

4. Does Pāṇinian grammar have (a) history?

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If one were to ask a modern Pandit to give a brief outline of the history of Pāṇinian grammar, he is likely to mention primarily three names: Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, and Patañjali.¹ These three scholars, he will add, were held in high regard by subsequent tradition, which gave the highest authority to the last of these three, and somewhat less to each preceding one: *yathottaraṇi munitrayasya prāmāṇyam* “the later the Muni, the greater his authority”.² After these three, there are many names but little of substance that changes.³

This traditional understanding leaves place for something like historical change from Pāṇini to Patañjali, and virtually none for the period after Patañjali. There have been modern scholarly studies trying to show that Patañjali’s understanding of Pāṇini was not always correct, implying that some kind of historical development had indeed taken place between the two. I think here primarily of Paul Kiparsky’s (1979) discovery that Pāṇini’s terms for optionality (mainly *vā*, *vibhāṣā*, and *anyatarasyām*) are not synonyms but express different preferences for certain derived forms. I also mention the new interpretation, or rather interpretations, of Pāṇini’s term *asiddha*.⁴ Furthermore, I myself have argued that Kātyāyana and especially Patañjali, most probably under the influence of new developments in Buddhist scholasticism, tried to fit grammatical derivations into an altogether different straitjacket, very different from what Pāṇini had intended.⁵ In these and oth-

1 Jan E. M. Houben (2015: 149) observes: “To my knowledge, all major current specialists of Pāṇinian grammar, in India and in the ‘West’, go back, directly or indirectly, to a single school within the tradition of Pāṇinian grammar, the one founded by Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita in the early seventeenth century – ca. 2000 years after Pāṇini – and completed and perfected by Nāgeśa in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.”

2 KIELHORN 1876: 53 n. *, referring to Kaiyaṭa on P. 1.1.29 (I p. 217).

3 The most complete presentation of Sanskrit grammarians (though with sometimes doubtful dates assigned to them) is still YUDHIṢṬHIRA MĪMĀMSAKA’s Saṃskṛta Vyākaraṇa-Śāstra kā Itihāsa (1973; in Hindi).

4 BRONKHORST 1980; 1984; 1989; KIPARSKY 1982; 1987.

5 BRONKHORST 2004a; 2016: § III.3.2.

er cases, it is claimed that the understanding of Pāṇini's grammar had changed at the time of Patañjali.

There are also claims that Patañjali no longer knew Pāṇini's text as originally pronounced, and that he was no longer acquainted with its original accentuation. As I have shown elsewhere (BRONKHORST 2009; 2016: Appendix VII), these claims are not based on firm evidence.

According to the traditional picture, nothing much changed after that. In my opinion, this picture is not correct. For perhaps as many as one thousand years, grammatical thought in the Pāṇinian tradition explored various directions. Grammarians did not feel bound to accept the authority of Patañjali and went their own ways. This rich and varied grammatical culture did, however, die out over time so that by the time of Kaiyaṭa – who perhaps was the first to state *yathottaraṃ munirayasya prāmāṇyam* “the later the Muni, the greater his authority” – grammar in the tradition of Patañjali had gained the upper hand; grammar in the tradition of Patañjali had become the orthodox tradition of Pāṇinian grammar. This was about one thousand years ago. From that date onward, there was, it seems (but see below), no interest any longer in unorthodox grammar, and the texts produced by unorthodox grammarians were no longer copied with the result that virtually none of their literary productions have survived.

If there are hardly any surviving texts, how can we find information about these “unorthodox” grammarians? As so often in historical studies, we depend on bits and pieces that *have* survived. In the case of grammar, these bits and pieces take the shape of changes in Sūtrapāṭha, Dhātupāṭha and Gaṇapāṭha, variant readings, irregular additions, critical remarks about grammarians who follow their bare reasoning, and other such data. I have collected a number of these in various articles. Some are presented and analysed in my article “On the history of Pāṇinian grammar in the early centuries following Patañjali”, which came out in 1983.⁶ When I wrote that article, I still believed that the activity of unorthodox grammarians had largely ceased by the time of Bhartṛhari (5th century CE) and certainly before the *Kāśikā* (end of the seventh century; see below), even though the *Kāśikā* still contains traces of earlier unorthodox activity and occasionally disagrees with Kātyāyana and Patañjali. Indeed, I argued that there were grammatical commentaries in the Pāṇinian tradition before the *Kāśikā*, and even before the *Cāndravṛtti*, a Buddhist grammatical text that extensively drew upon the Pāṇinian tradition.⁷ Subsequent research showed that also Udbhaṭa, who lived around the year 800 CE, was an unorthodox grammarian in the Pāṇinian tradition (BRONKHORST 2008a). This sug-

6 See also BRONKHORST 2002; 2004; 2008; 2009; 2009a; 2014.

7 See also GORNALL 2011.

gests that unorthodox grammar had not disappeared at the time of Bhartṛhari but was still alive and kicking more than three centuries after him.

