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Culinary Heritage and Materiality: Reconstructing Recipes from the *Mānasollāsa*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the culinary heritage of the 12th-century Sanskrit encyclopaedia, the *Mānasollāsa*, from the detailed account of royal cuisine in the section known as *annabhoga* ('the enjoyment of food'). The research reconstructs recipes as material-cultural artefacts, tracing the evolution of food traditions in the Indian subcontinent and highlighting the interplay between gastronomy, power, and identity in the medieval Deccan. By analysing the processes, materials, utensils, and specialist roles described in the text, the study reveals the sophistication of early Indian kitchens and the enduring influence of these practices on contemporary cuisine. The work also explores the socio-political significance of food, the diversity of ingredients—including both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes—and the integration of local and courtly traditions. Through detailed translations and reconstructions, the paper provides insight into the tangible and sensory aspects of medieval gastronomy, offering a valuable resource for historians, chefs, and anyone interested in the material culture of food.

Keywords: *Mānasollāsa*, recipes, regional cuisine, culinary history, material culture, Indian foodways.

INTRODUCTION

The *Mānasollāsa* ('Delight of the Mind'), a comprehensive encyclopaedia from the 12th century, is celebrated for its extensive account of royal life, encompassing subjects such as food, music, art, and governance. Its scope is remarkable, covering everything from politics and ethics to astronomy, horticulture, and culinary arts. The section devoted to cuisine, known as *annabhoga* ('the enjoyment of food'), stands out as one of the earliest and most detailed sources on medieval Indian gastronomy. This part of the text is invaluable for historians and chefs interested in reconstructing ancient recipes and tracing the development of Indian culinary traditions. It offers a thorough exploration of royal dishes and food-related rituals, revealing the sophistication of medieval Indian cooking and the interplay between food, power, and identity. Many of the recipes and practices described in the *Mānas* have endured, with some dishes remaining popular in India today

This study reconstructs the recipes as material-cultural artefacts. This would enable the curious readers to trace the development of food traditions in the Indian subcontinent. The analysis delves into the processes and materials used in cooking, examining Sanskrit terms, their possible English translations, and the functions of various materials and utensils. It highlights the roles of different specialists involved in each stage of food preparation. It also reveals the evolution of kitchen practice in the sub-continent which involves many aspects of human

activity ranging from daily life, to the sociality in the kitchen, division of labour, celebrations and ceremonies, etiquettes, objects.[1] The paper seeks to reconstruct the recipes in a way that highlights the tangible aspects of cooking, presenting them as culinary history and translating them in a form useful for recipe reconstruction, Additionally, the study draws parallels with contemporary folk cuisine in the Deccan, suggesting how certain culturally significant ingredients have persisted over time—though this comparison is not exhaustive and would benefit from further research.

STRUCTURE AND SCOPE

The Kalyan Chalukyas hailed from the medieval Deccan region and controlled large parts of modern Karnataka, Telangana, western Andhra Pradesh and southern Maharashtra at the ehight of their power. The Western Chalukya king Someshvara III (1126-38 CE), composed the *Mānas* described as an encyclopedia of royal conduct demonstrating "how literary-theoretical competence was as central to kingliness as military competence".[2] In addition to the two competences mentioned above, the king was expected to be competent on various subject that are mentioned in the *Mānas*.[3] The text has 8000 verses, and is divided into five sections (*viṃśatis*) of twenty chapters (*adhyāyas*) each. It is stated to be a science (*śāstra*) created by the king Someshvara for the benefit of the world.[4] Further, it is declared to be a book that teaches all the subjects comparable to the status of a world teacher (*jagadācārya*).[5] The first two sections borrow considerable material from the traditional literature on economics and ethics in Sanskrit and are about gaining and stabilizing a kingdom by a prince.[6] The third is for enjoying the domain and corresponds most closely to what one might expect to find in a *kāmaśāstra*,[7] the fourth for amusement (*vinoda*), and the fifth for happiness.

It is emphasized at various points that the composition of the verses was done by the King which immediately places the text is the courtly milieu. The nature of the text is apparent as an instruction manual for princes and by extension the courtly elite since the courtly etiquette required the elite to display their status through embodied visibilities and acquired knowledge. Courtly culture had a much wider reach by way of its spectacularity. At the same time regional polities were embedded in the particularities of local ecologies and cultural expressions.

The chapter that details various food preparations is titled '*annabhoga'* or 'the enjoyment of food' and it occurs as the thirteenth chapter in the third section which deals with the *upabhogas* or enjoyments. The *bhogas* (enjoyments/pleasures) are a considerable section devoted to the royal "pleasures" and contain a strong element of sensual pleasures like that of bath, clothes, food and beds.[8] *Annabhoga* has 259 verses (verses 1342 till 1600) and is the longest in the third *viṃśati* since it is a thorough elucidation of the various food preparations made in the royal kitchen by experts and served in the royal feasts and as the regular meals of the king's household. The *Mānas* demonstrates that knowledge of the cuisine was a matter of courtly etiquette emphasizing the king's role as both connoisseur and host illustrating how cuisine functioned as a symbol of royal prestige and cultural capital.

