> <i>bhaktarakṣamaṇīm, kristu</i> <i>rakṣara</i>
<i>vāmcāṇe</i>	Be saved	
<i>trāhaṇe</i>	Protect	
<i>praṇāma</i>	Salutation ²⁴⁹	

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 *praṇāma* in a very unusual way, which will be discussed in chapter 4.2.6.

4.2.1. *Rākhṇe, vāmcṇe and trāhṇe*

The verbs *rākhṇe*, *vāmcṇe* and *trāhṇe* are largely operating within the same field of meaning. *Rākhṇe* has the primary meaning “[t]o keep, preserve, protect, guard; i.e. to hold in possession or in security from harm.”²⁵⁰ *Vāmcṇe* 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.”²⁵¹ *Rākhṇe* is transitive, whereas *vāmcṇe* is intransitive. Their mutual relation can be described so, that if God does *rākhṇe* a human being, then that human being does *vāmcṇe*. *Vāmcṇe* 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.²⁵² *Trāhṇe*, the third of these verbs, means “protect”²⁵³ and is in the second part of *Kristapurāṇa* invariably used in the imperative formula *trāhi trāhi*.²⁵⁴ It can be regarded as a synonym of *rākhṇe*, in all essentials sharing its shades of meaning.²⁵⁵

Words related to *rākhṇe* are used much more than *vāmcṇe* and *trāhṇe*. One such word is the noun *rakṣaṇārā*, denoting an agent who does *rākhṇe*, 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”.²⁵⁶ This is used for example when infant Jesus in the manger is called “Israel’s *rakṣaṇa*”,²⁵⁷ reminiscent of *consolationem Israhel*, which old Symeon was waiting for in Luke 2:25.

Usage of *rākhṇe* in *Kristapurāṇa* includes watching or guarding,²⁵⁸ protecting sheep or pigs,²⁵⁹ taking care of one’s *ātmā*,²⁶⁰ sparing people from being killed,²⁶¹ and keeping God’s temple in a respectful manner.²⁶² It is also used for healing or release from illness and

²⁵⁰ Molesworth, *Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary*, p. 687.

²⁵¹ Molesworth, p. 743.

²⁵² II.26.43: “*jari tuṃ maṇi viśvāsa dharisi/tamri vāmcela kaṃnyā tujhi/*” (“If you keep faith in your mind, your girl will be saved.” Cf. Luke 8.50.

²⁵³ A. Feldhaus and S. G. Tulpule, *A Dictionary of Old Marathi*, Mumbai, Popular Prakashan, 1999, p. 310.

²⁵⁴ II.9.68; 39.26; 56.12.

²⁵⁵ Feldhaus and Tulpule (p. 310) render the meaning of *trāhṇe* as “*rakṣaṇa karṇe*”. In II.9.68 the words are brought together in the phrase “*trāhi trāhi bhaktarakṣamaṇīm*” (“Save! Save! O Saviour-Jewel of the *bhaktas*!”)

²⁵⁶ Molesworth, *Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary*, p. 687.

²⁵⁷ II.8.2: “*ṭrāyelicā 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 *rākhane* them so that they can see,²⁶³ or when Jesus saves or heals from possession and physical suffering,²⁶⁴

The words *rākhane* 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 (*rākhane*) her.²⁶⁵ 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.²⁶⁶ In both these cases the Vulgate has forms of *salus* and NIV has “healed”.²⁶⁷

The correspondence between *rākhane* and *salvus* shows up again when Jesus says that who regards his life as good will lose it, but who regards life in *samsāra* as evil will save (*rākhela*) it.²⁶⁸ Also when Jesus is hanging on the cross, and people cheat him and tell him to rescue himself, forms of *rākhane* correspond to forms of *salvus* and *salvare* in the Vulgate.²⁶⁹

When the devil tempts Jesus, he tells him to throw himself out from the top of the temple and let angels save (*rākhane*) 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.²⁷⁰

In one passage Jesus says that whoever wants to save (*rākhane*) his life (*prāṇu*) and leaves Jesus because of fear will lose it, and whoever leaves his life because of Jesus will get it. Here *rākhane* corresponds to *invenire* in the Vulgate, meaning “to find” or “to win”.²⁷¹

When a Canaanite woman begs Jesus to help her, *Kristapurāṇa*’s *rākhane* corresponds to a form of *adiuvare* in the Vulgate,²⁷² meaning “to help”, including “to help medically, relieve”.²⁷³

In short, *rākhane* 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 *soḍavane* 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 *rākhane*.

²⁶³ II.26.68; 39.59.

²⁶⁴ II.23.106.

²⁶⁵ II.26.31; cf. Matthew 9:22, Mark 5:34, Luke 8:48.

²⁶⁶ II.26.43; cf. Luke 8.50.

²⁶⁷ Matthew 9:22, Mark 5:34, Luke 8:48, Luke 8:50.

²⁶⁸ II.40.62; Matthew 16:25, Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24.

²⁶⁹ II.48.62, 64; Matthew 27:40, 42.

²⁷⁰ II.20.71, 72; Luke 4:10.

²⁷¹ II.29.134-135; Matthew 10:39.

²⁷² II.32.21; Matthew 15:25.

²⁷³ *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, vol. 1, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 46.

4.2.2. *Tāraṇe*

The verb *tāraṇe* means “[t]o deliver, save, preserve; to extricate from or carry through (danger, difficulty, distress).”²⁷⁴ 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 *tarane*, which can mean “[t]o float” or “[t]o be saved or extricated; to pass safely through”.²⁷⁵ 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.”²⁷⁶

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.²⁷⁷ In the same *ovī*, Stephens informs the reader or listener that Jesus’ name means *tāraku*. Since Jesus’ originally Hebrew name *Yēshuw`ah* means “saviour”,²⁷⁸ this shows that Stephens regarded *tāraku* as something like a Marathi default word for “saviour”, and as an explanation of Jesus’ name.²⁷⁹ As mentioned above also *Doutrina Christam* says that Jesus means *tāraku* (“IESU mhannatā Taracu”).²⁸⁰ The same thing is expressly said in *Kristapurāṇa*, with a short explanation of why Jesus bears this name:

Jesus means Saviour (<i>tāraku</i>) of the three worlds.	<i>yeju mhaṇīpem tāraku tribhuvani</i>
For our sake dying on the pole,	<i>āmhā kāraṇe siluvi nivartuna</i>
He saved (<i>tāraṇe</i>) us. Therefore	<i>āmhāmsi tārile mhaṇauna</i>
He is truly the <i>tāraku</i> .	<i>satye tāraku to</i> ²⁸¹

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”.²⁸² 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

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.

²⁷⁹ II.9.57, Matthew 1:21.

²⁸⁰ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 3.

²⁸¹ II.48.37.

²⁸² II.8.57, Luke 2:11.

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 *visvatāraku* and the *pratipālaku* of Jerusalem.²⁸⁴ Here *pratipālaku* (“nourisher”, “supporter”, “protector”) seems to stand for Vulgate's *redemptio*, which is a very free translation. *Visvatāraku* 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 controverse 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 <i>purāṇa</i> :	<i>purāṇī bolile hāti dirghadriṣṭivamtem</i>
‘With power and great	<i>to svāmīva dharoni bahuta</i>
Glory he'll come.’	<i>thora mahimatvem yeta</i>
So he said.	<i>mhaṇauniyām</i> ²⁸⁶
So said the Israeli prophet:	<i>bolilā tjrāyeli dirghadriṣṭivamtu</i>
‘He, our righteous one (<i>nitikartu</i>),	<i>to āmucā nitikartu</i>
Scribe and king,	<i>śāstra puruśa āṇī nṛpanātha</i>
Will come and save (<i>tāraṇe</i>) us.’	<i>to yeuni tārila āmhām</i> ²⁸⁷

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 pātacāmyā rāsi jāliyā*) on earth

²⁸³ II.11.44.

²⁸⁴ II.11.74.

²⁸⁵ II.16.3.

²⁸⁶ II.16.7.

²⁸⁷ II.16.8.

²⁸⁸ II.16.19-20.

(*pṛthvī*), that the evil people of *samsāra* get no punishment, and that the earth (*kṣīti*) is full of people who engage in sinful deeds (*pāpa karma*).²⁸⁹ Further, if Jesus really were the Christ, why did he not *rākhaṇe* the boys from King Herod’s infanticide?²⁹⁰ Taken together, these and other evidence seemed to prove that the saviour of the world (*samsāratāraka*) had still not come.²⁹¹ This sequence shows that the nouns *rākhaṇāra* 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 *soḍaṇe* 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”.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,²⁹³ about leaving somebody²⁹⁴ or something,²⁹⁵ unbinding a donkey²⁹⁶ or sandal laces,²⁹⁷ and about letting out a sigh.²⁹⁸

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 *limbaloka*. In cases when they have a clear Biblical counterpart, they often correspond to Latin *redemptio*. In *Kristapurāṇa*’s rendering of *Benedictus*,²⁹⁹ Zachariah says, in the verse corresponding to Luke 1:68, that Israel’s God redeemed (*soḍavile*) his people.³⁰⁰ Here

²⁸⁹ II.16.24-25.

²⁹⁰ II.16.33.

²⁹¹ II.16.37. The word is actually spelled *samsāraka* in this verse, which must be a misspelling of *samsāratāraka*.

²⁹² Molesworth, *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.

²⁹³ II.30.38.

²⁹⁴ II.32.20; 48.131.

²⁹⁵ II.40.188; 42.141; 49.156.

²⁹⁶ II.40.13, 17.

²⁹⁷ II.18.81.

²⁹⁸ II.32.41, 43; 48.143; 49.148, 170.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Luke 1:68-79.

³⁰⁰ II.6.77.

soḍavile (past tense *soḍavane*) of corresponds to “*fecit redemptionem*” in the Vulgate. Similarly *soḍavane* 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 *soḍavane* 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, *soḍavane* 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, *soḍavane* 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

³⁰¹ II.53.39, Luke 24:21.

³⁰² II.29.84, 89; Luke 4:18.

³⁰³ *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 888.

³⁰⁴ Glare (ed.) *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1611.

³⁰⁵ II.48.66, Matthew 27:43.

³⁰⁶ Molesworth, *Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary*, p. 96.

³⁰⁷ II.9.60: “*pataki uddhāriti / yeṇe nāme*” (“sinners are saved by this name”). N.b. the verb is here used intransitively.

³⁰⁸ II.44.52: “*jana udhārāvya*” (“to save people”). Cf. II.40.125.

Broke all the roots of sin (*doṣa*).
[He] saved the world (*visvalokā*)
And healed nature's wound.

doṣāci kaṁde moḍali sakaḷikā
udhārona visvalokā
*sādhilā ghāvo prakruticā*³⁰⁹

Nelson Falcao renders *visvaloka* as *jagātīla 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 thātī*³¹² and *udharāvyaācī jāgā*,³¹³ both conveying the idea of a place (*jāgā*, *thātī*) 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 Khrīstapurāṇa*, 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.

³¹⁵ II.39.53; Luke 19:9.

³¹⁶ Ahlberg, Lundquist, and Sörbom, *Norstedts Latinsk-Svenska Ordbok*, p. 785; Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, p. 1684.

