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Towards a diachronic intensional description of the concepts of spirit in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* – a report with special reference to the problem of philosophy in narration

Notwithstanding attempts at a „cultural turn“ in the historiography of Indian philosophy which are concerned with the symbolic function of texts in human societies rather than with their contribution to traditions of noetic problem-solving, close reading is still a prerequisite for the interpretation of documents of intellectual history – debatable as the latter may remain if pragmatic contextualizations by reconstruction of an empirical environment are based on scarce sources. In this regard, the *mokṣadharmā* collection of the *Mahābhārata*, belonging to a text assembly type whose exploration by statistical means may well prove to yield inconclusive results, has been approached so far based on intertextual speculation about the development of philosophical problems and the reconstruction of terminology (Johnston, Frauwallner, van Buitenen) and on the examination of the narrative structure and rhetorical qualities of the text itself (Fitzgerald, Brockington). In view of its further analysis for the purpose of a historiography of ideas, three crucial distinctions have to be kept in mind: the difference between the age of doctrinal aggregates and of their extant textual transmission (to be addressed by source criticism), the divide between philosophical notions and their employment as elements of rhetorical discourse (the task of narratology), and the interdependent development of conceptual configurations and the terms by which they are signified (to be delineated by a logic-based conceptual history). The present paper seeks to compare the intensional component of the concepts of spirit as well as of concepts whose intensions contain the terms *puruṣa*, *kṣetrajña* or *ātman* as found in *mokṣadharmā* passages with a relatively high density of terms often – if sometimes anachronistically – related to Sāṃkhya. It does so by recording at the same time the narrative environment (e.g. depth of diegetic level, form of speech, plot relation), the type of predication, and syntactical parallels in wording – all of which parameters to be taken into account when aiming at a composition hypothesis of the text examined at the stage of its presumed normative redaction as reconstructed by the critical edition.