In this paper, I wish to look at another bit of information that supports the general picture I have been evoking above.⁸ It occurs in Śabara's *Mīmāṃsābhāṣya* on sūtras 3.4.12–13 and Kumāṛila's *Tantravārttika* thereon; this is the co-called *Karṭṛadhikaraṇa* “the section on the agent”. The question discussed is whether verbal forms like *vadet* “one should speak” are expressive of the agent, as the opponent claims, or rather of *bhāvanā* “productive energy”. This last term, *bhāvanā*, is a key term of *Mīmāṃsā*, and it does not surprise that Śabara and Kumāṛila take the position that *bhāvanā* is what verbs express, rather than “agent” (*karṭṛ*).

The opponent in this discussion is a grammarian, and Kumāṛila says so explicitly, even going to the extent of putting the words “I, Pāṇini” (in the genitive: *pāṇiner mama*; *Tantravārttika* on sūtra 3.4.13, p. 373,₂₁) in his mouth. This grammarian points out that the verbal suffix in forms like *vadet* is expressive of “agent” as indicated by grammatical rules such as *laḥ karmaṇi ca bhāve cākarmakebhyaḥ* (P. 3.4.69). Then there is a maxim that states that “a stem and a suffix together express the meaning of the suffix” (*prakṛtipratyayau pratyayārthaṃ saha brūtaḥ*), about which Kumāṛila's grammarian says, “that we find neither reasoning (*nyāya*) nor a grammarians' tradition (*smaraṇa*) that would provide an exception (*apavāda*) to this general (*autsargika*) maxim.”⁹ Combined, grammatical rule and maxim justify the position that the whole word *vadet* is expressive of “agent”.

Both Śabara and Kumāṛila disagree that Pāṇini's rules ascribe the meaning “agent” to the verbal suffix, but both accept the maxim. Śabara and Kumāṛila obviously assume that the followers of Pāṇini, too, accepted it. This, however, is problematic. The maxim is explicitly rejected in the *Kāśikā* on P. 1.2.56. Indeed, the maxim and this sūtra seem to contradict each other, and the *Kāśikā* maintains that the sūtra was formulated by Pāṇini precisely to reject the maxim. The passage looks like this:

pradhānapratyayārthavacanam arthasyānyapramāṇatvāt (P. 1.2.56)
aśiṣyam iti vartate | pradhānaṃ samāse kiṃcit padam, pratyayas tavoyadādih, tābhyām
arthaavacanam arthābhīdhānam anena prakāreṇa bhavātīti pūrvācāryaiḥ paribhāṣitam:
pradhānopasarjane pradhānārthaṃ saha brūtaḥ, prakṛtipratyayau saharthaṃ brūta
iti | tat pāṇinir ācāryaḥ pratyācaṣṭe | aśiṣyam etad, arthasyānyapramāṇatvād iti |

8 For details, see YOSHIMIZU 2012.

9 YOSHIMIZU 2012: 556 n. 13 rendering of *Tantravārttika* on sūtra 3.4.12, p. 324,_{11–12}: *na hy asyautsargikasya nyāyasya smaraṇasya vāpavādabhūtaṃ nyāyāntaraṃ smaraṇāntaraṃ copalabhyate | tena kṛttaddhitāntavād eva pratyayārthaprādhānyam prāpnoti ||*

anya iti śāstrāpekṣayā loko vyapadiśyate | śabdair arthābhīdhānaṃ svābhāvikaṃ na pāribhāṣikam, aśakyatvāt, lokata evārthāvagateḥ |

“[Nor should it be taught (53 *aśiśyam*)] that the meaning [of a word] is expressed by the principal member [when the word is a compound] or by the suffix [when it is a word that consists of a stem and a suffix], because [what a word means is] determined by something else (i.e., conventional usage).

The word *aśiśyam* (‘should not be taught’) is carried over [from sūtra 53]. The principal member (*pradhāna*) is a [constituent] word in a compound; a suffix is [an ending] such as *taṅyaT*. Earlier preceptors have laid down that the meaning [of a word] is expressed by these two, in this manner: ‘the principal member and the subordinate one express the principal meaning together’ and ‘a stem and a suffix express the meaning together’. The preceptor Pāṇini rejects this [in this sūtra], with the words ‘this should not be taught’ ‘because [what a word means is] determined by something else’. The ‘something else’ with respect to the discipline of grammar is said to be conventional usage. The expression of meaning by words is natural, not laid down [by teachers], because [such artificial meanings] are not denoted [by words], and because we learn meanings from conventional usage only.”