The text is frequently referenced in studies of Indian history, literature, and food culture, and has inspired modern reconstructions of ancient recipes. Some studies on the culinary history of early India have relied on archaeological evidence to reconstruct ancient diets, especially in cultures lacking written records or with undeciphered scripts.[9] Other works, like Omprakash (1961), have used textual sources to trace patterns of food consumption across regions and

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time, focusing on specific ingredients rather than the details of individual dish preparation.[10] Scholars such as Zimmermann (1982) have explored the connections between ecology, medicinal foodways, the human body, and cultural zones, drawing on traditional Ayurvedic texts.[11] While this approach has its interpretive limitations, it does highlight the deep relationship between local ecology and food practices. Rita Samaddar's doctoral research focusses on locating the *Mānas*, its structure, the political context and summarizes the various chapters including the annabhoga.[12] Interestingly she provides parallels of the dishes with many contemporary Marathi, Kannada and Tamil preparations.[13] However, the recipes are not discussed in details since her study is not focussed on culinary history.

Achaya's (1994) comprehensive study of the subcontinent's foodways examines the *Mānas* as an example of royal cuisine, alongside information from other regional texts.[14] He also locates some of the modern equivalents of the recipes.[15] More recently Gutiérrez (2024) has done a more nuanced study of the *Mānas* to locate it within aspirations of imperial power, power being defined in the Foucauldian sense, while also noting the increasing absence of meat recipes in Sanskrit manuscripts.[16] The *Mānas* has not been fully translated, and while a few recipes have been rendered into English by scholars using it as a source, a detailed reconstruction is still lacking. Existing abridged translations, such as Arundhati (1994), provide only a partial account of the text, including the *annabhoga*. This study aims to address gaps in current scholarship by examining the socio-political context of the recipes of the *Mānas* and reconstructs them as material-cultural artefacts.[17]

CULINARY HERITAGE: THE ANNABHOGA

The *Mānas* classifies foods into five 'healthy and appealing' categories–solid carbohydrates (*bhogya*), edibles (*bhakṣya)*, beverages (*peya*), lickable foods (referring to sauces/chutneys) (*lehya*), and suckable/sippable foods (*coṣya*).[18] As a work within the Sanskrit *kāvya* tradition, it reflects culinary practices associated with Sanskrit culture and the broader phenomenon of Sanskrit cosmopolitanism. Sanskrit poetic texts (*kāvyas*) have been viewed as the cultural power of monarchies across South Asia from the early first millennium CE till the medieval 'vernacularization'.[19] The text also "provides some of the earliest textualizations we have of vernacular lyrics and showcases Kannada itself".[20] Thus, the text stands as much within the Sanskrit cosmopolis as it does within its local context which is reflected in its use of words from various vernaculars including Kannada and Marathi.

Conflict was a constant feature of political life in the early medieval period, with hierarchies shaped and maintained through warfare both within and between kingdoms.[21] Gastronomy, politics, and war were closely intertwined in the militarized culture of the court. It can be argued that cuisine served as a form of 'culinary capital' and as a tool of 'gastrodiplomacy', making gastronomy an integral aspect of royal culture.[22] The royal feast was not only ceremonial and public, but also performative, forming an essential part of the rituals and ceremonies that defined courtly life in early medieval kingdoms.[23]

The *annabhoga* describes around eighty recipes in total, beginning with cereal-based dishes and progressing to legume broths, meat preparations, and a variety of vegetable dishes and preserves made from different plant parts—leaves, roots, stems, seeds, and fruits. Notably, the text includes a substantial number of non-vegetarian recipes, with sheep and wild boar featuring most prominently. The specific names given to many of these dishes suggest they

were commonly prepared in royal and elite kitchens, and their nomenclature would have immediately conveyed to diners a sense of the ingredients and cooking methods involved, even if the full technique was not known. Some dishes, such as the black gram pan-roasted flatbread known as dosa, remain popular in the region till today, demonstrating a remarkable continuity in culinary traditions across centuries. Other dishes like the *vaṭakas* have evolved over centuries and can be seen in modern Indian cuisine in various forms, such as dahi vada (yogurt with fermented lentil spheres).

Fermented black gram (urad dal) savoury balls were and are a staple in Indian kitchens. The use of fermentation reflects advanced culinary techniques and an understanding of nutrition.[24] The combination of rice starch (the water left after boiling rice) and curd (yoghurt) demonstrates the resourcefulness of cooks in utilising every part of staple ingredients, minimising waste and enhancing flavour. The tempering with asafoetida and black pepper highlights the influence of Ayurveda, where spices were chosen not just for taste but also for their health benefits.

Various types of animal meats are listed as edible in the text: boar (*varāha*), spotted deer (*sāraṅgaja*), red deer (*hariṇasya*), rabbit (*śaśa*), sheep (*āvika*), goat (*aja*), ox (vṛṣya), swamp deer (*rūrū*), sambar deer (*samvara*), bird/eagle (*śākuna*) and fish (*matsya*).[25] The text also lists the meat of the parts of the animal that were considered edible: the backbone, thighs, the back (originating near the back of the tail), the chest, the waist, pelvis, neck, heart, liver, kidneys, intestines, eyes, tongue, ears, udders, testicles, the fat attached to the animal, brain, feet, horns, hooves and skin.[26]

The use of wild boar and rat in royal recipes warrants closer examination of their cultural significance. Pork, for instance, is often associated with minority communities in the subcontinent, and its inclusion in the text reflects the diversity of the regional cuisine. The recipe for roasting a rat (*mūṣaka*) also stands out in the text, as in present times, eating field rats is associated with marginalised communities in the subcontinent. This example also illustrates how local cuisines, shaped by the availability of regional flora and fauna, found their way into royal kitchens, reflecting their local roots and origins. In some areas, such as the Mandya district of Karnataka, villagers have been noted to consume field rats as an off-season food.[27] Gutiérrez interprets these meat recipes as expressions of monarchical power and the assertion of authority over different regions and peoples of the empire, with the bandicoot rat serving as a metaphor for forest-dwelling or indigenous communities.[28] She also demonstrates that while some texts include meat recipes, later authors often removed these sections to align with evolving norms of vegetarianism. Such practices highlight the intricate relationship between food, power, and identity in early medieval India.