Blessed state	Approximate meaning	Saviour³¹⁷
<i>mokṣa</i>	Freedom	<i>mokṣa rājā</i>
<i>mokṣa sīdhī</i>	Attainment of freedom	
<i>mokṣa bharita</i>	Full of freedom	
<i>mokṣa phaḷa</i>	Fruit of freedom	
<i>mokṣaprāptī</i>	Attainment of freedom	
<i>mokṣapada</i>	State of freedom	<i>mokṣapadācā rājā</i>
<i>mokṣa āśramī</i>	House of freedom	
<i>mukti</i>	Freedom	<i>mukticā dātā, muktīcā rājā, muktīcā rājā cakravartī, rājāmuktīcā</i>
<i>muktipada</i>	State of freedom	<i>muktipadācā dātā, muktipadācā dātāru, muktipadācā ṭhāvo</i>
<i>muktivamta</i>	Liberated, free	
<i>vaikumṭha mukti</i>	Heaven-freedom	
<i>mukti bharita</i>	Full of freedom	
<i>vaikumṭha</i>	Heaven	<i>vaikumṭharājā, vaikumṭhīcā rājā, vaikumṭharāyā, vaikumṭharavo, vaikumṭharāṇām, vaikumṭhapati, vaikumṭhanātha, vaikumṭhanāyekā, vaikumṭhasvāmī, vaikumṭhici māmuli</i>
<i>vaikumṭhasthāna</i>	Heavenland, place of heaven	
<i>vaikumṭhanagara</i>	Heaventown, city of heaven	
<i>vaikumṭhīcā rāja</i>	King of heaven	
<i>vaikumṭha svarga</i>	Heaven	
<i>vaikumṭhavāsu</i>	Residence in heaven	
<i>vaikumṭhavāsī</i>	Resident of heaven	
<i>vaikumṭha dāji</i>	Inheritance of heaven	
<i>vaikumṭha loka</i>	Heaven-world	
<i>vaikumṭha sukha</i>	Joy of heaven	
<i>vaikumṭhapada</i>	State of heaven	

³¹⁷ Translations of the epithets of the Saviour are given in chapter 4.8.

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

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.

*tiye stāni bhāgyevamta bhakta
 mani hona āmnamda bharita
 sarva sukha amkhamḍita
 bhogīti muktice*³¹⁸

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

*te sukha na jāye varṇīle
 ādi aikīle nām dekhīle
 āṇī te na citāmce vahile
 manuśācā jivī*³¹⁹

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 *vaikunṭha*:

There is no taking the cross ³²⁰ on ones shoulders	<i>navhe suluvyāsā deyāvāri āthavā prāchita karāvayā śariri</i>
Or making atonement with one's body.	<i>puḍām āpadā ākakaḷām thori</i>
Henceforth great troubles and hardships	<i>sāhāvi nalage³²¹</i>
Must not be bore.	

All those hardships are now over	<i>ti khamḍali sakaḷi ubharā bhari</i>
Now with me to the City of <i>vaikunṭha</i>	<i>ātām majasave vaikunṭha nagari</i>
To enjoy the state of <i>mokṣa</i> in the city	<i>mokṣapada bhogāvayā nagari</i>
Come with the angels!	<i>yeī je boḍavyāsave³²²</i>

I am your god and king	<i>mī tumacā devarānā rājā</i>
And you are my people.	<i>āñī tumhi mām̃jhi prajā</i>
Out of my hand my people	<i>mājhā karāpāsona loka mājhā</i>
Nobody can wring.	<i>kavanāmcena na kāḍave³²³</i>

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 *muktivaṃta* face. Falcao renders *muktivaṃta* in modern Marathi as *mukti deṅāre*,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 liberating power of Jesus' *darśana* is also stressed when he speaks about *mukti* and *mokṣa* to the people of *limbaloka*, where he is between his death and resurrection. *Limbaloka*

³²⁰ Literally “pole”.

³²¹ II.43.210.

³²² II.43.211.

³²³ II.43.212.

³²⁴ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāna*, 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.³²⁵ Stephens lets Jesus say to the people of *limbaloka*:

Now I draw you [away] from your sins	<i>ātām tumhā pātālā pāsona kāḍito</i>
And give you all my joy,	<i>āñī māmjhe sarva sukha deto</i>
Through my vision (<i>darśana</i>) I make	<i>māmjhena darāśane karito</i>
You free (<i>muktivaṃta</i>).	<i>muktivaṃta tumhām</i> ³²⁶

Speaking thus,	<i>ītuke vacana bolona</i>
Showing his divinity,	<i>āpule devapaṇa pragaṭauna</i>
He spread and showed	<i>dāvile phāmkauna</i>
The light of <i>mokṣa</i> .	<i>mokṣa teja</i> ³²⁷

The *bhaktas* on whom the light fell immediately became *muktivaṃta*,³²⁸ and the present angels “obtained even greater joy of *mukti*” (*mukti sukha pāvaleti/ādhīka thora*) because of his *darśana*.³²⁹

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 puṇe pāvana*). The same verse says that those who go to eternal suffering instead of *mokṣa*, will never see God’s *darśana*.³³⁰

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 *muktivaṃta* 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

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 dāsāmcā devo guptā/hā lekuraṇvāmsi yukta/to liba loki pāṭhāvita/hā nevhe to vaikumṭhātem//*” (“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 *vaikumṭha*.”)

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 now as the beatific vision.³³¹

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*³³² and in the story about the Mount Tabor Jesus "became full of *mokṣa*" (*mokṣa bharitu jālā*) and his body was shining (*śobhala*).³³³

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*).³³⁴ 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 bāmdhale paṇa mokaḷi/hoti jivhām*);³³⁵ he "confessed his sin" (*karona dośācā ucāra*) and so "reached the highest joy" (*paramasukha pāvalā*).³³⁶ The same thing is then described from the other perspective, telling what Jesus, the *tāraka*,³³⁷ does: He "removed the guilt and gave an eternal dwelling place in *vaikumṭhasthāna*" (*kelā āparāda niraśana/didhale vaikumṭhasthāna/āḍaḷapada*).³³⁸ From this it seems that *muktipada* refers to the same thing as *vaikumṭhasthāna*. A similar linking of *mukti* and *vaikumṭha* is made in a salutation to the wound in Jesus' side, which is called "the threshold of *vaikumṭha*" (*vaikumṭhicā dārivathā*) and "beautiful gate of *mukti*" (*muktīcā dārā baravaṭā*).³³⁹

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*,³⁴⁰ and that the killing of his body would mean that he was happily liberated (*soḍavilyā*) from his body.³⁴¹ He ends his monologue with the following words:

³³¹ Pace, 'Beatific Vision'.

³³² II.50.72.

³³³ II.48.29; cf. Matthew 17:1-8, Luke 9:28-36, Mark 9:2-8

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.

pa mājhā ātmā tujhā hāti
ārpilā svāmī visvapati
to tujhā kristāce mukti
*pāvem devā*³⁴²

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 theology³⁴³ 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 tutem*).³⁴⁴ Then he commends his spirit (*prāṇa*) in God’s hand.³⁴⁵ 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*).³⁴⁶

According to *Kristapurāṇa*, the first person Jesus meets after his resurrection is his mother Mary.³⁴⁷ He tells her that he is *mokṣa bharita vajra śariri*.³⁴⁸ Falcao’s modern Marathi version reads *mokṣāne bharalele śarīra vajrāsārakhe āhe*,³⁴⁹ 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.”³⁵⁰ His resurrected body is immortal, visible and touchable, but can be made invisible anytime.³⁵¹ In agreement with common Catholic teaching about the four

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 Stīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1392.

³⁵⁰ The whole verse II.51.62 reads: “*ātām jivānta jālo āvadhāri/mokṣa barita vajra śarira/hounayā tuja sāmori/āloṃ dekhā*”.

³⁵¹ II.51.63.

qualities of the risen body,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 (*pātāla*) and can go through stones and rocks.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.³⁵⁴ Later Jesus again describes the resurrected body of a good person, now called *muktivānti*,³⁵⁵ just like his own resurrected body is described.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*.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 svasamvedyā*”³⁵⁸ (“Victory to that Self-known One”³⁵⁹) addressed to *Gaṇeśa* in the first *ovī* of *Jñāneśvarī*, the lengthy Marathi rendering of *Bhagavadgītā* written by the 13th century poet saint Jñāneśvar. This is arguably the most prominent of all Vaiṣṇava works written in Marathi, and arguably it or at least the ideas presented in it were available to Father Stephens.³⁶⁰ Inspired by the Marathi Vaiṣṇavaite poets and with sufficient backing from the Bible and Christian tradition (notably

³⁵² Cf. Maas, ‘General Resurrection’, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911. Available from: New Advent, (accessed 1 July 2015).

³⁵³ II.51.64-69.

³⁵⁴ II.51.73-74.

³⁵⁵ II.43.34. The word is actually spelled *muktivānti*, i.e. without the *anusvara*, which I regard as a misspelling.

³⁵⁶ II.43.33-34. The body of the *muktivānti* 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 pātāla*), and (4) subtler than the sky (*āmtrālahoni pātāla*).

³⁵⁷ I.2.29: “mhaṇonī tyācyā thāim/racīlyā vastucī garja nāhīm/tyāsī bāhījē nalage kāhīm/apalā mokṣa apanaca/”

³⁵⁸ *Jñāneśvarī* I.1.

³⁵⁹ Lambert, *Jñāneśvarī [Bhāvārthadīpikā]*. Translated from the Marāthi by V. G. Pradhān. Edited and with an Introduction by H. M. Lambert. Volume I, p. 25.

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 *mokṣa*.”³⁶¹

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 *Kristapurāṇa*. Mary, through the fruit of whose womb (i.e. Jesus) human beings will reach *mukti*,³⁶² is referred to as the maternal home (*māhera*) of *paramagati*,³⁶³ since Jesus came to earth (*kṣiti*) to give *paramagati* to human beings.³⁶⁴ In another verse *Kristapurāṇa* admonishes the reader not only to hear but also to follow the words of the Lord in order to reach *paramapada*.³⁶⁵ Although the occurrences are few, they seem to indicate that Stephens uses *paramapada* and *paramagati* as synonyms of *mukti* and *mokṣa*.

The other verse in the second part of *Kristapurāṇa* where *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 *parama pada*.”³⁶⁶ Here seems not to use the term in its theologically specified sense, where it is synonymous with *mukti* and *mokṣa*. Rather it is there used in the more general sense “the highest state” or “excellent state”.

4.3.3. *Nirvāṇa*

The word *nirvāṇa* occurs three times in the second part of *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 *ovī* that renders Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane, shortly before he was arrested. The Bible passage that this *ovī* reflects is the second third of Matthew 26:39: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.”³⁶⁷ According to *Kristapurāṇa*, Jesus prays with the following words:

mhaṇe mājhā vaikumṭhicā tātā

yā maraṇa pātrā atā

³⁶¹ I.2.29: “*apalā mokṣa apanaca*”.

³⁶² II.2.167.

³⁶³ II.2.165.

³⁶⁴ II.6.17.

³⁶⁵ II.29.14: “*svāmīyāmem śabda aikije/aikona baravem sām̄bhāmlije/titukyā kelyām 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 *daiva* instead of *pade*, thus making the last phrase “highest destiny”.

³⁶⁶ II.7.35: “*jari yā daḷapatite voḷakhisi/tari tvarita pāvasi/parama pada/*”. Cf. Mika 5:2.

³⁶⁷ Matthew 26:39.

nirvāṇa āhe tari krupāvaṃtā

*nivāri bāpā*³⁶⁸

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 *pātrā* 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 whole 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!"³⁶⁹

This translation is problematic. To begin with, it is more plausible to suppose that *pātrā* 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.³⁷⁰ 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.³⁷¹

Given that *nirvāṇa* has this range of meanings and *pātrā* 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

³⁶⁸ II.44.185.

³⁶⁹ Cf. Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa*, p. 1260. Falcao's modern Marathi translation reads: "mhaṇālā, mājhyā /vaikuṃṭhīcyā bāpā, ātā/putrāce maraṇa ṭāḷāyace/asela, tara te ṭāḷa."

³⁷⁰ Feldhaus and Tulpule, *A Dictionary of Old Marathi*, p. 386.

³⁷¹ Molesworth, *Molesworth's Marathi-English Dictionary*, p. 471.