It is clear from this passage that the authors of the *Kāśikā* thought that the maxim according to which stem and suffix together express the meaning of the suffix predated Pāṇini, inducing him to reject it in this sūtra.

However, it is more likely, not that the maxim *predates* Pāṇini, but rather that this sūtra *postdates* him. P. 1.2.56 belongs to a group of five sūtras, about which SCHARFE (1977: 89 n. 10) says: “The enigmatic sūtra-s I 2 53–57 with their argumentative style must be an interpolation, and their tenets point to a different school of thought. As only the first of them is commented on and mentioned in the *Mahābhāṣya* (Patañjali only), it is likely that the others got into the text later; Patañjali could otherwise hardly have avoided any comment on them.”

We have seen that the *Kāśikā* belongs to the revived “orthodox” tradition of Pāṇinian grammar, even though it preserves some traces of the preceding “unorthodox” period. This means that authors who entered into discussion with grammarians of the Pāṇinian tradition – if they belonged to a period preceding the *Kāśikā* or perhaps even the first centuries following it – may have discussed with “unorthodox” Pāṇinīyas. Śabara and Kumārila appear to belong to this category.

Kumārila can be dated to the seventh century.¹⁰ If Yijing’s mention of Jayāditya as author of what he calls the *Vṛttisūtra* is a reference to the *Kāśikā* (which is not

10 CLARK 2006: 110–111 n. 26; TABER 2005: 163 n. 2.

certain),¹¹ the *Kāśikā* existed not only before Yijing's departure from India in 685, but presumably before the death of Jayāditya, which, according to Yijing, took place in 661. Kumārila and the *Kāśikā* may therefore have been roughly contemporaneous, which means that Kumārila may have discussed (literally, as Yoshimizu suggests, or figuratively, through reading and reacting to their works) with grammarians who did not in all respects agree with the *Kāśikā*, grammarians who still accepted the maxim that stem and suffix jointly express the meaning of the suffix, and who did not yet know (or recognize) sūtra 1.2.56.

To sum up: It appears that preceptors in the Pāṇinian tradition, at some point in time, taught the maxim that “a stem and a suffix together express the meaning of the suffix”. Other Pāṇinīyas were not pleased and added P. 1.2.56 to the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. Kumārila was still in discussion with followers of the “earlier preceptors” who did not recognize P. 1.2.56.

Interestingly, the maxim rejected in the *Kāśikā* occurs in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, in exactly the same form: *prakṛtipratyayau pratyayārtham saha brūta[ḥ]* (ed. KIELHORN vol. II, p. 58,¹¹⁻¹² under P. 3.1.67 vt. 2). YOSHIMIZU (2012: 558 n. 21) correctly explains that “Patañjali quotes this maxim to lend support to his opinion that it is impossible for two suffixes applied in succession after one and the same verbal root to denote two incompatible meanings” and concludes (p. 558) that “he applies it in a manner different from that of the Mīmāṃsakas.” This does not imply, however, that Patañjali understood the maxim differently, and I see no reason to think that he did.¹² This, then, would mean that Patañjali lived and wrote before P. 1.2.56 was inserted into the text of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

Why did later Pāṇinīyas, including the authors of the *Kāśikā*, give up this maxim? If it did not give rise to problems before, why should it give rise to problems afterwards?

I think the answer must be as follows. Accepting the maxim of the semantic predominance of the suffix meant for the grammarians that in the analysis of a verb like *pacati* “he cooks”, “agent” would be the principal meaning, for *-ti* is prescribed in Pāṇini's grammar in the sense “agent”. This is indeed the opinion of Kumārila's opponent, who even claims to provide proofs for this position.¹³ However, Bhartṛhari and those who follow him do not look upon “agent” as the prin-

11 See BRONKHORST 1990: 140–142.

12 Patañjali appears to attribute to someone else the idea that the verb is the main part of the sentence. See *Mahābhāṣya* (ed. KIELHORN) vol. I, p. 367,¹⁵ (on P. 2.1.1 vt. 9): *apara āha | ākhyātam saviśeṣaṇam ity eva | sarvāṇi hy etāni kriyāvīśeṣaṇāni |*. “Others say: ‘A [finite] verb with qualifications [makes a sentence]’, simply. For all these [qualifying words] are qualifications to the action.” (tr. KAHRIS 1986: 142 n. 2).