The use of blood in recipes, the ritual sacrifice of sheep, and the inclusion of every part of the animal in the diet—alongside pig rearing by marginalised communities and pork specialities—can still be observed in Dalit cuisines of the contemporary Deccan.[29] It is possible to draw connections across time, linking food traditions of groups at opposite ends of the social spectrum. Much of present-day Maharashtra once formed part of the Chalukya dominions, so the comparison is separated by centuries but not geography. The presence of many popular peninsular dishes in the *Mānas*, such as idli (the fermented rice and lentil roundel), demonstrates that deeply rooted culinary practices have endured. The boar, notably, is the

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third avatar of Lord Vishnu. Shahu notes a contemporary village belief that consuming the flesh of this incarnation protects against possession by ghosts, its canine tooth is worn as a protective charm, and its meat is thought to enhance virility.[30] These details may offer clues to early Indic thought, revealing intricate connections between food, ecology, nourishment, and belief.

SPECIALISTS AND OBJECTS IN THE KITCHEN

The *Mānas* has interesting mention of various materials used in cooking while detailing the recipes. These materials and utensils reflect both the sophistication and practicality of early medieval Indian royal kitchens. Many are still in use today, showing continuity in culinary practices. The emphasis on specific vessels (copper, clay, earthenware), tools (ladle, grinding stone, mortar and pestle), and cooking methods (hearth, charcoal roasting, churning) highlights the importance of technique and equipment in traditional Indian cuisine. This section lists out these terms and objects to unravel the materiality of cooking. The text also mentions the serving etiquettes towards the ending verses of the annabhoga, and the dinnerware consisting of golden dish along with multiple golden bowls for curries to serve the royal food.[31]

Table 1: Materials, Utensils and Devices Used in Food Preparation (from *annabhoga*)

	Sanskrit Word	**English Translation**	**Function**	**Verse/s (***Mānas* III. 3
1.	*darvī*	ladle	stirring, mashing	1354, 1370-1, 1446 (multiple references)
2.	*culli*	hearth	main cooking area with fire for cooking	1353 (multiple references)
3.	*tāmra sthālī, tāmrapātra*	copper vessel	used for multiple tasks including soaking, boiling, cooking	1351, 1411, 1540
4.	*gharaṭṭaḥ*, *peṣaṇi*	grinding stone or mill	splitting and grinding lentils, sesame and grains	1359, 1382
5.	*vāsasā śaśiśubhreṇa*, *vastra*, *sitavasatra*	moon white cloth	cover for vessels during soaking or marinating, and for draining liquids (like separating liquid from curd), steaming or boiling fermented spheres, covering boar to soak in water	1352, 1399, 1409, 1427
6.	*kāṣṭhapātra*	big wooden vessel	kneading dough	1377
7.	*sthālī*[32]	tray	pressing ground gram mixture into shapes	1398
8.	*musala*, *peṣaṇi*	pestle	unhusking rice, spreading dough, mashing meat	1348, 1396, 1478
9.	*kharparamastaka, karpara*	reverse-heating bowl	used as a surface for cooking flatbreads	1380, 1383,
10.	*mṛdaḥ sthālī, mṛdbhāṇḍa*	earthen vessel/pot	for cooking broths, storing salted fish etc.	1361 (occurs in multiple verses), 1508
11.	*kaṭa*	mat	to spread roasted meat	1431
12.	*kartrika*	knife, scissors	cutting meat, removing hair and preparing other ingredients	1429, 1432, 1471
13.	*śūla*	spear, spit, skewer	roasting meats and vegetables	1433, 1500 (multiple references)
14.	*aṅgāra*	charcoal	fuel for roasting meats and vegetables	1464, 1482

15.	*rajju*	rope	tying animals for whole roast	1510
16.	*manthāna*	churner	churning curd and buttermilk	1571
17.	*ghṛtabhāṇḍa*	ghee-pot	for making ghee or clarified butter	1576
18.	*śilā*	rock	breaking bones to extract marrow	1518
19.	*paṭṭa*	slab	spreading grains	1349, 1476
20.	*śūrpa*	winnowing basket	winnowing grain	1361, 1386,
21.	*daṇḍa*	stick	soaking boar in water	1427
22.	*haṇḍa*	clay pot	making meat broth	1468

Source: Author's analysis from *Mānas* III. 13.