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*),³⁷² and ward off his Father’s anger toward us sinners.³⁷³ In Saldanha’s version the way that Jesus makes easy is explicitly said to be *vaikumṭhapam̐thu*, “the way of/to *vaikumṭha*”. The Marsden version has *vaikumṭhapati* instead of *vaikumṭhapam̐thu*, thus stressing that Jesus hangs on the pole (*siḷuvā*) as “Lord of *vaikumṭha*”.³⁷⁴ 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*).³⁷⁵ Interestingly, their aim is presented as “to break your [Jesus’] *nirvāṇa*” (*tujhe nirvāṇa moḍāvayatem*).³⁷⁶ 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 *vaikumṭha* that same day, is the third and last event where the word *nirvāṇa* is used:

Blessed, blessed, great is your <i>nirvāṇa</i> ;	<i>dhanye dhanye thora tujhe nirvāṇa</i>
Well you did your thievery,	<i>cāṁgale kele taskarpaṇa</i>
Broke into the kingdom of <i>svarga</i>	<i>svargī rājyāsi khāmna</i>
You did!	<i>ghātale tuvām</i> ³⁷⁷

The stream of the nectar (<i>āmṛta</i>) of life,	<i>jīvitvāci āmṛtajhāri</i>
Which sprang forth on the pole,	<i>ji pragatāli siḷavyāvāri</i>
You will first of all	<i>ti tuja sakamḷām puḍāri</i>
Nicely enjoy.	<i>lābhali baravi</i> ³⁷⁸

³⁷² II.48.71.

³⁷³ II.48.72.

³⁷⁴ Cf. Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa*, p. 1334.

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: *vaikunṭha* and *svarga*

Both *svarga* and *vaikunṭha* 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 *vaikunṭha* is limited to the religious “heaven”. More specifically *vaikunṭha* 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 *vaikunṭha*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 *svargamandira* (“house of heaven”).³⁸³ Similarly *regnum caelorum*, “Kingdom of Heaven”, is rendered alternately *svarga rājya*³⁸⁴ (sometimes *svargīce rāje*)³⁸⁵ and *vaikunṭhicā rāja*.³⁸⁶ As noted above, the usage in *Doutrina Christam* gives the impression that the words *svarga* and *vaikunṭha* 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 *vaikunṭha*³⁸⁸ alike, and once both words are juxtaposed, saying that he ascended “into *svarga vaikunṭha*” (*svargī vaikuṭhā bhītari*).³⁸⁹ Still there is indication 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 *vaikunṭha dvāra*, “the gate of vaikunṭha”,³⁹⁰ which had been closed for human beings since Adam committed his sin (*doṣa*).³⁹¹ The impression that *vaikunṭha* is higher than *svarga* is further strengthened in II.58.52, where Jesus is exhorted to establish his throne “above all

³⁷⁹ Molesworth, *Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary*, pp. 773, 879.

³⁸⁰ II.35.107, Matthew 15:7; II.35.111, Matthew 15:10; II.36.19, Luke 15:18; II.36.25, Luke 15:21; II.32.81, Matthew 16:19; II.35.52, Matthew 6:10; II.56.14, Matthew 28:18.

³⁸¹ II.35.9 Luke 10:20; II.58.63, Isaiah 66:1.

³⁸² II.36.16, Matthew 19:21.

³⁸³ II.35.51, Matthew 6:9.

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 lokām gelyā upari*) in II.57.44, whereas the same in II.58.83 is placed in *vaikunṭhanagara* (*gelā caḍona vaikunṭhanagarā*). 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 *vaikunṭha*".³⁹² To sum up, *vaikunṭha* and *svarga* are often treated as synonyms, and when a distinction is made between them *vaikunṭha* is a name for what we could call the highest heaven or the highest realm of *svarga*. Stephens' occasional giving *vaikunṭha* pre-eminence over *svarga* is in accordance with Vaiṣṇavaite terminology, where *vaikunṭha*, understood as Viṣṇu's heaven, is placed above all other worlds or *lokas*.³⁹³

When telling about Jesus' ascension to heaven after his resurrection, Stephens stages a paraphrase of Psalm 24 in front of the gate of *vaikunṭha*. 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,	<i>mhaṇati parisāho rāje</i>
Open your gates,	<i>tumace dārivaṭhe ughaḍije</i>
And, O Gates, give place	<i>āṇī dārivaṭhe ho tumhi vosarije</i>
For the invincible Soul!	<i>āḍala jivitvācem</i> ³⁹⁴

The King and Emperor of <i>mukti</i>	<i>mukticā rājā cakravati</i>
Has come to enter, they say.	<i>praveśāvyā ālā mhaṇati</i>
Then those guards ask:	<i>tevhām te rākhaṇāmīta pusatī</i>
Who is that King of <i>mukti</i> ?	<i>kavaṇa to rājāmukticā</i> ³⁹⁵

The answer they get is:

This very Lord of angels, the life of the world,	<i>hāci boḍavyācā svāmī jagajivana</i>
King of <i>mokṣapada</i> !	<i>mokṣapadācā rājā</i> ³⁹⁶

³⁹² II.58.52: "sakaḷa svargā varute/pavitra vaikunṭhātem".

³⁹³ L. González-Reimann, 'Cosmic Cycles, Cosmology, and Cosmography', in Jacobsen, Knut A., Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar and Vasudha Narayanan (eds.), *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Available from: Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Gothenburg University Library, (accessed 25 June 2015).

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* (*bhāgyevamītā bhaktāmsamāṅgamī*).³⁹⁷ The gate through which he enters being the gate of *vaikumṭha*, it seems clear that what is here referred to as the house of *mokṣa* is *vaikumṭha*.

Upon entering *vaikumṭha* 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 *samsāra*, according to their respective merits (*puṇya*):

And for these your and my servants,	<i>āṇī yā tujheyā māmjhayā sevakāte</i>
Since the creation of <i>samsāra</i> for them	<i>samsāra racilā lāguna tayāṁte</i>
The places kept here	<i>je stāmne t̥heveli yethe</i>
Prepared,	<i>sidha karona</i> ³⁹⁸

Those places for your <i>bhaktas</i> ,	<i>ti stāmne tujhayā bhaktāmsim</i>
After merits to them all	<i>puṇyā sārīkhi tayā sakaḷāmsi</i>
Give, to those searching refuge by you,	<i>deunayā tujhiyā śaraṇāṅgatāmsi</i>
[And] establish, O Father.	<i>sthāpīgā bāpā</i> ³⁹⁹

In *vaikumṭha* people thus get different positions according to their deeds and different merits or virtues.⁴⁰⁰ But this stratification does not give raise to any suffering, since everybody considers his own lot as good as that of anyone else.⁴⁰¹ There is no reason for jealousy, 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 *vaikumṭha* (*vaikumṭha nagari*)⁴⁰²:

Seeing according to their merits,	<i>tyātyā puṇeyā sārīkho pāhātām</i>
Putting them on their own places,	<i>tyāsi āpulā stāni t̥hemvatā</i>
Seating (them) on incomparable seats	<i>anupamām baisīkārāvāri baisavita</i>
In <i>mokṣapada</i> .	<i>mokṣapadi</i> ⁴⁰³

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 *vaikunṭha* is described in perhaps surprisingly physical terms. The Father and the Son embrace each other,⁴⁰⁴ and God (probably the Father) embraces the saints and religious prominents (*sāmtamahānta*).⁴⁰⁵ At the same time it surpasses the conditions of normal physical existence. Life in *vaikunṭha* is eternal,⁴⁰⁶ and the joy that one enjoys in *mokṣapada* is beyond everything that eyes could see or ears could hear,⁴⁰⁷ and even beyond what human mind can think.⁴⁰⁸

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.⁴⁰⁹ In II.58.97 the *bhaktas*⁴¹⁰ ask Jesus when he will resuscitate (*vivavīsi*) their bodies (*kuḍi*),⁴¹¹ so that the bodies can enjoy in the city of *vaikunṭha* the fruit of the hardships they endured with them in *saṁsāra*.⁴¹² Admittedly the *bhaktas* say about themselves that they are in *svarga loka*,⁴¹³ but the episode comes after Jesus has entered through the gate of *vaikunṭha* together with the *bhaktas*,⁴¹⁴ been seated on the right hand of the Father,⁴¹⁵ whose throne is *vaikunṭha* and who keeps his feet on the earth,⁴¹⁶ and immediately after the Father has embraced the patriarchs, prophets and other *bhaktas* (*yerām bhaktāmsim*).⁴¹⁷ It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the occasionally made distinction between *vaikunṭha* 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,	<i>yeju mhaṇe manuśa jadi marati</i>
Then the souls (<i>ātmās</i>) that are good,	<i>tadi ātmem je barave āhāti</i>
They on their respective days come to <i>svarga</i> ;	<i>te āpāpule divasim svargā yeti</i>
The bodies do not come along.	<i>kuḍi na yeti savem</i> ⁴¹⁸

⁴⁰⁴ II.58.75.

⁴⁰⁵ II.58.93.

⁴⁰⁶ II.32.13; 34.34, 36.

⁴⁰⁷ II.58.107.

⁴⁰⁸ II.58.108.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1994, § 366, 1001.

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.

⁴¹⁶ II.58.63; cf. Isaiah 66:1.

⁴¹⁷ II.58.94.

⁴¹⁸ II.58.99.

One day all bodies	<i>yekuca dina kuḍi āvaghīyām</i>
Will attain what is given, ⁴¹⁹	<i>jo didhalā to pātalyā</i>
Will rise and come alive,	<i>uṭhila jivāntu honiyām</i>
All human beings.	<i>manuśa āvaghe⁴²⁰</i>

At that time all bodies rise,	<i>tyā veḷām sakaḷika kuḍi uṭhati</i>
Enjoy the fruit of (their) hardships.	<i>kaṣṭāce phaḷa bhoguyeti</i>
At one (and the same) time they attain the joy	<i>yeke samaī sukha pāvati</i>
In <i>vaikumṭha</i> .	<i>vaikumṭhām āmtu⁴²¹</i>

The conclusion that *svarga* in this passage refers to the same as *vaikumṭha* 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 *vaikumṭha*, not using the word *svarga* as in the passage quoted above. The crucial verse reads:

Then the <i>ātmās</i> of the <i>bhaktas</i> in <i>vaikumṭha</i> ,	<i>tevhām bhaktāmce ātme vaikumṭhātu</i>
Which were without body,	<i>je hote kuḍivarahita</i>
They, with body and <i>ātmā</i> ,	<i>te kuḍi ātmāsahitu</i>
Will sit on their respective places.	<i>āpāpulā paṭhi baisati⁴²²</i>

In other words the souls of the dead do not have to wait for the resurrection of the body. They can live happily in *vaikumṭha* 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 vikonayām/ākhaṁḍa mṛtye thevilā*).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

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,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 *vaikumṭha*⁴²⁶ and are caught in the conceptual opposite of *mokṣa*, namely *āḍaḷabāṁdi* or eternal bondage.⁴²⁷ In the story they understand that Lazarus, whose death they had considered unholy (*apavitra*),⁴²⁸ had become a *muktice vāṁṭekāra*, approximately “one who walks the way of *mukti*,”⁴²⁹ whereas for them the sun of righteousness (*dharmaniticā surya*) is covered.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” (*amhamce ātme nirākārā/kuḍi vegale*).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.⁴³²

Lazarus had suffered a lot in *samsāra* 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 *limbaloka*,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”.⁴³⁴ Falcao in his modern Marathi version has *pāpakṣālanacī jāgā*,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.”⁴³⁶

⁴²⁵ Cf. Luke 16:19-31.

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 “*udharāvyācā thār*” 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 *limbaloka* 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 *limbaloka*. 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 *limbaloka*, since there are quite unambiguous passages in other places in *Kristapurāṇa* that tell about the embodied existence in *svarga*. Probably *limbaloka* is also what Stephens actually means, although here using the word *svarga*. His usage of this word for referring to what he elsewhere calls *limbaloka* 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 *muktipamta* or way to *mukti* 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.

⁴⁴² Cf. Gansten, *Bhagavad-Gītā: vishet och yoga*, pp. 19-22.