13 See YOSHIMIZU 2012: 566ff.

principal meaning of a verb; they rather consider “operation” (*vyāpāra*) to be its principal meaning, and “operation” is not expressed by the verbal suffix.¹⁴ We do not know whether Bhartṛhari was the first to propose this semantic interpretation of verbs, but it will be useful to recall that this author played a central role in establishing the “orthodox” tradition of Pāṇinian grammar. If orthodox grammarians wanted to accept Bhartṛhari’s semantic interpretation of verbal forms (whether introduced by him or by others), they had to abandon the maxim according to which the suffix provides the principal meaning of a verbal form. The author(s) of the *Kāśikā*, and presumably other orthodox grammarians, did so. Kumārila, on the other hand, was in discussion with Pāṇinīyas who had not taken this step.¹⁵

Does this mean that the maxim that stem and suffix together express the meaning of the suffix had now disappeared? This may be true of grammar, but certainly not of other indigenous traditions. Mīmāṃsā and other schools of thought continue to invoke the maxim in more recent writings. One example must suffice. The *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, a text from the fourteenth century CE, presents the maxim in slightly modified form in its chapter on Rāmānuja’s philosophy (ch. 4), stating that a stem and a suffix are jointly expressive with the meaning of the suffix being more important, excepting the suffix *san*.¹⁶ The suffix *saN* is added to verbal roots to form desideratives, and this statement does indeed occur in the discussion of the desiderative form *jijñāsitavya* “what has to be desired to be known”. As a result, the statement *brahma jijñāsitavyam* “One must desire to know Brahma”, prescribes knowledge, not desire.

Further examples could no doubt be found, but not, perhaps, in grammatical literature. It appears that unorthodox grammarians had really succeeded in elim-

14 See *Vākyapadīya* (ed. RAU) 3.8.40–41: *bahūnāṃ saṃbhava ’rthānāṃ kecid evopakāriṇaḥ | saṃsarge kaścid eṣāṅ tu prādhānyena pratiyate || sādhyatvāt tatra cākhyātair vyāpārāḥ siddhasādhanāḥ | prādhānyenābhidhīyante phalenāpi pravartitāḥ ||* “Where there are many meanings, some are subsidiary; one, however, is understood to be the principal one when they are intimately related. (40) In that [situation] activities are expressed, by the verbs, as principal, because they are what is to be accomplished (*sādhyā*), even though [the activities themselves], whose means of accomplishment (*sādhana*) are [already] accomplished (*siddha*), are urged forward by the result. (41)”

15 Note that Kumārila’s *Tantravārttika* on sūtra 3.4.13 (p. 352_{,8-9}) is acquainted with Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya*.

16 *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (ed. ABHYANKAR) p. 121_{,4}, 313–315: *prakṛtipratyayau pratyayārtha-prādhānyena saha brūta itaḥ sano ’nyatreṭi vacanabalād icchāyā iṣyamāṇaprādhānatvād iṣyamāṇaṃ jñānam iha vidheyam* “By force of the statement ‘A stem and a suffix are jointly expressive with the meaning of the suffix being most important, excepting this suffix *san*’, the knowledge that is being desired is here prescribed, not the desire, because in a desire the desired item is most important.”

inating this maxim from grammatical literature, and in this way left an important mark on the further development of grammatical philosophy.

The case just discussed illustrates that new developments that find expression in the *Kāśikā* were sometimes ignored in grammatical discussions that took place after the composition of that text. The opposite also happened, where a position maintained in the *Kāśikā* is adopted in spite of its being in contradiction with the *Mahābhāṣya*. One example must suffice to show this.

The *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* makes the following remarks in connection with the word *anūsāyin* (ed. ABHYANKAR p. 363,₁₅ 317–321):

supy ajātau ṇinis tēcchīlye (P. 3.2.78) *ity atra supīti vartamāne punaḥ subgrahaṇ asyopasarganivṛttyarthatvena sopasargād dhātor ṇiner anutpatteḥ | yathākathaṃcit tadaṅtikāre 'py aco ṇṇiti* (P. 7.2.115) *iti vṛddhiprasaktāo atisāyāyādipadaavad anūsāyīpadasya prayogaprasaṅgāt |*

“The suffix *ṆinI* cannot be added after a verbal root that is accompanied by a preverb (as in *anu-śī*), because the repeated use of *suP* in the grammatical rule *supy ajātau ṇinis tēcchīlye*¹⁷ even though *suP* is here also valid from an earlier sūtra,¹⁸ has the purpose of excluding the use of a preverb. If you accept that *ṆinI* can somehow be added to a root with preverb, there would be substitution of *vṛddhi* for the vowel by the rule *aco ṇṇiti*,¹⁹ so that the word used would be *anūsāyin* rather than *anūsāyin*, like *atisāyīn*.”