The text refers to various specialist roles within the kitchen through the description of the tasks which can be inferred from the detailed instructions for each stage of food preparation. It refers to at multiple points to 'experts' (*vicakṣaṇaḥ*) which is a generic terms used for specialization in any task like boiling rice.[33] '*Kovidaḥ*' is another term used for 'expert.'[34] Other generic terms having the meaning of 'knowledgeable' are '*guṇī*' and '*budhaḥ*.' For example, the '*budhaḥ*' in making flatbreads (*dhosaka*) maintained the right temperature and oil quality and also cooked meats.[35] Those who were skilled in cooking (*pākavicakṣaṇaiḥ*), mentioned while giving the recipe for whole lentil broth, appear to be separate from the others. Terms for cook are '*sūpakāra*' and '*sūda*'who are mentioned while discussing lentil and meat broth respectively.[36] *Sūda* is also used for cooks preparing seafood.[37] At another point the cook cooking lentils is also called specialists (*vicakṣaṇaḥ*).[38] A specialist (*vicakṣaṇaḥ*) appears to have operated the grinding stone/mill to grind the grains and split the lentils.[39] The '*khaṇḍapākaviśāradaḥ*' ('skilled in making confectionary') is mentioned as making shapes of solidified sugar.[40] The expert in making meat broth is called *pākaviśāradaḥ*.[41] '*Pākajña*' ('the one knowing cooking') is used for barbecuing of skewers.[42] An expert (*vicakṣaṇaḥ*) handled the roasting of meats over charcoal or fire ensuring the correct heat of charcoal and strength of the fire for proper cooking.[43] The specialist in making meat broth (*sūpa*) is mentioned as 'proficient in the process of decocting' (*sūpa śāstraviśāradah*).[44] '*Pākakovidaḥ*' is the cooking specialist mentioned for roasting vegetable wafers.[45]

The text identifies a range of specialist roles within the royal kitchen, inferred from the detailed instructions provided for each stage of food preparation. It mentions various experts—such as those skilled in cooking, grinding grains, boiling rice, and preparing specific dishes—who were responsible for distinct tasks. Terms like 'cook', 'specialist', and 'expert' are used to describe individuals with proficiency in particular culinary techniques, whether making lentil broths, flatbreads, or meat dishes. The presence of these specialists highlights the complexity and division of labour in the medieval kitchen, where expertise was valued and different cooks contributed to the creation of elaborate meals. This system ensured that each dish was prepared with care and precision.

TRANSLATING MEDIEVAL GASTRONOMY

A recipe is defined as be 'some text that communicates information about the preparation of foodstuffs, and the various stages in terms of name of dish, serving suggestions, preparation method, etc. are optional.'[46] The culinary methods described in the *Mānas* can be considered as recipes even though they do not give exact quantities of ingredients to be used in the form of lists etc. History of food is 'part of material cultural facets–the recipes inscribed form culinary

textual artifacts, and the food forms sensory historical artifacts.'[47] The recipes in themselves are part of the materiality of life in early medieval period and have been reconstructed in this next section. To present them as comprehensible recipes for the modern kitchen, I have modified them to make a list of the ingredients and create a step wise method from the instructions which are given in the verse form and are very vague at places. All the recipes have not been given here and the ones shared are representatives of particular ingredients and preparation methods like boiled grains, flatbreads, broths, spheres, meats, seafood, preserves, etc.

Boiled Rice[48]
Ingredients: Raw jasmine rice, water, milk or clarified butter (ghee)

Method:
1. Unhusk and clean the rice, remove stones, soil and leaves
2. Wash the rice several times in water
3. Soak the rice in a copper or clay vessel for a long time, covering with a clean white cloth
4. Boil water in a vessel on a hearth with a smokeless fire
5. Add rice to the boiling water when its full of bubbles and has some steam, stir the rice with a ladle
6. Check the rice periodically when the grains become soft, add milk or ghee
7. Remove from the hearth, cover the vessel with a lid, drain the starchy liquid
8. Dry any remaining starch with gentle heat before serving

Split Lentil Broth[49]
Ingredients: Choice of lentils-Bengal gram (*caṇakā*), cowpea (*rājamāṣā*), red lentil (*masūrā*), or green gram bean (*rājamudgakā*); water, asafoetida water; turmeric powder, rock salt

Method:
1. Split the lentils using a grinding stone or mill.
2. Place the split lentils in a vessel with an equal amount of water.
3. Cook on gentle fire over a hearth.
4. While cooking add asafoetida water and turmeric for colour.
5. Add water as needed until the lentils are soft.
6. Season with a small amount of smoothened rock salt

Green Gram Broth[50] (*dāl*)
(Vegetarian/Non-Vegetarian)

Ingredients: green gram, water, asafoetida water, ginger, oil (eggplant oil preferred), black pepper powder, *nāgara* (ginger) powder

Optional Ingredients: fried lotus stem, chironji seeds, lamb meat, kidneys, fat

Method:
1. Wash green gram and cook in equal water over gentle heat.
2. Add asafoetida water and ginger.
3. Add to the boiling mixture, heated oil derived from eggplant

4. Optionally, add fried lotus stem or cuddapah almond (*cironjee*) seeds.
5. Stir and add water as needed.
6. For a non-vegetarian version, add pieces of lamb meat, kidneys (*vṛkka*) cut into two pieces, or different of fat.
7. Season with black pepper by adding in the cooking pot
8. after removing from the fire add *nāgara*[51] powder before serving.

***Maṇḍaka*[52] (Wheat Flatbread)**

Ingredients: Wheat flour (from unhusked, sun-dried wheat), clarified butter (ghee), water and milk, salt, rice flour

Method:

1. Grind with a grinding stone and then sieve wheat flour of unhusked, sun-dried wheat
2. Mix with ghee, water, milk, and salt; knead with hands into a soft dough in a big wooden vessel
3. Form spheres, coat with rice flour, and flatten into roundels with palms of the hands smeared with ghee or oil
4. Spread the white soft balls turning them from one hand to the other
5. Cook on the reverse side of a heated bowl placed over the hearth.
6. Remove quickly to prevent burning.