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 (*tāraṇe*) 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	<i>svāmī anubhāvārthīyām janām</i>
Gives not the inheritance of <i>svarga</i> , know this!	<i>svargīce dāīja nedi jāṁṇām</i>
Except believers nobody	<i>bhāvārthīyāvīṇa kavaṇām</i>
Reaches <i>mokṣa</i> .	<i>na phāve mokṣa</i> ⁴⁴⁵

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 māṁnileyā*), 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 <i>jñāni</i> ,	<i>jituke jñāni hāti baravem</i>
So many children of Christ,	<i>ītuke hi kristāci lekuravem</i>
And they get the eternal inheritance	<i>tayāsi sadaiva dāīja phāve</i>
Of the Kingdom of <i>svarga</i> .	<i>svarga rajyācem</i> ⁴⁵⁰

Therefore what to do?	<i>Hmaṇauni yā kāraṇe kāye kije</i>
Everybody should become a wise/knower (<i>jñāni</i>).	<i>sakaḷiki jñāni hoije</i>
Know that thereby they will become spiritual children (<i>dharmaputra</i>)	<i>teṇem dharmaputra hotila jāṇije</i>
Of Lord Christ.	<i>krista svāmīyāmsi</i> (II.17.90)

⁴⁴³ II.23.55.

⁴⁴⁴ II.23.55.

⁴⁴⁵ II.32.38.

⁴⁴⁶ A common phrase for "believe" in *Kristapurāṇa* is *satye māṁnaṇe*, 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.⁴⁵¹

Jesus, the Saviour, is referred to as the Ocean of Knowledge (*jñāna sāgaru*).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!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.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 crucifixion⁴⁵⁵ and writes:

To himself he led all,	<i>āpaṇā thāi sarva nele</i>
Brought the people of the earth;	<i>prthvīce loku āṇīle</i>
All castes ⁴⁵⁶ came	<i>te sakaḷīmhi jāte jāleṃ</i>
On the way to <i>mukti</i> .	<i>mukti paṃthim</i> ⁴⁵⁷

Confronted by a Brahmin who is not impressed by the meagre number of people Christ has drawn unto himself in Hindustan,⁴⁵⁸ the narrator explains that this does not mean that everybody will do Christ's *bhakti* and be taken to *vaikunṭha*, but only that those who are chosen (*vecuna kāḍile*) will.⁴⁵⁹ In this context Stephens connects *bhakti*, which is elsewhere referred to as the way to *mukti*,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.

⁴⁵¹ II.29.151.

⁴⁵² Cf. II.27.1.

⁴⁵³ II.29.94.

⁴⁵⁴ II.27.2: "jyācā kelyā stuti/hrḍaī praveṣe jñāṃnamati" ("praising whom wisdom enters the heart").

⁴⁵⁵ II.40.133.

⁴⁵⁶ The word *jāte* can be translated "castes" or "people".

⁴⁵⁷ II.40.134.

⁴⁵⁸ II.40.136-145.

⁴⁵⁹ II.40.152-153.

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. II.39.34.

ābhaktajana, cover their eyes due to their guilt (*āparādhe karona*) and do not see the way of *bhakti* (*bhaktīpam̐thu*⁴⁶¹).⁴⁶² On the other hand people who do *bhakti* will have eternal life:

Those human beings who, on this earth	<i>je kavaṇa manuśa he kṣīti</i>
Performing the <i>bhakti</i> of <i>parameśvara</i> ,	<i>karona paramesvarāci bhakti</i>
In the end go to permanent life,	<i>aṁti āḍaḷa jivitvāci jāti</i>
Know that they are blessed!	<i>te sadaiva jāṇāve</i> ⁴⁶³

God has given man a free will, and sometimes people act contrary to Gods will.⁴⁶⁴ 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 *muktīpam̐tha*.⁴⁶⁵ 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 <i>vaikum̐thapati</i>	<i>baḷotkāre vaikum̐thapati</i>
Does not give anybody attainment of <i>svarga</i> ;	<i>kavaṇāṁ nedi svarga prāpti</i>
Without <i>bhakti</i>	<i>bhaktivīṇe mukti</i>
Nobody gets <i>mukti</i> .	<i>na joḍe kavaṇāṁ</i> ⁴⁶⁶

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.⁴⁶⁷ We are therefore admonished to leave our own wishes aside and do Gods will (*samtośa*); then “you will be saved (*tarane*) over the ocean of this world, reaching the other shore” (*bhava sīdhu tarijeṁ/ṭhākije pailapāmra*).⁴⁶⁸ Here Stephens obviously speaks about the same thing in many ways. First we note that *bhakti* is the way to *mukti*, the *muktīpam̐tha*. 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” (*pailapāmra*). Salvation is referred to with the verbs *tāraṇe* and the

⁴⁶¹ Falcao (*Phādar Thomas Sīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1148), treats this word as a miswriting for *muktīpam̐thu*, 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 *tarāṇe*.⁴⁶⁹ Playing with the maritime connotation of these verbs, the saved person is alternately referred to as being the subject of Gods rescuing action (*tāraṇe*) and as getting safely over (*tarāṇe*) 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 *vaikumṭha* or the city of death (*yemapuri*)” (*āpule karaṇa pāvati/vaikumṭhi kiṃ 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	<i>bhāvo sakaḷa puṇāce muḷa</i>
Therefore who has no faith,	<i>mhaṇauna bhāvo nāhi jayā kevaḷa</i>
How will he get the fruit of virtue/merit	<i>tayāsi kaice puṇe phaḷa</i>
Without faith?	<i>bhāvemviṇa</i> ⁴⁷²

So although one reaches *vaikumṭha* 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	<i>bhāvārhī āṇi mīlacha jana</i>
And other believers ...	<i>āṇi yera bhāvārthi</i> 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,	<i>te kristācā sihāmsanā puḍām hoti</i>
See his lotus-face.	<i>tayāce mukhakamaḷa driṣṭi dekhati</i>
He is true God: this they will know	<i>to satyevata devo aise jāṇati</i>

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 Khristapurāṇa*, p.1226.

In vain.

*vāyāvīṇe*⁴⁷⁵

And they will speak in vain,

āṇī vertha karitī ucāramṇa

But they will not be called.

paṇa tayāmsi na lagatām niropaṇa

By themselves they fall into the pit of death,

yemakaṁḍi paḍati āpe āpaṇa

Since they do not have faith.

*bhāva nāhi dekhona*⁴⁷⁶

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.⁴⁷⁷

Verses that speak about *mukti* often also speak about mercy (*kṛpā*) or compassion (*karuṇā*), thus indicating a close connection between *mukti* and God’s mercy and compassion. For example Christ is called “compassioner and giver of *mukti*” (*karuṇākara/mukticā dātā*),⁴⁷⁸ and it is said that *vaikumṭhanātha* was born among animals in order to save us (*āmhām soḍavāvayā*) and give us the “richness of his mercy” (*apuliye krupeci saṁpati*).⁴⁷⁹ 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.

⁴⁷⁵ II.43.178.

⁴⁷⁶ II.43.179.

⁴⁷⁷ James 2:14-26.

⁴⁷⁸ II.1.47.

⁴⁷⁹ II.7.80-81.

4.6. The sacraments as gates of *mukti*

The sacraments⁴⁸⁰ 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 dośāmce khata*) as well as our own sins (*pātaka*) are taken away.⁴⁸⁸ It turns the baptised into Gods spiritual son (*devācā dharma kumarū*) and gives him the inheritance of *vaikunṭha*.⁴⁸⁹

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 “Bautismu” for baptism.

⁴⁸³ II.19.59.

⁴⁸⁴ II.19.61: “*maja nāna dyāvā*”. Cf. Matthew 3:15.

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 (*praṇṇāmī*); 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*).⁴⁹⁰

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,	<i>mhaṇauna sām̐gato tumhāmsi</i>
Go to all the earth,	<i>cālā āghave pṛthavīsī</i>
My <i>śāstra</i> ⁴⁹¹ to everybody	<i>mājhe śāstra sarvatrāsi</i>
(You) tell!	<i>sām̐gām̐ tumhi</i> ⁴⁹²

Father and Son	<i>pītyā āṇī sutā</i>
And Holy Spirit,	<i>āṇī phīratā sām̐tā</i>
Pronouncing his name,	<i>he yācā nāva ucāritām̐</i>
Wash [away] the guilt!	<i>dośa dhuṇī kije</i> ⁴⁹³

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	<i>je satyem̐ mānu jñāna nām̐na gheti</i>
<i>jñānasnāna</i> ,	<i>te mokṣapadāte thākīti</i>
They set out for the state of <i>mokṣa</i> ,	<i>āṇī je satye na mānīti</i>
And those who do not accept the truth,	<i>te paḍati yemapuri</i> ⁴⁹⁴
They fall into the city of death.	

⁴⁹⁰ II.26.83-84.

⁴⁹¹ For a thorough discussion of Stephens’ use of the word *śāstra* 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 *vaikumṭha* (*vaikumṭhanagari*), whereas those who persist in unbelief (*āvisvāsa kariti*) go to the city of death (*yemapuri*).⁴⁹⁵ But faith and Baptism alone do not lead to *mokṣa*. II.56.28 says that faith and baptism alone do not save (*tāraṇe*) anybody. One also has to follow God's commands:

Hearing the <i>śāstra</i> and accepting its truth,	<i>śāstra aikona satye mānilyā</i>
And taking <i>jñānasnāna</i> ,	<i>āṇī jñāmna nāmna ghetalyām</i>
Still in the end to save (<i>tāraṇe</i>),	<i>tari te amti tārāvyā</i>
It does not suffice for anybody.	<i>na pure kavaṇā</i> ⁴⁹⁶

First hear the <i>śāstra</i> and accept its truth,	<i>ādi śāstra aikona satye māmnije</i>
Then take <i>jñānasnāna</i> ,	<i>maga jñāmna nāmna gheṭje</i>
Thirdly please God,	<i>tisarā deva samtoṣa kije</i>
Keeping his commands.	<i>upadeśa pāḷona</i> ⁴⁹⁷

In II.43.184 a Brahman (*vipra*) 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 amtrāla*).⁴⁹⁸ Stephens says that the answer is not given in the Bible (*pavitra purāmna pustakeṁ*),⁴⁹⁹ but that the question is nevertheless possible to answer:

But they have done no sins in <i>samsāra</i> ;	<i>paṇa tehi pātake kele nāmhi samsāri</i>
Therefore they do not fall into <i>yemapuri</i> ,	<i>mhaṇauna na paḍati yemapuri</i>
And they do not go to the city of <i>vaikumṭha</i> ,	<i>āṇī na jāti vaikumṭha nagari</i>
Since they do not have God's mercy.	<i>he devakrupā nāhī dekhoni</i> ⁵⁰⁰

Therefore the scribes say,	<i>mhaṇauna śāstrāyukta sāmḡati</i>
Those children, the Lord of <i>vaikumṭha</i>	<i>tayā bāḷakā vaikumṭhapamti</i>
This <i>samsāra</i> to them in the end	<i>hā samsāra tayāsi amti</i>
Will give, so they say.	<i>deḷa mhaṇauna</i> ⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁵ II.57.41.

⁴⁹⁶ II.56.28.

⁴⁹⁷ II.56.29. Cf. I.5.153-154.

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 Gods mercy (*devakrupā*) and a condition for entrance into *vaikumṭha*, 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 *vaikumṭha* 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,⁵⁰² 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.⁵⁰³ This state or place is usually referred to as limbo, which is also the term that is used in Doutrina Christam,⁵⁰⁴ or in Latin *limbus infantium*. Without using the word “limbo”, the actual passage in *Kristapurāna* says that the unbaptized children will be given the recreated *samsāra*,⁵⁰⁵ reflecting the fact that some Catholic theologians have identified the childrens limbo with the recreated earth referred to in 2 Peter 3:13.⁵⁰⁶

Although never endorsed as a doctrine of faith, limbo was the common Catholic teaching until the middle of the twentieth century.⁵⁰⁷ 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.”⁵⁰⁸

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

⁵⁰¹ II.43.202.