This passage shows the influence of the *Kāśikā* on P. 3.2.78, which reads: *supīti vartamāne punaḥ subgrahaṇam upasarganivṛttyartham*. However, this goes against the interpretation provided by the *Mahābhāṣya*, which gives examples that involve preverbs: *pratyāsārīṇyaḥ*, *udāsārīṇyaḥ*. Kaiyaṭa under P. 3.2.78 shows this disagreement with the *Kāśikā*, saying: *etena subgrahaṇam upasarganivṛttyartham iti vṛttikāroktam apāstam*.

The above-quoted remarks in the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* are not refuted. This means that its author accepted their validity, thus implicitly siding with the *Kāśikā* against the *Mahābhāṣya*.

17 Pāṇini, *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.2.78: “Affix *ṆinI* occurs to denote *tēcchīlyā* ‘one’s nature’ after verbal roots used in conjunction with a *pada* which ends in a *sUIP* and does not denote *jāti* ‘class’.” (tr. SHARMA).

18 Viz., Pāṇini, *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.2.4.

19 Pāṇini, *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 7.2.115: “A vowel termed *vṛddhi* comes in place of the vowel denoted by *iK* of an *aṅga* which ends in *aC*, when an affix marked with *Ṇ* and *Ṇ* follows.” (tr. SHARMA).

One final question: When did this tradition of “unorthodox” Pāṇinian grammar – i.e., Pāṇinian grammar that does not take Patañjali as the highest authority – come to an end? Or perhaps rather, did it ever come to an end? We saw that Udbhaṭa represented this tradition around the year 800. It is possible that the *Prakriyā-Sarvasva* of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa of Melputtūr, a text from around 1600, belongs to this same tradition. This is a text to which Jan Houben has drawn attention in some recent publications (HOUBEN 2012; 2015). As Houben explains, Nārāyaṇa protests against the role of authority attributed to Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, and Patañjali, and is even unwilling to lend more authority to Pāṇini than to other grammarians such as Candra and Bhoja. The lack of evidence so far does not allow me to state with confidence that Nārāyaṇa continued the unorthodox tradition discussed above. Perhaps he did, or perhaps he rather acted independently.

Appendix

By way of conclusion, I wish to draw attention to some consequences of our reflections. On some occasions, scholars have tried to date a text on the basis of assumed quotations from the *Kāśikā*. Wezler and Motegi, for example, in their edition of the *Yuktidīpikā*, date this text to around 700 CE because, they claim, it quotes a passage from the *Kāśikā*. However, the quoted sentence does not mention the *Kāśikā* by name and is so short, and so general, that all one can conclude from it is that the *Yuktidīpikā* quoted a line from a commentary in the Pāṇinian tradition. Since I have already pointed out that such commentaries existed before the *Kāśikā*, it can no longer be concluded with certainty that the *Yuktidīpikā* is more recent than that text (BRONKHORST 2003).

Something similar happens in a recent reflection on the date of Jajjaṭa, the earliest known commentator on the *Carakasamhitā*. In support of a date in the seventh-eighth century CE, Zysk and Yamashita (2018: 4) show that Jajjaṭa’s commentary contains a quoted verse that is found in both the *Kāśikā* and the *Cāndravṛtti*. They state that “it would appear that Jajjaṭa’s verse derives from one or the other grammatical works” (*sic*), and, given that the *Cāndravṛtti* was composed in about the fifth century or a little later, they conclude that “[i]t confirms that Jajjaṭa cannot be before the fifth century.” They go further, saying: “given the general Brahmanic orientation of his commentary, it would seem most likely he was familiar with [the] *Kāśikāvṛtti*, placing his date earliest in the seventh century or slightly thereafter.”

I do not deny that Jajjaṭa may have lived in the seventh century or later, but the arguments here provided suggest nothing of the kind. If there was a commentary (or several of them) on Pāṇini’s grammar from which both the *Kāśikā* and the *Cāndravṛtti* borrowed the verse concerned, then Jajjaṭa may have borrowed the verse from that same source. He must then have lived after that commentary. Since

that commentary was composed, ex hypothesi, before the time of the *Cāndravṛtti*, and therefore before the fifth century, nothing compels us to believe that “Jajjāṭa cannot be before the fifth century.”

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