***Pūrikā*[53] (Split Chickpea Fried Flatbread)**

Ingredients: split chickpea (boiled and pounded), black salt, asafoetida, black pepper, cardamom powder, oil

Method:

1. Mix well boiled, pounded chickpea with black salt, asafoetida, black pepper, and cardamom.
2. Shape into spheres.
3. Fry in oil until golden.

Black Gram Roundel Variations[54]

a) *Iḍarikā*

Ingredients: Split black gram, clarified butter (ghee), asafoetida, cumin, black pepper powder

Method:

1. Soak, stir with hands and grind with mortar-pestle split black gram
2. Press the mixture on a tray with hands
3. Let the mixture ferment until sour.
4. Shape into spheres, wrap in cloth, and steam or cook from all sides.
5. Sprinkle with black pepper, temper with ghee, asafoetida, and cumin.
6. Well cooled down, white, softened *iḍarikā*

b) Rice Starch and Curd *Vaṭakas*

Ingredients: Thick rice starch (the water left after boiling rice)**,** well-churned curd (yoghurt)**,** black salt**,** ginger (finely chopped or grated)**,** coriander (fresh, chopped)**,** cumin seeds**,** green

chilli (cut into two pieces), *vaṭakas* (fermented black gram roundels, prepared separately),[55] black pepper powder, asafoetida (for tempering)

Method:

1. Combine thick rice starch and well-churned curd.
2. Add black salt, ginger, coriander, and cumin to the mixture.
3. Add green chilli cut into two pieces and mix well.
4. Using a ladle, press and stir the mixture while cooking gently until it thickens.
5. Once thickened, remove from the heat.
6. Add the prepared vaṭakas (fermented black gram roundels) to the hot mixture.
7. Sprinkle black pepper powder over the top.
8. Temper the dish with asafoetida before serving.

***Kṣīraprakāra*[56] (Sweet Cottage Cheese Roundels)**

Ingredients: milk, sour buttermilk, water, rice flour (uncooked powder), ghee, sugar syrup

Method:

1. Thicken the milk by heating it gently.
2. Add sour buttermilk to the centre of the thickened milk.
3. Pour water into the mixture.
4. Tie the thickened mixture in a clean cloth to separate the solids from the liquid.
5. Mix uncooked rice flour into the thickened milk solids and mash well.
6. Knead the mixture into various shapes (typically roundels).
7. Cook these shapes on all sides using clarified butter.
8. Soak the cooked roundels in sugar syrup before serving

***Varṣolakā*[57] (Sweet Milk Balls)**

Ingredients: Sugar (cleansed), milk (equal quantity to sugar), ginger (*nāgaraṃ*), cardamom, camphor, saffron

Method:

1. Combine sugar and an equal amount of milk.
2. Cook the mixture until it thickens.
3. Remove from heat and add ginger, cardamom, camphor, and saffron for flavour.
4. Shape the thickened mixture into balls.

Roasted Boar Preparations[58]

Ingredients: Wild boar, water, black pepper powder, rock salt, tamarind (optional), curd (well churned), sugar, cardamom, camphor, mustard seeds, citron, saffron, ginger, asafoetida, clarified butter

Method:

1. Cover the boar with a white cloth, wash and soak in water with a pole, remove hair by hand, or a knife. Or, alternatively burn with straw fire and pluck out the hair.
2. Roast the boar covered with straw until the skin hardens, then wash with soft water and spread on a mat.

3. Putting the head aside, cut the rest into chessboard like pieces, pierce them on a spit (*śūla*), and roast over well heated charcoal until fat drips.
4. Sprinkle with black pepper and rock salt, or with soaked tamarind.
5. Roast the skin separately with salt on charcoal.
6. Make roundels from the roasted meat pieces from which fat had dripped.
7. Serve the roundels in various ways: in well churned curd with sugar, cardamom and seasoned with edible camphor; in curd churned well with mustard seeds and citron, and saffron; roasted with clarified butter, cardamom and sugar; in citron juice containing small pieces of ginger, saffron, pepper powder, mustard seeds, rock salt and temper with asafoetida.

Praleha[59] (Broth)

Ingredients: Tamarind, curd, or pomegranate juice, or crushed Indian gooseberry, citron, bitter orange juice; coriander, asafoetida, cumin, turmeric, ginger, chilli, rock salt, oil; meat pieces

Method:

1. Choice of 2-3 juices as souring agents: tamarind in curd/ pomegranate juice/crushed Indian gooseberry; sour crushed Indian gooseberry; mixture of citron and bitter orange juice
2. Add coriander, asafoetida, cumin for fragrance/flavour.
3. Add turmeric for colour, followed by little pieces of ginger, chilli and rock salt as per taste.
4. Strain the mixture with a clean cloth and add oil.
5. Pour the liquid in and earthen vessel and cook meat pieces in the mixture until soft, mashing with a ladle.
6. Fumigate with asafoetida, cumin, or camphor before serving

Shallow Fried Boar[60]

Ingredients: Turmeric, cumin, chilli, dried ginger, coriander, asafoetida, ginger, green chickpea, tender pork, hyacinth bean, onion, garlic

Method:

1. Make small size (black gram size) pieces of turmeric, cumin, chili, dried ginger, coriander, and asafoetida
2. Fry in heated oil.
3. Add ginger, green chickpea, tender boar meat, hyacinth bean, onion, and garlic.
4. Add previously prepared mashed pork.
5. Cook until the juices are extracted, then temper.