⁵⁰² International Theological Commission, ‘The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Being Baptized’, § 3.

⁵⁰³ International Theological Commission, ‘The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Being Baptized’, § 26.

⁵⁰⁴ Stephens, *Doutrina Christam*, p. 27. In *Kristapurāna* 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’.

⁵⁰⁷ International Theological Commission, ‘The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Being Baptized’, § 26.

⁵⁰⁸ International Theological Commission, ‘The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Being Baptized’, § 102.

<i>jñānāmca putalā</i> (II.12.25)	“Image/statue of knowledge.
<i>jñāna dipu paramesvarācā</i> (II.16.44)	” <i>Paramesva</i> ’s knowledge-light.”
<i>jñāna dipu paripurṇa</i> (II.19.30)	”Perfect knowledge-light.”
<i>śabda devabāpācā</i> (II.16.44)	”Word of God the Father.”
<i>jñāna sāgaru</i> (II.27.1, 41)	”Ocean of knowledge.”
<i>jñāna simdhu</i> (II.40.86)	”Ocean of knowledge.”
<i>jñāniyācā rāvo sarva jāmṇa</i> (II.28.99)	”King of the wise, the omniscient one.”
<i>jñānamatice nidhāna</i> (II.29.94)	“Receptacle of wisdom.”
<i>sarvajña</i> (II.29.139)	“Omniscient.”
<i>sarvajña jñāna nidhī</i> (II.46.54)	”Omniscient treasure of knowledge.”
<i>guru sarva jñātā</i> (II.55.32)	”Omniscient master.”
<i>sarvajñāmni jāñāmru</i> (II.56.35)	”Omniscient knower.”

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 *jñānasnāna* 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 *jñānasnāna* for baptism, Stephens shows his creativity and readiness to connect to important Hindu ideas even when conveying a Christian message. Although the word *jñānasnāna* 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 journey. *Kristapurāṇa* says that when the time drew near for Jesus to leave *samsāra* for *vaikunṭha*

⁵⁰⁹ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 200.

⁵¹⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 1216.

nagara (“city of *vaikunṭha*”), Jesus wanted to leave something for the consolation of human beings until his return,⁵¹¹ 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.⁵¹² Finding nothing precious enough to show his love Jesus decided to give himself.⁵¹³ He then founded the Eucharist, the “holy mystery of the excellent *prasāda*” (*pavitra gupta saparsādāmcā*)⁵¹⁴ which helps human beings to reach the other shore:

This the food of angels,	<i>hā boḍavyācā grāsu</i>
Destruction of great sin,	<i>māhāpāmtakācā nāsu</i>
Through which man crosses (<i>tare</i>)	<i>jeṇe tare manuśu</i>
The ocean of this world.	<i>bhavasāgari</i> ⁵¹⁵

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 (*tarane*) 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 *tarane*:

Hail the Holy Meal,	<i>jayā namo pavitra bhojanā</i>
The holy blood and flesh of Christ,	<i>krista rakta māṁśa pāvana</i>
Through which is always remembered	<i>jeṇa smarane sadām hoye maraṇa</i>
His death!	<i>gyācayā mrtyāyāce</i> ⁵¹⁶
You are the door to the state of <i>mukti</i> ,	<i>tu muktipadācā dāravaṭhā</i>
[You] open the way to <i>svarga</i> ,	<i>mokaḷi kari svargīci yā vāṭhā</i>
Annihilate our hardship,	<i>nīvārona āmacā draṣṭā</i>
And give us peace.	<i>svasta karisi</i> ⁵¹⁷

⁵¹¹ II.44.16-17.

⁵¹² 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*.

⁵¹³ II.44.102-103.

⁵¹⁴ 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*”.

⁵¹⁵ II.44.115.

⁵¹⁶ II.44.116.

⁵¹⁷ II.44.117.

You fill the <i>ātmā</i> ⁵¹⁸ with grace,	<i>ātmām krupe na bharisi</i>
Give the <i>saṃskāra</i> ⁵¹⁹ of <i>mukti</i> ,	<i>mukticā saṃskāra desi</i>
Reveal the sign of the love	<i>śneho khuṇa pragaṭavisi</i>
Of God.	<i>paramesvarāci</i> ⁵²⁰

Jesus has come into the world with food, and whoever accepts that food will attain an enduring place (*āḍaḷapada*) in *vaikuṃṭha loka*. This food, the Eucharist, is Jesus' blood and flesh, and whoever eats and drinks this will get everlasting life (*ākhamḍita āḍaḷa jīṇem*).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 (*triguṇa*): (1) *jñānabudhi* to recognize our Lord God and Creator, (2) *santośe* (“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 (*avaguṇa*),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	<i>mhanīpe sāmḍavalem jñānavastra</i>
He gives him back upon returning,	<i>te puṇati paratoniyām deta</i>
Puts a ring on the hand	<i>kari mudrikā joḍavita</i>
Of the sinner.	<i>tyā pāpīyātem</i> ⁵²⁷

⁵¹⁸ Falcao treats *ātmām* as a mistake for *āmhām* (“to us”), which gives the following meaning: “You fill us with grace” (cf. Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1252).

⁵¹⁹ *Saṃskāra* is roughly translateble as “rite”. Here the word finds resonance in the 16 *saṃskāras* 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 *rākhaṇām*.

⁵²⁴ II.36.34-36. *Triguṇa* is an established concept in Hindu thought, originating in *Sāṃkhya* philosophy and playing a significant role in *Bhagavadgītā*. In Hinduism the three *guṇas* are *sattva* (goodness, constructive, harmonious), *rajas* (passion, active, confused), and *tamas* (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.

mhanīpe jo devācā rupākāru
dośa nāsuna jālā bhutākāru
tyāmtēṃ sarasāvi paramesvara
*ādile pari*⁵²⁸

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

The meal, which the father arranges after the homecoming of his son, is interpreted as the Eucharist.⁵²⁹ This meal is a sign of repentance from sin/guilt (*prāchita dośācem*).⁵³⁰ It is given to us to eat again and again⁵³¹ and when people receive it, they “through Gods grace live in *bhakti* (*devakrupestava dekhona/varte bhaktivari*).⁵³²

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*).⁵³³ What they forgive in *samsāra* is also forgiven in *svarga*.⁵³⁴ In this way he made it easier for the people, since confessing to a human priest is less scaring than confessing directly to God.⁵³⁵ Therefore the believers are admonished to throw their heap of sins at the feet of the priest and get the light to set out on the way of *mukti*:

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

ācyāryācā caraṇāmpāsīm
phedā pāpācā rāsīm
āṇī muktīpamthū thākāvayāsīm
*ghejje ujavāḍa*⁵³⁶

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. *Svadharmā: ones own duty*

Before leaving the topic of the way to *mukti*, the concept of *svadharmā* must be discussed. In verse I.36.136 of *Khrīstapurāṇa*, Father Stephens says that Jesus came into the world to give salvation (*muktī pada*) to those who follow their own *svadharmā*.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 Kṛīstu” and in that matter “his theology is ahead of his times.”⁵³⁸ However, “one’s own religion” is not the only possible meaning of *svadharmā*, 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 *svadharmā* 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* (*dyāvya*) 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 *svadharmā* 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 svadharmā calīyamtem/muktī pada dyāvya thamtem/sarva sukha pāvavyā jaṇamtem/samsārīm ālā/*”

⁵³⁸ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p.196.

⁵³⁹ Molesworth (*Molesworth’s Marathi-English Dictionary*) gives the following lengthy definition of *svadharmā*, in which “one’s own religion” is not even mentioned: “Own, proper, or peculiar duty, office, or business; as giving alms is the *svadharmā* of a householder; administering justice, the *svadharmā* 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: “*kuḍam devāntem jarī bhamjatī*”.

⁵⁴¹ I.26.68.

⁵⁴² I.18.44: ”*paradevācī bhamjanā na karī*”

the heart of man, God wrote it there.”⁵⁴³ 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 *svadharmā*, but not to the point of claiming that one can obtain *mokṣa* through that. The state of *mukti* (*muktipada*) is *given* by Jesus to those who follow their *svadharmā*;⁵⁴⁴ it is not *obtained* through following one’s *svadharmā*.⁵⁴⁵

Falcao claims, that “Stephens is telling the converts to drop the small village gods (*grāmiṇ 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.”⁵⁴⁶ 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.”⁵⁴⁷ 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 vaikunṭha” (*vaikunṭharāyā*, *-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 *vaikunṭha*, 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

⁵⁴³ I.18.3: ”te upadeś nava nhaveṭi/te āhe prakrutīcī nīti/manuṣyāce hrudaiṃ 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 manāmsi/to mājhayā āmtahkarṇāsi/navade jānām/!” (“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 *Vārkarī* movement. In a story explaining the god’s name – *vīṭ* means “brick” in Marathi – we are told how the god Viṭṭhal came to Pandharpur eager to meet a man called *Punḍalik*, since he had heard how great devotion he showed to his parents. *Punḍalik* 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 *ārāṭī* included in the same volume (Kundur 1999, p.2037).

⁵⁴⁶ Falcao, *Kristapurāna: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 202.

⁵⁴⁷ Falcao, *Kristapurāna: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 202.

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.⁵⁴⁸

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 *līṅgas*”⁵⁴⁹ 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 *līṅgā*, 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 *līṅga*.

It seems, then, that Falcao’s opinion that Stephens “does not mean to speak against the bigger names of God”⁵⁵⁰ 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.⁵⁵¹

4.8. The Saviour

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 *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.

Epithets of the Saviour	Approximate meaning
<i>mokṣa rājā</i>	King of <i>mokṣa</i>
<i>mokṣapadācā rājā</i>	King of the state of <i>mokṣa</i>
<i>muktīcā rājā, rājāmuktīcā,</i>	King of <i>mukti</i>
<i>muktīcā rājā cakravartī</i>	King and emporor of <i>mukti</i>

⁵⁴⁸ 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.

⁵⁴⁹ I.20.21: “*sīṃhayāsānī patamā līṅgā*”.

⁵⁵⁰ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 202.

⁵⁵¹ 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.

<i>mukticā dātā</i>	Giver of <i>mukti</i>
<i>muktipadācā dātā, muktipadācā dātāru</i>	Giver of the state of <i>mukti</i>
<i>muktipadācā ṭhāvo</i>	Treasury of the state of <i>mukti</i>
<i>tāraku</i>	Saviour
<i>visvatāraku, tāraku visvabhuvanām</i>	Saviour of the world
<i>visvatāraku paramesvaru</i>	Saviour of the world, God
<i>saṁsāra tāraka</i>	Saviour of the world
<i>jrāyeli tāraku</i>	Saviour of Israel
<i>deva tāraka</i>	God saviour
<i>krista tāraku</i>	Christ saviour
<i>soḍavaṇārā</i>	Liberator
<i>rākhaṇāita</i>	Saviour/protector
<i>rakṣaṇārā</i>	Saviour/protector
<i>ījrāyelicā rakṣaṇa</i>	Saviour/protector of Israel
<i>bhaktarakṣamaṇīm</i>	Saviour/Protector-Jewel of the <i>bhaktas</i>
<i>rakṣagā</i>	O Saviour/Protector
<i>kristu rakṣara</i>	Christ Saviour/protector
<i>vaikumṭharājā, vaikumṭhīcā rājā, vaikumṭharāyā, vaikumṭharavo, vaikumṭharāṇām</i>	King of heaven/ <i>vaikumṭha</i>
<i>vaikumṭhapati, vaikumṭhanātha, vaikumṭhasvāmī</i>	Lord of heaven/ <i>vaikumṭha</i>
<i>vaikumṭhanāyekā</i>	Hero of heaven/ <i>vaikumṭha</i>
<i>vaikumṭhici māṁuli</i> ⁵⁵²	Mother of heaven/ <i>vaikumṭha</i>
<i>svargīcā rāyā, svargīca ṅpavaru, svargīca ravo</i>	King of heaven/ <i>svarga</i>

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,

⁵⁵² Jesus as mother reminisces of the habit in Vārkarī circles to call the poet saint *Jñānadeva* and the god *Viṭṭhala māṁlī*, “mother”. For reference to this, see Novetzke, C. and J. Keune, ‘*Jñāndev*’, in Jacobsen, Knut A., Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar and Vasudha Narayanan (eds.), *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Available from: Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Gothenburg University Library, (accessed 7 October 2015).