Bhaḍitraka[61] (Roast Meat Skewers)

Ingredients: Meat (backbone), salt, asafoetida, ginger, clarified butter, black pepper.

Method:

1. Slice meat and pierce to make holes.
2. Marinate with salt, asafoetida, and ginger juice.
3. Skewer and roast over charcoal, basting with clarified butter.

4. Sprinkle with black pepper and rock salt.

***Kṛṣṇapāka*[62] (Sheep Blood Broth)**
Ingredients: Sheep blood, meat, sour powder, salt, asafoetida, cumin, camphor powder, cardamom powder, black pepper

Method:
1. Collect sheep blood in an earthen pan after cutting the neck
2. Add little salt and rub with fingers to squeeze out the blood, remove veins
3. Cover and set aside the blood.
4. Cut the skin of the sheep from the inside and outside parts with the tip of the knife beginning from the chest area.
5. Cut the meat into areca nut sized pieces and cook with sour powder.
6. When reduced, add the blood and cook thoroughly.
7. Temper with asafoetida and cumin, sprinkle with camphor, cardamom, and black pepper

***Bhūṣikā*[63] (Fried Meatballs**)
Ingredients: Raw meat, asafoetida water, salt, oil

Method:
1. Soak and crush raw meat in mortar-pestle with asafoetida water and salt.
2. Shape into balls when unctuous
3. Fry in oil until cooked on an *āṇaka* (hearth/vessel)
4. When roasted in coals the meat balls are called *kośalī*.
5. When the mashed meat is stuffed in scooped out eggplant and cooked with oil it is called *pūrabhaṭṭāka*.

Anttraśuṇṭhaka[64] (Roasted Intestines)
Ingredients: Intestines, rock salt

Method:
1. Wash intestines, pierce with a rod, and roast over coals until hard.
2. Sprinkle with rock salt.

***Maṇḍalīya*[65] (Stuffed Intestines)**
Ingredients: Blood, citron filament, ginger juice, lemon juice, cumin, asafoetida, coriander, salt, fatty flesh, intestines

Method:
1. Mix blood with citron filament, ginger juice, lemon juice, cumin, asafoetida, coriander, and salt.
2. Add fatty flesh, shape into clam-like roundels.
3. Stuff into washed intestines, tie, and roast over coals until hard

Upakhaṇḍaka[66] (Dried Lamb)
Ingredients: Ram meat with fat, asafoetida water, salt

Method:

1. Cut meat into large pieces, soak with asafoetida water and salt.
2. Dry in the shade for 1–3 days.
3. Roast over coals until hard and desirable.

Dry roundels of Venison[67]

Ingredients: Deer meat, ginger, asafoetida, sours, coriander, salt

Method:

1. Prepare roundels from deer meat.
2. Mix with ginger, asafoetida, sours, coriander, and salt.
3. Dry with high fire or roast. Serve as small, fragrant pieces

Bone marrow[68] (*Majjā*)

Ingredients: Long bones (antelope, deer, goat), salt, sours, asafoetida, pepper, cumin

Method:

1. Roast bones over fire, break to extract marrow.
2. Cook marrow with salt, sours, asafoetida, pepper, and cumin

Ram Brain[69]

Ingredients: Ram's head, *kāñjik* (fermented black carrot/rice and curd), oil, powders, asafoetida

Method:

1. Roast and split the ram's head, remove the brain.
2. Cook with kāñjik, then again on the hearth or in oil.
3. Combine with powders, temper with asafoetida smoke

Fish Preparations[70]

Precooking instructions include tearing the skin of the fish with scales, making pieces of big sized fish, using whole fish if small sized, cutting off the head of the fish and cutting the stomach to remove the insides. The fish is instructed to be cooked either on the hearth, or in oil, or on smokeless fire. Certain varieties of fish are mentioned for grilling options: *kahnāka*, *roṣṭa*, *baḍiśā* and *khavala*, *cācuka* and *pāṭhina*. *Roṣṭa* has been taken to mean *proṣṭhī*.[71] *Proṣṭhī* is the ban fish (Indian eel) which is considered light, appetizing with sweet-bitter flesh.[72] *Baḍiśā* is probably *vadisha* described as a riverine, scaly, large fish fed leaves and barley.[73] The *pāṭhina* (catfish) is a *nādeya* (river) fish that is mentioned in ayurveda as carnivorous.[74]

a) **Turmeric fish:** Rub fish with oil and salt, wash, marinate with turmeric paste, tie in cloth, squeeze, cook on hearth, then temper
b) **Fried fish:** Cook fish in tamarind, sprinkle with wheat powder, fry in oil, infuse with cardamom, black pepper, and salt
c) ***Khārakhaṇḍā* (Salted Roasted Fish):** Cut fish, salt, store in earthen pot, roast before eating
d) **Roasted Fish Egg Sacs:** Roast egg sacs, cook in oil with spices, scatter with rock salt, temper with asafoetida

***Nandyāvartā*[75] (Tortoise Recipe)**
Ingredients: Tortoise, sours, oil or clarified butter, powders

Method:
1. Roast tortoise, remove feet, shell, and head.
2. Cook with sours and oil or clarified butter.
3. Sprinkle with powder before serving

Clarified Butter Crabs[76]
Ingredients: Small crabs, copper vessel, earthen vessel, salt, sours, clarified butter, cumin, spices

Method:
1. Roast crabs in a dry copper vessel, transfer to earthen vessel after the hard shell breaks.
2. Cook with salt and sours, then again in clarified butter.
3. Add cumin, salt, and spices

Roasted rat (*mūṣaka*)[77]
Ingredients: Field rats, water, salt, sours, rod, salt, pepper, dried ginger, cumin

Method:
1. Boil rats in water, remove hair, cut open, clean.
2. Cook with salt and sours, skewer, roast over coals.
3. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, dried ginger, and cumin

Roast Veggies[78]
Method: The cooking specialist should make with various vegetables, in a process similar to the meats, appealing roundels or wafers by roasting on coals.