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;	<i>baraveṃ loka ānamda kariti</i>
This is our Saviour (<i>tāraka</i>), they say,	<i>yāji āmacā tārakā mhanati</i>
Remove our hardships and give, they say,	<i>kaṣṭa nivārūna deḡgā mhaṇati</i>
The fruit of <i>mokṣa</i> .	<i>mokṣa phaḷa</i> ⁵⁵³

The words *tāraka* and *mokṣa* are often mentioned in the same breath.⁵⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵⁵ In another place he is called *tāraka* and “King of *mokṣa*” (*mokṣarājā*).⁵⁵⁶

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 (<i>pātaka</i>), death, and the devil,	<i>pātaka mṛtya āṇī devacāra</i>
The Saviour (<i>rakṣaṇāmra</i>)	<i>jīṇāvayā lāgoni rakṣaṇāmra</i>
Lord Christ, Gods Son,	<i>krista svāmī deva kumara</i>
Came into <i>samsāra</i>	<i>samsāri ālā</i> ⁵⁵⁷

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

Then the Lord said with words of <i>āmṛta</i> . ⁵⁵⁸	<i>tevha svāmī mhaṇe āmṛta vacani</i>
God, by his grace/mercy,	<i>deve āpule karuṇā karoni</i>
Has pardoned your sins	<i>tumace pātake bakasona</i>

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 śabdāta* in his modern Marathi translation (*Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1682).

And made heaps of merit (*puṇya*)

*kelya puṇye rāsi*⁵⁵⁹

God gave me, one from your race,

deve tumacā vamsicā yeku

To you as Saviour (*tāraka*),⁵⁶⁰

tumhāmsi mī dīdhalā tāraku

All your stains of guilt

samagra tumācā dośācā kaḷamku

To clear away.

*phedāvvyā*⁵⁶¹

The conquering of sin is not reserved for the *tāraka* aspect of the Saviour. Jesus as *rakṣaṇāru* also has this role. For example it is said that the *rakṣaṇāra* extinguishes Peter's guilt (*dośā parihāra*)⁵⁶² 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 beautiful *ovīs* about when Jesus after his resurrection met and talked with Peter:

Rāyenātha⁵⁶³ saw God's Son

rāyenāthāne dekhilā devanaṁdanu

The words of the Cowherd⁵⁶⁴ consoled

govaḷā śabde nivavīlā manu

[his] mind.

maga mukhī hāmsona

Then while [his] face was laughing,

*ḍoḷā sāmḍi āśrupāt*⁵⁶⁵

[His] eyes were shedding tears.

Like sometimes on earth

aisī yekāde samāi kṣiti

The rays of the sun are covered

surya kiraṇem jhaḷakati

And from the clouds is dripping

āṇī saveṁ kupāmtuna gaḷati

What was held in the clouds,

*megha dhārā*⁵⁶⁶

So Rāyenātha sobbed while laughing

taisā rāyenātha hāmsona gahivarata

And laughed while sobbing.

āṇī gahivarona hāmsata

His unparalleled love

tayāce prema āparamīta

⁵⁵⁹ II.50.66.

⁵⁶⁰ Because of the peculiar word order of the two first lines, they have been translated 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.

*sāṃgatām naye*⁵⁶⁷

As shown by this example of Stephens' beautiful poetry, the *rakṣaṇāram* 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' *rakṣaṇa*, 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 (*māmrū*); now remains only the third enemy, death (*mṛtye*).⁵⁷¹ He will now take on his body (*mām̃jhi kuḍi kāḍoni gheīna*), make it "full of mokṣa" (*mokṣa bharita*) and immortal (*āmari*), and "come alive and rise" (*uṭhamvina/jitu honi*).⁵⁷² Jesus' resurrection is likened to several episodes in the Old Testament: Joseph coming out of jail (*baṃdi*) 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,
Nobody comes to wake him up;
He himself
Rises.

*jaisā sihem paudatām pokhari
kavaṇa jāgavāvayā naye sāmori
toci āpaisā āpule pari
uṭhona jāye*⁵⁷⁷

Likewise know that the lion of Juda dynasty
From his grave himself came alive,

*taisā to judām vaṃsicā sihe jāṃṇa
āpulā gumaṭāmtuni jīyālā apaṇa*

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.

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 649; Maas, 'Resurrection of Jesus Christ', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911. Available from: New Advent, (accessed 1 July 2015); John 2:19; 10:17-18.

⁵⁷⁷ II.51.32.

Nobody woke him up,
He rose himself.

tayāsi jāgavilā nāmhi kavaṇa
*to uṭhalā āpaisā*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 (*rakṣaṇāmra*) came
Mary's suffering was taken away.

purve bibalā dinakaru
nāse mṛgajaḷācā ākāru
taisā pātalā rakṣaṇāmru
*dukha phīṭale mariyece*⁵⁷⁹

4.8.3. Jesus' blood

Jesus' blood is praised for being the prize of our salvation⁵⁸⁰ and likened to *amṛta*,⁵⁸¹ in a couple of *ovīs* that have to be read together to be grammatically coherent:

Now you all who are thirsty
Come and drink the *amṛta*-water,
Drink the clean water,
Isaiah wrote thus,⁵⁸²

ātām tumhi truśāmkrāṃta sakaḷām
cālā prāsāvyā amṛta jaḷā
karā pīvana pāṇī nirmaḷā
*ījāī lile jaisēṃ*⁵⁸³

The immortality of the *tāraka*'s source,
And kheer, take for free,⁵⁸⁴
Thereby the flaw of sin
Is annihilated.

āmṛtapaṇa tārakāce jharice
āṇī khīra ṭhevā pukāce
teṇe khata dośāce
*bhaṃgona jāye*⁵⁸⁵

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

⁵⁷⁸ II.51.33.

⁵⁷⁹ II.38.26.

⁵⁸⁰ II.48.23: "jayā namo rakta tārakā/jana soḍavaṇeche mole āmolikā" ("Hail the blood of the Saviour, the priceless price of the people's salvation!").

⁵⁸¹ *Amṛta* in Hindu mythology is an elixir of life similar to nectar and ambrosia in antique mythology.

⁵⁸² Cf. Isaiah 55:1.

⁵⁸³ II.48.24.

⁵⁸⁴ 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."

⁵⁸⁵ II.48.25.

Saviour’s source and come in!”⁵⁸⁶ 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 *ovīs* 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 immortality or immortality. On the other hand, given that *amṛtapāṇa* and *kheer*⁵⁸⁸ 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 immortality, *amṛtapāṇa*, and therefore it is duly referred to as *amṛta* or *āṃṛta 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 *limbaloka* ask when the *tāraku*, who brings the

⁵⁸⁶ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Sūphanskṛta 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 (*samsārika janām muḍāsīm*) into the light (*ujeḍāsīm*) will come also to them,⁵⁸⁹ and beg him to take their travail away (*phedi śramu*), liberate them from their prison (*baṁdoḍi soḍuniyām*)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 *rakṣaṇārā* does. Jesus’ name also makes the curtain of ignorance (*ājñāna*) fall, and should always be kept in our heart.⁵⁹⁷

4.9. Mary

Many verses are dedicated to Mary, the mother of God (*devamātā*,⁵⁹⁸ *mātā paramesvarācī*⁵⁹⁹), maternal home of the Holy Spirit (*īsphiritā sātāmce māhera*),⁶⁰⁰ and maternal home (*māhera*) of *paramagati*.⁶⁰¹ Through the fruit of her womb, i.e. Jesus who came to earth to give *paramagati* to human beings,⁶⁰² human beings will reach *mukti*.⁶⁰³ Because of Mary the gates of *vaikumṭha* are opened and the sins of the people of the world are abolished (*visvajanāmceṁ*

⁵⁸⁹ II.2.37.

⁵⁹⁰ II.2.38.

⁵⁹¹ II.2.39.

⁵⁹² II.6.78.

⁵⁹³ II.50.69-70: “*sakaḷa nāmāhonai/didhale nām̐ma thora*”; cf. Philippians 2:9.

⁵⁹⁴ II.9.60: “*pātaki udhāriti/yeṇe nāme/’*”; cf. John 20:31, Acts 10:43.

⁵⁹⁵ II.9.61; cf. Acts 4:12..

⁵⁹⁶ II.9.62-63; cf. Mark 16:17, Acts 3:6.

⁵⁹⁷ II.9.66.

⁵⁹⁸ II.1.25.

⁵⁹⁹ II.15.11.

⁶⁰⁰ II.1.15. Spellings vary considerably throughout the work.

⁶⁰¹ II.2.165.

⁶⁰² II.6.17.

⁶⁰³ II.2.167.

pāpa phiṭhe).⁶⁰⁴ As the mother of Jesus she has brought forth a river of *amṛta*, in which sins are washed away.⁶⁰⁵ When Mary has become pregnant with Jesus, she invites the angels to come into her womb,⁶⁰⁶ saying:

Now the virgin's womb

Ātām āmkuvārice udara

Is like the City of *vaikunṭha*.

jaisem vaikunṭhanagara

The virgin's body

jāle devamaṅdira

Became God's temple.

*dehe āmkuvārice*⁶⁰⁷

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

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 1.7,⁶⁰⁸ 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:⁶⁰⁹

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*.

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 Falcao and his *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*.

Hindu *mukti* is conceived as liberation from *samsāra*, which is also largely the case in *Kristapurāṇa*. In *Kristapurāṇa* *samsāra* is not evil as such, since God has created everything in *svarga* and *samsāra* well,⁶¹⁰ but it contains distractions that can threaten higher values. Such distractions are vain joy⁶¹¹ and *māyā*.⁶¹² Stupid people find the joys of *samsāra* (*samsārasukha*) sweet; in their pride (*garva*) they do not see the future suffering (*dukha*).⁶¹³ Therefore people from Adam onwards ignore God and consequently fall into the pit of death (*yemakuṁḍi*).⁶¹⁴ It is not possible to serve two Lords at the same time; you cannot embrace both *samsāra* and God (*devā*).⁶¹⁵

Samsāra is also associated with darkness, contrasting with the light of *svarga*⁶¹⁶ 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 *samsāra* and clear away the darkness of the earth (*pṛthvī*).⁶¹⁷

Although *samsāra* 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*), *samsāra*, and sin (*pātaka*).⁶¹⁸ Further it is said that whoever regards his life as good (*barave*) will lose it,⁶¹⁹ but who regards life in *samsāra* as evil (*vokhaṭe*) will save (*rākhela*) it.⁶²⁰ 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 *samsāra* 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 *samsāra* becomes the place where man can be given *mukti* and from which he can be taken to *svarga/vaikumṭha*. For example *Kristapurāṇa* says that Jesus Christ came into *samsāra* in order to annihilate our

⁶¹⁰ II.2.54.

⁶¹¹ Cf. II.12.4.

⁶¹² Cf. II.57.28

⁶¹³ II.30.60

⁶¹⁴ II.2.42-43.

⁶¹⁵ II.27.69. Cf. Matthew 6:24. Taking this very seriously, Mary and Joseph after their marriage according to *Kristapurāṇa* decided to live like siblings and avoid/sacrifice the joys of *samsāra* for the sake of *bhakti* and *jñāna* (II.3.111).

⁶¹⁶ Cf. II.4.10.

⁶¹⁷ II.7.60. Cf. Malachi 4:2.

⁶¹⁸ II.57.Intro. Cf. John 16:33: “I have overcome the world.”

⁶¹⁹ II.40.31.

⁶²⁰ II.40.62. Cf. Matthew 16:25, Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24.

sins (*pātakā*) and give us residence in *vaikumṭha* (*vaikumṭhavāsu*),⁶²¹ and that he taught *śāstra* and thereby showed the way to *vaikumṭha* (*vaikumṭhapamthu*).⁶²² Like Jesus came to *saṃsāra* to save its people from the consequences of sin, so also *saṃsāra* 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 *saṃsāra*, which had been drowned in the deep river of sin (*pāpa*).⁶²⁴ God loved *saṃsāra* and gave it his only son, it is again stated in a passage reminiscent of John 3:16.⁶²⁵ In the following *ovīs* both *saṃsāra* and its inhabitants are helped by God’s son:

Therefore, to take <i>saṃsāra</i>	<i>tayā pāsuna saṃsāru</i>
To the other shore (<i>pailapāru</i>)	<i>thākāvayā pailapāru</i>
God sent his own son:	<i>deveṃ āpulā kuṃmaru</i>
Know this.	<i>pāṭhaviḷā jāṇām</i> ⁶²⁶

Those who truly believe in him,	<i>je tayāteṃ māṃṇiti satyem</i>
Their life will not perish.	<i>tayā prāṇanāṃsu nā hota</i>
Eternally living	<i>te ākhamḍita jivitva</i>
They will enjoy.	<i>bhoguṃ jāti</i> ⁶²⁷

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 *saṃsāra* 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 *saṃsāra* 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 ḍohātu / saṃsāra buḍālā hotā / to āpulā save varutām / sāmḍilā teṇem //”.

⁶²⁵ II.22.62.

⁶²⁶ II.22.63.

⁶²⁷ II.22.64.

⁶²⁸ II.43.185-199. Cf. Revelation 21:1, 5.

of the Holy Spirit.⁶²⁹ *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*⁶³⁰), i.e. baptism, and firm faith (*druḍamanabhāva*).⁶³¹ But contrary to the Hindu concept of *punarjanma*, where every new birth is a birth in *saṃsāra* and by implication means deprivation of *mukti*, this Christian *navā janma* is a death out of *saṃsāra* and a birth into the state of *mukti*.⁶³² Expressed with the terminology of *Kristapurāṇa*, those who are born with this *navā janma* through *jñānasnāna* and faith will not get the inheritance of *saṃsāra*; instead they will get the supreme heritage of *svarga*,⁶³³ and endlessly enjoy the happiness (*sukhaprāpti*) of *vaikunṭha* in the company of angels.⁶³⁴ 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 rājastāni*)”.⁶³⁵

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 *saṃsāra*, but the Christian *navā janma* signifies liberation from *saṃsāra* 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.⁶³⁶ This *punarjanma* is described as a resurrection to great joy for the virtuous (*puṇārthī*),⁶³⁷ but for evil people to *yemakoṃḍa* (“the pit of death”).⁶³⁸ 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 Khrīstapurāṇa*, 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 kaṃronī/āṇī spirita śāmtā karuṇī/navā janma nā ghe svargī 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 Khrīstapurāṇa*, 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 elements ⁶⁴¹	<i>yā caubhutāmca ṭhāī</i>
No more <i>yerajhāra</i> ,	<i>puṇati yerajhāra nāmhi</i>
Nature being created	<i>prakṛti nivṛti upajona kāmhi</i>
Cannot come to an end.	<i>houm na śake</i> ⁶⁴²

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

⁶³⁹ Molesworth, *Molesworth's Marathi-English Dictionary*, p. 677; S. R. Prabhudesai (compiler) and J. Margaj (ed.), *Navneet Marathi-English Dictionary*, Dantali, Navneet Publications, 2012, p.526.

⁶⁴⁰ Feldhaus and Tulpule, *A Dictionary of Old Marathi*, p. 577.

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 mahābhūtānta tithē sārakhe jāṇe-yeṇe nasela. prakṛtī, nivṛtī, janma, maraṇa kāhī tithē nasela." In English this would be: "In these four elements there will be no constant going and coming. In *prakṛtī* and *nivṛtī* there will be neither birth nor death./No *prakṛtī*, *nivṛtī*, 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 (*liḷāmāntrem*) will make heaven and earth new.⁶⁴⁴ Then he says that in the four elements (*caubhutām 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 *samsāra*.⁶⁴⁶

It is notorious that Stephens in this context chooses *liḷāmāntrem* (“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 *liḷāmāntrem* 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

⁶⁴³ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 1495.

⁶⁴⁴ II.43.189: “*maga śruṣṭi sāgara ānī amtrāḷa/ānī yeka āgnī maṅḍala/sarasāvila te sakaḷa/liḷāmāntrem/*”. Cf. Revelation 21:1.

⁶⁴⁵ II.43.192: “*aiseyā caubhutām bhītari/svasta hoīla sakaḷa/*”.

⁶⁴⁶ Gonzáles-Reimann, “Cosmic Cycles, Cosmology, and Cosmography”; Schweig, ‘Līlā’, in Jacobsen, Knut A., Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar and Vasudha Narayanan (eds.), *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Available from: Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Gothenburg University Library, (accessed 16 July 2015).

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 *saṃsāra* is *māyā*. Stephens' usage of *māyā* is similar to Hindu usage. Often he uses it in the phrases *saṃsāra māyā*⁶⁴⁸ and *saṃsārācī māyā*⁶⁴⁹ ("the *māyā* of *saṃsāra*"). *Māyā* is described as an obstacle for doing God's work,⁶⁵⁰ and as a mirage (*māyā mṛgajāla*) in which Judas drowned, his mind being filled with selfishness, wickedness, pride and rage.⁶⁵¹ In the case of Judas, whose crime consisted in betraying his master Jesus for thirty silver coins,⁶⁵² both the Sanskrit meaning "illusion" and the Persian "property" resonate in the phrase *māyā mṛgajāla*. 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 *muktipaṃtha* that leads to *vaikunṭha* 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*.⁶⁵³

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 *saṃsāra māyā*,⁶⁵⁴ and the Samaritan woman left all *saṃsāra maye*⁶⁵⁵ and became a *bhaktiṇī* instead of a *pātakīṇī*⁶⁵⁶ after meeting Jesus. Similarly Matthew immediately forgot all worldly things (*saṃsārika*) and followed Jesus when he called.⁶⁵⁷ So Stephens lets Jesus before ascending to heaven say to his disciples that the Holy Spirit (*isphirita sāmṭa*)⁶⁵⁸ will enter into their minds (*citi*) to show

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 aṃkramdalā/māyā mṛgajāli buḍālā/thora citavane/jjiva dhāvoṃ dāhi diśā// svārtha aṇī duṣṭācāru/garva aṇī krodha thora/jālā tyā mani saṃcāra/cyāri megha jaisēṃ/".

⁶⁵² Cf. Matthew 26:15.

⁶⁵³ II.34.16: "tumhi linatva dharona sariri/jale yāvina bālakāci pari/tumhā svargī rīga nāhi/".

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 *samsāra māyā*, lead them away from the wrong way (*āḍamāmr̥ga*).⁶⁵⁹ 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 *āḍamāmr̥ga*. Falcao renders the same word as *cukīce mār̥ga*,⁶⁶⁰ i.e. “the mistaken/wrong way”, which it of course is. Its general meanings in modern Marathi are “bypath” and “wrong way”.⁶⁶¹ 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.)”.⁶⁶² Perhaps Stephens purposely used the possible association to obstruction with the word *āḍamāmr̥ga* 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 *samsārāci māyā* at all.⁶⁶³ Here *māyā* may stand for “illusion” as well as “affection”. It has the power to bind a person in *samsāra* by affective attachment to the world (*samsāra*), dimming his sight and hindering the vision of God and the way to *mukti*. But Jesus, whose *ātmā* is always *muktivānta* (“free”, “in the state of *mukti*”),⁶⁶⁴ is not affected by *māyā*’s binding and obscuring power. Just like the always *muktivānta* Jesus Christ is free from *māyā*, the same holds true for all liberated souls. Before his ascension, Jesus depicts his “Fathers house”⁶⁶⁵ as a place where there is no doubt, toil, worry or *māyā*.⁶⁶⁶

To sum up, *māyā* in *Kristapurāṇā* stands in opposition to *mukti*. It is associated with *samsāra* and tries to bind us in the same. The liberated soul is not affected by it and where there is *mukti*, notably in *svarga/vaikunṭha*, 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 tumhām citi praveśonayām/neīla satye pathe cālaunayā/nirasona samsāra māyā/ādamāmr̥ga*”.

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 ātmām tethe lāgona nitye hotām muktivānta//*” (“From the day Christ came into the womb/his soul from then on/allways was *muktivānta*.”)

⁶⁶⁵ II.57.36: “*mājhā bāpāce māmdirī*”, i.e. heaven. Cf. John 14:2.

⁶⁶⁶ II.57.38.

Besides *māyā* the chief factor binding a person in *saṃsāra* 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.⁶⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁶⁸ Jesus came into *saṃsāra* to pay/take off the load of people’s *karma*,⁶⁶⁹ and died to pay off the debt (*ruṇa*) of *karmadośa*.⁶⁷⁰ It is also stressed that he is the lord and creator of the world who takes human body to pay/take away *ādi puruśācēṃ karma* (“the *karma* of the first man”).⁶⁷¹ This phrase of course refers to the sin of Adam, the original sin.⁶⁷²

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.⁶⁷³ This formulation reminisces of that in *Bhagavadgītā* 4.37, where it is the fire of *jñāna* that reduces *karma* to ashes.⁶⁷⁴ 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*)”.⁶⁷⁵ Leaving aside the doubtful proposition that *avidya* (ignorance)

⁶⁶⁷ II.43.80: “*je pāpa athavā puṇe kele/je je karma ācarale/te te hoīla thāuke*”. Cf. II.43.72.

⁶⁶⁸ II.31.91: “*phīṭela ākarma baṃdhana/krista cariṇī voḷagatāṃ/*”.

⁶⁶⁹ II.1.40: “*karma tumacēṃ vojeṃ phaḍāvayā/ saṃsārā 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 svāmīyānēṃ/manuśa deho kele pairaṇa/ādi puruśācēṃ karma darśana/pheḍāvayā/*”.

⁶⁷² Cf. Genesis 3.

⁶⁷³ II.9.65: “*jaisā suryabimbācā prakāśa/vighaḍiti āṃdhārācyā rāsi/vaise jejuce teja nāsi/pāpa karmāteṃ/*”.

⁶⁷⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* 4.37: “*yathaidhāṃsi samiddho ḡnir/bhasma-sāt kurute ṛjuna/jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi/bhasma-sāt kurute tathā/*”

⁶⁷⁵ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 161.

is connected with the cause of original disorder in Christianity,⁶⁷⁶ 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 andhakāra* (darkness of sin)" and, in the other direction, "cause-of-all-Pāpa (*avidyā*)"⁶⁷⁷. Concerning the phrase *āvidyā andhakāra*, 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 Samsāra 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

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.

⁶⁷⁷ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 162.

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."

⁶⁷⁹ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 156.

⁶⁸⁰ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, pp. 158-159.

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 *samsāra* for this to be brought about. Their sins (*pātake*) and misdeeds (*dukṛuta*) 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 “*samskāra* of *mukti*”.⁶⁸² Another such passage is the story about the prodigal son, who upon returning home after his disastrous debaucheries is given a *jñānavāstra*, a robe of knowledge, by his father.⁶⁸³ The importance of knowledge is also confirmed by the verses like the already cited II.56.29, where the three things necessary for salvation⁶⁸⁴ are listed:

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

ādi śāstra aikona satye māmnije
maga jñāmna nāmna gheṭje
tisarā deva samtośa kije
*upadeśa pāḷona*⁶⁸⁵

In I.5.154 a similar list is presented as the only way to *vaikumṭhasthāna*:⁶⁸⁶

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

yeka parameśvarāteṃ satya māmniṭje
sīrīm gnānasnāna gheṭje
devaputrācī prīṭi śevā kije
*akhaṇḍa tumhi*⁶⁸⁷

Knowledge is present in two ways in these both lists of requirements for salvation. Firstly it is implied by the phrase *satye māmnije* (“accept the truth”);⁶⁸⁸ secondly it is part of the compound *jñānasnāna* for baptism.