Preserve in Oil[79]
Method: Add bitter gourd, jackfruit, banana, mustard powder and salt to oil.

Milk and Buttermilk Preparations[80]
a) ***Dadhīti*:** Add buttermilk to boiled milk, keep in a pot in an airless place, add sugar or fruits, ferment for 18 hours.
b) **Tempered buttermilk:** Mix buttermilk with water, temper with asafoetida, cumin, ginger, cardamom, and rock salt.
c) ***Majjika***: Churned buttermilk with sugar, cardamom powder, and fragrant with camphor.
d) ***Mastu*:** Drain the water from the curd with a cloth, combine with cumin, ginger and rock salt. Fumigate with the fragrance of asafoetida.
e) **Clarified butter (ghee)**: heat butter slowly in a ghee-pot, add wheat seeds and betel leaves, remove when clarified.

CONCLUSION

The *Mānas* can be viewed as part of the courtly literature which "assisted the 'education' of élites in a 'mannered' system of emotions and dispositions central for the maintenance of

formal relationships at court".[81] It stands as a testament to the refined and varied culinary practices of the courtly elite in early medieval Deccan and South India. Its recipes and instructions for royal feasts were designed to educate princes in the art of hosting, ingredient knowledge, dish nomenclature, and the etiquette of dining. Through its detailed accounts, the text reveals the breadth of gastronomic expertise and the social significance of food in the royal milieu, highlighting both the diversity of ingredients and the sophistication of cooking methods that shaped historical Indian cuisine

The origins of the Chalukya dynasty highlight their agrarian and pastoral roots, as indicated by their association with crowbar (*chalke*) bearing clans.[82] The text demonstrates that the region's cuisine was diverse and deeply connected to local practices, flora, and fauna. The inclusion of boar meat, for example, reflects these traditions, with royal hunting described in detail elsewhere in the literature of the period.[83] Furthermore, the culinary customs outlined in the *Mānas* reveal how social status and prestige were expressed through the use of rare and costly ingredients, such as saffron, which distinguished the feasting habits of the elite from those of other groups.[84]

Those who participated in and observed royal culture included not only courtiers, ministers, princes, governors, and vassals, but also scholars, poets, linguists, reciters, singers, genealogists, and various women of the harem and courtesans.[85] The annabhoga section thus serves as a valuable record of early Indian gastronomy, illustrating its connections with indigenous food traditions and its integration into the royal practice of feasting. The recipes clearly demonstrate the advanced culinary skills required in the courtly kitchen, reflecting both the expertise of the cooks and the sophistication of the cuisine itself.

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[2] Sheldon Pollock (2006), *The Language of Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*. University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 15.

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[4] *Mānas* I. 9; All references of the text are from *Mānāsollasa of King Someśvara*, ed. G. K. Shrigondekar, 3 vols, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1925, 1939, 1961.

[5] *Mānas* I. 10; *Mānas.* I. 11-12.

[6] Daud Ali (2011), 'Botanical Technology and Garden Culture in Someśvara's *Mānasollāsa*,' in Daud Ali and Emma Flatt (Ed.), *Garden and Landscape Practices in Precolonial India: Histories from the Deccan*, Routledge, New Delhi.

[7] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, p. 155.

[8] Ibid., p. 138.

[9] https://youtu.be/m8q-ZZzH0PQ?si=Fs0vHEjzJQy_DmGM sourced on 6th December 2025, 9:57 pm.

[10] Om Prakash (1961), *Food and Drinks in Ancient India: From Earliest Times to c. 1200 A. D.*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Delhi.

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[13] Ibid, p. 147.

[14] K. T. Achaya (1994), *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*, OUP, New Delhi, pp. 92-3.

[15] K.T. Achaya (2003), *The Story of Our Food*, Universities Press, Hyderabad, (e-edition 2012).

[16] Andrea Gutiérrez (2024), 'Meat on and off the Royal Menu: The Medieval Delight of the Mind & the Erasure of Meat from Indian Recipe Collections.' *Global Food History*, 10:2, pp. 140-158.

[17] Andrea Gutiérrez (2018), 'Jewels Set in Stone: Hindu Temple Recipes in Medieval Cōḻa Epigraphy.' *Religions* 9. no. 9, pp. 270. She has reconstructed some medieval recipes from the records of temple offerings.

[18] *Mānas* III. 13. 1344.

[19] Pollock, *The Language of Gods*, pp. 12-15.

[20] Ibid., p.185.

[21] Daud Ali (2000), 'Violence, Gastronomy and the Meanings of War in Medieval South India,' *The Medieval History Journal*. 3, 2, pp. 261-89.