To begin with the phrase *satye māmnije*; to accept the truth of a true thing is, if not exactly the same, very much akin to knowing it.⁶⁸⁹ 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 (*parameśvara*) and the knowledge about the truth of the *śāstra*, i.e. the biblical

their minds like worms. But unlike in Hinduism these consequences come within the same lifetime, since Christianity does not accept the idea of repeated deaths and births in this world.

⁶⁸² II.44.118.

⁶⁸³ II.36.81. The passage is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.6.2.

⁶⁸⁴ The word used in the preceding *ovī* II.56.28 is the verb *tāraṇe*.

⁶⁸⁵ II.56.29. Cf. I.5.153-154.

⁶⁸⁶ The word is used in the preceding *ovī* I.5.153.

⁶⁸⁷ I.5.154.

⁶⁸⁸ The most natural English translation of the phrase *satye māmnije* would probably be “believe”.

⁶⁸⁹ This proposition is valid for the correspondence theory for truth, expressed thus by Thomas Aquinas: “A judgment is said to be true when it conforms to the external reality” (cited from M. David, ‘The Correspondence Theory of Truth’, fall 2015 edn., in Zalta, E. N., *Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Stanford, Stanford University, 2015). This is arguably the view on truth that was prevalent in early modern Catholic theology and embraced by Thomas Stephens.

teaching.⁶⁹⁰ 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:

<p>Now praise the Lord, By whose grace the work of turning the story of <i>śāstra</i> Into a complete <i>purāṇa</i> Was fulfilled.⁶⁹¹</p>	<p><i>ātām karitoṃ svāmiyāce stavana jyāce na kṛpe śāstra kathamna purāṇa honi sampurṇa pātale sīdhi</i>⁶⁹²</p>
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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.

<p>Through it become very wise.⁶⁹³ That disquisition is given in the <i>purāṇa</i>; The proper way to <i>vaikumṭha</i> Has it shown.</p>	<p><i>teṇe hoije paramajñāṃni to prabandha dāvilā purāṇastāni vaikumṭhicā nija paṃthu dāuna kelā pragata</i>⁶⁹⁴</p>
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<p>He who annihilated the guilt of <i>samsāra</i>, The ferry over the ocean of this world, Through whom you reach the other shore, He is the one⁶⁹⁵ Saviour of the world.</p>	<p><i>jo samsāra dośāmcā samvhamra bhavasāgaricā tāru jeñṇem pāvije pailapāru to yeku visvatāraku</i>⁶⁹⁶</p>
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<p>He is the king of <i>mokṣa</i> and lord of <i>vaikumṭha</i>, In whose hand God the Father Has given all power Over life and death,</p>	<p><i>to mokṣarājā vaikumṭhapati devabāpā jyāce hastim didhalise sarva prāpti jivātvā mrtyāci</i>⁶⁹⁷</p>
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<p>Without doing whose <i>bhakti</i> By no means one gets <i>mukti</i>⁶⁹⁸ The story and learning of that Lord Jesus I have narrated.</p>	<p><i>jyāci na karitām bhakti sarvathā na mīle mukti tyā yeju svāmīyāmcī kathā vitpati niropīli myām</i>⁶⁹⁹</p>
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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 *Paramajñāṃni* 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.

⁶⁹⁷ II.58.114. Cf. Matthew 28:18, 1 Corinthians 15:27.

⁶⁹⁸ Falcao's modern Marathi translation of the second line reads as follows: “*sampūrṇa muktī miḷata nāhī*” (“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 *vaikumṭha*. This is no esoteric knowledge that is hard to understand or that makes one see this world (*samsāra*) as unreal in any reasonable sense. What Stephens mentions in this passage is the knowledge about Jesus Christ the Saviour, the *mokṣarājā* and *vaikumṭhapati*. In *Doutrina 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 sindhu*)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 abundancy 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*.

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. II.56.18: “*je satyem mānu jñāna nāmna 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 Khrīstapurāṇa*, 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 Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 78).

⁷⁰⁵ *jñāna sāgaru*, *jñāna sindhu*: 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 *jñānasnāna* with faith, where faith is often expressed as “accepting as true” (*satye mānaṇe*).⁷⁰⁶ Thus the first kind of salvific *jñāna* is a prerequisite for the second; the simple and non-esoteric faith opens the door to *jñānasnāna*, in which the believer is immersed in the divine wisdom. This immersion in Christ as *jñāna sāgaru* opens the door to *mokṣa*⁷⁰⁷ and *vaikumṭha*,⁷⁰⁸ and by implication to God’s *darśana* or the beatific vision of God’s face.⁷⁰⁹ 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.⁷¹⁰ 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*.⁷¹¹ 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.⁷¹² 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

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 vikaṇṭm / karitoṃ guruye*”).

⁷¹¹ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khrīstapurāṇa*, p. 3: “*śrī sarveśvar prasanna/śrī devamātā prasanna/śrī guru prasanna*”.

⁷¹² *Kristapurāṇa* contains detailed stories about the childhood of Jesus and John the Baptist, topics on which the Bible is remarkably silent.

(*rākhane*) him.⁷¹³ Jesus is his mother and father (*janani janaku*), his treasure and wealth, and the love of his life; he will guide him.⁷¹⁴ The word here used for “guidance” is *sārathi*, 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 (*dhyātām citi*), then all obstacles or dangers (*vighne*) are taken away, and by remembering (*smarane*) him all fear is annihilated.⁷¹⁵ 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.⁷¹⁶ He then pronounces the following words:

I, to worship my guru [Jesus],	<i>mī ārādhāvayā guru</i>
Sit down in asceticism and meditation	<i>baisato tapa dhyāna karu</i>
To cross (<i>tarāvayā</i>) the rough sea	<i>tarāvayā dṛghaṭa [dur-?] sāgaru</i>
Of worldly bonds.	<i>bhava baṁdhācā</i>

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.⁷¹⁷ 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*,⁷¹⁸ 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”.⁷¹⁹ Without commenting on Hindu usages of the words Stephens sets out to tell the story he

⁷¹³ II.13.25.

⁷¹⁴ II.13.26.

⁷¹⁵ II.13.27.

⁷¹⁶ II.14.55.

⁷¹⁷ In Marathi Hindu tradition Ekanātha and Bahiṇābāi are examples of religious poets (*saṁta*) who got instructions from *gurus* (Jñānadeva and Tukārāma respectively) without or before meeting them physically.

⁷¹⁸ Cf. I.24.83.

⁷¹⁹ Falcao, *Kristapurāṇa: A Christian-Hindu Encounter*, p. 200.

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 *śāstra* and ours will be known to everybody: as much difference as between light and darkness, truth and falsity, *vaikunṭha* and *yemakoṃḍa*, *parameśvara* and the devil. Everybody will see that there is such a difference between our *śāstra* and other *śāstras*. Therefore in this our *purāṇa* we have not taken pains to show that their *śāstra* is false and our true. Light is automatically visible for everybody. The *śāstra* 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.⁷²⁰

Thus convinced of the excellence and splendour of the biblical story and message and the falsity of Hindu *śāstra*, 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 *saṃsāra*, *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 *saṃsāra*, *māyā* and *karma*, but the statement has to be qualified a bit. Firstly it is liberation from a *saṃsāra* without *punarjanma*. Having altered the signification of *saṃsāra* 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*

⁷²⁰ Falcao, *Phādar Thomas Stīphanskṛta Khristapurāṇa*, pp. 78-79. "[...] *teyāeā āṇī āmaṃ śāstrābhituri kevaḍeṃ aṃtara ujuvāḍā vā aṃdhārāsi, satyā vā laṭikāsi, vaikunṭhā vā yemakoṃḍāsi, paramesvarā vā devacārāsi āhe. yetukeṃ āmaṃceā śāstrā āṇī āṇiyekā śāstrābhituri aṃtara āhe aiseṃ mhaṇaunu samasta dekhaṭī. mhaṇaunu āmīṃ heā āmaṃceā purāṇāntu āṇī āmaṃceṃ satya aiseṃ mhaṇaunu dākhaūṃsi nāhīṃ kaṣṭavato; kāṃteṃ āpaiseṃ samastāsi sruṣī paḍatāye; kristāvāṃceṃ śāstra āpaṇapeṃ sobhatāye, miravatāye, vā teṃci baraveṃ mhaṇaunu āpaṇapeṃ dāunu demṭaye; vācileā āikileyā pure.*"

and *ādī puruṣāce karma* are sometimes used, more common expressions are *pāpa* and *pātaka*, roughly translatable as “sin”. Consequently with the stripping of *punarjanma* from *saṃsāra*, *karma* has lost the aspect of something that binds to continued rebirths in *saṃsāra*. Instead the word is used to signify deeds in general, which can be either good or bad and ultimately lead to either *vaikunṭha* or *yemakoṃḍa*, although deeds alone does not entitle one to a place in *vaikunṭha*. 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*, *rakṣaṇāra*) Jesus Christ.⁷²¹

Concerning the way to *mukti* in *Kristapurāṇa*, the *muktipamṭha*, 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 *paramēśvara* and Jesus Christ (who is *paramēśvara*); 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 *jñānasnāna* (“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 *vaikunṭha*. *Vaikunṭha* is among Vaiṣṇavaite Hindus conceptualised as the highest heaven, the heaven of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being, who has epithets like *vaikunṭhanātha* and *vaikunṭharājā*. These words, leaving out the name Viṣṇu, are adopted by Stephens for speaking about heaven and God. Instead the words *vaikunṭhanātha* and *vaikunṭharājā* are used to signify the Supreme Being according to Christianity, i.e. the triune God, whereas the concept of *vaikunṭha* 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 syncretic – 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 *samsāra* has effects on *mukti/mokṣa* and all other words used to express the same or almost the same idea comprising liberation from *samsāra* – since they no longer signify liberation from *punarjanma* – and also on *māyā*, which signifies something that binds in *samsāra* – since this no longer implies binding by means of *punarjanma*. Similarly Stephens adopts *vaikunṭha* for signifying the highest heaven, the place where *mukti* is enjoyed, and epithets like *vaikunṭharājā* ("king of *vaikunṭha*") but *not* the proper name Viṣṇu for signifying Jesus or the triune God of Christianity. Thereby he moulds a linguistic system where the sign *vaikunṭharājā* does not signify Viṣṇu, as it does in the Hindu system from where it is taken, but Jesus, and where "king of *vaikunṭha*" 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	<i>jaisī haraḷāmmāji ratnakilā</i>
Or a blue diamond among jewels,	<i>ki ratnāmmāji hirā nilā</i>
So among languages the spotless	<i>taisī bhāṣāmmāji cokhaḷā</i>
Language Marathi.	<i>bhāṣā marāthī</i>

Like the jasmine blossom among flowers	<i>jaisī puṣpāmāmmāji puṣpa mogarī</i>
Or musk among perfumes,	<i>ki parimaḷāmmāji kasturi</i>
So among languages the graceful	<i>taisī bhāṣāmmāji sājirī</i>
Marathi.	<i>marāthiyā</i>

Among birds the peacock,	<i>pakṣiāmmadhem mayoru</i>
Among trees the Whishing-tree,	<i>vṛkṣiāmmadhem kalpataru</i>
Among languages great honour	<i>bhāṣāmadhem mānu thoru</i>
Befalls Marathi.	<i>marāthiyesi</i>

Among stars the seven signs,	<i>tārāmmadhem bārā rāśī</i>
Among the seven days Sun and Moon, ⁷²³	<i>sapta vārāmmāji ravī śaśī</i>
So among the languages of this land	<i>yām dīpiceām bhāṣāmadhem tasi</i>
The idiom of Marathi	<i>bolī marāṭhiyā⁷²⁴</i>

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.

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