[22] Tarana Husain Khan (2023), 'Narrating Rampur's Cuisine: Cookbooks, Forgotten Foods, and Culinary Memories,' *Global Food History*. 9:2, pp. 149-174.

[23] Daud Ali, (2004), *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge., pp. 110-5.

[24] Jashbhai B. Prajapati and Baboo M. Nair (2008), 'The History of Fermented Foods,' in Edward R. Farnworth (Ed.) *Handbook of Fermented Functional Foods*, 2nd Edition. CRC Press, Boca Raton, p. 2.

[25] *Mānas* III. 13. 1417-20.

[26] *Mānas* III. 13. 1423-26.

[27] Achaya, *Indian Food*, p. 9.

[28] Gutiérrez 'Meat on and off.'

[29] Patole Shahu (2024), *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada*, Translator, B. Kargaonkar, Harper Collins India, Gurugram, pp. 60-1, 97, 136-8.

[30] Ibid., 137.

[31] *Mānas* III. 13. 1585.

[32] *Sthālī* is used in diverse contexts and the meaning has to be seen in the context of the task being performed.

[33] *Mānas* III. 13. 1354, 1366.

[34] *Mānas* III. 13. 1448.

[35] *Mānas* III. 13. 1393, 1447.

[36] *Mānas* III. 13. 1358, 1459, 1468.

[37] *Mānas* III. 13. 1529, 1535.

[38] *Mānas* III. 13. 1371.

[39] *Mānas* III. 13. 1359.

[40] *Mānas* III. 13. 1414.

[41] *Mānas* III. 13. 1446.

[42] *Mānas* III. 13. 1464.

[43] *Mānas* III. 13. 1502.

[44] *Mānas* III. 13. 1509.

[45] *Mānas* III. 13. 1549.

[46] Gutiérrez, 'Jewels Set in Stone.'

[47] Ibid.

[48] *Mānas* III. 13. 1350-56.

[49] *Mānas* III. 13. 1359-65.

[50] *Mānas* III. 13. 1367-72.

[51] *Nāgara* is a synonym for ginger which was called *ārdraka* as the fresh rhizome of the ginger plant, and *śuṇṭī* as the dried form; see Balwant Singh and K.C Chunekar (1972), *Glossary of Vegetable Drugs in Brihattrayī,* Chowkhamba Amarabharti Prakashan, Varanasi, pp. 40, 221-22.

[52] *Mānas* III. 13. 1376-81; *maṇḍakā* or *maṇḍā* is a special Karnataka dish which also figures in the inscription of the Hoysala king in the list of offerings to the deity; see Samaddar, 'A Critical Study,' p. 147.

[53] *Mānas* III. 13. 1388-90.

[54] *Mānas* III. 13. 1397-1407.

[55] The soaked black gram roundels, dense and large but without any holes, cooked in churned sugar, made with appropriately added cardamom seeds.

[56] *Mānas* III. 13. 1408-10.

[57] Mānas III. 13. 1415-1416.

[58] *Mānas* III. 13. 1427-41.

[59] Mānas III. 13. 1442-48.

[60] *Mānas* III. 13. 1449-52.

[61] *Mānas* III. 13. 1462-65.

[62] *Mānas* III. 13. 1469-75.

[63] *Mānas* III. 13. 1478-81.

[64] *Mānas* III. 13. 1492-93; dish famous as causing sound in chewing.

[65] *Mānas* III. 13. 1494-98; similar to sausages, they will be of the shape of *palāsh* ('flame of the forest' tree flowers) and comparable to the fruit of the amaltas (*rājavṛkṣa*) (thin long drum shape).

[66] *Mānas* III. 13. 1513-15.

[67] *Mānas* III. 13. 1516-17.

[68] *Mānas* III. 13. 1518-19.

[69] *Mānas* III. 13. 1520-21.

[70] *Mānas* III. 13. 1524-36.

[71] Nalini Sadhale and Y.L. Nene (2005), 'On fish in Manasollasa (c. 1131 AD),' *Asian Agri-History* Vol. 9. No. 3., pp. 177–199.

[72] K.M. Nadakarni (1976), *Indian Materia Medica* vol. 1 [1906]. Popular Prakashan, Bombay, p. 214.

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[73] Sadhale and Nene, 'On fish in Manasollasa.'

[74] Zimmermann, *The Jungle and the Aroma*, pp. 108-9.

[75] *Mānas* III. 13. 1537-39.

[76] *Mānas* III. 13. 1540-42.

[77] *Mānas* III. 13. 1543-47; fat, dark, and healthy rats originating in the fields, situated on the banks of a river are to be used for the recipe.

[78] *Mānas* III. 13. 1548-49.

[79] *Mānas* III. 13. 1560.

[80] *Mānas* III. 13. 1565-84.

[81] Ali, *Courtly Culture*, p. 23.

[82] Anirudh Kanisetti (2022), *Lords of the Deccan: Southern India from the Chalukyas to the Cholas*, Juggernaut, New Delhi, p. 3.

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[84] Whitney Cox (2011), 'Saffron in the Rasam.' Y. Bronner, W. Cox, & L. McCrea, (Eds.) *South Asian texts in history: Critical engagements with Sheldon Pollock*, AAS Asia Past and Present, Ann Arbor, pp. 177-98. Cox has studied the long distance trade in the luxury commodity, saffron, which reached the peninsula and was sourced from Kashmir.

[85] Pollock, *Language of Gods*, p. 185.

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